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April 30: My Last Day at Sierra Club - Leaving But Not Saying Goodbye

By Jeff Tittel, our Chapter Director since 1998

Today is my last day as the Director of the New Jersey Chapter of the Sierra Club. I have enjoyed crafting and lobbying for environmental legislation for more than two decades.

Thank you to everyone who has offered kind words and support. I intend to stay active and work on the issues that I care about, keeping in touch with Club members and overcoming the challenges that face us: climate change, preventing new fossil fuel infrastructure, protecting Liberty State Park, protecting overburdened communities, and promoting renewable energy.

We should be proud of our many accomplishments: from passage of the Highlands Act to the Global Warming Response Act, we've worked together to help pass the private well testing law, the bear feeding ban, the indoor smoking ban, and the ban on smoking in our state parks and beaches. Most recently, we helped pass the Plastic Bag Ban and get the DRBC to ban fracking in the Delaware River Basin.

In my transition to a next phase of activism and involvement, instead of Zoom meetings I intend to actually hike and enjoy nature, and to teach my grandchildren about nature and the environment. In the words of John Lewis, I will continue to "make good trouble and necessary trou-

ble" as I work on the issues that I care about.

I also hope to help train the next generation of activists, teaching them how to get more engaged and to use the tools that they will need. Activism isn't just about organizing, rallies, and email alerts. There's also the hard work of reading all of those documents and educating yourself on the issues. We need to understand regulatory strategy, legislative strategy, and legal strategy as well as media and outreach. We also need to know how to approach each environmental fight and develop the strategies and techniques for stopping a bad project, passing a law, or saving a park.

I also look forward to writing, teaching, and spending more time with my family. But most importantly, I look forward to continuing the fight to protect New Jersey's environment.

After today, I can be reached via my personal Facebook and Twitter accounts or at jeff.tittel@verizon.net.

Editor's note: The search for Jeff's replacement proceeds apace. A job description is on the Chapter website. Rich Isaac chairs the Search Committee.



CONSERVATION CHAIR'S REPORT

Support Joe [Biden] and Climate-Friendly Businesses

By Greg Gorman (ggorman07419@embarqmail.com)

"If we act to save the planet, we can create millions of jobs," Joe Biden told Congress as he laid out his vision of transformation. His speech assures our World allies and competitors that the United States resumes its leadership position in addressing climate change. Using decarbonization as the engine for his economic plans, his \$2.1 trillion Infrastructure Plan will provide many opportunities for developers and investors. Much investment will be necessary to replace the electricity grid and transportation corridors plotted out during the 1950's with replacements that meet our Nation's security and reliability needs for a clean energy future. Biden's Plan aligns the Federal Government with many state, municipal and business trends toward that clean energy future.

Hundreds of companies have already pledged to become "net zero" or "zero carbon" within the next two decades. For a company to reach net zero, its own operations and value chain (its suppliers and customers) must not release

more global-warming emissions into the atmosphere than they are able to remove.

New Jersey's Energy Master Plan proposes to achieve net zero or carbon neutrality by 2050, and complies with the Global Warming Response Act (GWRA) mandate. The GWRA requires reducing state greenhouse gas emissions by 80 percent below 2006 levels. The remaining carbon emissions may be offset by new forestation, and by protecting our coastal wetlands to maximize carbon sequestration. We hope NJ's newly established Office of Climate Action and its proposed Green Economy can achieve the goal of Zero Carbon.

The Zero Carbon pledge means that a company will no longer emit carbon. For examples, Google has promised to power its operations with entirely carbon-free energy by 2030; Walmart has announced plans to reach zero carbon emissions across its operations by 2040; Microsoft, which has been carbon neutral since 2012, pledges to go carbon negative by 2030, and to remove enough carbon from the atmosphere by 2050 to make up for all the emissions it has released since it was founded in 1975. To accomplish this, Microsoft will phase out the use of fossil fuels and invest funds to "accelerate the development" of new carbon reduction technology.



"Hundreds of companies have already pledged to become "net zero" or "zero carbon" within the next two decades"

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POLITICAL CHAIR'S REPORT

Candidates Endorsed for NJ's Primary and General Elections

By Karen Becker (political.chair@newjersey.sierraclub.org)

This year we will elect a Governor and our entire Legislature, both State Senators and Assemblypersons. The environmental importance of election results can be illustrated by comparing the policies and deeds of current and previous administrations. Here's our first list of endorsed candidates. Please consider them when you vote. The NJ Primary Election is June 8th!

Valerie Vainieri Huttle (D-District 37) is running for the State Senate seat that will be vacated by Loretta Weinberg, who retires later this year. Both Huttle and her opponent (who is backed by the Democratic Party) will be giving up their current seats in the Assembly. However, Huttle has the backing of many grassroots organizations. She has been far more proactive than her opponent, sponsoring the Global Warming Response Act, and legislation promoting environmental justice and proper disposal of byproducts from hydraulic fracturing, to name a few. Our Political Committee is impressed by the many occasions in which she has opposed large companies and big government.

She was the Sierra Club's "Legislator of the Year" in 2017.

Andrew Zwicker (D-District 16) is also vacating his seat in the Assembly to run for an open seat in the Senate, currently held by Christopher Bateman (R). Zwicker has an impressive record, authoring bills that have addressed the climate crisis and other environmental concerns. He is the head of Communications and Public Outreach Department at Princeton University's Plasma Physics Laboratory, making science and the environment his primary focus. Zwicker wants to put NJ First when it comes to investing in innovative companies through the Evergreen Fund. He also introduced legislation that would amend the current law to update the definition of "high performance green building".

Christine Clarke (D-District 26) has made climate change, public health and renewable energy key components of her campaign. This comes as no surprise since she has been an environmental champion for many years, with strong connections to grassroots ef-

forts. Clarke has taken a bold stance against pipelines and most recently the forestry bills that have been introduced in the State Senate. Clarke is an advocate of a green transition to a clean energy economy to protect New Jersey from negative climate and environmental impacts and to help create jobs that promote economic growth. She would like to see NJ become the Atlantic Coast hub for clean solar and wind energy. Clarke currently does not hold public office.

Additional Sierra Club Endorsements:

Other Incumbents running for for NJ State Senate:

- (Dist. 7) Senator Troy Singleton
- (Dist. 14) Senator Linda Greenstein
- (Dist. 15) Senator Shirley Turner
- (Dist. 17) Senator Bob Smith
- (Dist. 18) Senator Patrick J. Diegna
- (Dist. 27) Senator Richard Codey



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Incumbents running for NJ State

Assembly:

(Dist. 7) Assemblyman Herb Conaway
 (Dist. 11) Assemblywoman Downey
 (Dist. 14) Assemblyman Daniel Benson
 (Dist. 15) Assemblywoman Verlina Reynolds-Jackson
 (Dist. 22) Assemblyman James Kennedy
 (Dist. 27) Assemblywoman Mila Jasey
 (Dist. 27) Assemblyman John McKeon

(Dist. 33) Assemblyman Raj Mukherji
 (Dist. 31) Assemblyman Nicholas Chiaravalloti
 (Dist. 34) Assemblyman Thomas P. Giblin
 (Dist. 34) Assemblywoman Britnee Timberlake
 (Dist. 35) Assemblyman Benjie Wimberly
 (Dist. 36) Assemblyman Calabrese
 (Dist. 36) Assemblyman Gary Schaer
 (Dist. 38) Assemblyman Chris Tully

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YOU can promote the rapid adoption of carbon reduction technology in a variety of ways. Most importantly: decarbonize yourself and become an example for others. If you own corporate stock, urge your company or companies to adopt a Climate Transition Action Plan: setting out a range of targets and actions designed to deliver an emissions reduction pathway consistent with the 1.5° ambition of the Paris Agreement. If you participate in a pension or mutual fund, advocate for a strong Environment-Social-Governance (ESG) policy that encourages decarbonization and climate justice. Businesses can reduce costs and provide community benefits by using delivery services that rely on electric vehicles, power-purchase

agreements to buy clean energy, making and using energy-efficient products that rely on electricity rather than fossil fuels, providing work-from-home opportunities, and going paperless. Enterprises have immense resources and opportunities available to decarbonize.

Another and very inexpensive way for you to contribute is by simply asking your local shop- and business owner (pizza shop, convenience and hardware store manager, pub owner, bank manager, etc.) “What are you doing to reduce your carbon footprint?” If enough customers ask the same question, the owner takes the message and acts to decarbonize. Remember- your support for climate friendly businesses supports Joe.

ISSUE COORDINATOR'S REPORT

World Listening Day 2021: The Unquiet Earth

By Michael Competielle – Our Noise Pollution Issues Coordinator and Soundscape Preservationist (mcompetielle@gmail.com)

At 11pm on March 21st, 2020, I stepped outside to walk my dogs and sensed that something was amiss. Absent was the cacophony of road noise. My local soundscape had been changed by the onset of the Coronavirus pandemic lockdown. I quickly grabbed my audio recorder and microphone rig, and proceeded to “record” this new perception of silence.

Sitting motionless on my porch, holding my headphones tightly with both hands, I strained to listen for anthropic sounds. This was the closest I’ve come to witnessing natural silence. Less than one mile from NJ Transit’s Northeast Corridor mainline, eight miles from Trenton airport, and surrounded by a major highway interchange, my neighborhood had never before been noiseless.

What exactly is a soundscape? Close your eyes and focus on the totality of sounds you hear: a subtle breeze blowing? birds chirping in nearby trees? the distant sound of the city bus or the jingling bell of the ice cream truck? It’s the combination of all sounds that you hear that creates the soundscape.

In the late 1960s, Simon Fraser University professor R. Murray Schafer taught a course on noise pollution, drawing attention to the acoustical environment of Vancouver BC. He coined the term soundscape, and as his project gained momentum in Canada. Schafer, Barry Truax and Hildegard Westerkamp started The World Soundscape Project, and Acoustic Ecology was born.

Globally, field recordists have captured environments and acoustical representations of our planet by documenting the changing soundscape.

Bernie Krause, a soundscape ecologist, has broken soundscapes down into three categories: geophony (earth-related sound), biophony (animal sound), and anthropophony (human-related sound). Bernie, along with other audio ecologists, demonstrated that our global soundscapes are changing. Human-generated noise and environmental destruction are changing the soundscape affecting wildlife, plant life, and our oceans.

Audio ecologist Gordon Hempton is fighting to preserve “One Square Inch of Silence” in the Hoh Rainforest of Olympic National Park, in Washington State. Hempton deems his one square inch to be one of only a handful of naturally silent environments left on our planet. By protecting this precious location from human-generated noise, he thinks he can protect miles of backcountry wilderness.

The World Listening Project was founded in 2008 with the aim of “fostering understanding of the world and its natural environment, societies, and cultures through the practices of listening and field recording.” The WLP annually hosts a global educational and listening event. This year’s theme is “The Unquiet Earth.” On June 18th, 2021 global recordists will be listening to and recording our Unquiet Earth.

The silence of the early days of the COVID lockdown is now a distant memory. My recordings are my factual testimony of a quieted earth. Only by experiencing our soundscapes can we learn about the harmful effects of human-generated noise, and join the movement to preserve this aspect of our precious planet.

Our Appreciation Awards for 2020

By Stan Greberis, who chaired the Awards Committee

For many years the New Jersey Chapter has held an Appreciation Day event in November: to recognize the outstanding environmental achievements of our volunteers and supporters, and of heroic politicians.

Besides the opportunity to say thank you to these individuals, it was also a day for our members and guests to reflect back upon the goals we set, and the accomplishments we’ve made through our grassroots efforts.

Sadly, due to the COVID pandemic, all in-person Sierra Club gatherings in the past year were suspended. So, in order not to miss the opportunity to acknowledge the accomplishments made in 2020, we have produced a video for that purpose.

The video can be seen at bit.ly/NJSCAwards.

The following individuals received our 2020 Awards of Appreciation for Outstanding Achievement.

Chapter Conservation Chair Gregory Gorman is recognized for tireless dedication and long hours of work as our Chapter Conservation Chair and Skylands Group Chair, and his commit-

ment to environmental causes, especially on open space and energy issue.

Assemblyman Raj Mukherji provided unwavering support of every piece of legislation that would protect our clean air, clean water, and open space.

State Senator Troy Singleton has been an outspoken leader for the environment. He especially championed legislation to protect Environmental Justice communities from sources of pollution, and to help those communities obtain cleaner, renewable energy.

Congressman Frank Pallone, Jr. has a long history of environmental activism, at both State and National levels, especially with respect to climate change and coastal issues.

State Senator Loretta Weinberg received the Chapter’s Lifetime Achievement Award. She is an environmental hero and the “Conscience of the Senate,” fighting over many decades for clean air and water, and to protect open space. Her leadership on environmental and public health and safety issues has affected our everyday lives for the better.

Learn more about the Sierra Club’s New Jersey Chapter, our award honorees and other outstanding individuals on the website noted above.



GREG GORMAN



TROY SINGLETON



FRANK PALLONE



RAJ MUKHERJI



LORETTA WEINBERG

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE CHAIR'S REPORT

NJ Transit Website Earns C-Grade

From Bill Beren (beren1@verizon.net)

In a follow-up report to our 2020 study of NJ Transit’s website and train and bus information systems issued in March, the Sierra Club’s Transportation Committee still found major problems, earning the agency a C grade.

The initial reports released in February 2020 noted that the web and mobile apps failed to provide accurate, timely service information, had two trip planning apps that provided contradictory information, and failed to have a consistent “look and feel” between its web and mobile apps. In addition, the reports urged NJ Transit to develop and promote a “Frequent Service Bus Network” on busy corridors where headways would be 15 minutes or less all day, and to expand the scope of the web site to include all public transit services, including publicly subsidized transit services operated by private companies such as Suburban Transit, Academy, Lakeland, DeCamp and others.

Although New Jersey Transit has made many improvements in the last year, we hope that NJ Transit will address the remaining issues in the coming year.

In a newly released update of these reports, NJ Sierra Club graded the revised sites on the 9 major factors.

The most improved function is NJ Transit’s Alerts & Advisories – all out-

of date notices have been removed, they are more easily accessed, and the directions of travel of diversions are now provided. However, alerts dealing with service disruptions are still not prioritized over general service alerts, and the alerts are not yet integrated into the trip planning tools.

Trip planning on the website and mobile apps has also been improved, but significant problems remain, particularly related to bus routes. The trip planning app is rail oriented, is not customized for bus or multi-modal trips, and does not automatically link to relevant alerts and advisories. Similarly, the MyBus app needs additional improvements to make it a truly useful tool for bus riders.

The most egregious shortcoming is the failure of NJ Transit to provide residents and visitors with a “one stop shopping” experience for all transit options in the State. County bus maps are provided only for 3 counties (Atlantic, Mercer, and Camden) and trip planning and route diversion information for non NJ Transit bus routes is still not available. Furthermore, the Sierra Club continues to advocate for development and marketing of Frequent Bus Service corridors, which has been shown to be an effective way to attract increased ridership in many cities across the US.

[Editor's comment: Members may remember my January-March editorial lamenting on how the Sierra Club has changed in the last 50+ years. So you know of my broad interest in how the Club operates and functions. Our guest editorialist is the NJ member with the closest view of the Club's current operations nationally. He's also a member of our local Editorial Board.]

Our "Green" Pushmi-Pullyu

By Joe Testa, New Jersey's Delegate to the national Council of Club Leaders (and the CCL Chair)

In 1920's *The Story of Doctor Dolittle*, the pushmi-pullyu is a fanciful llama-like creature with one head at each end of its body. The image of two heads facing in different directions bears some resemblance to how the Sierra Club is organized, and symbolizes creative tensions within the Club that wax and wane over time.

This year is another one of those times that the Club is re-assessing how its parts work together to promote our goals of 'explore, protect, and enjoy the planet'. The Sierra version of the pushmi-pullyu has not two, but three heads!

First, a quick primer on how the Club is organized:

1. The umbrella organization: the National Sierra Club is headquartered in Oakland, CA and governed by a 15-member volunteer Board of Directors elected by Club members. The Executive Director oversees a sizable paid staff centered in Oakland and Washington, DC, which is responsible for the overall running of the Club and organizing its major initiatives, such as the Beyond Coal, Clean Transportation, Our Wild America, and other nation-wide campaigns working to retire dirty coal plants, promote renewable energy and modern transportation options, increasing access to the outdoors, and promoting environmental justice for traditionally exploited communities. National has a significant federal lobbying presence, sponsors an extensive outings program, and provides liability coverage and digital tools for the entire organization. You pay your annual membership dues to National; they publish the glossy *Sierra* magazine you receive with your membership.
2. 63 chapters: National has created a Sierra Club chapter in each state (along with Puerto Rico & DC), except for California, which has 12 chapters. Each chapter has a setup analogous to the National but on a smaller scale: governed by a volunteer Executive Committee ("ExCom" in Sierra lingo) consisting of members elected by Club members in the state (along with representatives from each local group – more on groups in the next paragraph). Most but not all chapters have a paid Chapter Director and staff responsible for running the chapter, lobbying at the state capital, and organizing activities in the chapter. A good part of the work at the chapter level is taken on by dedicated volunteers – depending on the chapter, roles include deciding on what are the most important legislative and regulatory issues to tackle, interviewing political candidates, running the web site, and organiz-



ing meetings and rallies. A part of your membership dues is sent by National to your chapter; the chapter does its own fundraising to supplement those funds. The

New Jersey Chapter has an office in Trenton, and this newsletter is published largely by volunteers from the chapter.

3. 351 groups: Each chapter can create a set of regional groups. These are the most local level of the Club and provide a personal, grassroots level of involvement for members. Like its chapter, each local group is governed by a volunteer ExCom elected by that group's members. The analogy ends here – groups generally do not have an office or paid staff, and depend on the chapter staff to support the group's volunteers. If you've been to a presentation at a Sierra Club meeting or gone on a Sierra outing, odds are it was sponsored by your local group. Your group is the entity to most likely get involved in preserving a nearby park or fighting a zoning board decision that would cut down a grove of trees or allow warehouse sprawl. Groups help decide which candidates the chapter will endorse for the state legislature and Congress. New Jersey has every part of the state assigned to a local group – 12 in total. In chapters where the population is more spread out, not every area of their state has a group assignment.

Here is where the creative tension comes in: while they share the overall goal of protecting the environment, each end of the pushmi-pullyu has its own views of how to work toward that goal, and different perspectives on what is important to concentrate their efforts and resources on.

Areas where the pushmi-pullyu effect can arise include:

- Action priorities – National "campaigns" are the focus of advocacy by national staff, with a lot of staff and funding dedicated to the campaigns; while state-level priorities are influenced by state-level politics and personalities. Sometimes, it can seem that national and chapter staff are working in ways that interfere with each other or the focus by one distracts from the efforts of the other. In one notable example, a national campaign approved signing onto a newspaper ad praising a member of Congress for his position on one issue, while that state's chapter was targeting him for defeat in the next election based on his overall voting record.
- Funding priorities – Should National pour a lot of resources into national staff that are working

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Thanking Jeff Tittel and Looking towards the Future

By Richard Isaac • Richard.Isaac@Sierraclub.org



I still vividly recall Jeff's job interview at my home almost 23 years ago. Near its end, I asked him what one thing he most enjoyed doing when he wasn't working. Whereas other applicants had mentioned outdoor activities such as hiking and bird watching (which I enjoy as well!), Jeff had a very different and interesting response: he most enjoyed discussing policy with his wife Barbara.

After we hired Jeff and got to know him better, that made more and more sense.

Jeff really, really knows policy, not only regarding a wide array of issues, but he knows those issues in depth. He not only has a broad view, but he reads through the fine print in legislation, follows how it is implemented via regulations, and tunes into how the regulations are actually enforced, and whether the agency charged with implementing them has the workforce to accomplish its mission.

Because of this and because of his political savvy and his ability to whittle issues down into concise, memorable phrases (e.g. the phrase "pay to play" became "pay to pave" for the issue of uncontrolled sprawl), Jeff has been instrumental in the passage of much landmark legislation, including the following:

Saving Sterling Forest – This 25-year battle resulted in one of the most significant open space victories in the nation, saving 20,000 acres of forest by one of the largest coalitions of environmental groups and government entities ever assembled. This battle serves as a model for other efforts around the country to preserve open space and protect critical wild lands.

The NJ Highlands Act of 2004: a landmark piece of legislation that put critical protections in place for one of New Jersey's most environmentally sensitive and ecologically important areas.

New Jersey's Clean Car Program, also 2004: New Jersey's "first major climate response bill," brought New Jersey in line with California's automobile emissions requirements, which are the strictest in the nation.

Global Warming Response Act (GWRA) – 2007, updated 2019 – Under this law, the DEP must assess the state's greenhouse gas emissions, and find ways to reduce emissions by 80% by 2050. Jeff has been a strong voice in the ongoing rulemaking under the GWRA, known as NJ-PACT (Protecting against Climate Threats). This is the Murphy Administration's regulatory reform effort to modernize environmental laws.

Plastic Bag Ban – New Jersey's bill is one of the most comprehensive in the country.

Banning Fracking in the Delaware River Basin – this recent ruling by the Delaware River Basin Commission was lauded by environmental groups across the country. Jeff worked closely with the Delaware Riverkeeper Network and the Water Defenders.

The above is just part of Jeff's legacy. I know of no one who has been more dedicated to preserving the environment, or who has worked harder to do so.

So, both personally and on behalf of our New Jersey Chapter, I thank Jeff for almost 23 years of dedicated and effective environmental work, and wish him and his wife Barbara all the best in retirement and many happy years of being grandparents.

The search is now on for Jeff's successor. I only hope that his replacement will be as hard-working and as successful.

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

March: Allie Horn, was appointed Chapter Legislative Analyst. There were many comments made in response to Chapter Director Jeff Tittel's announcement of his coming retirement early in May. We approved this resolution: "The Sierra Club New Jersey Chapter supports passage of the Green Amendment (SCR30/ACR80), which would amend the State's constitution to provide that every person in the State has a constitutional right to a clean environment, including the right to clean air, pure water, and healthy habitats." The Green Amendment would also require the State to preserve public natural resources and to prevent others from destroying or damaging public natural resources.

April: Resolved: "The New Jersey Chapter of the Sierra Club requests further information on PFAS contamination by Solvay Specialty Polymers USA, LLC, and requests that the DEP develop a public participation plan regarding PFAS." (PFAS = perfluoroalkyl substances). We also approved political endorsements for many candidates running for State Legislature in the June primary and November general elections. See Karen Becker's report on p. 1. Judy Minot was appointed to the ExCom, filling a vacancy left when Laura Lynch stepped down.

May: John Kashwick, ExCom Vice-Chair, resigned as Chapter Political Chair (since he is running for local office). In his place, Karen Becker was appointed Political Chair. John Kashwick was appointed to the new position of Legislative Chair, heading a new Legislative Committee (see list of members on p.12), which will work with our other committees to evaluate and prioritize bills in the State Legislature, and perhaps also propose new legislation. Several more political candidates were endorsed for the 2021 primary and general elections. A resolution was approved to submit comments to national Sierra Club on its bicycle policy: that pedal-assist e-bikes should be allowed on any trail where mountain bikes are allowed. A second resolution asks the Council of Club Leaders to update the Club's policy on noise pollution, which has not been revised since the 1970's. (Our secretary, Judy Minot, provided much of this wording.)

The Science Behind Why NJ's Black Bear Hunt is Unsustainable

By Alexandra Lauren Horn, Esq. (allie.l.horn@gmail.com)

Despite Governor Murphy's many promises to end NJ's Bear Hunt in 2020, his Administration's proposed Game Code (N.J.A.C. 7:25-5) transfers authority over bear policy from the Department of Environmental Protection to the Fish and Game Council, effectively weakening DEP's ability to provide oversight and stop future bear hunts. Despite the increased threat of COVID-19 from out-of-state hunters traveling to NJ, Gov. Murphy failed to live up to his promise, not only to end the bear hunt, but to act in the best interests of NJ residents.

That's because the Game Council is dominated by game hunters, eliminating wildlife biologists and conservationists from the decision-making process. NJ's bear hunting practices are almost universally regarded as cruel and inhumane, e.g. the use of bow and arrow hunting, which can cause prolonged suffering. Furthermore, the current parameters of the hunt contradict the science behind sustainable bear management.

The Chapter's campaign to end the bear hunt has seen enormous backlash from the hunting community. While we acknowledge that some hunters are dedicated conservationists, current bear hunt regulations are based on misguided information from the Game Council, which fails to consider the foremost studies on sustainable bear management. The Club's "official policy about wildlife and native plant management recognized that lawful hunting and fishing are an acceptable strategy for the management of natural areas, as long as such hunting and fishing are based on scientific data, consistent with all other management purposes and necessary for the protection of wildlife populations."

One of the most important studies analyzed the bear population in northwestern NJ and concluded that, while an annual black bear harvest can effectively manage populations and reduce problem behaviors, these hunts must be well regulated and must be coupled with careful monitoring of populations, non-lethal incident response practices, and educational programs. The maximum sustainable harvest is 14% of the state population, but this is only where natural reproduction and food sources are optimal. NJ's current bear management plan allows for the harvest of 30% of the entire bear population, over double the scientifically-determined amount. NJ is considered to have one of the densest populations of black bears in the country, having risen from fewer than 100 in the 1970s. The current population has plateaued at about 2,500. Despite Essex County suspending the 2020 hunt due to

COVID-19, more than 400 bears and cubs were killed in 2020. At this rate the bear hunt is grossly unsustainable.

Under the current Game Code, the future of NJ's bear population is even more grim: NJ is the only state, other than Alaska, that allows the harvest of bear cubs. This worsens the sustainability of NJ's bear population for several reasons. Black bears have low reproductive rates, averaging two cubs per female every six years. Cubs stay with their mother for about 17 months. Studies demonstrate that female bears are twice as likely to be killed during a hunt than male bears, for a variety of reasons. One is that pregnant and mother bears are more drawn to bait than males – in order to provide for their young, especially during frequent periods of food shortages and in areas with poor bear and waste management programs. (Using bait puts residential areas at greater risk and increases the likelihood of a nuisance bear by acclimating bears to the smell of human food/garbage. Black bears have the keenest sense of smell in the animal kingdom; they can smell food sources from over a mile away. NJ is one of only twelve states that permit the practice of baiting, which remains controversial amongst hunting groups.)

NJ's bear hunt is rooted in the romanticizing of trophy hunting rather than the interests of conservation. With more people working from home, more bear sightings in residential areas are to be expected. This is no excuse to continue a hunt that is currently detrimental to both the bear population and human safety. Now more than ever, hunters and conservationists alike must listen to the science and promote greater non-lethal bear management programs for the benefit of our own wellbeing and the wellbeing of NJ's beloved greater ecosystems.

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on big-picture items, or should it be more generous in sharing those funds with the chapters and groups that are doing the detailed local work? Chapters and groups always yearn for additional support from National; National's priorities tend toward funding their successful nation-wide campaigns.

- Communication – When a national campaign sends staff into a state to work on a national priority, it's important that they communicate effectively with local grassroots organizers who are most familiar with legislators and other influential people in their state. There is often overlap between what national staff and chapter staff are working on; it's important that they present consistent messages to the people they are trying to influence. In some states, national staffers work directly out of the chapter office.
- Governance and management decisions – Chapters have a certain degree of autonomy while still working within the framework of policies set by National. The Club has a tradition of being a volunteer-driven, grassroots organization. Chapter directors are answerable to the chapter chair and ExCom. This is often not as efficient as top-down control. What do we value most: grassroots tradition or efficient organization?
- Fundraising – National does a lot of market research into the 'best' number and types of fundraising appeals. Some chapters think this does not offer them enough fundraising opportunities; other chapters worry about over-soliciting their donors. In New Jersey, we follow the 'less often is more effective' approach.

Over the past two years, National has been conducting a "Structural Assessment" (SA) review triggered in part by requests from smaller chapters for a better distribution of resources. This review expanded into a broader man-

date to rethink how the Club promotes a more supportive environment for all its staff and volunteers, and how the pieces fit together. As we go to press, the Board of Directors is in the middle of approving changes that some see as imposing a more top-down managerial structure on the Club. For example, National may become responsible for the management of chapter directors. Some see this as damaging to the tradition of grassroots decision-making authority, while others see it as a professionalization of Club management to make it more effective and equitable.

Another one of the SA recommendations – already approved – will set up a so-called "State Table" for each state that would assemble all the Sierra organizers (national + local) working in a state to coordinate their activities. This started out as a controversial proposal, but if this works as designed, a lot of existing conflicts should be ironed out.

Change does not come quickly to complex organizations, and the Sierra Club is notorious for deadlines being set, reset, and reset again. The SA rollout is planned to take several years. There will be numerous task forces, reports, and surveys to evaluate progress along the way. How will the responses be measured and evaluated ... prioritizing efficiency? Promoting diversity and engagement? The effect on the passion of our committed volunteers? Those decisions in the end are made by the Board of Directors that you have elected.

Which direction should we be moving? With its heads looking in multiple directions, the pushmi-pullyu has the advantage of adversaries not being able to sneak up on it unseen, but it takes some effort to make a decision move together in one direction. We want to ensure that the Sierra Club can leverage these multiple perspectives to lead the movement for a cleaner, sustainable environment and just, equitable opportunities to 'explore, protect, and enjoy the planet'.

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 Angela DeSapio, Sylvia Kay and Judy Minot. ExCom members attend monthly ExCom meetings, held on second Saturdays, by Zoom (currently) or at locations roughly between Trenton and New Brunswick. To nominate yourself, or someone else, please contact the Chair of our Nominating Committee, Renée Pollard (rpollard16@comcast.net), by August 10.



Here's what our meetings look like in a time of COVID

Donor Correction

supplied by Ken Johanson:

The last issue of the Jersey Sierran included a listing of those who contributed \$100 or more to the New Jersey Sierra Club during 2020. However, due to a mix-up with the post office, we failed to include one of our long-standing supporters, Daniel Higgins. Dan should have been recognized as a Benefactor, our highest donor category. We regret this omission and extend to Dan our most sincere apology.

companies: requiring consumers to needlessly pay twice for generation capacity. The analysis found that the federal rule would cost New Jersey's consumers in excess of \$280-\$300 million annually: roughly \$75 per household. The money would subsidize dirty energy capacity we don't need and don't want.

MOPR was imposed to prevent Democratic-voting states like New Jersey, Illinois, and Maryland from reaching their ambitious carbon reduction goals. Leaders across the PJM region are looking for approaches to safeguard their states' economic and climate interests. In New Jersey, the Sierra Club recommends that the BPU prepare the state's utilities to exit the PJM capacity market using the Fixed Resource Requirement (FRR) option in order to save consumers large rate increases, meet the state's ambitious climate goals and generate economic benefits.

REPORT FROM TRENTON

Energy Politics: BPU and Fossil Fuels

From a Press Release issued on March 23rd

The New Jersey Board of Public Utilities has released an analysis of potential massive cost impacts on New Jersey consumers as a result of Trump-era federal meddling in the PJM capacity market. (PJM is the regional high-voltage electricity supply grid: "Pennsylvania-Jersey-Maryland.") The federal rule, known as the Minimum Offer Price Rule (MOPR), essentially bails out uneconomic fossil fuel

Updates and Perspectives on New Jersey's Plastic Bag Ban

By Sylvia Kay, our Zero Waste Coordinator, and member of Chapter ExCom

The NJ Senate, Assembly and Governor Murphy should be applauded for having enacted, last Fall, the strongest single-use-plastic legislation in the country. It will take effect in May, 2022, giving vendors time to develop alternative packaging. This Bill will ban plastic and paper carry-out bags, plastic straws, and polystyrene (aka styrofoam) food containers. We applaud the 60-plus NJ municipalities that paved the way by adopting local bans, and the many other non-profit organizations which also lobbied for Bill S864/A1978.

Plastic legislation is a hot topic across the country. 25 bills to impose plastic bans were introduced in state legislatures in 2019. S864/A1978 is the most comprehensive of them. Other "successful" states include California, New York, Connecticut, Delaware, Vermont, Maine, Oregon, Washington State and Hawaii. Unfortunately, 14 states have passed or are strongly considering preemptive legislation to prevent bans - including Florida, Idaho, Mississippi, Missouri, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Ohio, and Wisconsin.

New Jersey's legislation is also more aggressive than that of the European Union, which banned single use plastic bags (but not paper bags) in 2019.

Statewide plastic bans have advanced over bans at local levels:

- Uniform regulations for small and larger stores
- Staffing and resources to create effective enforcement systems
- Staffing and resources to data collect and name advisory boards
- Staffing and resources to create a hub for new product knowledge and education

New Jersey's Secretary of State, Tahesha Way, and the DEP's Acting Commissioner, Shawn Tourette, have just released materials to educate and support businesses for a successful transition. Highlights include:

- Start date of 11/4/2021 for the ban of plastic straws except for special requests
- Start date of 5/4/2022 for single use bags - plastic and paper
- Start date of 5/4/2022 for most polystyrene food containers
- Start date of 5/4/2024 for specific polystyrene items including very small cups (2 ounces or less), long handled foam soda spoons, and meat, poultry and fish trays sold from a refrigerator or cooler, and "any food product pre-packaged" with a polystyrene tray or container

Like all other single use bans, S864 bans only carryout bags. It does not apply to thin bags used to package loose food items such as produce or fruit, newspapers, laundry and garment bags, and bags used for transport of medicine or live animals. There are further exemptions for small stores (less than 2,500 sq. feet), which are allowed paper bags. Waivers for polystyrene food container products are available to meet specific situations or hardships. The State has specified details on acceptable reusable bags:

"Bags made of polypropylene fabric, PET non-woven fabric, nylon, cloth, hemp product, or other washable fabric, bags with stitched handles, and bags designed and manufactured for multiple reuses." S864 is a sweeping but thoughtful piece of legislation.

Sources:
www.nj.gov/dep/dshw/plastic-ban-law; Business.NJ.gov; www.BagUpNJ.com; www.njclean.org
www.earthday.org/a-third-of-the-us-has-laws-preventing-plastic-bans/, 1/2020
www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/article/map-shows-the-complicated-landscape-of-plastic-bans#clos, 8/2019
<https://www.ncsl.org/research/environment-and-natural-resources/plastic-bag>, 2/2020

Composite Wood

From Paul Ehrlich, Coordinator for Air Quality and Clean Air Issues (p.w.ehrlich@gmail.com)

Composite wood is made from plastic (sometimes recycled) and wood (previously used and/or wood scraps). Polymers from the wood and fossil fuel-derived polymers (plastic) bind tightly in composite wood to form very strong beams that are resistant to rot, termites and other insects, scratches, and breaking into smaller pieces. Decks made from composite wood last more than 30 years while wooden decks need to be replaced in 10 to 20 years. Maintenance of wood decks (and other wood structures) also need significant labor and material input.

Use of recycled plastic and used wood or wood scraps helps to preserve forests. Electric poles made from composite wood can greatly reduce the number of large trees that need to be cut down.

Wooden electric poles need to be treated with heat and/or resins so rot and weathering are resisted. Thus, composite wood keeps significant amounts of material from disposal in landfills, reduces energy consumption, and helps avoid air and water contamination by toxic materials. Manufacturing and repurposing composite wood requires special procedures. The EPA and the California Air Resources Board regulations limit emissions of formaldehyde from beams and finished products. While composite wood releases few very small plastic particles (dangerous to health and the environment) cutting beams for repurposing will release a significant number of small particles. Proper precautions, including air filters, need to be taken.

Liberty State Park Still Threatened

By George Moffatt, Chapter Programs Support Facilitator

New Jersey citizens fighting to keep Liberty State Park free from being commercialized are just short of their drive for 25,000 signatures -- although they would prefer even more -- to urge the State Legislature to pass the Liberty State Park (LSP) Protection Act.

Sierra members also are urged to spread the word about signing the [LSP](http://www.folsp.org/preservation/lspaw-support.html) petition (at <http://www.folsp.org/preservation/lspaw-support.html>). A two-minute video appeal from the Friends' president is also there.

"The Sierra Club strongly supports the LSP Protection Act"

If approved, the legislation would free the Park from the decades-long, never-ending efforts of developers to privatize it for golf courses, marinas, and other commercial ventures. The latest threat is from the owner of the private Liberty National Golf Course, who wants to extend his up-scale golf course into LSP's Caven Point Natural Area at the southern point of the Park.

The Park's waterfront acreage and spectacular views of the Statue of Liberty, Lower Manhattan, Hudson River, New York Harbor and Verrazano Bridge have long been coveted by speculators and developers.

The Sierra Club strongly supports

the LSP Protection Act and the LSP citizens' group, Friends of Liberty State Park, in their long battle to protect the Park. To save it, citizens everywhere are urged to **sign the petition at** <http://www.folsp.org/preservation/lspaw-support.html>.

The Park already has three permanent commercial enterprises: a marina and restaurant at what once was the eastern end of the Morris Canal, and a metered parking lot overlooking the old canal basin. None were intended for recreational visitors.

The area's historical significance dates back to when various Indian nations lived there. Henry Hudson explored the area, followed by Dutch settlers in the 1600s, who fought the Native Americans at what the Dutch then called Kewan's Point. That's also where a small Revolutionary War fort was located, and where three major transportation facilities once terminated, a U.S. Army depot, the Canal and the Jersey Central Railroad. Of course it was also a port of entry for immigrants processed at nearby Ellis Island. The area was heavily industrialized for the production of munitions during World War I.

They are Back!

From Joanne Pannone, Chair of our Central Jersey Group (jpatmeadowbrook@gmail.com)

March 20th was a beautiful day, especially because the male bluebirds arrived safely in Robbinsville and began checking out the three bluebird houses. Boy Scout volunteers had built them

improving, undoubtedly helped by bird houses provided by our species. When they're not nesting they roam the fields in small flocks in search of live insects and berries.

according to designs for the Peterson Bluebird House, provided by the North American Bluebird Society (www.nab-bluebirdsociety.com), and we had sited them on the edges of an open field.



New Jersey Bluebird Society (NJBBS) members have boxes available for you! And they are willing to conduct onsite assistance to insure that your box is placed in a good location.

Bluebirds are cavity-nesters and the boxes must be comfortable and safe. The male typically arrives on the breeding grounds before the female; he defends the nesting territory by singing. In courtship he may flutter in front of the female with wings and tail partly spread all the time while singing. The male may also feed the female, likened to human date night. Nests should be fairly low to the ground, they are mostly built by the female but the male may take part. The nest is soft -- made of weeds and fine grass and holding 4-6 pale blue, unmarked eggs. Incubation is by the female, but once hatched both parents bring food to the nestlings -- probably for about three weeks. There are two broods per year, then they migrate in late fall.

Eastern Bluebirds have declined seriously in recent decades, due to the loss of habitat and of nesting sites. But in the past few years their numbers have been

They compete with house sparrows and starlings; both are non-native and predatory. Therefore, the opening in the nest box must be one and one-quarter inch or less, to keep them out. These nonnatives need to be actively discouraged by removing their nests. They kill bluebirds in the nest and

build their own nests of sticks on top. Other predators include cats, snakes, raccoons, owls, and hawks. Bad weather can also limit survival, as can lack of proper management, poor design standards, wrong location, and lack of monitoring. Approximately 70% of the young and 50% of the parent bluebirds die each year. Therefore, proper management may be key to their survival.

I am very concerned that climate change and bad storms have altered the timing of the availability of food when the bluebirds arrive. In 2019 the NJBBS fledged 4000 bluebirds. Monitoring them during COVID-19 is a personal choice. Getting outdoor exercise while monitoring boxes has been a joy for me. Laura Stone, vice president of the central region of the NJBBS (and a Sierra Club member), and I recently gave a presentation at the Plainsboro preserve, informing 15 new bluebird admirers how to enjoy helping bluebirds. I hope I have motivated you to examine the NJBBS website and get involved.

Members in commuting distance of Trenton would be welcome to help run our state office: Call Taylor McFarland 609-656-7618

NJ PACT Fails to Protect Us From Climate Change Impacts

Edited from an Op-Ed column by Chapter Director Jeff Tittel, published in the Sandpaper on April 8th

New Jersey is one of the most flood-prone and climate-impacted states. The state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is using maps to identify problem locations, and proposing rule changes under the fancy acronym PACT (Protecting Against Climate Threats), but they aren't comprehensive, and they have loopholes big enough to drive bulldozers through.

The DEP is still letting developers build in the wrong places: "at their own risk." This undermines resiliency and fails to protect people from climate change and its impacts. The DEP should take a holistic approach that identifies properties appropriate for buyouts, elevations, and new construction. It needs the ability to say "no" where appropriate.

When the DEP started this program about a year ago, it said it would regulate land use for climate impacts. None of that is in the proposal. The DEP is not considering how developments increase greenhouse gases by cutting down forests, or paving over farmland. It isn't considering long commutes, or preventing developments that aren't flood-prone but are still environmentally sensitive. It isn't encouraging development near train stations and bus stops to reduce automobile use and encourage mass transit.

In New Jersey, 385,400 properties are at a substantial risk, a number that is projected to increase to 459,000 by 2050. We're developing in risk zones twice as fast as in safer zones, with more than 4,500 homes built in risk zones since 2009. Ocean, Cape May and Monmouth Counties are building in risk zones faster than anywhere else in the nation. This pattern won't change based on the DEP's "voluntary" approach.

Streets in shore communities are going underwater during full moons. Sewers are backing up, and even on sunny days flooding is occurring on high tides, due to both sea-level rise and land subsidence. Salt water is intruding into groundwater. The DEP seems not to be concerned that sea level is projected to rise five to eight feet by 2100, putting our barrier islands and much of Cape May County permanently under water.

PACT doesn't affect local zoning or rules and regulations regarding climate impacts. CAFRA is still in "business as usual," building seawalls and replenishing beaches. Wasting time on these projects only gives people false hope. We continue an undefined hardship exemption with which DEP approves almost all new developments.

We are in a climate emergency. We need the state to take immediate action to make our coasts and other flood-prone areas more resilient. New Jersey is still tying its rules to the State Plan, which uses 1996 data. Shore areas like Mystic Island are still listed as growth areas even though they're going underwater.

Here's what we suggest: Gov. Murphy should create a cabinet-level committee to coordinate coastal resiliency and produce a Coastal Plan that identifies zones for buyouts, elevations and no-build. It would put climate change into all rules and regulations, reverse former Gov. Christie's Flood Hazard and Wetland Rules, and drop loopholes in CAFRA that allow more development in flood-prone areas. The DEP should then implement the Plan. Doing all of this would be more than a PACT; it would be a real accomplishment.

Original version as published: <https://www.thesandpaper.net/articles/state-pact-does-not-protect-against-climate-change-impacts/>

Climate Change plus Water Pollution equals Fishkill

Edited from a press release issued on April 7th

The NJ Department of Environmental Protection has identified an "unidentified species of bacteria in the *Vibrio* family" as the cause of the menhaden fish kills that have plagued New Jersey's coastal waters. Hundreds of dead fish have been washing up along the Navesink and Shrewsbury Rivers. Last fall and winter, dead menhaden were observed in Newark Bay and the Hudson and Hackensack Rivers.

It's a serious issue. The *Vibrio* bacteria are primarily linked to nutrient pollution from sewage treatment plants, septic tanks, and stormwater runoff. They are also linked to warmer water, which is a consequence of climate change. Menhaden are a key link in the food chain, so if they get sick or die off it affects other species like bluefish, striped bass as well as marine mammals and birds like ospreys and bald eagles. This is a direct result of the DEP's failure to deal with water pollution from nutrients and raw sewage.

The bacteria also cause skin infections in humans, so anyone swimming in the water could get sick. Some *Vibrio* species can cause vibriosis - from eating raw or undercooked shellfish.

Menhaden provide a key link in the food chain: between small, primary producers such as plankton, and higher organisms including striped bass, bluefish, and weakfish. These fish live in near-surface schools in estuaries and nearshore ocean waters from early spring through early winter.

Electrifying Transit; Office of Climate Action

From a press release issued on Feb 16th

Governor Murphy has announced the release of \$100 million from the Volkswagen settlement and RGGI accounts - to fund electrification initiatives in the transportation sector. He also signed an Executive Order to create the Office of Climate Action within the Governor's Office. The office will consider climate change mitigation and guide New Jersey's clean energy transition, emphasizing economic recovery and environmental justice. A "Council on the Green Economy" will be formed within the Office to advise on job-related matters.

Let's hope that these measures will promote a goal of 100% electric vehicles by 2035, with NJ Transit leading the way. We also need a moratorium on fossil fuels and the promotion of green jobs.

The Council on the Green Economy will be co-chaired by the Commissioners of the Department of Labor & Workforce Development and of the Department of Environmental Protection, and the President of the Board of Public Utilities. Within a year, it must put together a strategic report on how to advance sustainable economic growth and rebuild a workforce trained for green jobs.

We strongly support this measure that will put leadership in the Governor's Office for all agencies dealing with climate resiliency issues. This will allow coordination between the DCA's green building codes, Treasury's buying electric vehicles for the state, and the need for many agencies to lease space in green buildings and divest from fossil fuels. It should promote NJ Transit's complete electrification and encourage the DEP to make land use as resilient as possible.

The state will release \$36 million for electrifying cargo-handling and related equipment in ports and industrial areas, \$15 million for electric NJ Transit buses, and \$22 million in grants for local communities to deploy electric school buses and electric garbage and delivery trucks.

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



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)
Website: <http://SkylandsGroup.org> Or click from the NJ Chapter's web-site.
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SkylandsNJSC>
E-mail: ggorman07419@embarqmail.com; Phone: 973-886-7950

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

Chair: (12/31/22)	Greg Gorman	ggorman07419@embarqmail.com
Vice Chair: (12/31/21)	Susan Williams	SkylandsGroup@gmail.com
Secretary: (12/31/22)	Norene Haberski	norenehaberski2@gmail.com
Treasurer: (12/31/21)	Jeri Doherty	bjd8974@gmail.com
ExCom at large: (12/31/21)	Dave Alcock	dwhoob@hotmail.com
	(12/31/22) Nicole Guerrieri	SierraClubNicole@gmail.com
	(12/31/21) Scott Dieman	
	(12/31/21) Chris Dunbar	chrisdunbar458@gmail.com
	(12/31/21) Joanne Morgan	jojommorgan@yahoo.com
Conservation Chair:	Greg Gorman	ggorman07419@embarqmail.com
Outings Chair:	Dave Alcock	dwhoob@hotmail.com
Outreach Chair:	Joanne Morgan	jojommorgan@yahoo.com
Environmental Justice:	Susan Williams	SkylandsGroup@gmail.com
Political Co-Chairs:	Nicole Guerrieri	SierraClubNicole@gmail.com
and:	Susan Williams	SkylandsGroup@gmail.com
Co-Publicity Chairs:	Jeri Doherty	bjd8974@gmail.com
and:	Joanne Morgan	jojommorgan@yahoo.com

Webmaster: Nicole Guerrieri SierraClubNicole@gmail.com
Open position available: Membership Chair – please contact Greg!

GENERAL MEETINGS: SECOND TUESDAY of each month and open 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:

Chair:	Jonathan Wall *	jonwall@jonwall.com
Vice Chair:	Celeste Martin *	onecentral@mac.com
Conservation Co-Chairs:	Nancy Carringer *	ncarringer@yahoo.com
and:	Chris Runion*	runionc3@gmail.com
Political Co-Chairs:	Karen Becker *	karbecker@gmail.com
and:	Amy Weeder *	aweeder@comcast.net
Children’s Programs:	Open Position! Please contact Jonathan if interested	
Environmental & Social Justice:	Angela De Sapio *	angela.desapio@gmail.com
Highlands Issues Coordinator:	Cinny MacGonagle *	cmacgonagle@yahoo.com
Outings:	Jonathan Wall *	jonwall@jonwall.com
Social Media Coordinator:	Matthew Avallone	mattavallone@ymail.com
Treasurer, Secretary:	John Kashwick	John.Kashwick@newjersey.sierraclub.org
Warren County Issues:	Pat Banes *	patrick_banes@comcast.net
Webmaster/Listmaster:	John Kashwick	John.Kashwick@newjersey.sierraclub.org
Fundraising Chair:	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 or to register for events. Registered participants will receive Zoom meeting information. There is no meeting in August.

July 7 (Wed): 7:30 p.m. A River Runs Through It: New River Gorge National Park: John Kashwick, Chapter Vice Chair, and Jonathan Wall, Hunterdon Warren Group Chair, share their visit to New River Gorge National Park and Preserve. The West Virginia park was officially named America’s 63rd national park, the U.S. government’s highest form of protection, during the COVID-19 pandemic as part of the relief bill in late 2020. The park is rich in cultural and natural history, and offers an abundance of scenic wonders.

Sept. 1 (Wed): 7:30 p.m. Voorhees, Hacklebarney, and the CCC: Join Patricia Kallesser, Park Superintendent and Deidre Supple, Park Project Specialist for a trip down memory lane to explore the history and legacy of Civilian Conservation Corps Company #1268 as they took part in one of America’s largest conservation movements whose legacy endures today with Voorhees and Hacklebarney State Parks.

OTHER EVENTS:
July 13 (Tues.): 7:30 p.m. Virtual Online Executive Committee/Planning Meeting. 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.

CURRENT ISSUES:
Oppose Mega-Warehouses: There are several massive warehouse projects that are proposed for Hunterdon and Warren Counties. We had some good news in January when the state rejected a plan for Franklin Township in Warren County to declare active farmland in need of “redevelopment” in order to give tax incentives for Safavieh to build a furniture warehouse. However Safavieh is appealing and the property is still threatened. 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.

Dark Skies: Voorhees State Park in Hunterdon County is home to the NJAA Observato-

ry 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. Please contact John at jkashwick@gmail.com if you are interested in this issue.

Logging on Public Lands: There are several ill-conceived bills in the New Jersey state legislature that would impact the health for forests throughout the state. These regulations would require additional expense for municipality to create management plans for their open space and effectively log their forests under the guise of “forest stewardship.”

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/northjerseysierraclub>
Twitter: @sierraclub_nj
Instagram: sierraclubnorth_nj

The duly elected nine-member Executive Committee benefits from the assistance of volunteers. If you are interested in participating at a planning level and/or as a member or leader of one of our committees (see the Committee Descriptions below), please contact the Group Co-Chairs or the Committee Chair.

North Jersey Group Officers

Co-Chair:	Diane Scarangella*	diascat@hotmail.com
Co-Chair:	Buddy Jenssen*	buddy.jenssen@gmail.com
Treasurer:	Buddy Jenssen*	buddy.jenssen@gmail.com
Secretary:	Laura Troy*	ltroy1019@gmail.com
Political Chair:	Sandi Liberti*	libertisandi@gmail.com
Outings Chair:	Mary Walsh*	north.outings.chair@newjersey.sierraclub.org
Conservation Chair:	Mary Walsh*	north.outings.chair@newjersey.sierraclub.org
Member:	Judy Greene*	jugreen547@gmail.com
Climate Change Chair:	Jeff Rapaport*	jefrap@optonline.net
Marketing/ Social Media Co-Chair:	Marie Mannino	mmannino@yahoo.com
Co-Chair:	Jan Barry*	janbarry61@hotmail.com
Inner City Outings Chair:	Sophia Neuendorff	sophianeue@gmail.com
Co-Chair:	Erica Cowper	ecowper@drew.edu
Youth Outreach Chair:	Erica Cowper	ecowper@drew.edu
Co-Chair:	SophiaNeuendorff	Sophia.N.njico.sierraclub@gmail.com
Diversity/Environmental Justice Chair/Co-Chair:	Vacant	
Contact:	Diane Scarangella*	diascat@hotmail.com
ExCom Member:	Bob Weiss*	bobweiss1967@gmail.com
Liaison, Raritan Valley Group:	Faris Jebara	faris.jebara@gmail.com
Liaison, NYC Group:	Hanna Atlas	h.atlas.425@gmail.com

*Elected North Jersey Group Executive Committee Members.

INITIATIVES: The North Jersey Group is committed to coalition building through outreach and planning with other Sierran Groups and with local and state non-profit organizations. Our collaborative initiatives focus upon (1) encouraging municipal resolutions that support town-level adoption of renewable energy strategies and the environmentally friendly development of affordable housing; (2) opposing gas-fueled plants and the construction of pipelines, transport terminals and the use of tankers and trains to transport Bakken oil, liquid natural gas and other dirty fuels; (3) advocating for renewable energy sources; (4) opposing commercialization and development of county, state and local parkland and open spaces; (5) advocating for removal not capping of contaminated soil on undeveloped public land and the restoration of that land to its natural state; (6) advocating for the clean-up of polluted waterways and for the transition to non-polluting sources of transport on the Hudson and other NJ/NYC waterways; (7) supporting access to affordable health care to address the harm done to the health of residents in environmental justice communities; (8) increasing group diversity, and (9) supporting the efforts of organizations who are “on the ground” in environmental justice communities.

We continue to focus our existing efforts upon fighting climate change; creating more opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to enjoy and appreciate nature; and collaborating with coalitions, such as Empower NJ and Don’t Gas the Meadowlands, and with other New Jersey Groups to advocate for renewable energy and a moratorium on fossil fuel usage, preserve our waterways and protect our parklands.

UPCOMING EVENTS: Unless otherwise noted, meetings and outings are free, open to the general public. Events are announced via email and on our social media. Due to the virus, we have been forced to cancel our in-person events. We are in process of planning virtual events so, please check our Meetup page, Facebook page, or website for newly posted meetings and events. Please email our Co-Chairs or contact one of the committee chairs listed above, if you have suggestions for events or if you would like to be added to our email list.

The North Jersey Group seeks members for the following volunteer committees and welcomes collaboration with other Groups. Please contact the Committee Contacts listed below if you are interested in joining dedicated people taking meaningful action in Bergen and Passaic Counties and throughout the state.

VOUNTEER OPPORTUNTIES
Webmaster Wanted: We are seeking a dedicated webmaster to work with our Marketing/Social Media Committee. We need someone to develop, monitor and update our webpage and to outreach to Group members to obtain/prepare copy for the website. If interested, please contact Marie at mmannino@yahoo.com or Diane at diascat@hotmail.com.

Conservation Committee: We assist people in the community with grassroots efforts to prevent destruction of natural habitat in Bergen and Passaic Counties and sur-

>continued on page 8

rounding areas. Help us by finding and reviewing public records, circulating petitions, going door-to-door with lawn signs, speaking in public meetings, and 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 north.outings.chair@newjersey.sierraclub.org or Judy at jugreen547@gmail.com.

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 at 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 at libertisandi@gmail.com.

Event Planning and Membership Committee: COMMITTEE CHAIR/CO-CHAIR WANTED. 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 at diascat@hotmail.com or Buddy at Buddy.Jenssen@gmail.com

Marketing/Social Media Committee: Are you creative? Do you love graphic design, writing press releases and short stories, contacting newspapers and radio. and using social media? We need you! If interested, contact Marie at mmannino@yahoo.com and Jan at 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 north.outings.chair@newjersey.sierraclub.org or Buddy at buddy.jenssen@gmail.com.

Youth Outreach/Inner City Outings: These Committees work together to outreach to youth, high school and college students and to plan nature walks in local parks for elementary and middle school youth. It outreaches to high schools and youth organizations to encourage local teenagers to become organizers of these events, so that all can appreciate the value of the outdoors. The committee creates liaisons with local schools, parents, other youth groups, and Sierra Club certified hike leaders to help young people learn to appreciate and protect the planet as they explore the natural world. The Committee uses social media to expand participation, as the group conforms to the goals of the national Sierra Club. If you are interested, Sophia at Sophia.N.njico.sierraclub@gmail.com or Erica at ecowper@drew.edu

Diversity, Inclusion, and Environmental Justice Committee: Do you want to act to support social, racial, economic and environmental justice? Do you believe that the Sierra Club must become more diverse and that our effectiveness is tied to increased inclusivity? If yes, then our new Diversity, Inclusion and Environmental Justice Committee is the place for you! The North Jersey Chapter promotes awareness of state, national, and international-level efforts addressing environmental justice and inequality at large. If you are interested in participating in the activities of this committee contact Diane at diascat@hotmail.com

GATEWAY GROUP

Serving Hillside, Elizabeth, and Essex County (except for Livingston, Millburn and Roseland).

Please contact any of the leaders below if you are interested in joining our campaigns to protect the environment. There are several Group officer positions open.

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:

Chair:	Bill Beren*	862-283-8754	Beren1@verizon.net
Vice-Chair:	Open Position!		
Conserv'n Chr:	Caroline Kane*	646-961-9003	ckane678@verizon.net
Secretary & Treasurer:	Open Position!		
Program Co-Chairs:	Suzanne Trimel*	973-509-8335	suzanne.trimel@gmail.com
and:	Steven Yafet	908-354-2537	syafet@gmail.com
Publicity Chair:	Open Position!		
Political Chair:	Bill Beren		Beren1@verizon.net
Fundraising Chair:	Rachel Tarzia	908-531-2168	Rtarzia6@outlook.com
Membership Chair:	Steven Yafet*	908-354-2537	syafet@gmail.com
Newark Issues Chair:	Jamie Bruno	973-393-2154	jjjjebruno@gmail.com
Elizabeth Issues:	Open Position!		
Recycling:	Open Position!		
Passaic River Issues:	Steven Yafet (see above)		
Outings Chair:	Dionne Howe	206-430-0288	dionnelhowe@gmail.com
Webmaster:	Christy Morganstein	732-718-4343	christy@medartsweb.com

*Group Executive Committee

Please contact our Program 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 and suburban communities. Note the several vacant positions listed above.

CONSERVATION NEWS: Our fight to block the construction of a 500-seat amphitheater in South Mountain Reservation has at least temporarily been successful. A complaint filed by the Coalition to Save South Mountain Reservation prompted the Dept of Env. Protection to conduct its own off-site evaluation, which found that the project was in a wetlands zone potentially regulated by NJDEP, contradicting Essex County's project plan which described the site as a forested area to be cleared.

Essex County responded to NJDEP by saying that the project was on hold due to COVID, so they still could apply for permits to build in a wetlands area. We will continue to work with the Coalition to preserve this area.

The Gateway Group also wrote to the West Orange Town Council asking them to preserve the 12 acre forest and historic Carriage House that was once the estate of flour magnate George Hecker.

HUDSON COUNTY GROUP

Website: <http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/udson-county>

E-mail: hudsonsierraclub@gmail.com

Facebook: @HCSierraClub

Instagram: @HCSierraClub

Twitter: @HCSierraClub

OFFICERS: (*=ExCom)

Chair:	Pramod Raju*	modisone@gmail.com
Secretary:	Patricia Hilliard*	hilliard_patricia@hotmail.com
Treasurer:	Patricia Hilliard*	hilliard_patricia@hotmail.com
Conservation Chair:	Patricia Hilliard*	hilliard_patricia@hotmail.com
Political Chair:	Pramod Raju*	modisone@gmail.com
Delegate to Chapter:	Open Position!	
Membership:	Open Position!	
Publicity:	Steve Krinsky*	stevekrinsky@comcast.net
Outings / Events:	Steve Krinsky*	stevekrinsky@comcast.net
At-Large:	Nancy Booth*	boothnancy2011@hotmail.com
At-Large:	Vanessa Smith*	vanes777@live.com
Instagram:	Open Position!	
Web-Master:	Open Position!	

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 are upcoming walks and hikes. Please stay tuned online! We can't wait to get back outside with everybody.

Hudson County Group Goals/Projects for 2021

Sustainability/Youth/Education. Sustainability is a catch-all which includes recycling, CSOs, green infrastructure, transportation and more. Two areas where we can make an immediate impact locally are composting and renewable energy. We need to create a task force to educate/promote composting and switching to renewable energy; individually, in our schools, and in our municipalities. Schools-- including area colleges-- are a great place to start. Environmental clubs can push their schools to adopt sustainable practices. This should also include an education campaign on the circular economy and related things like eco-bricking, etc. These issues tend to appeal to young people, who are a major target of these efforts!

Protect our parks from privatization and illegal diversion: Jeff Tittel has elegantly referred to Liberty State Park as "our Yosemite." For three decades advocates for "The People's Park" have fought one privatization scheme after another. To protect the park once and for all, must pass an un-amended Liberty State Park Protection Act. In our densely populated cities where land is scarce, greedy developers and bought-off politicians continue to attempt to divert our precious parkland for their various schemes.

Environmental Justice. Because pollution and environmental degradation tend to harm low-income communities, often people of color, we must include social justice issues in all of our work. Towards that end, we propose that an EJ committee plan an online public forum-- hopefully in the next month or so-- which taps into chapter resources as well connecting with social justice groups in Hudson County. One goal of this forum is to give participants an action plan: What can people do?

Political Action. In addition to preparing for upcoming election in NJ, we should target 2 or 3 issues/bills to support-- and do outreach to public officials in support of these. First, the Liberty State Park Protection Act. Second, the Clean Energy Equity Act. Third, continue to push Governor Murphy-- and the state legislature-- to oppose fossil fuel infrastructure. In particular, we support the efforts of the DGTm coalition in support of renewable energy for NJ Transit's new power plant in Kearny.

Communications/Social Media. We need to create a team of social media activists who can utilize a number of formats to promote environmental issues and campaigns. The main focus would be using Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and TicToc as well as email and the SC website. More traditional press-- online & print-- should be used as well.

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

Liberty State Park - The Liberty State Park Protection Act would end efforts to privatize the park once and for all! Keep "The People's Park" free and green! Billionaire Paul Fireman wants to steal the magnificent Caven Point Natural Area for his ultra-exclusive golf course in the latest attempt to privatize the park. The state can use funds from an Exxon toxic settlement to develop the final 234 acres, but only as passive recreation or open space. This still leaves plenty of room for development of active recreation like ballfields in this vast space. The DEP is gathering public input on their proposal for the interior of the park. They are making every effort to include all communities and are willing to consider various suggestions, including recreation.

No Gas Plant in the Meadowlands: The environmental movement in NJ has scored a huge victory! NJ Transit is now working toward renewable energy instead of building a gas-fired power plant on a toxic site on a floodplain in Kearny. Trains can be powered with solar and wind power combined with battery backup storage. This is being done successfully all around the world. Sierra Club is an integral part of the Don't Gas the Meadowlands coalition, which led the campaign.

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 will keep the pressure on state and federal legislators to demand support for the Green New Deal and related policies. We are 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.

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. We must stand up for social justice in these communities!

Parks and Greenways: Sierra Club is working to support and expand green spaces in Hudson County. In Jersey City, we want to connect existing parks and trails, as part of the Crossroads Campaign. This includes Skyway Park on the Hackensack River, the newly proposed-- and very exciting-- Essex-Hudson Greenway, the Bergen Arches, the 6th Street Embankment and more. Skyway Park is especially important: It is a former toxic landfill successfully converted into open space and will be a key link to Hackensack River Walkway, which someday will run from one end of the county to the other. We want to see the shoreline along the Hackensack River become Hudson County's "Green Coast."

Braddock Park: Stopping illegal diversion of open space in this beautiful county park. Twenty years ago the town of North Bergen re-placed a ballfield and the adjacent parking lot with 17 "temporary" school trailers. Sierra Club has joined a legal challenge to this illegal diversion of parkland in Braddock Park. The lawsuit would require Green Acres to enforce its own regulations. The town of North Bergen and Hudson County would be required to finally remove the trailers and create safe, permanent classrooms for the pre-school. Learn how you can help.

LOANTAKA GROUP

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

Website: <http://sierraclub.org/new-jersey/loantaka/>

Loantaka now has a Facebook page. Please check it out and "like" it: <https://www.facebook.com/LoantakaGroupNJSC>.

OFFICERS:

Group Chair:	Paul Sanderson	908-233-2414	loantakachair@newjersey.sierraclub.org
Treasurer:	Paul Sanderson	908-233-2414	paulmsanderson@aol.com
Secretary:	Jonathan Connor	201-463-7636	Jon78921@outlook.com
Conser. Chair:	Allen Swanson	201-715-7780	afswanson@hotmail.com
Political Chair:	Priti Thakker	973-752-1100	thakkerp@icloud.com
Programs:	Bob Zega	973-349-8001	rjzega@yahoo.com
Fundraising Chair:	Open Position!		
Outings Chair:	Kevin O'Brien	908-403-0900	kbkob@aol.com
Publicity Chair:	Wynn Johanson	908-464-0442	johansons@comcast.net
Membership:	Open Position!		
Webmaster:	Wynn Johanson	908-464-0442	johansons@comcast.net
Upper Passaic River Coordinator:	Kathy O'Leary	908-647-2870	kolearypcnj@gmail.com

If you might be interested in getting involved, please attend one of our Executive Committee Meetings: the first Tuesday of each month -- and get to know us. Or participate in one of our General Meetings on the second Wednesday of the month. There are no obligations and there will be no pressure. Currently all meetings are being held by Zoom technology.

More of our activities are at: <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, by Zoom technology. 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: are held on the SECOND WEDNESDAY of the month -- 7:30 pm by Zoom. Learn something new and make some new friends. We'd welcome the chance to meet you and to introduce ourselves, even by Zoom. Please see the schedule, below, and join us! Instructions for access are posted on our website: <http://sierraclub.org/new-jersey/loantaka/>.

MEETING SCHEDULE:

Currently, all Executive Committee and General Meetings are being held safely by Zoom technology; this is expected to continue until further notice.

July: No meetings

Aug: No meetings

Sept 8: Please check the Loantaka website..

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)

Website: <http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/central-jersey>. Or click from the NJ Chapter's website. In normal times we would offer a variety of outings! Not now -- until the pandemic is over!

OFFICERS:

Group Chair:	Joanne Pannone	jpatmeadowbrook@gmail.com
Group Vice Chair:	Xiaoping Duxiaping	du@yahoo.com
Secretary:	Leona Fluck	leona@pineypaddlers.com
Outings Coordinators:	George and Leona Fluck	leona@pineypaddlers.com
Treasurer:	Arlene Ceterskiva	Va2c2015@gmail.com
Programs:	Joanne Pannone	jpatmeadowbrook@gmail.com
Conservation Chair:	Kip Cherry	KipAtTheSierraClub@gmail.com
Recycling:	Sylvia Kay	Sylviakay222@gmail.com
Trails:	Dave Mattek	MattekDC@aol.com

We look forward to in-person get-togethers but until then our monthly lecture series will remain virtual. 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!

Here are the issues we are working on currently:

1. Against the Gibbstown LNG terminal.
2. Against the Hughes Warehouse development on Rte 1 and Quakerbridge Rd.
3. Against Synergy Solar in Hamilton: Sweetbriar Ave which threatens the community in the already flood-prone Lower Assunpink Creek area.
4. Monitoring the new Quickcheck in the Miry Run Watershed - for flooding potential.
5. Against Tennessee Gas Company's compressor station proposed for the Highlands Preservation Area.
6. For NJ's Endangered and Threatened Plant Protection Act.
7. Against the Mercer Corporate Park Warehouse development.
8. Opposing gas pipelines and compressor stations generally.
9. For the park at Miry Run - dam site 21.
10. Opposing logging public lands because we don't have 80 years to grow new tree canopy.
11. Promoting electric school buses.
12. Opposing NJ Transit's gas-powered electric plants.

We are always ready to lobby at the State House for laws to fight polluters and climate change. We need a moratorium on pipelines and fossil fuel projects.

To save the planet, support Empower New Jersey!

Get our news by joining the Sierra Club and signing up to receive our our email..

RARITAN VALLEY GROUP

(Middlesex and Somerset Counties and surrounding areas)

Officers:

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

Our monthly membership meetings are typically held on the FOURTH WEDNESDAY of each month in New Brunswick. We discuss environmental news impacting Middlesex & Somerset Counties, plus discuss upcoming events, speakers, volunteer efforts, etc. To confirm please contact the RVG Chair.

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

1. Opposition to gas and oil pipelines and new fossil fuel infrastructure that threaten the air, water and our health.
2. Conservation and protection of the Raritan River basin area.
3. Passage of and responsible enforcement of environmentally friendly ordinances.
4. Land conservation, preservation of open space and protection of Green Acres.

News from the Raritan Valley area:

- Williams Transco applied to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to extend their NESE project application for two more years. The pipeline permits were previously rejected by the NJDEP.
- Williams Transco applied to FERC for another fracked gas expansion project - the Regional Energy Access Expansion Project (REAE). Additional volatile compressors spewing harmful toxins are proposed for Old Bridge & Neshanic Station. The Sierra Club filed a motion to intervene in opposition to the expansion. <https://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/blog/2021/05/sierra-club-fights-new-williams-transco-pipeline>
- Williams Transco threatens to truck fracked liquid natural gas (LNG).
- NJ Transit's Kearny fracked gas power plant plans were withdrawn.
- Alfieri began removing trees at the Hidden Oak Woods development in the northern-most Pine Barrens outlier of East Brunswick, an area once known as Hickory Swamp. Thank you to our friends from the Lower Raritan Watershed Partnership in New Brunswick & the Lawrence Brook Watershed Partnership in Milltown for filing an am-

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icus brief in the township's lawsuit.

- Spotted lantern flies have been spotted in Somerset County and don't need to be reported. Middlesex County invasions can be reported to the NJ DOA.
- The Bedminster Trump National Golf Course situated in the Highlands Preservation Area needs new water permits from the NJ Water Supply Authority. www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/blog/2020/10/trump-s-bedminster-golf-course-water-hearing-delayed-again
- The NJDEP upgraded regulations for Category 1 waterways to protect water supplies for NJ residents.
- Flemington and Raritan Township MUA sued the NJDEP to downgrade C1 protections for the South Branch Raritan River to continue to pollute the river.
- A storage facility is proposed at 850 Main St in Sayreville. The owner previously had been fined for illegally removing trees on the property.
- Branchburg passed an ordinance to prohibit standalone warehouses.
- A mega-warehouse on a 10-acre site along the Raritan River is proposed at 41 Glendale Rd in Edison.

We encourage you to get involved by attending your town's planning and zoning board meetings. If you are aware of development proposals in your town that may have a negative environmental impact, please contact us and join our meetings. We are also interested in any environmental news or events affecting Middlesex and Somerset counties and invite you to submit those items as well.

Like us on Facebook! www.facebook.com/RaritanGroupNJSC
 Tweet with us - <https://twitter.com/RaritanSierra>

JERSEY SHORE GROUP

(Monmouth County, approximately)

Website: <http://sierraclub.org/new-jersey/Jersey-Shore/>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/JerseyShoreNJSC/>
Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/sierraclub_jerseyshore/?hl=en

OFFICERS:
Group Chair: Dennis Anderson 732-970-4327 dennisaza@aol.com
 6 Maple Ave, Matawan NJ 07747
Vice Chair: Faith Teitelbaum 732-513-5445 faithtei@aol.com
Secretary: John Luard 732-708-9221 John.Luard@gmail.com
Conservation Co-Chairs: Faith Teitelbaum 732-513-5445 faithtei@aol.com
 and: Bob Sandberg 732-241-7757 Sandberg00@gmail.com
 and: Stan Greberis 732-431-0882 grapefruit@msn.com
Treasurer: Jim Baye jimbaye@optonline.net
Political Co-Chairs: Robin & Harold Zullow drzullow@optonline.net
Outings Chair: John Luard 732-708-9221 John.Luard@gmail.com
Outings Leaders: *Open Position!*
Membership Chair: Wael Kanj
Program Chair: Mary Reilly 908-731-2466 Mary@reillygreen.com
Climate Chair: Steve Miller 732-671-5917 SteveMiller@Comcast.net
Fund-raising Co-Chairs: Mark Fukayama 908-902-1555 markexams@aol.com
 and: Faith Teitelbaum 732-513-5445 faithtei@aol.com
Communications Chair: Wael Kanj waelkanj@gmail.com
Education Chair: George Moffatt 732-544-1726 gmoffattgt@aol.com
High School Coordin: *Open Position!*
Letter-writing Committee: Mark Fukayama, Steve Miller and Stan Greberis

JERSEY SHORE GROUP HAPPENINGS:

Stormwater Management Update: Congratulations to the Green Teams, Environmental Commissions and local activists who helped Long Branch, Eatontown and Middletown add some additional green enhancements to their local stormwater ordinance. Together we are making a difference in the amount of stormwater runoff in our watersheds. If you have a good news story about stormwater in your town, please send it to: faithtei@aol.com.

Our next step is to help our towns amend the newly adopted ordinance by adding the 'redevelopment' enhancement. The Watershed Institute's sample ordinance definition of redevelopment follows:

"Redevelopment" means an activity that results in the creation, addition, or replacement of impervious surface area on an already developed site. Redevelopment includes, but is not limited to: the expansion of a building footprint; addition or replacement of a structure or a portion of a structure regardless of footprint; and replacement of impervious surface area that is not part of a routine maintenance activity. If a project is considered to be a redevelopment project, all new impervious cover, whether created by adding to or replacing impervious cover that was in existence before the redevelopment occurs, shall be considered in calculating the requirements for stormwater management. However, any such new impervious cover that will drain into an existing stormwater best management practice that is to remain after the redevelopment and that meets current stormwater management requirements shall be deducted from the total amount of impervious surface that must be treated by new stormwater best management practices. In the case of a redevelopment project, the pre-developed land cover shall be considered to be wooded.

For example, if you have an old strip mall that is being redeveloped, we want the developer to follow the green infrastructure guidelines as if this were a new development.

Since most of our towns are mostly built up, redevelopment will predominate. Send this definition to your municipal engineer. If you want help, contact: faithtei@aol.com

Nominations for 2022: The Jersey Shore Group is looking for interested members to join the Executive Committee. This committee identifies issues of concern, plans advocacy campaigns, develops projects to raise funds, informs the local community of environmental issues, and organizes outings. Voting will take place in the last quarter of the year for service in 2022. Should you like to join our leadership team, please contact the nominating committee at jfluard@gmail.com.

MEMBER MEETINGS: We are presenting Zoom webinars, usually on the fourth Monday of every month at 7pm. Presently scheduled Webinars:

June 28: Yes, You Can; Celebrating Volunteers: We will celebrate our members and friends and learn from them how to get things accomplished. Details and registration will be on our website.

No programs in July and August.

A picnic may be held on Aug 8, depending on state and Sierra Club guidelines. Check our website in July.

Sept 27: Water Issues in New Jersey: Daniel J. Van Abs, PhD, FAICP/PP, Associate Professor of Professional Practice for Water, Society and Environment, Rutgers University. Details and registration will be on our website.

Speakers' Contact: Mary Reilly, 908-731-2466 or Mary@reillygreen.com

If you are not getting e-mails announcing our webinars, please send one to waelkanj@gmail.com, or sign up at our website.

OCEAN COUNTY GROUP

Website: MEETUP.COM/SIERRA-CLUB-OCEAN-GROUP

OFFICERS:

Acting Chair & Conservation Chair: Margit Meissner-Jackson sylviaj1910@yahoo.com
Vice-Chair & Treasurer: Laura Stone LauraS36@yahoo.com
Outings & Envl Ed'n: Terrance Brown terrybrown@comcast.net
Recording Secretary: Nancy Brown nancybrown624@comcast.net
Political Chair: Margaret Mary Piccolo gogreenp1@yahoo.com
Membership Chairs: Ray & Cathy Kozakerich raykozak@comcast.net
Group ExCom Members: William Rodgers
 and: Peter Leighton JPLighton1@verizon.net
 and: Joyce Isaza realtymstr@aol.com
Hospitality, Fundraising, Publicity, Webmaster: all open positions!

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP 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.

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 Coord's: *Open position! Call Gina to volunteer: 856-848-8831*

GENERAL MEETINGS: are held at 7:30 pm on the SECOND WEDNESDAY of ALTER-NATE MONTHS, 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.

Special Notice: Meetings will resume September 8. Please watch our Facebook page for info on the presentation. Or signup to receive email reminders. Send your email request to ginaceee@verizon.net or annecaridi@yahoo.com and I will add you to our email list.

Meeting dates for the remainder of the year:

Sept 8, Nov 10 and Holiday Party and Year-end Wrap up **Dec 8**

Please check the West Group's Facebook page for updates.
<https://www.facebook.com/WestJerseyGroupNJSC>

In the meantime, please wear your mask, continue to physically distance and stay safe and well.

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!
Political 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 (at least with respect to the Club), and would more than welcome new blood, with ideas and energy for local projects. One alternative is to fold back into the West Jersey Group (from which we originated in the mid-1970s). Please contact Dick Colby for a discussion. Otherwise, our consuming conservation issue, adopted just after the Group was founded, continues to be protection of the Great Egg Harbor Wild & Scenic River, and continues to demand 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. 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, but currently held on-line.

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 also works with Atlantic County Friends of the Parks, and is President of 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. Detailed maps and route descriptions are now available on the Chapter's website. Dick has also produced a brochure describing 15 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, to be operated by the Atlantic County Utilities Authority, fueled by new legislation that prods the BPU, and a new president of Atlantic City Electric Co. (3) With the passage of Statewide plastic- and paper-bag-restricting legislation, there's educational work to be done! (4 etc.) Many other South Jersey issues are described in previous issues of this Newsletter, available on the Chapter website.

Some Allied Organizations, likely meeting by Zoom:

July 27 and Sept 21: (alternating fourth Tuesdays), 6:30pm: Great Egg Harbor Watershed Assn. Activities centered on protecting the Wild & Scenic Recreational River. All are welcome. If a physical meeting takes place, it would be at the Warren Fox Nature Center (WFNC*), Atlantic County Park in Estell Manor, Milepost 15 on NJ Rte 50, 3 1/2 miles south of Mays Landing. Contact Julie Akers, 609-432-3280.

June 2, July 7, Aug 4 and Sept 1: (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* if the meeting would be physical. Contact Julie Akers, 609-432-3280. Website: <https://www.facebook.com/Atlantic-County-Friends-of-the-Parks>.

June 9 and Aug 11: (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 (if physical): 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.

June 16 and Aug 18: (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. By Zoom or at the WFNC*. Contact Julie Akers, 609-432-3280.

June 23, July 28, Aug 25 and Sept 22: (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 (if physical) are in the Galloway Twp Library, 306 E Jimmie Leeds Rd. 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>

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.

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.

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 listed on the online calendar on the Chapter's web site: sierraclub.org/new-jersey. You can also "like" us on Facebook: "Singles Group New Jersey Sierra Club." Activities will also be posted on Meetup.

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.

LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER (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.

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

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

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

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Fundraising: Matthew Lang * matthewjlang58@gmail.com
Webmaster/Listmaster: John Kashwick * John.Kashwich@newjersey.sierraclub.org
(* Section Executive Committee Member)

June 2 (Wed): — The Story of Stonewall: In recognition of Pride Month, Sergio Moncada, Northeast Program Manager for National Parks Conservation Association, will speak on the process to get Stonewall National Monument in Manhattan designated by President Obama in 2016. Moncada will speak about nurturing public support for creation of the monument and fulfilling the mission of the Park Service to include under-represented populations among our national park units. This program is co-sponsored by the Hunterdon Warren Group. This meeting will be held on Zoom. Please visit <http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/> to register for the event.

Please check web site for further meetings and events.

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, and invites members to check her web site at www.funtravels.com for trips, tips, and travel information regarding New Jersey and other states.

Paul Ehrlich is the Vice-Chair (pkehrlich-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

>continued on page 12

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!)

Chair: Daria Buvanova ICOchair@newjersey.sierraclub.org
Other Officers: Amanda Gaglio, Oscar Nazar (Social Media/Communications Chair), Mike Depardieu, Zachary Rose (Youth Partnership Coordinator), Leila Marcovici, Tara Deaver, Julia Marchese, Devharsh Trivedi

New Jersey Inspiring Connections Outdoors - (NJ ICO) is dedicated to providing safe and fun wilderness trips for children and teenagers with limited access to the outdoors. Volunteer leaders collaborate with community partners to facilitate, lead, and promote events that will educate and foster a love of nature and the outdoors for youth

in New Jersey who may not otherwise have the opportunity or the means. The program works to reduce barriers by providing gear, transportation, trip fees, and leaders to create opportunities to explore, enjoy, and advocate for nature. The Chair welcomes inquiries from leaders of schools and other community organizations.



Organized outings continue to be proscribed until danger from COVID disease is relieved. Group Outings chairs may continue to be available to advise on local adventures that you can attempt individually and in family or other small groups.

Upcoming ExCom Meetings

All members are welcome to attend these monthly policy deliberations, held on **SECOND SATURDAYS**, almost certainly by Zoom, which accepts access from a computer, smartphone or telephone. 10am for the Conservation Committee; 1pm for ExCom. Details on access from our secretary: secretary@newjersey.sierraclub.org.

Dates: June 12, July 10, August 14, Sept. 11



NEW JERSEY CHAPTER LEADERSHIP

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* Rich Isaac (973) 716-0297
richard.isaac@sierraclub.org

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Tim Sevener, Rail, Public Transit
Paul Ehrlich, Transportation Air Quality Advisor
Angela DeSapio, Bicycle Advisor
Gary Frederick, Jordan Rosenbloom, Matthew Bewley

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Joan & George Denzer, Paul Sanderson, Joe Testa

Personnel Committee
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Information Technology Committee
Joe Testa Chair, Lorraine Terrell, Abdel Alfahham, Sunil Somalwar

Finance Committee
Paul Sanderson Chair, Sunil Somalwar, George Denzer, Ken Johanson, Jim Andreano

Nominating Committee
Renée Pollard Chair, Joanne Pannone, John Kashwick, Renée Pollard, Allen Swanson

Elections Committee
S. Pasricha Chair, Laura Bagwell, Mark Fukayama, John Kashwick

Facilities Committee (office, meeting sites)
Paul Sanderson Chair, Laura Lynch, George & Joan Denzer, Sunil Somalwar

Green Infrastructure Team
Allen Swanson, Chair, Allie Horn, Judy Minot, Faith Teitelbaum

Social Media Team
Allie Horn, Thomas Chen, Pranet Commar, Mary Prachthauser

Volunteer Communications Committee
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* Indicates Chapter-wide elected ExCom members.

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taylor.mcfarland@SierraClub.org

Communications Coordinator: Megan Steele
Megan.Steele@SierraClub.org

If no one is in the office to take your call, please leave a message on the answering machine. Please SPELL YOUR LAST NAME, and state whether the phone number you leave is for daytime or evening.

Please share this newsletter with a non-member friend, inviting use of the form on this page



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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. Advertisements and services carry no Club endorsement.

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

Members please send address changes:

To address.changes@sierraclub.org, or Sierra Club Membership 2101 Webster St., Suite 1300 Oakland, CA 94612 or 415-977-5653, and NJ Sierra Club, 145 West Hanover St. Trenton, NJ 08618

Prospective advertisers: See instructions: <http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/jersey-sierran-information-advertisers>

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SIERRA CLUB

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Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

MEMBER'S REPORT

From Hearth to Hell – Our Forests' Health and Horrors

By George Moffatt, of our Jersey Shore Group

Since our distant ancestors learned to control fire between 400,000 and 800,000 years ago (estimates obviously vary), fire has been both boon and bane, time and time again. In 2020 alone there were 48,000 wildfires in the US, 8.6 million acres burned, 35 deaths, and more than 10,500 structures destroyed.⁽¹⁾

Clearly, we need forests, not forest fires. Forests shelter thousands of species, sequester climate-damaging carbon dioxide, prevent soil erosion, provide building materials, produce oxygen, and offer an inner peace, perhaps inspiring Joyce Kilmer's meditation that a tree "... looks to God all day."

A paradox: Forests don't burn. Fire is a chemical, not a physical, reaction, caused by extreme heat acting as a catalyst for what we call "burning."

⁽²⁾ Wood is actually a chemistry set: on average 50% carbon, 42% oxygen, 6% hydrogen, 1% nitrogen, and 1% other elements. Externally, fire needs oxygen, combustible oxidation and, of course, high heat.⁽³⁾

Author John McPhee explains: "Several hundred significantly different chemical reactions are now going on [in a fire]. For example, a carbon atom and four hydrogen atoms . . . may lock together and form methane, natural gas . . . If two carbon atoms happen to come out of the wood with six hydrogen atoms, they are, aggregate-ly, ethane . . . Three carbons and eight hydrogens form propane. Four carbons and 10 hydrogens - butane, 5 carbons - pentane, 6 - hexane, 7 - heptane, eight carbons and 18 hydrogens, octane. Pentane, hexane, heptane, and octane have a collective name. Logs burning in a fireplace are making and burning gasoline."⁽⁴⁾

Another paradox is that the preferred preventive of forest fires is, oddly, fire, called "controlled burns": deliberately set to prevent raging conflagrations by removing dead leaves, tree limbs and debris, and eliminating harmful insects and invasive plants, returning nutrients to the soil, and opening sunlit areas for young trees and other plants.

The US Forest Service and some states once banned controlled burning because of mishaps. Then they decided that the benefit was worth the risk.

Present-day forest management techniques require rigid safety conditions for controlled burns, such as cool temperatures; high humidity; moist ground; and safe wind direction and strength. Even then, some controlled fires go wild. One such US Park Service fire in 2000 raced through Los Alamos NM, creating a fire storm that consumed more than 400 homes — and a media fire-storm against controlled burns.⁽⁵⁾

A third paradox: The value of controlled burning has been proven in, of all places, the NJ's 1.1 million-acre-Pine Barrens, once notorious for fires. Lenape Indians once clear-burned sections of the Pine Barrens and Europe-

an settlers followed suit, clear-burn-ing for towns and farms, and logging, especially to produce charcoal. Fires still occur, but foresters periodically set controlled burns to reduce flammable undergrowth, study controlled burn techniques and improve forest management.⁽⁶⁾

Now, a fourth paradox: Many Pine Barrens plants and trees need fire. Black and white oaks generate new growth from underground roots, and fire is needed to open the cones of Pitch Pines, dispersing their seeds. Some species of burned-over trees sprout from dormant buds at their burned stumps: pitch and shortleaf pines, alder and birch.⁽⁷⁾

In 2018, Gov. Murphy signed the Prescribed Burn Act, allowing homeowners to conduct their own burns, fortunately with DEP oversight.⁽⁸⁾

A final paradox: both controlled burns and "real" forest fires are major sources of air pollution in our regrettably very polluted state

This year, three forestry bills were introduced in Trenton that the Sierra Club opposes. One bill (A4845—Mazzeo) would permit controlled burns of up to 60,000 acres a year, including in the forested Highlands Region, and could release hundreds of millions of tons of climate-changing carbon dioxide into the atmosphere

A second bill, vaguely worded, would permit logging on all public forests of more than 25 acres, including Wilderness Areas, Natural Heritage Sites, and areas with threatened or endangered species, as well as non-profit and municipal lands. It does not consider biodiversity, climate impacts or water pollution. It allows 30 acres or more of clear-cutting; and the use of tree skidders (front-loaders) that destroy the ground cover when dragging trees, even through wetlands and streams.

The third bill (A4844—Armatto) would exempt forestry cuttings and burns from any conflicting municipal tree ordinances.

Humans cause 90% of all forest fires: by careless burning of trash and debris, flipping cigarettes out car windows — or committing arson. Lightning causes the rest.

Regrettably, despite their best efforts, neither fire rangers nor Smokey the Bear can control the uncontrollable.

Footnotes

1. National Interagency Fire Center, https://www.nifc.gov/safety/safety_documents/Fatalities-by-Year.pdf; also 120+ deaths (est.). See also, Insurance Information Institute, <https://www.iii.org/fact-statistic/facts-statistics-wild-fires>. See also: National Interagency Fire Center, "10-Year Average to Date," <https://www.nifc.gov/fireInfo/nfn.htm>. Also "Many missing from 1918-to 2020," various newspaper sources.
2. "Is Fire a Gas, Liquid, or Solid?" ThoughtCo, <https://www.thoughtco.com/what-state-of-matter-is-fire-604300>.

REPORT FROM TRENTON

American Dream Mall Is a Financial Nightmare

From a Press Release issued on March 1st, and edited by Tony Hagen

During its many incarnations, the American Dream Mall in East Rutherford (Passaic Co) has had more stops and starts than Route 1 at rush hour. After two decades of work stoppages and business commitment withdrawals, add a fresh lawsuit over an alleged contract breach, multiple liens totaling \$41 million filed against the property by unpaid contractors, and overdue loan and mortgage payments.

According to NJ.com, Villa Restaurant Group of Morristown contracted in 2015 to open two eateries in the Mall: Green Leaf and a Tony+Benny's Pizza Parlor. The restaurant operator refuses to complete construction and contends that the Mall did not open according to the agreed timeline. The Mall developer, Ameream, a subsidiary of Triple Five Group, suggests that the pandemic was a force majeure and that it cannot be held responsible for the delay.

Meanwhile, the Mall's completion date gets kicked further and further down the road. According to NJ.com, there are currently eight attractions operating along with 130 retail stores and restaurants, roughly 30% of what Triple Five Group had promised. (In addition, the Sea Life Aquarium and Legoland Discovery Center were slated to open May 4.)

Add to this various lawsuits that subcontractors have filed against Ameream and its tenants over work that was completed but not paid for. This includes a \$1.6 million claim against Ameream, general contractor Phoenix Diversified Group, and CMX Cinemas filed by New Jersey Boom & Erectors, which said it built a movie theater at the Mall and was never fully paid.

More still: last summer Triple Five Group missed mortgage payments on a Minnesota mall property that was used as collateral for \$2.8 billion in American Dream financing, according to NJ.com. And, most recently, lenders backing a \$1.2 billion construction loan in New Jersey have moved to secure collateral and claim 49% of any profits from American Dream until those loan obligations are paid off.

Despite many years and enormous sums of private investor cash and public investment (direct subsidies, financing, and tax breaks that may top \$1.5 billion), the future of this white elephant is looking bleak. The COVID pandemic may have permanently changed our shopping patterns such that brick-and-mortar retail establishments will go the way of the Dodo. Is it time to walk away from this money pit? New Jersey could probably find better ways to invest its money.

REPORT FROM TRENTON

Highlands Council Needs Members

Edited from a press release issued on April 19th

Rob Walton, former Hunterdon County Commissioner, has officially resigned as a member of the New Jersey Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council. Walton was appointed to the Highlands Council in May 2011. Since 2014 he has worked for FirstEnergy, the parent company of JCP&L, where he is currently Manager of Customer Accounts. There are now four vacancies on the Highlands Council.

Walton's resignation is a positive for the Highlands. Walton was appointed by Gov. Christie to undermine Highlands protections. We opposed his nomination. There are now four vacancies on the Council; no one has been nominated this year. With only 11 remaining members, many of them Christie holdovers, and eight needed for a quorum, nothing positive has been happening. Some members have been on the Council since 2005.

The Highland Council's main responsibility is the Highlands Regional Master Plan and its implementation by municipalities. The RMP was adopted by the Council in 2008; it needs to be updated to deal with new challenges such as climate change, chronic flooding, and applications for erecting mega-warehouses on protected farmland in Franklin and White Township. The Council has the authority to call up individual projects, and it can comment on whether wastewater plans meet the goals of the Highlands Regional Master Plan. Sadly, the Council has been letting these things move forward.

Governor Murphy and Senator Sweeney need to cooperate on filling the four vacancies, replacing Christie's appointees so that the Council can do its job. Only one of Murphy's nominees was approved — last year: Dr. Daniel Van Abs replaced Tracy Carluccio. Ten of the 11 council members' terms have expired.

3. "The Chemical Composition of Wood," Roger C. Pettersen, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, p.2, <https://www.fpl.fs.fed.us/documents/pdf1984/pette84a.pdf>.

4. John McPhee, "Fire," from Pieces of the Frame, Farrar Straus Giroux, NY, 1976. Kindle edition, 2011.

5. "Prescribed Burning," Forest Fire Service, NJ DEP, <https://www.state.nj.us/dep/parksandforests/fire/>

[whm-burning.htm](#). See also:

6. Pine Barrens: Ecosystem and Landscape, Chapter 17, pp. 304-305, Richard T. Forman. Ed., Academic Press, NY, 1979.

7. Pine Barrens...benefits?

8. "Prescribed Burning (Act) in NJ, Applications and Procedures," https://www.nj.gov/dep/parksand-forests/fire/docs/RxB%20Policy_v20_1_F_20201013.pdf

Have you tried a portion (or more) of New Jersey's new Long Trail? High Point to Cape May Point! Its description (with maps) is now the most visited "post" on the Chapter website: <https://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/long-trail>.

REPORT FROM TRENTON

Murphy Vetoes Bi-partisan, Anti-environment, Anti-worker Bill

Edited from a press release issued on April 1st, by Irene Gnarra

The NJ Sierra Club thanks Governor Murphy for vetoing, on May 5, A4810 (Pinkin) / S441 (Oroho), a bill that could have weakened regulations governing environmental, health, and worker safety. Sponsored in the Assembly by the Democrat Mary Pinkin and in the Senate by the Republican Steven Oroho, with twelve Democrats and eight Republicans joining them as cosponsors, the bill would have authorized the creation of a Government Efficiency and Regulatory Review Commission charged with assuring regulatory flexibility. We think this is code for letting polluters and corporations circumvent DEP rules and standards. It is shameful that the current Democratic Legislature passed the bill with wide support: Assembly 72-1; Senate 35-0.

The Pinkin-Oroho bill is modeled after former Gov. Chris Christie's 2010 Executive Order that established the Red Tape Review Commission. An instrument of the American Legislative Exchange Council, a well-funded and well-organized network of conservatives and right-leaning advocacy groups, such as the Koch brothers' organizations and the NRA, Christie's Commission was designed to hinder or stop environmental reviews. It blocked the DEP from regulating such synthetic toxic chemicals as perchlorate and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in drinking water. Among other actions detrimental to the wellbeing of New Jersey citizens, it blocked protections for clean air and assured withdrawal from the RGGI. The Christie Commission demonstrated that the criteria for determining which rules should be amended are arbitrary; recommendations could reveal political schemes rather than scientific facts. In sum, that Commission blocked environmental policy, rolled back labor rights, and championed cutbacks to the power of unions.

Under the Pinkin-Oroho bill, the Office of the Government Efficiency and Regulatory Review Commission would have been housed in the Office of the Governor. Its membership would have been tightly controlled: representatives from the Governor's Office, the State Legislature, the DEP, the Dept. of Labor and Workforce Development, the Office of Innovation, and the New Jersey Business Action Center. The Commission was to submit an annual report to the Governor with recommendations to repeal, rescind, or amend any rules, regulations, or Executive Orders that might burden New Jersey's businesses, workers, and local governments.

Designed to help advance conservative, pro-corporate priorities, this bill, like others proposed since 2010, eschews consideration of the public interest, environmental justice, health protections, and worker safety regulations. This is disturbing for many reasons. It would have had no place for scientific studies linking exposure to air pollution and contraction of viral and other deadly diseases--central to issues that would enable people to return to work after the coronavirus pandemic. We could have seen it recommending the privatization of parks, reducing the "hassle" of permit applications and concern with pollution, and weakening standards for site remediations and cleanups.

While we won this battle, we must remain vigilant, since conservative activists pay court to the Legislature and continue to wage their wars. Governor Murphy correctly vetoed this bill.

REPORT FROM TRENTON

BPU's Nuclear Subsidy Hurts Ratepayers & Renewable Energy

Edited from a press release issued on April 27th

New Jersey's Board of Public Utilities has just renewed its award of Zero Emission Certificates for the Hope Creek, Salem Unit 1, and Salem Unit 2 nuclear power plants -- for the period June 2022 through May 2025. The cost to New Jersey ratepayers will be \$300 million a year: something like \$75 per family.

We think this subsidy is unneeded. It will divert money from offshore wind, solar, and energy efficiency programs. It will compromise our goal of 100% renewable energy by 2050. This is the third time that the BPU has rubber-stamped these unneeded subsidies, establishing almost a permanent tax.

According to reports completed by Levitan & Associates, PSEG may not need the full \$300 million that it requested. But BPU staff think that the three Salem County plants will still not be profitable even with the subsidies.

Gov. Murphy talks about these nuclear plants running until at least 2050, so these subsidies could continue until then. Perhaps he cares more about PSEG's shareholders than the people of New Jersey.

According to an ITEP tax report, PSEG made almost \$1.8 billion in profits in 2018 on \$9.7 billion in revenues. That translates to a return of 18%, far more than the classical 6% that we learned in school is appropriate to natural public service monopolies. PSEG paid zero in federal taxes, and threatened to close the nuclear power plants if the subsidies weren't awarded. Perhaps PSEG stands for Public Subsidy Excessive Greed.

REPORT FROM TRENTON

BPU Solar Proposal Will Let the Sun In

Edited from a press release issued on April 28th

The New Jersey Sierra Club has submitted comments to the Board of Public Utilities (BPU) on its Solar Successor Program: a "bifurcated incentive program structure for behind-the-meter, community solar, and grid supply solar development."

NJ's solar program has been in the shade for the last few years, because the BPU limited the number of permitted projects. This new expanded program will let the sun in. It now proposes to triple the amount of solar in New Jersey, allowing 900 MW per year, up from 300 MW, and allowing grid-scale, net metering, and community solar. We will move away from SRECs, which is important.

The competitive solicitation process will be divided into tranches, enabling cost-based competition among similar solar projects, and substantial project maturity requirements to minimize failure rates. We expect the program will continue to prioritize old landfills and brownfields for solar installations. We also urge continued support for residential projects despite competition with larger projects.

The proposal includes a fixed incentive payment for behind-the-meter projects of 2 MW or less, which includes net metering and community solar projects. We would like to see the amount of allowed solar expanded. We think that community solar project size should be increased to at least 5 MW. Net metering should also be increased, to at least 15 MW.

The Legislature and the BPU are both considering a proposal that would allow out-of-state developers to receive subsidies to build grid-scale solar projects. Although this would lower ratepayer costs, it would mean that jobs and other benefits would be lost from New Jersey.

This is a first step toward fixing New Jersey's solar program. The BPU should keep its eyes on our state goal of 32.2 GW by 2050, called for by the Energy Master Plan. It is also good that the grid-scale solar carve-out is 260 MW. This will help move large-scale solar projects forward. But the state needs to do more. The cost cap has held us back; we should be getting rid of it.

Editor's note: Energy reform is one of the most technical and complex of our issues. In the coming months, look for an opportunity for technically proficient members to collaborate in some kind of advisory structure.

REPORT FROM TRENTON

NJ Should Leverage Biden's Infrastructure Plan by Doing More for Ourselves

From a Press Release issued on April 2nd, and edited by George Moffatt

President Biden's recently announced \$2 trillion infrastructure package would include \$621 billion for transportation, \$650 billion for affordable housing, schools, water infrastructure, and broadband, and \$300 billion for research, development and manufacturing.

That's good news for New Jersey, but we must step up our efforts to take full advantage of this windfall.

The plan includes \$80 billion for Amtrak repairs, which we hope will help pay for the \$30 billion Gateway Program: new rail tunnels under the Hudson River into New York, repairing the 111-year-old tunnels, replacing the Portal Bridge, and constructing the Bergen Loop in Secaucus.

The state's laundry list also includes converting the diesel bus fleets to electric, extending the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail Line, and electrifying South Jersey's light rail RiverLine.

But New Jersey is also proposing some unnecessary projects: widening the New Jersey Turnpike and Garden State Parkway, which will just create more pollution along its corridors, including impacts on adjacent residential neighborhoods. The Sierra Club's position is that we should first fix existing infrastructure. This is compatible with Biden's plan, which includes \$650 billion for American homes, school buildings, water infrastructure, and broadband expansion; \$213 billion to build, preserve and retrofit more than two million affordable homes and buildings; \$111 billion to solve a really serious health problem by replacing lead water pipes and service lines; and \$100 billion for constructing or modernizing public schools.

As if to snub his nose at President Biden, New Jersey Gov. Murphy is trying to hijack \$40 million from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund at a time when many people are in danger of losing their homes for defaulting on rent payments because of the pandemic. And New Jersey has failed to come up with any real plans or funding to solve the problem of lead water pipes.

Biden's offshore wind plan proposes 30 GW of offshore energy by 2030, which will include designating 'Wind Energy Areas' of nearly 800,000 acres off of the coast of New Jersey and New York, plus \$3 billion in loan guarantees for offshore wind projects. He also wants to offer tax credits for building renewable energy manufacturing facilities like the wind facility in Paulsboro, which could create more jobs while expanding renewable energy.

But New Jersey must not rely on the President to do our jobs for us. We must do more ourselves to support offshore wind and other energy projects, while reducing climate impacts and jumpstarting our economy after COVID.

REPORT FROM TRENTON

Exposing Misleading Climate Reports from Devious Business Groups

From a Press Release issued on March 8th, and edited by Tony Hagen

Further to the story on the DEP's PACT program (see article on p. 4), two business groups are challenging [the proposed new rules](#), which would cut greenhouse gas emissions and prepare for sea-level rise, extreme weather, and chronic flooding. Commissioned by the NJ Business & Industry Association (NJBIA) and the Commerce and Industry Association of New Jersey (CIANJ), a [report](#) falsely alleges that the DEP used unreliable data from Rutgers to determine risks from ocean-level rise.

The business-group report, prepared by Climate Forecast Applications Network (CFAN), is based on incorrect assumptions about sea-level rise. CFAN based its assertions on average global sea-rise projections and failed to take into account that sea-level is rising faster in New Jersey, owing partly to land subsidence.

In fact, a [peer-reviewed study](#) published in *Nature Communications* in March 2021 reported that sea level rise along the US Atlantic Coast was fastest in Southern New Jersey, where in the 20th century ocean rise was 0.63 inches per decade. The study noted significant marsh habitat destruction by advancing seas at the Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge, just north of Atlantic City.

NJBIA, in [announcing](#) the CFAN report, called for a go-slow approach to flood preparations that would set "no more than a 2-foot sea-level rise projection for regulatory purposes." However, Rutgers in a 2019 climate report predicted an upper-range estimate of 2.1 feet for sea-level rise by 2050, based on emissions scenarios, and up to 3.5 feet by 2070. Rutgers found that potential sea-level rise by 2100 could affect 580,000 people and \$180 billion of property.

NJBIA and CIANJ contend the state is looking too far ahead in its planning, and is consulting the wrong sources of information. Actually, many New Jersey communities are taking the flood threat very seriously. Hoboken, which suffered a 7-foot storm surge during Hurricane Sandy in 2012, announced on May 6 the commencement of a [\\$230 million project](#) to build sea walls and other structures to protect the city against future flooding. Meanwhile, the Army Corps of Engineers is contemplating building a six-mile-long sea wall across Lower New York Bay - to protect the New York-New Jersey metropolitan area, among other actions.

Climate reports have been issued for 20 years now, which is why we have the Global Warming Response Act (planned reduction of NJ emissions to 80% of 2006 levels by 2050) and the PACT process. The reports indicate that things are worse and happening more quickly than we originally thought. This past year we saw many other reports from top scientists about climate change, land use, and sea-level rise in New Jersey. These included reports from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, First Street Foundation (FSF), and the DEP itself.

The [FSF report](#), in February 2021, predicted \$415.4 million in flood damages this year to a group of 94,000 homes in New Jersey that are at "substantial" risk of flooding. Many towns are still not paying attention. A [2019 report](#) by Zillow found that we are building homes in flood risk zones at a rate two-to-three times faster than in safer locations. Further, New Jersey's temperatures have [increased by 3.5 degrees](#), and we have the highest short-term warming trends. These temperature increases will exacerbate New Jersey's vulnerability to flooding and fires.

The NJBIA and CIANJ's misleading report ignores all of the alarming climate data for New Jersey, and sows confusion and doubt at a time when we need collective action and stakeholder education based on the facts.

REPORT FROM TRENTON

NESE Requests More Time from FERC - Shameful

Edited down from a press release issued on March 25th

The once and future natural gas pipeline, proposed to bring fracked Pennsylvania gas to New York City by crossing central New Jersey and tunneling under Lower New York Bay, is sadly back in the news. NESE stands for Northeast Enhancement Project. Last refused by NJ-DEP on May 15, 2020, after New York denied the underwater portion, Williams Transcontinental Gas Pipe Line Company, LLC (Transco) has filed a Request for Extension of Time with the US Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). Transco wants two more years to "obtain the required permits and construct the authorized facilities."

This is the third resurrection of NESE, as if in a horror movie. We hope FERC will turn it down, but there are other ways of stopping it. For example, New York denied a 401 Water Quality Certificate for the Constitution Pipeline, for impacts on water quality and aquatic life, and was upheld in federal court.

Over the years there has been major opposition from towns in Monmouth and Middlesex Counties. In 2019 a coalition of groups, including the NJ Sierra Club, gathered more than 10,000 signatures asking the DEP to deny Transco's pipeline and compressor station.

REPORT FROM TRENTON

EPA Moves Forward With Bans on PBT Chemicals

From a Press Release issued on March 9th, and edited by Tony Hagen

Persistent, bioaccumulative and toxic (PBT) chemicals are those that build up over time in the environment and pose serious health risks to exposed populations, such as workers, subsistence fishers, Native American tribes, and children, among others. In March, 2021, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) opened a 60-day comment period for the public to provide input on final rules for five PBTs under the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA). There are already 16 PBT chemicals subject to Toxics Release Inventory reporting, including dioxins, lead, mercury, and PCBs.

These chemicals cause cancer, kidney malfunctions, learning disabilities, and many other serious health problems. The rules, if implemented, would help to reduce the amount of these toxic agents that get released into the environment.

Under the proposed rules, manufacturing, processing, and importing of decabromodiphenyl ether, a flame retardant, would be prohibited. Also, processing of phenol isopropylated phosphate, a substance used to make food packaging flexible and as a flame retardant, would be banned.

Additionally, restrictions would be imposed on the use of 2,4,6-tri-tert-butylphenol, a widely used antioxidant for jet, automotive, and marine fuels. Manufacturing, processing, and distribution of hexachlorobutadiene, which is linked to liver and nervous system damage, would be banned. The same would go for pentachlorothiophenol, which is used to make rubber less viscous during manufacturing. This substance causes skin and eye irritation, and is toxic to aquatic life.

The Sierra Club applauds the EPA under the Biden Administration for advancing protections against these five toxins. Public comment was accepted in docket EPA-HQ-OPPT-2021-0202 on www.regulations.gov, and further information can be found there.

Prohibitions on the use and manufacture of these agents are especially important in New Jersey because we have major problems with PBTs, including lead, PCBs, and dioxins.

REPORT FROM TRENTON

NJ Sierra Club Endorses NJ Green Amendment

From a Press Release issued on March 16th

The Sierra Club's New Jersey Chapter supports the New Jersey Green Amendment. On March 13, our Executive Committee passed a resolution to endorse a change to the NJ Constitution.

The proposed amendment states, in part, that, "Every person has a right to a clean and healthy environment, including pure water, clean air and soil and ecologically healthy habitats, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic, and esthetic qualities of the environment. The State shall not infringe upon these rights, by action or inaction."

The amendment would also require the State to preserve public natural resources and prevent the destruction or damaging of public natural resources.

Richard Isaac, our Chapter Chair, said, "This amendment will provide one more tool for preserving and providing equal access to clean air, water and soil. It will also help us meet the looming climate change crisis. Lending our support to the campaign for the Green Amendment is a no-brainer."

"Our resolution sends a powerful message to the NJ Legislature to pass this amendment, allowing the people of NJ to make the ultimate decision of whether their right to a healthy environment should be constitutionally protected," said Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper and founder of the organization Green Amendment For The Generations, which seeks to advance constitutional environmental rights nationally. "New Jersey is on the forefront of this national movement to constitutionally and equitably protect the environmental rights of all people."

Green Amendments have been in place in Pennsylvania and Montana since the early 1970's. The idea is gaining traction in other states including New Mexico, New York, West Virginia, Maryland and Hawai'i. These amendments give environmental rights a higher level of authority and permanence, and can be used to counteract anti-environmental legislation. Pennsylvania's version has been used twice, in 2013 and 2017: first, to allow communities to bar hydraulic fracturing or "fracking," and later to guide how the state legislature should spend revenue derived from leasing state forestland for fracking.

The Green Amendment was introduced into the Legislature in 2018; we supported it at that time. The Delaware Riverkeeper Network promoted the measure and helped get it re-introduced in the 2020 legislative session. It currently has 42 sponsors in the Assembly and 12 in the State Senate. Passage would require 48 votes in the Assembly, and 24 in the Senate. If passed, it would then face a referendum on the ballot for the next general election. A majority vote would add the amendment to the New Jersey Constitution.

The bill numbers are SCR 30 in the NJ Senate, and ACR 80 in the Assembly. To take action, voters can write, e-mail or call their representatives in the NJ Legislature.

REPORT FROM TRENTON

Shawn LaTourette Named NJ's DEP Commissioner

From a Press Release issued on April 14, and edited by George Moffatt

Shawn LaTourette has been named Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) by Gov. Murphy, after serving as Acting Commissioner and as the DEP's Chief of Staff.

He has proven himself to be sharp politically, working effectively on many important issues in the past few years. But the Sierra Club have not seen eye-to-eye with him on some pressing issues:

He will be the first DEP Commissioner in NJ's history who previously represented clients at DEP hearings;

He has had to recuse himself on a number of issues because they involve companies that he has represented;

He didn't fully answer, during his confirmation hearings, questions about moratoriums on fossil fuels, even in heavily polluted Environmental Justice communities;

The Sierra Club has disagreed with him on many issues: logging on Sparta Mountain, burning CF₄ at the Rahway Incinerator, streamlining permits, regulating CO₂; meeting the IPCC climate change goal of 45% reductions by 2030; stopping horizontal directional drilling in fracking, and allowing developers to 'build at your own risk' in high-risk flood zones.

LaTourette is familiar with the many serious environmental problems he now faces and, as DEP Commissioner, can exercise more leeway in his new executive capacity: to craft and enforce environmental rules and laws. And, in their executive and regulatory positions, both he and Gov. Murphy must move faster on all environmental fronts; especially, to integrate climate change and Environmental Justice rules into all state regulations.

They must also reverse former Gov. Christie's disastrous DEP staff and budget cutbacks and regulatory rollbacks, and modernize the DEP to provide Environmental Justice, reverse climate change, and switch to renewable energy and fossil-free fuels.

The Sierra Club's New Jersey Chapter wishes him success in his new position and looks forward to working with him on the State's thorny environmental problems.

REPORT FROM TRENTON

Collapsing I-295 Retaining Wall Suggests DOT Misdirection

From a Press Release issued on April 5th, and edited by George Moffatt

When a retaining wall on highway I-295 collapsed in Bellmawr (Camden Co) in March, it was an excellent metaphor for the NJ Department of Transportation's (DOT's) quixotic quest for more and more highway pollution, rather than developing mass transit systems.

The rubble is part of the \$800 million Direct Connection project being built by South State General Contractors for the DOT interchange between Routes I-295, NJ-42, and I-76.

The Sierra Club regards the collapsing wall is an embarrassing example of the state's overemphasis on highways construction, which includes the \$16 billion earmarked to add new lanes to the NJ Turnpike and GS Parkway. Instead, DOT should be spending taxpayers' money to motivate the switch from cars to efficient and pollution-free mass transit alternatives, such as an electrified South Jersey Light Rail Line, and replacing diesel buses with electric buses in urban areas such as Camden.

Reminder: this is an **election year for the New Jersey Legislature**. Each Legislative District is "assigned" to one of our 12 regional Groups, with a Group Political Chair in charge of liaisons. Might you be willing to get involved: by contacting your Group's Political Chair? If we have endorsed a candidate, there might be volunteer campaign office work to do, lawn and highway signs to distribute, leafletting, or other campaign chores.

There's an interactive **CALENDAR** for outings and Group events - on our website (www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/).
Click "Events and Outings"

REPORT FROM TRENTON

DRBC Moves toward a Full Ban on Fracking

Edited from a press release issued on Feb 25th, by Irene Gnarra

On February 25, the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) approved "Proposed Amendments to the Administrative Manual and Special Regulations Regarding Hydraulic Fracturing Activities." They include the prohibition of high-volume hydraulic fracturing in shale and other rock formations; provisions related to water use for hydraulic fracturing; and provisions related to the management of water waste generated by hydraulic fracturing. The culmination of 15 years of negotiations, this historic vote is a first step toward a full ban on all fracking activities in the Delaware River Basin. There is still much to be done.

The DRBC also adopted "Resolution 2021-02," which institutes a comment period and public hearings on a comprehensive ban that would address such issues as the importation of fracking wastewater and the export of water for fracking. We must help them by participating in public hearings and guaranteeing that they achieve their goals.

We must insist that the ban include regulations that protect all regional aquifers and waterways. Fracking contaminates millions of gallons of water with toxic chemicals: volatile organics including benzene, methyl benzene, and formaldehyde, which pose significant immediate and long-term risks. Many are carcinogenic.

Additionally, the DRBC should forbid fracking companies from depositing waste in the Watershed. Fracking wastewater contains as many as 600 different toxic chemicals, which would pollute land as well as drinking water. With fewer places to dump the waste, fracking might have to be banned nationwide. Importantly, pipelines will not be built to transport gas to markets, thus protecting both land and water.

We hope the DRBC will take further steps to achieve a comprehensive ban on fracking. Four years ago Gov. Murphy proposed a full ban, and in 2018 he signed a letter with Governors Carney and Wolf advocating a full ban. We will help them to keep their word.

The Delaware River supplies clean drinking water to more than 15 million people. Its Basin covers 13,000 square miles of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, and New York, including forests, open space, and waterways that provide habitat for hundreds of wildlife species. We applaud the DRBC for wishing to preserve what they consider "the exceptionally high scenic, recreational, ecological, and/or water supply values of the area." We thank the governors for their latest votes, and ask them to pursue a complete ban: to safeguard the Delaware River Basin for future generations.

REPORT FROM TRENTON

We Oppose Colliers Mills Land Swap

Edited from a press release issued on April 23rd

Our Sierra Club Chapter has formally asked the DEP to reject a land exchange with the Central Jersey Rifle and Pistol Club. The proposed swap would transfer approximately 43 acres of land that the DEP owns in Jackson Twp, Ocean Co, for approximately 87 acres of land owned by the Gun Club in Upper Freehold Twp.

This would be a bad deal for New Jersey and for open space: the state-owned property has already been badly polluted by the Gun Club, such that transferring it would absolve the Gun Club from having to remediate it. The State would take ownership of a less valuable property. Worse: the land swap would deny public access to what is now a public road. The Colliers Mills WMA is currently contaminated by lead from the Gun Club's bullets and spent ammunition, which is running off into C1 streams, leaching into the soil, and poisoning wildlife. The noise from the gun range also impacts people hiking and enjoying the wildlife refuge.

The property owned by the Gun Club and proposed for conveyance to the DEP is next to the Pleasant Run WMA. It was purchased in February, 2019, for \$246,086. According to the Proposed Land Exchange Report, the Club's land is valued at \$2,652 per acre, while the DEP's land is valued at \$3,500 per acre.

We are also concerned that the contract doesn't include a conservation easement or a stipulation to prevent development. Other land deals, such as involving Hamburg Mountain, have included language to preserve the property for conservation or recreational purposes. We smell a red herring!

New Jersey currently permits 22 gun ranges to operate on state property. There are more of them on County, Green Acres, and other public lands. Some of them have major contamination issues. The EPA intervened to fine Bergen County for permitting lead contamination of the Ramapo River. In Ringwood, the soil at Thunder Mountain Skeet Range, within Ringwood State Park, had extremely high levels of lead, arsenic, hydrocarbons, and other toxic chemicals from skeet shooting.

There's an electronic Chapter Alert Service for Environmental Action. Sign up at: <https://tinyurl.com/NJSC-alerts>. Also an e-mail updates signup: <https://tinyurl.com/NJSC-emailsub>.

REPORT FROM TRENTON

Purging an Environmental Advisory Board of Anti-Environmentalists

From a Press Release issued on April 1st

US EPA Administrator Michael Regan announced that he is dismissing 40 Trump appointees from the EPA's Science Advisory Board and the Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee. Many of them are corporate lobbyists.

Shouldn't Gov. Murphy do the same thing in New Jersey? Ex-Gov. Christie stacked NJ-DEP's Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) with polluters and developers, but Murphy hasn't replaced them yet. The Sierra Club asserts that this Board should include real scientists - for real transparency and to hold the state accountable. Murphy has been in office for almost four years. He should end Christie's war on science.

The SAB advises the DEP Commissioner on issues that impact public health and environmental protection. It includes four committees that consider Climate and Atmospheric Sciences, Ecological Processes, Public Health, and Water Quality and Quantity. Its current members include John Gannon and Gerald Kennedy from DuPont Corporation, John Dysken from United Water, Paul Bovitz from Weston, and Tom Amidon from Kleinfelder. All five have terms expiring this year.

Consider that the State is currently suing DuPont over PFAS and other contamination. DuPont has at least nine major toxic sites in NJ; its executives shouldn't be on an advisory board that advises measures to protect clean air and water, and clean up toxic sites.

REPORT FROM TRENTON

USFWS Expanding Supawna Meadows Wildlife Refuge

From a Press Release issued on February 8th

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service hopes to expand the Supawna Meadows National Wildlife Refuge (SMNWR) in Salem County, with the acquisition of a 182-acre privately-owned parcel of undeveloped wetlands and marsh that is adjacent to the Refuge. The SMNWR was established in 1974 and includes 3016 acres of wildlife habitat encompassing tidal waters and marsh, grassland, shrubland, and forest.

Expanding this Wildlife Refuge is critical. It provides a stopover and year-round home for many kinds of birds, including ospreys, bald eagles and a variety of ducks, and mammals including mink and otter. There are many important native plant species within the SMNWR; it also is a breeding ground for fish, and it protects inland areas against flooding and storm surges.

This acquisition would mark a changing tide for the refuge. In 2006, Wal-Mart Realty applied to build a 220,000 square-foot superstore on a 79-acre farm adjacent to the Refuge. The project would have added 22 acres of impervious surface, increasing stormwater runoff. The developer withdrew the application in 2008 after facing opposition from us and from other local and environmental groups; instead, the farm was added to the Wildlife Refuge.

New Jersey now has five National Wildlife Refuges: the SMNWR, the Cape May National Wildlife Refuge, the Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge (Atlantic, Burlington & Ocean Cos), the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge (Morris County), and the Wallkill River National Wildlife Refuge (Passaic & Sussex Cos).

For more detailed information about the SMNWR, click [here](#).

REPORT FROM TRENTON

Praise for NJ's Brownfield Incentive Program

From a Press Release issued on February 8th

In Mill One, Hamilton Twp, Gov. Murphy held a press conference highlighting New Jersey's program to reclaim, redevelop, and revitalize our brownfield sites. He noted two programs in the works: first a \$15 million brownfield loan program. Applicants can apply for \$100,000- \$5 million per site for revitalization, assessment, investigation, cleanup and demolition. The second program is the Brownfield Redevelopment Incentive: providing \$50 million per year in tax credits for brownfield projects. Each project can qualify for \$4 million in tax credits.

Mill One is an example of how an abandoned building can be redeveloped and leased to companies and organizations. There are solar panels on the roof. One tenant is Isles, a community development and environmental organization based in Trenton, with the mission of fostering self-reliant families and healthy, sustainable communities.

Another example is Woodbridge Waterfront Park: the site was contaminated and unused for many years. Designation as a brownfield resulted in remediation that includes restoration of natural wetland habitat. It is destined now to be a recreation area with direct public access to the Raritan River from Woodbridge. This includes walking trails, birding opportunities, and use by educators and students.

The money for these brownfield incentives comes from the corporate business tax dedication for environmental programs that the Sierra Club helped to pass in the late 1990s. We regret that, for most of the intervening years, the money from that tax dedication has been diverted to salaries for DEP staff and other uses like fixing of parks.

MEMBER'S COMMENTARY

A Biogas Solution for Newark

By Bushra Asfare of our North Jersey Group. Written for a college course. Received April 26th

Biogas is an energy-rich product of decomposed organic matter. It consists mostly of methane and carbon oxides, CO and CO₂. Sources include sludge from wastewater treatment plants, municipal solid waste in landfills, and manure. In New Jersey it is considered a renewable energy fuel, such that biogas generation projects are encouraged through incentives and tax subsidies.

Newark's Ironbound Community is especially rich in biogas potential, since the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission (PVSC) operates nearby one of the largest wastewater treatment plants in the East, treating 250 million gallons per day, and landfilling the sludge on site. Also nearby is the Covanta waste incineration plant that has been spewing air pollutants into the community for many years.

Recently, Tennessee-based Aries Clean Technologies Co. proposed to build a plant in Newark that would convert the sewage sludge to biochar, for use as a concrete thickener or fertilizer. The process would contribute an additional source of pollution in the already EJ-burdened communities of Newark.

Also, the PVSC has proposed to build a natural gas power plant (34 MW) to provide emergency electricity in disasters such as hurricanes or flooding, for which it has been awarded approximately \$150 million by FEMA, the Fed-

eral Emergency Management Agency. However, new Environmental Justice legislation, and New Jersey's recent greenhouse gas reduction plan, not to mention community objections, might hinder both proposals.

I would like to suggest a biogas alternative to both projects mentioned above, whereby the PVSC installs anaerobic sludge digesters, and uses the biogas to satisfy a portion of its energy needs. Anaerobic digesters can also handle food scraps added to the sludge, enhancing the efficiency of the digestion process, increasing the amount of biogas generated, and encouraging compliance with NJ's newly-signed Food Waste Recycling Bill. The neighboring landfills can also supply biogas collected from decomposing garbage, preventing its current release to the atmosphere and contribution to global warming.

[Notes from reviewer-members of our Editorial Board: "Although NJ considers biogas a renewable form of energy, it's not necessarily good for the environment or for climate warming." "Biogas is a dirty fuel with lots of particulates -- dirtier than fracked gas, and mostly made from animal waste and sewage sludge, as in the Aries plant in Newark. There are major environmental racism issues associated with its creation and use. The Sierra Club's national policy opposes biogas."]