



Fresh Air

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Atlantic Chapter Mid-Hudson Group Fall 2006 Vol. 38 Issue 3

Website: <http://newyork.sierraclub.org/midhudson>

Chair's Corner

Bibi Sandstrom

As I frantically prepare to leave on this year's summer vacation, I happily and somberly remember last July's. I loved **New Orleans**, and was lucky not only to go before August, but also heard a Sierra officer, Daryl, tell of the problems that beset Louisiana **before** Katrina. We may be plagued with developers in the Hudson Valley, but at least we haven't lost a football field worth of coastal land and wetlands every 3 minutes... Daryl also helped name the stretch from Baton Rouge to New Orleans "Cancer Alley" in 1987... Makes our problems with toxic wells and overdevelopment seem fixable, especially with our conservation volunteers! (check "Conservation Corner" and our website, <http://newyork.sierraclub.org/midhudson>, for details)

EEEmail Woes..... So Tell Us Again!!!


We were ready to send out the newsletter electronically to those of you who've said "yes", when my computer email folders got "corrupted" and lost since last August. I did have a list from before then, but to be sure, please give us your address again (bibis@juno.com) if you're willing to take the newsletter electronically - or if you'd like to get reminder notes about our events, such as our upcoming **TAG SALE September 9th!!**

Hall of Heroes: Dawn Osselmann for helping to defray our newsletter costs! Thanks to Adele Schultz for her donation and Mike Boyajian, recent program presenter, who donated proceeds from his book. **\$\$\$ Join our Hall of Heroes by mailing a check to Mid-Hudson Sierra Club, POB 1012, Poughkeepsie, NY 12602. Every little bit counts! \$\$\$**

Programs

Join us at the JCC – New Paltz!!

Weather: *Don't just talk about it - come learn about it!* On **Wed, October 18**, PAUL HUTH, the observer at the Mohonk Cooperative Weather Station of the National Weather Service, will teach us what they do, how they do it, and why they record the weather, as well as some of the results through lecture and slides. Mohonk is one of the premier stations for climate studies and is one of the few centenary stations - it has been in operation for 40,300 consecutive days! For 111 years they have been observing the weather (recording, not forecasting). They supply data to the federal government and to Cornell for the northeast. **Place: Jewish Community Center** on N. Chestnut Street in New Paltz at **730pm.**

Documentary:  **"Swim for the River"** to be screened **Wednesday, November 15.** Come to the **JCC at 730pm** and learn about the adventures of swimming the Hudson! Prior to the film's official release on public TV, Riverkeeper teamed up with the film's producer to organize a tour of screenings in the Hudson Valley. Either the director Tom Weidlinger or the actual swimmer, Chris Swain, will come tell us what was learned about the river and its challenges. We'll discover how the first person to swim the entire length of the Hudson River from the Adirondacks to NYC braved sewage, snapping turtles, dams, factory outfalls, and PCB contamination!

Tag Sale – Major Fundraiser \$\$\$

Our Tag Sale & Raffle - Sat, Sept. 9, at Mulligan's Pub on New Hackensack Rd., Poughkeepsie, 9:30 am - 3:30 pm. (Raindate/ Sun., Sept. 10...call the SC Sale Hotline (454-1190) to confirm.)

Volunteers!! This is a HUGE task! Your HELP is needed!! Contact Carol Jarvis at 473-5620. Pick a shift, price, sell, clean up, have fun but please help!

Donations Needed: Drop off your quality, clean items early Saturday -- volunteers will be there by 7 am. Needed: electronics in working order, toys with all the parts, hiking/camping equipment, sporting goods with some play left in them, books, tools, antiques, jewelry, framed pictures, camera equipment, etc. Clothing/shoes - NOT big sellers....**Pricing items helps a lot!!!**

Drop Off Locations: At the site – after 7am or by contacting one of the following folks: Joanne Steele (Kingston/New Paltz), 339-7562, Marjorie Russell (Hudson), 518-828-9146; Dave Page (Milton), 795-5665; Ronnie Brown (Newburgh), 565-6329, Gerald Davison, (Kingston) 339 4509 .

Fall Outings

Tonda Highley

Rating System for Hikes:

Class A – Difficult: 1500' climb/more than 8 miles

Class B - Moderate: Less than 1500' climb 6-8 mi.

Class C- Easy: well graded trails, less than 6 miles.

Contact Tonda at highleyt@newpaltz.edu or at 255-9933 if you would like to lead an outing.

Sat. Sept. 9th - TAG SALE An outing of sorts. Please attend, participate, and help!!! Call Carol at 473-5620.

Sat/Sun. Sept.16 & 17 and Sat/Sun Sept. 23 & 24, Annual Hudson Valley Ramble. 162 events are planned in this annual celebration of the Hudson Valley coordinated by the Hudson River Valley Greenway. Schedules are expected to be available online by early Aug. (www.HudsonRiverValley.com) & paper brochures by the end of August. To order, visit the website or call 518-473-3835.

Sun. Sept. 24, C +, Underhill/Overcliff hike at Mohonk Preserve. A fairly level easy hike. We will go down Underhill and then head up and down Overcliff. About a mile or two altogether. Splendid views of Wallkill Valley. Study the cliffs, note rock climbing technique, and identify soaring vultures. Free to Mohonk members, \$9 non-members. Meet at far end of West Trapps Parking lot off Rt. 44/55 at 9:00, Heavy rain cancels. Leader: Mike Boyajian (845-897-2487). Call for more information.

Sun. Oct. 8, B+, Fahnestock Park. A moderate, 7-8 mile loop hike in the autumn woods. Look for signs of wildlife as we meander meadows, along a beautiful stream, and past ponds. No big hills. Bring water, snack, and lunch. Leader: Georgette Weir, 462-0142; geweir@optonline.net. Contact for meeting place and time. Joint ADK.

Sat, Oct. 14, A+, Taconic Ridge Hike This is the first of a set of five “Walk through Geological Time” hikes (Taconic Mountains, Shawangunks, Catskills, New York City, Adirondacks) that will give us an idea of the very rich geological history of New York and of the Northeast. While hiking from Copake Falls (700') to Alander (2250'), to Brace (2311'), to South Brace (2304') we will look for clues to this area's dynamic geologic past and discuss the formation process of the North American continent eastern mountains. About 8 miles hike. Joint ADK.

Leaders: Jean-Claude Fouéré (JCFouere@optonline.net; 1-845-462 0142) and Dave Keohler (K2li@verizon.net). Contact leaders for meeting place and time, and for carpool arrangements.



Nature as a poet, an enthusiastic workingman, becomes more and more visible the farther and higher we go.

John Muir

Sun. Oct. 15, C, Poets' Walk. Discover this 120-acre park, nestled in the region's famous National Historic Landmark District. Breathtaking views of the Hudson River, Kingston-Rhinecliff Bridge and Catskill Mountains; rustic cedar pavilions. Appreciate the role of Scenic Hudson in creating a buffer zone on all sides through conservation easements that ensure the landscape's protection from development. Moderately paced 4-mile with beautiful vistas of the Hudson River and the Catskill Mountains. Meet at Poets' Walk Parking Lot at 10 am. Leader: Call Marie Caruso (452-9086) for directions and other details. Joint ADK.

Sun. Oct. 22, A+, Catskill Escarpment Trail. This will be a 10 + mile ridge loop hike, stopping at various historical points. Also Katterskill Falls and the two lakes within the state park. The hike will start at Scutt Road Trailhead just outside the state park. Leader: Tonda Highley, 255-9933, or highleyt@newpaltz.edu. Contact leader for directions if needed. Meet at Park & Ride area opposite southbound entrance to Exit 20, Thruway Saugerties.

Sat. Nov. 4, B+/A, Trail Maintenance at Minnewaska SP. Trail Maintenance on the Blueberry Run Trail between Lower Awosting Carriageway and Castle Point at Minnewaska State Park Preserve. We plan to clip back blueberry bushes and take care of any small blow downs or other minor trail obstacles. We'll hike in on the Mossy Glen Trail then pick up the Blueberry Run. Total hiking distance about 8 miles. Total time spent working won't be more than 1.5 hours. Leaders: Georgette Weir and J-C Fouere. Contact 462-0142 or geweir@optonline.net for meeting time/place.

Sun. Nov. 5, B+, Giant's Workshop. Hike to several locations on the Mohonk Preserve and find geologically telling features and remnants of the Great Ice Age. Spectacular views. Moderate 7 to 8 mile with rock scrambling through crevices. Meet at 9:30 AM at West Trapps parking area, off Route 44/55. Leader: Sherry Runk (687-7679) Call for directions and details regarding hike.

More Fall Outings on page 4



Kudos to Tonda Highley for her outings planning. Explore, Enjoy, and Protect!

Conservation Corner

Development Fears Loom in Fishkill

By Michael Boyajian

There is battle brewing over a commercial development that is bringing together environmental and historic groups in opposition. The location is in Fishkill south of I-84 off Rt. 9, the site of the Fishkill Supply Depot during the American Revolution. George Washington barracked 2,000 troops at this location and there is believed to be many artifacts from that time buried here.

There is talk that the site should become something along the lines of a Valley Forge or New Windsor Cantonment. Fishkill is rich in archeological artifacts. My own yard in the village has yielded historic bottles and Native American wampum sea shells. Many in Fishkill want to preserve the area in question for its historic significance alone.

Additionally, a member of the Fishkill Ridge Caretakers reported that the proposed development site sits a couple hundred feet from a soon-to-be-activated wellfield. Ground water from this location will supply an East Fishkill Superfund neighborhood. Special cautions should be taken with activities near a public water supply. Since the EPA advocates for superfund victims, that agency may want oversight authority. It would be most unfortunate for this community to be hit twice by environmental lightning that requires Federal intervention.

Finally, an area here was recently clear cut and now reports are coming in that an adjacent community is experiencing flooding problems. These are just some of the issues facing this community. Movement is afoot to bring together a coalition of groups like Sierra, ADK, the Fishkill Ridge Caretakers, the Fishkill Historic Society, and the Beacon Sloop Club to battle this developer. There is also talk of hashing out a compromise whereas some of the land would be developed while some is preserved as historic park land.

Belleayre Development Update

By Jim Mays

This is a quiet time for those involved in the campaign to stop the Crossroads Ventures development on the east and the west side of the ridge surrounding the State owned and operated ski area at Belleayre. The Administrative Law Judge ruled in our favor on twelve of the items we sought to have adjudicated, and, as expected, Crossroads appealed. So we're waiting a decision by the Assistant Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Conservation, due shortly.

Congressman Hinchey has proposed that the more environmentally sensitive east side should not be built on at all, and should be incorporated into the State Forest Preserve [or otherwise be protected]. If any building is to occur, it should be on the west, but only if adequate environmental safeguards can be built into the permits. No one has endorsed a build-out on the west, and Mr. Gitter hasn't responded in any meaningful way, so this is very much a "possible alternative" and not a concrete proposal. Sierra Club would, of course, prefer all the presently un-built land be permanently protected. The coalition opposed to the project has offered to talk to Mr. Gitter, but nothing is firm at this time. But there is always fund-raising to be done: the piper must be paid, so anyone interested in contributing or on assisting should contact me for more information. Jim Mays, 845-657-2013 or <james.mays@sierraclub.org>

Well Testing

by Debra Hall



It seems that the Dutchess County Executive, William Steinhaus, and the Dutchess Dept. of Health Commissioner Dr Michael Caldwell are against any kind of private well testing law. Although it was known for more than 1 year that the Board of Health changed the sanitary code to include well testing, both Steinhaus and Caldwell used their power to prevent the law from beginning on July 1st. And they waited a few days past July 1st to do so!

The Board of Health is made up of members of the medical community except one who is a member of the Dutchess County legislature. Similarly, all voted for the well testing law except for this legislature member. This same legislator's town was found to have contaminated water. I hope Ms. Horn has changed her view.

It is important to understand that Steinhaus believes that the County Legislature, people made up of builders, real estate brokers and even a gas station owner, are more qualified to promulgate a law dealing with medical regulations than the Board of Health. Can anyone else see the irony in this?

More on this issue next newsletter. In the meantime, you can read articles related to the well testing law or lack of a law at <http://hopewell-junction-citizens-for-clean-water.org/mynews.htm>.

If you have an opinion please write the Poughkeepsie Journal at letters@poughkee.gannett.com
Debra

Sat. Nov. 11, B+, Spring Farm Northeast Trail. Moderate 7 miles, some rock scrambling up to Bonticou Craig. The geological story of the Shawangunk Ridge is written in stone. This favorite hike at Spring Farm will take you to the almost bald white rocks of the ridge above which ravens and turkey vultures glide. Meet at Spring Farm Trailhead, off Mountain Rest Road, past Mohonk Mountain House entrance. Will require a fee if not a Mohonk Preserve member. Leader: Tonda Highley (highleyt@newpaltz.edu or call 255-9933) Potluck after.

Sat. Nov. 18, A-, Minnewaska State Park Hike. This is the second of the series of five “**Walk through Geological Time**” hikes. While hiking from Awosting parking area along Mossy Glen trail and up the Blueberry trail to Castle point, along the Long Path to Rainbow Falls and Jenny Lane back to Mossy Glen trail in a 8 – 9 mile loop, we will discuss the formation of the Shawangunk Ridge and of its renowned conglomerate rock, and will look for evidences of the last glaciation period. Leaders: Jean-Claude Fouéré (JCFouere@optonline.net; 1-845-462 0142) and Georgette Weir. Contact leaders for meeting place and time, and for car pool arrangements. Joint ADK.

Fri. Nov. 24, C+, Post Thanksgiving hike. Dennings Point in Beacon, part of Hudson Highlands State Park. View the Hudson from this wooded peninsula while taking note of a nesting site for the bald eagle which is closed during nesting season, December to April. The leader adds that Alexander Hamilton lived and wrote on Dennings Point. This is an easy hike of about 3 miles. Meet at 11AM at the Beacon Metro North station at the south end of the parking lot on the riverside of the station. Heavy rain cancels. Leader: Mike Boyajian (845-897-2487). Call for directions, etc.

Northeast Regional Conservation Conference (NERC) to be held September 29 – October 1, 2006. Join activists to discuss environmental challenges and solutions. Focus: Energy and its relationship to other major Club campaigns. Location: Poconos Environmental Education Center in Dingman’s Ferry, PA. Contact Mary Anne Jaffe at 1-518-587-9166 or mary.anne.jaffe@sierraclub.org.



Wanted: Sierra Kids outings coordinator. Are you interested in planning a few environmental educational outings or innings for young children and their families? Contact Nancy Keenan-Rich to discuss. 452-1727.

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