

Fresh Air

The Quarterly Newsletter of the
Atlantic Chapter Mid-Hudson Group



SIERRA
CLUB
FOUNDED 1892

Our website:
newyork.sierraclub.org/midhudson

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Chair's Corner

Joanne Steele

Consider the title of Sheldon S. Wolin's book, *Democracy Incorporated: Managed Democracy and the Specter of Inverted Totalitarianism*. Henry A. Giroux quotes Wolin and writes in Truthout (truth-out.org), "Corporate sovereignty has replaced political sovereignty, and the state has become largely an adjunct of banking institutions and financial service industries." It seems to me that the same can too often now be said of the EPA, the DEC and the rest of the alphabet soup of governmental environmental agencies. That's our struggle and the sufferance of the many good people in those agencies. It's going to take us all to restore and keep our environment healthy and habitable. You're counting on us and we're counting on you.

And there you were, at the DEC's public hearing on May 29th on the proposed Crossroads development held at the Belleayre Mountain Ski Center. An approaching nasty storm forced my exit preventing my testifying at the hearing, but I submitted my written Belleayre Mountain/Crosslands Development SEQRA comments to the DEC by the July 24th deadline. (see Conservation Corner)

Your Group (MHG) was a sponsor (Summer Newsletter) of the Two Row Wampum Campaign (www.honorhetworow.com) which ended on August 9-10 in NYC at the UN's International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples. I paddled up the Hudson on July 30th from a put-in in Athens, to greet the two rows of paddlers. Paddling upriver on a gorgeous morning, the first to be seen was the flag of the "Onrust", a Dutch ship accompanying the

paddlers downriver, and a little later I could make out a hundred tiny dots (the paddlers) in front. I greeted them and then paddled along with the flotilla downriver to their lunch stop. At their evening stop in Catskill, volunteers Lisa Jackson, Shelley Bance and I staffed a table for several hours adjacent to the gazebo to which we stapled our Sierra Club banner. We displayed our pamphlets, membership brochures and free anti-fracking literature and bumper stickers. Chief Jack Manno, in his native tongue, gave a long and inspiring blessing in great detail of this world (later translated in brief): of mother earth and her plants and animals and of the sun, the moon, winds and rain. He spoke of the Indian way of taking **only** what is given, adding emphatically that he didn't think that materials a mile below our feet was **given** to us (hydrofracking). Your Group also tabled at Beacon, another evening stop for the flotilla, with the help of volunteers Bill Collier, Carol Jarvis, Lena Smolon, Marie Caruso and Ed & Judie Mackie. At each occasion, you members showed up, too. Your caring and support are impressive! Thank you all

Our labor is freely and generously donated by you our members, and by your MHG Board members. Some of the costs are also donated by your Board members. However, consultants and lawyers, rental space and other necessary costs require your financial help as you might be able. Thank you to Dawn Osselman for your help. As we all know, you're depending on us and we're depending on you.

Public Programs

PROGRAMS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBIC. BRING A FRIEND!

See our website: newyork.sierraclub.org/midhudson for more details.

Wednesday, October 9th, 7pm

Our Wondrous Sky and How Light Pollution Affects It

Please be our guest at the John R. Kirk Indoor Planetarium in the Coykendall Science Building on the campus of SUNY New Paltz. Their new sky projector provides an immersive, transformative experience and creates a more dynamic atmosphere for viewers. But, what would the night time sky look like when light pollution takes over...come see. If the night sky permits, an outside telescope will be available for us to view our universe after the show.

NOTE: This is a limited seating event. You must email us to reserve your seat!!! mhsierraprograms@yahoo.com.

Directions: 845-257-7869 or go to newpaltz.edu/planetarium/directions.html

Wednesday, November 20th, 7pm

Light Up The World

This program is presented by Jean-Claude Fouere who recently completed a field trip for LUTW in the High Andes of Peru. "While in Peru, we installed low power solar systems and LED lights at the home of thirty alpaca herder families, providing far better and safer lighting than polluting, fire-prone candles." Light Up The World (www.lutw.org) is a Canadian non-profit organization dedicated to promoting safe and efficient lighting in remote, poor agricultural communities of Central and South America. The presentation will be followed by Q & A's about the need for safe and efficient lighting, worldwide, Light Up The World's programs, and this field trip in the High Andes.

Want to Get More Involved?

We have a wonderful **Program Chair**, JoyAnn, who would appreciate help with implementation and publicity. Do phone calls, propose programs. Contact JoyAnn at sunchipseac@yahoo.com. Our **Political Chair**, Andi, would be grateful for phone and text help contacting political figures from Dutchess and Ulster Counties and portions of Columbia, Green, Sullivan and Rockland). Our **Outings Chair**, Andy Moss is looking for people who would like to lead local Sierra Club outings of any kind. Contact Andy at andy@hvi.net. We are also in search of a **Secretary** to take minutes of our monthly Executive Committee meetings in New Paltz. Contact our **Volunteer Chair**, Marie (who would also appreciate a little help) at (845) 452-9086 or mariehv@verizon.net, if you have any questions.

Below are my SEQRA comments on the Crossroads Ventures LLC (Crossroads) revised SDEIS for Wildacres Hotel and Highmount Spa at Belleayre Mountain Ski Center (BMSC), NYS DEC Unit Management Plan (UMP) for BMSC and NYS DEC "Cumulative Impact" of the UMP DEIS and the Crossroads SDEIS. Yes, "they" bunched it all up together and had one public hearing in the middle of the week. I find a lot wrong with that. My comments are addressed to Daniel Whitehead, DEC Region 3 Environmental Permit Administrator.

The public comment period should be extended until the end of the summer with additional public hearings for the public, in particular for our seasonal residents and Park users.

No market study was done on potential customers for this ski resort. Nor do we have a financial study of the viability of the developer or of the project here. Making ski runs on the sunny side of the mountain and having them criss-cross is unlikely to be either viable or attractive.

According to the SDEIS and UMP, we taxpayers will buy the defunct Highmount Ski Center parcel from the Applicant, Crossroads Ventures, a 79 acre property which Crossroads reportedly bought for approximately \$3,000 per acre. Also reportedly, the price of the Highmount parcel to NY taxpayers will be \$5,000,000, which works out to about \$63,291 an acre. Really? Recently, the DEC purchased 266 acres on Overlook Mountain in Woodstock for \$3,225 an acre.

The SDEIS for the Belleayre Resort is jumbled together with the UMP for the Belleayre Ski Center. The UMP must be presented last, should the permits be granted, and after the design is complete.

There are natural limits to water absorption for soils, especially thin soils here. The velocity of the flow can be controlled with greater expense to the developer... but the Volume cannot.

On the matter of developer expense, there is no maintenance plan post construction for porous pavement, not for detention ponds, not for dry swales, not for the bio-retention area. The porous pavement requirement needs to be added at Discovery Lodge.

Under SEQRA law, it is required that the applicant present a Range of Alternatives which is totally absent in this File. Is the developer's 'not making enough money' a reason to allow exclusion?

How is the unconstitutional land transfer to be handled? How does the State intend to buy land for the forest preserve and then transform it into "intensive use" without a Constitutional amendment?

Concerning the 74 Million of our public money: what are we buying?

I greatly appreciate the concern you have for our environment. I feel sorry that the DEC is in the middle with many pressures placed on you all, while provided so little funds to help.

Supporting Atlantic Chapter's response, lest this come to a landfill near you, I responded to the DEC against the Casella-owned (Angelica Township, Allegany County) Hyland Landfill's application to the DEC for a permit to increase by half its yearly tonnage of frack waste from PA. On 6/29 our Atlantic Chapter Excom adopted the following action presented by the Gas Drilling Task Force:

"The Atlantic Chapter of the Sierra Club calls for the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to adopt administrative rules and regulations to prohibit the deposit of gas drilling wastes in New York landfills, to prohibit New York wastewater treatment plants from accepting gas drilling wastes and leachate from landfills taking gas drilling waste, and to prohibit the roadspreading of gas drilling wastes in New York. Landfills and treatment plants currently accepting such wastes must be notified that such wastes may no longer be accepted. While the DEC is preparing such rules and regulations, the DEC should put on hold any permit applications from landfills and wastewater treatment plants seeking to expand operations to increase capacity and acceptance rates to facilitate taking more gas drillings wastes, including the applications of the Hyland landfill at 6653 Herdman Road in the Town of Angelica, Allegany County, New York."

Williams Lake Report

by Marie Caruso

This summer saw several crucial developments in the Williams Lake saga.

The DEC released its Findings on July 10, approving the project in its entirety, albeit with some mitigation measures designed to protect the endangered bats and other sensitive habitats. The concerns of our Williams Lake committee and scientific consultants, Erik Kiviat, Paul Rubin, and John Keith, were largely ignored. Decisions about the project's compatibility with the Rosendale Comprehensive Plan and the required zoning amendment were deferred to the Town of Rosendale, which held

a contentious public hearing Aug. 14 on the zoning amendment (called the Binnewater Lakes Conservation Planned Development Area, or BLCPPDA). The Sierra Club was, for the first time in this case, represented by an attorney, David Gordon, who, like all the speakers, was allowed a 3-minute statement. Several other Sierrans and Save the Lakes supporters spoke, many expressing concerns about the project's non-compliance with the Rosendale Comprehensive Plan and lack of assurances for public access. Characteristic of the Rosendale community, project opponents and supporters were seemingly pretty much evenly divided. The Town Board reluctantly voted to extend the comment period to Aug. 21 for written comments.

Political Corner

Andi Weiss Bartczak

Our Group decided that the November town races in Rosendale are environmentally important because the proposed Williams Lake overdevelopment goes to the town for final approvals. Peter Fiorentino did his best to figure out which of our members are registered in Rosendale and sent me 40 listings. I decided to ask our Group members to attend the July 29th Rosendale Democratic Caucus to ask environmental questions of potential candidates and report back to me. I sent emails to 20 members, with three bouncebacks. I left phone messages for the 16 that had only phone

numbers listed; the only two I talked with were Town of Rochester voters and I was unable to connect with three others. One emailed back that he would be attending. I have not heard back from any of the 31 that were contacted.

You can help protect and improve our environment through political action and communication with our legislators. To find out how you can participate please contact: *Andi Weiss Bartczak, andiwbartczak@yahoo.com, (845) 255-4371*

The following outings were announced and organized through our online Outings site: www.Meetup.com/SierraClubNY. If you would like to participate please join the website to be notified by email. We always need volunteers to leading outings. Please contact me: Andy Moss, Outings Chair, for more information. (845-336-5446, andy@hvi.net)

**May 18
Castle Point and Rainbow Falls**

This is a classic hike that combines two of Minnewaska State Park's best features: Castle Point, which is the highest point in the park with remarkable views of the Hudson River Valley; and



Some of our hikers daring to get close to the edge of the precipice.

Rainbow Falls, a beautiful hike through a ravine that leads to this dramatic waterfall. We had a large group on this hike as we picked up some AMC hikers who missed their hiking group in New Paltz. They were new to the area so were happy to join us on our hike at Minnewaska.



Happy hikers on the way to Rainbow Falls after leaving Castle Point.

**June 22
Wittenberg Mountain**

This is one of the Catskill 35 (there are 35 peaks over 3500' in elevation). It is a rugged hike over varied terrain that is about 9 miles roundtrip. We start the hike in the day-use parking area

at the Woodland Valley Campground. The hike starts steep but moderates up with several rock scrambles along the way. Our effort was rewarded by the view of the Ashokan Reservoir. We took time to enjoy our lunch and relax before beginning our return down the mountain.



left: On the summit with the Ashokan Reservoir in the background. right: Taking a break by a rock wall on the return hike.



Two Row Wampum Campaign festivities, Beacon, NY

left: Unity Riders

right: Lena Smolon & Bill Collier at the Sierra Club table



left: Two Row Wampum paddlers on the Hudson River; right: Crew boats at end of Two Row Wampum paddle

Mid-Hudson
Sierra Club
P.O. Box 1012
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Non-profit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Newburgh, NY 12550
Permit No. 8604

ANNUAL TAG SALE

All proceeds benefit our Mid-Hudson Group

Calling all Sierrans! Please Donate, Promote, Purchase, Volunteer.

Saturday, September 21st, 9:00 am - 3:00 pm

Rain Date: Sunday, September 22nd, 9:00 am - 3:00 pm

Drop-Off: Friday, September 20th 1:00 pm - 6:00 pm (rain or shine)

Location: **Mulligan's Irish House**

2146 New Hackensack Road, Poughkeepsie, NY 12603

DONATE: Collect and bring donations to Mulligan's on Friday, September 20th between 1:00 pm and 6:00 pm (rain or shine), or early on the date of the sale. We are looking for donations of books, CD's, toys with all the parts, hiking/camping equipment (including jackets, ski boots, hiking accessories), sporting goods in good condition, tools, antiques, small furniture, kitchen items, glassware, pictures, camera equipment, etc. in good condition. All electronics must be in good working order. We do not sell clothing or shoes.

Can't make it to the Sale or Drop-Off? Let us know. ***We have volunteers who are willing to pick up goods or they can be dropped off early if need be. Call for more information.***

PROMOTE: Let your friends and family know about the sale. We have a poster on our website that you can download, print and post.

PURCHASE: Come to the sale and find great buys for yourself and others. The benefits are many — low prices, great selection, recycling goods, and helping your local Sierra Club!

VOLUNTEER: We can use your help! Can you spare 3 hours or more? Let us know. Help is needed on Friday and Saturday. To volunteer or for more information contact David Friedman, Tag Sale Chair, or Marie Caruso, Volunteer Coordinator (see below).

DAY OF SALE ANNOUNCEMENTS: Any rain announcements or special pre-sale announcements will be on our tag sale hotline. Call 845-255-2635.

If you have questions or can help, contact one of our coordinators:

David Friedman, Tag Sale Chair
845-255-2635 (Barner Books)
Email: Friedman_David@msn.com
Cell: 845-701-6229 (calls or text)

Marie Caruso
Volunteer Coordinator
845-452-9086
Email: mariehv@verizon.net