

# Fresh Air

The Quarterly Newsletter of the  
Atlantic Chapter Mid-Hudson Group



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Our website:  
[newyork.sierraclub.org/midhudson](http://newyork.sierraclub.org/midhudson)

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## Chair's Corner

Joanne Steele

How about this “crazy weather”? There’s no shortage of climate change warnings happening all around us. According to a draft United Nations report, Nations have so dragged their feet in battling climate change that the situation has grown critical and the risk of severe economic disruption is rising. The authors of the report also state that another 15 years of failure to limit carbon emissions could make the problem virtually impossible to solve with current technologies. They found that the risk of severe economic disruption is rising and further delay would likely force future generations to develop the capability to suck greenhouse gases out of the atmosphere and store them underground to preserve the livability of the planet. However, they acknowledge that it is not clear whether such technologies will ever exist at the necessary scale, and even if they do, the approach would likely be wildly expensive compared with taking steps now to slow emissions. The question is, expensive for who? The fossil fuel industries won’t put up with stranded assets without a fight. That job is ours, yours and mine, (yes, it is inconvenient). We must step up our efforts to stop the fossil fuel industries from anything further than stepping off the stage. We must make our government redirect the enormous subsidies of fossil fuels industries to the ready, environmentally sustainable wind, solar and other such energies. Write letters to your representatives!

Right now, we are dealing with hydrofracking, droughts, compressor stations, LNG terminals for exporting our American gas to higher-priced foreign markets, destruction of sand ecosystems for hydrofracking material, the Keystone XL pipeline, natural gas pipelines, electric High-lines, water desalination plants, wetlands destruction, coal waste spills, over-development

### Oil Tanker Rail Cars at Risk

Our government may require oil companies to upgrade aging oil tank cars to help prevent explosions. Railroads and oil refiners are negotiating now over costly proposals to update/replace the aged DOT-111 cars. President Obama could urge federal regulators to quickly come up with new safety rules. Congress could pass legislation. However, Obama has been mostly silent on the issue, and congressional leaders haven’t pushed bills to increase rail safety. Hearings on the matter are getting under way on Capitol Hill this month. (adapted from Matthew Phillips, *Bloomberg Business Week*)

on fragile lands, plastic micro-beads, the overreaching Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), and many more... Phew! Write letters to your representatives!

Over a million gallons of crude oil was spilled in train derailments in 2013, more, according to the Pipeline and Hazardous Material Safety Administration, than the combined total spilled in the prior 38 years. These “oil-bomb” trains carry Bakkan Shale fracked crude oil from North Dakota and the heavier Canadian tar sands oil, a hundred oil cars or more at a time (no limit required), though Kingston and many other cities nationwide. The DOT-111 rail cars are not reinforced (replacement not required) and rather than spend the \$3.6 billion for safer rail cars, the petro-industry is pushing for approval of the Keystone XL pipeline. Yet, the North Dakota Mineral Resources Department estimates that in 2014 around 90% of the state’s crude oil, nearly 1 million barrels a day, will move by rail. This amount exceeds the estimated capacity of 830,000 barrels a day of the Keystone XL Pipeline which is already intended for use by the heavier Canadian Tar sands oil, the production of which in 2012 exceeded 1.2 million barrels per day. Attorney Anthony Swift (National Resources Defense Council) notes that the Bakken Shale Energy companies prefer rail transport, finding it more flexible than pipelines. Based on capacity alone, it’s obvious that the rail shipments will continue. This leaves us with the thin-skinned DOT-111 rail cars which, from the derailments, have been found severely corroded on their inside walls, covers and valves. Write more of those letters to your representatives! Yes, we can all do this!

Oil Train data sourced from Betsy Piette, *Workers' World.*”

## Conservation Corner

Joanne Steele

*Williams Lake Subcommittee Report* by Marie Caruso

On January 29th, as promised, the developers of the Williams Lake Project, Hudson River Valley Resorts (HRVR) announced the placement of an additional 105 acres of their land into a conservation easement held by the Rondout-Esopus Land Conservancy. A stipulation of their project approval, this easement will protect the hibernacula of the endangered Indiana bat. According to the DEC, the Williams Lake hibernacula complex is used by 50% of the east coast Indiana bat population and is crucial to the continued survival of the species in this region.

On the political front, the project-supporting Republicans on the Rosendale Town Board maintained their majority in December by reappointing Ken Hassett to the Board as Deputy Supervisor, despite his loss in the November election. Hassett was appointed to take the place of a member who resigned to become highway superintendent. Thus the Town Board remains under the control

of project supporters despite their loss to two more conservation-minded Democrats in November. This action underscores the importance of keeping a watchful eye on what our local elected officials are doing.

### Is More Development Coming?

Another large property in the Binnewater Lakes region, the 232-acre Rosendale Retreat Center, whose property includes First Binnewater Lake, has recently been placed on the market for \$4.6 million. Unless protective measures are put in place, the entire Binnewater Lakes region could be threatened by over-development which would do irreparable harm to the area’s significant ecology. **Strong conservation-minded individuals are desperately needed to advocate for the protection of the Binnewater Lakes.** For more information, please contact me at [mariehv@verizon.net](mailto:mariehv@verizon.net) or 845-452-9086.

The following information must be very significant, because I had to call not only my county Board of Elections but also the state Board of Elections. Nobody at the county BoE knew the answers and at the state BoE the staffer had to go off and find out. All of our statewide offices are in play: governor and lieutenant governor, comptroller, and attorney general. All positions in our state legislature, state senate and state assembly seats, are in play. At the federal level, all congressional seats are in play, but neither of our federal senators is up for re-election.

Congressional primaries will be in June, but state primaries may

be again in September or perhaps moved to June, which would save taxpayers the costs of two primary days. In 2012 we offered our political questionnaires to candidates in the 41st state senate district, and 103rd, 104th, 105th and 106th assembly districts. We also offered political questionnaires to the candidates in our new 19th Congressional district. So find out which state senate and assembly districts you are in as well as which Congressional district. There's a lot of work to be done before and after candidates are endorsed, so your help would be appreciated.

*Andi Weiss Bartczak, andiwbartczak@yahoo.com, (845) 255-4371*

**Public Programs**

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

*See our website: [newyork.sierraclub.org/midhudson](http://newyork.sierraclub.org/midhudson) for more details.*

**Thursday, March 27, 7pm**

**Film Screening: *Dear Governor Cuomo***

The documentary film *Dear Governor Cuomo* will be shown on the SUNY New Paltz campus thanks to the campus Environmental Task Force. Come share the joy of watching hundreds of activists committed to keeping our waters clean and watch musicians perform who share our determination to make a difference in protecting our environment and ourselves from fracking. Don't miss Pete Seeger's inimitable warning to Governor Cuomo. Details are being worked out about whether the producer and/or Natalie Merchant, who organized the musical performances, will be there, or whether a local musician will serenade us before the film. A panel will be available to answer your questions after the film. For directions and more details, check our MidHudson Group website.

**Thursday, April 24, 7pm**

***What To Do About Solar Energy...***

We know that the need for renewable energy is clear. Fossil fuels are putting the environment at risk. Fuel costs are volatile while pollution and climate change threaten our security and future. Solar energy and energy efficiency are key to protecting the environment and growing the economy. They help tackle climate change and promote energy independence. Experts will join us to answer the many questions you may have regarding solar energy from the installation, to the costs and the options of owning or leasing. For further information please email, [mhsierraprograms@aol.com](mailto:mhsierraprograms@aol.com)

Location: Boughton Place, 150 Kisor Road, Highland, NY, 7pm

**Thursday May 22, 7pm**

***A Night of Wildlife, Rats And Raptors***

Please join us to welcome wildlife rehabilitator, Annie Mardiney as she shares her joys and the hardships of caring for injured wildlife. Learn what to do when you find baby birds that have fallen from their nest, orphaned bunnies or an eagle tangled in fishing line. Learn what you can do to prevent injuries and death to our beautiful wildlife from asking your town to install fishing line recovery tubes, to changing the type of rat poison or pesticides you use.

Annie will be bringing some very special raptor (owls and hawks) guests with her. She will have some slides to share and lots of handouts. If you would like further information please email: [mhsierraprograms@aol.com](mailto:mhsierraprograms@aol.com)

Location: Boughton Place, 150 Kisor Road, Highland, NY, 7pm

**Go Solar with the Sierra Club**

The Sierra Club has partnered with Sungevity to promote solar panel installations. When you go solar with the Sierra Club, you are joining more than 1,100 who have chosen to move toward a clean-energy future. Feel confident about going solar with Sungevity, a company that is a trusted partner of the Sierra Club. When you go solar, Sungevity sends \$750 back to your local Sierra Club chapter to continue the important on-the-ground work chapters are doing every day to explore, enjoy, and protect the planet. Solar puts your money to work for you: As utility rates continue to rise, solar leasing allows you to lock in lower utility rates through low solar lease payments. With these leasing options, an average Sungevity customer saves 15 percent on electricity costs from day one.

To find out more visit: <http://content.sierraclub.org/solar/>

We thank the following members and friends for their helpful contributions to our group:

**Dawn Osselman  
Jonathan Wechsler  
Jack & Nancy Persely  
Susanne Moss  
Henry Westmoreland**

*Contributions can be sent to  
Mid-Hudson Sierra Club  
POB 1012  
Poughkeepsie, NY 12602-1012*

Deductible Contributions may be sent to the above name & address, but made out to Sierra Club Foundation with Mid-Hudson Sierra Club in the memo line.

Again, thank you all so much!

*Outings are posted at: [meetup.com/sierraclubny](http://meetup.com/sierraclubny). To participate please join the website to receive email announcements. If you are interested in leading an outing, please contact me: Andy Moss, Outings Chair, (845) 336-5446 or [andy@hvi.net](mailto:andy@hvi.net).*

On Sunday, February 16th, we enjoyed a day in deep snow on the High Peterskill Trail at Minnewaska State Park. The snow pack was at least 30" deep in some areas. We were fortunate that others had been there before us to "break" trail. But where we were the first it was slow going as we would sink down 12" or more—even though we were using snowshoes. What a fantastic winter wonderland.



### Environmental Information and Action

(NOTE: The links below are shortcut URLs. They will bring up the desired web page.)

1. On August 5, the American Geophysical Union released an updated statement on climate change calling for "urgent action".  
Visit: <http://goo.gl/OWmMp6>
2. Why almost all environmental groups say that the best thing you can do is to switch to a Plant based diet! "Ruminants, climate change and climate policy" Visit: <http://goo.gl/mdezVj>
3. Announcing "Climate Action Across America," April 21 to 25.  
Visit: <http://goo.gl/Xcpuan>
4. Over 200 scientists who identify themselves as evangelical Christians told Congress that action is "urgently needed" to address climate change. Visit: <http://goo.gl/pqzQGv>

The **American Legislative Exchange Council** is using pay-to-play politics to push their pollution agenda on our elected officials and state legislatures. ALEC meets behind closed doors with big oil companies like ExxonMobil and Koch Industries. Together, they work to repeal the environmental safeguards that keep our air clean and drinking water safe. The ALEC agenda blocks the use of renewable and clean energy, supports controversial "fracking," denies the science of climate change, and seeks to repeal pollution defenses. Not surprisingly, these bills would directly benefit many of ALEC's corporate members. **Tell ALEC to stop putting polluters before people today!** Go to [StandUpToALEC.org](http://StandUpToALEC.org) and click on their fact sheet link for more information.

### Science Snippet...

**CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT IN THE U.S. ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT was analyzed for political motives.** A comparison of species petitioned by citizens for listing versus species identified by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) for listing determined that species litigated for listing were more threatened than species listed without litigation. Citizen-initiated listed species were more likely to be in conflict with development than those listed by FWS initiative. Species in conflict with development face significantly greater biological threat levels than species not in conflict with development. *Science*, Vol. 337 (8/17/12), p. 803.

*This information is provided by Dr. Andi Weiss Bartczak. For more Science Snippets, Science Trivia and FYI FactSheets, visit [www.scienceforcitizens.org](http://www.scienceforcitizens.org)*

See more Canadian Tar Sands Oil Mining photos: <http://goo.gl/8E40iw>




### Want to Get More Involved With Local Conservation?


We have a wonderful **Program Chair**, JoyAnn, who would appreciate help with the implementation and publicity of our programs. Contact JoyAnn at [sunchipseac@yahoo.com](mailto:sunchipseac@yahoo.com). Our **Political Chair**, Andi, would be grateful for help contacting political figures from Dutchess and Ulster Counties, and portions of Delaware, Greene and Orange. 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](mailto: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](mailto:mariehv@verizon.net), if you have any questions.

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Join Us for our Annual, fun-filled  
**New Member Party**  
Saturday, March 29th!



If you're a new member – or even if you're not,  
come to our Party 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm!

Enjoy free food, snacks, goodies; win door prizes;  
see the history of our Group through older newsletters;  
meet your fellow members; and have fun!

*Location:* Boughton Place, 150 Kisor Road, Highland

Boughton Place is on Kisor Road just off Route 299.  
(Look for Raizman Automotive at the corner of Kisor and 299)

#### READ YOUR NEWSLETTERS ONLINE

You can help our Group save printing and mailing costs by choosing to read your newsletters online. You may do so by contacting Dave Thomas, our Database Administrator: [dave@davidalexanderthomas.com](mailto:dave@davidalexanderthomas.com). Be sure to include your full name and email address in the body of the email. At the time newsletters are mailed you will receive an Email with a link to the PDF version posted on our website. If at some future time you decide you would prefer a printed newsletter, send your request to Dave Thomas.