

Fresh Air



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The Quarterly Newsletter of the Atlantic Chapter Mid-Hudson Group

Spring 2010 Vol.42 Issue 1

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

CHAIR'S CORNER by Joanne Steele

Spring is coming somewhere down there under the snow where it's currently parked -- under last fall's earthy home. But your excom is already in gear and now numbers eight, empowered by your returned election ballots which were printed in our Winter newsletter. Returned to your excom are Ralph Pollard and Marie Caruso who are now aided by elected Dave Friedman and by write-ins Irwin Sperber and Peter Fiorentino. After dickering some, your officers and chairs were re-/appointed as follows:

Chair: Joanne Steele

Vice-Chair: Bibi Sandstrom (temporarily)

Secretary: Marie Caruso

Treasurer: Ralph Pollard

Chapter Delegate: Gerald Davison

Alternate Chapter Delegate: none, but Marie, Irwin, and David will support

Fundraising Chair: David Friedman

HELEN/MUIR database administrator: Dave Thomas

Issues (Conservation) Chair: Joanne Steele, with members Marie, Irwin, and David

Publicity Chair: Beth Cashara

Membership Chair: Bibi Sandstrom

Program Chair: Bibi Sandstrom (temporarily)

Political Chair: vacant

Tag Sale Chair: vacant

Webmaster and Newsletter Editor: Kevin McKenzie

To contact us, just email the Chair at sierraclubjoanne@gmail.com or phone me at 845-338-0300. I hope you can make it to the New Member program, to our Spring programs, to our Earth Day cleanup (followed by an optional lunch with us), to the March 8th Forum and to the Atlantic Chapter's March 12th statewide lobby day.

It was an honor to testify on your behalf on Feb.17th before the Hudson Valley Catskill Regional SEQR (State Environmental Quality Review) hearings. The hearing officers are a working group of three, formed and mandated by New York State DEC (Department of Environmental Conservation) Commissioner Pete Grannis to "gathering public input and ideas for streamlining SEQRA (SEQR Act) without compromising environmental protection or public participation." The working group is chaired by DEC Region 3 Director Willie Janeway, Pattern for Progress President Jonathan Drapkin and Scenic Hudson President Ned Sullivan. In a short discourse including the words "greed" "moneyed" and "profit", I proposed that non-profits representing the public good, distinct from government, be funded (as an indigent is provided a public lawyer) to challenge inappropriate development. Another proposal concerned the failure of the developer and government to disclose to us do-good non-profits and to the public and abutters, what the developer's up to, such that his output to government must be "foiled" (requested formally by an application to government based on the Freedom of Information Act), requesting that the developer be required to disclose. The third proposal would require that the developer and government take into account scientific and other studies of the proposed development presented by qualified individuals prior to the submission by the developer of its DEIS (Draft Environmental Impact Statement). The 37 recommendations that have already been proposed are described in the 24 page summary draft document at <http://www.pattern-for-progress.org/reports.html>. I will submit these proposals in writing, and you can also submit yours to R3SEQRWorkgroup@gw.dec.state.ny.us prior to the March 17th deadline.

On March 8th I plan on attending the SUNY New Paltz Environmental Task Force's public forum, "The Future of Gas Drilling in New York State." to be held at SUNY New Paltz, 1 Hawk Drive, New Paltz, NY 12561. I hope you will join me if this newsletter reaches you in time! This event will feature a closing keynote by U.S. Congressman Maurice Hinchey, representatives from New York City, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) and the gas industry. ScheinMedia founder and CEO Jonathan A. Schein will serve as a moderator of the panel section of the event. For further information about this event, contact Paul McGinniss at (845) 626-2999 or greenadvocate@scheinmedia.com.

Coming right up, on March 12th I shall attend our Atlantic Chapter's (which represents the entire state of New York) statewide lobby day. Sierra Club members and non-members are welcome to lobby with us (just contact me to pitch in!). Our agenda will be protecting parks, new open space protection, and DEC staffing levels from the budget process; and continuing to educate our legislators about the risks of hydrofracking and the Marcellus shale. Contact me (above) and please register at <http://newyork.sierraclub.org/events/LobbyDay.html>

You can see that we all have plenty of work to do to protect --I just can't say it enough-- this gorgeous earth. I hope you can join us!

PROGRAM CORNER

The new normal location for Speaker Socials is the Hudson River Rowing Association's boathouse, in Poughkeepsie, near Marist. Directions to the boathouse can be found on the website, and on page 4.

Saturday March 20th, 2010, 7pm - NEW MEMBER PARTY - New Paltz Village Hall

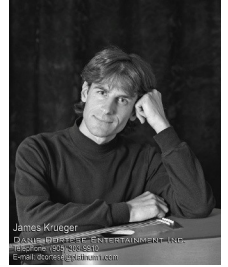
food & desserts, music & fun, newsletters & info.

Sat April 17, 2010, 9:00 am: Help clean up the Hudson River

Sat Apr 17: Help our host (Hudson River Rowing Association) clean up the Hudson River for Earth Day! 9am-noon cleanup; if you like, bring food and stick around after noon for lunch later with other members/friends. They are also having a Free Learn-to-Row Workshop in the morning which everyone is welcome to participate in but people need to pre-register for that so they have enough equipment - go to www.hudsonriverrowing.org.

Wed April 21st, 7:30 pm - James Krueger talks about John Muir

You were struck by the beauty of James Krueger's nature songs back in November 2004 (and during new member parties!). Now, on John Muir's birthday, come learn more about Sierra Club's founder from this talented singer and songwriter. He will speak a little about John Muir's life, read a little from his writings, and play a song or two. Copies of his CDs will be available for purchase.



Sat and Sunday, April 24 - 25 - Earth Day 40 - Dutchess County Fairgrounds

Tree plantings, Farmers Market, Educational presentation series, Shows and hands-on activities for kids, Organic cooking demonstrations & tastings, Environmental NGOs exhibits and activities, Musicians for Clean Air concerts, E-waste and CFL takeback, GPS Earthcaching, Road and foot races, Makers' Square and swappalooza, Hayrides and animal activities, Green vendors exhibition, Hall of clean energy. If anyone can help staff a booth here, contact us ASAP!

Wed May 19, 730pm: Presentation on Galapagos Islands

You were delighted with Will & Cheryl Cass's presentation of their trip to the Arctic Circle last year; now come learn about the Galapagos Islands as these world travelers show and tell us about their trip to the land of boobies and giant tortoises via pictures and a DVD!



Wed Jun 16, 7pm - Dan Guenther's into "Coal Country"

Eco-activist Dan Guenther's six-month foray into "Coal Country"; 40-minute DVD and Dan's trip to W Virginia to try to stop mountain top removal

A decorative border of rowing oars surrounds the text.

New Member Party!

You're invited to a party Saturday March 20th!

New to Sierra? New to our Group? New at attending events, even if you've been a member for a while? Or, just interested in meeting your fellow members, finding out more about Sierra, eating pizza and snacks and desserts, listening to music with an environmental theme, winning door prizes, and having a good time?

Then come, new or "old", to the New Member Party at New Paltz Village Hall (large room upstairs) at 25 Plattekill Avenue on Saturday March 20th starting at 7pm! No need to bring anything and you don't have to RSVP; however, if there's lots of snow & ice, snow date is Friday March 26th. 845-255-5528 or bibis@juno.com.

Report on Two Invasive Species

Gerald Davison

(Full version may be seen on the Mid-Hudon website)

Two invasive insects, the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) and the Asian Long-Horned Beetle (ALB), both from Asia, have found their way to North America recently, probably transported accidentally in wooden pallets. Looking ahead, these two insects together appear to have the potential to drastically alter the entire character of our eastern forests by potentially eliminating all ash trees and maple trees from the forests.

There is no way known to eradicate these insects once they are spread over a wide area. Therefore the only way to save our forests is to prevent the insects from spreading much beyond the areas that are already infected.

This report is a call to action. **If you see any of these insects, please contact Steve Sanford of the NY DEC Invasive Species Task Force at (518) 402-8924.**

Emerald Ash Borer Overview: The EAB attacks and kills all of our several species of ash trees and was first detected in Michigan in 2001. Since then it has been spreading eastward, state-by-state, despite efforts to contain it, until now in 2009 it has been detected in western New York State (the Randolph area of Cattaraugus County). It has also made its way into Canada and there is rumored to be an outbreak south of Montreal (which would put it pretty close to our Adirondacks). In the southern counties of Michigan's Lower Peninsula, where the original outbreak started, the ash trees are now history. Dead. Farther north in the Lower Peninsula, where the EAB arrived later, the infestation is widespread, though not yet complete. But it is just a matter of time before the ash trees are history throughout the Lower Peninsula. Similarly for other states: the state of Ohio has a bulletin out on the economics of salvaging ash trees. The EAB has been spreading by leapfrogging 50 or 100 or more miles at a time. This is thought to be the result of human transport of firewood and nursery stock and (in one instance) logs to a sawmill. When left to its own devices the insect is believed to spread naturally only about one mile per year from light infestations and about 6-10 miles per year from heavy infestations.

Asian Long-Horned Beetle Overview: The ALB attacks and kills our several species of maple trees and has made its way into urban areas of the United States several times. Until recently these urban outbreaks were successfully contained and eliminated by removing and burning all infected trees in the relatively small infected areas, However this year (2009) a large, previously unrecognized infestation covering about 70 square miles was discovered in Worcester, Massachusetts. Apparently the 70 square mile area is largely urban, but also includes some natural forest area, which is giving scientists their first opportunity (conclusions not yet drawn) to see how this insect will behave in North American forests. But based on what has previously been observed in urban areas, the expectation is that once it gets into the forests the ALB will attack and kill all of our several species of maple trees. It is also known to attack birch, elm, and poplar trees. The ALB infestation in Worcester is thought to have been there, unnoticed, for the past 15-20 years. Actually, the residents apparently noticed the insects but did not recognize that they were anything out of the ordinary that needed to be reported. Although the ALB has apparently been in North America longer than the Emerald Ash Borer, the ALB is thought by the experts to be the less urgent threat because it appears to spread more slowly. (That is based on its behavior in the urban areas, although the jury is still out on how fast it will spread once it gets into the forests.)

In the long run the ALB is believed to be the greater threat because the maple trees killed by the ALB are a larger component of our eastern forests than are the ash trees killed by the EAB.

Since the end of June when I began looking at this problem I have spoken on the telephone with a half-dozen scientists who are doing research on these insects. I believe all of them would agree on these points:

- We need more education of the public.
- We need more inspection of cargo at the points of entry.
- We need more research money.

In the coming weeks I plan to reach out to Siena Club activists in adjoining states to find out what interest in this problem already exists there. Or to generate interest, as the case may be. And then follow up by trying to generate interest within the Club at the national level.

Report on Williams Lake

Marie Caruso, Lake Issues Chair

We were surprised to see a letter in the Winter Sierra Atlantic from Tim Allred, Project Manager of HRVR's proposed development at Williams Lake, claiming that the company is environmentally conscious, and the project an example of "smart growth". Look for our response in the upcoming issue of Sierra Atlantic.

No sign yet of the expected DEIS, but our friends at Save the Lakes continue efforts to raise funds for the upcoming SEQRA hearings. Mid-Hudson Sierra has been working closely with this group, meeting with elected officials and providing limited funding for scientific studies. For further information and to support these efforts, please see the website: www.savethelakes.us.

Directions to the Hudson River Rowing Association's Boat House (Our Meeting Place)

Find Main Street in Poughkeepsie. It runs east-west, and is about two blocks north of the highway bridge over the Hudson. If you are coming across the bridge, turn left at the first traffic light and then turn left again at the next corner. From there, go with the flow until you come to a traffic light, which is Main Street. Turn left (west) onto Main Street.

Travel down Main Street and find North Water Street about a half block before Main Street ends at the river (it's the last side street before the river). Turn right onto North Water Street, traveling north between the river and the railroad. This is an interesting old industrial area. You'll shortly pass the Children's Museum (on your left) and the Walkway-Over-the-Hudson (above you). But just stay on North Water Street to the very end, a distance of about 1.2 miles. At about 0.9 miles there is a gate which should be open during our meeting. Beyond the gate the road descends to the level of the river and then makes a U-turn to double back and so then travels south along the river for the last 0.2 miles to the Boat House. The Boat House is the first building complex on your right after the U-turn. Enter through the first set of double-doors that you come to as you drive into the parking area.

As usual, our programs are free and open to the public.

Ex Comm Meetings

Excom meetings, to which all members are invited, are scheduled for 6:30PM on Thursday April 15, Wednesday May 5, and Wednesday June 2 at the **New Paltz Village Hall**. Please call Chair (see Chair's Corner) to confirm the date.

Non-profit Organization
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Mid-Hudson Group
Sierra Club
P.O. Box 1012
Poughkeepsie, NY 12602