

Fresh Air



The Quarterly Newsletter of the Atlantic Chapter Mid-Hudson Group

Spring 2011 Vol.43 Issue 1

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

CHAIR'S CORNER Joanne Steele

It's time to chip off that ice and brush off that snow! Your new Outings chair, **Andy Moss**, is busy planning outings for you (vide infra). As Sierrans we have a big appetite to help the environment we love. So here's some food. Because we will soon be updating our Mid-Hudson Group's website, go to our Atlantic Chapter's Conservation Issues site to find out about the issues that matter to you (<http://newyork.sierraclub.org/conservation.html>). The issues there are: Biodiversity/Vegetarian Outreach, Drinking Water, Energy and Climate, Farm and Food, Gas Drilling, Health and Toxins, Nature Population, Wetlands and Zero Waste. Bone up, then dig in!

But, don't stop there! Go to our National Sierra Club site and tap the "Take Action" button. There are many issues there that you can help move along. When you finish taking action, join the Activist Network at <http://connect.sierraclub.org/ActivistNetwork/home>. You can make a difference!

As for your Mid-Hudson Group, how about volunteering to help with Publicity or Program planning or something else at this time. We have tentative plans for a big Event this summer. It's a secret at this time. But, wouldn't you like to help with that? And, how about helping member **Rick Andracchio** in the Hopewell Jct/East Fishkill area on one of his clean-up days (after the snow melts, that is)! What have you the time, energy and talent to do? Let us know!

Of course, money is always appreciated! We are very grateful for your generosity last year. We thank members **Dawn Osselmann**, **Adele Schultz**, **David Friedman**, and **John Kosticky** for their gifts to Mid-Hudson Sierra Club! Thanks also to our many members who made donations and/or volunteered at our annual September tag sale! And congratulations to local member **Cornelia Smith**, for being honored as a "Legacy Donor" by Sierra's Rachel Carson Society. Cornelia's interest in the environment began with childhood excursions in California. A long-time Sierra Club activist, she has recently created a series of charitable gift annuities to help sustain the Club's future work.

I'd like to acknowledge member **Paul Rubin**, too. The Delaware River Basin Commission is moving ahead with their hydrofracking rule-making process in spite of the fact that it hasn't completed a full review of the impacts of natural gas drilling in a watershed that supplies drinking water for 15 million people. While the National Sierra Club is drafting comments and alerts for the upcoming hearings, the Atlantic Chapter will be partnering with Delaware River Network, which has commissioned several technical reports. On the list of experts providing reports, is Paul Rubin (geology and the handling of waste). Kudos to you, Paul, for your excellent work on this issue as well as on Williams Lake!

Then there's a set of proposed amendments to the Sierra Club's 2006 Energy Resources Policy that the National Sierra Club Board of Directors is circulating for review and comment. Read the introduction and proposed amendments at (below) and then submit your comments. Comment deadline: March 31, 2011. [<http://clubhouse.sierraclub.org/conservation/policy/2006-energy-policy-amendments.aspx>]

While we read this, thousands of us are working avidly on the issue of gas-drilling, hydraulic fracturing or hydrofracking, which by any name spells Trouble. It's going to take a lot of activism to stop the frackers in their current manner. Join the Atlantic Chapter's Gas Drilling Task Force to get involved. Spring is coming! Time for new growth! Lots we can do!

facebook

Our group has a Facebook page. Find it on Facebook by typing in "Mid-Hudson Group - Sierra Club" The page is regularly updated with information about the group and activities. Get the latest information about our newsletter, special events, and use the site to post questions or concerns that you would like to share with other members. It's a great way to stay current, involved, and in the know!

Save those good Spring Cleaning items for your Group's September Sierra Club Annual Tag Sale!

PROGRAM CORNER

The new normal location for Speaker Socials is the Hudson River Rowing Association's boathouse, at 270 N. Water Street in Poughkeepsie. Directions to the boathouse can be found on their website, <http://www.hudsonriverrowing.org>, and in the box below. Our meetings are free and open to the public, so bring friends. Refreshments will be provided.

March 26 (Saturday) 6:30PM: New/Old Member Party

It's time again for all members, new and old, to come to our New Member Party! Come to the New Paltz Village Hall on Plattekill Avenue (turn left at Starbucks from Main Street, go around the curve, past the firehouse, and park in the next parking lot and go upstairs to the big room) on SATURDAY MARCH 26th starting at 6:30pm. Come enjoy pizza, munchies, soda, and other goodies, catch up on the history/back issues of our newsletter, meet your fellow members and excom (board) members, tell us what are your interests/passions, and have a fun time!

April 17 (Saturday) 9AM: Hudson River Cleanup

Help our host (Hudson River Rowing Association) clean up the Hudson River waterfront for Earth Day! Cleanup is from 9 to noon. If you like, join other members/friends for lunch at a local venue by consent. www.hudsonriverrowing.org.

April 20th (Wednesday) 7PM: Gasland

Showing of the film "Gasland" followed by brief catch-up of what your Sierra Club is doing in New York and locally to deal with the serious problems of natural gas production. At HRRRA.

May 18th (Wednesday) 7PM: All About Outings - Gear, Clothing, Fitness, Location

Whether you have been getting out a lot or have only thought about it, this program will hopefully inspire you to participate and get outdoors. At HRRRA.

Topics will include:

1. Types of Outings. You may think that hiking is all we do, but you would be wrong. We will discuss hiking as well as bicycling, kayaking, and snowshoeing - four seasons of adventure.
2. Outing Locations. The Hudson Valley is full of fantastic outing locations. We will discuss a variety of outings locales, from easy strolls and bike rides, to high peak adventures.
3. Gear. What do you need for which kind of outing?
4. Clothing. How to stay cool in the summer and warm in the winter. The technique of layering.
5. Benefits of Participation. Why go on an outing. How you will be inspired every time.
6. Fitness. How to prepare before embarking on outings as well as staying fit between outings.
7. Setting outing goals for yourself throughout the year.



Presenter:

Andy Moss
Mid-Hudson Sierra Club Outings Chair

June (mid to late): No date, time or place set yet for The Big Event. Seeking Volunteers!
We're hoping to do this. Lots of fun! Contact Joanne Steele to volunteer.

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.

Our efforts to preserve the Williams Lake area were validated this past fall when Dr. Ralph Ewers, a nationally renowned karst geologist hired by the Town of Rosendale, issued a highly critical review of the hydrogeological studies conducted by the developer (Hudson River Valley Resorts, or "HRVR"). He deemed them essentially "worthless", due largely to HRVR's continued dismissal of the presence of karst on the site.

Karst is an area of irregular limestone in which erosion has produced fissures, sinkholes, underground streams, and caverns which can greatly complicate groundwater flow routes throughout the region. Dr. Ewers cited abundant evidence of the presence of karst, and basically found "... the DEIS insufficient to satisfy the requirements of the Final Scoping Document. . .".

HRVR subsequently, while attempting to discredit Dr. Ewers' report, has insisted that its hydrogeological studies were scientifically valid, and has urged the DEC to release the DEIS for public review. Rather than carrying out more comprehensive studies, they have been conducting, through numerous public meetings and news releases, a vigorous public relations campaign designed to convince the public of the supposed economic benefits of their proposed development.

Lawyers hired by Save the Lakes have sent letters, with supporting evidence from respected local hydrogeologist Paul Rubin, urging the DEC to require the rigorous studies which the site demands. Contributions to the Sierra Club Foundation at both the Group and Chapter level have been utilized to support some of Paul Rubin's work in this area, though much more money will be needed to support these efforts through the SEQRA process. The DEC, at least thus far, has resisted pressure from HRVR to release the DEIS until the developer has conducted the more rigorous scientific studies required by the scoping document.

Comprehensive background information and many documents can be found on the website: www.savethelakes.us. Or feel free to contact me for more details, or to help support, this important campaign.

Marie Caruso, Chair, Williams Lake Committee
mariehv@verizon.net; or (845) 452-9086

NEW OUTINGS CHAIR

I am very pleased to be the new Outings Chair for the Mid-Hudson Sierra Club. My interests include hiking, snowshoeing, bicycling, rock climbing, and canoeing. When weather permits I ride my hybrid bike to work twice a week. My 9 mile commute is a great way to start my work day. I hope to organize some bike outings this year both on- and off-road, for all levels of ability. For those that like hiking I will lead you on adventures into the Catskill mountains, the Kaaterskill Clove, North/South Lake, the Hudson Highlands, and the Shawangunk Ridge. Or we might just take a leisurely stroll for a few hours at one of the Hudson River estates, preserves or parks. Whatever your interest or ability I hope to organize Outings that will get you outdoors.

To facilitate organizing Sierra Club Outings, the Atlantic Chapter has recently started a Meetup.com website. I encourage all members to join this website as soon as possible so that you can automatically be informed of outings as I and other Leaders announce them. When you receive an email notification you can RSVP "No", or if the Outing appeals to you RSVP "Yes". The system tracks how many people are signed up for an outing and will limit participation to the number of people I have specified. Additionally, the site has a Message board and an Idea board where you can post questions or comments about outing activities and gear or make a suggestion for a future outing. During the next few weeks I will be announcing a series of new Outings for the coming months. So go online today and sign up. The website: www.meetup.com/sierraclubny

As much as I want to lead Outings as often as possible, I know I cannot do it alone. I understand that there are some of you who have experience leading others on outings as well as others who may never have led an outing but might wish to. Either way, I hope you will contact me so I can help you get certified to lead Outings.

I believe everyone here in the Hudson Valley should get out and see what this beautiful area has to offer. Whether you would like to hike up a mountain, walk along the River, escape into a beautiful woodland, canoe or kayak, or see the sights on a bicycle tour, I hope you will join me and other Sierra Leaders on one of our Outings. You will return home refreshed, healthier, inspired, and rejuvenated.

I welcome your comments, ideas, and support as I begin this year as your Outings Chair. Please feel free to contact me via email or phone.

Andy Moss
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2011 Chapter Officer List

Chair: Joanne Steele 845-338-0300

Vice Chair: David Friedman

Secretary: Peter Fiorentino

Treasurer: Ralph Pollard

Chapter Delegate: Gerald Davison

Alternate Delegate: Irwin Sperber

Conservation/Issues Chair: Joanne Steele

Fund raising Chair: David Friedman

Membership Chair: Bibi Sandstrom

Newsletter Editor: Kevin McKenzie

Outings Chair: Andy Moss 845-336-5446 (eves)

Political Chair: Position Open

Program Chair: Position Open

Publicity Chair: Position Open

Volunteer Coordinator: Marie Caruso 845-452-9086

Webmaster: Kevin McKenzie

ExCom Meetings

We hold our Excom meetings the 1st Wednesday of the Month at 7PM in New Paltz at Village Hall, 25 Plattekill. Please call Joanne Steele, chair, at 845-338-0300, to confirm the meeting time and place!