

# 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

By the time you read this newsletter, the “**Forward on Climate**” Demo in DC is over, and by now many of you have recovered from a very long day, its weather — and with a great life memory. Thank you for your commitment! As your Mid-Hudson group chair, I arranged for a bus to take 48 of you to attend that Demo.

**Today, 2/13, prior to the great Demo, and for the first time in our Club's history, Civil Disobedience was engaged in, with “enthusiastic approval” of our National Board. Washington, D.C., police arrested Sierra Club Executive Director Michael Brune, Board of Directors President Allison Chin, and a broad coalition of almost 50 other climate-crisis activists outside the White House.** A Club notice said, “This protest came, as you know, because the Club's grassroots leadership (Ed.Note especially the Atlantic Chapter and you, its members!) decided that the obligation to address climate disruption has become so urgent, and the opportunity to attain clean energy prosperity so real, that we had a moral duty to act. This act of civil disobedience, the first in the Club's 120-year history, was an announcement to President Obama and other leaders that they must take bold action now to address the threat of fossil fuel pollution — by stopping construction of the Keystone XL tar sands pipeline as a critically important first step.”



*Largest Climate March in U.S. History  
Nearly 50,000 demonstrated on  
Presidents Day Weekend at the  
Washington Monument, thousands  
at 20+ solidarity rallies across the  
country, and more than one million  
online activists stood up and spoke out  
to tell President Obama that right now  
its time to move Forward on Climate.*

**Meanwhile, in New York, hydrofracking was stalled again by your presence at many demonstrations in Albany and around the state, by our letters and petitions, and by our art and our music, as we protested and then demanded a Health Impact Study of hydrofracking.** We got that study, now being done by the DOH as part of the DEC rule-making process. February 11th was the deadline for the SGEIS, including the Health Impact Study. On that date, Community Environmental Defense Council, Inc. gained the right to sue the DEC and threatened to do so for failure to provide them copies of all reports that provide the basis for the proposed fracking regulations. That includes the Health Impact Study by DOH. On February 12, in a public letter and an official statement, the Departments of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and Health (DOH), explained why they missed the 2/11 date, acknowledged that fracking may impact public health, and announced that they (DOH) will not complete their work by the February 27 deadline. However, DEC Commissioner Joseph Martens added that the state may expedite drilling and grant hydraulic-fracturing permits within weeks, rather than months by circumventing the lengthy rule-making process (which you'd expect would go back to day one). The commissioner said he'll do that if the Health Department gives assurances on safety issues. Roger Downs, our Atlantic Chapter conservation director, responded, that if the state issues permits without formal rules, it “will be met with fierce opposition.” “We trust that the DEC will take this opportunity to re-evaluate the legality of using an environmental-review process as a de facto regulatory program.” Given today's addiction to money, a Sierra Club lawsuit is sure to follow. Be ready. Be generous.

## Conservation Corner

Marie Caruso

### Williams Lake Report

The comment period for several draft permits issued by the DEC ended on Jan. 11, and, as of this writing, we are awaiting the release of the final permits and the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Williams Lake Project. The DEC will then issue its findings (i.e. final decision), after the public is allowed a brief (minimal 10 day) period to respond to the FEIS. The DEC could approve, disapprove, or approve the project with modifications.

Thanks to Sierra member John Keith for submitting comments on Sierra's behalf regarding the SPDES permit, in which he stressed the importance of strict monitoring for the operation and maintenance of the wastewater treatment plant and its discharges. Both Keith and Paul Rubin, who commented on behalf of Sierra and Save the Lakes (STL), questioned the sustainability of the water supply at full build-out. Unfortunately, the size of the project has been reduced very little since its first inception.

In comments on the Incidental Take permit, the Sierra Club expressed disappointment that the permit provides protective

measures only for the Indiana bat, with no regard for other rare species which are likely to be impacted by this development. No special protection is afforded for the NYS threatened timber rattlesnake, whose presence on the site has been observed on several occasions, most recently in April of 2012. The DEC has made no response to our report of this sighting, which was first reported to the Sierra Club in Oct. 2012 and jointly submitted to the DEC, by Sierra and STL, with a photo and documentation, on Dec 5, 2012.

Erik Kiviat of Hudsonia, as well as other scientists, have expressed concern about the inadequacy of biological studies, and lack of protective measures, for the NYS endangered northern cricket frog, and other rare species which reportedly inhabit the site.

The Town of Rosendale will also be required to make a number of zoning changes before this project can proceed, changes which we believe are in conflict with the Rosendale Comprehensive Plan. Specific up-to-date information about the permitting, SEQRA, and zoning processes can be found on the research pages of the website [www.savethelakes.us](http://www.savethelakes.us).

I am pleased to announce that I have volunteered (on behalf of our Group) to maintain the Gertrude's Nose Trail at Minnewaska State Park under the supervision of the New York/New Jersey Trail Conference (NYNJTC). The trail runs from the Millbrook Mountain Carriageway to the "Nose". This is one of the most scenic hikes at Minnewaska. I will be announcing maintenance trips in the Spring and Fall and hope that some of you will join me to help keep our portion of the trail in good condition.

The NYNJTC maintains most of the trails in our region through the hard work of many volunteers. In addition, the NYNJTC produces some of the finest hiking maps for our region. These maps are an invaluable resource for hikers and I highly recommend them. Visit their website ([nynjtc.org](http://nynjtc.org)) or look for them locally at outfitters such as EMS, Rock and Snow, and Kenco among others. You might also consider joining, donating, or volunteering to help the NYNJTC maintain the many miles of trails throughout our region.

*The following outings were announced and organized through our online Outings site: [www.Meetup.com/SierraClubNY](http://www.Meetup.com/SierraClubNY). If you would like to participate in Outings please join the website to be notified by email. If you have questions, contact me: Andy Moss, Outings Chair (845-336-5446, [andy@hvi.net](mailto:andy@hvi.net))*

**December 1, 2012**

**Hike to Gertrude's Nose**

We were greeted with a cold and foggy day which gave a surreal look to Minnewaska Park. Everything was gray with distant sights obscured by the fog. After reaching the "Nose" we took a break for lunch while enjoying the eerie views. There was a large tree blowdown a little further along the trail that I knew about. Everyone pitched in to help cut the tree up and remove it from the trail. We



*Sharing some conversation and laughs along the cliffs.*

were very pleased with our successful bit of trail work. The return hike was filled with pleasant conversation as we came to know each other better.



*Our fearless group steps to the edge for a group shot.*



*At the base of the Fire Tower*

**February 3, 2013**

**Overlook Mountain**

For some, Superbowl Sunday is a chance to eat and drink with abandon. To help prepare for the evening festivities we worked hard to hike to the top of the mountain. It was cold and there was a lot of ice along the trail from last week's rains, so we used traction aids for safety. We were a small group of six but enjoyed the hike and the view from the top steps of the 60' fire tower (the tower room was closed). After our return to the trailhead we went into Woodstock for a relaxing lunch at the Landau Grill. What a great end to the day.



*In the ruins of the ill-fated Overlook Mountain House.*

At the state level, the Sierra Club endorsed **Terry W. Gipson**, who won in the 41st senatorial district after a count of every paper and absentee ballot over incumbent Stephen Saland [2,100/122,000].

**Cecilia Tkaczyk** won by under 20 votes of more than 134,000 cast (every vote does matter) and finally took the oath of office in mid-January. Tkaczyk had been considered a sure loser against her millionaire developer Tea Party opponent in the Republican-gerrymandered district, but her campaigning, enthusiastic

volunteers, PAC money and legal aid to force a proper counting of votes earned her a victory in the 46th senatorial district.

This year there will be at least one race of environmental importance. There is only so much that I can do by myself. Help is needed to strengthen the value of a Sierra Club endorsement in local races.

*Please consider joining the Political Committee. Contact me: Andi Weiss Bartczak, [dr.andi@scienceforcitizens.org](mailto:dr.andi@scienceforcitizens.org), (845) 255-4371*

## Public Programs

JOIN US FOR ONE OF THE FOLLOWING PROGRAMS. THEY ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. BRING A FRIEND!

**Sunday, April 21st, 7pm**

**Film: "BIDDER 70"**

A special program to celebrate Earth Day

A 2012 film from husband and wife documentarians George and Beth Gage examines the case of 30-year-old environmental activist Tim DeChristopher, who derailed a federal oil and gas lease auction for public land in southern Utah in 2008, effectively safeguarding thousands of acres of pristine Utah land that were slated for oil and gas leases.

**Location:** Unitarian Fellowship of Poughkeepsie (UFP), 67 South Randolph Avenue, Poughkeepsie

Co-sponsored by the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Poughkeepsie's Social Justice Committee and the Mid-Hudson Group, Sierra Club

**Wednesday, April 24th, 7pm**

**Film: "Gasland"**

The largest domestic natural gas drilling boom in history has swept across the United States. The Halliburton-developed drilling technology of "fracking" or hydraulic fracturing has unlocked a "Saudi Arabia of natural gas"

just beneath us. But is fracking safe? When filmmaker Josh Fox is asked to lease his land for drilling, he embarks on a cross-country odyssey uncovering a trail of secrets, lies and contamination. A recently drilled nearby Pennsylvania town reports that residents are able to light their drinking water on fire. This is just one of the many absurd and astonishing revelations of a new country called GASLAND. Part verite travelogue, part expose, part mystery, part bluegrass banjo meltdown, part showdown.



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Co-sponsored by the Mid-Hudson Group, Sierra Club, and the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Poughkeepsie's Social Justice Committee

**Thursday, May 16th, 7pm**

**"Climate Change at Mohonk: Weather & Species"**

This presentation will introduce you to the local story of climate change. The presentation is given by Mohonk Preserve's Shanan Smiley, Conservation Biologist/Collections Manager at the Mohonk Preserve's Daniel Smiley Research Center. Weather readings at Mohonk began in the mid-1880s, taken by the Smiley family, founders of the neighboring Mohonk Mountain House, and are now continued by Preserve research staff. Beginning in the late 1970s, data collection expanded to include regular monitoring the pH of precipitation, lakes, and streams.

At Mohonk, weather records have been taken daily since 1896, and species records since 1925. Shanan will discuss how climate change is affecting many species in New York and looking at how temperature, precipitation and even the timing of the seasons have changed over the years. As the climate changes, species changes follow. By combining weather data of dates of first plant blooms with Spring arrival dates of birds, one can illustrate the changes some species are making in response to the change in climate.

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### Another Program of Interest

**Wednesday, March 13, 7pm**

**"Sharing the River of Life:"**

The Mid-Hudson Group is a supporter of the Two Row Wampum Campaign

**"The Two Row Wampum and Our Collective Future"**

Onondaga Nation Faithkeeper Oren Lyons is the featured speaker. An internationally-recognized spokesperson on indigenous issues and environmental protection, Oren sits on the Onondaga Nation Council of Chiefs and the Haudenosaunee Grand Council. Two Row Wampum Campaign Coordinator Andy Mager will speak about the campaign. \$5 suggested donation, no one turned away.

**Location:** SUNY New Paltz, Lecture Center, Room 100

Sponsored by NYPIRG, CRREO, and Students for Sustainable Agriculture.

## Volunteers Needed

We never seem to have enough help, so we are asking you to consider participating. Here are some opportunities to consider:

**1. Assist our Political Chair.** Get involved with our local, state, and federal legislators. The greatest opportunity we have to effect meaningful change is through the political process. *Contact: Andi Weiss Bartzczak, dr.andi@scienceforcitizens.org, (845) 255-4371*

**2. Help with Conservation issues.** We try to protect our air, water, and land from exploitation or pollution. Using scientific research and fact-based evidence, our Conservation Chair works to keep our Hudson Valley region environmentally healthy. *Contact: Joanne Steele, sierraclubjoanne@gmail.com, (845) 338-0300*

**3. Archivist.** Our Mid-Hudson Group has many years of achievements to its credit. We would like to preserve our records

in an organized way. We are seeking someone willing to store our boxes of documents in a safe place. In addition the documents would need an initial cataloging. If you are organized and have some space and time to spare, your help would be greatly appreciated. *Contact: Joanne Steele, (845) 338-0300 sierraclubjoanne@gmail.com*

**3. Outings Leaders.** Consider leading a group on an outdoor excursion such as an estate walk, a hike, canoe/kayak, bicycling, visit to an historic site or garden, etc. *Contact: Andy Moss, andy@hvi.net, (845) 336-5446*

If you don't see something that specifically calls your name, but would like to contribute some time, please contact us. We are always in need of more help. No matter how much or how little time you have available, your participation would be appreciated. *Mid-Hudson Group mailbox: midhudsonsierra@verizon.net*

We want to thank Dawn Osselmann for her recent donation to our Mid-Hudson Group.

Did you know that donations to our Group can also be made through estate planning?

We thank all of you who have given to support our local Group activities.

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Join Us for our Annual, fun-filled  
**New Member Party**  
Saturday, March 23rd!



If you're a new member - or even if you're not,  
come to our Party 6:30pm-10pm!

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:*

Village Hall Upstairs Room, Plattekill Avenue, New Paltz

**Mid-Hudson Group Election Results**

The results are in. The top 3 vote-getters in this year's Executive Committee elections are:  
David Friedman, Christina Janiak and Marie Caruso (write-in vote winner).

We thank all who sent in their ballots.