

# Fresh Air

The Quarterly Newsletter of the  
Atlantic Chapter Mid-Hudson Group



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FOUNDED 1892

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

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## Chair's Corner

Joanne Steele



Muir Glacier at Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve in Alaska is among the many worldwide that are disappearing. Muir, left, as seen in August 1941, and photographed in August 2004. *Credit W. Field; B. Molnia/U.S.G.S., via Glacier Photograph Collection*

Well, the damage has been done and I, like you, am partly responsible. The best excuse I can come up with is, "I was snookered!" Did we know beforehand that our American lives would produce devastation like that!? The oceans four feet higher. Inevitable. I've heard people dismiss our problem saying, "Oh, it won't happen for fifty years." Wrong. (By the way, fifty years is your grandkids.) Scientists are saying it's happening a lot faster, and the rise may be more, too.

We haven't been helpless, though. We've each been cleaning up our own purview: Reducing buying new, un-local stuff, especially in un-recyclable containers, Reusing all we can by cleaning and repairing, and as a last resort, Recycling. We're reducing our energy consumption. We're bunching together our trips into town. We're driving slower to save fuel consumption. We may even be buying more energy efficient cars. We are getting energy audits on our houses and insulating them and then putting on solar arrays. And more. What's next is where we're at now: working together on the very large task of Restoring, despite the fact that, sadly, we can't Restore it all.

We environmentalists have won bans on aerial spraying of pesticides, blocked construction of garbage incinerators, forced cleanups of contaminated dump sites, blocked construction of hazardous waste disposal facilities, prevented entirely the development of fragile sites and disciplined the development of marginal ones. We have forced corporations to consider the consequences of their actions, to upgrade their pollution control equipment, and to reduce waste generation at the source and not at the

weakly-regulated end pipe. We have forced industry and government to reduce waste while we are reducing our own. We have stopped hydrofracking in New York for at least seven years now, as we direct ourselves to its permanent ban and even to its criminalization. We are now confronting corporations, governments and government regulatory agencies and authorities on pipelines, compressor stations, water-extraction plants, high-power electric lines, GMO food, dangerous genetic engineering and more.

As we have done all these things, we have pointed out the negative consequences of those environmental issues on health. In doing that, we have linked our issues to those of social justice and equality and have created a growing, broad, cross-class movement with a more radical criticism of our American living. We've been made to notice that we've been up against Big Money the whole way.

OK, we've joined Sierra Club, which is a start. Now, we make the choice to act, to inform ourselves (see below), to speak up in public (like the supermarket line), to send letters of criticism to wrong-doers, to write opinion pieces and letters to the editor, to question government's agents' decisions, to attend rallies, demonstrations, hearings, and presentations.

I have seen some of you Sierrans at those demonstrations in Albany, NYC and DC. I haven't seen a majority of you, though. I'm not sure how many is enough, but a few is not enough, right? We recognize that there are too many of us to kill, but let it not be that there are too few of us willing to fight on!

by Marie Caruso

**Williams Lake To Allow Swimming On Weekends Starting July 7**

It appears that pressure from the local community has had an impact on the developers at Williams Lake. It was announced at a recent Rosendale Town Board meeting that, for the first time in about seven years, Williams Lake will be open for swimming on a day pass basis, from July 7 through Labor Day, weekends only, from 12 pm to 7 pm. The cost will be \$10 for adults, \$6 for children, and \$5 for a twilight swim. The Town of Rosendale will pay for insurance and other expenses. Any profits made by HRVR

are to be deposited in the Rosendale Pool Fund, for repairs to the Rosendale pool which has been closed since 2012 due to its poor condition.

It was a condition of the zoning amendment passed by the Rosendale Town Board that public access to Williams Lake be assured, but no limits were set on the cost of such access. It will be interesting to see what the cost will be when HRVR's upscale resort and housing development is completed. No word, as yet, as to when construction might actually begin.

Thanks to Mourka Meyendorff, a Sierra Club and Save the Lakes member, for reporting on this activity of the Rosendale Town Board.

This year we have federal representative, governor/lieutenant governor, attorney general, comptroller and state legislature elections. Our Chapter will decide on which candidates to endorse for the statewide offices. Your executive committee is working on our 2014 political questionnaire to offer to candidates in the state legislature races in our Group's territory; their answers will help us decide which candidates to endorse. Our political questionnaire

will be offered to all state legislature candidates running in our territory; this will inform them of what issues are most important to our Group and help them think about their positions on these issues. Eventually we will post our political questionnaire on our website.

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

**Reject and Protect**

by Shelley Bance

As a fitting tribute to Earth Day, the "Reject and Protect" event kicked off on April 22nd in Washington D.C. with a rousing week of protests and ceremonies opposing the proposed Keystone XL pipeline through the nation's heartland. Energized by beautiful spring weather, activists from the Sierra Club, Bold Nebraska, the Cowboy Indian Alliance, and a host of environmental organizations descended on the National Mall in an effort to convince President Obama to reject the pipeline for which he has indefinitely postponed his decision.

In a powerful show of support, the Cowboy Indian Alliance, a rare confluence of ranchers, farmers, and members of tribal communities directly in the path of the pipeline's route, formed the courageous heartbeat of the event. Their "Reject and Protect" tipi encampment on the Mall was ground zero for the week's activities: water ceremonies, visits to legislative offices, a lively protest outside EPA offices, a prayer ceremony near Senator Kerry's house in Georgetown, followed by a circle dance with Native drummers blocking a traffic intersection, a tar sands film, and more. Activists took part in the symbolic painting of a tipi that included a liner

with their hand- and thumb-prints.

The Sierra Club organized logistics for the rally on Saturday the 26th when thousands of people converged for an inspiring march along the Mall. Leading the charge on horseback were five ranchers and First Nations members in ceremonial dress. Behind them, Native representatives and activists, along with music legend Neil Young and actress Darryl Hannah, held a huge banner with the words "President Obama: Protect Our Sacred Water." The parade paused at the National Museum of the American Indian, where the ceremonial tipi was gifted to curators as a spiritual object of historical importance in President Obama's name. After bringing traffic to a standstill near the U.S. Capitol, the marchers returned to the encampment stage to hear various speakers on the front lines of this struggle.

On that day, Sierra Club chapters held solidarity events in Oklahoma and Nebraska. Without doubt, the Reject and Protect event not only put human faces at center stage of this struggle, but helped build alliances for ending destructive energy development.

**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/>

**DECIDING WE WON'T DRIVE** to that chain grocery store and buy that imported pineapple is a path of liberation. Deciding to walk to the farmers' market and buy those fresh, local peas is like spitting in the eye of the industries that would control us. Every act of refusal is also an act of assent. Every time we say no to consumer culture, we say yes to something more beautiful and sustaining. Life is not something we go through or that happens to us; it's something we create by our decisions.

(Kathleen Dean Moore, *If Your House Is On Fire*, thanks to [thesunmagazine.org](http://thesunmagazine.org))

*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 becoming an outing leader, please contact me: Andy Moss, Outings Chair, (845) 336-5446 or [andy@hvi.net](mailto:andy@hvi.net).*

On March 23rd, three intrepid hikers joined me for a late winter hike to Slide Mountain, the highest peak in the Catskills at 4,180 feet. We had hard-pack snow on the trail so we used Microspikes® for traction rather than snowshoes. It was a really enjoyable day.



*Our group stops for a photo at a trail junction.*



Andy Moss sitting on the summit of Slide Mountain next to the commemorative plaque in memory of John Burroughs (April 3, 1837 – March 29, 1921). He was an American naturalist and nature essayist, active in the U.S. conservation movement.

*The plaque reads:*

IN MEMORIAM  
JOHN BURROUGHS  
Who in his early writings  
introduced Slide Mountain  
to the world. He made many

visits to this peak and slept several nights beneath this rock. This region is the scene of many of his essays.

*"Here the works of man dwindle, in the heart of the southern Catskills"*

The plaque was put near the summit by the Winnisook Club shortly after his death in 1921. It has since been known as Burroughs Ledge.

Note: The plaque is actually about five feet off the ground. The deep snow makes it seem to be much lower.

The following article appeared on Thursday, September 13, 2012 on the Sierra Club/Atlantic Chapter website:

<http://atlantic2.sierraclub.org/content/zero-waste>

## Zero Waste

The N.Y.S. Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has prepared a new State Solid Waste Plan that recognizes that materials in our waste stream are valuable and need to be preserved. We strongly endorse its preference for waste reduction, reuse, recycling and composting over disposal. The less waste we dispose of the more environmental, economic and social benefits that we will enjoy.

Unfortunately, millions of tons of garbage are still being wasted through disposal in landfills or incinerators. The DEC estimates New York's recycling rate to be only 20%, far short of the 50% reduction and recycling goal that was to be met by 1997 under the State Solid Waste Management Act of 1988. A large portion of waste headed for disposal is recyclable (50%) or compostable (30%). To achieve the goals of the Plan, we must stop trashing our resources through disposal!

- Incinerators emit toxic air emissions and produce toxic incinerator ash that needs landfilling. They also emit more CO<sup>2</sup> than coal burning plants per MWh. Incinerators must have burnable materials and therefore compete with recycling.
- Recycling saves 4-5 times the energy an incinerator recovers. Incineration is not renewable energy.

## To address climate change we must address waste in our society!

- For every trash bag we put at the curb, 70 bags of trash were generated by industry to make the products we buy. The production of products and packaging is associated with 44% of all greenhouse gas emissions.
- Biodegradable materials in landfills emit methane, a gas that has 72 times the global warming potential of CO<sup>2</sup>, over a 20 year period. Landfill gas collection systems capture only about 20% of landfill gas.
- The best strategy is to divert biodegradable organic material away from landfills and incinerators to composting. Compost provides nutrients for healthy soils and plants.

Burning and burying garbage wastes money, energy, and natural resources; it contributes to climate change and places an unfair pollution and health burden on nearby communities. Diversion saves energy and resources, and creates many more jobs in collection, processing, reuse of goods and remanufacturing of materials.

Maximizing waste reduction and diversion will dramatically decrease waste sent for disposal over time by 70%, 80%, 90% and more, enabling New York to achieve the significant benefits of a more sustainable system. The ultimate goal should be Zero Waste being sent to Disposal or very close to it.

## 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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## Public Programs

JoyAnn Savino

**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, June 19, 7pm**

### **Film: *Chasing Ice***

(Tomatometer = 96%)

Acclaimed environmental photographer James Balog, a skeptic about climate change, and a cynic about the nature of academic research discovers undeniable evidence of our changing planet. In *Chasing Ice*, Balog deploys revolutionary time-lapse cameras to capture a multi-year record of the world's changing glaciers. His hauntingly

beautiful videos compress years into seconds and capture ancient mountains of ice in motion as they disappear at a breathtaking rate. Traveling with a team of young adventurers across the brutal Arctic, Balog risks his career and his wellbeing in pursuit of the biggest story facing humanity. As the debate polarizes America, and the intensity of natural disasters ramps up globally, *Chasing Ice* depicts a heroic photojournalist on a mission to deliver fragile hope to our carbon-powered planet... **THIS IS A MUST SEE!!**

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 Sierra Club



### **Create A Tag Sale Donation Box**

Use a box or bin to collect items you no longer need, but would be appropriate for our next Tag Sale. By September your box of items will go a long way to help our Tag Sale be a success. Funds raised go towards our local conservation efforts. *Thanks to all of you who donated to last year's tag sale.*

### **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.