

# Fresh Air

The Quarterly Newsletter of the  
Atlantic Chapter Mid-Hudson Group



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## Chair's Corner

Joanne Steele

I think it's my duty, as your MHG Chair to be our cheerleader and to encourage our participation in lessening climate change, by changing our living habits and participating in the improvement of what's left of our democracy. These changes are desperately needed. Many millions of us must begin now to do so! Will we?

It's also my duty not to lie to you. What if I told you that all we can do now is to decrease how long the incredibly bad consequences of our past lethargy will last? Well, that's what I have to tell you. Yes. The party's over. We had a great time. What's left is a horrible climate mess and it's going to last a very, very long time. That's what the world's best scientists and climatologists are saying. Nature against crimes...ours. It's the Anthropocene (Earth's most recent geologic time period as being human-influenced, or anthropogenic, based on overwhelming global evidence that atmospheric, geologic, hydrologic, biospheric and other earth system processes are now altered by humans).

Hurricane Harvey dropped 4 feet of water on the Houston area, the whirl-wind having picked up much more moisture from the Gulf of Mexico's waters that WE caused to warm up over recent decades. Professor Stefan Rahmstorf, co-chair of Earth System Analysis at the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK) in Germany, adds: "...quite possibly also relevant, is a general slowdown of atmospheric summer circulation in the mid-latitudes. This is a consequence of the disproportionately strong warming in the Arctic. It can make weather systems move less and stay longer in a given location—which can significantly enhance the impacts of rainfall extremes, just like we're sadly witnessing in Houston."

We are only seeing effects now of warming from decades past. James Hansen says: "The fundamental difficulty is the delayed response—the inertia of the climate system. The ocean is deep and the ice sheets are three kilometers thick, and they don't respond quickly to what is really a weak forcing. And so the system has

only partially responded to the forcing we've put up already. There's more in the pipeline. You're talking about a system that responds on the timescale of decades to centuries — that's a different time constant than the political constant."

David Wallace-Wells writes in "The Uninhabitable Earth," (*New York* magazine, 7/17) subtitled "Famine, economic collapse, a sun that cooks us: What climate change could wreak—sooner than you think".... "If your anxiety about global warming is dominated by fears of sea-level rise, you are barely scratching the surface of what terrors are possible, even within the lifetime of a teenager today." The UN IPCC predicts that Earth will be warmed by 4 degrees within the next 50 years. The last time that happened, Peter Brannen points out in *The Ends of the World*, the oceans were hundreds of feet higher, not just 10 or 30 feet. It will take only time. Some predict that we're going to blow past four degrees to eight if we don't act vigorously and soon.

In an article By Richard Heinberg for the Post Carbon Institute (8/17/17), "Why Climate Change Isn't Our Biggest Environmental Problem, and Why Technology Won't Save Us," writes: "Some theorists...have abandoned the moral fight altogether. Their justification for doing so is that people want a vision of the future that's cheery and that doesn't require sacrifice. Now, they say, only a technological fix offers any hope." He goes on: "The reason for the failure thus far of the environmental movement wasn't that it appealed to humanity's moral sentiments—that was in fact the movement's great strength. The effort fell short because it wasn't able to alter industrial society's central organizing principle, which is also its fatal flaw: its dogged pursuit of growth at all cost. Now we're at the point where we must finally either succeed in overcoming growthism or face the failure not just of the environmental movement, but of civilization itself."

Your move.

## Conservation Corner

Joanne Steele

### Greenhouse Gases (GHGs) Strike for Good

The \$900 million Competitive Power Ventures (CPV) power plant being built in Wawayanda has been stopped because the 7.8 mile Millennium Lateral pipeline which is needed to supply fracked gas to the plant has been denied the three necessary permits by the NYDEC. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) had put the Millennium Pipeline Company's proposed Lateral through an environmental review, but its final approval depended on getting the three state permits from NYDEC. On 8/24/17 the DEC denied all three stating that FERC's environmental review of the \$57.3 million project was "inadequate and deficient" This conclusion was based on Sierra Club's victorious lawsuit against a Florida pipeline. In light of the Sierra Club decision the DEC is asking FERC to "reopen the evidentiary record" for the project to hear additional information about greenhouse gas emissions associated with burning natural gas at the power plant.

### Crimes against Nature

Credo Action (8/22/17) says: "Trump has nominated long-time racist and climate-denying conservative talk radio hack Sam Clovis to serve as the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) chief

scientist.... He has no policy expertise in food and agriculture or experience in hard sciences, and he believes climate science is 'junk'." This, despite that the 2008 Farm Bill law requires the USDA's chief scientist be chosen "from among distinguished scientists with specialized training or significant experience in agricultural research, education, and economics."

On 9/2/17 [info@climatehawksvote.com](mailto:info@climatehawksvote.com) reported that "Trump just nominated an anti-science climate denier to run NASA. Jim Bridenstine is not a scientist. He's a member of Congress with no experience in space. We must pressure members of the Senate to block and resist these nominations! Call Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (845-875-4585 or 202-224-4451) and Sen. Chuck Schumer (212-488-4439 or 202-224-6542).

In April 2017, President Trump signed an executive order to review 27 parks designated since the beginning of 1996, with an eye toward shrinking boundaries to support corporate and state government interests to 'develop' OUR lands by drilling and mining them. Shortly after, Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke opened a public comment period. Of the millions of public comments submitted about Bears Ears National Monument and the other parks, 99.2 percent opposed the executive order.

## Only A First Step: Coast Guard Suspends Anchorage On Hudson River

This is a good start, but only a first step. The Coast Guard has listened to the more than 10,000 comments received after soliciting the public's input and suspended designating anchorages on the Hudson River for a period of one year. About 94 percent of submissions were opposed to the maritime industry's request for 10 additional anchorages parking as many as 43 oil barges at a time on the Hudson River between Kingston and Yonkers. The Maritime Association of the Port of NY/NJ Tug and Barge Committee had requested federally designated anchorages to facilitate exports for foreign trade of American Bakken Crude Oil and Ethanol. The Coast Guard has delayed a permanent decision stating that it "has suspended future rule making decisions and directed a formal risk identification and evaluation of the Hudson River, known as a Ports and Waterways Safety Assessment (PAWSA)...a disciplined approach to identify major waterway safety hazards, estimate risk levels, evaluate potential mitigation measures and set the stage for implementation of selected measures to reduce risk." This clearly is not a promise of a permanent end to the anchorage proposal.

The Coast Guard also stated that "there is a lot that we really don't know about the Hudson River that we have to study before we make any sort of permanent decision." Safety assessments and invitation-only workshops relative to the river will be held by the Coast Guard in the fall. It is important to note that the Coast Guard is required to receive a recommendation from the United States Army Corps of Engineers regarding establishing anchorages before issuing an advance notice of proposed rulemaking. This had not been done prior to the recent suspension of additional anchorages. The Coast Guard previously had been treating the maritime industry's request as a customary or routine request. We should also recall that prior temporary setbacks to the oil lobby, as with the Dakota Access Pipeline, subsequently were lifted by the Army Corps of Engineers.

A second good news item is the legislation passed by the New York State Senate and Assembly on June 21, 2017, S5197b/A6825b, An act to amend the environmental conservation law and the navigation law, in relation to consideration of environmental conditions when permitting petroleum-bearing vessels to enter navigable waters; and repealing section seventy one of the navigation law relating to the petroleum-bearing vessel advisory commission. This legislation passed the NYS Senate by a vote of 61 to 1, and the NYS Assembly by a vote of 93 to 2. This legislation sets "minimum conditions for petroleum-bearing vessels in certain areas; tanker avoidance zones." These minimum conditions will be set by the commissioner of environmental conservation "in consultation with ... the United States Coast Guard, the board of commissioners of pilots, the Department of State, the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and appropriate officials of any state or country with concurrent jurisdiction." The minimum conditions "...may include, but not be limited to, visibility, the tide and wind conditions, weather,

environmental conditions such as the existence of designated coastal fish and wildlife habitats and proximity to waterfront communities." Tanker-avoidance zones may be designated "where it shall be unlawful for petroleum-bearing vessels...to enter, move or anchor upon the navigable waters of the state or any tidewaters bordering or lying within the boundaries of Nassau and Suffolk counties, except in cases of great emergency."

We must not overlook the reality that the recent NYS legislation only will establish future minimum conditions for anchorages. We know that the crude oil industry will continue to push their purely economic interests. Prior to 2012, crude oil was not shipped on the Hudson River. Beginning in 2012, about 25 percent of the oil coming from North Dakota has been shipped on the Hudson. The maritime associations and oil industry proponents of anchorages represent the effort to expand the flow of Bakken Crude Oil and Ethanol to foreign markets using the Hudson River as both a conduit and a long term anchorage for the continuing increase of the volume of petroleum-based product being shipped overseas.

The positive developments of a temporary suspension of anchorages by the Coast Guard and the passage of S5197 by New York State allows time to provide a more comprehensive assessment of risks and to redouble the effort to permanently ban crude oil parking lots, euphemistically called anchorages, on the Hudson River. We must remind ourselves that it was the public outcry of more than 10,000 comments and the support of local elected officials which resulted in the acknowledgement by the Coast Guard that existing procedures must be followed, and the anchorage request of the maritime industry be suspended, for a year.

It is inevitable that the battle for the preservation of the Hudson River will continue in the state and federal courts, and may ultimately be decided there. The court of public opinion plays a vital role in this process as already has been demonstrated. We must all stay vigilant, stay involved and make sure that our collective voices are heard. It is important to support environmental organizations like the Sierra Club, Riverkeeper, Scenic Hudson and others which have the legal resources and will to continue efforts to protect the Hudson River in the courts if necessary. It is perhaps just as important to raise our individual voices to preserve the Hudson River from crude oil spills caused by inevitable accidents on the waterway should even one anchorage be approved. The U.S. Coast Guard estimates that at best only 10 percent of crude oil spilled into a waterway is recoverable. Locally, Esopus, Rhinebeck and Poughkeepsie obtain their drinking water from the Hudson River. A temporary suspension of anchorages is very good news, but it is really just the opening skirmish of a long battle that must result in a permanent ban if we are to protect and preserve the Hudson River for future generations.

Stay vigilant, stay involved, and let your voice be heard!

## Outings News

Andy Moss

Sign up for outings announcements at: [Meetup.com/Mid-Hudson-Sierra-Club](https://www.meetup.com/Mid-Hudson-Sierra-Club)

In July I led a hike to North Point which is on the escarpment overlooking North Lake State Park. The views from this location encompass the park as well as points north and east, as the escarpment sits approximately 2000' above the valley. There are a number of excellent easy hikes at North Lake as well as two beaches for swimming and many picnic tables and barbeque stands.



On the summit of North Point



Hiking the beautiful woodlands

**Congressman John Faso’s Voting Record**

Have you been wondering how our Congressman, John Faso, has been voting since he was elected to represent us last November? His Congressional district (district 19) covers all of Columbia, Delaware, Greene, Otsego, Schoharie, Sullivan and Ulster counties, as well as parts of Broome, Dutchess, Montgomery and Rensselaer. This district encompasses most of our Mid-Hudson Sierra Club Group’s geographical area.

For the most part, Mr. Faso votes along Republican party lines. For example, he has voted ‘yea’ on every iteration of the Republican effort to repeal and/or replace the Affordable Care Act, despite extraordinary efforts by his constituents to convince him that such a vote hurts those he is supposed to represent.

What about the environment, which we as Sierra Club members care deeply about? Here is a list of Mr. Faso’s votes on environmental issues, beginning back in January of this year:

Bill or Resolution	Short Summary	Faso’s Vote	Voting Result
HJ Res 38	Repeal the stream protection rule.	yea	Passed House (228-194)
HR 998	This is the “Searching for and Cutting Regulations that are Unnecessarily Burdensome Act” or “SCRUB Act”	yea	Passed House (240-185)
HJ Res 69	Repeal a Department of the Interior rule that restricts hunting practices on national wildlife refuges in Alaska	yea	Passed House (225-193)
HR 1430	Prohibit the EPA from proposing any action or regulation that uses science which is not publicly available.	yea	Passed House (228-194)
HJ Res 36	Repeal the rule issued by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) that requires operators to take various actions to reduce waste of gas lost during oil and gas production	nay	Passed House (221-191)
HR 1431	Prohibit members of the Environmental Protection Agency’s Science Advisory Board from holding or applying for EPA grants.	yea	Passed House (229-193)
HJ Res 44	Disapprove the rule submitted by the Department of the Interior relating to Bureau of Land Management regulations that establish procedures used to prepare, revise, or amend land use plans pursuant to the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976.	yea	Passed House (234-186)
HR 2910	Coordination of federal and state authorizations and approvals of Natural Gas Pipelines under the Natural Gas Act.	yea	Passed House (248-179)
HR 2883	Establish a ‘transparent and uniform line of federal communication’ for the authorization of pipeline construction.	yea	Passed House (254-175)
HR 953	Prohibit states or the EPA from requiring a permit to spray pesticides into navigable waters.	yea	Passed House (256-165)
HR 23	Drought relief to the state of California, which also requires environmental studies on groundwater aquifers, water storage, and mountain runoff in California	yea	Passed House (230-190)
HR 218	Allow construction of a road through Izembek National Wildlife Refuge.	yea	Passed House (248-179)
HR 806	Delay the compliance date for ground level ozone standards.	nay	Passed House (229-199)

There are two bills of environmental interest that have been introduced in the House but have not yet moved to committee (as of this publication date), which we will be watching: **HJ Res 46 / Drilling in National Parks.** This would repeal the rule requiring oil, gas, and mining companies to cover ALL costs associated with any accident or contamination. If this rule is repealed, oil, gas, and mining companies would only be liable for the first \$200,000 for any accident, and the remainder would be covered by taxpayers; and **HR 622 / Local Enforcement for Local Lands Act.** This would terminate the law enforcement function of the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management, making regulation of public lands impossible.

It pays to keep an eye on your Congressional Representative’s voting record, and also on legislation that is coming up for a vote. The web site [votesmart.org](http://votesmart.org) has a search function to find out how your legislator voted on bills in specific categories, and [govtrack.us](http://govtrack.us) lets you find current bills in about 35 different subject areas. Experience with the ACA shows that if constituents communicate their opposition to a bill strongly enough to their representatives, those legislators find that they cannot be seen to support that bill. Inform yourself, and become your congressional staffers’ best friend!

Sources: [www.votesmart.org](http://www.votesmart.org) | [www.govtrack.us](http://www.govtrack.us) | [www.congress.gov](http://www.congress.gov)  
<https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com> | [www.indivisibly19.com](http://www.indivisibly19.com)

**This is Your Last Printed Issue of our Quarterly Newsletter, “Fresh Air”**

Our last two issues have presented information about our change to a bi-monthly email format for our newsletter. Beginning in December, “Fresh Air” will arrive in your email inbox, rather than your mailbox.

When it comes to email preferences there are three categories of Mid-Hudson Group members:

1. Those that have not provided an email address to the Sierra Club.
2. Those that have provided an email address but requested no emails from us or the Sierra Club
3. Those that have provided an email address and allow emails.

If you find yourself in category #1 or #2 and would like to begin receiving our Sierra Club email newsletters, please send an email to our database administrator David Thomas at: [dave@davidalexanderthomas.com](mailto:dave@davidalexanderthomas.com).

**Don’t forget, ALL newsletters will be posted on our website: [sierraclub.org/atlantic/mid-hudson](http://sierraclub.org/atlantic/mid-hudson). So whether you get an email, or not, you can always go to our website to read our newsletters.**

**Programs**

Tentative dates for our next programs are October 19 and November 16. Both will be held at Boughton Place. Program details will be available on our Meetup page and our website.

**Executive Committee Elections**

Information regarding our annual board member elections will be made available on our website in December. We will provide more information in our upcoming newsletter. We value your participation.

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# ANNUAL TAG SALE

*All proceeds benefit our Mid-Hudson Group*

**Calling all Sierrans! Please Donate, Promote, Purchase, Volunteer  
Tell Your Friends and Neighbors About Our Tag Sale.  
Saturday, September 23rd, 10:00 am - 3:00 pm**

*Rain Date: Sunday, September 24th, 10:00 am - 3:00 pm*

**Drop-Off: Day of sale, as early as possible after 7:00 am**

(In order to conserve volunteer time and resources, we are limiting the drop-off and sale to one day this year. See other drop-off options below.)

**Paula's Public House, 2146 New Hackensack Road, Poughkeepsie, NY 12603**

(formerly Mulligan's Irish House) 1.6 miles southeast of the intersection of Raymond Avenue & New Hackensack Road (Rt. 376)

**DONATE:** We are looking for donations of books, CD's, DVD's, toys with all the parts, hiking/camping equipment, sporting goods with some play left in them, tools, antiques, small furniture, kitchen items, usable glassware/kitchen items, art, camera equipment, etc. Your items should be in good condition. Small electronics must be in good working order. Please, no *large* electronics! We'd love to have kayaks, canoes, working bicycles and other quality sporting goods. Collectibles and antiques are very desirable as well. *Items should be clean and dust-free.*

*We do not sell clothing or shoes. Please donate elsewhere.*

**EARLY DROP-OFF & PICK-UP OPTIONS:** (Only if absolutely necessary):

*West side of Hudson, for storage:* Joanne Steele, St. Remy, up to 3 days before the sale; [sierraclubjoanne@gmail.com](mailto:sierraclubjoanne@gmail.com), (845) 338-0300 (H), or (845) 339-7526 (C). Pick-ups: Helga Klessen, [hklessen@yahoo.com](mailto:hklessen@yahoo.com), (845) 687-6243 (H), or (845) 279-5897 (C).

*East side of Hudson, for storage and pick-ups (that fit in his car):* Bill Collier, Wappingers Falls, [collier@acm.org](mailto:collier@acm.org) (please include your phone # in your e-mail message).

**PROMOTE:** Let your friends and family know about the sale. We have a poster on our website that you can download, print and post.

**PURCHASE:** Come to the sale and find great buys for yourself and others. The benefits are many — low prices, great selection, recycling goods, and helping your local Sierra Club meet the challenges of protecting our environment.

**POSSIBLE RAIN DATE ANNOUNCEMENTS:** If weather is iffy, check your e-mail, our website or Facebook page, or Joanne's cell phone, (845) 339-7526, for rain date messages.

**VOLUNTEER:** We can use your help! Can you spare 2 hours or more? We especially need **early-birds** who can help set up the sale starting at 7 am, and **late-birds** who can help with clean-up at 3 pm. But if you can spare any time at all that day (or prior, for pick-ups and storage), please contact Volunteer Coordinator Marie Caruso at [mariehv@verizon.net](mailto:mariehv@verizon.net), (845) 684-7058 (H) or (845) 702-4521 (C / calls or text).

**Joanne Steele & Marie Caruso, Tag Sale Coordinators**

