

Fresh Air

The Quarterly Newsletter of the
Atlantic Chapter Mid-Hudson Group



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P.O. Box 1012
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Chair's Corner Joanne Steele

Sierrans, the new administration is appointing bankers, oilmen and generals to lead our country's Departments. We are going to have to get more active, all of us, to defend our gains of the last 50 years! Prepare now!

What will our children (and grandchildren) ever know of "the seasons"? Of living in this place which we will be leaving them? Can we possibly right the climate ship in even their entire lifetimes? Spaceship Earth is already simmering at 400 ppm CO₂. This level is higher than it has been for more than 1 million years. Professor Jeffrey Chanton (Florida State University) writes, "Throughout the Pleistocene, carbon dioxide in the air was 280 parts per million (ppm) in warm periods and 180 ppm during cold times. Over this period, carbon dioxide amount and temperature have always followed each other directly. And during each of these climatic shifts, we know that sea level followed the same pattern, raising and falling by 300 feet." (<http://goo.gl/C5GE25>) He adds, "...if business continues as usual, by 2100 the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere will be over 700 ppm." Florida Governor Rick Scott's response was to order DEP employees, contractors and volunteers not to use the terms "climate change" and "global warming" in official communications. This spread to

many other Florida departments. (<http://goo.gl/oJifNz>)

Nooooo. We won't be bullied! (<http://goo.gl/IP0FqZ>) Our state, our county and our city will become climate leaders. We will commit to divest from fossil fuels, to embrace clean energy, to set emissions targets and to develop climate action plans, etc. We are not alone!

We are going to talk endlessly and everywhere about climate change and global warming! Yes we will! We are going to get more active and further decrease our carbon footprints! Yes we will! We are going to write letters to the editor (LTE)! Yes



we will! We are going to take charge of our state's moving forward and call and write to our Governor, our Senator, our Representative, and our local Electeds! Yes we will! We are going to rallies and demonstrations and we're taking the kids, too! Yes we will! And we're going to tell the others! Yes we will! Yes we will!

Conservation Corner Joanne Steele

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released (12/13/16) its widely anticipated final report on hydraulic fracturing (fracking), confirming that the controversial drilling process indeed impacts drinking water "under some circumstances." This conclusion is a major reversal from the EPA's June 2015 pro-fracking draft report (applauded by the fossil fuel industries) by removing the misleading line that fracking has not led to "widespread, systemic impacts on drinking water resources." The final report, done at the request of Congress, provides EPA's final conclusions that are based on review of "over 1,200 cited scientific sources; feedback from an independent peer

review conducted by EPA's Science Advisory Board; input from engaged stakeholders; and new research conducted as part of the study." (<http://goo.gl/BbLkol>)

With verification of this massive contamination, let us overturn the "Chaney loophole" and make these corporations subject to our hard won laws such as the "Clean Drinking Water Act," the "Clean Air Act," "TOSCA," (The Toxic Substances Control Act) and so many other laws that protect us and our children from the increasing contamination by corporate disregard of our water supplies! Come, join us: form our Chaney Loophole Committee!

Developments on Belleayre

by Kathy Nolan

Earlier this year, the Catskill Heritage Alliance (CHA) took legal action against Crossroads Ventures and the Shandaken Planning Board, arguing that it was improper for the Planning Board to permit the project because the various multifamily dwellings or "detached housing units" in the proposed project don't meet Shandaken Zoning Code's definition of accessory use, since they are habitable. The judge agreed this was a problem and directed the Planning Board to ask the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) for its determination. The Planning Board did so at a special meeting this month, and the ZBA will start addressing this at its December 21, 2016 meeting. The Planning Board, in its referral to the ZBA, rather misleadingly sent a letter redirecting the ZBA's attention to a red-herring question of what a "lodge" is under the code, though that's not what the judge asked them to do. The issue of accessory buildings or not is pretty straightforward: if the buildings in question aren't an accessory use, Crossroads can't include them without obtaining a variance.

These are more than just procedural or technical concerns. They go to the heart of the problem with the project: it's simply

too big for our local environment and economy. In addition to two hotels, an 18-hole golf course, a spa, and a conference center, the 15 multiple-family lodges and duplex structures Crossroads plans would bring the total number of dwelling units for accommodating guests and residents to 629. That would make the Belleayre Resort substantially bigger than nearby hamlets. Protecting against over-development is why we have a zoning code in the first place.

In early December the New York State Supreme Court in Albany ruled against the CHA in its legal action against Crossroads Ventures and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. The CHA has argued that it was legally necessary for a professional and independent Administrative Law Judge to review Crossroads Venture's proposed project before the Commissioner of New York's Department of Environmental Conservation could properly make a ruling on the project. The absence of such a review led to an incomplete record and inappropriate decision-making by the DEC and the DEC Commissioner. The CHA is considering the feasibility of an appeal.

Different Location, Same Fight

By Shelley Bance

Although a major victory against the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAP) has been celebrated following the Army Corps of Engineers' (ACE) temporary decision to deny its permit, a similar struggle in our own backyard is focused on another "black snake"—the Pilgrim Pipeline(s). Buoyed by the fierce resistance of the Standing Rock Sioux water protectors, East Coast activists are doubling down on efforts to stop not just one, but two Pilgrim Pipelines: one running south parallel to the NY State Thruway, transporting Bakken crude oil from Albany to refineries in New Jersey—and another carrying refined oil back north to Albany.

Opposition against both the DAP and Pilgrim Pipelines has slowed their progress with direct actions and demonstrations, as well as divestment from financial institutions. In North Dakota, DAP protesters who mistrust the Army Corps decision will remain at the Oceti Sakowin camp during the harsh winter. New arrivals are not being accepted due to severe weather conditions. Native camp leaders are encouraging people to go home and serve in ways that support the greater environmental cause in their own communities.

Here, in the Hudson Valley, the proposed Pilgrim Pipelines



Ceremony at Cooper Lake - World Wide Day to Protect the Waters, November 2016

would not replace rail and barge transport of highly volatile Bakken crude oil in New York. Instead, the flow of oil would be increased to refineries and export terminals, supporting long-term investment in fossil fuel infrastructure, including pump stations and roadways—all threatening the health and safety of residents and waterways.

Thankfully, the Pilgrim Pipelines have not yet received a single permit, with the scoping process delayed due to the partial loss of temporary funding. Iris Bloom, organizer of the Coalition Against Pilgrim Pipelines-NY and director of Protecting Our Waters, notes that although our activism has done a "good job keeping them at bay, they'll spring back up, so we must be alert, keep talking to our elected officials and neighbors, and pressure the major funder—Ares Management—to back off and the NY State Thruway Authority to deny permits." She says the Pilgrim Pipelines project is "dragging its feet," and has not yet submitted a scoping document, with many resolutions against it.

DAP loses its financial footing if the project is not completed by 1/1/17, the date when contracts of stakeholders can be renegotiated or cancelled. A strong level of vigilance will be required during the segmented Environmental Impact Statement of the DAP conducted by the ACE.

Activists are encouraged to call or email Governor Cuomo and deny Pilgrim's request to use the NY State Thruway Right of Way for its proposed pipelines. Call 518-474-8390 or email: gov.cuomo@chamber.state.ny.us. Tell your NYS senators and representatives, and US Congress members to stop Pilgrim Pipelines.

Check out these links for the DAP and Pilgrim Pipelines and for a list of banks for divestment:

www.stopilgrimpipeline.com
www.protectingourwaters.com
www.ocetisakowincamp.org
www.nodaplsolidarity.org
www.ienearth.org
www.yesmagazine.org
www.democracynow.org

The Sierra Club's Go Electric Campaign

Automobiles, above all else, represent America's addiction to dirty oil. Plug-in electric vehicles (EVs), which require no gasoline and emit no pollution from their tailpipes, present a critical opportunity to slash pollution, reduce our dependence on oil, and create American jobs. To drive this change, the Sierra Club has launched a national campaign to promote electric vehicles.

Each year, American passenger cars and trucks burn 121 billion gallons of gasoline and spew upwards of 3 trillion pounds of carbon pollution into the air. These emissions are from both the vehicle tailpipes and the "upstream" emissions from extracting, refining, and transporting the oil to our vehicles. Electric vehicles are a great way to save money and protect the environment.

New York incentives include:

- Vehicles powered exclusively by electricity are exempt from motor vehicle emissions inspections.

- Through the Clean Pass Program, drivers of EV can receive a 10% discount on established E-ZPass accounts with proof of registration.
- An income tax credit of up to 50% is available towards Electric Vehicle Service Equipment (EVSE) (a home charging station) (up to \$5,000)

Federal incentives include:

- Residents are eligible for a federal tax credit of as much as \$7,500 for purchasing an electric vehicle.
- Residents are eligible for a federal tax credit of as much as \$1,000 for purchasing qualified electric vehicle charging equipment.

Visit: <https://content.sierraclub.org/evguide/go-electric>

Don't forget the Sierra Club Go Solar program!

Insulate your house, add solar and watch your electric bill shrink.

Visit: <http://content.sierraclub.org/solar/sungevity>

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. 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. You can read any of our past newsletters by visiting: <http://www.sierraclub.org/atlantic/mid-hudson/newsletters>.

This was a deeply disappointing election for the United States and for the world. Though difficult to accept, it looks as though Donald Trump will in fact be president for the next four years. Another disappointing result was that the Sierra Club endorsed candidates in our local districts who represent progressive thinking for our local communities: Zephyr Teachout, Sara Niccoli, Chris Eachus and Terry Gipson. All lost to their Republican opponents.

Mr. Trump’s stated plan is to throw away most of what President Obama achieved regarding energy and the environment. He has said that he will back out of the Paris climate agreement. He wants to open up federal lands to oil and gas drilling. He would drop proposed regulations for tighter methane controls on drilling operations. He wants to shrink the role of the Environmental Protection Agency to an “advisory” one. He would cancel the Clean Power Plan, a set of rules that requires states to reduce their carbon emissions over the next few decades.

Trump has made a good start on all of this by appointing Oklahoma attorney general Scott Pruitt to lead the Environmental Protection Agency. Mr. Pruitt has made a name for himself by orchestrating numerous challenges to the EPA. In order to combat regulations on oil and gas industries in his state, he has sued, multiple times, the very agency he is now appointed to lead.

It might be easy to feel discouraged as we reflect on what a Donald Trump presidency may mean for our planet, our country, and our local environment. While that reaction is reasonable, now we need to move on to planning what to do, and then doing

it. As Sierra Club Executive Director Michael Brune has said in recent days: we are not defeated; we are determined, and we will organize and act.

Remember that a significant majority of voters—a margin of 2.7 million as of December 7—did not vote for Donald Trump. Since his election, progressive organizations whose priorities are in opposition to his, have seen tremendous surges in donations, new memberships, and volunteer applications. The Sierra Club saw a quadrupling of its monthly donation record and a huge influx of volunteers. (If you were a part of this, thank you! If not, please act now.) The American Civil Liberties Union saw its donation web page crash as visitors to the page increased by 7000 percent. The Anti-Defamation League received a 50-fold increase in online donations. Planned Parenthood received 80,000 donations immediately post-election.

All of us—and there are a lot of us—must work together and act to prevent this administration from rolling back the progress that has been made in curbing pollution of our environment, protecting biodiversity, and ensuring the purity of our air, our water, and our food. Already the Sierra Club and other organizations are gearing up to fight the Trump administration’s announced plans to decimate environmental protections and reverse movement towards clean energy and away from fossil fuels. This is a fight that will need effort from us all, one which will take place locally, regionally and nationally, in our communities, in the courts, in the marketplace, and in the public square.

We Need Volunteers

We are seeking individuals who would like to help us Protect Our Environment! If you can spare a few hours a month, you can make a difference.

- We are looking for people who will report on the fossil fuel industry
- We also need people who will report on what our New York

State representatives and Senators are doing or not doing for our environment

- Our Programs Chair would like you to help us put on Sierra Club Programs in your area of our six counties!

Email or call our Volunteer Chair, Marie Caruso at mariehv@verizon.net or (845) 217-5236.

BALLOT for Mid-Hudson Group Executive Committee

Candidates’ statements:

Joanne Steele - I grew up on a New England apple farm, and have been a feminist, patriot and political activist for decades. I am a long-time kayaker and a walker in awe of this gorgeous Earth. I hold a Masters Degree in Chemistry and have been recycling architecture as a Realtor® for over 30 years. Some of the environmental issues I have chosen in the past have originated from living in the Mid-Hudson region: Save Our Forest Action Coalition, Friends of SEQRA, and Environmental TV (public access). I became involved with Sierra Club over the struggle against Marriott for possession of Minnewaska in the 1980’s and became a member in 1986. I’ve been an Executive Committee member since 2003 and Group chair since winter, 2009.

Alison White - I’ve always enjoyed outdoor activities and have been a Sierra Club member for a number of years. In the past year I’ve become more active in the club, currently serving as the Political Chair. I also participate in “citizen science” programs sponsored by Scenic Hudson and Riverkeeper. I enjoy hiking, bicycling, kayaking, and skiing.

Andy Moss - I am currently the Outings Chair as well as a Sierra Club National Trip leader. I am very interested in preserving our planet’s environment, protecting wildlife, and supporting the mission and campaigns of the Sierra Club. I hope that by getting people outdoors I can contribute to educating and encouraging citizens to join the Sierra Club in protecting our environment for all of us.

This year we have three Executive Committee members up for election.

Note: Only Sierra Club members may run for Executive Committee positions.

You are invited to attend our monthly ExCom meetings which are open to all members. Meetings are normally held at the New Paltz Village Hall. Call our Chair, Joanne Steele at 845-338-0300 to confirm time and place.

**Each member can vote and/or write-in below for up to 3 candidates. (lines on right are for joint memberships)
The top 3 vote-getters get 3 year terms ending 12/31/19.**

Joanne Steele	_____	_____
Alison White	_____	_____
Andy Moss	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Send your ballot by January 23 to: Mid-Hudson Sierra Club PO Box 1012 Poughkeepsie, NY 12602

Your membership will be verified with your address label. Labels will be removed prior to counting the ballot.
PLEASE MAIL THIS ENTIRE PAGE.

Note: If you read your newsletters online, please print and mail this page along with your name, address, and signature on a separate page.

Mid-Hudson
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Join Us for Our Annual, Fun-Filled
MEMBER PARTY

Friday, March 3rd, 2017

All Sierra Club members are welcome.

7:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Enjoy free food, snacks, goodies; win door prizes;
learn about our Group; meet your fellow members; and have fun!

Location: New Paltz Village Hall - 25 Plattekill Avenue, New Paltz (map: goo.gl/XbQHvP)

Check our website for more information: sierraclub.org/atlantic/mid-hudson

Investing in the Local Environment—Your Gift Counts!

The efforts of your Mid Hudson Group of the Sierra Club has had impact on many local environmental projects and issues. We've stood strong in efforts to stop oil and gas pipelines in the area, objected to increased barge traffic on the Hudson, and ongoing bomb trains that roll within a few feet of the Hudson River. We have also provided financial support for The Clearwater which needed substantial rebuilding along with the efforts to keep further development at Belleayre to a reasonable level.

The work that we engage in is funded in part from membership dues, but primarily through our fundraising efforts including member contributions. While we don't send out solicitations, we very much appreciate your considering making a gift to our group to financially

support our efforts. Contributions given at the local level are targeted to projects in our area, and because we are volunteer led, the full value of the gift will have impact.

Contributions can be mailed to: Mid-Hudson Sierra Club, PO Box 1012, Poughkeepsie, NY 12602

For general, non-tax deductible contributions, make checks payable to the "Mid-Hudson Group of the Sierra Club"

For tax deductible purposes, please make your gift payable to "Sierra Club Foundation" and in the notation line, please write "Mid-Hudson Group" to insure our local group benefits from your gift.

We're happy to answer any questions or to discuss contributions to the Mid-Hudson group. Please contact David Friedman at 845-255-2535 or email: Friedman_David@msn.com