



The Quinnehtukqut Connecticut Chapter

The Monthly Newsletter for Events, Information, and Action

February 2016

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Note: To read captions on photos, place your cursor over photo.

HIKES

All participants on Sierra Club outings are required to sign a standard liability waiver. If you would like to read the Liability Waiver before you choose to participate on an outing, please contact the hike leader.

Penwood State Park, Simsbury, CT

Dates: Sunday, February 28th
Time: 12 Noon
Difficulty: Easy hiking on rolling terrain
Meet: Parking lot just off the Rte.185 park entrance
Hike Leader: Renee Taylor
RSVP: YES only by 2/26 to mchawigirl@yahoo.com

Note: *If you say YES and change your mind, please let Renee know so she can hike nearer to her home instead.*



Trail in Penwood

GPS: You can mapquest/GPS Stafford Street and Hartford Road intersection in Simsbury, CT for a site close to park entrance.

Directions: Rte. 91 to exit 35B, Rte. 218 west. Take 218 until you reach Rte.189 north in Bloomfield. Turn right onto Rte.189 and continue north to Rte.178. Turn left onto 178 and proceed to end where it intersects with Rte.185. Turn right onto Rte.185. Ahead about a mile on the right is park entrance.

Dogs: Friendly dogs are welcome but must be leashed as others approach. Messes on the trail must be removed.

RAIN/SNOW THAT DAY CANCELS

All hikers, adults and children over 10 years of age, with or without dogs are welcome as long as they refrain from cell phone use and smoking and can tolerate our dogs.

Eastern Fairfield County Group Hikes Roosevelt Forest Roosevelt Forest, Stratford, CT

In mid-November, several members of the Eastern Fairfield County Sierra Group were joined by members of the community on a hike at Roosevelt Forest in Stratford. The 401 acre Roosevelt Forest is owned by the town of Stratford and includes a lovely pond (pictured), various wetlands, picnic areas, walking paths and camp sites.

Roosevelt Forest is a wildlife sanctuary and has most species you would expect to find in a typical Connecticut mixed deciduous forest, including both coniferous (e.g. pines) and deciduous broadleaf hardwoods (maples, oaks, etc.) Along with deer, the forest contains smaller mammals as well as reptiles and amphibians and nearly all of Connecticut's birdlife.



Hikers Convene

Several marked trails lead hikers through the forest, and hike leader Dave Wright took the group around one of the longer routes. "We had a great hike, and really enjoyed seeing the mixed terrain," said Sierra member Joe Letendre. The forest has its own website, which can be accessed at: <http://www.rooseveltforest.info/>

For more information about the Eastern Fairfield County Sierra Group, contact: Peter McKnight, peter.mcknight@sierraclub.org, 203-257-6796



Pond in Roosevelt Forest, Stratford

GROUP MEETINGS

Greater Hartford Sierra Club Group

February Meeting and Presentation

Date: Thursday, February 11th
Speaker: Peter Picone, CT DEEP Wildlife Biologist
Topic: "Enhancing Habitat for Wildlife" (backyard and statewide)
Time: 7:30pm; Activist letter writing at 7:00pm on a related topic
Location: Westmoor Park, 119 Flagg Road, West Hartford, CT
Questions: Renee at mchawigirl@yahoo.com

Peter Picone specializes in habitat enhancement, native plants and invasive species management. He is a board member of the Quinnipiac River Watershed Association and lives in Southington. Peter was graduated from UConn with a BS degree in Renewable Natural Resources. He holds conservation awards from New England Wildflower Society, New England Outdoor Writers and United Bowhunters of Connecticut.

His website is: www.wildlifepassion.net



Peter Picone, CT DEEP Wildlife Biologist

Shoreline Sierra Club Group

At our January meeting, Shoreline Sierra Club Group decided to form an Energy Committee to address renewable energy. The chair is John Dixon. Our plan is to assist, educate and support our local existing New Haven Energy task force in this monumental effort! John Dixon has already been in communication with Marty Mador regarding input from the state level.

Our February meeting is a general monthly meeting that Jen Yoxall usually facilitates. It's a discussion of new/old business within a one hour time frame. John Dixon would welcome the opportunity to engage all interested parties in a discussion of renewable energy.

February Meeting and Presentation

(Note new location)

Date: Wednesday, February 10th
Time: 6:30pm-8:00pm
Location: Stony Creek Brewery
Address: 5 Indian Neck Avenue, Branford, CT

Note: *Stony Creek Brewery closes at 8 pm.*

Contact: Jennifer Yoxall 203-457-2624 or jyoxall@comcast.net

PREVIEWS: MARK YOUR 2016 CALENDAR

Greater Hartford Sierra Club Program

Date: Thursday, March 10th
Speaker: Laurie Julian, Esq., chapter consultant
Topic: Update of 2015-16 CT Legislative Session Environmental Bills

Shoreline Sierra Club Program

Continues theme of renewable energy

Date: Wednesday, April 13th at 7:00pm
Event: Guided tour for children and adults
Location: Energize CT Center, 122 Universal Drive N, North Haven.

The Energize Center is a joint venture between UI and Eversource. The Center provides adults and children with hands on learning to discover efficient and renewable energy solutions. The outing should be both fun and informative.

NATIONAL CLUB ELECTIONS

National Sierra Club Elections Scheduled Spring 2016

The annual election for the Sierra Club's National Board of Directors is now underway with an election date of April 27, 2016. The nominating committee has a slate of eight candidates to fill five open seats.

If you are eligible to vote in the election, that is you hold membership in the Sierra Club nationally, you will receive by mail (or by Internet if you chose the electronic delivery option) your National Sierra Club ballot in early March. Ballots will include information on the candidates and where you can find additional information on the Club's website.



If you don't know the candidates and find it difficult to vote without learning more, you have several options. Try:

- reading the candidates' views on a variety of issues facing the Club and the environment at sierraclub.org/board/election
- contacting membership.services@sierraclub.org if you have further questions
- telephoning 415.977.5653

To function well as a democratically structured organization at all levels, the Sierra Club requires the regular flow of views on policy and priorities from you, its grassroots members. Yearly participation in elections at all Club levels is considered a major membership responsibility.

For example, elections for Sierra Club's Connecticut Executive Committee (Excom) were held in the fall of 2015. The Executive Committee is required to stand for election by the chapter membership because it decides which programs, conservation campaigns, and political campaigns should be allocated resources. Voting for candidates, in both the group, chapter (state) and national elections, who express your views on how the Club should grow and change is both a privilege and responsibility of membership.

Note: This article is only about elections for our national board, not about candidates for public office.

SMALL VICTORIES: SIERRA CLUB INTERVENES IN NED/ROCKY HILL FRACKED GAS FIGHT

by Martha Klein

Since the Sierra Club Connecticut Chapter launched a Beyond Gas campaign in 2014, there haven't been very many victories. Actually, there's been none. But as everyone from the Pope to the President to the leaders in Paris talk about climate change, there seems to be a sea change happening in the public dialogue about the environment. The media is more frequently quoting people who talk about the need to keep fossil fuels in the ground, about the need to transition to 100% renewable energy, and about the fear of the billions of dollars in stranded assets that fossil fuel companies might leave their investors holding.



In Connecticut, Kinder Morgan (KM) wants to expand their pipeline to transport shale gas from the fracking fields in Pennsylvania to the Canadian coast for export. This five billion dollar, ratepayer subsidized transport and export pipeline, called the Northeast Energy Direct, or NED, is encountering numerous snags in its approval process. This is a dramatic contrast to the Algonquin Incremental Market, or AIM pipeline, which was under the radar and was approved last year before the majority of the public were even aware it existed.

Gas Industry/Regulator Pushback

Now that the populace is galvanized around the issue of climate change, environmental protection, and the troubling practice of corporations raiding the public trust, the pushback against the gas industry and regulators is unprecedented. Here are three recent developments.

1. A majority of the landowners along the pipeline route in Massachusetts and New Hampshire have denied KM the right to survey their property, thus creating a delay in the approval process. A delay speaks to the public's distrust of this company, headed by former Enron CEO, Richard Kinder.
2. The town of Deerfield, MA has brought a lawsuit against the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), for regulating international commerce as opposed to interstate commerce which is their purview. Their town attorney argues that as the NED is primarily an export pipeline, it falls under the (Department of Energy) DOE's purview, not FERC.
3. The town of West Hartford voted to oppose the location of NED in the Hartford watershed and is pushing for the company to explore alternative routes.

Intervention Follows

Pushing for relocation of unneeded pipeline is not an answer to the economic and environmental problems shale gas expansions invite. On January 15th, the Sierra Club (with the Connecticut chapter as a co-sponsor) intervened in the NED approval process with FERC. As only intervenors have the right to challenge FERC, the fight to stop fracked gas expansion has now been taken up by the largest and oldest environmental organization in the United States. This is a thrilling development and the chapter is proud for the support of the National Sierra Club.

Victories are not anticipated, so it was especially exciting and moving to be present at the Rocky Hill Town Council meeting on January 19th, when the council unanimously voted against Pentagon Energy's plan to bring tanker trucks loaded with compressed fracked gas into the town for the purpose of injecting the gas into the soon to be expanded AIM pipeline. This type of gas transport is fairly new and the town council members couldn't find any safety data to inform their decision. The mayor explained her choice to oppose this risky energy project by saying, "When we have to make an important decision like this, we must use our heads, but also our hearts." The room burst into applause following the vote, and townspeople and activists hugged and wept. Politics informed by head and heart is just what the world needs more of right now.

Strategy for 2016

Despite the impressive progress made by environmental groups, the gas companies continue to plan for massive expansions as they work to transport their gas to the coast for export. Here are the issues:

1. Along the pipeline route in Connecticut, public money is being allocated to pay for local conversions to gas. These conversions may be characterized as extortions as heating oil in Connecticut is both cheaper and less carbon intensive than heating with shale gas. The reason is 2% of the heating oil is reclaimed food-grade oil.
2. Ratepayers are paying to convert buildings to use a more expensive, more climate damaging fuel. In the last three years, roughly 57,000 homes or businesses were converted to gas and 75 miles of new mainline and approximately 215 miles of smaller lateral lines were built. Halting these conversions is our objective.
3. Gas pipelines already in place in Connecticut are leaking at a rate of approximately 5% annually. Interestingly, gas companies are allowed to leak that much gas with impunity and if they leak above 5%, the leaks fall under a self-reporting mechanism. With no real state oversight, gas companies have no incentive to fix leaks, and they pass the cost of "lost and unaccounted for gas," or leaks, on to the consumer. The gas leaks need to be addressed, and will probably require legislative action to compel the gas companies to change their procedures.

2016 Goals

You may recall that the CT legislature voted to make ratepayers liable for the costs of future interstate pipeline, diminishing needed public investment in renewable energy. Although Commissioner Klee of the Department of Energy denies public investment in fracked gas expansion subverts investment in renewable energy, he is on the defensive by the challenge from the environmental movement. Continued pressure against fracked gas expansion is crucial.

Bottom Line: A rapid transition to a 100% renewable energy powered electricity grid is necessary if we are to protect our planet from catastrophic climate change. Let's stop fracked gas conversions, fix leaking pipelines and move the state to a 100% renewable energy economy in 2016.

FORUM

Gas Pipeline Educational Forum

Topic: Beyond Fossil Fuels

Attend and learn about the economic, environmental, safety and health issues surrounding the proposed expansion of fracked gas in the state currently under construction or approval. Are you aware of the costs associated with these projects? Do you know how pipeline expansion will affect your town and neighborhood? Are you aware of its health and safety impacts?

Date: Tuesday, March 1st
Time: 6:45pm
Location: West Hartford Public Library
Address: 20 South Main Street, West Hartford, CT



Free and open to the public

Presenters:

Martha Klein, Communications Chair, Sierra Club CT Chapter
martha.klein@sierraclub.org

Jen Siskind, Local Coordinator, Food and Water Watch
jsiskind@fwwlocal.org

Ben Martin, Organizer, 350CT
organizers@350CT.org

Contact: Deb Roe, Forum Organizer, CT Chapter, Sierra Club
deborahsroe@gmail.com or connecticut.chapter@sierraclub.org
Telephone: 860.236.4405

CT ELECTRIC VEHICLE INITIATIVE UPDATES: 2016

by Jameelah Muhammad

Our Club's presence at the 2015 CT International Auto Show November 20-22, 2015 at the Hartford Convention Center was a great success. At the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony, the CT Sierra Club Chapter presented Governor Malloy with an award for his work on electric vehicles (EV) incentives in the state. During the show we promoted electric vehicles and let consumers know about the rebate program that just received renewed funding. The volunteers who manned our successful booth in the Main Lobby with our coalition partners, the CT EV Coalition, deserve a big thank you.



Governor Dannel Malloy

We would not have been able to achieve our goals without our friends at DEEP, Connecticut Fund for the Environment, the Acadia Center, CT Environment and Connecticut Auto Retailers Association (CARA). We look forward to involving more volunteers next year and to having more events in the future that continue to engage the public on this important issue.

For a recap of the Auto Show, check out this Blog Post:

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/gina-coplonnewfield/electric-vehicles-take-ce_b_8641820.html

It is good news that shortly after the auto show Governor Malloy announced the State's commitment to reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions as a part of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) in association with the United Nations Climate Change Negotiations this past year.

"Connecticut has set an aggressive goal for reducing carbon emissions to combat climate change - and is determined to do so in a manner that improves our environment and air quality while increasing our energy security, building our economy, and creating jobs," said Governor Malloy. "We are making strong progress on all fronts and our state has emerged as a national leader on climate action. Signing the Under 2 MOU aligns us with other jurisdictions who share our deep commitment to protecting the future of our planet and safeguarding the well-being of every one who lives here."

The Governor's action and statement have implications for both renewable energy and electric vehicle initiatives and we look forward to seeing what some of the action items and outcomes might be as the state moves forward in achieving its goal.

For more information visit: <http://1.usa.gov/1Q32ZUm>

With funding being renewed for the CT Rebate Program, now is a good time to think about possibly purchasing or leasing an electric vehicle for your next car. Visit the **CHEAPR Website** for more information about how to save thousands of dollars off your next car purchase: http://www.ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.asp?a=2684&q=561422&deepNav_GID=2183. Also, if you are thinking about buying a new or used EV check out this video that answers common myths about electric cars: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DoiZPEzN6LA>

Last, but not least we are gearing up for **Winter, Spring, and Summer Electric Vehicle** events and we need the support of volunteers to make these events a success. If you are interested in becoming an **EV Ambassador, a leader for our National Drive Electric Week 2016 or just volunteer at a tabling event**, send a quick e-mail with your contact information to Jameelah.muhammad@sierraclub.org and someone will be in contact with you shortly about how you can become more involved.

2016 is looking like a big year for electric vehicles in the State of CT and the CT Sierra Club Chapter is working hard to ensure that as many members are involved with this campaign as possible. We hope to hear from you soon!

Jameelah Muhammad is the Senior Organizing Representative Electric Vehicle Initiative (CT and MA), Sierra Club



Martin Mador, Political Chair, CT chapter at podium. Governor Malloy on right.

Photo credit: Jameelah Muhammad

POEM

Tranquil Together on the Trail

Alone, my two dogs and I step lightly,
Over snow covered stones and ice.
Crisp, pine scented air chills our lungs slightly,
As we eagerly seize a rare trice.

With one spirit these times we embrace,
Along a shallow frozen stream.
Silken flakes slowly drift down my face,
Coating our eyelashes and their whiskers the same!

We pass quietly in this still, white world,
When a cautious thought occurs.
Will trail's end appear, ere Nature blurs
Wonderland vistas and sets winds aw whirl?

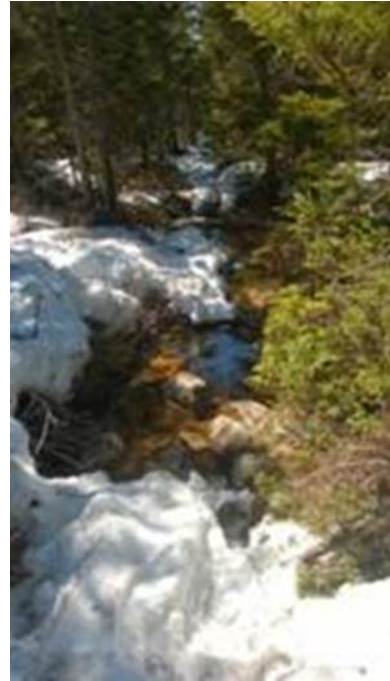
Gazing back, our passage etched as Winter can,
Tracks of paws and feet from where we began,
Show side by side, our Fate we meet.
Our frosty breaths rise, disperse, losing heat.

My thirsty dogs chomp frozen clumps that melt,
As they flop into snow angels, so heartfelt!
Then up, gleefully chasing stick and ice ball
Which hide or crumble, unfound all.

Leading on, their outlines a vague scheme,
Dusted with snow, until clues show,
With eyes that gleam, breaths of steam
And sudden turns where they pose.

Safely home without further bluster,
These cherished memories will stir,
When on rougher trails in later winter,
Forging forth I can't muster.

M. Renee Taylor



Snow covered stones and ice

SOLAR POWER

Have you ever considered going solar?

If so, **now is the time** because it's cheaper and easier than ever. Here's the proof: A new study just found that in 42 out of 50 of the largest U.S. cities, a typically-sized, \$0-down home solar system costs less than the energy purchased from a residential customer's local utility.*

Join more than 1,100 Sierra Club supporters in making the switch to clean energy.

With flexible financing through different Sungevity Energy Plans, you can get an efficient solar system without emptying your pockets. Plus you'll lock in your electricity rate for years to come! It sounds too good to be true, but it's not!

Now is the time to go solar.

Join the clean-energy movement today!

Check it out at: www.sierraclub.org/solarhomes



Solar energy lifts life on earth

CREATE YOUR LEGACY



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

Create a Lasting Legacy

By creating a charitable bequest to benefit Sierra Club or your favorite Sierra Club Chapter, you remain in control of your assets during your lifetime and help protect the environment in years to come.

For confidential assistance, contact:

Sierra Club

Gift Planning Program

85 Second Street, Second Floor

San Francisco, CA 94105

gift.planning@sierraclub.org

(800) 932-4270



...Your lasting legacy...

To create your legacy go to sierraclubfoundation.org or email gift.planning@sierraclub.org.

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