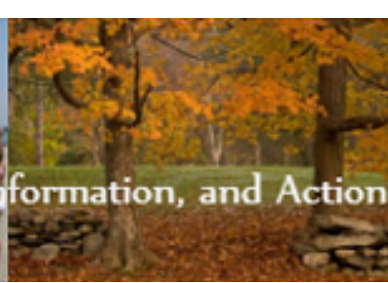




The Quinnehtukqut Connecticut Chapter

The Monthly Newsletter for Events, Information, and Action



MARCH 2017

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LOBBY DAY

We Can Do It! Lobby Day 2017

by Roberta Paro



Join fellow Sierra Club members and supporters from allied organizations, 350 CT, Connecticut Fund for the Environment and Citizen's Campaign for the Environment, at the Connecticut Chapter Sierra Club Lobby Day. Our Lobby Day is an excellent way to learn how to become an effective volunteer lobbyist and to lobby your local legislators about the Connecticut Chapter's priority legislative bills. [Sierra Club Legislative](#)

Date: March 8, 2017

Time: 10:00am-2:00pm

Location: Hartford Legislative Office Building
300 Capitol Avenue, Room 1C, Hartford, CT

Program: We gather for a one-hour lobby training and a briefing on our priority bills for this legislative session (clean energy, ending subsidies for expansion of fracked gas pipelines, protecting open space) and remarks from pro-environmental legislators. Then, you have an opportunity to lobby your local legislators and, if you can stay, participate in a celebration of International Women's Day.

RSVP: connecticut.chapter@sierraclub.org to participate and we'll send you more detailed information about the Lobby Day events.

Looking forward to being with you March 8th.

Roberta Paro is Co-Chair of the CT Chapter Sierra Club Legislative Committee

EDUCATIONAL PRESENTATION

Keep Fracking Waste Out of Connecticut

What your town and others can do

Topic: Oil and gas exploration or extraction activities create fracking waste we need to keep out of Connecticut towns with bans that bar the disposal or use of millions of gallons of fracking waste.

As many Connecticut towns as possible must pass these ordinances early this year to let the State know the people of Connecticut want fracking waste kept out of our state. CT has a temporary moratorium, due to end later this year, and the Director of DEEP (Department of Environmental Protection) has gone on record as opposed to making the temporary moratorium permanent.

Speaker: Jen Siskind, local coordinator with Food and Water Watch will discuss efforts to date and what you can do to move forward fracking waste bans in Connecticut towns. Jen has literature, flyers, etc., to adapt for use when it is time for a town's vote.

Sponsor: Greater Hartford Sierra Club

Date: Thursday, March 9th

Time: Program: 7:30pm:

Activist letter writing: 7:00pm

Donation: \$4 to defray hall rental fee

Questions: Renee at mchawigirl@yahoo.com

Jen may also discuss the following two bills before the current legislature session:

1. Proposed Bill No. 6329

Referred to Committee on ENVIRONMENT

Introduced by:

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI, 61st Dist.

REP. STORMS, 60th Dist.

REP. BARAM, 15th Dist.



Jen Siskind

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING HYDRAULIC FRACTURING WASTE IN CONNECTICUT

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

That section 22a-142 of the general statutes be amended to repeal the authority of the Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection to adopt regulations to permit the storage, disposal, handling and use of hydraulic fracturing waste in Connecticut.

Statement of Purpose:

To permanently prohibit the storage, disposal, handling and use of hydraulic fracturing waste in Connecticut.

https://www.cga.ct.gov/asp/cgabillstatus/cgabillstatus.asp?selBillType=Bill&bill_num=HB-6329

2. Proposed H.B. No. 6493

Introduced by: REP. JONATHAN STEINBERG, 136th DIST.

Title: AN ACT PROHIBITING THE STORAGE OR DISPOSAL OF WASTE FROM HYDRAULIC FRACTURING AND NATURAL GAS AND OIL EXTRACTION ACTIVITIES

Statement of Purpose: To extend the existing prohibition on the storage and disposal of waste from hydraulic fracturing and to prohibit the storage and disposal of waste from natural gas and oil extraction activities.

SPRING EVENT

Drowning the Snowmen

Welcome to spring. The first 2017 spring social gathering of the Southeast Group of the CT Chapter Sierra Club is scheduled. Here are the details:

Activities:

~ **Drown a Snowman** in effigy

~ **Poetry Slam:** Bring your choice of poetry, prose or folderol, with a spring theme to share, or read from selections provided.

History: This event has been celebrated over the years and is open to the general public. Once again, the drowning ceremony will take place in the waters of Long Island Sound. The dastardly deed has occurred, in ceremonies past, along the shores and docks of Noank, Gales Ferry, Stonington Borough, New London and several times indoors in a bucket, due to inclement weather.

Date: Monday, March 20th

Time: 6:00pm

Location: Pilot House, 98 Neptune Avenue, at Ocean Beach Park, New London

Sponsor: The Southeast Group of the CT Chapter Sierra Club

Cost: \$18.00 includes a light supper

Reservation deadline: March 10th

Contact: Louise 860.444.8916 for more information, and/or to make reservations and arrangements for payment.



Snowmen Await Their Destiny

REQUEST FOR CONTENT

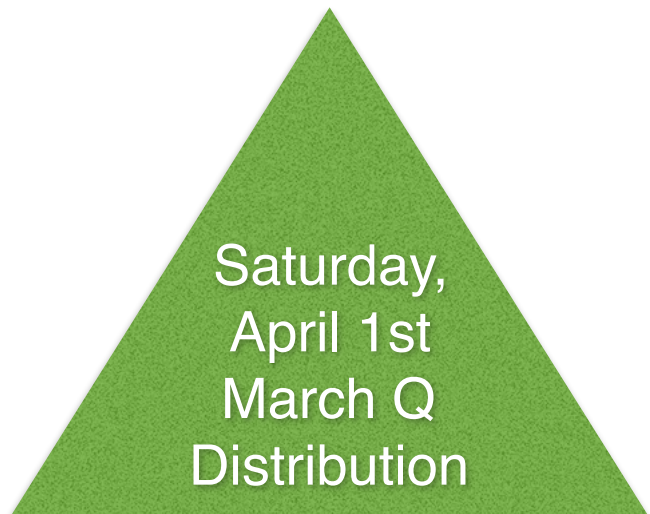
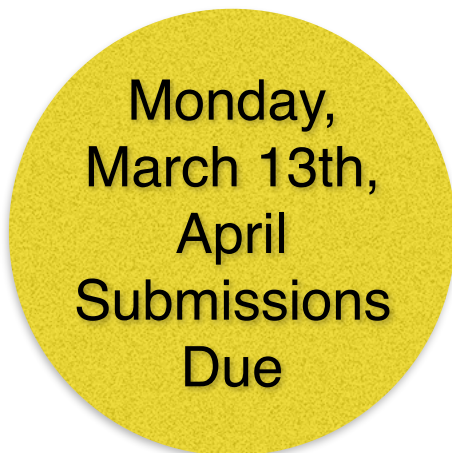
All Connecticut Sierra Club members are invited to contribute to The *Quinnehtukqut*. We accept articles, book reviews, puzzles, events, photos, poems, etc. Articles, limited to 500 words, should be on a subject of local or national interest to the Connecticut Chapter membership. The goal of the newsletter is to inform, educate, motivate and involve our members.

If you post information to the website and want it in the newsletter, too, submit those postings separately to the newsletter.

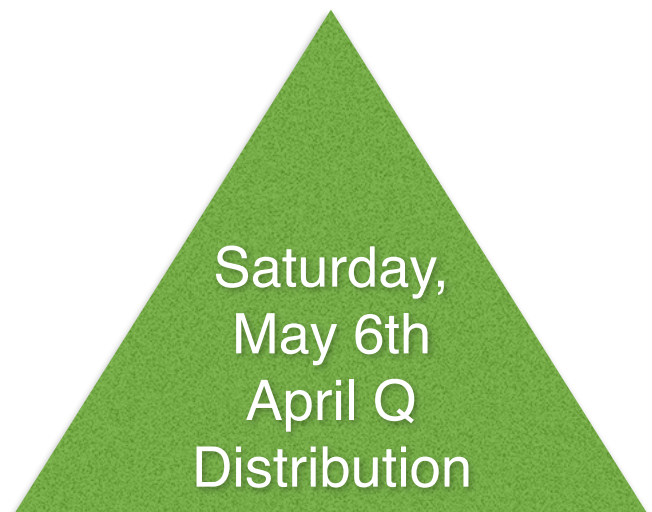
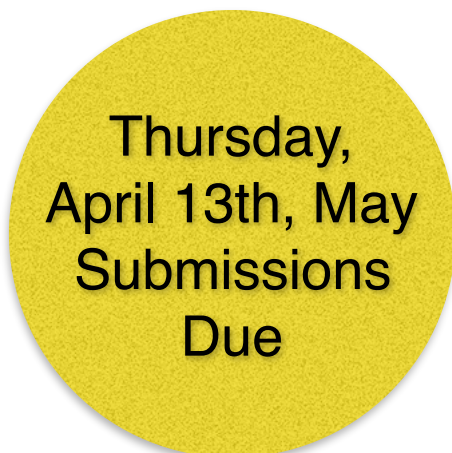
We have developed a newsletter calendar for the next two 2017 submission dates. Its purpose is to make it easier for you to plan your contributions to the *Quinnehtukqut* for publication.

The *Quinnehtukqut* will distribute at the beginning of the month. Comments, letters to the editor and all submissions may be sent to ctsierraq3@gmail.com for inclusion in future newsletters.

MARCH/APRIL CALENDAR:



APRIL/MAY CALENDAR:



All decisions regarding use are made by the Communications Committee.

BOOK REVIEW

The Grid, Gretchen Bakke Ph.D.

Reviewer: James Root

Cultural anthropologist Gretchen Bakke's book, "The Grid" is an informative history of our electrical grid. It also addresses the grid's coming challenges in the context of energy deregulation and government greenhouse gas reduction mandates.

The book begins with the irony that the original state of the grid, roughly 1910-30, was actually similar to what energy activists are working towards today: varied and distributed generation on site rather than the industrial scale, central generators we see today. Following these innocent beginnings, some ingenious, driven and well connected developers managed, through brilliant innovation-both technical and legal, to mass produce power from large scale generators and bring low cost power to the masses (achieved in Chicago first) while expanding the use of electricity in America.

Unfortunately, this often well meaning, progressive effort turned into a knotty, self-interested utility/government hybrid that preserves itself to this day-in the form of Eversource, United Illuminating (UI) and unlicensed Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) in Connecticut.

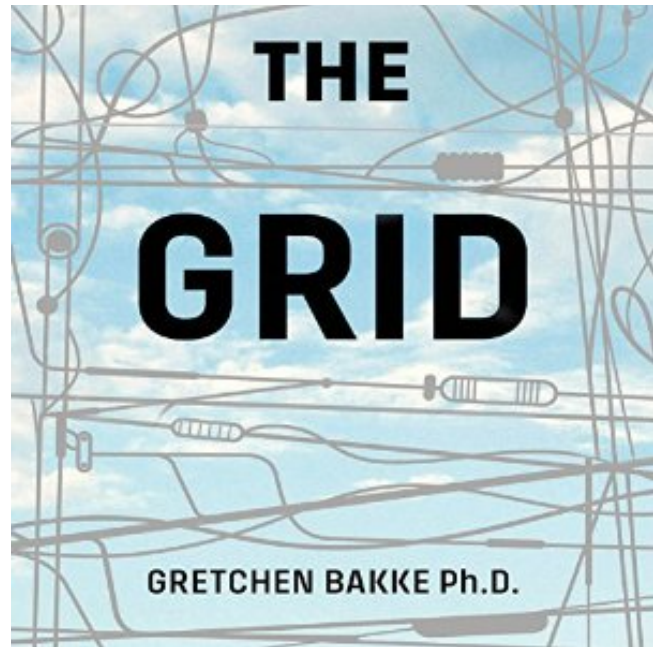
Origins of Deregulation

Bakke covers the critical energy industry development of deregulation-which, was done in part, out of good intentions on the part of the Carter administration. The utilities were forced to distribute power only to free up the power industry for renewable energy generator/entrepreneurs. Revolutionary deregulation legislation started in California, which gave up its power plant generation assets to corporations. Note: This new privatized model is a big reason why we fight aggressive, corporate natural gas plant entrepreneurs in Connecticut.

While this deregulation format was successful in terms of wind power in the west, it brought clever financial speculators, exploiting the inevitable new loopholes in the legislation, with Enron in California being the most notorious example. Deregulation also created the ongoing dilemma of funding the billions needed to upkeep the grid with declining ratepayer revenue (ultimately, the ratepayer pays for everything).

Ratepayer Revenue Declines

Because of laws such as our Renewable Portfolio Standard, energy companies like Eversource are required to buy power from renewable and/or distributed sources which can lead to lower ratepayer revenues to maintain an aging grid. People are increasingly producing their own power and/or selling it back to the energy distributor for prices still above most fossil fuels. Distribution utilities, although often an irresponsible actor regarding cost increases, are having a



difficult task maintaining the same size or larger grid on which the new types of generation may still depend. From constant equipment replacement to routine maintenance to tree cutting, the utilities are obliged to take care of the grid, with fewer ratepayer dollars.

According to Bakke, the technological silver bullet is most likely a breakthrough in power storage. Once 'variable' generation (most renewables), dependent on changing, hourly atmospheric conditions, can be stored on a large scale, if only for 4-6 hours, both new renewable generators and the utilities will be in a better place. The age old problem of 'time of day' energy demand fluctuation would be partially solved with new large capacity batteries or with other resourceful solutions that allow utilities to buy energy produced during the day when more power is available, and sell it to consumers in the evening when energy demand ramps up.

Power Outages Become Passe'

Bakke, in "The Grid", also analyzes infamous power outages, such as those in 1977 and 2003, as a way of illustrating the changing (and constant) nature of the grid. She also explores the trend of resiliency and microgrids, i.e., the effort to create 'islands' of power generation that are normally connected to the grid but can operate independently if necessary. The most notorious example of this grid of the future is New Jersey's mass transit system microgrid, developed in response to Hurricane Sandy. These self sufficient islands would be the starting point in bringing the entire grid back up in the event of a widespread systemic failure.

"The Grid" is an engaging and readable book, one that is a must read for the serious energy activist. We must be able 'to talk the talk' with energy bureaucrats and technocrats and our prerequisite passion must be tempered by reality. "The Grid" may help increase understanding of the long term, self perpetuating trends that exist separately from the good and bad intentions of the various actors in the energy industry.

James Root is a CT Chapter Sierra Club volunteer and leader of Occupy Danbury.

ARTICLES

2017 National Club Election

The 2017 election cycle for the National Board of Sierra Club Directors is underway. In early March if you are eligible to vote (Regular and Life members are eligible to vote in the national Club election) you will receive a National Club ballot in the mail or, via the Internet if you selected the electronic option. This year, 25,000 people have signed up to receive voting materials via email, thus saving the Club funds in printing and mailing this material to them.

There are nine candidates on the ballot. They are:



Loren Blackford
(NY)



Ramon Cruz (PR)



Debbie Heaton
(DE)



Stephanie Linder
(CA)



Natalie Lucas (MO)



Ross Macfarlane
(WA)



Peter Sargent (CO)

There are also two Petition Candidates:



Jim Dougherty
(DC)



Karen Maki (CA)

The public website features additional information and links to pages about the candidates. Access at: <http://www.sierraclub.org/board/election>

Why should you vote? The Sierra Club is proud to be a democratically structured organization at all levels. Therefore, the Club requires the regular flow of views on policy and priorities from you, its grassroots membership in order to function well. Yearly participation in elections at all Club levels is a major membership obligation. Our Board of Directors is required to stand for election by the membership to set Club policy and budgets at the national level and to work closely with the Executive Director and staff to operate the Club. Voting for candidates who express your views on how the Club should grow and change is both a privilege and responsibility of membership.

Learn about the candidates. Members frequently state that they don't know the candidates and find it difficult to vote without learning more. You can learn more by asking questions of your group and chapter leadership and other experienced members you know or you can visit the Club's election website: <http://www.sierraclub.org/board/election>. The site provides links to photos and information about the candidates, and their views on a variety of issues facing the Club and the environment.

Use your own judgment by taking several minutes to study the materials and vote for the leadership you support. Even if you receive your election materials in the mail, please go to the user-friendly Internet voting site to save time and postage. If necessary, you will find the ballot is quite straightforward and easy to mark and mail.

Note: Introductory members (i.e., new members who have not renewed their Club membership prior to January 31, 2017) are not eligible to vote in the national Club election. This change does not apply to chapter and group elections, in which all classes of membership remain eligible to vote.

Your Guide to a Sustainable Diet

by Julius Graefe

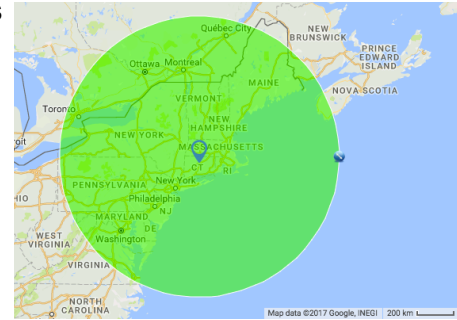
We've all heard the term "shop local." But what does "local" actually mean, and how important is it for food to be local? How can one ensure that purchased food and produce is as environmentally sustainable as possible?

Local Defined

Commonly, local food refers to food that is produced near the consumer. It is best defined as a geographic measurement of the distance food spends traveling (often referred to as "food miles.") According to the Farm Act of 2008, the USDA defines local food as food that is raised, produced and distributed within a locality or region and is transported less than 400 miles from its origin. Some common definitions of local being used in New England include items that are produced in-state, in the six-state region and within 250 miles of the consumer. This definition is often recognized as the [multi-tiered approach](#), which prioritizes in-state produced foods first, regionally produced foods second and national or global products last.

Does Local Matter?

Local only refers to a food product that is produced relatively close to where it's sold; the term does not provide any indication of food qualities such as freshness, nutritional value, or production practices involved in the life cycle of a particular product. Hence, local cannot be used as the predominant indicator of sustainability. A 2008 [study](#) that analyzed the production, transportation and distribution of food in the United States, concluded that transportation only accounts for 11% of food's total greenhouse gas emissions. Researchers found that food in the United States travels an average of 1,020 miles from the producer to the consumer. Greenhouse gas emissions associated with food are dominated by the production phase, which is responsible for 83% of the greenhouse gas emissions. In order to maximize sustainability as it pertains to overall GHG production, procured food must be examined most closely at the production phase. Food that features sustainable production qualities (e.g. organic) should be prioritized. The locality of food should be viewed as a component within the overarching theme of sustainability.



A 400-mile radius around Hartford, CT

Recommendation

It is most sustainable to purchase organic or ecologically sound food at a hyper local scale. Remember, the production quality of food precedes locality. Organic corn from California, for example, is more sustainable than conventionally produced corn in Connecticut. Fortunately, most foods produced on a local level are also organic or ecologically sound. Ecologically sound production simply refers to foods that qualify as organic or all-natural, but have not gone through the necessary documentation to be certified as such. Small-scale farmers, for example, may not have the financial means to obtain official food certifications, which can cost several hundred to thousand dollars per year. Hence, some local foods explicitly state that they are certified organic, while others do not – even though they are. Sustainable foods that are whole, fresh, in season and unprocessed are generally more nutritious than processed and packaged foods.

Modern, industrial crops are bred for high yield, ease of transport and fast growth, while sustainable foods – especially organic products – tend to grow at a much slower rate, which enables them to develop higher nutritional densities over time. I recommend purchasing local foods in supermarkets or at farmers' markets, such as those run by Knox Farm in Hartford during the summer months, or by enrolling in a [Community Supported Agriculture \(CSA\) program](#), that enables consumers to buy local foods directly from farmers. Most local farms have public websites, that detail their farming practices.

Julius Graefe is a recent graduate of Colby-Sawyer College, with a B.S. in Environmental Studies. He is a volunteer with the CT Chapter Sierra Club Communications Committee.

2017 Legislative Wish List

by Martin Mador

A handful of state legislative bills of environmental and energy interest are listed below. The CT Chapter Sierra Club is in favor of the listed bills, and those that are our priorities for the 2017 legislative session are in bold type.

Learn More

You can learn about the bills your Chapter supports by going to: cga.ct.gov. At the link, enter the bill number in the Quick Bill Search at the bottom on the screen. This will take you to the bill's home page, where you can find out the status of the bill, and click on the links to read the text. The bill process is not easy to follow, but this procedure will make you the most informed advocate on your street.

To be concise, I'm giving you the bill number and a few words about the substance. Bill titles tend to be very long and sometimes hard to understand. For more information, go to: <https://www.cga.ct.gov/asp/menu/citizen.asp>

List of Bills CT Chapter Sierra Club Supports

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| 630 | Raise the Renewable Portfolio Standard which sets long term goals for the state |
| 6546 | Natural gas pipeline expansions must not be billed to the ratepayers |
| 6121,6544 | Raise the cap on municipal virtual net metering, so towns can economically do more renewable energy |
| 6313 | Place a fee on disposable plastic bags to both raise money and encourage people to use reusable bags |
| 6352 | Establish an extended-producer-responsibility(EPR) program to fund collection and disposal of tires |
| 6343 | Lower the post 911 secrecy laws about water so we can do better water planning |
| 6123, 6356 | Enlarge the rules about notice of tree cutting to make sure our trees are not cut unnecessarily |
| 6926 | Allow towns to levy a fee on land purchases to fund open space |
| 6998 | Prohibit use of toxic recycled tire rubber on playgrounds |
| SJ39 | Put a measure on the ballot amending the state constitution to strengthen the rules for disposing of state owned open space |
| Budget: | Preserve the Council on Environmental Quality, our watchdog agency costing only \$174,00, which the governor wants to extinguish |

Martin Mador is Co-Legislative Chair of the CT Chapter Sierra Club

Defend Citizens' Election Program

by *Martin Mador*

The Citizens' Election Program (CEP) was passed in 2005 following the Governor Rowland corruption scandals. The program was designed to encourage citizen participation and discourage private money in the state's elections. The first election to follow CEP criteria was held in November 2008. Two months later, at the start of the 2009 legislative session, legislators were telling us the program had already changed the world in Connecticut. <http://www.ct.gov/seec/cwp/view.asp?a=3548&Q=489606>

CEP provides campaign funding for candidates for the state House, the state Senate, and statewide races (Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of the State, Treasurer, Comptroller and Attorney General). Funding comes from the sale of abandoned property in the state, not in any way from taxes or the state budget.

Candidates participating in the CEP must first show community support by raising a specific qualifying amount from individuals, only. Contributions for legislative candidates can be \$5-\$100. Candidates must promise in writing they will not accept any other contributions. Incumbents and challengers receive an equal amount to run for the same office. A watchdog agency, the non-partisan State Elections Enforcement Commission, administers CEP with scrupulous accountability.

Connecticut is now the model for the country demonstrating the benefits of public election funding. Statewide candidates and about 80% of legislative candidates use it. An organization called Common Cause in Connecticut created a brochure to help you run for a state office. Go to [Common Cause Brochure](#)

Connecticut is now the model for the country demonstrating the benefits of public election.

Unfortunately, we have seen efforts in recent years to defund the program from both parties. It is definitely at risk in the time of budget shortfalls. If we lose it, we are back to a state government run by and for special interests. Candidates would solicit big donations from special interests and incumbents would have a major advantage over challengers.

Once elected, our state officials would be influenced by special-interest donors, especially because they would have to court donors and spend time and energy raising money for their next campaign.

Yes, we have more work to do. The country has to overturn Citizens United, and remove the corrosive effect of PAC money. But the CEP is a great start for Connecticut, and is a model for the country. We must see it preserved unharmed.

The League of Women Voters (LWV) in Connecticut is committed to raising awareness about CEP. The initiative is called the Citizens' Election Proud, or CEProud. You can endorse this program by visiting <https://ceproud.wordpress.com/support-ceproud/>

Martin Mador is Co-Legislative and Political Chair of the CT Chapter Sierra Club

Growing Smarter Generations

by Diane Eng Swanson

In 1967 Trudie Pratt wrote: “The idea of starting an Outdoor Education Center came to me after a group of four year olds and their teachers came to visit us from New York City. When the children got out of their cars, they flew in every direction, like caged birds suddenly freed. They ran up Mount Tom and rolled down. They stood on the bridge watching the Aspetuck River rippling over stones.....making us aware of our very special place which we could share with the children of our town and others in the surrounding communities as well as children from New York City.”

Pratt Nature Center is a special place. I have been fortunate enough, time and time again, to experience the same thoughts that Trudie had when she and Eliot began the center so long ago. I’m amazed when Cole (4) observes the movement of a spider on the tiniest of spider webs, or as Ben (8) and Niko (4) unleash the creativity and energy that has been bottled up inside of them. I stand alongside them as we squish our toes together in the mud. I marvel how observant Henry (4), Zoe (4), and Sydney (4) have become as they immerse all of their senses into the natural world around them.



Children learning in the nature preserve.

Nature breeds people who are smarter, happier and healthier.

I am always being asked to explain in words what we do and why we do it. That’s easy, we connect people, mostly children, to the natural world. Why? Because it’s really important! Not because I say so, but because all research points to the social, emotional, physical and academic benefits of being in nature. Nature breeds people that are smarter, happier and healthier. Future conservationists are born from adults who were exposed to nature as children.

John Muir said it best, *“We are now in the mountains and they are in us, kindling enthusiasm, making every nerve quiver, filling every pore and cell of us.”*

How we do what we do is important as well, but I never seem to be able to find the right words to describe how we do things here at Pratt. To those of you who know us, we play outside, we get muddy and we accept people for who they are. We work on strengths and not weaknesses. We climb trees, we pick up sticks and throw stones. We go off trail just to see what is there. We ask questions, lots of questions. We encourage. We figure things out. We make mistakes. We fall down (a lot). We always get back up.

Pratt is not just a place you visit. Once you are here it becomes a part of you. It travels with you. No matter your age, once a Pratt Kid always a Pratt Kid.

Pratt Nature Center mission is to stimulate a lifelong responsibility for, and joy in, the natural world. We encourage people to experience themselves as a part of nature, dependent upon the earth resource. Pratt, a 205 acre nature center was established in 1967 as, a nonprofit 501(c)3. This unique, historic property includes: farmland, wetlands, wooded hiking trails, a pond and the East Aspetuck River. Most programs are held completely outdoors with each area of the property providing a new, personal, non-competitive learning experience. The opportunity for emotional, social, physical and academic growth encompasses each step as we hike in the woods, wade in the river, make new friends, catch frogs in the pond, gather the chicken eggs or eat a tomato we have grown from seed.



Diane Eng Swanson is Executive Director of the Pratt Nature Center, New Milford, CT.

The Q is brought to you by:

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Helen Applebaum, Editor

Heather Fronczek, Graphic Designer

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John Calandrelli, Website, Program Manager

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: [Solar Homes](#)



Solar energy lifts life on earth



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...

CREATE YOUR LEGACY

To create your legacy go to:

sierraclubfoundation.org

or email: gift.planning@sierraclub.org