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# Maine Sierran

Maine Chapter of the Sierra Club

Fall 2017

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*Maine needs changes in politics and policy or it will continue to lag behind in solar development.*

## Let the Sun Shine on Maine's Energy Future

**A**round the country and throughout the world the use of solar energy is surging. Last year alone, the solar market increased by a whopping 50 percent globally and the number of solar installations in the U.S. nearly doubled. Solar has become the leader in our march toward a clean energy future.

Much of that growth is being fueled by a sharp decline in the cost of equipment. Since 2011, the cost of installing solar panels has declined by 65 percent. A Maine homeowner can now install a solar system for roughly half of what it would have cost in 2012.

### Maine Lagging Behind on Solar Development

Those dropping costs should be spurring major growth in solar in Maine. But due to a backward-thinking state administration, misguided policies by the Public Utilities Commission (PUC), and misinformation spread by the fossil fuel industry, Maine lags far behind other New England states in solar policies and development.

"Oh yes, Maine is way behind," notes Insource Renewables owner and president Vaughan Woodruff. "Some states are having what you might call high school and even college-level discussions on solar policy. Here in Maine, I'm not sure we're even having sandbox-level discussions. Our current policies are holding back benefits for the solar industry and for the people of Maine."

Maine's most recent setback came this summer when the state legislature failed to override a Governor Paul LePage veto of a very modest solar bill (LD 1504). That legislation would have simply corrected one provision of the new and unfortunate PUC rules—rules that were put in place after a 2016 compromise bill also fell victim to a LePage veto.

The 2017 solar bill would have prevented millions of Maine ratepayer dollars being used to subsidize Central Maine Power (CMP) and Emera Maine for the cost of installing additional meters on new solar installations. These meters allow the utilities to measure and to bill a customer for solar-generated electricity that never reaches the grid.

"It's really a travesty," says former House Majority Leader Seth Berry, who is currently chair of the House Energy Utilities and Technology Committee. "Charging such a fee for solar generation is not being done anywhere else in the world." He compares it to being charged a fee by your local grocery store for raising tomatoes in your own backyard.

Berry believes that two forces worked against the



ability of the Legislature to override the governor's veto. First was the general misguided opposition to renewable energy development. The second was the intense lobbying by Central Maine Power and other utility interests. Their efforts included the spreading of misinformation around the state.

A lawsuit has been filed against the PUC, based on a Maine statute stating that a customer cannot be charged an "exit fee" for self-generation of energy or conversion to an alternative fuel source. The case is likely to go to court by this winter.

### The Impact of the PUC's Rules

The one positive to emerge from the otherwise discouraging solar news in Maine is that the PUC's rules, which go into effect on January 1, 2018, have spurred an increase of solar installations around the state. Anyone installing a system prior to January 1st will be grandfathered into the current and fairer regulations for the next 15 years.

"Right now there's a big push for installations because people are trying to get grandfathered into the existing rules," Woodruff says. "I know installers all around the state are backed up."

Phil Coupe, co-founder of ReVision Energy, says his company has seen a significant up-tick in customers trying to beat the deadline. But he emphasizes that even Mainers who move forward

with solar after January 2018 will still enjoy an excellent return on their investment.

"The first-year impact of the new net-metering rule is insignificant, in the minus three percent range," he explains. "That's pretty minuscule when compared to the fact that the cost of solar technology has dropped more than 75 percent in the past 10 years."

A common question from potential solar customers is whether a system needs to be installed by December 31st to be grandfathered under the current net metering arrangement. The PUC has clarified that it does—now it's the responsibility of the utilities to determine how to

implement the new rule.

"CMP and Emera have a lot of details to work out between now and January," Woodruff says.

### What Needs to Be Done

Even if the PUC's rules are nullified by the court, there will remain a huge chasm between Maine and the many states that are moving aggressively forward with solar development.

"The people in positions to make decisions have not been paying attention to what has happened around the world in the past decade," Woodruff says. "The policies we have in place were not based on facts and solid information."

Woodruff, Coupe, and Berry all share a similar vision for closing that gap. In the short term, they see the election of forward-thinking politicians in 2018

*-Continued on Page 8*

### November 3 at Pineland Farms

#### Talk by Chellie Pingree Highlights 2017 Annual Dinner



Chellie Pingree

Congresswoman Chellie Pingree will be the featured speaker at Sierra Club Maine's Annual Dinner scheduled for November 3 at beautiful Pineland Farms in New Gloucester.

Pingree has served as Maine's 1st District representative since 2009 and consistently earns near-perfect voting scores on environmental, health, and other progressive issues.

The event will also feature the Chapter's annual award presentations and a recap of Sierra Club activities and successes for the year. It all gets underway with a reception at 5:30 p.m. For registration and ticket information go to [sierraclub.org/maine](http://sierraclub.org/maine).



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*Legislative Update*

## Victories And One Big Defeat Highlight a Tumultuous 2017 Session



During the tumultuous 2017 state legislative session, Sierra Club Maine's Legislative Team lobbied for a number of environmental bills. The Chapter submitted and presented both written and oral testimony, issued action alerts to our members, reached out to media, and worked closely in support of the efforts

of key legislators. We also organized our own lobby day and participated in several other lobby days and press events.

In addition, we partnered and collaborated with Maine's Environmental Priorities Coalition (EPC) and participated in that group's annual breakfast for legislators.

*Victories:***Mining (LD 820)**

This important bill bans mining in or under floodplains, public lands, rivers, lakes, and coastal waters. It also set limits on groundwater pollution and requires mining companies to pay for major environmental disasters. The bill was passed by the legislature, vetoed by the Governor, and then became law when the legislature overrode the veto.

**Maine Public Reserved Lands (LD 586)**

This bill requires regular reporting on forest inventory, growth and harvest levels; creates a grant program to educate new loggers; bolsters recreation opportunities; and improves access to state forests, including for people with disabilities. The Legislature again overrode the Governor's veto.

**Healthy Furniture (LD 182)**

This bill bans all toxic flame retardants in upholstered furniture. The bill was enacted into law.

**Safe Drinking Water and Testing (LD 454)**

The Safe Drinking Water Bill raises awareness about the need to test for arsenic and will create a Private Well Safe Drinking Water Fund. Once again, the Legislature overrode the Governor's veto.

**Municipal Rights to Limit Use of Pesticides (LD 1505)**

This bill stopped an effort to prevent towns from taking steps to reduce citizen exposure to harmful pesticides and would have invalidated local pesticide regulation ordinances. The bill died in committee by unanimous vote.

**Natural Resources Protection (LD 1040)**

This bill proposed undermining the Natural Resources Protection Act, Maine's keystone law that protects waters, wetlands, mountain tops and significant wildlife habitat. The bill died in committee by unanimous vote.

*Losses:***Solar (LD 1504)**

The biggest loss of the session was the failure of the legislature to override the Governor's veto of the important solar bill (LD 1504). LD 1504 would have prevented a Maine Public Utilities Commission anti-solar rule that charges solar users for the power they generate to use in their own homes. The PUC rule will require a new meter on all solar homes, paid for by all ratepayers. The bill would have also required the PUC to conduct a cost benefit analysis, create an alternative to net metering, and increase the number of investors in solar farms to 100.

On June 28, the bill passed in the legislature by

strong margins. However, the Governor vetoed the bill and he and Central Maine Power started lobbying legislators to uphold the veto. On August 2, the Senate voted to override LePage's veto, but the House failed to override by only two votes. These eight Republican legislators initially voted for the bill but switched to oppose the bill by supporting LePage's veto: Rep. Bradstreet of Vassalboro, Rep. Cebra of Naples, Rep. Kinney of Limington, Rep. McElwee of Caribou, Rep. Sampson of Alfred, Rep. Seavey of Kennebunkport, Rep. Skolfield of Weld, and Rep. Wadsworth of Hiram.

Please take the time to contact these representatives to express your disappointment in succumbing to the pressure from anti-solar interests!

Another factor in the loss was the high number of representatives who were with us on June 28, but absent August 2. Those included: Rep. Golden of Lewiston, Rep. Hymanson of York, Rep. Jorgensen of Portland, Rep. Lawrence of Eliot, Rep. Reckitt of South Portland, Rep. Schneck of Bangor, Rep. Chace of Durham, Rep. Harvell of Farmington, Rep. Hilliard of Belgrade, Rep. Pierce of Dresden, Rep. Simmons of Walderboro, and Rep. Ward of Dedham.

The Legislature's failure to override the Governor's irrational veto is a big loss for Maine's economy, environment, and public health. Sierra Club Maine is committed to working with other pro-solar advocates to restore mainstream, common sense policies so that Mainers can realize the economic and environmental benefits of clean solar power.

**No Action on Passenger Rail**

Another major Sierra Club priority, the Passenger Rail Bond to fund for expansion of passenger rail in Maine, was not voted on and was part of the bond package negotiation process which resulted in no bonding. We expect to pick this issue up during the next session.

Now that our drinking water is a commodity to international corporations, Maine needs to put this vital resource under a public trust.

*Protecting Our Precious Groundwater*

It makes up more than 60 percent of our bodies. It's the most vital resource needed for life on the planet. Yet too often we take water, especially our drinkable water, for granted. We turn on the tap and think it will always be there—seemingly inexhaustible.

But the fact is that less than two percent of the earth's water is drinkable.

And with a growing world population and threats from climate change, our water needs greater and greater protection.

Here in Maine we are blessed with a plentiful supply of pure water. Unfortunately, that fact is also well known to a growing industry eager to make Maine water a commodity. Those commercial operations (notably Nestle) are grabbing water rights in various parts of the state and exporting our valuable resource for its booming bottled water business.

One person working diligently to protect our precious groundwater is Nickie Sekera of Fryeburg. Nickie is an elected trustee of the Fryeburg Water District, and in a separate role, a co-founder of Community Water Justice.

Nickie's town has been at the center of Maine's most visible groundwater controversy. Nestle, owner of Poland Springs, negotiated an exclusive, precedent-setting contract with Fryeburg to extract water from its aquifer for up to 45 years.

"The contract clearly gives Nestle, the more powerful party, the upper hand over control of our water and limits our community's authority over future allocations," Sekera explains.

The Nestle contract was challenged, but the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) ruled that it was not in its purview to look at environmental impacts in a case like this. In May, the Maine Supreme Court



**Nickie Sekera addresses John Banks during a water stewardship workshop at the Climate Action Conference in Lewiston. Nickie and John, director of natural resources for the Penobscot Nation, co-lead the workshop.**

heard a challenge to the PUC position and determined that Fryeburg could indeed sell its water rights. As a result, Nestle can pump as much water as it is able to secure for export.

"It's disturbing to think that the PUC would not consider the environmental impacts," Sekera says. "Unfortunately there are no nationwide studies that look at the environmental impact of water mining, but common sense tells us there are real and serious dangers. Groundwater supplies our lakes and is vital for healthy forests, and of course for agriculture."

Fryeburg isn't the only community facing this problem. Nestle, which has a 99 percent monopoly on water mining in Maine, is currently eyeing other communities in the state for water extraction.

"Its business is for export," Sekera says. "Nestle is creating the market for bottled water using the state of Maine brand. Maine spring water brings a higher value. Poland Springs (the number one selling bottled water) has a reputation as this pure, local company, but it's really a major multinational corporation doing everything it can to secure future profits."

When speaking on the subject, Sekera likes to emphasize that local communities lose much more than they gain by contracting out their water rights.

"Nestle receives millions in tax breaks, while often paying nothing for the resource to the towns," she says.

There are several things that Sekera believes need to be done to protect communities and their groundwater supplies. The first is demanding transparency and accountability from public

officials when dealing with Nestle. Second is working with town officials to develop local water-protection ordinances. Third, and perhaps most important, is to have Maine put our groundwater supply under a public trust.

"Our surface waters have protection—doesn't it make sense to protect our groundwater?" she asks.

For Sekera, Nestle's solution to drinking water problems—supplying bottled water—is a false one.

"It's not about sending bottled water to Flint or anywhere else with water problems," she explains. "It's about keeping local water supply pure and sustainable. Water resources should be the central part of every community and the most protected."

## New Study Raises Concerns of Warming in the Gulf of Maine

*Greatest temperature increases taking place in the summer months.*

A recently released study on the warming in the Gulf of Maine reaffirmed some previous findings but also contained at least one major surprise: Most of the warming is taking place in the summer months.

“What was most surprising is how different the warming process is from season to season,” explains University of Maine Researcher Andrew Thomas, who headed the study. “We think of our winters getting warmer, but most of the warming of the gulf is taking place in the summer months.” Spring is coming earlier, fall arrives later, and that change, he noted, totals some 66 days of summer-like temperatures being added to the warming process in the gulf since 1982.

Thomas and his co-authors reported on their study in the journal, *Elementa*, in August.

Previous studies have demonstrated that temperatures in the Gulf of Maine have been rising considerably faster than the world’s oceans. Globally, the ocean temperatures are rising at about 0.1 degrees per decade. The gulf’s temperature had been rising at a 0.3 degrees per decade rate. But the warming has increased to seven times that rate during the most recent decade.

Thomas points to two reasons why the gulf’s temperature is rising so rapidly. The first is that our region is susceptible to all kinds of atmospheric/climate conditions coming from the west. The other is that we are at the end of the pipeline for the waters coming down from the Arctic.

## Northeastern States Take Another Big Step to Reduce Carbon Emissions

*Maine is among nine states that have agreed to a 30 percent cap reduction by 2030.*

On August 23, the nine Northeast states in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) took another huge step toward reducing carbon emissions in the region. Those states (all the New England states plus New York, Delaware, and Maryland) agreed to a 30 percent cap reduction in carbon emissions by 2030, based on 2020 levels.

RGGI, a market-based cap-and-trade program, has already reduced power sector carbon emissions by close to 50 percent since 2008. During that same period RGGI has reduced electric rates and generated some \$2.7 billion for reinvestment to benefit consumers and develop clean energy systems. Agreed to in 2005, it was the first mandatory market-based program in the United States to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the power sector.

According to Massachusetts Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Matthew Beaton, the proposed changes will result in an emissions cap 65 percent lower than the original cap.

Sierra Club praised the RGGI states for their commitment in the midst of the Trump administration’s anti-environmental policies and actions.

“More clean energy and stronger pollution limits are overwhelmingly popular and mean more jobs, cleaner air, and healthier communities,” Sierra Club Eastern Regional Deputy Director for the Beyond Coal Campaign Mark Kresowik stated. “This is just a first step toward meeting the commitments to climate protection made by these states, and we look forward to working with them to implement this proposal....”

Public comment was heard in an open session in Baltimore on September 25.



**The North Atlantic right whale may be one of the species threatened by the warming in the Gulf of Maine. (NOAA photograph)**

“The changes going on from climate disruption in the Arctic impact the Gulf of Maine,” Thomas says. “All these conditions make us vulnerable.”

The warming temperatures are already disrupting ecosystems in the Gulf of Maine, although for some species, like lobsters, the changes are not all negative—at least not here in Maine.

“With the warming trend, lobsters have been shifting north,” Thomas says. “The southern lobstering boundary of the gulf is in trouble, but here in Maine lobsters are doing just fine.”

However, the warming is having a negative impact on other important fish, including cod.

“This is what happens with climate change,” Thomas explains. “There are winners and losers,

there are positives and negatives. The longer, warmer summers will help the tourist industry. But the real problem is that we don’t understand all the negative impacts and some could be dire.”

The study also stresses that the warming waters are increasing the likelihood of severe storms in the region. Historically, the colder waters in the gulf have weakened hurricanes and tropical storms as they move north. That may no longer be the case.

Another troubling consequence of the warming trend is the diminishing natural food supply for the North Atlantic right whale—the world’s second-most endangered marine mammal.

One of the study co-authors, Nicholas Record of the Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean

Sciences in East Boothbay, recently explained to the *Associated Press* that it’s possible the whales are becoming more vulnerable because the tiny organisms they feed on may be shifting to colder waters.

Only about 500 North Atlantic Right Whales are still in existence. This past summer 13 of those whales representing two percent of their population were found dead in the Gulf of St. Lawrence—north of their usual habitat in the Gulf of Maine and the Bay of Fundy.

It is speculated that the whales are migrating farther north in an effort to find food. Unfortunately, these areas do not yet have the whale protection rules that are found in the Gulf of Maine.



**Becky Bartovics (left) presents a Grassroots Leadership Award to Paul Strickland, a member of the Save Passamaquoddy Bay (SPB) leadership team for Red Beach/Calais, while Linda Godfrey and Alice Seeley look on. All of the SPB leadership teams—Point Pleasant/Sipayik, Perry, Robbinston, Canada, Red Beach/Calais, and the coordinating office in Eastport were honored for their successful efforts.**

## Save Passamaquoddy Bay—3 Nation Alliance Honored in Eastport

Sierra Club Maine volunteer leaders Becky Bartovics and Joan Saxe traveled Downeast in August to present the 2016 Grassroots Leadership Award to members of Save Passamaquoddy Bay- 3 Nation Alliance. This group successfully fought off three attempts to site LNG ports in three different locations over the course of twelve years. Linda Cross Godfrey and her husband Bob organized the ceremony in Eastport. “This award ceremony was a perfect way to give closure to this monumental effort to protect what we love,” said Linda.

The event coincided with the showing of *Rhythms of the Heart*, a documentary about renowned environmentalist, social justice advocate, and Wabanaki birch bark canoe builder David Moses Bridges.

Representatives from the six groups involved in the LNG effort received awards, including Hilda Lewis—activist and mother of David Moses Bridges.

The following day, Joan and Becky were invited to Sipayik—the Passamaquoddy Reservation to attend the memorial service for David, who passed away earlier this year. They said they were honored to be in a group representing many different backgrounds and races, all working for the common good on that day—the exact same day as the tragic events in Charlottesville.

*Sierra Club Maine's 3rd Climate Action Conference Draws 140 participants.*

## Inspiring and Empowering Climate Activists

Some 140 Sierra Club members and climate activists gathered at the University of Southern Maine's Lewiston campus on September 16 to share knowledge and gain the skills needed to take community-based action toward a clean energy future for Maine. By all accounts, the conference more than fulfilled its goal.

"Inspiring" and "empowering" were words that could be heard as people departed at the end of the day.

"I really think the enthusiasm generated and the knowledge shared here today will lead to greater and more effective local climate action around the state," said Sierra Club Maine super-volunteer Joan Saxe, one of the conference's prime organizers. "It was encouraging to see so many people here, and it was inspiring to see their commitment to protect our climate."

Other Chapter volunteers who worked closely with Joan on organizing the event were Lyn Sudlow (co-chair with Joan), Becky Bartovics, Andy Burt, Miriam Rubin, Susan Van Alsenoy, Norm Anderson, and Claudia King.

The day started with comments from Sierra Club Maine Director Glen Brand, who briefly reviewed the Chapter's long-time commitment to climate work and its current successes with its Climate Action Teams, now numbering 14 around the state.

Former Chapter Chair Becky Bartovics then paid tribute to the late David Moses Bridges. David was a nationally recognized Passamaquoddy canoe builder, environmentalist/social activist, and artist for whom the conference was dedicated.

Keynote speaker George Lakey took the podium and quickly captivated the conference participants with his wit, wisdom, and positive message on how real change is possible, even in these troubled times.

Lakey is a veteran activist and a past recipient of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Peace Award. Most recently he was an integral part of Earth Quaker Action Team (EQAT), the group that got PNC Bank to withdraw its funding from corporations that engage in mountaintop-removal coal mining. His latest book, *Viking Economics*, looks at how Scandinavian countries have achieved economic success while advancing a progressive social and environmental agenda.

Lakey emphasized that the actions of the Trump administration have served as a wake-up call and that he is encouraged by what he's seen in his travels around the country. He noted that troubled, polarized times are often the catalysts for major change and pointed to the 1930s and the 1960s as examples of this in America.

Economic inequality, Lakey said, is one of our most polarizing factors. And he thinks the country is set up for further economic inequality resulting in even greater polarization.

"It creates a sense of futility," he said, "but it also puts society in motion and brings the possibility of change."

Lakey also emphasized that creating real change means working cooperatively—tapping the individual passions and strengths of each group and each of the group's members.

"Successful movements recognize and generate different roles," he said, noting that some people want to be of service, some are organizers, and some are rebels. "When people act on what's in their heart, they will be more effective."

In closing, Lakey stressed that it's not enough to say "no" to troubling events happening around you. You need to say "yes" to an alternative possibility so that society can move ahead.

Following Lakey's motivating words, conference participants chose from a variety of workshop options for the remainder of the day. Workshop topics included: moving toward clean energy future, grass roots organizing, transportation for livable communities, energy efficiency, water stewardship, community-based energy, creating an effective climate change message, and sustainable agriculture. Thanks to all the workshop presenters for sharing their knowledge.

Lunchtime presented an opportunity for folks to continue discussing some of the major issues of the conference. Participants chose from a variety of "table topics" including: water sovereignty, electric cooperatives, the peace march, Maine green power, the Maine Small Business Coalition, and the Citizens Climate Lobby.

With new knowledge and renewed motivation from the conference, climate activists now get back to working in their communities on projects to reduce carbon emissions. And Sierra Club Maine is committed to providing even greater support for its Climate Action Teams around the state. To get involved go to [sierraclub.org/maine](http://sierraclub.org/maine) or email [maine.chapter@sierraclub.org](mailto:maine.chapter@sierraclub.org)

### Thank You Conference Sponsors!

Major sponsor: ReVision Energy

Other Generous Supporters: Goggin Energy, Lee Energy, Insource Renewables, Maine Organic Farmers & Gardeners Association, and Robert and Elizabeth Stoddard.

And many thanks to our door prize donors: Window Dressers, Inc., Back Country Excursions, Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens, Patagonia, The Green Store, and Andy Burt.



Conference keynote speaker George Lakey talks with Betsy Street (far left), Rozanna Patane, and Beverly Roxby (far right).



Mary Beth Sullivan and Nancy Chandler check out the displays between Climate Action Conference workshops.



Katie Greenman (left) discusses *Rhythms of the Heart*, with the film's maker, Thom Wiley. Next to Thom is Laurie Flood. The film chronicles the life of David Moses Bridges, for whom the conference was dedicated.



Jo Sorrell of ReVision Energy shares information on solar energy with conference participants Emily Mottrom and Brenda Howe.

## College of the Atlantic Again Named America's Greenest College

*Colby earns number nine ranking.*

For the second year in a row, College of the Atlantic (COA) in Bar Harbor was named America's "coolest" school in the Sierra Club's annual ranking of the most eco-literate colleges. Another Maine school, Colby College in Waterville, also made the top ten list. California and Vermont were the only other states to have two colleges in the top ten.

COA was praised for divesting from fossil fuel, working toward 100 percent renewable energy, and committing to diverting 90 percent of campus waste by 2025. In addition, the school was cited for its innovative sustainability student enterprises such as Reproduce, which markets commercially imperfect produce.

"It's exciting for us to receive this honor two years in a row," noted COA Professor of Environmental Law and Policy, Ken Cline, who serves on the Sierra Club Maine executive committee. "It's important for higher education to lead in the field of sustainability. Since its inception, sustainability has been an essential part of COA's core mission. Our students and graduates believe in that mission and carry it into their lives and professional careers. It's great that *Sierra Magazine* recognizes that commitment. We're a small school but one of the ways that we have a big impact is to inspire other colleges and universities to emulate us."

Colby, which was ranked number nine in the ratings, was recognized for being at the vanguard of introducing academic environmental courses in the 1970s. The school was also praised for achieving its carbon neutrality ahead of goal, for installing a 1.9 megawatt solar system, for its 15 LEED buildings, and for integrating a focus on the environment into all departments.



### Maine Sierrans Turn Out for People's Climate March in D.C.



Chapter executive committee member Tony Donovan.

Two busloads of Maine Sierrans and friends braved two long nights of travel and 90-degree Washington D.C. temperatures to take part in the April 29 People's Climate March. Overall some 200,000 people from around the country converged on the nation's capital to demand that our elected officials move forward with action on climate change.

"It was exhilarating to be among so many people showing that kind of support for climate action," says former chapter chair, Becky Bartovics. "And it was especially inspiring to see the turnout of Sierra Club members and friends from Maine. I think the march did just what we all wanted it to do—confirm that Americans will not let Donald Trump or Congress turn back the clock on climate action."

As with the New York City Climate March in 2014, the D.C. event motivated many participants to return to Maine and get involved in their communities on climate action projects.

To get involved in your community, log on to [sierraclub.org/maine](http://sierraclub.org/maine) or email [maine.chapter@sierraclub.org](mailto:maine.chapter@sierraclub.org).

## Katahdin Woods & Waters Will Stay, But There are Concerns

*Leaked report suggests the possibility that our new monument could be open to logging.*

On August 24, Maine Woods supporters breathed a collective sigh of relief. On that day, Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke recommended that the newly established Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument (KW&W) remain in place with no reduction in size.

Zinke's announcement followed a five-month review of all the nation's monuments established since 1996. He also recommended that the other 26 monuments under review keep their status, with a number being reduced in size.

While the size of KW&W will remain the same, Zinke said there could be "some changes on allowable uses." Specifically, he alluded to the permitting of demonstrations of historical logging practices.

However, leaks to the media indicate that Zinke will recommend that the monument might be open to commercial forestry. The exact language as reported in the *Washington Post* was "to promote a healthy forest through active timber management."

Responding to the leaked report, Lucas St. Clair, the man who led the effort to establish KW&W, told the *Bangor Daily News* (BDN) that he questioned whether logging is part of active timber management.

"It's not clear what they are recommending," St. Clair told the BDN, "The report does not define a 'healthy forest' or 'active timber management.' We'll just have to wait and see."

In addition to the possible changes for KW&W, the report recommends that five other national monuments be open to mining, drilling, logging, or commercial fishing. In addition it recommends that the boundaries of four monuments be shrunk.

Trump commissioned the monument review in



Ryan Zinke (left) and Lucas St. Clair enjoy the beauty of Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument during the Interior Secretary's visit to Maine last summer. (*Bangor Daily News* photo by Ashley Conti)

April even though many legal experts believe he does not have the authority to rescind a national monument's status. Some experts don't believe he even has the authority to reduce their size, or allow for commercial operations.

One person who shares that opinion is Sierra Club Maine's Maine Woods team co-leader, College of the Atlantic environmental law and policy professor Ken Cline.

Cline acknowledges that the Sierra Club is grateful to Secretary Zinke for recognizing the tremen-

dous ecological and economic benefits of KW&W and affirming its value to the American people. But he remains disturbed that the Trump administration ever undertook the review. He is even more troubled by the possibility of shrinking the size of any national monuments or allowing for logging and other commercial enterprises within their boundaries.

"The President does not have the legal authority to revoke or alter national monuments created by prior administrations," he said. "These national treasures were created by both Republicans and Democrats and they are loved and highly valued by the public—every poll indicates that."

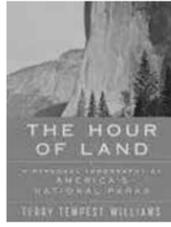
While we wait for more specifics regarding Zinke's recommendations, Sierra Club Maine urges all its members to let our Maine national delegation know that allowing commercial operations in our national monuments is unacceptable.

Most especially, members in the 2nd Congressional District need to urge their congressman, Bruce Poliquin, to reverse his support for logging in KW&W. Poliquin, who opposed the creation of the monument, has reportedly urged Zinke to allow logging within Maine's new monument.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Book Clubs

#### Sierra Club Book Club



#### **The Hour of Land: A Personal Topography of America's National Parks**

by Terry Tempest Williams

**Saturday, Oct. 28—12:30 p.m.**

Thai Garden—Route 1, Freeport  
For more information on upcoming meetings and books visit [Events at sierraclub.org/maine](http://Events.at.sierraclub.org/maine).

#### Downeast Book Club

The Downeast Book Club meets one Sunday a month. For information on upcoming books and meetings contact Deb at [loftusd@roadrunner.com](mailto:loftusd@roadrunner.com)

### Films

#### Bar Harbor Film Series

#### **How to Change the World**

**Sunday, Oct 22, 2017—2 p.m.**

Reel Pizza Cinerama, 33 Kennebec Place

In 1971, a group of friends sail into a nuclear test zone, and their protest captures the world's imagination. It is the story of how Greenpeace developed from a small group of idealistic environmentalists into a sophisticated protest movement. Post-film discussion by College of the Atlantic Professor Gray Cox and Jon Hinck, a founder of Greenpeace USA.

#### **Sonic Sea**

**Sunday, Nov. 5, 2017—2 p.m.**

Reel Pizza Cinerama, 33, Kennebec Place

Sound is essential to the survival and prosperity of marine life. But man-made ocean noise is threatening this fragile world. *Sonic Sea* is about protecting life in our waters from the destructive effects of oceanic noise pollution. Post-film discussion will be led by College of the Atlantic faculty member and Allied Whale Director Sean Todd.

#### Bangor

#### **Chasing the Sun**

**Thursday, Nov. 9— 6:00-9:00 p.m.**

Community Theatre, 1192 Ohio St.



*Catching the Sun* is a documentary film on the growth of the solar power industry. The film, which premiered on Netflix in April 2016, includes portraits of diverse personalities and their roles in the transition to solar power. Unemployed workers

in Richmond, California, businessmen in China, Tea Party activists, and a would-be White House adviser are all featured in the film. The film debunks a false notion that clean energy requires sacrificing economic prosperity. There will be a post-film talk and discussion.

*Dover-Foxcroft*

#### **Chasing the Sun**

**Thursday, Nov. 16, 2017, 6:00-9:00 p.m.**

Center Theatre, 20 East Main Street  
(See film description under Bangor)

*Bethel*

#### **Transforming America**

**Sunday, Nov. 5, 2017—1:00 pm**

The Gem Theater, 23 Cross Street



The population of the U.S. is on track to add over 100 million people to the country by the year 2050. Airports and highways are already overcrowded. This film takes a look at what expanding passenger rail service in America would look like, as well as asking passengers what they think about increasing rail investment. Would they use it? Would it be a waste of money?

The film will be followed by a discussion about the future of passenger rail in Maine

*Lewiston/Auburn:*

#### **Transforming America**

**Friday, Nov. 17, 6:00-9:00 p.m.**

Community Little Theatre, 30 Academy Street  
(See film description under Bethel, above.)

*Portland*

*Transforming America* will be shown at a date to be announced at Maine College of Art. Check the events page at [sierraclub.org/maine](http://sierraclub.org/maine) for updates on the date the film will be shown.

### Special Events

#### **Sierra Club Maine Annual Dinner**

**November 3, 2017—5:30 p.m.**

Pineland Farms, Farm View Rd., New Gloucester  
Join your fellow Maine Sierrans for an evening of camaraderie, great food, annual chapter awards, and a talk by environmental champion, 1st District Congresswoman Chellie Pingree. For reservations and directions to Pineland Farms go to [sierraclub.org/maine](http://sierraclub.org/maine).

#### **Buxton-Gorham Window Dressers Community Build Workshop**

**Saturday, November 11, 2017—9 a.m.**

**Sunday, November 19, 2017—4 p.m.**

Moody's Collision Center, Gorham

Tired of wrestling with clear plastic film, tape, and a hair dryer to cover drafty windows for the winter? Want a better solution to keep the heat inside and the drafts out?

Lower your carbon footprint, save money on heating bills, and be more comfortable in winter by adding window inserts to your home. Contact event organizer Miriam Rubin at [buxtongorhamwindowdressing@gmail.com](mailto:buxtongorhamwindowdressing@gmail.com).

### Outings

#### **Majestic Maine Weekend**

**October 7-8, 2017**

In celebration of Sierra Club's 125th anniversary, we invite you to join us for a special weekend hiking in the spectacular Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument (KW&W) and Acadia National Park.

Activities include an October 7 hike in KW&W. On Sunday, October 8 events will include a hike in Acadia National Park and a special Sierra Club reception at Asticou Inn. Contact Sara Harvey at [sara.harvey@sierraclub.org](mailto:sara.harvey@sierraclub.org).

#### **Mahoosuc Pathways**

**November 5, 2017**



This outing consists of a relaxing hike on Bethel's Mahoosuc Pathways trails. After a morning spent in Maine's beautiful natural wilderness, you will gather for lunch, followed by a 1 pm showing of *Transforming America* at Bethel's Gem Theater.

#### **Kennebunk Solar Array**

**November 2017**

This outing will give community members the opportunity to learn about Kennebunk Light & Power's new solar array and discover the benefits of a cleaner energy alternative that is also more cost-effective. The exact date for this outing is not yet set. Check the events calendar at [sierraclub.org/maine](http://sierraclub.org/maine).

**Outings, movies, and Sierra Club Maine special events are a great way to explore new places and new ideas and make new friends. Visit the events page at [sierraclub.org/maine](http://sierraclub.org/maine)**

Support Sierra Club Maine through payroll deduction

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## Chapter News Briefs

### Chapter Leaders Meeting in Washington, D.C.



Claudia King

Executive committee member Claudia King traveled to Washington D.C. in mid-September to attend the Sierra Club's annual Council of Club Leaders (CCL) meeting. It was Claudia's second trip to a CCL gathering.

While the chapter delegates were gathered together, the national Sierra Club board held its annual meeting at the same hotel.

On the final day, the two groups met jointly.

"It was a great opportunity for chapter leaders to interact with national Sierra Club folks," Claudia explained. "It was clear that they are totally committed to helping local chapters carry out their work. I also came away with a much better understanding of the importance of the Club's environmental justice work. In this challenging, polarizing climate, it's important that we broaden our movement."

She also appreciated the chance to gather with other chapter delegates. "It's a real opportunity to bond with other Sierrans, and possibly seek out areas for regional cooperation," she said.

### Testimony on Sea Level Rise and Storm Surge

Thanks to executive committee member Olin Jenner of Rockport for providing testimony on behalf of the Sierra Club urging Maine's legislators to take more action to address sea level rise and increased storm surges. This is especially important in light of the warming in the Gulf of Maine and the likelihood of stronger storms in the region ( See story on page 3).

### Chapter Treasurer Needed

Sierra Club Maine seeks a volunteer treasurer to begin training in November 2017. Providing oversight of the finances for all chapter entities, the required skills include bookkeeping, budget tracking and grant oversight for the executive committee. The treasurer provides the link between the Maine Chapter's executive committee and the finance department of the national Sierra Club regarding financial policies and procedures related to grants, investments, administration of the chapter office and staff, and compliance. The current chapter treasurer will provide support through year-end reporting for 2017. If interested, please contact [maine.chapter@sierraclub.org](mailto:maine.chapter@sierraclub.org).

Many thanks to Ruth Bettinger for her valuable work as Chapter treasurer the past several years. Her organization of the Chapter finances will make the next treasurer's job a great deal easier!

### Support Recycling at Our New Portland Office

In case you haven't heard, the Sierra Club Maine Office has moved to a new location at 565 Congress Street in Portland. With the new space comes new expenses, in particular a \$35 per month recycling pick-up fee.

Please consider a donation to help the chapter cover this new expense. A \$35 contribution to pay for one month's fee would be extremely helpful!

## Maine Chapter of the Sierra Club

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#### Statement of Purpose of the Sierra Club

"To explore, enjoy, and protect the wild places of the Earth; to practice and promote the responsible use of the Earth's ecosystems and resources; to educate and enlist humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environment; and to use all lawful means to carry out these objectives."

**Being a Sierra Club volunteer is fun and rewarding! Just contact Jeanine at [maine.chapter@sierraclub.org](mailto:maine.chapter@sierraclub.org)**

### Visit us on Facebook



A great way to keep up with Maine environmental issues and Sierra Club activities.

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/sierra-club-maine-chapter/181279771922933>

## Let the Sun Shine

*Continued from page 1*

as the major catalyst for needed change.

“The biggest problem here in Maine is an ultra-conservative, anti-renewable energy agenda inflicted by Governor LePage and his legislative supporters,” Coupe says. “It’s maintaining the utility monopoly status quo to the extreme detriment of Maine ratepayers.”

In the longer term, Maine needs to catch up to other states in policies that promote solar and other renewables—for both economic and environmental reasons.

Phil Coupe points out that Mainers currently drain more than \$5 billion per year from the local economy by importing polluting fossil fuels from out of state.

“For its long-term energy security and independence, Maine needs to integrate renewable energy, storage, and complementary technologies like heat pumps, electric vehicles, and microgrids (a small network of electricity users with their own supply source) as rapidly and cost effectively as possible.”

For Woodruff, the most important first step is undergoing a full, fact-based assessment of integrating solar and other renewables into the grid.

“This just hasn’t been done,” he says. “We need to look at the grid as a whole—both our urban areas and rural areas. For example, looking at the ways in rural Maine that we can use the distributive nature of solar to make sure we provide stable, dependable electricity.”

Seth Berry envisions a modernized northern New England grid with ten times more distribution generation. “This will reduce the need for more grid development and produce energy when and where it’s needed,” he explains.

The grid modernization effort is already well underway in Vermont, New York, and Massachusetts, as well as other states. These areas are steadily moving toward what is known as a “smart grid.”

In simple terms, a smart grid is an electrici-



Insource Renewables owner Vaughan Woodruff

*“We need to reframe the conversation so that we can move forward together. In the past the discussions on energy have been political, not pragmatic—not fact-based. That has to change.”*

ty-supply network using digital communications technology to maximize efficiency and reliability—providing two-way communications between the utility and its customers. It allows for incorporation of distributed energy sources (small, localized power sources), time-of-use pricing, and electric vehicle charging. Part of moving to a smart grid is the use of smart meters, which can match electricity consumption with the real-time demands of the grid. Through pricing incentives, consumers can be encouraged to shift energy consumption to off-peak

hours. Of course, solar plays a big role, because it produces most of its energy during peak hours of electricity use.

### Ending Overbuilding by the Utilities

What will it take to move Maine toward a modern grid, utilizing new technologies and incorporating significant contributions from renewable energy sources? In addition to electing forward-thinking politicians, Berry says the rewarding of utilities for “overbuilding” of transmission lines has to end.

“Central Maine Power is guaranteed at least 10 percent profit on transmission projects,” he explains. “The more they build, the more they charge. This profit incentive is a primary driver in today’s rising electricity costs.”

Moving to a smart grid would greatly reduce the need for more poles and lines, Berry adds, and would allow for a more efficient means of delivery. And while he believes that utilities are currently working against the best interests of Mainers, he’s hopeful that eventually all parties will be able to come to a compromise solution.

### Reframing the Conversation

Change isn’t going to happen quickly, but, like Berry, Woodruff remains hopeful that eventually all parties will see the need and value of policies that allow Maine to catch up with the rest of the country.

“No, it won’t happen in a year,” he says. “We need to reframe the conversation so that we can move forward together. In the past the discussions on energy have been political, not pragmatic—not fact-based. That has to change.”

He says that no matter what happens, there will be more solar development in Maine. But what we really need are policies and leadership that allow us to extract the most value we can out of that solar growth for the benefit of all the people of the state.

“We need to see how we can apply what is happening across the country to our own unique situation here in Maine,” Woodruff explains. “If we do it wrong, we won’t compete. We’ll have been passed over.”

## There’s Never Been a Better Time to Invest in Solar

Because of the uncertainty surrounding solar policy in Maine, many potential customers have been hesitant to move forward with installations. But now is actually an opportune time to make that investment. Solar equipment prices have plummeted in recent years, but some solar industry experts believe those costs are leveling off and will likely begin to rise.

If you’re concerned about the new Public Utilities Commission (PUC) rules that go into effect on January 1, 2018, remember an investment in solar before that date will be grandfathered into current policy. That’s a good thing. But the reality is that the PUC rule changes, although not solar-friendly, are relatively minor. Going solar, even after January 1, will still be a money-saver.

Here are just five (there are lots more) great reasons for investing in solar:

1. It will dramatically reduce (or potentially eliminate) your electric bill
2. It will significantly reduce your carbon footprint
3. It’s a hedge against rising electric rates
4. It helps create good Maine jobs
5. It increases your property value

And this is quick example of the cost and savings involved in a solar investment in a typical Maine home according to Efficiency Maine:



|                          |          |
|--------------------------|----------|
| 4.5kw solar installation | \$17,000 |
| 30% Federal Tax Credit   | 5,100    |
| Net Cost                 | \$11,900 |

Annual electricity savings would generally range between \$650 and \$1,000, depending on electricity use and where you live in the state. That could add up to a savings of up to \$20,000 in 20 years.

Many loan options are available for solar, and remember your new system produces electricity that could come close to offsetting your loan payments.

A list of Maine solar installers is available at [efficiencymaine.com](http://efficiencymaine.com). Most installers offer a free online GPS assessment of your house’s solar potential.



## Another Successful Solarize Effort in Maine

The Solarize movement made its way to Bangor this summer and by all accounts it was a big success. The program was spearheaded by volunteer Karen Marysdaughter and was supported by a citizens advisory committee (including a Sierra Club Maine representative), the City of Bangor, and the Eastern Maine Development Corporation.

Modeling itself after other solarize efforts in Maine, the greater Bangor program selected a single solar installer, in this case, Insource Renewables. That eliminated a significant step for solar purchasers and also provided support and reduced installation costs.

Community solarize programs employ a group purchasing concept. As more community members take part in the program, the more all participants can save. In Bangor’s case the average discount was about 10 percent.

All together more than 30 solar installations were contracted through the program which ran from mid-July to the end of September.

Marysdaughter emphasized that the program also had an important educational component, bringing more awareness and information about the benefits of solar to the greater Bangor area. She hopes that the program lays a foundation for continued solar growth in the region.

Freeport, Brunswick, Mount Desert Island, the Mid-coast and Mid-Maine have also all completed successful solarize efforts. Let’s keep the momentum going!