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New Hampshire Sierra Club

The Engaged Sierran

Fired Up After the Primary?

Thanks go out to all the wonderful volunteers who came out during the weeks leading up to the NH Primary. **A grand total of 98 people went to 39 events to "birddog" all of the Republican and Democratic candidates for President**, and to support the Clean Energy goals by questioning candidates, holding signs, talking to voters and reporters, passing out buttons and stickers at these events - all over the state, at all hours of the day and night, and in all kinds of weather. These actions generated a ton of press for our cause. Fabulous work, everyone!



Left to right: Excom Member Karen Irwin; Art Cunningham of Hopkinton; Winter Intern and UNH student Megan Gordon, and Newsletter Editor Cindy Reid of Chichester. In January, they attended a candidate town hall in Hopkinton together to ask an environmental question.

Now we would like to harness that amazing enthusiasm for the important work we still need to do in the next few months. The Chapter Political Committee is tasked with endorsing candidates for all state offices, including governor, council and the legislature. This is a big project because of the sheer number of seats. Candidates are screened with questionnaires, interviews and ultimately a committee vote to endorse or not, based on whether candidates have a solid environmental record that reflects the goals of the New Hampshire Sierra Club.

This year we would like improve our process by working more closely with candidates, to make our endorsements more meaningful for us and for them. This means revamping the questionnaires, following up carefully and discussing campaign strategies that would make a real difference.

The Political Committee is, therefore, recruiting new members! This is a great way to get to know the political players from the NH House to the US Senate. We are also trying to improve how we conduct the endorsement process, including moving to a more online approach, but there is still a certain amount of "manual labor" required to get everything done. Your input, creativity and fresh viewpoint may be just what we, and you, are looking for in the coming months!

This committee meets several times during the election year, at the office in Concord. **If you are excited about clean energy, the political process and want to stay involved in the important work of the Sierra Club, then this is for you.** Please contact the office at NHSC603@gmail.com, or (603) 224-8222. We look forward to having you join us!

Feb 2016: State House Update: Return of a Bad Bill and Wisdom During an Election Year

Challenge: A bill to repeal the current statewide ban of burning waste materials from construction and demolition sites is expected to be voted on in senate committee on Wednesday, March 1. The [bill](#) seems to be designed for the Penacook trash burning plant owned by Wheelerbrator because they have had "problems" with the waste separation and need drier material to stoke their fires. The real problem is that the waste materials from construction and demolition sites bring a mixed bag of toxic and dangerous materials that put children and vulnerable populations at risk. Former Governor

John Lynch supported the ban when the truth of the dangerous emissions came to light in 2007. The bill is expected to have a final vote in the Energy and Natural Resources Committee of the NH Senate on Wednesday. **We must act NOW: [call Committee Members to tell them you oppose burning the "C&D" waste material](#)** because:

1. The dangerous emissions include heavy metals and chemicals that are known carcinogens and neurotoxins that can cause developmental delays, chronic symptoms and death;
2. The Penacook trash burning plant is near 4 schools in the Penacook school district; and
3. The Village of Penacook is home to a large community in Concord - burning "C&D" would directly put those people at risk.

URGENT: Please call each Committee Member before Wednesday March 1. Thank you!!

Success: With rare insight and wisdom, the legislature voted to hold a bill that would have added a new registration fee on all non-commercial vehicles that would be calculated by gas use - or should I say gas efficiency. The less gas you used annually, the more you would pay. Meaning, an electric vehicle would pay the entire additional fee of \$200 annually; a hybrid car like a Prius would have paid an additional \$150; and, a car around 30 miles per gallon would have paid close to \$50. A simple gas guzzler, like a Hummer or an Expedition, would not have an additional fee.

The motivation for this bill is not ill-conceived. The gas tax is supposed to pay for road and bridge building and maintenance but it just doesn't cut it any more - the gas tax revenues are too small for the many roads that need repair. Never mind the years of neglect, the sponsors of the bill were revenue hunting and thought that the fuel sipping hybrids and fossil-free electric cars could fill the (pot)hole. Well, the idea ignored a few things: the fact that heavier vehicles damage roads more, not light efficient ones; the public health benefits of using less gas are enormous; creating penalties for doing the right thing is not fair; and lastly, passing a tax on an election year is bad politics. Now I am sure everyone wants good safe roads to drive on but everyone needs to pay their fair share. We need more options, like trains, buses and bikes. This bill did not strike the needed balance. HB1602 was sent to interim study on February 10.

If you would like to hear more about the legislative session, contact Chapter Director Catherine Corkery at Catherine.corkery@sierraclub.org.

Updates on Northern Pass

NH Public Utilities Commission: Gratitude is due to the landowners along the route of the Northern Pass proposal. The New Hampshire Chapter of the Sierra Club recently reached out to members and friends to encourage landowners to invoke their property rights in the various venues for approval of the 1000 MW transmission line from the flooded Canadian reservoirs of HydroQuebec. The Chapter opposes Northern Pass because of the destructive nature of damming rivers and building reservoirs to wildlife, people, and landscapes is unacceptable - in light of alternatives like solar, efficiency, wind and everything else. The landowners who responded shared their property easement deeds with us, as well as their concerns about the future of their property.

Our concerns were elevated when we discovered the proceeding at the NH Public Utilities Commission where Eversource is requesting the permission from the state to rent the easement (on other people's property) to Northern Pass LLC, who will then be paid by the country of Canada to build and maintain the poles and wires for the 200 mile international transmission superhighway. You can see it here: [DE-15-464](#). None of the landowners or abutters were notified of the rental request. Why? NHSC asked a few landowners to ask that question in the docket by intervening - despite Eversource not notifying them. It seems that the response from Eversource was not, well, friendly and they declared that the agency did not have the jurisdiction to determine property right claims. So the issue is raised and countered - now we will wait for a decision on the landowners' participation in the PUC docket about Eversource renting land easements to build the Northern Pass. The resistance continues.

Public Comment Opportunities: The Site Evaluation Committee (SEC) started the lengthy

process to determine the future of Northern Pass. The deadline for intervention was Feb 5, and the Chapter again encouraged members and supporters to engage in the process. At this point, an estimated 14 members and supporters have sent a letter to participate, along with the Chapter. Next month there will be a number of public hearings about the proposal and we once again encourage you to attend, speak, submit your comments in writing and listen. The SEC in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Energy, will conduct a Public Hearings:

- **March 7, 2016**, 5 p.m. at the Colebrook Elementary School, 27 Dumont Street, Colebrook, NH
- **March 10, 2016**, 5 p.m. at the Grappone Center, 70 Constitution Avenue, Concord, NH

Read the [SEC docket](#).

US Dept of Energy: Separately, the US Department of Energy will conduct additional hearings on the Environmental Impact Statement. A number of you have received the notice in the mail, but for others this may serve as new encouragement to participate. This is the federal process to examine the environmental impacts from the transmission line proposal. At these two hearings the discussion is ONLY about the draft [Environmental Impact Statement \(EIS\)](#).

Please review the different options presented in the EIS and refer to it in your comments. The public hearings are:

- **March 9, 2016**, 5 p.m.: Waterville Valley Conference and Event Center, Waterville Room, 56 Packards Road, Waterville Valley, NH
- **March 11, 2016**, 5 p.m.: Mountain View Grand Resort and Spa, Presidential Room, 101 Mountain View Road, Whitefield, NH

As noted by the DOE there are the details to the comments: "Comments on the Draft EIS and Section 106 can be submitted verbally during public hearings; on the [project website](http://www.northernpasseis.us/comment/) (<http://www.northernpasseis.us/comment/>); in writing to Mr. Brian Mills at: Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability (OE-20), U.S. Department of Energy, 1000 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20585; via e-mail to draftEIScomments@northernpasseis.us or Section106comments@northernpasseis.us; or by facsimile to (202) 586-8008. Please mark envelopes and electronic mail subject lines as "NP Draft EIS Comments" or "NP Section 106 Comments." Written comments should be submitted by April 4, 2016. Written and oral comments will be given equal weight and all comments received or postmarked by that date will be considered by DOE in preparing the Final EIS. Comments submitted (e.g., postmarked) after that date will be considered to the extent practicable."

Green Eggs and New HAMpshire Environmental Policy Breakfast

The weather was not cooperative on the 16th of February, but attendance at this annual event, held at the Grappone Conference Center in Concord, was impressive. It is sponsored and supported by a host of environmentally concerned agencies, organizations and non-profits from across the state. Many members of the state legislature were in attendance, as well as representatives from a variety of environmental groups and the public.

Many speakers presented our state's wild resources and properties as a key driver of our state economy. These included Senator Kelly Ayotte and Chief of Staff Terry Pfaff, who spoke for Shawn Jasper, Speaker of the House. Susan Arnold, Appalachian Mountain Club, spoke to the lack of protected lands, the importance of dedicated funds being used for their designated purpose only, and also to the need for bipartisan support to make things happen. Both Senator Dan Feltus and Clay Mitchell, NH Clean Tech Council, spoke in support of the Clean Energy Plan, net metering and, importantly, to stop the rhetoric and start acting on solutions.

A balanced approach including both economic and conservation goals were the focus of speeches by U.S. Senator Jeanne Shaheen, presented by Emily Cashman, and Meredith Hatfield, Director, Office of Energy and Planning.

The public is welcome at this free, annual event. We hope to see you there next year!

Speaking of Breakfast...
Climate Impacts on Maple Syrup Breakfast

March 9, 2016 ~ 7:30-9:30am
Young Student Center, Keene State College

Join the state's environmental organizations for a **Climate Impacts Waffle Breakfast** on the eve of New Hampshire's traditional Maple Syrup Weekend to hear from local maple syrup producers and experts about climate impacts on our forests and maple trees. After enjoying some malted waffles with New Hampshire maple syrup, you can take action to protect this New Hampshire tradition with local organizations and the Keene State Ecology Club.



Panelists include Phil Suter, President/CEO of the Keene Chamber of Commerce and Steve Roberge, Extension Field Specialist, Natural Resources & County Office Administrator at the UNH Cooperative Extension and others.

Doors open with Breakfast at 7:30 am; the panel discussion will begin at 8:00 am. [Register for free online.](#)

The Climate Impacts Waffle Breakfast is sponsored by Environment New Hampshire, Union of Concerned Scientists, League of Conservation Voters, National Wildlife Federation, Moms Clean Air Force, and New Hampshire Sierra Club, and is presented in partnership with the Keene State College Ecology Club.

Recently on Facebook...

If you're not a member of the NH Sierra Club Chapter group on Facebook, you're missing out! Enjoy posts about upcoming events, smart gardening, links to articles about environmental issues across the state – and, of course, a cute animal or two. Check out our [Facebook Group](#) today.

A Flash from the Past:

Former NH Sierra Club employee Marie Bergen left our Concord office for a spot in the San Francisco office four years ago. Today she is working hard behind the digital screen, making Sierra Club's national emails effective, efficient and good looking. We are excited to share that our colleague married her long time sweetheart Sheddi Shera on February 14, 2016. For those of us who knew her when she was just starting her career in the Sierra Club, and those of us who only know her virtually, we want to wish Marie and Sheddi many more happy years together, wherever they may travel!



If you are not a member yet -
Click here to become a member today to support our efforts to explore, enjoy, and protect our Earth!

SAVE THE PLANET & SOME GREEN.
JOIN AND ENJOY NEW MEMBER BENEFITS



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