



Iroquois Messenger

Action

Checklist

ATV Trail System

- See page 2. Send comments: NYSDEC Division of Lands and Forests, PO Box 5170 Cortland, NY 13045. Fax 607-753-8532. e-mail <r7forest@gw.dec.state.ny.us>

Waste to Energy

- See page 2. Volunteer for the Citizens Advisory Committee of the Waste to Energy Facility

**Meetings & Outings
list is on page 4
List of Iroquois Group
contacts is on page 3**

CHILI – SNOW FEST

It's Time! The Sierra Club, Iroquois Group Annual Chili-Snow Fest will be on Saturday, **February 16** at 1:00 PM. This is the party where old and new members, “maybe” members, and friends meet, eat, and mingle. We start at Erie Canal (parking lot) at Ryder Park, next to the DeWitt Town Hall. After pulling on our gear, we'll walk, ski, or snowshoe along the Erie Canal. Those who prefer a good book and a cup of hot cider may go directly to Midge Ferris' house at 104 Robbins Lane.

When the snow people return we will have a brief meeting about 3 PM and enjoy vegetarian chili, salad, home baked bread, desert, and drinks.

Directions to Midge: from corner of Kinne Road and Westminster — just over the bridge from Ryder Park — turn onto Westminster and immediately left on Robbins Lane. Information: 446-8062 and 492-4745.

Plight of the Unsightly: Urban Natural Areas

Take a lot in the city billowing unevenly in trees, shrubs, rocks and who knows what else, clear it off, grade it, pave it over in blacktop for a parking lot, and what it is now? An improvement. That's right — in the double-speak of real estate development anything manmade is an improvement over nature.

Take land in the suburbs, low-lying beside a rushing stream, clear it off, grade it, plant it in grass for a golf course, and what have we done? Converted junk property to increase the tax base. With planners' language clearly favoring those who need to shorten every blade of grass and shear every shrub, natural areas don't stand a chance.

And so it goes. But before you dismiss those unsightly leftovers as being unnatural and having little value for wildlife anyway, look again. D. Andrew Saunders, professor of environmental interpretation at SUNY-ESF, *has* taken another look. His slides of vacant land in and around Syracuse, show nature thriving in the “nuisance” areas of planning departments. His narrative explains why these places are important.

“Plight of the Unsightly” will be presented by D. Andrew Saunders at our March general meeting, Westcott Community Center, Tuesday, **March 26**, at 7:30 PM.

Environmental Digest

Sewage Treatment Plant

Onondaga county's plan to build a sewage treatment plant on Midland Ave in Syracuse's south side hit a major snag. On Oct 9, 2001, the Common Council voted unanimously not to sell the city-owned parcels to the County. Although the county said it will sue, it has agreed to informally discuss ways to resolve the impasse.

Closed negotiation sessions, with DEC facilitating have been held weekly in January among County representatives, Common Council and Mayor, Atlantic States Legal Foundation, Onondaga Nation, and Onondaga Creek Partnership.

At press time the only choice on the table was the County's \$60 million plant. The other players are supporting a "whole picture" effort, rather than patch-work plans. There was an impasse.

In light of the negotiations, the State has extended the January 17 deadline for site acquisition to April 1. Construction onset has moved from June to September 1, and completion changed from May 2004 to September 2004. With the breathing room provided by this decision, the Creek Partnership and others are hoping the County will seriously investigate alternative plans — plans that will save a neighborhood from environmental injustice and will create a creek that meets Clean Water Act.

Check updates in Mark Weiner's environment column in the Post-Standard. Send him comments <citynews@syracuse.com>

Fishing in Onondaga Lake

In 1999 the DEC changed the lake designation from "No fishing" to "Fish advisory." This did not seem prudent. All sarning signs were removed and replaced with notification of an "advisory" available only in English on fishing licenses. The warning is complex, allowing only *particular* fish to be eaten, to be caught in a *specific* area of the lake at a *precise* time of year by a healthy, non-child bearing adult.

The USEPA has awarded Atlantic States Legal Foundation an Environmental Justice grant to help bridge the language barrier for recent immigrants who may be unlicensed or unable to read the warning. ASLF will work to place basic informative signs on the lake shore, in appropriate languages.

ATV Trail System

DEC has completed public meetings on the ATV Trail issue for Central New York Counties. The final version of the Master Plan states *An acceptable location for the development of an ATV trail system on Region 7 state forests does not currently exist.* Other quotes in the Plan include: *Development of an ATV trail system is incompatible with the state forests... The relatively quiet undisturbed character is highly valued... The opportunity exists for commercial facilities or clubs to develop ATV Trails on private lands.*

ATV advocates will be trying to change it, but we can show support with written comments of approval — until Feb. 28 — to keep the Plan as is. See Action Checklist, page 1.

Waste to Energy

The Citizens Advisory Committee of the Waste to Energy Facility was formed by the County Legislature to appoint citizens of impacted areas to access information and express concerns about the effects of this facility on the environment and on health. There are currently openings on this committee, including: City of Syracuse (mayor); County Executive; Town of Onondaga; and at-large, appointed by the County Legislature. If you are interested in the mission of this committee, contact the Iroquois Conservation Chair. The incinerator has been one of the Group's ongoing conservation campaigns.

Atlantic Chapter

On October 26 the ExComm of the Atlantic Chapter met in Albany. The ExComm has 29 members. There are 20 Group delegates, sent on the basis of Group size, and 9 at-large members, chosen by the ballot in the Fall *Sierra Atlantic*. The Iroquois Group has one delegate, usually the chair. If you are interested in the Chapter functions, let the Iroquois Chair know, and you could become an alternate. When meetings are within driving distance, you are welcome to attend for the experience. The Chapter reimburses Delegates' expenses.

(continued on page 4)

From the Chair

Dear tree Huggers,

In the spirit of a New Year, I thought I would explain the Iroquois Group and how we all fit into the national Sierra Club. Iroquois Group has 2,000 plus members scattered over a large area bordering on the west at Rochester, on the east at Little Falls, north at Canton, and south at Binghamton. Our Group is one of 11 that make up the Atlantic Chapter (New York State) with 40,000 plus members. National has over 600,000.

One problem with our size is that it is hard to be relevant to the more distant areas. Although our ExComm meetings are open to all members, not many travel to Syracuse to attend them. We could be more relevant if members would contact us with environmental concerns or news from their area. We can put members in touch with experts or assist with local problems. Contact me or the Conservation Chair, preferably by email, but US mail or phone will also work. We also travel to other areas to meet a group or to address a Town Board to lend Sierra support to your local concern.

The ExComm began the year with newly elected members and passed the following resolution regarding the proposed expanded mall. *The Sierra Club-Iroquois Group*

Give a Wolf a Break

The brochure "Give a Wolf a Break Today: Go Veggie!" explains environmental reasons for a plant-based diet. It was produced by the Bio-diversity-Vegetarian Outreach Committee, chaired by Linda A. DeStefano. Kay Bushnell of Califor-

nia, feels that DestiNY USA is environmentally unsound because it would be wasteful of natural resources, be energy-intensive, overtax our water, sewage and transportation systems, and create air pollution from traffic. We are opposed to creating an artificial "natural" all-season environment when we live in a region with natural resources to enjoy.

We thank Tasha Cooper and Scott Webster for their work on the Iroquois Web site <www.newyork.sierraclub.org/iroquois>. Hopefully, Sierra events, changes in events, by-laws, officers, and action-alerts would be posted. Let Scott know about your ideas for the site: <stwebster@Syr.edu>

Each year the ExComm decides on primary campaigns for the Group. At the moment we have three: pesticides, Onondaga Lake cleanup, and the local trash incinerator. Future campaigns might include: reducing sprawl, expanding the bottle bill, improving recycling, promoting bike paths, mapping cancer, and investigating genetically engineered foods. If any of these are your special passion, contact us. Or let us know if there's something else you are interested and we will put it on the table. Or design your own local campaign and tell us how we can help.

nia, has a column of vegan recipes in her local *Sierran* publication. We will send some of them to you along with the brochure.

Contact Linda at 315-488-2140 (9 AM - 10:45 PM). Ask for the English or Spanish version, or both. Visit <www.meatout.org>

Every month we have a meeting or event. There are walks, or visits to environmentally interesting places, or speakers and slide programs. Our last meeting on January 22, was great. We had a thought-provoking slide show on "Great Urban Spaces," thanks to Ollie Clubb. Check our "Meetings and Outings" list (page 2)

We contact Group members through the *Messenger*, at our website <www.newyork.sierraclub.org/iroquois> and with an e-mail or postcard update lists. If you want to be on an update list, send me an email or a postcard. Contact information is on this page. I promise you will not be loaded with "stuff" and we do not share our lists.

For the Earth and the wonderful members who make this all possible. Martha Loew.

Iroquois Group Contacts

Sierra Club – Iroquois Group
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Jamesville, NY 13078

Executive Committee

Chair	Martha Loew	492-4745
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Outings	Open	
At Large	Debra DeSocio	329-0196
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	Rich Slingerland	298-3130

Meetings and Outings

General Meetings are at **Westcott Community Center** 826 Euclid Avenue, usually on fourth Tuesdays at 7:30 PM (with exceptions), and are open to the public. **ExComm meetings** are held at the **Jamesville Train Station**, in Jamesville Plaza at the corner of Route 173 and Jamesville Rd. on third Wednesdays at 7:30 PM **for Sierra members only**. Have a special item you would like to discuss? Please attend. Event information: 492-4745, unless otherwise listed. CPF — Council of Park Friends; PAR — People for Animal Rights.

- Feb 16 **Saturday, 1:00 PM Ryder Park, DeWitt:** Snow games for members and guests. Then it's off to Midge Ferris' House at 104 Robbins lane for Chat and Chili at 3:00 (See page 1)
- Feb 20 **Wednesday, 7:30 PM.** ExComm
- Feb 24 **Sunday, 2:00 PM:** Winter Ecology Walk, Clark Reservation. Meet at the nature center. CPF

- Mar 19 **Tuesday (yes, Tuesday), 7:30 PM:** ExComm
- Mar 24 **Sunday, 2:00 PM.** Early spring hike to look for signs of spring and migratory birds at Clark Reservation with CPF
- Mar 26 **Tuesday, 7:30 PM** at Westcott Community Center. General Meeting and program "Plight of the Unsightly" by D. Andrew Saunders, Prof of Environmental Interpretation at SUNY-ESF (See page 1)
- Apr 17 **Wednesday, 7:30 PM.** ExComm
- Apr 29 **Monday 7:00 PM:** General meeting and program jointly with PAR at Liverpool Library, 310 Tulip Street. **Tim Behrendt and Peggy Spencer: slide show of Shawangunk Nature Preserve, where they use solar energy, composting toilets, and organic farming.**

(Atlantic Chapter — continued from page 2)

At the first ExComm meeting of the year, Officers were elected: Chair, Aaron Mair; Vice Chair Ken Baer; no Secretary; Treasurer, Steve Kulick; Conservation Chair, Rhea Jezer (the last two from Iroquois). At the same meeting Conservation Committee members and Chairs were appointed. Iroquois' Linda DeStefano is Chair of the Biodiversity-Vegetarian Outreach, Endangered Species, and Pesticide committees. Any member

may join any Chapter Committee. They will pick up information and ideas, yet won't need to attend many meetings. Communications are mostly by phone or mail. Committees include Energy, Environmental Justice, Wetlands, Lands Management, and Political. Interested members contact Iroquois Chair or Conservation Chair.

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