



Vol. 52, No. 4

Fighting for a cleaner and healthier New Jersey for all!

October-December 2023

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# Wind Is the Answer!



A rally for support of offshore wind turbines at Long Branch June 10 attracted 300 supporters, including members of the NJ Chapter of the Sierra Club, the League of Conservation Voters, and a large crowd of other concerned citizens. Speakers included Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman, former Senate President Steve Sweeney, and NJ Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Shawn LaTourette. Photos: above, NJ Chapter Director Anjuli Ramos-Busot and Communications and Outreach Coordinator Jackie Greger lead the march. Right, Allen Swanson, Communications Committee co-chair, carries the flag. Photos by Taylor McFarland.



# 2023 Election for NJ Chapter Officers and Groups

Balloting is now under way for the 2023 election of executive officers and group leaders for the NJ Chapter of the Sierra Club. All current members are invited to participate.

Members will receive solicitations via email in October for online voting. Votes also may be cast using the mail-in paper ballot in the print edition of this newsletter (see page 2 for the ballot). **The deadline for receipt of ballots is November 13 (e-ballot or paper).**

Your votes are essential to help select leaders who will best represent the interests of Club membership!

The Chapter's Executive Committee (ExCom) consists of nine at-large volunteers who meet on the second Saturday of each month to discuss state, regional, and other environmental issues and decide policy. ExCom also coordinates committee work on sustainability and conservation, initiates legal action, endorses candidates for public office, and hears from staff and volunteer officers.

Three ExCom members are elected (or re-elected) each year to three-year terms. There were no petition candidates this year. This year's ExCom candidates were selected by Nominating Committee Chair Stan Greberis and members Joanne Pannone and Bill Beren.

The Elections Committee includes Chair Sindhu Pasricha and members Laura Bagwell and Jamie Zaccaria.

ExCom candidate bios and photos are on page 2.

Please vote for three at-large ExCom members and the leadership of your regional group. If you do not know which group you belong to, visit the Group News section of this newsletter (pages 12 to 16), where the Chapter's 12

>continued on page 3

# New Jersey Bag Ban: Is It Working?

By Allen Swanson • Communications Committee Co-Chair

Is New Jersey's bag ban, introduced in May 2022, making a difference? You bet!

In an [83-page report](#), the Plastics Advisory Council has charted progress of the law (P.L. 2020, Chapter 117) during its first eight months and concludes that New Jersey's "Get Past Plastic" policy has been a success.

The major findings of the report include the following:

- 16.5 billion plastic bags removed from the waste stream
- 110 million paper bags removed
- 15 million plastic straws removed
- 37% reduction in plastic bag litter on NJ beaches
- 39% reduction in plastic straw litter on NJ beaches
- 38% reduction in foam litter on NJ beaches

Chapter 117 restricted use of plastic straws and banned plastic and paper bags and polystyrene containers. It also created the Plastics Advisory Council (PAC) to oversee administration. The council consists of representatives from industry, environmental groups, education, and government. It has held regular meetings since April 2022, and its "First Year Report" not

only charts the achievements of this groundbreaking environmental law but also identifies 20 ways ("opportunities for action") plastic regulation can be strengthened and made more effective.

For example, a major unanticipated consequence of the law has been the accumulation of reusable bags. Of the 20 opportunities for action, the first three relate to reusable bags. Authors of Chapter 117 did not anticipate the proliferation of "reusable bags" that would result from the ban on plastic and paper bags. Reusable bags were immediately employed by takeout food vendors, which left many New Jersey residents with far more reusable bags than they need. The council has suggested improving the definition of reusable bags so they can be (a) cleaned for reuse, (b) recycled, and (c) verified as nonplastic.

Additional areas identified as requiring review and action include the following:

- Improve compliance with the plastic straw ban.
- Help consumers understand what plastics are and are not recyclable. The council cited the numerical International Plastic Resin Coding System as particularly problematic.

"This causes great public confusion."

- Work with wastewater treatment facilities and the state Legislature to prevent microplastics from entering the environment.
- Tap New Jersey's higher education community for research into more effective plastics management.
- Beef up industry responsibility for plastics content in products and packaging. Require honest and clear labeling about recyclability.
- Foster a "reuse and refill" green business economy.
- Reduce plastic waste at schools and government buildings.

The report made it clear that New Jersey has come a long way in addressing the problem of some waste materials, but said that, overall, nationally and in New Jersey, "waste reduction efforts have largely been ineffective."

It is imperative that all of us recognize how "ineffective" our efforts have been to reduce waste and increase our focus on education and action.

### Resource

Plastic Advisory Council Report: [shorturl.at/oOZ57](https://shorturl.at/oOZ57)

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## 2023 BALLOTS

### Instructions for completing your ballot

**Step 1:** Vote for the NJ Chapter leadership.

**Step 2:** Vote for candidates in your assigned regional group. Please check the mailing label on page 1 of this newsletter to confirm your group. Group codes are: *Central Jersey, 4001; Jersey Shore, 4002; Loantaka, 4003; North Jersey, 4004; Skylands, 4005; West Jersey, 4006; South Jersey, 4007; Raritan Valley 4008; Hudson County, 4009; Gateway, 4010; Hunterdon Warren, 4011; and Ocean County, 4012.*

**Step 3:** Clip the entire ballot and mail it to: **Sierra Club Ballot, 1 North Johnston Avenue, Suite A203, Hamilton, NJ 08609.** Be sure that the address label, which includes your membership number, is on the back of the ballot. Due by Monday, November 13, 2023.

If you have questions about the elections process or require additional assistance, please contact the Chapter elections chair at [spjersey@gmail.com](mailto:spjersey@gmail.com). Use the ballots below for electing New Jersey Executive Committee members and group officers.

**NJ Chapter ExCom Ballot:** Vote for a maximum of three candidates. The top three leading candidates will have three-year terms until December 2026. Name order has been randomized.

Candidates	Member or 1st Joint Member Vote	2nd Joint Member Vote
Karen Becker	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Renée Pollard	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Joe Testa	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write-In	_____	_____
Write-In	_____	_____

**Group Ballots:** Vote for candidates in your designated regional group.

Candidates	Member or 1st Joint Member Vote	2nd Joint Member Vote
<b>Central Jersey Group Ballot (4001):</b> Vote for a maximum of two candidates. The two elected candidates will have two-year terms that expire December 2025.		
Kip Cherry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dave Mattek	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write-In	_____	_____
Write-In	_____	_____

**Jersey Shore Group Ballot (4002):** Vote for a maximum of four candidates. The four elected candidates will have two-year terms that expire December 2025.

George Moffatt	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Robin Zullow	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stan Greberis	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jim Baye	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write-In	_____	_____
Write-In	_____	_____

**Loantaka Group Ballot (4003):** Vote for a maximum of seven candidates. The top five elected candidates will have two-year terms that expire December 2025. The next two leading candidates will have terms that expire December 2024.

Paul Sanderson	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jonathan Connor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Eric Hausker	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write-In	_____	_____
Write-In	_____	_____
Write-In	_____	_____
Write-In	_____	_____

**North Jersey Group Ballot (4004):** Vote for a maximum of six candidates. The top five elected candidates will have two-year terms that expire December 2025. The sixth leading candidate will have a term that expires December 2024.

Diane Scarangella	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jeff Rapaport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ron De Vos	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rebecca Wilkin	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kristine Scheufele	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maria Dvorozniak	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write-In	_____	_____
Write-In	_____	_____

**Skylands Group Ballot (4005):** Vote for a maximum of five candidates. The five elected candidates will have two-year terms that expire December 2025..

Susan Williams	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dave Alcock	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Allison Orsi	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chris Dunbar	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Joanne Morgan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write-In	_____	_____
Write-In	_____	_____

**West Jersey Group Ballot (4006):** Vote for a maximum of three candidates. The top two elected candidates will have two-year terms that expire December 2025. The third leading candidate will have a term that expires December 2024.

Gina Carola	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trish Sebastiano	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write-In	_____	_____
Write-In	_____	_____

**South Jersey Group Ballot (4007):** Vote for a maximum of three candidates. The three elected candidates will have two-year terms that expire December 2025.

Julie Akers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Allie Horn	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write-In	_____	_____
Write-In	_____	_____

**Raritan Valley Group Ballot (4008):** Vote for a maximum of two candidates. The two elected candidates will have two-year terms that expire December 2025.

Teresa Callahan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kevin Corcoran	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write-In	_____	_____
Write-In	_____	_____

**Hudson County Group Ballot (4009):** Vote for a maximum of four candidates. The four elected candidates will have two-year terms that expire December 2025.

Steve Krinsky	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nancy Booth	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meera Jaffrey	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Anne Arguelles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write-In	_____	_____
Write-In	_____	_____

**Gateway Group Ballot (4010):** Vote for a maximum of six candidates. The top five leading candidates will have two-year terms that expire December 2025. The sixth leading candidate will have a term that expires December 2024.

Bill Beren	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Steve Yafet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suzanne Trimel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write-In	_____	_____
Write-In	_____	_____
Write-In	_____	_____

**Hunterdon Warren Group Ballot (4011):** Vote for a maximum of five candidates. The five elected candidates will have two-year terms that expire December 2025.

Patrick Banes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Celeste Martin	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jonathan Wall	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write-In	_____	_____
Write-In	_____	_____

**Ocean County Group Ballot (4012):** Vote for a maximum of five candidates. The five elected candidates will have two-year terms that expire December 2025.

William Rogers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Terrence Brown	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Florence Abrenica	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write-In	_____	_____
Write-In	_____	_____

# Imagine— It Isn't Hard to Do

By Karen Becker • Political Committee Chair

Is there anyone who hasn't heard John Lennon's iconic song "Imagine"? The lyrics ask us to imagine a world of brotherhood and peace, without hunger or greed, and functioning as one. With today's environmental issues, I wonder if Lennon would have written a song suggesting how we can be kinder to Earth itself. Would he have asked us to listen to science and the facts before it's too late? If Lennon were alive today, I believe he would have been a leader in addressing climate change, the environment, and definitely environmental social justice issues.

Sadly, John Lennon is not here today to carry the torch on these as well as many other issues. But we do have the Sierra Club and members such as yourself. As a grassroots organization, the Sierra Club plays an important role in working with elected officials on all levels of government. Building relationships with our representatives helps us to inform and educate them on how we can approach and resolve harmful effects on the environment. Getting the right people elected who acknowledge these issues and will work to address them is key to the solution.

Each election cycle, the Sierra Club endorses candidates who we feel have taken the greatest steps in working toward a better, cleaner environment. We hope you will consider voting for these individuals in the November 7 General Election. Let's write our own song on how we can *Imagine* clean air, land, and water. (Visit [www.nj.gov/state/elections/vote.shtml](http://www.nj.gov/state/elections/vote.shtml) for voting information in your area)

2023 Sierra Club Endorsements	
NJ State Senate	
District	Candidate
5	Nilsa I. Cruz-Perez*
7	Troy Singleton*
11	Vin Gopal*
13	Declan O'Scanlon Jr.*
14	Linda Greenstein*
15	Shirley Turner*
16	Andrew Zwicker*
17	Bob Smith*
18	Patrick Diegnan Jr.*
19	Joseph Vitale*
20	Joseph Cryan*
22	Nicholas Scutari*
23	Denise King
25	Christine Clarke
27	John F. McKeon
29	Teresa Ruiz*
30	Robert Singer*
31	Sandra Cunningham*
32	Raj Mukherji
33	Brian Stack*
35	Nellie Pou*
36	Paul Sarlo*
37	Gordon Johnson*
38	Joseph Lagana*
NJ State Assembly	
District	Candidate
5	William Spearman*
6	Louis Greenwald*
7	Herb Conaway Jr.*
7	Carol Murphy*
15	Verlina Reynolds-Jackson*
15	Anthony Verrelli*
16	Roy Freiman*
17	Joe Danielsen*
18	Sterley Stanley*
18	Robert Karabinchak*
19	Craig Coughlin*
19	Yvonne Lopez*
22	James Kennedy*
22	Linda Carter*
23	Guy Citron
23	Tyler Powell
25	Diane Salvatore
25	Jon Torres
28	Ralph R. Caputo*
34	Britnee N. Timberlake*
36	Clinton Calabrese*
38	Lisa Swain*
38	Christopher Tully*
County and Local	
Daniel Benson - Mercer County Executive Director	
John Kashwick - Clinton Town Council*	
William Ziegler - Leonia Mayor	
Diane Scarangella - Leonia Town Council	

\* indicates incumbent

## ExCom Candidate Bios and Statements

(Listed in random order)

### Joe Testa

(Loantaka Group)

Currently serving as ExCom member, Information Technology chair, participant in several chapter committees, and our chapter's delegate to the national Council of Club Leaders (CCL), I have been honored to be elected chair of the CCL. In that role I serve as the liaison for all chapters with the Board of Directors. An avid hiker, I joined the Sierra Club over 25 years ago to participate in outings and to support a pro-environment political agenda. I would appreciate your vote so I can continue to work to support our chapter's goals and to be our "bridge" to/from the national organization.



tion, it is imperative that we establish a productive working relationship with members of the NJ Legislature. As an ExCom member, I get firsthand knowledge of the issues our committees are actively engaged in, allowing me to point our members in the right direction so they know whom to reach out to for help. I hope that you will vote for me, so that I can continue this important work."

### Renée Pollard

(West Group)

A 10-year NJ Chapter member and current member of the ExCom, Renée Pollard chairs the Environmental and Social Justice Committee and is on the Strategic Planning Committee. She is a Climate Reality Leader and an NJ School Boards Association Certified Board member. Renée has helped form many advocacy partnerships with environmental justice communities, groups, state leaders, and state legislators. You can count on her to attend rallies, marches, and other events. Renée seeks to continue representing NJ black and brown communities. "We all have the same rights to clean air, water, and an equal quality of life," she said.



### Karen Becker

(Hunterdon Warren Group)

"I currently serve on the NJ Chapter's ExCom and as the Chapter's Political Committee chair, handling political endorsements for candidates seeking election. As a grassroots organiza-



## Volunteer Opportunity: Chapter Secretary

The NJ Chapter of the Sierra Club is seeking a volunteer to act as secretary for our monthly Executive Committee meetings. Meetings are held on the second Saturday of every month from 1-3 p.m. and are currently held virtually. The secretary's role is to take accurate minutes of the meetings. Training will be provided. Candidates should have fast typing skills and proficiency with Google Workspace tools and Adobe Acrobat. If interested, please contact [secretary@newjersey.sierraclub.org](mailto:secretary@newjersey.sierraclub.org)

# Cleaning Up After Oil

By Tony Hagen • [editor@newjersey.sierraclub.org](mailto:editor@newjersey.sierraclub.org)

Oil Creek, Pa., is a pretty interesting place. It's now a park, thank goodness, but it was the birthplace of the American oil industry.

It all happened somewhere near the close of the Civil War. The whaling industry couldn't keep up with the demand for oil and, as people became aware of the vast utility of crude oil, fortune seekers crowded in from all directions to cash in on "black gold."

Lush forests were transformed virtually overnight into oil-slicked mudscapes and unruly boomtowns. Horses were routinely lashed to death hauling wooden barrels of oil across land to rail and water depots.

The Allegheny River became choked with oil pollution and sometimes caught fire. Amid all this detritus of greed and desperation, one man rose above all others: John Rockefeller, co-founder of Standard Oil and destined to become the world's richest person.

Rockefeller possessed a unique ability to organize, raise money, and manipulate vast economic engines to transform the rough and tumble oil business into what has become a sky-darkening, global menace today, a century and a half later.

Men still scramble to cash in on this easy money. Oil companies remain some of the highest dividend-paying stocks on Wall Street. Lots of "widows and orphans" and plenty of others depend on these profits for their liveli-

hoods. For many, that makes it hard to let go.

I clearly remember a friend recounting the words of his father: "Son, oil stocks have been very, very good to us."

Today, the oil business has the afterglow of a Russian missile attack. Its minions are like Sauron's Orks moving against the peace-loving, civilized world. Hopefully, soon, someone will throw this "ring" of delusion into the fires of Mount Doom.

As extreme weather events flicker like engulfing flames all over the planet, at the Sierra Club we work patiently and confidently on course corrections that will one day bring us out of this peril.

The Lower Passaic River, a toxic mess, is now getting the cleanup attention it deserves. Across the state, the foundations of an electric vehicle fleet and building electrification are taking shape. Wind turbines have been stymied by economic conditions and opposition groups, but our Chapter stands united in support for responsibly developed offshore wind to help New Jersey achieve 100% clean energy.

Read about these developments and more in this issue of *The Jersey Sierran*, and get involved. An appropriate response to the toxicity of the Oil Age starts with awareness and continues with action.



## Clean Energy Action Now!

New Jersey environmental advocates launched the [Clean Energy Action Now \(CLEAN\)](#) campaign to raise awareness of the health, economic and climate benefits of an equitable clean energy future for New Jersey. The campaign supports the urgent adoption of policies that encourage and accelerate clean energy solutions such as establishing a state target in law of 100% clean electricity by 2035 and an equitable, affordable pathway to upgrade New Jersey's homes and buildings.

### BALLOT *continued from page 1*

individual group geographical areas are described. You may only vote for your designated group as indicated by your membership number.

If you receive the print version of the newsletter, your group number is listed on the top line of your address label. This will help you determine which group ballot you should vote. If you participate in a group that is not in your regional area or if your group number is incorrect, please contact the Club's member services at [member.care@sierraclub.org](mailto:member.care@sierraclub.org) or (415) 977-5653. The change will be effective for future elections.

To vote using the paper ballot included with the print edition of this newsletter, clip the entire ballot on the heavy dashed line and return it in your own stamped envelope to the NJ Chapter address provided in the ballot instructions.

Note that a properly clipped ballot will include the front-page mailing label. This will verify your membership. Your address label also indicates whether you have a joint or single membership.

If you are an individual member, vote on the paper ballot by checking the boxes immediately to the right of the

candidates of your choosing. There is a second column of boxes to the far right of candidate names. This enables a second person to vote if you and they have joint Club membership.

If you receive our online newsletter, you may print the pdf of the ballot to mail to us. Your name, address, and membership number must be included in the submission for us to validate your ballot.

**"Note that a properly clipped ballot will include the front-page mailing label. This will verify your membership. Your address label also indicates whether you have a joint or single membership."**

Club rules require nominating committees to nominate at least two more candidates than the number of executive member seats that are open. Some ballots include those "extra" candidates as write-in spaces. Candidates who are written in must be Sierra Club members and Club leadership must be able to contact them.

If the Sierra Club has your email address in its records and you have authorized emails from the NJ Chapter, you will receive a ballot by email in October. Click on the link provided in the email and follow the instructions for voting. Joint members who choose the online voting option must vote separately. **Please cast only one ballot (e-ballot or paper).**

# Our Chapter Welcomes New Volunteers and a College Intern!

By Richard Isaac • [Richard.Isaac@sierraclub.org](mailto:Richard.Isaac@sierraclub.org)

On behalf of our NJ Chapter, I welcome our new volunteer officers and a college intern:

### Bill Brazell, Leaf-Blower Reform Coordinator

Bill Brazell is our Chapter's new coordinator of leaf-blower reform, focused on helping ban two-stroke gasoline-powered leaf blowers in as many municipalities as possible. While Bill may ultimately help us ban all two-stroke outdoor lawn and garden equipment, which emits considerable amounts of volatile organic compounds, including carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, and carbon dioxide, he is currently focused on gasoline-powered leaf blowers because they are not only major air pollutants but also major noise pollutants as well and will most likely be the easiest to ban.

Bill is a happily married father of three school-age daughters and a partner at WIT Strategy, a strategic public-relations firm. Dressing up as a giant kidney helped him raise money and awareness for PKD Foundation, which advocates for a polycystic kidney disease cure. For environmental causes, he's quite open to dressing up as something else—a tree, maybe, making use of his 6'6" height, or, perhaps even an electric leaf blower. A former magazine and book editor, Bill lives in Millburn, where he coaches his kids' teams and wonders how he can best help humanity to decarbonize.

### Winston Kim, Youth Committee Member

Winston Kim is a rising senior in high school. Winston is passionate about the environment and climate science and is very much looking forward to



working with the rest of our Chapter's Youth Committee, which now includes six high school students. All interested students are invited to join in.

### Alicia Remus, Press Release Translator

Originally from Mexico, Alicia is 100% bilingual. Alicia is passionate about anything that can help our world and reduce our carbon footprint.

She is very excited to help make our Chapter's activities known to Spanish speakers. Alicia will translate several of our press releases each month for distribution to Spanish news media in our state.

### Danielle Rapsas, Gateway Group College Intern

An environment and sustainability and human rights double major at Barnard College of Columbia University, Class of 2026, Danielle Rapsas is interning with our Chapter's Gateway Group. With guidance from Group Chair Bill Beren, Danielle has done research on recycling challenges in Essex County. She is also interested in environmental justice efforts, species conservation, environmental policy, and clean energy. Danielle aims to obtain a degree in law.

She volunteered at the Essex County Environmental Center from 2018 to 2022 and, among other activities, led group tours of the West Essex Park butterfly garden, becoming a lead intern. She acquired very specific knowledge about swallowtails and monarchs.



## Building Community With Spanish Speakers

By Alicia Remus • Press Release Translator

I was born in Mexico City and grew up in Guadalajara, Mexico. I studied industrial engineering and did an MBA and finance degree.

I became a New Jerseyan 26 years ago when the company I was working for in Guadalajara relocated me here. Hence, I love New Jersey and consider it to be my home.

I met my husband here and we have been married for 24 years.

Since I was young, I have been very aware of the footprint we humans make in this amazing world, and since then, I have tried to reduce my impact on the environment.

I have always admired all associations in the world that care for and fight to protect the environment. However, the jobs that I have had were extremely demanding and left me only

my weekends to do chores, rest, and enjoy outdoor activities with my husband such as biking and hiking. Despite my lack of hands-on environmental work, I have always donated to multiple organizations—one of my favorites is Sierra Club.

While reading the newsletter of the Sierra Club's NJ Chapter, I was very excited to find I could contribute at some level by supporting English-to-Spanish translation.

I always try to influence others to be mindful of the fragility of our incredible "blue round home, the earth" and how each of us can make a difference.

I hope that in this new role I can help to inspire Spanish-speaking NJ communities to participate in one way or another with the Chapter and help protect our wonderful world.

# We Need Much Stronger Ozone Standards

By Greg Gorman • ggorman@embargmail.com



Ozone is an invisible, odorless gas. In the upper atmosphere it is essential for life as it shields the Earth from the sun's harmful ultraviolet rays.

At ground level, though, ozone is toxic to life. "Good up high, bad nearby" is the phrase some scientists use. In fact, ozone is one of the most toxic air pollutants

Ground-level ozone irritates the entire respiratory tract, triggering chest pains, coughing, nausea, throat irritation, and congestion for all animals. In humans, it aggravates medical conditions such as bronchitis, heart disease, emphysema, and asthma, and it can reduce lung capacity. Children are especially at risk because they breathe more air per pound of body weight than adults and tend to be active outdoors during the summer when ozone levels are at their highest.

Ozone does more damage to plants than all other air pollutants combined, according to the US Department of Agriculture. One recent study predicted that by 2050, harvests of wheat would decline by 13%, soybeans by 28%, and corn by 43% because of rising temperatures and ozone. Ground-level ozone damages are responsible for about \$1 billion in reduced crop yield in the United States each year.

Because ozone harms public health and the environment, the Clean Air Act requires the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to set national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS) for ozone.

When discussing climate change, we typically think of carbon diox-

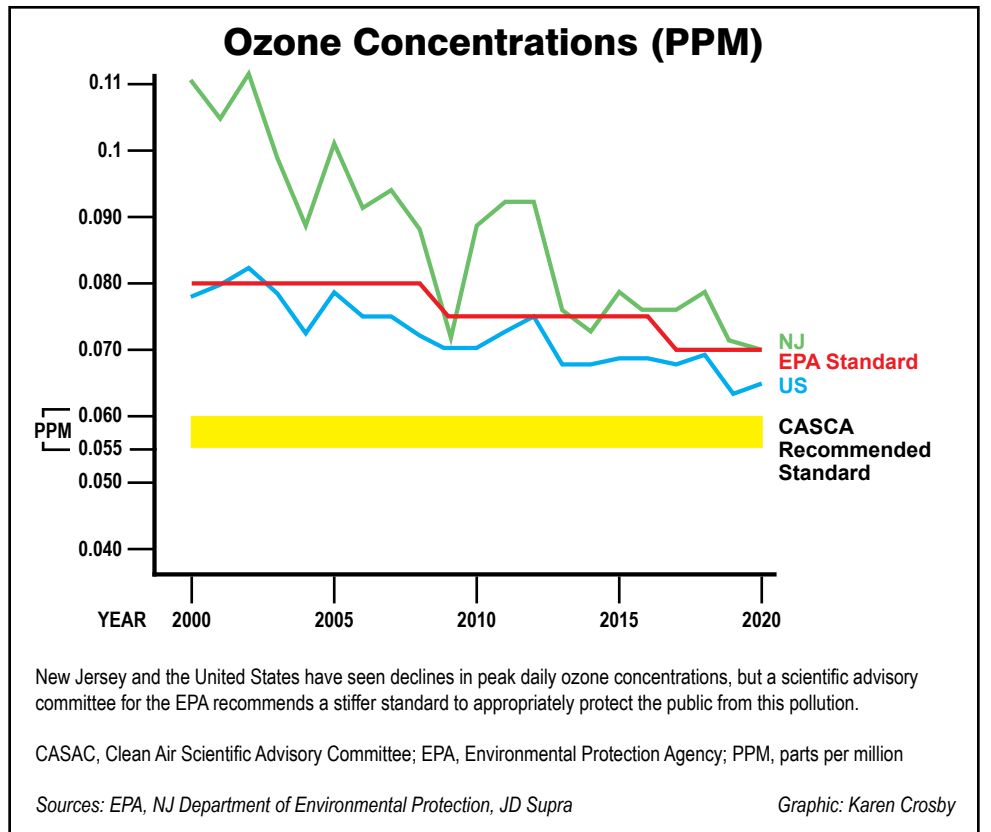
ide and methane, rarely mentioning the ground-level ozone "precursor" nitrous oxide, the third-worst greenhouse gas. Ground-level ozone is formed by pollutants—nitrous oxide and volatile organic compounds—that are emitted by cars, trucks, refineries, and power plants. When these airborne pollutants meet sunlight and warm temperatures, they go through a chemical reaction and become ozone. Worldwide, ground-level pollution is on the rise because of increased fossil-fuel consumption and increased sunny days because of climate change. Ozone pollution is accelerated by and contributes to climate change.

Ground-level concentrations in New Jersey and the nation reflect a downward trend since the mid-'90s (Graphic).

The American Lung Association's 2018 State of the Air report, based on the three-year period from 2014-2016, identified 10 NJ counties as failing to meet NAAQS standards for ground-level ozone. The 2023 State of the Air report, based on 2019-2021 data, identifies only two counties as failing (Bergen and Mercer). Despite this improvement, ground-level ozone remains a health threat, and the existing NAAQS standard is not low enough.

The EPA is presently reviewing the ozone standard with final recommendations expected in the spring of 2024. Preliminary commentary submitted by the Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee (CASAC) recommends lowering the ozone standard from 70 parts per million (ppm), established in 2015, to 55-60 ppm. The Sierra Club applauds this recommendation.

The EPA labels New Jersey as a "non-attainment" state—it has too much



ozone—and requires a state implementation plan (SIP) for achieving NAAQS. The 2017 SIP relies on a regimen of federal and state regulations to reduce emissions of nitrous oxides and volatile organic chemicals (VOCs) for automotive and stationary sources. To attain the ozone standard, the 2017 SIP recommends the federal government strengthen regulations for diesel engines as well as enforce ozone regulations on out-of-state sources. The 2021 SIP commits the state Department of Environmental Protection to investigate new control measures to:

- Adopt California Air Resource Board (CARB) prohibitions on the sale or installation of any aftermarket catalytic converter unless these are certi-

fied via a CARB executive order or meet requirements for emissions, durability, and other standards imposed on original equipment manufacturers. This will result in NOx reductions of about 3 tons per day.

- Incorporate rules to control VOC emissions from architectural and industrial maintenance coatings. The proposed rules will lower the VOC content for several coating categories.
- Incorporate rules to limit VOCs for several new categories of products and lower the VOC limits for several existing categories of products.

What better way to reduce ground-level ozone than to stop burning fossil fuel! The 2021 SIP highlights clean

>continued on page10

## GET OFF FOSSIL FUELS AND HELP THE ENVIRONMENT

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# Wind Energy: Let's Stick to the Facts

By Sia Satish • Youth Committee Member



Wind energy, an advantageous renewable energy source, could help prevent the extreme effects of climate change that are predicted to occur if greenhouse

gas production is not significantly reduced. This energy source—already widely employed in countries around the world—is one of our best hopes to achieve net zero emissions and a transition to a sustainable economy.

The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) released a statement on March 15, 2023, regarding the rise in whale mortalities off the East Coast. In

that statement, the DEP quashed allegations that offshore wind energy is the cause of humpback whale deaths.

Offshore wind power is ocean wind transformed into electricity on land. It is a clean and renewable source of energy. Moreover, the turbines will operate quietly and far away from land, the industry will support tens of thousands of jobs, and sustainable wind energy will help power our green transition to electric appliances and autos.

Given these benefits, Gov. Murphy announced a goal of producing 11 gigawatts of offshore wind energy by 2040, which could power 3.2 million homes.

The NJ Board of Public Utilities has already approved the development of three wind farms off the coast of South Jersey and is looking to support more.

However, wind energy opponents incorrectly argue that wind turbine development will be harmful to marine life, the environment, and New Jersey's multibillion-dollar tourism industry. Unfortunately, a number of legislators are now echoing these dangerously short-sighted arguments.

As of this writing, 52 humpback whales have been stranded (died) on the East Coast since the beginning of 2022. Many of these deaths have been scientifically determined to have been caused by fishing gear entanglement and vessel strikes. None of the deaths were found to be caused by wind turbine development or operation.

The Marine Mammal Commission has declared the recent whale deaths to be part of a humpback whale unusual mortality event (UME) that began in 2016. A DEP website dedicated to information about the UME recognizes that there has been an increase in menhaden (common prey for whales) along the East Coast due to warming waters, and the abundance of food may be attracting whales toward land and vessel navigation lanes.

To date, the DEP said it "is aware

**“Offshore wind power is ocean wind transformed into electricity on land. It is a renewable source of energy with low greenhouse gas emissions...turbines will operate quietly and far away from land...”**



The June rally in Long Branch for offshore wind attracted a diverse crowd of supporters.

of no credible evidence that offshore wind-related survey activities could cause whale mortality,” but it will continue monitoring for more information. Instead, the DEP noted the negative impacts on marine life from rising ocean temperatures caused by fossil fuel use, as well as the changes in movement of menhaden due to water chemistry and oceanic temperature variations.

There are many checks and balances on wind turbine development. New Jersey's Coastal Management Program works within the DEP to ensure that wind turbine use is compliant with conservation standards. Further, the Offshore Wind Research & Monitoring Initiative has granted \$8.5 million

to ensure that offshore wind energy projects are “safe and environmentally responsible.” Also, initiatives by the BPU have raised \$26 million from wind energy developers to monitor and research the ecological impacts of offshore wind.

Additionally, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries are working together to ensure that impacts from wind power development are balanced to protect marine life and fisheries' interests. Research by reputable NJ environmental organizations also supports the conclusion that offshore wind energy projects are not connected to the tragic whale strandings.

# Opposition to Offshore Wind Is Not Grassroots

By Judy Minot • Chapter Vice-Chair; Co-Chair, Fundraising Committee



Many New Jersey residents, even many environmentalists, have been drawn in by ongoing, vehement campaigns against offshore wind. Residents of the Jersey

Shore, in particular, are being led to believe that the opposition to offshore wind is a grassroots campaign started by concerned citizens. It isn't.

## Follow the Money

Protect Our Coast NJ and the American Coalition for Ocean Protection are fanning the flames of opposition to offshore wind in New Jersey. Both these organizations are financially connected to the [Caesar Rodney Institute](#), which is a right wing think tank. The Caesar Rodney Institute has spearheaded similar anti-offshore wind campaigns in many other states and receives money from American Fuel and Petrochemical Manufacturers and the American Energy Alliance, among others.

## Big Campaigns Are Expensive

The velocity of these anti-wind campaigns points to big money and paid staff. Volunteers are great for showing up at rallies and sending in lots of small donations, but a slick campaign that gets a topic on everyone's lips costs money. I learned this lesson over 13 years working for an ad agency in New Jersey. It helps when you can

associate your idea (rightly or wrongly) with something people care about, like property values, electric bills, beach views, or wildlife.

## Consider the money and time required to do these:

- Research negative, scary-sounding ideas to associate with wind turbines.
  - Use graphic design and copywriting to create slick websites, presentations, social media posts, ads and posters.
  - Blanket the press, obtaining nonstop media coverage in print, radio, web, and TV, writing letters to the editor and op-eds. Mailing letters to every resident of targeted communities.
  - Besiege local politicians and leaders with prepared anti-wind propaganda.
  - Fly planes with anti-wind banners over the beach.
  - Organize anti-wind rallies, including permitting, publicity, bus rental, speakers, press coverage, and sign creation.
  - Initiate lawsuits to delay or stop wind turbine development.
- We have seen all these tactics employed so far by opponents to New

**“We need your help to stand up to the ill winds that threaten New Jersey's coastline. We can stand up to the tornado of propaganda with a steady, strong message based on facts.”**

Jersey's nascent attempts to counter global warming with wind-based energy.

## Anti-Wind's Deep Pockets

There is well-documented evidence that oil and gas companies have been fighting clean energy with every available tool. They historically hid the facts about climate change and [are now renege-](#)ing on promises to transition to renewable energy, while attempting to appear “green” to the public.

Well-funded groups, such as Texas Public Policy Foundation and the Caesar Rodney Institute, are also behind the recent spate of lawsuits attempting to slow down or stop offshore wind. Texas Public Policy Foundation counts among [its funders](#) Charles Koch, ExxonMobil, Chevron, and ConocoPhillips.

## Anti-Wind Is a Red Herring

The superstorm of opposition over offshore wind in New Jersey perfectly serves the agenda of oil and gas companies. It forces environmental groups like ours—with limited budgets and busy staff and volunteers—to expend precious resources defending good developments, such as wind turbines.

This makes it harder for us to spend our efforts opposing ongoing, disastrous fossil-fuel projects.

While New Jersey residents face off over wind turbines, plans for the Regional Energy Access Expansion Project, the Woodbridge/Keasbey Power Plant, the Williams Transco Pipeline, Tennessee Gas Pipeline expansion, and the Gibbstown LNG Export Project are pushing ahead.

## Help Us Fight the Real Threats!

We need your help to stand up to the ill winds that threaten New Jersey's coastline. We can stand up to the tornado of propaganda with a steady, strong message based on facts. As concerned environmentalists in New Jersey, your financial support in the fight for wind energy is more essential now than ever. When you donate to the NJ Chapter of the Sierra Club, 100% of your donation stays in New Jersey so we can fight moneyed interests that put profit over people. Our power comes from members like you. To donate, please visit [shorturl.at/elnOX](#)

Thank you for helping us protect New Jersey's special places for future generations.

## Resources

- Caesar Rodney Institute: [shorturl.at/hnDKO](#)
- Big Oil Reneged: [shorturl.at/arwyT](#)
- GOP Anti-Wind Donors: [shorturl.at/kmBH8](#)

# Sierra Club Redesign Emphasizes Chapter Support

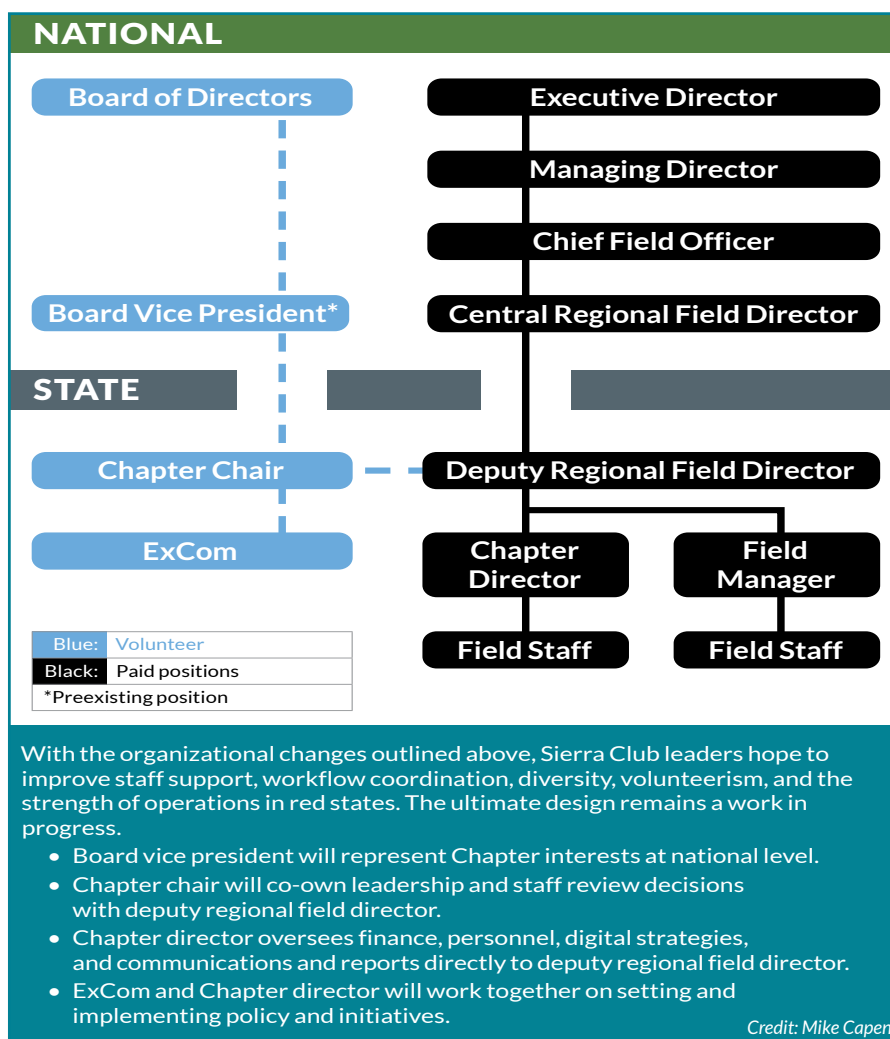
By Joe Testa • NJ Chapter Delegate to the national Council of Club Leaders and CCL Chair

How do you reimagine a 130-year-old organization for success in our current political, social, and funding situation? Sierra Club has a long history of growth since its founding in California as an all-volunteer organization in 1892. It was not until 1950 that the Club established its first chapter outside of California and not until 1952 that it hired its first executive director. Up to the 1970s, the Club had a relatively small staff. Since then, the staffing in the organization has grown dramatically to support at least one chapter in every state, a significant central administration in California that coordinates conservation campaigns, and a major lobbying presence in Washington.

Even with the substantial growth of professional staff, Sierra Club remains unique among environmental organizations in that it relies on volunteers—the elected Board of Directors and elected grassroots leaders at the chapter level—to set priorities for the organization. While staff working on the national campaigns have been managed by national staff, staff working for chapters have been managed by the local volunteer leadership. This has sometimes led to duplication of effort. For example, multiple teams each have a communications staff. There has also been some inconsistency in management standards.

In some chapters, national staff have worked alongside chapter staff in a coordinated way. In other chapters, national staff and state staff have worked on different priorities. Some chapters don't have any state staff at all and rely completely on national staff (along with local volunteers) to carry out the Club's priorities.

A "structural assessment" of our Club's resources led to recommendations that we move to a regional model for supporting the activism that drives our successes across the country. Since



joining us in 2022, Club Executive Director Ben Jealous has repeatedly emphasized that our strength lies in our grassroots, chapter-centered expertise and enthusiasm. Motivated by an urgency to address financial shortfalls in recent budgets, Jealous and his new executive team have devised an updated management structure that builds on this strength.

The plan is to transition from national-oriented campaigns that work with chapters, along with a parallel staffing structure for each campaign that reports to national management, to a regional structure where chapters

are the primary coordinators in each state. Support services will be provided by regional "hubs." For example, communications staff will focus on regional messaging rather than an assortment of strategies by different campaigns.

A key objective in the updated management structure (Figure) is to ensure that every state has a chapter director to support the priorities established by the chapter's volunteer executive committee (California is a special case, being the only state with multiple chapters). Right now, many of the chapters that don't have a director or staff to support their work are in "red" states—the

states where the Club's message is especially critical to fight back against environmentally hostile government and business decisions. Jealous has committed to providing enough funding for every state to have a chapter director. In New Jersey, we have the benefit of having three staffers who have been critical in achieving our Chapter's successes.

Another feature of the revised management structure is to relieve volunteers of administrative burden and ensure that all chapter staff have the benefit of consistent professional management. The present arrangement is a hit-or-miss situation, where some chapters have smooth staff management while others struggle with inconsistent oversight from volunteers who are not experienced at personnel management. Fifteen chapters have already moved to the new management system; other chapters will be gradually moved into this management structure as their capacity and interest permits. The NJ Chapter Executive Committee has voted to support moving into this new management arrangement sooner rather than later.

Moving from one management model to another inevitably causes some level of disruption. There has been a reassignment of job responsibilities for many national staff this past summer, and finance constraints have resulted in a reduction of some staff. This disrupts existing working relationships. The Jealous team has emphasized the expectation that all staff will work in collaboration with local volunteers. The Council of Club Leaders, as the national volunteer advisory body with a representative from each chapter, will take a leading role in working with the Jealous team and the Board of Directors to ensure that chapter perspectives are considered as the new management plan is refined and rolled out over the next several months.

## OPINION

# Hunters and Anglers Are Conservationists, Too!

By John Miraglia • Membership Chair, Raritan Valley Group

"All hands on deck!" is an order often given when a ship is in heavy seas and in danger of sinking. Forgetting personal squabbles or differences of opinion, the crew responds as a team to save the ship. New Jersey is the most densely populated state, and much of its remaining natural areas and the wildlife they support are in danger of sinking under a storm of housing and commercial development. Will New Jerseyans come together like a crew in a tempest or allow partisan differences to weaken our fight to protect the wilderness that remains?

While the Sierra Club as an organization recognizes the contributions of hunters and anglers to the preservation of our environment, some hard feelings remain between these individuals and some in the environmental community. But stereotyping people as "Bambi killers" or "tree huggers" is disrespectful and not in keeping with a commitment to diversity. It also limits our ability to work together to preserve our natural areas. Let's examine what is keeping these potential allies apart and what can be done to forge an inclusive team.

### The Biggest Hurdle

Hunting and fishing are blood sports. Many urban and suburban New Jersey residents are repulsed by these activities. But let's take a closer look at this stumbling block to unity. Outdoors

enthusiasts are often labeled as consumptive or non-consumptive users of natural areas and wildlife, yet this is a false dichotomy. If you live in a suburban home that was built where forest used to be, shop at a big box store supported by mega warehouses that also replaced a wooded area, or use parks designed for recreation rather than preserving nature, you are a consumptive user of nature. If you buy NJ vegetables grown on farms where farmers shoot deer that are eating their crops, you are a consumptive user of nature. We are all consumptive users of nature.

Believing the myth of nonconsumptive uses of nature can lead some to focus on what separates us and not on contributions made by those we disagree with. Here are a few examples.

Readers might be familiar with NJ Fish and Wildlife's (NJF&W) Connecting Habitat Across New Jersey (CHANJ) project, which maps and links primarily nongame animal habitats and creates safe places for wildlife to cross busy roads.

Other projects involve partnerships among NJF&W, hunter and angler volunteers, and related sports associations that many might not be aware of. They include:

- **Hunters for the Hungry:** Hunters donate the deer they shoot to feed New

Jersey's poor. The butcher bills are paid for by NJF&W. Since 1997 this program has provided 225 tons of venison—that's 2 million meals!

- **Trout in the Classroom:** Fly fishing volunteers from Trout Unlimited deliver trout eggs to classrooms throughout New Jersey, work with teachers and provide classroom curricula to help teach students about fish biology, the value of clean water, and the importance of the natural world. This program reaches 40,000 NJ students each year. At the end of the school year, the trout are released into suitable NJ streams. Read more about this program at: [www.troutintheclassroom.org](http://www.troutintheclassroom.org)

These are only a few examples of the conservation work being done by hunter/angler volunteers and outdoors organizations in New Jersey.

### Team Building Solution

How can we come together? Research by social psychologists has shown how to unite diverse groups. What works is creating diverse teams that work alongside each other to accomplish a mutual goal.

### Making Connections

Sierra Club members and groups could work with hunting/fishing as-

sociations and form teams to address:

- Habitat restoration or stream cleanup projects
- Land management/conservation initiatives
- Education



Here are a couple of suggestions for making contact with NJF&W and Trout Unlimited for potential joint projects.

For NJF&W volunteer opportunities: <https://dep.nj.gov/njfw/conservation/how-you-can-help/>

For contacts at New Jersey Trout Unlimited: [www.tu.org/chapters/New-Jersey](http://www.tu.org/chapters/New-Jersey)

### Final Point

Membership numbers in volunteer organizations look impressive on paper, but not so much when it comes to hands-on actions. Diverse teams could help improve volunteer motivation and foster broader points of view and expertise on environmental issues.

We need to work together to preserve New Jersey's natural areas.

John Miraglia is a member of the NJ Chapter's Raritan Valley Group and a Sierra Club hike leader.

# Can Passaic River Polluters Be Held to Account?

By Patricia Hilliard • Executive Committee Member



The Passaic River, which runs from the NJ Highlands, through the Great Swamp to Patterson and down to Newark Bay, was targeted for industrial development as far back

as George Washington's presidency. It was severely polluted during the industrial revolution of the 1800s. Most of the manufacturing was by small industries such as cotton mills, leather tanneries, cloth dyers, ship builders, and paint and paper manufacturers. In those days, little thought was given to the harm caused by dumping industrial residues into the river.

However, by the 1950s, major modern industries were dumping waste into the river and turning it into a toxic brew. Older residents, who remember a childhood playing near the river, have recalled the dead fish, strange chunks of waste material, and a putrid smell. The strange colors of the river due to the cloth dying and paint production industries were even stronger evidence of tainted water.

According to the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), as many as 100 industrial facilities within the Lower Passaic River were collectively responsible for discharging contaminants into the river, including dioxins and furans; polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs); polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs); DDT and other pesticides; and mercury, lead, and other metals.

**One of the worst polluters** was Kolker Chemical Works, which manufactured DDT. Consumption of DDT-tainted fish by bald eagles and ospreys weakened their ability to produce eggs and chicks. By 1982, there was just one nesting pair of bald eagles left in New Jersey. Kolker Chemical was bought by **Diamond Alkali Co.**, later known as Diamond Shamrock Chemicals Co., which was bought by Occidental Chemical (OxyChem).

Some of the herbicides produced there were used in the manufacture of Agent Orange, which the military used as a "tactical" defoliant during the Vietnam War. These pollutants spread

into the soil and groundwater, and, via the Passaic River, they flowed into Newark Bay, New York Bay, and the Atlantic Ocean.

The toxic chemicals drifted into favorite fishing spots, swimming beaches, inlets, and coves. An environmental coalition, including Sierra Club, pushed for legislation to impose wastewater standards that would curtail this pollution. In 1972, amendments to the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (aka the Clean Water Act) caused discharges to the Lower Passaic River to decline, the EPA noted. A small victory was scored.

## Focus on Cleaning the Passaic River

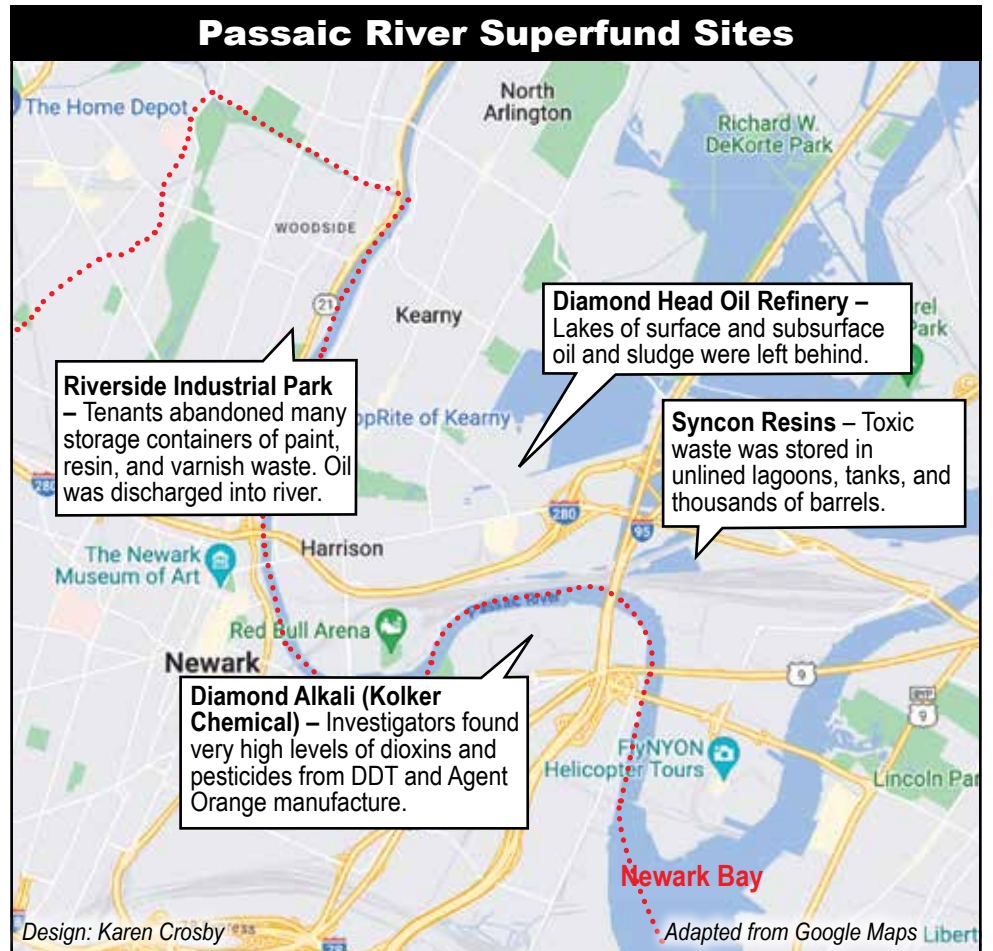
In 1983, alarmingly high levels of dioxins at the former Kolker plant caused Gov. Thomas Kean to declare a **state of emergency**. The Newark Farmers Market, a block away, was shut down. In 1984, the EPA added the site to the

Superfund list of high-priority toxic messes. The EPA cleanup plan included construction of containment barriers around the area, soil capping, and installation of a system to reduce the spread of contaminated groundwater.

**Studies** from 1994 by Tierra Solutions revealed that the toxins had migrated throughout the tidal stretch of the Passaic River, from Patterson to Newark Bay. By 2002, the Army Corps of Engineers and the EPA included a 17.5-mile stretch of the river in their studies. As the magnitude of the pollution became clear, corporations such as Diamond Alkali and Maxus Energy that had contributed to the contamination declared bankruptcy, possibly to escape paying for the damages.

## Who Could Be Held Responsible?

In 2004, companies considered responsible for the Passaic River pollution formed the Cooperating Parties Group (CPG), which negotiated with the EPA on a settlement agreement for cleaning up the mess along the 17.5-mile river stretch. By 2007, 70 companies were part of the agreement, although in 2022 a fresh agreement affecting 85 "potentially responsible parties" called for \$150 million in corporate dollars to support the ongoing cleanup. The EPA has estimated the total cleanup cost on the lower 8 miles of the river to be \$1.4



billion, and the EPA and US Department of Justice have been accused of letting polluters off the hook at the expense of taxpayers.

## But Is It Fair?

Recently, the **\$150 million settlement plan** with 85 suspected polluters has been challenged by OxyChem, which owns the former Kolker plant site. OxyChem contends it would have to pay out \$441 million for cleaning up the upper nine miles of polluted river and the settlement would allow an almost free ride for other polluters who may be responsible for a significant amount of the pollution. "Determining how much each company should contribute to the cleanup is an important, serious process," Charlie Weiss, senior vice president for OxyChem, wrote in an NJ Spotlight News **opinion piece** October 2022. "If companies...come to believe they can settle cheaply with the EPA with a waiver of future liabilities, what incentive do they have to be honest about the extent of their actions?"

Are OxyChem's objections to the EPA settlement a tactic to delay cleanup and allow contaminants to disperse so that there are fewer hotspots for it to clean up?



A paddler enjoys a cleaner part of the Passaic River. Photos: Pat Hilliard

## When It's Not the End.

The Passaic River has been polluted for over 150 years. The EPA knows it will take decades before the mess is cleaned up enough to safely swim and fish there again. In the end, those who pay taxes will ultimately pay for the cleanup. Did our society get enough satisfaction from the products manufactured to justify paying for the destruction of our environment? Have we learned any lessons?

## Resources:

- EPA report on Diamond Alkali: [//shorturl.at/cfwCG](https://shorturl.at/cfwCG)
- State of emergency: [//shorturl.at/wzJRV](https://shorturl.at/wzJRV)
- Charlie Weiss Op-Ed: [//shorturl.at/nvBR6](https://shorturl.at/nvBR6)

There's an electronic biweekly Chapter Alert Service. Sign up via: <https://tinyurl.com/scnj-Esubscribe>.

## ExCom Meeting Highlights

Editor's note: See our election coverage on page 2 for a full list of NJ Chapter endorsements.

**August:** Syona Gupta and Shirin Sood were appointed Youth Committee co-chairs, Nada Arafa was appointed Youth Committee member. The ExCom voted to support a resolution to ask the Sierra Club's national division to help stop commercial leasing and construction at Fort Hancock at the Sandy Hook Unit of Gateway National Recreation Area. The NJ Chapter is concerned climate science and biodiversity conservation efforts will be undermined by the leasing activity. The vote was 15 yes, 1 no.

**July:** Bill Brazell was appointed banning gas-powered leaf blowers coordinator. The ExCom voted to support (8 yes, 2 no, 3 abstentions) Chapter Director Anjuli Ramos-Busot's decision to opt in to the revised organizational structure under which she would report directly to a staff deputy regional field director and work cooperatively with volunteer members on goals and policy. The ExCom voted to support a revised warehouse policy statement that calls for minimizing the environmental impacts of these structures and stressing energy efficiency and pollution reduction (approved by consent).

**June:** The ExCom did not meet in June.

## Support Your Passion for a Just and Sustainable World

Create a legacy that protects and restores the natural world for future generations by naming Sierra Club's New Jersey Chapter in your will or trust. Or, name Sierra Club Foundation as a beneficiary of your retirement plan for the benefit of your local New Jersey Chapter and leave less highly taxed assets to your loved ones.



To learn more about the advantages of making a planned gift and to become a member of the Rachel Carson Society, please contact us.



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# State Incentives for EVs Fall Short

By Bill Beren • Transportation Committee Chair

This spring, the Transportation Committee in conjunction with Clean Cities Coalition sponsored two electric school bus road shows. These were held in Atlantic and Hudson counties and hosted by the Atlantic County Utilities Authority and Hudson County Improvement Authority, respectively.

The Hudson County event featured over 10 different kinds of electric utility vehicles owned and operated by the county, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, the Jersey City school district, and private vendors. These included electric school buses and diesel school buses converted to electric battery power, cherry pickers, street sweepers, vans, and electric passenger cars.

A major victory was achieved when the legislature approved a bill to allocate \$15 million to fund the first year of the Electric School Bus Program Act as part of the 2024 fiscal year budget. The act was originally signed into law by Gov. Murphy in August 2022, but due to a technical issue the funds for the program were not actually allocated to the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). The appropriations bill is still pending the governor's signature as this newsletter goes to press. The Chapter urges the governor to move forward with the allocation of funds to the DEP so the program can begin.

A major new electric vehicle in-

centive was announced by the Internal Revenue Service. School districts and other local and state government agencies can now take advantage of tax credits up to a maximum of \$40,000 when buying electric school buses and other vehicles. Previously, these tax credits could be used only by private companies to offset their tax liability. Now, under a program called Direct Pay, government agencies and other nonprofit organizations can get a cash payment equal to the value of the tax credit. The IRS is working on the rules and the forms needed to apply for the credit, which can be claimed for investments in electric vehicles made starting in calendar year 2023.

## NJ Transit's Sustainability Plan

The Sierra Club submitted comments critical of the draft [Sustainability Plan](#) issued by NJ Transit. The Club criticized the lack of details in the plan, calling the document "woefully inadequate, especially when compared with sustainability plans prepared by sister transit agencies. The plan as presented is merely a statement of goals and broad objectives" without any specific targets, such as a detailed schedule for purchasing electric transit buses, or deadlines for achieving any of the plan's goals.

The Chapter's comments included a

detailed analysis of sustainability plans for other transit properties, including AC Transit in Northern California and Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District in Illinois. A copy of our comments is posted on our website.

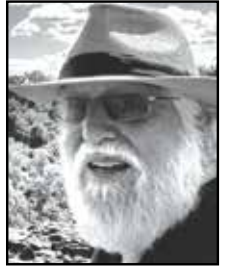
Although it is unlikely that NJ Transit will make major changes to the plan before adoption, the Chapter is committed to working with NJ Transit to accelerate their sustainability plans.

## Advanced Clean Truck and Advanced Clean Cars II

After much concern that New Jersey would miss a critical deadline for publishing its Advanced Clean Cars II rules, the draft rules were published in the August 21 *New Jersey Register*, starting a public comment period that will end on October 20, 2023. This would allow the governor to formally adopt the rules in December, making them apply to the 2025 model year.

Our Club director, Anjuli Ramos-Busot, was quoted in the official press release as follows: "The Advanced Clean Car II program is one of the most important policies for New Jersey to adopt... The faster the state makes its commitment to achieve 100% sales of new zero emission vehicles, the easier our transition and the greater the consumer choice. The Advanced Clean Cars II targets in New Jersey can help build and maintain market

leadership, which is critical to growing jobs. We thank the NJ Department of Environmental Protection and Gov. Murphy for moving forward on this important rule, and we are eager to see it adopted before the end of the year."



## Electric Car Incentives

Also included in the 2024 budget is an additional \$30 million to restart the popular electric vehicle incentives, which were halted in April after all funds were committed. Tellingly, the state Board of Public Utilities (BPU), which administers these incentives, did not increase funding even though last year's money did not meet demand and electric vehicle sales are increasing.

The BPU also reduced the maximum incentive to \$1,500 per car from \$2,000 per car for vehicles costing \$45,000 to \$55,000. Federal incentives remain at a maximum of \$7,500, but the number of eligible car models are severely limited by buy-American limitations imposed as part of the Inflation Reduction Act.

A summary of all the [available state, federal, and utility incentives](#) for purchasing an electric car and a charging station can be found at our website.

# NJ Transit Grid Rationale and Pivot to Renewables

By Tim Sevenser • Transportation Committee Member



Bridges wiped out, roads closed, rail lines shut down, gas stations shuttered or with long lines for those few trying to drive to work, major power outages affecting

2.6 million customers, odd-even gas rationing remaining in effect for two weeks: This was the wake of Superstorm Sandy of October 29, 2012.

To ensure critical New Jersey and regional mobility, Sens. Robert Menendez and Cory Booker obtained a \$410 million federal grant to build an independent power grid to keep rail transit moving during major outages affecting major rail links. The independent transit grid would support the Northeastern Corridor from NY Penn Station to Jersey Avenue, Amtrak, the Morris & Essex Line from NY Penn Station to Maplewood Station, and the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail.

Sandia National Labs in 2014 recommended the proposed grid be pow-

ered by a 140 megawatt (MW) natural gas plant in Kearny that would operate around the clock, with surplus energy sold to the larger power grid. This [plan](#) called for a mixture of minimal renewable energy (photovoltaics), minimal battery storage, and a preponderance of gas-fired generation.

Transit and environmental advocates discovered this proposal in 2019 and promptly proposed an alternative: solar plus batteries, which would have far less environmental impact.

Our survey showed NJ Transit has enough acreage for over 100 MW of solar panels—based on technological advances—with even more space available above the "tunnels" into Newark Broad Street from Morris and Montclair as well as above I-280 around Orange Station.

Based on our data and advocacy in 2019, Gov. Phil Murphy directed NJ Transit to pivot toward including solar and renewables. It agreed these specifications would be written into the project's request for proposals (RFP). RFPs provide guidance to vendors bidding to build proposed infrastructure.

Unfortunately, NJ Transit basically retained the original RFP predominantly based around a central gas-fired power plant, as opposed to multiple solar panel fields, and requested proposals from four finalists in the bid process. Revised bids were submitted to NJ Transit in May, but the agency has not shared any information on what those bids contain, especially regarding the percentage of renewable power envisioned for the project.

Requests to review the responses under the NJ Open Public Records Act were rejected by NJ Transit. A lawyer for NJ Transit contended that disclosing the bids would compromise proprietary information. According to the [RFP](#), NJ Transit will pick the winning project by April 2024, with construction completed four years later.

Meanwhile, the case for solar-based rail has only become stronger: A newly installed 22 MW solar project is already providing up to 50% of energy needs for the 15-mile PATCO Speedline, with solar canopies on train parking lots supplemented by panels on Philadel-

phia-bound bridges. In addition, JFK International Airport has used solar to augment resilience for its AirTrain inter-terminal passenger line.

Commissioned by an environmental coalition represented by Empower NJ, Strategen Consulting in March 2023 completed a [study](#) that demonstrated how solar plus battery storage plus an on-demand gas plant would be cleaner, bringing environmental and health benefits, and generate \$45 million in revenue from supplying clean electricity.

The proposed NJ Transit microgrid could be a critical first step toward powering NJ Transit rail with renewable energy, which could also be extended to renewables-based electrification of other transit service areas.

Electric trains, like electric cars, require less maintenance. They also provide more reliable and faster rail service.

## Resources

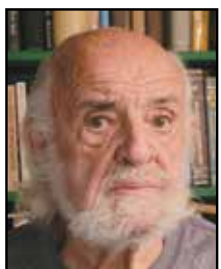
Sandia Plan: [shorturl.at/akwyN](http://shorturl.at/akwyN)

NJ Transit Revised RFP: [shorturl.at/dAGRW](http://shorturl.at/dAGRW)

Strategen Report: [shorturl.at/DEIUy](http://shorturl.at/DEIUy)

# Tax Credits and Rebates for Energy Improvements!

By George Moffatt



Everyone should closely check out the roughly \$50 billion in clean-energy tax credits and rebates for homeowners that are part of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)

that Congress passed last year.

Over the next decade, robust subsidies [will be available](#) for new and used electric vehicle purchases, home-energy efficiency audits and upgrades, heat-and-air conditioning pumps and other appliances, and more.

Some of the federal funding is already available via tax credits, and more in the form of rebates will become available later this year or next (see endnote), as individual states begin to administer these programs. Many of the tax credits extend existing programs for energy efficiency.

## Tax Credits vs Rebates

- **Tax credits** directly reduce the federal income taxes you must pay. If you owe the Internal Revenue Service \$2,000 in income tax, a \$1,000 tax credit would cut your tax in half. In some instances, consumers may be

eligible for the full tax credit amount regardless of tax liability.

- **Rebates** are unrelated to your taxes. Instead, they are refunds based on your costs for approved energy efficiency improvements. Under terms of the IRA, if you have a low income or live in designated low- and mid-income areas, your rebates may be higher.

## IRA Homeowner Benefits

### Heat pumps and Electric Appliances

[A \\$2,000 maximum yearly tax credit](#) is available for the purchase and instal-

lation of heat pumps and heat pump water heaters. [An additional \\$1,200 in tax credits](#) is available for other energy-saving improvements and appliances.

The federal government wants people to install highly efficient [major appliances](#), so credits and rebates are provided for water heaters, air conditioners and heat pump heaters, and stoves, etc. Consumers can receive tax credits if they convert from natural gas or propane to electric. Buying new electric appliances, including cooktops, induction stoves, and wall ovens

*>continued on page 9*



# “Ask Sean” How to Electrify Your Home

By Steve Miller • Coordinator for Building Electrification Issues

Can the building electrification (BE) webinar adopt the best practices of a popular entertainment show, or compete with “This Old House” running 24 hours a day on Pluto TV?

Climate change continues to worsen because of the continued rise of the world’s greenhouse gas (GHG) problem. New Jersey’s building sector is responsible for 26% of the state’s GHG, primarily from fossil fuel used for space and water heating. The BE Team has produced monthly BE webinars for nearly two years to persuade NJ homeowners to electrify their homes and leverage the increasing renewable energy component in the NJ electrical grid. However, monthly webinar attendance of 50 or 60 people is inadequate for New Jersey to reach its goal of 50% GHG reduction by 2030. We need to increase NJ homeowner interest by orders of magnitude.

Elsewhere in this issue, “Electrify Everything with IRA,” Pat Miller describes incentives (tax credits and rebates) available through the Inflation Reduction Act and bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. One BE step is to leverage these incentives

as carrots to encourage NJ residents to electrify their homes, but what else would it take to have 500 webinar attendees?

For a quick “ratings” boost, the BE team contacted the new (to us) “Ask Sean Show,” a popular webinar on building electrification produced in California. We found them receptive to spreading the show to NJ. We began on July 18 with a two-month inauguration of the “Ask Sean Show” format.

The lead performer/entertainer, Sean Armstrong, comes fully prepared, with slides and photos at his fingertips. Sean is managing principal of Redwood Energy (consulting and design for affordable housing developers). He recently celebrated his one-year anniversary heading the “Ask Sean Show,” has won almost yearly state and federal awards over the past decade, and uses his background to ensure all answers are presented quickly and with enthusiasm. Sean has four or five supporting cast and crew, including a moderator for the Q&A and a research engineer for case study analysis.

The “Ask Sean Show” reflects work by climate activists and features an at-

tractive continuous action entertainment format, with interacting speakers. It is stimulated by a surprising variety of audience Q&A topics. The show is choreographed so all answers are delivered immediately with suggested products, pictures, prices, and frequent smiles. In our East Coast version, half of each hour-long program uses one or two previously recruited NJ homeowners who contribute their house heating/cooling specs, supply photos of appliances (furnaces, AC, hot water tanks, dryers, etc.), utility bills, and other items for case study evaluation and recommendations.

Our “Ask Sean Show” also includes short reports on NJ BE topics and relies on quick-thinking experts to provide lightning-fast response with slides or photos of appliances not requiring household rewiring (e.g., 120-volt versions of hot water heaters, induction stoves, dryers, or perhaps load-sharing devices).

An impressive 121 people registered for the July 18 show, and by the time you read this, the BE team will have produced the August 21 “Ask Sean Show,” starring Sean himself.

For the BE Team to leverage this new

format in future webinars, we need NJ homeowners who are willing to provide their home data for careful review in case studies. And we also need additional heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning industry experts who can replace Sean on a regular basis. Ideally, these hosts and co-hosts would be knowledgeable and quick on their feet, lively and energetic, and able to excite the audience. I encourage Sierra Club members and leaders to register at [bit.ly/3tmyd1g](https://bit.ly/3tmyd1g) to watch the October 21, 2023, BE live webinar, and to watch recordings of the July and August shows (view recordings and slides of all webinars at [bit.ly/45bUPSK](https://bit.ly/45bUPSK)).



Observe our successes and failures at attempts to adapt new techniques to influence NJ residents. Then, consider how each of us, as leaders, can best motivate New Jersey’s 9 million residents to take steps to save the world for generations to come.

## Take Full Advantage of the Inflation Reduction Act

By Pat Miller • Building Electrification Team

With the passage by Congress of two historic acts that have the potential to revolutionize climate action, we are celebrating what may be “Our Climate Moment.” The May Building Electrification (BE) monthly [webinar](#) presented by me and my husband, Steve Miller, highlighted the benefits and provisions of the two acts: the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA).

Together, these laws will most likely provide more than \$1 trillion in direct spending on climate projects during the next decade. I say “likely” because the legislation imposes *no spending cap* on the tax credits. The tax credit funding is limited only by the number of people who take advantage. Furthermore, the laws are expected to spur more than \$4 trillion in new capital investment when individuals, companies, cities, and states invest money to reap the benefits of these laws. This will save money for American households, create more than nine million good jobs, and reduce energy bills for the entire country—all this in addition to the climate bene-

fits themselves. And underlying it all is President Biden’s “Justice40” initiative to deliver 40% of all climate investments to disadvantaged communities to address pollution burdens that the fossil fuel extractive and exploitative economy has imposed.

At the core is something near and dear to our hearts: building efficiency and electrification to lower greenhouse gas emissions. For us, that’s the goal—100% clean electricity, plus weatherization for maximum energy efficiency. The individual incentives (rebates and tax credits) in the IRA are all voluntary. Nothing in the laws requires people to switch from gas or oil to electric appliances, but there are ample rewards for doing so. It can be done at any time over the next nine years, whenever it is convenient (e.g., when the water heater dies and must be replaced).

The different efficiency and electrification programs are complicated. Note that tax credits for building electrification and efficiency, solar and batteries, and electric vehicles are available to

almost anyone who has income taxes to pay, as the credits work by reducing an individual’s tax liability. Tax credits are also available for commercial or multifamily buildings or even non-profits. Some are in effect now in 2023 and can be applied for in your 2023 IRS tax return early in 2024. Also note that there is a maximum tax credit limit per household each year, so it is to your advantage to stretch your upgrades over several years.

The federal guidance for states to implement the rebate programs was just released in July 2023. The rebates vary by income levels, and annual totals are capped for each state. Rebates will be available as discounts on purchase of any covered product or service (brands and models must meet efficiency criteria). They will take effect when the state announces details and availability of the state programs, which will likely begin in early 2024.

It behooves everyone to become acquainted with these programs and plan for appliance replacements and efficiency upgrades to your home.

Many appliances will wear out in the next few years. Replacing them with the more efficient versions will save you money and lower your energy bills forever.

Steve and I lowered our energy bills as demonstrated in a webinar account of our electrification journey. We replaced one of our gas furnace/AC units with an electric heat pump. After the first year (in our previously weatherized house), we calculated we saved 23% in energy costs and reduced our home’s carbon emissions by 83%. We recently switched to 100% clean local community solar, which guarantees 21% savings in electricity cost compared to JCP&L rates. We drive a plug-in hybrid and buy only two-to-three tanks of gas a year. We recently replaced a leaking gas water heater with an electric heat pump. Our goal is net zero and all-electric before the IRA runs out. We are already over 80% there.

### Resources

May Webinar: <https://shorturl.at/csHK5>

## TAX CREDITS continued from page 8

can garner \$840 in savings. The catch is the federal government wants you to install highly energy efficient appliances. Be sure to investigate carefully before making a purchase.

Homeowners may also be eligible for a rebate of up to \$4,000 to upgrade an electrical panel for electric or induction ranges, for electric heat pumps or electric-heat-pump clothes dryers; and \$2,500 for electrical wiring work.

### Electric vehicles

President Biden has a goal for half of all car sales to be electric by 2030. The IRA continues an existing [\\$7,500 tax credit](#) for new electric and hybrid plug-in passenger vehicles and a \$4,000 credit for used vehicle purchases. Vehicles must be assembled in North America and meet other restrictions on components and materials sourcing.

Income limits apply: \$150,000 for individuals and \$225,000 for household

heads. The income ceiling for joint filers is \$300,000.

Tax credits apply only to cars with prices \$55,000 or below; for trucks, vans, and SUVs, the limit is \$80,000. Used vehicles must be at least 2 years old and may cost up to \$25,000.

The income limits [to qualify for a used EV purchase](#) are: \$75,000 if single; \$112,000, head of household; and \$150,000, joint filers.

A restored and extended credit of [up to \\$1,000](#) is available for charging equipment.

### Solar panels

Up through 2032, the federal government will offer tax credits for [up to 30%](#) of the cost of solar panel installation, home wind turbines, geothermal heat pumps, and batteries for energy storage. The cost of labor, permits, and inspection is included.

### Windows and doors

Make renovations that reduce energy use and you could save money based on the measured reduction in energy used and your household income. Low-income households are eligible for rebates up to 80% of the cost of the work, which would involve insulating, replacing doors and windows, and upgrading ventilation. In some cases, third-party verification will be required to ensure energy savings meet guidelines for rebates.

- Windows, \$600; doors, \$500 (tax credit)
- Up to \$150 for a home energy audit (tax credit)

### Landscaping

Landscaping expenses aren’t covered, but the IRA does include electric vehicle tax credits for the purchase of equipment such as lawn

mowers. The credits are available [for businesses only](#), such as landscapers, and allow up to \$7,500 per piece of equipment.

### How to Obtain Tax Credits and Rebates

The IRS offers different ways of receiving tax credits. In the case of electric vehicle credits, owners must file IRS Form 8936 with their tax return. Consumers should research carefully and verify that credits and rebates apply before making purchases and hiring contractors.

In July, the US Dept. of Energy (DOE) issued guidelines for the distribution of rebate money. Individual states have until August 2024 to submit their rebate administration plans to the DOE for approval, so [it may be a while](#) before this money becomes available, and funding may not be consistent from state to state.

# NJ Students Advocate for More Climate Action

By Raghav Akula, Syona Gupta, Shirin Sood, Shriyaa Madineni, Winston Kim Youth Committee

The memories and experiences we've gained from being a part of the NJ Chapter's Youth Committee have shaped us into better students and activists. Joining the Youth Committee has allowed us to grasp many more diverse perspectives than we would have otherwise. Our meetings have ranged from speaking for an hour every week to talking a couple of times a month, but every meeting has given us a taste of the variety of viewpoints people have on environmental issues.

## Youth Committee Chair Enters University

In an era where climate change is becoming more concerning, many young individuals like Raghav Akula, founder of the Youth Committee, are advocating for environmental policy and voicing the climate concerns of youth. From early activism to his role as chair of the Youth Committee, Raghav's journey has been one of determination and commitment. Raghav has been with the NJ Chapter for three years, starting as its student liaison. Among the many memorable moments during his time with the Sierra Club, Akula said, one stands out: the debate on the national park status of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. The Sierra Club was trying to decide its stance on the issue and the best way to protect this wilderness area. Chapter Director Anjuli Ramos-Busot met with Lenape tribe members of the area to learn about the environmental justice issues they faced and then presented those findings at a Chapter Executive Committee meeting. Akula was inspired by Ramos-Busot's leadership and her effective advocacy.

Sadly, Akula will leave the NJ Chapter this fall for studies at Georgetown University and its School of Foreign Service, where he plans to remain deeply involved in the environmental movement. Being based in Washington, DC, will allow him to continue contributing to the policy side of sustainability while nurturing connections to amplify his impact. Meanwhile, in New Jersey, the Chapter's Youth Committee will continue the fight for a healthier planet, one step at a time.

## Shirin Sood Reflects on Serving

"When I first started my environmental journey, I was only aware of the basics of climate change—CO<sub>2</sub> pollution, deforestation, etc.—but the Youth Committee and the Sierra Club have shown us that these changes are very diverse and there is much work to be done," Youth Committee Member Shirin Sood said. "I have gained exposure to different policy ideas, including the proposed Green Amendment and New Jersey's successful plastic bag ban. These have enabled me to respect and

understand the situations of communities across the state, especially environmental justice communities. This coming year I look forward to co-leading the Youth Committee with Syona Gupta and progressing toward our goals."

## Inspirational Figures

Some of our inspiration to fight in the climate movement comes from figures including Xiuhtezcatl Martinez, 23, an indigenous activist from the United States, who has advocated for environmental protection since a young age. As the former youth director of Earth Guardians, he combined art, music, and storytelling to inspire young people. He has given powerful speeches at international conferences and filed lawsuits against governments for their inadequate action on climate change. Martinez's work shows how important it is to include indigenous wisdom and perspectives in our fight for a sustainable future.

## Conclusion

Throughout our journey in the environmental movement, our exposure to a multitude of perspectives has expanded our knowledge of environmental issues. Climate change is a problem that cannot be solved by a single idea or person, and as a result, there are multiple perspectives that surround this multifaceted issue. Many times, groups on different sides of an argument want what's best for the environment, but they may not agree on a solution. Essentially, various perspectives can arise on an issue even though all parties involved just want what's best. For example, many people believe that electric vehicles (EVs) are a huge step forward in moving us away from fossil fuels, whereas others condemn the lithium mining that EVs necessitate and the toxic hazards of lithium-ion battery disposal. Both sides support creating a sustainable future. As we continue to progress, it's important to note that everyone will have a different perspective, and that's OK. What really matters is that we compromise and work together to find a future that works for us all. The Youth Committee has held itself responsible to capture the viewpoints of all communities while working on various projects. In the coming year and years to follow, we hope to stay on this path.

Finally, one of our goals has always been to invite more youth into this movement, and we encourage them to overcome any self-doubt or the fear of being the only one who cares. The first step is always the hardest, but with courage and confidence, young voices can shape a brighter, sustainable, more just future for all.

# OZONE STANDARDS

continued from page 4

energy and climate change initiatives ranging from offshore wind, the return to the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, and the strengthening of New Jersey's Renewable Portfolio Standard by requiring 35% renewable power by 2025 and 50% renewable power by 2030. The 2021 SIP also addresses commitments for electric vehicles, creation of a regulatory roadmap to reduce emissions, resilience building, and adaptation to a changing climate to reduce emissions of methane and ozone precursors, along with other transpor-

tation initiatives.

The quicker we deploy clean energy and reduce ozone levels, the quicker we can improve public health and our environment.

## Resources

Yale Harvest Report: <https://shorturl.at/HMVYO>  
CASAC Recommendation: <https://shorturl.at/hpxzY>  
NJDEP 2021 SIP: <https://shorturl.at/dmvxY>



# Backyard Bonanza: Native Species Return

By Joanne Pannone • Chair, Central Jersey Group

A few Sierra Club members of the Jersey Shore Chapter of the Native Plant Society of New Jersey joined an open house garden tour recently at the home of Kelly and Peter Balon in Brick Township.

During a five-year effort, the Balons packed 19 different native plant gardens into less than an acre. Inspired by the famed ecologist Doug



Clockwise from top, Jacqueline Bonavito and friend Susan Buki, buckeye plants, a frog pond. Photos: Joanne Pannone

it brings us immeasurable joy and satisfaction when we see all the habitat we have restored to the land and get to share it with friends and wildlife," Kelly said.

Native plants can be part of the solution to climate change devastation because they allow many types of wildlife to live amid dense urban development by providing valuable habitat.

An added benefit to these strategies is that local biodiversity improves



Tallamy, they reduced their lawn space and added over 150 different native trees, shrubs, and native perennials.

During this process, they were excited to discover new natives that had lain dormant, just waiting for the invasive English ivy and garlic mustard to be cleared. The native netted chain fern has thrived.

"It is definitely a labor of love, but

and birds and insects flourish amongst restored native species of plants. Also, reductions in impervious surfaces and pesticides help improve water quality.

We can all make a positive difference during this time of climate change by striving to maintain biodiversity!



A variety of Club books, notecards, badges and clothing is available from [www.sierraclub.org/store](http://www.sierraclub.org/store)



Learn more about your environment... take a Sierra Club educational hike!

**Chapter Outings Chair:** Leona Fluck [leona@pineypaddlers.com](mailto:leona@pineypaddlers.com), (609) 259-3734  
**Skylands:** Dave Alcock, [dwhoob@hotmail.com](mailto:dwhoob@hotmail.com)  
**Hunterdon Warren:** Ron Gelok III [Gelokron@gmail.com](mailto:Gelokron@gmail.com)  
**North Jersey:** Co-Chairs: Open Position! and Mary Walsh, [north.outings.chair@newjerseysierraclub.org](mailto:north.outings.chair@newjerseysierraclub.org)  
**Gateway:** Co-Chairs: Steven Yafet, [syafet@gmail.com](mailto:syafet@gmail.com) and Ron Pate, [Ronpate31@verizon.net](mailto:Ronpate31@verizon.net)  
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**Jersey Shore:** Open Position!  
**Ocean County:** Open Position!  
**West Jersey:** Open Position!  
**South Jersey:** Tom Boghosian, [tboghosian44@gmail.com](mailto:tboghosian44@gmail.com)  
**Singles Section:** Open Position!

**LGBTQ+ Section:** Wanda Ashbrook, [pridegrlnj@gmail.com](mailto:pridegrlnj@gmail.com)  
**Inspiring Connections Outdoors:** Oscar Nazar [chair.njico.sierraclub@gmail.com](mailto:chair.njico.sierraclub@gmail.com)  
**River Touring:** Fred Tocce, (908) 453-2205 (H) RD-1, Box 277, Washington 07882

**Outing Leaders and Group Outings Coordinators:** Please send write-ups for January to March 2024 to your group outings coordinator (or, if you don't associate yourself with a single group, directly to [leona@pineypaddlers.com](mailto:leona@pineypaddlers.com)) before November 1, 2023. Outings for early April 2024 can be included.

**NOTES ON OUTINGS:** Outings are generally open to Club members, guests, and anyone interested. Unless otherwise specified, the events are free. All participants in Sierra Club outings must sign liability waivers. Please check with the leader before bringing small children on an outing. A parent or other responsible adult must accompany persons under 18. Participants may bring pets on outings

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Visit: [store.sierraclub.org/storefront.aspx](http://store.sierraclub.org/storefront.aspx)

only if the event description specifically says pets are allowed.

Sierra Club outings are arranged and conducted by volunteer leaders who are responsible for the safety, welfare, and enjoyment of all participants. Leaders determine qualifications to participate, adequacy of equipment, routes to be followed, and special precautions to be taken. Please arrive adequately prepared and equipped. If you have any allergies, please remember to bring your medication. The leader has the final word in the conduct of the trip. Your cooperation will help ensure a safe and pleasant outing.

Please arrive early at the meeting place so the outing can start on time. For day hikes, lunch, water (at least a liter), extra clothing, rain gear, and emergency equipment should be carried in a small daypack. For all except easy hikes, sturdy over-the-ankle shoes or boots should be worn. For most trips, you are expected to have your own equipment. In some cases, it may be rented from outdoor/camping suppliers—call or message the trip leader for more information. If the weather is questionable on the date of the

outing, you may assume that it will take place, unless the hike description indicates otherwise.

Unless registration is required, or if you have a question, it is not necessary to contact the leader before the trip. However, as these outings are planned many months in advance, we do advise that you contact the trip leader one to two days before the outing to make sure it is not canceled.

If you are a Sierra Club member interested in becoming an outing leader or have suggestions for new outings, contact your group outings chair or the Chapter outings chair for assistance and further information. The Chapter group or section leading each outing is given at the end of the write-up, as follows:

Atlantic Chapter, ACOC; Central Jersey, C; Gateway, G; Jersey Shore, JS; Hunterdon Warren (HW); LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender, Queer, Plus); Loantaka, L; NJ Chapter, NJ; North Jersey, N; Raritan Valley, RV; Ocean, O; River Touring, RT; Singles Section SS; Skylands, Sk; South Jersey, SJ; West Jersey, W.

## OCTOBER

**Oct 1 (Sun): Richard J. Coffee Mercer County Park Hike** (Mercer Co.) 10 a.m., 3-4 miles, easy pace. National Pumpkin Spice Day! We will hike along Mercer Lake and walk the woods trails. Nearby is the John Rogers House, built in 1761, which is now an open-air, reconstructed ruin adapted for interpretation. Bring water, snacks, and lunch. Leaders will have pumpkin spice cookies! Leashed dogs are welcome. Meet at Grandparents Grove, which is next to the Boathouse Marina on 334 S. Post Rd. There are facilities. Rain cancels. Preregistration is required. Co-leaders: Joanne Pannone, [jpatmeadowbrook@gmail.com](mailto:jpatmeadowbrook@gmail.com), and Leona F., [Leona@pineypaddlers.com](mailto:Leona@pineypaddlers.com) (C)

**Oct 7 (Sat): Hacklebarney State Park** (Morris Co.) 12 p.m., 4-5 miles, moderate hike. The Black River gorge, woodlands, and trails provide a great escape for walkers and hikers. Some of the trails have hills, and there are a few river bridges to cross to reach other parts of this park. This is a lovely fall hike. Website: [bit.ly/3nPOIDA](https://bit.ly/3nPOIDA) Meet at 119 Hacklebarney Rd., Long Valley. There are facilities. Bring water, snacks, and lunch. Hiking boots are recommended. Rain cancels. Co-leaders: RSVP with Wanda, [pridegrlnj@aim.com](mailto:pridegrlnj@aim.com), or Rebecca Wilkin, [rebeccawilkin@gmail.com](mailto:rebeccawilkin@gmail.com), (LGBTQ+)

**Oct 7 (Sat): Landsdown Trail and Meadow Hike** (Hunterdon Co.) 10 a.m., about 4 miles, easy pace. The trail passes through open fields, woodlands, and wetlands. The trail follows part of an old rail corridor once used as a spur for the Lehigh Valley Railroad, which was built in 1881. Children 8 years and older are welcome. Bring water and snacks. Wear hiking boots. No dogs, please. There are no facilities. Meet at the main entrance of the Landsdown Trail, 21 West Main St., Clinton. Preregister with leader, Ron Gelok III, [Gelokron@gmail.com](mailto:Gelokron@gmail.com) (HW)

**Oct 9 (Mon): Indigenous People's Day Hike at the Thompson Park Conservation Area** (Middlesex Co.) 10 a.m., 3-4 miles, easy pace. On the hike, a favorite stop is the Natural Spring. The park is dominated by heavily wooded forests and lowland swamps along the Manalapan Brook. Meet at trailhead lot next to the dog park, on Fir Drive, off Perrineville Rd., Monroe Township. There are facilities. Bring water, snacks, and lunch. Hiking boots and poles are recommended. Leashed dogs are welcome. Rain cancels. Preregistration is required. [shorturl.at/biNRS](https://shorturl.at/biNRS) Co-leaders: Sindhu P., [spjersey@gmail.com](mailto:spjersey@gmail.com) and Leona F., [leona@pineypaddlers.com](mailto:leona@pineypaddlers.com) (RV)

**Oct 13 (Fri): Pinelands Month—Guided Hike at Double Trouble State Park/Village** (Ocean Co.) 10 a.m., 3 miles, easy pace. It's Friday the 13th, and we're headed to the aptly named Double Trouble Park. Once home to both a lumber industry and cranberry farm, this former company town is a window into past and current industries in the Pinelands. Andrew Anderson, a historic resource interpretive specialist, will be our guide. Meet at Double Trouble State Park parking lot, Pinewald-Keswick, and Double Trouble Rds. There are facilities. Leashed dogs are welcome. Bring water, snacks, and lunch. Rain cancels. Preregistration is required. Leona and George F., [Leona@pineypaddlers.com](mailto:Leona@pineypaddlers.com) (W)

**Oct 14 (Sat): Wildcat Ridge Hike**, Rockaway Township (Morris Co.) 10 a.m., 7 miles, 4 hours in hilly terrain. Features: Split Rock Reservoir, Beaver Brook, Hawkwatch, Wildcat Trail, St. Patrick's Cemetery. A Parking lot has a portable toilet. Wear hiking boots and non-cotton hiking socks, bring a backpack with water and lunch. RSVP at [shorturl.at/bgwzE](https://shorturl.at/bgwzE) Directions will be sent via email. Leaders: Jimi Oleksiak, [the\\_hikist@mac.com](mailto:the_hikist@mac.com), and Jerry Ruocco (SS)

**Oct 16 (Mon): Foliage Hike at Mountain Lakes Open Space Area (Billy Johnson Mountain Lakes Nature Preserve)**, Princeton (Mercer Co.) 10 a.m., 3 miles, easy pace. There are stream crossings, but they're easy with very large rocks to step on and sometimes bridges. This is a beautiful preserve with something for everyone to enjoy. There are flats and gradual hills, fields and woods, old-growth pine forests, babbling brooks, a boulder field that includes the Devil's Cave, lakes and dams and a dike to walk on, and the historic Mountain Lake House. Meet at parking lot, 30 Mountain Ave. There are facilities. Hiking boots and poles are recommended. Rain cancels. Option for late lunch at Conte's Pizza. Preregistration is required. Co-leaders: Leona F., [leona@pineypaddlers.com](mailto:leona@pineypaddlers.com), and Lynn E., [lynnebeling@comcast.net](mailto:lynnebeling@comcast.net) (C)

**Oct 22 (Sun): Pinelands Month—Hike the Franklin Parker Preserve** (Burlington Co.) 10 a.m., 4-5 miles, easy pace on the Yellow Trail. This 9400-acre preserve is a keystone piece of land, linking Brendan Byrne, Wharton, and Penn State forests. Meet at Speedwell entrance off Rt. 563, Woodland Township. Portable toilet available. Leashed dogs are welcome. Bring water, snacks, and lunch for our break on the hike. Rain cancels. Preregistration is required. George & Leona F., [leona@pineypaddlers.com](mailto:leona@pineypaddlers.com) (W)

**Oct 29 (Sun): Early Halloween Hike at Estell Manor** (Atlantic Co.) 10 a.m., 3 miles; optional 5-mile hike, easy pace. Meet at the Warren E. Fox Nature Center on 109 Boulevard Rt. 50, Mays Landing. There are facilities. Bring water, snacks, and lunch for our break on the hike. Leashed dogs are welcome. Rain cancels. Preregistration is required. Co-leaders: Tom Boghosian, [tfboghosian44@gmail.com](mailto:tfboghosian44@gmail.com), and Leona and George F., [Leona@pineypaddlers.com](mailto:Leona@pineypaddlers.com) (SJ)

## NOVEMBER

**Nov 1 (Wed): Fall Walk at Colonial Park Gardens** (Somerset Co.) 10 a.m., 3-4 miles, easy pace. A walk under a canopy to enjoy the fall leaves and colors. Colonial Park Gardens is one of the treasures in Somerset County. It features a 144-acre Arboretum, perennial garden, and much more. We'll walk on the D&R towpath (surface is sand and crushed stone) to East Millstone to the restored Bridge Tender's Station and back. Meet at Colonial Park Gardens' parking lot F. There are facilities. Bring water, snacks, and lunch. Rain cancels. Leashed dogs are welcome. Preregistration is required: [shorturl.at/biNRS](https://shorturl.at/biNRS) Co-leaders: Sindhu P., [spjersey@gmail.com](mailto:spjersey@gmail.com) and Leona F., [leona@pineypaddlers.com](mailto:leona@pineypaddlers.com) (RV)

**Nov 5 (Sun): "Fall Back" Hike—Wharton State Forest, Batsto Mansion, and Village Tour** (Atlantic Co.) 10 a.m., 3 miles, easy pace with an option to continue the hike on the 4-mile Batona Trail loop around Batsto Lake. We'll begin our walk on the Sand and Water Trail that winds along a sandy forest road and into a dense Atlantic white cedar swamp. We will follow a series of wooden foot bridges and the Batona trail back to the visitors center. Interested hikers will continue the hike for another 4-miles around Batsto Lake. Good footwear and hiking poles are recommended. Leashed dogs are welcome. Bring water, snacks, and lunch. Rain cancels. There are hourly afternoon tours of the Batsto Mansion. Meet at the Batsto Village visitors center parking lot, 31 Batsto Rd., Hammonton. There are facilities. Preregistration is required. Co-leaders: Tom Boghosian, [tfboghosian44@gmail.com](mailto:tfboghosian44@gmail.com) and Leona and George F., [Leona@pineypaddlers.com](mailto:Leona@pineypaddlers.com) (SJ)

**Nov 11 (Sat): South Mountain Reservation Hike** (Essex Co.) 10 a.m., 6-7 miles, moderate pace. Meeting at the Turtleback Loop Trail parking area off 374 Walker Rd., West Orange. There are facilities. Wear hiking boots and bring hiking poles if needed. Bring water, snacks, and lunch. Rain cancels. No dogs, please. Contact the leader to preregister, Ron Pate, [Ronpate31@verizon.net](mailto:Ronpate31@verizon.net) (G)

**Nov 11 (Sat): Rancocas Nature Center and Hike on Veterans Day** (Burlington Co.) 10 a.m., 3 miles easy pace. The Rancocas Nature Center is situated on a 210-acre eastern piece of the Rancocas State Park, and features hiking trails through varied habitats, including meadows, forest, and wetlands. Meeting at 794 Rancocas Mt Holly Rd., Westampton. Website: [www.rancocas-naturecenter.org](https://www.rancocas-naturecenter.org) There are facilities. Bring water, snacks, and lunch. Preregistration is required. Rain cancels. Dogs are not permitted on the trails. Leona and George F., [Leona@pineypaddlers.com](mailto:Leona@pineypaddlers.com) (W)

**Nov 11 (Sat): Turkey Mountain Hike**, Montville (Morris Co.) 10 a.m., 6 miles, 4 hours in hilly terrain. Features: 100 Steps Trail, Lake Valhalla Lookout, Stone Mansion Ruins, Pyramid Mountain Waterfall, Limestone Quarry. Facilities: Parking lot has a portable toilet. Required: hiking boots and non-cotton hiking socks, backpack with water and lunch. RSVP: [shorturl.at/bgwzE](https://shorturl.at/bgwzE) Directions will be sent via email to those who RSVP. Leaders: Jimi Oleksiak, [the\\_hikist@mac.com](mailto:the_hikist@mac.com), and Jerry Ruocco (SS)

**Nov 18 (Sat): Hike at Washington Crossing State Park** (Mercer Co.) 10 a.m., 3-4 miles, easy pace. Meet at the D&R Canal parking lot Rt. 29/River Rd., Titusville, next to the Washington Crossing bridge to PA. Facilities available. Leashed dogs welcome. We'll take the pedestrian overpass over River Road into the park, and the Scenic Overlook as we walk the Green Dot trail connecting to other trails. Trails may be muddy and rocky with roots in some places. Hiking boots and poles recommended. Bring water and snacks. Option, late lunch at It's Nutts! Rain cancels. Preregistration required. Co-leaders: Leona F., [leona@pineypaddlers.com](mailto:leona@pineypaddlers.com) and Lynn E., [lynnebeling@comcast.net](mailto:lynnebeling@comcast.net) (C)

## DECEMBER

**Dec 3 (Sun): Wharton State Forest: Mullica River Yellow Trail** (Atlantic Co.) 10 a.m., 4-5 miles, easy pace. The Yellow Trail is a natural sandy trail along the beautiful Mullica River. Our hike will begin at Batsto Village where we'll hike across the Batsto Lake bridge to the Yellow Trail. The trail travels through a variety of pine barrens forest types and wetlands along the river. On the return from Constable Bridge there's an option to visit a couple of Mullica beaches. Also, the option to add a trail for participants interested in a longer hike. Good footwear and hiking poles are recommended. Leashed dogs are welcome. Bring water, snacks, and lunch. Rain cancels. Meeting at the Batsto Village parking lot, 31 Batsto Rd., Hammonton. Facilities are available. Preregistration is required. Co-leaders Tom Boghosian, [tfboghosian44@gmail.com](mailto:tfboghosian44@gmail.com) and Leona and George F., [Leona@pineypaddlers.com](mailto:Leona@pineypaddlers.com) (SJ)

**Dec 7 (Thurs): Hike at Jakes Branch County Park** (Ocean Co.) 10 a.m., 4 miles, easy pace. Jakes Branch has a nature center with hands-on exhibits and an observation deck that offers a 360° view of the Pinelands. Meet at Jakes Branch Park, 1100 Double Trouble Rd., Beechwood. There are facilities. We'll walk on woods trails with some elevations and flat sandy trails. Hiking boots and poles are recommended. Leashed dogs are welcome. Bring water and snacks. Option, late lunch at Shady Rest Restaurant. Inclement weather cancels. Preregistration required. George & Leona F., [leona@pineypaddlers.com](mailto:leona@pineypaddlers.com) (O)

**Dec 9 (Sat): Whitesbog Village Family Hike** (Burlington Co.) 10 a.m., 3-4 miles, easy pace on sandy trails. Join us for the Whitesbog celebration of the holidays. Handmade arts and crafts exhibitors will be spread throughout the village, kid crafts in the art gallery, live music and even more! Last year **tundra swans** were on the bogs. Bring water, snacks, and lunch. Leashed dogs are welcome. Outdoor facilities available. Preregistration required. Leaders: George & Leona F., [Leona@pineypaddlers.com](mailto:Leona@pineypaddlers.com) (W)

**Dec 9 (Sat): Watchung Reservation Hike**, Mountainside (Union Co.) 10 a.m., 6 miles, 4 hours in moderately hilly terrain. Features: The Deserted Village of Feltville, the History Trail, lookouts over Watchung Valley and Surprise Lake. Restrooms available at the parking lot and during the hike. Requirements: hiking boots and non-cotton hiking socks, and a backpack with water and lunch. No pets. RSVP at [shorturl.at/bgwzE](https://shorturl.at/bgwzE) Directions will be sent via email to those who RSVP. Leaders: Jimi Oleksiak, [the\\_hikist@mac.com](mailto:the_hikist@mac.com), and Jerry Ruocco (SS)

**Dec 15 (Fri): Hike at Smith's Woods and Holiday Tour of Smithville Mansion** (Burlington Co.) 10 a.m., 3-4 miles, easy pace. After the hike we'll tour the mansion, which will be decorated for a Victorian holiday (small fee) by local garden clubs. Meet at Smith's Woods Parking Lot, 39 East Railroad Ave., Easthampton. Facilities are available. Hiking boots and poles are recommended. Bring water and snacks. Option for late lunch at Vincentown Diner. Leashed dogs are welcome. Rain cancels. Preregistration required. George & Leona F., [leona@pineypaddlers.com](mailto:leona@pineypaddlers.com) (W)

**Dec 16 (Sat): Hike at Eagle Rock Reservation** (Essex Co.) 10 a.m., 4-5 miles, moderate pace. Wear hiking boots. Bring water and snacks. No dogs please. Meet at the main entrance of the Essex County 9/11 Memorial, Prospect and Eagle Rock Avenues, West Orange. There are facilities. Rain cancels. Contact the leader to preregister, Ron Pate, [Ronpate31@verizon.net](mailto:Ronpate31@verizon.net) (G)

**Dec 21 (Thurs): First Day of Winter Hike on the D&R Canal** (Mercer Co.) 10 a.m., 3-4 miles, easy pace. We'll hike over Lock 1, "swinging bridge," as we walk along the towpath; perhaps see **bold eagles**. Meet at River Line parking lot in Bordentown City. Bring water and snacks. There are no facilities. Leashed dogs are welcome. Option, late lunch at HOB Tavern. Inclement weather cancels. Preregistration is required. Leona and George F., [Leona@pineypaddlers.com](mailto:Leona@pineypaddlers.com) (C)

**Dec 26-Dec 31: Patriots Week in Trenton—History of the American Revolution in NJ** (Mercer Co.) Learn about the American Revolution during Patriots Week. Every day of the week offers fun and history for the entire family. See the First and Second Battles of Trenton Reenactments and participate in Walking Tours of the Trenton Battlefields. Check website for events [www.patriotsweek.com](https://www.patriotsweek.com) Contact us to meet for various events. Leona and George F., [leona@pineypaddlers.com](mailto:leona@pineypaddlers.com) (C)

## JANUARY

**Jan 1 (Mon): First Day Hikes in New Jersey's State Parks and Forests.** (New Jersey) Celebrate the New Year with one of the "First Day Hikes" that the Park Service holds across the state. These free guided hikes in state parks, forests, and historic sites are part of America's State Parks First Day Hikes program. There are many to choose from, so contact leaders for information after the hikes are posted by the NJ Department of Environmental Protection. Leona and George F., [Leona@pineypaddlers.com](mailto:Leona@pineypaddlers.com)



Members of the Sierra Club NJ Chapter and other environmentally conscious groups protested the liquid natural gas export facility planned for Gibbstown, NJ. West Group member Marty Levin holds up the head of the sturgeon, an endangered species that could vanish from the Delaware and East Coast. Also pictured, West Group Chair Gina Carola, West Group member Renee Pollard and Tracy Carluccio of Delaware Riverkeeper.

# GROUP News

From Around the State

There are 12 regional groups in the NJ Chapter of the Sierra Club. All groups have open officer positions for volunteers and welcome new members. Interested persons should reach out to the contacts listed below. Participation in the Sierra Club is a meaningful and rewarding way to give back to your community and help create a sustainable and healthier environment for all.

Groups are listed in rough geographical sequence: North to South

## SKYLANDS GROUP

(Sussex and Northern Warren counties)

**Webpage:** [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/skyland](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/skyland)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/SkylandsNJSC](https://www.facebook.com/SkylandsNJSC)

**Email:** [chachabacon@yahoo.com](mailto:chachabacon@yahoo.com); phone: 973-886-7950

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE and other OFFICERS** (ExCom members are elected to serve 2-year terms; term-expiry date in parentheses)

<b>Chair</b> (12/31/24)	Greg Gorman	<a href="mailto:chachabacon@yahoo.com">chachabacon@yahoo.com</a>	
<b>Vice Chair</b> (12/31/23)	Susan Williams	<a href="mailto:SkylandsGroup@gmail.com">SkylandsGroup@gmail.com</a>	
<b>Secretary</b> (12/31/24)	Norene Haberski	<a href="mailto:norenehaberski2@gmail.com">norenehaberski2@gmail.com</a>	
<b>Treasurer</b> (12/31/24)	Norene Haberski	<a href="mailto:norenehaberski2@gmail.com">norenehaberski2@gmail.com</a>	
<b>ExCom at large</b> (12/31/23)	Dave Alcock	<a href="mailto:dwhoob@hotmail.com">dwhoob@hotmail.com</a>	
	(12/31/24) Nicole Guerrieri	<a href="mailto:SierraClubNicole@gmail.com">SierraClubNicole@gmail.com</a>	
	(12/31/23) Allison Orsi	<a href="mailto:aeorsi@hotmail.com">aeorsi@hotmail.com</a>	
	(12/31/24) Jill Aquino	<a href="mailto:jda1timeforchange@gmail.com">jda1timeforchange@gmail.com</a>	
	(12/31/23) Chris Dunbar	<a href="mailto:chrisdunbar458@gmail.com">chrisdunbar458@gmail.com</a>	
<b>Conservation Chair</b>	(12/31/23) Joanne Morgan	<a href="mailto:jojommorgan@yahoo.com">jojommorgan@yahoo.com</a>	
	Greg Gorman	<a href="mailto:chachabacon@yahoo.com">chachabacon@yahoo.com</a>	
	<b>Outings Chair</b>	Dave Alcock	<a href="mailto:dwhoob@hotmail.com">dwhoob@hotmail.com</a>
	<b>Outreach Chair</b>	Joanne Morgan	<a href="mailto:jojommorgan@yahoo.com">jojommorgan@yahoo.com</a>
	<b>Environmental Justice</b>	Susan Williams	<a href="mailto:SkylandsGroup@gmail.com">SkylandsGroup@gmail.com</a>
<b>Political Co-Chairs</b>	Nicole Guerrieri	<a href="mailto:SierraClubNicole@gmail.com">SierraClubNicole@gmail.com</a>	
	Susan Williams	<a href="mailto:SkylandsGroup@gmail.com">SkylandsGroup@gmail.com</a>	
<b>Publicity Chair</b>	Joanne Morgan	<a href="mailto:jojommorgan@yahoo.com">jojommorgan@yahoo.com</a>	
<b>Recycling/Zero Waste</b>	Jill Aquino	<a href="mailto:jda1timeforchange@gmail.com">jda1timeforchange@gmail.com</a>	
<b>Chair Webmaster</b>	Nicole Guerrieri	<a href="mailto:SierraClubNicole@gmail.com">SierraClubNicole@gmail.com</a>	

**GENERAL MEETINGS** (Conducted via Zoom)

The Skylands Group of the NJ Chapter of the Sierra Club serves Sussex and Northern Warren counties. We offer a variety of opportunities for the public to learn about and connect with the natural environment. We present informative films and speakers; exploration of the great outdoors on hikes, edible-plant tours, and picnics; public outreach via town tabling; and visits to schools. Our hope is to foster love and deep respect for our great outdoors.

The Skylands Group works with grassroots organizations to protect open spaces and water quality, promote clean energy, and oppose privatization of public trust resources.

**CURRENT CAMPAIGNS:** The Skylands Group advocates the protection of the Sparta Mountain Wildlife Management Area from logging done under the guise of creating "healthy forests" and opposes the proposed Tennessee Gas Pipeline compressor station in Wantage.

The Skylands Group supports the Green New Deal, Sunrise Movement, and transition toward a clean energy economy.

The Skylands Group also opposes the Munsonhurst Planned Residential District development, which will adversely affect the ecology of a Natural Heritage Priority Site.

## HUNTERDON WARREN GROUP

(Hunterdon and Southern Warren counties)

**Webpage:** [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/hunterdonwarren](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/hunterdonwarren)

**Meetup:** [www.meetup.com/NJSierraClub/](https://www.meetup.com/NJSierraClub/)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/groups/sierraclub.hunterdonwarren/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/sierraclub.hunterdonwarren/)

**YouTube:** [www.youtube.com/@sierraclubhunterdonwarren9255/videos](https://www.youtube.com/@sierraclubhunterdonwarren9255/videos)

**OFFICERS**

<b>Chair</b>	Open Position!	
<b>Vice Chair</b>	Celeste Martin *	<a href="mailto:celeste.martin@sluhn.org">celeste.martin@sluhn.org</a>
<b>Conservation Chair</b>	Open Position!	
<b>Political Co-Chairs</b>	Karen Becker *	<a href="mailto:karbecker@gmail.com">karbecker@gmail.com</a>
	Amy Weeder *	<a href="mailto:aweeder@comcast.net">aweeder@comcast.net</a>

**Outings**

<b>Treasurer, Secretary</b>	Ron Gelok*	<a href="mailto:gelokron@gmail.com">gelokron@gmail.com</a>
<b>Warren County Issues</b>	Open Position!	
<b>Webmaster/Listmaster</b>	Pat Banes *	<a href="mailto:patrick_banes@comcast.net">patrick_banes@comcast.net</a>
<b>ExCom at Large</b>	John Kashwick*	<a href="mailto:jkashwick@gmail.com">jkashwick@gmail.com</a>
	Jonathan D. Wall*	<a href="mailto:docjdwall@gmail.com">docjdwall@gmail.com</a>
	* Group Executive Committee Member	

**GENERAL MEETINGS:** Meetings may be virtual or hybrid (in-person and virtual). Please check [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/hunterdonwarren](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/hunterdonwarren) for updates or to register for events. Registered participants will receive Zoom meeting information.

**October**

**Oct 18 (Wed) 7 p.m. Get Plugged in With Electric Vehicles (EV)**—NJ Electric Vehicle Association (NJEVA) President and Cofounder Stan Jaracz and Secretary and Program Manager Andi Sjamsu will discuss the environmental benefits of owning an EV and the NJEVA mission which includes accelerating the widespread adoption of EVs through education and infrastructure support. The NJEVA is a nonprofit organization with a desire to educate drivers before, during, and after their EV purchase. The discussion includes information and resources on how to car shop for an EV. This event is hybrid: In-person at the North Hunterdon County Library in Clinton and virtually on Zoom.

**November**

**Nov 8 (Wed) 7 p.m. Nature Knows Best: Restoring our Forests**—Pro-forestation enables continuous forest growth uninterrupted by active management or "timber harvesting." There is little protection for our large trees and forests in New Jersey or the rest of the country. Every governmental plan proposed to mitigate climate change relies on natural landscapes to remove CO2 from the atmosphere.

Our presenter, Leslie Sauer, was raised on a farm near the covered bridge in Hunterdon County. She is a founder emeritus of Andropogon Associates, a pioneer in the field of restoring and managing native landscapes and was an adjunct professor at the University of Pennsylvania in Landscape Architecture and was a founding member of the board of directors of the Society for Ecological Restoration. Her book, "The Once and Future Forest" (Island Press, 1998), is a guidebook for restoring and managing natural landscapes—especially remnant deciduous forests. This event is hybrid: in-person at the North Hunterdon County Library in Clinton and virtually on Zoom.

**December**

Dec 6, TBA

**CURRENT ISSUES**

**Warehouse Projects:** There are several massive warehouse projects proposed for Hunterdon and Warren counties. Please consider representing our group at local, county and state meetings which may consider granting permits for these projects.

**Night Skies:** The Hunterdon Warren Group and the Light Pollution and Dark Skies Committee (LPDSC) are encouraging municipalities to curb light pollution by introducing ordinances that encourage proper lighting. We need citizens to contact their environmental commissions, land use boards, and governing bodies to encourage them to support passing these energy- and tax-saving initiatives. Please help us in our campaign to have our county and local municipalities adopt stricter ordinances to reduce excessive light pollution. Contact the chair of the committee, Jonathan Wall at [jonwall@jonwall.com](mailto:jonwall@jonwall.com) if you are interested in this issue.

## NORTH JERSEY GROUP

(Bergen and Passaic counties)

**Webpage:** [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/north-jersey](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/north-jersey)

**Meetup:** [www.meetup.com/NJSierraClub/](https://www.meetup.com/NJSierraClub/)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/northjersseysierraclub](https://www.facebook.com/northjersseysierraclub)

**Twitter:** @sierraclub\_nj

**Instagram:** [sierraclubnorth\\_nj](https://www.instagram.com/sierraclubnorth_nj)

**OFFICERS**

<b>Co-Chair</b>	Diane Scarangella*	<a href="mailto:diascat@hotmail.com">diascat@hotmail.com</a>
<b>Co-Chair</b>	Open Position!	
<b>Treasurer</b>	Bob Weiss*	<a href="mailto:bobweiss1967@gmail.com">bobweiss1967@gmail.com</a>
<b>Secretary</b>	Ron De Vos	<a href="mailto:rondevos58@outlook.com">rondevos58@outlook.com</a>
<b>Political Action Committee</b>		
<b>Chair</b>	Ron De Vos	<a href="mailto:rondevos58@outlook.com">rondevos58@outlook.com</a>
<b>Co-Chair</b>	Open Position!	Contact Ron
<b>Outings Committee</b>		
<b>Co-Chair</b>	Rebecca Wilkin	<a href="mailto:rebeccawilkin@gmail.com">rebeccawilkin@gmail.com</a>
<b>Co-Chair</b>	Open Position!	
<b>Conservation Committee</b>		
<b>Chair</b>	Open Position!	Contact Diane at <a href="mailto:diascat@hotmail.com">diascat@hotmail.com</a>
<b>Member</b>	Judy Green*	<a href="mailto:jugreen547@gmail.com">jugreen547@gmail.com</a>
<b>Climate Change Committee</b>		
<b>Chair</b>	Jeff Rapaport*	<a href="mailto:jefrap@optonline.net">jefrap@optonline.net</a>
<b>Co-Chair</b>	Judy Green*	<a href="mailto:jugreen547@gmail.com">jugreen547@gmail.com</a>
<b>Marketing/Social Media</b>		
<b>Co-Chair</b>	Marie Mannino	<a href="mailto:mmannino@yahoo.com">mmannino@yahoo.com</a>
<b>Co-Chair</b>	Open Position!	Contact Marie
<b>Youth Outreach/Outings</b>		
<b>Co-Chair</b>	Rebecca Wilkin	<a href="mailto:rebeccawilkin@gmail.com">rebeccawilkin@gmail.com</a>
<b>Co-Chair</b>	Open Position!	Contact Rebecca
<b>Diversity, Inclusion, Environmental Justice</b>		
<b>Co-Chair</b>	Bushra Asfare*	<a href="mailto:bushra_c_e@hotmail.com">bushra_c_e@hotmail.com</a>
<b>Co-Chair</b>	Open Position!	Contact Bushra
<b>Consulting Engineer</b>	Bushra Asfare	<a href="mailto:bushra_c_e@hotmail.com">bushra_c_e@hotmail.com</a>
<b>Event Planning and Membership Committee</b> Chair/Co-Chair Positions Open!		
*Elected North Jersey Group Executive Committee Member.		

**UPCOMING ACTIONS/EVENTS**

We are seeking volunteer hike leaders! If you are interested in co-leading one of our LGBTQ+ and/or all-inclusive hikes, please let us know! **We need you!** Contact Diane

Scarangella at [diascat@hotmail.com](mailto:diascat@hotmail.com) or Wanda Ashbrook at [pridegrrlnj@aim.com](mailto:pridegrrlnj@aim.com) for more information!

## BLOG

In early 2023, Betsy L. and Judy Green initiated a free substack blog called Climate Friendly Lifestyle ([climatefriendlylifestyle.substack.com](http://climatefriendlylifestyle.substack.com)) to spread the word. In presenting a talk the prior fall we discovered the thirst many people have for knowledge about what they can do to help stave off climate catastrophe. And so, the blog's main mission is to let people know what practical actions to take, what "the fixes" are in many areas to counter climate change. In one article Judy explains greenhouse gases, the global warming mechanism and why electrification is so important. Betsy has written a number of articles on how to electrify easily and inexpensively (including solar panels) using the Inflation Reduction Act; how to choose and set up for owning an electric vehicle; how to choose and use an induction cooktop and electric gardening equipment. She's also illuminated the workings of the electrical grid. In other articles, Judy unpacks the climate-related plastics crisis and outlines the practical steps we can take as individuals to end the destructive use of plastics; explains the importance of diet change—less meat, more vegetable protein—for both climate health (major reductions in GHG emissions) and personal health/longevity; and how to lower greenhouse gas emissions through clothing and fabric choices. Like other blogs, Climate Friendly Lifestyle is an ongoing process. We welcome comments and suggestions!

**Climate Change & the Cost of Food** (Date TBD): This Zoom presentation will focus on some of the changes that are needed in our agricultural system and the agricultural policies that could help facilitate these changes. Suggestions will be offered for actions we can take to advocate for changes in our own communities and in Congress that could help secure a more sustainable food system. Presented by Katherine Schwarz, a public health nutritionist who has taught about food security and food policy at Lehman College and at New York Medical College. To be notified when date is scheduled, RSVP to [diascat@hotmail.com](mailto:diascat@hotmail.com)

## YOUTH Outreach

**Composting and Food Sustainability:** Anyone interested in composting/food sustainability is welcome to join our Zoom meetings! We are currently contacting school district administrators and researching grants/funding for composting initiatives in schools. Please reach out to [rebeccawilkin@gmail.com](mailto:rebeccawilkin@gmail.com) if you'd like to join.

**Slack Group for members of the Youth Outreach Committee:** Join our youth Slack Group to find out more about environmental opportunities for students or if you have any questions. You can join it at [bit.ly/3BHU8Uc](https://bit.ly/3BHU8Uc) or contact [rebeccawilkin@gmail.com](mailto:rebeccawilkin@gmail.com) if you'd like to join.

**Upcoming Meeting for High School Students,** environmental leaders, and new volunteers. Dates/times to be determined. Contact Erica Cowper at [ecowper22@gmail.com](mailto:ecowper22@gmail.com) to join.

**Preserving Open Spaces in Bergen and Passaic Counties:** Contact [Diascat@hotmail.com](mailto:Diascat@hotmail.com) for more information about what you can do to preserve and/or restore open spaces and woodlands in Bergen/Passaic Counties. **Demand** the replanting of the 100+ trees in Overpeck Park Area IV and the creation of unpaved walking paths, and **Oppose** the creation of great lawns, paved walking paths, bike paths, and roadways in our natural habitats.

**Protect the Climate:** Contact Jeff at [jeffrap@optonline.net](mailto:jeffrap@optonline.net) and keep your eye out for actions related to

- The Tennessee Gas pipeline upgrades in Sussex and Western Passaic County.
- The NJ Transit Gas backup plant in Kearney.
- The Passaic County Sewerage Commission's Back up Gas plant in Newark.
- Williams Transco Regional Energy Access Expansion project.
- The transportation of Liquefied Natural Gas through NJ from Pa. – Gibbstown Terminal.

## NORTH JERSEY SIERRA GROUP INITIATIVES

The North Jersey Group is committed to coalition building. Our collaborative initiatives include

- Supporting renewable energy strategies and affordable housing;
- Opposing gas-fueled plants, the construction of pipelines and transport terminals, and use of tankers and trains to transport dirty fuels;
- Opposing commercialization and development of parkland and open spaces;
- Advocating for removal, not capping, of contaminated soil on public land and restoration of that land to its natural state;
- Advocating for polluted waterways cleanup and nonpolluting transport on NJ/NYC waterways;
- Supporting access to affordable healthcare;
- Increasing group diversity;
- Supporting environmental justice communities;
- Advocating for sound forest stewardship, maintenance of old growth forests, preservation of endangered species.

We continue to focus on fighting climate change; creating more opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to enjoy and appreciate nature; and collaborating with coalitions, such as Empower NJ, Don't Gas the Meadowlands, and other NJ groups to advocate for renewable energy, a moratorium on fossil fuel usage, preservation of waterways, and protection of our parklands.

## GATEWAY GROUP

(Hillside, Elizabeth, and Essex County, except for Livingston, Millburn, and Roseland)

**Webpage:** [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/Gateway/](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/Gateway/) (Also accessible from the NJ Chapter webpage: [sierraclub.org/new-jersey/gateway](http://sierraclub.org/new-jersey/gateway))  
Members can join the Gateway Group on **Facebook** at [www.facebook.com/pages/Gateway-Group-NJ-Sierra-Club/128998363842782](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Gateway-Group-NJ-Sierra-Club/128998363842782)

Please contact any of the leaders below if you are interested in joining our campaigns to protect the environment. There are several group officer positions open.

## OFFICERS

<b>Chair</b>	Bill Beren*	973-746-9661	Beren1@verizon.net
<b>Conservation Chair</b>	Caroline Kane*	646-961-9003	ckane678@verizon.net
<b>Treasurer</b>	Open Position!		

<b>Program Co-Chairs</b>	Suzanne Trimel*	973-509-8335	suzanne.trimel@gmail.com
	Steven Yafet	908-354-2537	syafet@gmail.com
<b>Publicity Chair</b>	Open Position!		
<b>Political Chair</b>	Open Position!		
<b>Fundraising Chair</b>	Open Position!		
<b>Membership Chair</b>	Steven Yafet*	(see above)	
<b>Passaic River Issues</b>	Steven Yafet*	(see above)	
<b>Outings Chair</b>	Ron Pate		ronpate31@verizon.net
<b>Webmaster</b>	Christy Morganstein	732-718-4343	christy@medartsweb.com

\*Group Executive Committee

The following Gateway Group positions are open for volunteers: vice-chair, secretary, Newark and Elizabeth issues, recycling. If you are interested, contact Bill Beren at 973-746-9661.

Please contact our program co-chairs if you have ideas or suggestions for a meeting-topic, program, or conservation project.

We invite YOU to join in our activism and ask your support as we strive to address the many issues facing our urban and suburban communities. Note the several vacant positions listed above.

## EVENTS

Outings will be posted on the calendar on our Group's home page.

## CONSERVATION NEWS

The Gateway Group was blessed to have a student intern this summer, Danielle Rapsas, who did research on what happens to our recycled cans, papers, and plastics after they are picked up at our curb. While her final report was completed after the deadline for this edition passed, we will be scheduling a members meeting in the fall where Danielle will present her findings. So, look out for an email or check our calendar page on the Gateway webpage for date and time.

## HUDSON COUNTY GROUP

**Webpage:** [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/HUDSON-county](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/HUDSON-county)

**Email:** [HUDSONSIERRAclub@gmail.com](mailto:HUDSONSIERRAclub@gmail.com)

**Facebook:** @HCSierraClub

**Instagram:** @HCSierraClub

**Twitter:** @HCSierraClub

## OFFICERS

<b>Chair</b>	Patricia Hilliard*
<b>Secretary/Treasurer</b>	Rachel Ciekurs
<b>Conservation Chair</b>	Anne Arguelles*
<b>Political Chair</b>	Ricardo Pereira*
<b>Delegate to Chapter</b>	Ricardo Pereira*
<b>Membership</b>	Meera Jaffrey*
<b>Publicity</b>	Spencer Rubino Finn*
<b>Outings / Events</b>	Steve Krinsky*
<b>At-Large</b>	Nancy Booth*

(\*ExCom)

**Meeting Schedule:** The Hudson Group will continue to meet remotely for now. Meetings are held four times a year. Members are welcome and encouraged to join the meetings. Contact us at [HUDSONSIERRAclub@gmail.com](mailto:HUDSONSIERRAclub@gmail.com) for details.

**Upcoming Events:** We are planning activities: nature walks, shoreline cleanups and public forums. We will also be doing political outreach. Check our online calendar, watch your email or find us on social media!

**Current Campaigns:** Please join in. We can use help with any of these:

**Environmental Justice:** Clean air for Hudson County! Low-income communities and black and brown communities suffer the most from environmental destruction: elevated levels of cancer, asthma and other respiratory disease from air pollution. Join us to oppose the widening of the NJ Turnpike Extension which will add more traffic and bad air to the community.

**Liberty State Park:** We support rallies called by the Friends of Liberty State Park. As part of our environmental justice campaign, we support the work on the interior of the park which will create 180 acres of wildlife habitat and 50 acres of active recreation for the community.

**Skyway Park on the Hackensack River and Essex-Hudson Greenway:** The Hudson County Group of the NJ Chapter of the Sierra Club is working to support and expand green spaces in Hudson County. We want to connect existing parks and trails, as part of the Crossroads Campaign to connect greenways across Hudson County. Join up and learn how you can help.

**Political Action:** In preparation for upcoming elections in New Jersey, we plan to meet with sympathetic public officials. We support the Protecting Against Climate Threats Act (PACT), the Essex Hudson Greenway and the Clean Energy Equity Act. We support the efforts of the Don't Gas the Meadowlands coalition in support of renewable energy for NJ Transit. Let us know if you would like to join our campaigns.

## LOANTAKA GROUP

(Morris and Union counties (except for Elizabeth and Hillside), plus Livingston, Millburn, and Roseland, approximately)

**Contact:** Allen Swanson, chair [afswanson@newjersey.sierraclub.org](mailto:afswanson@newjersey.sierraclub.org)  
908-721-7014

**Webpage:** [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/loantaka](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/loantaka)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/LoantakaGroupNJSC](https://www.facebook.com/LoantakaGroupNJSC)

The Loantaka Group is planning for the upcoming fall climate action activities, including education, advocacy, and elections. Recently, Loantaka leadership has participated

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## GROUP NEWS continued from page 13

in several waste handling and treatment issues, recycling, incineration, and sustainability programs.

The group has also been active in correcting some of the disinformation regarding renewable energy sources such as offshore wind.

The one thing we are lacking right now are volunteers who can assume leadership roles in the areas of legislation, political action, publicity, and media. To help out or obtain more information about how to become involved in your community contact Allen Swanson, our chair.

## CENTRAL JERSEY GROUP

(Mercer County and neighboring towns in adjoining counties)

**Webpage:** [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/central-jersey](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/central-jersey) Or find us from the NJ Chapter's website.

### OFFICERS

<b>Group Chair</b>	Joanne Pannone	Jpatmeadowbrook@gmail.com
<b>Group Vice Chair</b>	Xiaoping Du	Du@yahoo.com
<b>Secretary</b>	Leona Fluck	Leona@Pineypaddlers.com
<b>Treasurer</b>	Arlene Ceterskiva	Va2c2015@gmail.com
<b>Outings</b>	George and Leona Fluck	Leona@Pineypaddlers.com
<b>Programs</b>	Joanne Pannone	Jpatmeadowbrook@gmail.com
<b>Conservation Chair</b>	Kip Cherry	Kipatthesierraclub@gmail.com

<b>Recycling and Zero Waste Coordinator</b>	Sylvia Kay	Sylviakay222@gmail.com
<b>Trails</b>	Dave Mattek	MattekDC@aol.com

**Webmaster** Benjamin Steinberg

### Group Executive Committee Members

Joanne Pannone, Kip Cherry, Sylvia Kay

We need volunteers to help us stop warehouses and inappropriate developments and keep preserved land from privatization. Our members have been speaking at township meetings for:

Colts Neck Manner  
Mercer Corp. Park  
Baldpate Hotel/Restaurant

Our recycling and zero waste coordinator has given presentations on plastics and proposed legislation/bills on single use packaging and extended producer responsibility (EPR). More than 25 states have some form of an EPR bill for single-use packaging. We need to reduce the growing amount of municipal solid waste management from local governments and make the producers responsible to remove the packaging toxins and hazardous materials from our environment. People are now accustomed to living without the plastic bags at the store and we notice less-littered roadways, waterways, and beaches.

Our trails coordinator has been working with municipalities to obtain access through obtaining more open space, specifically in Mercer County.

Central Group proudly supports former Assemblyman Dan Benson for Mercer County's executive position. We take note that New Jersey is the most densely populated state with threats to our environment from huge warehouses and trucking pollution, etc. We need to preserve clean air and clean water.

Our outings are listed on the Sierra Club's NJ Chapter website calendar, where you can sign up!

We hope to begin Zoom meetings in September! And see you then.

## RARITAN VALLEY GROUP

(Middlesex and Somerset counties and surrounding areas)

**Webpage:** [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/raritan-valley](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/raritan-valley)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/RaritanGroupNJSC](http://www.facebook.com/RaritanGroupNJSC)

**Twitter:** [www.twitter.com/RaritanSierra](http://www.twitter.com/RaritanSierra)

### OFFICERS

<b>Group Chair</b>	S. Pasricha	spjersey@gmail.com
<b>Conservation Chair</b>	Gary Frederick	609-203-3382 garyfrederick@newjersey.sierraclub.org

<b>Membership Chair</b>	John Miraglia	johnworks3@aol.com
<b>Political Co-Chairs</b>	Bernadette Maher	<i>Open Positions!</i>
<b>Publicity Chair</b>		<i>Open Position!</i>

<b>Treasurer</b>	S. Pasricha	
<b>Co-Webmasters</b>	Dennis Colligan	<i>Open Positions!</i>
<b>Outings/Events Co-Chairs</b>	John Miraglia, S. Pasricha, Bernadette Maher	
<b>Student Liaison</b>	Akhila Mahidara	

<b>Group Executive Committee Members</b>	Gary Frederick*, S. Pasricha*, Teresa Callahan**, Kevin Corcoran**, and Bernadette Maher*
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\*Jan 2023-Dec 2024

\*\*Jan 2022-Dec 2023

Monthly membership meetings are typically held on the fourth Wednesday in New Brunswick. We discuss environmental issues (impacting Middlesex and Somerset), upcoming events, and volunteer efforts. See our calendar on the webpage for meetings, outings, and events.

### The issues of interest to our communities include:

1. Opposition to new fossil fuel infrastructure;
2. Conservation, preservation, and protection of the Raritan River Basin area; and,
3. Passage and enforcement of environmentally friendly ordinances.

## NEWS FROM THE RARITAN VALLEY AREA

• FERC has approved the Regional Energy Access Expansion Project (REAE) to expand compressor stations at Old Bridge (CS 207) in Middlesex County and at Neshanic Station, Branchburg (CS 505) in Somerset County. Liquid natural gas storage is also proposed at Neshanic Station. They've stated that the fact that New Jersey and Pennsylvania do not need the gas is insufficient to deny the project as other states may prefer to burn fracked gas. Seventy-four percent of the gas will flow through New Jersey. The Club has filed an appeal.

• The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) responded to the public comments given at Raritan Valley Community College regarding the REAE air permit. The DEP stated that the air pollutants will be negligible. <https://bit.ly/3XwXLEg>

• **Northeast Supply Enhancement (NESE):** Williams submitted an application for a two-year extension for NESE. Their attorneys have responded to FERC's enquiries about obtaining the required state permit approvals. Williams is concerned that the current political climate in New York and New Jersey is not in favor of fossil fuel dependency. Read Williams' excuses here: [https://elibrary.ferc.gov/eLibrary/filelist?accession\\_number=20230626-5129](https://elibrary.ferc.gov/eLibrary/filelist?accession_number=20230626-5129)

• **Keasbey, Woodbridge Township:** A second fracked gas power plant is proposed by Competitive Power Ventures. Woodbridge officials claim that the state's rules to protect environmental justice communities do not apply since the EJ rules were only recently enacted. Adjacent towns and overburdened communities that will live under a cloud of pollution disagree. NJ state EJ map: <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/548632a2351b41b8a0443cfc3a9f4ef6>

• **South Plainfield:** The EPA is reviewing the 70 acre Woodbrook Road superfund dump site cleanup located in the Peter J. Barnes Wildlife Preserve. The projected costs have gone up from \$24.4 million to \$45.3 million. <https://semspub.epa.gov/work/02/652545.pdf>

• **Branchburg:** Warehouse construction is proposed along Route 202. Additionally in the area, there are plans to build a QuickCheck gas station on top of an underground aquifer.

• **The Raritan River** is increasingly flooding due to the climate crisis and fatal storms such as Tropical Storm Ida. New Jersey has adopted the Inland Flood Protection Rule. Check your flood risk: <https://dep.nj.gov/inland-flood-protection-rule/flood-tool/>

We encourage you to get involved by attending your town's planning and zoning board meetings. If you are aware of development proposals in your neighborhood that may have a negative environmental impact, please contact us and join our meetings.

## JERSEY SHORE GROUP

(Monmouth County, approximately)

**Webpage:** [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/Jersey-Shore/](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/Jersey-Shore/)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/JerseyShoreNJSC/](http://www.facebook.com/JerseyShoreNJSC/)

**Instagram:** [www.instagram.com/sierraclub\\_jerseyshore/?hl=en](http://www.instagram.com/sierraclub_jerseyshore/?hl=en)

### OFFICERS

<b>Group Chair</b>	Dennis Anderson	732-970-4327	dennisaza@aol.com	6 Maple Ave, Matawan NJ 07747
<b>Group Co-Chair</b>	Stan Greberis		sgreberis@newjersey.sierraclub.org	
<b>Conservation Chair</b>	Stan Greberis		sgreberis@newjersey.sierraclub.org	
<b>Education Chair</b>	George Moffat		gmoffattgt@aol.com	

<b>Letter-Writing Committee</b>	Steve Miller	732-671-5917	SteveMiller@Comcast.net	
	Stan Greberis		sgreberis@newjersey.sierraclub.org	

<b>Outings Chair</b>	<i>Open Position!</i>			
<b>Political Co-Chairs</b>	Robin and Harold Zullo		drzullo@optonline.net	
<b>Program Chair</b>	Lara Zullo		lara@newjersey.sierraclub.org	

<b>Social Media Manager</b>	Yvette Viasus		Yvetteviasus.Yv@gmail.com	
<b>Treasurer</b>	Jim Baye		jimbaye@optonline.net	

<b>Website Communications Manager</b>	Chris Foley		ccffoley359@gmail.com	
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### MEMBER MEETINGS

We present Zoom webinars, usually on the fourth Monday of every month at 7 p.m.

### Upcoming Speakers at Brookdale College

**Monday, Sept. 25, 7:30 p.m.** at Brookdale Community College: Susan Lockwood of the NJ Department of Environmental Protection will explain the agency's programs to preserve the state's freshwater wetlands from land and water pollutants. She has worked in New Jersey's freshwater wetland program since it was established in 1987. The program has preserved habitat for thousands of species of aquatic and terrestrial plants and animals, and includes flood protection, water quality, shoreline erosion control, natural food resources, recreation, and aesthetics.

**Monday, Oct. 23, 7:30 p.m.** at Brookdale Community College: Dr. David McDermott Hughes will discuss the importance of windfarm-generated electricity. McDermott, a professor of anthropology at Rutgers University, is the author of *Who Owns the Wind? Climate Crisis and the Hope of Renewable Energy*. He also has studied the evolution and support for wind farms in Spain. In a second book, *Energy Without Conscience*, he provides strong arguments for renewable energy based on his studies of the social and cumulative impacts of the oil industry on communities in Trinidad and Tobago.

**Monday, Nov. 27, 7:30 p.m.** at Brookdale Community College: Jonathan Phillips, executive director of Groundwork Elizabeth, will explain how the organization builds sustainable, healthy, and more equitable urban communities with an emphasis on community participation. The group is dedicated to reducing community climate risks and cumulative impacts, such as urban heat, flooding, and poor air and water quality. Groundwork Elizabeth is a locally based non-profit focusing on Union County and is part of a national network of environmental urban non-profits.

**Directions:** Brookdale Community College is on Route 530 (765 Newman Springs Road), *Lincroft, NJ*. Enter the campus at the Rt. 530 Roundabout, drive to the far end of

the campus and turn right onto Campus Road. Drive to the dead end/ parking lot. The BCC/ Sierra speakers program is in the Warner Student Life Center—on your far left, on the lower ground floor, in Twin Lights Rooms 1 and 2. Campus map is at <https://www.brookdalecc.edu/about/maps-and-directions/> We hope to see you there!

## OCEAN COUNTY GROUP

**Webpage:** [Meetup.com/Sierra-Club-Ocean-Group](https://www.meetup.com/Sierra-Club-Ocean-Group)

### OFFICERS

<b>Chair and Treasurer</b>	Laura Stone	LauraS36@yahoo.com
<b>Political Chair</b>	Margaret Mary Piccolo	gogreenp1@yahoo.com
<b>Membership Chairs</b>	Ray and Cathy Kozakerich	raykozak@comcast.net

<b>Group ExCom Members</b>	William Rodgers	
	Joyce Isaza	realtymstr@aol.com

**Activities director, fundraising, publicity, and webmaster** are all open positions!

**ACTIVITIES AND ISSUES:** Our group is focused on many critical issues. Locally and statewide we are fighting a myriad of overdevelopment problems. Along with our allies, we are working hard to save Barnegat Bay and The Pinelands, two natural gems in Ocean County.

The group is looking to build up its membership and welcomes new volunteers and people simply interested in getting outdoors. Interested persons should contact Ray and Cathy Kozakerich at [raykozak@comcast.net](mailto:raykozak@comcast.net)

Ocean County Group works closely with the Barnegat Bay Partnership and meetings are held in their building in Toms River.

## WEST JERSEY GROUP

(Camden, Gloucester, and Burlington counties, approximately)

**Webpage:** [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/west-jersey](https://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/west-jersey)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/WestJerseyGroupNJSC](https://www.facebook.com/WestJerseyGroupNJSC)

Follow us on **Twitter** @WJsierraclub and **Instagram** @wjsierraclub

Log on and Like Us!

### OFFICERS

<b>Group Chair</b>	Gina Carola	856-848-8831	ginaceee@verizon.net
<b>Vice-Chair</b>	Denise Brush		denise.brush111@gmail.com
<b>Secretary</b>	Open Position!		
<b>Treasurer</b>	Trish Clements		patri3210@gmail.com
<b>Publicity Chair</b>	Anne Caridi		annecaridi@yahoo.com
<b>Political Chair</b>	Linda Rubiano		Linda_Maritza@yahoo.com
<b>Greenways Coords.</b>	Frank and Ellen Zinni		efzin4@aol.com
<b>Conservation Chair</b>	Stacey Ayala		thunderwolfgalaxy@yahoo.com
<b>Pinelands Rep</b>	Open Position!		
<b>Delegate at Large</b>	Aida Ayala		thunderwolfgalaxy@yahoo.com
<b>Membership Chair</b>	Mike Brown	856-547-9221	eyebrown@verizon.net
<b>Media &amp; Communications</b>	Tony Hagen		editor@newjersey.sierraclub.org

**Open Positions! Call Gina to volunteer: 856-848-8831**

Smart growth chair, programs chair, social media coordinators, outings chair.

**GENERAL MEETINGS** are held at 7:30 p.m. on the SECOND WEDNESDAY of ALTER-NATE MONTHS, September through May, via Zoom. You do not need Zoom software on your PC or Smartphone, just send an email to [ginaceee@verizon.net](mailto:ginaceee@verizon.net) to get an invitation and link to participate.

**Sept 13:** To be announced

**Nov 8:** To be announced

These may be Zoom meetings or may be in person at the Haddonfield Meeting or it could be a hybrid using both. If you would like to participate and are not already on our email reminder list, please send an email to [Anne Caridi annecaridi@yahoo.com](mailto:AnneCaridi@yahoocom) or [Gina Carola ginaceee@verizon.net](mailto:GinaCarola@verizon.net) Or visit our Facebook page for the link to join the presentation. <http://www.facebook.com/WestJerseyGroupNJSC/>

The West Jersey Group does not meet in June, July, or August. Next meeting will be September 13.

**In the meantime, you can join us on a hike.**

<http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/upcoming-outings>

Contact Gina to get involved in any of our many initiatives on climate change.

## SOUTH JERSEY GROUP

(Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland and Salem counties, approximately)

**Webpage:** [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/south-jersey](https://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/south-jersey)

### OFFICERS

<b>Group, Outings Chair</b>	Tom Boghosian	609-335-6907	tfboghosian44@gmail.com
<b>Vice-Chair</b>	Open Position!		
<b>Conservation Chair</b>	Open Position!		
<b>Political Chair, Calendars</b>	Dick Colby	609-965-4453	dick.colby@stockton.edu
<b>Membership Chair</b>	Open Position!		
<b>Secretary/Treasurer</b>	Julie Akers	609-432-3280	julieakers56@gmail.com
<b>At Large</b>	Allie Horn		

Tom Boghosian is an avid kayaker (certified as a Maine Guide!), both oceangoing and in fresh waters, possibly willing to lead trips. Dick Colby is also an Atlantic County Parks Commissioner; contact him if you might be interested in attending monthly meetings of the Commission, which are open to the public. Julie Akers also works with

Atlantic County Friends of the Parks, and is President of the Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association.

**Current Issues:** (1) Ocean City (Cape May Co.) has been fighting both the siting of adjacent offshore wind turbines and the burying of power cables to bring the electricity onshore. An attempt to rally support (for wind energy) from the 65 Club members and supporters living in Ocean City has been unsuccessful! (2) We've been blue-blazing the southern portion of what will be a continuous footpath between the southern and northern tips of New Jersey, called the New Jersey Long Trail. Many others (and other groups) are contributing. Detailed maps and descriptions are now on the chapter website. Dick has also produced a brochure describing 15 historic walks in Egg Harbor City. Copies (electronic or paper) are available on request. (3) We continue to hope for Community Solar opportunities for each municipality in South Jersey.

## SINGLES SECTION

(A chapter-wide special interest section offering hikes/cleanups, social gatherings, meetings, etc.)

**Webpage:** [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/sierra-singles](https://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/sierra-singles)

### OFFICERS

<b>Interim Co-Chairs</b>	Ron Pate	ronpate31@verizon.net
	Jimi Oleksiak	The_Hikist@Mac.com

### Executive Committee

**Members** Jimi Oleksiak, Ron Pate

**The Singles Section has a need for volunteers.** Contact the officers if you would like to volunteer for any of the following: outings chair, conservation chair, treasurer, social chair, vice social chair, programs, publicity, membership, nominations.

We're a friendly, active group of individuals who enjoy hiking, biking, canoeing/kayaking, as well as a variety of social and cultural activities throughout the year. This section was created to offer a variety of singles-oriented activities to NJ Sierra Club members. See the Outings section in this issue for a list of upcoming hikes.

**COMMUNICATIONS:** The best way to be notified of upcoming singles events is to join our free listserv. Anyone may subscribe by going to: <https://lists.sierraclub.org/archives/NJ-SINGLES-NEWS.html> and clicking on "Join or leave the list." You may subscribe and unsubscribe at will. Events are also listed on the online calendar on the Chapter's website: [sierraclub.org/new-jersey](https://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey). You can also "like" us on Facebook: "Singles Group New Jersey Sierra Club." Activities will also be posted on Meetup.

## LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER (LGBTQ+) SECTION

Our mission is to support Sierra Club goals and to promote environmental activism and social equity. We are an inclusive section of the Sierra Club – all members of the LGBTQ+ community are invited to join us in any or all of the following events!

For more information or to help out, contact Diane at [Diascat@hotmail.com](mailto:Diascat@hotmail.com)

**Webpage:** [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/LGBT/](https://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/LGBT/)

**Meetup:** [www.meetup.com/njsierraclub](https://www.meetup.com/njsierraclub)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/njsierralgbt](https://www.facebook.com/njsierralgbt)

### OFFICERS

<b>Chair</b>	Diane Scarangella	diascat@hotmail.com
<b>Secretary</b>	Open Position!	
<b>Treasurer</b>	Jonathan Wall	docjdwall@gmail.com
<b>Webmaster/Listmaster</b>	John Kashwick	John.Kashwick@newjersey.sierraclub.org
<b>Outings Chair</b>	Wanda Ashbrook	pridegrlnj@aim.com

We are seeking volunteer hike leaders! If you are interested in co-leading one of our LGBTQ+ and/or all-inclusive hikes, please let us know! **We Need You!** Contact Diane Scarangella at [diascat@hotmail.com](mailto:diascat@hotmail.com) or Wanda Ashbrook at [pridegrlnj@aim.com](mailto:pridegrlnj@aim.com) for more information! Hope to see you on one of the following hikes!

**Sept. 16 (Sat), Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge**—Meet at the observations area at 12 p.m. This is a flat easy/moderate hike. There are trails and boardwalks, bird watching opportunities, and more. Great Swamp: [bit.ly/434BKAM](https://bit.ly/434BKAM) RSVP with Wanda, [pridegrlnj@aim.com](mailto:pridegrlnj@aim.com), or Rebecca Wilkin, [rebeccawilkin@gmail.com](mailto:rebeccawilkin@gmail.com)

**October 7 (Sat), Hacklebarney State Park**—Meet at 12 p.m. The Black River Gorge, woodlands, and trails provide a great autumn escape for walkers and hikers. Some of the trails have hills. A few bridges to cross over the river to other parts of this moderate hike.

Address: 119 Hacklebarney Rd. Long Valley, NJ, 07853

Website: [bit.ly/45bd6jO](https://bit.ly/45bd6jO)

RSVP with Wanda, [pridegrlnj@aim.com](mailto:pridegrlnj@aim.com), or Rebecca Wilkin, [rebeccawilkin@gmail.com](mailto:rebeccawilkin@gmail.com)

It is recommended that all hikers use proper hiking boots and apparel. Bring tick/insect repellent. Bring water/beverages, snacks, and food for a picnic along the way. Pets on leash are welcome at most hikes, but please check with hike leader if you are bringing a pet. Pictures for posting on social media at events are welcome, but please do NOT take pictures of people's faces without their permission. Tick, bug, and sunblock protection is recommended.

More Sierra Club NJ Chapter hikes are listed in the Outings Section of this newsletter as well as online at [sierraclub.org/new-jersey/calendar](https://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/calendar)

## SENIOR SECTION / FIFTY-PLUS SECTION

The Senior Section is a chapter-wide special interest section for members over 50 years of age. The mission of this section is to support the Sierra Club's goals through letter writing, phone calls, and other activities. We work through a listserve, by which members learn about current environmental issues, how these issues can be support-

>continued on page 16

ed, and places and events of interest to visit in New Jersey and surrounding states. In the future we hope to appoint members who will be responsible for leading and carrying out efforts related to those issues.

More about the Senior Section/Fifty-Plus Section is available online at <https://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/senior-section>. Visit our webpage to find out about activities and events, including hikes, cleanups, social gatherings, and other activities for members over 50.

**Section Chair** Paul Ehrlich p.w.ehrlich@gmail.com

**Senior Section** *Open Positions*

**Vice-Chair** *Open Positions*

Seeking a volunteer to assist the section chair in the management of the Senior Section. Promote interactions with grassroots communities and individuals, as well as other environmental groups, using the latest science, data, and research, including cumulative impacts. Represent the Senior Section at meetings of the Conservation Committee of the New Jersey Chapter. Attend and speak at relevant seminars, webinars, and conferences. Advise and assist seniors on projects/problems related to the environment.

**Conservation Coordinator**

Seeking a volunteer to assist New Jersey seniors and others with projects and problems related to the environment. Interact with government officials and corporate executives to explain our position on various issues. Attend relevant seminars, webinars, and conferences and explain items of importance to New Jersey Chapter members. Sierra Club membership is required for this position

If you are interested in one of these positions, send an email to Paul Ehrlich at p.w.ehrlich@gmail.com and include your resume. If you are interested in working on other goals, send an email with both a resume and justification for the proposed activity.

**ICO: INSPIRING CONNECTIONS OUTDOORS**

*(A special interest activity with the motto: "No child left inside!")*

**OFFICERS**

**Chair** Oscar Nazar [chair.njico.sierraclub@gmail.com](mailto:chair.njico.sierraclub@gmail.com)

**Other Officers** Amanda Gaglio, Mike Depardieu

**New Jersey Inspiring Connections Outdoors:** (NJ ICO) provides safe and fun wilderness trips for children and teenagers with limited access to the outdoors. Volunteer leaders collaborate with community partners to facilitate, lead, and promote events that will educate and foster a love of nature and the outdoors for youth in New Jersey who may not otherwise have the opportunity or the means. The program works to reduce barriers by providing gear, transportation, trip fees, and leaders to create opportunities to explore, enjoy, and advocate for nature. The chair welcomes inquiries from leaders of schools and other community organizations.

The chair is currently seeking volunteers looking to get involved as outings leaders to help facilitate and organize outings with our Youth Partner Organizations.

The group is also looking to fill its treasurer position. Any member with prior experience or interest is welcome to reach out to the group chair for more information.

**Upcoming Chapter Meetings**

All members are welcome to attend these monthly policy deliberations, held by Zoom video conferencing on second Saturdays. Zoom can be accessed from a computer, smartphone, or telephone. The Conservation Committee meets from 10 a.m. to noon and the Executive Committee meets from 1 to 3 p.m. For meeting link, contact [secretary@newjersey.sierraclub.org](mailto:secretary@newjersey.sierraclub.org)

**Upcoming Meetings: Oct. 14, Nov. 11, Jan. 13 (no meeting in Dec.)**



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**Explore, enjoy, and protect the planet**



# Thinking Cyclically at Mazza Recycling Services

By Jackie Greger • Communications and Outreach Coordinator

On July 27, the Gateway Group and other Chapter volunteers visited Mazza Recycling Services, a materials recovery facility in Tinton Falls. The Mazza operations cover 55 acres and process up to 2,000 tons of material a week, sourced from Monmouth and Atlantic counties. The day was scorching hot as we gathered to tour the facility to better understand the sorting process that our municipal waste goes through before being recycled.

From our green shuttle bus window, discarded materials resurfaced that one tends not to think twice about after putting them on the curb. We drove through what felt like an island of lost items and passed mountains of composting mulch, concrete, bulky waste and plastics, rubber tires, and more. The early life stage of mulch was evident as we passed a facility where the product is bagged and sold for our topsoil and gardening needs, thus going back to the earth. Other cycles—for bulk plastics, for instance—were just beginning here at Mazza, as much of the material is transported for further processing in Pennsylvania.

The shuttle eventually took us to the central processing facility, where we donned safety vests, hard hats, and hearing protection against the loud machinery. In this single stream municipal waste facility, conveyor belts separate materials by weight, type, and

size. From our high platform we could see recognizable household items like cereal boxes, plastic water bottles, laundry detergent gallons, and Amazon cardboard boxes. Each conveyor belt is overseen by quality control workers who pull out anything that does not belong or might clog the system (which occurred



once on the tour and results in a brief pause of all processing). The workers' hands fly with efficiency and focus. Once materials are sorted and separated, they are baled and sent to several other facilities to be turned into recycled products.

Seeing the sorting process firsthand and walking through the loud facility enabled us to gain a better understanding of the hard work, skill, and technological requirements of recycling. At home, recycling seems like a black hole. We try our best to follow the rules and hope that our waste magically ends up where it needs to go. Well, at Mazza, magic happens. In this facility, at least, even pizza boxes, foil, and pie tins are recyclable despite information often pointing otherwise. Overall, after our tour of the facility, there was a feeling of reassurance and hope that our individual efforts are not in vain but powerful if you add up the collective outcome.



Photo by Danielle Rapsas

## TRENTON REPORT

# Wildfires Affect NJ Air

From June 6 to June 8, New Jersey recorded its worst air quality since 1980. On Wednesday June 7, the air quality index reached 486 in Somerset County. Anything over 100 is concerning. This severe dip in air quality was owing mainly to the Canadian wildfire smoke that drifted south and east across the United States.

“Unfortunately, environmental issues have no boundaries, and we expect to see an increase in the frequency and intensity of wildfires in the Northeast,” Philip Demokritou, an environmental engineering professor at the Rutgers School of Public Health, told the Bergen Record.

New Jersey has seen intense wildfires that have added to the problem. Also in early June, a Bass River State Forest fire burned 5,475 acres over four days before firefighters succeeded in containing the blaze.

“Unfortunately, the frequency of fires due to climate change and dry, hot conditions in our state is a new reality and we must stay vigilant,” said Sierra Club NJ Chapter Director Anjuli Ramos-Busot. “Not only do these fires pose a risk to our state lands and forests, but also to the health of wildlife and communities who live on the frontlines.”

The 2023 State of the Air report from the American Lung Association found that particulate matter—fine particles that embed in the lungs and cause a range of illnesses—has worsened in New Jersey, although there were some improvements in ozone smog levels. The Philadelphia-Camden and New York-Newark metro areas remain among the worst nationwide for ozone.

# Sierra Club Mourns the Loss of Environmental Champion, Ed Lloyd



Ed Lloyd, a long-time environmental activist, attorney, and friend of the Sierra Club, died on August 5, 2023. He was 74. Ed was an environmental litigator, activist, and scholar. As the director of the Environmental Law Clinic, he represented clients on environmental issues ranging from clean water to wetlands to preservation and more. As an environmental professor for Columbia University, Ed was an incredible mentor and teacher for his students, many of whom became environmental lawyers and advocates. Ed was also the president of the Environmental Endowment for New Jersey.

Ed was a true protector of the Pines as a Commissioner of the New Jersey Pinelands Commission. He also litigated against big polluters like Ciba Geigy and Solvay to address the statewide contamination of PFAS chemicals, and to ensure polluters are held responsible for funding the cleanup.

His loss will be mourned by his family, his friends, and all of New Jersey's friends of the environment.

## TRENTON REPORT

# NJ DEP Forecasts a Need for Waders

New Jersey's flood mapping system was more than 20 years out of date, so the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has adopted new rules to account for current and future levels of precipitation in New Jersey.

“As New Jersey's residents face threats from the devastating impacts of extreme rainfall events, which are expected to intensify in their frequency and severity, DEP must continue to protect public safety,” the agency said in introducing its updated Inland Flood Protection Rule in June.

In adopting the rule, the DEP acknowledged that:

- It was previously relying on rainfall and flood information from 1999 or earlier.
- Previous DEP rules did not account for precipitation increases anticipated from climate change.

“The rules ensure the use of current precipitation data and reliable climate science to aid New Jersey communities in better preparing to confront climate change-induced increases in the intensity of precipitation events and the resulting effects of additional stormwater runoff on stormwater management systems and flood elevations in fluvial [non-tidal] areas,” [the DEP said](#).

The updated standards will require buildings be located a few feet higher in elevation in some areas, among other things.

### Resource

<https://dep.nj.gov/wp-content/uploads/rules/adoptions/adopt-20230717a.pdf>

## TRENTON REPORT

# NJ Settles with Solvay

Attorney General Matthew J. Platkin and Commissioner of Environmental Protection Shawn M. LaTourette announced on June 28 a proposed [settlement](#) with Solvay Specialty Polymers USA that would ensure the remediation of contamination, including per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), and compensate the public for natural resource damages in the vicinity of Solvay's facility in West Deptford, Gloucester County. PFAS has been proven to cause development defects in children and pregnant women, liver and kidney problems, and even tumors.

The first of its kind to address PFAS contamination in New Jersey, the proposed settlement provides financial commitments of nearly \$393 million, including commitments by Solvay to:

- Pay for and implement comprehensive remedial activities at and in the vicinity of its West Deptford facility,
- Provide financial support for certain public water system upgrades necessary to remove PFAS from drinking water, which will be administered by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP),
- Further investigate and address certain PFAS impacts to public water systems and private potable drinking water wells in the vicinity, and,
- Compensate the public for natural resources injured by the discharge of hazardous substances.

“New Jersey's proposed settlement is a step in the right direction. It is critical that we hold polluters like Solvay accountable for their environmental mess. For decades, West Deptford and surrounding areas have been exposed to toxic PFAS chemicals in the air, groundwater, and drinking water. This settlement doesn't provide any compensation or support for people who have already been exposed to PFAS and other chemicals from the West Deptford site, but it will prevent future harm, said Anjuli Ramos-Busot, director of the NJ Chapter of the Sierra Club.

## TRENTON REPORTS

## Fighting the Regional Energy Access Pipeline

New Jersey has enough natural gas, too much in fact, given the spike in local and global temperatures, but this isn't stopping Williams Companies from insisting we need more, over and above a state Board of Public Utilities (BPU) objection that we don't.

However, with an approval from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) in their back pocket, Williams Companies is "in full construction" of the sprawling, multistate gas Regional Energy Access pipeline extension.

In opposing FERC's support for this climate destabilizing project, a coalition of environmental organizations that includes the Sierra Club has been joined by eight attorneys general and the NJ Ratepayer Advocate.

In July, the Niskanen Center (Washington, DC-based environmental think tank) filed a joint opening brief on behalf of the NJ Conservation Foundation, NJ League of Conservation Voters, and others to contest FERC's decision. The brief was filed in concert with Earthjustice, representing Food & Water Watch and the Sierra Club.

The NJ Rate Counsel, which represents consumers in disputes with regulated industries, also filed a brief in support of the challenge. Also, the attorneys general of New Jersey, Washington State, Connecticut, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, Oregon, and Vermont filed a joint amicus brief (companion filing) to support the challenge to FERC's flawed authorization of this unneeded project.

The legal briefs underscore the importance of carefully considering the implications of the Regional Energy Access project and its potential effects on New Jersey's energy landscape and the health and safety of local communities.

The project, which includes expanded gas-fired compressor stations in Branchburg and Old Bridge, NJ, and a new compressor station in West Deptford, NJ, is an extension to a 10,000-mile pipeline system that extends from South Texas to New York.

With pictures of farm fields instead of muddy pipeline trenches and smog-filled overburdened communities, Williams Companies has falsely attempted to portray this pipeline expansion as reducing greenhouse gas emissions and good for the planet.

Despite Williams Companies' contentions that New Jersey needs additional pipeline capacity, the NJ BPU last year determined, based on a study by London Economics, that New Jersey can already "[easily meet firm demand](#)" for natural gas during normal winter conditions and even during colder than normal winters, based on past experience.

"It is unacceptable in 2023 for FERC to be greenlighting and expanding continued fossil fuel projects while the impacts of climate change are at New Jersey's doorstep," said Anjuli Ramos, director of the NJ Chapter of the Sierra Club.

### Resource

<https://shorturl.at/jxIZ9>

## No Flip-Flopping on Climate Change Policy

Global temperatures are now likely to reach 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels by the early 2030s. That's the famous "tipping point" after which climate changes become "[self-perpetuating](#)," according to the journal *Science*.

In New Jersey in February, Gov. Phil Murphy issued an [executive order](#) calling for a faster transformation to 100% clean energy. This means 100% of the electricity in the state would come from renewable sources. He wants to get there by 2035—15 years earlier than the original plan.

State legislators and environmental advocates, aware of the lasting problems of climate change and the changeable nature of political will, issued a plea in June that the state legislature "codify" Murphy's executive order, which means turn it into law.

This would make it more durable against a change of administrations.

In February, Murphy also established a target for expanding zero-carbon-emission space heating to 400,000 homes and 20,000 commercial properties by 2030. For this effort, the Inflation Reduction Act and its rebates and tax credits for electrification will be extremely helpful.

Murphy also called upon the Board of Public Utilities to formulate a plan for reducing emissions from the state's natural gas sector. We hope this leads to measurable progress in reduction of gas consumption.

In June, legislators and environmental advocates also called upon the state legislature to take common-sense actions, such as remove trash incineration from the list of allowable sources of renewable energy and work harder to increase genuinely clean energy production in New Jersey.

"We know that New Jerseyans support the clean energy goal, and we need state leaders to do the same. However, while we support steps being taken to pass supporting legislation that codifies these goals, we simply cannot overlook or compromise on the health of our most vulnerable communities by supporting any clean energy standard that includes trash incineration," said Ed Potosnak, executive director, New Jersey League of Conservation Voters.

### Resources

Science: [shorturl.at/mqFY0](https://shorturl.at/mqFY0)

Executive Order: [shorturl.at/gnGK1](https://shorturl.at/gnGK1)