

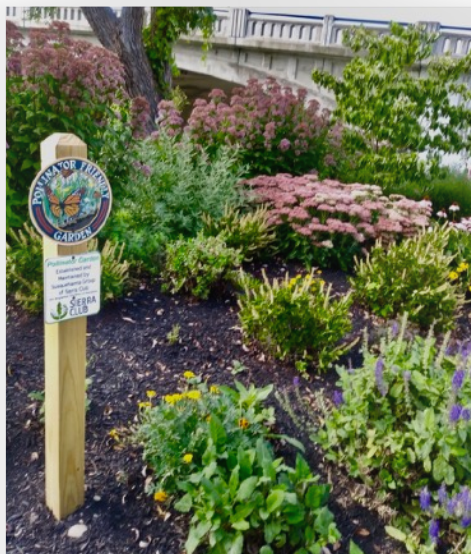
# Susquehanna Sierran

## MARCH 2024



Founded 1892

EXPLORE, ENJOY, PROTECT THE PLANET



**Portion of Susquehanna Group's Pollinator Garden Project at Confluence Park, Binghamton. More photos page 3.**

### PFAS – Doug Gausman

PFASs (Per- and Poly- FluoroAlkyl Substances) are a hot topic. They are oil-based chemicals that resist heat, oil, stains, grease, and water. They are frequently referred to as 'forever chemicals' as they do not break down easily and persist for a long time in the environment. Since the mid-20th Century manufacturers have incorporated them in water repellent clothing, furniture, adhesives, paint and varnish, food packaging, electrical wiring insulation, carpets, non-stick cooking surfaces and many other products. They are also common in firefighting foam. They have become pervasive in drinking water, wells, lakes, ponds, and rivers.

Health effects have emerged, including dyslipidemia (abnormally high cholesterol), suboptimal antibody response, reduced infant and fetal growth, and higher rates of kidney cancer. The US Environmental Protection Agency and the NY Department of Environmental Conservation continue to evaluate PFAS prevalence and biological dangers.

The Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter's Farm and Food Committee, and Sierra Club Tennessee have focused on PFASs, particularly as they appear in sewage sludge and runoff from landfills. In many instances the sludge is intentionally spread on agricultural land as fertilizer, thereby becoming part of the food chain. New York State has been monitoring PFASs in water through the DEC and the Dept of Health since 2016, and the DEC produced a PFAS technical guidance document in April 2023 covering field sampling procedures, data assessment, and reporting of results. Stay tuned. There will surely be a lot more coming on this.



*Fabric treated with a PFAS and repelling water.*

## **Susquehanna Group**

(All of Broome and Sullivan, & most of  
Chenango, Delaware, Otsego, and Tioga  
Counties)

Chair	*Valdi Weiderpass
Vice Chair	*Moirra Ashleigh
Secretary	Open
Treasurer	*Joann Lettis
Political Chair	*Scott Lauffer
Outings	*Scott Lauffer, *Mary Cronk
Membership	*Christina Fuller
Chapter Delegate	*Jim Taft
Newsletter Editor	*Jim Taft
Webmaster	Chris Harasta, *Christina Fuller
Conservation	*Doug Gausman, *Mary Cronk
Alt. Chapter Delegate	*Joann Lettis

\* Member Executive Committee

To become a candidate for the  
Susquehanna Group's Executive  
Committee, mail by November 1,  
2024 a candidate statement of 150  
words or less to:

Susquehanna Group  
PO Box 572  
Endicott NY 13760

The Nominating Committee will  
create a slate of candidates, and  
ballots will be mailed with the  
December *Sierran*.

## **COMING EVENTS**

March 19, 7:00 pm General Meeting. Amelia LoDolce, Director of VINES (Volunteers Improving Neighborhood Environments) will speak on the organization's net-zero (energy neutral) headquarters building under construction on Susquehanna Street, Binghamton.

Members of Susquehanna Group and of the public may attend in-person at the Vestal Public Library, 320 Vestal Parkway East, or remotely by Zoom at <https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/3644665286?pwd=VS9kUoNBaUttMnpRa3BSNngwci9TUTo9>

April 16, 7:00pm General Meeting. Andrew Hrycyna of the Mystic River Watershed Association will present on the contributions of impervious surfaces to water pollution. Additional details to be announced.

April 20, 1-4pm Earth Day. Susquehanna Group will table at Ross Park Zoo, Binghamton.

May (all) MOP. Susquehanna Group's annual Binghamton Move Out Project is gearing up for another collection cycle. Volunteers will be needed throughout the month of May to help with collection, sorting, distribution. To sign up to help contact [binghamtonmoveout@gmail.com](mailto:binghamtonmoveout@gmail.com) or visit [moveoutproject.org](http://moveoutproject.org).

May 21, 7:00pm General Meeting. Biology Professor Julian Shepherd on biodiversity. Additional details to be announced.

Before he departed,  
Roy Cronk passed on  
his photos. Thanks  
Mary for curating  
and sharing.



Red-winged blackbird



Tufted titmouse

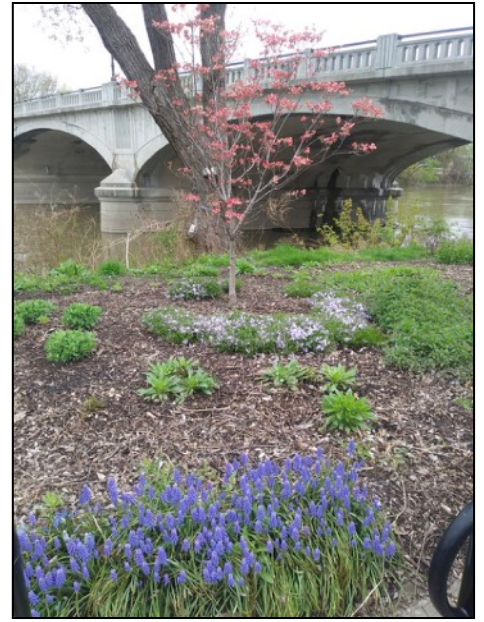
**Pollinator garden at Confluence Park turns 7 this year. A joint project of Susquehanna Group and Binghamton City Parks & Recreation. Some photos.**



We begin, 2017



Drainage is needed



Early plantings



Still early days



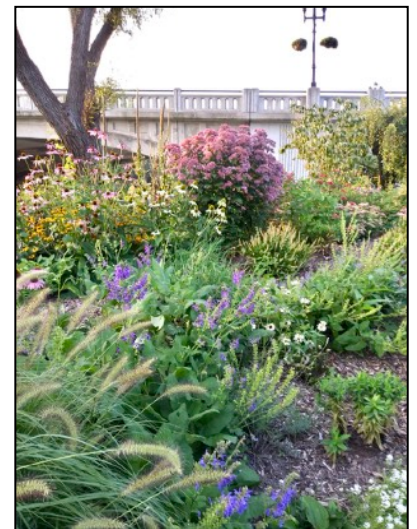
City asks us to expand to additional beds, 2022



Sarah, project leader, master gardener



Winter adversity



Spectacular, scenic volunteer opportunity.  
Contact Sarah at [shaddow@stny.rr.com](mailto:shaddow@stny.rr.com)

- **NY State Climate Bills**
- **Please Urge Passage Now**
- **Whom to Contact**

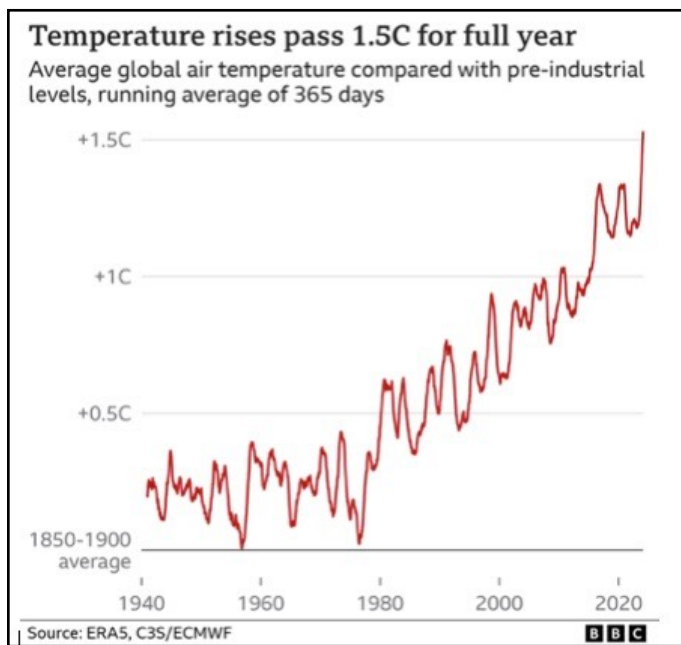
- Valdi Weiderpass

With our planet shooting past 1.5°C of warming, scientists plead for humanity to swiftly act before the climate system goes beyond our ability to bring it under control! Climate and atmospheric scientists Chris Smith at the University of Leeds and Robin Lamboll at Imperial College London: "If humanity wants to have a 50-50 chance of limiting global warming to 1.5°C, we can only emit another 250 gigatonnes (billion metric tons) of CO<sub>2</sub>....This effectively gives the world just six years to get to net zero."



Sierra Club and numerous NY environmental organizations agree we must now urge the State to speed the transition of its economy to renewable energies. Please urge \$1B funding and enactment of these climate-related bills. Bill statuses and summaries can be found at <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation> and <https://www.nyassembly.gov>.

- 1) NY HEAT Act S2016B (Krueger)/A4592B (Fahy) Please urge that full version of this bill be included in NY State budget so it will be a must-pass this spring
- 2) Climate Superfund S2129A/(Krueger)/A3351A (Dinowitz)
- 3) Energy Efficiency Equity and Jobs Act S2469 (Parker)/A2655 (Hunter)
- 4) Just Energy Transition Act S2935D (Parker)/A4866-C (Kelles)
- 5) Green Transit S6089 (Kennedy)/A6414 (Dinowitz)
- 6) Fossil Fuel Subsidies Elimination Act S3389 (Krueger)/A7949A (Simon)
- 7) Electric Planes, Trains, & Ferries S2966 (Kavanagh)/A2246 (Simon)
- 8) Ban CO2 Fracking S8357 (Webb)/A8866 (Kelles)



**Whom to contact:**

- Gov. Kathy Hochul <https://www.governor.ny.gov/content/governor-contact-form> Phone: [1-518-474-8390](tel:1-518-474-8390) Office hours: 9:00am to 5:00pm
- NY Senate Majority Leader Sen. Andrea Stewart-Cousins, [scousins@nysenate.gov](mailto:scousins@nysenate.gov) (518) 455-2585
- NY Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie, [Speaker@nyassembly.gov](mailto:Speaker@nyassembly.gov) 518-455-3791
- NY Senator Lea Webb (District 52) [leawebb@nysenate.gov](mailto:leawebb@nysenate.gov) 607-773-8771 (or look up your Senator)
- NY Senator Peter Oberacker (District 51) [oberacker@nysenate.gov](mailto:oberacker@nysenate.gov) 607-432-5524
- NY Senator Thomas F. O'Mara (District 58) [omara@nysenate.gov](mailto:omara@nysenate.gov) 607-735-9671
- Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo (District 123) [LupardoD@nyassembly.gov](mailto:LupardoD@nyassembly.gov) 607-723-9047

(continued next page)

- Assemblyman Christopher Friend (District 124) [friendc@nyassembly.gov](mailto:friendc@nyassembly.gov) 607-562-3602
- Assemblyman Joe Angelino (District 121) [angelinoj@nyassembly.gov](mailto:angelinoj@nyassembly.gov) 607-648-6080
- Assemblywoman Aileen Gunther (District 100) [GuntheA@nyassembly.gov](mailto:GuntheA@nyassembly.gov) 845-794-5807

For a layman's overview of Climate Change including tipping points, self-reinforcing feedback loops, and consequences from different degrees of global warming, see:

- <https://youtu.be/JwE6096T7UQ?si=9uELWUuE94IcObEc&t=271> 70-minute video presentation followed by 20 minutes of Q & A.
- <https://www.sierraclub.org/sites/default/files/sce/susquehanna-group/Sierra%20Club%20Climate%20Change%20talk%20for%2010-19-2021.pptx.pdf>
- <https://phys.org/news/2024-01-global-breach-15c.html>

## New Straw-Bale Office – Scott Lauffer

VINES (Volunteers Improving Neighborhood Environments), <https://vinesgardens.org> is a Binghamton-based non-profit promoting urban agriculture, education, and community-building. This year its office will, from rented space, move into its "net-zero" commercial building at 157 Susquehanna Street constructed with much volunteer labor. This will apparently be the first commercial straw-bale building in the Northeast and Binghamton's first net-zero building. It will house operations, education and community events.

Volunteers have done construction, including setting straw bales for walls and coating interior and exterior with a lime-based plaster that dries as hard as rock. Architect Laura Lee Intscher specializes in natural design. She informs volunteer groups about the benefits of straw bales and lime plaster: it's renewable, energy efficient, breathable, and highly insulating for both cold and warm weather. With the installation of air-source heat pumps and solar panels, the building will produce as much energy as it uses.



Executive Director Amelia LoDolce at VINES's nearly complete net-zero building photo: Scott Lauffer

VINES Executive Director Amelia LoDolce will speak to Susquehanna Group members (and the public) at its March 19 meeting. She has been at the building site on a continual basis since ground-breaking, pitching in with whatever tasks are needed and working closely with work crews. The plan is for the building to be complete in June and ready for occupancy in August.



Susquehanna Group  
 PO Box 572  
 Endicott NY 13760  
<https://www.sierraclub.org/atlantic/susquehanna>