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Fighting for a cleaner and healthier New Jersey for all!

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OPINION

# COP28 Puts Fox in Charge of Henhouse



Protesters made sure the purpose of the meeting was not forgotten. Credit: Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

By George Moffatt • Jersey Shore Group

The cliché “Don’t look a gift horse in the mouth” didn’t apply last December to the United Nations’ COP28 climate conference, where the “horse” was obviously missing some teeth.

After days of wrangling, the conferees called for “transitioning away from fossil fuels in energy systems, in a just, orderly and equitable manner.” Any good lawyer would have a field day exposing the low level of commitment there.

But considering how the odds initially were stacked against COP28, even the half-step of “transitioning” is an achievement. After all, one of the world’s largest oil and gas exporters, the United Arab Emirates, was the conference host (Dubai), and Sultan Al Jaber, head of the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company, was president of the conference.

Fossil fuel producers, including Saudi Arabia, have pushed carbon capture and storage, which would protect fossil fuel industry profits and leave the cleanup—trapping and burying pollut-

ing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions—to their customers. However, the scientific opinion is that carbon capture is not going to make much of a dent in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, and COP28 discounted the value of relying on that technology for solving the global warming problem.

Conference participants pledged to “ratchet up” climate action to keep the 1.5° C ceiling on global warming within reach. “Whilst we didn’t turn the page on the fossil fuel era in Dubai, this outcome is the beginning of the end,” said UN Climate Change Executive Secretary Simon Stiell. “Now all governments and businesses need to turn these pledges into real-economy outcomes, without delay.”

Sierra Club Executive Director Ben Jealous, carefully noting COP28’s resolution to “transition” away from fossil fuels, said even a little progress in the face of such pressure from the oil industry was a step in the right direction. “At a COP hosted by a petro-state, presided over by a literal oil executive,

with fossil fuel billionaires and their lobbyists crowding the halls in record numbers, the world still charted a way forward,” he said.

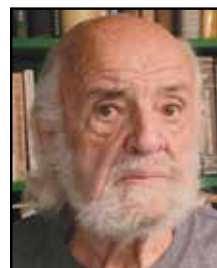
He described the final COP28 report as “a meaningful result of countless hours of global advocacy by Sierra Club and our partners across the world. Together, we not only forced global leaders to act, we fought back against the historic levels of influence—influence finally brought out of the shadows—that corporate polluters have had on negotiations.”

He also urged the Biden Administration to “lead a clear path forward for the rest of the world by stopping the expansion of the fossil fuel industry,” including “the expansion of LNG exports, pipelines, and drilling on our public lands and waters.

“As the global leader in oil production and the largest historical emitter of carbon pollution, the United States can and must lead the world forward in transitioning off of fossil fuels and on to clean energy once and for all.”

Al Jaber unsettled the COP28 mood when a [video](#) surfaced of him stating just weeks prior to the conference that, “There is no science out there, or no scenario out there, that says the phase-out of fossil fuel is what’s going to achieve 1.5° C.”

Fortunately, U.S. delegate and former Vice President Al Gore was having none of this. Criticizing Al Jaber sharply in an e-mail, he wrote, “From the moment this absurd masquerade began, it was only a matter of time before his preposterous disguise no longer con-



>continued on page 6

# NJ Transit Pulls Plug on Gas-Fired, 104 MW Kearny Plant

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

Amongst the debris that washed up from Hurricane Sandy in 2012 was an NJ Transit plan to build a gas-fired backup power plant in Kearny to keep its rail lines operating during emergencies. After all, Sandy caused power outages affecting some 2.7 million residents for up to two weeks.

In January 2024, NJ Transit announced it was abandoning that plan for [lack of “financial feasibility.”](#) Environmental groups throughout New Jersey had contended it lacked much more than monetary workability—namely, a clean energy component, as opposed to gas, a fossil fuel whose emissions would set us well back in the struggle for a stable climate.

The 104 MW plant and its associated microgrid would have added to the air pollution woes of innumerable state residents, particularly those in already overburdened neighborhoods.

“The NJ Chapter of the Sierra Club is pleased to see that NJ Transit has pulled this harmful project,” said Chapter Director Anjuli Ramos-Busot. “Gas is not the future for New Jersey and we hope to continue to move in the right direction toward renewable energy alternatives, battery storage, and incorporating climate resilience into everything we do.”

The Sierra Club and other environmentalists did try to get NJ Transit to incorporate renewable energy into the project, but there was much resistance and NJ Transit never disclosed whether the bids it received contained any renewable energy components at all.

Bids for the backup power plant were received over the past year and an award decision had been expected in 2024. A \$409.7 million grant for the project had been promised through the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) emergency response program, but by October 2023 the project was expected

>continued on page 6

# Greberis Receives Environmental Award

By George Moffatt • Jersey Shore Group

Stan Greberis, an Executive Committee member of the NJ Chapter of the Sierra Club, was honored recently by Gov. Phil Murphy and Sean LaTourette, commissioner of the DEP, for inventing a device that removes chlorine from swimming pool wastewater. The device may help avoid much of the illegal backwash dumping that goes on under cover of darkness.

In December, Greberis was presented with the Governor’s Environmental Excellence Award for his invention.

**How It Works**

Now that we’re approaching summer, more than 374,000 residential swimming pools in New Jersey will be prepared for action. So begins the annual contest between physics, biology, and chemistry.

Once pools are cleared of winter’s debris, many will require additional fresh

water to achieve the correct volume. Pool owners will also add chlorine to kill bacteria, viruses, and other harmful microorganisms. Then, the problems start.

First, physics and chemistry come into play as the sun’s radiation starts evaporating the pool water and neutralizing the chlorine. As the chlorine declines, biology happens, as algae bloom with abandon, and drowned bugs and bird droppings proliferate. So, pool owners add more chlorine.

Backwashing, or occasionally expelling water, helps to clear debris from the filter and remove dirty water from the pool. Some pool owners simply pump the chlorinated backwash water down the driveway or into a stormwater drain, often at night, when no one will notice. However, most municipalities ban such nocturnal dumping, and one risks having to appear before a municipal judge.



Sierra Club NJ Chapter Executive Committee member Stan Greberis (center) with NJ Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Shawn LaTourette (left) and NJ Infrastructure Bank Executive Director David Zimmer.

So, how can pools be maintained without violating local regulations?

Greberis, ever the environmentalist, invented a simple solution that would use a pool pump’s high-pressure discharge in an environmentally beneficial way. He developed what he calls the

>continued on page 5

## Inside This Issue

School Lead .....	2
Home Electrification .....	2
Donors List.....	3
Chapter Chair Message .....	3
ExCom Highlights.....	3
Director’s Message.....	4
Money Matters.....	4
Save the Sturgeon .....	4
Irish Environmentalism.....	5
Electric School Buses.....	5
Why Your Diet Matters.....	6
Outings and Group News.....	6-12
Chapter Leadership.....	12

## Electronic Supplement

(Available from the Chapter website)

Tesla Semi Trucks, Offshore Wind, PFAS, Boat Speeds, NJ Transit Fare Hike.... 13-14

# NJ Schools Still Contend With Lead Contamination

By Patricia Hilliard • Executive Committee Member

Recently, Eyewitness News NY reported that nearly 60% of schools in New Jersey notified parents that levels of lead in school drinking water were above the state and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) maximum allowable level of 15 parts per billion (ppb).

[NJ law requires school districts to test for lead](#) and cut off access to contaminated drinking water if levels exceed the limit.

One of those school systems was Toms River, which installed water filtering equipment in all its buildings or shut off access to contaminated drinking water. The district has worked for years to remediate its lead-contamination. A 2021 lab study found lead levels in Toms River schools as high as 56 ppb.

Schools must not only test for lead but also notify parents, guardians and staff and the NJ Department of Education (DOE) of contamination problems. In the event of lead contamination, test results must be posted on the school's website. Schools must test for lead every three years, and the next round of lead testing must be completed during the 2024-2025 school year.

[A 2017 study by New Jersey Future](#) found that of 95 NJ school districts that reported lead test results to the NJ DOE,

300 individual schools had one or more water outlets that tested positive for lead exceeding tolerable limits (8.1% of water outlets tested in total).

The report noted that not all NJ districts had reported to the DOE at the time the study was conducted, although "numerous other school districts conducted testing for lead in drinking water, had positive results, and notified the public, but were not included in the DOE data that was analyzed."

Three of the districts not included in the DOE results were Newark, Jersey City, and Camden, although all three had previously reported their lead problems to their constituent communities and initiated efforts to remediate. "No type of community appears to be immune from the presence of lead," NJ Future said.

Solutions to problems are always a work in progress.

## Where Is the Lead Coming From?

[A PBS report](#) in March 2023 noted that larger schools may not have a lead pipe problem so much as a problem with

lead-containing fixtures: "Typically lead pipes connected to public water systems are too small to serve larger schools. Water contamination in those buildings is more likely to come from old faucets, fountains, and internal plumbing."

School administrators have sometimes tried to solve the lead-contamination problem by posting signs at faucets that state: "OK for hand washing but not drinking."

## Who Pays for Remediation?

In July 2023, the [EPA announced funding of up to \\$58 million for lead remediation](#) in schools and childcare facilities. This money was made available through the Biden-Harris Investing in America agenda, and it will cover not just removal and replacement of pipes but also all the plumbing fixtures that go into school water systems, such as faucets, water fountains, water filler stations, point-of-use devices, and other apparatus related to drinking water.

School administrators can now apply for funding to replace the fixtures that

are dangerous. Also, NJ Department of Children and Families was awarded grant money from the EPA to assist childcare centers with the cost of testing for lead in drinking water.



## Information for Parents

Contact your child's school or visit the school's website to find out about lead contamination and remedial progress. Look for the school's drinking water report. Find out if the school is taking advantage of the funding now provided by the \$58 million to reduce lead in schools and other childcare facilities.

Act now to make sure your school is measuring up to standards. Democracy is participatory!

## Resources

Eyewitness News article: [shorturl.at/ruM89](#)

NJ Law: [www.nj.gov/education/lead/faq/](#)

PBS Report: [shorturl.at/koR26](#)

Biden-Harris fund: [shorturl.at/mqCL4](#)  
Please see the electronic supplement for more about lead remediation.

# To Electrify Your Home, Start With a Plan

By Betsy Longendorfer and Judith Green • Building Electrification Committee



Betsy Longendorfer (left) and Judith Green

The advantages of home electrification are numerous. All-electric homes are cheaper to run. Modern electric appliances are highly efficient, they reduce your carbon footprint, and they keep indoor air cleaner because no fuel combustion occurs. Further, as utilities convert to greener energy, the electricity you use becomes cleaner. However, you do need to plan wisely to get the full advantages of electrification. Here's how:

## Key Components of Electrification Planning

**The Energy Audit:** This is the *first and most important step* because it establishes the blueprint for any future improvements in your home's energy efficiency and, specifically, reveals where in your home you can leverage the

greatest savings. Inexpensive, easy-to-fix problems such as installing weather-stripping or sealing air leaks can quickly reduce utility bills and ready your home for bigger investments (e.g., an HVAC system, other appliances). If you move ahead without an audit, you risk wasting money on appliances with insufficient capacity or investing in things with little benefit at all. *Call your utility company to schedule an energy audit with a participating contractor.*

**Financing:** Planning your energy efficiency project(s) based on an audit also allows you to sequence the work optimally, with potentially large financial benefits from the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). To take full advantage of *financial rebates* (some routed through your utility company) and the *income tax reductions* provided under the IRA, check out the financial incentives summary table listed in the resources section at the end of this article. As some of these incentives have yearly caps, it may be wise to spread out your energy efficiency projects over several years to maximize the benefits.

**Weatherizing and Insulation:** Don't waste heating and cooling on the great

outdoors. The first step is to install weather stripping and seal air leaks as indicated by your audit. More expensive, and usually requiring professional contractors, are window replacements and wall and ceiling insulation. Because heat rises and the summer sun beats down, good nontoxic attic insulation is important. New Jersey offers utility rebates for insulation.

Windows can be a [major source of home energy inefficiency](#). On average, about 30% of a home's winter heating is lost through windows, and the summer sun significantly heats homes via the windows. If you don't want to replace your windows, having suitable window coverings installed can save a lot on heating and cooling expenses and, correspondingly, reduce your greenhouse gas emissions.

**HVAC and Hot Water:** Depending on the age and condition of your furnace and air-conditioning, it may be advisable to upgrade these systems. If you have a duct system in place, *heat pumps are the way to go*. Heat pumps heat and cool extremely efficiently by using a refrigerant that simply transfers heat either into your house from the outside (down to very low temperatures) to

warm it, or out of your house to cool it. Heat pumps are worth installing even if only the furnace or air-conditioning needs replacement. "Ground-sourced" heat pumps are able to exchange heat with the more constant earth temperature many feet below ground, although these are much more expensive.

Hot water also can be generated using a highly efficient heat pump for tank or tankless "on demand" model water heaters. Your current water heater's age and the rebate availability can help with a replacement decision. A less expensive alternative is an Energy Star electric water heater, either tank or tankless.

**Electricity Needs:** Planning allows you to know whether you need to upgrade your electric panel or electrical wiring. Consider *all the electrical needs* your plan requires, including whether you expect to buy electric cars at some point, so that you have the expense of upgrading your electrical system just once. Most experts agree that a 200-amp panel will allow for all the above improvements.

## Resources

Financial incentives table: [bit.ly/TaxCreditsandNJRebates](#)

Window insulation: [shorturl.at/pswzi](#)

# NJ Adopts ACCII

By Bill Beren • Chair, Transportation Committee

The NJ Department of Environmental Protection has adopted California's Advanced Clean Cars II (ACCII) standards. This sets a goal of gradually increasing the share of electric and hybrid electric passenger vehicles sold in New Jersey to 100% by 2035, starting with model year 2027.

The rule also establishes more stringent exhaust emission standards for gasoline and diesel vehicles, which will improve NJ air quality, especially near high-traffic corridors.

Delaying implementation until 2027 provides time for the auto industry to transition to electric vehicles and al-

lows for continued expansion of New Jersey's charging infrastructure and electrical grid.

The rule neither bans gasoline cars nor forces consumers to buy EVs. Rather, it will provide the certainty needed by vehicle manufacturers, suppliers, utilities, and charging infrastructure companies to invest in large-scale deployment of light-duty, zero-emission vehicles.

Eleven other states and the District of Columbia also have adopted the rule. They represent 34% of national light-duty vehicle sales. However, NJ auto dealers are opposed to ACCII. Stay tuned...

## 2024 Election for NJ Chapter Executive Committee

In the October-December issue of *The Jersey Sierran* newsletter, we will be including a ballot for our annual election for the Chapter Executive Committee. Each year, three members are elected to the Executive Committee for 3-year terms. This year, the Nominating Committee has nominated three candidates for the ballot: Stan Greberis, Kip Cherry, and Denise Brush.

If other Sierra Club members in New Jersey would also like to run for Chapter Executive Committee, they may do so by submitting an election petition signed by at least 15 Chapter members to Chapter Vice-Chair Joe Testa by June 30, 2024. For details on submitting a candidate petition, please contact Joe Testa at [vice.chair@newjersey.sierraclub.org](mailto:vice.chair@newjersey.sierraclub.org)

# Thanks for Your Support!

Supplied by Jim Andreano • Fundraising Committee Chair

The NJ Chapter of the Sierra Club wishes to thank all those who provided the Chapter with financial support during 2023. We value every donor and every donation. 100% of your gift stays within New Jersey to fund our local activities. Listed below are members and friends who contributed \$100 or more during the calendar year.



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## CHAPTER CHAIR'S MESSAGE

# The Chapter Warmly Welcomes More Volunteers!

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

Our Chapter extends a warm welcome to three new volunteers!

### Dennis Colligan, Chapter Webmaster

Dennis retired three years ago from AT&T, where he spent about 32 years in the technical field as a C/Unix developer, systems administrator, and data networking developer/tester. He has served as the Raritan Valley Group's webmaster and has taken several HTML5 courses and all of the Drupal website building courses offered in Campfire, the Club's website for information and resources.

Although he just recently became our Chapter webmaster, Dennis has already made several positive changes to our website, including the creation of a link for individuals to donate to our Chapter in various ways.

Now residing in Manasquan, Dennis was born and raised in New Brunswick and attended Rutgers University.



### Collin Crecco, Esq., Offshore Wind and Legislative Committees

Collin graduated from law school in New Hampshire and now practices environmental law in Atlantic City. Before attending law school, he worked as a research ana-



lyst for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and as an environmental consultant in South Florida.

An avid scuba diver, he is certified as an advanced and rescue diver by the Professional Association of Diving Instructors. We're glad to have Collin involved with our Offshore Wind Committee and our Legislative Committee.

### Alex Meseguer, Offshore Wind Committee

A retired information technology analyst with a BS in business administration, Alex follows all climate-related news and issues in the national press. In particular, Alex is interested in current and future technology that can provide solutions to the climate crisis. He pays close attention to wind, solar, enhanced geothermal, and anything else that is truly environmentally friendly.

Alex and his wife have four grandchildren and they are willing to do environmental work to leave behind a world where clean air and water are available to lead a healthy life. Now a member of our Chapter's Offshore Wind Committee, Alex regularly finds and shares articles with NJ Chapter members to help keep us informed.



## ExCom Meeting Highlights

**December (special meeting):** Ricardo Pereira was appointed chair of the Political Committee. Karen Becker, outgoing chair of the committee, expressed thanks for the support she received in that role. Rich Isaac, Chapter chair, thanked Karen for all of the work she has done for the Chapter's political program and in managing our political endorsements.

In a separate, special email vote, the ExCom voted unanimously to support Sierra Club National's litigation concerning the NJ Board of Public Utilities' plans for implementing renewable energy savings programs under the Inflation Reduction Act, in conjunction with the Natural Resources Defense Council and NJ Progressive Equitable Energy Coalition. The tax credits and electrification rebates under this program go into effect in July 2024.

**January:** After Karen Becker's resignation from the ExCom, Syona Gupta was appointed to fill the remainder of Karen's 3-year term. Rich Isaac was reelected Chapter chair for a 1-year term. Tony Hagen was appointed to the Transportation Committee. An updated list of 2024 leadership positions and committees was approved.

The ExCom approved the following endorsements recommended by the Political Committee: Rep. Donald Norcross (D, NJ-01), Rep. Frank Pallone (D, NJ-06), Rep. Bill Pascrell (D, NJ-09), Rep. Mikie Sherrill (D, NJ-11), Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman (D, NJ-12), Rep. Donald Payne Jr. (D, NJ-10). The Political Committee reported that it would send questionnaires to and schedule interviews with the three Democratic primary candidates in District 7. A motion was approved to authorize electronic voting for the 2024 Chapter elections. The ExCom approved allowing electronic voting on motions under certain circumstances.

The Elections Committee counted the 2023 ballots for the Chapter ExCom vote and the following candidates were elected for 3-year terms beginning 2024: Joe Testa, Renée Pollard, and Karen Becker. However, Karen's seat will be filled by Syona Gupta, as indicated above. Group results will be sent to group chairs.

## Warehouse Watch

We need your help. The Sierra Club of New Jersey is creating a database of warehouse development throughout the state. As you know, there is a lot going on in our counties and we depend on volunteers like you to help us stay abreast of it all. So, if you read of a new warehouse proposal or the status of an existing one, please let us know. If you can, please attach the article or reference, as well. Send your observation to either Stan Greberis ([sgreberis@newjersey.sierraclub.org](mailto:sgreberis@newjersey.sierraclub.org)) or Gary Frederick ([garyfrederick@newjersey.sierraclub.org](mailto:garyfrederick@newjersey.sierraclub.org)).

## DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

# Show Us More Leadership, Gov. Murphy

By Anjuli Ramos-Busot, Sierra Club NJ Chapter Director

We were disappointed to see that when Gov. Phil Murphy gave his Jan. 9, 2004, State-of-the-State Address, he mentioned the climate crisis and the environment just once each throughout the entire 6,000 word talk, which was covered by innumerable media outlets and witnessed by people across New Jersey.

The governor's statements were more focused on harnessing the power of artificial intelligence to foster a new industry in New Jersey. AI got mentioned 18 times during his address. We feel the governor wasted a massive opportunity to make the case for stronger environmental action.

The governor did mention AI once in the context of helping us find solutions to the climate crisis, but that's pie in the sky compared with the many underutilized tools already out there. For example, when Murphy adopted the Inland Flood Protection Rule in October 2023, a lot of hard work on coastal flood protections was put into cold storage.

It was, therefore, extremely heartening on February 15, 2024, to hear the governor announce support in a press conference for many existing initiatives that would further climate change protections in New Jersey for its residents. He said we could anticipate movement on coastal and riverine flood protections that, among other things, will change the floodplain map and put new buildings on higher ground.

All New Jerseyans have witnessed the devastating impacts of inland and coastal flooding in our state, and the floodplain rules are one of the most important mechanisms to keep our residents and property safe from severe weather events.

The governor also announced a target to install zero-carbon-emission space heating and cooling systems in 400,000 residential units and 20,000 commercial units, along with an accelerated effort to reach 100% clean energy in New Jersey by 2035, 15 years ahead of the governor's original schedule.

Combined with more investment in electric vehicles, funded by the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, and support for Advanced Clean Cars II, which has the potential to get more electric vehicles on the roads sooner in New Jersey, the governor showed that he has not forgotten about making our state a sustainable place to live.

Many tools are available to us now to combat the existential threat of climate change, and we need the governor's strongest possible leadership to make the best use of all of these.

The year 2023 was the hottest year on record, and New Jersey experienced climate events ranging from wildfires, to tornadoes and freak natural disasters, to increased water emergencies inland and along the coast.

There are only two years left in Gov. Murphy's term, with much needed work to be done. New Jersey must continue to push forward for 100% clean energy, making clean transportation accessible, and fighting for environmental justice, clean air and water, and green space for all.

Ambitious goals make our communities safer and healthier, but we need stronger leadership on climate initiatives from our governor.



## MONEY MATTERS

# NJ Chapter Donations

By Jim Andreano • Fundraising Committee Chair

Welcome to the first installment of "Money Matters"! This will be a regular feature about donations in upcoming issues of *The Jersey Sierran*. I know this is not your favorite topic, and it's probably not even in the Top 10, but it is important that we talk about it—because, y'know, money matters!

Thanks to the incredible efforts of our committed volunteers, the NJ Chapter of the Sierra Club is a dynamic change agent, but we do require some funding. Here is where it comes from:

**External Grants** – We aggressively pursue grants from charitable foundations and environmental benefactors, and we have been quite successful in securing grant funding. It is an important component of our budget. However, it doesn't provide 100% of our budgetary needs. That is because, generally, the grantor specifies how and where the money will be spent. Although we are comfortable with this type of funding (otherwise we wouldn't accept the grant), we do want and need some discretionary monies.

**Internal Funding From National** – Like all Sierra Club state chapters, we receive some funding from our national organization. This funding is often earmarked for specific initiatives. It does not fully meet our needs for discretionary capital that we can spend wherever it is most needed in New Jersey.

That's where you and I come in.

**Member Donations** – These are essential to our success. These are the funds which we are free to spend on NJ initiatives that we have defined as highest priority. **We ask you for money only three times a year:** in March, in summer, and at year-end. You are, of course, free to donate whenever you want. But we formally ask only three times. Be on the lookout for our upcoming March appeal. We are so grateful for your generosity!

When most people think of donating, they think of going online or writing a check. That is how we receive most of our donations. However, there are various other ways to give. These include:

- Automatic monthly contributions
- Vehicle and stock donations
- Donor advised fund (DAF) contributions
- IRA-qualified charitable distributions
- Legacy contributions
- Political action committee donations

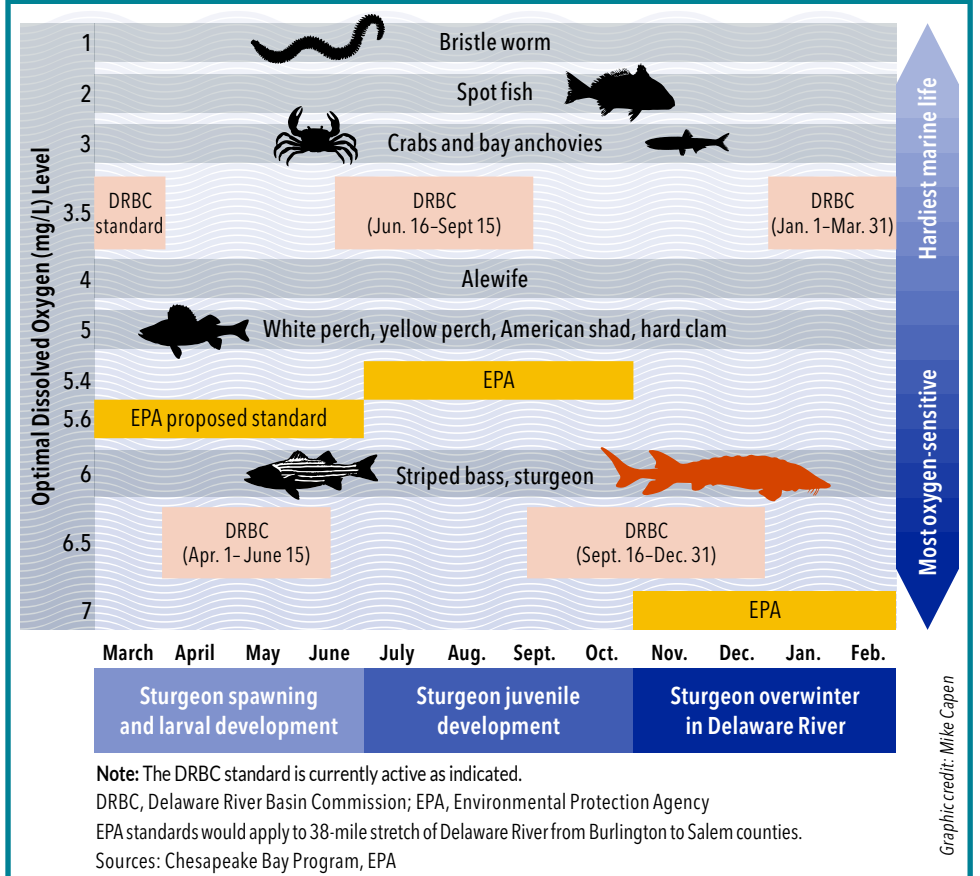
I will discuss the advantages of these in future columns. For now, please refer to the "[Ways to Give](#)" page on our website.

Again, we thank you for your generosity. You make it all possible.

**Resource**

Ways to Give: [shorturl.at/JRZ38](https://shorturl.at/JRZ38)

## EPA Proposes Higher, More Consistent Oxygenation Standards to Protect Delaware River Sturgeon



# EPA Proposal May Help Save the Sturgeon

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

With sturgeon on the brink of extinction in the Delaware River, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has [introduced a draft rule \(graphic\)](#) that would ease one of the threats to this highly sensitive—some might say “canary”—fish. The EPA plans to set limits on how low oxygen levels can drop in the river.

Survival rates of Atlantic sturgeon and shortnose sturgeon tend to drop as dissolved oxygen levels decline. The EPA believes it can improve conditions with tighter controls on discharges of sewage and industrial waste.

Anthropogenic activity (human waste), combined with warmer temperatures, causes algae to proliferate, and when algae die, their decomposition consumes oxygen in the river. This causes hypoxia, or oxygen-starved environments, which are especially harmful to sturgeon.

Heavy sewage discharge from the Philadelphia area has been a chief cause of this problem. Also, nutrients flowing into the Delaware River from farming, golf courses, and lawn maintenance in neighborhoods along the Delaware River also contribute to the growth of algae and hypoxia.

The numbers of adult sturgeon that return to the Delaware River each year to spawn have dwindled to the low hundreds, as opposed to hundreds of thousands two centuries ago, and hypoxia in the warmer months makes it very difficult for their young to survive. Great strides in cleaning up the river have been made over the years, but these hypoxic dead zones remain a problem.

In 2022, following [pressure from environmentalists](#) to improve water quality, an EPA investigation concluded that improved oxygenation was essential to make the river livable for sturgeon and other fish that are especially sensitive to low oxygen levels.

The proposed water quality standards would cover a 38-mile stretch of the river from Burlington County to Salem County. They would set mini-

mum oxygen levels that occasionally could be breached but in the aggregate would help ensure that populations of young sturgeon survive to return to the river as adults and spawn anew.

The draft rule has been welcomed by environmental advocates who recognize that the sturgeon population in the Delaware River is in danger of extinction. However, they note that the draft rule is imperfect. For example, its built-in tolerance for long periods of substandard oxygen levels could still allow large populations of juvenile sturgeon to be wiped out.

### Our Oxygen-Starved Waters

Hypoxia is a growing problem not just in the Delaware River but also along the East Coast and the Gulf of Mexico, which is notorious for hypoxic zones.

This past summer, an unexpectedly large algae bloom in the Gulf of Maine was believed responsible for reduced lobster catch off Cape Cod. Hypoxic zones off the coast of New Jersey are also believed responsible for recent deaths of fish and crustaceans.

Hypoxia in warmer, shallower waters may cause marine creatures to flee their accustomed ranges and expose them to deeper, possibly more perilous environments. Hypoxic zones may also travel with tides and wind. Some scientists theorize, in addition, that changes in summer storm patterns owing to climate change have influenced the development of hypoxic zones.

The EPA's public comment period for the draft rule ended prior to publication of this issue of *The Jersey Sierran*. Advocates for sturgeon survival eagerly await a positive decision on the proposed rule.

### Resources

EPA Draft Rule: [shorturl.at/oGL48](https://shorturl.at/oGL48)  
Problem overview: [tinyurl.com/36sv3mwk](https://tinyurl.com/36sv3mwk)

## DID YOU KNOW?

Solar panels could become the cheapest source of electricity by 2027. Solar panels, wind turbines, and batteries are seeing huge gains in efficiency. Check out our Tesla semi-truck graphic in the electronic supplement.

# Walking the Walk - Environmentally - in Ireland

By Judy Minot • Our Chapter Correspondent in Dublin

What would it be like to live in a place where the government and the people took threats to the environment and the effects of climate change seriously?

My husband and I have been living in Dublin, Ireland for the past four months. The Republic of Ireland is roughly half the population of New Jersey and covers four times as much land. Unlike New Jersey, Ireland is a sovereign nation. It also has four widely read newspapers, its own television and radio stations, and a strong sense of national identity. As a member of the EU, however, Ireland participates in a larger economic and regulatory entity, in some ways analogous to our relationship to the federal government. With that in mind, here are a few things about the Irish response to the climate crisis that stand out to us after living here for just a short time.

Dublin and many other Irish cities are aggressively promoting policies to reduce car traffic and increase use of mass transportation. US policy-makers have long given up attempts to wean Americans from our cars, even though climate scientists know that widespread public transportation and moving goods by rail are far, far more energy efficient.

First and foremost, the Irish are making it easier, cheaper, and more convenient to take public transportation. Bus routes and schedules have been revamped and expanded. Fares are shockingly low (to us), and residents over 66 are entitled to ride free, *throughout* Ireland. These measures seem to be highly effective: Ireland's [ridership figures](#)

show that passenger numbers in 2023 were 5% higher than in 2019, the previous record year.

Bike paths are everywhere in the city, and their numbers are increasing. Following the advice of cycling advocates, these cycle paths are protected from car traffic by concrete planters, low barriers or areas for cars to park. Many Irish cities, including Dublin, plan to close more city streets to car traffic. My husband and I see parades of riders, dressed for the weather and wearing lights at night, making their way to work, the supermarket, or elsewhere on their bikes, e-bikes, and electric scooters.

As bike paths widen, cars are getting the squeeze. This is part of a plan to make cities less attractive to car drivers. Rather than institute congestion fees or fines for drivers, Irish cities are simply making it darned inconvenient to drive in the city. A bus or a bike seems like a better option when it's just as fast, and it's far less frustrating.

We feel that we are living in an environmentally conscious country for other reasons, as well. Recycling is taken seriously. Our apartment building has bins for recycling all plastic, including thin-film plastic, as well as bottles,

cans, paper and cardboard, and even organic waste. Recycling is the norm, rather than the exception, and most Irish people seem to be compliant.

In 2002, Ireland became the first country to impose a mandatory charge for plastic bags: 24¢/bag. This led to a [90% drop](#) in use of plastic bags. Everyone carries their own bags to go shopping. Plastic straws and disposable cutlery simply can't be found.

Ireland is also taking strong steps to help its citizens heat their homes more efficiently. Most Irish homes are heated with electricity, and the country gets

[39% of its electric power from renewables](#), but, perhaps because the winters are mild, many older buildings have drafty windows and poor insulation. The government offers grants and loans that make it very low cost, even free, to bring a home up to a "B" grade rating (the highest possible for existing building construction).

High electricity prices (~49¢/kWh daytime, ~24¢ at night) are a powerful incentive to lower one's heating bill. High prices may also be the reason many Irish families have switched to efficient induction cooktops, eschew their clothes

dryers, and hang on to their small refrigerators. Our electric utility offers an app that lets us see exactly how much we spend every day. We clearly see the cost of running laundry during the daytime, or with hot water vs cold.

Our apartment complex, built just four years ago, has an A2 energy rating. In practical terms this means that, because of good insulation, we've never had to turn on the heat. The apartment stays at 68° F. even when the temperatures are in the 30s.

The above are my observations, after living only a short time in Ireland. I know there are exceptions to what I've seen. Large swaths of the country aren't well served by public transportation. Plenty of houses are so badly insulated that, as one friend quipped, "You may as well be outside." Cigarette butts and discarded vape pens litter the streets, and on windy nights, plastic bags cluster like tumbleweeds on Dublin's O'Connell Street.

I can't help feeling that, despite the imperfections one could point out, Ireland's legislators and its people, in company with most of Europe, are facing the threat of climate change and environmental disaster quite directly and bravely, instead of postponing action to focus on an upcoming election, legislative crisis, or war.

It is heartening to see this example, to live in this way, and to imagine that it could be possible in New Jersey.



Workers paving a newly pedestrianized street in Dublin. Photo credit: Judy Minot

## Electric School Bus Program Is Here! Finally!

By Bill Beren • Chair, Transportation Committee

It finally happened! Almost five years from when the New Jersey Chapter of the Sierra Club started its electric school bus campaign, the Electric School Bus Program is a reality!

Originally, Gov. Phil Murphy signed the bill in August of 2022, but the final version of that bill failed to allocate the money to the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to implement the grant program. This past June, the legislature passed a bill to allocate the first year's funding of \$15 million dollars, but in another drafting error, allocated the funds from fiscal year (FY) 2023, which ended on June 30. The governor then issued a conditional veto to have the funds allocated from FY 2024, and at the last legislative session in 2023, both houses did pass the new appropriations bill and the governor signed it into law on December 21.

The final version of the bill included many amendments that were drafted by the Transportation Committee, including raising the amount of funding from \$10 million to \$45 million, setting minimum standards for buses to qualify, and requiring that the DEP evaluate the actual performance of the buses purchased in order to develop an expanded procurement process to replace the entire state fleet of 10,000 standard-size diesel school buses.

The DEP formally announced the grant program on January 31. Both school districts that own their own buses and school bus contractors are eligible to apply, but contractors must

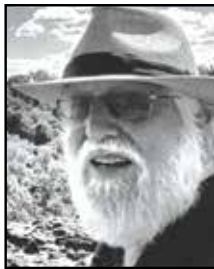
coordinate with a specified school or district when submitting their proposals.

Applicants can apply for a minimum of two and a maximum of 16 electric buses. Only Class C or D buses (minimum seating capacity of 44) are eligible, and applicants are not required to scrap a diesel bus. However, applicants who state that they will scrap a diesel bus will be awarded additional points when evaluating the proposals.

Mirroring the federal grant programs, and in contrast to prior grants issued under the [Volkswagen settlement](#) and Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative funding, the DEP is now awarding a standard amount per bus, depending on whether the district is located in an overburdened community, defined by a combination of high pollution and poverty.

The new program will also include incentives for applicants to use innovative procurement procedures, such as leasing instead of buying outright to make purchasing an electric school bus more affordable. The stored energy in the buses' batteries can be used to power electrical loads in school buildings when the buses are not in service.

Applications for the grants are now being accepted through Friday, May 17. More information can be obtained by doing an online search for "NJDEP Stop the Soot Electric School Bus Grant Program."



## School Districts and Municipalities Qualify for Federal EV Tax Credits

By Bill Beren • Chair, Transportation Committee

The Treasury Department has announced the rules and procedures for school districts and municipal governments to receive tax credits from the federal government for any electric vehicle delivered starting in tax year 2023. This allows governmental and nonprofit organizations to receive the same benefits given to taxpaying companies for investing in EVs.

This program was authorized under the Biden Administration's Inflation

Reduction Act and allows schools and local governments a tax credit up to \$40,000 depending on the vehicle price and the amount of non-subsidized expenses paid by the district or agency.

Agencies seeking these tax credits must preregister with the IRS. More information about this program is available here: [shorturl.at/BFKR2](https://shorturl.at/BFKR2) Print readers can search for IRS Elective Pay and Transferability Rules in their web browsers.

### EXCELLENCE AWARD continued from page 1

Eco Pool Drain Fountain. (Many folks just call it the "Eco.")

It sprays the water high and wide enough into the air to allow some of the chlorine to dissipate from each droplet's surface area. This process, called "gas out," removes some—but not all—of the chlorine, Greberis said.

Greberis' specially designed, wide-area sprayer also:

- Evenly distributes chlorine-reduced water over lawns;
- Avoids using municipal water to irrigate lawns and gardens;
- Eliminates soil erosion caused by ground-level high-pressure outflows;
- Allows the grandchildren to marvel at the spray; and,
- Avoids court costs.



Stan's backwash device at work.

The NJ Chapter of the Sierra Club congratulates Greberis on his achievement!

Greberis says his Eco Pool Drain Fountain is made in the United States and can be bought at many online stores.

You can learn more about Greberis' award and invention by visiting these sites:

[https://www.nj.gov/dep/news-rel/2023/23\\_0065.htm](https://www.nj.gov/dep/news-rel/2023/23_0065.htm)  
<https://ecopoolrain.com/>

In what was a first, total global investments in solar last year were greater than investments in oil.

# Why Diet Matters for the Planet and Your Health

By Judith Green • Co-Chair, Climate Committee; ExCom Member, North Jersey Group

“The hottest year was even hotter than expected,” read a recent headline in [Science](#). If, like me, you want to do more to stave off the worst, then cast a more critical eye on diet. What we eat has a major climate impact, because food production generates high levels of the greenhouse gases (GHG) that underlie climate change.

In fact, just the livestock sector of the global food supply chain contributes about 14.5% to the total of all the GHG emissions generated by human activities. Livestock [contributes](#) 50% of annual methane emissions and 75% of nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O) emissions.

By far the biggest dietary culprit is beef. In 2023, Americans consumed [more than 57 pounds per person](#). What brands cattle as bad climate actors? In their burps, flatulence, and manure, cows emit large volumes of methane, a gas far more effective at trapping heat than carbon dioxide. N<sub>2</sub>O, an extremely potent GHG, is released from [bovine urine](#).

Also driving global warming, [77%](#) of the world’s agricultural land is used either for grazing animals or growing crops to feed them. Recently, physicians have sounded the alarm about the [“dual threat”](#) to public health and the climate from our unsustainable meat-based diet. Healthy diets, associated with long and relatively disease-free lives, contain small amounts of lean meat, some fish and seafood, and a predominance of whole grains, fruits, vegetables, legumes, nuts and seeds, and healthy oils (e.g., olive oil).

High in animal products, unhealthy diets are linked to elevated rates of disease, shorter life spans, and planetary harm. At least partly due to diet, the [prevalence of obesity](#) in the United States is as much as [42%](#) higher than it was two decades ago, accompanied by a related epidemic of chronic diseases. Half of our adult population now has [diabetes or pre-diabetes](#), both conditions that predispose to cardiovascular diseases. Millennials are showing

“startling increases” in [obesity-related cancers](#). Low fiber diets (meat itself has no fiber) adversely affect digestive processes, immunity, and the gut’s defenses against colon cancer.

It’s not all gloom and doom, though. Modest meat restriction, for example, pays handsomely in longevity. If you switch a mere 3% of daily calorie intake (i.e., on average, just 60 calories) from meat to plant-based proteins, your risk of mortality declines, according to a [2020 study](#). That 3% switch led to a 10% decrease in overall mortality risk and a 11% to 12% decrease in risk of cardiovascular disease in men and women, respectively.

The biggest payoff for health and the planet comes from cutting down on, or eliminating, beef from the diet. Emissions produced from raising plant foods are [10 to 50 times lower](#) than those from animal products, according to the [Science](#) article mentioned above.

This is because eating meat is an [inefficient](#) way for us to extract calories and protein from the crops fed to farm animals. Most of the feed goes into maintaining the animals’ metabolic processes. Although [reported values](#) vary, beef cows, on average, are only about 4% efficient in converting protein in feed to edible protein, chickens about 20%, and pigs intermediate at about 15%.

Health reasons aside, logic alone suggests that human survival will benefit by decreased meat and dairy consumption, because [crops for animals are themselves jeopardized by climate change](#). Given this, growing most crops for direct human consumption makes life-sustaining sense.

## Resources

Hottest year: [shorturl.at/dknw1](#)  
Beef consumption: [shorturl.at/jmvT6](#)  
Grazing land: [shorturl.at/hknW8](#)  
Dual threat: [shorturl.at/aCLP6](#)  
Mortality risk: [pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32658243/](#)

environmentalists, Mohamed bin Zayed al-Nahyan, president of the United Arab Emirates, announced a \$250 billion fund that, by 2030, is “specifically designed to bridge the climate finance gap” and stimulate further investment. The funds, he explained, will come from oil revenues. And Ajay Banga, president of the World Bank, which has been criticized for not doing enough to fight climate change, announced a number of organizational changes to address the issues.

Hopefully, the fossil fuel industries’ fixations on profits over people will wane as wind turbine farms expand worldwide, people switch to electric vehicles, and the use of solar panels above ground and heat pumps below keeps expanding.

Of course, our fossil-fuel dependent utilities must continue to convert to clean electricity. In 2022, U.S. electrical utilities generated about [4,243 billion kilowatt hours \(kWh\)](#), with about 60% of this produced by fossil fuels.

Unless we build on the resolution from COP28 and transition away from fossil fuels, we eventually may hear the dinosaurs snickering, “We told you so.”

## NJ TRANSIT continued from page 1

to cost no less than \$577 million.

In its January announcement, NJ Transit said roughly \$500 million in funding for the Kearny plant would be reassigned to cover several other Hurricane Sandy-related resiliency projects. This is something of a surprise development because, in May 2023, Diane Gutierrez Scaccetti, the outgoing state transportation commissioner and NJ Transit board chair, [argued that the FTA would take the grant money back](#) if it weren’t spent on the backup plan and microgrid.

How is NJ Transit able to live without the half-billion dollar backup gas-fired generating plant it insisted it needed to build in Kearny? The publicly run transportation service explained it’s no longer necessary because, in the wake of Sandy, PSEG has spent [billions](#) to improve the storm resiliency of its power supply system.

The chief takeaway is that New Jersey is not going to have the burden of a new, 104 megawatt gas-fired generating plant in Kearny.



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**Ocean County:** *Open Position!*  
**West Jersey:** *Open Position!*  
**South Jersey:** Tom Boghosian, [tbboghosian44@gmail.com](#)  
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**LGBTQ+ Section:** Wanda Ashbrook, [pridegrlnj@gmail.com](#)  
**Inspiring Connections Outdoors:** Oscar Nazar [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 July to September 2024 to your group outings coordinator (or, if you don’t associate yourself with a single group, directly to [pineypaddlers@gmail.com](#)) before May 1, 2024. Outings for early October 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 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.

## MARCH

**Mar 19 (Tues): Spring Equinox Hike at Franklin Lakes Nature Preserve** (Bergen Co.) 4 p.m. - 7 p.m. 2-3 miles, easy pace. Meet at 1 Nature Preserve Way, entrance off High Mountain Rd. We’ll be near the Accessible trail parking lot. Look for the Pride colors and flags. This preserve has a lovely wooded paved and accessible trail. Novice and longer hiking areas are all available from this point. Bring a warm beverage and snacks; dress appropriately. Inclement weather cancels. Co-leaders: Wanda, [pridegrlnj@aim.com](#), and Rebecca Wilkin, [rebeccawilkin@gmail.com](#) Registration required: [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/lgbt](#) (LGBTQ+)

**Mar 24 (Sun): Cloverdale Farm County Park Nature Walk** (Ocean Co.) 10 a.m., 2 miles, easy pace. The Ocean County Natural Lands Trust Fund Program acquired Cloverdale Farm in 2004. Within the boundaries of this 90-acre park, we find the diversity of the Pine Barrens wetlands, uplands, and the beauty of 20 acres of cranberry bogs all year long. We’ll tour the Interpretive Center and walk the self-guided nature trail. Meeting at 34 Cloverdale Rd, Barnegat. There are facilities. Bring water, snacks, and lunch. Preregistration is required. Co-leaders George & Leona F, [leona@pineypaddlers.com](#), and Margaret Mary Piccolo, [gogreenp1@yahoo.com](#) (O)

## APRIL

**Apr 1 (Mon): Hike at Mercer County Park** (Mercer Co.) 10 a.m., 3-4 miles, easy pace. Dyngus Day hike along Mercer Lake to check out the park’s new Ropes and Zipline Course. Walk to the John Rogers House, built in 1761, which is now an open-air, reconstructed ruin that is adapted for interpretation. From there to the West Picnic Area (facilities) for a break and then along the lake and some woods trails before returning to Grandparents Grove for lunch. Meet us at Grandparents Grove, which is next to the Marina and Boathouse, 334 S. Post Rd. There are facilities. Bring water, snacks, and lunch. Leashed dogs are welcome. Rain cancels. Co-leaders: Leona and George F., [pineypaddlers@gmail.com](#), and Joanne Pannone, [jpatmeadowbrook@gmail.com](#) Registration is required: [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/central-jersey](#) (C)

**Apr 7 (Sun): Amico Island Park Spring Birding Walk** (Burlington Co.) 10 a.m., 2-3 miles, easy pace. The great blue heron colony becomes active with spring courtship. Look for migrant neotropical birds such as palm, blackpoll, black-throated blue, black-throated green, and magnolia warblers. Resident species, such as yellowthroat and red-winged blackbirds, begin territorial singing. Most trails are wide and level, traversing meadows, forest, pond, and wetland habitat.

## COP28 continued from page 1



Sultan Al Jaber was president of COP28. Credit: Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

sealed the reality of the most brazen conflict of interest in the history of climate negotiations.”

Gore, producer of the eye-opening documentary *An Inconvenient Truth* and founder of The Climate Reality Project, added, “Obviously, the world needs to phase out fossil fuels as quickly as possible.” He alleged that Al Jaber “has been preparing one of the most aggressive expansions of fossil fuel production, timed to begin as soon as he bangs the final gavel to conclude COP28.”

Perhaps because of the uproar from

**Sign up for alerts on helpful actions you can take as an NJ Chapter member to address urgent environmental needs and support Chapter initiatives: Visit <https://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/action-alert-signup-form>**

Various points in the park afford very nice views of the Delaware River and the flats at the mouth of Rancocas Creek. Meet us at 81 Norman Ave., Riverside. Bring water, snacks, and binoculars. There is a portable toilet at the parking lot. Some trails can be muddy, appropriate footwear is recommended. Rain cancels. Leaders: George and Leona F., pineypaddlers@gmail.com Registration is required: [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/west-jersey](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/west-jersey) (W)

**April 10 (Wed): Hike at Perrineville Lake Park** (Monmouth Co.) 10 a.m., 3-4 miles, easy pace. It's National Hug Your Dog Day! Leashed dogs are welcome. Beautiful woodlands, natural fields, and a picturesque lake meet here in the heart of quiet Millstone. Bring water and snacks. There are some ups and downs on forest trails. Hiking boots and poles recommended. Meet us at 23 Agress Rd., Millstone. There is a portable toilet available at the parking lot. Rain cancels. Option, late lunch at Albivi Brick Oven. Leaders: George and Leona F., pineypaddlers@gmail.com Registration is required: [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/jersey-shore](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/jersey-shore) (JS)

**April 13 (Sat): Cherry Blossom Festival Hike, Branch Brook Park, Belleville/Newark** (Essex Co.) 10 a.m. The hike will cover 7 miles in 4 hours. Level terrain. Easy difficulty. Moderate pace. There will also be a shorter version of the route, 3-4 miles, with a second leader. Features: Cherry Blossoms of Newark and Belleville, Family Day events, music, food booths. Facilities: There are two visitor centers with indoor bathrooms. Requirement: sneakers or hiking boots and a daypack with water and lunch. Registration required via web: Start with the calendar at <https://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey> and click on the "Cherry Blossom Festival Hike," then click on RSVP. Directions for the meeting place will be sent via email to members who register. Leaders: Jimi Oleksiak <[The\\_Hikist@mac.com](mailto:The_Hikist@mac.com)>, and Jerry Ruocco, and Ron Pate (SS)

**Apr 13 (Sat): Maintenance and Trail Repairs, Watchung Reservation, Mountainside** (Union Co.) 10 a.m. We will be back in the parking lot by 1 p.m. No dogs please. Rain cancels. Meet at the Trailside Nature & Science Center, 452 New Providence Rd., Mountainside. Activities include pruning vegetation, removing small fallen trees and branches, clearing drainage ditches, and pulling invasive plants. Bring water and snacks. Wear hiking boots. Gloves and eye protection recommended. Bring a rake, clippers, shears, if possible. If you don't have garden tools, we will have some available. There are facilities. Leader: Kevin O'Brien, (908) 403-0900, [kbkob@aol.com](mailto:kbkob@aol.com) Registration required: [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/loantaka](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/loantaka) (L)

**Apr 14 (Sun): Hike the Maurice River Bluffs Preserve** (Cumberland Co.) 10 a.m. We'll meet in the preserve's parking lot at 1200 Silver Run Rd. in Millville and hike 2 miles at an easy pace on the blue and orange trails where there are scenic overlooks and the opportunity to spot an eagle or two. The packed dirt trails have occasional roots and elevation changes. Wear good footwear and bring hiking poles if you use them. Bring water and snacks. There are no facilities. For those wanting to see more of the preserve, there is an option for an afternoon outing at an easy to moderate pace on trails with steeper and more frequent elevation changes. Rain cancels. Co-leaders: Tom Boghosian, [tfboghosian44@gmail.com](mailto:tfboghosian44@gmail.com), and Leona Fluck and Candy Moleff. Registration is required: [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/calendar](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/calendar) (SJ)

**April 18 (Thurs): Cherry Blossoms at Colonial Park Gardens and Walk the D&R Canal Towpath** (Somerset Co.) 10 a.m., 3 miles, easy pace. Colonial Park Gardens is one of the treasures in Somerset County. It features a 144-acre arboretum, perennial garden and much more. We'll enjoy the cherry blossoms and then continue our walk on the D&R Towpath (surface is sand and crushed stone) to a restored bridge tender's station. Meeting at Colonial Park Gardens, Parking Lot F, near the Lilac Garden. There are facilities. Bring water, snacks, and lunch. Rain cancels. Leaders: George and Leona F., pineypaddlers@gmail.com Registration is required: [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/raritan-valley](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/raritan-valley) (RV)

**Apr 20 (Sat): Come Celebrate Earth Day at the Essex County Environmental Center** (Essex Co.) 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. An annual outdoor festival and fun day honoring our beautiful planet Earth. There will be crafts and games for kids, including canoeing. Learn how we can help the environment. Also, short hikes will be led by Ron Pate. Meet at the Environmental Center, 621-B Eagle Rock Ave., Roseland. Facilities are available. Leader: Ron Pate, [ronpate31@verizon.net](mailto:ronpate31@verizon.net) Register at [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/gateway](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/gateway) (G)

**April 23 (Tues): Barnegat Bay Blitz Land Cleanup** (Ocean Co.) 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. This is the 11th year that the NJ Chapter of the Sierra Club is participating in the "Blitz" cleanup. We'll meet Lauren Keltos, NJ Department of Environmental Protection clean-up team captain for Barnegat Township, at the Barnegat public launch area. From there we'll travel to areas identified in need of cleanup. Garbage bags and gloves will be provided. Bring water and snacks. After the cleanup: option for late lunch at Sweet Jenny's Restaurant. Co-leaders: George and Leona F., pineypaddlers@gmail.com, and Mary Margaret Piccolo, [gogreenp1@yahoo.com](mailto:gogreenp1@yahoo.com) Registration is required: [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/ocean-county](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/ocean-county) (O)

**Apr 27 (Sat): Cattus Island County Park Nature Festival and Hike** (Ocean Co.) 10 a.m., 3-4 miles, easy pace. This is a great daylong event for the entire family. We'll walk through Pinelands woods and along the sandy trails around marshes and Silver Bay's beaches while looking for osprey in nesting platforms. The park is celebrating 44 years of "Connecting Community with Nature." The festival will have nature walks, kayak trips, live animal talks, and live music. Meet us at the Cooper Environmental Center, 1170 Cattus Island Blvd., Toms River. Bring binoculars, water, and snacks. There will be food vendors. Leashed dogs are welcome. Co-leaders: George and Leona F., pineypaddlers@gmail.com and Mary Margaret Piccolo, [gogreenp1@yahoo.com](mailto:gogreenp1@yahoo.com) Register online: [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/ocean-county](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/ocean-county) (O)

## MAY

**May 1 (Wed): May Day Hike at The Watershed Institute** (Mercer Co.) 10 a.m., 3-4 miles, easy pace. We'll walk the new accessible Hickory Loop boardwalk trail, which connects to the Blue Trail. The Blue Trail takes us around field edges and along forest paths with some elevations as we continue to the restored Wargo Pond and dock overlook. The trail may be muddy in places; wear appropriate footwear. Bring water, snacks, and lunch. After lunch we'll visit the Watershed Center's live exhibits and the Butterfly House. Meeting at 31 Titus Mill Rd. Pennington. Leashed dogs are permitted. Rain cancels. Co-leaders: Joanne Pannone, [jpatmeadowbrook@gmail.com](mailto:jpatmeadowbrook@gmail.com) and Leona F., pineypaddlers@gmail.com Registration is required: [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/central-jersey](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/central-jersey) (C)

**May 4 (Sat): Friends of Monmouth Battlefield Bird Walk at Monmouth Battlefield State Park** (Monmouth Co.) Meet 9 a.m. at the Visitors Center. The Friends of Monmouth Battlefield will be leading a guided bird walk on the battlefield trails, wooded paths, and field edges. Their walk will identify birds who live there or pass through in the spring. There are facilities. Bring binoculars, water, and snacks. No pets on this walk. George and Leona F., pineypaddlers@gmail.com To receive further information if cancelled due to inclement weather, please register online: [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/jersey-shore](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/jersey-shore) (JS)

**May 4 (Sat): Hike Eagle Rock Reservation** (Essex Co.) 9 a.m., easy pace. We will hike and clean up as we walk the reservation trails for 2-3 hours. Wear hiking boots, Bring water and a snack. Rain cancels. No dogs. Meet at the Essex County 9/11 Memorial, main entrance, Prospect Avenue and Eagle Rock Avenue, West Orange. There are facilities. Trash bags will be provided. For questions contact the leader: Ron Pate, [ronpate31@verizon.net](mailto:ronpate31@verizon.net) Register at [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/gateway](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/gateway) (G)

**May 5 (Sun): Spring Hike at Parvin State Park** (Salem Co.) 10 a.m., option for 3 or 5 miles, easy pace. The Green and Red trails through the woods are well-maintained but have exposed tree roots in some sections. Situated around Parvin Lake on the edge of the Pine Barrens, the park not only has pine forests typical to the area but also a swamp hardwood forest. Spring bursts out in bright colors and rich fragrances. Bring water, snacks, and lunch on the hike. Good footwear recommended. It's Cinco de Mayo - Sombreros optional! Meet at the Visitors Center, 701 Almond Road, Pittsgrove. There are facilities. Rain cancels. Co-leaders: Tom Boghosian, [tfboghosian44@](mailto:tfboghosian44@)

[pineypaddlers@gmail.com](mailto:pineypaddlers@gmail.com) and Leona F., pineypaddlers@gmail.com Registration is required: [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/calendar](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/calendar) (SJ)

**May 9 (Thurs): BAPS Hindu Mandir (temple) Guided Tour** (Mercer Co.) 9:30 a.m. Located in Robbinsville, the mandir is a hallmark of Hindu architecture and culture and the largest such temple outside of Asia. The campus is open to all visitors. It is wheelchair accessible. Meet us in front of the 49-foot-tall gold Murti (sacred statue). At 9:45 a.m. we will walk together to the welcome center to meet our guide. There is a strict dress code. Shoulders and upper arms must be covered, and legwear must be below the knee. Shoes cannot be worn inside, so be sure to wear socks. Shoe coverings can be provided or bring your own. The walking tour inside on the marble floor will be an hour-plus. Photography is prohibited inside. No large bags. No food or drink is allowed, and phones must be silent. Please do not touch the delicate carvings. Traditional Indian vegetarian snacks and lunch are available at the temple's Shayona Café after the tour. For questions contact the leaders: Leona and George F., pineypaddlers@gmail.com Registration for this tour is required; group size is limited. There is no fee. [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/central-jersey](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/central-jersey) (C)

**May 11 (Sat): Five Ponds Trail Hike, Ringwood State Park** (Passaic Co.) 10 a.m. The hike will cover 5.7 miles in 4 hours in hilly terrain, Total ascent 900 ft., Moderate to Strenuous difficulty. We will start with a tour of the Gardens then hike the Five Ponds Trail. Features: The NJ Botanical Garden, The Five Ponds Trail (pink). Facilities: There is a restroom near the gardens. Requirements: Hiking boots and a daypack with water and lunch. Registration required via web: Start with the calendar at [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey) and click on the "Five Ponds Trails Hike," then click on RSVP. Directions for the meeting place will be sent via email to members who register. Leaders: Jimi Oleksiak <[The\\_Hikist@Mac.com](mailto:The_Hikist@Mac.com)>, and Jerry Ruocco (SS)

**May 11 (Sat): Lord Stirling Park, Basking Ridge** (Somerset Co.) 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. 3-4 miles, easy pace. Lord Stirling Park is in the western part of the Great Swamp. We'll walk on level trails through marshes and swamps that feature boardwalks, ponds, and what might be the oldest tree in New Jersey, the Great Swamp Oak, 700 years old. We'll meet at the Environmental Education Center, 190 Lord Stirling Rd., Basking Ridge. There are facilities. Bring water, snacks, and lunch. Rain cancels. Co-leaders: Wanda, [pridegrlnj@aol.com](mailto:pridegrlnj@aol.com), and Rebecca Wilkin, [rebeccawilkin@gmail.com](mailto:rebeccawilkin@gmail.com) Registration required: [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/lgbt](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/lgbt) (LGBTQ+)

**May 13 (Mon): Hike at Double Trouble State Park/Village** (Ocean Co.) 10 a.m., 3-4 miles, easy pace. We'll walk through pine forests, cedar swamps, and sandy areas around the cranberry bogs with views of Cedar Creek and several reservoirs. Originally a cranberry farm and packing plant, the former company town called Double Trouble is a window into past and current industries in the Pinelands. We'll meet in the parking lot at Pinewald-Keswick and Double Trouble Rds., Bayville. There are facilities. Leashed dogs are welcome. Bring water, snacks, and lunch. Rain cancels. Co-leaders: George and Leona F., pineypaddlers@gmail.com and Mary Margaret Piccolo, [gogreenp1@yahoo.com](mailto:gogreenp1@yahoo.com) Registration is required: [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/ocean-county](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/ocean-county) (O)

**May 16 (Thurs): Hike at Davidson's Mill Pond Park** (Middlesex Co.) 10 a.m., 3-4 miles, easy pace. It's Love a Tree Day! The woods section of the park is primarily a mature, late succession or "climax forest" dominated by American beech, oaks, birch, tulip poplar, and sweet gum. Dogwood and sassafras. Our hike begins on the Yellow Trail, a grassy/rocky section that includes narrow boardwalks over swampy areas. The forested Blue Trail has elevations, exposed roots to step over and large stones for steps in some sections. Hiking poles and good footwear recommended. Bring water, snacks, and lunch. Leashed dogs are welcome. Portable toilet at parking lot. Meeting location will be emailed with registration confirmation. Rain cancels. Co-leaders: S.P., [spjersey@gmail.com](mailto:spjersey@gmail.com) and George and Leona F., pineypaddlers@gmail.com Registration is required: [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/raritan-valley](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/raritan-valley) (RV)

## JUNE

**June 1 (Sat): Hike Eagle Rock Reservation** (Essex Co.) 9 a.m., 4-5 miles, moderate pace. The Eagle Rock Reservation is a 400-plus acre park and forest reserve. Wear hiking boots, Bring water and a snack. Rain cancels. No dogs please. Meet at the Essex County 9/11 Memorial, main entrance, Prospect Ave. and Eagle Rock Ave., West Orange. For information, contact the leader: Ron Pate, [ronpate31@verizon.net](mailto:ronpate31@verizon.net) Register at [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/gateway](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/gateway) (G)

**June 5 (Wed): Canoe/Kayak at Lake Mercer in Mercer Park** (Mercer Co.) 10 a.m. It's World Environment Day! We'll paddle around the 365-acre Lake and see Blue Herons fishing at the water's edge and many other birds. Bring water, snacks, and lunch. We'll have lunch after the paddle at picnic tables. Meet us at the Marina Boat parking lot to unload boats on the ramp. There are facilities. Rentals are not available in the morning. Rain cancels. Leaders: George & Leona F., at pineypaddlers@gmail.com Registration is required: [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/central-jersey](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/central-jersey) (C)

**June 8 (Sat): Two Lakes Hike and Swim, Harriman State Park, NY** (Orange Co.) 10 a.m. The Sierra Singles are going to Harriman State Park for a hike and swim. Hiking 7 miles in 4 hours in hilly terrain. Strenuous difficulty. Facilities: a portable toilet at the parking lot. Requirements: hiking boots, backpack, sun block, bug spray. Bring a daypack with water and lunch. No pets. Optional: swimsuits, camp towel, water shoes. Registration required via web: Start with the calendar at [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey) and click on the "Two Lakes Hike and Swim," then click on RSVP. Directions for the meeting place will be sent via email to members who register. Leaders: Jimi Oleksiak <[The\\_Hikist@Mac.com](mailto:The_Hikist@Mac.com)>, and Jerry Ruocco (SS)

**June 8 (Sat): Roebling Museum Garden Tour** (Burlington Co.) Time TBD. Join us for the Roebling Museum Garden Tour to celebrate the beautiful spring weather and local gardens in the company town famous for building America's most iconic bridges! A ticket for the garden tour includes access to the museum exhibits as well as a walking tour of the former company town, with stops at lovely home gardens. The museum volunteers guided walking tour will begin at the Roebling Museum. There are facilities. Tours run on the hour from 10 a.m. through 2 p.m. Ticket price is \$15. Bring water and snacks. Leaders: George and Leona F., pineypaddlers@gmail.com Please register with leaders to coordinate a meeting time. [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/west-jersey](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/west-jersey) (W)

**June 8 (Sat): Maintenance and Trail Repairs, Watchung Reservation, Mountainside** (Union Co.) 10 a.m. We will be back in the parking lot by 1 p.m. No dogs please. Rain cancels. Meet at the Trailside Nature & Science Center, 452 New Providence Rd., Mountainside. Activities include pruning vegetation, removing small fallen trees and branches, clearing drainage ditches, and pulling invasive plants. Bring water and snacks. Wear hiking boots. Gloves and eye protection recommended. Bring a rake, clippers, shears, if possible. If you don't have garden tools, we will have some available. There are facilities. Leader: Kevin O'Brien, (908) 403-0900, [kbkob@aol.com](mailto:kbkob@aol.com) Registration required: [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/loantaka](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/loantaka) (L)

**June 11 (Tues): Hartshorne Woods Park - Clayton Creek Section Hike** (Monmouth Co.) 11 a.m., 3-4 miles, easy pace. **Note later meeting time.** Our hike will begin on Clayton Run with scenic views and then connect with the main trail system of the park at Laurel Ridge. Laurel Ridge takes us through the forest and features a wooded overlook extension. Bring water, snacks, and lunch. Leashed dogs are permitted. Rain cancels. Meet us at 239 Locust Ave., Locust. A portable toilet is available. Leaders: George and Leona F., pineypaddlers@gmail.com Registration is required: [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/jersey-shore](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/jersey-shore) (JS)

**Jun 14 (Fri): Flag Day "Rose" Walk at Colonial Park Gardens and D&R Canal** (Somerset Co.) 10 a.m., easy pace, 3-mile walk to "smell the roses," including a walk on the D&R Canal. The Rudolf W. van der Goot Rose Garden displays thousands of roses of many varieties, with both modern and historic significance. Colonial Park Gardens is one of the treasures in Somerset County. It features a 144-acre arboretum, perennial garden and much more. Bring water and snacks. Option: late lunch at a local restaurant. Rain cancels. Meet us at 156 Mettlers Rd., Somerset. There are

>continued on page 8

## OUTINGS continued from page 7

facilities. Leaders: George and Leona F., pineypaddlers@gmail.com Registration is required: [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/raritan-valley](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/raritan-valley) (RV)

**June 20 (Thurs): Summer Solstice Walk at Mercer County Park** (Mercer Co.) 10 a.m., 3 miles, depending on the weather, easy pace. We'll walk along Lake Mercer and on woods trails with some ups and downs. After our walk check out the new Spray Park. It features a shaded structure with tables underneath and a variety of in-ground sprays. It is open to all ages; individuals and families are welcome. Meet us at Grandparents Grove, which is next to the Marina and Boathouse, 334 S. Post Rd. There are facilities. Bring water, snacks, and lunch. Co-leaders: Joanne Pannone, jpat-meadowbrook@gmail.com and Leona F., pineypaddlers@gmail.com Registration is required: [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/central-jersey](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/central-jersey) (C)

## JULY

**Jul 6 (Sat): Hacklebarney State Park** (Morris Co.) 10 a.m. - 3 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 summer hike. Meet at 119 Hacklebarney Rd., Long Valley. There are facilities. Bring water, snacks, and lunch. Hiking boots are recommended. Rain cancels. Co-leaders: Wanda, pridegrrlnj@aol.com, and Rebecca Wilkin, rebeccawilkin@gmail.com Registration required: [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/lgbt](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/lgbt) (LGBTQ+)



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> (12/31/25)	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>
	(12/31/25) 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>
	(12/31/25) Chris Dunbar	<a href="mailto:chrisdunbar458@gmail.com">chrisdunbar458@gmail.com</a>

<b>Conservation Chair</b>	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>	<i>Open Position!</i>	
<b>Environmental Justice</b>	Susan Williams	<a href="mailto:SkylandsGroup@gmail.com">SkylandsGroup@gmail.com</a>
<b>Political Co-Chair</b>	Susan Williams	<a href="mailto:SkylandsGroup@gmail.com">SkylandsGroup@gmail.com</a>
<b>Publicity Chair</b>	Norene Haberski	<a href="mailto:norenehaberski2@gmail.com">norenehaberski2@gmail.com</a>
<b>Recycling/Zero Waste</b>	Jill Aquino	<a href="mailto:jda1timeforchange@gmail.com">jda1timeforchange@gmail.com</a>
<b>Chair Webmaster</b>	Ron Goshal	

**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 and enjoyment of the wild environment and public parks

The Skylands Group supports the Green New Deal, Sunrise Movement, and transition toward a clean energy economy, and the Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic River Partnership.

### 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/@sierraclubhunterdonwarreng9255/videos](https://www.youtube.com/@sierraclubhunterdonwarreng9255/videos)

#### OFFICERS

<b>Chair</b>	<i>Open Position!</i>	
<b>Vice Chair</b>	Celeste Martin *	<a href="mailto:celeste.martin@sluhn.org">celeste.martin@sluhn.org</a>

**Conservation Chair**  
**Political Co-Chairs**

*Open Position!*

Karen Becker \* [karbecker@gmail.com](mailto:karbecker@gmail.com)  
Amy Weeder \* [aweeder@comcast.net](mailto:aweeder@comcast.net)

**Outings**

*Open Position!*

**Treasurer, Secretary**

*Open Position!*

**Warren County**

**Warehouse Issues**

Pat Banes

[patrick\\_banes@comcast.net](mailto:patrick_banes@comcast.net)

**Webmaster/Listmaster**

John Kashwick\*

[jkashwick@gmail.com](mailto:jkashwick@gmail.com)

**ExCom at Large**

Jonathan D. Wall\*

[docjdwall@gmail.com](mailto:docjdwall@gmail.com)

\* *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.

May 1 (Wed): 7 p.m. **Wild Utah! :America's Redrock Wilderness Act**

Rachel Carlson, Eastern Regional Organizer for the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, visits us from Washington, DC to present Wild Utah!: America's Redrock Wilderness Act. Carlson will draw upon diverse voices to tell the story of why Utah's unique wild-lands places of pristine and natural beauty, untrammelled ecosystems, and unfathomable cultural significance are worth protecting, how corporate and political greed are risking their integrity, and what can be done to protect them. The presentation is 45 minutes and will be followed by a dessert potluck and networking--feel free to bring something delicious to share! This event is IN PERSON only at the Hunterdon North Branch County Library, 65 Halstead Street, Clinton.

**NJ 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 permit these projects. Contact: Patrick Banes at [patrick\\_banes@comcast.net](mailto:patrick_banes@comcast.net)

**Night Skies:** The Hunterdon Warren Group and the Light Pollution and Dark Skies Committee (LPDSC) are encouraging municipalities to curb light pollution by adopting stricter ordinances to reduce excessive light pollution. Help us partner with environmental commissions and land use boards to encourage municipalities to enact energy and tax saving initiatives. Contact: Jonathan Wall at [jonwall@jonwall.com](mailto:jonwall@jonwall.com)

### 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/northjerseysierraclub](https://www.facebook.com/northjerseysierraclub)

**Twitter:** @sierraclub\_nj

**Instagram:** sierraclubnorth\_nj

#### OFFICERS

<b>Co-Chair</b>	Rebecca Wilkin	<a href="mailto:rebeccawilkin@gmail.com">rebeccawilkin@gmail.com</a>
<b>Co-Chair</b>	<i>Open Position!</i>	
<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>	<i>Open Position!</i> 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>	<i>Open Position!</i>	
<b>Conservation Committee</b>		
<b>Chair</b>	<i>Open Position!</i> 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>	<i>Open Position!</i> 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>	<i>Open Position!</i> 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>	<i>Open Position!</i> 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</b>		
<b>Committee Chair</b>	Kris Scheufele*	<a href="mailto:kris.scheufele@gmail.com">kris.scheufele@gmail.com</a>
<b>Co-Chair</b>	<i>Open Position!</i>	

\**Elected North Jersey Group Executive Committee Member.*

#### UPCOMING ACTIONS/EVENTS

**NUCLEAR ENERGY:** We are planning a special showing of the Oliver Stone film: Nuclear Now followed by a panel presentation on the pros and cons of nuclear energy! Both events will take place in April 2024. Updates on both of these thought-provoking events will be posted shortly.

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED:** We are seeking volunteer hike leaders! If you are interested in co-leading one of our all-inclusive hikes and/or LGBTQIA+ hikes, please let us know! We need you! Contact Wanda Ashbrook at [pridegrrlnj@aol.com](mailto:pridegrrlnj@aol.com) or Rebecca Wilkins at [rebeccawilkin@gmail.com](mailto:rebeccawilkin@gmail.com) for more information!

#### BLOG

In early 2023, Betsy Longendorfer 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 EV; how to choose and use an induction cook-top, 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!

#### 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 [rebeccalwilkin@gmail.com](mailto:rebeccalwilkin@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/3BH8Uc](https://bit.ly/3BH8Uc) or contact [rebeccalwilkin@gmail.com](mailto:rebeccalwilkin@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 [jefrap@optonline.net](mailto:jefrap@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.

## 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>	<i>Open Position!</i>		
<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>	<i>Open Position!</i>		
<b>Political Chair &amp; Recycling Coordinator</b>	Danielle Rapsas*		danielle.rapsas@sierraclub.org
<b>Fundraising Chair</b>	<i>Open Position!</i>		
<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. 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.

#### UPCOMING ACTIONS/EVENTS

**March 2, South Mountain Reservation:** We will hike 6-7 miles, moderate difficulty, hilly trail on mostly dirt trails. Meet at the Turtleback Loop Trail parking area off 374 Walker Rd., West Orange. There are facilities. No dogs please. Contact the leader Ron Pate to register: [Ronpate31@verizon.net](mailto:Ronpate31@verizon.net) or 973-965-7578. You may also RSVP online using the link on our group calendar.

Additional outings will be posted on the calendar on our Group's home page as they are scheduled.

Our membership meeting in January featured member Danielle Rapsas and Essex County Recycling Coordinator Wayne Defeo discussing the status of recycling in Essex County and recommendations to increase the quantity and quality of recycling in the County.

Look for more information about an Earth Day festival being planned for April 28 in conjunction with the Township of Montclair, Montclair Climate Action, and other local environmental groups. The festival will feature our third annual Drive Electric event and other activities that are currently being planned. Look for more details on our webpage as we finalize the program.

The Northeast Earth Coalition will hold its eighth annual at Montclair State University

on April 6 at 9 a.m. The conference schedule and registration information are available on the NEEC website: [neearth.org](http://neearth.org))

#### CONSERVATION NEWS:

In our last issue, we highlighted the efforts of Montclair residents to prevent the loss of a grove of century-old oak trees along the border of Montclair High School's athletic facilities. Unfortunately, the board of education ratified the construction of an artificial turf baseball field and the loss of all but five of the threatened trees. The school district lost no time in chopping down the trees.

The Group has been actively promoting composting in Montclair.

Working with the Bnai Keshet Synagogue branch of the Dayenu Climate Action group (dayenu means enough in Hebrew), the Montclair synagogue began a zero-waste program in December. The synagogue is now collecting an average of 120 pounds of compost every week while significantly reducing the amount of solid waste being sent to International Waste Systems' Ohio landfill. In addition, increased emphasis is being put on recycling office paper and plastic containers.

We have also begun discussions with the Montclair Central Business Improvement District to begin a restaurant composting pilot program in conjunction with Java's Compost, a minority-owned company that collects food waste and other compostable materials from residential and commercial customers in Essex and Union counties.

## HUDSON COUNTY GROUP

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

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

**Facebook:** @HCSierraClub

**Instagram:** @HCSierraClub

**Twitter:** @HCSierraClub

#### OFFICERS

<b>Chair</b>	Patricia Hilliard*
<b>Secretary</b>	Rachel Ciekurs*
<b>Conservation Chair</b>	<i>Open Position!</i>
<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 gearing up for moving into the spring and summer and expanding our effort to encourage community climate actions plans, zero waste initiatives, election endorsements and more. We are seeking members who are interested in working on the challenges facing our environment in and around Morris and Union Counties. We are hoping to prioritize our political action committee and our efforts to reduce waste across our region. We are also looking forward to resuming in-person meetings very soon to address important issues affecting our region and beyond. To obtain additional information, contact Allen Swanson, Chair, Loantaka Group.

Loantaka has held another fund raising auction, our 18th since 2005, and boosted our treasury by another \$290. Our long-time donors keep up their generous assistance to the Sierra Club.

>continued on page 10

## GROUP NEWS continued from page 9

<b>From Chatham:</b>	Village Hardware, Charley's Aunt Restaurant, Chatham Sandwich Shop, Arminio's Italian Corner, Quartet, and T.M. Ward Coffee Co.
<b>From Cranford:</b>	Perrotti's Quality Meats, Dreyer Farms
<b>From Westfield:</b>	Winberie's Restaurant, Oak Leaf Garden Supply
<b>From Summit:</b>	Towne Deli, Sustainable Haus
<b>From Madison:</b>	San Francisco Clothing, Sunday Motor Co., Bistro
<b>From New Providence:</b>	Prestige Diner

Patronize these places if possible!

## 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>	Open Position!	
<b>Secretary</b>	Leona Fluck	Pineypaddlers@gmail.com
<b>Treasurer</b>	Arlene Ceterskiva	Va2c2015@gmail.com
<b>Outings</b>	George and Leona Fluck	Pineypaddlers@gmail.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
<b>Webmaster</b>	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

We are working with the Transportation Committee to get electric school buses for New Jersey.

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. We need to preserve more open space to provide clean air and clean water and habitat for people and wildlife to survive and thrive.

We support the Green Amendment. We are working with the Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic Rivers Committee to protect Fiddlers Creek as part of the Partnership Wild and Scenic Delaware River.

We have resumed our Zoom meetings. Let Joanne know what environmental issues you would like to hear about. Our outings are listed on the Sierra Club's NJ Chapter website calendar, where you can sign up!

Everyone is invited. Bring your friends! We welcome new members.

## 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](https://www.facebook.com/RaritanGroupNJSC)

**Twitter:** [www.twitter.com/RaritanSierra](https://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	Open Positions!
<b>Publicity Chair</b>	Open Position!	
<b>Treasurer</b>	S. Pasricha	
<b>Co-Webmasters</b>	Dennis Colligan	Open Position!
<b>Outings/Events Co-Chairs</b>	John Miraglia, S. Pasricha, Bernadette Maher	
<b>Group Executive Committee Members</b>	Gary Frederick*, S. Pasricha*, Teresa Callahan**, Kevin Corcoran**, and Bernadette Maher*	

\*Jan 2023-Dec 2024

\*\*Jan 2024-Dec 2025

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 the calendar on the RVG 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

• **Northeast Supply Enhancement (NESE), FERC Docket CP17-101-005:** Williams was granted an additional one-year extension for NESE. A polluting compressor station is proposed for Franklin Township, Somerset County along with a transmission pipeline under the Raritan Bay to deliver gas to New York City. The extension expires in May 2024. Thanks to all those who intervened and submitted comments to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). Read FERC's justification for granting the extension: [https://elibrary.ferc.gov/eLibrary/filelist?accession\\_num=20240118-3026](https://elibrary.ferc.gov/eLibrary/filelist?accession_num=20240118-3026)

• **Williams has begun construction** on the Regional Energy Access Expansion Project (REAE) despite our lawsuit. FERC had approved the REAE to expand the toxic compressor stations at Old Bridge (CS 207) in Middlesex County and at Neshanic Station, Branchburg (CS 505) in Somerset County. Explosive liquid natural gas (LNG) will also be stored at Neshanic Station.

• **Keasbey, Woodbridge Township:** Citing market concerns, Competitive Power Ventures has withdrawn their application for a second fracked gas power plant. The company was fined by the NJ Department of Environmental Protection for violations at their existing power plant. Woodbridge officials were in favor of building the polluting plant in Keasbey despite opposition from nearby EJ communities. Locate environmental justice communities in New Jersey: <https://shorturl.at/lzJSY>

• **Franklin Township:** To curb warehouse sprawl, the planning board has denied an application to build warehousing near a residential senior community. The township has also passed an ordinance that does not allow new warehousing within 500 feet of residential areas.

• **The Raritan River** is increasingly flooding due to torrential storms exacerbated by the climate crisis. New Brunswick, Bound Brook and towns along the Raritan River in Middlesex County are often at risk. Flooding occurs when the Raritan crests over 28 feet. See the devastation of the Raritan overflowing in Piscataway: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iy\\_MJyNo5xk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iy_MJyNo5xk)

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/](https://www.facebook.com/JerseyShoreNJSC/)

**Instagram:** [www.instagram.com/sierraclub\\_jerseyshore/?hl=en](https://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>Vice Chair</b>	Stan Greberis	sgreberis@newjersey.sierraclub.org
<b>Climate Chair</b>	Steve Miller 732-671-5917	SteveMiller@comcast.net
<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 Stan Greberis	SteveMiller@Comcast.net sgreberis@newjersey.sierraclub.org
<b>Outings Chair</b>	Open Position!	
<b>Political Co-Chairs</b>	Robin and Harold Zullow	zullow@newjersey.sierraclub.org
<b>Program Chair</b>	Lara Zullow	lara@newjersey.sierraclub.org
<b>Social Media</b>		
<b>Manager</b>	Kate DiPaolo	Kdipaolo@newjersey.sierraclub.org
<b>Treasurer</b>	Jim Baye	jimbaye@optonline.net
<b>Website Manager</b>	Chris Foley	ccffoley359@gmail.com

### Upcoming Speakers at Brookdale College

**Title:** Protecting NJ Wildlife: The Example of Red Knots and Ecosystem Protection on Delaware Bay

**Date:** Monday, March 25, 6:30 p.m. at Brookdale Community College

**Speaker:** Dr. Lawrence Niles, Biologist/Owner at Wildlife Restoration Partnerships After working in GA as a regional game biologist, Dr. Niles worked for the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife, first as a biologist then as chief of the Endangered and Nongame Species Program. He led the Bald Eagle Recovery Project, Delaware Bay Shorebird Project and took part in projects on many of NJ's rare species.

In 2006, Dr. Niles started his company to pursue independent research and management projects. His focus is on shorebird ecology and conservation and habitat conservation through planning and restoration. Nearly all of Wildlife Restoration Partnerships projects are funded by federal and state wildlife agencies and foundations and are carried out in partnership with many groups, including American Littoral Society, Conserve Wildlife Foundation of NJ, NJ Audubon Society and Defenders of Wildlife. Dr. Niles is a member of the National Shorebird Council, the Executive Board of the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network. and the Adaptive Resource Management Committee of the Atlantic States Marine Fish Commission.

**Title:** For the Birds: Tracking Wildlife Migration and Movements—Even From Your Backyard!

**Date:** Monday, April 22, 6:30 p.m. at Brookdale Community College

**Speaker:** Scott Whittle, bird expert, author of The Warbler Guide and director of the Terra Project

**Description:** Whittle will give an overview of the history of tracking birds as well as the technologies available today, including the MOTUS network, satellite trackers, and miniaturization of radio tags. He'll talk about the exciting opportunities on the horizon for learning about and saving wildlife. Finally, Scott will talk about his own company, Terra, and how it is combining bioacoustics, crowdsourcing and community science to create a global sonic net that will allow us to track birds and wildlife 24/7.

## Logistics

The doors open at about 6:30 p.m., announcements begin at 6:40 p.m., and speakers begin at about 6:45 p.m.. FREE pizza buffet for lecture attendees begins at 6:30 p.m. in Warner Student Life Center Twin Lights Rooms I and II, and the presentation begins at 6:45 p.m.

**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>Group Chair</b>	Florence Abrenica	
<b>Treasurer and</b>		
<b>Political Chair</b>	Margaret Mary Piccolo	<a href="mailto:gogreenp1@yahoo.com">gogreenp1@yahoo.com</a>
<b>Publicity Co-Chair</b>	Ray Kozak	<a href="mailto:raykozak@comcast.net">raykozak@comcast.net</a>
<b>Publicity Co-Chair</b>	Cathy Kozak	
<b>Outings</b>	Terrance Brown and Nancy Brown	

**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](http://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	<a href="mailto:ginaceee@verizon.net">ginaceee@verizon.net</a>
<b>Vice-Chair</b>	Denise Brush		<a href="mailto:denise.brush111@gmail.com">denise.brush111@gmail.com</a>
<b>Secretary</b>	Open Position!		
<b>Treasurer</b>	Trish Clements		<a href="mailto:patri3210@gmail.com">patri3210@gmail.com</a>
<b>Publicity Chair</b>	Anne Caridi		<a href="mailto:annecaridi@yahoo.com">annecaridi@yahoo.com</a>
<b>Political Chair</b>	Open Position!		
<b>Greenways Coords.</b>	Frank and Ellen Zinni		<a href="mailto:efzin4@aol.com">efzin4@aol.com</a>
<b>Conservation Chair</b>	Stacey Ayala		<a href="mailto:thunderwolfgalaxy@yahoo.com">thunderwolfgalaxy@yahoo.com</a>
<b>Pinelands Rep</b>	Eleanor Kelly		<a href="mailto:ekelly0917@gmail.com">ekelly0917@gmail.com</a>
<b>Membership Chair</b>	Mike Brown	856-547-9221	<a href="mailto:eyebrown@verizon.net">eyebrown@verizon.net</a>
<b>Media &amp; Communications</b>	Tony Hagen		<a href="mailto:editor@newjersey.sierraclub.org">editor@newjersey.sierraclub.org</a>

**Open Positions! Call Gina to volunteer: 856-848-8831**  
Political chair, smart growth chair, programs chair, social media coordinators, outings chair, Off-shore Wind Committee

**West Jersey Group Meetings:** Currently, there are no general meetings planned due to difficulty in securing a venue. Please check our Facebook page for announcements.

If you would like to receive an email invitation when we do have meetings and are not already on our email reminder list, please send an email to Anne Caridi, [annecaridi@yahoo.com](mailto:annecaridi@yahoo.com), or Gina Carola, [ginaceee@verizon.net](mailto:ginaceee@verizon.net) or visit our Facebook page for information. <http://www.facebook.com/WestJerseyGroupNJSC/>

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](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/south-jersey)

### OFFICERS

<b>Group, Outings Chair</b>	Tom Boghosian	609-335-6907	<a href="mailto:tboghosian44@gmail.com">tboghosian44@gmail.com</a>
<b>Vice-Chair</b>	Open Position!		
<b>Conservation Chair</b>	Open Position!		
<b>Political Chair, Calendars</b>	Dick Colby	609-965-4453	<a href="mailto:dick.colby@stockton.edu">dick.colby@stockton.edu</a>
<b>Membership Chair</b>	Open Position!		
<b>Secretary/Treasurer</b>	Julie Akers	609-432-3280	<a href="mailto:julieakers56@gmail.com">julieakers56@gmail.com</a>
<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.

**Are you familiar with your group's conservation campaigns? Call one of our group leaders and get involved!**

**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](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/sierra-singles)

### OFFICERS

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	Jimi Oleksiak	<a href="mailto:The_Hikist@Mac.com">The_Hikist@Mac.com</a>
<b>Executive Committee Members</b>	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](http://sierraclub.org/new-jersey). You can also "like" us on Facebook: "Singles Group New Jersey Sierra Club." Activities will also be posted on Meetup.

## LGBTQIA+ (LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, QUEER, TRANSGENDER+) 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 LGBTQIA+ 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/](http://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)

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<b>Secretary</b>	Open Position!	
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<b>Outings Chair</b>	Wanda Ashbrook	<a href="mailto:pridegrlnj@aim.com">pridegrlnj@aim.com</a>

We are seeking volunteer hike leaders and have open officer positions! WE NEED YOU!

If you are interested in helping us plan and organize events and actions for the LGBTQIA+ community please VOLUNTEER to join our leadership team.

If you are someone who loves to hike and be outdoors, we need volunteers who are from the LGBTQIA+ community or are allies to co-lead our LGBTQIA+ and/or all-inclusive hikes. Please let us know! WE NEED YOU, too! 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!

## 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 listserv, by which members learn about current environmental issues, how these issues can be supported, 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.

<b>Section Chair</b>	Paul Ehrlich	<a href="mailto:p.w.ehrlich@gmail.com">p.w.ehrlich@gmail.com</a>
<b>Senior Section</b>	Open Positions	
<b>Vice-Chair</b>	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 execu-

>continued on page 12

tives 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.

**ICO News**

Recently the ICO Group successfully worked with Visions and Pathways and ran a great outing in Lord Sterling Park and the Raptor Trust Bird Rehabilitation and Education Center in Somerset County. The ICO Group took a group of about 10 participants on a hike and later to the Raptor Trust to see the birds in rehabilitation.

The ICO Group is currently working to establish a partnership with Urban Promise, based out of Camden, particularly with their Urban Trekkers program. The group is primarily high school students, grades nine through 11, with potential to work with their middle schoolers, grade eight, as well.

Tentatively, we are looking at weekends in March/April for our first outing with Urban Promise.

The group is interested in integrating backpacking/camping skills such as fire making, tent setup, and other outdoor-focused skills. Anyone with experience is encouraged to volunteer!

ICO Group is looking for volunteers and outings leaders interested in working with Urban Promise and potentially working as a liaison for our future outings. Email our chair, Oscar Nazar, if interested: [chair.njico.sierraclub@gmail.com](mailto:chair.njico.sierraclub@gmail.com)

**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: March 9, April 13, May 11, June 8**



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**NEW JERSEY CHAPTER LEADERSHIP**

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*Please share this newsletter with a nonmember friend and invite them to join (see membership coupon this page).*



**THE JERSEY Sierran**

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The Jersey Sierran appears in January, April, July and October. The deadline for copy for the 2024 July to September issue is May 3. Members are welcome to propose articles, essays, letters, poetry, and art for publication. Group/section news columns are prepared by group/section chairs; Outings are vetted by Chapter Outings Chair Leona Fluck.

*Opinions, unless otherwise indicated, are the writer's own. Advertised products and services carry no Club endorsement.*

Thank you to all who contributed to this issue! This newsletter is produced mostly by volunteers.

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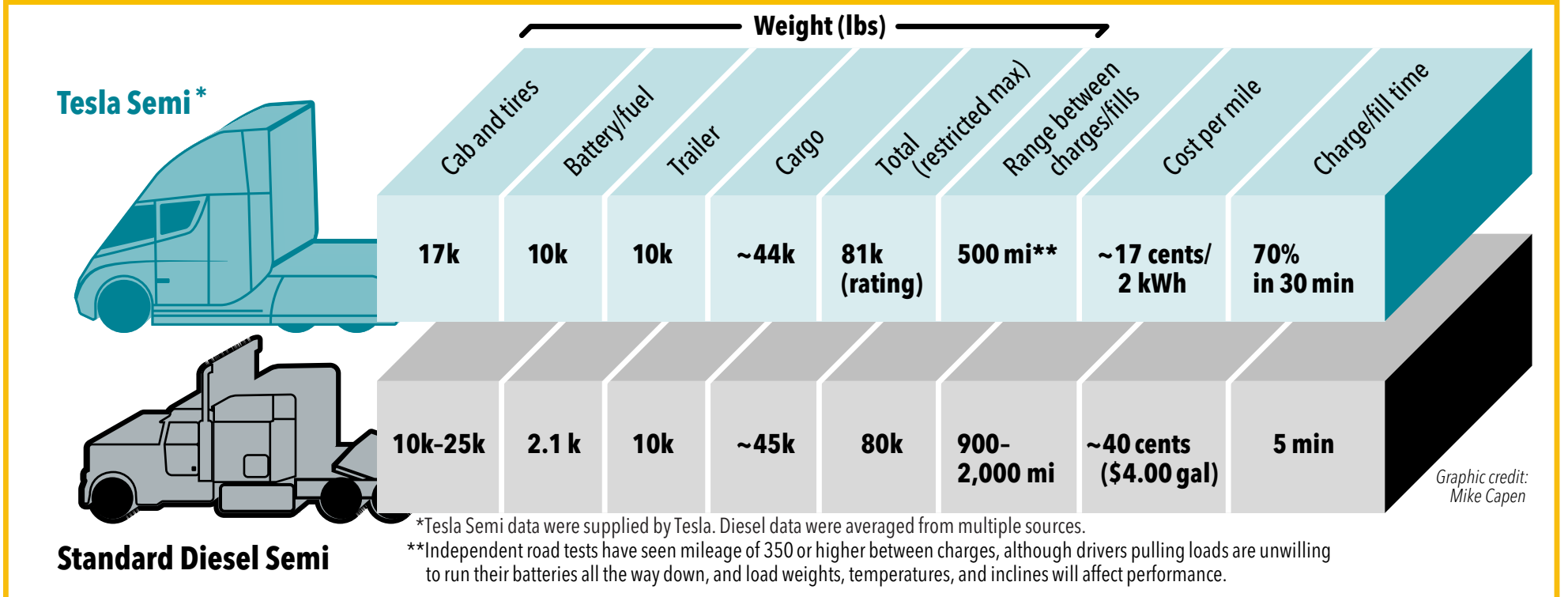
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Explore, enjoy, and protect the planet

## Tesla Electric Semi Trucks vs Diesel Semi Trucks



## Electric Semis Grow Up

A report last summer from the [Environmental Defense Fund](#) counted 1,777 warehouses in New Jersey. The trucks that service them are predominantly diesel and belch noxious fumes and particulate matter throughout the state, often in overburdened neighborhoods.

The report said that in New Jersey 1.9 million people live within a half mile of a warehouse.

Skepticism has abounded that the workhorses of our trucking fleet can be converted to electric. The new Tesla Semi may change that perception. Semis are trucks with detachable cabs that haul trailers and flatbeds laden with goods.

The Tesla Semi can cover [huge distances](#) with minimal recharges and pull loads

roughly equivalent to what diesel-powered semis can haul (graphic).

Just about 100 Tesla Semis rolled off the assembly line in 2023, and PepsiCo was the first to put them into service, in California. Tesla plans to move into full production by the end of this year. Tesla has previously stated plans to produce 50,000 semi-trucks starting in 2024.

That means New Jersey residents may start noticing these trucks very soon.

### Resources

EDF Report: [shorturl.at/agGHV](https://shorturl.at/agGHV)

Tesla Semi Challenge: [shorturl.at/wCJWo](https://shorturl.at/wCJWo)

## New Offshore Wind Projects Approved

Putting Ørsted's failed wind turbine projects largely in the rearview mirror, the Murphy Administration has approved two new offshore wind projects totaling 3.7 GW, enough to offset several million tons of CO<sub>2</sub> annually.

The projects are Leading Light Wind, by developers Invenergy and EnergyRe; and Attentive Energy Two, by TotalEnergies, Rise Light & Power, and Corio Generation. They would be built 40 miles off the coast of Atlantic City and 42 miles east of Seaside Heights, respectively.

Such distances would put them out of sight from the shoreline and have already earned them a measure of approval from Save Long Beach Island, one of the staunchest critics of the state's offshore wind program. Such political support is a positive for this fledgling industry.

"The Sierra Club is excited at the prospect of more turbines on New Jersey's horizon and looks forward to a safer climate future because of it," said NJ Chapter Director Anjuli Ramos-Busot.

Following Ørsted's cancellation of its two Ocean Wind projects, in November, New Jersey was left with one other offshore wind project in development, the 1.5 GW Atlantic Shores, which would extend seaward from a point 9 miles off the Sea Girt coastline.

The just-announced bid awards were selected from among four developer inquiries New Jersey received late last year. Importantly, one of the agreements calls for an investment of \$164 million at the Paulsboro turbine monopile (turbine foundation) manufacturing center.

This picks up some of the slack caused by Ørsted's departure. New Jersey is facing stranded investment based on Ørsted's pullout, although state officials suggested recently that the newly awarded bids have significantly improved the outlook. The state is hoping to install 11 GW of offshore wind power by 2050.

As far as opposition to turbines in New Jersey goes, there are still oil interests and fishing groups to consider, not to

mention not-in-my-backyard groups that remain opposed to the Atlantic Shores development. The turbines will be visible from the shore and have been described by opponents as "a stick in the mud."

Leading Light Wind will be built out all at once, rather than in stages, to take advantage of economies of scale, and its footprint will fully encompass 76,000 acres of leased ocean area. That will mean a lot of careful maneuvering for fishing boats that want to harvest in those waters.

The backers behind the Atlantic Shores development, Shell New Energies, and EDF Renewables North America, have 400 square miles of leased area at their disposal, not all of which would be developed at once.

The economics of wind farm development have grown daunting over the past three years, with rising materials and borrowing costs, not to mention heavy opposition from oil-entrenched interests.

A recent Standard and Poor's report stated that the [total cost](#) of an offshore wind project has increased by more than 30% over the past two years. In fact, New York State, where Ørsted is still active, has taken to allowing rebidding of contracts to account for these ballooning costs and to retain developer interest.

Ørsted and Eversource are rebidding their development contract for the Sunrise Wind turbine farm slated for a point east of Long Island's Montauk Harbor.

Ørsted and Eversource are also working to activate their 130 MW South Fork Wind Farm just north of the Sunrise Wind location. This would begin delivering power in the first half of 2024 and would be the first to do so for New York state.

In New Jersey, Atlantic Shores is looking to be the first to deliver wind energy. Their 1.5 GW farm will commence installation in 2024 and go live in 2027, according to the plan.

## 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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Sierra Club NJ Chapter Director Anjuli Ramos-Busot and Congresswoman Mickie Sherrill met with other NJ leaders recently to discuss native habitat restoration and plantings to stabilize New Jersey's natural environment, support wildlife, and provide climate change resilience.

## TRENTON REPORT

### “A Glass of Water, No Tire”

In the documentary *Dark Waters*, the ingestion of PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) was compared to swallowing a tire. There are thousands of PFAS chemicals in use and littered about the environment—some estimate 12,000 kinds—but only a small proportion of these are regulated in New Jersey, which is perilous considering the highly adverse health effects attributed to these chemicals.

On Jan. 16, Gov. Phil Murphy signed [legislation](#) enabling the state to move forward with a study on potential regulation of the entire class of PFAS substances. This would concern PFAS maximum contaminant levels (MCL) in drinking water and also technology for removing PFAS from wastewater.

Also in January, Gov. Murphy signed A4125 into law. This prohibits the use of PFAS in firefighting foam used in New Jersey. Firefighting foam at airports is considered a major source of PFAS groundwater contamination.

“The legislation is a massive win for toxics regulation and the protection of drinking water for New Jerseyans,” said Sierra Club NJ Chapter Director Anjuli Ramos-Busot.

It was in 2020 that New Jersey [established](#) MCL for three types of PFAS in drinking water. The EPA has proposed even stricter MCL standards, and adoption of a rule was expected to occur early in 2024.

However, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has moved more slowly than New Jersey in implementing realistic [measures](#) for regulating PFAS. In February, it announced plans to expand the types of PFAS in drinking water that would be regulated, but blanket regulation of these toxic compounds nationally is not yet in the cards.

The EPA also announced in February it is working on potential modification of the definition of hazardous waste, such that the federal government and individual states would have more latitude to address PFAS contamination cleanups at hazardous waste sites.

#### Resources

NJ PFAS Legislation: [shorturl.at/uxKTo](https://shorturl.at/uxKTo)

EPA on PFAS: [www.epa.gov/pfas](https://www.epa.gov/pfas)

### Dealing With Vinyl Chloride

In 2012, a train carrying colorless, flammable gas called vinyl chloride derailed at the Jefferson St. Bridge in Paulsboro. Many area residents were sickened. More than 10 years later, some still worry about the long-term health effects of their exposure. The Environmental Protection Agency has recently been contemplating a risk evaluation of vinyl chloride, among other chemicals: <https://shorturl.at/prN36>. The EPA risk evaluation would determine whether vinyl chloride should be regulated more strictly under the Toxic Substance Control Act. Many environmental activists have called for an outright ban on vinyl chloride, based on the East Palestine, Ohio train derailment and contamination in February 2023.

## NJ Transit Faces Fiscal Cliff, Proposes 15% Fare Hike Across the Board

By Bill Beren • Transportation Committee Chair

In January, New Jersey Transit announced its intention to raise bus and rail fares 13% to 15% while keeping service at current levels. This will be the first fare increase for NJ Transit riders in 10 years.

NJ Transit claims that Covid-19 related farebox revenue loss (ridership is approximately 80% of pre-Covid-19 levels) totals nearly \$2 billion. The agency claims the fare hike will cover an expected budget gap of \$106.6 million in fiscal year 2025, which begins on July 1.

NJ Transit also estimates they will need an annual infusion of \$200 million for the next decade to meet the governor’s climate goal to gradually replace the agency’s 2,400 diesel buses with electric buses. This additional funding is needed for preliminary engineering work to install charging equipment at 17 garages as well as the actual installation of charging infrastructure at those garages.

To date, the governor has not proposed any funding for that purpose, and it is expected that NJ Transit will not be able to meet its climate goals as a result.



Public comment on these hearing proposals was accepted at eight locations throughout the state during the week of March 4 to March 8.

The Sierra Club has been advocating for the legislature and governor to establish a dedicated source of funding to cover NJ Transit’s operating expense deficit. The governor has rejected calls to reinstate the so-called millionaire’s tax and dedicate those funds to NJ Transit. There are other options for generating funding that include a real estate transfer tax, like the one in place in the NY metropolitan area, or receiving a portion of New York’s proposed congestion pricing tax on vehicles entering the Manhattan Central Business District.

## TRENTON REPORT

### What’s the Hurry, Cap’n?

The number of documented whale collisions off the East Coast speaks to the wisdom of slower speeds for ocean-going vessels. The Sierra Club NJ Chapter has joined Congressman Frank Pallone in calling on the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the US Coast Guard for vessel speed monitoring and enforcement.

The enlargement of the Port Elizabeth docking facilities has made it the second largest in the world. Traffic into and out of the port has increased 65% since 1998. At the same time, the food stocks whales like to eat have been swimming closer to shore, luring whales into the path of these giant ships. This is believed to have added to whale mortalities.

The right whale population off the East Coast is already on the precipice of extinction, and protections for these magnificent creatures are desperately needed. The NJ Chapter is calling for robust enforcement of the 2008 [vessel speed rule](#) to protect marine wildlife.

“It is no news that marine wildlife is severely threatened,” said Sierra Club NJ Chapter Director Anjuli Ramos-Busot. “We understand how the ocean’s ecosystems are drastically changing because of climate change. Water temperatures, currents, salinity, and prey distribution all have a direct impact on our marine ecosystems and wildlife.”

“There is plenty of [evidence](#) showing that vessel strikes are overwhelmingly harming and killing marine wildlife. Eliminating the leading culprit of these deaths can be achieved by simply following the existing law and adapting to the current climate dynamic in our oceans,” she said.

The Endangered Species Act and the Marine Mammal Protection Act required NOAA to create the vessel speed rule in 2008 mandating all vessels 65 feet and longer to travel at a speed of ten knots or less in certain times and places to prevent the critically endangered North Atlantic right whale from being struck and injured or killed.

“The vessel speed rule must be enforced, strictly and properly, for it to be effective,” Pallone said.



Congressman Frank Pallone joined environmental leaders recently to ask NOAA and the US Coast Guard to enforce boating/shipping speed restrictions to reduce marine mammal collisions. Left to right, Anjuli Ramos-Busot, NJ Chapter Director of the Sierra Club; Doug O’Malley, state director of Environment New Jersey; Pallone; John Weber, senior field representative for the Mid-Atlantic Oceana Staff; and Ed Potosnak, executive director of the NJ League of Conservation Voters.

## Trenton Tackles the Lead Problem With Cost Aid

By Joanne Pannone • Central Jersey Group

Four years ago, Trenton began replacing lead service lines. The city exceeded the safe standard of 15 parts per billion, and the state Department of Environmental Protection was issuing fines for missing deadlines to replace city lead service lines with copper.

The city complained that it was understaffed to address water issues. Funding has been delayed. The city still needs \$150 million to locate and replace 37,000 lead water service lines. However, a \$9 million state grant and a \$15 million dollar loan will allow Trenton to get started.

Replacing street access lines, generally the homeowner’s responsibility, can cost up to \$5,000 per home, but Trenton is making it happen for a flat cost of \$1,000 per home. For those with limited incomes, the work can be done for free.

Recently, the EPA met with parents after tests showed lead at contaminated grassy play areas at a Trenton school. Several pottery factories existed in the area in the 1900s, and these were a major contributor to the lead residue. Cleanup has been initiated.

Lead can alter behavior, affect learning, and cause seizures and death. Ten NJ towns are getting help from the Biden administration to speed up the removal process, although it is esti-

mated it will take eight more years to fix the problem.

Blackwood, Camden, Clementon, East Newark, Harrison, Keansburg, Keyport, New Brunswick, Trenton, and Ventnor are estimated to have tens of thousands of lead service lines. Many more are of unknown composition.

There is \$15 billion available for problems like this in President Biden’s bipartisan infrastructure act. New Jersey has received roughly \$150 million in federal funding each of the last two years, but it’s not enough. Records from well over 100 years ago don’t completely show where all those lines are. The EPA Accelerator program is the doorway to the infrastructure fund, but to qualify, towns must provide reliable information on the number of lead lines in need of replacement.

Shereyl Snider, of the East Trenton Collaborative in the North Ward Community, believes “lead poisoning is 100% preventable.” She said combatting lead contamination starts with proper housing and protecting children from lead in the water and in older paint. Helpful programs are Lead-Free NJ and Get the Lead Out of Trenton.

