

Susquehanna *Sierran*

SEPTEMBER 2026



Founded 1892

EXPLORE, ENJOY, PROTECT THE PLANET

Let's Row Together!

– Valdi Weiderpass, Chair, Susquehanna Group of Sierra Club

Susquehanna Group has over 1,000 members. A few dozen attend monthly Group meetings in-person or on-line. Nine members serve as volunteers on the Group's Executive Committee, which tracks environmental matters in our region, plans Group interventions, plans Group meetings, manages its finances, manages its website, engages with government officials, decides on political candidate endorsements, plans field trips and other events, and produces communications including emails, social media, and this newsletter. Members and many volunteers run the much-admired Move Out Project which redirects to the needy usable items left by departing college students.

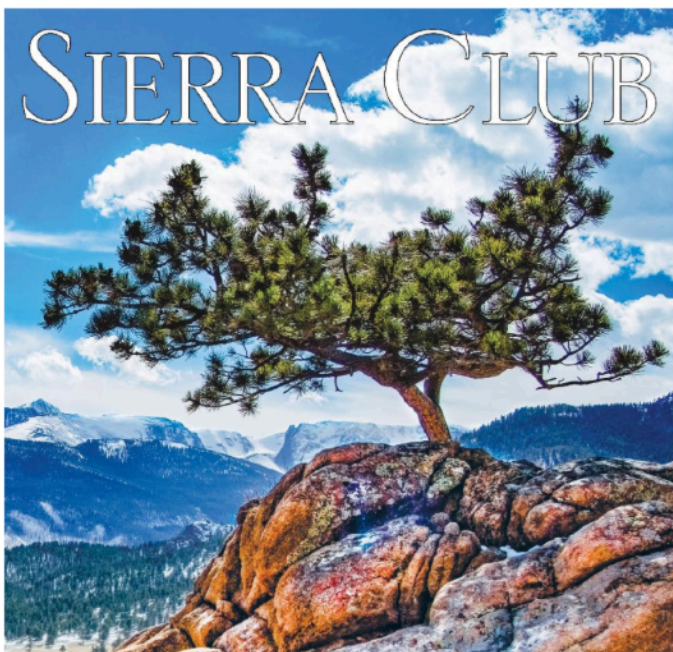
We need help to get government officials to listen to us when we fight expansion of fossil fuel infrastructure and press for a transition to an electrified economy based on renewable energy. **We need help** when we ask New York State (NYS) to enforce existing environmental laws and regulations. **We need help** to advocate for legislation to improve environmental protection and to enact policies needed to save a habitable climate.

Susquehanna Group is part of the Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter (SCAC), which covers all of New York State. Several of our Group members work on Chapter activities including serving on its Executive Committee and other committees.

The Chapter's Legislative Committee reviews introduced NYS legislation, and when appropriate suggests new legislation for the NYS Legislature to enact. The Energy Committee tracks NYS emissions and non-polluting new power sources. The Political Committee deals with election candidates and makes/withholds endorsements. Other active committees are focused on Farm & Food, and Gas Action. Some Group members also volunteer with other environmental organizations because collaboration can be effective. **More help is needed.**

NYS would be the world's eighth largest economy if it were a separate country, so what we do matters. NYS woefully failed to meet its climate law (Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act or CLCPA of 2019), so environmental organizations, including SCAC, sued NY State to compel it to issue CLCPA-mandated economy-wide greenhouse gas reduction regulations. In response our Governor held hostage this year's NYS budget during the legislative session thereby weakening the law's targets and accounting rules. **We need help** to show there's a political cost to not meeting the CLCPA and moral obligations on climate change. We need collective actions to save a habitable climate.





WILDERNESS
CALENDAR 2027

CALENDAR TIME !

We'll mail them (in full color) to you!
Supplies are limited. Please get your order
in promptly. \$18 each for either Wall or
Engagement size. This is a small fundraiser
for Susquehanna Group.

Mail order form and payment by check to
the address below. Questions? Contact
Treasurer Joann Lettis at
jomom83589@aol.com



Please make check payable to: Sierra Club
Susquehanna Group. Mail to: Sierra Club
Susquehanna Group
PO Box 572
Endicott NY 13760

THANK YOU !

Calendar Type	Each	Quantity	Cost
Wall	\$18		
Engagement	\$18		
Shipping			\$5
Total Due			

Coming Events

9/13/26 11:00AM Tree Identification Walk, Chenango Valley State Park, with forester Roy Hopke.
Roy is particularly interested in the nearly-extinct chestnut, survivors of which exist in the park.
Meet at office building parking lot at the main entrance. Dress appropriately. Register, and pose questions in
advance at lauffer.scott@gmail.com

9/15/26 7:00PM, General Meeting. New Era of Solar Cells: From Rooftops to Space Applications
Presentation by Tara P. Dhakal, PhD, Director of Binghamton University's Center for Autonomous Solar Power
(CASP) and professor, electrical and computer engineering. How solar cells turn sunlight into electricity and
how advances in materials and manufacturing make solar energy more powerful, affordable, and useful in
applications from homes to space missions. Vestal Public Library, 320 Vestal Parkway E. Or attend via Zoom
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3644665286?pwd=VS9kUoNBaUttMnpRa3BSNngwci9TUT09>

10/17/26 9:00AM Annual Riverbank Cleanup organized by Broome County Environmental Management
Council. Meet at south end of Washington Street pedestrian bridge, Binghamton. Bring: work gloves, water.
Long pants and tick spray are also recommended.
If questions, lauffer.scott@gmail.com

10/20/26 7:00 PM General Meeting, The Health Care Crisis and the New York Health Act
Susan Beckley, business manager with considerable experience with employers, employees and providers, will
discuss the importance of the New York Health Act (S3425) which would provide universal health coverage for
all NY residents regardless of age, ability to pay, or employment status. Vestal Public Library, 320 Vestal
Parkway E. Or attend via Zoom [https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3644665286?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3644665286?pwd=VS9kUoNBaUttMnpRa3BSNngwci9TUT09)
[pwd=VS9kUoNBaUttMnpRa3BSNngwci9TUT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3644665286?pwd=VS9kUoNBaUttMnpRa3BSNngwci9TUT09)

Susquehanna Group

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

Chair	*Valdi Weiderpass
Vice Chair	*Moir Ashleigh
Secretary	*Laura Seltz
Treasurer	*Joann Lettis
Political Chair, Outings	*Scott Lauffer
Chapter Delegate	*Jim Taft
Newsletter Editor	*Jim Taft
Webmaster	*Moir Ashleigh
Conservation Co-Chairs	*Doug Gausman, *Mary Cronk
Alt. Chapter Delegate	*Joann Lettis
MOP Co-Coordinator	*Christina Fuller
* Member Executive Committee	

To become a candidate for the
Susquehanna Group's Executive
Committee, mail by November 1, 2026
a candidate statement of 150 words or
less to:

Susquehanna Group
PO Box 572
Endicott NY 13760

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

Electronics Recycling

— Scott Lauffer



New York State law requires residents to properly recycle electronics covered by the Electronic Equipment Recycling and Reuse Act. Components contain metals and other toxic substances that can get into the environment, and which can be reused to lessen mining impacts.

Broome and Tioga Counties offer electronics recycling. For residents of both counties the Broome County landfill is the primary site to take used electronics. It's a 'haul' to get them there. I've done it and would prefer better options. Broome County sometimes offers multiple offsite electronics recycling collections for County residents. But it's not many times a year.

The Towns of Union and Richford also offer electronics recycling for their residents. Some retail outlets take certain electronics, which for most of us is more convenient. Among them are Best Buy, Staples, Red Barn and ICS Industries in Endicott.

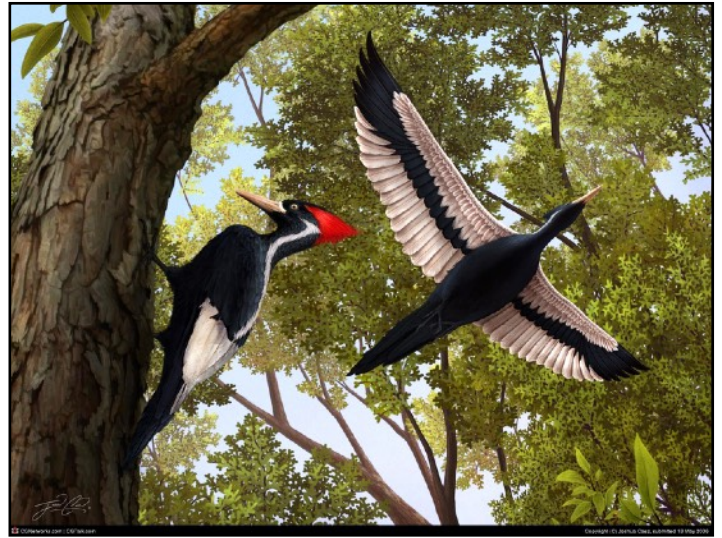
Materials accepted by the County are computers, monitors, printers, TVs, VCRs, modems, stereos, laptops, keyboards, radios, fax machines, pagers and mobile phones.

We asked Broome County Legislative candidates "How do you think the County can enhance electronic recycling to make it more accessible to the residents?" This is part of our endorsement process. Making electronics recycling more accessible makes sense if we want to better protect the environment. Let your county legislator know this is an issue you care about.

A Major Blow for Nature

– Julian Shepherd

Shortly after Independence Day this year, the U.S. Interior Department (Doug Bergum, Secretary) and the Commerce department (Howard Lutnick, Secretary) released a change of rule for the Endangered Species Act (ESA), redefining the crucial term “harm.” “Harm” is defined in the Act as direct harm to endangered organisms but also harm to their habitat by elimination or “modification or degradation.” Thus, even when the Act came into effect in 1974, it recognized the major role of habitat loss in the endangerment and extinction of animals and plant populations. Although direct harm to organisms was long ago the major threat to organisms (dodos, great auks, and passenger pigeons, for example), habitat loss has become by far the leading cause of reduction of biodiversity. So, eliminating the protection of habitat essentially guts the ESA.



The ESA was a uniquely American approach to conservation of nature when it was introduced, and it was soon followed in other countries by variations on the same idea. Among other innovations, the ESA included the idea that it should apply to private as well as public lands. That soon ran into big trouble (e.g. the snail darter controversy) with developers, but a major revision of the Act in 1982, the Habitat Conservation Plan allowed substitution of new protected habitat for projected destruction of protected habitat. This helped diminish opposition, and later the protection of habitat in the definition of “harm” was upheld by a Supreme Court decision in 2005. But almost every year since then, efforts to dilute or destroy the Act have been introduced in Congress in support of development and extractive interests, fortunately without success.

So, the Act has survived pretty much intact for over 50 years... until now. The rule now promulgated was proposed a year ago and received over 200,000 comments, 99% opposed (NYTimes analysis). Extractive interests (mining, drilling, logging) say that the ESA has obstructed development with regulations that exceed the original intent of Congress. I would hope that, yes, it does limit some development, but nature is obviously imperiled even under current regulations. Recent extensive and careful analyses of animal populations have shown considerable losses over the last several decades, E.G. 29% of North American bird populations over the last 50 years, 23% of U.S. butterfly populations over the last 20 years. Several environmental organizations are already developing legal challenges to the rule change. Given the original wording of the ESA, a successful challenge might seem a no-brainer, but if such challenges reach our current Supreme Court, all bets are off.

For me, the diversity of biodiversity in nature is one of our greatest treasures. So, I hope all Sierra Clubbers will do what they know well how to do: urge and aid rejection of this destructive rule change and the several other current assaults on our natural heritage.



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PO Box 572

Endicott NY 13760

<https://www.sierraclub.org/atlantic/susquehanna>