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**Solidarity
with
Standing
Rock
Native
Americans**

Organized by Heartwood and including representatives from a number of Western Pennsylvania organizations, a small but determined group of Pittsburgh area residents, including some local Sierra Club members, met at the Point on Sunday, September 4, 2016, to support the Standing Rock Lakota native American tribe's resistance to the Dakota Access oil pipeline (DAPL). Participants at the action made statements in support of the tribe members, who are protecting their water, land, and sacred sites from being destroyed by the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline. Supporters then rejoiced by accompanying a Native American drummer in traditional Native American music. In addition, participants collected funds and goods



and entrusted them to Bill Bartlett, who drove out to the Standing Rock reservation to provide help for a long winter's resistance.

This event was followed on Thursday, September 15, by a much larger rally in front of the Federal Building in downtown Pittsburgh for "PGH Solidarity with Standing Rock Protectors." Members of the Allegheny Group of the Sierra Club joined over 150 Pittsburghers, blocking traffic on Liberty Avenue during rush hours with a 75' long mock pipeline, signs, and their bodies. At the demonstration, participants heard from allies from all backgrounds, including a member from Save Our Salem, a local group in Salem Township in Westmoreland County fighting the destructive impacts on their com-

"Standing Rock" Continued on Page 2

The Sierra Club is now the nation's largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization - with more than two million members and supporters. *The Allegheny Group of the Sierra Club* was organized in the early 1970s. It is one of 10 groups comprising the Pennsylvania Chapter.

Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

“Standing Rock” Continued from Page 1

munity after the disastrous April 29, 2016, pipeline explosion and the Mariner East II pipeline project. Native voices were heard from at this rally as well.

Since April 2016, the Standing Rock Native Americans have had several encampments protecting the land and water from the DAPL. If built, the pipeline would carry 470 barrels of crude per day to Pakota, Illinois, where it would link with other pipelines around the country. If built, the pipeline would be a cultural and environmental threat to the residents of the Standing Rock Reservation. The pipeline would cross the Nation’s traditional hunting, fishing, and burial territory, as well as directly crossing under the Missouri River, the main source of water for this band of Native Americans.

The Water Protectors have met with violent responses from police, private security firms, and North Dakota politicians, who declared a State of Emergency to discredit the encampments.

On Friday, September 9, the Army Corps of Engineers, the US Department of Justice, and the US Department of the Interior jointly announced that they would temporarily stop construction under a lake that serves as a critical source of drinking water for the Standing Rock Tribe. They also requested that the pipeline company, Energy Transfer Partners, voluntarily halt construction within 20 miles of the lake. However, construction continues in other sections of the project. During the demonstration in Pittsburgh on September 15, supporters of the Standing Rock tribe called on the Army Corps of Engineers to permanently halt construction of the pipeline.

The Allegheny Group of the Sierra Club supports indigenous communities fighting for their rights for sovereignty, dignity, and the protection of the water, air, land, and cultural spaces. We encourage our members to educate themselves and continue to get involved and support this important pipeline battle, not only for the environment but also for native sovereignty.

Eva Westheimer and Matt Peters

(<https://www.facebook.com/Shadbushcollective/posts/1032851020169893>)



Sierra Club Strives for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion



Whites are projected to become a demographic minority (under 50%) in the United States by 2045. That being the case, most societal improvement organizations (i.e., rights groups, peace and justice groups, civic improvement groups, etc.), concerned about their survival and the survival of their missions, are mounting an effort to diversify by reaching out to ethnic and gender communities that have not traditionally played a significant role in these organizations, either as members or, especially, as leaders.

Having participated in several social justice movements and been a part of several progressive organizations, I have reached the conclusion, based upon my experience, that the environmentalist movement is the whitest and the wealthiest of them all.

The reason I think this a reasonable conclusion is that other progressive movements address manifestations of social injustice, and activists in those movements are usually the people who are the victims of a specific form of injustice. So, those who suffer discrimination because of ethnicity or gender, for example, are drawn to rights movements that address those issues while the working poor are inclined to rally for a raise in the minimum wage and are, in general, drawn to the labor movement.

On the other hand, it is quite likely that folks who dedicate their time and energies to saving the whales and the polar bears, or to fighting to preserve

pristine wildernesses from the depredations of drillers and loggers are, for the most part, members of an ethnic social category and an economic class not struggling on a daily basis with racial discrimination and/or economic hardship. In other words, they are “white” and trending to “upper middle class.” And the absence of discrimination based on color is part of what is meant by a term that a lot of people (mostly white) find objectionable: “white privilege.”

None of this is meant to be criticism. That people who could be spending their lives totally in pursuit of pleasure and entertainment are willing to give of themselves to work for a better world is truly commendable. Clean air and clean water are basic human necessities. And global warming threatens the whole human race, but especially the poor. Environmentalists are certainly fighting in behalf of the whole human race, including the underprivileged.

Yet this very fact may lead some to wonder why a special outreach effort is being undertaken by the Sierra Club to achieve diversity, equity and inclusion within the organization by actively reaching out to minorities, especially communities of color, in an effort to form partnerships and alliances with the goal of eventually changing the complexion of our activist demographic. After all, anybody who wishes to join the Sierra Club or participate in Club activities is

more than welcome. And might not the fact the so few minority persons become involved with the Club indicate a lack of interest on their part? Perhaps even a lack of concern for the plight of our planet?

Such questions, however, even when posed in an honest and sincere manner and with the best of intentions are the best evidence for why such outreach is necessary.

People best understand what they have experienced, what they have lived, as opposed to what they have read about in books or derived from other second-hand sources of information. White people who have grown up in white middle-class surroundings and who, as adults, live a white middle-class or upper middle-class existence and whose friends and associates are similarly situated have no real understanding of what it is like to be African-American in this society. There is no real idea what it is like to be a member of a group that, in our society, has been enslaved, beaten, lynched and otherwise murdered, exploited, deemed inherently inferior to the majority population, and to be at best treated as second-class citizens, which has been the experience of black Americans since the time the first African was brought to this continent in chains until the present day. Those who have watched *Roots* or read *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* might think they can “imagine” what it is like, but, really, such “imaginings” are gauzy fantasies compared to a reality reeking of burnt flesh and the sweat of a lynch mob.

“Diversity” Continued on Page 4

So, the fact that poor people and people of color have not come flocking to our predominantly white, predominantly upper-middle class environmental movement, despite our “open door policy,” is not because they don’t care. It is because they face more immediate and pressing needs on a daily basis such as extremely high unemployment especially among youth, lack of educational opportunities, drugs and the ever-present threat and reality of violence in their neighborhoods. This is an existential situation that well-off whites are mostly clueless about, and the most clueless are the ones who think they “get it.” Let’s be frank: we in the environmental movement have never been able to persuasively articulate our message among a majority of the white blue-collar working class who at least share with us the “privilege” of being white. How much more difficult is it to connect with people whose history and experience in the United States has been so vastly different from our own?

Yet it is imperative that we in the environmental movement make the utmost effort to actively open our organizations to the whole panoply of diverse ethnicities, cultures, genders, faith traditions (or lack thereof) and poor and working people of every background. And by “actively” I mean that we must work to create a space within our organizations in which diverse humanity, in addition to well-educated, financially comfortable white people, feel safe, comfortable and valued. The Sierra Club, as the oldest and largest environmental organization in the nation,

must assume a leadership position here and, in fact, that is precisely what is happening. The election of Aaron Mair as the first African-American president of the Board of Directors of the national Sierra Club is a step in the right direction. But much more needs to be done on every level to achieve this goal. And one of the best ways to start is to join the fight for racial and social justice by joining organizations that work for these goals in communities of color and among the working poor and among those who are discriminated against because of their gender or perceived gender. And not to join them as a “gimmick” to get them to join us, but as a real expression of solidarity in the struggle for justice.

Locally, for example, the Sierra Club Allegheny Group endorsed and was a part of the National Mobilization Against Police Brutality in Pittsburgh last summer and this year we have endorsed the Freedom From Violence March which was held in the Hill District on Memorial Day weekend. Also the Allegheny Group marched as an organization in the Pride Parade in June.

Global warming is the foremost threat facing humankind today, but combating global warming is going to involve a lot more than simply switching our energy sources from fossil fuels to renewables. Currently the United States has 5% of the world’s population but consumes 20% of the world’s energy. That is an unsustainable way to live, fossil fuels or no fossil fuels, as is becoming increasingly evident as people all over the world, including China and India with over a billion people apiece, “want to live like Americans.” Real and hard deci-

sions about consumption habits are going to have to be made and it is unacceptable that those decisions be made by professional politicians often beholden to wealthy institutions and individuals. Some form of direct democracy is going to have to either replace or supplement the so-called “representative democracy” that currently prevails. And in this direct democracy everybody’s voice, and I mean everybody’s, is going to have to be heard and everybody’s vote is going to have to count, and right now what is coming to pass is One Big Movement dedicated to building the institutions of inclusion and diversity and equity. And the environmental movement needs to be an integral part of this One Big Movement or we are going to be on the outside looking in.

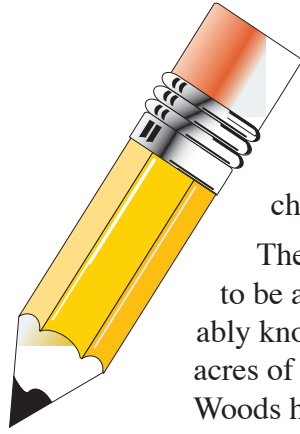
The truth that environmental issues and social justice issues are intimately linked was eloquently expressed by Pope Francis last year in his encyclical *Laudato Si* when he wrote: “[T]he earth is essentially a shared inheritance, whose fruits are meant to benefit everyone...[h]ence every ecological approach needs to incorporate a social perspective which takes into account the fundamental rights of the poor and the underprivileged.”

Welcome to the Revolution.

*Michael Pastorkovich,
Vice Chair
Sierra Club Allegheny Group*

Notes from the Chair:

Making a Difference



Once again I revel in living in an area that has four seasons – these fall days with the humidity down, temperatures in the mid 60s, blue skies, and the beautiful changes of colors of the leaves that nature provides.

The Allegheny Group of the Sierra Club has a fantastic opportunity to be a part of the plans for the future of Hays Woods. As you probably know, the city purchased this incredible tract of wilderness – 635 acres of woodland, the largest undeveloped tract of land in the city. Hays Woods has six streams, including a waterfall, three wetland areas, and, of course, is home to our nesting bald eagles. It will become the largest park in Pittsburgh. You may be aware that in 2005-06, the Sierra Club along with a group of activists successfully prevented part of this woodland from being strip mined and becoming the site of a thoroughbred racetrack and housing development. We believe this current effort to determine its future will be a long, slow process as many factors (e.g. old gas wells, old deep mine, the eagles, the streams) need to be taken into consideration. Matt Peters (mattnedludd@gmail.com) is heading a group to become involved in the process of helping influence the future use of this marvelous woodland. Please contact him if you are interested in getting involved.

This newsletter includes a wonderful variety of articles – the Pope’s Encyclical, the Cheswick Coal Plant hearing, Fracking and health and worker safety, Hazelwood activities, Citizens Climate Lobby—as well as the Sierra Club’s endorsements for the November 8 elections, order forms for our Calendars and Trail Guides, and upcoming events.

I know everyone’s attention is focused on the November 8 elections. However, I want to call everyone’s attention to our annual Executive Committee Elections. We have a wonderful slate of candidates who will be excellent contributors to our organization. Details about these elections are in an article on page 18. By now you should have gotten a notice via email to go to our website to vote or received a ballot in the mail (if we did not have an email address for you). We appreciate your participation in this process.

Thank you for your support of the Allegheny Group! Please contact me with your questions or concerns at 412-521-9526, or barbgrover1@gmail.com.

*Barbara Grover,
Group Chair*

The city of Pittsburgh has a new blank spot on the map, and fortunately it is not due to the collapse of one of our neighborhoods. The city has a new park, thanks to the generous donation of some 660 acres of land that has escaped development since the dawn of the Industrial Revolution and is now thickly forested, in some places with stands of oaks easily 200 years old.

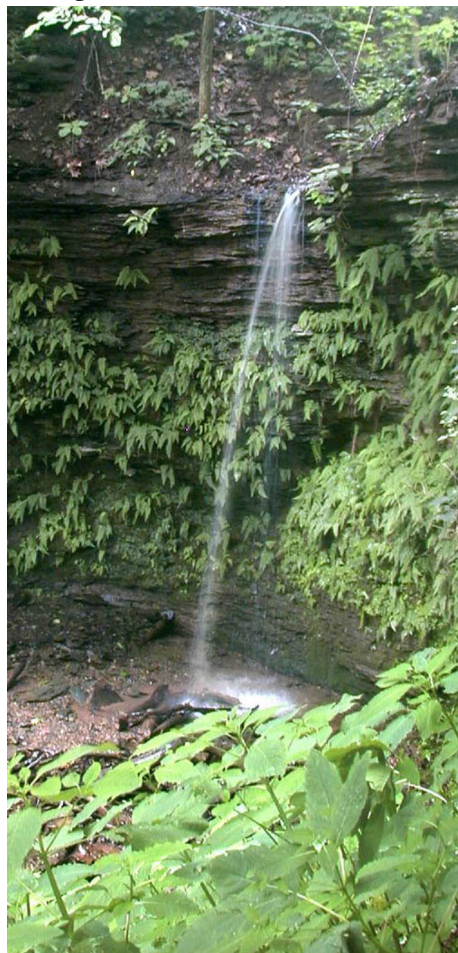
Hays Woods, as the area is called, is the extension of the mountain bluff above the Monongahela River beyond where the South Side ends, that long stretch of Carson Street that takes you past Beck's Run and around the river's bend to Homestead. Near the Point, the bluff is called Mount Washington. In the earliest days of the Industrial Revolution here in America, all that mountain was known as "coal hill" and was extensively mined for its exposed seams of coal, iron and limestone, but once the mines moved underground and out into neighboring counties that area known as Hays Woods has since remained largely untouched, save for a few roads for access to power line right-of-ways.

In the early 2000s, a developer presented a plan to the City to stripmine the top of the mountain for what remained of the coal, and build casinos and a horse racing track on the newly leveled ground. Local residents and environmental groups like the Sierra Club petitioned against the plan, and when the City rejected the proposal in favor of building the casino on the North Side an uneasy stalemate was reached. The forest remained

Hays Woods, "FOREVER WILD" in Pittsburgh

standing, but also remained threatened by the need for landowners to "profit" from their holdings.

The area gained national fame among bird enthusiasts when a pair of bald eagles built a nest there in 2012, the first nesting pair in the city in over 200 years of recorded history. A web-cam was quickly set up by wildlife biologists, and access to the nest was posted and closed to all traf-



fic, even on foot. The species has thankfully been removed from the Endangered Species list but our national symbol still enjoys certain protections under the law, and the publicity has been a tremendous asset to a city that is seeking to redefine itself on the global stage as atoning for its polluted industrial past by becoming a world leader in sustainability and green innovation.

In a remarkable twist of fate, the developer who a decade ago was thwarted by a determined group of citizens very generously decided to donate the land to the City of Pittsburgh, to be forever preserved as a 660-acre Park. With this gift, unparalleled since the gift of Frick Park by Ms. Sarah Frick a century ago, the city is suddenly presented with a unique opportunity to demonstrate its capacity for stewardship of this precious natural area. Hays Woods is the single largest forested tract of land in any urban area in the US, and the parcel of land that will become a park is surrounded by flanking steep hillsides that increase this acreage to over one thousand acres of forest habitat, interrupted only by Glass Run Road, Becks Run Road, and Route 885. The city has vowed to manage the area "in as natural a manner as possible" but does plan to use a small section to build out new neighborhoods. The Sierra Club is seeking to have a voice in this process, to help ensure that the ecological integrity of the forest is maintained to the greatest degree.

The City of Pittsburgh is already well versed in dealing with forests, having the most trees per capita

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of any major city in the US, and that’s just counting street trees. When you include the network of Greenways that can be found everywhere throughout the city, often on the steep slopes that define the city’s neighborhoods, Pittsburgh once famous for its gritty mills and steely determination turns out to be one of the most forested cities in America.

Hays Woods has some very sensitive forest habitat that would be devastated by a massive influx of Frick-style park infrastructure. Populations of rare wildflowers and nest sites of neotropical migratory birds (warblers etc) that rely on remoteness and inaccessibility to survive would not be well-served by a wheelchair-accessible multipurpose recreation access trail, no matter how sustainably the trail surfacing gravel material is sourced. There



are also areas of Hays that need significant restoration, ranging from stands of 1930s-era pine plantations that are best carefully pruned and slowly converted, to areas where invasive vines and non-native species need to be removed by more drastic means in order to re-establish native species. The City has just recently begun using goats to do this kind of work, starting with a pilot project last year in Polish Hill spearheaded by the nonprofit group Tree Pittsburgh. Upgrade and repair of existing abandoned roadways will provide access to the mountaintop, where hikers and bikers can enjoy the magnificent views, but measures will have to be taken to curb the rampant expansion of trails that inevitably comes with an increase in popularity and use.

Changes to Frick and Schenley Parks over the last 20 years show that there is a deep need in the human psyche for wild places that can find expression in urban planning and design. While Frick has long been managed as a mature natural forest, ecological restoration projects in recent years have converted some of the bottomland ball fields into native wetland habitat, and Schenley for all its serpentine roads and golf-course landscaping ethos is beginning to convert some of the steeper slopes and open areas to native grasses and prairie wildflowers, with an eye towards rainwater collection and absorption as part of a comprehensive revamping of the city’s rainwater runoff management system. This “green infrastructure” is doing more than restoring ecosystem functions to perform tasks that would cost millions if not billions for ALCOSAN to handle. It is reintroducing a bit of Wild Nature to a familiar park landscape, a vitamin for the soul that cannot be synthesized. Now the Hays Woods terra incognita has officially become part of the public trust, and by its wild nature serves best to inspire that part of our urbanized brain that needs the mystery and the ancient familiarity that can only be found in large areas of mature forest, that which we have legislated aside as “wilderness,” remote and inaccessible, yet as intimate and familiar as a small campfire. Suddenly there is a sample of such a place in the very midst of the city, overlooking the river valley where the Industrial Revolution began in the North American continent. No longer “hell with the lid off” there are times when it is so quiet you can almost hear the cheering over at the sports arenas on the Allegheny North Shore, just five miles away as the blue heron flies, and there are places you can get an eagle’s-eye view of the barges and kayaks on the mighty Monongahela River.

Matt Peters

<http://www.post-gazette.com/opinion/letters/2016/06/13/Nature-of-Pittsburgh-s-new-park-will-need-protection/stories/201606300049>

<http://www.post-gazette.com/opinion/letters/2016/08/15/We-re-fortunate-for-this-commitment-to-city-forests/stories/201608110031>

Local Residents Support Cuts to Air Pollution from Cheswick Power Plant

It was standing room only at the hearing on August 1, 2016, for the Cheswick Power Plant's air pollution permit. Cheswick is the closest coal-fired power plant to Pittsburgh, and the largest source of smog-causing nitrogen oxides (NOx), sulfur dioxide (SO2), and mercury in Allegheny County. Sierra Club and allies PennEnvironment, Group Against Smog and Pollution (GASP), Clean Water Action, and New Voices Pittsburgh turned out with about 70 residents in support of cleaning up the plant (compared to about 20 plant workers and supporters). Testimony was 27-11 for our side. We also delivered nearly 1000 locally-generated petition signatures in support of a strong permit.

Notable speakers included a home care nurse who treats elderly patients near the plant, some of whom are home-bound with respiratory diseases; a member of the Sisters of St. Francis who is a retired hospital administrator; a student who developed asthma shortly after moving to Pittsburgh to attend college; and Marti Blake (pictured), who lives next to the plant and showed pictures of the plant's air pollution and the black soot she has to wash off her patio furniture every couple of days.

We support the draft permit from the Allegheny County Health Department that is, with respect to limits on NOx pollution, stricter than the pending state standard. The plant has highly effective controls for NOx but rarely runs them and is by far the largest industrial NOx source in the county. If the permit had been in place in 2014, the simple act of requiring this plant to run its NOx controls would have reduced total county-wide industrial NOx pollution by 37%. And yet, according to an IBEW representative at the hearing, NRG has told the union that forcing the plant to run its NOx controls would force it to shut down. This could just be fear-mongering by the company, although it is true that the plant will stop receiving reliability payments in 2019 from the regional grid operator, indicating that the aging plant is too expensive and unnecessary.

Regardless, we will continue to encourage the Health Department and County Executive Rich Fitzgerald to prevent any weakening of the permit draft in light of NRG's pushback, to ensure that the plant no longer contributes excessive and dangerous levels of smog-causing pollution to our region's air.

*Tom Schuster, Senior Campaign Representative for Pennsylvania
Coal to Clean Energy Campaign
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Down to the Wire for a Green First Solution for Our Sewage Problem

The Sierra Club continues to fight to get the sewage out of our rivers in a way that is friendly to the environment, brings multiple benefits back to our communities, and gives ratepayers the biggest bang for their buck. Readers of this newsletter have heard me say that fixing our sewage problems will be the largest infrastructure project our region has ever seen. Larger than the airport, both stadiums and the Consol Energy Center - combined. We need to get it right.

As part of the Clean Rivers Campaign we have been working with our campaign partners – PIIN, Nine Mile Run Watershed Association, Action United, Clean

Water Action, and Pittsburgh United – to build support among decision makers for a plan that does the maximum amount of scientifically designed and placed green infrastructure first and then determines what is the right amount of gray infrastructure for our region.

We have been very excited by the design plans that Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority has been developing. PWSA has contracted with Tim Duggan, a nationally renowned green infrastructure expert, to bring to Pittsburgh the experience he has gained in his work on green solutions in Kansas City. Tim helped that community switch from a mostly gray tunnel plan to a green first one that invests in and brings multiple benefits to neighborhoods and communities. Tim’s presentations at the CRC’s “Beyond Tunnel Vision” Speakers Series and our recent “Lunch and Learn” have excited ratepayers and municipal leaders alike. They have built support for your region making a similar switch.

One of the benefits of a green first approach that Tim talked passionately about is reductions in flooding - something that an all gray tunnel plan would not do. The recurring flooding on Washington Boulevard makes it abundantly clear that we need to address that problem – a problem that will only get worse in years to come.

Our region is weeks away from signing an agreement with the EPA that will describe how we solve our sewer problems and whether or not our region seizes the opportunity to remake our communities. PWSA has recently completed a “green first” study for its service area. The report is not public but people who have seen it say that it lays out a real alternative to ALCOSAN’s tunnel plan. We look forward to the public release and a vigorous debate about the advantages of the two approaches. We also hope that the final agreement with EPA will give us the flexibility to shift course as the effectiveness of the green approach becomes apparent.

Tom Hoffman

*Conservation Program Coordinator, Pennsylvania Chapter, Sierra Club
(tom.hoffman@sierraclub.org)*



Michael W. LaMark

Fracking: Health Effects and Worker Safety

Summary of remarks at The Battle of Homestead Foundation screening of “Gaswork” by Josh Fox on August 25, 2016. A pdf with the full slides from the presentation is available at <https://patriciademarco.com/fracking-health-effects-worker-safety/>.

Hydraulic fracturing (“Fracking”) for natural gas is touted as the centerpiece of American energy leadership for climate change and economic security (1). Sadly, this entire industry rests on “The Haliburton Loophole” in the Energy Policy Act of 2005, which grants exemptions from seven major federal statutes intended to protect public health and the environment, including the Safe Drinking Water Act, Clean Air Act, and Toxic Release Inventory provisions (6). The Fracking Responsibility and Awareness of Chemicals Act to close the Haliburton Loophole has been introduced by Senator Casey (D) PA, every year since 2011 with bipartisan support, but has been kept in committee without a hearing.

Fracking Pollution Sources:

Fracking pollution occurs at all stages of the process: site access and preparation, material transportation, drilling operations, production and processing, gas compression, pipelines, and combustion at the final point of use (3). Between 2005 and 2016, 137,000 wells have been drilled in 20 states (8). The industry operates in rural areas of the country, separating the various

components of the industrial process to avoid consolidated review of environmental impacts. In many jurisdictions, as is true in Pennsylvania, local government entities are limited in what restrictions they can place on fracking activities. Unfettered by normal environmental and health protections, the industry has expanded rapidly.

In spite of industry assertions of safe practices, evidence of widespread environmental and health harm is accumulating.

1. Climate Effects. Approximately 4% of the gas produced by fracking is lost through leaks and flaring at the well site, equivalent to 100 million tons of carbon dioxide annually. Fossil methane is a potent contributor to the greenhouse gases that cause climate change with a 105 times greater impact than carbon dioxide over 20 years (9).
2. Surface water and groundwater pollution. Groundwater pollution occurs from well casing leaks, estimated to have a 5% per year failure rate, and leaks through the fractured rock (8). Hydraulic fracturing shocks can mobilize water contamination from older pollution sources such as mine drainage. Surface water pollution can occur from several paths including discharges and spills at the well site, wastewater disposal, and transportation spills.

Water pollutants associated

with fracking discharges include carcinogens such as benzene, toluene, butoxyethanol, and xylene; toxic chemicals including boric acid, methanol, and dissolved methane; and 120 endocrine disrupting chemicals such as naphthalene (3, 10).

3. Air pollution. Drilling gas wells, producing the gas, and completing the wells releases fine particulates and volatile organic compounds (3, 8). These also come from spills on site, produced water evaporation pits, flaring gas at the well site, surface transfers, compressor stations, and processing facilities. In addition, thousands of diesel truck trips for hauling sand, chemicals and materials contribute to local air pollution.
4. Ground pollution. Produced water from the fracking wells, labeled “Dirty water,” legally can be discharged onto the roads for dust control or ice control. Sludge from evaporation pits goes into landfills and some produced water can be added to municipal waste in landfills. The process of developing access roads and pipelines has fragmented habitat in forests and parks, degraded farmland, and contributed to land erosion. Common contaminants include heavy metals such as arsenic and lead, bromides, radioactive isotopes of radon, boron, uranium and chromium, and chlorides from heavy brine (8).

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Hydraulic Fracturing Health Concerns:

Fracking environmental and health effects come from the environmental disruptions of the process, the chemicals used in the slick water hydraulic fracturing process, and the contaminants that are extracted from the shale and brought to the surface with the gas. The most pervasive health effect comes from degradation of the environment and of the systems that generate fresh water, fertile ground and the biodiversity of species that support life on Earth. About 500,000 gallons of fresh water are required each time a well is fracked (1). A single site may be fracked several times, causing stress on watersheds and on domestic and agricultural water needs, especially in drought stricken areas.

About 649 chemicals are associated with the fracking process. Of these, 75% cause acute skin, eye and respiratory irritation; 40-50% affect the brain, nervous, immune and cardiovascular systems and kidney functions; and 37% are known endocrine disruptors (5). 25% of the most common fracking chemicals cause cancers and mutations that may take years to emerge. Those most clearly associated with fracking include silicosis, lung cancer, liver cancer, leukemia, Hodgkins lymphoma, and reproductive disorders (4). The latter are especially of concern because they increase the incidence of birth defects, low birth weight, miscarriages and stillbirths. These kinds of health effects are reported at statistically significant elevated levels among populations within a mile of fracking operations, poten-

tially affecting about 9.4 million Americans (4, 5).

About 170 thousand workers in the oil and gas industry are exposed to harmful chemicals as part of their regular work experience (2). Fatal injuries occur at a rate seven times higher than the rate for general industrial workers. Trucking accidents happen when the driver is overcome by exposure to volatile organic compounds during transport of wastes, with no cautionary hazard placards. Workers suffer from strange painful rashes and neurological disorders without any idea of what caused them. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health reports that 47% of workers at 111 sites they examined were exposed to levels of fine silicone dust at ten times the allowable level (7). Many suffered from silicosis and lung cancers from inhaling the fine sand used for proppant in fracking. Workers' exposure to benzene levels far in excess of the 0.1 parts per million standard for occupational exposure was found at 88% of work sites (5). Most of the workers in the fracking industry are not represented by a union, have no advocate for their health and safety, and often are facing few alternatives to working in dangerous and unhealthy conditions (2).

Because of the Haliburton Loop-hole, the fracking health exposures to both the public and the workers are legal, but it is not ethical or morally right to allow such a broad

segment of the population to be affected so harshly.

Patricia M. DeMarco, Visiting Researcher and Writer, Carnegie Mellon University, Institute for Green Sciences;

Senior Scholar, Chatham University;

Elected to Forest Hills Borough Council



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Calling Our Shot: Passing a Carbon Fee bill by the end of 2017

This past June, in Washington D.C., the executive director of Citizens’ Climate Lobby, Mark Reynolds, shared and received a pledge from the lobby members: we will pass a carbon fee bill by the end of 2017. Sierra Club is a partnering organization with Citizens’ Climate Lobby.

How does it make sense to promise this? Our nation is more divided than ever before on the issue of our changing climate. Various research projects have shown that climate change is even more divisive

than abortion or gay marriage, and that in recent years more people than ever are concerned or alarmed about global warming and are more likely to vote for candidates who support renewable energy.

Mark Reynolds describes why, this way: “. . . the truth is we’re running out of time. We’re getting dangerously close to the tipping point of no return on greenhouse gas emissions. It’s time for Congress to pass the most efficient and effective solution on climate change – a steadily-rising, revenue-

neutral fee on carbon” (<http://citizensclimatelobby.org/carbon-fee-and-dividend/>). We can’t wait another five years until the “right” people get elected. To paraphrase former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld: You don’t save the world with the Congress you wish you had; you save the world with the Congress you have.”

This year, my older daughter introduced me to the “Hamilton” Broadway soundtrack, and like

“Shot” Continued on page 13

many people I have been mesmerized by the genius of the music and story. In it, a key idea is that when we get a shot, we take it and -- most importantly -- we don't throw it away. I'm convinced that a number of reasons are intersecting to give us a shot.

The historically record breaking heat from 2014, 2015, and now 2016 as hottest years ever are breaking through the media reluctance to report on climate. The four “Thousand Year Flooding” events in the USA (Houston, West Virginia, Maryland, and Louisiana) hitting within just the past 6 months highlight our immediate risks. Finally, progress with the U.S. and China ratifying the Paris climate change agreement creates important momentum for other nations' ratification.

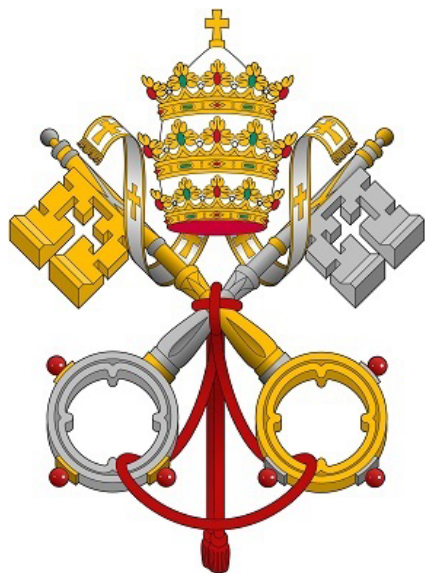
Citizens' Climate Lobby has been succeeding in working with Republicans to develop support for a carbon fee that is revenue-neutral and would return money to U.S. households. The practical effects of such a policy would be economic growth, protecting 2/3 of households from rising fossil fuel costs, and CO2 pollution reductions to keep warming under 2 degrees Celsius. The most recent political development, an amendment to defund climate research, was defeated with 33 Republicans (<http://citizensclimatelobby.org/ground-shifts-in-congress-as-republicans-break-ranks-on-climate-change/>) breaking ranks with the rest of their party. This vote demonstrates that the political landscape is changing quickly.

We're calling our shot and we're not going to throw it away.

Ray Roberts

Pennsylvania State Co-Coordinator for Citizens Climate Lobby

June 18 marked the one year anniversary of the release of Pope Francis's encyclical on the environment entitled *Laudato Si'*.



The Pope's Green Encyclical

Its reception among U.S. Catholics, laity, clergy, and hierarchy has been, at best, mixed. Greeted enthusiastically in some parts of the country, it has met with a stony silence perhaps indicative of hostility in others.

The encyclical got off to a rocky start in the U.S. because the day before its release was the day that white supremacist Dylann Roof murdered nine African-Americans in the historic Emmanuel A.M.E. Church in Charleston, South Carolina, and it was that atrocity which justifiably dominated the news cycle the entire weekend. Had that mass murder not occurred, the Pope's letter would have undoubtedly been the big story and, consequently, many more Americans would have been aware both of its release and its content.

However, a poll released by the Center of Applied Research in the

Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University found that only 32% of U.S. Catholics had read about or were aware of the encyclical, while 56% had never heard of it (1). While some of this ignorance can be accounted for by the news of its release having been drowned out by the tragedy in Charleston, I think it's not unfair to assign a significant share of the blame to a large portion of the Catholic hierarchy and clergy who have been remiss in getting the word about this papal treatise out to their flocks. For while CARA has pointed out that awareness of papal documents is generally low, I think it safe to assume that had the Pope written a strong condemnation of abortion or same-sex marriage, that message would have been proclaimed loud and clear from Catholic pulpits across the land and in the diocesan newspapers, and that a lot more

“Pope” Continued on page 14

than 32% of American Catholics would be aware of its existence.

There are a number of reasons why some U.S. Catholic bishops are reluctant to spread the word about *Laudato Si'*. One of them is that over the past few decades, these bishops have focused their attention and energies on issues of personal and sexual morality like abortion and same-sex marriage. This focus has brought them into contact and at least an informal alliance with Republican legislators who tend to take a conservative stance on these kinds of issues while at the same time being, for the most part, climate change deniers. The Pope's encyclical has the potential to embarrass the deniers and

put the bishops in the position of having to lecture their erstwhile allies on their responsibilities to the environment when they would much rather be scolding Democrats about abortion and homosexuality.

Furthermore, *The New York Times*, reporting on a meeting of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in 2015 before the encyclical was released, stated that some bishops “expressed concern about allying with environmentalists, some of whom promote population control as a remedy, since the church sees abortion and contraception as great evils” (2).

Another reason, especially for bishops whose dioceses lie in places like Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio and Kentucky, in other words in “coal country” and areas currently experiencing the shale-gas boom, is a fear of alienating Catholics who work in the fos-

sil fuel industry, whether they be management or labor, and whose contributions to the collection plate keep the churches in those localities solvent. According to *Mother Jones*, “[B]ishops, notably in California and the Southwest, have...come out strongly in support of the Pope,” and it quotes Patrick Carolan of the Franciscan

While by no means calling for a socialist revolution, the Pope has no qualms about lambasting capitalism

Action Network as saying that “in the Philippines, Brazil, Ecuador, in countries all around the world, Catholic bishops have taken the lead and issued statements, urging action, and preaching every Sunday at mass.” But the same article also quotes Professor Evan Berry of American University as saying that “it's a lot easier to come out in support of progressive policies on climate change if you are the Archbishop of Los Angeles...than if you are the Archbishop of Cleveland or West Virginia.”(3)

But I suspect that the fundamental source of American hierarchical reluctance is their perception of Pope Francis as a radical. The relatively liberal bishops appointed by the Vatican II Popes John XXIII and Paul VI are gone and their successors have been appointed by conservative Pope John-Paul II and his conservative successor now

Pope-emeritus Benedict XVI. Pope Francis, in his encyclical, not only makes the case for climate change, but links environmental devastation to the depredations of the prevailing economic system in much of the world: so-called “neoliberal” capitalism and the “throwaway culture” which this system engenders. While by no means calling for a socialist revolution, the Pope has no qualms about lambasting capitalism with such barbs as “[t]he principle of maximization of profits, frequently isolated from other considerations, reflects a misunderstanding of the very concept of the economy.” (4) Clearly this first Latin American Pope has been influenced by liberation theology which

was anathema to John-Paul and Benedict and, no doubt, to most of the bishops they appointed.

Early on in *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis proclaims that “the climate is a common good, belonging to all and meant for all,” and later on that “God created the world for everyone.” In other words, the earth belongs to all of us, and not just those of us alive today but to future generations as well. While acknowledging “the legitimate right to private property,” he also affirms (quoting Pope John-Paul II), “the principle of the subordination of private property to the universal destination of goods, and thus the right of everyone to their use.” In addressing the issue of the availability of potable water, the Pope deplores the trend in many places to “despite its scarcity, privatize this resource, turning it into a com-

“Pope” Continued on page 15

“Pope” Continued from page 14

modity subject to the laws of the market.” He declares that, on the contrary, “access of safe drinkable water is a basic and universal human right, since it is essential to human survival and, as such, is a condition for the exercise of other human rights.” What he is doing here is grounding the right to a habitable environment in the inalienable right to life which is a fundamental principle of Catholic moral teaching and one which certainly trumps any right to private property.

The Pope also insists that environmental issues and social justice issues are intrinsically linked because it is the same mentality and the same rapacious system that plunders the earth for the benefit of the relatively few and condemns the majority of humankind to abject poverty. Several times throughout the document he avers that “everything is connected” and he invokes the phrase “the cry of earth and the cry of the poor.” This latter phrase is the title of a book by Brazilian liberation theologian and ex-Catholic priest Leonardo Boff. That the Pope is using, in an official document, the words not only of a liberation theologian but a man who left the priesthood must surely raise the hackles of many conservative clergy and hierarchy. And while explicitly condemning abortion in the encyclical, he never directly addresses the issue of birth control, although he does make the valid point that a carbon footprint has as least as much to do with lifestyles as with population numbers. Conservatives might find his not explicitly condemning contraception worrisome as well.

Taking a cue from Eastern Orthodox Patriarch Bartholomew, Pope Francis last year designated September 1 as a World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation and the time span between September 1 and October 4 (the feast day of St. Francis of Assisi) as a “Season of Creation” in which believers are encouraged to pray for the earth and give thanks for the gift of the earth given to us by God. This year the Season of Creation witnessed the active participation of, among others, the Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury, Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and the World Council of Churches. Ironically, perhaps, one year before the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther nailing his 95 theses to the Wittenberg Cathedral door and launching the Reformation, it is Protestants who are for the most part stepping up and backing the Pope. But from the American Catholic hierarchy there has been, for the most part, the sound of silence.

But perhaps that is appropriate. Pope Francis addresses the encyclical “to all men and women of good will” regardless of theological orientation. For this Pope is certainly Catholic, but he is not parochial.

Michael Pastorkovich

FOOTNOTES:

(1) Reported by Brian Roewe in “Laudato Si’ week renews awareness ahead of encyclical anniversary,” *National Catholic Reporter*, June 14, 2016.

(2) “Pope Francis May Find Wariness Among U.S. Bishops on Climate Change,” Laurie Goodstein, *The New York Times*, June 13, 2015

(3) “Why U.S. Bishops Aren’t Embracing Pope Francis’ Climate Push,” Suzanne Goldberg, *Mother Jones*, September 21, 2015.

(4) & all other quotes from *On Care for Our Common Home: Laudato Si’* by Pope Francis.

Hazelwood, Pittsburgh's Fallow Neighborhood

Call it “the hole in the doughnut.” When describing it to friends, I make the claim that this is where the Industrial Revolution began in North America. Across the river and downstream a ways at Station Square there is a bronze plaque (or is it steel?) along the bike trail, commemorating when Auld Andy, that’s Andrew Carnegie, brought the Bessemer steelmaking process from the town of Bessemer, Alabama, to the banks of the Monongahela River Valley in 1859. A year later the Civil War broke out, with the ironclad warships the Monitor and the Merrimac lobbing gobs of metal forged in their respective home foundries.

The neighborhood has its claim to more than just a share of this City’s industrial history: it also features the home of one Jonathan Woods, the man for whom Wood Street is named. The building is locally known as the Howser House, for the last tenants that lived there before the place was condemned; now the stone structure that remains is the oldest building in the City after the Blockhouse down at Point State Park. It is currently boarded up and owned by the URA. Then there is the Blair Field, an acre or so of ballpark that happens to be some of the last undisturbed ground on the floodplain, where once a Native American village stood for at least 300 years. Somewhere about where the Baldwin School now stands were once a

group of Indian Mounds, which unfortunately were obliterated in the early 1800s for the stones, which were used to pave the original Second Avenue.

Today, the neighborhood of Hazelwood is something of a blank spot on the map of the City. The end of the American steel industry in the



early 1980s left this neighborhood in similar straits as nearby Mon River Valley towns like Braddock and Homestead, ghost towns looking for ways to redevelop themselves. Since then the neighborhood has cycled through some 40 years of neglect, geographically isolated from neighboring Greenfield and Squirrel Hill by steep hills, and other than the scrap value of the rusting old buildings, largely ignored by city administration until relatively recently. The largest

Superfund site in the US consumed (and still occupies) a very large portion of the prime riverfront land in the neighborhood, known as the ALMONO district. As the population dwindled to about 5,000 souls the surrounding neighborhood is now 60% vacant and recognized as one of America’s many “food deserts” by the Federal government. Until the opening of Dylamato’s Market last year, the nearest grocery stores are the corporate chain Giant Eagle either up that steep hill, well over a mile and more from the center of population density, or across the river either to South Side or Homestead, the cost of a jitney driver away.

“Nature abhors a vacuum” as the saying goes, and in the fallow ground left behind by industry and agency alike, seeds of self-reliance began to sprout. People who came to the neighborhood as immigrants to work in the steel mills brought their gardening skills from the Old Countries and kept the Victory Garden tradition going long after the end of WWII. Eventually, as the Permaculture movement began to catch on in the late 1990s/early 2000s, folks began holding meetings and getting organized, and what began as a loose association of like-minded garden enthusiasts has now grown into a fully recognized subcommittee of the Hazelwood Initiatives Planning Committee, with members including the garden coordinator of the YMCA, Hazelwood’s first “subscription farm” on nearly a full acre run by Kyle Patteson, tech specialists from GTECH helping develop internet tools for gardeners in the city, the

“Hazelwood” Continued on page 17

City’s Open Lands Specialist, and the owner of Dylamato’s Grocery, who buys vegetables grown by local gardeners right here in the neighborhood and makes them available to customers at the first grocery in Hazelwood since the closing of Dimperio’s Market in January 2009. The Urban Ag Team meets the second Thursday of each month – meetings are open to all.

The Hazelwood Urban Ag Team was one of the first community organizations to try out the City’s new law enabling access to vacant lots owned by the City. Although the original version of the law was a bureaucratic nightmare, with unrealistic fees prohibitively expensive for the low-income families that would presumably need it most, recent revisions in the law passed by City Council are a big improvement, and regulatory kinks continue to be worked out at the ground level. The City has also had a very progressive Side Lot Program for a number of years now, an innovative and effective way for local homeowners to gain full ownership of a vacant lot, at a fraction even of down-market real estate prices.

In addition to our gardening endeavours, the Urban Ag Team has been surveying the neighborhood and mapping the natural springs that can be found here and there. Developers looking at tax-ownership plat maps of the neighborhood may not realize that building a house on certain lots is bound to be extra impractical, due to the presence of native water on that particular site. A house built there would have a perpetually damp basement, with mold and termites being an additional liability. By identifying and mapping these spots and sharing this information with the City, we hope to have these locations set aside from construction plans and managed as mini-parks and wildlife habitat, with the option of a food-producing component where applicable. It may be that this data will be useful to the City as it begins to address its combined-sewer overflow problems, and offer opportunities for innovative design in Green infrastructure to absorb stormwater runoff and mitigate local flooding.

Parallel to the growth of the Urban Ag Team has been another neighborhood-scale group of entrepreneurs, meeting as a Kitchen Committee to develop a Community Kitchen available for processing this garden bounty into local products. Currently the facilities at Saint Steven’s Church are using the School kitchen for more than just seasonal Lenten fish fries – you can now buy ready-made meals and baked goods at Dylamato’s Market produced by neighborhood residents here in this certified kitchen. Any resident can rent production time and cooler space to bring your own ideas to gourmet fulfillment, talk to so and so for info.

The third leg of our stable start to sustainable commerce is Floriated Interpretations Plant Nursery, located in the 4700 block of Second Avenue. This small business started in the backyard of Elaine Price and is yet another thriving new business based on local agriculture. The site is developing rapidly, currently a storeroom structure is being built by Construction Junction, which is providing not only labor but also salvaged materials for the building. With a grocery store, and a landscape/nursery supply, and eventually a restaurant such as Fat Rae’s across from the Library all doing commerce supported by local agriculture, even this simple economic web is already supporting a score or more of neighborhood families, which can be measured in terms of side income per household or seasonal part-time jobs. These first steps may have been small, and long in the taking, but they are a giant leap forward in building a grassroots economy that benefits everybody.

Matt Peters

John Craig Hammond for State Representative

Mr. Hammond is a Democrat running against Mike Turzai (R-incumbent) in the November 8, 2016, general election. His district is PA-28, which includes Bradford Woods, Franklin Park, Marshall Township, McCandless Township, and Pine Township.

Regarding Mr. Hammond's views on protecting our environment, his main concern is the disposal of the toxic waste water that is a by-product of fracking. He feels the strategy for reducing the hazards of fracking is to convince the Pennsylvania General Assembly representatives whose constituents are in the rural areas of Pennsylvania that jobs can be shifted from the gas industry to the wind and solar industries. Mr. Hammond is also dedicated to championing smart growth in his district: he is especially concerned about the lack of convenient public transportation from areas in his district to downtown Pittsburgh.

John Craig Hammond lives in Franklin Park with his wife, a Bradford Woods native, and two children. He holds a bachelor's degree from Temple University and a Ph.D. in history from the University of Kentucky. Mr. Hammond teaches at Penn State New Kensington, where he is an internationally recognized scholar of slavery and politics in early America, and he has been recognized for his commitment to teaching and undergraduate education.

Mr. Hammond is also an active member of the North Allegheny community, where he has coached youth soccer and softball.

The Sierra Club Allegheny Group endorses John Craig Hammond in the November 8, 2016, election. We encourage our members, as well as their friends and family, to cast their vote for Mr. Hammond for State Representative, district 28.

Lisa Mekovsky

Allegheny Group Executive Committee Elections

As you know, each fall Sierra Club members have the opportunity to vote for candidates for our Allegheny Group Executive Committee. You will already have received a ballot in the mail or a notice via email to vote at our website. We are fortunate to have an excellent slate of candidates – four of the five are relatively new to our activities here in southwestern PA but dedicated and committed to the mission of the Sierra Club in southwestern Pennsylvania.

This nine-member Executive Committee meets monthly and assures that the activities and services provided by the Allegheny Group are consistent with our Bylaws as well as the policies and directives of the Pennsylvania Chapter of the Sierra Club and the National Sierra Club. Their responsibilities include financial management, membership services, publication of *The Sierran* (this newsletter), conservation issues, and political programs. Each elected Executive Committee member serves a two year term and can run for re-election as often as he/she wishes.

Candidates for the ExCom provide a brief statement about their interest in environmental issues and why they wish to serve on the Executive Committee. These statements are included with the ballot. Voting by the membership for the 5 of the 9 seats up for election for the 2017-2019 term occurs in the fall. Results of the election will be announced in January 2017.

Please vote via the paper ballot or electronically at our website. Let your voice be heard.

*Barbara Grover,
Group Chair*

Sierra Club Endorsements

As we all well know, this election is vital to the future direction of this country and the habitability of the planet for our children, grandchildren and future generations. Mr. Trump believes Climate Change is a hoax. Secretary Clinton knows that Climate Change is a serious problem and has plans to address it. Sierra Club at the national, state, and local level has endorsed candidates who will promote policies to protect the quality of our water, the quality of our air, and the use of public lands.

Sierra Club Endorsements:

President/Vice President – *Hillary Clinton and Tim Kaine*

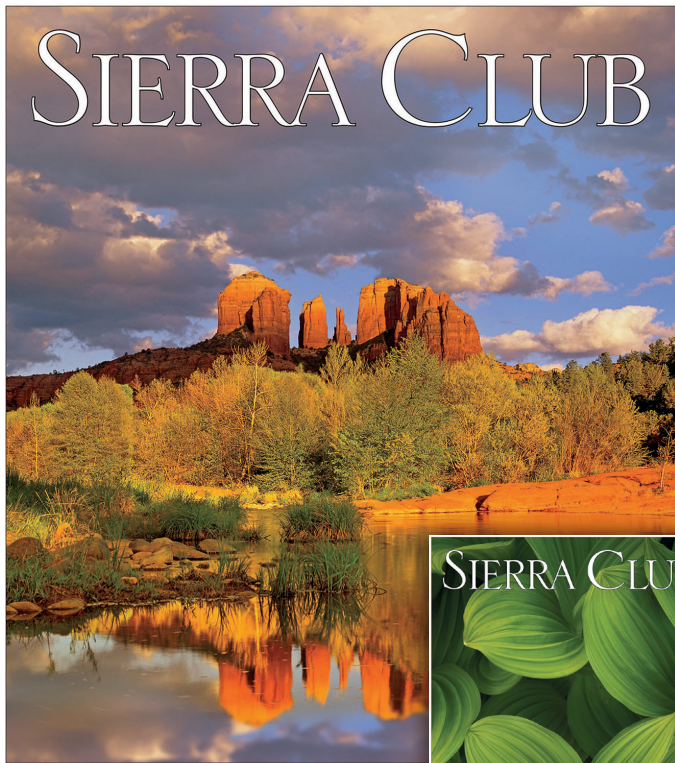
US Senator for Pennsylvania – *Katie McGinty*

PA Attorney General – *Josh Shapiro*

PA Auditor General – *Eugene DePasquale*

PA State Representative – *John Craig Hammond*

For other Sierra Club endorsements for other regions in Pennsylvania (e.g., US Representative, PA Representative or PA Senator, go to pennsylvania.sierraclub.org and click on Politics.



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We have the new 2017 calendars, and they are available to be ordered. Please expect delivery within 7-10 days of placing your order.

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Calendars can also be ordered online at www.alleghenysc.org using a credit card.

Allegheny National Forest Hiking Guide

The 800-square mile Allegheny National Forest contains over 250 miles of foot trails for hiking, backpacking and ski-touring. Edition 4 of this guide describes hiking and ski-touring opportunities and points of scenic interest. 192 pages. \$9.95

The Laurel Highlands: A Hiking Guide

This guide to the foot trails of Chestnut Ridge, Laurel Ridge and Allegheny Front covers 446 miles of foot trails, mainly in state forests and state parks. Features: directions to trailheads, ski-touring and backpacking info, difficulty ratings and more. Does not cover Laurel Highlands Trail (see separate guide). 288 pages. \$8.95

Hiker's Guide to Laurel Highlands Trail

The 6th edition of this guide to the 70-mile Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail features: the geology, climate, vegetation and wildlife of Laurel Hill; tree identification; elevation profile; directions to the trailheads; back packing info and shelter reservations; a list of hiking organizations in the area and more! 128 pages. \$8.00

These trail guides and other items can be ordered online at www.alleghenysc.org using a credit card.

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Laurel Highlands: a Hiking Guide	\$8.95	_____	_____
Hiker's Guide to Laurel Highlands Trail	\$8.00	_____	_____

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Sierran

Fall/Winter, 2016-17

Upcoming Events

Events: October – December 2016:

Activist Nights: Every Tuesday evening (except Nov. 8, 22, Dec. 20, 27); 6:30-8:30pm at the SC office, 425 N. Craig St., Suite 202, Pgh 15213. ALL are welcome.

November 6: The cycling group Low Carbon Crossings is coming through Pittsburgh – cyclists started in California (<https://lowcarboncrossings.wordpress.com/cross-country-ride-2016/>).

NOVEMBER 8: ELECTION DAY --- VOTE!

November 14: Thomas Merton Center Awards Dinner, Sheraton Hotel at Station Square. Frida Berrigan (daughter of Phil Berrigan) is the honoree. 6:00pm, \$65 per person. For more information, contact 412-361-3022, or email (marnifritz@thethomasmertoncenter.org)

November 16: Shale & Public Health Conference, 8:30am – 5:00pm, University of Pittsburgh University Club, 123 University Place, Pgh 15260. FREE, presented by the League of Women Voters of PA (<https://www.palww.org/event/2015-shale-public-health-conference/>).

Allegheny Sierran

Allegheny Sierran Summer 2016

The Allegheny Sierran is the newsletter of the Allegheny Group and is intended to keep the membership posted on the activities of the Group. Opinions expressed in the Allegheny Sierran are those of the authors, and should not be taken as Sierra Club policy unless specifically so stated.

All parties are encouraged to respond to any of the articles we publish and submit any material they feel may be appropriate. Submissions and questions regarding newsletter content should be addressed to the editor, Claudia Kirkpatrick (kirkclaudia@gmail.com).

Founded by legendary conservationist John Muir in 1892, the Sierra Club is now the nation's largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization -- with more than two million members and supporters. Our successes range from protecting millions of acres of wilderness to helping pass the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, and Endangered Species Act. More recently, we've made history by leading the charge to move away from the dirty fossil fuels that cause climate disruption and toward a clean energy economy.

The Allegheny Group of the Sierra Club was organized in the early 1970s. It is one of 10 groups comprising the Pennsylvania Chapter.

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