

*Fall is here* ..... 1

*The Mechanics of the Sierra Club National Outings Program* ... 2

*Permanent. Perpetual. Plastic.*..... 4

*The Tipping Point* ..... 7

*Nemo iudex in causa sua* .... 9

*Wilksburg Projects Going Strong!*..... 10

**FROM THE CHAIR:**

*Racism and the Reactionary State* ..... 12

*Vote, November 6, 2018* .... 13

*Sierra Club Calendars* ..... 15

*Contact information* ..... 19

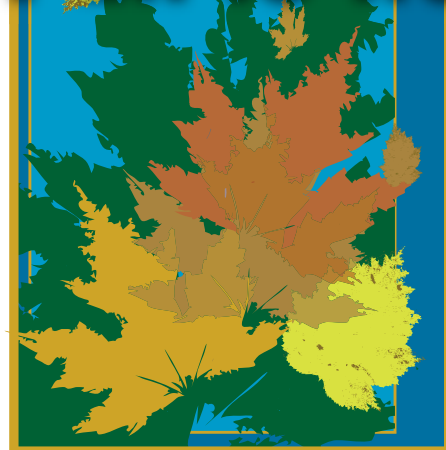
**Just for kids** ..... 16

*Endangered species* ..... 16

*Maze* ..... 17

*You can make a pet owl* .... 18

## Fall is here



Michael W. LaMark

And what a great time to get our Outings program amped up! Life is so busy and we all know the benefits of the outdoors and that being surrounded by nature feels so tranquil, rejuvenating, and uplifting with its extraordinary beauty and wonder. Many Sierra Club members (and not-yet members) in the area have expressed interest in joining hikes and other fun outings with a group.

We are both very pleased to be involved in helping local Sierra Club outing leaders to plan new and exciting outings for anyone in the Greater Pittsburgh community to “Explore, Enjoy and Protect” the wild places here in Western PA. There are many opportunities for hiking, biking, paddling, and beyond, right in our backyard – these are just as exciting for seasoned adventurers as for new outdoor enthusiasts. We’re going to have a wide variety of outings on the calendar this fall and into winter for all skill levels, so be sure to check our calendar often at <http://www.sierraclub.org/pennsylvania/allegheny>.

On September 28th our first monthly hike & social occurred at Frick Park. We had a nice leisurely walk on the Falls Ravine Trail that was family friendly with a lot of good conversations, and we learned some interesting history about the park. It was a beautiful sunny day. We all took in the greenery on the trail and took note of how it will all change in just a few weeks. After the hike, participants were invited to the Map Room a few blocks down to enjoy pizza and drinks with continued good conversations to get to know one another and share ideas for the future.

*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**

*Continued from Page 1*

We are excited and enthusiastic about welcoming new members and members of the local communities to join us outdoors to see the beauty of nature here in Western Pennsylvania. There are many beautiful trails and parks that range in a variety of levels of effort and are ready to be explored. We are into autumn and what better time to kick off some outing hikes. There are many good ideas and suggestions at the table. People have expressed enthusiasm about hiking, kayaking, biking, white water rafting, and trying snowshoe hiking at various locations. There was also an idea of having a hike that involved identifying wildlife and edible plants. Lots of great ideas to explore Western Pennsylvania's many beautiful outdoor places!

If you have your own idea for an outing, we'd love to hear about it! You can send us an outing idea by email (our emails are at the end of this article) or via this form: <http://bit.ly/wpaouting>. And, if you're interested in leading your own outings, we're looking for volunteers to join our outings team and become certified Sierra Club Outings Leaders. We'll be offering training for leaders in January; then participants just need to complete First Aid & CPR training and organize an outing with mentorship from an existing leader.

Once you're a leader, you can organize outings whenever you want, with access to lots of Sierra Club resources, including liability insurance, email outreach lists, and the Sierra Club calendar. Leaders bring these ideas to reality and plan these exciting adventures with the support of other members and mentors in the program, who will help you in any way possible to make your outings a success.

If you are interested in becoming a leader or have any ideas for outings please contact Seth or Amber. We can't wait to meet you and get outside!

*Amber Kelly, Outings Leader Chair for Western Pennsylvania (amberk0807@gmail.com)*

*Seth Bush, Western Outings Coordinator (seth.bush@sierraclub.org)*

## THE MECHANICS OF THE SIERRA CLUB NATIONAL OUTINGS PROGRAM

Outings have been part of the Sierra Club for over 116 years. Outings are integral to the Sierra Club mission to explore, enjoy and protect. They are also a key source of membership recruitment since you must join the Club to participate in an Outing.

I have been leading National Outings for almost 40 years. I started with backpacking, moved to base camp and family trips and most recently service trips. In 2018 these service trips were to a farm on Martha's Vineyard, another farm near

Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and the last to Bear Run/Fallingwater.

So how does an outing get created?

First, you need a place to go. Certain locales sell themselves. For example, there is not much prodding a leader has to do to get folks to join a backpacking trip to Yosemite or a rafting trip in the Grand Canyon. That is why you see few trips in Pennsylvania. Many years ago I tried to lead a backpacking trip on the Mid-State Trail but only had one signup. So the west is always heavily represented.

About two years ago I found a place to go – Flint Hill Farm near Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. I was reading Pennsylvania Magazine and they had a feature about this educational yet working farm. I contacted the farm manager and she was very enthusiastic about having a group working on the farm for a week. This was a family service trip and I scheduled it for the week before Easter hoping to capture spring breaks. We had six kids, ages 6 to 18, and nine adults. This trip will be run again in April 2019. The Sierra Club contributes 25,000 volun-

*Continued on Page 3*

*Continued from Page 2*

teer hours per year to land agencies through our service trip program.

First, you need a leader. Ok, I already had a first but this is a chicken and egg situation. There are many places out there that need to be explored. The Outings program has about 400 active volunteer leaders and assistant leaders. To initiate a trip you must have a good place to go and an available leader or vice versa.

Outings are administered separately from the Club. There is a full-time staff of about 10 at the Club office in California who that manage the program. About 350 trips are run annually with thousands of participants. Sierra Club Outings is a major player in the adventure travel market.

So a leader may take over an existing trip which is the easiest way to run a trip. All the logistics have been established, so much of the work has already been done.

New trips are a heck of a lot of work. You must first scout the area, ensure that there is enough activity for a week (the vast majority of trips are week-long), create your budget trying to compute a reasonable price, then write up the catalog copy and the trip brochure, coordinate with the public agencies for routes and permits, and submit all your materials about 10 months prior to the trip begin date. This is to meet hard copy and online publication deadlines.

Your proposed adventure must be approved by your outings subcommittee chair. National Outings divides the country into geographic districts: Alaska, California/Nevada, Hawaii, Midwest, Northeast, Northwest, Rocky Mountain, Southeast, and Southwest. And



Michael W. LaMark

there are the specialty subcomms: International, Knapsack, Service, and Water.

Next is your budget and trip capacity which determine the trip price. All the expenses of the leader and assistant leader are covered by the trip price: mileage, airfare, subsistence, and other incidentals. Add in food for the week, concessionaires

or outfitters (on the Bear Run/Fallingwater trip we take one day off to raft the Youghiogheny River), housing (if not tenting), permits, and sundries such as postage, copying, supplies and equipment. Add to this the overhead to pay for the outings staff in California, office expense, publication fees for the website and Sierra magazine, and insurance.

Trip capacity is set by the leader but sometimes dictated by the government agency. For example, on a trip to the Brooks Range in Alaska the Fish and Wildlife Service only permitted a group size of six for the 13-day backpack. In 2017, I had 20 participants at The Farm Institute on Martha's Vineyard since we stayed at a Hostel and there were 60 beds available.

Expenses are why you see such a wide range of pricing in National Outings. Lodge based trips are always more because housing must be expensed. The Bear Run/Fallingwater trip usually

comes in about \$500 because the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy provides us housing for free. And since I live in Pittsburgh my transportation costs are low.

Trip copy is not difficult to write. This is the short paragraph that appears in Sierra Magazine. The trip brochure is more in-depth and generally runs four to five pages and you can add photos. The brochure

*Continued on Page 4*

*Continued from Page 3*

describes the trip, the project (for service trips), the itinerary, accommodations and food, trip difficulty, equipment and clothing, references and other details.

Once the trip is posted online and in Sierra Magazine, the leader then must screen applicants. Generally, the more difficult the trip the more thorough the screening must be. There are three forms: a waiver, a medical form, and a questionnaire examining prior experience, physical conditioning, and other factors intended to determine trip suitability. I can be more lenient for base camp trips since transportation is readily accessible and we are usually in 911 territory. There are more stringent requirements for back country trips.

Hopefully, the trip will fill fast so the leader does not spend the next few months wondering whether the trip will run and staying up at night having bad thoughts about cancelling a trip.

I think this is nice to know for our members. But what is even nicer is getting out and joining an outing. Read the trip brochure carefully to find a trip that matches your interests. Contact the leader – there is a link in the online trip brochure.

The trips are reasonably priced for the benefits you receive during the week.

If you need more information send me an email and then we can talk from there. I would certainly enjoy introducing you to the outings programs..

## **EXPLORE, ENJOY, AND PROTECT THE PLANET**

*Marty Joyce*

*quali89@verizon.net via yahoo.com*

# PERMANENT PERPETUAL PLASTIC.

It wasn't always like this. I'm not that old, but I remember the days before plastic. Society 'made do' with items that were completely recyclable. We turned our glass soda bottles back into the distributor to be sanitized and reused by the 'pop' company, as we call it here in western Pennsylvania. As kids, we collected aluminum cans for our select non-profit to receive donations. And bags were paper. OR, as I have recently found going through a box of my parents' items from 2003 (don't ask.....), they were biodegradable

corn-based bags and felt much like today's plastic bags. In what is seemingly an irreversible decision by the powers-that-be, choices were made for all of us regarding this indestructible item. Our planet is unable to degrade plastic. What are we to do as thinking, compassionate individuals who care a great deal for our home?

While many organizations lament where we are, explain the negative factors on fertility, nature, etc., I'd like to present this handy guide to reduce or eliminate plastic use. It

is my personal goal to be a 'new plastic-free family,' meaning I will not purchase plastic. I've recycled for practically my whole adult life but that is not enough anymore. When whales that have choked on plastic wash up on beaches, we must do better than recycle. Let's become plastic-free.

### **THE THINKING PERSON'S GUIDE TO PLASTIC:**

**1** . Take your own bags to the grocery store, truly the easiest one. OR, get paper. Do not accept that this is the store's process, or that your birthday card or meat need to be wrapped separately in plastic. Really? Bags are washable....

Yes, some stores get annoyed but eventually comply. In fact, if you are bold enough, ask them to change and realize what they are doing to the environment.

*Continued on Page 5*



**2.** Do not use a straw when at restaurants or with takeout food, paired with do not use a plastic stirrer. I'm fairly certain that a professional marketer backed by odd science told us it was unsanitary to drink from a glass. We drink from mugs. What's the difference? Selling more plastic straws, of course.

Straws and stirrers make up 7.5% of the plastic waste in the environment and are made from polypropylene, a chemical that can leach into the liquids being consumed. It has been linked to lower estrogen levels and cancer. Like the chemical in GMO corn that works by exploding an insect's stomach (Bt Bacillus thuringiensis), the FDA has approved the consumption of propylene in small, trace amounts. Not now, not in my body, not when I am informed.

Straws may also increase the amount of air intake when you drink and be responsible for gas and bloating. And really, who wants that? If the other reasons are not compelling enough, this, in and of itself, should seal the deal.

**3.** Ask for a paper container when going out for ice cream. For the 10 minutes or less you are eating it, nothing will seep through. 10 minutes or thousands of years of waste, you decide. Choose paper, choose wisely, or simply take your own container.

**4.** Buy an electric razor. Another tragedy in our disposable society. Disposable razors can't be recycled and end up in landfills for a thousand years or more.

**5.** Buy bamboo toothpicks, rather than plastic, for good dental

hygiene. The UK has banned the plastic ones.

**6.** Stop buying plastic food storage bags and only use your reusable plastic or glass containers to store or transport food. Yes, your children can return a container from their lunchbox. Not only will you train them to think differently, they may actually tell their friends that they are considering the environment and are not using plastic bags.

**7.** Choose cardboard or paper over plastic for wrapping or mailing items. Never buy those god-awful Styrofoam peanuts.

**8.** Do not use Ziploc bags. I use a glass container for marinating. At Thanksgiving, it scares me to roast a turkey in a plastic bag so my cleanup is easier. Who knows what chemicals are released into your food when the plastic is heated to 350 degrees? I'm unwilling to take that chance. Don't buy plastic bags and stop using them.....period.

**9.** When you exfoliate, be certain that the product you are using contains some naturally-occurring grit. Until I became better informed, I did not realize that exfoliants contain tiny plastic balls that end up in the water, which end up in the fish, which end up in the humans. Quite a cycle, huh? They do not disappear. Call the company that makes your favorite product and insist on change.

**10.** Make your own cleaners. I have my essential oils, my castile soap, my baking and washing soda, salt and white vinegar and I do what thousands of generations be-

fore me have done. I make my own laundry soap, household cleaner, toilet bowl cleaner, glass cleaner, foaming hand soap, etc. It's easy, takes less time than shopping for it and is MUCH less expensive. My favorite supplies come from Young Living. Choose your own, message me on Facebook for further advice on oils, if you would like. The recipes I use, primarily, I've found on Pinterest or via friends.

**11.** DO NOT BUY WATER. Own a few stainless, refillable bottles. Put them in the dishwasher, reuse.

**12.** Do not buy iced tea, lemonade, or soda from a plastic container. Only glass, ever. My homemade iced tea sits in a glass pitcher in my refrigerator. I brew tea once a week from 3 tea bags and a little good old-fashioned sugar. It probably costs me \$.30 per pitcher as I buy organic tea bags and all of 5 minutes of my time. Do I really need to spend my time or money, in a store, paying \$3.00 for ONE plastic container of iced tea for the convenience? Is this really convenient?

Now, let's talk about these plastic bottles. Here, again, is the chemical polypropylene. All plastic bottles contain it – shampoo, milk, ketchup, relish, spaghetti sauce, everything. Think about this..... remember, the FDA approved trace amounts of polypropylene for consumption. When you consider the number of plastic bottles that we use daily, when does trace become way too much? Is there ongoing study on the effects on our lives or our bodies?

*Continued from Page 5*

And the key is the ending in the word. POLYPROPYLENE, poly meaning many. Propene, methyl ethylene is a class of HYDROCARBONS with a petroleum-like odor. Who makes this? You may have already guessed but it is made through oil refining. Are you seeing the connection with our food, our personal health, our insects, our lives and the destruction of our planet?

**13.** Do not purchase dryer sheets. Again, made from an oil-based polyester product covered with a chemical that reacts with air to create formaldehyde, a probable carcinogen. Really? On your clothes, on your skin which is the largest living organ in your body! I purchased 3 wool dryer balls that I scented with essential oils for tumbling in the dryer. OR cut up old clothes into squares, put them in a jar with some water and favorite essential oil scent and you have your own homemade dryer sheets. If static is the issue, then add a ¼ cup of white vinegar to the rinse cycle on your washer.

**14.** Lastly, THINK. Bring your choice to a level of consciousness that can't be ignored. And if now, after reading this, guilt is a motivator, so be it. Choose and act wisely, set an example, talk about it with your friends and family, try to get them engaged in this process of change. Our planet is depending on us.

There are big issues at stake here in Pennsylvania. Fracking and cracker plants produce more plastic and their presence is up for approval locally. A cracker plant produces 16 tons of plastic per year. We can and should protest and add our collective voice to these very important battles.

But daily, as consumers who make conscious spending choices, we can make a difference. By not buying or perpetuating this mindless destruction. Yes, we are all busy and have been truly sold on what convenience looks like. But through our consistent words, actions and choices, we can reduce or eliminate our personal plastic use. Every little bit helps and we can do better, together.

### **Recipe for Homemade Dishwashing Fluid**

- 10 drops lemon essential oil
- 10 drops citrus essential oil
- 5 drops Thieves Household Cleaner (Young Living Product)
- 6 ounces of water
- 6 ounces of Organic Castil soap

### **Recipe for Homemade Toilet Bowl Cleaner**

- 18 ounces of water
- 1/4 cup Organic Castile Soap
- 4 drops lavender essential oil
- 4 drops tea tree essential oil
- 4 drops lemon essential oil

I spray vigorously and use more than the 'normal' toilet bowl cleaner. But things are shiny and clean when I am finished!

*Patti Flowers Jacobina*

# THE TIPPING POINT

## A Life or Death Decision Point on Global Pollution and Climate Change

The summer of 2018 goes down in my life history as the turning point in my fifteen-year fight with cancer. After being free of any disease from 2001 to 2017, I have faced two cancers in the last two years. Knowing that I have been living on borrowed time changed the direction of my life. In 2006, I left the corporate world, divorced from a destructive relationship, and came home to my roots as an environmental activist. I vowed to stop trying to be “successful” and wealthy, but to do work that has meaning and purpose for the future. I came home to Pittsburgh, to Rachel Carson, and to a life devoted to preserving the living earth. Now as my strength has waned through a 24 week regimen of chemotherapy, I find that my role has shifted once again from the strong voice, standing with raised fist, to one who writes the words and empowers others to speak.

After a decade of public activism, the message echoes back to me through my students, through my family, and through my community. I see the power of many voices joined in demands for clean air, fresh water and fertile ground. The hopeful vision of a future where people can make better choices for energy, food, and materials emerges one community at a time.

A life and death decision point acts as a catalyst to crystallize priorities. There is no time left to wait for others to act. When you have nothing to lose, there is no point to preserving proper dignity or protocol.

And this is exactly the situation of the world we are living in today. We face a life and death decision point on global warming and global pollution, yet people still act as though the ponderous machinations of due process will get us to a solution. But the laws of nature proceed without “due process.” Greenhouse gases accumulate; the atmosphere warms; the oceans acidify; glaciers and ice caps melt; storms intensify. People as well as plants and animals cannot adapt quickly to the intensity or speed of these changes. But, we can act much more effectively than is the case now if we act together, with common purpose and directed intent.

So in this tortured year of 2018, I feel my strength wane, but I see the strong voices of my students -- Eva Resnik-Day in the Fight for 100% renewable energy; Seth Bush coaching and empowering entrepreneurs and activists; Kacie Stewart taking a role in renewable energy in manufacturing with Epic Metals. I see young colleagues making a huge impact through film and media -- Mark Dixon with Blue Lens, LLC, documenting Jansa, making documentaries and pushing creativity in response to crises and becoming a new citizen activist; Maren Cook holding gatherings to keep the movement together; Matt Mehalik working for

clean air through the Breathe Project; Mike Stout documenting the struggle of organized labor and the importance of democratic process through unions; Charlie McColester, Wanda Guthrie, so, so many others raising the call to action. Jackie Dempsey and the Indivisible Forest Hills movement, mirroring a whole country of people taking politics seriously and calling others to action.

The human spirit is hard to quench. Re-defining aspirations to value preserving the living Earth as a critical need above profits in a monetary measure alone may take a generation. We have no time for gradual transitions. A crisis point is upon us, now, in this generation. There is no longer time to reverse the trajectory toward a hotter drier planet, but action can still be effective to mitigate the worst of the effects and preserve viability for the next generation. We have tools at hand to solve the problems of climate change and global pollution. This is not a technology problem- it is an ethical and moral challenge: do we living today make decisions that preserve the option of life for the next generation? Or do we persist on a path of instant gratification and greed, heedless of known disastrous consequences of our actions?

This is the time- our time- to face the existential crises of climate change and global pollution, especially from plastic. This is our time to take the actions needed to curtail fossil resource extraction and combustion. Climate change and environmental destruction must be on the central political agenda in every election, every race, every town hall. We who care about the future cannot stand silent while those in

*Continued on Page 8*

*Continued from Page 7*

power continue to pretend there is a positive outcome for continuing on the fossil path. We will follow the dinosaurs into extinction if we continue burning their remains. It is time to place priority on the vital functions of the living Earth – the ecosystem services – embedded in the interconnected living systems on the surface of the earth. Instead of criminalizing those who stand to protect watersheds, wetlands, forests, farmland and refuges, we should be prosecuting those who rip fossil materials – oil, coal, fossil methane- from the depths of the earth. The 1837 laws that gave mineral rights superiority over surface rights continue to subsidize and destroy our life support system. The Pennsylvania laws that demand access to mineral “rights” over the objections and concerns of landowners and citizens, in violation of our own Constitution, need to be overturned. The federal law and regulations that made exemptions for natural extraction from deep shales legal in spite of environmental harms need to be overturned. It is time to place the health and safety of people and the living planet above the short-term profits of multi-national corporations.

Take these three actions today:

**First**, make sure climate and environment issues are in the discussion for every candidate for office. Demand a position statement- hold them accountable for votes taken against sustainability actions. Find your elected officials here:

*For PA: <http://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/yourlegislator/>*

*For federal <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members>*

**Second**, VOTE in every election, every time! Work to “Get Out The Vote” for candidates who stand for climate action and environmental justice – there are MANY action groups! Find a local action group here: (<https://350.org>).

**Third**, pledge to take action in your personal life to move toward a more sustainable lifestyle. Recruit your family, friends and neighbors to do the same. Find more suggestions here: <https://www.greenpeace.org/archive-international/en/campaigns/climate-change/Solutions/What-you-can-do/> and here: [https://www.lifewithoutplastic.com/store/10\\_easy\\_tips\\_for\\_living\\_with\\_less\\_plastic#.W6PeWC2ZOL8](https://www.lifewithoutplastic.com/store/10_easy_tips_for_living_with_less_plastic#.W6PeWC2ZOL8).

I will be working to preserve our Living Earth every day for the rest of my life. My book, “Pathways to Our Sustainable Future,” lays out the argument and tells some stories of success. I hope you will join me and tell me of your own journey.

*Patricia M. DeMarco*







## *Nemo iudex in causa sua*

**I**t is a foundational principle of Anglo-American jurisprudence that “no person can be judge in his own case,” meaning “in a case in which he has an interest.” The reason, of course, is that it is assumed everyone is prejudiced in his or her own favor and would pass judgment accordingly.

For the same reason, in a trial by jury the defendant’s friends and family are not permitted to serve on the jury as it is assumed that they too are prejudiced in favor of the defendant.

And yet this is the position all citizens and residents of Allegheny County are faced with when they have complaints against police entities in the County other than City of Pittsburgh police.

In Pittsburgh, there is a Citizens Police Review Board independent of the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police and of the District Attorney’s office empowered to investigate allegations of police misconduct and to render a verdict in such cases. The CPRB leaves a lot to be desired -- specifically its inability to assign penalties for police misconduct. But at least it is an independent agency and has done a fine job in spite of limitations imposed upon it.

Everywhere else in the county, however, those who believe they have been victims of police misconduct have little choice but to take their complaints either to the police department in question or else to the DA’s office.

Taking such complaints to the police departments is like the chickens complaining to the fox about raids on the henhouse. Especially in the smaller departments, those investigating a complaint will personally know the officer being investigated. Furthermore, the standards applied to the officer being investigated could, at some future time, be applied to investigators themselves. So, the investigators will be inclined to be as lenient as possible.

My saying this is not meant to imply that police are exceptionally corrupt. It’s just the way human nature is.

Taking a complaint against the police to the DA is almost as bad. Prosecutors depend upon the police to provide them with the evidence they use to obtain convictions, and so it is in their interest not to alienate the police. This usually means decision not to prosecute, even in egregious cases of police brutality, as in the beating of Jordan Miles.

That is why an independent Civilian Police Review Board is needed for all of Allegheny County. We need an agency which will cover all the community police departments in the county as well as the County Police, the Port Authority Police, and those campus police organizations empowered by governmental authority to make arrests and to use force up to and including lethal force.

Creation of such an independent agency should not be viewed as being in any way anti-police. The vast majority of police officers are decent human beings doing a difficult job with diligence and often grace. But the community must be protected from the minority who, either through incompetence or malice, abuse the power to harm which we the people have delegated to them. An independent Civilian Police Review Board for Allegheny County is the best way to protect the community.

*Michael Pastorkovich*

**REMARKS FOR ALLEGHENY COUNTY COUNCIL RE:  
CIVILIAN REVIEW BOARD FOR ALLEGHENY COUNTY.**

# Wilkinsburg 2018 Summer Program Update

The two Wilkinsburg Pollinator Gardens (Jerry Gaudi's at 718 North Ave; Lynette Bloedow's at Covenant Church) survived the winter in good condition. During the summer, volunteers weeded and replanted, and they were in good shape for August tours. Educational signs explaining the garden and its plants were installed.

A landscape design is in progress for Nicole Santella's property at 1300 Wood Street. Plantings at Kate Luxemburg's property at the corner of Swissvale and North Avenues have been postponed to Spring 2019. Her property will feature a host of zinneas planted to read, "Yes We Can." An information box about the garden will be installed rather than the plant signage appropriate for the other two gardens.

An Education Day was held May 12 from 10am til 5pm at the Covenant Fellowship Church in Wilkinsburg. About 50 residents enjoyed lots of activities for children and adults to showcase the pollinator garden and the fruit tree orchard. A wonderful unveiling of the sign, "Grace and Fruit Pollinator Garden," occurred with the Mayor of Wilkinsburg Marita Garrett, Pastor Pete Smith of Covenant Fellow-



*Continued on Page 11*



*Continued from Page 10*

ship Church, and Barb Grover of the Sierra Club each saying a few words

Three new gardens are in progress. Michelle Soto has begun to install a Memorial Pollinator Garden on Whitney Avenue, and Kate Burke is in the process of enrolling in the Backyard Habitat program sponsored by the Audubon Society to plan a pollinator garden in her back yard. The Princeton Park Block Watch group will be removing debris from a vacant lot on Marlboro Avenue, where pollinator garden beds will be installed in the spring of 2019.

Cliff McGill, an avid nature lover and a superb photographer, has created a 2019 calendar highlighting our gardens. He documented our work in 2017 and has continued to do so in 2018. Be sure to check out our website, [sierraclub.org/Pennsylvania/Allegheny](http://sierraclub.org/Pennsylvania/Allegheny), in late December where you can purchase this calendar as well as our annual 2019 Sierra Club Wall and Appointment calendars.

The Wilkesburg project received a second Huplits Wildlife Grant to continue this work through the summer of 2019. We invite all interested residents of Wilkesburg, Sierra Club members, and other interested parties to attend our final meeting for 2018 on November 14 at the Wilkesburg Borough Hall, 605 Ross Avenue, Pittsburgh 15221. Meetings are held from 6:30 – 8:00pm in the 3rd Floor Auditorium. Street parking is free after 6 pm.

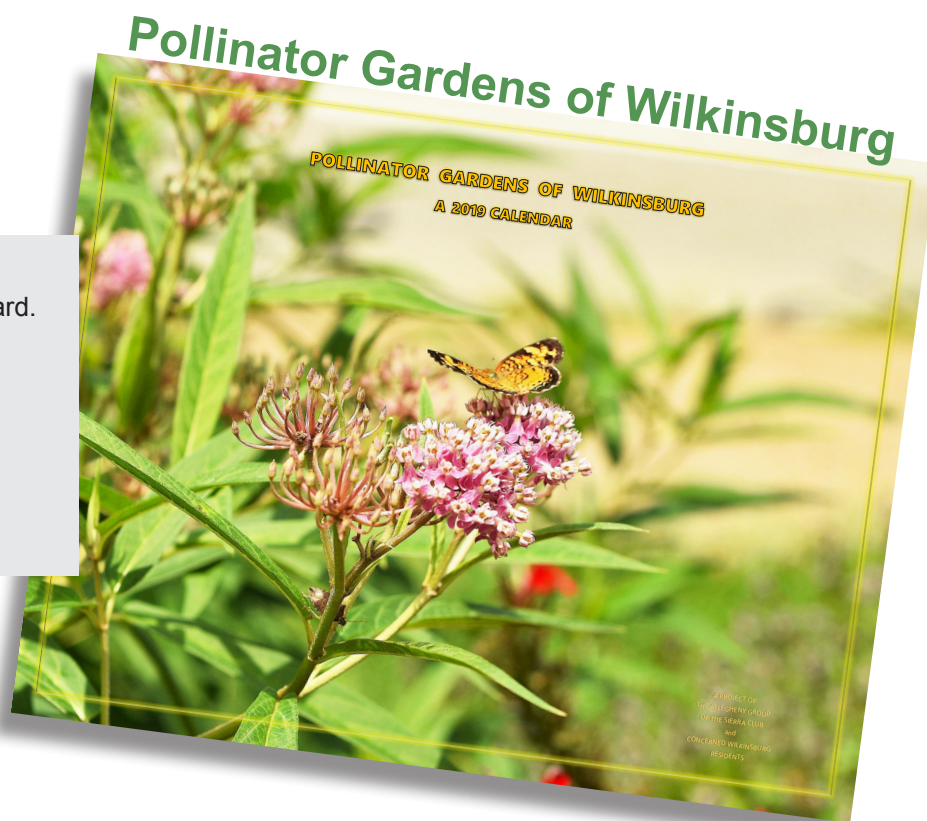
### **Wilkesburg Summer Program**

The Allegheny Group's Endangered Species Team offered one program for pre-K-3rd graders on bees, bats, and butterflies during the Wilkesburg Summer Program, Park It! Children enjoyed a brief explanation of each of the pollinators, their importance to ecosystems, and to our food supply. The children were then engaged in interactive craft projects related to the pollinators.

*Barb Grover*

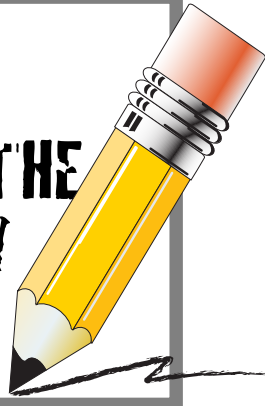
Calendars can be ordered online at [www.alleghenysc.org](http://www.alleghenysc.org) using a credit card. or send a check to:

**Claudia Kirkpatrick**  
3763 Orpwood Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15213  
and make it payable to  
Allegheny Group-Sierra Club



FROM THE CHAIR:

## RACISM AND THE REACTIONARY STATE



The citizens of the developed countries of Western Europe and Canada receive far more benefits for their tax monies than do the citizens of the United States. From Universal Healthcare, Universal Education, generous pensions, generous pregnancy-leave and general childbirth-leave provisions and more vacation-time, the rest of the developed world far and away outstrips the United States in providing a superior quality of life for those who live there. Sure, most people living in these countries pay higher taxes than we do, but, unlike US, they receive value for their monies instead of perpetual wars, military spending higher than the next 6 nations combined (including Russia, China, and others) and tax-cuts for wealthy individuals and multinational corporations. Have you ever wondered why this is the case?

A big part of the answer is: racism. While it might at first seem a stretch to link racism with U.S. failure to provide healthcare for all and an education system that does not leave college graduates mired in massive debt upon graduation, it is a fact that the reactionary right in this country has consistently used racism as their prime tool to persuade a substantial portion of the

white working class to oppose the kind of government programs which would be of significant benefit to themselves and their children.

It is the goal of the reactionary right in this country to repeal all of the progressive legislation of

the past 60 years as well as earlier legislation passed during Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal, and return us to the glory days of 19th century laissez-faire capitalism. The values of laissez-faire capitalism can be listed as follows: if you can't pay for food, go hungry; if you can't pay for clothing, go naked; if you can't pay for shelter, go homeless; and if you can't pay for a doctor, die. The values of the reactionary right pretty much dominate today's Republican Party.

This reactionary right, through politics and its media network consisting of right-wing talk radio and Fox "News," have managed to persuade a lot of white working people that things like universal healthcare and universal education are "socialism" and that socialism is basically a scheme to take tax dollars from hard working white folks and transfer it, through social programs, to THOSE PEOPLE, meaning primarily African-Americans, but also other peoples of color, immigrants, and those who worship a deity other than the Christian one.

The effort has spanned 50 years and began in earnest with Richard Nixon's "southern strategy" of appealing to racists in the then solidly Democratic south who were alienated by passage of the Civil Rights

Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 under the leadership of President Lyndon Johnson. He also famously used "dog whistles" like "law and order" and "crime in the streets" to imply that black Americans were responsible for most violent crimes. Nixon, however, was not opposed to all social programs and actually was instrumental in creating the Environmental Protection Agency.

The reactionary right's first true champion was Ronald Reagan, who truly did want to return us to a world similar to the one depicted in the novels of Charles Dickens. Reagan assumed the persona of a kindly grandfather with a twinkle in his eye, but in 1980 he gave a speech on "states rights" (the battle cry of the Confederacy) in Neshoba County, Mississippi. Neshoba County was where 3 civil rights workers, James Chaney, Michael Schwerner, and Andrew Goodman, were murdered by the Klan in 1964. Most Americans did not catch the symbolism, but hardcore racists in Mississippi and the rest of the deep south surely did.

Reagan also liked to regale the American people with tales of "strapping young bucks" too lazy to work and "welfare queens in Cadillacs" both of whom used food stamps to stock up on t-bone steaks at the grocery store while the hardworking (white) people behind them in line were forced to dine on hot dogs.

It was Reaganism, with its, at times, overt racism and economic policy of drastically cutting taxes on the affluent, that directed the nation's wealth away from the 99% and into the pockets and bank accounts of the 1%, which created the

*Continued on Page 13*



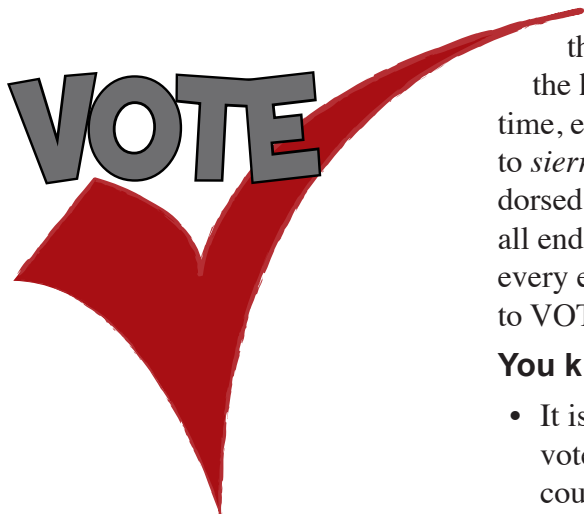
pathetic situation our country finds itself in today, as the richest nation on earth whose citizens have the lowest quality of life of any in the developed world. Americans used to trumpet their nation as “the greatest in the world” but even Donald Trump’s “Make America Great Again” campaign slogan tacitly admits that is no longer the case (if it ever was).

Therefore, if we, as a people and as a species, are ever to effectively address the grave problems facing us, including Catastrophic Climate Change, by means of politics, we must do everything we can to destroy the racism that has poisoned the United States of America since before its founding. We must not tolerate racism in any of our political parties, in our families, among our friends, in our places of worship, or in any other organizations to which we belong. Until we eradicate racism root and branch from our midst, our political and social life will continue to spiral down, only this time it will not be only our nation that goes down the drain, but the whole planet as well.

I write this the day after a “white nationalist” rally planned for Washington, D.C., to commemorate the one year anniversary of the Charlottesville debacle turned out to be a colossal flop. Only two dozen racists showed up to face over one thousand anti-racist and anti-fascist counterdemonstrators. So few showed because they were afraid to come. I am jubilant because for once the racists and the fascists are afraid of us instead of the other way around. To me, this is a real sign of hope. But we must never let our guard down.

Edmund Burke said that “all that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing.” On Sunday, August 12, in Washington, D.C., good men and good women turned out in force, and evil was, at least on that day, routed. But we must all keep the pressure on, every day in every way, if the evil of racism is to be exorcised from our land at long last.

Michael Pastorkovich



**VOTE NOVEMBER 6, 2018,  
for Sierra Club  
endorsed candidates!**

**I** know that Sierra Club members are conscientious voters and those of you reading this article have probably voted in every election you possibly could since age 18 or 21 depending on your current age. You clearly know this is

the most important election of your lifetime. Our Democracy and the habitability of this planet are at stake. My plea is to spend your time, effort and money supporting Sierra Club endorsed candidates. Go to [sierraclub.org/Pennsylvania/Allegheny](http://sierraclub.org/Pennsylvania/Allegheny) for our southwestern PA endorsed candidates and to Pennsylvania Chapter Sierra Club to see a list of all endorsed candidates throughout the state. My plea is for you to make every effort to convince EVERY NEIGHBOR, RELATIVE, and FRIEND to VOTE for these candidates on November 6.

**You know the importance of voting:**

- It is the foundation of our democracy. Attempts to prevent eligible voters from executing that right is completely contrary to what our country stands for.
- The people have the right to choose their representatives – those who run the government - local, state, and national.
- Every vote counts. To opt out because “it won’t make a difference” is not a valid reason! In the 2016 presidential election, Donald Trump won PA by 44,292 votes out of more than 6 million votes – a difference of 0.72%, the narrowest margin in a presidential election for PA since 1840.

You also know that Americans are one of the least active voting populations among developed countries. We are ranked 31 out of 35 countries in voter turnout – barely 50% in presidential elections and far less in mid terms such as 2018.

Continued on Page 14

*Continued from Page 13*

If you or anyone you know will not be able to go to the polls and vote in person on November 6, then PLEASE apply for an Absentee Ballot. Call your elections office and request one. They'll mail a Request for Absentee Ballot form to you. Complete that form and mail it back ASAP. The deadline for receipt of Requests for Absentee ballots is October 30, 2018. Then you will receive an Absentee Ballot at whatever address works for you. Return your ballot so it will be received at your appropriate Elections Office no later than Friday, November 2, 2018.

### **Resources abound:**

---

**1** From Answers.com

**2** *The Daily Dot*, [dailydot.com](http://dailydot.com). American Presidency Project

At [VOTESPA.com](http://VOTESPA.com), you can check your registration status, find your polling place, and apply for an Absentee Ballot. If you have problems, call 1-866-472-7873 (toll free) or email [STSVCSURE\\_HELPDESK@PA.GOV](mailto:STSVCSURE_HELPDESK@PA.GOV).

At [BALLOTPEDIA.ORG](http://BALLOTPEDIA.ORG), you can get a sample ballot by simply typing in your home address.

At [PALWV.ORG](http://PALWV.ORG) and at [VOTE411.ORG](http://VOTE411.ORG), the League of Women Voters of PA, provide information about candidates. Simply enter your address. Candidate answers to specific questions asked by the League will be available.

**CANDIDATE WEBSITES** – Go to the website of the candidates you will be voting for and you will find a wealth of information about their positions on many issues such as health care, education, immigration, economic development, climate change, and the environment. AND you can sign up to volunteer and/or donate. We all know from Sara Innamorato's and Summer Lee's primary campaigns that door-to-door canvassing, personal phone calls, and house parties/coffees DO MAKE A DIFFERENCE! They beat two incumbents who had been in office 10 years or more and certainly had name recognition.

One final note to voters in Allegheny County: there is a Special Election Question on the ballot that has generated some controversy (See Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, October 15, 2018, "Some city board members wary of children's fund", page A1).

**Special Election Question: Allegheny County Tax Levy**

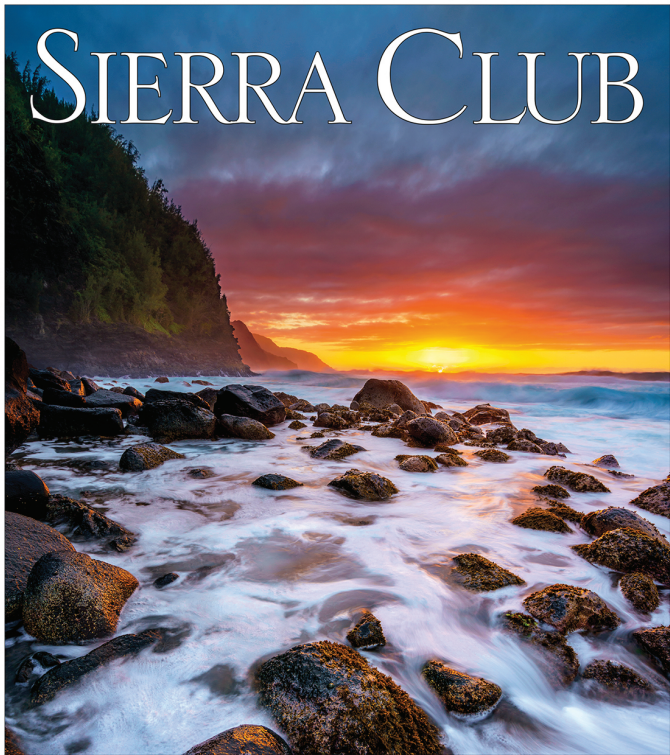
A yes vote is a vote in favor of establishing the Allegheny County Children's Fund and funding it by increasing property taxes by 0.25 mills—\$25 per \$100,000 in assessed property value.

A no vote is a vote against establishing the Allegheny County Children's Fund and funding it by increasing property taxes by 0.25 mills—\$25 per \$100,000 in assessed property value.

**BE INFORMED AND VOTE!**

*Barb Grover, Political co-chair*

---



WILDERNESS CALENDAR | 2019

# 2019 SIERRA CLUB CALENDERS

	Cost	Quantity	Total
Engagement Calendar	\$14.95	_____	_____
Wilderness Wall Calendar	\$13.95	_____	_____
* Prices include sales tax.		Subtotal	_____
* Shipping & Handling:		Shipping & Handling *	_____
For calendars to the same address, add \$3.50 for one item and \$0.50 for each additional item.		Total	_____

**Ship to**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_



ENGAGEMENT CALENDAR | 2019

Calendars can be ordered online at [www.alleghenysc.org](http://www.alleghenysc.org) using a credit card. or send a check to:

**Claudia Kirkpatrick**  
**3763 Orpwood Street**  
**Pittsburgh, PA 15213**  
*and make it payable to Allegheny Group-Sierra Club*

“This is our only fundraising event of the year. If you’re not purchasing a calendar, then a donation would be most welcome. This will help us do the work that we do”.



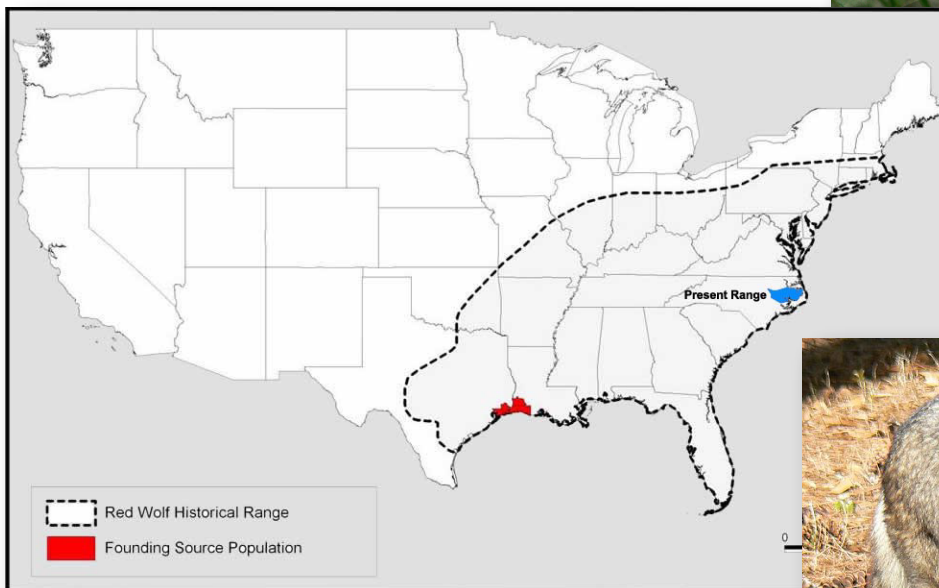
# Just for Kids

Allegheny Group, Sierra Club

## Endangered Species... Red Wolf

The red wolf is found only in North America. It used to roam the entire south east from the Atlantic Ocean to the Gulf of Mexico and north to the Ohio River and even into the middle of Pennsylvania. It liked to live in forests, swamps and coastal prairies.

The red wolf became extinct in the wild by 1980 but there were still some in zoos. In 1987 they were reintroduced in northeastern North Carolina and seem to be breeding successfully in the wild. Some people think the red wolf is a cross between the gray wolf and the coyote. The wolf-coyote ancestor lived about 150,000 - 300,000 years ago.





You have to find a way out of the forest



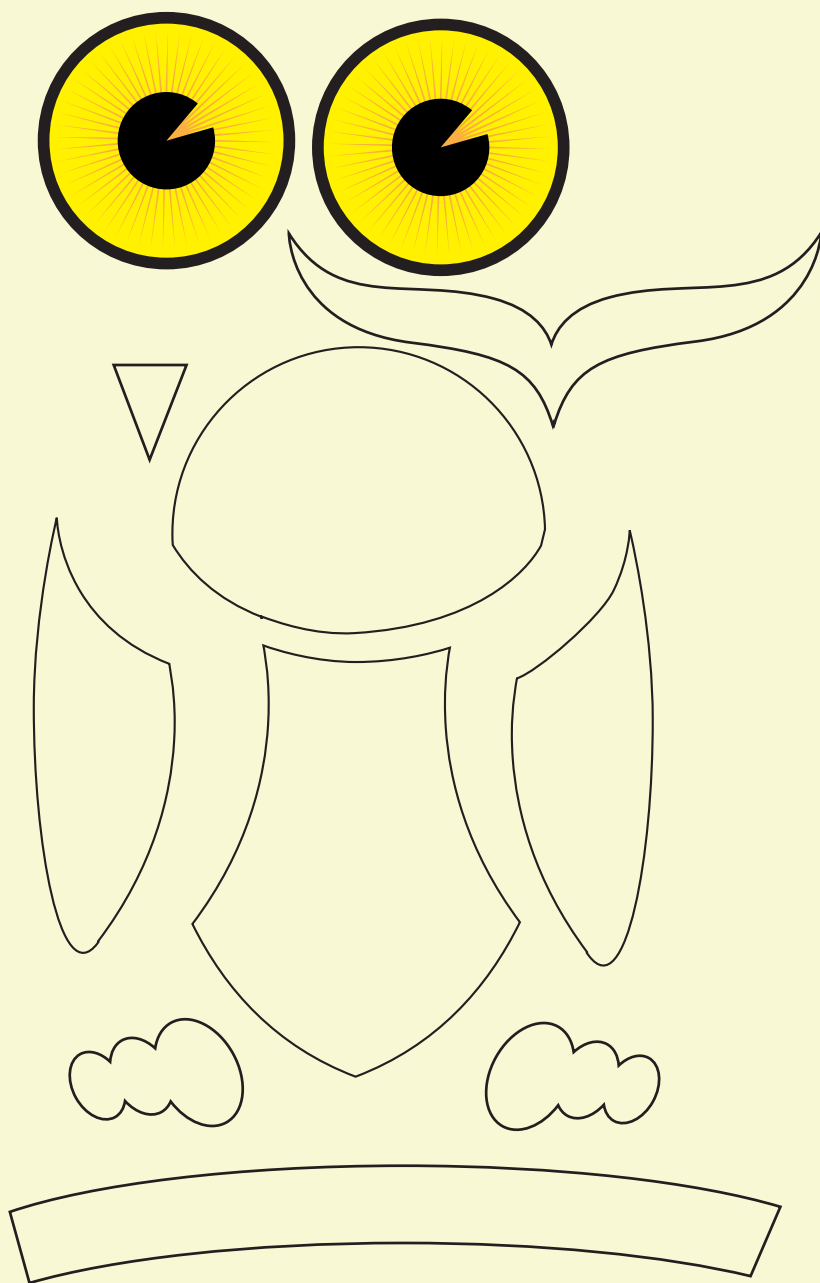
SIERRA CLUB

FOUNDED 1892  
Allegheny Group  
[www.alleghenysc.org](http://www.alleghenysc.org)



Yea, you are out of the forest

# You can make your own pet owl



**Use the Pattern and colored paper or old rags. Glue them together and you have your new pet.**



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](mailto: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.

---

## Contact Information:

---

**Michael Pastorkovich**, Chair; Diversity co-Chair ([michael.louis.joseph@gmail.com](mailto:michael.louis.joseph@gmail.com))

**Ray Roberts**, Vice Chair; Political Committee co-Chair ([l.ray.roberts@gmail.com](mailto:l.ray.roberts@gmail.com))

**Chris Shepherd**, Treasurer ([shepherd999@gmail.com](mailto:shepherd999@gmail.com))

**Naomi Swerdlow**, Secretary ([nswerdlow@gmail.com](mailto:nswerdlow@gmail.com))

**Barbara Grover**, Political Committee co-Chair; Huplits Chair ([bardgrover1@gmail.com](mailto:bardgrover1@gmail.com))

**Ellen Wright**, Conservation co-Chair ([ellenwright714@gmail.com](mailto:ellenwright714@gmail.com))

**Ashley Funk**, Diversity co-Chair ([ashleykfunk@gmail.com](mailto:ashleykfunk@gmail.com))

**Sarah Martik**, Fundraising Chair ([sarahmartik@gmail.com](mailto:sarahmartik@gmail.com))

**Claudia Kirkpatrick**, Editor, Allegheny Sierran; sales for Trail Guides, Calendars ([kirkclaudia@gmail.com](mailto:kirkclaudia@gmail.com))

### Others:

**Bob Lang**, Co-Treasurer ([rclanggeo@gmail.com](mailto:rclanggeo@gmail.com))

**Michael LaMark**, Graphic-Designer-in-Residence ([lamarkmichael@yahoo.com](mailto:lamarkmichael@yahoo.com))