

MASSACHUSETTS

SIERRA

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Reaching More Than
26,000 Sierra Club Members
in Massachusetts

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Massachusetts Sierra Club

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TOGETHER WE CAN?

Letter from the desk of James McCaffrey, Director

Massachusetts has a long record of enlightened environmental protection, which contributes to our high quality of life. Of vital importance to environmental protection is preserving wetlands. Wetlands provide us open space, water storage and purification, spawning grounds for fish, and habitat for rare and endangered species. Wetlands also provide massive areas of flood prevention, which will become increasingly important as we begin to see the effects of global climate change and sea-level rise. Wetlands truly are a public resource that serves all citizens of the commonwealth.

But a new proposal by the Patrick administration would severely undercut the role citizens play in protecting these resources. Under ongoing pressure from developers to "streamline" permitting and reduce delays for developers, the Patrick administration is proposing to eliminate the long-standing right of 10 townspeople to appeal wetlands decisions by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the agency which administers wetlands regulations in Massachusetts.

Regrettably, by the mid 1980s Massachusetts had already lost about 28 percent of its estimated original wetlands. Much of this loss was caused by sprawling development — the same sprawl that threatens the environment throughout our nation. Our state Wetlands Protection Act has decreased the rate of loss, but it is of great concern to us that Massachusetts, long considered a leader in protecting wetlands, is now poised to abandon decades of achievement.

To date, the administration has presented no studies showing whether permit delays are due primarily to citizen appeals or the shortage of DEP staff and law judges to review appeals. Administration officials cite (at every opportunity) the case of Hoosac Wind, in which 10 citizens appealed a renewable energy project in western Massachusetts, as a prime example of how

continued on page 12

ON THE COVER: Mt Norwottock seen from beaver swamp along Hop Brook in Amherst
photograph by Elisa Campbell

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Protecting Our Children and Our Lands

by Bille Bates

Why must children be killed before illegal and unregulated use of all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) can be controlled? In June, three parents of children killed while riding ATVs courageously testified before a legislative hearing against irresponsible and unregulated ATV use. The children were killed while visiting friends where they were provided with adult-sized ATVs to ride.

Representative Matt Patrick sponsored House Bill 3592. The Bill will require a title, registration, and insurance for all off-road recreational vehicles, whether called ATVs, off-road vehicles (ORVs), or off-highway motorcycles and dirt bikes (OHMs). HB3592 would also mandate safety requirements and training by the Registry of Motor Vehicles, the distribution of safety information by sellers, and limits to driving by age and size.

Among those testifying in favor of HB3592 were James McCaffrey, Director of the Massachusetts Chapter, Pediatric Trauma Surgeon Peter Masiakos, Rona Wallace of the Massachusetts Association of Orthopedic Surgeons, Falmouth Natural Resources Directors, and Sierrans from Cape Cod.

Natural Resources

Of course, ATVs are not only dangerous for children, they also tear up the land. In his testimony, McCaffrey spoke eloquently of the years of effort by Sierrans to control rampant ATV abuse to our natural resources. Last year, we commented on the draft "Motorized Trail Recreation Facility Assessment Policy" put forth by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). The revised policy includes strong policy statements, such as: "Recreation activities should not diminish the resource." The Policy notes "widespread environmental and social impacts ... due to [OHVs]," and calls for "effective enforcement." At our request, the Policy specifies that the only permitted machines must weigh less than 1000 pounds, prohibiting everything larger such as four wheel drive trucks and sport utility vehicles.

In addition, DCR bans use of ATVs in areas of cultural or historic importance and environmentally sensitive areas. That means water supply lands, wetlands, vernal pools, areas identified by the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program as "priority communities," Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, and Forest Reserves would be protected. Georgetown-

Rowley State Forest was closed to OHVs following these new requirements. Among the areas protected for historic or cultural reasons are the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, the Taconic and Mahican-Mohawk trails, and other national, statewide, and regional trails identified by the Massachusetts Greenway Plan.

At the Partners in Parks Conference in Worcester, McCaffrey was the lead facilitator of a workshop entitled, "Keeping It Civil: Balancing Interests, Expectations, and Impacts." Six other Massachusetts Sierrans participated in the discussion. ATV riders attending the conference joined in the search for solutions. Most park activities are compatible, but the Partners are seeking to reduce conflicts between incompatible user groups, such as those who want to quietly observe nature and those who want to drive ATVs through it.

Unfortunately, we have had less success with the National Park Service. In March we submitted comments to the Cape Cod National Seashore (CCNS) in response to their "Environmental Assessment — Options for Managing ATV Access." The Club thanked CCNS for strongly protecting Piping Plovers, a rare shorebird, from ORVs during the past 10 years, and asked them to choose the option that would phase out the allowed use of ORVs. In the absence of a phase-out plan, we asked for "no change," which would mean that during ORV closures (mandated by the Endangered Species Act to protect the Plovers), no modifications would be made. It is our contention that everyone has been well aware that if the Piping Plover population began to improve, and therefore used more of the beach, ORV use would be curtailed. East Coast development has infringed on this bird's necessary habitat, and Massachusetts is the only state where its numbers are increasing.

Regrettably, the CCNS chose the option "to modify existing designations of scheduled access to three ATV beaches" We will continue to monitor this situation. ❖

Billie Bates is Chair of the Cape Cod and the Islands Group, focusing on environmental justice and protection of public lands and natural resources.



Photo by Elisa Campbell

Jug End Forest Reserve

ATVs are not only dangerous for children, they also tear up the land

Rising to the Climate Challenge: the Sierra Student Coalition

by Aditya Nochur

“Ooooooh! It’s hot in here! There’s too much carbon in the atmosphere!” “Take action, take action, and get some satisfaction!” Buoyed by catchy chants such as these, the youth of America are rising to the climate challenge — and activists from the Sierra Student Coalition (SSC) are on the cutting edge of this growing movement.

Founded in 1991, the SSC is the national student arm of the Sierra Club, with over 250 chapters nationwide. The SSC mobilizes students and youth to run hard-hitting environmental campaigns which develop the next generation of environmental leaders. As a member of the Campus Climate Challenge, a North American coalition effort to reduce global warming pollution from high school and college campuses, the SSC is transforming hearts and minds and influencing broader public debates about sustainability.

During the 2006-2007 school year, the SSC won an incredible 58 campus victories across the country, including three in Massachusetts. Students at Holy Cross in Worcester organized an energy-efficient light bulb exchange. Members of Northeastern’s Husky Energy Action Team (HEAT) successfully pressured their president to adopt the American College and University President’s Climate Commitment to climate neutrality. At the opposite end of the state, Williams College students convinced their administration to reduce the college’s greenhouse gas emissions 10 percent below 1990 levels by 2020. Through strategic use of campus media, screenings of *An Inconvenient Truth*, and other innovative tactics, these students won their campaigns and educated thousands of their peers about solutions to the climate crisis.

“Students are increasingly realizing that they have the power to take action and create institutional change on global warming issues,” said Maura Cowley, Northeast campus organizer for the SSC. “The victories we’re seeing show that youth today want more than hot air — they want sustainable and just global warming solutions.”

Knowing that reducing their colleges’ ecological footprints alone won’t stop global warming, SSC activists are also building networks and sharing information across campus boundaries. This past March, SSC members and stu-

dents from Boston University’s (BU) Environmental Student Organization organized a Northeast regional climate summit. This event brought nearly 300 students from Maine to West Virginia to BU for an inspiring weekend of organizing skills trainings, issue briefings, and breakout discussions on topics ranging from campaign strategy to environmental justice to regional climate policy.

As part of the summit proceedings, students also attended the final day of an “Interfaith Walk for Climate Rescue” that had crossed Massachusetts, calling upon political leaders to reduce carbon emissions 80 percent by 2050. History was made as those chants — “It’s hot in here!” and “Take action!” — reverberated through the streets of Cambridge and Boston: the 1,500 people gathered in Boston’s Copley Square made it the largest climate rally in the US up to that time. That record was blown away by the phenomenal success of the “Step It Up” day of action just a few weeks later.

The SSC did not slow down during the summer. A contingent of SSCers and members of the “Step It Up” team went to New Hampshire for a “Climate Summer” program that evoked the civil rights struggles of a past generation. The participants canvassed households, attended community forums, and built citizen power across New Hampshire to reframe the debate about global warming and clean energy solutions. (A parallel effort was taking place in Iowa.) In early August there was a five-day march from Nashua, MA to Concord, NH and a rally to send a clear message to our political leaders to take bold and decisive action on the climate crisis.

As the fall gets underway, the SSC will continue its campus organizing efforts under the Campus Climate Challenge. SSC leaders are also playing key roles in organizing “Power Shift,” a conference that will bring over 3,000 students from all over the country to Washington, DC in October to further grow and mobilize the youth climate movement. As the challenge of a generation looms before us, the SSC will continue to inspire and fight for positive change. ❖

Aditya Nochur is a recent graduate from Tufts University and a volunteer Boston organizer for the SSC. He served on the SSC’s Executive Committee in 2006.

*Youth today
want sustainable
and just global
warming
solutions*

Re-Connecting our Youth with the *Natural Environment*

by Alexandra Oster

I recently had the pleasure of attending the Partners in Parks Conference. This one-day conference was co-sponsored by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs and the Department of Conservation and Recreation as well as numerous local and state non-governmental organizations including the Massachusetts Sierra Club. The conference brought together leaders and advocates for parks and open space to brainstorm and discuss what's needed to help the Commonwealth's forests, parks, and open space achieve their potential as safe and enjoyable places to visit.

The conference started off with two bright, impassioned young adults discussing their involvement with Boston area youth environmental programs. It was refreshing and invigorating to hear these two discuss the importance of involving today's children and adolescents, particularly inner-city youth, in outdoor activities.

This particular discussion struck a chord with me. At times there appears to be a disconnect between young people and those at the forefront of the environmental movement. However, in order to preserve and protect the natural environment for future generations, we must teach our youth to value the environment and inspire them to become environmental stewards. One program that strives to instill in youth an appreciation for the natural environment is the Sierra Club's Inner City Outings program.

The ICO program of the Sierra Club was established in 1971 by the San Francisco Bay Chapter. Since 1971, it has expanded to over 50 cities nationwide. In 1994, Craig Kelley, a long time Sierra Club member (and currently a member of the Cambridge City Council) founded the Boston ICO program.

The Boston ICO is a volunteer, community outreach program that gives inner-city youth the opportu-

nity to explore and learn about nature through outdoor adventures and environmental education. Working in conjunction with four Boston area agencies — the East Boston Neighborhood Health Center,



Photos taken by youth from St. Peter's Teen Center in Dorchester

Boston Medical Center's Project Health, the Teen Center at St. Peter's in Dorchester, and Zumix in East Boston — the Boston ICO provides outdoor experiences at no cost to 150-200 young people every year.

Every month, volunteers lead trips to local forests and parks where children and teenagers ranging in age from 6 to 18 participate in various outdoor adventures including hiking, camping, rafting, canoeing, swimming, sledding, and snowshoeing. This past spring the Boston ICO held its first ever nature photography trip at Crane Beach Reservation in Ipswich. Participants were given a lesson in photography and were allowed to use digital cameras to document their two hour hike throughout the reservation. At the end of the hike photos were uploaded onto a laptop and displayed using a projector so that the teenagers

could reflect upon their experience and all that they had accomplished.

By providing experiences and knowledge that can only be achieved by interacting with the great outdoors, the Boston ICO allows inner-city youth unique opportunities to foster an appreci-

ation for the natural environment that they might not have otherwise. Much like the energetic youth speakers at the Partners and Parks Conference, many ICO participants return from the outings with memories and experiences they will not soon forget. To quote one child, age 12, "I thought for sure I wasn't going to make it up the mountain...and then I did."

For more information about volunteering or ICO, please visit <http://sierraclubmass.org/ico/icosite>. The next volunteer orientation will be held Tuesday September 18 at 7:00 PM at the Redline Bar, 59 John F Kennedy Street, Cambridge, MA 02138.



Alexandra Oster is currently the Administrative Assistant in the Chapter's Boston office.

Quabbin Adopting Watershed Land Use Plan

by Elisa Campbell

I represent the Sierra Club on the Quabbin Watershed Advisory Council (QWAC). In that capacity I have reviewed the proposed Quabbin Watershed Land Use Plan (QLMP) for 2007–2017.

The state agency responsible for managing the water supply for Boston and many other communities — formerly the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC), now the Division of Water Supply Protection within Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) — has been creating detailed land use plans for decades. The previous plan officially expired in 2004.

The best protection for the water and reservoir is a vigorous forest of long-lived species well-suited to their sites, a forest diverse in species, age, and size. The goal is to have a forest that is resilient and can respond to changes such as hurricanes, outbreaks of major pests, fires, etc. with a minimum of disruption or release of pollutants (including silt from erosion) into the reservoir.

The resource managers and foresters at Quabbin have earned high praise over the years for their management of this extremely important resource. The watershed forests under MDC were the first of the publicly-owned forests in Massachusetts to be certified as “green”



Photo by Elisa Campbell

Forest in the Quabbin Reservation

by the Forest Stewardship Council — an accomplishment that led to the goal of getting all the state’s publicly-owned forests certified.

As I write this, I am still reviewing the QLMP. In general, the plan looks good. My principal concern is the difficulty of maintaining species diversity. Most of the tree species in Quabbin, and all of Massachusetts, for that matter, are under attack from one enemy or another. For example, oaks are just beginning to regenerate after too much browsing by deer, and now Quabbin has a large population of moose. In addition, gypsy and winter moths attack white oaks, and there is the

threat that sudden oak death will be brought to the area and attack the red oaks. Eastern hemlocks are succumbing to the hemlock woolly adelgid. White ash, American beech, sugar maple, hickory and yellow birch are all uncommon. What’s left? Mostly white pine, black birch, and red maple.

These threats mean that forest management must be even more skillful than in the past if there is to be any hope of having a forest that is truly diverse. While the QLMP’s goal is to continue a forest with approximately the current species component, the plan does not focus on that goal. For example, browsing by moose is a problem that will increase rapidly. In July, the Chapter Executive Committee voted to urge DCR to begin searching for methods to control the moose population. Similarly, the QLMP does not propose specific control measures for invasive plants. Which silvicultural methods are most likely to promote the growth of diverse species is also a matter of debate.

To learn more about the QLMP and forestry in Quabbin, please email me at ecampbell@sierraclubmass.org. ❖

Elisa Campbell works on land use and forestry issues and leads frequent hikes in the Quabbin watershed for the Sierra Club.

F Mike dorsey 2007©



Cartoon by Mike Dorsey

TIME TO PUT AN END TO THIS— DON'T YOU THINK ?

Public Lands Preservation Act Update

by Philip Saunders, Jr.

Article 97 of the Massachusetts Constitution protects public lands acquired for natural resource purposes (parks, forests, conservation land, playgrounds, etc.) ... in theory. The reality is different. The last legislature authorized transfer of ownership interests in no less than 102 parcels of public land, with little scrutiny, less debate, and essentially no opposition. Of these lands, about two thirds were Article 97 lands.

There is a bill to fix this problem. The Public Lands Preservation Act (PLPA, S. 542, aka the Article 97 bill, aka the No-Net-Loss bill) would bring some sanity to this process. It would establish government policy that no public lands acquired for natural resource purposes be converted to other uses or otherwise disposed of unless analysis demonstrates no feasible alternative and replacement land of equivalent acreage and market value is provided.



Photo by Laura Carmen Viviana Arena

Once Ferryway Green Park in Malden, now Ferryway School

The PLPA has been sponsored or co-sponsored by 43 senators and representatives, and has been endorsed by a growing number of environmental organizations and city and

town bodies. (Over 50 as we go to press.) In addition, in June the governor rejected a transfer of park land in Wellesley, saying that the town was not receiving land equal in value to the land it is losing. This endorsement of the no-net-loss policy gives us some hope of support for the PLPA from the administration.

What you can do

Mark your calendar for the PLPA hearing set for September 20, 1:00 PM, Room A-1 at the State House, before the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources, and Agriculture. Plan on attending. Numbers count.

Ask your senator and representative to support the PLPA.

For more information go to www.sierraclubmass.org/issues/plpa.htm ❖

Phil Saunders is a Sierra Club volunteer working with the Legislative Action committee to get the PLPA bill enacted.



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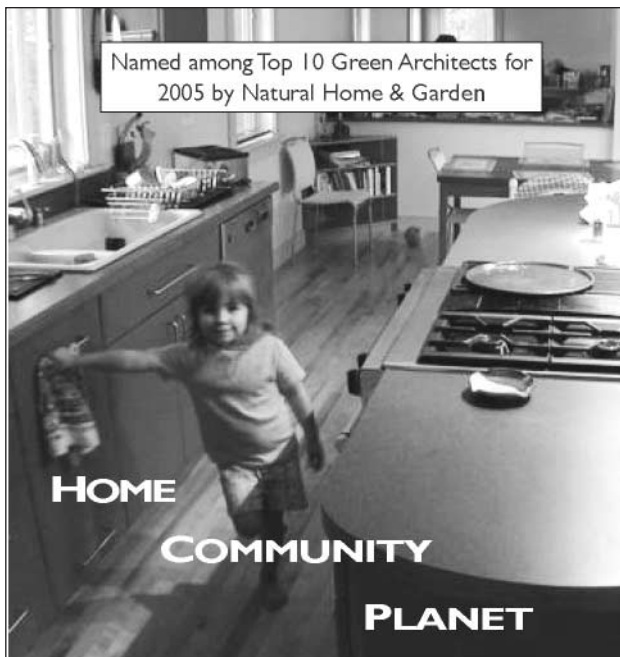
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BOOK REVIEW:

Cape Wind: Money, Celebrity, Class, Politics, and the Battle for Our Energy Future on Nantucket Sound

by Wendy Williams and Robert Whitcomb

Public Affairs, 2007

326 pages

\$26.95

review by Philip Dowds

It is painful to read of Robert Kennedy Jr. — an authentic environmental champion in other contexts — capitalizing his credibility on the shoals of Nantucket Sound. But he is hardly alone; Walter Cronkite, for instance, was right there with him, opposing the Cape Wind project.

Cape Wind, by journalists Wendy Williams and Robert Whitcomb, details the five-years-and-counting epic struggle between alternative energy production and other values. On one side of this conflict is energy entrepreneur Jim Gordon, who proposes to erect a “wind farm” of 130, 440-foot-tall, electricity-generating wind turbines in the shallow waters of Horseshoe Shoals, an ocean area bounded by Cape Cod, Martha’s Vineyard, and Nantucket. On the other side is the Alliance to Protect Our Sound: a citizens’ assembly animated and funded by wealthy, famous, and well-connected area residents (many with waterfront views of the Shoals) who see this “industrial” energy facility as an impending desecration of a “pristine” wilderness and a “national treasure.”

The *Cape Wind* dust jacket promises a tale of “how the wealthy manipulate democracy to serve their own interests,” and the book does not disappoint. Within a year of Gordon’s announcement in the summer of 2001, the Alliance was formed, raised money, and had launched a sophisticated anti-wind farm campaign of public relations (disinformation, the authors assert), litigation, and most importantly, delay plus more delay — the operative theory being that developers will fold their hands when the approval process takes too long and costs too much. As the Cape Wind agents pursue the many public permits they will need, meetings with officials are put off or canceled, public hearings are postponed or proliferated, and agency reports normally written in a few weeks refuse to appear for half a year or more. Despite these delays, the Alliance insists that permits for Cape Wind are being hastily stamped through the gate without any kind of systematic public scrutiny.

That this strategy has thus far failed is due chiefly to the ferocious tenacity of Gordon, who brings his own substantial resources to the contest, and doesn’t know

how to quit. But after several years locked in the embrace of the Army Corps of Engineers, public permitting of Cape Wind has been transferred over to the federal Mineral Management Services, where some wind supporters fear the endless review process is about to begin again.

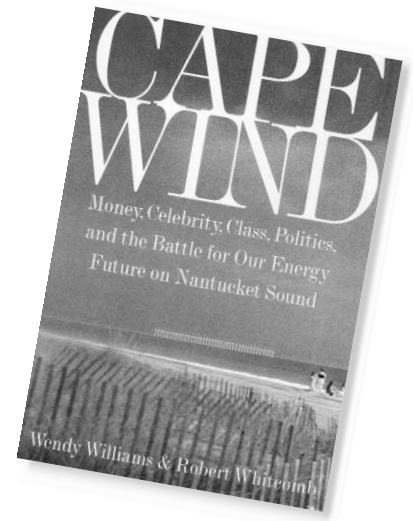
Massachusetts readers will delight (or groan) at the steady parade of familiar politicians, celebrities, socialites and chief executive officers of major corporations tramping through the saga of Cape Wind. Complementary to all this namedropping are entertaining nuggets of sociology and science, like the chemical ambiguity of Number 6 crude oil, our cultural commitment to bird watching, and how the New England power grid is managed.

The authors characterize the Alliance as selfish and shortsighted elites who care more about defending their traditional yachting privileges than about securing clean power to serve their communities.

This may not be unfair — but unfortunately, an *ad hominem* emphasis conceals a bitter truth we will all face as we forge our way into the new energy world. All new energy sources will require some kind of compromise, adaptation, or sacrifice. Wind turbines, for instance, need wind, and wind is often most available high up on ridges, or out in the open — in other words, in places where turbines will inevitably be new elements in existing views and vistas, or possibly even intruders into “wilderness” zones where little or nothing has been previously built.

Perhaps few of us yacht, but most of us are out there, remote from our neighborhoods, to hike, bike, paint, canoe, camp, fish, climb, or photograph in the natural places we love. When somebody proposes a wind farm located within, or visible from, one of *our* treasured wild lands, let’s hope that we can address the controversy with more integrity than we find in this saga. We’ll certainly have a chance to find out: Doing the energy math shows that America needs thousands more projects like Cape Wind. And soon. ❖

Philip Dowds of Cambridge currently serves as the Chapter’s Energy Committee Chair.



All new energy sources will require some kind of compromise

Fight Climate Change with Clean and Healthy Energy

by Janna Cohen-Rosenthal

Carbon is the leading contributor to climate change, and experts believe that if emissions are drastically reduced, we can avert a climate crisis. Generating electricity is the largest contributor to carbon pollution; in addition, burning fossil fuels releases many other pollutants. As consumers, we can support cleaner and healthy sources of electricity such as wind and solar. Both wind and solar electricity are a zero-carbon emission sources that protect our health and create local jobs. While it is more expensive at this time to build wind turbines and solar power than the traditional dirty power plants, we desperately need these clean energy sources.

To address this cost problem, three years ago Mass Energy Consumers Alliance, a non-profit organization, launched *New England GreenStart* for National Grid electrical customers. Thanks to over 7,300 *GreenStart* members who pay a small premium for renewable energy on their monthly utility bill, we are increasing the use of clean energy sources in New England. Unfortunately, the other electric companies do not offer this program. So we started a new program, the *New England Wind Fund*, which allows anyone to make tax-deductible contributions to support clean energy. Mass Energy is focusing on community-scale wind projects, similar to the wind turbine in Hull. All of the projects will be strictly reviewed internally and with help from our environmental partner groups.

Blossom Hoag, a Sierra Club member and East Boston resident, has joined the *New England Wind Fund* and has given donations as gifts in honor of friends and family. Hoag believes, "We don't need more dirty energy — this was an easy way for me to make an impact plus I spread the word about the solution."

GreenStart and *New England Wind*

Fund create exciting opportunities for local communities. The Massachusetts Technology Collaborative, a state agency, matches contributions twice: it gives a grant to the donor's city or town to fund clean energy projects and a grant to fund clean energy projects that benefit low-income residents. Communities including Boston, Cambridge, and Newton have won free solar panels for use on their school buildings!

Don't delay — make the statement that climate change is a problem and creating clean energy is an essential solution. For more information go to www.MassEnergy.com ❖

Janna Cohen-Rosenthal is Mass Energy's Marketing and Communications Coordinator, as well as a Sierra Club member who lives in Jamaica Plain.

Support the Massachusetts Sierra Club

Your generous donations directly to the chapter will allow us to continue our local conservation programs, promoting our efforts to preserve public lands and open space, protect marine and coastal habitats, and fight sprawl by working to ensure balanced transportation choices for all. To learn more about how your donations are used in direct support of our Massachusetts programs, please visit our web page and select the Politics & Issues page.

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Every Day Is Demo Day

Chair's Column

by David Heimann

As I write this column at the beginning of July, the year 2007 is shaping up to contain significant environmental progress. The Senate passed an energy and global warming bill that, while not containing all that we would like, does increase the fuel-efficiency requirements for vehicles for the first time in ages. By the time you read this, hopefully the House will have acted as well, and perhaps improved the bill.

Here in Massachusetts we have been acting on many fronts. We are implementing the Club's signature Cool Cities campaign, with many cities and towns having signed on. Following the Chapter's decision in 2006 to support the Cape Wind project conditionally, the Energy Committee has continued to advocate for the conditions we believe are vitally important. The Energy Committee submitted comments to the Mineral Management Service on their draft plan for offshore alternative energy facilities, including Cape Wind. The Cape Cod and Islands Group has submitted comments on the toxic plume flowing from the Massachusetts Military Reservation, as well as the return to use of lead ammunition for training. The Transportation Committee is working on a number of MBTA-related issues, especially the Silver Line, and the North-South Rail Link. The newly-reinvigorated Thoreau Group has been addressing the use of land from Walden Woods in Concord for school purposes. The Political Committee is hard at work with endorsements in the state's major cities and towns in this municipal election year, as well as a number of special elections to fill vacancies.

As we address these particular issues, we are thinking about Massachusetts' role in the national and global environmental picture. Our vision is the Green Triad: renewable energy sources, energy efficiency, and energy conservation. Together, these are the foundation for moving our society past oil shortages and glob-

al warming to a sustainable future. Our question is, "How can we in Massachusetts best advance the Green Triad?" While our answer is still forming, three areas are shaping up as elements of that answer:

Massachusetts already has several wind facilities, including those in Hull, the Massachusetts Maritime Academy, and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers facility on Boston's Southeast Expressway; in addition to Cape Wind, there are proposed facilities in Hull and elsewhere. We can become not only one of the key areas in the development of a nationwide wind power capacity, especially offshore, but also the catalyst for a process to deliver this potential in an environmentally proper way.

With many cities and towns signing on to the national Sierra Club's campaign for Cool Cities, and with the Patrick administration showing definite interest in having Massachusetts become a "Cool State," we can potentially advance energy efficiency and conservation throughout the state.

With Massachusetts being the center of rail travel capacity in the Northeast and with Greater Boston being one of not many American cities with a significant non-automotive transportation capacity, we can potentially use our automobiles far less than in other parts of the nation, with significant resulting energy efficiency and conservation.

You can help! To volunteer, visit our web site at www.sierraclubmass.org/ps/volunteer.htm or contact our Volunteer Coordinator Peter Ruggiero (volunteer@sierraclubmass.org) or me (chapter-chair@sierraclubmass.org), and let us know of your interest. We'll be sure to put you in touch with the right people working on the issue you want to make happen! ❖

Still Time to Save the Belmont Uplands

by Ellen Mass

Representative William Brownberger and co-sponsors Representative Jim Marzili and Senator Steve Tolman have introduced legislation to authorize a \$6 million purchase of 15 acres in the Alewife Reservation to save the area's silver maple forest from development. This "Uplands" is the only forested area of the Alewife Reservation, binding Cambridge wetland to Belmont upland, and providing an ideal environment for plants, animals, and birds. Forest interior species, such as thrushes, warblers, and flying squirrels thrive in this unique core habitat, which is highly unusual for the area. Silver maple is a critical food source and a provider of large nesting cavities.

The legislative hearing on House Bill 21 (HB21) was well attended by neighbors, environmentalists, and town officials from Belmont, Arlington and Cambridge. Speakers, coordinated by Douglas Massidda, included Belmont Selectman Paul Solomon, Arlington Selectwoman Clarissa Rowe, Kevin O'Brien (Arlington City Planner), Charles Torrini, (Arlington Conservation Commission), Michael Baram (Belmont Land Trust), Sue Bass (Mystic River Watershed Association and Belmont Citizen Forum), and me (Friends of Alewife Reservation). Specialists, including Stanley Dzierzeski, formerly of the Corps of Army Engineers, spoke of the flood retention value of the lands surrounding the Uplands. The Sierra Club also supports the bill.

HB21 must go through the House and Senate and be signed by Governor Patrick. Presently, a "save the forest" state house post card signing campaign is underway. For more information or to join the campaign, please contact the Save the Silver Maple Forest Campaign, at caroline.huang@verizon.net or 617-489-6770. ❖

Ellen Mass is President of the Friends of Alewife Reservation.

Water Management: Politics and Science

by Jesse Schwalbaum

Although Massachusetts has a wet climate, our water resources are dwindling and sensitive aquatic ecosystems are being affected. Water shortages are also an economic and social problem. The time has come for serious water resource management.

Management of water resources should be based on good science, protect sensitive aquatic ecosystems, and be equitable, reasonable, measurable and openly deliberated.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has what might be described as the beginnings of a water resource management system but nearly everyone agrees that it currently falls well short of the ideal. Some environmental groups claim that water management policies implemented by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) do not sufficiently protect aquatic environments. Many water suppliers and municipalities feel that the current regulations are onerous, expensive, unreasonable, and ineffective.

In August of 2006, responding to growing criticisms and pressure from water suppliers and towns, the Massachusetts legislature established a Blue Ribbon Panel to examine the effectiveness of the DEP's water management policies and report to the legislature by year-end. The panel was composed of representatives from environmental and watershed groups, water suppliers, municipalities, and the DEP.

Throughout the course of the panel's meetings there was relatively little agreement and no breakthrough on key issues. In the end, the panel's report loosely documented the fractured viewpoints of the stakeholders but never really addressed the primary question posed by the legislature — are the current water management policies effective?

The DEP had never conducted any scientific analyses of the potential effectiveness of the policies. They were developed without any input from stakeholders, without any hearings or independent scientific review. These



Nashua River in Fitchburg

Photo by Cindy Delpapa

specific water management policies were developed in response to intense political pressure on DEP to “do something” about the problem while minimizing the burden on an agency whose budget has been slashed for more than a decade.

But the Blue Ribbon Panel was not a complete waste of time. From the ruins of that politically and ideologically straight-jacketed process, two technical reports emerged that documented the ineffectiveness of the DEP's water management policies (based in part on studies conducted by the US Geological Survey), and which provide proposals for developing equitable and environmentally effective solutions. These reports have been prepared by engineers and scientists from the Massachusetts Water Works Association and the New England Water Works Associations; the reports are widely available and widely ignored by state bureaucrats and environmental organizations.

Environmental groups have been of two minds regarding the DEP's water management policies. When the policies first came out in the Ipswich River basin they were legally challenged by environmental groups who viewed

them as not sufficiently protective of the environment. But during the panel hearings, these same environmental groups chose not to criticize the policies. Then, almost immediately after the panel hearings were over, environmental groups (including some who had been on the panel) signed a strongly-worded letter insisting that the DEP's policies were inadequate. The politics of water management can be complicated.

The science of water management is much more straightforward.

Although water conservation has been promoted as the answer to our water management woes, the simple truth of the matter is that water conservation, while good and necessary, is not nearly enough. Anyone who claims that a reasonable degree of water conservation will significantly improve aquatic ecosystems has simply not done the math.

Environmental groups like Massachusetts Audubon and The Nature Conservancy are correct in asserting that the bottom line in water management is protection of aquatic ecosystems — streams, wetlands, ponds, vernal pools, and the web of life and water that sustains them. But the lesson to be learned from the failure of the Blue Ribbon Panel is that the road to effective water management must be paved with good science, open discussion, and cooperation among stakeholders. Hopefully, with the help of the legislature, that critical work will soon begin in earnest. ❖

Jesse Schwalbaum, an Amherst hydrogeologist and author of Understanding Groundwater, provided data and testimony to the Legislative Blue Ribbon Panel on Water.

From the Director

(continued from page 2)

well intentioned citizens can delay a “good” project. But the Hoosac wind project appeal was not only credible and substantive, it was “limited to the project’s compliance with the Wetlands Protection Act, and does not, in any way, concern wind turbines or alternative energy” as the DEP Commissioner correctly pointed out. In other words, the citizen challenge would be identical were it wind towers or coal power. We wonder, would the administration be making so much fuss over Hoosac were it in fact an asphalt plant, and not a wind powered energy plant?

The governor’s proposed solution to permitting delays will only create bigger problems. Excluding local res-

idents as potential appellants weakens local oversight and will quiet voices who might be most knowledgeable about local conditions. That’s a vicious cycle — unless, of course, the goal ultimately is to eliminate protection altogether and give developers a free hand to build anywhere.

Yet, proper enforcement of environmental laws and regulations, particularly at the local level, enhances not only public health and safety, but also real estate values, tourism, and business opportunities. That feeds the economy, improves the state budget, and makes more money available for state agencies responsible for critical environmental programs.

Perhaps most disappointing is that the new Patrick proposal is not really new at all, but merely a rehashed attack on our environmental laws ini-

tiated by the previous administration to “improve the climate for business in Massachusetts.” Under Romney’s watch, that wave of attacks meant decreased protection for coastal and waterfront protections, and the delisting of a turtle species that developers considered public enemy number one in their ongoing quest to build everywhere.

The administration claims that out of 65 recent wetland’s appeals (not all of them by citizens) only three resulted in a changed ruling. If even one citizen appeal has ever resulted in a ruling that helped protect the natural values inherent in wetlands systems, including flood storage, water purification, and habitat for species, then the right of citizens to help protect these values should not be extinguished. ❖

Community Gardens for Environmental Justice

by Robert Murphy

There are many ways to respond to the global warming problem while encouraging environmental justice. In Falmouth, the Cape Cod and Islands Group (CCIG) helps the town’s food pantry to produce tomatoes, corn, zucchini, and other vegetables in a community garden. Neighbors work together, using very little fossil fuel and no chemical pesticides or fertilizers, to learn more about each other and to help protect the environment.

On October 13th, Cape residents will host the annual Rachel Carson Harvest Dinner in Falmouth. The Carson Dinner, first developed as a local Sierra Club project, is a community event that recognizes and thanks Cape Cod residents who are involved in “earth friendly” gardening and landscaping. All money raised at the dinner is donated to the community food pantries that serve the people of Mashpee, Falmouth, Sandwich, and Bourne.

Community gardening is important on Cape Cod for several reasons. Most of the food consumed on the Cape and on nearby islands is trucked into the area from hundreds of miles away. Community gardens help to save energy by growing food right there where

it will be consumed. Equally important, community gardens help organize communities. Volunteers with little interest in committee meetings and academic discussions — including many people



who don’t consider themselves to be “environmentalists” — join together to learn more about their surroundings. Gardens are also just friendly places where neighbors can get together. People

often separated by race, ethnicity, age or income can discover that they have things to share with each other. Information about planting techniques, how to water and how to weed, and how to test the soil, is passed around so that everybody benefits.

There are 70 garden plots at the Falmouth Service Center and it’s not unusual to see 30 or 40 volunteer gardeners working together on a Saturday morning in August or September. Garden plots are rented for \$10 each for the season. Water, compost, and tools are provided free of charge. Recently, the CCIG has even provided refreshments for garden work days in Falmouth.

Leaders of the Mashpee Wampanoag tribe remind us that native peoples have been raising fresh, sustainable, and minimally processed foods, as well as celebrating harvest festivals, for at least a thousand years. The CCI is honored to continue that tradition. Plus, it’s one way to improve neighborhood life in a time of global warming. ❖

Bob Murphy has been an environmental justice advocate for many years and does much of his work through the Cape Cod and Islands Group.

Shrinking Our Own Carbon Footprints

by Peggy MacLeod

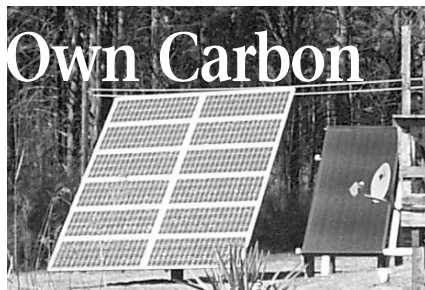
Faced with a myriad of political figures and celebrities offering their “gloom and doom” spins on the planet’s warming atmosphere due to human causes, we may find it difficult to escape a pit-in-the-stomach feeling of a climate disaster on the horizon.

Yet sitting back in anticipation of miracle technologies or sweeping legislation to save us from this climate predicament is not a great option. To take a significant step towards reducing climate change, together we must learn to re-frame our perception of an endangered planet as an opportunity to make “carbon friendly” lifestyle choices as well as to collaborate with others working on local solutions to climate change.

Some people are motivated to find personal solutions by the prospect of saving money through investments in energy efficiency or renewable energy. Others are motivated to live in ways that more closely mirror their values or through an earth stewardship commitment by their faith group. Still others are inspired through an emotional motivation such as ensuring their grandchildren have a healthier planet. If you, like me, cannot stand that “deer in the headlights” feeling of waiting for someone else to fix the problem, you’ll want to find your own approach for taking direct action to address climate change. A few of the options available are:

Self-inspiration: You self-starters may already know how to summon your own creativity to help you achieve a smaller carbon footprint. Using multiple sources of information, you can create your own “to-do list” of priorities that lead to saving money while saving the planet.

Baby steps that add up: Bill Moomaw, a climate scientist from Tufts University, advocates a “3 percent solution” in which the goal is an annual reduction of greenhouse gases of just 3 percent per year. In this scenario, if you typically drive 12,000



miles per year (1,000 miles per month), 3 percent would be 30 less miles per month which doesn’t seem daunting. After three years you’ve reduced your carbon footprint for transportation by almost 10 percent.

Inspired groups: Groups that reduce one’s guilt and are supportive of anyone’s starting point can help you discover some of the common barriers to change (“I want to change, but I’m too busy, can’t afford to, don’t have enough knowledge, etc.”). Beginning this fall, the Massachusetts Climate Action Network will be launching a community-based team approach to help participating households “lose 5,000 pounds of carbon in 30 days.” Team members will meet three or four times to support each other and to compare progress towards lower carbon footprints while developing ties in their community. The program is modeled on the successful *Low Carbon Diet*, developed and tested by the nationally-known Empowerment Institute. Organizers from more than 20 communities will publicize the collective results in order to inspire other consumers seeking concrete solutions for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. For more information, please visit www.massclimateaction.org

No matter what your approach to getting started, many find that once they have committed to a target goal for reducing personal carbon emissions, even small successes lead to a

greater willingness to tackle the harder tasks. The great news is that the momentum created by the masses who are working on reducing their climate footprint will lead the public, and business and community leaders, to take bolder steps to support the larger changes we need to turn the tide towards a healthier planet.

Peggy MacLeod is the Marketing Director for Green Building Services at the Center for Ecological Technology (CET), a non-profit environmental organization serving western Massachusetts as well as southern Vermont and New Hampshire. You can learn more about CET at www.cetonline.org

[Editor’s note: the Sierra Club has a 2 percent solution campaign underway— to join, go to the Club’s website at www.sierraclub.org and select “Take Action.”]

ENERGY-SAVING TIP

Even when electronic devices are turned off, they use energy.

DVD players and stereo equipment can draw 30-50 watts (W) even when turned off. Computers that are not in standby can draw 60-150W. Keeping just one 50W device on all the time, depending on your electric utility, can cost \$45 per year in electricity. Plug your electronic devices into power strips instead, and use that to turn the power off.

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NON-SIERRA CLUB EVENTS

FIFTH ANNUAL ALTWHEELS ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION AND ENERGY FESTIVAL

September 28 – 29, Boston City Hall Plaza

See the latest the world has to offer in clean transportation and clean energy technologies: Vehicles fueled by hydrogen fuel cells, CNG, biodiesel, solar, vegetable oil, as well as hybrids, custom bikes, scooters, pedicabs, and more. Demonstrations, interactive exhibits, test rides, workshops, discounts, and children's activities. The Sierra Club is a co-sponsor. For more information, visit www.altwheels.org or call 508-698-6810. Free.

GREEN BUILDINGS OPEN HOUSE

October 6, 2007

throughout Massachusetts

The Northeast Sustainable Energy Association (NESEA) will host the annual Green Buildings Open House in conjunction with the American Solar Energy Society's National Solar Tour. Visitors to local green buildings, from Williamstown to Provincetown, learn directly from their neighbors who live and work happily with their green, energy-efficient choices. To sign up to host a site, or to find locations near you, please visit www.nesea.org or call 413-774-6051. Most locations are free.

THIRD ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON CLEAN ENERGY

October 29 and October 30

Hynes Convention Center, 900 Boylston Street, Boston

Register at <http://www.mattcenter.org/cceconf2007/ce-conference.html> Sponsored by the Massachusetts Technology Transfer Center

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Massachusetts Chapter Outings

"E" indicates educational content

WENDELL STATE FOREST HIKE PIONEER VALLEY GROUP

September 30

Time: 10:00 AM

We'll hike on part of the Metacomet - Monadnock Trail and old dirt roads; we'll see where a tornado went through the forest in July 2006 and enjoy lunch at a scenic overlook from which we can see Mt. Greylock and parts of southern Vermont. Sorry: no dogs. Contact Elisa at 413-256-4247 or by email at campbell@oit.umass.edu.

MT TOBY RESERVATION HIKE, MONTAGUE AND SUNDERLAND PIONEER VALLEY GROUP (E)

October 13

Time: 9:30 AM

Hike the Robert Frost Trail over Bull Hill to the Mt Toby summit. We'll hike up and down through varied forests and eat lunch at the summit (with a fire tower for great views). Our hike co-leader has done forestry in the Mt Toby area for years and can show us the Arnold Rhodes old-growth hemlock stand as well as discuss the other types of forests there and the principals of the forest management done there. Sorry: no dogs. Contact Elisa at 413-256-4247 or by email at campbell@oit.umass.edu.

MIDDLESEX FELS HIKE, GREATER BOSTON GROUP (E)

October 14

Time: 10:00 AM

This is a challenging and hilly 3.7 mile hike with great views of the Boston skyline. The meeting place is accessible by public transportation. Contact Deborah at 617-227-8898 or holtdj@verizon.net.

QUABBIN RESERVATION HIKE, NEW SALEM PIONEER VALLEY GROUP (E)

November 10 (rain date November 11)

Time: 9:30 AM

A hike (or possibly snowshoe) guided by the recently-retired chief forester of Quabbin. We'll visit some big pines near Gate 29, then go to Rattlesnake Hill and perhaps the soapstone quarry on the shoulder of Rattlesnake. Sorry: no dogs. Contact Elisa at 413-256-4247 or by email at campbell@oit.umass.edu.

DOGTOWN HIKE, GLOUCESTER GREATER BOSTON GROUP (E)

November 11

Time: 10:00 am

History, geology, a varied landscape — Dogtown has it all and offers a good workout, too!

Contact Deborah at 617-227-8898 or holtdj@verizon.net.

Please note that an outing may be cancelled for insufficient interest up to three days before the scheduled date. If you are interested in an outing, do not wait until the last minute to contact the leader.

EVENTS

NERC WIND ENERGY FALL CONFERENCE

October 12 – 14

Place: Camp Jewel, CT

Fee: \$90 weekend, \$25 one day

The 2007 NERC Fall Conference offers activists an opportunity to learn, discuss and plan. This years' conference will focus on renewables, concentrating on wind power for Cool Communities and opportunities for energy efficiency resources. For more information please contact Jenny Blodgett of the Maine Chapter at maine.chapter@sierraclub.org or 207-765-5616.

RACHEL CARSON HARVEST DINNER

October 13

Time: 7:00 PM

Unitarian Universalist Church,
840 Sandwich Road, Falmouth

Cape Cod's annual harvest dinner is a celebration of "earth friendly" gardening and landscaping. The event raises money for community food pantries serving the towns of Bourne, Falmouth, Mashpee, and Sandwich. Information about fuel assistance, home energy conservation, locally produced food, and other environmental justice concerns is provided. The building is accessible for people with disabilities. For information, call the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Falmouth at 508-457-0449.

GROUP & CHAPTER MEETINGS

All meetings are at the Massachusetts Chapter Sierra Club Office, 100 Boylston St. Boston, unless otherwise noted. Committees are chapter committees unless otherwise noted.

LEGISLATIVE ACTION COMMITTEE

September 13

Time: 12:00 PM

Upcoming Meetings: October 11, November 8, December 6

Work to write, support, lobby, and testify on important environmental bills. Volunteers are needed to help write bill testimony. Contact Leslie Doyle, doyleleslie@yahoo.com

ENERGY COMMITTEE

September 19

Time: 6:00 – 8:00 PM

Upcoming Meetings: October 17

The Energy Committee addresses environmental, economic, and educational issues relating to energy and its production and consumption. Current issues are wind energy, green power, power plants, and utility restructuring. All interested members are most welcome! Please contact R. Philip Dowds, Energy Committee Chair, at rpdowds@sierraclubmass.org for more information.

POPULATION COMMITTEE

September 20

Time: 8:00 PM

Neilson Library Browsing Room, Smith College, Northampton

Margaret Catley-Carson will speak on "The New World of Water." Since 1950, the human population of the world has grown three-fold, but

consumption of freshwater has grown seven-fold. Catley-Carson will describe the resulting crisis and its causes.

CHAPTER TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE AND NORTH/SOUTH RAIL LINK SUB-COMMITTEE

October 18

Time: 7:00 PM

Come to our meeting to learn more about what we're doing and how to become involved in the fight for environmental justice in public transportation planning. Contact John Kyper, Transportation Committee (617) 445-8662, jkyper@sierraclubmass.org

GREATER BOSTON GROUP EXCOM

Meetings are on the second Tuesday of each month

Address correspondence to the attention of the Greater Boston Group at gbg@sierraclubmass.org

MASSACHUSETTS CHAPTER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

September 16

HDN Architects, 86a Sherman St., Cambridge

All members welcome and encouraged to attend. Please call the chapter office for more information.

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