

M A S S A C H U S E T T S

# SIERRAN

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Winter 2003-04

Reaching More Than  
26,000 Sierra Club Members  
in Massachusetts

## INSIDE:

- 3 News Briefs**  
*Joint Harvard-Sierra Club study on grassroots organization; our favorite Dirty Dozen 2003 award.*
- 4 Bird Meets Wind Turbine**  
*Wind power is one of the most promising sources of clean, renewable energy today. But is it safe?*
- 6 Everything Old is New Again**  
*Peter Roudebush explores recent developments in wind and water technology.*
- 7 Massachusetts Chapter and Group Elections**  
*Candidate Statements...pages 7-9  
Ballots...page 10*
- 11 Rare Forest in Alewife Reservation Threatened**  
*At the heart of the Alewife Reservation, a rare silver maple forest may be sacrificed for a new housing development.*
- 12 Waiting on the Orange Line**  
*John Kyper recounts a decade-long tale of MBTA neglect.*
- 13 The Politics of Caspian Oil**  
*Book Review by Diana Muir*
- 15 Chapter and Group Meetings**
- 16 Essex Group Speaker Series**

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## Massachusetts Sierra Club

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Annual dues in the Sierra Club are \$39, of which \$1 is for a subscription to the Massachusetts Sierran.

## CORRESPONDENCE

### Take Back the Sky Redux

Your review of my book *Take Back The Sky: The Community Quest For Environmentally Sustainable Aviation* contains several inaccurate assertions. First, I do not "assert that the people oppose airport expansion, which only a greedy industry desires." Rather, I present many facts about aviation pollution, including its social impacts, so that people may consider them when lobbying for a cleaner environment and choosing among transportation options. Further, "greedy" is your reviewer's word, not mine. My own view is that industry will never be any more concerned about pollution than the government that regulates it.

I also do not say that Lexington should block Hanscom expansion by emphasizing the auto pollution associated with airports. On the contrary, citing the Hanscom Field instance as one case study, I describe in detail the many and various environmental and social impacts airport expansion has on communities across the country. (Commenting specifically on the Boston area concerns, I conclude that sharing the suffering does not an environmental policy make.)

Although your reviewer does not define NIMBY, she asserts I'm it "at its worst." In the book I take some pains to discuss the NIMBY issue, pointing out that typically it is bad planning and weak environmental regulation that create pollution concerns in communities. Of course, NIMBY is also a favorite word with which to goad environmental activists. Perhaps I should be thanking Ms. Muir for the compliment.

Rae André

*Diana Muir replies:*

*Take Back the Sky presents a great deal of useful material on the environmental impact of airplanes and airports. It would have been an even better book if in addition to focusing on ways to stop the expansion of airports in suburban communities, the author had more broadly addressed the environmental impact of the aviation industry as a whole.*

*On the cover:* Single tower at Tuno Knob in the Kattegat Sea, Denmark. Photograph courtesy Vestas

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Please submit all copy to Roberta Tovey at [editor@sierraclubmass.org](mailto:editor@sierraclubmass.org). Please submit all announcements and meetings information to [announce@sierraclubmass.org](mailto:announce@sierraclubmass.org).

*Opinions, unless otherwise stated, are of the author only; positions adopted by the Sierra Club are identified as such.*

*Circulation of the Massachusetts Sierran is over 26,000 outdoor-minded, environmentally aware readers.*

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## What Makes Our Grassroots Grow?

*Joint Harvard–Sierra Club research study aims to find out*

To most of its members, the Sierra Club has two distinct faces: the national organization, which gets quoted in the *New York Times* and *USA Today*, and the state chapters and groups, led by local activists, whose efforts are reported in newsletters like the *Sierran*. It is the combination of the two—national advocacy and grassroots organization—that gives the Sierra Club its special clout, says Harvard Professor Marshall Ganz.

But not all our grassroots efforts are equally effective. If we are to combat the ever-increasing threats to our environment, we need to understand just what makes some of our chapters and groups more successful and active than others.

To this end, the Sierra Club has joined forces with Professor Ganz and the Hauser

Center for Nonprofit Organizations at Harvard University to study the strengths and weaknesses of our grassroots organization and to figure out how we can do an even better job at the local level.

The “National Purpose, Local Action” project is the first time the Sierra Club has ever “engaged all of its chapters and groups in a comprehensive effort to identify the critical elements it takes to build strong local grassroots networks of activists,” says Greg Casini, who co-chairs the Sierra Club task force that is working with Ganz.

This past September, Ganz trained 140 chapter and group leaders in a four-hour session at the Sierra Club annual meeting. Representing the Massachusetts Chapter were Chapter Executive Committee member John Kyper, Essex Group Executive Com-

mittee member Deborah Longman-Marien, and Chapter Chair Mary Ann Nelson.

In the next stage, now ongoing, chapter and group executive committee members from all 64 chapters and 390 groups will do a self-assessment. The 12-page survey asks a range of questions, from how members set the agenda for executive committee meetings to what motivated them to become involved in the first place.

After doing the Massachusetts Chapter executive committee self-assessment, says Nelson, “I saw areas where we are weak, like volunteer recruitment, training, and development. We also don’t take the time to celebrate our victories.”

The self-assessment also revealed “a strong commitment to environmental values” and a shared sense that “being part of the Sierra Club makes us more effective. We see around us the impact of our activism, and that keeps us going,” says Nelson.

The *Sierran* will report on the progress of this study in future issues. ❖

—Roberta Tovey

## And the award goes to . . .

On December 3, residents and statewide environmental groups presented Wachusett Mountain Associates (WMA) with a 2003 Dirty Dozen Award for the damage it has done at Mount Wachusett Ski Area.

“WMA is operating a large scale industrial facility in the heart of the most fragile and ecologically important public resource in central Massachusetts,” said Donna Brownell of Watchdogs for an Environmentally Safe Town. “They’ve mismanaged this public parkland at every turn.”

Brownell cited clear-cutting of a rare 140-year-old red oak forest protecting old growth forest habitat, routine felling of and damage to rare old growth trees along their ski trails, and runoff from snow-making activities flowing into the city of Fitchburg’s water supply as examples of WMA’s mismanagement. “They even polluted a stream at the reservation, and then used tax-payer dollars to clean it up,” added Brownell.

In the fall issue of the *Massachusetts Sierran*, we reported on the Massachusetts Supreme Court decision that paved the way for the clear-cutting of 14.5 acres of public forest land for additional ski trails (*Profit Before Parks*, page 6). “The clear-cutting of the forests at Wachusett Mountain State Reservation took less than a week,” wrote James McCaffrey, director of the Massachusetts chapter. “The effects will be felt for decades.” ❖

# Bird Meets Wind Turbine

by Jean Sideris

Today wind farms dot the American landscape, providing electricity to power homes and businesses. And more are on the way. Cape Wind Associates, a private company, would like to build the first off-shore wind farm in the US in the waters off Cape Cod.

Wind farms tap into a relatively unused source of energy that produces no emissions, requires no mining, and will never run out. Although some worry about the effect they might have on bird populations, studies are encouraging for both environmentalists and bird enthusiasts—though these studies suggest that developers should do extensive surveys of potential sites to minimize the hazards to birds.

## Blowing in the wind

Concern about the hazard turbines pose to birds was first sparked in the late 1980s, when red-tailed hawks, golden eagles and other raptors were found dead at a wind farm on Altamont Pass in California (50 miles east of San Francisco). Some theorized that the birds could not see the blades and were trying to perch on the towers.

From 1998–1999, the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), a division of the Federal Department of Energy, conducted a study of Altamont Pass wind farm. Their findings alarmed environmental organizations. Today it is estimated that 1100 birds are killed at Altamont Pass wind farm every year, 20 to 40 of which are golden eagles.

To determine whether Altamont was representative of wind turbine's affects on birds, the NREL subsequently studied two other wind farms in California, as well as two in Colorado, and one in each of the states of Vermont, Washington, Wyoming, and Montana. In the six studies that

have been completed to date, the NREL has found few or no bird fatalities due to wind turbines. The NREL concluded that the raptor deaths at Altamont Pass were an isolated incident and that other factors, including topography, weather, urban encroachment, habitat loss, species abundance, and behavior, have a greater impact on bird fatalities than wind turbines.

Curry & Kerlinger, a consulting company conducting studies on turbines and bird populations for private corporations, power companies and environmental organizations, also did a study at Altamont. Their conclusions agreed with those of the NREL.

## An ounce of prevention

Bird surveys at wind farm sites can greatly reduce the threats posed by turbines. Such surveys assess the possibility of harming an endangered bird species, as well as the migratory paths, flight height and nesting habitats of birds in the area. Altering the height of the turbines can dramatically reduce the threat to birds. It is also a good idea to avoid construction where endangered species fly and nest.

Changes in turbine technology over the past five years or so have also helped reduce the number of bird fatalities. Today's blades are much more visible to birds because they are longer and as a result they spin more slowly.

This is how it works: The longer the blade, the larger the diameter of the circle created when the blades spin. As the circle gets bigger, the tips of the blades spin more slowly. Where older blades were 78 feet long, today's are 100 feet long; where older blades spun at 70 rpms, today's blades spin at 15 rpms. Today's blades are also wider at the tip, so birds can see them more easily.

## A perilous world

Compared with other threats to birds, wind turbines appear to exact a relatively small toll. Every year, house cats kill 100 million birds; cars and trucks kill 50–100 million; oil and gas extraction kill 1–2 million; and glass windows kill 100–900 million. Wind turbines kill an estimated 30,000 birds per year—an average of about 2 bird deaths per turbine per year. For every 2 birds killed by wind turbines, 3000 are killed by house cats.

Or compare the hazards of electricity generation: Natural gas and nuclear power plants use water as a coolant. Power plants are often built near rivers and other water sources, for better access to water. Not only do these plants use a lot of water, they can also pollute the water, killing fish and turtles and destroying the surrounding habitat.

The destruction of habitat that is a byproduct of coal, natural gas, and nuclear energy production also leads to the death of much wildlife. If you consider that by 2020 the US is going to need 40 percent more energy than it did in 2000, says Dr. Paul Kerlinger of Curry & Kerlinger, the clean, unlimited energy from wind turbines might be worth “a few non-significant bird kills to prevent killing numerous other species.”

The impact upon wildlife and birds is just one of the many things to consider when evaluating the siting of wind facilities.

For further information, the following articles may be helpful: *Avian Collisions with Wind Turbines* and *Studying Wind Energy/Bird Interactions: a Guideline Document*. They are not endorsed as being approved Sierra Club policy or recommendations. The articles can be found at <http://www.nationalwind.org/pubs/default.htm>. ❖

*Jean Sideris is Announcements Editor of the Sierran. She works for the Center for Environmental Citizenship.*

## Renewable Energy

Today only about 2 percent of US electricity comes from clean, safe, renewable energy sources like solar and wind power; nearly 90 percent comes from polluting sources like coal and nuclear power.

The Sierra Club's goal is to use existing technology and resources to provide at least 20 percent of our electricity from renewable energy sources by 2020.

Wind power is one of the most promising of our alternative energy sources.

Did you know that

- a single modern wind turbine can produce enough power to provide a year's worth of electricity for 500 households?
- wind turbines already provide enough electricity for over 1 million households in the US?
- wind power is getting cheaper, and is increasingly competitive with fossil fuels? According to data gathered by the national Sierra Club, kilowatt-hour price for wind now is competitive with natural gas.

## Cape Wind Project, Nantucket Sound

In Massachusetts, Cape Wind Associates wants to build a wind farm in Nantucket Sound. Proponents of the project say that the sound is a perfect location for wind generation. Opponents say that before a project like this goes forward, we must resolve public policy issues like the use of public resources for private gain, competitive bidding and royalty payments.

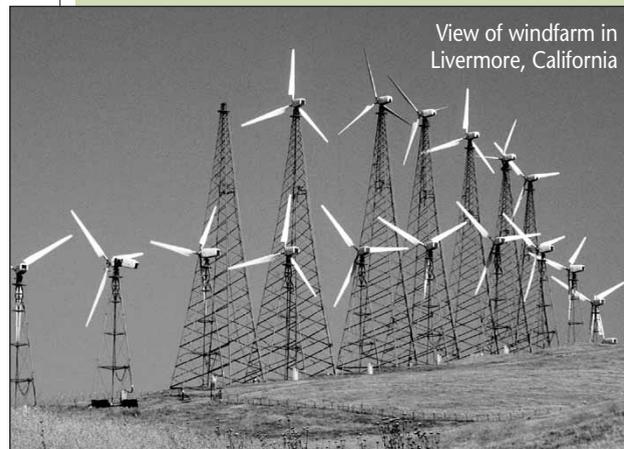
The Cape Cod group is taking the lead in reviewing the Cape Wind project. The Massachusetts Chapter position is “actively neutral,” says Chapter Chair Mary Ann Nelson, “in that we are seeking information on the potential environmental impacts before we take a position on the project.

“In particular, we are waiting to see the reports that the project proponents are preparing for the US Army Corps of Engineer permitting process.”

The Massachusetts Chapter supported having a test turbine erected on the site.

“Though the Sierra Club supports the development of renewable energy, including wind energy,” says Nelson, “each project needs to be evaluated individually.”

The national Sierra Club Energy Committee is developing a guidance document, soon to be available on the Massachusetts Chapter Web site, that will help club members evaluate the suitability of a particular site.



## What you can do

The Massachusetts Chapter Energy Committee is kicking off an effort to identify and evaluate proposed wind energy sites in the Commonwealth. If you want to get involved with this project, please come to a meeting on January 22 at the Sierra Club office. For more information, please contact Kristina Cairns at [kristinaca@earthlink.net](mailto:kristinaca@earthlink.net).

The Energy Committee works on the environmental, economic, and educational issues surrounding energy and its production and consumption in Massachusetts. In addition to wind power, the committee is currently working on green power, utility restructuring, and power plant pollution. ❖

# Everything Old is New Again

## *Wind and water power make a comeback*

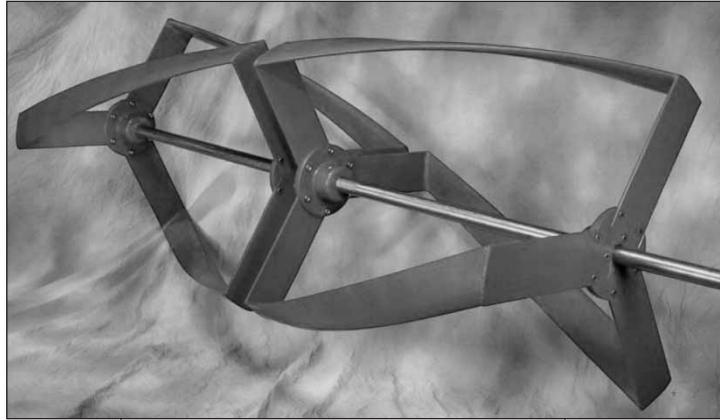
By Peter Roudebush

**D**on Quixote, the hero of Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra's novel of the same name, is well-known for tilting at windmills. In Cervantes's time, wind, river and tidal power were used to grind flour for bread and cane for sugar and rum. Windpower was also used to sail the ships that built empires.

Until recently, the Don appeared to have won his joust. But today wind and water technologies are coming back, improving the reliability of electricity, creating jobs, and enhancing social and economic security. Depending upon locally-generated kinetic energy (instead of peat, coal, oil, gas, nuclear or bio-fuels), wind and water can generate power coolly, without delivery and waste-disposal costs, and without causing air pollution.

Weather, real estate values, radiation, labor costs, security, and liability insurance make above-ground electricity generation and distribution expensive. Transmission lines in many older, densely-built communities are badly in need of maintenance. With wind and water technologies, we can bring lower-voltage power in shielded cable to neighborhood transformers, upgrading electricity distribution without adding to hazardous, overhead high-voltage power lines. With these technologies, we can phase out weather-vulnerable centralized generating plants and high electro-magnetic impedances that cause brownouts and blackouts.

Western states are already showing that wind-generated electricity is cleaner and cheaper than the electricity burning fuels generate. The reason?



The twin assembly shown here consists of two Gorlov turbine units mounted on a single shaft. Each single turbine of this assembly is 1.0 meter in diameter and 1.25 meter long.

Improved engineering and performance. The Hull Wind Project, a 150-foot windmill in Boston Harbor, has allayed some public fears about wind towers depreciating real estate. Not only does the Hull windmill fit into the landscape, the money saved from powering traffic lights with wind-generated electricity is funneled into public services like education.

One of the most promising of the new water and wind technologies is inventor Alexander Gorlov's water turbine. The turbine makes electricity from free-flowing water in rivers and tides, without appearing to affect the surrounding ecology. Tests of Gorlov's turbine show fish swimming around and through it. The cost is 2 to 6 cents per kilowatt, much less than the 8 to 16 cents or more that it costs to make electricity from burning fuels.

Gorlov's turbine, which won the 2001 American Society of Mechanical Engineers Thomas A. Edison Patent Award, uses helically formed blades shaped like airplane wings to efficiently

extract the kinetic energy in water currents. The US Department of Energy and Northeastern University are developing his invention in a Federal technological-transfer research program.

Gorlov is designing the first global commercial application of his invention, a 90-megawatt tidal-generating system for South Korea, intended to take the place of expanded nuclear facilities. Test demonstrations of the Gorlov turbine are planned at Plum Gut on Long Island and the Cape Cod Canal, and turbines are already installed along the Atlantic coast of South America and in Vinalhaven, Maine. Turbine-generated electricity may replace the electricity now generated by the Indian Point Nuclear Power Plant on the Hudson River, 30 miles north of Ground Zero.

With devices like Hull's windmills and Gorlov's water turbines, which can generate electricity more redundantly with less heat and radiation closer to end users, inventors like Gorlov are the Don Quixotes of today. As they joust with contemporary guardians of power, they are leading us back to cleaner, more economical technologies.

For more information about the Hull windmill, go to [www.hullwind.org](http://www.hullwind.org). For more information on the Gorlov water turbine, go to [www.gcktechnology.com](http://www.gcktechnology.com). ❖

*Peter Roudebush is an architect, city and regional planner. He learned about electricity from managing the utility systems design for a new city in Saudi Arabia for the US Army Corps of Engineers.*

Photograph courtesy Alexander Gorlov

# Massachusetts Chapter and Group Elections

*Your membership number must appear on the **outside** of your envelope in order for your ballot to be valid.  
(An extra ballot is provided for households with joint memberships.)*

## Voting Instructions and Election Procedures

You elect the Sierra Club leadership each year. In this issue of the *Sierran*, you will find candidate statements and ballots (on page 10) for three separate Sierra Club Executive Committee Elections: Massachusetts Chapter, Greater Boston Group, and Essex County Group. All Massachusetts Sierra Club members may vote for the chapter executive committee. You may also vote for the executive committee of the group of which you are a member. Please contact the chapter office if you have a question about your group membership.

**Mail ballots to: Sierra Club Elections, 100 Boylston Street, Suite 760, Boston, Massachusetts, 02116. Ballots must be received by 5:00 PM, Tuesday, January 6, 2004 in order to be counted.** Vote for no more than the number of candidates indicated on each ballot.

In order to validate your ballots, please write your membership number on the upper left hand corner of your envelope. Your eight-digit membership number appears on the mailing label of the *Sierran*. A second ballot is provided for those households with joint memberships so that each member can vote. If you have any questions, please call the chapter office at 617-423-5775.

## Massachusetts Chapter Executive Committee Candidate Statements *(Ballots are on page 10)*

**ELISA CAMPBELL**—I have been active in the Pioneer Valley group and the Massachusetts Chapter (previously the New England Chapter) since the mid-70s. As an activist, I am primarily working on public lands within Massachusetts, which means mostly the state's forests and park lands; in that context, since the mid-80s, I have concentrated on the fight to save Greylock Glen from inappropriate development.

While we have had a victory there, the fight is not over. I am also on a national committee focusing on state and private forests.

**ALEXANDRA DAWSON**—I have been connected with the Sierra Club for sixty years. I was an executive committee member of the Thoreau group and, then, the Pioneer Valley group. As a lawyer, I believe that law and politics must work together: law without political discourse becomes tyrannical, and politics without law is an inherently corrupt system. We have some very good federal and state environmental law, all of which is taking a beating. In the absence of power to improve it, the Sierra Club's job is to fight a continual battle to hold the line until the grownups come back into power. As a member of many groups, I believe the Sierra Club is better adapted to this role than any other single group.

**JOHN KYPER**—For the past two years I have had the privilege of serving on the Massachusetts Chapter Executive Committee. A Roxbury resident since 1975, I have long worked for an enlightened transportation policy that would reduce our dependence on the private automobile by providing more benign and attractive alternatives. Not only do we need to redesign our streets and highways to encourage walking and bicycling, but we must also dramatically expand the frequency and coverage of our often-disjointed public transportation modes. Through con-

struction of the North-South Rail Connector, our underutilized rail system can finally expand to become the foundation of a truly regional network.

The need for improved public transportation is most evident in our inner cities, whose residents provide our transit systems with their most loyal riders—but who too often receive only irregular, overcrowded buses instead of the first-class service their heavy patronage warrants. For over a decade I have worked in the Washington Street Corridor Coalition, advocating for true, light rail replacement service for the old Orange Line elevated instead of the inadequate "Silver Line" bus that the MBTA insists upon for this route. The long struggle for equity in transportation planning reflects the manner in which the state is neglecting the needs of its most transit-dependent patrons.

**GILBERT WOOLLEY**—I have been an active member of the Sierra Club since 1972, have held many volunteer positions and have been a regular contributor to the chapter newsletter. I am currently Conservation Chair of the chapter. I welcome the increased visibility of the chapter in the local media recently and believe that the chapter should be the leading environmental advocacy group in the Commonwealth, especially on difficult and controversial issues.

Now that the federal government has fallen into the hands of people who have no concern for the environment, only the state governments are left to protect open space and clean air and water. Because the Sierra Club is the only national environmental organization which has active chapters in every state, it is in a unique position to implement national club priorities at the state and local level. If elected I will advocate this policy and also continue to support members—and others—who need help in fighting local threats to the environment.

## Massachusetts Chapter and Group Elections

### Greater Boston Group Executive Committee

#### Candidate Statements *(Ballots are on page 10)*

**MEGAN AMUNDSON**—I have been a member of the Greater Boston Group Executive Committee for two years. As a member of the Marine Coastal Habitat Committee and the Legislative Committee I focus on federal endangered species legislation and am working to create local activism around national policy that greatly affects Massachusetts wildlife. Formerly the chair of the Northern Right Whale campaign, the 2001 Membership Chair, and the 2002 Vice Chair, I have been active in engaging new volunteers at the local level in local Sierra Club campaigns. If elected for another two-year term, I will continue to work to develop local Boston campaigns and advocate for increased activity around developing new volunteers to be tomorrow's Sierra Club leaders, as well as continue to support increased political work by the Greater Boston Group in local elections.

**R. PHILIP DOWDS**—I'm an MIT graduate, and a practicing architect specialized in eldercare. For more than 30 years my wife and I have lived in Cambridge. Prior civic involvements have included presidency of the CCA, the food co-op Board, and several local activist groups. In the early '90s, I helped form and run a 501(c)(3) which subsequently played a key role in both the Cambridge parking freeze and Scheme Z.

I've been paying my Club dues for years, but when the President sent me a tax refund I didn't want, I forwarded it to Carl Pope and became a Life Member. I have continuing interests in urban land use policy, alternative transportation, and ecosystem preservation. This conceptual heavy lifting is balanced out by frequent wilderness travel and backpacking in the canyons of the Southwest.

I need more to do. If elected to the Greater Boston Group Executive Committee, I expect to do work beyond showing up for the monthly meeting.

**CHRIS HALLGREN**—As a Sierra Club member since 1994, I feel honored to have been nominated for a seat on the Greater Boston Group's Executive Committee. In addition to enjoying the outdoors through hiking, biking and backcountry skiing, my primary interests are energy and transportation. To that end I have been a member of the Club's Energy Committee since May of 2002. I am also the coordinator of our chapter's contribution to the national "Campaign for Responsible Automakers." From this work I've seen what can be accomplished when the right message regarding a pressing issue is delivered to the right audience: those who may have been unaware take an interest, while those who were already aware are moved to action. As a member of the Greater Boston Group's Executive Committee, I'll do what I can to make sure the Sierra Club's message continues to reach the right audience.

**DEB HOLT**—I would like to serve you on the Greater Boston Executive Committee. I am a life-long Massachusetts resident and have made Boston my home since 1971. I joined the Club in 1988 but became most active at the chapter and group level several years ago after I started attending meetings to find out what goes on behind the scenes. My curiosity resulted in a year and a half's involvement with the North-South Rail Link Committee that culminated in the production of an action plan to increase regional support and obtain Congressional funding. My interest in promoting conservation through political channels is balanced by a passion for the outdoors. In this regard, I lead outings for the chapter and the national organization and am trying to revive the chapter's outings program. If elected, you can count on me to work hard, be accountable, and uphold the Club's mission and standards.

**LISA LaBRECQUE**—My name is Lisa LaBrecque and I am running for a seat on the Greater Boston Group Executive Committee. I have been an activist on several issues, including hunger, living wage, affordable housing, and most extensively, domestic violence. Up until recently, my experience with the environment has been more personal than political, through hiking and camping. Some of my best memories are of my Sierra Club service trips—one in Wyoming in 2001 and one in New Mexico in 2002. It has largely been these trips that have sparked my interest in becoming more active on environmental issues. Although I am relatively new to the environmental movement, I hope to contribute my organizing and activist skills and experience to the Sierra Club. I was recently appointed to the Greater Boston Group Political Committee and am working with other members to support environmentally-friendly candidates for the Cambridge City Council election.

**MICHELLE SALISBURY**—I'm seeking re-election as a Greater Boston Group Executive Committee member. During my tenure, I've helped develop the Massachusetts Sierra Club Web site to make it a valuable member resource and activist tool, and I've helped the Greater Boston Group increase the number of volunteer opportunities available to new members. I've also written articles on energy efficiency for the *Sierran*. In my next term, I want to continue the work I've begun and further incorporate energy efficiency into Sierra Club offerings.

I am a Senior Analyst at the Cadmus Group, an environmental consulting firm, which is under contract with the US EPA to implement and promote Energy Star.

# Massachusetts Chapter and Group Elections

## Essex Group Executive Committee

### Candidate Statements *(Ballots are on page 10)*

**MARILYN GRAVES**—Marilyn Graves is running for a seat on the executive committee of the Essex County group of the Sierra Club. As a resident of Newburyport, she has an interest in the environmental issues facing the North Shore, such as over-development/open space and animal habitat, the water supply, coastal habitats, and food supply. She has been working on the Steering Committee since the inception of the Essex County group assisting in getting the group started. Currently she is the Conservation Chair of the Essex County group. She has been volunteering at the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge for several years as a Plover Warden helping enforce the beach closure for Plover nesting and educating the public to the needs of nesting shore birds. She also has assisted in scheduling volunteers to staff the Visitor Center at the Refuge.

By profession, Marilyn is a librarian working with the North of Boston Library Exchange Computer Network as an inter-library loan librarian. Previously she worked at Bradford College as a reference librarian. She is interested in using her professional research skills to help the Essex County group address the environmental issues of the area.

**DEBORAH LONGMAN-MARIEN**—I am an educator who has taught about human cultures and the natural wonders of this planet at a number of museums. Recently I taught about threats to the web of life in the Biodiversity Gallery at the Royal Ontario Museum, in Toronto, Canada. My love for nature grew from exploring the outdoors on camping trips with my family. In Toronto, I worked on promoting recycling, also have experience in organizing travel and outings, and would like to share my expertise in this area.

Though new to Essex County, I feel at home here. I love birding and exploring the region. It is a very special place, rich in natural beauty. I question how long it will stay that way. Development pressures are encroaching. I feel that there is a need for a group in Essex County that can advocate the right choices for the county. The Sierra Club can carry through on issues at the local, state and national level. The Club

can raise the right questions, keep track of new challenges and provide the expertise of a statewide and national organization that has been successful. I want to serve on the executive committee of the Essex County group of the Sierra Club to guarantee that county residents continue to enjoy the diversity of fields, forests, shore and sea.

I have assisted the Club with election campaigns and am currently working on the Outings and Speakers committee to plan future events. I am also assisting the Sierra Club with the Harvard-Sierra Club Study, a joint research project with Professor Marshall Ganz at the Hauser Center for Nonprofit Organizations of Harvard University.

**JOAN LONGWELL**—Joan Longwell is currently in the position of acting vice chair of the Sierra Club Essex County group. She has volunteered for other environmental and social service groups in the past, such as Audubon Society, Greenpeace and Project Place in Boston. She works as a psychiatric nurse practitioner in the Lawrence area.

**MARGARET S. RENY**—Margaret's business experience includes positions as a human resource and communications consultant, training consultant, sales professional, and a franchise business owner. These experiences have given her a diverse business foundation enabling her to be well versed and highly effective in her present role as an organizational development consultant.

Since 1989, Margaret has been a consultant working with professionals to develop and deliver programs, strategies, and training to assist them in their professional development and organizational effectiveness. Currently, she is an independent training consultant and works with clients to assist in the delivery of strategic communication and training initiatives. Her current project is with a banking client to develop and deliver core management training. For five years, she was the training manager at United Way Massachusetts Bay where she was responsible for designing and managing strategic training and development initiatives to assist United Way in meeting organizational goals. Prior

**YES!** *I want to save America's wild lands and wildlife before our chance to do so disappears forever!*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (optional) ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

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Contributions or gifts to the Sierra Club are not tax deductible as charitable contributions. Annual dues include subscription to *Sierra* (\$7.50) and chapter publications (\$1), and other member-only benefits.

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to this, Margaret was a human resource consultant at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts and was responsible for developing corporate-wide communication programs and training for staff and developing and facilitating training for business units.

Margaret graduated with a BA in Psychology and minored in Business Administration from the University of New Hampshire. She enjoys spending time with her family, gardening, and volunteering in her community.

## BALLOT

### Massachusetts Chapter Executive Committee Election

Vote for no more than four candidates.

- Elisa Campbell
- Alexandra Dawson
- John Kyper
- Gilbert Woolley

MAIL TO: Sierra Club Elections  
100 Boylston Street, Suite 760 Boston MA 02116

Your membership number must appear on the **outside**  
of your envelope in order for your ballot to be valid.

**Ballots must be received by 5:00 pm January 6, 2004  
in order to be counted.**

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## BALLOT

### Greater Boston Group Executive Committee Election

Vote for up to six candidates.

The four candidates to receive the greatest number of votes  
will serve for two years. The others will serve for one year.

- Megan Amundson
- Deb Holt
- R. Philip Dowds
- Lisa LaBrecque
- Chris Hallgren
- Michelle Salisbury

MAIL TO: Sierra Club Elections  
100 Boylston Street, Suite 760 Boston MA 02116

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## BALLOT

### Essex Group Executive Committee Election

Vote for no more than four candidates.

- Marilyn Graves
- Deborah Longman-Marien
- Joan Longwell
- Margaret S. Reny

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100 Boylston Street, Suite 760 Boston MA 02116

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in order to be counted.**

## Rare Forest in Alewife Reservation Threatened

by Ellen Mass and Craig Kelley

A few hundred feet from the Alewife terminal of the MBTA Red Line, northwest towards and across the Belmont line from Cambridge, lies a natural world that is as different from the metallic environment of the T as an American Woodcock is from a Great Horned Owl. Acre upon acre of lush wetlands, green fields and verdant uplands, bushes full of singing birds, underbrush laden with fox and voles, and ancient trees so big a family of four would struggle to encircle their multi-trunk bases—the Alewife Reservation and its buffer areas are a watershed model of how nature can co-exist and, indeed, thrive alongside development.

Sadly, this much-loved reservation may lose its core habitat if O'Neill Properties of Pennsylvania, a private developer, goes ahead with its plan to clear-cut the rare silver maple forest that lies in the heart of the 115-acre reserve. O'Neill plans to build a large self-contained housing development or an office park on the site.

The rare silver maple forest is an urban oasis of massive maple trees that shades several acres near the former Arthur D. Little site next to Route 2 in Belmont. The forest is anchored by a massive, over-100-year-old mother maple, one of the largest of its kind

in the Commonwealth. Known as the Belmont Uplands, the forest plays an important function in the Upper Mystic River Watershed. According to Larry Millman, a local fungi specialist, the trees and soil are a breeding area for both mammals and birds, and a seed center that keeps the ecosystems in adjacent parts of Belmont and Cambridge healthy.

The forest also mitigates flooding, functioning as a superior water-retention area in the extensive wetlands that lie east and west of Acorn Park Drive. Thus, the forest is of great value to residential areas in this part of Cambridge and Arlington, which are subject to frequent flooding.

According to Charles Katuska, a forest and wetland specialist, these historically significant trees have been in existence since the area's early farm days when fishing for alewives was the mainstay of the Cambridge economy.

"The presence of a significant stand of silver maple, in association with a variety of dynamic lower elevation wetland plant communities, is highly unusual, especially in the landscape context of a densely-developed, urban watershed" says Katuska. "Comparable sites within the Boston Basin are, if present at all, extremely rare. In the

upper reaches of the Mystic River watershed, this site is unique."

Unfortunately, these rare floodplain trees happen to be on land O'Neill Properties owns, and are designated for clear-cutting. The property is currently posted and not open to the general public.

### What you can do

Belmont will soon vote on whether to rezone the forest area from commercial to residential, as O'Neill would like. Once the rezoning is complete, the construction project and clear-cutting will likely happen post-haste. We must notify Douglas Foy, Chief of Commonwealth Development, and Ellen Roy Hertzfelder, Secretary of Environmental Affairs, of this imminent threat. To get involved, call Ellen Mass at 617-290-4864.

The Friends of Alewife Reservation has recently published *Biodiversity in the Alewife Reservation Area: Species, Habitat and Ecosystems*, a 120-page, illustrated book available at local libraries, and at Audubon in Lincoln for \$10. Write for a copy to Box 161, 1770 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02140. ❖

*Ellen Mass is president of the Friends of Alewife Reservation, a stewarding and educational non-profit, whose efforts have led the way towards an active forest preservation campaign.*

*Craig Kelley is a resident of North Cambridge, and a member of the Greater Boston Group Executive Committee.*

Ellen Mass and Tina Groeger canoe at Little Pond, Belmont, in the Alewife Reservation. Silver maple forest is in the background.



Photograph by David Fichter

# Waiting on the Orange Line... while the station crumbles around me

by John Kyper

May 1, 1987, was a festive occasion at Roxbury Crossing, Boston, and at the eight other stations on the MBTA's new Orange Line traversing the Southwest Corridor from Chinatown to Forest Hills. After many years of anticipation, planning and construction, a subway line had finally been brought to the edge of my Fort Hill neighborhood. Now I had convenient access to downtown and the rest of the subway system, instead of having to rely on the ever-erratic #43 bus—or drive. Like many other riders I eagerly explored the line over the next several weeks, visiting each of its stations.

But perhaps the failure to provide the long-promised light rail replacement service for the communities along its former Washington Street alignment a mile to the east, between downtown and Dudley Square, was a bad omen for the future of the subway line that would supplant the rickety old elevated that used to clatter above the street. Now, nearly 17 years later, the new line is threatening to become as decrepit as the 85-plus-year-old structure that was finally abandoned that distant spring day.

I live three blocks from Roxbury Crossing and have boarded the train there practically every day since it first opened. Almost from the beginning, the station started leaking as gaskets between the roof sections began to fail. Now it leaks in a dozen places, both in the headhouse and on the platform. During rainstorms, water drips on passengers coming up the escalator. Several leaks are located next to the track and water freezes there during cold weather (someday, someone is going to slip and fall in front

of an oncoming train and there will be a major lawsuit). In summer I am frequently assaulted by the stench of urine. Lights are burned out, and the never-used inspector's booth on the platform has been badly vandalized. The P.A. system often does not function properly.

Concrete is spalling and chipping away on one portion of the retaining wall beside the outbound track, near the base of the stairway to the platform. Weeds are growing in the cracks between the concrete slabs that support the track, including beside the third rail. Litter has accumulated in the track pit. Just after the start of 2003, the sidewalk underneath the front portico of the station was blocked off with sawhorses, due to the collapse of a portion of its overhanging ceiling.

Over the past decade I have spoken and corresponded with a succession of MBTA General Managers about these conditions. Responses from T officials, written in 1993 and 1997, promise that the ceiling leaks at Roxbury Crossing would be remedied several months hence. Nothing ever happened. Late in January after the plaza outside Back Bay was closed, I wrote again, to General Manager Michael Mulhern. Shortly afterward,

the circle of sawhorses on the sidewalk in front of Roxbury Crossing disappeared, but the gaping hole in the ceiling above that spot remains. This feeble action is the only thing that could possibly be construed as an official "response" to my letters.

Inside the station, the only noticeable change continues to be the spreading gloom, as more and more light bulbs burn out, making me wonder how much longer it will be before I can no longer read a newspaper there after dark. Too, the out-of-service emergency call box at the far end of the platform has been so wrapped in plastic that it resembles a little mummy mounted on a pole. Elsewhere the line continues to deteriorate. Most notably, the upper level bus-way at Ruggles station has been closed due to the deterioration of its concrete slabs. The schedule appears to have been cut over the years, and increasing numbers of trains seem to stop without explanation between stations, contain out-of-service cars, or are pulled from service entirely, often during the rush hour.

I heard nothing from General Manager Mulhern despite an initial e-mailed promise of a response, so I sent a follow-up letter in July with cc's to Governor Mitt Romney and the state transportation secretary. Finally, in mid-August I received a reply: "The Authority recently negotiated a new cleaning contract in April of 2003," Mulhern informed me, "and many improvements are being made at all MBTA stations." Further, he informed me that the Orange Line is getting

*continued on page 14*

1999: Mural in Roxbury Community College parking lot celebrating the building of the Orange Line in place of the I-95 Southwest Expressway.



Photograph by John Kyper

## BOOK REVIEW:

# The Politics of Caspian Oil

Reviewed by Diana Muir

## The New Great Game Blood and Oil in Central Asia

By Lutz Kleveman  
*Atlantic Monthly Press, 288 pp., \$24.00*

Back when there was a Soviet Union, the northern end of the Caspian Sea was a national wildlife refuge sheltering over 350 species, including sturgeon, Caspian seals and numerous migratory birds.

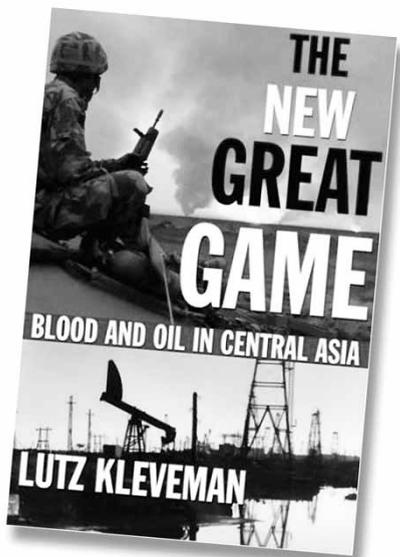
Koshbakht Yussifzadeh, the Soviet geologist in charge of the region, wanted to drill for oil in that wildlife refuge.

"I flew to Moscow and applied for an authorization to do a test drilling at Kashagan. The lady colonel in charge of the matter declined the request categorically. 'Only over my dead body!' she said. Today the lady colonel is dead, and the foreign corporations are drilling at Kashagan. No one mentions the environment anymore," says Yussifzadeh.

Today, Yussifzadeh is the vice president of the national oil company of Azerbaijan. He remains profoundly uninterested in environmental impact.

### Global warming takes a back seat

The consequences of pumping and burning fossil fuel—global warming and ecosystem devastation—are of negligible significance to the careers of politicians now in office in Central Asia. Changing this fact would not merely require an electorate determined to halt environmental devastation. It would require nations in which government is responsible to an electorate that wants to end global warming and ecosystem destruction. As it is, national leaders have little incentive to do so.



For today's statesmen, the looming crisis is not environmental devastation. It is the threat of rapidly rising and wildly fluctuating oil prices. To avoid this economic threat, China, Europe, and the United States are locked in a high-stakes competition for control of Caspian oil. And Iran and Russia are only the most aggressive of several nations vying to profit by controlling the pipelines.

### The race for Caspian oil

There is oil in abundance in the Caspian region. Kashagan, the largest oilfield in the Caspian, is only one of many oil fields in Kazakhstan, a nation that just a few years ago was one of the poorest and most backward regions of the former U.S.S.R. On the western shore of the Caspian lies the city of Baku, Azerbaijan, where oil wells that have been pumping crude since the 1870s still contain billions of barrels.

Across the Caspian from Baku lies Turkmenistan. Deciding which of the new Caspian states is more corrupt would be hard, but Turkmenistan would be a strong contender. Turkmenistan probably has somewhat less oil than Kazakhstan. I write probably because test drilling here is so recent that good figures are not yet available.

The problem is that the Caspian, a sea the size of California, is landlocked. So Caspian oil and gas can only be turned into money by pouring it through a pipeline. But every route from the Caspian to market runs through one or more of the most polit-

ically unstable nations on earth. Kleveman's compelling book takes us to each of those nations.

### The politics of pipelines

You can get some idea of the scope of the problem by beginning where Kleveman does, with the simplest case: Azerbaijan, where oil has flowed for decades through a pipeline to the Russian Black Sea port of Novorossiisk.

For Azerbaijan, this route has two great drawbacks. It makes Azerbaijan dependent on its hated former colonial master, Russia. And it runs through Chechnya. The Azeris may feel a certain Muslim brotherhood with the Chechens, but this does not override the risk of pumping oil through an active war zone.

A better route would run in a straight line from Baku to the deep-water Mediterranean port of Ceyhan on the Turkish coast. Unfortunately, such a pipeline would run through Armenia. In a bitter and bloody war marked by large-scale ethnic cleansing during the 1990s, Christian Armenia wrested the Christian Armenian majority province of Nagorno-Karabakh from Azerbaijan. The Azeris Kleveman interviewed expressed eagerness to renew the *jihād* against Armenia. Cooperation on a pipeline is out of the question.

The pipeline to Ceyhan is, however, being built. It will take a wide detour through Christian Georgia and eastern Turkey, where Kurdish sentiment for independence from Turkey is strong. This is an expensive route not merely because it is so long, but because much of the way the pipeline will be buried several meters deep to lessen the risk of sabotage.

### No good guys in this game

Kleveman's book is a splendid introduction to the nations of the region, as well as to the politics of Caspian oil, but it is not always a reliable guide. Kleveman's profound, almost visceral distrust of American power regularly leads him to misstate fact.

Kleveman writes, for example, of an "Iran Air passenger plane shot down for no apparent reason by the American battleship U.S.S. Vincennes in 1987." Actually, while the incident was indeed a tragedy, there was a reason.

*continued on page 14*

## Waiting on the Orange Line

(continued from page 14)

a higher-capacity signal system, which will purportedly reduce stopping between stations (but he did not acknowledge that the trains are deteriorating, as well, impacting service reliability).

I was also disturbed by the letter's vague promise "to prioritize the cleaning and safety issues" that I had raised. Materially, it is less than his predecessors had promised, and never delivered, in our correspondence of ten and six years ago.

Must we wait for a catastrophic failure to occur and for the Orange Line to become unusable? If Governor Romney's "Fix It

First" program means anything at all and is not just another political slogan to be forgotten a year or two from now, it is incumbent on the Authority to repair this invaluable element of our urban infrastructure before such a sad day arrives. ❖

*John Kyper is a member of the Massachusetts Chapter Executive Committee.*



Photograph by John Kyper

May 1, 1987:  
Opening day of  
Orange Line service,  
train approaching  
Roxbury Crossing  
station, as viewed from  
Cedar Street bridge.

## The New Great Game

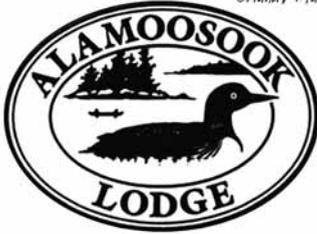
(continued from page 13)

The Vincennes was in the Persian Gulf because of reports that Iran was positioning Chinese-made Silkworm missiles near the Strait of Hormuz in a bid to control oil supplies. On the morning of July 3, three Iranian gunboats fired on one of Vincennes's helicopters. The Vincennes returned fire. Five minutes later, the Vincennes detected an aircraft taking off from the civilian-military Bandar Abbas airport. The ship radioed seven warnings to the plane, which apparently went unanswered. The ship's log shows that the Vincennes identified the plane as an F-14 approaching at an altitude of about 7,000 feet and descending.

*The New Great Game* is both a great read and an eye-opening introduction to the realpolitik of oil. It is weakened only by Kleveman's failure to perceive that Azerbaijan, Iran, Russia, and other nations are at least as willing as the United States to lie, cheat, steal, and kill in the competition for oil. ❖

*Diana Muir, a regular contributor to the Sierran, is working on a new book on the role of overpopulation in history.*

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## Conservation and Issue Committee Meetings

### NEW COASTAL AND MARINE HABITAT COMMITTEE

January 10

Time: 11:00 AM

Place: Sierra Club office

### POLITICAL COMMITTEE

January 13

Time: 2:00 PM

Place: Sierra Club office

### NORTH/SOUTH RAIL LINK COMMITTEE

January 20 and March 16

Time: 7:00 PM

Place: Sierra Club office

For more information, contact Louise Lewis, Chair (617-266-5890 or [ejlewis@shore.net](mailto:ejlewis@shore.net)).

*The Sierra Club office is located at 100 Boylston Street, Suite 760, Boston.*

*All meeting times may change without notice. Please consult Web site for updates ([www.sierraclubmass.org](http://www.sierraclubmass.org)).*

### LEGAL INTERN

The North/South Rail Link Committee is looking for a legal intern to do research on federal transportation law. If you are interested, please contact Louise Lewis, Chair, at 617-266-5890.

### LEGISLATIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### NEW ON THE SIERRA CLUB WEB SITE: LEGISLATIVE PAGE!

The legislative page includes:

- Updates on key environmental legislation
- A list of upcoming public hearings where Sierra Club members can testify
- Information about how to participate in the legislative process

<http://www.sierraclubmass.org/issues/legislative/legislative.html>.

### SIERRA CLUB ACTIVIST NETWORK

Would you like to stay up-to-date on environmental legislation impacting Massachusetts? Sign up today for the Sierra Club Activist Network! To join, send a BLANK message to [scan@sierraclubmass.org](mailto:scan@sierraclubmass.org). Make the subject of your message SUBSCRIBE.

SCAN is an "announce only" list with very low traffic (usually less than two messages per month). We will never share your name or e-mail address with any outside entity.

## Massachusetts Chapter and Group Executive Committee Meetings

### MASSACHUSETTS CHAPTER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

January 24

Time: 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Place: Sierra Club office

### GREATER BOSTON GROUP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

January 13 and February 10

Time: 7:00 PM

Place: Sierra Club office

*The Sierra Club office is located at 100 Boylston Street, Suite 760, Boston.*

*All meeting times may change without notice.*

*Please consult Web site for updates ([www.sierraclubmass.org](http://www.sierraclubmass.org)).*

### THE CAPE COD GROUP

is soliciting nominees for the Cape Cod Group Executive Committee election (Excom). If you are interested in running for the Cape Cod Group Excom, please respond to David Dow, at 18 Treetop Lane, East Falmouth, MA, 02536-4814; or phone 508-540-7142 (evenings) or 508-495-2249 (days).

### AD SALES OPPORTUNITY

The Massachusetts Sierran is looking for a self-starter to sell advertising for this high-demographic, 26,000-circulation quarterly. Generous commission structure. Work from home. Send resume to James McCaffrey at [jobs@sierraclubmass.org](mailto:jobs@sierraclubmass.org) or by regular mail at the chapter office. No phone calls please.

## Events and General Membership Meetings

### ANNUAL CAPE COD "TOAST TO THE COAST" CELEBRATION

January 1 (New Year's Day)

Environmentalists gather in front of the Woods Hole Community Association building, on Water Street, at noon. There will be a holiday parade around Eel Pond with rainbow banners, costumes, and noisemakers appropriate for the occasion. At Waterfront Park, everyone stops to "toast the coast" with non-alcoholic beverages. Individuals make their promises to help protect the coastal and ocean environments. Afterwards, there's a potluck party. This will be the fourth year for this celebration.

Sponsored by the Sierra Club's Cape Cod Group and other community and environmental organizations. For additional information, please contact Bob Murphy: 508-563-5948.

### SWAMPSCOTT LOCAL ISSUES DISCUSSION

January 10

Time: 3:00 PM

Place: Swampscott Public Library  
61 Burrill Street, Swampscott

All members in the Town of Swampscott are invited to a discussion on Sierra Club positions on local environmental issues.

Contact office for more information or [chapter-chair@sierraclubmass.org](mailto:chapter-chair@sierraclubmass.org).

### PIONEER VALLEY GROUP GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

February 1

Time: 10:00 AM

Place: to be announced

Meeting information will be sent to all Pioneer Valley members. For more information, call Elisa Campbell (415-256-4247).

### BOSTON INNER CITY OUTINGS FUNDRAISER: WINTER BREW FEST!!

February 20

Time: 7:00 PM

Place: Boston Beer Works,  
112 Canal Street, second floor

\$10 minimum donation. For more information or to purchase raffle tickets, email [ico@sierraclubmass.org](mailto:ico@sierraclubmass.org). For more information about ICO, visit <http://www.sierraclub.org/ico/>

### NEW: ESSEX GROUP OUTINGS PROGRAM

The Essex County Group is planning an outings program. Any members who are interested in helping, please e-mail the outings chair: [Heidiroberts@comcast.net](mailto:Heidiroberts@comcast.net), or call: Heidi Roberts, membership chair: 978-927-4157.

## Essex Group Speaker Series

### GREENING OF YOUR ENERGY CONSUMPTION

January 11

Time: 3:00 PM – 5:00 PM

Place: Newburyport Public Library,  
94 State Street,  
Newburyport

Larry Chretien, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Energy Consumers Alliance (Mass Energy) will speak on Mass Energy's green energy programs including:

- New England Green Start
- electricity generated from renewable resources
- solar energy
- energy efficiency in the home

### PROTECTING OUR ENVIRONMENT...AGAIN!

February 8

Time: 3:00 PM – 5:00 PM

Place: Newburyport Public Library,  
94 State Street,  
Newburyport

Mark Bettinger, Sierra Club Northeast Regional Field Staff Director, will discuss the Sierra Club's campaign: "Building Environmental Community to Continue Environmental Progress."

### THE FUTURE OF FISHING IN NEW ENGLAND

March 14

Time: 3:00 PM – 5:00 pm

Place: Unitarian Universalist Church,  
26 Pleasant Street,  
Newburyport

Fishermen have recently proposed a plan to quickly end over-fishing on most stocks, including cod, in the Gulf of Maine and to phase in an end to over-fishing over the next several years on other fish. This talk will look back at fishing practices of the last century and look forward to the emerging trends in cooperative research for habitat protection and selective fishing methods.

David Lincoln, the speaker, is an environmental consultant to the Gloucester Fishermen's Wives Association specializing in marine pollution and energy development along the coasts. He serves as an advisor to the Habitat Committee of the New England Fishery Management Council and various fishing organizations in Massachusetts.

## Create an Environmental Legacy.

**B**equests have played a key role in the Sierra Club's environmental successes over the years.

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John Calaway  
Director, Gift Planning  
85 Second Street, 2nd Floor,  
San Francisco, CA 94105  
(415) 977-5639 or e-mail:  
[planned.giving@sierraclub.org](mailto:planned.giving@sierraclub.org)

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