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HOME SOLAR ISSUES COORDINATOR'S REPORT

Community Solar Program Makes Big Strides

By Abbas Salim • azas786@yahoo.com

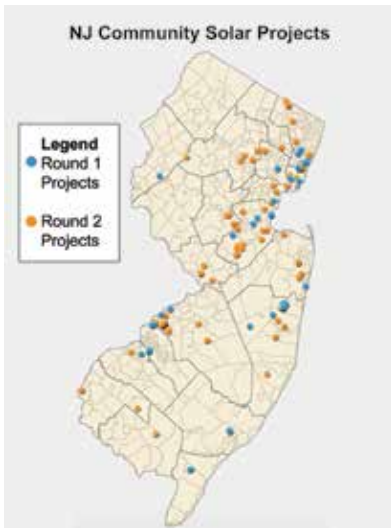
In 2019, New Jersey established the three-year Community Solar Energy Pilot Program, administered by the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU).

Gov. Phil Murphy has called the pilot program a national model for making solar accessible to underserved communities and a key part of the state's commitment to transition to 100% clean energy by 2050.

To achieve this goal, the Clean Energy Initiative has charted a plan to install 32 gigawatts (GW) of solar power by year 2050. As of October 31, 2021, 3.7 GW of solar had been installed in New Jersey, including a blend of installations, such as residential, non-residential, grid-supplied and community solar. With over 148,000 solar installations, the Garden State is No. 1 in the United States for installed solar capacity per square mile.

The most important benefit of community solar is that it makes clean energy available and affordable to those who otherwise could not have it. About 85% of US residents can't own or lease rooftop solar systems. This may be because their roofs are unsuitable or they live in multifamily housing. In addition,

many can't afford the up-front cost of solar panels. Community solar enables all residents and businesses to benefit from clean energy.



Service areas for community solar projects awarded to date. Map courtesy of Solar Landscape.

Based on its pre-established criteria, the BPU approved 45 project applications in October 2019 for the program's first year and 105 applications in October 2021 for the second. These projects are expected to generate a total of 243 megawatts (MW) in electrical capacity and serve nearly 45,000 homes; 51% of this capacity is set aside for low and moderate income (LMI) households. These projects are located throughout the

state (Figure). Of the second-year projects, 98 are located on rooftops, five on landfills, and one on a brownfield. Pilot year-one projects are fully subscribed and subscription for the second-year projects is expected to start sometime in the second quarter of 2022.

How Does Community Solar Work?

In a community solar program, a solar developer sets up a solar farm and offers subscriptions to utility customers in the area. Based on their previous

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Murphy Forces PVSC to Reconsider Fossil Fuel Plant

In early January, Gov. Phil Murphy intervened with the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission (PVSC) to prevent a vote on construction of an 84-megawatt, backup, fossil fuel-powered generation plant. The move will force the PVSC to reflect more deeply on opportunities for renewable energy alternatives and pay greater heed to the state's environmental justice commitments.

The PVSC processes sewage for four counties and is the state's largest electricity user. The Newark sewage processing facility's grid dependence became evident following Hurricane Sandy in 2012, when it lost power and allowed 840 million gallons of sewage to flood into waterways and Newark Bay. The backup plant would enable the PVSC to maintain operations during crises, although the backup plant itself

would be a major polluter, generating up to 39,000 tons of carbon dioxide per year even on standby status.

For Newark's Ironbound section, already gasping from smog and where one in four children have respiratory conditions, a solution that does not involve fossil-fuel consumption is needed. In addition, New Jersey will fall short of critical goals for emissions reduction if it continues to authorize the construction of fossil fuel-based infrastructure.

In his intervention with the PVSC, Murphy gave vital acknowledgement of the need to avoid dumping more smog upon an already overburdened section of New Jersey. It was just one year earlier that the Governor signed the state's environmental justice law, which requires the Department of En-

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National Board Election Coming!

The 2022 election for the Sierra Club's Board of Directors begins in March. National Board members are elected for three-year terms. All Sierra Club members will soon receive ballots.

The New Jersey Chapter recommends a vote for Kate Bartholomew, Cheyenne Branscum, Maya Khosla, and Aaron Mair in the upcoming election for the Sierra Club's Board of Directors.

The Big Win: New Law Sets Recycling Standards

By Sylvia Kay • Zero Waste Coordinator

After multiple revisions, New Jersey's recycled content bill (S2515/A4647) was signed into law by Gov. Phil Murphy on January 17, 2022. It won by a nice margin in both houses: 48 to 26 in the Assembly and 22 to 15 in the Senate. The bill had been vigorously edited and amended over the past year to accommodate many opposing sides and to circumscribe many complex factors.

The recycling content law is a big win and puts New Jersey in one of the leading positions for recycled content legislation.

In brief, the law regulates the percentage of postconsumer recycled content (PCR) in rigid plastic containers, plastic carryout bags, plastic garbage bags, glass containers, and paper carryout bags (Table). It bans the sale of polystyrene packing material (such as peanuts). It takes effect in phases that commence in 2024 and gives oversight, with potential waivers, to the Department of Environmental Protection.

Key points debated over the year include the regulation of milk and food containers, as well as specific percentages of PCR. In the final version, milk packaging is exempt, as are packaging for infant formula, medical products, many dietary products, and identified hazardous products. In the final version, rigid food containers (not bottles) are exempt for five years.

Of greatest importance, the recycling content law will reduce reliance on virgin materials and decrease our dependency on fossil fuels for plastic production, particularly single-use plastics. This new law will expand the market for recycled materials and promote a circular economy. It will assign specific responsibilities to industry for repurposing postconsumer materials.

There are a number of states tackling the complexities of PCR legislation. The laws in two states, California and Washington, have specific metrics for recycled content as well as phased-in periods with escalations. New Jersey's recycled content law resembles the legislation in these states due to its detailing of PCR rates and target dates. The law is a robust piece of legislation and thanks should be given to the strong

Table: Postconsumer Recycled Content (PCR) Requirements

Requirements	2024 PCR Content Requirements*	Target PCR
Rigid plastic containers	10%	50% (2036)
Plastic beverage containers	15%	50% (2045)
Plastic carryout bags	20%	40% (2027)
Plastic trash bags (thickness)		
0.70 mm - <0.80 mm	5%	10% (2027)
0.80 mm - < 1.00 mm	10%	20% (2027)
≥ 1.00 mm	20%	40% (2027)
Glass containers (clear)	35%	
Large paper carryout bags	40%	
Small paper bags (≤ 8 lbs)	20%	

*With plastic containers, PCR must increase by predetermined increments every three years; with plastic bags, manufacturers must reach target levels within five years. Credit: Tony Hagen

leadership in the Senate and Assembly and to their dedicated staff members, to Gov. Murphy, and to a strong and dedicated coalition of environmental groups for this truly big win.

For Related Reading

News release from Beyond Plastics:

<https://bit.ly/3JBKeFE>

Summary of bill:

<https://bit.ly/3rX9jVG>

Article on similar progress in other states: <https://bit.ly/3MnPeA8>

Starting with this quarterly issue of *The Jersey Sierran*, electronic distribution is being extended to 62,000 nonmember Champions who have previously supported the NJ Chapter of the Sierra Club. If you are not a member, now is the time to become more active! See the membership coupon on page 12.

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Thanks for Your Support!

Supplied by Ken Johanson • Fundraising Committee Chair

The New Jersey Chapter of the Sierra Club wishes to thank all those who provided the Chapter with financial support during 2021. Listed below are the names of those members and friends who contributed \$100 or more during the calendar year. Please be assured that all contributions are very much appreciated, regardless of the amount.

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The NJ Chapter Tackles PFAS Contamination

By Judy Minot • Chapter Secretary

In 2020 the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) adopted strict drinking water standards for three chemicals in the per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) family. Many NJ water systems soon found they were exceeding the new standard. In 2021, 74 water systems exceeded the state's maximum contaminant level. This has contributed to increasing concern about PFAS chemicals in New Jersey.

What are PFAS?

PFAS are a class of chemicals that contaminates our drinking water, air, and soil. PFAS pollution is a public health crisis. "PFAS have the ability to persist in all environmental media, making their contamination ubiquitous. People in New Jersey have been exposed to these chemicals in their air and drinking water for decades. This is extremely concerning because very low doses can cause significant health effects," explained Anjuli Ramos-Busot, NJ Chapter Director.

Health problems associated with PFAS include infertility, immune system dysfunction, cancer, liver damage, developmental disorders, and thyroid disease.

PFAS are found in hundreds of products that we use daily, including nonstick cookware, firefighting foam, moisture- and stain-resistant clothing (eg, Gore-Tex), carpeting and upholstery, and cleaning products. PFAS are also used in food containers, grease-resistant food packaging, waterproof mascara, sunscreen, and shaving cream.

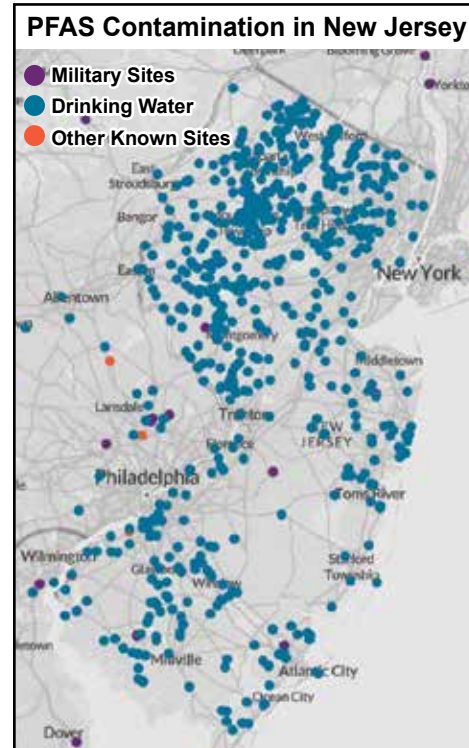
Beginning in 2002, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) took action to monitor PFAS chemicals in consumer products and control their manufacture and import. The chemical industry, in the intervening time, has worked to develop similar compounds that may be just as toxic but are not subject to regulation. The burden of mitigating this proliferation is widely referred to as "chemical whack-a-mole." There are now more than 4,700 chemicals in the PFAS family.

PFAS are often called "forever chemicals" because they remain in the environment for an unknown length of time and bioaccumulate in the bodies of humans and animals. A 2015 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) study estimated 97% of Americans have PFAS in their blood. PFAS are also pervasive in wildlife.

No Easy Solutions

When it comes to PFAS, New Jersey is one of the most heavily contaminated states. Removing PFAS from drinking water is costly for municipalities. For homeowners with well systems there is no perfect solution.

Two types of water treatment systems are usually recommended for removing PFAS from home drinking water. Both require regular maintenance. Granular activated carbon or solid carbon block filters are relatively low-cost. They are effective at removing long-chain PFAS, such as perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS). High pressure membrane filtration, such as reverse osmosis (RO), is more effective



Courtesy of the Environmental Working Group: <https://bit.ly/3s4amTV>

for a wider range of PFAS although it is generally more expensive and produces a significant amount of wastewater. RO also removes minerals like calcium, magnesium and potassium, which are necessary for human health.

Many assume that bottled water is safe, but there are no federal PFAS regulations for bottled water in the United States. A 2021 study found PFAS in 39% of bottled water products sampled, including some that were RO-treated.

Stopping PFAS at the Source

The most effective way to reduce our exposure to PFAS is to stop producing them. Studies by the CDC suggest that between 1999 and 2014, as production and use of PFOA and PFOS declined, blood levels in Americans dropped 60% and 80%, respectively. However, New Jersey has a legacy of decades of pollution by such companies as Chemours, DuPont, Solvay, and 3M, and the risk of exposure remains high.

The Sierra Club is highly engaged in the fight against PFAS contamination. The NJ Chapter has filed an [amicus brief](#) in support of a DEP lawsuit against Solvay Specialty Polymers USA to compel the cleanup of the company's West Deptford site. In January the Sierra Club joined a lawsuit to force the EPA to [close loopholes](#) that allow companies like Solvay to underreport their levels of PFAS contamination.

Our Chapter staff is currently working with Senators Linda Greenstein (NJ-14) and Bob Smith (NJ-17) to liaise with the DEP to address PFAS emissions and contamination in New Jersey. An active volunteer committee provides staff support and outreach.

While we work to combat PFAS production and contamination, taxpayers foot the bill for cleanup, and we all pay an intolerable price in human health. We hope you'll join us in the fight against PFAS pollution.

Find Out More

PFAS: <https://bit.ly/3BySOT1>
NJ Drinking WaterWatch: View drinking water info for your water system. www9.state.nj.us/DEP/Water-Watch_public/
PFAS Action www.pfasaction.org/

“People in New Jersey have been exposed to these chemicals in their air and drinking water for decades.”

Sign up for alerts on helpful actions you can take as an NJ Chapter member to address urgent environmental needs and support Chapter initiatives: Visit <https://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/action-alert-signup-form>

MURPHY FORCES

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Environmental Protection to consider public health impacts of certain facilities when reviewing permit applications.

For its part, the PVSC says it cannot continue to rely on Public Service Electric & Gas for its power needs, given the risk of more outages and the dangers that sewage spills pose for public health. The authority has engaged four outside energy consultants to devise potential renewable energy solutions that are consistent with the goals of the

state's Energy Master Plan for emissions reduction and mitigation of climate change.

"This is an opportunity to find alternative, green, renewable solutions to otherwise dirty projects," said Renée Pollard, Environmental and Social Justice Chair for the NJ Chapter of the Sierra Club. "We need to continue to protect the health and wellbeing of these communities, and environmental justice advocates will be watching to ensure that happens."

CHAPTER DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

A New Outlook

By Anjuli Ramos-Busot • anjuli.ramos@sierraclub.org

This is a moment of transformation and growth for the Chapter, and I am excited to be part of it.

I come to the Sierra Club with a background in climate change science and air quality. I earned my Bachelor of Science in chemistry from the University of Puerto Rico before getting my Master of Science in environmental chemistry and air pollution science and technology from Rutgers University. I previously volunteered with the NJ Chapter of the Sierra Club as the Air Quality Issues Coordinator—one of many reasons why I'm so excited to be back as the new Chapter Director!

I've always been passionate about protecting the environment, from doing highly technical scientific work to raising awareness about climate change and sustainability. I have dedicated my life to understanding the complex issues of environmental pollution and climate change so that I can carry over the message to those who may not be as aware.

I'm very proud to be leading the Chapter, because the work that the Sierra Club does in New Jersey is more important than ever. We're a small state, but one with so much environmental beauty. We are also unique because we are densely populated, which makes us very susceptible to environmental toxins. Even "small pollution" is big pollution for New Jersey.

In my role as Chapter Director, I will harness the science and facts to inform our mission and focus on those envi-

ronmental challenges where advocacy and awareness are most needed. My priorities include working to protect overburdened communities, reduce the "forever" pollution of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) compounds, mitigate climate change, and develop a green economy. I will also advance equity, justice, and inclusion, which are important to me both personally and professionally. As a Latinx woman in science, I value diversity and inclusion in the workplace; academia; and the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

With Gov. Phil Murphy starting his second term, and the changes and transition happening within our Chapter, our volunteers are more important than ever. Over just the past few months, we have developed new relationships with organizations and expanded our work on everything from protecting forests to cleaning up PFAS, reducing plastic waste and promoting renewable energy. We can get even more done with your help! Please email me at anjuli.ramos@sierraclub.org to learn more about volunteering with us today. For our current volunteers, a huge thank you from myself and my staff! We wouldn't be as effective as we are today without your help.



CONSERVATION CHAIR'S MESSAGE

Be The Tiger: Take Charge of Your Energy Transition

By Greg Gorman • ggorman@embargmail.com

According to the Chinese zodiac, this is the Year of the Tiger, and climate activists would do well to embrace the characteristics of the tiger: bravery, assertiveness, and dominance. Clearly, the escalating impacts of carbon pollution—extreme weather events, massive wildfires, and retreat of ice sheets in Antarctic and Greenland—demand that activists embrace these qualities. "Given our delays in addressing climate change, we must now commit to completely transforming our energy supply and demand—end game decarbonization," said Saul Griffith in his "playbook" for a clean energy future. Just as the tiger will take on animals much larger than itself, we need to grapple with the massive fossil fuel industry.

Recent projections indicate renewable energy sources are gaining the advantage. In 2019, US consumption of renewable energy surpassed that of "King Coal" power generation for the first time. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's latest Energy Infrastructure Update [report](#) reveals that renewable energy sources accounted for 87.61% (16,665 MW) of new capacity added during the first nine months of 2021. Also, the projected costs of building geothermal, solar, and onshore wind resources for service starting in 2026 are cheaper than for natural gas. Operating costs for onshore wind and solar are cheaper than for combustion technology, but operating and maintenance expenses for solar with battery storage are [more expensive](#) than for gas, although prices continue to fall. The clean energy tiger is strong!

In 1980, the oil and gas sector accounted for 29% of the Standard and Poor's 500 value. Today, despite recent oil and share price increases, these fossil fuel companies account for just 2.7% of the S&P. In 2020, Exxon's declining value caused it to be dropped from the Dow Jones Industrial Average (30 stocks) after 92 years of continuous presence, to be replaced by Salesforce, a tech company. Meanwhile, wholesale natural gas prices have risen; in November 2021, New Jersey Natural Gas [petitioned](#) the NJ Board of Public Utilities for a 5% rate increase for residential and certain small commercial customers. Higher gas costs strengthen the case for renewable energy. The fossil fuel elephant is weak!

Greta Thunberg implored, "I want you to act as if your house is on fire!" Indeed, in New Jersey it's true. About 75% of New Jersey households rely on methane as their primary heating fuel, and about 10% depend on petroleum products. Space heating, water heating, appliances, and industrial use account for 28% of New Jersey's greenhouse gas emissions, including 15.2 million metric tons of CO₂ equivalent in the residential sector. Fossil fuel combustion poisons our homes with particulate matter, nitrous oxides, sulfur, volatile organic compounds, ammonia,



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CHAPTER CHAIR'S MESSAGE

A New Chapter Director Brings a New Chapter for Our Chapter!

By Richard Isaac • Richard.Isaac@Sierraclub.org

A few months into our Hiring Committee's search for a new Chapter Director, I took part in a one-hour training webinar on recruitment that proved invaluable. In the webinar I was advised that it was perfectly fine to call potential job candidates and ask them to apply.

Using that incredibly helpful advice, I thought of individuals I had interacted with regarding the environment over the last several years and then reached out to a few and asked if they were interested in the position.

Among those was one who had volunteered with our Chapter for several months before the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) realized her value and snatched her away.

Trying to remember her name, I searched through previous issues of *The Jersey Sierran* until I found her.

As luck would have it, this individual had sent me her resume when seeking a volunteer position with our NJ Chapter.

At that time her resume listed a master's degree in environmental chemistry, air pollution science and technology, as well as numerous skills including experimental design, research, statistical analysis, data visualization and manipulation, technical writing, and public speaking.

The resume also included a phone number.

Dialing that number, I found that it was still working; and when that previous Chapter volunteer picked up, I asked if she'd be interested in applying for Chapter Director.

The thing was that she held a secure job at the DEP and had been promoted twice since starting there five years earlier.

Nonetheless, Anjuli Ramos-Busot not only expressed interest, she applied!

By providing satisfactory answers to written questions, Anjuli qualified for a telephone screening and aced it. She then passed a virtual interview by our full Hiring Committee and became a finalist, receiving a second virtual interview and submitting a writing sample.

Of course, there were a number of other applicants—in fact, there were literally scores of them, some with strong backgrounds in politics or fundraising. No one could possibly have all the skills that could be helpful for a Chapter Director.

But Anjuli was unique not only because of her very strong environmental science background and ardent environmentalist nature, but also because even under challenging situations she could get along with a range of different people, from shy potential volunteers to strong-willed politicians and (perhaps the most difficult) other professional environmentalists.

Since coming on board, Anjuli has already demonstrated her interpersonal skills by developing effective synergy with her staff, our volunteers, national-level Club staff members, journalists, public officials—even her professional counterparts in other environmental groups!

After having worked with our new Chapter Director since November, I am delighted to state unequivocally that I am *really* glad we hired her and hope she stays with us for many years. And I am confident that she will only become better the longer she stays!



POLITICAL CHAIR'S REPORT

Together We Are Powerful

By Karen Becker • political.chair@newjersey.sierraclub.org

When you open the homepage for the national Sierra Club, you are greeted with graphics and images representing the many climate and environmental concerns that our organization champions. You also see a simple block of text with a not-so-simple message. The bold heading "Together, We Are Powerful" is followed by these words: "This country belongs to all of us. Together, we can help deepen the movement for a liveable planet, safe communities, and a democracy that works for everyone." It's not too difficult to visualize the Sierra Club mobilizing for a liveable planet with safe communities. But what does democracy have to do with our mission?

Our country was founded by changemakers who were dedicated to creating a better tomorrow. The colonists had no voice in their governance, so the changemakers of 1776 went to work on creating our American democracy. Our near-perfect union gave us the freedoms we desired. But the one basic principle that continues to be a challenge to uphold is equity for all persons,

specifically because not everyone's voice is heard and not everyone has an equal voice in their governance. When the Sierra Club refers to "a democracy for everyone," we are saying that all members of a community should have an equal say in how their community's government works for them. Sadly, we know that's not how it works.

We have been an organization that has worked tirelessly to promote clean energy, protect wildlife, preserve the wilderness, and save our oceans. But challenges such as pipelines, warehouses, contaminated drinking water, diesel fumes from trucks and buses, and the shipment of liquid natural gas through our streets and rail networks have become the new problems we've had to tackle, with most of these issues impacting marginalized communities. These are the communities whose citizens are prevented from becoming involved in mainstream society and government. These are the communities where equity is absent and voter suppression is prevalent.

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Less Smog to Come From School Buses and Trucks

By Bill Beren • Beren1@verizon.net

Our Chapter's Transportation Committee was instrumental in achieving some major victories in the fight to reduce the transportation sector's carbon footprint.

Our campaign to electrify the state's 22,000 school buses helped get legislation passed in both the Assembly and Senate, but time ran out to reconcile the differences in the two bills before the end of the legislative session on January 10. However, we are working with the two prime sponsors, Sen. Patrick Diegnan Jr. and Asm. Sterley S. Stanley, both Democrats from the 18th District, so that \$15 million in annual funding is included in next fiscal year's budget.

We are also happy to report that the first five electric school buses in the state were put into service by Student Transportation of America for students in the Trenton Public Schools. We are pleased to note that the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has incorporated the requirement that all electric vehicles funded by their grants include dataloggers and report performance statistics such as mileage between recharging to the DEP. This requirement was inserted into the pending legislation based on amend-

ments proposed by the Transportation Committee. In 2022, the Committee will continue our educational outreach on electric school buses. We'll be hosting webinars and conducting research needed to speed the adoption of electric school buses.

Included in last year's Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act are additional funds for electric school buses (between \$2.5 billion and \$5 billion) that will be distributed later this year by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Guidelines and rules for this grant program will be published by the EPA sometime this spring. The bill also includes funding for the long-delayed Gateway tunnels that will serve NJ Transit and Amtrak passengers between New Jersey and New York City. Additional funds may be available to jump-start the extension of the Hudson Bergen Light Rail from North Bergen to Englewood.

In December, the DEP formally [adopted](#) the Advanced Clean Truck rule, which sets goals for the sale of electric delivery vehicles in the state starting in 2025 and continuing to 2050.

For more about the Advanced Clean Truck rule, visit <https://bit.ly/3oVjsAs>

Let's Enjoy More of the Nighttime Sky

By Jonathan Wall • docjdwall@gmail.com

We need to shed light on the issue of light pollution. One of the newest committees formed by the New Jersey Chapter is the Light Pollution and Nights Skies Committee. We plan to advocate for statutes and ordinances that regulate lighting so we all can start enjoying the night skies once again and mitigate the adverse effects on wildlife and human health.

Part of the Sierra Club Grassroots Network, our Committee shares the goal championed by the International Dark Sky Association (IDA): to restore the natural nighttime environment.¹ The IDA estimates that 35% of artificial light in the United States is unnecessary and 600 million trees must be planted annually to offset the carbon emissions from this waste. While it may seem like a futile effort in a state as densely populated as New Jersey, there is still a lot we can do. If you are disturbed by the plummeting populations of fireflies, butterflies, songbirds, hummingbirds, bats, owls, and the prey they need to survive, such as the mice and insects of the world, then please consider advocating in your community for common-sense curbs on nighttime illumination.

Using a friendly tone, start by talking to your neighbors and community leaders about the need to curb outdoor lighting. Explain the effects of poor lighting on wildlife and human health. Encourage the use of soft-yellowish lighting with color temperatures of 3,000 degrees Kelvin and below to cut back on harmful blue light. Educate your community about lighting and safety.² Instead of leaving lights on all night long, install timers, motion detectors, and dimmers. Municipalities and businesses can maintain security and save on electric bills as well, by investing in these energy-saving ideas.

Although studies show that crime decreases in "properly" lit areas, the

choice we are faced with is not bright lights or no lights. LED technology can provide our communities with *intelligent dynamic road lighting*.³ This fancy term simply means the light changes automatically. Your neighborhood street lights, for example, may softly brighten or dim as you walk or drive toward or away from them. The light will not abruptly turn on or off. The cost savings will be significant for our local governments. Street lights will remain dim when not needed. Even your neighbors who prefer bright exterior lighting could save money by installing dynamic systems. When you walk up their driveway, the lights would gently brighten and then dim a few minutes after you have entered their home.

Our Committee is not advocating a return to the Dark Ages, but moving forward to an age of progressive lighting. Brighten the streets when needed and dim them when you are done. That's the bright idea for our future.

If you want more information or are interested in joining us, please check out our webpage at: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/light-pollution or email docjdwall@gmail.com.

References

1. Eaves, M. "Who owns the night sky?" International Dark-Sky Assoc. December 15, 2021; Issue 106, 5-7. <https://bit.ly/34UoK8h>
2. "Can enhanced LED street lighting contribute to reduce violent crime?" Newark Public Safety Collaborative. November 4, 2020. <https://bit.ly/3JBIHzE>
3. Haans A, de Kort Y. "Light distribution in dynamic street lighting: Two experimental studies on its effects on perceived safety, prospect, concealment, and escape." *J Environ Psychol*. December 1, 2012; 32, 342-352. doi:10.1016/j.jenvp.2012.05.006

There's an electronic biweekly Chapter Alert Service. Sign up via: <https://tinyurl.com/scnj-Esubscribe>.

Do You Have Marketing Experience?

Join Our Team

The Jersey Sierran is looking for a volunteer with marketing expertise to help us sell ads in the newsletter. Anyone with a print or electronic marketing background is urged to contact the Editor, Tony Hagen, at editor@newjersey.sierraclub.org

Developing a stream of ad revenue is essential to support Club activities and offset the cost of producing the newsletter. Your involvement will help achieve critical goals for a sustainable and better-quality way of life in New Jersey.

ExCom Meeting Highlights

There was no Chapter Executive Committee meeting in **December**. Instead, we held a brief virtual get-together to welcome our new Chapter Director, Anjuli Ramos-Busot. The meeting was well attended and we are excited to work with her going forward.

January: Rich Isaac was unanimously reelected as Chapter Chair. Congratulations to three new members of the Executive Committee, elected by our members: Kip Cherry, Stan Greberis, and Judy Minot. A resolution was adopted in support of giving the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area full national park status as the "Delaware Water Gap National Park and Preserve." Revised standing rules for the Legislative Committee were approved. Chapter issue coordinators will be asked to provide annual reports on their activities. The Chapter is endorsing the following legislators in the upcoming Congressional races: Andy Kim (D3), Frank Pallone (D6), Tom Malinowski (D7), Bill Pascrell (D9), Mikie Sherrill (D11) and Bonnie Watson-Coleman (D12)

February: New committees were created for Forest Conservation and mitigation of mitigation of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), also known as "forever chemicals." Al Borelli was appointed to the Offshore Wind Committee and Laura Lynch to the Environmental and Social Justice Committee. Our Student Liaison reported strong interest in the Sierra Club among young people. The Legislative Committee recommended supporting bills that would, among other things, establish an office of Clean Energy Equity in the state Board of Public Utilities, require state pension fund divestment from fossil fuels, and require the NJ Department of Environmental Protection to develop an electric school bus program. The Political Committee is working to promote awareness about recent Congressional redistricting. Several endorsements for the Sierra Club Board of Directors Election were approved (see front page).



Saving the Planet With Visuals?

Do you have graphic design skills? Would you like to work on video production? Do you want to help further the Sierra Club's goals?

The NJ Chapter is looking for volunteers. We need **graphic designers** to help us with infographics, fact sheets, and presentations to illustrate and clarify our messages. You would work on a project-by-project basis in collaboration with team leaders from the Chapter.

Video volunteers will work under an experienced video producer to create shareable videos on subjects from outings to events to news to issue "explainers." Good ideas, self-motivation and willingness to learn are more important than experience here!

Social media help is also welcome. Volunteers would produce content in the form of visuals, graphics, and writeups based on ideas and information provided by our Chapter leadership.

Your work can increase awareness of climate, environmental, and environmental justice issues, promote the natural beauty of our state, and encourage others to join us!

For more about graphics, contact Tony Hagen, Editor of *The Jersey Sierran*, at editor@newjersey.sierraclub.org.
To get involved in video production, reach out to Judy Minot, Chapter Secretary/Communications Co-Chair, at secretary@newjersey.sierraclub.org. To help with social media, write to Megan Steele at megan.steele@sierraclub.org.

NJ Is Making Progress Toward Its Wind Energy Generation Targets

By Alexandra Horn and Denise Brush • Co-Chairs, Offshore Wind Committee, offshorewind@newjersey.sierraclub.org

There are currently three offshore wind (OSW) projects slated to be built off the coast of New Jersey, with more to come! Ocean Wind I and II will be adjacent to one another off the coast of Atlantic City and stretching toward Cape May; and Atlantic Shores will be just north of those wind farms, reaching toward Barnegat Light.

Combined, the projects will supply enough energy to power over 1.7 million NJ homes. Gov. Phil Murphy has pledged to create 7500 MW of energy from OSW, which would power 3.5 million homes. Our state is well on its way to achieving this ambitious goal; Ocean Wind I and II and Atlantic Shores combined would represent the largest OSW center in the United States. We could soon be a national leader in offshore wind.

The NJ Chapter of the Sierra Club created the Offshore Wind Committee in the summer of 2021 to promote the socially and environmentally responsible execution of proposed OSW projects off the New Jersey coast. Our goal is to equitably advocate for the best interests of the ocean, wildlife, and local economies and to promote accurate information about OSW. To begin achieving these goals, we are currently working with a coalition of environmental organizations to develop educational materials that can be used nationwide.

Generating power from offshore wind offers an opportunity for New Jersey to be a leader in tackling the climate crisis while creating thousands of

safe, high paying jobs, especially in areas along our shore that have seasonal economies. Offshore wind jobs offer training and good salaries and benefits, not just during construction but during maintenance and operation.

For marine life, the climate crisis is well underway, and we owe it to these creatures to act. Turbines serve as artificial reefs, which attract and harbor marine species. The resulting abundance of fish can be extremely beneficial for larger marine life, as well as for the fishing industry. New Jersey's current offshore wind plans incorporate safety measures and construction restrictions that benefit marine life and go beyond what is already required by law.

The OSW committee also considered the potential impacts on birds. Studies have found that most birds live or migrate within three miles of the shore. The current plan is to locate the turbines at least 12 to 15 miles out to sea. At that distance, the risk of collision for migratory birds is extremely low. As a safeguard, the turbines can be shut down should migratory birds pass through.

Our ocean and our shore communities deserve better than the effects of climate change. OSW can play an important role in climate change mitigation.

For more information about the work of the Offshore Wind Committee, visit our [issues page](#) on the NJ Chapter website and keep an eye out for our toolkit coming soon!

COMMUNITY SOLAR

continued from page 1

annual electricity use, customers are allocated a share of the solar farm that generates enough electricity to offset nearly all of their annual electricity charges. They get a credit on their regular utility bill for the electricity generated by their portion of the community solar installation, and they receive a bill from the developer for the solar farm portion allocated to them. If their electricity consumption exceeds the solar allocation, they are billed for the excess as per the regular utility rates. However, their solar energy cost can be discounted 10% to 20% below what the utility company would charge. The discount offered to LMI households is generally higher than for non-LMI households. Customers have the comfort of knowing that they are drawing most of their energy from a renewable source, not a fossil fuel-based energy source. Thus, community solar significantly lessens a homeowner's or business's dependence on nonrenewable and toxic sources of energy while also saving money.

The NJ Chapter of the Sierra Club has long been an advocate for the need for

community solar. We applaud the fact that the focus of New Jersey's program is on LMI households and that it prioritizes the placement of solar arrays on rooftops, landfills, and brownfields; and tightly restricts the use of farmlands and open space for solar arrays.

How to Get Community Solar?

The number of community solar installations in New Jersey is growing quickly. Solar Landscape is one well-established developer that has over 50 approved projects in the state. They are currently working with Sustainable Jersey to create a webpage that will simplify the process of locating a community solar supplier. Residents will be able to enter a zip code and find out who to contact. The webpage should be ready by mid-2022, when many of the new projects are expected to be online. If community solar is not available in your area yet, don't be discouraged. The program is growing quickly and will get a boost from the Clean Energy Act, which mandated that the BPU establish a permanent community solar program by February 19, 2022.

for those who have no voice, so they are heard. We will march with those who feel they are invisible, so they are seen. Together we are powerful, and together we will help build a democracy that works for everyone.

TOGETHER

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So, what do we do? We do what we are best at and what we are known for: mobilizing. We band together. We advance our vision of a world where everyone, regardless of zip code, can advocate without fear of retribution. But until that world exists, we will speak

DEP Draft Emissions Rules Fall Short

By Tony Hagen • editor@newjersey.sierraclub.org

Each year in New Jersey, over 100 million metric tons (MMT) of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) greenhouse gases pour into the atmosphere from industry, generating plants, heating systems, and the transportation sector.

The state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has formulated draft rules to curb these emissions, but these fall well short of what is needed. The rules would affect fossil fuel-fired electricity generating plants, commercial and industrial fossil fuel-fired boilers, and use of No. 4 and No. 6 fuel oils. Among fossil fuel plants, gas-fired generators contribute 83% of the state's total CO₂e emissions.

The draft rules would allow new plant construction and many exemptions that would cost us precious time in the effort to mitigate global warming.

"New Jersey is in urgent need of CO₂ regulation. In theory, these rules are the best opportunity for the DEP to achieve the easiest and cheapest greenhouse gas emissions reduction possible, but they are too weak," said our Chapter Director, Anjuli Ramos-Busot.

New Jersey's [Global Warming Response Act](#) set a goal of reducing state greenhouse gas emissions by 80% of 2006 levels by 2050. This is known as the "80 x 50" target. In its draft rules, the DEP notes that annual emissions in the state must be reduced by 73 MMT CO₂e by 2050.

However, the DEP estimates that the rules would cut emissions from the electricity generating sector by just 2.5 MMT per year, "starting in 2035, when the rules are expected to be fully implemented."

Scientific evidence suggests there needs to be a 45% reduction in green-

house gas emissions by 2030. This would limit overall global warming to 1.5°C; and in November 2021, the Murphy administration set a "50 x 30" target, or a 50% reduction by 2030. The DEP draft rules need substantial revision to help, and here's why:

- Electricity generating plants would be exempt unless more than 50% of their heat input is derived from fossil fuel combustion. This could exempt incinerators and cogeneration plants.

- Electricity generating plants would be exempt if less than 10% of their annual electricity input is channeled to the grid. Many plants, such as at refineries, retain most, if not all, of their electricity generated; and New Jersey's two refineries account for 56% of industrial CO₂e emissions.

- Only existing or new fossil fuel-fired plants with capacity of 25 MW or greater would have to comply with the DEP's proposed CO₂e emissions limits.

- Fossil fuel-fired boilers, used all over the state by public schools, universities, and the military, can be exempted if alternate forms of energy are determined to be "infeasible." Also, boilers with maximum heat input of less than 1 million British thermal units per hour would not be affected; the DEP does not track these via permitting and has no count of how many there are.

- Incinerators would be exempt if they burn waste rather than fossil fuels, and burning of coal-derived gas, biogas, and landfill gas also would not be affected.

Public comments on the proposed DEP rule changes will be accepted through March 6, 2022: www.nj.gov/dep/rules/comments

What Blows in the Wind and Retires in May?

By Sylvia Kay • Zero Waste Coordinator

Question: What happens to thin plastic carry-out bags and paper carry-out bags on May 4, 2022?

Answer: Banned!

This ban is strictly for the thin plastic bags used at retail stores and restaurants to carry out items and does not include trash bags, in-store bags for loose food items (eg, fruits, vegetables, grains, meats, fish), small bags sold in multiple packs (eg, resealable), bags for prescription drugs, bags for meat or fish, and newspaper or garment bags.

The use of carry-out paper bags is banned only in grocery stores that occupy 2500 square feet or more.

Shoppers can use cloth bags or reusable thick plastic bags with woven handles, which are commonly sold at stores for \$1 or less.

Question: What happens to plastic (polystyrene) food containers and service items on May 4, 2022?

Answer: Banned!

Polystyrene (foam) food containers and service items will be banned

from use or sale by food service providers in New Jersey such as restaurants, food trucks, grocery stores, movie theaters, retail stores, and nonprofits handling food.

Banned polystyrene items include cups, plates, trays, egg cartons, and cutlery.

Current exemptions include manufacturers' prepackaged food items, small portion cups (2 oz or less), disposable, long-handled spoons for thick drinks, trays for refrigerated raw meats, fish, and poultry. Presently, these items are exempt until May 4, 2024.

Plastic straws were banned in November 2021, with the exception of customer requests.

More information on the bans can be found at: www.nj.gov/dep/plastic-ban-law/#foam_products



YOU HAVE MORE TO GIVE THAN YOU KNOW

Maybe you can't make a gift to protect the environment during your lifetime, but you can become a financial hero by remembering the Sierra Club in your will. You can even direct your gift to a special Club program or to the New Jersey Chapter.

For information about making a bequest to the New Jersey Chapter call Paul Sanderson at 908-233-2414

Electric Vehicles Will Make Fossil Fools of Fossil Fuels – Eventually

By George Moffatt • gmoffattgt@aol.com

A tidal wave of electric vehicles (EVs) is heading our way, but will they reduce overall carbon emissions and other pollutants? It's complicated.

In 2020, there were some 276 million registered vehicles in the United States. About 1.4 million were EVs and 5.4 million, hybrids. However, last year EV sales were about [9% of global car sales](#), and although estimates of global EV passenger vehicle sales by 2030 vary widely (18% to 48% of total sales), sales clearly are expected to grow rapidly.

Before the pandemic, US residents drove an average of 13,476 miles a year, with New Jersey drivers averaging 8,300 miles, according to federal highway data. The national daily average, therefore, is just 37 miles, which means that for many drivers EVs are a suitable option, since they get an average of 250 miles per charge.

Prospective EV owners should not be concerned about running out of electrons on the highway. *Consumer Reports* has estimated the average EV owner can charge at home 92% of the time and would need charging stations just six times a year.

President Biden has pledged to create 500,000 charging stations (not locations), although Congress gave him just half the money he requested for this. Last year, the US Department of Energy [awarded \\$127 million](#) in contracts under the SuperTruck 3 initiative to develop battery and fuel cell technology for truck transport.

Meanwhile, several states have acted to ban the sale of gasoline-powered vehicles by 2035: New York, Massachusetts, and California. The NJ Department of Environmental Protection has recommended we do likewise.

Understanding the Problem

So, what's the problem? As usual, it's us. We're not buying the right vehicles.

The [average gas mileage](#) of combustion sedans grew from 25.3 mpg in 2009 to 30.9 mpg in 2019—a 22% increase. That's somewhat impressive—about half of the Obama administration's target of 54.5 mpg by 2025. However, when you include the current sales of popular gas-guzzling SUVs and pickups, that average gas mileage increase was just 11% (22.4 mpg vs 24.9 mpg, respectively).

About 10 years ago, combustion sedans outsold the gas-thirstier SUVs by two to one; but by 2019, the now luxurious SUVs were outselling sedans two to one, offsetting the fuel improvements of both combustion sedans and EVs. In effect, sales of SUVs and trucks are slowing down our fuel improvement gains.

Longevity is another factor. In 2020, the average age of vehicles on US roads was a [record 12.1 years](#), helped along by the pandemic and the drop in new car

sales. Also, newer technology and the low production of EVs contributes to higher prices that are [not competitive](#) with what we pay for gasoline-powered vehicles.

Then there are environmental concerns.

EVs' lithium-ion batteries are long-lasting, but still pose environmental concerns. For one thing, lithium is a highly reactive, flammable substance. Last year, General Motors [recalled](#) 130,000 Chevy Bolt EVs because of battery fire risk.

Also, the [growing need](#) for lithium and other raw materials is already creating social and environmental problems. Lithium is mined in open pits or extracted from brine pools, and enormous quantities of water are used, creating potential for groundwater contamination. There is also intense pressure to ramp up lithium production quickly. Adequate pollution and safety controls may be absent.

Emissions From Charging

Another issue is higher emissions from fossil-fuel plants as more EVs need charging. "If every American switched over to an electric passenger vehicle...the United States could end up using roughly 25% more electricity," *The New York Times* reported in 2021. Authors of a recent [Yale study](#) stated that, even factoring in emissions from electricity generation, EV emissions would be lower than for gasoline-powered vehicles.

On the bright side, fossil-fuel plant closings and the increased use of wind and solar power are expected to improve the environmental impacts.

Then there are the economic and supply problems. Chinese companies are among the [most aggressive](#) of buyers seeking to control supplies of lithium and other key minerals. According to the 2021 BP Statistical Review, China has 7.9% of the world's lithium reserves. China also controls roughly 60% of global capacity to process raw lithium; 65%, [cobalt](#); and 35%, nickel.

But let's close on promising news. One immediate promise of EVs is, of course, cleaner air for everyone. Another is that EV owners may save from [\\$6,000 to \\$10,000](#) in maintenance and other costs over the life of the vehicle. The average price of an EV is about \$56,000, with the powertrain (eg, batteries) amounting to [51%](#) of the cost. But battery re-use and new battery chemistries, manufacturing techniques, packaging, sales volume and expanded use of wind power and commercial and residential solar for power will continue driving down EVs' overall costs.

And certainly, EV owners with residential solar panels will be well ahead in the game. So, isn't it about time to trade in your DeSoto?

hold methane and oil burners now!

Resources

Incentives for home energy improvements: <https://bit.ly/3v0J7LN>

Snapshot of NJ energy consumption: <https://bit.ly/3BwBopT>

Renewable energy progress: <https://bit.ly/3JzZBP5>

BE THE TIGER

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carbon monoxide, and water vapor, which leads to mold. Heat pumps with programmable thermostats, electric water heaters, electric stoves, and other appliances are readily available and constitute economical substitutes. These clean energy products are eligible for state rebates and federal [incentives](#). Be the tiger: Replace your house-

Members in commuting distance of Trenton would be welcome to help run our state office: Call Taylor McFarland 609-656-7618



How to Identify Your Group (by county)

Skylands Group: Sussex & northern Warren
Hunterdon Warren Group: Hunterdon & southern Warren
North Jersey Group: Bergen & Passaic
Gateway Group: Essex
Hudson County Group: Hudson
Loantaka Group: Morris & Union
Central Jersey Group: Mercer
Raritan Valley Group: Somerset & Middlesex
Jersey Shore Group: Monmouth
Ocean County Group: Ocean
West Jersey Group: Burlington, Camden & Gloucester
South Jersey Group: Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland & Salem

These designations are approximate: members are welcome to participate in whichever Group(s) they find convenient

(Groups are listed in rough geographical sequence: North to South)

SKYLANDS GROUP

(Sussex and Northern Warren counties)

Webpage: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/skyland

Facebook: www.facebook.com/SkylandsNJSC

Email: ggorman07419@embarqmail.com; Phone: 973-886-7950

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE and other OFFICERS (ExCom Members are elected to serve 2-year terms; term-expiry date in parentheses)

Chair (12/31/22)	Greg Gorman	ggorman07419@embarqmail.com
Vice Chair (12/31/23)	Susan Williams	SkylandsGroup@gmail.com
Secretary (12/31/22)	Norene Haberski	norenehaberski2@gmail.com
Treasurer (12/31/23)	Norene Haberski	norenehaberski2@gmail.com
ExCom at large (12/31/23)	Dave Alcock	dwhoob@hotmail.com
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Outings Chair	Dave Alcock	dwhoob@hotmail.com
Outreach Chair	Joanne Morgan	jojommorgan@yahoo.com
Environmental Justice	Susan Williams	SkylandsGroup@gmail.com
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	Susan Williams	SkylandsGroup@gmail.com
Co-Publicity Chairs	Jeri Doherty	bjd8974@gmail.com
	Joanne Morgan	jojommorgan@yahoo.com
Recycling/Zero Waste	Jill Aquino	jda1timeforchange@gmail.com
Chair Webmaster	Nicole Guerrieri	SierraClubNicole@gmail.com
Membership Chair	<i>Open Position – please contact Greg!</i>	

GENERAL MEETINGS (Conducted via Zoom)

The Skylands Group of the NJ Sierra Club serves the environmentally sensitive region of Sussex and Northern Warren Counties in Northwestern New Jersey.

We offer a variety of opportunities for the public to learn about and connect with their natural environment, including informative films and speakers at our monthly general meetings; exploration of the great outdoors on hikes, edible-plant tours, and picnics; public outreach via town tabling; and visits to schools to teach students about the environment. Our hope is to foster a love of and deep respect for our great outdoors.

As advocates, the Skylands Group works with other grassroots organizations to protect open spaces and water quality; promote clean energy; oppose privatization of our water and land public trust resources; and address other local, national, and global environmental issues as they arise.

CURRENT CAMPAIGNS: The Skylands Group advocates the protection of the Sparta Mountain Wildlife Management Area from logging done under the guise of creating "healthy forests" and opposes the proposed Tennessee Gas Pipeline Compressor station in Wantage.

The Skylands Group supports the Green New Deal, Sunrise Movement, Sierra Club's Ready for 100 Campaign, and projects to move toward a clean energy economy.

The Skylands Group also opposes the Munsonhurst Planned Residential development, which will adversely affect the ecology of a Natural Heritage Priority Site in Franklin Township (Sussex Co.)

HUNTERDON WARREN GROUP

(Hunterdon and Southern Warren counties)

Webpage: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/hunterdonwarren

Meetup: www.meetup.com/NJSierraClub/

Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/sierraclub.hunterdonwarren/

OFFICERS

Chair	Jonathan Wall *	jonwall@jonwall.com
Vice Chair	Celeste Martin *	onecentral@mac.com
Conservation Chair	<i>Open Position!</i>	
Political Co-Chairs	Karen Becker *	karbecker@gmail.com
	Amy Weeder *	aweeder@comcast.net

Highlands Issues Coordinator	Cinny MacGonagle *	cmacgonagle@yahoo.com
Outings	Jonathan Wall *	jonwall@jonwall.com
Social Media Coordinator	Matthew Avallone*	mattavallone@ymail.com
Treasurer, Secretary	John Kashwick	John.Kashwick@newjersey.sierraclub.org
Warren County Issues	Pat Banes *	patrick_banes@comcast.net
Webmaster/Listmaster	John Kashwick	John.Kashwick@newjersey.sierraclub.org
Fundraising Chair	<i>Open Position!</i>	

Please contact Jonathan if interested in open positions

* Group ExCom Member

GENERAL MEETINGS: Meetings are virtual for the time being. Please check www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/hunterdonwarren for updates or to register for events. Registered participants will receive Zoom meeting information. There is no meeting in August.

April 5 (Wed): 7:30 p.m. To be announced

May 4 (Wed): 7:30 p.m. “We are the Sierra Club!” Learn how the Sierra Club is organized and functions. Listen to volunteers speak about their environmental actions. See how you can participate on state committees or become more active in the Hunterdon Warren Group.

June 1 (Wed): 7 p.m. How to Brighten Our Homes and Darken Our Skies: Two presentations in one. Promoting Solar Power and Dark Skies. Randi Orlow will shed light on a Community Solar Program in Asbury, NJ. This renewable energy program adopted by the NJ Board of Public Utilities in 2019 aims to spread the benefits of solar energy equally to all citizens and communities.

Jonathan Wall, Chair of our local group and Chair of the NJ Chapter’s Dark Sky Committee along with John Kashwick, Chapter Vice-Chair, will present on the goal of darkening our skies to brighten the stars. Light pollution trespass spoils the night sky, disrupts the migration, eating, sleeping, and reproducing habits of wildlife. We live in an era of perpetual false dawn. As technology advances, light pollution will get worse unless we address these problems sooner than later.

OTHER EVENTS

April 13 (Wed): 7:30 p.m. Virtual Online Executive Committee/Planning Meeting. All members are welcome and encouraged to attend to learn more about the Club. Hear about and discuss issues, plan future events, and become more active.

CURRENT ISSUES

Oppose Mega-Warehouses: Contact and encourage your mayor and council to rezone large tracts of land to exclude warehouses. For more information, please contact Cinny MacGonagle at cmacgonagle@yahoo.com

Dark Skies: Voorhees State Park in Hunterdon County is home to the NJ Astronomical Association Observatory, which relies on dark skies. The Hunterdon Warren Group is initiating a campaign to have our county and local municipalities adopt stricter ordinances to reduce excessive light pollution which not only conflicts our view of the night sky but also wastes energy and harms wildlife and human health. Please contact John at John.Kashwick@newjersey.sierraclub.org if you are interested in this issue.

NORTH JERSEY GROUP

(Bergen and Passaic counties)

Webpage: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/north-jersey

Meetup: www.meetup.com/NJSierraClub/

Facebook: www.facebook.com/northjerseysierraclub

Twitter: @sierraclub_nj

Instagram: sierraclubnorth_nj

The duly elected nine-member Executive Committee benefits from the assistance of volunteers. If you are interested in participating at a planning level or as a member or leader of one of our committees (see the committee descriptions below), please contact the Group Co-Chairs or the Committee Chair.

OFFICERS

Co-Chair	Diane Scarangella*	diascat@hotmail.com
Co-Chair	Buddy Jenssen*	buddy.jenssen@gmail.com
Treasurer	Buddy Jenssen*	buddy.jenssen@gmail.com
Secretary	Laura Troy*	ltroy1019@gmail.com
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Co-Chair	Buddy Jenssen*	buddy.jenssen@gmail.com
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Member	Judy Green*	jugreen547@gmail.com
Climate Change Committee Chair	Jeff Rapaport*	jefrap@optonline.net
Marketing/Social Media Committee Co-Chair	Marie Mannino	mmannino@yahoo.com
Co-Chair	<i>Open Position!</i>	
Youth Outreach/Inner City Outings Committee Chair	Erica Cowper*	ecowper@drew.edu
Co-Chair	Sophia Neuendorff	Sophia.N.njico.sierraclub@gmail.com
Diversity/Environmental Justice Committee Co-Chair	Daniel Shirley	shirleydaniel712@gmail.com
Co-Chair	Bushra Asfare	bushra_c.e@hotmail.com
Special Events/Membership Committee Co-Chair	Hanna Atlas*	h.atlas425@gmail.com
Co-Chair	<i>Open position!</i>	
ExCom Member	Bob Weiss*	bobweiss1967@gmail.com

*Elected North Jersey Group ExCom Members

INITIATIVES: The North Jersey Group is committed to coalition building through outreach and planning with other Sierran Groups and with local and state nonprof -

it organizations. Our collaborative initiatives focus upon (1) encouraging municipal resolutions that support town-level adoption of renewable energy strategies and the environmentally friendly development of affordable housing; (2) opposing gas-fueled plants and the construction of pipelines, transport terminals and the use of tankers and trains to transport Bakken oil, liquid natural gas and other dirty fuels; (3) advocating for renewable energy sources; (4) opposing commercialization and development of county, state and local parkland and open spaces; (5) advocating for removal (not capping) of contaminated soil on undeveloped public land and the restoration of that land to its natural state; (6) advocating for the cleanup of polluted waterways and for the transition to nonpolluting sources of transport on the Hudson and other NJ/NY waterways; (7) supporting access to affordable health care to address the harm done to the health of residents in environmental justice communities; (8) increasing group diversity; and (9) supporting the efforts of organizations who are “on the ground” in environmental justice communities.

We continue to focus our existing efforts upon fighting climate change; creating more opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to enjoy and appreciate nature; and collaborating with coalitions, such as Empower NJ and Don’t Gas the Meadowlands, and with other New Jersey Groups to advocate for renewable energy and a moratorium on fossil fuel use, preserve our waterways, and protect our parklands.

UPCOMING EVENTS: Unless otherwise noted, meetings and outings are free and open to the general public. Events are announced via email and on our social media. Due to the virus, we have been forced to cancel our in-person events. We are in process of planning and/or co-sponsoring virtual and hybrid events for the summer and fall. Please check our Meetup page, Facebook page, or webpages for newly posted meetings and events. Please email our co-chairs or contact one of the committee chairs listed above, if you have suggestions for events or if you would like to be added to our email list. North Jersey Group committees are seeking volunteers to help us expand our offerings and develop new collaborative relationships with other groups and with corporations/businesses who are seeking to develop corporate responsibility programs in our area.

We are seeking volunteers. Please contact the Committee Contacts listed in our volunteer opportunities section if you are interested in joining dedicated people taking meaningful action in Bergen and Passaic Counties and throughout the state.

Volunteer opportunities with the North Jersey Group may be found below on page 13.

GATEWAY GROUP

(Hillside, Elizabeth, and Essex County, except for Livingston, Millburn and Roseland)

Please contact any of the leaders below if you are interested in joining our campaigns to protect the environment. There are several Group officer positions open.

Webpage: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/Gateway/

(also accessible from the NJ Chapter website)

Facebook: www.facebook.com/pages/Gateway-Group-NJ-Sierra-Club/128998363842782

OFFICERS

Chair	Bill Beren*	973-746-9661	Beren1@verizon.net
Vice-Chair	<i>Open Position!</i>		
Conservation Chair	Caroline Kane*	646-961-9003	ckane678@verizon.net
Secretary	<i>Open Position!</i>		
Treasurer	Rachel Tarzia*	908-531-2168	Rtarzia6@outlook.com
Program Co-Chairs	Suzanne Trimel*	973-509-8335	suzanne.trimel@gmail.com
	Steven Yafet	908-354-2537	syafet@gmail.com
Publicity Chair	Amanda Zhong		zhong.amanda@yahoo.com
Political Chair	Claire Ciliotta	973-746-0438	ccili279@gmail.com
Fundraising Chair	Rachel Tarzia	908-531-2168	Rtarzia6@outlook.com
Membership Chair	Steven Yafet*	908-354-2537	syafet@gmail.com
Newark Issues Chair	Jamie Bruno	973-393-2154	jjjjebruno@gmail.com

Environmental Justice Chair Shelly Rollins 201-443-7004 volunteer4400@gmail.com

Elizabeth Issues *Open Position!*

Recycling *Open Position!*

Passaic River Issues Steven Yafet (see above)

Outings Chair Steven Yafet (see above)

Webmaster Christy Morganstein 732-718-4343 christy@medartsweb.com

*Group Executive Committee

Please contact our Program Co-Chairs if you have ideas or suggestions for a meeting topic, program, or conservation project.

We invite YOU to join in our activism and ask your support as we strive to address the many issues facing our urban and suburban communities. Note the several vacant positions listed above.

CONSERVATION NEWS

As one of his first acts after the November election, Gov. Phil Murphy approved funds to purchase the rail right-of-way to build the Essex Hudson Greenway along the former Boonton Line tracks between Montclair and Jersey City. He also directed the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission to postpone voting on a contract to begin construction of a fracked gas power plant at their Newark facility. The plant is now on hold while the Commission reevaluates renewable energy alternatives.

In November, the Gateway Group cosponsored a rally in Montclair for Climate Action and Climate Justice to coincide with the Global Day for Climate Justice. We cosponsored the rally with Montclair Climate Action and 10 other environmental and good government groups. Although the event was quickly put together in less than a month, we attracted over 100 attendees, who listened to a number of speakers on local and regional climate-related issues.

In December, NJ Transit began soliciting bids for a proposed microgrid serving its North Jersey rail lines. Unfortunately, it does not provide a clear directive to develop an alternative energy microgrid.

>continued on page 8

The reconstruction of the Asia exhibit at the Turtle Back Zoo is underway. Drone surveillance of the zoo grounds shows that the zoo is now 52 acres, not the 30 acres claimed by Essex County, and it is not clear whether the Asia exhibit has expanded the zoo's footprint. Furthermore, 2 additional parking areas are included in a new plan funded by Green Acres and county open space money.

HUDSON COUNTY GROUP

Webpage: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/ HUDSON-COUNTY

Email: HUDSONSIERRACLUB@gmail.com

Facebook: @HCSierraClub

Instagram: @HCSierraClub

Twitter: @HCSierraClub

OFFICERS

Chair	Pramod Raju*	modisone@gmail.com
Secretary, Treasurer, Conservation Chair	Patricia Hilliard*	hilliard_patricia@hotmail.com
Co-Chair	Dave "Ace" Case*	acecase88@gmail.com
Political Chair	Ricardo Pereira*	rh.pereira.1995@gmail.com
Delegate to Chapter	Pramod Raju*	modisone@gmail.com
Membership	Pramod Raju*	modisone@gmail.com
Publicity	Alec Hilton*	alechilton1@gmail.com
Outings / Events	Steve Krinsky*	stevekrinsky@comcast.net
At-Large	Nancy Booth*	boothnancy2011@hotmail.com

*ExCom

Meeting Schedule: The Hudson Group will continue to meet remotely for now. Meetings are held four times a year. Members are welcome and encouraged to join the meetings. Contact us at HUDSONSIERRACLUB@gmail.com for details.

Upcoming Events: We are planning a number of activities in the near future: nature walks, shoreline cleanups, and public forums. Always check the online calendar for details. Watch your emails!

On Saturday, March 19: We will be doing a **Shoreline Cleanup at Lincoln Park West**. Always check the online calendar for details. Watch your emails!

Current Campaigns

Please join in. We can use help with any of these:

Environmental Justice: Clean air for Hudson County! Low-income communities and black and brown communities suffer the most from environmental destruction. Health concerns include elevated levels of cancer, asthma, and other respiratory disease from air pollution. Join us to push for electric school buses and trucks to reduce air pollution in Hudson County. We will be doing a presentation soon. Check our online calendar and watch your email!

Liberty State Park: The Liberty State Park Protection Act would end efforts to privatize the park once and for all! We attend and support all rallies called by the Friends of Liberty State Park. As part of our environmental justice campaign, we support the work on the interior of the park which will create 180 acres of wildlife habitat and 50 acres of active recreation for the community.

Skyway Park on the Hackensack River and Essex-Hudson Greenway: The Hudson County Group of the NJ Chapter of the Sierra Club is working to support and expand green spaces in Hudson County. We want to connect existing parks and trails, as part of the Crossroads Campaign to connect greenways across Hudson County. Join up and learn how you can help.

Hudson County Group Goals/Projects for 2022

1. Sustainability/Youth/Education: Sustainability includes recycling, composting, green infrastructure, mass transportation, and renewable energy. We want to create a task force to educate/promote these issues in our schools and municipalities. Let us know if you would like to help build this task force.

2. Political Action: In addition to preparing for upcoming elections in NJ, we hope to meet with sympathetic public officials to discuss strategies to show support for a number of environmental bills now in Trenton. These include the Liberty State Park Protection Act; NJ PACT: Protecting Against Climate Threats; Essex Hudson Greenway; and the Clean Energy Equity Act. We will also continue to push Gov. Phil Murphy and the state legislature to oppose fossil fuel infrastructure. We support the efforts of the Don't Gas The Meadowlands coalition in support of renewable energy for NJ Transit. Let us know if you would like to join our campaigns.

4. Communications/Social Media: We have created a team of social media activists who can utilize a number of formats to promote environmental issues and campaigns as well as email and the Sierra Club website. More traditional press will be included as well. Join us if you'd like to help.

5. Climate Change (NJ PACT): New studies show that Hudson County will be harder hit by sea-level rise and catastrophic flooding than any other NJ county. The NJ Sierra Club has joined with other leading environmental groups to form the Hudson Climate Coalition and Empower NJ. We are working to build awareness and grass roots support as we transition to 100% renewable energy locally by the year 2050, or sooner. Please get involved and be part of the solution.

LOANTAKA GROUP

(Morris and Union counties (except for Elizabeth and Hillside), plus Livingston, Milburn and Roseland, approximately)

Webpage: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/LOANTAKA

Facebook: www.facebook.com/LoantakaGroupNJSC

OFFICERS

Group Chair	Allen Swanson	201-715-7780	loantakachair@newjersey.sierraclub.org
Treasurer	Paul Sanderson	908-233-2414	paulsanderson@aol.com
Secretary	Jonathan Connor	201-463-7636	Jon78921@outlook.com
Conservation Chair	Allen Swanson	201-715-7780	afswanson@hotmail.com
Political Chair	Priti Thakker	973-752-1100	thakkerp@icloud.com
Programs	Bob Zega	973-349-8001	rjzega@yahoo.com
Fundraising Chair	<i>Open Position!</i>		
Outings Chair	Kevin O'Brien	908-403-0900	kbkob@aol.com
Publicity Chair	<i>Open Position!</i>		
Membership	<i>Open Position!</i>		
Webmaster	<i>Open Position!</i>		

If you might be interested in getting involved, please attend one of our Executive Committee meetings, the first Tuesday of each month (except July and August), and get to know us. Or, participate in one of our general meetings on the second Wednesday of the month (except July and August). There are no obligations and there will be no pressure. Currently, all meetings are held via Zoom.

For more of our activities, please visit: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/loantaka/
To join our email list, go to: lists.sierraclub.org/archives/nj-loantaka-news.html

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS are held on the FIRST TUESDAY of the month: 7:30 p.m., via Zoom. All members are welcome. There are currently some open positions! If you would like to find out more, please contact Paul Sanderson.

GENERAL MEETINGS are held on the SECOND WEDNESDAY of the month at 7:30 p.m. via Zoom. Learn something new and make some new friends. We would welcome the chance to meet you and introduce ourselves, even by Zoom. Please see the schedule below and join us! Instructions for access are posted on our webpage.

MEETING SCHEDULE

Currently, all Executive Committee and General Meetings are held safely by Zoom; however, in-person meetings at the Chatham Library may resume in January or shortly thereafter.

April 13: Please check the Loantaka webpages.

May 11: Please check the Loantaka webpages.

June 8: Please check the Loantaka webpages.

ACTIVITIES: The Loantaka Group is working with concerned citizens and local environmental organizations to protect open space and wildlife habitat in Morris and Union counties and to safeguard the water resources on which we all depend. In addition, the Group is actively involved in statewide initiatives involving air quality, transportation, and environmental legislation. Volunteers are always welcome. Call Allen at 201-715-7780. Consult our webpages for more information.

CENTRAL JERSEY GROUP

(Mercer County and neighboring towns in adjoining counties)

Webpage: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/central-jersey Or find us from the NJ Chapter's website.

We look forward to in-person activities, but for now activities are limited due to Covid-19. Our monthly lecture series will remain virtual. The Central Jersey Group will post any future activities on the webpage, Facebook page, and Pineypaddlers.com. Be patient, stay safe! And don't stop lobbying for our environment!!

OFFICERS

Group Chair	Joanne Pannone	jpatmeadowbrook@gmail.com
Group Vice Chair	Xiaoping Du	Du@yahoo.com
Secretary	Leona Fluck	Leona@Pineypaddlers.com
Treasurer:	Arlene Ceterskiva	Va2c2015@gmail.com
Outings	George and Leona Fluck	Leona@Pineypaddlers.com
Programs	Joanne Pannone	jpatmeadowbrook@gmail.com
Conservation Chair	Kip Cherry	Kipatthesierraclub@gmail.com
Recycling and Zero Waste Coordinator	Sylvia Kay	Sylviakay222@gmail.com
Trails	Dave Mattek	MattekDC@aol.com
Group Executive Committee Members	Joanne Pannone, Kip Cherry, Sylvia Kay	

Our monthly lecture is held virtually on Zoom the first Wednesday of the month. We have speakers discussing environmental issues impacting New Jersey. All members are welcome.

Our members are working to protect open space, wildlife habitat, water resources, and clean air. We are lobbying for electric school buses and environmental legislation. We help our legislators design legislation. We work with local groups (Hughes warehouses, Mercer Corporate Park, Dam Site 21) to provide information to protect from development that will adversely impact our lives. Statewide, we oppose the Gibbstown liquid natural gas terminal and NJ Transit's gas-powered electric plants, to name a few.

We must stand up for social justice in our communities. We welcome your input. Please join the Sierra Club. We are always ready to lobby at the State House for laws to fight polluters and climate change. We need a moratorium on new pipelines and fossil fuel projects to save the planet. New members are always welcome.

RARITAN VALLEY GROUP

(Middlesex and Somerset counties and surrounding areas)

Webpage: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/raritan-valley

Facebook: www.facebook.com/RaritanGroupNJSC

Twitter: www.twitter.com/RaritanSierra

OFFICERS

Group Chair	S. Pasricha	spjersey@gmail.com
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Conservation Chair	Gary Frederick	609-203-3382
	garyfrederick@newjersey.sierraclub.org	
Membership Chair	John Miraglia	johnworks3@aol.com
Political Co-Chairs	<i>Open Position!</i>	
Publicity Chair	<i>Open Position!</i>	
Treasurer	S. Pasricha	spjersey@gmail.com
Webmaster Co-Chairs	Paul Ehrlich	p.w.ehrlich-nj@outlook.com
	<i>Open Position!</i>	
Outings/Events Co-Chairs	John Miraglia, S. Pasricha, Bernadette Maher	
Student Liaison	Varin Dharia	
Group Executive Committee Members	Gary Frederick, S. Pasricha, Teresa Callahan, Kevin Corcoran, and Paul Ehrlich	

Our monthly membership meetings are typically held on the fourth Wednesday of each month in New Brunswick. We discuss environmental news (impacting Middlesex and Somerset counties), upcoming events, speakers, volunteer efforts, etc. To confirm interest/attendance please contact the RVG Chair.

The issues of interest to our communities include but are not limited to:

1. Opposition to gas and oil pipelines and new fossil fuel infrastructure that threaten the air, water, and our health
2. Conservation and protection of the Raritan River Basin area
3. Passage of and responsible enforcement of environmentally friendly ordinances
4. Land conservation, preservation of open space, and protection of Green Acres

NEWS FROM THE RARITAN VALLEY AREA

• **Northeast Supply Enhancement Project (NESE):** The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) granted a 2-year extension, until May 2023, to Williams Transco for NESE, to supply New York. A fracked gas burning compressor station (CS 206) is proposed for Franklin Township, Somerset County; a pipeline storage loop of three miles is to be built in Sayreville, and Raritan Bay is to be trenched in order to lay down 23 miles of pipes. Thank you to our friends from the Eastern Environmental Law Center, Clean Ocean Action, Princeton Manor, Central Jersey Safe Energy Coalition, and the Franklin Township Task Force, among others, for continuing efforts to stop this dangerous project! <https://bit.ly/35CuUKY>

• **Regional Energy Access Expansion Project (REAE):** The NJ Chapter of the Sierra Club, along with other environmental groups, submitted comments to FERC demanding that Williams Transco provide a full environmental impact statement (EIS) instead of an environmental assessment. FERC is requiring Williams to submit a full EIS for the newly proposed compressors in Old Bridge (CS 207) and Neshanic Station, Branchburg (CS 505). An explosion in 2013 injured 2 workers at CS 505, and parts of Neshanic Station were under water during tropical storm Ida. <https://bit.ly/35UtvPe>

• **Keasbey, Woodbridge Township:** Various towns have passed ordinances in opposition of a fracked gas power plant proposed by Competitive Power Ventures. New Jersey no longer requires that power suppliers prove that energy projects are needed.

• **Hidden Oak Woods development, East Brunswick, part of the northernmost Pine Barrens outlier:** In July 2021, the Superior Court of New Jersey, Appellate Division, ruled that the township should have required updated proof (letter of interpretation) from Alfieri Property Management that the area is free of wetlands. The trees have been cut and sold. Floods plague the neighboring properties.

• **The state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) upgraded regulations for Category 1 (C1) waterways** to protect water supplies for NJ residents. Unfortunately, Flemington and Raritan Township municipal utilities authorities have sued the DEP to downgrade C1 protections for the South Branch Raritan River in Somerset County, which would allow the continued dumping of chemically treated sewage into the river.

• **A \$25 million assessment related to the Raritan River Superfund** settlement from the Cornell-Dubilier Electronics superfund site has been allocated to the restoration of the Raritan River watershed. Twenty projects are planned for Branchburg and surrounding areas which include removing the Blackwell Mills dam, putting in fish passages, planting trees, and protecting endangered plants such as the swamp pink in East Brunswick.

• **Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) water contamination:** The Middlesex Water Company has stopped drawing water from a contaminated well until its water treatment facility in South Plainfield can be brought up to code under the new DEP thresholds. The facility reopening is projected for 2023. In the meantime, the company's customers in South Plainfield, Clark, Edison, Metuchen, Woodbridge, and Carteret are receiving water drawn from alternate sources.

• **A mega-warehouse on a 10-acre site along the Raritan River is proposed at 41 Glendale Road in Edison.** The town is in negotiation with the developer to purchase the property and convert it to open space.

• **Environmental justice, lead pipes:** The Sierra Club deeply appreciates that Chairman Frank Pallone and the House Energy and Commerce Committee are working to achieve President Biden's goal of 100% lead pipe replacement. <https://bit.ly/3pDJLEY>

• **Warehouse solar-ready bill:** S3504/A3352 sponsored by Sen. Bob Smith and Asm. James Kennedy, has been passed and is awaiting Gov. Phil Murphy's signature. The bill requires all newly constructed warehouses to be solar-ready buildings. <https://bit.ly/3ttGG21>

• **The Clean Ocean and Safe Tourism (COAST) Anti-Drilling Act** has been reintroduced by Congressman Frank Pallone. If enacted, this legislation will protect our coasts from oil/gas exploration, development and production. <https://bit.ly/3KkcrRP>

• **In the new 2022 legislative session,** the electric school bus bills have been reintroduced in the Assembly (A1282) by Asm. Sterley Stanley and the Senate (S759) by Sen. Patrick Diegnan. The Senate Transportation Committee has released S759 which requires the DEP to establish a 3-year pilot program to fund and demonstrate the advantages of electric school buses in NJ. <https://bit.ly/3Cj707D>

• **Keany and Edison:** Polluters are going to be held accountable in environmental justice communities. Attorney General Grewal and DEP Acting Commissioner Shawn

LaTourette announced the filing of new environmental enforcement actions. <https://bit.ly/3iOWjW>

We encourage you to get involved by attending your town's planning and zoning board meetings. If you are aware of development proposals in your town that may have a negative environmental impact, please contact us and join our meetings. We are also interested in any environmental news or events affecting Middlesex and Somerset counties and invite you to submit those items as well.

JERSEY SHORE GROUP

(Monmouth County, approximately)

Webpage: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/Jersey-Shore/

Facebook: www.facebook.com/JerseyShoreNJSC/

Instagram: www.instagram.com/sierraclub_jerseyshore/?hl=en

OFFICERS

Group Chair	Dennis Anderson	732-970-4327	dennisaza@aol.com
	6 Maple Ave, Matawan NJ 07747		
Vice Chair	Faith Teitelbaum	732-513-5445	faithtei@aol.com
Secretary	John Luard	732-708-9221	John.Luard@gmail.com
Conservation Co-Chairs	Faith Teitelbaum	732-513-5445	faithtei@aol.com
	Bob Sandberg	732-241-7757	Sandberg00@gmail.com
	Stan Greberis	732-431-0882	grapefruit@msn.com
	Jim Baye		jimbaye@optonline.net
Treasurer	Robin and Harold Zullow		drzullow@optonline.net
Political Co-Chairs	John Luard	732-708-9221	John.Luard@gmail.com
Outings Chair	<i>Open Position!</i>		
Outings Leaders	<i>Open Position!</i>		
Membership Chair	Wael Kanj		
Program Chair	Mary Reilly	908-731-2466	Mary@reillygreen.com
Climate Chair	Steve Miller	732-671-5917	SteveMiller@Comcast.net
Fundraising Co-Chair	Faith Teitelbaum	732-513-5445	faithtei@aol.com
Communications Chair	Wael Kanj		waelkanj@gmail.com
High School Coord.	<i>Open Position!</i>		
Letter-writing Committee	Steve Miller and Stan Greberis		

MEMBER MEETINGS

We present Zoom webinars, usually on the fourth Monday of every month at 7 p.m.

Speakers Contact: Mary Reilly, 908-731-2466 or Mary@reillygreen.com

If you are not getting emails announcing our webinars, please send one to Wael at waelkanj@gmail.com, or sign up at our webpage.

OCEAN COUNTY GROUP

Webpage: Meetup.com/Sierra-Club-Ocean-Group

OFFICERS

Acting Chair and Conservation Chair	Margit Meissner-Jackson	sylviaJ1910@yahoo.com
Vice-Chair and Treasurer	Laura Stone	LauraS36@yahoo.com
Outings and Environmental Education	Terrance Brown	terrybrown@comcast.net
Recording Secretary	Nancy Brown	nancybrown624@comcast.net
Political Chair	Margaret Mary Piccolo	gogreenp1@yahoo.com
Membership Chairs	Ray and Cathy Kozakerich	raykozak@comcast.net
Group ExCom Members	William Rodgers	
	Peter Leighton	JPLighton1@verizon.net
	Joyce Isaza	realtymstr@aol.com

Hospitality, Fundraising, Publicity, Webmaster *all open positions!*

ACTIVITIES & ISSUES: Our group is focused on many critical issues. Locally and state-wide we are fighting a myriad of overdevelopment problems. Along with our allies, we are working hard to save Barnegat Bay and The Pinelands, two natural gems in Ocean County.

WEST JERSEY GROUP

(Camden, Gloucester and Burlington counties, approximately)

Webpage: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/west-jersey

Facebook: www.facebook.com/WestJerseyGroupNJSC

Follow us on **Twitter** @Wjsierraclub and **Instagram** @wjsierraclub

Log on and Like Us!

OFFICERS

Group Chair	Gina Carola	856-848-8831	ginaceee@verizon.net
Vice-Chair	Frank Zinni		efzin4@aol.com
Secretary	Ellen Zinni		efzin4@aol.com
Treasurer	Trish Clements		patri3210@gmail.com
Publicity Chair	Anne Caridi		annecaridi@yahoo.com
Political Chair	Linda Rubiano		Linda_Maritza@yahoo.com
Pinelands Rep	Jaime Philpot		jpote345@gmail.com
Greenways Coords.	Frank and Ellen Zinni		efzin4@aol.com
Conservation Chair	Stacey Ayala		thunderwolfgalaxy@yahoo.com
Delegate at Large	Aida Ayala		thunderwolfgalaxy@yahoo.com
Membership Chair	Mike Brown	856-547-9221	eyebrown@verizon.net
Media			
Communications	Tony Hagen		editor@newjersey.sierraclub.org
Outings Chair	<i>Open position! Call Gina to volunteer: 856-848-8831</i>		
Fundraising Chair	<i>Open position! Call Gina to volunteer: 856-848-8831</i>		
Smart Growth Chair	<i>Open position! Call Gina to volunteer: 856-848-8831</i>		

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Programs Chair Open position! Call Gina to volunteer: 856-848-8831
Social Media Coords. Open position! Call Gina to volunteer: 856-848-8831

GENERAL MEETINGS are held at 7:30 p.m. on the SECOND WEDNESDAY of ALTER-NATE MONTHS, September thru May, via Zoom. You do not need Zoom software on your PC or Smartphone, just send an email to ginaceee@verizon.net to get an invitation and link to participate.

March 9: Pachamama Alliance—Creating a Sustainable Future for All. Marty Levin will present the mission of the alliance to empower indigenous people of the Amazon rain-forest to preserve their lands and culture and, using insights gained from that work, to educate and inspire individuals everywhere to bring forth a thriving, just, and sustainable world. Zoom meeting.

May 11: Butterflies: 200 Million Years of Evolution. Join us online to learn how butterflies have evolved over millions of years to become a very important species to the survival of all species. Zoom meeting.

Please check the West Group’s Facebook page for updates.

In the meantime, please wear your mask, continue to physically distance, and stay safe and well.

Contact Gina to get involved in any of our many initiatives on climate change.

SOUTH JERSEY GROUP

(Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland and Salem counties, approximately)

Webpage: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/south-jersey

OFFICERS

Group, Outings Chair	Tom Boghosian	609-335-6907	boghosian1@verizon.net
Vice-Chair	Open Position!		
Conservation Chair	Open Position!		
Political Chair, Calendars	Dick Colby	609-965-4453	dick.colby@stockton.edu
Membership Chair	Open Position!		
Secretary/Treasurer	Julie Akers	609-432-3280	julieakers56@gmail.com
At Large	Allie Horn		

Most of the officers listed above are wearing out (at least with respect to the Club) and would more than welcome new blood, with ideas and energy for local projects. One alternative is to fold back into the West Jersey Group (from which we originated in the mid-1970s). Please contact Dick Colby for a discussion. Otherwise, our consuming conservation issue, adopted just after the Group was founded, continues to be protection of the Great Egg Harbor Wild & Scenic River. This continues to demand the energies of those few officers who remain active both within the Sierra Club and in the Watershed Association (GEHWA) that spun off from the South Jersey Group. Very few of our local members seem interested in the meetings we once scheduled (monthly, from the early 1980s until 2005). For now, we’ll continue to be listed in this Newsletter, and offer a point of contact for Club members in South Jersey who want help with local issues. We strongly recommend GEHWA’s website for keeping up with local issues, and for links to many other local, regional, state, and national environmental organizations: www.gehwa.org.

Dick Colby is also an Atlantic County Parks Commissioner; contact him if you might be interested in attending monthly meetings of the Commission, which are open to the public. Tom Boghosian is an avid kayaker (certified as a Maine Guide!), both ocean-going and in fresh waters, possibly willing to lead trips. Julie Akers also works with Atlantic County Friends of the Parks and is President of the Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association. Allie Horn also serves as the Chapter’s Legislative Analyst and Social Media Coordinator.

Current Issues: (1) We’ve been blue-blazing the southern portion of what will be a continuous footpath between the southern and northern tips of New Jersey, called the New Jersey Long Trail. Many others (and other groups) are contributing. Detailed maps and descriptions are now on the Chapter website. Dick has also produced a brochure describing 15 historic walks in Egg Harbor City. Copies (electronic or paper) are available on request. Every municipality ought to have its own such brochure: This is a hint for you to try your hand at it! (2) We continue to hope for Community Solar opportunities for each municipality in South Jersey, operated by the Atlantic County Utilities Authority or other public agencies, promoted by the BPU, and with cooperative acceptance by the Atlantic City Electric Co. (3, etc.) Many other South Jersey issues are described in previous issues of this Newsletter, available on the Chapter website.

Some Allied Organizations, likely meeting by Zoom:

March 22, May 24: (alternating fourth Tuesdays), 6:30 p.m.: **Great Egg Harbor Watershed Assn.** Activities centered on protecting the Wild & Scenic Recreational River. All are welcome. Contact Julie Akers, 609-432-3280.

April 6, May 4, June 1: (first Wednesdays), 6:30 p.m.: **Atlantic County Friends of the Parks:** Monthly meetings of a group that works to improve and promote the Atlantic County Park System. All are welcome. Contact Julie Akers, 609-432-3280. Facebook: www.facebook.com/Atlantic-County-Friends-of-the-Parks-1672309633070169/

April 13, June 8: (alternate second Wednesdays), 7 p.m.: Bi-monthly meeting of **Citizens United to Protect the Maurice River and its Tributaries** (another “Partnership River” under federal protection): Cumberland County development issues are commonly discussed, including art and historical and recreational attributes of the area. Contact Karla Rossini (CU) at 609-774-5853 or karla.rossini@cumauriceriver.org. Website: www.cumauriceriver.org

April 20, June 15: (alternate third Wednesdays), 6:30 p.m.: **Great Egg Harbor Scenic and Recreational River Council:** Representatives of the 12 municipalities discuss and implement river management strategies. Open to the public. Contact Julie Akers, 609-432-3280.

March 23, April 27, May 25, June 22: (fourth Wednesdays), 7 p.m.: **Atlantic Audubon Society** is a lively member-organization with strong environmental programs and an excellent monthly online newsletter. Membership is free. Meetings (if physical) are in the Galloway Twp Library, 306 E Jimmie Leeds Rd. Website: <https://www.atlanti-caudubonsociety.com/>

SINGLES SECTION

(A chapter-wide special interest section offering hikes/cleanups, social gatherings, meetings, etc.)

Webpage: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/sierra-singles

OFFICERS

Interim Co-Chairs	Ron Pate and Jimi Oleksiak
Outings Chair	Open Position!
Conservation Chair	Open Position!
Treasurer	Open Position!
Social Chair	Open Position!
Vice Social Chair	Open Position!
Programs	Open Position!
Publicity	Open Position!
Membership	Open Position!
Nominations	Open Position!

Executive committee members Rozanna Fanelli, Ron Pate, and Jeff Sovelove.

We’re a friendly, active group of individuals who enjoy hiking, biking, canoeing/kayaking, as well as a variety of social and cultural activities throughout the year. This section was created to offer a variety of singles-oriented activities to NJ Sierra Club members.

PURPOSE: Our purpose is to acquaint single adults with the natural history and beauty of the surrounding area, to promote environmental conservation, and to provide recreational and social activities for members. All activities shall be consistent with Sierra Club purposes. We are not a local group; we’re a statewide additional “layer” of club involvement. Everyone is welcome to join us.

COMMUNICATIONS: The best way to be notified of upcoming events is to join our free listserv. Anyone may subscribe by going to: <https://lists.sierraclub.org/archives/NJ-SINGLES-NEWS.html> and clicking on “Join or leave the list.” You may subscribe and unsubscribe at will; directions on how to unsubscribe are at the bottom of each announcement. We recommend joining the listserv to receive announcements for all of our events a few weeks before each event. Events are also list on the online calendar on the Chapter’s web site: sierraclub.org/new-jersey. You can also “like” us on Facebook: “Singles Group New Jersey Sierra Club.” Activities will also be posted on Meetup.

SOCIAL GATHERINGS:

Social dinners: Join us for dinner the second Tuesday of each month at 6:30 pm, at a variety of restaurants in different locations. Jimi Oleksiak, the leader, will announce the details one week in advance through a listserv message. An RSVP will be required as described in the announcement.

HIKES AND OTHER OUTINGS: The Singles Section sponsors many outings, ranging from beginners’ level of hikes to advanced difficulty. Some of these are listed in the Outings section of this newsletter; others will be announced on our listserv, the Chapter’s online calendar, Facebook and Meetup. Hikes are for anybody who is capable of hiking the distance described. It is up to the person who wants to hike to determine their own ability and limits. All hikers are required to sign a liability waiver.

LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER (LGBTQ+) SECTION

Our mission is to support Sierra Club goals, and to promote environmental activism and social equity. We are an inclusive group and all are welcome to join our events.

Webpage: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/LGBT/

Meetup: www.meetup.com/njsierraclub

Facebook: www.facebook.com/njsierralgbt

OFFICERS

Chair	William Parish *	whparishiv@gmail.com
Secretary	John Kashwick *	John.Kashwick@newjersey.sierraclub.org
Treasurer	Jonathan Wall *	docjdwall@gmail.com
Outings Chair	Robert Zitzman *	robertmzi@yahoo.com
Fundraising	Matthew Lang *	matthewjlang58@gmail.com
Webmaster/Listmaster	John Kashwick *	John.Kashwick@newjersey.sierraclub.org

(* Section Executive Committee Member)

Please check web site for further meetings and events.

SENIOR SECTION / FIFTY-PLUS SECTION

The Senior Section is a chapter-wide special interest section for members over fifty years of age. The mission of this section is to support the Sierra Club’s goals through letter writing, phone calls, and other activities. We work through a list-serve, by which members learn about current environmental issues, how these issues can be supported, and places and events of interest to visit in New Jersey and surrounding states. In the future we hope to appoint members who will be responsible for leading and carrying out efforts related to those issues.

Arline Zatz is the Editor and Chair of the Senior Section/Fifty-Plus Section. She can be reached at azatz@funtravels.com and invites members to check her web site at www.funtravels.com for trips, tips, a source of travel information for New Jersey and other states.

Paul Ehrlich is the Vice-Chair (pehrlich-NJ@outlook.com). He vice-edits the Essays Section of the Senior Section web site. These essays are written by members of the NJ Sierra Club, and focus on environmental issues, including reports of environment-re-

lated news that may not be easily accessed by many members, opinions on how to deal with environmental problems, and support/criticism of environmental actions taken by organizations and individuals. Do you have anything you've been thinking about that you'd like to tell a large audience? Send an essay to Arline and Paul for editing and approval and it will be posted on our website.

The Senior Section/Fifty-Plus Section is also accessible online at <https://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/senior-section>

Visit our webpage regularly to find out about activities and events, including hikes, clean-ups, social gatherings, dinner get-togethers, and other functions for members over 50.

SIERRA STUDENT COALITION

(a semi-autonomous organization of college and high-school students)

National Website: www.ssc.org/

ICO: INSPIRING CONNECTIONS OUTDOORS

(A special interest activity with the motto: "No child left inside!")

Co-Chairs Zachary Rose & Oscar Nazar chair.njico.sierraclub@gmail.com
Other Officers Amanda Gaglio, Mike Depardieu

New Jersey Inspiring Connections Outdoors: (NJ ICO) provides safe and fun wilderness trips for children and teenagers with limited access to the outdoors. Volunteer leaders collaborate with community partners to facilitate, lead and promote events that will educate and foster a love of nature and the outdoors for youth in New Jersey who may not otherwise have the opportunity or the means. The program works to reduce barriers by providing gear, transportation, trip fees and leaders to create opportunities to explore, enjoy and advocate for nature. The Chair welcomes inquiries from leaders of schools and other community organizations.



GROUP OUTINGS COORDINATORS

Chapter Outings Chair: Ellen Blumenkrantz
ellenblumenkrantz@hotmail.com, 201-784-8417

Skylands: Dave Alcock, dwhoob@hotmail.com

Hunterdon Warren: Jonathan Wall
psychologist@jonwall.com

North Jersey: Co-Chairs: Ellen Blumenkrantz
ellenblumenkrantz@hotmail.com,
and Mary Walsh, blehlwalsh@hotmail.com

Gateway: Open Position!

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natalyadt@gmail.com

Loantaka: Kevin O'Brien, kbkob@aol.com

Central Jersey: Leona & George Fluck
Leona@pineypaddlers.com

Raritan Valley: John Miraglia, johnworks3@aol.com
S. Pasricha, spjersey@gmail.com; Bernadette Maher

Jersey Shore: John Luard, John.Luard@gmail.com

Ocean County: Terrance Brown, 848-333-7331
terrybrown@comcast.net

West Jersey: Open Position!

South Jersey: Tom Boghosian; 609-625-0878 (H)
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Singles Section: Open Position!

LGBT Section: Jonathan Wall, dojdwall@gmail.com
and Robert Zitzman, robertmz@att.net

ICO: chair.njico.sierraclub@gmail.com

River Touring: Fred Tocce, 908-453-2205 (H)
RD-1, Box 277, Washington 07882

Outing Leaders: Please send write-ups for July-to-September 2022 to your Group Outings Coordinator (or, if you don't associate yourself with a single Group, directly to the new Chapter Outings Chair) before May 5. If you are planning to lead an outing close to the beginning of one of our quarterly publication periods, please submit it also for the previous *Sierran*, due to the occasional lag in mailing. Also, please send outing rosters or sign-up sheets to the Chapter office as soon as possible after each outing.

Note to Group Outings Coordinators: Please submit your July-to-September 2022 trip write-ups by May 10.

NOTES ON OUTINGS: All Outings are generally open to Club members, guests and anyone interested in outings. Unless otherwise specified, the events are free and open to the public. All participants must sign liability waivers on all outings sponsored by the Sierra Club. Please check with the leader before bringing small children on an outing. A parent or other responsible adult must accompany persons under 18. At their discretion, leaders may permit pets on outings if the event description specifically includes bringing pets.

Sierra Club outings are arranged by volunteer leaders who are in charge of the trip and responsible for the safety, welfare, and enjoyment of all participants. Leaders determine qualifications to participate, adequacy of

equipment, routes to be followed, and special precautions to be taken. Please arrive adequately prepared and equipped. If you have any allergies, please remember to bring your medication. The leader has the final word in the conduct of the trip. Your cooperation will help assure a safe and pleasant outing.

Please arrive early at the meeting place so that the outing can start on time. For day hikes, lunch, water (at least a liter), extra clothing, rain gear, and emergency equipment should be carried in a small daypack. For all except easy hikes, sturdy over-the-ankle shoes or boots should be worn. For most trips, you are expected to have your own equipment. In some cases, it may be rented from outdoor/camping suppliers—check the yellow pages or call the trip leader. If the weather is questionable on the date of the outing, you may assume that it will take place, unless the schedule indicates otherwise.

Registration is required for all outings, and all outings are limited to 10 to 12 people at the discretion of the trip leader. Face masks are not required for adults, but are suggested. Face masks are required for all children. Please keep appropriate space (6 ft) between you and other participants on all outings. If you are sick and experiencing any possible Covid-19 or cold/flu symptoms, do not attend the outing.

Watercraft trips let you experience the unspoiled parts of our region, but water safety does impose special requirements. The size and skill of each party must be appropriate to each river, so participation in each trip must be at the discretion of the leader. We ask you to register at least one week in advance. Unless a phone number is provided, please send an email with an honest assessment of your paddling experience, whether you need or can offer a ride, your phone number, and any questions you may have. You will receive a description of the trip, with directions, where you can rent a canoe, and what you will need to bring. Almost all trips can arrange partners to share a canoe if you are coming by yourself. Unless stated otherwise: rental canoes are available, trips do not require advanced paddling skill or exceptional physical conditioning, public transportation is not available, nonmembers may participate, and responsible smokers are welcome.

If you are a Sierra Club member interested in becoming an Outing Leader or have suggestions for new outings, contact your Group Outings Chair or the Chapter Outings Chair for assistance and further information. The Sierra Group contributing each outing is given at the end of the writeup, as follows:

Atlantic Chapter, ACOC; Central Jersey, C; Gateway, G; Jersey Shore, JS; Loantaka, L; NJ Chapter, NJ; North Jersey, N; Raritan Valley, RV; River touring, RT; Singles (SS); Skylands, Sk; South Jersey, S; West Jersey, W.

April 9 (Sat): Hike the Franklin Parker Preserve (Burlington Co.) 10 a.m., 4-5 miles, easy pace on the Yellow Trail. The acquisition of the Franklin Parker Preserve in 2003 by the New Jersey Conservation Foundation was a momentous occasion in conservation. This 9400-acre preserve is a keystone piece of land, linking the expanses of Brendan Byrne, Wharton, and Penn State Forests and creating a more contiguous Pinelands National Reserve. Meet at Speedwell entrance off Rt. 563, Woodland Township. Leashed dogs are welcome. Bring lunch, snacks, and water. Inclement weather cancels. Preregistration is required; participant limit is 10. George & Leona F., leona@pineypaddlers.com (W)

April 9 (Sat): Cheesequake State Park Hike, Old Bridge (Middlesex Co.) 10 a.m., 5 miles, moderate pace. Bring plenty of water and a snack. Hiking boots recommended. Inclement weather cancels. Group size is limited to 10 participants. Registration required via web. Start with the calendar at www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey and click on the Cheesequake State Park hike, then click on RSVP. Leader: Kevin O'Brien, kbkob@aol.com (L)

April 9 (Sat): Cherry Blossom Festival Hike, Belleville/Newark (Essex Co.) 10 a.m., 7 miles, 4 hours, moderate pace over level terrain. There will also be a shorter, 3-4 mile version of the route, with a second leader. Features: cherry blossoms. There are two visitor centers with indoor bathrooms. Sneakers or hiking boots are required. Pack a lunch with water. Preregistration is required via web: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey Click on the Cherry Blossom Festival Hike, then on RSVP. Directions to meeting place will be sent to members who register. Leader: Jimmi Oleksiak, he_Hikist@Mac.com The_Hikist@Mac.com

April 10 (Sun): Hike Tatum Park, Middletown (Monmouth Co.) 2:30 p.m. Tatum offers a near-climax forest and many open meadows; terrain is varied with opportunities for short climbs. We will walk about 4 miles in about 2 hours. Supportive footwear is recommended, bring plenty of water. Register online at Hike at Tatum Park, Middletown (sierraclub.org). Leader John Luard (john.luard@gmail.com) will provide meeting place after you register. (S)

April 15 (Fri): Hike at The Watershed Institute (Mercer Co.) 10 a.m. 3-4 miles, easy pace. Keeping water clean, safe, and healthy is the heart of the Institute's mission: working to protect and restore our water and natural environment in Central New Jersey through conservation, advocacy, science, and education. Certified as LEED-Platinum through the US Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design program, the facility demonstrates innovative strategies for conserving and managing water and energy. Pets are not permitted. Meet at 31 Titus Mill Road Pennington, NJ <https://thewatershed.org/about> Bring water and lunch. Rain cancels. Preregistration is required; Participant limit is 10. Co-Leaders: Leona F., leona@pineypaddlers.com, and Joanne P., jpatmeadowbrook@gmail.com (C)

April 22 (Fri): Earth Day Cleanup at Mercer County Park (Mercer Co.) 10 a.m.-noon. Lake Mercer was formed by Assunpink Dam No. 20 and is part of the Delaware River Watershed. Today is the 52nd Anniversary of Earth Day. Join the NJ Sierra Club Central Group and enjoy the outdoors as we clean up litter. We will walk along Lake Mercer and on the wooded trails with emerging wildflowers. Bring lunch and water. Gloves and trash bags will be provided. Leashed dogs are welcome. Rain cancels, bring water and lunch. Preregistration is required; participant limit is 10. Co-Leaders: Leona F., leona@pineypaddlers.com, and Joanne P., jpatmeadowbrook@gmail.com (C)

April 23 (Sat): Earth Day hike and cleanup at Eagle Rock Reservation (Essex Co.) 10 a.m. We will meet at the 9/11 memorial and work for several hours in the reservation. We will provide all materials. Contact Leader Ron Pate, ronpate31@verizon.net, to register. (SS)

April 28 (Thu): Spring Hike at the Manasquan Reservoir (Monmouth Co.) 10 a.m., 5 miles, easy pace. We'll meet at the Visitor Center on 311 Windeler Rd., Howell. A bald eagle pair are longtime residents and have been spotted at the reservoir, waterfowl as well. We'll tour the Environmental Center as we walk the trail. Bring water, snacks, and lunch. Rain cancels. Leashed dogs are welcome. Preregistration is required; Participant limit is 10. Co-leaders: John Miraglia, johnworks3@aol.com, and Leona F., Leona@pineypaddlers.com (RV)

April 30 (Sat): Friends of Monmouth Battlefield Bird Walk at Monmouth Battlefield State Park (Monmouth Co.) Meet 9 a.m. at the Visitors Center. The Friends of Monmouth Battlefield will be leading a guided bird walk on the Battlefield. Their walk will identify birds who live there or pass through in the spring. Check this link for more information and the Friends 2022 schedule of events www.friendsofmonmouth.org/ Social distancing and other Covid-19 precautions will be followed. To receive further information if cancelled due to inclement weather, please register with Leona F., leona@pineypaddlers.com, or John Miraglia, johnworks3@aol.com (RV)

MAY

May 7 (Sat): Spring Hike at Duke Farms (Somerset Co.) 10 a.m., 3-4 miles, leisurely walk with stops along the way. Duke Farms serves as a model of environmental stewardship in the 21st century. Meet at the Farm Barn Orientation Center. www.dukefarms.org/ Bring your camera, water, and lunch on the hike. Pets are not permitted. Rain cancels. Preregistration is required; group size is limited 10 participants. Social distancing and other Covid-19 precautions will be followed. Co-Leaders: Sindhu P., spjersey@gmail.com, and Leona F., leona@pineypaddlers.co

May 8 (Sun): Hike Shark River Park, Wall (Monmouth Co.) 2:30 p.m. We will enjoy the babbling brook that's Shark River in this area and then walk through the outer reaches of the park. About 5 miles, a little over 2 hours; some short climbs, mostly flat. Beginners welcome, supportive footwear recommended, bring plenty of water. Register online at [Hike at Shark River Park, Wall \(sierraclub.org\)](http://Hike at Shark River Park, Wall (sierraclub.org)). Leader John Luard, john.luard@gmail.com, will provide meeting place after you register. (JS)

May 12 (Thu): Hike at Double Trouble State Park/Village (Ocean Co.) 10 a.m. 3-4 miles, easy pace. Originally a cranberry farm and packing plant, the former company town called Double Trouble is a window into past and current industries in the Pinelands. Meet at Double Trouble State Park, Pinewald-Keswick and Double Trouble Rds. Leashed dogs are welcome! Bring lunch, snacks, water, and a folding chair for our lunch break after the walk. Preregistration is required; Participant limit is 10. Rain cancels. Leona and George F., Leona@pineypaddlers.com (W)

May 14 (Sat): Allamuchy Mountain State Park Hike, Stanhope (Sussex Co.) 10 a.m., 4 miles, moderate pace. Bring plenty of water and a snack. Hiking boots recommended. Inclement weather cancels. Group size is limited to 10 participants. Registration required via web: Start with the calendar at www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey and click on the Allamuchy Mountain State Park hike, then click on RSVP. Leader: Kevin O'Brien, kbkob@aol.com (L)

May 14 (Sat): Ringwood State Park and Botanical Gardens Hike (Passaic Co.) 10 a.m., 7 miles, 4 hours over hilly terrain, with moderate to strenuous difficulty. A second leader will lead a shorter version of the hike, 3-4 miles, moderate to easy. Hike includes the NJ Botanical Gardens and there is a restroom near the parking lot. Wear hiking boots and pack water and a lunch. Registration via web is required: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey. Click on Ringwood State Park Hike, then RSVP. Meeting place directions will be sent to members who register. Leader: Jimi Oleksiak, The_Hikist@Mac.com The_Hikist@Mac.com

May 15 (Sun): Hike at Duke Island Park (Somerset Co.) 10 a.m., 4-5 miles, easy pace. Duke Island Park includes trails, which are part of the Raritan River Greenway. We'll meet at the Visitors Center, which is located near the main parking area and houses the Park Ranger office and the restroom facilities - Old York Rd., Bridgewater, NJ. Inclement weather cancels. Bring snacks, water, and lunch. Leashed dogs are welcome. Preregistration is required; Group size is limited to 10 participants. Co-Leaders: Sindhu P., spjersey@gmail.com, and Leona F., leona@pineypaddlers.com (RV)

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APRIL

April 1 (Fri): A Lighthearted Day No Pranks—Hike at Mercer County Park (Mercer Co.) 10 a.m., 4-5 miles, easy pace. We'll meet at the East Picnic Area parking lot 1346 Edinburg Rd., Princeton Junction, NJ 08550. We'll walk the East Trails and see the new campground available for overnight camping on the trail to the Casperson Rowing Center. Bring lunch, water, and snacks. Leashed pets are welcome. Preregistration is required; group size is limited to 10 participants. Rain cancels. Leader: Joanne P., jpatmeadowbrook@gmail.com (C)

May 19 (Thu): Hike at Mercer County Park (Mercer Co.) 10 a.m., 3-4 miles, easy pace. We'll meet at the Mercer County West Picnic area located alongside Lake Mercer. There is a bald eagle nest on the other side of the lake which can be viewed best with binoculars. Bring binoculars, lunch, water, and snacks. Leashed pets are welcome. Rain cancels. Preregistration is required. Participant limit is 10. Co-Leaders: Leona F., leona@pineypaddlers.com, and Joanne P., jpatmeadowbrook@gmail.com (C)

JUNE

June 1 (Wed): Canoe/Kayak at Lake Mercer in Mercer Park (Mercer Co.) 10 a.m. "It's National Say Something Nice Day!" We'll paddle the 365-acre lake and explore the Assunpink Creek upstream. Mercer Lake was created in the 1970s with a dam to control the flooding in Trenton from the Assunpink Creek. We'll see blue herons fishing at the water's edge and many other birds. Bring water and snacks. Meet at the Marina Boat Ramp parking lot where we unload and launch our boats. Preregistration is required; group size is limited to 10 participants. Rain cancels. George and Leona F., leona@pineypaddlers.com (C)

June 4 (Sat): National Trails Day hike and trail maintenance, Eagle Rock Reservation (Essex Co.) 10 a.m. We will meet at the 9/11 memorial and work for several hours. Contact leader Ronald Pate for details and registration: ronpate31@verizon.net" ronpate31@verizon.net (SS)

June 5 (Sun): Roebing Museum Tour and Village Walk (Burlington Co.) 10 a.m. A former gateway to the Roebing Mill, the main gate museum building was once the passage point for thousands of workers entering the steel mill each day. The 7,000 sq ft building now houses five galleries, Investors Bank Media Room, offices, lobby, gift shop, and the Ferdinand Roebing III Archives of the Roebing Museum. Two short documentary films run continuously. The museum admission fee is \$7. Option to take the River Line to Roebing Museum parking lot. Social distancing and other Covid-19 precautions will be followed. Bring lunch, water, and snacks. Contact leaders to confirm meeting time and details. Co-leaders: Leona F., leona@pineypaddlers.com, and Joanne P., jpatmeadowbrook@gmail.com (W)

June 11 (Sat): Sterling Forest Hike, Tuxedo Park (Orange County) 10 a.m., 7 miles in 4 hours over moderately rugged terrain. The cool and clear water of Sterling Lake will cool our feet. There is a visitors center near the lake with restrooms. A changing tent will be set up. No pets. Bring hiking boots, water, and lunch. Swimsuits are optional. Preregistration via the web is required: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey Meeting place directions will be sent to members who register. Leader: Jimi Oleksiak, The_Hikist@Mac.com

June 12 (Sun): Hike Huber Woods Park, Middletown (Monmouth Co.) 3 p.m. We will walk the hickory and oak forest, with occasional distant views of the Navesink River, and listen and look for pileated woodpeckers. The mountain laurel should be in bloom. About 4 miles in about 2 hours, some ups and downs. Beginners welcome, supportive footwear recommended, bring plenty of water. Register online: [Hike at Huber Woods Park \(sierraclub.org\)](http://Hike at Huber Woods Park (sierraclub.org)). Leader John Luard, john_luard@gmail.com, will provide meeting place after you register. (JS)

June 18 (Sat): Watchung Reservation Hike, Mountainside (Union Co.) 10 a.m., 6.5 miles, moderate pace. Bring plenty of water and a snack. Hiking boots recommended. Inclement weather cancels. Group size is limited to 10 participants. Registration required via web: Start with the calendar at www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey and click on the Watchung Reservation Hike, then click on RSVP. Leader: Kevin O'Brien, kbkob@aol.com (L)

Upcoming Meetings

All members are welcome to attend these monthly policy deliberations, held by Zoom video conferencing on second Saturdays. Zoom can be accessed from a computer, smartphone, or telephone. The Conservation Committee meets from 10 a.m. to noon and the Executive Committee meets from 1 to 3 p.m. For meeting link, contact secretary@newjersey.sierraclub.org.

Upcoming Meetings: April 9, May 14, June 11, July 9



SIERRA CLUB

NEW JERSEY CHAPTER LEADERSHIP

Chapter Chair and Group Effectiveness Chair
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Chapter Vice-Chair and Legislative Committee Chair
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Judy Minot, Stan Greberis, Kip Cherry, Rich Isaac, John Kashwick, Paul Sanderson, Ken Johanson, Renée Pollard, Joe Testa

Advisors and Liaisons
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School Liaison
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Inspiring Connections Outdoors Chair (ICO)
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Light Pollution and Night Sky Committee
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PFAS Committee
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Brownfields and Superfund Sites
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If no one is in the office to take your call, please leave a message on the answering machine. Please spell your last name, and state whether the phone number you leave is for daytime or evening.

Please share this newsletter with a nonmember friend and invite them to join (see membership coupon this page).



THE JERSEY Sierran
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Opinions, unless otherwise attributed, are of the writer only. Advertised products and services carry no Club endorsement.

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Volunteer With the North Jersey Group

NORTH JERSEY GROUP VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Webmaster Wanted: We are seeking a dedicated webmaster to work with our Marketing/Social Media Committee. We need someone to develop, monitor, and update our webpages and reach out to Group members to obtain/prepare copy for these. If interested, please contact Marie at mmannino@yahoo.com

Political Action Committee Co-Chair Wanted: We are seeking someone to assist the Chair of the Committee. This person will be involved in interviewing and recommending candidates for political office in Bergen, Passaic, and Hudson Counties (where there is overlap), tracking relevant state legislation, and keeping our members informed of potential local actions regarding legislation. Learn where our elected officials and candidates for office stand on environmental issues by examining their voting records and interviewing them. You can phone bank or otherwise work from your home, or visit candidates and their representatives in their offices. Canvass door-to-door for endorsed candidates. The way you contribute is up to you, but know there is work to do. If interested, contact Ron De Vos at rondevos58@outlook.com

Conservation Committee: We assist people in the community with grassroots efforts to prevent destruction of natural habitat in Bergen and Passaic Counties and surrounding areas. Help us by finding and reviewing public records, circulating petitions, going door-to-door with lawn signs, speaking in public meetings, and attending and organizing press conferences. The choice of activity is up to you. No activity or time commitment is too small. Make your voice heard. If interested, contact Mary at north.outings.chair@newjersey.sierraclub.org or Buddy at buddy.jenssen@gmail.com

Climate Change Committee: The objectives of the Climate Change Committee are to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, discourage new fossil fuel facilities (like the Meadowlands and NJ Transit gas-powered plants) and encourage the use of renewable energy. Slowing down climate change may give scientists time to find permanent solutions to this crisis. Our committee works in conjunction with other environmental groups to support a transition to renewable energy. Your help could bring us a little closer to a cleaner, safer, and healthier world for our children and grandchildren—be a part of it! For more information or to sign up, contact Jeff at jefrap@optonline.net

Event Planning and Membership Committee Co-Chair Wanted: Interested in conducting an event on a particular topic? Like speaking with other people about environmental issues and concerns? This committee is for you! We seek someone who is dedicated to the environment, believes in the Sierra Club, is enthused about the actions our North Jersey Group is taking, and wants to help us move forward through program planning and the recruitment of new members. If interested contact Hanna Atlas at h.atlas425@gmail.com

Marketing/Social Media Committee: Are you creative? Do you love graphic design, writing press releases and short stories, contacting newspapers and radio, and using social media? We need you! If interested, contact Marie at mmannino@yahoo.com

Outings Committee: Organize and lead hikes, snowshoeing, kayaking, and your other favorite outdoor activities on trails and locations of your choice. Trips can vary in length, level of difficulty and location. If interested, contact Mary at north.outings.chair@newjersey.sierraclub.org or Buddy at buddy.jenssen@gmail.com

Youth Outreach/Inner City Outings: These Committees reach out to youth, high school, and college students and plan nature walks in local parks for elementary and middle school youth. This outreach includes encouraging local teenagers to become organizers of these events, so that all can appreciate the value of the outdoors. The committee creates liaisons with local schools, parents, other youth groups, and Sierra Club certified hike leaders to help young people learn to appreciate and protect the planet as they explore the natural world. The Committee uses social media to expand participation, as the group conforms to the goals of the national Sierra Club. If you are interested, contact Erica at ecowper@drew.edu or Sophia at Sophia.N.njico.sierra-club@gmail.com

Diversity, Inclusion, and Environmental Justice Committee: Do you want to act to support social, racial, economic, and environmental justice? Do you believe that the Sierra Club must become more diverse and that our effectiveness is tied to increased inclusivity? If yes, then our new Diversity, Inclusion and Environmental Justice Committee is the place for you! The North Jersey Chapter promotes awareness of state, national, and international-level efforts addressing environmental justice and inequality at large. If you are interested in participating in the activities of this committee, contact Daniel at shirleydaniel712@gmail.com or Bushra Asfare at bushra_c.e@hotmail.com

For more information about the North Jersey Group, see the Group News section of this newsletter or visit <https://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/north-jersey>

Opinion: Why Does Nature Feel So Natural to Us?

By George Moffatt

Why are Sierrans, other environmentalists, and most of humanity so concerned about protecting nature? There may be as many reasons as there are thoughtful people, but why do we have this feeling at all?

Well, we do have centuries-old theological imperatives. The Old Testament urges, “But ask the beasts, and they will teach you; the birds of the heavens, and they will tell you; or the bushes of the Earth, and they will teach you; and the fish of the sea will declare to you.” The mystic and preacher Saint Francis of Assisi has written, “Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Earth our Mother who sustains and governs us.” And the metaphysics of Islam teach about *hima*, conservation of land; *ayat*, the many signs of God; and *khilafah*, or stewards of the world.

These are just a few examples of what is called *biophilia*—the human desire to connect with nature and the many creatures of the Earth.

Secular, current-day appreciation of nature encompasses a wide range of mental states: serenity, contemplation, appreciation, fondness, otherworldliness, humility, and thankfulness.

For many decades, our environmental reverence and sense of connectedness with nature have been the subject of a wide range of disciplines, including evolutionary psychology, education, medicine, anthropology, and even workplace design, all part of the growing study of biophilia.

The basis for this study grew from a theory that maintains our affinity for nature is genetic, an affective part of us that can be traced back to the prehistoric evolution of our species. Other human traits, such as why we hunt and are aggressive, have also been linked to our genetic makeup, but not without controversy.

The term biophilia was first used in 1973 by the psychologist and sociologist Erick Fromm in his book, “*The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*,” to describe our psychological attraction to all that is alive and vital. The term was popularized by the naturalist Edward O. Wilson, who described biophilia as “the connections that human beings subconsciously

seek with the rest of life” and humanity’s “innate tendency to focus on life and lifelike processes.”

Wilson espoused a conservation or environmental ethic based on the innate relationships we humans share with nature. His theory included our ancient dependence on nature, the pleasures nature provides us, the physical appeal of nature, its challenges, our esthetic attachment to landscapes, and our emotional attachment to animals, even those we hunt for food.

Other studies have shown that even a simple connection with nature—sometimes just gazing out of a window—increases our productivity and health, promotes healing in hospital patients, sharpens creative thinking, and even reduces the frequency of sickness in prisons. Even small parks and playgrounds have this [effect](#).

The hypothesis of our biophilic attachment to nature maintains that it evolved over eons to become part of our genetic makeup because of our [relationships](#) with nonhuman species. Because our ancestors remained closely connected to and attuned to nature throughout our species’ evolution, we exist today. (The lack of dinosaurs helped.)

Wilson and others cautioned, however, that our increased reliance on technology these last few centuries has adversely affected our biophilic respect for and connectedness to the natural world. And as any Sierran or other environmentalist will tell you, we are losing that vital connectedness. This diminution has led to Homo sapiens’ indifference to the environmental destruction and rapid extinction of species that we are causing.

We know that our appreciation of nature has been a human trait for eons, and, in theory, restoring our biophilic connection with nature is a driving factor in the modern environmental movement, whether we accept its prehistoric origins or not. Or so the hypothesis goes.

But, yes, even committed nature lovers can occasionally be adversely affected by nature, a condition called biophobia. An example would be our sudden fear while hiking, when we stumble upon a coiled snake—staring at us.

Help Make the Water Gap a National Park!

By John Kashwick • Chair of the Delaware Water Gap National Park and Preserve Committee

Efforts by the New Jersey and Pennsylvania Chapters of the Sierra Club to have the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area redesignated as a national park and preserve are gaining steam. This area deserves national park status. Filled with scenic wonders and historical artifacts, it also protects a portion of the homeland of the Lenape people.

The Appalachian Mountain Club, PennEnvironment, and Environment America have signed on to support redesignation. In addition, the Board of County Commissioners for Warren County, led by Commissioner James Kern, has passed a resolution supporting the cause. We have had positive news

stories in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, the *Star-Ledger*, on WBZT, and in several other news outlets.

We continue to reach out to other environmental groups, outdoor and sporting groups, the hunting and fishing community, chambers of commerce, faith-based groups, and councils representing the Lenape. We also are trying to get as many local government entities as possible to endorse the project.

Are you interested in supporting this important grassroots effort? Send me an email and let us know: john.kashwick@newjersey.sierraclub.org Thanks!

There’s an interactive CALENDAR for outings and Group events on our website (sc.org/njcalendar). Click “Events and Outings”

Have you tried a portion (or more) of New Jersey’s new Long Trail? High Point to Cape May Point! Its description (with maps) is now the most visited “post” on the Chapter website: <https://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/long-trail>.