



Fracking in New York State - An Update

by John Kastner

While New York State's hold on hydrofracking remains in effect, the gas industry, apparently with the aid of our Department of Conservation (DEC), is moving along with their plans as if fracking NY was a done deal. Processes are underway to secure land for pipelines, and to enable permits for the transportation and storage of liquid natural gas (LNG). LNG facilities have been banned in NYS since 1973 when one exploded on Staten Island, killing 40 people.

Even though fracking does not yet have the green light here, the DEC has issued a draft regulatory impact statement proposing rules for permitting a huge storage facility on Seneca Lake and an export terminal at Port Ambrose (off the coast of Long Island), and rules for transporting LNG by truck. The public comment period for these rules was extended to 12/4/13. See Dr. Sandra Steingraber's "30 Days of LNG Regulations" (thirtydaysoffrackingregs.com) to learn a bit about these proposed (at press time) regulations. She makes the learning enjoyable! One of the interesting things you'll learn from Dr. Steingraber is that Governor Christie of New Jersey rejected a proposed offshore LNG facility as not being consistent with his state's commitment to renewable energy.

Much of the work creating documents related to the fracking issue is conducted in secret. These include the DEC's revisions of the widely rejected Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement (SGEIS) and the health impact "study" which State Health Commissioner Dr. Nirav R. Shah was directed to undertake before a new SGEIS could be written. Now it has been revealed by Walter Hang, President of Toxics Targeting, an environmental database service, that no actual scientific study of the health impacts of fracking on exposed populations has been done. Rather, Dr. Shah's report consists of a mere review of the unpublished revised SGEIS. The report cites not completed studies and makes reference to at least one study that has not even begun due to underfunding by the federal Environmental Protection Agency. When NYS Assembly Representative Donna Lupardo, a member of

Governor Cuomo's hydrofracking review panel, called on the Governor to reject Dr. Shah's report and insist on a full scientific study, he replied that no further study was needed.

The pressure on this and succeeding governors to ruin NY's environment with hydrofracking will remain as long as there is gas under our state or until NY makes a serious and permanent commitment to bringing non-fossil fuel renewable energy online. Governor Cuomo has already promised to do this. It is our task to make sure he does.

To stay current with what's happening with fracking in NYS, see the Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter's website: newyork2.sierraclub.org, (click "Issues," then "Gas Drilling"). Also see: r-cause.net, newyorkersagainstfracking.org and ecowatch.org.

Ex-Com Ballot Rochester Regional Group Sierra Club

Each year the Nominating Committee recommends candidates to serve a term of two years on the Executive Committee.

Vote for any 6 candidates for term 2014-2015. Members may vote for those nominated or write in a candidate. See p. 6 for info on our nominees.

- ___ Dr. Cenie Cafarelli
- ___ Margie Campaigne
- ___ Jeff Debes
- ___ Linda Isaacson Fedele
- ___ John Kastner
- ___ Holly Rockwell
- ___ Robert Withers

Please cut out ballot and mail by Dec. 26th.

Ballots will be counted at the first Ex-Com meeting in 2014.

Send ballots to:

Elections, Sierra Club - Rochester Regional Group
PO Box 10518, Rochester, NY 14610-0518



From the Chair: Looking Back, Looking Forward - Climate & Other Change

Happy Holidays and Happy New Year to our members and friends. We thank you for your membership in the biggest (about 750,000 members), oldest (founded in 1892) environmental organization in the country.

In the past year, our Rochester Regional Group has accomplished a lot. Highlights include:

- For our 15th Annual Environmental Forum, we brought internationally known water champion Maude Barlow to town to inspire and educate, and our Great Lakes committee is now actively putting her principles and strategies to work. To join this effort, contact our Great Lakes Committee at GreatLakesCommitteeSC@gmail.com.
- Our Zero Waste Committee has led massive recycling efforts —cutting land-filled waste down to less than 5%! — at several community festivals, and has advised others eager to do the same.
- A local project spawned by the Sierra Club to remove invasive plant species and restore naturally occurring ones in the Washington Grove forest in Cobbs Hill Park has officially become a separate non-profit organization—congratulations to the Coalition to Protect Washington Grove!

- We have worked alongside other organizations (our NYS Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter, R-CAUSE: Rochesterians Concerned About Unsafe Shalegas Extraction, NYers Against Fracking, Frack Free Genesee, and more) to forestall fracking in New York state (so far, as of this typing!) and to support local towns and villages in passing bans within their borders. We collected over 500 signatures on petitions destined for Governor Cuomo to ban fracking in NYS.

So what's in store for two-oh-one-four? Change. Yes, climate change. As I type, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change takes place in Warsaw, and the delegate from the Phillipines has called for urgent action in the wake of Typhoon Haiyan, "the strongest typhoon that has ever made landfall in the course of recorded human history." The country is devastated. Will global leaders take action to transition away from fossil fuel sources of energy, towards renewable energy? We can only guess that the steps forward will not come close to matching the intensity of the damage and pain wreaked across the world by increasingly frequent and volatile so-called "isolated weather events."

Closer to home, there are changes in store for our Rochester Regional Group of the Sierra Club. This will be my last "From the Chair" piece, as I will be stepping down as Chairperson to participate as a non-officer member of the Executive Committee, if re-elected. Many sincere "Thank You's" to all of you who have been so supportive of our work these last 3 years.

You will also note the addition of several new names on the Ballot on page 1 of this newsletter. If elected, your Group's leadership will have the benefit of new perspectives, knowledge, skills, and energy. Please vote! We look forward to expanding our leadership team, and to your participation in our events, and in our efforts to protect our water, air, land, and soil, and all the living things that inhabit and rely on them.

Happy Holidays and best wishes for a healthy and peaceful future for all,

Linda Isaacson Fedele
Chairperson, Sierra Club
Rochester Regional Group

TAX DEDUCTIBLE GIFTS: THE LESSER KNOWN FACTS

Your Rochester Regional Group is financially supported by the National Club with a portion of membership fees and by the donations that you send directly to us. Gifts to the "Sierra Club Foundation, Rochester Regional Group" are tax deductible and can be used to help us fund newsletter publications and educational programs. You will receive Foundation acknowledgement for the IRS.

Gifts made out simply to "Sierra Club, Rochester Regional Group" are not tax-deductible, but we can use them without restriction— that is, also for legislative advocacy. Please know that your donations, regardless of which type, enable us to make a difference for the environment right here at home. We have very low overhead compared to many organizations - 88.4% of your donation goes directly to the support of Sierra Club conservation programs. Your support is much appreciated.

Our address is: Sierra Club - Rochester Regional Group, P.O. Box 10518, Rochester, NY 14610-0518

The Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) Talks: Action Alert!

by Jeff Debes

What is the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) ?

If approved by Congress, the TPP (like NAFTA) will be yet another binding international trade agreement. The TPP is a Pacific-rim nation focused trade agreement with 11 nations participating in the talks. The TPP negotiations have been criticized for their tight secrecy and for the business dominated focus of the participants driving the agenda. Leaked documents and early summaries of the draft indicate proposals for TPP rules that would subvert local US rules and law.

That is, under TPP, corporations may have the right to sue a government for unlimited cash compensation-- in private, non-transparent tribunals--over any law or regulation that a corporation argues can hurt its expected future profits.

For a list of TPP participant nations and other details, see references at the end of this article.

Issues of Concern:

Secrecy and Participants: Only a few members of congress are privy to the details of the proposals! Very little mainstream news attention has been given to this pending agreement. The majority of the US public is unaware of this fast-track negotiation. TPP participants are apparently limited to corporate concerns, while environmental, labor, and consumer advocates are under-represented.

Fast-Tracking: President Obama wants the TPP signed before the end of this year. As of November 20th, negotiations were occurring in Salt Lake City Utah.

Likely increase in hydraulic fracturing for export of natural gas: The TPP may allow for significantly increased exports of liquefied natural gas without the careful study or adequate protec-

tions necessary to safeguard the American public. This would mean more fracking here in the U.S., with a possible increase in natural gas and electricity prices, and increased demand for dirty coal since it would be less expensive.

Actions: What to Do?

Since we have little direct knowledge of the content of the TTP, and because the attempt is being made to fast-track this agreement without public commentary, the focus of action should be directly involving our congressional representatives.

Urgent: Please call, email, or write your congressional representatives, asking them to vote against the TPP agreement based on these concerns:

1. There should be no fast-tracking of the TPP agreement! The public must have time to review the agreement and comment prior to any congressional vote! The current process is undemocratic. This process is exclusionary and in itself is good reason to vote down the TPP.
2. There should be no secrecy in the agenda and drafts of the TPP negotiations!
3. There should be environmental and other non-corporate representation in the TPP draft talks!

Web Information Sources:

Sierra Club:

www.sierraclub.org/trade/trans-pacific-partnership-agreement.aspx

US Representatives Contact info:

www.govtrack.us/congress/members/NY

Public Citizen:

www.citizen.org/Page.aspx?pid=5411&frclid=1

Local US Representatives Phone Contact Information:

US Senate:

Senator Charles Schumer:
585-263-5866

Senator Kristen Gillibrand:
585-263-6250

US House:

Rep: Louise Slaughter (25th district):
585-232-4850

Rep: Chris Collins (27th district):
202-225 5265

Rep: Dan Maffei (24th district):
315-423 5657

Learn More About TPP

What:

Live Interactive Webinar by MoveOn.org

Date:

Wednesday, Dec. 11, 2013

Time:

7pm-8:30pm

Where:

Penfield Public Library, Ruth Braman meeting room, 1985 Baird Road, Penfield, NY 14526

Or:

Register to attend the webinar from your home computer & phone:
http://civic.moveon.org/event/events/event.html?event_id=140449

Free and open to everyone.

Pre-registration only required if attending the webinar from your own computer.

Co-sponsored by:

Sierra Club - Rochester Regional Group and Federation of Monroe County Environmentalists

Rochester and Eastman Students Shift the Power

by Jackie Dreher

With organizing assistance from the Greenpeace Student Network and financial support from the Sierra Club Rochester Regional Group and Cool Rochester, 18 excited students from the University of Rochester and the Eastman School of Music were able to attend Power Shift 2013, an environmental youth convergence in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania this October 18-21. Power Shift is one of the largest youth convergences in history, with over 10,000 students in attendance this year. Organized by a group of 50 influential environmental and social rights groups called Energy Action Coalition, Power Shift brings students from across the nation together to unite us in our thoughts, ideas, and strategies for a brighter future without a dependence on dirty fossil fuel energy.

While at Power Shift, we were able to choose from dozens of classes, discussions, panels, and trainings every hour of the day, talk one-on-one with environmental leaders such as Bill McKibben, Josh Fox, Michael Brune, and Kim Wasserman, and listen to their stories of environmental injustice every evening. Additionally, at a special breakout for students from the state of New York, we worked together with our peers from our state to find solutions for our specific issues such as hydraulic fracturing, campus divestments, issues with our food, and waste management.

What Power Shift did for us as students was so important. Not only did it bring us together as like-minded students and groups in our community, but also we are now grounded in a supportive base of 10,000 others who care as we do. We are not alone, and we know that we are powerful as the upcoming generation of decision-



Jackie Dreher speaks with Sierra Club President Michael Brune at Power Shift

makers and leaders. Additionally, we were given the knowledge and skills to become successful environmental justice leaders in our community and amongst our peers. We return to Rochester empowered, and with a sense of urgency and the confidence that we are not alone in this fight,

and that we can do something to make a difference on our campus and in our community. We are so thankful for this opportunity, and can't wait to repay the kindness and support with our innovation and momentum in the fight for environmental justice.



Thousands of students gathered together to discuss and learn about environmental issues at Power Shift 2013, one of the largest youth convergences in history.

Driving the Alaska Highway: Wonderful, But With an Oily Twist

by Jeff Debes

I recently had the fine fortune and opportunity to drive the Alaska Highway end-to-end from Fairbanks AK, south east to the 'mile 'O' terminus in Dawson Creek, British Columbia (BC), a distance of roughly 1400 miles. I was helping my sister with her move to Auburn, Alabama with her two dogs and three cats.

Stuffed into my sister's Ford Escape, cats meowing and pulling a U-Haul trailer, we left Fairbanks and the -50° below zero winters behind. The plan was to just drive 'til we were tired and there were motels in which to stay.

From Fairbanks, the Alaska Highway passes through vast areas of wilderness on its way toward Dawson Creek, BC. Hamlets and towns are few and often not well equipped, but that is part of the excitement and adventure. The fully paved route through Alaska and the Yukon Territory winds through valleys bordered by incredibly steep and tall mountain peaks, glacial out-wash beds and crystal clear blue Lakes. At one

point near Lake Kluane, we pulled over for a leg-stretch. It was early morning, just light, no other humans around anywhere. I stood there looking almost straight up at wondrously magnificent mountain peaks. I felt as if I was being watched and turned to see a moose cow and calf staring right back at me. They seemed to be in no hurry to cross the road. They finally crossed the highway and we continued on our way past the grand mountains unique in rock type, color, shape and height and staggering beauty.

Near Lake Kluani, the highway passes within 45 air miles of 19,551 foot Mt. Logan and its endless glacial fields. One can almost feel the tug of gravity from the massive mountains close by the highway. Villages are tiny, far apart and look a bit like Western US towns of-old except with a single gas pump as the saloon, with cars as the thirsty patrons. I loved this area.

Two days later, near Ft. Nelson, the Highway left the mountains and entered a rolling hill plains country.

The area between Ft. Nelson and Dawson Creek (Alaska Highway end) had evident gas and oil exploitation. Compared with our previous days' trips, driving this section was like having a smudgy curtain pulled over our windshield. As we drove further south approaching Dawson Creek, oil trucks and shabby housing built exclusively for oil and gas workers became commonplace. Trucks disappeared down many dirt side roads kicking up a fine mist of dust that permeated everything. I wondered if the mess would ever be cleaned up and at what cost? When the gas and oil is gone, this area will take years to heal. Fortunately, not too much of the mining damage was actually visible from the road; however gas and oil extraction dominated all nearby towns, side roads, the economy, and highway. This corrupted area of the Northern Canadian Plains was a deep disappointment after the uncorrupted Canadian wilderness. At minimum, the experience and contrast of environments helped to revitalize my resolve to work to prevent this kind of pollution within the USA.

Farewell to a Rochester Giant



On September 9, a centuries-old black oak in Washington Grove was cut down after it was determined that the interior of the tree had rotted, putting it at significant risk of falling during high winds.

While the exact age of the tree is unknown, we do know that it flourished in the Grove for at least 200 years. At 120 feet, the tree was believed to be the largest black oak in the Eastern United States - perhaps the largest in the country.

Peter Debes, a long-time leader with Friends of Washington Grove, was on hand to say goodbye and capture this photo of Chris Rothfuss of Birchcrest Landscape felling the tree.

Night Gliders: Wildlife Notebook for Parents and Kids

by Peter Debes, Vice-Chair

You probably haven't seen them -- unless you have a bird feeder by a window and your house is close to a woods. They have been seen recently in the day, by accident in the Washington Grove at Cobb's Hill. They are the Northern Flying Squirrel.

This squirrel is bunched up, ready to launch from the branch and unfurl the "wings" which are loose skin that stretches between the front and hind leg on each side of the body. Note the flat furry tail that it uses as a rudder to steer.



This squirrel is gliding from one tree to another and notice it has small "winglet" tips that curve up, just like most of the new jet airliners. The winglet is formed of leathery cartilage and acts as an airfoil to reduce drag. With its large eyes, it will probably see you at night, long before you see it!

As soon as they land on a tree, they scuttle around to the back side to avoid any owls that might be trying to catch them. Owls can see well at night. They do not hibernate and share winter nests in old woodpecker holes, to help keep warm.

Get to Know Your Executive Committee Nominees

Read about the Sierra Club members running for Executive Committee positions, then fill out the ballot on the front page!

Dr. Cenie Cafarelli: Camping and nature are Cenie's passions. She started her Sierra Club membership by taking joy in Sierra Club outings and service trips, and now advocates for the self-sustaining natural world.

Margie Campaigne: Margie has worked as an environmental activist for many years, in many capacities, with many organizations. She grew up close to nature, camping with her parents and siblings, Scouts, then with her own family. Her passions are sustainability education, saving energy, reducing waste, vegetarian eating, and combatting climate change.

Jeff Debes: Jeff has spent a good part of his life in the

Adirondack Park. The time he's spent in the Adirondack wilderness helped develop his interest in nature. As a retired Xerox engineer he really enjoys technology, yet he has no illusions about the dangers of its misuse.

Linda Isaacson Fedele: Linda works towards all living things and the water, land, and air that support them being healthy and loved. When not volunteering for environmental issues, she's a social worker trying to ensure that human seniors are healthy and loved. Linda's biggest concern is climate change.

John Kastner: John grew up on the edge of Rochester when Irondequoit was farm, meadow, woods and water. He watched it all eaten by sprawl, became an environmentalist, founded the committee to save Seneca Park, and worked on New York's Bottle Bill. John believes living simply with

fewer things is the best medicine for the planet.

Holly Rockwell: Holly Rockwell spent most of her youth wet, muddy and outside. She retired early from practicing law in order to homeschool her kids, is an avid amateur naturalist and has been involved in environmental issues for years. Climate change is currently the focus of her concern.

Robert Withers: Robert has a long history of community service. He has worked with handicapped children, volunteered for political and environmental efforts and supported international relief organizations. He is proud to have been a part of the RRG Sierra Club Ex-Com and will do what he can to help in the future. If you are reading this, Robert asks that you see what you can do to help the ongoing effort to make a difference.



Enjoy, explore and protect the planet

2014 Sierra Club Calendars

Our biggest annual fundraiser!

Purchases from bookstores do not benefit the Rochester Regional Group.

Great for holiday gifts!

**Please mail all orders to:
Sierra Club, Calendar Sales
PO Box 10518
Rochester, NY 14610-0518**

**For questions or large orders, call
Dina Stein at 585-271-0544**

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6 or more: call 585-271-0544 for pricing		GRAND TOTAL: _____	
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New York State Voters Set Dangerous Precedent for State Forest Lands

by Linda Isaacson Fedele, Chair

In the November election, there were several ballot referendums decided by voters in New York State. One was "Proposition Five" which let voters decide whether a deal should be made with a mining company to enable them to explore and mine for minerals in the Adirondack Forest Preserve, in exchange for land of "equal or greater value." By a 53-47% vote, NYS citizens gave a green light to the deal.

Even environmentalists do not agree on whether this deal was a good one. For example, the Adirondack Mountain Club was in favor of it, as the Forest Preserve stands to potentially gain more land in the deal than it has lost. But the land to be gained is not necessarily of the same quality.

Sierra Club is strongly against Proposition 5. As a result of the vote, our State Constitution

will be amended to allow exceptions to Article 14 which now reads: "The lands of the state, now owned or hereafter acquired, constituting the forest preserve as now fixed by law, shall be forever kept as wild forest lands. They shall not be leased, sold or exchanged or be taken by any corporation public or private, nor shall the timber thereon be sold, removed or destroyed."

Roger Downs, Conservation Director of the Sierra Club's Atlantic Chapter, said: "The term 'forever wild' loses meaning when we allow parcels of our remaining wilderness lands to be developed for private commercial gain. The Forest Preserve and the 119-year old protection afforded to it by Article 14 of the State Constitution should not be for sale at any price. The proposed land exchange does not represent any real improvement to the wilderness legacy of the Adirondacks. The agreement would provide new protection to

land that isn't imminently threatened, while leaving a massive hole in the ground where wilderness protections were once guaranteed. This kind of horse trading sets a lower bar for legislative behavior and if approved by the voters will lead to even greater pressure from mining, logging and real estate development interests to convert New York's wild forests into private cash cows."

Our concern is that Proposition Five's win sets a dangerous precedent for making more "exceptions" to the promise that was made to protect our public wild lands from those who would exploit them for private profit.

Did you vote in the November election? Many citizens feel disenfranchised by our political system. This is an example of how you could have helped to make a real difference with your vote on this ballot proposition.



**Rochester Regional Group
of the Sierra Club**
P.O. Box 10518
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 585-234-1056
<http://newyork.sierraclub.org/rochester>
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Executive Committee Members

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Committees & Projects- Leaders

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Winter 2013-2014 Calendar

All Committees are local volunteer groups of the Rochester Regional Group of the Sierra Club

Date	Day	Time	Calendar/Event	Place
Dec. 3	Tuesday	6:30-8:30pm	Executive Committee Meeting	Harro East Bldg., 400 Andrews St., Ste 600
Dec. 8	Sunday	2:00-4:00pm	Transition Committee Meeting	56 Rand Place, Pittsford, NY (usually held at this location on the 2nd Sunday of the month)
Dec. 9	Monday	6:30-8:30pm	Global Warming & Energy Committee Meeting	Lemoncello Italian Restaurant and Bar 137 W. Commercial St., East Rochester 14445
Dec. 11	Wednesday	7:00-8:30pm	Webinar on Trans-Pacific Partnership Join via computer, or in person at Penfield Public Library (address on right)	Penfield Public Library, Ruth Braman meeting room, 1985 Baird Road, Penfield, NY 14526
Jan. 7	Tuesday	6:30-8:30pm	Executive Committee Meeting	Harro East Bldg., 400 Andrews St., Ste 600
Jan. 13	Monday	6:30-8:30pm	Global Warming & Energy Committee Meeting	Call 585-234-1056 or e-mail lci_msw@hotmail.com for location
Jan. 28	Tuesday	4:30-6:00pm	Zero Waste Committee Meeting	Rochester Greenovation, 1199 E. Main St. Contact Frank for ?s: fjregan@gmail.com
Jan. 28	Tuesday	7:00-9:00pm	Great Lakes Committee Meeting	Asbury First UMC 1010 East Ave. (smaller bldg. just west of main bldg.)
Feb. 4	Tuesday	6:30-8:30pm	Executive Committee Meeting	Harro East Bldg., 400 Andrews St., Ste 600
Feb. 10	Monday	6:30-8:30pm	Global Warming & Energy Committee Meeting	Call 585-234-1056 or e-mail lci_msw@hotmail.com for location
Feb. 25	Tuesday	4:30-6:00pm	Zero Waste Committee Meeting	Rochester Greenovation, 1199 E. Main St. Contact Frank for ?s: fjregan@gmail.com
Feb. 25	Tuesday	7:00-9:00pm	Great Lakes Committee Meeting	Asbury First UMC 1010 East Ave. (smaller bldg. just west of main bldg.)

Executive Committee meetings are open to Sierra Club members. All other meetings are open to everyone.

The Eco-Logue is printed on 100% recycled paper with green plant-based toner.