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On April 8, 1981 I was fortunate to attend a meeting of Centre and Huntington county area Sierra Club Group members nearby in State College. Convened by Chris and Ed Perry, who believed that we had enough activist members in 1981 to create a new Group – ultimately named “Moshannon” – to carry on important conservation work in public lands and air quality and a host of other issues.

The Moshannon Group splintered from the then-existing Headwaters Group, whose center of gravity was the Johnstown area. Headwaters’ energies were mostly devoted to its outings program, particularly because of Johnstown’s proximity to the Laurel Highlands. Moshannon’s mission focused more on environmental activism. Three issues that the Group confronted in its early days were the pollution of Spring Creek from the Ruetgers-Nease kepone plant, regional growth in the State College area of Centre County, and the broader problem of acid rain.

Moshannon’s first chair was Rick Potts, and the vice-chair was Chris Fichtel. Besides the Perrys and myself, other early activists included Dick Repsher, Gerrie Russell, Steve Calhoun, Jean and Gert Aron.

The Moshannon Group started with 9 Pennsylvania counties, has had as many as 14 counties, and currently has 12, running from the New York border down to Maryland. In 1981 it had 381 members. As of March 2021, it has 1245 members.

- **Nancy F. Parks** *(with help from Chris and Ed Perry and Steve Lachman)*

# U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS PROTECTS PORTION OF RAYSTOWN LAKE AS “ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREA”

By Steve Lachman

8,300-acre Raystown Lake is a recreational, scenic, and conservation treasure located in Huntingdon County. It was created in 1973 by the damming of the Raystown Branch of the Juniata River. It is heavily used by boaters, fishers, bikers, hikers, campers, hunters, and birders. It serves as habitat to a wide variety of fish, birds (including bald eagles), and mammals (including river otters).



Raystown Lake

In 2011, Texas oilman Rod Roberts bought 2,000 acres of land near the lake, and proposed constructing a recreational development at Hawn’s Point and Hawn’s Bridge in a more remote area of the lake. This proposal included the construction of a large hotel, marina restaurant, and roads. Before this development could proceed, however, the Army Corps of Engineers would have to revise its master plan, which governs the management of the area for a period of 15 to 25 years. In 2017,

On March 18, 2021, the Army Corps released its final master plan, and declared the Hawn’s Bridge an Environmentally Sensitive Area, which precludes the proposed development. Factors leading to that classification included:

- Proximity to Bat Conservation Area
- Proximity to Shale Barren area
- Impact on timber resources or tree cover
- Impact on fisheries
- Impact on hunting
- Topographic impacts to infrastructure construction.”

The protection of this critical area was largely due to the hard work done by the Coalition to Protect Hawn’s Peninsula, with help from local citizens, Back Country Hunters and Anglers, the Audubon Society, and the Sierra Club.

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## ROULETTE OIL & GAS PROPOSES INJECTION WELL FOR POTTER COUNTY

By Laurie Barr

On September 18, 2020, James Reynolds, managing partner of Roulette Oil & Gas Company, LLC applied to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (“EPA” or the “Agency”), Region 3, to convert a depleted gas well in Potter County, Pennsylvania into an Underground Class II-D injection well to dispose of waste from oil & gas wells. This permit is the first of two permits required to operate this type of disposal well. If approved, Roulette Oil & Gas would also need authorization from Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). The company operates over 430 oil and gas wells in Pennsylvania and New York. Roulette is aptly named – it is gambling with our future.

The proposed injection well is located on a mountain near the PA/NY border & drains toward tributaries of the Upper Allegheny River.



(See *Injection Well* on Page 3)

## Injection Well (from page 2)

In 1984, James Reynolds and Robert Benson, d/b/a Benson & Reynolds Gas Co., operated eight injection wells in Potter County. Inspections conducted in 1990 found all eight were abandoned. The inspector noted the wells were “venting gas into the atmosphere.” Follow-up inspections conducted in 1993 found the eight injection wells were still unplugged, abandoned - *nine years after the EPA authorized the injection well permits in 1984.*

The township where the proposed injection wells is located, Clara Twp., is the same township where Benson & Reynolds Gas abandoned one of their injection wells years earlier. Left unplugged, abandoned wells often vent natural gas into the atmosphere for decades. Methane, the main component of natural gas and is 86 to 105 times as powerful as carbon dioxide at disrupting the climate over a 20-year period.

The EPA is accepting comments on the proposed injection well permit until **April 5, 2021**. Comments can be sent to Kevin Rowsey, Source Water & UIC Section, US EPA Region 3. Email: rowsey.kevin@epa.gov. Subject line: PAS2D050BPOT

## CLIMATE ACTION: JOIN THE READY FOR 100 TEAM!

To achieve the objective of 100% Renewable Energy by 2035, the Sierra Club’s RF100 Team met in February to celebrate achievements, review projects already underway, and consider priorities for 2021 and beyond. In addition to supporting the work of the State College Borough and Centre Region, working toward

electrification of other area bus systems, and making residential solar more accessible, the team prioritized working with Sierra Club members and environmental groups beyond the beyond the Centre Region. Please join the Moshannon Group’s Ready for 100 Team and help your community move toward 100% renewable energy. For more info, contact Ellen Foreman at [esforeman@yahoo.com](mailto:esforeman@yahoo.com).

### ON YOUR CALENDAR:



April 22<sup>nd</sup> is the 51<sup>st</sup> Earth Day. In Super Bowl lingo, that’s Earth Day LI. Here are a couple events to help you celebrate:

1. **Clearwater Conservancy’s 25<sup>th</sup> annual Watershed Cleanup Day on April 24<sup>th</sup>**. Go to: [clearwaterconservancy.org](http://clearwaterconservancy.org) and click on “events.” Participants will mask and maintain social distancing. As part of the Cleanup, the Sierra Club will host a canoe/kayak cleanup of Bald Eagle Creek. Contact Ron Johnson: [rwjohnson1@outlook.com](mailto:rwjohnson1@outlook.com).
2. **Webinar on electrical energy storage on Thursday April 29 at 7 p.m.** This is a follow-up to the Sierra Club, Envinity Building Energy Solutions, where 14 local co-sponsors presented a Virtual Home Solar Tour last January 7th (in case you missed it, you can catch it by clicking on this link: <https://www.envinity.com/solarsystemsgo-solar-in-2021/>).

Since it was so well attended (more than 150 participants!), we are following up with an event that will let you know how to best manage the storage of the energy provided by your solar panels, once you have them installed. If you want to know how energy storage works, what kind of technology is available, and how to choose the setup that is right for you, this is a must! The webinar will be 30 minutes long, with 30 minutes at the end for questions and comments. To attend, please use this link:

<https://www.envinity.com/solarsystems/>

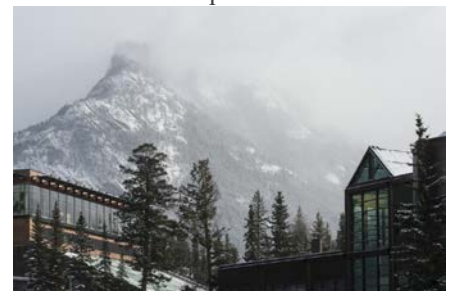
For information on how to become a co-sponsor, or with any questions about the event, please email Candice at: [cbradley@envinity.com](mailto:cbradley@envinity.com). We’ll see you there!

## BANFF FILM FESTIVAL ADDS 2 NEW PROGRAMS

Hopefully by now you have had the chance to see this year’s virtual Banff Mountain Film Festival. When originally released, there were two different programs you could view – Amber and Onyx. Now Banff has added two additional (and completely different) programs – Sapphire and Ruby. Each program costs \$15, or \$28 for both. Here’s the link:

<https://filmfest.banffcentre.ca/?campaign=WT-160360>

A portion of the proceeds goes to the Moshannon Group.





## The Chair Speaks

By Doug Mason  
Chair, Moshannon Group

I've been thinking bioregionally recently. On January 4, the Patton Township Board of Supervisors appointed me to the Spring Creek Watershed Commission (SCWC). The SCWC was founded in 1996 to provide an integral vision for this Centre County watershed's future.

Bioregionalism was coined by Allen Van Newkirk in 1975. Bioregionalism is a political, cultural and ecological system or set of views based on naturally defined areas termed bioregions, similar to ecoregions. Bioregions are defined through physical and environmental features, including watershed boundaries or soil and terrain characteristics. Bioregionalism stresses that the determination of a bioregion is also a cultural phenomenon, and emphasizes local populations, knowledge and solutions.

I first encountered the concept when a Williamsport countercultural newspaper called "Kindred Spirits"

published a bioregional map of the West Branch of the Susquehanna River's basin in the early 1980s. Later that decade, when I lived in Springfield, MO, I attended the Ozark Area Community Congress, which has been hosted annually in the Ozark Plateau Bioregion since 1980. I learned that bioregions are not synonymous with ecoregions (as defined by the Commission for Environmental Cooperation and others). Bioregions, by contrast, are human regions informed by nature but with a social and political element. Bioregionalism is simply political localism with an ecological foundation.

The First North American Bioregional Congress was held in Missouri in 1984. In 1992, the congress was renamed the Turtle Island Bioregional Gathering. In 1996, I joined 700 people at the First Bioregional Gathering of the Americas in Tepoztlan, Mexico. Tepoztlan was the first free, self-directed municipality in this hemisphere. Local citizens had become angry over environmental issues related to ejido lands (communal tracts)

and outsider-led corporate land developments centered around a planned golf resort. "The Golf War" was an intense campaign that involved many demonstrations, the killing and wounding of some townspeople, the removal of corrupt town council officials, and the eventual secession from the State of Morelos.

We camped in a beautiful setting, the Mexitia Scout Camp on the edge of Tepoztlan. Campers were surrounded by cliffs 300 to 400 feet high, with an ancient Aztec pyramid perched on top. The international meeting was a watershed moment in my life. Many of those bioregional insights come to mind when I consider the SCWC's goal to establish a long-term, consensus vision for the Spring Creek watershed. Those of us on the commission are tasked with a leadership role to advance and coordinate projects and programs to advance that vision through development of a comprehensive, long-term Watershed Management Plan...a One Water Plan.

The concept of "One Water" has been around for several years. The One Water approach views all water - drinking water, wastewater, stormwater, grey water, watersheds and more - as resources that must be managed holistically and sustainably. Doing so builds strong economies, vibrant communities and healthy environments.

Unfortunately, development of our Spring Creek Watershed Management Plan has been hamstrung for decades, mostly due to a lack of funds. A special fund appeal was required in 2017 to secure \$16,000 which was provided by local municipalities, authorities, Penn State University, businesses and non-profit organizations to hire a facilitator and provide administrative support that ultimately led to publication of Phase II of the plan in 2019 (Phase I was released in 2003). It is time to move on to Phase III...the actual comprehensive plan, which could cost anywhere from \$35,000 to a half million dollars. I think the SCWC needs to consider hiring a development director to secure grant money from foundations and other sources to accomplish this undertaking. Given the impact of the pandemic on the revenue of the 14 municipalities that comprise and support the SCWC, perhaps it is time for another special fund appeal.



**Doug Mason and his great granddaughter  
(Doug's wearing the hat)**

## REGIONAL GREENHOUSE GAS INITIATIVE (RGGI) CREATES OPPORTUNITY FOR PENNSYLVANIA

By Nancy F. Parks

The urgent need to reduce carbon pollution and limit the significant existing dangers from climate disruption have spawned two robust efforts that Pennsylvania can utilize to attain our critical carbon reduction goals.

RGGI will focus on our ever-present fossil-fuel fired utilities using coal and natural gas to produce our electricity. The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources (DEP) suggests that as Pennsylvania joins the existing RGGI framework within the northeast United States next year, we will be reducing our carbon load burden by as much as 30% from 2022-2030. That's 188 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub>. It also conservatively suggests that we can reduce CO<sub>2</sub> by 80% by 2050 using just this program alone, matching the goal of Governor Wolf's Climate Action Plan. **The Sierra CLUB supports 100% carbon free by 2050, and by 2030 if possible.**

The necessary legislation is before PA General Assembly right now: *HB637 and SB119*. We need to support the passage of participation in the RGGI framework.

Starting in 2022, those industries emitting CO<sub>2</sub> will need to purchase CO<sub>2</sub> equivalents for each ton of carbon they will emit. Pennsylvania's CO<sub>2</sub> allowances will be bought at auction quarterly.

### Benefits to Pennsylvanians

Proceeds from the carbon auction come directly back to Pennsylvania. Here's the economic benefit: DEP expects RGGI will create 27000 new jobs, increase gross state profits by \$2 billion by 2030, and increase personal disposable income statewide of \$3.7 billion by 2050.

Auction proceeds should be used for equity. For instance, they could be used to promote energy efficiency in low-income homes, to rehabilitate communities destroyed by hydrofracking, or to provide job transition for workers currently employed in the fossil fuel industry, or buying electric mass transit and school buses.

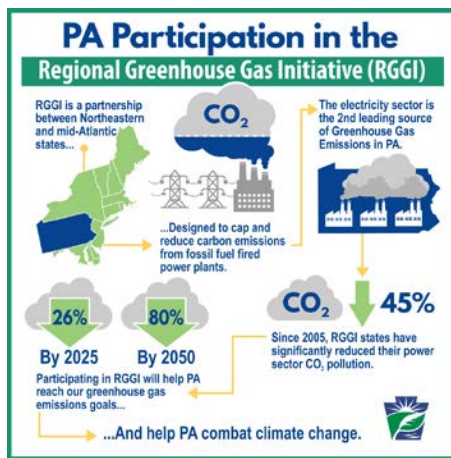
Existing RGGI states have implemented successful programs. For example, New York pays for air monitoring in disadvantaged communities; Connecticut has subsidized electric buses; and Massachusetts has promoted regional mass transit to reduce local air pollution.

DEP has identified benefits to PA from the regional greenhouse gas reductions: *"... Emission of other harmful pollutants like nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide, and particulate matter emissions will also drop significantly. These reductions will particularly benefit those most often impacted by marginal air quality, such as children and at-risk seniors, especially in low income and environmental justice communities."*

Because of reduced air pollution, Pennsylvanians will see significant health benefits:

*"The health benefits of the reduced sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide emissions*

are significant - up to \$6.3 billion by 2030.” Additionally, DEP estimates that between now and 2030, RGGI participation would prevent 639 deaths, 30,000 hospital visits, and 83,000 lost workdays.



## LET'S DO THE RIGHT THING: BAN SINGLE-USE PLASTIC BAGS

By Pam Steckler

PennEnvironment had studied over 300 samples from 53 rivers, streams, and lakes across Pennsylvania to find microplastics in every single one, including our beloved Spring Creek.

The science is clear - plastics are damaging our environment and are a threat to the health and welfare of wildlife and humans alike.

For several years, I worked hard to get local municipalities aware of this pollution problem by petitioning both Ferguson Township and State College Borough to consider a substantial fee to eventually ban single-use plastic carry out bags, straws, stirrers and expanded polystyrene (Styrofoam) cups and boxes.

It took over 2 years of hard work to reach the point where the Ferguson Board of Supervisors agreed to take action and look into creating an ordinance. Virtually on the eve (Friday before the Monday) of that Board of Supervisors meeting, Senator Jake Corman tacked an amendment onto a necessary Budget Bill, banning all such local ordinances throughout the state, preempting our municipalities from acting on such legislation for a year in order to enable more unnecessary studies on this issue.

By doing this Corman chose to protect one single business in his district, Novolex's Hilex Poly in Milesburg, over the health and welfare of his constituents. Profit before people once again.

With Covid, the "ban on bans" was extended and even much more plastic is entering our waste stream; with masks, gloves, and take-out food all adding to the problem. The huge plastic patches in our oceans' gyres, stories deep, are getting huger, more and more marine life has been impacted - with everything from baby birds, their mothers unknowingly feeding them plastics mixed with their food, to whales, with up to 80 pounds of plastic in their bellies, dying horrendous deaths by starvation from their digestive tracts being packed with plastics.

Plastic, produced from fossil fuels, is not biodegradable. In waterways and oceans it breaks down to smaller and smaller bits known as microplastics. These enter the food stream when the tiniest of animals ingest them and move the plastics up the food chain to us humans. There is a small study on human feces from 5 different countries in which every single sample contained microplastics. How can this not be toxic to our health.

Big Oil and Gas have done their best to continue fracking by creating a

plastics industry strongly supported by our state. This adds to the omnipresence of this heinous contaminant.

The time is Now for a substantial fee (at least 25 cents) on single-use plastics. Hopefully, it will lead to an eventual ban in our local municipalities and all of Pennsylvania.



**Kelly Forest reminds us:  
When in doubt, hug a tree!**

The time is Now to curb fracking which supplies gas for cracker plants which make virgin plastic beads called nurdles by cracking ethane into ethylene - making polyethylene plastic. Many of these nurdles escape into the lakes, rivers, streams and oceans. They look like food to many animals. There is already far too much plastic on our Planet damaging ecosystems. We definitely should not be making more!

The time is Now for plastics producers to change how they manufacture plastics and invest in biodegradable resins such as hemp instead of fossil fuel based polyethylene.

I hope our citizenry will become knowledgeable on this horrible contaminant and bring their own canvas cloth (not polyester) bags to the

store (and not just grocery stores). It is so very easy to just keep a bunch in your car or near your door. They hold so much more than standard single-use plastic bags, and they can be washed and reused. Nearly all places of business allow you to use them.

Please be aware that your purchases and what they are carried in, really do matter. Be aware that the plastic bag you use once or twice can pollute for centuries in the form of microplastics. As an aside, plastics can hold viruses and bacteria longer than paper or cloth.

As for our current state of affairs; Governor Wolf just declared another 90 days of continuance of the Covid emergency declaration on February 19. The law which blocks municipalities from enacting or enforcing bans or regulations on plastic bags and other single-use plastics will stay in effect until 6 months after the coronavirus emergency declaration is lifted. I asked both Ferguson Township and State College Borough to have an ordinance in place, ready to go, as soon as the ban on bans is lifted.



**Cloth is best!**

Both municipalities should join in supporting the lawsuit filed by Philadelphia, along with Narberth, West Chester and Lower Merion which challenges the moratorium on bag bans. The suit argues that the cities have the right to enforce their

laws banning single-use plastic bags. Philadelphia passed a bag ban in 2019. The lawsuit filed against Pennsylvania and the state legislature seeks to have the state law struck down to prevent challenges once the City begins implementation in July. “The preemption provision is both undemocratic and unconstitutional and directly harms Philadelphia.” City solicitor, Diane Coites said. The petition filed in Commonwealth Court challenges the state on procedural grounds. It also said the law violated the environmental rights amendment of our state constitution (Article I, Section 27) which guarantees our right to clean air and water.

It is my hope that the Ferguson Township Board of Supervisors and the State College Borough Council will pass a resolution in support of Philly and the other towns and will file an amicus brief supporting the lawsuit, while getting their ordinances in place.

If this is important to you; if you find plastic pollution to be appalling; if you are worried about the effects of plastic on wildlife and humans and future generations; if you want to help prevent plastic in our oceans from becoming more prevalent than fish by 2050, please contact your local, county and state legislators.

Let Pennsylvania take a leadership role in helping to stop plastics from being a contaminant in our rivers and streams which flow right into the Chesapeake Bay. Although we seem landlocked, we are directly connected to the Atlantic Ocean. What we do effects everything downstream.

Single-use plastics are not a necessity, yet are so damaging to life. Let’s get rid of them!

Since this article was written, I have learned that Ferguson Township is very much interested in supporting Philadelphia’s suit. I believe they may send a letter of support.



**Don't be a plastic baghead.**

There is also a Federal bill to help end the plastics problem which has just come to my attention. It’s called the Break Free from Plastic Pollution Act of 2020 and I believe it is being reintroduced in 2021. The Public Interest Research Group (PIRG) and the Sierra Club have already gathered over 20,000 signatures requesting support from representatives in Congress. This is an ambitious piece of legislation that tackles plastic pollution on all levels: production, distribution, and waste management. The bill would eliminate wasteful single-use items; protect local action; increase recycling; and ensure that plastic manufacturers, not taxpayers, are responsible for cleaning up their waste. It could make the United States a leader on this issue.



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[www.sierraclub.org/pennsylvania/moshannon](http://www.sierraclub.org/pennsylvania/moshannon)