

Susquehanna *Sierran*

March 2018



- 434 Greenway
- 363 Gateway
- Food Waste
- Club Governance
- Secretary position open
- Finger Lakes Trails
- Moths & Butterflies
- Busy Year
- Coming Events

EXPLORE, ENJOY, PROTECT THE PLANET

Sierra Club Susquehanna Group PO Box 572 Endicott NY 13760
<https://www.sierraclub.org/atlantic/susquehanna>

From the Editors — Chris Rounds

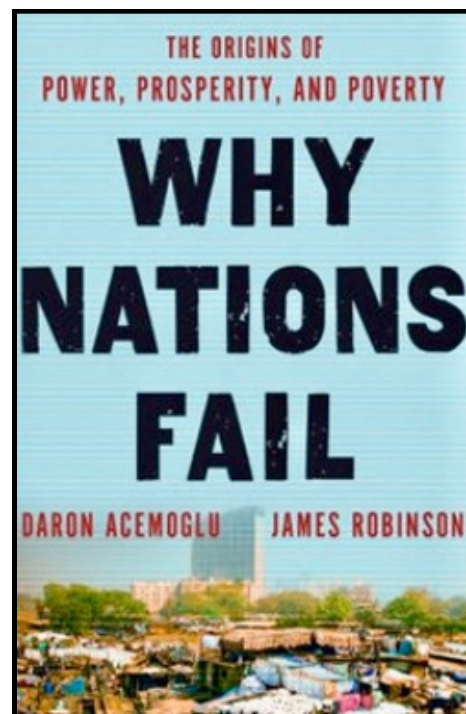
In 2012 Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson published *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty*. Their argument remains relevant. Having examined and rejected a variety of explanations of this puzzle, the authors came to the conclusion that countries reliant on what they describe as an “extractive” relationships with their people and environments tend to fail, while those that rely on an “inclusive” model tend to thrive. The extractive pattern is driven by the elite’s interest in maximizing profits and preserving power. The inclusive model recognizes that the interests of elites are better served when benefits are shared. New constituencies and aspiring young people need to be incorporated rather than simply exploited and discarded.

Acemoglu and Robinson focused on the political economy of countries, but the same model can be applied to relationships with the environment. Asking whether our practices are extractive or inclusive might be a useful approach to judging the appropriateness of resource use patterns. Farming methods that exhaust soil and result in erosion are extractive, while those that preserve fertility and sustainable soil health are inclusive. From this perspective, people recognize that their relationship with the land is not one of dominance and subordination. Rather, it is mutually dependent: what’s good for the land is, in the long run, good for the farmer. What’s true for farming is as true for forestry and fishing. If what we’re hoping for is a thriving environment that our grandchildren will enjoy, we need to live modestly with the land and its creatures, as if we all deserve a place of our own. Remember Aldo Leopold’s “Land Ethic?” He advised:

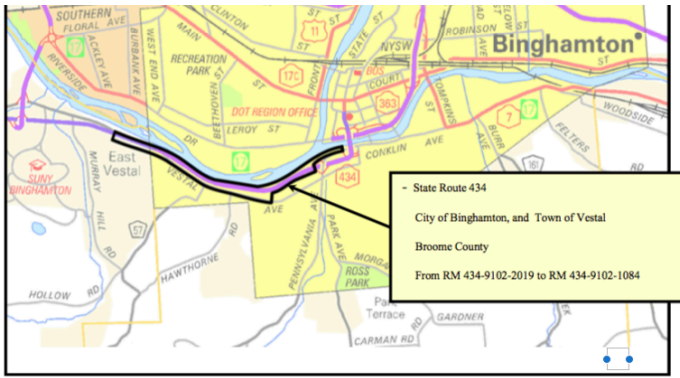
Examine each question in terms of what is ethically and esthetically right, as well as what is economically expedient. A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise.

As we try to make sense of the chaos of our current political environment, it might serve us well to ask of those in positions of authority: are your actions serving the interests of the whole community or those of an isolated segment? Are you committed to the long-term welfare of our human and natural communities, or do you behave like an extractor of short-term benefits?

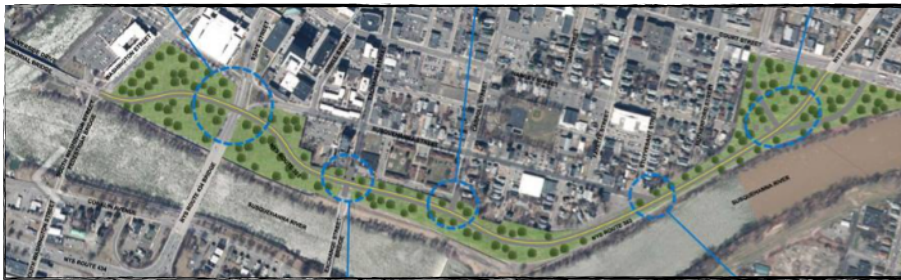
As we brace ourselves for another round of elections this fall, we might apply the same criterion. What can we do, as citizens, to promote an inclusive perspective? How can we nudge the conversation away from a focus on enemies and victimization and toward a commitment to community and inclusivity?



2 Bike/Pedestrian-Friendly DOT Projects – Jim Taft



Route 434 Greenway: bicycle/pedestrian trail connecting Binghamton Southside and Binghamton University, part of the BMTS (Binghamton Metropolitan Transportation Study) master plan for trails through Broome & Tioga Counties. At a well-attended 12/12/17 public meeting, many Vestal Avenue residents strenuously objected to route options which would affect their properties; a 3rd option along the south edge of NY434 may become the design focus. Project manager Jillian Newby will update the Susquehanna Group in March (see p6 Upcoming Meetings). [Graphic from 2012 DOT document]



Route 363 Gateway: redesign of Northshore Drive, Binghamton (between Court and Washington Streets) along the Chenango River. It would make additional connections to downtown streets, free up urban spaces for other uses including river access, and recreational and bike trails. At a well-attended 1/29/18 public meeting Phase I design options were

presented, advocates for Susquehanna Street objected to increased traffic there, and to some attendees it appeared there was insufficient collaboration with other entities including Army Corps of Engineers, Binghamton City Planning Dept. [Graphic from Broome County Planning Dept.]

Finger Lakes Trail Conference – Scott Lauffer

The mission of the Finger Lakes Trail Conference is to build, protect, enhance, and promote a continuous footpath across New York State. Forever!



The Finger Lakes Trail system, over 950 miles in length, runs from the Pennsylvania-New York border in Allegany State Park to the Long Path in the Catskill Forest Preserve, with several branch trails. The Finger Lakes Trail is also part of the North Country National Scenic Trail. This system is built and maintained almost entirely by volunteers. The Triple Cities Hiking Club maintains 32 miles of the trail in Chenango County, plus some members maintain trails further east towards the Catskills. Covering some of the most scenic land in New York, we welcome you to hike it, and volunteer to keep it beautiful. <http://www.fltconference.org/trail/> offers maps and tools for both.

Editorial – Chris Rounds

Should we be optimistic or pessimistic about the future of the environment and people's place in it? Judging based on what we've been seeing and reading lately, the pessimists would seem to have the winning argument. Every year warmer than the last. Violent and destructive storms more frequent and costly than ever. Growing numbers of people displaced by floods, droughts and wildfires. And governments seemingly incapable or disinclined to respond to these looming challenges.



So the pessimists would seem to win the day at a trot, right? I would urge us to take a step back from these daily realities, and ask ourselves: As people concerned about wilderness, wildlife and the welfare of the planet and its people, what do we need to accomplish, right now? Some have argued that we need a revolution: we need to throw the bums out, tear down institutions that no longer serve us, and start again. Others would argue for flat-out resistance. We need to make sure that those currently in power are unable to accomplish anything: bring the system to a full stop.

From an historian's perspective, I want to propose a counter argument. The multiple and compounding miseries of the current administration pose a real threat to our national institutions, but we've been here before. In the late 19th century, the age of the "robber barons," corruption was rampant. Judges and legislators were routinely bought and legislatures protected the haves from the have-nots while courts assured us that the Constitution guaranteed the rights of private property without regard for the welfare of common people. What a time to be a pessimist! And pessimism was rampant. And yet, and yet, things got better. We Americans did what, I would argue, we've always done: we muddled through.

Terrible tragedies like the Triangle Shirtwaist fire and the 1910 "Big Burn" in the Northwest led to dramatic changes in the ways we thought about government's role and its responsibility for the public welfare. Very gradually, great wealth was brought to heal, public needs were addressed, imperfectly in the short run but more effectively in the long, and things got better. Children were better educated and lived longer, cities were cleaner and safer, food became safer to eat and air healthier to breathe. In factories, on the railroads and in mines, working conditions improved, and employment of children was eliminated. None of this happened as quickly as it should have, and none of the solutions introduced was perfect.

What happened? How did this come about? There is never one, simple answer, but at its core I would argue that people made demands of their governments, went to work to elect people they trusted who would speak for them, and defeated narrow special interests to insure that public needs were met through public institutions. We muddled through.

Now we must re-engage. We need to recruit and support candidates who share our values and who are beholden to the public and not to private interests. We need to look to the needs of all the people, and all the creatures of our country, recognizing that our interests will be served only when every American has reason to believe in a promising future: one in which their children and their children's children will have beautiful places to play, schools where they are both safe and well educated, and an environment that is health-promoting and sustainable. And to accomplish those modest goals, we really must be optimistic. We have to believe that, no matter how bad things are today, they can be better tomorrow. We have to act as if we can make a difference, incrementally at first, and then massively over time.

Pessimism is a self-fulfilling prophecy we cannot afford.

Join our email list and 'like' us on Facebook
Email kronin55@gmail.com to be added to our email list in order to receive updates about programs and events. You can also find and 'like' us on Facebook—search for Susquehanna Group of the Sierra Club.

Food Recovery & Recycling Act in the New York State Budget

— Michael Fry

Deep in the 2019 New York State Executive Budget proposed by Governor Cuomo is Article VII, Legislation on Environmental Conservation. A key provision is section BB, whose purpose is to “Reduce and sustainably manage food waste by requiring large food waste generators to divert excess edible food to food banks, and food scraps to organics recycling facilities.”

Approximately 40 percent of US food goes uneaten. Much is disposed of in landfills where its decomposition accounts for over 15% of our nation's emissions of methane, a potent greenhouse gas. In New York, an estimated 2.5 million people are hungry or food insecure. To address this misuse of food resources the Act establishes a food scrap hierarchy:

1. Source reduction: the prevention of food waste generation by larger commercial generators and residents.
2. Recovery: the State will support the recovery of wholesome food by providing grants from the Environmental Protection Fund.
3. Repurposing: appropriate scraps will be diverted to feed animals.
4. Recycling: requiring composting or anaerobic digestion to create nutrient-rich soil amendments.

If you agree that this piece of legislation is important contact your local Assemblyperson and State Senator and ask that they help ensure enactment of Section 22 of the Budget, the Food Recovery and Recycling Act.

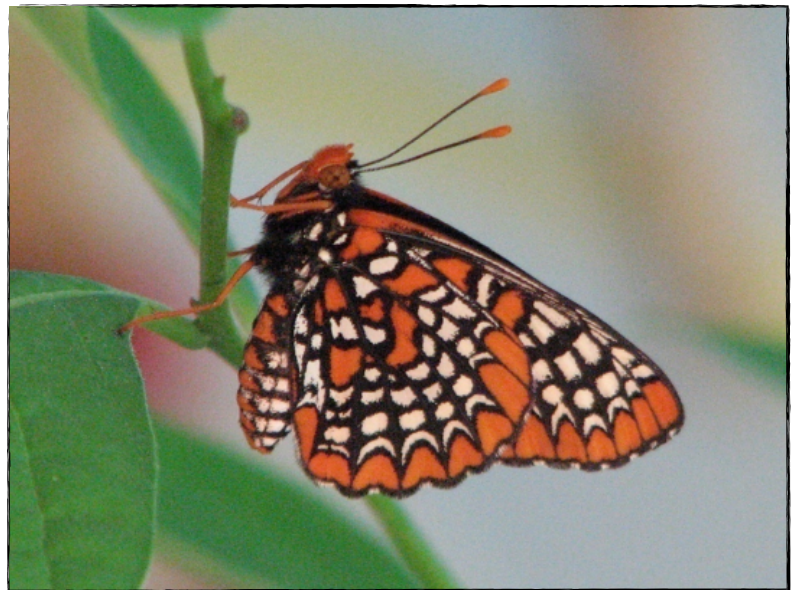
Find text of the Act on starting on page 297 at

<https://www.budget.ny.gov/pubs/archive/fy19/exec/fy19artVII/TEDArticleVII.pdf>



Butterflies and Moths — Can They Survive Spring Cleanup?

— Colleen Wolpert



Baltimore Checkerspot — Caterpillar & Butterfly

This official Maryland State Insect has been reported from the Carolinas to Minnesota and Ontario. Like many moth and butterfly species it overwinters in many of our yards.

Tips on how to protect them, and many other moths and butterflies, during Spring Cleanup:

<https://www.sierraclub.org/sites/www.sierraclub.org/files/sce/susquehanna-group/HelpButterflies.pdf>

Club Governance

Susquehanna Group (Broome, Chenango, Delaware, Otsego Tioga)

2018 OFFICERS

Chair	Scott Lauffer (607)341-3746
Vice Chair	Valdi Weiderpass
Secretary	OPEN, can you volunteer?
contact:	lauffer.scott@gmail.com
Treasurer	Kathy Cronin
Conservation Chair	Douglas Gausman
Political Chair	Allan Hochberg
Chapter Delegate	Jim Taft
Newsletter Editors	Chris Rounds, Jim Taft
Membership Chairs	Michael Frys, Chris Harasta
Outing Chair	Erin Riddle
Tioga Coordinator	Erin Riddle

To become a candidate for the Susquehanna Group Executive Committee for 2019, submit a candidate statement of 150 words or less to PO Box 572 Endicott, NY 13760 by November 20, 2018 or email to the Nominating Chair. The Chair will be identified by October 16 via a notification to all members with an email address on file. The Nominating Committee will create a slate of candidates by the end of November 2018, and ballots will be mailed with the December 2018 Newsletter.

web: <https://www.sierraclub.org/atlantic/susquehanna>

Atlantic Chapter (NYS)

2018 OFFICERS

Chair:	Kate Bartholomew
Vice Chair:	Bob Ciesielski
Secretary:	Ellen Banks
Assistant Secretary:	
Treasurer:	Steve Kulick
Conservation Chair:	Ellen Banks
Conservation Vice Chair:	Erin Riddle

web: <https://atlantic2.sierraclub.org>

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (At-large & Group Delegates)

Carl Arnold	(At-large)	Bill Meyer	(LowerHudson)
Ellen Banks	(At-large)	Catherine Skopic	(NYC)
Kate Bartholomew	(Finger Lakes)	Diana Strablow	(Niagara)
Hal Bauer	(At-large)	Jurgan Wekerle	(Ramapo-Catskill)
Bob Ciesielski	(At-large)	Jim Taft	(Susquehanna)
Jeff Debes	(Rochester)	Virginia Boyle Traver	(Hudson-Mohawk)
Mary Finneran	(At-large)		
Robert Heinemann	(Mid Hudson)		
Charley Bowman	(At-large)	Don Hughes	(At-large)
Don Hughes	(At-large)	Gale Pisha	(At-large)
Martha Loew	(Irondequoit)	Erin Riddle	(At-large)
Helen Roussel	(Long Island)		

National Sierra Club – Special Request

National Sierra Club Elections are Underway - VOTE!

Those eligible to vote in the national Sierra Club election will receive in the mail (or by Internet if you chose the electronic delivery option) your national Sierra Club ballot in early March. This will include information on the candidates and where you can find additional information on the Club's web site.



How can I learn about the candidates?

Each candidate provides a statement about themselves and their views on the issues on the official election ballot. You can also visit the Club's election web site for additional information about candidates:

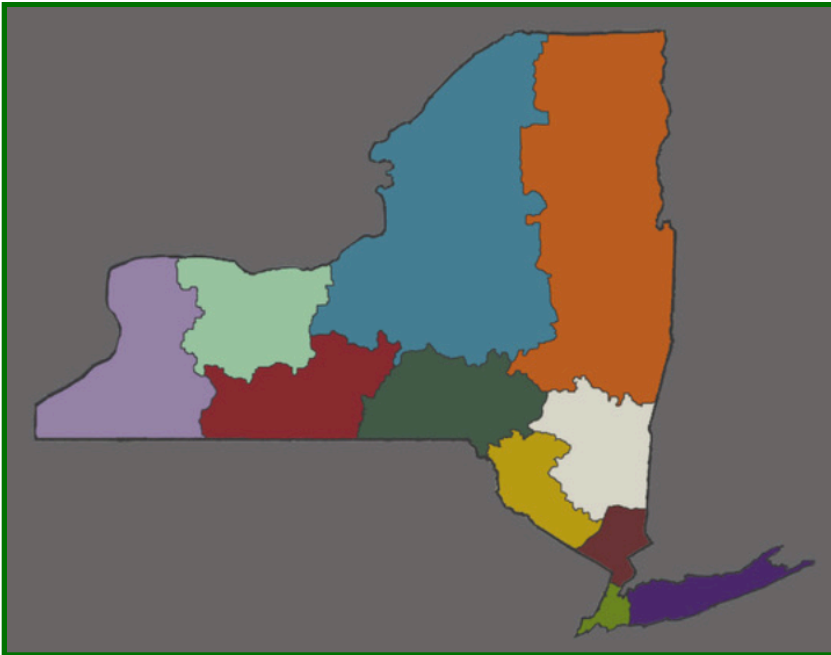
<http://www.sierraclub.org/board/election>

Voting Online is Quick and Easy!

Even if you receive your election materials in the mail, we encourage you to use the user-friendly Internet voting site to save time and postage. If sending via ground mail, please note your ballots must be received by no later than Election Day, April 25, 2018.

web: <https://www.sierraclub.org>

Susquehanna Group, part of the Atlantic Chapter (NYS)



GROUPS	MEMBERS
NIAGARA	3,649
ROCHESTER	3,444
FINGER LAKES	1,777
IROQUOIS	3,264
SUSQUEHANNA	1,225
HUDSON-MOHAWK	4,797
MID HUDSON	2,882
RAMAPO-CATSKILL	1,229
LOWER HUDSON	5,805
NEW YORK CITY	18,129
LONG ISLAND	8,265

Chapter had c.54,500 members, July 2017.

Chapter expenses last fiscal year \$470,888 included both tax deductible (c3) and non-deductible (c4) activities.

Map courtesy of Matthew Smith, Club Volunteer, based on National Sierra Club's member/zip code list

Recent Susquehanna Group Activities

- Hosted presentations on: reintroduction of passenger rail service to Southern Tier, Nov 21; NYS Climate Office, Feb 21, 2017; local flood potentials; carbon tax presentation by Citizens Climate Lobby, Oct 17
- Led writing sessions of letters to officials
- Joined Binghamton SciCli March, April 22
- Organized/led participation in People's Climate March, Washington DC, April 29
- Created/maintained pollinator garden at Confluence Park, Binghamton
- Lobbied Broome County Executive Jason Garnar & State Senator Fred Akshar
- Cleaned up Argonne Ave, Endwell section of Susquehanna flood zone, May 7
- Displayed at Earth Day, SUNY Broome, April 30
- Led day-long outing at Rogers Environmental Center, Sherburne, July 22
- Hosted Atlantic Chapter Executive Committee meeting, October 21
- Queried and endorsed candidates in local elections
- Participated in Binghamton Women's Marches, 2017 & 2018
- Opposed, with Citizen Action & NYS United Teachers, a NYS Constitutional Convention
- Established, with Water Sentinels program, baseline water quality readings of local streams
- Monitored truck shipments through Broome County of compressed natural gas
- Participated in Broome County Sustainability Committee
- Engaged with NYDOT on the Route 434 Greenway and 363 Gateway projects
- Hosted new volunteer meetings

Upcoming Meetings

General meetings are open to all and held at Central United Methodist Church, 17 Nanticoke Ave, Endicott, 7:30 PM on the 3rd Tuesday of the month, with the exception of July and August.

- March 20 **Route 434 Greenway**, with Jillian Newby, NYSDOT Project Manager & Scott Riegle, Senior Transportation Planner, Binghamton Metropolitan Transportation Study
- April 17 **Intro to Bluebirds**, with Sarah Hodder (& discussion about a bluebird outing in May)
- May 20 **Binghamton City Planning Department**, with Juliet Berling, Director of Planning, Housing, & Community Development