

# Susquehanna *Sierran* December 2018



- Our Endorsed Local Candidates
- Coming Events
- VOTE for Executive Committee
- Nuthatch Hollow
- *The Fifth Risk*

EXPLORE, ENJOY, PROTECT THE PLANET

## == *Election Edition* ==

### Susquehanna Group and the November Elections

— Allan Hochberg

The Susquehanna Group of the Sierra Club endorsed 10 candidates for the 2018 elections. Endorsement decisions were made based on responses to a Sierra Club questionnaire as well as a review of the candidates' backgrounds and environmental records. To help support endorsed candidates, the Sierra Club held a Meet-the-Candidates night in October. Candidates spoke briefly about their environmental concerns and then answered questions. The Susquehanna Group held a news conference with Citizen Action discussing environmental issues and endorsed candidates. Sierra Club members made contributions to the candidates and participated in phone banking and canvassing. The Susquehanna Group of the Sierra Club looks forward to being actively involved in future local elections.

Position	Candidate	Win/Loss
Binghamton City Council	Dan Livingston	W
Broome County Legislature	Karen Beebe	L
Broome County Legislature	Mark Bordeau	L
Broome County Legislature	Bridget Kane	L
Broome County Legislature	Mary Kaminsky	W
Broome County Legislature	Barbara Mullen	L
Broome County Legislature	Dan D Reynolds	W
Broome County Legislature	Suzy Ryan	W
Broome County Legislature	Jason Shaw	W
NYS Assembly	Donna Lupardo	W

### Coming Events

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

December 18	7:30	Juliet Berling, Director of Binghamton Planning, Housing, Urban Development; Lynda Spickard Environmental Award will be presented to Gay Canough, PhD and founder of ETM Solar Works of Endicott
January 15	6:30	Potluck Dinner
	7:30	"Indigenous Rights and Environmental Justice," Thomas Sinclair, Department of Public Administration, Binghamton University
February 19	7:30	"Proposed Wind Energy in Broome County," Elizabeth Broad, NY for Clean Power
March 19	7:30	"Complete Streets, Neighborhood Heritage & Sustainability," George Homsy, Department of Public Administration, Binghamton University

# Susquehanna Group

(All of Broome, & parts of Chenango,  
Delaware, Otsego, Tioga Counties)

Chair \*Scott Lauffer (607)341-3746  
Vice Chair \*Valdi Weiderpass  
Secretary Karen Boba  
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  
\* Member Executive Committee.

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

## ***Election of Executive Committee Members***

Group Bylaws require annual elections to the Executive Committee, which has 9 members serving 2-year terms. This year we elect 4. Statements by candidates appear below. Using the ballot below, mail your vote(s) to Susquehanna Group, PO Box 572, Endicott NY 13760, **or** email up to 4 choices to [kcronin55@gmail.com](mailto:kcronin55@gmail.com), using the subject "SG Election." Include your member number (can be found on mailing label).

### **Joann Lettis**

I would like to be considered for the Executive Committee of the Sierra Club's Susquehanna Group. Here is a little about my background. When we lived on Long Island, my husband Ritch and I owned a Wild Bird Center franchise store for seven years. During that time I became active with the Huntington Audubon and the Four Harbors Audubon of which I was president for a couple of years. I have been constantly educating myself about the environment. I have planted several gardens with native plantings that benefit birds and butterflies. I am currently employed by Broome County as a Principal Account Clerk. Thank you for your consideration of my nomination.

### **Scott Lauffer**

I have been a member of the Sierra Club since 2000, and Chair of the Susquehanna Group for the last six years. Areas I have been active in include water monitoring, renewable energy, climate change, state legislation, local politics and defense of the natural world. I feel we are at a critical crossroads concerning the planet. The environment is being abused by powerful economic interests and we have a long and hard fight to preserve and protect, while balancing that with enjoyment of the outdoors. I have been privileged to serve on the Group Executive Committee and am willing to continue, as there is important work ahead.

### **Karen Boba**

I've been a long time donor to the Sierra Club and now I want to get more involved. This is the first year I've started attending the Susquehanna Group meetings, and I volunteered for and was approved to be Recording Secretary for the Executive Committee. I am an engineer by training but spent most of the past 20 years in various volunteer positions with the Union-Endicott school district, both in the PTA and as a member of the U-E Education Foundation. I am most concerned about climate change and policies of the current administration.

### **Chris Harasta**

A considerable amount of my life has been spent in the forest; I grew up camping and hiking. This resulted in a profound respect for our diminishing natural world. As an adult, I strive to do everything in my power to make a difference. I volunteer with VINES, Waterman, WAVE (NYDEC), and the BU Nature Preserve. With the Sierra Club Susquehanna Group I have organized a river cleanup and an educational stream study. At my job at BU Dining Services I am in charge of our sustainability efforts. I train over 500 employees a year on composting, recycling, and reducing food waste. I also work directly with students on efforts to reduce plastic usage, increase recycling efficiency, and offer more local food. I currently serve on the Susquehanna Group's Executive Committee filling in a temporary vacancy.

Vote for up to 4. Mail this ballot to  
Susquehanna Group, PO Box 572, Endicott NY  
13760 by 12/31/18, or send email to  
[kcronin55@gmail.com](mailto:kcronin55@gmail.com). Include member  
number (from mailing label).

Member # \_\_\_\_\_

- Karen Boba
- Scott Lauffer
- Joann Lettis
- Chris Harasta

# Update on Binghamton University's Nuthatch Hollow

— Georgia Kerkezis

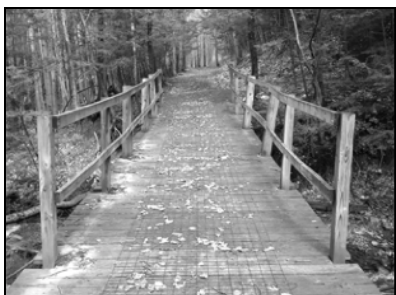
When local businessman and environmentalist Robert Schumann passed away in 2011, he left behind friends, family, and almost 75 acres of land which he graciously donated to Binghamton University. Known as Nuthatch Hollow, it will become home to the world's twenty-second certified Living Building.

A Living Building gives back to the surrounding environment and community more than it takes, ultimately creating a net positive impact. It must meet 20 requirements set by the International Living Future Institute which fall into seven main foci: Place, Water, Energy, Health and Happiness, Materials, Equity, and Beauty. Examples include incorporating urban agriculture, preserving fresh air and waterways, and production of over 100 percent renewable energy.

Construction of the Living Building, originally slated for 2018, has been delayed to 2019 by planning needs, budget, and weather. Nature Preserve Steward Dylan Horvath would rather have the project "done right than rushed." The final design of the 2,000-2,500 square-foot building is nearly complete. It includes laboratory classroom and support spaces, a library, and a food preparation area.

Living Buildings mustn't use any of the 815 materials on a "Red List." Though commonly used in construction, they pollute the environment, harm workers, or can accumulate up food chains. PVC pipes, for example, are disallowed. This has prompted the planning process to become quite creative. Bidding is also complicated. Generally, the University would publicly solicit bids, then select the highest-qualified contractor. However, due to the 20 requirements aforementioned and restrictions imposed by the Red List, bidding on this project has been carefully stipulated.

While BU's Nature Preserve emphasizes recreational enjoyment, Nuthatch Hollow will emphasize environmental education, research, and interdisciplinary collaboration. From its very start the project has been collaborative. Students, faculty, staff, the public, and specialists in water, food production, art, engineering, and social justice have come together to meet goals and interests. Professor Carl Lipo wrote that a great benefit from the project has been "the conversations that need to take place in order to make it a reality," and that these conversations "have been transformational for those who have participated... and will shape campus procedures going further."



The Living Building is expected to be fully functional by the summer of 2020 when it will serve as an inspiration to other universities and organizations, just as the Living Building at Smith College had originally inspired President Harvey Stenger. It will become an important tool in creating and encouraging a sustainable, resilient future.

*Note: Georgia Kerkezis is a junior at Binghamton University, majors in environmental science and minors in geographical information systems.*

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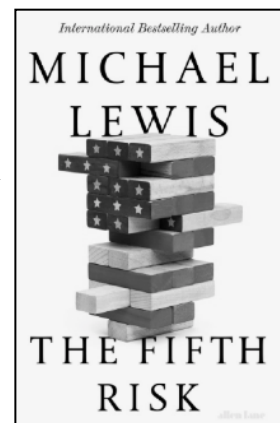
## Book review: Michael Lewis, *The Fifth Risk*, Norton, 2018

Chris Rounds

I've got a tough task here: convince committed environmentalists to read about federal agencies and transitions in power. I could begin by pointing out that the author is a master craftsman whose previous bestsellers, *Moneyball* on baseball, *The Big Short* and *Liar's Poker* both on the financial system, made statistics and big data fascinating. But I suspect one might dig in one's heels hearing this book focuses on agencies none of which is the Department of Interior or the EPA. Why bother?

The answer: Lewis shines a bright light on the many immensely important tasks federal agencies engage in day in and day out that protect us from nuclear disaster, fund vitally important research, warn citizens of impending hurricanes and tornadoes, and funnel federal money to towns suffering from inevitable adverse consequences of the free market. My hope is that after reading this book, we'll agree that key federal agencies are incredibly important to our short- and long-term welfare. When we hand them over to people who don't believe that, we'll live to regret it.

*continued on p 4*





Susquehanna Group  
PO Box 572  
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[sierraclub.org/atlantic/susquehanna](http://sierraclub.org/atlantic/susquehanna)

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**TAKE HEED — The *Susquehanna Sierran* publishes 4 times per year. Printing and mailing for over 1000 local members draws heavily on financial reserves. Therefore the *Sierran*, except for December issues, is delivered by email (which also allows color & web links). So! For email delivery please take a moment and send your email address to [helen.support@sierraclub.org](mailto:helen.support@sierraclub.org)**



*The Fifth Risk, continued*

Lewis introduces us to talented and committed scientists and “bureaucrats” whose work has gone unremarked over decades. Having convinced us of the inestimable value of their work he then describes the transition from the Obama to the Trump administration. In each Department, people spent months compiling briefing books and planning briefings for a smooth transition. Then nobody from “Team Trump” showed up. And when they finally did, they were poorly qualified and deeply uninterested. The author quotes an Obama official: “They mainly ran around the building insulting people... There was a mentality that everything government does is stupid and bad and the people in it are stupid and bad.” [p.42]

The title emerged from the Department of Energy’s Chief Scientist, John MacWilliams who identified five risks. The first four were unsurprising: keeping things designed to blow up from doing so when they’re not supposed to; North Korea; Iran; electrical grid failure. The fifth risk MacWilliams worried about was “project management,” that, distracted by short-term problems, we will fail to detect challenges we are ill-prepared to address.

Give yourself this book for Christmas. You will come away with a deeper understanding of and appreciation for the work of those faceless bureaucrats in Washington and around the country. Perhaps you’ll also satisfy yourself that a strong and intelligently-directed civil service is essential to our country’s future.