

Susquehanna *Sierran* March 2020



EXPLORE, ENJOY, PROTECT THE PLANET

Local Advocacy Regarding Planetary Problems – Editor



Susquehanna Group members Valdi & Karen Weiderpass, and others, met February 19, 2020 with NY 22nd Congressional District Representative Anthony Brindisi. The advocacy stemmed from an April 2019 collaboration between the Susquehanna Group and GROW (Generation Repairing Our World), a Binghamton University student environmental group. Rep. Brindisi met with GROW, Sierra Club members and others April 25 last year to share concerns and perspectives. At Brindisi's suggestion, the Environmental Advisory Committee was formed to research and advise the Representative. At the pictured meeting there were reports from four subcommittees: Climate Resilience; Sustainable Agriculture; Education, Communication and Workforce Development; and Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency. Each made numerous suggestions. Valdi's complete report on the meeting can be found at <https://www.sierraclub.org/atlantic/susquehanna/local-issues>

Boland Pond – Mary Cronk

The largest wetland in Broome County is Boland Pond in the Town of Chenango. It's well-known to bird watchers, is federally protected, and is registered with the NYDEC. Fallon Road, off NY Route 12, allows access to a causeway and excellent views. Enter "Chenango Bridge" on <https://www.fws.gov/wetlands/Data/Mapper.html>. Alternatively, search N 42° 10.584 W 075° 52.914 on Apple or Google maps. Yet another map (with bird data) is at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology Ebird web page <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L505437?yr=all&m=&rank=mrec> The wetland is home to many species including painted and snapping turtles, and beavers.



photo – Ray Cronk

The Pond is locally known as "the aquifer," and provides drinking water for the Town of Chenango. County records show most of it owned by W&D Realty, apparently associated with the Maines family.

Geological surveys indicate that during glacial times a dam diverted the Chenango River into the channel that is now Boland Pond. The temporary channel filled with water and gravel. When the dam melted or wore away the river returned to its current bed. In modern times the deposited gravel became

commercially valuable and

supported a quarry owned by the Boland company. Quarrying enlarged and deepened the pond. Most gravel was removed and the quarry is no longer active, though some buildings and equipment remain. As the gravel permitted easy burials, cemeteries, two human and one for pets, were built along NY 12. The wet, unstable soil has discouraged buildings and development.

Since I have lived in the town, there have been significant threats to the wetland. Walmart proposed a store but later opted for Vestal. A large condominium development was proposed near the pond. A possible threat was the County's new highway garage just east of the wetland; with NYDEC consultation, the County built Fallon Road, essentially a causeway across the marsh, so as to protect it.

In 2019 there was a problem with the Fallon Road culvert. Water drained from the marsh at a fast rate, endangering the ecosystem. Most birds did not return or nest. The fish were impacted. The beavers mysteriously disappeared. A state biologist took a look and reported that when the culvert on Fallon Road was repaired the wetland would be restored. The culvert was replaced in August/September by Broome County DPW and over this past winter water levels have returned to normal. Hopefully, the wetland system will recover.

The area though protected is private land so can be bought and sold. Currently a for sale sign on Rt 12 states 121 acres can be developed. The seller/contact is W&D Realty, William Maines. Town zoning allows residential development on the 121 acres but permits from the NYSDEC would be required. A 150-acre industrial-zoned area owned by Bert Adams Disposal may be developed. It includes a pond and stream. The Town of Chenango recently held hearings regarding re-zoning properties to "commercial" along Rt 12. Objections from Town residents led to maintaining the status quo.

Early mornings in spring are wonderful times to visit the Pond. Binoculars and spotting scopes are very helpful.

Susquehanna Group

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

Chair	*Scott Lauffer (607)341-3746
Vice Chair	*Valdi Weiderpass
Secretary	*Karen Boba
Treasurer	*Joann Lettis
Political Chair	*Allan Hochberg
Chapter Delegate	*Jim Taft
Alt. Chapter Delegate	*Joann Lettis
Newsletter Editor	*Jim Taft
Membership Chair	*Chris Harasta
Outings Chair	*Chris Harasta
Co-Conservation Chairs	*Doug Gausman * Mary Cronk
Webmaster	Jack Davis

* Member Executive Committee

Susquehanna Group News

- A neighboring Group, Ramapo-Catskill, may dissolve, ceding territory to 3 surrounding Groups, including Susquehanna which would likely gain much of Sullivan County.
- The Executive Committee is searching for a more central, accessible venue for monthly general meetings. Any suggestions?
- The Group financially supports the Broome County Art Council's annual environmental photography contest/show, and an Energy Event convened by Vestal Residents for Safe Energy (VERSE).
- We submitted support letters for Broome County Transit's grant applications for funds for acquiring electric buses.
- **To become a candidate for the Susquehanna Group Executive Committee mail by November 20, 2020 a candidate statement of 150 words or less to:**
Susquehanna Group
PO Box 572
Endicott NY 13760

The Nominating Committee will create a slate of candidates, and ballots will be mailed with the December *Sierran*.

TIME TO VOTE !

NATIONAL Sierra Club Elections are Underway

Those eligible to vote in the national Sierra Club election will receive ballots in early March by mail (or digitally if you chose the electronic delivery option). This will include instructions and information on the candidates.

Our grassroots structure is strengthened when participation is high and provides an opportunity for members from all walks of life to have a say in the future of the Club.

On the official ballot are statements from each candidate about themselves and their views.

You may learn more by asking questions of your group and chapter leadership and other experienced members you know. You can also visit the Sierra Club's election website for additional information, including campaign videos from each candidate:

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

We encourage you to use the user-friendly Internet voting site to save time and postage. If sending via ground mail, your ballots must be received no later than April 22, 2020.



Warm weather is arriving!
Susquehanna Group's **Pollinator Garden** at Confluence Park will need cleanup and regular maintenance. Contact Project Leader Sarah Hodder, shaddow@stny.rr.com.



Coming Events

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 17 Impact of Climate Change on Natural Ecosystems and Species

Julian Shepherd, Associate Professor, Biological Sciences, Binghamton University

There is much talk about the climate itself and effects on human systems (important of course), but less about current and likely future effects on the other living organisms, e.g. how much can we expect different organisms to adapt or move to accommodate climate change? I will also talk about projections of ecosystem changes and species extinctions. and the obstacles that inhibit the transition.

April 21 Chris Rounds leads discussion of "**Natural Rivals: John Muir, Gifford Pinchot, and the Creation of America's Public Lands**" by John Clayton

All are encouraged to read in advance. This book can be obtained from public libraries, bookstores, or purchased online.

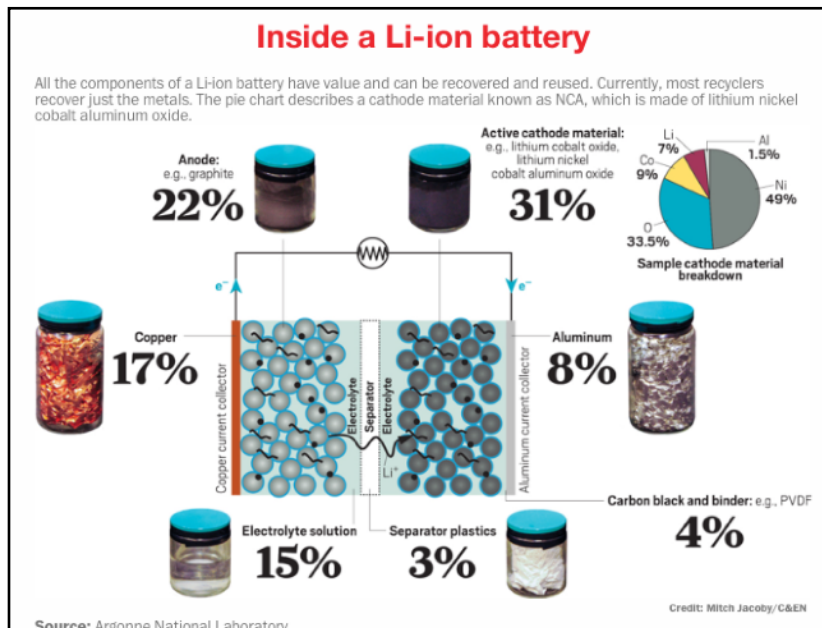
May 19 Lowering our Fossil Footprint

Chris W Burger (Chemical Engineer, Resource Management Consultant, College Science Instructor) discusses the importance of reducing use of fossil fuels and strategies on how to do so. He shares his family's personal journey on reducing its home's fossil footprint to nearly zero. Strategies on how our community can reduce its dependency on fossil fuel are also discussed.

Lithium-Ion Battery Recycling in Endicott? – Valdi Weiderpass

A major industrial process is planned at the Huron Campus (former IBM facility) in Endicott, by joint-venture company SungEel MCC Americas LLC. Application documents describe a facility to recycle lithium-ion batteries from electric vehicles, power packs (devices such as power tools including electric drills, saws, lawn mowers, etc.) and cell phones. It would process at maximum 2,200 pounds per hour while running 12 hours per day, 5 to 7 days per week, 50 weeks per year.

A gas-fired rotary kiln heats batteries to 1022-1112°F (exhaust is heated to 1472F by an afterburner). Next is shredding and grinding, then magnetic/screening separation to recover metal powders. Recovered lithium, cobalt, nickel, iron, manganese, copper and aluminum are then sold to manufacturers.



In the big picture, the Climate Crisis can be partially eased by transitioning to renewable energy and electrifying everything possible. This will require increasing use of lithium-ion batteries unless better energy storage becomes practical. Scarce materials in batteries will become scarcer, and batteries beyond their useful life will need to be dealt with. The best way to deal with end-of-life lithium-ion batteries is to recycle them. Landfilling them can lead to groundwater pollution and toxic uncontrolled air emissions from hard-to-extinguish fires.

The Endicott facility would use the same process as a lithium-ion battery recycling facility run by SungEel Hitech, a project partner, in Gunsan, South Korea. Emissions of Federally-regulated pollutants are predicted to be less than 50% of major

source thresholds, and emissions of “high toxicity air contaminants” are predicted to be below thresholds in 6 NYCRR 201-9 (a section of NY’s environmental regulations in its Codes, Rules and Regulations). Therefore the facility could have “Registered” with the DEC by submitting a handful of pages, and then be given permission to operate. However, in light of this being a new process in NY the DEC, exercising caution, requires the company to apply for a State Facility Permit. The Permit involves more documentation, allows the DEC to more easily impose operating and monitoring requirements, and invites public comments prior to granting the permit.

Based on my 50+ hour review and submission of comments, I believe the processing facility will probably conform to DEC's requirements, so long as the company behaves responsibly. More concerning perhaps is a separate storage facility where a fire, if not quickly suppressed, could cause substantial emissions. The company says the batteries will be kept segregated by type in relatively small quantities, with appropriate on-site extinguishing capability. For people who are concerned about this facility or about future similar facilities coming into municipalities, key things to remember are:

- 1) There is still a fire risk which may release substantial emissions.
- 2) Municipal zoning may provide a means of siting industrial activities away from residences, though a host of adverse environmental effects could follow the industry to any new location.

Additional reading:

<https://cen.acs.org/materials/energy-storage/time-serious-recycling-lithium/97/i28>

https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/ywajkw/todays-electric-car-batteries-will-be-tomorrows-e-waste-crisis-scientists-warn

Member Ed Nizalowski shared an Owego Gazette story from **Feb. 22, 1934**:

A Berkshire Thermometer Records 52 Degrees Below Zero on Feb. 10th Morning

During the last 12 days this section, as well as all other places in the east, have been experiencing the coldest winter weather since the latter part of December, 1917, and January, 1918. The coldest weather so far experienced was on Saturday morning, Feb. 10, when the cold caused the mercury to drop so low that it disappeared in the bulbs of thermometers, those that do not register more than 30 degrees below zero.

Since the publication of last week's Gazette, in which the cold spots on the morning of Feb.10 in Tioga county were published, additional information has trickled into this office. The report of the coldest place came from Newark Valley, where a thermometer at the Borden milk station recorded 40 degrees below zero. This was a warm spot compared with a later report, which subsequently came from Berkshire, where one thermometer registered 52 degrees below zero. Besides several thermometers in the town of Candor reported from 44 to 46 degrees below zero.

The Berkshire report came from William Clark's poultry farm at Berkshire. On the night of Feb. 9, Mr. Clark placed the thermometer at the northwest corner of his large poultry house, which is situated near the Owego creek. The wind blew out of the northeast that night so that the thermometer faced the coldest spot. In the morning the thermometer registered 52 degrees below

You May Have Missed It – Editor

NYS DOT, on January 28 at MacArthur School, conducted a public hearing on the long-anticipated 434 Greenway which will connect downtown Binghamton with Binghamton University. This was an informational session with the latest designs, and there was ample time for the public to examine displays and deliver comments. Project planners did not respond to comments or questions. There were approximately 300 attendees. There were many positive comments though several people objected to an access path at Ivanhoe Road. Plans can be found at <https://www.dot.ny.gov/434greenway> particularly under 'Project Documents.'

At the February 18 General Meeting, Lisa Bloodnick described her involvement with seed-saving, and also fielded many questions on the operation of her family's 25-year-old organic farm in Apalachin. She exhibited many beautiful and rare seeds, and we learned many things about the farm including how an initially rambunctious horse is now providing good draft services. Bloodnick Farm participates in the Broome County Farmers Market.



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