



Building Thriving Communities

Register Now for May 4 Climate Conference

Belfast event looks to inspire action in Maine communities to promote climate solutions and mitigate and adapt to climate disruption.

With disturbing new projections on the rate our planet is warming, and a White House in denial of the problem, there is an imperative for more and bolder local action on climate issues. That's what Sierra Club Maine's Fourth Annual Climate Conference is all about. It will bring together activists and experts focused on community climate solutions.

The May 4th event at Belfast's Hutchinson Center will kick off at 8:45 (registration is at 8 a.m.) with a welcome by Sierra Club Organizer Bill Price. The welcome will be followed by a keynote address from the legendary environmentalist, Gus Speth (see interview on page 4).

Attendees will chose from three breakout sessions: Moving Toward a Clean Energy Future, The CMP Transmission Project, and Organizing and Growing Climate Action Teams. That will be followed by lightning round talks on how climate change is impacting a number of industries, as well as our health, our natural resources, and our economy. After lunch, attendees will have the opportunity to discuss those topics in workshops.

"Our goal is for attendees to leave this conference energized, inspired, and equipped with the tools needed to take action in their communities" explains Becky Bartovics, one of the event's organizers.

For more information and to register for the conference go to www.sierraclub.org/maine or call (207) 761-5616.

Will CMP's Transmission Line Project Reduce Emissions? Who Knows?

The Public Utilities Commission approves CMP's application, but questions on the impact on greenhouse gas reductions and the Maine Woods remain.

There's been some good news this spring for Central Maine Power Company (CMP) and its plan to transmit electric power generated by Hydro-Quebec through 145 miles of Maine for use in Massachusetts.

But the debate about the controversial plan is far from over.

As expected, the Maine Public Utilities Commission (PUC) recently approved CMP's New England Clean Energy Connect (NECEC) application. That came just a month or so after Governor Janet Mills put her support behind the proposal, the result of new perks offered to the state by CMP.

With the Public Utility Commissioners giving their approval, the fate of NECEC will be in the hands of the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Land Use Planning Commission (LUPC). The DEP will examine the plan's impacts on wildlife, wetlands, scenery, etc. LUPC will look specifically at the project's impact on the Unorganized Territories. Joint DEP/LUPC hearings were held in the first week of April.

While Mills' support and PUC approval move the NECEC project forward, all the news for CMP hasn't been good. A recent statewide poll indicated that 65 percent of Mainers oppose the transmission line—only 15 percent support the project. That poll result is reinforced by the fact that the overwhelming majority of public comments to the PUC were in opposition. In fact, out of 1,300 comments only 28 were in favor.

In addition, more towns along the proposed transmission corridor have come out opposing

NECEC, including Janet Mills' hometown of Farmington. In late March, despite a plea from Mills, the Farmington Town Meeting voted 262 to 102 to rescind its earlier support for the CMP project. And just a week earlier, Franklin County commissioners rescinded their support.

The strong public opposition has led to political activity in Augusta and legislation to block or slow down the CMP project. Representative Seth Berry,

chair of the Energy, Utilities, and Technology Committee recently introduced a bill that would require CMP to get approval from every town along its route.

State Senator Brownie Carson is also sponsoring a bill, LD 640, that calls for a report from the DEP on the net total effect on greenhouse gas emissions from NECEC. It asks for that report to be completed and made public by June 1.

Sierra Club Maine strongly supports Car-

son's legislation.

"Hydro-Quebec has been absent from all of the proceedings before the Public Utilities Commission, therefore no proof of greenhouse gas emissions reduction has been provided to the people of Maine," Sierra Club Maine Climate Action Advisory Team member Becky Bartovics stated in testimony supporting LD 640.

"Assumptions have been made, and assertions presented that Hydro-Quebec will provide cleaner power. What sources of power are they using? Is it coming from the Line 3 Tar Sands pipeline? Is it flooding new landscapes by damming up rivers? And where do they promise cheap electricity? No-

-Continued on Page 2



Join our Earth Day celebration with a hike in Camden Hills

Celebrate Earth Day 2019 with a hike up Mt. Megunticook Trail in Camden State Park. Bring a lunch and enjoy the great views (especially great before the leaves come out).

We'll meet at 10:30 at the trailhead. For further information and to register go to the events page at <https://www.sierraclub.org/maine/events>.



Repeal of LePage's gross metering policy for solar headlines the successes.

Legislature Addresses a Wide Range of Environmental Issues

After eight years of Governor LePage's anti-environmental policies, Maine's new governor and legislature are now moving forward on critically important issues, including major legislation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

One of the early legislative successes was repeal of the gross metering policy of the LePage administration, aimed at stifling the development of the solar industry in Maine. The repeal of the policy, passed by the legislature and signed by Governor Mills, removes the fees that utilities were able to charge solar users for generating their own power.

Sierra Club Maine strongly supported the repeal bill (LD91). The Chapter's legislative team has worked hard to identify priority bills and recruit volunteers to testify for legislation. Public testimony is important and effective. If you would like to be part of our legislative effort please email us at maine.chapter@sierraclub.org or call 761-5616.

Here are some of the the Chapter's highest priority bills:

LD 1494: An Act to Reform Maine's Renewable Portfolio Standard

This bill, sponsored by Senator Eloise Vitelli, calls for an increase in Maine's renewable energy portfolio to 80 percent by 2030. No public hearing date has been scheduled.

LD 1093: An Act To Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue To Invest in Maine's Railroad Infrastructure

This bill, sponsored by Senator Ned Claxton, would allow for improvements in railway infrastructure. In addition to enhancing passenger rail service, the improvements could double the safe speed a freight train can travel. This investment can be expected to be matched by approximately \$150 million in additional federal funds.

CMP, continued from 1

where in their submission is there proof."

Regrettably, the PUC did not require a full, independent, and well-documented answer to the greenhouse gas emissions question as part of its review process. That, despite some expert speculation that the electricity Hydro-Quebec would transmit to Massachusetts is energy it would have sold to customers in other areas such as New York and Ontario. Those areas would then need to rely on other energy sources, most likely carbon-producing sources such as natural gas and oil.

The PUC examiner's report cites one CMP study (by Daymark) and a PUC study (by London Economics International) indicating that NECEC will result in a significant reduction in regional greenhouse gas emissions.

Support for Hydro-Quebec's claim of reduced emissions is largely based on the power coming from the company's yet-to-be-completed dam. But in its application to Massachusetts, Hydro-Quebec indicated that the energy would be generated by existing hydro facilities.

According to a 2018 study by Energyzt Advisors of Boston (partially funded by Sierra Club Maine), if NECEC uses current Hydro-Quebec generating facilities to transmit electricity to Massachusetts, energy that was being sent elsewhere, it could actually increase carbon emissions for the Northeast Region.

So exactly what sources will be used to provide the NECEC electric power? CMP and Hydro-Quebec are not answering that question.

That's why an independent emissions study on the project is so important.

Is Hydro Really Clean Energy?

While it's true that large-scale hydro electricity production, on its own, does not produce greenhouse gas emissions, that's not the whole story, as explained in this excerpt from the *New Scientist*:

"...Large amounts of carbon tied up in trees and other plants are released when the reservoir is



Representative Seth Berry addresses the more than 40 participants at the Chapter's Lobby Day at the State House in March. Attendees learned about lobbying their legislators and providing testimony at legislative hearings.

LD 911: An Act To Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue To Promote Land Conservation, Working Waterfronts, Water Access and Outdoor Recreation

LD 911, sponsored by Senator Cathy Breen, would strengthen Maine's legacy of conserving special places for future generations by providing \$75 million in new bond funding for the Land for Maine's Future (LMF) program and \$20 million in bond funding to invest in Maine's State Parks. No hearing is yet scheduled for the bill.

LD 797: Act To Limit Greenhouse Gas Pollution and Effectively Use Maine's Natural Resources

This bill, sponsored by Representative Ralph Tucker, provides a comprehensive strategy for curbing harmful carbon pollution, creating jobs, and protecting the health of Maine's people and environment for future generations.

LD 434: An Act To Price Carbon Pollution in Maine

initially flooded and the plants rot. Then after this first pulse of decay, plant matter settling on the reservoir's bottom decomposes without oxygen, resulting in a build-up of dissolved methane. This is released into the atmosphere when water passes through the dam's turbines.

"Seasonal changes in water depth mean there is a continuous supply of decaying material. In the dry season plants colonize the banks of the reservoir only to be engulfed when the water level rises. For shallow-shelving reservoirs these "draw-down" regions can account for several thousand square kilometers. In effect man-made reservoirs convert carbon dioxide in the atmosphere into methane."

Methane, as we know, is a significant factor in climate change.

There is a reason the State of Maine doesn't qualify large-scale hydro dams in our Renewable Portfolio Standard—it's neither clean nor green.

Hydro is Not the Best Option for reducing Massachusetts Carbon Footprint

While NECEC would, in fact, reduce carbon emissions in Massachusetts, as previously noted, it may not decrease and may even increase global greenhouse gas emissions.

Massachusetts already has a booming solar industry, and very real potential for significant offshore wind power. Pursuing these localized green energy sources, along with focusing on conservation makes more sense than importing hydro power. As was expressed by Deb Pasternak of the Massachusetts Sierra Club:

"Massachusetts has many options available for building our clean energy economy. Bringing electricity from Hydro-Quebec down from Canada should not be one of them."

Impact on the Maine Woods

Putting in the transmission lines would mean a significant amount of clear cutting to create a corridor.

This bill, sponsored by Representative Deane Rykerson, requires an assessment on the carbon content of fuels sold by a distributor in the State. The bill defines "distributor" and requires a distributor to submit on a monthly basis the required assessment to the Public Utilities Commission.

LD 13: An Act to Allow Microgrids That are in the Public Interest

LD 13, sponsored by former Sierra Club Maine executive committee member Mick Devin, would create a process through which the Maine Public Utilities Commission could approve the construction and operation of microgrids.

As explained on *Energy News Network's* website, microgrids could serve

loads no larger than 10 megawatts and generation would have to be located nearby and contribute to the state's renewable portfolio standard. The operator also could not be an investor-owned utility or affiliate. Legislative team co-leader Olin Jenner provided testimony on behalf of the Chapter.

LD: 1282: An Act to Establish a Green New Deal For Maine

This bill, sponsored by Representative Chloe Maxmin, calls for major increases in renewable energy and a revision in state goals for emissions reductions. It also addresses related issues of job creation, income inequality, and environmental justice. A hearing on the bill is scheduled for Tuesday, April 23 at 1 p.m.

Please contact your legislators and let them know you support these important legislative efforts. With a more forward-thinking governor and legislature, now is the time for bold action in Augusta.

And maintaining the corridor would mean periodic chemical spraying that would affect the quality of rivers, streams, and lakes along the route. Bisecting 54-miles of forest with this corridor would fragment vital habitat, threatening wildlife migration behavior and food and water supplies.

Additionally, the CMP route goes through iconic areas of forested waterways. People travel long distance to enjoy these special wilderness experiences—experiences that would be visually marred by the CMP plan.

Let Your Voice be Heard

During the two evenings of public testimony to the DEP and LUPC (April 2 and April 4) a significant majority of speakers provided sworn testimony against the NECEC project as proposed.

The DEP and LUPC will hold one last hearing on May 9. After that, the public will have an additional 10 days to submit written comments.

Please take time to submit a comment to the DEP. Let the department know that you expect a thorough environmental impact study and that the wildlife, woods, and waters in this unfragmented stretch of the Maine Woods must be protected. Send your comments to : NECEC.DEP@maine.gov.

The final decision by the DEP commissioner will be made in the fall—probably by late October. Following that, the matter will be taken up by the Board of Environmental Protection (independent of the DEP).

That's not all. The Army Corps of Engineers is also required to approve permits related to the Clean Water Act 404 due to the many impacts on wetlands, streams, ponds, and rivers. In addition there will be a Presidential Permit required due to the international border crossing. The Army Corps comment period will close on April 25. When writing, include the file number: NAE-2017-01342. Send comments to Jay Clement at jay.l.clement@usace.army.mil.

As we said, the debate on NECEC is far from over.

An interview with Sierra Club Maine Climate Conference keynote speaker, Gus Speth

Advocate For a “New Environmentalism”

Sierra Club Maine is thrilled to have James Gustave “Gus” Speth, a legendary figure in the environmental movement, as keynote speaker for its fourth climate conference on May 4 in Belfast.

Speth’s resume is long and impressive. He served as chair of the U.S. Council on Environmental Quality in the Carter Administration, advisor to President Clinton, administrator of the UN’s Development Programme, and dean of the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. Speth is also the founder and former president of the World Resources Institute and a co-founder of the Natural Resources Defense Council. He currently serves as a fellow at the Tellus Institute, the Democracy Collaborative, and the Vermont Law School.

Speth is the author or co-author of seven books, including the critically acclaimed *Red Sky at Morning* and his 2014 memoir, *Angels by the River*.

Speth believes that the climate crisis demands dramatic changes in our political and economic systems, but also in our personal lifestyles and actions. And he doesn’t just talk the talk, he walks the walk. The Speth home in Vermont is virtually carbon neutral and he drives an electric car. As for his taking action, Speth was arrested (along with Bill McKibben and Sierra Club Director Michael Brune) in the 2011 Tar Sands protest at the White House.

The *Maine Sierran* talked with Speth about the current state of the environmental movement, the Green New Deal, local activism, and the systemic change that is needed to deal with the global climate crisis.

You’ve been part of the environmental movement since the early 1970s. There was significant progress in those early days of the movement and a great deal of optimism. Yet our environmental problems have significantly worsened. What are the main factors that have stifled progress?

I think the main factor is the opposition we came up against. Progress really stalled after 1980 with Reagan’s anti-environmentalism and the conservative movement’s anti-regulatory campaign. We’ve seen a surge of disinformation that has really led to the current climate denialism. All the opposition had a big impact. The Environmental Law Institute did a study looking at the major environmental accomplishments, especially legislation. Four out of the top five environmental accomplishments occurred in the early 1970s. That’s why it’s so important for the environmental movement to be reborn—not just keep doing what we’ve been doing. We need systemic change.

What’s included in that rebirth of environmental movement?

Well, a key feature is a focus on local action and community solidarity. And we need to broaden the agenda beyond the environment to include social and economic justice issues and community challenges. That includes making alliances with all elements of the progressive movement. And systemic change is essential because our environmental problems are actually rooted in the defining features of our current political economy.

You use the term “New Environmentalism.” Does that involve a different way of looking at the problems?

Well, what is an environmental issue? Most of us would say air pollution, water pollution, loss of habitat, etc. But what if your answer is that an environmental issue is anything that impedes environmental progress? That’s a much different way of looking at it. And if you think of it in that way then Trump putting all our emphasis on economic growth is an environmental issue. Consumerism



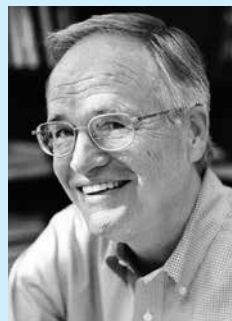
In September 2014, Gus Speth joined his students from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies in the New York City Climate March.

and commercialism are environmental issues. Our fractured democracy is an environmental issue. Corporate misfeasance and the ascendancy of money power and corporate power over people power are environmental issues. There’s a whole constellation of factors that war against real progress. A “new environmentalism” embraces that broader view of the problem.

There’s been a good deal of buzz about the Green New Deal. What are your thoughts about it?

Right now it seems like a flexible concept. It addresses some of things I was referring to—social and climate justice issues and jobs for all, which is great. It is a breakthrough. It’s stimulated discussion

“Four out of the top five environmental accomplishments occurred in the early 1970s. That’s why it’s so important for the environmental movement to be reborn—not just keep doing what we’ve been doing. We need systemic change.”



and it’s forcing politicians in the middle to address these issues. The Green New Deal will get modified, of course, but it would still be a big step forward.

Any reservations about it?

Well, a few things aren’t clear to me. The talk is that we can outgrow the climate issue by creating a new economy—an economy that would be different. I think we have to stop putting our priority on growth and a profit-centered economy. Also, we need a declining cap on greenhouse gas emissions. That’s not a clear part of the Green New Deal. There has to be a tax on carbon and we need to cap emissions and have a mandated decline—in short order. All that said, the Green New Deal is a valuable contribution—look at the activity that it’s fostered. There are sit-ins in Nancy Pelosi’s Capitol Building office on climate change!

Why do you think the AFL-CIO came out against the Green New Deal?

Unfortunately, I think that is a reflection of the widespread economic insecurity in the country. So many people live paycheck to paycheck with little or no retirement plan. All this despite America’s impressive GDP. It points out that new economic indicators are needed to reflect real well-being.

The sad thing is that environmental progress and bold ideas like the Green New Deal are hindered because people are easily scared by untrue claims of lost jobs, higher taxes, etc. They are frightened because they are so economically insecure. That’s why a new environmental vision

has to embrace social and economic justice issues.

How about the need to make changes in our lifestyles?

That’s a push-pull kind of thing. More and more people are coming to see that a simpler, less materialistic lifestyle is actually more desirable. And there are a lot of studies that support that. Those studies show that it’s not greater wealth or more material things that bring a sense of happiness and well-being, it is the relationships we have with family, friends, and our community. Other things bring a sense of well-being—learning and creative endeavors, for example.

As I said, more people are moving voluntarily toward less consumeristic lifestyles. But the reality is that we will all be compelled to move in that direction because of the climate issue. If we don’t do it voluntarily, it will eventually be forced upon us. Let’s hope that doesn’t happen too late.

It’s good to stress that these change don’t mean a decline in our well-being.

That’s right. Just take meat as an example. Significantly reducing meat production and consumption would have a great benefit for our climate. But eating less meat is also a real benefit to your health.

What about the role of youth and education?

I think it’s vital. I’m working right now with the young people in their lawsuit to compel the government to address the climate issue. It’s encouraging that young people all over the world saying, “Hey this is our earth, this is our future, and we are screwing it up.” And they’re making an impact.

As for education, we need a great deal more science and environmental education in schools. But it’s a struggle getting to teach subjects like climate. It’s a horrible problem that so many people are science skeptics these days, and that so many others are just truly ignorant.

Could you talk a bit more about the importance of community action?

Having more and more communities take control of their own energy supplies is a big step in the right direction. There are real possibilities there, although the transition to all renewable will not be painless. But in the end it has to happen and local communities taking the initiative to make it happen is important.

The reality is that the heyday of cheap fossil fuels is coming to an abrupt end.

Join Gus Speth, other experts, and fellow activists on May 4 in Belfast

Register at www.sierraclub.org/maine

How Will the Nordic Aquafarm Impact Penobscot Bay and Its Communities?

Unanswered questions about water consumption and waste lead Sierra Club Maine leaders to a determination that the plan is too risky.

At its March meeting, the Sierra Club Maine Executive Committee voted unanimously to oppose the proposed Nordic Aquafarm in Belfast. The Committee determined that, as currently planned, it poses a significant and unreasonable risk to the environment and economy of Penobscot Bay communities.

The Nordic operation would be constructed on a 40-acre plot abutting Little River, on the outskirts of Belfast. Salmon would be raised in onsite tanks. It's projected that once in operation, the farm would produce 33,000 tons of salmon annually—about eight percent of what is consumed in the United States.

The amount of water consumption and wastewater discharge involved in the proposed aquafarm is mind-boggling. The giant, land-based operation could draw as much as 1,200 gallons per minute of fresh water from the local aquifer and release up to 7.7 million gallons of wastewater a day into Penobscot Bay.

Nordic maintains that opponents are exaggerating the amount of water the aquafarm will consume. It says that the 1,200 gallons per minute number refers to the maximum that is available, not what will actually be consumed.

However the 1,200 gallons per minute water consumption estimate comes from Nordic's own expert report and its permit application. In addition to water drawn from on-site wells, Nordic has also asked to get additional water from the City of Belfast.

Transparency is also an issue. Nordic claims it will create up to 100 jobs, and promises no environmental damage. Yet it refuses to release scientific data to back up its promises.

"Do we know the impact of pumping up to 7.7



million gallons a day of waste water into the Bay?," asks Sierra Club Maine Chapter Director Alice Elliott.

"Is there scientific consensus that this volume of partially treated, brackish water won't impact the lobster and other fisheries that provide livelihoods for so many in the area? Nordic threatens countless existing jobs for the promise of creating a limited number of new jobs."

Elliott says that Nordic has not been forthcoming about specifics such as the feed that will be used for the salmon (and what it will contain); the changes in level of filtration in the discharge system; and how antibiotics will be prevented from being discharged in the wastewater.

And then there is the mercury question.

Nordic says it has extensive data from past samples in the bay demonstrating that mercury contamination is not a problem. But the six to 12 tons of elemental mercury that was discharged by Mallinckrodt (formerly HoltraChem) into the Penobscot Riv-

er in Orrington resulted in the closing of parts of Penobscot Bay to fishing. The dredging that would be required for Nordic's two 30-inch (in diameter) intake pipes and one 36-inch discharge pipe could re-suspend the currently buried mercury. That could mean increased mercury levels in lobster and other seafood.

Sierra Club Maine will oppose any project that risks spreading HoltraChem legacy mercury contamination.

Chapter leaders also believe that Nordic's proposed donation of 80 acres of regional coastal lands into a land trust in exchange for full permitting of the project fails to mitigate the environmental threats to the quality of coastal waters.

Additionally, there are concerns about the carbon footprint of fish farming in general—especially on the scale of the Nordic proposal.

Nordic is expected to submit its application to the Maine Department of Environmental Protection sometime in April.

Maine Youth Speak Out on Climate Change

Next big event is Youth Day of Action at the Maine State House on April 23.

The youth of the world have the most to lose from the climate crisis. They are well aware that their future will be adversely affected if significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions aren't made—and soon.

Increasingly, young people are demanding that the adults in charge take action.

The concern of the world's youth was on full display on March 15 during student strikes around the world. Hundreds of students across Maine left school in midday to rally for bold action on climate change. In Portland, some 600 students

gathered outside the city hall. Rallies were also held in Brunswick, Bar Harbor, Saco, and Lewiston. The Maine rallies were part of more than 1,300 Youth Climate Strike events around the world.

"We are here today to show our lawmakers that things must change. Politicians haven't taken the climate crisis seriously for decades," said seventh-grader Anna Siegel, who helped organize the Portland rally. "Time is running out."

Sierra Club Maine has joined with student groups and several other organizations in an effort to elevate the voices of youth around the climate issue.



Students rally at Portland City Hall on March 15.

"Young people are the most affected," said Sierra Club Executive Committee member, Jonathan Fulford, "and their voices and leadership are a powerful force in creating the changes we all need."

Fulford is currently helping to organize the Youth Day of Action on Tuesday, April 23 at the State House in Augusta. Students from across Maine will rally at the Capitol in Augusta to engage with lawmakers and learn about the legislative process—as many as 500 students are expected to attend. Participants are asked to gather on the Capitol steps at 11:30 a.m. and then in the Hall of

Flags at 1 p.m.

According to Fulford, you don't have to be a student to participate—everyone is welcome.

He emphasized that more volunteers are needed to help with the large number of participants. If you can help, please email maine.chapter@sierraclub.org or call 761-5616.

Fulford noted that Youth Day of Action is a continuation of the vibrant youth climate movement in Maine. "Yes, we are at the beginning of what I see as a long term goal of having young peoples' voices heard on climate change," he said.

Maine Joins Climate Accord

Governor Mills' commits to action on reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

In a clear signal that it's a new day in Maine state government, Governor Janet Mills announced in late February that Maine will join 21 other states that have committed to the principles of the Paris Climate Agreement. The states' actions are in response to President Trump pulling the United States out of the historic climate agreement in 2017.

By joining, Maine agrees to:

1. Implement policies that advance the goals of the Paris Agreement, aiming to reduce greenhouse gas emission by at least 26-28 percent below 2005 levels by 2025.
2. Track and report progress to the global community in appropriate settings, including when the world convenes to take stock of the Paris Agreement.
3. Accelerate new and existing policies to reduce carbon pollution and promote clean energy deployment at the state and federal level.

Mills further noted that she will present legislation to form a Maine Climate Council, charged with meeting carbon reduction goals. Among those goals will be reaching 80 percent renewable energy for producing electricity by 2030.



Your backyard garden can play a role in providing a refuge for threatened species of insects.

Gardens As Sanctuaries For Wildlife

By Reeser Manley



Monarch Caterpillar

We live in the sixth mass extinction period of Earth's history, a period of unprecedented species loss, a period unique in two ways: it is the first such event in the short history of the human species, and we are the cause of it.

E. O. Wilson, University Research Professor Emeritus at Harvard, summarizes the causes of this unprecedented species loss in the acronym HIP-PO: Habitat loss due to human activities, Invasive species introduced around the world by human activity, Pollution of all types, (human) Population growth, and Over-harvesting of Earth's resources, particularly in our oceans. Habitat loss is the number one cause of Earth's biodiversity crisis.

What role could our gardens play in mitigating habitat loss? Studies show that public and private gardens represent an increasing percentage of suitable habitats for many threatened species. Gardens can play a significant role in sustaining native plant diversity and, as a consequence, provide refuge for threatened species of insects, the creatures described by E. O. Wilson as "the little things that run the world," as well as sanctuary for birds, amphibians, reptiles, and small mammals.

The backbone of a biodiversity garden is a predominance of native plants, both herbaceous and woody. For example, the garden that my wife, Marjorie, and I tend is surrounded by native trees, including red oaks, white pines, and birches, all larval host trees for numerous species of moths. Within the confines of these trees and surrounding our house and chicken coop, we planted pagoda dogwood (*Cornus alternifolia*), witch-hazel (*Hamamelis vir-*

giniana), winterberry holly (*Ilex verticillata*), mountain holly (*Ilex mucronata*), mountain maple (*Acer spicatum*), summersweet clethra (*Clethra alnifolia*), meadowsweet (*Spiraea alba*), and other native understory trees and shrubs.

All of these plants provide nectar and pollen for insects as well as food and shelter for songbirds.

Three large beds filled with predominantly native perennials and a large vegetable and small fruits garden, enclosed by a mesh fence to keep the deer out, fill the remainder of the cultivated garden. Narrow paths of wild grasses provide walkways around the perennial beds while lowbush blueberries (*Vaccini-*



Thread-Waisted Wasp

um angustifolium), bunchberry (*Cornus canadensis*), and native sedges, larval host plants for skipper butterflies, grow wild at the edge of the woods.

Perennial beds are filled with the most functional plants for attracting beneficial insects. Among these herbaceous perennials are mountain bluet (*Centaurea montana*), catmint (*Nepeta x faasseni*), astilbe (*Astilbe x arendsii*), globe thistle (*Echinops ritro*),

bee balm (*Monarda fistulosa*), goldenrod (*Solidago* spp.), swamp milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*), purple coneflower, both the species and varieties (*Echinacea purpurea*), gooseneck loosestrife (*Lysimachia clethroides*), and New England aster (*Symphotrichum novae-angliae*).

The total number and diversity of insect species that we encounter in our garden increases every year. The list includes numerous butterfly and moth species, including adult monarch butterflies that nectar on milkweed flowers while their caterpillars munch on the leaves; several species of predatory wasps that feed on caterpillars and other herbivores; numerous species of hoverflies, the adults pollinating garden plants while their larvae prey on aphids and other herbivores; flower longhorn beetle species that pollinate a wide range of flowering plants; numerous species of pollinating flies; and an abundance of spider species. Because of this balance of pollinators, herbivores, and predators, we seldom experience crop loss in the vegetable/small fruits garden or significant damage to the ornamentals.

It's disturbing that organizations that otherwise do good work in promoting gardening continue to use the word "pest" in reference to any garden creature that eats plants. If we want to get serious about gardening to preserve biodiversity, we must eliminate "pest" from our thinking. If we can eliminate "pest" from the gardening lexicon, we can dispose of the word "pesticide" as well, eliminating these toxins from store shelves.

Imagine functional gardens throughout your community, not only around homes, but also around (and even on top of) campus buildings, churches, and businesses, all dedicated to providing wildlife habitat. Imagine these gardens linked by vegetation corridors that enable wildlife to move safely through a pesticide-free world.

Start with your own garden.

The Green New Deal Lacks Strong Support From The Maine Congressional Delegation

Representative Chellie Pingree stands alone in backing the proposal.



Sadly, the Green New Deal has only a single supporter among Maine's Congressional Delegation—Congresswoman Chellie Pingree. Of course, there was little expectation of support from Senator Susan Collins, but there was some hope that Senator Angus King and freshman Congressman Jared Golden might at least support the spirit of the Green New Deal resolution. After all, Representative Golden promised strong action on climate during his 2018 campaign. And Senator King has been a long-time champion in the call for climate action in Washington.

However, in late March, King joined the Republican majority in voting against the Green New Deal Resolution.

"I want to emphasize that my skepticism surrounding the current resolution should not be misconstrued as being uninterested in pursuing the most ambitious and realistic action on climate change; I simply differ with the most effective way to accomplish that goal," King stated. He called the plan "overly aggressive," "unrealistic," and "far too broad." Instead, he called for realistic time frames for energy conversion, more energy efficiency, and increased investments in green energy.

King was also extremely critical of Senate Majority leader Mitch McConnell for the way he brought the resolution before the Senate, calling it a, "cynical act of political theater that did not include hearings or an amendment process to provide the opportunity to improve this flawed resolution."

King was joined in his vote against the resolution by Collins.

And while Congresswoman Pingree was an early and strong supporter of the Green New Deal, 2nd District Representative Golden has been quiet on the proposal.

Sierra Club is supporting the Green New Deal which calls for a big, bold transformation of the economy to tackle the twin crises of inequality and climate change. It would mobilize vast public resources to help us transition from an economy built on exploitation and fossil fuels to one driven by dignified work and clean energy.

The Green New Deal embodies the kind of change that is needed to address the climate crisis. We have just 12 years to turn things around—incremental changes and middle-of-the-road-solutions are not going to do the trick.

We urge Sierra Club Maine members to contact Senator King and Representative Golden and tell them the status quo won't work—you want bold action on climate change.



New Initiatives Promote Electric Vehicles in Maine

Governor Janet Mills and Efficiency Maine Trust recently announced a set of initiatives that will expand the use of electric vehicles across Maine in an effort to reduce the state's carbon footprint and reliance on fossil fuels. The initiatives, which include the creation of financial incentives to purchase electric vehicles and the installation of at least 50 public vehicle charging stations, are in part the result of a \$5.1 million settlement won last year by then-Attorney General Mills against Volkswagen.

Approximately half of the \$5.1 million will be used for a financial incentive program to help public agencies and organizations that serve the elderly, low-income Mainers, and Mainers with special needs, to purchase EVs. Efficiency Maine estimates that these funds also will be sufficient to leverage local funding for 100 new EVs being used in local communities, lowering the operating costs of those fleets, and raising visibility and awareness of EVs and their benefits.

The other half of the \$5.1 million in funding will be used for a rebate program for the purchase or lease of EVs for Maine residents and businesses.

You Can Have an Impact as a Sierra Club Volunteer

Sierra Club Maine is a genuine grassroots organization, made up of committed volunteers working together for a common cause. We are always looking for new volunteers to join actively in our efforts to preserve, protect, and enjoy Maine's natural treasures. With just one staff member, volunteers create and carry out the Chapter's workplan with help from the Chapter director.

If you fear for your children or grandchildren's future, join Sierra Club Maine's efforts to keep our state and our planet livable for all.

We need volunteers in the following roles:

Communications

Are you a good communicator? Join our Communications Team and help us tell our story! We need volunteers to write letters to the editor, write testimonies for public hearings, write blog posts, and update and create content for social media.

Graphic Design

Got some design skills? Help us make fliers, posters, postcards, and programs for our events.

Outings

Is sharing the great outdoors with others your thing? Become an outings leader and plan day hikes, paddling adventures, or other activities. Help introduce others to what the Maine outdoors has to offer.



Graphic courtesy of EcoSuperior

Monitor executive and legislative activities in state

Political/Legislative

Monitor executive and legislative activities in state

government. Work with our Legislative Team to track legislation on climate change, renewable energy, environmental protections and more. This is a hands-on way to facilitate the change you want.

Fact Checking and Research

Are you a stickler for factual information and enjoy research? You can make sure our public information is factual and help us to respond to inaccurate beliefs and assumptions on issues like climate change and the benefits of renewable energy. Research information will be used in white papers, testimonials, and as talking points.

The Sierra Club is a great place to volunteer; the club offers opportunities to be a change-maker, to interact with other Sierra Club members and friends, and to enhance current skills and learn new ones. And volunteers have an important say in the direction of our organization.

Much of the work we do can be done from home or in Augusta, with occasional get-togethers in Portland or other parts of the state. Please consider joining with people who share beliefs in the need to protect what we hold dear. You can make a difference! If you would like to join us, please reach out to maine.chapter@sierraclub.org.



Earth Day 2019: Events Around Maine

There are plenty of opportunities to participate in Earth Day 2019 around the state of Maine. These Maine events will be part of a worldwide recognition of the importance of raising awareness of our environment and taking action to protect our precious planet. Here's a partial list of what is going on in the state:

Science/Earth Day Celebration: What Would Rachel Do?

Friday, April 19, 10-a.m. – 1 p.m.

Wells Reserve at 342 Laudholm Farm Road, Wells

Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association

Earth Day Work Day—Unity, Maine —April 20—9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Common Ground Education Center in Unity

<http://www.mofga.org/Events/EarthDayWorkDay/tabid/2778/Default.aspx>

Deering Family Festival & Urban Run-Off

Saturday, April 20—Race-9 a.m., Festival-9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Deering High School, Portland

Three Crises and How They Interact: Climate, Militarism, and The Economy

A Community Conversation—Monday, April 22—7 p.m.

Unitarian Universalist Church, Brunswick

Sponsored by Peaceworks—co-sponsored by Sierra Club Maine

Children's Museum & Theatre of Maine

April 22 - Portland- Admission Fee

A day of earth-friendly activities! We'll have seeds to plant, mud to play with, natural materials to create art with, live animals, story times, special face painting,

and much more.

<https://www.portlandmaine.com/events/earth-day/>

Earth Week at Unity College

Unity College will celebrate Earth Week with music, lectures, hands-on activities, games, and community activities.

<https://www.unity.edu/events/#event=28356713>

Scarborough Earth Day Cleanup

April 28 - Scarborough

Join the Scarborough community for a work day, and help make our corner of the earth a better place. Groups are welcome!

<https://www.maineaudubon.org/events/>

MDI/Trenton Earth Day Roadside Cleanup

Saturday, April 27

Join friends, family, neighbors, and coworkers for the 20th annual Earth Day Roadside Cleanup. <https://friendsofacadia.org/events/earth-day-roadside-cleanup/>

Green ME Up

Freeport - April 20

Free, fun-filled 2nd annual Girl Scout Green Me Up Day. <https://www.visit-freeport.com/events/1-l-bean-green-me-up-earth-day-festival/>

Allagash Spring Greening Kickoff

Saturday, March 30—11 a.m. to 1:45 p.m.

50 Industrial Way in Portland

<https://www.allagash.com/event/spring-greening-kickoff-event/>

MaineShare

Support Sierra Club Maine through payroll deduction

MaineShare gives you an easy way to support more than 40 organizations working to make Maine a better place to live.

Enroll your workplace for the current campaign online at www.mainshare.org or contact us directly.

P.O. BOX 2095, Augusta, ME 04338
Telephone: 207-622-1050
Email: giving@mainshare.org



Donated Cars Benefit Sierra Club's Important Work

Your car donation to the Sierra Club Foundation will not only clear up space at your home, it will help support our work to protect the planet. Vehicle donations are a great way to add another tax deduction to your list.

Donate now by calling (844-674-3772) or visit <http://scfch.careasy.org/HOME.html> to fill out our secure online form. Our partners at CARS Inc. will handle the rest—including picking up your vehicle from any location, no matter its condition. CARS accepts trucks, trailers, boats, RVs, motorcycles, and more.

Upcoming Events

Sierra Club Maine Happy Hour

Thursday, April 18, 2019—5 p.m. to 7 p.m.
Gulf of Maine Research Institute: 350 Commercial Street, Portland, ME

Join Sierra Club Maine and the Gulf of Maine Research Institute (GMRI) for Happy Hour, Thursday, April 18th at the GMRI facility (parking to the right of the building). GMRI staff will present information and data behind sea level rise and explore models projecting impacts in your community while examining potential resiliency measures. (Co-sponsored by Gulf of Maine Research Institute)

Earth Day Hike, April 22—10:30 a.m.

Camden Hills (see page one)
Meet at Camden Hills State Park parking lot
Register at <https://www.sierraclub.org/maine/events>.
(For a list of other Earth Day events see page 6)

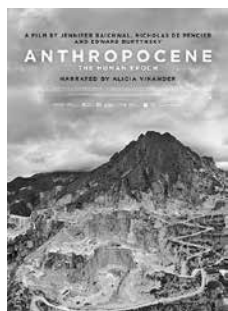
Youth Day of Action

Tuesday, April 23—State House, Augusta
11:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. on the Capitol Steps
1:00 to 2:30 p.m. in the Hall of Flags

Youth from across Maine will rally at the Capitol in Augusta to engage with lawmakers and learn about the legislative process.

Camden Film

Anthropocene: The Human Epoch
Wednesday Apr 24, 2019—7:00 p.m.
Camden Opera House, 29 Elm St., Camden, ME



Anthropocene is a cinematic meditation on humanity's massive reengineering of the planet, bringing a provocative and unforgettable experience of our species' breadth and impact.

This special screening is co-sponsored by Sierra Club Maine

Kennebunk Film Series

Paris to Pittsburgh
Friday, April 26, 2019—6:30 p.m.
First Unitarian Universalist Church, Kennebunk



This is a National Geographic film narrated by Emmy and Golden Globe winner, Rachel Brosnahan. The film brings to life how individuals from coastal cities to America's heartland,

are demanding and developing real solutions in the face of climate change. Speaker to be announced.

Sierra Club Maine Climate Conference

Saturday, May 4—8:30 a.m.
Hutchinson Center, Belfast
Experts and activists join together for workshops and discussions on local climate action and building thriving communities. For more details, see story on Page 1. To register visit: www.sierraclub.org/maine.

Kennebunk Film Series

Friday, May 24
Film to be announced—check the events page at www.sierraclub.org/maine.

For complete up-to-date listings of all Sierra Club Maine events—outings, films, and more—visit the events page at sierraclub.org/maine

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Statement of Purpose of the Sierra Club

"To explore, enjoy, and protect the wild places of the Earth; to practice and promote the responsible use of the Earth's ecosystems and resources; to educate and enlist humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environment; and to use all lawful means to carry out these objectives."

Visit Us On Facebook



<http://www.facebook.com/pages/sierra-club-maine/chapter/181279771922933>

*An interview with Sierra Club Maine outings leader, Sue Levene***“Connecting People to Nature—Benefiting Both.”**

As Sierra Club Maine’s Outings Team leader, Sue Levene is committed to getting more people to explore our abundant natural treasures here in Maine. Toward that goal, Sue is organizing more, and increasingly diverse, year-round outdoor adventures for Chapter members and friends.

An electrical engineer by training, Sue ran her own software consulting business for 20 years. She is now in what she terms her “transition to a post-work lifestyle.” That lifestyle includes collaborating on social entrepreneurial projects, serving on the Phippsburg Budget Committee and the Sierra Club Maine Executive Committee, and being a member of the Bath Municipal Band. Of course, there’s also plenty of time for hiking and paddling.

Sue grew up in Connecticut and moved to Phippsburg in 2006. She is married to Eric Schade, who is often her outings partner. She and Eric have two grown children, Andrew and Ben Schade.

In the following interview, Sierra Club Maine Executive Committee member Kelsey Halliday Johnson talked with Sue about the outings program and her love of exploring nature.

For the unfamiliar, can you tell us a little bit about Sierra Club outings and what makes them different?

Sierra Club is dedicated to providing opportunities to help us enjoy the outdoors together. The Sierra Club’s outdoor tag-line is, “Connecting people to nature—benefiting both.” We have so many great outdoors and natural places in Maine, so we aspire to offer a diverse collection of outings throughout the year. Our outings program is a grassroots effort just like all of Sierra Club’s priorities. So we need participants and volunteers to join in and support us to make our outings program a success.

John Muir said, “The mountains are calling and I must go.” What “calls” you or what do you think calls us to the landscape?

I really appreciate having a personal relationship with my local natural environment. I live in the woods, close to the Kennebec River, and I find myself taking a walk in my woods or paddling on the river almost every day. Being a part of the ebb and flow of the changing seasons and noticing even the smallest things helps me to care about nature and hopefully be a good steward for my local natural environment. I also really love exploring new areas and building my skills as an outdoors person and an outings leader. This fall we hiked up Katahdin and explored the Ambejeus Lake region by kayak. It’s a privilege to travel where not many people go—to experience an environment where humans aren’t making the biggest impact.

What are the kinds of conservation messages explored in the outings? What conservation messages are most important to you right now?

One of things I like best about Sierra Club outings is that the participants are often more knowledgeable than me about the conservation issues that affect us all. Personally, I think it is crazy to bulldoze a pristine swath of wilderness for a powerline to feed Massachusetts power from Canada, when we have plenty of roads already created between the two regions. And I’m excited about the possibilities that Green New Deal brings us. I believe we can find a way to remove our reliance on fossil fuels and ensure that we are good neighbors with our fellow human communities and all the plants and animals that coexist with us on our planet.

How does one become an outing leader and what’s required?

The most important criteria for being an outings leader is to have the skills and desire to lead a group on adventures safely and respectfully. I recommend that each outing has a leader and a co-leader and



Sue Levene on a recent Sierra Club Maine winter outing.

I subscribe to the philosophy: “We’re not here to rough it, we’re here to smooth it. Things are rough enough in town.”

that leaders only lead trips that are well within their comfort zone for their current skills. No matter what our skills are, there is always more to learn. Sierra Club has some national guidelines. Every leader needs to have first aid training, Sierra Club leader training, and lead a trip with the Sierra Club supervised by a qualified leader. We are actively recruiting new leaders, so if anyone is interested, please contact us. Depending upon people’s skills and interests, we can get volunteers leading, and/or co-leading, outings pretty quickly.

How did you get connected with the Sierra Club and what inspires you about leading outings?

My husband, Eric and I have been leading outdoor adventures for friends and family and organizations for the last 25 years, I really enjoy the camaraderie of sharing an outdoor adventure. I subscribe to the philosophy: “We’re not here to rough it, we’re here to smooth it. Things are rough enough in town.” Being able to share my love of the outdoors and help others enjoy the type of adventures that I enjoy brings me joy. As my children were growing up, our adventures tended to be geared to whatever their



Former Chapter Executive Committee member Bill Briggs enjoys the view during a winter 2017 outing at Katahdin Woods & Waters National Monument. As team leader, Bill kept the outings program alive for many years.

current interests and abilities were. Now that they are grown, I wanted to expand the types of trips we lead. My sister, Dot Kelly, mentioned to me that the Sierra Club was trying to build their local outings program in Maine, and now I find myself the newly appointed outings chair. I’m looking forward to helping build an active program.

What are your favorite kinds of landscapes to explore in Maine?

I’m drawn to edges. Whether it is where the sea meets the land, or foothills meet the mountain, I love the place of transition.

My adventures tend to change with the seasons. In the snowy weather, I’ll be out snowshoeing and cross country skiing. In the spring and fall, I’m usually hiking. And when the weather is warm and the seas calm, I’m out in my kayak.

The Sierra Club has a long legacy with writers, photographers, and scientists who engage with the landscape in different ways. Are there figures, books, movies, or photographs that have reminded you why you go outdoors or inspired you to go to a new place?

I enjoy all sorts of creative outlets of naturalists, but I believe that my love of adventuring has been most inspired by Thoreau’s tales of taking to the woods and Lewis and Clark’s tales of Sacagawea. The idea of feeling very much at home surrounded by nature with little or no baggage is very appealing to me.

What outings are on the horizon for 2019?

I am hopeful that we can expand our outings offerings with some new volunteer leaders. I plan to lead some day hikes in the Midcoast area as well as some paddling trips this summer. I’m also trying to plan a weekend of hiking in the mountains region of Maine with an option for participants to stay at a campground near to the hikes.

To learn more about becoming an outings leader contact Sue Levene at sulevene@maine.sierraclub.org. To check on upcoming outings visit the events page at maine.chapter@sierraclub.org.