

Fresh Air

The Quarterly Newsletter of the
Atlantic Chapter Mid-Hudson Group



SIERRA
CLUB
FOUNDED 1892

Our website:
newyork.sierraclub.org/midhudson

Winter 2013 Vol. 45 Issue 4

Chair's Corner Joanne Steele

Oh, where to begin! It's easy to become overwhelmed to inaction! Of course, we had hoped for success, but didn't we expect the UN's climate talks to fail again? But, know that not all is hopeless! We witness the destruction of life's basis and still we know that we can stop the insanity. We can change that bit by bit by bit. We are transitioning: we tirelessly move ahead.

All of us but the money addicts. There are too many very wealthy people who are addicted to money and gathering even more of it as if it were life ... happiness itself. And they've too many hangers-on eager to do their bidding, eager to get a piece of wealth, and will do anything to get it. So they hydrofrack someone else's home, lumber down the world's rainforests, take water from the local community in Ecuador and India, mine the ancient Redlands of our Southwest, desecrate our National Parks, build supersized real estate on fragile land, build huge pipelines through someone else's back yard, erect

even taller towers to carry ever more powerful electric — to what has turned out to be fewer users.

We know that the happiness in life is owned, not by the rich, but by the poorest people in the least wealthy countries such as in Latin America. So we've learned that Community is what makes us humans happy, and that has carried us for millennia upon millennia. We know that money addiction has to be treated, but how do we treat it? How do we treat an addiction that at least all Americans are groomed to, almost from birth, and that we ourselves are afflicted with to some extent?

We environmentalists, each one of us, must continue bit by bit, to tirelessly move ahead. As we put the brakes on environmental degradation, we create new stories and prioritize slower, lower-tech, smaller scale, relationship-driven ways of living in harmony with each other and this beloved earth. We are in transition. The Transition Movement in our bailiwick is on the net at TransitionMidAtlantic.org.

Williams Lake Report

by Marie Caruso

Rosendale Town Board Accelerates Approvals for Williams Lake Project

On October 2, the Rosendale Town Board passed the zoning amendment (BLCPDA), which will allow the Williams Lake Project to be built. It appears that comments submitted by our attorney, David Gordon, were instrumental in making changes to the amendment, as the final version is substantially more restrictive in potential development acreage and thus more environmentally protective than previous versions. It does not, however, reduce the size, scope or likely ecological damage of Hudson River Valley Resort's project: a 130-room luxury hotel, with spa, fitness center, and other amenities, and an upscale housing development of 89 townhomes and 65 detached houses, priced from \$642,000 to \$1.4 million.

Then, on December 4, the Town Board approved the project's Master Development Plan (MDP), immediately following a public hearing during which additional comments had been submitted. Although the MDP had been amended since its first inception, none of the comments submitted by the public on Dec. 4 were taken into consideration. These included comments presented by our attorney, David Gordon, regarding the need for further protection of ecologically sensitive areas and reasonable fees for public access, as well as several comments submitted by board member Manna Jo Greene. The MDP was approved with 3 board members in favor (one being absent), and Manna Jo abstaining.

The one major improvement to the MDP, in response to pressure from the Sierra Club and other commenters during two previous hearings, is the provision of on-site parking for day-pass users at Williams Lake. The previous version did not allow for that. No determination has been made, however, on the cost of day-pass access, other than to say it will be "on par with fees charged at the Mohonk Preserve and/or the Mohonk Mountain House", which may be unaffordable for many local residents. No commitment has been made to offer any sort of seasonal or annual membership.

The Wallkill Valley Rail Trail, as of Sept. 4, now extends thru the property (bordered by fencing and private property signs), so hikers and bikers can at least get a partially-obstructed view of the lakes and forests that were once such a vital recreational resource for the Rosendale community.

Although attorney David Gordon had previously objected to the Town Board's inappropriate acceleration of approvals for the project, which resulted in several procedural errors, the Board was determined to move the project along as far as possible before two new members take office in January. Jen Metzger and Chris Pryslopski, both elected with Sierra Club support, have been much more critical of the project than the present Board, of whom four out of five members openly favor it. Perhaps with oversight from these two new board members and continued diligence on the part of Rosendale residents, the developers can be held to the many promises they have made over the years to build a sustainable development, enhance public access, and protect the site's significant ecological features.

READ YOUR NEWSLETTERS ONLINE

As you know, we mail out this newsletter four times a year. At the same time we post a PDF version of the newsletter on our website. You can help our Group save printing and mailing costs by choosing to go "electronic" and read your newsletter online. You may do so by contacting Dave Thomas, our Database Administrator: dave@davidalexanderthomas.com. Be sure to include your full name and email address in the body of the email. Each time a newsletter goes out you will receive an email with a link to the PDF newsletter posted on our website. If at some point you decide you would prefer a printed newsletter send your request to Dave Thomas.

Our endorsement of 5 candidates in Ulster County and one in Dutchess County began with the executive committee looking over our political questionnaire from 2012 and slightly modifying it. Local races with important environmental issues were suggested by me and confirmed by the ExCom. Once the official ballot was decided at the county level, I emailed political questionnaires to those candidates for whom I had addresses and contacted county party committees to ask for other addresses. During this process Rosalyn Cherry of New Paltz suggested another candidate, whom I had thought had no opposition because there was no Republican candidate.

This year one contender asked for our endorsement and one Republican candidate asked for our political questionnaire, although only Democratic candidates emailed me filled-out political questionnaires.

For the first time, several candidates asked to do a mailing to Sierrans in their districts. Since I had trouble finding out exactly what to do, the mailings went out a few days before the election. Peter Fiorentino deserves our thanks for his hours of comparing

our Group members to the voting list in one district. Andy Moss inserted two endorsement letters into our letterhead for me to email to the candidates for printing.

I wrote a press release about our endorsements, which was emailed to selected news media, modified it with requests for Group members to volunteer and contribute and emailed to Bibi, our membership chair, who sent out an email blast. I picked up one batch of mailing and return address labels from Tillson and drove them to Ellenville, where the envelopes were stuffed, labeled and stamped and then I found the post office and mailed them. The other batch was taken care of in Rosendale.

The three Rosendale winners thanked us for motivating voters with our endorsements to go out and vote. *We are pleased that five out of our six endorsed candidates won.*

More could be done if others would join our Political Committee. Help is needed to strengthen the value of a Sierra Club endorsement in local races. Contact me to join.

Andi Weiss Bartczak, andiwbartczak@yahoo.com, (845) 255-4371

Dollars and Cents at the Root of our Grass Roots Group

Our local group of the Sierra Club (The Mid Hudson Group) works to be involved in local environmental issues. While much of this involvement is "sweat equity" there is a portion that requires funds. Our group's funding comes from several places:

1. The Atlantic Chapter (which is the state organization of Sierra Club) provides financial support based on our specific group's membership (currently 1736). This year's total is \$1,100. Most of your annual dues go to National and Atlantic that work on national and state-wide issues; our local group is not enabled to do this. This leaves a small portion for our Group, which is why we need your support to fund our local grassroots programs.
2. From time to time we receive special grants for our work from the Chapter. We received such a grant this year in the amount of \$1,000 to assist with our efforts on Williams Lake.
3. The Majority of the funds for our group come from our local fund raising projects. The largest of these is the annual tag sale, and those who buy and donate goods and the volunteers who make the tag sale successful are much appreciated. Following is an approximate breakdown of our locally obtained funds:

Tag sale income:	\$2,000
Calendar Sales:	\$500
Special Events:	\$350
Individual Gifts:	\$250
Total local funds:	\$3,100

These funds, along with the funds that come to us from the Chapter are used to advocate for and benefit our local area. While the National Club and the Chapter are able to do direct solicitation of contributions, our local group is not able to do this. You can however make direct contributions to the Mid Hudson Group. Doing so will have a very positive effect on the environment and our ability to advocate for important work right here in the Mid Hudson region.

We welcome your financial support and active involvement in the Mid Hudson Group. Please note that donations to Mid-Hudson Sierra Club are not tax deductible. A tax deductible contribution to our Group can be made by making your check out to *The Sierra Club Foundation*. Whichever contribution you choose to make to benefit our Mid-Hudson Group should be sent to:

**Mid-Hudson Sierra Club
POB 1012
Poughkeepsie, NY 12602**

If you have any questions or wish to be in touch about our group's financial issues or needs, please feel free to contact David Friedman, Vice Chair and Fund Raising Chair or Ralph Pollard, our group's Treasurer.

New Member Party Saturday, March 29th!

If you're a new member — or even if you're not, come to our Party, 7pm - 9pm!
Enjoy free food, snacks, goodies; win door prizes; see the history of our Group through older newsletters; meet your fellow members; and have fun!

Location: Boughton Place, 150 Kisor Road, Highland, NY 12528

As you may know, the Sierra Club offers vacation trips throughout the U.S. In 2014 I will be leading two trips. The first is in the Sierra Nevada mountains (7/27/14 - 8/2/14). Enjoy high altitude hikes with great mountain vistas, and as a bonus visit Big Trees State Park and see the giant Sequoias. The second trip (9/28/14 - 10/4/14) takes place right here in the Catskill Mountains. We will hike scenic and historic trails and enjoy early fall foliage. During both trips we will do a different hike each day and then return to our comfortable lodges and enjoy good food and camaraderie. You can find all the details at sierraclub.org beginning sometime in December. Go to the "Book Your Vacation" link under "Outings", and select "Lodge" under the "Find A Trip" link. Contact me if you have questions.

The following day hikes were announced and organized through our online Outings site: meetup.com/sierraclubny. If you would like to participate please join the website to be notified by email. If you are interested in leading an outing, please contact me: Andy Moss, Outings Chair, (845) 336-5446 or andy@hvi.net.

October 5 - Gertrude Nose Service Trip

This was the second trip this year to maintain the Gertrude Nose trail at Minnewaska Park. We cut back the overgrown vegetation to provide sufficient space for comfortable hiking. Along the way



Group photo at Lake Minnewaska at the end of the day.

we enjoyed each other's company and the beauty of this trail. I want to thank all the volunteers who joined me in keeping this trail in good shape: Ed, Murray, Sue, Mary, Nancy, and Larry.



Taking a break at Pattersons Pellet along the cliffs

November 9 - North Point

This historic hike begins at North Lake State Park. We passed the site of the Catskill Mountain House and then followed the 2200' escarpment to such famous lookouts as Artist's Rock,

Sunset Rock, and Newman's Ledge. Our destination of North Point has views as far as Albany to the north, and Massachusetts and Connecticut to the east. Although cloudy most of the day, we enjoyed a bit of sunshine at North Point.



left: Posing at Newman's Ledge; center: lunch at North Point; right: crossing over a split tree bridge.



Want to Get More Involved?

We have a wonderful **Program Chair**, JoyAnn, who would appreciate help with implementation and publicity. Do phone calls, propose programs. Contact JoyAnn at sunchipseac@yahoo.com. Our **Political Chair**, Andi, would be grateful for phone and text help contacting political figures from Dutchess and Ulster Counties, and portions of Delaware, Greene and Orange. Our **Outings Chair**, Andy Moss is looking for people who would like to lead local Sierra Club outings of any kind. Contact Andy at andy@hvi.net. We are also in search of a **Secretary** to take minutes of our monthly Executive Committee meetings in New Paltz. Contact our **Volunteer Chair**, Marie (who would also appreciate a little help) at (845) 452-9086 or mariehv@verizon.net, if you have any questions.

This, our Winter issue, is our Elections Issue.

Please review the ballot on the back and mail in your vote by February 1st.

Mid-Hudson
Sierra Club
P.O. Box 1012
Poughkeepsie, NY 12602

Non-profit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Newburgh, NY 12550
Permit No. 8604

BALLOT for Mid-Hudson Group Executive Committee

This year we have three Executive Committee members up for election.

Note: Only Sierra Club members may run for Executive Committee positions.

You are invited to attend our monthly ExCom meetings which are open to all members. Meetings are normally held at the New Paltz Village Hall. Call our Chair, Joanne Steele at 845-338-0300 to confirm time and place.

Candidates' statements:

Joanne Steele - Activist since the 60's and constant organizer for a sensible, healthy, livable America, socially, politically, and environmentally. Longtime member, supporter or former of an alphabet soup of such directed organizations, including Sierra Club, to maintain and regain all we can of a good and equitable simple life for all on this gorgeous Earth. Currently Chair and Conservation Chair.

Andi Weiss Bartczak - I have been an activist since the early 1970s, after returning from a year in Europe following 2 years in the Peace Corps. For the past 3 years I have been the Political Chair, managing the process for endorsing and then helping local and Congressional candidates in our Group territory. I am an independent science consultant.

Andy Moss - Since 2010 I have been a member of the Executive Committee and our Group's Outings Chair. I have always had a strong concern for the environment and my participation with the Sierra Club has given me opportunities to take action. My mission as Outings Chair is to get as many people as I can to enjoy our wilderness areas with the hope that it will inspire them to want to protect our environment as well.

Each member can vote and/or write-in below for up to 4 candidates. (2nd space is for joint memberships.) The top 3 vote-getters get 3 year terms ending 12/31/16.

Joanne Steele	_____	_____
Andi Weiss Bartczak	_____	_____
Andy Moss	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Send your ballot by February 1st to:
**Mid-Hudson Sierra Club
PO Box 1012
Poughkeepsie, NY 12602**

Your membership will be verified with your address label. Labels will be removed prior to counting the ballot.
PLEASE MAIL THIS ENTIRE PAGE.

Note: If you read your newsletters online, please print this page and provide your name, address, and signature in the space above. Thank you.