Hello fellow SussexDE Sierrans and supporters,

In the fall of 2017, Valerie Faden and Claire Simmers began efforts to resurrect Sierra Club activities and events in Sussex County. With your support, we've had a busy year in 2018!! We held monthly meetings in Bethany Beach and Ocean View on a variety of environmental topics from clean water to electric vehicles to the Sussex County Comprehensive Plan; conducted a Letter to the Editor (LTE) workshop; co-sponsored movies and events such as Environmental Justice 101, Hands Across the Sand, Clean Water events (including joining the Clean Water Alliance), League of Women Voters Expo and Coast Day; held outdoor activities – hikes and kayaking and a visit to Birdsong Gardens Monarch Butterfly Preserve; and hosted a SussexDE section picnic.

In 2019, with your help and participation, SussexDE is planning a number of family-friendly events and involvement in critical topics including:

1. Co-sponsoring events, movies, outdoor activities and participating in Hands Across the Sand and Coast Day;
2. Advocating for clean water, plastics free Delaware, banning off-shore drilling, and climate change;
3. Collaborating with local groups to address issues critical to Sussex County;
4. Planning new initiatives as suggested by all of you including: exploring creating high school Sierra Club sections in Sussex County, advocating for plant based eating to benefit you and the planet, and sponsoring a Climate Change Conference; and
5. Communicating with you through monthly emails.

SussexDE relies on your interest and participation in activities like these. If you have ideas or you want to be more directly involved in any SussexDE events and activities, please email SierraSussexDE@gmail.com

UPDATES

December 1, 2018: Sussex Health and Environmental Network, a collective voice for positive solutions and inclusiveness in representation in environmental and public health issues in Sussex County had its inaugural meeting.

December 04, 2018: Calculation of Permitted Density, Sussex County Council adopted Ordinance No. 2618 to prohibit developers from counting state wetlands when calculating total density in a subdivision. Under previous regulations, density – or the total number of units – was calculated using the total parcel acreage, even though state wetlands cannot be built on. An amendment to clarified that perennial nontidal rivers or streams and nontidal wetlands are not part of the ordinance. Only tidal state wetlands are subject to the ordinance, which make up less than 3% of the county landscape. Thanks to all of you who advocated for this ordinance and to Sussex County Councilman I.G. Burton for introducing it.

UPCOMING EVENTS

January 5, 2019 2:00-4:00 p.m. Sussex Health and Environmental Network (SHEN) meeting at South Coastal Library

Check out some of these January Events at Cape Henlopen State Park and the Delaware Seashore State Park including star gazing, hiking, chillin' with reptiles and the Delaware Seashore lectures.

Upcoming Ordinances and State Legislation

Stay tuned for local and state action on the following:

Forested Buffers - Sussex County Council is considering an ordinance on Forested Buffers. The County is also considering new rules that would require more vegetated space between waterways and construction. Currently, Sussex County only requires a 50-foot buffer on tidal wetlands and waterways - 1/2 the distance required in Kent and New Castle counties; 1/4 required in Maryland; and 1/6 required in New Jersey.

Plastic Free Delaware – watch for legislation on making plastic straws by request only. The DNREC-sponsored 31st annual Delaware Coastal Cleanup held Sept. 22 drew 1,115 volunteers, who collected 2.7 tons of trash and recyclables from 42 sites along more than 68 miles of Delaware's waterways and coastline stretching from Wilmington to Fenwick Island. In a year when the numbers of most trash items were lower, the count of three plastic items increased: 2,738 straws, up from 1,898; 1,116 plastic lids, up from 993; and 7,026 plastic bottle caps, up from 4,636. Other notable items included 1,946 plastic bags and 723 balloons.

Offshore Drilling Proposal – The next draft of the offshore drilling proposal by the Trump Administration is expected sometime between January and February of 2019. A public comment period will open as soon as the plan is released. This will be one of the last opportunities for public input before the plan is finalized. SussexDE is working with a coalition of local groups to communicate opportunities to voice your opposition.

Tell Governor Carney: Don’t Allow any Fracking-Related Activities in the Delaware River Basin – The Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) is a regional body (including DE, NY, NJ and PA) to oversee management of a river system without regard to state boundaries. In the next few months, the DRBC is expected to issue regulations to ban fracking, but to allow water to be taken from the
Delaware River and its tributaries and to allow fracking wastes to be imported for "treatment" and disposal.

Groups in the four states called for the rejection of DRBC draft regulations which would ban the act of fracking itself but still allow wastewater produced by fracking to be stored, processed, and discharged in the Watershed, as well as water from the basin to be exported for use in fracking elsewhere. Tell Governor Carney not to put our drinking water at risk for millions of people in the watershed. A complete ban must also prohibit frack wastewater disposal and water export.

Your contribution will help sustain our efforts into 2019. We cannot do it without your generous support!

Join - Donate - Keep Informed on the Delaware Chapter of the Sierra Club Website

EXPLORE, ENJOY, PROTECT the planet!

Have a Healthy and Happy New Year,

SussexDE Section
of the Delaware Chapter of the Sierra Club