April 30: My Last Day at Sierra Club - Leaving But Not Saying Goodbye

By Jeff Tittel, our Chapter Director since 1998

Today is my last day as the Director of the New Jersey Chapter of the Sierra Club. I have been working for the Sierra Club for almost 30 years, and I have seen a lot of changes over the years.

One of the most significant changes has been the increase in awareness about climate change and the need to take action to combat it. I have been privileged to work with many people who are dedicated to protecting our planet and creating a sustainable future.

I will be missed, but I am confident that the Sierra Club will continue to do great things in the years to come. The Club has a long history of success, and I have no doubt that it will continue to thrive.

Thank you to all of the members who have supported me over the years. I am grateful for your dedication and commitment to the Sierra Club.

Editor’s note: This is the last in a series of editorials, written by Jeff Tittel, on the Sierra Club and its impact on the environment and society.

POLITICAL CHAIR’S REPORT

Candidates Endorsed for NJ’s Primary and General Elections

By Karen Becker (politicalchair@newjersey.sierraclub.org)

This year we will elect a Governor and our entire Legislature, both State Senators and Assemblypersons. The environmental importance of election results can be illustrated by comparing the policies and deeds of current and previous administrations. Here’s our first list of endorsed candidates. Please consider them when you vote.

Valerie Vainieri Huttle (D-District 37) is running for the State Senate seat that will be vacated by Loretta Weinberg, who retires later this year. Both Huttle and her opponent (who is backed by the Democratic Party) will be giving up their current seats in the Assembly to run for the State Senate.

Andrew Zwicker (D-District 16) is also vacating his seat in the Assembly to run for an open seat in the Senate, currently held by Christopher Bateman (R). Zwicker has an impressive record, authoring bills that have addressed the climate crisis and other environmental concerns. He is the head of Communications and Public Outreach Department at Princeton University’s Plasma Physics Laboratory, making science and the environment his primary focus. Zwicker wants to put NJ First when it comes to investing in innovative companies through the Evergreen Fund.

Christine Clarke (D-District 26) has made climate change, public health and renewable energy key components of her campaign. This comes as no surprise since she has been an environmental champion for many years, with strong connections to grassroots efforts.

She was the Sierra Club’s “Legislator of the Year” in 2017. Andrew Zwicker (D-District 16) is also vacating his seat in the Assembly to run for an open seat in the Senate, currently held by Christopher Bateman (R). Zwicker has an impressive record, authoring bills that have addressed the climate crisis and other environmental concerns. He is the head of Communications and Public Outreach Department at Princeton University’s Plasma Physics Laboratory, making science and the environment his primary focus. Zwicker wants to put NJ First when it comes to investing in innovative companies through the Evergreen Fund.

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“Hundreds of companies have already pledged to become ‘net zero’ or ‘zero carbon’ within the next two decades. For a company to reach net zero, its own operations and value chain (its suppliers and customers) must not release more greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere than they are able to remove.” Joe Biden and Andrew Cuomo have led the way. 

“Hundreds of companies have already pledged to become “net zero” or “zero carbon” within the next two decades.”

New Jersey’s Energy Master Plan proposes to achieve net zero or carbon neutrality by 2050, and complies with the Global Warming Response Act (GWRA) mandate. The GWRA requires reducing state greenhouse gas emissions by 80 percent below 2006 levels. The remaining carbon emissions may be offset by new forestation, and by protecting our coastal wetlands to maximize carbon sequestration. We hope NJ’s newly established Office of Climate Action and its proposed Green Economy can achieve the goal of Zero Carbon.

The Zero Carbon pledge means that a company will no longer emit carbon. For example, Google has promised to power its operations with entirely carbon-free energy by 2030; Walmart has announced plans to reach zero carbon emissions across its operations by 2040; Microsoft, which has been carbon neutral since 2012, pledges to go carbon negative by 2030, and to remove enough carbon from the atmosphere by 2050 to make up for all the emissions it has released since it was founded in 1975. To accomplish this, Microsoft will phase out the use of fossil fuels and invest funds to “accelerate the development” of new carbon reduction technology.

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CONSERVATION CHAIR’S REPORT

Support Joe [Biden] and Climate-Friendly Businesses

By Greg Gorman (ggorman07419@embarqmail.com)

“If we act to save the planet, we can create millions of jobs,” Joe Biden told Congress as he laid out his vision for transformation. His speech assures our World allies and competitors that the policies and deeds of current and future administrations will serve as a “roadmap” to global cooperation.

“Hundreds of companies have already pledged to become “net zero” or “zero carbon” within the next two decades.”

“I also hope to help train the next generation of activists, teaching them how to get the right tools and to use the tools that they will need. Activism isn’t just about organizing, rallies, and email alerts. There’s also the hard work of reading all of those documents and educating yourself on the issues. We need to understand regulatory strategy, legislative strategy, and legal strategy as well as media and outreach. We also need to know how to approach each environmental fight and develop the strategies and techniques for stopping a bad project, passing a law, or saving a park. I also look forward to writing, teaching, and spending more time with my family. But most importantly, I look forward to continuing to fight for New Jersey’s environment.”

After today, I can reach out to my personal Facebook and Twitter accounts or at jeff.tittel@verizon.net.

By Greg Gorman (ggorman07419@embarqmail.com)
You can promote the rapid adoption of carbon reduction technology in a variety of ways, not only by decarbonizing yourself and becoming an example for others. If you own corporate stock, urge your company or companies to adopt a Climate Transition Action Plan: setting out a range of targets and actions designed to deliver an emissions reduction that is consistent with the 1.5°C aim of the Paris Agreement. If you participate in a pension or mutual fund, urge it to set in motion an Environment-Social-Governance (ESG) policy that encourages decarbonization and climate justice. Businesses can reduce costs and enhance their reputation, by offering incentives for customers to switch to electric vehicles, power-purchase agreements to buy clean energy, and making on-site clean energy projects and renewable energy a priority in their strategic plans. Our Noise Pollution Issues Coordinator and Soundscape Project, and Acoustic Preservationist, has broken soundscapes down into anthropogenic (man-generated noise) and ‘biophonies’ (natural sounds). By simply asking the question, ‘What are you doing to reduce your carbon footprint?’ or ‘What are you doing to reduce man-generated noise?’ we can begin to understand the opportunities and responsibilities we all share. Another and very inexpensive way for you to contribute is by simply asking the question, ‘What are you doing to reduce your carbon footprint?’ or ‘What are you doing to reduce man-generated noise?’ Even if the answer is that they are addressing the issue of clean energy, it is still an opportunity to say thank you to them for taking action. It was also a day for our members and guests to reflect back upon the goals we set, and the accomplishments we’ve made through our grassroots efforts.

My local soundscape had been changed by the onset of the Coronavirus pandemic. I quickly grabbed my microphone, levels, and recording equipment and proceeded to “record” this new perception of the world. Sitting motionless on my porch, holding my headphones tightly with both hands, I strained to listen for anthropic sounds. This was the closest I’ve come to witnessing natural silence. Less than one mile from NJ Transit’s Northeast Corridor, my porch overlooks the train station and TZ varsity fields. I was experiencing our soundscapes can we truly understand the world and the natural beauty it has to offer us. We have been taught that sounds are made by objects, but this is not true. Sounds are made by vibrations that are created by objects. When we hear a sound, we are actually hearing the vibrations that are created by the object that is making the sound. For example, when we hear the sound of a guitar, we are actually hearing the vibrations that are created by the strings of the guitar. These vibrations are then transmitted through the air and are what we are able to hear.

Bernie Krause, a soundscape ecologist, has broken soundscapes down into four categories: biophony (earth-related sound), biophonies (animal sound), and anthropophony (human-related sound). Bernie, along with other audio ecologists, demonstrated that the sounds of的声音是变化的。人类产生的声音和环境的声音正在相互作用，改变着声音，影响着野生动物，植物生活，和我们的生活。

Audio ecologist Gordon Hempton is fighting to preserve “One Square Inch of Silence” in the Hoh Rainforest of Olympic National Park, in Washington State. He has his one square inch to be one of only a handful of naturally silent environments left on our planet. By protecting this precious location from human-generated noise, he thinks he can protect miles of backcountry wilderness. The World Listening Project was established in 2008 with the aim of fostering the understanding of the world and its natural environment, and cultures through the practice of listening and recording. The World Listening Project hosts a global educational and listening event. This year’s event is “The Unquiet Earth.” On June 18th, 2021, the World Listening Project will be hosting the Unquiet Earth.

The silence of the early days of the COVID lockdown is now a distant memory. Our recordings are our factual testimony of a quieted earth. Only by experiencing our soundscapes can we learn about the harmful effects of human-generated noise, and join the movement to preserve this aspect of our precious planet.

By Michael Competielle – Our Noise Pollution Issues Coordinator and Soundscape Project, and Acoustic Preservationist (mcompetielle@gmail.com)

At 11pm on March 21st, 2020, I stepped outside to walk my dogs and soon realized that something was missing. The absence of the cacophony of road traffic, shopping mall noise, and the music of the ice cream truck was a profound reminder that the COVID pandemic had affected our everyday lives for the better. Our leadership on environmental and public health and safety issues has protected our everyday lives for the better. Learn more about the Sierra Club’s New Jersey Chapter, our award winners and other outstanding individuals on the website noted above.

By Stan Greberich, who chaired the Awards Committee

For many years the New Jersey Chapter has held an Appreciation Day event in November to recognize the outstanding environmental achievement of our volunteers and supporters, and of heroic politicians. This year, 2020, was different. Due to the pandemic, all in-person Sierra Club gatherings in the past year were suspended. So we were determined to make the opportunity to acknowledge the accomplishments and the contributions of our volunteers as well as those of our heroic politicians. Besides the opportunity to say thank you to our volunteers, it was also a day for our members and guests to reflect back upon the goals we set, and the accomplishments we’ve made through our grassroots efforts.

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New Jersey Sierra Club TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE CHAIR’S REPORT

NJ Transit Website Earns C-Grade

In a follow-up report to our 2020 study of NJ Transit’s website and train and bus information systems issued in March, the Sierra Club’s Transportation Committee still found major problems, especially on the web site.

The initial reports released in February 2020 noted that the web and mobile apps failed to provide accurate, timely service information, had two trip planning apps that provided contradictory information, and failed to provide useful, consistent “look and feel” between its web and mobile apps. In addition, the reports urged NJ Transit to develop a “Frequent Service” of travel by removing diversions are now provided. However, alerts dealing with service disruptions are still not priori-

The most egregious shortcoming is the failure of NJ Transit to provide residents and visitors with a “one stop shopping” experience for all transit options in the State. County bus maps are provided only for 3 counties (Atlantic, Mercer, and Camden) and trip planning and route diversion information for non NJ Transit bus routes is still not available. Furthermore, the Sierra Club continues to advocate for de-

The most improved function is NJ Transit’s Alerts & Advisories – all out of date notices have been removed, they are easy to access, and the directions of travel of diversions are now provided. However, alerts dealing with service disruptions are still not priori-

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CHAIR’S MESSAGE

He’s also a member of our local Editorial Board.

Council of Club Leaders (and the CCL Chair)

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National Sierra Club is headquar-

Our “Green” Pushmi-Pullyu

By Joe Testa, New Jersey’s Delegate to the national

New Jersey’s Clean Car Program, al-

s the New Jersey’s “first major cli-

mate response bill,” brought New Jer-

ey in line with California’s automobile emissions requirements, which are the strictest in the nation.

Global Warming Response Act (GWRA) – 2007, updated 2019 –

Under this law, the DEP must assess the state’s greenhouse gas emissions, and find ways to reduce emissions by 80% by 2050. Jeff has been a strong voice in the on-going rulemaking under the GWRA, known as NJ-PACT (Protect-

ing against Climate Threats). This is the Murphy Administration’s regulato-

ry reform effort to modernize environ-

mental laws.

Plastic Bag Ban – New Jersey’s bill is one of the most comprehensive in the country.

Banning Fracking in the Delaware River Basin – this recent ruling by the Delaware River Basin Commission was lauded by environmental groups across the country. Jeff worked closely with the Delaware Riverkeeper Network and the New Jersey Sierra Club.

The above is just part of Jeff’s legacy. I know of no one who has been more dedi-

icated to preserving the environment, or who has worked harder to do so.

So, both personally and on behalf of our New Jersey Chapter, I thank Jeff for almost 23 years of dedicated and effec-

tive environmental work, and wish him and his wife Barbara all the best in re-

tirement and many happy years of life in New Jersey.

The search is now on for Jeff’s succes-

sor. I hope that his replacement will be as hard-working and as successful.

 resolutions – Approved by the Chapter Executive Committee (ExCom) in March, April, and May

March: Allie Horn, was appointed Chapter Legislative Analyst. There were many

comments made in response to Chapter Director Jeff Tittel’s announcement of his coming retirement early in May. We approved this resolution: “The Sierra Club New Jersey Chapter proudly supports passage of the Green Amendment (SCR380), which would amend the State’s constitution to provide that every person in the State has a constitutional right to a clean environment, including the right to clean air, pure water, and healthy habitats.” The Green Amendment would also require the State to conserve public natural resources and to prevent others from destroying or damaging public natural resources.

April: Resolved: “The New Jersey Chapter of the Sierra Club requests further involvement from New Jersey and Solvay Specialty Polymers USA, LLC, and requests that the DEP develop a public participation plan regarding PFAS. (PFAS = perfluoroalkyl substances). We also approved political endorsements for many candidates running for State Legislature in the June primary and November general elections. See also Ben Becker’s report on p.1. Judy Minot was appointed to the ExCom, filling a vacancy left when Laura Lynch stepped down.

May: John Kashwick, ExCom Vice-Chair, resigned as Chapter Political Chair (a role he has held for local office elections). In his place, Karen Becker was appoint-

ed Political Chair. John Kashwick was appointed to the new position of Legisla-

tive Chair, heading a new Legislative Committee (see list of members on p.12), which will work with our other committees to evaluate and prioritize bills in the legislature. New candidates were endorsed for the 2021 primary and general elections.

A resolution was approved to submit comments to national Sierra Club on its bicycle policy: that pedal-assist e-bikes should be allowed on any trail where mountain bikers are allowed. A second resolution asks the Council of Club Leaders to improve the Club’s policy on noise pollution, which has not been revised since the 1970’s.

(continued on page 4)
Despite Governor Murphy’s many promises to end NJ’s bear hunt in 2020, his Administration, using the New Jersey Game Code (N.J.A.C. 7:25-5) transfers authority over bear policy from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to the NJ Assembly. This effectively weakening DEP’s ability to provide oversight and stop future bear hunts. The current bear population in COVID-19 from out-of-state hunters traveling to NJ, Gov. Murphy failed to live up to his promise, not only to end the bear hunt, but to act in the best interests of NJ residents.

That’s because the Game Council is dominated by game hunters, eliminating wildlife biologists and conservationists from the decision–making process. NJ’s bear hunting practices are almost universally regarded as cruel and inhumane, e.g. the use of bow and arrow hunting, which can cause prolonged suffering. Furthermore, the current parameters of the hunt continue to incentivize the killing of bears behind sustainable bear management.

The Chapter’s campaign to end the bear hunt has seen enormous backlash from the hunting community. A recent survey conducted by the Chapter’s Social Media Coordinator confirmed that 85% of hunters support the existing bear hunt, and 93% believe that it is necessary to maintain its current population, which is over double the scientific sustainable harvest.

The NJ Game Code states, “The future of NJ’s bear population is even more grim. NJ is the only state, other than Alaska, that allows the harvest of bear cubs. This worsens the sustainability of NJ’s bear population for several reasons. For instance, the removal of female cubs in the first year reduces the productivity rates, averaging two cubs per female every six years. Cubs stay with their mother for about 17 months. Studies demonstrate that female bears are twice as likely to be killed during a hunt than male bears, for a variety of reasons. One is that pregnant and mother bears are more drawn to bait than males – in order to provide for their young, especially during frequent periods of food shortage. (Chapters) management programs, (using bait puts residents at greater risk and increases the likelihood of a nuisance bear by acclimating bears to the smell of human food/garbage. Black bears have the keenest sense of smell in the animal kingdom; they can smell food sources from over a mile away. NJ is one of only twelve states that permit the practice of baiting, which remains controversial amongst hunting groups.)

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The NJ Senate, Assembly and Gov- ernor Murphy should be applauded for having enacted, last Fall, the stron- ger single-use plastic bag ban in the country. It will take effect in May, 2022, giving vendors time to devel- op alternative packaging. This bill will ban plastic and paper carry-out bags, plastic straws, and polystyrene (aka styrofoam) food containers. We ap- plaud the 60-plus NJ municipalities that paved the way by adopting local bans, and the many other non-profit organizations which also lobbied for Bill S864/A1978.

Plastic legislation is a hot topic across the country. 25 bills to impose plastic bans were introduced in state legisla- tures in 2019. S864/A1978 is the most comprehensive of them. Other “success- ful” states include California, New York, Connecticut, Connecticut, Vermont, Maine, Oregon, Washington State and Hawaii. Unfortunately, 14 states have passed or are strongly considering pre- emptive legislation to prohibit bans in their borders, including Florida, Idaho, Mississip- pi, Missouri, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Ohio, and Wisconsin.

New Jersey’s legislation is far more aggressive than that of the European Union, which banned single use plastic bags (with narrow exceptions) in 2019. Statewide plastic bans have advan- tages over bans at local levels: • Uniform regulations for small and larger stores. • Staffing and resources to create ef- fective enforcement systems • Staffing and resources to data col- lect and answer advisory boards. • Staffing and resources to create a hub for new product knowledge and ed- ucation New Jersey’s Secretary of State, Ta- hesha Way, and the DEP’s Acting Com- missioner, Shawn Tourette, have just released the State’s 2019 Sustainability and sup- port businesses for a successful transi- tion. Highlights include:

- Start date of 1/1/2021 for the ban on plastic straws except for special re- quests.
- Start date of 5/4/2022 for single use bags – plastic and paper
- Start date of 5/4/2022 for most polystyrene food containers
- Start date of 5/4/2024, for specific polystyrene items including very small cups (2 ounces or less), handle foam soda spoons, and meat, poul- try and fish trays sold from a refriger- ator or cooler, and “any food product pre-packaged” with a polystyrene tray or container.

Like all other single use bans, S864 bans only carryout bags. It does not ap- ply to thin bags used to package loose food items such as produce, fruit, newspapers, laundry and garment bags, and bags used for transport of medi- cine or live animals. There are further exemptions for small stores (less than 2,500 sq. feet), which are allowed paper bags. Waivers for polystyrene food con- tainer products are available to meet specific situations or hardships. The State has specified details on acceptable reusable bags:

- “Bags made of polylowpolypropylene fabric, PET non-woven fabric, nylon, cloth, hemp product, or other washable fab- ric, bags, bags designed and manufactured for multiple reuses.” S864, is a sweeping but thoughtful piece of legislation.

Sources: 
www.nj.gov/dep/dshw/plastic-ban- law
www.BagLpNj.com
www.niclean.org
www.earthday.org/a-third-of-the- us-has-laws-preventing-plastic- bags/, 1/2020

Conservation News

They are back!
From Joanne Pannone, Chair of our Central Jersey Group (joanneleubrock@gmail.com)

March 20th was a beautiful day, es-pecially because the male bluebirds ar-rived safely in Robbinsville and began checking out the three bluebird hous- es. Boy Scout volunteers had built them according to designs for the Peterson Bluebird House, provided by the National Audubon Society and the Blue- bird Society (www.nab-luebiersociety.com), and placed them at three sites – one of the edges of an open field.

New Jersey Bluebird Society (NJBBS) mem- bers have boxes avail-able for you! And they are asking volunteers to conduct outdoor assistance to insure that your box is placed in a good location. Bluebirds are cavity-nesters and the boxes must be comfortable and safe. The male typically arrives on the breed- ing grounds before the female; he de-fends the nesting territory by singing. The female may have a flushing flight in front of the male with wings and tail partly spread all the time while singing. The male may also feed the female, like- ly a small insect or a caterpillar. Nestlings can be fairly low to the ground, they are mostly built by the female but the male helps. They are so small – made of weeds and fine grass and holding 4 – 6 blue, unmarked eggs. Incubation is by the female, but once hatched both will fly short of their nests – probably for about three weeks. There are two broods per year, then they mi- grate in late fall.

Eastern Bluebirds have declined seri-ously in recent decades, due to the loss of habitat and of nesting sites. But in the past few years their numbers have been improving, undoubtedly helped by bird houses provided by our species. When they are not nesting they roam the fields in small flocks in search of live insects and berries. They compete with house sparrows and starlings; both are non-native and pred-atory. Therefore, the opening in the nest box will be no more than one-quarter inch or less, to keep them out. These nonnatives need to be actively discour- aged by removing their nests. They kill blue- birds in the nest and build their own nests of sticks on top. Other predators include cats, snakes, raccoons, owls, and hawks. Bad weath- er can also limit survival, as can lack of proper management, poor design stand-ards, wrong location, and lack of monitoring. Approximately 70% of the young and 50% of the parent bluebirds die each year. Therefore, proper man- agement may be key to their survival.

I am very concerned that climate change and bad storms have altered the timing of the availability of food when the bluebirds arrive in 2019. The NJBBS will soon be producing a new book, Monitoring them during COVID-19 is a personal choice. Getting outdoor exercise while monitoring boxes has been a job for me. Laura Stavish, President of the central region of the NJBBS (and a Sierra Club member), and I recently gave a presentation at the Plainfield Sierra Club, informing 15 new bluebird ad- mirers how to enjoy helping bluebirds. I hope I have motivated you to examine the NJBBS website and get involved.
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New Jersey is one of the most flood-prone and climate-impacted states. The state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is using maps to identify problem locations and proposing rule changes under the fancy acronym FACT (Protecting Against Climate Threats), but they aren’t comprehensive, and they have loopholes big enough to drive bulldozers through.

The DEP is still letting developers build in the wrong places: “at their own risk.” These development decisions, resulting in the loss of coastal habitat, fails to protect people from climate change and its impacts. The DEP should take a holistic approach that identifies properties appropriate for buyouts, elevations, and new construction. It needs to be able to say “no” where appropriate.

The DEP started this program a year ago, so it said it would regulate land use for climate impacts. None of that is in the proposal. The DEP is not considering how developments increase greenhouse gases by cutting down forests, or paving over wetlands. It isn’t considering long commutes, or preventing developments that aren’t flood-prone but are still environmentally sensitive. It isn’t encouraging development near train stations and bus stops to reduce automobile use and encourage mass transit.

The state’s 384,000 properties are at a substantial risk, a number that is projected to increase to 459,000 by 2050. We’re developing in risk zones twice as fast as in safer zones, with more than 4,500 homes built in risk zones since 2009. Ocean, Cape May and Monmouth Counties are building in risk zones faster than anywhere else in the nation. This pattern won’t change based on the DEP’s “voluntary” approach.

Streets in shore communities are going underwater during full moons. Sewers are backing up, and even on sunny days flooding is occurring on high tides, due to both sea level rise and land subsidence. Salt water is intruding into groundwater. The DEP seems not to be concerned that sea level is projected to rise five to eight feet by 2100, putting our barrier islands and much of Cape May County permanently under water.

FAC doesn’t affect local zoning or rules and regulations regarding climate impacts. CFARA is still in “business as usual,” building seawalls and replenishing beaches. Wasting time on these projects only gives people false hope. We continue an undefined hardship exemption with which DEP approves almost all new developments. We are in a climate emergency. We need the state to take immediate action to make our coastal areas more resilient and other flood-prone areas more resilient. New Jersey is still following its rules to the State Plan, which uses 1996 data. Shore areas like Mystic Island are still listed as growth areas even though they’re going underwater.

Here’s what we suggest: Gov. Murphy should create a cabinet-level committee to coordinate coastal resiliency and produce a Coastal Plan that identifies zones for buyouts, elevations and no-build. It would put climate change into all rules and regulations, reverse former Gov. Christie’s Flood Hazard and Wetland Rules, and drop loopholes in CFARA that allow more development in flood-prone areas. The DEP should then implement the Plan. Doing all of this would be more than a PACT; it would be a real accomplishment.

Original version as published: https://www.thesandpaper.net/articles/state-pact-does-not-protect-against-climate-change-impacts/

Governor Murphy has announced the release of $100 million from the Volkswagen settlement and RGGI accounts — to fund electrification initiatives in the transportation sector. He also signed an Executive Order to create the Office of Climate Action within the Governor’s Office. Our own climate change mitigation and clean energy transition, emphasizing economic recovery and environmental justice. A “Council on the Green Economy” will be formed within the Office to advise on job-related matters. Let’s hope that these measures will promote a goal of 100% electric vehicles by 2035, with NJ Transit leading the way. We also need a moratorium on fossil fuels and the promotion of green jobs.

The Council on the Green Economy will be co-chaired by the Commissioners of the Department of Labor & Workforce Development and of the Department of Environmental Protection, and the President of the Board of Public Utilities. Within a year, it must put together a strategic report on how to advance sustainable economic growth and rebuild a workforce trained for green jobs.

We strongly support this measure that will put leadership in the Governor’s Office for all agencies dealing with climate resiliency issues. This will allow coordination between the DCA’s green building codes, Treasury’s buying electric vehicles for the state, and the need for many agencies to lease space in green buildings and divest from fossil fuels. It should promote NJ Transit’s complete electrification and encourage the DEP to make land use as resilient as possible.

The state will release $67 million for electrifying cargo-handling and related equipment in ports and industrial areas, $15 million for electric NJ Transit buses, and $22 million in grants for local communities to deploy electric school buses and electric garbage and delivery trucks.

The DEP is still letting developers build in the wrong places: “at their own risk.” These development decisions, resulting in the loss of coastal habitat, fails to protect people from climate change and its impacts. The DEP should take a holistic approach that identifies properties appropriate for buyouts, elevations, and new construction. It needs to be able to say “no” where appropriate.

The state’s 384,000 properties are at a substantial risk, a number that is projected to increase to 459,000 by 2050. We’re developing in risk zones twice as fast as in safer zones, with more than 4,500 homes built in risk zones since 2009. Ocean, Cape May and Monmouth Counties are building in risk zones faster than anywhere else in the nation. This pattern won’t change based on the DEP’s “voluntary” approach.

Streets in shore communities are going underwater during full moons. Sewers are backing up, and even on sunny days flooding is occurring on high tides, due to both sea level rise and land subsidence. Salt water is intruding into groundwater. The DEP seems not to be concerned that sea level is projected to rise five to eight feet by 2100, putting our barrier islands and much of Cape May County permanently under water.

FAC doesn’t affect local zoning or rules and regulations regarding climate impacts. CFARA is still in “business as usual,” building seawalls and replenishing beaches. Wasting time on these projects only gives people false hope. We continue an undefined hardship exemption with which DEP approves almost all new developments. We are in a climate emergency. We need the state to take immediate action to make our coastal areas more resilient and other flood-prone areas more resilient. New Jersey is still following its rules to the State Plan, which uses 1996 data. Shore areas like Mystic Island are still listed as growth areas even though they’re going underwater.

Here’s what we suggest: Gov. Murphy should create a cabinet-level committee to coordinate coastal resiliency and produce a Coastal Plan that identifies zones for buyouts, elevations and no-build. It would put climate change into all rules and regulations, reverse former Gov. Christie’s Flood Hazard and Wetland Rules, and drop loopholes in CFARA that allow more development in flood-prone areas. The DEP should then implement the Plan. Doing all of this would be more than a PACT; it would be a real accomplishment.

Original version as published: https://www.thesandpaper.net/articles/state-pact-does-not-protect-against-climate-change-impacts/
The Skylands Group advocates the protection of the Spruce Mountain Wildlife Management Area from logging done under the guise of creating “healthy forests.”

The Skylands Group supports Green New Deal, Sunrise Movement, Sierra Club’s Ready and trains to transport Bakken oil, liquid natural gas and other dirty fuels; (3) advocating for the clean-up of polluted waterways and for regulations that support town-level adoption of renewable energy strategies and the environmental justice communities. (8) increasing group diversity, and (9) supporting the efforts of organizations who are “on the ground” in environmental justice communities.

We continue to focus our existing efforts upon fighting climate change; creating more opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to enjoy and appreciate nature; and collaborating with coalitions, such as Empower NJ and Don’t Trash the Meadowlands, and other New Jersey Groups to advocate for renewable energy and a moratorium on fossil fuel usage, preserve our waterways and protect our parks.

UPCOMING EVENTS: Unless otherwise noted, meetings and outings are free, open to the general public. Events are announced via email and on our social media. Due to the virus, we have been forced to cancel our in-person events. We are in process of planning for their online counterparts. Please check out attendees who are interested in this issue.

Volunteer Opportunities
Webmaster Wanted: We are seeking a dedicated webmaster to work with our Marketing/Social Media Committee. We need someone to develop, monitor and update our social media pages and to outreach to Group members to obtain/prepare copy for the website. If interested please contact Marie at mmannino@yahoo.com or Diane at dscott@hotmail.com.

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rounding areas. Help us by finding and reviewing public records, circulating petitions, going door-to-door with lawn signs, speaking in public meetings, and attending and organizing press conferences. The choice of action is up to you. No activity or time commitment is required so please come. Make a difference. If interested contact Mary at north.outings.chair@newjersey.sierracub.org or Judy at jgurem@47.com.

Climate Change Committee: The objectives of the Climate Change Committee are to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, discourage new fossil fuel facilities (like the Meadowlands and NJ Transit gas-powered plants) and encourage the use of renewable energy. The committee may act to mitigate climate change and give scientists time to find permanent solutions to this crisis. Our committee works in conjunction with other environmental groups to support a transition to renewable energy. Your help could bring us a little closer to a cleaner, safer, and healthier world for our children and grandchildren – be a part of it! For more information or to sign up, contact Jeff at jefrap@optonline.net.

Political Action Committee: We recommend candidates for political office in Bergen, Passaic, and Hudson Counties (where there is overlap). Learn where our elected officials and candidates for office stand on environmental issues by examining their voting records and interviewing them. You can phone bank or otherwise work from your home, or visit the legislator’s offices. Canvass door-to-door for endorsed candidates. The way you contribute is up to you. But know there is work to do. If interested, contact Sandi at libertsierra@gmail.com.

Event Planning and Membership Committee: COMMITTEE CHAIR/CO-CHAIR WANT-ED. Interested in conducting an event on a particular topic? Like speaking with other people about environmental issues and concerns? This committee is for you! We seek someone who is dedicated to the environment, believes in the Sierra Club, is enthusiastic about the actions our North Jersey Group is taking and wants to help us move forward through program planning and the recruitment of new members. If interested contact Diane at daciat@hotmail.com or Buddy at buddy.jenssen@gmail.com.

Marketing/Social Media Committee: Are you creative? Do you love graphic design, writing press releases and short stories, contacting newspapers and radio and using social media? We need you! If interested, contact Marie at marinromino@yahoo.com and Jan at janarybel@hotmail.com.

Outings Committee: Organize and lead hikes, snowshoeing, kayaking and other of your favorite outdoor activities on trails and locations of your choice. Trips can vary in length, level of difficulty and location. If interested, contact Mary at north.outings.chair@newjersey.sierracub.org or Buddy at buddy.jenssen@gmail.com.

Youth Outreach/Inner City Outings: These Committees work together to outreach to youth, high school and college students and to plan nature walks in local parks for env-iromental, racial, social, economic and other outreach to high schools and youth organizations to encourage local teenagers to become organizers of these events, so that all can appreciate the value of the outdoors. The committee creates liaisons with local schools, partners with other youth organizations in their offices. Canvas door-to-door for endorsed candidates. The way you contribute is up to you. But know there is work to do. If interested, contact Sandi at libertsierra@gmail.com.

Diversity, Inclusion, and Environmental Justice Committee: Do you want to act to support social, racial, economic and environmental justice? Do you believe that the Sierra Club is more diverse and that we need to take action to increase diversity? If yes, then our new Diversity, Inclusion and Environmental Justice Committee may be for you! Interested in participating in the activities of this committee contact Diane at daciat@hotmail.com.

Hudson County Group Goals/Projects for 2021

Sustainability/Youth/Education. Sustainability is a catch-all which includes recycling, conservation of infrastructure, transportation and more. Two areas where we can make an immediate impact locally are composting and renewable energy. We need to create a task force to educate/promote composting and switching to renewable energy; individually, in our schools, and in our municipalities. Schools— including area colleges —are a great place to start. Environmental clubs can push their schools to adopt sustainable practices. This should also include an education campaign on the circular economy and related things like eco-bricking, etc. These issues tend to appeal to young people, who are a major target of these efforts.

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Protect our parks from privatization and illegal diversion: Jeff Tittel has elegantly posed to Pressure Liberty State Park as “our Yosemite.” For three decades advocates for “The People’s Park” have fought one privatization scheme after another. To protect the park once and for all, must pass an un-amended Liberty State Park Protection Act. Our densely populated cities where land is scarce, greedy developers and bought-off politicians continue to attempt to divert our precious parkland for their various schemes.

Environmental Justice. Because pollution and environmental degradation tend to harm low-income communities, often people of color, we must include social justice issues in all of our work. Towards that end, we propose that an EJ committee plan an online public forum— hopefully in the next month or so— which will tap into chapter resources as well connecting with social justice groups in Hudson County. One goal of this forum is to give participants an action plan: What can people do? We recommend candidates for political office in Bergen, Passaic, and Hudson Counties (where there is overlap). Learn where our elected officials and candidates for office stand on environmental issues by examining their voting records and interviewing them. You can phone bank or otherwise work from your home, or visit the legislator’s offices. Canvass door-to-door for endorsed candidates. The way you contribute is up to you. But know there is work to do. If interested, contact Sandi at libertsierra@gmail.com.

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No Gas Plant in the Meadowlands: The environmental movement in NJ has scored a huge victory! NJ Transit is now working toward renewable energy instead of building a gas-fired power plant on a toxic site on a floodplain in Kearny. Trains can be powered with solar and wind power combined with battery backup storage. This is being done successfully all around the world. Sierra Club is an integral part of the Don’t Gas the Meadowlands coalition, which led the campaign.

Climate Change: You think Hurricane Sandy was fun? New studies show that Hudson County will be harder hit by sea-level rise and catastrophic flooding than any other NJ county. Sierra has joined with other leading environmental groups to form the Hudson Climate Coalition. Together, we will demand change from politicians at all levels of government. We will keep the pressure on state and federal legislators to demand support for the Green New Deal and related policies. We are working to build awareness and grass roots support as we transition to 100% renewable energy locally by the year 2050, or sooner. Get involved and be part of the solution.

Environmental Justice: Low-income communities and black and brown communities suffer the most from environmental destruction: elevated levels of cancer, asbestos disease, lead poisoning, and a host of other problems. Hudson County has had more than its share of environmental poisoning for generations. We must stand up for social justice in these communities!

Parks and Greenways: Sierra Club is working to expand and green spaces in Hudson County. In Jersey City, we want to connect existing parks and trails, as part of the City of Jersey City’s “Greenway.” In Weehawken, the newly proposed – and very exciting – Essex-Hudson Greenway, the Bergen Archs, the 6th Street Embankment and more. Skyway Park is especially important: it is a former toxic landfill successfully converted into open space and will a key link to Hackensack River Walkway, which someday will run from one end of the county to the other. We want to see the shoreline along the Hackensack River become Hudson County’s “Green Coast.”

Braddock Park: Stopping illegal diversion of open space in this beautiful county park. Twenty years ago the town of North Bergen re-placed a ballfield and the adjacent park with “drumpk creek.” Twenty years later, this town is reversing its mistake and returning the park to its former glory. The Group is working with concerned citizens and local environmental organizations to protect park open space and wildlife habitat in Morris and Hudson Counties, and to safeguard the water resources on which we all depend.

The issues of interest to our communities include but are not limited to:

4. Land conservation, preservation of open space and protection of Green Acres.
8. Opposing gas pipelines and compressor stations generally.
9. For the park at Miry Run – dam site 21.
10. Opposing logging public lands because we don’t have 80 years to grow new tree canopy.
11. Promoting electric school buses.
12. Opposing NJ Transit’s gas-powered electric plants.
2. Against the Hughes Warehouse development on Rte 17 and Quakerbridge Rd.
3. Against Synergy Solar in Hamilton: Sweetwater Ave which threatens the community in the already flood-prone Lower Lampsink Creek Valley.
5. Against Tennessee Gas Company’s compressor station proposed for the Highlands Preservation Area.
7. Against the Mercer Corporate Park Warehouse development.
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To save the planet, support Empower New Jersey! Get our news by joining the Sierra Club and signing up to receive our e-mail.

We look forward to in-person get-togethers but until then our monthly lecture series will remain virtual. The Central Jersey Group will post any future activities on the New Jersey Sierra Club website, Central Group Facebook page, and Pineypaddlers.com. Stay home, be patient, stay safe! And don’t stop lobbying for our environment!

Their NESE project application for two more years. The pipeline permits were previ

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2. Against the Hughes Warehouse development on Rte 1 and Quakerbridge Rd.
3. Against Synergy Solar in Hamilton: Sweetwater Ave which threatens the community in the already flood-prone Lower Lampsink Creek Valley.
5. Against Tennessee Gas Company’s compressor station proposed for the Highlands Preservation Area.
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MEETING SCHEDULE: Currently, all Executive Committee and General Meetings are being held safely by Zoom technology; this is expected to continue until further notice.

July: No meetings

Aug: No meetings

Sept 8: Please check the Loantaka website...

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Congratulations to the Green Teams, Environmen
JERSEY SHORE GROUP HAPPENINGS:
Mark Fukayama, Steve Miller and Stan Greberis
Education Chair:
tact the nominating committee at jfluard@gmail.com.

The Jersey Shore Group is looking for interested members to
Nominations for 2022:
this definition to your municipal engineer. If you want help, contact: faithtei@aol.com
For example, if you have an old strip mall that is being redeveloped, we want the de

from the total amount of impervious surface that must be treated by new stormwater
existing stormwater best management practice that is to remain after the redevelop-
water management. However, any such new impervious cover that will drain into an

of impervious surface area that is not part of a routine maintenance activity. If a proj-
ment of a structure or a portion of a structure regardless of footprint; and replacement

Our next step is to help our towns amend the newly adopted ordinance by adding the

Our group is focused on a number of critical issues. Locally and state-wide we are fighting a myriad of over-develop development proposals in your town that may have a negative environmental impact, please contact us and join our meetings. We are all

- Spotted lantern flies have been spotted in Somerset County and don't need to be re

• A mega-warehouse on a 10-acre site along the Raritan River is proposed at 41 Glen-
dale Rd in Edison.

We encourage you to get involved by attending your town’s planning and zoning board meetings. If you are aware of development proposals in your town that may have a negative environmental impact, please contact us and join our meetings. We are all

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\[x = \frac{-b \pm \sqrt{b^2 - 4ac}}{2a}\]

MEMBER MEETINGS: We are presenting Zoom webinars, usually on the fourth Mon-
day of every month at 7pm. Presently scheduled Webinars:

June 28: Yes, You Can; Celebrating Volunteers: We will celebrate our members and friends and learn from them how to get things accomplished. Details and registration will be on our website.

No programs in July and August.
A picnic may be held on Aug 8, depending on state and Sierra Club guidelines. Check our website in July.

Sept 27: Water Issues in New Jersey: Daniel J. Van Abs, PhD, FAICP/PP, Associate Professor of Professional Practice for Water, Society and Environment, Rutgers University. Details and registration will be on our website.

Speakers’ Contact: Mary Reilly, 908-808-2456 or Mary@reillygreen.com
If you are not getting e-mails announcing our webinars, please send one to Wael at waelkanj@gmail.com, or sign up at our website.

OCEAN COUNTY GROUP
Website: MEETUP.COM/SIERRA-CLUB–OCEAN-GROUP
OFFICERS:
Acting Chair & Conservation Chair: Margit Melissner-Jackson
Vice-Chair & Treasurer: Laura Stone
Outings & Env'l Edn: Terrance Brown
Recording Secretary: Nancy Brown
Political Chair: Margaret Mary Piccolo
Membership Chair: Ray & Cathy Kozakircher
Group ExCom Members: Russell Wickersham & David Koch
Outings Chair: Frank and Ellen Zinni
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SOUTH JERSEY GROUP
(Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland and Salem Counties, approximately)

OFFICERS:
Group, Outings Chair: Tom Boghosian 267-930-8583 boghosiani@verizon.net
Vice Chair: Open Position!
Conservation Chair: Open Position!
Political Chair, Calendars: Dick Colby 609-965-4453 dick.colby@stockton.edu
Membership Chair: Open Position!
Secretary/Treasurer: Julie Alters 506-432-3248 juliealters56@gmail.com

The officers listed above are wearing out (at least with respect to the Club), and would more than welcome new blood, new ideas and energy for new projects. One alternative is to fold back into the West Jersey Group (from which we originated in the mid-1970s). Please contact Dick Colby for a discussion. Otherwise, our consuming conservation is an adopted group that was founded, continues to be protected of the Great Egg Harbor Wild & Scenic River, and continues to demand the energies of those few officers who remain active both within the Sierra Club and in the Watershed Association (GEHWA) that spun off from the South Jersey Group. Very few of our local members seem interested in the meetings we once scheduled (monthly, from the early 1980s until 2005). For now, we’ll continue to be listed in this Newsletter, and offer a point of contact for Club members in South Jersey who want help with local issues. We strongly recommend GEHWA’s website for keeping up with local issues, and for links to many other local, regional, state and national environmental organizations: www.gehwa.org. If you have topics (and places) for meetings, please let the officers know about them. We welcome general comments from Club members in South Jersey. To be placed on our thoughtfully guarded distribution list for local issues and meetings, please e-mail dick.colby@stockton.edu. Dick is also an Atlantic County Parks Commissioner; contact him if you might be interested in attending monthly meetings of the Commission, which are open to the public, but currently held on-line.

Tom Boghosian is an avid kayaker (certified as a Maine Guide!), both ocean-going and inland waterways, pretty much a willing lead trip leader. Julie Alters also works with Atlantic County Parks, and is President of the Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association.

Current Issues: (1) We’ve been blue-blazing the southern portion of what will be a continuous footpath between the southern and northern tips of New Jersey. Many others (and other groups) are contributing. Detailed maps and route descriptions are now available on the Chapter’s website. Dick has also produced a brochure describing 15 historic water-related sites in the Counties. Even the hiker/bicyclist is invited to have its own “footprint” on the creation of the monument and fulfilling the mission of the Park System. All are welcome. If a physical meeting takes place, it would be at the Warren Fox Nature Center (WFNC*), Atlantic County Park in Estell Manor, Milepost 15 on NJ Rte 50, 3½ miles south of Mays Landing. Contact Julie Alters, 609-432-3280.

June 2, July 7, Aug 4 and Sept 1: (first Wednesday meetings), 6:30pm: Atlantic County Friends of the Parks: Monthly meetings of a group which works to improve and promote the Atlantic County Park System. All are welcome. WFNC* if the meeting would be physical. Contact Julie Alters, 609-432-3280. Website: https://www.facebook.com/Atlantic-County-Friends-of-the-Parks.

June 9 and Aug 11 (alternate second Wednesdays), 7pm: Bi-monthly meeting of Citizens United to Protect the Maurice River and its Tributaries (another “Partnership Group’s) activities and events, including hikes, clean ups, social gatherings, dinner get-togethers and other functions intended for those members over fifty). Contact Karla Rossini (CU) at 609-774-5853 or karla.rossini@cumauriceriver.org. Website: www.cumauriceriver.org.

SINGLES SECTION
(A chapter-wide special interest section offering hikes/cleanups, social gatherings, meetings, etc.)

Website: http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/sierra-singles

We’re an active, effective group of individuals who enjoy hiking, biking, canoeing/kayaking, socializing, as well as a variety of social and cultural activities throughout the year. This section was created to offer a variety of single—and/or activities to NJ Sierra Club members.

PURPOSE: Our purpose is to acquaint single adults with the natural history and beauty of the surrounding area, to promote environmental conservation, and to provide recreational and social activities for members. All activities shall be consistent with Sierra Club purposes. We are not a local group; we’re a statewide additional “layer” of club involvement. Everyone is welcome to join us.

COMMUNICATIONS: The best way to be notified of upcoming events is to join our free listserv. Anyone may subscribe by going to: http://lists.sierraclub.org/archives/NJ-SINGLES-NEWS.html and clicking on “Join or leave the list.” You may subscribe or unsubscribe at will, directions on how to unsubscribe are at the bottom of each announcement. Once you subscribe you can login to your listserv to receive announcements for all of our events a few weeks before each event. Events are also listed on the online calendar on the Chapter’s web site: sierraclub.org/new-jersey/. You can also “like” us on Facebook: “Sierra Club New Jersey Sierra Club.” Activities will also be posted on Meetup.

SINGLES SECTION / FIFTY-PLUS SECTION
(A chapter-wide special interest section which offers a weekly to monthly calendar of activities and events, including hikes, clean ups, social gatherings, dinner get-togethers and other functions intended for those members over fifty).

In addition, a monthly 6-page newsletter is sent out to members free of charge, in which they can list items they are seeking for or want to buy.

The mission of this section is to support Sierra Club goals, and to promote activism through letter writing, phone calls, and other active support for environmental issues.

We work through a “list-serve,” by which members learn about current environmental issues, and how they can be supported. Please find more news at Website: http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/sierra-section.

Airline Zatz is the editor and Chair of the Senior Section/Fifty-Plus Section. She can be reached at azatz@funtravels.com, and invites members to check her web site at www.funtravels.com for tips, trips, and travel information regarding New Jersey and other states.

Paul Ehrlich is the Vice-Chair (pehrlich-nj@outlook.com). He vice-edits the Essays Section of the Senior Section web site. These essays are written by members of the NJ Sierra Club, and focus on environmental issues, including reports of environmental problems, and support/criticism of environmental actions taken by organizations and individuals. DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING YOU’VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT THAT NEEDS TO BE TAKEN PUBLICLY, AND A SPECIAL INVITATION TO JOIN THE SIERRA CLUB? PLEASE LET THE OFFICERS KNOW.

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Interim Co-Chairs: Ron Pate and Jimi Oleksiak
Outings Chair: Joyce Haddad
Conservation Chair: Open Position!
The Jersey Sierran | July-September 2021 | 11

Executive committee members: Rozanna Fanelli, Joyce Haddad, Ron Pate, and Jeff Zitzman

OFFICERS:
Position Open!
Membership: Open Position!
Nominations: Open Position!

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New Jersey Inspiring Connections Outdoors - (NJ IC) is dedicated to promoting safe and fun wilderness trips for children and teenagers with limited access to the outdoors. Volunteer leaders collaborate with community partners to facilitate, lead, and promote events that will educate and foster a love of nature and the outdoors for youth in New Jersey who may not otherwise have the opportunity or the means. The program works to reduce barriers by providing gear, transportation, trip fees, and leaders to create opportunities for explore, enjoy, and advocate for nature. The Chair welcomes inquiries from leaders of other school and community organizations. Organized outings continue to be proscribed until further notice. COVID disease is retrieved, group outings chairs may continue to be available to advise on local adventures that you can attempt individually and in family or other small groups.

Upcoming ExCom Meetings

All members are welcome to attend the upcoming ExCom meetings, held on SECOND SATURDAY, 5pm, which accepts access from a computer, smartphone or tablet. 10am for the Conservation Committee; 1pm for ExCom. Details on our access from the secretary: secretaries@newjersey.sierraclub.org.

Dates: June 12, July 10, August 14, Sept. 11

MEMBERSHIP COUPON

25% off all Sierra Club membership or upgrade
20% off all Sierra Club products
$35 for the entire family

Use code SIERRA2021

MEMBERSHIP COUPON

Name ____________________________
Address __________________________
City ___________________ State _______
Phone ____________________________
Email ____________________________

(* Check enclosed, made payable to Sierra Club
Mastercard / Visa / American Express

Exp. Date ______/______

Card Number ______________________

Contributions, gifts and dues to the Sierra Club are not tax deductible; they support our effective, citizen-led campaigns for conservation. A $7.50 subscription is available for a subscription to Sierra magazine and $15.00 for your 1st birthday newsletter.

Enclose check and mail to: Sierra Club Member Services 2101 Webster St., Suite 1300 Oakland, CA 94612

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GROUP NEWS continued from page 11

ABOUT THAT YOU’D LIKE TO TELL A LARGE AUDIENCE? Send an essay to Arline and Paul for editing and approval and it will be posted on our web site.

SIERRA STUDENT COALITION

(a semi-autonomous organization of college and high-school students)

Website: http://www.ssc.org/

ISO: INSPIRING CONNECtIoNS outDoorS

(a semi-autonomous organization of college and high-school students)

Deaver, Julia Marchese, Devharsh Trivedi

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Since our distant ancestors learned to control fire between 400,000 and 800,000 years ago (evidence obvi- ously vary), fire has been both boon and bane, and time again. In 2020 almost 4.9 million acres burned in the US, 8.6 million acres burned, 35 deaths, and more than 10,500 structures destroyed. 

Clearly, we need forests, not forest fires. Forests shelter thousands of species, sequester climate-threatening carbon dioxide, prevent soil erosion, provide building materials, produce oxygen, and offer an inner peace, per- haps inspiring Joyce Kilmer’s medita- tion on the mysteries of natural fire. 

A paradox: Forests don’t burn. Fire is a chemical, not a physical, reac- tion, caused by extreme heat acting as a catalyst for what we call “burning.” (Wood is actually a chemistry set: on average 50% carbon, 42% oxygen, 6% hydro- gen, 1% nitrogen, and 1% oth- er elements. Externally, fire is ox- ygen, combustible oxidation and, of course, high heat.) The burned tree, three explains: “Sev- eral hundred significantly different chemical reactions are now going on [in a fire]. For example, a carbon at- om and four hydrogens atoms … may lock together and form methane, natu- ral gas … If two carbon atoms hap- pen to come out of the wood, then two hydrogen atoms, they are, aggregate- ly, ethane … Three carbons and eight hydrogens form propane. Four carbons and ten hydrogens - butane, 5 carbons - pentane, 6 - hexane - 7 - heptane, eight hydro- gens, octane. Pentane, hexane, heptane, and octane have a collective name. Log burning in a fireplace are making and burning gas- oline. 

A second paradox is that the preferred preventive of forest fires is, oddly, fire, called “controlled burns”: deliberate- ly set to prevent raging conflagrations by consuming young, weak, tender limbs and debris, and eliminating harmful insects and invasive plants, returning nutri- ents to the soil, and opening sunlight to- wards for young trees and other plants. 

The US Forest Service and some states once banned controlled burning, believing that fire would destroy forest regeneration. Only in the past two decades have we come to understand the important role that controlled burns play in maintaining healthy ecosystems. Now, controlled burns are increasingly being used as a tool to manage forests and enhance wildlife habitat. 

Burning is a chemical reaction that releases energy in the form of heat. The energy released during burning is what we call “burning.” The energy released during burning is what we call “burning.” The energy released during burning is what we call “burning.” The energy released during burning is what we call “burning.”

Footnotes 
4. “Fire in the Frame,” Mazzeo.) would permit controlled burns of up to 60,000 acres a year, including in the forested Highlands Region, and could release hundreds of millions of tons of climate-changing carbon diox- ide into the atmosphere 
5. A second bill, vaguely worded, would permit logging on all public forests of more than 25 acres, including Wilder- ness Areas, Natural Heritage Sites, and areas with threatened or endangered species, as well as non-profit and mu- nicipal lands. It does not consider bio- diversity, climate impacts or water pollution. Controlled burns could be more of clear-cutting; and the use of tree skid- ders (front-loaders) that destroy the forest. 
6. Pine Barrens: Ecosystem and 
7. Highlands Council Needs Members 
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10 Year Average to Date,” https://www.nifc.gov/fireinfo/cfrm.htm. Also “Many missing from 1891 to 2020,” various newspapers. 
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The Jersey Sierra Club thanks Governor Murphy for vetoing, on May 5, A4810 (Pinkin) / S4811 (Oroho), a bill that could have weakened regulations governing environmental, health, and worker safety. Sponsoring in the Assembly by the Democ- rats Mary Pinkin and in the Senate by the Republican Steven Oroho, with twelve Democrats and eight Republicans joining them as cosponsors, the bill would have authorized the creation of a Government Efficiency and Regulatory Review Com- mission charged with assuring regulatory flexibility. We think this is code for let- ting polluters and corporations circumvent DEP rules and standards. It is shameful that the current Democratic Legislature passed the bill with wide support: Assem- bly 72-1; Senate 35-0.

Under the Pinkin–Oroho bill, the Office of the Government Efficiency and Reg- ulation Review Commission would have been housed in the Office of the Gover- nor. Its membership would have been tightly controlled: representatives from the Governor’s Office, the State Legislature, the DEP, the Dept. of Labor and Workforce Development, the Office of Innovation, and the New Jersey Business Action Cen- ter. The Commission was to submit an annual report to the Governor with recom- mendations to repeal, rescind, or amend any rules, regulations, or Executive Or- ders that might burden New Jersey’s businesses, workers, and local governments.

Designed to help advance conservative, pro-corporate priorities, this bill, like other proposals recently considered, continues the pattern of deconcentrating the public interest, empowering an entrenched environmental justice, health protections, and worker safety regulations. This is disturbing for many reasons. It would have had no place for scientific studies linking ex- posure to air pollution and construction of viral and other deadly diseases—central to issues that would enable people to return to work after the coronavirus pan- demic. We could have seen it recommending the privatization of parks, reducing the “hassle” of permit applications and concern with pollution, and weakening state siting certification requirements.

While we won this battle, we must remain vigilant, since conservative activists pay court to the Legislature and continue to wage their wars. Governor Murphy correctly vetoed this bill.

**BPU Solar Proposal Will Let the Sun In**

The New Jersey Sierra Club has submitted comments to the Board of Public Utili- ties (BPU) on its Solar Successor Program: a “bifurcated incentive program struc- ture for behind-the-meter, community solar, and grid supply solar projects.” NJ’s solar program has been in the shade for the last few years, because the BPU limited the number of permitted projects. This new expanded program will let the sun in. It now proposes to triple the amount of solar in New Jersey, allowing 900 MW per year, up from 300 MW, and allowing grid-scale, net metering, and com- munity solar. We will move away from SRECs, which is important.

The competitive solicitation process will be divided into tranches, enabling cost- based competition among similar solar projects, and substantial project maturity requirements to minimize failure rates. We expect the program will continue to prioritize old landfills and brownfields for solar installations. We also urge continu- ing support for residential projects despite competition with larger projects.

The proposal includes a fixed employment program for behind-the-meter projects of 2 MW or less, which includes net metering and community solar projects. We would like to see the amount of allowed solar expanded. We think that community solar project size should be increased to at least 5 MW. Net metering should also be increased, to at least 15 MW.

The Legislature and the BPU are both considering a proposal that would allow out-of-state developers to receive subsidies to build grid-scale solar projects. Al- though this would lower ratepayer costs, it would mean that jobs and other bene- fits would be lost from New Jersey.

This is a first step toward fixing New Jersey’s solar program. The BPU should keep its eyes on our state goal of 32.2 GW by 2050, called for by the Energy Master Plan. But it must go beyond the current level of 32 MW to 280 MW. This will help move large-scale solar projects forward. But the state needs to do more. The cost cap has held us back; we should be getting rid of it.

**BPU's Nuclear Subsidy Hurts Ratepayers & Renewable Energy**

New Jersey’s Board of Public Utilities has just renewed its award of Zero Emis- sion Certificates for the Hope Creek, Salem Unit 1, and Salem Unit 2 nuclear power plants – for the period June 2022 through May 2025. The cost to New Jersey rate- payers will be $300 million a year. something like $75 per family.

According to reports completed by Levitan & Associates, PSEG may not need the full $300 million that it requested. But BPU staff think that the three Salem County plants will still not be profitable even with the subsidies.

Governor Murphy talks about these nuclear plants running until at least 2050, so these subsidies could continue until then. Perhaps he cares more about PSEG’s shareholders than the people of New Jersey. According to an IEEP tax report, PSEG made almost $18 billion in profits in 2018 on nuclear plants alone. It will make only 18% more by 2025 than it did in 2018, far more than the classical 6% that we learned in school is appropriate to natural public service mo- nopolies. PSEG paid zero in federal taxes, and threatened to close the nuclear pow- er plants if the subsidies weren’t awarded. Perhaps PSEG stands for Public Subsidy Excessive Growth.

We think this subsidy is unneeded. It will divert money from offshore wind, so- lar, and energy efficiency programs. It will compromise our goal of 100% renew- able energy for many reasons. It would have had no place for scientific studies linking ex- posure to air pollution and construction of viral and other deadly diseases—central to issues that would enable people to return to work after the coronavirus pan- demic. We could have seen it recommending the privatization of parks, reducing the “hassle” of permit applications and concern with pollution, and weakening state siting certification requirements.

While we won this battle, we must remain vigilant, since conservative activists pay court to the Legislature and continue to wage their wars. Governor Murphy correctly vetoed this bill.

**NJ Should Leverage Biden’s Infrastructure Plan by Doing More for Ourselves**

President Biden’s recently announced $2 trillion infrastructure package would include $621 billion for transportation, $650 billion for affordable housing, schools, water infrastructure, and broadband, and $300 billion for research, de- velopment and manufacturing.

That’s good news for New Jersey, but we must step up our efforts to take full ad- vantage of this windfall. The plan includes $80 billion for Amtrak repairs, which we hope will help pay for the $30 billion Gateway Program: new rail tunnels under the Hudson River in- to New York, repairing the 111-year-old tunnels, replacing the Portal Bridge, and constructing the Bergen Loop in Secaucus.

The state’s launch list also includes converting the diesel bus fleet to electric, extending the Hudson–Bergen Light Rail Line, and electrifying South Jersey’s light rail RiverLine.

But New Jersey is also proposing some unnecessary projects: widening the New Jersey Turnpike and Garden State Parkway, which will just create more pollution along its corridors, including impacts on adjacent residential neighborhoods. The Sierra Club’s position is that we should first fix existing infrastructure. This is compatible with Biden’s plan, which includes $650 billion for American homes, school buildings, water infrastructure, and broadband expansion; $213 billion to build, preserve and retrofit more than two million affordable homes and buildings; $121 billion to solve a seriously health problem by replacing lead water pipes and service lines; and $100 billion for constructing or modernizing public schools.

As if to snub his nose at President Biden, New Jersey Gov. Murphy is trying to hijack $40 million from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund at a time when many people are in danger of losing their homes for defaulting on rent payments during the pandemic. And New Jersey has failed to come up with any real plans or fund- ing to solve the problem of lead water pipes.

Biden’s offshore wind plan proposes 30 GW of offshore energy by 2030, which will include designation of “Wind Energy Areas” of nearly 800,000 acres of the coast of New Jersey and New York, plus $3 billion in loan guarantees for offshore wind projects. He also wants to offer tax credits for building renewable ener- gy manufacturing facilities like the wind facility in Paulsboro, which could create more jobs while expanding renewable energy.

But New Jersey must not rely on the President to do our jobs for us. We must do more ourselves to support offshore wind and other energy projects, while reducing climate impacts and jumpstarting our economy after COVID.
Exposing Misleading Climate Reports from Devious Business Groups

From a Press Release issued on March 8th, and edited by Tony Hagen

Further to the story on the DEP’s PACT program (see article on p. 4), two business groups are challenging the proposed new rules, which would cut greenhouse gas emissions and prepare for sea-level rise, extreme weather, and chronic flooding in New Jersey.

The New Jersey Business and Industry Association (NJBIA) and the Commerce and Industry Association of New Jersey (CIANJ), in a report falsely alleges that the DEP used unreliable data from Rutgers to determine risks from ocean-level rise.

The business-group report, prepared by Climate Forecast Applications Network (CFAN), is based on incorrect assumptions about sea-level rise. CFAN based its assertions on average global sea-rise projections and failed to take into account that sea-level is rising faster in New Jersey, owing partly to land subsidence.

In fact, a peer-reviewed study published in Nature Communications in March 2021 reported that sea level rose along the US Atlantic Coast was fastest in Southern New Jersey, where in the 20th century ocean rise was 0.63 inches per decade. The study noted significant marsh habitat destruction by advancing seas at the Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge, just north of Atlantic City.

NJBIA, in announcing the CFAN report, called for a go-slow approach to flood preparations that would set “no more than a 2-foot sea-level rise projection for regulatory purposes.” However, Rutgers in a 2019 climate report predicted an upper-range estimate of 2.1 feet for sea-level rise by 2050, based on emissions scenario, and up to 3.5 feet by 2070. Rutgers found that potential sea-level rise by 2070 would impact 389,000 people and $810 billion of property.

NJBIA and CIANJ contend the state is looking too far ahead in its planning, and is consulting the wrong sources of information. Actually, many New Jersey communities are taking a low-threshold very seriously. Hoboken, which suffered a 7-foot storm surge during Hurricane Sandy in 2012, announced on May 6 the commencement of a $230 million project to build sea walls and other structures to protect the city against future flooding. Meanwhile, the Army Corps of Engineers is contemplating building a six-mile-long sea wall across Lower New York Bay - to protect the New York-New Jersey metropolitan area, among other actions.

Climate reports have been issued for 20 years now, which is why we have the Global Warming Response Act (planned reduction of NJ emissions to 80% of 2006 levels by 2050) and the PACT process. The reports indicate that things are worse and happening more quickly than we originally thought. This past year we saw many other reports from top scientists about climate change, land use, and sea-level rise in New Jersey. These included reports from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, First Street Foundation (FSF), and the DEP itself.

The FSF report, in February 2021, predicted $425.4 million in flood damages this year to a group of 94,000 homes in New Jersey that are at “substantial” risk of flooding.

This is the third resurrection of NESE, as if in a horror movie. We hope FERC will turn it down, but there are other ways of stopping it. For example, New York denied a 401 Water Quality Certificate for the Constitution Pipeline, for impacts on water quality and aquatic life, and was upheld in federal court.

Over the years there has been major opposition from towns in Monmouth and Middlesex Counties. In 2019 a coalition of groups, including the NJ Sierra Club, gathered more than 10,000 signatures asking the DEP to deny Transco’s pipeline and compressor station.

EPA Moves Forward With Bans on PBT Chemicals

From a Press Release issued on March 9th, and edited by Tony Hagen

Persistent, bioaccumulative and toxic (PBT) chemicals are those that build up over time in the environment and pose serious health risks to exposed populations, such as workers, subsistence fishermen, Native American tribes, and children, among others. In March, 2021, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) opened a 60–day comment period for the public to provide input on final rules for five PBTs under the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA). There are already 16 PBT chemical categories subject to Toxics Release Inventory reporting, including dioxins, lead, mercury, and PCBs.

These chemicals cause cancer, kidney malfunctions, learning disabilities, and many other serious health problems. The rules, if implemented, would help to reduce the amount of these toxic agents that get released into the environment.

Under the proposed rules, manufacturing, processing, and importing of deca-bromodiphenyl ether, a flame retardant, would be prohibited. Also, processing of phenol isopropylphosphatase, a substance used to make food packaging flexible and as a flame retardant, would be banned.

Additionally, restrictions would be imposed on the use of 2,4,6- tri-tert-butyphenol, a widely used antioxidant for jet, automotive, and marine fuels. Manufacturing, processing, and distributing of hexachlorobutadiene, which is linked to liver and nervous system damage, would be banned. The same would go for pentachlorophenol, which is used to make rubber less viscous during manufacturing

The Sierra Club applauds the EPA under the Biden Administration for advancing protections against these five toxins. Public comment was accepted in docket EPA–HQ–OPPT–2021–0202 on www.regulations.gov, and further information can be found:

Prohibitions on the use and manufacture of these agents are especially important in New Jersey because we have major problems with PBTs, including lead, PCBs, and dioxins.

NJ Sierra Club Endorses Green Amendment

From a Press Release issued on March 16th

The Sierra Club’s New Jersey Chapter supports the New Jersey Green Amendment. On March 13, our Executive Committee passed a resolution to endorse a change to the NJ Constitution.

The proposed amendment states, in part, that “Every person has a right to a clean and healthy environment, including pure water, clean air and soil and ecologically healthy habitats, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic, and aesthetic qualities of the environment. The State shall not infringe upon these rights, by action or inaction.”

The amendment would also require the State to preserve public natural resources and prevent the destruction or damaging of public natural resources.

Richard Isaac, our Chapter Chair, said, “This amendment will provide one more tool for preserving and providing equal access to clean air, water and soil. It will also help us meet the looming climate change crisis. Lending our support to the campaign for the Green Amendment is a no-brainer.”

“Our resolution sends a powerful message to the NJ Legislature to pass this amendment, allowing the people of NJ to make the ultimate decision of whether their right to a healthy environment should be constitutionally protected,” said Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper and founder of the organization Green Amendment For The Generations, which seeks to advance constitutional environmental rights nationally.

“New Jersey is on the forefront of this national movement to constitutionally and equitably protect the environmental rights of all Americans.”

Green Amendments have been in place in Pennsylvania and Montana since the early 1970’s. The idea is gaining traction in other states including New Mexico, New York, West Virginia, Maryland and Hawai’i. These amendments give environmental rights a higher level of authority and permanence, and can be used to counteract anti-environmental legislation. Pennsylvania’s version has been used twice, in 2013 and 2017; first, to allow communities to bar hydraulic fracturing or “fracking,” and last year to avert the state’s guidance to spend revenue derived from leasing state forestland for fracking.

The Green Amendment was introduced into the Legislature in 2018; we supported it at that time. The Delaware Riverkeeper Network promoted the measure and helped get it reintroduced in the 2020 legislative session. It currently has 42 sponsors in the Assembly and 12 in the State Senate. Passage would require 48 votes in the Assembly, and 24 in the Senate. If passed, it would then face a referendum at the next state election. A majority vote would add the amendment to the New Jersey Constitution.

The bill numbers are SCR 30 in the NJ Senate, and ACR 80 in the Assembly. To take action, voters can write, e-mail or call their representatives in the NJ Legislature.
**REPORT FROM TRENTON**

**Shawn LaTourette Named NJ’s DEP Commissioner**

*From a Press Release issued on April 14, and edited by George Moffatt*

Shawn LaTourette has been named Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) by Gov. Murphy, after serving as Acting Commissioner and as the DEP’s Chief of Staff.

He has proven himself to be sharp politically, working effectively on many important issues in his two years with the DEP. But the Sierra Club have not seen eye-to-eye on a number of issues because they involve companies that he has represented;

He didn’t fully answer, during his confirmation hearings, questions about moratoriums on fossil fuels, even in heavily polluted Environmental Justice communities;

The Sierra Club has disagreed with him on many issues: logging on Sparta Mountain, burning CF, at the Rahway Incinerator, streamlining permits, regulating CO₂, meeting the IPCC climate change goal of 45% reductions by 2030; stopping horizontal directional drilling in fracking, and allowing developers to ‘build at your own risk’ in high-risk flood zones.

LaTourette is familiar with the many serious environmental problems he now faces and, as DEP Commissioner, can exercise more leeway in his new executive capacity: to craft and enforce environmental rules and laws. And, in their executive and regulatory positions, both he and Gov. Murphy must move faster on all environmental fronts; especially, to integrate climate change and Environmental Justice rules into all state regulations.

They must also reverse former Gov. Christie’s disastrous DEP staff and budget cutbacks and regulatory rollbacks, and modernize the DEP to provide Environmental Justice, reverse climate change, and switch to renewable energy and fossil-free fuels.

The Sierra Club’s New Jersey Chapter wishes him success in his new position and looks forward to working with him on the State’s thorny environmental problems.

**REPORT FROM TRENTON**

**Collapsing I-295 Retaining Wall Suggests DOT Misdirection**

*From a Press Release issued on April 5th, and edited by George Moffatt*

When a retaining wall on highway I-295 collapsed in Bellmawr (Camden Co) in March, it was an excellent metaphor for the NJ Department of Transportation’s (DOT’s) quixotic quest for more and more highway pollution, rather than developing mass transit systems.

The rubble is part of the $800 million Direct Connection project being built by South State General Contractors for the DOT interchange between Routes I-295, NJ-42, and I-76.

The Sierra Club regards the collapsing wall is an embarrassing example of the state’s overemphasis on highways construction, which includes the $16 billion earmarked to add new lanes to the NJ Turnpike and GS Parkway. Instead, DOT should be spending taxpayers’ money to motivate the switch from cars to efficient and pollution-free mass transit alternatives, such as an electrified South Jersey Light Rail Line, and replacing diesel buses with electric buses in urban areas such as Camden.

**REPORT FROM TRENTON**

**DRBC Moves toward a Full Ban on Fracking**

*Edited from a press release issued on Feb 25th, by Irene Gravna*

On February 25, the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) approved “Proposed Amendments to the Administrative Manual and Special Regulations Regarding Hydraulic Fracturing Activities.” They include the prohibition of high-volume hydraulic fracturing in shale and other rock formations; provisions related to water use for hydraulic fracturing; and provisions related to the management of water waste generated by hydraulic fracturing. The culmination of 15 years of negotiations, this historic vote is a first step toward a full ban on all fracking activities in the Delaware River Basin. There is still much work to be done.

The DRBC also adopted “Resolution 2021-02,” which institutes a comment period and public hearings on a comprehensive ban that would address such issues as the importation of fracking wastewater and the export of water for fracking. We must help them by participating in public hearings and guaranteeing that they achieve their goals.

We must insist that the ban include regulations that protect all regional aquifers and waterways. Fracking contaminates millions of gallons of water with toxic chemicals: volatile organics including benzene, methyl benzene, and formaldehyde, which pose significant immediate and long-term risks. Many are carcinogenic.

Additionally, the DRBC should forbid fracking companies from depositing waste in the Watershed. Fracking wastewater contains as many as 600 different toxic chemicals, which would pollute land as well as drinking water. With fewer places to dump the waste, fracking might have to be banned nationwide. Importantly, this ban will not be built to transport gas to markets, thus protecting both land and water.

We hope the DRBC will take further steps to achieve a comprehensive ban on fracking. Four years ago Gov. Murphy proposed a full ban, and in 2018 he signed a letter with Governors Carney and Wolf advocating a full ban. We will help them to keep their word.

The Delaware River supplies clean drinking water to more than 15 million people. Its Basin covers 13,000 square miles of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, and New York, including forests, open space, and waterways that provide habitat for hundreds of wildlife species. We applaud the DRBC for wishing to preserve what they consider “the exceptionally high scenic, recreational, ecological, and/or water supplies of the past few years.” We thank the governors for their latest votes, and ask them to pursue a complete ban: to safeguard the Delaware River Basin for future generations.

**REPORT FROM TRENTON**

**Worthington Colliers MWA Land Swap**

*Edited from a press release issued on April 23rd*

Our Sierra Club Chapter has formally asked the DEP to reject a land exchange with the Central Jersey Rifle and Pistol Club. The proposed swap would transfer approximately 41 acres of land that the DEP owns in Jackson Twp, Ocean Co, for approximately 87 acres of land owned by the Gun Club in Upper Freehold Twp.

This would be a bad deal for New Jersey and for open space: the state-owned property has already been badly polluted by the Gun Club, such that transferring it would absolve the Gun Club from having to remediate it. The State would take ownership of a less valuable property. Worse: the land swap would deny public access to what is now a public road.

The Colliers Mills WMA is currently contaminated by lead from the Gun Club’s bullets and spent ammunition, which is running off into C1 streams, leaching into the soil, and poisoning wildlife. The noise from the gun range also impacts people hiking and enjoying the wildlife refuge.

The property owned by the Gun Club and proposed for conveyance to the DEP is next to the Pleasant Run WMA. It was purchased in February, 2019, for $2,652 per acre. According to the Proposed Land Exchange Report, the Club’s land is valued at $2,652 per acre, while the DEP’s land is valued at $3,500 per acre.

We are also concerned that the contract doesn’t include a conservation easement or a stipulation to prevent development. Other land deals, such as involving Laurel Mountain, have included language to preserve the property for conservation or recreational purposes. We smell a red herring!

New Jersey currently permits 22 guns ranges to operate on state property. There are more of them on County, Green Acres, and other public lands. Some of them have major contamination issues. The EPA intervened to fine Bergen County for permitting lead contamination of the Ramapo River. In Ringwood, the soil at Thun- der Mountain Skeet Range, within Ringwood State Park, had extremely high levels of lead, arsenic, hydrocarbons, and other toxic chemicals from skeet shooting.

There’s an electronic Chapter Alert Service for Environmental Action. Sign up at: https://tinyurl.com/NJSC-emailsub. Also an e-mail updates signup: https://tinyurl.com/NJSC-emailsub.
REPORT FROM TRENTON

US EPA Administrator Michael Regan announced that he is dismissing 40 Trump appointees from the EPA’s Science Advisory Board and the Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee. Many of them are corporate lobbyists.

Shouldn’t Gov. Murphy do the same thing in New Jersey? Ex-Gov. Christie stacked NJ-DEP’s Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) with polluters and developers, but Murphy hasn’t replaced them yet. The Sierra Club asserts that this Board should include real scientists – for real transparency and to hold the state accountable. Murphy has been in office for almost four years. He should end Christie’s war on science.

The SAB advises the DEP Commissioner on issues that impact public health and environmental protection. It includes four committees that consider Climate and Atmospheric Sciences, Ecological Processes, Public Health, and Water Quality and Quantity. Its current members include John Gannon and Gerald Kennedy from DuPont Corporation, John Dysken from United Water, Paul Bovitz from Weston, and Tom Amidon from Kleinfelder. All five have terms expiring this year.

Consider that the State is currently suing DuPont over PFAS and other contaminants. DuPont has at least nine major toxic sites in NJ; its executives shouldn’t be on an advisory board that advises measures to protect clean air and water, and clean up toxic sites.

REPORT FROM TRENTON

Praising the N.J. Brownfield Incentive Program

From a Press Release issued on February 8th

In Mill One, Hamilton Twp, Gov. Murphy held a press conference highlighting New Jersey’s program to reclaim, redevelop, and revitalize our brownfield sites. He noted two programs in the works: first a $15 million brownfield loan program. Applicants can apply for $100,000 - $5 million per site for revitalization, assessment, investigation, cleanup and demolition. The second program is the Brownfield Redevelopment Incentive: providing $50 million per year in tax credits for brownfield projects. Each project can qualify for $2 million in tax credits.

Mill One is an example of how an abandoned building can be redeveloped and leased to companies and organizations. There are solar panels on the roof. One tenant is Isles, a community development and environmental organization based in Trenton, with the mission of fostering self-reliant families and healthy, sustainable communities.

Another example is Woodbridge Waterfront Park: the site was contaminated and unused for many years. Designation as a brownfield resulted in remediation that includes restoration of natural wetland habitat. It is destined now to be a recreation area with direct public access to the Raritan River from Woodbridge. This includes walking trails, birding opportunities, and use by educators and students.

The money for these brownfield incentives comes from the corporate business tax dedication for environmental programs that the Sierra Club helped to pass in the late 1990s. We regret that, for most of the intervening years, the money from that tax dedication has been diverted to salaries for DEP staff and other uses like fixing of parks.

REPORT FROM TRENTON

USFWS Expanding Supawna Meadows National Wildlife Refuge

From a Press Release issued on February 8th

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service hopes to expand the Supawna Meadows National Wildlife Refuge (SMNWR) in Salem County, with the acquisition of a 182-acre privately-owned parcel of undeveloped wetlands and marsh that is adjacent to the Refuge. The SMNWR was established in 1972 and includes 3016 acres of wildlife habitat encompassing tidal waters and marsh, grassland, shrubland, and forest.

Expanding this Wildlife Refuge is critical. It provides a stopover and year-round home for many kinds of birds, including ospreys, bald eagles and a variety of ducks, and mammals including mink and otter. There are many important native plant species within the SMNWR; it also is a breeding ground for fish, and it protects important habitat encompassing tidal waters and marsh, grassland, shrubland, and forest.

The acquisition would mark a changing tide for the refuge. In 2006, Wal-Mart Realty applied to build a 220,000-square-foot supermarket on a 79-acre farm adjacent to the Refuge. The project would have added 23 acres of impervious surface, increasing stormwater runoff. The developer withdrew the application in 2008 after facing opposition from us and from other local and environmental groups; instead, the farm was added to the Wildlife Refuge.

New Jersey now has five National Wildlife Refuges: the SMNWR, the Cape May National Wildlife Refuge, the Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge (Atlantic, Burlington & Ocean Cos), the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge (Morrisk County), and the Wallkill River National Wildlife Refuge (Passaic & Sussex Cos).

For more detailed information about the SMNWR, click here.

REPORT FROM TRENTON

Electric Solutions for Newark

From a Press Release issued on February 8th

In Newark's Ironbound Community is a Biogas Solution for Newark

By Bushra Afare of our North Jersey Group. Written for a college course. Received April 26th

Biogas is an energy-rich product of decomposed organic matter. It consists mostly of methane and carbon oxides, CO and CO2. Sources include sludge from wastewater treatment plants, municipal solid waste in landfills, and manure. In New Jersey it is considered a renewable energy fuel, such that bio-gas generation projects are encouraged through incentives and tax subsidies.

New Jersey’s Ironbound Community is especially rich in biogas potential, since the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission (PVSC) operates nearby one of the largest wastewater treatment plants in the East, treating 250 million gallons per day, and landfilling the sludge on site. Also nearby is the Covanta waste incineration plant that has been burning air pollutants into the community for many years.

Recently, Tennessee-based Aries Clean Technologies Co. proposed to build a plant in Newark that would convert the sewage sludge to biochar, for use as a concrete thickener or fertilizer. The process would contribute an additional source of pollution in the already EJ-burdened communities of Newark.

Also, the PVSC has proposed to build a natural gas power plant (34 MW) to provide emergency electricity in disasters such as hurricanes or flooding, for which it has been awarded approximately $150 million by FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency. However, new Environmental Justice legislation, and New Jersey’s recent greenhouse gas reduction plan, not to mention community objections, might hinder both proposals.

I would like to suggest a biogas alternative to both projects mentioned above, whereby the PVSC installs anaerobic sludge digesters, and uses the biogas to satisfy a portion of its energy needs. Anaerobic digesters can also handle food scraps added to the sludge, enhancing the efficiency of the digestion process, increasing the amount of biogas generated, and encouraging compliance with NJ’s newly-signed Food Waste Recycling Bill. The neighboring landfills can also supply biogas collected from decomposing garbage, preventing its current release to the atmosphere and contribution to global warming.

[Notes from reviewer-members of our Editorial Board: “Although NJ considers biogas a renewable form of energy, it’s not necessarily good for the environment or for climate warming.” “Biogas is a dirty fuel with lots of particulates -- dirtier than fracked gas, and mostly made from animal waste and sewage sludge, as in the Aries plant in Newark. There are major environmental racism issues associated with its creation and use. The Sierra Club’s national policy opposes biogas.”]