Pipeline Victory

By Greg Gorman (ggorman07419@embarqmail.com)

On May 15, the NJDEP effectively killed the NESE pipeline by ruling that Transco had failed to demonstrate a need for it.

NESE is (was!) the Northeast Supply Enhancement Project: a natural gas pipeline from tracking sources in Pennsylvania, across central New Jersey and under Raritan and Lower New York Bays to a terminal off Queens to supply natural gas to New York City.

Earlier this year, New York had also denied the water certification Transco needed to dig under Raritan Bay, saying that the gas from the proposed pipeline was no longer needed, by National Grid’s own admission. National Grid, which would have bought the gas that Transco could not sell to other utilities including existing infrastructure could now manage New York City’s needs.

So after four years of protests, letters, alliances with other environmental groups, political mobilization and sheer will, this pipeline is dead. Except for any

Conservation Chair’s Report

Economic Stimulus Following Covid-19

By Greg Gorman (ggorman07419@embarqmail.com)

As a nation we face three converging crises: the Covid-19 pandemic, its resulting economic depression; the climate emergency; and extreme inequality. These are the opening words of a Green Stimulus Plan, calling for spending at least $2 trillion on millions of green jobs and strategic investments. Another proposal, Five Principles for Just Covid-19 Recovery (13-16), calls for public investments to rebuild our infrastructure, replace lead pipes, expand wind and solar power, build clean and affordable public transit, weatherize our buildings, build and repair public housing, manufacture and deliver medical supplies, preserve our wetlands and forests, expand public services that support climate resilience, and support the moral and physical health of families. (2)

The International Energy Agency advocates putting clean energy at the heart of Covid-19 stimulus plans, and taking the opportunity to lower or eliminate fossil fuel subsidies. (3) Governor Murphy’s Covid-19 recovery commission is charged with suggesting priorities for investments to allow the state’s economy to both rebound and be positioned for long-term success. (4)

By improving public transportation, modernizing our roads, and as suggested above, New Jersey could accelerate reaching its Energy Master Plan goals, improve economic growth, and provide environmental justice.

So, what’s the story? That fossil fuel air pollution correlates with Covid-19 infection rates? (5) Air pollution and obesity are risk factors for susceptibility to Covid-19 infection. (6) NASA photographs for March, 2020, show that air pollution was significantly lower in major cities, and that nitrogen oxides from light trucks and methane leaking from compressor stations and pipelines.

We should place a moratorium on fossil fuel projects and focus on developing energy parks combining active recreation with community solar and storage. Instead of expanding highways, we should develop mass transit and walkable communities.

New Jersey needs to identify and reduce the climate stressors that increase coastal and riverine flood risk, change growing seasons, and affect our biota on land and sea. That is the obligation of every energy plan needs to build social resiliency. We should build microgrids and improve transportation networks in a state that is already fully developed. Community planning, building codes and home rehabilitation projects need to be upgraded to maximize energy efficiency and storm water control. All lead pipes should be replaced.

NJ should focus its investment strategy on transitioning to clean energy, and including active networks. Societal benefits will include reduction in health costs and traffic congestion, generating millions of jobs in savings. The economic recovery from the pandemic should be a springboard to Protect, Restore, and Enjoy Our Planet.

Citations:
1) https://medium.com/@green_stimul_...-buildour-economy-1e7030a19e8e
2) This site’s database of policy initiatives is available online.
3) NJDEP: “The 2020 Report from Trenton: Vital Aftermath: Phil Murphy’s Road Back Plan Must Be Green”
4) Report from a press release issued on April 27, and edited by Tony Hagen

Gov. Phil Murphy’s Road Back Plan, unveiled on April 27, details how New Jersey will reopen amid the still-present coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19). It calls for efforts to sustain new case reductions, expand testing, trace contacts of infected individuals, improve isolation measures, invigorate the economy, and ensure resilience. Murphy should also push for a green agenda. We have seen the clean air benefits of people driving less. These support the case for incorporating mass transit, renewable energy, electric vehicles, energy efficiency and jobs, and lowering New Jersey’s comeback plan. Now is the perfect time to steer toward reductions in population, cleaner air, water, and climate change interventions. In the zeal to reopen our economy, we must not fast-track permits or weaken standards. Murphy issued two Executive Orders in response to the pandemic: EO 10 intended to stop nonessential construction, but it doesn’t. Projects such as the NJ Turnpike and Garden State Parkway expansions, the Southern Reliability Link pipeline, the liquid natural gas port in Gibbstown, and major sprawl developments are still moving forward, and with our adequate public oversight and input. EO 127 extends the time available for adoption, rejection, or modification of recommended reports and decisions. EO 127’s failings are that it does not extend public comment periods, and there is danger that builders and developers will exploit it to obtain permit extensions. Both orders must be clarified and refined.

In response to Covid-19, major cities around the world have seen reductions of between 40% and 65%. By up to 66%, a significant improvement that without green initiatives will be lost as we recover from the pandemic. The American Lung Association’s 2020 “State of the Air” report found that, post-Covid-19, New Jersey’s major megalopolis areas continued to rank among the worst in the nation for outdoor smog. Our economic blueprint must become greener: as we recover from this pandemic, we must seize the opportunity for major changes in how we do business and protect our environment.

Inside This Issue...

As the crisis has unfolded, have I regularly asked myself what will we see after this pandemic? I’m afraid to think about the answer. It’s like a Jane Austen novel condensed this before. We know this story. It’s the world has not seen a global pandemic on the scale of the Covid-19 outbreak since the 1918 Spanish Flu. It certainly nothing like it has been seen here in the U.S. in our lifetimes. So why, as the crisis has unfolded, have I regularly had the notion that we’ve seen this all before? "Like deja vu all over again," as the immortal Yogi Berra once said.

After a few weeks of following the news, it finally struck me: We HAVE seen this before. We know this story. It’s the Climate Crisis: just a condensed version! It’s like a Jane Austen novel condensed into a telenovela. Or War and Peace – the Marvel Comics version. The coronavirus story is really much the same as the climate story. With one or two disturbing differences the coronavirus story has unfolded over days and weeks, whereas the climate crisis has unfolded over years and decades. The coronavirus threats to engulf us for months, even years, whereas climate threats to engulf us for generations – centuries. With the coronavirus crisis we all hope for some return to “normal,” or at least this before. We know this story. It’s the Climate Crisis: just a condensed version! It’s like a Jane Austen novel condensed into a telenovela. Or War and Peace – the Marvel Comics version. The coronavirus story is really much the same as the climate story. With one or two disturbing differences the coronavirus story has unfolded over days and weeks, whereas the climate crisis has unfolded over years and decades. The coronavirus threats to engulf us for months, even years, whereas climate threats to engulf us for generations—centuries. With the coronavirus crisis we all hope for some return to “normal,” or at least this before. We know this story. It’s the Climate Crisis: just a condensed version! It’s like a Jane Austen novel condensed into a telenovela. Or War and Peace – the Marvel Comics version. The coronavirus story is really much the same as the climate story. With one or two disturbing differences the coronavirus story has unfolded over days and weeks, whereas the climate crisis has unfolded over years and decades. The coronavirus threats to engulf us for months, even years, whereas climate threats to engulf us for generations—centuries. With the coronavirus crisis we all hope for some return to “normal,” or at least
The Sierra Club is pleased to announce our endorsement of Cory Booker in his re-election campaign. Cory Booker has been a steadfast supporter of environmental and social justice issues since becoming our Newark, New Jersey, political leader. We believe he is the candidate who can best bring about a bill that requires federal agencies to address the disproportionate impact of environmental and health impacts on communities of color, indigenous communities, and low-income communities resulting from agencies’ programs and policies. In addition, he is a strong proponent of federal lands, co-sponsoring legislation to fund the backcountry of our national parks and retaining a strong Antiquities Act that will provide greater protection to our nation’s monuments that protect natural and cultural resources. From 2015 to 2018 Booker maintained a consistent position on the League of Conservation Voters, and only declined in 2019 because of missing votes during his presidential campaign. The Sierra Club is proud to give its support to Cory Booker for re-election.

In other news, 2020 is going to be an election like no other. Not only do we have a historic presidential race, but we have an environmentally-hostile President in our history, but we need to protect the environment. It is crucial that we work together to fight for clean air and water and protect the environment. It is important that we vote in this election and support candidates who share our values.

The reports were prepared by two students at Rutgers-Bloomsburg School of Planning and Public Policy: Matt Bewley and Jordan Malinowski. Matt and Jordan were hired under a grant from the Transportation Consultant, and me, as Chair of our Transportation Committee. Matt and Jordan have written this report from the National Sierra Club’s “Clean Transportation for All” program.

The Sierra Club Transportation Committee endorses Cory Booker for re-election. Our second report takes a deep dive into the process of helping you use a computer and mobile apps to find your way, including non-NJ Transit bus services run by other agencies in New Jersey. The Sierra Club is proud to give its support to Cory Booker for re-election.

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The Frequent Service Study identified an additional 16 corridors that could be included in the Frequent Service Program. Our second report takes a deep dive into the process of helping you use a computer and mobile apps to find your way, including non-NJ Transit bus services run by other agencies in New Jersey. The Sierra Club is proud to give its support to Cory Booker for re-election.

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The Sierra Club was founded in California by conservationists intent on preserving Western wilderness, and offering an environmental perspective on the beauty and other majesties of California’s High Sierras. The territory quickly spread to the other Western states, and eventually to wilderness such as New Jersey’s Delaware Water Gap, Pinelands, Highlands, Great Swamp, shore areas, and Monmouth County’s Atlantic City. On the other hand, we added protection of the planet against despoliation by air, water and soil pollutants. Then came energy, with the realization of the probable environmental consequences of Global Warming, especially motivated by the campaigning of Al Gore. In the last 20 years, finally, we added Environmental Justice as a core issue, a logical extension of our concern for the harms of pollution. But there is definitely an interface between Environmental Justice: to what extent does it encompass the right of poor people to live in clean air and water?

Yes, low income people are stuck with the dregs of housing opportunity, a consequence of residential segregation; in which money buys the best places to live. And low income people are disproportionately African-American and Hispanic, but also immigrants and just low income. Local and state governments are crowded in their communities, compared to suburban Americans (the majority!), what would we do if we had to use the use of suburban open space for affordable housing. And from a planning perspective any creation of dense houses, which is an affordable and ALL housing be “densified”; nudged into transit villages that enable public and right rail public trans- portation, and preserve our limited remaining open space. It’s politics is the Art of the Possible. It’s interesting that the current coronavirus pandemic and upemployment may be changing the political clime, i.e. the “Possible,” in the direction of what might be called Democratic Socialism: the acceptance of a universal right to health care, a universal basic income, and the understanding that race and class and housing need to be fought at those issues. I think it appropriate for affordable hous- ing to be legislated rather than judged (to coin a new word). (That’s what legis- lators are for)

If any reasonable legislator would expect us to be able to estimate how much it would cost, and to propose which of our programs might cut in exchange (since higher taxes and increased debt are not politically “possible”).

But is it an environmental issue? Here’s the Chapter’s official pronouncement, approved at our annual meeting and share Membership Reports with our Chapter’s official pronouncement, approved at our annual meeting and Chapter Executive Committee and assist- ing per month (currently by video con -}

The Council of Club Leaders requests the [National Sierra Club Board of Directors] create a national conservation policy on affordable housing.

Approved by the New Jersey Chapter ExComm on May 9, 2020

Background Information:

The decades of planning committed to pro- tecting the natural environment, it is also dedicated to protecting the human environment. The question was simple: Where should the Club has historically been and continues to be com- mitted to the responsible use of the earth’s eco- systems and resources, its guiding organization- al principles include equity, inclusion, and jus- tice for all of humanity. Providing access to safe, affordable housing for everyone needing it is clearly a national priority.

Currently, while the Sierra Club does have National resolutions on the importance of affor- dable housing, it is buried in the Club’s Urban Infill policy where we may not find it, and there is such an acute shortage of safe, affordable housing in so many areas, that it seems that all issues is its own policy.

Affordable housing refers to housing affordable in urban communities, there is, to some degree, also a need for affordable housing in nonurban locations as well, since sub-

As I write this in late April, 2020, there are plenty of unknowns moving forward. It’s unclear at this time whether there will be a successful treatment for Covid-19 any time soon, or if vaccines are going to be reliable, safe, and effective vaccine is successfully tested, manufactured, distributed, and given to stop this new disease. Currently, there are also numer- ous questions about possible treatments and antibodies, how long the latter will provide protection. It’s also unclear what the state of this guidance — and this world’s — economy will be in. Even more importantly, it’s also unclear where the planet’s environ- mental health is headed, and whether humanity can substantially decrease its use of fossil fuel to avoid a climatic catas- trophe.

However, in the midst of all this uncer- tainty, I can say with certainty that the Sierra Club will keep moving forward, and that our New Jersey Chapter will be keeping forward as well. I can also say with certainty that we currently have an opening for Chapter Chair. Any member has the oppor- tunity for an individual who would like to serve as Chair and is willing to spend a large amount of volunteer time with simple membership questions and share Membership Reports with our National volunteer forum. Club members and/or other required, but utilize it to main-tain accurate membership data. Before leaving office, train a replace-ment.

Affordable Housing: issues that have environmental justice and social jus- tice concerns. There are numerous environmental issues that have the resources to have a position on all of them. Some might consider the existing national policy on urban infill as acceptable. The Club Chair acts as a bridge between the Chapter’s volun- teer leadership and our members at large, sharing membership reports with the Chapter Executive Committee and assist- ing members with simple membership questions and share Membership Reports with our National volunteer forum. Club members and/or other volunteers, and you are interested in learning more about this opportunity, please contact me at (H)

Editorial

Affordable Housing: an Environmental Issue

By Dick Cobly (dick.cobly@stjohns.edu)

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Chair’s Message

An Unclear Future and a Present Need

By Richard Isaac, Chair Chair (risaacs@sierraclub.org)

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Consequences of Global Warming, espe- cially the beauty and other majesties of California’s High Sierras. The territory quickly spread to the other Western states, and eventually to wilderness such as New Jersey’s Delaware Water Gap, Pinelands, Highlands, Great Swamp, shore areas, and Monmouth County’s Atlantic City. On the other hand, we added protection of the planet against despoliation by air, water and soil pollutants. Then came energy, with the realization of the probable environmental consequences of Global Warming, especially motivated by the campaigning of Al Gore. In the last 20 years, finally, we added Environmental Justice as a core issue, a logical extension of our concern for the harms of pollution. But there is definitely an interface between Environmental Justice: to what extent does it encompass the right of poor people to live in clean air and water?

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Eastern Bluebirds are declining in numbers so I decided to try to help them. Found only in North America, Bluebirds are long-lived birds noted for their bright colors and soft musical songs. A male Bluebird will put them in jeopardy when the introduced starlings and house sparrows competed with them for nests, but fortunately, they will accept artificial cavities. Many thousands of houses have been put up across the continent to help the Bluebird survive. With the help of Sierra Club member Laura Stone and the Rutgers Environmental Steward program, I decided to take on the challenge to help the birds.

I learned that nest building is not generally hardwired in birds but on each continent they have evolved their own unique pages. Bluebirds are adaptable species; they learn to feed the female. They placed the nest, built mostly by the female, in the box. It was loosely constructed cup of weeds, twigs and dry grass lined with finer grass and sometimes animal fur or feathers. They placed 4 to 5 eggs in a nest. When baby birds leave the nest they are full grown. Unfortunately, we never got that far because the house sparrows came. The bluebirds did their best to fight and defend their nest but when I checked I found the wrong egg - a brown speckled egg had been laid in the nest and the Bluebirds were gone. Sometimes they have two broods per year, sometimes three. And older babies help care for the new ones. I cleaned out the nest boxes and hopefully, more Bluebirds will come to use them.

Does my town, New Providence (Union Co), need 125 benches this year? Will it be more difficult to calculate how many benches, per year, would need to be assembled state wide? Yes, we should continue to convert bags into bags, but we should also agree that this is not a serious solution to the problem of the overuse of single use plastic bags. The plastic from the bags should not prevent towns from passing ordinances to ban plastic bags. The reality is that bags must be eliminated in order to prevent their negative impact on our environment.

COVID CORNER (Continued from page 3)

President Trump interrupts and silences the scientists who have the unequivocal job of joining his Daily Briefing. The New York Times update show “Ltys-tilmi, anyone? “A Chlorox and soda? We have seen him reasign Dr. Rick Bright, leader of the federal agency working toward a vaccine, because “he resisted efforts to fund potentially dangerous drugs promoted by those with political connections.” President Trump, the first time has ever even bothered to name a Science Advisor (other than Anthony Fauci and Ohio Health Department Dr. Amy Acton have earned public support for his honesty, but they provide a counterpoint because the version of “Stalinism”? Now, suddenly, we’re all in it together. Everyone’s health is only as secure as that of the clerk at the checkout counter or the minimum wage worker on the slaughterhouse production line. Will this new attitude stick? Time will tell. Perhaps more people will get to use the new kind of medicine.

New unlikely leaders have arisen out of the current crisis: scientists, politicians and everyday people. Will this new attitude stick? Time will tell. Perhaps more people will get to use the new kind of medicine.
New Jersey's forests play an important role in the fight against climate change. Forests have tremendous capacity to sequester atmospheric carbon dioxide and help combat the effects of climate change. However, threats such as logging, invasive species, and habitat destruction can negatively impact forest health and biodiversity. The state of New Jersey is currently considering a forestry management plan that includes practices such as "heavy thinning," which is damaging to many forest ecosystems.

Forests provide numerous ecosystem services, including carbon sequestration, water filtration, and habitat for wildlife. However, current forestry practices often result in fragmented forests and loss of biodiversity. The proposed plan for northern New Jersey's forest reserves is currently under consideration at the New Jersey Forest Management Area Plan. This plan includes activities such as "heavy thinning," which involves removing up to 60-65% of the trees from a stand, and disturbing native habitat.

The proposed plan's data tends to support the idea that "heavy thinning" will create one of the healthiest, most ecologically-balanced and diverse forests among the entire east coast forests. Yet, many groups that want to promote a healthy planet disagree on such a core issue.

There are some of the healthiest, most ecologically-balanced and diverse forests among the entire east coast forests, and supporting climate resilience by providing migration corridors for species that must shift their geographic ranges or face extinction. For women, transgender and gender diverse individuals, it is the key to climate change. Climate change is a universal human rights imperative, a global security threat, and a pervasive economic strain. Those women who are least responsible for this crisis, are the most threatened by its adverse impact. Climate equity focuses on divid- ing the burden of climate change while sharing the benefits of climate action. For women, transgender and gender nonconforming people, gender-based violence undermines the health and agency of its victims. With access to education, voluntary family planning, and freedom from violence, these communities are not only better prepared to deal with climate disruption but play an important role in clean energy innovation.
NJ Nation Lose Clean Energy Jobs During Public Health Crisis
From a press release issued by our Trenton staff

An analysis released on April 16 found that the US clean energy sector lost 106,472 jobs in March, a 5% decline. The analysis came from Environmental Progress (EP), the American Council on Renewable Energy, E4TheFuture and BW Research Partners. New Jersey lost 2,245 jobs, a 4.1% decline.

This report shows how the coronavirus is impacting clean energy jobs in New Jersey and across the country. This is a time when we need to be ramping up renewable energy and energy efficiency to reduce air pollution. New Jersey and other states have stopped energy efficiency and solar projects even though they are allowing pipeline projects and other fossil fuel projects to continue. Congress should include the clean energy sector in the next federal stimulus package, especially now that air pollution has been linked to coronavirus risk.

The analysis projected that the clean energy sector will lose more than a million jobs, or 15% of its total workforce, in the months ahead.

A recent Harvard study found that long-term exposure to air pollution is linked to coronavirus risk. The study examined 5,000 counties in the United States and found that higher levels of PM 2.5, a type of particulate matter, were associated with higher death rates from the disease. But instead of reducing air pollution, Governor Murphy is allowing projects like NJNG’s Southern Reliability Link to proceed. This is especially notable during the current pandemic, for a recent Harvard study found that long-term exposure to air pollution is linked to coronavirus risk.

Air Quality in NJ Ranks among the Worst in Nation
From a press release issued on April 21, and edited by Irene Gnarra

The American Lung Association has released its 2020 State of the Air Report, and the statistics are not good for New Jersey, which continues to rank among the states with the most polluted air in the nation. Though a slight improvement from last year, New Jersey is, nevertheless, ranked the twelfth most polluted metropolitan area in the U.S. for ozone levels, and counties in New Jersey were cited for high ground-level ozone pollution (smog), while twelve have reduced their number of high-particle pollution days.

In more rural and suburban areas in New Jersey, we have seen some improvements. For example, Hunterdon County’s air quality has improved because dirty diesel plants and two coal plants in Pennsylvania have ceased operations. However, that progress could be undone by EPA’s recent rollbacks, and other improvements could be reversed by the fossil fuel projects going forward in New Jersey.

As Chapter Director Jeff Tittle has noted, in the parts of the state with some of the worst air quality in the nation, we see the development of fossil fuel projects, including multiple fracked gas pipelines and power plants that will make air quality worse.

In the long list: the PennEast pipeline, the Southern Reliability Link, the Williams-Transco Northeast Supply Enhancement Pipeline Project, a Liquefied Natural Gas terminal in Gibbstown, and NJ Transit’s power plant in the Meadowlands. It is disturbing that the NJ Turnpike Authority and the South Jersey Transportation Authority are moving forward with plans that will increase Vehicle Miles Traveled and greenhouse gas emissions exponentially.

A prime source of ground-level ozone pollution is vehicle emissions. Ozone directly affects our health and contributes to the deaths of children and people with respiratory problems. This is especially notable during the current pandemic, for a recent Harvard study links the risk of contracting the coronavirus with air pollution. Unless the state starts to act more aggressively to reduce ozone pollution, we will see an even greater impact on public health. Because of our health emergency, as well as for the need to drastically lower our emissions to deal with climate change, we must have a moratorium on all fossil fuel projects in NJ.
North Jersey Group (Bergen and Passaic Counties)

WEBSITE: http://www.sierranewjersey.org/northjersey
MEETUP: http://www.meetup.com/NJSierraClub/
FACEBOOK: https://www.facebook.com/northjersey_sierracub/

The North Jersey Group has a duly elected nine-member Executive Committee, as follows

Co-Chairs: Diane Scarangella diascat@hotmail.com, and Buddy Jensen buddyjensen@gmail.com
Treasurer: Buddy Jensen buddyjensen@gmail.com
Secretary: Laura Troy ltny1019@gmail.com
Political Chair: Sandi Libertini libertini@sierraclub.org
Outings Chair: Mary Walsh maryl猀alsh@gmail.com
Conservation Chair: Judy Greene jugreen547@gmail.com
Climate Change Chair: Jeff Rapaport jeff@285online.net
Marketing: Publications Chair: Jan Barry january651@hotmail.com
ExCom Member: Bob Weiss bobweiss1967@gmail.com

We are actively involved in preserving open spaces and parklands, fighting climate change, and collaborating with Empower NJ and Don’t Gas the Meadowlands partners to advocate for renewable energy and a moratorium on fossil fuel usage.

We seek volunteers for our Political, Conservation, Publications, Climate Change, and Trail Maintenance Committees. Please contact the appropriate chair listed above to join a committee or for specific information about it. Or see the addendum below.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Unless otherwise noted, meetings and outings are free and open to general public. Please check our Meetup page, Facebook page, or web site for newly posted meeting and events. An event list will be provided for the summer and fall months. You can also email us at northjersey_sierranewjersey@gmail.com.

The North Jersey Group seeks members for six volunteer committees. Please contact the Chair of the Committee below if you are interested in joining dedicated people taking meaningful action in Bergen and Passaic Counties and throughout the state.

COMMITTEE OPENINGS

Conservation Committee: We assist people in the community with grassroots efforts to prevent destruction of natural habitat in Bergen and Passaic Counties and surrounding areas. Help us by finding and reviewing public records, circulating petitions, going door-to-door with lawn signs, speaking in public meetings, attending and organizing press conferences. The choice of activity is up to you. No activity or time commitment is too small. Make your voice heard. If interested contact Mary at bethwhalb@hotmail.com or Judy at jupiter547@gmail.com (Committee Co-Chairs), or Diane at diascat@hotmail.com (Group Co-Chair).

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. Mowing down climate change may give scientists time to find permanent solutions to this crisis. Our committee works in conjunction with other environmental committees 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 (Committee Chair) at jeff@285online.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 stand on environmental issues by examining their voting records and interviewing them. You can phone bank, or otherwise, work from your home, or visit candidates and their representatives in their offices. Canvas door-to-door with petition candidates or in the way your campaign asks you to. But know there is work to do. If interested, contact Sandy (Committee Chair) at libertisandi@gmail.com.

Event Planning and Membership Committee: We seek a Committee Chair and additional members! 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 enthused 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 (Acting Chair & Group Co-Chair) at diascat@hotmail.com. PLEASE!

Publications/Marketing Committee: Are you creative? Do you love graphic design; writing press releases and short stories; contacting newspapers and radio; using Instagram, Facebook, twitter, Snapchat? We need you! If interested, contact Jan (Committee Chair) at january651@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 level of difficulty. If interested contact Linda Cozzi, Chair at bethwhelb@hotmail.com (Committee Chair) or Buddy (Group Co-Chair) at buddyjensen@gmail.com.

Trail Maintenance: If you are interested in combining outdoor activity with actions that restore hiking trails and preserve the natural environment, please contact Marty at martycoven@verizon.net.

Gateway Group

Outcomes: Who, What, and Where (for Livingston, Millburn and Roseland)

The Gateway Group was organized in January 2011. Please contact any of the leaders below if you are interested in joining our campaigns to protect the environment.

There are several Gateway Group positions open.

(Continued on page 8)
Meeting Schedule: Hudson group will be meeting remotely for the duration of the shutdown. Members are still welcome and encouraged to join the meetings. Contact any of the officers for details about how to join the meeting.

Outings: Sadly, we are forced to cancel are upcoming walks and hikes. Please stay tuned online! We can’t wait to get back outside with everybody.

Current Campaigns: Please join in. We can use help with any of these:

- Braddock Park: North Bergen Residents - you’re support is needed! Be part of a citi- zen’s group protecting Braddock Park. Sierra Club has taken the first steps towards initi- ating a legal challenge of illegal dumping in Braddock Park. We hope to support NJ Appleseed in this effort. Twenty years ago the town of North Bergen re- placed a ballfields and the adjacent parking lot with 17 “temporary” school trailers. The action violated NJ laws under the Green Acres Act of 1969. The lawsuit would require Green Acres to enforce its own regulations. North Bergen and Hudson County would be required to finally remove the trailers and create safe, permanent classrooms for the pre-school. They would also have to restore the ballfields space and to create additional parkland in compensation.

- No Gas Plant in the Meadowlands: NJ Transit is using the distraction of the Covid 19 crisis to move ahead with plans to build a gas-fired power plant on a toxic site on a floodplain in Kearny. We want them to provide the trains with solar power combined with battery backup storage. This is being done successfully all around the world. But NJ Transit says they are “too busy” to even hear proposals from solar providers. Help us create a social media tidal wave of opposition! Follow us on twitter and facebook to see what action you can take - all while social distancing.

#MoratoriumMondays! Call Gov. Murphy to tell him you want a moratorium on all new fossil fuel projects in the state of NJ. Here Hudson County there are proposals for two huge new gas-fired power plants which would pour toxic chemicals into the air we breathe for generations. Help make the change to renewable energy. Stop the Meadowlands Power Plants - no more Fossil Fuel Projects! www.empowernewjersey.org

Climate Change: You thought Hurricane Sandy was fun? New studies show that Hudson County will be harder hit by sea-level rise and catastrophic flooding than any other county. For other low-lying areas, the Green New Deal and related policies. The ReadyFor100 campaign is work- ing 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.

Hackensack River Greenway: Sierra Club is working to connect existing parks with new rights of way along the Hackensack River to create a “Hackensack River Walkway” from one end of the county to the other! We are working to see that the Hacken- sack becomes Hudson County’s “Green Coast.”

Green New Deal: Creating the green infrastructure of the future. Building our local economy, creating good paying union jobs, and empowering urban communities who have been the victims of environmental injustices for too long.

Community Solar for Hoboken: We’ve sent the Board of Public Utilities a letter of support for Hoboken’s application to be one of New Jersey’s 15 pilot projects, based on Hoboken’s population of low- and moderate-income residents.

Environmental Justice: Low-income communities and black and brown communities suffer the most from environmental destruction: elevated levels of cancer, respiratory disease, lead poisoning, and a host of other problems. Hudson County has had more than its share of environmental poisoning for generations.

Laotanka Group

(Morris and Union Counties (except for Elizabeth and Hillside), plus Livingston, Millburn and Roseland, approximately)

WEBSITE: http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/Laotanka/Laotanka now has a FaceBook page. Please check it out and like it: https://www.facebook.com/LaotankaGroupNJS/

OFFICERS:
- Chair: Paul Sanderson 908-255-2414 laotanka@newjersey.sierraclub.org
- Treasurer: Paul Sanderson 908-255-2414 paulsanderson@aol.com
- Secretary: Open Position!

Conservation Chairs:
- Morris County: Len Farriello
- Union County: Allen Swanson
- Political Chair: Clea Carchia 908-492-7229 info@cleacarchia.com
- Programs: Bob Zega 973-434-8001 rzega@yahoo.com
- Fundraising Chair: 732-666-0477 spencer@njcp.org
- Outings Chair: Kevin O’Brien 908-403-0900 kkboab@aol.com
- Publicity Chair: Wynn Johnson 908-464-0442 johnsons@comcast.net

Membership: Open Position!

Webmaster: Wynn Johnson 908-464-0442 johnsons@comcast.net

Open Position!

Riverside: Kathy O’Brien 908-647-2870 kolayrcpjc@gmail.com

Member-at-Large: Priit Thukker 973-752-1100 thukkerp@icloud.com

If you might be interested in getting involved, come to one of our Executive Committee Meetings on the first Tuesday of the month and get to know us. Or come to one of our General Meetings on the second Wednesday of the month. There are no obligations and there will be no pressure.

To find out our activities, go to: https://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/laotanka/ To join our e-mailing list, go to: http://lists.sierraclub.org/archives/nj-laotanka-news.html

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS: are held on the FIRST TUESDAY of the month: 7pm at the Library of the Chathams, 214 Main St, Chatham. All members are welcome. There are currently some open positions on it! If you would like to find out more, please contact Paul Sanderson.

GENERAL MEETINGS: Meetings are virtual for the time being. Please check our web- site for updates. Once we can meet meetings are held on the SECOND WEDNESDAY of
Are you familiar with your Group's conservation campaigns? Might you wish to join one?

We encourage you to attend your town’s planning/ zoning board and land use board meetings. If you are aware of development proposals in your town that may have a neg- ative environmental impact, please let us know by attending our meetings and by con- tacting Gary Frederick at garyfrederick@newjersey.sierraclub.org. We are also interest- ed in any environmental news or events affecting Middlesex and Somerset counties and invite you to submit those items, as well.

Jersey Shore Group
(Monmouth County, approximately)


OFFICERS:
Group Chair: Dennis Anderson  
732-970-4527  dennisiazo@aol.com
Secretary:  
John Luard  
732-708-9221  johnluard@aol.com
Consor. Co-Chairs: 
Feitl Walt  
732-515-5445  faithteib@gmail.com
and: 
Stan Greberis  
732-241-7774  sandberg00@gmail.com
Social Media Chair: 
Yazmin Sourias  
yazmin915@gmail.com
Treasurer:  
Wael Kanj  
732-554-4176  waekanj@gmail.com
Program Chair: 
Mark Fukayama  
732-554-1545  markmazo@aol.com
Member Chair: 
Wael Kanj  
waekanj@gmail.com
Fund-raising Co-Chairs: 
Mark Fukayama  
732-908-1555  markmazo@aol.com
and:  
Faith Teitelbaum  
faithteib@aol.com
Co-Chairs: 
Letter-writing Committee: Mark Fukayama, Steve Miller and Stan Greberis
Communications Chair: 
High School Coor:
Open Position!

Jersey Shore Group Happenings:
Progress at Whale Pond Greenway – The Jersey Shore Sierra Club is a partner of the Whale Pond Brook Preservation Association. We have taken on the task of restoring the banks and water quality of the Whale Pond Brook and create a greenway from the ocean at Long Branch to the uplands in Tinton Falls. We are working with the Long Branch Green Team in Long Branch. In Ocean Township we are aiming to create a trail in the Whale Pond Preserve, part of 350 acres of open space in the rectangle formed by Rt 35, Industrial Way West, Rt 16, and W Park Av. The WPBWA, as a non-profit, has engaged a forester to tell us how to best manage the land. To help: contact Faith Teitelbaum at FaithTeib@aol.com.

Member Meetings: We really, really miss you, but we must cancel our get-together programs during this stressful time for the safety of everyone. This includes our popular Science Monday presentations at Brookside Community College because we all have to avoid group activities or crowds. We probably will have to cancel our September speaker as well.

However, we intend to stay in touch with you. We are planning to use a two-way voice and video system for us to communicate with each other. With this system, we will bring to you – in the comfort and safety of your living room – knowledgeable guest speakers and interesting videos on important environmental issues. In addition, we will keep you advised of local environmental progress.

In addition, we will be sending you electronic notices about environmental issues, peti- tions, and alerts. In fact, let’s try one now. To learn about what the White House is doing to systematically tear apart our environmental protections, please go to https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/climate/trump-environment-rolls-backs.html.

All in all, we aren’t putting our conservation programs in mothballs. We can’t, because some corporations and politicians are taking advantage of the coronavirus epidemic to secretly unravel many of our hard-earned environmental laws. And we can’t let them get away with it.

Stay well. An environmentalist is a terrible thing to waste.

Speakers’ Contacts: 
George Moffatt  
732-544-1726  gmoffattg@aol.com
Mary Reilly  
908-731-2466  MaryReilly4@gmail.com

Ocean County Group

WEBSITE: MEETUP.COM/SIERRA-CLUB-OCEAN-GROUP

OFFICERS:
Acting Chair & Conservation Chair: Margit Meissner-Jackson  
sylvij1910@yahoo.com
Vice-Chair & Treasurer: 
Laurajighth@gmail.com
Outings & Env Ed: 
Terry Brown  
terrybrown@comcast.net
Recording Secretary: 
Nancy Brown  
nancybrown242@comcast.net
Political Chair: 
Margaret Mary Piccolo  
gogreen1@yahoo.com
Green ExCom Members: 
Ray & Cathy Kozakicher  
rakyozak@comcast.net
William Giordano  
Peter Leighton  
JLeighton@verizon.net
And: 
Joyce Isaaz  
rcaltymstr@aol.com

General Membership Meetings: Meetings are virtual for the time being. Please check our website for updates. Meetings normally held bi-monthly at the Skywalk Cafe in Toms River, except July and August.

Activities & Issues: Our group is focused on a number of critical issues. Locally we support and provide public education on environmental issues. Along with our allies we are working hard to save Barnegat Bay and The Pinelands, two natural gems in Ocean County.
GROUP NEWS

West Jersey Group
(Camden, Gloucester and Burlington Counties, approximately)

WEBSITE: http://sierranclub.org/new-jersey/west-jersey/
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/WestJerseyGroupNJSC
Log on and Like Us
Follow us on Twitter @wijerseyclub and Instagram @wijerseyclub

OFFICERS:
Group Chair: Gina Carola 856-848-8851 ginaaceee@verizon.net
Vice Chair: Frank Zinini einzin@ails.com
Secretary: Ellen Zinini eflzin@ails.com
Treasurer: Trish Clements patti2120@gmail.com
Publicity Chair: Anne Cardi amanacci@yahoo.com
Political Chair: Linda Rubiano Ldaritz@yahoo.com
Pine Island Sponsors: Susan Fabian sfabian@gmail.com
Greenways Coordinator: Frank and Ellen Zinini eflzin@ails.com
Conservation Chair: Stacey Ayala thunderswolgal@yahoo.com
Colby for a discussion. Otherwise, our consuming conservation issue, adopted just like the Group was founded in the 1970s, continues to be protection of the Great Egg Harbor Wild & Scenic River, and continues to consume the energies of those few offi- cers 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

Directions: From I-295, take exit 34B onto Rte 70 West. Follow the signs for Rte 41 South, which is Kings Hwy (you will have to exit to the right into a jug handle and then turn left onto Rte 41 (Kings Hwy). Cross over Rte 70 and you will be briefly on Rte 154 (Black Rd). Make the next left (right) and then the next left onto Kings Hwy. After about 1 mile, you will cross Grove Rd (Indian King Tavern is on the right corner). After crossing Grove Rd, you will go over the bridge and turn right on to Friends Ave. Go one block and turn right into the Meeting House Park. Walk in the lot next to the Meeting House and enter the auditorium through the doors on the right side of the building. Do not go into the Meeting House.

Sept 9: Topic to be announced
The West Jersey Group does not meet in June, July or August. Please check for updates on our Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/WestJerseyGroupNJSC.

Contact Gina at 856-848-8851, ginaaceee@verizon.net to get involved in any of our many initiatives on climate change.

South Jersey Group
(Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland and Salem Counties, approximately)

OFFICERS:
Group, Outings Chair: Tom Boghosian 267-930-8583 boghosianl@verizon.net
Vice Chair: Joyce Haddad 609-761-3690 joycehaddad@gmail.com
Conservation Chair: Open Position!
Pol. Chair, Colby: Dick Cobly 609-965-4155 dick.cobly@stockton.edu
Membership Chair: Secretary/Treasurer: Julie Akers 609-432-5280 julieakers56@gmail.com

Current Issues: (1) We’ve been blue-blazing the southern portion of what will be a conservation corridor between the southern and northern tips of New Jersey. Many other groups (and other groups) are contributing. Contact Dick for copies of some of our preliminary maps. Dick has also produced a brochure describing 14 historic walks in Egg Harbor City. Every municipality ought to have its own such brochure: this is a hint for you to try your hand at it! (2) There is “movement” on the prospect for a Community Solar experiment in South Jersey; funded by new legislation that predates the BPU, and a new presidential administration. (3) If you know an Atlantic County Freighthouse, please consider lobbying her/him to take on Clark’s Landing as an historic county park. (4) With the passage of a plastic-bag-restricting ordinance in Longport, there’s lobbying work to be done in each of our other municipalities! (4 etc.) Many other South Jersey issues are described in previous issues of this newsletter, available on the Chapter website.

SOME ALLIED ORGANIZATIONS, some of which may be meeting by Zoom:
May 26 and July 28: (altering fourth Saturdays, 6-8pm): Great Egg Harbor Watershed Assn. Activities centered on protecting the Wild & Scenic Recreational River. All are welcome. Warren Fox Nature Center (WFNC*), Atlantic County Park in Estell Manor, Milepost 15 on N J Rte 50, ½ miles south of Mays Landing. Contact Julie Akers, 856-432-5280.

June 3, July 1, Aug 5: (first Wednesdays), 6-8pm: 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*. Contact Julie Akers, 609-432-5280. Website: https://www.facebook.com/AtlanticCountyFriends-of-the-Parks.

June 10, Aug 12: (alternate second Wednesdays). “Ben” bi-monthly meeting of Citizens United to Protect the Maurice River and its Tributaries (another “Partnership River” under federal protection): Meeting place: George Luciano Center, Cumberland County College. Cumberland County development issues are commonly discussed, including how land is zoned and local and state governmental attributes of the area. Contact Karla Rossini (CU) at 609-774-8853 or karla.rossini@cumaricriver.org. Website: www.cumaricriver.org.

June 17, Aug 19: (alternate third Wednesdays), 6-8pm: Great Egg Harbor Scenic and Recreational River Council: Representatives of the 12 municipalities discuss and implement river management strategies. Open to the public: WFNC*. Contact Julie Akers, 609-432-5280.


Singles Section
(A Chapeter-wide, special interest section offering hikes/cleanup, social gatherings, meetings, etc.)

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

We’re a friend, active group of individuals who enjoy hiking, biking, canoeing/kayak- ing, as well as a variety of social and cultural activities throughout the year. This section was created to offer a variety of singles-oriented activities to NJ Sierra Club members.

OFFICERS:
Interim Co-Chairs: Ron Pate and Jimi Oleksiak
Outings Chair: Joyce Haddad
Conservation Chair: Position open
Treasurer: Position open
Social Chair: Position open
Vice Social Chair: Jeff Sovelove
Programs: Position open
Publicity: Position open
Membership: Position open
Nominations: Position open

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

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 recrea- tional 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/ NJSINGLES/NEWS.html and clicking on “Join or leave the list.” You may subscribe and unsubscribe at will, directions on how to unsubscribe are at the bottom of every e-mail announcement. We recommend joining the listserv to receive announcements for all of our events a few weeks before each event. Events are also list on the online calendar on the Chapter’s website: sierranclub.org/new-jersey. You can also “like” us on Facebook: “Singles Group New Jersey Sierra Club.” Activities will also be posted on Meetup.

Meetings are virtual for the time being. Please check our website for updates.

SOCIAL GATHERINGS:
Social dinners: Join us for dinner the second Tuesday of each month at 6:30 pm, at a variety of restaurants in different locations. Jimi Oleksiak, the leader, will announce the details one week in advance through a listserv message. An RSVP will be required as described in the announcement.

HIKES AND OTHER OUTINGS: The Singles Section sponsors many outings, ranging from beginners’ level of hikes to advanced difficulty. Some of these are listed in the Outings section of this newsletter; others will be announced on our listserv, the Chapter’s online calendar, Face book and Meetup. Hikes are for anybody who is capable of hiking the distance described. It is up to the person who wants to hike to deter- mine their own ability and limits. All hikers are required to sign a liability waiver.

LGBTQ+ Section

Our mission of this Section is to support Sierra Club goals, and to promote environ- mental activism and social equity. We are an inclusive group and all are welcome to join us.

WEB SITE: http://www.sierranclub.org/new-jersey/LGBT/
EMAIL: This section meets at njsierranclub
FACEBOOK: https://www.facebook.com/njsierralgbt

OFFICERS:
Chair: William Parish * wmparish6@gmail.com
Vice-Chair: Andrew Bvaequa * andrewbvaequa@gmail.com

* We are a club of friends, which means you don’t have to be a member of Sierra Club to join our events.

There’s an interactive CALENDAR for outings and Group events - on our website (www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/). Click “Events and Outings” and you’ll be whisked away to the Chapter’s online calendar, Facebook and Meetup. Hikes are for anybody who is capable of hiking the distance described. It is up to the person who wants to hike to determine their own ability and limits. All hikers are required to sign a liability waiver.
The Sierra Club is currently not sponsoring organized outings due to the coronavirus pandemic. We do, however, encourage individual outings in your local area if you feel comfortable doing so. Please remember to wear a mask, stay at least 6 feet apart, and follow local and state guidelines.

Our leaders were asked to recommend favorite walks in each New Jersey county, under five miles from your home. An inspiring story about what happens when we produce about five trips per year for students in the ICO is a public service program that provides outdoor trips to children, and is active in each county. We have also tried to include color maps in the electronic supplement to this exercise is all-the-more important during the lockdown period – so long as we are healthy and remain at home. Meanwhile, outdoor activities will be announced, and they will be posted, on our website. See the website and/or contact Paul Parish at whparshiv@gmail.com for additional information.

ICO: Inspiring Connections Outdoors

Previously: Introducing Children to the Outdoors; before that: Inner-City Outings (another chapter-wide special interest activity with the motto: No Child Left Inside)

Chair: Position Currently Vacant

ICQ:黑龙江省

(continued on page 12)
The Chapter website, http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/, has been upgraded to provide much useful information.

Upcoming ExCom Meetings

All members are welcome to attend these monthly statewide policy deliberations, held on SECOND SATURDAYS, either by Zoom utility on a computer, smartphone, or tablet, or at the Reform-Union High Park (19-21 S Second Av.), depending on the kinetics of the viral pandemic. Our website will provide reliable information: https://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/NJCalendar. For details of the Zoom connection, contact Joe Testa: secretary@newjersey.sierraclub.org.

Dates: June 12, July 11, Aug 8, Sept 12

New Jersey Chapter Leadership

Personal Committee
Rick Isaac, Chair, John Kashwick, Paul Ehrlich, Claudia Mausner, Lisa Allard
Information Technology Committee
Joe Testa, Paul Ehrlich, Al Feldman, Suril Somalwar
Finance Committee
Paul Sanderson, Suril Somalwar, George Denzer, Ken Johanson
Nomination Committee
Dennis Andreason, Joanne Pannone, John Kashwick, Renée Pollard, Maria Santiago
Facilities Committee (office, meeting sites)
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The Jersey Sierran: July–September 2020

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Explore, enjoy and protect the environment.

The Jersey Sierran, Vol. 49, No. 3 • Summer, 2020

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NJ Transit Gets Federal Superfund Plan

EPA Extends Comment Period on Ringwood Superfund Plan

From a Press Release issued on April 1, edited by Sylvia Kay

Public comment on the proposed cleanup plan for groundwater contamination at the Ringwood Mines/Landfill Superfund Site in New Jersey has been extended a third time by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The plan involves installation of wells intended to introduce an oxygen-releasing compound into the aquifer to enhance the breakdown of contaminants. The EPA plans to add granular activated carbon and resin into the mine water at the Peters Mine Pit. New Jersey Sierra is opposed to this plan and supports remediation based on pumping out the toxin from contaminated waters. It is important to voice opposition to the EPA Plan, so that NJ Attorney General’s office will intervene.

EPA reached a $21 million settlement with Ford Motor Co. and Ringwood on a cleanup plan for the Superfund site. Almost 160,000 tons of paint sludge and toxic chemicals from the company’s plant are still prevalent. EPA put this site on the Superfund program’s National Priorities List in September 1983. Currently, contamination is leaking into Ringwood State Park and entering Mill Brook and Sally Pond. Toxic chemicals, including dioxane, are being released into streams which link to the Wanaque Reservoir—a source of drinking water for millions of people. Surface water quality standards and DEP protocol are threatened.

Residents near the Superfund site have suffered from cancers, kidney ailments and other health conditions. The Ringwood Mines/Landfill site is an historic iron mining district situated on 500 acres in the borough of Ringwood, Passaic County. There are 660 people in Upper Ringwood who are living on top of this site. Vapor intrusion and chemicals from the Superfund site impact their health. An efficient and prompt remediation of this Site will promote social justice for New Jersey citizens—a concept expressed in Governor Murphy’s Executive Order 23.

Send written comments to: Joseph A. Gowers, Remedial Project Manager, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 290 Broadway, New York, NY 10007 or email: greaternewyork.epa.gov/hero@epa.gov

NJ Transit Rubberstamps Meadowlands Power Plant During Health Emergency

From a press release issued on April 20, and edited by Joe Teesta

JZBMW APOCALYPSE (Continued from page 2)

Footnotes:
3 https://int.nyu.edu/data/documentspdf/26092020nationalsecuritycouncil/jointstatement/sdfs5797955oee0724/full.pdf
4 https://www.cdc.gov/nj/756000c5be0724/full.pdf
6 https://hcbs79500ec5be0724/full.pdf
7 https://healthsecurity.csis.org/final-report

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NJ Transit Rubberstamps Meadowlands Power Plant During Health Emergency

From a press release issued on April 20, and edited by Joe Teesta

On April 17, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and NJ Transit issued a “Combined Final Environmental Impact Statement/Record of Decision” for the NJ TRANSGRID Traction Power System project. The grid would be powered by a 104-MW natural gas fueled power-generating plant in Kearny, costing close to $526 million. This is a rubber-stamp of approval for a fossil-fueled power plant in the Meadowlands, without looking at health and environmental impacts of adding hundreds of thousands of tons of pollution to South Kearny and the areas around the plant, which already have some of the worst air quality in the nation.

FTA issued a single document that consists of a final environmental impact statement and a record of decision in a manner that bypasses the normal 30-day wait/review period under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). This EIS is deficient and doesn’t look at alternatives that we have been suggesting for months, including using renewable energy generation; instead, this plan is more fossil foolishness. Approving this while the state is locked down due to the Covid-19 outbreak is especially ironic: considering how power generation has been linked to covid risk.

A recent Harvard study and other studies have found a link between air pollution exposure and coronavirus risk. According to the Harvard study, coronavirus patients in areas that had high levels of air pollution before the pandemic were more likely to die from the infection than patients in cleaner parts of the country. They analyzed 3,080 counties in the United States and found that higher levels of the tiny, dangerous particles in the air, known as PM 2.5, were associated with higher death rates from the disease.

This plant will mean more air pollution and cause an increase of harmful chemicals such as fine particulates PM2.5, NOx and SOx. The fact that they released the report late on a Friday to avoid public opposition and press coverage shows that they know how bad this project is.

In New Jersey, there are trains that are being run off of solar power. We could be the first place in the nation to use solar power for trains. Other renewable alternatives include tidal energy, hydropower, wind, solar, landfill gas, and even small hydro facilities. New Jersey has plenty of brownfields that can be linked and used for solar panels, as well as rail yards and parking lots at train stations suitable for panels. By dispersing these power sources, we could avoid concentration at a single point, protecting us against failure by flooding or other disasters—in contrast to a single natural gas plant. Looking at clean alternatives is critical because this plant will run 24/7, so it will produce air pollution year-round.

The purported purpose of this project is to protect the transit system from another Sandy, but building more fossil fuel projects will make another superstorm like Sandy more likely to occur. Governor Murphy and NJ Transit should be looking out to protect the citizens of New Jersey by rescinding their authorization for this natural gas plant. If the Governor allows this plant to go forward, he will be shown to be short of hot air when it comes to reducing GHGs and impacts to Environmental Justice communities.

NJ Turnpike Capital Plan = More Pollution, More Traffic

From a press release issued on March 25

The New Jersey Chapter of the Sierra Club has issued a report analyzing the Turnpike Authority’s recent $2 billion Capital Plan. The Plan proposes 15 highway widening and bridge replacement projects totaling $15.6 billion; the final costs will be much higher due to budget adjustments and cost overruns. These 15 projects will add 454 lane-miles, increasing maximum capacity by 998,800 cars per hour.

The Turnpike Authority is hiding all this despite the public health emergency. The proposal would pave over environmentally sensitive areas and cut through neighborhoods, many of which are Environmental Justice communities. Many homes will be taken. More fundamentally, high-speed roads promote residential sprawl and exhaust pollution, at the cost of open space and walkable communities. All this with public hearings that are nothing more than a pretense of public participation, with an epidermal layer of public comment.

It would be the biggest fossil fuel subsidy in the history of the state, and a contradiction to Governor Murphy’s rhetoric for reducing greenhouse gases. Our report shows that these projects would increase emissions, with some components doubling projected emissions. A recent Harvard study and other studies have found a link between air pollution exposure and coronavirus risk; it just moves bottlenecks and overwhelms the roads that our toll roads feed into. Homes and apartment buildings will be taken in Hillside, Irvington, Newark and many other places, including communities.

Our report also notes that increasing highway capacity does not eliminate traffic congestion; it just moves bottlenecks and overwhelms the roads that our toll roads feed into. Homes and apartment buildings will be taken in Hillside, Irvington, Newark and many other places, including communities.

The proposal includes toll increases of 36% on the Turnpike and 27% on the Garden State Parkway, raising more than $500 million through 2029. There are 53 projects in all.

No environmental analysis or impact study has been performed, even though hundreds of acres of wetlands, forests, streams, and rivers will be destroyed. Projects in the Meadowlands and coastal parts of South Jersey, flood-prone areas.

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NJ Unveils RGGI Strategic Funding Plan - Important Step Forward

From a press release issued on April 17, and edited by Joe Testa

New Jersey has released its final Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) Strategic Funding Plan. RGGI is an association of ten Mid-Atlantic and New England states that share a reduction and auction process to encourage market efficiencies, investments in renewable energy, and improvements in power-plant technology, all to reduce smokestack emissions from electricity generating stations. The new plan describes how the State will spend $82 million in proceeds from the quarterly RGGI CO2 auctions, and emphasizes projects that will support disproportionately burdened communities.

This is a step in the right direction. It will reduce pollution and create green jobs. We think it proper to remEDIATE our overburdened and Environmental Justice communi-
ties, which have some of the worst air quality in the nation, and suffer high levels of asthma. (See related story, Clean Energy Jobs, on p.6.)

Of the $82 million, about $60 million will be directed to clean transportation proj-
ects. The NJ Department of Environmental Protection will get 20%, the Board of Public Utilities will get 10%, and the NJ Economic Development Administra-
tion will get 10%.

The DEP will use 10% of its portion for grants and incentives by which local govern-
ments can electrify their transportation sectors; another 10% will go toward carbon sequestra-
tion, two-cycle natural gas plants, and other fossil fuel projects. So we are glad to see this money go to clean transportation, targeting NJ communities.

Gov. Murphy’s EO 127 Will Hurt the Environment

From a press release issued on April 14, and edited by Joe Testa

Governor Murphy’s Executive Order 127, issued in April as the Covid-19 crisis was unfolding, extended deadlines for filing or making decisions on pending reports until 90 days after the end of the declared Public Health Emergency. We are seriously con-
cerned that this action sides with polluters and bad practices by allowing DEP to extend their decision-making comment periods for permit decisions without similarly extending public comment periods for those decisions.

Projects are still being pushed through despite the pandemic without enough pub-
lc oversight or input.

The Turnpike and Parkway capital plan is one of the biggest projects in state histo-
ry, adding at least 454 lane miles and almost 1 million cars per hour on our roads and causing major air pollution and sprawl. The unnecessary IRL pipeline can continue construction in Monmouth and Burlington Counties, risking public safety by blocking traffic which is especially difficult for emergency vehicles. High-density housing devel-

opment at the Waterman Hampton Tract can still move forward with its approval for a sewer service area along a high-quality C1 stream. This project will pave over environ-
mentally sensitive areas and pollute our drinking water.

We have concerns that Governor Murphy’s EO will extend controversial permits for builders and developers, just like the Permit Extension Act has done before. Any time there is an emergency, this permit extension becomes an excuse to take care of devel-
opers and builders. It could allow projects where permits or approvals have expired within the past two years to be brought back to life, even if those projects would cause environmental harm or damage to public health. These projects will not only promote sprawl and overdevelopment and also will hurt water quality.

Throughout New Jersey, there are dozens of projects currently in front of local plan-
ning boards that would have detrimental impacts on water quality, greenhouse gas emissions, and more, if approved. For example, there is a massive Jaided Land Co. warehouse that has been proposed on environmentally sensitive farmland in White Township (Warren Co.), and a similar project in Franklin Township in Hunterdon County. The Sewell Tract in Cape May is a housing development on environmentally sensitive wetlands that is currently in front of the planning board and also in front of DEP.

We are very concerned that these projects could be approved without public participation.

During this health emergency, it is critical for the public to have a say in permits that will last for years. We would automatically extend comment periods for those proposals that can have a direct impact on our water and our overall envi-
ronment. We have to make sure that during this pandemic, that we are protecting public health as part of it.

DEP Adopts Strictest PFAS Standards in Nation - Win for Public Health

From a press release issued on April 17, and edited by Joe Testa

The Department of Environmental Protection has submitted a proposed rule for maximum contaminant limits on PFAS to the Office of Administrative Law. PFOA (perfluorooctanoic acid) and PFOS (perfluorooctanesulfonic acid) belong to the PFAS family of “forever” fluorine-containing chemicals. The rule would require drink-
water from private wells and public utilities to contain no more than 14 parts per trillion of PFOA and 13 ppt of PFOS. This is far more stringent than the 70 ppt guide-
line set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

PFAS’s are used in products ranging from Teflon pans to stain-resistant clothing to firefighting foams. In New Jersey the Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base Willow Grove, and Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, and many other sites, used firefighting foams and have significant PFAS contamination.

This is a big step towards protecting public health for the roughly 1.6 million peo-
ple who have been exposed to these chemicals in New Jersey. Also of benefit is that, under New Jersey law, groundwater and drinking water standards are the same.

The standards will be easily implemented by water purveyors, because the treat-
ment process is simple and inexpensive. New Jersey is one of the most affected states in the country, with over 500 water systems contaminated with PFAS. Now it is important that the standards be implemented quickly.

In Salem and Gloucester County, PFOA found near the Solovar site were seven times over the standard. People in Pompton Lakes and Carney’s Point have been living in a toxic nightmare for decades. PFOS is in our fish, even from the most pristine areas.

New Jersey has set its own standards for harmful chemicals in our water because we can’t trust the current federal government to make strong enough standards. We thank the Murphy Administration and DEP for moving forward, but urge stricter stan-
dards for more than a dozen other chemicals found in our watersways.

Executive Disorder in the Governor’s Office

From an op-ed by Chapter Director Jeff Tittel, published Feb 20 in the Newark Star-Ledger, and edited by Tony Hagan

New Jersey is anticipating a future of scorching temperatures and rising ocean lev-
els, but make no mistake: Climate change is already here. Unfortunately, Gov. Phil Murphy’s Executive Order 100, signed in January, 2020, is a rallying cry without real task for climate change mitigation.

Murphy could sign an emergency order to regulate greenhouse gases, utilizing the powers of the Department of Environmental Protection, but he doesn’t. Although the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change calls for a 4.5% reduction in greenhouse gases by 2050, Murphy’s executive order doesn’t include any targets for this. Electrification of the housing sector needs to begin now. The DEP most revise its flood zone maps—now. We need a carbon standard. So much needs to be done. Murphy says the executive order looks at land use and other permitting processes, but it doesn’t. It fails to mention the 14 or more laws that need to be changed to allow this.

Former Gov. Chris Christie’s “waiver rules,” which allowed for sidestepping environ-
mental regulations if they are “unduly burdensome,” need to be rolled back. The same goes for his flood hazard rules, which loosened development restrictions on building in sensitive areas. These and other Christie-era rules exacerbate flooding and pollution threats.

New Jersey sticks out as the only state in our region without a climate adaptation and mitigation plan. Executive Order 100 is a distraction: a cover for the lack of need-
ed changes in the state’s revised Energy Master Plan. Testimony called for real climate action and a moratorium on fossil fuel infrastructure development, but the plan kow-
tows to dirty energy, defining biogas, nuclear energy, incinerators, and biomass as clean sources of energy. We need wind, solar, and geothermal instead.

The Master Plan calls for 80% net reduction of greenhouse gases by 2050, but it is watered down by gimmicks such as carbon sequestration. What’s worse, Murphy doesn’t mention current proposals for eight pipelines, five power plants, and a liquid natural gas port that would increase NJ’s emissions.

Meanwhile, the road to climate change is paved with failed initiatives. Tom Kean’s 1985 order for greenhouse gas and climate impact reductions was never implement-
ated. We’re in a climate emergency. We need a moratorium on new fossil fuel proj-
ects and we need to reach 100% renewable and zero carbon by 2050.
Earth Day Flashback:
We asked our older members for memories of the first Earth Day, in 1970

Hey, Unless You Try, You’ll Never Know
From George Moffatt, Programs Support Facilitator (gmoffatt@aol.com)

I didn’t realize at the time of “Earth Day” that I was working in the belly of the Beast – as convention and public relations manager for a professional association of mining, metallurgical and petroleum engineers.

One day at lunch I fell into a conversa- tion with an engineer working on the Alaska pipeline. He was complaining about a University of Alaska professor who opposed the pipeline’s design because it would block the caribou’s yearly migrations for food. “We need that oil,” he argued, and I replied “You’re right! We certainly do, but what about the caribou?” As he went on, I asked, “You’re a Ph.D. in engineering, right?” Yes. “And this professor has a Ph.D. in biology, right?” Reluctant, yeah.

“So why don’t you both, as experts in your respective fields, sit down and figure out how both the oil and caribou can move about freely.” He shrugged and said nothing. Several months later, I received a note from him: “I meet regularly with Professor X, and he has some really valuable ideas. Thanks for the suggestion.”

Another time, at a dinner that included the Dean of the Colorado School of Mines, an engineer mentioned a plan to mine manganese from the floor of the Caribbean. It involved huge plow-like machines that would sift through the sand to scoop up manganese modules. I thought it to be a terrible idea and said so.

The dean was not pleased, but I pushed on, arguing that plowing up the sea floor would destroy the sea’s benthic marine life, as well as upset the sea’s entire food chain. “This also would play havoc with the jobs and economy of the entire area,” I said, listing the hotel and restaurant industries, major employers in the area; the many native merchants; the cruise and airline industries; sustainable and sport fishing; and boating, sailing and recreational diving. “You’d be destroying an economic emerald,” I said. When the dean countered with “yeah, you guessed it. – But we need the manganese,” I replied, “No, we don’t. Only that company needs it.

Well, I kept my job, the pipeline was designed to let the caribou roam freely, and no one is mining manganese in the Caribbean. I’d take a bow but I doubt I had any influence on either event. But then, hey, unless you try, you’ll never know.

Remembering Paul Ehrlich
From Eric Hauker, Fundraising Chair of our Loantaka Group (Ericbiomass@gmail.com)

I was sixteen years old and attended a high school teach-in on the date of the first Earth Day, 1970, and remember the good vibes that were in the air, the hope that we as members of the Human Race would begin to take action.

One of the environmental pundits of the time who is still with us fifty years later is Dr. Paul Ehrlich, who had written “The Population Bomb” two years before. He made many sensational pessimistic claims about our impending doom, i.e., that most of us would all starve by 1985. This reduced his gravitas quite a bit. But he did say something back then that has stuck with me all these years: “Nature bats last” in other words, physical and biological factors will eventually restrict the scope of human activity despite our most ingenious scientific and technological attempts to transcend them.

Fifty years later, we watch as one of those factors, Contagious Disease, causes the cancellation of our yearly Earth Day forum for presenting our case to the world’s media about what we should be doing to ensure the survival of human civilization. We do not complain because we know that combatting this pandemic takes precedence over everything else.

But to continue Ehrlich’s baseball analog, it’s the ninth inning. We are way ahead of Nature in the score and it looks like our way of life, our high consump- tion economy, our prodigal use of energy, and our continued obsession with eco- nomic and demographic growth will pre- vail. But now human activity has picked up the bat and comes to the plate.

When our Chapter Director Was Young
From Jeff Tittel, Chapter Director (Jeff.Tittel@SierraClub.org)

As we recognize the 50th anniversary of Earth Day this year it is important to look back at what happened back then and what is happening today.

Fifty years ago, rivers caught fire. Today the planet is on fire, with ramp- ant wildfires every summer in California, the Amazon, and Australia. Back then, people wore masks because of dirty air. Now, people are wearing masks because of the coronavirus. The First Earth Day heralded a new era of political activism and new environmental leaders. This year being an election year, that is even more important. The corona- virus may be changing our everyday lives, but Earth Day will not be post- poned.

Every Earth Day is different, but this year is nothing like we’ve seen before. The coronavirus outbreak is reshaping the way we recognize Earth Day. We won’t be cleaning up beaches and streams or holding rallies. Instead, we’ll honor Earth Day through online protests and webinars while building toward a big mobilization movement in the fall. Even in separation, we can be as one. This year, the stakes are even greater than 50 years ago because we are in a climate emergency.

For the first Earth Day, I was in junior high and organized the cleanup of the Elizabeth River in Hillside. Afterward, we joined tens of thousands of people at a rally in Philadelphia. Students across the globe are still standing up for our environ- ment today. Greta Thunberg is hold- ing political leaders environmentally accountable. Students in the U.S. are get- ting active and fighting for the environ- ment with the Sunrise Movement and by calling for a Green New Deal.

For the first Earth Day we brought about the National Environmental Policy Act or NEPA and the Environmental Protection Agency. The U.S. went on to pass important legislation like the Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, and the Endangered Species Act. It also led to political activism. There were 12 con- gressmen with terrible environmental records called the ‘Dirty Dozen,’ and seven of them were defeated. Today, Trump is waging a war on the environ- ment by rolling back 95 rules and regula- tions, getting rid of EPA enforcement, and opening up our public lands for min- ing and drilling. Now it is even more important for us to be politically active.

This will be the most important Earth Day since the first one in 1970. It is even more important in New Jersey because we are one of the fastest-warming states in the country while also being one of the most vulnerable states to climate change. DEP has projected sea-level rise in New Jersey of up to 8.8 feet by 2100 and we are second in the nation for developing in flood-prone areas. Gov. Phil Murphy must put a moratorium on new fossil fuel projects and move us for- ward toward 100% renewable and zero- carbon by 2050. We have the tools and technology to get there; now we need the political will.

This year also marks the 50th anniver- sary of New Jersey’s DEP. They have worked hard to implement important environmental laws like the Spill Act and many more. However, the DEP budget and staff levels have dropped over 50% each in the last 20 years without any new hiring. The DEP needs more funding so it can update our rules and regulations to meet the current climate urgency and protect us from the flood waters, water, flood Hazard Rules, Waiver Rules, and CAPRA all need to be updated. We also need to start regulating greenhouse gases, make a Climate Adaptation and Mitigation Plan, and cre- ate a Coastal Commission to deal with sea-level rise. It is critical that the DEP does their job for the next 50 years, and another 50 after that.

We are facing the coronavirus pandem- ic in part because we are polluting and destroying the Earth’s natural resources. Fortunately, we have seen a reduction of pollution in NJ and across the globe dur- ing the pandemic. It shows that even dur- ing a tragedy, we can turn the corner on climate change. We have one environ- ment, we are one people and one planet. It is critical to recognize Earth Day every day and keep fighting to save our planet.
Maps of segments of the NJ State Long Trail, to accompany some of the hikes described in On the Trail - On Your Own (pp.11-12)

Credit for these maps goes to Frank Pearce, of the Outings Club of South Jersey.