

# [ the sylvanian ]

winter 2016

Pennsylvania Chapter Sierra Club • [pennsylvania.sierraclub.org](http://pennsylvania.sierraclub.org)

## The Rich Get Richer Unless We [ broaden our focus ]



explore, enjoy and protect the planet.

# [ from the editors ]

## Our Patch is Not Big Enough

*“When I was a child growing up in Greenville, South Carolina and grandmama could not afford a blanket, she didn’t complain and we did not freeze. Instead she took pieces of old cloth — patches, wool, silk, gabardine, crockersack — only patches, barely good enough to wipe off your shoes with. But they didn’t stay that way very long. With sturdy hands and a strong cord, she sewed them together into a quilt, a thing of beauty and power and culture.”*

— The Reverend Jesse Jackson,  
speech at the 1988 Democratic National Convention

Now, we in the Sierra Club must build such a quilt. Our quilt needs to be made with patches from groups in which we find common ground. One patch from a faith-based group working to protect creation, another patch from a group seeking peace, another from a union seeking fair wages, a patch from students seeking a chance at a good education, another from mothers working for safe streets, a patch from community seeking environmental and economic justice, and family farmers seeking fair prices for their products.

No one patch is big enough to stand alone against some of the largest multinational companies in the world. We have seen the power their money can buy to get their message out. Since the advent of Super PAC’s, there is no end to the money that a billionaire can spend to get someone elected.

“But don’t despair,” Jackson said. “Be as wise as my grandmama. Pull the patches and the pieces together, bound by a common thread. When we form a great quilt of unity and common ground, we’ll have the power ...”

In this issue, we hope to convince our members to hook up with as many groups as possible and use that common thread to become a force for good.

WENDI TAYLOR AND PHIL COLEMAN  
Co-editors of *The Sylvanian*



Wendi Taylor



Phil Coleman



*We all thank Wendi for her years of service and great term as our Chapter Chair. All she has to do going forward is continue with the Sylvanian. Her co-editor is grateful that she will continue in that job. Note the analog clock. Is it a.m. or p.m.?*

DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING ON YOUR MIND?



Consider this your invitation to say it on our blog. Yes, the Sierra Club Chapter has a blog that allows our members to share their thoughts, ideas and peevs with the rest of us on Sierra Keystone Conversations.

THE PROCESS IS SIMPLE.

Submit your blog to:  
[carli.timpson@sierraclub.org](mailto:carli.timpson@sierraclub.org)

Or, of course, you can just be a regular reader. Find it at:  
<http://sierraclubpa.blogspot.com/>

# [ the sylvanian ]

[ broaden our focus ]

## special report

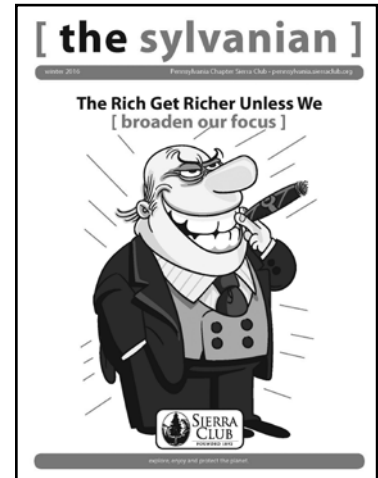
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[ on the cover ]

The cover of this issue of *The Sylvanian* reminds us that wealth inequality is getting worse, not better and that most environmental problems are ultimately traceable, directly or indirectly to big companies – big oil, big coal, big agriculture, etc., and the influence they have with our legislators. All people must work together to turn this trend around.

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## chapter directory

Due to space restrictions, the Chapter Directory was not included in this issue. To view the directory, go to: <http://pennsylvanian.sierraclub.org> and select "Volunteer Resources." The password is: VolunteersRule

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This publication is dedicated to serving the Sierra Club Pennsylvania membership, and is a forum for internal policy discussion and debate among those truly concerned with protecting the environment. Opinions expressed herein are the personal opinions of their authors and may or may not reflect Sierra Club policy.

Contributor deadlines are March 15 (Spring issue), June 15 (Summer issue), September 15 (Fall issue), and December 15 (Winter issue). Anonymous contributions are not accepted.

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

The Sierra Club seeks to become a fully realized multicultural organization and is working to make the systemic changes required to welcome, respect, support, and value any individual or group to fully participate.

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# [ the view from harrisburg ]

by Joanne Kilgour, Chapter Director

## STATE BUDGET 2015-2016: PUBLIC GOOD VS. POLITICAL POWER STRUGGLE

When we elect our State Senators and Representatives, we do not just check a box or pull a lever indicating our support - in fact, we give them a part of ourselves - the right and responsibility to make decisions on our behalf and with our best interest in mind. We put our trust and confidence in these elected officials and we live our lives based on an agreement that that they will, in return, put our collective needs above their own egos and individual prosperity. As a State Senator or Representative, one not only takes an oath to uphold and defend the constitution, but also accepts the burden and the privilege of taking on all those pieces of one's constituents - the trust and reason and faith of thousands of Pennsylvanians - and giving up one's own needs for the greater public good. With no state budget in sight more than six months after the supposed June 30th deadline, resulting in a lack of security for our public education, health and human services, and infrastructure systems

- not to mention undermining our credit position - it is clear that whatever is happening in Harrisburg is not in our best interest and is a violation of the trust we place in our elected officials.

Back in early December 2015, the PA House passed a budget bill, HB 1460 (largely on party lines) that would have provided \$30.26 billion in spending. While the supporters of this package argued that HB 1460 provided a \$405 million in-

crease in funding for Pre K through grade 12 education, new funding for agriculture, a 3.1 percent increase in funding for the Department of Environmental Protection and funding for human services and public safety, opponents of the bill claimed that it would not result in a balanced budget and would only perpetuate the deficit. Absent bi-partisan support, this spending proposal also lacked support of the Senate at the time it was passed in the House. However, as the Christmas holiday approached, and after some procedural maneuvering, the PA Senate passed (again, largely on party lines) the same version on HB 1460 that the House had passed earlier in the month, sending the bill to the Governor's desk and adjourning for the holiday. On December 29, 2015, calling the bill "garbage," Governor Wolf elected to line-item veto a significant portion of the bill, releasing only \$23.4 billion of "emergency funding" to help prevent some schools and human service providers from closing.

While the hope was that both chambers and the Governor would return in the new year resolved to compromise and govern - and put the public good ahead of politics - legislative leadership instead started the year off with more of the same, apparently in no rush to do the job we have all entrusted to them.

In addition to the budget, the fiscal code taking the form of HB 1327, has been the subject of much concern over the past several months. Included in HB 1327 are provisions that would interfere with the final regulatory steps in the process of securing much-needed updates to our state oil and gas regulations, and an additional 80 days of legislative review of the state's plan to implement EPA's Clean Power Plan. Not only are these provisions bad for the environment and contrary to the will of the public, using the fiscal code to carry out such action is on shaky constitutional ground - at best.

Amid the pre-holiday legislative actions,

the House Rules committee amended the fiscal code, removing much language, including the provisions we are concerned with, but the bill was then recommitted to House Rules, where on the following day the committee voted unanimously to revert to the prior printer's number, adding the harmful environmental provisions back in and moving to the floor for consideration by all House members. The bill was set on the House calendar, but before a final vote could be taken, the House adjourned. If the House decides to take up this bill and it passes, it will go to the Governor's desk, where we hope it will be at least partially vetoed to remove the provisions that run contrary to the purpose of the fiscal code, outside the boundaries of the PA Constitution, and undermine good environmental policy and public procedure.

## REGULATORY MATTERS: OUR RESPONSE TO THE DRAFT PIPELINE INFRASTRUCTURE TASKFORCE REPORT

In 2015, Governor Wolf convened a Pipeline Infrastructure Taskforce to "develop policies, guidelines and tools to assist in pipeline development." This Taskforce met throughout the year and developed a set of recommendations in the form of a draft report to the Governor. The Department of Environmental Protection opened this report for public comment, and the Chapter - under the leadership of Diana Csanik from the Environmental Law Program and Thomas Au, our Conservation Chair - responded on behalf of the Sierra Club and 12 public interests organizations. Our full comments are available on the Chapter website. In these comments, we ask that the Taskforce:

- Make clear that Article I Section 27 of the PA Constitution applies to the Commonwealth's actions concerning pipeline infrastructure, and further that the Commonwealth must



complete the advance, robust environmental review to assure that no Taskforce recommendation promotes action that would unduly infringe upon the people's constitutional environmental rights, or interfere with the Commonwealth's fiduciary duty as trustee to conserve and maintain public natural resources for the benefit of all the people, including generations yet to come;

- Recommend to the Governor to promulgate regulations or guidance on the Commonwealth's use of the constitutionally required environmental reviews in its decision-making;
- Recommend to the Governor to establish a central clearinghouse of pipeline infrastructure-related information that the public can easily access; and
- Address other key issues that the Taskforce has ignored thus far, including but not limited to market conditions, available staff and resources, on-the-ground environmental protection, abusive practices by pipeline companies, pipeline safety in rural areas, wetlands protection, and the siting and operation of compressor stations.

## Chapter Elects New Chair and Co-Chair

When the delegates to the Chapter Executive Committee (Ex Com) gathered in Harrisburg on January 9, they elected Veronica Coptis as the new Chapter Chair and Justina Wasicek as the new Vice-Chair. Veronica and Justina replace Wendi Taylor and Jack Miller, who have served as chair and vice-chair for the past four years.

Rounding out the slate of officers, Bill Brainerd who was re-elected as secretary, Brian Brown who was re-elected as treasurer, and Tiffany Hollibaugh who was elected as assistant treasurer.

Veronica Coptis grew up in Greene County near a massive coal preparation plant. She lives in Carmichaels, PA, where shale gas activity is dotted across the landscape. Veronica is the Deputy Director with the Center for Coalfield Justice, which is a grassroots environmental justice advocacy organizations working with communities impacted by mining and drilling. She is passionate about the need for just economic transition so as we move beyond coal the people in the coalfields are not left behind.

Veronica is currently serving as the state mining chair for the Pennsylvania Chapter of Sierra Club and is a member of the Allegheny Group's Executive Committee and an At-Large Delegate to the Chapter Ex Com. Veronica holds a bachelors degree in Biology from West Virginia University and previously was a community organizer with the Mountain Watershed Association.

Justina is long-time member of Sierra Club, first in the Allegheny Group and then in Governor Pinchot Group. For the past six years, Justina has co-chaired the Energy Issues committee, in which she has worked to increase the amount of energy we get from clean, renewable sources. As co-chair, she analyzes proposed legislation, drafts testimony for the Club, helps write email alerts, and meets with legislators to discuss the Club's goals.

To complete the reorganization, the following committee chairs were appointed and approved by the Ex Com:

- Conservation chair – Thomas Au
- Political Chair -- Dave Hemberger
- Political Action Fund Chair -- Dave Byman
- Political Action Fund Treasurer -- Nathaniel Hasan,
- Special Assistant to the Chair – Cece Viti
- Diversity – Sue Edwards
- Membership -- Jack Miller
- Hal Lockwood Fund -- Patti Fenstermacher
- Reserve Fund -- Nancy Parks
- Legal Chair -- Alex Bomstein
- Vice Legal Chair-- Zelda Curtis
- Outings -- Tom Hiegel
- Newsletter Editors -- Wendi Taylor and Phil Coleman
- Nominating – Jack Miller
- Calendar/Book Reporter -- Rich Gordon
- Computer/IT, HELEN, and Webmaster -- Dan Schreffler
- Training Coordinator – Wendi Taylor
- Staff Manager -- Brian Brown
- SPEL/Personnel -- Brian Brown
- Long Range Planning and Implementation -- Cece Viti
- Council of Club leaders, delegate and alternate -- Don Miles and Jeff Schmidt
- Budget/Finance -- Brian Brown
- Compliance -- Zelda Curtis
- Political Compliance -- Don Miles
- Elections -- Roy Fontaine
- Also appointed and approved to serve as Conservation Issue Committee chairs were:
- Air Research -- Nancy Parks
- Water Quality -- Claudia Kirkpatrick, Tom Au
- Renewable Energy -- Justina Wasicek
- Transportation -- Dennis Winters
- Public Lands -- Gary Thornbloom, Jeff Schmidt
- Waste -- Al Wurth
- Land Use -- Don Miles
- Sustainable Agriculture -- Sheila Gallagher, Darree Sicher
- Mining Issues -- Veronica Coptis
- Transmission Lines -- Don Miles, Nicole Faraguna
- Global Warming/Climate Disruption -- John Rossi
- Oil and Gas -- Tom Au, Arthur Clark
- Wilderness and Wildlife -- Dave Sublette, Gary Thornbloom
- Radiation -- Melody Fleck

# Paris to Earth: act locally within a global framework

by John Dernbach

Paris—In the run-up to the Conference of the Parties to the Climate Change Convention, a short humorous video, “Earth to Paris,” was widely viewed. It was a call to delegates to take serious action on climate change at the conference.

The Paris Agreement is being hailed as an historic breakthrough by political leaders, nongovernmental organizations, and the business community. It represents the first time since the Framework Convention on Climate Change was opened for signature in 1992 that all 196 parties have agreed to take actions to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. The only prior agreement even remotely comparable to the Paris Agreement—the Kyoto Protocol—limited only developed country emissions.

Not only was there unanimous approval of this agreement—a remarkable feat in itself—but its overall goal is ambitious. Countries agreed to hold “the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels.” They also agreed to “to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels, recognizing that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change.” The parties thus increased somewhat the level of ambition from limiting warming to 2 °C, which had been the consensus objective.

They also agreed to “aim to reach global peaking of greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible, recognizing that peaking will take longer for developing country Parties, and to undertake rapid reductions thereafter.” That, too, is new.

And unlike Kyoto, this agreement puts primary responsibility for what happens in particular countries where it has always been—with the countries themselves. This is through the mechanism

of nationally determined contributions (NDCs)—public commitments that nearly all countries made prior to Paris to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions to some extent. The Paris agreement affirmed those agreements and made them central to the global climate change effort.

But what also sets the Paris Agreement apart—and will ultimately determine whether humanity averts or limits the worst effects of climate change—are processes that the agreement puts in place to periodically increase national ambition, assist countries in meeting their objectives, share information, and ensure methodological consistency in accounting for emissions reductions. These processes should greatly enhance the likelihood that the Paris Agreement will actually work.

Processes in the Paris Agreement that embody this approach include the following:

- Beginning in 2020, and every five years afterwards, each country is to “communicate and maintain successive nationally determined contributions that it intends to achieve.” These, of course, are in addition to those that countries already submitted. Each “successive nationally determined contribution” is to “represent a progression beyond the Party’s then current nationally determined contribution and reflect its highest possible ambition.”
- While financial assistance to developing countries has always been part of the international framework to address climate change, developed countries agreed to increase their level of financial support from previous levels by a nonspecific amount. Developed countries also agreed to communicate “indicative quantitative and qualitative information” about

their financial support to developing countries, including projected future levels of public finance.

- Beginning in 2023, and every five years afterwards, the conference of the parties is to “take stock of the implementation of this Agreement to assess the collective progress towards achieving” its purpose. The outcome of this “global stocktake” is to “inform Parties in updating and enhancing, in a nationally determined manner,” including enhanced “international cooperation for climate action.”
- The agreement creates “an enhanced transparency framework for action and support.” This framework is partly to understand what NDCs actually mean and achieve. NDCs from different countries use different assumptions and baselines, and enhancing their comparability is essential. This transparency framework is also to better understand what financial contributions developed countries are actually making to developing countries.
- Recognizing that “[a]ccelerating, encouraging and enabling innovation is critical for an effective, long-term global response to climate change and promoting economic growth and sustainable development,” the agreement creates a Technology Mechanism. The purpose of the mechanism is to facilitate technology development and the transfer of technology to developing countries. The “global stocktake” is to consider this and other efforts to support “technology development and transfer for developing country Parties.”

These processes are different from the kind of obligations we are used to in environmental law—obligations, for

*continued on page 11*

# [ coleman's lantern ]

## disney world

by Phil Coleman

When I read John Rawlins review of Paul Craig Roberts' article (pg. 9), I realized that I had only a vague understanding of the term "Third World" and no notion what the first and second worlds were. So I Googled.

The term "third world" was developed in the 1950's, early in the Cold War years. As the term was originated, the NATO Alliance countries were the first world and the countries in the Soviet Block were the second world. Everything else was third world. If I ever heard the terms used this way, I have totally forgotten.

Somehow the only term that stuck was "Third World," standing for undeveloped poor countries.

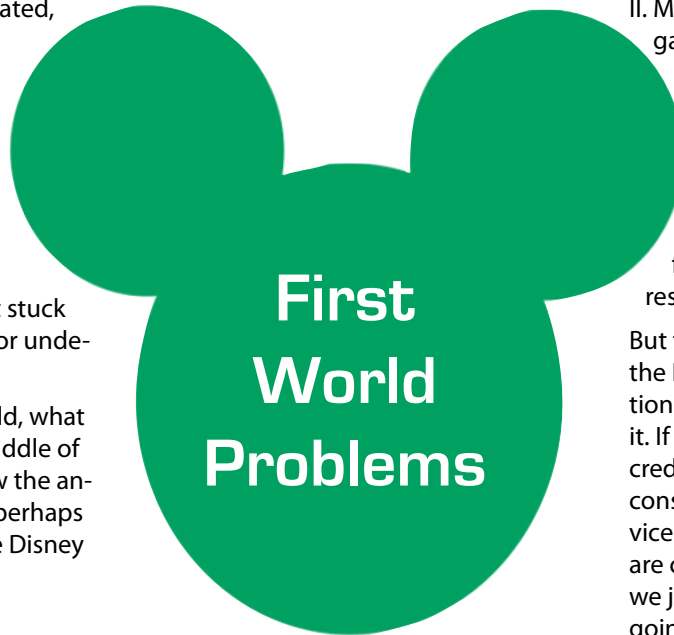
So, if we are not the first world, what are we? I awakened in the middle of the night last week and knew the answer. The United States and perhaps a few other countries are The Disney World.

### Think about it.

We are the world of brightly colored plastic. Shiny cartoon animals are funny and fun and almost human. We are surrounded by bright signs on sparkling buildings that lure us into realms of fun and calories. Shiny credit cards permit us to spend money we don't have. We can burn electricity without giving it a thought. We can fill our tanks with gasoline without pulling money out of our pockets. We can sleep in fancy hotels, help ourselves to the beverage bar, and eat at prime restaurants without "spending" a cent. We heat and cool our houses without

lifting a finger.

"It's a Barnum and Bailey world just as phony as it can be." But Disney World trumps Barnum and Bailey. We are beyond big top tents. Our lion tamer faces a plastic lion which is grateful and friendly. To Frank Sinatra, "it is only a paper moon sailing over a cardboard sea." But we have moved past



Frankie. Paper and cardboard and have been replaced by plastic.

Beyond the cartoon sketch I have made of our neighbors – people who thoughtlessly borrow on their future, beyond their means to repay – consider the depletion of oil, deforestation, soil depletion, the over consumption of water, overfishing of our oceans, and global warming.

Consider that we have almost gladly spent what little we have as the one percent wealthiest in our country get richer and richer. The price of oil has

dropped, so we can continue to drive our expensive cars. But we don't even understand the price rigging game played by big oil and the big oil countries, a game that gives them immediate wealth but puts companies and countries on the brink of bankruptcy.

Some of us who are old enough remember rationing during World War II. My family car was restricted to three gallons of gasoline a week. Sugar was rationed. I remember being told that I could sprinkle one level tea spoon of sugar on my corn flakes. Meat was rationed. Bacon disappeared from our diet. We were at war, and my family complied absolutely with restrictions as a matter of patriotism.

But that was then. Now that we are the Disney World, we have no restrictions. If we can afford it, we consume it. If we can't afford it, we get another credit card. Whatever we say about conserving, we are just paying lip service. We drive on highways where cars are crowding the road to get where we just left and we compete with cars going where we think we will enjoy going. We will behave this way until we run out of gas and the oil we made it from. We will find ourselves sputtering to a stop just a few blocks away from the drive-in that sells the biggest bacon burger. The big plastic sign will still lure us, but the drive-in has run out of bacon.

As a society, we are living comfortably and thoughtlessly by borrowing from the future, the world our grandchildren will inherit.

# [ explore enjoy...pennsylvania ]

## learn to cross country ski at parker dam state park

by Gary Thornbloom



*Left: Carey Huber, Parker Dam Environmental Education Specialist, stands on the Beaver Dam Trail along the meadow and beaver dam on Mud Run.*

**Cross country skiing is a great way to enjoy winter. If you would like to learn to cross country ski, Parker Dam State Park - near Penfield in Clearfield County - has programs to help you. Intermediate and advanced skiers will also enjoy skiing here.**

Five miles of groomed trails make it easier to learn to ski. I skied the Beaver Dam trail Loop with the Environmental Education Specialist at Parker Dam, Carey Huber. We began skiing at the Cabin Colony trailhead. After a gentle climb the trail follows the contour across the side of the mountain through hundred year old mixed hardwood trees. As the trail enters a thick hemlock stand

you will find the first of several bridges that spare you the sometimes drama of stream crossings.

To the left of the trail is a meadow formed by beaver activity in Mud Run. Huber commented on how beavers move into an area, transform it with their dam and tree cutting, eventually move from the area, the dam deteriorates, the birch and aspen return, the

beavers return, and the cycle continues.

The hemlocks here are lush compared to those in many other hemlock stands in Pennsylvania which are infested with the wooly adelgid. This insect pest, introduced from Asia, has not damaged the trees at Parker Dam. Identify the hemlock by its needles - short, flat, dark green above, and light green with two white lines below.

There are two other trees with needles that are common along this trail. White pines have 5 needles in each cluster. Red pines have two 4"-6" long needles. Red pines have reddish brown bark and, here, they are also easily identified by the neat rows they are planted in. They are Civilian Conservation Corps tree plantations planted in the 1930's.

On the Beaver Dam Trail you ski through both hemlock and red pine stands, and will see an occasional

white pine. As the trail straightens out you are following an old railroad bed that was used for hauling logs. Typically trails follow small gauge railroad beds, but this area was near enough to the standard gauge rail line in Penfield that it was easier to simply extend the standard gauge to here. This avoided unloading and reloading the logs.

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# [ article review ]

## Review of "On the Road to Third World," an article by Paul Craig Roberts

by John Rawlins <http://www.paulcraigroberts.org/2015/10/29/us-on-road-to-third-world-paul-craig-roberts/>

Paul Craig Roberts blogs from the perspective of a well-known economist who has worked in government, academia, and reporting. I take most of his blogging somewhat seriously, since his familiarity with the financial world helps fill in a major blank in my own background (physics); he also does NOT come across as a standard classical economist and appears to be thinking for himself. So I was not too surprised by the title of the article, in spite of my skepticism that the U.S. would resemble a third-world economy in such a short timeframe, as viewed through my lens of peak oil (*aka* peak everything, or having hit limits to growth). Since I am NOT an economist (nor would I choose to be in any other life), I'll simply re-iterate his "evidence" and occasionally comment from a peak oil perspective.

First, however, remember that countries with third-world status today might well be of a much lower status a decade from now, so the terminology is somewhat relative. Over a decade ago, my immediate family gathered in New Zealand for a week where one son was spending a year at the university in Christchurch. At the end of that visit, we spent nearly a week in Fiji "on the way home" to Bellingham, Washington. Fiji is and was listed as a third-world nation. Roads were narrow and pot-holed, hardly any vehicles were on those roads, and the ones that were could not travel faster than 30 mph and ALL emitted considerable smoke from tailpipes and were old. Markets were outdoors under tarps, homes were ramshackle, jobs were scarce, and any educated

young people left the islands for places like New Zealand. All food was local, and people were healthy with very few obese citizens. Air-conditioning in the warm climate was non-existent. Workers cut sugar cane with machetes, and cleared fields by burning. Travel between islands was by small motor-boats. We didn't see any buildings over two stories high. That is my comparison point for a third-world country - it was simple, required manual labor, and quiet - the complete opposite of the U.S.

The only similarity was racial conflict - between native Fijians and Indo-Fijians.

Here's a list of Roberts' bits of evidence for "progress" toward his 2004 projection that this country would be third-world by 2024. I urge you to read the article for more complete understanding of his logic.

1. Except for the top 0.1 percent, real income has declined from the 1999 peak, on the order 5 percent, depending on income level.
2. A record 93,000,000 (93 million) Americans are not in the work force. What this actually means is sketchy, but even so that must imply a lot of people not paying taxes. Roberts attributes this lack of jobs - as well as low pay service jobs - to offshoring of manufacturing as well as higher-paying jobs to China and India following the collapse of the former USSR.
3. Between 1999 and 2012-13, the number of 25 year olds living with parents doubled, from 25 percent to nearly 50 percent. Young

people unable to form households do not purchase houses OR household goods - a significant economic damper.

4. Economic, social, and governmental infrastructure is collapsing. If the 2015-16 Republican presidential primaries are not convincing evidence, I don't know what would be.
5. Young college graduates have a terrifically hard time finding good jobs, and most have to settle for a salary that does not allow them to pay back their college debts. Many of you readers will be familiar with that problem. What Roberts says about college and universities - insularity, use of 'adjuncts' (aka part-timers) - is all consistent with my experience from 1996-2008 in the local community college.

His conclusion seems to be that a system so poorly run already has third-world status. I still think we have a long way to descend before conditions resemble those I saw in Fiji. My guess for reaching today's third-world status would be somewhere in the 2030-2035 timeframe for the U.S., which coincides with current estimates for the complete disappearance of conventional oil exports around the world. However, I do see strong evidence of the beginnings of general world social/economic/political collapse, beginning around the end of the 20th century and currently accelerating.

Just prior to submitting this article for publication, I encountered an

*continued on page 11*

# the clean rivers campaign: why the sierra club should be “all in”

by Tom Hoffman

For four years a coalition of faith, low income, minority, labor and environmental organizations have been waging a campaign over how a portion of Southwestern Pennsylvania will spend \$3 billion of residents’ money to end the practice of dumping 9 billion gallons a year of raw sewage into the three rivers.

On one side of this battle is the coalition, known as the Clean Rivers Campaign ([www.cleanriverscampaign.org](http://www.cleanriverscampaign.org)) that has fought for solving this problem with a green first approach. This means we would invest those \$3 billion in green infrastructure in a smart scientific way to keep as much stormwater as possible out of our sewers. Regions that have taken this approach have found that these investments bring many benefits back to their neighborhoods such as local jobs, revitalized business districts, less flooding and a cleaner and healthier environment. Once we have done the maximum amount of green we would then figure out what other kinds of gray infrastructure we would need to finish the job of cleaning our rivers.

On the other side of the fight is the Allegheny County Sanitary Authority or ALCOSAN. They have been advocating for years that we need to build 14+ miles of tunnels under our rivers to catch all the stormwater and sewage and hold it until the rain stops and then pump it out and treat it. This approach is outdated and does not bring back the multiple

community benefits that a green first approach has shown it can do in cities like Washington DC, Kansas City, New York and Seattle.

As Pittsburgh Mayor Peduto likes to put it, “We need to invest in a sponge, not a funnel.”

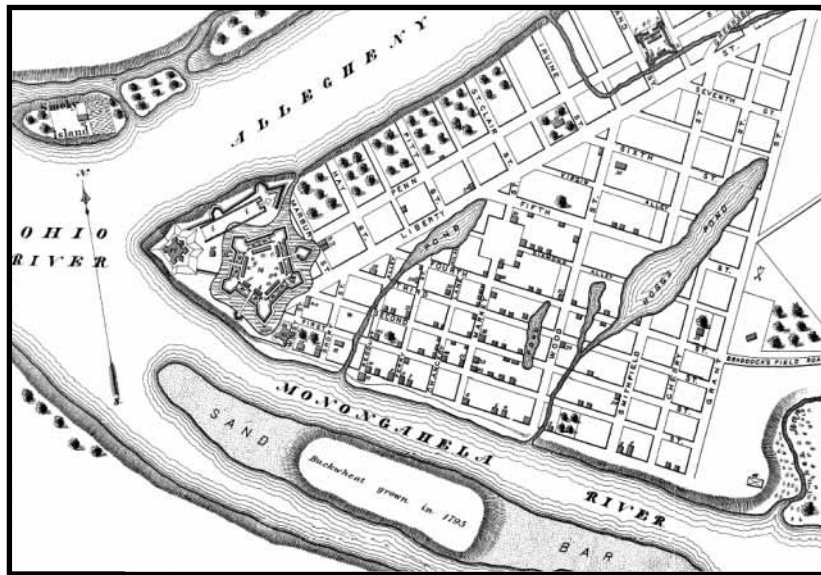
and minority residents of this region. It has helped bring new activated Sierra members into the campaign. As Naomi Klein described in her book, *This Changes Everything*, the fight for climate justice can be the issue that brings progressive movements together and the CRC is an example of how that can work.

We are talking REAL money here. There are about 200 cities across the country facing the same choice about how we solve. At an average of \$3 billion per city that is HALF A TRILLION DOLLARS that will be spent fixing our country’s sewage in the rivers problem. Winning a sustainable way to spend that money is a fight we need to win.

A green approach is climate strategy. Investing in green infrastructure is a way to build resilient communities

that can withstand the effects of climate change at the same time it helps soak up carbon dioxide. Many of the communities that could receive these investments have traditionally been left behind because they are low income and or minority communities. These investments can redress that wrong. Building tunnels uses huge amounts of concrete which pumps carbon into the atmosphere. In the world after Paris, nobody should be spending a half a trillion dollars on anything that doesn’t help the climate situation.

*To learn more about the Clean Rivers Campaign, contact Tom Hoffman at [tom.hoffman@sierraclub.org](mailto:tom.hoffman@sierraclub.org)*



The coalition partners are Pennsylvania Interfaith Impact Network, Action United, Pittsburgh United, Nine Mile Run Watershed Association, Clean Water Action and Sierra Club. Sierra has been in the campaign since day one and has played a leadership role particularly in working with the 83 municipalities that are part of the ACLOSAN service area.

Here are some of the reasons why Sierra Club members should be “all in” with the campaign:

It is a model for how environmental campaigns should be. It has built strong relationships between Sierra Club members and members of organizations that represent faith, labor and low income

## Paris

continued from page 6

example, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by a certain amount by a certain date. Rather, these processes may be understood in terms of reflexive law and governance. Reflexive approaches are not substantive rules: they improve the capacity of governmental institutions and other entities to learn about themselves and their actions. Reflexive approaches also stimulate them to use this information to make appropriate changes. They create spurs to action.

*John Dernbach is a distinguished professor of law at Widener University Commonwealth Law School. To read more, see: [www.johndernbach.com](http://www.johndernbach.com)*

*“... if anybody still wants to dispute the science around climate change, have at it. You’ll be pretty lonely, because you’ll be debating our military, most of America’s business leaders, the majority of the American people, almost the entire scientific community, and 200 nations around the world who agree it’s a problem and intend to solve it.”*

— Barack Obama

*State of the Union Address, January 12, 2016*

## the lancaster group takes an educational bike ride



Chapter Director Joanne Kilgour (far left) led a bike ride for the Lancaster Group members on the Enola Low-Grade Rail Trail on Sept. 19, passing several energy producing facilities along the adjacent stretch of the Susquehanna River. Joanne discussed the environmental concerns each facility poses.

## Article Review

continued from page 9

interesting related article by Barbara Ehrenreich, one of my favorite writers and thinkers. She reports the discovery that U.S. blue-collar white working class “members in the 45- to 54-year-old age group are dying at an immoderate rate.”

One of the key predictions of the “Limits to Growth” book from 1972 was a peak and decline in world population shortly after peak “everything.”

Ehrenreich seems to conclude that this over-worked and under-paid group has an increasing tendency

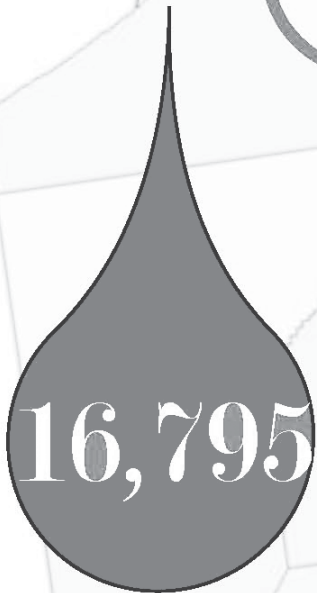
to engage in various types of self-destructive behavior, hence lower life-expectancy. While this trend would have little effect on reproduction, I would be unsurprised to see it spread to our child-bearing population unless life prospects somehow improve significantly for them. The following is the link to her article.

[http://www.tomdispatch.com/post/176075/tomgram%3A\\_barbara\\_ehrenreich%2C\\_america\\_to\\_working\\_class\\_whites%3A\\_drop\\_dead%21/#more](http://www.tomdispatch.com/post/176075/tomgram%3A_barbara_ehrenreich%2C_america_to_working_class_whites%3A_drop_dead%21/#more)

# 2015

ANNUAL  
SNAPSHOT

It is with great enthusiasm that I introduce the 2015 grassroots institution we employ a model that proactively direct and shape a high-profile statewide environmental agenda to create a body of work that is leading to local, state, and national social justice. We look forward to another year of progress in safe, healthy, and just places to live for generations to come.



16,795

dollars of grant money invested in improving hiking trails and environmental education in the City of Erie and Presque Isle State Park

40+ outings

6 campaigns/groups

100+ participants

13

letters sent to Harrisburg for stronger action on climate change legislation designed to protect our environment



275

members attended more than two dozen opportunities on climate change & Natural Gas development | Water | Clean Power Plan | Clean Air Act | Clean River

15 Sierra Club Pennsylvania Chapter Annual Report. As a truly volunteer-led, puts the will of our members first and provides opportunities for citizens to environmental organization's legislative, conservation, and outings initiatives to create, and global progress on climate, the environment, human health, and of working together to make our communities - and our global community - as to come. *-Joanne Kilgour, Chapter Director*

**71%**

increase in total giving over FY 2014

**3,000+**

Lebanon, Pa. urging  
regulation and  
funding the  
ment

**24**

years the Kittatinny group has been  
cleaning up Berks Co. roadsides

**451k**

people reached  
through our social  
media platforms  
Twitter, Facebook,  
Blogger, and  
YouTube.

**266,743**

TWITTER

**173,427**

FACEBOOK

**10,977**

BLOG

**806**

YOUTUBE

ities for public engagement on: Public Lands | Oil  
Plan | Zero-Emission Public Transit | Clean Water  
ers-Campaign

[ broaden our focus ]

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# introduction: working more broadly for a better future

**A**s we begin a new year, there is no better time to envision a better future. As we say farewell to 2015, let's lean forward and broaden our focus.

Yes, our country and our Commonwealth are in a pretty sorry state. We have managed to create an economic system that exploits every natural resource and every person who is not an "owner." The rich get richer and the rest of us fight over the leftovers.

When we environmentalists work for a cleaner environment, we are almost always working against large corporations, whose only reason for existing is to make money. And to make their profits they frequently work to resist, undo and violate environmental regulations. Corporations work to lower corporate taxes at the expense of social services and infrastructure.

They advocate for war so arms development can be profitable; they work against individual rights and workers' rights; they lobby for free trade pacts that enable big companies to utilize poor (and sometimes underage) work forces at starvation wages in countries that don't protect the environment. Corporations work to keep wages low and thwart attempts by workers to gain power through organizing into unions.

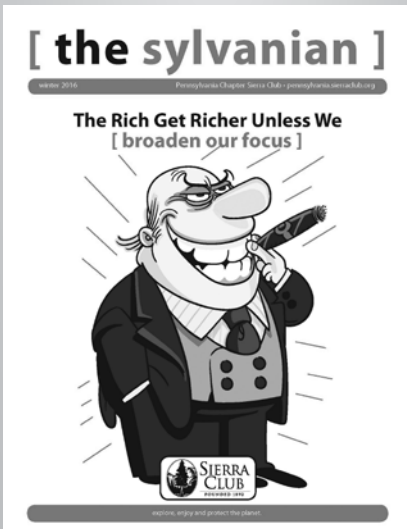
Our political system is no better. We have created a system that oppresses people, rather than solving the problems they face. People with money can buy more power through Super Pac's and highly paid lobbyists who influence legislators with "favors." We have a tax code and state laws that have been written and amended by the lobbyists of major corporations; which obstruct fair and just treatment of the average citizen.

When fifty percent of the wealth is held by less than one percent of the people, we can no longer advocate narrowly. We must take up John Muir's declaration: "Everything is hitched to everything else." We must continue to work against environmental abuses, coal mining, fracking; and work for clean water, clean air, clean, renewable energy, wilderness, and protection of species. But we must not be narrow in our work. We must join with other people of good will to create an economic and political system that works for all of us.

Further, we need to develop a new attitude that is based on the well-being of others. We need to demand an equitable economic system that provides for our common wealth, a political system that results in good government that delivers justice for all of us, and an attitude that creates a better way to live and work together.

Working with others, we can modify our current political system which in turn could restrain the excesses of huge corporations.

As this new year begins, let us look around and see the groups that are working to get money out of politics, to invest in our schools, to protect the right to vote, to provide for living wages, to improve our infrastructure, to promote an equitable tax system, to secure justice from our courts, to advocate for peace, and to insure that everyone has access to food, shelter, health care, education and work. When we work with any of these groups, we are working in our own best interests because, after all, "Everything is hitched to everything else."



In the last 20 years, business after business has fled overseas where it can enjoy cheap labor, freedom from environmental regulation, and a variety of tax breaks.

# neo liberal economics

by Phil Coleman

Those of us who are liberals flinch when neo liberalism suddenly becomes a bad word. In the 1970s and 1980s, some world leaders, Ronald Reagan, for example, abandoned long held economic policies to embrace fiscal austerity, deregulation, free trade, and reductions in government spending in order to enhance the role of the private sector in the economy. Seeing this as a return to laissez-faire policies of a century earlier, it became known as neo liberalism.

Neo liberalism is an argument which extends personal rights to businesses and argues against governmental protections.

We are attuned to the exploitive devices of big business, big banks, Wall Street, etc., the practices that enable the super wealthy to get richer while we struggle to stay solvent. We seem to know where the blame rests. We hate it when the Koch brothers and their billionaire ilk buy the political process. But let's look at another aspect of our problems – the world economic process.

The Clinton administration, with cheerful support of many Republican Congressmen forced through the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), paying lip service to environmental regulation and fair labor practices. The Obama administration has continued this movement with the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP).

When we learn that Apple employs over one million Chinese workers in its factories, building an array of devices from laptops to ipads and iphones, and that these Chinese workers typically work 60 or more hours a week in harsh work conditions and for low pay, we have to believe that such trade has gone too far. Apple also takes advantage of laws that permit it to hold much of its wealth overseas so that it does not have to pay its full share of taxes.

Over the years many of us have viewed Apple, like Microsoft, as a group of clever and able technicians located in California – intelligent, creative and benign. But Apple's business practices are not significantly different from WalMart, the store we love to hate.

In the last 20 years, business after business has fled overseas where it can enjoy cheap labor, freedom from environmental regulation, and a variety of tax breaks.

Combine this trend with the mechanization and robotization of manufacture processes and we create tremendous pressures on American labor.

Although the official unemployment rate is around 5 percent, the number of people without jobs is higher, and many workers are working part time or for lower pay than they used to receive, and many have given up looking for work. Also, the United States has the highest number of prison inmates of any country in the world, higher even than those

more populous countries like China and India. Relying on third world labor to produce materials for the American markets means we buy things for less. But each time we make those purchases, we are taking money out of the pockets of American workers.

When candidates for Congress and/or the presidency go hat in hand to banks and big business, asking for campaign donations, they are making it easier for those interests to get the legislation they want and to have it enforced the way they want as well. The wealth imbalance between the rich and the supposed middle class continues to grow.

From the beginning, workers and the unions that represent them knew that the new era of neo liberal economics was bad news for the middle class. Labor unions have lobbied hard to defeat the free trade agreements because they knew these agreements would suck jobs out of the country. The Sierra Club found common ground with the unions and joined with them to oppose the TPP. The Club has also stood with workers seeking an increase in the minimum wage.

[ broaden our focus ]

# supplying the world with weapons

by Phil Coleman

[ ...war tends to sow the seeds of environmental disasters. ]

Overseas sales of military weapons hit a new high in 2014, with over \$36 Billion in sales to foreign countries. Ironically, primary sponsor of these sales is President Obama.

Private companies like Boeing Aircraft, manufacture the weapons and profit from the sales. All sales must be approved by the Defense Department. It also seems that the Department's role might go beyond passive approval to a more active role assisting in the negotiations.

Just ten years ago, Boeing's plant outside St. Louis (a former McDonnell-Douglas Aircraft plant, prior to the merger) which manufactured F -15's was about to go out of business because of vanishing demand. But suddenly that changed. Countries like Saudi Arabia and India placed large orders. Revitalization of the business saved thousands of American jobs. But we have to wonder about the

future problems we may have created.

Boeing is one of three major American aircraft companies, the other two being Lockheed Martin and Northrup Grumman. They are the three largest aircraft manufacturers in the world, and the three together account for 1 percent of American GDP.

We remember the weapons (especially ground-to-air bazooka-type missiles) the United States supplied to Afghanistan rebels when these rebels were fighting the Soviet Union. We were shocked after the United States invasion of Afghanistan when some of these weapons were used against us. Some people with longer memories may remember that arms sales to Iran when the Shah was in power came back quickly to haunt us when he was overthrown.

Although the aircraft industry has a workforce of over 200,000, the total

number of jobs has shrunk by over 30 percent in the last 20 years. Part of this is explained by automation, but overseas outsourcing of parts manufacture also accounts for much of the loss. In fact, some outsourcing is done to offset the costs some receiving countries are entailing. The companies buy parts made in these countries, making the cost less burdensome.

While this may not feel like an environmental problem, war tends to sow the seeds of environmental disasters. The actions of our government as the biggest weapons trader – by far – in the world does raise serious concerns. In the short term and in years to come, we have to be viewed as a war threat, an invasion threat, everywhere. Our protestations of peaceful intentions ring hollow. Our leaders proclaim the dangers of terrorists, but weapons we have made are killing thousands in the Middle East.

## answers to crossword puzzle

(from page 24)

### Across

- 1 World
- 7 Slaughter House Five
- 11 Agreement
- 15 Bacon
- 16 American
- 17 Veronica Coptis

### Down

- 1 World
- 2 Horseshoe
- 4 Boeing
- 5 Country
- 6 Rich
- 8 Pacific
- 9 Depletion
- 10 State Park
- 12 Research
- 13 Emissions
- 14 Tom Au





# another way to see ramadi

by Phil Coleman

Seeing pictures of Ramadi, Iraq, as it was recaptured brought me a flashback to *Slaughterhouse Five*, Kurt Vonnegut's World War II novel. For those who have forgotten, Dresden, Germany, was fire bombed and thousands died while the city was destroyed. In that novel, Billy Pilgrim, the protagonist of Vonnegut's novel walks around in a dreamlike state viewing the destruction. Pictures of the devastated Dresden are available on line. Following half a year of warfare, Ramadi looks worse than Dresden. We cannot imagine a single citizen still living there.

In the news, we are urged to be happy that Ramadi has been recaptured and that ISIS has been defeated. In some sense, we should be. But in another sense, we should be appalled. We are sponsors, participants in the spread of misery in a broad swath of the Middle East. This misery makes the destruction of the World Trade Center\*\*\* and loss of 3,000 lives seem almost trivial.

### There has to be a better way.

By the way, Billy Pilgrim is a minimally conscious, inept soldier who spends part of his time in dream travel to another world. The horror of war es-

capas him. There is a sense in which our happy talk media news makes Billy Pilgrims of us all.

\*\*\* The rubble from the World Trade Center made its way to landfills all over the world, much of it toxic and hazardous. Mass destruction is an environmental problem.

## fighting eminent domain

On December 14, friends gathered in solidarity at the Huntingdon County Courthouse to listen to oral arguments in an eminent domain case filed by Sunoco Partners to take the Gerharts' land for the Mariner pipeline.



Seated: Elise Gerhart

Second Row L to R: Wendi Taylor, Jim Garthe, Ralph Blume, Harvey Nickey, Etta Albright, Ellen Gerhart

Third Row: Attorney Mike Faherty, John Cerry, Betsy Conover, Stephen Gerhart

# saving a species 101

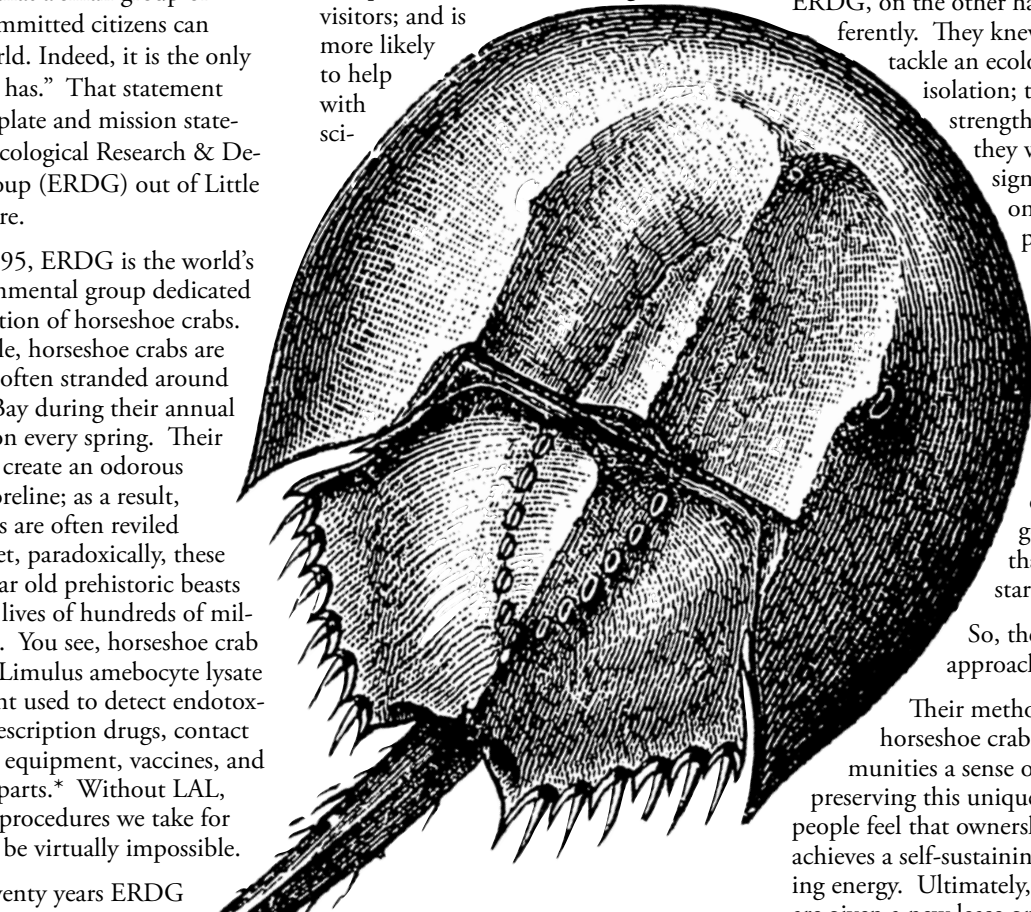
by Anthony D. Fredericks

Many years ago, noted anthropologist Margaret Mead opined, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” That statement serves as a template and mission statement for the Ecological Research & Development Group (ERDG) out of Little Creek, Delaware.

Founded in 1995, ERDG is the world’s leading environmental group dedicated to the preservation of horseshoe crabs. For most people, horseshoe crabs are alien creatures often stranded around the Delaware Bay during their annual spawning season every spring. Their carcasses often create an odorous and untidy shoreline; as a result, horseshoe crabs are often reviled and vilified. Yet, paradoxically, these 455 million year old prehistoric beasts have saved the lives of hundreds of millions of people. You see, horseshoe crab blood harbors *Limulus ameobocyte lysate* (LAL), a reagent used to detect endotoxins in or on prescription drugs, contact lenses, surgical equipment, vaccines, and artificial body parts.\* Without LAL, many medical procedures we take for granted would be virtually impossible.

For the past twenty years ERDG has proffered an innovative conservation framework; not one of rules and regulations, but one built on the concept of ownership. Indeed, ERDG has a philosophy unlike considerably larger environmental entities. They believe that building an engaged community is the best way to approach wildlife conservation; and that a community, if given the chance, will achieve more than a (typical) “conservation through regulation” approach. The philosophical anchor of ERDG is the be-

lief that an involved community is more aware of changes in the environment; is best positioned to educate neighbors and visitors; and is more likely to help with sci-



entific analysis, shape public opinion, and report infractions.

Too often, environmental initiatives consist of myriad regulations that take time to draft, time to review, time to implement, and even more time to achieve significant results. And yet, the intricacies of those rules frequently fail to regulate human behavior—particularly when people think the legislation conflicts with economic growth or their individual livelihoods. In fact, the regulatory process, because it is “top down” rather than “bottom up,” typically alienates the very communities that should be

assisting in the stewardship of a natural resource.

ERDG, on the other hand, thinks differently. They knew they couldn’t tackle an ecological issue in isolation; they needed the strength of numbers if they were to have any significant effect on what is often perceived as an endangered population. They also realized that many Delaware residents didn’t like horseshoe crabs, and they knew it would be crazy to even suggest to those folks that they should start liking them.

So, they took a novel approach.

Their methodology is to save horseshoe crabs by giving communities a sense of ownership in preserving this unique species. When people feel that ownership, the group achieves a self-sustaining and long-lasting energy. Ultimately, horseshoe crabs are given a new lease on life.

For example: every year the Delaware shoreline is hammered by winter storms, and every spring, residents petition the state to come in and repair those beaches. Unfortunately, there is little beachside commerce to justify the expense of replenishing the shoreline. But, when ERDG stepped in and informed the coastal communities that if they could demonstrate to the state that they had an interest larger than themselves, larger than the value of their real estate, then they would have a better argument when they requested replenishment dollars.

To do that, ERDG proposed that each community become a horseshoe crab sanctuary (initially called a Backyard Stewardship). Amazingly, 95 percent of the members of one community signed on to the first sanctuary, simply because it was a relatively easy way for them to get sand in their backyards.

But, it doesn't stop there. For example, once a community decides to become a sanctuary, ERDG gives them an interpretive sign about horseshoe crabs and the community's commitment to protect and conserve them. Each community is also required to prepare a written statement as to why it chose to become a sanctuary. Groups form, committees organize, and the citizens begin to coalesce. Eventually, there's some local media coverage, and the group gets some traction. Citizens become proud of something they accomplished, something they banded together to preserve.

Then, in 1998, ERDG launched its Just flip 'em! program to bring attention to the high mortality horseshoe crabs incur

from being stranded upside-down during spawning, and to encourage, through a simple act of compassion, an appreciation for this remarkable creature. The program seemed almost too simple... too obvious... for an animal rights group to propose. "Why devote time and effort to a project with no economic benefits?" people asked.

In the past, citizens used backhoes to bury tons of stranded crabs each year. Now, while walking along the shore, they're flipping them over. The first thing people realize is that thousands of crabs, normally dying on the beach and smelling up their properties, now go back in the water. It quickly became apparent that the simple act of flipping horseshoe crabs produced a lot less stink for a small investment of time. Again, "ownership" was the common denominator.

ERDG embraces the import of a change in the public's perception of these ancient creatures. Beyond that, however, is the notion that the salvation of horse-

shoe crabs by a small band of ecological warriors is a metaphor for a much larger issue. That is, an overemphasis on legislative efforts often breeds indifference and that indifference, perhaps more than financial resources, is the ultimate stumbling block for any preservation effort. On the other hand, ecological conservancy and environmental protection are ensured when promoted in concert with a strong scaffold of public ownership. Forcing legislation without attention to psychological and personal dynamics frequently limits momentum, drive, and impact. The final lesson for any ecological initiative is, ultimately: we tend to take care of what we own.

\* Processed horseshoe crab blood is worth more than \$15,000 a quart.

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*Anthony D. Fredericks is the author of 151 books. These include the adult nonfiction books *Horseshoe Crab: Biography of a Survivor* and *The Secret Life of Clams*. He is also professor of education at York College of Pennsylvania and a long-time member of the Sierra Club.*

## Explore, Enjoy

*continued from page 8*

The trail ends within sight of the Park Office. After thanking Huber for his insights to habitat and history, I retraced the Beaver Dam Trail to a short spur that connects to the Skunk Trail.

Huber had told me that skiing the Skunk Trail from the trailhead along Mud Run Road would let me finish that trail with a long gentle grade back to the Park Office area. As I climbed the uphill grade away from the road I realized that I would have to work for the gentle return.

The Skunk Trail passes through a shelterwood cut. This is a forest management technique where trees are removed to thin the canopy. Enough large trees remain to "shelter" the area and encourage seedlings to grow. Eventually the large trees are cut, and the end result is an even aged stand. Compare this with clearcut logging in other State Forest

areas, and with mixed age old growth in protected areas.

Skunk Trail's gentle grade ends with a downhill rush to Laurel Ridge Road - control your speed as you approach the metal gate! Cross the road and continue to the trailhead at Souders Trail. Continue to the left on Souders Trail, and out to Fairview Road. Go left to return to the Park Office area.

Groomed trails are a nice change of pace for intermediate and advanced skiers who often do most of their skiing on ungroomed woodland trails. Advanced skiers may also like to check out Sullivan Ridge Trail and Tornado Alley. Both will take you into areas where you will be more likely to see elk.

Huber describes the park "...as a great place for beginner's and intermediate level cross-country skiers to come and practice their skills, and to get into shape

for longer excursions. We have about 5 miles of groomed (track set) trails..."

February 6 is the first of seven "Learn to Cross-country Ski" days offered at Parker Dam this season. There is a \$3 fee and limited number of skis are available, free, for children and for adults. You will learn how cross country skis work, how to determine the correct size, and with a few more pointers in an open area where you will be shown the basics, you may then choose to try the trails. What you need to know, including the dates and times, snow depth and maps, is available online at the park's website. Rental cabins are also available.

Parker Dam State Park is a great place to learn to cross country ski. Once you have learned to cross country ski, you will look forward to wintry days when you can be out enjoying and exploring Pennsylvania's woodlands.

# announcing the Huplits Wildlife Grant awards

*by Edward J Chute, PhD, 2015 Allegheny - Huplits Wildlife Committee Chair*

Each year, a gift from the Huplits Trust is distributed by the Allegheny Group, Sierra Club, to grant applicants with projects to protect wildlife and wildlife habitat in Pennsylvania. The 2015 ALG-Huplits Wildlife Grant Committee awarded nine grants totaling \$49,479.00.

## **2015-A PENNSYLVANIA CHAPTER SIERRA CLUB WILDLIFE COMMITTEE**

The Huplits Grant will provide funding for a permanent educational installation at Gull Point on Presque Isle in Erie, PA. Huplits will fund the erection of an interpretive kiosk and sign describing and protecting the delicate habit and nesting area of Gull Point, which is a stopover and resting point for migratory birds and is one of PA's and North America's important refuge and nest area for birds and bats.

**2015 Award: \$6,975.00**

## **2015-B ALG-PENNSYLVANIA FIREFLY FESTIVAL**

The Huplits Grant will help provide two years of funding in order to grow and expand the Firefly Festival's educational outreach project. Specifically, the Firefly Festival seeks: to attract greater participation from scientists; to partner with agencies (local, state, federal) overseeing PA forests and parks; to create an internship program with local higher education institutions.

**2015-2016 Award: \$10,290.00**

## **2015-C CALIFORNIA UNIVERSITY OF PA BIOLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES**

The Huplits Grant will help fund a scientific and professional bio-assessment of abandoned mine drainage mitigation in the Blackleggs Creek watershed of the Kiski-Conemaugh River basin. The bio-assessment will focus on pollution problems and mine discharges on small tributaries which hamper complete watershed recovery. The bio-assessment will measure of the effectiveness of the previous remediation strategies, provide a benchmark for future monitoring,

and reveal the need for remediation of abandoned coal mines as the area transitions from an economic reliance on the coal and steel industry toward recreation and tourism..

**2015 Award: \$3,200.00**

## **2015-D HERITAGE CONSERVANCY**

The Huplits Grant will support the Heritage Conservancy's Quakertown Swamp Preserve's "Bioblitz Project," which will provide essential information into their stewardship of the Swamp. Specifically, the "Bioblitz" will locate and identify the species of flora and fauna on the Quakertown Swamp Preserve in the Spring of 2016. The "Bioblitz" event will bring together teams of volunteers, scientists, and naturalists as well as teachers, students, and other community members working together to conserve and balance the Preserve's threatened and endangered species while discovering options to enhance public access to the Heritage's property.

**2015 Award: \$6,140.00**

## **2015-E LEHIGH VALLEY GROUP**

The Huplits Grant will support the LHV Group's proposed "Lehigh and Delaware Canal Flow Study and Wildlife Survey" project. The Lower Lehigh River's natural aquatic ecosystem was altered by the construction of three dams installed to provide water for three canal systems for coal and goods transportation below each dam, which have been deleterious to wildlife populations that establish in the canals. During a 12 month, four seasonal period, the project will: determine the Lehigh and Delaware River canal water flow rates; document the current controlling method for the in-flow and exit-flow of the canals system; survey and record the wildlife within the canal system—all corresponding to the seasonal flow determinations.

**2015 Award: \$14,880.00**

## **2015-F WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA CONSERVANCY**

The Huplits Grant will provide supplemental funding for "Additional important roosting and maternity habitat for imperiled bat populations in Western Pennsylvania." The project seeks to increase survivorship for several cave bat species whose populations are in decline because of the white-nose syndrome infestation. The proposal is similar to the WPC project, which received Huplits funding in 2014.

WPC will install educational signs and conduct monitoring visits to collect information on the use of the houses by bats.

**2015 Award: \$3,490.00**

**2015-G KITTATINNY GROUP**

The Huplits Grant will help initiate funding for the “Wild Places, Clean Spaces” project proposal to highlight the dangers to the environment, wildlife, flora, soil, air and water quality of the use of municipal treated sewage sludge waste marketed as a “fertilizer” on public and private wild lands. The major activity of the project will involve the creation of a media kit, including an internet “streamable” video file that can be made available to Sierra Club Groups and others through the PA United Sludge Free Alliance and other websites.

**2015 Award: \$286.00**

**2015-H ALLEGHENY LAND TRUST**

The Huplits Grant will help fund the purchase of 30 acres in the Little Sewickley Creek Watershed in Bell Acres Borough, Allegheny County, PA—known as the Roby Property. The Roby Property contains a mix of woodlands, meadows, wetlands, springs and seeps, which provide a diversity of habitats (including grassland) needed for declining bird species

such as the endangered upland sandpiper and eastern meadowlark. The watershed carries a DEP “High Quality” designated Trout stocked fishery and possesses some of the best quality water in Allegheny County. Protecting this parcel will help buffer encroachment’s negative impact on water quality, wildlife, and its habitat from surrounding development.

**2015 Award: \$1,290.00**

**2015-I ALLEGHENY DEFENSE PROJECT**

The Huplits Grant will continue to help fund the Allegheny Defense Project’s “Stop FERC’s Fracking Pipelines Project” to protect wildlife habitat in Pennsylvania from the impacts of rampant natural gas pipeline construction. New gas pipelines and shale gas fracking are rapidly fragmenting forested wildlife habitat throughout Pennsylvania. According to ADP, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), routinely ignores the wide-ranging and long-term impacts to wildlife when it reviews applications for new pipelines. ADP believes that the combined impact of pipeline construction and related fracking for shale gas is the most significant environmental issue effecting wildlife in Pennsylvania.

**2015 Award: \$2,928.00**

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**Governor Pinchot Group**

<https://gvpsierraclub.wordpress.com/>

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**Moshannon Group**

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<http://pennsylvania.sierraclub.org/moshannon/outings.html>

**Northeastern Group**

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**Southeastern Group**

<http://pennsylvania.sierraclub.org/southeastern>

# coveted water - the collision of demand

*by Darree Sicher, Kittatinny Group Chair*

Recently, citizens of Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania, approached the Kittatinny Sierra Club for help concerning the issue of groundwater extraction in their area - and they are justly concerned. With at least three water extraction facilities for the bottled water industry in a five mile radius, this community already has water losses for commercial benefit. Just one of these wells extracts over 7 million gallons per month. Pennsylvania is second in the nation for the most flowing waters, making it especially important - and especially vulnerable - to commercial interests.

Schuylkill and Berks counties are within the Delaware River Watershed and, as such, hold an important role in the waterways and water supply for a huge segment of the US population. 15 million people rely on the Delaware River Watershed for drinking water, including some of the most populated cities in the nation. The Delaware River is the longest free-flowing river east of the Mississippi, with no dams the entire length.

Water extraction on a national and global scale includes the \$60 billion dollar global bottled water industry. In 2015 alone, the bottled water volume exceeded 30 billion gallons. Aside from water extracted for bottled water industry, agriculture groundwater extraction uses an estimated 50 billion gallons per day. Under constant threat are the regulations banning commercial extraction of water for natural gas drilling within the Delaware Watershed, a process that uses over 4.5 million gallons of fresh water per natural gas well.

According to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), serious studies find concerns about water extraction. Groundwater is a valuable resource in the United States and the source of drinking water for almost half the total population and nearly all of the rural population. Groundwater depletion - the long-term, water-level decline caused by sustained groundwater pumping - is a key issue associated with groundwater use.

Groundwater depletion is primarily caused by sustained groundwater pumping and extraction at a faster rate than it can be recharged, ultimately creating a negative effect on the community, the environment and the people who make use of the water. Water depletion problems can include drying up of wells, reduction of water in streams and lakes, deterioration of water quality, increased pumping costs and land subsidence, also known as 'sink holes'. Twenty-five percent of all rainfall in the US becomes groundwater, an important fact to consider when recognizing that the level and volume of an underground water supply requires constant monitoring to determine extraction impact on both underground and above ground water supply.

The environmental rights of a community are inherent, regardless of laws or regulations, and it is the duty of the government

body to maintain and protect our shared resources now and for the future. Every state may pass rules and regulations regarding natural resource extractions, including water extraction.

Part of elected officials and township supervisors roles is to recognize that state-wide and local regulations are necessary for the health and safety of the citizens of the community and state. Resources unique to a particular locale must be part of local control and Section 27 of the PA Constitution instructs that no government authority can pass laws that force environmental degradation. Under the Pennsylvania Constitution, Section 27, the people have a right, "... to clean air, pure water and the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic and esthetic values of the environment. Pennsylvania's public natural resources are the common property of all the people, including generations yet to come. As trustee of these resources, the Commonwealth SHALL maintain them for the benefit of all the people."

Although some Pennsylvania laws requires registration with the DEP of any use of 10,000 gallons or more of water per day, reporting a natural resource use does nothing to protect that resource. Congress created the Delaware River Basin Commission and the Susquehanna River Basin Commission in 1981 to regulate use of waters over 20,000 to 100,000 gallons per day because of threatened overuse of resources but this bureaucratic body does not "protect" any location. In fact, the lack of state or local regulation places the burden of proof on the citizens if degradation of local water supply is impacted.

The Kittatinny Sierra Club supports the rights of the citizens, as stewards of our natural resources, to protect its community from natural resource extraction. Among other protection for the community and the resources, Kittatinny Sierra Club encourages municipalities and the state to create water extraction regulations BEFORE new well drilling and new business ventures force the loss of community and resource rights. As lobbyists queue in Harrisburg to push for unfettered access to your community, now is the time to get engaged. Regulating resource extraction fees, well monitoring, road bonding and traffic studies are all ways that a community can become engaged on a local and state level.

Do you want to get involved in protecting the one resource that every living creature needs for survival – water? Contact: Darree Sicher, Kittatinny Chair 610-756-6334, zinc5@enter.net

## club members elect at-large delegates and support bylaw change

Last month the members of the Sierra Club in Pennsylvania voted to elect Tom Au, Veronica Coptis and Dennis Winters as their at-large delegates, who will represent the members' interests on the Sierra Club's Executive Committee for the next two years.

Further, members overwhelmingly supported, by a vote of 166 to 3, the proposal to change the Chapter Bylaws to add two At-Large Delegates to the Chapter Executive Committee (Ex Com), increasing the number from six to eight.

The Chapter's 2015 election filled the three delegate positions which were expiring, held by Tom Au, Arthur Clark and Wendi Taylor. Clark and Taylor decided to retire from their positions. In all, eight candidates ran for the three open seats, which in addition to Au, Coptis and Winters, included Brian Brown, Sue Edwards, Dave Hemberger, Tom Wolper and Jim Wylie.

The election was supervised by the Election Committee, chaired by Roy Fontaine. The ballots were counted on December 21 at the Cherry Alley Café in Lewisburg. Of the 153 single ballots and 20 joint ballots cast, one single ballot was declared invalid because the member voted for four candidates, in violation of the directions for voting. This single case would not have altered the outcome of the election.

"Thanks to all the candidates for their service to the club," Fontaine said in announcing the election results.

Au, Coptis and Winters join the Chapter's other three At-Large Delegates whose terms will expire in December: Don Miles, Jeff Schmidt and Nancy Parks.

The Chapter Ex Com appointed a special Ad Hoc Committee on Bylaws Changes to review and recommend how to proceed with increasing the number of At-Large Delegates and to review another proposal requiring the Chapter to implement term limits for delegates.

Last Spring, the Chapter was notified that the National Sierra Club Board of Directors had changed its policy concerning group delegates. It eliminated the option to allow groups proportional representation on the Chapter Ex Com. Instead, it limited each group to one and only one delegate to the Chapter's governing body. This meant that the Southeast PA Group lost two delegates and the Allegheny Group lost one.

After much discussion, the PA Chapter Ex Com voted to add two At-Large Delegates to mitigate the effect of this change and in December, the Ex Com asked its members.

In December, the chapter received another National Board policy change, in which the Chapter was to institute term limits on its delegates.

The Committee on Bylaws Changes will recommend how to institute the policy changes at the second quarterly meeting of the Chapter. All chapters are bound by the policies set by the National Board.

### You're Invited

This year, plan to gather with your fellow Sierra Club volunteers to organize around important conservation and political issues that shape the future of the Club and the environment. Meetings take place in Harrisburg and are open to all members. Notifications of meetings and location information is available on our website, [pennsylvania.sierraclub.org](http://pennsylvania.sierraclub.org), under "Get Involved," or by calling the Chapter office at 717.232.0101. Mark your calendar for: March 12, September 17 and November 12.

Also save the date of the Annual Member Outing to be held from June 10 – 12 at Raccoon Creek State Park, Hookstown, PA



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<http://sierraclubpa.blogspot.com/>



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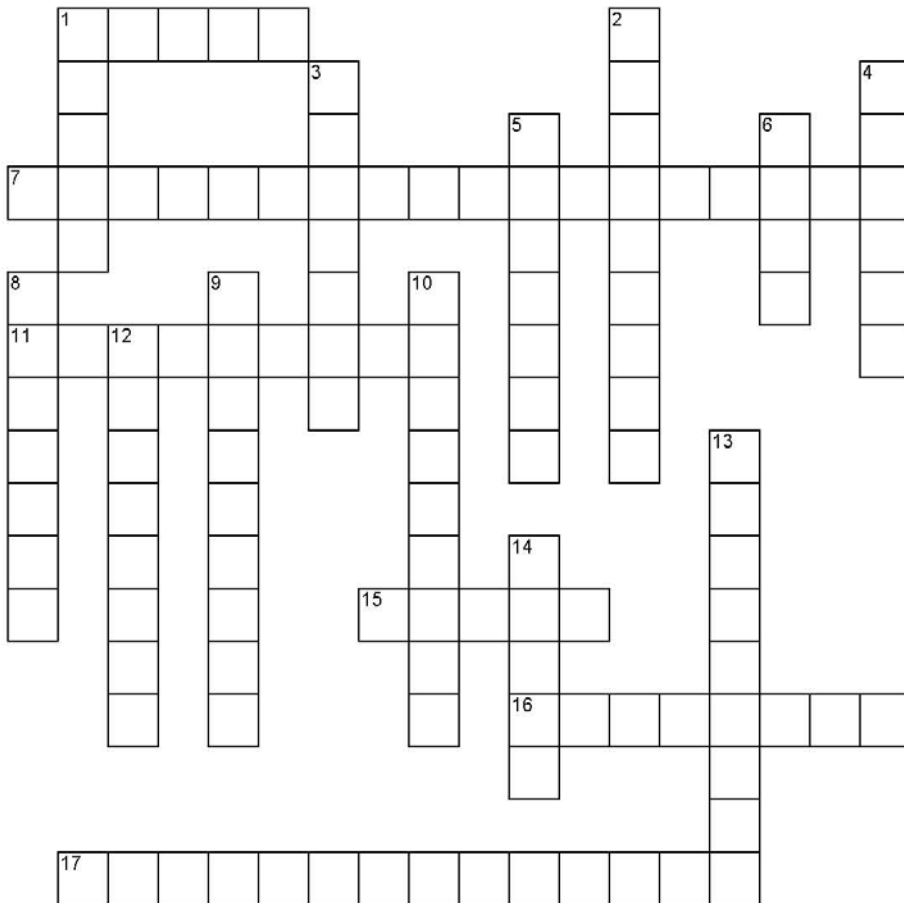
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explore, enjoy and protect the planet.

# [ winter crossword ]



### Across

- 1 It's a Barnum and Bailey \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 Kurt Vonnegut's World War II novel
- 11 Paris \_\_\_\_\_ on Climate Change
- 15 Biggest \_\_\_\_\_ Burger
- 16 North \_\_\_\_\_ Free Trade Agreement
- 17 New Chapter Chair

### Down

- 1 Third \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_ Crabs
- 3 Everything is \_\_\_\_\_ to everything else.
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_ Aircraft, makes F-15's
- 5 Cross \_\_\_\_\_ skiing
- 6 The \_\_\_\_\_ get richer
- 8 Trans \_\_\_\_\_ Partnership
- 9 Groundwater \_\_\_\_\_ Problems
- 10 Parker Dam \_\_\_\_\_
- 12 Ecological \_\_\_\_\_ & Development Group
- 13 Greenhouse Gas \_\_\_\_\_
- 14 Conservation Chair

www.CrosswordWeaver.com

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