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Approximately 21,000 Members in New Jersey

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**OUR POLITICAL CHAIR'S REPORT**

# Big Wins for the Environment

By John Kashwick • [Political.Chair@NewJerseySierraClub.org](mailto:Political.Chair@NewJerseySierraClub.org)

We congratulate President-elect Biden, Vice President-elect Harris, and all of our endorsed candidates, whether they won or lost – because they made the environment a key issue in their campaigns.

Unless the stars align in January, enabling the Democrats to win two runoff elections for US Senate seats in Georgia, the Republicans will continue to control the Senate and be able to stifle the new President's most ambitious plans. But the Biden Administration can still do wonders for the environment.

President Biden will surely rejoin the Paris Climate Agreement, enabling us to cooperate with our global neighbors on climate change. He can reverse Pres. Trump's rollback of our National Monuments – by expanding Utah's Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante back to their original borders. He can stop the destruction of natural areas on our Mexican

border by halting construction of the border wall. He can make climate policy part of any coronavirus relief package. He can sign executive orders that reinstate or strengthen automobile fuel economy standards, and he can curtail oil and gas leasing on federal lands. He can prioritize the remediation of pollution and global warming effects in low-income communities. 2021 should provide a bright outlook for the environment in Washington DC.

Here in New Jersey, all of our endorsed Congressional incumbents won re-election. Most races weren't even close. Mikie Sherrill won in District 11 by 7%. In District 3, Andy Kim, whose

margin in 2018 was just over 1%, is winning re-election by 8%. Josh Gottheimer won in District 5 by 8%. The closest race in 2020 was in District 7, where the Republicans ran a well-funded opponent to freshman Congressman Tom Malinowski. Malinowski won by just over 1%. Senator Booker, Congresswoman Watson-Coleman, and Congressmen Sires, Payne, Pascrell, Norcross, and Pallone all won comfortably.



**“Here in New Jersey, all of our endorsed Congressional incumbents won re-election”**

In the two Republican-held seats, party-switcher Jeff Van Drew prevailed over endorsed challenger Amy Kennedy in District 2. Polls had Kennedy ahead approaching Election Day, but she came up short. In District 4, where the Sierra Club did not endorse this year, Republican Chris Smith won re-election easily.

In local races, our endorsed candidates for Somerset County Freeholder Board prevailed, as did our Council candidates in Lambertville and Summit.

We look forward to 2021, which in many states is an “off-year.” But here in New Jersey there will be a Governor's race as well as contests for all 40 State Senate seats and 80 Assembly seats.

Our Chapter and Group Political Committees will welcome the participation of Club members in framing our questionnaires, interviewing the candidates, and helping to decide on endorsements in many of these races!

**ISSUE COORDINATOR'S REPORT**

# New Jersey's Bold Plastic Ban

From Sylvia Kay • [SylviaKay222@gmail.com](mailto:SylviaKay222@gmail.com) • Zero Waste Issues Coordinator

In early November, Governor Murphy signed the strongest single-use plastic pollution legislation in the country. Bill S864, sponsored by Bob Smith (D, 17), passed in the Senate last February, and A1978, sponsored by Nancy Pinkin (D, 18), passed in the Assembly in early September.

The new legislation will move us to using reusable bags! It bans not only thin plastic carryout bags provided by retailers and food establishments, but also paper bags offered by larger stores. The new legislation also bans polystyrene (aka foam or Styrofoam) food containers, and plastic straws except upon request. The law provides for hardship exemptions and for some allocation of Clean Community funds. It will go into effect in 18 months, then supersede

ing the approximately sixty county and municipal bans which have been imposed since 2018.

S864/A1978 is the beneficiary of many attempts at plastic control legislation over the last several years. In the summer of 2018, and at the urging of the Sierra Club and other environmental groups, Governor Murphy killed a weaker bill, hoping for more-robust legislation. New Jersey now joins a growing set of US states and territories with some form of plastic control. California and Oregon ban bags and straws; Connecticut, New York, Oregon, Puerto Rico, and Delaware ban bags; Maine bans foam containers; and areas of Hawaii ban bags and in some areas straws and foam containers.

The extent of global environmental

**CONSERVATION CHAIR'S REPORT**

# Building Back Better under Biden

By Greg Gorman • [ggorman07419@embarqmail.com](mailto:ggorman07419@embarqmail.com)

Joe Biden has a plan to build back better. A key objective of this plan is to mobilize American ingenuity to build a modern infrastructure and an equitable, clean energy future. This requires building a resilient economy and building sustainable infrastructure. On Nov. 4, the day the U.S. officially left the Paris Climate Agreement, Joe Biden reaffirmed his commitment to rejoin it.

Although his plan is not as ambitious as the Green New Deal, he has promised to spend \$2 trillion over four years toward achieving a carbon-free power sector by 2035, and net-zero emissions country-wide by 2050. With the need to replace jobs lost during the COVID-19 Pandemic, an emphasis will be on climate solutions that stimulate economic development.

The “Biden Plan to Build a Modern, Sustainable Infrastructure and an Equitable Clean Energy Future” (<https://joebiden.com/clean-energy/>) was developed by a Climate Task Force co-chaired by Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY), a strong advocate for bold climate action, and former Secretary of State John Kerry, an architect of the Paris Climate Accord. The plan is influenced by The Select Committee on the Climate Crisis, created by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi in response to progressive calls for detailed, ambitious, and actionable climate solutions (<https://climatecrisis.house.gov/report>). Many States (including New Jersey), communities and businesses have adopted strong climate action commitments. Biden's national goals build on these accomplishments.

The incoming Administration will have the opportunity to implement this planning and to restore the function of many science advisory groups throughout government. Newly elect-

ed Senators John Hickenlooper (Colorado) and Mark Kelly (Arizona) will replace anti-environment office holders. Hickenlooper was a presidential hopeful running with a central climate message. Former Astronaut Mark Kelly is committed to commonsense climate solutions. After this year of hurricanes and forest fires, citizen support for Congressional climate action is expected.

2021 is an election year for New Jersey state office-holders including the Governor. The NJ Chapter of the Sierra Club, and its members, have a responsibility to ensure that all candidates and parties align their platforms with the need for combating the Climate Crisis. We'll do this by pushing for aggressive decarbonization policy, by promoting Smart development, and by supporting clean energy and energy efficiency initiatives. We need to elect people who recognize the challenges of global warming and who are willing to seek solutions.



## NEW LOOK!

To start our 50th year as a Sierra Club Chapter, our Designer, Karen Crosby, has revamped the style of the Jersey Sierran Newsletter, adding color and using the latest formatting recommended by the national Sierra Club's “branding team.”

The new typeface is called Merriweather. I'm sure she would welcome comments to [karonna@yahoo.com](mailto:karonna@yahoo.com).

-Editor

## Inside this Issue

CCL Report, Asian-American Hate Crimes, Club's Finest Hours in NJ..... 2  
 Chair's Message: New Officers; Editorial: 50-year Perspective; ExCom's Sept-Nov Resolutions..... 3  
 Member Reports: Spotted Lantern Fly, High School Report, Pine Barrens Water, NJ State Long Trail, Pollution Laws and Environmental Justice ..... 4-5  
 Reports from Trenton: State Budget, Beach Sand Replenishment, Subsidizing PSE&G, Warehousing, Bear Hunt, Lead in Newark Schools ..... 5-6  
 Group News ..... 7-11  
 Outings, Leaders, Meetings, Membership form ..... 12  
 Electronic supplement: ..... 13-15  
 Editorial on the Land and Water Conservation Fund; More Reports from Trenton: Bus Depot for Ridgefield Park? Ciba-Geigy Superfund Site; Powering NJ Transit's Trains; Solvay Sues; Salem Co. Groundwater, Cost of Shutting Coal Plants, Solving Water Problems, Toxic Site in Gibbstown

>continued on page 4



# 2020 Report from the Sierra Club's Council of Club Leaders

By Joe Testa, NJ Chapter Delegate

The Council of Club Leaders (CCL) consists of one delegate from each of the 63 Sierra Club chapters across the country. I am your representative from the New Jersey Chapter and attended this year's annual four-day meeting in September (online this year due to the pandemic). The CCL advises the Board of Directors, which is the official national policy-setting body of the Sierra Club. The Board meets over the same long weekend, enabling a joint session with the CCL.

These meetings are the major forum for National leadership to share information with the Chapters, and for Chapters to share their local concerns with the Board. This year, the CCL adopted resolutions asking the Board to:

- Limit the use of promotional "free" gifts for donations & memberships by offering them on an opt-in basis instead of opt-out. This would better align with the Sierra Club values of reducing unnecessary consumption and the use of critical resources.

- Include an assessment of a political candidate's donations from fossil fuel interests when making endorsement decisions.

- Establish a policy on guidance for coal ash containment and clean up.

- Establish a Renewable Energy-Construction Union Task Force to explore how we can build alliances with construction unions to promote clean energy development projects rather than the fossil fuel infrastructure projects (pipelines, dirty power plants) that these unions often support.

- Promote policies acknowledging that 1) water is a finite resource; 2) a sustainable water demand must be less than or equal to water supply; and 3) if water use is unsustainable then it exceeds the ecosystem's carrying capacity leading to collapse.

- Create a national Club policy on affordable housing, recognizing that af-

fordable housing is needed to accommodate lower-paid workers in both urban and non-urban areas, while also safeguarding our environmental resources. (In New Jersey, our Chapter has developed a state-specific policy that is on our web site under Reference Resources -> Chapter Policy Docs.)

- Urge the federal government to require robust environmental review of 4G/5G wireless exposure by independent scientists, and allow for local control over the deployment of small cell installations.

- Support efforts to energize community-based science using PM2.5 air pollution monitoring and remote sensing technology to create meaningful, localized data on air pollution and organize pressure on government agencies to reduce particulate air pollution. This pollution is associated with a higher incidence of health problems, including COVID-19, especially in environmental justice communities.

In October, the Club approved a new union contract for its represented staff to make salaries more equitable at the chapter and national levels. This will eventually put increased financial pressure on chapters as we accommodate the new salary levels.

The Club has spent over a year doing an internal "structural assessment" that is supposed to better distribute the Club's limited resources to achieve better support for both National-level and chapter-level programs. The assessment stage is winding down, with a final proposal to be presented to the Board by the time you read this article. Board President Ramon Cruz and Executive Director Mike Brune assured us that approval and implementation of a plan will be done in a way that will support the work all the Club staff and volunteers who are passionate about driving positive change for our envi-

>continued on page 7

## ISSUE ADVISOR'S COMMENTARY

# 'Kung Flu' and the Rise of Asian American Hate Crimes

By Mark Fukayama, our advisor on toxicology

On March 14, a Burmese American father and his two children aged 2 and 6 were brutally stabbed by a 19-year old man at a Sam's Club in Midland, Texas, resulting in the father and older son being hospitalized in intensive care. According to the FBI, the captured assailant attacked "because he thought the family was Chinese and infecting people with the coronavirus".<sup>1</sup>

Shortly after the attack, the White House denied that calling COVID-19 the "Chinese virus" or "Kung flu" increases the risk of retaliation against Asian Americans.<sup>2,3</sup> But researchers at the University of California, Berkeley, looking at trends in bias against Asian Americans from the pandemic's racially charged coverage, conclude otherwise in their recently published study.<sup>4</sup>

In the early days of the pandemic, most news outlets followed the February 11th WHO recommendation to use the terms 'COVID-19' or 'coronavirus' and to avoid stigmatizing terms such as 'China flu'. But this trend quickly reversed after Secretary of State Mike Pompeo used the term "Chinese virus" in TV interviews on March 7, and Rep. Paul Gosar (R-AZ) tweeted "Wuhan virus" on March 8.<sup>5</sup>

A 650% increase of Twitter retweets with the terms "Chinese virus," "Wuhan virus," and other stigmatizing terms was observed on March 8, and on March 9, an 800% increase occurred in the number of online news articles with racially charged terms that continue to be used to this day by officials and conservative news outlets.<sup>6</sup>

To evaluate whether this change in media tone increases bias against Asian Americans, the researchers evaluated respondent survey data from an academic database and tool (see Project Implicit at [www.projectimplicit.net](http://www.projectimplicit.net)), looking specifically at the "Implicit Americanness Bias" or the sub-

conscious belief that European Americans are more "American" than Asian Americans. They observed a steady decline of this anti-Asian bias from 2007 to early 2020; but on March 8, the trend quickly reversed with the increase in stigmatizing language in conservative media outlets.

The researchers conclude that these stigmatizing terms increase bias against Asian Americans and intensify the subconscious belief that Asian Americans are "perpetual foreigners" who are not truly "American." This bias and pernicious belief encourages discriminatory acts against Asian Americans.

Hate crimes and other acts of discrimination against Asian Americans have been surging this past year. In the first two weeks (March 19-April 1) of a new website established by a civil rights organization to track discriminatory acts against Asian Americans, 1,135 incidences were reported that included physical assault, being barred from establishments and transportation, coughed or spat upon, verbal and online harassment, ignored service, and workplace discrimination.<sup>7</sup> In late March, the FBI warned of a surge of hate crimes against Asian Americans,<sup>8</sup> and in August, the NYPD established an Asian Hate Crimes Task Force due to the spike in hate crimes against Asian Americans.<sup>9</sup>

In addition to these overt acts, discrimination also affects the mental and physical health of minorities, including Asian Americans, ranging from depression, cardiovascular problems, obesity and many other maladies often associated with increased stress.<sup>10,11</sup>

As the coronavirus swept through the White House in September, Kelly Loeffler, U.S. Senator from Georgia, tweeted "China gave this virus to our President"

>continued on page 6

## Our Finest Hours in the Sierra Club

For our 50th anniversary, we asked some of our longest-serving officers to contribute words of reminiscence:

**From Marty Cohen, founder of the Chapter's Inner City Outings program:** Our most memorable activity was **education**, and our most memorable student was, in fact, me. Nobody, I suspect, has learned as much from ICO as I, from what a ten year-old is capable of in the woods to an appreciation of the importance of experience to a leader.

Early in my ICO days I was usually the strongest hiker on the outing, which was good (having to keep up with me increased some children's confidence in their capabilities) and bad (I didn't realize my pace was too fast for some of the others). One of my favorite hikes involved climbing a level IV section of the 7-Hills Trail. When seen from below the ascent appears vertical, hand and foot holds required, but it was probably "only" about 40 degrees. At the onset there was a great commotion from the children, some screaming in anticipation, others in fear; but all made it (hundreds of kids over the years), and at the top all of them beaming expressions of accomplishment.

Or what about the time we encountered a coiled rattlesnake on the edge of

the trail, a snake I had walked right by, but which did not escape the sharp eyes of the children. Or the time, on a trail that I had hiked about 50 times previously, one of the children asked if we could go see that waterfall "over there". None of the adults who hiked with me, nor I, had ever seen that waterfall, maybe 150 yards from the trail, before!

As I looked out at my audience at one of our pre-hike talks at a middle school in Paterson what I saw were the faces of twenty or so 7th graders staring right at me wanting, demanding to know more about the upcoming adventure, an adventure into our homeland (we didn't evolve in cities, but in the woods). This was the preliminary part of education, the main event would be being there, trepidation at the beginning, familiarity at the end.

**From our Central Jersey Group, courtesy of Laura Lynch:** We stand on the shoulders of giants. None of our achievements would have been possible if not for the people who came before us and the people who worked with us.

Through our community connections, during my tenure as Conservation Chair for the Central Jersey Group, we were able to stop environmentally destructive highway projects such as

the Millstone Bypass and Route 92. We were able to keep dense housing off of the environmentally-sensitive Princeton Ridge. We held back several big-box retailers from planting themselves next to open spaces.

None of these battles were won alone. We relied on each other's expertise and refusal to give up, no matter how many Planning Board meetings went into the wee hours.

Now we hope to be the shoulders other people stand on for their next environmental victories.

**From your editor, Dick Colby:** Nothing succeeds like success, especially when a team of activists has worked closely together for more than ten years on a major project: obtaining federal Wild & Scenic protection for the watershed of the Great Egg Harbor River, which includes parts of Camden, Gloucester, Atlantic and Cape May Counties. The effort took from about 1975 to 1992, with officers of the Club's South Jersey Group incorporating themselves as the Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association - to acquire needed status as we solicited formal support from each of the 12 municipalities along the River, from the National Park Service (NPS) office in Phila-

delphia, and from Senator Bill Bradley and Congressman Bill Hughes. It was my only opportunity to actually contribute to the wording of federal legislation, in tense sessions with the professional lobbyists of American Rivers, which wanted the boilerplate language used for all the previously designated W&S Rivers. But the Great Egg was different: the first of a new series of Partnership W&S Rivers: devoid of federal land ownership and management, and requiring cooperation between the river municipalities in zoning and management. We founded the concept of a River Council for formal interaction between the municipalities, and with the NPS, and initiated funding for a River Administrator and other staff.

Since 1992 twelve additional Eastern rivers have received Partnership W&S status following our model, including three in New Jersey: the Maurice-Manumuskin, the Musconetcong, and the Lower Delaware. Benefits to the rivers include control of intrusive private docks and bulkheads, NPS input to the appropriateness of public works projects in the river corridor, cleanups, and promotion of the River's natural, historic and safe recreational values. A fine hour indeed.



# How We've Changed in 50+ Years

By Dick Colby • dick.colby@stockton.edu

I don't know any currently active Club members who were here at the beginning: when in 1971 the Atlantic Chapter of the Sierra Club was fragmented into separate Chapters for each Eastern State. Who were our earliest Chapter Chairs, where did they hold meetings, and what were their issues and campaigns?

The Sierra Club was founded in California in 1892. Up until some time in the mid-20th Century, Club membership required **sponsorship** by an existing member. Also during that Century, the Club evolved from a member-operated organization to a staff-operated organization, both at the national level and at Chapter level. In the mid-1900s David Brower became the Club's first national Director, hired (at least partly) to lead the campaign to resist damming of the Colorado River in Glen Canyon that was expected to flood part of the Grand Canyon. Tim Dillingham was the New Jersey Chapter's first Director, hired in or about 1993. One consequence of the move toward staff operation was a dramatic increase in our need for money, and the new need for elaborate fund-raising campaigns that we see today.

So gone are the days when MOST Club members were in it mostly for the opportunities to hike, camp, climb, socialize, and be awed by immersion in wilderness. Even in the 1970s, New Jersey Chapter officers retreated into the woods at least annually for a weekend of introspection and fellowship.

That professionalist transition from member-operation to staff-operation was, to my mind, the saddest change in the Club's history. We still differ from most other environmental organizations in the extent to which some of our campaigns are conducted by volunteers. But in our lifetimes political lobbying has become a full-time professional business for well-paid experts, and the enjoyment of wilderness has become a rare niche activity.

Paralleling the shift toward professionalism, the last 50 years is also a time of emergent environmental consciousness, nationally and locally. The issues have changed from land use (the protection of open space, especially of spectacular open space) to push-back and remediation of environmental degradation: global warming, sea-level rise, toxic site remediation, water and air quality, the need for recycling, the need for replacing plastics and other problematic substances, and the need to environmentally unburden communities especially of ethnic minorities.

Our Chapter engages in two primary theaters of environmentalism: one is political lobbying in Trenton, in both the Legislative and Executive branches of government; the other is at the local level: in our cities and townships. I don't belittle the superb efforts of our volunteer conservation activists who report at our monthly Conservation and Political Committee meetings on campaigns to cope with insect invasions, local runoff contaminations, battles in local land use boards, promoting candidates for political office, and many other involvements. But I see what was once one Sierra Club as having morphed into two or three clubs: one for profes-

sionals, one for volunteer activists, and perhaps one for the bulk of our membership.

My earliest memories of Chapter activity include my recruitment by faculty and student colleagues shortly after Stockton State College opened in 1971. I remember attending statewide meetings in the Engineering Quad at Princeton University, where an early Chapter Chair, Ian Walker, taught Geology. Ian married the Chapter's Conservation Chair, Diane Graves, and the pair of them functioned almost full time in the 1970s and 1980s as the best volunteer leadership team I have ever known. One big issue then was confronting the proposed Tock's Island Dam: an effort to dam the Delaware River at the Water Gap: for hydro-power and flood control. Their/our efforts were successful, and the publicity built the Chapter's membership numbers, not to mention conversion of the site to the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area.

I think another major shift in the last 50 years has to do with the bulk of Club membership: from active to passive, i.e. from participatory to dollar contributory. The average age of our members has risen. Participation in our outings has fallen, both in Chapter outings and in the Club's national outings, especially as a percentage of our members. We've become more of a charity, with dues understood as necessary for the salaries of professionals.

As a graduate student in California in the 1960s, I remember participating in the campaign for the designation of Redwoods National Park, an effort led by the Club's then President, Ed Wayburn, and conducted primarily by member-volunteers.

When I was Chapter Chair of the New Jersey Chapter (1997-1998), I remember a financial crisis in the Club nationally, that was solved by trimming the number of national staff from 250 to 225. Today there are more than 600 staff in Washington DC, Oakland CA, and in regional and chapter offices, and the money brought in by membership dues is dwarfed by the additional amount raised by grants, advertisements and other means, with a substantial number of our employees needed just for raising money. (The issue is so delicate that I've never been permitted to publish a Chapter Treasurer's report in this Newsletter. But of course very few charities are comfortable with revealing the salaries and other details of how they use their money. And of course the expansion of the non-profit sector is world-wide, and arguably legitimate economically, as the number of workers needed in the profit-making sector decreases with technology.)

Another way in which environmental activism has become professionalized: In the 1990s Chapter volunteers were invited regularly to meet with DEP officials and with the Governor. No longer.

Such are the lamentations (and prejudices) with which I unburden myself as your 81-year-old curmudgeonist editor!



# Congratulating our Volunteers

By Richard Isaac • Richard.Isaac@Sierraclub.org

The New Jersey Chapter extends a warm welcome to the following folk as they take on new Chapter positions:

**Michael Depardieu, as Inspiring Connections Outdoors (ICO) Treasurer**

Mike is retiring from the financial industry after more than 30 years. With degrees in industrial engineering, information systems and statistics, he is ideally suited to be the Treasurer of our Chapter's ICO Committee. Mike's outdoor interests include biking, hiking, skiing and snowshoeing.

**Kaya Simmons, as ICO Committee Member**

Kaya is an enthusiastic high school senior in North Jersey. She intends a college major in Environmental Policy and a minor in Film and Philosophy, and is excited to be a part of our new Sierra team. She is an avid environmentalist who loves to hike!

**Tara Deaver, as new ICO Member**

Tara has a bachelor's degree in English with a minor in Spanish. She has taken many graduate-level courses in Education, English, and Library Science. Her children are now both in school, giving her free time to contribute to community action/political groups.

Tara is very much a people person and gets outdoors any chance she can with her husband, children and dog. She enjoys running, and is currently training for a half-marathon in the Great Smoky Mountains with Team Sierra. The opportunity to volunteer to help get kids outdoors is perfect for Tara. She feels strongly that there is so much to be learned about oneself and navigating the world by simply taking a hike through the woods or sleeping in a tent. Tara wants to help get more kids outside.

**Sophia Neuendorff, as new ICO Member**

Sophia is a 16-year-old from Upper Saddle River, passionate about keeping our earth clean and helping the environment! She loves to hike, and believes that nature is one of the best remedies for stress. She hopes to inspire kids to enjoy and respect the planet.

**Daria Buvanova, as new ICO Member**

Daria is an Executive Assistant/Project Manager at New York Public Radio. As a kid, she traveled all over the world. Now she understands how important childhood experiences can be. It wasn't until a few years ago that she really be-

gan to appreciate the outdoors, which is why she has joined the ICO Committee. She looks forward to giving children and adolescents a chance to connect with nature at an earlier age, to see its beauty, and understand the importance of protecting it.

**Allie Horn, as Volunteer Outreach Coordinator for Amy Kennedy's 2nd CD Congressional Campaign**

Allie is a newly admitted attorney in New York and New Jersey living in Atlantic County. She hopes for a career in environmental justice law. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic she has the time to contact our members to urge them to replace Rep. Van Drew with Amy Kennedy.

**Neal Poloncarz as Chapter Hazardous Waste Issues Advisor**

Currently employed at the Picatinny Arsenal, Neal is a recent graduate of Columbia Southern University (online) with a B.S. in Environmental Management. He hopes to learn more about the environment outside of the classroom: especially the management of hazardous waste.

**Judy Minot, Chapter Grant Writing Editor - becomes Chapter Secretary**

After Judy left her job as a marketing exec she became a freelance writer (writing mostly about marketing and corporate communication). This last year she's been our Chapter's Grant Writing Editor; now she'll take over from Joe Testa as Chapter Secretary. I offer her my heartfelt thanks for being willing to take on this strenuous task.

**Joe Testa now Chairs the Sierra Club's Council of Club Leaders (CCL)**

After serving as our NJ Chapter's representative on the national Sierra Club's Council of Club Leaders (CCL), Joe is now not only on its Executive Committee - he has been elected to chair the Council, which speaks on behalf of the Club's state chapters to the Club's national Board of Directors. With so much more to do, he is stepping down as Chapter Secretary. He will continue as our IT Chair and Parliamentarian. I offer hearty congratulations to Joe on his "promotion," and wish him well in his new position. [Testa's report on p. 2 of this newsletter.]



## Resolutions - Approved by the Chapter Executive Committee (ExCom) in Sept., Oct. and Nov. 2020

**September: Appointments:** Mike Depardieu as ICO Treasurer, and Sophia Neuendorff, Kaya Simmons and Tara Deaver as ICO Committee Members. **A late political endorsement** of Amy Kennedy for Congress (2nd CD), and the retraction of our previous endorsement of incumbent Jeff Van Drew were completed. To rescue the **Chapter awards** feature of our annual Fall Appreciation Day gathering, which will not take place in 2020, it was urged that some kind of on-line awards event be implemented. We also opposed the **Hidden Oak Woods development** on an environmentally sensitive site in East Brunswick Twp (Middlesex Co). Our action includes joining in a lawsuit.

**October Appointments:** as laid out in the Chapter Chair's message elsewhere on this page. **Two resolutions** were adopted in support of a **societal right to affordable housing**. They should be available on the Chapter website. We also urged passage of **S2051: Establishing Fire Safety Standards for Multifamily Light Frame Residential Construction**.

**November: Six more appointments:** Daria Buvanova as Inspiring Connections Outdoors (ICO) Chair; Oscar Nazar as ICO Webmaster and Communications Coordinator; Amanda Gaglio as ICO Social Media Coordinator; Zachary Rose as ICO Youth Partnership Coordinator; and ICO Committee Members: Julia Marchese, Ala Pokrzywa

A variety of Club books, notecards, badges and clothing is available from [www.sierraclub.org/store](http://www.sierraclub.org/store)



# The Challenge of the Spotted Lantern Fly

By Kip Cherry, PP, AICP, Conservation Chair of our Central Jersey Group

While we cope with COVID-19, there is another issue where we need to take immediate action. The Spotted Lantern Fly (SLF), an invasive insect species from Asia, has arrived in New Jersey and needs immediate action. Right now we need to be scraping SLF egg masses off of trees and cutting down the invasive Tree of Heaven. Here are more details:



Seeds of a Tree of Heaven



Leaves of Tree of Heaven

The SLF attacks apple trees, peach trees, cherry trees, blueberries, grapes, hops, walnut trees, maple trees, sweet gums, oaks, birch, sassafras, and many other important agricultural plants and shade trees. When the SLF feeds on a host tree it digests sap and releases a sticky honeydew waste that draws mold and other insects. This weakens the host and degrades the fruit, presenting the probability for major financial losses among the locally grown fruits for which New Jersey is so well known,



Eggs laid

and a reduction in the quality of life for New Jerseyans.

The most popular host for the SLF is the Tree of Heaven (Latin: *Ailanthus*), another invasive species, that grows along roadways and in vacant lots. Eight counties in New Jersey are currently under quarantine. That means that anyone who leaves those counties should do a quick inspection to make sure that no SLFs or its egg masses are residing on their vehicle. Measures that can be taken against the SLF include cutting down the Tree of Heaven, scraping egg masses (which look like a gray or sandy-colored smear) off bark and into a jar of alcohol, and hanging SLF traps on host trees. Note: unlike Sumac, which looks similar to the Tree of Heaven, the Tree

of Heaven has smooth leaf edges except for one or two notches at the base of the leaf. SLFs die off in the Fall after laying their eggs. The eggs survive the winter and hatch as nymphs that morph into the adult flies.

First seen in 2004 in Berks County, Pennsylvania, SLFs have been spreading fairly rapidly into surrounding states. Eight counties in New Jersey are officially quarantined: Mercer, Warren, Hunterdon, Burlington, Camden, Salem, and Gloucester. That means that anyone who leaves these counties in a vehicle should do a quick inspection to make sure that there are no SLF stowaways. Towns are becoming increasingly aware that their Public Works Departments have a responsibility to survey public rights-of-ways and public properties to identify Trees of Heaven, receive reports of sightings from the public, and send out crews to cut down the infected tree and properly dispose of the waste materials.

The SLF seems to take its name from the effect of its inner red wings that reflect off of large outer wings, creating what seems like a glow. It also jumps more than it flies. Thus far no SLF predator has been identified, but there is some hope that a wasp might be a possibility. Most immediately with farmers fighting the SLF, local residential neighborhoods will be saddled with sticky messes and cleanups that will be a reminder of the devastation that lies ahead.

For further information, here is a link to a presentation by Rich Buckley, Rutgers' University Plant Diagnostic Laboratory. <http://PostIt.rutgers.edu/uploads/SLF%20Buckley%20zoom%5F0.mp4>

## PLASTIC BAN *continued from page 1*

a single-use plastic ban, and is attempting to improve a strong consumer consciousness for reuse and recycling.

Single-use plastics have proven particularly harmful to wildlife. They accumulate in ecosystems and have been reported to harm more than 700 animal species by blocking ingestion or suffocation.

Plastic decomposes very slowly, degrading through a stage of microplastics: 5 micrometers or smaller. Microplastics have been found in more than 100 aquatic species: entering food webs in the ocean, fresh water and on land.

Plastics are a lucrative by-product of the fossil fuel industry. New production from virgin natural gas or petroleum is cheaper than from recycled plastic waste, so only about 9% of all plastics are recycled, and far less than this are repurposed. The EPA reports that this is especially true for plastic bags. Much of the so-called "recycled" plastic sits in landfills or enters the oceans.

In the last decade there has been a growing trend to burn waste plastic as fuel, but this leaves toxic residuals. New Jersey has been estimated to supply 4.4 billion plastic bags each year, so the new law will have a sizable impact. With Murphy's signature on S864/A1978, we have made a bold, clean step forward and obtained a clear win for the environment.

### Sources:

"Single-Use Plastics: A Road Map for Sustainability" (2018), UN Environment Program

"Here's how much plastic trash is littering the Earth," [news.nationalgeographic.com/2017/07/](https://news.nationalgeographic.com/2017/07/) L. Parker, and [www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/habitats/plastic-pollution/](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/habitats/plastic-pollution/)

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*>continued on page 15*

# From First-Time Voting to Community Service

By Allison Fabrizio ([allisonl.f1190@gmail.com](mailto:allisonl.f1190@gmail.com))

I have just voted for the first time! Mailing in my ballot brought an enormous sigh of relief, knowing that I am now privileged to be able to have a say in the issues that directly affect me, my community, and my generation.

Much of the youth population, however, doesn't (yet) have the right to vote. But that doesn't mean that they were powerless during this election year: in October, a virtual conference, "Countdown," was attended by many students in New Jersey. After this event, I asked the founder of the Edison High School's iSTEM Club, Sunrit Panda, to reflect on his team's amazing work of putting on this conference.

TEDxEdisonHighSchool's "Countdown" was a virtual conference that brought the TEDCountdown Climate Change initiative to our high school community. Our local and TED-provided talks focused on possible solutions to climate change: something more than just creating awareness. Through powerful personal anecdotes and scientific evidence, we discussed topics such as the Green New Deal, city green spaces, the heat island effect, big business, capitalist climate solutions, and water access.

Our conference hosted two live speakers: Greg Gorman (Conservation Chair of the NJ Sierra Club) and Justin Paik (Student Organizer of the Columbia University Youth Climate Summit). Gorman presented a bird's eye view of climate change in NJ. He discussed how the Green New Deal would rebuild NJ's infrastructure the right way, focusing on both planet and profit.

Justin discussed a project in which he built a well in the Moroccan desert: a use of environmental engineering to solve problems caused by climate change. Such engineering solutions are the basis of "Climate Action Plans" developed by high school students at the Youth Climate Summit. These plans addressed environmental problems in the students' own high schools. "Overall, this local TEDx event was a great way

to bring hot-button climate change issues home to New Jersey." (Sunrit) Event Page: <https://www.ted.com/tedx/events/40657>. Also: [countdown.ted.com](http://countdown.ted.com).

The iSTEM Club works to channel the interest of the next generation of STEM professionals. Even though this Club is only in its second year, its members are already trying to branch outside of their club setting into their school curriculum. This Club focuses not just on STEM, but also on principles of teamwork and leadership – so their members feel as though their efforts positively impact their surrounding communities. For the rest of this academic year, the iSTEM Club's platform for meetings and events will be entirely online.

"TEDxEdisonHighSchool is a great example of how we can provide value to the community in this virtual world. We will host another TEDx event in February: on recent social unrest, and titled, "Diversity through Uncertainty." We are also developing a seminar series where Club officers share their experiences to help the members of the community seek career-oriented activities such as internships, research projects, and community service." (Sunrit)

"Additionally, since real-world STEM experiences are not practical during the pandemic, we are emphasizing iSTEM Club activities. We have planned community-building events such as TEDx-Circles discussions where Club members just talk about current events in an academic context. Additionally, Club officers make themselves available for academic and personal guidance. Finally, we provide direct mentorship for applicants to summer programs. In short, while it was difficult to create a plan for the upcoming year, the iSTEM Club is taking a community-minded and personal approach to serving our community during the pandemic." (Sunrit)

Sunrit also attributes the success of his Club and this event to organizers including Vasumathi Venkat, Aditi Deshmukh, Gunjan Adya, Neoma Chowdhury, and Anastasia Ibrahim.

## PINELANDS ISSUES COORDINATOR'S REPORT

# Water in the Pine Barrens – Part 2

By Lee Snyder ([Pinelands1@hotmail.com](mailto:Pinelands1@hotmail.com))

As noted in a previous issue of this Newsletter, the most important natural resource in and below the 1.1-million-acre Pinelands National Reserve in New Jersey is an estimated 17 trillion gallons of fresh water. This water resource is extraordinary not only because of its quantity, but also because of its quality. The water sits in the Kirkwood-Cohansey Aquifer, one of the largest aquifers in the United States. An aquifer is a slowly-moving underground fresh water reservoir, which, in the case of the Pinelands, is contained in and filtered through the sandy soils.

Pine Barrens groundwater has few objectionable physical or chemical characteristics, and has been described as bacterially sterile, odorless and clear. The chemical purity approaches that

of uncontaminated rainwater or melted glacial ice. Where water pollution is present, it is usually local and of relatively low intensity.

In summer, Pinelands surface water has a pronounced reddish brown color which is caused by a chemical mix of dissolved iron and organic materials such as tannin from tree bark and other plant matter. This "cedar water" can be so dark that it obscures the river and lake bottoms. It is practically tasteless and refreshing to drink, as it seldom exceeds a temperature of 70°F. In wintertime, the influx of constant 54°F groundwater generally prevents the streams from freezing bank-to-bank. It is vitally important to protect this amazing fresh water resource for future generations.

**Members in commuting distance of Trenton would be welcome to help run our state office: Call Taylor McFarland 609-656-7618**



# The NJ State Long Trail and Greenway

By David Mattek (MattekDC@aol.com)

I and others spent much of the last 15 years planning and implementing the NJ State Long Trail and Greenway. When completed, it will run from High Point (Sussex Co) to Cape May Point (Cape May Co). It goes through some of the most beautiful natural areas of the State. It goes over as many mountains and hills as we could place on it. It passes many lakes, reservoirs, ponds, cranberry bogs, rivers, streams and creeks. It also runs through areas representing most of New Jersey's forest and woodland communities, as well as farmlands, and marshlands of fresh- and saltwater. It also passes through or close to some notable historic sites. It is 380 miles long. Our descriptions and detailed maps are now posted on the Sierra Club Chapter website.

After completing a career of working inside buildings, and in jobs designed to convince elected and appointed State and local officials to do things in the public interest, I embarked on this long-term effort to create the State Long Trail. This work gets me outside a lot, but still allows me to encourage positive actions

**“Our descriptions and detailed maps are now posted on the Sierra Club Chapter website.”**

by State and local officials.

Currently 292 miles of the trail are marked with blazes and available for hiking. This includes all of the 134 miles in the northern third of the state. 158 miles in the south and central parts of the state are marked and completed, with 50 miles yet to be cut and marked on public or semipublic lands. However, half of those can be hiked with our maps and descriptions, available at <https://www.sierra-club.org/new-jersey/long-trail>. Another 25 miles on unmarked paved roads can also be hiked now. This brings us up to nearly 90% of the trail's eventual total length.

Even in the current pandemic, we urge hikers in every part of the State to utilize parts of the trail near them, as individuals and small groups of family and friends properly masked. Our maps note many good trailside parking places both on- and off-road, as well as scenic outlooks from the trail. Many segments of the trail are ideal for short- or medium-length day hikes. Please begin hiking on the NJ State Long Trail.

## MEMBER'S COMMENTARY ON ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

# Will Socially Oriented Pollution Laws Help Our Vulnerable Communities?

By George Moffatt, Communications Chair of our Jersey Shore Group

Our concept of “environmentalism” has evolved over time. Our earliest nature writers, such as John Muir, Henry Thoreau, Aldo Leopold and Rachael Carson, offered different views of “nature.” But all struck common chords: respecting the land and sea, communing with nature, and preserving God's creatures<sup>(1)</sup>

The “Muckrakers” of the early 1900's, when exposing the nation's dark underbelly, including unsafe foods, weren't called “environmentalists.” But they qualified. In the 1940s environmental concerns morphed from “health” to “national” issues — including nuclear carnage.

When climate change took hold in the late 20th Century, “environmentalism” expanded into new and more complex territory — geology, chemistry, biology and geography. And, as hurricanes, rising seas, drought and fire threatened, our attention morphed again from “national” to “worldwide” concern — survival.

And when COVID 19 raised its terrifying head this year, we worried — “Is this ‘It’?”

Yet, ironically, on Sept. 25, 2020, New Jersey's Legislature throttled back to “local” again to use, of all things, applications for major environmental pollution permits as the trigger to determine whether a project will increase the already disproportionate pollution burdens in “vulnerable” communities of color and low-income, including many living at the poverty line. The new rules might also help alleviate some urban areas of health, psychological, social, and economic problems. These long-recognized ills, when evaluated together, are called “Cumulative Impacts (CI),”<sup>(2)</sup> and New Jersey is the first state to adopt CI's very innovative and comprehensive regulatory tools.

In effect, CI's regulations will help determine if a community has “had enough.” This is why CI is a big deal.

Consider just one “had-enough” burden — low income: The three richest Americans have more money than the poorest 160 million of their countrymen. Twenty percent of American households have zero or negative net worth, including 37 percent of Black families. The median wealth of Black households is 10 percent that of whites. The majority of Americans — white, Black, and brown — are two paychecks removed from bankruptcy. While the US is the wealthiest country in history, most Americans live on civilization's edge. Most shockingly, almost 13 percent of all low-income US households don't have enough to eat.<sup>(3)</sup>

Another urban burden is health. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention state that whites are 61 percent of the US population, Latinos 28 percent, and Blacks 12 percent. Yet, while whites account for 53 percent of COVID deaths and Latinos 17 percent, Black deaths are twice their population percentage -- 22 percent.<sup>(4,5)</sup> Blacks also have the highest COVID-19 mortalities per 100,000 as of October-108.4, followed by Indigenous-90, Pacific Islanders-71, Latinos-73, whites-54, and Asians- 5.4.<sup>(6)</sup> The higher rate of COVID 19's infections and other health studies dramatize how low incomes and poor health hurt minority and lower-income populations more than other groups.<sup>(7)</sup> The CDC also reports that conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, and asthma affect Blacks more than other groups.

And CI could also help reduce two other often overlooked urban burdens, psychological and social stresses. These include: racism, red-lining mortgages

# Monmouth Beach Project Will Wash \$\$\$ Out to Sea

From a Press Release issued on Sept 29

On Sept 24, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers started a \$52 million beach replenishment project in Long Branch, Monmouth Beach, and Sea Bright (Monmouth Co). 2.7 million cubic yards of offshore sand are being pumped onto the beaches. A first phase began last December, costing \$31.5 million; this second phase will cost another \$20.5 million. The federal government is paying 65% of the cost, the state will cover 26%, and the local authorities will cover the rest.

All this sand will be washed out to sea in the next storms, along with the \$52 million. Sea walls and dikes won't work either. The Sierra Club urges a long-term approach to accommodating climate change: Restoring natural systems protects property and is environmentally beneficial. There needs to be a comprehensive approach that includes elevating structures and moving them back from the water's edge. Regional stormwater planning and developing new flood storage areas will also help. Foremost, we should refuse further development in flood-prone areas.

Unless we build dunes appropriately and restore marshes and tidal wetlands, we cannot protect our coast against beach erosion or protect property from storm surges. The U.S. Army Corps should also offer to buy-out flood-prone properties.

In October of 1999, several shore towns tried to replenish their beaches after tropical storm Melissa caused major beach erosion and tidal flooding. The storm washed away mounds of sand at some beaches and created scarps close to 15 feet high. There were sinkholes in Sea Bright.

The Sierra Club recommends the building of dunes, even at the cost of depriving homes of a private ocean view. Dunes protect against beach erosion, provide habitats for many plant and animal species, and protect property from storms and storm surges.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency is moving forward on a new program, worth over \$500 million, to buy out large scale communities in flood prone areas. New Jersey's Fish and Wildlife Management Bureau is already buying out properties in South Jersey to create wetlands. The Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has started a similar \$16 billion program.

and car insurance, sub-standard housing, police oppression by some, unsafe neighborhoods and schools, dangerous and low paying work, debt, and no retirement benefits. Psychologists have found all these conditions contribute to deteriorating health, anxiety, alienation, depression and despair.

And as for children, “...slum life imprints on them a culture from which they are unable to escape.”<sup>(8)</sup>

CI's regulations can't solve many of these problems, but they can prevent them from becoming worse. And if CI can successfully control all forms of pollution — noxious odors, discharges and spillage, faulty treatment plants, and other manufacturing burdens — it will certainly help improve a community's living conditions.

If so, the Muckrakers would be pleased. But CI isn't there yet. Detailed DEP regulations must be written to flesh out the enabling legislation, and lobbyists will try to water down or work around them — and therein the Devil lurks. Environmentalists must still carefully monitor the specifics as they unfold.

As a prescient CI advocate challenged at a recent Jersey Shore talk, “What are you going to do about it?”

Citations:

(1) Buell, Lawrence, “The Environmental Imagination,” Belknap Harvard, 1995. A scholarly treatise on the history of American nature writing and eco-criticism, with an emphasis on Henry Thoreau.

(2) “Introduction to Cumulative Effects Analysis,” <https://ceq.doe.gov/docs/ceq-publications/ccenepa/sec1.pdf>.

(3) “How Hunger Persists...,” NY Times, p1, 9/3/2020, <https://www.ny->

[times.com/interactive/2020/09/02/magazine/food-insecurity-hunger-us.html?action=click&module=Top%20Stories&pgtype=Homepage](https://www.ny-times.com/interactive/2020/09/02/magazine/food-insecurity-hunger-us.html?action=click&module=Top%20Stories&pgtype=Homepage).

(4) “As U.S. coronavirus deaths cross 100,000, black Americans bear disproportionate share of fatalities,” CNBC, 5/27/2020, <https://www.cnb.com/2020/05/27/as-us-coronavirus-deaths-cross-100000-black-americans-bear-disproportionate-share-of-fatalities.html>. See also <https://247wallst.com/special-report/2020/07/20/how-covid-19-has-disproportionately-affected-minority-communities-in-every-state/>.

(5) “Black & Indigenous Americans experience highest death tolls from COVID-19,” APM Research Lab, Oct.13, 2020, <https://www.apmresearchlab.org/covid/deaths-by-race>.

(6) Weekly Updates by Select Demographic and Geographic Characteristics, Provisional Death Counts for Coronavirus Disease,” Updated: 9/2/ 2020, U.S Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Provisional data for 2019–2020, [https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/vsrr/covid\\_weekly/index.htm#Comorbidities](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/vsrr/covid_weekly/index.htm#Comorbidities).

(7) “How the Aging Immune System Makes Older People Vulnerable to COVID-19,” NY Times, 9/14/2020,” [https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/08/health/covid-aging-immune-system.html?surface=home-discovery-vi-prg&fell-back=false&req\\_id=26056085&algo=identity&imp\\_id=149448445&action=click&module=Science%20%20Technology&pgtype=Home](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/08/health/covid-aging-immune-system.html?surface=home-discovery-vi-prg&fell-back=false&req_id=26056085&algo=identity&imp_id=149448445&action=click&module=Science%20%20Technology&pgtype=Home).

(8) DuBois, Renee, “So Human an Animal,” Chapter 3, specifically p. 87+ in “Biological Remembrances of Things Past,” Scribners, 1976.



# Governor's Budget Restores Key Environmental Programs

From a Press Release issued on Sept 29, and edited by Joe Testa

The budget that Governor Murphy signed in September increases the operational budget of the Department of Environmental Protection to \$181 million, up from \$159 million last year. It restores money that was being raided from the Recycling Trust Fund (\$12 million) and the Clean Communities Fund for Parks Management (\$10 million). The DEP appropriations also include \$759,000 for grants-in-aid, \$8.5 million for state aid, and \$117 million for capital construction.

The restored funds will help deal with plastic pollution and implement the state-wide plastic bag ban. The budget also restored \$10 million for removing lead paint from homes. There will also be more money for programs like open space, parks, cleaning up underground storage containers and contaminated sites, and watershed protection. This is because the Corporation Business Tax is increasing, and 6% of the CBT is dedicated to environmental programs.

NJ Transit's budget, which was originally cut by \$31 million, has increased by \$600 million. The Lead Abatement Program has been restored to its original \$20 million. However, a total of \$40 million is still being taken from the Clean Energy Fund and the budget reduces funding for the Clean Water and Drinking Programs from \$80 million to \$60 million.

This is the first year in over a decade that the DEP hasn't been cut, and the budget eliminates some of the raids and one-shots that hurt the environment in recent years. Given the coronavirus and the budget shortfall, having this money restored is a step forward for the environment, but we need to do more. DEP staffing has been cut year after year; we need to start restoring its capacity for environmental protection.

With this budget, Murphy has finally given the environment a break. It is a first step to make sure DEP has the funds for personnel and resources to protect our environment and our health. Investment in the environment is investment in ourselves and our future.

## REPORT FROM TRENTON

# Tinton Falls Delays Warehouse Proposal

From a press release issued on Oct 15

The Tinton Falls (Monmouth Co) Planning Board canceled a meeting scheduled for Oct 14 – that would have heard an application for a major receiving and shipping warehouse, because there was not enough room and space to fit everyone in a socially distanced setting. Members of the Sierra Club's Jersey Shore Group, of the Shark River Cleanup Coalition, and several other organizations who opposed this development, appeared for the hearing but were turned away after the Planning Board said it would reschedule in order for everyone to participate in the hearing.

The public is strongly opposed to this project. The community is mostly residential. Large warehouses dump vast quantities of rainwater runoff, which in this case would impact Jumping Brook, which flows into Jumping Brook Reservoir and Shark River. We are also concerned that the proposed 2-acre warehouse would then be expanded on the 50-acre property. There will be more truck traffic producing noise and air pollution, flooding, and destruction of critical wetlands.

The property, known as Twinbrook, is located at 1251 Jumping Brook Road. The applicant is William Sitar, Managing Member of W&M Associates, LLC. The project is of a type known as a "last mile distribution center."

## YOU HAVE MORE TO GIVE THAN YOU KNOW

Maybe you can't make a gift to protect the environment during your lifetime, but you can become a financial hero by remembering the Sierra Club in your will. You can even direct your gift to a special Club program or to the New Jersey Chapter.

For information about making a bequest to the New Jersey Chapter call Paul Sanderson at 908-233-2414

## KUNG FLU *continued from page 2*

and First Lady. WE MUST HOLD THEM ACCOUNTABLE."<sup>12</sup> Her accusation and call to action are consistent with the talking points in a Republican strategy document, obtained by Politico,<sup>13</sup> that blames China for the suffering in the U.S. ("This is China's fault," "I will stand up to China," etc.).<sup>14</sup> Although early in the pandemic the Chinese government was culpable for holding back information, this accusation does not distinguish between the Chinese government versus its people, nor does it explain the departing Administration's actions (or lack thereof) in handling this crisis.

Fortunately, the Burmese American family in Texas survived the vicious at-

tack, and hopefully the physical pain and scars will heal over time. We can also hope that our newly elected officials will not use stigmatizing language towards minority or other marginalized groups that was disgracefully embraced by our soon-to-be-departing administration, and that the fear, pain, and scars of discrimination can begin to heal.

### Footnotes

1. <https://www.dallasnews.com/news/crime/2020/04/01/fbi-says-texas-stabbing-that-targeted-asian-american-family-was-hate-crime-fueled-by-coronavirus-fears/>

2. AP News, Trump dubs COVID-19

>continued on page 14

# PSE&G Seeks More Subsidies

From a press release issued by our Trenton staff on Oct 1, edited by Irene Gnarra

New Jersey's Nuclear Subsidy Law requires that the NJ Board of Public Utilities create a program and mechanism for the issuance of Zero Emission Certificates (ZECs) for eligible nuclear power plants. Following the requirements in "The Matter of the Implementation of L. 2018, c. 16," PSE&G submitted its petition on October 1, requesting ZECs for its two nuclear power plants in Salem County.

Last year, the BPU staff urged the rejection of PSE&G's application, but the Board disregarded them and granted the company \$300 million. The Sierra Club opposes these subsidies and hopes that the new petition will be denied, for the company has no need for financial assistance. According to PSE&G's tax report for 2018, the company received \$9.7 billion in revenues, of which almost \$1.8 billion was profit. That amounts to an 18 percent return, yet the company paid no federal taxes. Doubtless, that money was distributed as dividends to stockholders.

The Nuclear Subsidy Law also requires that utilities buy 40% of their electricity from nuclear power plants. It is shameful that the subsidy constitutes a regressive tax on working families who struggle to pay taxes while their electricity bills escalate.

PSE&G would also like to build a new power line through Maryland and Delaware, apparently funded by New Jersey subsidies. New Jersey ratepayers should not have to finance in- and out-of-state nuclear plants. It is critical that BPU analyze how much power each plant generates, where the power is used, and who is paying for it. Companies receiving subsidies from New Jersey should not be permitted to receive additional support from the PJM Grid, as well as from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI). The New Jersey Sierra Club is concerned that other companies owning plants within the PJM region will also apply for New Jersey's ZEC credits. BPU must make the application process transparent and require that all applicants show proof to an independent auditor that they need support for their nuclear facilities.

Instead of subsidizing multimillion-dollar energy companies, the State should fund the development of renewable energy. Nuclear power should not be considered a long-term solution, nor should it be considered the ultimate goal for green energy.

## REPORT FROM TRENTON

# Murphy's Bear Hunters Kill 336

From a Press Release issued on Oct 19

The first, bow-and-arrow, segment of the 2020 New Jersey Bear Hunt resulted in 336 bears killed: 152 in Sussex Co, 89 in Warren, 63 in Morris, 21 in Passaic, 7 in Hunterdon, and 1 bear in Somerset. The second segment for firearms was scheduled to begin on December 7th.

Governor Murphy should have stopped this hunt but he didn't. More than 5,000 "trophy" bears have been killed since 2010. The Sierra Club urges transition from hunting to a real management plan, one that includes education and installs warning signs in the region, educational materials at trail heads, prohibits the feeding of bears, and manages garbage. These measures would manage the bear population better than hunting.

The bear hunt was initiated to get rid of aggressive and nuisance bears. But their numbers have dropped by about 80% since 2010.

A coalition of twelve organizations, including the NJ Chapter of the Sierra Club, the Humane Society of the United States and The Animal Legal Defense Fund, filed a petition with the NJ Department of Environmental Protection under the Administrative Procedures Act to repeal rules permitting bear hunting and the Department's Comprehensive Bear Management Policy. The coalition also sent a letter to Murphy asking him to issue an Executive Order to stop the bear hunt.

## REPORT FROM TRENTON

# Newark Schools Receive \$7.5 Million for Lead Removal

From a Press Release issued on Oct 23

On Oct 23rd, the US Environmental Protection Agency awarded the Newark Board of Education \$7.5 million in federal funds to combat lead in Newark schools. The grant will help fund the Newark Safe Water Initiative, which removes lead from school drinking water.

In addition to replacing lead plumbing, the money will also fund outreach and public education to raise awareness of the health effects of lead in drinking water and ways to reduce lead exposure.

Testing has revealed elevated levels of lead in 30 schools in New Jersey, in some places at levels ten times above the federal standard. In March 2016, a memo obtained by the New Jersey Sierra Club showed that school officials in Newark have known about the lead problem since August 2014.

One benefit of subscribing electronically is that the links (URLs) to internet sources become live (clickable). To switch to electronic delivery, just e-mail the editor, dick.colby@stockton.edu, with "Electronic JS" in the subject line and your 8-digit membership number (from the mailing label on p.1) in the text.



ronment. The CCL is working to ensure that this is the case.

I am honored that the CCL elected me as its Chair for the coming year. In that role, I have a seat with the Board of Directors and on many national Board

committees, and am responsible for leading the CCL Executive Committee and bringing local Chapter and Group concerns to the attention of our Club's national leadership and bureaucracy. We will have a busy year ahead.



**HOW TO IDENTIFY YOUR GROUP (BY COUNTY)**

- Skylands Group:** Sussex & northern Warren
  - Hunterdon Warren Group:** Hunterdon & southern Warren
  - North Jersey Group:** Bergen & Passaic
  - Gateway Group:** Essex
  - Hudson County Group:** Hudson
  - Loantaka Group:** Morris & Union
  - Central Jersey Group:** Mercer
  - Raritan Valley Group:** Somerset & Middlesex
  - Jersey Shore Group:** Monmouth
  - Ocean County Group:** Ocean
  - West Jersey Group:** Burlington, Camden & Gloucester
  - South Jersey Group:** Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland & Salem
- These designations are approximate: members are welcome to participate in whichever Group(s) they find convenient*

*(Groups are arranged in rough geographical sequence: North to South)*

**SKYLANDS GROUP**

*(Sussex and northern Warren Counties)*

**Website:** <http://SkylandsGroup.org> Or click from the NJ Chapter's web-site.  
**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/SkylandsNJSC>  
**E-mail:** [ggorman07419@embarqmail.com](mailto:ggorman07419@embarqmail.com); Phone: 973-886-7950

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE and other OFFICERS:** (ExCom Members are elected to serve 2-year terms; term-expiry date in parentheses):

- |                                   |                             |  |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>Chair:</b> (12/31/20)          | Greg Gorman                 | <a href="mailto:ggorman07419@embarqmail.com">ggorman07419@embarqmail.com</a> |
| <b>Vice Chair:</b> (12/31/21)     | Susan Williams              | <a href="mailto:SkylandsGroup@gmail.com">SkylandsGroup@gmail.com</a>         |
| <b>Secretary:</b> (12/31/20)      | Norene Haberski             | <a href="mailto:norenehaberski2@gmail.com">norenehaberski2@gmail.com</a>     |
| <b>Treasurer:</b> (12/31/21)      | Jeri Doherty                | <a href="mailto:bjd8974@gmail.com">bjd8974@gmail.com</a>                     |
| <b>ExCom at large:</b> (12/31/21) | Dave Alcock                 | <a href="mailto:dwhoob@hotmail.com">dwhoob@hotmail.com</a>                   |
|                                   | (12/31/20) Nicole Guerrieri | <a href="mailto:SierraClubNicole@gmail.com">SierraClubNicole@gmail.com</a>   |
|                                   | (12/31/21) Scott Dieman     |  |
|                                   | (12/31/21) Chris Dunbar     | <a href="mailto:chrisdunbar458@gmail.com">chrisdunbar458@gmail.com</a>       |
|                                   | (12/31/21) Joanne Morgan    | <a href="mailto:jojommorgan@yahoo.com">jojommorgan@yahoo.com</a>             |
| <b>Conservation Chair:</b>        | Greg Gorman                 | <a href="mailto:ggorman07419@embarqmail.com">ggorman07419@embarqmail.com</a> |
| <b>Outings Chair:</b>             | Dave Alcock                 | <a href="mailto:dwhoob@hotmail.com">dwhoob@hotmail.com</a>                   |
| <b>Outreach Chair:</b>            | Joanne Morgan               | <a href="mailto:jojommorgan@yahoo.com">jojommorgan@yahoo.com</a>             |
| <b>Environmental Justice:</b>     | Susan Williams              | <a href="mailto:SkylandsGroup@gmail.com">SkylandsGroup@gmail.com</a>         |
| <b>Political Co-Chairs:</b>       | Nicole Guerrieri            | <a href="mailto:SierraClubNicole@gmail.com">SierraClubNicole@gmail.com</a>   |
| and:                              | Susan Williams              | <a href="mailto:SkylandsGroup@gmail.com">SkylandsGroup@gmail.com</a>         |
| <b>Co-Publicity Chairs:</b>       | Jeri Doherty                | <a href="mailto:bjd8974@gmail.com">bjd8974@gmail.com</a>                     |
| and:                              | Joanne Morgan               | <a href="mailto:jojommorgan@yahoo.com">jojommorgan@yahoo.com</a>             |
| <b>Webmaster:</b>                 | Nicole Guerrieri            | <a href="mailto:SierraClubNicole@gmail.com">SierraClubNicole@gmail.com</a>   |
- Open position available:** Membership Chair – please contact Greg!

**GENERAL MEETINGS:** SECOND TUESDAY of each month and open to the public. We meet from 7-9pm at the Unitarian Fellowship, 1 West Nelson St, Newton.

The Skylands Group of the NJ Sierra Club serves the environmentally sensitive region of Sussex and Northern Warren Counties in Northwestern NJ.

We offer a variety of opportunities for the public to learn about and connect with their natural environment, including informative films and speakers at our monthly general meetings; exploration of the great outdoors on hikes, edible plant tours and picnics; public outreach via town tabling; and visits to schools to teach students about the environment. Our hope is to foster a love of and deep respect for our great outdoors.

As advocates, The Skylands Group works with other grassroots organizations to protect open spaces and water quality; promote clean energy; oppose privatization of our water and land public trust resources; and other local, national and global environmental issues as they arise.

We table annually at Luscroft Farm's Medicine Wheel Festival in May, host a summer picnic in July, conduct a Drive Electric Event in September at the GreenLife Market in Andover Township, and celebrate winter holidays in December. All our events are free of charge and open to the public.

**CURRENT CAMPAIGNS:** The Skylands Group advocates the protection of the Sparta Mountain Wildlife Management Area from logging done under the guise of creating "healthy forests."

The Skylands Group supports Green New Deal, Sunrise Movement, Sierra Club's Ready for 100 Campaign, and projects to move toward a Clean Energy Economy.

The Skylands Group supports the residents opposing ill-conceived dump sites such as those found in Wantage and Vernon.

The Skylands Group also opposes the Munsonhurst Planned Residential Development, which will adversely affect the ecology of a Natural Heritage Priority Site in Franklin Twp (Sussex Co).

**HUNTERDON WARREN GROUP**

*(Hunterdon and southern Warren Counties)*

**Website:** <http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/hunterdonwarren>  
**Meetup:** <http://www.meetup.com/NJSierraClub/>  
**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/sierraclub.hunterdonwarren/>

**OFFICERS:**

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <b>Chair:</b>                              | Jonathan Wall *   | <a href="mailto:jonwall@jonwall.com">jonwall@jonwall.com</a>           |
| <b>Vice Chair:</b>                         | Celeste Martin *  | <a href="mailto:onecentral@mac.com">onecentral@mac.com</a>             |
| <b>Conservation Co-Chairs:</b>             | Nancy Carringer *   | <a href="mailto:ncarringer@yahoo.com">ncarringer@yahoo.com</a>         |
| and:                                       | Chris Runion*   | <a href="mailto:runionc3@gmail.com">runionc3@gmail.com</a>             |
| <b>Political Co-Chairs:</b>                | Karen Becker *  | <a href="mailto:karbecker@gmail.com">karbecker@gmail.com</a>           |
| and:                                       | Amy Weeder *  | <a href="mailto:aweeder@comcast.net">aweeder@comcast.net</a>           |
| <b>Children's Programs:</b>                | Kimberly Borin *  | <a href="mailto:storiesofourown@mac.com">storiesofourown@mac.com</a>   |
| <b>Environmental &amp; Social Justice:</b> | Angela De Sapio *   | <a href="mailto:angela.desapio@gmail.com">angela.desapio@gmail.com</a> |
| <b>Highlands Issues Coordinator:</b>       | Cinny MacGonagle *  | <a href="mailto:cmacgonagle@yahoo.com">cmacgonagle@yahoo.com</a>       |
| <b>Outings:</b>                            | Jonathan Wall *   | <a href="mailto:jonwall@jonwall.com">jonwall@jonwall.com</a>           |
| <b>Treasurer, Secretary:</b>               | John Kashwick   | <a href="mailto:jkashwick@gmail.com">jkashwick@gmail.com</a>           |
| <b>Webmaster/Listmaster:</b>               | John Kashwick   | <a href="mailto:jkashwick@gmail.com">jkashwick@gmail.com</a>           |
| <b>Fundraising Chair:</b>                  | <i>Open Position! Please contact Jonathan if interested</i> |  |
| <b>Social Media Coordinator:</b>           | <i>Open Position! Please contact Jonathan if interested</i> |  |
- (\* Group Executive Committee Member)*

**GENERAL MEETINGS:** Meetings are virtual for the time being. Please check <http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/hunterdonwarren> for updates or to register for events. Zoom meeting info will be sent to registered participants a few days before the meeting.

**Jan 6 (Wed):** COVID-19 Camping in the National Parks. Recent Rutgers graduates Ray Martin and Victoria Sharky Voorhees will share stories and photos of their great park summer adventure visiting the Badlands, Rocky Mountain, Yellowstone, Arches, Canyonlands, Great Sand Dunes, Redwoods and Olympic Parks.

**Feb 3 (Wed):** "Collaboration is our Strongest Lever for Change!" Mary Conti, Director Of Marketing for The Nature Conservancy (TNC), together with Heather, Tracy and Melissa from the Woodland's Wildlife Refuge (WWR) will present on their collaboration to release rehabilitated animals back into the wild. See how TNC and WWR organizations collaborative effort may serve as a model to spearhead other environmental initiatives to preserve lands while mitigating the impacts of climate change.

**Mar 3 (Wed):** Precious yet Imperiled Northern New Jersey's Secret Forest—260 Square miles of Woodlands. Elliot Ruga from the NJ Highlands Coalition will give a Pro-for-estation talk. Learn how the Coalition is spearheading efforts to stop NJ's misguided logging practices that threaten habitat for mature trees best used to absorb carbon to combat climate change.

**OTHER EVENTS:**

**Jan 13 (Wed):** Executive Committee/Planning Meeting. 7:30 pm via Zoom. The meeting is casual and informative. All members are welcome and encouraged to attend to learn more about the Club. Hear about and discuss issues, plan future events, and become more active. (Please contact [jonwall@jonwall.com](mailto:jonwall@jonwall.com) or sign-up on Meetup.com)

**CURRENT ISSUES:**

**Oppose Mega-Warehouses:** There are several massive warehouse projects that are proposed for Hunterdon and Warren Counties. We are working with other groups to oppose these projects that threaten to spread industrial sprawl to our farms and natural areas. For more information, please contact Cinny MacGonagle at [cmacgonagle@yahoo.com](mailto:cmacgonagle@yahoo.com).

**Dark Skies:** Voorhees State Park in Hunterdon County is home to the NJAA Observatory which relies on dark skies. The Hunterdon Warren Group is initiating a campaign to have our county and local municipalities adopt stricter ordinances to reduce excessive light pollution which not only conflicts our view of the night sky but also wastes energy and harms wildlife and human health.

**NORTH JERSEY GROUP**

*(Bergen and Passaic Counties)*

**Website:** <http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/north-jersey>  
**Meetup:** <http://www.meetup.com/NJSierraClub/>  
**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/northjerseysierraclub>  
**Twitter:** @sierraclub\_nj  
**Instagram:** sierraclubnorth\_nj

The duly elected nine-member Executive Committee benefits from the assistance of volunteers. If you are interested in participating at a planning level and/or as a member or leader of one of our committees (see the Committee Descriptions below), please contact the Group Co-Chairs or the Committee Chair.

**North Jersey Group Officers**

- |                                 |                    |  |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|--|
| <b>Co-Chair:</b>                | Diane Scarangella* | <a href="mailto:diascat@hotmail.com">diascat@hotmail.com</a>   |
| <b>Co-Chair:</b>                | Buddy Jenssen*     | <a href="mailto:buddy.jenssen@gmail.com">buddy.jenssen@gmail.com</a>   |
| <b>Treasurer:</b>               | Buddy Jenssen*     | <a href="mailto:buddy.jenssen@gmail.com">buddy.jenssen@gmail.com</a>   |
| <b>Secretary:</b>               | Laura Troy*        | <a href="mailto:ltroy1019@gmail.com">ltroy1019@gmail.com</a>   |
| <b>Political Chair:</b>         | Sandi Liberti*     | <a href="mailto:libertisandi@gmail.com">libertisandi@gmail.com</a>   |
| <b>Outings Chair:</b>           | Mary Walsh*        | <a href="mailto:north.outings.chair@newjersey.sierraclub.org">north.outings.chair@newjersey.sierraclub.org</a> |
| <b>Conservation Chair:</b>      | Mary Walsh*        | <a href="mailto:north.outings.chair@newjersey.sierraclub.org">north.outings.chair@newjersey.sierraclub.org</a> |
| <b>Member:</b>                  | Judy Greene*       | <a href="mailto:jugreen547@gmail.com">jugreen547@gmail.com</a>   |
| <b>Climate Change Chair:</b>    | Jeff Rapaport*     | <a href="mailto:jefrap@optonline.net">jefrap@optonline.net</a>   |
| <b>Marketing/</b>               |                    |  |
| <b>Social Media Co-Chair:</b>   | Marie Mannino      | <a href="mailto:mmannino@yahoo.com">mmannino@yahoo.com</a>   |
| <b>Co-Chair:</b>                | Jan Barry*         | <a href="mailto:janbarry61@hotmail.com">janbarry61@hotmail.com</a>   |
| <b>Youth Outreach Co-Chair:</b> | SophiaNeuendorff   | <a href="mailto:sophianeue@gmail.com">sophianeue@gmail.com</a>   |
| <b>Co-Chair:</b>                | <i>Vacant</i>      |  |
| <b>Diversity/Environmental</b>  |                    |  |
| <b>Justice Chair/Co-Chair:</b>  | <i>Vacant</i>      |  |
| <b>Contact:</b>                 | Diane Scarangella* | <a href="mailto:diascat@hotmail.com">diascat@hotmail.com</a>   |

*>continued on page 8*



**ExCom Member:** Bob Weiss\* bobweiss1967@gmail.com  
**Liaison, Raritan Valley Group:** Faris Jebara faris.jebara@gmail.com  
**Liaison, Hudson Group:** Ninad Kashyap ninadmkashyap@gmail.com  
**Liaison, NYC Group:** Hanna Atlas h.atlas.425@gmail.com

*\*Elected North Jersey Group Executive Committee Members.*

**INITIATIVES:** The North Jersey Group is committed to coalition building through outreach and planning with other Sierran Groups and with local and state non-profit organizations. Our collaborative initiatives focus upon (1) encouraging municipal resolutions that support town-level adoption of renewable energy strategies and the environmentally friendly development of affordable housing; (2) opposing gas-fueled plants and the construction of pipelines, transport terminals and the use of tankers and trains to transport Bakken oil, liquid natural gas and other dirty fuels; (3) advocating for renewable energy sources; (4) opposing commercialization and development of county, state and local parkland and open spaces; (5) advocating for removal not capping of contaminated soil on undeveloped public land and the restoration of that land to its natural state; (6) advocating for the clean-up of polluted waterways and for the transition to non-polluting sources of transport on the Hudson and other NJ/NYC waterways; (7) supporting access to affordable health care to address the harm done to the health of residents in environmental justice communities; (8) increasing group diversity, and (9) supporting the efforts of organizations who are “on the ground” in environmental justice communities.

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

**UPCOMING EVENTS:** Unless otherwise noted, meetings and outings are free, open to the general public. Events are announced via email and on our social media. Due to the virus, we have been forced to cancel our in-person events. We are in process of planning virtual events so, please check our Meetup page, Facebook page, or website for newly posted meetings and events. Please email our Co-Chairs or contact one of the committee chairs listed above, if you have suggestions for events or if you would like to be added to our email list.

The North Jersey Group seeks members for the following volunteer committees and welcomes collaboration with other Groups. Please contact the Committee Contacts listed 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, and 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 north.outings.chair@newjersey.sierraclub.org or Judy at jugreen547@gmail.com.

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

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

**Event Planning and Membership Committee:** We are in need of a Committee Chair and additional members, especially those with experience and interest in setting up virtual events! 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 at diascat@hotmail.com or Buddy at Buddy.Jenssen@gmail.com

**Marketing/Social Media Committee:** Are you creative? Do you love graphic design, writing press releases and short stories, contacting newspapers and radio, and using social media? We need you! If interested, contact Marie at mmannino@yahoo.com and Jan at janbarr61@hotmail.com.

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

**Youth Outreach:** This Committee plans nature walks in local parks for elementary and middle school youth. It outreaches to high schools and youth organizations to encourage local teenagers to become organizers of these events, so that all can appreciate the value of the outdoors. The committee creates liaisons with local schools, parents, other youth groups, and Sierra Club certified hike leaders to help young people learn to appreciate and protect the planet as they explore the natural world. The Committee uses social media to expand participation, as the group conforms to the goals of the national Sierra Club. If you are interested, please contact Sophia at sophianeue@gmail.com.

**Diversity, Inclusion, and Environmental Justice Committee:** Do you want to act to support social, racial, economic and environmental justice? Do you believe that the Sierra Club must become more diverse and that our effectiveness is tied to increased inclusivity? If yes, then our new Diversity, Inclusion and Environmental Justice Committee is the place for you! The North Jersey Chapter promotes awareness of state, national, and international-level efforts addressing environmental justice and inequality at large. If you are interested in participating in the activities of this committee contact Diane at diascat@hotmail.com

## GATEWAY GROUP

*Serving Hillside, Elizabeth, and Essex County (except 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 Group officer positions open.

**Our website:** <http://sierraclub.org/new-jersey/Gateway/>. (also accessible from the NJ Chapter website)

Please also join the Gateway Group on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Gateway-Group-NJ-Sierra-Club/128998363842782>.

#### OFFICERS:

<b>Co-Chairs:</b>	Bill Beren	862-283-8754	Beren1@verizon.net
and:	David Yennior	973-844-1384	dyennior@gmail.com
<b>Vice-Chair, Conserv’n Chr:</b>	Caroline Kane	646-961-9003	ckane678@verizon.net
<b>Secretary &amp; Treasurer:</b>	Anne Hirs	973-844-1121	annehirs@msn.com
<b>Program Co-Chairs:</b>	Suzanne Trimel	973-509-8335	suzanne.trimel@gmail.com
and:	Steven Yafet	908-354-2537	syafet@gmail.com
<b>Publicity Chair:</b>	<i>Open Position!</i>		
<b>Political Chair:</b>	Bill Beren	Beren1@verizon.net	
<b>Fundraising Chair:</b>	Rachel Tarzia	908-531-2168	Rtarzia6@outlook.com
<b>Membership Chair:</b>	Steven Yafet	908-354-2537	syafet@gmail.com
<b>Newark Issues Chair:</b>	Jamie Bruno	973-393-2154	jjjjebruno@gmail.com
<b>Recycling, Passaic River Issues:</b>	David Yennior (see above)		
<b>Elizabeth Issues, Env Justice Chr:</b>	Kason Little	908-305-7719	kasonjamal@icloud.com
<b>Outings Chair:</b>	Dionne Howe	206-430-0288	dionnelhowe@gmail.com
<b>Webmaster:</b>	Christy Morganstein	732-718-4343	christy@medartsweb.com

**Group Executive Committee:** David Yennior, Bill Beren, Suzanne Trimel, Steven Yafet, and Caroline Kane.

A Gateway membership virtual meeting was held July 29. There were 20 people in attendance.

Please contact Bill Beren or David Yennior, Gateway’s Co-Chairs, if you have ideas or suggestions for a meeting-topic or program, or conservation project. We are very grateful for the many contributions of Suzanne Trimel, Anna Whitley, John Beadle, Barbara Conover, ZaSah Khademi, Bill Chappel, Steven Yafet, Anne Hirs, Paula Borenstein, and Brenda Toyloy.

We invite YOU to join in our activism and ask your support as we strive to address the many issues facing our urban as well as suburban communities. Note several vacant positions listed above.

**CONSERVATION NEWS:** The Gateway Group has been supporting the Coalition to Save South Mountain Reservation in their fight to defeat an Essex County plan to build a 500 seat, \$8.8M amphitheater on South Mountain Reservation property adjacent to the Turtle Back Zoo. Termed a “Conservation Pavilion”, the project is being sold as necessary to provide “interactive” conservation programs, but the County also plans for it to be rented out to outside groups. The NJ Sierra Club has opposed the pavilion on the grounds that it is not educational for children, will traumatize 30 wild animals 5X a day, is a waste of tax revenue, and is harmful to the environment.

Recently the Essex County Environmental Commission recommended in a strongly worded resolution that the “Conservation Pavilion” project be “dropped altogether” given the new realities of COVID-19 and budgetary shortfalls. Short of a complete cancellation, the Commission recommended a full and independent environmental study on the project’s environmental impact on water, air, light, groundwater pollution, surface pollution, carbon absorption and open space area before proceeding. The ECEC Resolution was sent to County Executive Joseph DiVincenzo and the Board of Chosen Freeholders.

As of the beginning of May, no construction contract has been awarded to clearcut the land and build the amphitheater. Over 130 trees on the designated site within the South Mountain Reservation remain marked for destruction with green paint and the State’s Department of Community Affairs has not released its promised \$4 million funding to the County. No new County funding has been approved.

Also, the Group is working with the Passaic River Coalition to investigate reports of raw sewage being dumped into the headwaters of the Peckman River in West Orange, which flows into the Passaic in Little Falls.

## HUDSON COUNTY GROUP

**Website:** <http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/hudson-county>

**E-mail:** hudsonsierraclub@gmail.com

**Facebook:** @HCSierraClub

**Instagram:** @HCSierraClub

**Twitter:** @HCSierraClub

#### OFFICERS: (\*=ExCom)

<b>Co-Chair:</b>	David ‘Ace’ Case*	acecase88@gmail.com
<b>Co-Chair:</b>	Pramod Raju*	modisone@gmail.com
<b>Secretary:</b>	Patricia Hilliard*	hilliard_patricia@hotmail.com



<b>Treasurer:</b>	Patricia Hilliard*	hilliard_patricia@hotmail.com
<b>Conservation Chair:</b>	Patricia Hilliard*	hilliard_patricia@hotmail.com
<b>Political Chair:</b>	Pramod Raju*	modisone@gmail.com
<b>Delegate to Chapter:</b>	Open Position!	
<b>Membership:</b>	Open Position!	
<b>Publicity:</b>	Steve Krinsky*	stevekrinsky@comcast.net
<b>Outings / Events:</b>	Steve Krinsky*	stevekrinsky@comcast.net
<b>At-Large:</b>	Nancy Booth*	boothnancy2011@hotmail.com
<b>At-Large:</b>	Vanessa Smith*	vanes777@live.com
<b>Instagram:</b>	Open Position!	
<b>Web-Master:</b>	Open Position!	

**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:

**Liberty State Park:** The Liberty State Park Protection Act would end efforts to privatize the park once and for all! Keep "The People's Park" free and green! Billionaire Paul Fireman wants to steal the magnificent Caven Point Natural Area for his ultra-exclusive golf course in the latest attempt to privatize the park. The state can use funds from an Exxon toxic settlement to develop the final 234 acres, but only as passive recreation or open space. This still leaves plenty of room for development of active recreation like ballfields in this vast space. The DEP is gathering public input on their proposal for the interior of the park. They are making every effort to include all communities and are willing to consider various suggestions, including recreation.

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

**Climate Change:** You 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 NJ county. Sierra has joined with other leading environmental groups to form the Hudson Climate Coalition. Together, we will demand change from politicians at each level of government. We will keep the pressure on state and federal legislators to demand support for the Green New Deal and related policies. We are working to build awareness and grass roots support as we transition to 100% renewable energy locally by the year 2050, or sooner. Get involved and be part of the solution.

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

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

**Braddock Park:** Stopping illegal diversion of open space in this beautiful county park. Twenty years ago the town of North Bergen replaced a ballfield and the adjacent parking lot with 17 "temporary" school trailers. Sierra Club has joined a legal challenge to this illegal diversion of parkland in Braddock Park. The lawsuit would require Green Acres to enforce its own regulations. The town of North Bergen and Hudson County would be required to finally remove the trailers and create safe, permanent classrooms for the pre-school. Learn how you can help.

## LOANTAKA GROUP

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

**Website:** <http://sierraclub.org/new-jersey/loantaka/>

Loantaka now has a FaceBook page. Please check it out and "like" it: <https://www.facebook.com/LoantakaGroupNJSC>.

<b>OFFICERS:</b>			
<b>Group Chair:</b>	Paul Sanderson	908-233-2414	loantakachair@newjersey.sierraclub.org
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Paul Sanderson	908-233-2414	paulmsanderson@aol.com
<b>Secretary:</b>	Jonathan Connor	201-463-7636	Jon78921@outlook.com
<b>Conser. Chairs:</b>			
<b>Morris County:</b>	Len Fariello		len@wildlifepreserves.org
<b>Union County:</b>	Allen Swanson		afswanson@hotmail.com
<b>Political Chair:</b>	Priti Thakker	973-752-1100	thakkerp@icloud.com
<b>Programs:</b>	Bob Zega	973-349-8001	rjzega@yahoo.com
<b>Fundraising Chair:</b>	Eric Hausker	732-669-0719	ericbiomass@gmail.com
<b>Outings Chair:</b>	Kevin O'Brien	908-403-0900	kbkob@aol.com
<b>Publicity Chair:</b>	Wynn Johanson	908-464-0442	johansons@comcast.net
<b>Membership:</b>	Open Position!		
<b>Webmaster:</b>	Wynn Johanson	908-464-0442	johansons@comcast.net
<b>Upper Passaic River</b>			
<b>Coordinator:</b>	Kathy O'Leary	908-647-2870	kolearypcnj@gmail.com

If you might be interested in getting involved, please attend one of our Executive Committee Meetings: the first Tuesday of each month -- and get to know us. Or participate in one of our General Meetings on the second Wednesday of the month. There are no obligations and there will be no pressure. Currently all meetings are being held as Zoom meetings.

**More of our activities are at:** <http://sierraclub.org/new-jersey/loantaka/>

**To join our e-mailing list, go to:**

<http://lists.sierraclub.org/archives/nj-loantaka-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, when possible. 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:** are held on the SECOND WEDNESDAY of the month -- 7:30 pm at the Library of the Chathams, 214 Main St, Chatham, when possible. Learn something new and make some new friends. We'd welcome the chance to meet you and to introduce ourselves, even by Zoom. Please see the schedule, below, and join us! DIRECTIONS are posted on our website: <http://sierraclub.org/new-jersey/loantaka/>.

**MEETING SCHEDULE:** Currently all Executive Committee Meetings and General Meetings that have been scheduled are being done as Zoom meetings, and are expected to continue as Zoom meetings until further notice.

**Jan 13:** Please check the Loantaka website.

**Feb 10:** Please check the Loantaka website.

**Mar 10:** Please check the Loantaka website.

**ACTIVITIES:** The Loantaka Group is working with concerned citizens and local environmental organizations to protect open space and wildlife habitat in Morris and Union Counties, and to safeguard the water resources on which we all depend. In addition, the Group is actively involved in State-wide initiatives involving air quality, transportation, and environmental legislation. Volunteers are always welcome. Call Paul at 908-233-2414.

Consult our website (<http://sierraclub.org/new-jersey/loantaka/>) for more information.

## CENTRAL JERSEY GROUP

(Mercer County and neighboring towns in adjoining counties)

**Website:** <http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/central-jersey>. Or click from the NJ Chapter's web-site. Please see the Outings List in this newsletter -- or on Pineypaddlers.com.

**OFFICERS:**

<b>Group Chair:</b>	Joanne Pannone	jpatmeadowbrook@gmail.com
<b>Group Vice Chair:</b>	Xiaoping Du	xiaping_du@yahoo.com
<b>Secretary:</b>	Leona Fluck	leona@pineypaddlers.com
<b>Outings Coordinators:</b>	George and Leona Fluck	leona@pineypaddlers.com
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Arlene Ceterski	va2c2015@gmail.com
<b>Programs:</b>	Joanne Pannone	jpatmeadowbrook@gmail.com
<b>Conservation Chair:</b>	Kip Cherry	KipAtTheSierraClub@gmail.com
<b>Recycling:</b>	Sylvia Kay	Sylviakay222@gmail.com
<b>Trails:</b>	Dave Mattek	MattekDC@aol.com
<b>Webmaster:</b>	Open Position!	
<b>Education:</b>	Open Position!	

One recent activity was a zoom video presentation, "Pinelands National Preserve-Wilderness Remains," held on May 13th. The Central Jersey Group will post any future activities on the New Jersey Sierra Club website, Central Group FaceBook page, and Pineypaddlers.com. Stay home, be patient, stay safe! And don't stop lobbying for our environment!

We lobby at the State House for laws to fight polluters and climate change. We need a moratorium on pipelines and fossil fuel projects. Support Empower New Jersey!

Get Sierra news by joining Sierra Club and receive our email.

## RARITAN VALLEY GROUP

(Middlesex and Somerset Counties and surrounding areas)

**Officers:**

<b>Group Chair:</b>	S. Pasricha	spjersey@gmail.com
<b>Conservation Chair:</b>	Gary Frederick	609-203-3382
	garyfrederick@newjersey.sierraclub.org	
<b>Membership:</b>	John Miraglia	johnworks3@aol.com
<b>Political Chair:</b>	Teresa Callahan	terry.callahan15@gmail.com
<b>Publicity Chair:</b>	Open Position!	
<b>Treasurer:</b>	S. Pasricha	spjersey@gmail.com
<b>Webmaster:</b>	Paul Ehrlich	p.w.ehrlich-nj@outlook.com
<b>Outings/Events Co-Chairs:</b>	S. Pasricha, Brianna Cerione and Bernadette Maher	
<b>College Liaison:</b>	Open position!	
<b>Bee affairs:</b>	Brenda Bradley	
<b>Group Executive Committee Members:</b>	Gary Frederick, S. Pasricha, Teresa Callahan, Kevin Corcoran, and Paul Ehrlich	

Our monthly membership meetings are typically held on the FOURTH WEDNESDAY of each month in New Brunswick. We discuss environmental news impacting Middlesex & Somerset Counties, plus discuss upcoming events, speakers, volunteer efforts, etc. To confirm please contact the RVG Chair.

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

1. Opposition to gas and oil pipelines and new fossil fuel infrastructure that threaten the air, water and our health.

>continued on page 10



2. Conservation and protection of the Raritan River basin area.
3. Passage of and responsible enforcement of environmentally friendly ordinances.
4. Land conservation, preservation of open space and protection of Green Acres.

**News from the Raritan Valley area:**

- NESE pipeline permits have been rejected by the NJDEP. Thank you to our friends from the Central Jersey Safe Energy Coalition, SCRAP-NESE and the Franklin Township Task Force on Compressor Station 206!
- Williams Transco threatens to truck fracked LNG.
- NJ Transit Kearny fracked gas plans have been withdrawn.
- Alfieri has begun removing trees at the Hidden Oak Woods development in the northernmost Pine Barrens outlier of East Brunswick, an area once known as Hickory Swamp. 1,500 trees are on the chopping block.
- Spotted lantern flies have been spotted in Somerset County and don't need to be reported. Middlesex County invasions can be reported to the NJ DOA.
- The Bedminster Trump National Golf Course situated in the Highlands Preservation Area needs new water permits from the water authority. [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/blog/2020/10/trump-s-bedminster-golf-course-water-hearing-delayed-again](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/blog/2020/10/trump-s-bedminster-golf-course-water-hearing-delayed-again)
- Branchburg has prohibited standalone warehouses.
- Congratulations to the newly elected Somerset County Freeholders endorsed by the Sierra Club, Paul Drake and Doug Singleterry!

We encourage you to get involved by attending your town's planning and zoning board meetings. If you are aware of development proposals in your town that may have a negative environmental impact, please contact us and join our meetings. We are also interested in any environmental news or events affecting Middlesex and Somerset counties and invite you to submit those items as well.

Like us on Facebook! [www.facebook.com/RaritanGroupNJSC](http://www.facebook.com/RaritanGroupNJSC)

**JERSEY SHORE GROUP**

*(Monmouth County, approximately)*

**Website:** <http://sierraclub.org/new-jersey/Jersey-Shore/>  
**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/JerseyShoreNJSC/>

- OFFICERS:**
- Group Chair:** Dennis Anderson 732-970-4327 [dennisaza@aol.com](mailto:dennisaza@aol.com)  
 6 Maple Ave, Matawan NJ 07747
- Secretary:** John Luard 732-708-9221 [John.Luard@gmail.com](mailto:John.Luard@gmail.com)
- Conservation Co-Chairs:** Faith Teitelbaum 732-513-5445 [faithtei@aol.com](mailto:faithtei@aol.com)  
 and: Bob Sandberg 732-241-7757 [Sandberg00@gmail.com](mailto:Sandberg00@gmail.com)  
 and: Stan Greberis 732-431-0882 [grapefruit@msn.com](mailto:grapefruit@msn.com)
- Treasurer:** Jim Baye [jimbaye@optonline.net](mailto:jimbaye@optonline.net)
- Political Co-Chairs:** Robin & Harold Zullo [drzullo@optonline.net](mailto:drzullo@optonline.net)
- Outings Chair:** John Luard 732-708-9221 [John.Luard@gmail.com](mailto:John.Luard@gmail.com)
- Outings Leaders:** Open Position!
- Membership Chair:** Wael Kanj
- Program Chair:** Mary Reilly 908-731-2466 [Mary@reillygreen.com](mailto:Mary@reillygreen.com)
- Climate Chair:** Steve Miller 732-671-5917 [SteveMiller@Comcast.net](mailto:SteveMiller@Comcast.net)
- Fund-raising Co-Chairs:** Mark Fukayama 908-902-1555 [markexams@aol.com](mailto:markexams@aol.com)  
 and: Faith Teitelbaum 732-513-5445 [faithtei@aol.com](mailto:faithtei@aol.com)
- Communications Chair:** Wael Kanj [waelkanj@gmail.com](mailto:waelkanj@gmail.com)
- Education Chair:** George Moffatt 732-544-1726 [gmoffattgt@aol.com](mailto:gmoffattgt@aol.com)
- High School Coordin:** *Open Position!*
- Letter-writing Committee:** Mark Fukayama, Steve Miller and Stan Greberis

**JERSEY SHORE GROUP HAPPENINGS:**

Stormwater Management Campaign to Stop Urban Flooding: Wael, Stan and Faith are coordinating this campaign with the help of Megan at the Chapter Office. We're asking all our members to attend a Municipal Council meeting and read the following:

**I am asking that the City include the following in the new Stormwater Rules:**

- Reduced threshold definition for major development
- Require major developments to treat runoff from all impervious surfaces for water quality
- Require stormwater management for minor development over 250 square feet
- Address redevelopment
- Require the use of Low Impact Development techniques
- Include maintenance reporting requirements

If we can speak up at every Council meeting in our group area, we can make a difference.

See our Shore Group website for details on how else you can help.

**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 Mondays" presentations at Brookdale Community College.

However, we are presenting Zoom webinars, usually on the fourth Monday of every month. 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 problems.

Please check with our website and/or watch your Email for details.

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 pandemic 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' Contact: Mary Reilly, 908-731-2466 or [Mary@reillygreen.com](mailto:Mary@reillygreen.com)

If you are not getting Emails announcing our webinars, please send one to Wael at [waelkanj@gmail.com](mailto:waelkanj@gmail.com), or sign up at our website.

**OCEAN COUNTY GROUP**

**Website:** [MEETUP.COM/SIERRA-CLUB-OCEAN-GROUP](http://MEETUP.COM/SIERRA-CLUB-OCEAN-GROUP)

**OFFICERS:**

- Acting Chair & Conservation Chair:** Margit Meissner-Jackson [sylviaj1910@yahoo.com](mailto:sylviaj1910@yahoo.com)
- Vice-Chair & Treasurer:** Laura Stone [Laura36@yahoo.com](mailto:Laura36@yahoo.com)
- Outings & Env'l Ed'n:** Terrance Brown [terrybrown@comcast.net](mailto:terrybrown@comcast.net)
- Recording Secretary:** Nancy Brown [nancybrown624@comcast.net](mailto:nancybrown624@comcast.net)
- Political Chair:** Margaret Mary Piccolo [gogreenp1@yahoo.com](mailto:gogreenp1@yahoo.com)
- Membership Chairs:** Ray & Cathy Kozakerich [raykozak@comcast.net](mailto:raykozak@comcast.net)
- Group ExCom Members:** William Rodgers  
 and: Peter Leighton [JPLEighton1@verizon.net](mailto:JPLEighton1@verizon.net)  
 and: Joyce Isaza [realtymstr@aol.com](mailto:realtymstr@aol.com)
- Hospitality, Fundraising, Publicity, Webmaster:** all open positions!

**GENERAL MEMBERSHIP 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 and state-wide we are fighting a myriad of over-development issues. Along with our allies we are working hard to save Barnegat Bay and The Pinelands, two natural gems in Ocean County.

**WEST JERSEY GROUP**

*(Camden, Gloucester and Burlington Counties, approximately)*

**Website:** <http://sierraclub.org/new-jersey/West-Jersey/>  
**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/WestJerseyGroupNJSC> Log on and Like Us!  
**Follow us on Twitter** @WJsierraclub and Instagram @wjsierraclub

**OFFICERS:**

- Group Chair:** Gina Carola 856-848-8831 [ginaceee@verizon.net](mailto:ginaceee@verizon.net)
- Vice-Chair:** Frank Zinni [efzin4@aol.com](mailto:efzin4@aol.com)
- Secretary:** Ellen Zinni [efzin4@aol.com](mailto:efzin4@aol.com)
- Treasurer:** Trish Clements [patri3210@gmail.com](mailto:patri3210@gmail.com)
- Publicity Chair:** Anne Caridi [annecaridi@yahoo.com](mailto:annecaridi@yahoo.com)
- Political Chair:** Linda Rubiano [Linda\\_Maritza@yahoo.com](mailto:Linda_Maritza@yahoo.com)
- Pinelands Rep:** Lee Snyder [pinelands1@hotmail.com](mailto:pinelands1@hotmail.com)
- Greenways Coord's:** Frank and Ellen Zinni [efzin4@aol.com](mailto:efzin4@aol.com)
- Conservation Chair:** Stacey Ayala [thunderwolfgalaxy@yahoo.com](mailto:thunderwolfgalaxy@yahoo.com)
- Delegate at Large:** Aida Ayala [thunderwolfgalaxy@yahoo.com](mailto:thunderwolfgalaxy@yahoo.com)
- Membership Chair:** Mike Brown 856-547-9221 [eyebrown@verizon.net](mailto:eyebrown@verizon.net)
- Fundraising Chair:** *Open position! Call Gina to volunteer: 856-848-8831*
- Smart Growth Chair:** *Open position! Call Gina to volunteer: 856-848-8831*
- Programs Chair:** *Open position! Call Gina to volunteer: 856-848-8831*
- Outings Chair:** *Open position! Call Gina to volunteer: 856-848-8831*
- Media & Communications:** Tony Hagen [hagenajohn@verizon.net](mailto:hagenajohn@verizon.net)
- Social Media Coord's:** *Open position! Call Gina to volunteer: 856-848-8831*

**GENERAL MEETINGS:** are held at 7:30 pm on the SECOND WEDNESDAY of ALTERNATE MONTHS, September thru May, at the Quaker Meeting Hall on Friends Ave in Haddonfield. Inclement weather (or pandemic) may cancel. Please call 856-848-8831 if unsure.

**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 (Brace Rd). Make the next 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, go two more blocks and turn right on to Friends Ave. Go one block to the Meeting House. Park 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.

**Special notice:** in accordance with Sierra Club's policy in effect due to the spread of the coronavirus, all NJ Chapter and Group in-person meetings and outings are canceled until further notice. We hope to resume soon.

If you would like to receive an email with a virtual presentation, please send an email to [ginaceee@verizon.net](mailto:ginaceee@verizon.net) and I will add you to our email list.

**Please check the West Group's Facebook page for updates.**  
<https://www.facebook.com/WestJerseyGroupNJSC>

In the meantime, please wear your mask, continue to physically distance and stay safe and well.

Contact Gina at 856-848-8831, [ginaceee@verizon.net](mailto:ginaceee@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 [boghosian1@verizon.net](mailto:boghosian1@verizon.net)
- Vice-Chair:** *Open Position!*
- Conservation Chair:** *Open Position!*
- Political Chair, Calendars:** Dick Colby 609-965-4453 [dick.colby@stockton.edu](mailto:dick.colby@stockton.edu)
- Membership Chair:** *Open Position!*
- Secretary/Treasurer:** Julie Akers 609-432-3280 [julieakers56@gmail.com](mailto:julieakers56@gmail.com)



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

Tom Boghosian is an avid kayaker (- certified as a Maine Guide!), both ocean-going and in fresh waters, possibly willing to lead trips. Julie Akers also works with Atlantic County Friends of the Parks, and is President of the Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association.

**Current Issues:** (1) We've been blue-blazing the southern portion of what will be a continuous footpath between the southern and northern tips of New Jersey. Many others (and other groups) are contributing. Detailed maps and route descriptions are now available on the Chapter's website. Dick has also produced a brochure describing 15 historic 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, to be operated by the Atlantic County Utilities Authority, fueled by new legislation that prods the BPU, and a new president of Atlantic City Electric Co. (3) With the passage of Statewide plastic- and paper-bag-restricting legislation, there's educational work to be done! (4 etc.) Many other South Jersey issues are described in previous issues of this Newsletter, available on the Chapter website.

#### Some Allied Organizations, likely meeting by Zoom:

**Jan 26 and Mar 23:** (alternating fourth Tuesdays), 6:30pm: Great Egg Harbor Watershed Assn. Activities centered on protecting the Wild & Scenic Recreational River. All are welcome. If a physical meeting takes place, it would be at the Warren Fox Nature Center (WFNC\*), Atlantic County Park in Estell Manor, Milepost 15 on NJ Rte 50, 3 1/2 miles south of Mays Landing. Contact Julie Akers, 609-432-3280.

**Dec 2, Jan 6, Feb 3 & Mar 3:** (first Wednesdays), 6:30pm: Atlantic County Friends of the Parks: Monthly meetings of a group which works to improve and promote the Atlantic County Park System. All are welcome. WFNC\* if the meeting would be physical. Contact Julie Akers, 609-432-3280. Website: <https://www.facebook.com/Atlantic-County-Friends-of-the-Parks>.

**Dec 9 & Feb 10:** (alternate second Wednesdays), 7pm: Bi-monthly meeting of Citizens United to Protect the Maurice River and its Tributaries (another "Partnership River" under federal protection): Meeting place (if physical): George Luciano Center, Cumberland County College. Cumberland County development issues are commonly discussed, including art, historical and recreational attributes of the area. Contact Karla Rossini (CU) at 609-774-5853 or [karla.rossini@cumauriceriver.org](mailto:karla.rossini@cumauriceriver.org). Website: [www.cumauriceriver.org](http://www.cumauriceriver.org).

**Dec 16 & Feb 17:** (alternate third Wednesdays), 6:30pm: Great Egg Harbor Scenic and Recreational River Council: Representatives of the 12 municipalities discuss and implement river management strategies. Open to the public. By Zoom or at the WFNC\*. Contact Julie Akers, 609-432-3280.

**Jan 27, Feb 24 & Mar 24:** (fourth Wednesdays), 7pm: Atlantic Audubon Society is a lively member-organization with strong environmental programs and an excellent monthly on-line newsletter. Membership is free. Meetings (if physical) are in the Galloway Twp Library, 306 E Jimmie Leeds Rd. [www.AtlanticAudubon.org](http://www.AtlanticAudubon.org).

## SINGLES SECTION

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

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

#### 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.

We're a friendly, active group of individuals who enjoy hiking, biking, canoeing/kayaking, 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.

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

**COMMUNICATIONS:** The best way to be notified of upcoming events is to join our free listserv. Anyone may subscribe by going to: <http://lists.sierraclub.org/archives/NJ->

[SINGLES-NEWS.html](#) and clicking on "Join or leave the list." You may subscribe and unsubscribe at will; directions on how to unsubscribe are at the bottom of each announcement. We recommend joining the listserv to receive announcements for all of our events a few weeks before each event. Events are also listed on the online calendar on the Chapter's web site: [sierraclub.org/new-jersey](http://sierraclub.org/new-jersey). You can also "like" us on Facebook: "Singles Group New Jersey Sierra Club." Activities will also be posted on Meetup.

#### 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, 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.

## LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER (LGBTQ) SECTION

*Our mission of this Section is to support Sierra Club goals, and to promote environmental activism and social equity. We are an inclusive group and all are welcome to join our events.*

**Website:** <http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/LGBT/>

**Meetup:** <http://www.meetup.com/njsierraclub>

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/njsierralgbt>

#### OFFICERS:

<b>Chair:</b>	William Parish *	<a href="mailto:whparishiv@gmail.com">whparishiv@gmail.com</a>
<b>Vice-Chair:</b>	Andrew Bevacqua *	<a href="mailto:andrewpbevacqua@gmail.com">andrewpbevacqua@gmail.com</a>
<b>Secretary:</b>	John Kashwick *	<a href="mailto:jkashwick@gmail.com">jkashwick@gmail.com</a>
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Jonathan Wall	<a href="mailto:docjdwall@gmail.com">docjdwall@gmail.com</a>
<b>Outings Chair:</b>	Robert Zitzman *	<a href="mailto:robertmzi@yahoo.com">robertmzi@yahoo.com</a>
<b>Fundraising:</b>	Matthew Lang *	<a href="mailto:matthewjlang58@gmail.com">matthewjlang58@gmail.com</a>
<b>Webmaster/Listmaster:</b>	John Kashwick *	<a href="mailto:jkashwick@gmail.com">jkashwick@gmail.com</a>

(\* Section Executive Committee Member)

Please check web site for meetings and events.

## SENIOR SECTION / FIFTY-PLUS SECTION

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

In addition, a monthly Buy & Sell newsletter is sent out to members free of charge, in which they can list items they are searching for or want to buy.

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

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

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

Paul Ehrlich is the Vice-Chair ([phehrlich-NJ@outlook.com](mailto:phehrlich-NJ@outlook.com)). He vice-edits the Essays Section of the Senior Section web site. These essays are written by members of the NJ Sierra Club, and focus on environmental issues, including reports of environment-related news that may not be easily accessed by many members, opinions on how to deal with environmental problems, and support/criticism of environmental actions taken by organizations and individuals. DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING YOU'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT THAT YOU'D LIKE TO TELL A LARGE AUDIENCE? Send an essay to Arline and Paul for editing and approval and it will be posted on our web site.

## SIERRA STUDENT COALITION

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

**National Website:** <http://www.ssc.org/>

## 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:** Daria Buvanova [ICOchair@newjersey.sierraclub.org](mailto:ICOchair@newjersey.sierraclub.org)  
**Other Officers:** Amanda Gaglio, Oscar Nazar, Mike Depardieu, Zachary Rose, Leila Marcovici, Tara Deaver, Julia Marchese

**New Jersey Inspiring Connections Outdoors** - (NJ ICO) is dedicated to providing safe and fun wilderness trips for children and teenagers with limited access to the outdoors. Volunteer leaders collaborate with community partners to facilitate, lead, and promote events that will educate and foster a love of nature and the outdoors for youth in New Jersey who may not otherwise have the opportunity or the means. The program works to reduce barriers by providing gear, transportation, trip fees, and leaders to create opportunities to explore, enjoy, and advocate for nature. The Chair welcomes inquiries from leaders of schools and other community organizations.

*There's an interactive CALENDAR for outings and Group events - on our website ([www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/)). Click "Events and Outings"*





**Chapter Chair**  
\* Rich Isaac (973) 716-0297  
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**Conservation Vice-Chair**  
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**Outings Chair**  
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**Advisors and Liaisons**

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**Home Solar Advisor**  
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**Inspiring Connections Outdoors Chair (ICO)**  
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**Legal Chair (Compliance Officer)**  
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**Legislative Coordinator & Litigation Oversight**  
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**Ready for 100 Campaign Liaison**  
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If no one is in the office to take your call, please leave a message on the answering machine. Please SPELL YOUR LAST NAME, and state whether the phone number you leave is for daytime or evening.

**Please share this newsletter with a non-member friend, inviting use of the form on this page**



Sierra Club outings have been discontinued for the duration of the COVID-19 viral pandemic. Members are encouraged to find their own ways of exploring and enjoying (and protecting) the natural world. Chapter and Group outings leaders, listed below, would probably welcome the opportunity to advise members on prospective locations for outdoor adventure. Most local, county, state and federal parks, forests and wildlife management areas are open for limited recreational use. The maps and descriptions are now on the Chapter's website: <https://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/long-trail>. 76% of the route is now open for hiking.

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**Upcoming ExCom Meetings**

All members are welcome to attend these monthly policy deliberations, held on SECOND SATURDAYS, almost certainly by Zoom, which accepts access from a computer, smartphone or telephone. 10am for the Conservation Committee; 1pm for ExCom. Details on access from our secretary: [secretary@newjerseysierraclub.org](mailto:secretary@newjerseysierraclub.org).

**Dates: Jan. 9, Feb. 13, Mar. 13**

**THE JERSEY Sierran**  
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*The Jersey Sierran* appears in January, April, July and October. The deadline for copy is on the 10th of the month, two months before appearance. Members are cordially invited to propose articles, essays, letters, poetry and artwork. (Group/Section News columns are prepared by Group/Section Chairs; Outings are vetted by the Chapter Outings Chair, Ellen Blumenkrantz.)

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## NATIONAL SCENE

# A Historic Funding Achievement for Our National Parks

By Tony Hagen, Editorial Assistant and Communications Chair of our West Jersey Group ([hagenajohn@verizon.net](mailto:hagenajohn@verizon.net))

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) provides funds to augment our national parks, so that logging interests and condo developments don't crowd up against their boundaries. But in its 55-year history, the LWCF has been fully funded only twice. In fact, President Trump in his 2021 federal budget even tried to reduce LWCF appropriations to just \$14.7 million, as opposed to the \$900 million in annual funding it is supposed to receive.

([https://www.everycrsreport.com/reports/RL33531.html#\\_Toc12029263](https://www.everycrsreport.com/reports/RL33531.html#_Toc12029263))  
(<https://missoulacurrent.com/government/2020/02/budget-proposal/?print=print>)

The Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA), which Trump signed into law this summer amid strong bipartisan pressure, made that \$900 million mandatory, not discretionary, which means our ailing national parks will get some much-needed life support—now and in the future. Appalachian Mountain Club staffer Amy Lindholm is an LWCF coalition manager who fought with many others to secure this historic victory. In a recent interview with *The Sierran*, she discussed the significance of this achievement.

Lindholm explained that the LWCF is funded with offshore oil and gas drilling fees in an offset arrangement that conserves and increases our parks and outdoor resources as fossil fuels are depleted. The GAOA provides an additional \$9 billion over five years to catch up with maintenance at national parks, refuges, forests, and other federal lands. The 419 national parks get \$6.5 billion, specifically.

(<https://www.ehslawinsights.com/2020/08/trumps-signs-the-great-american-outdoors-act/>)

Although modest, the LWCF funding is distributed via matching grants through programs such as the Forest Legacy Program and the Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program, which promote everything from sus-

tainable forestry to urban park development. These required matches make the LWCF money more impactful. They ensure that community support exists for the projects that are chosen. (<https://www.lwcfcoalition.com/tools>)

**Could you have achieved this outside of an election year?**

Is any year not an election year? In 2015 they were working on full permanent funding of LWCF but the underlying law expired. It had always enjoyed bipartisan support, and nobody thought that would be a problem, but everything becomes politicized these days, and we ended up fighting to save the program itself in 2015, and then it expired again in 2018. We've found in each round that some of the same members of Congress and some different members up for re-election are super supportive of this issue. They were already, most of them, grand champions of the program.

**How confident are you that Congress will not renege on this funding?**

Over the life of this 55-year-old program, more than half of the funding has been diverted to other uses. So, this is like a doubling of funding and it's really exciting. Congress will no longer have to vote on this every year, so this does make a big difference. They would have to vote to reverse this flow, but I feel confident that they're not going to want to do that any time soon, barring a huge national meltdown.

However, it's a very challenging economic time, and about half of the money goes to state and local grants, so that's going to be a real challenge — to raise those matching funds. We're not stopping the campaign now that we've won. We're trying to make sure this is as much of a success in the ground as it is in Congress.

**Please explain the debate over national park funding.**

The GAOA addresses maintenance funding for the national parks, which has been horrifically underfunded and

is reaching a dire state. A lot of times people have asked why we are acquiring more money for the national parks expansion when we cannot take care of the land we have. But conservation and maintenance are like two sides of the same coin. If you have roads and visitor centers that are falling apart, that terribly impacts the visitor experience. But if you have private land within a national park that a family turns over to a condo developer, that also has a terrible impact on the visitor experience. One of the reasons that the GAOA succeeded was that it addressed both problems.

**What else can be done with this expanded LWCF money?**

We're excited to finally have this money stretch into underserved communities. Not only do 100 million Americans live where there is not a park within a ten-minute walk, but parks that serve minority communities are smaller and not as nice as parks that serve primarily white communities. That needs to be addressed, and we finally have the kinds of dollars that can address that.

We're also deeply concerned about climate change. We're losing a football field of natural area every 30 seconds in the United States. New England is increasingly residential, and a 2017 Harvard University forest study indicated New England is losing 65 acres of forest a day. You can imagine that instead of addressing climate, we're making it worse. We're excited to be able to take steps to mitigate that problem. But in some ways, this may be only the first step, as much as it has involved decades of work to get to full funding of the LWCF.

(<https://www.vpr.org/post/study-new-england-loses-65-acres-forest-day-development#stream/0>)

**Isn't the annual \$900 million for the LWCF relatively small compared with actual need?**

It was established in the 1970s as

the amount of annual need, based on a study then. You can imagine what that would have bought had the LWCF been fully funded each year, but it was so hard to get a mandatory funding commitment. To achieve mandatory funding there was no question of getting to a bigger number, because so much of our persuasive argument was just for fulfilling the original funding promise. But now we can build on that.

**How do you reconcile the use of oil and gas revenues for funding national parks?**

People have mixed feelings about that. I don't feel bad, because this was proposed as an offset for that drilling. The drilling would occur anyway, and the drawing down of those resources will be counterbalanced by the development and preservation of permanent outdoor resources. No new drilling needs to happen for this to be fully funded. Until we make the decision to stop drilling offshore, that money will still be coming in. As long as that's the case, we should be investing it in conservation. As the energy mix changes to renewables, maybe LWCF should change along with it. That's a conversation that Congress hasn't been prepared to have yet.

A lot of folks have asked why we don't take all of the \$900 million and address the maintenance problems in our national parks, and we have said "No! This is supposed to be a capital investment in land and water resources, not resources for construction." The two things ended up being paired, but they're separate things, and it should stay the way it is.

**Concluding thoughts?**

In a state like New Jersey, where outdoor amenities are at a premium, we've seen more starkly in the pandemic how important it is for people to have places to connect with the outdoors—for physical health, for mental health, for the economy. This is a really historic victory. It's great to have something to celebrate amid all the bad news.

## REPORT FROM TRENTON

## NJ Transit Ridgefield Park Bus Depot - Another Bad Plan in the Wrong Place

From a Press Release issued on October 9

Ridgefield Park (Bergen Co) officials are trying to stop NJ Transit from acquiring a 56-acre property off Route 46 for a bus depot for 500 diesel buses. The village had originally planned to use the property for a town center, to be called "Skymark" — that would have included stores, residential space, and a 10-acre wildlife sanctuary.

NJ Transit once again is pushing forward with a bad plan in the wrong place. This should be an area for the town to grow, perhaps with affordable housing. A bus depot would mean traffic congestion, air pollution and noise in an area that is already overburdened environmentally.

We suggest that NJ Transit consider building electric bus infrastructure instead, like every other transportation system in the country is doing.

Ridgefield Park expected that developing the town center would bring in an estimated \$6.9 million in revenue. If NJ Transit acquires the property, that tax revenue would be lost.

## REPORT FROM TRENTON

## Ciba-Geigy Pollution Still a Threat - Half Done, Long Way to Go

From a Press Release issued on Oct 22

The underground pollution plume from the Ciba-Geigy Superfund Site near Toms River (Ocean Co) has been cut in half after 24 years of pumping and treating polluted groundwater. More than 10 billion gallons of polluted groundwater have been treated to remove contaminants, and then recharged onto land in the property's northeast corner.

Pollution from the site was first found in Windsor Park groundwater in the early 1990s after seven residential wells along Beachwood and Veeder Avenues were found to contain mercury at concentrations above the state standard of 2 parts per billion. That prompted lawsuits and a \$13 million settlement to nearby families stricken with cancer.

The Ciba-Geigy site has been on the Superfund List since 1982, and it is still one of the most contaminated in the country. The pollutants can cause miscarriages and a variety of cancers. The Club has lobbied for a cleanup for more than 30 years.

Roughly the size of Hoboken (1.25 sq. miles), the Ciba property is the largest undeveloped property in Toms River.

There's an electronic Chapter Alert Service for Environmental Action. Sign up at: <https://tinyurl.com/NJSC-alerts>. Also an e-mail updates signup: <https://tinyurl.com/NJSC-emailsub>.



**KUNG FLU** *continued from page 6*

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**REPORT FROM TRENTON**

# Coal Plant Shutdown Proposal Holds Clean Air to Ransom

*From an Op-Ed by Chapter Director Jeff Tittel, published in NJ Spotlight News on Sept 30, and edited by Tony Hagen*

The last two coal-fired generating plants in New Jersey could be shut down this year, with ratepayers switched to electricity sourced from a cleaner blend of fossil- and renewable-generated power. But a dispute over costs is holding this up. Starwood Energy Group has proposed to shutter the Logan Generating Plant in Gloucester County and the Chambers Cogeneration Plant in Salem County, switching customers to the PJM wholesale electricity grid.

The estimated net reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from 2021 to 2024 would be 3.9 million tons. That means cleaner air for South Jersey residents, and the plants could be repurposed for green energy projects such as solar, energy storage, or offshore wind turbine staging, according to FTI Consulting in an analysis done for Starwood. For perspective, the improvement in air quality would be equivalent to that obtained by the removal of 760,000 cars from New Jersey’s highways.

A reverse argument comes from Atlantic City Electric (ACE), which has contracted to purchase coal-generated energy from the plants through 2024. ACE maintains that customers already pay above-market rates for the electricity and would receive no discount by switching to PJM. In fact, the deal would cost them \$300 million in “excess” payments, ACE says, although Starwood would kick in \$7.5 million as an enticement.

Starwood earns \$160 million annually from the existing contracts with ACE. Part of the problem, as Stefanie Brand, the director of the state Division of Rate Counsel, sees it, is that the contracts were awarded 30 years ago at prices that are now above market. Terminating those contracts this year, and switching to PJM, would substantially improve air quality in South Jersey, but ratepayers should not be gouged in the process. Unless it is willing to negotiate a fairer deal, Starwood is holding clean air and lower emissions to ransom during a time of great climate instability and danger.

**REPORT FROM TRENTON**

# NJ Toxic Site Cleanup Won’t Go Far Enough

*From a Letter to the South Jersey Times by Chapter Director Jeff Tittel, dated Oct 13*

Finally, on Sept 28, Hercules LLC reached an \$11.3 million consent decree with the Environmental Protection Agency and the state Department of Environmental Protection to clean up the mess the chemical company made in Gibbstown (Gloucester Co).

This is one of the state’s worst Superfund sites, with groundwater contaminated by lead, benzene and other hazardous and cancer-causing chemicals. A previous EPA plan was for natural attenuation (treating the hazardous materials in place) and capping the site.

The toxic chemicals are located under the site’s tar pits. They pose a serious threat to the community and the environment. If the contamination migrates, local wells would be threatened. Pollutants would also leach from the disposal area into the surrounding wetlands, or Clonmell Creek, and impact wildlife.

We ask for the remediation plan to include removal the contaminated soil underneath the tar-pits. (The plan calls for only lead-tainted soil to be taken off-site.) Caps can fail and undo all of the progress of the cleanup.

Hercules should be held accountable. And as a one-time subsidiary of the DuPont Co., it should also be responsible for cleaning up the Repauno Works site just a mile away. Instead, they’re selling the property to Delaware River Partners for a LNG (liquified natural gas) export terminal that will put the entire area at risk.

**REPORT FROM TRENTON**

# New Report on Ex-DuPont Site Chemicals is ‘Scary’

*From an OpEd by Chapter Director Jeff Tittel, published in the South Jersey Times on Sept 28, and edited by Tony Hagen*

Salem County residents have lived a nightmarish existence for many years owing to per- and poly-fluoroalkyl (PFAS) contaminants in their groundwater. Now, a new report from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) shows that one of these chemicals, perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), was found in concentrations reaching 310,000 parts per trillion (ppt)—22,000 times the Department of Environmental Protection’s upper limit for safe consumption—at the Chemours Chamber Works site in Pennsville Township. PFAS chemicals are linked to many forms of cancer.

Also at the Chemours site, a former DuPont chemical manufacturing complex, perfluorononanoic acid (PFNA) concentrations were as high as 120,000 ppt, more than 9,000 times the DEP maximum for drinking water; and perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) was detected at levels 7 times higher than the NJ limit. The report also noted evidence of 13 types of unregulated PFAS chemicals. All samples were taken in the second half of 2019.

This is downright scary. The DEP needs to push for a full cleanup of the site. New Jersey set strict, health-based standards for PFOS and PFOA earlier this year. A standard for PFNA was set in 2018. The state needs to move quickly to set standards for other PFAS chemicals and their replacements, such as GenX, which also are suspected carcinogens.

The EPA report also noted that well samples taken in West Deptford, Gloucester Co, between 2013 and 2017, contain PFAS levels well above DEP limits, including PFNA, with more than 37,000 times the NJ safety maximum. The contamination is believed to have come from the Solvay Specialty Polymers plant, which ceased using the chemicals in 2010.

[\(https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/09/pfas-toxic-chemical-tests-chambers-work-nj-greatly-exceed-state-health-limits/\)](https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/09/pfas-toxic-chemical-tests-chambers-work-nj-greatly-exceed-state-health-limits/)

**REPORT FROM TRENTON**

# New Jersey’s Water Problems Will Get Worse without Real Action

*From a Letter to an Editor, by Chapter Director Jeff Tittel, published on Sept 30, and edited by Tony Hagen*

Diverted funding, insufficiently aggressive leadership by state environmental authorities, poor support from the Governor, the growing presence of environmental toxins, and decaying legacy infrastructure are problems that plague New Jersey’s drinking water and retard efforts to fix problems and raise standards.

The Department of Environmental Protection and Governor Phil Murphy need to step up efforts to address these issues before the quality of drinking water and our waterways erodes any further. A stable source of funding is needed to fix outdated water filtration plants and water systems; lead pipes, especially, must be removed. The DEP needs to be tougher on overdevelopment, impervious cover, and aquifer over-pumping, each of which affects water supply and quality. In addition to lead pipes, per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a serious water contamination issue that requires tougher regulation and investigation. Water protections that were undermined by former Governor Chris Christie’s Administration must be restored.

Climate change and sea level rise also threaten water quality in New Jersey. The Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area was closed for swimming because of stormwater pollution, and sea lice were found at South Jersey beaches because of high nutrient levels and warm temperatures. The DEP’s stormwater rule fails to account for sea-level rise, nutrient pollution, proper green infrastructure, or the potential for flooding. In 2020, at least 24 lakes were closed or under advisory because of algae; these included major drinking water sources like Greenwood Lake and Lake Hopatcong.

In addition, drought calculations need updating because the existing system does not conform to actual conditions. More waterways need to be upgraded to C1 protective status, flood hazard rules need updating, wetlands need restoration, and so much more needs doing. Is the glass half empty or half full? It doesn’t matter if you can’t drink what’s in it.

**Are you familiar with your Group’s conservation campaigns? Might you wish to join one?**



## REPORT FROM TRENTON

# Solvay Countersues to Avoid PFAS Clean-Up Costs

From a press release issued by our Trenton staff on Oct 22

Solvay Specialty Polymers has filed a lawsuit in the Superior Court of Gloucester County accusing Paulsboro Refining Company of being the source of water pollution in the area. Solvay has spent \$3.5 million over a decade to clean up polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) including perfluorononanoic acid (PFNA), perfluorooctanoic acid, and perfluorooctanesulfonic acid found in the Paulsboro area.

Solvay used PFNA and related chemicals as part of its manufacturing process for years at its plant in nearby West Deptford, resulting in some of the highest levels of PFNA pollution in the world. We think Solvay is trying to shift blame away from itself by suing a nearby refinery in Paulsboro. It is trying to avoid responsibility for cleaning up its pollution. The chemicals have been found in municipal water systems at levels 11 times above DEP standards, all linked to Solvay.

In March 2019, the DEP and Attorney General identified Solvay as one of five companies responsible for the extensive contamination, directing it to fund millions of dollars in assessment and cleanup efforts. Recent testing around New Jersey revealed PFNA above the new standard 13 times in municipal water systems, according to the DEP. Of those, 11 were tied to Solvay.

These chemicals have been shown to cause developmental effects affecting the unborn child and pregnant women, and liver and kidney problems, including tumors. Even as it cleans up the contamination in Paulsboro, Solvay is thought to be using a new chemical as a replacement for PFAS: chloroperfluoropolyether carboxylates (CIPFPECAs), which have now been found near the Solvay plant.

The Delaware Riverkeeper Network, New Jersey Sierra Club and others recently sent two letters to DEP regarding a recent study published in the journal *Science*, on PFAS replacement chemicals found near the Solvay plant. This study, by a team of EPA and DEP research chemists, found CIPFPECAs in soil samples taken across New Jersey, with the highest levels in the area surrounding the Solvay plant.

There needs to be a full investigation into the new chemicals that Solvay is using. DEP must also continue to hold Solvay responsible for cleaning up its PFNA contamination in West Deptford and Paulsboro. We also need New Jersey's Drinking Water Quality Institute to produce regulations for new replacement chemicals including CIPFPECAs. There are 500 chemicals that DWQI hasn't looked at to set standards, including perchlorates, PFAS, TCE and PCE.

"We can't afford to wait another two years," said Jeff Tittel, Director of the New Jersey Sierra Club. "We need the strictest standards for these dangerous materials and we need them to be as strong as possible based on strict science. The longer they wait, the more people are put in danger."

## REPORT FROM TRENTON

# NJ Transit Goes Green – Progress on Microgrid

From a press release issued on Oct 22

Good News: At a meeting of NJ Transit's Board of Directors on Oct 21st, Commissioner Diane Gutierrez-Scaccetti announced suspension of work on a proposed fossil fuel electric power plant in Kearny. Instead, NJ Transit intends to update a review of renewable or other zero emissions energy technologies to supplement or replace the current power generation for its electric trains, known as its Microgrid Central Facility.

Alternatives to centralized fossil fuel electricity include microgrids, renewable energy, and battery storage. By "microgrid" is meant the dispersal of power sources such that no single power plant outage would bring down the entire transit system – aka resilience. New Jersey could be a national leader in powering its transit system environmentally.

NJ Transit's timeline includes the following steps: hosting a Microgrid Market Outreach event in October 2020, issuing a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) on November 25, issuing a Request for Proposal (RFP) that encourages new, thoughtful renewables integration by December, 2021, and selecting a project option and awarding a contract to a developer by December, 2022.

The RFQ must allow for alternative energy sources; it must be open and transparent to the public. Companies require instruction so that they understand the process. Microgrid alternatives are not only cheaper, but safer for us and the environment. They still require air permits, land use approvals, and flood hazard permits.

There are microgrid back-up systems that use solar, wind or other renewables, and battery storage. They have the resiliency and reliability of fossil fuel generators – and alternative transmission systems – without greenhouse emissions and with tremendous reductions in operating expenses. They can also serve as back-up for the surrounding community to access heat or air conditioning, phone charging, internet access, etc. should there be an outage.

Microgrid generators can be easily sited on landfills in the Meadowlands, corridors along NJ Transit, NJ Transit train stations, the NJ Turnpike, brownfields, and other vacant land.

## PLASTIC BAN *continued from page 4*

"The New Plastics Economy: Rethinking the Future of Plastics," Jan 2016, [www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/publications/the-new-plastics-economy](http://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/publications/the-new-plastics-economy)

"Confronting Plastic Pollution One Bag at a Time", M. Anderson, [blog.epa.gov/tag/plastic-bags](http://blog.epa.gov/tag/plastic-bags)

New Jersey League of Conservation Voters, [www.njlc.org/plastic](http://www.njlc.org/plastic)  
[https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/assets/downloads/Foundation\\_New-Plastics-Economy\\_6.jpg](https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/assets/downloads/Foundation_New-Plastics-Economy_6.jpg);  
 projected growth rate used New Plastics Economy report offers blueprint to design a circular future for plastics (Jan 19, 2016)