



In This Issue:

Ballot and Candidate Biographies for Moshannon Group Excom Election

Please Vote!

Bellefonte Borough Council Wavers on Support for EV Charging

Update on the Battle Against Rutter's at the Old Crow Wetland

The Chair Speaks: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly on Climate Change

What to Tell a Climate Denier

The deplorable condition of Roulette's well pad at its proposed injection well site in 2022.

Success!! Roulette Oil and Gas Pulls Its Clara Township Injection Well Application

By Laurie Barr

Waste injection wells are used to dispose of waste fluids generated during oil and gas well drilling and production. This waste is known to contain carcinogenic chemicals, salts, and heavy metals that can be toxic to humans and the environment.

Pennsylvania's oil and gas industry produces millions of barrels of wastewater per year, and though some of it is recycled, much of it is hauled to neighboring Ohio, a state with over 220 active injection wells. Some operators in Pennsylvania are seeking more local and economical ways to dispose of their waste fluids. One operator with an inventory comprised of mostly marginally producing wells recently sought to repurpose an old well in his inventory to be used as a waste injection well.

The permitting process began in late 2020 when the Roulette Oil and Gas Company filed a Class II-D injection well permit application with the EPA. The EPA advertised the pending permit, opened a public comment period (and extended it) and then held a public hearing. The EPA authorized that injection well application contrary to the EPA's own guidance on permitting as it relates to local regulatory compliance.

In 2022 Roulette then applied to the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for the second and final authorization needed to operate a Class II-D injection well in Clara Twp., Potter County, PA.

The DEP chose not to advertise the pending injection well application or hold a public permit

Trouble in Bellefonte: Borough Council Wavers on Commitment to Electric Vehicle Charging

By Joanne Tosti-Vasey

Editors Note: The author is a member of the Bellefonte Borough Council.

On October 2, 2023, an unexpected motion was placed on the Bellefonte Borough (in central Centre County) Council agenda to remove all eight electric charging stations in the Bellefonte municipal parking lots. What is the history here, and why is this happening?

The history of EV plugs in Bellefonte

In 2018, the Department of Environmental Protection started distributing the Volkswagen Settlement funds the US Department of Energy granted to Pennsylvania. Some funds were placed into a rebate program for local governments, businesses, and highway locations managed by the state to install electric charging stations. In 2018 and 2019, Bellefonte signed contracts to install eight charging stations with an 80-90% rebate when the three main parking lots were repaired and upgraded.

Because the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) did not allow "third-party resell" of electricity, Council decided to install non-networked stations that cannot determine how much electricity is used when charging electric vehicles.

Four stations are on an independent electric meter; the other four are hooked into the street lighting system. As a result, the Borough cannot determine how much electricity is being used to charge cars.



Subsequently, the PUC changed its regulations to allow third-party resells. The Council decided this year not to upgrade the chargers to a networked system because the ones we have work and replacement networked plugs were estimated to cost between \$7,000 to \$10,000 per plug. With the funds from the Volkswagen Settlement being expended, the total cost for replacement is not possible within the Borough's budget.



What changed?

First, five members of the previous Council were replaced by new members in January 2022. Several members of Council, both old and new, questioned why the Borough was not charging anyone for charging their car in the municipal parking lots. I explained that we couldn't charge until the PUC changed its regulations. This year, Council decided to update its parking ordinance and add a charge to the parking fees for people who use the plugs as part of the revision.

Since we have no reasonable estimate of the electricity cost per vehicle, Council decided to

Continued on Page 3

Bellefonte, cont'd

guesstimate an additional \$1.00/hour to charge for parking in one of these spaces. Then, the PA Department of Transportation notified us that the Borough has to pay the Alternative Fuel Tax plus backdated taxes for the last two years. This notification resulted in another vote by Council to add another \$1.00/hour to the parking fee for EVs.

The company that handles the parking kiosks said they couldn't separate the eight parking stations from the rest of the lot. So, Council decided to install separate meters for these eight parking stations. Any vehicle parked in one of these parking spaces will now be charged \$3.00/hour, 24/7, whether or not the car is being charged. Note, all other spaces in town are being charged \$1.00/hour, but only between 8 am and 8 pm on weekdays and 8 am and noon on Saturdays. These fees are expected to go into effect in the New Year.

Motion to remove the charging stations and current status

After all of the fee decisions were made, a motion/2nd "to approve the removal of EV Charging Stations within the Borough Lots" was suddenly placed on the agenda for the October 2, 2023 Council meeting.

Four members of the public spoke. All opposed the removal of the charging stations, including the Executive Director of the Bellefonte Intervalley Chamber of Commerce. I also chimed in when we got to the actual agenda item. Those of us in opposition gave the following reasons to oppose this motion:

- These meters are an economic asset to the downtown area as they create a welcoming environment for EV owners to charge their cars while shopping and eating downtown; and
- Residents with electric vehicles who live in apartments or homes in the area without a garage that allows access to a personal charging station rely on these charging stations to charge their cars for work and leisure.

Those wanting to get rid of the charging stations cited the cost to the Borough,

even though in previous meetings, Council had passed the additional parking fees needed to cover these costs.

The President of the Council then said he put it on the agenda for discussion only. However, there were never any comments about removing the chargers during any previous council meeting. After this discussion, one of the council members, who has never favored the charging stations, motioned to table this motion.

This future discussion will not likely happen until the new year after the individual meters and the new fees are implemented. The motion to remove the EV chargers may be brought up again because some members of Council still want them removed. So stay aware and be ready to speak out should this or any other climate action agenda item come up for discussion in Bellefonte. We need your support for our environment and sustainability within Bellefonte.

Clara Twp., cont'd from Page 1

comment period and public hearing. Local environmental advocates enlisted the help of members of many environmental organizations, State Senator Katie Muth and Clara Twp. elected officials. A petition asked regulators to publish an announcement of the pending injection well permit in local newspapers and then hold a public comment period and hearing. After enormous collaborative efforts, DEP finally gave in.

During the public hearing 11 people testified, including 3 Sierra Club members. Testimony revealed that the principles of the company applying for this permit had numerous abandoned wells in their past inventory while they operated wells under three different company names.

With an assist from State Senator Chris Dush, the DEP asked Roulette to plug their abandoned wells before it would authorize the permit for the injection well. The operator refused and instead withdrew the injection well permit application!

This would have turned out very differently but for the publication of notice of the application in the local paper or for the public hearing and comment period.

In March of 2023, DEP's Deputy Secretary of Oil and Gas Management, Kurt Klapkowski, explained to board members that DEP will apply for "primacy" from the federal government regulate underground injection wells in Pennsylvania.



The Chair Speaks ...

On the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

by Doug Mason
Chair, Moshannon Group

Sometimes environment reality feels like a spaghetti western. The man with no name (a.k.a. Clint Eastwood) rides into town with good news from Yale Climate Connections in October. According to the latest report from the International Energy Agency (IEA), governments have made substantial progress in curbing their climate pollution. The deployment of clean technologies is accelerating, and global temperatures are on a less dangerous path than they were a decade ago.

The report forecasts that the world is on track to avert the production of 7.5 billion tons of heat-trapping carbon dioxide between 2015 and 2030 compared to the pre-Paris Agreement business-as-usual scenario. Solar panels account for 40% of that reduction, Wind turbines are expected to be responsible for the next biggest chunk at 27%, and electric vehicles a further 13%.

In fact, between 2015 and 2023 the number of solar panels

built around the world increased by more than 400%; electric car sales increased by nearly 2,000%; residential heat pump sales increased by 225%; and battery storage additions increased by 2,500%. These technologies are key to achieving net zero climate pollution by 2050.

The report also noted that several key fossil fuel technologies are already on their way out: "Fossil-fuel-based electricity capacity additions peaked in 2012 and declined to less than half their peak level by 2022, while sales of (internal combustion engine) vehicles peaked in 2017 with a 25% decline from this peak in 2022."

As a result, the IEA forecasts that global climate pollution will peak by the mid-2020s. That's consistent with a new analysis from clean energy think tank Ember, which found that global power sector climate pollution rose by just 0.2% in the first half of 2023, suggesting that the "world is teetering at the peak of power sector emissions,"

The United States has been making progress thanks in large part to the recent passage of laws like the Inflation Reduction Act. As a result, though the U.S. was on track to see a 12% increase in its climate pollution from 2022 to 2030 before the Paris Agreement, the country is now headed towards a 23% reduction over that period. Nearly half of that reduced pollution will be due to the deployment of solar panels and wind turbines.

Angel Eyes (Lee Van Cleef) arrived with the September 13 article in "Science Advances" entitled "Earth beyond six of nine planetary boundaries." Very bad indeed.

This planetary boundaries framework update finds that six of the nine boundaries are transgressed. These six are Biogeochemical Flows (phosphorus and nitrogen), Freshwater Change, Land System Change, Biosphere Integrity, Climate Change, and Novel Entities. As such, this research article suggests that Earth is now well outside of the safe operating space for humanity.

Ocean Acidification is only worsening, while Aerosol Loading regionally exceeds the boundary. Stratospheric Ozone levels have slightly recovered.

All nine processes are critical for maintaining the stability and resilience of our Earth system as a whole. All are heavily perturbed by human activities, which have brought Earth outside the 10,000 year Holocene's window of environmental variability, giving rise to the proposed

Continued on Page 5

The Chair Speaks, cont'd

Anthropocene Epoch.

Currently, anthropogenic perturbations of the global environment are primarily addressed as if they were separate issues, e.g., climate change, biodiversity loss, or pollution. This approach, however, ignores nonlinear interactions and resulting aggregate effects on the overall state of our Earth system. Planetary boundaries bring a scientific understanding of anthropogenic global environmental impacts into a framework that calls for considering the state of our Earth system as a whole.

Today, human activities with planetary-scale effects act as additional forcing on our Earth system. Thus, the anthroposphere has become an additional functional component of our Earth system, capable of altering its state. The planetary boundaries framework formulates limits to the impact of the anthroposphere on our Earth system by identifying a scientifically based safe operating space for humanity that can safeguard both Earth's interglacial state and its resilience.

Tuco (Eli Wallace) traveled through cyberspace via the Daily Kos in a November article by Karen Feridun, "Stupid? I'll tell you what's stupid." State Sen. Gene Yaw (R-Lycoming), the chair of the Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee, a role that oversees legislation that impacts the oil and gas industry, also works as an attorney for McCormick Law Firm, which

represents gas companies (a blatant conflict of interest). Reacting to a hearing on HB 170, he concluded, "It is often said that we cannot legislate against stupidity. That is true, but we can stop stupid legislation from becoming law. Should House Bill 170 or any similar legislation pass the House of Representatives, it will not be considered in the Senate."

The "stupid" legislation would establish setbacks from natural wells of up to 5,000 feet. Nowhere in his ugly statement did Senator Yaw acknowledge the real world adverse impacts to health and safety that led a Grand Jury to recommend those setbacks that State Rep. Danielle Friel Otten (D-155) introduced for consideration in the legislature. As Feridun writes in her piece, "It's stupid that Senate leadership allows Senator Yaw to make unilateral decisions about which matters will be taken up by the full Senate and which won't by refusing them a committee vote."

And Feridun also notes, "It's stupid that Pennsylvania's broken ethics rules allow someone who has regularly disclosed his financial interests (2007, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2017, 2022) in the methane gas industry to chair an environmental resources and energy committee in the first place."

The planet is on fire. The last 12 months were the hottest in recorded meteorological history. Harrisburg is fanning the flames. People asking for a little protection are dismissed or disparaged, and if you ask for more, you're an extremist. I wonder if the man with no name is very busy? Angel Eyes and Tuco are needing some attention.



Doug Mason (top right) and Sierra Club friends at the 2023 Climate Convergence in Harrisburg

Update on the Old Crow Wetland

By Claire Holzner

DEP has not yet issued a permit for Rutters to build a truck stop next to Old Crow Wetland in Huntingdon. The coalition believes that they likely will, and is raising funds to appeal. Our lawyer is working for us pro bono but we'll need to pay experts who will testify for us at an appeal with the Environmental Hearing Board. To donate to the legal fund please send a check made out to Coalition to Save Old Crow Wetland to: P.O. Box 7, Huntingdon PA 16652, or donate to fundrazr.com/saveoldcrow Any donation would be much appreciated.

Members of the Coalition to Save Old Crow Wetland voice opposition to Rutters' plans at

Continued on Page 9

WHAT TO TELL A CLIMATE DENIER

By Steve Lachman

You are at Christmas dinner and your Uncle Chet says (while still masticating the last of the green bean casserole): “All that climate change talk is a bunch of hooey.” Or maybe you are in front of your township supervisors and the red-faced chairman expostulates, “Be serious. Do you expect us to spend taxpayer money on solar panels based upon some unproven pie in the sky theory about climate change?” How should you respond to these dinosaurs?

First, take a breath. Don’t react with anger. This is your opportunity to enlighten someone.

Second, accept that you can’t convince everybody. There’s no sense insulting someone if doing so is not going to change their mind. It may only make you look bad and it may damage relationships that you hold dear. Uncle Chet may have a heart of gold and you don’t want to alienate him. And maybe you need old Red-Face’s support on another issue.

Third, ask who else is in the room? Maybe Red-Face is not amenable to instruction, but other township supervisors are, or maybe members of the public at the meeting are. Though you are addressing Red-Face, you may in fact be speaking to a different audience. Talking to Uncle Chet may be like talking to a wall, but maybe Aunt Sally and Cousin Irma are more open-minded.

Fourth, present your case with facts and logic. There are probably only a couple dozen

persons in the United States who can intelligently debate the conclusion that humans have caused global warming. Your Uncle Chet and old Red Race aren’t among them. So bring out the evidence showing climate change. Frame this evidence with the *precautionary principle*.

The precautionary principle states that where a practice or product creates a risk of harm, that practice or product should not be adopted until the outcomes are known with certainty. The greater the potential harm the more we should hesitate to adopt. And the more certain the harm the more we should hesitate. In the case of climate change, we run the risk of turning out planet into Venus, or at least

causing mass extinctions, so those are very severe potential harms. And as to certainty, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has said the likelihood that humans are altering the climate is greater than 95 percent.

After the denier agrees that we shouldn’t take unnecessary risks with the planet that nurtures us, move on to the evidence of climate change. Here are some talking points:

- The laws of chemistry and physics state that greenhouse gases trap heat in the Earth’s atmosphere. If it weren’t for this, Earth would be too cold to be inhabited.
- The recent increase in Earth’s temperature correlates with the increase carbon dioxide emissions. This is the warmest period in the past 800,000 years. Before the industrial revolution, atmospheric CO2 levels were 280 parts per million. Now they are at least 421 parts per million.
- Almost every glacier on Earth is decreasing in area due to melting. Sea ice has decreased at least 30 percent over the past 40 years. Sea levels are rising correspondingly.
- Tropical disease vectors, such as malaria and dengue fever are spreading due to temperature changes. In temperate climates parasites are spreading, attacking climate-stressed, plants and animals (e.g., woolly adelgid for hemlocks, pine bark beetles for pines, ticks for moose).
- Because of temperature change and acidification (also caused by carbon emissions), the Earth’s coral reefs are being bleached to death. This decreases the amount of ocean-based wildlife.

Here are some arguments the dinosaurs are likely to make and possible responses:

- *Climate change is a natural process that has occurred throughout the Earth's history.* True, but it is now occurring much faster than at any time in the Earth’s history (barring large-scale meteor strikes).
- *There is no consensus among scientists that humans are causing climate change?* Wrong. At least 99 percent of climate scientists, as reflected in peer-

Climate Denier, cont'd

- reviewed literature, agree that anthropomorphic climate change is real.
- *Earth is too big for humans to cause climate change.* Is that statement of fact or just wishful thinking? There are now more than eight billion humans on Earth. The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification announced that humans have altered more than 70% of the Earth's lands.
- *We just had a record low temperature.* The climate's conditions). The last seven years have been the warmest on Earth in recorded history, with 2023 leading the pack. Sure we still get some cold days, but average temperatures have increased, as have extreme heat incidents.
- *Plants and animals will adapt to climate change.* Climate change is happening so rapidly that many plants cannot migrate fast enough into more suitable territory. And plants and animals undergo evolutionary changes over a period of thousands or millions of

years – again, too slow to keep pace with the changing climate. Cold water trout aren't going to suddenly become a warm water species. Currently, species are going extinct at more than 1,000 times the natural rate.

Global warming is a good thing. While some areas will expand their agricultural range, overall economic activity is predicted to drop by 11 to 14 percent according to a report by insurance company Swiss Re. And that doesn't factor in the human hardship caused by extreme heat events, flooding, desertification, and the and the expansion of insect-borne diseases.

- *Humans will always adapt.* The human species may survive environmental catastrophe, but that doesn't mean that billions of people won't suffer or die. And what about all the other

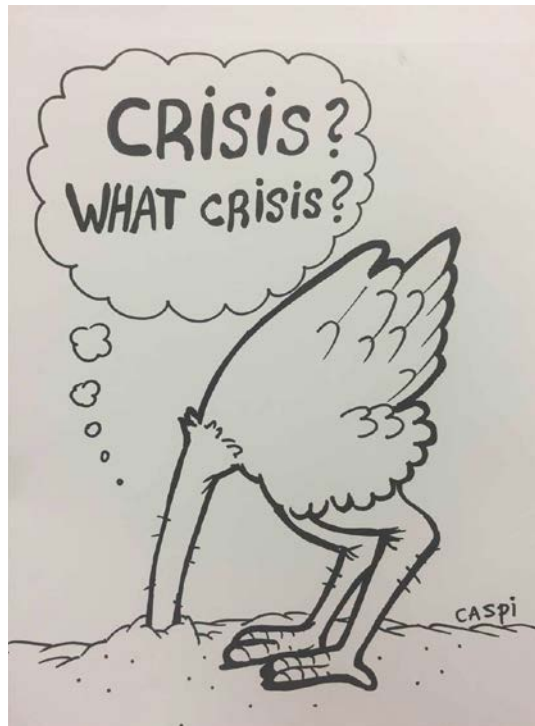
species that lack human adaptability?

Fifth, ask questions. Questions will quickly reveal a person's ignorance and they will shut up so they don't look stupid. Here are some questions you might ask:

- What are your sources of information refuting climate change?
- Is that person an expert in the field?
- If the person does have some expertise, which

oil company or oil lobby is funding him/her.

- How much carbon dioxide do you think we can put in the atmosphere before it affects the climate?
- Where are you going to fish for trout when all the local streams are too warm to support trout? Who's going to pay for the sea walls to protect our coastal cities from sea level rise?
- Should we spray DDT again to counter the malaria carrying mosquitoes will return to the United States because of warmer temperatures?



- Did you have this many ticks when you were young?
- How are we going to handle all the homeless climate refugees?
- If it turns out you're wrong, how will you explain your inaction on the climate issue to your grandchildren and their children?
- Since the vast majority of scientists believe humans are altering the climate, even if you are skeptical, wouldn't it make sense to play it safe?

Climate deniers can be infuriating, but they present us an opportunity to educate.

**SAVE THE DATE - JANUARY 10, 12 NOON AT
SCHLOW LIBRARY, STATE COLLEGE**

Lunch and Learn Series

Reducing Our Personal Carbon Footprint

ELECTION TIME!

Please vote for 3 candidates to serve on the Moshannon Group Executive Committee.

This year there are five candidates running for three positions. Their biographies are printed below. Three of the candidates (Ernest Boyd, Ellen Foreman, and Steve Lachman) are incumbents. Two candidates (Claire Holzner and Rick McCorkle) are newcomers. **Only ballots received by January 9, 2024 will be counted.** Thank you for making the Sierra Club a democracy!

ERNEST BOYD. There are multiple threats to the livability of our planet. Carbon emissions, methane gas from the cattle industry, food waste - the third largest source of greenhouse gases (methane) just behind China and the U. S. But I fear that the greatest long-term threat to our beautiful blue orb is plastic pollution. When I joined the Executive Committee in 2012, and ever since, we have worked to expose the problems of plastic pollution and sought measures to counter single use plastics. We tried to negotiate with retail vendors throughout Centre County, once sending fifty-three letters to store managers to meet with us to discuss how a plastic bag ordinance could work. No response. But persistence pays off. The Wegman's decision to eliminate plastic bags will pressure other retailers to eschew single use bags. I have served in various capacities including Chair of the Moshannon Group, and now organize our tabling events. We are embarking on a campaign that will focus on the sensible use of funds to cap leaking abandoned gas and oil wells throughout Pennsylvania. Our information campaign will include our tabling opportunities. With your vote I will continue to work with the great people known as the Moshannon Group Executive Committee.

ELLEN FOREMAN. Ellen is a life member of the Sierra Club and joined the Executive Committee in 2022 to work with Ready for 100 team and Clean Energy. Her career has been in global brand management with Black & Decker, Motorola, and most recently ICMA an NGO dedicated to advancing ethical and high performing local government. She

has a BA in journalism from Duquesne University, and an MBA from the University of Pittsburgh. She lives in State College with her husband Michael, and they are both avid skiers, hikers and bikers.

CLAIRE HOLZNER. Claire is a semi-retired instructor of English as a Second Language and writing at Juniata College in Huntingdon. She is president of the Coalition to Save Old Crow Wetland (2022 - 23), which opposes a planned truck stop next to the beautiful and diverse Old Crow wetland in Huntingdon. She is a founding member of the Friends of Huntingdon Borough Trails, which averted local government's plans to cut large trees in the Flagpole Hill and Huntingdon Borough forests in 2021. Claire has planted over 250 native trees and shrubs on her property and in the Huntingdon area through the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's Ten Million Tree project. She's a graduate of the Pennsylvania Master Naturalist program and has a BA in history and MA in Teaching English as a Second Language. For seven years she taught English in Torun, Poland at a teacher training college and a university.

Claire is fighting a long-term battle with Japanese stilt grass, barberry, and other invasive plants on her property. She has loved Pennsylvania forests since her childhood in Pittsburgh and identifies birds and plants pretty well. She believes that climate change and loss of habitat and biodiversity are the most urgent crises of our times.

STEVE LACHMAN. I have served on the Moshannon Group Executive Committee since 2009. I am the Group's Membership Chair and Newsletter Editor. In the 1990s, I served on the Executive Committee of the Allegheny Group. I hold a Ph.D. in geography - my dissertation focused on urban sustainability. I also have a law degree from Vermont Law School and I serve as a Magisterial District Judge in Centre County. As a member of the Moshannon Group Excom, I have emphasized our fiduciary duty to our membership, ensuring the money we raise (mostly through the Banff Mountain Film Festival) is spent directly on crucial environmental issues. I also fight to maintain the Sierra Club as a grass roots organization in the wake of efforts by the National Sierra Club to centralize control. While the Club should treat everyone fairly, it does a disservice to our mission and to the planet when it prioritizes equity over environmental protection.

Candidates, cont'd

To be effective, the Moshannon Group needs to engage in tactical campaigns. To that end, I am coordinating a new campaign to compel the Pennsylvania DEP to prioritize the plugging of abandoned wells according to the amount of methane being released.

RICK McCORKLE. Rick has a bachelor's degree in wildlife management and a master's degree in applied ocean biodiversity hotspot mapping, wetland restoration and reforestation, bird and amphibian

conservation, and fish passage and environmental impact mitigation at hydropower dams. Rick is also a former vice president of the Delaware Native Plant Society and served on various conservation planning committees during his time in Delaware. While living in Delaware, he had solar panels installed on his house and took other steps to reduce his carbon footprint. At his State College home (for the past 8 years) he purchases renewable (wind and solar) energy through Green Mountain Energy and drives EV or walks or pedals his bike. Rick also enjoys native plant

landscaping (e.g., for pollinators), art, music, hiking, canoeing, kayaking and other outdoor activities. He has participated in the Delaware Chapter of the Sierra Club, many public hearings on environmental issues, and various marches (e.g., climate) and protests (e.g., fracking). Spare-time reading includes trying to keep up with the peer-reviewed literature on the subjects of global warming, climate change, melting ice and sea level rise. Rick's favorite public radio segment is The Allegheny Front.



MOSHANNON GROUP ELECTION BALLOT

Vote by placing a checkmark next to up to 3 Excom candidates. For family memberships, each member may each enter a separate checkmark. Ballots must be **received no later than January 9, 2024** at the following address: Elections, Sierra Club, P.O. Box 513, State College, PA 16804

Ernest Boyd Ellen Foreman Claire Holzner Steve Lachman Rick McCorkle

Thank you for voting!!!

Old Crow Wetland, Cont'd

at every Smithfield Township supervisors' meetings on the first Tuesday of the month at 6:00 pm at 202 South 13th Street, Huntingdon, PA 16652. Any member of the public may attend.

The Coalition plans to again distribute flyers and to residents of Smithfield Township to inform them of the threat to the wetland and that Rutters plans a 7-acre truck stop

for the site, and not just a "convenience store" as it is called in our local newspaper.

There will be a Non-Violent Direct Action Training session with Michael Badges-Canning and Penn Garvin, NVDA training facilitators, on Saturday December 16 at the Huntingdon County Arts Center. Lunch at 11 am, session 12 - 2 pm. You're welcome to attend. Please RSVP in the Facebook event or email Claire at holzner@fastmail.fm.

We have spoken with members of the [Maxatawny Community Coalition - \(savemaxatawny.org\)](http://savemaxatawny.org) near Kutztown PA. Since a Rutters was recently built there, traffic congestion in the area has become worse.

Join our Facebook group: [Coalition to Save Old Crow wetland \(Huntingdon PA\) | Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/CoalitiontoSaveOldCrowWetlandHuntingdonPA/). Share this video: [Help Save Old Crow Wetland - YouTube](#)

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Chair and Programs	*Doug Mason	814 753-0598	ramakong1@gmail.com
Air Quality, Conservation	Nancy Parks	814 349-5151	nancyfparks@gmail.com
Vice Chair, Banff Coordinator	*Kelly Forest	814 441-8916	khforest@icloud.com
Tabling	*Ernest Boyd	814 404-2275	ernestcboyd@gmail.com
Water Quality	*Dave Roberts	814 769-0550	puzzlewuzzle.dr@gmail.com
Membership, Newsletter Editor	*Steve Lachman	814 384-7505	stevlachman@gmail.com
Oil and Gas Wells	*Laurie Barr	814-203-9772	lauriebarr59@yahoo.com
Treasurer	Ron Johnson	814 359-6841	rwjohnson1@outlook.com
Secretary and Chapter Delegate	Judy Tanner	814 542-8519	billtann@verizon.net
Special Events	Joan Bouchard	860-818-4421	bouchardjm@aol.com
Outings	Kat Alden	814 404-2165	aldenkat@gmail.com
Outings	Kevin Abbott	814 769-3644	kevingabbott@comcast.net
Clean Energy	*Ellen Foreman	240 418-9721	esforeman@yahoo.com

* Indicates Executive Committee Members