

Environmental Justice Activities with NAACP in the Monongahela River Valley

In November of 2013 I was attending a Board strategy session for the Center for Coalfield Justice when one of the Board members noted the need for more diversity among that Board’s members. He put it a bit more pithily, but the observation was on the mark. We had little to no representation from, or contact with, communities of color, faith-based communities, or labor unions, to name just a few. And while the Allegheny Group of the Sierra Club has some contact with a number of labor unions, communities of color, and faith-based communities, it would be very helpful to have more extensive relationships, particularly in the Mon Valley. I had been thinking about contacting

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Protect Mingo Creek Park and its Surrounding Community

“Protectors of Mingo,” a grassroots citizens group in the Nottingham Township area of Washington County, is working to preserve the safety of our children and standard of life in our quiet communities by securing a healthy environment for our families. Protectors of Mingo, along with *Continued on Page 5 (Mingo)*



The Rally in Butler for the Great March for Climate Action

It was my idea to have a rally in Butler related to climate change, and my good fortune to have met some of the marchers before they were marchers - on last year’s Walk For Our Grandchildren. I could go on and on about the Marchers (some are friends), about how inspiring they are, about the energy, boldness, passion, commitment they brought to the Butler Rally, about the example they gave us

about dealing with discomfort, adversity, and pain, about how they enlarged our community, about the energy they brought to me - I could go on and on - but I figure my place in all of this is as the primary organizer of the rally itself. Soooooo

The idea for a rally first came to me 13 months before the rally in Butler. I was canvassing near Summit Elementary during the first week of the 2013-2014

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Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

Notes from the Chair Making a Difference

Happy New Year! 2015 will certainly be as exciting and active as 2014! We were part of history in 2014 by taking 150 activists to the People's Climate March in New York City September 21. We joined the nearly 350,000 who marched. What a thrill! We were also part of history by endorsing and electing *Tom Wolf* to be our next Governor, ensuring that current Governor *Tom Corbett* will be the first Governor in Pennsylvania history to serve only ONE term. Unfortunately, voters also returned a majority of Republicans to the PA House and Senate, and so we have a lot of work to do to help Governor-Elect Wolf enact the policies he promoted during his campaign. And then there's the US Congress that will present serious challenges (e.g. Keystone XL Pipeline, EPA funding, financial reform) in 2015.

Local environmental issues that will engage our attention in 2015 are detailed in the many articles in this newsletter --- Environmental Justice issues in the Mon Valley, Coal issues in Washington and Greene counties, protection of North Park areas, ALCOSAN's Storm Water Control plans. Other articles of interest address how The Great March for Climate Action worked with environmental issues in the Butler area in October, and personal insights from a Sierra Club Summer Intern among others.

A big THANK YOU to all who purchased our beautiful 2015 Sierra Club Calendars. If you are still interested in getting one, you have till January 15 to order one. Contact Rick Arnold
Continued on Page 6 (Chair)

SIERRA CLUB

Supports Fairness for ALCOSAN Ratepayers in a Big Way

The week of November 17th was a big one for the Sierra Club and the *Clean Rivers Campaign*. On Tuesday the 18th, Sierra Club turned out 15 people to the Campaign's Townhall for Ratepayer Fairness. Sierra volunteers talked to almost 50 people about the meeting from a phonebank. Tom Hoffman made an announcement at the meeting of the Allegheny Group Executive Committee and followed up with emails and phone calls. The Chapter did a blast email to almost 1300 members in Allegheny County.

Speakers from a wide range of social justice, environmental, and faith organizations called for fairness for ALCOSAN ratepayers as the region deals with cleaning up our sewage-in-the-rivers problem in what will be the largest public works project ever in this region. ALCOSAN will have to raise \$3 billion from ALCOSAN ratepayers – and the rate hikes are just starting to kick in.

The fairness that speakers called for at the meeting has three major components: (1) Major investments in green solutions in neighborhoods that bring back maximum benefits; large investments in green infrastructure have been shown to raise property values, provide local jobs and bring cleaner air and cooler temperatures. (2) Assurances
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Interning with the Sierra Club

Hello all! My name is Taylor and I'm currently a senior at the University of Pittsburgh and majoring in Environmental Studies. Last summer I had a wonderful opportunity of expanding my knowledge and understanding of nonprofits through interning with the *Sierra Club Allegheny Group*. At first, I expected to help about a few days a week, probably from nine to five. However it wasn't long before I realized that working at the Sierra Club is not a typical nine to five office job. There are gatherings, such as the monthly ExCom meeting and weekly Activist Nights, which take place after five, and many Sierra Club events that are held on weekends! Being a student and only holding a part time job, it was not a problem for me to attend these events but it made me realize the importance of a flexible schedule for a job like this.

I was also exposed to the amount of planning that goes into a typical event. During my internship the Sierra Club helped plan Pittsburgh's first Solar Fest. Months before the actual festival, hours were spent collaborating with other organizations, contacting food trucks, planning activities and entertainment, and working with a solar energy company. A few times meetings were held at Millvale Riverfront Park, the site of the festival, so we could get a feel for the location. I mostly helped out with volunteer recruitment and management, and I had a lot of fun doing so.

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“Building a More Resilient Pittsburgh”

forum celebrates 10 years for Carnegie Mellon University’s Steinbrenner Institute

On October 14, 2014, Carnegie Mellon University’s Steinbrenner Institute for Environmental Education and Research (SEER) co-hosted “Building a More Resilient Pittsburgh,” a community forum on climate change. The event, which was held in the Jared L. Cohon University Center on the CMU campus, was created and executed in partnership with the City of Pittsburgh and the CMU Program for Deliberative Democracy, along with a host of other supporting organizations. The Allegheny Group of the Sierra Club and participants in the Great March for Climate Action were among many supporting and participating organizations.

The Forum featured five distinguished panelists: Peter Adams, CMU Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering, and Engineering and Public Policy; Neil Donahue, Professor of Chemical Engineering and Chemistry, and SEER Faculty Director; Kelly Klima, CMU Research Scientist in Engineering and Public Policy; Fred Brown, Associate Director for Development at the Kingsley Association; and Grant Ervin, Sustainability Manager for the City of Pittsburgh.

*Continued on Page 8
(Steinbrenner)*

No Walmart in McCandless!

On July 29, 2014, the McCandless’ Town Council approved a development plan for a Walmart Supercenter on Blazier Drive, located off Ingomar and McKnight Roads. The proposed supercenter would be adjacent to several wetlands, to Pine Creek, and less than one mile away from the beautiful North Park.



Bicycling is a popular activity in North Park

Currently, the 55 acre site is an asphalt eyesore, with two vacant buildings, Trader Horn, a Port Authority Park-and-Ride, and Rave Cinemas. The site, as it is parceled, is located on a 100 year flood plain, which has deterred developers in the past. The intent now is not to eliminate the defunct site but to increase construction, increase traffic, and destroy the neighboring wetlands.

According to the reports by the engineers hired by Walmart, the supercenter will be approximately 150,000 square feet, which does not include the parking spaces that will be provided. The engineers explained that they could mitigate the saturated land adjacent to the site with retention ponds that would

Continued on Page 7 (WalMart)

The Fight for Healthcare

At the end of 2014, over 1,200 retirees from Consol Energy lost their healthcare benefits. Several retirees and community members have formed Consol Retirees United for Our Rights to pressure Consol Energy into reinstating the retirees’ benefits.

Consol Retirees United for Our Rights is a group of concerned community members fighting for the reinstatement of healthcare to retired Consol Energy workers and to maintain and protect the rights of Consol Energy retirees, present workers, and future employees. The Center for Coalfield Justice is partnering with the Consol Retirees United for Our Rights to pressure Consol Energy to fulfill their promises and moral obligations, and not continue to abandon these hardworking men and women. These retirees have been dedicated, loyal employees to Consol Energy because they were promised the ability to retire at 55 with healthcare. Consol is once again showing that it cannot be trusted and it is failing to be a responsible, ethical employer to the men and women who were part of the company’s success.

Some may think the Center for Coalfield Justice’s partnership with Consol Retirees United for Our Rights is unusual, but instead it is crucial in the overall fight for healthier communities because a thriving economy is necessary part of that. In areas where fossil fuel extraction is occurring, the economy and *the environment are so closely tied together*. At CCJ, we feel that fighting for economic

Continued on Page 7 (Healthcare)

(Environmental)

Continued from Page 1

the mid-Mon Valley branch of the NAACP to see if there was common ground that we could work on together, so now I had a firmer shove in that direction.

After contacting the President of the local NAACP Branch, *George Simmons*, I received an invitation from him to attend their next meeting and introduce myself and the Sierra Club. I did, and after a couple of meetings decided to join their Branch. I wasn't sure what kind of productive role I could play, but the President solved that quandary at the next meeting when he asked me to form an Environmental Justice Committee for the Branch. Having grown up in Duquesne in the Valley, and with a long interest in conservation and environmental issues, I was happy to agree.

We started out in the "hunter-gatherer" stage, looking for information. What we often found was not a happy story. We've met a lot of folks who've lived their entire lives in their towns and are devoted to them, but many in the Mon Valley communities are still struggling to recover from the deindustrialization that hit parts of our region very hard.

We examined various Mon Valley towns in Allegheny, Washington, Westmoreland, and Fayette counties and found that most of them were more like each other than the various counties in which they resided. What do I mean by that? Well, for example, many Mon Valley communities had a median household income that was 40-60% of their county-wide median. Their percent of vacant

housing units was 2.0-2.5 times the county percent.

Because of the history of locating heavy industries and other heavy polluters in the Mon Valley, there are many current operating and legacy issues the towns must deal with. Doing a quick survey from Homestead to California, PA, we found 2 operating steel mills, 2 operating coke plants, and 6 former steel mill sites in various stages of rehabilitation. These towns have to deal with the health impacts of the current emitters and the negative economic effects of the abandoned brownfield sites. Added to this list are idled coal-burning power plants, along with their attendant fly ash disposal sites and lagoons, at Elrama and outside New Eagle. There is an abandoned mine drainage site along with the treatment lagoons on the outskirts of New Eagle; a partially dismantled coal washing/preparation plant that served that mine on Main Street in New Eagle; and a large coal waste dump site in Carroll Township near New Eagle. This particular dump can be seen as a huge mound rising high above the Joe Montana Bridges on 143. There are, no doubt, many smaller coal waste and fly ash dumps scattered in the countryside above the Valley. And, finally, we have the dangerous coal waste and fly ash disposal site at La Belle, PA, which the Sierra Club and our partners at the *Center for Coalfield Justice* have been monitoring carefully. Recent investigative reporting by the *Post-Gazette* has exposed the very negative health outcomes experienced by the inmates at State Correctional Institute Fayette located on one side of the waste dump, as well as among the

residents of the small town of La Belle located on the other side.

This proliferation of 'brownfield' sites contributes to some communities remaining in a blighted condition for decades. These sites reduce community property values, resulting in an aggregate loss of family wealth while they underutilize the productive capacity of the region's workers, resulting in higher unemployment rates, disaffected youth, falling populations, and further decline of the affected communities. And to make matters worse, government policy has often moved in exactly the wrong direction. Rather than focusing development resources on remediating such sites and communities, government focus has often, instead, been on building new highways to facilitate the development of far off 'greenfields.'

So, looking back, we have a lot of potential opportunities to work on. We might also find community interest in sustainability projects such as energy savings and renewable energy, community gardens, bike trails, or public transportation issues.

If you are interested in Environmental Justice issues and would consider joining us in the Valley we'd like to hear from you. If you're ready to join our group, great, but we also just need other eyes and ears in the region who can alert us to issues we're not aware of. Mostly, though, we need other minds at work to help us sort through the potential projects and pick some to focus on. We'll also need to do outreach in the various

communities to help drive our project focus. We might do this through 'listening tours.' Also, by scheduling interviews that might be called 'Meeting with the Mayor,' we might organize short visits to some of the Valley communities to familiarize others with the many issues. We'd like to hear your ideas. If you have interest in or questions about our activities please contact me at: kennethyonek@yahoo.com.

Kenneth Yonek

(Mingo) Continued from Page 1 the Center for Coalfield Justice, has been fighting a proposed deep mine that would affect both Nottingham and Peters Townships. This mine threatens our water, air, and general safety.

RAMACO Mining, LLC, a Kentucky-based mining corporation, has recently submitted their mining application to the Department of Environmental Protection. The submitted application has many flaws, including a risky and irresponsible wastewater plan and an unsafe transportation plan. RAMACO's plan for transporting the coal is through truck. There would be an average of 244 trucks per day traveling very narrow country roads that are used by school buses and bikers. That's 27 trucks per hour. This proposed mine would have extremely negative effects not only on this community, but also on communities on the coast of Louisiana where RAMACO's proposed export terminal would go.

In order to win this fight, Protectors of Mingo needs your help! There are several ways that

you can support us immediately; and through the coming months there will be many more opportunities to help.

Currently we need you to sign the supporter sign-on list (bit.ly/POMSupport at <https://docs.google.com/forms/>)

(Rally) Continued from Page 1 school year: a parent called, said that there was a well flaring very close to the school (around 500 feet from the playground and 900 feet from the school). As I was making my way through the neighborhood, an older woman engaged me in conversation and we got to talking about the well. She had lived in the neighborhood for 42 years. I asked her how she felt about the well being so close to her home. She said, "We all get along but we don't talk about the difficult things." She never really expressed anything about the well, until, as I was turning to leave, she called after me, "What can we do? They're so big and we're so small."

I carried that conversation with me all year - was haunted by it. I kept asking myself, "What can I do to let people know that they are not alone, not small, not powerless?"

And then the answers started pouring in. First, a small band of residents of Connoquenessing Borough extracted significant concessions from Rex Energy (which they subsequently ignored). Then a group of 50 residents of Butler City crammed into a meeting hall that said no more than 36 were allowed in to demand that the city not lease park land. Then the Mars Parent Group changed

the conversation in the entire county when they ended up on the front page. Then Save Lake Arthur Watershed, a group of feisty retirees, got a permit rescinded. Suddenly we had some minor victories without really coming together as a county, as a region.

That's when the idea for the rally started crystallizing. I thought it would be great if we could have a regional rally that could celebrate the many successes groups were experiencing. And that's also when I remembered the Climate Marchers, so I reached out to my friend Lee Stewart (one of the Marchers) and the welcoming rally started to take shape.

The Great March for Climate Action broadened our scope of community - they brought the notion that not only we weren't alone in our region, we also had a wide network of folks from all across the continent who were engaging in the same battle, were realizing victories, were banding together. Our theme broadened to "we are not alone, we are not small, we must act boldly, we must build resilient communities."

If there were one moment that brought all of this together for me during the rally it was a comment by Connie Fleeger. She told the story of being depressed until she saw an anti-fracking sign in the yard of a neighbor she did not know, Rose. They spoke, they organized, they stopped XTO from putting a well in.

We are not alone, we are not small, we must act boldly and build resiliency!

Michael Badges-Canning

(Chair)

Continued from Page 2

(lbud401@gmail.com; 839 N. Sheridan Avenue, Pittsburgh, 15206).

THANKS to all of you who took the time to review our Executive Committee candidates for the 2015 term and VOTE! The number voting (197) was the largest return we have ever had! I was thrilled that so many of you participated in this important process of electing your leaders. We would like to increase the number of you voting electronically, so, if you received a paper ballot, please send us (alleghenysc.org) your email address. Then next year you can vote electronically too. Election results are reported on Page XX in this newsletter.

And speaking of electing leaders, we believe we need some new leadership on Allegheny County Council. *Nicholas Futules* (District 7), *John Palmiere* (District 6), *John DeFazio* (at large) all voted to allow fracking under Deer Lakes Park and are up for re-election in 2015. At this point, we do not know if all will plan to run for re-election. In any case, if you know of people in District 6 or 7 or anywhere in Allegheny County who might be interested in running, please let me know. *Barbara Daly Danko* (District 11), *Amanda Hawkins* (District 13), *Heather Heidelbaugh* (at large), and *Bill Robinson* (District 10) are also up for re-election in 2015. These council members have been supportive of environmental issues. The Sierra Club will be interviewing all the candidates for County Council to determine whether or not we will endorse any of them. If you are interested

in helping with our Political Committee, please contact Lisa Mekovsky, our political chair, at lisamekovsky@gmail.com.

Once again, I encourage you to review the articles in this newsletter for more details on our activities and go to our Web site, www.alleghenysc.org, for the latest news and events. There are many opportunities to be involved and know that 'YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE'!

You can contact me at: 412-521-9526 or barbgrover1@gmail.com

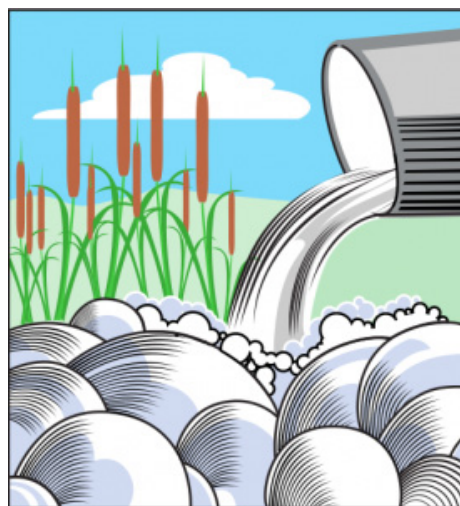
with your questions or concerns.

Barbara Grover,
Group Chair

(ALCOSAN)

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that all segments of the community contributing to the problem pay their fair share. For example, big box stores with huge parking lots are huge contributors to the



problem but since they use very little water they are not going to contribute much to the solution.

(3) Protection for those who will struggle with huge ALCOSAN rate increases. ALCOSAN has already

begun to raise our rates 60% over the next four years and that will only pay for a small fraction of the whole project. We need a rate payer assistance program for those who can't afford those increases and might face water shutoffs as residents of Detroit did.

At the end of the meeting, people were invited to come and carry this message to the ALCOSAN Board meeting on Thursday, November 20th. Those who couldn't come to that were urged to sign a post card supporting these principles that would get delivered to the ALCOSAN Board.

Over fifty people from the campaign did attend the Thursday ALCOSAN board meeting. Barb Grover, Chair of the Allegheny Group Executive Committee, made a statement on behalf of Sierra Club supporting fairness for rate payers. She also told ALCOSAN that the group had been responsible for sending 3 buses to the big climate rally in New York in September. Large scale investments in green are a proven strategy to combat climate change. Given the urgency of the climate dislocation facing us, it would be a huge loss not to invest as much as we can into green.

If you want to know more about the Clean Rivers Campaign, visit the website and sign up to be a supporter: www.cleanriverscampaign.org.

Tom Hoffman
Conservation Program
Coordinator

Pennsylvania Chapter of the
Sierra Club

*(Intern) Continued from
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I enjoyed interacting with the volunteers and helping make the event a success!

Also, many weeks I was in charge of running Activist Night, which occurs every Thursday night at the office from 6:30 to 8:30. These nights were mostly spent leading volunteers in calling our members and updating them on our current campaigns and upcoming events. Even though my internship is now over, I still attend Activist Nights because they're a fun way to stay involved and a provide an opportunity to interact with a great group of volunteers.

Overall, my internship with the Sierra Club was very successful in opening my eyes to the world of a nonprofit. I encourage students with an interest in environmental nonprofits to apply for the internship!

Taylor Elliott-DelBuono

*(Healthcare)
Continued from Page 3*

justice along with environmental justice is the only way to achieve strong, healthy, and resilient communities.

In order to win this fight, we need all of you, including people concerned with the environment, to show your support. It can be as simple as signing this petition demanding Consol reinstate healthcare for their retirees, signing the supporter list to get updates about the campaign, or contacting the Center for Coalfield Justice (724-229-3550) to get more involved in the campaign.

Eva Westheimer

*(WalMart)
Continued from Page 3*

hold potential runoff from their building and future storm water, thereby posing no threat to Pine Creek or adjacent wetlands. But we would need to see evidence. Wetlands act as an air purifier, with the plants taking in the carbon dioxide and replacing it with clean oxygen. Wetlands next to the supercenter would be threatened by excess air pollution from the 90-plus weekly delivery trucks and thousands of automobiles passing through the very small Blazier Drive and Ingomar Road intersection. The exhaust saturating the air could kill the sensitive flora that fill the wetland, thereby recycling none of the damaging fumes into breathable air.

Wetlands also function as water purification systems and a buffer for flooding. The plants filter the water, holding toxins and eliminating them from the water. The excess storm water runoff and sewage from a supercenter could not be held in these small wetlands and could further overflow into Pine Creek, threatening water quality.

Also, this activity will inevitably affect Pine Creek. Pine Creek is a 67.3 square mile watershed that covers parts of 14 municipalities, including McCandless, and is a significant tributary that flows into the Allegheny River. Its potential for overflowing has been the point of study for many years due to the damage that flooding of it has caused, particularly in Etna, where in 2004 millions of dollars of damage and loss of life occurred.

As Pine Creek sits next to this site, the potential for storm water runoff and sewage ultimately ending up in

the creek is a major concern. Prior studies of Pine Creek conducted by the Pennsylvania Environmental Council and the Department of Environmental Protection recommended that riparian zones be 'unaffected by development' and that 100 foot buffers be placed next to any building site adjacent to the creek. The engineers representing Walmart stated that they would be adhering to DEP regulations, but these plans seem inadequate for the amount of space the supercenter will encompass. Their proposal would leave no room for the 100 feet of buffer that has been recommended by the PEC.

In addition, the McCandless Town Council tentatively passed Tentative Ordinance no. 1440 that deals with flood plain designations. According to the August 25, 2014, meeting transcripts, key changes would include that buildings occurring in a flood plain be 50 feet away from stream banks and have minimal to no impact outside of the properties in the flood plain. This is contradictory to the PEC recommendations for development near Pine Creek.

The next point of environmental distress is the impact on North Park. North Park is an Allegheny County park, is located less than one mile from the Blazier Drive development site, and is located on Ingomar/Wildwood Road. There is a 2.5 mile stretch of the park that is on a Pennsylvania state-maintained road that would be accessed by Walmart customers and delivery trucks. This road has cyclists, runners, walkers, and horseback riders every day of the year. The impact of increased traffic and air pollution would further disrupt

Continued on Page 8 (WalMart)

(WalMart)

Continued from Page 7

the lake ecosystem that has been recently dredged and stocked with fish and their breeding grounds.

Finally, other impacts of this type of large development so close to parks and creeks include the impact of traffic on air quality standards, the threat to water quality and aquifers, potential for mismanagement of storm water and sewage, reduction of wildlife habitat, destruction of woodlands, and loss of open space.

In response to the decision to develop by the Town Council and Walmart executives, a proactive group has formed. More than one thousand McCandless residents have formed an advocacy group to stop the further destruction of the wetlands, Pine Creek, woods, and potentially North Park. "Citizens of McCandless" has raised thousands of dollars to retain a lawyer and have filed an appeal to stop the development. They have made themselves visible throughout North Park, McCandless, Pine Richland and Hampton Townships. Their goal is not to limit the free market, but to protect the valuable natural sites the area has. They are also looking to better the 55 acre site with a recreation area and a senior center, and to maintain the park and ride area. Supporters can reach out and help by going to:

[www.facebook.com/](http://www.facebook.com/NoWalmartinMcCandless)

[NoWalmartinMcCandless](http://www.facebook.com/NoWalmartinMcCandless)

and signing the petition. Please see <http://www.citizensofmccandless.com/>.

Donations and volunteers accepted.

Giovanna Bochicchio

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(Steinbrenner)

Donahue started the forum with introductory remarks describing human climate forcing and observed 20th century global warming, then turned to local effects and both financial and health "co-benefits" of policies designed to reduce emissions of greenhouse gas. He described recent research from CMU's Department of Engineering and Public Policy showing that wind and photovoltaic power generation is best situated near Pittsburgh once social costs of climate and human health associated with displaced CO₂ and pollution emissions are considered. He also described the process of ordering policy options from the most cost effective (those that generate net cost savings) to the most expensive until a given target for climate mitigation is reached.

Nearly 100 students, community members, faculty and staff then participated in small-group moderated discussions focused on extreme temperatures and water infrastructure issues in the City of Pittsburgh. As with previous deliberative discussions at Carnegie Mellon, participants were given a short pre-read document containing information about the challenges and opportunities that climate change poses for the City of Pittsburgh along with some strategies that the City is considering to mitigate and adapt in the face of increasingly difficult environmental challenges. The groups then used the information in the pre-read and their informed discussion to generate questions for the panel members.

Audience members were encouraged to have constructive dialogue on how the City is currently addressing climate change from both adaptation and mitigation perspectives, as well as future actions that citizenry and municipalities alike might undertake to prevent and deal with the effects resulting from extreme temperatures and the water infrastructure woes that plague the City of Pittsburgh.

Many conversations among the table participants had to do with the idea of a Community Clean Water Fund currently being considered by the City. The fund would support green infrastructure projects city wide and would provide incentives for developers and home owners to increase the amount of green space on their properties. Other conversations addressed transportation infrastructure as well as the potential and effect of renewable energy portfolios.

One of the goals of the Deliberative Democracy Forum is to delve into what people think about an issue after they "have been provided the resources that citizens need to develop an opinion informed by relevant facts, expert information, and an understanding of how issues and policies affect others in their community." While developing the "Building a Resilient Pittsburgh Forum" forum, SEER and its community partners decided not to focus on whether climate change is an issue for our region, but rather to focus on the practical ways of addressing what we know to be real issues affecting citizens of Pittsburgh, Allegheny County and the region at large. One question formulated by a group of student participants



addressed the issue of what student residents who may have no long-term ties to the region could do and, perhaps more importantly, why students who may only live in the area for 4-6 years should feel obligated to do anything at all in their adopted home on the Carnegie Mellon Campus. Their question was addressed by community activist and Kingsley Center Associate Director Fred Brown, who spoke about a “moral obligation” to be aware of your impact, whether you live on campus or in a neighborhood and whether you live in an area for 6 months or 6 years.

Tim Dawson, of *The Art of Democracy*, who was involved in helping to craft the pre-read and in recruiting and training moderators for the event, commented that deliberative discussions on contentious issues such as climate change can “inspire people towards ideological positioning and debate, but deliberative forums change this dynamic by providing a well-structured discussion that helps people to discuss practical

challenges as problems to be solved rather than as issues to be debated.”

The Steinbrenner Institute for Environmental Education and Research was established in 2004 with the goal of encouraging the environmental work at Carnegie Mellon University “to change the way the world thinks and acts about the environment, through our educational and research methods and results, through the issues we raise, and through the outcomes we produce.”

As the Steinbrenner Institute continues to celebrate its 10th anniversary year in 2014, its goal has been to amplify this side of its mission with events throughout the academic year that focus on perhaps the most important and topical of environmental issues: climate change and the associated strategies in climate adaptation and mitigation by governments and individual citizens. According to the Steinbrenner Institute, “we hope to accelerate the discussions of serious environmental challenges while presenting

opportunities to confront and attack those challenges through CMU’s unique blend of interdisciplinary culture and experience.”

Erika Ninos and Neil Donahue,

Carnegie Mellon University

Executive Committee Election Results

THANK YOU to all who took the time to vote for our Executive Committee Candidates – all 197 of you! In the past the ballot and candidate information was part of our paper newsletter, The Sierran, mailed each fall. This year, we tried a new, two-pronged approach to getting ballot information to all our members. 1) For those members for whom we had emails, we sent an email notice with links to the ballot and candidate information: these members could vote electronically. 2) Paper ballots were sent to those members for whom we did not have email addresses: these members returned their ballots via US postal service to our office. The response this year was the best we've ever experienced (previously, the normal return has been around 30, and the highest return in recent years was 50 votes). But 197 is still only a small percentage of our total membership, which is over 5000

The wonderful return of ballots is definitely the positive side of this new approach. We want members to be involved in the important election of the Executive Committee members. However, paper ballots were definitely a labor intensive effort. Volunteers spent two fairly long Sunday afternoons, stuffing, labeling, stamping, and sealing about 2700 envelopes. We would like to cut down that required work effort. So, if you received a paper ballot, have an email address, and are willing to share that with us for yearly Executive Committee elections,

please send it to: Bob Lang, excomvote@rdlang.com. Not only will electronic voting be easier and quicker for you, it will save the time, effort, and money it costs to send a paper ballot. Our goal for the 2016-2018 term is to reduce the number of paper ballots to under 500.

Please help us do that.

The results are:

Rick Arnold – 92

Gwen Chute - 182

Veronica Coptis - 176

Matt Peters - 142

Chris Shepherd - 167

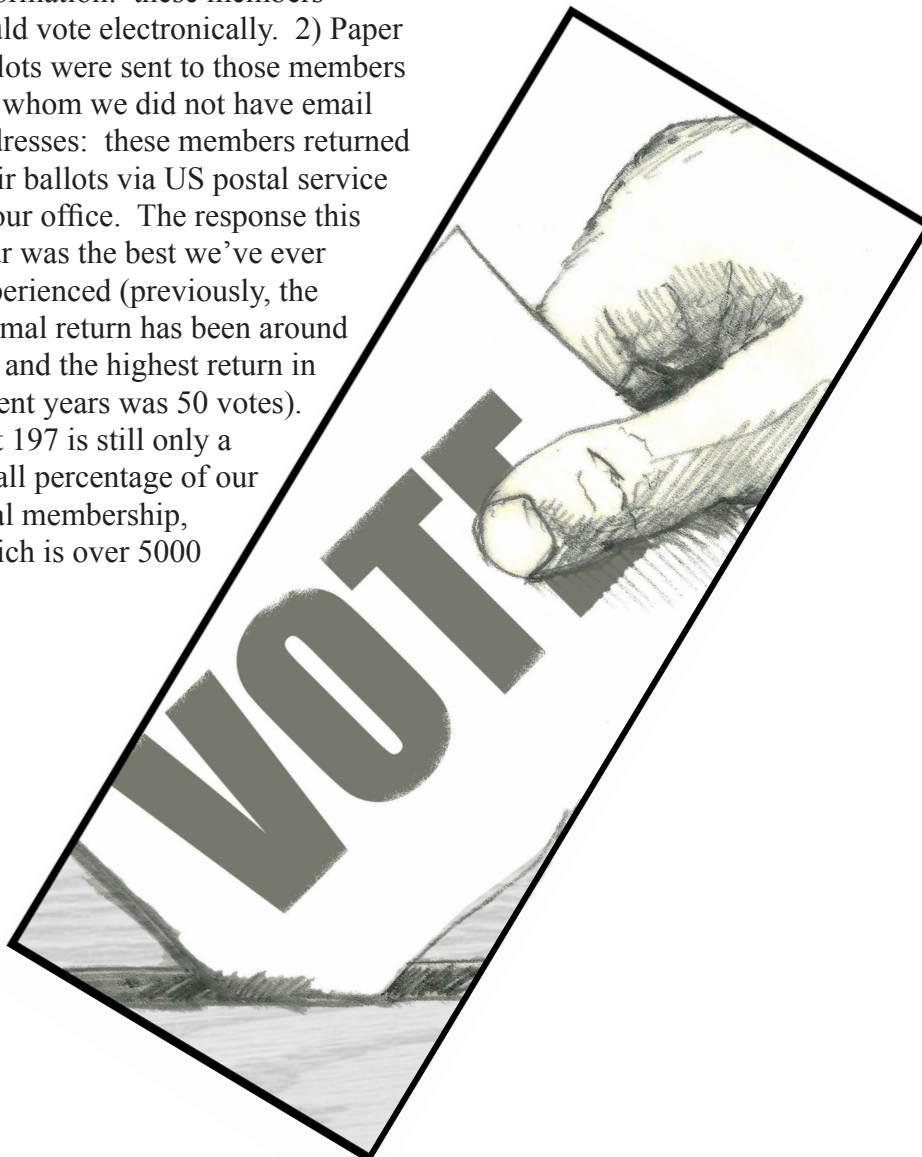
The four candidates, *Gwen, Veronica, Matt, and Chris*, who received the most votes will be officially approved for a two-year term (January 2015- December 31, 2016) at our January 12, 2015 Executive Committee meeting. One of our current Executive Committee members has indicated she wishes to resign before completing her full term (January 2014-December 31, 2015) and so, in accordance with our by-laws, the fifth candidate, Rick Arnold, will serve out the remainder of her unexpired term. January through December 31, 2015.

If you received a paper ballot, PLEASE, SEND BOB LANG (excomvote@rdlang.com)

YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS!

Thank you again for your support of the Sierra Club

*Laura Donovan & Bob Lauth,
co-chairs ExCom Election
Committee*



“Section 27 Alliance of Butler Township”

Butler Township, in Butler County, PA, has an ordinance in place that allows drilling as a permitted use in all zoning districts, including residential. To date, the township has approved two residential well pads – one on property zoned R-1 Single Family Residential, another zoned R-2 Multifamily Residential. The latter, the Krendale well pad, is located so dangerously close to homes and businesses – 550 ft. from the nearest home – that the township planning commission refused to even vote on it. But township officials had no choice but to approve it, because of the ordinance that is in place.

Our concerned citizens group, “Section 27 Alliance of Butler Township,” has formed to try and stop residential drilling in the township, and especially the dangerously located Krendale well pad. The only way we can hope to do this is through legal action. Our name comes from Article 1, Section 27 of the PA Constitution – the Environmental Rights Amendment – which was referenced frequently by the Pennsylvania state Supreme Court in its ruling that the Act 13 zoning laws which required municipalities to allow drilling in all zones were unconstitutional.

We are of course extremely disappointed that our elected

officials have made such unwise choices and left a dangerous mess for residents to attempt to clean up, at considerable expense. While they consistently claim that they enacted the drill-anywhere ordinance to comply with Act 13, court injunctions throughout the course of the Act 13 legal challenge



kept state municipalities from having to make such changes. When the courts declared Act 13 zoning unconstitutional, the township did not change its ordinance. When we confronted township officials about the ordinance in June of this year, we were arrogantly dismissed. Only when they were forced to approve the Krendale pad three months later did they have their “oops!” moment and began talking publicly about changing the ordinance.

At the Oct. 20, 2014, township meeting, the township solicitor was officially authorized to amend the drilling ordinance so as to restrict shale-gas drilling in residential and commercial zoning districts. This delayed about-face will have no effect whatsoever on the Krendale well pad. Township officials didn’t really want to approve this well pad but were powerless to stop it; now the only thing even remotely standing in the way of this dangerous well pad’s construction is the possibility of legal action against the township by Section 27 Alliance! That’s how crazy this whole fracking mess has gotten – we can possibly “bail out” our officials through legal action against them. . . .

Section 27 Alliance is now going into major fundraising mode. Anyone wanting to contribute to the S27A legal fee fund may do so via our GoFundMe site, accessible from our website – <http://www.section27alliance.com/>. And please follow our progress and “like us” on our Facebook page -- www.facebook.com/Section27

Alliance. Together we are strong!
Together we will win!

Joseph McMurray

Sierran

Winter Newsletter January 2015

Upcoming Events

January 6, 20 – Allegheny County Council Meetings – 5:30pm, County Courthouse, 436 Grant St., 4th Floor Gold Room – Action/discussion expected on the Citizen’s Ordinance presented Dec. 2 to place a 2 year moratorium on fracking in the other 8 County Parks.

Sometime week of January 12-16 – Possible Allegheny County Council Committee meeting to discuss the Citizen’s Ordinance. See alleghenysc.org or protectparks.org closer to the date for details.

January 8, 15, 22, 29 -Activist Nights – Every Thursday, 6:30-8:30pm, volunteers are welcome at the Sierra Club office, 425 N. Craig St., Pittsburgh, PA 15213. Engage in activities to protect our environment. Free Pizza and drinks provided.

January 14 and 28 – Hampton Township Council meetings, 7:30 pm at 3101 McCully Rd, Allison Park, PA 15101. Citizens attempting to stop an ordinance allowing the use of All Terrain Vehicles (ATV), dirt bikes and other off-road vehicles in residential areas of the township, especially in environmentally sensitive areas. Contact Joan Davidow-Sneed (jsdavidow@verizon.net) for details.

January 19 - March Against the Racist Wars at Home and Abroad – 6-8pm Forbes and Bigelow inOakland

January 20 – Rally at Governor Tom Wolf’s Inauguration – Grace Street Methodist Church, 216 State St., Harrisburg, PA 17101, assembling at 10am. Purpose to ask Wolf to make his #1 priority halting new fracking in the state. Bus going from this area. Contact brigetshields@gmail.com or mpro113@gmail.com for details.

January 21- Sustainability Pioneers Documentary Film by Kirsi Jansa in conjunction with The Institute for Green Science at Carnegie Mellon University, 6:30 PM Gemini Theater at the East End Coop, 7516 Meade St, Pittsburgh, PA 15208; Panel discussion will follow the showing of the film. Panel will include Rachel Carson Scholar Patricia Demarco and Sharon Pillar of Solarize Allegheny. The event is FREE, please call 412-242-3598 to reserve your spot.

January 21 – Harry Enstrom Chapter of the Izaak Walton League of America, Seasons on the Greene, 144 Lippencott Rd., Waynesburg, PA. 6:30-8:30pm. Learn about what folks in Greene Coiunty are doing to conserve our environment. Free and open to the public. For more details contact the Center for Coalfield Jusitice. 724-229-3550.

Allegheny Sierran

Winter 2015

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Opinions expressed in the Allegheny Sierran are those of the authors, and should not be taken as Sierra Club policy unless specifically so stated. The Allegheny Sierran is the newsletter of the Allegheny Group and is intended to keep the membership posted on the activities of the Group. Any production costs are paid from Group fundraising activities.

All parties are encouraged to respond to any of the articles we publish and submit any material they feel may be appropriate. Submissions and questions regarding newsletter content should be addressed to the editor, Claudia Kirkpatrick (kirkclaudia@gmail.com).

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The Sierra Club's members are 700,000 of your friends and neighbors. Inspired by nature, we work together to protect our communities and the planet. The Club is America's oldest, largest, and most influential grassroots environmental organization.

The Allegheny Group of the Sierra Club was organized in the early 1970s. It is one of 10 groups comprising the Pennsylvania Chapter.

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