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**Memorial Talk for Sam Hays**



Sam Hays was active in the Allegheny Group shortly after its creation from the New York state Chapter in 1970. Stemming from his time in Oregon forests as a conscientious objector during the Second World War, Sam was our group’s leader on forest and state park issues. In the seventies his major concern was clear-cutting on public lands and he strongly objected to former Gov. Gifford Pinchot’s philosophy of viewing public forests solely in terms of commercial use and profitability. I recall that Sam was disappointed when a new Sierra Club group in York County chose the name Gov. Pinchot Group.

Sam maintained a concern for the management of Allegheny National Forest and supported the work of Dick Pratt, Bruce Sundquist, and others in incorporating areas of the Forest into the National Wilderness Preservation System in 1984.

As was his bent as an academic, Sam wrote position papers, etc., for Sierra Club members to use at public hearings, but it was also Sam’s strong belief that once people learned about and enjoyed wild places in western Pennsylvania they would become strong advocates for protecting the state forests from commercial exploitation. So he and wife Bobby led numerous Sierra Club hikes, especially in the Laurel Ridge area.

In line with his belief that protection of the environment could no longer rely on the elite, as was the case of the early wilderness movement, Sam was a strong advocate of public education, and for years he chaired the program of monthly talks at the Pittsburgh Garden Center.

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**The Sierra Club** is now the nation’s largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization - with more than two million members and supporters. *The Allegheny Group of the Sierra Club* was organized in the early 1970s. It is one of 10 groups comprising the Pennsylvania Chapter.

Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

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Shortly after the Allegheny Group was formed here in Pittsburgh, the state Chapter was created in Harrisburg. This was the beginning of many trips by Sam and Bobby to Executive Committee meetings in the state capital. Sam became chair of the chapter's Public Lands committee, a position he held until 2000. In Chapter Executive Committee meetings Sam argued strongly for the need of a full time Sierra Club lobbyist and indeed in 1983 we opened an office in Harrisburg with full-time staff.

As head of the History Department at Pitt, Sam was instrumental in creating the Archives of Industrial Society at Pitt in the 1960's. And it is there that Sam made sure that not only would his urban history records be stored, but that much of the early history of the local Sierra Club would be included.

During his thirty years with the Sierra Club in Pennsylvania, Sam was an important leader, always digging for the root causes of the problems we dealt with and providing the ethical compass that we sometimes needed.

Once they moved to Boulder we no longer had close touch with Sam and Bobby. But during the past year I wondered what Sam thought of the calamitous changes in Washington, with clear-cutting on state forests seeming to be an almost quaint concern compared to what is happening now to our planet.

*Peter J. Wray*

## Hays Woods Development Proposal

### Belies Promises for Park

When the City of Pittsburgh acquired the 660-some-odd acres of Hays Woods across the river, there was much celebration about creating "the city's largest park" and what a tremendous asset this would be for our "green renaissance" and global reputation as a leader in sustainability. Hays Woods got its fifteen minutes of fame four years ago, when a pair of Bald Eagles built a nest on the steep slope near the Glenwood Bridge, and today their daily lives are monitored by some million or more folks via web-cam as if they were in a television soap-opera. But I would guess that most folks take the silent bulk of Mountain across the river for granted, if they think of it at all.

To some, it's just that long drive out the end of Carson Street to get from the South Side to Homestead, all too often clogged with rush-hour traffic. Few residents of Pittsburgh realize that Hays Woods is the largest urban forest anywhere in the US, a unique biological treasure that is also an artifact of our city's industrial history.

The American industrial revolution was forged here on the shores of the Monongahela River because of the natural outcrops of coal, limestone and iron exposed on the surface of the face of the hill. Miners tunneled right into the hillside and slid the raw materials right down to the river onto barges that portaged the rock to where it would be processed into steel, putting the American Industrial Revolution into high gear. When that material was exhausted, the mines extended ever outward, and Hays Woods was left behind and for the most part has been quietly nursing its wounds ever since.

In recent decades, various developers have come forward with outlandish proposals to strip-mine



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the remaining coal, removing some 300 feet off the top of the mountain, leveling the area with dreams of building casinos and horse-racing tracks. Citizens organized and protested, and the city wisely denied permits for these schemes, in 2009 placing the city's casino on the North Side near the sports arenas in an effort to boost the economy in that part of the city. Finally, the thwarted landowners of this mountain bluff were persuaded to make a gift to the City on its 200th birthday, in an act of generosity unparalleled since the Frick family gave their land to form what is now Frick Park.

When the city acquired the 660-some-odd acres across the river, there was much celebration about creating "the city's largest park" and what a tremendous asset this would be for our "green renaissance" and global reputation as a leader in sustainability. As a footnote, the possibility of a "small area" for new housing was mentioned, with assurances that every effort would be taken to minimize any impact on the forest habitat and set a new standard for ecologically sustainable development. At the time, these words were lost in the celebrations surrounding the triumph that the land transfer represented, and without any solid proposals there was no way to have any meaningful discussion about potential impacts from such new housing.

Fast forward to last November, when the URA released a map showing where they intend to build high-end luxury homes for the wealthy elite. The map shows a sprawling polygon in the middle of the most contiguous portion of the property, which although as



far from the eagle's nest as possible otherwise presents the most ecologically damaging fragmentation of the forest habitat imaginable. This area was determined not by any ecological assessment or consideration of biological impacts, but simply based on a "topographical assessment" which is code for, all the flat ground they could find. That means that any "park" is shoved off to the side, relegated to the steep slopes, the scraps from the table at which the housing-vultures feast on the forest carcass. With the eagles' nest at the eastern

end of the Hays property, any activity even walking there is prohibited by the PA Game Commission and the US Fish and Wildlife Service because the area is so ecologically sensitive! Assertions by the URA that nearly 100 acres of clear-cutting and home-building, road building, sewer and utility infrastructure would have "no impact" are simply ludicrous. An eagles-eye view of the area on satellite photos shows that these majestic birds, symbol of our nation, chose their nest site not based on imaginary property lines but based on the fact that it is in fact centrally located in a forest complex far larger than just the

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Hays property when you include the forested slopes along Route 885 in West Homestead.

Loss of the eagles would be more than just a black eye to our city's image in the eyes of grandmothers and schoolchildren who watch the eagle-cam, be it for entertainment or science. In Pennsylvania, as in many states, the largest industry by far in terms of sheer number of jobs, and amount of tax-revenue generated, is agriculture. Second, according to Bureau of Labor statistics, is outdoor tourism and recreation. This economic sector may be hard to imagine, as there seems to be little economic activity generated by sitting quietly under a tree watching birds. But included in this is the sale of windbreakers and socks, the gas and restaurant tips from visitors who come to Pittsburgh to visit the nation's largest urban forest and see the amazing eagles. Sacrificing some 20% for luxury homes means we lose the title of urban forest champion, just as surely as we lost the Super Bowl to the Green Bay Packers in 2011.

Building homes in Hays means that Hazelwood loses an important asset that makes our neighborhood unique in the city: our pristine view of a mountain that is largely in its natural state. Developing luxury homes on the hilltop would mean that instead of a majestic sunset marching its way back and forth across that elevated horizon with the yearly progression of the seasons, we would instead be looking at the obnoxious glow of streetlights and the glare from those McMansion picture-windows. We may take that view for granted, but to newcomers like myself that view was a decisive selling point, and it is an asset to our neighborhood we cannot afford to lose.

More than mere aesthetics, the forests on that mountain provide irreplaceable ecological services to this region that will come to mean even more in the next few decades. As the impacts from anthropogenic climate change become more apparent and more severe, our remaining forests are becoming increasingly important as the best tool we have to mitigate these impacts. Science is discovering that as forests mature, these older forests store far more carbon than previously thought, mainly due to the recovery of microbial and fungal relations in the soils with tree roots. Forests provide natural air-conditioning, helping regulate temperature fluctuations and controlling humidity. Forests absorb storm water and help mitigate flooding, and this water is retained and released slowly during times of drought. Forests also absorb high winds that could otherwise tear roofs off of homes or topple stand-alone trees that may damage property.

Punching holes in a forest canopy has impacts far beyond the footprint of development. For every acre of forest that is directly affected by chainsaw or bulldozer, some five surrounding acres of what remains is affected by the additional sunlight that dries out the soil and by the wind that reaches in and sucks away moisture. Nesting songbirds suffer from increased predation from edge-loving crows and bluejays, raccoons and other predators that eat the eggs. Non-native plants gain a foothold and spread across the forest floor, displacing native plants some which have tremendous medicinal value like ginseng or goldenseal. Disrupting the forests in Hays means that skunks and other "nuisance wildlife" (pardon the expression) look for new homes under our porches or in the rafters of our garages.

The bottom line is, the URA has no business developing in forests that have been recovering for 150 years for the sake of a few homes for the wealthy elite, while our existing neighborhoods have vacant lots and empty storefronts. How will the city provide fire and police protection to such a remote area, and upon whose backs will the tax burden fall? The cost of extending sewer and electric services to the middle of the forest cannot be justified in a city that is struggling to pay firefighters and other public servants who clamor for a raise to meet the rising costs of living.

Most of all, there is simply no justification in compromising the right of that mountain to its own existence, especially considering how in its wild state it provides us human neighbors with so many benefits that enhance our own lives. Let Hays remain forever wild!

*Matt Peters*

# A Plea for the Rights of the Living Earth

“I pledge myself to preserve and protect America’s fertile soils, her mighty forests and rivers, her wildlife and minerals, for on these her greatness was established and her strength depends.”

*Rachel Carson*<sup>1</sup>

Earth as we have known it faces dramatic and escalating changes wrought by the ignorance and carelessness of human exploitation. In the early days of human civilization, when humans were small tribal bands moving among other predators and omnivores, their impact was kept in balance as part of the ecosystems they occupied. As the population grew and humans added technologies for manipulating and shaping the natural world through large scale agriculture then through roads, cities and industry, the impact has grown to the point where now modern people do not perceive themselves automatically as part of the natural world. This separation from nature combined with a sense of entitlement to exploit, own and use the resources of the Earth for profits has sent the impact of human civilization spinning beyond the threshold of balance of natural systems.

Today’s economy rests on using fossil resources - oil, natural gas and coal - for fuel and petrochemical feedstocks. Fossil resource use is manifest in global warming and global pollution, from the accumu-

lation of petrochemical products in the environment and the products of fossil fuel combustion in the atmosphere.<sup>2</sup> Our fossil-dependent civilization now faces life or death situations across the planet as the inherent limits of tolerance for living conditions are breached. A quarter of the globe now faces desert conditions from prolonged drought; bleaching of 40% of the world’s coral reefs from ocean acidification and warmer temperatures; melting and collapse of Arctic and Antarctic ice sheets; and average global carbon dioxide levels above 400 parts per million, levels not seen for thousands of years.<sup>3</sup>

The governments of all the countries in the world have pledged to address the peril of climate change, except for the United States of America under the Trump Administration. The isolation from our peers and the destructive effect of his policies undermine the natural capital of our nation and amplify the effect of our civilization on climate change and global pollution. Our life support system is under direct attack. Since taking office, the Trump Administration has rescinded or repealed at least 60 environmental, public health and worker safety protections in the name of eliminating ‘burdensome regulations.’<sup>4</sup> Millions of people now are exposed to risks of water contamination, air pollution, and the destruction of national lands and offshore areas from expanded oil, gas and coal development under relaxed environmental reviews. This is the road to an impoverished and unhealthy nation ruled by a cruel and oblivious elite. This is

not the America my immigrant grandparents shed blood, sweat and tears to build.

This situation is more tragic because the solutions are all around us, technologies and systems proven to provide the base for a thriving economy abound – renewable energy systems, regenerative agriculture, green chemistry and a circular supply chain.<sup>5</sup> We are facing a moral and ethical crisis, not a technology challenge. The splintered factions of the environmental and social justice movements must coalesce and stand together to restore a system of checks and balances that contain the rampant greed of unfettered economic exploitation. Capitalism unbalanced by social and environmental constraints becomes a tyranny, thriving on the exploitation of the natural resources of the Earth and discounting the intrinsic value of all living things, including people. Continuing on this course will end in a planet hurtling through space devoid of the lush regenerative life we have known.

The People’s Climate Congress held in Cochabamba, Bolivia in 2010 adopted a Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth signed by 288 nations and adopted at COP21 in Paris as part of the Paris Climate Accord. The first declaration is “For the right to life and to exist.”<sup>6</sup> The Earth provides everything we need to live and thrive as functions of the interactions among the living systems and mineral structure of the planet. Robert Costanza and his colleagues have recently updated the twenty-year study of the value of ecosystem services in an article which concludes that the substantial

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contributions of ecosystem services to the sustainable well-being of humans and the rest of nature should be at the core of the fundamental change needed in economic theory and practice if we are to achieve a societal transformation to a sustainable and desirable future.<sup>7</sup>

We can achieve a sustainable society where economic enterprise is balanced with environmental health and social and cultural values.

This goal rests on recognizing the intrinsic value of the life support systems of the living Earth. We have established in law that corporations have the same rights as “persons” under the First, Fourth, and Fifth Amendments; the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment; and the Contract Clause and Supremacy Clause of the U.S. Constitution<sup>8</sup> Yet, we do not recognize the components of our living Earth as having intrinsic rights under the law. In a few places in America, this concept of Nature having legal rights is beginning to be challenged in the courts. First is the lawsuit *Juliana et. al. vs. the United States* filed by the Children’s Trust on behalf of 21 teenagers in Oregon who claim the federal government’s promotion of fossil fuel production and its indifference to the risks posed by greenhouse gas emissions have resulted in “a dangerous destabilizing climate system” that threatens the survival of future generations. The plaintiffs argue that their fundamental constitutional rights to life, liberty, and property have been violated. They also argue that the government violated the public trust doctrine, a legal concept grounded in ancient law that holds the government is responsible for



protecting public resources, such as land and water -- or in this case, the climate system -- for public use.<sup>9</sup>

A new lawsuit filed in U.S. District Court in Denver, Colorado, is asking a judge to treat the Colorado River as a person rather than property, therefore recognizing its right “to exist, flourish, regenerate, and naturally evolve.” It makes the argument that if corporations in the U.S. can be granted the same rights as people, shouldn’t rivers be allowed that status as well?<sup>10</sup> The same issue lies at the heart of the of the Indigenous Peoples’ challenge to the Keystone XL Pipeline, who argue that the pipeline would endanger the water supply and the river system in the event of a leak. Initially denied pending further environmental studies to evaluate the effects on the watershed and water supply, the Keystone XL Pipeline is now returned to production by Trump actions rescinding the requirement for a more thorough environmental review.<sup>11</sup>

The 1,179-pipeline extension was projected to move 830,000 barrels of sands oil per day, and is at the center of this battle over land rights of private U.S. citizens, Native Americans, and the U.S. government in its role as guardian of the public interest.

The most alarming aspect of these lawsuits and many others piling up across the country is that the government is supposed to protect the public interest and the people, not corporations! The perversion of our Constitution to serve multinational corporations with no concern whatsoever for the people of this country, or indeed of ANY country, over the preservation of the public health and welfare is a total perversion of America. We must take back the true values of America, a government of the people, by the people and for the people, or we will perish from this Earth. If corporations are persons, how much more valid is the claim that

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the rivers, forests, grasslands, wetlands, and estuaries should have the rights of persons! I call for the adoption of the Universal Rights of Mother Earth as a Constitutional Amendment to balance Citizens United. We will otherwise destroy our life support system in the pursuit of unfettered economic greed.

Patricia M. DeMarco, Ph.D.

Senior Scholar, Chatham University

Forest Hills Borough Council, 2016-2020

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<sup>5</sup> Patricia M. DeMarco. *Pathways to Our Sustainable Future - A Global Perspective from Pittsburgh*. Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Press, 2017.

<sup>6</sup> See the preamble and the ten rights of Mother Earth in Patricia DeMarco. 2017. *Pathways to Our Sustainable Future - A Global Perspective from Pittsburgh*. Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Press, 2017, p. 25-26.

<sup>7</sup> Robert Costanza, Rudolph deGroot, Leon Braat, Ida Kubeziewski, Lorenzo Fioramonte, Paul Sutton, Steve Farber, Monica Grasso. “Twenty years of ecosystem services: How far have we come and how far do we still need to go?” *Ecosystem Services* 28 (2017), 1-16. ([http://www.robertcostanza.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/2017\\_J\\_Costanza-et-al.-20yrs.-EcoServices.pdf](http://www.robertcostanza.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/2017_J_Costanza-et-al.-20yrs.-EcoServices.pdf)). Accessed January 15, 2018. See also my interview with Robert Costanza on The New American Economy Radio (<https://theunionedge.com/twenty-years-ecosystem-services/>).

<sup>8</sup> Citizens United vs. Federal Elections Commission ruling of corporations as persons (<http://caselaw.findlaw.com/us-supreme-court/08-205.html>). Accessed January 15, 2018.

<sup>9</sup> Juliana et al. vs. the United States Government (<https://www.ourchildrenstrust.org/us/federal-lawsuit/>). Accessed January 20, 2018.

<sup>10</sup> Angela K. Evans. “Rights of Nature Lawsuit Seeks Personhood for the Colorado River,” *Boulder Weekly*. September 28, 2017 (<http://www.boulderweekly.com/news/rights-nature-lawsuit-seeks-personhood-colorado-river>). Accessed January 19, 2018.

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# An Opening Shot in the War Against Plastics



*“...Plasticity’s central canon: that chemists were no longer to be at the mercy of Nature. They could decide what properties they wanted a molecule to have, then go ahead and build it.”*

**Thomas Pynchon, Gravity’s Rainbow(1973)**

*“Me see a neon moon above  
I searched for years  
I found no love  
I’m sure that love will never be  
A product of plasticity.”*

**“Plastic People” by The Mothers of Invention (1967)**

Plastics are truly ubiquitous in our modern, industrial civilization. We normally begin our days by pulling a plastic curtain before taking a shower, pouring shampoo on our heads from a plastic bottle and grabbing a cake of soap from a plastic soap dish. The comb we run through our hair is made of plastic and the disposable razors guys often use to remove whiskers is, except for the blade, made of plastic. Plastic is in the clothing we wear containing “synthetic fibers” and I won’t go into the plastic contained in our food and, especially, our beverage packaging, automobiles, computers, and smartphones because by now, I’m sure, you get the point. Plastics are impossible to avoid and, if, some-

how plastics were to miraculously disappear from our world, there wouldn’t be much left in working order in our society.

But it wasn’t always this way. The plastics revolution took off only after the Second World War. Before that restaurants, from five-star to greasy spoon and everything in between, served food and drink using glass, chinaware, and utensils made of metal, all of which could be washed and reused any number of times. Pop and beer came in glass bottles which were returned to the vendor, washed and disinfected and used again, the only thing disposable being the bottle cap. Even medical syringes were made of glass and were sterilized to be used again.

Our throwaway culture really began with the invention and exponential spread of plastics. Again, according to EcoWatch, 50% of the plastics we use get thrown away and every year we throw away enough plastic to circle the earth four times.

The problem with plastic begins with the fact that it is the first completely synthetic substance created on earth. As the quote above from Thomas Pynchon makes clear, plastic is at once both unnatural and anti-natural. Everything of the earth eventually passes away. Plants, animals and people die and their bodies decompose into their constituent elements. The tallest mountains are eventually worn away by the wind and reduced to sand. But plastic, being literally a substance alien to the earth, is non-biodegradable. It does “break down,” but only in the sense that larger pieces of plastic are reduced to smaller pieces of plastic. According to EcoWatch, “virtually

every piece of plastic that was ever made still exists in some shape or form (with the exception of the small amount that has been incinerated).” Contrary to Ian Fleming, plastics, and not diamonds, are forever.

Worse yet, the chemical base for plastics are hydrocarbons such as petroleum and natural gas liquids, which means that even if humanity can devise ways of providing abundant energy without the use of fossil fuels, drilling for these fuels (including “fracking”) will

**Our throwaway culture really began with the invention and exponential spread of plastics.**

continue in order to obtain them for producing plastics. And the process by which these hydrocarbons are transformed into plastics, called “cracking,” releases dangerous chemicals and known carcinogens into our air and our water. The proposed “cracker plant” in Potter Township, Beaver County, if completed, could be the first of many built in our region transforming southwestern Pennsylvania into a “cancer alley” and undoing everything we have worked for to improve the quality of our water and our air.

Plastic pollution is already taking a huge toll on our lands and our oceans. A report by the World Economic Forum predicts that by the year 2050, there will be more plastic than fish in our oceans. Ingestion of plastics mistaken for food is damaging and destroying marine

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life by wounding and ulcerating their digestive systems or actually creating blockages within them, causing death by starvation. On land, most of our throwaway plastics, which is to say, most of our plastics, end up in landfills where they leech dangerous chemicals into our soil and ground waters including, again, carcinogens as well as endocrine disrupters such as phthalates and bisphenol-A (BPA) which have been shown to cause defective development of genitalia in male fetuses of various animal species and, most likely, in humans as well.

Clearly, if we are to build a sustainable future for life on our planet, plastics have got to go. But plastics are everywhere. They are used for the manufacture of everything from soda straws to medical tubing to electronic devices like computers and cell phones, to automobiles and aircraft. Imagining modern life without plastics is like trying to imagine modern life without . . . fossil fuels. And, of course, imaging a future without the use of fossil fuels is precisely what we environmentalists are doing, because we understand that to do otherwise spells catastrophe for the living things on our planet. And we can also imagine a world without plastic, and for fundamentally the same reason: a plastic world means, eventually, a dead world.

Because we know that humans burning fossil fuels is the principal cause of climate change, we know that humankind must end its dependence on burning fossil fuels for energy if we are to fend off the climate catastrophe which is the worst-case scenario of a warming climate. But no responsible person advocates doing so immediately and all at once, as this would mean the end of our civilization and result in billions of deaths. So as we environmentalists do our utmost to end the extraction and use of fossil fuels, we simultaneously support the development of clean, green, alternative ways of generating energy to replace these fuels without resorting to the nuclear option. We must take a similar approach to the eventual elimination of plastics.

Plastics comprise an integral part of our contemporary civilization and eliminating them all at once is not a viable option. But a lot of the plastics predominant in our throwaway culture are unnecessary and gratuitous for which substitutes can be readily found. So our first step in the war against plastic must focus on the elimination of these gratuitous plastics while simultaneously encouraging research in and development of substitutes that can do everything plastics can do but which are non-toxic and biodegradable. Already there are corn-based, as opposed to petroleum-based, plastics on the market, but while these plastics are biodegradable, they degrade slowly and their presence, for example, in our oceans in the form of plastic bags and drinking straws would still be capable of harming marine life. Much research still needs to be done in the development of such biodegradable plastics, but in the meantime we must strive to eliminate the gratuitous plastics in our lives and in our societies.

A good place to start is elimination of those thin, annoying all-pervasive plastic bags that aren't even good for the purpose they are intended to serve. Ever had one of those things break on you? Or tried to carry a bulky object without it falling out? Plastic bags did not begin to proliferate until the 1990s as the result of a deliberate marketing strategy by the plastics industry, and they are easily replaced with paper or, preferably, reusable cloth totes. Already, over 100 cities, counties and municipalities in California have banned the plastic sacks as has Minneapolis and, most recently, Boston. A Pittsburgh ban seems a next logical step.

I propose that, as an opening shot in the War on Plastic, we make the banning of these plastic bags in Pittsburgh a foremost goal of the Sierra Club Allegheny Group for 2018. Let us work diligently to keep fossil fuels in the ground and plastics, so far as possible, away from our ground, our rivers and streams, and our oceans. And the only way to do that is to one day do away with petroleum-based plastics entirely.

*Mike Pastorkovich, Chair, Allegheny Group*

# Quickening

As the wheel of the year turns toward the spring equinox, I'm writing this on a snowy grey day when the Republican president will deliver a speech. My mood is dark and I feel very tired. In a few days we will learn from Punxsutawney Phil if he foresees six more weeks of winter. What for my grandparents was a rite of winter's passage is becoming less and less relevant within our changed climate. I am confident regardless of Phil's fortune telling we will see a shorter winter and earlier spring.

## Why then do I hold a realistic hope in my heart?

I returned from the District of Columbia -- the January 26-27 Mid-Atlantic Regional Conference of Citizens' Climate Lobby (CCL). Pittsburgh's representation at this year's regional was double that of previous years. That parallels the annual geometric doubling of CCL's overall membership growth.

In November of 2016, following that election, there were six Republican House members on the Climate Solutions Caucus. At this year's regional it was announced that a new GOP member, Fred Upton, had joined, raising the caucus membership to 34 Republicans and 34 Democrats. For context, when the caucus reaches 40 members in each party they will move into a new phase, ready to go on offense instead of just playing defense. Representative Upton is the first member to join who has a statesman's reputation within

the Republican Party: a milestone, making others more likely to follow.

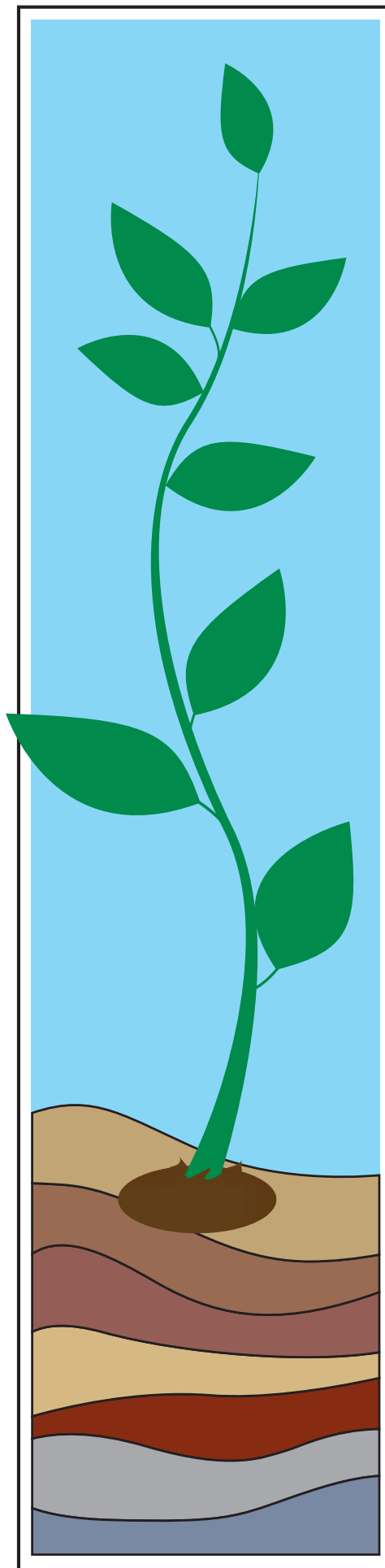
## Growth is a part of life.

Groundhog Day originally was the pagan holiday of Imbolc: the quickening. It was when the seeds underground would respond to the warming days as the sun's daylight was gradually renewing dominance over darkness. At the halfway mark between the winter solstice and the spring equinox, early worship of the Pagan Goddess Brigit became appropriated into that of St. Brigit. Saint Brigit was a wise woman, who among other things was known for helping girls "in the family way" to be released from unwanted burdens. Feasting celebrated bread and milk and the promise that seeds would begin growing as the days became longer and warmer. And another way of celebrating Imbolc was to begin spring cleaning.

## Seasons turn and turn again.

The eyes of the nation are turning toward PA-18's congressional race. At this moment in time while I'm writing this we don't yet know the result. However, it holds a potential that could reshape national politics. The Women's March this year was focused on "Power to the Polls" and their first national test in 2018 will be south of Pittsburgh. Will the House of Representatives be cleaned this March and next November by an army of women turning out voters to the polls?

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### **The hope I hold in my heart is a seed.**

In the U.S. of A., Groundhog Day is overshadowed by a relatively new holiday during the same time frame: the Super Bowl. A revelry of consumerism that idolizes battle on the gridiron with commercial breaks and musical excess. Since the Stillers aren't playing, I'm not as engaged.

And for the first time the Super Bowl will include concussions, taking-a-knee and #MeToo as a part of our national conversation. By the time you read these words the Super Bowl winner will be known. The winner of PA-18 will shortly be decided. The spring equinox will arrive and the cherry blossoms in D.C. will bloom at least three full weeks earlier than what was once normal. Geometric growth doubles and then doubles again.

Change is a part of life. The year's wheel keeps turning. Hope joined with action is changing our nation's path in ways once believed impossible. The celebration of Imbolc included fortune-telling especially about your future welfare and prosperity. That fortune-telling tradition continues when we ask if Punxy Philomena sees her shadow or not. However, you don't have to rely on an overgrown rodent. Our changed climate means we will not see six more weeks of winter this year, next year and so on.

### **When you look in the mirror, see your seed. How will your hope grow?**

I suggest we determine our own future. Become a part of this year's quickening. Get involved. Knock on doors. Phone bank. Take ten people to their polling place. Sierra Club Allegheny Group will help give you a part to play. Vote like your life depends on it. Together, let's celebrate this year's spring, summer, and especially this fall and join me in doing some House cleaning.

*L. Ray Roberts*

# Wilkinsburg 2018 Summer Program Update

Ladies and Gentlemen -- our involvement in Wilkinsburg activities moves forward! We are VERY excited about several developments – receipt of a Huplits Grant, continued involvement in the Wilkinsburg Summer Program, and new opportunities to connect with Wilkinsburg residents. Read on and join us for an exciting summer!

Thanks to the collaborative effort of Kate Luxemburg, Lynette Bloedow, Nicole Santella, Jerry Gaudi and me, our Pollinator Garden project was awarded a Huplits Grant to continue our work in 2018. We will install signage at the two gardens we planted last year and publicize tours of those gardens for community members. Lynette has already started planning a full set of activities for May 12 at her garden at the corner of Swissvale and Glenn Avenues. We will develop two more gardens this summer- one at Kate’s property and one at Nicole’s. Come join us for lots of garden work and fun!

Mike Milberger, chair of the Parks and Recreation Committee in Wilkinsburg, has tentative plans for a 2018 summer program in Wilkinsburg. These plans are based on analysis of last year’s participation, or lack thereof. Very little participation occurred at parks other than Ferguson; chess was a big hit with many young folks as they would play even if the leader

of the chess activities wasn’t present.

Mike Milberger’s plans currently include:

All programs will be at Ferguson Park (center of Wilkinsburg): Ferguson Park is near a lawn area by the South Avenue Methodist Church, where activities such as soccer could occur, and Ferguson has a basketball court, shelter, and playground equipment. Programs will run Monday – Friday from noon to 8 pm.

Since requesting money from the Wilkinsburg School Board, he needs some educational activities (that’s where we come in!)

Our Endangered Species Team spearheaded last year’s Scavenger Hunt and definitely wishes to participate again. Some of our ideas for once a week activities are:

Conduct some Endangered Species activities on pollinators, similar to the ones already done at the Charter School and elsewhere for K-3 age group; possibly involve Klara Brown, resident of Wilkinsburg who is a very strong advocate for educating children in urban settings about nature, environmental issues, growing your own food, etc.

Conduct Scavenger Hunts at Hunter Park – have everyone meet there for the event.



Make sure to have BETTER advertising/promotion.

Conduct tours of our Pollinator Gardens – have everyone meet at the various locations.

Conduct a tour of the Hamnett Place Community Garden (Klara Brown is deeply involved in this garden and wants to get parents and children involved).

We invite all of you to join us for these very rewarding activities. Starting in March and through the summer, we’ll need lots of volunteers to work in the gardens, conduct the Scavenger Hunts, and prepare/implement the tours. Your knowledge, talent and enthusiasm for helping young people become excited about the wonders of nature can contribute greatly to these efforts.

You are invited to our first planning meeting, scheduled for March 20, 2018, 6:30 -8:00pm, Wilkinsburg Borough Building, 605 Ross Street. Check our website for volunteer opportunities or contact me ([barbgrover1@gmail.com](mailto:barbgrover1@gmail.com); 412-521-9526).

*Barb Grover*



*Join Us at the 28th Annual Heartwood Forest Council:  
“Edge Effects”*

*May 25-May 28, 2018  
Camp Crestfield Slippery Rock, Pennsylvania  
<https://heartwood.org/events/>*

Dear Friend of Heartwood,

Heartwood is excited to hold our 28th annual spring Forest Council in western PA this year, bringing to bear the focused efforts of our network’s grassroots strength and solidarity to where it is needed in the face of the massive build-out of the petrochemical industry in the region. This year, our program will feature workshops on the Shell ethane-cracker plant in Beaver, fighting the Falcon Pipeline, and other related issues. We are also for the first time having a discussion about Citizens Entering Politics, featuring many of our Board members who have run for office as well as candidates from the PA primary!

In addition to the slate of workshops and strategy discussions, we are offering a variety of options for Field Trips on Sunday, visiting either the worst of nearby frack-damage or the best that Nature has to offer in the region. The camp is near Moraine State Park and Wolf Narrows, and just a stone’s throw away from any number of fracking wellhead sites, pipelines partially under construction, and the ominous beginnings of the Shell cracker plant in Potter Township, Beaver County. We are planning to offer a slate of activities for kids as well! There’s also a fantastic menu of organic vegan food, farm-to-table fresh and deliciously prepared by our hard-working kitchen crew Seeds of Peace. This will all be topped off with Saturday evening entertainment from Chai Baba and Ph at Man Dee and Liz Berlin’s Social Justice Disco! The traditional Heartwood Auction will be on Sunday night. For more information, please contact me or our coordinator Tabitha Tripp (618-697-1474 or [info@heartwood.org](mailto:info@heartwood.org)).

For the forests,

*Matt Peters, Heartwood Board Member  
Pittsburgh, PA 15207 (412-320-0739 or [mattnedludd@gmail.com](mailto:mattnedludd@gmail.com))*

# Pittsburgh United Update

You can stay up-to-date by going to “Our Water Campaign” on Facebook.

**P**ittsburgh United, as with all our like-minded organizations, is going to have a very busy year in 2018. We look forward to continuing the progress we made in 2017 – supporting good jobs with the right to form unions at places like UPMC, McDonald’s, the Rivers Casino, and others; supporting green infrastructure and community benefits in the federally mandated storm water control; and supporting policies that guarantee affordable housing for all as well as protecting residents from displacement.

## The 2018 Campaigns include:

**Worker Justice:** In February, the PA Supreme Court will hear cases challenging the Paid Sick Days law. Pittsburgh United will continue to defend workers’ rights and is prepared to fight back should the Court’s ruling go against them.

**Environmental Justice:** The “Our Water Campaign” continues to fight for safe, affordable water and a water authority accountable to the people of Pittsburgh. The Mayor’s Blue Ribbon Panel **REJECTED PRIVATIZATION of PWSA!**

The Clean Rivers Campaign obtained funding for the design of the Four Mile Run Green Infrastructure project. Cheers to Tom Hoffman and Aly Shaw for these accomplishments.

**Housing Justice:** The Housing Campaign celebrated a huge victory for affordable housing when Pittsburgh City Council passed an increase to the realty transfer tax to fund the Housing Opportunity Fund at \$10 million per year. More NEEDS to be done here regarding the implementation of those funds.

**Building Power Across Western PA:** Pittsburgh United, in partnership with One Pennsylvania and others, is organizing in Washington, Beaver and Erie Counties to build power for workers in those regions. Organizing is being done around education, community benefits agreements, and “ban-the box” legislation (TO REMOVE from job applications the check box that asks if applicants have a criminal record).

A new Pittsburgh United executive director will be hired for Pittsburgh United in the next several months

as Barney Oursler takes on different roles in the organization. On January 26, 2018, we had a full day retreat (10:00am-4:00pm) to discuss plans for our 2018 campaigns as well as creating a 501C4 component to the organization. The Allegheny Group of the Sierra Club has been a member of Pittsburgh United, a coalition of community, labor, faith, and environmental organizations, since its inception in 2007. This coalition has proved to be a very successful strategy for “making sure working families share in the prosperity of a New Pittsburgh.” For more details, go to [pittsburghunited.org](http://pittsburghunited.org).

I’m looking for someone to join me in being the liaison between the Allegheny Group and Pittsburgh United. The major commitment is to attend monthly meetings on the 4th Friday of the month from 10-noon at the Pittsburgh United office, 841 California Ave., Pittsburgh 15212. Please contact me ([barbgrover1@gmail.com](mailto:barbgrover1@gmail.com)); 412-521-9526 if you are interested.

*Barb Grover*





## CALL FOR PROPOSALS

March 1, 2018

### THE 21st ANNUAL HUPLITS WILDLIFE GRANT COMPETITION

#### **A Challenge to Protect Animal Wildlife and Habitat in Pennsylvania**

The Allegheny Group Sierra Club's Huplits Wildlife Grants Committee is seeking grant proposals to help protect animal wildlife and wildlife habitat in Pennsylvania. Approximately \$50,000.00 will be available for the 2018 Huplits Wildlife Grant Competition. Five (5) grants were awarded in last year's (2017) competition, totaling \$50,000.00.

#### Application guidelines:

We seek projects that directly impact wildlife in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania on a regional or statewide level.

A proposal may involve public education, grassroots campaign organization, litigation, land acquisition, or research that directly focuses on protecting Pennsylvania wildlife, its habitat, and preventing cruelty to animals.

Projects will be funded for no more than two years. Under special circumstances a project may be extended.

Grants may be sought by Sierra Club entities within Pennsylvania.

Grants may also be applied for by non-Sierra Club organizations in Pennsylvania, although preference will be given to such organizations only if the proposed project is in partnership with Sierra Club members.

Applications seeking Sierra club preference must be accompanied by a supporting letter from their local PA Sierra Club Group Chair.

All proposals should include a copy of their IRS 501(c)(3) designation letter.

All proposals should be submitted in WORD format and include the overall purpose and goal of the project, objectives, major activities, resources required, specific timelines, a detailed budget, and a contact person's name, address, phone number and email.

**DEADLINE:** Submit proposals no later than May 7th, 2018 to Barb Grover (Huplits 2018 Committee Chair) via e-mail at [barbgroverHuplits2018@gmail.com](mailto:barbgroverHuplits2018@gmail.com). If you have any questions, contact Barb via email or call 412-521-9526.



# 17 Reasons to Join a National Outing in 2018

The Sierra Club was founded on May 28, 1892. One of the reasons it was founded was to preserve wilderness areas. A way to preserve such areas is to connect people to the natural world so they become advocates and guardians.

Since its beginning, the club has sponsored an active outings program. In a typical year, about 350 trips by volunteer leaders are run ranging from arduous backpacking to leisurely basecamp. Until 1960, groups of up to 200 were taken to the Sierra High Country. As the impact of such large groups became a concern, they faded into history. Today, group size seldom exceeds 20.

## Here are 17 enticements.

1. To explore and enjoy a wilderness and in some cases a tamer scene in depth.
2. To meet members from throughout the country of the best conservation organization in the world and as William Colby stated “to create the spirit of good fellowship among our members.”
3. To share the wilds and learn more about other wilderness areas from your companions.
4. While the catalog and web site are interesting, the thrills come

when you come with us.

5. To test John Muir’s proposition that “if people in general could be got into the woods, even for once, to hear the trees speak for themselves, all difficulties in the way of forest preservation would vanish.”

6. To improve a national park, forest service trail, private preserve, farm and even New York’s Central Park on a service trip. How many times have you enjoyed someone else’s labor by hiking trails they constructed and maintained?

7. To carry on a tradition of over a hundred years.

8. To bypass the public parts of the parks and explore the intrigue beyond the windshield.

9. To test yourself physically.

10. To enjoy fine cuisine on a Coleman stove and sometimes not so fine cuisine that tastes great just because it’s hot.

11. To look at the western sky with so many stars you cannot make out any constellations.

12. To just shake your head when one of the kids ask when we will reach the waterfalls in Everglades National Park.

13. To help you appreciate the Sierra Club mission, To Explore, Enjoy and Protect The Planet.

14. To see if there are really all sorts of trips for all ages, abilities and interests.

15. To encounter new challenges like trekking, rafting, mountain highs and swamp lows.

16. To see if the family who canoes together, can really stay together.

17. Why get lost by yourself when it is more fun with a group?

You should have received your recent issue of Sierra Magazine which has the international trips and early 2018 trips listed. Here is the website:

<http://content.sierraclub.org/outings/adventure-travel>

Come join us and carry on this century old tradition and explore and enjoy!

*Sierra Club Pennsylvania Chapter*

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## Pennsylvania Resources Council

# 2018 Hard to Recycle Events in Western Pennsylvania

All events run from 9:00am to 1:00pm: more details including acceptable materials and associated fees will be coming soon: see PRC website (<http://prc.org/programs/collection-events/hard-recycle-collections/west/>) for further information.

Saturday, May 12th  
Galleria at Pittsburgh Mills

Saturday, June 16th  
Bethel Park High School

Saturday, June 30th  
Quaker Valley High School

Saturday, August 25th  
Century III Mall

Saturday, October 6th  
Settler's Cabin Park

General Donations accepted at all events

### **MATERIALS COLLECTED AT NO COST:**

CPU (towers) / Laptops / Mice /  
Keyboards / Home phones / Cell Phones / Tablets /  
PDAs / UPS/Servers / Router / Modems /  
Web and Digital Cameras / DVD Players / VCRs  
Paper Shredders / Clock Radios / Stereos  
Microwaves / Copiers/ Fax Machines /  
Scanners Zip Drive/ Electronic Cables /  
Video Game Consoles /  
Expanded Polystyrene Packaging Material/  
(CFL) Compact Fluorescent Light Bulbs/

### **MATERIALS COLLECTED FOR A FEE:**

All Computer Monitors (flat screen & CRT) – \$20 each  
Televisions – \$30 each  
Console or Rear Projection TVs – \$40 each  
Printers – \$5 each  
Large Stereo Speakers \$10 each  
Alkaline Batteries \$1.50 per pound  
Small Freon Containing Appliances (window ac units, dehumidifiers)  
\$10 each  
CDs, DVDs, VHS TAPES & FLOPPY DISKS \$1.00 per pound

*Continued on Page 18*



*Continued from Page 17*

Tires (car/truck) \$3.50 without rims \$10 with rims

Hard Drive Data Destruction Verification -1 Drive \$11.50 each

Hard Drive Data Destruction Verification -each additional drive after 1st \$3 each

**Lighting:**

Fluorescent Tubes \$2 per 4ft \$3.50 per 8ft

U” and Circle Lamps \$2.75 each

Neon Lighting \$9 per lb

Incandescent \$0.75 each

Halogens \$1 each

Projector Lamps \$12 each

**HOUSEHOLD CHEMICALS COLLECTIONS:**

*Allegheny County #1:*

Saturday, May 5, 2018

North Park Swimming Pool parking lot

*Cambria County:*

Saturday, May 19, 2018

Concurrent Technologies Corporation

ETF Facility, Johnstown, PA

*Fayette County:*

Fayette County Fairgrounds

Dunbar, PA

Saturday, June 23, 2018

June 23, 2018

*Washington County:*

Wild Things Park

Washington, PA

Saturday, July 21, 2018

*Allegheny County #2:*

Boyce Park Four Seasons Ski Lodge

Parking Lot

750 Center Road

Pittsburgh, PA 15239

Saturday, August 18, 2018

*Allegheny County #3*

South Park Wave Pool Parking Lot

Saturday, September 22, 2018

*Beaver County*

Bradys Run Park

Recycling Center

Saturday, October 13, 2018

*Continued on Page 19*

*Continued from Page 18*

**Disclaimer:** All event dates and/or locations are subject to change; check back frequently (<http://prc.org/programs/collection-events/household-chemicals/>) for the most up-to-date list of PRC collections events, hours, fees, and list of acceptable materials.

### **VOLUNTEER INFORMATION:**

Volunteers are an essential part of each and every collection event, and volunteering is a great way to make a positive impact on the environment of Southwestern PA! At the Hard to Recycle Collection events the public is able to drop off electronic waste, tires, batteries, CFLs, and more for recycling.

#### **What does a volunteer do?**

As a collection volunteer, you will:

- Participate in a brief training session prior to the start of your event
- Perform tasks such as set up, directing traffic, handing out educational materials, and much more!

#### **Volunteer shift is as follows:**

- Full-day shift: 8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
- Partial day shifts:
  - 8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
  - 10:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

PRC provides breakfast, lunch, and refreshments for the day. The events run rain or shine, so volunteers are advised to dress for the weather. Safety vests and gloves are provided to all volunteers.

If you would like to volunteer for a Hard to Recycle Collection, please e-mail: Sarah Shea ([saraha@prc.org](mailto:saraha@prc.org)).



# Just for Kids

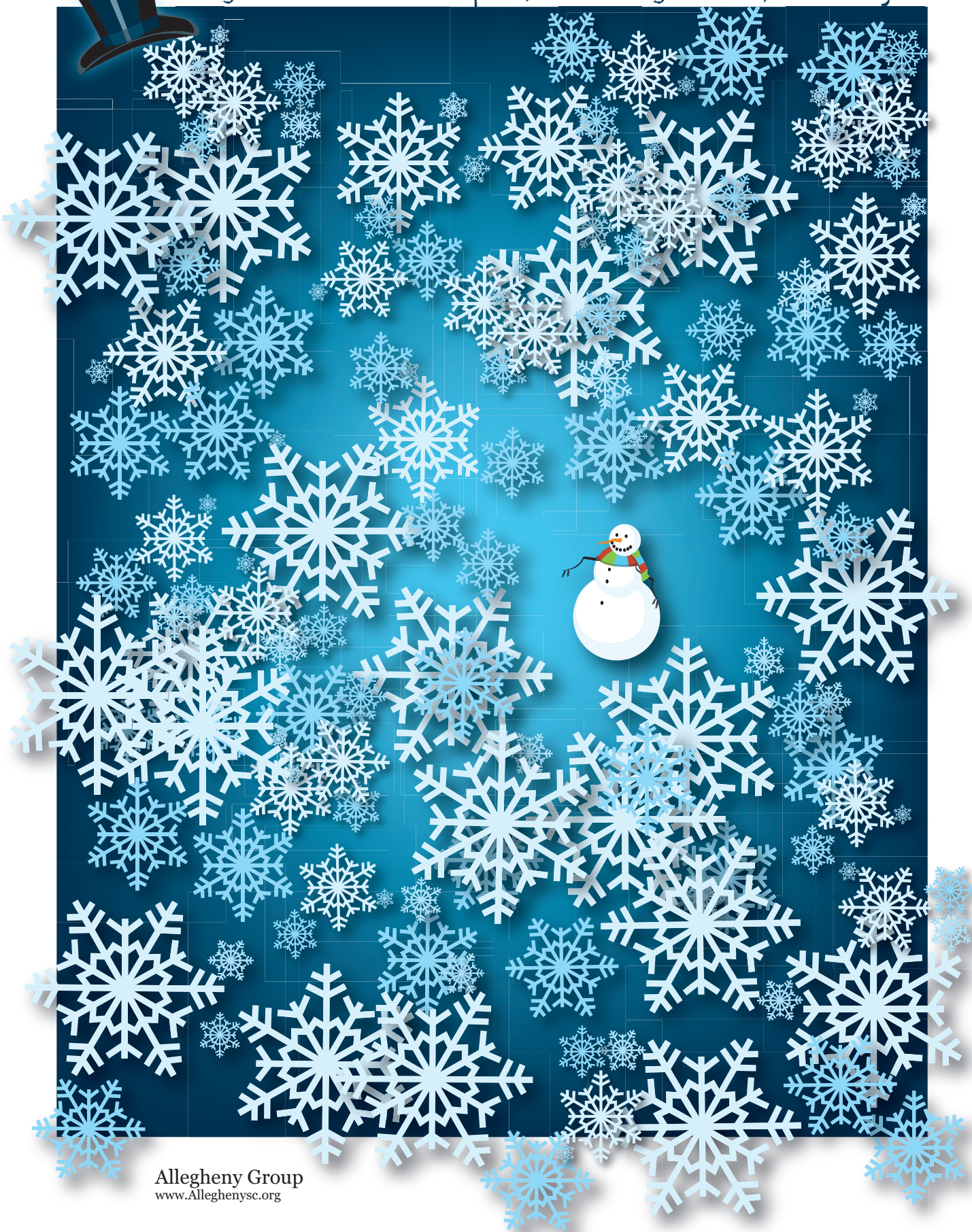
Allegheny Group, Sierra Club

## Endangered Species... Polar Bear

Polar bears live in one of the harshest environments on the planet. These powerful predators are the largest bears on earth and are adapted for life in very cold conditions. Their front paws are slightly webbed for swimming and their thick fur covers a warming layer of fat. Polar bear hair is really transparent, not white, and the individual hairs are hollow. Their skin is black to help soak up the warmth of the sun. A polar bear diet consists mostly of seals so they are found mainly in areas of cracking, shifting ice where seals come up to breathe. The biggest threat to polar bears is habitat loss due to climate change. Rising temperatures are causing the sea ice to melt earlier in the year. This prevents the bears from building up an adequate layer of fat to survive the cold, arctic winters. Less sea ice also means they have to swim longer distances to find food which further depletes their energy.

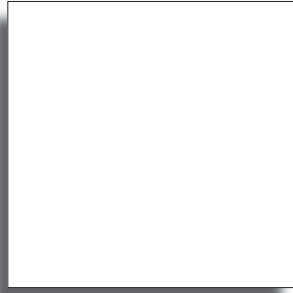


Bring the snow man his top hat, But don't get snow flakes on you.

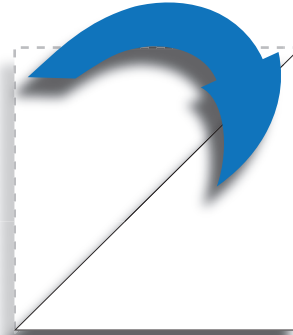


Allegheny Group  
[www.Alleghenysc.org](http://www.Alleghenysc.org)

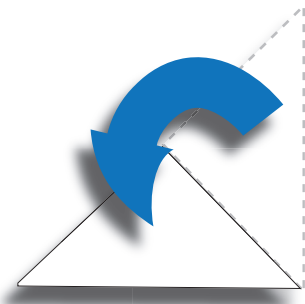
# Make a paper snowflake



1. Start with a square sheet of white paper.



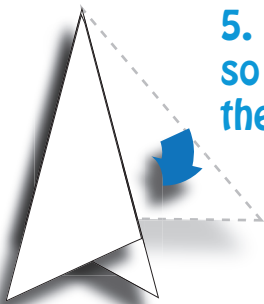
2. Fold the paper in half to make a triangle



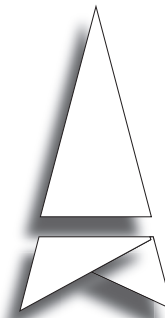
3. Fold it in half again to make a smaller triangle



4. Fold one third of this triangle over.



5. Fold it again, so that it makes the shape shown.

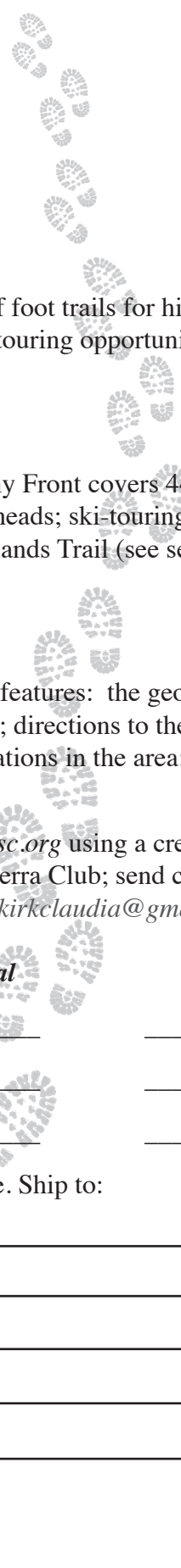


6. Cut the shape straight across the bottom.



7. Cut tright and curvy lines through the paper, unfold it and you have a snowflake

# Western Pennsylvania Hiking Guides

## *Allegheny National Forest Hiking Guide*

The 800-square-mile Allegheny National Forest contains over 250 miles of foot trails for hiking, back-packing, and ski-touring. Edition 4 of this guide describes hiking and ski-touring opportunities and points of scenic interest. 192 pages – \$9.95

## *The Laurel Highlands: A Hiking Guide*

This guide to the foot trails of Chestnut Ridge, Laurel Ridge, and Allegheny Front covers 446 miles of foot trails, mainly in state forests and state parks. Features: directions to trail-heads; ski-touring and back-packing information; difficulty ratings; and more. Does not cover Laurel Highlands Trail (see separate guide). 288 pages – \$8.95

## *Hiker's Guide to Laurel Highlands Trail*

The 6th edition of this guide to the 70-mile Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail features: the geology, climate, vegetation, and wildlife of Laurel Hill; tree identification; elevation profile; directions to the trailheads; back-packing information and shelter reservations; a list of hiking organizations in the area; and more! 128 pages – \$7.00

These trail guides and other items can be ordered online at [www.alleghenysc.org](http://www.alleghenysc.org) using a credit card. They can also be ordered by mail: make checks payable to Allegheny Group, Sierra Club; send check and order form to: *Claudia Kirkpatrick, 3763 Orpwood Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15203 (kirkclaudia@gmail.com)*.

<i>Cost</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Allegheny National Forest Hiking Guide</b>	\$9.95	_____
<b>Laurel Highlands: A Hiking Guide</b>	\$8.95	_____
<b>Hiker's Guide to Laurel Highlands Trail</b>	\$7.00	_____

For shipping: add \$3.50 for one guide plus \$0.50 for each additional guide. Ship to:

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**City/State/Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_