



OTZINACHSON

In Memory of David Unger (1953-2003)

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"I decided that if I could paint that flower in a huge scale, you could not ignore its beauty."

-Georgia

Arctic Refuge Still At Risk - A Warning from the Audubon Society

Proving again z Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is seen by some as a gas station rather than a national wildlife refuge, pro-drilling supporters in both the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives are back on the bandwagon urging their colleagues to support a final energy bill that includes the House-passed provision to open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas drilling this year. As you know, earlier this year, the House passed an energy bill that included the drilling provisions.

And just before leaving town for their annual August recess, the Senate passed an energy bill without any Arctic Refuge drilling provisions. So now the final deci-

sion will be made by a Conference Committee comprised of members of both the House and Senate who must hammer out the differences between each chambers' bill and come up with a final measure that can pass both the House and Senate. Conferees will be named in September.

And while September may be three weeks away, it's not too early to start communicating with your two U.S. Senators and your U.S. Representative again and urge them oppose any final energy bill that includes provisions to open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to drilling! Click on this link now to learn more about the House-passed provision, find out how your lawmakers voted on the provision earlier this year, and to take action today! <http://>

No First Resort—State Parks Under Pressure

By Ed Lawrence

Development advocates are targeting Pa.'s state park system as their next golden goose.

The Rendell Administration is being encouraged to change long-standing state policy in order to allow commercial resort-type development within the boundaries of state parks. We support upgrading and maintaining park facilities and infrastructure in an environmentally sensible and sensitive manner (the new park office and visitors center at Ricketts Glen for example) however, we oppose BIGGING UP our parks with 200 room hotels and

18-hole chemically dependent golf courses, as has been proposed. Our state parks do not need to get into the 'who has the biggest heart shaped hottub contest'. Calling a sprawling hotel a "rustic lodge" don't make it so. Contact Governor Rendell:

Mailing Address

Governor Edward G. Rendell's Office
225 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

Telephone

(717) 787-2500

Email

http://sites.state.pa.us/PA_Exec/Governor/govmail.html

OTZINACHSON

Message from the Chair: PA Public Lands Shine

Hopefully you've been out and about this summer with grand kids, relatives from out of state or your current infatuation. That picnic and fishing at a state park or walk in the woods and birding in a state forest should be a reminder that we are truly blessed with wonderful public lands in this state. Promoting the sound stewardship of these lands is something that the Pa chapter of the Sierra Club takes seriously. Please attend the slide presentation which Dave Coleman, the chapter State Forest Issue Chair, will be giving on September 11. Also contact your elected officials to express concern about the threat posed by turning our parks into resorts (see article for details).

Ed Lawrence, Chair

Executive Committee:

Ed Lawrence, Orangeville; Chair
Dave Hafer, Lewisburg; Vice-Chair
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Ken Warn
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Thank you for Renewing Your Commitment to the Environment

If you are not currently a Sierra Club member
and would like to join, register online at
www.sierraclub.org/membership

David L. Unger, Sierra Club Member (1953-2003)

We're disheartened to learn of the death of David Unger, conservation leader, naturalist, photographer, and, along with his wife, Linda, a twenty-five year member of the Sierra Club. He passed away August 8th at his home in the Danville area.

David was recognized as an authority on birds and was familiar to many members as a leader of annual bird outings at Montour Preserve. He was noted for his skill at bird identification and rarely failed to spot a rare or unusual species. An original member of the North Branch Bird Club, he coordinated the club's participation in the annual Christmas bird count.

He was also an authority on butterflies. He lead local conservation efforts and constructed a butterfly garden at Riverside Elementary School.

David was an early proponent of the successful campaign to preserve Brush Valley. In addition, he served as vice chair of the Northumberland County Conservation District and as chairman of the Northumberland County Agriculture Preservation Board.

An environmental engineer by profession, David was educated at Susquehanna and Bloomsburg Universities. Over the years, he gained recognition for his understanding of conservation issues and his skills as naturalist.

The members of the Otzinachson Group extend our deep sympathy to his wife Linda and daughter Holly. David's leadership and knowledge will be greatly missed but not forgotten by the conservation community.

Contributions in memory of David L. Unger can be sent to Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, Memorial Fund, RR 2 Box 191, Kempton, PA 19529 or Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Memorial Fund, 8159 Sapoucher Woods Road, Ithaca NY 14850.

- Dave Hafer





Federal \$\$ for Abandoned Mine Reclamation At Risk

The federal Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund is set to expire September 30, 2004. The fund is the primary source of assistance for addressing Pennsylvania's abandoned mine legacy. Efforts are currently underway to both improve the delivery mechanisms of the fund and to reauthorize it this fall.

Modification and reauthorization of the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund are important to protect our communities and families from hazards posed by coal mines abandoned before 1977. Dangerous shafts, mountains of black waste, polluted waters, and depressed economies afflict one-half of the citizens of the United States. The Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund is the primary source of money available to fix these problems. We have successfully used the fund to clean up toxic mine water, extinguish mine fires, and eliminate other dangerous abandoned mine hazards.

Unregulated coal mines abandoned before the Federal Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (SMCRA) resulted in a legacy of environmental damage. abandoned mines leak acidic, alkaline, and metal-contaminated water, polluting public water supplies, destroying fish and wildlife habitat, depressing local economies, and threatening human health and safety. Statewide, 44 of Pennsylvania's 67 counties are directly affected by abandoned mines that encompass over 189,000 acres. Abandoned mine drainage (AMD) is the largest contributor to water quality impairment in the Commonwealth. According to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, over 3,000 miles of the Commonwealth's streams are impaired by AMD.

The price tag for cleaning up Pennsylvania's abandoned mine legacy has been estimated to be as high as \$15 billion. Pennsylvania has committed substantial state and private dollars and countless hours of professional and volunteer time to addressing the abandoned mine problems. Contact your Congressional Representatives and ask that they support the reauthorization of this bill.

IT IS CRITICAL FOR PENNSYLVANIANS TO SPEAK UP AND BE HEARD ON THIS ISSUE. THE FATE OF THE PROGRAM IS AT STAKE.

**Check out the Group's Website
at
www.sierraclub.org/chapters/pa/**

Why We Hike *by Tom Thwaites*

In recent years, many hiking trails have been lost to "other users". Some trails were abandoned, both passively and actively. At least one trail club has grabbed the dirty end of the stick and attempts to maintain trail for others. Land managers are besieged by others to provide trails for them as they "did" for hikers. So land managers go over their maps trying to find hiking trails they can award to others. Are user conflicts inevitable? Are these conflicts reconcilable? If the motivations of the different groups are the same then perhaps their conflicts can be reconciled. What are the motivations of these different groups?

Mountain bikes are the fastest of non-motorized trail users and their motivation appears to be the adrenaline rush obtained from speeding down hills. The personal danger is part of the attraction but a trip over the handle bars may produce a paraplegic. The decreased reproductive success is acceptable. Mountain bikers don't take the side trail to the view nor do they get off and lie in the mud to smell the trailing arbutus growing along the edge of the trail. Mountain bikes tear out water bars and stone steps. They produce ruts in soft ground and on hills with predictable results but the damage is apparently collateral and not essential to their activity. On occasion they will actually get off their bikes and do some trail work where absolutely necessary to avoid private land, for example. They rarely hit hikers but like to charge at them and get hikers to jump into the brush. "If I see a trail, I'm gonna ride it." This is what has become of the alternative form of transportation of the seventies.

The motivations of equestrians are more complicated. They are faster than hikers but slower than mountain bikes. Horses do lots of damage to hiking trails. They tear out steps and water bars, destroy side hill, and deposit manure on the trail. The great weight of horses and the small size of the feet combine to really churn up a trail. Equestrians appear to suffer some pangs of conscience about the damage they do. They tell a lot of horse lies (horses do no more damage to a trail than hikers, for example). It is sufficient that equestrians believe these stories. Nobody else will. Motivations of equestrians include the display of mastery over a powerful animal, display of wealth, conspicuous consumption and social standing. It costs a lot of money to maintain a horse. There is the initial expense followed by the cost of boarding, vets bills, tackle, a horse trailer, and a truck to pull it, etc. Part of our heritage from England is that only the upper class rode while peasants walked. Hence the reluctance of equestrians to get off their horse and do trail work. Horses tend to be skittish and do not mix well with mountain bikes. The bikes are fast and quiet and horses may bolt when overtaken by bikes. Again the damage done to hiking trails is collateral and probably not essential to the activity.

(Continued on page 4)

Pesticide Exposure to Humans

Article from *POLLUTING OUR BODIES WITHOUT PERMISSION* by Pesticide Action Network
North America's Kristin Schafer and Margaret Reeves/Spring 2003.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) just released another study about the chemicals we are carrying in our bodies. In preparing the second NATIONAL REPORT ON HUMAN EXPOSURE TO ENVIRONMENTAL CHEMICALS, CDC scientists looked for -and found- 116 pesticides and industrial chemicals in the blood and urine of thousands of Americans across the country.

Much is known about the health effects of the 116 chemicals CDC found, and none of it is good news. Potential harm from exposure to individual chemicals ranges from reduced fertility and developmental damage in our unborn children to neurological disorders and cancer. What we don't know much about is the combined effect of two or more chemicals, let alone 116 found by the CDC - or the 700 that some scientists believe we would find if we looked for them.

As conscious consumers we can make healthier choices that also send a message to the chemical industry. In the case of pesticides, the better choice is clear: buy organic. Recent studies show that children who eat more organic foods have fewer chemicals in their bodies. The faster the organic market grows, the less demand exist for agricultural pesticides.

For more information email panna@panna.org or visit www.panna.org.

The U.S. is the world's single largest pesticide consumer, accounting for 20% of global use (in lbs). Agricultural use accounts for 77% of the estimated 1.2 billion pounds of active ingredient applied annually in the U.S.

Why We Hike (Cont'd)

(Continued from page 3)

Hiking is the best possible exercise. Hiking is a low stress activity on joints and hiking enjoys the largest possible age range from toddlers to refugees from wheelchairs. But one could get many of the same health benefits from mall walking and even treadmills. The boredom of treadmills can be forestalled with videos, probably of the out-of-doors. Why do large numbers of hikers venture into the wet wild woods with biting insects and stinging nettles on trails lined with roots and studded with rocks? There is something different and deeply appealing about hiking in the out-of-doors. The wilder and more beautiful the land, the better the hiking. Perhaps a few quotes will give us a clue.

Clearly these experiences are spiritual. They are not available in malls or on treadmills. But in our secular age they are also embarrassing. Years ago such experiences would have been hammered into the prisons of organized religion but now they merely mark one as odd and possibly dangerous. So one doesn't talk about them. This is why hiking is such a private activity, some say as private as sex and is the reason hikers refrain from using trail registers. It is the deep but bright secret of hiking. But spiritual experience is essential to our well being so hiking remains popular and can never be replaced by treadmills and malls. There is no overlap in the motivations of these different groups of "trail users" so user conflicts are not only inevitable, but irreconcilable.

20th Annual Sock Hop— A Great Success by Dave Hafer

Thanks to the help of Sierra Club members, our Annual Sock Hop held April 26th at the Lewisburg club was a memorable and successful event. Admissions brought in over \$300 in profit and people danced to the music of "Riverstone" and "Good Without One".

A special thanks to members:

Joe DeCristopher who organized the bands;

Deb Slade who designed the Sock Hop Flyer;

Roy Fontaine who coordinated the cleanup after the Sock Hop;

and a note of thanks to the members who collected money at the door.

Anyone with comments, suggestions or who would to help with next year's Sock Hop, contact David Hafer (P.O. Box 65, Lewisburg, PA 17837 or cal 570-523-3107).

*Remember to Vote on November 4th
in the General Election. We have an opportunity to
make a difference, locally and nationally...
Research your candidates and support those
individuals who are environmentally responsible!*



Transportation Bill Presents Big Challenge to Environment Legislation Could Erase Decades of Progress

By Eric Olson and Neha Bhatt, Sierra Club Challenge to Sprawl Campaign, www.sierraclub.org/sprawl

In the coming months, Congress will pass a mammoth transportation bill which could either continue moving transportation priorities in the direction of smart growth, or take us backward toward a narrow focus on road-building and promoting more sprawl. We are especially concerned that environmental reviews and public involvement processes that help protect communities may be dramatically weakened.

TEA-3, as the federal transportation bill is now termed, will guide spending over the next 6 years to the tune of \$250 - \$375 billion. The last transportation bill, passed in 1998, was \$217 billion. Because the funding authorization runs out on September 30, 2003, Congressional committees are working this summer to draft a new bill. However, some in Congress want to use TEA-3 to undo many of the gains made during the last decade.

Because the wrong transportation choices can result in dangerous impacts on air and water quality, public health, our natural and historical heritage and quality of life, it is critical to make our priorities known to Congress in the coming few weeks. August and September are the critical months to give your input on this legislation.

Top priorities for TEA-3:

No “gutting” of the environmental and public review processes, which offer protections for communities, parks, wetlands, wildlife refuges, historic sites, and more. The Bush administration and some Congressional leaders have proposed damaging proposals that would gut the environmental review provisions outlined in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and remove the protections on parklands, historical sites, wildlife refuges and other environmentally sensitive areas.

- ❖ NEPA is a landmark environmental law, passed with broad bipartisan support 30 years ago and signed into law by President Nixon. Now, President Bush and some members of Congress want to impose unrealistic deadlines on conducting environmental reviews of transportation projects; severely limit timeframes for citizens to challenge bad aspects of projects in court; and transfer more power over environmental reviews to state and local departments of transportation. These changes would weaken those reviews and the public input process. Within TEA-3, we must preserve the protections offered by NEPA.

- ❖ The Bush Administration would also transfer the power to evaluate transportation project impacts on historic sites, parklands and recreation areas from resource managers – whose focus is on environmental preservation – to the U.S. Department of Transportation. This move would drastically weaken the protections on our nation’s most important sites from irreversible impacts.

Don’t weaken clean air protections. As asthma rates and respiratory ailments continue to rise around the country, and the health threats of bad air, especially for children and seniors, grow annually, we cannot allow any deterioration of our clean air protections.

- ❖ In an attempt to ignore the long-term effects of transportation projects on air quality (and to circumvent impediments to new road construction), some in Congress would require that air pollution consequences of new roads be projected for only 10 years. This is *half* of the 20 year projections that are now required. Cutting back these projections would ignore important data and will only lead to dirtier air in the long run.

- ❖ Other attacks on clean air include lengthening the time between air quality check-ups from every three years to every five years. It is important to balance the air pollution budget frequently enough to catch problems before they become serious, just as people should balance their checkbooks regularly. We must resist attempts to lengthen intervals between air quality check-ups.

- ❖ In order to clean up the nation’s air, Congress should increase funding for transportation that improves air quality. The Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality improvement program (CMAQ) provides funding for clean transportation projects in regions with unhealthy air. CMAQ provides essential emergency funds to help areas with the worst air pollution implement measures such as clean buses, transit, and pedestrian and bike infrastructure so they can meet acceptable air quality standards while also solving transportation needs. The number of regions with unhealthy air will more than double in the next few years; thus the CMAQ program should be at least doubled to meet the growing need.

Protect and Grow the Transit Program. In order to build upon the gains in mass transit over the last decade and promote alternatives to sprawl, we must insist on the following:

(Continued on page 7)

Appreciation for Rails to Trails Projects

By Joseph Rebar

Pennsylvania's Rails to Trails system is a wonder to behold! Do you know Pennsylvanian's are fortunate to have 116 trails open totaling 1,121 miles? And the system is not yet completed. 87 trails with a total of 969 miles are now in the process of being built or in the planning stages. Only three other states have more miles completed than Pennsylvania. Michigan with 1,311 miles, Wisconsin with 1,309 miles and Minnesota with 1,302 miles. Consider how fortunate we are, Delaware has two trails open totaling 2 miles, Kentucky with five trails totaling 4 miles and Tennessee with sixteen trails with a total of 44 miles.

The crown jewel of this Rail Trail System has to be the Pine Creek Rail Trail in north-central PA. Constructed and maintained by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, the trail is completed with 42 miles open for public use. The trail runs from Waterville to Ansonia thru the Pine Creek Gorge, also known as the Grand

Canyon of Pennsylvania.

In 1883, the Jersey Shore, Pine Creek & Buffalo Railroad began operating to carry timber southbound from the vast forests in the canyon area to sawmills in Cammal, Tiadaghton and Slate Run. Trains running northbound carried anthracite coal into New York State. Around 1896, three passenger trains ran daily between Williamsport and Wellsboro. The last freight train traveled through the gorge in 1988, ending 105 years of rail service to the area.

The trail has well constructed parking areas, restrooms, camping and picnic areas. It is used by bicyclists, walkers, hikers, campers and in some areas, for horseback riding. Soon to be completed and open will be the trail from Waterville to Jersey Shore and from Ansonia to routes 287 and 6 just north of Wellsboro.

Take time this fall to explore this majestic trail that we are so lucky to have here in Pennsylvania!

Snakes: A Part of Our PA Heritage

By Dave Hafer

Pennsylvania is unique for the number of folk traditions and rituals that have survived and thrived within its borders over the years. Most are quaint and harmless, but one backwoods ritual that wildlife conservationists would like to see relegated to folk history is the "organized" snake hunt.

Organized snake hunts are on the increase. Some are sponsored by volunteer fire companies as fund raising events. Others are organized simply to provide cheap thrills for people who fancy themselves as fearless hunters of dangerous venomous snakes.

Snakes, like many other reptiles, are facing an uphill battle for survival against loss of natural habitat and exposure to toxic pollutants. This is compounded by superstitions that prevail in rural areas causing people to kill snakes out of fear and ignorance.

There is no valid reason to kill a non-poisonous snake. Venomous snakes can be removed from locations near human habitat and taken to remote areas by individuals who know how to properly handle and release a snake. Most snakes caught in snake hunts die from stress or rough handling. Many are deliberately killed by snake hunters.

Organized snake hunts should be banned in Pennsylvania. Continuation of this senseless ritual will result in the extinction of many species.

Voice your opposition to organized snake hunts to the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission, PO Box 670000, Harrisburg, PA 17106. Phone 717.657.4518. Send copies of your letter to your state legislators and to Governor Rendell.

BUCKTAIL MOUNTAIN ALLIANCE

Bucktail Mountain Alliance is a new group in PA dedicated to protecting the environment. They are an alliance of citizens and various citizens groups across PA who are trying to give a united voice to common problems. Their current project is the ATV problem and the lack of ATV law enforcement in PA.

Currently they are working with other groups and elected officials to introduce legislation which would allow officers of our land management agencies to cite violators as they are encountered on both private and public lands. The goal is uniform and state-wide enforcement of the ATV law to bring the "outlaw" ATV element into compliance and stop the destruction of our environment.

The Bucktail Mountain Alliance has a very informal structure with no dues requirement. They are seeking your support in addressing



Transportation Bill (cont'd)

(Continued from page 5)

- ❖ Oppose a crippling proposal by Senators Max Baucus Baucus (D-MT) and Charles Grassley (R-IA), which would raid the transit fund in order to bolster the highway fund. The Baucus-Grassley proposal would push responsibility to come up with the missing funding onto states and localities through a bonding mechanism, which would prove risky and would destabilize the program putting transit further out of the reach for our communities.
- ❖ Maintain a level playing field between the transit and highway programs. Currently, states and localities must pay for 20 percent of new transit and highway projects, while the federal government pays 80 percent. Due to high competition for transit projects, communities often will pay a higher percentage to get a transit project. The Bush Administration wants to require states to come up with 50% of the cost for new transit, setting a prohibitive threshold to get new projects started for the least affluent communities who would need it the most. At the same time, however, the Bush proposal maintains an 80-20 federal-state split for road projects. Effectively, communities that are trying to solve transportation needs would be encouraged to build roads not transit. This would be a devastating change in policy that would only create more sprawl and greater air pollution.
- ❖ In order to meet the growing demand for transit in metro, suburban and rural communities around the country,

Note From Member Chair by Joseph Rebar

The Pennsylvania Sierra Club Chapter has 11 groups. One of the smallest in membership is the Otzinachson Group with 733 members. Over the past twelve months, four groups had an increase in membership while seven groups had a decrease in membership. Otzinachson Group is one of the four groups that have increased membership! It's a small increase, but it's an increase! In fact, Otzinachson had an increase second only to one other group, the Moshannon Group. They had a membership increase of 2.4% while Otzinachson increased 1.7%. The two other groups with a small increase are Lehigh Valley at 1.4% and Gov. Pinchot at 0.3%. The seven other Pennsylvania groups had a decrease in membership ranging from an 11.9% decline in the Bucks Group to a 1.9% decline in the Headwaters Group. Overall, the Pennsylvania Chapter had a loss of 6% in membership.

You can help the Otzinachson Group and Pennsylvania Chapter grow by giving a membership as a gift; for a birthday, Christmas etc. Thank you for being a member and we hope you'll continue to renew when you get your renewal notice.

Congress should grow the transit program. The current 4:1 highway/transit funding ration should be changed to 3:1. For every \$3 spent on highways, transit should receive at least \$1. Increasing transit's slice of the transportation budget will move our transportation priorities in the right direction to clean up our air, increase our transportation choices, and revitalize businesses in our towns and cities.

Because the transportation bill is only authorized every six years, it is a massive piece of legislation with only a narrow window of opportunity for us to influence the outcome. Once this bill passes, the next opportunity to influence federal transportation priorities will be 2009.

Please contact your Senators and Representative and ask them to prioritize public transit, public health, and the environment, and to let them know that TEA-3 should not be used to weaken public involvement in transportation planning or the environmental review processes. The victims of a bad TEA-3 bill will be our air and water, the health of our children and seniors, those individuals without access to cars, and those with respiratory ailments.

Contact information for your congressional delegation may be found at: www.congress.org.

For more information about TEA-3, please visit: www.sierraclub.org/sprawl

Just A Reminder:
Group Outings Participants can
earn a copy of the
Keystone Trails Association's

HIKING TRAILS IN PENNSYLVANIA

by logging 50 miles with the Edward Abbey Hiking Society. This book is the best compendium of information on hiking trails in Pennsylvania available. Outing leaders will also earn a copy.



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Come learn more about the

STATE FOREST WILD AREA PROTECTION CAMPAIGN

our chapter's number one public lands priority with
a **SLIDE SHOW** presented by **DAVE COLEMAN**

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 11 at 7:00 p.m.
UPSTAIRS at THE BULL FROG BREWERY
229 West 4th Street
(across from the Community Arts Center in Williamsport)

For more information, call 570-925-5285