

# Susquehanna Sierran JUNE 2024



Founded 1892

EXPLORE, ENJOY, PROTECT THE PLANET

## **Christopher Harasta Receives Lynda Spickard Award**

– Valdi Weiderpass

The Susquehanna Group on May 21 presented Chris Harasta with its annual Lynda Spickard Environmental Award in recognition of years of effort and continued drive and leadership to protect the environment and educate the public.

A notable November 2016 event motivated him to engage in environmental protection. He joined the Susquehanna Group and was soon on its Executive Committee where he became webmaster and organized outings including:

- a successful clean-up of the Argonne Avenue Neighborhood Park in Endwell,
- with the Broome County Environmental Management Council an outing to learn about invasive species,
- a stream-side science 'classroom' to help children and their caregivers learn about natural life in streams.
- a visit to Binghamton University greenhouses combined with a hike at its Nature Preserve.

Chris co-leads and coordinates over 100 volunteers on the Move Out Project (MOP) which is now under the umbrella of the Susquehanna Group. *See MOP article page 4.*

He brought first-hand perspectives of food systems affecting the environment and climate. At Binghamton University's food service he worked to reduce food waste and reduce/eliminate plastics. He developed the Food Recovery Network and organized dozens of volunteers to collect leftover food from dining halls for donations to local food pantries. Chris has been a Site Coordinator for one of VINES' (Volunteers Improving Neighborhood Environments) community gardens on Davis Avenue in Endwell. He helped involve the Endwell Rotary Club in sustainability, and presented/led a discussion on sustainable food systems at a regional Rotary Conference. He serves on the Town of Union's Tree Committee supporting its Tree City USA program.



Congratulations to Chris and thank you for all of your efforts! You do much yet were humble and thanked others when presented with the Lynda Spickard Award. Your energy, good nature, and smile in doing so much to help others and the environment are a wonderful inspiration and we truly appreciate you.

## More Recognitions

- 1- Binghamton University's College of Community and Public Affairs recognized in its publication that Sierra Club member **Christina Fuller** founded the Move Out Project (described page 4 in this *Sierran* issue).
- 2- **Scott Lauffer** received a New York State Senate Proclamation, sponsored by Senator Leah Webb. Scott: "I have lived in the Southern Tier most of my adult life and feel a love and connection to it. We have much to appreciate with the natural beauty of our region and much to take care of. I have been part of worthwhile efforts in making our environment better, including leadership in the Sierra Club for over ten years, active participant with IBM Spill Stakeholders, organizing three bus trips to climate marches, coordinating a VINES community garden for over ten years, leading a water monitoring effort with NY Water Sentinels for five years and more recently acting as a coordinator in the Binghamton Move Out Project. I'm just one of many who strive to make our corner of the planet a better place."



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## Our Electoral Endorsements

– Scott Lauffer

The Susquehanna Group and the Atlantic Chapter endorsed Lea Webb, NYS Senate District 52, and Donna Lupardo, NYS Assembly District 123. Both incumbents advocated against CO2 fracking, and cosponsored legislation to ban it. They cosponsored other important environmental legislation including the NY HEAT Act. They support comprehensive PFAS bans, and elimination of fossil fuel subsidies. They get high ratings from the NY League of Conservation Voters and are reliable supporters of the Chapter's environmental goals.



Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo



Senator Leah Webb

## **Susquehanna Group**

(All of Broome and Sullivan, & most of  
Chenango, Delaware, Otsego, and Tioga  
Counties)

Chair	*Valdi Weiderpass
Vice Chair	*Moira Ashleigh
Secretary	<i>vacant</i>
Treasurer	*Joann Lettis
Political Chair	*Scott Lauffer
Chapter Delegate	*Jim Taft
Newsletter Editor	*Jim Taft
Webmaster	Chris Harasta
Conservation Co-Chairs	*Doug Gausman, *Mary Cronk
Alt. Chapter Delegate	*Joann Lettis
Outings Coordinator	*Scott Lauffer
Move Out Project Leads	*Christina Fuller, Chris Harasta
	* Member Executive Committee

To become a candidate for the  
Susquehanna Group's Executive  
Committee, mail by November 1, 2024  
a candidate statement of 150 words or  
less to:

Susquehanna Group  
PO Box 572  
Endicott NY 13760

The Nominating Committee will create  
a slate of candidates, and ballots will be  
mailed with the December *Sierran*.

## **Coming Events**

- 6/11/24 7pm General meeting. Pollinators with focus on honeybees, presentation by Ken Lord of Southern Tier Beekeepers Association. Vestal Public Library (320 Vestal Parkway E.) and via Zoom <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3644665286?pwd=VS9kUoNBaUttMnpRa3BSNngwci9TUTO9>
- 6/25/24 4:30pm Outing to Cannawanna Nature Preserve, Owego. Jason Shaw, Julian Shepherd and Kevin Millar will present on: the Cannawanna Preserve, Southern Tier Land Conservancy, and efforts to conserve natural areas in Broome and Tioga Counties. Parking available at Water and Mill Streets, Owego. For possible rain date see <https://www.sierraclub.org/atlantic/susquehanna/events>
- 9/17/24 7pm General meeting. Rachael Cornick of Hover Energy on medium-scale renewable energy projects and/or microgrids (tentative, details TBD).
- 10/15/24 7pm General meeting. Devin Bialy of Cornell Cooperative Extension on smart energy choices and incentives. In person and via Zoom.
- 11/19/24 7pm General meeting. Renee Seacor on Project Coyote. Via Zoom only.

## **NY Legislative Session Ends With Little On Climate**

- Valdi Weiderpass

For the second year in a row the NY State Senate passed several substantial Climate-related bills, but the Assembly did little. The Assembly failed to pass the NY HEAT Act, despite hundreds of calls, rallies, and many letters to newspapers, etc. However, the Assembly in the wee hours of June 8 did pass the Climate Change Superfund Act which requires fossil fuel polluters to pay some costs associated with climate change; it awaits the Governor's signature. Also waiting on the Governor is legislation to ban CO2 Fracking which came from the Legislature more than two months ago. How many climate-related superstorm Sandy, tropical storm Lee events, or Canadian wildfire-instigated choking smoke events do we need for elected NY State leaders to wake up and take urgent action on climate change?



# The Mighty MOP - 2024 Report

– Jim Taft, Christina Fuller

MOP: Move Out Project, started by students in 2018 and now a Susquehanna Group project, collects usable cast-offs from students departing during May for summer vacations. MOP organizes the cast-offs, and invites non-profit organizations to re-distribute them to needy local residents. This keeps a lot of material out of the landfill.

Binghamton University enrollment	18,300
SUNY Broome Community College enrollment	5460
Pounds of donations collected 2023	18,795
Pounds of donations collected 2024	20,111
Largest category of donations	Clothing
Number of nonprofits, schools, churches served	40+
Number of volunteers 2024	140+



One of 5 collection sites, BU campus



Unopened food containers ready for distribution



Sorting space, provided by BU, before distribution



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Endicott NY 13760

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