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Fighting for a cleaner and healthier New Jersey for all!

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NESE Gas Pipeline Goes Down to Defeat

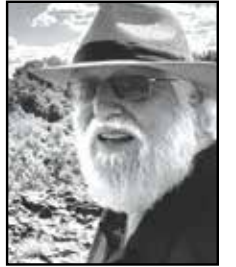


Celebrating the defeat of the Northeast Supply Enhancement (NESE) gas pipeline project, representatives of a coalition of environmental advocates gathered May 6, 2024, at Keyport, NJ, a Raritan Bay community. Seated, left to right: Blair Nelsen, executive director of Waterspirit; Sindhu Pasricha; Taylor McFarland, NJ Chapter conservation program manager. Standing, left to right: Linda Powell, Central Jersey Safe Energy Coalition; Bernadette Maher, Franklin Township Task Force to Stop NESE; Patty Cronheim, NJ League of Conservation Voters; Kari Martin; Joanne Panone; NJ Chapter Chair Rich Isaac; Ron Waetzman; Gary Frederick; Kip Cherry; Tony Hagen; Clean Ocean Action Executive Director Cindy Zipf; Linda Isaac; Kevin Corcoran; Jim Baye. For the full story, please see page 13 of our electronic edition, available on the Sierra Club NJ Chapter's website (<https://shorturl.at/1PEMd>).

Will Anyone Be Able to Afford an Electric Car in New Jersey?

By Bill Beren
Chair, Transportation Committee

There seem to be two speeds at which the NJ Legislature acts: Snail pace for legislation that actually is good for the state, such as our Electric School Bus Law that took four years to crawl through the process (plus another year to actually fund it); and lightning speed for special interest legislation that the political establishment doesn't want you to know about. These latter bills get introduced without any advance notice, are quickly shepherded through Assembly and Senate committees, and then are voted on and signed in a matter of two months.



Examples of such bills include the Paul Fireman-backed Liberty State Park Conservation, Recreation, and Community Inclusion Act, the bill gutting the Open Public Records Act, and a recent bill (signed March 26) to overhaul the way the Transportation Trust Fund is managed. This included a new registration fee that will tack over \$1,000 onto the cost of electric vehicles purchased in New Jersey.

Despite lots of press to the contrary, electric car sales are growing exponentially in New Jersey. Year-over-year sales of light duty (passenger cars) and medium/heavy duty vans and trucks increased 130% from 2022 to 2023. New Jersey added 62,638 plug-in electric vehicles (PEVs) in 2023 compared with 27,208 in 2022 (this number includes plug-in hybrids), and as of December 31, 2023, there were 154,153 PEVs registered in New Jersey. EV sales in 2023 represented 14% of total car and light truck sales in the state, double the percentage from 2022.

>continued on page 7

Don't ATV on Me!

By Joanne Pannone • Chair, Central Jersey Group



Irresponsible off-roaders have gone wherever they wanted in Wharton State Forest and behaved recklessly, at great cost to this fragile wilderness.

Gov. Phil Murphy's new off-road plan would limit vehicle access to 200 miles of dirt roads in this much-abused park. Off-roaders don't like it, but they still have their 450-mile "Trans New Jersey Trail," a mixture of backcountry roads and unpaved forested roads extending from the state's northernmost point at High Point State Park in Sussex County to the southernmost point at Cape May Light House. It takes them at least three days to complete.

Part of this 4x4 course is through the fragile Pinelands forests, a unique region encompassing 1.1 million acres of dense forests, rivers and wetlands that is already deeply scared by illegal off-road traffic with very little enforcement.

Every vehicle that travels through this wilderness must be "street legal"—licensed, registered, and insured in New Jersey. Unfortunately, Pinelands' vehicle rules are often violated, causing habitat fragmentation and disruption of wildlife.

For Earth Day (April 22), I joined the New Jersey Jeep Association at Forked River Mountain in the Candace McKee Ashmen Preserve. The Jeep Association advocates for jeep owner access to

backcountry roads, but they also support conservation and responsible activity. Together, we filled two dumpsters in five hours with bed frames, a mountain of discarded kitchen material, cans, and bottles, plus tires and fenders from all-terrain vehicles (ATVs). The Pinelands has been used irresponsibly as an illegal dumping ground. There is very little police presence.

We met a group from Long Island who were camping. At first when we approached them and explained we were doing a cleanup, they said, "Go ahead, not our mess." Then we asked if they wanted to help, and they did!

We witnessed unlicensed ATVs riding with toddlers sitting on their gas tanks and no helmets. There were lots of other vehicles without license plates—motorcycles, monster trucks, and 4x4s. Once again, we saw no law enforcement! These are the violators whose actions lead to road closures and who ride off the roads and through the forest, where they destroy fragile wetlands and turn vernal ponds into muddy pits.

Under the draft [Visiting Vehicle Use Map](#) prepared by the DEP, Wharton State Forest's network of sand roads has been redrawn to keep off-roaders out of zones that were never intended for them. The public comment peri-



Photo by Joanne Pannone

od for this visiting vehicle policy ended in March, but the Pinelands Alliance warns that lobbyists for destructive and irresponsible off-roaders are attempting to undermine the efforts to protect Wharton.

Education and outreach are key components of Pinelands conservation. For thirty-four years, Stockton University has hosted the [Pinelands Short Course](#) in partnership with the NJ Pinelands Commission. It is

a day of learning together, featuring presentations and tours that explore the culture, ecology, and history of the Pinelands. The next one is June 28, 2024.

I agree we need protections from illegal off-road activities to preserve the Pine Barrens' biodiversity and natural wonders for all to explore safely and legally—not only by vehicle, but also on foot, in canoes and kayaks, on bicycles, and on horseback. We must also protect the 3,000-square-mile Kirkwood-Cohansey Aquifer system which underlies the Pinelands and represents such a remarkable water resource for the residents of New Jersey.

Visiting Vehicle Use Map: https://www.nj.gov/dep/news-rel/2024/24_0001.htm

Pinelands Short Course: <https://www.stockton.edu/continuing-studies/pinelandsshortcourse.html>

Inside This Issue

Altman for Congress.....	2
Youth Committee.....	2
Whale Update.....	2
Rocket Emissions.....	3
Chapter Chair's Message.....	3
ExCom Minutes.....	3
From Hamilton HQ.....	3
DEP Water Plan.....	4
Heat Pumps Explained.....	4
Jersey Fresh!.....	5
Transmission Upgrade.....	5
On the Trail.....	6
Money Matters.....	6
Environmental Justice.....	6
Outings/Group News.....	7-12
Chapter Leadership.....	12

Electronic Supplement

(Available from the Chapter website)

Flexitarian Eating, NESE Pipeline Defeat, Particulate Matter, Reusable Bag Issue, OPRA Reform, PFAS, Global Wind Day.....	13-15
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Altman Promises to Be an NJ Environmental Champion

By Allen Swanson • Chair, Loantaka Group



The Sierra Club takes very seriously the opportunity to review the records of our elected officials running for re-election and their challengers. In 2024, the NJ Chapter and our national Sierra Club office have carefully reviewed the positions and voting record of US Rep. Tom Kean Jr., of the 7th Congressional District, and his challenger Sue Altman.

The Sierra Club leadership has concluded that there is one candidate who will best reflect our mission and goals as the member of the House of Representatives from the 7th Congressional

District. That candidate is Altman.

Altman has a record of grassroots organizing and activism in New Jersey that is unparalleled. She has been an advocate for workers, women, voting rights, government accountability, and transparency.

Altman will be accessible and represent the needs of the diverse communities that make up the 7th District.

Sierra Club NJ Chapter Chair Rich Isaac stated, “New Jersey is experiencing some of the most serious



Sue Altman is running for Congress

challenges from the climate change crisis. We need leaders like Altman who understand these challenges and will represent New Jersey at a national level.”

This writer has known Altman as a grassroots organizer and activist who does not back down in the face of challenges from those in power. Living in the 7th Congressional District, I look forward to working with Altman as our representative in Congress.

In the past, Kean established an en-

vironmental record that earned him praise from the Sierra Club. He served as a member of the New Jersey Senate from 2003 to 2022, and in 2022 he was elected to Congress.

However, Kean, a Republican, has failed to distance himself from the politics of former President Donald Trump, and Kean’s lack of environmental commitment in the face of the climate crisis is deeply troubling.

The leadership of the Sierra Club encourages voters to select Altman for Congress on November 5, 2024.

Look for much more information about Altman and all the other candidates endorsed by the Sierra Club during the months leading to the November 5 General Election.

YOUTH COMMITTEE

The Clean Energy Bill Will Help Us Get to Net Zero

By Syona Gupta, Shirin Sood, Sia Satish, Nidhi Karnik, Shriyaa Madineni, Arin Harkawat, and Kiran Adams • Youth Committee

As youth activists, we have seen the disproportionate impact of climate change on different communities and have joined phone banking events to fight for the [New Jersey Clean Energy Act](#) (aka, 100% Clean Energy Bill; S237/A1480), which would transition New Jersey to net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045. We hope that other young people also join this movement to protect the Earth—our current and future home. The Clean Energy Act would support renewable energy development until our state’s total power supply has reached net zero greenhouse gas emissions.

As students and young people, we often take a clean environment for granted, but that is no longer a luxury we can afford. Our generation has the most to suffer from climate change if we fail to work with proactive policies and other efforts to mitigate this peril. As students and activists, we plead with our fellow youth to join the environmental movement and support the Clean Energy Act.

Phone Banking Was a Positive Experience

On March 20, 2024, the Sierra Club Youth Committee, with the guidance of Sierra Club Senior Field Organizer Tiziana Bottino, participated in a phone banking event to garner support for the Clean Energy Act. This event was a challenging and novel experience for many of us. However, the adrenaline



(Left to Right) Syona Gupta, Shirin Sood, Sia Satish, Nidhi Karnik, Shriyaa Madineni, Arin Harkawat, and Kiran Adams

rush of being able to connect with even a few NJ residents and motivate them to call their legislators more than made up for the rejections we had to face while calling.

Through phone banking, the Sierra Club Youth Committee was able to amplify the message to legislators that the Clean Energy Act is essential to address climate change in New Jersey. Youth Committee member Shriyaa Madineni described phone banking for this cause as a transformative experience:

“At first, I was hesitant about reaching out to strangers and potentially engaging in difficult conversations since you never know what to expect on the other side. However, in the process, I discovered a sense of empowerment and connection that I hadn’t expected. Each call became an opportunity to listen, learn, and make a difference, whether by raising awareness about these important issues or by encouraging voter participation,” she said.

Youth Committee Member Nidhi Karnik Reflects

“Growing up, I was not exposed to climate-change discussions,” said Youth

Committee member Nidhi Karnik. “Climate change was a term I heard sometimes, but I never talked about it with my friends or in my classes. Then, during the pandemic, I found that I had a lot of time on my hands. I began to read the news and learn so much more about climate and social justice issues. I even learned about how a local Native American community was being disproportionately impacted by air pollution: A company’s toxic waste dump on their land led to poor air quality and caused them to contract diseases.

“Learning about the impacts of climate injustice made me feel upset and hopeless; I wanted to help but did not even know where to start. Once I discovered youth advocacy organizations, including the Sierra Club Youth Committee, I realized that I could take action to make a difference. I have been able to connect with many like-minded individuals and work toward making positive change in my community. I was able to set up voter registration events and even begin advocating for policies like the Clean Energy Act and Green Amendments—which make a clean environment a constitutional right for state residents.”

In March, the NJ Senate Environ-

ment and Energy Committee voted in favor of a Green Amendment bill and moved it further along in the legislative approval process.

An Environmental Justice Perspective

It is important to our Youth Committee that we acknowledge and understand the communities that are disproportionately impacted by climate change and how policies such as the Clean Energy Act could improve health and safety.

Industrial facilities, notably processing and chemical plants, are often located in “sacrifice zones”—areas with disproportionate amounts of environmental degradation. These are often low-income communities of color. Especially in underserved communities in New Jersey, polluters such as incinerators continue to rely on nonrenewable sources of energy. A [GEOS-Chem study](#) estimated that 18.1% of deaths in New Jersey in 2012 were caused by fine particulate matter (PM 2.5) pollution from fossil fuel combustion, or 17,646 of 97,747 mortalities from all causes.

>continued on page 5

Impose Boat Speed Limits to Protect Whales

By Denise Brush • Chair, Offshore Wind Committee

A humpback whale stranding death was recorded April 11 at Long Beach in Ocean County, the only one so far in 2024 in New Jersey and well down from the seven recorded humpback whale deaths reported here from January to April last year.

A [necropsy](#) performed by the Marine Mammal Stranding Center at Brigantine indicated that the 25-foot long 1-year-old whale suffered blunt force trauma that included multiple skull fractures and dislocations. The injuries point strongly toward a vessel strike.

The Marine Mammal Commission and other federal agencies have repeatedly stated there is no evidence linking offshore wind site preparation work

to the spate of whale deaths along the East Coast in recent years.

Meanwhile, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is awaiting an Office of Management and Budget ruling on a proposed expansion of a vessel speed law. This would be beneficial to all whales and other marine mammals of the East Coast.

[Seasonal 10 knot speed limits](#) currently imposed on vessels 65 feet or longer would apply to vessels 35 feet or longer, and speed limits would be reduced in other areas where right whale pods have been observed to be traveling. NOAA has estimated that there are only 360 right whales remaining, down from 400 in 2020.

In New Jersey, these [seasonal zones](#) would last from Nov. 1 to May 30 and extend up to 50 miles from the New Jersey shoreline. The opposition from fishing groups, who say they rely on high-speed travel to get their customers to fishing grounds expeditiously, has been fierce.

More whale deaths may occur off the Jersey coast this year, and some residents and public officials will keep trying to blame offshore wind.

Speeding commercial and private fishing vessels are a [well-documented threat](#) to marine mammals, especially right whales, which feed near the surface. NJ officials are going out of their way to ensure that offshore wind

activity follows best practices for marine mammal protection.

In mid-April Governor Phil Murphy added \$3.7 million in funding to the state’s Research and Monitoring Initiative. It is hoped that this additional research will finally convince the public that the ongoing (since 2016) “unusual whale mortality event” has nothing to do with offshore wind development. This research will include whale surveys and tagging, ocean circulation studies, and bird and bat tracking.



EDITOR'S MESSAGE

Limit Rocket Emissions, Before It's Too Late

By Tony Hagen • editor@newjersey.sierraclub.org

At the rate things are going, rocket contrails may one day join airplane contrails as chief polluters. Blasting people off to the Moon, to Mars, or just for a brief excursion into the upper atmosphere for a view of this beautiful blue marble is the stuff of science fiction novels come true.

The trouble is, rocket emissions can exacerbate global warming and ozone loss. Over time, they can also [slow down jet stream](#) currents, those bands of wind that form the dividing line between weather extremes.

Concerns about rocket emissions are based largely on projections of growth of this industry, rather than current levels of traffic. The rocket industry is expected to grow exponentially in the coming decades, from \$424 billion a year or two ago to more than [\\$1 trillion by 2050](#).

A small number of scientific studies have emerged recently that focus on black carbon and other rocket exhaust contents that in large enough quantities, distributed throughout the stratosphere (12 to 31 miles up), will heat up the planet, change the weather, and impede our progress on restoring the ozone layer.

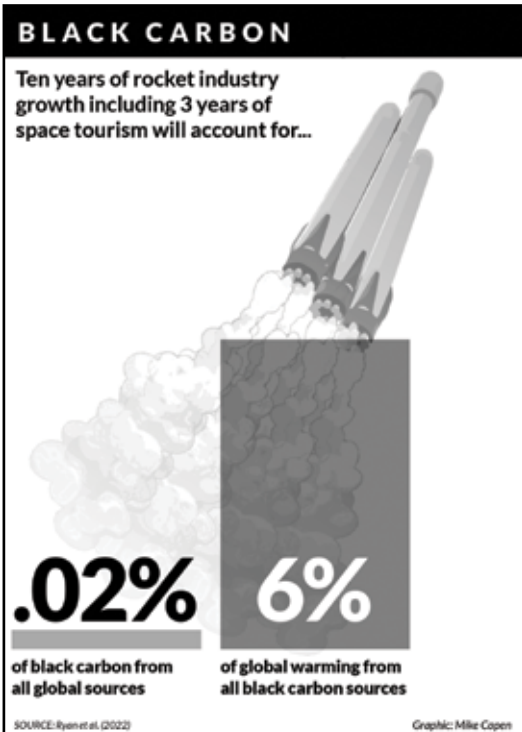
NASA's plans to blast human beings and equipment across the solar system are going to require many heavy duty rocket launches. Space tourism and the lofting of "constellations" of tens of thousands of satellites will add to the emissions problem.

Scientists are saying the space industry needs regulation like the [Montreal Protocol](#) (1987), which limited use of chlorofluorocarbons and halons, allowing the ozone layer a chance to start its recovery.

Black carbon in the stratosphere has [475 times](#) the power to cause global warming, ounce for ounce, as black carbon emitted by trucks, cars, airplanes, and trains in the troposphere,

which is the layer of atmosphere closest to the planet's surface ([Graphic](#)).

There are other compounds in the plumes of rocket exhaust that are concerning, such as nitrous oxides, but it's the character of rockets as vertical polluters that is more at issue here.



What goes into the stratosphere hangs around for a very long time. Further, as spent rocket stages fall back to Earth, and as satellites and other space junk see their orbits decay and plunge to Earth, they, too, leave emissions that spur global warming and ozone loss.

"These findings demonstrate an urgent need to develop environmental regulation to mitigate damage from this rapidly growing industry," Ryan et al. wrote in their [2022 study](#) published in the peer-reviewed journal *Earth's Future*.

FROM OUR HAMILTON HQ

NJ Legislature Must Increase Funding to NJ Transit and NJDEP

By Anjuli Ramos-Busot, NJ Chapter Director, and Taylor McFarland, Conservation Manager

The New Jersey Chapter of the Sierra Club is pleased to see the proposed creation of the Corporate Transit Fee (CTF), a tax applicable to mega-corporations in the state with a \$10 million income or more specifically dedicated to fund NJ Transit. This is a good foundation and starting point to address NJ Transit's significant fiscal problems, and it targets deep-pocketed companies.

However, the job of strengthening NJ Transit is far from finished. NJ Transit's capital budget and the Clean Energy Fund are still being raided to cover NJ Transit's operational costs.

It is imperative to keep the Clean Energy Fund whole so that these funds are utilized effectively for clean energy initiatives that are essential for our clean energy transition and fight against climate change. However, if lawmakers continue to divert money from the Clean Energy Fund to NJ Transit, the budget should include specific language to ensure these dol-



Anjuli Ramos-Busot (left) and Taylor McFarland

lars are used to transition the agency's buses, trains, and buildings to green energy and zero emissions.

NJ Transit requires investment on a scale large enough that NJ riders and clean energy initiatives are not the ones paying the price. We certainly do not want to see a reduction in NJ Transit's budget, but rather believe that funds should come from a newly created dedicated source like the CTF or from the reinstatement of the Corporate Business Tax (CBT). The proposed CTF would generate only a portion of what the full CBT would generate. With

CHAPTER CHAIR'S MESSAGE

Welcome to a New Volunteer and Seeking a Program Manager!

By Richard Isaac • Richard.Isaac@sierraclub.org

Our Chapter is glad to welcome a new volunteer at the Chapter level. On behalf of our NJ Chapter, I welcome her and thank her for coming on board to help strengthen our efforts dealing with waste! In addition, I look forward to our Chapter director leading us in hiring a new staff person to help us strengthen our efforts on energy!

hiring (for the very first time) a fourth staff person to help us strengthen our efforts to transition from fossil fuels to clean, renewable energy.

When hired, the Chapter's energy program manager will help coordinate development and implementation of strategic campaigns to move New Jersey to 100% renewable energy, working in collaboration with the NJ Chapter and program staff, as well as volunteer leadership, partner organizations, and the public.

The Energy Program

The manager will coordinate our Chapter's efforts directly with the Club's Beyond Coal, Clean Transportation for All, and Building Electrification Campaigns to develop and execute state-level campaign plans.

Working both independently and as part of a team, the new staff person will develop energy policy positions, implement policy strategy, and identify and solve legislative, regulatory, and local impediments to clean energy in New Jersey.

As there's a possibility that the position may still be open at the time this newsletter is published, individuals who are interested in applying should go to this site: <https://shorturl.at/Pe6hg>

Andrea Panico, Chapter Zero Waste Coordinator

Andrea Panico is an industrial designer and educator with over 20 years' experience in the home furnishings space. She has extensive experience in the production of consumer goods, from large-scale mass manufacturing in factories to small, independent, and ethically sourced workshops.

In conjunction with her focus as a professor at Montclair State University, her interests include educating designers about the range of tools available to create more sustainable products.

Andrea has been appointed and confirmed as our Chapter's zero waste coordinator and is now working on a number of waste issues with Chapter Conservation Program Manager Taylor McFarland.

Chapter Energy Program Manager

Our Chapter has begun the process of



ExCom Meeting Highlights

April: The ExCom approved the following appointments: Gina Carola, Elections Committee chair; Allen Swanson, liaison to Sue Altman's campaign; Ricardo Periera, liaison to Andy Kim's campaign. The Chapter will hire an energy program manager and is soliciting applications. The ExCom noted with sadness the passing of Abbas Salim, our community solar liaison, who served with our Sierra Club Chapter for five years. The ExCom approved the endorsement of US Rep. Andy Kim (D-NJ 3rd) for US Senate. This endorsement was confirmed by the Sierra Club national political team. The ExCom voted 16-0 with one abstention to request the Council of Club Leaders (CCL) to advise the National Board of Directors to prioritize funding support for renewable energy. The CCL will discuss this on Aug. 2. Joanne Pannone was appointed Pinelands issues coordinator to address off-road vehicle activity in the Pinelands.

March: Andrea Panico was appointed zero waste coordinator and John Kashwick was appointed legislative committee member. The ExCom established June 30 at 5 p.m. as the deadline for ExCom candidates to submit their petitions. Stan Greberis and Allen Swanson were appointed as initial members of the Smart Housing Committee, which will tackle the shortage of affordable housing in New Jersey.

February: Joanne Pannone was appointed to the Chapter Transportation Committee. Laura Lynch was appointed Legislative Committee chair. The Nominating Committee has submitted the following nominations for three open positions on the ExCom in 2025: Stan Greberis, Kip Cherry, and Denise Brush. The ExCom unanimously approved the Political Committee's recommendation to endorse Sue Altman (D) in New Jersey's 7th Congressional District.

the proposed fare hikes and the ongoing raids of the Clean Energy Fund and the capital budget, we believe this makes the case that the full CBT should be reinstated to help end the proposed raids. The state can fund NJ Transit while simultaneously stopping diversions from the Clean Energy Fund.

It's also critical that the NJ Legislature increase funding for the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for its staff and programs. The proposed 25% cut across the board to the Department is unacceptable, as many of the programs this government

body would like to achieve for our state heavily depend on the DEP. Unfortunately, the DEP lacks the staff and resources to do these things effectively. This is why we experience backlogs in program implementation, permit approvals, rulemaking, and enforcement actions. The DEP is in need of more experts who can take us to a safer future with cleaner air and water and access to well-taken-care-of open space and natural resources. We urge the Legislature to provide a reasonable funding source so that the DEP can achieve what we ask of them.

DEP Water Plan Takes Climate Change Into Account

By Greg Gorman • ggorman@embargmail.com



The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is obligated and empowered to improve and protect water resources and water system infrastructure to

ensure safe drinking water and system sustainability. In February 2024, the [draft 2024 NJ Statewide Water Supply Plan](#), which addresses the state's water resources, anticipated problems, and recommendations for future action, was released. The plan for the first time assesses water supply challenges resulting from climate change and offers climate resilience solutions. Other challenges addressed in the plan include aging water supply infrastructure, emerging water contaminants (e.g., per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances), and the occurrence of harmful algal blooms.

The goal of the plan is to ensure that water supplies and water infrastructure are "in place and coordinated to meet anticipated future demands." The planning is also intended to ensure that water uses are efficient and not excessive.

The recommendations rely on the availability of long-term and real-time hydrologic datasets to quantify trends, characterize current conditions, and build and calibrate models to support decision making and future water supply planning. Climate change is recognized as a risk multiplier. Anticipated changes in precipitation, temperature, sea-level, and emissions will require adjustments in water supply modeling and monitoring methods. The DEP will work with experts to understand water availability and demand during extended drought conditions and growing seasons. It will also work to improve understanding of saltwater intrusion of recharge areas and aquifers, stormwater surges, and changing boundaries of flood zones.

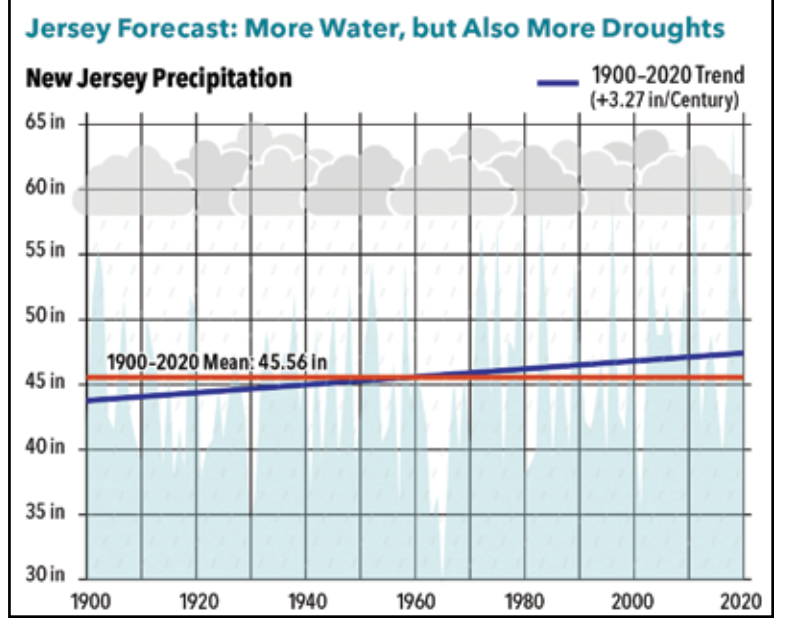
This knowledge is necessary to adjust policy and regulations to address resilience needs for dams, well construction and modifications, pipelines, power supplies, and other critical infrastructure.

The draft 2024 Water Supply Plan also addresses recommendations to modernize water policy through improved regional and statewide planning. For example: The Passaic and Hackensack watersheds serve NJ residents but their headwaters are in New York state. In the

Delaware River basin, the Delaware River Basin Commission must ensure that water supply and flow are balanced with water supply needs.

Future policy will address:

- Financial preparation and participation for environmental justice/overburdened communities in the replacement of aging infrastructure.
- Low-income assistance for the replacement of failing drinking water wells due to age or for the treatment of naturally occurring contaminants.
- Funding for preservation of open space upstream of drinking water intakes or in wellhead protection areas.
- Prioritization of water quality restoration.



New Jersey has seen an annual precipitation increase of 3.27 inches over the past 120 years. Still, more droughts are anticipated.

- Revision of policy and regulations to address water quality and allocations.

The forecast calls for another hot summer. Let's give the DEP support to effectively ensure availability of clean water.

Resource

Draft Water Plan: <https://shorturl.at/rtxS5>

Heat Pumps Are Efficient, but Choose Carefully

By Betsy Longendorfer and Judith Green • Building Electrification Committee



Betsy Longendorfer (left) and Judith Green

What Is a Heat Pump?

A *heat pump* is an appliance that uses a refrigerant to transfer heat from one place to another in an efficient and reversible manner. An air-conditioner transfers heat out of a room to the outside air, thus cooling the room. A heat pump does that, and in winter, transfers heat from even very cold outside air, or from the ground, to the indoors, providing warmth.

The outdoor portion of a heat pump has coils filled with a liquid refrigerant that turns to vapor at very low temperatures. When cool outside air passes over the coils, the liquid absorbs whatever heat is in the air and vaporizes. This gas moves via a pipeline into a compressor, where the pressure increases the temperature of the gas even more. It then moves to a heat exchange system inside the house, which creates warm air for home heating.

As heat is transferred into the home, the gas cools down into liquid form and is returned to the outdoor unit. The cycle is repeated until the home has reached the thermostat setting. In hot weather, the process is reversed, with warm indoor air giving up its heat to the refrigerant to be transferred outdoors.

Heat Pump Advantages Over Traditional HVAC Systems

Heat pumps operate in a clean, safe way that is uniquely efficient. As no fuel is burned to create heat, indoor air is cleaner, and dangerous gas or carbon monoxide leaks cannot occur. Heat pumps are two to three times more efficient than the best gas furnaces. The

high efficiency of heat pumps means that they have much lower carbon footprints than traditional HVAC systems.

Despite their high efficiency, heat pumps usually but not always cost less to operate, because the relative prices of gas and electricity in each area are the major determinants of operating cost. However, because one appliance serves for both heating and cooling, additional savings are possible.

How can a heat pump be so much more efficient than a conventional heating/cooling system? The answer lies in the genius of refrigerants that transfer "stolen" heat from outside air to the home's interior, or vice-versa. Because heat pumps use electricity only to drive fans, they consume less energy in the form of electricity than they produce in the form of heat energy.

An exception to that may occur when heating a home in colder climates. Despite advances in cold climate heat pumps (some newer models can handle temperatures of -22°F), auxiliary electrical heating may at times be necessary to maintain the desired indoor temperature.

Common Types of Air Source Heat Pumps

The system described above is considered an *air source* heat pump (ASHP) because it derives heat from the outside air. Several configurations of ASHP systems are common. *Central* (whole house) heat pumps are appropriate for homes that regulate indoor climate using a forced air duct system with vents throughout the house. Advantageous features are that central pumps can be configured to divide your home into different temperature areas, each controlled by its own thermostat. They easily work with humidifiers, dehumidifiers, and air-filtering equipment made by other manufacturers.

For homes built without a duct system, *mini-split* heat pumps are often a good option. Suitable for a circum-

scribed space (e.g., a room), a *single zone* mini-split consists of an indoor unit, usually mounted out of the way on a wall, that is directly connected to an outside unit.

Reaching a greater area, *multi-split* heat pumps allow for heating and cooling several zones by having, in addition to the outside unit, two to four indoor emitters. More extensive zoning in large homes is possible with *multi-zone* heat pumps. These have one or more junctions ("branch boxes"), each of which serves several indoor heating or cooling emitters, all connected to a single outdoor unit.

Choosing a Heat Pump System

The heat pump you select must be suitable for your home's climate zone, as this determines the range of outdoor temperatures in which the system must be able to maintain a stable, desirable indoor "design temperature." It must also be appropriate for the total heating and cooling load of the house

(required BTUs per hour), as determined by the contractor's "Manual J" calculation. Because a building's insulation reduces the heating and cooling load, it is extremely important to weatherize your home before choosing a heat pump.

The contractor's expertise is needed, too, for recommending the overall system design, including the number and arrangement of climate zones within the home. Lastly, it's important to consider the efficiency ratings of heat pumps when you are deciding which to buy.

Once installed, heat pumps are best enjoyed when allowed to run fairly constantly, well below peak capacity, at a steady thermostat setting. This is the condition under which they operate most efficiently.

Reference: Rewiring America's Electrification Coaching Course via Creative Commons license and verbal permission to cite (B.L.)

Consider a gift membership in the New Jersey Chapter of the Sierra Club or a legacy donation in the name of a loved one. See our Money Matters column on page 6 for more detail.

In Memory of Abbas Salim

Abbas Salim (79), an active member of the Sierra Club NJ Chapter since 2019, passed away on March 29, 2024.

Abbas, a resident of Monroe Township in Middlesex County, served as our Chapter's home solar issues coordinator. He was an ardent champion of New Jersey's community solar movement, which allows affordable renewable energy access for residents who cannot install solar at their homes. Thanks to the efforts of Abbas and many others, community solar is taking off in New Jersey.

Abbas also advocated for solar installations on warehouse rooftops, which would otherwise make little or no contribution to the environmental cause.

Outside of his Sierra Club work, Abbas was a family man and a retired aerospace and terrestrial photovoltaic electrical engineer with 47 years of service to Lockheed Martin and General Dynamics. His expertise encompassed lithium-ion battery technology.

Abbas and his wife were the first residents in Monroe Township to purchase solar panels for their home. In Abbas' memory, consider signing up for community solar through this website: <https://shorturl.at/hnHKW>

Make Mine Jersey Fresh!

By Patricia Hilliard • Executive Committee Member and Hudson County Group Chair

We can make changes in the world every day by the simple actions we take. At the grocery store, we could easily grab a fruit or vegetable without a thought, but we could also make this an opportunity to help protect our global environment. By buying local we can support a cleaner healthier world. How?

That pepper in your hand may have come from across the sea. Its delivery may have involved a diesel-powered ship that left a trail of air pollution halfway around the world. Or, it may have come from a state far away. Roughly 90% of all the fresh vegetables consumed in the United States are grown in California's San Joaquin Valley, according to the Emory University Office of Sustainability Initiatives.

Produce may have been held in a warehouse for several days, where air conditioning operated, thus using more energy, before being trucked to the grocery store. As time passes, fruits and vegetables lose their vitality, crispness, and nutrition. Any state that can produce some of its own food will have fresher fruits and vegetables for residents, and the residents will be better off during times of supply chain disruption.

Obviously, it is important that we keep growing food in New Jersey, the Garden State. If local farmers cannot sell their produce and make a living, more and more farmlands will be converted to housing, sold to warehouse developers, or developed for other purposes. Open green space will be lost, and our state's ability to provide really fresh, healthy food will be greatly diminished.

Fortunately, New Jersey has the Agriculture Retention and Development Act, which allows the state to purchase farmland easements to prevent overdevelopment of this precious resource. This law (1983) created County Agricultural Development Boards that operate in 18 of 21 NJ counties. These boards work to preserve quality farmland, monitor right-to-farm disputes, and make sure that ordinances and policies are upheld in regard to farm preservation. Education and grant money are offered to farmers to improve their chances of success. Because of this legislation, New Jersey has protected 34% of its agricultural land base, which is the highest percentage in the nation.

Purchasing from farmers markets and grocery stores that carry Jersey Fresh produce is another way to show support for locally grown food. The Jersey Fresh program has a [website](#) that shows you where to find local farmers markets. For readers of *The Jersey Sierran* print edition, the link is listed at the bottom of this article.

While you're at the farmers market, let them know you hope they go "organic." This means that only natural growing processes are used, without pesticides and herbicides.

Unfortunately, some fertilizers are made from fossil fuels, which are hazardous to farmers and to consumers.

The Emory Office of Sustainability Initiatives states that "as much as 40% of energy used in the food system goes toward the production of artificial fertilizers and pesticides."

Another concern is that even locally sourced foods can have a large emissions footprint. Animal-based food production causes such a heavy greenhouse gas burden that buying locally sourced meat and dairy can't fully offset the climate impacts. To really help reduce emissions, "locally produced plant-based diets are the answer."

Organic Sustainable, Regenerative Agriculture (OSRA), an NJ Department of Agriculture program, educates and assists farmers with becoming organic growers. Telling farmers how important organic produce is to us, as consumers, is another action we can take toward protecting the environment.

As environmentalists, we are fully aware that rising global and local temperatures are affecting our farming. New Jersey's \$1 billion farming industry relies heavily on seasonal

and migrant workers during the hottest months, and yet these workers may not have adequate protections. In America, "occupational heat-related mortality is **35 times higher** (3.06 per 1 million workers) among agricultural workers compared to workers from other industries," according to one study. Migrant farmworkers suffer more exposure to the elements, work long hours, and earn relatively low rates of pay. Further, their language barriers may lead to exploitation or unwillingness to assert their rights.

The Farmworkers Support Committee (CATA, El Comité de Apoyo a los Trabajadores Agrícolas) reaches out to farm workers to improve their conditions. Also, the Agricultural Justice Project offers a [tool kit](#) for food businesses, farmers, and farmworkers to make agriculture fair and sustainable.

No one should be surprised that New Jersey is one of the top 10 producers of blueberries, peaches, bell peppers, squash, tomatoes, and cranberries. But in the wintertime, when Jersey cropland is dormant, it may be necessary to find fresh produce from other areas. An alternative is to buy frozen. Many frozen vegetable companies label their products with the origin of their growth. Look for labels that indicate the fruits and vegetables were grown close to New Jersey. In summer and autumn, look for that "Jersey Fresh" label or find your nearest farmers market. Let's keep agriculture in New Jersey.

Resources:

Jersey Fresh link: <https://rb.gy/m78akx>

OSRA: <https://tinyurl.com/47hhwjev>
Agricultural Justice Project: <https://tinyurl.com/mw676v7v>

Migrant workers' rights: <https://tinyurl.com/3zwyw46h>



More Juice for the Power Grid via Reconductoring

By George Moffatt • Education Chair, Jersey Shore Group

New Jersey is on its way to becoming a clean, green state, as we start buying electric vehicles, heat pumps, and other energy saving devices, and as we install wind and solar energy generation.

And despite Ørsted's recent hiccup (withdrawal from NJ market) and the anti-offshore wind propaganda, offshore wind energy is part of our future. One glitch, though, is a lack of high-voltage electrical transmission capacity on our grids.

As solar and wind generation become the norm and our electrical consumption grows, we still have problems to solve. One of those is the need to replace and augment the aging high-voltage electrical transmission cables in our national, regional, and local grids.

A utility's high-voltage lines may be too old to run at capacity, or they may be vulnerable to outages or overloads due to dated technology. Or, customers' demands may exceed a grid's capacity and a utility's high-voltage towers may not have space for additional cables. Residents may even adamantly oppose new towers.

In addition, long-distance, high-voltage lines may cross multiple jurisdictions (states, municipalities, etc.) that require different permits—or may not grant them at all.

One big problem is that many aging utility cables are operating under outdated standards. The US Department of Energy [estimated](#) in 2023 that inter-regional transmission capacity needs to quadruple by 2035 to accommodate high load needs and meet clean energy goals established by the federal government and individual states.

To upgrade the system using standard transmission cables (steel core, aluminum wrapped), much costly new infrastructure will be needed. This could provoke many major bureaucratic nightmares, since transmission lines cross jurisdictional boundaries, as explained above.

Fortunately, one of the many proposals to upgrade grids is "reconductoring," which involves replacing the ancient cables, economically, with lines capable of carrying more voltage. These newer cables use advanced carbon fiber as their core, replacing steel, and employ larger amounts of aluminum alloy that can deliver at least twice the current of steel and aluminum cables—if supported by other system upgrades. This can allow new sources of energy—particularly, solar and wind—to be hooked into the grid.

Experts in the transmission business estimate that reconductoring can yield energy savings of 50% or more and can take significantly less time than building new infrastructure. [More savings](#) are possible because reconducted lines can hook up to more solar and wind energy plants.

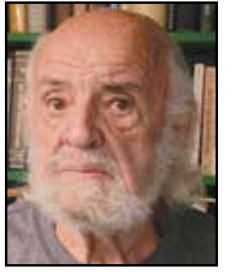
Other advantages of reconductoring include:

- These advanced conductors can operate at higher temperatures than con-

ventional conductors, reducing line sag, which allows a tremendous increase in electricity loading capability during emergencies.

- Advanced conductors can carry significantly more power even when strung on existing towers and other structures.

- The higher load bearing capability can allow utilities to switch more power through reconducted sectors during power outages induced by



weather or other problems. This can support rapid restoration of power to affected areas.

- Some advanced conductor lines have fiber optic sensors built into them, which can provide high-resolu-



Photo by James Wainscoat, Unsplash

tion monitoring capability.

- Fiber optic sensors in advanced conductor lines can provide real-time information on temperature, line sag, wind and ice strain, and power "loading" capability.

Europe is further ahead with reconductoring, partly because they have fewer utilities and less partnership and bureaucracy is involved. In the United States, which has several thousand separate utilities, about 200 reconductoring projects had been completed by 2022, but most of these incorporated a mixture of older steel-supported line technology, which [limited the efficiency and power loading capability](#) of the reconductoring.

Major changes are now afoot:

- The U.S. Bipartisan Infrastructure Law includes up to \$3.9 billion to modernize and expand the nation's electrical grids, and this [includes nearly \\$1 billion](#) for reconductoring and related projects.

- JCP&L announced [\\$935 million in spending](#) late last year to strengthen grid resiliency in New Jersey. This will include installing about 600 miles of higher-capacity overhead power lines, replacing 46 miles of underground lines, and installing 2,175 circuit breaker-like devices that can repower lines quickly following outages.

- Also last year, Atlantic City Electric announced [\\$93.1 million in spending](#) on 22 projects to support the connection of solar and other clean energy technologies in South Jersey. The improvements will also strengthen the grid against severe weather.

- PSE&G announced in 2022 a 4-year plan to invest \$511 million to support clean energy technology and strengthen grid resilience.

These planned investments by power suppliers serving New Jersey come at a critical moment. Power companies have reported that building interconnections for clean energy is bottlenecked by grid limitations.

In Atlantic City, "much of the utility's franchise territory in South Jersey is so constrained that most residential solar projects cannot hook into its distribution system," [NJ Spotlight News reported](#) in March 2024.

CLEAN ENERGY BILL continued from page 2

Closing Note

We hope that today's young people realize that they, too, can be a part of the solution. Every action, no matter how small, helps create a brighter, cleaner future. The Clean Energy Act, if adopted, could promote development of our state's incipient offshore wind

industry, notes Mukesh Shukla, an energy transition and decarbonization consultant:

"Wind technology faces engineering, bureaucratic, and logistical challenges, but if deployed at scale, the technology could be a major, consistent power source to coastal communities," he said.



On the Trail

A Bird's Eye View of Amico Island

By Susan Matson

Amico Island! Fresh air, friendly folks, feathered friends, and Leona and George Fluck as leaders—what more can you ask for?

I was tickled to be asked to participate in the April 7 Club visit to Amico Island recently as the birding “point person.” And three years ago, I wouldn't have considered myself even halfway qualified to point out the birdlife to anyone interested. But here's the thing about my now-favorite hobby: In a few seasons of regular observations, going out with experienced people who are quick to point out what they see and hear, you can very quickly get a good working knowledge of many, many species beyond your back yard—and be the better for it.

A few years ago, I decided to start “birding” all 21 NJ counties. After a year, I could identify about 100 birds that are common to New Jersey, versus about 25 previously in my Mercer County neighborhood.



Ducks find the local waters to be a fruitful feeding area. Photos by Karen Gee

What an amazing state we have for birding! We have a wide variety of ecosystems—lakes, streams, ocean, hillsides, grasslands, fields. The cold months can be just as fascinating as summer for seeing the wonders of wildlife. I now enjoy being a kestrel box monitor for the NJ Department of Environmental Protection as a Wildlife Conservation Corps volunteer. I have also done grassland bird monitoring for NJ Audubon at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst.

Amico Island Park is a charming spot in Delran Township along the Delaware River. Several trails allow you to pass under old growth trees, with many perch-

ing birds calling (though not always visible), but also navigate the shoreline, popular with lots of dark double-crested cormorants.

We had a good group attending. Several were modest about their beginner-birder skills, but after having the constant call of the Carolina Wren pointed out, people began to identify it before I did! Soon those close to me were picking up on other calls:



A heron rookery on Amico Island.

the northern cardinal, chickadee, white-breasted nuthatch, red-bellied woodpecker, northern flicker, and many more birds in the branches.

Finally, George and Leona led us to the icing on the cake: In the middle of a small lake was an island featuring a great blue heron rookery! Several adults were sitting on the nest. With good binoculars, you should be able to see their chicks after they have hatched. In the meantime, the parents make a beautiful sight as they fly in and out with nesting material and food for their mates.

Some of our more experienced participants helped to spot hard-to-see birds in the thickets. Many eyes are always better than two, and you can always count on birders to help each other in solidarity.

As the morning ended, I had racked up 20 species on a walk of less than 2 miles; a warm day in early or late spring should bring in far more. Just as valuable were meeting some great Sierra Club members and being part of their enjoyment of the often-hidden bird life around us. Thanks, Sierra!

I hope you join us for future trips to focus on our feathered friends during a walk together.



On May 11, members of the Sierra Club's NJ Chapter had a Q&A with US Rep. Andy Kim about his November bid for the US Senate. Kim has the Sierra Club's endorsement in this race. The talk took place inside the Hamilton Mill, the spacious new home of the NJ Chapter. Pictured are Kim, front row, third from left, his staff, and numerous members of the Club's Conservation Committee and Executive Committee.

MONEY MATTERS

The Many Different Ways to Support Our Chapter

By Jim Andreano • Fundraising Committee Chair

Welcome to our second installment of “Money Matters.” Let's talk about the lifeblood of the Sierra Club or any other nonprofit: cash donations from supporters who believe in the organization's mission. Donations are essential to help us work toward a safer, healthier environment for you and your family.

Why donate to our New Jersey Chapter? Because you believe in our mission. If you didn't, you wouldn't have received this, much less be reading it.

How to donate? We conduct formal fundraising drives via US Mail and e-mail (no annoying phone calls) three times a year. That's it. Our next fundraising drive will be in summer. Be on the lookout for your solicitation letter.

What if I can't wait that long? Online donations can be made from our website: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/ways-give

Alternatively, you can donate by mail. Make the check payable to Sierra Club New Jersey Chapter, and send it to:

Sierra Club New Jersey Chapter
PO Box 269
Garwood, NJ 07027-0269

A few other ideas to consider:

Monthly Donations: You can support our work all year long by becoming a monthly supporter. Simply determine the monthly amount with which you feel comfortable. When you donate online, you will see an option to make your gift monthly at checkout.

Commemorative and Memorial Donations: Want to honor a loved one

who shares Sierra Club ideals? Donate in their name to the NJ Chapter of the Sierra Club. We will notify the honoree of the gift. Similarly, a deceased loved one can be remembered if you invite well-wishers to make a memorial donation in the person's name. Either type of donation can be accomplished on our website or through the mail.

Here's how to make a commemorative or memorial donation online:

Visit <https://shorturl.at/diCM6> (Click the red “Continue” button for commemorative or memorial gifts)

Tax-Deductible Donations: Because the Sierra Club engages in political activism, donations are generally not tax deductible. The Sierra Club is a 501(c)(4) social welfare organization. This status allows the Sierra Club to engage in legislative lobbying and political advocacy to a much greater extent than most other groups. Most New Jerseyans do not itemize deductions on their tax returns. Therefore, this is usually not a concern.

However, if tax deductions are important to you, you should make your check payable to Sierra Club Foundation. The Foundation is an independent 501(c)(3) organization, and donations are charitable and tax-deductible. The Foundation supports a variety of environmental programs and organizations. It is also the fiscal sponsor of the Sierra Club's charitable environmental programs. By law, we are allowed to use donations to the Foundation only for the purposes outlined above.

In future columns, we will discuss alternative ways to support the New Jersey Chapter of the Sierra Club.

We thank you for your generosity. You make it all possible.



Dealing with 1,4-Dioxane

By Arin Harkawat and Ashley Kim • Environmental & Social Justice Committee

Last year on March 23, the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) filed suit against several chemical companies in the state due to contamination from the persistent toxic compound 1,4-Dioxane. The lawsuit claims these companies knowingly and willfully contaminated the natural resources of the state, including the soil and the drinking water. The lawsuit alleges the companies mishandled the chemical and that hundreds of industrial facilities and landfills across the state now show evidence of 1,4-Dioxane contamination, with a particularly high burden on environmental justice communities, which tend to be overburdened with pollution. The DEP is seeking civil penalties, environmental damages, and more.

1,4-Dioxane is a synthetic chemical that causes eye, throat, and nose irritation. Very heavy exposure can cause kidney and liver damage and even death. Long-term exposure may increase the risk of cancer. As 1,4-Dioxane is typically found in consumer products such as shampoo and laundry detergent, it can easily enter the environment through waste discharge. The compound does not break down



Arin Harkawat (left) and Ashley Kim

easily and may remain in groundwater or waterways for an extended period of time. As 3 million out of the 8.9 million people living in New Jersey rely on public water supplies that draw from groundwater, the DEP has implemented a maximum 1,4-Dioxane ground water quality standard of 0.4 µg/L (micrograms per liter).

Besides groundwater regulation, the state has made little progress on regulating 1,4-Dioxane in drinking water or in household products. States including New York have restricted the presence of the compound in cosmetics. However, the problem is more widespread: 1,4-Dioxane lurks among the ingredients in many household products. The lawsuit may be a sign of increased vigilance

>continued on page 7

ELECTRIC CAR *continued from page 1*

So, instead of maintaining the incentives that have helped push electric vehicle sales to all-time highs, the state is imposing major new costs on potential EV buyers that are likely to impede sales.

These include:

- Gov. Murphy's budget eliminates the sales tax exemption over three years, a savings worth between \$2,000 to \$3,300 on new car sales between \$30,000 to 50,000.
- The state keeps underbudgeting for the EV incentive program (worth \$4,000 per car). Available money for this program ran out five months into the fiscal year in 2023, compared to nine months in 2022.
- The Transportation Trust Fund bill mentioned above included a new annual "registration fee" for EVs of \$250, rising to \$290 in five years. However,

the kicker is that EV owners will have to pay four years' worth of fees up front when they purchase a new vehicle, adding \$1,060 to the cost of a new EV. This is supposed to make up for the fact that EVs don't pay gasoline taxes that fund the Transportation Trust Fund. In contrast, the registration fee for a regular internal combustion car is \$59. (The NJ Chapter is lobbying to replace this "registration fee" with a small per kWh surcharge on electricity dispensed at the EV charging station.)

In total, it may cost an additional \$8,000 to purchase a new EV in New Jersey. The NJ Chapter is actively lobbying to restore the sales tax exemption, ensure enough money is budgeted for a full year of EV incentives, and minimize discriminatory "road use" fees imposed on EV owners.

1,4-DIOXANE *continued from page 6*

by New Jersey to address 1,4-Dioxane contamination and the arrival of justice in communities under siege from toxic compounds.

Overburdened communities are characterized as low-income areas facing disproportionate levels of environmental hazards. More often than not, industrial facilities are placed near these communities, worsening the health hazards. 1,4-Dioxane is a perfect example. The compound has leached out from industrial facilities into local waterways, affecting a large portion of the state, notably underserved and overburdened communities. Especially due

to economic constraints, access to clean water is a continual struggle in overburdened communities; and, as with per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), removing the compound from waterways will be a challenge. The DEP lawsuit is a step in the right direction.

Seeking compensation for damages shows the state's focus on environmental justice—establishing equity in marginalized areas in response to environmental hazards. By addressing the root of the contamination, the state is taking a step toward ensuring all communities in New Jersey are safe from 1,4-Dioxane.



Learn more about your environment... take a Sierra Club educational hike!

Chapter Outings Chair: Leona Fluck pineypaddlers@gmail.com, (609) 259-3734
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Hunterdon Warren: Ron Gelok III Gelokron@gmail.com
North Jersey: Co-Chairs: *Open Position!* and Mary Walsh, north.outings.chair@newjersey.sierraclub.org
Gateway: Co-Chairs: Steven Yafet, syafet@gmail.com and Ron Pate, Ronpate31@verizon.net
Hudson Co.: Steve Krinsky, stevekrinsky@comcast.net
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Singles Section: *Open Position!*
LGBTQ+ Section: Wanda Ashbrook, pridegrlnj@gmail.com
Inspiring Connections Outdoors: Oscar Nazar chair.njico.sierraclub@gmail.com
River Touring: Fred Tocce, (908) 453-2205 (H) RD-1, Box 277, Washington 07882

Outing Leaders and Group Outings Coordinators: Please send write-ups for October to December 2024 to your group outings coordinator (or, if you don't associate yourself with a single group, directly to pineypaddlers@gmail.com) before August 1, 2024. Outings for early January 2025 can be included.

NOTES ON OUTINGS: Outings are generally open to Club members, guests, and anyone interested. Unless otherwise specified, the events are free. All participants in Sierra Club outings must sign liability waivers. Please check with the leader before bringing small children on an outing. A parent or other responsible adult must accompany persons under 18. Participants may bring pets on outings only if the event description specifically says pets are allowed.

Sierra Club outings are arranged and conducted by volunteer leaders who are responsible for the safety, welfare, and enjoyment of all participants.

Leaders determine qualifications to participate, adequacy of equipment, routes to be followed, and special precautions to be taken. Please arrive adequately prepared and equipped. If you have any allergies, please remember to bring your medication. The leader has the final word in the conduct of the trip. Your cooperation will help ensure a safe and pleasant outing.

Please arrive early at the meeting place so the outing can start on time. For day hikes, lunch, water (at least a liter), extra clothing, rain gear, and emergency equipment should be carried in a small daypack. For all except easy hikes, sturdy over-the-ankle shoes or boots should be worn. For most trips, you are expected to have your own equipment. In some cases, it may be rented from outdoor/camping suppliers—call or message the trip leader for more information. If the weather is questionable on the date of the outing, you may assume that it will take place, unless the hike description indicates otherwise.

Unless registration is required, or if you have a question, it is not necessary to contact the leader before the trip. However, as these outings are planned many months in advance, we do advise that you contact the trip leader one to two days before the outing to make sure it is not canceled.

If you are a Sierra Club member interested in becoming an outing leader or have suggestions for new outings, contact your group outings chair or the Chapter outings chair for assistance and further information. The Chapter group or section leading each outing is given at the end of the write-up, as follows:

Atlantic Chapter, ACOC; Central Jersey, C; Gateway, G; Jersey Shore, JS; Hunterdon Warren (HW); LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender, Queer, Plus); Loantaka, L; NJ Chapter, NJ; North Jersey, N; Raritan Valley, RV; Ocean, O; River Touring, RT; Singles Section SS; Skylands, Sk; South Jersey, SJ; West Jersey, W.

JULY

Jul 3 (Wed): Hike with Your Dog at Perrineville Lake Park (Monmouth Co.) 10 a.m., 3-4 miles, easy pace. A popular park to walk your dog! Beautiful woodlands, natural fields, and a picturesque lake. There are some ups and downs on forest trails. Hiking boots and poles recommended. Meet here in the heart of quiet Millstone at 23 Agress Rd. There is a portable toilet available at the parking lot. Wear a broad-brimmed hat, light clothing, and pants tucked into socks. Leaders will bring insect repellent and sunscreen. Rain cancels. Option: late lunch at Albivi Brick Oven restaurant. Leaders: George and Leona F., pineypaddlers@gmail.com Preregistration is required: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/jersey-shore (JS)

Jul 6 (Sat): Hacklebarney State Park (Morris Co.) 10 a.m. - 3 p.m., 4-5 miles, moderate hike. The Black River gorge, woodlands, and trails provide a great escape for walkers and hikers. Some of the trails have hills, and we will cross a few river bridges to reach other parts of this park. This is a lovely summer hike. Meet at 119 Hacklebarney Rd., Long Valley. There are facilities. Bring water, snacks, and lunch. Hiking boots are recommended. Rain cancels. Co-leaders: Wanda, pridegrlnj@aim.com, and Rebecca Wilkin, rebeccawilkin@gmail.com Preregistration required: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/lgbt (LGBTQ+)

Jul 7 (Sun): Hike at Woodford Cedar Run Wildlife Refuge (Burlington Co.) 10 a.m., 3-4 miles, easy pace. We'll begin our visit at the Nature Center and "slither on in" to the Reptile Room. Cedar Run Wildlife Refuge consists of 171 acres of protected "Green Acres" Pinelands habitat. Cedar Run features about 3 miles of trails for a leisurely stroll around the lake or the option for a longer walk into the forest. The Wildlife Housing Area is the highlight of any visit with nearly 60 resident owls, eagles, vultures, raccoons, turtles, and more! Admission: adults (13+) \$10, Children (4-12) \$5. Address: 4 Sawmill Rd, Medford. There are facilities. Bring water and snacks. Pets are not permitted. Option for late lunch at Vincentown Diner. Leaders: George & Leona F., pineypaddlers@gmail.com Preregistration is required: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/west-jersey (W)

Jul 13 (Sat): Hike and Swim Catfish Pond, Camp Mohican (Water Gap), Blairstown (Warren Co.) 10 a.m. The hike will cover 7 miles in 4 hours. Hilly Terrain. Medium to strenuous difficulty. Features: Catfish Pond, Appalachian Trail, scenic views, AMC Camp Mohican. Facilities: There is a visitor center with indoor bathrooms and a place to change clothes. Requirement: Hiking boots and a daypack with water and lunch. Registration required via the website: Start with the calendar www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey and click on the event "Hike and Swim at Catfish Pond," then click on RSVP. Directions for the meeting place will be sent via email to members who register. Leaders: Jimi Oleksiak, The_Hikist@mac.com and Jerry Ruocco (SS)

Jul 13 (Sat): Birding Walk: Assunpink Wildlife Management Area—Navigation Beacon Area (Monmouth Co.) 8:30 a.m., 2 miles, easy pace. Susan Matson is an avid and experienced birder and will be our guide on the walk. The trail includes a circular hike that takes about an hour and a half. In the summer we will see many indigo buntings and common yellowthroats, pretty and easy to spot. The yellow-billed cuckoo is a secretive bird and a common breeder in Monmouth County. Susan will identify the cuckoo for us with its loud call. We'll meet at the Assunpink Conservation Ctr. (Log Cabin), East Branch Rd., Allentown. Portable toilet at parking lot. Please no dogs. Bring binoculars, water, and snacks. Wear a broad-brimmed hat, light clothing, and pants tucked into socks. Leaders will bring insect repellent and sunscreen. Leona and George F., pineypaddlers@gmail.com Preregistration is required: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/jersey-shore (JS)

Jul 17 (Wed): Crystal Lake Park (Burlington Co.) 10 a.m., 3 miles, easy pace. Crystal Lake Park is over 370 acres with upland and lowland forests, a freshwater lake and wetlands, diverse vegetation, and many bird species. Meet at 2401 Axe Factory Rd., Mansfield. There is a large sign at the entrance, turn in and drive to the large parking area. There are permanent restrooms and a drinking fountain. Bring water, snacks, and lunch. There is a pavilion with picnic tables. Wear a broad-brimmed hat, light clothing, and pants tucked into socks. Leaders will bring insect repellent and sunscreen. George and Leona F., pineypaddlers@gmail.com Preregistration is required: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/west-jersey (W)

Jul 21 (Sun): Huber Woods Park Hike, Middletown (Monmouth Co.) 10 a.m., 3-4 miles, easy pace. There are pretty, well-maintained trails. There is an environmental center and a small reptile house. We will walk the hickory and oak forest, with occasional distant views of the Navesink River. Many warblers nest in Monmouth County Parks during the summer. We'll listen and look for pileated woodpeckers. There are some ups and downs; good footwear is recommended. Bring water and snacks. Leashed dogs are welcome. Address: 25 Brown's Dock Rd., Middletown. There are facilities. Wear a broad-brimmed hat, light clothing, and pants tucked into socks. Leaders will bring insect repellent and sunscreen. George and Leona F., pineypaddlers@gmail.com Preregistration required: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/jersey-shore (JS)

Jul 26 (Fri): Family Hike at The Watershed Institute (Mercer Co.) 10 a.m., 3-4 miles, easy pace. We'll walk the new accessible Hickory Loop boardwalk trail, and then take short steps down to the Blue Trail. The Blue Trail takes us around field edges and along forest paths with some elevations as we continue to the restored Wargo Pond and dock overlook. In May there was a sandpiper on the pond edge. The trail may be muddy in places; wear appropriate footwear. Bring water, snacks, and lunch. After lunch we'll visit the Butterfly House. Meeting at 31 Titus Mill Rd, Pennington. There are facilities. Leashed dogs are permitted. Rain cancels. Co-leaders: Joanne P, jpatmeadowbrook@gmail.com and Leona F., pineypaddlers@gmail.com Preregistration is required: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/central-jersey (C)

AUGUST

Aug 2 (Fri): Hike at Smith's Woods and Smithville Park (Burlington Co.) 10 a.m., 2-3 miles, easy pace. International Beer Day! Smith's Woods and Smithville Park feature a diverse collection of habitats as well as views of Rancocas Creek. Meet at the Smith's Woods access parking lot, 39 East Railroad Ave. Facilities are available. Bring water, snacks, and hiking poles if you use them. Leashed dogs are welcome. Wear a broad brimmed hat, light clothing and pants tucked into socks. Leaders will bring insect repellent and sunscreen. Option: late lunch at the Vincentown Diner. George & Leona F., pineypaddlers@gmail.com Preregistration is required: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/west-jersey (W)

Aug 10 (Sat): Hike and Splash at Ramapo Valley Reservation, Mahwah (Bergen Co.) 10 a.m. The hike will cover 7 miles in 4 hours. Hilly terrain. Medium to strenuous difficulty. Features: MacMillan Reservoir, Ramapo River, Bear Swamp Lake, and ruins. Facilities: Indoor bathroom building. Requirement: hiking boots and a daypack with water and lunch. Registration required via website: Start with the calendar at www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey and click on the event "Hike and Splash at Ramapo Valley," then click on RSVP. Directions for the meeting place will be sent via email to members who register. Leaders: Jimi Oleksiak, The_Hikist@mac.com, and Jerry Ruocco (SS)

Aug 14 (Wed): Hike at Davidson's Mill Pond Park (Middlesex Co.) 10 a.m., 3-4 miles, easy pace. There are lovely garden displays and a butterfly house. Last summer we saw a pileated woodpecker in the woods. We begin our hike on the Yellow Trail, a grassy/rocky section through the woods that includes narrow boardwalks over swampy areas. The forested Blue Trail has elevations, exposed roots to step over, and large stones for steps in some sections. Hiking poles and good footwear recommended. Wear a broad-brimmed hat, light clothing, and pants tucked into socks. Leaders will bring insect repellent and sunscreen. Bring water, snacks, and lunch. Dogs on leash are welcome. Portable toilet at parking lot. Rain cancels. Leaders: George and Leona F, pineypaddlers@gmail.com Preregistration is required: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/raritan-valley (RV)

Aug 17 (Sat): Eagle Rock Reservation Hike (Essex Co.) 9 a.m., 5 - 6 miles. We will hike at a moder-

>continued on page 8

OUTINGS continued from page 7

ate pace. Meet at the Essex County 9/11 Memorial, main entrance, Prospect Avenue and Eagle Rock Avenue, West Orange. There are facilities. No dogs please. Bring water and snacks. Rain cancels. Contact the leader for information. Ron Pate, 973-965-7578 or Ronpate31@verizon.net Registration required at www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/gateway (G)

Aug 23 (Fri): Summer Walk at Duke Farms (Somerset Co.) 10 a.m., 2-3 miles, leisurely walk with property highlights stops along the way. Duke Farms serves as a model of environmental stewardship in the 21st century. The trails are easy and mostly level; surface varies between grass/wood chips, gravel, and paved. Sunny--most paths are not wooded. Broad-brimmed hat and sunscreen recommended. Meet at the Farm Barn Orientation Center. www.dukefarms.org/ We'll be seated in The Café, with a cup of coffee and a clipboard. Bring your camera, water, snacks, and lunch on the walk. Pets are not permitted. Excessive heat cancels. Heavy rain cancels. Leaders: George and Leona F., pineypaddlers@gmail.com Preregistration is required: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/raritan-valley (RV)

SEPTEMBER

Sept 8 (Sun): Guided Tour of the Isaac Watson House (headquarters of the Daughters of the American Revolution) and Spring Lake Walk (Mercer Co.) 12:30 p.m. The Watson House is open for public, docent-guided tours in the spring and fall. Donations welcome. Built by Isaac Watson in 1708 and recognized as the oldest house in Mercer County, this historic landmark was originally set on 800 acres and is situated on a bluff overlooking Watson's Creek in John A. Roebing Park. After the tour we'll take a walk around Spring Lake and look for sunning turtles on logs, many resident birds, **mute swans** on the lake and an active **beaver** lodge. Bring water and snacks. Meet at the parking area 151 Westcott Ave.; facilities at Tulpehaking Nature Center. Please no dogs. Co-leaders: Leona F., pineypaddlers@gmail.com and Joanne P., jpatmeadowbrook@gmail.com Preregistration is required: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/central-jersey (C)

Sept 14 (Sat): Camp Glen Gray Hike, Ramapo Mountain Forest, Oakland (Bergen Co.) 10 a.m. The hike will cover 7 miles in 4 hours. Hilly terrain. Medium to strenuous difficulty. Features: Twin Hill Lookout, Mill Stone Hill, Lake Vreeland, camp sites, and cabins. Facilities: portable toilets and outhouses. Requirement: hiking boots and a daypack with water and lunch. Registration required via the website: Start with the calendar at www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey and click on the event "Camp Glen Gray Hike," then click on RSVP. Directions for the meeting place will be sent via email to members who register. Leaders: Jimi Oleksiak, The_Hikist@mac.com and Jerry Ruocco (SS)

Sept 15 (Sun): Cloverdale Farm County Park Nature Walk (Ocean Co.) 11 a.m., 2 miles. The Ocean County Natural Lands Trust Fund Program acquired Cloverdale Farm in 2004. Within the boundaries of this 90-acre park, we find the diversity of the Pine Barrens wetlands, uplands, and the beauty of 20 acres of cranberry bogs all year long. Meet at 34 Cloverdale Rd., Barnegat. There are facilities. Leashed dogs are welcome. Bring water, snacks, and lunch. Wear a broad-brimmed hat, light clothing, and pants tucked into socks. Co-leaders: George and Leona F., pineypaddlers@gmail.com and Margaret Mary Piccolo, gogreenp1@yahoo.com Preregistration is required: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/ocean-county (O)

Sept 21 (Sat): Eagle Rock Reservation Hike (Essex Co.) 9 a.m., 5 - 6 miles. We will hike at a moderate pace. Meet at the Essex County 9/11 Memorial, main entrance, Prospect Avenue and Eagle Rock Avenue, West Orange. There are facilities. No dogs please. Bring water and snacks. Rain cancels. Contact the leader for information. Ron Pate, 973-965-7578 or Ronpate31@verizon.net Registration required at www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/gateway (G)

Sept 25 (Wed): Hike at Mountain Lakes Nature Preserve, Princeton (Mercer Co.) 10 a.m., 3-4 miles, easy pace. This 75-acre natural area is mostly flat, wooded terrain with some inclines and occasional tree roots. We'll have a snack break to read the interpretive signage at the man-made ice ponds and dams. They were created for harvesting ice by the Princeton Ice Company before the age of refrigeration. Meet at 30 Mountain Ave, parking lot. There are facilities. Hiking boots are recommended and hiking poles if you use them. Trails can be muddy in some places. Rain cancels. Bring water and snacks. Option: late lunch at Conte's Pizza. Co-leaders: Leona F., leona@pineypaddlers.com and Lynn E., lynnebeling@comcast.net Preregistration is required: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/central-jersey (C)

Sept 29 (Sun): Wharton State Forest Hike (Atlantic Co.) 10 a.m., 3 miles, easy pace with an option to continue the hike at a moderate pace along the 4-mile Batona White Trail, which is a loop going through upland pine oak forests and dropping in elevation to the Batsto River and Batsto Lake. We'll begin our walk on the Sand and Water Trail that winds along a sandy forest road and into a dense Atlantic white cedar swamp. We'll follow a series of wooden foot bridges and the Batona Trail back to the visitors center for our lunch break. Then interested hikers will continue the hike for 4 miles around Batsto Lake. Good footwear and hiking poles are recommended. Leashed dogs are welcome. Bring water, snacks, and lunch. Rain cancels. Meet at the Batsto Village visitors center parking lot, 31 Batsto Rd, Hammonton. There are facilities. Co-leaders: Tom Boghosian, tfboghosian44@gmail.com and Leona F., pineypaddlers@gmail.com Preregistration is required: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/calendar (SJ)

OCTOBER

Oct 4 (Fri): Pinelands Month—Guided Walk at Double Trouble State Park/Village (Ocean Co.) 10 a.m., 2-3 miles, easy pace. Once home to both a lumber industry and cranberry farm, this former company town is a window into past and current industries in the Pinelands. Andrew Anderson, Historic Resource Interpretive Specialist, will be our guide. Meet at Double Trouble State Park parking lot, Pinewald-Keswick, and Double Trouble Rds. There are facilities. Leashed dogs are welcome. Bring water, snacks, and lunch. Rain cancels. Co-leaders: George and Leona F., pineypaddlers@gmail.com and Margaret Mary Piccolo, gogreenp1@yahoo.com Preregistration is required: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/ocean-county (O)



There are 12 regional groups in the NJ Chapter of the Sierra Club. All groups have open officer positions for volunteers and welcome new members. Interested persons should reach out to the contacts listed below. Participation in the Sierra Club is a meaningful and rewarding way to give back to your community and help create a sustainable and healthier environment for all.

Groups are listed in rough geographical sequence: North to South

SKYLANDS GROUP (Sussex and Northern Warren counties)

Webpage: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/skyland

Facebook: www.facebook.com/SkylandsNJSC

Email: chachabacon@yahoo.com; phone: 973-886-7950

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE and other OFFICERS (ExCom members are elected to serve 2-year terms; term-expiry date in parentheses)

Chair (12/31/24)	Greg Gorman	chachabacon@yahoo.com
Vice Chair (12/31/25)	Susan Williams	SkylandsGroup@gmail.com
Secretary (12/31/24)	Norene Haberski	norenehaberski2@gmail.com
Treasurer (12/31/24)	Norene Haberski	norenehaberski2@gmail.com
ExCom at large (12/31/23)	Dave Alcock	dwhoob@hotmail.com
(12/31/25)	Allison Orsi	aorsi@hotmail.com
(12/31/24)	Jill Aquino	jda1timeforchange@gmail.com
(12/31/25)	Chris Dunbar	chrisdunbar458@gmail.com
Conservation Chair	Greg Gorman	chachabacon@yahoo.com
Outings Chair	Dave Alcock	dwhoob@hotmail.com
Outreach Chair	<i>Open Position!</i>	
Environmental Justice	Susan Williams	SkylandsGroup@gmail.com
Political Co-Chair	Susan Williams	SkylandsGroup@gmail.com
Publicity Chair	Norene Haberski	norenehaberski2@gmail.com
Recycling/Zero Waste	Jill Aquino	jda1timeforchange@gmail.com
Chair Webmaster	Ron Goshal	

GENERAL MEETINGS (Conducted via Zoom)

The Skylands Group of the NJ Chapter of the Sierra Club serves Sussex and Northern Warren counties. We offer a variety of opportunities for the public to learn about and connect with the natural environment. We present informative films and speakers; exploration of the great outdoors on hikes, edible-plant tours, and picnics; public outreach via town tabling; and visits to schools. Our hope is to foster love and deep respect for our great outdoors.

The Skylands Group works with grassroots organizations to protect open spaces and water quality, promote clean energy, and oppose privatization of public trust resources.

CURRENT CAMPAIGNS: The Skylands Group advocates the protection and enjoyment of the wild environment and public parks

The Skylands Group supports the Green New Deal, Sunrise Movement, and transition toward a clean energy economy, and the Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic River Partnership.

HUNTERDON WARREN GROUP

(Hunterdon and Southern Warren counties)

Webpage: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/hunterdonwarren

Meetup: www.meetup.com/NJSierraClub/

Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/sierraclub.hunterdonwarren/

YouTube: www.youtube.com/@sierraclubhunterdonwarren9255/videos

OFFICERS

Chair	<i>Open Position!</i>	
Vice Chair	Celeste Martin *	celeste.martin@sluhn.org
Conservation Chair	<i>Open Position!</i>	
Political Co-Chairs	Karen Becker *	karbecker@gmail.com
	Amy Weeder *	aweeder@comcast.net
Outings	<i>Open Position!</i>	
Treasurer, Secretary	<i>Open Position!</i>	
Warren County		
Warehouse Issues	Pat Banes	patrick_banes@comcast.net
Webmaster/Listmaster	John Kashwick*	jkashwick@gmail.com
ExCom at Large	Jonathan D. Wall*	docjdwall@gmail.com
	* Group Executive Committee Member	

GENERAL MEETINGS: Meetings may be virtual or hybrid (in-person and virtual). Please check www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/hunterdonwarren for updates or to register for events. Registered participants will receive Zoom meeting information.

July 17 (Wed): 8:45 a.m. - noon. Grow A Row - Volunteer Workshop

Join us as we spend the morning at the Hunterdon County-based America's Grow a Row farm. We will begin with a brief overview of the project and from there, we will spend up to 3 hours harvesting crops to feed the hungry. You are welcome to bring breakfast before or lunch afterwards and enjoy the beautiful farm and countryside. The event is rain or shine. Registration is required: <https://tinyurl.com/SCandGAR> For more information about Grow a Row, visit their website: www.americasgrowarow.org/

September 28 (Sat) Clinton, Clinton Township & High Bridge Green Fair - Save the Date. Let us know if you would like to volunteer and help out at our tent. Email karbecker@gmail.com

NJ CURRENT ISSUES

Warehouse Projects: There are several massive warehouse projects proposed for Hunterdon and Warren counties. Please consider representing our group at local, county and state meetings which may permit these projects. Contact: Patrick Banes at patrick_banes@comcast.net

Night Skies: The Hunterdon Warren Group and the Light Pollution and Dark Skies Committee (LPDSC) are encouraging municipalities to curb light pollution by adopting stricter ordinances to reduce excessive light pollution. Help us partner with environmental commissions and land use boards to encourage municipalities to enact energy and tax saving initiatives. Contact: Jonathan Wall at jonwall@jonwall.com

NORTH JERSEY GROUP

(Bergen and Passaic counties)

Webpage: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/north-jersey

Meetup: www.meetup.com/NJSierraClub/

Facebook: www.facebook.com/northjerseysierraclub

Twitter: [@sierraclub_nj](https://twitter.com/sierraclub_nj)

Instagram: [sierraclubnorth_nj](https://www.instagram.com/sierraclubnorth_nj)

OFFICERS

Chair	Diane Scarangella	diascat@hotmail.com
Co-Chair	Kris Scheufele*	kris.scheufele@gmail.com
Treasurer	Bob Weiss*	bobweiss1967@gmail.com
Secretary	Ron De Vos	rondevos58@outlook.com
Event Planning and Membership Committee		
Chair	Kris Scheufele*	kris.scheufele@gmail.com
Political Action Committee		
Chair	Ron De Vos	rondevos58@outlook.com
Outings Committee		
Chair	Rebecca Wilkin	rebeccalwilkin@gmail.com
Youth Outreach/Outings		
Chair	Rebecca Wilkin	rebeccalwilkin@gmail.com
Conservation Committee		
Chair	Open Position!	
Climate Change Committee		
Chair	Jeff Rapaport*	jeffrap@optonline.net
Co-Chair	Judy Green*	jugreen547@gmail.com
Diversity, Inclusion, Environmental Justice		
Chair	Bushra Asfare*	bushra_c.e@hotmail.com
Consulting Engineer		
	Bushra Asfare	bushra_c.e@hotmail.com
Social Media/Website		
Chair	Marie Mannino	mmannino@yahoo.com

*Elected North Jersey Group Executive Committee Member.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: We are seeking volunteer hike leaders! If you are interested in co-leading one of our all-inclusive hikes and/or LGBTQIA+ hikes, please let us know! We need you! Contact Wanda Ashbrook at pridegrlnj@aim.com or Rebecca Wilkins at rebeccalwilkin@gmail.com for more information!

BLOG

Betsy Longendorfer and Judy Green's free blog, climatefriendlylifestyle.substack.com, features new articles. A series called Electrify Everything includes Part 1: Making a Plan; Part 2: The Energy Audit (crucial for proceeding logically and cost effectively with home electrification projects); and Part 3. Heat Pump Basics. Heat pumps are a boon to climate friendly heating and cooling systems.

As a follow-up to Food-Climate-Health, a "how to" on tackling food-related climate change is the basis for the article, *Becoming a Flexitarian Eater: Ease Into a Healthy, Mostly Plant-Based Diet*.

Appearing, too, are articles on e-bikes and e-scooters, greenways and rail trails, and the actions that one of the local high school environmental clubs is taking.

North Group also held a showing and discussion of the pro-nuclear movie "Nuclear Now" by Oliver Stone. The 2022 movie is a documentary that takes the position that only nuclear energy will help us achieve sufficient carbon emissions reductions in time to avoid irreversible climate change.

YOUTH OUTREACH

Composting and Food Sustainability: Anyone interested in composting/food sustainability is welcome to join our Zoom meetings! We are currently contacting school district administrators and researching grants/funding for composting initiatives in schools. Please reach out to rebeccalwilkin@gmail.com if you'd like to join.

Slack Group for members of the Youth Outreach Committee: Join our youth Slack Group to find out more about environmental opportunities for students or if you have any questions. You can join it at bit.ly/3BHU8Uc or contact rebeccalwilkin@gmail.com if you'd like to join.

Upcoming Meeting for High School Students, environmental leaders, and new volunteers. Dates/times to be determined. Contact Erica Cowper at ecowper22@gmail.com to join.

Preserving Open Spaces in Bergen and Passaic Counties: Contact Diascat@hotmail.com for more information about what you can do to preserve and/or restore open spaces and woodlands in Bergen/Passaic Counties. **Demand** the replanting of the 100+ trees in Overpeck Park Area IV and the creation of unpaved walking paths, and **Oppose** the creation of great lawns, paved walking paths, bike paths, and roadways in our natural habitats.

Protect the Climate: Contact Jeff at jeffrap@optonline.net and keep your eye out for actions related to

- The Tennessee Gas pipeline upgrades in Sussex and Western Passaic County.
- The NJ Transit Gas backup plant in Kearney.
- The Passaic County Sewerage Commission's Back up Gas plant in Newark.
- Williams Transco Regional Energy Access Expansion project.
- The transportation of Liquefied Natural Gas through NJ from Pa. – Gibbstown Terminal.

GATEWAY GROUP

(Hillside, Elizabeth, and Essex County, except for Livingston, Millburn, and Roseland)

Webpage: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/Gateway/ (Also accessible from the NJ Chapter webpage: sierraclub.org/new-jersey/gateway)

Members can join the Gateway Group on **Facebook** at www.facebook.com/pages/Gateway-Group-NJ-Sierra-Club/128998363842782

Please contact any of the leaders below if you are interested in joining our campaigns to protect the environment. There are several group officer positions open.

OFFICERS

Chair	Bill Beren*	973-746-9661	Beren1@verizon.net
Conservation Chair	Caroline Kane*	646-961-9003	ckane678@verizon.net
Treasurer	Open Position!		

Secretary	Open Position!		
Program Co-Chairs	Suzanne Trimel*	973-509-8335	suzanne.trimel@gmail.com
	Steven Yafet	908-354-2537	syafet@gmail.com
Publicity Chair	Open Position!		
Political Chair & Recycling Coordinator	Danielle Rapsas*		danielle.rapsas@sierraclub.org
Fundraising Chair	Open Position!		
Membership Chair	Steven Yafet*	(see above)	
Passaic River Issues	Steven Yafet*	(see above)	
Outings Chair	Ron Pate		ronpate31@verizon.net
Webmaster	Christy Morganstein	732-718-4343	christy@medartsweb.com

*Group Executive Committee

The following Gateway Group positions are open for volunteers: vice-chair, secretary, Newark and Elizabeth issues. If you are interested, contact Bill Beren at 973-746-9661.

Please contact our program co-chairs if you have ideas or suggestions for a meeting-topic, program, or conservation project.

We invite YOU to join in our activism and ask your support as we strive to address the many issues facing our urban and suburban communities. Note the vacant positions listed above.

EVENTS

The Gateway Group participated in four events this spring: Montclair Township's first (and hopefully annual) EarthFest on April 28, the Northeast Earth Coalition's Environmental Conference at Montclair State University on April 6, an Earth Day event at the Essex County Roseland Environmental Center (April 21), and Caldwell College's Environmental Justice Conference on March 1. Our participation in the Montclair EarthFest included setting up a Drive Electric Event in concert with Montclair Climate Action, in which EV owners brought their cars and talked with people about their experiences owning and operating an electric car or truck.

These events were a good way to publicize the work that the Sierra Club generally, and the Gateway Group specifically, is doing to fight climate change and protect natural areas in Essex and Union Counties. If you hear of an event in your town, let us know and we can work with you to set up a table and provide literature and other hand-outs. For example, the environmental commission in West Caldwell reached out to us to help them plan a drive electric event in the fall.

CONSERVATION NEWS

This being an election year, the Gateway Group worked with two other Montclair-based environmental groups (Montclair Climate Action and Sustainable Montclair) to develop a questionnaire for candidates running for township mayor and council seats. All 14 candidates responded with thoughtful answers on a wide range of topics that included their commitment to implementing Montclair's new Climate Action Plan, improving transportation options in the township, reducing fossil fuel use, protecting shade trees, improving flood control, and opposing the use of artificial turf on the township's athletic fields.

While the groups collectively decided not to endorse any candidates, we did publicize the answers we received and heard from the candidates themselves, who said they appreciated the questionnaire, as it forced them to think about the role that the council can play in stemming climate change and improving the health and well-being of Montclair residents.

We are also working with members in Maplewood Township who will be voting to elect town council members in June.

Please contact Group Chair Bill Beren or Political Chair Danielle Rapsis if you want the Club to get involved in your local elections.

OUTINGS

Our Outings Chair, Ron Pate, will be scheduling additional outings this summer and fall. Check the Chapter calendar on the NJ Sierra Club website regularly to be notified about these outings as they are scheduled.

HUDSON COUNTY GROUP

Webpage: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/HUDSON-county

Email: HUDSONsierraclub@gmail.com

Facebook: @HCSierraClub

Instagram: @HCSierraClub

Twitter: @HCSierraClub

OFFICERS

Chair	Patricia Hilliard*
Secretary	Rachel Ciekurs*
Conservation Chair	Open Position!
Political Chair	Ricardo Pereira*
Delegate to Chapter	Ricardo Pereira*
Membership	Meera Jaffrey*
Publicity	Spencer Rubino Finn*
Outings / Events	Steve Krinsky*
At-Large	Nancy Booth*
(*ExCom)	

Meeting Schedule: The Hudson County Group meets four times a year. Contact us at HUDSONsierraclub@gmail.com for details.

Upcoming Events: We are planning activities: nature walks, shoreline cleanups and public forums. We will also be doing political outreach. Check our online calendar, watch your email or find us on social media!

Current Campaigns: Please join in. We can use help with any of these:

Environmental Justice: Clean air for Hudson County! Low-income communities and black and brown communities suffer the most from environmental destruction: ele-

>continued on page 10

vated levels of cancer, asthma and other respiratory disease from air pollution. Join us to oppose the widening of the NJ Turnpike Extension which will add more traffic and bad air to the community.

Liberty State Park: We support rallies called by the Friends of Liberty State Park. As part of our environmental justice campaign, we support the work on the interior of the park which will create 180 acres of wildlife habitat and 50 acres of active recreation for the community.

Skyway Park on the Hackensack River and Essex-Hudson Greenway: The Hudson County Group of the NJ Chapter of the Sierra Club is working to support and expand green spaces in Hudson County. We want to connect existing parks and trails, as part of the Crossroads Campaign to connect greenways across Hudson County. Join up and learn how you can help.

Political Action: In preparation for upcoming elections in New Jersey, we plan to meet with sympathetic public officials. We support the Protecting Against Climate Threats Act (PACT), the Essex Hudson Greenway and the Clean Energy Equity Act. We support renewable energy for NJ Transit and oppose rate hikes for passengers. Let us know if you would like to join our campaigns.

LOANTAKA GROUP

(Morris and Union counties (except for Elizabeth and Hillside), plus Livingston, Milburn, and Roseland, approximately)

Contact: Allen Swanson, chair afswanson@newjersey.sierraclub.org
908-721-7014

Webpage: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/loantaka

Facebook: www.facebook.com/LoantakaGroupNJSC

The Loantaka group recently recognized the volunteers and Madison Borough Council who are taking proactive positions to address the current climate-change crisis in New Jersey. The Group has also entered the spring tabling season by attending events in New Providence, Rahway, and Madison.

Group Chair Allen Swanson is acting as the liaison from the Sierra Club to the "Altman for Congress" campaign in the 7th Congressional District. Look for more information about the campaign and the important issues in this year's election soon. Those who are interested in helping the campaign should contact Allen. 908 721-8184. Email: afswanson@newjersey.sierraclub.org

CENTRAL JERSEY GROUP

(Mercer County and neighboring towns in adjoining counties)

Webpage: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/central-jersey Or find us from the NJ Chapter's website.

OFFICERS

Group Chair	Joanne Pannone	Jpatmeadowbrook@gmail.com
Group Vice Chair	<i>Open Position!</i>	
Secretary	Leona Fluck	Pineypaddlers@gmail.com
Treasurer	Arlene Ceterskiva	Va2c2015@gmail.com
Outings	George and Leona Fluck	Pineypaddlers@gmail.com
Programs	Joanne Pannone	Jpatmeadowbrook@gmail.com
Conservation Chair	Kip Cherry	Kipatthesierraclub@gmail.com
Recycling and Zero Waste Coordinator	Sylvia Kay	Sylviakay222@gmail.com
Trails	Dave Mattek	MattekDC@aol.com
Webmaster	Benjamin Steinberg	
Group Executive Committee Members	Joanne Pannone, Kip Cherry, Sylvia Kay	

We need volunteers to help us stop warehouses and inappropriate developments and keep preserved land from privatization. Our members have been speaking at township meetings for:

Colts Neck Manner
Mercer Corp. Park
Baldpate Hotel/Restaurant

We are working with the Transportation Committee to get electric school buses for New Jersey.

Our recycling and zero waste coordinator has given presentations on plastics and proposed legislation/bills on single use packaging and extended producer responsibility (EPR). More than 25 states have some form of an EPR bill for single-use packaging. We need to reduce the growing amount of municipal solid waste management from local governments and make the producers responsible to remove the packaging toxins and hazardous materials from our environment. People are now accustomed to living without the plastic bags at the store and we notice less-littered roadways, waterways, and beaches.

Our trails coordinator has been working with municipalities to obtain access through obtaining more open space, specifically in Mercer County. We need to preserve more open space to provide clean air and clean water and habitat for people and wildlife to survive and thrive.

We support the Green Amendment. We are working with the Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic Rivers Committee to protect Fiddlers Creek as part of the Partnership Wild and Scenic Delaware River.

We have resumed our Zoom meetings. Let Joanne know what environmental issues you would like to hear about. Our outings are listed on the Sierra Club's NJ Chapter website calendar, where you can sign up!

Everyone is invited. Bring your friends! We welcome new members.

10 | *The Jersey Sierran* | July-September 2024

RARITAN VALLEY GROUP

(Middlesex and Somerset counties and surrounding areas)

Webpage: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/raritan-valley

Facebook: www.facebook.com/RaritanGroupNJSC

Twitter: www.twitter.com/RaritanSierra

OFFICERS

Group Chair	S. Pasricha	spjersey@gmail.com
Conservation Chair	Gary Frederick	609-203-3382 garyfrederick@newjersey.sierraclub.org
Membership Chair	John Miraglia	johnworks3@aol.com
Political Co-Chairs	Bernadette Maher,	<i>Open Positions!</i>
Publicity Chair		<i>Open Position!</i>
Treasurer	S. Pasricha	
Co-Webmasters	Dennis Colligan,	<i>Open Position!</i>
Outings/Events Co-Chairs	John Miraglia, S. Pasricha, Bernadette Maher	
Health & Air Quality Issues Coordinator	Linda Powell	
Group Executive Committee Members	Gary Frederick*, S. Pasricha*, Teresa Callahan**, Kevin Corcoran**, and Bernadette Maher*	

*Jan 2023-Dec 2024

**Jan 2024-Dec 2025

Monthly membership meetings are typically held on the fourth Wednesday in New Brunswick. We discuss environmental issues (impacting Middlesex and Somerset), upcoming events, and volunteer efforts. See the calendar on the RVG webpage for meetings, outings, and events.

The issues of interest to our communities include:

1. Opposition to new fossil fuel infrastructure;
2. Conservation, preservation, and protection of the Raritan River Basin area; and,
3. Passage and enforcement of environmentally friendly ordinances.

NEWS FROM THE RARITAN VALLEY AREA

• **Northeast Supply Enhancement (NESE), FERC Docket CP17-101-005:** Finally, after 8 years of battles, we've won the war! Williams gave notice to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) relinquishing their permit for NESE. A polluting compressor station was to be built in Franklin Township in Somerset County along with transmission pipelines through Old Bridge in Middlesex County and under Raritan Bay. The gas would have been delivered to New York City.

Thanks to all those who intervened and submitted comments to FERC. We especially thank Clean Ocean Action and the Stop NESE coalition for their commitment to stopping fossil fuel projects and for protecting New Jersey from the devastating effects of the climate crisis.

• **Northeast Supply Enhancement (NESE), FERC Docket CP17-101-005:** Williams was granted an additional one-year extension for NESE. A polluting compressor station is proposed for Franklin Township, Somerset County along with a transmission pipeline under the Raritan Bay to deliver gas to New York City. The extension expires in May 2024. Thanks to all those who intervened and submitted comments to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). Read FERC's justification for granting the extension: https://elibrary.ferc.gov/eLibrary/filelist?accession_num=20240118-3026

• **Williams has begun construction** on the Regional Energy Access Expansion (REAE) project despite our lawsuit. FERC approved the REAE to expand the toxic compressor stations at Old Bridge (CS 207) in Middlesex County and at Neshanic Station, Branchburg (CS 505) in Somerset County.

The joint appeal process by the Sierra Club is underway. Oral arguments can be heard here: <https://rb.gy/fod1b5>

• **Williams has begun construction** on the Regional Energy Access Expansion Project (REAE) despite our lawsuit. FERC had approved the REAE to expand the toxic compressor stations at Old Bridge (CS 207) in Middlesex County and at Neshanic Station, Branchburg (CS 505) in Somerset County. Explosive liquid natural gas (LNG) will also be stored at Neshanic Station.

• **Keasbey, Woodbridge Township:** Citing market concerns, Competitive Power Ventures has withdrawn their application for a second fracked gas power plant. The company was fined by the NJ Department of Environmental Protection for violations at their existing power plant. Woodbridge officials were in favor of building the polluting plant in Keasbey despite opposition from nearby EJ communities. Locate environmental justice communities in New Jersey: <https://shorturl.at/lzJSY>

• **Franklin Township:** To curb warehouse sprawl, the planning board has denied an application to build warehousing near a residential senior community. The township has also passed an ordinance that does not allow new warehousing within 500 feet of residential areas.

• **The Raritan River** is increasingly flooding due to torrential storms exacerbated by the climate crisis. New Brunswick, Bound Brook and towns along the Raritan River in Middlesex County are often at risk. Flooding occurs when the Raritan crests over 28 feet. See the devastation of the Raritan overflowing in Piscataway: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iy_MJyNo5xk

We encourage you to get involved by attending your town's planning and zoning board meetings. If you are aware of development proposals in your neighborhood that may have a negative environmental impact, please contact us and join our meetings.

JERSEY SHORE GROUP

(Monmouth County, approximately)

Webpage: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/Jersey-Shore/

Facebook: www.facebook.com/JerseyShoreNJSC/

Instagram: www.instagram.com/sierraclub_jerseyshore/?hl=en

OFFICERS

Group Chair	Dennis Anderson 732-970-4327 dennisaza@aol.com 6 Maple Ave, Matawan NJ 07747
Vice Chair	Stan Greberis sgreberis@newjersey.sierraclub.org
Climate Chair	Steve Miller 732-671-5917 SteveMiller@comcast.net
Conservation Chair	Stan Greberis sgreberis@newjersey.sierraclub.org
Education Chair	George Moffat gmoffattgt@aol.com
Letter-Writing Committee	Steve Miller 732-671-5917 SteveMiller@Comcast.net
Treasurer	Stan Greberis sgreberis@newjersey.sierraclub.org
Political Co-Chairs	Jim Baye jimbaye@optonline.net
Program Chair	Robin and Harold Zullo zullo@newjersey.sierraclub.org
Website Manager	Lara Zullo lara@newjersey.sierraclub.org
Social Media Manager	Steve Miller 732-671-5917 SteveMiller@comcast.net
Manager	Kate DiPaolo Kdipaolo@newjersey.sierraclub.org

Open Positions

The following positions are open and we are actively recruiting volunteers who want to be involved. If you are interested in any of the below positions, please reach out to our Chair, Dennis Anderson (dennisaza@aol.com): Outings Leader, High School and Youth Outreach Coordinator

Science Monday (4th Monday each month during school year) is suspended for the summer and resumes at 6:30 p.m., Sept 23, 2024, at Brookdale Community College.

OCEAN COUNTY GROUP

Webpage: Meetup.com/Sierra-Club-Ocean-Group

OFFICERS

Group Chair	Florence Abrenica
Treasurer and Political Chair	Margaret Mary Piccolo gogreenp1@yahoo.com
Publicity Co-Chair	Ray Kozak raykozak@comcast.net
Publicity Co-Chair	Cathy Kozak
Outings	Terrance Brown and Nancy Brown

ACTIVITIES AND ISSUES: Our group is focused on many critical issues. Locally and statewide we are fighting a myriad of overdevelopment problems. Along with our allies, we are working hard to save Barnegat Bay and The Pinelands, two natural gems in Ocean County.

The group is looking to build up its membership and welcomes new volunteers and people simply interested in getting outdoors. Interested persons should contact Ray and Cathy Kozakerich at raykozak@comcast.net

Ocean County Group works closely with the Barnegat Bay Partnership and meetings are held in their building in Toms River.

WEST JERSEY GROUP

(Camden, Gloucester, and Burlington counties, approximately)

Webpage: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/west-jersey
Facebook: www.facebook.com/WestJerseyGroupNJSC
 Follow us on **Twitter** @WJsierraclub and **Instagram** @wjsierraclub
 Log on and Like Us!

OFFICERS

Group Chair	Gina Carola 856-848-8831 ginaceee@verizon.net
Vice-Chair	Denise Brush denise.brush111@gmail.com
Secretary	Open Position!
Treasurer	Trish Clements patri3210@gmail.com
Publicity Chair	Anne Caridi annecaridi@yahoo.com
Political Chair	Open Position!
Greenways Coords.	Frank and Ellen Zinni efzin4@aol.com
Conservation Chair	Stacey Ayala thunderwolfgalaxy@yahoo.com
Pinelands Rep	Eleanor Kelly ekelly0917@gmail.com
Membership Chair	Mike Brown 856-547-9221 eyebrown@verizon.net
Media & Communications	Tony Hagen editor@newjersey.sierraclub.org

Open Positions! Call Gina to volunteer: 856-848-8831

Political chair, smart growth chair, programs chair, social media coordinators, outings chair, Off-shore Wind Committee

West Jersey Group Meetings: Currently, there are no general meetings planned due to difficulty in securing a venue. Please check our Facebook page for announcements.

If you would like to receive an email invitation when we do have meetings and are not already on our email reminder list, please send an email to Anne Caridi, annecaridi@yahoo.com, or Gina Carola, ginaceee@verizon.net or visit our Facebook page for information. <http://www.facebook.com/WestJerseyGroupNJSC/>

Contact Gina to get involved in any of our many initiatives on climate change.



The Runnemede Green Team Green Fair on April 21. Left to right, Gina Carola (group chair), Eleanor Kelly (West Group Pinelands rep.) and Denise Brush (group vice chair and chair of the Offshore Wind Committee).

SOUTH JERSEY GROUP

(Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland and Salem counties, approximately)

Webpage: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/south-jersey

OFFICERS

Group, Outings Chair	Tom Boghosian 609-335-6907 tfboghosian44@gmail.com
Vice-Chair	Open Position!
Conservation Chair	Open Position!
Political Chair, Calendars	Dick Colby 609-965-4453 dick.colby@stockton.edu
Membership Chair	Open Position!
Secretary/Treasurer	Julie Akers 609-432-3280 julieakers56@gmail.com
At Large	Allie Horn

Tom Boghosian is an avid kayaker (certified as a Maine Guide!), both oceangoing and in fresh waters, possibly willing to lead trips. Dick Colby is also an Atlantic County Parks Commissioner; contact him if you might be interested in attending monthly meetings of the Commission, which are open to the public. Julie Akers also works with Atlantic County Friends of the Parks, and is President of the Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association.

Current Issues: (1) Ocean City (Cape May Co.) has been fighting both the siting of adjacent offshore wind turbines and the burying of power cables to bring the electricity onshore. An attempt to rally support (for wind energy) from the 65 Club members and supporters living in Ocean City has been unsuccessful! (2) We've been blue-blazing the southern portion of what will be a continuous footpath between the southern and northern tips of New Jersey, called the New Jersey Long Trail. Many others (and other groups) are contributing. Detailed maps and descriptions are now on the chapter website. Dick has also produced a brochure describing 15 historic walks in Egg Harbor City. Copies (electronic or paper) are available on request. (3) We continue to hope for Community Solar opportunities for each municipality in South Jersey.

SINGLES SECTION

(A chapter-wide special interest section offering hikes/cleanups, social gatherings, meetings, etc.)

Webpage: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/sierra-singles

OFFICERS

Interim Co-Chairs	Ron Pate ronpate31@verizon.net	Jimi Oleksiak The_Hikist@Mac.com
Executive Committee Members	Jimi Oleksiak, Ron Pate	

The Singles Section has a need for volunteers. Contact the officers if you would like to volunteer for any of the following: outings chair, conservation chair, treasurer, social chair, vice social chair, programs, publicity, membership, nominations.

We're a friendly, active group of individuals who enjoy hiking, biking, canoeing/kayaking, as well as a variety of social and cultural activities throughout the year. This section was created to offer a variety of singles-oriented activities to NJ Sierra Club members. See the Outings section in this issue for a list of upcoming hikes.

COMMUNICATIONS: The best way to be notified of upcoming singles events is to join our free listserv. Anyone may subscribe by going to: <https://lists.sierraclub.org/archives/NJ-SINGLES-NEWS.html> and clicking on "Join or leave the list." You may subscribe and unsubscribe at will. Events are also listed on the online calendar on the Chapter's website: sierraclub.org/new-jersey. You can also "like" us on Facebook: "Singles Group New Jersey Sierra Club." Activities will also be posted on Meetup.

LGBTQIA+ (LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, QUEER, TRANSGENDER+) SECTION

Our mission is to support Sierra Club goals and to promote environmental activism and social equity. We are an inclusive section of the Sierra Club – all members of the LGBTQIA+ community are invited to join us in any or all of the following events!

For more information or to help out, contact Diane at Diascat@hotmail.com

Webpage: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/LGBT/

Meetup: www.meetup.com/njsierraclub

Facebook: www.facebook.com/njsierralgbt

OFFICERS

Chair	Diane Scarangella diascat@hotmail.com
Secretary	Open Position!
Treasurer	Jonathan Wall docjdwall@gmail.com
Webmaster/Listmaster	John Kashwick John.Kashwick@newjersey.sierraclub.org
Outings Chair	Wanda Ashbrook pridegrrlnj@aim.com

We are seeking volunteer hike leaders and have open officer positions! WE NEED YOU!

If you are interested in helping us plan and organize events and actions for the LGBTQIA+ community please VOLUNTEER to join our leadership team.

If you are someone who loves to hike and be outdoors, we need volunteers who are from the LGBTQIA+ community or are allies to co-lead our LGBTQIA+ and/or all-inclusive hikes. Please let us know! WE NEED YOU, too! Contact Diane Scarangella at diascat@hotmail.com or Wanda Ashbrook at pridegrrlnj@aim.com for more information!

ICO: INSPIRING CONNECTIONS OUTDOORS

(A special interest activity with the motto: "No child left inside!")

OFFICERS

Chair	Oscar Nazar chair.njico.sierraclub@gmail.com
Other Officers	Amanda Gaglio

>continued on page 12

GROUP NEWS *continued from page 11*

New Jersey Inspiring Connections Outdoors: (NJ ICO) provides safe and fun wilderness trips for children and teenagers with limited access to the outdoors. Volunteer leaders collaborate with community partners to facilitate, lead, and promote events that will educate and foster a love of nature and the outdoors for youth in New Jersey who may not otherwise have the opportunity or the means. The program works to reduce barriers by providing gear, transportation, trip fees, and leaders to create opportunities to explore, enjoy, and advocate for nature. The chair welcomes inquiries from leaders of schools and other community organizations.

The chair is currently seeking volunteers looking to get involved as outings leaders to help facilitate and organize outings with our Youth Partner Organizations.

The group is also looking to fill its treasurer position. Any member with prior experience or interest is welcome to reach out to the group chair for more information.

ICO News

Recently the ICO Group successfully worked with Visions and Pathways and ran a great outing in Lord Sterling Park and the Raptor Trust Bird Rehabilitation and Education Center in Somerset County. The ICO Group took a group of about 10 participants on a hike and later to the Raptor Trust to see the birds in rehabilitation.

The ICO Group is currently working to establish a partnership with Urban Promise, based out of Camden, particularly with their Urban Trekkers program. The group is primarily high school students, grades nine through 11, with potential to work with their middle schoolers, grade eight, as well.

ICO Group is looking for volunteers and outings leaders interested in working with Urban Promise and potentially working as a liaison for our future outings. Email our chair, Oscar Nazar, if interested: chair.njico.sierraclub@gmail.com



Photo: Pete Nuij, Unsplash

Black bears are key to the health of America's and New Jersey's forests. They balance populations of other animals, nourish healthy soils, and spread seeds far and wide, but they are facing serious threats.

Help us support smart bear policy by urging legislators to post S765(Johnson)/ A360(Stanley) to committee so that we can move forward with non-lethal bear management solutions. Send your message now: <https://shorturl.at/Oy1Yn>


Upcoming Chapter Meetings

All members are welcome to attend these monthly policy deliberations, held by Zoom video conferencing on second Saturdays. Zoom can be accessed from a computer, smartphone, or telephone. The Conservation Committee meets from 10 a.m. to noon and the Executive Committee meets from 1 to 3 p.m. For meeting link, contact secretary@newjersey.sierraclub.org

Upcoming Meetings: July 13*, August 10, September 14

*This meeting is in-person at The Reformed Church of Highland Park and does not have a remote option.

 <h2 style="margin: 0;">SIERRA CLUB</h2> <p>Executive Committee Members Tony Hagen, Stan Greberis, Kip Cherry, Rich Isaac, Paul Sanderson, Syona Gupta, Renée Pollard, Joe Testa, Pat Hilliard</p> <p>Chapter Chair and Group Effectiveness Chair Rich Isaac (973) 716-0297 richard.isaac@sierraclub.org</p> <p>Chapter Vice-Chair and Council of Club Leaders Delegate Joe Testa • vice.chair@newjersey.sierraclub.org</p> <p>Conservation Chair Greg Gorman • ggorman07419@embarqmail.com</p> <p>Conservation Vice-Chair Gina Carola (856) 848-8831 ginaceee@verizon.net</p> <p>Political Committee Chair Ricardo Pereira political.chair@newjersey.sierraclub.org</p> <p>Parliamentarian and Council (CCL) Delegate Joe Testa CCLDelegate@newjersey.sierraclub.org</p> <p>Secretary Jim Andreano • Jimandreano@gmail.com</p> <p>Treasurer Paul Sanderson (908) 233-2414 Treasurer@newjersey.sierraclub.org</p> <p>Co-Vice Treasurers Jim Andreano • Jimandreano@gmail.com Sunil Somalwar • sunil.somalwar@gmail.com</p> <p>Membership Co-Chairs Jill Costa • membership@newjersey.sierraclub.org Seth Kantor • membership@newjersey.sierraclub.org</p> <p>Outings Chair Leona Fluck (609) 259-3734 pineypaddlers@gmail.com</p> <p>Newsletter Editor Tony Hagen (609) 499-8678 editor@newjersey.sierraclub.org</p> <p>Webmaster Dennis Colligan webmaster@newjersey.sierraclub.org</p>	<h2 style="margin: 0; background-color: #2c3e50; color: white; padding: 5px;">NEW JERSEY CHAPTER LEADERSHIP</h2> <p>Video Producer Heather Semler • heathermakesithappen@gmail.com</p> <p>Advisors and Liaisons</p> <p>Inspiring Connections Outdoors Chair (ICO) Oscar Nazar • ICOChair@newjersey.sierraclub.org</p> <p>Compliance Officer Bill Singer, Esq. (908) 359-7873 wsinger@singerfedun.com</p> <p>Transportation Outreach Coordinators Matthew Bewley • 14bewley@gmail.com Jordan Rosenbloom • rosenbloomjordan@gmail.com</p> <p>Regional Issues Liaison Joan Denzer • JDenzer73@yahoo.com</p> <p>Committees</p> <p>Building and Electrification Committee Steve Miller, Co-Chair • stevemiller@comcast.net Pat Miller, Co-Chair • patmiller@comcast.net</p> <p>Communications Committee Seth Kantor, Chair • membership@newjersey.sierraclub.org</p> <p>Elections Committee Gina Carola, Chair • ginaceee@verizon.net</p> <p>Environmental and Social Justice Committee Renée Pollard, Chair • rpollard16@comcast.net</p> <p>Facilities Committee (office, meeting sites) Paul Sanderson, Chair • treasurer@newjersey.sierraclub.org</p> <p>Finance Committee Paul Sanderson, Chair • treasurer@newjersey.sierraclub.org</p> <p>Forest Conservation Committee Greg Gorman, Chair • ggorman07419@embarqmail.com</p> <p>Fundraising Committee Jim Andreano, Chair • Jimandreano@gmail.com</p> <p>Information Technology Committee Joe Testa, Chair • CCLDelegate@newjersey.sierraclub.org</p> <p>Inspiring Connections Outdoors Committee Oscar Nazar, Chair • chair.njico.sierraclub@gmail.com</p> <p>Legislative Committee Laura Lynch, Chair • njsierraclub@gmail.com</p>	<p>Light Pollution and Night Sky Committee Jonathan Wall, Chair • docjdwall@gmail.com John Kashwick • John.Kashwick@newjersey.sierraclub.org</p> <p>Nominating Committee Rich Isaac, Chair • richard.isaac@sierraclub.org</p> <p>Offshore Wind Committee Denise Brush, Chair offshorewind@newjersey.sierraclub.org</p> <p>Personnel Committee Rich Isaac, Chair • richard.isaac@sierraclub.org</p> <p>PFAS Committee Gary Frederick, Chair garyfrederick@newjersey.sierraclub.org</p> <p>Transportation Committee Bill Beren, Chair • Beren1@verizon.net</p> <p>Warehouse Committee Stan Greberis, Co-Chair • sgreberis@newjerseysierraclub.org Gary Frederick, Co-Chair garyfrederick@newjersey.sierraclub.org</p> <p>Youth Committee Syona Gupta, Shirin Sood, Co-Chairs</p> <p>Issue Coordinators Air Quality and Clean Air Paul Ehrlich • p.w.ehrlich@gmail.com</p> <p>Alaska Amy Weeder • aweeder@comcast.net</p> <p>Asbestos and Toxic Dust Francie Goldstein, MD • franciegoldstein@mindspring.com</p> <p>Banning Gas Powered Leaf Blowers Bill Brazell • bill.brazell@gmail.com</p> <p>Delaware River Gina Carola • ginaceee@verizon.net</p> <p>Endangered Species/Wildlife Jamie Zaccaria • jamiezaccaria@gmail.com</p> <p>Genetically Modified Organisms Joanne Pannone • jpatmeadowbrook@gmail.com</p> <p>Noise Pollution Michael Competielle • mcompetielle@gmail.com</p> <p>Passaic River Steve Yafet • syafet@gmail.com</p>	<p>Pinelands Joanne Pannone • jpatmeadowbrook@gmail.com</p> <p>Regional Joan Denzer • jdenzer@yahoo.com</p> <p>Tiger Conservation Sunil Somalwar • sunil.somalwar@gmail.com</p> <p>Toxics Legal Leila Marcovici • leilamarcovici@gmail.com</p> <p>Trails Dave Mattek • trail.coordinator@newjersey.sierraclub.org</p> <p>Utah Wilderness Debbie Young • debyoung31@comcast.net</p> <p>Watershed Faith Teitelbaum • faithtei@aol.com</p> <p>Wetlands Robert "Bo" Petrillo • RPetrillo22@gmail.com</p> <p>Zero Waste Andrea Panico, Coordinator • panico@picomeanslittle.com</p> <p>New Jersey Chapter Office Suite A203, Building A 1 N. Johnston Ave. Hamilton, NJ 08609 609-656-7612</p> <p>Professional Staff Chapter Director Anjuli Ramos-Busot anjuli.ramos@sierraclub.org</p> <p>Chapter Conservation Program Manager Taylor McFarland taylor.mcfarland@SierraClub.org</p> <p>Communications and Outreach Coordinator Jackie Greger jackie.greger@sierraclub.org</p> <p style="background-color: yellow; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Please share this newsletter with a nonmember friend and invite them to join (see membership coupon this page).</p>
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 <p style="text-align: center;">Vol. 53, No. 2 • Spring, 2024</p> <p>Editor Tony Hagen • editor@newjersey.sierraclub.org Assisted by George Moffatt, Joe Testa, and Judy Minot</p> <p>Designer Karen Crosby • karonna@yahoo.com</p> <p>Publisher Paul Sanderson • paulmsanderson@aol.com</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Editorial Board: Tony Hagen, chair; Joe Testa; Seth Kantor; Judy Minot; Jackie Greger</p> <p><i>The Jersey Sierran</i> appears in January, April, July and October. The deadline for copy for the 2024 October to December issue is August 3. Members are welcome to propose articles, essays, letters, poetry, and art for publication. Group/section news columns are prepared by group/section chairs; Outings are vetted by Chapter Outings Chair Leona Fluck.</p> <p style="font-size: small;">Opinions, unless otherwise indicated, are the writer's own. Advertised products and services carry no Club endorsement.</p> <p style="font-size: x-small; text-align: center;">Thank you to all who contributed to this issue! This newsletter is produced mostly by volunteers.</p>	<p>Members, please send address changes to: address.changes@sierraclub.org, or</p> <p>Sierra Club Membership 2101 Webster St., Suite 1300 Oakland, CA 94612 or 415-977-5653, and</p> <p>Sierra Club NJ Chapter Suite A203, Building A 1 North Johnston Ave. Hamilton, NJ 08609</p> <p>Advertising Information: https://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/jersey-sierran-information-advertisers</p> <p>Printed by Witherspoon Media, Kingston Addressed by Digital Dog Direct, Princeton Periodical postage paid at Princeton, NJ.</p> <p><i>The Jersey Sierran</i> is published quarterly by the Sierra Club's New Jersey Chapter.</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">Copyright 2024 Permission to reprint (with source acknowledgement) is granted to other Sierra Club entities.</p>
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Oakland, CA 94612

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SIERRA CLUB

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Explore, enjoy, and protect the planet

Become a Flexitarian Eater

By Judith Green • Co-Chair, Climate Committee; ExCom Member, North Jersey Group



Are you among the **one in five** consumers interested in shifting your dietary priorities toward more plant-based foods? If so, you may wonder, how do I start?

Focus first on *why* you are pursuing change. Is it for environmental, health, or any of a variety of ethical reasons? Whatever your reasons, embrace them, and refer to them to reinforce your commitment to change.

Use Comfortable language.

If the words vegetarian, vegan, ovo-lactovegetarian, and pescatarian are confusing, think of them as options on the animal-vegetable food “dial,” from a strictly plant-based food orientation to one that allows eggs, dairy, or fish. Like a “dial,” the issue is *not all-or-nothing*—no rigid diet is involved. Based on decades of research, health experts recommend plant-centered, low meat “flexitarian” eating styles, including the well-known [Mediterranean diet](#), for optimal health and environmental sustainability.

Core Features of the Flexitarian Approach.

Of foremost importance are a variety of whole grains, vegetables of different colors, fruits, nuts and seeds, legumes, and extra-virgin olive oil. Fish and other seafoods, with their many health benefits and generally [low carbon footprint](#), are included. Meat is an option, in small amounts.

Whole natural foods are emphasized, as they are nutritious and health-promoting. This is true, too, of minimally processed foods, which allow storage and more convenience. Among these are extra-virgin olive oil, whole grain breads, soy-based tofu and tempeh, nut and seed butters, humus, baba ghanoush, plant milks, unsweetened whole grain cereals (e.g., oatmeal), and canned fish.

Change

Changing any complex behavior is difficult to do, and it usually takes months. A slow, incremental path makes sense. Habits, long-held beliefs, and social pressures all push back against change. Familiarity seems “normal” or “good,” even when not in our best interests. In fact, US culture embraces several erroneous beliefs about food that hold us back.

“Meat and dairy are required for health.” Decades of promotional campaigns by the US Department of Agriculture on behalf of the meat and dairy lobbies (money, not science) was behind convincing Americans to eat plenty of steak, chops, cheeses, eggs, and milk. Actually, such foods are [unsustainable and unhealthy](#).

“A vegetarian diet results in protein deficiencies.” plant sources have dif-

ferent quantities of the 20 amino acids that build proteins. A varied vegetarian or even vegan diet [provides enough of all the amino acids](#), including all nine essential ones, that we need for good health.

Be Optimistic

Regardless of any false dietary notions, compelling information can change our beliefs and behavior. A desired change in behavior is most likely to succeed when it is consistent with our values. This is why we should review our “why” list as needed.

Taking Action

Start with a realistic plan for change, and patience. Choose the easiest food changes first and make only one or two at a time. These are the most likely to be successful and encourage further progress. *Repeated practice* adds helpful neuronal networks to the brain. *Rewarding yourself* is vital to reinforce desirable changes, so that your new approach to eating becomes comfortable and also possible to maintain. For encouragement, track your progress by noting flexitarian meals in your calendar. Eat foods that taste good—they are rewarding! If you already have some favorite flexitarian dishes, plan to eat them regularly.

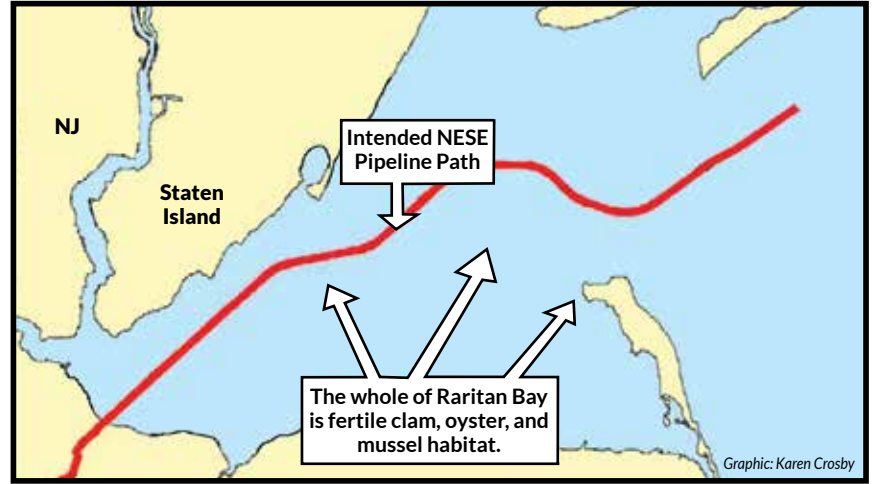
Frequent Eaters of Beef.

Perhaps you’ll decide to adopt only a “no beef” or “rarely beef” orientation—a sensible one since beef, as compared with chicken, fish, and even pork, has by far the [worst climate and health impacts](#). You may decide to start by having chicken or ground turkey (e.g., burgers, or in a turkey chili or pasta sauce) for one or two of the beef meals each week. If you like to grill food, switch gradually to chicken, turkey burgers, fish, or shrimp. Alternatively, reduce the amount of beef in favorite dishes, such as stew, and increase the vegetables, adding any kind of canned beans or lentils for greater protein content. As your comfort grows, you may also find meat substitutes appealing (e.g., tofu, Beyond Burger, or others). Importantly, any reduction in beef consumption makes a positive difference in greenhouse gases and your health.

As social creatures, we are influenced by what others around us do. Thus, it’s good to realize that most of the world’s people have been eating predominantly plant-based diets for millennia. This is the diet that is normal for our species.

Resources

- Mediterranean diet: t.ly/N44xb
- Fish & sustainability: t.ly/GrdOr
- So-called healthy foods: t.ly/QMfWo
- Vegetarian food is enough: t.ly/Oh3Tw
- True cost of beef: t.ly/QMfWo



NESE Pipeline Goes Down

The Northeast Supply Enhancement (NESE) undersea pipeline Project was officially declared dead *out of the water* on Tuesday, May 9, 2024. This horrendous 23-mile gas pipeline proposal for Raritan Bay and Lower New York Bay would have significantly harmed the recovering aquatic community there and caused innumerable other environmental ills.

The Williams Companies (aka, Williams Transco) announced it would not seek renewal of a Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) certificate for consideration of the project. This ended eight years of grassroots opposition to the pipeline from the Sierra Club, numerous other environmental groups, innumerable towns along the Raritan Bay shoreline and elsewhere in New Jersey, and countless thousands of public citizens who spoke up against this ill-conceived plan to prolong and extend fossil fuel reliance.

Williams sought to construct the pipeline extension from Middlesex and Somerset counties and across Raritan Bay to Brooklyn, Queens, and Long Island, where New York is attempting to switch to natural gas from heavy dependence on heating oil.

The pipeline would have sourced gas from the Marcellus Shale fracking region of northern Pennsylvania, cutting directly across the Staten Island clam beds and, in the process, dredging up an industrial legacy of many tons of copper and lead-containing sediments, which are known to be extremely harmful to aquatic life.

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation previously denied water quality certification to Williams, citing these concerns. New York also determined that existing infrastructure in the New York metropolitan region could handle energy needs equally well.

The NJ Department of Environmental

Protection (DEP) also denied numerous water quality, wetlands, flooding, and waterfront development permits for this project. This followed numerous failures by Williams to demonstrate that its pipeline extension would meet basic standards. The DEP said no compelling need was demonstrated for the project.

“Williams’ decision not to renew its FERC extension is a monumental victory for the people who have been fighting this disastrous fossil fuel project,” said Sierra Club NJ Chapter Director Anjuli Ramos-Busot. “While we are celebrating now, we will remain vigilant. We will continue to fight to protect our land, air, and water from any fossil fuel project in New Jersey.”

The victory was tinged with some disappointment, as almost simultaneously Delaware River Partners and Bradford County Real Estate Partners said they would push forward with construction of a Wyalusing, Pa., gas liquefaction plant. Last September, the partnership was denied a permit for shipping the gas via rail from the proposed plant to Gibbstown, NJ, where it would have been exported. The partnership now says it aims to truck the gas to New Jersey.

The Sierra Club strongly opposes the extension of fossil fuel markets and infrastructure due to the pollution this represents and the climate change crisis.

“The last thing we need is even more dangerous methane gas extracted from Pennsylvania, shipped through our communities by truck, and exported overseas—all while residents face worsening illnesses, higher healthcare costs, and increased energy bills caused by gas exports. This decision is unnecessary and reckless, and the Sierra Club is prepared to continue fighting this project until it is officially canceled,” said Patrick Greter, Sierra Club Beyond Dirty Fuels Campaign director.

Join the NJ Chapter Offshore Wind Committee!

Calling all volunteers! We need you to help us advance the responsible and equitable build-out of offshore wind in New Jersey!

Offshore wind is New Jersey’s greatest climate solution and will create thousands of good-paying green jobs, clean our air, and power our homes. We need YOU to show that New Jerseyans want clean energy and offshore wind in our state. Join our Offshore Wind Committee to learn more about what you can do to further our clean energy transition.

To join, please contact Senior Field Organizer Tiziana Bottino at tiziana.bottino@sierraclub.org or NJ Communications Coordinator Jackie Greger at jackie.greger@sierraclub.org.



Photo: Nicholas Doherty, Unsplash

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Are We Becoming What We Breathe?

By George Moffatt • Education Chair, Jersey Shore Group

Many years ago, a spokesman for a large factory on the Raritan River defended his company's pollution, claiming "It's the price to pay for progress."

Such attitudes are still pervasive today.

Last year, this time-worn excuse was invoked when the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) moved to decrease the allowable amount of industrial airborne pollutants called particulate matter (PM 2.5) to within the range of 9 to 10 micrograms per cubic meter, ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) versus the current standard of 12, which industry favors.

The EPA has [estimated](#) health savings from this proposed rule would far exceed the costs to industry of installing additional pollution control measures. If the rule is for $9 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, the benefit in health savings, including reduced emergency room visits, premature deaths, and asthma, could be as high as \$19 billion to \$43 billion in 2032 alone.

The respective 2032 costs to industry are pegged at \$393 million.

Corporations have bemoaned the relatively low increased costs (to them) and ignored the potential number of lives saved (ours). Improving standards "would harm America's ability to revitalize our supply chains and manufacturing, as well as to restore and revitalize our nation's infrastructure," a group of manufacturers, farmers, and petrochemical companies stated in a [comment](#) to the EPA in September 2023.

The Many Forms of PM

PM comes in many sizes, shapes, and chemical combinations, such as sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides from power plants, industry, and—yes—our non-EV automobiles.

Sierra Club has united with many other environmental organizations in demanding that the EPA tighten both the annual and 24-hour standards for these particles—a deadly mix of met-

als, organic chemicals, and acidic substances that can enter our bloodstreams. The coalition maintains that by following clear scientific consensus and setting the final annual soot standard no higher than $8 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, the EPA could save [nearly 9,200 lives in 2032](#) alone.

However, the EPS draft rule, by calling for 9 to 10 micrograms per cubic meter, falls short of that mark.

The Sierra Club has described PM 2.5 as the "most deadly and destructive air pollutant there is." [A recent study](#) from the University of Minnesota found that air pollution, including fine particulate matter, kills over 100,000 people every year.

These pollutants can affect our eyesight by causing cataracts, glaucoma (the second-most-common cause of blindness), conjunctivitis, and age-related macular degeneration.

The health hazards of PM 2.5 include deaths from heart or lung disease, other cardiovascular problems, aggravated asthma, and increased susceptibility to Covid-19 and its variants, to name but a few.

What's worse, they have been detected throughout our bodies—the bloodstreams and brains of infants, children and adults—and even in mothers' breast milk and placentas.

Without realizing it, we breathe in particulate matter copiously every day; PM 2.5 are generally no thicker than the wall of a plastic trash bag. They also can be quite obvious when concentrated, such as from industrial emissions and even forest fires, especially those that have been raging worldwide the past few years.

The environmental damage caused by PM 2.5 includes acid rain, concentrations of toxins in lakes and streams, depleted nutrients in soils, damaged forests and farm crops, and generally imbalanced ecosystems.

Levels of PM 2.5, as well as many other pollutants, are partly controlled by the Clean Air Act, which the Sierra Club and other environmental organizations have criticized for loopholes that must be closed. Chiefly, the EPA's draft rule for PM 2.5 management needs to be made stronger.

Chipping Away at the Public's Right to Know

By Tony Hagen • editor@newjersey.sierraclub.org

As this issue went to press, Gov. Murphy was considering signing a series of revisions to the Open Public Records Act (OPRA) that would reduce access to information generated by public bodies in the state.

In the age of electronic information, it is no secret that people's private data can be easily compromised. Public officials have woven this concern into their rationale for dialing back the Open Public Records Act (OPRA), a pillar of our democratic process in New Jersey.

The exploitation of OPRA by commercial data aggregators is a second prong of this attack. Proponents of OPRA reform contend that OPRA was never intended to support for-profit companies' insatiable demand for information. The proposed changes would restrict public information requests under OPRA to non-commercial uses only.

These issues aside, advocates for open government believe that the [proposed OPRA changes](#) would go too far. In particular, they would limit access to certain other types of information and give public officials more latitude to decide whether they need to respond to an OPRA request and how soon.

It has been shown in the past that

public officials [sometimes cannot be trusted](#) to comply with OPRA, and these changes would give them more places to hide information that should be disclosed.

OPRA in its original form allows courts to impose financial penalties on public officials who wrongfully fail to disclose public documents. The changes would shift the burden of paying those penalties to public institutions, thereby punishing the taxpayer for calling attention to individual public officials' wrongdoing. This also makes public officials less accountable for their actions.

OPRA has its flaws, which have been compounded by the electronic age, and these do need to be addressed. Many contend, however, that the process of revision has been too quick and is lacking in transparency.

Further, it has been pointed out that conservatives in the Legislature may hold Gov. Murphy's agenda hostage by refusing to support it if he doesn't approve these OPRA changes. We hope Gov. Murphy holds firm in defending the public's right to know.

Latest draft of OPRA bill: <https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/bill-search/2024/A4045>

PFAS Concerns Move from Water to Farms

By Tony Hagen • editor@newjersey.sierraclub.org

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) took further steps this spring to deal with the problem of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). The [EPA declared two classes of PFAS](#) (PFOA and PFOS) to be hazardous substances under the Superfund law, which allows polluters to be held responsible for cleanup.

The EPA also set [maximum allowable limits](#) on PFOA and PFOS of 4 parts per trillion (ppt) in drinking water. Limits were also established for four other classes of PFAS. In doing so, the EPA

gave water utilities three years to test for the presence of these toxic substances and two additional years to install safeguards, such as filters.

PFAS are linked to kidney, liver, and testicular cancer; thyroid disease; developmental disorders; and other serious health conditions. The EPA has said no level is safe.

New Jersey has been a leader in establishing PFAS drinking water limits, but the EPA has now set even higher standards, which will supersede the

New Jersey maximums.

In other developments, a South Carolina court approved a [settlement](#) under which the manufacturer 3M will pay at least \$10.5 billion to compensate US water systems for PFAS contamination.

3M and DuPont are among the most prominent culprits in the nation's PFAS problems. Last year, the NJ Department of Environmental protection (DEP) settled with Solvay Specialty Polymers for

\$393 million to clean up PFAS contamination related to a factory in West Deptford.

Ridding our drinking water of PFAS is one of the first steps in dealing with this problem. New Jersey has water contaminated by PFAS in many communities throughout the state. The DEP estimates that more than 200 water systems will fail to pass under the stricter EPA standards.

>continued on page 15

Getting the Kinks Out of NJ's Plastic Bag Ban

By Tony Hagen • editor@newjersey.sierraclub.org

[A report](#) by Freedonia Custom Research early this year seemed to turn New Jersey's plastic bag ban upside down. It said manufacturing reusable plastic bags had tripled the rate of plastic production versus before and had caused a 500% increase in greenhouse gas emissions from bag production.

The report was widely circulated, especially by industry friendly publications such as the *Wall Street Journal*, although it was later determined the report was commissioned by the American Recyclable Plastic Bag Alliance, which works to promote the use and acceptance of disposable plastic bags.

It was also asserted that the report was [not peer reviewed](#), a gold standard for double checking research by submitting it to unbiased expert review prior to publication.

It is true that New Jersey has a problem with reusable bags, which tend to pile up in people's homes if they forget to bring them to the grocery store and end up buying more. Delivery services use huge quantities of reusable bags, and these, too, pile up in closets or end up being put into the trash.

An individual reusable bag must be reused many times if it is to result in a net environmental benefit over disposable plastic bags. They should also be washed, a chore which may not be seen as worthwhile by Americans who can dodge the work just by spending an-

other dollar and getting a new reusable bag.

Whether or not the Freedonia numbers are even close to accurate, New Jersey state officials have acknowledged that the surplus of reusable bags is a serious unintended consequence of the disposable plastic bag ban, which they are working to address. Meanwhile, environmental advocates have noted that at least [5.5 billion](#) disposable bags were removed from the waste stream in the first year since the ban went into effect on May 2022.

The ban also encompassed Styrofoam food service products, and the group Clean Ocean Action has reported more than 37% less plastic bag and Styrofoam waste turning up on New Jersey beaches.

Plastics are undoubtedly very bad for the environment and our health. They must be reduced. As New Jersey authorities tweak the bag ban and do more research, a more balanced picture of what is happening (and what needs to happen) with reusable bags will emerge. In the meantime, New Jersey consumers can help by reusing their reusable bags and sticking with this effort to clean up and reduce our waste stream.

Resources

Freedonia Report: <https://shorturl.at/j07OC>

First Year Report: <https://shorturl.at/h4ObO>

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PFAS *continued from page 14*

PFAS in Biosolids

Concerns have increased lately about PFAS contamination from other sources. PFAS tends to accumulate in raw sewage, which is processed into biosolids, which throughout the nation have been used as farm fertilizer on an estimated 20 million or more acres.

In February, the group Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER) [filed suit](#) against Synagro Technologies, a biosolids-based fertilizer maker, after alarmingly high lev-

els of PFAS were found in soil, water, fish, and calf tissue at farms in Johnson County, Texas.

"There were 610,000 ppt of PFOS in a stillborn calf liver, and 57,000 and 74,000 ppt of PFOS in two fish samples," PEER wrote. [PFAS are also readily taken up](#) by plants, especially green, leafy vegetables.

Kyla Bennett, PEER's Director of science policy and a former EPA wetland permit reviewer, said in an [interview](#) that as biosolids are created at waste-

water plants, the levels of PFAS actually increase.

Synagro has biosolids operations across the country, processing millions of tons of waste annually, including one in [Deerfield Township](#) in Cumberland County, New Jersey. That facility was built just a few years ago despite residents' concerns about PFAS in biosolids.

New Jersey does permit agricultural use of biosolids, although a 2018 report indicated [less than 1%](#) of New Jersey biosolids were used in agriculture that

year. The majority were used as landfill covering or disposed of in landfills, adding to the dangers of leachate from these facilities.

New Jersey's use of biosolids in agriculture stretches back many years. These biosolids have also been shipped out of state because New Jersey has limited agriculture and limited landfill space.

Further investigation and testing appear necessary, and advocates believe PFAS regulation should not stop with drinking water standards alone.