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2024 Election for NJ Chapter Officers and Groups

Balloting is now underway for the 2024 election of executive officers and group leaders for the NJ Chapter of the Sierra Club. All current members are invited to participate.

Members will receive solicitations via email in October for online voting. Votes also may be cast using the mail-in paper ballot in the print edition of this newsletter (see page 2 for the ballot). **The deadline for receipt of ballots is November 13 (e-ballot or paper).**

Your votes are essential to help select leaders who will best represent the interests of Club membership!

The Chapter's Executive Committee (ExCom) consists of nine at-large vol-

unteers who meet on the second Saturday of each month to discuss state, regional, and other environmental issues and decide policy. ExCom also coordinates committee work on sustainability and conservation, initiates legal action, endorses candidates for public office, and hears from staff and volunteer officers.

Three ExCom members are elected (or re-elected) each year to three-year terms. There were no petition candidates this year. This year's ExCom candidates were selected by Nominating Committee Chair Rich Isaac and members Joanne Pannone and Bill Beren.

The Elections Committee includes

Chair Gina Carola and members Laura Bagwell and Jamie Zaccaria.

ExCom candidate bios and photos are on page 2. This year's ExCom candidates are Stan Greberis, Kip Cherry, and Denise Brush.

Please vote for three at-large ExCom members and the leadership of your regional group. If you do not know which group you belong to, visit the Group News section of this newsletter (pages 12 to 16), where the Chapter's 12 groups are listed.

Instructions for completing your ballot:

Vote for the NJ Chapter leadership.

Vote for candidates in your assigned regional group. Please check the mailing label on page 1 of this newsletter to confirm your group. Group codes are: *Central Jersey, 4001; Jersey Shore, 4002; Loantaka, 4003; North Jersey, 4004; Skylands, 4005; West Jersey, 4006; South Jersey, 4007; Raritan Valley 4008; Hudson County, 4009; Gateway, 4010; Hunterdon Warren, 4011; and Ocean County, 4012.*

Clip the entire ballot and mail it to: **Sierra Club Ballot, 1 North Johnston Avenue, Suite A203, Hamilton, NJ 08609.** Be sure that the address label, which includes your membership num-

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Sierra Club NJ Chapter Director Anjuli Ramos-Busot and NJ League of Conservation Voters Executive Director Ed Potosnak address the crowds at Liberty State Park during Global Wind Day on June 15, 2024. Many advocates for renewable offshore wind power spoke at the event, which featured information tables, activities, and live music. Full story with more photos on page 6. Photo credit: Jackie Greger.

Circuit Court Quashes Transco Project

A late July appellate court decision has sent the horrendously destructive Transco pipeline project back to the drafting table.

The US Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit overturned a Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) approval of the plan to expand pipeline and compressor capacity in five states, including New Jersey, to allow for the pumping of an additional 829 million cubic feet per day of fracked gas.

The petition against Transco's (Transcontinental Gas Pipe Line Co.) Regional Energy Access Expansion project was led by the Sierra Club and other leading environmental groups and joined by NJ state government, including the Division of Rate Counsel.

"This is a major victory for the climate, clean air and water, and New Jersey residents on the ground who have organized and opposed this project for years," said Sierra Club NJ Chapter Director Anjuli Ramos-Busot. This decision also helps ensure

that future proposals for unneeded and harmful pipeline projects are not given the green light without the proper vetting.

Judge J. Michelle Childs, writing the [opinion](#) for the DC Circuit, said that FERC had simply not considered the enormous emissions impact of the pipeline and had not accounted for laws in New Jersey that require reductions in gas consumption.

The pipeline project threatened to destabilize the climate even more and undermine New Jersey's efforts to reduce fossil fuel dependence and achieve a clean energy transition. A state study indicated New Jersey already has a sufficient

natural gas supply, although FERC had accepted Transco's argument that the

"This is a major victory for the climate, clean air and water, and New Jersey residents on the ground who have organized and opposed this project for years," said Sierra Club NJ Chapter Director Anjuli Ramos-Busot.

pipeline project was essential to ensure reliable gas supplies during winter peak periods and that consumers might even see lower gas prices.

The project would have encompassed modifications and construction in New Jersey, New York, Delaware, Maryland, and Pennsylvania. In New Jersey, the Transco project called for a new compressor station in Gloucester County and the addition of gas-fired compressor units at existing stations in Somerset County.

The New Jersey Business & Industry Association (NJBIA), which so far has

failed to square its policies with the environmental realities of rapid climate change and global warming, called the circuit court's opinion "ideological." The Sierra Club encourages NJBIA to recalibrate its stance given the disastrous effects of fossil fuel use and the undeniably urgent need to switch to sustainable energy.

Possible Appeal

Transco said it would not give up on the project, and an appeal to the Supreme Court is a possibility; however, the appellate court decision sends Transco back to square one on any revised FERC application, which would have to respect the appellate court's objections to the pipeline plan.

Sierra Club and Food & Water Watch were represented by Earthjustice in the lawsuit challenging FERC's approval of the project. Delaware Riverkeeper Network and Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper, were represented by in-house counsel.

2024 BALLOTS

ber, is on the back of the ballot. Due by Wednesday, November 13, 2024.

If you have questions about the elections process or require additional assistance, please contact the Chapter elections chair at ginaceee@verizon.net. Use the ballots below for electing New Jersey Executive Committee members and group officers.

Joint members of the Sierra Club may share this ballot form by using the second column of boxes for votes.

NJ Chapter ExCom Ballot: Vote for a maximum of three candidates. The top three candidates will have three-year terms until December 2027. Name order has been randomized.

Candidates	Member or 1st Joint Member Vote	2nd Joint Member Vote
Denise Brush	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kip Cherry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stan Greberis	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write-In	_____	_____
Write-In	_____	_____

Group Election Ballots: Vote for candidates in your designated regional group.

Central Jersey Group Ballot (4001): Vote for a maximum of two candidates. The two elected candidates will have two-year terms that expire December 2026.

Kip Cherry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dave Mattek	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write-In	_____	_____
Write-In	_____	_____

Jersey Shore Group Ballot (4002): Vote for a maximum of five candidates. The elected candidates will have two-year terms that expire December 2026.

Dennis Anderson	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Steve Miller	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Harold Zullo	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Robert Grize	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jim Baye	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write-In	_____	_____
Write-In	_____	_____

Loantaka Group Ballot (4003): Vote for a maximum of three candidates. The elected candidates will have two-year terms that expire December 2026.

Allen Swanson	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gilbert Rohde	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kevin O'Brian	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write-In	_____	_____
Write-In	_____	_____

North Jersey Group Ballot (4004): Vote for a maximum of three candidates. The winning candidates will have two-year terms that expire December 2026.

Bob Weiss	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Judith Green	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bushra Asfare	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write-In	_____	_____
Write-In	_____	_____

Skylands Group Ballot (4005): Vote for a maximum of five candidates. The winning

candidates will serve two-year terms that expire December 2026.

Greg Gorman	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Norene Haberski	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jill Aquino	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write-In	_____	_____
Write-In	_____	_____

West Jersey Group Ballot (4006): Vote for a maximum of two candidates. The winning candidates will serve two-year terms that expire December 2026.

Write-In	_____	_____
Write-In	_____	_____

South Jersey Group Ballot (4007): Vote for a maximum of two candidates. The winning candidates will serve two-year terms that expire December 2026.

Dick Colby	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tom Boghosian	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write-In	_____	_____
Write-In	_____	_____

Raritan Valley Group Ballot (4008): Vote for a maximum of three candidates. The winning candidates will serve two-year terms that expire December 2026.

Gary Frederick	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S. Pasricha	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bernadette Maher	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write-In	_____	_____
Write-In	_____	_____

Hudson County Group Ballot (4009): Vote for a maximum of four candidates. The winning candidates will serve two-year terms that expire December 2026.

Patricia Hilliard	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ricardo Pereira	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rachel Ciekurs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Blythe Davis	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write-In	_____	_____
Write-In	_____	_____

Gateway Group Ballot (4010): Vote for a maximum of four candidates. The winning candidates will serve two-year terms that expire December 2026.

Allison Fabrizio	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Danielle Rapsas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ron Pate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Christy Morganstein	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write-In	_____	_____
Write-In	_____	_____

Hunterdon Warren Group Ballot (4011): Vote for a maximum of three candidates. The winning candidates will serve two-year terms that expire December 2026.

Karen Becker	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Amy Weeder	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
John Kashwick	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write-In	_____	_____
Write-In	_____	_____

Ocean County Group Ballot (4012): Vote for a maximum of five candidates. The five elected candidates will have two-year terms that expire December 2026.

Margaret Mary Piccolo	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write-In	_____	_____
Write-In	_____	_____
Write-In	_____	_____
Write-In	_____	_____

Candidates Endorsed for Political Office

By Ricardo Pereira • Chapter Political Chair



2024 may prove to be one of the most salient elections for the environment. Earth experienced 13 consecutive months of record-breaking global heat from

May 2023 through June 2024. The climate crisis grows more severe every year. An increasing number of Americans are experiencing severe heat and other exacerbated weather events, and they are demanding that government act—now.

According to a Pew Research Center survey, 37% of adults (13% of Republicans and 59% of Democrats) said addressing global climate change should be a priority. What's more encouraging is that 74% of Americans agreed the United States should participate in international efforts to reduce the impacts of climate change.

The survey mentioned above was conducted in 2023 and it is important because it shows the extreme political divide over taking action on climate change. A spring 2024 study by Yale attempted to get beyond politics to understand the general opinions of Americans. It found that 64% of Americans are "somewhat worried" to "very worried" (28%) about climate change, and 66% agree that climate change is affecting weather in the United States.

Despite the daunting reality of climate change, many politicians continue to disregard the urgency of the problem.

The Republican National Convention did not directly address climate change. Additionally, their official 2024 platform doesn't have any mention of climate change or global warming; however, it does promise to "DRILL, BABY, DRILL" and encourages expanding fossil fuel consumption instead of building sustainable and renewable energy infrastructure. All this, of course, is only the official platform, and it doesn't even begin to address the threat posed by Project 2025—a right wing version of the Unibomber Manifesto.

The one bright spot is that young conservatives are concerned, and

[open discussion of climate change](#) was grudgingly allowed to push its way on to the periphery of the Republican National Convention—a first.

Right now, what we need are leaders; politicians who are activists, unafraid to act and do what's right. That's how we've chosen our endorsements. The Sierra Club urges your vote for these candidates (**Table**) for US President and Congress—based on their voting and sponsorship records and interview performances.

One of the most important things you can do in this election is vote. Second, urge your friends and family to vote, too. Please—if you want a government that'll take action on environmental issues—vote! The election will be held on Tuesday, November 5. I would welcome the opportunity to explain to Club members, members of the press, and anyone else the basis for each of our endorsements (or non-endorsements) in New Jersey's 12 Congressional Districts.

If you would like to do more to help, I would love to suggest how you can contribute your time, energy, and money to help our endorsed candidates get elected. Please contact me at: rh.pereira.1995@gmail.com

Resources

Pew Study: <https://shorturl.at/RL4Vy>

Yale Study: <https://shorturl.at/Nmuen>

President and Vice President:

Vice President Kamala Harris (D) and Minnesota Governor Tim Walz (D)

US Senate: Rep. Andy Kim (D)

Congress:

Dist.	Candidate
1	Rep. Donald Norcross (D)
5	Rep. Josh Gottheimer (D)
6	Rep. Frank Pallone, Jr. (D)
7	Sue Altman (D) *
8	Rep. Rob Menendez, Jr. (D)
9	Rep. Bill Pascrell (D)
11	Rep. Mikie Sherrill (D)
12	Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman (D)

* District 7 may be extremely competitive, so be sure to vote.

Help with our national election campaign: <https://act.sierraclub.org/actions/National?actionId=AR0458816>

ExCom Candidate Bios and Statements

Kip Cherry

Seeking re-election to ExCom, with almost 50 years of experience in environmental, urban planning, and historic preservation issues, Kip is



a licensed NJ professional planner and a certified member of AICP. She holds an MBA from the Wharton School. She tries to focus where she can be the most effective, most recently working on electric school bus legislation, offshore wind, and community solar, and trying to save environmentally sensitive sites at Baldpate Mt., Mercer Corporate Park, Colts Neck Manor, and Monmouth Battlefield. She is Central Group's conservation chair and is very active in the warehouse, conservation, transportation, and legislative committees.

Denise Brush

Denise is the chair of the Off-shore Wind Committee and vice chair of the West Jersey Group. She regularly attends Chapter Conservation Committee and ExCom meetings, where she has learned a great deal about the work of the Club in the past three years. Her interests include many areas of environmental and conservation advocacy, not just renewable energy. While she is new to the Sierra Club, she has done much volunteer work related to the environment and conservation with other organizations and served on many executive committees. She pledges to work hard for the NJ Chapter of the Sierra Club.



Stan Greberis

An NJ Chapter ExCom member and a Sierra Club Life Member, Stan also serves as ExCom member and conservation chair for the Jersey Shore Group and is on the group's letter-writing committee.



Stan is a past Jersey Shore Group Political Committee member and lead for endangered species.

The retired VP of a 500,000 square-foot distribution center, he led energy savings, recycling, LED conversion, and hybrid truck purchase efforts.

Stan educated employees on reducing their home environmental footprints. His house is solar powered.

A current SCORE business mentor, he received the 2023 NJ Governor's Environmental Excellence Award for Business Sustainability.

Revitalizing Sierra Club NJ Chapter

Sierra Club Mid-Atlantic Deputy Regional Field Director Kristina Andreotta will coordinate a new initiative to enhance leadership, strategize, and grow membership across our 12 regional groups in New Jersey. Andreotta kicked off the effort with an introductory meeting on Aug. 14 in Hamilton, where she engaged with Chapter leaders to discuss needs and develop solutions to address existing challenges.

Interested individuals or those with concerns are encouraged to contact Rich Isaac at risaacx@aol.com or Kristina Andreotta directly at kristina.andreotta@sierraclub.org to participate or share their input.

Taking the First Steps Toward Sustainability

By Tony Hagen • editor@newjersey.sierraclub.org

Scorchingly hot temperatures got an early start this year. In Ewing, temps peaked over 90°F six times in June—way above normal.

We in New Jersey have always known the hot times were coming, but this year they caught us off guard. Decades ago, we were warned about global warming, but we're only just putting up the first wind turbines. We're making good progress with EVs and solar panels, though.

People are finding it hard to change their fossil fuel habits. How many of us would still be using plastic bags at the grocery store if New Jersey hadn't banned them?

Some of us make partial moves in the right direction—baby steps. We eliminate plastic cutlery but reward ourselves with a short trip halfway round the world (and back) for a friend's wedding.

Some people invested in the “magnificent seven” (Apple, Microsoft, Amazon, etc.) or did similarly well some other way. They now feel entitled to spend all that money, no matter what it does to the planet.

Others simply don't know what to do with their time if they're not shopping or burning gas.

Still others might feel there's nothing to be done, as much as they'd like to help.

The business of America is tearing the environment apart, piece by piece. It's hard to avoid stepping on a bug or running over a squirrel, so to speak, no matter what you do. Developers constantly build on open land until it's all gone. Manufacturers take raw materials dug out of the earth and make consumer products, which end up in landfills.

If you happen to be a developer or a manufacturer or even a teacher, teaching kids how to be manufacturers and developers, you're stuck in the hamburger grinder, no matter what. If your busi-

ness is your survival, you're not going to let it go that easily, no matter how much you care about birds and trees.

One might conclude that the worldwide trend toward ultra conservatism is, in part, a reaction to the environmental movement. People are tremendously fearful that change is coming. It's dividing us.

As temperatures soar, people are going to bury their heads in the sand more deeply. It's easy to do that in our modern world. Your houses and buildings are climate controlled, so is your car. You can watch nature shrivel up through your tinted windows, like it's a Netflix program.

Before the Brits and Americans rose up to fight Nazism, there was a long period of inaction. This gave Hitler a chance to build up his armaments and expand into Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Austria. Many people felt that Hitler could be bargained with and that his war would not come to them. They were wrong.

Many of us keep climate change on the periphery of our concerns. We are, figuratively, conceding Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Austria. Meanwhile, climate change marches on.

When we fully mobilize against this new terror, however, we won't be fighting to restore peace and prosperity, so to speak. We will be fighting to preserve a piece of what's left. What happens to our livable area, potable water, and sources of food is an open question.

Human nature being what it is, global conflict is a strong possibility. That's why the sooner we start remedying climate change, the better, so that Mel Gibson's Mad Max world doesn't become our world.



A Sad Farewell to Kenneth Johanson

By Richard Isaac • Richard.Isaac@sierraclub.org

Unfortunately, former Chapter Chair Ken Johanson recently passed.

Ken was an integral part of the New Jersey Chapter of the Sierra Club since 1996. He not only chaired our Chapter for 11 years, but he also held at various times the chair position for the Personnel Committee, Legislative Committee, and Fundraising Committee. He also served on the Litigation Oversight Committee and Finance Committee.

To Ken, serving in our Chapter was a full-time commitment.

Ken's initial forays into the environmental movement were with other environmental organizations, where he stuffed envelopes, performed trail maintenance, and even did some pro bono legal work. However, he found that because those other organizations were largely staff driven, his role was too limited. When Ken discovered the Sierra Club via a group executive meeting, he was pleased to find that the meeting was run by volunteers and that within the Club he could satisfy the need to be actively involved in the decision-making process.

When he took over from the able leadership of the previous Chapter chair, his number one goal was not to “break” anything, with another goal being to find ways of strengthening our Chapter's financial base.

He clearly accomplished both objectives.

A Harvard-trained attorney, with a very strong economics background, he brought a lot to the table. Not only did he have a strong background in law and policy, he also excelled at economics and fundraising. In addition to devoting an incredible amount of time to proposed state

legislation, his yearly parties for volunteers and donors were always highly anticipated.

For 11 years Ken did an extraordinary job as our Chapter chair with thoughtfulness, skill, and grace. In that role, he kept our Chapter in solid financial health and, even more important, was a strong, effective advocate for the environment.

Ken was my mentor, and I learned a lot from him. Ken was pivotal in many ways as a chapter chair, legislative chair, and finance committee member. When he stepped down after over a decade as chair, the Chapter was a strong, effective organization in excellent shape.

My deepest thanks go to Ken Johanson for his tireless dedication and long hours of work, providing almost three decades of incredible service.

From deep within my heart, I can say that Ken will be sorely missed.



ExCom Meeting Highlights

May: Ashleey Kim and Allison Fabrizio were appointed to the Environmental and Social Justice Committee. The ExCom voted 14-0 to ask the Council of Club Leaders to ask the Board of Directors to develop a comprehensive per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) policy. Sierra Club activists and staff have been working to get strong laws and regulations on PFAS adopted at the federal level, and although PFAS are referenced in some Sierra Club policies, the Club has not yet adopted a comprehensive policy for PFAS. The ExCom voted (12 yes, 1 abstention, 1 nay) to ask National to authorize the Chapter to join *Free-land, et al v. The Board of Zoning Adjustment, Township of Hopewell*, an attempt to prevent a hotel/resort from being built near the Baldpate Mountain Preserve and other important habitat. This application was rejected by National, which does not favor “tag-along” suits, as lending the Club's name and reputation would be unlikely to affect the outcome. Also, NJ Chapter member Chris Hitchcock, Esq., advised against joining the suit, citing Club policy and the extensive Hopewell zoning board review and approval of the hotel/resort application, which he advised would be difficult to overcome.

July: Nicholas Dell Beni and Matthew Walsh were appointed to the Transportation Committee, Gabriel Serna was appointed to the Legislative Committee, and Ashna Singh was appointed solar energy coordinator. Chapter Chair Rich Isaac noted that volunteers are sought for phone banking and letter writing in Pennsylvania, a swing state. Those interested should contact him directly at risaacx@aol.com. Incumbent US Representatives Josh Gottenheimer (D, NJ-5th) and Robert Menendez Jr. (D, NJ-8th) were endorsed with 11 votes in favor, none opposed or abstaining. The ExCom approved by consensus a plan to support dredging the former Clark Reservoir in Union County and creating a wildlife preserve and habitat there instead of an amusement park, which a developer has proposed and local residents oppose. The Loma Prieta (Ca.) Chapter has recommended a national road use charge and the NJ Chapter ExCom voted 10-0 with one abstention to recommend that Loma Prieta fine-tune the proposal by considering a set of alternatives, such as at-the-pump surcharges for electric and gas vehicles. The ExCom approved by consensus a plan to consider holding a member appreciation day event at Liberty State Park in October, where state Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Sean LaTourette will receive a Sierra Club National Environmental Achievement Award.

August: Shirin Sood was appointed to replace Syona Gupta on the Chapter ExCom. Syona is heading to college and the ExCom expressed appreciation for her work. The ExCom supported a resolution urging Essex County to act quickly to purchase a 5.7 acre property in West Caldwell, using money from the Essex County Open Space Trust Fund, to be preserved for passive recreation or open space.

Calling All Volunteers! Are you concerned about climate change? Want to help with New Jersey's clean energy transition?

We need you to help us advocate for the responsible and equitable build-out of offshore wind in New Jersey!

Offshore wind is a breath of fresh air for New Jersey, providing cleaner, healthy air for all communities, not just those at the shore. Offshore wind is also our greatest climate solution, with the potential to generate massive amounts of electricity without relying on dirty fuels or emitting pollutants or greenhouse gasses. By replacing fossil fuels with clean wind energy, we can reduce harmful emissions and slow the record-breaking warming to protect our planet. In our transition to clean energy, the offshore wind industry will create thousands of family-sustaining and good-paying green jobs, powering not just our homes but our economy, too.

Offshore wind is a win-win for New Jersey that will ensure the legacy of the Jersey shore survives for future generations to enjoy as we do. **However, fossil fuel-funded groups are doing everything they can to spread misinformation and delay its development.** We do not have time to lose; we need your support and advocacy to show that New Jerseyans want clean energy and offshore wind in our state.

The Offshore Wind Committee of the NJ Chapter of the Sierra Club works to advance responsible offshore wind development by engaging in public comment periods, public hearings, educational webinars, tabling events, and more. Join our Offshore Wind Committee to learn more about what you can do to further our clean energy transition while also becoming a part of the larger Sierra Club community, which is the oldest and largest environmental organization in the country. To join, please contact NJ Communications Coordinator Jackie Greger at jackie.greger@sierraclub.org.

Volunteer opportunities with the NJ Chapter are described here:

<https://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/volunteer-opportunities>

How to Not Mess Up Your Dirt

By Joanne Pannone • Chair, Central Jersey Group

“Don’t Treat Your Soil Like Dirt” is a popular slogan for talks about outdoor management. It was the title of a lecture given by Ocean County Soil Conservation District about building a foundation for a Jersey-friendly garden (or yard) without chemicals—because your soil is the most important ingredient!

Soil is the foundation of a successful garden and yet it is the least understood of all elements in this effort. The physical and biological properties of soil work together to create nourishment for our plant life.

There is a delicate balance required. My neighbor applied too much fertilizer on his lawn and caused his young redbud tree to develop too much foliage. As a result, the overlaid branches broke in a rainstorm, all because the tree didn’t need fertilizer!

A soil test is worth the cost when it comes to growing and maintaining healthy plants. Nutrients along with soil pH may change over time, frustrating your efforts to harvest a bountiful crop. Getting a [soil test](#) takes the

guesswork out of fixing these nutritional issues. Why spend money on fertilizer or lime that isn’t needed? You will be happy with the knowledge gained from a soil test because you will know what adjustments if any, are needed.

Everything you put on your soil eventually ends up in the water table. Fertilizer, pesticides, pet waste, and storm-water runoff are harmful to water-bodies and their inhabitants. Because water is life, we should be landscaping and gardening for a healthy environment.

Water from rain and melting snow flows along hard surfaces before



Master gardener Joanne Pannone works her backyard magic.

soaking into the ground. This water picks up pollution as it goes—lawn chemicals and oil spills included. This ends up in the streams and rivers and the water table—the water-saturated portion of the ground.

Fertilizer-fueled growth of algae and phytoplankton causes ecological imbalance by starving our waterways of oxygen, which is essential for fish. Mulch can reduce the

need for fertilizer. It keeps soil temperature more even, protecting plant roots from violent swings in temperature and roots from drying out.

Using compost adds humus—a dark,

crumbly, organic material formed from the partial decomposition of plant and animal matter—which suppresses weeds and warms the soil and can be used throughout the season.

Grass clippings add nutrients and nitrogen, and leaves add nutrients and act as winter cover. Avoid using peat moss, as harvesting it releases carbon and destroys habitat. Wood chips steal the nitrogen from soil, leading to poor plant growth.

Above all, keep in mind that organic gardening doesn’t require fossil fuels.

Your county [Master Gardeners](#) (extension service) can help you with obtaining a soil test kit. Testing your soil allows you to garden with science-based decisions. We all need to work together for cleaner water and a healthy ecosystem. Happy Gardening!

Resources

Soil Testing Service: <https://shorturl.at/2va4U>

Master Gardeners: <https://shorturl.at/frfM>

Save the Planet, One Wash at a Time

By Judy Minot • Our Chapter Correspondent in Dublin



Front-loading washers are promoted as more energy-efficient than top loaders. They’re also gentler on clothes and get them cleaner at the same time. Yet

American consumers seem to be skeptical. Sales of front loaders have grown haltingly and slowly. In 2023 most new washers sold were still [top loaders](#). American consumers seem to favor the convenience of large loads and fast laundry cycles over energy savings.

If you are more concerned about the environment and the climate, a front-loading machine is the better choice. That’s because front loaders use less energy and less water, and they can spin clothes faster, so less time is needed for drying. Front loaders also use less detergent, clean clothes more effectively and more gently, and usually make less noise than top loading machines.

How Front Loaders Clean

The cleaning mechanism of a front-loading washer is quite different from that of a top loading machine. Top loaders submerge the clothes in water with detergent and swish them

around, like you might do in the sink.

Front loaders clean by lifting the clothes and dropping them into a smaller amount of water than is required for top loaders. This tumbling action helps to separate the dirt from the fabric. Detergent helps some more. This is actually a much more gentle and effective way to clean fabric, although front loaders require a longer cycle time to increase the contact time between clothing, water, and detergent. Multiple controlled tests have shown that front loaders [remove more soil](#) from fabric than top loaders. Some even have settings for washing wool and silk, which can lower your dry-cleaning bill as well.

Front loaders work best with multiple small loads rather than one or two large ones. Some models have load-sensing capability, and they automatically adjust the amount of water and other cycle parameters, allowing for more efficient operation.

Less Electricity

According to [energystar.gov](#), despite their longer cycle times, front load washers are [25% more energy-efficient](#) than even the most efficient top load washers. Many consumers wonder how this can be true, when the cycle times for front loaders are so long. Most people don’t realize that up to 90% of the

cost of running a washing machine is spent [heating the water](#). Modern washing machines draw cold water and heat it to the correct temperature. Therefore, less water means less heating. Even the “cold” wash cycle may involve some heating. In addition, since front loaders use only [one-third to one-half](#) of the water used by top loaders, they save energy by not having to slosh around gallons of heavy water and soaked clothing.

Less Time in the Dryer

The dryer is one of the most energy-intensive appliances in your home, using between [1,800–5,000 watts/hr](#). Front load washers save on drying time and efficiency by spinning clothes much faster than top load washers. By extracting more water out of clothes, they speed up drying time enormously, resulting in lower energy use. Even without a dryer you’ll find your clothes dry faster on the clothesline when spun at rates of 1,200–1,500 rpm.

Money Talks

In Europe, where electricity and



heating oil costs have historically been higher, top loaders are rarely found. Many Europeans air-dry their clothes and wash in cold water to save on electricity costs. US consumers would be wise to follow these practices, as retail electricity rates have increased sharply since 2000, from < 11 cents per kWh in 2000 to > 16 cents per kWh in 2022, according to the [NJ Energy Data](#)

[Center](#).

Is there a Downside?

Because the door on a front loader seals in moisture, it’s important to wipe the gasket (or seal) dry after each load and leave the door open between washes to prevent the formation of mold. We’re all creatures of habit, and using a front loader efficiently means some changes in laundry routine, like doing smaller loads. It’s nice to know that with a front loader you can still save water and electricity, and your clothes actually will come out cleaner and, potentially, last longer.

Isn’t it great when a change that’s good for the environment can also be better for your clothes?

Your Right to Know and Have Clean Air

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



Ever smell something stinky while enjoying your backyard? Have you or your family been suffering from frequent bronchial or sinus problems?

You may want to do some air-quality detective work. Fortunately, there are several resources to help you with your research. Once you have proof, you can act.

In 1986, the federal Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA) became law, giving everyone the right to know what chemicals are floating around in the air of our communities.

In New Jersey, we also have the NJ

Worker and Community Right-to-Know Act. This strengthens efforts to protect public health and the environment by ensuring that workers and community members have access to information about hazardous chemicals and the means to take appropriate actions to safeguard themselves.

Here is how to find out what’s blowing in the wind around you.

The first and easiest online tool to use is [AirNow.gov](#). All you have to do is go to the link, enter your ZIP code, and you will see if the air in your community is good, bad, or dangerous. The information comes as a partnership between the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). A big colorful dial makes the information

clear and easy to understand. However, details are limited, so if you want to know more try the links below.

What the EPA offers

The EPA has a [Toxic Release Inventory \(TRI\) Program](#) database that tracks industrial discharges of toxic chemicals by facilities in the United States. At the bottom of the title page, there’s a handy TRI Toxics Tracker. Enter your search information. You can just enter your ZIP code to learn about your immediate area.

Once the map downloads, it’s best to click on the full screen option and zoom in so that you can click easily on the dots that provide details on the pollution sites. Dark burgundy and wide circles indicate the worst pollution.

If you adjust the radius of your search, the tracker tool will show toxic releases even across state lines. The charts and maps are a generalization, but they give you some idea of where the worst industrial pollution is and which companies are releasing toxins.

Corporations are obligated to file reports on a regular basis. Depending on when companies report, the data can be a bit outdated. If a new company has just moved into the area, it may not be listed on the map. Check back later.

The NJ Worker and Community Right-to-Know Act

This is New Jersey’s effort on behalf of residents. Click the [link](#) to the NJ DEP site to find out about air quality in your

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The Plastics Problem Calls for Stronger Regulation

By Shirin Sood, Shreyaa Patel, Arin Harkawat, Olivia Xu, Shriyaa Madineni, Syona Gupta, and Kiran Adams • Youth Committee

Going out with friends is a normal activity—picking up food, buying clothes, or grabbing a Starbucks drink. We as consumers can choose whether or not to buy from certain companies. We also can choose whether or not we request a plastic bag or a plastic straw when purchasing an item or a drink.



(Left to Right) Shirin Sood, Shreyaa Patel, Arin Harkawat, Olivia Xu, Shriyaa Madineni, Syona Gupta, and Kiran Adams

Yet, if we do accept these plastic items, what eventually happens to them? According to the World Economic Forum, the majority of plastic products ends up in landfills or the environment as litter, and another one-fifth is mismanaged during the recycling process.

Beyond correcting our own plastic habits, there have been legislative attempts to minimize plastic production by companies themselves. Advocates, including the [Sierra Club](#), are urging the adoption of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) laws that would reduce the amount of packaging waste that includes plastic. New Jersey was

the first state to hold [battery producers responsible](#) for tracking the batteries they sell for electric and hybrid vehicles and developing used battery management plans. The state has EPR bills for plastics under consideration currently ([A1444](#) and [S426](#)).

Many of us naively believe that when our plastic waste is collected it is sent off to a recycling factory and efficiently and cleanly recycled. In reality, most plastic waste (at least 90%) is not recycled and instead is incinerated, land-filled, or [shipped to underdeveloped countries](#) where it pollutes other peo-

ple's land, water, and air.

To help address the serious lack of waste management regulation, government leaders should adopt Skip the Stuff laws—removing single-use plastic items from delivery orders—and consider expanding current EPR legislation to reduce plastics waste, too. New Jersey's plastic bag ban, enacted in 2020, highlighted the value of legislation in bringing about wide-scale positive change. Each NJ resident now uses an average of [594 fewer plastic bags](#) each year because of this ban.

NJ law also now mandates that plas-

tic straws can only be provided upon request, and this type of rule needs support elsewhere across the nation. Plastic straws, a common form of litter in the ocean, are widely consumed in the United States. One [widely quoted study](#) estimates 500 million plastic straws are used each day.

Strong plastic policy would help to protect public health. Microplastics—plastics that have partly broken down—have been found throughout the human body including our [lungs, blood, and heart](#).

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What You Can Do Personally About Plastics

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



"I just want to say one word to you... Plastics." This advice for Benjamin Braddock in the 1967 movie "The Graduate" presaged a bright future for plastics. While they

have come to serve a panoply of seemingly indispensable functions, their environmental costs are staggering. Our addiction to single use, "disposable" plastics isn't necessary or sustainable.

Basic facts: Much of the [400-plus million metric tons](#) of plastics now produced each year soon becomes waste, with about [11 million tons](#) entering the oceans. Sadly, the United States is among the top [per-capita generators](#) of plastic waste. Among the many tragic results, [vast numbers](#)

of marine animals and birds die each year from ingesting plastic or entangling with it. Meanwhile, global plastic recycling is just 9% and only [5% in the United States](#).

Greenhouse Gases: Manufactured from fossil fuels, plastics contribute to the demand to drill and "frack." Deep rock fracturing (fracking) releases methane (the main component of natural gas) into the atmosphere where its heat trapping effects far exceed that of carbon dioxide. Further, the processing of oil and gas into plastic is energy intensive. Creating industry's huge variety of plastics requires adding [thousands of polluting chemicals](#).

No End of Life: Plastics accumulate and persist in the environment. Over time, however, mechanical forces break and shred plastic into micro-

and nanometer-size particles, which end up in our air, water, food, soil and throughout the tissues of living organisms. What little we know so far about the [health impacts](#) of these pervasive plastic particles is highly concerning.

What Can We Do?

First, **reduce** at the source. Is it necessary to buy bottled water regularly? Even #1 (polyethylene terephthalate) bottles, which are among the most common for water and other drinks, shed [microparticles](#) into our drinks. Use of a safe, endlessly reusable stainless steel water bottle, and a home water filter is far cheaper. We can buy soda in cans and juice in glass bottles. Use washable cloth, mesh, and paper bags for shopping to reduce plastic waste. Ordering take-out food? Ask for aluminum containers and refuse unneeded plastic cutlery.

Second, **reuse** intact plastic food containers and zip bags. Clear, recyclable #1 plastic containers, most often used for bottled beverages, have been approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use and reuse. Plastics numbered 2, 4, and 5 are also considered [safe to reuse](#). Reuse spray bottles by refilling them with tablet or liquid concentrates and water, or with white vinegar (e.g., for cleaning). This saves money and the environment.

Polyester and other synthetic fabrics are forms of plastic that are best refused at the source or bought for the long term. However, synthetic fabrics shed microplastics that end up in the ocean. In a dryer, the shedding is notorious. Launder synthetic clothes less often, spot clean, and hang them to dry.

When you need to **replace** items,

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NJ Chapter Opposes NJ Turnpike Expansion

By Bill Beren • Chair, Transportation Committee

In July, the NJ Chapter of the Sierra Club urged the US Coast Guard not to approve the NJ Turnpike Authority's plans to replace the Casciano Bridge across Newark Bay between Newark and Bayonne and double the number of lanes from four to eight.

The Turnpike had submitted an environmental assessment that concluded that the bridge project is a "replacement in kind" and asked the Coast Guard to issue a finding of "no significant impact" regarding the Bridge replacement. In May, the Coast Guard indicated it was inclined to approve the project, but the public comments period was extended to allow stakeholders more time to weigh in.

Our Chapter requested that the Coast Guard require a complete Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the entire Turnpike expansion, in line with the Coast Guard's procedures, which require a full EIS for projects that are highly controversial or that will affect environmentally sensitive areas.

The Chapter's comments particularly focused on the failure of the Turnpike Authority to consider public transit alternatives that will reduce

traffic volume and the need to widen the Turnpike.

The Sierra Club was well represented at an electric school bus conference held in Baltimore the last week of July. The conference was sponsored by the World Resources Institute (WRI) and included a field trip to the Baltimore City Public Schools bus garage, where we saw a fleet of 20 electric school buses that had been delivered and were in service in the spring.

WRI is a national organization that has been funding grassroots efforts to replace diesel school buses with zero emission battery electric buses. NJ Chapter Director Anjuli Ramos-Busot and I joined Katherine Garcia, who directs our Club's Clean Transportation for All campaign, at the conference.

NJSBA Workshop

This fall, the Club will once again exhibit at the annual NJ School Boards Association Workshop in Atlantic City. We'll be there for two days of the event, October 22 and 23. If you are a member of a local school board or know someone who is, stop by our booth and find out how your school board can help with

the transition to clean, emission-free transportation for school children.

A July 18 New York Times' article, "[More Gas Cars and Trucks, Fewer EVs as Automakers Change Plans](#)," was one more story based on the false impression that the market for EVs is declining when the market is, in fact, continuing to realize strong year-over-year growth in terms of both market share and actual sales. What is happening is that the auto industry was overly optimistic about sales growth potential, and what we are seeing is a cutback in planned production, although sales growth is still strong.

For example, the article states that GM has reduced its 2024 forecast for battery electric, zero emission vehicle sales by 50,000 to between 200,000 and 250,000 cars and trucks. What the article does not state is that GM's sales of EVs in 2023 were only 75,386.

So, yes, GM overestimated the market when they originally had a goal of building 400,000 EVs by the end of 2024, but the focus of reporting should be on the real growth in EV market share and sales. Total EV sales in 2023 made up 7.6% of the entire US mar-

ket, up from 5.9% in 2022, according to the Electric Drive Transportation Association and the US Department of Energy.

Actual sales growth in 2024 may not be as dramatic as the 200,000-250,000 target mentioned in the article, but GM's EV sales for the first half of 2024 are up 17% over the first half of 2023, which outpaced the industry average sales increase of 10% for all vehicle types. And if GM actually succeeds in meeting the 200,000-plus EV total, that's a huge win for electrification of our auto fleet. It's worth noting here that the EV Cadillac Lyriq is Cadillac's [second best-selling model](#).

Ford's EV sales [grew 65% in May](#) vs May 2023, and their percentage growth in EV sales outpaced growth in both their hybrid and gasoline models.

Doomsday stories about the market for EVs evaporating may make for click-bait worthy headlines, but the real story is the steadily growing market for EVs in the United States.



Turning Out for Turbines: Global Wind Day 2024!

Hundreds of people turned out for our Global Wind Day Celebration at Liberty Park on June 15, hosted by the Sierra Club, NJ League Of Conservation Voters, NJ Wind Works Coalition, labor unions, and many other partners for a cleaner, renewable New Jersey.

“We are creating the sustainable future we wish to see, one free of fossil fuels, with clean air and a safe climate for all,” said Sierra Club NJ Chapter Director Anjuli Ramos-Busot.

The event took place along the Hudson River at Liberty State Park with the dramatic Manhattan skyline as a backdrop. The weather was beautiful, and everyone was in good spirits. We had a great lineup of influential speakers including US Rep. Bob Menendez Jr., NJ Commissioner of Environmental Protection Shawn LaTourette, and Steve Sweeney, former president of the New Jersey Senate and candidate for NJ governor in 2025. Their presence underscored the message that there is no backing down on renewable energy.

The Sierra Club tent was busy with traffic all day. We had tables where children could fly kites or draw on a large banner, young people could meet members of our Youth Committee, and adults interested in volunteering with us could talk with Sierra Club leaders.



Perfect weather helped make Global Wind Day a success. Sierra Club volunteers and tent visitors enjoy the event. Clockwise from top: Denise Brush hosts the “drawing board,” state Commissioner of Environmental Protection Shawn M. LaTourette, visitors at the Sierra Club tent, Allen Swanson, Mike Ruscigno stretching some kite yarn, and ExCom member Kip Cherry. Photo credit: Jackie Greger, Seth Kantor, Tony Hagen, Anjuli Ramos-Busot.

Atlantic Shores Rebids Project as Approvals Pour In

By fits and starts, wind turbine development is making progress in New Jersey. In early July, the Department of the Interior announced its approval of the 2.8 gigawatt (GW) Atlantic Shores South offshore wind project, which will create enough energy to power nearly 1 million homes.

This project will encompass two separate wind farms and will help New Jersey reach its goal of 11 GW of offshore wind power, while reducing annual CO₂ emissions by 2,625 tons each year.

This summer, in the fourth round of offshore wind bid solicitations in New Jersey, Atlantic Shores submitted revised bid terms for its wind farm projects, contending these would ensure “a more resilient, competitive, and sustainable path” toward wind farm operation. Inflation, supply bottlenecks, and other factors have stalled wind farm development. Atlantic Shores’ fresh bid will undergo state

review before development is allowed to proceed.

The Atlantic Shores wind farms are slated for the waters off Atlantic City, and in August, the city granted Atlantic Shores critical approval to run its transmission cables underground through tracts in the city. This involves beach area and property co-owned by Atlantic City and Green Acres.

Following construction, there would be no further impact on public access or enjoyment of the property in question. The NJ Chapter of the Sierra Club supports this use of the property.

Also this summer, Community Offshore Wind submitted a bid to build a 1.3 GW wind farm 37 miles off Barnegat Light. Attentive Energy was also a participant in the fourth round of bidding, although the nature of its bid—whether this involves more turbines or price adjustments on an earlier contract—was undisclosed. Previously, in October 2023, the company asked New Jersey

for approval to build 1.3 GW of offshore wind 42 miles east of Seaside Heights.

Whale Impact Addressed

In a key development in May, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) issued a final environmental impact statement for the Atlantic Shores project, ruling that despite the intrusion on the marine environment, it would be beneficial and help New Jersey meet its renewable energy goals.

Of particular concern to the BOEM investigation was the impact on the critically endangered North American right whale (NARW, pop. 340), which for years has suffered high mortality from vessel strikes and fishing gear entanglements. These threats to the NARW population will continue regardless of whether offshore wind is developed, BOEM decided.

However, efforts will be made to mitigate the impact of offshore wind installation on NARWs and other ma-

rine life, BOEM said.

“Offshore wind construction and installation, operations, and maintenance activities would be conducted with applicant-proposed and agency-required mitigation measures developed to minimize impacts on NARW. Therefore, impacts from offshore wind activities are not expected to substantially contribute to the existing major impacts from the baseline conditions,” BOEM said.

Those baseline conditions include sport and commercial fishing, cargo movement, passenger traffic, cable laying, and even beach replenishment. These adversely affect marine life, and despite the BOEM report’s intimidating length of 560 pages, readers of The Jersey Sierran are strongly encouraged to read through it for a deeper, factual understanding of the issues.

BOEM Report: <https://shorturl.at/IywGp>

Polluters Will Likely Exploit Ruling Overturning Chevron

By Chris Hitchcock, Esq.



The Supreme Court has made another radical departure from well-established law in the case of *Loper Bright Enterprises v. Raimondo*. The Court overturned the

40-year-old Chevron deference doctrine, which required courts to defer to government agencies' interpretations of ambiguous statutory language. Federal courts will now have the power to determine the meaning of such language, thereby becoming involved in regulatory policymaking. EPA regulations are expected to be one of the principal targets of challenges brought under *Loper Bright*.

In *Chevron*, the Court considered whether the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was authorized to define the meaning of an ambiguous term used in the Clean Air Act. The Court ruled on June 25, 1984, that courts should defer to an agency's interpretation of ambiguous statutory language provided the interpretation was "permissible." Under the Chevron deference doctrine, agencies were often successful in defending their statutory interpretations and the regulations issued under those interpretations.

Loper Bright was brought by commercial fishing groups challenging the National Marine Fisheries Services' (NMFS) interpretation of the 1926 Magnuson-Stevens Fishery and Management Act (MSA), which governs fish conservation in federal waters. Applying Chevron deference, the lower courts determined that NMFS was authorized to issue the challenged rule requiring fishermen to pay government monitors on their vessels under NMFS' interpretation of the MSA. The Supreme Court's June 28, 2024, decision reverses the ruling, determining that federal courts should be the party to interpret the MSA's ambiguous statutory language.

Justice Elena Kagan strongly dissented. "The [Chevron] rule is right." Agencies have a "detailed understanding of complex and interdependent regulatory programs," which courts lack. Kagan noted that, since rulemaking can involve policy decisions, "agencies report to a President, who in turn answers to the public for policy calls..." In contrast, courts have no political accountability. "In one fell swoop," Kagan wrote, "the majority today gives itself the power over every open issue—no matter how expertise-driven or policy-laden—involving

the meaning of regulatory law."

Loper Bright is a victory for regulated entities. It will likely lead to a wave of litigation testing existing regulations on the grounds that they were issued under broad or ambiguous statutory language. Industry lawsuits will undoubtedly focus on abolishing various EPA regulations.

Effect of Ruling

One possible near-term effect involves Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) rules that require public companies to disclose extensive climate change-related information in their SEC filings. Industry is challenging those rules partly on the grounds that the Securities Exchange Act does not authorize the SEC to issue regulations of this nature. *Loper Bright* strengthens that argument. If a company is not required to disclose climate impact from its operations, it may reduce actions necessary to curb climate change.

The broad sweep of the *Loper Bright* opinion creates uncertainty. The Court states that under certain circumstances agency interpretations of statutory language should be given "respect." Instead of deference, an agency's interpretation is a factor to be weighed, along with other factors, for a court to interpret ambiguous language in a statute. One circumstance that would cause a court to respect an agency's interpretation is if the interpretation is consistent with prior agency interpretations of the same statute. However, agencies like the EPA sometimes change statutory interpretations of prior administrations, in which case such revisions may be subject to attack.

The impact on the thousands of prior cases decided based on Chevron deference is also unclear. The Court stated that "mere reliance on Chevron" by itself is not grounds for overruling. Instead, there must be a "special justification" for overruling the prior decision. However, Justice Kagan notes in her dissent that if "special justification was found to overrule Chevron, how hard could it be to find comparable 'special justifications' to overrule other cases?" Accordingly, regulations that have been in effect for many years could be struck down. One positive note: Aware that Chevron was under attack, administrative agencies under President Biden reportedly have invoked Chevron only five times in issuing fifty-one major rulings. However, should Donald Trump get elected in November, his administration is likely to offer little resistance to industry's assault on environmental regulations.

"The impact on the thousands of prior cases decided based on Chevron deference is also unclear."

CLEAN AIR continued from page 4

neighborhood. Be sure to scroll down on the page to "What's in Your Community?" It advises that you use the "layer list" to see what's happening in overburdened communities, which is probably applicable if you live in any metropolitan area.

This tool even shows current local air direction and speed, if you want to know whether you are currently exposed to air from the pollution source.

Other information provided by the

layering function includes major air quality sites that have pollution permits and locations that are being monitored by the DEP.

Clicking on the plus sign (+) brings the map closer and provides more detail on smaller sources of pollution.

The DEP is advised on clean air matters by the Clean Air Council which is made up of appointees of the governor taken from various other agencies such as Community Affairs and the Dept. of

Most Americans Support Climate Action

By Greg Gorman • ggorman@embargmail.com



The Sierra Club, in conjunction with three other leading environmental, clean energy and climate organizations (League of Conservation Voters [LCV] Action Fund, the

NRDC Action Fund, and Clean Energy for American Action [CE4A Action]), has endorsed Vice President Kamala Harris for president. This is the first time these four groups have ever jointly announced a presidential endorsement.

This endorsement was not surprising, and it is not surprising that the Sierra Club still supports the Democratic campaign and Harris' candidacy for president. Former President Donald Trump repeatedly denounced climate change as a "hoax" while reversing, revoking or rolling back more than [100 environmental rules and actions](#) established by the Obama administration. This will continue if Trump wins reelection. The 2024 Republican Party platform proclaims, "We will DRILL, BABY, DRILL," cancel electric vehicle mandates, and terminate the Green New Deal.

The hardline Republican position regarding the climate crisis is inconsistent with American attitudes in general. A 2024 poll conducted by Energy Policy Institute of the University of Chicago with the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research found that about half of Americans agree that taking steps to reduce emissions; expand clean energy; and protect our air, water, land, and wildlife are important priorities for the next president. About three-quarters of Democrats support these policy goals, and younger Republicans are closer to Democrats on the issue of supporting fossil fuel devel-

opment than their older Republican counterparts. Younger Republicans are also more supportive of clean energy expansion than older Republicans ([37% vs 28%](#)). The EPIC/AP-NORC poll results clearly indicate that the draconian Republican position of "no climate action" is just plain wrong.

On the contrary, an ambitious climate policy is the right thing to do and is quite popular. Helped along by Inflation Reduction Act funding, "Scores of companies have announced 585 new clean energy projects totaling \$361 billion in investments across 47 states and Puerto Rico between August 2022 and May 2024, creating 312,900 new jobs" [Forbes reported](#) in July 2024. The challenges of domestically sourcing rare minerals are being addressed with discoveries in Wyoming and California. [Technology challenges are being addressed](#) for lower emissions cement manufacturing, thermal batteries for industry, next-generation EV-batteries, and high tech solutions for building insulation.

It is important to address the climate crisis to avoid more of the price increases we have seen lately for auto/home insurance and food prices, which are affected by severe storms, droughts, and wildfires. Likewise, stabilization of regional environments can help prevent mass migrations and displacement of families.

The more economic damage that is caused by climate change, the more likely it is that people will respond. [Research](#) indicates that although health, environment, and experiences with severe weather events may influence individual climate action, cost savings is still the primary motivation for adopting clean energy and energy efficiency.

This year, vote for candidates who support bold climate action.

STRONGER REGULATION continued from page 4

Plastic items impact marine life. Approximately [700 species are known to have been affected by plastics](#). For marine animals, often death or sickness from plastics occurs from consumption or strangling. Sea turtles may mistake plastic bags for jellyfish, causing their digestive systems to be blocked. Birds and fish ingest plastic fragments or

particles called microplastics, accumulating toxins that are devastating to their health. Whales may ingest plastic waste that fills up their stomachs and causes them to starve.

The Youth Committee believes that it is vital to transition to sustainable product use that protects the diverse ecosystems that are integral to life.

ABOUT PLASTICS continued from page 4

keep in mind that glass and ceramic containers are safe and endlessly recyclable.

Silicone handily replaces plastic bags and wrap. Compostable paper food storage bags neatly replace plastic varieties. One such brand, Lunchskins, offers sealable, recyclable, nontoxic, freezer- and microwave-safe paper bags in different sizes. Waxed paper is making a timely comeback. Look for

wax made from vegetable sources.

Lastly, **recycle**. Sadly, this fourth "R" is the least useful when it comes to plastic, as just 5% of plastics are recycled in the United States. Nonetheless, it's important to follow your town or municipal recycling guidelines. Check plastic numbers and put unwanted plastics in the trash to prevent contaminating the plastic that is being recycled.

Commerce and Economic Development. Pollution from airports and other facilities is not included on the maps.

Make Use of These Sites and Tools!

Vote for politicians who favor protecting and funding government agencies that help provide information to citizens. Join Sierra Club in the fight for our freedom to breath clean air.

Information on Water Quality

If you missed my previous article in

The Jersey Sierran on how to find out about toxins in your community drinking water and school drinking water, click on this [link](#).

Resources

AirNow: www.airnow.gov/
EPA TRI: <https://shorturl.at/oMkyz>
NJ Right to Know Act: <https://dep.nj.gov/airquality/>
Water Updates: <https://shorturl.at/Sy4Sl>

Are You a 'Heavy Hitter'? Or Do You Know One?

By Jim Andreano • Fundraising Committee Chair

As with most nonprofits, the life-blood of our Chapter is frequent small donations from our members. You may well be one of those donors. If so, please accept our most sincere thanks. If not, we invite you to join this much-appreciated group at www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey

But, we must ask, are you a *heavy hitter*? Are you in a financial position to help us in a very special way? For purposes of this communication, we define a heavy hitter as someone who can comfortably make a donation of four figures or more to the NJ Chapter of the Sierra Club.

If that's you, you likely view your philanthropic activity as a social investment in return for tangible results—not as a charity. You demand a healthy social return on your investment. If you're not convinced that's happening, you'll adjust your donation portfolio accordingly.

Focused on Results

Our New Jersey Chapter is focused on results. We're strong advocates for cleaner air and water. We stand up for renewable energy and sensible development. Our staff of hard-working volunteers and paid professionals are dedicated to these objectives and more.

With that in mind, I respectfully ask that you include the Sierra Club NJ Chapter in your heavy hitting philanthropic portfolio. You can start by talking to me at jimandreano@gmail.com. I will be happy to show how your investment in our Chapter will generate the social return that you require.

Note that donations made to Sierra Club National are not the same as those made to Sierra Club NJ Chapter. Only the latter stay in New Jersey to be spent 100% on local causes.

If you're not a *heavy hitter*—like ma-

ny of us who still give what we can—maybe you know someone who is. Maybe that person could be invited to invest in our Chapter.

How do you know if such a person is a potential donor/investor? The answer to that question is as easy as A-B-C: Access, Belief, and Capacity.

Access—Do you have access to the person? Will the person take your calls, or return your texts and emails? Having an open channel is essential!

Belief—Does the person share our Sierra Club beliefs, or is this person a Sierran at heart who just doesn't know it yet?

Capacity—To the best of your knowledge, does the person have the financial means to make a significant donation to the Chapter?

If your answer to all three questions is yes, then it may make sense for the two of you to have a preliminary chat.

At this point you may be thinking, "But I hate asking for money!" Fair enough. We are not asking you to solicit the person directly, although you are certainly welcome to do so. What we are asking is that you ask the person if it's OK if we contact them. If they agree, you can send me an email with the person's contact information, and Club representatives will take it from there.

With generous donor backing from you and others like yourself, we can achieve more in this very important effort to build a sustainable New Jersey.

All of that said, we cherish all our donors at all donation levels, and we thank you again for making our work possible.



Life After Solar Panel Installation

By Betsy Longendorfer • Building Electrification Committee

There are numerous articles about choosing solar panels, but not many about your experiences with them after they are installed.

Billing

Let's assume that the electric utility and the contractor have sized your solar array such that it reasonably covers your needs, according to your past records and your planned future electric use.

You will be billed monthly for maintaining a connection to the grid (in our case, that is \$5.75). Excess power that you produce but do not simultaneously consume is sent to the grid. If you have batteries installed, you will be able to store solar energy for when the sun isn't shining or a grid outage. Most residential solar systems are designed to stop operating during a grid outage to avoid feeding power into the grid, which could be dangerous for workers. We chose not to install batteries because they were as expensive as the entire solar array, and we did not expect to have many power outages.

You will, of course, draw power from the grid during the night, as well as on cloudy days, and whenever you are using more electricity than you produce.

At the end of the billing period, the total electricity that you produced is subtracted from what you used. Short-term excess production will offset future bills. If you do not have enough production credits saved up, you will be billed for the difference.

At the end of each year's solar panel installation anniversary, you will be paid (wholesale price) for any remaining production credits, your credit balance will be reduced to zero, and the credit accrual process begins again. Your unused production credits will be auctioned as solar renewable energy credits (SRECs) in a special marketplace, and you will be paid for those (approximately \$90 currently), too.

SRECs were a rebate strategy to get people to install solar panels, and the incentive programs are being replaced and reduced as the price of solar installations comes down and fewer rebates are needed. An SREC is awarded every time your solar panels generate 1 MWh (or 1,000 kWh) of energy, even if you then consume it yourself or are paid for it in credits from your utility.

We have had our solar panels for two years, receiving a credit balance at the end of both years, and we paid out of pocket only one month out of the 24 (January 2024), because it was cloudy most of the month and our energy consumption was relatively high.

If your energy consumption pattern is like ours, you will produce more than you consume in the spring and fall, and you will break even or run a deficit in the summer and the winter.

Reports

Our solar panel manufacturer, Enphase, has an app for our smartphones that lets us monitor our panels in a very detailed way. It shows power production and consumption in 15-minute increments, as well as daily, monthly, and yearly. It also shows the functionality of each of the individual solar panels, so we can tell if they're working properly or are being shaded by an overgrown branch.

We've been able to use the 15-minute incremental report (**Graphic**) to see our real-time import or export of energy. For you energy nerds out there, this shows exactly what happens to your energy usage when you turn on one appliance at a time (toaster oven, microwave, window A/C, lights, etc.). One of the interesting things we discovered was that our mini split heat pump was cycling on and off when it should have been running steadily at a higher efficiency.

There are also electricity usage reports from our electric utility. These include weekly usage, with any changes highlighted, and comparisons of electricity usage over the days of the week.

This level of detailed reporting causes you to think more carefully about changes you can make to reduce your usage.

Maintenance Considerations

One of the lessons we learned was the importance of making sure that your roof will last a long time prior to installing panels. We were assured by the installer that we had 10 years of life left, and it turned out to be just one. To

>continued on page 10

In Remembrance:

George C. Denzer (1939-2024)

George C. Denzer, 84, a dedicated treasurer for the New Jersey Chapter of the Sierra Club, passed away unexpectedly on June 3, 2024, at PennMedicine Princeton Medical Center in Plainsboro.



A passionate environmentalist, George resided in Plainsboro with his wife, Joan, with whom he recently celebrated his 55th wedding anniversary. Before his retirement, George had a successful career as an IT professional at Bristol Myers Squibb in Lawrence. In his free time, he generously volunteered his skills for AARP tax preparation assistance at the Plainsboro Library.

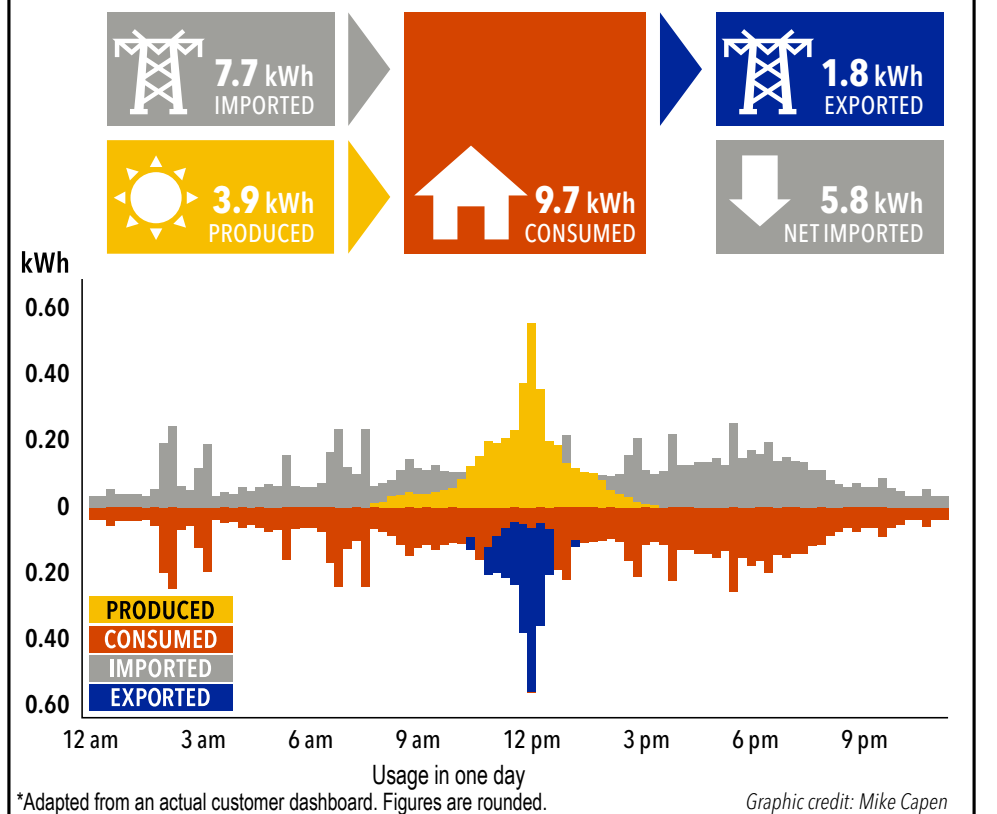
George was an alumnus of Stevens Institute of Technology, where he studied engineering and chemistry. He had a keen interest in sports cars, particularly Porsches, and was also an accomplished model railroad builder, an avid book collector, and a devoted cat lover.

We extend our deepest condolences to Joan and the entire Denzer family during this difficult time. George's dedication to the environment and his community will be greatly missed.



The joys of community gardens include fresh, organic vegetables and flowers all summer long. Consider joining a community garden program in your community or, if there isn't one available, encouraging your local town governing body and environmental commission to start one. Pictured: squash, zinnias, sunflowers, and tomatoes. Photo credit: Tony Hagen

Power Usage Summary for a Residential Solar Customer*



Enjoying the Wide Open Spaces at Assunpink

By Susan Matson • NJ Chapter Trip Leader

On a mid-July Saturday, Sierra Club offered hikers a good walk on an almost undiscovered trail: the Radio Beacon Trail of the Assunpink Wildlife Management Area, a well-hidden gem at the southeast corner of the tract, near Allentown.

To find this on Google maps, look for the Assunpink Wildlife Conservation Center: That's the name of the small education building you'll see as you turn into the driveway off Eldridge Road, near the management area's headquarters.

This trail is occasionally used by horseback riders, and because the track is a simple, narrow dirt track winding slowly uphill, past alfalfa fields on

one side and native trees on the other, you're unlikely to encounter strollers or bicyclists—or even other hikers.

The main appeal for this location is wild birds! You're usually guaranteed the sight of beautiful **indigo buntings** and **bright gold common yellowthroats**, calling lustily. These birds arrive in spring and stay till August or even October.

As we enjoyed our feathered friends, we got a few bonuses—finding and learning the names of dragonflies we were unfamiliar with—such as the mysteriously dark **widow skimmer dragonfly** (pictured) and others.

In spring, rarities like the **grasshopper sparrow** can be heard with their insect-like calls.



Photos: Susan Matson, Seth Kantor



We were also impressed by the tower at the crest of the Radio Beacon Trail, attainable within about 30 minutes of walking. Officially called the VORT-AC NAVAID, the odd-looking structure (pictured) is a navigation aid for pilots using instrument guidance, as opposed to visual markers. It's a handy guide for point-to-point travel for both military and civilian pilots.

While there, we enjoyed seeing a glider swoop close to the crest of the hill, enjoying an updraft. Once past the structure, we made our way downhill, where we heard **yellow-billed cuckoos**, **white-eyed vireos** (hard to find in other parts of New Jersey), **goldfinches**, and other feath-

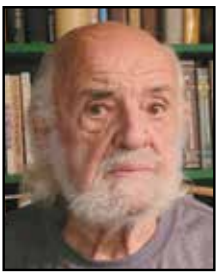
ered friends.

The entire circuit route was doable in about 90 minutes and made for a serene morning, enjoying midsummer with friends. If you're looking for a low-key way to enjoy the outdoors, the Radio Beacon Trail could be just what you're looking for!



Finding a Name for What's in Pandora's Box

By George Moffatt • Education Chair, Jersey Shore Group



What's in a name? Consider "Anthropocene," with its somewhat sexist "anthro" for "man" and the gender-free "pocene" for "new." "Anthropocene" was first coined by biologist Eugene F. Stoermer in the 1980s to emphasize our destructive effects on the environment. It was later popularized in 2019 by Paul J. Crutzen, a meteorologist and atmospheric chemist, who shared the same concerns.

Today, we use the relatively benign "climate change," or the slightly more ominous "global warming." Considering that humanity has populated Earth

for just .01% of Earth's existence, our short but highly destructive era deserves a more serious name.

The question comes on the heels of 12 straight months of unprecedented temperatures, with 2023 being the hottest year scientists have ever seen. But that record is being challenged. The planet's average temperature on July 22 was 17.15°C (62.87°F)—the hottest day in the history books.

As another example, ground temperatures in East Antarctica were approximately 28°C (50°F) above normal this year, mirroring major heat waves experienced in the region over the last two years.

Because the emissions of oil, coal, and gas products are the primary cause

of Earth's increasing pollution (with a tip of the hat to us), most fossil fuel companies prefer the vaguer "climate change" to "global warming."

As Earth keeps getting warmer, we'll see more deaths from scorching heat waves, lethal hurricanes, and devastating forest fires that pollute the atmosphere and even local water supplies. Some scientists fear these mega-storms will become routine weather events and even create their own weather.

There's more: nations threatened by rising ocean levels, record rains and winds, destroyed crops, and increasing numbers of the homeless and hungry. We also face prolonged droughts, parched farmlands, lower crop yields, and starving livestock. And, of course, melting glaciers.

And if we include our ever-increasing abuse of Earth's plant and animal kingdoms—including extinctions—good grief, the list could go on forever!

All these upheavals are from "global warming"—or one could argue, "global heating"—of Earth's atmosphere. According to NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, Earth's average temperature has increased by about 1.1°C (1.9°F) since the 1880s. This amounts to an average increase of about 0.2°C (0.36°F) per decade, with approximately two-thirds of that increase occurring since 1975.

Scientists estimate that Earth's "tipping" point, beyond which climate change could become irreversible, is at or near 1.5°C (2.7°F), potentially within the next few decades.

Meanwhile, the Earth is getting steadily warmer due to air pollution. Traditionally, about 71% of the Sun's incoming longwave radiation (heat) has been absorbed by the Earth, while the remaining approximately 29% has been reflected back into space as shortwave radiation. Today, Earth's polluted atmosphere reflects back to Earth some of the heat that previously escaped. The result? Havoc!

Consider just one effect of heat. When oceans become increasingly warmer from the atmosphere's re-reflected heat, it "excites" or energizes the water molecules to move about more rapidly and spread further apart. This "excitation" has increased ocean volumes above pre-industrial levels, causing coastal flooding and other havoc on Earth.

The Northeast faces higher humidity and rising sea levels; the Midwest, droughts and floods; and the West, droughts and fires. And the Southeast? Everything. In Antarctica, the world's largest currently known iceberg, A-68A, measuring approximately five times the size of New York City and more than 1,000 feet (305 meters) thick, is adrift toward the Southern Ocean. This cycle of heat and "excited" energy will continue to destabilize Earth's air, land, and sea to the point where coastal flooding will be the least of our problems.

But to put the best face on it, someday we may be able to snorkel in Alaska and ice skate in Florida. Then we might reconsider our species' well-earned designation, "Anthropocene Age." Better yet, "Darth Vader's Delight" also has an interesting ring to it.

Below is a short list of Sierra Club NJ Chapter legislative priorities.

Bill	Description	Status
S-237, A-1480	Establish 100% clean electricity standard and direct the BPU to create a clean energy certificate program (aka, NJ Clean Energy Act of 2024).	Referred to Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee (3/14/2024)
S-3066, A-4214	Promote electricity-ready homes and buildings in New Jersey by restricting use of gas (aka, Healthy and Affordable Construction for Tomorrow Act).	Introduced in Senate, referred to Senate Community and Urban Affairs Committee (5/2/2024)
S-249	BPU would establish targets for transition from fossil fuel-based systems in buildings to efficient electrification with lower emissions. Electric utilities would have to comply.	Referred to Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee from Senate Environment and Energy Committee (6/20/24)
N/A	Sierra Club NJ Chapter seeks to persuade NJ government to codify Gov. Phil Murphy's goal to achieve 11 gigawatts of wind power by 2040. This would provide legislative or regulatory strength to make the goal legally binding.	
N/A	Sierra Club NJ Chapter seeks a codified restriction against use of Green Acres' open space funding for the construction of artificial turf fields, which are polluting and hazardous.	
S-1117, A-3254	Require DEP to establish a plan to reduce emissions pollution caused by warehouses. This would include renewable energy generation systems and low emission vehicles.	Introduced in the Senate, referred to Senate Environment and Energy Committee (1/9/24)
S-3399	Establish requirements for the removal and recycling of solar energy generation facilities and structures at end of useful life.	Passed by Senate (6/28/2024)
S-3398	Create producer packaging stewardship program to reduce and appropriately manage recyclable waste.	Introduced in the Senate, referred to Senate Environment and Energy Committee (6/3/24)
A-3345	Create \$150 million through bonding to help towns prevent unwanted warehouse construction by purchasing land development rights.	Referred to Assembly Environment, Natural Resources, and Solid Waste Committee (1/9/2024)
S-3147, A-4379	Establish beverage container deposit and refund system to encourage recycling.	Referred to Senate Environment and Energy Committee (5/6/2024)
S-3065, A-4145	Prevent flood-prone or environmentally sensitive tracts from being used to satisfy affordable housing building requirements.	Amended by Senate Environment and Energy Committee (5/13/2024)
A-2149, S-2879	Create an Office of Sustainability to reduce carbon footprint, improve water conservation, and improve energy efficiency in state managed buildings.	Referred to Assembly Environment, Natural Resources, and Solid Waste Committee (1/9/24)
S-2751, A-575	Allow DEP to set guidelines for the level of recycled content in goods purchased by state and local agencies.	Referred to Senate Environment and Energy Committee (2/15/2024)
A-1677, S-3163	Allow school boards to use "competitive contracting," vs. less-flexible bidding, for electric school bus contracting, and enter > 10-year lease arrangements. School Boards Association could facilitate electric bus use through aggregation.	Gov. Phil Murphy signed into law (7/10/24)
S-1049, A-1481	Direct DEP to regulate testing for microplastics in drinking water.	Gov. Murphy returned this for amendment (1/8/24), saying as written the bill was not feasible to implement as it prematurely assumes availability of study information and filtration technology.
S-1034, A-2929	Require disclosure and testing of lead in drinking water to residential tenants, provides for lease termination in event of landlord obstruction.	Referred to Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee (6/17/24)
S-224, A-2775	Prohibit sale, distribution, and import of certain products marketed as recyclable, unless DEP determines that products are widely recycled.	Amended by Senate Environment and Energy Committee (5/13/24)
S-4468	Would ensure that \$70 million in Clean Energy Fund cash is used for NJ Transit bus electrification, rather than being diverted into NJ Transit's FY2025 operating budget.	

DEP Puts on Flood Pants

The NJ Department of Environmental Protection has proposed a package of long-awaited land use reforms that will reduce the clash between human development and rising sea level and rainfall amounts in New Jersey.

“We must adapt in order to best protect ourselves and our property from the effects of climate change, including rising sea levels, more intense storms, and expanding flood zones,” said Sierra Club NJ Chapter Director Anjuli Ramos-Busot.

Current projections indicate as much as 5.1 feet of sea-level rise is likely by 2100, and nearly two-thirds of New Jersey’s coastline is at high or very high risk of coastal erosion. “Our homes and communities are on the line, and these rules are crucial to keeping New Jerseyans safe, improving stormwater management, and safeguarding critical coastal habitat,” she said.

The Reform to Support Resilient Environments and Landscapes is part of the New Jersey Protecting Against the Climate Threats (NJ PACT) Initiative from Gov. Phil Murphy’s office.

Among other changes, it would:

- Redraw coastal flood hazard maps to account for rising sea levels and storm surge, requiring higher first floor elevations, flood proof buildings, and higher roadways.
- Assess the risk to residential buildings and critical structures that are subject to potential inundation from sea level rise.
- Improve stormwater management to protect water quality and reduce flooding.
- Encourage nature-based solutions for problems with water volume.
- The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has predicted an above normal hurricane season this year, with seven to 25 named storms and, of those, as many as 13 becoming hurricanes. The [highest concentrations](#) of infrastructure vulnerable to sea level rise and coastal flooding are in New Jersey and Louisiana.



Sierra Club New Jersey Director Anjuli Ramos Busot and other environmental advocates discuss NJ PACT at Asbury Park. Photo credit: Taylor McFarland

Climate Change Update

This summer the Rutgers Climate Change Resource Center released its [2023 State of the Climate report](#) for New Jersey.

2023 was the third warmest year in New Jersey recorded so far. Fifteen of our warmest years have occurred since 2000, according to the report.

We had 13 tornadoes in 2023, the same as in 2021, and this was the second highest total since 1989. Seven of the tornadoes occurred on April 1, 2023, as part of an extreme weather event, and two of them were EF2, with wind strength of 111-135 mph. Homes in Lawrence and West Windsor experienced severe damage.

2023 was also the year of Canadian wildfire smoke. The Canadian fires consumed a forested area more than five times the size of New Jersey. Because of the thick smoke, which we all experienced, Flemington had an air quality index number of 237, which is 37 points above the very unhealthy mark.

New Jersey is 4.0% covered by forest, and although precipitation has increased 7% since the 1900s and is forecast to continue to increase, rising temperatures will dry the soil more rapidly and raise the potential for more forest fires here, the report said.

Sea level at Atlantic City has risen 18.6 inches since 1911 and could rise another couple feet by 2050. People at the Shore are already familiar with tidal (or “sunny day”) flooding, and this will get worse, the report said. Atlantic City had 8 days of tidal flooding on average from 2007 to 2016, and by 2030 the yearly range could be 17-75 (yes, *seventy-five*) days, under a moderate emissions scenario.

Such statistics are reflected globally, and the Rutgers climate crisis group is now speculating whether the rate of climate change is accelerating.

Warmer ocean temperatures are causing fish to migrate off the Jersey coast. Local fishermen have been catching record numbers of sea bass lately, which have moved [14.0 miles](#) north of their accustomed range.

SOLAR PANEL *continued from page 8*

avoid voiding the panel warranty, the original solar installer usually must remove and reinstall the panels, even if a different roofing contractor is used. The quote for the removal and reinstallation was quite high, although it added just a few hours to the whole job.

Squirrels or birds sometimes nest under the panels. Protective guards can be added to prevent access.

Future Plans

We did not plan for a heat pump or EV charging when we added the solar pan-

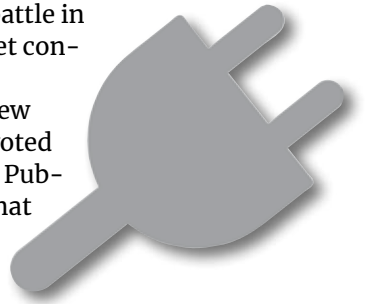
els. While we do have extra production capacity at this time, we may not have enough for these devices.

While we did not install batteries initially, there are several developments that may compensate. EVs are being built with batteries that can power a home for short periods of time and even supply power to the grid. There are also standalone portable solar-powered generators/batteries that can power a home for short periods of time. These might be a better investment than dedicated batteries.

BEPs Plug Us In

Creating wind and solar power is only part of the battle in achieving a sustainable energy future. You have to get consumers to use it.

That’s why it was encouraging in June when the New Jersey Senate Environment and Energy Committee voted in favor of S249, a bill that would direct the board of Public Utilities to orchestrate electrification programs that would incentivize New Jersey consumers—homes and businesses—to switch to electrical appliances and tools.



S-249 in late June was referred to the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee. If the bill is eventually signed into law, the state could order New Jersey’s utilities to design “beneficial electrification programs” (BEPs) to spur a wider transition to renewable energy use in the state.

For example, utilities could find ways to switch consumers to heat pumps, which can lower energy costs by up to 41% and reduce a building’s emissions by 33% in the first year and 59% over the life of the equipment. Cleaner air is also a benefit of these electrification programs.

BEPs need to be planned and managed carefully because of wide and sudden swings in electricity demand and supply that can make it difficult to keep the grid amply supplied with electricity.

Encouraging greater consumer dependence on electricity makes a supplier’s job more challenging. Nevertheless, solutions are possible, and many states are moving forward with BEPs.

For utilities, there [is potential](#) to increase revenues from growth in energy sales. This larger market for electricity, as fossil fuel use declines, can lead to lower rates for consumers.

“S.249 is a pathway to deliver cleaner, healthier air for New Jersey families while reducing the state’s greenhouse gas emissions,” Sierra Club NJ Chapter Director Anjuli Ramos-Busot said.

“Replacing fossil fuel appliances that release dangerous pollutants such as nitrogen oxides, a key ingredient of smog and a trigger for asthma attacks, with clean energy technologies like heat pumps is essential to protecting the health and well-being of our state’s families. We urge the entire legislature to get this bill over the finish line,” Ramos-Busot said.

The companion Assembly bill, A5591, was referred to the Assembly Telecommunications and Utilities Committee.

Earlier this year, New Jersey [joined eight other states](#) in pledging to accelerate heat pump adoption to reach 65% of heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning (HVAC) sales by 2030 and 90% of HVAC sales by 2040, a move widely supported by [industry voices](#). The BPU recently [enacted a package of new construction incentives](#) that will promote electrification measures and greater energy efficiency, and residents will soon be able to access more than \$183 million in federal rebates from the Inflation Reduction Act.



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Gateway: Co-Chairs: Steven Yafet, syafet@gmail.com and Ron Pate, Ronpate31@verizon.net
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River Touring: Fred Tocce, (908) 453-2205 (H) RD-1, Box 277, Washington 07882

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.

Sierra Club outings are arranged and conducted by volunteer leaders who are responsible for the

OCTOBER

Oct 4 (Fri): Fifteenth Annual Guided Walk and Village Tour at Double Trouble State Park (Ocean Co.) 10 a.m., 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. We'll have a tour of the sawmill and the packing house too! 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. Heavy 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)

Oct 5 (Sat): Hacklebarney State Park (Morris Co.) 11 a.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 there are a few river bridges to cross to reach other parts of this park. This is a lovely fall 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 Registration required: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/lgbt (LGBTQ+)

Oct 5 (Sat): Hike at Eagle Rock Reservation (Essex Co.) 9 a.m., 5-6 miles, moderate pace. Wear hiking boots. Bring water and snacks. No dogs please. Meet at the Essex County 9/11 Memorial, main entrance, Prospect Ave. and Eagle Rock Ave., West Orange. There are facilities. Rain cancels. Register with leader: Ron Pate, Ronpate31@verizon.net Preregister at www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/gateway (G)

Oct. 6 (Sun): Fall Walk at Grounds For Sculpture (Mercer Co.) 10 a.m. Grounds For Sculpture (GFS) was founded by artist and philanthropist Seward Johnson. It opened in 1992 on the site of the former NJ State Fairgrounds. The Van Gogh Café and the Peacock Café are available for lunch. No outside food permitted. Water is allowed. Advance timed ticket reservations are required to ensure entry. Open rain or shine. Tickets are available up to two weeks in advance. www.groundsforsculpture.org/about/ We'll have a Sierra Club banner outside the welcome center. Leaders: Leona and George F., pineypaddlers@gmail.com Preregistration is required: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/central-jersey (C)

Oct 12 (Sat): Bird Walk at Curlis Lake Woods Nature Preserve, Hopewell (Mercer Co.) 8 a.m., about 2 hours. Susan Matson is an avid and experienced birder and will be our guide on this first NJ Sierra Club outing at Curlis Woods. It contains some of the oldest forest in Mercer Meadows with mature beech, oak, and maple trees. The woods are dominated by a variety of **woodpeckers** and there is a body of water that is good for **ducks** and other birds. The trails are generally flat. Bring your cameras/binoculars, water and snacks. Please no dogs. Meeting at the Mercer County Equestrian Center parking lot, 431B Federal City Road, Pennington. There are facilities, Leaders: Leona and George F., pineypaddlers@gmail.com Group size is limited. Preregistration is required: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/central-jersey (C)

Oct 12 (Sat): Wawayanda State Park Hike, Upper Greenwood Lake (Sussex Co.) 10 a.m. Description: 7 miles in moderately hilly terrain. Features: Wawayanda Lake, wetlands, and wildlife (e.g., **bald eagles** and **bears**). Facilities: restroom/outhouse building and sinks with running water. Requirements: hiking boots, non-cotton hiking socks, and a backpack with water and lunch. Directions will be sent via email to those who register. RSVP at www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/calendar Leaders: Jimi Oleksiak, the_hikist@mac.com, and Jerry Ruocco (SS)

Oct 14 (Mon): Indigenous People's Day Hike at Davidson's Mill Pond Park (Middlesex Co.) 10 a.m., 3-4 miles, easy pace. The Yellow Trail is a grassy/rocky section through the woods that includes narrow boardwalks. 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. Bring water, snacks, and lunch. Dogs on leash are welcome. Portable toilet at parking lot. Rain cancels. Co-leaders: George and Leona F, pineypaddlers@gmail.com, and John Miraglia, johnworks3@aol.com Preregistration is required: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/raritan-valley (RV)

Oct 20 (Sun): Hike the Franklin Parker Preserve Yellow Trail (Burlington Co.) 10 a.m., 4-5 miles, easy pace on sandy trails and woods trails. This 9,400-acre preserve is a keystone piece of land, linking the expanses of Brendan Byrne, Wharton, Penn State forests and creating a more contiguous Pinelands National Reserve. Meeting at Speedwell entrance off Rt. 563, Woodland Township. Leashed dogs are welcome. Bring water, snacks, and lunch. Good footwear recommended, Rain cancels. Co-leaders: Tom Boghosian, tfboghosian44@gmail.com, and Leona and George F., pineypaddlers@gmail.com Preregistration is required: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/south-jersey (SJ)

Oct 23 (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! Let's enjoy the fall foliage in beautiful woodlands. There are some ups and downs on forest trails. Hiking boots and poles recommended. Meet at 23 Agress Rd., Millstone. There is a portable toilet available at the parking lot. 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)

Oct 27 (Sun): Fall Foliage Hike at Huber Woods Park (Monmouth Co.) 10 a.m., about 3-4 miles, easy pace, moderate trails. The Huber property was an early 20th century family estate. The Bavarian style house has an environmental center with many exhibits, including a Lenape Indian display. There are elevations, good footwear and hiking poles are recommended. Bring water and snacks. Leashed dogs are welcome. Address: 25 Browns Dock Rd., Middletown. There are facilities. Option: late lunch at Bahrs Landing, Middletown. Leaders: George and Leona F., pineypaddlers@gmail.com Preregistration is required: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/jersey-shore (JS)

NOVEMBER

Nov 1 (Fri): Celebrate Diwali, the Indian Festival of Lights with a Fall Walk at Colonial Park Gardens (Somerset Co.) 10 a.m., 3 miles, easy pace. A walk to see the last of changing colors, with exposed branches and evergreens. Colonial Park Gardens is one of the treasures in Somerset County. It features an accredited arboretum and shrub collection—and much more. After walking the grounds we'll cross the canal bridge to the Delaware and Raritan Canal Towpath (surface is sand and crushed stone). Meet at Colonial Park Gardens' parking Lot F. There are facilities. Bring water and snacks. Rain cancels. Leashed dogs are welcome. Option: late lunch at a local restaurant. Preregistration is required. Co-leaders: George and Leona F, pineypaddlers@gmail.com, and John Miraglia, johnworks3@aol.com Preregistration is required: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/raritan-valley (RV)

Nov 3 (Sun): "Fall Back" Hike at Estell Manor (Atlantic Co.) 10 a.m. easy pace, about 2 miles. Option for an additional 3+ miles. We'll follow the Purple Heart Trail south to the Glassworks and the scenic overlook on Stephens Creek for a break. Meet at the Warren E. Fox Nature Center on 109 Boulevard, Rt. 50, Mays Landing and see the displays before we hike. Facilities are available. Bring water, snacks, and lunch on the hike. Leashed dogs are welcome! Rain cancels. Co-leaders: Tom Boghosian, tfboghosian44@gmail.com, and Leona and George F., pineypaddlers@gmail.com Preregistration is required: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/south-jersey (SJ)

Nov 6 (Wed): Hike at Monmouth Battlefield State Park (Monmouth Co.) 10 a.m., 3-4 miles, easy pace on the Green and Red Trails. Monmouth Battlefield State Park is the site of one of the longest battles (June 28, 1778) fought during the Revolutionary War. There are some elevations; hiking shoes and poles are recommended. Meet at the visitors center, 16 Business Rt. 33, Manalapan. There are facilities. Bring water, snacks, and lunch. Leashed dogs are welcome! Rain cancels. Co-leaders: George & Leona F, pineypaddlers@gmail.com, and John Miraglia, johnworks3@aol.com Preregistration is required: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/raritan-valley (RV)

Nov 9 (Sat): Hartshorne Woods Hike, Highlands (Monmouth Co.) 10 a.m. Description: 6 miles in moderately hilly terrain. Features: views of the ocean and woods, WWII battery and guns, Navesink River pier. There are picnic tables. Facilities: heated restroom, flush toilets, sinks with running water. Requirements: hiking boots, non-cotton hiking socks, and a backpack with water and lunch. Directions will be sent via email to those who register. RSVP at www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/calendar Leaders: Jimi Oleksiak, the_hikist@mac.com and Jerry Ruocco (SS)

Nov 11 (Mon): Veterans Day Hike at St. Michael's Preserve (Mercer Co.) 10 a.m. 3-4 miles, easy pace. The highlight of our walk is the J. Seward Johnson II 70-ft wide monumental sculpture "The Awakening." The sculpture depicts a giant man anchored deeply in the Earth who struggles to free himself. Bring your cameras! The St. Michael's Preserve is over 400 acres of farm fields and forests on the edge of Hopewell Borough. D&R Greenway was successful in purchasing the land through a public/private partnership. Bring water, snacks, and lunch. Leashed dogs are permitted. Rain cancels. Co-leaders: Leona F., pineypaddlers@gmail.com, and Lynn E., lynnebeling@comcast.net Preregistration is required: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/central-jersey (C)

Nov 16 (Sat): South Mountain Reservation Hike (Essex Co.) a.m., 6-7 miles, moderate pace. Meeting at the Turtleback Loop Trail parking area off 374 Walker Rd., West Orange. There are facilities. Wear hiking boots and bring hiking poles if needed. Bring water, snacks, and lunch. Rain cancels. No dogs, please. Register with leader: Ron Pate, Ronpate31@verizon.net Preregister at www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/gateway (G)

Nov 20: (Wed): Hike at Smith's Woods (Burlington Co.) 10 a.m. 3 miles, easy pace. The park features a diverse collection of habitats and terrain and Rancocas Creek vistas. Meeting at Smith's Woods parking lot, 39 East Railroad Ave., Easthampton. There are facilities. Hiking boots are recommended. Leashed dogs are welcome. Inclement weather cancels. Bring water and snacks. 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)

DECEMBER

Dec 1 (Sun): The Affair at Cedar Bridge 1782 Reenactment, Barnegat (Ocean Co.) Noon-4 p.m. "The Affair at Cedar Bridge" is a reenactment of the last land engagement of the American Revolutionary War that took place at the Cedar Bridge Tavern Historical Site in Barnegat. Skirmishes at 1:30 and 3:30 p.m. A family event with NJ Fifes & Drums Sea Dogs (traditional tavern musicians), historic style tents, and the Ocean County Liberty Bell for children to ring. Rangers provide an informative guided tour of the 200-year-old restored tavern. The historic restoration is the result of extensive architectural and archeological research that has resulted in the tavern being placed on the prestigious National Register of Historic Places on Aug. 8, 2013. ADA and wheelchair-accessible first floor. There are restrooms. Option for a walk on the nature trail with interpretive signs. Bring water and snacks. Option: late lunch at Lucille's Country Cooking, a short drive from the tavern. If you are interested in meeting us at this reenactment, Leona and George F., pineypaddlers@gmail.com, and Margaret Mary Piccolo, gogreenp1@yahoo.com Please register to coordinate a meeting time at www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/ocean-county (O)

Dec 4 (Wed): Hike at Jakes Branch County Park (Ocean Co.) 10 a.m., 3-4 miles, easy pace. Jakes Branch has a nature center with hands-on exhibits and an observation deck that offers a 360' view of the Pinelands. The woods trails have some sandy sections and boardwalks. There are ups and downs. Good footwear and hiking poles recommended. Leashed dogs are welcome. Inclement weather cancels. Meeting at Jakes Branch Park, 1100 Double Trouble Rd., Beechwood. Bring water and snacks. Option: late lunch at Shady Rest Restaurant. 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)

Dec 7 (Sat): Hike at Eagle Rock Reservation (Essex Co.) 9 a.m., 4-5 miles, moderate pace. Wear hiking boots. Bring water and snacks. No dogs please. Meet the Essex County 9/11 Memorial, main entrance, Prospect Ave. and Eagle Rock Ave., West Orange. There are facilities. Rain cancels. Register with leader: Ron Pate, Ronpate31@verizon.net Preregister at www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/gateway (G)

Dec 8 (Sun): Winter in the Pines Hike at Batsto Village, Wharton State Forest (Atlantic Co.) 10 a.m., 3 miles, easy pace on the Sand and Water Trail with an option for an additional 4 miles around Batsto Lake. Good footwear and hiking poles are recommended. Rain cancels. Leashed dogs are welcome. Bring water, snacks, and lunch. We will walk along sandy forest paths and on a series of wooden foot bridges to the Batona Trail and back to the village for our lunch break. FYI: From noon to 3 p.m. Enjoy the Holiday Spirit at Batsto Village with mansion tours, meet Santa, listen to carolers, and the post office will be open! 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 and George F., Leona@pineypaddlers.com Preregistration is required. www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/south-jersey (SJ)

Dec 14 (Sat): Celebration of the Holidays at Whitesbog Village (Rain Date Dec. 15) (Burlington Co.) 10 a.m., 3-4 miles, easy pace on sandy trails. Last year we saw a flock of **tundra (whistling) swans** from the Arctic Circle that winter in the Pinelands. Join us for the Whitesbog celebration of the holidays. Handmade Arts & Crafts exhibitors will be spread throughout the village, kid crafts in the art gallery, live music, food trucks and even more! Bring water, snacks, and lunch. Leashed dogs are welcome. Leaders: George & Leona F., pineypaddlers@gmail.com Preregistration is required: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/west-jersey (W)

Dec 14 (Sat): Tourne Park Hike, Boonton (Morris Co.) 10 a.m. Description: 6 miles in moderately hilly terrain. Features: mountain top view of Manhattan, 9/11 Memorial, Birchwood Lake. Facilities: portable toilet in the parking lot. Requirements: hiking boots, non-cotton hiking socks, and a backpack with water and lunch. Directions will be sent via email to those who register. RSVP at www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/calendar Leaders: Jimi Oleksiak, the_hikist@mac.com, and Jerry Ruocco (SS)

Dec 19 (Thurs): Hike at Smith's Woods and Holiday Tour of Smithville Mansion (Burlington Co.) 10 a.m., 3 miles, easy pace. After the hike we'll tour the Mansion decorated for a Victorian Holiday (small fee) by local garden clubs. Meeting at Smith's Woods parking lot, 39 East Railroad Ave., Easthampton. There are facilities. Hiking boots are recommended. Leashed dogs are welcome. Inclement weather cancels. Bring water and snacks. 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)

Dec 21 (Sat): First Day of Winter Hike on the D&R Canal (Mercer Co.) 10 a.m., 3-4 miles, easy pace. We'll hike over the Lock 1 "swinging bridge" as we walk along the towpath; perhaps see the resident **bald eagles**. Meeting at the River Line parking lot in Bordentown City. Bring water and snacks. Leashed dogs are welcome. Option: late lunch at HOB Tavern. Inclement weather cancels. Leaders: Leona and George F., pineypaddlers@mail.com, and Joanne P., jpatmeadowbrook@gmail.com Preregistration is required: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/central-jersey (C)

Dec 26 - Dec 31: Patriots Week in Trenton—History of the American Revolution in NJ (Mercer Co.) Learn about the American Revolution during Patriots Week. Every day of the week offers fun and history for the entire family. See the First and Second Battles of Trenton reenactments and participate in walking tours of the Trenton battlefields. Check website for events www.patriotsweek.com Contact us to meet for various events. Leona and George F., pineypaddlers@gmail.com, and Joanne P., jpatmeadowbrook@gmail.com (C)

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JANUARY

Jan 1 (Wed): "First Day" Monmouth Battlefield State Park Guided Walking Tour of Perrine Hill (Monmouth Co.) The Friends of Monmouth Battlefield will be participating in "America's State Parks First Day Hikes" programs sponsored by the state's Division of Parks and Forestry. Meet 11 a.m. at the visitors center. There are facilities. The group will drive in convoy to Perrine Hill on Rt. 522. At Perrine Hill we'll view the main American position and walk to sites associated with Molly Pitcher. Bring water and snacks. Good footwear recommended. Co-leaders: George & Leona F, pineypaddlers@gmail.com, and johnworks3@aol.com Please register to receive further information if cancelled or rescheduled due to inclement weather. www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/raritan-valley (RV)

Did You Know?

New Jersey had a record 267 nesting pairs of bald eagles and 800 osprey nests in 2023, up from one bald eagle nest and 50 osprey nests in the 1970s.



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

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/@sierraclubhunterdonwarreng9255/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
	<i>* Group Executive Committee Member</i>	

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.

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
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	rebeccawilkin@gmail.com
Youth Outreach/Outings		
Chair	Rebecca Wilkin	rebeccawilkin@gmail.com
Conservation Committee		
Chair	<i>Open Position!</i>	
Climate Change Committee		
Chair	Jeff Rapaport*	jefrap@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
	<i>*Elected North Jersey Group Executive Committee Member.</i>	

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Are you interested in leading an all-inclusive and/or LGBTQIA+ hike? A nature walk? Backpacking trip or water event? If so, please let us know! We need you! Contact Wanda Ashbrook at pridegrlnj@aim.com or Rebecca Wilkins at rebeccawilkin@gmail.com for more information!

SUPPORTING LEGISLATION THAT CALLS FOR RAIL SAFETY

Are you worried that your community could become the next East Palestine, Ohio, or Lac-Mégantic? North Jersey Group cosponsored the Rail Safety rally held alongside the railroad tracks in Teaneck on July 8, 2024. Remembering people killed and communities upended by past rail accidents, the rally focused on toxic materials, like the highly flammable vinyl chloride, which is carried in tanker cars throughout our state. There is "no safe dose" for vinyl chloride, nor is there for the cancer-producing dioxin released when it burns. Airborne toxins know no boundaries. Cutbacks in personnel who maintain and inspect freight trains add to the danger they pose. We urge you to SUPPORT RAIL SAFETY by supporting the two companion rail safety bills before the state legislature. For more information, contact Judy Green, jugreen547@gmail.com

BLOG

Interested in what you can do to combat climate change? Read articles in Betsy and Judy's free substack blog, climatefriendlylifestyle.substack.com. See also articles by these authors in The Jersey Sierran. Blog articles include a series called Electrify Everything including 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.

BUILDING ELECTRIFICATION

Are you interested in learning more about building electrification? As a member of the NJ Sierra Club Building Electrification (BE) Committee, North Jersey Group member Betsy Longendorfer reviewed the Triennium utility filings to NJ Board of Public Utilities and has testified at five of the public comment sessions and to the NJ Senate. She and others on the BE Committee have been certified as electrification coaches by Rewiring America. They plan on offering their free services to whoever needs advice on how to electrify their home, so feel free to contact Betsy at BetsyLong.env@gmail.com.

PRESERVING OPEN SPACES

North Jersey Sierra continues to fight against the paving and development of newly remediated landfills in Overpeck Park and is now supporting the Northern Valley Gre-

enway (NVG) in its efforts to create a new “rails to trail” in northern New Jersey. The proposed rail trail would replace the unused CSX tracks through Englewood, Tenafly, Cresskill, Demarest, Closter, Norwood, and Northvale. The Palisades Study Commission is working with NY transportation planning to consider the NVG or a route along the Palisades Parkway as a complement to the Empire State Trail System, connecting the George Washington Bridge to the Cuomo Bridge. Help with letters/support from NJ Sierra Club members is needed/welcomed. Contact Betsy at BetsyLong.env@gmail.com for more information or go to www.nvgreenway.org.

COMPOSTING AND SUSTAINABILITY

Are you interested in learning more about composting/food sustainability? 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

Are you in high school or college? Do you want to learn more about what you can do to protect the Earth while enjoying the beauty of nature? If so, we invite you to join our Youth Slack Group! You can join it at bit.ly/3BHU8Uc or contact rebeccalwilkin@gmail.com.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Do you want to be a change agent? Do you have a passion for stopping CLIMATE CHANGE? If so, contact Jeff at jefrap@optonline.net and keep your eye out for actions related to

- The Passaic County Sewerage Commission's backup gas plant in Newark
- Stopping unsafe oil trains and promoting rail safety
- Williams Transco Regional Energy Access Expansion project
- The transportation of liquefied natural gas through New Jersey from Pennsylvania—Gibbstown terminal
- Protecting our remaining natural lands, open spaces, and forests from development

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

Environmental

Justice Chair Allison Fabrizio allisonlfabrizio@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

Five other climate action groups walked with the Gateway Group as we marched in Montclair's annual July Fourth Parade. Members of the NJ Electric Vehicle Association, the Northeast Earth Coalition, Montclair Climate Action, Sustainable Montclair and Interfaith Climate Action joined us in the 1.6 mile march from downtown Montclair to Watchung Avenue. Four electric vehicles were showcased and we were met with enthusiastic thumbs up and waves along the route.

On June 23 we participated with many of the same groups in a Climate Action March organized by Interfaith Climate Action, a coalition of 16 Montclair churches, synagogues and mosques through downtown Montclair. Among the over 100 individuals who marched was Montclair's newly elected mayor, Renee Baskerville. At the end of the march, we gathered in the sanctuary of Bnai Keshet synagogue where marchers signed postcards to be delivered to State Senator John McKeon (D-27) asking him to support climate action legislation

CONSERVATION NEWS

Our environmental questionnaire to candidates for Montclair's town council is paying dividends. Now that the new council has been elected and seated, we are fielding questions from many of the newly elected council members for our assistance in dealing with local transportation and other environmental issues. Significantly, the interim town manager announced that he will suspend the pending purchase of new vehicles so that he can evaluate options for buying zero emission electric cars.

Two new development issues have arisen. There is a proposal for a massive residential development on 120 undeveloped acres in West Orange. And in West Caldwell, a local group is fighting the sale of protected wetlands.

In July, the DEP approved permits to allow the Passaic Valley Sewerage Committee (PVSC) to continue building their proposed fracked gas power plant in the Ironbound section of Newark. This has met with increased opposition from the public and almost all elected officials in the region.

OUTINGS

Our Outings Chair, Ron Pate, will be scheduling additional outings this fall and winter. 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: elevated 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, Millburn, 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

OFFICERS

Group Chair Allen Swanson

Outings Kevin O'Brien

Group Webmaster Gilbert Rohde

Treasurer Paul Sanderson

Secretary Jonathan Connor

Fundraiser Eric Hausker

ExCom Member Richard Isaac

The Loantaka Group has taken advantage of the open invitation from the Madison Farm and Artisan Market to have a booth. Besides providing information and literature, Allen has been giving away his hand-painted cotton produce bags to encourage people to stop using plastic produce bags. The group has also joined residents of Clark in opposing a project at the Clark Reservoir that would remove four acres of trees and put in a downsized amusement park. The state Chapter leadership has joined the Loantaka Group in opposing the project.

Most of the Loantaka Group is in the 7th Congressional District. Allen has been spearheading the effort to elect the Sierra Club endorsed candidate, Sue Altman, to replace Tom Kean Jr. in Congress.

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.

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OFFICERS

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

For a job description for Group Co-Chair, please go to: <https://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/volunteer-opportunities>

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 welcome new members!

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	berndanerin@aol.com
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

• **Regional Energy Access Expansion (REAE)** - The US Court of Appeals has ruled in our favor against Williams! They noted that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) did not account for the climate crisis or the fact the gas supply was unneeded. The approval for the polluting REAE proposal has been voided by the court and returned to the FERC to properly address these concerns. The REAE proposal seeks to expand the toxic compressor stations at Old Bridge (CS 207) in Middlesex County and at Neshanic Station, Branchburg (CS 505) in Somerset County. Read the court's decision here: subscriber.politicopro.com/eenews/f/eenews/?id=00000191-041e-dd86-ad91-adff3d9e0000

Sierra Club Reaction: [Court Vacates FERC Decision to Approve Massive Gas Expansion Project | Sierra Club](#)

• **Northeast Supply Enhancement (NESE), FERC Docket CP17-101-005:** Finally, after 8 years of battles, we've won the war! Williams gave notice to 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.

• **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 other towns in Middlesex County along the Raritan River 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

• **Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs)** - Water bodies in Middlesex and Somerset Counties are under advisory for toxic HABs. Fertilizers from lawns and agricultural use may be present in stormwater runoff ending up in lakes and waterways. Check for HABs on the map: NJDEP Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) Dashboard (arcgis.com)

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

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Website Manager	Steve Miller	732-671-5917	SteveMiller@comcast.net
Social Media 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

We have **Science Monday lectures**, on the fourth Monday of Sept, Oct, Nov, Jan, Feb, March, and April. Program opens at 6:30 p.m. at Brookdale Community College.

Upcoming Speakers at Brookdale Community College

Title: Native Plants and Wildlife: Wild in the Garden State
Date: Monday September 23, 2024 6:30 p.m. at Brookdale Community College
Speaker: Sarah Galloway (film director)
Description: "Wild in the Garden State," a documentary short, is a screening that will appeal to those who want to spend less time maintaining a pristine — and unhealthy — lawn and more time enjoying the natural world. Shot over 10 years, it presents a story of gardening missteps, lessons and experiences that go far beyond replacing an area of lawn.... It's a story of connecting to the natural world in suburban New Jersey.

Filmmaker Sarah Galloway has produced exhibit media for the American Museum of Natural History. "Wild in the Garden State" premiered at the Garden State Film Festival, and has screened at the Colorado Environmental Film Festival, the Environmental Film Festival at Yale, the Princeton Environmental Film Festival, and more. A discussion with the director, Sarah Galloway and Q&A will follow the screening.

Title: The Ecology of Native Plants

Date: Monday October 28, 2024 6:30 p.m. at Brookdale Community College
Speaker: Jason Goldman
Description: Jason Goldman, of the Monmouth County Parks System, is a Naturalist, Garden Designer, and Ecological Presenter. With a degree in ecology, Jason strives to empower others and help them become more environmentally conscious. Jason has presented and consulted with numerous groups as well as local government.

This lecture is a deep dive exploration on native plant gardening. It is an in-depth look into the ecology of plants and animals, driving home the importance of native plants and how they support so much life around us. It is forged out of a greater need for deeper understanding about native plant gardening. The Ecology of Native Plants will take the audience on an exploration of the natural world right here in our backyards. Audience members will walk away from this presentation with a better understanding of how animals and plants rely on each other, and why native plant gardening matters a great deal. You'll leave this talk wanting to plant native everywhere!

Title: Forever Chemicals, Pesticides and Other Contaminants in Our Environment: Impact on Human and Wildlife Health

Date: Monday, Nov. 25, 2024, 6:30 p.m. at Brookdale Community College

Speaker: Kelly Smalling

Description: "One Health" is an integrated, unifying approach that aims to sustainably balance and optimize the health of people, wildlife, and ecosystems. Kelly Smalling will speak about the One Health perspective of her work at the US Geological Survey's New Jersey Water Science Center, where she has researched the presence of forever chemicals in tap water throughout the US, and implications of environmental contaminants for the health of humans and wildlife.

Kelly Smalling is a Research Hydrologist with the U.S. Geological Survey, New Jersey Water Science Center. She is Co-lead, along with Paul Bradley of the USGS Environmental Health Program, Drinking-Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Integrated Science Team. Kelly's research is focused on the actual versus perceived health risks of contaminant mixtures to human health and the environment (including fish and wildlife).

Logistics

The doors open at about 6:30 p.m., announcements begin at 6:40 p.m., and speakers begin at about 6:45 p.m. There will be free pizza for attendees beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Brookdale Address:

Warner Student Life Center

Twin Lights Rooms 1 and 2, ground (lowest) floor

Brookdale Community College

765 Newman Springs Road

Lincroft, NJ 07738

DIRECTIONS to BROOKDALE & the campus building:

To get to Brookdale's Lincroft campus, take Parkway Exit 109 to Route 520 West (Newman Springs Road, which becomes E. Main Street at the Lincroft campus). Take the traffic circle into the campus and follow the signs to the Warner Student Life Center ("SLC" on the map below) and parking lot 7. As you walk eastward towards the building complex, Warner will be down a slight incline to your left. If lot 7 is full (which usually doesn't happen at that time on a Monday), use parking lots 5 or 6. A campus map is at: <https://map.brookdalecc.edu>

OCEAN COUNTY GROUP

Webpage: [Meetup.com/Sierra-Club-Ocean-Group](https://www.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
Beyond Plastics			
Coordinator	Virgil Maderich		vann118@comcast.net
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.

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 and their allies are invited to join us for a hike or a rally.

Want to do more? Consider volunteering to work with our dedicated leadership team as our treasurer, secretary, or social media specialist! Volunteer and help us grow and better serve New Jersey's LGBTQ+ hikers and environmentalists of all ages!

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

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

Meetup: www.meetup.com/njsierraclub

Facebook: www.facebook.com/njsierralgbt

OFFICERS

Co-Chair	Diane Scarangella	diascat@hotmail.com
Co-Chair and Outings Chair	Wanda Ashbrook	pridegrlnj@aim.com
Secretary	Open Position!	
Treasurer	Open Position!	
Webmaster/List Master	Open Position!	

>continued on page 16

OUTINGS AND ACTIVISTS

More members of our community and their allies are seeking LGBTQ+ outdoor activities and actions. To meet the demand, WE NEED MORE VOLUNTEER OUTDOOR ACTIVITY LEADERS! Please consider spending some of your time providing events that build environmental advocacy through direct involvement in nature. Hikes, water activities, field trips, nature works, backpacking trips—these are just some of the activities we can provide IF we have the help of people like you! Contact Diane Scarangella at diascat@hotmail.com or Wanda Ashbrook at pridegrlnj@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

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

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: Oct. 12, virtual;
 Nov. 9, in person/Highland Park; Jan. 11, virtual
 (No meeting in December)**



SIERRA CLUB

NEW JERSEY CHAPTER LEADERSHIP

Executive Committee Members
 Tony Hagen, Stan Greberis, Kip Cherry, Rich Isaac, Paul Sanderson, Shirin Sood, Renée Pollard, Joe Testa, Pat Hilliard

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 Rich Isaac (973) 716-0297 richard.isaac@sierraclub.org

Chapter Vice-Chair and Council of Club Leaders Delegate
 Joe Testa • vice.chair@newjersey.sierraclub.org

Conservation Chair
 Greg Gorman • ggorman07419@embarqmail.com

Conservation Vice-Chair
 Gina Carola (856) 848-8831 ginaceee@verizon.net

Political Committee Chair
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Parliamentarian and Council (CCL) Delegate
 Joe Testa CCLDelegate@newjersey.sierraclub.org

Secretary
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Treasurer
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Co-Vice Treasurers
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 Bill Singer, Esq. (908) 359-7873 wsinger@singerfedun.com

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Communications Committee
 Seth Kantor, Chair • membership@newjersey.sierraclub.org

Elections Committee
 Gina Carola, Chair • ginaceee@verizon.net

Environmental and Social Justice Committee
 Renée Pollard, Chair • rpollard16@comcast.net

Facilities Committee (office, meeting sites)
 Paul Sanderson, Chair • treasurer@newjersey.sierraclub.org

Finance Committee
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Forest Conservation Committee
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Fundraising Committee
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Information Technology Committee
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Inspiring Connections Outdoors Committee
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 Shirin Sood, Chair

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 Jackie Greger jackie.greger@sierraclub.org

Please share this newsletter with a nonmember friend and invite them to join (see membership coupon this page).



THE JERSEY Sierran
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Editorial Board: Tony Hagen, chair; Joe Testa; Seth Kantor; Judy Minot; Jackie Greger

The Jersey Sierran appears in January, April, July and October. The deadline for copy for the 2025 January to March issue is November 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.

Opinions, unless otherwise indicated, are the writer's own. Advertised products and services carry no Club endorsement.

Thank you to all who contributed to this issue! This newsletter is produced mostly by volunteers.

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address.changes@sierraclub.org, or

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Enclose check and mail to:
Sierra Club Member Services
 2101 Webster St., Suite 1300
 Oakland, CA 94612

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SIERRA CLUB **F94Q W 4000 -1**

Explore, enjoy, and protect the planet

FROM NATIONAL

Below is a summary of important recent news items reported by our head office.

Zero-Emission Forklifts

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) has adopted a [zero-emission forklifts regulation](#) aimed at phasing out forklifts powered by gasoline, propane, or natural gas by 2038. The rule will affect approximately 89,000 forklifts in California.

This could significantly reduce pollution and prevent many premature deaths and health issues, especially benefiting warehouse workers who are exposed to forklift emissions.

Restrictions on new forklift sales will begin January 1, 2026, and existing fossil fuel-powered forklifts will be phased out beginning January 1, 2028.

Protecting the Western Arctic

The Department of the Interior has proposed to expand ecological “special areas” within the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska, commonly known as the Western Arctic. The ecological zones may have significance for wildlife or ecology, help store carbon, or serve as hunting and gathering areas for Alaska Native communities. The proposal could expand protections for millions of acres of public lands in one of the last untouched ecosystems in the United States.

At nearly 23 million acres, the Western Arctic is the largest single unit of public lands in the U.S. and supports diverse wildlife including polar bears, caribou, and migratory birds.

Reducing Haze

On July 12, 2024, the US District Court for the District of Columbia set deadlines for the Environmental Protection Agency to implement haze reduction plans in 32 states. This came in response to legal action by Sierra Club, Earthjustice, the Environment Integrity Project, and the National Parks Conservation Association.

“This settlement secures overdue relief for communities that have suffered from industry pollution for too long,” said Sierra Club Beyond Coal Director Laurie Williams. “The Regional Haze Rule preserves air quality in our country’s most iconic national parks, but it also protects public health for many Americans, especially in communities overburdened by fossil fuel pollution.”

Good Neighbor Rule

The Supreme Court has blocked (5-4) a critically important Environmental Protection Agency rule—the Cross-State Air Pollution Rule—which has reduced smog and threats to public health. This decision means tens of millions of people will be exposed to higher levels of dangerous air pollution, causing asthma attacks, lung damage, and premature deaths.

This “good neighbor rule” was opposed by polluters and fossil fuel-dependent states, who argued it was too costly for the benefits it provided. An appeal is anticipated in the United States Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit.

CP2 LNG Plant is Ecological Disaster in the Making

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission in June approved construction of a liquid natural gas (LNG) plant in Cameron Parish, La., that would produce 20 million tons of LNG annually for export. The United States is already the biggest exporter of LNG, and this would increase the total by 20%. Outgoing FERC Commissioner Allison Clements voted against the project, saying the gas to be produced by the plant, named Cameron LNG Phase 2 (CP2), would be equivalent to 1.8 million gas-fueled cars each year.

CP2 will need approval from the Department of Energy before it can begin exporting to countries without free trade agreements, which represent roughly 90% of the global LNG market. DOE has paused approvals for those licenses until it updates the studies on the full impacts of LNG exports to determine whether projects are in the public interest.

“CP2 is an environmental justice, climate, and economic disaster waiting to happen and with this decision, FERC has ignored the harm that will be caused by CP2—and gas exports more broadly—and sided with the greedy fossil fuel industry,” Sierra Club Beyond Dirty Fuels Director Cathy Collentine said.

Massachusetts’ Climate Bill

The Massachusetts Senate has passed a strong climate bill (S-2829) that will require gas companies to provide fossil fuel plant decommissioning proposals and timelines for remedying leak-prone infrastructure.

The bill supports measures to enable a fair transition for ratepayers and fossil fuel workers who would like to work in the clean energy sector.

Use Clean Energy Fund for Electric Buses

New Jersey has allocated \$70 million in Clean Energy Fund cash to New Jersey Transit. Although the stated intent of the grant is to support bus electrification, the funds may also be used to support NJ Transit’s operating budget for fiscal year 2025. Therefore, the NJ Chapter of the Sierra Club supports S-4468, a budget Resolution from Sen. Andrew Zwicker, which would ensure that all of the money allocated to NJ Transit bus is restricted to electrification projects.

New Jersey is woefully behind in transitioning to emissions-free buses, and using the Clean Energy Fund for its intended purpose is the right place to start.

In past years, New Jersey administrations have treated The Clean Energy Fund like a Depression-era cookie jar, diverting over \$2 billion for unrelated purposes. Instead, Gov. Phil Murphy’s administration should move forward with its fiscal year 2025 proposal to tax the wealthiest corporations in New Jersey to help support NJ Transit’s capital and operating costs.

“Right now, New Jersey Transit’s sole source of funding for bus electrification is coming from federal grants to build a new bus garage in Union City and to modernize the Meadowlands garage to accommodate electric buses. However, the agency currently owns and operates 17 bus garages in the state, and there is no long-term funding plan to migrate these facilities to handle electric buses,” said Sierra Club NJ Chapter Transportation Committee Chair Bill Beren. “Although Gov. Murphy has set a goal to purchase electric transit buses starting in 2024, this goal and others like it are meaningless unless the infrastructure is built ahead of time to charge and maintain these buses—and there is no plan in place to time the needed infrastructure improvements with electric bus purchases.”

Tellingly, NJ Transit CEO Kevin Corbett said in a July 24th press release that its new Union City bus garage will serve “as a model for cost-effective, sustainable bus operations ... and represents another important step in advancing [NJ Transit’s] Zero-Emission Bus Program.” But this model isn’t expected to be on line until 2030.

Group Co-Chair for the Central Jersey Group (Mercer County)

The co-chair is generally one of the most visible representatives of the Sierra Club at the local level. Since the public, and especially the media, interpret the co-chair’s remarks as the official position of the Club, a co-chair can rarely express a private opinion at a public gathering.

As co-chairs are the official spokespeople for their groups, they must expect to be asked about a range of national, regional, and local issues, and should over time develop (with assistance from the Chapter Chair, the other Co-Chair, and others in the Group a working knowledge of Club policy on those issues (where there is an official Club position), as well as a general understanding of the issues.

Along with the other co-chair, the co-chair is responsible for:

The smooth functioning of the group in fulfilling the Club’s overall conservation goals.

To maintain channels of communications within the organization so that ideas and resources are available when needed, the two co-chairs should:

- Delegate authority to assist in performing group functions.
- Identify the right person for a particular job and enlist his/her help.
- Follow up to see that the jobs are done adequately.

Individuals interested in learning more about this volunteer opportunity should contact NJ Chapter Chair Richard Isaac, at risaacx@aol.com and/or (H) 973-716-0297.



Bill Beren and JoAnn Katzban represented the Sierra Club at Green Day at the NJ State Fair in Sussex County on August 5. The big draw was a quiz with people spinning the wheel and being asked questions about climate change. Photo by Donna Traylor.