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# NJ Chapter 2024 Awards Ceremony



From left, Sierra Club Executive Director Ben Jealous, NJ Chapter Director Anjuli Ramos-Busot, NJ DEP Commissioner Shawn LaTourette, NJ Chapter Transportation Chair Bill Beren, NJ Chapter Chair Rich Isaac.



Ben Jealous meets NJ Lt. Gov. Tahesha Way.



Central Jersey Group Conservation Chair Kip Cherry, winner of the Kenneth Johanson Lifetime Achievement Award.



Rich Isaac honors Wynn Johanson, wife of former Chapter Chair Kenneth Johanson.



Carrie Rapaport and her son Sam enjoy the buffet.



NJ Sen. Bob Smith receives his award and Tahesha Way makes a point.



Left, NJ Sen. Raj Mukherji and his wife Natasha Alagarasan; above, Chapter members Florence Abrenica, Dennis Anderson, and Allen Swanson enjoy the evening.



Photos: Taylor McFarland

## NJ Chapter Fetes Environmental Champions!

November 14, 2024, was a day of appreciation for supporters of the New Jersey Chapter of the Sierra Club. A year-end awards dinner was held at Maddy Rose Restaurant on the waterfront at Liberty State Park in Jersey City.

NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner Shawn LaTourette received National Sierra Club's Environmental Achievement Award for his outstanding efforts in protecting and preserving Liberty State Park. Sierra Club Executive Director Ben Jealous and NJ Lieutenant Gov. Tahesha Way presented the award.

"New Jersey continues to set a powerful example for the rest of the nation when it comes to holding polluters accountable, pushing advances in clean energy and clean transportation, and protecting public lands and access to nature," Jealous said.

LaTourette has held the line against privately funded groups who sought to turn Liberty State Park into a for-profit sports and entertainment complex. He has spearheaded a robust stakeholder process involving the communities around Jersey City, hearing directly what they would like to happen at the park. He has also guided the DEP's plans to restore the park and make it more resilient to climate change.

This year's Environmental Champion Award recipients were Sen. Bob Smith and Sen. Raj Mukherji. The work of these leaders, along with grassroots activists across the Garden State, is improving health for New Jersey resi-

>continued on page 9

### Inside This Issue

Use the Right Plastic .....	2
Help With Electrification .....	2
Environmental Law.....	2
Editor's Message.....	3
Chapter Chair .....	3
New Energy Manager .....	3
ExCom Highlights.....	3
Your Support Counts! .....	4
Money Matters.....	4
Kim Goes to Washington.....	4
EJ Corner .....	4
Smarter Fashion.....	5
Transportation Committee.....	5
A World of Change.....	6
Enough Oil Already.....	6
A Wedding Announcement .....	6
Offshore Wind .....	7
Staff Reports .....	7
Endangered List .....	8
RU Solar?.....	8
From National.....	8
Thomas Edison Park.....	9
On the Trail .....	10
Jeff Rapaport.....	10
Outings, Group News, Leadership.....	10-16

# Choosey Consumers Choose Recyclable Plastic!

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

Look around as you stroll through your favorite grocery store. The shelves are full of plastic bottles that will need to be recycled, but often they are not. We need a bottle recycling bill to help send more recyclable plastics to our recycling centers. We also need the business community to be more willing to accept bottle returns.

Special infrastructure is needed for recycling plastic. It costs money. Some grocery chains and food producers have made an effort. This summer, ShopRite stores in New Jersey [partnered](#) with TerraCycle of Trenton to accept flexible plastics, such as zip baggies.

The NJ Department of Environmental Protection offers a [page of answers](#) to frequently asked questions about recycling. Each county in New Jersey provides [more specific information](#) for its residents. Be sure to check out their websites for helpful information.

## Facing the Challenge of Recycling

We've all seen those plastic [recycling charts](#) with the arrows and numbers. Often, we are disappointed to learn that

our used plastic items have the wrong numbers and cannot be recycled. Some people put them into the recycling container anyway. This practice has been termed "wish-cycling." It contaminates the plastic that is recyclable and increases the amount of waste.

Nonrecyclable plastic must go out with the regular trash, and this of course is a big problem for the environment.

## What About Plant-Based Plastics?

Plant-based! What a concept! Grow soybeans and turn them into plastic bottles that could be recycled and used again. Unfortunately, bioplastics are not as good as their hype. They break down slowly in the environment, produce methane gas, and contain everything that farmers sprayed on their crops, such as [pesticides](#). It's still [a good idea](#) to sidestep plastics and choose reusable containers and utensils.

Beyond Plastics, an anti-plastics advocate, notes that bioplastics are resource intensive: "In addition to the greenhouse gases produced, growing the crops to make these materials also requires significant amounts of fossil fuels, farmland, and water—all precious resources that can and should be used to grow actual food."

Jenna Jambeck, an environmental engineer, states that there are ben-

efits to bioplastics, but "only when taking a [host of factors](#) into consideration." Bioplastic made from plant sugars, for example, won't biodegrade in a meaningful timeframe unless intense heat is applied through industrial composting. "It's really not any different from industrial polymers," Jambeck says.

## Other Considerations

Even if we cannot find alterna-

tives, our deposits of petroleum, natural gas, and coal—from which most plastics are made—are limited.

Fossil fuels are huge contributors to global warming, but the problem is worse than that. Petroleum-based plastics, for example, can contain per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), which are toxic and [leach](#) into our water and food. Bioplastics also can contain [PFAS](#).

## Back to the Drawing Board!

It looks like we've got a long way to go before we solve the plastics problem. In the meantime, buy only products with clearly recyclable plastic, give up "wish-cycling," and separate bad plastics from genuine recyclables. Be a voice calling for more solutions to the plastic pollution problem. Join beach and wildlife area cleanups whenever you can, and take back the plastic that's choking our world!



# Network Offers Support for Home Electrification

By Betsy Longendorfer and Ernest Dorflinger • Building Electrification Committee

The Building Electrification Committee (BEC) of the NJ Chapter of the Sierra Club conducts monthly webinars about home electrification and also fields questions from residents. *Electrification* is the replacement of gas- and oil-burning home appliances. It also includes the installation of solar panels and batteries.

Some BEC members are certified as electrification coaches through Rewiring America and have joined with other certified coaches to form a new, independent organization called The Electrification Coaches Network. This offers free electrification coaching to homeowners and renters. The coaches are experienced with electrification and want to share that knowledge with readers like yourself.

What can an electrification coach help you with? Coaches can clarify:

**Your reasons for wanting to take on one or more projects.** Are you replacing worn out equipment and want to take advantage of tax credits and rebates? Do you want healthier air or more even heating/cooling of your home? Do you want to reduce your energy usage? Do you want to save money on monthly utility bills?

**The types of projects available to you.** Do you want to replace your total HVAC system or your water heater? Do you want to replace appliances such as your gas stove with an induction range, or your gas or electric clothes dryer with a heat pump dryer? Perhaps you'd like to install solar panels or an EV charger?

**What will be the approximate cost of your project?** How much are you likely to save annually on operation? What other benefits will there be?

**What tax credits, rebates, and zero-interest loans are available to you and in what timeframe?** Tax credits

can be carried over from year to year, so spacing out your projects might be advantageous, depending on your income and tax liability.

**Is there a recommended order for your projects?** For example, if you want to upgrade your HVAC system, you should weatherize your home first. Or, it may be advisable to upgrade your electrical panel before you begin electrification projects.

**How do you find qualified contractors? What questions should you ask the contractor to evaluate the quality of the quote?**

Part of the problem with the rapid pace of electrification is that contractors are also struggling to educate themselves and to obtain experience in various types of

installations, especially cold-climate heat pumps. Some states oversee the training and qualifying of contractors, and they aid their residents in finding and vetting contractors, and sometimes in connecting with coaches.

For example, Massachusetts has [Mass Save](#) and New York has [NYS Clean Heat](#). Massachusetts has a large network of trained, volunteer heat pump coaches (organized by the [HeatSmart Alliance](#)) who provide free advice and guidance to homeowners. Some towns also offer free expert reviews of quotes. [Wellesley MA](#) is a good example of a town with such supports.

The BEC is currently advocating that New Jersey supply the same kinds of assistance. Meanwhile, the independent Electrification Coaches Network volunteers are available. To sign up, click [here](#) (link is also listed below) and fill out the form. A coach will contact you.

First, though, we recommend you start a personalized electrification plan using an [online tool](#) provided by Rewiring America. Filling out the planner helps you organize your thoughts.



Betsy Longendorfer (left) and Ernest Dorflinger

There is a lot of information presented to you about the projects you choose, including costs, financial incentives and available contractors.

Coaches will chat with you about your residence and may ask for pictures or details about your electrical panel, your heating and cooling bills, and the age of your equipment, as well as special restrictions on your site.

In most cases, getting an energy audit is the first step, and weatherizing your home is the second step, which is why it's a good idea to start your electrification journey before an emergency replacement is required.

Coaches can also suggest other systematic approaches. For example, there may be ways to avoid installing 240-volt circuits or to share circuits in your home so that a panel upgrade is not needed. Coaches may be able to connect you with others who have already installed similar equipment.

Here in New Jersey, [residential energy use](#) was responsible for 15% of the greenhouse gas emissions in 2021. Through home electrification, you can help make sure that our state's energy efficiency and emissions reduction goals are met!

## Resources

Independent Electrification Coaches Signup: <https://shorturl.at/WLUeg>

Rewiring America Personal Planner: <https://shorturl.at/vXI13>

New Jersey Emissions Report: <https://shorturl.at/ZwYOR>

**This holiday season, give back to the environment you love.**  
**Donate to Sierra Club:**  
[www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/ways-give](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/ways-give)

# Trump Is Poised to Dismantle Environmental Policy

By Chris Hitchcock, Esq. • Chapter Legal Advisor

There is no sugarcoating this. Donald Trump's reelection will lead to substantial setbacks for environmental law and the environment.

During Trump's chaotic first term, his administration managed to eliminate or modify approximately 125 environmental regulations, but other attempts were defeated in court because proper procedures were not followed. However, Mandy Gunasekara, chief of staff at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) during Trump's first term, has said that experience and "lessons learned" will enable the second Trump administration to be more effective at accomplishing its goals.

Lee Zeldin, Trump's choice to head the EPA, stated that he intends to eliminate "left-wing" regulations. These likely will include: regulations that require power plants to dramatically cut hazardous, plant-warming pollution, which could have led to the closure of most coal power plants; regulations requiring greenhouse gas reductions from cars, buses, commercial vans, and heavy trucks; and [newly finalized regulations](#) that charge a fee to oil and gas producers for methane emissions above a certain threshold.

The Trump administration cannot immediately eliminate these regulations, and the methane regulations would require repeal of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). However, Trump's new Justice Department no doubt will withdraw any opposition to existing lawsuits brought by industry challenging them. Trump's EPA will then move quickly to replace these regulations with industry-friendly rules.

Trump has said he will [repeal the IRA](#), although he might meet resistance from fellow Republicans. The law was designed to withstand

>continued on page 9

# Ablaze Like a Torch, Then a Crackle Underfoot

By Tony Hagen • [editor@newjersey.sierraclub.org](mailto:editor@newjersey.sierraclub.org)

The colors of fall were unbeatable this year. Some flocked to New England in search of spectacular leaf displays, but here in New Jersey we had a show that I'll bet was unrivalled by any other place you could name.

On the way to the New Jersey School Boards Association convention in October, I passed through a Pine Barrens that was ablaze with yellows and reds for mile after mile. It wasn't just there; it was all over New Jersey, and people everywhere could not stop commenting on how lovely it was.

Sadly, not every fall season is worthy of such praise. The soggy, cloudy ones don't do much for anybody. Their colors are dull and muted. In 2024, we had the great advantage, if you would call it that, of unseasonable dryness. This was the secret ingredient for the technicolor displays in everyone's neighborhood.

Lurking in the background, of course, was perhaps the influence of climate change. Week after week, month after month, where was the rain? Why weren't there any clouds?

Throughout New Jersey there were warning signs pleading with people not to choose this time to light campfires or burn trash. The state was a hair-trigger tinderbox at the same time as being

a treasure house of beauty.

All great things have this sort of fragility about them. They are utterly distracting, yet one small thing can change the picture. Our democracy is like this, for instance.

However, fall is ephemeral by nature and comes crashing down leaf by leaf. The brown crackle of leaves underfoot is the next step in the cycle. Then come the gray skies, the winter chills, and the yellowy light from windows in houses huddling against the darkness.

Spring will be with us once again. The rebirth is inevitable and shows more courage than we do, with green shoots and crocuses before the frost has fully gone.

Many of us prefer the warmest of weather before we venture out. There is surely a reward for those who catch the first taste of spring or defy the winter's mood and mingle boots and coats with exposure to the cold.

Be among the latter group and join Sierra Club leaders on a hike in coming days. Or help us advocate for positive change. Don't allow the chill to settle in.



# NJ Chapter Hires Energy Program Manager

The New Jersey Chapter of the Sierra Club has hired a fourth staffer to strengthen its environmental advocacy. This makes the largest complement of paid employees in the Chapter's history.

Brooke Lockwood joins the Sierra Club as energy program manager, bringing a wealth of experience in advocacy and policy work at both state and federal levels. Holding a BA in political science and a BS in public health from Rutgers University, Brooke's recent role as advocacy manager for the Greater NJ Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association saw her lead a team of over 80 volunteers in successful advocacy efforts, resulting in key policy victories for Alzheimer's patients and their families.

Previously, Brooke served as deputy chief of staff to NJ Sen. Raj Mukherji during his time in the Assembly. There,

she was instrumental in crafting legislation to promote building electrification, safeguard green spaces, and enhance the state's resilience to climate change.

A lifelong environmentalist, Brooke has long admired the Sierra Club's mission. In her free time, she enjoys hiking and connecting with nature. Committed to protecting the environment from destruction and exploitation, Brooke is thrilled to join the NJ Chapter of the Sierra Club. She looks forward to collaborating with the Chapter's dedicated staff and volunteers to drive meaningful progress in sustainability and the adoption of renewable energy resources.



# ExCom Meeting Highlights

**November:** The ExCom approved a resolution to support efforts to preserve a property adjacent to Monmouth Battlefield Park that is targeted for warehouse development. The Chapter will prepare a historical map showing the role the property played in the battle. It will write a letter of support for preservation to the Manalapan Planning Board. The Chapter will pay a portion of the cost to commission the aid of a historical research consultant. The ExCom adopted a resolution to oppose the Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) planned downgrading of protected status for the bald eagles and ospreys in New Jersey. The Chapter will request a meeting with the DEP to discuss this.

**October:** In a special meeting, the ExCom approved an endorsement for LaMonica McIver (D-Newark) for election in the District 10 race. McIver defeated GOP candidate Carmen Bucco on November 5 to succeed the late Rep. Donald Payne Jr. The ExCom also approved a motion to advocate for strengthening the NJ Endangered Species Conservation Act of 1973 to provide greater protection for threatened species in New Jersey.

Many articles in the electronic version of *The Jersey Sierran* have links to source material. If you're reading the print version and would like to access this background material, visit the following webpage: [https://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/njs\\_sierran/nj-sierran](https://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/njs_sierran/nj-sierran)

# Our Chapter Welcomes New Volunteers!

By Richard Isaac • [Richard.Isaac@sierraclub.org](mailto:Richard.Isaac@sierraclub.org)

Our Chapter extends a warm welcome to our new volunteers and congratulates those who are taking on more responsibility!

**Shirin Sood, Youth Committee Chair**

Shirin Sood has been named chair of the Youth Committee of the New Jersey Chapter of the Sierra Club. Shirin's main environmental interests lie at the intersection of environmental justice and environmental contaminants.



She has studied airborne particulate matter (PM 2.5) and microplastics in water to understand how these contaminants affect overburdened communities. Shirin has been part of the Youth Committee for the past three years and loves to work with this highly motivated team.

"It's always rewarding to see the excitement the other students have for lobbying their local policymakers and writing for *The Jersey Sierran*," she said.

Outside of the Sierra Club, Shirin likes to take long walks and spend time learning about new environmental policies.

**Howard Stein, Offshore Wind Committee Co-Chair**

Howard Stein has agreed to co-chair the Offshore Wind Committee with Denise Brush. Howard was a photography major in college. He then worked with photo processing laboratories until his retirement. Besides his work on the Offshore Wind Committee, he is also a member of the West Jersey Group of Sierra Club, having lived in Cherry Hill for over 48 years.



Believing that passenger railroads are an energy efficient (if imperfect) transportation method, Howard is also on the national council of the Railroad Passengers Association.

**Allison Fabrizio, Environmental & Social Justice Committee Secretary**

Allison Fabrizio, a New Jersey native, previously served as our Chapter's high school liaison, working to decarbonize local schools. Since then, Allison has earned her bachelor's degree in environmental analysis and dance from Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri.



At university, Allison worked with various non-governmental organizations, including Citizens' Climate Lobby, the Pachamama Alliance, and the Missouri Botanical Garden. After graduating, she deepened her commitment to climate and social justice, working as a researcher and writer for organizations such as the Women's Earth and Climate Action Network, Friends of the Earth, and Dream.Org.

Allison's work centers on environmental justice, equity, and fostering connections among members of our global community:

<https://www.allison-fabrizio.com/projects-8>

**Lois Castrovance, Offshore Wind Committee Member**

Lois Castrovance has joined our Chapter's Offshore Wind Committee. She is recently retired after 20 years in the public schools. Prior to that, she worked in private industry. While Lois is new to environmental advocacy, she is convinced that we need to end our dependence on fossil fuels if we want a livable environment for future generations. By joining the Offshore Wind Committee, she hopes to be able to assist in accomplishing this goal.



Lois's interests are spending time outdoors, animal welfare, cooking, and family. Her husband and she have set a goal to visit and hike in as many national parks as they can, and so far they have visited six. They only have 57 more to go!

**Christopher Hitchcock, Chapter Legal Advisor**

Christopher Hitchcock is serving as our Chapter's volunteer legal advisor. Before recently retiring, Chris practiced for more than 40 years in New York federal, state, and appellate courts. Chris represented clients in complex commercial litigation matters involving construction, professional liability, legal ethics, partnership dissolutions, insurance coverage, and real estate disputes.



As our legal advisor, he is helping to advise the Chapter on a variety of legal issues, including when and how to become involved in litigation.

**Nicholas Dell Beni, Transportation Committee Member**

Nicholas Dell Beni has been appointed a member of our Transportation Committee. As part of Nicholas's course work for his bachelor's degree in sustainability, he was required to participate in an internship. Because of his interest in environmental law, Nicholas looked at both government agencies and nonprofit organizations. When he saw that our Chapter was looking for assistance with legal research, he jumped at the opportunity, not only to gain experience in the field but also to do good for his community.



While working with our Chapter, Nicholas has assisted in the research and analysis of new zero emission vehicle legislation. This has taken the form of communicating with the departments of transportation, taxation, and legislative services throughout the nation as well as major utility companies within New Jersey.

>continued on page 9

# Now More Than Ever, Your Support Counts!

By Ricardo Pereira • Chapter Political Chair

Donald Trump has won the election for president of the United States of America. Not much more needs to be said that hasn't already been said. Every single one of us knows exactly how dangerous this is for the things we all care about: clean air and water, renewable energy, preserving national parks, conserving wildlife, protecting endangered species, sustainable development, reducing emissions, combating climate change, preparing for and mitigating the effects of our warming world, building resilient communities, and much more. These are all on the chopping block. Everything we've fought for, in New Jersey, throughout the nation, and across the globe, is now threatened.

Under Trump, the United States is now expected to pull out of the Paris Agreement, under which countries and territories (including China) representing 98% of global greenhouse gas emissions agreed to try to keep global warming from rising more than 2°C above pre-industrial levels. The United States would become one of the few countries not a signatory to this major multinational agreement on climate change.

I realize all this may be discouraging. It is easy to fall into despair about the future and the potential for harm to our planet. But the last thing we should do

is give up, surrender to bad policy, and comply in advance. We don't need to accept what Trump's administration is about to do. Now, more than ever, we need to be energized. We need warriors who will stand for what we believe in. The true measure of how much we care isn't what we achieve with a tailwind, when the sailing is easy. The true metric is how hard we push against the headwind—how much fight we have in the face of heavy odds. More than ever, we will need passionate volunteers and donors like you to help us resist bad environmental policy, defend our natural world, stop pollution, and stop climate change.

Next year, in 2025, New Jersey will elect a new governor, and all 80 of our state Assembly seats will be up for election. We need to ensure we elect representatives who will stand up to the Trump administration and be strong on environmental protection.

Thank you for everything you've done so far to support our pro-environment and quality-of-life initiatives in New Jersey. But get ready. Our work is never over, and we're counting on your support for the struggle that lies ahead.



# NJ Chapter Congratulates Senator-Elect Andy Kim!

By Ricardo Pereira • Chapter Political Chair

The New Jersey Chapter of the Sierra Club congratulates Senator-elect Andy Kim on his victory in the November 5 General Election. This was a historic moment, as Kim is the first Asian American senator from New Jersey and the first Korean American senator in US history.

Throughout his career, Kim has been a strong advocate for environmental protection, climate resiliency, and sustainability. As the US congressional representative for NJ District 3, he demonstrated strong advocacy and leadership on environmental issues. His legislative record includes support for the Inflation Reduction Act, which provided nearly \$400 billion to address climate change and accelerate the transition to clean energy. Kim has also opposed various bills that would remove restrictions on

polluters and dismantle protections for endangered species.

In the US House of Representatives, Kim worked tirelessly to protect New Jersey's natural resources. We are excited to see how he will build on this legacy in the Senate with a robust agenda that addresses both immediate and long-term environmental challenges.

His proven leadership on fighting climate change, protecting our air and water, preserving our green spaces, and advancing sustainable energy makes him the fighting champion we need in the Senate. The NJ Chapter of the Sierra Club looks forward to partnering with Kim on these initiatives.

Congratulations once again to Kim and to all who supported his candidacy and commitment to a healthy, sustainable future for all New Jerseyans.



## The Quest for Clean Air

By Renée Pollard • Environmental and Social Justice Committee Chair

The air is one of Earth's most valued resources, something every living being needs for survival. But today, it is no longer as clean as it once was, and no longer free because it comes with a toll on our health.

Over the years the air has become more and more dirty with fossil fuel emissions and ozone. Trying to maintain healthy lungs from all the toxins we breathe every day has become more challenging for some than others—especially those living in environmental justice communities. It can be a struggle just to breathe.

It is unfortunate that we as citizens should have to advocate and fight for something as simple as having clean air to breathe. After years of public outpouring, pleas, and advocacy we now have [tools and resources](#) to better help us plan our days outdoors and to determine what is a good air quality day versus a bad air quality day. Thank you, but why should that be necessary?

In roadway corridors, air monitors help us to see where pollutants are coming from and what type. That's also great, but we already know the transportation sector is one of the largest pollution contributors, and the traffic congestion, especially in Northeastern New Jersey, just continues to get worse.

Many man-made pollutants such as PM 2.5 (particulate matter) are major sources of poor air quality. As a result, in New Jersey many children, elderly people, and those in frontline communities have elevated rates of asthma.

Our indoor air quality can be more toxic than outdoor air quality. People living below the poverty line and those in poor and substandard housing are more likely to have this problem. There are ways to improve indoor air quality, but first one must be educated to even know what's in our environment that should not be there.

Educating oneself about the hazards and daily practices of our indoor living can help to improve better overall health and longevity. Once you know what to

do you can put it into practice. It can be a disparaging and daunting task.

We spend most of our daily lives at work or school. One of the most vulnerable populations, children, can have lifelong negative impacts from poor air quality in schools. Their bodies are still developing. Some may be taught in old, lead-and-asbestos filled, insect-infested school buildings.

We need to have all school buildings brought up to code by investing in green building materials, modern heating and air conditioning systems, and electric school bus fleets. Not all school districts in the state have the money to invest in making necessary changes, but if such improvements become a federal and state mandate this would be a big step in the right direction.

Do you think about what you're breathing every day at work, what your building is made of, how old it is, or the HVAC system? I do. I now think about what is in the air I breathe while at work, on my drive to work, and back home.

The reminders of poor air quality are everywhere: car traffic, truck traffic, warehouses, and manufacturing facilities—this list goes on. When did we become so indifferent to the basic need every human being has for clean air? We all have a responsibility to ensure our natural resources are preserved. Something so basic as clean air, over the years, has become a continuous struggle to keep and maintain. It should not be this hard. We know what to do, so why aren't we doing it?

Here is a question to ask yourself: What am I doing to help?

### Resources:

American Lung Association Report: [shorturl.at/OkGjo](https://shorturl.at/OkGjo)  
Healthy Housing Facts: [shorturl.at/Tcois](https://shorturl.at/Tcois)



## MONEY MATTERS

# As Far as We Know, You Can't Take It With You

By Jim Andreano • Fundraising Committee Chair

Some have tried to take it with them. There's the story of the dying multi-millionaire who gave his lawyer \$1 million and instructed him to place it in the man's coffin upon his death. Which the lawyer did—in the form of his personal check for \$1 million, tucked inside the dead man's jacket pocket.

We at the New Jersey Chapter of the Sierra Club believe your last wishes must be backed up more reliably. We do recommend that you prepare an estate plan or revisit your current plan. We respectfully ask that we be part of that plan.

Why consider the NJ Chapter in your estate planning? Because you care about our planet, particularly that small section of the planet that we call home. You recognize that, for better or worse, the world will go on without you. And you really want it to be for better.

Please strengthen your commitment to the planet by helping to ensure it's cared for after you're gone. Create a meaningful legacy in your name with a bequest to the NJ Chapter through the Sierra Club Foundation. You can do this by reaching out to our treasurer, Paul Sanderson, at [treasurer@newjersey.sierraclub.org](mailto:treasurer@newjersey.sierraclub.org) or (908) 233-2414.

Another form of legacy giving is the memorial gift. In many traditions, family and friends understandably feel the need to "do something" upon the death of a loved one. Did the deceased have the same strong commitment to the planet that you do? If so, a suggestion that well-wishers consider a donation to our NJ Chapter would be entirely appropriate.

On a happier note, we can and do celebrate people's lives with donations while they are still sharing life with us. Birthdays, anniversaries, and holidays are all reasons for gift giving.

Because you are an environmentalist, you probably do not define your happiness by how much "stuff" you accumulate—you know the environmental cost of producing and disposing of it. So, in lieu of more stuff, why not give (and request) a commemorative donation to the NJ Chapter of the Sierra Club? We will send the honoree a record of all donations.

**To make a commemorative donation for a living honoree, or a memorial donation for a deceased person, please visit our website at [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey). Click on "Ways to Give," and then, "Make a One-Time Donation."** You can enter the name of the honoree just before entering the payment information.

In truth, you never need a special occasion to donate to the Sierra Club. We need your constant support for our environmental advocacy. [Web-site donations](#) are quick and easy or, if you prefer, send your contribution to:

Sierra Club, New Jersey Chapter  
P.O. Box 269  
Garwood, NJ 07027-0269

You should receive a copy of our annual solicitation letter shortly, if you haven't already. Please be on the lookout!



# Fashion, Fabric, and Climate

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

Many people fail to consider climate change and environmental pollution when shopping for clothes, yet fabric manufacturing contributes [up to 8%](#) of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions worldwide, and textile dyeing ranks second in polluting our waters.

Some clothing trends are sustainable while others are deeply concerning.

## Clothing that Pollutes

*Fast fashion* describes the lucrative-but-environmentally-costly “make-buy-trash” cycle. Based on cheap, synthetic, plastic fibers such as nylon and polyester, fast fashion drives the fossil fuel industry and contributes to heavy carbon emissions. Manufactured to excess and sold cheaply, this apparel is meant to maximize sales and profits. The fossil fuel industry is betting on the continued steep increase of synthetic fabric production.

Synthetic clothes shed fibers heavily in every wash cycle, accounting for about [a third](#) of the global microplastic pollution. Microplastics are known to bind toxins that accumulate in marine organisms and are perhaps most burdensome to larger predator fish.

In short, fast fashion offers us no bargains.

## Embrace slow fashion and a circular economy

Green, sustainable, ethically sourced clothing is the smarter choice, and the offerings of major clothing manufac-

turers increasingly include sustainable choices. Shop thoughtfully for timeless styles and durable fabrics, with the goal of owning “for keeps.” Meanwhile, prolong the life of the clothing you now have to reduce the environmental cost of replacing them. Ways to extend apparel life include mending, altering, and repurposing, as well as giving away, donating, and selling or exchanging. As a last resort, a fabric recycling center will convert worn-out clothes into new, useful materials (e.g., playground surfaces).

A *circular economy* is vital for sustainability because it reduces material use, relies on materials and products that are less resource intensive, and repurposes “waste” for new materials and products. By these standards, extending the life of clothing is circular.

## Fabrics For a Sustainable Closet

*Organic linen from flax or hemp* is top tier for sustainability. Flax plants can thrive without fertilizers, irrigation, or herbicides and pesticides, and when so grown, are labeled “organic” or “GOTS” (Global Organic Textile Standard). Flax plants even help our climate by taking up several tons of CO<sub>2</sub> per hectare yearly and improving soil quality. Linen cloth from flax or hemp is compostable and naturally comes in earth tones, eliminating the need for polluting dyes. It is durable, breathable, and minimizes body odor.

*Organic cotton* is also very Earth friendly. It is grown without the heavy

use of synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides that go into traditionally farmed cotton. On organic farms, water recycling saves about 90% of the roughly [700 gallons of water](#) used per conventional T-shirt.

When shopping, it’s useful to be familiar with some more organic and eco-friendly cotton labels, such as Organic Content Standard (OCS), Better Cotton Initiative (BCI), Fair Trade, and Blue Sign (indicating safe chemistry).

*Recycled cotton*, because it sharply reduces resource investment and waste, ranks high in sustainability.

*Rayon/Modal/Tencel/Lyocell*—the soft, “slinky” fabrics. Traditional rayon (viscose), though still a large share of this “cellulosic fiber” family, is not sustainable. With a GHG toll exceeding that of traditional cotton or polyester, it is made from tree pulp subjected to harsh polluting chemicals. The deforestation involved accelerates climate change.

Some more recent kinds of rayon, such as Tencel-Lyocell, are sustainable and highly versatile, as well. Made from certified sustainably grown eucalyptus wood pulp (eucalyptus grows rapidly with minimal water needs), Tencel-Lyocell feels luxurious, is comfortable, breathes, stretches with you, wicks moisture, and is fungus resistant, thus reducing body odor. Further, [nearly 99%](#) of the chemicals and water used in the “closed loop” manufacture of Tencel-Lyocell are recycled. Along with its eco-conscious cellulosic cousin, Lenzing-Modal, Tencel, like lin-

en, can eventually be disposed of by composting.

*Wool fabrics* are beautiful, durable, water repellent, insulating, odor and stain resistant, and compostable. One downside, though, is animal cruelty: The tails of young, wool-bearing sheep are docked to prevent fly borne disease and to promote hygiene. Docking is highly painful for lambs, and the Responsible Wool Standard and ZQ certification advise against such practices, but compliance is voluntary. Other downsides of wool farming include soil erosion, water pollution, the risk of desertification when overgrazing is allowed, and methane emissions from the sheep.

## Summing It Up

The field of fabrics and fashion is a complex arena of mixed approaches, motives, dangers, and benefits. However, momentum for increased sustainability is also growing. Major clothing and household cloth goods companies increasingly offer fuller arrays of sustainable fabrics, and some take responsibility for products’ extended lives. A growing market for previously worn clothing lengthens the life of apparel. With increasing availability of sustainable choices, we can shape our fabric purchases and related stewardship to benefit the planet.



## TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE REPORT

# Schools Show More Interest in Bus Fleet Electrification

By Bill Beren • Chair, Transportation Committee



For the fourth year in a row, the Transportation Committee brought our electric school bus campaign to school district decision makers at the annual NJ School Boards

Association Workshop in Atlantic City. This year we were able to partner with Sustainable New Jersey Senior Program Manager Nancy Quirk to host a well-attended panel discussion on electric school buses.

Speakers included Jackson School District Energy Education Specialist John Blair, NJ Department of Environmental Protection Environmental Scientist Gabrielle Baet, Maryland Prince Georges County Board of Education member Pamela Boozer-Strother, and myself. The 2024-2025 edition of our “NJ Electric School Bus Buyers’ Guide” was distributed at the conference and is available for free on our [website](#).

John Blair successfully applied for \$5.4 million in state and federal grant money to purchase 19 electric school buses, four DC fast-charging stations (which can provide an 80% battery charge in as little as 20 minutes), and some additional dual port Level 2 stations (which are slower, more standard EV charging stations). By leveraging these grant funds, the net cost to the

district was \$128,699 per bus, a savings of \$51,000 per bus compared with purchasing a new diesel-powered bus.

Pamela Boozer-Strother’s presentation focused on how individual school board members can advocate for electric school buses and other sustainability programs. The [Climate Change Action Plan](#) adopted by Prince Georges County Public Schools includes eight overarching goals encompassing 58 action items, including electrifying their entire bus fleet by 2040.

If you are involved with your district’s school board or know someone who is, begin planning now to apply for the next round of NJ Electric School Bus Grant Program funding, to be announced in January or February 2025. Our Chapter’s Electric School Bus Campaign webpage is an excellent reference tool for learning how to efficiently transition to electric school buses.

## EV Sales

Electric passenger cars [continued to sell briskly](#), recording total sales of 363,000 in the second quarter of 2024, with total first half sales of 704,000. Used electric vehicle sales also rose 4.3% in Q3 2024.

Contradicting the media hype, 79% of new EVs sold in the second quarter were battery electric, far outpacing



A panel discussion on electric school buses attracted more than 60 attendees at the New Jersey School Boards Association convention in October. Pictured are NJ Department of Environmental Protection Environmental Specialist Gabrielle Baet; NJ Chapter Transportation Committee Chair Bill Beren; and Jackson Township School District Energy Education Specialist John Blair.

electric hybrid sales. Significantly, EVs represented 9.9% of the total light duty vehicle market in Q2.

Toyota [doubled their sales](#) of light-duty EVs to almost 23,000 in the second quarter. The automaker also announced a \$1.4 billion investment to produce “3-row” SUV lithium-ion batteries at its Princeton, Indiana, facility starting in 2026, contradicting extensive media reports that Toyota was exiting the electric battery marketplace. The 3-row system enables better configuration for space efficiency and vehicle balance.

## I-95 Electrification

New Jersey was awarded a [\\$250 million grant](#) from the Environmental Protection Agency to coordinate a four-state effort to install 24 fast-charging stations with 450 ports for trucks along the Interstate 95 corridor from Connecticut to Maryland. Nine of the sites will be in New Jersey. These charging ports will be critical infrastructure to support NJ’s Advanced Clean Truck rule, which is intended to increase the

number of electric freight trucks on our nation’s highways.

## Statewide Charging Stations

The NJ Board of Public Utilities finally adopted a set of basic requirements under which the state’s four public utilities will propose programs to finance charging stations for medium and heavy duty electric vehicles across the state. The board’s proposed standards will allow the utilities to include the cost of electric power upgrades to fleet depots and other facilities in its rate base, spreading these “make ready” costs among all ratepayers. This will help reduce the cost of electrifying trucks, buses, delivery vans, and utility vehicles, especially in overburdened communities. The utilities have until February to file their proposed rate structures, and the board is expected to approve the proposals within three months after that.

Chapter Electrification Committee Website: <https://shorturl.at/3hI8p>  
Prince Georges County Climate Plan: <https://shorturl.at/VAUYk>

# Congratulations Taylor!



On November 9, 2024, Sierra Club NJ Chapter Conservation Program Manager Taylor McFarland married Alexander Keller. The Club wishes them a long and happy life together.

## A World of Change in a Very Short Time

By Joanne Pannone • Lifetime Sierra Club Member

We had very little rainfall this autumn. On October 22, the temperature was 88°F and it hadn't rained in a month. I and others were helping Sierra Club volunteer Dave Mattek try to locate a good place for Mercer County to put a bridge to cross the Assunpink Creek to continue the State Long Trail, which will extend 383 miles from High Point to Cape May. As we crossed a field and cut our way through woods it was eerie that there were no grasshoppers, beetles, or butterflies—no bugs at all! Nor did we see any birds, for the simple reason there were no bugs to eat. Why would there be?

The cool nights and warm days were producing bright colors in the leaves. New Jerseyans were spared the hurricanes that devastated the South, but climate change has impacted New Jersey's biodiversity—definitely.

There are other reasons for the lack of bugs. Before Hurricanes Helene and Milton came along, Earthjustice sued tire manufacturers on behalf of fishing groups to hold them accountable for the devastating impact of 6PPD in runoff, which kills insects and some fish, such as coho salmon. This chemical is used in agriculture as a fungicide and in tires to retard deterioration from heat, oxygen, and sunlight. The reaction with sunlight is believed to exacerbate the toxicity of 6PPD. The Environmental Protection Agency has [agreed to regulate](#) the use of 6PPD in tires in response.

Extreme dryness contributes to the development of forest fires. Forestry officials in New Jersey have issued many warnings about fire lately. Uncontrolled fires are also a bane to insects. Bugs are pushed in front of a fire and their predators swoop in for a feast. Did

you know the New Jersey Forest Fire Service maintains a [Facebook page](#)? Tune in to find out about conditions across the state.

Some relief may be on the way. The Farmers' Almanac forecast for 2024-25 predicts a winter season of rapid storms, bringing rain and snow with little time in between. This is predicted to begin with the solstice on Saturday, December 21.

High temperatures have affected the propagation of plants and trees, whose seeds often require long-term cold winter temperatures before they can germinate, a process known as *winter stratification*. Oaks are beneficial to hundreds of species of plants, but their acorns need stratification to grow.

Last year, CNN reported that the world's oldest moss, [Takakia](#), has persisted in some of the Earth's most extreme environments for millions of years. Even though this ancient plant is one of the fastest-evolving species of moss known to science, it may not survive the climate crisis. It is specially adapted to survive heavy snowfall, but without this, it is exposed to more UV radiation than it can tolerate.

In June, the Biden administration announced [plans](#) to protect old growth forests, noting they store huge amounts of carbon and can help enormously in mitigating climate change.

In sum, good conservation practices and protecting our plants and wildlife are good for our climate and our own survival.

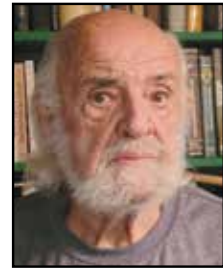
The weather will be what it is until it changes. There are solutions. I am doing my best to help.



## OPINION

# We Must Reduce Our Oil Dependence

By George Moffatt • Education Chair, Jersey Shore Group



The United States produced more crude oil in 2024 than any other country, an [expected average](#) of 13.25 million barrels per day.

Although this is bad news for the global climate, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and other oil producing countries continue to protect their markets and promote further oil development.

[Goldman Sachs Research](#) forecasts that worldwide oil demand will continue increasing until 2034, and although a decline in gasoline use will begin at that stage, demand for petrochemical products such as plastics may not.

We must keep pushing for a clean electricity supply, such as solar and wind, and backup batteries for everything—buildings of all types and transportation, even airplanes. Although batteries pose weight problems for all-electric aircraft and limit their time aloft, advances in hydrogen powered aircraft are pushing these boundaries. In July, a [hydrogen-powered air taxi](#) completed a record 523-mile flight over California.

New Jersey is [making progress](#) with electric vehicle (EV) sales, albeit slowly. As of June 2024, the state had around 184,000 hybrid and battery EVs on the road, up 30,000 from the year before, according to the Department

of Environmental Protection. However, the increase from 2023 to 2024 was roughly half the increase from 2022 to 2023.

New EV buyers in New Jersey can still get a 50% break on sales taxes on new EV sales until June 30, 2025, so now's the time to act.

From manufacturing to operation to disposal, EVs are responsible for less than half the greenhouse gas emissions of gasoline-fueled vehicles. The EV emissions are primarily related to manufacturing and power plant electricity generation; however, there are significant emission savings during operation, which account for the green difference between gasoline and electric vehicles.

A must-solve challenge is creating nationwide networks of electrical and hydrogen "filling" stations. The shortage of recharging stations is one factor limiting sales of EVs across the country.

Powering vehicles with hydrogen is not necessarily a climate-friendly choice. A looming issue is the quality of hydrogen fuel. Only a small percentage of hydrogen produced in the United States is genuinely green. Manufacturers would have you believe otherwise.

The federal government has earmarked \$7 billion to transition from petroleum to hydrogen production, but this program is deeply flawed and could [contribute to global warming](#) on a massive scale.

Fortunately, the federal [Inflation Reduction Act](#) of 2022 still offers billions of dollars in subsidies and incentives, such as tax breaks, for solar and wind projects, pollution-free vehicles, home electrification, and other all-electric buildings using geothermal heating and cooling.

New Jersey also has a popular program, "[Charge Up New Jersey](#)," which offers incentives up to \$4,000 to buy or lease EVs and \$250 for eligible EV chargers.

Meanwhile, offshore wind companies are moving ahead, despite supply problems and [misinformation](#) funded by the

fossil fuel industries. Most recently, federal officials gave [final approval](#) for Atlantic Shores to build up to 197 turbines off the New Jersey coast, enough to power 1 million homes. This would be the first wind turbine project built in our state.

On shore, Northeast states and their utilities are planning

to upgrade their electricity [transmission grids](#) to meet increasing demands for energy, to create a modern integrated nationwide power grid, and to use massive storage battery "farms" for backup power. New Jersey's progress with battery storage has been [frustratingly slow](#), and in 2024 legislators sought to advance the bill S-225, which would incentivize battery storage systems.

But our state faces other issues: increasing demands for electricity and cooling water for [crypto mining](#), which early in 2024 used from [0.6% to 2.3%](#) of all US electricity, according to the US Energy Information Administration.

[Data centers](#), riding the new wave of artificial intelligence spending, are forecast to grow in [capacity](#) by 40.5% annually through 2027. One question taxpayers must watch is "who pays for watt?"

We must continue our efforts for clean energy, not just for us but for our grandchildren and their grandchildren. Why the rush? The [World Economic Forum](#) predicts global warming alone may cause about 14.5 million deaths by 2050. Hurricanes Milton (17 deaths) and Helene (230+ deaths) recently demonstrated that US residents won't be spared from that casualty count.

**"We must keep pushing for a clean electricity supply, such as solar and wind, and backup batteries for everything—buildings of all types and transportation, even airplanes."**



Very dry autumn conditions caused lakes and ponds to recede and increased the fire hazard in New Jersey. On November 17, there were eight forest fires involving 1,531 acres in New Jersey. Credit: Tony Hagen

# Chapter Members Turn Out for Turbines!

By Denise Brush and Howard Stein • Offshore Wind Committee Co-Chairs



Central Jersey Group Conservation Chair Kip Cherry and Offshore Wind Committee Chair Denise Brush staff a table at the Pitman Green Fair.

Our Chapter's Offshore Wind Committee was active this fall in advocacy for and education about the benefits of offshore wind for New Jersey. Committee members have attended webinars, public hearings, rallies, and community fairs.

## Advocacy

The Offshore Wind Committee participated in two tabling events. The first was on August 31 (Labor Day weekend) in Asbury Park for the Friends of Clearwater Festival. Howard Stein, Kip Cherry, and Denise Brush represented the committee. The kids enjoyed our tabletop turbine model.

On Saturday, October 6, Howard, Kip, and Denise had a table promoting offshore wind at the First Annual Pitman Green Fair, in Gloucester County. We were able to acquaint some local environmentalists with the Sierra Club and offshore wind development.

## Education

On September 18, we watched a very informative NJ Wind Works webinar titled "Offshore Wind Transmission and the Grid." On September 24, Denise attended a presentation by Paulina O'Connor, executive director of the [NJ Offshore Wind Alliance](#) at the monthly meeting of TriCounty

Sustainability (for Burlington, Camden, and Gloucester counties).

On September 26, Howard and Denise attended a Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) open house in Atlantic City. We submitted testimony; chatted with federal government experts on fisheries, wind power, and computer modeling; and collected many information-packed handouts for future tabling.

## Hearings and Rallies

On the evening of October 1, Howard, Alejandro Meseguer, and Dennis Coligan represented the Sierra Club at a small rally in Wall Township organized by Chapter Communications and Outreach Coordinator Jackie Greger. The rally, at which offshore wind supporters outnumbered opponents, was held outside the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 400 hall, where a Board of Public Utilities (BPU) hearing on pre-build infrastructure for offshore wind transmission was occurring.

The hearing concerned transmission infrastructure for the Leading Light Wind and Attentive Energy offshore wind projects, which will connect to shore at the Sea Girt National Guard Training Center in Monmouth County. From there the electricity will be conveyed to the Larrabee power substation in Howell. The hearing included presentations by BPU staff and an expert on electromagnetic fields (EMF). He assured us that EMF from the offshore wind cables would be just *half of 1%* of the safety maximum recommended by the International Commission



Denise Brush (left) and Howard Stein

on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection. Denise gave comments virtually, and Steve Miller from the Jersey Shore Group also testified.

On November 5, Denise planned to give a presentation to the Pennsylvania Chapter of the Sierra Club. We hope our neighbors across the Delaware River will become allies advocating with us for offshore wind.

## Development Progress

In early October, we received the good news that Atlantic Shores Offshore Wind had received approval for their construction and operations plan from the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM). Atlantic Shores Projects 1 and 2 together will generate enough renewable energy to serve more than 1 million New Jersey homes. The two Atlantic Shores projects will connect to the grid at Atlantic City.

On October 21, it was [announced](#) that BOEM has completed an environmental review to assess potential wind development activities within six wind lease areas covering over 488,000 acres in the New York Bight, which includes the New Jersey and New York coastal area. BOEM estimates that full development of the lease areas could generate up to 7 gigawatts of offshore wind energy.

## STAFF REPORTS

# Lipari Landfill Is Officially Cleaned Up, Mostly

Since August the state officially has one less Superfund site. After four decades of cleanup and containment, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has [declared](#) that the Lipari Landfill in Mantua Township may be taken off the National Priorities List. Many types of chemical and household waste were improperly dumped into sand and gravel trenches at the site between 1958 and 1971. These contaminants have been linked to illness in the local population, including leukemia. Industrial solvents, paints and thinners, and formaldehyde are among the contaminants dumped at the 16-acre landfill. The EPA capped the landfill, installed barriers to prevent migration of contaminants, and pumped and processed leachate to remove toxins. Monitoring of the site will continue despite the delisting. The Lipari Landfill is approximately 15 miles south of Camden. It has the disreputable distinction of having been placed at the top of the first Superfund list of sites for remediation, in 1984.

# Triennium Policy

The NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) has an initiative called Triennium that spurs the state's energy utilities to undertake energy efficiency programs. Although these programs have come a long way, they still require improvement.

On October 30, the BPU approved utility proposals for the second round of Triennium energy efficiency programs, which would begin January 1, 2025. Under the rules, these programs must achieve energy savings over prior years.

Environmental advocates were cautiously optimistic about the latest round of approvals.

"We have much more work to do to ensure that our Triennium utility programs maximize electrification and not continue to incentivize fossil fuel reliance," said Sierra Club NJ Chapter Director Anjuli Ramos-Busot.

Also, Triennium programs need to ensure affordable utility rates for low- and moderate-income households over the long term, Ramos-Busot said. "We must continue to prioritize equity in our just transition to clean energy and in our decarbonization efforts, so that no New Jerseyans are left behind."

This is the second round of Triennium, the first having been three years ago. Triennium programs include rebates for more efficient home appliances and support for decarbonizing home energy use.

Advocates for sensible energy use in New Jersey said the Triennium program is pointed in the right direction.

# EPA Targets Emissions at Ports and Ferry Terminals

Some of the worst air quality in the nation can be found in Northeastern New Jersey, so it was good news for residents and workers there when, in October, the Environmental Protection Agency announced [millions in spending](#) to reduce emissions in the New York-New Jersey port area.

"These dollars will make tangible our transition to zero-emission technologies and modernize our ports to allow for a more safe, clean, and sustainable transfer of goods and services," said Sierra Club NJ Chapter Director Anjuli Ramos-Busot.

Recent port expansions have brought more trucks, more ships, and more warehouses to the port region, meaning more diesel fumes and particulate matter in communities already suffering from high rates of breathing-related illnesses.

The largest of the funding awards is \$344 million for the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey to electrify cargo handling equipment, drayage trucks, and vessels. Shore power connections are also targeted for these air quality improvements and emissions reductions. The applicants have up to four years to complete the improvements they have proposed.

Solar power is identified as a possible element of these upgrades, but so is hydrogen power, which is seldom truly green. Additionally, it is not clear that hydrogen storage and transfer systems are ready for the role in the clean energy transition that federal authorities have envisioned. Mishandling of hydrogen and leakage into the environment exacerbates global warming.

An additional \$55 million has been awarded to Sea Streak, which operates New York, Massachusetts, and Connecticut ferries from the Sandy Hook area at Atlantic Highlands. The money will pay for new vessels, battery storage, and shore power upgrades.

Another half-million dollars will go to the Delaware River and Bay Authority in Cape May to fund an emissions inventory of ferry operations, leading to strategies to cut emissions and improve resilience against storms and flooding. The Cape May-Lewes Ferry runs regular service between Cape May and Lewes, Delaware.

Millions more is slated for spending on electrification in the Philadelphia regional port area, which could have positive clean air spillover effects on Camden and other southwestern New Jersey communities.

**"Mishandling of hydrogen and leakage into the environment exacerbates global warming."**

# DEP Proposes to Lengthen the Endangered List

By Tony Hagen • [editor@newjersey.sierraclub.org](mailto:editor@newjersey.sierraclub.org)

Pity the poor rusty-patched bumblebee. It used to be one of the most common bees in New Jersey, but no populations of this pollinator have been documented in the state since 1999.

Under a Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) [proposed rule](#), conservation status for this insect would be changed to *endangered*.

In all, 30 species would see increased concern under the proposed rule. They include butterflies, freshwater fish, reptiles, amphibians, birds, and land mammals.

To be sure, there are conservation successes, too, notably the bald eagle, which in the 1970s was reduced to just one nesting pair in a remote corner of Cumberland County. Now, there are 262 nesting pairs located throughout New Jersey. This is thanks largely to conservation efforts and the banning of DDT, a pesticide that made eggshells so fragile chicks could not hatch in the wild.

The bald eagle would see its conservation status changed from *endangered* to *special concern*.

The osprey is a similar success story. Its conservation status would be changed from *threatened* to *stable*. There are an estimated 800 nesting pairs of this apex, fish-eating predator in New Jersey.

## Atlantic Sturgeon

The Atlantic sturgeon would be moved to the endangered list. Fewer than 250 adults are believed to return to the Delaware River each year to spawn. This fish's population has been decimated over the years by dredging, hypoxia (insufficient water oxygen), boat collisions, water intakes, and overfishing.

Eleven butterfly species are in store for endangered or threatened status, owing to population declines. "Butterflies are among the many pollinating insects suffering significant declines in population numbers and distribution," the DEP wrote.

"Factors include habitat loss and degradation... warming climate, pesticides, and loss of critical food and nectar plants to competition from invasive, nonnative plant species and to damage by invasive insects and diseases," the DEP wrote.

The barn owl, eastern meadowlark, Kentucky warbler, king rail, and salt marsh sparrow each would see heightened concern under the proposal.

The barn owl and eastern meadowlark both are victims of changes in agricultural practices that have resulted in fewer open grasslands and meadows—for example, the disappearance of dairy farms in New Jersey. Also, barn owls have been affected indirectly by use of rodenticides.

The barn owl would be considered *threatened* and the eastern meadowlark *endangered* under the proposal.

The king rail was a game bird in New Jersey until 2002, when its population was declared too sparse. These chicken-like marsh birds have been affect-

ed by waterway encroachments in New Jersey.

The ruddy turnstone, a small wading bird, would be moved to *special concern* from *stable*, based on a significant population decline.

"The department's aerial surveys



A barn owl in flight. Photo by Bob Brewer on Unsplash

of shore birds on Delaware Bay during spring migration indicate a greater than 60% decline in ruddy turnstone over the past decade," the DEP wrote.

Besides bald eagles and ospreys, various birds would be accorded reduced conservation concern. Cattle egrets and peregrine falcons would move to *stable* from *special concern*, and non-breeding red-headed woodpeckers would move to *special concern* from *threatened*.

The destruction of trees by insect infestations in New Jersey has created more winter habitat for the red-headed woodpecker, and the lack of snow cover has made it easier for them to find acorns and other food on the forest floor.

## Bobcats

The bobcat has the distinction of being the only mammal on the endangered list to be upgraded to *threatened*. This notoriously elusive species is difficult to count, but wildlife officials believe its population has increased, particularly in the area north of Interstate 80 and west of Interstate 287. "They remain threatened because of their limited geographic distribution and very low densities in areas of the state they historically occupied, namely in Central and Southern New Jersey," the DEP wrote.

The Cope's gray treefrog may be benefitting from the shorter periods of cold and warmer winters associated with global climate change, the DEP wrote. "Although still restricted to the four or five southernmost counties, the range of this species appears to be expanding northward." Its status would be upgraded to *threatened* from *endangered*.

Four bat species would be considered *endangered* under the proposal. Bats have suffered from the spread of white nose syndrome and habitat loss. The DEP notes that land-based wind turbines are a threat to these creatures but that special efforts are being made to understand and mitigate any related dangers to these populations from offshore wind installations.

The Sierra Club's NJ Chapter is advocating for stronger protections for declining wildlife populations via greater curbs on habitat encroachment and incidental harm to animals.

The DEP proposed rule was subject to a public comment period that has now ended, and a final rule was expected before the end of 2024.

# Driving on Sunshine

By Alina Zahra, Shloka Parikh, and Anthony Chann

At Rutgers University, an undergraduate team of engineers and business students are constructing a car from scratch—powered only by solar energy.

The Rutgers University Solar Team, known as RU Solar, is designing, financing, and constructing its first fully in-house solar car. Solar cars are lightweight, aerodynamic vehicles that utilize solar panels as their sole source of power. They also are the focus of a series of intercollegiate racing challenges.

At the end of the academic year, RU Solar will enter its new car into the 2025 Formula Sun Grand Prix (FSGP) competition, whose location has yet to be announced. FSGP is a three-day, intercollegiate, solar car endurance race that puts cars' handling, efficiency, and speed to the test. Competing will give RU Solar critical insights about ways to improve their solar car, while giving them experience with renewable energy's practical applications.

The team was founded in 2016 by Rutgers student Matthew Middleton, who sought to connect the university's community to solar car racing. The team made significant progress toward race readiness after receiving a donated solar car from the Stanford University Solar Team. After modifying the Stanford car to adhere to FSGP regulations, RU



Members of the RU Solar team pose with the solar car they will enter in the 2025 Formula Sun Grand Prix.

Solar arrived at the 2019 Formula Sun Grand Prix for its first major competition. Although the Stanford Solar Car was deemed ineligible to race, RU Solar had helped move it toward competition readiness.

Following a Covid-19 hiatus, the club regrouped in 2021 with the goal of crafting a fully Rutgers-made vehicle. After three years of work, this goal is approaching completion.

The new car will have a completely new chassis, aerodynamic frame, suspension system, brake system, and electric battery cell system. Each component was created by RU Solar, who applied the knowledge about sustainable energy they gained from university classes.

"We hope to get people excited about solar energy," said RU Solar President Kelly VazLima, who has led RU Solar into a period of robust membership growth and also helped increase the club's community outreach. A top

priority, VazLima said, is to show the Rutgers community "all the fun applications" solar energy can have when it is integrated into everyday technologies.

Vice President Brian Jin believes solar car racing will eventually "revolutionize the transportation industry." This may seem like a lofty ambition, but this is really solar car racing's purpose.

At its core, intercollegiate solar car racing is an opportunity for undergraduate students to pioneer new applications of solar energy technology in the automobile industry. RU Solar members receive first-hand experience with renewable energy and contribute to the global move toward sustainable energy.

Solar car teams from across the world, including Australia, Belgium, Malaysia, Japan, also are preparing entries for the 2025 FSGP challenge. Their efforts are helping to maximize battery efficiency, minimize solar panel weight, develop more aerodynamic vehicles, and more.

As RU Solar puts the finishing touches on their solar car entry for the FSGP 2025 competition, the team is building on the accomplishments of other students before them. As the only active collegiate solar car team in New Jersey, the Rutgers Solar Car Team looks forward to representing our state's dedication to technological, sustainable, and energy efficient innovation at FSGP 2025.

## REPORTS FROM NATIONAL

The national office of the Sierra Club monitors environmental issues across the country that are of great importance to us locally. The following is a short summary of those reports from the past few months. For the full list, [click here](#).

### Methane Charge for Oil and Gas Sector

On November 12, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released a [final rule](#) allowing fees on oil and gas producers if they fail to take appropriate measures to contain leaks of methane, a potent greenhouse gas. The charge is intended to incentivize producers to practice conservation as well. The EPA noted that methane is responsible for one-third of global warming that has occurred to date. The agency estimated the rule would reduce methane emissions by 1.2 million metric tons through 2035.

### Breathing Maryland's Pollution

Pollution from residential, commercial and institutional use of fossil fuels in Maryland creates nitrogen oxides which in turn combine with sunlight and volatile organic compounds to create unhealthy levels of smog that migrate to Southern

>continued on page 11



# Club Urges NPS to Protect Thomas Edison Park

The New Jersey Chapter of the Sierra Club has submitted comments to the National Park Service urging them to prevent Middlesex County's massive artificial turf [development proposal](#) for Thomas Edison Park. The park already has several playing fields, over a dozen tennis courts, a running track, baseball fields, and a parking lot for 300 cars. Middlesex County's proposal includes building 14 new artificial turf sports fields, 16 tennis courts, parking for 1,350 cars, and more.

This proposal for Thomas Edison Park will have many detrimental land use impacts. Among those, it will increase impervious land cover, potentially causing flooding problems, and reduce public access to natural park area.

"Natural grass playing fields and open spaces should not be replaced with toxic synthetic turf that has been found to create significant environmental and public health issues," said NJ Chapter Conservation Program Manager Taylor McFarland.

There are safer alternatives to improve recreation opportunities for residents and athletes, she said.

Adding 14 new artificial sports fields to Thomas Edison Park equates to 32 acres of synthetic turf and 7 million pounds of plastic. A standard artificial turf field contains 500,000 pounds of plastic, which results in microplastic shedding into the environment.

On a warm day, synthetic turf radiates more heat than a plant-based surface, leading to extreme temperatures that adversely affect players and raise surrounding temperatures. A synthetic turf field lasts just 8 to 10 years on average, after which thousands of pounds of infill and plastic carpet must be removed and replaced. Mixed plastic waste, such as synthetic turf, is not recyclable using conventional methods. Therefore, used field material is typically sent to landfills, where it may remain for centuries.

"We urge the National Park Service to pursue safer alternatives for the park that can responsibly accommodate active recreation while protecting our health, environment, and overall access to the park," McFarland said. The county should stick with natural grass fields, reduce the proposed parking lot area, and preserve the 11 acres of woodlands that would be destroyed for this project.

## TRUMP TO DISMANTLE

*continued from page 2*

a Republican administration in two ways. First, a significant portion of IRA financial incentives are in the form of tax credits. Eliminating these credits would be tantamount to raising taxes on the corporations that are moving ahead with projects that rely on them. Second, more than 80% of projects receiving IRA incentives are being built in Republican districts. According to Sen. Edward Markey (D-Mass.), repealing the IRA would "kill 343,000 jobs nationwide."

Prior to the election, 18 House Republicans wrote to Speaker Mike Johnson asking him not to eliminate the IRA clean energy tax credits if the GOP maintained its House majority. However, because the law was passed under a budget resolution, Republicans would only have to secure a simple majority vote in both the House and Senate to repeal the IRA. If a repeal is not feasible, Trump has said that he would claw back funding from the IRA, which could hobble the EPA since it has received roughly \$4.2 billion from the law.

### Legal Challenges

The decision earlier this year by the Supreme Court in *Loper Bright Enterprises v. Raimondo* takes on greater importance under a new Trump administration. The opinion implicitly invited industry to challenge regulations on the grounds that a federal agency lacked authority to issue the regulation. For example, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) rules that require public companies to disclose extensive climate-related information in their SEC filings are subject to numerous challenges. It is likely the Trump Justice Department will no longer oppose those challenges, resulting in the rules being struck down. Future lawsuits attacking EPA regulations under *Loper Bright* likely will face no opposition as well, which will invite more lawsuits.

While the Biden administration added nearly 5,200 EPA employees during his term, Trump is determined to reduce the number of EPA employees through budget cuts and potentially move many

EPA jobs out of Washington. He probably will also reclassify the EPA's workforce by terminating federal civil service employees and replacing them with political appointees. Trump believes that civil service employees during his first term impeded the radical changes he sought, and he wants to replace them with employees who can be fired for refusing to implement his changes. The reclassification plan would clearly face litigation, but conservative Justices on the Supreme Court are receptive to the argument that federal agencies need to be reined in and subject to greater control by the president.

Project 2025, drafted by former (and perhaps future) Trump staffers, proposes that the EPA "update," and presumably dilute, the 2009 finding that greenhouse gases endanger public health and the environment. This finding is the bedrock for Clean Air Act climate regulations. While it is hard to imagine that climate change data since 2009 would lead to the weakening of the 2009 finding, it has been a target of conservative groups for years.

Finally, Project 2025 also focuses on the EPA's annual compilation of greenhouse gas emissions data. Presently, the EPA requires 41 sectors to report their greenhouse gas emissions. About 8,000 facilities within those sectors that exceed certain emissions thresholds form the basis of the EPA's annual greenhouse gas inventory. Project 2025 proposes reducing the number of sectors reporting emissions, omitting major emitters such as municipal landfills; iron, steel, and cement manufacturing; and carbon capture and storage. This would result in a serious undercount of greenhouse gas emissions.

In this bleak political climate, our country especially needs the Sierra Club, the nation's most experienced and successful environmental litigation organization, to oppose and seek to limit the setbacks that are coming.

### Resource

Methane Fees: <https://shorturl.at/UYWbU>

## NEW VOLUNTEERS

*continued from page 3*

### Ashna Singh, Solar Energy Coordinator

Ashna Singh has been appointed the solar energy coordinator for our Chapter. She is a high school senior in Jersey City and, during her AP US history class, developed an appreciation and respect for the work Sierra Club has accomplished.



Ashna's passion for clean energy has led her to work on helping improve access to solar energy through legislative initiatives. In her free time, Ashna loves reading, crocheting, and watching documentaries. She strongly believes solar energy can transform our communities, and she's excited to see what the Sierra Club does next!

### Matthew Walsh, Transportation Committee Member

Matthew Walsh has been appointed a member of our Transportation Committee. Matthew has been interested in rail since he was about 8 years old. "I used to watch passenger and freight trains whenever they arrived," he recalled. And Matt also knew most of their scheduled arrivals and departures.

He is in complete agreement with writer Edna St. Vincent Millay, who once wrote in a poem, "There isn't a

train I wouldn't take, no matter where it's going!"

In later life, Matt became an advocate for the NJ Association of Railroad Passengers, a passion that has not ebbed. Matt very much looks forward to working with our Chapter's Transportation Committee members.

### Ashley Kim, Environmental and Social Justice Committee Member

Ashley Kim, a member of our Environmental and Social Justice Committee, is a senior at Cresskill High School in Bergen County. She is an aspiring civil and environmental engineer and is especially interested in sustainable energy and practices. She is a frequent volunteer at her local nature center and has done extensive research regarding the environment.



Also, **Meagan Kuhlmann** and **Lois Castrovince** were appointed to the Offshore Wind Committee.

The NJ DEP has created a one-stop source for information about climate resiliency project funding: <https://shorturl.at/NE1fX>

## ENVIRONMENTAL AWARDS

*continued from page 1*

dents and helping to ensure America's clean energy future, which is vital for a livable planet and for creating jobs and prosperity for working families.

"The New Jersey Sierra Club is so pleased to celebrate outstanding environmental leadership in the state," said Sierra Club NJ Chapter Director Anjali Ramos-Busot.

The speakers said it was discouraging that the new administration would very likely roll back hard-won environmental protections at a time when the planet is deeply imperiled by global warming, but they noted the fight is not over and encouraged Sierra Club members and the public to join in.

"State and local efforts made possible by advocates like those at the Sierra Club will be all the more important to ensure New Jersey remains a leader in clean energy and our citizens are guaranteed a safe, healthy environment," Smith said.

Mukherji said he, too, had no inten-

tion of easing up on his efforts to protect the environment. "I will always fight for sustainability and for our planet as if my children's futures depend on it—because they do," he said.

NJ Chapter Transportation Committee Chair Bill Beren received the Volunteer of the Year Award. Beren also leads the Gateway Group. Central Jersey Group Conservation Chair Kip Cherry, who is also a dedicated member of several issue committees, received the Ken Johanson Lifetime Achievement Award.

"Congratulations to Bill Beren and Kip Cherry," said Chapter Chair Rich Isaac. "I have seen the countless hours put in, passion, and dedication in both of them to keep New Jersey safe and clean for future generations."

Also, Carrie Rapaport gave a talk in honor of her late father Jeff Rapaport, who contributed to Sierra Club advocacy on many levels over many years.

## Support Your Passion for a Just and Sustainable World

Create a legacy that protects and restores the natural world for future generations by naming Sierra Club's New Jersey Chapter in your will or trust. Or, name Sierra Club Foundation as a beneficiary of your retirement plan for the benefit of your local New Jersey Chapter and leave less highly taxed assets to your loved ones.



To learn more about the advantages of making a planned gift and to become a member of the Rachel Carson Society, please contact us.



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# On the Trail

## Hiking Gertrude's Nose in the Hudson Valley

By Gary Frederick • Conservation Chair, Raritan Valley Group



Each year, my wife and I join a group of friends in search of the most spectacular fall foliage hikes within a day's drive of Central New Jersey. While New Jersey offers plenty of colorful fall foliage hikes, such as Hacklebarney State Park, Norvin Green State Forest, and High Point State Park, our multi-day trips have taken us to treasures such as Virginia's Shenandoah Mountains, Acadia National Park in Maine, and Lake Placid in upstate New York.

This year we traveled to New York's picturesque Hudson Valley to explore trails in the Minnewaska State Park Preserve. The preserve is part of the Shawangunk Ridge, which rises more than 2,000 feet above sea level and provides memorable views of deeply wooded valleys, waterfalls, sheer cliffs made mostly of sandstone and white quartz, and expansive farmlands.

It's also a place where visitors can go mountain climbing, bike riding, and boating. My favorite hike within the preserve is Gertrude's Nose, an approximately 7-mile, moderate-to-strenuous loop that starts at the Minnewaska Visitor Center. Legend has it that the rock formation was named in 1682 after Gertrude Bruyn, a Dutch settler who lived in the Shawangunk Mountains. It's certainly one of the most memorable hikes in the area.

Our group set off from the visitor's center and followed a carriage road that rises gently around the west shore of Lake Minnewaska. Carriage roads are generally wide roadways topped



Gary and his wife Phyllis capture a memorable moment with a selfie. Credit: Reuven Kaswin

with broken stone, making it easy to walk on and accommodate horseback riders and Park Service vehicles. Starting the hike so easily was only a tease. We soon reached a winding and wooded trail that ascended more steeply alongside streams, boulders, and a wide variety of trees, ferns, and plants. We emerged from the woods to see our first breathtaking view at a place called Patterson's Pellet, which is a large

6-foot-tall boulder perched along a cliff edge overlooking the valley before us. In geological terms, the "pellet" is a rock that was moved to its present location during the Ice Age. Continuing on, we soon reached the Gertrude's Nose Trail, which is where the views got even more spectacular. We walked along rocky ledges, gazing across the thickly wooded valley and into sheer drops of several hundred feet just off to our right.

As we followed the red blazes that marked the trail, we hiked near cliff edges, hopped over crevices from which pitch pines grew, and eventually came to Gertrude's Nose. This large



A view from the Gertrude's Nose trail. Credit: Gary Frederick

expanse of smooth rock is 1,728 feet above sea level and looks out over incredible views of sun-splashed red, yellow, and orange forests alongside green meadows and farmland. This point was about halfway in our hike and was a good place for lunch while enjoying the serenity of being in nature, breathing in the crisp air, and marveling at nature's unmatched beauty.

After about 20 minutes of photography, eating, and wonderment, we set off on a descent into the valley of Coxing Kill. The descent is steep, through narrow and rocky paths, making all of us glad we were using walking poles and wearing high-quality hiking boots. This portion of the hike is several miles long. It's a challenge and we took it slow, but it was incredibly exhilarating to be surrounded by this quiet forest, shielded from the sun, and listening to birds and the rustle of fallen leaves. Eventually we climbed again toward Lake Minnewaska and the carriage road that circled back to the visitor's center.

This is the second time I've hiked Gertrude's Nose. With different seasons come different experiences, whether it's spring, when trees are awakening with new growth and flowers that are beginning to bloom, or fall, when leaves turn colors and the air gets cooler. But even if you're not ready for the challenge of Gertrude's Nose, the Minnewaska State Park Preserve has a variety of trails for all experience levels. It was worth the drive.

## Jeff Rapaport: Honoring a True Climate Warrior

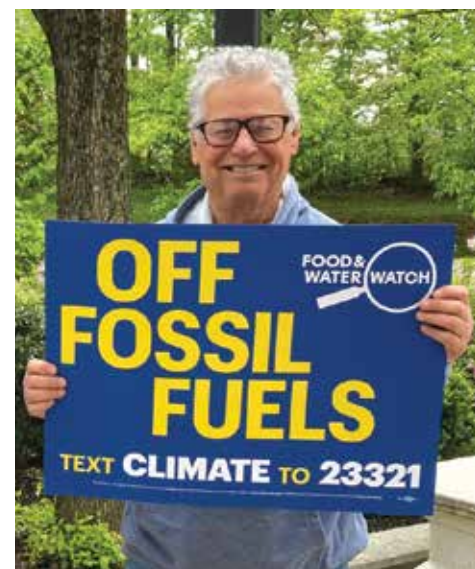
The North Jersey Sierra Group mourns the loss of Jeff Rapaport, a true climate warrior and an amazing human being. Jeff was passionate about two things: his beloved grandchildren and fighting against climate change. A thoughtful, caring man, Jeff believed the greatest gift he could bestow on his grandchildren was a more habitable planet. Jeff passed away unexpectedly on Sunday October 14, 2024.

On October 10, Jeff shared his passion to fight climate change during a presentation at a North Jersey Group Open House. Four days later, he was gone. But his passion for the environment and compassion for future generations lives on in all who knew him and those who heard him speak. The gleam in his eyes, look on his face, and excitement in his voice when he spoke about taking action, attending rallies, and giving testimony was infectious and motivating. His environmental spirit lives on in us.

An officer of the North Jersey Group for over a decade, Jeff shared his passion for environmental action with all who knew him. He was the chair of the North Jersey Sierra Group Climate Change Committee and a member of the Club's Off-shore Wind Committee. He worked tirelessly to build coalitions with other organizations, including the Franciscan Response to Fossil Fuels, Food & Water Watch, and the Coalition to Ban Unsafe Oil Trains. He represented the North Jersey Sierra Group on the coordinating committees of these coalitions and was on the front lines in the fight against the construction of the NJ Transit Gas Plant, the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission's gas plant, Tennessee Gas Pipeline Company's pipeline projects, NJ Turnpike expansions, and the Meadowlands power plant, to name just a few.

Jeff was also a star bird dogger. He always showed up on short notice to publicly lobby Gov. Murphy and, on many occasions, was able to unassumingly enter events even when other protesters were held back by security! He was always willing to do the not-always-fun-but-critically-important "behind the scenes" work, such as calling voters and activists to engage them on an issue.

In his daily prayers, Jeff asked two things: "Please help me be a human being. Please help me fight climate change." Always cognizant of what he needed to do, Jeff remained calm in the face of sometimes heated meetings. His path was clear and he refused to be sidetracked or pushed off course. Jeff was a tireless advocate for the environment. His loss leaves a void in our group and our hearts.



Jeff Rapaport



- Chapter Outings Chair:** Leona Fluck [pineypaddlers@gmail.com](mailto:pineypaddlers@gmail.com), (609) 259-3734  
**Skylands:** Dave Alcock, [dwhoob@hotmail.com](mailto:dwhoob@hotmail.com)  
**Hunterdon Warren:** Ron Gelok III [Gelokron@gmail.com](mailto:Gelokron@gmail.com)  
**North Jersey:** Co-Chairs: *Open Position!* and Rebecca Wilkin, [rebeccawilkin@gmail.com](mailto:rebeccawilkin@gmail.com)  
**Gateway:** Co-Chairs: Steven Yafet, [syafet@gmail.com](mailto:syafet@gmail.com) and Ron Pate, [Ronpate31@verizon.net](mailto:Ronpate31@verizon.net)  
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**River Touring:** Fred Tocce, (908) 453-2205 (H) RD-1, Box 277, Washington 07882

**Outing Leaders and Group Outings Coordinators:** Please send write-ups for April to June 2025 to your group outings coordinator (or, if you don't associate yourself with a single group, directly to [pineypaddlers@gmail.com](mailto:pineypaddlers@gmail.com)) before February 1, 2025. Outings for early July 2025 can be included.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## JANUARY

**Jan 1 (Wed): Monmouth Battlefield State Park Guided Walking Tour of Perrine Hill** (Monmouth Co.) 11 a.m. The Friends of Monmouth Battlefield will participate in America's state parks First Day Hikes programs sponsored in New Jersey by the Division of Parks and Forestry. Meet 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 Colonial position and walk to sites associated with Molly Pitcher. Bring water and snacks. Good footwear and hiking poles (if you use them) are recommended. Co-leaders: John Miraglia, [johnworks3@aol.com](mailto:johnworks3@aol.com) and Leona F, [pineypaddlers@gmail.com](mailto:pineypaddlers@gmail.com) Please register to receive further information if cancelled or rescheduled due to inclement weather: [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/raritan-valley](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/raritan-valley) (RV)

**Jan 4 (Sat): Eagle Rock Reservation Hike** (Essex Co.) 9 a.m., moderate pace. We will hike 4 to 5 miles with beautiful views of Manhattan. Wear hiking boots, traction devices, and poles, if snow or ice. No dogs, please. Bring water and snacks. Check the website for the meeting location. Register with leader Ron Pate, [Ronpate31@verizon.net](mailto:Ronpate31@verizon.net) or 973-965-7578. Preregister at [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/gateway](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/gateway) (G)

**Jan 5 (Sun): National Bird Day Hike at Veterans Park** (Mercer Co.) 10 a.m., 3 miles, easy pace. The magnificent 330-acre park was built in honor of Hamilton veterans in 1977. Ribbons of walking paths are sprinkled through wooded areas with picnic grounds and rest stops. Meet at the tennis court parking lot, 2264 Kuser Rd., Hamilton Township. Bring water and snacks. Leashed dogs are welcome. Inclement weather cancels the hike. Leaders: Leona and George F, [pineypaddlers@gmail.com](mailto:pineypaddlers@gmail.com) Register at [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/calendar](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/calendar) (C)

**Jan 11 (Sat): Sterling Forest Hike, Tuxedo Park, NY** (Orange Co.) 10 a.m., 7 miles, moderately hilly terrain. Hike along a mountain ridge to the remote end of Sterling Lake. Features: visitor center with a scale model of the park, Sterling Lake, Sterling fire tower. Restrooms and sinks with running water. Bring hiking boots, non-cotton hiking socks, and a backpack with water and lunch. RSVP at [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/calendar](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/calendar) Directions will be sent via email to those who RSVP. Leaders: Jimi Oleksiak [the\\_hikist@mac.com](mailto:the_hikist@mac.com) and Jerry Ruocco (SS)

**Jan 12 (Sun): Lake Lenape Park West-Winter Birding Walk** (Atlantic Co.) 10 a.m., 3 miles, easy pace along the lake shore to the blue trail that overlooks the lake. The trails are wide, hard-packed, and well blazed. Lake Lenape Park is a great destination for beginner and advanced naturalists alike. In the winter, raptors, mammals, and waterfowl are conspicuous. During the winter, between Christmas and late January, Lake Lenape hosts a population of roosting **bold eagles**. Meet at Lake Lenape Boathouse, Old Harding Highway, Mays Landing. There are heated facilities. Bring binoculars, water, and snacks. Please, no pets on this birding walk. Dress warmly; it can be windy along the lake shore. Inclement weather/icy conditions cancel. Co-leaders: Tom Boghosian, [tfboghosian44@gmail.com](mailto:tfboghosian44@gmail.com) and Leona F, [pineypaddlers@gmail.com](mailto:pineypaddlers@gmail.com) Registration is required. [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/south-jersey](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/south-jersey) (SJ)

**Jan 19 (Sun): NJ State Museum** (Mercer Co.) 10 a.m. Let's enjoy an "indoor outing" to the NJ State Museum. The current Robert Duran (1938-2005) exhibition seeks to reintroduce this artist to the public primarily through the most significant record of his life available to us: his paintings and works on paper. Also, a current exhibit is "Bark! Indigenous Cultural Expression," which highlights objects from the museum's ethnographic collection. Explore items from the Pacific Northwest, South America, Pacific Islands, and our local Eastern Woodlands area. On long-term view and great for families is "Written in the Rocks: Fossil Tales of New Jersey." Parking is free in front of the museum, 205 W. State St., Trenton. Leona and George F, [pineypaddlers@gmail.com](mailto:pineypaddlers@gmail.com) Please register to confirm participation [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/calendar](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/calendar) (C)

**Jan 29 (Wed): Chinese New Year (Lunar New Year) Hike at the Plainsboro Preserve** (Middlesex Co.) 10 a.m., 3 miles, easy pace. The Plainsboro Preserve includes over 1,000 acres of evolving ecosystems, nature trails, a dense beech forest, and the 50-acre McCormack Lake. Bring water and snacks. Dogs are not permitted. Meet at the nature center, 80 Scotts Corner Rd., Cranbury. There are facilities. Option: late lunch at a local restaurant (Romeo's Pizza or Lotus Garden). Inclement weather/icy conditions cancel. Co-leaders: SP, [spjersey@gmail.com](mailto:spjersey@gmail.com) and Leona F, [pineypaddlers@gmail.com](mailto:pineypaddlers@gmail.com) Registration is required. [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/raritan-valley](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/raritan-valley) (RV)

## FEBRUARY

**Feb 1 (Sat): South Mountain Reservation Hike** (Essex Co.) 10 a.m., moderate pace. We will hike 6-7 miles over moderate difficult, hilly trails. Wear hiking boots, bring water and lunch. Rain cancels. No dogs, please. Check the website for the meeting location. Register with leader Ron Pate, [Ronpate31@verizon.net](mailto:Ronpate31@verizon.net) or 973-965-7578. Preregister at [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/gateway](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/gateway) (G)

**Feb 2 (Sun): Groundhog Day Hike at Jakes Branch County Park** (Ocean Co.) 10 a.m., 3-4 miles, easy pace. Jakes Branch has a nature center with an observation deck that offers a 360° view of the Pinelands. Meet at Jakes Branch Park, 1100 Double Trouble Rd., Beechwood. There are heated facilities. Leashed dogs are welcome. Woods trails with elevations and some sandy sections. Hiking boots and hiking poles (if you use them) are recommended. Bring water and snacks. Option for late lunch at Shady Rest Restaurant. Inclement weather/icy conditions cancel. Co-leaders: George & Leona F, [pineypaddlers@gmail.com](mailto:pineypaddlers@gmail.com) Margaret Mary Piccolo, [gogreenp1@yahoo.com](mailto:gogreenp1@yahoo.com) Registration is required <https://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/ocean-county> (O)

**Feb 8 (Sat): High Point State Park Nordic Ski**, Montague, NJ (Sussex Co.) 10 a.m. If there is enough snow, we will ski for 3-4 hours. If there is no snow, we will hike 6 miles. Outstanding views in all directions. There is a cross-country ski center with ski rentals and hot soup. The all-day trail pass fee is \$25. Facilities: heated restrooms with flush toilets and sinks with running water. Bring skis and boots, non-cotton hiking socks, and a backpack with water and lunch. RSVP at [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/calendar](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/calendar) Directions will be sent via email to those who RSVP. Leaders: Jimi Oleksiak, [the\\_hikist@mac.com](mailto:the_hikist@mac.com) and Jerry Ruocco (SS)

**Feb 9 (Sun): "Photo Safari" and Walk at Sandy Hook** (Monmouth Co.) 10:30 a.m. Situated in Sandy Hook Bay, the tip of Skeleton Hill Island has the unique advantage of being the winter host of many restful **harbor seals**. There is no guarantee that we will see the seals, but they usually arrive sometime in December from their breeding grounds up in Northern New England and Southern Canada. They forage at night and during the day mostly sleep and take it easy. Bring binoculars, dress warmly in layers, and bring a hot beverage and snacks. Plan for 2 hours outdoors to observe seals at low tide and waterfowl that overwinter in New Jersey. Meet at Gateway National Recreation Area, 128 South Hartshorne Dr., Highlands. Facilities are available. Inclement weather/icy conditions cancel. Co-leaders: John Miraglia, [johnworks3@aol.com](mailto:johnworks3@aol.com) and Leona F, [pineypaddlers@gmail.com](mailto:pineypaddlers@gmail.com) Preregistration is required. [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/raritan-valley](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/raritan-valley) (RV)

**Feb 14 (Fri): Valentine's Day Hike at Smithville Park** (Burlington Co.) 10 a.m., 3 miles, easy pace at Historic Smithville Park in Vincentown, NJ. The park features a diverse collection of habitats and terrain and offers Rancocas Creek vistas. There are woods trails and elevations. Hiking boots and poles are recommended. Meet at the Smith's Woods access parking lot, East Railroad Ave. Facilities available. Leashed dogs are welcome. Option for late lunch at Vincentown Diner. Inclement weather/icy conditions cancel. Leaders: George & Leona F, [pineypaddlers@gmail.com](mailto:pineypaddlers@gmail.com) Registration is required: [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/west-jersey](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/west-jersey) (W)

**Feb 16 (Sun): Hike the Franklin Parker Preserve** (Burlington Co.) 10 a.m., 3 miles, easy pace on the White Trail. In the winter raptors are active in fields and over lakes and bogs. **Tundra swans** and **Canada geese** are abundant in old bogs, as well as **snow geese** and a variety of ducks. Meet at Speedwell entrance off Rt. 563, Woodland Township. Portable toilet at parking lot. Leashed dogs are welcome. Bring water and snacks. Inclement weather/icy conditions cancel. Co-leaders: Tom Boghosian, [tfboghosian44@gmail.com](mailto:tfboghosian44@gmail.com) and Leona F, [pineypaddlers@gmail.com](mailto:pineypaddlers@gmail.com) Registration is required. [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/south-jersey](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/south-jersey) (SJ)

## MARCH

**Mar 1 (Sat): Richard W. DeKorte Park** (Bergen Co.) 10 a.m., 2-3 miles, easy pace. This is a beautiful estuary park with miles of walking paths and an environmental center. Great for folks who are interested in bird watching. Meet at the parking lot at 1 DeKorte Park, Lyndhurst. There are facilities (portable toilet). Bring water and snacks. Hiking boots are recommended. Rain cancels. Co-leaders: Rebecca Wilkin, [rebeccawilkin@gmail.com](mailto:rebeccawilkin@gmail.com), and Robert Gill, [rcgill@gmail.com](mailto:rcgill@gmail.com). Registration required: <https://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/north-jersey> (N)

**Mar 1 (Sat): Eagle Rock Reservation Hike** (Essex Co.) 10 a.m., moderate pace. We will hike 4-5 miles with beautiful views of Manhattan. Wear hiking boots and traction devices, and bring poles if snow or ice. No dogs, please. Bring water and snacks. Check the website for the meeting location. Register with leader Ron Pate, [Ronpate31@verizon.net](mailto:Ronpate31@verizon.net) or 973-965-7578. Preregister at [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/gateway](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/gateway) (G)

**Mar 4 (Tues): Mardis Gras Hike at Davidson's Mill Pond Park** (Middlesex Co.) 10 a.m., 3 miles, easy pace. We begin our hike on the Yellow Trail, a grassy/rocky section through the woods that includes narrow boardwalks over swampy areas. The forested Blue Trail has elevations, exposed roots to step over and large stones for steps in some sections. Hiking poles and good footwear are recommended. Bring water, snacks, and lunch. Leashed dogs are welcome. Portable toilet at parking lot. Rain cancels. Co-leaders: SP, [spjersey@gmail.com](mailto:spjersey@gmail.com) and Leona F, [pineypaddlers@gmail.com](mailto:pineypaddlers@gmail.com) Registration is required. [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/raritan-valley](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/raritan-valley) (RV)

**Mar 8 (Sat) Mahlon Dickerson County Park Hike, Jefferson Township** (Morris Co.) 10 a.m., 6 miles in moderately hilly terrain. Views from Headley Overlook, Cascades, Saffin Pond area, picnic shelter. Portable toilet in the parking lot. Wear hiking boots and non-cotton hiking socks, and bring a backpack with water and lunch. RSVP at [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/calendar](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/calendar) Directions will be sent via email to those who RSVP. Leaders: Jimi Oleksiak [the\\_hikist@mac.com](mailto:the_hikist@mac.com) and Jerry Ruocco (SS)

**Mar 9 (Sun): "Photo Safari" and Walk at Sandy Hook** (Monmouth Co.) 10:30 a.m. Situated in Sandy Hook Bay, the tip of Skeleton Hill Island has the unique advantage of being the winter host of many restful **harbor seals**. There is no guarantee that we will see the seals, but they usually arrive sometime in December from their breeding grounds up in Northern New England and Southern Canada. They forage at night and during the day mostly sleep and take it easy. Bring binoculars, dress warmly in layers and bring a hot beverage and snacks; plan for 2 hours outdoors to observe seals at low tide and waterfowl that overwinter in New Jersey. Meet at Gateway National Recreation Area, 128 South Hartshorne Dr., Highlands. Facilities are available. Inclement weather/icy conditions cancel. Co-leaders: John Miraglia, [johnworks3@aol.com](mailto:johnworks3@aol.com) and Leona F, [pineypaddlers@gmail.com](mailto:pineypaddlers@gmail.com) Preregistration is required. [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/raritan-valley](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/raritan-valley) (RV)

**Mar 16 (Sun): "Early Wear Green" Hike at Estell Manor** (Atlantic Co.) 10 a.m., about 2 miles, with an option for an additional 3-plus 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. Leashed dogs are welcome! Heavy rain cancels. Co-leaders: Tom Boghosian, [tfboghosian44@gmail.com](mailto:tfboghosian44@gmail.com) and Leona F, [pineypaddlers@gmail.com](mailto:pineypaddlers@gmail.com) Registration is required. [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/south-jersey](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/south-jersey) (SJ)

**Mar 22 (Sat): Return to Amico Island Park for a Spring Birding Walk** (Burlington Co.) 9 a.m., 2-3 miles, easy pace. Susan Matson is an avid and experienced birder and will again be our guide on this third Sierra Club NJ Chapter Amico walk! The **great blue heron** rookery becomes active with spring courtship. Look for migrant neotropical birds such as **palm**, **blackpoll**, **black-throated blue**, **black-throated green**, and **magnolia warblers**. Resident species, such as **yellowthroat** and **red-winged blackbirds** begin territorial singing. Most trails are wide and level, traversing meadows, forest, pond, and wetland habitat. Various points in the park offer very nice views of the Delaware River and the flats at the mouth of Rancocas Creek. Meet us at 81 Norman Ave., Riverside. Please, no dogs on this walk. Bring water, snacks, and binoculars. There is a portable toilet at the parking lot. Some trails can be muddy, appropriate footwear is recommended. Leaders: George and Leona F, [pineypaddlers@gmail.com](mailto:pineypaddlers@gmail.com) Registration is required. [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/west-jersey](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/west-jersey) (W)

## NEWS FROM NATIONAL

*continued from page 8*

New Jersey, a [study](#) commissioned by the Sierra Club has found. The study looked at baseline data from 2016 created smog maps for 2016 and 2023 (projected). The maps showed increasing levels of smog, with the potential to drive higher levels of respiratory illnesses, asthma attacks, bronchitis, and premature death.

### Sierra Club Urges TVA to Upgrade—Now!

A [report](#) commissioned by the Sierra Club reveals that the Tennessee Valley Authority, the sixth largest power producer in the United States serving seven South-eastern states, is failing to upgrade its infrastructure and increase transmission capacity and inter-grid connectivity. These upgrades are crucial for quickly bringing more renewable energy online and integrating large-scale battery storage, which is essential for reducing reliance on fossil fuels as backup power.



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](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/skyland)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/SkylandsNJSC](https://www.facebook.com/SkylandsNJSC)

**Email:** [chachabacon@yahoo.com](mailto:chachabacon@yahoo.com); phone: 973-886-7950

*>continued on page 12*

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

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

**GENERAL MEETINGS** (Conducted via Zoom)

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

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

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

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

## HUNTERDON WARREN GROUP

*(Hunterdon and Southern Warren counties)*

**Webpage:** [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/hunterdonwarren](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/hunterdonwarren)  
**Meetup:** [www.meetup.com/NJSierraClub/](http://www.meetup.com/NJSierraClub/)  
**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/groups/sierraclub.hunterdonwarren/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/sierraclub.hunterdonwarren/)  
**YouTube:** [www.youtube.com/@sierraclubhunterdonwarren9255/videos](http://www.youtube.com/@sierraclubhunterdonwarren9255/videos)

**OFFICERS**

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

\* Group Executive Committee Member

**GENERAL MEETINGS:** Meetings may be virtual or hybrid (in-person and virtual). Please check [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/hunterdonwarren](http://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](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/north-jersey)  
**Meetup:** [www.meetup.com/NJSierraClub/](http://www.meetup.com/NJSierraClub/)  
**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/northjerseysierraclub](http://www.facebook.com/northjerseysierraclub)  
**Twitter:** @sierraclub\_nj  
**Instagram:** sierraclubnorth\_nj

**OFFICERS**

<b>Chair</b>	Diane Scarangella	diascat@hotmail.com
<b>Co-Chair</b>	Kris Scheufele*	kris.scheufele@gmail.com
<b>Treasurer</b>	Bob Weiss*	bobweiss1967@gmail.com
<b>Secretary</b>	Ron De Vos	rondevos58@outlook.com
<b>Event Planning and Membership Committee</b>		
<b>Chair</b>	Kris Scheufele*	kris.scheufele@gmail.com
<b>Political Action Committee</b>		
<b>Chair</b>	Ron De Vos	rondevos58@outlook.com

**Outings Committee**

<b>Chair</b>	Rebecca Wilkin	rebeccawilkin@gmail.com
<b>Youth Outreach Chair</b>	<i>Open Position!</i>	
<b>Conservation Committee</b>		
<b>Chair</b>	<i>Open Position!</i>	
<b>Climate Change Committee</b>		
<b>Co-Chair</b>	Judy Green*	jugreen547@gmail.com
<b>Co-Chair</b>	<i>Open Position!</i>	
<b>Diversity, Inclusion, Environmental Justice</b>		
<b>Chair</b>	Bushra Asfare*	bushra_c.e@hotmail.com
<b>Consulting Engineer</b>	Bushra Asfare	bushra_c.e@hotmail.com
<b>Social Media/Website</b>		
<b>Chair</b>	Marie Mannino	mmannino@yahoo.com

\*Elected North Jersey Group Executive Committee Member.

**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!

**UPCOMING OUTINGS**

**Mar 1 (Sat): Richard W. DeKorte Park** (Bergen Co.) 10 a.m., 2-3 miles, easy pace. This is a beautiful estuary park with miles of walking paths and an environmental center. Great for folks who are interested in bird watching. Meet at the parking lot at 1 DeKorte Park, Lyndhurst, NJ 0707. There are facilities (port-o-john). Bring water and snacks. Hiking boots are recommended. Rain cancels. Co-leaders: Rebecca Wilkin, rebeccawilkin@gmail.com, and Robert Gill, rcgill@gmail.com. Registration required: <https://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/north-jersey> (N)

**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](http://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](mailto:BetsyLong.env@gmail.com).

**PRESERVING OPEN SPACES**

North Jersey Sierra continues to fight against the paving and development of newly remediated parks and the preservation of natural trails and native ecosystems in parklands targeted for remediation and development, including newly remediated landfills and undeveloped wetlands in Overpeck County Park. North Jersey Sierra continues to support the Northern Valley Greenway 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](mailto:BetsyLong.env@gmail.com) for more information or go to [www.nvgreenway.org](http://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 [rebeccawilkin@gmail.com](mailto:rebeccawilkin@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](https://bit.ly/3BHU8Uc) or contact [rebeccawilkin@gmail.com](mailto:rebeccawilkin@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](mailto: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, and
- Protecting our remaining natural lands, open spaces, and forests from development.

*>continued on page 13*

# GATEWAY GROUP

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

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

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

<b>Chair</b>	Bill Beren*	973-746-9661	Beren1@verizon.net
<b>Conservation Chair</b>	Caroline Kane*	646-961-9003	ckane678@verizon.net
<b>Treasurer</b>	Open Position!		
<b>Secretary</b>	Open Position!		
<b>Program Co-Chairs</b>	Suzanne Trimel*	973-509-8335	suzanne.trimel@gmail.com
	Steven Yafet	908-354-2537	syafet@gmail.com
<b>Environmental Justice Chair</b>	Allison Fabrizio		allisonfabrizio@gmail.com
<b>Publicity Chair</b>	Open Position!		
<b>Political Chair &amp; Recycling Coordinator</b>	Danielle Rapsas*		ddr2142@barnard.edu
<b>Fundraising Chair</b>	Open Position!		
<b>Membership Chair</b>	Steven Yafet*	(see above)	
<b>Passaic River Issues</b>	Steven Yafet*	(see above)	
<b>Outings Chair</b>	Ron Pate		ronpate31@verizon.net
<b>Webmaster</b>	Christy Morganstein	732-718-4343	christy@medartsweb.com

\*Group Executive Committee

The following Gateway Group positions are open for volunteers: vice-chair, conservation chair, 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 several vacant positions listed above.

## GATEWAY GROUP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

Two new members were elected to the Gateway Executive Committee. A warm welcome to our webmaster, Christie Morganstein, and to Allison Fabrizio. Allison was previously our student representative, and has now returned to Essex County after graduating college. And our thanks to long time executive committee member Caroline Kane who decided not to run for re-election.

## EVENTS

On Saturday, Oct 5 the Gateway Group tabled at the Verona Eco-Fair sponsored by Sustainable Verona, featuring a display of Electric Vehicles.

## CONSERVATION NEWS:

The Gateway Group in association with Our Green West Orange endorsed a slate of three candidates for the Town Council. Two of the three candidates, Joyce Rubin and Joe Krakoviak were elected. Joyce is a long time environmental activist in West Orange, who was instrumental in stopping the proposed amphitheater in South Mountain Reservation adjacent to the Turtle Back Zoo. Key environmental issues in the race include open space preservation, a gas leaf blower ban, and storm water control.

This is the second municipal race that the Gateway Group got involved with this year. While we did not endorse any specific candidate in the Montclair elections in May, our questionnaire provoked great interest and response by all the candidates, and we are working closely with two Council members on a variety of issues, including restarting a township wide jitney service, restoration of DeCamp bus service, and purchasing electric vehicles and charging stations. Under the direction of acting Town Manager Michael LaPolla, the town has authorized the purchase of 2 electric cars for the Parking Authority.

Participating in local elections is a great way to educate candidates about environmental issues in their communities and to forge working relationships with council members after the election. Gateway members who want to endorse local candidates for school board and municipal Council members are advised to begin planning early in the campaign process by developing a list of questions for candidates to answer and to work with Gateway executive committee to obtain official Sierra Club endorsements.

## OUTINGS:

Our Outings Chair, Ron Pate, has scheduled a number of outings for Gateway Group members. These are included in the outings section of this newsletter and in the Gateway Group calendar Gateway Group <https://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/gateway>.

# HUDSON COUNTY GROUP

**Webpage:** [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/hudson-county](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/hudson-county)

**Email:** [hudsonsierraclub@gmail.com](mailto:hudsonsierraclub@gmail.com)

**Facebook:** @HCSierraClub

**Instagram:** @HCSierraClub

**Twitter:** @HCSierraClub

## OFFICERS

<b>Chair</b>	Patricia Hilliard*
<b>Secretary</b>	Rachel Ciekurs*
<b>Conservation Chair</b>	Open Position!
<b>Political Chair</b>	Ricardo Pereira*
<b>Delegate to Chapter</b>	Ricardo Pereira*
<b>Membership</b>	Meera Jaffrey*
<b>Publicity</b>	Open Position!
<b>Outings / Events</b>	Steve Krinsky*
<b>At-Large</b>	Nancy Booth*

(\*ExCom)

**Meeting Schedule:** The Hudson County Group meets four times a year. Contact us at [hudsonsierraclub@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:afswanson@newjersey.sierraclub.org)  
908-721-7014

**Webpage:** [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/loantaka](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/loantaka)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/LoantakaGroupNJSC](http://www.facebook.com/LoantakaGroupNJSC)

## OFFICERS

<b>Group Chair</b>	Allen Swanson
<b>Outings</b>	Kevin O'Brien
<b>Group Webmaster</b>	Gilbert Rohde
<b>Treasurer</b>	Paul Sanderson
<b>Secretary</b>	Jonathan Connor
<b>Fundraiser</b>	Eric Hausker
<b>ExCom Member</b>	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](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/central-jersey) Or find us from the NJ Chapter's website.

## OFFICERS

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

>continued on page 14

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](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/raritan-valley)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/RaritanGroupNJSC](http://www.facebook.com/RaritanGroupNJSC)

**Twitter:** [www.twitter.com/RaritanSierra](http://www.twitter.com/RaritanSierra)

### OFFICERS

<b>Group Chair</b>	S. Pasricha	spjersey@gmail.com
<b>Conservation Chair</b>	Gary Frederick	609-203-3382 garyfrederick@newjersey.sierraclub.org
<b>Membership Chair</b>	John Miraglia	johnworks3@aol.com
<b>Political Co-Chairs</b>	Bernadette Maher	berndanerin@aol.com

<b>Publicity Chair</b>	Open Position!
<b>Treasurer</b>	S. Pasricha
<b>Co-Webmasters</b>	Dennis Colligan, <i>Open Position!</i>
<b>Outings/Events Co-Chairs</b>	John Miraglia, S. Pasricha, Bernadette Maher

<b>Health &amp; Air Quality Issues Coordinator</b>	Linda Powell
<b>Group Executive Committee Members</b>	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](https://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](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](http://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/](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/Jersey-Shore/)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/JerseyShoreNJSC/](http://www.facebook.com/JerseyShoreNJSC/)

**Instagram:** [www.instagram.com/sierraclub\\_jerseyshore/?hl=en](http://www.instagram.com/sierraclub_jerseyshore/?hl=en)

### OFFICERS

<b>Group Chair</b>	Dennis Anderson	732-970-4327 dennisaza@aol.com	6 Maple Ave, Matawan NJ 07747
<b>Vice Chair</b>	Stan Greberis	sgreberis@newjersey.sierraclub.org	
<b>Climate Chair</b>	Steve Miller	732-671-5917 SteveMiller@comcast.net	
<b>Conservation Chair</b>	Stan Greberis	sgreberis@newjersey.sierraclub.org	
<b>Education Chair</b>	George Moffatt	gmoffattgt@aol.com	
<b>Letter-Writing Committee</b>	Steve Miller	732-671-5917 SteveMiller@Comcast.net	
	Stan Greberis	sgreberis@newjersey.sierraclub.org	
<b>Treasurer</b>	Jim Baye	jimbaye@optonline.net	
<b>Political Co-Chairs</b>	Robin and Harold Zullow	zullow@newjersey.sierraclub.org	
<b>Program Chair</b>	Lara Zullow	lara@newjersey.sierraclub.org	
<b>Website Manager</b>	Steve Miller	732-671-5917 SteveMiller@comcast.net	
<b>Social Media Manager</b>	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](mailto: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: **New Jersey's Fungal Biodiversity**

Date: Monday January 27, 2025, 6:30 p.m. at Brookdale Community College

Speaker: Jason Hafstad

Description: New Jersey's fungi are often overlooked when thinking about our rich biodiversity. Come discover why fungi are as deserving of our awareness and protection as plants and animals. Citizen scientists take note: Lecture includes information on how to contribute to fungal conservation in New Jersey.

Bio: Jason Hafstad is a trustee of the NJ Mycological Association, and is the preserve manager and ecologist for the NJ Natural Lands Trust. He is responsible for overseeing more than 100 nature preserves across the state totaling around 30,000 acres. Before this, he was the botanist for the Endangered & Threatened Species Unit of the NJ Department of Environmental Protection, where he reviewed wetland permit applications for impacts to rare plant species. Outside of work he enjoys documenting New Jersey's under-appreciated elements of our natural heritage such as vascular plants, lichens, mushrooms, mosses, liverworts, and slime molds.

Title: **Getting your feet wet in stream monitoring: How you can help keep streams healthy**

Date: Monday February 24, 2025, 6:30 p.m. at Brookdale Community College

Speaker: Davis Bush

Description: Students and residents throughout New Jersey can help keep our streams and rivers healthy, and in turn, the Jersey Shore, through monitoring the water quality of our streams and helping to protect our waterways. Davis will speak about the StreamWatch Schools program as well as give information on why it is important to monitor streams and stream testing procedures, which empowers students, educators and communities to conduct water quality tests on local streams. He will also discuss how, through land conservation, green infrastructure, and the use of native plants, you can help to protect our streams from pollution and stormwater runoff.

Bio: Davis Bush joined The Watershed Institute's education department, and became their StreamWatch Schools coordinator, heading up this new initiative. StreamWatch Schools is a state-wide water quality monitoring program, in which students are empowered, through their classrooms, to contribute water quality data to a central online platform and to download data from other schools and water monitors. He coordinates training of educators, and classroom implementation, and is also involved in the River Friendly program and stormwater management education for the public. Davis studied marine science and sustainability at Stony Brook University and is passionate about empowering young people to fight for social changes they want to see and helping them acquire the tools to do so.

Title: **Climate Change and New Jersey's Wildlife**

Date: Monday March 24, 2025 6:30 PM at Brookdale Community College

Speaker: Marc Rogoff

Description: This program looks at the impacts of climate change and its effects on New Jersey's wildlife and the habitats in which they live. The program will also explore a natural resource important to wildlife and humans: water. We will look at how we can protect water resources, and at best practices for water conservation.

Bio: Marc Rogoff has been an educator throughout his career, engaging the public first as a park ranger at the Upper Delaware River and a planetarium producer & educator at the Hudson River Museum, and then two decades in public teaching and instruction. He served in educational and communications advisory roles for organizations that

>continued on page 15

include the National Wildlife Federation and the Alliance for NJ Environmental Education. Marc joined the NJ DEP in 2000, as an environmental education specialist; he collaborates with schools and teachers to promote environmental and resource educational program development. Marc was recently appointed to the US Environmental Protection Agency's National Environmental Education Advisory Council.

Title: **Birdy Jerz: Birding in the Garden State**

Date: Monday April 28, 2025, 6:30 PM at Brookdale Community College

Speaker: Lindsay McNamara, MA

Description: Learn from an experienced naturalist about great spots across New Jersey for birding, including what you can expect to find, and what makes a location a great area for bird activity. This multimedia presentation will get you excited to look in your neighborhood, local park or backyard for our state's exceptional range of migratory and year-round birds. Lindsay will also draw on her experience supporting bird banding research to share insights into how concerned community members are using science to learn about, monitor, and protect birds.

Bio: Lindsay McNamara has 12-plus years of experience working in conservation, environmental nonprofit communications and development. She holds a BA in environmental studies and an MA in public and organizational relations. Lindsay has been birding since she was 9 years old when she saw her first great blue heron along the Raritan River. Her favorite bird is the one she's looking at. She's been leading bird walks since 2018 and is always looking to engage new birders in her lifelong passion. You can join her on her monthly bird walks through her new LLC Beachy Birder Adventures (@beachybirder).

#### 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

<b>Group Chair</b>	Florence Abrenica	<a href="mailto:florence.abrenica@gmail.com">florence.abrenica@gmail.com</a>
<b>Treasurer and Political Chair</b>	Margaret Mary Piccolo	<a href="mailto:gogreenp1@yahoo.com">gogreenp1@yahoo.com</a>
<b>Environmental Education Coordinator and Outings Chair</b>	Terrance Brown	<a href="mailto:terrybrown@comcast.net">terrybrown@comcast.net</a>

**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. We have been reignited. Come join us! The group is looking to build up its membership and welcomes new volunteers who care about the environment, combatting climate change, and people simply interested in getting outdoors. Interested persons should contact Florence Abrenica: [florence.abrenica@gmail.com](mailto:florence.abrenica@gmail.com)

Ocean County Group meets in the Home Town Dairy Room at the Ocean County Library, 101 Washington St., Toms River, NJ 08753

## WEST JERSEY GROUP

(Camden, Gloucester, and Burlington counties, approximately)

Webpage: [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/west-jersey](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/west-jersey)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/WestJerseyGroupNJSC](https://www.facebook.com/WestJerseyGroupNJSC)

Follow us on **Twitter** @WJSierraclub and **Instagram** @wjsierraclub

Log on and Like Us!

#### OFFICERS

<b>Group Chair</b>	Gina Carola	856-848-8831	<a href="mailto:ginaceee@verizon.net">ginaceee@verizon.net</a>
<b>Vice-Chair</b>	Open Position!		
<b>Secretary</b>	Open Position!		
<b>Treasurer</b>	Trish Clements		<a href="mailto:patri3210@gmail.com">patri3210@gmail.com</a>
<b>Publicity Chair</b>	Anne Caridi		<a href="mailto:annecaridi@yahoo.com">annecaridi@yahoo.com</a>
<b>Political Chair</b>	Open Position!		
<b>Greenways Coords.</b>	Frank and Ellen Zinni		<a href="mailto:efzin4@aol.com">efzin4@aol.com</a>
<b>Conservation Chair</b>	Stacey Ayala		<a href="mailto:thunderwolfgalaxy@yahoo.com">thunderwolfgalaxy@yahoo.com</a>
<b>Pinelands Rep</b>	Eleanor Kelly		<a href="mailto:ekelly0917@gmail.com">ekelly0917@gmail.com</a>
<b>Beyond Plastics Coordinator</b>	Virgil Maderich		<a href="mailto:vann118@comcast.net">vann118@comcast.net</a>
<b>Membership Chair</b>	Open Position!		
<b>Media &amp; Communications</b>	Tony Hagen		<a href="mailto:editor@newjersey.sierraclub.org">editor@newjersey.sierraclub.org</a>

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

Vice Chair, membership chair, political chair, smart growth chair, programs chair, social media coordinators, outings chair, Offshore 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](mailto:annecaridi@yahoo.com), or Gina Carola, [ginaceee@verizon.net](mailto: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](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/south-jersey)

#### OFFICERS

<b>Group, Outings Chair</b>	Tom Boghosian	609-335-6907	<a href="mailto:tfboghosian44@gmail.com">tfboghosian44@gmail.com</a>
<b>Vice-Chair</b>	Open Position!		
<b>Conservation Chair</b>	Open Position!		
<b>Political Chair, Calendars</b>	Dick Colby	609-965-4453	<a href="mailto:dick.colby@stockton.edu">dick.colby@stockton.edu</a>
<b>Membership Chair</b>	Open Position!		
<b>Secretary/Treasurer</b>	Julie Akers	609-432-3280	<a href="mailto:julieakers56@gmail.com">julieakers56@gmail.com</a>
<b>At Large</b>	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](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/sierra-singles)

#### OFFICERS

<b>Interim Co-Chairs</b>	Ron Pate	<a href="mailto:ronpate31@verizon.net">ronpate31@verizon.net</a>
	Jimi Oleksiak	<a href="mailto:The_Hikist@Mac.com">The_Hikist@Mac.com</a>
<b>Executive Committee Members</b>	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](http://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](mailto:Diascat@hotmail.com) or Wanda Ashbrook [pridegrlnj@aim.com](mailto:pridegrlnj@aim.com)

Webpage: [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/LGBT/](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/LGBT/)

Meetup: [www.meetup.com/njsierraclub](https://www.meetup.com/njsierraclub)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/njsierralgbt](https://www.facebook.com/njsierralgbt)

#### OFFICERS

<b>Co-Chair</b>	Diane Scarangella	<a href="mailto:diascat@hotmail.com">diascat@hotmail.com</a>
<b>Co-Chair and Outings Chair</b>	Wanda Ashbrook	<a href="mailto:pridegrlnj@aim.com">pridegrlnj@aim.com</a>
<b>Secretary</b>	Open Position!	
<b>Treasurer</b>	Open Position!	
<b>Webmaster/List Master</b>	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](mailto: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](mailto:secretary@newjersey.sierraclub.org)

**Upcoming Meetings:**  
**Jan. 11, virtual; Feb. 8; March 8; April 12**



**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

**Chapter Chair and Group Effectiveness Chair**  
 Rich Isaac (973) 716-0297  
[richard.isaac@sierraclub.org](mailto:richard.isaac@sierraclub.org)

**Chapter Vice-Chair and Council of Club Leaders Delegate**  
 Joe Testa • [vice.chair@newjersey.sierraclub.org](mailto:vice.chair@newjersey.sierraclub.org)

**Conservation Chair**  
 Greg Gorman • [ggorman07419@embarqmail.com](mailto:ggorman07419@embarqmail.com)

**Conservation Vice-Chair**  
 Gina Carola (856) 848-8831  
[ginaceee@verizon.net](mailto:ginaceee@verizon.net)

**Political Committee Chair**  
 Ricardo Pereira  
[political.chair@newjersey.sierraclub.org](mailto:political.chair@newjersey.sierraclub.org)

**Parliamentarian and Council (CCL) Delegate**  
 Joe Testa  
[CCLDelegate@newjersey.sierraclub.org](mailto:CCLDelegate@newjersey.sierraclub.org)

**Secretary**  
 Jim Andreano • [Jimandreano@gmail.com](mailto:Jimandreano@gmail.com)

**Treasurer**  
 Paul Sanderson (908) 233-2414  
[Treasurer@newjersey.sierraclub.org](mailto:Treasurer@newjersey.sierraclub.org)

**Vice Treasurer**  
 Sunil Somalwar • [sunil.somalwar@gmail.com](mailto:sunil.somalwar@gmail.com)

**Membership Chair**  
 Seth Kantor • [membership@newjersey.sierraclub.org](mailto:membership@newjersey.sierraclub.org)

**Outings Chair**  
 Leona Fluck (609) 259-3734  
[pinepaddlers@gmail.com](mailto:pinepaddlers@gmail.com)

**Newsletter Editor**  
 Tony Hagen (609) 499-8678  
[editor@newjersey.sierraclub.org](mailto:editor@newjersey.sierraclub.org)

**Webmaster**  
 Dennis Colligan  
[webmaster@newjersey.sierraclub.org](mailto:webmaster@newjersey.sierraclub.org)

**Video Producer**  
 Heather Semler • [heathermakesithappen@gmail.com](mailto:heathermakesithappen@gmail.com)

**Advisors and Liaisons**

**Inspiring Connections Outdoors Chair (ICO)**  
 Oscar Nazar • [ICOChair@newjersey.sierraclub.org](mailto:ICOChair@newjersey.sierraclub.org)

**Compliance Officer**  
 Bill Singer, Esq. (908) 359-7873  
[wsinger@singerfedun.com](mailto:wsinger@singerfedun.com)

**Legal Advisor**  
 Chris Hitchcock • [chitchcock650@gmail.com](mailto:chitchcock650@gmail.com)

**Transportation Outreach Coordinator**  
 Jordan Rosenbloom • [rosenbloomjordan@gmail.com](mailto:rosenbloomjordan@gmail.com)

**Regional Issues Liaison**  
 Joan Denzer • [JDenzer73@yahoo.com](mailto:JDenzer73@yahoo.com)

**Committees**

**Building and Electrification Committee**  
 Steve Miller, Co-Chair • [stevemiller@comcast.net](mailto:stevemiller@comcast.net)  
 Pat Miller, Co-Chair • [patmiller@comcast.net](mailto:patmiller@comcast.net)

**Communications Committee**  
 Seth Kantor, Chair • [membership@newjersey.sierraclub.org](mailto:membership@newjersey.sierraclub.org)

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