



**SIERRA CLUB**  
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# Hudson/Mohawk Group



April 2003 Vol. 27 No. 4

*"Aspens" by Ansel Adams in This is the American Earth*

## Upcoming Events

### Sierra Club Social

**Wednesday, April 16, 7:30**  
**Malt River Brewing Co.**

Interested in getting involved with our local Sierra Club Group and making new friends? If so, join us for some light hearted discussions about who we are and how we work. For information contact John Nemjo at 279-4777. Malt River Brewing Company is just off the Northway and Route 9 at the Latham Circle Mall.

### Adirondack Update

**Thursday, April 17, 2003**  
**Colonie Community Center**  
**1653 Central Avenue**  
**(West of Northway entrance)**

The April Member Meeting will focus on Adirondack issues. Snowmobile/ATV use, clean air, and land acquisition top the list of 'hot topics' that will affect the future of this great area. We're very fortunate to have presenters who are experts in all these topics:

Dave Gibson, Executive Director, Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks.

Neil Woodworth, Counsel and Deputy Executive Director, Adirondack Mountain Club.

Pete Bauer, Executive Director, Residents Committee to Protect the Adirondacks.

For information, contact Roger Gray (434-8681) (rtg50@aol.com).

## Adirondack Update

by Roger Gray

Three major issues currently threaten our beloved Adirondacks. The April Member Meeting (details in box) will focus on the details of these issues.

**Snowmobile/ATV Use:** The State Department of Environmental Conservation has spoken for several years about developing a comprehensive snowmobile trail system for the Adirondacks. They now appear ready to begin the actual development of such a plan. As snowmobiles get bigger and faster, the strictures of the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan, which require that snowmobile trails be comparable in size to hiking trails, butt up against the snowmobile community's desire to have straighter, wider, 'hardened' trails to accommodate higher speeds and two way traffic. ATV use in the warm months tends to follow the snowmobile trails, but ATVers also tend to 'off-road' even from the snowmobile trails, and this can lead to tremendous adverse impacts on streambeds and other sensitive wild areas. It will be the task of everyone concerned with the quality of the wild areas in the Park to work to ensure that the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan is not weakened as the State snowmobile plan evolves.

**Clean Air:** Acid rain is the invisible scourge of the Adirondacks. Blown in on the prevailing winds from midwestern power plant emissions, it is known to acidify lakes and waterways, killing aquatic and plant life, rendering many lakes and ponds that once teemed with fish practically sterile. Acid rain is also suspected of having more subtle and insidious effects - altering soil chemistry and microscopic life in the soils which ultimately weakens the entire forest, making large tracts susceptible to blight. The acid rain, of course, also comes in the form of acid snow threatening high altitude growth on mountaintops where the snowpack is deepest. To add to the murky brew, incredible as it seems, the Whiteface Mountain weather station has recorded 'ozone non-attainment days' - days which, if they were recorded in urban areas, would result in mandatory health advisories. And we thought we hiked up there for the fresh air!

**Land Acquisition/Sustainable Forestry:** The population burgeons, the percentage of people engaging in outdoor recreation increases, and former timber companies want to sell off their holdings. Sounds like a perfect world, right? Just get the State to buy up the timber company holdings and there will be more wildland for all those outdoor enthusiasts. Not so fast. In these days of fiscal austerity, how much land will the State actually be able to buy? Will the land be snapped up by developers who will sell off all the waterfront and other prime parcels and leave the dregs to the State? What's going to happen to the two parcels of nearly 100,000 acres each in the northwestern and northeastern Adirondacks which just came on the market? What about forestry, does it still have a place in open space protection in the park? Can logging actually be conducted in a sustainable way? Join us on April 17th.

*"When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe."*

- John Muir, 1911

## Hudson-Mohawk Group

Chair	Pete Sheehan, 489-5803 psheeha5@nycap.rr.com
Vice-Chair	Susan Lawrence, 489-5721 shlawr2@aol.com
Treasurer/ Membership	Clarence Gregory, 393-7100 clarence.gregory@alum.mit.edu
Secretary	Maureen Ferraro-Davis, 235-0728 maureenfd@aol.com
Conservation Chair	Roger Gray, 434-8681 rtg50@aol.com
Environmental Justice	Aaron Mair, 465-8523 aaronmair@ahcj.org
Newsletter	Janet Given 346-5439 jgiven@nycap.rr.com
Outings	Bill Koebbeman, 399-5027 WKEBB@juno.com
Political Chair	Jim Malatras, 459-6952 greek45@yahoo.com
Fundraising/ Programs/ Social Chair/ Volunteers	John Nemjo, 279-4777 Johnnemjo@aol.com

## Issue Gurus

Hudson River	Aaron Mair, 465-8523 aaronmair@ahcj.org
Cascade Lakes	Roger Gray, 434-8681 rtg50@aol.com
Solid Waste/ Recycling	Clarence Gregory, 393-7100 clarence.gregory@alum.mit.edu
Energy	Jim Malatras, 459-6952 greek45@yahoo.com
Pesticides/ Clean Water	John Van Deloo, 370-4932 JVDMD@aol.com
Clean Air	Susan Lawrence, 489-5721 shlawr2@aol.com
ANWR/ World Trade	Paul Caver, 686-7290 paulscaver@aol.com

The Hudson-Mohawk Group Executive Committee meets the first Monday evening of every month (except July). Members are encouraged to attend! Please call Pete Sheehan to confirm.

This newsletter is published 5-6 times per year (or more) by the Hudson-Mohawk Group of the Sierra Club's Atlantic Chapter. Submit all letters to the editor to: Hudson-Mohawk Group, Capitol Station, Box 7194, Albany, NY 12224. Include your name and phone number. We reserve the right to edit and keep all articles. Views expressed by the contributors may or may not be those of the Sierra Club or the Hudson-Mohawk Group. The subscription rate is \$5/5 issues; subscriptions for members are free. Contact John Nemjo for advertising rates.

## Outings

### April 12, Saturday: Family Outing at Emma Treadwell Thacher State Park -

Learn about the fascinating life cycle and habitat needs of amphibians! Salamanders and wood frogs may be seen during this time of their spring migration. We'll start with a presentation at the new Emma Treadwell Thacher Nature Center, followed by a walk led by a naturalist from the Center. Joint outing with AMC. Contact Lorraine Plauth (765-4937) or Bill Koebbeman (399-5027) for details.

### April 27, Sunday, 10AM: Rensselaer County Waterfalls -

We will travel by car and foot to visit very scenic waterfalls at three locations in Rensselaer, East Greenbush and Schodack where streams drop to the Hudson River floodplain. We will study the botany, geology, and history associated with the waterfalls at a time of year when they are most spectacular. These waterfalls are also located at important early mill sites and one is associated with a fascinating chapter in Mohican history. The hiking will total 4 miles and will involve some short ascents and descents. Joint outing with the Rensselaer-Taconic Land Conservancy. The outing will be limited to 30 persons, by reservation only. Contact leader: Warren Broderick (518) 235-4041.

### May 3, Saturday: Cascade Lakes Stewardship Project

Twice each year, in the Spring and Fall, we try to give a little back by conducting a clean-up of the shores of our adopted lakes, The Upper and Lower Cascades, along Route 73 in the Town of Keene. The day will continue with a picnic lunch and an afternoon hike. This event is a great time for the whole family in one of the most scenic spots in the Adirondacks.



Last spring we were joined by a group of Girl Scouts who helped lighten the clean up chore. If you would like to join us this year, contact Roger Gray (434-8681) or Ralph and Doreen May (346-2818) for details.

### May 4, Sunday: Hoosic River Canoe Trip

We will canoe the scenic Hoosic River for 7 miles between Hoosic Falls and Buskirk. This will involve mostly Class I water (one short rapid is Class II at high water levels only.) The landscape is very attractive. We will put in at the new launch site at the Hoosic Falls Hydro plant and take out at the historic Buskirk covered bridge. This is a joint outing with the Mohawk-Hudson Chapter, AMC. For details contact leader Warren Broderick (235-4041) or co-leader Bill Koebbeman (399-5027).

### May 18, Sunday: Batten Kill Canoe Triip

We will canoe the scenic Batten Kill for 9 miles between Route 22 and Center Falls. We may canoe an additional 5 miles upstream depending on the water level. This will involve entirely Class I water. The landscape is pastoral, passing between a series of large forested islands, and this stretch of the river is not often canoed. Great horned owl, osprey and great blue heron are seen in this stretch of river. This is a joint outing with the Mohawk-Hudson Chapter, AMC. For details contact leader Warren Broderick (235-4041) or co-leader Lorraine Plauth (765-4937).

### May 31, Saturday: Joralemon Park, Coeymans

A botanical walk, flat, easy walking. Focus is on the spring wildflowers and ferns of this rich, sugar maple dominated forest. Call Ted for details at 452-5526.

**An 'Assumption of Risk and Release of Liability' sheet will be signed by outing members prior to all outings.**

## Notes From The Chair

A recent article from the Times Union discussed the development plans in the Town of Colonie which included more than 1200 units of housing on the horizon. It discussed how the looming Sematech development is anticipated to create additional demand for housing. The secretary of the Birchwood Neighborhood Association lamented the town's lack of a comprehensive master plan to control the haphazard development patterns. What this leads to, of course, which is clearly evident in parts of Colonie, are clover patch housing developments that dump out to non-pedestrian friendly highways, including Route 155. Consequently, many parts of Colonie are so auto dependent that walkers are seldom seen. For those of you living in Latham, for example, think about how many people you see walking to and from the post office on Route 155 - virtually none. As some of you may recall, we discussed this situation at our conference on sprawl last March.

A comment by Supervisor Mary Brizzell concerning the need to plan for incoming Tech Valley workers was a sad indication of where the Town is: "I don't know what we can get ready for, it sounds like developers are doing it for

us." This has been the story of Colonie planning for the better part of 25 years, and certainly the Town is not to blame for all of it. There has been a decided lack of leadership from the State and a lack of regional vision to help the towns and villages put some effective land use controls in place to target development which protects natural resources and permits growth in locations which can accommodate it. We are trying to work with both Houses of the State legislature and the business community to begin to craft some of these controls. If you are interested in helping please let us know.

Supervisor Brizzell stated that the Town is looking to fill a vacancy on the Planning Board. I am going to recommend that she consider filling it with a member of the Sierra Club - someone who has the time and energy to devote to the position. If you are a resident of the Town, have just some basic knowledge of the Town's land use and geography, and think you might be interested, please give me a call. Let's see if we can take this opportunity to land a person on the Planning Board who would bring a fresh approach to proactive planning, with protection of the Town's vast natural resources as it's guiding mark.

-Pete Sheehan

## Stan Pettibone

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- Tom Blandy  
H-M Sierra Member

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## Saratoga Sprawl

The biggest project ever to hit Saratoga County has been proposed by the Saratoga Economic Development Corporation. While located in the Town of Malta, 20 miles north of Albany, this is a project that should be of concern to all in the Capital District who want smart growth and sustainable development in our area.

The project is called the Luther Forest Technology Camous, which is a friendly sounding name for a semiconductor chip plant (the same kind of factory that was rejected by the Town of North Greenbush). To give you an idea of the size of this monster, it will clear 1350 acres in Luther Forest, require a new exit on the Northway, use 116 different kinds of chemicals in its manufacturing process, and need two to ten million gallons of water per day. The water will be supplied by a new 36 inch diameter waterline from the Hudson. This new water line may be one of the drivers behind the whole project as it will open up new green areas to development. The comment period for the Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement ended March 24th, but there will be a chance to comment on the final EIS when it comes out. If you are concerned call Dave Meager, Malta's supervisor at 899-3434 and get on their mailing list. For more information, call Bill Koebberman at 399-5027.

## Help Wanted:

*Publicity Chair*

Help us get the word out. Send press releases from home about the Sierra Club Programs, etc. Work with radio and TV stations. We provide the info, you organize it and get it out on time. Work from home and attend one meeting per month.

Call John Nemjo at 279-4777  
(johnnemjo@aol.com)

# Key Legislation and Regulations on Conservation Issues

by Susan Lawrence

## State Legislation to Enhance Environmental Review of New Power Plants -

Assemblyman Tonko, Chair of the State Assembly Energy Committee, has introduced legislation (A.6248) to extend Article X of the Public Service Law to 2008, providing for greatly improved mechanisms for State review and approval of major new electrical generating plants. This bill requires that:

- There be enhanced identification and review of the cumulative effects of the power plant projects on the local environment and public health, including impacts from emissions of mercury and other Federal criteria pollutants and fine particulate matter.

- Plants not exceed State and Federal standards for air and water pollution.

- The threshold for plant review drop from 80 to 30 megawatts.

- The plant is consistent with the State's Energy Plan and best sited to supply power where needed.

- The plant applicant contribute more Intervenor Funds to enable localities and other local interested parties, including environmental groups, to hire consultants and attorneys for review and possible litigation of a plant's preliminary and final applications.

Please write your legislator to support passage of this bill that provides these environmental protections and more sought by a consortium of environmental groups, including the Sierra Club.

# Federal Regulations to Weaken the Clean Water Act

by Susan Lawrence

In our Group's last newsletter, John VanDeloo wrote an article explaining the proposed U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Army Corps of Engineers rules that would weaken the U.S. Clean Water Act by exempting as much as 20% of the nation's waters and wetlands from protection under the Act. You still have until April 15th to contact the EPA to let them know you are against this proposed rule. See the national Sierra Club's website (SierraClub.org) and search under Clean Water for more information. Draft letters to send to EPA and to your local newspapers.

# How About An Earth Day Resolution

Earth Day is April 22nd. Many of us make New Year's resolutions - some of us even keep them. What if each of us made an Earth Day resolution to do something to improve our environment in the coming earth year? Start small but stretch yourself a little. If you have never taken action on an issue, write a letter or make a phone call. Go with me to the Earth Day Lobby Day April 28th. Join one of our committees. If you are a member of a committee, take a leadership role. We have lots of volunteer opportunities, try one out. The cumulative result of all our individual actions does make a difference. You will be amazed at how good it will feel. Make that resolution and then, just do it.

Contact Bill Koebeman for Earth Day Lobby Day at 399-5027

# Mark Your Calendar -

ExCom (Executive Committee) meeting Monday April 7, 2003. All members are welcome. Contact Pete Sheehan (psheeha5@nycap.rr.com)(489-5803) for place and time.

Conservation Committee Meeting Wednesday, April 23, 2003, 7 - 9 p.m.

St. Paul's Episcopal Church  
21 Hacket Blvd., Albany

If you would like to attend, please contact either:

John VanDeloo (jvdmd@aol.com)

Susan Lawrence

(shlawr2@aol.com)

Roger Gray (rtg50@aol.com)

"Every good thing, great and small, needs defense." — John Muir

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Contributions, gifts and dues to the Sierra Club are not tax deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to Sierra magazine and \$1.00 for your Chapter newsletter.



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Send ad copy and payment to:  
Sierra Club Classifieds  
c/o John Nemjo  
3695 Rt. 2  
Cropseyville, NY 12052

## Volunteers

*We Need You!*

Whether you have only a couple hours each month or have an interest in getting into the nitty gritty of some of our most pressing conservation issues, we need you.

Our success depends on active volunteers. Many of the jobs do not require any experience other than the willingness to spend a small amount of your free time to help us get our business in order. You'll find a congenial group of like-minded people who care deeply about protecting the environment in which we live. Read the job descriptions to find your niche.

With more active members our voice becomes stronger and the environment comes out ahead.

## Help Wanted

*Newsletter Party Volunteers and Leader -*

This job requires nothing more than 2 - 3 hours one day per month to label and sort our newsletter for mailing. We would like a leader and several volunteers (5 - 6) to take over this task so that our volunteers working on the conservation issues can devote more time to the issues. The meeting is usually the last week of the month. Simple organizational skills needed, lots of time to talk!

*Fundraising Chair -*

We need someone to sell ads for our newsletter, organize calendar drives, and other fundraising activities. Work from home and attend one meeting per month.

*Programs Chair -*

We need someone to plan and conduct our monthly issues programs. You don't have to come up with a program each month, just organize it.

Call John Nemjo @ 279-4777

[Johnnemjo@aol.com](mailto:Johnnemjo@aol.com)

## Wanted

*Office Space*

Our local group needs an office to conduct board meetings (no more than 15 people), store campaign and educational materials, and house a local phone, computer, and other office machines and supplies. If you have some space available in the Albany area and are willing to donate or help our local group in its fight to protect our environment, then please call John Nemjo at 279-4777.


## Sierra Club E-Newsletter

In the months when this newsletter is not published, we are going to begin sending out a smaller version electronically. To sign up to receive the electronic newsletter, as well as reminders of upcoming events, send your email address to Pete Sheehan at [psheeha5@nycap.rr.com](mailto:psheeha5@nycap.rr.com).

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## RENT THIS SPACE

Interested in advertising your business with the Sierra Club? We have over 3,300 members in our local area and many of them are interested in what you have to offer. Make a difference on local issues and at the same time write it off as an advertising expense. Place your advertisement here to show your support, and in turn our members will support you. Rates are reasonable, and there are discounts for long-term advertising. For more information contact John Nemjo at 279-4777.

## Weekly Activities Begin in May

\* May through September: Sunday Morning Bike Rides in Voorheesville/Helderburg Area. Start about 7:15 am, usually finished by 9 am. Mostly flat and very scenic. A great way to start the day. Call leader Steve Redler (434-1540).

\* Spring through Fall: The Saratoga Saunter - An easy weekday morning walk. We will visit a variety of natural areas in Saratoga County with the objectives of better understanding of our bioregion and make some new friends in the process. Call Bill Koebbeman(399-5027) for more information.

\* Beginning in May: Weekly walks open to the public led by the staff of the Emma Treadwell Nature Center. Call the Center at 872-0800 for more details.

## Help Wanted:

*Environmental Education Chair* - Attend events that allow for the Sierra Club to have a booth and dispense literature, and sign up new members. 1 - 2 events per month and one meeting is all you have to commit to.

*Conservation Activists* - Have an issue you would like to work on? Attend our monthly Conservation Committee Meetings and get involved. One meeting a month and some leg work in between to keep up on how Sierra can get involved and make a difference.

*Political Activists* - Work on the Sierra Club endorsement process. Interview candidates, work on campaigns, have a direct voice with our elected leaders. It's fun and addicting! You may even one day run for office yourself. I did!

*Assistant Membership Chair* - Help organize members database and take newsletters to the post office. Work from home, attend 1-2 meetings per month. John Nemjo 279-4777

### Law Offices of Peter Henner

P.O. Box 326, Clarksville, NY 12041  
Tel (518) 768-8232 | Fax (518) 768-8235  
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- Building bridges with labor unions
- Fighting against deregulation of electricity

## Bits and Pieces

There is a wealth of reading material about the very substantial negative environmental, visual, noise, economic, and other aspects of the St. Lawrence Cement Project. See the following web sites:

'[FriendsOfHudson.com](http://FriendsOfHudson.com)' and '[scenicHUDSON.org/environment/sctp/campaign.htm](http://scenicHUDSON.org/environment/sctp/campaign.htm)'. Also, the 2002 book "*Proposed St. Lawrence Cement Plant in Greenport and Hudson*" (publisher Citizens for a Healthy Environment) is a useful resource and can be found in local bookstores and libraries. Also, see the article on the project in the Fall 2002 *Sierra Atlantic*. If you would like to join with other Sierra Club members fighting this project, contact Joyce Hearst at 518-329-1133 or via e-mail at '[Gme1@earthlink.net](mailto:Gme1@earthlink.net)'.

## Arctic Refuge

A huge victory was won when the U.S. Senate voted 52 - 48 to block oil development in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. The pro-environment vote was all the more remarkable coming on the eve of war, with every Senator under enormous pressure to approve this centerpiece of President Bush's energy plan. For months, the case has been made that drilling the Arctic is the slowest, most expensive, and most destructive way to ensure America's energy security. In the end, eight Republicans joined most Democrats and stood in defense of America's most spectacular birthing ground for Arctic wildlife. Don't give up the fight.

*"Keep close to nature's heart...and break clear away, once in awhile, and climb a mountain or spend a week in the woods. Wash your spirit clean."*

*\_ John Muir*



Hudson-Mohawk Group Newsletter  
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*Weekly Activities Begin  
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