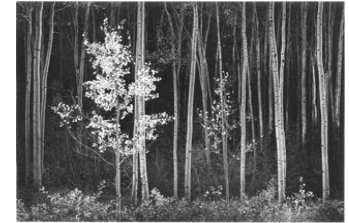




# Hudson Mohawk Group January/February 2007



Hudson/Mohawk Group January/February 2007 Vol. 31 No. 1

## Environmental Programs Continue!

### CONSERVING ENERGY IN YOUR HOME

Tuesday, January 23, (2007)

Two experienced energy conservation professionals will educate us as home owners or renters on how we can conserve energy and save dollars too. These professionals perform initial home energy audits and provide complete plans including strategic sealing and whole house "envelope" services. Pete Collison, an energy and efficiency expert from Affordable Energy, will discuss home energy audits, insulation techniques and strategic sealing and whole house "envelope" services. Mike Stangl from Renewable Power Systems will discuss net-zero energy homes and what it can mean to the average homeowner. Institute some of these recommendations yourself or, depending on the complexity, use the services of a professional.

### CARBON NEUTRAL TREKKING IN THE ALPS & WIND ENERGY FOR TODAY

Tuesday, February 27 (2007)

Linda Burtis of Community Energy will update us on the wind technology industry in New York State and how one can purchase renewable energy for your home, workplace, or other institution in your community. Linda will show a power point presentation on her summer trekking adventures with her husband Dave in the Swiss and Italian Alps. She will illustrate the impact of global warming on receding glaciers and lack of snow.

These two Environmental Programs begin at 7 pm (doors open at 6:30 pm) at the Colonie (William Sanford) Town Library, 629 Albany-Shaker Road (1/2 mile east of Northway Exit 4).

## SAVING ENERGY=SAVING THE ENVIRONMENT =SAVING MONEY

By John VanDe Loo

A recent article in the Schenectady Gazette illustrates clearly how we can save energy, the environment and money by following the conservation recommendations of the Cool Cities program and other simple recommendations at home, in our schools and universities and other public buildings. Many have stated that conservation is too expensive, but that is an idea put forth by people looking for a quick profit

The article details a deal between the City of Schenectady and Siemens Building Technologies to replace outdated city technology with energy-efficient devices. Siemens loaned the City the money to pay for the technology updates, to be paid back over 15 years, and predicted that Schenectady would save so much that it would be able to pay for the new equipment and still be able to save money. The savings from these energy saving technologies will soon approach \$200,000 according to Mayor Stratton and is expected to rise even more now that the six-month installation project has been finished. This included replacing the City Hall boiler and air handling motors and, installing automated energy management systems and light emitting diodes (LED's) in nearly every traffic light throughout the city. "We are realizing the savings we projected" said the Mayor. It's proving very productive for the taxpayers." Even the City Hall Christmas lights have been replaced with LED's which will save the City \$100 this month

And the city has begun to look at Phase Two that calls for placing oil-burning heaters with newer models that are powered by natural gas. Other projects can be included, such as, installing idle reduction devices that could reduce energy burning to one-eighth of present use while idling.

Conservation can take many forms, some complex and expensive, many simple and inexpensive. Over time,

## Hudson-Mohawk Group

<b>Chair:</b>	<b>*Susan Lawrence, 489-5721, SHLawr2@aol.com</b>
<b>Conservation Chair:</b>	<b>*John VanDeloo, 370-4932, JVDMD@aol.com</b>
<b>Environmental Justice:</b>	<b>*Aaron Mair, 465-8523, aaronmair@yahoo.com</b>
<b>Fundraising :</b>	<b>*John VanDeLoo</b>
<b>Fundraising :</b>	<b>*Pete Sheehan, 489-5803, Psheehan74@netscape.net</b>
<b>Membership Vice-Chair:</b>	<b>*John VanDeloo</b>
<b>Newsletter:</b>	<b>Michael Divak, divakm@strose.edu</b>
<b>Newsletter Distribution</b>	<b>*Susan Lawrence</b>
<b>Outings Chair:</b>	<b>*Joe Gardner, 439-8719, jgardnr@nycap.rr.com</b>
<b>Political Chair:</b>	<b>Steve Redler 434-1540, steveredler@yahoo.com</b>
<b>Programs:</b>	<b>*Susan Lawrence</b>
<b>Secretary :</b>	<b>*Paul Caver: 753-4205 PaulCaver@usadatanet.net</b>
<b>Social Chair:</b>	<b>John Nemjo, 279-0771, Johnnemjo@aol.com</b>
<b>Tabling:</b>	<b>*Virginia Traver 489-5758 Virginib28@hotmail.com</b>
<b>Treasurer:</b>	<b>Jim Dufresne: 233-7957, Jdufre1928@aol.com</b>
<b>Volunteers:</b>	<b>*Susan Lawrence</b>
<b>Webmaster:</b>	<b>Tom Reynolds, hm-webmaster@newyork.sierraclub.org</b>

### Issue Gurus

<b>Cascade Lakes/Adirondacks</b>	<b>*Roger Gray, 434-8681, RTG50@aol.com</b>
<b>Clean Air Chair:</b>	<b>*Susan Lawrence</b>
<b>Energy:</b>	<b>*Pete Sheehan</b>
<b>Hudson River:</b>	<b>*John VanDeloo</b>
<b>Hudson River:</b>	<b>*Pete Sheehan</b>
<b>Pesticides/Clean Water:</b>	<b>*John VanDeloo</b>
<b>Sprawl/Smart Growth:</b>	<b>*Susan Lawrence</b>
<b>Sprawl/Smart Growth:</b>	<b>*John VanDeloo</b>
<b>Sprawl/Smart Growth: *</b>	<b>Aaron Mair</b>
<b>*Executive Committee Members</b>	

The Hudson-Mohawk Executive Committee Members meet the first Wednesday of every Month. Members are encouraged to attend! Please call Susan Lawrence to confirm. This newsletter is published 6 times per year (or more) by the Hudson-Mohawk Group of the Sierra Club's Atlantic Chapter. Submit all letters, including name and phone number, to The Editor, Hudson-Mohawk Group, PO Box 8447, Albany, NY 11208-8447. We reserve the right to edit and keep all articles. Views expressed by contributors may or may not be those of the Sierra Club or the Hudson-Mohawk Group. The subscription rate is \$6/6 issues; subscriptions for members are free. This newsletter is also published on our Group website at: [www.newyork.sierraclub.org/hudsonmohawk](http://www.newyork.sierraclub.org/hudsonmohawk)

## Saving (continued from page 1)

almost all efforts to save energy will save money. But the reduction in energy use also means a reduction in burning of fossil fuels and the production of greenhouse gases.

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The Sierra Club "*Cool Cities Campaign: Solving Global Warming One City at a Time: Activist Toolkit*", April 2006 can be downloaded from [www.sierraclub.org/coolcities](http://www.sierraclub.org/coolcities). This 35-page handbook is an excellent guide with detailed step-by-step instructions on how to develop and implement effective campaigns for cities to take a wide range of specific actions to reduce global warming and thereby meet or exceed Kyoto Treaty Protocol targets. The Sierra Club has emphasized that its members need to reach out to others in the community to work together to achieve these goals. If you are interested in working on Cool Cities campaigns in your city, town, school district, county or other local organization, please contact Pete Sheehan and Susan Lawrence (see the contact information on page two of this newsletter)

For college students, there is also a Sierra Club "Campus Climate Challenge Campaign Planning Guide", developed by the Sierra Club Student Coalition & the Energy Action Coalition, and available on [www.ssc.org](http://www.ssc.org). Also go to: [www.sierraclub.org/globalwarming/cleanenergy](http://www.sierraclub.org/globalwarming/cleanenergy) for specifics on the many actions that can be taken to reduce energy use and global warming.

**Awards Dinner Recap - John Van De Loo wins Distinguished Service Award**: It is with great honor that the Sierra Club bestowed its highest honor for service to Dr. John Van De Loo at our annual awards dinner on December 7, 2006 at New Visions in Slingerlands. John has been a tireless advocate and leader for the environment in his community of Schenectady. This includes his fight to protect the Great Flats Aquifer from unrelenting development.

John leads by example and inspires others by doing so. He led the first ever "bio-blitz" in the Woodlawn Preserve this summer and has elevated it such that the NYSDEC is considering adding it to the protected Pine Bush Preserve to which it is ecologically connected.

Ever the watchdog, John has shined the spotlight and put considerable heat on some elected officials on recent unwise developments in the town of Rotterdam which threaten the Great Flats Aquifer.

## OUTINGS

(Key: H=Hiking, E=Education, C= Conservation, T=Trail Work)

**Sunday, December 24, Balsam Mt. Loop** (Sierra Club & Catskill 3500) A moderately paced trail hike. Heavy precipitation cancels. Distance: 5 mi. Ascent: 1600' Elev.: 3600'. Meeting Place/Time: Email (preferred) or call leaders to register from Nov. 6 - 10. Leaders: David and Carol White, #859 and 860; [ccswhite@juno.com](mailto:ccswhite@juno.com); 315-853-6942 (H)

**Saturday, December 30, Save The Pine Bush Winter Event** (Sierra Club & STPB) Skate Outing or Hike. Meet at 9:30 AM at SUNYA Bus Stop - Collins Circle 1400 Washington Ave., Albany. Leader - Claire Nolan. Celebrate some of the Winter Holiday time out of doors by joining Claire in a walk to her favorite ice skating place in the Pine Bush. Bring skates and skis if lots of snow or just skates if cold enough and no snow. For more information call John Wolcott 465-8930 [beverwyck1@earthlink.net](mailto:beverwyck1@earthlink.net) (H)

**ADK Winter Mountaineering School** - Want to learn new winter skills? Looking to expand your winter fun? ADK Winter Mountaineering School has been helping hikers for over 50 snow- and ice-filled years. **Weekend day hiking section:** Jan. 5-8, Cost: \$295. **Weekend backpacking section:** Jan. 5-8, Cost: \$250. **Combo section (day hikes/3 night backpack):** Jan. 5-11, Cost: \$350. For more information: <http://www.winterschool.org> or (518-523-3441)

**Saturday, January 13, Empire Orienteering Club SKI-O** (Sierra Club & EMPO) Norray Farm, Berne/Knox, NY - ESG Qualifier - Registration and Starts: 10 AM - Noon. A fee is charged. Meet Director: Phil Hawkes-Teeter, 518-872-1993, [philht@nycap.rr.com](mailto:philht@nycap.rr.com)

**Thursday, January 18, Bartholomew's Cobble (C)** (Sierra Club & ADK) A beautiful and easy snowshoe along the Housatonic and up to Hurlburt's Hill at Bartholomew's Cobble, a protected reservation in Sheffield, Mass. About 5 miles and 350 feet of elevation gain. We'll be back before the kids get home from school. Meet 8:30 a.m., Defreestville 4 & 43 park and ride. Leader: Virginia Boyle Traver, 489-5758, [virginiaabt28@hotmail.com](mailto:virginiaabt28@hotmail.com)

**Saturday and Sunday, January 27 - 28, SOLO Wilderness First Aid at RPI** Wilderness First Aid is a valuable resource on any hike away from cars. Outings Leaders are encouraged to take the course but anyone can benefit from having RPI conveniently nearby. The SOLO course on the RPI campus is \$120 with a \$50 Sierra scholarship on completion. 10% discount for three or more Sierra members. To Sign-up: Email [davisj@rpi.edu](mailto:davisj@rpi.edu) and mail a check to:

Jonathan Davis, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, 1999 Burdett Avenue, 219 North Hall Troy, NY 12180 Checks can be made out to "RPI Union - Outing". He will hold spots for a week from the time you contact him to give time for the money to arrive.

**Saturday, January 27, Ski Partridge Run** (Sierra Club, ADK &

**Saturday, January 27, Ski Partridge Wildlife Management Area** (Sierra Club, ADK & ECOS) This area, located in western Albany County at an elevation of 2,000 feet enhances the chances of finding good snow cover. Terrain is gently rolling. Depending on conditions, this will be a trip of two to three hours duration once we arrive at the destination. David Geisinger 887-3030 [geisingerd@aol.com](mailto:geisingerd@aol.com) (H)

**Saturday, January 27, John Boyd Thacher State Park, Hop Field** (Sierra Club, MVHC & AMC) Enjoy a Winter snowshoe with a warming room 9 AM to Noon at Hop Field. J. Gardner 518-439-8719 [jgardnr@nycap.rr.com](mailto:jgardnr@nycap.rr.com) (H)

**Sunday, January 28, Leader's Choice XC Ski (B)** (Sierra Club & ADK) We will go wherever there is good snow--moderate backcountry terrain in the Adirondacks, southern Vermont or somewhere else. Expect to ski 8-12 miles and be out for four to six hours. If you would like, I can email you a copy of my backcountry ski to-do list. Leader: Rich Macha, 346-3180w or [apnp@prodigy.net](mailto:apnp@prodigy.net).

**Saturday, February 10, Tongue Mountain Northern Traverse (B)** (Sierra Club & ADK) We will spot cars and hike/snowshoe the northern portion of the Tongue Mountain Range starting from the Clay Meadow trailhead and ending at the trail's northern terminus on Route 9N. Total distance approx. 7.5 miles. Leader: David Pisaneschi: 459-5969 Email: [dpisanes@nycap.rr.com](mailto:dpisanes@nycap.rr.com) Time, Place, car pool fee: TBA

## OUTINGS & MEETINGS

(Key: H=Hiking, E=Education, C= Conservation, T=Trail Work)

**Sunday, February 11, Aiken Wilderness XC (B)** (Sierra Club & ADK) High elevation area east of Bennington, VT gets plenty of snow. We will start from Woodford State Park and explore old logging roads and open beaver meadows. If we get lucky we might see a moose. Expect to ski 8-10 miles and be out for 4-6 hours of intermediate skiing. Leader: Rich Macha, 346-3180w or [apnp@prodigy.net](mailto:apnp@prodigy.net).

**Saturday, February 17, Emma Treadwell Thacher Nature Center, Thompsons Lake** (Sierra Club, MVHC & AMC) - Think snow and snowshoe the Center trails 9 AM to Noon. Joe Gardner 518-439-8719 [jgardnr@nycap.rr.com](mailto:jgardnr@nycap.rr.com)

**Sunday, February 25, Leader's Choice XC Ski (B)** (Sierra Club & ADK) We will go wherever there is good snow. Expect to ski 8-12 miles and be out for four to six hours. Intermediate backcountry skiing. Leader: Rich Macha, 346-3180w [apnp@prodigy.net](mailto:apnp@prodigy.net).

**Sundays, May through September: Bike Rides**(Sierra Club & Mohawk Hudson Cycling Club) - Sunday morning bike rides in the Voorheesville/Helderburg area. Start about 7:15 AM, usually finish by 9 AM. A great way to start the day. For information, call leader Steve Redler at 518-434-1540.

**Paddling Instruction** John Nemjo's Mountainman Outdoor Sports is dedicated to providing outdoor sports enthusiasts with everything you need to make the most of your outdoor experiences. Expert staff and American Canoe Association Certified Instructors offer instructional classes and

day trips that are suited for beginner to intermediate kayakers. Plan a trip to the Adirondack Mountains and set aside some time to paddle! Visit [www.mountainmanoutdoors.com/pages.rentals/instruction.html](http://www.mountainmanoutdoors.com/pages.rentals/instruction.html).

**Views Photo Contest** - In order to identify the really special places and views locally, the Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy is sponsoring a views contest in Montgomery and Schenectady counties. For more information, go to the conservancy's Web site at <http://www.mohawkhudson.org>.

**"Sustainable Development II: Strategies for Growth in the Capital Region", Friday, February 2, 8 am – 4 pm, College Park Hall, Nott Street, Schenectady.**

This Environmental Clearing-house of Schenectady (ECOS) conference will bring together professional planners, academics, and ecologists to consider alternative growth scenarios for the Capital District. There will be sessions on collaborative planning, designing new multi-use "New Centers", managing transportation and land use, and planning to protect rural areas.

To register and for more information, contact Patrick Clear at 370-4125 or [ecos@global2000.net](mailto:ecos@global2000.net) or go to [www.ecosny.org](http://www.ecosny.org).

### WANT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Volunteering with the Hudson Mohawk Group is a way to make a difference in your community. You can work on key conservation issues like smart planning to stop sprawl, conserving special natural areas and energy, or cleaning up air, land, and water pollution. You can develop and publicize educational programs, help with educational "tabling" at fairs and other events, lead outings, recruit new members and coordinate volunteers. You can write newsletter articles and label newsletters for mailing.

In the May/June 2006 Hudson Mohawk Group newsletter (available on our website), we included a sheet for volunteers to let us know let us their volunteer interests. Volunteering can a lot of fun and a way to meet new friends. To find out more about specific volunteer opportunities, please contact one of the Hudson Mohawk Group leaders identified on page two of the newsletter. Hope to hear from you soon!

**HELP PROTECT THE ADIRONDACKS!!**

The Sierra Club Adirondack Committee is joining with other organizations to fight two huge developments in the Adirondacks, one in the Village of Tupper Lake, and one on the Saranac River near Union Falls. Please read on to see how you can help.

The Adirondack Park Agency (APA) review of these projects appears to be timed to gain approval in the 11th Hour before the new Governor takes office.

Please help us hold off the onslaught by making your tax-deductible contribution to: The Sierra Club Foundation - Adirondack Committee Account.

Your contribution will enable us to develop a strong legal defense against the well-financed developers of these projects.



Yes, I want to help protect the Adirondacks. I have enclosed my tax-deductible contribution of:

\_\_\_\$25 \_\_\_\$50 \_\_\_\$100 \$\_\_\_\_(Other)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail your contribution to:

Sierra Club Hudson Mohawk Group  
P.O. Box 8447  
Albany, NY 12208

**Thank you!!**

**ROUND LAKE BY-PASS: DOT PERFORMS WEAK ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

Below is our December 21, 2006 letter to NYSDOT regarding the proposed Round Lake By-Pass. We were contacted by NYSDOT one day after this letter, we believe to accommodate our request for an additional comment period. The FEIS for this project can be downloaded at: <https://www.nysdot.gov/portal/page/portal/regional-offices/region1/projects/round-lake-bypass/feis> Please contact Mr. Werner at 518-388-0388 to provide your input and support our letter.

Mr. Thomas Werner  
Regional Director  
New York State Dept. of Transportation – Region 1  
328 State Street  
Schenectady, NY 12305

RE: Comments on Final Environmental Impact Statement, Round Lake By-Pass

Dear Mr. Werner

Below are the comments from the Hudson Mohawk Group of the Sierra Club regarding the FEIS for the proposed Round Lake Bypass project, PIN 1807.01. In sum, the FEIS has very serious flaws in

**Inadequate Time for Review:** The ten (10) day time period provided for public comment by NYSDOT is totally inadequate for a project of this size, magnitude and environmental and other impacts. Additionally, having the comment period end right before a major holiday is particularly insensitive. The Sierra Club formally requests an additional ninety (90) day comment period to adequately address all of the issues involved.

**Cumulative Impacts/Segmentation:** The Sierra Club is extremely disappointed with the near total lack of consideration of other projects, chief among them, the proposed Luther Forest Technology Campus (LFTC.) The FEIS does not evaluate the combined impacts of the Round Lake By-Pass with the with the impending LFTC. This is clearly an attempt by the NYSDOT to improperly segment these two projects to mitigate the traffic and environmental impacts of both. We would therefore request that NYSDOT redo this section of the FEIS and coordinate its review of this project with the Saratoga Economic Development Corporation and others involved in the LFTP.

**Lack of Consideration of Alternatives:** There are no meaningful alternatives listed in the FEIS. The lead agency has a responsibility pursuant to EDPL section 204 to adequately consider alternative location for the proposed project and to provide its reasons for selecting the final location. By not considering the alternatives, NYSDOT has determined that the only route for the bypass is through 400 acres of green space zoned as conservation land and traversed by both the multi-use Zim Smith Trail and the Ballston Creek with very sensitive and ecologically important freshwater wetlands. Had NYSDOT seriously considered the alternatives suggested in the public comment period, it would have discovered at least one other alternative along Interstate 87, following the north bluff of the Ballston Creek Valley to Route 76/Route 9 intersection.

In accordance with SEQRA, NYSDOT must consider and analyze reasonable alternatives taking into consideration the objectives and capabilities of the applicant (NYSDOT.) The alternatives must be sufficient to provide a logical and reasoned choice. Any choices it deems not feasible must be reasonably ex

(ROUND LAKE BY-PASS—CONT'D) plained. NYSDOT has failed to do this. We are deeply concerned that in completely focusing its FEIS on the option chosen without even a scoping process to identify and provide consideration of feasible alternatives, NYSDOT is failing to fully follow its adopted policy to make highway design decisions by using its "Context Sensitive Solutions." Therefore, we request that NYSDOT redo this section of the FEIS and take into consideration the alternatives suggested during the public comment period.

**Visual Impacts:** One of the major considerations of this project is the visual impacts that the Round Lake By-Pass would have upon nearby residents and commuters and other travelers on Interstate 87. NYSDOT has failed to provide even a minimum concept of the visual impacts that this project would have. We therefore request that this section be revisited and drawn up again with realistic renderings of this project.

Thank you for taking these comments into consideration.

Sincerely,

Susan Lawrence, Chair  
Peter Sheehan, Conservation Co Chair  
William Koebbeman, Saratoga County Chair

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Town Library, 629 Albany-Shaker Road, see p. 1**

**Be An Underwriter!**  
Contact Michael Divak, Newsletter Editor, for rates.

## Sierra Club Hudson Mohawk Group

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