



**SIERRA CLUB**  
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# Hudson/Mohawk Group



June 2003 Vol. 27 No. 6

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

## Upcoming Events

**Sierra Club Social**  
**Tuesday, June 17th, 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.

**Conservation Committee Meeting**  
**Wednesday, June 25, 7 P.M.**  
**St. Pauls Episcopal Church**  
**21 Hackett Blvd., Albany**

All members welcome to attend. The Conservation Committee works on the many conservation issues and projects. Please let Roger Gray, John VanDeloo, or Susan Lawrence know that you plan to attend. (Contact info on page 2).

## Watch The Group's Website This Summer

Until our next newsletter in September, you can check out our group's website @ [www.newyork.sierraclub.org/hudsonmohawk](http://www.newyork.sierraclub.org/hudsonmohawk) this summer for updates on events, outings, conservation issues and how you can participate. Anyone wishing to post an item should forward it to Pete Sheehan and Susan Lawrence (see mast head on page 2 for email addresses and phone numbers).

## Participate in Planning for Sustainable Capital District Growth

By Susan Lawrence and Pete Sheehan

As environmentalists, we all need to try in some way to affect what happens with the impact of the projected high tech growth on our cities, suburbs and rural areas. This growth could most significantly for us mean increased pollution and degrading our valuable natural resources, including farmlands, forests, woodlands, wetlands, watersheds, and water supplies. Growth that becomes sprawl and is not carefully planned will hurt our collective quality of life.

**LAY OF THE LAND:** From plans to build a huge microchip plant and other high tech businesses in Luther Forest, Malta with the clearing of 1350 forested acres and the drawing of 2 - 10 million gallons of Hudson River water a day; to plans for a major residential development encroaching on the Pine Bush areas in Schenectady and Niskayuna; to road projects such as the widening of Routes 9 & 20 in East Greenbush for commuters to leapfrog this older suburb to new residential developments in rural Rensselaer County; to the deterioration of the watershed for Watervliet's reservoir due to more building encroachment; to the possibility of extending water lines from the City of Albany out to enable sprawl in the water-hungry area of the rural Town of New Scotland, there are projects all over the Capital District developing **without careful planning** for the long-term impact on our quality of life and the environment.

It is cheaper in the long run to use already existing infrastructure in our cities and older suburbs than to keep building out into greenspace. The State needs to take actions, like enacting a law to enable economical reuse of brownfields, enacting income tax credits for rehabilitating historic residential areas, and making building codes more flexible to enable reuse of older structures. It costs suburban areas much more to allow sprawl than they get in return in increased taxes.

The localities in our area can work together to plan for future growth. State laws now enable them to join together through intermunicipal agreements to provide zoning changes or mutual services. Localities can adopt conservation overlay districts that protect special natural areas from growth. State enactment of laws establishing principles for smart growth and funding to support that growth as well as mechanisms to enable planning at a locality or multi-locality level is highly recommended. But it is not essential as localities have the authority now to prepare comprehensive land use plans and in effect adopt smart growth plans now.

We need State supported legislation that will ensure protection of our natural resources against the Bush administration and developers' attempts to further damage our resources. A 2001 Supreme Court decision determined that isolated wetlands are no longer protected by the Army Corps of Engineers. So, New York State now needs to give the DEC the power to protect wetlands that are less than 12 acres. In fact, preventing the destructive infill of wetlands is often the key to stopping sprawl projects.

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## Hudson-Mohawk Group

Chair	Pete Sheehan, 489-5803 psheeha5@nycap.rr.com
Vice-Chair	Susan Lawrence, 489-5721 shlawr2@aol.com
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Secretary	Maureen Ferraro-Davis, 235-0728 maureenfd@aol.com
Conservation Chair	Roger Gray, 434-8681 rtg50@aol.com
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Newsletter	Janet Given 346-5439 jgiven@nycap.rr.com
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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, Pete Sheehan
Cascade Lakes/Adirondacks -	Roger Gray
Sprawl / Smart Growth -	Susan Lawrence Pete Sheehan
Energy -	Susan Lawrence
Pesticides/ Clean Water -	John Van Deloo, 370-4932 JVDMD@aol.com
Clean Air -	Susan Lawrence
Webmaster -	Tom Reynolds reynt0@cs.albany.edu

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

### June 7, Saturday: Moreau Lake State Park Sierra Club Outing

**'Welcome to the Summer'**. Hike the new Hudson Scenic Trail, explore around the Lake, or paddle on the Lake. Covered pavillion has been reserved in case of rain. Food arranged by a sponser, but please let us know 1 week ahead to arrange for quantity and preferences. Contact John at 370-4932.

**June 12, Thursday:  
Sunset Photography Hike on  
Pebbles Island.** Just 12 miles north of Albany on the confluence of the Hudson & Mohawk Rivers. Offers river and rapids views, miles of trails through gently rolling, wooded landscape, a railway bridge, waterfowl sightings, and historic buildings. Meet at 6pm in the parking lot of the State Park at the end of Delaware Ave in Waterford. The leisurely 2 mile hike will be geared to beginner and intermediate photographers. Our leader is a professional photographer. Bring your coamera! Contact N. Sukumar (283-6958) or Bill Koebbeman (399-5027).

### June 29, Sunday: Kenrose Preserve Nature Walk.

This Nature Conservancy land has had many owners and uses over time. This area is part of the region written about in Henry Christman's 'Tin Horns & Calico' (1945). Our primary interest will be the identification of some of the more than 250 species of plants found along the trail. Call Pete Sheehan (489-5803)

### July 6, Sunday: Long Path Walk

Hike an interesting scenic trail in Schoharie County. For details call Nancy and Ed (374-5810)

### July 12, Saturday: Tenant Creek Falls Outing

8AM. Follow an old logging road that turns into a hiking trail along Tenant Creek passing three pretty waterfalls. The trail has some gradual up and down sections taking us through very nice mixed woods and



hemlocks. A delightful, fairly gentle hike perfect for a summer day. This approximately 4 mile round trip begins near the north end of the Great Sacandaga Lake, a little north of Northville. Call Lorraine Plauth at 765-4937 or Bill Koebbeman at 399-5027. Hike is limited to 12 participants.

### July 20, Sunday: Schodack Creek Canoe Trip

9:30AM. We will canoe 4-5 miles at high tide on Schodack Creek, a flatwater tidal stream separated from the Hudson River by the new Schodack Island State Park. We will study a remarkable freshwater tidal habitat that abounds with wildlife, including resident bald eagles, great blue herons and river otters. These wetlands are rarely visited and only accessible by canoe. Call for reservations and directions. Leader: Warren Broderick (235-4041) Co-leader: Bill Koebbeman (664-9433 (joint outing with the Mohawk-Hudson Chapter, AMC)

### July 30, Wednesday: Easy, Guided Nature Walk.

Begin with an informative visit to the new Emma Treadwell Nature Center followed by a naturalist led trail walk in scenic John Boyd Thacher State Park. Points of geological and cultural history will be highlighted during this easy 1 1/2 hour walk. Optional: Bring your own picnic lunch to enjoy after the walk, and we may choose to walk a different trail in the afternoon. Call Lorraine Plauth (765-4937) for details.

### August 16, Saturday: Albany Pine Bush.

Six mile walk (approximate) with botanist Ted Elliman. Flat walking, offering a close look at habitats and flora in pitch pine and scrub oak forest. Walk starts at 10 AM. Call Ted for details (452-5526).

### September 27, Saturday: Cascade Lakes Stewardship Project.

Join us for a rewarding AM clean-up of the lake shore. Picnic lunch and short hike in the PM. Call Roger Gray at (434-8681)

## Weekly Activities

**\*May through September:**  
**Sunday Morning Bike Rides in Voorheesville/Helderburg Area:**  
 Start about 7:15 am, usually finished by 9am. 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.

**\*Weekly Walks:** Open to the public led by the staff of the Emma Treadwell Nature Center. Call the Center at 872-0800 for more info.

## ...Growth

*cont'd from page 1*

Get involved in any way you can: join the local planning board or sit in on its meetings; start reading about sprawl related issues and what can be done to protect against sprawl and provide for smart growth; write letters to the editor and contact your local elected officials about your concerns; link up with other local groups concerned about a sprawl project or the need to rebuild the city or older suburbs. Please contact us (Pete Sheehan and Susan Lawrence) to help in this effort, and let us know what you are doing. (Contact info on page 2).

[www.newyork.sierraclub.org/hudsonmohawk/](http://www.newyork.sierraclub.org/hudsonmohawk/)

### PLEASE HELP SUPPORT OUR CLEAN AIR EFFORTS

For some of our big conservation projects, we need to hire technical consultants and attorneys. They do work that hundreds of hours of our volunteers work cannot do. We are participating as a formal party in the review of a project to build a major power plant and paper recycling plant (the Besicorp project) in the City of Rensselaer. Although we benefited from receiving grant moneys from the State to pay for most of our consultant costs, it will not cover all consultant costs and will cover no legal fees. We are asking for donations from our members to support our work on the Besicorp project and other projects we undertake to protect our air from toxic pollutants. Please send a check today (the amount is tax deductible) for us to pay needed consultants and attorneys. Make it out to: Sierra Club Foundation (write Clean Air on the memo line) and mail to:

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

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For more information contact:

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**"I know that our bodies were made to thrive only in pure air, and the scenes in which pure air is found."**

**- John Muir**

***Please help with our clean air efforts - see page 3***

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**Sierra Club Outing:  
Welcome  
To The Summer!**  
June 7, 2003

See page 2 for details

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