



## Hudson/Mohawk Group March/April 2008 Vol. 32



HUDSON/MOHAWK GROUP MARCH/APRIL 2008 VOL. 32 NO. 2

### Annual Dinner Featuring DEC Pathologist Ward Stone

The Wildlife Pathologist View On Global Warming - by Roger Gray

The Hudson Mohawk group is honored and excited to announce that Ward Stone, distinguished Wildlife Pathologist with the Department of Environmental Conservation, and host of the weekly radio show "In Our Backyard" on WAMC, Northeast Public Radio, will speak at our annual dinner on May 9, 2008.

As many residents of this region and in many areas of the state know, Ward Stone, as the only wildlife pathologist in New York State for more than 35 years, has been in the vanguard, if not leading the charge, on many of the pivotal environmental issues of our time.

In the 1980's Dr. Stone was the principal expert for the US Environmental Protection Agency in a historic hearing that resulted in a national ban on the use of the highly toxic pesticide diazinon on golf courses and sod farms. During that time he also did pioneering work on PCB contamination in the Akwesasne Mohawk Indian Reservation on the St. Lawrence River caused by years of dumping from the General Motors and Reynolds Metals plant. His work substantially affected the scope of remedial actions in that area and it also set the stage for the remediation of PCB contamination

in the Upper Hudson River at the General Electric Fort Edwards plant currently in the planning stages.

More recently, Dr. Stone has been in the forefront of testing for crows of West Nile Virus, identifying viral duck plague in the Finger Lakes, documenting the decimation of popular bird feeder denizens, such as house finches, siskins, and redpolls. With his daughter Montana, Dr. Stone brought to the public the problem of high levels of lead in children's jewelry imported from China.

Through all his years as wildlife pathologist, Dr. Stone has worked tirelessly and boldly using science to sound the alarm about hazards, man-made and natural, in our environment. In his radio show, he not only reports on these environmental concerns, but he reminds us of the natural beauty and wonder as close as our backyards.

We look forward to Dr. Stone's perspective on the signs and effects of global warming as viewed from his laboratory and from his backyard.

**Go to back page to register for the dinner. Seating limited.**

### Conservation and Protection Battles in Full Swing - by Pete Sheehan

Three recent and ongoing efforts to preserve our natural resources within the Hudson Mohawk Group coverage area demonstrate our commitment to protecting these special areas:

- **DEC Wetland Disturbances - Through Pre-Application Meetings with DEC:** It has become quite evident that the DEC is short-circuiting the permitting process and thereby eliminating or trivializing public input through its pre-application meetings with developers. Sierra Club member Bill Koebbeman has followed this closely in Clifton Park and has diligently documented how developers negotiate with DEC staff to reach understandings of what activities and (for example), wetland disturbances will be allowed. These types of informal agreements are abrogations of DEC regulations because pre-application meetings are only supposed to inform the developer of what the process is and any other procedural issues that may arise.

In a very recent case, XAR Corporation is planning a nine lot light industrial subdivision on 213 acres in Clifton Park. Initially, a DEC biologist stated that wetlands 3, 4, 10 and 11 should be included as "NYSDEC Freshwater Wetlands." However, subsequent to the pre-application meeting, DEC Wildlife biologist William O'Connor wrote that NYSDEC Article 24 jurisdiction does not extend over wetlands 3, 4, 10 and 11. The letter was unsigned and there was no rationale as to why the original DEC biologist was overruled. There is no record that Mr. O'Connor even visited the site. For more information, please contact Bill Koebbeman at 399-5027 or at [wkebb@juno.com](mailto:wkebb@juno.com)

- **Great Flats Aquifer, Schenectady County:** This aquifer is one of only 13 sole source aquifers in New York State and most worthy of Sierra Club protection. This environmental treasure has been under assault for over 20 years. Sierra Club member Aaron Mair has documented the unrelenting pressures, most recently by developer (and now Assemblyman George Amedore)

## Hudson Mohawk Group

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**Environmentall Justice:** \*Aaron Mair, [aaronmair@yahoo.com](mailto:aaronmair@yahoo.com)  
**Programs:** Pete Sheehan  
**Secretary :** \*Paul Caver:753-4205 [paulcaver@gmail.com](mailto:paulcaver@gmail.com)  
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**Tabling:** \*Virginia Boyle-Traver  
**Treasurer:** \*Jim Dufresne  
**Webmaster:** Tom Reynolds, [hm-webmaster@newyork.sierraclub.org](mailto:hm-webmaster@newyork.sierraclub.org)  
**Saratoga County Conservation:** Bill Koebbeman, [wkebb@juno.com](mailto:wkebb@juno.com)

### Issue Gurus

**Cascade Lakes/Adirondacks** -\*Roger Gray and John Nemjo  
**Clean Air Chair:** \*Susan Lawrence  
**Clean Water:** \*Susan Lawrence and \*Aaron Mair and \*Joe Gardner  
**Energy:** \*Pete Sheehan  
**Hudson River:** \*Aaron Mair  
**Sprawl/Smart Growth:** \*Susan Lawrence and \*Virginia Traver  
\*Executive Committee Members

The Hudson-Mohawk Executive Committee Members meet the first Wednesday of every Month. Members are encouraged to attend! Please call the Co-Chairs 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 12208-8447. 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)

## Sierra Club Program Series Continues—Please Support Them

Our program series are held at the William K. Sanford library in Colonie, 7:00 PM.

**Tuesday, March 26, 2008:** Find out about current technologies for making clean solar electricity and solar hot water for your home and business. Jeff Wolfe, CEO of groSolar, one of the top five independent solar companies in the US, will share his overall industry knowledge, as well as information specifically about using solar energy in New York state. Solar is simple and easy to use, and New York state may pay for over half the cost of your system. Jeff will also review other ways to reduce your carbon foot print and fight climate change.

**Tuesday, April 22 (Earthday!)** Mike Stangl, PE and Kevin Rose, a certified photovoltaic (PV) system installer by the North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners, will make a short presentation on how individuals can use Renewable Energy Systems to reduce their Carbon Footprint. The presentation will emphasize the importance of combining renewable energy systems with energy efficiency measures. Mr. Stangl and Mr. Rose are co-owners of Renewable Power Systems, the largest installer of photovoltaic (solar) electric systems in the Capitol Region. There will be ample time for members of the audience to ask questions concerning renewable energy systems (solar, wind, geothermal, etc.) and energy efficiency measures.

**Election Results - Hudson Mohawk Group Executive Committee:** The following Executive Committee members who were reelected to serve additional two-year terms: Paul Caver, Theresa Cassiack (first full term), Susan Lawrence, Aaron Mair, Virginia Boyle-Traver. Congratulations and thanks for your hard work, enthusiasm, and dedication for all you do to protect our environment! (*continued on page 3*)

and how the Town of Rotterdam has continually permitted the piece meal assault upon the aquifer. The most current act of destruction is its approval of the 52 condominium-unit Putnam Woods Development. We are fortunate that Aaron Mair's residence/property abuts this development should the Sierra Club ever become legally involved. At present, we are supporting Aaron's legal battles.

The Sierra Club Hudson Mohawk Group believes very strongly that the Great Flats Aquifer should be afforded the highest level of protection. Toward that end, we have established a foundation account through which donors can make tax-deductible donations. To make a donation, send your check, made payable to "The Sierra Club Foundation" - and in the memo line, write "RE: Great Flats Aquifer Protection Fund".

- Last but certainly not least is our support of legal action to deny transfer of the water supply permit for the Upper Hudson Water Supply Project from the (Saratoga) Board of Supervisors to the Saratoga County Water Authority. This is the infamous sprawl-inducing waterline project to support the AMD plant in Luther Forest in Malta, NY. We have opposed this project from the start because it is/will result in the destruction of hundreds of acres of forested land and the corresponding waterline will induce more suburban sprawl along the path of the waterline.

At present, there appears to be no "public need" for the waterline project as we have spelled out in a letter to the DEC's region five office in Warrensburg. The town of Clifton Park opted out and the City of Saratoga Springs has not signed any formal letter of intent to utilize the water system. On top of all this, we believe that the State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation has violated Article 14 of the State constitution and the Environmental Conservation Law by permitting the waterline to transverse Moreau Lake State Park. We support the legal action which quite clearly explains why the property that the waterline is situated should be protected by virtue of it being classified as Forest Preserve.

## OUTINGS

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

**Sunday, March 2 - Wilcox Lake WF X-C Ski (Sierra Club & ADK)** We'll ski the Bartman Trail down to Baldwin Springs. We'll return by either backtracking or via the Oregon Trail or Lizard Pon Trail. Expect to ski about 10 miles. Leader: David Pisaneschi: 518-459-5969 H, E  
[dpisanes@nycap.rr.com](mailto:dpisanes@nycap.rr.com), Time and Place: TBA Carpool fee: TBA

**Saturday-Sunday, April 5-6 - Wilderness First Aid Course:** The Outdoor Activities Training Program (OATP) and Atlantic Chapter are very excited to offer a Wilderness First Aid Course April 5-6, 2008 at Camp Hoover in Preble, NY.

Fast paced and hands-on, this two-day course covers a wide range of wilderness medicine topics for people who travel in the outdoors. When spending time in the backcountry is your passion you should never have to ask, "What do I do now?" On this course, you'll learn how to prepare for the unexpected. The Wilderness Medicine Institute's curriculum is unique and includes many advanced topics that other programs leave out such as dislocation reduction, focused spinal assessment and epinephrine administration. In just two days, you'll have the knowledge, skills and ability to make sound decisions in emergency situations. This course is ideal for trip leaders, camp staff, outdoor enthusiasts and individuals in remote locations. This course does not include CPR. Additionally, no prior first aid experience or certification is necessary.

### DETAILS

**Where:** Camp Hoover in Preble, NY

**When:** April 5-6, 2008. 8 am – 5 pm each day.

**Cost:** \$125 for members; \$150 for non-members (includes Sierra Club membership). Includes all course materials, instruction, food and lodging!

**Registration:** To register, learn more about the workshop, and check for available space, go to the Training website at <http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/training/> OR you may register by one of the following 3 ways as explained below.

Be sure to include your name(s), address, telephone #, email address, membership #, and workshop # - 08871 and

**MAIL** check or money order for \$125/\$150 to:

Sierra Club Outings, 85 Second Street, 2nd Floor, San Francisco, CA 94105

**CALL** - credit card only: 415-977-5522, Monday-Friday, 8:30-5, PST

**FAX** - credit card only: Tele. 415-977-5795

Include Card Number, Expiration Date and Signature

Space is limited to 30 people. First come, first served. Questions? Contact Sascha Paris.

**Thursday, April 24, Ashuwticcook Rail Trail (B-) (Sierra Club & ADK)** Back by popular demand! Also known as the Berkshire Bike Path, this rail trail makes a scenic spring bike ride. We will ride 22 miles round trip from Lanesborough to Adams, Massachusetts. Meet 8:30 a.m. at the Defreestville 4 & 43 Park and Ride. This is a school-hours outing. Leader:

Virginia Boyle Traver, 489-5758, [virginiabt28@hotmail.com](mailto:virginiabt28@hotmail.com). H, E

**Saturday, April 26, 2008 Cascade Lakes Project Cleanup:** Join us in the Adirondacks and help beautify the local roadway along the scenic Cascade Lakes. The Sierra Club is recognized formally by the New York State Department of Transportation as a steward of this part of the roadway. Come help us meet our obligation and join us for a hike in the afternoon when the cleanup is done. Contact Ralph and Doreen at 346-2818. H,E ,T

**Thursday, May 29, Mt. Williams (B) (Sierra Club & ADK)** Mt. Williams in the Mt. Greylock State Reservation in Massachusetts offers a lovely view across the Berkshires. With the main road through the Reservation still under reconstruction, we will begin the hike at the Notch Road parking area, hiking the Bernard Farm Trail. 6 miles with 1600 feet elevation gain. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Defreestville 4 & 43 Park and Ride. Leader: Virginia Boyle Traver, 489-5758, H, E  
[virginiabt28@hotmail.com](mailto:virginiabt28@hotmail.com).

**Saturday, May 31, Bearpen & Vly:** Distance: 8 mi. Ascent: 1900', Elev. 3524'. Relaxed to moderately paced bushwacks. Bad weather cancels. Meeting Place/Time: Please contact leaders to register (email preferred). Leaders: David & Carol White #'s 859, 860; [ccswhite@juno.com](mailto:ccswhite@juno.com); 315-853-6942. H,E

**Saturday-Saturday, August 9 - 16 Anaconda Wilderness Ramble, Montana (Sierra Club National Outing Trip Number 08147A)** Leaders: Michael Jensen and Jonas Wickham. The Anaconda-Pintler Wilderness offers extraordinary backpacking opportunities in Montana's Beaverhead Deer-lodge National Forest. The Wilderness spans more than 40 miles and 160,000 acres along the Continental Divide in southwestern Montana and offers big rewards. Fortunately for us it is far less visited than the better-known wilderness areas of Montana, even with its spectacular mountain grandeur. Michael Jensen 518-274-3578 [jensem@rpi.edu](mailto:jensem@rpi.edu) For a complete brochure visit: <http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/>

### *(Election Results—cont'd from page 2)*

We are also pleased to announce that Susan Lawrence has been nominated as Executive Committee Chair for the Atlantic (statewide) Chapter. It can be difficult to meld the different opinions and backgrounds of all the Chapter delegates and we wish Susan well in her new endeavor!

### **EPF Fund in Jeopardy!**

We are at a critical juncture in the history of open-space protection in New York State. Right now, we have a unique opportunity to protect tens thousands of acres of wild lands in the Adirondacks and across the state, but a proposed raid on the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) is jeopardizing that opportunity. Contact David Pisaneschi for more info at: [dpisanes@nycap.rr.com](mailto:dpisanes@nycap.rr.com).

**Newsletter Editor Needed!** We are in desperate need of an experienced, competent newsletter editor. It's fun and you'd be surprised how much you will learn. If you or somebody you know (they don't have to be a Sierra Club member) have an interest in putting our newsletter together please have them contact Pete Sheehan at 489-5803.

**Sierra Club Annual Fundraising Dinner - Friday, May 9, 2008 at New Visions, 334 Krumkill Road, Slingerlands, 12159**

We're honored to have the Chief Pathologist of the New York for New York State DEC Ward Stone as our keynote speaker at our annual fundraising dinner. Please reserve your spot today by sending an email to Jim DuFresne at JDufre1928@aol.com (and pay at the door.) Or you may fill in the reservation form below and mail it to: Sierra Club HM Group, P.O. Box 8447, Albany, NY 12208. Refreshments begin at 5:30 PM followed by buffet dinner at 6:30 PM. **Seating is limited!**

**Please join us for a fun and informative evening!**

**SIERRA CLUB HUDSON MOHAWK GROUP DINNER RESERVATION FORM:**

Mail this form to: Sierra Club, P.O. Box 8447, Albany, NY 12208. Ticket prices are \$30 for adults and \$10 for children under 12.

Please reserve a seat for myself and those people listed below (if applicable.)

\_\_\_\_\_

I've enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for the reservation(s) listed above.



**Sierra Club Hudson Mohawk Group**

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