



SIERRA CLUB
FOUNDED 1892

Hudson/Mohawk Group



May 2004 Vol. 28 No.4

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

Upcoming Events

Summer Breakout Party

June 12th, Saturday, 1PM til 7 or so...

Join with us in welcoming the summer at the newly reopened Inn and Bistro at Saratoga Lake (remember Brown's Beach?). Food prepared by renowned French chef Eric Masson, music, volleyball setup on the beach or bring your own equipment - bring the kids - and most importantly, bring your summer attitude! Call John at 370-4932.

Solar and Renewable

Energy - Viable Right Now

Tuesday, May 25 7PM at the William J. Sanford Library, Albany Shaker Rd., Colonie. Doors open 6:30

Using solar photovoltaics (PV's) to provide clean, renewable electricity for YOUR house or business can and is happening RIGHT NOW. We have assembled a panel of experts to talk about how PV systems work and to discuss other renewable energy forms as well. Present will be: Adele Ferranti of NYSERDA; Dr. Richard Perez SUNYA professor of Renewable Energy and owner of a house utilizing PV and other RE options; and a PV installer certified by the North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners. Come learn how solar and RE can work for you right now!

Political Action Committee

Monday May 17th 7PM - St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 21 Hackett Blvd., Albany

All members invited. We will discuss the State Legislative candidate questionnaire, the lobby days that occurred in early May and the State Legislative candidates voting record on environmental issues. For more info contact Steve Redler at 434-1540 or steveredler@yahoo.com. (cont'd pg 4)

WORKING TOWARD OUR CONSERVATION AND LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

By Susan Lawrence and Pete Sheehan

The Hudson Mohawk Group (HMG) focuses much of its conservation work on the conservation and legislative priorities set each year by the Atlantic Chapter Executive Committee. For 2004, the top conservation priorities are protecting wetlands, fighting sprawl, providing cleaner energy (including more renewable energy), brownfields and superfund cleanup, and improving solid waste management.

The Atlantic Chapter legislative office has been a key player in the development of legislation (A.7905/S.4480) that would protect all isolated wetlands under 12.4 acres by putting them under the jurisdiction of the State Department of Environmental Conservation. This legislation is critical because a 2001 U.S. Supreme Court decision determined that the Army Corps of Engineers no longer had jurisdiction over isolated wetlands used by migratory birds.

Wetlands soak up water run-off thereby preventing floods, and most importantly wetlands clean water as it percolates into the ground. In Saratoga County with many wetlands threatened by sprawl, the HMG recently appealed the process that the DEC uses to streamline wetland review, usually to the benefit of developers.

The HMG has adopted as a major priority promoting smart planning to stop sprawl into our critical natural resource areas, including wetlands and watersheds, and to focus development on areas with existing infrastructure and more critical economic needs. The Atlantic Chapter is working with many parties to reform the State Empire Zone Program legislation to direct it back to its original purpose, inducing businesses to locate in urban areas with critical economic needs.

The Comptroller recently issued a report critical of Program abuses, including not providing jobs and moving jobs to well-to-do suburbs away from needy near-by cities. This is basically what the Saratoga Economic Development Corporation has proposed for development of four huge chip-manufacturing plants in the 1350-acre forest in Malta and Stillwater, an area without the needed roads, sewer, water, and power lines and facilities, and with low unemployment rates. So the companies moving into an area like Luther Forest under the existing Empire Zone Program get huge real property and other tax breaks ultimately paid for by the State taxpayers.

For solid waste management, passage of a Bigger Better Bottle Bill (A.3922/S.1696-a) is a high priority this year. The bill will require a five cent deposit for all beverage containers, except milk, infant formula, liquor and wine and will reclaim the \$175 million in unclaimed deposits, now held by distributors and bottlers, to be used to fund municipal recycling programs.

The Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter is working with other environmental groups to fight against including the incineration of solid waste within the new Retail Renewable Energy Portfolio, being developed under the auspices of the State Public Service Commission. This Portfolio will move from 17 percent power sold from renewal sources to 25 percent by 2013. In the HMG areas,

Hudson-Mohawk Group

Chair / Susan Lawrence 489-5721
Programs SHLawr2@aol.com

Vice-Chair / John VanDeloo 370-4932
JVDM@aol.com

Treasurer/ Clarence Gregory, 393-7100
Membership clarence.gregory@alum.mit.edu

Secretary Maureen Ferraro-Davis,
235-0728 maureenfd@aol.com

Conservation John VanDeloo
Chair

Environmental Aaron Mair, 465-8523
Justice aaronmair@yahoo.com

Newsletter Janet Given Chen 346-5439
jgiven@nycap.rr.com

Outings Bill Koebbeman, 399-5027
WKEBB@juno.com

Political Chair Steve Redler 434-1540
steveredler@yahoo.com

Fundraising/ John Nemjo, 279-4777
Social Chair/

Volunteers johnnemjo@aol.com

Newsletter Tom Blandy 274-2098
Distribution TBlandy@nycap.rr.com

Issue Gurus

Hudson River - Aaron Mair, Pete Sheehan

(P12Sheehan@netscape.net)489-5803

Cascade Lakes/Adirondacks - Roger Gray (RTG50@aol.com)434-8681

Sprawl/Smart Growth - Susan Lawrence, Pete Sheehan

Energy - Susan Lawrence

Pesticides/Clean Water - John VanDeloo

Clean Air - Susan Lawrence

Webmaster - Tom Reynolds
reynt0@cs.albany.edu

The Hudson-Mohawk Group Executive Committee meets the first Wednesday of every month (except July). Members are encouraged to attend! Please call Susan Lawrence 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, including name and phone number, to the editor to: Hudson-Mohawk Group, PO Box 8447, Albany, NY 12208-8447. 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

**May 8, 2004 (Sunday)
Cascade Lakes Project -**

Join us for our annual service project, picnic and hike. Contact Roger Gray 434-8681, or Ralph & Doreen 346-2818

**May 16, 2004 (Sunday)
Rotterdam -** Tour 4 sites in Rotterdam, small and large - The Old Maid Woods, Plotter Kill Nature

Preserve, Moccasin Kill Sanctuary and then the Great Flats Nature Trail.

Anyone who wishes can help clear some of the trail so we can come back and enjoy it again! Try to identify some of the over 600 species of plants and trees, including witch hazel, azalea, dogwood, blueberry, honeysuckle, nannyberry and elderberry, trailing arbutus, liverworts, ferns, fringed polgala, lichens, orchid and much much more. There are spectacular waterfalls of 40 and 60 feet. See what we have in our own backyard and discuss what we need to do to preserve some of our most important natural areas. Call John at 370-4932.

**June 5, 2004 (Saturday) 9am -
Pine Bush Walk with botanist Todd Elliman -** Look at Pine Bush flora, including pitch pine-scrub oak habitats, aspen groves, shrub communities, and plants such as New Jersey tea, wild lupine and butterfly weed. We will discuss the Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission efforts to conserve Pine Bush land. Hike is in the 'Karner Barrens East' section of the Pine Bush (between Western and Central Avenues). Meet at SEFCU parking lot on Rt. 155, in back of the building. Call Ted to confirm your reservation 765-7209.

**July 31, 2004 (Saturday) 9am -
Lake Myosotis Walk with botanist Todd Elliman -** The mix of habitats includes sugar maple forest, hemlock forest, flora on the edges of Lake Myosotis, and wetland communities on the north side of the lake. We will look for and identify summer blooming flora throughout our walk. The mission of



the Preserve is to 'understand and preserve the World's biodiversity' - many long-term ecological studies are done on the Preserve. From Albany take Rt. 85 southwest 27 miles. At the Village of Rensselaerville turn right and go a few hundred feet to the preserve office. Parking lot will be on the right before crossing bridge. Call Ted to confirm your reservation 765-7209.

Sleeping Beauty Hike, a joint ADK/Sierra Club outing, included 14 people and a dog. We hiked on packed snow and a bit of ice near the top, but all were rewarded with gorgeous views of Lake George at the summit. This is a great hike at any time of the year!

Dyken Pond Area Outing - Warren Broderick led eight of us into beautiful Adirondack type woods on the Rensselaer Plateau east of Troy. He gave an interesting guided walk pointing out specific ecological communities we were passing through. Computer GIS maps were given to everyone showing the location of the communities. Much of the trail system we were on has been established and meticulously maintained by Warren. Don't miss it if its offered again!

Important Note: All outing members will sign an "Assumption of Risk and Release of Liability" sheet prior to participation in the outings.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO LEAD AN OUTING?

Our group is looking for new outing leaders. If you've thought you might like to lead a day hike for the group, this is a great time to do it. We will have a special program to train new leaders in 2004. The outings program is important for new member recruitment, conservation education, just plain fun and good exercise, and you can be a part of it. For details or questions about our outings program call Lorraine Plauth (765-4937) or Bill Koebbeman (399-5027)

Priorities...

(cont'd from page 1)

we are concerned about a proposed project to build an incinerator in Corinth (Saratoga County) to burn over 3000 tons a day of New York City's garbage. There are proposals to burn tires for the operation of a cement plant in Ravena (Albany County) and for the International Paper Company plant in Ticonderoga (Essex County).

Providing additional protection to wetlands in New York State - those now considered 'isolated' according to the Bush Administration, is more important than ever. A local project that could very well be affected by this ruling is a project approved by the Town of Rotterdam referred to as Putnam Woods Condos. The Sierra Club is providing technical and other assistance to local homeowners to stop this project. We believe it will have a very negative effect upon a sensitive natural resource located directly below the project referred to as The Great Flats Aquifer. A number of Sierra Club members have walked through this area which is adjacent to the wetland-laden Putnam Woods trail. It is full of waterfowl and other birds, beavers, deer and other wildlife.

This project will have a disastrous effect upon the wetlands and Great Flats Aquifer. Not surprisingly, the developer has submitted the initial paperwork and declared this project will have no impact (we refer to this as 'negdec' a negative declaration). In our opinion, this is outrageous.

Needed: Wetland biologists and hydrologists to help perform evaluations of the wetlands and the entire topography. We will have our work cut out for us -we'll have to convince the Army Corps of Engineers that the wetlands found on site ARE NOT isolated and indeed are connected to the Aquifer and of course, the nearby Mohawk River. Please call Pete Sheehan at 489-5803 if you can help.

There are many opportunities to become involved in working on these critical conservation and legislative issues. You can write your State legislators in support of the Bigger Better Bottle Bill and the Wetlands Reform bill and other key legislation. Please refer to the HMG website for updates on legislation. Finally, in your community you can participate in the many grassroots efforts to promote smart planning not sprawl, to protect our critical natural resources, and to revitalize our urban areas.

HELPSUPPORT CLEAN AIR/WATER EFFORTS

For some of our big conservation projects, we need to hire technical consultants and attorneys. Although we do receive some grant money, it does not cover all the consultant costs and none of the legal fees. Please send a check to help us fight to protect our air and water from toxic pollution. Send to The Sierra Club, Hudson-Mohawk Group, PO Box 8447, Albany, N.Y 12208-0447 with Clean Air/Clean Water on the memo line. We really need your help - Thanks!

New York's #1

& CANOE & KAYAK Dealer

Over 1000 Canoes & Kayaks in stock

TEST Paddle BEFORE you buy!

We no nah • Bell • Dagger • Eddyline • Riot
Liquid Logic • Esquif • Boreal Designs • Impex • Perception
Walden Kayaks • Necky • Current Designs • Ocean Kayak
Grumman • Cobra • Old Town • Heritage Kayaks • Feathercraft

YAKIMA THULE

Lotus • Werner • Stohlquist • Kokotat • Aquabound
 Extrasport • Paddleboy • Mitchell • Sawyer • Bending Branches
 Swift • The Original Bug Shirt • Camp Paddles

Your Complete ADIRONDACK WILDERNESS OUTFITTER
 Hiking & Backpacking Supplies

Dana Designs • The North Face
 Mountain Hardwear • Marmot
 Merrell • Osprey & more . . .

patagonia

Visit us on-line for awesome specials:
www.mountainmanoutdoors.com

MOUNTAINMAN OUTFITTER SUPPLY COMPANY
 Rt. 28, Old Forge, NY 13420 (315) 369-6672
 Rt. 28, Inlet, NY 13360 (315) 357-6672

*Shipping available to anywhere in the U.S. mmo018ADK

2004 Adirondack Paddlefest

Admission to Paddlefest is FREE!

America's largest on-water canoe & kayak expo
May 14, 15 & 16
Route 28, Inlet, New York

Over 75 manufacturers of canoes, kayaks & accessories

Over 1000 canoes & kayaks on sale
 1000's of accessories
 Show specials
 Test paddle everything in paddlesports
 Speakers, clinics & demos
 Live Music, Food and Fun for the whole family

Sponsored by SUBARU
The Beauty of All-Wheel Drive

We no nah
 Current Designs
 Bell • Ocean Kayak
 Necky • Eddyline
 Dagger • Old Town
 Perception
 Liquid Logic
 Walden Kayaks
 Riot • Impex
 Boreal Designs
 and more...

www.mountainmanoutdoors.com
Call (315) 357-6672
 or write for FREE Adirondack Paddlefest 2004 Guide:
 Mountainman Outdoor Supply Company, Rt. 28, Inlet, NY 13360

Upcoming Events (con't from page 1)

Conservation Committee Meeting
Wednesday May 19th, 2004 at 7PM
Wednesday June 16th, 2004 at 7PM
St. Paul's Episcopal Church
21 Hackett Blvd., Albany

All members are welcome to attend the meetings. The Conservation Committee works on conservation issues and projects. Please contact Conservation Chair John VanDeloo for more information. (contact info page 2)

Volunteers Needed To Write For Grants

We could really use some volunteers who have expertise in or are interested in learning about grant-writing to help us raise money for our many conservation projects. To volunteer, please contact Pete Sheehan or Susan Lawrence (contact info page 2).

Watch our Website for the latest information on events, meetings, outings, issues or legislation

www.newyork.sierraclub.org/hudsonmohawk



Hudson-Mohawk Group Newsletter
PO Box 8447
Albany, NY 12208-0447

LAW OFFICES OF PETER HENNER
P.O. Box 326, CLARKSVILLE, NY 12041
TEL (518) 768-8232 * FAX (518) 768-8235
PETER@PETERHENNER.COM WEB:
WWW.PETERHENNER.COM

CREATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR CITIZENS
AND ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS
AGAINST CORPORATE AND
GOVERNMENTAL POLLUTERS

OVER 50 CITIZEN'S SUITS LITIGATED

North American Board of
NABCEP
Certified Energy Practitioners

NABCEP™ Solar Photovoltaic Installer
Certification Program.
www.nabcep.org
Tele. (518) 889-8126

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
ALBANY, NY
PERMIT NO. 806

SUMMER BREAKOUT

BROWN'S BEACH

JUNE 12TH - SEE PAGE 1

Printed with soy based ink on recycled paper containing 30% post-consumer content.



0802