

Susquehanna Sierran

Explore, enjoy and protect the planet



"NO!" to Gas Drilling

At its Oct. 17 meeting in Syracuse, the Atlantic Chapter Executive Committee of the Sierra Club passed the following resolution:

"WHEREAS extensive environmental and health damages would be caused by horizontal drilling and high pressure hydrofracturing gas extraction techniques due to the contamination of water, soil and air by the toxic chemicals used in drilling and fracturing, and the naturally occurring toxic chemicals brought to the surface from deep in the ground,

"WHEREAS these environmental and human and animal health damages will have damaging economic consequences on residential property values, and on the state's tourism, agriculture, forestry, winery, real estate development and educational businesses,

"WHEREAS the infrastructure costs of building and repairing roads, water treatment facilities, and other public services would far exceed any economic benefit to local communities, and

"WHEREAS it is yet to be proven that the green house effects of the production and use of natural gas produced by horizontal drilling and hydrofracturing are any less than those of the production and use of coal when the life cycle emissions of natural gas production and the higher impact of methane as a green house gas are taken into account.

"Be It Resolved that the Atlantic Chapter of the Sierra Club calls on the NYS Legislature to enact a ban on permitting gas wells that use horizontal drilling and hydro-fracturing to release gas from tight sand and shale formations such as the Marcellus." (see articles inside)

November/December 2009

General Meetings/Speakers

Utah's Threatened Wilderness

Speaker: Jackie Feinberg of the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance presents a multi-media slide show featuring stunning images by noted wilderness photographers and narrated by Robert Redford. Educate and activate yourself—a must-see for people wishing to make the difference in this tremendous American public lands conservation effort.

Also, a Sierra Club Green Corps Intern will update the group on her mission—to convince BU to use alternative energy sources, rather than coal.

Tues., Nov. 17, 7:30 p.m., Central United Methodist Church, 17 Nanticoke Ave, Endicott.

Update on Climate Change

Speaker: Richard Rehberg, BU professor *emeritus* of political science, projects the consequences of climate change. It's progressing more rapidly than predicted! He'll review the most recent climate change data and projections, with emphasis on the northeastern United States.

Tues., Dec. 15, 7:30 p.m., Central United Methodist Church, 17 Nanticoke Ave., Endicott.

Spickard Award Nominations Sought

Nominees are sought for the annual Linda J. Spickard Award, honoring the memory of a former group chair and community environmental activist. Nominees must have gone the extra mile to protect and preserve the environment. Send name and brief bio to Julian Shepherd at jshepher@binghamton.edu. Deadline is December 5.

ExCom Nominations Open

Hankering to be a more active environmentalist? Then consider joining the Executive Committee of the Susquehanna Group of the Sierra Club for 2010. To nominate yourself or someone else, send a name and brief bio to jshepher@binghamton.edu. Nominees must be Sierra Club members. ExCom meetings are held from 7:30-9 p.m. on the first Tuesday of the month, September-June and members serve two-year terms.

BU Nature Preserve Outing

A guided tour of the Binghamton University Nature Preserve has been postponed until spring.

Update on Former ExCom'ers

Scott Lauffer and Kathy Cronin are safely back in NY after being involved in an auto accident in Utah. They had just completed a volunteer assignment at Bryce Canyon National Park. They plan to attend Sierra Club events as much as they can over the next few months. Kathy is recovering from head and neck injuries; she expects to be fully healed in six months. They thank all who offered their concern and support.

Water Contamination is Topic of Talk

A forum on "Water Contamination From Toxic Well Drilling" will be presented on Wed. Nov. 18, at 7 p.m., in the Sanctuary, Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Binghamton, 183 Riverside Dr., Binghamton.

Presenters are Stephen Pennin-groth, Ph.D., Biochemical Sciences; Executive Director, Community Science Institute, Ithaca, Non-Profit NYS Certified Water Testing Lab. He'll discuss risks posed by drilling fluids on ground/surface water; legally admissible baseline water testing.

Also speaking is Helen Slottje, Public Interest Lawyer, Ithaca. Active in gas drilling concerns, she's the lead attorney for citizens of Horseheads regarding the proposed Schlumberger facility, the Southern Tier base camp for drilling operations. She will address legal challenges concerning residents/communities.

The public is invited. A free will offering will be taken. The event is co-sponsored by BRSC, the Green Sanctuary Committee of UUCB and Susquehanna Group of the Sierra Club.

Sierra Club Calendars Make Great Holiday Gifts

They feature dozens of beautiful photographs of nature and their purchase benefits the work of your local Sierra club. Prices are \$12 for a wall calendar and \$13 for a an engagement calendar. Contact Vivian Stevens at 748-9865 to purchase yours.

Marcellus Shale Drilling — in a Nutshell

Our region is rich in fresh water, streams and creeks, bucolic farmland and outstanding scenery. But we also have a rich supply of natural gas in what geologists call the Marcellus Shale layer, running far below the Southern Tier of New York and Northern Tier of Pennsylvania. And tapping that source of fuel threatens all of our natural resources.

New technology techniques of horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing has made natural gas in the Marcellus Shale layer accessible for the first time. Companies have contracted for drilling rights to this layer with citizens through the region, often paying \$5,000 or more an acre.

The DEC recently released an 800-page-plus report on the rules and regulations governing this type of drilling. But after watching how oil companies have operated in Pennsylvania drilling operations, many question whether any regulations will govern their action, without taking them to court after the pollution has occurred.

Here are some facts you should know and take into consideration:

! Approximately 1 million gallons of water are forced deep into the ground each time a well is fractured, and there may be many hundreds, in fact, thousands of wells, at a density of 16 per square mile. Wells could be re-fracked every 5 years.

! Many compounds, some of them toxic, are used to fracture a well, the composition of which is considered “proprietary” and not available to the public. If leaks occur, these compounds could contaminate ground or surface water.

! Fracturing produces huge quantities of contaminated waste water, which may have to be treated by our local sewage treatment plant — already overburdened. Neither the technology nor the capacity to treat this hazardous waste now exists.

! There will be impacts on our roads, traffic patterns, noise levels, aesthetics and air quality (including emissions from the drilling operations, drilling equipment, compressors and test burn-offs).

! Local businesses, farming and real estate, and local residents who enjoy a good quality of life in the Southern Tier, depend on our excellent water, air and soil quality.

! What you can do:

Attend a DEC Hearing: 7 p.m., Nov. 12, Chenango Valley High School. Doors open at 6 p.m. to submit questions.

Write: Your state legislators. Go to www.nysenate.gov/ or www.nyassembly.gov/ to find your legislator’s contact information.

Join the BRSC Gas Production Task Force. More information at www.binghamtonsustainability.org

Legislative Update "Bigger Better Bottle Bill"

A decision by Federal District Court Judge Deborah Batts allowed provisions of the "Bigger Better bottle Bill" to go into effect immediately and the bottled water expansion to take place on Oct. 31. Implementation of the NY state Bottle Bill had been delayed by a lawsuit filed by the bottled water industry. Now, the state can start collecting 80 percent of the unclaimed deposits on beverage containers; to extend the state's deposit law to include bottled water; the compensation to stores increases from 2 to 3.5 cents per container, and many redemption centers, on the verge of collapse and needing the fee increase, will stay in business. More than \$100 million in revenue will be added to the state budget.

Global Warming Pollution Control Act (S.4315/A.7572). The bill requires an 80 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from all sources by 2050. If enacted, it will be the strongest carbon cap legislation in the country (passed Assembly, pending in Senate).

Green Jobs-Green NY Act (S.5888/A.9801). This bill will establish the "Green Jobs/Green New York Program with the goal of creating thousands of new green jobs and training the workers to fill them, while making one million homes, businesses and not-for-profits in New York more energy efficient (Passed Assembly and Senate and signed into law by the Governor).

Electronic Equipment Reuse and Recycling Act (S.6047/A.9049). This bill requires manufacturers of electronic equipment to take back their share of waste and ensure that it is properly handled and recycled (Passed Assembly, in Senate Codes Committee).

Clean Water Protection/Flood Prevention Act (S.4956/A.6363). Hundreds of wetlands are at risk of destruction because they are not covered under state or federal laws. This bill closes a regulatory gap, giving New York regulatory authority over wetlands of one acre or more (Passed the Assembly, in Senate Environmental Conservation Committee).

For more information about these bills, go to::
<http://www.nysenate.gov/> and paste the bill number in the search box. You can also use the site to find your senator's contact information to discuss the issue with him or her.

Governor's Proposal:

Governor David Paterson, in his proposed budget, includes a Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, that would transfer \$90 million from RGGI proceeds and the Environmental Protection Fund to the General Fund to cover the state's budget shortfall. The Atlantic Chapter is opposed to raiding this fund.

Contact Gov. Paterson at <http://www.ny.gov>.

In the U.S. Senate/House: Fracturing Responsibility and Awareness of Chemicals Act (S.1215/H.R. 7231).

This will remove an exemption under the Safe Drinking Water Act which allows mining companies to keep secret the chemicals and toxins they use in natural gas drilling. Rep. Maurice Hinchey co-authored this bill.



**CLIP and SEND
Membership Application**

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Select a membership level:

Introductory \$25

Intro On-line \$15

Individual Regular \$39

Joint Regular \$49

Please pay to Sierra Club via personal check, or apply via website.

F94Q W0814

Please do not send me the free expedition pack. Put my total contribution toward protecting the environment.

Mail this form to:

Sierra Club Member Services,
85 Second Street,
2nd Floor,
San Francisco, CA 94105-3441
Thank you! Contributions, gifts and dues to the Sierra Club are not tax deductible; they support our effective advocacy and lobbying efforts.

General Meetings:

Everyone interested is welcome at all Sierra Club activities, whether or not a member (except for Executive Committee meetings). General meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. on the third Tuesday of each month, except July and August. They are held at Central United Methodist Church, 17 Nanticoke Ave., Endicott, NY (on Route 26 — from Route 17, follow 26 north to Endicott, west on East Main, north of Nanticoke.) The public is welcome and refreshments are served following the meeting. Contact Julian Shepherd at jshepher@binghamton.edu for more information.

Sierra Club Websites:

Each of these provides links to the other two:

National: <http://www.sierraclub.org>

Atlantic Chapter (NY State):

<http://newyork.sierraclub.org>

Susquehanna Group (NY Southern

Tier- Binghamton - area):

<http://newyork.sierraclub.org/>

Susquehanna

To Be on a List-Serve:

To be on a list-serve (low volume!) for announcements about meetings, outings and other events, send your full name and preferred e-mail address to Erin Riddle at erinriddle@verizon.net



Susquehanna Group
of the Sierra Club
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We're on the Web:

<http://newyork.sierraclub.org/susquehanna>



Electronic Newsletters

To be friendlier to the environment, we deliver our newsletters, in both html and pdf format, via our web site, <http://newyork.sierraclub.org/susquehanna/newsletter.shtml>. We also mail paper newsletters with our "Year in Review" articles in January, and those describing candidates in our elections, to all members. If you would like to have all newsletters mailed, please contact Jack Davis at 570-553-2081 or jkdavis@epix.net

Officers for 2009-2010

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