GOVERNOR, LEGISLATURE CLOSE ON REACHING GROUND BREAKING AGREEMENT ON CLIMATE CHANGE

By Robert Cieselski and Roger Downs

ew York State is on the verge of enacting groundbreaking climate change law. With comprehensive reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and 13 US federal agencies warning that there is at most a 12-year window to limit a complete climate catastrophe, it could not come at a more urgent time. Because of the new progressive shift in the Senate, led by Andrea Stewart-Cousins, the legislature is poised to pass the Climate and Community Protection Act, which has passed the Assembly for each of the last three years. The Sierra Club has been privileged to work with the over 160 environmental justice, social justice and labor groups that support the Climate and Community Protection Act (CCPA) and which have helped position the bill for successful passage.

Not to be outdone, Governor Cuomo unveiled his own “green new deal” package at January’s State of the State Address and put his own climate bill, the “Climate Leadership Act,” in his executive budget proposal. In spite of the exciting prospect of enacting strong climate legislation, it was determined that the issue was too complicated to be rushed through an already complicated budget process - leaving the second half of the legislative session to negotiate the details. What remains to be seen is whether the State Assembly, Senate and the Governor can forge an agreement from their divergent proposals that can lay the groundwork for meaningful climate action.

On the national level, the tragic political blunder of the Trump administration on climate change is a positive example of developing renewable energy, energy efficiency, and carbon capture. Not to be outdone, Governor Cuomo is acting ambitiously with what his experts and agency heads tell him we can get done to develop renewable energy.

A key aspect to establishing any effective climate policy is proper timing and facilitation of the transition from fossil fuel dependency to a 100% renewable energy future, without harming working people and disadvantaged communities along the way.

SUPPORTING RENEWABLE ENERGY WITH YOUR LOCAL OFFICIALS AND IN YOUR COMMUNITY

By Bob Cieselski and Susan Lawrence

he need to halt climate change becomes clearer every day. So does the need to promote the development of renewable energy and energy efficiency in our economy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in all sectors. Last year, our New York Energy Team commenced a Ready for 100 Campaign to bring awareness of the importance of renewable energy and energy efficiency to local governments and municipalities across the state. A number of our Sierrans have started to contact supervisors and mayors to sign a simple pledge to support renewable energy development. We’re asking you, our local members, to become involved with your local Sierra Club groups to bring this message to your elected leaders.

Besides obtaining pledges, the Ready for 100 Campaign also provides means for considering and acting on the many positive examples of developing renewable energy sources and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The 55-minute film Retrenching Dover gives eight wonderful examples of renewable energy successes nationwide, including clips of the Block Island Wind Turbine farm, the National Renewable Energy Lab in Golden, Colorado, the use of municipal electric buses and the replacement of fossil fuel jobs with renewable energy employment.

Additionally, our Energy Team has developed and released the stories of a number of local successes in the energy sector in New York State. These inspirational stories are examples of how various communities have reduced greenhouse gas emissions and enhanced their local economies through clean energy development. Many of these advances in renewables and energy efficiency have come about through NYS programs.

These stories include the advantages of Community Choice Aggregation (municipal governments making renewable electricity available to all residents). Some towns have become Clean Energy Communities under the auspices of the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) with funding incentives for implementing clean energy goals, such as community solar programs and purchase of municipal electric vehicles. Many other communities have already implemented Climate Smart Community programs, where the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and NYSERDA offer continuing help to communities to save energy and develop renewables.

It is our hope that developing the discussion on renewables and energy conservation in all sectors will encourage our State Legislature and Governor Cuomo to focus on the importance of these issues.

If you’re interested in taking an active part in this important climate change work to protect your community and develop renewable sourced energy, please contact your group or chapter leaders, or go to our Atlantic Chapter website at http://atlantic2.sierraclub.org.

Bob is the Atlantic Chapter Energy Committee Chair and Susan is a member of the Energy Committee.
EARTH DAY 2019: PROTECT OUR SPECIES

This year marks the 49th anniversary of Earth Day, and the stakes could not be higher. We are in the end game, if you will, of determining whether we have the resolve, strength and persistence to ensure that the Earth we know — and all its diversity, multiplicity and interdependence of biotic and abiotic elements, including ourselves — survives. That the planet will remain is not in doubt, but in what form is where we have the opportunity to make an impact through some rapid and significant choices we make now.

The first Earth Day, celebrated on April 22, 1970, was created by Senator Gaylord Nelson (D-Wisconsin) and organized by Denis Hayes in response to a massive oil spill — over three million gallons — off the coast of Santa Barbara, California, that killed over 10,000 seabirds, dolphins, seals and sea lions. The spill occurred on January 28, 1969, when a well drilled by Union Oil blew out. In addition to Earth Day, this disaster spurred the creation of the National Environmental Policy Act, the first of many new environmental protection laws sparked by the national outcry about that ca-lamity.

There is also a competing Equinox Earth Day on March 20, set to coincide with the spring equinox in the Northern Hemisphere and the autumnal equinox in the Southern Hemisphere. This date was introduced by environmentalist John McConnell at the 1969 UNESCO Conference on the Environment. The April 22 date was chosen by Hayes to maximize participation by college students as he determined the date didn’t coincide with exams or college breaks.

The theme for Earth Day 2019 is “Protect Our Species,” as in all our many species inhabiting the planet. But it can must be understood that, in so doing, we are protecting ourselves by maintaining the interdependent biodiversity necessary to maintain a healthy, sustainable biosphere. And this message can’t be emphasized enough given the current rate of species decline. The scientific community is basically in accord with the finding that the extinction rate on the planet today is between 1,000 and 10,000 times the previously observed background rate of extinction of 0.1 species per million, or one to five species per year — a rate not experienced for the last 60 million years. In other words, we are on the cusp of a sixth mass extinction.

The very first mammal species — the Bramble Cay melomys — a small rodent indigenous to a tiny, sovereign Australian island in the Torres Strait near Papua New Guinea — was officially declared extinct during the week of February 18, 2019, with human-induced climate change listed as the cause of the mammal’s demise. Although official recognition of the animal’s extinction occurred this week, none had been sighted since 2004. Though this is the first mammal, many other species of amphibians, fish, birds and insects have preceded the Bramble Cay melomys across the bridge into extinction courtesy of mankind in recent decades.

So, what can we do, both individually and collectively, to help stave off this march toward mass extinction? Well, the list is only limited by your imagination, energy and will. Stopping and reversing Climate Chaos, protecting and restoring habitats, stopping and cleaning up pollution in all its many forms — all of these are paths toward a better, sustainable future for all species. Many different organizations have projects and campaigns to kickstart your imagination and activism. You could use this Earth Day as a launch pad for a multi-part, multi-year campaign — a launch pad for a multi-part, multi-year campaign.

Notes from the Chair

The Bramble Cay melomys, first mammal to be declared driven to extinction due to anthropogenic Climate Disruption.

FOR THE CONSERVATION CHAIR

Our groups in the Atlantic Chapter have a remarkable array of projects and initiatives. Some are covered in Sierra Atlantic articles but others may not be known to members in each region.

For the Summer issue, we would like to highlight the groups’ projects and will be reaching out to group chairs and conservation committee chairs, but would also welcome reports of projects from other volunteers in the Chapter. Please send your notes to ebanks@daemen.edu.
COMMUNITY ENERGY
GIVE US THE POWER TO
CHOOSE GREEN

By Tina Lieberman with Professor Jeffrey Corbin

A s an environmental activist who spends countless hours contemplating climate change, I find myself asking, ‘What’s the one project I can commit to as a volunteer that will do the most to reduce greenhouse gas emissions?’ I’m not talking about changing all the bulbs in my house to LEDs or riding public transit to work or composting my food scraps. Those are certainly important personal actions. I’m asking How can I help my community save TONS and TONS of carbon from going into the atmosphere? How can I help a huge swath of my fellow residents do our fair share toward mitigating the climate crisis?

Last year I found what is undoubtedly one of the most significant things ordinary citizens can do to transform their own community’s greenhouse gas emissions. It’s called Community Choice Aggregation — or CCA for short. CCA is a program authorized by the NYS Public Service Commission and supported by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA). It enables a community to link with other communities to get affordable, wholesale ‘green’ electricity for all its residents and small businesses.

You probably know Costco and BJ’s, where you can buy bulk at savings. These ‘buyer’s clubs’ leverage their buying power to bring bulk goods to the marketplace with discounts on behalf of the consumer. You can do the same for electricity in the same city. Creating a renewable CCA, it turns out, is one of the easiest and most impactful ways to encourage local solar/wind. Enter CCA, through which we, as voters, can tell our municipal officials that we want them to provide a much higher percentage of renewable energy — even 100% — as the default electricity supply.

CCA gives communities the power to choose where their energy comes from and allows us to support local sources of clean energy and jobs.

With CCA, your utility still ensures delivery of the electricity to your home, maintains the power lines and responds to service outages. And you still get the familiar-looking bill from your utility company.

Seven states currently allow this electricity purchase option: New York, California, Illinois, Massachusetts, Ohio, New Jersey, and Rhode Island. In 2016, The Public Service Commission approved the CCA model for NYS Westchester County municipalities were the first to form a CCA and negotiate a three-year electricity supply contract. The Westchester CCA gave its members communities a choice of conventional ‘brown’ electricity or a 100% ‘green’ option, both at savings over the consumer utility rate. Of 24 member communities, 21 chose the 100% renewable supply. From 2016 to 2018, Sustainable Westchester estimates that it collectively saved its participants nearly $10 million on their utility bills and prevented hundreds of thousands of tons of carbon each year from entering the atmosphere. Recently, Sustainable Westchester negotiated a second contract term for 2019–2020. The new rates are 7.76 cents/kwh for 100% renewable energy, with the ‘brown’ supply choice only a fraction of a penny less at 7.71 cents/kwh. What’s more, as part of this contract, small businesses will pay the same as the residential rate, saving them 20% off their electricity bills. Three municipalities that had opted for standard supply in the first contract selected renewables, and two new municipalities joined the CCA, opting for the ‘green’ supply. See www.westchesterpower.org/press-releases/ and its 2017 annual report.

As of now, Westchester has the only operating CCA in NYS — but not for long. The mid-Hudson Valley, Southern Tier/Ithaca area and Rochester suburbs are starting their own Community Choice programs. To start a CCA, each municipality must pass a local law, choose an administrator, and have an implementation plan approved by the Public Service Commission. Since 2016, 170 local governments have expressed interest in CCA, 81 municipalities have passed local laws enabling CCA and 71 municipalities have been approved to be part of a CCA. By the end of 2019, up tp 920,000 New Yorkers may be enjoying the benefits of a CCA, while significantly reducing their greenhouse gas emissions.

Democratizing Our Energy Supply

Currently, your utility company decides what kind of electricity you get. In New York, your typical supply is a mix of fossil fuels, nuclear, and hydro-power (a renewable) with a smidgen of solar/wind. Enter CCA, through which we, as voters, can tell our municipal officials that we want them to provide a much higher percentage of renewable energy — even 100% — as the default electricity supply.

CCA gives communities the power to choose where their energy comes from and allows us to support local sources of clean energy and jobs.

CCA gives communities the power to choose where our energy comes from and allows us to support local sources of clean energy and jobs. We can make the responsible choice of putting less carbon into the atmosphere, while also taking advantage of the fact that renewable energy costs are dropping.

Once a municipality and its CCA approves the new renewable energy contracts, all residents and small businesses within the town or city are automatically enrolled, unless they choose to ‘opt out’ and stay with their local utility. This means the vast majority of residents are plugged into renewable energy, which has a whopping effect on emissions. To put it in perspective, a mid-size city of about 40,000 households might proudly reduce its carbon footprint by changing 10,000 light fixtures to LEDs. If that same city creates a renewable CCA, it would be the equivalent of swapping 560,000 street lamps!

Cutting carbon emissions on a grand scale is what makes CCA one of the most impactful actions we can do to combat climate change.

With CCA, your utility still ensures delivery of the electricity to your home, maintains the power lines and responds to service outages. And you still get the familiar-looking bill from your utility company.

Cutting carbon emissions on a grand scale is what makes CCA one of the most impactful actions we can do to combat climate change. Because of that, I believe my volunteer hours working to form a CCA in New York’s Capital District to be an excellent investment. Like you, I will continue to pursue my own path toward a low-carbon lifestyle. But, as more and more New Yorkers are enrolled in CCAs that deliver clean, renewable and local energy, the impact will be measured by the megawatt, not just by the light bulb.

Tina Lieberman (tliberme1@gmail.com) is Education Chair, Sierra Club Hudson-Mohawk Group. Jeffrey Corbin (corbin@union.edu) is professor of biology at Union College. Both are members of the Capital District CCA Steering Committee. Please contact them if you’re interested in helping form a CCA in the Capital Region.
Governor, Legislature Close On Reaching Ground Breaking Agreement On Climate Change continued from page 1

and complete carbon neutrality in the electric sector based upon years of incremental progress and negotiation with utilities, developers and labor unions. Committing New York to a 70% renewable energy grid by 2030 and a 100% carbon-neutral grid by 2040 puts New York ahead of every state in the union in the generation sector. But there hasn’t been, to date, a willingness to codify emission-reduction goals for the transportation and building sectors (34% and 32% respectively of NY’s annual GHG emissions) largely because our blueprint for how to get there and at what pace is still uncertain. But, as we have seen time and time again, the political will to act languishes without enforceable goals codified by statute into law.

Leaders in the Assembly have based their sector-wide (i.e., electric, transportation, heating and cooling, manufacturing) climate change plan upon the dire warnings of climate scientists. They’ve worked from recommended time frames and suggested carbon-emission reductions to inform what NY has to do to help stave off a global catastrophe. Their solution, the CCPA, would put New York State on the path to 100% greenhouse gas reduction across all sectors by 2050. It would set benchmarks and reporting requirements to ensure we are meeting our goals along the way. The bill also promotes healthy communities by ensuring that 40% of all climate mitigation funds are invested in disadvantaged neighborhoods and guarantees good jobs in the renewable energy sector by codifying fair labor practices.

It’s good news that the governor and legislative leaders both recognize that the direction of the global economy favors those that embrace the financial benefits of renewable energy and efficiency technologies.

Key to establishing any effective climate policy is proper timing and facilitation of the transition from fossil fuel dependency to a 100% renewable energy future, without harming working people and disadvantaged communities along the way. The pace of this transition has been strongly debated. In some ways, it is not unlike the dynamics of evacuating people from a burning theater. Moving too fast in a panicked way has the same dire consequence as does not moving fast enough. While the CCPA institutes a methodical process to avoid “trampling” disadvantaged communities and NY’s workforce through several years of public outreach, data collecting, reporting, planning and rulemaking, there may be more immediate actions that can be codified to make sure progress is made during these initial, essential stages.

Part of the strength of CCPA is the codification of goals, which makes a New York State commitment to decarbonization enforceable. While some of the provisions of CCPA will take years to be fully operational, some of the goals go into effect within months of the bill’s enactment, namely codifying the goal of 50% renewable energy by 2030. It seems reasonable that this goal should be synchronized with the governor’s recently announced 70% clean energy standard by 2030 and a 100% carbon neutral grid by 2040. But both Gov. Cuomo and the legislature need to identify other targets and thresholds in the transportation and building sectors that are consistent with IPCC recommendations. These should be codified early, even as the road map to carbon-free NY under CCPA takes longer to unfold (such as 50% emission reductions from the transportation sector by 2030).

In February, Senator Todd Kaminsky, Chair of the Senate Environmental Conservation Committee, held hearings on the Climate and Community Protection Act in Albany, NYC, Long Island, Syracuse, and the Hudson Valley as a means for the Senate to gather information to support their position on a potential bill. The expert response and public voice captured in these hearings have been invaluable in helping to craft a potential bill to combat the looming climate emergency. It appeared that nothing said in the hearings dissuaded senators from the continued push for strong climate legislation. It is also clear that Mr. Kaminsky and his senate colleagues have an increasingly important role in helping broker agreement on the CCPA, where there is more distance between the Assembly and the Governor.

Much of the strength of the governor’s own “green new deal” comes from initiatives he proposes to do unilaterally without needing the agreement of the legislature — like doubling procurement targets for offshore wind (OSW) to 9 Gigawatts (GW) and small scale distributed solar projects under the NY Sun program to 6 GW — using the same labor standards enshrined in the CCPA. Coming to agreement on codifying enforceable sector-wide goals for carbon reduction should not be insurmountable. The good news is that the governor and legislative leaders all recognize that the direction of the global economy favors those who embrace the financial benefits of renewable energy and efficiency technologies. They also know that if NY ignores climate science and adheres to fossil fuel dependency, we’ll suffer severe, adverse economic consequences. Ultimately, if we don’t act resolutely together, irreversible carbon-emission cycles will peri- petuate out-of-control warming and untold degradation to human society and the ecology around us. Then we all will lose.

With the governor pushing forward with major energy efficiency, stor- age and renewable energy development programs, and the legislature advancing overarching equity and emission-reduction goals for climate pollution laws — the formula for a nation-leading policy is within our grasp.

It is imperative for the Senate, Assembly and Governor to come together in 2019 and pass bold, comprehensive climate legislation.
THE DRAWDOWN PROJECT TO REVERSE GLOBAL WARMING — EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

By Lisa DiCaprio
Conservation Chair, Sierra Club NYC

Project Drawdown comprises 100 existing solutions for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and reversing global warming.

I learned about Project Drawdown at a September 24, 2018 event at the New York Society for Ethical Culture that was produced by Climate Reality Leaders Elly Lessin, the Pachamama Alliance, and Monica Weiss, New York Society for Ethical Culture and 350NYC. Over 700 people attended the Drawdown event, which was part of Climate Week NYC 2018, and co-sponsored by the New York Society for Ethical Culture, 350NYC and the Pachamama Alliance.

Each Drawdown solution "reduces greenhouse gases by avoiding emissions and/or by sequestering carbon dioxide already in the atmosphere." Drawdown is defined as "that point in time when the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere begins to decline on a year-to-year basis."

The Drawdown timeline correlates with the conclusions of the October 2018 UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Special Report: Global Warming of 1.5°. The report compares climate change impacts at 1.5° Celsius (2.7° Fahrenheit) versus 2°C (3.6°F) of global warming since the Industrial Revolution. Currently, average temperatures have increased by about 1°C (1.8°F) Limiting warming to 1.5°C will require reducing carbon emissions from human activities "by about 45 percent from 2010 levels by 2030 reaching ‘net zero’ around 2050."

Project Drawdown is described on its website and in The New York Times best-selling book Drawdown: The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming (Penguin 2017), edited by author and environmental activist Paul Hawken, the project founder. The lead writer for Drawdown is Dr. Katharine Wilkinson, the Vice-President of Communications and Engagement at Project Drawdown. Dr. Jonathan Foley is the project's Executive Director.

To date, the Drawdown coalition includes over 70 research fellows from six continents and 22 countries as well as more than 120 advisors.

Eighty existing solutions were selected based on five criteria, which are explained in Drawdown's Frequently Asked Questions.

• Is the solution currently available and scaling?

The seven sectors of solutions are:

• Electricity Generation
• Food
• Women and Girls
• Buildings and Cities
• Land Use
• Transport
• Materials

The solutions in the Women and Girls sector facilitate the realization of women's potential, contributions to sustainability solutions and stabilization of the world's population, which is projected by the UN to increase to 9.7 billion by 2050. Providing women smallholder farmers with equal access to finance and resources will increase agricultural yields and reduce deforestation.

For each of the 80 solutions, Drawdown provides an essay that describes its main features and typically includes a photograph, a ranking, and achievable results by 2050 with regard to carbon dioxide equivalent (CO2e) emission reductions, net cost, net savings and impact. The essays are accompanied by references, a technical summary and the modeling methodology.

Here are the impacts described for a single solution from four of the seven sectors.

**ELECTRICITY GENERATION, Wind Turbines (offshore), Rank #22: IM-PACT:** For offshore wind, growing from 1 percent to 4 percent could avoid 14.1 gigatons of emissions. If a combined cost of $8.8 trillion, wind turbines can deliver net savings of $8.2 trillion over three decades of

continued on page 6

GET INVOLVED WITH THE SIERRA CLUB ATLANTIC CHAPTER TODAY!

You may be receiving our newsletters and the Sierra magazine, but to be sure you're getting all of our communications and to learn about getting involved in our work, our website offers a variety of options.

By visiting www.newyork.sierracub.org, you'll find email signups for:

• Atlantic Chapter Updates, including general Chapter updates as well as any take-action emails
• Sierra Atlantic Newsletter, the electronic version of the quarterly newsletter
• Volunteer Connection, where you can sign up for any of our available positions and get more involved with the Atlantic Chapter and your local Groups.

All of these sign-up forms are in the right column on the homepage of the Atlantic Chapter website.

You can also stay up-to-date with what's happening by following us on Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/SierraClubAtlanticChapter and our Twitter page https://twitter.com/SierraClubNY
Earth Day 2019: Protect Our Species
continued from page 2

plan to envision a better, healthier bio-
sphere for all life. Everyday can and
should be an earth day.

- Start a project at your home, school,
  library — or in your community — to
  plant pollinator-friendly gardens grow-
  ing native plants without pesticides.
  Use organic methods to regulate pests.

- Initiate a community garden project in
  your school, village or county-wide.
  Again, avoid pesticides and try using
  non-GMO heirloom seeds. Think also
  about a local farmers’ market.

- Start a ‘carbon reduction challenge’ in
  your school, business, church, town,
  village or county. See who can become
  the ‘climate champion’ each week, month,
  year by driving less, walking or biking
  more, weatherizing homes, switching
  lightbulbs, reducing meat in diets, buying
  local foods, reducing water use, and re-
  using and recycling items instead of buying new, etc.

- Create a tree-planting campaign in
  your community or state. Build out
  the canopy or reforest empty lots with
  trees and pollinator-friendly plants and
  bird-friendly green cover. All species
  must be native to the area.

- Begin a ‘plastic bag ban’ campaign in
  your community. Have a design con-
test for a graphic to go on the reusable
  cloth bag to distribute as an alternative.
  Strive to get local ordinances passed at
  the town, city and county levels to ban
  single-use plastic bags.

- Initiate a ‘prevent plastic pollution’
  (P3) campaign similar to the ‘carbon
  reduction challenge,’ and award ‘P3
  power awards’ to those individuals
  and groups who collect the most plas-
tic pollution each week. If you live
  near a body of water, vary the location
  of collection goals to land and water
  weeks. Maybe even throw in a couple
  of ‘nurdle mines’ — nine days going to
  beaches and collecting those tiny
  plastic building blocks found almost
  everywhere (but wear gloves).

These are just a few ideas. Many more
can be found through campaign links
on the National Sierra Club website
(https://www.sierracubclub.org/home),
the Earth Day Network website (https://
www.earthday.org/campaigns/),
Plants for the Planet (https://www.
plant-for-the-planet.org/en/home/),
Roots and Shoots (http://www.rootsand
shoots.org) and The Great Global Nurdle
Hunt (https://www.nurdlehunt.org.uk/).
And, of course — your creative mind.

The bottom line remains — doing noth-
ing is no longer an option. But doing
something can be positive, enriching
and sustainable, as well as community
building and enhancing.

The Drawdown Project to Reverse Global Warming
Environmental Resources
continued from page 5

operation. These are conservative
estimates, however Costs are falling
annually and new technological im-
provements are already being installed,
increasing capacity to generate more
electricity at the same or lower cost.”
(See also the impact on onshore wind
power. Rank #2.)

WOMEN AND GIRLS, Educating Girls. Rank #6:

- IMPACT: Two solutions influence
  family size and global population;
educating girls and family planning.
  Because the exact dynamic between
  these solutions is impossible to deter-
  mine, our models allocate 50 percent
  of the total potential impact to each.
  We assume that these impacts result
  from thirteen years of schooling, in-
  cluding primary through secondary
  education. According to the United
  Nations Educational, Scientific, and
  Cultural Organization, by closing an
  annual financing gap of $59 billion,
  universal education in low- and low-
  er-middle-income countries can be
  achieved. It could result in 59.6 giga-
  tons of emissions reduced by 2050.
  The return on that investment is in-
calculable.

BUILDINGS AND CITIES, Insul-
ation, Rank #51:

- IMPACT: Retrofitting buildings with
  insulation is a cost-effective solution
  for reducing energy required for heat-
ing and cooling. If 54 percent of exist-
ing residential and commercial build-
  ings install insulation, 8.3 gigatons of
  emissions can be avoided at an imple-
  mentation cost of $3.7 trillion. Over
  thirty years, net savings could be $2.5
  trillion. However, insulation measures
  can last one hundred years or more,
  realizing lifetime savings in excess of
  $4.2 trillion. (This solution mentions
  Passive House, an international build-
ing efficiency standard that saves up
  to 90% of the energy required for heat-
ing and cooling conventional
  buildings and 75% of all energy usage
  when electricity is included in the to-
  tal. For more information on Passive
  House, see my article, ‘High-rise Pas-
  sive House in NYC,’ in the Fall 2017
  Sierra Atlantic.)

TRANSPORT, Ships, Rank #52:

- IMPACT: With an efficiency gain
  of 50 percent across the international
  shipping industry, 7.9 gigatons of
  carbon dioxide emissions can be
  avoided by 2050. That could save
  $42 billion in fuel costs over thirty
  years and $1 trillion over the life of
  the ships.

Implementing Drawdown Solutions.

Throughout the world, organiza-
tions, individuals, NGOs, corporations
and educators are implementing Draw-
down solutions. Initiatives that provide
a framework for activism include the
Pachamama Alliance’s Drawdown Solutions: Getting Into Action Work-
shop, Drawdown Learn and the an-
nual Drawdown EcoChallenge.

The Pachamama Alliance’s Draw-
down Solutions: Getting Into Action
Workshop is a multi-section work-
shop offered in locations throughout
the US. Founded in 1996, the Pachama-
ma Alliance describes its purpose in
these terms: “With roots deep in the
Amazon rainforest, our programs inte-
grate indigenous wisdom with mod-
ern knowledge to support personal,
and collective, transformation that is
the catalyst to bringing forth an en-
vironmentally sustainable, spiritually
fulfilling, socially just human pres-
ence on this planet.”

In NYC, Elly Lessin and Keith Voos,
volunteers with the Pachamama Alli-
ance, led a five-section workshop in
October and November 2018 that
gave participants an opportunity to
learn more about the Drawdown Learn
and to select a solution or solutions
of particular interest for which they
created an action plan.

This workshop inspired Andrea Ken-
nedey, founder of Fashionex, Inc and
a faculty member teaching fashion
sustainability courses at LIM College
in NYC, which focuses on the study of
business and fashion, to develop a
project on the fashion industry relat-
ing to Transport, Ships, Solution #52.
As described in this solution, eighty
percent of global trade, by weight, is
transported by ships that are respon-
sible for 11 percent of emissions from
transportation. Andrea organized a
panel for the April 12, 2019 second
annual Fashion & Sustainability Sum-
mit at LIM on how to reduce the en-
vironmental impact of the shipping
industry. This goal can be achieved by
retrofitting container ships with
ducktails, air compressors and ener-
gy sails to increase their fuel efficien-
cy; and consolidating the number of
trips required for the global manufac-
ture and distribution of clothing.
The panel will be moderated by An-
drea, who will provide an introduc-
tion to the Drawdown solutions on
ships. The speakers include Barak
Ayata, Senior Director of Sea and Air
Logistics, North America, at Kuehne
and Nagel Inc.

On January 10, 2019, I attended a
follow-up to the workshop in which
participants shared ideas for projects
that relate to a variety of Drawdown
solutions, such as a plant-rich diet,
composting, bioplastics, the installa-
tion of rooftop solar and communicating
about Drawdown in NYC public schools.

The participants decided to con-
verse on a monthly basis to discuss
how they are developing their
Drawdown projects and initiatives
to publicize Project Drawdown.

Elly Lessin and Keith Voos are
planning to organize additional
multi-session Drawdown work-
shops in the NYC area in the future.
If you’re interested in participat-
ing, write to drawndownpachanyc@gmail.com

Drawdown Learn is an initiative
to develop resources for K-12, in-
cluding the K-12 Next Generation
Science Standards (NGSS) higher
education and community sustain-
ability initiatives.

The annual Drawdown EcoChal-
lenge, developed from the Earth
Month EcoChallenge, was first or-
ganized in 2009 by the Northwest
Earth Institute as an online platform
in which participants earn points for
taking an action that reduces carbon
emissions. The April 2018 Drawdown
EcoChallenge involved 65 countries,
50 states and 7,247 participants, of
whom 2,181 focused on the Wom-
en and Girls sector of solutions. For
the 2019 Drawdown EcoChallenge,
which will be held from April 5 to 24,
2019, see: https://www.drawdown.
drawdownecochallenge

The second edition of Drawdown
is scheduled for publica-
tion in 2020.

* Note: The Sierra Club does not
support all of the Drawdown solu-
tions; for example, we oppose nuclear
power and waste-to-energy.

** For more information on this IPCC
report, see my article, ‘Key Resources
on Recent Climate Change Reports,’ in
the Fall/Winter 2018 Sierra Atlantic.

Key Resources on Project Drawdown

- Project Drawdown: https://www.
drawdown.org

- Drawdown (Future) Events: https://
  www.drawdown.org/events

- The video for the September 24,
  2018 Project Drawdown event at
  the New York Society for Ethical
  Culture: https://www.youtube.com/
  watch?v=v4VDYHg6vAo

- Katherine Wilkinson, TEDWomen
  2018, November 2018, “How empow-
ering women and girls can stop glob-
al warming”: https://www.ted.com/
talks/katherine_wilkinson_how_em-
powering_women_and_girls_can_stop_global_warming

- Jonathan Foley, GreenBiz 19, Feb-
  ruary 28, 2019, “ Mobilizing a Move-
  ment to Advance Climate Action”: 
  https://www.ustream.tv/record-
ed/120377526?t=384

For more details about Project Draw-
down and additional resources, see

For more details about Project Draw-
down and additional resources, see
People living near nuclear energy facilities have been failed, once again, by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC).

On January 24, 2019, the two Democratic commissioners on the NRC dissented from a vote by the three Republican commissioners to make voluntary, rather than mandatory, recommendations to lessen the catastrophe that could occur at US reactors during extreme weather conditions. This follows seven and a half years in which NRC staff and stakeholders studied updated methods of lessening the danger of a repeat of the Japanese Fukushima Daiichi disaster of March 11, 2011, in which multiple reactors melted down after an earthquake and tsunami. To this day, radiation continues to contaminate the land and the ocean, and people are reluctant to return to their homes.

The West Valley Nuclear Waste Facility, 30 miles south of Buffalo, has housed radioactive and toxic waste for over 50 years on a site that should never have been allowed to hold any such waste. It would not be permitted today. The plant was built to reprocess nuclear fuel but the endeavor was problematic from the beginning and was closed in 1972 by its owner, Nuclear Fuel Services. The facility was put in place before there were any regulations on siting nuclear waste. It was, and continues to be, seriously unsuited to contain nuclear and hazardous waste.

There have been releases of radioactive material into Cattaraugus Creek, and Seneca land has been contaminated. If there were a release today, increasingly possible due to the intensity of storms caused by climate change, the Great Lakes and drinking water of millions could be contaminated. West Valley cannot safely contain radioactive and hazardous material. This is why the Sierra Club and other activist groups are demanding a full clean-up of the site and removal of all toxic material.

In the spring of 2018, the Department of Energy (DOE) and NYS Energy Research & Development Authority (NYSERDA) held hearings to prepare for the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement to determine the final disposition of the waste on site. Hundreds of NY residents, elected officials and indigenous people are demanding that the waste be dug up and removed from this dangerous location. We expect to see the SEIS report from DOE/NYSERDA this spring and will have the opportunity to make further comment.

Waiting for an official document does not, however, mean that there is any rest on the nuclear front. West Valley and nuclear waste sites across the country are facing a series of deregulation moves by the federal government that would exacerbate the already terrifying risk of radioactive exposure. There is the application by Holtec to open a large nuclear waste dump in New Mexico. If approved by the US Nuclear Regulatory Commis-
KEY RESOURCES ON RECENT CLIMATE CHANGE REPORTS PART II

By Lisa DiCaprio
Conservation Chair, Sierra Club NYC

In the ‘Key Resources on Recent Climate Change Reports’ column in the Fall/Winter Sierra Atlantic, I provided resources on the October 2018 UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report, the November 2018 Fourth National Climate Assessment Volume II: Impacts, Risks, and Adaption in the United States and the November 2018 Lancet report: ‘Countdown on health and climate change: shaping the health of nations for centuries to come.’

New studies published between December 2018 and February 2019 describe the acceleration of climate change impacts, such as the warming of the oceans, the melting of the Himalayan glaciers and the Antarctic ice sheet, sea level rise and the extensive loss of ice from thousands of lakes in the Northern Hemisphere. In chronological order, here are the titles and first two or three paragraphs of pertinent articles.


Carol Barford, “Key Internet Connections and Locations are at Risk from Rising Seas,” American Scientist, November–December 2018

‘In some metropolitan areas, between one fifth and one quarter of local internet links are at risk, and nearly one third of internet cables.’


‘A new analysis, published Thursday in the journal Science, found that the oceans are heating up 40 percent faster on average than a United Nations panel estimated five years ago. The researchers also concluded that ocean temperatures have broken records for several straight years.’


‘Today, plants and soil around the world absorb roughly a quarter of the greenhouse gases that humans release into the atmosphere, helping Earth avoid some of the worst effects of climate change. In an ideal situation, as levels of carbon dioxide increased, plants would soak up more of these emissions, helping to fuel their growth.’

‘But in a study published Wednesday in the journal Nature, researchers found that, under a warming climate, rather than absorbing more greenhouse gas emissions, plants and soil may start absorbing less, accelerating the rate of change.’

Richard B. Alley, “Are Antarctica’s Glaciers Collapsing?” Scientific American, February 2019

‘Rapid glacier retreat could push coastlines farther away from disaster once predicted…’


‘NEW DELHI — Rising temperatures in the Himalayas, home to most of the world’s tallest mountains, will melt at least one third of the region’s glaciers by the end of the century even if the world’s most ambitious climate change targets are met, according to a report released Monday.

“If those goals are not achieved, and global warming and greenhouse gas emissions continue at their current rates, the Himalayas could lose two thirds of its glaciers by 2100, according to the report, the Hindu Kush Himalaya Assessment.”


‘Global warming is melting glaciers in Greenland and Antarctica, but for millions of people, ice is vanishing closer to home as lakes lose their winter cover’


‘The Earth’s average surface temperature in 2018 was the fourth highest in nearly 140 years of record-keeping and a continuation of an unmistakable warming trend. NASA scientists announced Wednesday…’


‘For port authorities and logistics companies alike, sea level rise and infrastructure concerns are coming into view faster than ever before. With extreme weather events happening more frequently and sea levels estimated to rise as much as four feet by 2050, what used to be cemented into a master plan that could span many decades is now under water…’

continued on page 10

2019-20 NEW YORK STATE BUDGET YEILDS ENVIRONMENTAL VICTORIES

Governor Cuomo and the New York State Legislature included a number of important environmental funding and policy initiatives as part of the 2019-20 budget that was approved by both houses in time for the April 1st deadline. The new Senate under the leadership of Andrea Stewart-Cousins and her 7-seat democratic majority helped forge agreement on a number of issues that had been gridlocked for years. Among the major budget decisions that the Sierra Club rallied support for and the legislature and the Governor implemented:

• An Historic $300 million Environmental Protection Fund that maintains the integrity of the funding structure for critical programs like land acquisition, farmland and habitat protection, drinking water infrastructure and waste reduction.

• A $500 million Clean Water Infrastructure investment, part of a $2.5 billion, 5-year commitment to repair New York’s clean water systems, protect source water and eliminate drinking water contaminants.

• A statewide ban on plastic bags that ends the scourge of plastic pollution littering our parks, despoiling our communities and clogging our waterways. While the Sierra Club is disappointed that the legislation did not include a mandate for statewide fee on paper bag alternatives, there are provisions in the new law that allow NY counties to “opt in” to establish their own fees. It has been demonstrated that fees play a critical role in changing consumer behavior and help foster the bring-your-own-bag mindset that reduces pollution overall. The Sierra Club is committed to working with counties across the state to establish a 5-cent fee on paper bags — the proceeds of which will go to local reusable bag programs and the Environmental Protection Fund.

• A comprehensive food waste reuse and recycling policy that requires facilities that create more than 2 tons of food waste daily per week to divert that waste to replenish food banks, soup kitchens and shelters, and capture the methane from the rest of what is deemed inedible through digesters and composting programs. This groundbreaking policy infuses both compassion and consideration of climate change into a chronic solid waste issue that has been waiting for this solution.

• A Congestion Pricing plan for lower Manhattan that raises revenue for crumbling public transportation systems, while creating toll mecha-nisms that reduce traffic and vehicle emissions for New York City.

In addition, the Senate and Assembly acted before budget negotiations to jointly pass:

• A Ban on all offshore oil and gas extraction in NY.

The Trump administration announced in 2017 that 90% of America’s offshore waters would be open to oil and gas development, reversing an Obama-era ban on drilling. The new state law will ban all offshore leasing to fossil fuel extraction as well as place restrictions on the distribution networks required to process any oil or gas derived from offshore development.

• A Ban on Purse Seines for commercial harvesting of Menhaden

Current New York fishery permits allow for the harvest of menhaden, a staple Atlantic fish species, using large nets called “purse seines” that have the capacity to catch hundreds of thousands of fish and the marine animals that pursue them in a single cast. The new law will ban the use of this tech-nique so as not to set back the recovery of this keystone species and repeat the overfishing mistakes of the past.

Both bills await the Governor’s signature and he is expected to sign.

There is still much to be done in the second half of the legislative session. The Sierra Club looks forward to working with the Governor, the Senate and the Assembly in passing meaningful climate change legislation, strengthening laws to protect wetlands, establishing new rules to limit air and water pollution, and addressing toxics in consumer products, among other important issues that need to be addressed before the conclusion of the legislative session in June. Hopefully these initial budget successes are a prelude for what is to come.
ENVIRONMENTALISM 101
Sierra Club Anatomy & Physiology

By Kate Bartholomew
Finger Lakes Groups

N o matter how often or under what circumstances it occurs, this is always surprising when a Sierra Club member expresses a lack of understanding about the Club’s organizational structure. Perhaps they’re unaware of the connection between the national Club and the Chapter, or they don’t realize the Chapter is also subdivided into Groups, or they’re confused by all the various campaigns and teams the Club operates. Perhaps, given all these factors, I shouldn’t really be surprised! What I’ll attempt here is to establish some clarity about all the jumbled levels.

The Sierra Club is the largest and oldest grassroots environmental and conservation organization in the world. It was founded by John Muir in 1892 and today boasts over 3.5 million members and supporters. Since the 2016 election, that number grew substantially, much as it did after Reagan’s election in 1980.

The Sierra Club is, technically, an international organization because it has affiliates in Canada, but for the purpose of this article we’ll consider only the US Club. The national Club is divided into 63 chapters, one of which is the Atlantic Chapter. These chapters were established over time as the Club grew in size, with larger chapters subdividing and dividing again until the current number of Chapters was obtained. Initially, the Atlantic Chapter covered a far larger portion of the Atlantic coast — hence the name. Now it only encompasses New York State. Periodically, there have been discussions about a name change, but, as of this date, we’re still the Atlantic Chapter.

Each chapter is further divided into geographically defined Groups for localized affiliation and action. The Atlantic Chapter has eleven local groups. Membership in a group, from the national perspective, is determined by zip code. The Atlantic Chapter is working on an interactive map it hopes to have up on the Chapter website soon so new members can determine their local group affiliation. Some groups are geographically small but densely populated — like the New York City Group, while others are quite large but relatively sparsely populated — like the Hudson-Mohawk Group, which covers northeastern NYS.

Another source of confusion may be the various dues requests throughout the year. No matter the level of the Club to which you pay your dues or make additional contributions, you belong to all three levels — national, chapter and group. The Sierra Club has a ‘One Club’ policy that guarantees consistency throughout all levels of the organization in policies and procedures, so one dues payment covers it all. The only gray area may be during an individual’s college/university studies, when a home base is much more fluid. During that period, the individual is definitely a Sierra Club member, but membership in which chapter and group may be unclear.

This also means that the local group structure is basically the same as the chapter structure. Both have virtually the same bylaws, with a few exceptions. Both are governed by an executive committee (ExCom), which hires and negotiates the national framework.

That is definitely a Sierra Club member, but not necessarily a member of the national organization in policies and procedures.

Given the size and complexity of its governance structure as well as the organic nature of its growth, it’s not really surprising members get confused when asked to define the Sierra Club’s organization.

So one dues payment covers it all. The only gray area may be during an individual’s college/university studies, when a home base is much more fluid. During that period, the individual is definitely a Sierra Club member, but membership in which chapter and group may be unclear.

We had Judith Enck on video feed speaking on the PFOS contamination, such as in Hoosick Falls, Newburgh and the Seneca Army Depot. Other topics and presentations from the day included the following:

• Lake Erie Bill of Rights
• The Necessity Defense
• working with municipalities
• using the media to impact water law

Though attendance was smaller than in 2017, it was wonderful to see so many engaged water protectors in Ithaca! We’ll be updating the Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter website with conference videos as soon as they are finished so more people can benefit from the information presented.

Feedback is always appreciated, so please contact Ann Finneran Ann@Finneran@gmail.com or Kate Bartholomew ccgreenwolf@gmail.com if you have any comments or suggestions for the next Water Law Conference.
us to subsidize reactor owners by imposing a fee on all ratepayers as of April 1, 2017 (fittingly, April Fools’ Day). The owner of Fitzpatrick announced its intention to close due to unprofitability. We anti-nuclear activists celebrated, but our hopes were dashed when Cuomo intervened. It is estimated that the subsidies will cost us $7.6 billion over 12 years. This could have been used to support energy efficiency, renewables and education about energy conservation. There is a pending lawsuit that challenges these subsidies.

It isn’t only the Mark I and II reactors which endanger us, animals, plants and the entire environment. Some of the reactors are very old, leading to metal fatigue and general weakening of components. Two of the oldest reactors in the US are Nine Mile I near Oswego and Ginna near Rochester. There is also the on-site storage of radioactive waste, increasing daily, which is vulnerable to accident or terrorist attack. And evacuation of a large population presents a nightmarish situation: This is especially true for Indian Point 2 and 3 near NYC but also a problem for upstate populations. For example, three of the reactors in Oswego County are near the city of Oswego and about 36 miles from Syracuse. There’s an extensive history of safety problems at upstate reactors (www.allianceforagreeneco.org/upstate-nukes).

Some environmentalists worry that closing some NYS nuclear reactors now will result in increased use of fossil fuel. However, there is data to indicate this would not happen.

The NYISO (NY Independent Systems Operator) released a report in 2016 saying that Ginna and Fitzpatrick could shut down without having to build any new generation in the state to maintain reliability.

Additionally, from 2016 to 2017, New York reduced its demand for electricity from the wholesale market by 4,428 gigawatt hours (through energy efficiency and distributed solar). This is equivalent to 92% of the output of Ginna. This is without a robust energy efficiency program or concerted development of community solar. It shows that it’s quite possible for NY to replace nuclear power generation with energy efficiency and distributed generation at the rate of at least one nuclear plant per year.

Sources
Information compiled from Beyond Nuclear, Alliance for a Green Economy and Citizens Environmental Coalition.

On West Valley Nuclear Waste Facility continued from page 7

Key Resources On Recent Climate Change Reports Part II continued from page 8

On West Valley Nuclear Waste Facility

More clean up at West Valley nuclear site in western New York.

One deregulatory act proposed by the Department of Energy would reclassify High Level Radioactive Waste (HLW) less dangerous simply by changing the definition of what constitutes the various levels of radioactive waste — a little linguistic ledger de main.

Given the precarious and dangerous situation at West Valley; this is totally unacceptable. A further argument is that West Valley is governed by an act of Congress, the “West Valley Demonstration Project Act of 1980” and the definition of waste is not open to interpretation by the Department of Energy.

The Department of Energy has, in the past, attempted to reduce by fiat the dangers of nuclear waste by (a) re-naming it “WIR” (Waste Incidental to Recycling), (b) changing concentrations of waste to spread it out through dilution, or (c) even declaring some radioactive waste from nuclear weapon production not radioactive so it can be disposed of in the regular trash or sold to commercial recycling for new consumer/industrial goods. Each time the public has vigorously opposed these moves, and will continue to strongly oppose these attempts. We argue that DOE should reject and withdraw this proposal.

The question must be asked: Why this proposal? What purpose does deregulation serve? One can only assume that the intent is to reduce the responsibility and liability of the government to manage this toxic material. Perhaps this is a muddled response to the fact that no one knows what to do with radioactive materi- al that will be dangerous to life for thousands, even millions of years. What we do know is that it is imper- ative that we stop producing more waste through nuclear energy and production of weapons.

Those of us who live in Western New York believe that the value of our lives and our homes on the Great Lakes is not subject to recategorization. We want ‘full cleanups’, even as we acknowledge that no one knows what to do with nuclear waste, and there is no place where it can be safe- ly stored for millennia. Yet we do not consent to being exposed to nuclear waste now; we do not have the right to impose exposure on future genera- tions; we will not expose people elsewhere. In spite of the uncertain- ty of what to do, all of us, especially through our governmental structures and affiliation with groups like the Si- erra Club, are responsible to protect the public, environment and future generations from the exposure of all human-made radioactive waste for as long as it remains a threat.

“Climate change in the spotlight: Hitting 1.5 degrees,” New Scientist, December 8-14, 2018

A special report comprising articles published in the New Scientist in December 2018 and January 2019. The first article: “Hitting 1.5 degrees” by Graham Lawton, appears in the December 8-14, 2018 issue and begins with this explanation:

“We have to do everything, and we have to do it immediately. As a summary of the challenge facing humanity, these words are about as pithy as it gets. They come from Piers Forster, a professor of climate physics at the University of Leeds, UK, and a lead author on the latest report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). In case you missed it, it said we’re done for. Almost…”

David Wallace-Wells, “Time to Panic,” The New York Times, February 17, 2018

“The planet is getting warmer in cata- strophic ways. And fear may be the only thing that saves us.”

“The age of climate panic is here. Last summer, a heat wave baked the entire Northern Hemisphere, killing dozens from Quebec to Japan. Some of the most destructive wildfires in California histo- ry turned more than a million acres to ash, along the way melting the tares and sneakers of those trying to escape the flames. Pacific hurricanes forced three million people in China to flee and wiped away almost all of Hawaii’s East Island.

“We are living today in a world that has warmed by just one degree Celsius (1.8 degrees Fahrenheit) since the late 1800s, when records began on a global scale. We are adding planet-warming carbon diox- ide in the atmosphere at a rate faster than at any point in human history since the beginning of industrialization…”

For links to these climate change arti- cles, including the entire New Scientist special report, see the electronic version of this column.
DEVELOPING THE NEXT STATE ENERGY PLAN

By David Alicea
Sierra Club NY Lead Organizing Representative, Rochester

As I sit here writing, the country is just beginning to unthaw from the polar vortex. Living in Rochester, I begrudgingly accept that there will be some very cold days, but the more frequent and intense record-breaking weather events continue to surprise me. Although it shouldn’t be that surprising to someone who spends as much time thinking about climate change as I do. The science is clear — unless we ratchet down climate pollution, we should only expect more extreme weather.

Luckily, I get to wake up every day and work with passionate people (both volunteers and staff) who are doing their best to ensure that, at least here in New York, we’re working hard to tackle the climate crisis. Atlantic Chapter volunteers have rallied, marched and lobbied for our state to ban fracking, create an enforceable 50% renewable energy target, establish a robust offshore wind program and stop more pipelines than I can even name.

Despite this progress, there is still a long way to go. While Governor Cuomo’s recent Green New Deal proposal is a step in the right direction, it’s up to us to make sure that his bold rhetoric is put into action in a way that truly creates a just and equitable future powered by 100% clean, renewable energy. We need to ensure that New York gets serious about tackling pollution from other sectors, like transportation, which is now the largest source of climate pollution in the state. Importantly, we have opportunities to ensure that all communities and workers benefit from this transition.

There are many ways we can push and elevate these concerns. One key strategic tool we have is the upcoming State Energy Plan. I’ll admit, the State Energy Plan may not sound like the most exciting prospect. However, it affords a key opportunity to raise our demands directly with Governor Cuomo and other key decision-makers in state government.

That’s why the Sierra Club is working with allies across the state, supporting efforts to develop a shared Energy Plan Platform. Over the coming months, we’ll host a set of surveys, community dialogues and other activities through which we’ll work to solicit feedback from communities across New York on what they want to see in the new State Energy Plan.

While we expect a draft State Energy Plan to be released either late this year or early 2020, our goal is to release the platform before that date to set a clear baseline that the climate movement in New York believes is critical for any plan.

How can you help? First, let us know what your energy priorities are by taking this survey at http://bit.ly/2019energysurvey. Once you fill out the survey, we can keep you in the loop on local listening sessions in your community, opportunities to send formal comments and to attend public hearings in your area.

Editor’s note: A 2009 state law established the NYS Energy Planning Board, chaired by the President and CEO of NYSERDA. The law calls on the Board to launch an energy planning process and complete a State Energy Plan, updated every two years. Comments on the Plan and its updates are sought throughout the process from stakeholders and the public through public comment on NYSERDA’s Plan website and at public hearings. You can find Plan updates on the NYSERDA website.
strategy to push the state toward 100% renewable energy across all sectors by various dates. If you’re a little confused at first, that’s fine. Just be assured, we’re all striving toward the same goals and communicating constantly.

Because of the invention of the internet and social media, a great deal more activism can be conducted online in the virtual world, hence the establishment of a burgeoning number of national and regional campaign teams and Core Groups in the Club. These all exist simultaneously as transparent, virtual layers over the Club’s fundamental three-tier structure. Because of these tools, a volunteer member can live in rural New York State as a member of a group concerned with a proposed waste-to-energy incinerator; be a member of the Atlantic Chapter ExCom; work on the national Conservation Policy task force; and connect with antinuclear activists throughout the country by joining the Sierra Club Nuclear-Free Core Team.

Fundamentally, under all the trappings, the Sierra Club is an organization of grassroots volunteer members who, because of their passion for the environment and their conviction that it must be conserved and preserved, can join together to amass the power and conviction needed to change and save the planet. ■

Environmentalism 101
continued from page 9

The four winners are: David Fischer, a new delegate from the Iroquois Group; Gale Pisha, re-elected from Lower Hudson; Chris Burger, newly elected from the Susquehanna Group; and Carl Arnold, re-elected from the NYC Group. Congratulations to all!

In addition, chapter officers were elected at the ExCom meeting held on January 26, 2019, in Poughkeepsie. The results of those elections are as follows:

Chair: Kate Bartholomew
Vice-chair: Bob Ciesieski
Conservation Chair: Ellen Banks
Secretary: Mary Finneran
Treasurer: Steve Kolick (over 30 years and counting)
Assistant Treasurer: Kathy Sidmore

Chairs for the various committees, both administrative and conservation, will be re-appointed at a later ExCom meeting held by conference call. ■

Underlying all the layers of acronyms, jargon and multi-tiered bureaucracy, the Sierra Club is, at its core, a grassroots volunteer organization whose members join forces to conserve and preserve the environment.

Support Chapter’s work in NYS

We need your help to fight fossil fuel infrastructure, maintain the Chapter’s other critical conservation efforts and continue print publication of the Sierra Atlantic. Your membership dues primarily support the Club’s national priorities. Your additional support is needed to strengthen the Chapter’s work in the state Legislature and throughout the state.

Please use the coupon below to send us your donation. Contributions and dues to the Sierra Club are not tax deductible. Thank you for your generosity.

Yes, I want to help the Atlantic Chapter preserve and protect the environment of New York state. I am enclosing my gift of:

$500 $250 $100 $60 $35 Other $______

I’d like to become a sustainer with a $____ monthly or $____ quarterly credit card donation.

Bill to: Mastercard Visa Discover

Acct. no.________________________ Exp. date________________________

Signature____________________________________________________

Name_______________________________________________________

Sierra Club membership no.____________________________________

Street_______________________________________________________

City________________________ State ______ZIP________

Mail this completed form with your check or credit card information to: Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter, PO Box 38225, Albany, NY 12203

A copy of our latest financial report can be obtained by writing to Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter, PO Box 38225, Albany, NY 12203, or the NYS Attorney General.