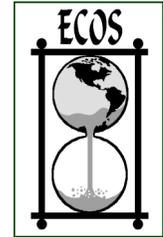


# ECOS NEWS



## *ECOS: The Environmental Clearinghouse*

Celebrating Our 46th Year in Environmental Education

---

Volume XLVI

Number 4

December 2018/January 2019

---

### *From the President's desk . . .*

ECOS continues to function and operate without a paid Executive Director as we rely on Board members and other volunteers to help with our regular activities. Our budget is balanced, our bills are paid and we have plans to be involved with the community.

In October Darwin Roosa led a hike in the Bozen Kill Preserve as part of our Seven Preserve Challenge. We also did our annual trail maintenance at Featherstonough State Forest, and had a well-attended event at the Kelly Adirondack Center on spotting invasive species. In November the Program committee offered an evening out at Schenectady's Improvisation Theater, MOPCO. The performers worked some environmental themes into what was a spontaneous performance, and allowed ECOS to be introduced to their regular audience. If you should go there and fill out their audience questionnaire card, please be sure to mention ECOS as one the ways you heard about them.

This fall the ECOS Board accepted an offer from Clarkson University students to do a study of our organization. Four students, attending school through a distance-learning program, offered suggestions for our management. Their work has just been completed and I will report on their conclusions in our next newsletter.

Our annual Rachel Carson dinner was successful, and details of the evening are included elsewhere in this newsletter.

Mike Howard, a resident of Schenectady, was appointed to the ECOS Board at our November meeting. He recently retired after a 40 year career with the Golub Corporation. Mike earned his BA in Accounting at Siena in 1977 and retired as VP of Budgeting for Price Chopper supermarkets.

The Board is considering the idea of moving all membership renewal dates to the month of April. We want the routine renewal process to occur primarily in one month, rather than every month of the year. The Board feels that in the long run this would be more efficient and practical. It will be a confusing transition for some and we are prepared to work with anyone with specific concerns. We would build renewal around Earth Day, which is a natural reminder for most of us why we support ECOS. There may be some grace period allowed for the transition and we expect the administrative details to be extra work during the next year. More details will be announced in future newsletters if we do decide to make this change. I am hoping the annual renewal process would be a better focus to attract new members as well.

As always, I ask that you help us make ECOS grow by sharing this newsletter with friends.

—*William Seyse, President*

## ECOS NEWS

*Published six times per year by*

**ECOS:**

The Environmental Clearinghouse, Inc.

P.O. Box 9118, Niskayuna, NY 12309

Office phone: 518-370-4125

E-mail: [info@ecosny.org](mailto:info@ecosny.org)

Web: [www.ecosny.org](http://www.ecosny.org)

Webmaster: Cliff Rhode

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President

William Seyse

Vice President for Programs

Art Clayman

Vice President for Outreach

Arden Rauch

Secretary

Holly Hawkes

Treasurer

Denise Cashmere

Bruce Bonacquist

Mike Howard

Jen Insull

Steve Jones

Alex Lykins

Aaron Mair

Jim Ormsbee

Melinda Perrin

Darwin Roosa

William Shapiro

Peter Tobiessen

*ECOS: The Environmental Clearinghouse is a non-political, not-for-profit organization. Our mission is to provide environmental information and educational opportunities that enhance appreciation of the natural world, build a community that is aware and knowledgeable about environmental issues, and advocate informed action to preserve our natural resources. ECOS is funded through the support of our members and the community.*

## ECOS Holiday Party



Thursday, December 13<sup>th</sup> 6-8 pm

Niskayuna Recreational Center

2682 Aqueduct Road, Niskayuna

Lively conversation & a good time  
with ECOS friends!

Bring a party tray, specialty food or sweet to share

A Re-gift table to find one-of-a-kind items, and  
you are welcome to contribute if you like.

Raffle baskets to enhance your holidays

ECOS trail guides and other items

### Come and Join us!

**THE RACHEL CARSON DINNER  
A MEMORABLE EVENING**

The annual Rachel Carson Celebration tends to be ECOS' most popular, well-attended event, and this year was no exception. It was an opportunity for the 80 who showed up not only to get together, have drinks, eat dinner, and add to ECOS' coffers by participating in our raffle and silent auction (overall, ECOS' profit for the night was around \$3,200), but to renew their commitment to the environment.

They were inspired to do so by the evening's two speakers. First was Albany County Executive Daniel McCoy, this year's Rachel Carson Award recipient, who was chosen for the way he has used his official powers and influence to turn Albany County into a green leader.

Among other things, Mr. McCoy was instrumental in preventing a large increase in those dangerous Bakken crude oil trains coming to Albany, and in getting Styrofoam out of the waste stream. He also started a clean water initiative and built a long-awaited bike-hike trail from the Port of Albany to Voorheesville.

It is very unusual for ECOS to give this prestigious award to a public official (we prefer to honor private citizens like Rachel Carson), but it was impossible to ignore the environmental accomplishments of Mr. McCoy, and we hope that honoring him will spur other public officials to follow his example.

After Mr. McCoy came the keynote speaker, Mark Castiglione, executive director of the Capital District Regional Planning Commission. Using words and well-chosen graphics, he showed how lax land-use controls have been harmful to the region's environment. How sprawl development has eaten up most of our open space even as the population has remained flat. How the lack of sidewalks has left communities auto-dependent and isolated. How the region's water quality is threatened by sewage overflows, and its social cohesion by the growing income gap between the haves and have-nots.

Once again, ECOS congratulates Mr. McCoy on his well-deserved award. And we thank Mr. Castiglione for coming and speaking to us.

**Tax deductible contribution for the dinner is \$21.  
Special thanks to those eligible for a corporate match**

*ECOS would like to thank the businesses and organizations that contributed to the silent auction and raffle.*

- |                           |                     |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| Back Yard Birds           | Schenectady County  |
| Brueggers Bagels          | Historical Society  |
| Cheryl Swyers Creations   | Shoprite            |
| Glenville Hannaford       | Soluna Yoga         |
| Have Trowel Will Travel   | Starbucks           |
| Homestyle Pizza           | Tesoros Cafe        |
| JCC Niskayuna             | Tough Traveler      |
| Lapland Lake              | Up North Rocks      |
| Maple Ski Ridge           | Viaport Aquarium    |
| Niskayuna Liquor          | Village Paint and   |
| Osahmin Judith Meister    | Decorating          |
| Price Chopper Eastern Ave | Wolf Hollow Brewery |

*And to the individuals who gave their special efforts, time and talent.*

- |                 |                |                 |
|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Ruth Brooks     | Holly Hawkes   | Arden Rauch     |
| Art Clayman     | Jen Insull     | Will Seyse      |
| Joanne Coons    | Ed Kautz       | Nancy Slack     |
| Roberta Farrell | Roy Keats      | Pat Shuff       |
| Carol Hamblin   | Nancy Parry    | Peter Tobiessen |
|                 | Melinda Perrin |                 |

**ECOS PLANTS HABITAT FOR MONARCHS**

The monarch butterfly population has declined dramatically in recent years due to a variety of factors, including pesticide use, development, and climate change. The butterflies cannot survive without milkweed; monarchs lay their eggs on the underside of milkweed leaves, and the caterpillars eat nothing but milkweed leaves.



Many efforts are being made to plant milkweed to help monarchs survive, and ECOS is proud to play a small part in these efforts. ECOS member Lois Porter suggested planting milkweed along a sunny stretch of the bike path in Niskayuna and ECOS brought the idea to the town; many thanks to Highway Superintendent Ray Smith and his staff for agreeing not to mow the area.

*Continued p. 4*

# ECOS EVENTS

*Continued from p. 3*

In late October Lois and a small group of ECOS members and friends planted milkweed seeds in an area on the south side of the bike path about a 10 minute walk west of Lions Park. Temporary signs have been erected and permanent ones are in the works. Look for milkweed plants as you walk or bike the path in the spring, and say “thanks” to Lois.



This is very easy to do in the fall when the weather gets cool, so try it at home if you have a sunny yard!

## THE FALL WALKS REPORT

ECOS sponsored five fall walks in September and October this year. Nancy Slack, Kathie Armstrong, Sue Wright, Elizabeth Collins, Sigrin Newell, Jacqueline Donnelly, and Nancy Engel led or helped to lead our walks. Rainy weather adversely affected attendance some weeks, but the walk leaders and the attendees enjoyed each outing. Our September 25<sup>th</sup> walk at Moreau State Park had the unusual sighting of the Small-flowered Dwarf Flatsedge. It was visible only because of the unusual drought, and the very low lake level. The date of the last sighting of the Small-flowered Dwarf Flatsedge at Moreau Lake was in 1961, 57 years ago. Although the New York Flora Association calls this little flatsedge *Cyperus subsquarrosus*, most other states still call it *Microcarpha micrantha*. So much for using scientific names to end confusion!

Jackie Donnelly took the photo shown here. If you are unable to walk the trails as often as you would like, visiting Jackie’s blog is a great substitute. The web address for her blog can be found at <http://saratogawoodswaters.blogspot.com>.



*Continued. . .*

Part of her blog at the time said, “I was able to show my fellow walkers our little Small-flowered Dwarf Flatsedge (*Cyperus subsquarrosus*) almost immediately as we headed out to the beach. But even though I know very well that it grows there abundantly, I still had to search and search to find its tiny whorl of curving stems and blunt little spikelets, it is so very small.”

## ECOS SKI AND SNOWSHOE TRIPS



## WINTER 2019

First outing is January 8, conditions permitting. We will be running the trips similar to the past couple of years which means that different people will volunteer for certain days to lead a trip. At this point we have volunteers for January 8, 15, 22, and 29. We need more volunteers for February Tuesdays.

Outings will be at locations within the Capital District similar to what has been on our outings list for many years. If anyone would like to volunteer to lead a ski and snowshoe trip, please contact Roy and Sue Keats at [roysueski@yahoo.com](mailto:roysueski@yahoo.com) or 518-466-8544. Outing locations are chosen based on what we can learn about ski conditions each week.

**Trip information will be posted on the ECOS Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/ecosny>) by 3:00 pm Monday for the Tuesday Trips. We will also email the information to those who are on our email list. Or please call ECOS at 518-370-4125 after 3:00 pm the day prior to the trip.)** ECOS participants **MUST** stay with the group. Bring your own water & snack and dress in layers.

To be included on our ski/snowshoe email list contact **ECOS** at [info@ecosny.org](mailto:info@ecosny.org)

# PARTNER EVENTS

## THACHER STATE PARK EVENTS

### **Saturday, December 1, 10am-4pm & Sunday, December 2, 11am-4pm: Holiday Bazaar at Thacher Nature Center**

Shop for unique hand-crafted gifts made by local artisans and crafters, including jewelry, wooden wares, fleece and woolen items, pine needle baskets, honey and maple products, wildlife photography, delicious cheese spreads, artisanal baked goods, and much more. Find nature books, wooden toys, and stocking stuffers in our gift shop, too. Enjoy live music that'll put you in the holiday spirit. Call 518-872-0800 for more information.

### **Saturday, December 15, 11am – 3pm: Holiday Open House at Thacher Visitor Center**

Take a break from the hustle and bustle to enjoy the peaceful beauty of Thacher Park. Join friends around the fireplace, enjoy live music, make a holiday craft, and relax with hot drinks and sweet treats. Call 518-872-1237 for more information.

### **Thursday, December 27, 2-4pm: 'Paint a Snowy Owl' workshop at Thacher Nature Center**

Join our favorite artist and teacher Noreen Powell for a fun, guided painting class! Paint a close-up portrait of a majestic snowy owl, a symbol of survival in winter. Learn how to create the texture of feathers on canvas, and capture that steady owl gaze. Students will leave with a completed masterpiece! Space is limited, and program is appropriate for ages 8 and up. Materials fee is \$10. Please call 518-872-0800 to register your child.

### **Saturday, December 29, at 10am: Evergreen Walk at Thacher Nature Center**

While the aroma of balsam is still in the air, take time to appreciate the season's color- green! We'll take an easy walk to find several species of conifers and learn how to identify them by their leaves (needles) and cones. Then we'll warm up at the Nature Center with some hot cocoa and make a simple tree ID guide to take home. This program is appropriate for adults and children ages 5 and up. Please call 518-872-0800 to register.

*Thacher Park continued . . .*

### **Tuesday, January 1, at 10am: 'First Day' Snowshoe Walk at Thacher Park**

Welcome the New Year with a walk in the park! If we have enough snow, we'll snowshoe. We'll leave from the Visitor Center and walk for about an hour, taking in views from the escarpment along the way. Dress in layers and wear warm winter boots. Register and reserve snowshoes by calling 518-872-0800. In case of extreme weather, call the park office at 518-872-1237 to confirm conditions.

## VOLKSSPORTERS

Empire State Capital Volkssporters, ESCV, is the local chapter of AVA, America's Walking Club. We will be starting 2019 with a New Year's Day walk, January 1, 2019.

The walk will start at Four Seasons Natural Foods, 120 Henry Street, Saratoga Springs, NY. Registration starts at 12:30, the walk starts at 1:00 pm. Cost is \$2.00. Please bring a return address label to expedite registration.

Please park on the street, or at the municipal lot on High Rock Avenue, not in the store's parking area, as that is reserved for customers only.

There will be two walks, a 5k and a 10k.

*Continued*



Holiday lights in the U.S. use more than 2.2 million megawatt hours of electricity every holiday season, enough to power more than 173,000 homes for an entire year.

## PARTNER EVENTS

### **PINE BUSH DISCOVERY CENTER**

Albany Pine Bush Discovery Center , 195 New Karner Road, Albany, NY. All programs Free!

Reservations required for all attendees (regardless of age). Children under 18 must be accompanied by an adult. Make reservations by calling 518-456-0655 or visit [www.AlbanyPineBush.org/events](http://www.AlbanyPineBush.org/events)

### **Owl Investigation**

**Saturday December 1, 2018, 1:00pm–2:30pm**  
**Suitable for ages 6-10, tweens, teens and adults**

Learn about the owls that live in the Pine Bush Preserve and the signs they leave behind.

### **CSI: Critter Scene Investigation**

**Saturday December 8, 2018, 11:00am**  
**Suitable for ages 6-10, tweens, teens and adults**

A 30-minute indoor introduction followed by a 0.9-mile outdoor trek to look for clues and evidence of what lives in the Pine Bush.

### **Discover the Pine Bush**

**Saturday December 15, 2018, 10:30am**  
**Suitable for all ages**

Our experts will guide you along this 0.9-mile hike over rolling sand dunes where you will discover Pine Bush natural history and seasonal surprises and transformations.

### **Invertebrates in Winter for Adults**

**Sunday December 16, 2018, 1:00pm**  
**Suitable for adults**

Come learn about the many strategies our small Pine Bush residents employ to get through the coldest season. Hike over rolling terrain, stopping intermittently to search for signs of insects and observe winter in the preserve.

### **Almost Full Moon Hike**

**Friday December 21, 2018, 6:00pm**  
**Suitable for tweens, teens and adults**

Enjoy the Pine Bush at night under an almost full moon. Meet at the Discovery Center and then hike at Karner Barrens trailhead.

*Pine Bush continued . . .*

**10<sup>th</sup> Annual Cookie Burner Stroll**  
**Saturday December 22, 2018, 11:00am**  
**Suitable for tweens, teens and adults**

Our cookie burner stroll will take you 2.6 miles over rolling terrain through the Karner Barrens East region of the Albany Pine Bush. If there is snow, we will snowshoe approximately one mile! Snowshoes will be provided to program participants.

### **Drop-in Nature Journaling**

**Wednesday December 26, 2018, 10:00am-3:00pm**  
**Thursday December 27, 2018, 10:00am-3:00pm**  
**Suitable for all ages**

Drop in between 10:00am and 3:00pm to check out some self-guided Pine Bush nature journaling activities.

### **Family Nature Journaling**

**Friday December 28, 2018, 1:00pm**  
**Suitable for all ages**

Come spend part of your day with us as we draw inspiration from nature and pause to observe life in the Pine Bush we record a visit to the Pine Bush in our own creative way.

### **Snowshoeing in the Pine Barrens**

**Saturday December 29, 2018, 10:30am**  
**Suitable for ages 6-10, tweens, teens and adults**

Have you tried snowshoeing? The Albany Pine Bush Preserve is a great place to learn the basics of snowshoeing. Snowshoes will be provided.



*Tufted titmouse courtesy Phil Falconer*

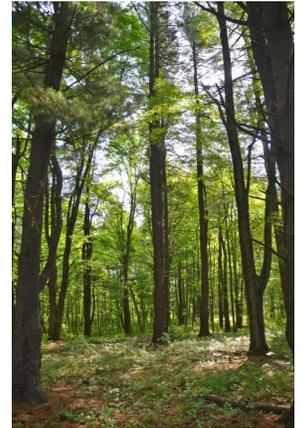
*Continued . . .*

## PARTNER EVENTS

### Land Trusts and Climate Change: How Conservation Can Help

Extreme weather events this year have sparked climate change conversations across the globe. Wildfires fill the California skies with smoke, major heat waves hit the United Kingdom and Japan, and record rainfalls have punctuated a hot New York summer with severe flooding events. With sweltering temperatures and damaging storms, many people wonder: “Is this weather caused by climate change?”

**Yes.** Although individual weather events cannot be attributed to climate change, these changing patterns and trends in the weather are the result of increased greenhouse gas emissions over the past two centuries and a changing climate. The real question is: how can we fight climate change? Tackling such a global issue is a complex task. Land trusts play a crucial role in this work, and the Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy is working to protect landscapes which naturally sequester carbon, reduce greenhouse gases, and provide climate-resilient habitats. Through the conservation of undeveloped lands, we are fighting climate change.



#### **Carbon Sequestration**

The majority of MHLC’s protected lands are forested landscapes. These forests provide habitat for wildlife and filter air and water for our communities, but they are also natural sequesters of carbon. As trees photosynthesize, they trap carbon from the atmosphere in their tissues. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, “one acre of forest absorbs six tons of carbon dioxide and creates four tons of oxygen – enough to meet the annual needs of 18 people.” Forests are carbon sinks: by protecting them, we slow climate change by removing greenhouse gases from the atmosphere.

#### **Climate Resilience**

By strategically planning our conservation, we can better protect the lands which will store carbon and which will help our ecosystems survive an already-changing climate. To date, we have protected more than 5,000 acres, with many more acres to be announced in the coming months.

We prioritize our land projects based on several Conservation Criteria, including climate resilience. When we use the term “resilient,” we are referring to the ability of a landscape to support a variety of plants and animals in a changing climate. The Nature Conservancy has been studying resilience for over a decade and has created mapping tools which MHLC uses to examine our service area through a lens of resilience. Resilient areas often have steep topography and water features which create natural cooling: our work in the Bozen Kill Conservation Corridor is a great example of protecting a resilient landscape.

#### **Act Locally For Global Impact**

Our land protection work is more important than ever: but conservation is only one piece of a much larger puzzle. As the Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy grows, protecting more land and expanding into new areas, we work to improve in our efforts to fight climate change. We continue to partner with other environmental and climate-focused organizations, with experts, and with landowners to put together many pieces of this puzzle: the fight against climate change.

Sarah Walsh  
Conservation Director,  
Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy



**ECOS: The Environmental Clearinghouse**  
**P.O. Box 9118**  
**Niskayuna, NY 12309**

**Non-Profit**  
**U.S. Postage**  
**Paid**  
**Permit #20**  
**Rexford, NY**

ECOS: The Environmental Clearinghouse is located in the Niskayuna Community Center,  
 2582 Aqueduct Road, Niskayuna, NY.



**ECOS Membership**

**ECOS: The Environmental Clearinghouse, Inc.**

**P.O. Box 9118, Niskayuna, NY 12309 518-370-4125**

Please check your membership contribution level.

- \$30. Individual
- \$40. Family
- \$55. Donor/Organization
- \$125. Sustainer
- \$250. Benefactor
- \$500. Patron
- \$\_\_\_\_ Additional Donation

Please make your check payable to ECOS.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

As a GE employee (or retiree) my contribution is eligible for GE Foundation Matching Funds. I have registered with GE for the matching gift by computer at [www.gefoundation.com](http://www.gefoundation.com). If you do not have computer access call customer service at 1-800-305-0669.

My employer will match my contribution. I've enclosed my matching gift form.

I would like to be a volunteer. Please send me more information.