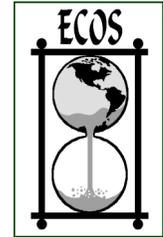


# ECOS NEWS



## *ECOS: The Environmental Clearinghouse*

Celebrating Our 47th Year in Environmental Education

Volume XLVII

Number 2

April/May

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

This is my final newsletter report and I am pleased to note several positive things for ECOS. First of all, Ruth Bonn has been elected as our new President effective April 1<sup>st</sup>. Secondly, Art Clayman's Program Committee is planning some great programs for the coming year that will raise our visibility in the community again. Thirdly, Holly Hawkes has been chairing the Governance Committee that will be updating our by-laws. Our website and electronic presence has greatly improved through the efforts of Jim Ormsbee and his committee. Members should be aware of more details for all of these things through our newsletters and through their own interaction or participation in ECOS events.

I should mention a common factor in three of the above mentioned committees is Steve Jones who quietly volunteers, offers to help, and makes serious contributions wherever he goes. I thank him and all the Board members for their efforts and service to ECOS this past year.

Two other members of the Executive Committee deserve mention from me for all the assistance and support I have received this past year. Arden Rauch supports ECOS in so many ways they can't be listed but I also appreciate her efforts (along with Janet Hollocher's help) to review old files and organize the office. And Denise Cashmere gets the honorary "been there and done that" award as she completes a term as the Treasurer for ECOS. She has in the past served as Secretary, Vice-President, and in two different decades, President. While I can't thank Denise enough for all she has done for ECOS, neither can I adequately thank so many members who volunteer with our programs, our events, and our fundraising efforts. Together we continue to make ECOS a great local environmental organization.

—*William Seyse*

### ANNUAL DINNER

The ECOS annual dinner will be held Tuesday April 16th at the Schenectady County Community College. The evening's guest speaker will be Union College Professor John Garver. His topic: The State of the Mohawk River: Flooding, Water Quality, and Infrastructure Challenges.

The office requests all reservations be made by April 4th. If you have not sent in a reservation, call the ECOS office at 518-370-4125 and leave a message with your name and choice of entrée (salmon, roast beef or pea and asparagus risotto). Gluten free versions of all three are available as well as a vegan option by request.

The evening will include a raffle of gift baskets. Additionally, **a Curtis Ladybug fiberglass solo canoe will be auctioned.** It is 13 feet, 8 inches long and 39 lbs. Very good condition. Single and double blade paddles and wheeled cart included. Minimum bid \$200.

If you would like to bid on the canoe, but are unable to attend the dinner, please **e-mail your best offer to ECOS ([info@ecosny.org](mailto:info@ecosny.org)) by 5 pm April 15.**



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*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 fund-*

**NEW BOARD MEMBERS**

**Ruth Bonn** is a graduate of Smith College and holds several master's degrees from the State University of New York. Since retiring after a career in the Schenectady School District, she has devoted time to volunteer work and pursuing two of her passions: gardening and paddling. The volunteer work includes a previous stint on ECOS' board, where she organized conferences on open space and sustainable development. She has also been active with the Schenectady County Environmental Advisory Council, and the Schenectady County League of Women Voters (where she served as president for four years). She is currently on the board of the Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy. Ruth will replace Will as board president.

**Connie Young** was last employed at Albany Medical Center's oncology unit. She has been an active community volunteer, including five years each with the Schenectady Free Health Clinic, the Reading Is Fundamental project, and Keane Elementary School in Schenectady as a teacher's aide. She also spent 30 years with the Salvation Army's soup kitchen and 15 years with the Schenectady County League of Women Voters, where she has served as a board member, program planner, membership coordinator, and led an elementary school voting project.

**Andy Kulmatiski** says his interest in environmental issues began by reading authors like Henry David Thoreau and Rachel Carson, but that he was really inspired by his outdoor experiences. Over the years, he has hiked, climbed and skied most of the High Peaks in the Adirondacks. But much of his time outdoors has been spent bicycling or cross-country skiing. He and his wife Phyllis have particularly enjoyed riding their tandem bike in the Capital Region, New England and Europe. Andy retired as director of the Schenectady County Public Library in 2014.

The board and membership welcome these talented newcomers, and look forward to working with them as ECOS moves forward with a new strategic plan that includes some exciting new programs and partnerships in the coming year.

## ECOS BOARD COMINGS AND GOINGS

ECOS' annual all-member meeting, held March 13, included elections for the board of directors. With some current board members leaving, others staying and new ones coming, here is what the new board will look like starting April 1.

One of those leaving is Will Seyse, who has served as ECOS' president since 2012. We all owe Will a great debt of gratitude for his leadership, and his commitment to keeping ECOS going through a difficult couple of years when it has been in transition and without an executive director. In addition to running board meetings, communicating with board members, and doing the big things that go with being president, Will has spent countless hours in the office doing the little things such as opening mail, answering phone calls, depositing checks, and preparing the newsletter for mailing. We want him to know that these efforts, without which ECOS might have ceased to exist, are recognized and appreciated.

But Will was not always alone in the office. Joining him often was Denise Cashmere, a former ECOS president who returned to the board at Will's request to help out around the office and serve as treasurer. And she has done both well, most notably putting in a great deal of time to rationalize and re-create ECOS' financial records after an unsuccessful attempt at an online bookkeeping system. Thank you, Denise.

Joining Will and Denise at times was Jim Ormsbee, who is leaving after one term due to work and family commitments. Jim, a computer expert, has helped make the office computers work better. He also led a committee that has brought ECOS a greatly improved website and Facebook page. Although he is leaving, Jim wants to continue helping ECOS on the technology side, which can be done remotely, and the board looks forward to continuing to work with him.

Also leaving the board after two terms are Bruce Bonacquist, a former treasurer and member of the executive committee, and Bill Shapiro.

Staying on are the following board members: Arden Rauch (Vice President for Outreach), Art Clayman (Vice President for Programs), Holly Hawkes (Secretary), Mike Howard (Treasurer),

as well as Darwin Roosa, Steve Jones, Jen Insull, Peter Tobiessen, Aaron Mair, Alexander Lykins, and Janet Hollocher.

Those are the leavings and stayings. In addition, three new members were elected to the board on March 13: Ruth Bonn, Connie Young, and Andrew Kulmatiski.

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### ED MILLER

ECOS has lost a strong friend and former Board member in the passing of Ed Miller on March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019. His many interests and activities were an asset for ECOS and he authored two pamphlets that we co-published with the Landis Arboretum, "Ferns of the Capital Region of New York", and "Trees and Shrubs of the Capital Region". ECOS honored Ed in 2014 with our Rachel Carson Award. Four sons, their wives, and five grandchildren survive him. A memorial will be scheduled at a later time.

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### Progress with Programs

For programs and projects, ECOS has decided to focus on three areas in the coming year: childhood education, the Mohawk River, and Vale Park.

For childhood education, we are excited to be starting a new partnership with the Schenectady Jewish Community Center. During the spring months, we will be bringing 10 -12 hands-on activities to children in the JCC's afterschool program. We will also be working with the Schenectady City School District to provide programming to elementary school children in its summer academic camp.

For the Mohawk River, we expect to restart a Mohawk River Program that ECOS used to offer, where schoolchildren come to the river for half a day to walk along it and learn about its ecology and history. We are also planning guided walks, kayak trips, and bicycle rides along the river in partnership with other organizations, including the Mabee Farm. We will also be working with the Mohawk Watershed Alliance to highlight water quality and flooding issues. John Garver, a Union College professor who is

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the originator of the annual Mohawk Watershed Symposium and a leader of the Alliance, will be the keynote speaker at our annual dinner on April 16.

For Vale Urban Park, we want to hold guided walks and other events introducing people to this magnificent 35-acre forest in the heart of the city. We are also in the process of developing partnerships with Schenectady County Community College, whose students use the park for research, and Vale Urban Farm, which maintains a large vegetable and herb garden there.

In addition, we will be doing the usual Tuesday flower walks each week from April 23-June 4, and working with the Schenectady County Environmental Advisory Council to protect and improve the Plotterkill and other preserves in the county. We will be hosting various talks and lectures. In other words, it's going to be a busy year for ECOS, with some new directions and programs that will get us more involved in the community. This, we hope, will bring new energy to the organization, as well as new members with an appreciation for the environment and a commitment to protecting it.

*Art Clayman, Vice President for Programs*

### **Ski and Snowshoe Outings this Year**

Roy and Sue Keats have again organized the ECOS schedule of Tuesday ski and snowshoe outings. It is worth mentioning that sometimes microspikes or other traction-assisted footgear were needed instead of skis or snowshoes, but the outdoor efforts went on and were enjoyed by many. Our snowy winter has allowed our outings to go into March.

Thanks also to trip leaders who make the extra effort to inspect a site a day or two in advance of the group outing. In addition to Roy and Sue Keats, Will Seyse led at Maple Ridge, the Saratoga State Park and Vischer Ferry; Rich Vertigan at the Sanders Preserve and the Albany Pine Bush; Ed Kautz at the Schenectady Municipal Golf Course; Karen Wang at Indian Meadows; and Frank Risler at Dyken Pond.

Participants saw bald eagles, a porcupine, deer, rabbits, a red-tailed hawk, a coyote, and tracks from a fisher.

### **Paddle and Learn with "Kayak Through History"**

There's nothing better than combining recreation with education, and ECOS will be offering a chance to do that this summer in a new partnership with the Schenectady County Historical Society.

On eight different dates, we will set out from the Water's Edge Lighthouse Marina and paddle to the vicinity of the Glen Sanders Mansion, learning along the way. The paddling will be done by you. The learning will come from the Historical Society's educator, who will talk about the history of the river and its surroundings, as well as from ECOS' own experts and those we arrange for in areas such as invasive species, birds, and river ecology. The cost is \$10, and includes the tour and kayak rental. You're also welcome to bring your own kayak or canoe. Tickets will be available at [www.schenectadyhistorical.org](http://www.schenectadyhistorical.org) in May.

Kayak Through History dates are: June 6 @ 6pm, June 8 @ 10am, June 13 @ 6pm, June 15 @ 10am, July 10 @ 6pm, Aug. 7 @ 6pm, and Sept. 28 @ 10am. See ECOS' website or Facebook page for more details as they become available.

### **ECOS, The Vale and The Farm**

As part of ECOS' effort to bring people and attention to Vale Park, we are developing a relationship with Vale Urban Farm, which has operated there for the last seven years. One of the farm's major attractions is a Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) program in which 50 families participate, contributing \$25 a year and two hours of work at the farm each week in return for a weekly share of the harvest. But the farm also allows organizations to have a plot of their own, and ECOS is considering having one if there is enough interest among its members. Members would plant and tend their own crops, and then enjoy the bounty. Please let us know if you are interested by calling 518-370-4125 and leaving a message, or sending an email to [info@ecosny.org](mailto:info@ecosny.org) or [artclayman@gmail.com](mailto:artclayman@gmail.com). The operators of the farm will also be offering ECOS members classes in gardening, beekeeping, composting, cooking, and other subjects. See our website and Facebook page for more information.

## ECOS EVENTS

### ECOS SPRING WALKS 2019

*Our Tuesday guided walks are back! Meeting time at the trailhead is 9:30 a.m. You may want to bring hiking shoes and trekking poles or sticks for hills, mud, water, or ice along the trails. Directions are from the closest major road. Anyone who wishes to carpool may contact Steve Jones, [doniphin.jones@gmail.com](mailto:doniphin.jones@gmail.com), 518-381-1826. Notice of cancellation or changes can be found at [www.ecosny.org](http://www.ecosny.org) or [www.facebook.com/ecosny](http://www.facebook.com/ecosny).*

**APRIL 23 Lock 7 & Bike Path:** For this walk, led by Ed Kautz, we'll meet at the parking area where the Mohawk-Hudson Bikeway crosses Lock 7 Rd., and walk west on the bike path. It's paved and easy walking. Expect to see early spring wildflowers like hepatica and Dutchman's breeches.

Directions: From the Schenectady area, take Rosendale Rd east from its start at the junction of Union St. with Rt. 7 in Niskayuna. After 2.2 miles Rosendale Rd. makes a 90 degree right turn; instead, turn left onto Lock 7 Rd., and go a half mile to a small parking area on the right. The parking area is just before the bikeway crossing. From the north on Balltown Rd., take River Rd. east to its end at Rosendale Rd. Turn left and go half a mile to the 90 degree right turn, and follow the directions above.

**APRIL 30 Paint Mine at Thacher Park:** Paint Mine Trail has rich limestone soils that support a variety of woodland wildflowers. The higher elevation means a later start to the blooming succession. We may see bloodroot, trillium, early meadow rue, blue cohosh, baneberry, wild ginger, and many others. The Paint Mine Trail runs alongside Minelot Creek, climbing uphill through the hemlock northern hardwood forest. With Nancy Engel as our leader, we'll walk up to a wetland overlook, then back down the hill.

Directions: From Altamont, drive up the escarpment on Rt. 156 then turn left onto Old Stage Rd. Follow this until it ends, then bear left onto Rt. 157/Thompson's Lake Rd. Drive about 1 mile and turn left onto Ketcham Rd. At the end of Ketcham Rd. turn left onto Thacher Park Rd. It's about 1 mile to the Paint Mine parking area on the right. For those using GPS or Google, the Visitor Center's address is 830 Thacher Park Rd., Voorheesville; the center is just west of Paint Mine.

**MAY 7 Bog Meadow Brook Nature Trail** Passing through swamp, marsh, and forest, this trip offers quite a variety of plants from different habitats. 47 species of May wildflowers have been counted here, as well as a good variety of shrubs and trees, ferns and mosses. Jackie Donnelly will lead.

Directions to the Rt. 29 trailhead: Take exit 14 of the Northway and head west toward Saratoga on Rt. 9P. At the first light, turn right onto Henning Rd., which ends in a couple of miles at Rt. 29. Turn right and proceed on Rt. 29 approximately one mile to the trailhead for Bog Meadow Brook Nature Trail; parking is on the right, opposite Old Schuylerville Rd.

**MAY 14 Skidmore Woods:** Skidmore College's North Woods has a rich succession of spring wildflowers. We may see bellworts and trilliums, also bloodroot, hepatica, many species of violets, trout lily, wild ginger, and blue cohosh, depending on whether we have an early or late spring. Nancy Slack will lead us through a maze of trails on land open to the public.

Directions: From the south, follow Rt. 50 north through Ballston Spa and on to Saratoga. Bear left on Broadway in Saratoga, continuing past the first entrance into the campus. Turn left into the campus at the second entrance. Follow the road as it curves toward the right, watching for Falstaff Parking Lot on the right.

**MAY 21 High Point Trail at Thacher Park:** By May the hepatica and bloodroot should be gone, but there are many spring ephemerals still in bloom. Though not as well known, these too are delightful. We'll learn about their myths and legends as well as the way people have used these plants in the past. The High Point Trail is a flat loop trail, an easy stroll through the woods with naturalist Sigrin Newell.

Directions: From Altamont, drive up the escarpment on Rt. 156 then turn left onto Old Stage Rd. The trailhead will be on the left after a couple of miles.

**MAY 28 Lisha Kill Preserve:** Many of you have walked the trails of the Lisha Kill Preserve, but this walk will discuss the forest from the point of view of the trees. How are they adapted to their environment? How do they interact and compete? How will they change in the future? Led by Peter Tobiesson, we will enter the Preserve though one of its "back doors," so there will be no long steep slopes to

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## ECOS EVENTS CONTINUED

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navigate. It will be a slow walk of about 1.5 miles, much of it off-trail, so precautions against Lyme disease are strongly suggested.

Directions: The walk will start on the (long) driveway to 2452 Rosendale Rd., which is between the Rosendale Elementary School and Iroquois Middle School entrances. They are on the north side of Rosendale Rd., while 2452 is on the south side, closer to the elementary school.

**JUNE 4 Malta Ecological Park:** Elizabeth Collins will guide us through this small but diverse area. It includes a variety of habitats, from sandy plain to rich woodland, wetland, and a small stream. A wide variety of plants flourish, including pitch pine, 12 species of ferns, and such wildflowers as gaywings, pink lady's slipper, wild azalea, and bishop's cap.

Directions: Head east from Exit 12 of the Northway on Rt. 67. Continue straight east across Rt. 9 onto Dunning St. (Rt. 67 turns south here.) Dunning becomes Plains Rd., and the park is on your left

just two miles from the Northway. The nature trail starts from the rear parking lot, which is often closed, but you can walk through the playground to the trail.

### **BIKES ALONG THE MOHAWK May 25<sup>th</sup>, 10 AM**

Invasive species are already a big threat to the local environment, and it will only become worse as climate change brings non-native species that can harm or even kill native ones.

Come learn about these invaders, while getting a little exercise, by joining ECOS on a bicycle ride along the Mohawk River that will focus on invasive species. The ride will be led by Spencer Barrett, an expert with the Capital/Mohawk Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management.

The ride will start at Schenectady County Community College and go to Kiwanis Park in Rotterdam Junction and back, a total distance of around 10 miles.

Register in advance by calling 518 370-4125, or emailing [info@ecosny.org](mailto:info@ecosny.org)

## PARTNER EVENTS

### **VOLKSSPORTERS**

**On Wednesday, April 17, 2019,** Empire State Capital Volkssporters is walking in **Scotia**, starting at the Glen Sanders Mansion. Registration is from 9:30-9:55, the group walk starts at 10. 5k and 10k options are offered, the cost is \$2.00.

**On Wednesday, May 15, 2019,** we will be enjoying the Village of **Round Lake**. Registration is from 8:30-8:55 at the Dominick Pasquale Recreational Field, Haven Road, Round Lake, NY. The walk starts at 9.

Many other walks are scheduled, exploring in and around the Capital District. Please refer to [www.walkescv.org](http://www.walkescv.org) for further information.

**Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy Events**  
*Register for free at [www.mohawkhudson.org/events](http://www.mohawkhudson.org/events)*

**May 18--Walking with Warblers: A Birding Hike with Rich Guthrie and the Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy, 7AM**  
Winn Preserve, Knox, NY

Rich is a veteran birder and the resident avian expert for station WAMC. This will be a stop, look, and listen saunter as we look for and listen to songbirds while taking in the flowers, geology, and history of the Helderberg Escarpment. Suitable for experienced birders or novices- space is limited, so register early. Bring your binoculars!

**May 19--Beginning Hiking with Ondatra Adventures and the Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy, 10 AM—1PM**

Bennett Hill Preserve, New Scotland, NY

Join Dave Muska, Licensed NYS Outdoor guide for this introductory class on hiking. Dave will share his tips and expertise concerning gear such as footwear and clothing, nutrition and hydration, as well as physical exercises to keep you primed for the trail. This class will also include a short hike through the beautiful Bennett Hill preserve.

## PARTNER EVENTS

### Native Plant Sale at Thacher Park

Thacher Nature Center will hold its Annual Native Plant Sale on May 18 & 19 from 10am – 3pm at the Overlook in Thacher Park. The focus of this year’s sale is “Bees, Birds and Berries: Creating a Wildlife Sanctuary in your Yard”. There will be native perennials, trees, and shrubs available for purchase, all native to New York State. There will be several species that are threatened or endangered in New York, but all are easy to grow. Every purchase is accompanied by a cultural instruction sheet with specifics about how to achieve the best results. There are many “hard to find” species.

All plants are free of neonicotinoids and therefore are safe for bees! Knowledgeable staff will be available to assist you in making your selections and to answer your questions. For more information, contact Thacher Nature Center at 518-872-0800.

### Rensselaer Land Trust Event

#### April 6—Amphibian Walk at Poestenkill Community Forest, 10AM—1PM

The first program of our Rensselaer Naturalist Series! We will check a pond and a vernal pool for early breeding frogs and salamanders. We will learn to identify calls and egg masses, and will discuss the differences in breeding and larval development between frogs and salamanders. If spring thaw permits, we will also look for wood salamanders and stream salamanders. Wear boots for walking in wet areas. Bring water and snack. Learn more and register at [www.renstrust.org](http://www.renstrust.org).

### Five Rivers Environmental Education Center

56 Game Farm Rd, Delmar, NY 12054

Five Rivers offers numerous programs including an after school family fun outing for children K-5 and their caregivers on Thursdays, April 4—June 13 from 4:30—5:30. For more information on this or other programs go to: [5rivers@dec.ny.gov](mailto:5rivers@dec.ny.gov) or call 518- 475-0291

### Albany Pine Bush

*All activities take place at the Albany Pine Bush Discovery Center, 195 New Karner Road, Albany, NY unless otherwise noted. Go to [Albanypinebush.org](http://Albanypinebush.org) or call 518-456-0655 for reservations and information.*

#### April 4 & 8--Wild and Wacky Woodcock Walk, 7 PM, Ages 6--Adult

The American Woodcock is a chunky little bird with a short neck, long bill and big eyes set high in a large head. During the mating season in early spring, male woodcocks perform amazing flight displays at dusk.

#### April 5--Morning Meander, 10 AM, Adult

**Location:** Madison Avenue Pinelands trailhead (#7)

#### April 6--Wonder Walk, 10:30 AM, Ages 6--Adult

#### April 17—American Woodcock Survey Training, 7 PM--Adult

The American woodcock has been declining in number since the 1960s. You can help us monitor them in the preserve. *Survey:* Between April 20th and May 15<sup>th</sup>.

#### April 19--Spring Symphony and Full Moon Hike, 7:30 PM—All ages

#### April 21--Signs of Spring, Pine Bush, 1 PM—All ages

**April 24--Nature Journaling, 1 PM, Ages 6--Adult** Participants draw inspiration from nature and pause to observe life in the Pine Bush.

**April 25--Signs of Spring at Woodlawn Preserve, 11AM—All Ages** **Location:** Woodlawn Preserve trailhead, Gifford Road, Schenectady, NY

**April 25--Science Lecture Series: The Ecology of Tick-borne Diseases, by Dr. Keesing, Professor of Biology, 6:30—Adult**

#### April 26--Tree Trek, 1 PM—Adult

**April 27—Earth Day in the Pine Bush, 9 AM –12 PM**

**April 27--Discover the Pine Bush, 1 PM—All ages**



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

**Non-Profit**  
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ECOS: The Environmental Clearinghouse is located in the Niskayuna Community Center,  
 2682 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.

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- \$40. Family       \$125. Sustainer       \$500. Patron
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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.