



ECOS NEWS

The Environmental Clearinghouse of New York

Celebrating Our 45th Year of Environmental Education

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Fall 2017

A Day in the Life of the Mohawk River

ECOS Hosts Schoolchildren at DEC Event



Children from RiverRun Community Montessori School, Matt Schlesinger, and ECOS Director Leah Akins seining for fish in the Mohawk River. Story on page 3.

**Deadline for tickets for Rachel Carson
Celebration is November 1! See page 4.**



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The Environmental Clearinghouse of New York



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ECOS' mission is to provide environmental information and educational opportunities that enhance appreciation of the natural world, to build a community that is aware and knowledgeable about environmental issues, and to advocate informed action to preserve our natural resources.

ECOS is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization funded through the support of our members and community. We invite new members to join us in supporting our mission. Our membership form is on the back of this newsletter.

Extending Our Reach

By William Seyse, ECOS Board President

I went for a walk in the woods last month that took 10 days to complete. Four other friends went along, from Northville to Lake Placid, a distance of about 140 miles. We started in the rain, and had a very wet night to tent near Woods Lake. The next nine days were dry and we could concentrate on mudholes, tree roots, washed-out bridges, the scenery, and having a good time.



For this type of trip, everyone uses hiking poles. They provide balance, take some of the strain of the backpack off your knees and hips, and can assist in the search for stepping stones that are usually there in the mud somewhere in front of you.

My hiking poles adjust easily for different lengths, and I normally don't have an exact setting that I use. When hiking in the Adirondack High Peaks I can change settings by six or even 10 inches, depending on the steepness of the terrain.

Usually on hiking trails, I don't need to make any adjustments. But for some reason, on this hike, on the second day I lengthened the poles by about two inches and found a better stride for the entire hike. There was a slightly longer sweep to plant the pole in front of me, but there was also more reason to look farther ahead on the trail. While some sections of mud won't allow any distraction from the placement of each and every step, in general I found myself looking ahead more and seeing more of the sights that surrounded me.

I report all this just to say that I believe ECOS has lengthened its hiking poles, too, with the hiring of our new Executive Director, and we are looking ahead a little further than we have been able to in recent months. I'm happy to report that the view looks great, and as the journey continues, ECOS has a long trail still ahead of us. Thank you for your continued support.

Close Encounters of the Fishy Kind: A Day in the Life of the Mohawk River

By Matt Schlesinger, ECOS Newsletter Editor

On October 12, ECOS hosted school groups and the public at an educational event on the Mohawk River at Lock 7 Park in Niskayuna. A corollary to the “Day in the Life of the Hudson” programs that the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and Hudson River Estuary Program have held annually up and down the Hudson, the event drew more than 50 participants, who learned about the Mohawk’s fish species, studied its water quality, and witnessed the demonstration of an Erie Canal lock.

RiverRun Community Montessori school in Niskayuna brought its lower and upper elementary and middle-school students to the river on a perfect



fall morning. Several homeschoolers attended as well, and a class from Niskayuna High School visited the river for a separate project, but quickly joined in with seine operation and fish identification. “This is more fun than what we came here to do,” one student was overheard saying.

The students were treated to close encounters with some of the river’s resident fish, including walleye, white sucker, smallmouth bass, and a 16-inch goldfish (a.k.a. carp) that was the clear favorite of many. Some kids had never touched a live fish before, and the squeals of delight and surprise from some of the younger ones were rewarding to hear.

The occasion also drew media attention, with The Daily Gazette of Schenectady previewing the program in its October 11 edition, and following up with photos and video of the October 12 event on October 13.

Executive Director Leah Akins was joined in representing ECOS by Board President Will Seyse, Board Members Art Clayman, Arden Rauch, Holly Hawkes, Darwin Roosa and Peter Tobiessen, as well as volunteers Ed Kautz, Nancy Parry, Kathie Armstrong, and Matt Schlesinger. Kathy Czajkowski and Russell Moore from the state DEC educated partici-



pants about water quality sampling and fish identification and biology, respectively, and Bill Sweitzer of the New York Canal Corp. hosted the group and demonstrated the operation of the canal lock. Scott Wells and Doug Reed, from DEC, conducted fish sampling and sediment coring.

The data on water quality and fish populations will be submitted to the DEC, making this a citizen science event with real value.

Thank you to everyone who made A Day in the Life of the Mohawk such a success! We hope to expand the program to other schools and more of the public next year. Contact Leah at leah@ecosny.org if you’d like to help!

Cycling Doesn’t Get Smoother Than This!



ECOS brought this **Smoothie-making Bike**, owned by Cornell Cooperative Extension, to the Mabee Farm Fall Foliage Festival on October 15. We handed out well over a hundred cups of free smoothies and got countless kids excited about outdoor recreation, coached on by our spin instructor extraordinaire Art Clayman!

Put Down Your Phone and Get Outside!

By Leah Akins, ECOS Executive Director

ECOS is launching a campaign with this theme to get people in our region OUTSIDE. Next spring, we plan on rolling out a new series of ECOS programs to help parents and caregivers get their kids outside digging in the garden, riding their bikes, playing in the woods, and exploring our watershed and river.

With this campaign, ECOS will be “biting” into the outdoors with enthusiasm, just as my daughter Eliza did while apple picking this fall. My youngest Flora, with her absolute reverence for the apple in her hands, reminds us to slow down and enjoy each precious “apple” of the natural world.



Too little nature and too much technology are an unprecedented threat to the minds, bodies, and spirits of children growing up today. I worry about how excessive time spent indoors and using technology at a much younger age, and more than ever before in human history, will affect our children and grandchildren’s mental and physical health, and ultimately the health of our planet.

Luckily, the solution lies in what brings us together as ECOS—our love of the outdoors. Let’s put down our phones and computers and work together to get the children in our community OUTSIDE! We will need your help and continued support to tackle this initiative head-on.

In particular, we need to think strategically to determine how ECOS, with the strength of our more than 400 members and 45 years of commitment to our mission, can best nurture a love of the outdoors in our region’s youth. What do you love about the outdoors and how could you share it? Please email me at leah@ecosny.org with your thoughts. It will truly take a village of leaders for us to outsmart the age of the smart phones!



ECOS 16th Annual Rachel Carson Celebration

Last Call!
*Nov. 1 deadline
for tickets*

Monday, November 13, 5-8 pm
Schenectady County Community College
Van Curler Room

- ◆ Arts and Services Silent Auction, Raffles, Wine and Hors d’oeuvres Reception, Buffet Dinner
- ◆ Presentation of the 2017 Rachel Carson Award to Michael Hickey of Hoosick Falls
- ◆ Guest Speaker: Phil Brown, Editor, Adirondack Explorer magazine

Tickets can be purchased at www.ecosny.org for \$50 per person. Contact Leah or Holly Hawkes at the ECOS office at (518) 370-4125 or info@ecosny.org with questions or to volunteer.

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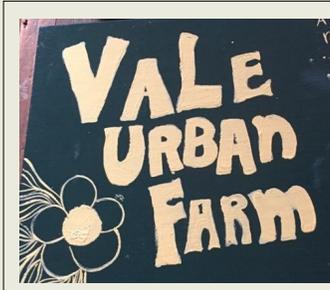
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ECOS Fall 2017 Programs

By Art Clayman, ECOS VP for Programs



**Mitzvah Day at
Vale Urban Farm**
Sunday, November 5
1-4 pm
Vale Cemetery
N. Brandywine Ave.
Schenectady

November 5th is Mitzvah Day at Congregation Gates of Heaven in Schenectady, a day when congregation members are asked to do a good deed in the community. This year, ECOS will be joining them, along with members of the Unitarian Universalist Society of Schenectady. The "mitzvah" we will all be performing is preparing the gardens at Vale Park Urban Farm for winter, and cleaning trash from Vale Park.



All are invited to join us in this mitzvah! Please wear work clothes, gloves, and boots. Also, it would be helpful if you could bring shovels, wheelbarrows, and/or wagons for moving compost and turning soil. Email leah@ecosny.org if

you have questions.

In particular, ECOS needs help from kids in our community for this project. Kids know well the cozy feeling of getting tucked into bed on a cold, winter evening. Get your children and grandchildren outdoors with all the animals getting ready for winter, and help tuck in the garden beds with a warm and nutritious blanket of compost. The worms and microorganisms might even give a goodnight kiss of thanks, but don't tell the kids that!

In addition, on Mitzvah Day ECOS volunteers will be collecting electronic recycling, free of charge, at Gates of Heaven Synagogue, Ashmore Avenue and Eastern Parkway, Schenectady. 9 a.m.-12 p.m. Email Arden at raucha@union.edu for the list of acceptable items and any questions.



Please check our **ECOS Calendar** at www.ecosny.org prior to any program for event updates or cancellations.



**Festival of Trees
Craft Party**
Sunday, November 19
1-4 pm
Community Center
2682 Aqueduct Road
Niskayuna

Join us to make decorations for our ECOS tree to be displayed in the Festival of Trees in Schenectady this December. Our tree's theme is "Keep Trash out of our Rivers and Ocean." We have been collecting (and disinfecting) washed-up debris from along the Mohawk and Hudson Rivers, as well as from Cape Cod and Hawaii. Come see our impressive collection of flip-flops, car parts, toothbrushes, and more, and help us figure out how to make a whimsical, but compelling, display of this flotsam and jetsam of the plastic era. Email leah@ecosny.org with any questions.

The Festival of Trees itself, at which ECOS' and its members' creation will be on display, will be at the Schenectady County Historical Society and the YWCA in Schenectady on December 2 through 17 from 10 am-5 pm each day. Tickets are \$6 for adults, but kids under 12 are free!



ECOS Annual Holiday Party and Regifting Sale

Friday, December 8, 6-8pm
Niskayuna Community Center
2682 Aqueduct Road

Please bring a dish to share. Also, we will be holding a "regifting sale," so please bring clean, quality items to donate. We hope ECOS members and friends can join us to celebrate the holiday season!

Fall 2017 Regional Environmental Calendar Highlights

Wed Nov 1	10am-12pm	ESCV Walk: Saratoga State Park - Hilton Garden Inn Saratoga Springs, 125 S Broadway, Saratoga Springs
Sat Nov 4	All day	ADK Young Member Hike: Hurricane Mountain - Contact Dustin Wright, 603-953-8782
	All day	AMC Hike: Slide Mountain- Contact Kevin Cox, mmcloug1@nycap.rr.com or 518-279-4839
Sun Nov 5	1pm-4pm	ECOS Mitzvah Day at Vale Urban Farm - Vale Cemetery (N. Brandywine Ave entrance), Schenectady
Mon Nov 6	All day	ADK Hike: Haystack Mountain, Pawlet, VT - Contact Walt Hayes, 518-399-7482
Wed Nov 8	All day	AMC Hike: Kaaterskill Falls - Contact Sharon Bonk, sboqc@mindspring.com or 518-674-0042
	10am-12pm	ESCV Walk: Albany/Colonie Crossings - Rudy. A Ciccotti Family Recreation Center, 30 Aviation Rd, Albany
Fri Nov 10	All day	ADK Hike: Big Indian & Eagle - Contact John Susko, jpsusko@netzero.net or 518-383-1284
Sat Nov 11	All day	ADK Hike: Balsam Lake Mountain- Contact Mary Zawacki, zawackimm@gmail.com or 914-373-8733
Mon Nov 13	5pm -8pm	ECOS Rachel Carson Celebration Dinner - Schenectady County Community College, Schenectady
Wed Nov 15	All day	AMC Hike: Christman Sanctuary- Contact Nancy Crowther, nancy@crowther.org or 518-698-0531
	1pm-3pm	Environmental Poet Connie Clarke <i>Bending Branch</i> - The Open Door Bookstore, 128 Jay Street, Schenectady
Sun Nov 19	1pm-4pm	ECOS Festival of Trees Craft Party - Niskayuna Community Center, 2682 Aqueduct Road, Niskayuna
Sat Nov 25	All day	ADK Survey: Long Path through Thatcher Park - Contact John Tift, jtift2@nycap.rr.com or 518-439-5686
Fri Dec 8	6pm-8pm	ECOS Annual Holiday Party - Community Center, 2682 Aqueduct Rd, Niskayuna
Dec 2-17	10am-5pm	Festival of Trees: Schenectady County Historical Society and the YWCA NorthEastern NY, \$6 for adults

Please check the ECOS website prior to our events for updates.

Our partners' websites are provided for updates to their programs.

ECOS: The Environmental Clearinghouse, www.ecosny.org

AMC: Appalachian Mountain Club, www.amcmohawkudson.org

ADK: Adirondack Mountain Club, www.adk-schenectady.org

ESCV: Empire State Capital Volkspotters, www.walkescv.org

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Lansing Manor Historic Estate open 10 a.m.- 5 p.m.

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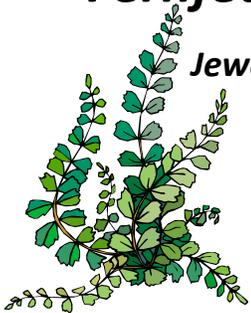
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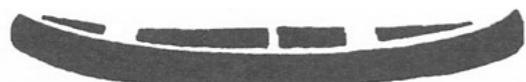


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 \$500. Patron

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