



ECOS NEWS



ECOS: The Environmental Clearinghouse
Celebrating Our 43rd Year in Environmental Education

Vol. XLIV

Number 4

March 2016

ECOS Annual All Member Meeting

Monday, March 7th

**Niskayuna Branch Library
2400 Nott Street East, Niskayuna**

Open Board meeting 5:00 to 6:00

Light refreshments 6:00 to 6:30

Guest Speaker 6:30 to 7:30

Guest Speaker: Art Clayman, Electric City Bicycle Rescue & ECOS Board member.

Electric City Bike Rescue is an all-volunteer community where bicycle repairs and maintenance skills are shared in a creative and supportive environment. Services are available to anyone with a desire to learn. Volunteer-led programs focus on rescuing, repairing, and redistributing little-used bicycles that would otherwise be destined for landfills. These bicycles are used as tools to teach self-empowerment, and to promote sustainable transportation. www.electriccitybikerescue.org

SAVE THE DATE

ECOS Annual Dinner

Thursday, April 7th Schenectady County Community College

Guest Speaker: Christopher Swain, "It's about clean water."

Christopher Swain has been Swimming and advocating for our waterways since 1996. Swain is the first person in history to swim the entire lengths of the Columbia, Hudson, Mohawk, Charles, and Mystic Rivers, as well as Lake Champlain, and large sections of the Atlantic coastline of the United States.

The purpose of Christopher's swims is to put threatened waterways squarely in the public eye, and to support protection, restoration, and education efforts. Swain documents his swims in photographs, videos, and journals. He interviews stakeholders, and collects and shares location, personal physiology, and water quality data. During his swims, Christopher has stroked through rapids, pesticides, sewage, and nuclear waste. He has explored pristine wilderness reaches, and survived collisions with boats, unplanned trips over waterfalls, and blood-sucking Lamprey Eel attacks. www.swimwithswain.org

*****We expect this event to sell out.*****

**Registration for ECOS members begins Now. Registration opens to the public on Monday, March 14.
See insert for details.**

ECOS NEWS

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ECOS: The Environmental Clearinghouse, Inc.

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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, to build a community that is aware and knowledgeable about environmental issues, and to advocate informed action to preserve our natural resources. ECOS is funded through the support of our members and the community.

JOIN THE LOCAL FOOD REVOLUTION

We are building a new, full-time cooperative market featuring local, organic and sustainably produced natural foods in downtown Schenectady.



Electric City Food Cooperative
PO Box 1416, Schenectady, NY 12301

Contact: Kat Wolfram
(518) 322-6628
www.electriccityfood.coop

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Shopping online this Holiday Season? If you are then you can support your favorite charity, AT NO EXTRA COST TO YOU, by visiting www.iGive.com. Over 800 of you favorite stores and catalogs participate in this program in which the retailer donates a portion of your purchase to your favorite charity. In addition, there are special discounts and sales available through iGive.com. ECOS: The Environmental Clearinghouse has raised over \$200 through this program so far.

eBay Giving Works

Did you receive a holiday gift you don't want or need? Sell it on eBay and support ECOS. eBay Giving Works is the dedicated program for charity listings where you can buy or sell items to support nonprofit organizations. eBay Giving Works is the dedicated program for charity listings on eBay, enabling you to list items on eBay and donate part or all of the final sale price to your favorite nonprofit organizations. Since 2000, more than \$81 million has been raised for charity from listings sold on eBay worldwide. To learn how the program works visit ebay.com and click on Giving Works. ECOS: The Environmental Clearinghouse is participating in this program.

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Visitors Center Exhibits on energy and the environment.
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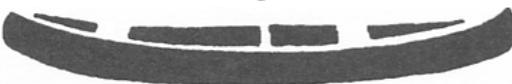
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President's Letter

Executive Director's Report

Our lack of snow and other less than pleasant weather has hampered our Tuesday ski and snowshoe outings - - - but we keep trying to stay focused on "next week".

Your ECOS Board has recently changed the name and purpose of the Resource Committee to the Development Committee. Holly Hawkes will head this up with principle support and direction from Past President Pat Rush. We have also changed the name of a committee charged with trail maintenance work from the Mohawk River State Park to simply the "Trails Committee, as it also does work in the Featherstonaugh State forest and from time to time may work in other places.

Furthermore we have created a new "Communications" Committee, recognizing that we need a newly focused and better-directed effort to reach the public, and discuss our efforts of environmental education. We accept help from any of our members in these efforts, but put out a special request in this regard as we believe we need the help of younger folks more familiar with the electronic forums of Face Book, web pages, and so forth. If you are interested or know of a high school or college age student that is accomplished in these areas, please have them contact us.

Lastly, I hope you are able to attend our All Member Meeting Monday, March 7th at the Niskayuna Branch of the Schenectady County Public Library.

Will Seyse

What a disappointing winter for skiing and snowshoeing. Not only is there no snow on the ground as I sit writing this report on February 20, it is also 60 degrees outside and there is no snow in the forecast, just more rain later in the week.

On the brighter side we are excited to announce that the guest speaker for our annual dinner will be environmental activist and educator Christopher Swain. He was the keynote at last year's Mohawk River Symposium speaking about his swim of the Mohawk River. I was able to hear his program last year and I can promise his talk at our dinner will be enlightening and exciting.

Looking ahead to our All Member Meeting on Monday, March 7th at the Niskayuna Library we will have Art Clayman from Electric City Bicycle Rescue as our speaker. Over the last couple years EOCs has held multiple bicycle collections at our events to help support the Electric City Bicycle Rescue. Art will tell us what Electric City Bicycle Rescue does with the donated bikes.

And finally, as we have done for the last few years, we will be running a series of articles in our newsletter written by environmental policy interns from Union College. This year's interns are Graham Kilpatrick and Calvin Wiles.

Patrick Clear

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
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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. (If you do not have computer access, call customer service at 1-800-305-0669.)
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Mohawk River Symposium
Friday, March 18 Union College

Reconnect with friends and colleagues working in the basin, and get up to speed with the latest developments in the watershed. The Geology Department at Union College will host the Eighth Symposium on the physical aspects of the Mohawk Watershed in New York State. The scientific program and timing of theme sessions will be shaped by submitted abstracts and invited talks. The meeting will highlight recent and on-going work in the watershed during oral and poster presentations and technical sessions.

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Karin Limburg
SUNY College of Environmental Science & Forestry,
Syracuse, NY

*From the mountains to the sea and back again:
Why the Mohawk River is important
to the North Atlantic*

[http://minerva.union.edu/garverj/mws/
2016/symposium.html](http://minerva.union.edu/garverj/mws/2016/symposium.html)

Friends of the Schenectady Library
March Science Series
All programs begin at noon
McChesney Room, Central Library

Monday, March 7: Frontiers in Astronomy.
Josh Hauck and Valerie Rapson, Dudley Observatory.

Monday, March 14: Frontiers in Genetics.
Ricki Lewis, Geneticist and Science Writer.

Monday, March 21: Climate Change: Science, Society
and the Skeptics. Nancy Slack, ecologist and science his-
torian.

Monday, March 28: Bitcoin, a New Form of Money.
Christopher Dosch, GE Global Research.

13th Annual Nature Art Exhibit

The 13th Annual Nature Art Exhibit will be coming to Thacher Nature Center in a few short weeks! Exhibits can be viewed March 5 through March 25, Tuesdays through Sundays, 9am to 5pm. Join us for the reception to kick off the show on Saturday, March 5, 1pm to 4pm at Thacher Nature Center.

Please call 872-1237 or 872-0800 for more information.

Schenectady County Environmental Advisory Council
“Re-Clothe NY” Earth Day Textile Collection Event

On average, New York State residents dispose of some 1.4 billion pounds of recoverable clothes and textiles, with an estimated market value over \$200 million. It is estimated that some 9,600 jobs would be created across the state if that material was dropped off for reuse and recycling. Across the country, only 15% of recyclable clothes and textiles are actually recovered; 85% ends up in the trash.

Schenectady County Environmental Advisory Council will be hosting a textile reuse and recycling event on Saturday, April 23 from 8:00 am – 12:00 pm at the Schenectady County Community College’s parking lot.

The average person throws away 70-pounds of used clothing annually; of those 70-pounds, 95% could have been reused or recycled. Industry officials say only clothing that is wet (mildewed) or has been contaminated with a solvent such as gasoline, paint, or odorous cleaner cannot be recycled.

Used clothing and other textiles such as sheets, towels, curtains, and pillowcases are extremely recyclable – even if it’s ripped, missing buttons, has a broken zipper, or is slightly stained.



A PLACE FOR FOLK 2016
Unitarian Universalist Society of Schenectady
1221 Wendell Avenue, Schenectady 12308
www.aplaceforfolk.org

Phil Henry Acoustic Trio
Friday, March 18 at 7:30 pm
\$20 per adult

This singer/songwriter lifts us up and draws us in with engaging lyrics and memorable melodies that turn new songs into new favorites. Phil’s smooth delivery and charming voice are backed by Gary Moon and Jeff Kimble.

Ocean's Dead By 2048

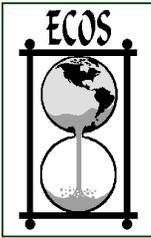
The old saying, “there are plenty of fish in the sea” could be no longer by the middle of this century. An international collection of scientists have recently been predicting that almost all coral reef ecosystems will be completely gone by the year 2025 and all commercial fish and seafood species will be gone by 2048, unless there is a drastic change in the way that humans treat our world’s oceans. This collapse will not just mean the death to a handful of fish species, it presents a threat to the survival of the ocean as a whole. This is not merely speculation, but a predictable, well supported trend based off of an enormous amount of data that scientists have been examining for decades. If this trend continues for years to come, then all seafood species will be diminished within my lifetime. Unfortunately, these predictions do not register as a major threat to the majority of Americans. The problem in today’s world is that people have a huge disconnect between what is going on in their world vs. the real world. People see a healthy supply of seafood on the shelves of their local grocery stores and they refuse to acknowledge the issue because these problems have not had an affect on them yet. This is why it is so important to raise awareness for the importance of the health of our oceans. If people continue to think and act like this, it will be much too late to save the ocean by the time people realize the true risk of harming our oceans. Yes, it is the fish that are dying right now, but we are threatening ourselves just as much for the future.

On the most basic level, human overpopulation and the overconsumption of natural resources are the driving forces of our diminishing oceans. The four main factors that cause marine life populations to crash are over-fishing, global warming, pollution, and habitat loss. All four of these causes are interrelated with each other and reinforce the collapse of the oceans.

As the human population grows and as technology has advanced along with fishing techniques, we have increasingly been able to exploit the oceans resources more and more to the point where we are taking the fish out of the sea much faster than the fish populations can regenerate naturally. This results in the overall depletion of marine life leaving much less fish in the sea. On top of this, one of the big causes is pollution and global warming. Pollution of the oceans that contributes to species loss is both the physical pollution of plastic and other wastes such as fertilizers that runoff into the oceans, but also the increase of carbon dioxide in the oceans due to greenhouse gas emissions from burning fossil fuels for energy around the world which changes the chemistry of the ocean and makes the water much more acidic. The overall warming of the oceans also contributes to this and changes the chemistry of the waters. Most marine life inhabits a specific set of climate conditions, and when ocean temperatures continue to increase, more and more marine species find themselves in unsuitable living conditions. This contributes to the overall loss of stability of the ocean’s ecosystems. All of these driving forces results in overall habitat loss for marine life. Without our ocean’s rich biodiversity, massive dead zones will start to emerge throughout the waters. These dead zones mark areas in the ocean with such low levels of oxygen that it is unable to support the majority of marine life.

Perhaps the biggest issue in dealing with this problem is that people don’t truly understand the potential for the collapse of the oceans wreaking havoc on human populations all around the world. Almost every single human community relies on the oceans in some way whether it be directly from the sea, or indirectly from its ability to regulate our climate and the entire planet’s ecosystem of life. There is still time to turn things around by restoring these precious ecosystems, but without a global halt in industrialized fishing and greenhouse emissions around the world, this 2048 prediction is not going to change. This effort would require humans to make a radical change in lifestyle. Unfortunately, this is an effort that the majority of humans are not willing to do. Without the biodiversity of the ocean, our planet along with its natural resources will quite literally deteriorate. The ocean is truly a life support for the human population and without it we will no be able to sustain ourselves and survive on this planet. When the oceans die, we die.

Calvin Wiles, ECOS Intern, Union College



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Sea Level Rise Along the Hudson

The Hudson River stretches 160 miles from New York harbor to the Federal Dam in Troy, New York. Sea level rise poses many problems for communities and infrastructure along the Hudson River. Recent Super Storm Sandy demonstrated the power of storm tidal surges and destroyed many wetlands that provide critical stability at the mouth of the Hudson River.

Over the past century sea level on the Hudson has risen about a foot per year, at a rate above the global average. Sea level rise is locked in for the foreseeable future due to the continued and increasing emissions of greenhouse gases. Decisions made today on energy, land use, and infrastructure along the coastline of the Hudson River will help determine how prepared New York is for the inevitable affects of sea level rise.

Over 9,000 acres of riverfront land along the Hudson are at risk to the potential expanding high tides and sea level changes. About 3,600 households and almost 7,000 people reside in the at risk area. Also at risk from sea level rise are the 13,000 acres of tidal wetlands that are vital to the stability of the Hudson. The low laying coastal wetlands along the Hudson help minimize the effects of storm surges, sea level rise and erosion.

Planning and efforts made now to prepare for sea level rise on the Hudson will lessen the burden on future generations. Sea level rise is unavoidable, preserving wetland areas will only do so much. Fortifying and protecting the transportation, low laying sewage, wastewater, communication and energy infrastructure systems along the Hudson River gives New York the best chance to avoid future sea level rise problems.

By Graham Kilpatrick, ECOS Intern, Union College Sources

<http://www.dec.ny.gov/energy> <http://www.dec.ny.gov/energy> <http://www.scenichudson.org/slr>
<http://blog.timesunion.com/green/sea-level-rise-on-hudson>