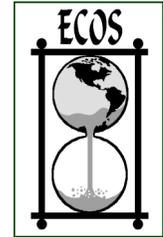


# ECOS NEWS



*ECOS: The Environmental Clearinghouse*

Celebrating Our 47th Year in Environmental Education

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Volume XLVII

Number 5

October /November 2019

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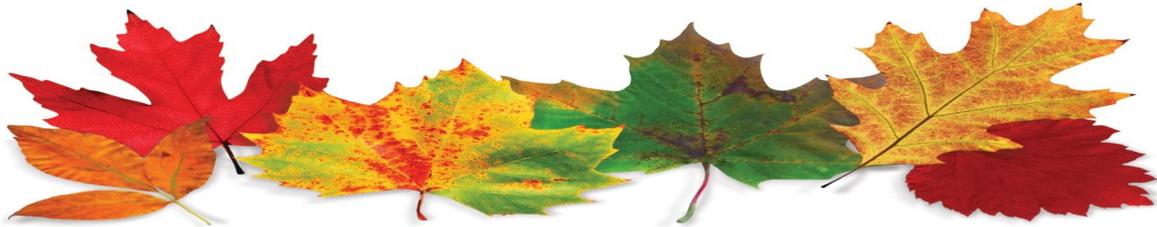
SAVE THE DATE

## *Rachel Carson Celebration*

**November 19, 2019**

**Reservation form enclosed**

See pages 3 and 4 for information on Rachel Carson and the dinner speaker



*From the President's Desk . . .*

### **WATCH FOR IT!**

The ECOS membership year has been changed to simplify our recordkeeping. Instead of renewals coming due throughout the year, the membership year for all members will begin on April 1 and end on March 31 of the following year.

We are currently in transition. If you paid dues between April 1 and December 31 of 2018, you will be receiving a letter that will list your pro-rated dues amount. Watch for it! Keep supporting ECOS, and let us hear from you soon!

New activities are being planned for 2019-2020, including more activities for families and people who are working during the week. We are planning family-friendly walks in the preserves on our popular Seven Preserve

Challenge, special programs for children and families, programs focused on the Mohawk River and watershed, as well as continuing our Tuesday Fall and Spring walks, our ski trips, and our popular dinner events.

In addition, we are increasing our focus on educating schoolchildren about the environment. We have been working with students in the Schenectady City School District's summer enrichment program and the JCC after-school program, and will continue to develop programs in the coming year. We are also in conversations with the schools about offering our Mohawk River Program for fourth-graders in the spring, provided the transportation issue can be worked out.

—*Ruth Bonn*

**ECOS NEWS**

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**Congratulations Alex**

Alex Lykins has stepped down from his position as a member of the ECOS board, as he has recently taken a new job as Clean Energy Specialist for SUNY and also assumed leadership of the Schenectady County Environmental Advisory Council (SCEAC).

During his time on the ECOS board Alex made significant contributions in the areas of by-laws revision and strategic planning. We'll miss you, Alex, but we look forward to working with you through SCEAC.

**Do You Have Web Skills?**

ECOS is seeking a volunteer with basic web design and/or programming skills to assist in maintaining and updating our website. Knowledge of Wordpress would be especially helpful. Contact Gerry Magnes at 518-810-7000 or [gmagnes1@gmail.com](mailto:gmagnes1@gmail.com).

**Trail Clearing**

Featherstonaugh State Forest, Duanesburg

Tuesday, October 15, 9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.  
Help clear trails for our winter ski trips. Bring loppers and/or a small saw. This area can be wet, so boots are recommended.

Meet trip leader Will Seyse at the corner of Lake and Hardin Roads in Duanesburg at 9:30 a.m. If you have questions, please call Will at (518) 369-4254.

**Keep in the Know**

**by sending your e-mail address**

Occasionally, an ECOS event arises which, for a variety of reasons, is not in the newsletter. To avoid missing out, please send your email address to [info@ecosny.org](mailto:info@ecosny.org) and you will be added to the electronic ECOS membership list. We anticipate just one or two announcements between newsletters.



**ECOS HOLIDAY PARTY**

December 11, 2019

6 PM—8PM

Niskayuna Recreational Center

2682 Aqueduct Rd

Niskayuna, NY 12309

Bring a food dish to share

Please consider bringing a new or nearly new item for our re-gifting sale.

**ECOS Welcomes Our New Office Manager**

ECOS is pleased to announce that Maureen Gebert has accepted the new part time position of Office Manager. Ms. Gebert has wide experience in project management, including having served as the City of Schenectady's Heritage Area Coordinator under four mayors. For the past year, she has been working with ECOS under contract on projects such as the newsletter. We appreciate her continued contribution to the work of ECOS and we look forward to her presence in the office.

Official office hours will be Wednesday 11 AM – 2 PM and at other times by appointment.

## Rachel Carson's Life and Legacy

by Ruth Bonn, ECOS President

*On November 19<sup>th</sup>, ECOS will host its annual Rachel Carson Dinner to celebrate the life and legacy of Rachel Carson. Her groundbreaking book, Silent Spring, catalyzed a national environmental movement and provoked passage of national environmental legislation. ECOS was founded at that time.*



When I was in my teens, I read Rachel Carson's *The Sea Around Us*. I was enthralled. It opened my mind to the vastness of geologic time, the complexity of something we tend to take for granted, the sweep of human history and our relative ignorance about the sea that covers almost three quarters of our planet. Carson describes the ocean, "... so vast, so complex, and so infinitely mysterious ..." in the language of a poet and with the accuracy of a scientist. Published in 1951, the book became an overnight best-seller and established Rachel Carson's place as a respected voice of public science and a celebrated nature writer.

Carson's scope is vast. She was thinking in ecological terms before the terms *ecosystem* or *ecology* were generally known. Her writing always places creatures firmly within their environment. "To stand at the edge of the sea, ... to watch the flight of shore birds that have swept up and down the surf lines of the continents for untold thousands of years, to see the running of the old eels and the young shad to the sea, is to have knowledge of things that are as nearly eternal as any earthly life can be."\*

After World War II, DDT became widely available for use on farms and gardens. Carson, who was employed in the Department of Fisheries, read many government reports on fish and wildlife. Finding that it appeared that many creatures, not only insects, were dying as a result of widespread use of DDT, she became alarmed. She proposed an article investigating whether DDT might "upset the whole balance of nature if unwisely used." Publishers were not interested.

By 1958, popular concern about the consequences of local and statewide DDT aerial-spraying programs was high. A citizens' Committee Against Mass Poisoning filed a lawsuit in New York. Carson was asked to cover the trial, but she was prevented from travelling to New York by family responsibilities. She arranged to be sent regular reports from the trial and read vast amounts of scientific literature in biology, chemistry, medicine, and physiology at home. The resulting explanation of her findings was written with storybook clarity. The work for the book for which she is best known had begun.

She herself was suffering from breast cancer even as she was writing about the consequences of "the never-ending stream of chemicals of which pesticides are a part, chemicals now pervading the world in which we live, acting upon us directly and indirectly, separately and collectively..." She kept her cancer secret partly out of concern that chemical companies would dismiss her work as having been motivated by her illness. By 1961 she was often wheelchair bound from pain and weakness. She was terrified that she might die before she could finish the book.

In June 1962, *Silent Spring* appeared in *The New Yorker* in three parts and as a book published by Houghton Mifflin in September. It started "a national quarrel" as CBS Reports termed it in a one-hour special which aired in April 1963. Footage of Carson (shot sitting on her porch as she was too ill to travel or even to stand) was intercut with footage of government and industry spokesmen to give the sense of a debate.

*Continued page 4*

**Industry spokesman:** “Miss Carson maintains that the balance of nature is a major force in the survival of man, whereas the modern chemist, the modern biologist and scientist believes that man is steadily controlling nature.”

**Carson:** “Now, to these people, apparently, the balance of nature was something that was repealed as soon as man came on the scene. Well, you might just as well assume that you could repeal the law of gravity.”

On April 14, 1964, Rachel Carson died at home. Her writing sparked a national environmental movement and led to a burgeoning understanding of the complexity of the natural world and the effects of human actions on it. It provoked passage of The Clean Air Act (1963), the Wilderness Act (1964), the National Environmental Policy Act (1969), the Clean Water Act and the Endangered Species Act (both 1972) and the establishment of the Environmental Protection Agency in 1970.

“Wildlife, it is pointed out, is dwindling because its home is being destroyed, but the home of wildlife is also our home.” She wrote these words in 1938; they are still not being taken to heart.

\*From “Under the Sea Wind” (1941) as quoted in: The Right Way to Remember Rachel Carson; Leopold, Jill (New Yorker/2018/03/26). I have relied heavily on Leopold’s article for this piece; all quotations are from her article.



## 18th Annual ECOS Rachel Carson Celebration

Tuesday, November 19th

Van Curler Room, SUNY Schenectady

### ECOS’ Arts and Experience Silent Auction

This is our big fundraising event and will be held along with the Rachel Carson Celebration. Please contact Jen Insull [insullj@gmail.com](mailto:insullj@gmail.com) 518-269-0387 or [info@ecosny.org](mailto:info@ecosny.org) with questions or ideas for the silent auction donations.

## *Rachel Carson Dinner Speaker*

Kristopher Williams, PRISM  
(Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management)

### Biodiversity and the Management of Invasive Species

Kristopher Williams is the coordinator of Capital-Mohawk PRISM, one of eight New York State Partnerships for Regional Invasive Species Management. Capital-Mohawk PRISM is funded by the New York State Environmental Protection Fund and is hosted by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Saratoga County.

Mr. Williams is a former teacher of earth science and chemistry at the high school level, and holds a Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Science/Geology from Alfred University and a Master of Science in Education from Sage College in Albany.

As coordinator of invasive species management in this eleven-county region, Mr. Williams works with county, regional, state and federal agencies, as well as non-profit agencies, corporations, school groups and citizens to provide environmental education and programming for the detection, monitoring and control of terrestrial and aquatic invasive species and restoration of the environment.

Mr. Williams will explain how invasive species are defined, how their threat is ranked, and how their rate of invasion is measured. He will talk about why biodiversity is important to fighting invasives in our changing climate, and how Integrated Pest Management can be used to do so. To illustrate these principles he will use a case study from the field: an invasion of Japanese Stiltgrass at Daniels Road State Forest in Saratoga County.



## ECOS Volunteers Participate in the Schenectady City School District's Summer Enrichment Program

Over four weeks, from July 8 to Aug. 1, our volunteers were at the park Tuesdays and Thursdays, for two one-hour sessions each day. In each session we worked with 72-80 third and fourth grade students, broken up into four groups of 18-20, all groups doing different activities. The children rotated to a new activity every week, so that by the end of the program they had completed them all. Those activities were: taking water samples from Iroquois Lake and examining them under a microscope; stream study; tree and plant identification, with walks in the woods; and animal tracks. During the second half of the program bees and beekeeping were substituted for water samples.



## Partner Events

	Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy Annual Fall Fundraiser	MHLC
3-Oct		
4-Oct	Five Rivers Annual Birdseed Sale Order Due	5R
4-Oct	Tree Identification Workshop	LA
5-Oct	Fall Leaves Preschool Program	THCR
5-Oct	Indian Ladder Trail Guided Walk	THCR
6-Oct	Volkssporters Walk Williamstown MA	VOLK
6-Oct	Batty for Bats	THCR
12-Oct	Fall Fungi	THCR
12-Oct	Moonlight Walk at Thacher Park	THCR
13-Oct	Full Moon Owl Prowl	LA
13-Oct	Batty for Bats	THCR
19-Oct	Pick up Five Rivers Birdseed	5R
20-Oct	Pumpkin Painting at Thacher Park	THCR
25-Oct	Albany Area Amateur Astronomers Star Party	LA
26-Oct	Albany Area Amateur Astronomers Star Party	LA
27-Oct	Batty for Bats	THCR
2-Nov	"Woodland Path" Oil Painting Workshop	THCR
3-Nov	Understanding the Landscape with Ondatra	MHLC
6-Nov	Volkssporters Walk Schenectady	VOLK
8-Nov	NYS Wine Tasting	LA
22-Nov	Albany Area Amateur Astronomers Star Party	LA
23-Nov	Albany Area Amateur Astronomers Star Party	LA
30-Nov	Decorating with Native Greenery	LA

### Partner Key

<b>5R</b>	<b>Five Rivers</b> www.FriendsFiveRivers@outlook.org 518-475-0295
<b>LA</b>	<b>Landis Arboretum</b> www.landisarboretum.org
<b>MHLC</b>	<b>Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy</b> mohawkhudson.org 518-436-6346
<b>TCHR</b>	<b>Thacher Park</b> https://parks.ny.gov 518-872-1237
<b>VOLK</b>	<b>Volkssporters</b> www.walkescv.org

## For the Climate, Today is as Important as 2030

by Janet Hollocher

You may have heard that we have only a decade left to solve the climate problem if we're going to keep the planet habitable. Or perhaps someone has told you that scientists say we have only 10 years left to save the Earth.

Where does this 10-year time frame come from, and what does it mean for us today?

To understand, we start with a 2018 report by scientists from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) who studied the impacts of global warming of more than 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. Seemingly small amounts of global-average warming can make an enormous difference to Earth systems, and by 2018, warming of 1°C had already taken place.

The IPCC study found that global warming greater than 1.5°C would, with a high probability, cause the loss of the planet's coral reefs, the inundation of coastal areas, and more deadly droughts, heat waves, and extreme precipitation events. Other effects would themselves accelerate warming by inducing positive feedbacks -- the thawing of permafrost, by releasing methane; and the loss of Arctic ice, by increasing the absorption of solar radiation. Yet the study was conservative, as it did not include lower probability events of high potential impact, such as disrupted ocean circulation, loss of Antarctic ice, and human displacement and conflict.

The IPCC scientists determined that we must stop adding greenhouse gases to the atmosphere by mid-century in order to keep global warming under 1.5°C. To be on a path to reasonably achieving zero emissions by 2050, they calculated that we must cut greenhouse gas emissions roughly by half by 2030, about a decade from now.

One decade, 10 years -- the time it took to put a man on the Moon or for the internet to dominate, and longer than World War II.

It is never too late to make a difference, but the sooner we begin to reduce individual and global greenhouse gas emissions, the better our chance of success. The longer we wait, the greater will be the financial, social, and ecological cost. Let's start today, and let's not stop.

## Seven Preserve Challenge Fifty Patches Awarded



The ECOS-sponsored Seven Preserve Challenge (7PC) has now been completed by 50 people. Our patch is given to each participant who visits all seven sites and completes our application form. Six preserves are in Schenectady County and one, the Bozen Kill Preserve, is in Albany County. Details on the application are available through our website or by contacting our office. Our intention is to get people outside discovering wonderful sites close to home. Nature, geology, birding, botany, parenting, grand parenting, dog walking, and so forth, can be enjoyed in the seven locations. ECOS publishes Natural Area Guides for four local counties and each identifies many more places to enjoy and reconnect with nature.

Most of the 7PC patch recipients are from Schenectady County or nearby Altamont, Slingerlands, or Latham. Others have been from Fort Plain, Herkimer, Poland, and Marcy, New York. Our most distant recipient is from Lake Hopatcong, New Jersey.

There is no time limit for completing the challenge but no reason not to get started right away. Please encourage others to join you.

For those who prefer a guide, please see the enclosed flyer for dates of walks led by ECOS volunteers through the Seven Preserves.

**More Images of the  
Summer Enrichment  
Program in Central Park**



**ECOS Membership**

**ECOS: The Environmental Clearinghouse**

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

Please check your membership contribution level.

\$40 Individual

\$75 Donor/Organization

\$150 Sustainer

\$50 Family

\$100 Supporter

\$250 Benefactor

\$500 Patron

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

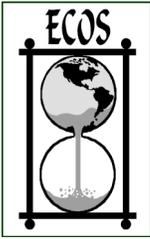
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As a GE employee (or retiree), my contribution is eligible for GE Foundation Matching Funds. I have registered with GE for the matching gift by computer at [www.gefoundation.com](http://www.gefoundation.com). If you do not have computer access, call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



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

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

ECOS: The Environmental Clearinghouse is located in the Niskayuna Community Center, 2682 Aqueduct Rd. Niskayuna, NY.

**DATES AND EVENTS TO REMEMBER**

- October 15**      **Trail Clearing**
- November 19**      **Rachel Carson Celebration**
- December 11**      **Holiday Party**

**Seven Preserve Challenge Family Friendly Guided Walks 2 PM**

- October 6**
- October 13**
- October 20**
- October 27**
- November 3**
- November 10**
- November 17**

**Or anytime on your own**



*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.*