



# ECOS NEWS



*ECOS: The Environmental Clearinghouse*

Celebrating Our 48th Year in Environmental Education

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## **2019-2020 STATE OF ECOS REPORT**

### **Housekeeping**

Not sexy, but essential...the basic systems that keep an organization functioning smoothly....

**Date of membership renewal**—changed to one date for everyone—April 1<sup>st</sup>, rather than renewal on the anniversary of the date you first joined ECOS.... The reason was to simplify the renewal process so that one mailing goes out during the year to all members, rather than dues reminders going out every month to different people. A large backlog of unpaid memberships had accumulated due to the complexity of the rolling dues structure which has now been cleared up....but it took a while to make that happen.

(You will be getting your dues reminder soon if you haven't already.)

**Hiring of part-time office manager**—it didn't take me long to realize that the many little tasks—keeping track of our publications, sending out Seven Preserve Challenge badges, filing release forms, responding to email and phone questions, posting information on Facebook and our website, dealing with mail, etc. needed more attention than I could give them. Luckily, Maureen Gebert who was already doing the Newsletter, was able to move into the position of office manager. We even have official office hours—three hours a week!

**By-laws update**---not exactly Housekeeping, but important for guiding the organization. The process of developing, discussing, redrafting, etc.etc. the by-laws has taken well over a year. But they will soon be in place. Grateful thanks to Holly Hawkes for taking on this project and seeing it through.

**Communications**—a committee headed by Gerry Magmes managed to develop guidelines for our use of Mail Chimp, Facebook, the website and the Newsletter so that information gets out in a timely fashion but is not overwhelming.

**Volunteers and Membership**---Our membership chair, Connie Young, is developing a list of members and their skills and interest in volunteering. An interest survey is included with the dues notice.

### **Program**

This is the part everyone is interested in...the fun part...

Long-standing programs have been continued... Tuesday Nature Walks have a full schedule for the Spring (thanks to Steve Jones for arranging them), Tuesday Winter Outings were well attended (hats off to Sue and Roy Keats), our traditional Rachel Carson Dinner was very successful (Thank you to Jen Insull), as was last year's Annual Dinner.

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**ECOS NEWS**

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*Welcome New Board Members*

**Rebekka Henriksen** is the garden coordinator and educator at Zoller Elementary. She has spent the last 10 years consulting on various projects with the National Institute for Children's Health Quality, and the New York State Department of Health. She is a lifelong environmentalist, starting a campaign at age 8 to get her neighbors in Rochester, NY to stop using pesticides and herbicides on their lawns. She believes in the power and wisdom of children.

**Cindy Eisenbeck** took an early retirement from her 35 year career as a registered nurse and more recently a diabetes educator at Ellis Medicine. She learned a new hobby, beekeeping. She has become amazed and excited about the incredible life a bee, and now loves sharing it with children which she is getting the opportunity to do through her involvement with ECOS.

**Josh Bennett**, native of Michigan, spent his early years hiking, camping, canoeing, and backpacking. After two degrees at MIT, he worked in Seattle performing metal failure analysis. In 1999 he began work at KAPL where he became involved in Friends of the Niskayuna Trails which oversees the development and maintenance of the John Brown/Mohawk State Park trail system.

**Sarah Celik** has a B.S. in Forest Science and a Master of Landscape Architecture. Her experience includes computerized tree inventory, a "Service Forester" managing woodlands and fire suppression. In Texas, she worked on large development projects in city parks and school playgrounds. In 2007 she joined the Beekman Conservation Advisory Council and helped rewrite the code for logging within the Township for stronger environmental protection. Sarah recently became FAA part 107 certified for flying a drone and is forming "Aerial Land Services, LLC" to engage in site analysis and other land management applications.

**Margie Amodeo** is the coordinator of the Kelly Adirondack Center of Union College. The facility former home of Adirondack conservationist Paul Schaefer, includes exhibit space and the Adirondack Research Library. The library's collections are focused on the 20th century environmental movement in the Adirondacks and the complexities of managing a peopled wilderness. The center works to engage Union's campus community and the public in discussions surrounding the Adirondacks and the complex relationships between nature and society. Margie has also been on the board of Southern Adirondack Audubon Society since 2018.



**Unsung Heroines**

ECOS has many volunteers who prepare the newsletter for mailing by folding it, adding inserts, and affixing mailing labels. While many people have helped, those who have done so most frequently in recent years are Flo Bigelow, Jo Moore, Harlene Smalkin, and Judy Smith. We are also grateful to Margie Litwin, who has recently taken over from Will Seyse the task of coordinating the newsletter mailing. Many thanks to all of you!

**STATE OF ECOS REPORT continued. . .**

The recently established Seven Preserve Challenge has attracted interest from many hikers. Nearly 100 badges have been awarded to people who have walked all seven preserves and submitted a form with comments about each hike. This year, we added guided Seven Preserve hikes on Sunday afternoons in the Fall. They were extremely popular attracting up to 45 people on some afternoons! Thanks to Holly Hawkes for organizing them. A Spring series of Sunday afternoon guided walks is also being planned.

A Winter Talks series was arranged by Art Clayman. Topics covered herbal remedies, the Mohawk watershed, gardening with children at Zoller School, Native American history along the Mohawk. Response was very positive; we plan to have a talk series this coming year as well.



In early March, collaborating with Riverkeeper, ECOS hosted a showing of two short films about the work Riverkeeper is doing to restore the Hudson River. The panel discussion which followed highlighted Riverkeeper's work monitoring the water quality of the Mohawk River. The event, held at the First Reformed Church, was attended by about 50 people, many new to ECOS.

ECOS also organized several bike rides and kayak outings during the summer and will be planning more.

**Programs for youth**



A priority for ECOS is developing and delivering programs which reach youth. To lead this effort, we will be establishing a position of part-time Youth Program Director. We also are exploring ways of collaborating with other groups.

A very successful program with 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students was held during the month of July. ECOS presented programs on Tuesdays and Thursdays in the Schenectady School District Summer Program. Topics were water study, animal tracks, tree identification and bees. Many

ECOS volunteers were involved. Our thanks goes to them. The School District has asked that ECOS again participate in their summer program this coming summer.

ECOS also presented environmental experiences to children in the JCC afterschool program.

This summer we will also be pilot testing a revised version of the Mohawk River program that ECOS delivered for fourth graders for many years. State standards and curriculum have been updated. We will be working with teachers to revise the Mohawk program to meet current needs. We hope to be able to offer the half-day program to the schools in the fall.

**In conclusion**

ECOS' mission is to provide environmental experiences and education for youth and adults to foster enjoyment and understanding of the natural world and promote action to preserve it. In the modern world, many people have lost touch with the natural world which sustains life. Our work to increase awareness and understanding is needed now more than ever. We hope to substantially increase our outreach to youth and families in the coming year. We count on your continued generous support, both by volunteering and financially.

## *What Can I Do? Compost?*

—Arden R. Rauch

For many, composting is simply not a choice. Easy if you have a yard and either a composting barrel or simply a pile acceptable to neighbors. Also easy if you have space, red worms or a commercial composting service. But if no yard, no space, and just too complicated, what then?

There are some relatively simple options that entail a bit of foresight. Buy **only** what is needed to avoid unwanted leftovers, or freeze even small quantities of myriad foods to be used later in a stew or soup. Curb impulse buying motivated by a “sale” or momentary impulse. Think: Will I really use or need it?

Many studies have indicated that we buy and don’t fully utilize not only food, but clothing and on and on. Although advertising and our conditioning is to buy.buy.buy, we need not succumb: EXERCISE CHOICE.

### **The Capital Region PRISM is hiring Watercraft Stewards**

The PRISM is in year three of administering a five-year contract (2018-2022) funded through the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) via the Environmental Protection Fund. As part of the agreement with the NYSDEC, we are administering a Hudson and Mohawk River Valleys Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Spread Prevention Program and are looking to hire a team of 20 AIS Watercraft Inspection Stewards along with 6 Lead AIS Watercraft Inspection Stewards. Watercraft stewards work independently at various boat launch locations along the Mohawk and Hudson Rivers. Counties of employment include Albany, Columbia, Dutchess, Green, Herkimer, Montgomery, Orange, Saratoga, Schenectady, Ulster, and Westchester.

For More Information:

<http://www.capitalmohawkprism.org/>

ECOS: The Environmental Clearinghouse presents

### **Seven Preserve Challenge Family-friendly Walks**

#### **Spring 2020**

Explore seven beautiful local nature preserves this Spring with ECOS guides. Once you’ve visited all seven preserves – with ECOS or on your own – complete the Seven Preserve Challenge form and receive your free patch.

All walks will be on Sundays at 2 p.m. and will last 60-90 minutes. They’re suitable for all ages – bring the kids! Wear sturdy footwear and dress for the weather. Walks will go rain or shine.

No preregistration is required; just meet your guide in the parking lot. If you have questions, call (518) 370-4125 or email [info@ecosny.org](mailto:info@ecosny.org).

April 19—Plotter Kill Preserve, Mariaville Rd., Rotterdam (2.3 miles west of Putnam Rd.)

April 26—Sanders Preserve, Sanders Rd., Glenville (Between Gower and Washout Rds.)

May 3—Christman Sanctuary, 3281 Schoharie Turnpike, Delanson

May 10—Schenectady County Forest, Lake Rd., Delanson (2.9 miles south of Mariaville Rd.)

May 17—Indian Kill Preserve, Hetcheltown Rd., Glenville (just north of Glenridge Rd.)

May 24—Bozen Kill Preserve, Westfall Rd., Altamont (.2 miles north of Bozenkill Rd.)

May 31 Lisha Kill Preserve, 2518 Rosendale Rd., Niskayuna



**Note: The Annual Dinner was canceled due to the Coronavirus. If you made a paid reservation, your check will be returned to you shortly if you haven’t received it already.**



**FAMILY EVENT**

A Walk through Vale Park  
 Sunday, April 19 -- 1 to 3 p.m.

*Open to the public at no charge*

Join us as ECOS and the Vale Urban Farm present a special Earth Day “woodswalk” with Jeff Kehoe, a local forester, arborist, and vice-chair of the Capitol District Chapter of the New York Forest Owners Association (NYFOA-CDC). Along the way we’ll identify plantings, and discuss concepts related to everything trees, with special attention to tree health, proper tree locations, and the soil conditions that can help your trees thrive.

The walk will start and end at the Vale Urban Farm, a membership collective that raises organic produce for members and neighbors. Directions: From State St. turn north on N. Brandywine Ave. Travel 3-tenths of a mile. Just past the old firehouse on the left is the entrance to Vale framed by brick pilars. Bear to the left where the road splits and see the farm on the left. Parking is on the grass by the chain-link fence. On April 19 the Farm will have another special event for expanding its orchard area with trees donated by ReTree Schenectady. After the walk participants can watch -- or join in on -- the landscaping and planting, as well as tour the farm itself.

**Growing Schenectady**

Vale Urban Farms, a community-supported farm since 2012, is growing. We are now Schenectady Urban Farms and will run three urban farms and a community orchard in Schenectady: Vale Urban Farm, Hulett St. Garden, and Fehr Ave. Farm! Schenectady Urban Farms envisions a greener Schenectady where small farms abound and everyone has access to fresh food. We have partnered with many organizations, like ECOS, to create a thriving space at Vale that welcomes all ages. We look forward to continuing these partnerships as we green our city and care for our community.

*Capital Roots Jour*

We all know the importance of fresh, affordable food, and how residents of Capital Region’s inner cities have limited access to it. Since 1975 the non-profit Capital Roots has been working to reduce the impact of poor nutrition on public health through a variety of programs.

Come join us on **April 2 at 1 PM** for a tour of Capital Roots’ Urban Grow Center, the hub of its food storage, distribution and horticultural training system. 594 River St., Troy, NY. 12180.

**Invasive Species Identification Training**



Invasive species are a threat to the environment, one that will only grow worse with climate change. Learn about invasive species and how you can help contain their spread by identifying and reporting them to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

On **April 14th** ECOS will offer a training session for a mobile app called iMapInvasives, taught by Kristopher Williams, director of Capital Mohawk PRISM (Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management). The training will be from 10 a.m. to noon at the Kelly Adirondack Center, 897 St. David’s Lane, Niskayuna. It will be followed by a walk in the adjacent Henry Reist Preserve, where participants will get a chance to identify invasive species and then upload them to the app.

To prepare for the training, participants should register online by going to <https://www.nyimainvasives.org> on a desktop computer and creating an account. After they have an account, they should download the iMapInvasives mobile app to their smartphones.

Those needing help with this process should follow this link: <https://www.nyimainvasives.org/online-tutorials>



## Partner Events To Celebrate Arbor & Earth Days



### Wildflower Walk at Thacher Park

**Saturday, April 25, 10am**

Early Spring Woodland wildflowers known as spring ephemerals bloom on the forest floor before the trees leaf out and block the sun. The season is short, and the blooms of some delicate flowers can disappear in days. We'll look for early bloomers like hepatica, coltsfoot, trout lily, spring beauties, and bloodroot. Meet at the Paint Mine picnic area. Call 518-872-0800 to register.

### Nature Journaling in the Pine Bush

**Sunday, April 19, 1pm-2:30pm**

**Suitable for ages 6-10, tweens, teens and adults**

We will combine drawing, scientific observation, poetry and more as we each record a visit to the Pine Bush in our own creative way. This is an outdoor program and will include a short hike of no more than one-half mile. Participants are welcome to bring their own materials, purchase journals at the start of the program, or use materials we will provide.

**Location:** Albany Pine Bush Discovery Center, 195 New Karner Road, Albany, NY

**Fee:** 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)

### Volkssporters Walk Schedule

**On Sunday, April 5,** we will be walking at 5k or 10k event (your choice), from the Albany Visitors Center, 25 Quackenbush Square, Albany, NY. Registration is between 1 and 1:25, group walk starts at 1:30. Cost is \$2.00, and all participants must register.

**On Wednesday, April 8,** there will be a 5k or 10 walk at **Saratoga Spa State Park**, starting at the Hilton Garden Inn, 125 S. Broadway, Saratoga, NY. All participants must register between 9:30 and 9:55, walk starts at 10. The cost is \$2.00 for non-credit walkers.

**On Wednesday, May 13,** we will be walking through the **Albany Tulip Festival**, starting at the Corning Riverfront Park parking lot, Albany, NY. All participants must register between 8:30 and 8:55, walk starts at 9. The cost for non-credit walkers is \$2.00.

### The Artwork of Wayne Trimm

**April 11-24, Monday-Saturday, 9 am.- 4:30 pm**

Exhibit at Five Rivers Environmental Center

### The Life and Art of Wayne Trimm Program

by Steve Trimm and Melodee James

**Wednesday, April 22, 7pm.- 9 pm**

Five Rivers Environmental Center, 56 Game Farm Road, Albany, NY

### Spring Hawk Watch / Hawk ID Workshop at Landis

Arboretum with Nature Director George Steele

**Saturday, April 25, 10am - 4pm**

Join us for this annual nature event at the Arboretum, a day observing hawks in migration over the Schoharie Valley. We will hope to see bald eagles, sharp-shinned hawks, osprey, and the longest travelers, broad-winged hawks - among other raptors on the move. A Hawk Identification Workshop will be held at 2:00. Come for a short while or the whole day. Location: Meeting House, 174 Lape Raod, Esperance, NY. Members: \$5/person, \$15/family; non-members: \$15/person, \$25/family

### Earth Day Exploration with Crafts, Storytime, and a Hike

**Thursday, April 16 from 10 – 11:30 am**

Phillipin Kill Preserve, Bethlehem, NY

Let's celebrate Earth Day! Join MHLC and Miss Michelle from Bethlehem Public Library for a fun-filled morning. We'll hear a few stories about Earth Day, take a walk through the Phillipin Kill Preserve (we may even get to see a beaver in the stream!), and make our own leaf rubbing artwork to take home. (This event is designed for ages 7 and under.) Register at <https://mohawkhudson.org/events/>

### Arbor Day Save the Trees

**Friday, April 24 from 9 am- 12 pm**

Fox Preserve, Colonie, NY

Celebrate Arbor Day with MHLC! We will meet at the Fox Preserve for a work day to remove invasive vines. These vines can have devastating long-term effects on trees. After identifying these invasive species, MHLC staff will work with participants to remove the plants from the trees.

Register at <https://mohawkhudson.org/events/>

**Early lessons of COVID-19**

1. We are connected with the world and with each other.
2. Invisible things in the environment can have a big impact.
3. When bad things increase exponentially, drastic action is needed.
4. Individual actions make a difference.
5. Behavior can change rapidly when people understand the reasons.
6. Science is a necessary tool for solving problems.
7. We should listen to experts when we face new threats.
8. Accurate information is essential for survival.



PLEASE GIVE THIS MEMBERSHIP FORM TO A FRIEND OR NEIGHBOR

**ECOS Membership**  
**ECOS: The Environmental Clearinghouse**

Please check your membership contribution level.

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
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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.



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

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

**DATES AND EVENTS TO REMEMBER 2020**

**April 2—Tour of Capital Roots’ Urban Grow Center**

**April 7, 14, 19, 21, 28— Spring Flower Walks\***

**April 14—Invasive Species Identification Training**

**April 19—Earth Day Event at Vale**

**April 19, 26— Seven Preserve Challenge Guided Walks**

**May 3, 10, 17, 24, 31— Seven Preserve Challenge Guided Walks**

**May 5, 12, 19, 26— Spring Flower Walks\***

**June TBD—Watch for a “No Octane Boat and Bike Sale”**

**September—Nature Walks**

**November—Rachel Carson Dinner**

**December—Holiday Party**

**\* See insert for more details**



**Seven Preserve Challenge**

ECOS is conducting guided walks of the seven preserves beginning Sunday, April 19, 2020. Or, you can complete the challenge on your own and at your own pace. Forms are available on our web site: [www.ecosny.org](http://www.ecosny.org) or by calling the office at 518-370-4125. Upon submission of the form, you will receive a patch suitable for affixing to a jacket or other garment.

*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.*