



# ECOS NEWS

*ECOS: The Environmental Clearinghouse*



ECOS provides environmental experiences and education for youth and adults to develop enjoyment and understanding of the natural world and foster action to preserve it.

**Celebrating Our 51st Year in Environmental Education**

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Volume LI

Number 3

April / May 2023

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## Membership Renewal Month

Dear Members,

As our new fiscal year begins, it is time to both thank you for your generosity and ask for your continued support of the ECOS mission.

ECOS has been getting people outside and educating them about the environment for over 50 years. We are largely a member-supported organization. Your continued support allows us to continue our educational programs and activities.

We had our last ski/snowshoe outing of the season, and the flower walks and Seven Preserve hikes are set to begin soon. Check our web site for dates. Look for ECOS-led hikes, kayak trips, and bike rides throughout the spring, summer, and fall, often co-hosted by partner organizations. Each activity is an opportunity to both experience the natural world first-hand and learn something new.

We are looking forward to our summer education program with the Schenectady school system, which is a great opportunity for students to learn from our incredibly knowledgeable volunteers. This year we will also sponsor Nature Bus trips. This program transports children and families from central urban locations to parks and open spaces throughout the region.

The ECOS Natural Areas of Schoharie County is now released, and complements our Schenectady, Albany, Rensselaer, and Saratoga County guides. This guide, as well as all ECOS publications, is available for purchase from the ECOS website.

ECOS' programs are open to all families, youth and adults. To fund our programs and new initiatives, ECOS relies on your membership and your donations. Appreciation of the environment, understanding the impact of human activity on it, and acting to preserve it, have never been more important.

Your continued membership support of ECOS and its mission is needed. Please find a form and envelope inserted. If your membership is paid, there is no insert and thank you!

Josh Bennett  
President, ECOS Board of Directors

**ECOS NEWS**

*Published six times per year by*

ECOS: The Environmental Clearinghouse, Inc.

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*Annual Dinner*

**Tuesday, April 11, 2023**

**SUNY Schenectady**

**Guest Speaker: John I. Garver, PhD,**

**Professor of Geology, Union College**

**Please go to our website  
[ecosny.org](http://ecosny.org) to register and choose  
your entrée by April 3rd**

**We look forward to seeing you!**

**We Need Your Help!**

ECOS hosts events, programs, and activities throughout the year, which are planned by various standing committees. Any member can participate. Joining a committee is a great way to give back to the organization without the commitment of serving on the Board of Directors. Of course, we're interested in future new Board members, too!

If you're able to volunteer a few hours per month (or need more information), please email your contact information with your committee choice to the ECOS Board of Directors at [board@ecosny.org](mailto:board@ecosny.org).

Standing Committees:

Programs Committee:

Develops and executes educational programs and activities

Outreach Committee:

Works to publicize ECOS' message and increase interactions with other organizations

Governance Committee:

Proposes updates to the ECOS bylaws, and organizational efficiency

Finance Committee:

In conjunction with the Treasurer, develops and executes the annual budget

Development Committee:

Leads ECOS fundraising efforts

Nominating Committee- December to February

Recommends candidates for the Board of Directors and officers

Annual Dinner Committee- January to March

Plans the Annual Dinner, roughly coinciding with the April 1 start of the fiscal year

Rachel Carson Dinner Committee- August to October

Plans the annual Rachel Carson Award Dinner

## Looking Back, Looking Forward

—*Josh Bennett, President*

It's been an extremely eventful year for ECOS. The relaxation of COVID restrictions has allowed us to return to in-person activities. It's easy to overlook the importance of human contact until it's taken away. I've enjoyed participating in our activities, including hikes, ski/snowshoe trips, bike rides, and kayak paddles. Whether experiencing a new location, or treading in areas I'm familiar with, I have learned something new each time. I particularly enjoy meeting new people on these activities- both members and prospective ECOS members. The knowledge and camaraderie of our membership is what makes ECOS a great organization.

We restarted the summer program with the Schenectady school system. This is a great educational program that exposes Schenectady students to the natural world through interesting and engaging classes led by extremely knowledgeable ECOS volunteers. Some of these courses have also been packaged as complete, stand-alone classes as part of our Lessons to Go program, available for purchase on the ECOS website.

We made the decision to hire an Executive Director in 2021. We greatly appreciate the contributions of Catherine and John during their time filling this role. However, it is unclear that the organization can currently afford a competitive compensation package for this position at this time. We will continue to evaluate our strategy for the future. In the meantime, our capable office manager Maureen and our social media intern Thomas have stepped up to supplement our dedicated core of volunteers.

Sadly, we lost two giants of the ECOS family last year, Ed Kautz and Nancy Slack. Their contributions to the organization and the environmental advocacy movement can not be understated. Their legacy will live on in ECOS publications and events.

We have established partnerships with different organizations that share our dedication to protecting the environment and environmental education. This will expand in the coming years. These partnerships allow us to be more efficient and reach an expanded audience, as well as deepen our relationships with people and groups that share our goals.

In the near future, look for:

ECOS will participate in the Nature Bus program, where we use CDTA transportation to bring folks from the urban areas of Schenectady to parks or open spaces where they can experience the natural world firsthand.

In conjunction with the town of Niskayuna, the Niskayuna Conservation Advisory Council, and the Friends of Niskayuna Trails, ECOS will help establish a new trail system in the town land adjacent to the Community Center and the town pool. These trails will weave through hemlock and hardwood groves on top of the ridge above Aquaduct Road, with intermittent views of the Mohawk River. Ideally these trails will connect to the Mohawk-Hudson bike path and the Aquaduct Park trails.

ECOS, along with a host of other organizations including the Schoharie River Center, Upper Union Neighborhood Association, and Schenectady Community Fathers, is continuing discussions with the city of Schenectady to restore the Central Park casino building for shared use as office and meeting space. The building is in a prime location, and has been abandoned for many years. The concept involves resurrecting the building as the Schenectady Environmental Education Center. If successful, ECOS would move operations to the building.

Further, I am proud to announce the ECOS Natural Areas of Schoharie County is now released, and complements our Schenectady, Albany, Rensselaer, and Saratoga County guides.

In the meantime, my goal for this year is to increase ECOS' exposure. As a member, you represent ECOS to the broader community. Spread the word.

As always, I welcome your comments and suggestions at [president@ecosny.org](mailto:president@ecosny.org)

## ECOS SPRING WALKS 2023

*This spring our guided walks include some new leaders and new preserves courtesy of the Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy (MHLC).*

**All walks are on Tuesday at 9:30 a.m. except where noted.** Walks usually last around 2 hours. There is no pre-registration, but we may need to follow covid recommendations of the time. For information email [doniphin.jones@gmail.com](mailto:doniphin.jones@gmail.com). Cancellations or changes may be found at [www.ecosny.org](http://www.ecosny.org) or [www.facebook.com/ecosny](https://www.facebook.com/ecosny).

### APRIL 18 High Point Trail, Thacher Park:

Here's a flat loop trail for an easy stroll through the woods. This year we should be on time to catch an abundant amount of early flowering woodland ephemerals. Debra Barnes, leader. *Directions:* Either go through Thatcher Park on Rt. 157, turn right on Ketcham Rd., right again on Rt. 157, right onto Old Stage Rd., past Carrick Rd., and a quarter mile on is parking along the High Point Trail. OR, from Altamont, drive up the hill from the Stewart's Shop on Rt. 156, turn left onto Old Stage Rd.; after a steep switchback turn left into the parking area for High Point Rd, on Old State Rd. OR meet to car pool **at 9:15 a.m.** from the parking lot next to the Altamont Public Library, 179 Main St.

### WEDNESDAY (at 9:30 a.m.) APRIL 26 Wolf Creek Falls Preserve:

A Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy (MHLC) property in the town of Knox. This offers many waterfalls as well as trout lilies and other spring ephemerals. Leader: Sarah Walsh, MHLC associate director.

*Directions:* From Main St. in Altamont turn north at Farmhouse Tap and Tavern onto Maple Ave., turn left onto Bozenkill Rd./Rt. 253, and drive roughly 3 miles to the preserve, which is between 734 and 816 Bozenkill Rd., on the south (left-hand) side of the road.



**MAY 2 (at 10 a.m.) Cottage Park Trail, Moreau Lake State Park:** A relatively easy one-mile loop through mixed forest to a stream-crossed vale at the foot of the Palmertown Mountains. Thousands of Spring Beauty flowers pave the forest floor here, along with other lovely spring wildflowers including Canada Violets and Dutchman's Breeches. Leader: Jackie Donnelly. *Directions:* From exit 16 of the Northway/I-87, head west on Ballard Rd. to Rt. 9, cross Rt. 9 directly onto Corinth Mountain Rd., and proceed about 3 miles over Mt. McGregor. When you reach the stop sign at Spier Falls Rd., turn right onto Spier Falls Rd. Proceed along Spier Falls Rd. about 3.5 miles, and park at the Sherman Island Boat Launch on the left.

**MAY 9 Joralemon Memorial Park:** A wonderful spring habitat for wildflowers, with fern-filled dells as well as a historic lime kiln dating back to the Civil War. Ruth Brooks, leader. *Directions:* Take Rt. 890 east to the NY Thruway; take the Thruway east to exit 22 (Selkirk), then take Rt. 144 south to meet Rt. 143. Follow Rt. 143 about 2.5 miles to Starr Rd. (Rt. 102). Turn right on Rt. 102, and go about ½ mile north to Joralemon Park. If using Google Maps, use Joralemon Park Disc Golf Course, Ravena NY.

**MONDAY MAY 15 (at 10 a.m.) Pine Hollow Arboretum:** If we've timed this right we'll be able to wander through magnolias in bloom, as well as exploring various plant regions from Europe to Asia to America. Easy hiking, mostly level, though it might be muddy in wet periods. Leader: Sigrin Newell. Due to parking limitations, we will actually meet at the Market 32 (junction of Rt. 85 and New Scotland Ave.), near the southern entrance to its parking lot, off Rt. 85, to the left/west of the Citizens Bank.

Should you choose to go another time, take Rt. 890 east to the NY Thruway; get off at its exit 24 and follow onto Rt. 90, taking its exit 4 to Rt. 85 and continuing until the left turn onto Maple Ave. The arboretum is on the left. .



### ECOS Speaker Series

Check our website for the Zoom link and details for the last of this season's ECOS Speaker Series to be held Thursday April 20th at 7 PM before we pause for the summer months. From October to April, the monthly Speaker Series hosted an array of interesting speakers and, if you weren't lucky enough to catch them live, the recorded links can be found and enjoyed under "Zoom Recording" on the [ecosny.org](https://ecosny.org) website.

**MAY 16 Schoharie Creek Preserve:** A 198-acre Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy (MHLC) preserve along the banks of the Schoharie and Wilsey Creeks, featuring mature and early successional woodlands, ponds and wetlands, several waterfall vistas, and a walk along the beautiful Schoharie Creek. The trail is 1.3 miles long with some moderately steep sections. Leader: Marshall Lefebvre, MHLC Stewardship Coordinator. *Directions:* From Rt. 30 (south of Amsterdam), bear east at Bramans Corner on Bramans Corner Rd., cross the bridge into Burtonsville, soon turn right (north) onto Burtonsville Rd./Rt. 127, turn right again onto Butler Rd.; the gravel parking lot is less than 1 mile, to the left, on Butler Rd.

**MAY 23 Bender Melon Farm:** Once home of the "Bender's Surprise" melon, this former farm is now an MHLC property containing fields with nests of boblink, meadowlark, and grasshopper sparrow, dotted by wetlands that form the beginning of the Phillipin Kill. Leader: Steve Jones. *Directions:* The trail is roughly 1.5 miles from the intersection of Rt. 155 and 85A/Maple Rd. on the west side of Voorheesville. Parking is on Hilton Rd. in New Scotland, just off of Rte. 85A to the east, next to the Hilton Barn.

**MAY 30 No walk scheduled**

**JUNE 6 Hollyhock Hollow Sanctuary:** The sanctuary is a 135-acre MHLC preserve of wooded trails along the unique geology of the Onesquethaw Creek. Botanical diversity and bird watching abound in this lovely setting which includes a former limestone quarry used to build the Brooklyn Bridge. Co-Leaders: Debra Barnes and Chris Berte. *Directions:* From Feura Bush take Old Quarry Rd./Rt. 102 south 3 miles to Rarick Rd., where there should be a Wildlife Viewing sign with binoculars. Turn right on Rarick Rd. and go just a short distance to the parking lot for Hollyhock Hollow, which is at the 3rd house on your left. Or with GPS search "Hollyhock Hollow" or "46 Rarick Rd., Selkirk."

### Ed Kautz Porch and Pollinator Drop-in

Come join us for lemonade and cookies at the "Ed Kautz Porch & Pollinator Drop-in" on Sunday, May 7th 1PM at 1147 Keyes Avenue Schenectady! Ed, our beloved ECOS Board Member, walk leader, and generous volunteer, knew and loved native plants. He led groups on many wildflower walks through the years. Ed's wife, Nancy, will lead us on a stroll around the yard identifying species that he planted. Following the yard stroll, we'll talk briefly on their porch about the history of American lawns, discuss the importance of planting native species, and strategize together about how ECOS might help shift the local lawn norms in favor of creating healthier pollinator habitats, and reducing pesticide, fertilizer, water and fuel use around area homes.



## Adopt a Trail!

ECOS is forming a Trail Stewardship Initiative with Schenectady's Soil and Water Conservation District, which officially oversees and manages the Schenectady County Nature Preserves, along with the section of the Mohawk-Hudson Bike Hike Trail from the Schenectady County Community College west to the Montgomery County line. ECOS has a long-standing tradition of helping with trail maintenance, sign posting, and litter removal in our parks and along our roads, but the Initiative provides an organized and consistent framework, led by the professionals who know well the parks and their needs. In addition to clean up, trail widening, and brush and tree removal, members may want to choose one park and serve as a steward, walking it several times a year to check what needs to be done and what might be improved. Joining the group won't commit you to specific activities and duties (unless you do want to be a steward), but will provide us with a pool of interested volunteers that we can tap when needs arise. ReTree Schenectady is organized in a somewhat similar fashion, and has been amazingly successful for decades. If you are interested in joining, please contact Nick Klemczak at [nickklemczakswcd@yahoo.com](mailto:nickklemczakswcd@yahoo.com), or Steve Jones at [doniphin.jones@gmail.com](mailto:doniphin.jones@gmail.com).



### ARBOR DAY FESTIVAL

April 30, 2023

12:30 p.m.

Join ECOS for an introduction to **Schenectady's Urban Farms** located in Vale Cemetery. We will tour Vale Urban Farm, plant new trees in Vale Orchard and learn how to measure trees. From there we will go on a Tree Scavenger hunt.

We may meet a local farmer and possibly bring home a free sapling. Visit our website at [ecosny.org](http://ecosny.org) for more details as they evolve.

## Birding at Vischer Ferry

On MARCH 28 come out to see wildfowl migrating through the area on their way north. Meet at 9 a.m. at the Whipple Bridge parking area, corner of Riverview and Van Vranken Roads in Clifton Park. Leader: John Good.



I'll be waiting for you. . .

## 2023 CALENDAR

Outings				
Date		Leader	Date	Leader
March 28	Birding at Vischer Ferry	John Good	May 7	Ed Kautz Porch and Pollinator Drop-in
April 18	Thacher Park	Debra Barnes	May 9	Joralmon Memorial Park Ruth Brooks
April 20	Speaker Series via Zoom	TBD	May 15	Pine Hollow Arboretum Sigrin Newell
April 26	Wolf Creek Falls Preserve	Sarah Walsh	May 16	Schoharie Creek Preserve Steve Jones
April 30	Schenectady Urban Farms	Staff	May 23	Bender Melon Farm Steve Jones
May 2	Moreau State Park	Jackie Donnelly	June 6	Hollyhawk Hollow Sanctuary Debra Banes and Chris Berte

## Zoom Speaker Series

7:00 pm, Thursday, April 20, 2023

**ANNUAL DINNER, Tuesday, April 11, 2023, SUNY Schenectady**

**For addresses and additional details on walks or other events visit the calendar on our website: [www.ecosny.org](http://www.ecosny.org)**

## MEMBERSHIP FORM

## ECOS Membership

## ECOS: The Environmental Clearinghouse

Please check your membership contribution level.

☐ \$40 Individual
 ☐ \$75 Donor/Organization
 ☐ \$150 Sustainer  
☐ \$50 Family
 ☐ \$100 Supporter
 ☐ \$250 Benefactor  
☐ \$10 Student
 ☐ \$500 Patron

Please make your check payable to ECOS.

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

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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☐ As a current GE employee 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.

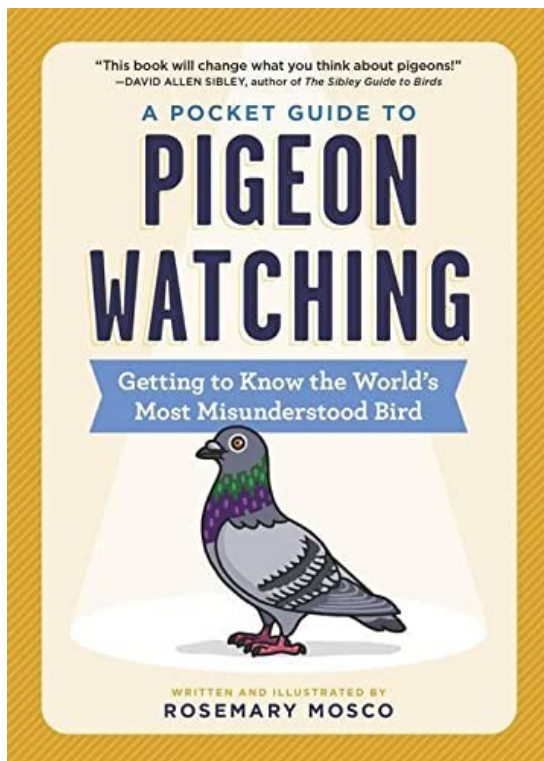




ECOS: The Environmental Clearinghouse  
P.O. Box 9118  
Niskayuna, NY 12309

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

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



Fact: Pigeons are amazing, and until recently, humans adored them. We've kept them as pets, held pigeon beauty contests, raced them, used them to carry messages over battlefields, harvested their poop to fertilize our crops—and cooked them in gourmet dishes. With Rosemary Mosco's *The Pocket Guide to Pigeon Watching*, readers can rediscover the wonder. Equal parts illustrated field guide and quirky history, it covers behavior: Why they coo; how they flock; how they preen, kiss, and mate (monogamously); and how they raise their young (on chunky pigeon milk). Anatomy and identification, from Birmingham Roller to the American Giant Runt to the Scandaroon. Birder issues, like what to do if you find a baby pigeon stranded in the park. And our lively shared story together, including all the things we've taught them—Ping-Pong, for example. “Rats with wings?” Think again. Pigeons coo, peck and nest all over the world, yet most of us treat them with indifference or disdain. So Rosemary Mosco, a bird-lover, science communicator, writer, and cartoonist (and co-author of *The Atlas Obscura Explorer's Guide for the World's Most Adventurous Kid*) is here to give the pigeon's image a makeover, and to help every town- and city-dweller get closer to nature by discovering the joys of birding through eon-watching.

*Courtesy of Open Door Bookstore*

*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.*