



# 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 50th Year in Environmental Education**

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## Rachel Carson Award

DR. NANCY SLACK is the 2022 RECIPIENT OF THE RACHEL CARSON AWARD

Each year ECOS gives an award to an individual who personifies the values of Rachel Carson: creation of awareness of the environment, concern and stewardship of the environment, and courage, perseverance, tenacity and vigilance. Long-time ECOS member, Nancy Slack is an individual who exemplifies all these qualities. Nancy is a plant ecologist, bryologist (mosses), and science historian, who generously shares her knowledge of plants and ecology and her enthusiasm for understanding the workings of the natural world. She is known in ECOS for leading Tuesday morning flower walks.

Nancy has been involved in ECOS since its earliest days. Early on she taught courses on ecology for members. After earning her Ph.D. in ecology from SUNY Albany in 1971, she became a professor of biology at Russel Sage College and turned her attention to her students, a number of whom she is still in touch with. After “retirement” in 2002, she wrote two books, numerous articles, and continued to teach and lead field trips for students for 20 more years. She pursued her research on bryophytes, ecosystems of the U.S. Northeast, the ecology of peatlands and ecological niche theory. She directed a project in 2012 which involved (in part) several years of climbing Mt. Washington and counting encroaching dandelion plants. It resulted in the report: *Alpine Snowbed Communities of Mt. Washington and the Monitoring of Populations of Rare Bryophytes and Lichens in Relation to Future Climate Change*. She received the 2014 Guy Waterman Alpine Steward Award for her lifetime achievements in alpine ecology, outreach, and conservation. AND she also led ECOS Tuesday morning flower walks, as well as special outings. Look for the trip she will be leading next July to Brant Lake Bog!

## Special Volunteer Award

PRESENTED WITH GRATITUDE TO

**ED KAUTZ**

**YOUR KNOWLEDGE, ENTHUSIASM, AND LOVE OF THE OUTDOORS HAS  
EDUCATED AND INSPIRED CHILDREN AND ADULTS TO SEE THE WORLD WITH  
WONDER AND APPRECIATION.**

**ECOS NEWS**

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**In Memoriam: Ed Kautz**

A foundational member of the ECOS family Ed Kautz, was taken too soon. Ed would be found on ECOS outings, whether on skis, bikes, or hiking boots. His animal track-making kit was a highlight of public events.

A wildlife biologist, Ed's interest in the behavior of animals within their habitat was both fascinating and infectious. Ed could examine a few tracks left in the snow and weave a detailed story about the timeless interaction between predator and prey. He could explain how animals see the environment in sufficient detail for us to view the landscape through their eyes. I learned something on every outing with him, and he has fundamentally changed the way I perceive the natural world.

A former competitive bike racer, Ed remained active throughout his life. Numerous times I have watched him ski up to a rather technical piece of trail, then heard his distinctive giggle as he jumped the obstacle and skied away, beard and bomber hat flapping in the wind.

Ed was also a dedicated volunteer who gave back to his community. Besides leading hikes and ski trips, he also served on the ECOS board of directors and taught at his church.

My thoughts go out to Nancy Peterson and the rest of the family in this difficult time. *-Josh Bennett*

***Stepping down, but not away—John Loz***

What a wonderful evening we had back in-person together at our 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Rachel Carson Award Dinner on Tuesday, November 29<sup>th</sup>! An enlightening keynote speaker and inspiring comments made by our awardee, along with gathering together to celebrate the environment and our outdoor adventures, made for a warm and fun evening. I hope some of you went home with a silent auction gift to enjoy to remind you of a memorable evening. I very much enjoyed the event and am looking forward to joining more to come as we launch into the *next* 50 years of ECOS: The Environmental Clearinghouse!

As you may infer from my title above, I am stepping down as Executive Director of ECOS, but I am happily not leaving the organization entirely. The ECOS board has welcomed me on as an ECOS Board Member, so I can continue to volunteer and help them lead the organization into the next half century of environmental stewardship in our region. There are a few things I am looking forward to helping with including outreach into the community to share what ECOS is and does, writing for the newsletter, participating in the Trails For All initiative, and maybe even leading a few bird walks for our members and the general public. I am a low-key, but passionate birder, you know.

You are probably wondering why I'm stepping down. I was offered a full-time opportunity to work at the Albany Pine Bush Preserve Discovery Center that I just could not pass up. After 18-1/2 years in the engineering marketing and media industry prior to the pandemic, I decided to make a career change during the pandemic to something I had more heart in and what I originally went to school for – environmental conservation and education. That's what led me to join a successful and vibrant environmental organization at ECOS as Executive Director. A 50 year old organization at that! I am lucky now to continue to volunteer for ECOS in different capacities as a board and committee member, as well as represent the organization in the field with our info table at farmers markets and nature fests, write a couple articles for our newsletter, and overall, help foster environmental education around the Greater Capital Region. As you might have read in the last newsletter, I am a big promoter of making nature more accessible to those who don't have the means of getting into it. I hope to assist our VP of Outreach to foster more accessibility through his work bringing the Nature Bus to Schenectady and with other initiatives he has in the pipeline.

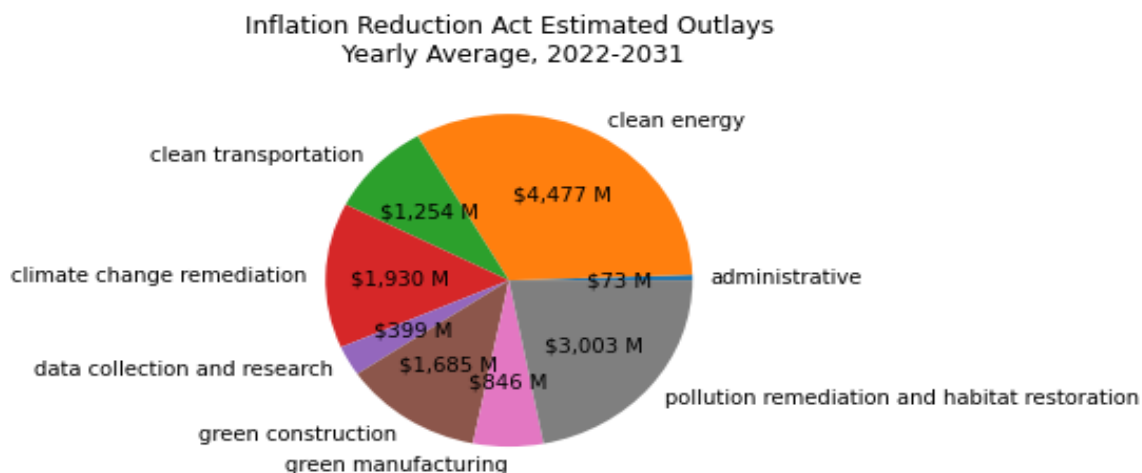
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## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF THE INFLATION REDUCTION ACT

—Josh Bennett

ECOS is not a political organization. We will not (and cannot) tell you who to vote for, or which party to support. However, as environmental advocates, we should understand policies that affect our environment. You've probably heard that the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 included environment-related components. I had heard numerous sound bites, generally filtered through our current state of hyper partisanship. I felt a strong obligation to dig a bit deeper and learn some of the details. If you've also only seen the cursory highlights, perhaps my findings will be helpful.

The act is at its core a set of budgetary adjustments. The modern Senate practices effectively require legislation to be considered budget reconciliation to avoid being blocked by a filibuster. The act makes changes to corporate tax rates, Medicare drug policy, IRS enforcement, and resource extraction licenses on public land to increase revenue. This revenue is balanced by direct spending and tax credits covering a number of environmental and climate-related policies. The Congressional Budget Office, CBO, a non-partisan organization that analyzes budgetary policy for the US Congress, has estimated the costs and revenue for these policy changes. The CBO estimates that the revenue and spending are balanced within the margin of error of their analysis. Examining the estimated spending over the next ten years (plot is my own, based on data from [www.cbo.gov](http://www.cbo.gov)): The largest component of spending involves increasing the production of low or zero-carbon energy, and investment in energy distribution infrastructure. This wedge of the plot also includes incentives for carbon sequestration.



Striking to me is the amount earmarked for remediation. It's generally more expensive to fix a problem than prevent one. I fear that the red wedge ("climate change remediation") will grow by necessity in future years. I'm also somewhat dismayed by the relative size of the purple "data collection and research" wedge, as it is really the only portion that is not reactive. But, upon reflection, I suppose we generally know how to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and it's a matter of acting on this knowledge.

Will these policies be effective?

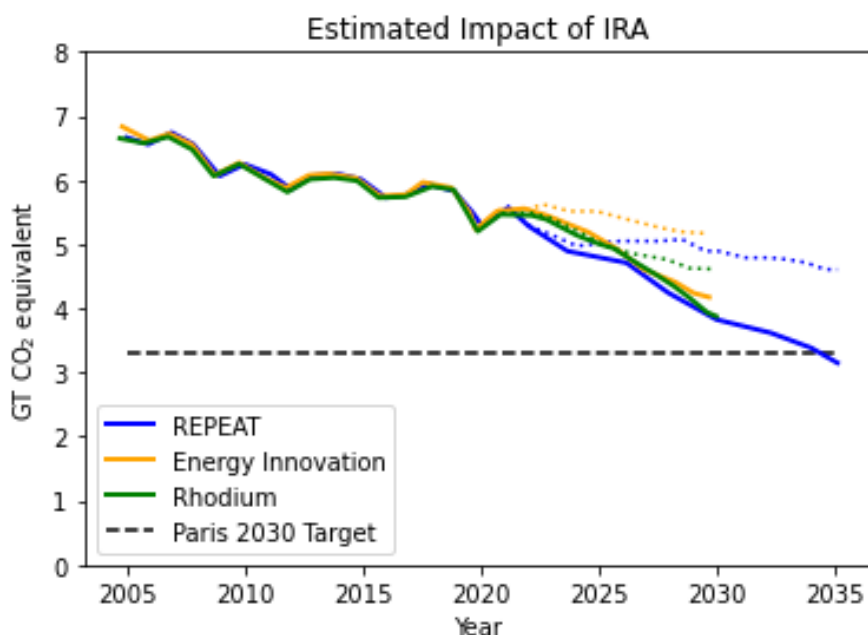
Sidestepping the partisan sources, analyses of the impact on greenhouse gas reductions are available from multiple sources. The plot below combines estimates from:

REPEAT ([www.repeatproject.org](http://www.repeatproject.org)), an independent consortium led by the Princeton ZERO Lab

Energy Innovation, LLC ([www.energyinnovation.org](http://www.energyinnovation.org)), a climate policy think tank

Rhodium Group ([www.rhg.com](http://www.rhg.com)), an economic and public policy think tank

Again, the plot is my own. Each organization presented modeled results of the new policy (solid lines), compared with models assuming no policy changes (dotted lines). In all cases, the solid line represents the median of the range of outputs. With insufficient information to judge the relative accuracy, it's reasonable to consider the average of the three models as most representative.



(Released greenhouse gas inventory is plotted as gigatons (million tons) of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent, reflecting both CO<sub>2</sub> and other greenhouse gases.)

All three organizations estimate a significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. Each organization summarizes their results similarly:

“In summary, if the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 becomes law, it will be the largest and most consequential U.S. climate legislation in history.” -Energy Innovations

“The IRA will be the single largest action ever taken by Congress and the US government to combat climate change.” -Rhodium

“We find that the IRA is the most significant federal climate and clean energy legislation in U.S. history.” - REACT

While these statements are accurate conclusions from the models, note that even the most optimistic analysis suggests greenhouse gas emission reductions that fall short of the Paris agreement target. This target is judged necessary to keep warming below 1.5°C.

The primary carbon sequestration method incentivized is “enhanced oil recovery”. This method allows extraction of oil from mostly-depleted wells by involves pumping CO<sub>2</sub> into oil wells to reduce the viscosity of the oil. As noted by the International Energy Agency, an intergovernmental energy policy treaty organization ([www.iea.org](http://www.iea.org)), this process can result in a net sequestration of CO<sub>2</sub> if correctly performed with the right geology. However, this process still involves the extraction of fossil fuels. Environmental organizations are therefore mixed on recommending this practice.

On balance, I find this law to be a positive step. But we should not be satisfied, as we're still on track to significantly modify our planet's climate. ECOS' role in protecting the environment and educating the public has never been so vital and so necessary.

ECOS SKI & Snowshoe TUESDAY Trips  
For WINTER 2023

First Outing Tuesday, January 3

We will be running the trips similar to last year. This includes some minor COVID restrictions **(masks if not socially distanced, limited carpooling, and 10 to 12 participants per leader).**

Thus, in order to attend an outing, you will need to contact the leader of the day. Their name, email address, phone number and the outing location will be sent to all who are on our Trip Outing email list by either the Sunday or Monday immediately preceding the Tuesday of the trip. They will also be on the ECOS Facebook page. Meeting time at the trailhead will be 9:30 am as in the past.

Outings will be at locations generally within the Capital District similar to what has been on our outings list for many years. This list will be emailed as a pdf file to everyone on our Tuesday outing list, and it will be on the ECOS website. Outing locations are chosen based on what we can learn about snow conditions each week. Last year we had many “traction gear” outings when the snow did not cooperate.

ECOS participants **MUST** stay with the group. Bring your own water & snack and dress in layers.

To be included on our ski/snowshoe email list contact Roy and Sue at [royskipaddle@gmail.com](mailto:royskipaddle@gmail.com) or 518-466-8544. The list of dates and leaders is given below:

Date	Trip Leader (s)
January 3, 2023	Roy and Susan Keats
January 10, 2023	Karen Wang
January 17, 2023	Margie Litwin
January 24, 2023	Don Orr
January 31, 2023	Will Seyse
February 7, 2023	Karen Wang
February 14, 2023	Rich Vertigan
February 21, 2023	Don Orr
February 28, 2023	Margie Litwin

ECOS WINTER WEEKENDS 2023  
SKI & SNOWSHOE TRIPS

We have scheduled winter weekend trips again this year. Since the Tuesday trips are popular, why not try some weekend outings? These will be very similar to the Tuesday trips. Any of the locations used Tuesdays are possible.

The outings will be on the easy to intermediate level but no one will be left behind and faster skier/snowshoers will be accommodated. Bring your own water and snacks. There will be no official carpooling. Participants will meet at the designated outing location on Saturdays during January and February at 10:30am. We will not meet at car pool locations. If the weather is bad an event might be rescheduled for Sunday at 10:30am.

To be included on our email list, send your email address to [kulmatiski@gmail.com](mailto:kulmatiski@gmail.com). Include your name and phone number. Each Thursday during January and February we will contact you with info about the trip. To register for the trip sign up with your name and phone number at [kulmatiski@gmail.com](mailto:kulmatiski@gmail.com) We will also post trip information on the ECOS Members' Page on Facebook.

January 7, 2023	Will Seyse
January 14, 2023	Harris Eisenhardt
January 21, 2023	Josh Bennett
January 28, 2023	Will Seyse
February 4, 2023	Andy Kulmatiski
February 11, 2023	Don Orr
February 18, 2023	Josh Bennett
February 25, 2023	Bruce Bonacquist





### **The Frostbite Challenge Is On, Again!**

Vischer Ferry General Store (357 Riverview Rd Rexford, NY) is once, again partnering with ECOS to encourage ....ok, bribe....kids to get outside in the winter months! VFGS will offer a free cookie to kids under 14 year of age who complete a four-mile walk along the Towpath Trail from January 1st to March 31st.

This stretch of trail runs along the Mohawk River, from the Whipple Bridge entrance to the Lock 7 Overlook. Both ends have small parking areas. There's an additional parking lot midway, at the end of Ferry Drive. The four-mile challenge can be done in either direction, on one day, or in sections on different days.

First, send an email to [celikECOS@gmail.com](mailto:celikECOS@gmail.com) to let ECOS know that you are undertaking the challenge.

After completing the four miles, the family may go to Vischer Ferry General Store and tell them that the child has completed the four miles! Vischer Ferry will jot down the child's name and age, email it to ECOS, and give the child a cookie. They might even like to see photos of the walk, as well.

To document completion, the child (or parent) should email two digital photos of themselves on the path, one near each end of the walk, with their name and age to: [celikECOS@gmail.com](mailto:celikECOS@gmail.com). If parents give permission to publish the names and/or photos of the winners on the ECOS website, Facebook page or newsletter, please state so with the photos.

***For the Whipple Bridge entrance:*** A small parking pull-off area is available directly across from the intersection of Riverview Road and Van Vranken Road.

***For the Lock 7 overlook entrance:*** A parking area can be found by going down the hill toward the Mohawk at the intersection of Riverview and Sugar Hill roads. A blue sign, "Vischer Ferry Power Plant" leads to the parking lot from Riverview Road.

***Note:*** The Vischer Ferry Parking Lot at the end of Ferry Drive makes a good midpoint location along the trail for parking and walking the trail in sections. This central parking lot is near Vischer Ferry General Store.

Trail Map link:

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=1eWQSDsaEz4cc2ZKxH DU22AxmXhga3oeZ&ll=42.80279888164603%2C-73.78720474999997&z=13>

### **Zoom Speaker Series Continues**

Put your feet up, fix a warm mug of cocoa and join us via Zoom on the 3rd Thursday of each month at 7 PM for our Speaker Series! We'll break for December but commence on January 19th. Watch your emails for the Mailchimp announcements with links each month, or find them posted on our website: [ecosny.org](http://ecosny.org)

### ***Stepping down but not away continued***

I'm also looking to help expand our Trails for All project to more counties in the region beyond Saratoga, and most recently, Schenectady. Look for an announcement for the Schenectady listings soon! Additionally, I'm looking to see how I can assist our Development Committee and help the VP of Programs bring a few beginner birding outings to our offering of ECOS-led hikes, kayak trips, and winter adventures. As you can see, I'm excited to now be a volunteer for ECOS!

Won't you join me? Come on board as an ECOS volunteer. The value of this organization cannot be matched and it is why I feel it is so important to continue my volunteer work with ECOS. And that's what this is about, isn't it? How do you *feel* when you volunteer for something that is so good? The best payment I receive is the *reward* I feel for helping—whatever I do! Opening a door for someone at the grocery store, folding a big batch of ECOS newsletters with other volunteers to be sent out to our loyal members, showing people a new nature preserve on a birding trip to one of *my* favorite places and witnessing how they enjoy the experience there as I always have. I love the feeling I get when I complete a task or event for something I believe in, especially if it has to do with conservation and stewardship of the environment.

Join me to see how together we can educate our youth about the environment and bring safe and rewarding experiences in nature to everyone in our greater Capital Region. Write me at: [director@ecosny.org](mailto:director@ecosny.org), so we can grab a cup o' joe and talk or chat more on the phone. Like I said above, I'm stepping down, but not away. You'll periodically be seeing me out at farmers markets representing ECOS (hang out with me at the table!), and on the trails this winter and in the warmer months hiking our Seven Preserve Challenge circuit again. Look for the guy who has binoculars stuck to his face and is dropping his spotting scope every 30 feet on the trail and you'll know that's me. Enjoy the beautiful things in nature that come with this winter and holiday season and I'll be seeing you again in 2023! - John

## 2023 CALENDAR

### Tuesday Ski Outings

Date	Trip Leader (s)
January 3, 2023	Roy and Susan Keats
January 10, 2023	Karen Wang
January 17, 2023	Margie Litwin
January 24, 2023	Don Orr
January 31, 2023	Will Seyse
February 7, 2023	Karen Wang
February 14, 2023	Rich Vertigan
February 21, 2023	Don Orr
February 28, 2023	Margie Litwin

### Saturday Ski Outings

Date	Leader
January 7, 2023	Will Seyse
January 14, 2023	Harris Eisenhardt
January 21, 2023	Josh Bennett
January 28, 2023	Will Seyse
February 4, 2023	Andy Kulmatiski
February 11, 2023	Don Orr
February 18, 2023	Josh Bennett
February 25, 2023	Bruce Bonacquist

### Zoom Speaker Series

Thursday, January 19, 2023

Thursday, February 16, 2023

**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.

<input type="checkbox"/> \$40 Individual	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75 Donor/Organization	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150 Sustainer
<input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Family	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Supporter	<input type="checkbox"/> \$250 Benefactor
<input type="checkbox"/> \$10 Student		<input type="checkbox"/> \$500 Patron

Please make your check payable to ECOS.

Name  Phone

Address

Email

☐ 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**  
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**Niskayuna, NY 12309**

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**Rexford, NY**

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

First Snow of the Season  
Peck Hill  
Submitted by Josh Bennett



*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.*