Watchable Wildlife at the Bashakill

Photo by: Kevin Kreischer
MAILBAG:

To BKAA,
With thanks for all you do to save the Basha Kill and our environment.
Fondly,
Gloria Coruzzi and Douglas Daly

Dear Paula and Staff,
Thanks so much. Your efforts on behalf of our beautiful environment are greatly appreciated. May God give success to the work you do!
Sincerely,
Eileen (Carney)

Hello, (In memory of Justina Burton)
I thought highly of Justina and she thought highly of your efforts to protect your wetlands. So please accept this small gift given in her memory.
Thank you,
Dave Reilly

Gift to Basha Kill Area Association
In memory of my mother, Mary Nola. She and my late father, Thomas, were lifelong residents of Wurtsboro since marrying in 1959. My father also spent summers in Wurtsboro with his family growing up as a boy.
They so loved Wurtsboro, the mountain air, beauty and raised their family there. It is this love of the area that was instilled in us, too.
With thanks for your preservation efforts.
Sincerely,
The family of Thomas and Mary Nola

To the BKAA,
Sara is so looking forward to summer camp. Thank you so much for this opportunity. We will see you in April for the cleanup.

Annie Labrada

Sunday, February 9, 2020

To whom it may concern,
Please use whatever portion of this check

MAILBAG continued on page 3

CONTACT THE BKAA
Paula Medley 845-754-0743, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. email: info@thebashakill.org website: www.thebashakill.org

CONTACT THE DEC
Environmental Conservation Officers (ECO’s) & Forest Rangers Covering the Basha Kill WMA for the NYS DEC
ECO’s: Officer Ricky Wood 845-665-5637 (cell) Officer Glenn Parker 929-505-6887 (cell)
Officer Christopher Doroski 929-505-6869 (cell) Officer Mary Grose 607-244-4561 (cell)
Griggsby Cowart 845-372-3543 (cell)
Call 24-hour DEC Law Enforcement Dispatch at 1-877-457-5680 if the Officers are not available.

The Guardian is published quarterly by the Basha Kill Area Association Inc., PO Box 1121, Wurtsboro, NY 12790.
President: Paula Medley • Vice-President: Anita Altman • Treasurer: Monique Lipton
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Water Testing & Facebook Coordinator: Linda Lou Bartle
Nature Watch Co-Leaders: Maryallison Farley, Kevin Keller, Cathy Liljequist & Nora Brusinski
Guardian Editor: Paula Medley

Mission Statement: Since our founding in 1972, our mission has been to protect the Basha Kill Wetlands and surrounding area from ecological degradation, to promote education and respect for the environment in general, and to preserve the beauty of the area.

We welcome new members who are interested in protecting the environment. Dues are $10 per person per year.
BKAA is a not-for-profit corporation and donations are deductible to the extent allowed by law.
website: www.thebashakill.org • e-mail: info@thebashakill.org
Due to Covid-19, the BKAA’s 39th Annual Cleanup Has Been Canceled. Members will be informed if or when a new date is set.

Spring 2020 New Members & Donors

Spring 2020 New Members
Nancy Brohan — Barbara A. Doty — Howie & Vicki Forbes — Evan Garey — Zita Kurtzman — Jean Parrella
Nadia Rajsz — Scott & Nancy Reichert — John Skelton — Brad Wild

Spring 2020 Donors
In Memory of Justina Burton:
Maryallison Farley
In Memory of Phyllis Riley Jones:
Arlene Borko — Jon Grennan — Deanna Mendels
In Memory of Mary Nola:
The Family of Mary Nola
Toby Boritz — Robert Campbell — Irwin Cantor — Eileen Carney — Gloria Coruzzi & Douglas Daly
Mary and James Craig — Barbara A. Doty — Barbara Garriel — Joanne Gray — Helen Paci Griggs
Andrew Jacobs — Barbara J. Johnson — Cliff and Jane Johnson — Michael Kavanaugh — Christopher Krogslund
Zita Kurtzman — Vega Lalire — Marlena Lange — Jean Lerner — Monique Lipton — Linda's Office Supplies
Anna Marchini — Cynthia McGlynn — Virginia & Donald McMillin — Phillipsport Community Center
Nadia Rajsz — Heriberto Rodriguez — Louise Rozos — Chaim Spear — Phyllis & Gregory Squires — Stephen Vignet

BKAA Members, Water Testing Volunteers Needed!

As the BKAA's own water testing program is in hiatus (lacking a coordinator), we strongly urge those interested in Basher Kill water testing to join a water monitoring team currently being formed for the lower Basher Kill and Neversink River by Deerpark Rural Alliance and partners, like the BKAA.

Citizen Science Opportunity 2020

Seeking: 3-5 volunteers to be on a water monitoring team in the lower Basher Kill and the Neversink. This is an initiative of the Deerpark Rural Alliance and NYenvironcom (Mid-New York Environmental and Sustainability Committee). In coordination with the Stroud Water Institute and the Delaware Watershed Initiative and its partners. Co-sponsored by BKAA and Orange County Land Trust.

Volunteer profile: High school and college students, teachers, interested citizens.

Training provided: Will train to build the monitoring station and learn about the Mayfly equipment - the technical aspects, maintenance skills, data retrieval process. Interest and/or skills in IT a plus.

Time commitment: Onsite checking of monitors for upkeep and info retrieval, once every 7-10 days.

Long term project: Rotating volunteers to avoid fatigue.

Perks: Modest stipend; fun and good times threaded into the work.

Further information:
Grace Woodard gfwoodard@gmail.com 646-644-3726.

MAILBAG continued from page 2

is available for purposes most in need of funding. It would give me great satisfaction and joy, however, if available funds went for support of youth education and/or scholarships to campers.

Thank you,
Barbara A. Doty
**Invasives Strike Force Surveyor (Standard) Workshop**

*Sponsored by NY-NJ Trail Conference and the BKAA*

**Where:** Mamakating Environmental and Interpretive Center, 762 South Road, Wurtsboro, NY 12790  
**When:** July 11th, 2020, 9:00 a.m. through 3:00 p.m.

By taking this training course to become an Invasives Strike Force survey volunteer, you’ll learn ways to identify a set of invasive plants commonly found along our trails as well as how to record and report information about their locations. Not only will you learn how to ID invasive plants, but you will also learn how to utilize some easy-to-use mobile apps to help identify many types of organisms you are seeing along your hike. It truly takes the hiking experience to the next level - you will learn so much about the plants and animals inhabiting the parks you enjoy and discover ways to keep our trails free and clear of invasive species!

*More details on the workshop:*

The morning session (from 9-11:30 a.m.) will consist of a few hours in the classroom learning the basic ecology and impacts of invasive species as well as practicing our plant ID skills using hand-held guides, powerpoint slides and practice with potted plants as resources. We will then break for lunch time *(all attendees must bring their own bag lunches and drinks)*. The afternoon session will consist of guided walks outside where we will practice our plant ID skills and survey methods together. The workshop will wrap up with discussion and Q&A and end around 3 p.m.

**Attendees are also asked to bring along fully charged smartphones for help during the training.** GPS units are also available to rent if requested ahead of time.

Following the workshop, you will receive a trail assignment in a park of your choosing to survey for the invasive plants you learned about during the workshop. You will have the remainder of the summer to complete the survey on your own time. We will continue to be here for support and questions throughout the survey season and are so grateful for your help. Volunteering for this program is so important in keeping our parks and trails healthy and enjoyable! Please do not hesitate to contact Invasive Species Citizen Science Coordinator Brent Boscarino at the below address with any questions.

**Pre-registration is required.** Feel free to register here or contact Brent at the email address or phone number below to register.

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**— IN MEMORIAM —**

With profound sadness, the BKAA announces passing of valued members:

**Phyllis Jones**  
An avid BKAA supporter, Phyllis was also an exceptionally active Sullivan County Audubon Society member, fulfilling several critical organizational roles, like being editor of the “Warblings” newsletter. She was very courageous, always “soldiering on” despite encountering serious physical challenges.

**Andrew D. Lewis**  
Extremely generous, Andrew even remembered the BKAA in his will, causing us to work harder to deserve this recognition.
Poetry Corner:

The Spirit of Mamakating

— Lee Scribner

Land of sleeping clouds; Mamakating.

When you arrive you must remember to bring:
Binoculars, cameras, good walking shoes and a smile.

We here are friendly and will make you happy all the while.

Spring, Summer, Autumn or Winter;

There is much to do and see; even an occasional wild critter.

We have eagles, ospreys, herons, geese, ducks and bear.

You can hike on the many trails; if you dare.

The Spirit of Mamakating is in all we see;

From the shopkeepers to the people to every living tree.

On Memorial Day we have a parade and strike up the band!

Our town’s spirit lives in all our souls;

So we try very hard to reach our goals.

We have a synagogue and many a church steeple,

But most of all we have wonderful people.
The Bashakill
A Heritage for all time

by Robert F. Cross

New York has recently purchased a five-mile long freshwater marsh which may be one of the greatest wildlife “finds” of the decade.

Tucked in the southern foothills of the Catskills, the Bashakill Wetland is the largest freshwater marsh between the Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge near Cayuga Lake and Jamaica Bay in New York City. Teeming with thousands of different plant and animal species, the 2,200-acre Sullivan County marsh is home for a vast array of creatures, many of which are rare and some even endangered.

Best of all, though, this marvelous wildlife sanctuary now belongs to all New Yorkers. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation—using a combination of federal and state money—has just bought the marsh and its upland acres for about $2.4 million.

100 Centuries Old
Born of glacial action more than 100 centuries ago, the Bashakill today serves not only as a home for rare and unique plants and animals, but also as a natural catch basin to help control flooding and erosion through its ability to capture and hold rainwater.

Wetlands, such as the Bashakill, store excess water during times of flooding and slowly release the water later into rivers and streams, thus preventing or at least reducing downstream flooding. Wetlands also help to slow down fast-moving water, trapping silt and organic materials and preventing erosion. They provide other benefits, too, including pollution control, protection of water resources, wildlife habitat, recreation and nature study.

The Bashakill has all of these attributes—and more. When the continental glacier covering the area receded about 11,000 years ago, it deposited till (rock debris) at what is now Summitville, creating a natural divide between the Hudson and Delaware River Basins. As the waters of the Bashakill flowed southward, they met the Pine Kill, an easterly flowing stream. But rocks and soil prevented the flow of the Bashakill waters further south, resulting in today’s marsh.

Birds, Beasts and More
The Bashakill is a birder’s paradise. As many as 217 different resident and transient species delight observers as they swoop overhead or quietly glide across the calm marsh waters.

The osprey or fish hawk, an endangered species in New York, is frequently sighted in the area during spring and fall migrations. Aerial courtship displays have been seen, and it is thought

(Continued on page 26)
that this rare species is nesting nearby.

New York's official bird, the eastern bluebird, has also been spotted frequently in the southeastern section of the marsh. Although bluebirds are said to be relatively rare in this portion of the state, their presence can be encouraged through use of artificial nests.

Other avians found around the marsh either as residents or visitors include wood ducks, mallards, blue and green-winged teals, black ducks, Canada geese, great blue herons, hooded mergansers, screech owls, and the rare bald eagles, which visit the marsh regularly each spring.

But there's more than bird watching available to Bashakill visitors. More than 31 species of mammals, 25 species of reptiles and amphibians, and 30 species of fish inhabit the lands and waters of the expansive marsh. Muskrats, mink, beaver and river otters are the primary aquatic mammals living around the marsh waters. White-tailed deer, turkeys, red and gray fox, raccoons, skunks, eastern cottontails, and porcupines are on the long list of resident land mammals living in the nearby woods and fields.

Sullivan County's only reported limestone outcropping is in the Bashakill and has resulted in extensive underground caves, providing roosting habitat for several species of bats. The caverns were formed when underground water containing carbonic acid dissolved the limestone. As water dripped from the cave ceilings, calcium carbonate deposits formed from stalagmites and stalactites, creating what some experts believe to be the most magnificent caverns anywhere in New York.

Above ground, a myriad of microscopic plants and animals floating in the marsh waters provide nourishment for the larger aquatic life in the food web. The fishery is essentially a warm water one, with large numbers of bass, pickerel, bullheads, catfish and sunfish (including the rare blue-spotted variety), all hiding in the marshy waters. And at Haven Bridge which dissects the marsh it is not uncommon on a warm summer evening to see dozens of anglers taking their chances or spectators just enjoying the serenity and beauty of the marsh surroundings. As humans of all ages try their luck at the
fish lurking in the quiet waters, a variety of salamanders, toads and frogs dart about the arrow arum plants, mostly unnoticed except by keen-eyed observers.

Getting There

Protection of this vast array of flora and fauna within the Bashkill's boundaries is paramount and can be achieved only through a comprehensive management plan. DEC wildlife officials have begun to draft such a plan to protect and enhance animal and plant populations along with providing public access to these natural wonders.

Two major roadways provide easy access to the Bashkill. Westbound travelers along Route 17 can view the magnificent marsh as they traverse the Shawangunk Mountains on their way to the Catskills. From midtown Manhattan to the Bashkill is about a two-hour journey along this scenic highway. The major north-south highway is Route 209 which parallels the wetlands, passing through small rural communities.

But even more spectacular sight can be had by getting off the main highway and hitting the back roads which lead to the marsh. It is there that visitors can get a glimpse of the plants and animals that help to make the Bashkill so unusual. By hiking along the abandoned railroad bed or the Delaware & Hudson Canal roadway, visitors can see the flora and fauna up close—the best way to experience their endless variety and aesthetic values.

The Plan

Besides the natural beauty already provided by the marsh water and its inhabitants, there are even greater benefits in store for Bashkill residents and visitors once a comprehensive management plan is adopted. Better hunting, fishing and trapping can be expected through game management practices. In addition, current plans provide for hiking, bicycling, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, canoeing and nature study areas.

Although a total management plan is still under review by DEC, the final plan will ensure a balance between sound wildlife management policies and recreational uses for visitors. The only form of non-wildlife-oriented recreation will be bicycle riding, which probably will be restricted to the southwest corner of the marsh along South and Haven Roads.

It is expected that a limited number of automobile parking areas will be located along the marsh's borders so visitors can leave their cars behind and roam freely along wooded trails. The abandoned railroad and canal roadways may be developed into hiking paths once a total management scheme is adopted.

Public use of the marsh, and especially its critical habitats, will be limited to prevent harassment of wildlife. Several large and many smaller areas will be restricted to limited use throughout the year to protect critical areas and to form wildlife sanctuaries. Some of the sanctuary boundaries may be adjusted seasonally to allow public access and use of the areas.

To insure successful breeding by waterfowl, shorebirds and other marsh nesting birds and upland game birds, as well as mammals, the area will probably be closed for all uses from March 1 to June 15, with anglers restricted to Haven Road bridge and other shore sites during that period. Boats and canoes will be prohibited during this period.

Motorized vehicles will not be allowed on the marsh at any time. This includes snowmobiles, trail bikes, off-the-road vehicles and gasoline motors for boats or canoes. However, electric motors will be permitted on boats or canoes. Boat launching sites will be located where the least disruption will occur.

Cages for field ecology and conservation education or other large groups will be required to obtain a permit before venturing into the marshlands, while smaller groups and individuals will not need permission to hike through the marsh during "open" seasons. Scientific studies will be allowed on a permit basis. A permanent DEC permit station will be located on the marshlands.

Fishing, hunting and trapping will be regulated by DEC in order to prevent conflicts between activities. Permits will be required and assigned areas will be given. Additional studies must be conducted to determine the extent of use of the Bashkill by fishermen, hunters and trappers in order to develop fair management policies. In addition, studies must be conducted to determine the varieties and number of animal species.

DEC wildlife biologists hope to encourage several rare bird species to nest along the marsh’s shores. Artificial nests will be built to encourage more wood ducks to stay at the marsh as well as to attract more bluebirds and ospreys. An intensive bluebird management area will be located near an abandoned apple orchard and natural spring. An observation area nearby will allow visitors to get a firsthand look at the habits of this delicate and beautiful bird.

A Victory For All New Yorkers

The acquisition of this spectacular piece of real estate is the culmination of a half dozen years of negotiations between local landowners and the state. For the most part, negotiations and acquisitions have been friendly and residents have willingly sold their property to the state. After all, it was those same folks, along with environmentalists, who first alerted the state to the uniqueness of the Bashkill and were a driving force behind acquisition.

Strong pressures to develop the area arose (and still exist at a degree), but environmentalist pressure prevailed. Environmental leaders such as Martin Borko, a local college biology professor, were instrumental in convincing then-DEC Commissioner Henry Diamond to use money from the 1972 Environmental Bond Act to buy the marsh. Negotiations began immediately and, more than a half decade later, have ended with a ringing victory for environmentalists as well as for all New Yorkers. One of the state's greatest natural treasures belongs to us all now—and for all time.

Robert F. Cross is an associate engineering research editor with DEC. He has B.S. and M.A. degrees in biology from State University of New York at Albany and New Paltz, respectively. He is a former legislative correspondent in Albany for Ottaway Newspapers and The Wall Street Journal.
2020 BKAA Calendar of Events

All activities free and open to the public!

Saturday, April 4, 9:30 am - 12 noon
Nature Watch Training
If you’d like to join the BKAA’s Nature Watch (NW) as a volunteer, attend the NW Annual Training on Saturday, April 4th. Registration begins at 9:30 am, with programming following at 10:00 am. Training will take place at the Mamakating Environmental Education and Interpretive Center, situated at the edge of the Bashakill Wildlife Management Area, 762 South Road, Wurtsboro. You’ll learn about wetland residents, including bald eagles, so that you can share information with Bash Kill visitors. Highlights of this year’s program will be a presentation by long-time Bash Kill naturalist and historian, Gary Keeton. Gary will review the many changes he has observed occurring at the wetland over the last 40 years. Additional presentations include description of the nuts and bolts of NW. After training, volunteers sign up for three shifts (three hours each) on Saturdays or Sundays from April 18 through June 28. A quick field trip to the boat launch helps familiarize everyone with our spotting scopes and NW location. Please call Kevin Keller at 845-434-6209 or Maryallison Farley at 845-888-0261 to register and for more details. If you love the Bash Kill and like to talk with people, this program is for you!

Weekends from
Saturday, April 18 through Sunday, June 28

Nature Watch at the South Road Boat Launch
Join trained BKAA Nature Watch Volunteers at the South Road boat launch to learn more about the amazing residents of this amazing wetland. View the nesting bald eagles and other birds. Equipped with two powerful spotting scopes and lots of information, volunteers will help you get to know the Bash Kill a little better bring your children, other family members and friends of all ages for some fun in the outdoors! From 10:00 am to 4:00 pm every Saturday and Sunday between April 18 and June 28. Call Kevin Keller at 845-434-6209 or Maryallison Farley at 845-888-0261 for more details.

Saturday, April 18
38th Annual Basha Kill Clean-up
9:30-10am (registration and site assignments)
Celebrate Earth Day! Enjoy a walk and fresh spring air while ridding the wetlands of debris. Garbage bags are provided. Wear boots, work gloves, and insect repellent. Bring chairs as lunch, supplied by the BKAA, will be eaten al fresco in the Haven Road DEC parking lot (on left coming from Route 209); also event’s registration site. BKAA merchandise will be on sale and door prizes awarded. Call Paula Medley at (845) 754-0743 for further information.

Saturday, April 25, 10 am
Walk the O & W / D & H Canal Trail Loop with Gary Keeton
Stroll a 3 mile loop on level terrain with Bash Kill naturalist Gary Keeton as you observe wetlands, headwaters of the Basher Kill, and Gumaer Brook. The 1.4 mile portion of the O & W rail trail was recently gifted to Mamakating by Open Space Institute. At McDonald Road, event participants will return to Wurtsboro via the D & H Canal towpath. Bring binoculars, insect repellent, and wear good walking shoes. Meet at the trailhead adjacent to O’Toole’s Harley-Davidson on Sullivan Street in Wurtsboro. To register and/or for more information, contact Gary at (845) 649-5887.

Sunday, May 3, 8 am
Spring Migration Warbler Walk with John Haas
Meet at the Stop Sign Parking Area off Haven Road (from Route 209, cross Haven Road bridge and take first left just before Haven Road ends at South Road). Bring binoculars. We should see an array of spring migrants including warblers, orioles, and grosbeaks. We will move to the Nature Trail from there and finish up at the Main Boat Launch. Visit to Mamakating’s new Environmental Center included. To register and/or for more information, contact John at (845) 888-0240. The walk will last at least 2 hours.

Sunday, May 3, 10 am
History of D&H Canal with Gary Keeton
Join Gary for a walk through time. Ever wonder about local stone walls and foundations? Curious about how people farmed the rocky soils or the relationship between the Basha Kill and Pine Kill? Bring binoculars and insect repellent. Oh, and learn about the canal, too! Meet at the DEC access road on Route 209 across from the Hometown Deli in Westbrookville. Bring binoculars. Contact Gary at (845) 649-5887 for particulars.
Friday, May 8, 9:00 pm

**Moonlight Walk with Gary Keeton**
Amble along Haven Road and the Railroad Trail. Enjoy moonrise over the ridge as you discuss the area's natural history. Meet at the Haven Road DEC parking lot (on left coming from Route 209). Contact Gary at (845) 649-5887 for additional facts.

Sunday, May 17, 10 am

**Hike to Gobbler’s Knob**
with NY-NJ Trail Conference Representative
Enjoy views of a beautiful 650 acre Shawangunk Ridge property, that was also site of the proposed Bashkill Subdivision. The hike gains 450 vertical feet from the parking area to the Knob, which is almost 1,000 feet high. Wear comfortable, sturdy shoes; bring water and binoculars. Trip takes two hours. Meet at the South Road fishing platform (Westbrookville end). To register or for more information, contact Paula at (845) 754-0743.

Sunday, June 7, 10 am

**Happy for Herps with Bill Cutler**
Join herpetologist Bill Cutler on a search for amphibians and reptiles. Kids as well as adults love learning about them. Bring binoculars and insect repellent. Meet at the Haven Road DEC parking lot (on left coming from Route 209). Visit to Mamakating’s new Environmental Center included. Call Bill to register and/or for additional information at (845) 482-5209.

Saturday, June 13, 9 am

**Natural History Walk with Jack Austin**
Stroll 2-3 miles on level terrain with Bash Kill educator Jack Austin as you see and listen to what’s nesting, growing, and maturing. Bring binoculars, insect repellent, and wear good walking shoes. Meet at the Haven Road DEC parking lot (on left coming from Route 209). Visit to Mamakating’s new Environmental Center included. To register and/or for more information, contact Jack at cell # (845) 649-8720.

Sunday, June 14, 10 a.m.

**Examine Early Summer Vegetation and Plants’ Relationship to the Bash Kill’s Ecology with SUNY Orange Professor Emeritus Marty Borko**
Bring binoculars and insect repellent. Meet at the Haven Road DEC parking lot (on left coming from Route 209). Visit to Mamakating’s new Environmental Center included. Call Paula Medley to register and/or for additional information at (845) 754-0743.

Saturday, October 3, 10 am

**Canoe/Kayak the Bash Kill**
with Scott Graber and Mike Medley
Join naturalists Scott and Mike for a late season venture. Bring your own vessel and binoculars. Meet at the South Road Boat Launch. Call Mike at (845) 754-0743 to register and for more details.

Friday, October 9, 7-9 pm

**Free Public Star Watch by John Kocijanski of the Catskills Astronomy Club**
Bring scopes and/or binoculars. Meet at the South Road Boat Launch, across from Bashkill Vineyards. To register, call John at (845) 798-8087. For event updates, visit Catskills Astronomy Club’s Facebook page. Rain date the following day.

Sunday, October 18, 10 am

**Hike the Shawangunk Ridge with a NY-NJ Trail Conference Trail Maintainer**
Event co-sponsored with Trail Conference. Moderately difficult hike, lasting 4-5 hours. Wear comfortable sturdy shoes and bring water, lunch and binoculars. Meet at the D&H Canal Kiosk at the Pat Moore Memorial Picnic Grove on Sullivan Street in Wurtsboro. Must register by calling Paula at (845) 754-0743.

Sunday, October 25, 9 am

**Hike the Minisink Trail at Huckleberry State Forest in the Town of Greenville with Mike Medley**
Join Mike on a beautiful 5 mile loop hike on the Shawangunk Ridge. Wear comfortable sturdy shoes and bring water and lunch. Bring binoculars. Carpool or travel in a caravan led by Mike. Meet at South Road fishing platform (West-brookville end) at 9:00am. Absolutely must register for this trip by calling Mike at (845) 754-0743.

**BKAA Action and Information Alerts**
are sent from the following email address:

libertylithoink@yahoo.com

To ensure that emails reach your Inbox, and not your junk or spam folder, add this address to your safe senders list (called ‘whitelisting’).

Your email provider or security service (if you use one) may have their own instructions for adding an email address to a whitelist. Look up instructions with the provider or service you use.
DEC’s Rationale for Proposed Changes to New York’s List of Endangered and Threatened Species
As Several Species Exceed Recovery Expectations, Others Demonstrate Need for Increased State Protections

Two New Proposals Clarify State’s Current Stringent Regulations for Vulnerable Fish and Wildlife

Nate Ermer, Regional Wildlife Manager

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Basil Seggos today announced changes are being considered to amend state regulations and designations for protecting endangered and threatened species across the state. The two proposals recognize the state’s progress in restoring populations of several species, such as the bald eagle and peregrine falcon, and the need to protect other vulnerable species to prevent additional population loss, such as the eastern hellbender.

New York is a national leader in endangered species conservation and with Governor Cuomo’s leadership the state has invested significant resources to support the recovery of vulnerable fish and wildlife through habitat restoration, management plans, stocking, and more to help populations grow," said DEC Commissioner Basil Seggos. “Unlike the Trump Administration, which continues to roll back critical protections for endangered species and dismisses the very real threats climate change presents going forward, DEC is committed to using science to focus on the species most in need of protection and improving how we interact with New Yorkers living alongside our state’s endangered and threatened species so both natural and man-made communities benefit.”

When a species is listed as threatened or endangered under New York State’s Endangered Species Law, the species becomes a priority for DEC monitoring and management programs and is protected through a permit requirement for projects likely to cause harm to these species. DEC is proposing draft changes consistent with the New York State Wildlife Action Plan and is encouraging the public to review assessments and help DEC identify any new sources of information that can help improve the decision-making process for High Priority Species of Greatest Conservation Need. This preproposal is intended to solicit public and expert comments on the need for list changes from the existing 90 endangered and threatened designations to ensure upcoming formally proposed list changes reflect the latest science that accurately accounts for the species most in need of additional legal protections.

Raptor and Other Recovery Successes

DEC’s preproposal would remove 19 species from the state’s endangered and threatened species list. Several species like the bald eagle, northern harrier, peregrine falcon, and humpback whale have experienced significant growth in their numbers and range, with some populations now 10 times the state’s initial recovery goals.

For instance, through the work of New York’s bald eagle management program and those in other states and Canada, the magnificent bird that symbolizes our nation has come back from the brink of extinction. There are now more than 390 pairs of breeding eagles in New York nesting within every region, which is why DEC is considering removing the bald eagle from the threatened species list. By comparison, there was only one breeding pair remaining in New York State when they were listed as Endangered in 1973. Higher population levels and successful reproduction mean the bald eagle is on much firmer footing today than it has been for well over half a century. Restoration efforts across the state and region have been so successful that the bald eagle was removed from the federal endangered species list in 2007, though the species remains protected under the Federal Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act.

Executive Director of Audubon New York Ana Paula Tavares said, “The remarkable recovery of the Bald Eagle in New York State and beyond is one of our nation’s best stories of conservation success. Help came to this species when it was needed most—exactly what the state endangered, threatened, and special concern species list exists to achieve. Moving forward, we must ensure timely resources are directed to those at greatest risk-like the Saltmarsh Sparrow. We thank the DEC for their work on this update, and urge them to periodically revise the list moving forward to prioritize our most vulnerable birds.”

Other species would be removed from the state’s endangered or threatened lists because they have been found to no longer include New York within their range, such as the silver chub, or because they have gone extinct like the eastern cougar and Eskimo curlew. Even if a species is removed from the list, DEC would continue to monitor their populations and make management changes as necessary to address any new concerns that may arise.

DEC’S RATIONALE continued on page 25
[Editor's Note: Each year, Americans throw away more than 100 BILLION plastic bags. Historically, less than 1% are recycled, however consumers in NYS are able to recycle film plastics at certain retail stores and most grocery stores. By law, stores must make recycling collection bins for film plastics available to customers in a visible, easily accessible location. If film plastics collection containers are not available in a regulated store, please email recycling@dec.ny.gov or call (518) 402-8706. NYSDEC will need the store name and location (street address and city).]

(BKAA Editor's Note: This article was originally published in the winter edition of Warblings, Sullivan County Audubon Society’s newsletter. It is reprinted here with their permission.)

What are Acceptable Film Plastics for Recycling?
NYS law requires certain stores that provide plastic bags collect film plastics from consumers, which includes all CLEAN and DRY:
- Plastic grocery bags
- Plastic retail bags with string ties removed
- Plastic newspaper bags
- Plastic dry-cleaning bags
- Plastic produce bags with ALL food residue removed
- Plastic bread bags with ALL food residue removed
- Plastic cereal bags with ALL food residue removed
- Plastic wrap from paper products (paper towels, toilet paper, etc)
- Plastic stretch/shrink wrap with all food residue removed
- Plastic zipper type bags

What may be Acceptable at SOME Retail Stores?
- Plastic bubble wrap
- Plastic air pillows found inside shipping packages
- Plastic shipping envelopes
- Plastic from pellet bags with ALL residue removed
- Plastic salt bags with rigid plastic handles removed and all residue removed

What are UNACCEPTABLE Film Plastics?
- Plastic bags with strings
- Plastic bags with food residue
- Plastic soil or mulch bags

- Plastic food containers
- Plastic bottles

Why Recycle Film Plastics?
By recycling film plastics, valuable materials are provided to manufacturers of plastic lumber, plastic bags and other useful products. Using film plastics as feedstock, in place of virgin plastics, reduces demand for petroleum. In addition, recycling film plastics help reduce waste and litter which means cleaner streets and waterways, and less materials in the landfill. Film plastics can also be dangerous to animals that ingest them or are strangled by them (sea turtles mistake plastic bags for jellies (Cnidarians) floating at sea, a primary food source).

What are Alternatives to Single-Use Plastic Grocery Bags?
Instead of using a plastic grocery bag, you can:
• Use canvas, cloth or a durable plastic bag made for multiple use. Reusable bags are more environmentally friendly than paper or plastic. Under the law, any store required to recycle plastic bags must also sell reusable bags. Keep them in your car for the next time you have to run out for groceries.
• Say "No thank you." Not all items require a bag so tell the clerk, "No thank you." Carry small purchase items like a magazine, one piece of candy, or drink to the car instead of in a plastic bag.
• Reuse them. There are many great uses for plastic carryout bags such as trash can liners in the home, for doggie waste or to use again at a retail store. Get creative and find new ways to reuse those bags.
• Tell a friend. Get others to recycle and use reusable bags. Let them know where they can find them or turn them on to recycling opportunities at their nearest grocery store.

What's NEXT for Film Plastics?!
Plastic pollution, especially from single-use sources like plastic bags, is a threat to our environment. It litters our waterways, harms wildlife and as litter costs American taxpayers an estimated $11 billion every year to clean up. More needs to be done.

The NYS Plastic Bag Waste Reduction Law takes effect March 1, 2020 and prohibits the distribution of single-use plastic carryout bags to customers by any retailer in New York State required to collect sales tax, as defined in Title
MEEIC Connection Vol 2

Jackie Broder, MEEIC Director

Greetings from Mamakating Environmental Education & Interpretive Center (MEEIC)! As I write, we are in the midst of voluntary distancing due to the Coronavirus, so grab your coffee, put your feet up and enjoy this beautiful publication Paula diligently pours her heart into every quarter. Since MEEIC is officially closed until further notice, you have the pleasure of experiencing it here. So much has happened since the last Guardian, as you will see by reading this issue! I’m grateful to the Basha Kill Area Association for their ongoing support, both here and at our events.

MEEIC programs have been well attended. Approximately 100 people wandered around the center and grounds during the Winter Carnival. I was overwhelmed by the beautiful support of numerous volunteers who helped. Everyone gave it their best, from baking and cooking to fire tending and sharing knowledge on everything winter. It was amazing seeing visitors and volunteers alike, enjoying the grounds and center. Other activities have also been popular and I would like to personally shout out to program presenters: Pam Golben, Jan Berlin, Christian Chevalier, John Kocijanski, Peggy Johansen, Gary Keeton, Tom Smith, and, Elly Knieriemen. You have enriched MEEIC with your knowledge and passion for our natural world.

Construction on our children’s classroom is well underway and, in fact, should be completed by the time you read this. I am currently endeavoring to secure equipment and supplies. Hopefully, funding will ensue, enabling the classroom’s opening by summer. Our town maintenance team has tirelessly worked on this project for several months and I am most appreciative. They are extremely talented and I can’t wait for everyone to see their incredible efforts!

Our bird feeders have been active this winter with the usual suspects, white-breasted nuthatches, goldfinches, juncos, chickadees, mourning doves. We’ve had wonderful opportunities to observe hairy and downy woodpeckers side by side and encountered similar moments with a red-bellied woodpecker and piliated in the trees. And, of course, squirrels and chipmunks abound but, hey, they need to eat too!

The MEEIC Advisory Committee remains committed and involved. We presented our Charter at the town board’s last meeting. Basically, this document defines our committee’s role and ensures that future committee and town board members have a reference base to avoid cross purposes. We expect Charter approval soon.

I hope this difficult time passes quickly and we open our doors soon. In the meantime, savor your down time, enjoy your family and venture out onto the trails! Nothing better than Mother Earth to feed our bodies and souls!

NEWS BRIEF:

Paula Medley

Open Space Institute (OSI) Will Not Fund Hudsonia’s Biodiversity and Water Resources Analyses of the Basher Kill Watershed

After months of waiting, Dutchess County based, science-driven Hudsonia recently learned that OSI denied its watershed funding application.

Apparently, OSI was disinclined to incorporate biodiversity examination within the study, preferring to concentrate solely on water issues. The BKAA, however, which provided a support letter and input during the initial application stage, agreed with Hudsonia that evaluating biodiversity was indispensable to ensuring appropriate future planning within the watershed.

Hudsonia will now explore other alternatives in obtaining requisite financial backing.

PLASTIC BAG continued from page 14

28 of the NYS Environmental Conservation Law. Neighboring Ulster County already enacted similar legislation that took effect on July 15, 2019. This Law will NOT affect the current NYS Plastic Bag Reduction, Reuse and Recycling Law. It expressly keeps the requirements for retail stores required under Title 27 of Article 27 of the ECL to continue to collect film plastic from consumers for recycling.

For more information on waste reduction, reuse and recycling in Sullivan County, please contact the Department of Solid Waste & Recycling at 845-807-0291.
Backyard Birds at the MEEIC!

Cathy Dawkins

It was a gorgeous early winter afternoon and an eager crowd packed the front room of Mamakating’s Environmental, Education, and Interpretive Center (MEEIC) on South Road. The occasion was a program on “Backyard Birds”, which attracted a group including some BKAA regulars and quite a few visitors from nearby Yankee Lake, Port Jervis, Middletown, and our Pennsylvania neighbors.

Once guests signed in and were seated, Pam Golben gave a brief introductory presentation on selection of birds most likely to visit local backyard feeders (She didn’t mention the one known as a black bear, who frequented my backyard feeder just last night!). Pam showed photos of each and then played audio clips of birds including, my personal favorite, the Black Capped Chickadee, as well as the Tufted Titmouse and both the Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers.

Following this indoor introduction, MEEIC Director, Jackie Broder, escorted all participants to the Center’s back door. With lots of bird feeders, little birds were abundant as we looked over the deck and into the wooded slope leading down to the Basha Kill. Just magnificent!

Next, Pam and Jackie ushered us outside into the especially warm afternoon to look for birds. We walked along South and Haven Roads, viewing streams laden with remnants of ice, ferns, squirrel’s nests, and, much to the delight of our youngest participants, mounds of snow abutting road edges. It was a lovely day for a breath of fresh air at the Basha Kill!

Finally, we returned to the Center, congregating in the room on the lower level. Pam and Jackie guided us in a great indoor activity – creating treats for our feathered friends. We made peanut butter suet. Some used suet to fill pine cones and log feeders, while others decorated pre-made seed “cookies” to hang for the birds. We left with a suet treat to feed birds in our own backyards! (Mine disappeared after the first night because the bear thought it was a perfect snack before his main course of fresh suet block. Mmmm!)

All in all, a wonderful afternoon with like-minded bird lovers of all ages!

Gary Keeton’s Presentation at MEEIC On Native Americans in the Bashakill Paleolithic Migration to the Bashakill Wetlands Resource

Alethea Pape

A large audience filed into the Mamakating Environmental Education & Interpretive Center (MEEIC) on a mild January evening. A six foot mastodon tusk was the topic. Bashakill’s own Gary Keeton, naturalist, forester, and archaeologist, accompanied by Stephanie Tice Benson, President of the Incorporated Orange County Chapter of the New York State Archeological Association, presented Native Americans In The Bashakill on January 10, 2020. The Tunkamoosue tusk discovered in the Black Dirt tract of the Wallkill River by Gary’s son, Glen, offered further clues about our resource-rich region.

“Each time you see something, you read it. It’s a book”. The story of the mastodon tusk, along with stone tools, is of early peoples benefiting from the Bashakill in the Paleolithic era. Stone cuts on the mastodon tusk were from a tool used by Paleo people. Gary explained that type of stone, craftsmanship, and tool use reveal time period, originating area, and culture. Stone chert, volcanic glass, and jasper tools found in the Bashakill were brought from other places. Gary, first to discover the habitation site, Basha’s Village, recently encountered a jasper knife in Bashakill soil. Jasper stone originates in southeastern Pennsylvania. Chert and volcanic glass would have been transported hundreds and possibly thousands of miles. Hunter Gatherers participated in a trade economy. Carrying everything they owned, small bands migrated using the unique resources prevailing in each region. Paleo peoples traveled the important route from the Delaware River to the Hudson River. A worn trail remained on the northwest side, becoming Route 209. Bashakill Wetlands provided an important migratory path during Paleolithic times and still does today.

We viewed slides of fluted points, spear heads, and nutting stones. Stephanie distributed samples for audience examination. We observed the wide range of tool use. Atlatls used for spear-throwing, to arrowheads for bow and arrows, indicated span of peoples from Paleo, Archaic, to Woodland. Tools also confirmed that Snook Hill, Fox Creek, Adena, and the Lenape camped, hunted, fished, and foraged in the Bashakill Wetlands. Among the most prized fare were turtles, beaver, woodland ducks, yellow perch, broadleaf arrowhead and other medicinal plants.

This program was first in a three part series, Fireside Chats. The well attended event prompted a registration required policy at MEEIC activities, proving locals’ appreciation for what Gary acknowledges as “…the depth of history in this area of Sullivan County.”
Awesome Opossums Presentation at the Mamakating Environmental Education and Interpretive Center

Alva Jones and Lilith Jones

On Saturday, November 16th, 2019, Jackie Broder, Director of the Mamakating Environmental Education and Interpretive Center (MEEIC) on South Road in Wurtsboro, New York, introduced a happily packed meeting room to the “Awesome Opossum” program. Presenters were Pam Golben, environmental educator from Golben Farms, Florida, New York, and Jan Berlin, Director of Everything Animals Resource Center in Bullville, New York. The event consisted of a fascinating slideshow talk, followed by observing, and being charmed by, a beautiful, captive Virginia Opossum named Harriet, gently regarding us from the arms of Jan Berlin while they moved through the audience. Harriet then calmly walked and sniffed upon the display table, delicately snacking on grapes.

Here are highlights of Pam and Jan’s engaging presentation. Our local opossum species, the Virginia Opossum, is a marsupial mammal, not a rodent, as many people presume due to its bare ears and tail. White-faced, furry, and solitary when mature, adult opossums are about the size of a domestic cat and live from 1-4 years in the wild. Nomadic rather than territorial, they travel steadily through their preferred forested habitat near streams and also expand into urban and suburban areas sheltering in rock walls and woodpiles. Shy, nocturnal by nature, and incapable of hibernating, opossums may, during periods of extreme cold, venture out in daylight searching for food. This behavior should not signal that an opossum is rabid, as opossums are highly unlikely to contract or carry rabies due to low body temperature.

Opossums are naturally gentle creatures: When threatened, an opossum instinctively runs to its shelter or a tree. If unable to escape, an opossum may defensively bare its fifty sharp teeth and utter a small growl, but is not inclined to strike; Rather, if the threat continues, the opossum sways from side to side, drooling and, finally, faints or “plays dead.” The faint, which lasts from 20 minutes to 4 hours, interrupts predators’ chase-and-kill instinct. The foul odor which a “dead” opossum emits will further deter predator interest.

Despite the odor released when threatened, opossums are cleaner than many woodland neighbors. Their fastidious, cat-like grooming regime makes them especially beneficial to humans. By routinely gobbling up ninety percent of ticks attached to their bodies due to their "low-rider" proportions, opossums have slowed spread of Lyme disease!

Opossums have poor eyesight, but possess keen senses of hearing and smell which facilitate locating food. Besides munching up to 4,000 ticks per week, an opossum hunts or scavenges remains of a wide range of animal species, including snakes, birds, rodents and insects in their environment thanks to physical adaptations of exceptionally sensitive whiskers, prehensile (or “thumbed’) feet, a prehensile tail and high intelligence.

As marsupials, opossums give birth to tiny, underdeveloped offspring called "joeys" just 13 days after conception. When born, joeys immediately crawl into a fur-lined pouch on their mother’s abdomen where they latch onto a nipple to nurse and grow for their next 2 months of life. They then emerge as bright-eyed juveniles, who firmly grasp onto Mom’s fur to alternately travel about on her back or rest in the warmth of her pouch. At 3 months, the young venture from their mother to explore, developing climbing and foraging skills. By 4-5 months of age, the capable youngsters, now half adult size, leave their mother to live independently.

Many North American opossums perish within their first year because of cats as well as cars and misguided people. In the human environment, further danger includes becoming stuck in window wells or trash cans. If you find one in either of these predicaments, please help by gently tipping the can and walking away, allowing the opossum to exit or carefully place a 2”x4” board into the window well and likewise leave, enabling its safe retreat. Should you find an injured opossum (or other wild animal), do not handle him or her. Instead, immediately visit www.nyswrc.org and follow their links to contact a local wildlife rehabilitator.

Pam and Jan’s program offered a great opportunity to learn how truly awesome and beneficial opossums are - and how lovely and gentle too, thanks to special guest Harriet! Harriet’s darling photos are worth scrolling for on MEEIC’s wonderful Facebook page. There you will also see listings for upcoming MEEIC activities. We have greatly enjoyed every single presentation at the Center and look forward to many more. We hope to see you there too!
Fly-Fishing: A Unique and Remarkable Pastime

Christian A. Chevalier

As a student at SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry in Syracuse, finding something to occupy my limited free time can be challenging. When home from school, I am employed at the Mamakating Environmental Education and Interpretive Center (MEEIC) as an educator. I have lived in the Catskills my entire life, but only found fly-fishing about 6 years ago. A hand-me-down rod, a thrift store reel and line, and I was off. Using a combination of articles, books, videos on the internet, I taught myself to cast and then tie flies. With this new-found knowledge and a little skill, I began to hit the water to perfect and hone my abilities. Of course, there is always more to learn, but my skills have improved ten-fold since I first started. My point is that everyone, from any walk of life, can successfully fly-fish. It comes down to employing patience and motivation to overcome whatever obstacles face you on your path to success.

Part I: History and Birth of Fly-Fishing in the United States

The first program in my MEEIC series focused on history of fly-fishing and its foundation in the Catskills. The start of fly-fishing is difficult to determine due to the number and variety of accounts regarding its beginning. The first concrete evidence describing fly-fishing and tackle making occurred in Britain in the 15th century. As time progressed, interest in the sport grew but, with few ways to learn, people were deterred from even attempting it. The 1600s sparked a large fly-fishing movement with publication of Izzak Walton’s “The Compleat Angler or The Contemplative Man’s Recreation” and “Instructions on How to Angle for Trout and Grayling in a Clear Stream.” Walton and colleague, Charles Cotton, are known as two founders of modern fly-fishing.

Fast-forward to the late 1700s—early 1800s—where Britain is the hotspot for all things fly-fishing. There are numerous publications and techniques being developed, instructing and guiding those interested in fly-fishing. The 1600s sparked a large fly-fishing movement with publication of Izzak Walton’s “The Compleat Angler or The Contemplative Man’s Recreation” and “Instructions on How to Angle for Trout and Grayling in a Clear Stream.” Walton and colleague, Charles Cotton, are known as two founders of modern fly-fishing.

The essential gear/equipment necessary for fly-fishing are a rod, reel, and line. Waders and boots are completely optional, depending on weather and season, but I recommend keeping them handy. For the field, I likewise require a pack or bag to hold fly boxes, tippet spools, forceps, hand warmers, etc. One item I strongly suggest having is a wading stick or staff. This is crucial when surveying a new spot or reducing weight and stress from your feet when walking all day. It also serves as a probe into murky or deep water, determining where to safely wade. Of course, there are a plethora of different items and accessories available, depending on your tastes. Ultimately, you make this sport your own. We fly-fishermen have our own unique style, allowing us free expression through something we love.

Although fly-fishing is quickly becoming a more common pastime in this modern age, every cast made and fly tied is linked to the clear European streams where this activity began.

Part II: Overview of Fly-Fishing Techniques and Styles

The second of my two-part presentation divided fly-fishing into three categories: dry-fly, nymph, and streamer, while also highlighting general equipment required. Each category, despite using similar materials and equipment, is very unique and different in its own way. Dry fly-fishing necessitates patience and focus as does nymphing. However, streamer fishing entails more aggression and tenacity when casting large flies for large, hungry trout. The real difference between the three, besides small variations in gear, is fly presentation. Dry flies mimic adult insects landing on the water’s surface to lay eggs or die. Floatant and other hydrophobic solutions keep the fly afloat, aside from fur and feathers used to create a similar effect. Nymphs impersonate larval stages of these aquatic insects and appeal to trout feeding subsurface. Using lead wire or beads, nymphs effectively reach feeding fish in all water columns. Streamers are much larger and copy small bait fish or even small mammals and stimulate a strike. Using a sink tip or a weighted fly, or simply fur and feathers, streamers can dredge the bottom of deep pools or swing effortlessly through fast currents, wherever the fish lie. Whichever technique you use is entirely your choice. I’m a dry and streamer guy myself.

Although fly-fishing is quickly becoming a more common pastime in this modern age, every cast made and fly tied is linked to the clear European streams where this activity began.
February 8 MEEIC Winter Carnival

Maura Muller

It was a crisp, cold, grey day when I parked my car by the Stop Sign Trail and walked up the hill towards Mamakating Environmental Education and Interpretive Center (MEEIC) with my dog happily trotting alongside. I saw through trees that nearly every parking space was taken. Cars were parked along South Road, too. We entered the long driveway to find a festive atmosphere, with folks gathered around a nice bonfire and the delicious smell of toasting marshmallows. Nearby, I talked with Tom Forrester about his family making maple syrup. He had equipment, pamphlets and answered all my questions about tapping trees and catching the right temperature and weather to turn 40 gallons of sap into 1 gallon of sweet syrup. He also explained the perfect temperature to insure maple candy turns out best, about 230ºF, and showed me maple candy molds. My mouth was watering and suddenly pancakes for lunch seemed like a great idea.

I walked to the bike repair area which has air and a variety of wrenches if you need assistance, tying my dog to the bike racks and heading inside. I was met by Paula Medley, BKAA President, who provided a brief overview of event activities, suggesting I pick up any brochures I might need and encouraging me to try some food. There was a great food selection, two kinds of chili, beef and vegetarian, hot dogs, corn bread, drinks and a huge variety of baked goods. Something tasty for everyone. I found a poster of New York State butterflies and was surprised by how similar Monarchs and Viceroys look. I’ll keep this useful guide when hiking in warmer weather. I noticed significant bird activity at feeders outside on the back porch. Birds were busy, with many White-breasted Nuthatches, Downy Woodpeckers, Black-capped Chickadees, Tufted Titmice, American Goldfinches and Cardinals. I talked with Tom Smith, who had a gorgeous display of his taxidermied specimens for all to see. I was partial to the Snowy Owl and the tufted titmouse.

Next, I checked on my pooch. I took him for a quick walk down the Diamond Trail right outside the center’s back door. On our return, we met a family of 4, who happily revealed their crafts just made in the center’s basement. They had a bird feeder, a dove to hang, and an adorable groundhog bean bag. Inside, Maryallison Farley showcased a great display of books on nature and animals from the Mamakating Library, encouraging people to visit this facility. Families were busy crafting birds, doves, bird feeders, and groundhog bean bags helped by volunteers, Lori Whitmore, Pam Golben, Susan Erny and Dr. Jack Kura. Everyone seemed to be having a terrific time. The day’s highlight, though, may have been watching eager visitors being photographed with Jan Berlin’s lovely, photogenic dove. It was so friendly, laid-back, mellow and accommodating, truly an ambassador for peace.

MEEIC’s first winter carnival was a wonderful respite from such a grey, cold day. Kudos to Jackie Broder and MEEIC’s advisory committee for organizing this event. If you haven’t yet visited the center, I encourage you to do so!

Basha: Queen of the Lenape

Frank J. Covello

Visions of Mastodons roaming the plains, feeding on local flora and fauna. Native Americans hunting these huge beasts sporting 9-foot tusks. Killing them and utilizing their hides and skeletons for clothing, food, tools and weapons. These were several visions generated by Gary Keeton, local historian, naturalist, geologist and archeologist at his second Fireside Talk on Native Americans and archaeology held at the Mamakating Environmental Education Interpretive Center (MEEIC) on January 24. According to Gary, local archeological finds prove there was habitation in the Hudson Valley as early as 10,000 – 14,000 years ago.

The Hudson Valley was created by glacial invasion during the last Ice Age about 18,000 years ago. After glaciers receded, the Valley was comprised of creeks, fields, open prairies and bogs but no mature forests. Virtually every known medicinal plant was present. Numerous villages were sited here, most notable being Basha Village, a major Wurtsboro area trading hub supplying much of the northeast around 1150. It was named after an Indian woman named Basha who was Queen of the Lenape Indians and also a Shaman (a medicine woman and spiritual leader with great power).

Historically, the Lenape territory included present day New Jersey, eastern Pennsylvania, along the Delaware River, New York City, western Long Island and lower Hudson Valley. The Lenape were an agricultural and hunter-gatherer society. They practiced large scale agriculture (maize), hunted bear, birds, turtles and beaver (to name a few) and harvested large quantities of fish, clams and shellfish. Most Lenapes were pushed west by European settlers during the 1800s.

Many Lenape artifacts, such as arrowheads, knives, and tools, were found in the Hudson Valley and shown by Gary as slide photos or actual examples from his personal collection.

The evening’s program was enhanced by local historians Virdanna Lawrence and Judy Gumar Testa who were in the audience. Other participants were Dawn and Art from Otisville, Wanda from Summitville, and Coleen from Deerpark. These were just a few of the 50+ who packed MEEIC.

I have had the honor of participating in numerous hikes and presentations led by Gary and the depth of his knowledge never ceases to amaze me! If you have the opportunity to attend one of his events, I strongly recommend you do so!
BKAA Supports MEEIC Programs

Backyard Birds

Photos by Jackie Broder

Backyard Birding attendees create peanut butter suet.

Presenter Pam Golben makes birdseed cookies with young participant.

Final products.
Awesome Opposums

“Real” opposum Henrietta with toy babies.

Photos by Frank Coviello

Opossum feet are specialized

50 sharp teeth! Opossums have more teeth than any other mammal in North America.
Fly Fishing

Event participants
Dr. Jack Kura and son Peter

Photos by Christian Chevalier

Dry Flies

Nymphs

Dry Fly

Streamers
MEEIC Director Jackie Broder introducing Gary Keeton, both alongside Mastodon powerpoint.

Fireside Talk

Photos by Alethea Pape

Stone tools from the Paleolithic, Archaic, and Woodland periods including chert and quartz found in the Bashakill wetlands.

Native Americans in the Bashakill Paleolithic Migration to the Bashakill Wetlands

A Muller Stone discovered in the Basha site.
MEEIC Winter Carnival

Photos by Kevin Kreischer

Posing with doves, real and not!

Proudly displaying groundhog beanbags.

Crafting bird feeders.

Outdoor fire pit and maple syrup demonstration.

Visitors to BKAA table included far left, Russell Reeves, Sullivan County Clerk and far right, Mike Schiff, Sullivan County Sheriff.
Vulnerable Species Needing Additional Protection from Extinction

While some species like the eagle have demonstrated a strong resurgence, DEC would propose to list 18 other species as threatened or endangered and enable the additional protections under state law that the listing provides. Several species of freshwater mussels and the common nighthawk would be listed as threatened, and the freshwater bloater would be listed as endangered, among others.

The eastern hellbender, a type of salamander currently listed as a species of special concern, is proposed to be listed as threatened because its known range has been reduced to only 17 locations in six counties mostly within the Allegheny and Susquehanna river drainages. DEC has been working with partners including the Buffalo Zoo, Seneca Nation, Wildlife Conservation Society and SUNY-ESF to help increase the population and look for signs of the species in places where they were historically known to inhabit but additional steps, including designating it as threatened, are necessary.

The full list of draft changes to the state endangered and threatened species listing can be found in the DEC prepropositional on the DEC’s website (see “New York Environmental Conservation Law, Article 11-0535”). Public input is encouraged on the draft list changes before a formal proposal to revise the list is developed. Input that provides recent information that is not included within the Species Status Assessments is particularly welcome. Comments can be submitted until January 24, 2020 by email to: wildliferegis@dec.ny.gov with “Endangered Species List” in the subject line or by mail to: Joe Racette, NYSDEC, 625 Broadway, Albany, NY 12233-4754.

Clarifications to Existing Regulations to Help Protected Species

DEC is also proposing a formal rulemaking to the existing endangered species regulations to help clarify and improve the administration of the state’s stringent regulations for endangered and threatened species while also helping to prevent potential project delays when the species are present in a project area. Identifying and addressing potential impacts to endangered and threatened species and their habitats early in the planning process has proven to be the most successful way to avoid harmful impacts from construction and other new development. The proposed changes will help prevent project delays and speed up the application process by better clarifying the criteria needed by DEC to make endangered and threatened species determinations, and also enhances DEC’s ability to carry out protected species restoration efforts with cooperating landowners, among other changes.

Documents regarding this proposed regulation amendment are available on the DEC’s website (see “6 NYCRR Part 182”). The public is encouraged to submit comments through close of business on Nov. 10, 2019. Comments must be submitted in writing to: Dan Rosenblatt, NYSDEC, 625 Broadway, Albany, NY 12233-4754 or e-mail comments to: wildliferegis@dec.ny.gov; subject line “Endangered Species Regulation.”
BKAA CAMPERS continued from page 25

grew up in the woods. My basic childhood was dirt, tree climbing, archery, hiking, fishing and so and so forth.

I would like to improve the environment because the earth is my home. It is an awesome place to live. I learn something new from this world every day. The woods I once called home, where I received my first bee sting and stirred up a hornets’ nest and chipped my tooth, is receding rapidly. I want to save it! It breaks my heart to see it disappear.

I would like to improve my fishing skills (I once almost put a hook through my hand) and my skills with a knife. Also to improve not making hornets mad at me all of the ever loving time!

I enjoy feeling small on a mountain and by the lake. We are truly powerless against the pure force of nature.

I love the woods and camp itself. I hope you will consider me as an applicant for your camp. I’m attaching a few pictures of me enjoying nature. I hope you like them.

Sincerely,
Sara Jane Labrada

ERICH S. LACHMANN

I am 10 years old, reside in Montgomery, and am a 5th grader at Montgomery Elementary School.

I think it would be a great experience to be at Camp DeBruce. Many of my peers have gone and had positive results. I hear it is fun there and I will make many friends and memories. As an only child this is very important to me. Also, there are many things that other camps don’t have that you have. I cannot wait to sleep in tents, practice archery, swim, play games with peers and just explore the outdoors in a natural way. I bet it will be a blast.

One of the things I heard is that we sleep in tents. At most of my camps we slept in cabins. Also, I heard that you do archery. I took a bow and arrow course last summer. Most camps don’t allow it for safety. I am excited about the archery. These are things that camps should have.

I read that you have a lake. Where I live, I always swim in the lake. I love to play, fish, boat, build sand forts and just explore what I find in the lake. I try to catch the small fish in nets but never do. I think every camp should have a lake to see what lives inside.

I think the hunter education would be good for me. I like to learn and preserve the environment. Most of my friends destroy and kill things that look or are different. I would like to learn how to aim and shoot. I think it would be great to learn about all these things.

My peers told me that there are lots of activities and games to do. They said that it is a lot of fun doing them and everyone is caring. They all agree that Camp DeBruce is a fun place to be and I would like to be part of that.

FRANCESCA LAYOS

Hello, my name is Francesca Layos. I am 13 years old, reside in Sparrowbush, and am an 8th grader at Port Jervis Middle School. I am interested in the environment because I enjoy being outside. I grew up around woods and I loved exploring them and I love to do outdoor activities. There are so many different things about the environment that are interesting like fishing and the different types of trees that there are and what they are used for. I love to just relax in nature and think about how these trees have been here for so long. I love going on walks in the woods. It just seems really relaxing to me and makes me feel good.

RONAN NORBY

Hello, my name is Ronan Norbury and I am applying to receive a scholarship to attend the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation Camp. I am 13 years old, reside in Wurtsboro, and am a homeschooled 8th grader.

I am interested in the environment because without it, we couldn’t survive. Our trees and plants use carbon dioxide and breathe out oxygen. We cannot live without oxygen. They also provide food and shelter for us and other animals. As we face climate change, it is imperative that we gain a better understanding of the environment and everything that impacts it. I am starting a class on environment in my homeschool this year so that I can do my part because it is important to have respect and knowledge about the environment. We all need to be good caretakers of our earth.

Thank you for considering me.
Ronan Norbury

KEEGAN McGINNIS-PETRONIO

I am 13 years old, reside in Monticello, and am an 8th grader at Robert J. Kaiser Middle School, Monticello. I am interested in the environment because I grew up in a very rural area and have always been fascinated by nature and the flora and fauna within it. My great grandfather owned a farm and my grandmother is very connected with nature. She likes taking regular hikes and has camped in the summer for every year as far back as I can remember. I also take great interest in learning a variety of subjects: English, History, Math but most of all Science and especially living environment or biology and think I would very much enjoy and learn a lot from this environmental camp. I am currently at the age where I need to begin looking at possible career exploration. One of the areas I am most interested in is the environment.

DIDI SAN MIGUEL

Hi! My name is Didi San Miguel. I am 13 years old, reside in Mongaup Valley, and am an 8th grader at Robert J.
BKA CAMPERS continued from page 26

Kaiser Middle School, Monticello. I am interested in the environment because the environment contains so many interesting and beautiful organisms that are worth going outdoors to learn about and explore. Not only that, but I also want to be aware of what is out there for my safety and others. For example, if I or someone else comes across an animal that we don’t know is dangerous or poisonous, we may try to touch, feed and/or observe the creature and risk getting injured or worse. So, it is important to be cautious and learn about certain animals. Not just animals, nature as well (bushes and fruit for example). I am also curious about what is out there in the environmental world, especially animals since I have a passion for them. I also want to help the animals, plants, trees or any other organism in need, but if I don’t know how to do it then I am sadly, not able to help. I simply want to go outdoors, not just to do exercise, but to also explore fascinating things I may have never encountered and help what is in need, because if we don’t help our environment, we may also be affected in either a positive or negative way. It’s better to just help the environment instead of getting rid of it and losing the chance of valuable information that could be used in the future.

MIKEY SCHNITZER

Hi, my name is Mikey Schnitzer and I found out about this program from my cousin Anneliese who was at the camp last year. I’m in the 7th grade at RJK Middle School, Monticello and I’m 12 years old, turning 13. I live in Wurtsboro.

I love baseball but I’m also very interested in hunting, fishing and hiking. I like fishing but I prefer catch and release, but if I’m in a survival position, I will catch and eat. Fishing to me is calming and soothing and it’s a way for me to spend time with my dad. I don’t have a hunter safety guide, but I would like to get mine very much. My family and I go hiking at the Shawanga Mountain behind my grandparents’ house. It’s cool because I get to see the Basha Kill.

My family and I have ducks and chickens at our house that my brother and I take care of. We produce our own food and we also have a compost bin which are ways to help the earth.

I know a little about the environment, but I want to know more. That’s why I would like to go to the DEC camp. I would love it if I could go the same week as my cousin Anneliese Vitale, if we are both picked.

Sincerely, Mikey

TOMAS SIERRA

My name is Tomas Sierra. I am 10 years old and in 5th grade at Montgomery Elementary School. I have always liked the outdoors since I was a little kid. I was born in the tropical environment of Colombia, surrounded by all kinds of Flora and Fauna and have always enjoyed helping and looking out for the environment.

My family and I hike a lot and love going to museums to learn new things. Exploring the environment has always been a passion of mine and I wish I could do so more often. I collect minerals and fossils because I believe every piece of the environment tells a story.

ANNELIESE VITALE

Dear Basha Kill Area Association, My name is Anneliese Vitale. I am 11 years old, reside in Bloomingburg, and am in 6th grade at Crispell Middle School, Pine Bush. Last year I went to the DEC summer camp and I had an amazing time. I really liked playing all the informational games and I especially enjoyed the overnight camping trip. I would love to have the chance to go again because I love the environment and learning about how to save it. I love photography, especially taking pictures of wildlife. I also enjoy going fishing, hiking, and kayaking. When I go kayaking, I love watching all the birds, especially the eagles. I also love looking at the vegetation.

One of my favorite quotes is “I don’t want to protect the environment, I want to create a world where the environment doesn’t need saving.” (author unknown) I think it is up to our generation to stop global warming. I reduce, reuse, and recycle to the best of my ability but I love learning other ways to conserve nature. I have always been interested in learning how to help the environment. One product that is contributing to harming our earth is Styrofoam. Styrofoam is bad for both the environment and humans. Me and my friend Lillian are working together to ban Styrofoam from my school. My school uses Styrofoam trays to serve lunch. This is a big problem because at least half of the 600 kids that go to my school eat school lunch. We have been doing research to find alternatives for Styrofoam including reusable and biodegradable trays. We have also worked with teachers and called other schools to see what they use and if it is environmentally safe. Our next step is to do a cost analysis and write up a proposal to the school board to see which would be possible for my school to accomplish. Styrofoam takes 500 or more years to break down so it would be great if me and Lillian could ban it. I learned so much last year and I would love to learn more. Thank you for considering me.

Sincerely,
Anneliese Vitale
2019 Phillipsport Community Center Accomplishments

From PCC Board of Directors

(Editor’s Note: PCC has long been an invaluable BKAA partner.)

Fellow Phillipsport Community Center Members, Friends and Neighbors:

The Community Center completed another full year (our 63rd consecutive year) of charitable activities and valuable community service, highlighted as follows:

• Continued our widespread support of important charitable organizations in our area. Our Donations this year (the largest number in PCC history) were: further contributions to the Sullivan County Federation for the Homeless, the Basha Kill Area Association for their ongoing educational efforts to protect our environment and Mamakating’s valuable natural resources, to Planned Parenthood’s Medical Services, to the Summitville Fire Department, to the Hudson Valley LGBT Support Center, to The Family of Ellenville’s Support Activities, the local Meals on Wheels program, the Mamakating First Aid, ASPCA in Rock Hill, the Mamakating Lioness, to Shadowland Stages (youth program) and finally: to B.A.T.S. for Veterans.

In addition, we expanded our “Educational Award Program” with a sizable donation from Marcia Pavlica, in memory of her late husband and member Richard, with Scholarship awards of $300 each to worthy local students Victor Blinov and Isabella Ramirez.

We continued our on-going food and clothing drives with almost all our donations going to Family of Ellenville.

We had another successful year of fund-raising events notably our annual yard/book sale and Penny Social (with goods donated and impressive volunteer work provided by our members) that also produced strong and popular community outreach.

• We continued our increasingly popular Music Nights at the center (April through October) skillfully arranged and produced by members Andy Weil and Christine Saward and underwritten by a generous grant (reduced lately due to competition) from the Delaware Valley Arts Alliance allowing us to provide meaningful distributions to our local musicians. We had great attendance at this year’s events, enhanced by our handsome new pavilion and outdoor setting, that continue to serve as a valued source of community entertainment. Our members continue to provide very popular homemade food offerings for which we are very grateful.

Members Fred and Maria Dallin continue to provide valuable help with sound equipment needs and door management while Sean Moore and Dave Lybolt helped manage our overflow parking needs with the generous help of Gabby Baudendistel’s lawn and parking area.

• We also undertook another Sullivan Renaissance project and scaled back the effort to a “Maintenance” program. With hard work from dedicated members and neighbors we completed further renovations and restorations to all our existing gardens. We all benefit from the end results of very attractive properties throughout our neighborhood.

• We continue to attract new members through our various outreach efforts (notably our music nights, community events, town advocacy efforts and Sullivan Renaissance awards activities) and this year celebrated the 94th birthday of one of our staunchest members Gloria Rothstein.

• We continued our long-standing relationship with the Basha Kill Area Association by again hosting their annual meeting at the center and sharing in a number of their community based educational efforts, clean up work, joining in their field trip activities and public meeting advocacy efforts at Town Hall.

• Members Andy Weil, Jack Weiser and Bob Spezialie spearheaded our efforts to take part in the county’s Dove Trail celebrations with our own beautiful Dove hand crafted by Paul Kean and painted by Kathleen Anderson, which Andy installed and we unveiled before a large neighborhood gathering that included our State Senator Jen Metzger (who continues to be a strong PCC supporter).

• We again hosted a very well attended and successful “Meet the Candidates” forum, moderated by Bill Lucas, for our most pertinent local Mamakating and Sullivan County offices and benefitted by the active participation of ALL the candidates for Town Supervisor, Town Wards 2 & 3, Town Highway Superintendent and our District 4 County Legislators.

• Our Silver Spoon winners for this year were Sue Rizzo for her good-natured work in our Music Night kitchen, and Pat Blanco for her tireless efforts to make food service a part of our Music Night offerings. Additional thanks to all our members and friends that donated homemade goods for our monthly food concession.

• Our Silver Shovel winner was Sean Moore for his initiative to help maintain our Gateway Gardens and PCC grounds and his invaluable help in meeting our Music Night parking challenges.

• Our membership continues a strong presence in the civic stewardship of our community with active elected roles on our town board (Janet Lybolt as new Town Supervisor and Matt Mordas continuing as ZBA Chairman).

• We continued to receive positive press coverage during the course of the year for our events, hamlet maintenance, 60+ years recognition and charitable activities.

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As usual, it was wonderful to be at Yankee Lake. We had 40 attendees at our Patterson Reunion, organized by my son Pat (with many recruited helpers) and held at my cottage. We usually include a bit about family history, so I wrote a play portraying ancestors, starting with John Patterson, born in 1780. His first son Jeremiah was born in Hamburg, New Jersey in 1804. Jeremiah taught school in the winter, farmed in the summer, had 10 children and eventually “migrated” to Rio near Forestburgh, New York where he bought 400 acres of virgin timber which he logged and sold to shipbuilders. He also opened a bluestone quarry, the bluestone used for paving before cement was invented. As a teenager, he was hired to dig the D&H Canal for 50 cents a day. And he became a devout Baptist deacon.

I recruited all descendants under age 18 attending the reunion (9 of them) to play each generation from the present to Jeremiah and John and their wives. They read from the script I wrote, using as a resource my dad’s book, Pioneers of Quarry Hill (Maurice L. Patterson), on area history, family stories and articles by various family contributors. My dad gathered material from four generations to his own. The youngest attendees profiled their Patterson ancestors dressed in vintage costumes and speaking in first person from the script. They were amazing, and their parents and grandparents are probably arranging for Broadway auditions.

We also had a fishing tournament, kids in one group and adults in another. My cousin Bob is a licensed Adirondack fishing guide; so he ran the contest. He borrowed a scale from a hunting/fishing club, but some fish were so small their weight didn’t register. A lure was left in a tree on the big island but retrieved the next day and my sister hooked a glove. Laura Lee’s friend Mary Beth, who had never fished before (and our photographer par excellence), won the biggest fish trophy, catching a 3-1/2 pound largemouth bass.

On Friday before the reunion’s official start, 25 of us toured a historic zinc mine, Sterling Hill Mining Museum an hour from Yankee Lake in Sussex County, New Jersey, five miles from forefather Jeremiah’s birthplace. In two rooms of naturally fluorescent mineral and rock displays we also began to “glow”.

Saturday night we had a huge bonfire and fireworks. Sunday, before our mid-day barbeque picnic, baby Zachary was blessed in Otisville Presbyterian Church where 5 generations of Patterson’s have attended. In between activities, the kids swam, boated, fished and pushed each other off the raft. The adults gathered in groups of two or three to visit, pick on each other as siblings and cousins do, and catch up on our lives since the 2016 reunion. A good time was had by all, and Pat asked us to put reunion dates on our July 2022 calendars.

PHILLIPSPORT continued from page 28

• You can also follow us on FACEBOOK or our website for updates on our events and news.

• Throughout our 2019 activities we remain in a sound fiscal position with adequate Operating Funds on Hand to meet our scheduled obligations, our building preservation and property maintenance and continue our charitable giving activities.

• We continue to appreciate and value the volunteer work of Bob Speziale as President for his marshalling our resources and keeping us focused on our primary objectives along with board members former VP Janet Lybolt and current VP Andy Weil, Secretary Christine Saward, Treasurer Bill Lucas and Trustees Fred Dallin, Jack Weiser and David Tancredi as well as all our other members that contribute their time, energy, positive attitudes, food contributions and efforts to support our activities. Special thanks accordingly to Sheldon Trembiay and Lexi Harnish for their contributions to the curbside appeal of all our properties and to Pat Blanco, Charlotte Dolan, Maria Dallin, Alva Jones, Sue Rizzo, Roberta Christy, Marcia Pavlica, Sean Moore, Vivian Multari-Ginsberg and David Lybolt for their help and community spirit.

We look forward to providing more valuable community service and events in the coming year and thank you all for your volunteer efforts and support.
Phillipsport Community Center (PCC)

*Left:* BKAA Camper Mikey Schnitzer with favorite catch.  
*Bottom Left:* BKAA Camper Sara Labrada with friend.  
*Bottom right:* Patterson descendants playing ancestors.
Turning up the Heat in the Town of Fallsburg

Fallsburg’s Future Leadership

As residential development rapidly continues in this town of 14,000 residents with eight hamlets and one village, Fallsburg’s town board (TB) is increasingly pressured to implement recommendations proposed by its 2018 Comprehensive Plan (CP). Concerned residents, many represented by Fallsburg’s Future (FF), are challenging municipal officials to ensure the Comprehensive Plan (CP) is taken seriously. Importantly, residents are watching closely so that waivers, requested by developers, are not automatically accepted as readily as in the past.

FF, voicing concerns in formal letters to the TB, expects these will be addressed in upcoming months. For instance, FF advocates that the town include Fallsburg citizens on a Plan Implementation Committee. Our letter to the TB states in part:

“The 2018 Comprehensive Plan Update, adopted in June, 2018, includes a list of recommendations to be implemented by the Town Board. We welcome and support most of the recommendations, the first of which is to appoint a committee that will take on the task of implementation…we are concerned that this committee has not yet been established, to the best of our knowledge. We want to be sure that the town creates this committee. Without it, confidence in the Comprehensive Plan can easily be eroded if residents believe that it only sits on a shelf collecting dust.

Fallsburg’s Future sees the Comprehensive Plan as a living document, a useful tool in guiding the development of our town. According to the Comprehensive Plan itself, in the section “Other, O-3” states: ‘Establish a standing Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee to ensure Implementation of the recommendations of this Plan subsequent to its adoption, by continually monitoring progress and communicating with the Town Board, staff, and relevant Boards and Committees.’

We look forward to finding ways to support the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan’s crucial recommendations.”

Communication with Residents

Our FF team also identified lack of clear, accessible and timely information regarding official town meetings as an obstacle to public participation in Fallsburg’s civic life. Some TB members lament low public turnout at town meetings. We believe making the town’s website user friendly with accessible information will increase community interest, trust and participation. FF’s communication to the board presents our case for more transparency:

“We write out of our shared concern that Fallsburg residents have timely and complete access to information, especially agendas, documents and minutes, relating to the various town board meetings. We appreciate that the Board is looking for ways to increase public awareness of the town’s official business. From our experience, however, we find that the current communications setup, including the agenda formats and page locations on the Fallsburg’s website, do not facilitate the smooth exchange of information.

The current bare-bone agendas and location of relevant documents relating to official meetings hinder the ability of residents to become involved. When residents cannot easily access and review necessary information prior to board meetings, their capacity to engage in the proceedings is diminished. We believe that significantly more information should be available to the general public so that it can be reviewed and digested by all town residents.

While some information is available at the Code Enforcement Office, we would like as much information as possible to be digitally available on the town website. This would include the applications that are submitted, as well as site plans, surveys and all the related documents for projects. Without knowledge, the public cannot effectively participate nor assume responsibility for what happens in our town. More people are interested in the affairs of the town than what is reflected in the attendance at meetings. More people would show up for meetings if they had easier access to the information they need in order to comment and interact with the various boards.

We ask that you please consider more ways of making all pertinent information available on your website.”

Studying the Long-Term Impact of Development

Fallsburg residents are concerned that accelerating residential development in recent years runs counter to the area’s rural character and could preclude rebuilding our economy to become a much-needed environmentally, attractive visitor destination. We do not want to wake up in five, ten or twenty years and find our water resources depleted, sewer treatment plants overwhelmed, and streets impassable for vehicles and pedestrians alike. We are not against development and believe everyone has a place in Fallsburg. We desire an ethnically and racially diverse population who can enjoy good jobs, good schools and the great outdoors.

For these reasons, FF believes an important CP recommendation is ongoing assessment of cumulative impacts of large-scale developments on town infrastructure. We continue pressuring the board to broadly review Fallsburg’s current and projected demands for water, sewer and road use given the town’s expected growth rate.
We must have real data and, despite reassurances that there is nothing of concern, it is clear the public does not have access to hard facts aside from year-end water and sewer reports. Who pays for the huge upgrades and expansions that are clearly needed?

Again, we have been addressing our worries to the TB, and have written, in part:

“The construction of thousands of new homes - built, under construction or before the Planning Board -- on such a small and relatively poor rural community’s physical infrastructure, namely the streets, water and sewer, continues to move forward without the benefit of having important information that a study might provide. The impact of this growth, if not carefully managed, could possibly lead to outcomes that put the town in an unsustainable financial position. Such a study would include residential developments oriented as independent siteplans as well as those that might be classified as subdivisions. It might also include information/data and observations about how these changes affect the character of the community.

We would like to have accurate data that quantifies the number of rental homes, homes that are occupied part-time/seasonally, and homes that are occupied full-time/year-round. We believe that it’s important to have a much better understanding of the number of seasonally occupied homes versus permanently occupied homes for you to have the ability to manage the town and its resources effectively.

Therefore, we ask that the Town take the necessary first steps to engage in a study, as recommended in the 2018 Comprehensive Plan, of the impact of high-density housing developments.”

There was talk of a water and sewer capacity study in 2019, but nothing was made public. Also, there were reports of inadequate water pressure, especially in new developments, which could be catastrophic in a fire emergency. Last summer, water main breaks occurred at a rate of one a week according to reliable sources. Some waste treatment plants are already operating at capacity during peak season. While it is the board’s responsibility to allocate funds for such a study, FF is exploring finding grants covering consultants and expenses for such a technical and politically sensitive project. We hope residents and other activists, including those from BKAA, may have recommendations and leads.

Similarly, regarding the town’s website, we may have to find ways to support posting the right information in a timely manner. This requires a review of what exists and what is needed. Your thoughts are welcome.

The Months Ahead

We will continue identifying critical issues, along with suggested solutions, and submit them to the TB. Therefore, we need your participation, together with your expertise, especially technical advice.

We appreciate the note in the last Guardian regarding the death of Steve Gordon, a Hurleyville resident and long-time activist and FF’s founding member. We are carrying on FF’s work in Steve’s spirit. We hope more will join us. We would love to have people with legal, governmental, environmental, economic, IT and community organizing skills, but enthusiasm and patience are just fine.

Sign up for our Updates and Alerts and feel free to contact us at neighbor@fallsburgfuture.org or write to Paul Hoeffel at phoeffel@gmail.com or Jim Legari at jlegari@gmail.com. Visit our website at fallsburgsfuture.org and post on our Facebook page.
6. Modifies the use and residential density requirements of the Neighborhood Residential District as recommended by the adopted Comprehensive Plan;

7. Establishes a separate designation (Lake Neighborhoods) for parcels formerly zoned Neighborhood Residential in the vicinity of the Town’s lakes and modifying the use and residential density requirements as recommended by the adopted Comprehensive Plan;

8. Modifies the use and residential density requirements of the Hamlet Center District as recommended by the adopted Comprehensive Plan;

9. Merges the Village Center and Town Center Districts into a new Village Adjacent District and modifying the use and residential density requirements as recommended by the adopted Comprehensive Plan;

10. Modifies the use and residential density requirements of the Planned Resort-Office Development District as recommended by the adopted Comprehensive Plan;

11. Changes the current Industrial/Office zoning district to Mountain Greenbelt zoning district;

12. Renames the Light Industrial/Office District to the Airport Development District and modifying the use and residential density requirements as recommended by the adopted Comprehensive Plan;

13. Establishes an Interchange Economic Zone Overlay District and establishing use and residential density requirements as recommended by the adopted Comprehensive Plan;

14. Establishes a Route 209 Economic Zone Overlay District and implementing the use and residential density requirements as recommended by the adopted Comprehensive Plan;

15. Changes the definitions pertaining to agriculture uses to parallel definitions promulgated under the New York State Agriculture and Markets Law.

16. Establishes Agritourism (including farm markets, public farm markets, farm stands, farm vacations, and farm breweries, wineries, cideries and distilleries) as permitted accessory uses to the principal uses agricultural operations and specialty horticulture as recommended by the adopted Comprehensive Plan;

17. Changes the term “automobile” to “motor vehicle” and utilizing the definition as promulgated by New York State;

18. Clarifies the meaning of some defined terms, to better match the terms utilized throughout the code;

19. For several instances of defined uses, including but not limited to extractive uses, asphalt plants, and bungalow colonies, clarifies that new uses are prohibited;

20. Clarifies several definitions in accordance with the past interpretation of the Building Inspector;

21. Removes definitions for terms not referenced within the code;

22. Defining new uses that are recommended by the adopted Comprehensive Plan;

23. Redefines “Hobby Farms” as “Small Farms” as recommended by the adopted Comprehensive Plan;

24. Provides that the term Industrial Use does not include extraction of rock, stone or minerals as necessary to implement the Comprehensive Plan recommendations regarding such uses;

25. Prohibits new extractive operations and asphalt plants in the prior 10 (now MG) zoning district except operations lawfully existing on January 1, 2020, may continue and authorized expansion of such lawfully existing operations is subject to special permit requirements;

26. Renames the Planned Office district to Interchange Commercial district and adding and clarifying the uses permitted within such district.

27. Changes references to all renamed districts throughout the document;

28. Limits livestock density criteria to farm operations not located within agricultural districts and to agricultural uses not meeting the definition of a farm operation as recommended by the Comprehensive Plan;

29. Implements Comprehensive Plan recommendations relevant to mixed-use resorts in the Ridge and Valley Protection Area (RVP) district;

30. Clarifies differences between resorts and country inns, as recommended by the Comprehensive Plan in allowing country inns in areas where less intensive overnight accommodations are permitted;

31. Modifies or adds particular special use permit requirements as necessary to implement the land use recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan;

32. Prohibits development on slopes over 20% in grade, except for roads or driveways necessary to access flatter areas of a site, as recommended by the Comprehensive Plan;

33. Implements Comprehensive Plan recommendations with regard to the density calculations based on soils;

34. Limits livestock within stream buffers as recommended by the Comprehensive Plan;

35. Implements Comprehensive Plan recommendations regarding the transfer of development rights and the establishment of a development rights bank;

36. Removes the specifics of the Stormwater Control section of the Zoning chapter and instead referring to the Town’s separate Stormwater Control Chapter;
Notes in Schedule I (The Table of Use and Bulk Requirements) where the existing code permits small-scale and large-scale solar uses;

Establishes bulk standards in Schedule I (Table of Use and Bulk Requirements), for new uses including but not limited to Community Facilities (emergency and non-emergency), Breweries, Wineries, and Cideries, Park and Rides, Tow Businesses, and Truck Stop/Travel Centers in line with those of similar existing uses.

Deletes attachments 5 and 6 pertaining to stormwater management practices and acceptable maintenance agreements since that information is included in Chapter 160 and incorporated by reference in zoning code section 199.44.

Adds new or revised definitions for small-scale farm, agritourism-farm to table restaurant, adult/senior housing, high-tech agriculture, junkyards and through-lots.

Requires that the operator of a bed and breakfast establishment must be a resident property owner.

Replaces the proposed provision that would allow an 80-foot high sign for truck stops and travel centers to instead allow off-site advertising signage visible from Route 17 as a special use permit.

Clarifies the dimensional requirements applicable to existing nonconforming lots.

Clarifies that uses deemed prohibited because they are not listed as a permitted use applies to principal uses.

Changes “accessory storage of noxious materials” to “accessory storage” in the use and bulk table for the Airport Development zoning district.

Adds bike and boat rentals as a permitted use in the Hamlet Center zoning district.

A complete copy of the Local Law, including the amended Zoning Map, is available for inspection at the Town Clerk's Office.

BY ORDER OF THE TOWN BOARD
TOWN OF MAMAKATING
JEAN M. DOUGHERTY, TOWN CLERK
THOMPSON continued from page 34

trails and similar recreational and/or educational facilities. The occupants of a summer camp shall be limited to the owner and his/her immediate family, the caretaker and his/her immediate family, and staff. A Sleep-Away Camp shall not include temporary or permanent shelters, buildings, or structures designed for use or occupancy by family members of the children who are attending the summer camp, or families of staff who work there except for the up to 5 maximum dwellings allowed for essential staff. No building or structure within the Sleep-Away camp shall have a kitchen facility, with the exception of the communal kitchen/dining room, the owner’s dwelling, the caretaker’s dwelling, and up to a maximum of 5 additional essential staff dwellings.

2. The current definition of Bungalow shall be removed and replaced with:

Bungalow - A type of seasonal resort complex consisting of a group of one or two units, predominantly one-story structures where indoor plumbing and kitchen facilities may be provided in each unit. Said complex may also have communal dining and recreational facilities.

3. The following definition will be added:

Cabin/Bunkhouse Summer Camp -

A sleeping quarter which:

(a) has a sleeping capacity of fewer than twenty-five occupants per room, with a total combined sleeping room floor area of 1200 square feet or less for each sleeping room;
(b) is one story;
(c) is used and occupied only between May 1 and October 31;
(d) has no cooking facilities, no heating systems, and no solid fuel heating or burning systems;
(e) has only sleeping rooms (including the necessary area for storing occupant belongings) and bathrooms;
(f) has no interior corridors or separate common area rooms;
(g) has at least two exits per sleeping room which are remote from each other and which discharge directly to the building’s exterior;
(h) has exit doors that open in the direction of, and are non-locking against egress; and
(i) has smoke alarms in each sleeping room that are interconnected such that the activation of one alarm will activate all of the alarms in the cabin.

In sleeping quarters housing more than four persons, 40 square feet of floor area per occupant shall be provided, when single beds are provided. When double-deck bunk beds are provided, 30 square feet of floor area shall be provided for each occupant. Floor area includes space within the occupied structure to accommodate: the bed, storage for personal belongings, aisles and exit ways, and associated assembly space. Space for toilets, lavatories and showers shall not be used to calculate a sleeping quarter’s floor space.

4. The following definition will be added:

Dormitory - An accessory building, or part of a building to a school, containing private or semi-private units which open to a common hallway, which units are sleeping quarters for administrative staff, faculty, or students, along with bathroom, dining, cooking, laundry, lounge and recreation facilities, as required. Dormitory units shall not contain separate cooking, dining or housekeeping facilities, except that one dwelling unit with complete housekeeping facilities may be provided for use of a superintendent or supervising staff for every 50 dormitory units, or major part thereof. Single-family, two-family and/or other multiple residential facilities, other than that described above, are not to be considered as dormitories. Private units may be occupied by no more than one person and semi-private units by no more than four persons. A dormitory unit shall provide a minimum of 50 square feet per occupant.

5. The current definition of School will be removed and replaced with:

School - Any public or private school under the jurisdiction of the Commissioner of Education of the State of New York; any parochial school operated and maintained by any religious corporation authorized to perform its corporate functions in the State of New York; or any school chartered by the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York.

7. Except as herein specifically amended, the remainder of Chapter 250 of such code shall remain in full force and effect.

8. If any clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivision, section or part thereof this local law shall be adjudged by any court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, such judgment, decree or order shall not affect, impair or invalidate the remainder thereof but shall be confined in its operation to the clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivision, section or part thereof directly involved in the controversy in which such judgment, decree or order shall have been rendered and the remainder of this local law shall not be affected thereby and shall remain in full force and effect.

9. Except as herein otherwise provided penalties for the violation of this local law, any person committing an offense against any provision of the chapter of the Code of the Town of Thompson shall, upon conviction thereof, be punishable as provided in Chapter 1, General Provisions, Article 11, of such Code.

10: This local law shall take effect immediately upon filing with the Secretary of State and will apply to all projects where Lead Agency has not been determined.
Deerpark Rural Alliance

Grace Woodard

UPDATE: Lower Basher Kill Water Monitoring Initiative proceeding with volunteers signed for training at the Stroud Water Research Center in Avondale, Pennsylvania May 13-14. Looking forward to starting and later expanding the project. We need backup volunteers. If I missed your call, please email gfwoodard@gmail.com. Training date now dependent on the COVID-19 emergency.

UPDATE: Dragon Springs (DS): A new driveway was built on Guymard Turnpike without planning board (PB) or public input, just a highway department permit. It is not open yet, due to ongoing litigation. Court hearing is in April on Article 78 proceeding.

UPDATE: Deerpark’s PB Rivendale project proceeding: 20-lot housing development in Huguenot on Neversink Drive/Rte. 209 (across the road from New Century Film). This venture should concern all because of its density, water treatment/Neversink issues, deed covenants and potential for a traffic light on Rte 209.

UPDATE: Galley Hill Road mall/apartments development has been absent from Deerpark PB appearances and has not had its public hearing.

UPDATE: Former C&D battery factory in Huguenot, next to Deerpark Town Hall, is a Superfund cleanup site, moving slowly, but steadily forward.

NEW: Planned round table with groups throughout the Neversink Valley exchanging ideas and networking. Date not set because of COVID-19 impacts. Look for an ALERT later this spring, sponsored by Nyenvironcom.org.

NEW: February 13, DEC Letter of Violation issued to DS on its water treatment plant, maintenance deficiencies from 2017, including failure of oversight and training, and not disclosing water treatment chemicals. DS and DEC are in a consent decree, and a fine is expected. Petroleum tanks are also in violation. Senator Metzger met with DEC Region 3 Director regarding DS and other issues. Her office is kept abreast of DS matters.

NEW: Several solar farm applications, from modest to huge, are being processed by the PB. The town has no regulations to mitigate clear cutting.

NEW: Bald eagles are fishing at Guymard Lake. There is a probable nest northwest of Guymard Turnpike Bridge in the Neversink Cliffs (Nature Conservancy lands). Kayakers, canoers—please explore (discreetly). The nest on DS property is fully abandoned.

UPDATE & NEW: New Century Film (NCF) in Huguenot, Rte. 209/Neversink Drive, has an application for a restaurant in the big arena’s lobby before PB. It is not ready for public hearing.

NEW: March 11 PB meeting: Project engineer, John Fuller proposed new expansion, an enhanced water treatment plant and a 22 room hotel (12 x 12 rooms with bathroom and kitchenette) in the former horse barn, 3,000 gpd water usage, and, on the second floor, a second restaurant. Deerpark town attorney questioned how many persons would occupy each room. What does the code say about hotel room size, kitchens, parking? It is a stunning proposal. Aside from apparent segmentation and the hotel seeming to be a dormitory and cafeteria, NCF has increased to about 5 multiple uses, with no film studio construction mentioned. The hearing’s town engineer, a substitute, stated he will send the preliminary plan to Orange County Health Department to determine if the water estimate sufficiently covers proposed hotel and food involvement. This project may well impact the commercial one referenced above, Rivendale housing across from NCF.

TELL A FRIEND ABOUT THE BASHA KILL AREA ASSOCIATION!

Have your friends fill out this coupon for membership or more information:
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Yes, I’m interested in the environment and wish to become a member of Basha Kill Area Association. Enclosed is:

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(for action alerts)
About Us:

NYenvironcom

(Editor’s Note: The BKAA is also a NYenvironcom partner.)

The Mid-New York Environmental and Sustainability Committee [NYenvironcom] is a nonpartisan environmental policy and outreach group, focusing on land use, as well as organizing environmentally focused activities for the New York region. Established in 2018.

Our core focus is developing initiatives that lead to re-urbanization, reruralization, and de-suburbanization.

Re-urbanization: Defining and encouraging best practices in planning and implementation that maximize smart development, using the capacity of existing and planned infrastructure to allow for development that has the least harmful net environmental impact, while meeting the realistic needs of the population to increase their living standards.

Re-ruralization: Restoration and preservation of rural areas, allowing these lands to maximize their ability to offset and balance the unavoidable negative environmental impacts of urban areas.

De-suburbanization: Assessing suburban areas and working to either integrate them into urban development, or restore them to rural status, wherever the net positive environmental impact will be greatest. Discouraging further urbanization of untouched rural areas.

Active Advocacy

• We work with local stakeholders to provide expert and legal support to document and speak about issues of concerns relating to the environmental impact of proposed developments and changes to existing land use of areas in our region of activity.

• This advocacy also includes aiding, linking, and partnering with municipalities and the private sector to work together on land use resources; bridging land use repurposing initiatives, brownfield cleanup, and promoting of sites for vital investment in the community.

Policy Work

• Establishing and providing a platform for regional stakeholders to share their experience in land use issues.

• Outreach, in the forms of meetings, roundtables, and forums to further the discussion of land use policy.

• Working to build a common vocabulary and framework for discussion of land use in the region. Educating stakeholders about the connections between land use and climate, helping find ways that proper land use (whether through zoning, planning, or development) can mitigate climate change, and restore our environment and communities.

Advocacy Focus

2019

• Land Use

Establish our advocacy platform for land use. Develop a framework to define and advocate for re-urbanization, reruralization, and de-suburbanization.

• Educational Program:

Begin to develop an annual recycling best practices educational platform/event to promote awareness and increase performance in recycling and solid waste management in the NY region.

• CSR Program:

Begin to develop an annual sustainability-focused Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program for regional industry to help them in building a sustainable culture in their enterprises.

Partners

REGIONAL:

The Deerpark Rural Alliance (DRA)

The Deerpark Rural Alliance (DRA) is a group of residents from several hamlets in the towns of Deerpark and Mt. Hope, Orange County, NY.

DRA was established in 2013 in response to the growing negative consequences of overdevelopment in the region, particularly the numerous issues arising from the unchecked Dragon Springs development on the
Above, March 8, 2019 photo shows the Falun Gong Dragon Springs compound in Otisville, NY - Julie Jacobson / AP

Right: The 400-acre chunk of land in Deerpark was purchased in 2000.
Shawangunk ridge. DRA has been active as a watchdog in alerting residents and notifying town officials about pollution issues, building without permits, and violation of stop work orders through documentation and awareness activities.

From these efforts, the mission has been expanded to working on regional land use issues and helping build new frameworks for land management. Creating paths that can not only preserve a rural character and way of life, but also help to attract positive opportunities for the community and create sustainable growth.

ZFenvironmental Services Ltd.

ZFES [ZFenvironmental Services Ltd] offers consulting, data tracking services, environmentally themed corporate team-building programs, custom environmental solutions, and is a fully licensed and accredited collector and processor of all types of commonly recycled materials, with a focus on ferrous/non-ferrous metals and plastics. In addition to the collection and processing of materials, we are also licensed for the import/export, production, and wholesale of finished and semi-finished products produced from both new and recycled Sources.

TJenvironcom

The Tianjin Environmental and Sustainability Committee (TJenvironcom), established in 2014.

Created with the goal of providing a platform for regional stakeholders to discuss and increase awareness of issues pertaining to environmental awareness and sustainability on a commercial and individual level, and to actively identify, develop, and to promote real world projects that can have a positive effect either on the environment or sustainability.

Since it’s founding, the committee has held 2-3 events a year, as well as the annual TReC and TECC programs, and was twice awarded the American Chamber of Commerce in China, Tianjin Chapter committee of the year, in 2016 and 2018.
Dear Members and Friends,

Stay Healthy. Be Safe!

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