



L.I. Sierra Club News

Volume 41 No. 2

LISierraClub.org

Summer 2021

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

by Tom Ward

Spring is here, and while the weather is improving, unfortunately COVID-19 is still with us, so as of right now, our Sierra Club outings are still on pause until July, per national Sierra Club rules. Hopefully, we will soon be able to schedule some hiking, biking, and kayaking outings so we can begin enjoying the outdoors together again.

Last week, President Biden hosted a global Climate Summit and pledged to halve the United States' Greenhouse Gas Emissions by the end of the decade. This is obviously a very ambitious target, but while the federal government has repeatedly dragged its feet on climate issues, many states, including New York, have already begun aggressive steps to reduce their carbon output, providing models for the nation as a whole.

New York's Climate Leadership and Protection Act was signed into law by Governor Cuomo in 2019, committing the state to reduce its Greenhouse Gas Emissions 85% by 2050, with a goal of 70% renewable energy in 2030 and 100% zero-emission electricity by 2040. To help meet these goals, the state legislature is currently considering the Clean Futures Act. I would encourage all our members to educate themselves on these issues. More information can be found at <https://atlantic2.sierraclub.org/content/legislation> or by contacting Allison

Considine at allison.considine@sierraclub.org.

Another important issue that the Atlantic Chapter and the Long Island Group have been involved with is advocating that the Long Island Power Authority (LIPA) become a public power utility. Last month, the ExCom of our Long Island Group endorsed a letter by our Energy Chair Gail Payne to LIPA's Board of Trustees, which is currently considering municipalization of the power grid. The ExCom believes that municipalization will result in more accountability, better service, and lower power rates. Again, I encourage all of our members to educate themselves on this issue.

Finally, I have some disappointing news to share. Our lawsuit that many of you have been following to force the state to conduct a proper environmental survey of the work to be done at Hempstead Lake State Park has failed, and the project is going to move forward with what we believe will be both an unnecessary, and environmentally destructive removal of hundreds of trees at the park. The campaign to stop this project was led by Dr. Charles Bevington, and a more thorough explanation of the issues regarding the fight over Hempstead Lake State Park can be found in an article by Linda Lombardo in this newsletter.

PRO ENVIRONMENTAL NEW YORK STATE BUDGET

by Jill Weber

The New York State Legislature passed a budget on April 3rd that includes a number of pro-environment policies which have been long advocated by the Sierra Club. The budget includes \$3 billion for the Restore Mother Nature Environmental Bond Act which supports green jobs, water quality improvements and sustainable infrastructure projects. The bond act aims to spend 35% of the funds on projects to benefit underserved areas of the state, and will go to the state voters for approval in the November 2022 election. A fully funded Environmental Protection Fund of \$300 million invests in water and land preservation and recycling enhancements. Also included is funding for the Clean Water Infrastructure Act, building on funding in 2017

of \$2.5 billion with an additional \$500 million for improving sewer systems, water treatment plants and lead pipe replacement. Other budgeted items include \$110 million for state park capital improvements, and investments in mass transit (\$100 million over 5 years). The budget also includes the creation of a green jobs tax credit for jobs which lead to the expansion of green economy businesses. Other highlights include the permanent banning of hydrofracking and a ban on the distribution and use of styrofoam. New York is taking a leadership role in demonstrating that projects which support the economy can also fight climate change.



Explore, enjoy, and protect the planet
SIERRA CLUB
LONG ISLAND GROUP
631-600-3324
LISierraClub.org

OFFICERS

Group Chair: Thomas J. Ward*
tjward98@gmail.com
Vice Chair: Ann Aurelio* 631-567-1937
smileyann21@verizon.net
Secretary: Barbara Haegele 631-642-3048
Treasurer: Harvey Miller* 516-794-7059
hmiller@optonline.net
Assistant Treasurer: OPEN

CHAIRPERSONS

Political: Albert Fredericks 646-369-7222
afredericks101@gmail.com
Coastal Waterways/Public Presentations:
Diane Ives* 631-532-9926 spideyives@yahoo.com
Outreach/Outings/Chapter Delegate: Jane Fasullo* 631-689-1568 jfas1@optonline.net
Membership: Ann Aurelio* 631-567-1937
smileyann21@verizon.net
Social Media: Anthony Becker* 516-639-7684
anthonytvb@gmail.com; Ann Aurelio
smileyann21@verizon.net
Energy: Gail Payne* paynestudios@gmail.com
Conservation Chair: Jill Weber*
jillweber18@gmail.com
Winter Trip: True Hampton 516-835-7689
Newsletter: Nelly Ortiz ortiz.nelly5@gmail.com
Calendar/Card Sales: Jeanne Sofia 631-643-1434
Education: Sue Watins 516-921-7150
sawatins@gmail.com
Legislative: Carol Mauro
francophileforever@gmail.com
Nuclear: Gail Payne* paynestudios@gmail.com
Activism Organizer: OPEN
Public Relations: OPEN
Tabling Manager: Jan Brenner*
Board Members: Linda Lombardo*
linda@liforestwalks.com, 516.238.0059
William Hock* willsidney@hotmail.com, Jill
Weber* jillweber18@gmail.com (Alternate Delegate)

*Denote Executive Committee Member

The ExCom meets monthly, on the third Monday of the month. For details, call or email Ann Aurelio.

To receive a different monthly all-electronic newsletter, send an email to Jane Fasullo at jfas1@optonline.net

WATERFOWL ABANDONMENT: AN ANTHROPOGENIC DISASTER FOR NATIVE & NON-NATIVE BIRDS ALIKE

by John Di Leonardo

Every year, hundreds—if not thousands—of domestic ducks and geese are cruelly and illegally abandoned to the wild on Long Island, often following school hatching projects or Easter photoshoots. Now that many schools are going virtual and gatherings are limited, you might think this wouldn't be an issue during a pandemic, but suburbanites have found new reasons to purchase and abandon these animals. Citing an egg shortage, some are “panic buying” baby birds like they did toilet paper, not realizing that ducklings won’t be mature enough to lay eggs for six months after purchase. Others say they thought the birds would break the monotony of isolation, but with many people going back to work, they can no longer give these animals the care they need.

It's a huge problem, and the impact on local ecosystems is serious. In 2020 alone, my organization Long Island Orchestrating for Nature (LION) rescued more than one hundred domestic ducks abandoned in the town of Hempstead, despite fowl-keeping being illegal in the municipality—as it is in all Nassau municipalities without obtaining a special exception from a Town Board. Many of these birds were sick and injured, with broken or deformed legs and wings. They suffered from frostbite, fungal and bacterial infections, and were riddled with parasites. This is not only tragic for the birds, it can also be disastrous for ecosystems.

Just like our farmed animals, ducks and geese were domesticated by humans thousands of years ago. Years of selective breeding have produced animals vastly different from their wild counterparts, both physiologically and psychologically, just like dogs and wolves. Domestic waterfowl depend entirely upon the care of humans to survive. Bred for either egg or meat production, they have large bodies and small wings, rendering them flightless and unable to escape predators or find open water when ponds freeze.

They also lack the survival instincts of wild birds; many were raised in incubators and never learned even limited skills from their mother. When abandoned on ponds, they do not know how to forage for naturally occurring food and often starve to death. They are routinely attacked and killed by predators, including raccoons, foxes, snapping turtles, and cruel humans. Most die within the first few days of being dumped. If they make it until winter, they face diminishing natural food sources and frozen ponds and cannot migrate to find water. These abandoned animals often become frozen in place on the ice -- those who don't freeze to death or are attacked, die of dehydration or starvation.

Continue on Page 3

Continued from Page 2

When introduced into nature, non-native species disrupt natural ecosystems, which rely on the migratory behavior of wild ducks and geese and the natural recovery period that comes with their absence. They can also spread disease to native species. Should these domestic ducks and geese breed with wild birds, their offspring will likely be flightless as well, further disrupting the ecosystem and exposing the young to the same dangers as their domestic parent. The National Park Service has noted that “threats from invasive species play a critical part in [the] loss of native biodiversity,” and recognizes that invasive species frequently “start out as pets.”

For these and many other reasons, fowl abandonment is a crime, punishable by a year in jail, a one-thousand dollar fine, or both. Abandoning a Muscovy duck also violates a federal order in addition to state law.

Community members can protect domestic and wild birds alike by reporting sightings of domestic waterfowl in public parks and waterways to local SPCAs and rescue organizations like LION who rehabilitate and find reputable homes for abandoned birds and can

guide you on how to help them yourself.

If your child’s school is holding a hatching project or you hear about someone who is considering buying a duckling for Easter, please speak up. There are few humane ends for these animals: Those sent back to hatcheries are often killed right away and municipal shelters in Nassau do not accept fowl. Even upstate sanctuaries are bursting at the seams.

The best way to avoid having to place these baby birds is by remembering that they are not science experiments or Easter photo props. They are thinking, feeling individuals, and, just like dogs or cats, require lifelong care. Domestic ducks can live 10-15 years with proper care and the oldest domestic goose lived to be a few months shy of 50.

To get involved in efforts to rescue waterfowl in your community, contact John@humanelongisland.org.

About the Author:

John Di Leonardo is an anthrozoologist, a New York State-licensed Wildlife Rehabilitator, and president of Long Island Orchestrating for Nature (LION).

HEMPSTEAD LAKE STATE PARK – HUMAN EXCEPTIONALISM, WHEN NATURE LOSES ITS BATTLE, WE ALL LOSE

by Linda Lombardo

As a newly-elected Executive Committee Board member, I was filled with the intent to do good for both people and Nature. The Living with the Bay Resiliency Project, which I’ll describe in detail in just a moment, was already an issue when I took my seat on the Executive Committee and immediately felt I was here to serve the rights of Nature in this \$125 million project, initiated by the Governor’s Office of Storm Recovery for the area that we know and love as Hempstead Lake State Park and the surrounding communities, some of which are considered environmental justice communities.

A good place to start is: what is an environmental justice community? One of Sierra Club’s intentions is that “... we [the club] intend that ... the natural and human environment should be restored to the benefit of all people and for other living things, and their future generations; and that no community should bear disproportionate risks of harm because of their demographic characteristics or economic condition.”

An environmental justice community is one that is disproportionately impacted by climate change and pollution. It is a community where both environmental and socioeconomic stressors may act cumulatively to affect health and the environment.

As for Hempstead Lake State Park, the South Shore Audubon Society defines it in the following way:

“Hempstead Lake State Park, one of only two NYS-designated Important Bird Areas (IBA) in Nassau County, and the only one consisting of woodlands and freshwater wetlands, is critical to the survival of bird populations.”

For the past three years, this Long Island ecosystem has also been at the center of an intense battle between New York State’s \$125 million Living with the Bay Resiliency Project and local environmental groups like Long Island Sierra Club and South Shore Audubon who understand Hempstead Lake State Park’s vital role in the environment.

We learned recently that we lost this fight to continue to work for further study of the area and the impact of this project on both humans and Nature. In fact, as I understand it, work began in the park even before the court’s decision was made that the project may move forward as planned.

Now that we’ve lost this battle for Nature, our communities in the area, and Long Island’s environment, how do we bear witness to these trees and all the wildlife in these wetlands and woodlands areas that will be destroyed and displaced? What happens when ecosystems are cut off from one another?

To read the full article, please go to:
<https://www.lisierraclub.org/enews-sign-up>.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Letter From the Chair.....	Front Cover
Pro Environmental NYS Budget.....	Front Cover
Waterfowl Abandonment.....	Page 2
Hempstead Lake State Park.....	Page 3



Printed on 30% Recycled Paper

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA



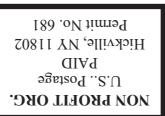
[Facebook.com/LongIslandSierraClub](https://www.facebook.com/LongIslandSierraClub)



[Instagram.com/LISierraClub](https://www.instagram.com/LISierraClub)



[Twitter.com/LISierraClub](https://www.twitter.com/LISierraClub)



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet



Long Island Group

P.O. Box 172
West Sayville, NY 11796-0172

Sierraclub.org
631-600-3324

Permit No. 681
Hicksville, NY 11802