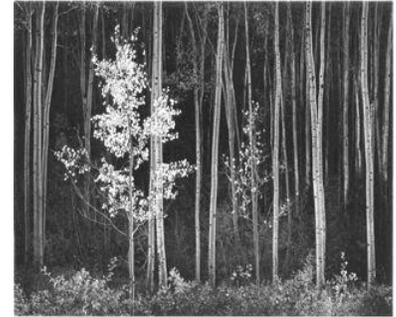




Hudson-Mohawk Group

October-December 2018



“This is the American Earth”,  
photograph by Ansel Adams.  
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*Order Your 2019 Calendars Now-Limited  
Availability-See page 3*

Volume 52, No. 4

### Welcome to the fourth 2018 newsletter

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### Volkswagen Settlement an Electric Vehicle Bonanza for New York!

New York State will finally reap the benefits of Volkswagen Clean Air Act Settlement announced by the EPA in June of 2016. Volkswagen violated the Clean Air Act by selling approximately 500,000 vehicles between 2009 and 2015 which it claimed were “green”, “lower emitting”, or “clean diesel” through use of a “defeat device” which blocked detection of some emissions. Under the settlement, New York will receive \$127.7 million, most of which will be used to increase the number of electric vehicles (EV) including automobiles, buses, trucks, locomotives, ferries, tugboats, and cargo handling equipment. Another large component of the funds will be used to increase the number of EV charging stations available in the State.

According to the EPA a zero emission vehicle is one that produces zero exhaust emissions of carbon dioxide, non-methane organic gases, carbon monoxide, particulate matter, methane, formaldehyde, nitrous oxides (NOx). Furthermore, there are three classes of zero emission vehicles which are: passenger cars and light and heavy-duty vehicles and trucks which are battery or fuel-celled EVs; plug-in hybrid EVs with zero emission range greater than 35 miles (for passenger cars and light

trucks and 10 miles for medium and heavy-duty vehicles); and on-road heavy duty vehicles with electric powered take-off.

Regarding the all-important charging and its infrastructure, there are a number of factors and options involved. The most basic charger is one that is considered “AC Level 1” which uses a standard 120 volt outlet and typically adds 2-3 miles of range for each hour of charging. The next level is “AC Level 2” which typically adds 10 or more miles per each hour of charging. It is highly recommended that an electrician is consulted in using this level – an upfront estimated cost is \$2,000-\$3,000. The other type of charger is a “DC Fast Charger” which can charge 80% of an EV battery in about 20 minutes. There are limited versions of these chargers available which according to NYSERDA, are being installed in high traffic areas or along highways. The NYSERDA EV charging station locator can be found at:

<https://www.nyserdera.ny.gov/All-Programs/Programs/Drive-Clean-Rebate/Charging-Options/Electric-Vehicle-Station-Locator#/find/nearest> There is a website by “Plug-In America” which lists EV hardware available for purchase at: <https://pluginamerica.org/get-equipped/> To easily link to these websites, please note that this newsletter is also available on our website as you are reading this at: <http://www.sierraclubhudsonmohawk.org/>

In terms of rebates available for individuals, businesses and municipalities, NYSERDA offers a \$2,000 rebate for individuals and businesses which can be researched at: <https://www.nyserdera.ny.gov/All%20Programs/Programs/Drive%20Clean%20Rebate> Also, the New York State DEC is the state agency processing rebate applications for municipal fleet purchases. That website can be located at: <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/NYSDEC/bulletins/214f752> Pam Haddad Hearst at DEC is a most knowledgeable staffer on the entire fleet purchase if you'd like to talk to a real person about that.

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### **Sierra Club Annual Fundraising Dinner – A Special Night**

Our annual dinner took place in September at the new interpretive center at Five Rivers Environmental Center in Delmar – with a capacity crowd on hand. For those of you who haven't been in the interpretive center yet, we highly recommend a visit – with new plant and animal exhibits, a solar PV system, and green roof, among other great features. We were honored to have Joe Martens, former DEC Commissioner and now Director of the Offshore Wind Alliance as our featured speaker. There are not many environmental professionals with the varied background like Joe's including his time working for Governor Mario Cuomo as one of Cuomo's top energy advisors and his work at the Open Space Institute where he was involved in preserving thousands of acres of beautiful uplands, wetlands and forests.

Joe has always been one to tell it like it is and explained that: *"I for one am not afraid or hesitant to say that climate change and global warming are playing a major role in these increasingly frequent and violent storms. Horrifying weather events are only one terrifying aspect of climate change. We're rapidly losing species, glaciers are retreating and disappearing, as are coral reefs, the oceans are acidifying, invasive species are spreading, animal migration patterns are changing, sea level is rising and that's just the tip of the iceberg, which if this keeps up, we might just lose that popular expression in our lexicon."*

Joe went on to also describe the positive developments in renewable energy that are critical in reducing the effects of climate change. He pointed out that at the end of 2016, wind became the largest source of renewable power generation in the nation, overtaking hydropower and in 2017 the U.S. added another 6,250 MWs of wind capacity, enough to power 2 million homes. This has been achieved due in large part to the vastly increasing size of the actual wind turbine blades. As backup to that, Joe explained that the average capacity of a wind turbine back in 1991 (Denmark) was about ½ MW in size. Now, that average has increased to about 8 MWs or more.

As land-based wind farms are continuing to be sited/proposed across New York State along with the recent developments with the State's Clean Energy Standard and goal of 2,400 MWs of off-shore wind, there has been substantial opposition. Joe pointed out that New York cannot reach its goal of 50% renewables by 2030 without wind, he asked we conservationists to pause and reflect on our sometime opposition to wind and point out that we need to start showing up at public meetings when renewable projects are going through the permitting process so that as he put it: *"There needs to be advocates in the room, not just opponents."* And he finished with the statement: **"But given the stakes, that I talked about earlier, we all need to think hard when our instinct is to say I support renewable energy, but just not here."**

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### **Monitor DEC on Water Withdrawals**

This past January, the Sierra Club won a major legal victory when a state appeals court in Brooklyn invalidated the water withdrawal permit for a large, fish-killing power plant to take up to 1,528,000,000 gallons per day from the East River in the Hudson River estuary without any environmental review. But nine months after that landmark ruling, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation ("DEC") announced its plans to reissue the same exact permit for the Ravenswood electric generating station – thumbing their noses at the court's decision – without a full environmental review of the devastating impacts of the plant's once-through cooling system killing millions of fish in the Hudson River estuary.

Tell the DEC to rescind this permit – navigate to: [The ENB notice is posted here](#)

**Sierra Club 2019 Calendars**—Stunning award-winning photographs of all sections of the country on high quality stock paper—good enough for framing! Order yours **NOW** (last year we ran out!)

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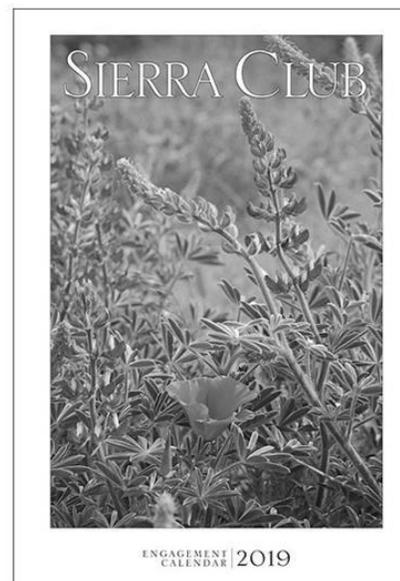
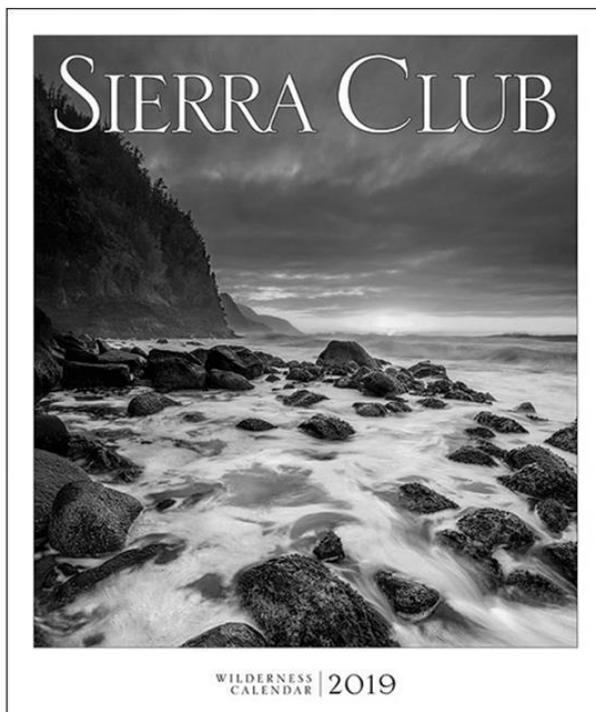
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*Any questions? Email [Psheehan74@aim.com](mailto:Psheehan74@aim.com) or call 518-210-5294. Thanks for supporting the Hudson Mohawk Group!*



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### **Rensselaer Solid Waste Plan Proposal**

The City of Rensselaer Planning Commission has granted approval for a \$35 million trash treatment facility at the former BASF site in Rensselaer. Originally promoted as a composting facility, recent documents and presentations now describe the plant as a trash pelletization process, referred to in company literature as, "EPA approved solid recovered fuel (SRF)". The pelletized product would be sent to a cement plant in Pennsylvania to be used as fuel in the cement kilns.

Promotional materials from BioHiTech Global, Inc., the firm proposing the plant, state that the system "will recover bio-mass, plastics and other carbon-based material from the municipal solid waste (MSW) stream and convert them into a safe alternative fuel source."

The plant capacity is projected to be 150,000 tons of municipal solid waste annually, which is approximately the amount of trash delivered to the Albany and Colonie landfills annually, and would result in 15 - 25 semi-trailer truck arriving per day at the facility.

As of September the firm has not filed for any permits from the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. At a minimum, it will likely require a solid waste and an air facility permit. The Hudson-Mohawk Group will be following closely whether this project will actually be in compliance with the State Solid Waste Management Plan, and what other environmental impacts the project will have.

<https://www.timesunion.com/news/article/Albany-mulls-over-5-plans-for-future-trash-removal-12450217.php>