



Save the Pine Bush

September/October Newsletter

Sept/Oct 15 No. 127 • 33 Central Ave., Albany, NY 12210 • email pinebush@mac.com • phone 518-462-0891 • web http://www.savethepinebush.org • Circ. 1000

Vegetarian/Vegan Lasagna Dinner
Wednesday September 16, 6:00 p.m.
Becky Meier & Bob Connors
Co-founders of Stop NY Fracked Gas Pipeline
will speak about

Northeast Energy Direct Gas Pipeline

Becky Meier and Bob Connors will give a PowerPoint presentation about the Northeast Energy Direct Gas Pipeline proposed by Tennessee Gas, a subsidiary of Kinder Morgan. This pipeline will go through Albany County south of the city. This pipeline is proposed to go more than 400 miles from the fracking fields of Pennsylvania through New York, Massachusetts and New Hampshire before ending at Dracut, MA (outside Boston). Becky and Bob will present information about the pipeline, the process for its being permitted, why the gas is not needed, the dangers such a pipeline presents and what citizens can do to try to stop it. We and other members of SNYFGP will be available for a question and answer period.

At the Westminster Presbyterian Church, 85 Chestnut Street, Albany, NY (people with cars can park in the lot near the door). All-the-vegetarian-and-vegan-lasagna-you-can-eat, garden salad, garlic bread and homemade pies. Only \$12 for adults, \$6 for students, and \$2 for children. People who make reservations are served first. For reservations, please leave a message for Rezsine Adams at 462-0891 or email pinebush@mac.com. Get It While It's Hot! We start serving dinner promptly at 6:00. Of course, we will be delighted to serve you whenever you get here as we always have. We greatly appreciate your attendance whenever you arrive.

People are welcomed to attend the movie beginning at 7:00 for which there is no charge.

September Pine Bush Walk

Saturday, September 19, 2015 at 9:00 AM

Meet at: Pine Bush Discovery Center Parking Lot, East side of New Karner Rd. (Route 155) opposite "T" with Old State Rd., Albany, NY;

Leader: Claire Nolan • For More Information: 518-465-8930

If you haven't hiked the Purple Path yet; it's a real nice surprise and treat. This trail begins at the end of the roadway that goes straight westerly behind that big water tower just past the corner of Washington Ave. Ext. and Rte. 155. From here it's the long abandoned Lydius Street (Madison Ave.) proceeds westerly and across the East Branch of the Hunger Kill, then leaves Lydius Street just before it becomes a paved Rd. again and diverts a little south westerly and heads for the upper Hunger Kill and some beautiful deep valley as well dune scenery and other features. This route beyond the East Branch of the Hunger Kill hasn't been hiked by much for many years and the reopened route is much improved

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Bakken Crude Oil Rail Shipments in Decline, But Surplus Tank Cars a Problem

By Tim Truscott

As most people in the Capital Region know, Albany became a hub for crude oil shipments by rail when the Bakken crude oil began flowing from North Dakota. It was perhaps the third largest Bakken crude oil hub in North America and was dubbed by some as "Houston on the Hudson". But rail shipments of Bakken crude seem to have fallen off in recent months, as East Coast refiners are now not taking in as much Bakken crude. Shipments by CSX and CP Rail into Albany have decreased, but the size of the drop is unknown at this time.

According to an August 20 article from the Wall Street Journal, the Irving Refinery at St. John, New Brunswick, is apparently no longer taking Bakken crude (they are importing their

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Say 'No' to proposed pipeline

By Roger Downs, Commentary

Published in the Times Union Opinion Page, Wednesday, August 26, 2015

In 1996, the Iroquois Pipeline Co. pleaded guilty to four felony counts and paid multimillion dollar fines for overseeing hundreds of criminal violations of the Clean Water Act during the construction of a 375 milelong gas pipeline across New York state.

A decade later, the construction of the Millennium Pipeline resulted in the same catastrophic erosion events and negligent destruction of aquatic habitats. State regulators once again levied fines and hundreds of enforcement actions as they sought to repair the wanton destruction of New York's water resources at the hands of pipeline developers.

So when Cabot Oil and Gas, a notorious environmental polluter in its own right, announced plans to build the Constitution Pipeline, New York's Department of Environmental Conserva-

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Hike, continued from page 1

now. The entire distance will not be hiked unless enough participants want to and if more than one hiker will be heading back together at the point of deciding.

Note: Please wear appropriate protective clothing for the danger of ticks, Bring deet or insect repellent to spray on you before beginning the walk. Check carefully for ticks right after the walk and again as soon as you get home. We have discovered that these ticks are subject to transmit a lesser known disease called erlichiosis. Wear the usual protection from ticks. Our wildflower walk leader Amy Reilly recommends garden gaiters which can be had by mail and are advertised in divers gardening magazines. Always check carefully after a walk. Ticks can get onto your upper body too. We want everyone to be safe as you enjoy the outdoors!

Bakken Crude Oil, continued from page 1

light crude from Saudi Arabia now). Irving was the destination of the oil from Buckeye Partners in the Port of Albany. It's unclear where Buckeye is sending their oil now (probably somewhere in New Jersey), but the volume has been reduced and it must be going now by barge and not the 9 million gallon tanker ship that was going from Albany to St. John.

Quoting from the article: "Refiners on North America's east coast can now import crude shipped by sea for less than the cost of shipping it by rail from shale oil producers in North Dakota and elsewhere in the U.S."

The article also says that refiners PBF Energy (with two refineries located in Delaware and New Jersey) and Phillips 66 (located in New Jersey) both increased overseas procurements in the second quarter of 2015.

So it looks like we may be getting a slight reprieve from the oil trains. What the long-term situation will be remains to be seen.

While less crude oil being shipped by rail is good news, the bad news is that there are thousands of rail tank cars which are being unused and need locations for storage. While thousands of these cars are being stored in rail sidings in other parts of the country, many are being stored right here in New York State. Hundreds of tank cars have been stored on the Western New York & Pennsylvania Railroad near Franklinville in Cattaraugus County (western New York). One hundred of these cars are brand-spanking new and never been used, manufactured in Mexico for PBF Energy but never put into service.

One proposal is to store a large number of these cars on the rail line between North Creek and Tahawus, New York. This is a private industrial line which served the NL Industries titanium mine at Tahawus until about 1988. There is grave concern over this proposal, with several environmental groups actively opposing it.

While the tank cars will have presumably been drained of oil, there will still be a quantity of oil residue remaining in them. The residue from a 30,000-gallon tank car could be a fairly large quantity – 50, 100, 150 gallons?). Who knows? But if any of the tank cars leak, they could create a mess in the Adirondacks. And, since the cars will be in a very remote area without anyone keeping a constant watchful eye on them, they could leak for days or months without anyone knowing about it and being able to do anything about it. And in a remote area with no highway access, what could be done about it, anyway?

And what is to prevent anyone from using the tank cars as shooting targets? In this regard they would be an attractive nuisance.

The other environmental problem that these stored tank cars present is their impact on large wildlife. Hundreds of tank cars coupled together will effectively create a fence many miles long which will prevent the normal movement of large wildlife such as deer and moose (there are moose in the Adirondacks, and we'd like to encourage them to stay).

I'm all for parking the surplus oil tank cars in North Dakota. After all, North Dakota has been the source of all our Bakken crude oil problems over the past few years. Let North Dakota be responsible for them.

The surplus of tank cars with nowhere to store them illustrates once again the poor planning – actually the absolute lack of planning – which has gone into the Bakken crude oil venture. Intelligent business people and government officials would have planned for the possibility of a surplus of tank cars and been prepared for it. We deserve better in New York State.

Say No, continued from page 1

tion must have felt a horrible sense of déjà vu. This 124-mile pipeline, designed to transport gas from the fracking fields of Susquehanna County, Pa., to Schoharie, presents the same potential catastrophic erosion risks that DEC officials were promised would never happen with the Iroquois and Millennium pipelines.

As proposed, the pipeline would rip a 125-

foot wide scar from the Southern Tier along the Western slope of the Catskills, plowing through 277 stream crossings, clear-cutting more than 700,000 trees and destroying 1,800 acres of farmland and forest under many of the same steep slope and unstable soil conditions that lead to previous violations.

In an attempt to not repeat the past, DEC and other state and federal agencies urged Cabot to change the route and "use existing utility corridors and rights-of-way for all or most of the proposed pipeline route in New York." Such collocation of previously disturbed corridors would drastically reduce impacts to virgin terrain and sensitive habitat. In addition, DEC asked that if streams, rivers or wetlands could not be absolutely avoided, then directional drilling should be employed to route the pipeline under these fragile aquatic resources, not through them.

But in spite of New York's tragic history with pipeline water quality violations, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and Cabot ignored DEC's warnings and advice in the final approvals granted in December 2014. As proposed, the Constitution Pipeline will be constructed along the worst possible route, using the worst possible construction techniques. The only thing holding the project back is DEC's required certification that this pipeline will not violate the laws of New York that protect our water resources.

It is clear the current plan is set up for certain failure. But the question remains: Will DEC learn from the past or sign off on routes and techniques they warned FERC not to pursue?

To make matters worse, another company, Kinder Morgan, has proposed a gas pipeline, the Northeast Energy Direct, that will run parallel to the Constitution Pipeline — as little as 50 feet apart in some places — doubling the damage to every stream crossing and clear cut forest under review. At the very least, DEC must take into account the cumulative impacts of both these pipelines together before any decision can be made.

In truth, DEC is under no obligation to fix the permitting nightmare created by Cabot and the FERC. With an ample historical record supporting it, DEC should deny Constitution Pipeline's water quality certification and send this ill-conceived project back to the drawing board.

Roger Downs is the conservation director for the Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter, a volunteer-led environmental organization of 40,000 members statewide dedicated to protecting New York's air, water and remaining wild places.

Crossing paths: Area farmers fear risks from 2 gas pipeline proposals

Farmers: Risks but no benefits from 2 proposals

By Brian Nearing — Published in the **Times Union**, Saturday, June 27, 2015

It's a long way from a sea of natural gas wells scattered through Pennsylvania's Bradford County to [Libby Reilly](#)'s organic farm off Clarks Chapel Road in Nassau. And it is even longer from her farm, where about two dozen beef cows graze in grassy fields, to remote cliffs overlooking the Atlantic Ocean at Cape Breton, Nova Scotia.

But these far-flung places share something in common — they are in the path of a natural gas boom fueled by hydraulic fracturing, or hydrofracking. While New York decided last December against allowing hydrofracking in its Southern Tier piece of the multistate, gas-rich Marcellus Shale, and opponents celebrated, the Pennsylvania boom is still reverberating here.

It is taking the form of two massive pipeline projects crossing about 450 miles in four states and with a price tag close to \$5 billion. Both the Constitution and Northeast Energy Direct (NED) pipelines could move a growing tsunami of Pennsylvania gas to customers in New York, New England, Canada and possibly beyond.

Energy firms behind the projects say new pipelines will bring more low-cost gas to new U.S. customers in New England, help reduce high electricity prices in the region and cut greenhouse gas emissions from power plants.

Opponents say the pipelines — along with a third major project, Spectra Access Northeast, which would expand existing pipelines from metropolitan New Jersey to coastal New England — also reflect an eastward race to the sea by energy firms eager to ship gas to higher-priced markets in Europe and Asia, reduce the domestic supply of fracked gas from Pennsylvania and Ohio, and boost historically low prices now enjoyed by customers back home.

Also, both NED and Constitution — which roughly follow the Interstate 88 corridor from Binghamton to Schoharie — also happen to pass through the heart of the Marcellus shale region, which means pipes would be well-placed to accept natural gas should New York some day change its mind and allow fracking.

At Reilly's farm in the rolling hills of southern Rensselaer County, the mother of two is aghast that the NED project wants to build a 90,000-horsepower natural gas compressor station nearby. She and one of her two young boys have a genetically based chemical sensitivity, and the family has modified their diet to deal with it. "We don't put down chemicals here on our farm. And now we will have the emissions from this compressor," she said.

The Nassau compressor station is one of

nine needed by NED owner, Houston-based Kinder Morgan, to push gas through a planned 36-inch, 323-mile underground pipeline for fracked gas that would start in Bradford County and run northeast through six New York counties — Broome, Delaware, Chenango, Schoharie, Albany and across the Hudson River into Rensselaer — on its way through Massachusetts and New Hampshire to metropolitan Boston.

Once there, NED would link up with other pipelines, including one that goes north through Maine to Nova Scotia, where a planned massive liquefied natural gas (LNG) export plant is being touted by developers as a year-round, ice-free, deep water harbor capable of handling the world's largest current and proposed LNG tankers. Currently, natural gas in Asia and Europe is about twice as expensive as it is in the U.S.

Two other gas export facilities also are being proposed off the coast of Nova Scotia and in Maine at Passamaquoddy Bay, an inlet of the Bay of Fundy, between Maine and the province of New Brunswick. In March, [Dean Girdis](#), CEO and president of Downeast LNG, told the [Bangor Daily News](#) that the planned \$400 million Maine terminal would be "well-positioned" to export natural gas overseas from the Marcellus region.

People who live near natural gas compressor stations — which must be installed along pipelines every 30 miles or so to pressurize gas to move it forward — have reason to be concerned, said [David Carpenter](#), director of the [Institute for Public Health](#) and the Environment at the [University of Albany](#). Last year, he co-authored a study of such stations in five states that found unsafe amounts of two human carcinogens — benzene and formaldehyde — were released into the air, he said.

Because federal rules don't require air studies around compressor stations, "we don't have a lot of good information," said Carpenter. Accordingly, it is difficult to judge the proximity risk to a station, although Carpenter estimated it was likely a radius of at least a mile, depending on wind and weather conditions.

Carpenter is working with Madison County officials to conduct an air quality and residential health study of the area around a proposed compressor station. "We are measuring the air now to compare against the air after a station begins running," he said.

In March, U.S. Rep. [Chris Gibson](#) wrote to acting state Health Commissioner [Howard Zucker](#), asking the state to "take the lead" to see that such studies are conducted around all proposed compressor stations in the state. In addition to

Nassau, new or expanded compressor stations are currently planned at Wright, Schoharie County and Brooksman Corners, in Minden, Montgomery County, as well as in Delaware, Madison and Chemung counties in the Southern Tier.

Gibson spokesman [Matt Sheehey](#) said Zucker never responded. A [Health Department](#) spokesman had no comment on Gibson's letter.

Another NED opponent, [Charles Waggoner](#), lives on his wife's family farm a few miles to the south of Reilly's farm, near Nassau Lake. He said the pipeline would bring risk, but no benefit, to its neighbors. Waggoner is convinced the line is meant to bring gas to the Atlantic seaboard so it can be shipped away on massive tankers to Europe and Asia. "We are just expendable," he said.

That idea that NED could carry Pennsylvania gas to ultimate export overseas is a valid one, said [Curtis Cole](#), director of business development on the NED project for Kinder Morgan. In Dracut, Mass., where the NED line would end, there is a connection to another gas line that connects to Nova Scotia, where there are plans for a facility at the northern tip of Cape Breton to liquefy up to 1.2 billion cubic feet of gas a day for export.

However, Cole said such an export scenario is not part of Kinder Morgan's proposal to the [Federal Energy Regulatory Commission](#) and none of the project's customers who have signed on to use the pipeline, including [National Grid](#), have indicated such plans, he added.

"We don't control where our shippers take the gas, we just move it from Point A to Point B," Cole said.

Currently, Pennsylvania wells that could connect to NED are producing about 6 billion cubic feet of gas a day — twice as much as is needed to power all of New York for for two days — and that could jump to 10 billion cubic feet in a few years, said Curtis.

In March, Kinder Morgan announced it had customers committed to shipping about 0.5 billion cubic feet a day in NED, which has the potential capacity for an increase to 2.2 billion cubic feet daily. Curtis said such an increase would happen only if there were customers to justify it, and that federal regulators at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission would have to approve.

FERC has already approved the route of the Constitution pipeline, which is only awaiting water quality permits from the state Department of Environmental Conservation before construc-

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tion can start. DEC spokesman Tom Mailey said the permits remain under review, with no timeline for action.

This pipeline would end at Wright, Schoharie County, at a connection with the Iroquois pipeline, another major line that runs between the Canadian border on the St. Lawrence River near Waddington, St. Lawrence County, and metropolitan Connecticut and New York City.

That pipeline now carries natural gas from western Canada southward into the U.S. This year, Iroquois' owners proposed reversing that flow northward, so Marcellus gas could flow toward Canada. Once there, another pipeline network through Ontario, Quebec, Maine and New Brunswick leads to Nova Scotia as another path to potential export facilities.

Constitution spokesman Chris Stockton said suspicions that "all of this gas" is destined for export are "not correct." He said the pipeline provides access to Marcellus gas to "markets in New York and New England."

The company has obtained either voluntary agreements or court orders with all landowners in the path of its pipeline.

These pipeline projects are part of a "master plan" by energy companies to reconfigure the Northeast network to bring gas to the coast for export, said [Anne Marie Garti](#), an environmental attorney working with the Pace Environmental Litigation Clinic in Westchester County and founder of the anti-Constitution group Stop the Pipeline.

She also warned that both NED and Constitution — whose pipes pass through the gas-rich part of New York — also could be a "Trojan horse" to make it easier for fracking to commence later.

"The energy companies put out all this press about fracking for natural gas being clean energy for America, and to support it to bring a soldier home, but this is all about shipping gas to where they can get the highest price. And that is not the U.S.," said Garti.

Back in Rensselaer County, ecologist David Hunt dragged a net through the waters of a hemlock-shaded section of the Valatie Kill, near a National Grid right of way that NED developers want to lease for their pipeline, and less than a mile from Libby Reilly's farm. He said the stream reflects a rare population of native trout.

Hunt is also checking the rest of the pipeline's proposed path, and said some of it could pass near an unconfirmed population of endangered timber rattlesnakes.

Watching nearby, Nassau resident [Brian Shoemaker](#) said his family owns about 80 acres of forest next to the stream and the utility right of way. "We will fight this tooth and nail," said Shoemaker, who works at the Amtrak locomotive maintenance yard in Rensselaer. "No one here wants this. We are gaining nothing and risking everything."

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Hi again, Karner blue

An Excerpt from the Associated Press, Published July 26, 2015

Albany: More than 20 years of habitat restoration and breeding programs have helped the endangered Karner blue butterfly make a comeback in the Capital Region pine barrens where it was discovered by Russian author Vladimir Nabokov decades ago.

"This project has been unbelievably rewarding," said Neil Gifford, conservation director for the 3,200-acre Albany Pine Bush Preserve.

"Getting to see an animal that was on the brink of extinction locally now have a robust and healthy population is just incredible."

"The population over the last 15 years has declined to the point where we're pretty concerned that it's been lost from this area," said Ralph Grundel, a biologist with the U.S. Geological Survey in Porter, Indiana. The reasons are elusive.

According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Karner blue has declined by 99 percent over the past 100 years, with 90 percent of the decline occurring in the last 15. Among the reasons are habitat loss from land development and suppression of the wildfires that are a necessary part of the ecology of the pine barren and black oak savanna where the insects live.

Recovery efforts focus on restoring the original pine barrens ecology by removing non-native trees such as black locust, burning the landscape to destroy invasive plants and help fire-dependent species like pitch pine and scrub oak, and planting plenty of blue lupine, the only plant Karner blue larvae eat.

Scientists have also partnered with New Hampshire officials in a captive breeding program since 2001. New York sends adult Karner blues to New Hampshire each spring, and New Hampshire returns some of the pupating larvae back to Albany to be hatched and released.

Butterflies have been released at 21 sites and have naturally colonized other sites in the preserve. The number of Karner blues has gone from about 200 in 1991 to more than 14,000 now, Gifford said.

The federal threshold for recovery is a population above 3,000 in four of five consecutive years. Gifford said the recovery goal is likely to be met next year.

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