



# Save the Pine Bush

## August/September Newsletter

Aug/Sep 18 No. 142 • 33 Central Ave., Albany, NY 12210 • email [pinebush@mac.com](mailto:pinebush@mac.com) • phone 518-462-0891 • web <http://www.savethepinebush.org> • Circ. 625

### *No dinner in August!*

## Vegetarian/Vegan Lasagna Dinner Wednesday, September 19 2018, 6:00 p.m.

**Scott Kellogg**  
of the Radix Center

**Justina Thompson**  
RPI Student, Chemistry Major  
will speak about

## The Floating Island of the Radix Center & Ecological Stewardship

On Thursday, July 26, Scott Kellogg dropped four baby islands of plants with a solar powered bubbler into the Hudson River near Island Creek Park, just down river from the Big C pipe, where sewage runoff sometimes flows into the river, Justina Thompson along with a plant expert, and student interns, helped to design and construct the device. The goal? For the plants and bacteria to eat the sewage and clean the Hudson. Learn about this innovative method of cleaning a river. Our speakers will also talk about the Radix Ecological Sustainability Center, which promote ecological literacy and stewardship through demonstrations of sustainable technologies.

**At the Westminster Presbyterian Church, 85 Chestnut Street** (people with cars can park in the lot near the door). All-you-can-eat lasagna dinner, with vegetarian, vegan and gluten-free options, salad, garlic bread and delicious desserts. 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 Rezsín Adams at 462-0891 or email [pinebush@mac.com](mailto:pinebush@mac.com).

Interested people are welcome to attend the program beginning at 7:00 for no charge.

## Save the Pine Bush August Evening Hike Wednesday August 22, 2018 at 6:45 PM

**Meet at:** Pine Bush Discovery Center parking lot, east side of Route 155, opposite Old State Road.  
For GPS - 195 New Karner Road, Albany NY 12205

**Leader: Andy Arthur • For More Information:** 518-281-9873

We will hike overlook dune and then do the loop past the wetlands and the restoration area, which was the former trailer park. Listen to the bull frogs, spot fireflies, walk by moon light. Bring a flash light as it gets dark early this time of year and part of the trail is heavy wooded and will be dark by the time we reach it.

The hike is free and open to the public. Bring your friends!

## The Potential of Community Choice Aggregation

*by Tom Ellis*

ALBANY, NY: Tina Lieberman and Susan Lawrence spoke at the June 20 SPB dinner about the power and potential of Community Choice Aggregation (CCA). Tina is a member of the Energy Subcommittee of the Albany City Sustainability Advisory Committee. Susan is on the Executive Committees of both the Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter and the local Hudson Mohawk Group.

Tina said CCA is similar to Sam's Club and other bulk purchasing discount clubs with electricity the product. She said in 2016 the NYS Public Service commission (PSC) authorized municipalities to bulk purchase electricity and negotiate for discounts. A municipality that chooses CCA could select the type of electricity it desires and might choose to purchase hydro-

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## Pine Bush Commission may soon be able to buy land in revolving fund

*Reprinted from the Altamont Enterprise  
by Elizabeth Floyd Mair*

ALBANY COUNTY — Pending the governor's signature, the Pine Bush Commission will soon be able to hold title to property and buy land directly from landowners, due to new legislation passed in both the state assembly and senate. This change will allow the commission to move more quickly to obtain land that could otherwise go to developers.

Property that the Pine Bush Commission might be interested in adding to the land it manages includes any parts of Guelderland west of Route 155 and south of Route 20 that are still undeveloped "natural Pine Bush habitat," according to Christopher Hawver, the commission's executive director.

In the past, it has sometimes taken three years to close on a property, and not all landowners can wait that long, said Hawver. The Pine Bush has needed to partner with state agencies — Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation or the Department of Environmental Conservation

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## *CCA continued from page 1*

electricity, wind, and solar power, and stimulate demand for those electricity resources.

She said the electricity bill of a National Grid customer has two main charges: one for the delivery of electricity by National Grid and one for the supply of electricity that is offered by any one of hundreds of energy supply companies (ESCOs). If a municipality selects to participate in CCA, customers would get one electricity bill - with possibly an extra one if they signed up for Community Solar.

With municipal CCA, residential and small businesses would be automatically enrolled with the choice to opt-out. Larger businesses and not-for-profits would have to opt-in if they want to participate.

Among the benefits of CCA Tina identified are: reduced electricity bills of 5-10 percent, a stable electricity rate could be locked in, reduced greenhouse emissions for our community, stimulation of the renewable electricity industry, improved access to state grant programs, new local jobs if new local renewables are built to supply the CCA, protection of residents from predatory electricity suppliers, and any resident or business could opt-out.

Tina used a PowerPoint showing how solar photo-voltaics prices are continuing to steadily decline. She said a Capital District CCA steering committee has held four meetings and is looking for new, interested members.

She said a municipality could choose CCA and then select fossil fuels, something she would oppose. A CCA participating municipality would usually hire an administrator or broker to make the electricity purchases or could choose to do so themselves.

She said CCA suppliers want a minimum of 40,000 households, which Albany has. Niskayuna is also looking into CCA

as are other local municipalities. Several or many municipalities, some large and small in size, could join the same CCA, increasing the total number of customers and enhancing the CCA's ability to negotiate the lowest possible prices.

During the questions and comments, I said that people should be careful when promoting hydroelectric development because not all of it is good. When pipes are carved into rocks alongside a waterfall and some of the river diverted through the pipes and turbines to generate electricity, such as at Niagara Falls, this is generally viewed as positive and renewable electricity.

However, in Quebec and Labrador the provincially-owned power companies often utilize a destructive hydro model. Many miles of dikes are constructed along river valleys with dams and power stations constructed at the bot-

tom of the valley. The river valleys gradually fill up creating giant reservoirs. Rotting vegetation in the flooded valleys release methane into the water and air. The inundated rocks and soil release methyl mercury into the water, poisoning it along with fish, animals, and people who drink the water.

This electricity is pumped into the Canadian electricity grid which flows south and west into New England and New York where it is falsely marketed and sold as clean, safe, and renewable electricity. Rivers in Quebec and Labrador are literally being destroyed to supply electricity to the United States. Two years ago, Jim Learning of the Labrador Land Protectors spoke at a SPB dinner about how destructive hydroelectricity in Labrador is.

Tina said that currently local hydroelectricity suppliers are getting very low rates from National Grid and are looking to CCA because it would increase demand for their electricity allowing them to negotiate higher prices, while we buyers would pay less than we do now.

Tina said Albany Common Councilwoman Cathy Fahey is sponsoring legislation to have Albany explore CCA options.

Mark Schaeffer said he pays a premium to National Grid for renewable electricity and national Grid buys renewables to meet Mark's demand.

Tina said Westchester County has a residential CCA which also allows their residents to get better prices on bulk purchases of other items such as electric vehicles. She said 65 NYS communities have enacted CCA laws and many others are interested in joining with larger partners because they are too small to benefit on their own.

She said years ago Albany locked in a long term electricity rate for electricity the city uses at a high price and loses money each month because fossil fuel electricity rates have decreased since the city signed the contract.

Chris Kielb said the town of Colonie recently signed on to Climate Smart Communities and the town may be interested in CCA. Tina said Glens Falls is interested too.

If interested in furthering CCA, Tina said people can join the steering committee and organize community meetings, lobby municipalities, or be a supporter and spread the word. She invites people to get more information by contacting her at [tlieberm1@gmail.com](mailto:tlieberm1@gmail.com).

Lynne Jackson said she sees no downside to CCA and recommends we support it.

Tina said if enough NYS communities go with CCA renewables, we could transform where we get our electricity from in a very powerful way.

## *Commission Buy Land continued from page 1*

— to purchase real estate, said Hawver, and each of these agencies has a large backlog, because of the scale of its work for various entities and the sheer number of properties available throughout the state.

“But there is funding to do it,” Hawver said of the commission itself purchasing property.

The Pine Bush Commission itself doesn't own any land, Hawver said. All the land it manages is owned by entities such as the state of New York, the towns of Colonie or Guilderland, the city of Albany, or The Nature Conservancy.

If the new bill is signed into law, the commission would be able to buy land, Hawver said, working with a partner like The Nature Conservancy or the Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy, which have greater knowledge of how to handle real-estate transactions. The Pine Bush would borrow money from its reserves to pay for the property, transfer the property to the state, be reimbursed for it, and have the funding available to do it again.

“Think of it as a small revolving fund of money to be able to buy land in the short term,” Hawver said.

The Pine Bush Commission currently manages 3,300 acres of land — globally rare pine barrens — and hopes to raise that number to a little over 5,400, Hawver said. The legislation, which was sponsored by Patricia Fahy in the assembly and George Amedore in the senate, will make it easier for the commission to move toward that higher number.

“The Pine Bush is not just an incredible recreational resource and a local gem,” said Fahy. “It serves a broader purpose too: helping us with some water-control problems.” She said that good land management is good water-resource management and also good for flood abatement.

Fahy mentioned the frequent flooding that occurs in front of Stuyvesant Plaza and said, “We know that some of that problem originated because of overbuilding in what had previously been the Pine Bush.”

One way that the Pine Bush sometimes increases its acreage is through land dedicated to the town as open space, and then, in turn, dedicated by the town to the Pine Bush, which becomes responsible for its maintenance.

An example of this type of arrangement is the Pine Bush Senior Living project at 20 New Karner Road, near Route 20. It has been approved as a planned unit development, known as a PUD, that would rezone almost 40 acres of land as open space; that land would ultimately be managed by the Pine Bush. Developer Timothy Cassidy of Pine Bush Senior Living LLC said on June 28 that the project is on track to break ground by January 2019.

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# Needed: Zero Waste Ambassadors for September 8th Albany Jazz Festival

**Where:** Jennings Landing, Albany (Rain location: Corning Preserve Boat Launch)

**When:** Saturday, Sept. 8th. Festival from 1-9 pm with fireworks.

**What:** Help concert-goers compost and recycle at Albany's Riverfront Jazz Fest! This will be Albany's first ever "Zero Waste Event" and a major outreach effort. Please volunteer to make it a success!



We will have 3 "Zero Waste Stations" and need lots of volunteer "ambassadors" to help people sort their waste so more ends up in compost and recycling than in our overburdened Rapp Road Landfill. Soon, Albany residents will have to pay for their garbage, so let's get people thinking now about how to reduce their waste! Training provided! Adults & kids welcome to help!

Please sign up to help at a shift by emailing [ZeroWasteCD@gmail.com](mailto:ZeroWasteCD@gmail.com) or [tlieberm1@gmail.com](mailto:tlieberm1@gmail.com). Shifts run from 12 to 5 pm, and 4:30 to 10 pm with training during the first half hour. Or volunteer for less hours and we'll train you on the spot. Training will be provided by Sonia Sandoval of FoodScraps360 at 12 noon and 4:30 pm. Info table help needed too. Please get your friends to sign on!

You can support composting at the Albany Riverfront Jazz Fest by making a GoFundMe donation to: Zero Waste Capital District

*Co-Sponsoring Organizations: PAUSE/350.org, Albany County League of Women Voters, Sierra Club Hudson-Mohawk Group, Save the Pine Bush, Solidarity Committee of the Capital District, Radix Ecological Sustainability Center*

## Be An Earth Hero - Go Zero!

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## Our June 23rd Hike in the Pine Bush

By Hugh Johnson

After my planned Pine Bush hike got rained out in May, it looked as if Mother Nature, combined with the “Hughie” curse, was going to throw me another bone for my June Hike. However, as it turned out, the rain held off just long enough to allow we five hikers to complete our 3.5 mile hike of the Red (Sand Dune Trail, as well as part of the White and Yellow Trails at the Madison Highlands.

Most the Pine Bush hikes start at the Discovery Center. I think it was a nice change to commence the walk at a different location. When I first came to the Capital Region 23 years someone told me about the Pine Bush and I became a regular at this starting point, especially after fresh fallen snow. The Madison Highland Trails had been shut down for awhile, as a lot of the Black Locust trees were removed. It took some time to get use to this change as the area used to be heavily wooded. However, now it has definitely developed a specific character of the “original” Pine Bush as it has become lush with lots of green fauna.

On our hike, we heard several bird calls, including a Prairie Warbler, Mourning doves. Robins and more. We observed the result of the last controlled burn back in early May on portions of the Red Trail. Lingering Lupine was scattered in some of the open fields, although the first bloom had clearly peaked about two weeks before. Pictures were taken by all of us, many posted on the “Save the Pine Bush” Facebook page. Unfortunately, we saw no Karner Blue butterflies but a few other ones and a white moth.

I had to hurry up the hike at the end as radar indicated a large swath of rain was heading our way. The rains started as we reached back on the Yellow Trail for the last quarter of a mile. We got

somewhat wet but did not melt. Instead we headed to Yonder Farms for a tasty lunch and really great deserts. I originally was going to bike to the trailhead but so glad I did not as it was pouring when we came out of the restaurant.

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### Next Dinner Dates

**No dinner in August**

**Wednesday, Sept 19, 2018**

**Wednesday, October 17, 2018**

**Wednesday, November 14, 2018**

**Wednesday, December 19, 2018**

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## Zero Waste Jazzes Up the City of Albany:

The City of Albany is about to hold its first ever Zero Waste Festival! Albany’s Riverfront Jazz Festival is slated to celebrate its 17th anniversary on Saturday, September 8th from 1-9 pm at Jennings Landing. For the first time this festival will bring its attendees more than great music, Hudson River views and evening fireworks – the festival will also bring new hands-on insight into waste reduction, recycling and composting.

To accomplish this, the City of Albany will be partnering with Zero Waste Capital District, a newly formed volunteer coalition that includes Save the Pine Bush, PAUSE/350.org, the Sierra Club Hudson-Mohawk Group, the League of Women Voters, the Solidarity Committee of the Capital District and the Radix Ecological Sustainability Center. With the combined efforts of Zero Waste Capital District and the City of Albany’s Department of General Services, the City hopes to make this the most environmentally friendly festival in the area. Zero Waste Capital District will be training dozens of volunteers, who will be present at several Zero Waste Stations at the Festival. These friendly “Zero Waste Ambassa-

dors” will help attendees sort their Festival waste into compost and recycling bins first, and then put what’s left into the landfill basket. Volunteers will also provide helpful tips to festival attendees on how to compost and recycle at home.

Food vendors are required to use plates and bowls that are compostable in a commercial (high heat) facility or recyclable, and are encouraged to set aside their compost at the festival for collection. Attendees are encouraged to bring reusable water bottles, cups and utensils from home and to bring their waste to one of the Zero Waste Stations at the Festival. Zero To Go, will be serving as consultants, bringing their expertise in organizing zero waste events to this festival. FoodScraps360, a local business, will be collecting the compost for the event. The cost of composting at \$14/bag is supported by donations.

The goals of the Zero Waste Jazz Festival are to reduce the amount of waste Albany residents add to the almost-full Rapp Road Landfill, recycle material, and put valuable nutrients back into the soil where they belong. The Albany 2030 Plan calls for a 65% diversion of solid waste from the Rapp Road Landfill. Reducing waste saves the city and residents money, improves neighborhood cleanliness and saves thousands of tons of earth-warming methane emissions from being produced by the landfill. A Zero Waste Festival is a great way to reach lots of residents with an important hands-on demonstration of what we can do to reduce waste.

To be a volunteer Zero Waste Ambassador at the September 8th Riverfront Jazz Festival or to sponsor a \$14 bag of compost, please contact Tina at [tlieberm1@gmail.com](mailto:tlieberm1@gmail.com) or Diana at [comphomellc@gmail.com](mailto:comphomellc@gmail.com). Or visit the Zero Waste Capital District GoFundMe page at <https://www.gofundme.com/zero-waste-capital-district>

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A Project of the Social Justice Center  
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