



# Save the Pine Bush

## June/July Newsletter

Jun/Jul 15 No. 126 • 33 Central Ave., Albany, NY 12210 • email [pinebush@mac.com](mailto:pinebush@mac.com) • phone 518-462-0891 • web <http://www.savethepinebush.org> • Circ. 1000

### Vegetarian/Vegan Lasagna Dinner

Wednesday June 17, 6:00 p.m.

Save the Pine Bush will show the movie

# FUEL

## Change Your Fuel . . . Change Your World

This movie FUEL, which won awards at Sundance, is a comprehensive and entertaining look at energy in America: a history of where we have been, our present predicament and a solution to our dependence on foreign oil. As first time director and narrator of the film, Josh Tickell offers a virtual tour guide through the drama of fuel, the history, the politics, the mess that the world is in and the fascinating alternatives for a way out. In the movie, he interviews politicians, historians, professors and a sprinkling of activist celebrities, all of whom have their own take on one of the most important and pressing concerns of the modern era. Interviews with a wide range of environmentalists, policy makers and educators, along with such "green" celebrities as Woody Harrelson, Sheryl Crow and Larry Hagman offer serious fuel for thought.

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](mailto: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.**

### June Flower Walk

**Saturday, June 27, 2015 at 9:30 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: Amy Reilly • For More Information: 518-465-8930**

Join Amy Reilly as she takes us on a walk through the Pine Bush to look for flowers. Amy will also speak about ticks and the important precautions that walkers and hikers need to take.

Note: Please wear appropriate protective clothing for the danger of ticks. Bring deer 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. We want everyone to be safe as you enjoy the outdoors!

[www.savethepinebush.org](http://www.savethepinebush.org)

### Neil Gifford Brings Good News

*by Lynne Jackson*

ALBANY: Neil Gifford, conservation director of the Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission, spoke at the Save the Pine Bush Earth Day dinner on April 22. He brought good news.

Neil began by describing "young forest management." Young forests are dominated by shrubs and saplings, and are often found where old farm fields and pastures used to be, in places regenerating from timber and in pine barrens. Many species of greatest conservation need live in these young forests.

The Pine Bush is the best example of an inland pine barrens in the world. The preserve is currently about 3200 acres in size, and the Commission has a goal of 5280. The Commission expects that new research will show that 64 species of the greatest conservation need (out of 371 state-wide species of greatest conservation

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### Anaerobic Digestion and Composting of Organics

*by Tom Ellis*

ALBANY: Gary Feinland, environmental program specialist for the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), was the speaker at the May 20 SPB dinner. He spoke about Anaerobic Digestion and Composting of Organics. His appearance was arranged by Tim Truscott who wrote an excellent article about this topic in the May/June Save the Pine Bush Newsletter.

Prior to Tim's introduction of Gary, I said that Albany County Controller Michael Connors delivered his annual report on the county's finances at the county legislature's May 11 meeting. He recommended the county focus on a resource recovery program saying, "It is possible to divert more than ninety percent of the waste stream from landfills." Gary responded to my comment saying resource recovery could mean incineration and it is possible to divert or

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## *Neil Gifford, continued from page 1*

need) or 17% live in the Pine Bush.

Other animals besides butterflies need protection too.

In 2003, the US Fish and Wildlife Service finished its plan to protect the Karner Blue butterfly (KBB). There are 13 federal KBB recovery units; the Pine Bush is the only naturally occurring unit east of Great Lakes. In order to recover the butterfly, the USFWS plan recognizes three viable recovery areas in the Glacial Lake Albany Recovery Unit: the Pine Bush, Queensbury and Saratoga/Wilton.

The Commission has been working to recover the Pine Bush. 1600 acres have been burned with 208 acres in 2014. The Commission uses mowing, removal of black locust, then seeding the areas with lupine, native grasses and wild flowers.

The Commission has been working to increase the KBB population. Staff capture female KBBs during the first brood, drive them three hours to Concord, New Hampshire where they are kept while they lay their eggs and the eggs are raised to cocoons. Then, the cocoons are driven back to the Discovery Center, where the cocoons are held until they morph into butterflies and released. Each female KBB can lay up to 150 eggs; the Commission staff have released 6,600 butterflies at the rate of 400-600 per site since 2008. All KBB sites in the Pine Bush are now self-sufficient. This release program has worked.

Fourteen thousand Karner Blue butterflies were counted in the second brood in 2014. Last July, KBB were even found on the front lawn of the Discovery Center.

Recovering the Pine Bush for the KBB helps other species as well. The Commission has stopped counting Frosted Elfin, because they are doing so well in the lupine fields. Other animals that are benefiting include the worm snake (which has been found on Blueberry Hill), buckmoths, and many birds.

Neil has a particular soft spot for birds — he was trained and is a master bird bander. He sets up nets, pulls the birds out, puts bands on the birds. Neil looks at what birds are caught, the feathers, age, and gender. His research has shown there are 92 species of birds in the Pine Bush. Some of the birds found in the Pine Bush include woodcock and prairie warblers.

I would like to observe that I found Neil's presentation to be simply astonishing. The good news from the Commission's efforts to recover the Pine Bush are amazing. Save the Pine Bush had many dark days about a decade ago, when we feared the Karner Blue would become extirpated from the Pine Bush. At that

time, the Commission had presented to the City of Albany charts showing how many butterflies were in the Pine Bush — there were less than 200 butterflies counted, with some sites having only 4 or 5 butterflies. We knew that less than 1000 individuals were not enough to preserve the genetic diversity of a species, and so few being counted was a disaster.

That last summer, 14,000 butterflies were counted during the second brood is nothing less than amazing.

Another point that Neil made was criticisms of the "karnerization of the Pine Bush" or the idea that the Commission focused only on preserving the Karner Blue at the expense of all the other species. Turns out, making the ecosystem healthy for one native species, makes the ecosystem healthy for the other species in that ecosystem. The Commission's focus to remove invasive species such as black locust, quaking aspen, and to remove these species in what may be perceived as a dramatic manner (removing everything down to the sand, except the pitch pine), has proved to be a benefit. Yes, the Commission has scraped some sand dunes clean of all vegetation. These bare sand dunes look out of place in the woods. However, by ridding the Pine Bush of these invasive species has allowed the natural species of the Pine Bush to flourish. Recovery of the Pine Bush to its natural state is being vigorously pursued by the Commission, and so far, has been a success.

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## *Tobacco, continued from back page*

were removed from American beaches and inland waterways. Cigarette butts are toxic to animals and children that may swallow them, they pollute groundwater, and they leach chemicals into soil. Compounding this problem is the waste from other items related to smoking such as cigarette packages and lighters or matches. Cigarette butts and other tobacco-related trash are a massive environmental problem.

### *What can you do?*

**Quit Smoking** - not only is it good for your health, it's good for the environment!

**Become an Advocate** - Communities across the United States are beginning to take action against tobacco waste. Contact your local, state, or federal officials and voice your opinion on tobacco waste!

**Utilize your Network** - help educate your network and the public about the environmental harms of tobacco by sharing this and other information, especially on Twitter or Facebook using this sample message:

Learn how unforeseen consequences of tobacco can cause so much harm: [#StandWithHealth @ASHOrg](http://ash.org/earth-day2015)

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## *Anaerobic Digestion, continued from page 1*

destroy more than ninety percent of the waste stream using incineration.

Gary said he has been at DEC for 15 years, 13 in solid waste; he educates on organics diversion and works in the Albany office. He said DEC is trying to replace the term "waste" with "materials recovery" to emphasize that discarded materials can be used again.

Organics, he said, make up thirty percent of the discarded materials in New York. Only one percent (30,000 tons) of food scraps are recycled (composted) while about 65 percent of yard wastes are. Food wastes have a very low composting rate because they are often smelly, much more difficult to collect than yard wastes, and must be managed daily.

At the top of the six-step food recovery hierarchy are source reduction (encouraging people to eat all or nearly all the foods they purchase) and feeding the hungry. DEC and others have resources to help educate people on how to reduce the amount of food we buy, don't eat, and throw away. He said one resource is the [westcoastclimateforum.com](http://westcoastclimateforum.com).

New York has 170 regulated compost facilities that take yard trimmings; of these 36 can take food scraps. New York has a current capacity to compost only two percent of food scraps. He said DEC hopes that small facilities will be sited to handle food scraps. Colleges, institutions, and supermarkets are driving the growth in food scraps composting with increasing numbers of haulers getting into the food scraps composting business.

Anaerobic (without air) digestion facilities convert organics into biogas (which is about sixty percent methane), liquids to be further treated, and solids. The two main types, both of which are expensive, are wet and dry. About twenty farms and a few others non-farm anaerobic digesters operate in New York. They look like a small waste-water treatment facilities.

Europe has thousands of digesters because land-filling is more expensive there, European government mandates, and many facilities generate revenues by selling electricity.

He identified ways to increase organics diversion from landfills such as encouraging reduction and reuse, increasing funding for facilities and collection vehicles, offering more dollars for net metering, creating facilities that do not focus solely on tip fees, and enacting state and local government mandates.

He mentioned an anaerobic digestion facility under construction in Connecticut that will have three revenue streams: electricity, compost, and food.

## Save the Pine Bush loses a friend — Peter J.R. Buttner

*Editor's note: Peter Buttner spoke several times at Save the Pine Bush dinners. My most vivid memory is when he gave a presentation to Save the Pine Bush about 1989 Hurricane Hugo. He observed about what a disaster it would be should such a hurricane strike Manhattan. I often thought about his comments during Sandy.*

*Below are excerpts from an article about Peter Buttner from the Altamont Enterprise:*

Peter J.R. Buttner was a man who, by his own reckoning, worked to build a brighter future no matter how dark the present.

He did this in his personal life and in his professional life as director of Environmental Management for the state. He also did this for his community; when he lived in Guilderland, Dr. Buttner led a citizens' board that pushed to have toxic waste removed from an abandoned Army depot.

He died on Monday, April 27, 2015. He was 83.

Born in Brooklyn, New York, he was the son of the late Peter and Margaret (née Flood) Buttner.

In 1985, Dr. Buttner wrote a 16-page letter to his elder son, which his wife has shared. His exuberance shines through the details of a difficult childhood. . .

"Mom was in the hospital most of the time we lived on Pilling Street," he wrote; she suffered from mental illness. One summer, his father took Dr. Buttner and his brother to St. Vincent DePaul's Home for Wayward Boys in Brooklyn, presumably so they could attend summer camp for free. But, when the brothers returned home from camp, no father met them at the train station. They made the long trek home and arrived hungry and exhausted. Rather than being greeted with open arms, they were sent to bed without supper. His father, Dr. Buttner wrote, "felt that we should remain in the home for boys for the next few years but our 'self reliance' had sabotaged the scheme. I caught the most hell, being the oldest." . .

After graduating from high school in Queens, Dr. Buttner served in the United States Army in Korea during the Korean War. This is when he wrote his son: "Complex lessons in trust and forgiveness. No matter how dark the present, I have always been able to construct a future that made the present tolerable. Always, there is the sweet smell of tomorrow."

"He never was a victim, never ever," said his wife, Natalia Prajmovsky Buttner, after reading those words out loud.

After Korea, Dr. Buttner went to Hofstra

College on the G.I. Bill and majored in geology. Natalia Prajmovsky was a geology major at Hofstra, too. . .

The Buttners then moved to the Capital Region as Dr. Buttner pursued a Ph.D. in geology at the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. After graduating, he worked for the state, serving as director of Environmental Management for the New York State Office of Parks and Recreation from 1974 until his retirement in 1991.

Dr. Buttner served on a disaster preparedness committee that mapped out what effect natural disasters could have so that the state would be prepared. He headed a scientific advisory committee that sent experts to South Carolina after Hurricane Hugo struck in 1989.

Dr. Buttner flew in a plane 200 feet above the Carolina shoreline, taking more than 1,600 photographs. He then helped make computer models that showed what would happen if a storm like Hugo hit Long Island.

"Hugo is a great laboratory in which to study how a barrier system behaves," Dr. Buttner told The New York Times in 1990. "A storm that size would basically wipe out Freeport, Merrick, Belmore, Wantagh," and many other villages along the Island's South Shore, where the model predicted 10 to 15 feet of flooding. The Hudson River would rise more than 28 feet at the George Washington Bridge, the model indicated.

Dr. Buttner gave a prescient warning at that time: "We're fooled into thinking that we can fix the position of the beaches," he told Eric Schmitt of The Times, sounding a warning on future development on barrier islands.

Also in the 1990s, Dr. Buttner was a leader on the Restoration Advisory Board that finally got federal funds to clean up toxic waste buried and forgotten at the old Army depot. He was deeply concerned about the effect the toxins could have on Guilderland's drinking water supply. After he suffered a stroke in 2002, Dr. Buttner's work on the advisory board was carried forward by his colleagues. . .

Dr. Buttner also loved to travel and

enjoyed traveling the world with his wife. Together, they explored the Amazon, Machu Picchu, Iceland, New Zealand, China, the Alps, The Galapagos, Greece, Italy, and France, as well as many interesting places in North America, all of which he documented with his brilliant photographs. When not traveling, he enjoyed spending time with friends and family at his cabin in the Adirondacks. . .

When they returned from their travels — their last trip abroad was to China in 2001 — Dr. Buttner would often give lectures, accompanied by slides he had taken. He gave a series of lectures at the University at Albany, and spoke about China and Greece at the Guilderland Public Library. . .

His life changed dramatically with his stroke in 2002 and, in his later years, with Alzheimer's disease.

"The stroke affected his right side," said his wife. "He was a very determined and focused man," she said. Dr. Buttner worked at physical therapy and made remarkable progress, she said. "He could walk."

Dr. Buttner suffered aphasia because of brain damage from the stroke. Always a verbal person, "He lost the gift of language. He could never speak or write," said Mrs. Buttner. "It was immensely frustrating for him." . .

*Read the entire fascinating story in the Altamont Enterprise at <http://altamontenterprise.com/05072015/peter-jr-buttner>*



Lupine in bloom near Blueberry Hill after controlled burns, May 2015  
Photo by Dave Camp.

## 4 Simple Ways to Teach Your Kids About Recycling at Home

By Jacinda Boneau

Get the family talking about all things recycling. If you don't already recycle in your home, take this opportunity to open up the conversation. Talk to your kids about the importance of recycling and how it can help our environment. Did you know that the average American family wastes about 150 pounds of paper per year? Teach your kids about where paper comes from and how recycling can help save the trees and forests. And instead of having our plastic containers making their way to the ocean, talk to them about how we can recycle plastic to make it into new things. Here are a few other ways you can start talking all about how to reduce, reuse, and recycle ...

**1. Read up on It** - A great way to break down the basics of recycling is with a book. Start off by reading a book about the topic — there are many you can choose from. After you've read it, talk about how you want to start recycling in your home and how it will help the environment. Here are a few books to help get you started...

*Don't Throw That Away!: A Lift-the-Flap Book about Recycling and Reusing* by Michael Recycle;  
*I Can Save the Earth!: One Little Monster Learns to Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle*; *Fancy Nancy: Every Day Is Earth Day (I Can Read Book 1)*

**2. Make Personalized Bins** - Next, make recycling bins for paper, glass, and plastic. Let the kids decorate them however they'd like with images of what will go inside. This can be a great reminder and will help the little ones not get too overwhelmed. If you want, you can make a goal chart above each bin to try and see how much you've recycled in a week.

**3. Make It a Game** - Recycling can also be fun by repurposing it in your home. We took old water bottles and made them into a classic carnival game that the kids had a blast playing. It was a way for us to show them that we don't need to buy new toys when we can make them at home. This is a great way to get the wheels in their head turning for new and creative options.

**4. Visit a Recycling Center** - Last, but certainly not least, take a family trip to the recycling center. You can use this recycling site to help you find a recycling center near you. Meet the people that work at the recycling center and learn about where all the recycled material goes. You can also find out if there are ways you can volunteer as a family at the recycling center.

*Jacinda Boneau is a fabric designer and founding co-editor at Pretty Prudent..*

*Carol Waterman submitted this article about tobacco and the environment from <http://ash.org/earthday2015/>*

## The Unforeseen Consequences of Tobacco

Most people view cigarettes as a health problem, but they are a huge environmental problem as well. The entire life cycle of a cigarette has an impact on the environment — from growing the tobacco to throwing away the butt.

**Tobacco Farming** - Tobacco cultivation is responsible for a myriad of environmental problems, including land and water pollution due to pesticides as well as deforestation. Tobacco

plants are prone to many insect pests, and therefore tobacco farmers are forced to use pesticides to keep the plants healthy. Not only do tobacco growers often get sick from the pesticides, but the pesticides also leach into the soil and water.

Tobacco growth and cultivation also causes deforestation. Trees are often cut down to make room for tobacco plants. Once tobacco plants have been harvested, they are "cured." Sometimes the curing is done by air drying, but often tobacco is cured by burning wood to heat the air, which speeds up the process.

It's estimated that 600 million trees are cut down every year to produce tobacco products and cigarette-manufacturing machines use up to four miles of paper an hour to roll and package cigarettes.

**Air Pollution** - As mentioned above, tobacco cultivation is a source of air pollution. But cigarettes also have a significant effect on air pollution while they are being smoked. When cigarettes are burned, they create more than 7,000 chemicals. At least 69 of these chemicals are known to cause cancer, and many are poisonous.

A study in Italy found that cigarettes release 10 times as much particulate matter into the air as a diesel engine. Smoke from cigarettes and from tobacco cultivation is contributing to climate change.

It's well established that second hand smoke is extremely dangerous. It should be considered an environmental problem as well as a public health concern.

**Butts** - In 2009, tobacco products — primarily cigarette butts — comprised nearly 38% of all collected litter items from roadways and streets. In 2010, over one million (1,181,589) cigarettes or cigarette filters — enough to fill 94,626 packs —

*Tobacco continued on Page 2*

### Next Dinner Dates

**No dinner in July!!**

Westminster Presbyterian Church,  
85 Chestnut Street, Albany, NY

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