



Save the Pine Bush

November/December Newsletter

Nov/Dec 22 No. 163 • 223 S. Swan St., Albany, NY 12202 • email contact@savethepinebush.org • phone 518-366-7324 • web www.savethepinebush.org • Circ. 600

Save the Pine Bush Zoom Meeting **November 16, 2022, at 6:30 p.m.**

Amanda Dillon

Field Ecologist and Entomologist for the Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission, will speak about

Science in the Albany Pine Bush Preserve

Ever come across some weird equipment in the preserve? Wonder how we know how many karners are out there? See someone standing with a clipboard on the trail? How do we know if our restoration and management are working? Join us this evening with Amanda Dillon as she details a season of science in the Albany Pine Bush Preserve.

How to Join the Zoom Meeting

A link to the Zoom meeting will be posted on the Save the Pine Bush website at savethepinebush.org/zoom.html. Or click <http://savethepinebush.org/z> for a direct link to Zoom. Or call into the meeting at (929) 205 6099, meeting # 3958921225. **The Zoom meeting will open at 6:00 PM for anyone who wishes to socialize prior to the presentation.** Also, you may call or text (518)366-7324 for assistance.

See you online at 6:30! • Everyone is welcome!

Pine Bush Hikes Are Back!

December Ski/Hike at Blueberry Hill

Saturday December 3, 2022 at 9 AM

Meet at: Trailhead #4 Blueberry Hill East next to Kiddie Academy,
13 Columbia Circle, Albany

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

The first week of December join us for a ski trip or hike in Blueberry Hill Area. If there is snow, bring skis or snowshoes. Otherwise just bring comfortable shoes and we will enjoy a nice morning walk around the Pine Bush enjoying the changing seasons.

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

www.savethepinebush.org

A Wild Idea: How the Environmental Movement Tamed the Adirondacks

by Tom Ellis

ALBANY, NY: Long time SPB member Tom Ellis spoke at the June 22 SPB virtual meeting. He reviewed the book, "A Wild Idea: How the Environmental Movement Tamed the Adirondacks" by Brad Edmondson, published last year. Tom discussed the same book at an in-person review on May 24 for the Friends of the Albany Public Library.

Tom said the title of the book (A Wild Idea) came from what, in the late 1960s, was a utopian belief: that a state agency could be established to successfully block, control, and regulate development in the six-million-acre Adirondack Park, and to perpetually preserve what makes the Adirondacks so special or even spiritual. A Wild

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The Dunn Dump Should be Closed!

by Tom Ellis

New Yorkers live in an environmental health Twilight Zone. Governor Hochul and the state legislature are seeking election or reelection this fall, encouraging voters to approve a \$4.2 billion environmental bond act, while quietly facilitating continued operations in Rensselaer of the largest construction and demolition debris dump in the state, and that borders a 1100 student-staff school.

Many people think it insane to operate a dump next to a school. The NYS Legislature has not enacted legislation to forbid such activity, nor has the governor urged it.

When the state approved the original dump permit in 2012, the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) committed regulatory malpractice. DEC accepted as fact the applicant's statement that the dump would not be proximate to the then-brand new Rensselaer public school. Dumping began early in 2015.

Despite US Representative Paul Tonko signing a petition in 2019 calling for the im-

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Idea came out of the widely held belief of fifty years ago that government can be a positive force, that government can do things well.

The Adirondack Park Agency (APA) was conceived of as perhaps the only possible way to preserve the Adirondacks as an intact ecosystem. How else could millions of acres have been protected from imminent hyper and/or haphazard incremental development that would have ruined or wrecked a spectacular wilderness?

Mr. Edmondson asserted the APA could only have been established when it was--between 1968 and 1973--when the environmental movement that had been growing all through the 1960s, peaked in the United States.

He wrote the opening of the Adirondack Northway (Interstate 87) in 1967, and a proposal (quickly defeated) the same year by Larry Rockefeller, to turn the high peaks into a national park, signaled that threats to the Adirondacks were existential and something must be done quickly. These events led Larry's brother, NY Governor Nelson Rockefeller, to appoint a Temporary Study Commission (TSC) on the Future of the Adirondacks in 1968 that gathered data, created maps, held hearings, and issued a report late in 1970 urging the state legislature create a new state agency--the APA--that would develop land use plans for public and private Adirondacks lands. The legislature established the APA in 1971 and two years later, approved legislation defining its responsibilities and duties. Edmondson wrote that when the APA was established, the Adirondack Park became the largest area in the United States subject to comprehensive land use controls.

The bulk of the book concerns the time period 1968-1973 and provides considerable detail about the inner workings of state and local governments in the Adirondacks during that era. The TSC commissioners and staff worked long hours under difficult conditions to complete their work, as did the early APA staff.

The book discusses the tug of war among powerful, mostly wealthy men, who staffed the TSC, DEC, and early APA. Many are familiar names to long-time SPB members; the Rockefeller brothers, Richard Lawrence, who conceived the Wild Idea, Harold Jerry, Harold Hochschild, Jim Loeb, George Davis, and Peter Paine.

Tom compared how the APA came into existence and what it does with efforts by Save the Pine Bush and the Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission to preserve thousands of acres in the Pine Bush. More than 3500 acres are preserved with 2500 more identified for preservation.

Tom recommended SPB lobby the Albany County Legislature (ACL) to allocate \$1 million annually to acquire Pine Bush lands in Albany

County for preservation. He said SPB has many friends in the legislature, it should be easy to get sponsors, one million dollars is a tiny part of the county's \$750 million annual budget, the 2023 proposed budget will be issued in the fall followed by a public hearing, with the 2023 budget approved at a December ACL meeting.

During the questions and comments, Russell Ziema pointed out an important omission from the book. Mr. Edmondson did not mention the Sacandaga Reservoir, completed about 1930 that flooded 42 square miles of Adirondack land. Tom agreed.

Close Dunn continued from page 1

mediate and permanent closure of the dump, no elected state government official has called for dump closure.

Dump owner, Texas-based Waste Connections, held a June 14 meeting at the Rensselaer school at which Rensselaer and East Greenbush residents, Rensselaer County legislators, and Rensselaer city councilmen demanded closure. One county legislator was nearly in tears saying his pets got cancer from the dump. Many others described in detail how the dump has an enormous negative impact on health and quality of life.

Shortly thereafter, dump owners mailed a two-page color flyer to Rensselaer residents. In it, Dunn promised to "always live up to our responsibility in continuing a positive, fact-based dialogue" and asserted "Our operations are not contributing to any contamination in the surrounding environment." I will pay \$1000 to anyone who can prove Dunn's operations are not contaminating the surrounding environment.

Dunn has had plenty of time to clean up its act and become the good neighbor it claims to be. Dunn apparently cannot or will not resolve, let alone acknowledge, the many hazards and abuses it imposes on its neighbors.

The dump's permit expired on July 19 but dumping continues. Governor Hochul should instruct the DEC and state health department commissioners to close the dump because it is an ongoing nuisance and menace to public health.

Tracy Frirsch drafted the following resolution and is calling on organizations and local legislatures to pass it:

A Resolution Calling on the NYS Legislature and Department of Environmental Conservation to Ban the Use of Sewage Sludge in Compost and as a Soil Amendment or Fertilizer due to PFAS Contamination.

Summary: This resolution calls for New York State to ban the recycling and use of sewage

sludge (also known by the PR term "biosolids") as a fertilizer or soil amendment, including the co-processing (composting or anaerobic digestion) of sewage sludge with food waste or yard waste, due to contamination with PFAS and other toxic substances.

1. WHEREAS, in the process of treating municipal and industrial sewage, wastewater treatment plants produce a solid, semisolid, or slurry residual material that is commonly called sludge (or biosolids), as a by-product of wastewater treatment processes.

WHEREAS, following treatment, the sludge may be dried and disposed of at landfills or applied as a soil amendment or fertilizer to agricultural croplands and landscapes either without further processing alone or in combination with plant, food or yard wastes.

WHEREAS, sewage sludge is known to contain numerous contaminants:

1. EPA has identified 352 pollutants in sewage sludge including pharmaceuticals, steroids and flame-retardants, but cannot regulate these pollutants in sewage sludge since data as well as risk assessment tools are lacking; and

2. Testing of sewage sludge from municipal wastewater treatment plants everywhere tested around the U.S. has detected per and polyfluorinated alkyl substances (PFAS), also known as "forever chemicals"; and

3. Sewage sludge may also be contaminated with heavy metals.

WHEREAS PFAS are called "forever chemicals" because the strength of the carbon-fluorine bond prevents them from breaking down naturally. This class of chemicals includes more than 12,000 different compounds with various chemical properties. PFAS are commonly used in thousands of products, from nonstick cookware to firefighting foam and protective gear, because they have desirable chemical properties that impart oil and water repellency, friction reduction, and temperature resistance. PFAS as a class have a wide variety of distinct chemical properties and toxicities; for example, some PFAS can bioaccumulate and persist in the human body and the environment, while others transform relatively quickly. The PFAS that do transform, however, will become one or more other PFAS because the carbon-fluorine bond they contain does not break naturally. It is for this reason that PFAS are termed "forever chemicals."

WHEREAS organizations such as the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), and the EPA have linked exposure to PFAS (particularly PFOA-perfluorooctanoic acid and PFOS-perfluorooctanesulfonic acid) to multiple cancers, thyroid dysfunction, small

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Save the Pine Bush Lost Good Friends

Mark Plaat One of the Founders of Save the Pine Bush

ALBANY, NY: *Mark Plaat was one of the founders of Save the Pine Bush in February, 1978. He led many hikes, cleanups, and organized a cross-country ski race. Here is his obituary.*

On May 13th, Mark Plaat, loving husband and father of two boys passed away at the age of 72.

Mark was born on May 8, 1950 along with his twin sister Tina, in Bronx NY to Shirley and Julius Plaat. He left home to attend SUNY Albany where he got his BS in Environmental Sciences and continued his education at RPI where he received a MS in Urban Planning.

He was a charter member of PYE (Protect Your Environment) at SUNY Albany and an advocate from then on as a charter member of Save the Pine Bush. He also became an active member and leader of the Albany Chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club. He was a member of PSIA and an active ski instructor at Jiminy Peak Resort for more than 20 years. Mark retired from over 20 years of retail service at Homebrew Emporium in Defreestville New York where he made many cherished friends.

Mark had a passion for skiing, camping, hiking, biking, travel, and music. A child of the 60's and Grateful Dead fan, he also loved Jazz and the Blues which he could play a mean harmonica to when the spirit moved him. He also enjoyed homebrewing beer and wine to share with friends.

Mark was predeceased by his parents, Shirley and Julius Plaat. He is survived by his wife of 40 years, Nancy (Leicht) Plaat, his sons Louis (Holly Proper-Plaat), and Daniel. He was blessed with four beautiful granddaughters, Adelaide, Ellanora, Seraphina, and Rosetta. He is also survived by his sister, Tina Ponzo and nephews Andrew (Hillary) and Jeffrey (Robin). Mark also left behind many loving cousins, sister and brother in laws, additional nieces and nephews, and cherished friends, especially Andy, Bill, and Ted

A funeral service was held at Levine Memorial Chapel, 649 Washington Avenue, Albany New York 12206 on Wednesday, May 18, 2022 at noon. Followed by his burial at Memory Gardens in Colonie and a small reception at the Pine Bush Discovery Center at 195 New Karner Rd #1, Albany NY 12205.

Donations in Mark's memory may be made to Friends of the Pine Bush Community, Adirondack Mountain Club-Trails, or the Mohawk-Hudson Land Conservancy.

Jim Travers, Save the Pine Bush Volunteer

ALBANY, NY: *Lynne Jackson was asked to speak at Jim's memorial service. Here are her edited comments.*

Jim was a passionate advocate for the environment. With Save the Pine Bush, he worked tirelessly opposing the expansion of the Albany Landfill in the Pine Bush. But, he especially worked to stop the City of Albany from operating a landfill on 361 acres of beautiful woodland in the Town of Coeymans, where he lived.

Jim read and researched landfills extensively. He knew his facts. He attended countless public hearings and public meetings. He worked for years and years speaking out about how important it was not to let the City of Albany make this beautiful land in Coeymans into a dump.

In 2018, the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation purchased this woodland from the City of Albany for a preserve. All of Jim's hard work paid off — and we all won. Instead of a dump, Coeymans now has this beautiful woodland for hiking, bird-watching, hunting, fishing and winter activities like cross-country skiing.

We owe a big thanks to Jim for his foresight and advocacy to preserve this land.

I know Jim was involved in many other environmental issues, especially as related to toxic chemicals. But, Jim was very modest about his achievements, and I do not know of all of the other issues he worked on.

Once, Jim regaled me with a story about his attendance at a huge protest over housing issues in Washington, DC. I wish I could remember the details but, what I do remember is that this protest involved Jim actually stealing the rolodex of a famous politician and the police. If anyone knows this story, I would very much like to hear about it! [Note: turns out, a lot of Jim's friends knew this story. Jim took Michael Deaver's rolodex. Deaver was White House Deputy Chief of Staff under Ronald Reagan. The rolodex was returned before Jim and his companions left.]

There is no doubt that Jim worked hard and was effective with his advocacy for the environment and other justice issues. In addition, he was a really caring person. Not only did he work for justice on all kinds of issues, he also was a good and caring friend.

I spoke to Jim only a few weeks ago. About his health, he told me it was not looking good. I told him I wanted to come visit, and he said, oh no, that his apartment was too messy. I had planned to go see him when my husband and I returned from being away. Unfortunately, I

waited too long, and Jim was gone.

Had I been able to see Jim one more time, I would have told him that he did so much for the environment, for housing, for people. Who cares if his apartment was stuffed with paper from a life-time of working for justice? The big secret about activists like Jim, is that people working hard for justice are too busy advocating for and helping their fellow humans to be concerned about filing their papers and keeping their houses tidy for visitors.

I will miss Jim. We lost him too soon.

Here is Jim's obituary.

James A. Travers III, passed away peacefully on the eve of August 31, 2022, after losing his battle with lymphoma. James, aka Jim or Jimmy, was born on October 31, 1948, to the late Helen K. Travers (Kennedy) and the late James A. Travers II, in Freeport on Long Island. Jim was the youngest of three children. Jim graduated from Wantagh High School in 1967.

Jim was a great prankster and he and his friends loved playing pranks on each other as well on some other unsuspecting victims. He also enjoyed surfing and going to Jones Beach. Jim married Judy Shaw in 1969 and they had two children, Cheryl and Jason. They moved to Albany and eventually separated.

Jim raised Cheryl and Jason as a single parent, dedicating his life to them. Jim was a wonderful and loving father. Jim fought against social injustices his entire life. He would help anyone, without exception, and his kindness and humility were appreciated by all who knew him.

He became involved with United Tenants of Albany in the 1970s, when he had housing problems. He remained an active supporter of tenants' rights and affordable housing throughout his life. Many of the folks he met through United Tenants became lifelong friends. Jim was also passionate about the environment and was active with Save the Pine Bush, fighting to preserve the land, its rare ecosystem, and the Karner Blue butterfly. Many environmental causes benefitted from Jim's activism.

Jim was predeceased by his sister, Sharon McGlynn; and his son, Jason. He is survived by his sister, Dawn Daugherty (John); his daughter, Cheryl Travers; his son-in-law, Eric Phoenix; his two grandchildren, Bazeil Phoenix and Zinnaira Mansingh; as well as his two great-granddaughters, Fearra and Aleiya Mansingh. He is also survived by three nieces and a nephew. A memorial service was held on Saturday, September 17, from 1 to 4 p.m. at the First Unitarian Universalist Society, 405 Washington Ave., Albany. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to United Tenants of Albany or Save the Pine Bush.

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changes in birthweight, and high cholesterol.

WHEREAS, in Spring 2022, the state of Maine banned all land application of sewage sludge and other biosolids because of documented PFAS contamination of soils, well water, farm products including milk, grains, and vegetables, farm livestock, and the bodies of farm families as a result of the spreading of sewage sludge on farmland; and

WHEREAS PFAS “forever chemicals” and other hazardous chemicals in the sewage sludge are known to contaminate the resulting compost¹⁰ or anaerobic digestate; and

WHEREAS PFAS compounds are readily absorbed by plants and they bioaccumulate up the food chain, whether they are in livestock feed, the human food supply or plants or animals eaten by wildlife; and

WHEREAS PFAS compounds leach into groundwater¹¹ and are extremely persistent in soil (and the bodies of people and other animals),

NOW, THEREFORE, in view of the foregoing substantial harmful and long-lasting adverse impacts of the application of sewage sludge in any form on lands and the coincident impacts on air and water resources, <<place organization name here>>, hereby resolves as follows:

1. <<place organization name here>>. supports (1) a ban on the recycling of sewage sludge (AKA biosolids) for use as a fertilizer or soil amendment; (2) the land application of sewage sludge and fertilizers or compost made with sewage sludge; and (3) a ban on the co-processing of sewage sludge with food waste and/or yard waste in a composting operation or in an anaerobic digester.

2. <<place organization name here>>. further resolves to advocate for these bans and to educate the public on their necessity to protect the environment, the food supply, and public health.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the organization named below acknowledge its approval and support of this Resolution.

Ask Albany County to Dedicate Funds to Buy Pine Bush

by Lynne Jackson

ALBANY, NY: It is time for Albany County to step up and dedicate funds to purchase land in the Pine Bush. Let’s follow Tom Ellis’ suggestion in the article he wrote in this newsletter, “A Wild Idea,” and lobby the Albany County Legislature to annually allocate \$1 million to purchase land in the Pine Bush.

The fight for the Pine Bush has been going on for nearly fifty years. It is long past time to just buy the remaining privately owned land in the Pine Bush ecosystem to preserve it as forever wild.

Almost the entire Pine Bush ecosystem is located in Albany County. But, Albany County has done very little to protect and preserve this beautiful unique ecosystem.

The Albany County Legislature will be finalizing the budget for Albany County very soon. The Albany County Legislature usually holds a budget hearing on the forth Tuesday of the month in November. This year, the forth **Tuesday is November 22**. The hearings are held at 7:15 PM in the Albany County Legislative chambers in the Albany County Court House, entrance on Lodge Street, Albany.

Yes, you read that correctly — the County

Volunteers Needed!

Want to volunteer with Save the Pine Bush? Volunteers needed for the newsletter, including writing articles and preparing the layout. In addition, volunteers are needed to organize the speakers for the virtual Zoom meetings

legislature holds budget hearings on the Tuesday before Thanksgiving!

Very few members of the public attend these hearings. When Tom has attended in the past, he has often been the only speaker.

Let’s make a big showing, attend the hearing and ask for money to be set aside for Pine Bush preservation.

By November 16, I will be able to confirm the hearing will be Tuesday, November 22.

People do not need to speak long. It is possible that public comments will be limited to three or five minutes.

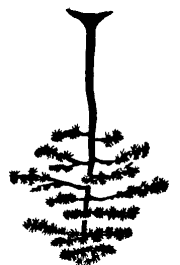
Please pencil this hearing in on your calendar, and plan to attend. Write a short speech with just a few reasons why you want to protect the entire remaining Pine Bush ecosystem.

Email me at contact@savethepinebush.org to be put on a list to be reminded of the hearing. I will send out an email as soon as I can confirm the date, and, if you send me an email, I will make sure you receive a notice with all the necessary information.

Let’s get the remaining approximately 2500 acres of privately-owned Pine Bush ecosystem into the Preserve!

Return Service Requested

Save the Pine Bush
A Project of the Social Justice Center
33 Central Avenue
Albany, NY 12210



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