



# L.I. Sierra Club News

Volume 36 No. 1

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

Spring 2016

## ENVIRONMENTALIST OF THE YEAR AWARDS LUNCHEON

Saturday, March 12, 2016, 1:00-4:00pm • Seatuck's Scully Estate, Islip, NY

Please join us for our 34th Annual Environmentalist of the Year Awards Luncheon and Ceremony honoring Dr. Heidi Hutner.

Dr. Heidi Hutner serves as Director of the Sustainability Studies Program at Stony Brook University and as Director of the Environmental Humanities major in the Sustainability Studies Program. Her journey into environmentalism and sustainability began through the study of the connections between toxic pollution and disease in the writings of Rachel Carson and Sandra Steingraber. This investigation led her to teach courses and write about toxics and cancer in literature and film. More recently, Hutner's work expanded to include a larger range of environmental issues such as climate change, radioactive nuclear pollution, fracking, food/agricultural and animal rights, and general sustainability/energy issues.

The luncheon will be held at the beautiful Scully Estate. From the late 1880's until the early part of the 20th century, the 70-acre estate was part of Windholme Farm, a nearly 300-acre "gentleman's farm" that also included the 200-acre Seatuck National Wildlife Refuge on the east side of South Bay Avenue. Inspired by a French chateau, the house at Scully (which was named Wereholme) was built in 1917.

All are welcome, with a suggested donation of \$20. Please RSVP by March 2nd to Ann Aurelio at [SmileyAnn21@Verizon.net](mailto:SmileyAnn21@Verizon.net) or call 631-567-1937. Send checks to PO Box 172 West Sayville, NY 11796-0172.



*Dr. Heidi Hutner*

Seatuck Wildlife Refuge Center (Scully Estate), 550 So. Bay Ave., Islip, NY 11751, (631) 581-6908.

**DIRECTIONS:** From Southern State Pkwy Exit 43 south, or Sunrise Hwy. Exit 45 south. Take Islip Ave. (Route 111) south to Montauk Hwy. (Main Street). Turn right at Main St/New York 27A W. (On Main Street you will see the Town of Islip's Town Hall building.) Turn left at So. Bay Ave. Destination is about a mile from Main Street on the right side.

### Don't Forget Earth Day April 22<sup>nd</sup>

Started nationwide in 1970 by Senator Gaylord Nelson who called upon students to fight for environmental causes.

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## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND CHAIRS

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\*Executive Committee Member

\*\*The ExCom meets monthly, generally on the third Monday or Tuesday. For details, call the Chair or Vice-Chair.

## Letter from the Chair

By Jane Fasullo

The biggest snow to hit the New York city area in many years just finished falling. As I sit here, I can't help thinking about how comfy I felt in my home during the storm. I hope you did too. But if you had even the slightest discomfort from drafts, or if your energy bills are higher than you feel you should pay, read on.

All homeowners (including condo owners) and renters can reduce unwelcome drafts and stabilize interior temperature which results in increased comfort. And renters, if you talk to your landlord, there's a good chance they will pay for the upgrades or share the costs with you.

So what can you do?

Start simple and cheap. Make sure your windows and doors are working properly and if not, try to make them work better by using a lubricant spray on mechanisms or tracks or by removing burrs or dents on tracks or glides. Make sure windows and doors are fully closed when the heat or A/C are running. Caulk around frames of windows and exterior doors as well as around attic access hatches, doors, or pull down stairs. Use canned (spray) foam to seal all big gaps especially around holes where tubes or wires pass through exterior walls or from one floor to another (be careful, it expands!). Caulk gaps between walls and floors and between walls and ceilings. If you can't do these things yourself, hire someone to do them. Even if you hire someone, these actions will pay for themselves in less than a year of energy cost savings.

Then look to do other improvements. Add insulated drapes to sliding doors and windows. Add storm doors to your exterior doors. Add storm windows to single pane windows—it's easier and cheaper than replacing your windows (search exterior storm windows). Add insulation to your attic and other above-ceiling areas. If you can see the beams, you need more. Weather strip around cold space access hatches, pull down stairs or doors. Add an insulated cover over pull-down access staircases. Including labor, these actions will pay for themselves in less than 2 years.

Get a FREE energy audit. Whether you do the work yourself and whether you live in a conventional or unconventional home, you qualify for one. It will tell you what else you should do to make your home comfy (like getting a more efficient furnace) and it will add things that can reduce your energy consumption (though they won't add to your comfort like new appliances).

Find out what you can get FREE and how to reduce your costs by visiting [www.LongIslandGreenHomes.org](http://www.LongIslandGreenHomes.org). The site also has information about low cost financing options (for those who don't qualify for free materials or installation) including on bill financing and low cost loans.



To join, visit our website [www.LiSierraClub.org](http://www.LiSierraClub.org).

# SPRING PROGRAMS

## **Rusty Schmidt: How to Use L.I.'s Native Plants to Protect Wildlife**

**Grace UMC — New Date: Mar. 5, 2-4pm** (1:30pm refreshments)

515 S. Wellwood Ave., Lindenhurst

See the website for the full event details.

See the second Rusty Schmidt item to learn more about him.

## **Family program: Start your own garden—take home seed plantings and other activities.**

**Sands Point Preserve — Sun., April 3, 12-3pm**

127 Middle Neck Rd., Sands Point.

For more info., call Mary Miller 516-571-7901

A celebration of Spring Celebration. The long winter is over! As the Preserve awakens to the spring season, bring the family for an afternoon of seasonally-themed activities: take-home seed planting, live bird program, family photo opportunities, and our much-awaited spring crafts room. Weather permitting, we'll have outdoor navigation trail hikes, scavenger hunts and beach walks.

Admission: \$20 per car / \$10 per car with SSP Membership Pass.

## **Film screening: A Convenient Truth: Urban solutions from Curitiba, Brazil, 2006**

### *Third of three in our zero waste series*

**Grace UMC — Fri., April 8, 7-9pm** (6:30 refreshments)

515 S. Wellwood Ave., Lindenhurst

For more info., call Diane 631-532-9926

"This documentary aims at sharing ideas to provoke environment-friendly and cost-effective changes in cities worldwide. It focuses on innovations in transportation, recycling, social benefits including affordable housing, parks, and the processes that transformed Curitiba into one of the most livable cities in the world. Includes exclusive interviews from Curitiba's mayors, Jaime Lerner and Cassio Tanigushi, as well as others who made Curitiba a world class model". By Maria Vaz Photography in association with Del Bello Pictures present; director, Giovanni Vaz Del Bello; scriptwriters, Giovanni Vaz Del Bello, Maria Terezinha Vaz.

Followed by a discussion of what we're doing locally to save our water and and keep it clean, led by Corey Humphrey, Nassau Soil and Water Conservation District.

## **Family program: Foraging for wild edibles tour with 'Wildman' Steve Brill**

**Belmont Lake State Park — Sat. April 9, 10:30-12:30**

Belmont Ave., N. Babylon

From the time 'Wildman' Steve was arrested for picking dandelions in Central Park in the 70's he (and now with his daughter, Ariel) has been helping us understand what those 'weeds' are that we hate so much. You may discover that you can actually eat some and which ones to keep on hating. Also see listing in hike schedule. Easy hike, bring a hand trowel, bags and paper bags for collecting.

Steve has written many books including *Identifying and harvesting edible and medicinal plants in wild (and not so wild places)* and *The Wild Vegan Cookbook* and is the subject of a documentary film 'Foraging with the Wildman'.

Wheelchair accessible. \$20 suggested donation to Steve. Reservations required at least 24 hrs. in advance, space is limited: 914-835-2153, for more info: go to [wildmanstevebrill.com](http://wildmanstevebrill.com).

## **Rusty Schmidt: Raingardens to help save and keep our water clean**

### **Part two of a two part series**

**Grace UMC — Fri. May 12, 7pm** (6:30 refreshments)  
515 S. Wellwood Ave., Lindenhurst

Rusty Schmidt is an expert in ecological planning and design. His projects include coordinating rain garden programs in Minnesota, Canada, Ohio, Indiana and Missouri. He is an innovative designer of natural and native environments in existing/new developments, as well as alternative stormwater facilities and wetlands restoration/habitat improvement. He is the co-author of *The Blue Thumb Guide to Raingardens: Design and Installation for Homeowners in the Upper Midwest* and *Plants for Stormwater Design*.

Currently Rusty is a Landscape Ecologist at Nelson, Pope, & Voorhis, LLP in Melville and Adjunct Professor at Farmingdale State College.

More info: 10,000 Raingardens Initiative, Kansas City, MO. <http://www.sustainablecitiesinstitute.org/topics/water-and-green-infrastructure/urban-forestry/rain-gardens/10000-rain-gardens-initiative>.



# Outings and Events

*Note: More information about events, additions or cancellations: [www.LiSierraClub.org](http://www.LiSierraClub.org), mouse over "events" and click on "calendar". Registration with the leader at least one hour before is strongly advised. Please call back if you can't attend. Read descriptions carefully. YOU PARTICIPATE AT YOUR OWN RISK.*

*For all hikes: 1 - bring a beverage, 2 - dress in layers, 3 - wear appropriate footwear, 4 - heavy rain or snow cancels, and 5 - pace is moderate unless stated otherwise. "E" means an event has at least three brief two-five minute stops for educational purposes and information sharing along the way. Leaders: Jane (631-689-1568), Len (LN56789@gmail.com), Jan (beachtowel1@verizon.net or 631-327-1268), Paul (631-707-6497 or wpziems@optonline.net), Julie (732-337-6757 or juliecoats@gmail.com).*

**Mar. 5, Sat. – E – Jane**

**noon**

## **Hike – Massapequa Preserve, Massapequa**

4 + mi.; 2 hr.; **flat; rooted; moderate pace; some stops.** From the farthest east end of the parking lot on the NORTH side of the Massapequa train station, walk to the bathrooms, then along the Greenbelt trail to the second bridge, cross the stream, and return along the stream on a paved path. Learn how the park came to be, where the stream water comes from, what purposes the ponds serve, and what the tall grasses are. Learn how to recognize greenbrier, poison ivy, bitter sweet, and skunk cabbage. Identify some of the many birds. **Directions:** Sunrise Hwy to Broadway in Massapequa (traffic light & diner on the corner). Turn right. Turn right immediately after going under the RR trestle. Pass through the parking lot, zig a bit, then go to the far end, right side, of the second lot by the opening in the fence.

**Mar 6, Sun. – Paul**

**10:45 am**

## **Hike – Montauk State Park Money Pond Trail**

5-ish mi.; **short hills; moderately difficult;** pace 2.5 mph; 2-3 hrs. Arrive at 10:45 to sign in. Start promptly at 11. Follow Money Pond Trail on the north side of Montauk Highway to Money Pond. Continue west to Seal Haul Out Rd. then head to the seal overlook where, if we approach quietly, we may see seals resting on the rocks. Return along Money Pond Trail. After the hike, optionally walk the rocks (revetment) on the ocean side of the Lighthouse to Turtle Cove and back. The Lighthouse Grille has inside restrooms and food/snacks but it may not be open this early in the year. The lighthouse gift shop may also be open. Dress for the weather (layers advised). Bring liquid to drink and a tick repellent. Snack and camera are advised. Meet in the lower parking lot at the lighthouse near the rest rooms (open all year). No pets. Rain or snow cancels.

**Mar. 13, Sun. – E – Jane**

**noon**

## **Hike – Pine Trail, Ridge**

4 mi.; **mostly flat; moderate pace.** Walk through oak forests, visit a series of ponds that are the headwaters of the Peconic River (Sandy, Grassy, and maybe Duck) and discuss what lives in and around the woods and water. At the end of the hike, you'll be able to identify and avoid poison ivy, and know how to avoid tick illnesses. Dress for the weather. Heavy rain (but not drizzle) cancels. Bring a beverage and tick repellent. Bathrooms NOT available here. **Directions:** Meet at the Pine Trail parking lot on the South side of Middle Country Road, about ¼ mile East of the William Floyd Parkway.

**March 19, Sat. – Julie**

**10 am**

## **Hike – Blydenburgh County Park, Smithtown**

3.5 mi.; 2 hr.; **mostly flat w some mud and high brush; moderate pace.** **This is ideal for all levels of experience.** Enjoy the shorter loop of Blydenburgh County Park, starting at the SOUTH ENTRANCE off route 347/454. Follow along the lake path for some amazing scenic views, and turn back for a shorter hike. Please meet in the boat rental parking lot adjacent to the lake; possible park fee. We'll need to check for ticks - bring repellent!

**Mar. 25, Fri. – E – Jane**

**11 am**

## **Hike – Avalon & West Farm, Stony Brook**

3 plus mi.; 1.5 hr.; **hilly, moderate pace.** Start this varied hike at the Stony Brook gristmill (restored) and pond. Walk the boardwalk along the pond, climb the stone steps to a small man-made pond, a labyrinth, a monument (learn why it's here), and pause at a rhododendron viewing platform. Cross Rhododendron La. to West Farm, a mix of hilly woodlands, open fields and transition zones where vines, shrubs, and small trees provide the perfect habitat for upland birds because they supply shelter and food (berries and seeds). Stop a few times to discuss some of the animals and plants located here. On the way back, stop to see who's on the pond. Closest bathrooms are a 5 minute walk away in the shopping center. Meet across from the grist mill on Harbor Rd (off Main Street) in Stony Brook.

**April 2, Sat. – Julie**

**10 am**

## **Hike – Edgewood Oak Brush Plains Preserve Trail, Commack**

3plus mi.; 2 hr.; **flat; moderate pace.** Great trail for all levels of ability. We should have an opportunity to observe budding spring foliage and wildlife. We once had the excitement of seeing a Bobwhite (quail) in the field! Please meet in the parking lot.

**Apr. 3, Sun. – Len**

**1 pm**

## **Hike – Trailview, Woodbury**

5- 6 mi.; 3+ hrs.; **HILLY, moderately strenuous.** Only those in good physical condition should take this hike. Enjoy friendly conversation as you explore the awesome natural beauty of Trailview State Park. Sierra Club members and friends will join with people from other groups. Bring a beverage. Snack suggested. Don't forget to bring your smile and a positive attitude. Be sure you and your guests can handle a quick pace before registering. Wear layers to adjust for the weather. Bathrooms in the Stop and Shop just west of the trail head parking lot. **Directions:** Rte. 135 (Seaford/Oyster Bay Expy) North to Jericho Tpk. Head east (right) on Jericho Tpk. (rte. 25) toward Woodbury. Look for the Stop and Shop on the north (left) side after Woodbury Rd. You Must Register by leaving your phone number with Len.

**Apr. 10, Sun. – E – Jane**

**1:30 pm**

## **Hike – Takapausha Museum and Preserve**

5 mi.; 2 hr.; **flat; moderate pace with stops.** Some areas of the trail are likely to be wet. In the middle of densely populated Seaford on the South Shore, is an historic and beautiful 84-acre sanctuary of oak forests, rare Atlantic White cedar groves, ponds and streams, small mammals and scores of bird species, all of which can be viewed on the clearly marked trails. Sierra Club Naturalist Jan Christopher Porinchak will lead this interpretive walk through this gem of a park. Consider visiting the museum before or after the hike. It has excellent displays and a unique collection of animals including an Arctic Fox! There is a nominal fee to access the park. Adults only. Registration required at [beachtowel1@verizon.net](mailto:beachtowel1@verizon.net). **Address:** 2225 Washington Ave, Seaford, NY. **Takapausha information:** 516-571-7443.

**Apr. 16, Sat. – E – Paul** 9:45 am

**Hike – Wertheim’s White Pine Trail, Shirley**

3+ mi.; < 2 hrs.; **flat; moderate pace** 2.5 mph; some stops. Start at the Welcome Center off Smith Rd., east side of the river. Walk to and over the bridge to the start of the White Pine trail. Wind through upland oak-pine forest, then along the river’s edge looping back to the start point. Detour to a wildlife viewing platform overlooking the river near the Welcome Center. Here, a duck blind makes for good pictures. The Welcome Center houses replicas of Wertheim’s 2250 acres of natural landscapes and wildlife. Restrooms in the Center. Wear layers. Beverage, camera and tick repellent suggested. Continuous rain or storms cancel. Enter the park from Smith Rd., about one mile south of Montauk Hwy. Smith Rd. is 2 mi. E. of Horseblock Rd. or 1.5 mi. west of William Floyd Pky. No pets.

**Apr. 17, Sun. – E – Jane** noon

**Hike – Muttontown Preserve, Muttontown**

3-4 mi.; 1.5-2 hrs.; **rolling & flat; moderate pace**. Cover this 550 acre plot of fields, woodlands, ponds and estate grounds in Nassau County’s largest nature preserve and one of the most beautiful settings on Long Island. Hear about the mansion and its ruins and learn about some of the native and non-native plants on the grounds. Bathrooms probably not open. If it recently rained, the ground will be wet and slippery so wear appropriate shoes. **Directions:** At the end of Muttontown Lane, South off 25A in East Norwich west of rte. 106. Meet at the nature center.

**Apr. 23, Sat. – E – Jane** noon

**Hike – Spinney Rd to Sears Pond, Flanders**

5+/- mi., 2 hours, **slightly rolling, moderate pace** in an oak forest with 2 or more ponds. During stops to let people in back catch up, learn about summer ticks & chiggers, the importance of this area to L.I. wildlife and our drinking water, the value of natural fires, and plants and animals who live here while listening for the sounds of nature. We’ll pass at least two ponds. Bring tick repellent. No bathrooms. Park at Spinney Rd. on the S. side of County Rte. 24, east of Long Neck Rd. and west of the police station.

**May 8, Sun. MOTHER’S DAY – E – Jane** noon

**Hike – Elizabeth Morton Preserve, Sag Harbor**

1.5 mi loop; **flat, suitable for all levels**; 1 plus hr. In 1954 Elizabeth Morton donated these 187 acres to the Fish and Wildlife Service. Now we can explore the wonderful mix of ornamental and non-native plants as they intertwine with native shrubs and plant communities. Learn how the succession of plant communities illustrates the agricultural changes in the area that dates back to 1600. A unique highlight of this hike is being buzzed by Chickadees, Nuthatches and other small birds accustomed to being fed—they’ll eat out of your hand! DO NOT bring bread—it is not good for them. Bring bird seed, sunflower preferred. Our path will be on a forested trail with some boardwalks and beach sections. This is a slow walk designed so we can enjoy what’s around us. Bring tick repellent, sunshade, beverage. Camera and binoculars suggested. Bathroom at entrance to refuge. Entry fee: \$4/car, \$2/pedestrian. Rain cancels. **Directions:** Noyack Rd (CR 38) between Deerfield Rd. and Millstone Rd. across from the Noyac Golf and Country Club.

**May 14, Sat. – Julie** 10 am

**Hike – West Hills County Park, Melville**

4-5 mi.; 2-2.5 hr.; **mixed flat and steeply rolling; moderate pace**. Walk the Walt Whitman trail in West Hills County Park, starting at the trailhead off Sweet Hollow Road. This is ideal for all levels of experience. The 3.8-mile loop includes a 400 ft. elevation gain up Jaynes Hill, the highest elevation on Long Island. There are many paths off the main one; we may explore with one! Bathrooms available. Please meet in the parking lot.

**May 21, Sat. – E – Jane** 3 pm

**Hike – West Meadow Beach, Stony Brook**

1.5 hrs.; 2 mi.; **flat interpretive walk** on the West Meadow peninsula. Walk all or part of the way to the end on the beach then return along the paved path on the marsh side. Learn about the cottages that once stood here, the local wildlife (plover, crabs, raccoon, etc.), beach habitats, beach ecology, and some of the plants like beach plums and bayberry. Dress in layers. Bring a beverage, sun screen, and tick repellent. Restrooms at the parking lot. Car parking fee may apply: \$20 non- town residents, \$5 resident, \$0 with a Town pass. **Directions:** LIE exit 62 North (Nichols Rd.). At end, turn left (25A toward Stony Brook). At first traffic light, turn right onto Quaker Path. After Christian Ave., stay left at the fork onto Mount Gray Rd. About ½ mile up, turn left onto West Meadow Rd. At the end, turn right into the parking lot, then left to the south end. Register please.

**May 22, Sun. – E – Jane** noon

**Bicycle – Westhampton Beach**

About 14 mi.; 2 hr.; 7-13 mph. **Paved roads with little traffic. Beginner friendly.** Bicycle to the barrier island where you’ll see and learn about how the beach and houses were destroyed by a major storm, and then replaced. Learn how storms move sand in general. View the bay and ocean from a raised platform which crosses over the dune. Hear how the beach and back bays were formed and about the importance of the bay to the areas early and current inhabitants. Helmet required. Bring beverage and weather appropriate clothes. The village is about ½ mi. from the end of the ride. High wind may force the route to change. Rain cancels. Meet at the Elementary school on the west side of ONeck La. just south of the intersection with Mill Road and diagonally across from the Westhampton Middle School.

**May 28, Sat. – E – Jane** noon

**Kayak – Browns Creek, Sayville**

3 miles in 1-1.5 hrs. on the river. **Good for beginners.** More experienced kayakers will add more on the Great South Bay. Much of the riverside is protected marsh so we should see plenty of birds (e.g. marsh wrens, herons, red wing blackbirds) and talk about the importance of marshes and how they and their life forms are affected by tides and pollution. With light winds, paddle into the Great South Bay for an open water experience. If it’s windy, optionally, do a second loop of the river. After the kayak, we’ll probably stop to eat at the Cull House (you pay – snacks to full dinners). Bring a beverage, sun protection, and wear weather-appropriate clothes. Floatation device must be worn. Kayak owners meet at the end of Terry Street. Renters call Captains Kayak (631-750-3587 - 23 River Rd.) at least a day ahead to arrange your rental—mention you are with the Sierra Club. Renters meet us in the water about a half hour after the start time. Heavy rain cancels, light rain does not. **Directions:** Sunrise Hwy to Lakeland (exit 49) or Johnson Ave (exit 50) south to Montauk Hwy. Turn left (east) and bear right onto Middle Rd. Turn right onto Foster Ave and left onto Terry St. Renters, turn left off Foster Avenue at Hamilton or Erwin Street, before Terry.

**REMINDER: DON’T FLUSH DRUGS!**

Unwanted prescription drugs - bring to a King Kullen food market at a prescription counter or drop them at a police precinct or senior center. Do NOT put them in the toilet or down the drain where they get into everyone’s drinking water.

Locations in Nassau & Suffolk: <http://www.citizen-scampaign.org/campaigns/pharmaceutical-disposal/nassau-suffolk-locations.asp>

# Implementing the Paris Climate Change Agreement on LI

By Peter Golon, Energy Chair

Almost everyone on Long Island is now aware of climate change. Its cause is the continued burning of fossil fuels (coal, oil and gas) by people everywhere to maintain their lives and lifestyles. We all need to realize how rapidly our species must break its fossil fuel addiction in favor of renewable energy in order to avoid totally ruining the only planet we have.

The international conference in Paris in November ended with 195 nations signing an agreement to each act individually to reduce their carbon dioxide emissions, ultimately reducing them to near zero, with the goal of global warming below 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit)<sup>1</sup>. While some climate scientists argue that the promised reductions will not be sufficient to attain the two degree goal<sup>2</sup>, the fact that all nations could agree to take action indicates that they now recognize the severity of the problem.

Actions to limit the extent of climate change need to be taken at all levels of society. Each of us can act individually by having our houses better insulated<sup>3</sup>, buying and using more efficient appliances<sup>4</sup> including LED light bulbs, adding solar panels to our roofs<sup>5</sup>, and driving less and in better mileage hybrid or plug-in electric cars<sup>6</sup>. All these steps will both save money and reduce our own emissions of climate-changing carbon dioxide.

We can also reduce or eliminate meat from our diets, since growing animals for human consumption releases huge amounts of climate-changing methane from the animals' digestive tracts, and is thus one of the largest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions in the US and world-wide<sup>7</sup>. Even growing animal feed to produce meat on an industrial scale uses many times more fuel, fertilizer, land and pesticides than would be needed to grow the equivalent amount of plant-based food for people.

Each individual change may seem small, but if multiplied by many millions of people, they will make a significant difference.

At the same time, we also need major changes in both policies and actions at all levels in the country—by large corporations, the national government, the state, county, town and village governments, and school districts across Long Island, and of course by LIPA & PSEG. Each should be putting in place appropriate zoning policies, tax incentives, procurement policies, building codes, energy-saving retrofits<sup>8</sup>, etc. in their areas of jurisdiction in order to move as quickly as possible away from fossil fuels such as coal<sup>9</sup> and natural gas<sup>10</sup>, and toward an economy powered by clean energy from sun and wind. We are continuing to add rooftop and large scale solar installations, but

LIPA has regrettably turned down proposals to build a wind farm 30 miles off Montauk Point<sup>11</sup>.

As citizens, it is our job to constantly push these entities to rapidly move beyond continuing the existing practices that continue to drive climate change, and into a new realm of renewably produced and efficiently used energy. After all, it is our children and grandchildren who will be alive to face the impact of a changed climate long after those decision makers leave office.

Footnotes:

1 <https://www.climaterealityproject.org/blog/cop21-paris-agreement>;  
<http://www.theenergycollective.com/globalwarmingisreal/2301999/cop21-paris-agreement-and-art-possible>

2 [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/michael-e-mann/how-close-are-we-to-dangerous-planetary-warming\\_b\\_8841534.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/michael-e-mann/how-close-are-we-to-dangerous-planetary-warming_b_8841534.html)

3 <http://www.lisierraclub.org/#!/energy/c4ew>

4 <https://www.psegliny.com/page.cfm/Efficiency>

5 <https://www.psegliny.com/page.cfm/Renewables/NYSun>

6 <http://www.ucsusa.org/clean-vehicles/electric-vehicles/life-cycle-ev-emissions#.Vny46aI7YvA>

7 <http://www.fao.org/agriculture/lead/themes0/climate/en/>

8 [http://www.rmi.org/retrofit\\_depot\\_get\\_connected\\_true\\_retrofit\\_stories](http://www.rmi.org/retrofit_depot_get_connected_true_retrofit_stories)

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# What Does Cheap Oil Mean for Environmentalists?

By Lauren O'Reilly, member

In January 2016 the price of crude oil fell to prices below \$30 a barrel, averaging \$1.91 a gallon at the gas pump<sup>1</sup>, a record low in over a decade due to excess supply<sup>2</sup>. What does this drop in oil prices mean for the average American? For many, it means cheaper gas, cheaper heating fuel, and even cheaper beef. While it may mean those things in the short term, oil is not a renewable resource. It's a huge contributor to greenhouse gas emissions and of course, to climate change. So the bigger question is: What does cheap oil mean for our environment, and as stewards of the environment, what does it mean for environmentalists?

The environmentalist inherently knows that the market price of oil does not reflect the true cost of oil. It does not include the property damage that results from extreme weather events, the loss of invaluable species, or the human health effects<sup>3</sup> caused by climate change. According to the International Monetary Fund's May 2015 report, the world paid \$4.9 Trillion to subsidize fossil fuels in 2013 and the reason for most energy subsidies (mainly for coal and oil) is due to the failure of countries to charge for the actual cost of domestic environmental damage<sup>4</sup>.

However, the price we pay for oil is determined by the economic market, and on a consumer level, the cheaper the price the more likely we are to consume more of it. So as environmentalists, it's important to try to overcome the natural human tendency to reap short term benefits of cheap oil prices and to remind ourselves of the bigger picture: climate change is here and now, and we need to act accordingly. So when feeling the instant gratification at the gas pump, remember a few things:

1. Oil is a finite resource and prices are unpredictable
2. Climate Change is the present, not the future
3. The US has pledged to reduce GHG emissions 26-28% from 2005 levels by 2025

Oil is a finite resource. Oil prices are affected by a slew of variables, ranging from geopolitical to economic to weather events, all of which are fairly uncertain occurrences. Hurricanes can suspend oil production and close down refineries, extreme cold can cause supply to run low as demand spikes, and outages or issues with pipelines can inhibit oil supply chains, all of which can lead to increases in oil prices<sup>5</sup>. As extreme weather events become more frequent due to the impacts of climate change, imported energy sources, such as oil, become increasingly vulnerable. By the end of the 21st Century, the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), projects we will experience longer and more intense heat waves, longer and more intense droughts, more hurricane activity, and more frequent and intense heavy rainfall events<sup>6</sup>. In addition, as oil prices decrease,

oil extraction becomes less profitable since the most easily extracted oil sources have already been tapped, leaving only high cost and high risk oil extraction projects which require higher oil prices to be worthwhile<sup>7</sup>. Therefore, we can't count on oil remaining cheap.

Climate Change is here now. According to IPCC's 2014 report, unprecedented warming of the atmosphere and oceans, decrease in snow and ice cover, and rising sea levels have been observed since the 1950's due to human induced climate change<sup>8</sup>. While specific extreme weather events cannot be directly linked to climate change, these events may be exacerbated by conditions such as higher sea levels, which can be linked to anthropogenic climate change. For example, the flooding that resulted from Hurricane Sandy was most likely more intense due to higher sea levels caused by climate change<sup>9</sup>.

US pledge to reduce GHG emissions 26-28%.

Renewables are cheaper than they were in the past, and will continue to decrease as efficiency improves. As public policy supports renewables, such as the US's pledge to reduce greenhouse gas emission 26-28% from 2005 levels by 2025 at the 2015 Paris climate conference<sup>10</sup>, demand for renewables will increase, and with it will corporate investor's support will follow<sup>11</sup>.

So, while cheap oil might be a temporarily rewarding, it is in our long term best interest to not allow it to slow down our momentum to invest in renewables and support renewable energy policies.

1 <https://www.eia.gov/petroleum/gasdiesel/>

2 <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/business/energy-environment/oil-prices.html? r=0>

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4 <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/wp/2015/wp15105.pdf>

5 [https://www.eia.gov/finance/markets/spot\\_prices.cfm](https://www.eia.gov/finance/markets/spot_prices.cfm)

6 <http://www.carbonbrief.org/what-the-ipcc-report-says-about-extreme-weather-events>

7 <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/dec/11/cheap-oil-climate-change-fossil-fuel-extraction-tar-sands>

8 [http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar5/syr/AR5\\_SYR\\_FINAL\\_SPM.pdf](http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar5/syr/AR5_SYR_FINAL_SPM.pdf)

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10 <http://www4.unfccc.int/submissions/INDC/Published%20Documents/United%20States%20of%20America/1/U.S.%20Cover%20Note%20INDC%20and%20Accompanying%20Information.pdf>

11 <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/energy/2016/01/160122-why-solar-and-wind-thrive-despite-cheap-oil-and-ga/>

# Indian Point 3, the Next Rogue Nuclear Plant

By Gary Shaw

In September, 2013, Indian Point 2's 40-year operating license expired but the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, a captive agency that operates under a structural conflict of interest allowed it to keep operating, so it became the first nuclear power plant in the US to operate without a valid license. The NRC's structural conflict exists because 90% of the agency's budget comes from industry fees and if reactors close, they lose jobs.

In Dec. 2015, Indian Point 3's license [will] expire and it is likely that the NYC area will have its second rogue plant operating without a valid license. This is a plant that has had four unexpected shutdowns in the past few months, one caused by its second explosion and fire of a transformer. This episode caused a large release of oil into the Hudson River and the flooding of an electrical switching room. That does not instill confidence about their weatherproofing seals.

Furthermore, FERC (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission) has approved a 42-inch diameter expansion of the Algonquin gas pipeline that will be within hundreds of feet of Indian Point's high level radioactive waste storage. FERC and NRC have declared that this is not a

safety issue based on a hand-written, undated, unsigned and unsubstantiated diagram. Paul Blanch, a nuclear engineer who worked in the industry for 40+ years was able to get the diagram through a FOIA request and much opposition. He is trying to stop the pipeline. (Check [www.sape2016.org](http://www.sape2016.org)).

The pipeline is next to Indian Point 3, which has been classified by the NRC as the US nuclear plant most likely to suffer reactor core damage due to seismic activity. Its located about one mile from the intersection of two faults that have the potential for a 7.0 earthquake. The Aug. 2011, 5.8 magnitude Virginia earthquake had ground vibrations almost twice as strong as what IP's reactors and waste storage were designed to withstand.

Indian Point workers largely do the best they can. The Entergy corporation and the so called "regulators," NRC and FERC, are the villains who will risk the lives and property of 20 million people to further corporate profits. This time they might get away with murder if the public cannot stop them.

If you'd like to get involved in this vital issue, visit [ipsecinfo.org](http://ipsecinfo.org).

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