Borko’s students search the sandstone and limestone cobbles for the pickerel frog that went that way.

Marty Borko pointing out the varnished conks which are exclusive saprophytes, feeding only on dead wood and restricted to hemlock trees. Foreground of mostly hay-scented ferns. Photos by Kirsten Gabrielsen

NATURAL HISTORY RAMBLE - see page 9
Photo by Jack Austin

“HAPPY FOR HERPS” OUTING - see page 9
Photo by Vicki Godderd

SU NRISE WALK - see page 6  Photo by Rob Rogers

MOONLIGHT PADDLE - see page 10
Photo by Scott Graber
MAIL BAG

To BKAA,
Here is a donation to help your campaign to save the wild areas of the Basha Kill water-shed.
Lin Fagan, Treasurer
John Burroughs Natural History Society

Dear Paula,
I want to thank you for meeting with my Natural History of the Bashakill Class on June 30th. Your presentations and discussion of the various threats to the rich natural resources of the area are deeply appreciated.
The students have had an introduction to the headwaters and general geology and how they inter-relate to the Basha and ways in which we can evaluate the importance of water and more importantly its quality. It was good for them to hear about BKAA’s continued public participation and learn about citizen responsibility if we are to sustain healthy communities.
I was also pleased to have an additional faculty member as well as Bio chair to join us for the discussions that ensued. Please be assured that your time with us will prove productive as BKAA tackles future threats.
Most appreciatively,
Marty Borko – SUNY Orange

Ms. Monique Lipton, Treasurer
Dear Ms. Lipton,
Please find enclosed two membership checks for 2013-

CONTACT THE BKAAA
Paula Medley 845-754-0743, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.  email: info@thebashakill.org  website: www.thebashakill.org

CONTACT THE DEC
Forest Rangers: Logan Quinn 845-240-6792 (cell)  Alexander Virkler 845-905-6000 (cell)
Conservation Officer: Michael Bello 845-665-5489
If Mr. Bello is not available, call 24-hour Law Enforcement Dispatch 1-877-457-5680

The Guardian is published quarterly by the Basha Kill Area Association Inc., PO Box 1121, Wurtsboro, NY 12790.
President: Paula Medley  •  Vice-President: Anita Altman  •  Treasurer: Monique Lipton
Corresponding Secretary / Membership: Marcia Briggs Wallace  •  Recording Secretary: Christine Saward
Board Members: Linda Lou Bartle  •  Jackie Broder  •  Fred Harding  •  Bill Lucas  •  Susan O’Neill
Publicity & E-mail Coordinator: Susan O’Neill  •  Alerts Coordinator: Hattie Grifo

Mission Statement: Since our founding in 1972, our mission has been to protect the Basha Kill Wetlands and surrounding area from ecological degradation, to promote education and respect for the environment in general, and to preserve the beauty of the area.

We welcome new members who are interested in protecting the environment. Dues are $10 per person per year. BKAA is a not-for-profit corporation and donations are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

website: www.thebashakill.org  •  e-mail: info@thebashakill.org
MAIL BAG continued from page 2

Although we have been neighbors with the nesting eagles for at least ten years, fledglings are usually concealed once the leaves fully emerge in late spring. Unlike the nest at the Basha Kill, the nest here in Campbell Hall is located in a very tall deciduous tree.

Susan Armistead

Dear Friends,

I have moved to Arkansas and will now be supporting some local environmental groups here.

Thank You for your great work and I send my blessings to the long term preservation of the Basha Kill.

With great respect & love,
Nutan Karen Landwehr

Dear John (Haas),

On my recent visit to the Bash I saw a banner across the main street that said, I believe “welcome birders.” I assume you had something to do with its placement or, if not, know who did and will relate what a great idea that was and is. We spent 3 days in the area-birding and we spent a good deal of money surrounding our visit so it is nice to know the Chamber of Commerce recognizes we are out there! Thanks.

Mary Normandia
Glen Cove, NY

Dear BKAA,

Hello, my name is Mary Lou Deitrich and I am a member of the Mid-Hudson Area Retired Teachers (MARTA).

I am always so impressed with the work the Basha Kill Organization does to preserve and maintain the Basha Kill. I have gone to see the eagles and other wildlife many times and have been amazed at the dedication of the volunteers who are there to assist and explain.

We are a group of retired teachers and are looking for some activities in to do in nature. I was wondering if your volunteers would be willing to lead a not too strenuous hike at the Basha Kill. I don’t know how many would participate but I am sure it would not be more than 15 or so. We are looking to do this sometime on September or early October before it gets too cold. It would be nice to have someone explain the wildlife and vegetation along one of the trails.

Our group consists of local retired teachers ranging in age from 50 though 90+. I’m thinking most of the hikers will be able to hike about 2 miles or so but I don’t think steep inclines would be a good idea. We currently offer knitting, crocheting, painting, but are looking to do something in the outdoors.

We could work around your schedule if you could provide me with a few dates in the morning or early afternoon.

Any feedback you could provide would be greatly appreciated. I hope we can arrange something with your organization.

Thank you for all your hard work and thank you so much for all the GORGEOUS photos on your Facebook page.

Mary Lou Deitrich, Treasurer, MARTA

Mike (Medley)

Thank you for our leading some of our associates’ children on a nature walk during our annual Kohl’s Go Green event. We heard nothing but rave reviews about the walk…and a little bit about snakes. :-) The kids seemed to love it, and it helped make our event more fun for everyone. We truly appreciate your time and thank you very much.

Regards,
Andrea Vidler

Guardian Editor Buff McAllister Retires After 27 Years of Incomparable Service

Paula Medley

As veteran Guardian Editor Buff McAllister retires, she leaves a legacy of unmatched excellence. Really, what volunteer commits to a 27 year project that coincides with part of a 15 year stint as President?

Her Guardian responsibilities included: collecting all submissions, determining format of articles, photographs, graphics, typing numerous items, editing stories for spelling, grammar, facts, length, regularly conversing with Liberty Press and Paula Medley, newsletter coordinator, updating and printing mailing labels, affixing them and sealing stickers to 600 publications, which were then organized in large bins by zip code for subsequent mailing at Liberty’s Post Office. Incredibly, Buff executed those functions four times a year for over a quarter century!

She has truly facilitated the Guardian’s continuation through the years and ensured that the current newsletter remains a vital BKAA communication tool. Join me in honoring this remarkable woman at our Annual Meeting on Saturday, October 25.
Nature Watch Wrap-ups
The 12th Season
by the Nature Watch Group

The BKAA’s educational outreach and bald eagle nest monitoring program, Nature Watch, finished its 12th season at the end of June. The resident eagle pair at the Basha Kill hatched one chick this year around April 7th. The eaglet successfully fledged during the week of June 15th. The ospreys raised either two or three young this year who fledged (thanks to John Haas for this information).

Nature Watch had almost sixty participants this year to keep an eye on the eagle and osprey families. These volunteers worked the kiosk at the boat launch on week-ends for ten weeks from April 19th to June 22nd and logged in 1,747 visitors. Keeping track of boats for the first time, they counted 379 boats (both kayaks and canoes) entering the Basha Kill at the boat launch during our season.

The Basha Kill is known for its diverse wildlife. Volunteers noted seeing some snakes, fish, many birds and of course frogs, but there were a few highlights! There were two black bear sightings. The first was during John Haas’s bird walk on May 3rd. Nature Watch Volunteer Truth Muller was on the walk with Haas when the bear was spotted on the Nature Trail near South Road. The bear was also seen on June 14th in the same area. Another prominent moment was glimpsing an osprey “fishing,” as it seized a turtle and returned it to the nest.

Nature Watch members aided the rescue of an injured gosling on May 26th. Kayaker Eddie Rodriguez brought the bird ashore. Volunteers contacted Annie Mardiney, a bird rehabilitator in Rosendale, for assistance and she was able to take the gosling.

Our members were very interactive with visitors, always touting the Basha Kill’s wonders. During our season, visitors new to the Basha Kill and others who had been there many times, promised they’d return.

Thanks to our wonderful, dedicated group for their enthusiasm and work educating people about the Basha Kill. Nature Watch received a special boost this year as Cathy Liljequist and Kevin Keller stepped in to help co-leaders Patricia Diness and Maryallison Farley. Kevin was the hands-on person at the boat launch, orienting new volunteers and facilitating program operation. Cath managed many administrative functions, like sending group e-mails and compiling data. Thanks also to Ed Morse, our advisor, who is on shift with us every Saturday and to John Haas for providing updated birding information.

We will not hold our annual fundraiser this year in order to give everyone a break from organizing an endeavor that involves considerable volunteer time and energy. However, we plan to conduct another one in the fall of 2015. We’ll see you next year for the start of Nature Watch in mid-April and at the fall fundraiser at the Bashakill Vineyards.

Basha Kill Explorations
by Marty Borko

The Basha is a place dear to my heart. From the beginning, before State acquisition, I worked to have it protected. As acting chair of the Sullivan County Environmental Management Council in the late 60s early 70s I worked with Warren McKeon, the DEC regional director at New Paltz to prioritize the importance of the wetland in the State’s eyes. As a faculty member at OCCC I worked to have an offering called special topics under which a faculty member could stretch him or herself to give students a unique opportunity to explore nature in its natural setting as opposed to the classic classroom.

It was for this reason, my wanting to share this rich resource, that A Natural History of the Bashakill was offered by OCCC this summer. It was taken advantage of by 6 students varying in age from 17 to 70. Two, Steve and Nick are Bio majors, Vanessa & Nora Liberal Arts majors, and Lynn and Sue senior citizens took it to learn more about the Basha. Each day was a day of exploration in a different part of the Kill with a continuing emphasis on water.

The class began at the observation platform where the Pinekill used to enter the exiting waters. We observed yellow-billed cuckoos, cedar waxwings, a scarlet tanager and enjoyed the songs of red-eyed vireo and red-wings.

We sampled most tributaries from the Pinekill, Wilsey Brook, Gumauer Brook as well as the headwaters in Summitville. The brooks appeared healthy based on the short-nosed dace and darters (fishes) and the mayflies, caddisflies and stoneflies (insects) that we confirmed along with trout in Wilsey Brook. Early in June we experienced many painted turtles and a couple of snappers excavating egg chambers. They create a small entrance with a larger cavity below, lay their eggs and cover the scene completely. On a drizzly afternoon we were rewarded with lots of Syracuse orange efts whose warning coloration communicates its toxic glandular skin. After 3 to 5 years, the terrestrial stage transforms into an aquatic greenish adult with red dots. My favorite vernal pool was full of woodfrog tadpoles and laden with road silt that created a slippery clay margin. On the last day of the class...

BASHA KILL EXPLORATIONS continued on page 5
BASHA KILL EXPLORATIONS continued from page 4

...we were overrun with 1/4 inch toads emerging from Basha’s exiting waters.

One intention of the course was to have the students walk away knowing the dominant trees, birds, insects, ferns, marsh vegetation and how they are affected by the area’s geology. We had received special permission from the State to visit the cave and falls area to demonstrate Karst topography with its sink holes and walking fern. Calcium from this lime layer dissolves and precipitates clay particles that would otherwise cloud the Basha’s waters.

The dominant marsh bird is the red-winged blackbird, marsh-edge, the yellow warbler, overall ,the red-eyed vireo, the woods, the veery, wood thrush and the ovenbird. We did observe the nesting bald eagle and osprey but because it was an afternoon class bird activity was slow with occasional views of the great-blue heron and wood duck. The dominant tree is the red maple with the uplands having a good mix of sugar maple, oaks, hickory and white pine. Native understory shrubs of dogwood and viburnum were seen competing with exotic honeysuckle.

Sensitive fern dominates the greater Bashakill with royal and cinnamon fern in the wettest swampy zones of red maples. Interrupted ferns liked the drier sites and were common on south road where hay-scented ferns dominated all sun-lit areas. The hay-scented is soft & delicate and when crushed does smell like hay. The roadside also had broken fern and where we had limy outcrops maiden-hair fern as well.

The marsh proper is overlain with a meadow of emergent arrow arum. Its reproductive cover, the spathe, protects its spadix of tiny flowers that bow down and hide underwater. Its gelatinous fruits will float up in the Fall. Arrow arum’s heavy three veined foliage is interrupted here and there by a woody button bush and in many places one can see the purple flower spikes of the round based leaves of pickerelweed. Hidden submerged is coontail and Elodea, floating and submerged are pondweeds and waterlilies. Most interesting were the bladderworts with their multiple insect traps. We were too early in the year to appreciate its irregular yellow emergent flowers.

We had a special visit with Robert K. Angyal, a DEC senior aquatic biologist, and an associate. They brought along their electro-shocking boat and sampled fishes at the lower Basha for us. In addition to the normal warm water fishes such as sunfish, large-mouth bass, and pickerel, the Basha houses some unique species found in few other places. One of these is the blue-spotted sunfish both being restricted to the Basha. The big surprise for Robert’s team was their discovery of two gizzard shad. There is no mention of the gizzard shad, the only fresh water herring, as being present in the Basha in C. Lavett Smith’s 1985 publication The Inland Fishes of New York State. It has the typical shad saw-belly along with the last ray of the dorsal fin drawn out into a long filament. The fish we missed was the introduced bowfin. It is a primitive fish with a lung-like swim bladder allowing it to live in low oxygen waters where it can gulp in air. The headwaters provided a corpse of a lamprey and electro-shocking turned up the migrating American eel.

The Bashakill’s connection downstream to the Neversink River and its connection to the Delaware River must be protected at all costs. New York City with its reservoirs protects most of Delaware’s head-waters and Sullivan and Orange County have a responsibility to maintain the water quality from its other upstream sources. One of the reasons for offering this course was to see what changes have occurred, if any, and how the present significant threats of development in the valley, on the Gunks and at the edge of the Catskills could affect this unique precious resource. You have to remember that the Delaware is the only major river in the Northeast without a dam.

It was the next to the last class when BKAA president Paula Medley met with our class and two interested faculty. Paula presented the developmental plans that would impact the ridge, the Shawanga lodge site, 7 Peaks, the China city plan as well as the apparent approved mushroom project. A conservationist’s job is never done as disapproved projects continue to raise their heads again and require an educated committed citizens group such as BKAA to act, to protect the long term health and welfare for the public good.

Volunteers Needed for Guardian Mailings

by Paula Medley

The BKAA seeks members to help with Guardian mailings four times a year. Duties include: placing address labels and sealing stickers on 600 publications, which are then organized in large bins by zip code for bulk mailing at Liberty’s Post Office. Former Editor Buff McAllister will train volunteers. If interested, email info@thebashakill.org or contact Paula Medley directly at (845)754-0743.
The Never-Ending Nature Walk – Part II
Nora Brusinski

In the previous issue of The Guardian, I wrote a short piece on a class I was taking at SUNY Orange called Biology of the Basha Kill. Taught by Professor Martin Borko, an instrumental figure in the original purchase of the Basha Kill, the six week course explored the ecology of the wetland both on land and in the water.

We began our studies on land. From the very first day of class we were out in the field, examining specimens at the Basha Kill. We learned to identify many different types of plants and animals, as well as the most common species in the Basha Kill. The most common tree is the Red Maple, while the most common warbler is the Yellow Warbler. Although we were able to identify more common species, we were also able to see many unique plants and animals. The diversity of the Basha Kill served us well in this regard.

My favorite thing we did during the terrestrial half of the class was to hike up to the limestone caves on South Road. We walked up to the top of the waterfall, something which would not have been allowed outside of class. Although we were not allowed to go into the caves, seeing the karst topography was still amazing. We were also able to see certain species which only live in areas with a lot of limestone, such as the walking fern. That day also happened to have perfect conditions for finding salamanders and turtles. We saw countless red efts and probably about ten painted turtles. However, the most exciting thing was finding a snapping turtle. We were also lucky enough to have a herpetologist join us on a few walks to help identify snakes.

For the second half of the class, we took our studies to the water. This was quite a relief as we reached the end of June and the days began to get hot. We spent most of our time wading in and collecting samples, in locations ranging from South Road to Phillipsport. However, sometimes we were able to go swimming, something not usually allowed in the Basha Kill. This allowed us to collect specimens from a wider range of areas. One class the DEC helped us collect samples by electroshocking the water. This stuns the fish temporarily, causing them to float to the surface for easy collection. We were able to glimpse many more species of fish this way, such as pickerel. We allowed most of the fish to go free, but we did take four back to the lab with us for dissection. Although none of them had anything unusual on the inside, it was still fascinating.

This class was focused on the biology of the Basha Kill, but our studies ranged beyond that. In one class we stopped at the Summitville Historical Society, where we were able to learn about the area’s past. They had many books on the canal and railroads, as well as several models. One of these models even had an accurate replica of the mines inside the mountain. We also focused on conservation. One of the highlights of the class was when BKAA President Paula Medley came to discuss threats facing the Basha Kill. Many of the students were not aware of how tenuous the Basha Kill’s safety remains. It was wonderful to have a context proving the importance of our studies.

This was really an exciting and enjoyable class to take. Although I have lived in the area for 17 years, I still learned something new every day. I would highly recommend this course to anybody looking to learn more about the Basha Kill and the world around them.

Sunrise Walk with Gary Keeton
by Denege Patterson

The BKAA announced a Sunrise Walk with Gary Keeton on August 17, 2014. “Rise and shine! Enjoy the Basha Kill’s wonders from a different view. Meet at Haven Road DEC parking lot at 5:30 am.”

5:30 in the morning? Were they kidding?

The clock alarm went off at 4:34 am. It was pitch black outside. My husband said groggily, “What time is it? …Wait! I don’t want to know.” As my feet touched the cold, morning floor, he mumbled incredulously, “Are you really going?!”

“Yes!” I answered with the excitement of a little kid. Maybe something was wrong with me. I spoke as if in a dream, oblivious to my true state of torpor. He knows I don’t like the darkest hour just before dawn. He knows how I hate to conduct my morning ablutions while squinting my eyes in the glare of electric lights. I normally avoid the chill-to-the-bone by giving in to the magnetic pull of a nice, warm bed.

But I was imagining the joy of being there, watching the sunrise, and saying, “I do! I do like morning in Nature!” and reassuring myself that indeed I love beautiful skies. I like to see wood ducks flying. I like to listen to mysterious movements in the trees. I like to dip my fingers into the cool, clear water, listening to the wisdom of a knowledgeable guide. So I persevered. And within 25 minutes my husband, my niece, and her husband joined me.

Gary Keeton was waiting at the Haven Road parking lot. Bright, professional, and focused, he welcomed us as we arrived before anyone else. He stood outside the open...
Young Eagle  Photo by Susan Armistead
See MAILBAG
on page 2

The Basha Kill:
En Plein Aire
Watercolors by
Emma Chase Students
See page 12

Katherine Beinkafner,
Geologist/Hydrogeologist
See page 14  Photo by Paul Beinkafner
Gary said this valley was gouged deeper during the glacial period which ended about ten thousand years ago, although the mountains from which it eroded were millions of years old. As the glacier receded, it left behind alluvial deposits of rocks, sand, and gravel, filling the bottomland. During storms, the mountain streams such as the Pine Kill would carry tons of rocks and debris and “explode” into the basin leaving natural dams that blocked the flow of the Basha Kill. As dams washed away, new storm deposits accumulated, and in time were followed by new washouts, and thus the cycle continued.

Today the south-flowing channel with its sinuous curves is still evident in the Basha Kill basin especially when viewed from Haven Road.

Gary told much more about this dynamic landscape. For example, in the early 1800s the Basha Kill was once drained for farmland, providing rich peat similar to the soil in the famous black dirt region near Chester and Pine Island, NY. Periodic flooding and other factors precluded its permanent use as farmland.

Today we enjoy a northern everglades: a river of submerged vegetation with ribbon-like channels and oxbows, all showing geological evidence of flooding not just once, but hundreds of times over the millennia. Today this rich riverine habitat supports numerous species of birds, mammals, reptiles, fish, and amphibians.

“Look! An orange spotted salamander!” I blurted with the enthusiasm of my childhood in Westbrookville, NY. As a child I heard the old-timers call them “sky babies” because they appeared after a rain. Gary gently informed us of its common name. “That is a red eft. It is a relative of the newts we see in freshwater springs.”

As a pair of wood ducks flew overhead, Gary mentioned how at least 220 species of birds have been identified in the Basha Kill, or more than one third of the birds in North America. He pointed out the distinctive call of a blue heron.

Walking along the old railroad bed of the narrow gauge railroad (once connecting Port Jervis with Wurtsboro), Gary provided a treasure-trove of botanical information. He discussed and demonstrated the different features and species of a swamp versus wetlands. He pointed out native plants versus invasive aquatic and land plants.

He cautioned us not to disturb the poison ivy vines along the way and identified similar-looking plants which were safe to touch, such as black brier and wild strawberry. He spoke about an old concrete foundation and what it signified during the railroad era. He also identified tree species, teaching us how to tell the difference between red oak and white oak, red pine from white pine, sugar maple from red maple and silver maple, differences in the bark of an elm tree, and showed us a rare healthy hemlock and its historical uses.

He taught us to recognize three different kinds of ferns, and pointed out some edible fruits including Concord grapes, and three types of blueberries, as well as the “fragrant” parts of what must be a “delicious” species, the skunk cabbage. Yes, it is edible, to a point. Ask Gary; he knows enough to eat it only when it is very hot. If you let it cool you’ll get sick!

It was a magnificent morning. Gary is a great teacher. Thanks Gary. See you on the next walk!
Observations by a Herpetologist at the Basha Kill

By Maryallison Farley and Bill Cutler

On June 8th, herpetologist Bill Cutler led another one of his Basha Kill herp walks, always a favorite with BKAA members and friends. Although the humans turned out in number for the walk, some 24 people, unfortunately the herps (amphibians and reptiles) did not. There were only a few sightings as the group headed out from the Haven Road parking lot on a warm (low 80’s) and humid morning.

Bill had checked the day before and saw signs of nesting activity by snapping turtles and painted turtles. He had hoped for a protracted turtle nest/egg laying season because of the late, very cold winter. Instead it seemed to him that the nesting cycle was compressed. While usually the snapper and painted turtle nesting is separated by one to two weeks, he observed that this year both species were nesting within a couple days of each other.

The group did examine a stinkpot (or musk turtle) found by one of the participants just before the walk started near the Haven Road parking lot. According to Bill, only a sliver of their range extends along lower New York State. The name comes from scent glands at the base of their rear legs which exude a powerful scent in an oily, brownish fluid that’s unpalatable to predators. Many turtles have scent glands but they are involved with pheromone production. If you see a few turtles sunning in a shrub together, they are likely to be stinkpots. They can climb low vegetation to gain sun advantage!

In the parking lot itself, Bill observed only two snapping turtle nests and three incomplete painted turtle nests. This was low compared to past years when he said there could have been as many as twelve nests total in that same area.

He was not sure why this was the case.

As the group walked along Haven Road to the bridge, they heard the sporadic plunking of green frogs. But mostly it was quiet. Calls by pickerel frogs, bullfrogs, gray tree frogs and spring peepers were absent. They did have a sighting of a large pickerel frog in the ditch along Haven Road. Make that sighting #2 for the day!

Along the Stop Sign Trail, they observed more turtle nesting activity and the third herp of the day made its appearance, the red-backed salamander. According to Bill, this is the most abundant salamander by biomass in the northeastern forests. It’s a small, lungless salamander that breathes through its skin and a buccal pouch at its mouth and throat.

As the group proceeded to the northern end of the Stop Sign parking lot, they came upon a large vernal pool. The Basha Kill offers a good environment for vernal pools. These ephemeral (temporary) pools of water offer environments that are largely free of predators. On the other hand, amphibians that use them for egg-laying must mature quickly so that they can move out when the pool environment changes. On this day, the fourth herp sighting was wood frog tadpoles in the vernal pool. Bill commented that there are also autumnal pools which are used by other species of amphibians. For example, the marbled salamander lays its eggs in the fall in an autumnal pool.

Bill’s final observation was that the Basha Kill represents a diverse environment for amphibians in spite of their poor showing on this particular day in June. For herps dependent on water, the Basha Kill is a terrific environment!
Full Moon Walk • JULY 11
Susan O'Neill

After days of heat, humidity and thunderstorms, the evening of Friday, July 11 was clear and deliciously cool. Thirty-two people of all ages and one well-behaved dog gathered on Haven Road to watch the full moon rise over the Shawangunk Ridge. Naturalist Gary Keeton was our guide to all we were about to see by the light of this “supermoon.” After a brief discussion of how the Bashakill got its name and how the wetland was formed, we started west on Haven Road.

Passing buttonwood and wild roses in bloom, we observed the channel flowing through the wetland and saw an oxbow that had been formed by a second channel. The importance of milkweed to the existence of the monarch butterfly was mentioned. Crossing over the bridge, we exchanged friendly greetings with the families fishing there. Nothing was biting, but the fishers seemed content being together in the peaceful twilight. Looking ahead, we could see a golden moon peeking over the ridge.

As we reached the road leading to the “stop sign” parking lot, fireflies were beginning to twinkle. A bat flew high over head, scooping up insects. We could smell the heavenly scent of swamp azalea and hear a catbird call. Familiar with this bird as a resident of areas with lawns, we learned that the catbird is starting to be found in the woods in our area. We continued down the darkening road.

We found a wood duck house and learned that twilight is a good time to spot ducklings and their mother going for a swim and that the reversal of the declining numbers of the black duck was one of the reasons that New York State began buying land parcels in the 1970s to form what would one day be the Bashakill Wildlife Management Area. After seeing the tiny wooden house provided to encourage the propagation of wood ducks, we saw the bulky remains of a water tower built to fill the steam engines of a past when the path on which we walked was a railroad bed.

Across from the site of the water tower was a knoll that we learned was a seasonal home of Native Americans of the Archaic era. These hunter / gatherers favored this spot because of the abundant berries, acorns, and fish. Weights for fishing nets and the stone points of their weapons have been found from these residents of 5,000 years ago. Another benefit of this knoll had been a sweet water spring which has been mentioned in letters and other documents of the settlers from Europe.

Upon learning from Gary that the spring no longer flows because the water table has dropped, a natural question from the group was why the water table has changed. The answer that it was because of the number of wells that have been drilled was a sobering reminder of the important BKAA mission as watchdog over the waters of the Bashakill.

As we walked back to the parking lot under the brilliant beams of a fully risen moon, I pondered the dwindling numbers of butterflies and bats. What in past years had been a frog orchestra sounding from the Kill in notes from soprano to bass, was on this night the call of a solitary bullfrog. Will we learn to live in harmony with our environment as did the long-ago residents of the knoll? Will we adapt to changing conditions as does the catbird? Or will we fade, one by one, until the moonlight is reflected back by an equally cold, dead sphere?

Full Moon Paddle
Scott Graber

The BKAA’s third “full moon paddle” launched on the evening of July 12. Mike Medley and I set out in our canoe from the South Road Boat Launch with 24 kayaks following closely behind. Though the skies were partly cloudy, the promise of a full moon was on everyone’s mind as darkness slowly began to envelope the Bashakill. As in past years, our planned route was to connect with the main water channel and follow it down toward the southern end of the marsh.

In addition to paddling past the Bashakill’s enormous Bald Eagle nest, memorable wildlife sightings included several Great Blue Herons, Mallards and Wood Ducks. Eventually, Northern Green Frogs and American Bullfrogs were heard - many close to our boats.

Just after reaching our southern terminus, a beautiful full moon could be seen rising over the Bashakill’s eastern ridge. “Super Moon” was the catchy term used to describe this particular moon because it appeared a bit brighter and larger than usual. This occurs when the moon happens to be full on the same day as perigee - a term denoting the point each month at which the moon is closest to the Earth. The July full moon is also referred to as the “Full Buck Moon” since this is the time of year when bucks begin to grow their new velvet-covered antlers. “Thunder Moon” is another term occasionally used in reference to the frequent booming storms that often roll through July’s summer skies.

The Super Moon provided an abundance of light for our paddlers as we headed back to our initial launch site. Although a few folks insisted on using their flashlights, they actually weren’t needed the entire time we were on the water as we all enjoyed the bright natural moonlight!

As always, Mike and I would like to thank all the enthusiastic participants who joined us on that relaxing summer evening. We hope you enjoyed the adventure. Don’t forget about our next BKAA paddle on Saturday morning September 27th – early autumn will be in the air!
**John Kenney**

The effects of the winter that wouldn’t end were felt throughout the northeast. Snow lingered on the Catskill peaks well into May. Paradoxically, meteorologists stated that this past winter was one of the warmest - with the notable exception of the northeastern states.

Many people lost normally hardy perennials. My butterfly bushes retreated all the way to the roots this year. I thought at first that I had lost two of them until finally they came back from the underground rootstock.

I knew from my wanderings that many butterflies took a heavy toll. Butterflies overwinter in various stages: eggs, caterpillars, and chrysalis. Many of these appeared to suffer the most.

The tortoiseshells and anglewings hibernate as adults and did not appear to have suffered as much. The monarchs, the only migrants, flee to the warmer climate of central Mexico.

After introducing myself I brought out my butterfly collection which is always a hit. There were a lot of “oohs” and “aahs” as many attendees took photographs.

Next we circled the Haven Road parking lot finding as many attendees took photographs.

Our next stop on the other side of the causeway was at the so-called stop sign or birder’s parking lot. We added sweet cicely, wild geranium, pussy-toes, honeysuckle, sarsaparilla, ground ivy, false hellebore, solomon’s seal, Japanese barberry, solomon’s plume, skunk cabbage, buttercup, crows foot, gaywings (not flowering), pepperggrass, and garlic mustard.

This year the best patch of milkweed I could find was at the beginning of Haven Road by the old Elks’ Club. We drove up to the parking area here adjoining Rte. 209 and walked to the milkweed patch. There were also a lot of beautiful lavender colored sweet peas flowering. We watched for awhile until people had seen enough. I was disappointed with the number of butterflies seen but as I mentioned earlier the cold spring had an impact. We did see cabbage whites, a great spangled fritillary, a silver spotted skipper, a tiger swallowtail, and several smaller skippers. A red spotted purple and a comma were seen in the birder’s parking lot.

**John Winkler Memorial Water Testing**

*by Linda Lou Bartle, Water Testing Coordinator*

I traveled south this summer and established strong water testing connections in South Carolina (yes, thinking about water testing on my vacation). People there experience significant water problems, relating to radioactive waste, clay from dish factories, and rising sea levels, among other difficulties. For instance, a Lays Potato Chip operation wants to drain millions of gallons daily from the Edisto River.

I visited the Edisto, which reminded me of the Basha Kill and Wallkill River in Orange County. The Edisto River Basin contains the longest free flowing blackwater river in America. A blackwater river has a deep, slow-moving channel flowing through forested swamps or wetlands. As vegetation decays, tannins leach into the water, creating trans-parent, acidic water that is darkly stained, resembling tea or coffee. Residents and members of groups like Friends of the Edisto River, founded in 1998, and the Sierra Club oppose Lays Potato Chip’s plans. I didn’t interject myself into this very volatile situation, preferring to listen.

Back to our own turf, we also encounter critical development issues in the Basha Kill watershed, so it is vital to continue examining this ecosystem’s tributaries. While our water testing results there have been normal and may remain so for some time, if pertinent changes occur, we possess past data to reference and provide clarification. Water testing definitely protects our environment and positively engages our volunteers, members and community. I am very proud to inform people that the BKAA has been water testing since the 1980s.

I spend considerable time as water testing coordinator. My duties include organizing volunteers’ schedules, maintaining equipment, calibrating it for testing dates, loading information into my personal computer, and connecting with local groups. My peer, Ed Helbig, Water Conservation Education Coordinator with the Orange County Water Authority, is partnering with Rose Baglia of Cornell Cooperative Extension, on water-themed events. We hope to conduct a local watershed summit soon. Meanwhile, I look forward to upcoming Water Conferences, one of which is sponsored by The Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed, in October, 2014.

Finally, I would like to welcome new members Cindy Coker and Joseph Putnam to our water testing team. Much appreciation and thanks to veteran volunteers: Bill Bradl, Eileen Lake, Bob, Maura, and Truth Muller, Dennis Solow, along with Matt and Tricia Zeitler. Each brings something different to the table in our pursuit of biodiversity monitoring. Thanks again!
Reprise of Emma C. Chase Elementary School and BKAA Collaboration on Basha Kill: En Plein Aire
- by Paula Medley

At the end of May, early June, 1st, 3rd, and 5th graders from Emma C. Chase in Wurtsboro once again visited the Bashakill Wildlife Management Area (WMA) to create water color paintings of their observations. These trips were part of the “Basha Kill: En Plein Aire” project originated by art teacher Laurie Kilgore.

Prior to these outings, students learned about the Basha Kill’s unique plants and animals, the vital role played by wetlands, and their need for protection. Consequently, the children arrived at the WMA already primed to respect this valuable ecosystem.

During trips by 1st and 3rd graders (sixty participants each day!), BKAA educator Michael Medley focused a spotting scope on the nesting bald eagle, “bringing to life” classroom lessons. Most students had never peered through a scope, so it was quite the experience, positioning small children (some wearing glasses) in order to facilitate optimum viewing. Nevertheless, the youngster loved this novel activity and patiently waited in long lines for an opportunity to “eyeball” the eagles.

This program culminated on June 19 with a school-wide art show that showcased the Basha Kill watercolors. Students’ works were amazingly eclectic, reflecting diverse ages, skills, and personalities (photos on page 7). 180 children, encountering the same landscape, produced 180 different interpretations. Incredible!!! Throughout the exhibition, a steady stream of parents and friends praised the young artists’ talents. Attendees also perused the BKAA’s informational table, managed by Paula Medley, acquiring brochures, newsletters, and maps.

Kudos to Laurie and Emma C. Chase for using art to enhance student’s awareness of a local environmental treasure. The BKAA eagerly awaits partnering with the school on future undertakings.

BKAA ARTISTS FYI:

Art Work Needed For SUNY Orange Water And Wildlife Exhibit Series
- Dorothy Szefc

As part of this series, Gene Weinstein, long-time BKAA member and Nature Watch advisor, will conduct a Master Class on the NYS Eagle Restoration Project.

Exhibit Water & Wildlife Series
October 16 - November 23, 2014 — Orange Hall Gallery
Waterways & Wildlife ~ our region’s wetlands, ponds, lakes, kills, creeks, brooks, & native flora & fauna.

A large exhibit of paintings, drawings, photographs, sculptures, assemblages, mixed media, maps examines the diversity of life. The reception is scheduled for Saturday, November 8 3-5:30pm with music provided by Joy Kissane, pianist.

[Artists interested in exhibiting in the show should contact Dorothy Szefc at cultural@sunyorange.edu or call 845-341-4891 (o) or 914-443-0796 (c). Receiving: 9:30-11am on Saturday, October 11. Installation immediately follows. If an artist needs to bring in artworks ahead of that date and time, just contact Dorothy and arrangements can be made. All works must be ready to hang with eye hooks and WIRES on back of frames. No zigzag things. Also, work must have title, medium, artist, price affixed to back or bottom of each work. If you have works which are odd-shaped or heavy, please contact Dorothy so we can figure out how we can work this out. Also, please be in contact about what you will be submitting by September 26 in order that identification cards can be made for each work of art. Submission fee: $5 per person. It would also help considerably if each participant provides food or beverage for the November 8 reception 3-5:30pm.]

Master Class Water & Wildlife Series
October 25, 2014 - 10:30am — Orange Hall Gallery Fringe
NYS Bald Eagle Restoration Project
Through original slides of photographs taken during the 22 year project, Gene Weinstein, photographer, biologist, and project volunteer discusses the successful restoration of bald eagles to New York State.

Lecture Water & Wildlife Series
November 19, 2014 - Orange Hall Gallery — 7pm
Wetlands: Their Importance and Preservation
Lecturer to be announced.
The BKAA is highlighting the work of our Fabulous Four consultants in honor of the extremely important services they provide our organization. We’ve learned about Spider Barbour, Ecologist and Andy Willingham, Engineer previously. This GUARDIAN issue will focus on Katherine Beinkafner, Geologist and Hydrogeologist.

Think deep. Think millions of years ago. Plunge into the depths of the earth, down into all those strata of soil, rock, sand, oil, gas and water. This is the world of a Rock Doctor. A rock doctor? Yes, Katherine Beinkafner has a Ph.D. in geology from Syracuse University, hence, her email nickname is “rock doctor”. Kathie also has a B.A and an M.A. in geology from SUNY New Paltz and an M.S. in physics from the University of Pennsylvania. She’s a deep thinker with layers upon layers of earth knowledge. For 10 years the BKAA has relied upon her expertise regarding issues that deal with our most vital resource: clean water.

Kathie has over 40 years of diverse, professional experience as a geologist and hydrogeologist. Her career began with 2 years as a high school physics teacher in Hyde Park. She also taught geology and groundwater hydrology at several colleges. For 10 years she worked with the NYS Geological Survey and NYS Museum as an oil and gas geologist. Kathie spent 5 years as a senior geologist at SOHIO Petroleum Co. in San Francisco. Then she became a Senior Reservoir Geologist with Naval Petroleum in Wyoming for 2 years. Since 1986 Kathie, as sole proprietor of Mid-Hudson Geosciences, has been a hydrogeological consultant in the Hudson Valley working for engineering firms as well as a number of citizens groups. Besides the BKAA, Kathie has assisted Chester Preservation Collective, Cragsmoor Association, Woodstock Citizens, Orange County Land Trust, Citizens for Montgomery and other groups in Warwick, Bedford and Arlington.

True to her commitment to the environment, Kathie serves as a member on her town’s planning board. In the same vein, Kathie and a fellow hydrogeologist prepared a report that was presented at a NYS senate hearing on behalf of the Delaware Riverkeeper Network in their efforts to provide evidence for the need to initiate a ban on fracking in New York and in the Delaware watershed. The report concluded, “The enormous magnitude of planned gas well installations will result in large-scale and widespread water contamination that cannot be remediated. The risk and assured contamination of ground and surface water supplies is the reason to ban hydrofracturing.” Certainly this vital, 7-page report played a significant role in the battle against fracking in NYS. Of the 5 projects that Kathie -and our other 2 technical consultants- have worked on, not one development has yet been built. The fruit of Kathie’s labor can be seen both locally and statewide.

Following are responses to questions we posed to Kathie.

**What sparked your interest in geology?**

I used to go to Thacher State Park up near Albany when I was young. There were lots of fossils there and I loved finding them. I had a collection of all kinds of rocks and fossils. I also enjoyed camping, hiking and using topographic maps. When I went to college, I majored in physics and geology.

**How did you come to be a geologist/hydrogeologist (a “rock doctor”)?**

I originally worked for the New York State Geological Survey (NYGS) and was in charge of a computerized database of oil and gas records. Then I went to Syracuse University to earn a Ph.D. in mathematical geology. My dissertation involved mapping oil and gas wells along the southern tier of New York State, specifically penetrating the Silurian and Devonian Periods (440 to 350 millions of years ago) [mya]. In the process of mapping, I discovered that buried sheet faults had developed in the Salina salt beds and massive blocks of sedimentary rocks had slid on salt beds for miles to the west and northwest originating in northern Pennsylvania. A colleague at the NYGS had mapped the Salina Group as deposited in a large basin extending from New York to Michigan with the thickest sediments in the center. However, when drawn with proper elevations relative to sea level, my work showed that the huge blocks of the Salina were thrust over top of one another, described by the term Décollement Tectonics. I also mapped a prominent oil and gas play called the “Bass Island” which was being developed in Chautauqua County at the time. It formed on the western end of Décollement where the salt beds ran out and the sole of the horizontal thrust faults bent upward through the overlying sediments forming oil and gas traps. These discoveries were the topic of my dissertation, which was well received by the oil and gas operators in New York and Pennsylvania and is still referenced today by geologists. Several more oil and gas fields have been discovered based on the model provided in the tome. Interestingly, a month ago my information was used as testimony in a legal proceeding.

One summer while at Syracuse, I worked for ARCO Oil and Gas in Midland, Texas. I mapped some weathered Precambrian rocks (600 mya), called “granite wash”, with spotty oil production in New Mexico. As a result of my work, I proposed an oil play for drilling. A few years later, I learned that I was a successful oil finder. Just recently, I saw that a geologic society is presenting a seminar on oil production in the granite wash.

**BKAA’S CONSULTANTS** continued on page 14
Before finishing my dissertation, I moved to San Francisco and worked for SOHIO. I chaired the meetings with the oil and gas operators owning leases in the Prudhoe Bay oil field in Alaska. Based on geophysical wells logs and maps, we were figuring out who owned how much of the oil production. It was a huge three-dimensional puzzle because the wells were not vertical. Gravel pads were built to insulate the operations from the tundra. The wells were drilled down through the gravel and then outward to penetrate different volumes of the oil field, a variation of horizontal drilling. The Sadlerochit sandstone varied in thickness from 300 to 600 feet and was faulted which created a challenge in geologic mapping and petroleum volumetrics.

After two years at Tea Pot Dome also known as Naval Petroleum Reserve #3 in Wyoming, the price of oil plummeted in 1986. The oil industry works in weird ways, the minute the price of oil or gas goes down, all drilling and work stops. Being unemployed, we moved back to New York and I worked on developing GIS* systems using AutoCAD* and the programming language LISP* for a “big blue” corporation. The transition from oil finder to hydrogeologist was quite easy given that hydrogeology involves water and contaminants while petroleum geology involves hydrocarbons and variable amounts of water. A “rock doctor” can handle both specialties.

How has it been being a woman in a field that is dominated by men?

I wanted to be the very first woman to get a Ph.D. in geology from Syracuse, but I took too many courses and wrote a complicated dissertation, so another lady friend beat me to the goal. As a woman, my experience has been that I have to do extraordinary work to get recognized.

What are some functions of a hydrogeological consultant? What exactly does it entail?

Hydrogeology is essentially the science of groundwater—both clean water and contaminated water. Projects can involve searching for a water supply such as a fractured bedrock or shallow sand and gravel aquifer. Sometimes a geophysical survey is needed where we measure electromagnetism, or gravity or seismisity of the subsurface. Based on a map of results, a good aquifer may be found. A pumping test is needed to measure the well yield and determine pumping influence on neighboring wells. I was in charge of a project for the Town of Lloyd where we drilled horizontally into vertical beds on Illinois Mountain. That was a very interesting pumping test because a horizontal well does not work the same way as a vertical well. A vertical well develops a cone of depression around it with increasing radius with longer pumping time. A horizontal well develops drawdown along something like a trough of depression.

Projects dealing with accidental release of chemicals into surface and or groundwater can take years to trace the movement of contamination, to devise a way to clean up the plume, and implement and monitor progress of the remediation. Leaking buried gasoline tanks at a gas station or release of dry cleaning agents are typical contaminant situations requiring cleanup according to NYS DEC regulations. At this time in my career, I often review the work of other geologists or train new geologists in the practices and techniques of hydrogeology. One of my favorite jobs is review of complex pumping tests. Each aquifer type—such as unconfined, confined or leaky—follows a specific mathematical formula. Identifying the type of aquifer based on the pumping test results and calculating aquifer characteristics is an amazing process: it’s discovering the secrets of mother earth.

When did you assume this role for the BKAA?

I first provided reports for the BKAA in 2004 with the review of Yukiguni Maitake’s (YM) Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements. Additionally, I have worked on Seven Peaks, Wurtsboro Airport, Basher Kill Subdivision and China City projects for the BKAA.

What are some frustrations you have encountered as a hydrogeological consultant?

Not having access to the properties in order to investigate environmental conditions is one of the biggest frustrations. SEQRA does not provide access to sites for public or consultant observations. If the developer does not want you to come onto the property and look at things, it’s very difficult because geology is really a science where you have to make a lot of observations. You need to see if there are streams or caves where water travels into the ground or out of the ground. Without that access, you are left with having to accept what developers tell you and they may have overlooked or intentionally ignored hydrologic features. A case in point is when YM claimed that seasonal water level measurements were not needed! Similarly, the consultants hired by developers do not follow the scoping document for the DEIS. They merely do the minimum and leave out vital information. It leads one to believe that paid consultants provide the information the applicants want to hear. Another frustration is that nonprofits like the BKAA or homeowner groups wind up paying for their consultants to review and sometimes do the work of the applicant. How about having the applicants supply an escrow account which would cover consultants’ expenses?!

How do you like partnering with nonprofits like the BKAA?

Actually, about half of my work is with nonprofit groups. I really enjoy educating people and helping to protect the environment. It’s a pleasure to work with likeminded people who want to do the right thing environmentally.

What is your value to groups like ours?

I have many years of experience and I’m very careful to provide comprehensive, accurate reports.
Who or what has inspired you?
I am inspired by people who take on an extraordinary project, remain dedicated to the project, and achieve success. An example is the anti-fracking movement. I am so pleased to see how many people have realized that there is no safe way to frack and finally that message has gotten to the governor.

What are some of your other pastimes?
Gardening is one of my favorite activities. I enjoy growing fruits and vegetables and making homemade jellies and jams. We have red raspberries, black raspberries, elder berries, blackberries, currants, grapes and rhubarb. In the winter, my husband and I have a camper that we take to Florida where we visit state parks and historical sites for a few months.

Any other final comments?
Hopefully, the American populace will realize that global warming and climate change are here and citizens will exert political pressures for action to save our precious earthly environment.

The BKAA is grateful for this very bright woman’s assistance in protecting our fragile Basha Kill. Kathie, the “rock doctor” has done an incredible job defending the BKAA. In other words, she ROCKS!

GLOSSARY:
*GIS- Geographic Information System, links to a database of information with geographic sitings
*Auto CAD- computer aided drafting
*LISP- List processing, a computer programming language which links a database file with drafting and drawing commands to create maps

What is the Geographic Scope of BKAA Advocacy?
- Paula Medley  (See map on page 16)

The BKAA employs definite guidelines when determining our stance on proposed developments. Before assuming a position, we review our Mission Statement, which declares: “Since our founding in 1972, our mission has been to protect the Basha Kill wetlands and surrounding area from ecological degradation, to promote education and respect for the environment in general, and to preserve the beauty of the area.”

The BKAA defines “surrounding area” as the Basha Kill watershed or the lands through which streams drain on their way to the Bashakill Wildlife Management Area. Most of this drainage or wetland system is delineated in yellow on the accompanying map entitled Greater Bashakill Ecological System, prepared by The Nature Conservancy’s George Schuler in 2004. Note that recent BKAA activity is actually sited within the watershed or directly adjacent to it. However, endeavors like fracking or casinos are so regionally significant that we intercede even though they may not be located inside our target zone.

A New City for Mamakating - Fall 2014
By Anita Altman
There will be no new “city” in Mamakating on the long-contested site of the former Homowack Hotel in Spring Glen. As a result of non-payment, since 2011, of property and school taxes for the most valuable parcels (those containing the hotel and ancillary buildings), the county foreclosed on this land, which went up for auction in June.

Congregation Ahavas Gemillas Chesed chose to pay back taxes on acreage housing the sewage treatment plant and parking lot, located across from the hotel, possibly anticipating that someone might find this infrastructure critical to redevelopment of the site. Nevertheless, I believe that this this chapter in the life of the Homowack property is concluded.

The great news is that the auctioned real estate was acquired by the owner of a contiguous parcel along Myerson Road. He is the president of a clean, renewable energy development company, which seeks, “....to implement a fundamentally new way of doing business. In our approach, the ability to profit financially is fundamentally linked to our success in creating environmental and social profits.” Even prior to completing the acquisition, he had reached out to our elected officials to discuss future plans for this tract. My hope is that there will be a community conversation to re-envision the subsequent development of this beautiful, but now derelict property.

Need I remind you, this was never about who they are, but what they wanted to do, which would have violated the vision of Mamakating’s Master Plan, which recognizes the importance of the town’s rural residential character. It is clear that over the years since the idea of “a new city” publicly surfaced, our continuing vigilance has critically influenced the present outcome. It is an important lesson for all to remember.

BKAA Jack Orth Memorial Scholarship Update
Marcia Briggs Wallace
Our members will recall that the Jack Orth legacy, left to the BKAA, was turned over to Sullivan County Community College (SCCC) in 2003 to fund scholarships in the environmental sciences. Currently, two majors at SCCC are involved—Environmental Studies and Green Building Maintenance and Management. I am informed by Cindy Kashan, Vice President for Institutional Advancement and Enrollment Management at SCCC that, while they are soliciting applications for the current (fall 2014) semester, a decision is still pending. An update will appear in the next Guardian.
Greater Basha Kill Ecological System:
A Draft Spatial Description Based on Key Ecological Attributes*

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENTS LEGEND
1 - Shawanga Lodge
2 - Seven Peaks
3 - Commerce Park at Wurtsboro Airport
4 - Yukiguni Maitake
5 - Thompson Learning Center

Map Legend
Major Roads
- Interstate Hwy
- U.S. Route
- Road or street

Wetlands
Legal Status
- Protected (> 12 ac.)
- Unprotected (< 12 ac.)
- Open Water, Lakes & Ponds
- Greater Basha Kill Ecosystem Overlay (draft)

New NY State Stream Data - NOT included in original analysis
Fall 2014 New Members

Lawrence Brodhead — Yvonne Caplandies — Barbara C. & Geary F. Chumard — Gerard Cook
Frederick C. & Maria DeLourdes Dallin — Tim Gelling — Terry & Terry Grafmuller — Mark Hoffacker
Laura Lee Patterson Huttenbach — Rhonda Knopp — Karen F. Krogslund — Robert J. Kurtz
Christine & Orien Laplante — Michael Levin — Peter Lisker — Veronica Lomboyer — Bob McMahon — John Maier
Suzanne K. Meier — Anika Mohammed — Ira Morrow — Sandra G. & Robert E. Sanford — Felix Sencion
Joseph Tierney III — Carol Torchio — Diane Wanser

Fall 2014 Donors

Bob McMahon “In appreciation of Mike and Paula Medley”
Diane & Clark Rothauser, “In Memory of Florence Rothauser” — Charles F. West “In Memory of Larry West”
Catherine & Michael Abate — Judith C. Adams — Anita Altman & Gil Kulick — Anna M. & Burton M. Angrist
E. Susan & Robert T. Armistead — Harold L. Ashworth — John F. Austin — Scott J. & Paula Lazov Baldinger
John J. Baranowski — Elinor B. Barber — Linda & Michael Bartle — Paul C. Beinkafner — Catherine M. Beregowitz
Pamela, Eric & Galen Booth — Arlene D. Borko — Martin Borko — Susan London & Bill Bradl
Scott Buchholz — Susan & Dan Burrows — Justina & Mark Burton — Adrienne Butvinik — Angela M. Callahan
Robert D. Campbell — Irwin Cantor — Yvonne Caradec — Lynne Darby Carlin — Maryvonne & Kurt W. Carney
Billie Mae & David Case — Virginia & Anthony Castrogiovanni — Catskill Mountainkeeper — Jean Cellini & D. Turner
Susan Opotow & Stephen Chang — Chapin Estates Lake Club — Barbara C. & Geary F. Chumard — Susan W. Cioffi
Barbara J. & Charles R. Clark — Phyllis Coelho — Silvia C. Colella — Gerard Cook — James P. Corcoran
Laura A. Coruzzi & Robert J. Schneider — Mary R. & James A. Craig — Warren Cuddeback — Elizabeth A. Cushing
William H. Cutler II — Janet Davis — Catherine M. & Bradley J. Dawkins — Sam & Wayne A. Decker
Debbie DeMott — Christine & Mark DiPaolo — Helen M. & Raymond E. de Prado — Paul Deninno
Dorothy Deutsch — Carolyn M. Diercksmeier — Patricia A. Diness — Patricia Distefano — Mary A. Donnelly
Gay Donofrio — Margaret Dreyer — Berle M. & Timothy G. Driscoll — Kim E. & James B. Dunnmore — Linda Dunn
Sylvia Zamczynski & Tom Dwyer — Michael Egan — Nancy English — Susan E. & Stephen Emy — Joan W. Everett
Scott Fairbanks — Patricia, Lyndsay, & Reese Fairchild — Maryallison Farley — Cathys A. Farris
Frederic & Betty Glassman Feibusch — Gely & Jakob Franke — Carmela Federico — Mary Collier & Valerie M. Freer
Marc B. Fried — Charles S. Gambino III — David J. Goggins — June O. Goldberg — Mary J. & Henry M. Goldberg
Margaret Gorton — Scott Graber — Joy Grancio — Kirsten Gabrielsen & William Graziano — Sue & Lorrence Green
Walter S. Greenberg — Danny Low & Bonnie Greer — John H. Haas — Thomas R. Hansen
Cindy B. Coker & Fred R. Harding — Victor Haring — Elinor & Andrew Hart — Joanna Hartell
Caroline Kiyabu — Jean L. Klaiss — Robert A. Klenk — Stanley J. Kocot — Eileen & Joe Kolaitis — Gys B. Kooy
Jacek Kura Healing Touch Alternative Care Center — Deborah J. Stoltz & John L. Kurzejewski — Keith P. La Budde
Eileen Lake — Vega A. Lalire — Marlena Lange — Barbara L. Langseder — Linda & Richard Langseder
Jerome J. & Grace M. Lanuti — Louisa & Carl Lanzano — Scott Larsen — Tanya Laurer — Armand J. Laurino
Mary A. LeBeau — Gene A. Lefebvre — Beth & Sheldon Leidner — Chris Leser
Janet L. Campbell & William Leuszler — Andrew D. Lewis — Barbara Wasserman & Robert G. Lewis
Monique Lipton — William O. & Carol Smith Lucas — Janet & David O. Lybolt — Silvia-Maria Lynch
Priscilla Derven & Stephen MacDonald — Antoinette & Glenn Macpherson — Peter J. Madori — Tracy Mahoney
Alvin Mann — Regina & Norman Mann — Carole Marantz — Nancy S. & John T. Masterson — Elizabeth McAllister
Mary & Dennis McAnany — Barbara McCormack — Constance I. McCarron — Kelly McGowan
Elizabeth McKnight — Mary & Stephen McLaughlin — Paula & Michael Medley — Suzanne K. Meier
Barbara & Alfred Merritt — Elizabeth M. & Francis Mesnick — Jacqueline & Gregory Metakes
Matthew C. Migliaccio — Thaddeus Miklewicz — Margaret A. & Marcel R. Milfort — John W. Miller
Howard E. Millman & Fredrika V. Miller — Judy Monaco — Margaret T. Moore — William R. Morishita
Truth, Maura M. & Robert G. Muller — Cherie L. Munday — Frances B. & Martin Nankin — Michael Nathanson
Trudy Neilson — Brigitte R. & Gregory M. Nesteroke — Ginny & Tom O’Connell — Beverly Paige

FALL DONORS continued on page 23
Update: Thompson Learning Center (China City)

- Paula Medley

Thompson Learning Center (TLC) was last before Thompson's Planning Board (board) on June 11, 2014. At that meeting, applicants urged rescheduling the scoping session. However, Bob Geneslaw, consulting town planner, recommended restarting the entire application/environmental review process. Mr. Geneslaw argued that the current application had been negatively impacted by the specter of segmentation, thereby placing the board in legal jeopardy. TLC representatives countered that project sponsors would pay town expenses associated with future litigation. Following board attorney Paula Kay's advice, the restart issue was to be discussed at a private workshop on June 18.

Since then, for several apparent reasons, TLC has disappeared from public view.

- Currently, the board is assessing town zoning regulations pertinent to TLC's proposal, likely motivated by compelling written data and analyses furnished by constituent Toby Boritz and others (see Boritz June 30 letter page 22).
- Seemingly, TLC has not yet been declared an officially approved EB-5 site, an indispensable designation for project funding.

The BKAA persistently monitors TLC's roller-coaster scenario and will inform members and interested parties when significant developments arise.

President’s Note:
EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED has become the mantra for the Thompson Learning Center (TLC) proposal as evidenced by Supervisor Bill Rieber's "bombshell" announcement that TLC was "off the agenda" for that night's (9/2/2014) Thompson Town Board (board) meeting. Supervisor Rieber explained that board consideration of TLC's requests were "premature." He also indicated that Thompson's attorneys were unaware of the development's agenda referral. Notably, TLC initially must have received official sanctions to be placed on the agenda. Perhaps, the Town's turnabout was influenced by critically timed correspondence from a Thompson constituent highlighting pending, unresolved TLC issues, that rendered board deliberations at this juncture "premature." Whatever... delays are great! Thanks to all meeting attendees. Stay tuned for future updates on this matter.

Update: 7 Peaks

- Paula Medley

While 7 Peaks has not appeared once before Mamakating's Planning Board since April 22, the BKAA has relentlessly expressed concerns and recommendations to the board and its consultants in the intervening months. Our advocacy, using myriad modalities, has been NON-STOP!

We organized letter writing campaigns via several highly effective Action Alerts, which were also implemented by key partners, Friends of the Shawangunks, NY-NJ Trail Conference, and Orange County Land Trust. Our Alerts urged creation of a Conservation Alternative that eliminated or moved further eastward, lots positioned on the ridge top (overlooking The Basha Kill) or westernmost acreage. Furthermore, the BKAA strongly advocated that the Trail Conference, rather than the North American Land Trust, construct any footpath considered for 7 Peaks. We likewise maintained that the subsequent trail corridor (with a maximum 1000 ft. width) be protected with a conservation easement held either by the Trail Conference or Orange County Land Trust. Additionally, we advised backing of our consultant’s proposals related to stormwater, groundwater, wetlands, et. al.

Also, the BKAA has continuously sent correspondence from our consultants to the planning board including:

- BKAA Consultants' Rebuttals to 7 Peaks - 5/6/2014
- Willingham letter on Additional Infrastructure Maintenance Comments - 5/20
- Willingham remarks on SEQRA Alternative Evaluation (contained herein) - 6/23
- Willingham correspondence on Impacts to Winterton Neighborhood: Stormwater Runoff Assessment (contained herein) - 8/1

Recently, the BKAA received tremendous backing from Concerned Winterton Residents, whose members reside in neighborhoods at the base of 7 Peaks' eastern slope (Nicole Place, Karen Joy Drive, Upper and Spruce Roads among others). Organized and led by the dynamic, fearless Cecilia Walsh, this assemblage has rapidly morphed into a mega force with significant influence. Deeply worried about flooding, stormwater, groundwater, and impacts to septic systems, Concerned Winterton Members have written 36 letters and collected 135 signatures indicating their consternation. Town officials responded to this lobbying by conducting a “field trip” to relevant enclaves on July 22. Participants entailed planning board members and consultants, 7 Peaks advisers, BKAA consulting engineer Andy Willingham, and of course, Cecilia Walsh and friends. Subsequently, Andy summarized his findings and suggestions in a report sent to all parties.

Currently, the planning board is likely to schedule a special 7 Peaks workshop (open to the public) in the near future. We will inform members and partners when pertinent information is available. Until then...Stay Tuned!!!
Dear Chairman Starobin and Planning Board Members:

As the Board knows, the meeting was attended by multiple Planning Board members, Planning Board Engineer Fusco, the Applicant’s Engineer (Reilly Associates), and several homeowners from the Winterton Neighborhood, among others. As we understand, many homeowners in the Winterton Neighborhood have submitted written comments to the Planning Board with an overwhelming theme of poor drainage conditions. Drainage issues appear to be commonplace in the neighborhood and were likely worsened by the construction of the Seven Peaks access road in 2007. All of the homeowners in question are located downstream of the Seven Peaks project, which include residents on Mountain Road, Silver Mine Estates Road, Shirley Lane, Nicole Place, Karen Joy Drive, Spruce Road as well as areas in Orange County (along Spruce Road).

Based upon the meeting and site visit, the following is a preliminary assessment of the relevant points. The potential impacts are also included, with recommendations for further review and analysis during the environmental process. We have also conducted a very cursory study of the revised FEIS as it pertains to the above, and offer related preliminary comments.

**Existing Conditions & Site Visit**

As the Board knows, the meeting was attended by multiple Planning Board members, Planning Board Engineer Fusco, the Applicant’s Engineer (Reilly Associates), and several homeowners from the Winterton Neighborhood, among others. As we understand, many homeowners in the Winterton Neighborhood have submitted written comments to the Planning Board with an overwhelming theme of poor drainage conditions. Drainage issues appear to be commonplace in the neighborhood and were likely worsened by the construction of the Seven Peaks access road in 2007. All of the homeowners in question are located downstream of the Seven Peaks project, which include residents on Mountain Road, Silver Mine Estates Road, Shirley Lane, Nicole Place, Karen Joy Drive, Spruce Road as well as areas in Orange County (along Spruce Road).

Approximately 6,900 length feet (or 1.3 miles) of Mountain Road currently receive runoff from the Seven Peaks property. The estimated 430 acre watershed area is comprised of the eastern portion of the Seven Peaks project, with the vast majority of that area being steeply sloped.

To date, very little information has been provided by the Applicant concerning the drainage infrastructure along Mountain Road. No survey data regarding swales, culverts (size or location) or details regarding downstream discharge points and pathways have been provided. As we understand from the site visit and from discussions with the Applicant’s Engineer, approximately nine (9) separate

**7 Peaks Letters continued on page 20**
culverts convey stormwater under Mountain Road along this section of road to nine (9) separate discharge points east of Mountain Road.

The lack of existing stormwater infrastructure along Mountain Road given the large and steep watershed area is surprising and we consider this system to be substantially inadequate. The roadside swale on the west side of Mountain Road, which should be sizable considering the tributary area, is nearly non-existent in many locations, thereby allowing water to flow directly onto the road during any moderate storm event. Not surprisingly, there were multiple reports heard at the site visit by homeowners of stormwater bypassing the drainage system on the west side of Mountain Road, overtopping the road and discharging directly to the Winterton Neighborhood properties.

Potential impacts
As noted above, a large portion of the Seven Peaks development is proposed to drain toward Mountain Road. Given the vastly undersized infrastructure and abundance of reported issues, the potential for additional impacts as a result of the development is a significant concern. As the Applicant’s Engineer has accurately stated, Seven Peaks must limit stormwater runoff rates to that equal to or less than existing runoff rates. The review of the revised Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), which includes revised stormwater runoff calculations, will determine whether that requirement has been achieved.

Although there are requirements on the limiting runoff rate, there is little regulation on runoff volume. The project will substantially increase runoff volume, due to the conversion of ground cover from woods to impervious and lawn areas. For the Board’s information, stormwater ponds are designed to reduce runoff rate, not volume. It should also be noted that we recognize the difficulty of reducing runoff volume, but it is a potential impact that is real and must be assessed.

For many land development projects, the discharge point is a large wetland or stream that may be capable of accommodating the additional volume. However, in the case of Seven Peaks, the inadequacy of the discharge points along Mountain Road warrant greater consideration of the impacts of the additional runoff volume. The proposed stormwater ponds must limit runoff rate discharging from Seven Peaks to that of pre-development as required, which remains to be shown by the Applicant. Assuming runoff rates are limited, stormwater will flow for a longer period of time due to the additional runoff volume created, toward what appear to be inadequate discharge points. It’s a potential impact that certainly warrants further study and analysis.

Recommendations
The existing infrastructure along Mountain Road should be mapped on the Preliminary Plans with topography, drainage infrastructure (including culvert sizes/invert/slope) and other existing features (e.g. driveways). The approximately nine (9) stormwater culverts that cross Mountain Road are critical since these are the locations where runoff impacts would likely occur. Areas where the swale on the west side of Mountain Road is under capacity or non-existent should be shown on the plan. The condition of culverts should be noted if applicable. Many were observed to be partially overgrown with vegetation or clogged.

Another critical piece of missing information is the pathways of the drainage from the culverts into the Winterton Neighborhood. As described above, these appear to be low quality discharge points given the lack of infrastructure both on Mountain Road and downstream through the Winterton Neighborhood. The pathway of this drainage, particularly given the history of drainage issues and the certain increase in volume warrants a thorough assessment.

As observed at the site visit, it is evident that the existing downstream drainage infrastructure is deficient and requires further study and analysis regarding the project’s impacts. It is not uncommon for proposed developments to furnish offsite utility improvements when the infrastructure is inadequate. It may be appropriate for the Applicant and the Board to discuss infrastructure improvements in this regard to mitigate the impacts.

Initial Review of Revised FEIS
We have conducted only a cursory review of the July 3, 2014 FEIS. However, several observations were noted, all related to stormwater:

1. When reviewing stormwater calculations, the drainage area maps are critical in determining correct drainage areas, discharge points, etc. Per our review of the Drainage Area Maps, located in the revised FEIS (See Appendix L - Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan), the maps are very difficult to read. The drainage area boundaries aren’t clear [line types of different features are too similar], the discharge points aren’t shown or labeled, time of concentration paths are difficult to decipher and there is no legend. This information is crucial in determining runoff effects, which may not be possible given the current format of the maps.

2. As discussed above, the nine (9) culverts that cross Mountain Road are vital analysis points in determining the impacts, as well as the pathways drainage will take beyond these points and toward the Winterton Neighborhood. However, the SWPPP includes very little discussion regarding these discharge points. The SWPPP should be revised to contain this information.

3. We note that the revised design incorporates changes to stormwater pond sizes and locations, the addition of bioretention areas, etc. which we will review at a later date. However, it is worth noting that the proposed road appears to drain directly into wetlands, intermittent streams, or offsite without receiving water quality treatment (e.g. see Frederick Law Olmstead Way Stations 15+00 to
Continued from page 20:

22+00 (west side of road), 30+00 to 42+00 (west side of road), 73+00 to 87+00 (west side of road), 87+00 to 101+00 (both sides of
road), 110+00 to 129+00 (northwest side of road), 145+00 to 151+00 (west side of road)). In accordance with NYSDEC regulations,
direct discharge from proposed impervious surfaces without providing water quality treatment is not permitted. The plan must be
revised.

**Summary**

As detailed above, the drainage infrastructure along Mountain Road and through the Winterton Neighborhood beyond is substantially
inadequate, as evidenced at the site visit and per issues described by the Winterton Neighborhood residents. Very little information
has been provided to date regarding these downstream discharge points and the associated impacts. Before any consideration of
the Board’s acceptance of the FEIS, the Applicant must furnish the required information to assess impacts, and provide mitigation
measures as needed.

We again thank the Board for the opportunity to comment and participate in the review process for this important project. Feel free
to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,
Andrew Willingham, Willingham Engineering, PLLC

---

**Winterton Residents’ Letters on 7 Peaks**

I am writing to the Mamakating Planning Board with my concerns about the Seven Peak development.

We have lived in the Town of Mamakating for 20 years, our first home on Witte Drive off of Winterton Road and at our present
residence on Shirley Lane, off of Upper Road. We live on the side of the mountain where Seven Peaks will be located, and it will be
above our development, as well as several other developments. Our house is on a Cul de sac, accessible only off of County Route
65.

We have concerns of sufficient availability of water for the planned homes and whether it will affect the homes below the Seven
Peaks subdivision. There is data available which indicates “Well testing to date does not show that sufficient water can be obtained
for each of the homes proposed on 49 lots.” - Source: Mid-Hudson Geosciences April 18, 2014 letter

Other concerns are storm water runoff and sewage. As mentioned our home is at the end of the Cul de sac on Shirley Lane. During
heavy rain, water from the street run off, approximately 200 yards long, discharges on to our property and we have a 2 to 3 foot wide
stream running through our yard that continues to erode our property, which Town of Mamakating fails to address. What will happen
to the homes below Seven Peaks when there is heavy rain and there are approximately 4.7 miles of roads that will have storm water
runoff. Do the 13 large storm water management ponds and other components of the system meet the State of New York and the
Town of Mamakating requirements? Will they be able to handle severe rain of several inches an hour without overflowing to the
homes below Seven Peaks?

Please consider carefully the Seven Peaks proposal. Please do what is best for this rural community.

Thank You,

Kurt & Maryvonne Carney

To: Mr. Mort Starobin, Chairman and Board Members

I am writing to the Mamakating Planning Board with my concerns about the Seven Peak development. I have lived in the Town of
Mamakating for eight years, since 2006, at my residence on Karen Joy Drive, in the Winterton Area, in a development known as
Spruce Meadows. I live on the side of the mountain where Seven Peaks will be located, and it will be right above my development,
as well as several other developments. My development is on a cul de sac, accessible only off Spruce Road.

We moved here years ago to get away from Queens: the over crowded housing, the noise of traffic, and the amount of people. Now
that we are here, and love our home and our community, the reason we moved here in the first place is threatened by the very thing
we moved here to avoid. This proposed subdivision will destroy our property, our well, our septic, our peace and quiet and the beauty
of the ridge we moved here to admire.

Years ago, I witnessed how a huge increase in water running down from the mountain was ripping up our development. We had major
problems with storm water runoff from the mountain when a development above us on the mountain was attempted by Michael Kuhl
(Blue and Gold Homes) called Stoneleigh Woods Major Subdivision (Tax Map Section 72, Block 1, Lot 2.1). As a result of preliminary
work done by the people seeking to develop this area (which is right next to where Seven Peaks is planned), my development
suddenly was plagued by rivers of water running through our development, tearing up the back yards and driveways of the Stout and
Van Fluke families, as well as large portions of the road itself, Nicole Place. Another neighbor significantly impacted by this increase
in water lives across the street from me, Jay Clisdell.

---

7 Peaks Letters continued on page 22
7 Peaks Letters continued from page 21

Please consider the impact on our existing community, we love our neighborhood. Please be diligent! We, as a community feel this area of Seven Peaks should be left forever wild if the composition of the mountain cannot sustain development without harming the people below. Be mindful and thoughtful of neighbors and long term residences.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our homes.

Edwin and Michele Arce

Attention: Mr. Mort Starobin, Chairman and Board Members - Town of Mamakating Planning Board

July 14, 2014

I am writing this official letter of concern regarding the SEVEN PEAKS development in the Town of Mamakating, which will be above my residence on Upper Road. I have lived on Upper Road since June 8, 1979 and have had quite a few experiences with activity up on the ridge.

I am very concerned about the negative effects of this subdivision on my present property and on my family’s health, future property value, and a planned relaxing retirement.

I formerly resided at another address on Upper Rd when the first roads were cut into the ridge above our home. My well pit flooded, my basement flooded, water ran down the mountainside and overfilled my pool, and my yard became a soggy mess. It cost me a lot of time, hard work, and expense I did not need to bear to correct the issues the best I could with fill, storm drainage, sump pumps, and more. The owners after me took it further by digging and installing blind ditching and storm basins etc.

So far, at my present address on Upper Road, I have only had minor water issues during the big storms. However, my neighbors property and the pond behind me, have suffered disastrous results from storm water runoff. Also, on the opposite side of the street, the ditches quickly fill with water and the property owners on Winterton Rd are the next recipients of the flow.

The ridge has a large composition of shale. Attempting to develop this mountain will certainly not make the situations of the landowners below any better. Moreover, the results of irresponsible developing could very likely be disastrous for present homeowners.

I am sure the Zoning, Planning, and Town Boards will fulfill their responsibilities by carefully engineering all the proper procedures in this process. Having municipal board experience myself, I understand the liabilities of the Boards and their need to adhere to both legal and professional engineering advice.

Furthermore, I would recommend that the Town of Mamakating keep a record of all written and emailed concerns of property owners and others, in the event that any claims are later made against the Town for its decisions.

In the event that the development moves forward, I feel it would be prudent for the Board to insist on a sizable multi-million performance and liability bond from the developers, before approval to commence work could be given. These bonds should be in place before any approvals, and have a duration of at least 10 years from the date of completion. They should also be open ended to allow for additional issues to be added as they arise.

I would encourage anyone submitting an official letter of concern, such as mine, to forward a copy to the Town’s Insurer. I will be requesting their name and address from the Clerk.

Thank you for your time and concern with my issues and those of my neighbors.

Sincerely,

Daniel H Burrows

Boritz Letter on Thompson Learning Center / China City

TLC’s Zoning Analysis: Dormitory Buildings vs Dormitory Density Units

June 30, 2014

If RR-2 has the most protective zoning regulations in the Town of Thompson - 2-acre zoning for 1&2 family homes, no townhouses, row houses, PUD zones, or hotels permitted - how can Thompson Learning Center fit millions of square feet of development and so many facilities on 422 net acres and still comply with the Town’s zoning laws? Short answer: they can’t.

TLC’s revised density analysis, like the earlier CCOA proposal, hinges on a gross misinterpretation of RR-2 zoning regulations with respect to dormitories. This eye-opening quote from Dick McGoeey’s 619 Technical Review Comments about Tom Shepstone’s density analysis sheds important light on this matter ...

“The density evaluation basically represents that dormitories are not subject to and not considered dwelling units therefore, the 660 townhouses at four units per acre will consume about 140 acres.* The single family housing for benefactors equaling 29 units and the faculty housing equaling 68 units for a total of 97 units using 2 units per acre will consume 194 acres therefore, of the 422 net acres available, there is 88 additional acres for other uses.’ (660 divided by 4 = 165 acres, not 140)

The applicant apparently claims that because dorm units (rooms, suites) are not actually “dwelling units” that their 660 proposed freestanding townhouse dormitory buildings are not buildings at all but rather “density units” to be calculated at 4 buildings (rather
than 4 dorm rooms or suites) an acre—thereby circumventing the required subtraction of 3 net acres per building. If TLC were to comply with actual RR-2 regulations, they could only build a total of 97 single family homes and just 76 of 660 proposed townhouse dorms, leaving them no land on which to build any classrooms or any of their ancillary facilities at all.

Single-Family Homes On the positive side, TLC correctly calculates that 97 single-family homes will use up 194 of their 422 net acres; leaving 228 net acres, on which to build everything else.

**Gross Misinterpretation of RR-2 Dormitory Regulations**

It is by tortured logic that TLC’s planner asserts that 660 freestanding townhouse style dormitories are not dormitory bldgs at all but rather “density units.” Had they employed the same correct analysis for dorms as they use for single family homes they would have concluded that each dormitory facility (i.e., building) must be sited on a 3 acre lot to be subtracted from net acreage—with two 50’ side yard setbacks, and density units (rooms or suites) that may not exceed 4 density units an acre.

**Each Dorm Bldg Requires 3 Acre Lot**

There is currently no section or definition in the code for “dormitory” or “dormitory unit,” and the appropriate size & configuration of dorm units need to be determined. But regardless of how you define a dorm unit, it is clear that each dorm building requires a 3 acre lot. Just as a freestanding seminary or convent must comply with Table 1 parameters, each freestanding dormitory building must do likewise. For each dormitory facility (building), TLC must subtract 3 acres from their 228 remaining net acres, meaning they can only build 76—not 660—freestanding dormitory facilities (buildings) before running out of land to build on (228 net acres + 3 net acres per bldg = 76 dorm bldgs). Therefore, applicant can only build 97 single-family homes @ 0.5 DU/ac that use up all remaining 228 net acres, leaving no land to build anything else on!

Because TLC claims that dorm units do not constitute actual “dormitory units” applicant improperly asserts the right to calculate density of dormitory buildinasas though they were dorm moms (units) @ 4 facilities per acre. Yes, dorm rooms are not “dwellings” since they may not have kitchen or sanitary facilities. They are, however, ‘density units in the same way that RR-2 campsites & tents are density units (calculated at 2 DUI acre under 250 Attachment 3:2). Please note that when Chap. 250 supplanted the 1984 Chap. 126 Regs in 2005, the Town Board re-labeled its RR-2 (formerly AR) zoning chart headings from “dwellings units per acre” to “density units per acre” to allow more flexibility and inclusiveness as to the kinds of habitable spaces that can be built in this rural area, including dorm units & campsites—see my 6/17 letter.

**A Type of Facility Is Not A “Density Unit”**

Table 1 lists the type of facility in the left-hand column and to the right the bulk regulations that must be followed. Each seminary, convent, dormitory is a freestanding facility subject to the following parameters; 3 acre minimum lot size (to be subtracted from net acres) with 50’ setbacks on each side yard, max 4 density units an acre and maximum 15% lot coverage.

Since a convent, place of worship, seminary and, yes, a dormitory is a freestanding structure, just as you can’t decide to call a convent or a seminary a “density unit” “and propose building 4 convents or 4 seminaries per acre, it is equally absurd to claim that a dorm building (facility) is a “density unit” (a dorm room or suite within a multi-unit bldg) that can be built at 4 per acre. But that’s apparently what TLC is asserting by calling 660 freestanding townhouse style dorm buildings “density units” rather than dormitory buildings, thereby circumventing the required subtraction of 3 net acres for each building.

Thompson’s RR-2 regulations were carefully crafted to protect this rural area from overdevelopment so, as outlined here, the only way to try and push through a massive project such as this is to deny that freestanding townhouse dorm buildings are buildings at all. But just as all homeowners have to comply with zoning regulations for lot size, setbacks & density, no less should be required of Thompson Learning Center. I hope this information is helpful to the board in making a determination on this important matter.

**TOBY L. BORITZ**

*The 2 setbacks omitted were — 50’ required setback from 1 side yard & 100’ from both side yards.

1 570 gros acs less 148 acs of wetlands = 422 net buildable acs; they also have 71.5 acs of 100’ protected DEC wetland buffers

2 a strategy reminiscent of Mr. Shepstone’s 2013 CCOA proposal to build 92 acres of “inns” on this site & his 2009 Parkwood plan for 175 two-family homes using inapplicable B&B zoning & basing density calculations on a misprint in RR-2 zoning chart

3 single family homes require minimum 2 acre lots; their density is calculated at @ 0.5 density units per acre

**FALL DONORS** continued from page 17

Barbara M. Palinkas — Denoge E. Patterson — Eileen A. Phelan — Marguerite A. Phillips — Glenn Pontier


Barbara Restaino — Heidi Schneider & Steve A. Richter — Eileen H. Rogers — Kimberly E. & Robert F. Rogers

Lee Rosenthal — Marc Alan Rosner — Michele L. & Clark Rothausen — Alan Rothschild


Christine M. Saward — Patricia A. Sayad — Sharon S. Saracino — Terry R. Saturno


Kathryn E. Scullion — Sally Seymour — Shawangunk Ridge Coalition — Sharon Richman & Alex Shiffer

**FALL DONORS** continued from page 25
The Anti-Fracking Movement in Mamakating

By Anita Altmann

The Phillipsport Community Center (PCC) inaugurated its new film series in June with a screening of Josh Fox’s Gasland II, the powerful sequel to his 2010, Oscar-nominated Gasland, a forceful expose of the dangers of hydraulic fracturing commonly known as fracking, and its impact on communities where it occurs. This follow-up film challenges the gas industry’s attempt to persuade the public that natural gas is a safe and clean alternative to oil, by piercing that myth, and exposing the devastating environmental impact on our water, air, and the quality of life of families living where fracking prevails. Moreover, Fox documents the industry’s role in our political life, where in his words, gas interests are “…contaminating our democracy.” The screening was followed by a discussion with Wes Gillingham, Director of Catskill Mountainkeeper, whose mission includes to promote “…sustainable growth and protect the natural resources essential to healthy communities”.

A small, but moved, audience called for subsequent action to prevent fracking in our township. Many localities across New York State have already passed regulations prohibiting fracking in their towns, along with bans on using any by-products of the process. Wes offered the assistance of his organization in securing model ordinances, which could be presented to the Town Board for review and passage. Catskill Mountainkeeper has been working with NRDC (Natural Resources Defense Council) which provides pro bono lawyers who help draft these models to meet the particular needs of each community desiring them.

At its first meeting following the screening, the PCC voted to request that the Mamakating Town Board pass an anti-fracking edict along with barring by-product usage in our township. The PCC, working with the pro bono lawyer obtained a proposed ordinance, which has now been submitted to the Town Board for review. The Board has already indicated significant support for its passage.

The anti-fracking movement was greatly strengthened by a recent New York State Court of Appeals decision upholding the right of localities to forbid fracking, despite the fierce arguments of the oil and gas industry. It appears likely that Mamakating will join the 170 localities across New York State, which have already banned this environmentally devastating process from their communities.

Never underestimate the power of film to open up hearts and minds, and move people to action. Thank you Josh Fox!!

NEWS BRIEFS

- Paula Medley

BKAA Financial Appeal Yields Extremely Positive Results

BKAA members and friends generously responded to our special appeal, which accompanied June’s annual membership drive (see huge donors list). Currently, operating expense donations total $10,225.00, while Legal Fund contributions total $10,960.00. Some of the aforementioned have already been spent. Notably, dues are deposited into our regular or operating account. Though we can pay this year’s standard bills, like two additional Guardian printings/mailings, porto-potty rental, etc., we may not sufficiently “cover” BKAA brochure reprinting or camper sponsorships. Therefore, those who have not yet paid their dues, please consider doing so at your earliest convenience. We are “holding our own” with legal fees. While 7 Peaks consistently incurs substantial costs, Thompson Learning Center’s (China City) hiatus has enabled resuscitation of depleted resources.

Thanks again to all who donated. We appreciate your trust and will work hard to earn your ongoing confidence.

John Kenney, BKAA Educator, is Moving to Colorado

John Kenney, seasoned BKAA naturalist, well-known for leading his Spring Wildflowers, Blooms and Butterflies, as well as tree identification walks, is relocating to Colorado in October to be near his children. His trips have always been popular with Basha Kill visitors, due to John’s passion, knowledge, and meticulous preparations, like surveying wetlands locales beforehand to ensure optimum experiences for outing attendees.

The BKAA gratefully acknowledges John’s long-time efforts, which have significantly enriched our educational programs. We thank him for his generosity and wish him “Happy Trails.”

Who Am I? POETRY CORNER

Undaunted by others or rain or wind I take to the sky.
Across the meadows and mountains I soar; who am I?
I carry no weapons; just my beak and my claws.
Don’t fear me, don’t hide and lock your doors.
As I sail overland I look down on our great USA
I see chaos; people running from each other, not together; I am dismayed
It should not be divided we fall, but united we stand.
Come on America, be brother with brother and strike up the band.
The time has come to unite and revolt against those who want to see us fall.
Stand together, shoulder to shoulder, hand in hand and listen to your symbol call.
Yes, I am your eagle, soaring high and free.
Forever faithful, loyal and true to our nation of democracy. — Lee Scribner

SEE KESSLER POEM ON PAGE 36
Presently, Mamakating officials and consultants are drafting amendments to Mamakating’s Master Plan and Zoning, which hopefully will incorporate input obtained from residents and groups, like the BKAA and YLPA, at several town workshops, as well as from citizens’ letters. Rumor has it that critical BKAA and YLPA recommendations will be considered. Eventually, a public hearing on these amendments will be scheduled.

As we believe them to be extremely pivotal, our propositions, followed by YLPA’s, are listed below.

**BKAA:**
1. Conduct a town-wide habitat assessment to be incorporated into the Plan. Inventorying Mamakating’s natural landscape will protect critical resources while facilitating appropriate economic development.
2. Employ stronger language when referencing the Basha Kill and Shawangunk Ridge as possible Critical Environmental Areas (CEAs). For instance, state the Town “will designate” the above as CEAs, rather that the Town ‘recommends” these classifications.
3. Eliminate ineffectual language in Town Code Section 199-42 - Shawangunk Ridge View Protection Area. Instead of saying “whenever possible, structures shall be sited at lower elevations and close to existing roads,” assert that “structures shall be sited...”
4. Eradicate the loophole in Chapter 199-36c of the Code, which calculates density in the Ridge and Valley Protection and Mountain Greenbelt Zones using soil methods which yield higher residential density than originally intended.
5. Change Shawanga Lodge’s zoning from “mixed use resort” to Ridge and Valley Protection, thereby lowering density (presently single family residences and townhouses associated with a resort are allowed) and enhancing public scrutiny via a special use permit requirement. Permitting a resort “as of right,” currently the case at Shawanga Lodge, “flies in the face” of the Plan’s Vision for the Ridge!
6. In the Wurtsboro Airport Economic Development Area, create a “no build” buffer between intensive commercial/industrial development and the Gumaer Brook (headwaters of the Basha Kill), Shawangunk Ridge, and D&H Canal Linear Park (See Mamakating map). Unless this is accomplished, there will be continuous battles with environmental groups. Remember Yukiguni? And...right now, access to a proposed 1.2 million square foot warehouse, part of Commerce Park at Wurtsboro Airport’s project, is at the end of McDonald Road, right “on top of the crucial assets just listed. Consequently, site major commercial endeavors in this economic zone, right along Route 209, not inland. We likewise urge recommended uses to be better defined such as “distribution centers and warehouses not to include...”

**YLPA:**
1. Rezone the western portion of the Town of Mamakating to Mountain Greenbelt, creating a full Mountain Greenbelt corridor from north to south along the Town’s Western border.
2. Create a Lake District Overlay zone to cover the developed properties surrounding the four lakes within the proposed Mountain Greenbelt zone. This includes Yankee Lake, Masten Lake, Wanasink Lake and Wolf Lake. The Lake District Overlay would add additional protections and assist the Town Planning and Zoning Boards variance requests for any building within the district.
3. Correct the language in the zoning regulations in PRO and MG regarding building density and cluster development rules.

**Other Updates** by Paula Medley

**Shawanga Lodge:** There will NOT be a casino here as property owner David Flaum submitted his application for a casino in Woodbury, Orange County, instead.

Nevertheless, this land will be a catalyst for “off the wall” projects unless purchased as open space and incorporated into the Shawangunk Ridge Greenway. Until then, the BKAA advocates that the parcel be rezoned for lower density (See #5 in Medley Master Plan article). The BKAA will continually monitor Shawanga Lodge’s development status and apprise members and partners of relevant breaking news.

**Yukiguni Maitake:** Nothing new to report.
**2014 BKAA CAMPERS’ STORIES** *(President’s Notes)*

Like 2013, this year’s campers were geographically “all over the block,” with Madigan Murphy and Leo Shestakov at Camp DeBruce in the Catskills, Truth Muller at Pack Forest in the Southern Adirondacks, and Braedon Halpin at Camp Rushford in Western New York. Wherever they “landed,” they all enjoyed great experiences and definitely enhanced their environmental awareness. Here are there stories! (Photos on page 27).

**BRAEDON HALPIN**

I had a great time at Camp Rushford! Some of my favorite things that happened were:

1. I got my hunting license
2. I had the best counselor and cabin
3. I made a lot of friends who I will keep in touch with forever
4. My favorite game to play was ZAP - a flashlight game!
5. I learned a whole bunch about the environment, like how to help save the environment and different ways to recycle and reuse.

Thank you so much for sponsoring me to go to this camp. I would love to go to a different environmental camp in the future.

**TRUTH MULLER**

Last summer my week at Camp Colby seemed as though it couldn’t be topped. A year later, it appears as though I was mistaken!

From the moment I stepped from the car, I could see Pack Forest had a great time in store for me. In one day, it felt as though we had covered a week of material.

At our first meal, one of our counselors declared that we “should abandon all hope of sanity, you won’t find any here!” And he meant it! Everything was loose. Unexpected interruptions were welcomed, be it a rainstorm, a howling loon, an exotic mushroom... or the sudden appearance of two counselors in one pair of pants during lunch! A lesson on water erosion might find itself morphing into a debate on how long it would take to reach the Alpha Centauri system. A discussion on renewable energy sources could change into a conversation on how macroalgae makes an unusual “pet”. We took it as it came, savoring every deranged moment.

I tried to take every opportunity to do something new this year. I started out on an exploration of Pack Lake in a canoe, and came back in a kayak - without returning to shore to make the switch! On top of that, I blazed my way into first place on the boating race back to camp. Speaking of “on top”, I found myself scaling my first mountain with a full pack and a tent by the third day. The overnight atop the 3,241 ft. Crane Mountain was, both literally and metaphorically, the highest point of the week. Despite two dozen cuts & scrapes and a few gallons of sweat, the view from the summit alone was worth it all. A full rainbow crested the peak, iridescence gilded the clouds and golden beams of light spilled down into a veritable ocean of lush, green pines. It was enough to take one’s breath away.

And, finally, I tried my hand at archery this year. The first few shots landed in the grass about a yard from where I stood. Each try crept a few inches closer to the target. I’ll never be the next William Tell, but I made sure that my last arrow hit that target!

We had a great mix of counselors, each one with something to offer to us. One, named Rocket (yes, that is her real name) was the daughter of an astronaut. Another, Katie, was a passionate mushroom enthusiast. Our cabin counselor, Marc, was a big bear of a guy who would play his mandolin and tell us Native American folktales from memory after a long, exciting day.

Virtually every day had a nature hike in store for us. Counselor Katie led us on a mushroom hunt, on which we were treated to around forty species of fascinating fungi (Many of which I had never seen before), twenty-one Red Efts and a unique tribe of forehead-attacking mosquitoes (who were less than a treat). Counselor Matt took us on a forestry hike, where we saw a 120 year old Maple tree that once, in its prime, provided nine buckets of sap a year. We found an Ironwood sapling, a tree I thought up until then was purely fictional, and felt the soft needles of a very rare Larch Pine.

Whether it was paddling alongside of a family of loons, using African tracking techniques to hide in a game of “Predator-Prey” or consuming large quantities of brownie pancakes for breakfast, I greatly enjoyed every moment of my Pack Forest week. A big thank you to the BKAA for making this wonderful experience possible!

**MADIGAN MURPHY**

At Camp DeBruce, there was a focus on nature and conservation. While there, we participated in some typical camp games. However, we also learned a lot about nature, energy, and our environment. We were challenged to create no food waste, to keep the trails clean, and tell others to do the same and more. Each and every camper grew to know the Earth we live on better than ever before. Camp DeBruce was definitely a great experience for all of us. Going to this camp taught us all a lot about the importance of taking care of the Earth.

*Campers’ Stories* continued on page 28
Truth Muller

Leo Shestakov

Braedon Halpin

Madigan Murphy

Founders Day
See page 31

Photo by Bob Muller

The “Buddies for Bats” booth was swamped with a record-breaking amount of visitors (242)!
Camper's Stories continued from page 26

Madigan's mother, Heather adds:

Madigan also received her archery safety course certification at Camp DeBruce. Thank you, Basha Kill Organization!

LEO SHESTAKOV

This summer, I got lucky! I was sponsored by the Basha Kill Area Association for a week at one of the NYS DEC Environmental Camps, Camp DeBruce. This was my second year at this camp, and I got to have many new, fun experiences. My favorite activities at camp were making friends with lots of awesome people, and having fun on camp nature lessons.

I feel that camp is a bit like an airport. It is a place where many different people, from many different places, with many different talents can all come together. This is why making friends was one of my favorite parts of camp. Just hearing about all the various places people came from made me think that the world isn't really that big of a place, and that it is possible for everyone to unite! People came from as far out as Texas, which made camp feel very special to me! It also gave us all lots of time to bond with each other. I really enjoyed playing games that helped us all get to know each other a little better, and having lots of “Cabin Time”, which is where we all had time to socialize with our cabin mates.

Another experience that I enjoyed at camp was how it made learning fun. Everyone at camp would go on 2-3 daily nature lessons, where we would get hands-on learning activities with wildlife, and gain lots of interesting information. One of my favorite nature lessons was going to the Catskill Fish Hatchery and seeing how the state is helping increase the population of fish. Another one was our weekly “Stream Lesson”, in which we looked for many things in the camp stream (bugs, salamanders, etc.), and collected them!

I would like to thank the BKAA for not only sponsoring me, but also providing me with so many life experiences to count!

PS: After my parents picked me up from camp, we all went together on a small hike at Basha Kill Area in order to get to know this special place we heard so much about. My favorite part was seeing the huge marsh that is surrounded by the forest. I’ve never seen anything like that! We all really enjoyed the scenery and want to visit again sometime, and everybody else should too!

Mamakating and the Rediscovery of the D&H Canal

Kerron Barnes
Interagency Coordinator, Town of Mamakating

ORIGINS

The recent rediscovery of the D & H Canal began in 2001 with a $20,000 Member Item grant from State Senator John Bonacic. Mary Barbuti, Town Supervisor at that time asked me to help with the grant; that is, deciding what to do with the funds that were described only as for “improvements to the canal.”

Realizing that the funds should be used for the best possible purpose I began to research the canal’s history, mapping and related information. The single question was, on what do we spend the grant? Would it be to repair a section of towpath, acquire property, or protect a historic element about to be lost. There was no information available to solve this puzzle.

I began with three basic questions: where is the canal on current tax maps, who owns it and what condition is it in? This information would guide the expenditure of the funds.

Getting usable, modern information on a historic resource that was 175 years old and which was unused for one hundred years was a considerable challenge. It needed an expert.

I had originally been engaged as a consultant to the town to manage two federal grants that were for housing rehabilitation in Highview and the Phillipsport - Summitville area. We were required to follow federal regulations regarding work on historic structures. The best way to do that is to identify those structures. Doing so eliminates the need for State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) review of all the non historic structures. Since a good number of structures in the northern part of the town were along the canal route, I had the brainstorm to use the federal funds to do an inventory of the canal and neighboring structures.

For $5,000 the town hired Neil Larson, a historic preservation consultant and former employee of the SHPO to do an inventory of canal properties. We asked for answers to the three questions: give us a tax map the length of the town with the canal marked on it, tell us who owns the actual canal and abutting properties, and tell us what its condition is.

The answers came in a mammoth inventory, maps, photos and description of the canal’s history. The answers were stunning: the canal was now clearly delineated on current maps, it was almost entirely owned by government entities, and the towpath was almost entirely intact from end to end.

FIRST STEPS

The inventory identified four locations where private parties owned small sections of the canal, other than numerous lots in Phillipsport where walking on the road was the only...
Do You Know a Boy or Girl from 11-17 Years of Age Who Would Like to Attend an Environmental Camp for One Week Next Summer?

The Basha Kill Area Association (BKAA) is sponsoring two children for one week each at a NYS Department of Environmental Conservation Camp during the summer of 2015.

Camp choices include:
Camp Colby (Saranac Lake)
Camp DeBruce (Livingston Manor)
Camp Rushford (Caneadea)
Pack Forest (Warrensburg).

BKAA will pay $300.00 of the total camper’s fee ($350.00) for each child selected. Primary requirements are that campers be between 11 and 17 years old and be interested in the outdoors. Priority will be given to first-time applicants.

Types of Camper Experiences
Campers 11-13 years old
Teen Ecology Camp 14-17 years old

To Apply:
Please have the interested child send us a letter with the following information:
1. Why you are interested in the environment.
2. Your name and names of your parents or guardians
3. Your address and phone number
4. The grade you are in and which school you attend

Send your letter to:
Paula Medley, BKAA President, P.O. Box 1121 Wurtsboro, NY 12790
or email: info@thebashkill.org

We must receive your application by January 14, 2015.

WHO WE ARE:
The BKAA, formed in 1972, has some 600 members who are dedicated to preserving the wonderful 3000-plus acres of the Basha Kill Wildlife Management Area and surrounding areas in the Town of Mamakating, New York.
alternative. The four locations were two private homes in Wurtsboro, the Orange and Rockland building and substation in Wurtsboro, and a small section between the Pine Kill and Orange County. Supervisor Fred Harding had a strong interest in the history of the canal and a clear vision for its rediscovery. He had a special Canal Commission appointed to move forward on a vision for the canal.

The first priority was creating an unbroken public trail. Using a state grant, the town purchased the O & R building which included easements over two abutting O & R properties containing the filled in canal. The town then secured an easement from one of the two private homeowners. When the second owner refused to provide an easement, the town secured the donation of a nearby 3.5-acre lot from Diner owners Teek and Vee Persaud to serve as a detour. Subsequently the village made a land swap with this owner and it now owns this short piece of the canal.

The property at the Pine Kill creek turned out to be actually owned by Orange County. The remainder of the canal in the town was owned by Sullivan County, the Village of Wurtsboro and the NY DEC. Thus from Phillipsport to Orange County public access was secured.

Physical conditions were the next consideration: access meant little if the towpath was deteriorated, destroyed or interrupted by breaches made by streams. As part of the inventory of canal and abutting properties, Neil Larson and his colleague Jill Fisher walked and bushwhacked the entire length of the canal in Mamakating and made note of the condition of every separate parcel of canal land. It turned out that the canal and towpath were in remarkably good condition. Some sections of the canal itself had been filled in but the towpath was virtually intact. A century of disuse had left the towpath heavily overgrown with multiflora roses, honeysuckle, grapevines, accumulated seasonal growth and a variety of living and fallen trees.

Clearing the town’s two miles of trail between the county owned section north of Wurtsboro and NYS Route 17 became a major task. Fortunately Otisville Correctional had a forestry crew of four to six volunteer inmates available for the clearing work. It took nearly three months of nearly daily work to cut the brush and trees from the towpath. Gary Keeton was present on an almost daily basis to watch over the clearing work so that it would be done in an environmentally sensitive manner.

When the clearing work was complete, the real towpath condition could be seen for the first time. There were only two places where the towpath was not passable. One was the Wilsey Brook in Wurtsboro. The other was a gap at the north edge of Wurtsboro. That issue was solved with the donation of the lot that created a usable detour.

The Wilsey Brook was another story. The Town Engineer was enlisted in the solution. After almost nine months the design for concrete abutments was complete and the work put out to bid. When installed the abutments plus design costs were about $20,000, paid for with another member item grant from Senator Bonacic.

The last item was the bridge. Following bidding, a company in Elmira had the low bid, of $21,000 for a 65 foot steel bridge. Following a winter hiatus and abutment construction, the installation day arrived on August 17, 2004.

Installation day came on August 17, 2004. Orange and Rockland lowered heavy insulation over the nearby 4000 volt wires to prevent arcing to the crane. A tractor trailer with the bridge onboard backed down the towpath followed by a huge crane. Up went the 16,000 pound bridge, dangling over the canal, then it was slowly lowered past the wires, around overhanging trees until it rested on the abutments. The bridge, designed in Elmira and the abutments, designed off site and then built in Wurtsboro were so precisely constructed that the holes in the flanges at the ends of the bridge fit around the upright abutment bolts within a half inch. It was a relief to take eight large nuts and slowly turn them down on the bolts and lock the bridge in place.

TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS

The final link in the towpath was now complete. With some difficulty a visitor could walk from the County Park at Bova Road south of Phillipsport to Route 17, using a short detour around a private property where there was an old breach in the towpath. In cooperation with the Town, the NY DOT included a stone like surface on the abutments of the new Route 209 Overpass. More importantly, the DOT carved out an undeveloped parking area opposite the new Park and Ride at the intersection of Routes 17 and 209. The bridge design also included a sidewalk on the east side for pedestrians. The DOT also created a pathway from the south side of the new overpass back to the towpath so the section to the south would be accessible.

The overall effort involved the cooperation of Sullivan County, a private homeowner, the Village of Wurtsboro, the NY DEC, Wurtsboro Renaissance and a non-profit known as the Delaware and Hudson Conservancy. Supervisor Bob Fiore also continued to support the canal trail initiative.

Following the initial period of development, Wurtsboro Renaissance assumed an important role. The Larson inventory showed that the stretch of canal and towpath from Sullivan Street to the Village’s well to the north was town owned. Renaissance members began planning to use the section between Sullivan and Pine Streets for a village park. They engaged landscape architect Bob Hansen to create a plan. What followed was an imaginative stretch of concrete walkways, benches and tables and extensive plantings. Using donated funds and extensive donations of materials and volunteer labor they created what is now the Pat Moore Memorial Park. Subsequently, Wurtsboro Renaissance was
awarded the Golden Feather grant of $50,000 from Sullivan Renaissance.

In the years that followed, the Town made gradual improvements. Another grant funded the removal of two large dumpsters of tires from the towpath near route 17. The cost was reduced through the help of Thompson Sanitation which made dumpsters and disposal available for nominal cost. The same funds paid for the use of a tractor mounted mower to remove the heavy vegetation, small trees and overhanging vines from about 1/2 mile of the canal and towpath.

A group of volunteers from the Sierra Club spent a week working on improvements in the Wilsey Brook area. They cleared brush, installed split rail fencing and planted hemlocks along the fence. Subsequently, Wurtsboro Renaissance installed additional fencing between Pine Street and the footbridge.

**RECENT IMPROVEMENTS**

Beginning in January 2014, newly elected Supervisor Bill Herrmann made further improvement of the canal trail a major priority. Once weather permitted, the Town Highway Department installed a large culvert and then backfilled the breach in the towpath adjacent to Ferguson Lane. This opened a section of towpath that has been impassible since the 1960’s when a hurricane created a gap. As of late April, 2014 and for the first time in almost 50 years a person could easily walk from Summitville to Wurtsboro, the Chase elementary school and the government / IGA shopping complex with a safe, year round route. While this program is limited in scope and cannot help all of the encroaching on the trail.

In June, the Town applied for a federal grant of $1,057,190 to improve 7,977 feet of the towpath trail to become an ADA compliant pedestrian and bicycle route from Ferguson Lane to the Town Hall parking area. The idea is to connect the residential areas of the village to the business district, elementary school and the government / IGA shopping complex with a safe, year round route. While this program is highly competitive and federal funds very limited, portions of the idea can be carried out with local funding, labor and materials.

An official opening of this section of towpath trail was on Saturday, September 6 at 10:00 AM.

**BKAA at 2014 Wurtsboro Founders Day**

- **Bill Lucas**

The BKAA participated in Wurtsboro Founders Day Street Fair on Saturday, July 19. This year the celebration ran from 12 noon until 6 pm with great weather and good crowds.

Our booth was in a terrific spot on Sullivan Street with no tempting carnival desserts in sight and staffed by returning veterans led by Paula Medley, who stayed the day. Joining Paula were the ever reliable Mike Medley, who set up our venue, along with board member Marcia BriggsWallace, who organized the BKAA’s merchandise. Monique Lipton worked several productive hours before I arrived at 2 pm. Also sitting in for much of the fair, keeping us company and helping with our breakdown was BKAA friend and member Chris Leser.

We enjoyed a steady flow of interested neighbors and visitors stopping by with encouraging exchanges about the value of the Basha Kill and the BKAA in our community. A large number had experienced some activity or pleasure in the Basha Kill. Many were current BKAA members whom Paula knew by name and who positively commented about receiving Paula’s famous thank you cards.

One interesting exchange was with a gentleman who had spent time in the Basha Kill and wondered why we let all that grass grow up in the Summer, limiting the flow of water. We explained that these wetlands are maintained in their natural state to benefit the ecosystem’s flora and fauna and that the grasses act as a natural filter, cleansing the Basha Kill’s water. Also engaging in this conversation was BKAA member Margaret Green, who added that “we need to let nature alone to do its job.” That summed up the matter and all parties left satisfied.

BKAA member and regular Guardian contributor, Truth Muller, had his expanded and improved “Buddies for Bats” booth established down the road from us and proudly attracted a record 242 visitors to his informative venue (see photo page 27).

It’s always satisfying to hear significant positive comments from fairgoers about various BKAA sponsored activities at the Basha Kill, like Nature Watch. Additionally, a number from Yankee Lake were thankful for our efforts to thwart the invasive China City development. Consequently, we also had our most profitable festival in recent years ($440), garnering 8 new memberships and 3 renewals, selling 2 Field Guides and lots of T-shirts. Due to heavy visitor traffic, we also had a run on Guardians and other BKAA materials.

Thanks to the Wurtsboro Board of Trade for sponsoring another wildly successful Founders’ Day and to the BKAA volunteers who “got the word out” on the Basha Kill Wetlands and our organization.
D&H Conservancy

Cliff Robinson Jr.

In May of 2014 about 30 people met in Westbrookville near the intersection of Otisville Rd. and Rt. 209. There was a small ceremony to celebrate the opening of a 1.5 mile trail section of the D&H Canal. Who was responsible for this? How did this group form? Are they going to be doing anything else?

The group that did the work to open this section of trail is The Delaware and Hudson Canal and Gravity Railroad Conservancy (The D&H Conservancy). This group was formed in September of 2006 by current President Cliff Robinson Jr. After attending a meeting of the Delaware & Hudson Transportation Heritage Council (DHTHC) he realized that, while a lot of great work was being done, the majority of the canal route was being ignored. Cliff formed a not-for-profit with a mission statement that included the entire corridor from Carbondale, PA to Eddyville, NY.

One of the first D & H Conservancy projects undertaken was to write a report on the towpath breaches along the Orange County Parks 11 miles owned section of the canal. This eventually became part of a grant proposal in 2009. In 2010 The Conservancy was awarded $125,000 to improve the towpath in Orange County from Westbrookville to Port Jervis. Obviously this required a lot of work. What have they accomplished so far?

• Dumpsters of trash were removed behind a trailer park just west of the Neversink River.

• Three breaches were bypassed near Huguenot by building rock stairs down to the washed out prism, a wood deck/bridge to the berm side, wood stairs back up to the berm, a bench trail for 100 yards and a .25 mile trail back to the intact towpath through the prism.

• After months of effort to obtain permission, they had a fence moved off County property and back onto the property of the former C&D Battery factory, creating a paved parking area.

• Behind Deerpark Manor was a very large blowout of towpath which was bypassed by creating rock stairs down into the washout, a small trail through the prism to the berm side, rock stairs back up to the berm, a bench trail for 200’ and a small trail through the prism back to the intact towpath.

• A 50’ washout by a small creek at Port Orange Rd. was bypassed by installing two large footings and a 66’ fiberglass engineered bridge.

In addition to work in Orange County, The Conservancy has also done the following:

• Nearly a mile of towpath was cleared from the onramp to Rt. 17 west to where the canal crosses Rt. 209.

• Obtained Stewardships in several areas where State organizations have the controlling interest.

• In total about eight miles of towpath have been cleared to date and much of that cleared again of underbrush several times.

In addition to the above work The Conservancy board members have given several talks in the area promoting the importance of the canal and its preservation. They have printed and distributed hundreds of brochures as well as trail markers. Several articles about their work have made it to area newspapers.

The current board members are:

• Cliff Robinson Jr., President and Executive Director (Also the current President of The DHTHC and a member of Orange County Pathways)

• Burt Thelander, Vice President (Also the current Chairman of Orange County Pathways)

• Kerron Barnes, Treasurer (Also the Liason for the Town of Mamakating)

• Gary Keeton, Trustee (Also a member of the Orange County Land Trust)

• Sally Robinson, Secretary

All of the work noted above has been performed by volunteers without whom this enormous undertaking would not be possible. We would like to take this opportunity to express a very sincere thank you to all of you who have helped over the past years.

While it is gratifying to look back at all that has been accomplished so far, we are looking forward to what yet needs to be done. Within the next year we hope to complete clearing the trail from Huguenot to Port Jervis, bypass three major breaches, continue to acquire easements and work with private landowners, acquire more Stewardships with the NYS DEC and the PA DEP, where possible, and continue educating the public about both the history and future of this canal.

Would you like to help? While much of the work is physical we also need help in other areas that are not. Please email us at: or write us at: D&H Conservancy, 119 Mandy’s Rd., Westtown, NY 10998. Of course tax deductible donations are always appreciated.

If you have already been using the canal trail as part of your exercise or relaxation routines, terrific. Please continue to do so. If you haven’t, why not get out there in the next few weeks? Tell your friends about it. The more interest we get the faster this project will get done, to the benefit of all of us.
The Only American Stork  
Photos by Linda Lou Bartle

See page 36

Paul Koehler of the Silver Bluff Audubon Center, South Carolina

A Day Out  
Photo by Bill Lucas

See page 34

Logan Quinn, DEC Ranger  
Photo by Jane Anderson

Forest Ranger Logan Quinn
See page 37
A Day Out in Mamakating on the D&H Canal Linear Park

Bill Lucas

So, are you looking for a nice summer/fall outdoor activity in the Mamakating valley area, maybe a pastime with some exercise, challenges, and even history? May I recommend a bike ride along Sullivan County’s D&H Canal Linear Park.

I have a house in the historic hamlet of Phillipsport just off Route 209 and have been riding the park’s tow path trail since the county first started clearing what is now a contiguous and well-maintained tow path trail (almost 5 miles) all the way from Phillipsport to downtown Wurtsboro. Entrance and parking is available at the County’s sign-posted D&H Linear Park access off of Bova Rd, just south of Phillipsport on Route 209 (about 6 miles south of Ellenville and 5 miles north of the light in Wurtsboro).

In the early days of the linear park’s development (some 15 years ago) there was a fair amount of “trail blazing” on rough parts of the yet to be completed sections and some fording over storm water run-off channels from the Shawangunk Ridge to the east of the canal as well as over broken down bridges over the canal itself.

Since completion through present day (last week actually) this path way is easy to traverse (on a thick tired mountain bike) along a scenic and historic canal with slow flowing water in most of the sections (see photo on page 34). This all makes it seem, like you’re on the canal in it’s hey-day when it was a vital mode of transportation that made our valley important through most of the nineteenth century. The Delaware and Hudson Canal, when completed in 1828, ran for over 100 miles and connected the coalfields of northeastern Pennsylvania with the tidewater of the Hudson River near Kingston.

The canal functioned until finally being replaced by the railroads by 1898. Along with coal, the canal also carried other goods (tanned hides, cement, blue stone and other Upstate New York commodities) to New York City.

The linear park section of towpath and canal in Mamakaking is unique for its preserved state, it’s uninterrupted length, the level of water still in the clay lined canal and the photo-op quality of these settings.

As a canal trail, it’s also flat and easy for most levels of bike pedaling skill. The towpath is primarily a mowed grass surface with some compacted gravel sections. There is also a bunch of small wooden bridge inserts cut into the towpath that allow for storm water run-off without undermining the integrity of the towpath itself. Although major storms like Sandy periodically mess with some of these inserts, the county thankfully has been vigilant about replacing them and back-filling the connecting surface of the towpath.

Starting from the sign-posted D&H Canal Linear Park in Phillipsport referenced above, there is a remaining canal lock in very good condition. This section of the original canal in the Summitville/Phillipsport area had a large number of locks used to raise and then lower the canal water level through this “summit” region. You can then ride the towpath down to Summitville right under the Red Hill route of the old 0&W Railroad line, which ran above the canal when they both traversed the valley in the latter part of the 1900s (the rail line closed down during the 1950s).

The best way to re-connect with the canal trail by Summitville is to take a left from the end of the Phillipsport tow path section onto Summitville Rd. then some 50 or so yards out to Route 209 and then south another 100 yards to where the canal and towpath head east. There is some additional parking space on both sides of Route 209 at this junction.

From where you join the canal you can take heart that you will not get lost as the trail clearly directs you the rest of the way toward Wurtsboro. This initial section heads off southeast around the Wurtsboro airport through a quiet, wooded wonderland to the end of McDonald Road and then on south behind the proposed site of the controversial Yukiguni Maitake plant and over a relatively new prefab bridge installed by the county to cross the canal (an obstacle I formerly had to ford by foot). From there the path extends behind the Hornbeck Basin (a part of the park with access from Route 209 north of Wurtsboro) and on to Wurtsboro. The path crosses over Ferguson Lane and with a little bike maneuvering goes on and over another county installed pre-fab bridge (over the Willsey Brook) right down to the attractive Canal Town Park on Sullivan Street. Of course you could also start this ride from Wurtsboro if more convenient.

This great bike ride is best undertaken after a dry warm spell, as the towpath can get a bit spongy after a good rain. I once ended up covered with splattered mud from this ride after such a wet period and when I got into Wurtsboro I took advantage of a charity car wash going on that day at the firehouse and got myself and the bike a good hose down to the delight of the young volunteers before traveling back north on 209.

For skiers and snow-shoe folks, the park’s towpath is ideal when we have dumps of snow like last winter.

Kudos to Sullivan County’s Legislature for continuing to fund the park’s maintenance and to the Public Works folks for doing a great job taking care of the park, especially all those bridge inserts that keep the towpath intact.

This ride (or walk if you prefer) is definitely a worthwhile activity for Mamakating residents or visitors and out for a good, moderate workout, a great day outdoors (complete with recommended camera and some bug spray) or those interested in our own D&H Canal legacy.

Hope to see you on the trail soon.
Musings on DVRC, BKAA, and Life’s Serendipity

By Bill Streeter, Director, Delaware Valley Raptor Center (www.dvrconline.org)

In the summer of 1984 I was working at a fresh air camp in western Massachusetts teaching environmental education and heading the construction crew, after having designed and constructed a nature trail system supervising various socially and economically disadvantaged youth over the previous few years. My wife Stephanie and I had founded the North Quabbin Raptor Center, and I incorporated our work with raptors into the environmental education program. I was asked by the Natural Science for Youth Foundation to come back to our home state of Pennsylvania to create a raptor center at an environmental center called the Natural Science Solar Center in Milford, PA. There was going to be a large wildlife park on the 1,600 acre property owned by the Hayden Foundation. It was being designed by Jim Fowler of “Wild Kingdom” fame, and I was to become the director of education for the park. Stephanie was to run the raptor center, very heady stuff for a young couple (I was 31 years old). The park was never constructed. The powers that be could not raise the funds, and everything fell apart by the spring of 1987. Retrospectively, it was the best thing that could have happened. The Hayden Foundation allowed us to remain on the property, and with our meager life savings in May of 1987 we incorporated the Delaware Valley Raptor Center, a 501(c)(3) non-profit dedicated to the conservation of birds of prey, and opened for membership. We wanted to do more than just wildlife medicine. We wanted to create an education program showcasing the majesty of birds of prey and produce a publication that educates as well as entertains (the Delaware Valley Raptor Center Journal). It has been a group effort (myself, Stephanie, staff member Jan Lucciola, and board member Julie Collier, a talented artist, writer, and raptor expert). Twenty seven years later we’re still trying to get better. Who knew?

I first became acquainted with the BKAA when I received a call from Pat Diness, BKAA Nature Watch co-leader, asking me to speak at the Basha Kill winery for a Nature Watch fundraiser in September of 2010. A friend of mine spoke often of hiking and canoeing in the Basha Kill watershed property, so I was curious to see what it was all about. I wasn’t disappointed. The setting was beautiful and I remember thinking, “What a great group of people!” They even understood and laughed at all of my jokes, although the wine may have helped. A few BKAA members had accompanied me to Alaska on a trip I had hosted the previous August, which made the speaking engagement even more special. I made a mental note to join the organization, and then later forgot to do so (this happens more and more as I get older).

On July 3rd of 2012 I connected with the BKAA again, when some members of the Basha Kill Area Association Nature Watch Volunteers rescued a juvenile bald eagle a day after it fledged from its nest. The juvenile was seen on the ground in the Basha Kill watershed and had to be rescued by boat. The bird was wet and had a few external blood sucking parasites (hippoboscid flies), but was otherwise alert and feisty. An x-ray confirmed a fracture of the distal head of the radius bone at the wrist joint of the right wing. Although the bone was fractured completely through, the normal figure 8 wrapping of the wing would create a larger space between the radius body and its broken head. The ulna bone next to the radius would act as a natural splint, so we decided to leave the wing unwrapped. Any surgery attempt would have done more harm than good. The eagle was placed in a small 8’X8’ building to keep her movement restricted, and nobody was allowed to approach the building except once a day to quickly leave food. We re-x-rayed the wing in early August. The callus formation looked good, and the joint moved and extended well. She was placed in a large flight enclosure with another bald eagle where she immediately flew well, and soon made it clear that she was ready to go shortly thereafter. On August 12, 2012, the day before leaving for Alaska (with more BKAA members), I drove to the boat launch opposite the winery with the eagle and was surprised to see that over 30 BKAA members had shown up to witness her release. Although watching the eagle fly away with strength and grace was compensation enough, BKAA members (Nature Watch volunteers) still presented us with a $535 donation that they had collected. I was deeply touched, re-affirming my initial impression of BKAA. The experience showed what can be accomplished when two grass roots organizations work together. I joined BKAA shortly thereafter. There’s an old adage in the environmental movement community which might now seem like a cliche but still holds true. “Think globally, act locally.” We may not be able to solve all of the world’s environmental problems, but it’s quite wonderful what a small group of people when working in concert can accomplish in our communities.
The Only American Stork
- Linda Lou Bartle

When mature, this bird possesses a large bare head with black face, grey, thick, slightly curved beak, and featherless neck. Its body is snowy white with black flight feathers. During the breeding season, adults develop patches of pale pink feathers under the wings, while their flesh-colored feet become bright pink. Storks fly crane-like with neck and feet fully extended and land in ways that are both comical and graceful. Standing over three feet tall with wing spans approaching six feet, the American Wood Stork is hard to miss!

The America Wood Stork has undergone a remarkable comeback since designated an endangered species in 1984. How did the only North American Stork, now considered threatened, stage this resurgence when many thought it might be extinct by the year 2000? Some background...In 1984, The Department of Energy (DOE) built the L- Reactor in South Carolina, which disrupted the foraging habitats for a large Wood Stork population. Subsequently, an alternative foraging location, sited at the Silver Bluff Sanctuary in Jackson, South Carolina, was chosen as a replacement. Silver Bluff Audubon would manage foraging ponds with DOE furnishing funding and researchers from the Savannah River Ecology Lab. The Silver Bluff Audubon Center and Sanctuary is one of just a few places facilitating the Stork's survival. Director Paul Koehler, who has worked there for 28 years, has played a key role in effecting this positive outcome. This summer, I spent time with Paul, who gave me his full attention and a front seat tour to observe the Storks at Silver Bluff Kathwood Ponds. As Paul explained, "The ponds are a managed habitat for Wood Storks after they have fledged and left nesting areas. They supply feeding grounds for the immatures and adults at a critical juncture in their life cycle. We don't know where they originate. For instance, when the large nesting site in Georgia failed due to drought a few years ago, we still had young birds. Obviously, they survive and nest in more than one place, returning to Silver Bluff to forage. Some years, almost 90% of the birds are immatures."

The Kathwood ponds mimic nature by draining out to about 6 - 20 inches deep, leaving a mass of fish. When feeding, the Stork’s bill is submerged and opens about three inches before rapidly snapping shut, in about 25 milliseconds when fish are caught. Foot-stirring is used to startle fish from weeds. This feeding method is highly efficient if fish supply is concentrated. Seasonally drying ponds have traditionally provided this food source. In previous years, loss of optimal feeding has yielded substantial mortality in the Stork's first year. Fortunately, the ponds at Silver Bluff helped rectify this situation as large numbers of Storks have arrived here following nesting since the ponds opened in 1986, and return every year.

On Saturday, July 26, I joined the Augusta - Aiken Audubon group and Paul, who furnished a “birds-eye” view of the ponds. Maintaining our distance, careful not to scare or flush the birds, about 25 of us enjoyed, photographed, and counted almost one hundred Storks. These birds were on trees in the rear property, in the water, feeding, taking flight, arriving from who knows where! Wood Storks are social animals that feed in flocks and nest in large rookeries which attract other birds. Subsequently, we noted 40 Egrets, 6 Blue Heron with young, and 3 White Ibis. Wading birds were on every front. We continued this tour after first watching Swallow-Tailed Kites in another locale. I was treated to a complete drive around the ponds; it was up close and personal and I couldn’t stop smiling!

As noted earlier, Wood Storks were protected in 1984 after the species declined from approximately 20,000 pairs in the late 1930’s to 5,000 pairs in the late 1970’s, largely due to wetlands draining and development. After the endangered declaration, work began to preserve and restore wetlands. While Silver Bluff is the only Audubon venue committed to maintaining this managed foraging habitat, Paul Koehler knows of private citizens who also practice managed foraging techniques. Importantly, people from diverse backgrounds are making a difference, though more education and community tracking are imperative.

Researchers say the species has experienced a startling revival, expanding its territory from southern Florida, where 70% of the population once lived, to establishing nesting colonies in Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina. After nesting season, Storks can also be encountered in parts of Alabama and Mississippi. US Fish and Wildlife estimates that 1,000 breeding adults now exist.

The Wood Storks inhabit the ponds of Silver Bluff from mid-July through part of September. If you wish to visit the ponds, please call ahead for an escort. Silver Bluff also has beautiful trails to explore along with an education center funded by Silva cultural systems.

For more information on birding at Silver Bluff, call Paul Koehler at (803)471-0291 or email pkoehler@audubon.org.

On November Wings

January snows grow February ice fleses March winter waits
April buds break May flowers spring June bugs sing:
‘July sun’s nigh’

August loons cry, ‘September!’ summer stalls
October colors fall on November wings the flight (from)
December’s deepest night

Steve Kessler
Meet DEC Forest Ranger Logan Quinn, Friend of the Bashakill

By Jane Anderson

Innumerable people visit the Bashakill Wildlife Management Area each year to enjoy its tranquility, wildlife and peace. They will be glad to know that there are forest rangers there to help keep that peace. Our local ranger is Logan Quinn, Forest Ranger 1 with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

“It’s a pretty diverse job,” he said on a recent cool, breezy day at the boat launch. “I’m very rarely doing the same thing every day.”

His duties encompass search and rescue, the protection of people who visit, law enforcement, fire management, and public education - the last of which is his favorite.

“Most people are happy to see a forest ranger,” he said with a smile. “I like to have conversations with people; sometimes I feel as if I am paid to have pleasant conversations. It’s a pretty nice thing to do.”

Quinn is a wealth of information about the area he patrols - and it’s a big one: he is responsible for most of Sullivan County. But of all the places he patrols, he considers the Bashakill unique: “It’s over 2,000 acres; it’s big, but it’s accessible pretty much from everywhere,” he said.

He appreciates all the different types of activities that visitors can enjoy here, from walking dogs to boating, hiking, bird watching, hunting, and fishing. He checks for fishing licenses and for boaters’ compliance with lifejacket and boating laws: one duty he wishes he could do more is a canoe patrol.

Sometimes, though, his interactions can be less than pleasant.

“There are some people who aren’t happy to see me,” he admits. Those are mostly the people who are trying to skirt the law. “My job is to enforce regulations. I get blamed for things (by those who disagree with the rules), but I don’t come up with them.”

“Those are mostly the people who are trying to skirt the law. “My job is to enforce regulations. I get blamed for things (by those who disagree with the rules), but I don’t come up with them.”

“Most people are happy to see a forest ranger,” he said with a smile. “I like to have conversations with people; sometimes I feel as if I am paid to have pleasant conversations. It’s a pretty nice thing to do.”

Quinn is a wealth of information about the area he patrols - and it’s a big one: he is responsible for most of Sullivan County. But of all the places he patrols, he considers the Bashakill unique: “It’s over 2,000 acres; it’s big, but it’s accessible pretty much from everywhere,” he said.

He appreciates all the different types of activities that visitors can enjoy here, from walking dogs to boating, hiking, bird watching, hunting, and fishing. He checks for fishing licenses and for boaters’ compliance with lifejacket and boating laws: one duty he wishes he could do more is a canoe patrol.

Sometimes, though, his interactions can be less than pleasant.

“There are some people who aren’t happy to see me,” he admits. Those are mostly the people who are trying to skirt the law. “My job is to enforce regulations. I get blamed for things (by those who disagree with the rules), but I don’t come up with them.”

Forest rangers are full-duty state police officers, he added. “When we see a law broken, we are required to act,” Quinn said. Those violations could range from littering, to hunting out of season or without a license, and even speeding or driving while intoxicated.

He’s stopped people who were riding all-terrain vehicles, and people who have stolen timber out of the park to use as “free” firewood.

By far, though, the biggest issue is trash dumping on state parkland, Quinn said. Besides the usual beer bottles he’s seen strewn around, the ranger has had to remove televisions and dressers that uncaring people have dumped. Even if the dumper is gone when the trash is discovered, that doesn’t mean he or she will get off scot-free. “I’ll sort that through the trash to find clues,” Quinn said. “It’s interesting what you can find that will lead you to the perpetrator.”

There are no time restrictions on when people can come and enjoy the Bashakill. “People come here and go catfish fishing at night,” Quinn remarked. “It’s a relaxing, laid-back way to fish.”

Hunting, of course, is restricted to only sunrise through sunset in season. You may be surprised to hear that coyote and bobcat as well as deer can be hunted on state parkland, as long as hunters have the proper license.

When asked which wildlife poses the most risk at the Bashakill, Quinn was firm in his answer: “The two-legged (human) kind,” he said, especially those who ignore “leave no trace” principles of taking only pictures and leaving only footprints, or those people who are “looking for dark pull-offs to do nefarious things.”

He’s yet to find rattlesnakes around here, although he’s heard stories about them. “You usually have to mess with them for them to be a threat,” he said. “If you leave them alone, they’ll leave you alone.”

The same goes for bears, Quinn added. “You live among the wildlife,” he stressed. “When people see a bear in their garbage or their birdfeeders, they get worried. But the bear is just being a bear.” He suggested that securing garbage cans and bringing birdfeeders in at night (and only feeding birds in the winter) can help prevent human/bear interactions.

A big threat to the Bashakill itself is the encroachment of invasive species, such as purple loosestrife and the emerald ash borer. Invasive species can cause harmful and permanent changes in the ecosystem, “although everything around here seems pretty darn healthy to me,” he commented.

The most dangerous threat to visitors at the Bashakill may well be the tiniest: the deer tick. “To be honest, that scares me the most of all,” Quinn said. “Ticks, and the diseases they carry, are an endemic problem around here. Children can get Lyme disease in their own backyards - they’re everywhere.” His protocol is to treat his clothing with permethrin, which he said lasts through six washes, and to use repellents containing DEET.

Quinn hasn’t had any crazy experiences or unusual requests during his tenure at the Kill. “One guy had an inflatable kayak that ruptured, but he was able to get to shore and we gave him a ride to his car,” Quinn said.

If visitors find themselves in trouble, and a ranger is not in the immediate area, they can call the Forest Ranger dispatch at 518-408-5850 for assistance. Quinn hasn’t had to conduct a search and rescue at the Kill yet, but he has assisted in other areas, including a case in Shandaken.

He’s also helped fight forest fires in neighboring counties, and even across the country: Quinn recently returned after two weeks in the state of Washington, fighting the 12,659-acre (20-square-mile) Duncan Fire north of Entiat, WA that began with a lightning strike. His job included constructing and plumbing fire lines.

As interesting as that was, Quinn was content to come back to New York. He is from the Adirondack area (and has a Forest Technology degree from a small college upstate), and hopes to someday be transferred up there.

For now, though, Quinn is glad to be of service down here, where his knowledge is being put to good use. He credits the members of the Bashakill Area Association for being his “eyes and ears” when he is patrolling elsewhere. “They do a good job as a watchdog to help with our management goals,” he said.

Coincidentally, BKAA President Paula Medley and her husband, Mike, pulled up to the boat launch as our interview was wrapping up. Paula agreed with Quinn on the benefits of the symbiotic relationship between the DEC and the BKAA.

“The rangers are critical to the protection and preservation of the Bashakill,” Paula said. “We know if we contact them, something good’s gonna get done.”

Forest Ranger Quinn may be contacted at cell: 845-240-6792.

Jane Anderson is a freelance writer who is always looking for opportunities to write. She lives in Winterton with her husband and three children, all of whom enjoy what the Bashakill has to offer. She may be contacted at 845-699-8769
Celebrate this year’s notable achievements and hear latest updates at our Annual Meeting to be held Saturday, October 25, 2014 at the Phillipstown Community Center, 657 Red Hill Road, Phillipstown, 12769, several miles north of Wurtsboro off Route 209. Registration commences at 9:30 am, when dues may be paid, with only solvent members receiving a ballot. Light refreshments will be available then, also. Call to order occurs promptly at 10:00 am. Participants will be treated to a special offering of “Buddies for Bats,” a nationally recognized educational outreach program. Also, we should have an informative, interactive discussion of the year’s highlights, subsequent election of officers and board members, along with awards. As usual the finale will be a drawing for intriguing door prizes (all donated). Additionally BKAA merchandise like Basha Kill field guides, John Haas birding publications, and sweatshirts, all $20 apiece, will be available. See you there!

Questions? Email info@thebashakill.org or contact Paula Medley at (845)754-0743.