



BKAA

GUARDIAN

Volume 39 • Number 2

Summer 2025

In Loving Memory of
Paula Medley
1945 ~ 2022
Who worked tirelessly
to make sure that the wild vista you see
stays wild.



—Poetry Corner—

Queen Basha's Veil

Christine Saward

As the morning dawns, Queen Basha's veil of fog covers the valley in sadness. The stalwart guardian of Basha's land and water, Paula Medley, no longer walks among the wetlands. The day begins to warm and Basha's veil slowly rises. When the sun breaks through, Basha's veil dissipates. She sees the valiant warriors standing ready to continue Paula's legacy of guardianship. In spirit, Paula, now with Basha, will be watching over all the protectors as they now guard our precious wetlands called the Basha Kill.

MEEC CONNECTION Summer Festival

Pollinator Palooza - Saturday, August 16th
10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

ON THE FRONT COVER:

*Paula's View (top) by Bob Muller —
(bottom) by Frank Coviello*
See Remembrance article on page 14

Summer 2025 Donors

Victoria Bailey
Christina Schnitzer
Mike Konefal
Anneliese Vitale

Summer 2025 New Members

Steve Altman
Linda Chrisey
Nancy Farren
Anthony Grzymkowski
Joni Haracek
Mike Konefal
Mikayla Lewis
Merrie Lloyd

BKAA GUARDIAN — Volume 39, Number 2 • Summer 2025

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.

The *BKAA Guardian* is published quarterly by the
Basha Kill Area Association Inc., PO Box 1121, Wurtsboro, NY 12790 • 845-796-5339
President: Leslie Otto • Vice President: Mark Otto • Treasurer: Lisa Schnitzer
Secretary: Christine Saward • Assistant Secretary: Kim Rogers • Membership Coordinator: Ellen Pilipski
Board Members: Frank Coviello • Cliff Johnson • Walter Jahn
Graham Vest • Ellen Pilipski • John Pratt • Jackie Broder
E-mail Coordinator: Graham Vest • Alerts Coordinator: Liberty Press - Jon Heaphy
Advocacy Chair: Frank Coviello • Nature Watch Co-Leaders: Nora Brusinski & Walter Jahn
Water Testing Coordinator: Cheyenne Otto
Guardian Editor: Frank Coviello • Guardian Layout: Liberty Press - Jon Heaphy

CONTACT THE BKAA — info@thebashakill.org website: www.thebashakill.org
CONTACT THE DEC — Call 24-hour DEC Law Enforcement Dispatch at 1-877-457-5680

2025 BKAA *Calendar of Events*

Tuesday, September 9 • 10 AM to Noon Nature Walk

Take a stroll with BKAA Board Member and MEEC Director, Jackie Broder, to learn about exotic species invading the Bashakill. We'll do some light invasive species removal as we go. Bring gloves if you are interested in helping, some will be provided if needed. If you just want to walk, that's ok too! Meet at Haven Rd parking lot. Call 845-644-5014 to register.

Saturday, September 13 • 10 am Canoe/Kayak the Basha Kill with Elly Knieriemen

Join photographer extraordinaire Elly for a late season venture. Bring your own vessel and binoculars. Meet at the South Road Boat Launch. To register or for more details email info@thebashakill.org.

Sunday, September 14 • 10 AM Nature Walk

Join BKAA Board Member Dr. Walter Jahn for a season appropriate Nature Walk. Meet at the Boat Launch opposite the Wurtsboro Winery at 10:00 AM. . Bring camera, binoculars, insect repellent and wear good walking shoes. To register or for more details email info@thebashakill.org.

Sunday, October 12 • 10 AM Nature Walk

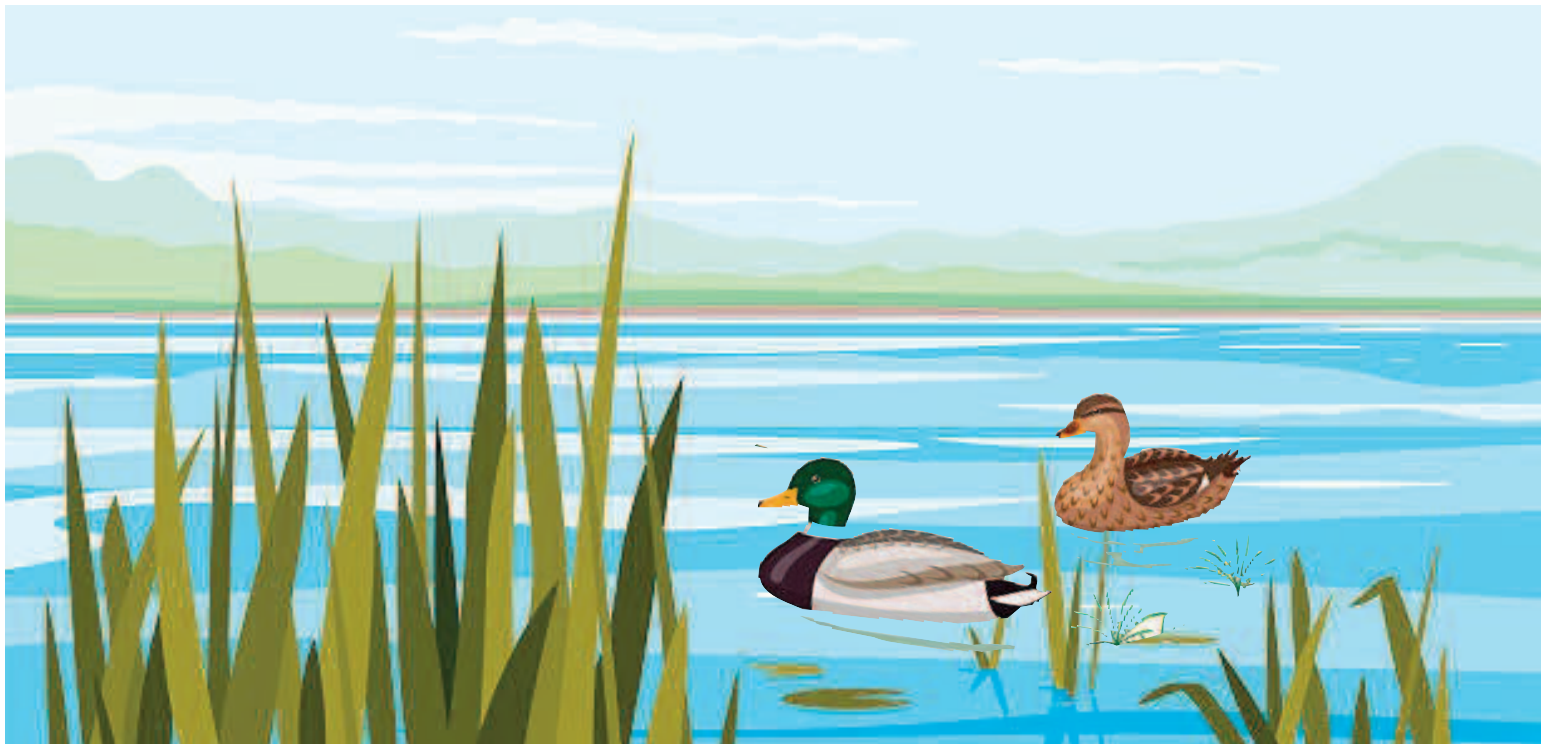
Join BKAA Board Member Dr. Walter Jahn for a season appropriate Nature Walk. Meet at the Boat Launch opposite the Wurtsboro Winery at 10:00 AM. . Bring camera, binoculars, insect repellent and wear good walking shoes. To register or for more details email info@thebashakill.org.

Friday October 17 • 7 PM Free Public Star Watch with John Kocijanski of the Catskills Astronomy Club

Bring scopes and/or binoculars. Meet at the South Road Boat Launch, across from the Bashakill Vineyards. To register call John at (845) 798-8087. For event updates, visit Catskill Astronomy Club's Facebook Page. Rain date is the following day.

Sunday, November 9 • 10 AM Nature Walk

Join BKAA Board Member Dr. Walter Jahn for a season appropriate Nature Walk. Meet at the Boat Launch opposite the Wurtsboro Winery at 10:00 AM. . Bring camera, binoculars, insect repellent and wear good walking shoes. To register or for more details email info@thebashakill.org.



Wurtsboro to Celebrate 200th Anniversary of the D&H Canal on July 13



WURTSBORO, NY (June 2nd, 2025) – Join the Town of Mamakating and the Village of Wurtsboro on **Sunday, July 13, 2025**, for a full day of festivities celebrating the **200th anniversary of the groundbreaking of the Delaware & Hudson (D&H) Canal**. This free, family-friendly event will include a parade, historic reenactments, music, living history displays, and a period costume ball.

The D&H Canal was an invaluable project in the early 19th century, allowing the transportation of coal from Pennsylvania to East Coast markets. This industrial creation led to the formation of hamlets and villages along its route and shaped the future of commerce and community across our region. See below for a tentative schedule of events set for **Sunday, July 13th, 2025**.

- **12:00 PM – Parade kicks off** near the Wurtsboro Firehouse to 85 Sullivan Street (lineup at 11:00 AM).
- **1:30 PM – Welcome ceremony** and reenactment of groundbreaking and Philip Hone's 1825 groundbreaking speech.
- **2:00–4:00 PM – Living history displays**, children's activities, and horse & wagon rides at 85 Sullivan Street.
- **1:30–3:00 PM – Live music performances**.
- **2:00 PM – Light buffet lunch** for invited guests.

Parade, Historic Reenactments, Music, Living History Displays and a Period Costume Ball to Take Place

• **4:00–5:00 PM – Guided canal towpath walk** (1.4 miles) through historic Wurtsboro Turns, upper Bashakill marsh and new link to Town Government center.

• **7:00–9:00 PM – Period Costume Ball** at the Wurtsboro Firehouse (\$10 per person; limited tickets available).

More events will be announced soon. Don't miss this once-in-a-generation celebration of local history!

Poetry Corner

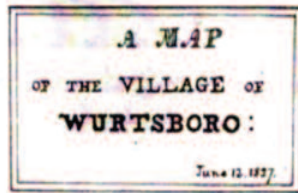
A Day In Our Kayak

Ken Shaw

Decided to go paddling, with some old friends of mine,
To gather with our kayaks, to the Basha Kill water line.
Maneuver to the launch site, life jacket carried on my arm,
Concentration needs maintaining, enthralled by Nature's charm.
We're moving with the channel, avoid the weeds to keep us free,
Our goal beyond the islands, past the plants, the bogs, and trees.
The birds now starting their chatter, our intrusion they now object,
We soon blend in, suppressing our noise, to a place they undetect.
It's not about the soaring eagles, and the heron in our midst,
Nor the towpath line beside us, and what history now exists.
Surreal calm now presented, where sanctuary will come to dwell,
Embrace the beauty in this valley, find new secrets that it may tell.
Refreshed over time, we now paddle back, anticipate home before dark,
Another excursion is already planned, where soon again we'll embark.
Pack up our gear, take a last glimpse, the winery on the hill soon appears,
Their open doors, embracing us all, with joyful new stories to hear.

See More Details on Next Page

PARADE ROUTE



PARADE ROUTE STARTING POINT : 92 PINE STREET

PARADE ROUTE ENDING POINT : 85 SULLIVAN STREET

D&H CANAL BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

GROUNDBREAKING REENACTMENT

JULY 13, 2025 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

12:00 PM – 1:30 PM

A PARADE / PROCESSION:

groups will assemble on Pine Street near the Wurtsboro firehouse about 11 AM. At noon with cannon shot and church bells ringing, the parade will proceed down Pine Street, to 4th Street, then ending at the reenactment site at 85 Sullivan Street.



2:00 PM – 4:00 PM:

LIVING HISTORY PRESENTATIONS & DISPLAYS:

These are for public participation, also located at 85 Sullivan Street in the left side of the front yard. Tables will be set up with different activities for children and adults.



2:00 PM – 4:00 PM:

HORSE & WAGON RIDES:

Will be provided on Sullivan Street.

4:00 PM – 5:00 PM:

GUIDED CANAL TOWPATH WALK:

Follow the historic D&H Canal towpath past the Chase School and along the upper portion of the Bashakill marsh through the winding 'Wurtsboro Turns' and a new section of federally financed trail to the Town Government center. Total distance 1.4 miles. Assemble at Wurtsboro Village Hall



1:30 PM – 3:00 PM:

MUSIC ENSEMBLES

Musical performances (to be determined) will play at 85 Sullivan Street.



2:00 PM

BY INVITATION ONLY. DIGNITARIES AND GUESTS BUFFET LUNCHEON:

This will take place after the ceremony and the speeches at 85 Sullivan Street.

200TH
Anniversary
D&H CANAL



2:00 PM – 9:00 PM
PERIOD COSTUME BALL:

To take place at the Wurtsboro Firehouse on Pine Street. Tickets \$10.00 per person. Limit of 100 tickets to be sold. For ticket purchase & info contact Janet Lybolt - 845-888-3357.

More events to be added in weeks/days before July 13
SUGGESTIONS ARE WELCOME FOR ITEMS IN OUR TIME CAPSULE

D&H CANAL BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

COSTUME BALL

SUNDAY
JULY 13
7PM-9PM

Wurtsboro Fire House
Pine St, Wurtsboro, NY

Live Dance Caller
Costumes Optional

Only 100 Tickets
Sold in Advance

\$10 PER TICKET

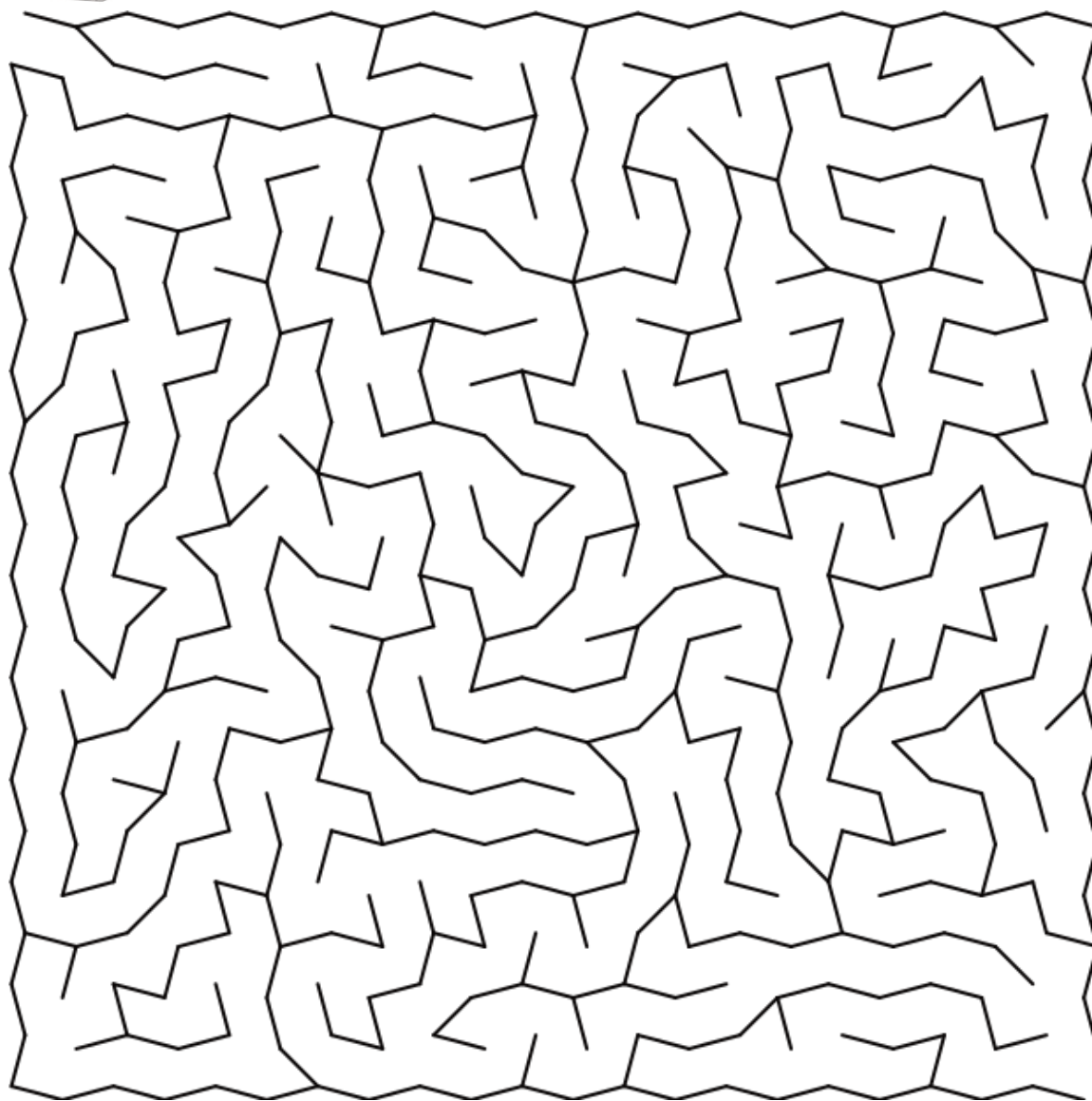
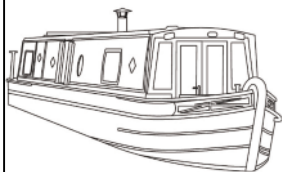
For info & to purchase tickets call Janet Lybolt:
845-888-3357 & leave message.

Mail Check to:
D&H Canal Bicentennial Committee
c/o PO Box 25, Summitville, NY 12781
Please include your name, phone number
and email with your payment.

Sponsored by the D&H Canal Bicentennial Committee



Help the Canal Boat find it's way through the maze to pick up it's next load of coal. Hurry, Hurry! The donkeys are getting tired and it's almost time for a nap!



Black-Billed Cuckoos & the Caterpillars in their Diets

Black-billed cuckoos are shy birds which breed at the Bashakill although they are not common. Their long tails, curved bills, red eye rings, and distinctive calls can help with their identification. The reputation of cuckoos for laying their eggs in the nest of other birds (hence the origin of the word “cuckold”) is derived primarily from the behavior of the Eurasian Cuckoo. While black-billed cuckoos can engage in nest parasitism, they typically make their own nests.

Our area could arguably benefit from more cuckoos since they are more likely than most birds to prey on bristly caterpillars such as spongy moth caterpillars, tent caterpillars, and fall webworms. Adaptations for ingesting this prickly prey include the frequent shedding of their stomach lining and the regurgitation of balls of caterpillar bristles. Cuckoo numbers can increase in years following spongy moth outbreaks (like the outbreak in the Bashakill area last year). Young birds can fledge in under 3 weeks—this is one of the shortest developmental periods in birds. This bird was photographed during a Nature Watch session at the boat launch.



Our area could arguably benefit from more cuckoos since they are more likely than most birds to prey on bristly caterpillars such as spongy moth caterpillars, tent caterpillars, and fall webworms. Adaptations for ingesting this prickly prey include the frequent shedding of their stomach lining and the regurgitation of balls of caterpillar bristles. Cuckoo numbers can increase in years following spongy moth outbreaks (like the outbreak in the Bashakill area last year). Young birds can fledge in under 3 weeks—this is one of the shortest developmental periods in birds. This bird was photographed during a Nature Watch session at the boat launch.

Cheyenne the Water Woman

Cheyenne Otto

In this issue, we will be discussing two different measurements of water quality testing. These measurements include the chemical and biological parameters which can be collected and analyzed to indicate current water quality conditions.

In previous issues, myself or Frank Coviello have described the parameters being tested in the current water testing program for the BKAA. These include temperature, pH, dissolved oxygen, and specific conductivity which are considered a chemical measurement of the Bashakill's water quality. Chemical measurements provide an in depth look at potential pollutants that are not visible. Extreme fluctuations in pH, dissolved oxygen, and/or specific conductivity would show that conditions have changed drastically.

Biological indicators can be used to understand the

overall health of the ecosystem. This would include measuring the abundance and diversity of organisms that have a low tolerance to pollution. Macroinvertebrates, such as fly nymphs, worms, snails and more, are used when testing the biological measures of water quality. As these organisms have low mobility, they are unable to avoid pollutants. Different taxonomic groups of macroinvertebrates have a range of tolerances to different pollutants. The presence or absence of certain species of macroinvertebrates can be used to indicate the current water quality index and overall health of the ecosystem.

Please be on the lookout for the following article which will complete the two part series about our programs testing sites! Thank you to all of our volunteers and everyone who has reached out to volunteer for our water testing program at the Bashakill. If you have any questions or you would like to inquire about volunteering for our water testing program, please reach out to info@thebashakill.com with the subject ATTN: Cheyenne - Water Testing Program for more information.

Spring Migration Talk

Maura Muller

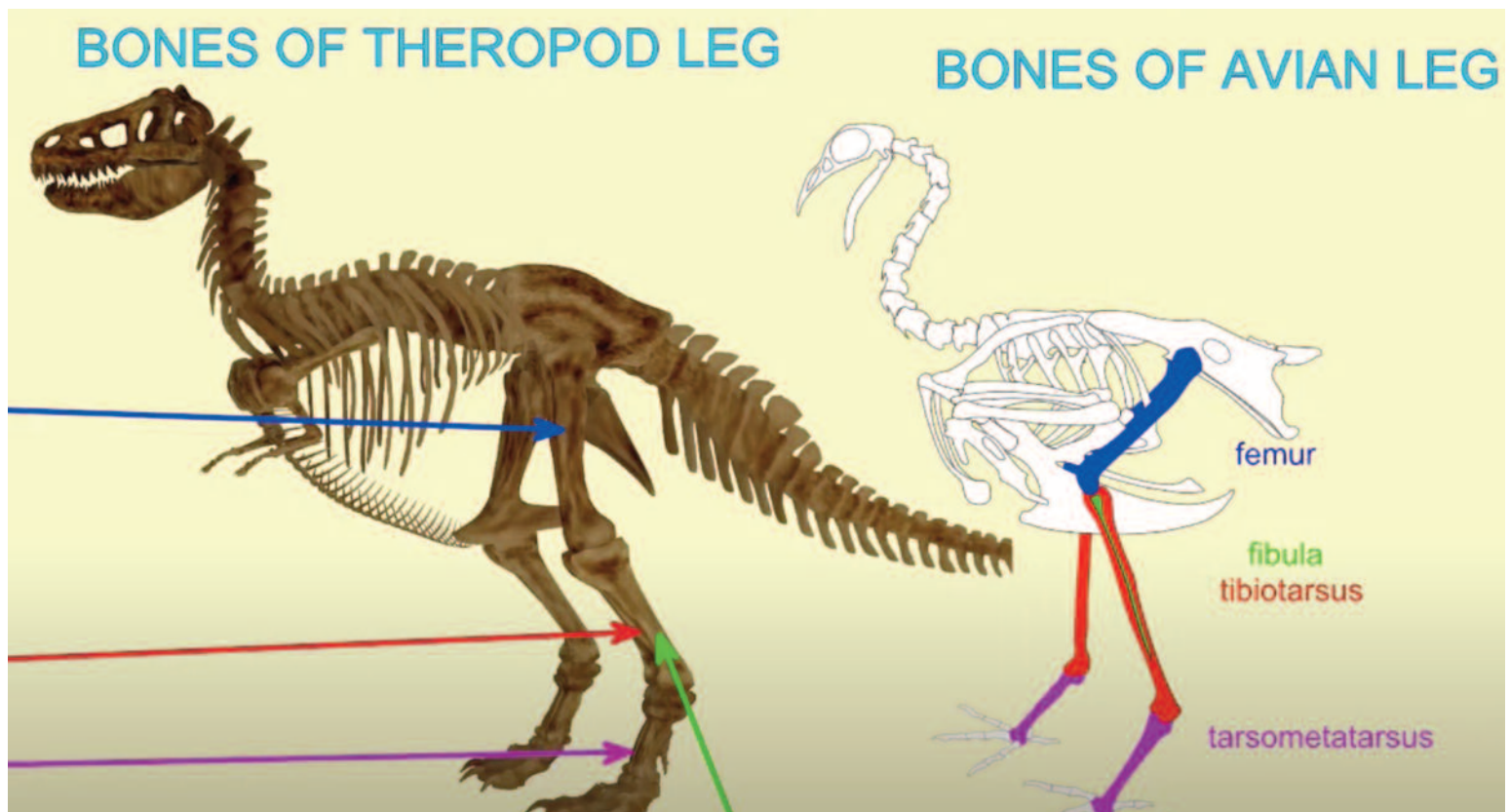
On April 17th the Sullivan County Audubon Society held our second spring meeting at MEEC. If you were not in attendance, you missed a very entertaining and educational slideshow presented by Dr. Walter Jahn of the Biology Department at Suny Orange. Not only is Professor Jahn a talented professor and avid birder, he is also quite adept at singing, songwriting and playing the guitar and harmonica. While everyone arrived, grabbed refreshments and found a seat, we were entertained with the helpful and hilarious tune, "Warbler Song".

At one point, he asked if any of us walked like the Greater Yellowlegs and someone said, "Yes, when I fell off a ladder!" I've always been fascinated by the way shorebirds walk and how their legs seem to be bending

backwards. My favorite moment of the presentation was when Dr. Jahn explained how their femurs, unlike ours, are high up under their feathers and we are actually watching them bend their ankles! Exactly like certain dinosaurs. He suggested that they be called the Greater Yellowfeet. See the illustration below.

The evening was filled with wonderful photos and videos, many very recently taken at the Bashakill Wildlife Management Area. If you wish to be enlightened and entertained check out Dr. Jahn's YouTube channel. Go to YouTube, search for "Walter Jahn", and once on his page, search for Warbler Song, Greater Yellowlegs or his Spring Bird Migrations video. <https://youtu.be/GDFHHnSL6uY>

It was the Audubon Society's first ever meeting held at MEEC and everyone had a good time. If you would like to join us for future gatherings or field trips, check out www.sullivanaudubon.org



Sullivan County
Audubon Society

BIRD

with
Dr.
Walter
Jahn



- 1) Eastern bluebird 2) ruby-crowned kinglet 3) northern pintail
4) yellow warbler 5) wood duck 6) ring-necked duck
7) green winged teal 8) black duck



- 9) American goldfinch 10) Canada warbler 11) warbling vireo
12) cedar waxwing 13) common grackle 14) American redstart
15) least flycatcher 16) Baltimore oriole

Route 17 Update

Maura Muller

If you check the NYS DOT Rt 17 website it seems like we're in a holding pattern with not much happening as we wait for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement to be released later this summer.

But, in an April 2nd Virtual Town Hall organized by Catskill Mountainkeeper, called Rethink Route 17, I learned that there is still work that we can be doing behind the scenes.

Taylor Jaffee, Catskill Mountainkeeper's Program Manager hosted the meeting, giving an overview of the project, the current proposal, what's at stake for affected communities and partner organizations, an alternate vision and actions we can take. She started with 3 main causes for concern:

1. Efficiently spending \$1.4 billion in the region to increase transportation outcomes.
2. Climate impacts (up to 2 million tons of greenhouse gas pollution through 2025) and non-compliance with NYS Climate Act.
3. Protecting key ecological resources and disadvantaged communities.

Next Taylor discussed the background on the project. The stated project impetus is to supposedly alleviate congestion, improve safety, support economic development and meet current safety standards. She noted that the only people seeming to support this project are the 17 Forward 86 group, a 501c4, made up of unions and lobbyists who will benefit most from widening the highway. Their pro-expansion arguments are that widening 17 will improve or solve congestion, improve safety, support economic development AND improve the climate. (?!)

The proposed concepts are:

1. No Build Alternative: No improvements will be made other than those already scheduled and routine maintenance.
2. Alternative A: Two lanes with operational improvements, interchange improvements, and mobility and access improvements. This includes adding auxiliary lanes and collector - distributor roadways at three locations.

From a 2-lane highway to an 8-lane highway.

3. Alternative B: This includes a general use third lane from exit 120 in Middletown to I-87 at Harriman, with interchange improvements and mobility and access

improvements. This includes auxiliary lanes and collector - distributor roadways, effectively turning portions of Rt 17 into a superhighway with 5 lanes in each direction. Ten lanes total.

Notably, Taylor mentioned that statistics taken from the NYS DOT's own reports show that 95.8% of the time there is NO congestion on Rt. 17, and spending \$1.4 billion on this project will save 3 minutes and 6 seconds of drive time during peak periods. I read most of what they have published and came to the same sad conclusion. Every time I think about this project I'm reminded of Joni Mitchell's song, Big Yellow Taxi. "They paved paradise, put up a parking lot. With a pink hotel, a boutique, and a swingin' hot spot. Don't it always seem to go. That you don't know what you've got 'til it's gone."

Prevailing science and traffic studies show that widening a highway actually induces more use, not more efficient use. Traffic will get worse over time. There is a correlation between crash density and existing third lanes. Third lanes add an additional point of conflict, potentially making Rt 17 less safe.

Rethink Rt 17's primary goal is to stop the highway expansion, and they have some local and national partners including Catskill Mountainkeeper, Earth Justice, National Resources Defense Council, Regional Plan Association, Orange Environment, Inc., Sustainable Hudson Valley, and the Tri-State Transportation Campaign. Their second goal is to divert the \$1.4 billion to an alternative transportation vision including:

1. Increasing transportation equity and accessibility in the region
2. Connect communities
3. Support economic development
4. Align with climate and equity goals

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement will be released this summer. Then residents will be able to offer their comments.

Regarding the \$1.4 billion - half is supposed to come from Federal money (!?) and half from State dollars. Rt 17 is already not maintained well, so how will widening a neglected highway help? That money should be used towards actually repairing and maintaining the existing highway.

There were a number of guest speakers. Keith discussed transportation challenges in the region including safety issues when trying to drive to work on bicycle or spending exorbitant amounts on Uber. He spoke of a friend who was hit by a drunk driver while walking to work.

ROUTE 17 UPDATE continued on page 11

ROUTE 17 UPDATE continued from page 10

He also mentioned that there are not enough bus stops, and animals crossing 2 lanes already cause issues, imagine animals trying to cross 10 lanes.

Mike from Orange Environment, a retired professor who taught Sustainable and Environmental Studies, discussed noise and air pollution along the Rt 17 corridor and the explosion of warehouses. He highlighted mobility issues related to lack of public transportation and flooding issues due to storms.

Jessica, the President of Lake Communities Alliance, an architect from Wurtsboro, spoke of overdevelopment in Sullivan County. She noted the fragile Bashakill Area WMA and how Rt 17 travels through this sensitive wetland and lake region. And how this area is part of a “linkage” area to other waterways. Rt 17 expansion would increase impermeable surface area, elevate pollution, elevate noise levels, and be devastating to the biodiversity of the region. (I was reminded of driving a carload of young 4Hers to an event a few years back and the horror as the kids looked out the window to see a dead bear and her three dead cubs splattered all over the highway. Exactly what happens when you cut a sensitive wetland in half with no plan for wildlife crossings.) She mentioned that more than 50% of NYS’ original wetlands have been lost to development and human activities.

Damon from New York Lawyers for The Public Interest spoke about NY’s Climate Act. It is the most ambitious law in the country requiring very hard reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and recognizes climate change as an environmental justice issue. All state agencies must be consistent with the Climate goals, and this project is not in compliance. It has an estimated 1 million tons of GHG emissions by 2050 if completed. The DOT has not submitted the required GHG mitigation plans. Also, Rt 17 currently passes through 9 disadvantaged communities, which are also addressed in the Climate Act. It must propose alternative transportation

solutions, and they have not yet. He mentioned how important public comment is, and how important community member pushback is since the NYS DOT seems to be disregarding NYS Climate Act and environmental protections.

Lizzie from New Yorkers for Transportation Equity spoke. They are a grassroots coalition fighting for transportation equity, including frequent, reliable, and accessible public transportation, safe streets for walking, cycling and other forms of micromobility, and more affordable ways to get around New York. They are advocating for the Get Around NY Act. It would invest in public transportation and not highways.

Arif from Ulster County, a transportation planner who drives Rt 17 every week, chimed in, noting there is no congestion on Rt. 17, except on Friday evenings. He mentioned opportunity costs of what else we could be doing with that money. He said he reached out to county planners and they struggled to even come up with ways to spend .4 billion dollars. He noted that 1,000 people are killed each year on NYS roads. He filed a FOIL request for the top 20 most dangerous roads in the region and Rt 17 is not in the top 20. But our local roads are in need of safety upgrades. Money could be better spent on mobility, on maintenance and on addressing the physical, environmental and social aspects of driving, development and sprawl. He asked people to submit their ideas for local use of the money to better transportation and accessibility in our small hamlets.

Everyone is encouraged to take action, right now, using this link that will help you email all key legislators. <https://mountainkeeper.good.do/rethinkroute17/No-Expansion/>

Finally, if you have ideas for transportation projects in your community that need funding or would like to get more involved with the ReThink Route 17 Alliance, please reach out to Taylor Jaffee at taylor@catskillmountainkeeper.org.

Basha Kill Area Association Slows Down Route 17K Densification Plan

Maya Licata

MAMAKATING – On Friday May 30, members of the Basha Kill Area Association (BKA), in conjunction with the Lake Communities Alliance, held a meeting to discuss the future of the Basha Kill wetland in light of proposed changes in what kind of businesses would be allowed to open along route 17K.

Last month, the Mamakating town board called for changes to zoning laws on the highway, primarily in the area around exits 112, 113, and 115, to encourage new

**Reprinted with permission
of the Shawangunk Journal**

businesses to open in the largely undeveloped area. The rule would cut the minimum lot size from 25 acres to just 3, creating a path for businesses that need a smaller footprint, including fast food restaurants, self-storage facilities, and light industry.

BKAA is alarmed, but not necessarily opposed. They believe the proposal is being made too fast, is the opinion of Leslie Otto, President of the BKA. She says

DENSIFICATION PLAN continued on page 12

DENSIFICATION PLAN continued from page 11

“We are not against development, not against business, we just want more information and more time.”

The question on the minds of the BKAA, which is a very environmentally conscious organization, is how increased development is going to affect the Basha Kill area. There haven't been any environmental studies done, and it's unclear to the townsfolk what the ramifications of development of the propose areas would be. There were concerns raised at the meeting about wells going dry, as the change would mean a potential for eight times as many drains on an already scarce water supply.

The speed of the process means for some, this meeting was the first time the subject was aired out, and a general gauge could be made on opinions and questions. Those questions were largely about the reasons and speed.

“Why change from twenty-five acres required all the way down to three?” one person asked. “It seems drastic.”

“Why is this change being pushed so quickly?” inquired another. “The master plan that guided this town and has kept our area safe took five years to develop, and this would undo some of that protection.”

“Why,” asked a third, “is the master plan being changed at all?”

In a show of good faith, and in an effort to listen to the voices of the people affected by this change, Deputy Supervisor Matthew Mordas, Councilman Peter Goodman, and Deputy Chairman of the Planning Board Alex Goodman came out to the meeting and did their best to field questions.

“I was in favor of this change,” explained Deputy

Supervisor Goodman, “because we haven't been bringing in business like we hoped, so I saw this and maybe I got excited that this could be what we needed. But I hear everyone loud and clear.”

When BKAA President Otto asked if he would propose a motion to the council to table the changes until the proper studies could be done, Goodman said that he would do just that, to the sound of applause from the gathered.

Town Meeting

The following town meeting was held on June 3, and Supervisor Michael Robbins opened the meeting letting everyone know that the zoning changes would not be voted on at that meeting – they were going to be given more time.

The public hearing still happened, and many people stepped forward to praise the slowdown. Speakers requested environmental impact studies and traffic studies. The most notable speaker of the meeting was one Alan Tucker, speaking directly against the zoning changes (rather than, as most others had done, requesting more time or information).

Tucker told the council that fifty-five years ago he formed the Basha Kill Wetlands Association to save the Basha Kill from development.

“This work will likely harm one of the most sensitive ecosystems in New York State,” he told the board. “It is your job to care for our most important natural resource in the town of Mamakating, and to continue to save the Basha Kill Area.”

Tucker was met with overwhelming applause from the crowd.

Bloomingsburg Waste Water Treatment Plant Update

Frank Coviello – June 15, 2025

In the previous edition of The Guardian I reported a positive change in the situation at the Bloomingsburg Waste Water Treatment Plant, the bacterial count in the effluent channel had decreased significantly compared to the results obtained over the previous 15 months. I am happy to report that the most recent test also decreased significantly when compared to the same 15 months.

I'm certain a contributing factor is the continued operation of the Bar Arm which was repaired a few months ago with the installation of a custom made part and has been operating 24/7 since then. The Bar Arm is responsible for removing large solids including flushable wipes from the incoming sewage stream. It is noteworthy that the Bloomingsburg Board of Trustees has approved the purchase of a new Bar Arm.

Unfortunately, in May 2025 failure of actuators caused discharge of partially treated sewage with disinfection for a few weeks. The new actuators were installed and this problem has been resolved.

I concluded my previous report by stating they appeared to be on a pathway to resolve the problems experienced at the Plant and the last few months further support that statement.

Rara Avis



Recent sightings of a bird species in the Basha Kill Wildlife Management Area

All photos downloaded from public domain



Cerulean Warbler



Eastern Wood Pewee



White-Crowned Sparrow

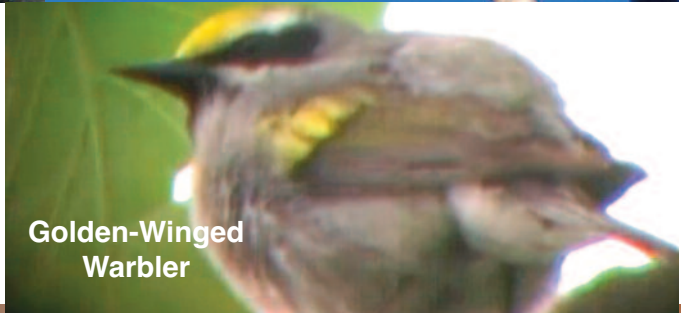


Red-Eyed Vireo



Willow Flycatcher

ALSO SEEN:
Great Cormorant
Prothonotary Warbler
Blackpoll Warbler
Black-Billed Cuckoo
Common Nighthawk
Yellow-Billed Cuckoo
Lincoln's Sparrow



Golden-Winged Warbler



Trumpeter Swan

Remembrance and Gratitude at the Bashakill for Paula Medley

Jackie Broder

On Saturday, June 14th, BKAA members gathered at the boat launch to remember in gratitude, former BKAA President, Paula Medley. Long time BKAA member and former board member, Bob Muller, made it his mission to erect a memorial bench for our former leader. He did the leg work, kept the project alive and moving forward, and it finally came together.

This was a labor of love for many. Despite hurdles, including weather, many hands came together to see this happen. Our DEC managers, Greg Cerne and EJ Evans, made the trip out to the boat launch and met with me very early on to decide placement and logistics. BKAA President and VP, Leslie and Mark Otto worked hard to get the bench in place and bring in beautiful small touches like flowers. Mike Medley put the icing on the cake, bringing a beautiful array of photos that spoke to the life of Paula. Steve and Susan Erny had the emotionally difficult task of singing their beautiful “Bashakill Song”, Paula’s favorite.

Those who wished to, spoke about Paula and her many gifts to them and the community. Mike spoke very eloquently about all the people Paula loved and who loved her. He was truly touched by the turnout and the bench saying he would visit it often.

I looked to Robin Wall Kimmerer’s “Braiding Sweetgrass” for the words to sum up the day. I have been asked to reprint it here. Excerpted from the chapter entitled, “The Consolation of Water Lillies”, about dealing with grief of becoming an empty-nester:

“...I had planned for this with my special grief-containment



system strapped on top of my car... I drove down to Labrador Pond and slipped my new red kayak into the water.

Just remembering the sound of the first bow wave brings back the whole of the day. Late summer afternoon, golden sun and lapis sky between the hills that fold around the pond. Red-winged blackbirds cackling in the cattails. Not a breath of wind disturbed the glassy pond.

Open water sparkled ahead, but first I had to traverse the marshy edges, beds of pickerelweed and water lilies so thick they covered the water. The long petioles of the spatterdock lilies, stretching six feet moving forward.

I paddled hard and strong out to the deep water, pulling against the weight of the restraining vegetation, eventually breaking free. When I had exhausted my shoulders so they were as empty as my heart, I rested on the water, closed my eyes, and let the sadness come, adrift.

Maybe a little breeze came up, maybe a hidden current, or the earth tilting on its axis to slosh the pond, but whatever the invisible hand, my little boat began to rock gently, like a cradle on the water.

Held by the hills and rocked by the water, the hand of the breeze against my cheek, I gave myself over to the comfort that came, unbidden.

I don’t know how long I floated, but my little red boat drifted the length of the lake. Rustling whispers around my hull drew me from reverie and the first thing I saw upon opening my eyes were polished green leaves of water lilies and spatterdock smiling up at me again, rooted in darkness and floating in the light. I found myself surrounded by hearts on the water, luminous green hearts. The lilies seemed to



REMEMBRANCE continued on back page

Deerpark Rural Alliance and NYenvironcom

Grace Woodard

April, May, and early June showers delivered green-up time, violets, bluets, buttercups, and trusty daffodils led the way with a big fat black bear porch-invasion at Guymard Lake bringing up the rear

NYenvironcom: We have expanded analyses, including turbidity monitoring in our WaterInsight project. And have more charts. And continue grabbing tests in the lower BK. One of our volunteers, Bobby Howe, received the Open Space Institute's McHenry Award. It provides financial support to promising young leaders with exemplary projects. Working with our TerrainInscape framework, Bobby will be addressing Harmful Algae Blooms (HABs) in the Wallkill River Watershed — monitoring, assessing, and developing solutions for the harmful HABs in the lower end of the Wallkill. Kudos, Bobby!

Meanwhile, we await the court decision on our Clean Water Act appeal from the US Court of Appeals, 2nd Circuit Appellate Division. Let's hear rooting from the gallery.

And we inaugurated capricious spring with a tasty breakfast at the Cuddebackville Fire Department on March 20th. This DRA – Lower Huguenot Neighborhood Alliance – Nyenvironcom - Cuddebackville Firehouse collaborative breakfast featured donated ingredients, a trusty kitchen crew

producing waffles, French toast, pancakes, Ketcham special baked apples (raves), and local farm eggs that satisfied the hungry. We look forward to more joint firehouse gatherings and thank all the volunteers.

Now for the big benefit event. Our 2nd ANNUAL NEVERSINK RIVER FESTIVAL will be a 4-day biggie —August 14th-August 17th — at the D&H Canal Park in Cuddebackville. Featuring East Coast Wrestling (ECWP) with a local hero, expert trout events with noted flyfishers, a cycling tour, games, lots of bands, vendors, BBQ, a dance evening, prized raffle items, and more—all with the help of community sponsors and environmental groups. Children and adults will have something to engage their interests, ears, and palates. Follow us on social media. Seeking sponsors and vendors gfwoodard@gmail.com.

Winding up —the Quarry Management Scandal on Rte 6 and Lime Kiln Road below Rte 84, continues. A Public Hearing was unanimous in its comments rejecting QM's expansion plans. Deerpark PB still doesn't know the real intent of this massive clear-cutting, earth-moving, building, and leveling project. In late June, there will be a follow-up PB meeting, hopefully producing serious town oversight. Next to Dragon Springs and the lack of inspections/permits as site work grows, QM is a black eye for the town. DRA keeps following meetings. And on it goes.



Tell A Friend About the Basha Kill Area Association

Fill out this coupon for membership or more information:

Mail to: P.O. Box 1121, Wurtsboro, NY 12790

_____ \$10 per membership _____ Other Donation _____ Prefer mailed newsletter (Not available to seasonal residents due to forwarding costs)
 _____ \$20 Family Membership (every family member aged 14 years and older holds voting rights)

Name _____

Phone _____

Address _____

Email (required) _____

REMEMBRANCE continued from page 14

pulse with light, green hearts beating with my own. There were young, heart leaves below the water on their way up and old leaves on the surface, some with edges tattered by a summer of wind and waves and, no doubt, kayak paddles.

...

I paddled more easily back to shore. Loading the kayak onto the car in the fading light, I was doused with the leftover pond water draining onto my head. I smiled at the illusion of my grief-containment system: there is no such thing. We spill over into the world and the world spills over into us.

The earth, the first among good mothers, gives us the gift that we cannot provide ourselves. I hadn't realized that I had come to the lake and said feed me, but my empty heart was fed. I had a good mother. She gives what we need without being asked. I wonder if she gets tired, old Mother Earth. Or if she too is fed by the giving, 'Thanks,' I whispered, 'for all of this.'

...

We are showered every day with gifts, but they are not meant for us to keep. Their life is in their movement, the inhale and the exhale of our shared breath. Our work and our joy is to pass along the gift and to trust that what we put into the universe will always come back."

All rights reserved to the author.

In this issue:

Poetry Corner	2 & 4
Donors and New Members	2
Calendar of Events	3
200th Anniversary of D&H Canal	4-6
Black Billed Cuckoos	7
Cheyenne the Water Woman	7
Spring Migration Talk	8
Bird ID with Dr. Walter Jahn	9
Route 17 Update	10-11
Bloomington Wastewater Update	12
Rara Avis	13
Remembrance for Paula Medley	14
Deerpark Rural Alliance/NYenvironcom	15

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 52
LIBERTY, NY 12754

BASHA KILL AREA ASSOCIATION
PO BOX 1121
WURTSBORO, NY 12790