

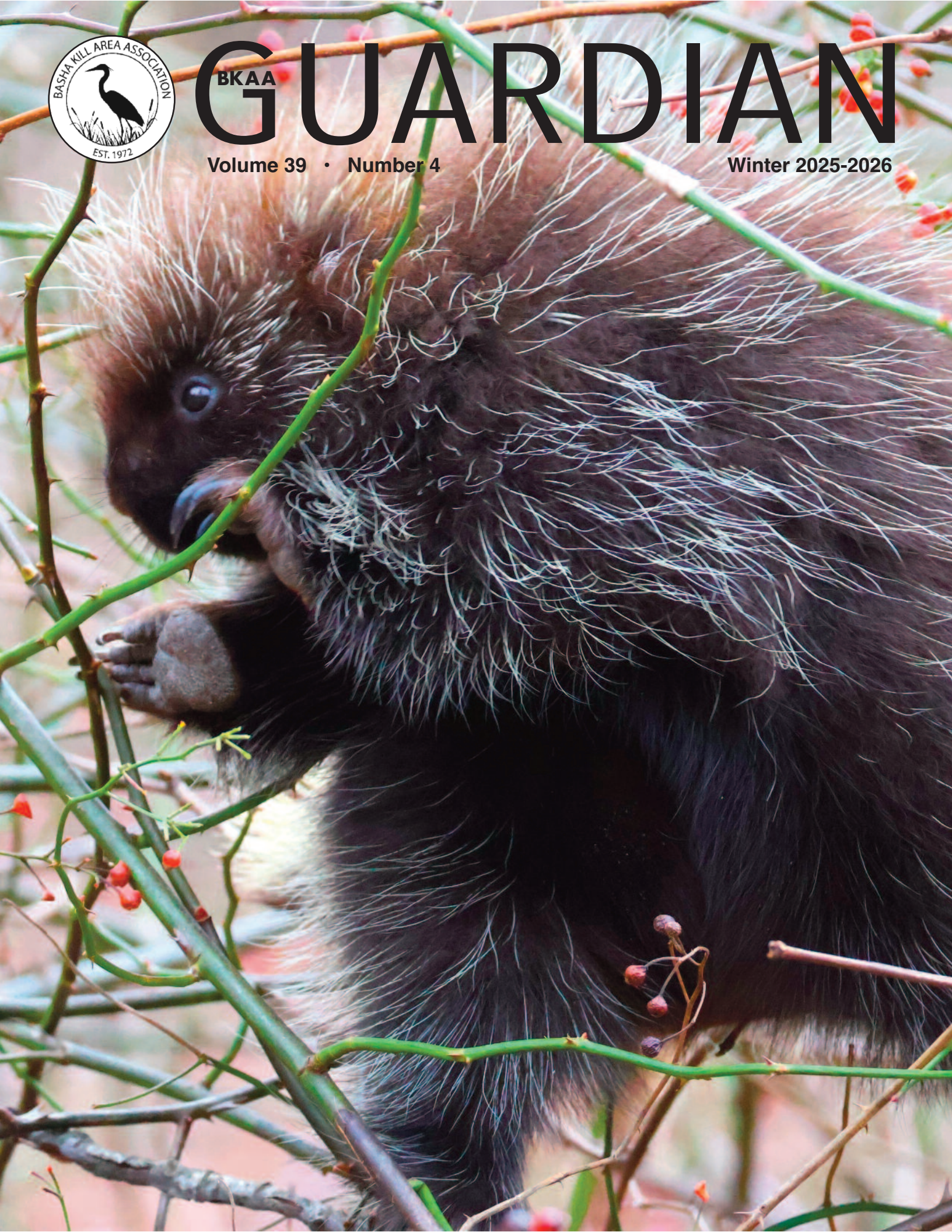


BKAA

# GUARDIAN

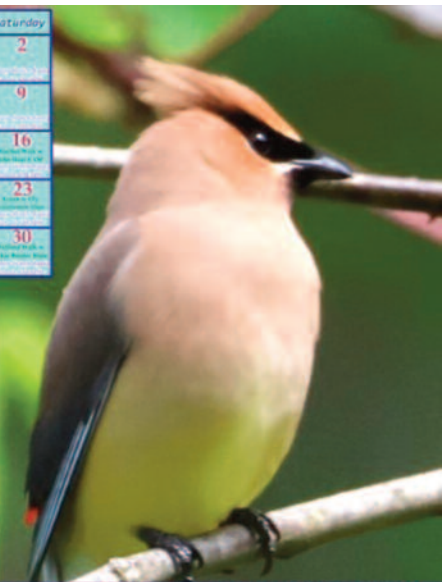
Volume 39 • Number 4

Winter 2025-2026



# BASHA KILL AREA ASSOCIATION 2026 CALENDAR

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|
|        |        |         |           |          | 1      | 2        |
| 3      | 4      | 5       | 6         | 7        | 8      | 9        |
| 10     | 11     | 12      | 13        | 14       | 15     | 16       |
| 17     | 18     | 19      | 20        | 21       | 22     | 23       |
| 24     | 25     | 26      | 27        | 28       | 29     | 30       |
| 31     |        |         |           |          |        |          |







| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|
|        | 1      | 2       | 3         | 4        | 5      | 6        |
| 7      | 8      | 9       | 10        | 11       | 12     | 13       |
| 14     | 15     | 16      | 17        | 18       | 19     | 20       |
| 21     | 22     | 23      | 24        | 25       | 26     | 27       |
| 28     | 29     | 30      |           |          |        |          |

**ON THE FRONT COVER:**

*Bashakill Porcupine by Walter Jahn*  
— See article on page 11

**2026 BKAA CALENDARS!** For those who would like a calendar highlighting Bashakill wildlife which includes a schedule of walks & talks, they are now available at MEEC! (while supplies last) Donations to cover the printing costs (\$8) are welcome.

**BKAA GUARDIAN** — Volume 39, Number 4 • Winter 2025-2026

**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 for individuals, \$20 for families 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.

President: Leslie Otto • Vice President: Mark Otto • Treasurer: Lisa Schnitzer

Secretary: Kim Rogers • Membership Coordinator: Ellen Pilipski

Board Members: Frank Coviello • Cliff Johnson • Walter Jahn

Graham Vest • Ellen Pilipski • John Pratt • Jackie Broder • Chris Titus

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: Jackie Broder • Guardian Layout: Liberty Press - Jon Heaphy

**CONTACT THE BKAA** — [info@thebashakill.org](mailto:info@thebashakill.org) website: [www.thebashakill.org](http://www.thebashakill.org)

PO Box 1121, Wurtsboro, NY 12790 • 845-789-2846

**CONTACT THE DEC** — Call 24-hour DEC Law Enforcement Dispatch at 1-877-457-5680

**MORE TO COME!**

# 2026 BKAA *Calendar of Events*

**MORE TO COME!**

## **Sat Feb 20th 8pm Raindate: Sun Feb 21st Free Public Star Watch John Kocijanski**

Join John Kocijanski of Catskills Astronomy Club for an evening of sky watching. Bring scopes and/or binoculars. Meet at South Rd. boat launch, across from Bashakill Vineyards. For information and to register, call John at (845)798-8087. Check for event updates at Catskill Astronomy Clubs Facebook page.

## **Sat March 21 9:30 am-12pm Nature Watch Training**

BKAA seeks volunteers for their popular spring/summer Nature Watch program. If you love nature, are willing to share your passion, and have a few weekend hours to offer, then you'd make a GREAT addition to our team! No experience necessary. Join Nature Watch leaders Nora Brusinski and Walter Jahn for breakfast treats and Nature Watch Training at MEEC (762 South Rd, Wurtsboro). Learn about bald eagles and natural history of the Bashakill. Then join John Kocijanski to learn about high powered scopes. Great way for students to earn community service hours! Call 845-789-2846, x4 for information and to register.

## **Sat April 4th 8-10am Spring Water Fowl Walk with John Haas**

Join local expert John Haas to look for an array of early ducks, geese, and mergansers. Bring binoculars and a scope if you have one and dress for the weather. Meet at the Haven Rd. parking lot (on left coming from Route 209). May travel to boat launch to walk birch trail and/or other trailheads. Includes visit to Mamakating Environmental Education Center afterward. For information and to register, call John at 854-807-2437.

## **Sat April 17th 8pm Raindate: Sun 18th Star Watch - John Kocijanski**

Join John Kocijanski of Catskills Astronomy Club for an evening of sky watching. Bring scopes and/or binoculars. Meet at South Rd. boat launch, across from Bashakill Vineyards. For information and to register, call John at (845)798-8087. Check for event updates at Catskill Astronomy Clubs Facebook page.

## **Sat/Sun April 11 - June 13 10am-4pm Nature Watch**

Weekends at the South Rd Boat Launch, across from Bashakill Vineyards. Join BKAA Nature Watch Volunteers to learn about the residents of the Bashakill. View nesting Bald Eagles and other wildlife through high powered spotting scopes. Suitable for people of all ages. Call 845-789-2846, x4 for information.

## **Sat April 25th 9:30-noon Annual Bashakill Cleanup**

Happy Earth Day! Join us for a morning of fun and giving back to our beautiful Bashakill. Registration and site assignments begin promptly at 9:30 at Haven Rd Parking Lot. Enjoy a walk in the fresh spring air as you rid the Bashakill of debris. Garbage bags are provided. Gloves and pickers provided on first come serve basis. Bring chairs so you can join us for lunch provided by the BKAA. BKAA merchandise will be on sale and door prizes awarded! Please call 845-789-2846 for info.

## **Sat May 16th 8am Warbler Walk**

Join John Haas in search of an array of spring migrants: warblers, orioles, grosbeaks, and more. Bring binoculars and insect repellent. Dress for the weather, sturdy boots recommended. Meet at Stop Sign Parking Lot (coming from Route 209, cross Haven Rd bridge, turn left on dirt road). We will visit several trailheads in search of migrants. For information and to register, call John at 854-807-2437.

## **Sat May 23rd 10am Kayak the Bashakill**

Join Elly Knieriemen for an early paddle through the Bashakill, before the vegetation takes over. If you are new to kayaking, Elly is a great person to go out with. Bring your own vessel or rent one at MEEC (762 South Rd, Wurtsboro). Make sure you arrive early enough to get your kayak in the water before 10am. Binoculars/cameras, hats and sunscreen recommended. Meet at South Rd. boat launch across from winery. To register or for information on kayak rental, call MEEC at 845-644-5014.

## **Sat May 30th 10am Wetland Walk**

Join Jackie Broder for a natural history tour of our beloved wetland as we wind up National Wetlands month. How was our wetland formed? Who has lived here through the years and who lives here now? And why the hype over wetlands

**CALENDAR** continued on page 4

## Winter 2025-2026 Donors

Eileen Carney  
Stephen Chang  
James Corcoran  
Neil Cuthbert & Wendie Dasteel  
Eileen Decker  
Patricia Diness  
Edgar A. Mearns Bird Club  
*On behalf of Patrick Dechon*  
Susan & Steve Erny  
Patricia Fairchild  
Colleen Filippone  
John O. Flaherty  
Lewis Gluck  
Margaret Gorton  
Nicholas & Vera Ioannou  
Walter Jahn  
Joseph & Mary Kadet  
Fred & Patti Kirby  
Morris & Sarah Kornbluth  
Jay & Risa Levine  
Bill & Carol Lucas

Dusanka & Sime Marusic  
Leslie & Mark Otto  
Angela Page  
Pine Lake Estates Property Owners Association  
Peter Polsunas  
John Pratt  
Barbara Restaino  
Colleen Roth  
Catherine Sadaghiani  
Elizabeth Schettkoe  
Alex Scilla  
Carole & Charley Shields  
Maria Skwarlo  
Adam Stuart  
Dorothy Szeftc  
*In memory of Kevin LeRoy*  
Graham Vest  
Ruthmary Wein  
John J. White  
Zufall Family Foundation

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## Winter 2025-2026 New Members

Kerron Barnes  
Robert Cecere  
Lewis Gluck  
Kirk & Gail Haarklau  
Hector Herrera  
Catherine Lambe

Anna Long  
Jennifer Lynch  
Pine Lake Estates Property Owners Association  
Denise Tracey  
John J. White  
Hamza Zaman-Roth

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### CALENDAR continued from page 3

anyway? Meet at MEEC (762 South Rd, Wurtsboro). Bring binoculars and insect repellent. Dress for the weather, sturdy boots recommended. Call 845-644-5014 for information.

### Sat Sept 11 8pm Raindate: Sun Sept 12th Star Watch - John Kocijanski

Join John Kocijanski of Catskills Astronomy Club for an evening of sky watching. Bring scopes and/or binoculars. Meet at South Rd. boat launch, across from Bashkill Vineyards. For information and to register, call John at (845)798-8087. Check for event updates at Catskill Astronomy Clubs Facebook page.

### Sat Sept 12th 10am Kayak the Bashakill

Join Elly Knieriemen for an end of summer paddle through

the Bashakill. If you are new to kayaking, Elly is a great person to go out with. Bring your own vessel or rent one at MEEC (762 South Rd, Wurtsboro). Make sure you arrive early enough to get your kayak in the water before 10am. Binoculars/cameras, hats and sunscreen recommended. Meet at South Rd. boat launch across from winery. To register or for information on kayak rental, call MEEC at 845-644-5014.

### Sat Oct 9th 8pm Raindate: Sun Oct 10th Star Watch - John Kocijanski

Join John Kocijanski of Catskills Astronomy Club for an evening of sky watching. Bring scopes and/or binoculars. Meet at South Rd. boat launch, across from Bashkill Vineyards. For information and to register, call John at (845)798-8087. Check for event updates at Catskill Astronomy Clubs Facebook page.

# Fifty-third BKAA Annual Report

Submitted by Leslie Otto

— October 18, 2025

## **MISSION**

*Since our founding in 1972, our mission has been to protect the Bashakill 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.*

## **BKAA BOARD**

The BKAA Board continues to carry on the BKAA's mission. Biologist Chris Titus is a welcome new addition and we are grateful for his help to continue finding new ways to protect the Basha Kill. We have worked very hard this year on outreach within our community as well as out, two of our board members Jackie Broder and John Pratt attended Conference on the National level in Washington DC. We are planning to continue increasing our outreach and networking efforts to ensure the continued growth of the BKAA. In the spirit of growth we are presently working on forming a youth group under the umbrella of the BKAA to engage the youth, increase volunteer hours within our organization, and help to ensure growth. To us this can be a wonderful opportunity all around, helping to spark interest in the younger generations to continue our mission.

We have also had a very busy year for advocacy taking on several projects including the continued water quality monitoring of the Bloomingburg waste water plant and in the Bashakill, the Re-zoning of Mamakating's overlay zones, and presently the proposed mulching and composting plant. Also we are starting to meet with other environmental groups in hopes of forming an Advocacy Coalition in the area. More to come there.

Presently we are working toward developing a Comprehensive Plan as Stewards of the Bashakill Wetlands. This will include using Wildlife Acoustics to identify bird, frog and bat species that both live and visit the area. By showing which endangered, threatened and rare species call it home we can further the protections of our area. Also in this plan we will be developing an invasive species management plan to systematically remove both invasive aquatic and land plants and replace them with naturally occurring species. In the future we hope to be able to place a MOTUS tower (Motus is latin for movement) within the Bashakill that will track tagged birds and eventually Monarch butterflies as they migrate through. Another layer of proof as to why it is so important to protect the beautiful Bashakill. This will take time though as funds will need to be raised for such equipment.

We are always looking for volunteers. If you are interested in helping with The Guardian, website maintenance,

membership, scholarships, merchandise, Nature Watch, advocacy, BKAA Youth Club, or water testing email us at [info@thebashakill.org](mailto:info@thebashakill.org) or call us at 845-789-2846.

## **ADVOCACY**

### **Bloomingburg Water Treatment Plant Update**

Submitted by Frank Coviello

The BKAA became aware of the discharge of contaminated and/or untreated water into the Shawangunk Kill in January 2024. The discharge was a result of the failure of the bar screen which is responsible for removing large solids such as flushable wipes to prevent them from entering the treatment plant and causing clogs in pipes, pumps and filters. Further investigation revealed that the bar screen had failed intermittently as far back as summer 2022. Clogs of the filters are especially problematic and require bypass which results in partially treated sewage without disinfection to be discharged into the Shawangunk Kill. Beginning February 20, 2024, the Basha Kill Area Association began a monthly program of testing the water exiting the wastewater treatment plant.

The monthly testing program consisted of collecting water samples directly below the exit of the effluent pipe. Two individual samples were collected, one for the determination of coliform bacteria and the second for the determination of E. coli bacteria. All the monthly samples collected from February 20, 2024 through January 6, 2025 produced results greater than 1,000 (most were greater than 2,000) for coliform. The Shawangunk Kill is classified as a Water Quality B. The standard for Quality B requires a monthly geometric mean from a minimum of five samples to be less than 200. For the same period 5 results were greater than 2,000, one result was greater than 1,000 and 4 results were less than 500 for E. coli bacteria. Current EPA guidelines require less than or equal to 126 for E. coli.

March of 2025 a new component which was custom manufactured was installed on the bar screen and it has been operational continuously. Beginning April 2, 2025 through August 4 2025 all coliform results have been less than 700 and all E. coli results have been less than 500, a very significant improvement!

Moving forward, at the August 11, 2025 Bloomingburg Board of Trustees meeting, it was announced that financing for a new replacement bar screen was almost completed but there was currently no estimated time for completion of this step. Once the replacement has been made a new and more efficient bar screen will be manufactured and installed, but again there is no estimated time for this. Rest assured the BKAA will continue to monitor this situation.

**ANNUAL REPORT** continued on page 6

## ANNUAL REPORT continued from page 5

President's Note: I would like to personally thank Frank Coviello, and his son Anthony Coviello, for all of this hard work. The countless hours spent collecting samples, doing research, compiling data, attending meetings, and disseminating information to the public is absolutely paying off. Without Frank's dedication none of this would have been possible.

### Mamakating Re-Zoning Proposal

*Submitted by Leslie Otto*

On May 5, 2025 we learned that the Mamakating Town Board would be proposing a re-zoning of the overlay zones at the May 6, 2025 meeting, and that they planned on closing public comments and voting to approve them that night. The zones in question are located off of Route 17 exits 115 by Bloomingburg, and exits 113 and 112 by Wurtsboro. The proposal loosened restrictions from 25 acre minimum to 3 acres to build, also allowing further commercial building such as fast food restaurants, construction lots, and truck stops to name a few examples. We were also very concerned with how the proposal was written, noting the verbiage to be very non-descript, and felt it could be twisted to allow for other uses. We had heard about a specific project that the zoning was possibly being changed to accommodate, although that project was not formally proposed. We felt it was not in the best interest of our area, and everyone needed more time and information before a decision was made.

We felt we needed to respond very quickly to what we perceived to be a serious issue, so an email blast was sent out, posts were placed on social media, and all our contacts were notified in the hope that people would attend the May 6th Town Board Meeting in force and get the board to see reason and slow the process down. We also hired attorneys William Demerast and John Barrone to guide us as we felt we had no time to waste. Of course our members did not disappoint! The meeting that night was standing room only with over 20 speakers in person, and several via zoom, including our Attorney, William Demerast, who voiced his concerns and uneasiness with this proposal. The effort paid off and the board voted to keep the public hearing open and slow down the process for at least 2 weeks. This gave us much needed time to plan and organize.

We are very appreciative that Yankee Lake Preservation Association joined us very quickly, and offered to allow us to use their clubhouse to hold a Town Hall type meeting for the general public to attend on May 30, 2025. Again we hosted a full house of concerned citizens, and are thankful that Board members Peter Goodman, Matt Mordis, and planning board member Alex Goodman attended to help answer questions and hear the residents' concerns. The meeting was very successful, a board member even publicly agreed that the process needed to be slowed down.

Soon after the meeting the Attorneys from BKAA and YLPA drew up petitions and developed an action plan to obtain signatures in order to force the board to obtain a supermajority vote to pass the resolution. We sent a letter to the board sharing our complaints, concerns and plan. At the June 3rd meeting members of the BKAA board spoke again, as well as approximately 20 residents. The board then closed public comments. At the July 11, 2025 meeting the matter was put to rest and the resolution was voted down 6-1!! The Basha Kill Area Association stood by its mission statement once again.

President's Note: A special thank you to YLPA for quickly stepping up to stand by the BKAA. Thank you to Attorneys William Demerast and John Barrone for jumping in so quickly, and a huge Thank You to all our members who showed in force to help.

### Mulch and Composting Plant on McDonald Road

*Submitted by Leslie Otto*

There is a proposed mulch and composting facility to be located on McDonald Road, 1/2 mile from the Village of Wurtsboro, located between a 2 acre wetland and Guymard Brook which empties into the Bashakill (the former Yukiguni Mushroom Plant site). There are many concerns such as the wood dust (a known carcinogen), the noise which could affect migratory birds, local wildlife, and our quality of life, and the nitrates that could be released into the groundwater and the aquifer, to name a few. Frank Coviello, Lisa Schnitzer and Leslie Otto presented our concerns at the last planning board meeting on October 14, 2025, and are doing further research into the issue. As this is a new issue we will be watching it closely and will keep our membership posted.

### Water Monitoring

*Submitted Cheyenne Otto*

Water testing has continued this year on its normal schedule. We did have a few weeks where we were unable to perform complete testing due to one of the probes failing and the replacement being on back order. Once resumed everything went smoothly, although we will have to consider purchasing new equipment as the replacement parts are becoming harder to acquire.

This summer the BKAA had the pleasure of collaborating with high school students enrolled in a college course through the College of Environmental Science and Forestry. These students conducted field work in four locations on the Bashakill. They collected water quality data using tertiary testing kits and conducted macroinvertebrate surveys to determine which organisms were present in different environmental conditions. We hope to continue and expand on the initiative of involving students.

**ANNUAL REPORT** continued from page 6

I would like to thank all the volunteers and members who continue to support our organization and the water testing. Without you we could not continue to do this.

**Expansion of Route 17**

*Submitted by Maura Muller*

On September 9th I attended the "ReThink Rt 17 Town Hall" held by Catskill Mountainkeeper and the ReThink Route 17 Alliance via Zoom.

The meeting presented a report titled "Invest in Our Communities, Not a Wider Highway," advocating for alternative spending of \$1.4 billion to improve local transportation instead of widening Route 17.

The document and the meeting highlighted several alternative ideas including funding the Orange County Roadway Safety Action Plan for \$600,000, providing sidewalks and intersection improvements in Orange and Sullivan Counties for \$45 million, doubling bus routes in Sullivan County for \$5 million, and installing 250 bus shelters in Orange, Ulster, and Sullivan counties for \$10 million. For more information, and to read more of the alternative ideas you can check

**[www.rethinkroute17.org](http://www.rethinkroute17.org)** The most recent development is that The Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Project study is delayed and now expected to be released next summer.

Previously, the Draft Environmental Impact Statement was to be available and released in August 2025 and a public hearing on the DEIS was scheduled for last month, September 2025 to be followed by a 45-day DEIS Comment Period (beginning with the Notice of Availability of the DEIS) that would have concluded in October 2025.

The amended project timeline, according to the project's website (<https://www.route17.dot.ny.gov/#/mobility-access>) now has the release of the DEIS and a public hearing on the DEIS in the summer of 2026, followed by a 45-day comment period that begins on the date of the release of the DEIS. NYSDOT now estimates the completion of the FEIS and the release of the study's Record of Decision in the fall of 2026.

**EDUCATION****Nature Watch 2025**

*Submitted by Nora Brusinski*

In 2025, the BKAA Nature Watch volunteers continued the program's mission by serving as ambassadors to the Basha Kill, assisting and educating visitors as they explored the area's flora and fauna. The season began in late March, when volunteers, both new and returning, gathered at the Mamakating Environmental Education Center for our annual training. After enjoying an array of refreshments provided by MaryAnn Geary-Halchak and Nature Watch co-leader Walter Jahn, participants were treated to a lively

question-and-answer session with Mamakating Town Historian Virdanna Lawrence about the history of the Basha Kill. The presentation covered many common questions we receive from visitors, such as the origins of the Kill's name. Our second presentation, from Walter, walked volunteers through the biology of bald eagles and expected activity during the coming weeks. Training concluded with a group visit to the boat launch where John Kocijanski demonstrated spotting scope setup. He then trained his sights upon the two visible nests, one to the north and one to the south.

This year saw three confirmed nesting pairs within a relatively small area. These were the nest on the island, which NW has observed for many years, the centrally located nest we observed last year, and a new nest which appeared at the Westbrookville end of the Kill. Expert birder John Haas believes the latter may be the pair who had previously nested closest to Haven Road. If so, this new nest is their fourth location over the past ten years. The Nature Watch team observed the situation with bated breath. 2021 marked the first recorded incident of intraspecies aggression between the bald eagles of the Basha Kill, when John Haas watched an adult from the island nest attack the Haven Road nest, killing their young. In 2024, Scott Baldinger witnessed a third adult attack the southern nest, leaving it bare. The northern nest was similarly empty, although nobody observed any conflict that occurred there. The only chick to fledge last year came from the central nest. With the new nest moving closer to the island this year, the territory pressure between the three pairs could only increase.

The last weekend of April saw three active nests around the Basha Kill. By the first weekend in May, all had gone silent. The adults were still spotted in the area, but any signs of tending to chicks had ceased. There were no witnesses to whatever occurred, but continued territorial aggression is the most likely culprit. Despite the lack of eaglets, our volunteers continued to answer questions, share views from the spotting scopes, and introduce visitors to the wonderful biodiversity of the Bashakill.

I am always thankful for our volunteers, but I would like to extend an especially hearty thanks this year. The weather we experienced this season was some of the worst luck I can remember, with multiple weekends being rained out completely. Other shifts had to be shortened or cancelled due to heat, snow, or flooding. Still our Nature Watchers continued to turn up as soon as the weather cleared. Our program could not continue without their hard work and dedication. In addition, special thanks to John Haas for serving as our birding resource, the Mamakating Environmental Education Center for hosting our annual training; Janet Barnett for keeping our equipment accessible in her shed; Maureen O'Meara for sending weekly shift emails; Mary Allison Farley for her role as

**ANNUAL REPORT** continued from page 7  
program advisor, and co-directors Nora Brusinski and Walter Jahn.

**2025 BKAA Sponsored DEC Camp Scholarship Campers:** The Basha Kill Area Association awarded scholarships to nine campers, age 11-17, for one week each at a NYS Department of Environmental Conservation Camp during the summer of 2025. Recipients submitted essays addressing our application question "Why are you interested in the environment?".

**2025 BKAA sponsored MEEC Camp Scholarship Campers:** The Bashakill Area Association also sponsored 4 children to attend the 1 week summer day camp at the Mamakating Environmental Education Center this year.

**Jack Orth Memorial Scholarship:** The Jack Orth Memorial BKAA Scholarship is awarded to a full-time student pursuing a degree in Environmental Science or Green Building Technology at SUNY Sullivan. Applicants must be a returning, full-time student and have completed 30 credits with a minimum grade point average (GPA) of 3.0. In addition, applicants must submit one letter of recommendation and an essay describing their ultimate career goal in science and why they are pursuing this goal.

Unfortunately we were not able to award this scholarship in 2025 due to internal issues within SUNY Sullivan. We are working with the college to try and move forward, and hope to be able to award it again in 2026.

## **SISTER ORGANIZATIONS**

### **Deerpark Rural Alliance**

*Submitted by Grace Woodard*

Deerpark Rural Alliance is happy to announce that our efforts and that of NYenvironcom appealing a District court decision favoring Dragon Springs prevailed in Manhattan in federal appeals court. September 16th 2025 was a good day. Now, we await Dragon Springs' response. The issue was and continues to be pollution of the lower Basha Kill and Neversink from the hillside above and below surface of wastewater with notable fecal coliform.

We also celebrate 50 years of the Clean Water Act under which we filed our complaint.

We are looking forward to discovery, a potential motherlode of facts, patterns and evidence which should open up the many-pronged issues with DS wastewater treatment and history.

There will be delays because of the nature of the appeals process. Dragon Springs may request a re-hearing, request the full appeals court rule on the decision, request a re-arguing of the case, appeal to the Supreme Court and a few more actions.. We are optimistic that their moves will be rejected. So, time will tell. Dragon Springs is required to respond by Saturday, Oct 18th(within 30 Days from the decision in our favor). By the way, the appeals decision was

unanimous, by three judges, with a robust dismantling of DS' arguments.

Our big effort is to raise money for the next stages of the case. We appeal to you for help as we move forward.

We have also had good news with Deerpark regarding Quarry Management. The monster earth and fill project on Lime Kiln Road and Rte 6 (site objective never clear) is getting more than a spanking and finger wagging from the Deerpark Planning Board. Many remedial, scaling back directives, financial determinations, and deadlines have been delivered to Quarry Management. Late to the party though the town was, a big point is made: when a town fails to engage due diligence at the beginning of an application process and fails to follow up, there are serious consequences. QM illustrates the importance of state environmental procedures that, if taken seriously, prevent what happens when questions are not asked, negative declarations are superficially declared, and the SEQRA process is dismissed out of ignorance, resentment, and laziness.

2026. More monitoring, outreach, advocacy, and contributions. We love contributions and conversations.

Land, water, community, climate—always..

## **PUBLIC RELATIONS**

Thank you, Frank Coviello, for your countless hours of research, attending and presenting at board meetings for the BKAA, continuing the water testing with the Bloomingburg wastewater plant, the electronic mailing of the Guardian, and genuinely stepping up whenever and wherever needed on a moment's notice.

Thank you, Lisa Schnitzer, for your continued work in keeping our membership and financial records up to date, attending Town board, and planning board meetings, always being willing to help out with outreach and advocacy, and for stepping up and organizing the BKAA's part in the D&H canal anniversary celebration.

Thank you, Mark Otto, for your time spent attending board meetings, your advocacy work, all the outreach events you have attended, helping to build the float and donating your time and truck to pull the float. A special thanks for the donation of Wildlife Acoustics equipment to help get this new project up and running !

Thank you, Ellen Pilipski, for your help and support attending board meetings, doing all the membership letters, and attending our outreach events, and helping with the building of the BKAA float.

Thank you, Cliff Johnson, for writing all of the beautiful thank you's as well as handling shipping of Guide Books. Also thank you for helping out with community outreach by attending many of the events the BKAA has attended through the year, distributing the Guardians to local businesses, and especially helping to build our float.

**ANNUAL REPORT** continued on page 9

**ANNUAL REPORT** continued from page 8

Thank you, Christine Saward, for doing a great job ordering and organizing all of the BKAA merchandise, and helping out with our outreach events such as the Founders Day Fair and the Farmers Market events. And thank you for organizing the refreshments at the annual meetings every year.

Thank you, Kim Rogers, for taking over as Secretary for the BKAA and always doing such a great job with the meeting minutes. Also a huge thank you for helping out with the rezoning proposal advocacy, as well as attending many of the BKAA's events.

Thank you, Walter Jahn, for all your hard work with organizing and executing Nature Watch, the Kayak tours you lead, your work organizing and leading our invasive species event, producing our beautiful calendar and your educational presentations. A special thanks for the donation of the Wildlife Acoustics equipment to help get this project up and running !

Thank you, Jackie Broder, for taking over as editor of the Guardian, a huge undertaking. Also for representing the Bashakill Area Association on the National level by attending the conference in Washington DC.

Thank you, Cheyenne Otto, for your continued work on the bi-monthly Bashakill water testing, training and organizing all the volunteers, calibrating the equipment, and maintaining all the supplies.

Thank you, John Pratt, for helping to network the BKAA within the community of environmental groups.

Thank you, Graham Vest, for handling all of the Guardian mailings.

Alerts - thank you to Jon Heaphy and Nancy Benedek of Liberty Press for their timely alerts and taking care of all of our printing needs.

Facebook & Instagram - thank you to Cheyenne Otto, Walter Jahn and Jackie Broder

Thank you Cathy Dawkins and her team, Pam and Galen Booth, Patricia Diness, and Maryallison Farley for sorting and assembling the Guardian.

The BKAA Board would like to thank each of its members for their continued support which allows us to continue our very important mission. We are continuously looking for volunteers to help occasionally with outreach (sitting at events, telling people about all the great things we do), "stuffing envelopes", water testing (easier than you think and only 1-2 times/month for a couple of hours), guides to lead nature walks (1-2 times/year). If you are looking for something more involved, we need an outreach coordinator (do you love telling people where to go?). We are also in need of a "tekkie" to help with our website. Volunteering is a great way to contribute to our amazing work, if you are interested just reach out by email at [info@thebashakill.org](mailto:info@thebashakill.org)

or calling us @ (845)789-2846. Together we can make a real difference!

**AWARD WINNERS 2026**

With our First award we would like to recognize one of our founding members, **Alan Tucker**. Back in 1972 When the State of New York purchased the Bashakill some residents recognized that it would need a watchdog group to make sure it was handled and protected properly. They understood that environmental protection was truly in its infancy, and that it was a learning curve for everyone. Our award winner was one of those residents. We found this out during our recent advocacy effort to slow down the rezoning proposal in Mamakating, when this gentleman approached us saying he was quote "here to solve all of our problems". When he spoke to the board he explained who he was and that he was coming out of retirement to protect the Bashakill. He was greeted to a standing ovation by the crowd. Unfortunately, Alan could not be with us today due to personal reasons, but he did send this message:

*"I have looked forward to this event with great expectations for the future of the Bashakill, it is my life's goal to save it for the future. You, the board and the organization keep going strong!"*

Our next recipient, **Christine Saward**, has been a board member for 18 years. She has served as our Secretary and merchandise manager, as well as attending many of our community outreach events such as the farmers market, spring clean-up and Wurtsboro Founders Day Street Fair to help raise awareness of our efforts throughout our community. Most recently she attended the Upper Delaware River Conference representing the BKAA, and has promised to continue to volunteer and help out when she can. We thank her for her service.

**William Lucas** has also been a board member for 18 years. His keen financial mind has kept us on track and his ability to think outside the box and hone in on the heart of an issue made him a true asset to the board. Bill could always be counted on to "show up", whether it was a clean up, an event, or a town meeting, he was always there, fighting for the Bashakill. We thank him for his service.

**Liberty Press** - Jon Heaphy, Nancy and Frank Benedek-Long time members may remember that we have honored the Liberty Press team in the past. But we felt it necessary to thank them again. Jon, Nancy, and Frank have been invaluable help to the BKAA board in these last few transition years. It is their historical knowledge, patience, and guidance that has kept The Guardian on track, consistent, and beautiful. We are grateful for their patience and guidance and look forward to many years of working with them in the future.

**John Haas - Great Blue Heron Award** - If you are any kind of birder or wildlife watcher in Sullivan County, you have

## ANNUAL REPORT continued from page 9

surely met, or at least know of, John Haas. John has been an avid birder and naturalist his whole life. Fortunately, for the Bashakill and its fans, he spends a good amount of time here. Many of you know that that time spent has produced a daily blog and two books on local birding which still sell consistently to this day. What you may not know, is that ALL proceeds from the sale of those books go directly to the BKAA.

In John's own words, "You already thanked me for that", which is true. What we haven't thanked him for is the hours and hours of scientific data that John has collected over the years. Like Jack Orth before him, that data is an important record of the natural history of the area. A record that is as crucial now as it will be in the years to come, in determining individual species fluctuations, instances of accidental species, and the overall health of an ecosystem, especially as it relates to climate change.

This takes a passion and dedication that is not found in many people. It is this passion for which the Great Blue Heron Award is reserved. It is for individuals that go above and beyond for our beloved Bashakill, and that is John Haas.



## Bloomington WWTP Update

*Frank Coviello*

In January of 2024 the BKAA became aware of a serious problem with the Bloomington Wastewater Treatment Plant. A component of the plant known as the bar screen which is the first component encountered when sewage enters the plant. The purpose of this component is to remove solid debris. The influent sewage at this plant contains an overwhelming number of flushable wipes. Due to the number of wipes entering the swing arm eventually became disabled. The result was many of these disposable wipes entered the downstream components of the wastewater treatment plant and caused numerous problems such as clogging pipes, disabling pumps and clogging filters. Any single or combination of these problems resulted in discharging partially treated or untreated sewage into the Shawangunk kill, usually without disinfection. The BKAA immediately implemented a water testing program to monitor the condition of this discharge. Three sites were selected, the first is a site about 100 yards upstream of the effluent channel, the second a site at the head of the Effluent Channel immediately below the effluent coming from the wastewater treatment plant, and 3rd a site about 100 yards downstream from the Effluent channel. At each site two samples were collected 1 for analysis of coliform bacteria and the second for the analysis of E coli enumeration.

For most of 2024 most of the results for these two tests at

the effluent channel were greater than 1,000 MPN [most probable number]. In April of 2025 the numbers for both test dropped below 1,000 into the hundreds, a significant improvement over the past year. As a reference, for recreational water these numbers should be below 160. Some of these results were below 100. I attribute this to the fact that a new component was installed in the bar screen earlier this year and since then the numbers have been dropping.

The current situation at the wastewater treatment plant is a new duplicate bar screen has been ordered and is expected to be delivered and installed in the next several months. This is the first stage of a two stage process, the second stage which doesn't currently have a timeline is the design, construction and installation of a brand new bar screen incorporating current technology which would be a great improvement over the older bar screen.

On July 28th of 2025 the Department of Environmental Conservation fined the village of Bloomington \$92,500 for these unauthorized discharges. Of that amount \$10,000 has been collected in cash and Bloomington is committed to spend an additional \$50,000 on a supplemental environmental project. As of my last communication with the village they have not yet received from the DEC a list of supplemental projects available. It is my opinion that over the last two years there has been a significant improvement at the wastewater treatment plant and that Bloomington has a viable plan to correct all the deficiencies at the wastewater treatment plant.



# Autumn Bald Eagles

In the past few months, autumn visitors to the Bashakill were often treated to the majestic sights of bald eagles. At the conclusion of one nature walk, 5 eagles were in view from the boat launch at the same time—two adult pairs and one immature. (In the accompanying picture of one of the adult pairs, you can observe the gender difference in size; female bald eagles can be 25% larger than males.) These autumn eagles were hunting diverse prey items ranging from fish to waterfowl to small mammals as they perched in treetops, sat on muskrat mounds, and flew overhead.

Bald eagles undergo partial migration and therefore there is no simple answer as to whether our autumn eagles will overwinter in our area. While eagles may remain in their breeding territory year-round in the southern portions of their range, freezing temperatures force most birds in the northern portions of their range to migrate south. In southeastern New York, both of these strategies are possible, especially in milder winters. While it is possible that any eagles observed this winter are the same birds that spent the summer here, it is also possible that they are Canadian eagles which are overwintering here while our summer birds are farther south.

If the eagles which will nest here in the spring of 2026 are overwintering south of here, we expect them to return in Late February or March depending on the weather to prepare their nests for a new

brood of eggs. If you would like the chance to observe bald eagle nests and (hopefully) maturing eaglets through a spotting scope, dedicated Nature Watch volunteers will be present at the boat launch from 10 AM to 4 PM Saturdays and Sundays throughout the spring breeding season beginning Saturday, April 18th through Sunday, June 14th. If you would like to share your enthusiasm for eagles and other wildlife as a Nature Watch volunteer, you are welcome to attend the training session at MEEC on Saturday, March 21st at 10 AM.



# What is 6-PPDq?

Christine Saward



On October 15 & 16 I attended the 2025 Upper Delaware Rendezvous presented by Friends of the UDR. One of the sessions I chose was entitled "It's Everywhere, but is it Toxic? A Basin-wide Survey of 6-PPDq in Brook Trout Waters of the DRB", presented by Jeremy Conkle, PhD., Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC). (Jeremy is a senior chemist/toxicologist at Temple University). 6-PPD is a chemical that was added to tires in the 1960's to slow cracking and extend the life of the tire. It is also found in other rubber parts and products. The chemical

leaches from tires, and upon interacting with water becomes 6-PPDq. As this gets washed into our waterways by rain events, it is effecting the water quality. There's a report called "Death by Dirty Water", produced in November of 2014. There was an investigation of what was killing the salmon. As Coho salmon swam upstream to spawn, they encountered road runoff, tires, metal. The chemical taken in through the gills, damages the lungs of the fish.

What does this have to do with the Delaware River? Studies have shown that 6-PPDq is present in the river. Although most concentrations are below known lethal toxicity thresholds, sometimes it reaches levels potentially toxic to juvenile trout. Brook trout fry are very sensitive and the concentration of the chemical is lethal to them. About 50% of them die. It doesn't seem to effect adult trout. Rainbow and brown trout are hardier and it doesn't seem to effect them. The half life of 6-PPDq is 33 hours, when it then bonds with the sediment and doesn't seem to present an issue.

Every tire all over the world leaches 6-PPD. Water near roadways wash down during rain events into our waterways and groundwater. In the states of Washington and California manufacturers have to find an alternative to replace 6-PPD. This is an effort to protect the Coho salmon. Further research needs to be conducted into 6-PPDq's sub-lethal effects on brook trout populations.

## Bashakill Porcupine

Walter Jahn

**You can look — but don't touch!**

Porcupine quills are hollow, possess barbs at the tip which can lodge in the skin of a potential predator, and are only loosely attached to the porcupine's skin so they can be easily shed. Porcupines possess about 30,000 quills which can be replaced if shed or used against potential predators such as bears, coyotes, and great horned owls. Porcupines cannot eject their quills as projectiles as is often believed.

Most of a porcupine's diet is composed of diverse plant material such as inner tree bark, twigs, roots, berries, and leaves. Tree bark and conifer needles provide most of their sustenance in winter. They do not hibernate but will seek shelter in rock crevices and hollow logs during winter.

Porcupines are nearsighted which was a factor in my being able to photograph this Bashakill porcupine at such close range.



**Basha Kill Area Association, Inc.**  
**Treasurer's Report**  
**October 1, 2024 - September 30, 2025**

**General Fund Operating Account**

**Balance from September 30, 2024** **\$ 24,008**

**Income:**

|                                                           |                      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Membership Dues                                           | \$ 9,530             |
| Donations                                                 | \$ 24,991            |
| Donations - LEGAL (needs to be transferred to Legal Acct) | \$ 500               |
| Donations - Scholarships                                  | \$ 500               |
| Donations - Sponsorship for Community Programs            | \$ 770               |
| <u>Book Sales:</u>                                        |                      |
| Book Royalties Received                                   | \$ 57                |
| Haas - A Birding Guide to Sullivan County                 | \$ 222               |
| The Basha Kill Wetlands Field Guide                       | \$ 37                |
| Merchandise Sales                                         | \$ 856               |
| Sales Tax collected on books & merchandise                | \$ 57                |
| <br>Total Income                                          | <br><u>\$ 37,520</u> |

**Expenses:**

|                                                   |                        |
|---------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Advocacy - Bloomingburg                           | \$ (1,804)             |
| Annual Cleanup                                    | \$ (336)               |
| Annual Meeting (2024)                             | \$ (200)               |
| Class Instruction                                 |                        |
| Community Programs                                | \$ (1,533)             |
| Conference Costs                                  | \$ (175)               |
| DEC Campers Scholarships (Used \$750 credit )     | \$ (1,210)             |
| Email Alerts                                      | \$ (673)               |
| Insurance                                         | \$ (1,407)             |
| MailMeteor (Program to send email blasts)         | \$ (45)                |
| Mamakating Local Development Calendar             |                        |
| Meeting Room Rental                               | \$ (800)               |
| Meeting Supplies                                  | \$ (69)                |
| Membership Dues for other Organizations           | \$ (1,300)             |
| Merchandise Purchases                             | \$ (1,282)             |
| MoneyMinder - Accounting Program Annual Fee       | \$ (308)               |
| Nature Watch                                      |                        |
| NYS Law Department                                |                        |
| NYS Sales Tax Paid - 2024                         | \$ (49)                |
| Office Supplies (Laptop for Pres + Misc Supplies) | \$ (512)               |
| PayPal, CheddarUp & Bank Fees                     | \$ (59)                |
| Phone - Ring Central                              | \$ (410)               |
| Port-A-Potty                                      | \$ (389)               |
| Postage, Postal Fees                              | \$ (878)               |
| Misc Printing/Copies                              | \$ (148)               |
| Printing - Guardian                               | \$ (9,853)             |
| Storage Unit                                      | \$ (420)               |
| Sympathy Gifts                                    | \$ (300)               |
| Taxes                                             |                        |
| Volunteer Mileage Reimbursement                   |                        |
| Water Testing Program                             | \$ (689)               |
| Website                                           | \$ (298)               |
| <br>Total Expenses                                | <br><u>\$ (25,147)</u> |

**Net Income** **\$ 12,373** **\$ 12,373**

**Balance: General Fund Operating Account at September 30, 2025** **\$ 36,381**

General Fund Special Accounts

|                                  | Unallocated | CFOS      | Total     |
|----------------------------------|-------------|-----------|-----------|
| Balance from September 30, 2024: | \$ 10,000   | \$ 18,907 | \$ 28,907 |
| Net Investment Earnings & Fees   |             | \$ 538    | \$ 538    |
| Balance as of September 30, 2025 | \$ 10,000   | \$ 19,445 | \$ 29,445 |

Unallocated - Currently held on deposit in bank  
CFOS - Community Foundation of Orange & Sullivan Fund

Basha Kill Area Association, Inc.  
Treasurer's Report  
October 1, 2024 - September 30, 2025

Legal Fund Account

|                                  |             |
|----------------------------------|-------------|
| Balance from September 30, 2024  | \$ 45,721   |
| Income:                          |             |
| Various Donations                | \$ 1,905    |
| Total Income                     | \$ 1,905    |
| Expenses:                        |             |
| Advocacy                         | \$ (11,322) |
| Total Expenses & Outlays         | \$ (11,322) |
| Net Income                       | \$ (9,417)  |
| Balance as of September 30, 2025 | \$ 36,304   |

Hiking the Bashakill with Walter Jahn



# MEEC Connection

Vol 22 — December 2025

## Jackie Lukowski-Broder

Happy Winter! By the time this reaches you, the holidays will just be ending and the peace and quiet of winter will be upon us. A most magical time of year for me as I try to follow nature's example to slow down and rest.

We entered fall at MEEC by joining with BKAA to tackle some of the invasive species taking over the kill. While some BKAA members took to the water to eradicate water chestnut and clear the channels, we spent a few days on land, clearing Mugwort and Autumn Olive from the ADA accessible trailhead on Haven Rd. We got a lot done fast and the difference was noticeable immediately. Our goal is to keep plugging away come spring, so look for more programming geared toward eradicating exotic invasives.

We supplemented with continued programming on native gardening, monarchs, and native plant sales throughout the autumn, a perfect time to plant. We also held our first Tai Chi class with Master Long Fei Yang. It was very successful and we are looking forward to having more classes throughout the winter. If you are interested, please email [xwmkungfu@gmail.com](mailto:xwmkungfu@gmail.com). Our Fall Festival fell on a beautiful November day, we had over one hundred visitors who enjoyed outdoor activities, including a fire, fall crafts and food by Layla's of Wurtsboro. We hosted a fern propagation workshop presented by Wildwoods, a not-for profit dedicated to restoring our woodlands, Astronomy Movie night by John Kocijanski and Irene Pease, and candlemaking, wreathmaking, and kissing ball workshops. It's been a busy Fall and things won't stop here at MEEC. Come January, look for Birds at your Feeder, Starting Native Seeds, and our Winter Festival on January 31st.



As usual, we couldn't do it without our Friends of MEEC Volunteers. We've had a few changes in that arena. After five dedicated years, our President, Janet Barnett, VP MaryAnn Geary-Halchek, and Treasurer, Lorry Green have decided to step down as officers but continue as volunteers. We are so very grateful for all of the hard work and many hours they've dedicated to MEEC. We couldn't have done it without them. Thomas DePaulo, another dedicated volunteer, has stepped into the President role with gusto and we are excited to work with him. Charlotte Tracy has taken over our social media and public relations



responsibilities and is doing a fantastic job. It's certainly been a load off my shoulders. We are looking for a new treasurer, so anyone with a talent for numbers who wants to give back to the community and the Bashakill... we need you!

We are still looking for different funding avenues in order to acquire and maintain staff so that we may continue to provide the quality of programming you've all come to expect from us. To that end, the Friends of MEEC are seeking foundational and corporate sponsors willing to support our mission and vision. Significant annual funding is the goal, but we are open to smaller or one-time gifts as well. If you can help us achieve this goal in any way, please give us a call at 845-644-5014.

<https://www.facebook.com/Mamakatingnaturecenter>

<https://www.friendsofmeec.org/>

Wishing you a beautiful, peaceful, healthy winter full of hot drinks, good books, and an occasional visit to your local nature center!



## ***Can You Identify Bashakill Autumn Wildlife?***

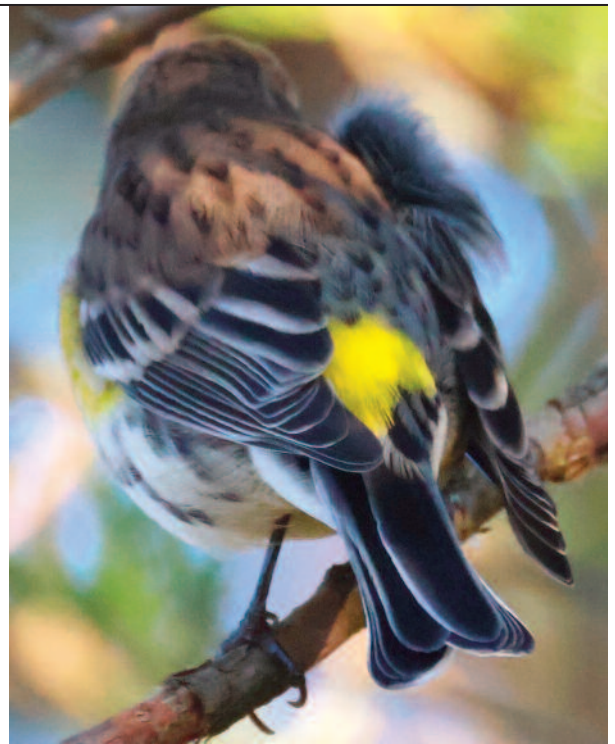
*See more photos on next page (along with the answers)*





## BASHAKILL ID ANSWERS

- 1) Eastern bluebird    2) black duck    3) great blue heron
- 4) brown creeper    5) fox sparrow    6) bald eagle
- 7) yellow rumped warbler    8) northern flicker
- 9) yellow bellied sapsucker    10) northern cardinal
- 11) common gallinule    12) snapping turtle
- 13) ruby crowned kinglet    14) wood duck    15) pickerel frog
- 16) swamp sparrow    17) red eft
- 18) witch hazel flower    19) hairy woodpecker
- 20) Cooper's hawk    21) downy woodpecker
- 22) painted turtle    23) northern harrier



## Goodbye “Butter Butts”!

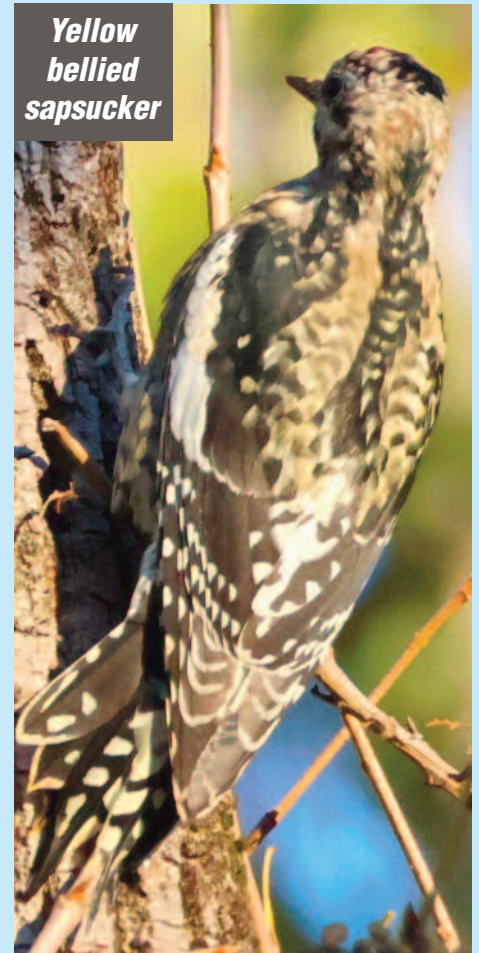
Yellow-rumped warblers offer an example of why autumn bird watching can be challenging. Not only do males and females differ in coloration, autumn coloration is muted compared to the spring plumage, and this year’s juveniles may possess a distinct patterning from that of the adults (and may include a streaked chest, for example). Luckily, one can still glimpse the tell-tale yellow patch on their rumps which has earned them the nickname “butter butts”. Adaptations of their digestive system allow this species to incorporate more plant material into their diets than is typical in other warbler species and thus they are often the last species of warbler observed at the Bashakill in autumn. Goodbye Butter Butts—see you next spring!

## Migration in Two Species of Woodpeckers

Woodpeckers are adapted to hunt insects, even throughout winter, with their reinforced skulls, long tongues, stiffened tail feathers, and the modified feet which allow them to position themselves on tree trunks. Two species of woodpecker have somewhat atypical lifestyles and are more likely to migrate than most woodpeckers. Northern flickers often feed on ants which they capture on the ground—in fact, flickers incorporate more ants into their diets than any other North American bird. Yellow bellied sapsuckers often obtain about a third of their nutrition from the tree sap which leaks from the small holes they make in tree bark. Since tree sap and ground ants are harder to come by in winter, most of the flickers and yellow-bellied sapsuckers observed at the Bashakill this autumn were migrating south to warmer areas which better support these specialized diets.



**Northern flickers**



**Yellow bellied sapsucker**

# Upper Delaware River Rendezvous - Oct 15-16th 2025

*Jackie Broder*

An amazing well-spring of individuals and groups came together on a beautiful fall day at Villa Roma Resort. Introductions revealed presenters from science, colleges, not-for-profits, and state organizations. Unfortunately, federal representation was absent due to the shutdown. Fellow board member, Christine Saward represented BKAA and I represented MEEC. There was so much information that we have chosen to focus on just a few workshops, and encourage those interested to attend next year.

Despite the shutdown, Amy McHugh, Deputy River Master for the Office of the Delaware River Master (ODRM), sent a video of her presentation. It was a very informative history of the Delaware Basin, the reservoirs, and the federal agency.

The Office of the Delaware River Master was established in 1931, after a long legal battle over water rights stemming from the lack of water in NYC. The Supreme Court decreed that NYC was able to divert water from upstate NY, but within limits. Because the Delaware River Basin (DRB) encompasses New York, New Jersey, Delaware, and Pennsylvania, and water was being diverted to NYC, the River Master was established. (NYC is the largest municipal water supply in the nation).

The River Master's job is to administer provisions of the decree and to conserve the waters of the river and its tributaries. They have three duties: (1) Operations- the reservoir release design process. The River Master team conducts a daily analysis of whether water needs to be released to NYC while preserving the river. This is a very involved process which includes monitoring the reservoirs (Cannonsville, Pepacton, Neversink, Roundout) as well as the secondary reservoirs, which all intersect in Montague, and the hydroelectric plants (Wallenpepack & Rio). They need to predict the total amount needed, then let NYC know (NYC has autonomy on the decision as to where the water is released from). (2) The River Master must publicly report their actions. Their website is very informative: <https://www.usgs.gov/mission-areas/water-resources/science/office-delaware-river-master>. (3) They must keep ongoing communication and collaboration between the entities.

One of the outcomes of their third duty was the establishment of the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) in 1961. They are a government agency created to ensure that all areas of the DRB are properly managed and protected. This area includes entities in New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Pennsylvania, and Army Corps of Engineers (federal representation). NYC is not included in this agency. In 2017, the Flexible Flow Management Program was incorporated into ODRM. This is a program that allows more flexibility in flow management based upon

climate change conditions such as drought, salinity, and wildlife habitat concerns.

I was amazed to see what a complicated history and process this was, and very impressed at how well it was organized and executed.

I also attended a workshop by the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC). They were represented by Avery Lentini (Community Engagement Specialist) and Joseph Fogarty (Water Resource Engineer), who explained the creation of a Water Resources Resilience Plan (WRRP). To quote DRBC, "The WRRP will inform DRBC actions and activities to prepare and adapt the Basin's shared water resources to withstand the known and potential impacts of climate change and other hazards." The purpose for developing the plan is:

- 14 million+ people rely on our shared waters
- it encompasses 13, 536 square miles of watershed it crosses four states
- it consists of 330 river miles
- 130 miles are tidally influenced

Most of the session was open to discussion and comment. The DRBC is seeking as much public comment as possible so that every concern is met. It was very apparent that everyone seems to have very similar concerns: over development, pollution, misuse, and invasive species. We encourage everyone to visit their site and follow their progress as their will be multiple opportunities for comment. <https://nj.gov/drbc/>

There are three phases to the plan:

1. Develop the framework of DRBC's plan
  2. Develop a prioritized list of actions and activities that DRBC can take to address climate change impacts to water resources
  3. Broaden and revise DRBC's water resources resilience
- Each phase will have a public comment period. Actions may include flow and drought management, flood loss, water quality, water use and efficiency, water equity, and regulations.

The preservation of this basin is in the best interest of every individual living within the basin, human and otherwise, especially in areas like our Bashakill, that are keystone habitats for everything from micro invertebrates to our precious eagles. Your input is important.

I was very impressed with the knowledge, passion, and sheer numbers of people who dedicate their lives to the Delaware River Basin. I feel like it is in good hands, and I feel like we are less alone in our fight to preserve our water and our beautiful Bashakill.

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*Wishing each and every one of our dedicated members a peaceful winter and healthy, happy New Year. We are so grateful for your continued support.  
Best wishes from the BKAA Board.*



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