

*Land—  
they don't make it  
anymore.*

—WILL ROGERS



sparc  
NEWS

THE STEWART PARK AND RESERVE COALITION BULLETIN - SPRING 2011

# We Love New York

SPARC loves New York State and we are proud to be New Yorkers. We are the first state to blow the whistle and call for “Time Out” on the gas fracking companies, itching to sink their rigs into our beautiful mountainsides, hillsides and river valleys.

SPARC also loves our state forest lands, including our very own Stewart State Forest. We know the operating word is “proactive” and it is just great that so many groups understand this and are moving full steam ahead and getting state officials to see the light.

Last October we were excited to host Wes Gillingham of Catskill Mountainkeeper at our annual dinner. If you attended you know how informative and chilling his talk was, with power point graphically showing how fracking with its poisonous waste had changed open rural areas into toxic industrial zones, and how so many trusting people in other areas, thinking the drilling would improve their lives, later wished they had never let the frackers come.

SPARC, late in 2009, saw the threat to our natural places and resolved to fight fracking. We traveled to Albany for a rally in 2010 and started to educate our members and partners on the threats of fracking. When the federal Environmental Protection Agency

responded to the growing public outcry about fracking's dangers, and announced they would do a study about drilling's serious effects on ground and surface water, we drove to Binghamton on September 15, 2010, and put in our comments (see SPARC bulletin of fall 2010).

Then we heard about the DEC's State Forest Strategic Plan and got to the September 3rd, Region 3 meeting to discover that the poison pill in the Plan was to allow fracking in State Forests, more than 400 public recreation areas amounting to over 700,000 acres, (see again SPARC bulletin, fall 2010).

Again, there was a comment period. We commented and, wow, they had the final version out by December 29, 2010, and it certainly left drilling provisions as well as associated road building and pipeline construction, to the discretion of the DEC. Naturally there were requirements to do various reviews and analyses, (paper work, paper work, etc.) but no hard and fast prohibitions against drilling permits.

The only condition now protecting our public lands from these gas companies, is the moratorium on new horizontal drilling, that former Governor Patterson put in place. Without further action, that moratorium sunsets on July 1st, 2011.

## DELAWARE RIVER BASIN COMMISSION

Another problem reared its head in February: the Delaware River Basin Commission saw fit to come out with draft regulations to permit fracking in the 13,539 square mile Delaware River Basin, (which supplies drinking water to 17,000,000 people). Why a problem? Because they were initiating their own permitting process for fracking before New York State has finished its own studies and/or the EPA had completed its comprehensive impact study. And, of course, the Delaware River Basin includes large areas of New York State.

The DRBC is a federal/interstate agency with representatives of the governors from four states, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware and the federal Army Corps of Engineers. They set their public hearings for last February 22nd, at the High School in Liberty, Sullivan County. SPARC representatives traveled to the meeting and basically said that DRBC should immediately stop their preliminary permitting process, or they were betraying their mission of protecting the Delaware River and its basin. To quote *“The Delaware is the longest free flowing river in the eastern United States and its waters have been designated for special protection by the federal government”* (Catskill Mountainkeeper).

At this point, the comment period on the plan is closed, and the Commission has said its regulations could be ready by the end of summer.

However, our NYS Attorney General **Eric Schneiderman** has taken the proactive step of threatening to sue the DRBC within 30 days if they don't commit to doing a full Environmental Impact Study, *“of the 15,000 wells that could be drilled [under their plan] along the Delaware...”*. (see Times Herald Record of April 19, 2011). This cumulative impact study was a key demand at the recent hearings on the DRBC proposed regulations. Most of Sullivan County sits within the river basin.



### Sunny is Gone

Sandra's Sunny is not with us anymore. Last Monday, April 18th, he passed on, after being a faithful and good companion to Sandra Kissam for nine years. Sunny was a rescue English Setter that Sandra adopted when he was four years old and he was one of the best-natured dogs you would ever meet. He came to meetings, enjoyed runs on Stewart State Forest, liked other dogs and all people, and followed his nose whenever possible. We are sad that he is gone.

### MAP WITH TRAILS



SPARC map of Stewart State Forest available, showing trails and other features, including parking. \$5 donation requested. Order by mail from SPARC (add \$1.50 for mailing) or purchase at SPARC meetings or events.

SPARC, Box 90  
Blooming Grove, NY 10914

## sparc NEWS

– Spring 2011 –

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VISIT OUR WEB SITE AT  
[www.sparc.info](http://www.sparc.info)

Sandra Kissam, *President*

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Lynn Barber, Jayne Fiero,  
Susan Mischo and Sharon Soons

Layout by edgeBlur

## SPARC Frack Meeting

After two cancellations due to winter weather, SPARC finally had its open meeting on February 16, 2011.

Although well-attended, it was not an easy night for the attendees, a hardy group that put up with boiler problems in the building and stuck it out with their jackets on.

Sportsmen were well represented and included Federation President **Jim Torcivia**. Federation legislative chair **Ed Wilson** and O. C. Trappers' President **Bill Stoehr** offered considerable input, along with others at the meeting.

Most present showed great concern about fracking and, in particular, the State

Forest Plan to allow fracking on public lands. **Jurgen Wekerle** of the Sierra Club also shared much information. Jurgen has been very active attending Albany meetings and hearings, both on SPARC's and the Atlantic Chapter of the Sierra Club's behalf. **Verne Bell** of the Rock Tavern Unitarian Universalist Congregation, also present, had previously organized a panel discussion about fracking on December 4th, along with a screening of the film 'Gasland', at the UU meeting house.

Furthermore, the Orange County Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs, according to President Torcivia, are working on a resolution opposing, at the very least, any fracking and associated activities on public state forest lands. Good news.

## SPARC AT ALBANY RALLY

Hundreds of demonstrators attended a large rally held in the Capitol on Monday, April 11, 2011 to bring together the many groups, important individuals and legislators that oppose hydrofracking. SPARC President **Sandra Kissam**, along with SPARC members **J.J. Murphy** and **Verne Bell** boarded a bus for the rally that had originated in Brooklyn that morning, sponsored by another group, 'Food and Water Watch', with their director, Eric Weltman.

With signs and dressed warmly against a sharp breeze, a broad coalition

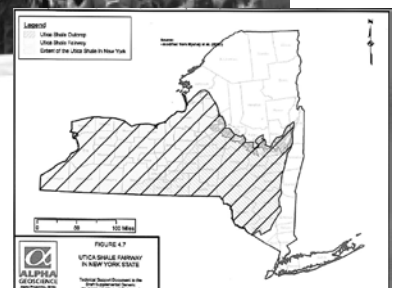
of groups converged on the lawns in front of the Capitol Building to hear speeches from such folks as 'Gasland' producer **Josh Fox**, Buffalo resident **Natalie Brant** (with samples of her polluted water), Assembly member **Englebright**, Senator **Liz Krueger**, author and cancer survivor **Sandra Steingraber**, and **Wes Gillingham**.

The rally was inspiring, and it was great to meet people from all over the state.

Later, large groups went to lobby lawmakers. SPARC tried to see **Tom Kirwin**, but his office was locked tight.



**Very Interesting:** this map of New York State shows the extent (shaded area) of underlying Utica Shale. Marcellus shale is the rock that attracts hydrofracking operations, but it often occurs with Utica shale and may be considered a source of natural gas for the fracking companies as well.



DEC SGEIS, 2009

# SPARC's 11th Annual Trail Ride

As this newsletter goes to press, **SPARC's 11th Annual Trail Ride** will be happening on the beautiful Stewart State Forest on **Saturday, April 30th**.

Event Chair **Debbie Schiraldi** hosted the well-known annual ride, changed this year to Saturday, rather than May 1st, out of consideration for the opening day of Turkey Season.

This SPARC event took place on well-marked trails groomed and cleared by hard-working volunteers **Toni Jackens, Laura Lunt, Vera Tooth, Mark Gisselbrecht**, and, of course, Debbie herself. They set

up two courses, one gentle and the other rough and ready.

Riders brought their own horses and enjoyed the many miles of scenic trails that traverse the rural landscape that is Stewart State Forest. They enjoyed the many prizes being offered by local businesses that support the event, while their mounts got mouthfuls of local apples.

If you are a horse lover and missed this annual ride, please try to come next year. We want you to experience the tremendous space that is Stewart.

For info contact Debbie at 845 496-6754.



PHOTOS BY SUSAN MISCHCO

## Earthday Celebration Features SPARC's Kissam

SPARC's Sandra Kissam gave a talk last Friday, April 22, 2011, about our 18-year mission to save the Stewart Buffer Lands as open space. She was invited to the 'Earth Day Fair' at the Newburgh campus of OCCC in the beautiful modern setting of the brand new green Kaplan Building.

In the vaulted Great Room of Kaplan Hall, with two glass walls overlooking the Hudson River, Kissam used an assortment of visual materials, including old posters, collages and maps, as well as power point projections, to illustrate SPARC's grassroots coalition

campaign that resulted in the preservation of Stewart State Forest. OCCC students in the audience were given numerous opportunities to question and make comments during her presentation.

She was graciously assisted by User Services Librarian **Stephanie Herfel**, who took time to assemble projections for power point. Sincere thanks are also due English Department faculty member and poet **Sandra Graff**, as well as **Dr. Nicole Shea**, Cultural Affairs Coordinator.

Thanks from SPARC for this rewarding opportunity.

## Highway Cleanup is Best Ever

This past April 10, 2011, was the date of our spring highway cleanup and we really had a good group of veteran and new cleaner-uppers. As always, the weather was good—dry and overcast, and the trash was waiting patiently for us.

After having some fruit snacks and signing our releases, we hit the road with big orange bags, paper snatchers and our fishnet orange vests (all courtesy of the NYS DOT).

Interesting to see what folks toss: a great mess of fast food containers, followed closely by beer and soda cans and bottles. One big plus is to see the difference when we're done. Later we gathered back at the Weed Road parking lot and some of us went out for lunch.

Sincere thanks to coordinator **Lynn Barber** and equipment man **Joe Giglio**. We also appreciated our other volunteers: **Sandra Kissam, Bill Stoebr, Joyce Crossley, Jayne Fiero, Susan Mischo, Ronnie Brown, Joan James, Mark Rubin, Diana Krautter**, and **Wayne Hall**.

## This is How We Roll



PHOTO BY SHARON SOONS

The Best Bike Fuel: Blueberry Mountain ice cream at the finish will make you smile!

There's just something magical about riding off road ... and cycling off road in Stewart State Forest is magic you want to share! So join us for the **12th Annual Stewart State Forest Bike Tour on June 5th** and experience an amazing ride... and much more.

We do more than just create great routes, we create a start/finish you'll love as much as the ride! This year **Wheel and Heel** is hosting the Trek demo truck—try out the latest models—we bet you'll look fabulous doing so! Plus, we'll have our excellent local lunch—beef, hotdogs, ice cream, pies, beer and more. And fun extras like a massage therapist on-site to help you work out any kinks, or just relax into a state of pure bliss.

Thanks to all our sponsors and volunteers—check out our website, **www.SPARCride.com**, or Facebook page for more information!

## SPARC SEEKS NEW BOARD MEMBERS

SPARC wishes to encourage interested individuals to apply to **join the Board of SPARC**. These would be volunteer positions, involving monthly meetings and other responsibilities. Board members are part of the decision-making process.

If you wish to be considered please send a brief email to us at **sparc@frontiernet.net**. We will contact you with information on the acceptance process.

Thank you for your interest.

## Dear Members and Friends of SPARC

We sincerely thank the following, who have donated to SPARC since the last newsletter. Your moral support, as well as your donations, means very much to us. Through all these years we have been a completely grassroots organization and individual donations have kept us moving forward.

Again, thank you.

*The SPARC Board*

Eulie Anderson  
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Adele Wagman  
Denise and Bennett Weiss  
Nick Zungoli

(We apologize for any omissions, please inform us of any errors.)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**April 30th, 2011, Saturday**  
**SPARC Trail Ride, Stewart State Forest, Ridge Rd. Parking Lot, Registration starts 9 AM.**

**May 24th, 2011, Tuesday**  
**Stewart Airport Commission Meeting, 8:30 AM, Stewart Airport Administration Bldg.**

**June 5th, 2011, Sunday**  
**Stewart State Forest Bike Tour, Registration begins 9 AM, Weed Rd. at Ridge Rd. (on the lands, enter from Rt. 207).**

**July 26th, 2011, Tuesday**  
**Stewart Airport Commission Meeting, 8:30 AM, Stewart Airport Administration Bldg.**

**September 24th, 2011, Saturday**  
**Annual Dinner of Orange County Federation of Sportsmen, 6:30 PM, Brookside Manor, Goshen Turnpike, call 845 294-5038 for info.**

### I Want to Help SPARC Protect the Land

- \* I want to    join /    renew my membership in SPARC,  
Family/Individual \$15/yr\_\_\_; Organization \$50/yr\_\_\_; Member/Sponsor \$50/yr\_\_\_
- \* I want to support SPARC with a donation. For a completely tax deductible contribution, make your check payable to the Open Space Institute / note SPARC on the memo line.  
Supporter \$25\_\_\_, Sponsor \$50\_\_\_, Benefactor \$100\_\_\_, Other \$\_\_\_.
- \* I want to help (mailings, fundraising, clean-ups, phone campaigns, etc.).  
Call \_\_\_day, \_\_\_evening.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Make your check Payable to: SPARC. Mail to: SPARC, Box 90, Blooming Grove, NY 10914

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