CREATING GREATER RESILIENCE

In light of the damaging effects of climate change, a noticeable shift of our views and actions - now observed among people in the Hudson Valley and New York State - encourages being ‘resilient’ and ‘adapting.’

It means going far beyond what we once thought of as being “sustainable.” Consultations’ founder, Keith Smiley, wisely noted in 1980 that Earth’s natural ecosystems and resources were finite and could not be studied apart from the influences of human activities on them. Now, more than 30 years later, we live in a time of increasingly rapid change to which we must adapt.

In fact, there is international acknowledgement by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, among many other agencies and scientists, that our environment – and the Earth as we have known it – are not sustainable in all ways. This newsletter highlights how some mid-Hudson Valley leaders are adjusting their actions and policies accordingly in an effort to help make our region’s communities become more “resilient.”

In the centerfold following, are testimonials from ‘the trenches’ by regional leaders who are changing their plans, policies and work to meet the challenges of our times.

(see page 4)

Nearly a century ago, Keith Smiley, age 11, helped secure meaningful Mohonk Mountain House, family and social artifacts in a time capsule inside the new cornerstone of the rising Skytop Tower. (Courtesy of MMH Archives)

SAVE THESE DATES

Come to Mohonk Mountain House for these 2014 events. Reservations are required.

**Lyme Aid and Tick Talk:**
*Seeking Solutions*
Community Forum
Sun April 27, 2014, 3-6 pm

**Distinguished Environmental Achievement Award Ceremony**
Honoring Arm of the Sea Theatre and its founders, Marlena Marallo & Patrick Wadden
Sun June 8, 2014, 5-8 pm

**Where it Grows, Where it Goes:**
*Achieving Local Food Security*
Autumn Conference
Mon Nov. 10, 2014, 9-4 pm

Mohonk Mountain House's Skytop Tower was built to last of hard Shawangunk quartz conglomerate in 1921. Skytop Tower might symbolize our earlier sense of ‘resilience.’ The term now, however, is far more inclusive and holistic, signifying a building of local ecological and economic health and strength, so that a given community and ecosystem can recover quickly from damage. [Photo by Patty Matteson]
Sunday, April 27, 3 - 6 pm
LYME AID AND TICK TALK: SEEKING SOLUTIONS

Mohonk Consultations will present a community forum focusing on prevention of Lyme Disease and tick borne illnesses at Mohonk Mountain House Parlor.

Keynote speaker, Congressman Chris Gibson, will address what is being done at the federal level. Other presentations will examine both human immunization and tick control vaccines. Community activist Jill Auerbach, Chair of the Hudson Valley Lyme Disease Association, will help us share our collective resources and wisdom.

Registration is $25 (includes a tick-removal kit) / $12 Students. Available online at http://www.mohonk-consultations.org/programs/events, or you may register by mailing a check made out to ‘Mohonk Consultations’, designated for ‘Spring 2014 Forum.’ Mohonk Consultations, 1000 Mountain Rest Road, New Paltz NY 12561.

Please join us in early spring so we can take back the woods together!

Sunday, June 8, 5 - 8 pm
ARM-OF-THE-SEA THEATRE
2014 DISTINGUISHED ENVIRONMENTAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD CEREMONY

Please come celebrate Arm-of-the-Sea Theater and its founders and artistic directors, Marlena Marallo and Patrick Wadden, as they are recognized with Mohonk Consultations’ 2014 Distinguished Environmental Achievement Award. The ceremony and reception that follows will be held in Mohonk Mountain House Parlor.

Arm-of-the-Sea has delighted, educated and inspired many thousands of people of all ages to take a fresh look at our connection to this earth we live on, and to deepen our understanding of how nature really works.

Founded in 1982, Arm-of-the-Sea Theatre’s five-member company melds performance art, ecology and social action, to “explore the links between human communities and the life-support processes of the planet.” They tour “performing arts centers, festivals, community venues, and schools throughout the Northeast and beyond.” They also host an annual summer event in Saugerties NY, the ESOPUS CREEK PUPPET SUITE.

Reservations are required. Please see http://mohonk-consultations.org for more details as they become available.

Just one of many performances by Arm-of-the-Sea Theatre, the Turtle Island Medicine Show is a contemporary fable and cautionary tale inspired by the Lenape Indian origin story and by current climate reports. [Photo by Patrick Wadden. Courtesy of Arm of the Sea Theatre.]
Monday, November 10, 9 am - 4 pm

WHERE IT GROWS, WHERE IT GOES: ACHIEVING LOCAL FOOD SECURITY
A Mohonk Consultations Autumn Conference
(with the support of local individuals and organizations)

In an era of growing demand for a sustainable and accessible local food supply and of increasing need for available land, the conference will address these issues:
• Protecting farms and farmland – policy and preservation
• Expanding local markets
• Supporting young farmers and start-ups
• Strengthening infrastructure for agriculture

Join us for a dynamic conference on these cutting-edge topics.
Please check our website for further details as they become available: www.mohonk-consultations.org

NOTEWORTHY

UN INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF FAMILY FARMING

The United Nations has declared 2014 the International Year of Family Farming and many countries have formed national committees to carry out activities in cooperation. The U.S. executive committee is comprised of the 25x'25 Alliance, the Alliance to End Hunger, the American Farmland Trust, the Consumer Federation of America, the National Cooperative Business Association, and National Farmers Union. For more information, see http://www.nfu.org/news/current-news; and http://www.fao.org/family-farming-2014/home/en/

INNOVATIVE NY RISING GROUPS

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To plan ahead in the battle against the future destructive forces of extreme storms, NY State groups are now planning for hardiness and resilience in our local communities. Our local representatives are Jeff Logan and Julie Robbins in New Paltz. The Ulster County Communities Committee of nearly 50 members is co-chaired by Steve Kelley and Julie Robbins. For more information about regional work, see http://stormrecovery.ny.gov/nyrct/regions/hudson-valley-catskills

MOHONK CONSULTATIONS

The purpose of Mohonk Consultations is to bring about a clearer understanding of the interrelationships of all life on earth, emphasize the need for sustainable use of all the earth’s resources, including humans, and support the development of practical means to do so.

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To receive notice of our events, check Mohonk-consultations.org, where our annual newsletters are also available as pdf files.

To join our mailing list, please contact us at mohonkconsultations@hvi.net, or Mohonk Consultations, 1000 Mountain Rest Road, New Paltz, NY 12561, or call (845) 256-2726.

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PAMELA BOYCE SIMMS is a Certified Transition US Trainer based in Woodstock NY and a founding member of the two-year-old Mid-Atlantic Transition Hub (MATH) Council. MATH serves Transition initiatives in the seven states of Southern Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Northern Virginia, USA.

Pamela says “Hurricanes Sandy and Irene made it abundantly clear to New York State residents that friends and neighbors are indeed the “first responders” in extreme weather emergencies. New Yorkers who fended for themselves and spontaneously took care of each other during the last two super-storms could be doubly as effective if they are emergency-trained and empowered by effective communications systems in anticipation of extreme weather which will increase in frequency and intensity over the coming decades.” MATH’s Resiliency Response Working Group prepares community members to demonstrate personal and collective resiliency. See http://transitionmidatlantic.org/ for more information.

MANNA JO GREENE is Environmental Director at Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, and represents District 19 (Rosendale and Marbletown) in the Ulster County Legislature. Manna explains, “For many years I’ve worked to ensure a more sustainable future and to mitigate climate change by promoting green building, energy efficiency and renewable energy. In 2000, I built a model of green building in my backyard in Cottekill. In 2005, I helped the Town of Rosendale to green its Recreation Center with a 10-kilowatt solar array, which generated one sixth of its electricity, and a geothermal system, which reduced heating and cooling costs by half. Then I attended a climate conference, which stressed “adaptation” in addition to mitigation and...

...MY HEART SANK. I SENSED THAT WE
HAD GIVEN UP ON PREVENTING CLIMATE CHANGE AND WERE BECOMING RESIGNED TO ITS INEVITABILITY.

Now, in the aftermath of hurricanes and tropical storms, Irene, Lee and Sandy, the BP oil spill and the ongoing devastation from Fukushima, it’s clear that we must move out of floodplains and build to withstand severe climate events. Sustainability, the balancing of environmental protection with economic prosperity and social equity, must now include resilience - the ability to minimize harm from intense weather and other catastrophic events.

We need to rapidly transition to a green energy economy, which can replace the pipeline to poverty, prison, pollution and war and promote resilience, while reducing the impacts of climate change and other human-caused disasters.”

Two forms of sustainable green energy systems are demonstrated at the Rosendale Recreation Center. Photovoltaic panels on the roof of the pavilion convert the sun’s energy to electricity. A geothermal system, using underground wells, converts the constant warmth of the earth to provide both heating and cooling to the building. Net Fuel Savings: $400 / yr. vs. $2,000 / yr. = 80 percent reduction in fossil fuel consumption and cost. [Photo by Manna Jo Greene.]
FRAN DUNWELL is Hudson River Estuary Program (HREP) Coordinator at the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) where she oversees the award-winning Hudson River Estuary Action Agenda, to conserve the myriad resources of the Hudson River watershed from Troy to New York harbor. Fran says: “The Hudson River Valley faces unprecedented challenges from accelerating sea-level rise, storm surges, and increased flooding caused by rising temperatures. Several ways that HREP is helping communities adapt to climate change while improving the long-term resiliency of the eco-system include:

SUNY New Paltz improved watershed resiliency in the Saw Mill Brook, a tributary of the Wallkill River in the Hudson watershed, through DEC funding. A variety of green infrastructure practices designed to allow rainwater to slowly soak into the ground were installed across the campus, such as adding permeable pavement and a rain-harvesting system.

In December 2012, Kingston Mayor Shayne Gallo appointed the Kingston Flooding Task Force to recommend actions in response to the severe flooding on the Rondout and Hudson waterfront during storms Irene, Lee, and Sandy. A consulting team led by the DEC Hudson River Estuary Program, Scenic Hudson, and Catalysis Adaptation Partners worked for nearly a year with stakeholders. Their recommendations were adopted unanimously in 2013. The DEC is providing both funding and staff expertise to support similar efforts now underway in Catskill, Piermont, and Stony Point.”

DAVID E. CHURCH, AICP, Orange County NY Planning Commissioner reports: “From neighborhoods to towns, cities and regions - regional land and water use decisions, public and private transportation, education, trends research, resource management, agriculture, open space and economic issues now must include the principles of ‘resiliency’. The high variability of weather in recent years, punctuated by the set of devastating storms these past two years, enters into almost all decisions now. For instance:

In 2012 Orange County initiated a NYSERDA grant proposal to complete a seven-county Mid Hudson Sustainability Plan. We researched with hundreds of residents to define what sustainability means here and what we should do to act as a region. Resiliency and climate adaptation quickly became resonating themes in this now published Plan.

We strengthened the watershed aspect of our work by completing watershed plans and helping to organize constituents in the Wallkill, Moodna, Quassack and Ramapo watersheds.

Orange County has also focused on specific communities where [the need for] storm resiliency has proven most pressing. For instance, we host the Black Dirt agricultural region, one of the Northeast’s most fertile. Yet recurring and devastating floods there have led to profound crop and property loss requiring concentrated attention and new, more synergistic approaches to land and water management.”
REPORTING BACK ON OUR 2013 EVENTS

Monday April 22, 2013...
Along with over 150 supporters, Mohonk Consultations and Preserve jointly presented the 2013 Distinguished Environmental Achievement Award to the Preserve’s Director Emeritus of Research Paul C. Huth, honoring his nearly four decades of service. The Award program included a “virtual field trip,” a nominating speech by Mohonk Preserve Director of Conservation Science John Thompson, and a keynote presentation by Mohonk historian, Larry Burgess, Ph.D., Director of the A.K. Smiley Public Library in Redlands, CA.

Monday November 11, 2013...
Mohonk Consultations and Hudson River Watershed Alliance co-sponsored a conference ‘A Watershed Moment’: Changing Climate and the Future of Our Water Resources. All 120 seats sold out as experts in the fields of planning, geography, hydrology, climate change, engineering, as well as administrators from diverse municipalities, (seven) counties, businesses, New York State government, and local citizenry gathered for a full day of presentations, networking, and problem-solving. Dr. William Solecki, Director of the CUNY Institute for Sustainable Cities and Professor of Geography at Hunter College-CUNY was keynote speaker. Philip Bein, Watershed Inspector General, New York State Attorney General’s Office responded: “I wanted to thank [Mohonk Consultations] for all the hospitality at ... [your] conference. The speakers were excellent and the conference did achieve its goal of facilitating practical action, certainly from my perspective. It was very helpful in formulating comments we submitted to incorporate climate change into the filtration avoidance determination for the New York City Watershed.”

DEAR READER
When Consultations first chose ‘resilience’ as our 2014 theme – considered the most pressing issue of community concern – the image of Skytop Tower instantly came to mind. But since then I’ve learned that ‘resilience’ - now a ubiquitous buzz word - is perhaps even better symbolized by the Pitch Pines commonly found growing on all rocky cliffs and outcrops in the Shawangunk Mountains.

Paul C. Huth (see above) says some nearby Pitch Pines are ± 300 years old and are among the oldest living individuals among our local species. They grow in the dry, thin soils of the ridgetops and crags, despite low moisture and cold temperatures. They withstand and are dependent on fire and often bowed by prevailing winds. It’s inspiring to think of them, showing us how to adapt - by bending, not breaking - and thriving despite extremes.

People too are rooted in the natural environment despite our efforts to think otherwise. Perhaps our interdependent relationships with nature, including Pitch Pines, can be most instructive when we look for needed strengths in the face of our changing world. Recently one Mohonker, Linda Yang, reminded me, “the Mohonk Spirit (...on so very many levels) has helped A LOT of folk in countless ways.” Certainly all these notions reflect our founder Keith Smiley’s ideas and represent a part of that Mohonk Spirit.

- Patty Matteson, Editor

INSPIRING CHANGE, WITH YOUR SUPPORT
Reflecting on the many diverse activities of Mohonk Consultations over the decades, it is easy to have a renewed sense of optimism that people meeting and working together can surely make a difference in these extraordinarily challenging times, here on planet Earth.
In order to sustain what we have that is essential, it has become increasingly imperative for us all to work cooperatively towards enhancing our resilience at the local, regional, and national levels. Our legacy of forums and conferences that has brought folks together has resulted in numerous initiatives that have produced practical solutions.

The Board is exploring several initiatives to strengthen the impact of our work, including expanding the content of our web site, offering short evening programs, increasing collaborative programming with other organizations and expanding the scope of our programming to include national and international issues.

We can only do this with your help, and there is so much more that we could do. Please consider donating to support Mohonk Consultation’s activities in 2014. For those of you who are inspired but are unable to contribute financially, perhaps you have a skill or resource that can be of use - please feel free to inquire, even if it is something simple.

We thank you so very much for your support of our efforts.
- Brad Berg, Chair
Mohonk Consultations Board of Managers
HELP STRENGTHEN OUR COMMUNITIES’ AND OUR NEIGHBORS’ LIVES

Please contribute to Mohonk Consultations’ 2014 work and beyond.

To donate online:  http://mohonk-consultations.org/donate

Or, fill out the coupon below and mail it to: Mohonk Consultations, 1000 Mountain Rest Road, New Paltz NY 12561

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☐ Please send me the newsletter electronically via email to save printing, paper and postage costs.

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AUTUMN CONFERENCE 2014
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ACHIEVING LOCAL FOOD SECURITY
Mon Nov. 10, 2014, 9-4 pm, Mohonk Mountain House Conference Center

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- Expanding local markets
- Supporting young farmers and start-ups
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A mixed vegetable field and high growing tunnels at Phillies Bridge Farm Project, a Community Supported Agriculture farm [Photo by Maggie Cheney]