



THE EASTERN TIMBER RATTLESNAKE... AND ITS RATTLE  
photos by Bill Cutler.



## TREATING SNAKEBITE

If you or someone you are with is bitten, you'll know the venom has been injected once there are signs of swelling and pain, usually within 15 minutes of the bite. Death from rattlesnake or copperhead bites is rare, but the venom affects everyone differently. It is imperative to get medical attention as soon as possible. Most local hospitals carry anti-venom serum, but it is very expensive. (One copperhead victim reported spending more than \$30,000 on anti-venom.)

*Following is a list from New York Presbyterian Hospital for what to do while waiting for emergency response:*

- ❖ Wash the bite with soap and water.
- ❖ Immobilize the bitten area and keep it lower than the heart.
- ❖ Cover the area with a clean, cool compress or a moist dressing to minimize swelling and discomfort.
- ❖ Monitor breathing and heart rate.
- ❖ Remove all rings, watches, and constrictive clothing, in case of swelling.
- ❖ Note the time of the bite so that it can be reported to an emergency room physician if needed.
- ❖ If possible, try to remember to draw a circle around the affected area and mark the time of the bite and the initial reaction. If you are able, redraw the circle around the site of injury marking the progression of time.
- ❖ It is helpful to remember what the snake looks like, its size, and the type of snake if you know it, in order to inform the emergency room staff.
- ❖ Do not apply a tourniquet.

--B.C., S.E. and K.L.B.

## SHORT WALK TO AN ABANDONED TUNNEL

The North Portal of the High View Tunnel—an abandoned railroad tunnel on the Kingston Branch of the Ontario & Western line—can be seen at the end of a short walk along the old rail bed.

The trail is unmarked and so should be attempted only by hikers experienced with bushwacking in the Shawangunks. A compass or GPS device should be used. The trail is clear of obstacles except for the final 100 yards where the walker must negotiate around some wet patches and fallen trees.

To reach the unmarked trail head, start at the traffic light on Route 209 and Sullivan Street—the main business street of Wurtsboro—and drive 1.3 miles towards the Shawangunk Ridge. At a hairpin turn a VFW post will be on your left and a concrete railroad bridge abutment on your right. (The facing abutment on the north was destroyed when the highway was widened.) Immediately past the abutment there is enough room to pull off the road and park. Be careful getting in and out of your car—the sharp turn hides the fast-moving traffic. You will notice a path leading into the woods here, just beyond the abutment. It will lead in thirty yards up to the rail bed. Walk south: you are less than a mile from the tunnel entrance.

--Thomas Nozkowski



PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

## NOTES FROM THE SOUTHERN SHAWANGUNKS DEERPARK COMMONS by Susan Erny

As SHAWANGUNK WATCH reported earlier this year, another massive, inappropriate development is brewing at the southern end of the Shawangunks: Deerpark Commons. A number of factors laid the groundwork.

Beginning in 2001 a Chinese group that practices Falun Gong, a form of spiritual meditation, purchased 400 acres in the Town of Deerpark. These individuals were seeking asylum from Chinese government persecution. Over a 14-year period a major complex known as Dragon Springs (DS) has been built. It includes two schools and a performing-arts center. It is a heavily gated, security-minded community. The land DS bought is zoned Rural Residential but Deerpark granted a special-use permit and has renewed it annually, enabling continued development. DS has a history of noncompliance with building and zoning regulations and slowness to comply with Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) requests.

Then in 2005 Alan Adler of Da Tang Development LLC purchased 190 acres on the western flank of the Ridge within the southernmost watershed of the Basher (aka Basha) Kill. The property is located between Route 211 and narrow, two-lane Galley Hill Road in the Town of Deerpark, where about 75 private homes are nestled, and where Dragon Springs lies. This March Adler proposed building a “traditional Chinese village” called Deerpark Commons (DC) on the site. DC is a commercial project that would include a 400-room hotel, 622 townhouses, one million square feet of retail space, and 6,100 parking spaces, some underground. Because DC property contains water bodies, wetlands, and slopes greater than 15%, the buildable acreage is actually less than 100 acres. Adler, a supporter of Dragon Springs, is counting on DS to bring visitors, specifically Chinese family members of DS students who will frequent Deerpark Commons. Deerpark views this development as beneficial tourism despite its harmful impact on town residents. (See map.)

The most recent facilitating factor came in 2013, when Deerpark changed the zoning of 6,500 acres from Rural Residential or Rural Settlement to Hamlet-Mixed-Use,



PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

asserting the revision would increase business opportunity. “Tax ratables” became the town’s mantra. Communication to residents of this major zoning amendment was minimal. So the door was opened wide for such dense, incongruous projects as Deerpark Commons.

The silver lining in this dark cloud is the rallying of local activists. A group of residents who oppose Deerpark Commons formed the Deerpark Rural Alliance (DRA). Its mission is to preserve the town’s rural character, to advocate for environmentally sustainable growth, and to resist overdevelopment. DRA members attend all Town Board, Planning, and Zoning meetings

and voice their concerns. They met with Supervisor Gary Spears and Councilman David Dean to express their disapproval of the scope and appropriateness of the project. DRA has also been monitoring and reporting Dragon Springs’ discharge violations, building issues, and deficient fire protection to Deerpark and to the DEC. The Basha Kill Area Association (BKAA) has been monitoring the DC project because discharge from a possible 700,000 gallons per day wastewater treatment plant would affect tributaries to the Basha Kill.

Deerpark Commons’ State Environmental Quality Review process has just begun. According to the DEC, the Deerpark and DC must consider discharge treatment, wetland disturbance, stream disturbance, threatened and endangered species habitat assessment, water withdrawal, historic mining on site, and possible archaeological resources. DC has not appeared before the Planning Board since this spring and is modifying its plan. As of mid-July no revised plans had been submitted.

BKAA supported DRA with a \$2,500 grant and is serving as a 501(c)(3) conduit for others wishing to contribute tax deductible donations. Checks can be written to BKAA with “DRA” on the memo line and mailed to BKAA, P.O. Box 1121, Wurtsboro, NY 12790. To contact DRA, email: grace.woodard@earthlink.net.

The Friends of the Shawangunks recently sent \$3,000 to DRA via BKAA. Thus FOS members are supporting protection of the entire Shawangunk Ridge.

Susan is a Board Member of Friends

TOP: On Galley Hill Road, beside Lake Helen.  
BELOW: Deerpark Commons location map.

