



Riverlovers Currents

Volume 24, Number 8-9, August-September 2011

Message From The President

What a wonderful Summer, with sunny days and even rainy days to make the trees and plants so lush and green. Heavy rains have made the rivers and creeks, like Annsville Creek, filled with fresh water flowing down to the Hudson River.

Our planned July 3 kayak trip was (what else) rained out, so we scheduled another for July 16. We had a very nice day on the Annsville Creek. The tide had started to retreat, so we went pretty far up the creek but went aground and had to turn back before the tide got any lower. We stopped to talk to a couple who lived next to the creek for over 40 years. We asked why the creek is so clear with no dead trees blocking it. They told us very heavy rains in February and March washed all the trees away. Wow! The power of nature!

We would like to have another kayak trip for Sunday, July 31 at 10:30am to take advantage of the early high tides on the weekend. We will meet at the Annsville Paddlesports Center just north-west of the Annsville traffic circle.

I want to briefly report on the outreach table at the Clearwater Revival Festival. We had a lot of visitors to our table and gave away most of our *Riverlovers Currents*. We also made \$58 selling tire gauges, flashlights and copies of the book "My Mighty Hudson". This was a success!

Our big event has arrived. The annual Sloop Clearwater sail is set for Wednesday evening, July 27th at 5:45pm at Randy King's Marina in Verplanck. Once again we are asking for a suggested donation of \$10 from members and \$20 from non-members (children are free) to help with Riverlovers' costs and our donation to our parent Clearwater organization. Please call Warren at 739-9028 to let me know who is coming. (*Editor's Note: It was a beautiful sunset sail, with breezes and food and singing, and we had 33 people helping to raise the sail.*)

Riverlovers will be participating in the River Day Celebration at Van Cortlandt Manor on Sunday, August 7. Set-up time is at 10:30am. This will be a wonderful time to showcase Riverlovers and how we help the environment, with our newsletters and other activities. Call Warren to help staff our table and help advertise Riverlovers.

For Saturday, August 27th at 11am, I reserved a canoe trip to Constitution Marsh in Cold Spring. The cost is \$25 per person and canoes will be provided. An Audubon Society naturalist guide will lead us and discuss the history of the marsh, including the environmental restoration, and the wildlife that can be observed. There is an 8-person minimum, so

please call me to sign up! To get to Constitution Marsh, follow Route 9D north past the bridge, head west on Beverly Warren Road, turn left on Indian Brook Road. Go ½ mile and look for the Constitution Marsh Sanctuary sign and parking area on the right. Walk downhill on the dirt road to the right of the parking area, about 1/4 mile to the nature center. The address is 127 Warren Landing Road, Garrison, NY.

Finally, let's have a meeting Friday, August 19th at the Nature Center at 6:30pm to discuss future plans such as a hike along the Appalachian Trail to Anthony's Nose.

Power Plant Mercury In Your Fish

Coal-burning power plants near and far spew out toxic pollutants like mercury that end up in our food supply as well as in our lungs. In 2010 in Westchester County, there were about 825 asthma attacks and 42 deaths tied to pollution from coal, whose waste fumes can travel a very long way.

That's bad enough, but what we may not appreciate is just how far pollutants like mercury travel, and how some of our most popular ocean fish have levels of contamination exceeding the EPA safe ingestion level of about 0.10 micrograms per kilogram of body weight per day.

Let's say you live in Westchester, you are active outdoors, you weigh 160 pounds, and you are over age 60. If you ate, for example, four servings a month of canned albacore tuna, two servings of bluefish and two servings of grey cod, your mercury exposure would be 0.28 micrograms per kilogram of body weight per day—about three times the EPA safe limit.

That's the bad news, but the good news is that you can minimize your exposure by choosing other fish species to put on your table. Fish that are lower in mercury contamination include flounder, herring, catfish, sardines tilapia and whitefish. You can't entirely avoid the mercury pollution from coal-fired power plants, many of which are in the mid-west and which generate about half of our electricity nationwide, but you can make some healthier choices in the fish you eat, and you can agitate for cleaner, renewable energy for a healthier life and a healthier economy too.

Pay your dues now—support our river! \$25 Individual & \$35 Family

It cost \$7.60 a year to send you the *Riverlovers Currents*. Please consider adding at least that much to your annual dues. Support your Newsletter and the river!

Lowdown On Fracking Secrets

Here are five secrets that the gas companies don't want you to know. There are lots more, but these basically economic ones are good for starters.

Gas drilling is a boom-and-bust industry. Profits are short-lived, with little money staying in the community. Large landowners who have financially benefited are likely to leave town. While some reap financial benefits, the entire community must pay for damages and to clean up a degraded environment.

Gas drilling is highly subsidized. Because of the current surplus of gas in the market, gas companies cannot turn a profit without the help of your tax dollars. In fact, they don't need to produce any gas to turn a profit. According to the *New York Times*, this is one of the few industries where the after-tax profit is greater than the before-tax profit.

Natural gas is not a bridge fuel. It is a non-renewable fossil fuel. Natural gas production forces the government's focus away from a comprehensive energy policy and diverts investment funds away from developing renewable energy sources. And it certainly doesn't promote conservation.

Gas drilling is not about energy independence. On the contrary, foreign companies are currently obtaining local leases, and gas is being sold on the international market rather than filling domestic needs.

Exemptions, deregulation, government cutbacks, lack of accountability. These are the things that have undermined the ability of government agencies like EPA and the DEC to provide adequate protection against the environmental, economic, and social abuses of the oil and gas industry's natural gas development.

The myth of "clean" and "cheap" energy from natural gas is just that—a myth. Don't let the fast talkers fool you into thinking it's real.

Tour Of The Planet Earth

- Our planet is 4.5 billion years old.
- The Earth is tilted 23.5 degrees on its axis of rotation, causing our seasonal weather variations.
- More than 11 million species live on the planet, and we have named about 1.7 million of them.
- Oceans cover 70% of Earth's surface, but less than 1% of the planet's water can be used for drinking purposes.
- The last decade has seen the highest average temperatures on record, and global temperatures may rise as much as 10.4 degrees by 2100.
- Over 70 million barrels of crude oil are produced a day.
- The 806 million cars and light trucks in the world burn 260 billion gallons of gasoline and diesel fuel a year.
- Every square mile of ocean contains on average 46,000 pieces of plastic trash.
- Extreme weather may force relocation of 150 to 200 million people by 2050.
- Sea levels are predicted to be three feet higher in 2100.
- Renewables provide 8% of U.S. energy. Other sources: oil (37%), natural gas (25%), coal (21%), nuclear (9%).
- Sources of greenhouse gases: electric power (35%), transportation (27%), industry (20%), agriculture (7%), commercial (6%), residential (5%).
- That's where we are, folks, and it doesn't look good.

Whither Nuclear Power?

Let's consider a few things. At present, no country on the planet has implemented a long-term solution to the problem of nuclear waste. Some consider it criminally irresponsible to implement a process where you don't know what to do with waste that remains hazardous for tens of thousands of years.

Fast breeder reactors, it is thought, might someday be able to reduce waste significantly, but so far, the hazards, risks of diversion and proliferation, costs, contamination and transportation issues for reprocessing technologies have not been solved. And when you come right down to it, there is really not enough uranium on the planet to significantly replace fossil fuel.

An analysis of the energy gain from nuclear power versus fossil fuels would show that, overall, little carbon-free net energy is produced, yet we are willing to tolerate elevated risks of cancer and reproductive defects in order to contribute in this way to global climate change anyway. Ultimately, there seems to be no long-term benefit to the human race from this scheme.

Existing U.S. reactors are all approaching, or have exceeded, the end of their originally designated 40-year life span. Running them past that time exposes the public to the consequences of almost certain structural materials failure.

Instead of building more units, we need to find a way (and the will) to decommission these highly radioactive plants and properly sequester the spent fuel for the long term. Only then can we contemplate safe ways to replace the energy that nuclear power once promised to deliver. In the meantime, we may have to dial back our energy consumption to a radical degree and pay a much higher price for the energy we must use. The alternative is another Fukushima a lot closer to home. Nuclear energy needs to be thought of for what it is—a mistake in our past that we need to bury, and move on.



HOMEWORK

by Allen Ginsberg (written in 1980)
Homage Kenneth Koch

If I were doing my Laundry I'd wash my dirty Iran
I'd throw in my United States, and pour on the Ivory Soap, scrub up Africa,
put all the birds and elephants back in the jungle,
I'd wash the Amazon river and clean the oily Carib & Gulf of Mexico,
Rub that smog off the North Pole, wipe up all the pipelines in Alaska,
Rub a dub dub for Rocky Flats and Los Alamos, Flush that sparkly Cesium
out of Love Canal
Rinse down the Acid Rain over the Parthenon & Sphinx, Drain the Sludge
out of the Mediterranean basin & make it azure again,
Put some blueing back into the sky over the Rhine, bleach the little Clouds
so snow returns white as snow,
Cleanse the Hudson Thames & Neckar, Drain the Suds out of Lake Erie
Then I'd throw big Asia in one giant Load & wash out the blood &
Agent Orange,
Dump the whole mess of Russia and China in the wringer, squeeze out the
tattletail Gray of U. S. Central American police state,
& put the planet in the drier & let it sit 20 minutes or an Aeon till it came
out clean.



What's Happening When

Sundays at the Beacon Sloop Club, **Farmers' Market** 10am-4pm. Local cheeses, eggs, pasta, bread, lamb, mushroom spring rolls, fruits and vegetables.

July 31, Sun, 10:30am, **Riverlovers kayak trip** at Annsville Creek. Meet at the Annsville Paddlesports Center. See page 1 for more information.

Aug 7, Sun, 10:30am, **River Day Celebration at Van Cortlandt Manor**. Riverlovers' table needs staffing help. Call Warren at 739-9028, help advertise our Sloop Club.

Aug 19, Fri, 6:30pm, **Riverlovers Potluck** outdoors in back of the Croton Point Nature Center. Sign up for our outdoor hiking and boating events for the summer season. Info: www.Riverlovers.org.

Aug 27, Sat, 11am, **Riverlovers canoe trip into Constitution Marsh**, with Audubon Society guide. See page 1 for details and call Warren to sign up now!

Sept 17, Sat, **Clearwater Annual Meeting**, Beacon, NY. Check www.clearwater.org for details. Takes the place of our monthly Potluck.

Top Concerns

According to a recent Consumers Union survey, here are the ten problems of greatest concern to its members:

1. Cost of healthcare
2. Cost of health insurance
3. Future of Medicare
4. Stability of the financial system
5. Future of Social Security
6. Quality of healthcare
7. Need for more renewable energy
8. Air and water pollution
9. Rising cost of prescription drugs
10. Theft of personal financial information

Overwhelmingly, people are worried about healthcare in America—five of the top ten concerns have to do with health issues. However, two of the major concerns are environmental ones, so, despite the current major worries about health and finances, it's clear that people still care about our environment. That's a good thing, because it shows that, even with our current problems, we haven't lost sight of the need for environmental protection. We just need to convince a few of our politicians of this.

Environmental Pet Peeves

by Warren Lindholm

My environmental pet peeve is fast-food drive-thru's. Drivers sit idling their vehicles as they wait in line, can't decide what to order, eventually order their food, pay, and finally wait for their un-healthy meal to be handed to them.

Vehicles when idling use from 1/2 to 1 gallon per hour. Multiply this by the tens of thousands of drive-thru's in this country and the millions of SUVs and sedans idling for maybe 15 minutes. This is a tremendous waste of gasoline

and a contributor to atmospheric CO₂ and global warming. Why can't drivers turn off their engines while waiting, or better yet park their vehicles, turn the engine off, and walk inside. I would like to see a ban on drive-thru's in this county, state, or even nationwide!

(Editor's Note: Do you have an environmental pet peeve? Send it in, and we'll share it. E-mail items to wflank2@gmail.com)

Here's how to join Riverlovers...

(the local Clearwater Sloop Club in the Northern Westchester-Putnam County area)

Application for Riverlovers Membership

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Zip _____ Telephone _____

Renewal ___ New ___ Additional Contribution \$ _____

Please send check (\$25 individual, \$35 family) for 2011 to: Riverlovers, P.O. Box 285, Croton-on-Hudson, NY 10520.

I want to have *Riverlovers Currents* delivered electronically.

Send to this e-mail

Yes! I Also Want To Join Clearwater

Please sign me up in the following membership category:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Individual \$40 | <input type="radio"/> Mariner \$500 |
| <input type="radio"/> Family \$55 | <input type="radio"/> Sailing-Master \$1000 |
| <input type="radio"/> Contributor \$100 | <input type="radio"/> Benefactor \$5000 |
| <input type="radio"/> Sponsor \$200 | <input type="radio"/> Student \$10 |

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Please include check payable to Clearwater, or charge by credit card

- | | | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Visa | <input type="radio"/> MC | <input type="radio"/> Discover | <input type="radio"/> Amex |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|

Account No. _____

Exp. Date _____ Signature _____

Mail To: Clearwater, Inc.
112 Little Market Street
Poughkeepsie, NY 12601

Your Clearwater membership gets you the *Navigator* and other benefits, along with being part of Riverlovers' "parent" organization representing individuals and Sloop Clubs up and down the Hudson Valley "working for the River."

Riverlovers - Who We Are

Riverlovers, Inc. is a chartered Sloop Club of the Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, Inc., an environmental non-profit membership organization whose most visible symbol is its member-owned and operated 106-ft. sloop "Clearwater." As a local affiliate, Riverlovers' purposes are:

- Maintaining an active Sloop Club in the Northern Westchester-Putnam County area;
- Meeting the needs and interests of individuals through a variety of interest groups, including monthly Potluck dinner meetings with varied programs, environmental education and awareness, boats and sailing, concerts and festivals;
- Organizing trips and recreational activities, seminars and workshops, learn-to-sail programs and Clearwater visits;
- Research, education and action to protect our rivers and our environment;
- Working for access and effective land use along the Hudson River and its tributaries;
- Boating projects on the Hudson River, to reach out to the surrounding community for educational and recreational purposes.

We invite you to join us. Contact our interest group coordinators, or write to Riverlovers, Inc., P.O. Box 285, Croton-on-Hudson, NY 10520. Together we can do a lot!

Riverlovers Officers

President:	Warren Lindholm	739-9028
Vice Pres. (programs):	Robin Fox	271-6088
Secretary:	Cynthia Andersen	432-3112
Treasurer:	Daria Gregg	944-8396
President-Emeriti	Eric Marshall	827-3696
	Gunnar Andersen	432-3112



Interest Group Coordinators

Interest Group	Coordinator	Phone
Envir. Education	Bill Flank	238-8240
Membership	Gunnar Andersen	432-3112
Newsletter	Bill Flank	238-8240
Newsletter Distribution	Cynthia Andersen	432-3112
Outreach		
Photographer/Archivist	Beverly Dyckman	739-5057
Potluck	Warren Lindholm	739-9028
Publicity		
ShadFest	Robin Fox	271-6088

Web Page: www.riverlovers.org

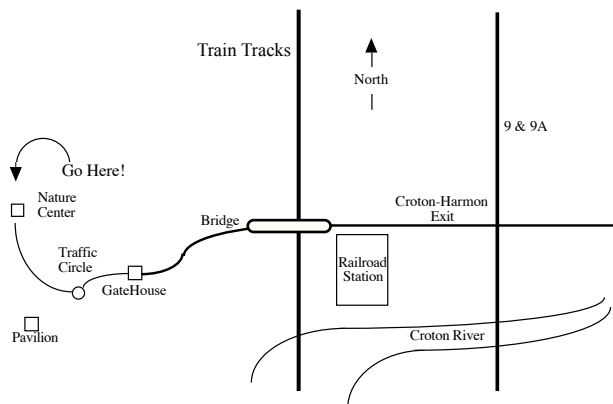
Newsletter Submissions

Please send news articles and other items of interest to Riverlovers Currents, P.O. Box 285, Croton-on-Hudson, NY 10520. Include your name, address, and phone number. Names can be omitted on request.

Newsletter Committee: Editor, Bill Flank; Associate Editor, Mel Fitting

August–September Newsletter Contributors: Bill Flank, Allen Ginsberg, Warren Lindholm

Riverlovers Outdoor Potluck



Riverlovers, Inc.

P.O. Box 285

Croton-on-Hudson, NY 10520

Friday, August 19, 2011

6:30pm

Croton Point Nature Center