



# Riverlovers Currents

Volume 27, Number 8-9, August-September 2014

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## Message From The President

Summertime and the living is easy, with warm days and cool nights. My wife and I decided to not to put up our little window air conditioner. We leave the windows open at night to bring in the cool night air and have a lot of fans during the day to circulate the air and to exhaust the upstairs air. My experience at the Con Edison power plant was that the hotter the day, the higher the electrical loads. I asked an old-timer when I first started, what it was like years earlier, and he said the loads were way down in summer, because few people had air conditioners. So try to minimize the use of air conditioners and reduce your electric bill, and your carbon footprint.

I want to thank Daria Gregg for leading an insightful tour of the protected Wildflower Island at the Teatown Lake Reservation, in late May. We had a chance to see some rare flowers at their seasonal peak. It was an enjoyable visit and we learned a lot, and then had a chance to share some refreshments too.

The Clearwater Revival Festival was quite an event in June. We had many visitors to our outreach table. We sold educational toys and environmental DVD's, and had a chance to talk about our river and our environment.

We also had a successful annual sail on the *Hudson River Sloop Clearwater* on July 25<sup>th</sup>, and we were fortunate to have Rick Nessler on board to lead us in singing a bunch of river-related songs. That was really a special treat.

We will have two more sails on our members' sailboat, the *Solar Wind*. Please sail with us and experience the Hudson River up close. This is a sturdy sailboat with a tiller for steering. We welcome passengers having the opportunity to steer the sailboat. The dates will be Sunday at 2pm on August 17<sup>th</sup>, and on September 7<sup>th</sup>. We will meet at the Senasqua Park dock in Croton. We have room for 4 passengers and 2 crew. Call Warren (914-319-3379) or Gunnar (914-522-0339) if you are interested.

If anyone is interested in the Constitution Marsh canoe trip guided by the Audubon Society, we can go either Sunday August 3<sup>rd</sup> at 3:30pm or Monday September 1<sup>st</sup> at 3pm. Another idea is to go kayaking up the Croton River in August or September. Kayak rentals are available at the far end of the Croton Harmon train station, or bring your own kayak or canoe. Both activities need a high tide. Call Warren if you are interested in either activity.

For the September 19<sup>th</sup> Potluck at 6:30pm at the Croton Point Nature Center, we will screen the PBS program about Rachel Carson's controversial book "*Silent Spring*." She wrote an expose' of the chemical industry and its unregulated use of DDT in 1962. Her warning sparked a revolution in environmental policy. Does anyone have a copy of "*Silent Spring*" to bring to the meeting?

I like to bicycle ride, traveling with the fresh air in my face, and use absolutely no fuel to travel. We are fortunate to have the North County Trailway nearby. No motorized vehicles are allowed, and it's a pretty level path with some very easy hills. The North County and South County Trailway extend from the Bronx County line to the Putnam County line (and beyond). One can rent bicycles from the nearby Yorktown Cycles at 1899 Commerce Street, or bring your own bike. We can go north toward Putnam County, or south past the bridge over the Croton reservoir. I would like to go Sunday, September 21<sup>st</sup> and/or Sunday October 19<sup>th</sup> at 1pm. Give me a call.

For the Friday, October 17<sup>th</sup> Potluck at 6:30 pm, we will screen another PBS special, "Global Warming—What's Up With the Weather." The weather is becoming different now—but why?

For the November 21<sup>st</sup> Potluck, we will screen the award-winning "The Antarctica Challenge—Global Warming." It's one of the most remarkable documentaries of our times.

And for the December 19<sup>th</sup> Potluck, we will screen a PBS Nova special "Solar Energy—Saved by the Sun." Can solar power help save the Earth from the ravages of global warming?

This will be an interesting Summer, Autumn, and Winter. Be prepared to paddle, pedal, and sail, and to be amazed at the sights outdoors, and environment related DVD's indoors at the Potlucks! Be part of Riverlovers, and bring your friends and family to our activities. Thank you for your kind support.

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## Factoid Without Comment

In February, 2014, 36% of the fracked natural gas production in the State of North Dakota was either flared (burned off) or vented to the atmosphere. This greenhouse gas, primarily methane, is 20 times more climate-damaging than carbon dioxide and is lost because of inefficient and careless well-head practices by the oil and gas industry.

## 2014-15 Walkabout Coffeehouse Schedule

by Robin Fox

Thank you all for helping to make the Walkabout Clearwater Coffeehouse's 26th season a smashing success. We hope we'll see you back with us this October as another great season of acoustic music gets underway. Our 2014-15 schedule is included below:

October 11: The Kennedys  
November 8: Garnet Rogers  
December 13: Josh White, Jr.  
January 10: Tom Chapin  
February 14: The Boxcar Lilies  
March 14: Joe Jencks/Natalia Zukerman  
April 11: Joe Crookston/Mustard's Retreat  
May 9: Kim & Reggie Harris

Tickets for individual concerts, as well as half-season and whole-season advance sale options, went on sale **July 1** at [www.BrownPaperTickets.com](http://www.BrownPaperTickets.com). To keep up to date, check out [www.walkaboutclearwater.org](http://www.walkaboutclearwater.org), or better yet, use the url to sign up and join the e-mail list. Bring your friends!

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### The True Cost of Nuclear Electricity?

by Marilyn Elie

When it comes to nuclear power there are other factors that must be figured into the cost of the electricity produced. In four words they are waste, water, Wall Street and weapons. And that's not even considering the human costs, when we see the cancer toll among the uranium miners.

*Waste:* No other means of generation leaves such a troubled and toxic legacy or generates material that must be sequestered from any contact with the environment for 240,000 years – 10 half-lives of plutonium. And guess who pays for the storage? Not the corporation. While the corporations plead for a free market to sell electricity, they are eager to socialize the cost of managing the waste and hand it off to the public.

*Water:* A public resource that a multibillion dollar corporation like Entergy uses for free and in the process leaves a damaged river for the rest of us. Indian Point is the largest user of water in New York State.

*Wall Street:* That is, private capital, will not invest in nuclear construction because it is deemed too risky with little chance for profit. When a new nuclear plant is built, it is through government subsidies and increased bills for rate payers, something that could not happen in New York. In our deregulated market, companies that generate electricity are required to pay for construction since they are the ones who will reap the profit.

*Weapons:* The world is awash in plutonium and no one knows what to do with it. What comes out of civilian reactors is essentially weapons-grade material and we have enough in storage to blow up the world several times over. Is this a technology we really want to export to countries all around the world? Who are we to use it in our country and tell the rest of the world they can't have it?

Electricity is but the fleeting by-product of nuclear power. So, the next time you hear someone counting megawatts and wringing their hands about how many tons of coal

or gallons of oil it would take to replace splitting the atom, just tell them to wake up and smell the coffee. The rest of the world has moved on and they need to get with the program—something that is truly green and can carry the world—wind and solar.

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### We Need Renewable Energy Standards—III

Renewable energy is a good deal for consumers:

- States with renewable energy standards (RES) policies achieved more than 95 percent compliance with renewable energy requirements through 2010, with little to no impact on electricity rates in almost every state.
- A 2009 - 2010 evaluation of 14 states with RES policies estimated that all but one of the states experienced cost impacts of about 1.6 percent or less.
- Increasing renewable energy also helps stabilize electricity rates and provide long-term savings. Once a wind or solar facility is installed, the "fuel" is free. Fossil fuels, on the other hand, are subject to potentially volatile prices that can lead to significant fluctuations in electricity rates.

There's no big economic penalty for us to do what is needed to stabilize our costs and our climate, and halt the rapid deterioration that fossil fuels are bringing on. It's in our interest to "go renewable."

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### The Failure Of The Clean Water Act

The quality of American waterways continues to worsen. According to the most recent data released by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency:

- States have issued 223 new fish advisories, bringing the total advisories recognized by EPA to 4,821.
- Approximately 17.7 million lake acres and 1.36 million river miles were under advisory as of 2011, representing 42.3 percent of the nation's total lake acreage and 36 percent of the nation's total river miles.
- Of the nation's 3,650 ocean and Great Lakes coastal beaches monitored in 2011, health notifications and closures affected 33,127 beach-days.

The 1972 Clean Water Act aimed to retire these problems as of 31 years ago:

"It is the national goal that wherever attainable, an interim goal of water quality which provides for the protection and propagation of fish, shellfish, and wildlife and provides for recreation in and on the water be achieved by July 1, 1983."

The bad news about fish has been building for decades. And when fish are poisoned, so too are the wildlife that feed on them, as the mounting problem of mercury contamination demonstrates. The Clean Water Act's spectacular failure to meet its goals has been understood for decades, but no decisive action has been taken. According to EPA, 40% of rivers, lakes, and estuaries are still not clean enough to meet basic uses such as fishing or swimming.

Because the Clean Water Act goals are non-binding, it is now popular to characterize them as merely aspirational. But what direction does the Clean Water Act take, now that it is empty of aspirations? Does it still have meaning, and for whom?

*Adapted from Professor John Cronin's EarthDesk blog*



# What's Happening When

Sundays, 10am-3pm, **Farmers' Market** at the Beacon Sloop Club, at the Long Dock Park in Beacon. Local cheeses, eggs, pasta, bread, lamb, mushroom spring rolls, fruits and vegetables.

Aug 10, Sun, noon-5pm, **Beacon Sloop Club Annual Corn Festival**, at Pete & Toshi Seeger Riverfront Park, Beacon. If you want to help, set-up is 8:30 to noon, and clean-up is 5-7pm. Info: Rosemary Thomas, rmthomas99@yahoo.com.

Aug 17, Sept 7, Sun, 2pm, **Sails on the Solar Wind**, our members' small sailboat. Call Warren or Gunnar. See details on page 1.

Sept 19, Fri, 6:30pm, **Riverlovers Monthly Potluck** at Croton Point Nature Center. Screening of PBS special on Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*. More details on page 1. Info: www.Riverlovers.org.

Sept 21 and/or Oct 19, Sun, 1pm, **Riverlovers biking trip** on North County Trailway. Call Warren at 914-319-3379. See details on page 1.

## The Achilles' Heel of Gas Extraction

Conventional and shale natural gas production wells both generate huge quantities of wastewater contaminated with heavy metals, petroleum constituents, radionuclides and extraordinarily high levels of chlorides and other dissolved solids. Properly disposing of that polluted wastewater is the Achilles' Heel of gas extraction.

It's been documented that more than 20 million gallons of conventional gas extraction wastewater was dumped into treatment plants across Upstate New York in recent years. The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) permitted this practice for decades even though it is well-known that many pollutants in gas extraction wastewater are neither removed nor broken down by our sewage treatment systems, and remain toxic.

The U. S. Environmental Protection Agency's Region 2 office was petitioned to require a "headworks analysis" to determine whether an upstate Auburn plant could actually treat gas extraction wastewater pollutants. At the end of March, 2014, Auburn's engineering consultant's report determined that: "The headworks analyses performed herein indicate that the Auburn WPCP [Water Pollution Control Plant] does not have the additional capacity for the acceptance of hauled VGWW [Vertical Natural Gas Well Wastewater] due to excess chloride loading to the plant."

This critically important study will maintain the dumping ban that Auburn adopted earlier, and make it exceedingly difficult for municipal treatment plants anywhere in New York to accept gas extraction wastewater. This would now systematically block gas extraction wastewater dumping in every municipal sewage treatment plant in New York.

By halting gas extraction wastewater dumping into municipal treatment plants, the economics of shale fracking are

being fundamentally altered. This decision will impose additional cost burdens on New York gas drillers who needed to find disposal alternatives. If the EPA Region 2 "headworks analysis" decision can be replicated in other states, the effect could become nationwide, and that has huge implications for all of us.

*(Thanks to Walter Hang of Toxics Targeting for the information above.)*

### 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 2014 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.  
724 Wolcott Avenue  
Beacon, NY 12508

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!



## 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		

Web Page: [www.riverlovers.org](http://www.riverlovers.org)

### 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

### 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.

Back issues of *Riverlovers Currents* are available at our web site, [www.riverlovers.org](http://www.riverlovers.org)

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

August-September Newsletter Contributors: Marilyn Elie, Robin Fox, Warren Lindholm

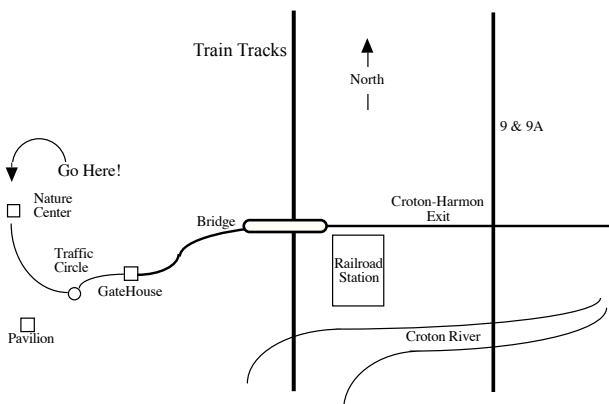
## Riverlovers September Potluck and film about *Silent Spring*



**Riverlovers, Inc.**

P.O. Box 285

Croton-on-Hudson, NY 10520



**Friday, September 19, 2014**

**6:30pm**

**Croton Point Nature Center**