



# Riverlovers Currents

Volume 21, Number 12, December 2008

## Riverlovers Doings

by Gunnar Andersen

Hey Riverlovers, mark your calendars for February 7, 2009!

This is the date of the annual EagleFest which will once more be centered in Croton Point Park. Teatown will erect three heated tents this year. There will be an Eagle tent that will seat 300+ people for Bill Streeter's live raptor show and the Arm-of-the-Sea Theater. A second tent will host other presentations by Teatown, and there will be a tent for the many collaborators to set their presentations (including Scott Williamson of the Croton Point Nature Center).

Here's where we come in. From our perch in the Nature Center, Riverlovers will once again serve bread and soup for the EagleFest volunteers. So start getting your pots and recipes ready now! We had a great event last year, and this year should be even better, for both the EagleFest and for Riverlovers.

Another event that we would like to repeat is a showing of the film "Swim for the River". This time we would like to show it at a larger venue like the library. Gunnar is working on scheduling this event.

By the time that you read this, we will have taken our specially arranged tour of the Millwood water treatment plant. We'll have a full report in the next issue of *Riverlovers Currents*.

Our next "Third Friday" potluck meeting is on January 16, and we will start the planning for our 19<sup>th</sup> annual Shad-Fest (which will occur on May 17, 2009). Don't miss a chance to get in early on the planning! We'll also make preparations for our participation in the EagleFest as well. At the April meeting we will invite a representative from Clearwater to discuss the projects that Clearwater is involved in and how we can work more closely with them.

## Climate Change And Politics

Political appointees in NASA's public affairs office, according to a recent inspector general's report, "reduced, marginalized, and mis-characterized" the agency's climate change data.

The report says Bush administration officials altered or withheld press releases about the agency's scientific findings on climate change, and tried to stop James Hansen, director of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies and its top climate scientist, from speaking to the news media.

Political appointees in NASA's public affairs office improperly managed information about climate change, but the report indicated that actual research activities appeared not to have been blocked. Decisions controlling how the agency presented climate-change science to the public were made solely by political appointees in NASA's public affairs office in Washington, D.C. Apparently appointees in other parts of NASA and in other branches of government were not involved, according to the inspector general.

Senior NASA officials weren't aware of how the public affairs managers were handling global warming data until reports appeared in the news media and members of Congress started complaining. Once the situation was uncovered, top officials took corrective action to disseminate the research results, as required by the 1958 Space Act. It's nice to know that even political appointees are supposed to follow the law. We could use more of that nowadays.

## How Stormwater Pollutes

Stormwater is a leading cause of water pollution, and the threats are caused locally, seen locally, and are best addressed locally as well. New York State now requires local communities to develop stormwater management plans, and it must be a part of every new development project.

Local governments already have the processes in place, with zoning districts and zoning ordinances, site plan reviews and often comprehensive planning policies. What's needed is a little prodding to get some attention and action to improve local stormwater policies sooner rather than later.

Stormwater pollution begins when natural landscapes are altered, changing the way water moves over the land. Hard structures such as parking lots and rooftops prevent water from naturally soaking into the ground. The rainwater picks up pollution from streets and driveways and runs off into local streams, often causing flooding as well.

A typical 10-acre parking lot will create 270,000 gallons of polluted stormwater runoff after only one inch of rain, while our paved surfaces and rooftops generate sixteen times more runoff than the fields they replace. Management is a must if we are to avoid the damage that rampant development can bring. Local communities need to make this a priority, and local citizens need to show they care.

**Pay your dues now—support our river!**  
**\$15 Individual & \$20 Family**

## Indian Point Environmental Justice

Clearwater's petition to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission was given legal standing because of the relevance of the environmental justice argument. Here's what is contended:

Entergy's environmental report contains a seriously flawed environmental justice analysis that does not adequately assess the impact of Indian Point on the minority, low-income and disabled populations in the area surrounding Indian Point. There are many potential and disparate environmental impacts in the minority and low-income communities near Indian Point, and these are ignored in Entergy's environmental report, which states that "no significant off-site environmental impacts will be created by the renewal of the IP2 and IP3 Operating Licenses."

Entergy's environmental justice and demographic methodologies are flawed and incomplete. They don't adequately acknowledge the significant environmental justice communities within 50 miles of Indian Point, or assess the impact on these communities.

Minority and low-income populations are likely to be more susceptible to cancer from Indian Point radioactive emissions than other populations. Furthermore, the report fails to take into account subsistence fishing in the Hudson River, which has been amply documented by Clearwater research investigations.

Low-income populations will be more severely and negatively impacted by an evacuation resulting from a radiological event at Indian Point. Residents of special facilities, such as disabled patients in hospitals and long-term care facilities, as well as inmates in the many prisons in the area, would be disproportionately at risk.

Another little-recognized off-site impact relates to the production and long-term storage of fuel, which involves economically disadvantaged Native American populations who desperately need the income from hosting such operations.

Unfortunately, it does not appear that these issues have been considered in prior environmental impact statements prepared in connection with Indian Point. But this time around, there's hope that adequate attention will be paid.

## EPA Won't Regulate Perchlorate

Although EPA's recent determination not to limit the amount of perchlorate it allows in drinking water is only a preliminary one, it has attracted a lot of attention. The House Energy and Commerce Committee is launching an investigation, and environmental groups are preparing a lawsuit to file against the EPA as soon as the agency makes a final determination. That is expected to happen before the end of the year.

EPA argues that there is not "a meaningful opportunity for health risk reduction" because levels of perchlorate are low in most public drinking-water systems. Perchlorate is a component of rocket fuel, but it also occurs naturally on some soils to a small extent.

The chemical inhibits uptake of iodine by the thyroid gland, and can lower the amounts of thyroid hormone in the body. It has been found in water, food, breast milk and cow's milk.

EPA's decision not to regulate perchlorate is seen as a victory for the military, the Department of Energy, NASA, and their contractors, whose operations have tainted aquifers and rivers in more than 20 states. It's time for the government to put people first, rather than the contractors.

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## Environmental Book Review

*Hell and High Water, by Joseph Romm*

"Romm writes about the reasons why you don't hear a lot of scientists flooding the media with dire warnings of our actions and the near future of global warming--he writes vividly and rationally, pointing no fingers of blame at anyone. He writes a history of scientific studies and the Delayers and Denyers tactics in stalling appropriate responses to issues that should have been addressed yesterday if not today. He writes simply. He writes of the truth. He backs his reasons up with scientific studies and news reports.

He doesn't point fingers at anyone--just states simply the facts and the solutions he thinks are viable in fixing this problem before it's too late. Already, we're seeing record hurricanes, droughts and mild winters and already, we're seeing signs of glaciers melting. Romm debunks what the current administration is doing in fixing global warming and offers other viable solutions (after going into details about what would happen if we built more coal or nuclear plants as well as just how exactly far the hybrid cars have come along).

This is a very straight-forward book and very well-written. Instead of worrying about catching the Avian flu, I think I am now more worried about global warming. And what I can do to help educating others about it. If you want to get some insights and a practical guide on what needs to be done, I would highly suggest getting this book."

*From reader review at Amazon.com*

*And thanks to Jan for suggesting it,*

*and to Daria for digging it out on the Internet*

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## Fluorescent Bulb Trade-Off

Switching from incandescent to compact fluorescent bulbs, popularly known as CFLs, to save energy may in some cases increase atmospheric mercury emissions. According to a study by Yale University researchers, each CFL can release about 5 milligrams of the toxic heavy metal mercury, if it is broken during use or disposal.

Mercury also occurs naturally in coal and is emitted from coal-fired power plants. According to data collected in 2004 from all 50 states and 130 other countries, mercury emissions during the life cycle of a CFL vary widely. Using CFLs appears to cut emissions by reducing use of coal-derived electricity, but if there is a small percentage of coal-based power generation and little to no recycling, the use of fluorescents may actually increase mercury emissions.

For example, Estonia, China and West Virginia have the greatest potential for emissions reduction, and emissions in California and much of South America and Africa could increase. Recycling is the obvious answer, and you can take your used tubes or bulbs to Home Depot, where they have a recycling center for them. Some local communities, like Chappaqua, accept fluorescents at their recycling centers, so there's not much excuse not to recycle.



# What's Happening When

Daily at 11:11am, Sat at 9am & 2pm on WAMC and upstate affiliates, **The Clearwater Moment**. Snippets of news, history & song. Turn on, tune in.

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

Nov 27, Thurs, all day. **Thanksgiving**. Celebrate an old holiday and a fresh start on the future.

Dec 13, Sat, 7:30pm, **Walkabout Clearwater Coffeehouse featuring Peggy Seeger & guest Peter Siegel**. At Memorial United Methodist Church, 250 Bryant Ave, White Plains. Tickets are \$17.50 in advance (available via [www.BrownPaperTickes.com](http://www.BrownPaperTickes.com) or [walkaboutclearwater.org](http://walkaboutclearwater.org) or 1-800-838-3006), or \$20 at door. \$15 at door with student ID, \$10 children 6-12, open seating. Proceeds benefit Walkabout & Clearwater. Refreshments available. Free parking. Informal songfest starts at 6:45pm. Info: [www.walkaboutclearwater.org](http://www.walkaboutclearwater.org) or call 914-242-0374.

Dec 22, Mon, first of 8 days of **Hanukkah**. Enjoy them all!

Dec 25, Thurs, all day. **Merry Christmas** and holiday cheer to all.

Dec 26, Fri, begins the celebration of **Kwanzaa**, which lasts until Jan 1.

Dec 29, Mon, is **Islamic New Year's Day**.

Jan 1, Thurs, all day. Come on now, do we have to tell you!

Jan 16, Fri, 6:30pm, **Riverlovers "Third Friday" Potluck** at Croton Point Nature Center. Prepare for our EagleFest participation in Feb & start planning for ShadFest. Check our website for the latest info, at [www.riverlovers.org](http://www.riverlovers.org).

## Summer Reading

by Robin Fox

If you are depressed by the dismal news-of-the-world, if you are appalled by the cheesy clatter of the presidential campaigns, if you are feeling panicked by how fast this summer has slipped by, read this book.

"Central Park in the Dark" by Marie Winn is published by Farrar, Straus & Giroux. A few years ago, Marie Winn wrote the now well-known love story "Red-Tails in Love," which chronicles the life of Pale Male, Central Park's famous red-tail hawk.

In this latest book, Winn takes us along with a diverse cast of amateurs, experts, and scientists into night-time Central Park. She writes about moths, several types of owls, the beloved red-tail Pale Male, grackles, robins, clouds of insects, meteors, slugs.... Details abound, feeding habits, nesting behavior, fledging, hunting, migrating, sex. Triumphs,

and tragedies. Along the way, Winn writes about the Park's trees, various plantings and some of its history.

Her obsessions with, and her obvious delight in, her subject(s) is part of what makes this book so rich and lovely. "Central Park in the Dark" is about creatures—yes—but it's about us humans as well. We're a pretty interesting species by both day and night.

### 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 (\$15 individual, \$20 family) for 2009 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

Visa  MC  Discover  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:	Gunnar Andersen	432-3112
Vice Pres. (programs):	Robin Fox	271-6088
Secretary:	Cynthia Andersen	432-3112
Treasurer:	Daria Gregg	944-8396
President-Emeritus	Eric Marshall	827-3696



## 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](http://www.riverlovers.org)

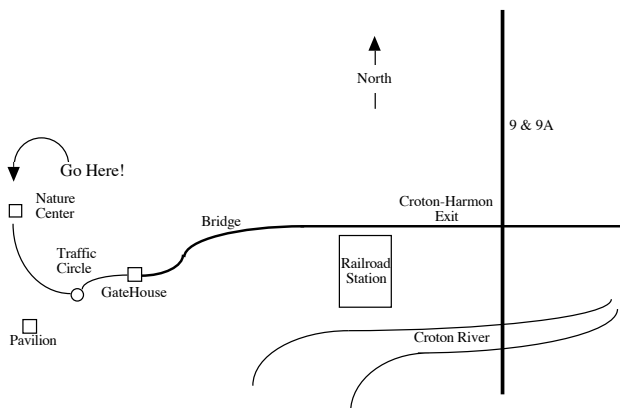
### Newsletter Submissions

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

December Newsletter Contributors: Gunnar Andersen, Robin Fox, Daria Gregg

## Riverlovers Fresh Start Potluck — Start the New Year Right!



**Riverlovers, Inc.**

P.O. Box 285

Croton-on-Hudson, NY 10520

**Friday, January 16, 2009**

**6:30pm**

**Croton Point Nature Center**