



Riverlovers Currents

Volume 27, Number 1, January 2014

Message From The President

Happy New Year 2014! I would like to reflect on 2013, and what a great year it was. We had a successful sail on the Hudson River Sloop Clearwater. We were financially able to donate \$1000 to the Clearwater organization (which was well received at the Clearwater annual meeting) for specialized seining nets that won't harm fish. The timing of our donation made it possible to obtain a matching grant.

We had many outdoor activities including walks at the Annsville Preserve and the Sylvan Lake Park Preserve. On the water we canoed on the Constitution Marsh in Cold Spring, and the Great Swamp in Putnam County, and we also sailed on the Solar Wind and the Clearwater.

We screened many thought-provoking documentaries such as "An Inconvenient Truth" and "America Revealed, Electric Nation". We had many talks and demonstrations, from John Phillips, Andy Hofer, Warren Lindholm, and Cynthia Andersen. Cynthia gave a fantastic PowerPoint presentation on The Art and Photography of the Civil War to a practically standing-room-only audience. Way to go Cynthia!

We will finish 2013 with a screening of "Climate of Doubt," a PBS Frontline program, at the December 20th Potluck. From the synopsis: "Correspondent John Hockenberry goes into the organizations that fought the scientific establishment, environmental groups and lawmakers to shift the direction of debate on climate issues and redefined the politics of global warming."

We will start 2014 with a January 17th Potluck at 6:30 pm at the Croton Point Nature Center. We are screening, from the PBS Nature series, "Radioactive Wolves of Chernobyl." This program shows how nature and wildlife—but not people—are returning to the exclusion zone surrounding the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. Makes you wonder.

We are excited about Teatown's annual Hudson River EagleFest. This year it will be held on Saturday, February 8th (inclement weather date Sunday, February 9th). Riverlovers will once more be serving home-made and donated soups and baked breads at the Croton Point Nature Center for volunteers and vendors from 11am to 2pm.

We need volunteers to bring soups, breads and butter, and to help serve. We also need volunteers for the Outreach Table from 9am to 4pm. Riverlovers will get plenty of exposure, since large crowds are expected at the big tent. Call Gunnar at 432-3112 if you can help with soups at the Nature

Center or call Warren at 739-9028 if you can help out at the Outreach Table (both phones are in the 914 area code).

For the February 21st Potluck at 6:30pm we will screen "Pandora's Promise." Excerpts from the synopsis: "The atomic bomb and meltdowns like Fukushima have made nuclear power synonymous with global disaster. But what if we've got nuclear power wrong? An audience favorite at the Sundance Film Festival, 'Pandora's Promise' asks if the one technology that we fear most could be the one to save our planet from a climate catastrophe, while providing the energy needed to lift billions of people in the developing world out of poverty." There are two sides to that argument.

For the March 21st Potluck at 6:30pm we will see screen director Robert Stone's "Earthdays", a look at the environmental movement and how we have progressed. Robert Stone also directed "Pandora's Promise."

For April, I would like the Riverlovers to participate in both the Westchester County and Croton Earthday celebrations with outreach tables. There is a lot to look forward to, so plan on taking part. If you can, bring your friends and family to our activities. Thank you, and have wonderful holidays everyone!

Environmental Justice Contention Wins

Clearwater's Environmental Justice Contention has been upheld at the Indian Point relicensing hearings before the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, in a national precedent-setting victory. The Atomic Safety and Licensing Board, the trial court of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), found in favor of Clearwater and against Entergy and the NRC Staff in the battle about the relicensing of the Indian Point nuclear plant.

Clearwater contended that the NRC's Environmental Impact Statement for the relicensing of the reactor was inadequate because it failed to recognize that an accident at the plant would have greater impact upon environmental justice populations, including prisoners at Sing-Sing, minority, and low income groups, than the general population.

The Board found that the NRC Staff "failed to follow its own internal procedure" in carrying out the assessment. The Staff "analyzed the wrong variables" by failing to compare the effects of the relicensing on environmental justice populations with the effects on the general population. Therefore the NRC Staff "failed to comply with its . . . obligations" to

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Toxic Coal-Fired Power Plants

Coal-fired power plants are the largest source of toxic water pollution in the United States based on toxicity. They dump billions of pounds of pollution into America's rivers, lakes, and streams each year.

The waste from coal plants, also known as coal combustion waste, includes coal ash and sludge from pollution control devices called "scrubbers" that are notorious for contaminating ground and surface waters with toxic heavy metals and other pollutants. These pollutants, including lead and mercury, can be dangerous to humans and wreak havoc in our watersheds even in very small amounts. The toxic metals in this waste do not degrade over time and many bioaccumulate, increasing in concentration as they travel up the food chain, ultimately collecting in our bodies, and the bodies of our children.

Existing national standards meant to control coal plant water pollution are 31 years old now, and fail to set any limits on many dangerous pollutants. Only now has the EPA proposed to update these outdated standards, in order to curb discharges of arsenic, boron, cadmium, lead, mercury, selenium, and other heavy metals from coal plants. Although the Clean Water Act requires the EPA and states to set pollution limits for power plants in the absence of federal standards, states have routinely allowed unlimited discharges of this dangerous pollution.

A review by the Sierra Club of 386 coal-fired power plants across the country demonstrates that the Clean Water Act has been almost universally ignored by power companies and permitting agencies. The survey is based on the EPA's Enforcement and Compliance History Online (ECHO) database and a review of discharge permits for coal-fired power plants. For each plant, the study reviewed permit and monitoring requirements for arsenic, boron, cadmium, lead, mercury, and selenium; the health of the receiving water; and the permit's expiration date. The study's analysis reveals that nearly 70 percent of the coal plants that discharge coal ash and scrubber wastewater are allowed to dump unlimited amounts of arsenic, boron, cadmium, mercury, and selenium into public waters, in violation of the Clean Water Act.

Only about 63% of these coal plants are required to monitor and report discharges of arsenic, boron, cadmium, mercury, and selenium. Only about 17% of the permits for the 71 coal plants discharging into waters impaired for arsenic, boron, cadmium, lead, mercury, or selenium contained a limit for the pollutant responsible for degrading water quality. Nearly half of the plants surveyed are discharging toxic pollution with an expired Clean Water Act permit. And 53 power plants are operating with permits that expired five or more years ago. Coal plants have used our rivers, lakes, and streams as their own private waste dumps for decades.

These dangerous discharges have serious consequences for communities that live near coal-fired power plants and their dumps across the United States. Thousands of miles of rivers are degraded by this pollution. EPA has identified over 250 individual instances where coal plants have harmed ground or surface waters. Because many coal power plants sit on recreational lakes and reservoirs, or upstream of drinking water supplies, those thousands of miles of poisoned waters have an impact on people across the country. Water

pollution from coal raises cancer risks, makes fish unsafe to eat, and can inflict lasting brain damage on our children.

Americans do not need to live with these dangerous discharges. Wastewater treatment technologies that drastically reduce, and even eliminate, discharges of toxic pollution are widely available, and are already in use at some power plants in the United States. According to the EPA, coal plants can eliminate coal ash wastewater entirely by moving to dry ash handling techniques. Scrubber discharges can also be treated with common sense technologies such as chemical precipitation, biological treatment, and vapor compression to reduce or eliminate millions of tons of toxic pollution. It's time coal-fired power plants cleaned up their act!

EPA Proposes Coal Plant Standards

The EPA's recent proposal to set long overdue standards for coal-fired power plants contains multiple options, including strong standards that would require the elimination of the majority of coal plant water pollution using technologies that are available and cost-effective. The strongest of these options, called "Option 5" in the proposal, would eliminate almost all toxic discharges, reducing pollution by more than 5 billion pounds a year, and should be the option EPA selects for the final rule. The next strongest option, called Option 4, would eliminate ash-contaminated discharges, and apply rigorous treatment requirements for scrubber sludge. However, it would only reduce pollution by 3.3 billion pounds a year, 2 billion less than Option 5.

By eliminating or significantly reducing toxic discharges from coal plants, a strong final rule would create hundreds of millions of dollars in benefits every year as improved health and recreational opportunities for all Americans, in addition to the incalculable benefits of clean and healthy watersheds. The EPA estimates that ending toxic dumping from coal plants would cost less than one percent of annual revenue for most coal plants and at most about two pennies a day in expenses for ordinary Americans if the utilities passed some of the cleanup costs to consumers.

Unfortunately, the proposal also includes illegal and weak options inserted by political operatives, rather than EPA scientists. These options would preserve the status quo or do little to control dangerous pollution dumping. Weak options are a giveaway to polluters and Americans deserve better. It's time for the EPA to set strong national standards to end decades of toxic water pollution, and protect public health and our waters.

Walkabout Coffeehouse Features Robin & Linda Williams In January

We were snowed out on December 14th, but the best is yet to come. On January 11th the Walkabout Clearwater Coffeehouse will feature the renowned Robin and Linda Williams and Their Fine Band in concert. The second Saturday of every month in the Fall and Spring features terrific entertainment and a folksy environment, so plan on making this a regular habit. Great people, great music, refreshments, free parking, a chance to join in with the Walkabout Chorus in a Singalong every month—that's a combination that's hard to beat. And you'll be helping to support Clearwater as well as folk music! See page 3 listing for more info.



What's Happening When

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

Jan 11, Sat, 7:30pm, **Walkabout Clearwater Coffeehouse featuring Robin & Linda Williams.** Come see a big show, put on by nationally known performers. At Memorial United Methodist Church, 250 Bryant Ave, White Plains. Advance tickets are available via credit card (\$20) at www.BrownPaperTickets.com/producer/5602 or \$25 at door. Open seating. Proceeds benefit Walkabout & Clearwater. Refreshments available. Free parking. Sing with the Walkabout Clearwater Chorus at its informal Teachabout starting at 6:45pm. Info: call Bill Chestnut at 914-603-3383 or www.WalkaboutClearwater.org.

Jan 1, Wed, **New Year's Day.** Resolve to do better this coming year (and pay your Riverlovers dues too!).

Jan 17, Fri, 6:30pm, **Riverlovers First-of-the-New-Year Potluck** at Croton Point Nature Center, featuring a screening of "Radioactive Wolves of Chernobyl," from the PBS Nature Series. Info: www.Riverlovers.org.

Feb 8, Sat, **EagleFest at Croton Point Park.** Sign up to help with soup & bread luncheon at the Nature Center, or outreach table in the big tent. See more details on page 1.

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analyze environmental justice impacts under the National Environmental Policy Act.

The NRC Staff had claimed that they were not required to look at accident impacts, but the Board found "there is no legal foundation for the Staff's failure" to analyze accidents. However, instead of requiring more analysis to devise appropriate mitigation, the Board said that the NRC should merely take note of the greater impact upon environmental justice populations when it makes the decision about relicensing. The Board noted that Clearwater had established for the record what the NRC Staff had failed to do, and the Commission will have to consider that in its findings.

In the future, the NRC will have to address the environmental justice impacts of its relicensing decisions, which they had never been required to do prior to this decision. One more constraint has now been added to a growing list of considerations that must be evaluated in relicensing hearings, significantly raising the bar before approval can be granted.

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

It cost \$8.60 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, and get your friends to join you.

Our Life-Support System

"I am tired of hearing that man is on his way to extinction, along with most other forms of life. My own view of man suggests that something worse than extinction is in store for us. It is not man as a species the ecological crisis threatens to destroy, but the quality of human life: the attributes that make human life different from animal life."

Rene Dubos

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

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

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

January Newsletter Contributors: Bill Flank, Warren Lindholm

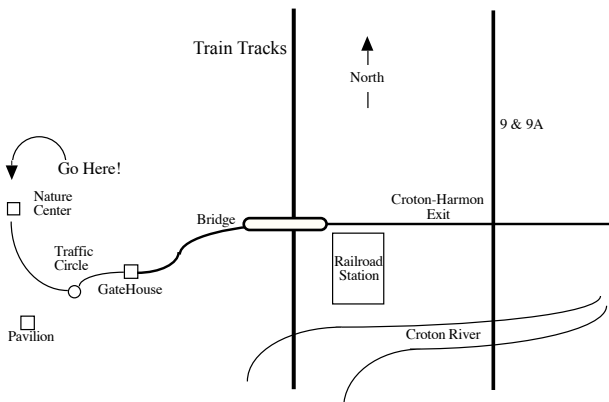
Riverlovers Monthly Potluck and screening of "Radioactive Wolves of Chernobyl"



Riverlovers, Inc.

P.O. Box 285

Croton-on-Hudson, NY 10520



**Friday, January 17, 2014
6:30pm
Croton Point Nature Center**