



# Riverlovers Currents

Volume 27, Number 3, March 2014

## Message From The President

Snow, snow and more snow! EagleFest was held Saturday, February 8th between all the snowstorms. It was a little warm, with some mud on the grounds of the park. There were large crowds attending the shows in the tent, visiting volunteer and vendor tables, and going to eagle-watch walks.

At the Riverlovers outreach table I again showed the PBS program "An American Eagle" on my laptop. This was a huge draw to our outreach table, with adults and children stopping by to watch the program, and then learning about Riverlovers and our various activities. This year we had a sympathy card for Pete Seeger's family, so people could express their condolences.

The February meeting had to be cancelled at the last hour due to concerns about the very muddy parking area. We did not want cars stuck in the mud! We will plan to screen "Pandora's Promise" for the Friday, March 21st Potluck, which starts at 6:30 pm. This is an important film with concerns about global warming, and a different world view on how to safely prepare for the future. Discussion will follow the screening. I welcome hearing other viewpoints, but let's keep an open mind about views expressed in this film.

Riverlovers will again participate in the Earth Day celebration in Valhalla on Sunday, April 20th from 10am to 4pm. The Village of Croton's Earth Day celebration will likely follow the week after. We will inquire about participating.

The April Potluck will be on the 25th at 6:30 pm, on the fourth Friday of the month, due to the third Friday being Good Friday. We will screen "Earthdays," another film directed by Robert Stone. It's a look at the environmental movement through the years and how it has changed.

For the May 16th Potluck we will screen 'Til The River Runs Clear, a film about the Hudson River, Clearwater, and our departed Pete Seeger. We also look forward to another tour of Teatown's Wildflower Island led by our own Daria Gregg. There will also be a canoe trip with Friends of the Great Swamp. Both activities were very popular last year!

Finally, I would like to thank Cynthia Andersen, Kirsten Andersen, and Leesa Thompson for helping me at the outreach table for EagleFest, and all the Riverlovers and Ferry Sloops members who worked with Gunnar Andersen preparing and serving soups and breads at the Nature Center, especially Hale and Gerhard. We particularly want to acknowledge ShopRite, Umami Café and Mex-To-Go for their generous contributions of food and supplies.

## We Need Renewable Energy Standards—I

A renewable electricity standard (RES) requires electric utilities to gradually increase the amount of renewable energy in their power supplies to customers. Currently 29 states and the District of Columbia have adopted an RES—for sources such as wind, solar, geothermal, and biopower—to help create reliable markets for renewable energy and reduce the use of polluting fossil fuels.

A review of RES policies shows that utilities are successfully meeting their renewable energy requirements with little or no additional cost to consumers, while supporting rapidly growing renewable energy industries that provide substantial economic benefits.

Renewables provide a range of economic benefits:

- *The renewable energy industry supports American jobs.* More than 119,000 people worked in solar-related industries in 2012, while wind energy development employed 75,000 full-time workers across the U.S., including 30,000 jobs at manufacturing facilities throughout the country.
- *Renewable energy development promotes investments in the U.S. economy.* In 2012, wind power made up 42 percent of all new U.S. electric capacity additions, representing a \$25 billion investment in the U.S. economy.
- *Renewable energy development outperforms fossil fuels in two important ways when it comes to driving job growth:* 1) Renewable energy development is relatively labor-intensive, so it creates more jobs per dollar invested than fossil fuel resources and 2) Installing renewable energy facilities uses primarily local workers, so investment dollars are kept in local communities.
- *Local landowners benefit from renewable energy development.* When wind turbines are installed on privately owned land, the land owners typically receive payments in the form of lease, royalty, or right-of-way payments. These payments can be an important source of income for rural families.
- *Renewable energy projects pay property and income taxes that help support states and local communities.* For example, wind projects in Iowa, which now generates more than 20 percent of its electricity with wind, provided more than \$19.5 million in annual property tax payments to state and local governments in 2011.

It's not just that we might save the planet, or at least make it habitable a little longer, but that it makes a lot of economic sense.

## Tar Sands, Us, And The Environment

Tar sands, more correctly called oil sand, is a naturally occurring mixture of sand, clay or other minerals, water and bitumen, which is a heavy and extremely viscous oil that must be treated before it can be used by refineries to produce usable fuels such as gasoline, jet fuel and diesel. The Province of Alberta in Canada is in the news these days because of the controversy surrounding the environmentally risky Keystone XL pipeline project for transporting this oil south to us and other customers around the world.

Bitumen is so viscous that at room temperature it acts much like cold molasses. It must be heated, often using hot water, to extract and process it into synthetic crude oil (SCO). On average it takes about two tons of mined oil sands to produce one barrel of SCO. About 80% of Alberta's reserves are *in situ* oil, and 20% can be surface-mined. Currently, about half of the extracted oil is recovered from *in situ* wells, and half from surface mining.

In mining operations, 8 to 10 barrels of water is used for every barrel of SCO produced. However, with recycle rates of 40 to 70 percent this means 2 to 4 barrels of water make-up is required. For *in situ* operations about 2.5 to 4 barrels of water is used for every barrel of bitumen produced, and with recycle rates of 70 to 90 percent, this means about 0.5 barrels of water make-up per barrel is required. By Canadian law, all oil sands projects together can only withdraw less than three percent of the average yearly flow of the Athabasca River for their business use. In 2010, total usage was 0.74 percent of the long-term average annual flow, although that's still a lot of water.

Alberta ranks third, after Saudi Arabia and Venezuela, in terms of proven global crude oil reserves. In 2011, their total proven oil reserves were 170.2 billion barrels, or about 11 percent of total global oil reserves (1,523 billion barrels). Almost all of Alberta's proven oil reserves are found in its oil sands. Of its total oil reserves, 168.7 billion barrels, or about 99 percent, come from the oil sands, and the remaining 1.5 billion barrels come from conventional crude oil. Notably, Alberta accounts for an overwhelming majority (about 98 percent) of Canada's oil reserves.

In 2011, Alberta exported about 1.3 million barrels per day (bbl/d) of crude oil to the United States, supplying 15 percent of U.S. crude oil imports, or 7 percent of U.S. oil demand. Total U.S. oil consumption in 2011 was 18.9 million bbl/d. Canada as a whole exported 2.23 million bbl/d of crude oil to the U.S. in 2011, or about 25 percent of U.S. total crude oil imports.

Although this oil is the most difficult to recover and most expensive to process, there's lots of it. At a world price of about \$100 a barrel of crude, there's a lot of money to be made from it. The environmental costs are huge, however, in terms of water usage and contamination, transportation mishaps, greenhouse gas emissions and other consequences.

Just because it's there, and a profit can be made from it in the short term, doesn't mean that in the long term it's good for the planet and most of us. Living smart requires more of us.

**Pay your dues now—support our river!**

**\$25 Individual & \$35 Family**

## Fracking Politics vs Health And Safety

Five Republican senators, on behalf of oil and gas drilling advocates, had asked the EPA's Office of Inspector General to investigate whether EPA exceeded its authority in acting on complaints from Texas residents about methane leaks into drinking water from hydraulic fracturing operations.

Here's what the Inspector General found: Not only did the EPA have the legal authority to investigate and take action on complaints, but they could have done more to protect the public from methane exposure via drinking water. They tested wells on an emergency basis after the politically controlled Texas Railroad Commission failed to act, and found methane at unsafe and explosive levels in well samples. EPA also used sophisticated techniques to establish that the gas in the groundwater matched the gas produced by a drilling company at two nearby fracking sites.

They even published a picture in their report of methane being flared from a drinking water well, and issued an emergency order requiring the company to provide drinking water to residents. Does this remind you of the faucet-flaring scenes in the documentary film, "Gasland"?

In Pennsylvania and Wyoming, residents living near fracking sites have complained to the EPA of methane-contaminated water after state agencies dragged their feet. A growing body of peer-reviewed research has found methane contamination in groundwater near drilling sites, and seismic effects as well, but drilling advocates and their political friends think dollars first, instead of health and safety. What's wrong with this picture?

## Indian Point's Real Contribution

Let's be clear about this. Entergy mis-represents the share of electricity that Indian Point contributes to the New York City and Westchester region of the power grid.

The total output from both nuclear reactors at Indian Point is 2069 megawatts. Most of Entergy's output, over two-thirds, is exported to the New England grid, according to the New York Times. Con Ed's Annual Report shows that they buy only 500 megawatts from Indian Point, and NYPA, the New York Power Authority, buys none.

Back in 2001, Con Ed and NYPA bought 2000 megawatts from Indian Point. The Entergy sales contracts with New York City have expired, and today only 4% to 6% of the city's electricity is produced by Indian Point, depending on the season.

Our average summer usage level is 12,500 megawatts, and in winter it's 9,000 megawatts, so what we actually get from Indian Point is only a very small fraction of our needs. So much for Entergy's claims of being safe, secure and vital.

Especially after the recent emergency shutdown of Unit 3 and the maintenance shutdown of Unit 2 in mid February, it might be more accurate to say that Indian Point is unsafe, insecure, and certainly not very vital at all!





# What's Happening When

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

Mar 8, Sat, 7:30pm, **Walkabout Clearwater Coffeehouse featuring Sara Thomsen.** Check out the story on page 2, and come see a delightful show. At Memorial United Methodist Church, 250 Bryant Ave, White Plains. Tickets \$23 at door, or advanced tickets via credit card (\$18) at [www.BrownPaperTickets.com/producer/5602](http://www.BrownPaperTickets.com/producer/5602). Open seating. Proceeds benefit Walkabout & Clearwater. Refreshments available. Free parking. Sing with the Walkabout Clearwater Chorus at informal Teachabout starting 6:45pm. Info: [www.WalkaboutClearwater.org](http://www.WalkaboutClearwater.org) or 914-946-1625.

Mar 15, Sat, 4-8pm, **Clearwater Open Boat Party**, at the Kingston homeport, with potluck food, drink, music jam session, boat tours. These have been hugely successful this year. Join the crowd! Info: 845-265-8080.

Mar 20, Thurs, 7pm, **Beacon Sloop Club's Winter Lecture Series: "Sustainable Agriculture."** At the Beacon Sloop Club clubhouse, dockside of the Beacon railroad station.

Mar 21, Fri, 6:30pm, **Riverlovers Monthly Potluck** at Croton Point Nature Center, featuring a screening of "Pandora's Promise," a different way of looking at nuclear power and global warming. Discussions to follow. More details on page 1. Info: [www.Riverlovers.org](http://www.Riverlovers.org).

## Navigating The Anthropocene

The modern era in our planet's history began about six million years ago, when our very early ancestors—*homo erectus*—first stood up on two legs. About two million years ago, modern humans started to become dominant. We call this the Age of Humans, or the Anthropocene Era.

We could migrate over long distances, move resources, make tools, create fire, build shelters, and tend plants for food. All these basic elements of survival ended up changing our surroundings, for us and our ecosystem.

The result was decreased biodiversity and new combinations of climatic and ecological conditions. Much more water is controlled by dams or in man-made lakes than occurs as free-flowing water. Carbon dioxide-induced global warming, by even the most conservative estimates of sea level rise, will eventually inundate areas occupied by about ten percent of the human population—that's many hundreds of millions of people displaced or needing new ways of living.

These are unintended consequences of human activity, and are the "downstream effects" of human decisions, waste, emissions, and self-interest in the use of land and resources for people's livelihoods, comforts and personal security.

Sustainability and survival will require a new approach. The Native American populations, although fewer in number than present populations, largely practiced purposeful sustainability in their activities. We have a model to follow. The question is, can we start while there is still time to avert catastrophic consequences.

## Walkabout Coffeehouse Features

### Sara Thomsen In March

Continuing a stellar lineup this season, March 8<sup>th</sup> at the Walkabout Clearwater Coffeehouse will feature Midwesterner Sara Thomsen. Her songs are an exciting mix of the very personal, the political and the universal. Check out her website at [www.SaraThomsen.com](http://www.SaraThomsen.com) to see what you're in for. See listing above for more info.

### 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.

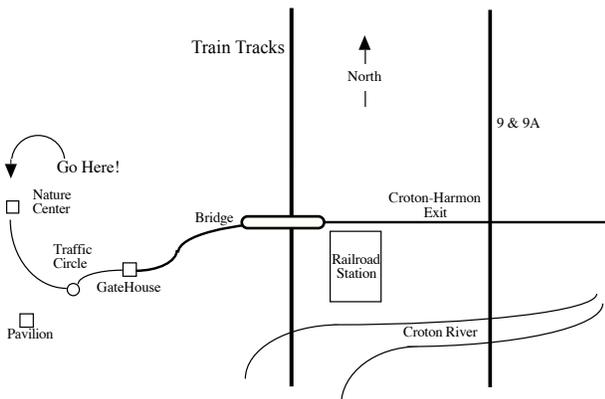
Back issues of *Riverlovers Currents* are available at our web site, [www.riverlovers.org](http://www.riverlovers.org)

Newsletter Committee: Editor, Bill Flank; Associate Editor, Mel Fitting  
 March Newsletter Contributors: Marilyn Ellie, Robin Fox, Warren Lindholm

## Riverlovers Monthly Potluck with movie "Pandora's Promise"



**Riverlovers, Inc.**  
 P.O. Box 285  
 Croton-on-Hudson, NY 10520



**Friday, March 21, 2014**  
**6:30pm**  
**Croton Point Nature Center**