



Riverlovers Currents

Volume 24, Number 5, May 2011

Message From The President

We are truly *RIVERLOVERS!* One of the items in the “Who We Are” statement in the last page of the *Riverlovers Currents* is “Working for access and effective land use along the Hudson River and its tributaries.” Another tributary we visit and kayak in, is the Annsville Creek with its myriad waterfowl and tidal changes.

I visited the Croton Gorge Park right after the April 13th and 14th rain deluge. WOW! The water cascading down the spillway was the largest volume I have ever seen, making a deafening roar. The beginning of the Croton River is now free to flow unimpeded to the Hudson river. The swollen rapids are shooting along at maybe 20 m.p.h. Make a trip to see the Croton dam and spillway—this is a must-see sight!

We are now blessed with abundant rainfall in the Northeast. A few years ago I visited the Hoover dam, and the reservoir was 30 feet low due to droughts in the West. Is this all due to Climate Change?

Our participation for Earth Day has been changed to April 30th at Senasqua Park. There will be a river clean-up at 9 a.m. We will have an Outreach table there. Set up is at 10:30 a.m. Hopefully we will attract some new members. We need volunteers for a few hours. Call me at 914-319-3379 or my home number to volunteer if you would like to help out. There will be presentations, demonstrations and activities including a talk by Chris Letts on funny fish of the Hudson River, composting and organic lawn care. Also arts and crafts using recycled materials, and skits and live music. After the Earth Day celebration, since we are so close, let's go up Route 129 to see the Croton Dam spillway.

The screening of Fahrenheit 9/11 at our April 15th meeting was well received. The movie, among other topics, delved into the perceived threats after 9/11 and the Iraqi invasion. Money and oil were the real driving forces.

For the May 20th meeting we will discuss and schedule future activities such as hiking our nearby section of the Appalachian Trail up to Anthony's Nose overlooking the Bear Mountain Bridge and the Hudson River, or a short walk at the Annsville Preserve overlooking the Hudson River and the Annsville Creek. Another favorite is a walk around the Teatown Reservation Lake. When the water temperatures get warmer we will get on the Hudson River and its tributaries; with kayaking at Annsville Creek near Peekskill, canoeing at Constitution Marsh near Cold Spring, sailing on two of our members' sailboat (The Solar Wind), and whitewater

canoeing on the Delaware River near Pond Eddy. Come and express your likes and preferences for these events.

Sunday May 22nd at 12:30 p.m. we will return to the Hudson Highlands Gateway Park to follow the trails to the original signal fireplace used in the Revolutionary War. To get to the trailhead from Route 9, go to the beginning of the Bear Mountain Parkway heading east. Get off the first exit, Highland Ave., and turn left (north) approximately 1/4 mile. Just before the overpass is Doris Lee Drive on the right. Go all the way up the hill to the little parking area next to the trailhead. Call me if you are coming.

The Clearwater Revival festival is the weekend of June 18th and 19th. Enjoy the music and all the environmental activities. We will have an outreach table with our fellow Sloop Clubs under a shared tent arranged by Marcia Kaplan from the Brooklyn Sloop Club. We need volunteers at the table to remind people to continue the Clearwater environmental experience by coming to our meetings and becoming members of Riverlovers. To help, sign up at the Clearwater website for a Sloop Club volunteer reduced-price ticket for 2 days with free meals, camping and a free Tee shirt.

Finally, we have a date for everyone's favorite activity—our annual sail on the Hudson River Sloop Clearwater. It will be on Wednesday, July 27th at 5:45 p.m. at Randy King's Marina in Verplanck. Sign up and reserve your spot.

Walkabout Coffeehouse Doings

You have only one more chance this spring to support Clearwater and enjoy good music at the same time. The Walkabout Clearwater Coffeehouse's 23rd season is winding down, and the final Coffeehouse evening of the season on Saturday, May 14th features John McCutcheon. Tickets are selling fast so if you want to hear John, buy your tickets now—don't be disappointed! You can order them at www.BrownPaperTickets.com/producer/5602

That's at 7:30pm on Saturday, May 14, 2011 at Memorial United Methodist Church, 250 Bryant Avenue in White Plains, NY.

After you order your tickets, post the enclosed flier. Enjoy a night out and support Walkabout Clearwater, Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, live folk music—and our River.

Pay your dues now—support our river!

\$25 Individual & \$35 Family

EPA To Study Drilling Risks

The Environmental Protection Agency has submitted its plan for a congressionally-mandated study of hydraulic fracturing (“fracking”) to its independent Science Advisory Board for review. Agency scientists are studying this method of natural gas drilling “to better understand any potential impacts it may have, including on groundwater,” according to EPA.

The study will examine the safety of the hydraulic fracturing technique being used to unlock natural gas from shale formations around the nation. The process involves injecting water, sand and a proprietary mixture of chemicals at high pressures deep underground to extract gas from the shale rock formations.

Environmentalists warn that gas can escape out of poorly designed and inadequately secured wells, causing risks of explosions and water contamination, especially of drinking water. They also warn that chemicals used in fracturing can pollute nearby water sources with chemicals that in many cases are carcinogenic.

Although the process is regulated by state and local governments, those regulations and their enforcement is spotty and often inadequate. Some legislators, mostly Democrats, want to empower the EPA to regulate matters more uniformly and strictly. The study’s findings are expected to be made public by the end of 2012.

Hydraulic fracturing should be suspended until that time, so that irreversible damage can be avoided. Our governor and our state legislators need to hear that message from all of us.

Pollution Speeds Evolution

Natural selection normally happens over thousands of years, but it took just 50 years for pollution to transform a fish species in the highly contaminated Hudson River, according to Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution biologists. The PCBs and other toxins that General Electric plants started dumping into the river in 1947, and for 30 years after that until stopped by court order, used to kill most of the river’s Atlantic tomcod while they were still young. Recent surveys, however, show that the bottom-feeding fish in the still-polluted waters are now living much longer than before.

Researchers have found that 99% of Hudson tomcod now have a genetic mutation that prevents or minimizes the pollutants from harming them, and that gene shows up in only 10% of tomcod from clean waters. According to the study’s authors, “It’s an example of how human activities can drive evolution.”

The mutation allows the Hudson tomcod to survive and reproduce by binding extreme levels of PCBs in their fatty tissue, but the rest of the ecosystem pays a big price for this. The Hudson tomcod’s adaptation means that the striped bass that prey on them ingest heavy doses of stockpiled toxins, pushing pollutants up the food chain in a process called bioaccumulation. According to the study’s authors, “Any evolutionary change at this pace is not a good thing.” What’s good for some is evidently not good for everyone else, and we (read *GE* here) create such anomalies at our peril. It would be better if we didn’t.

(Thanks to Art Ansel for finding this article.)

Electric Vehicles: Myths vs. Reality – II

(Adapted from the Sierra Club’s Insider)

Myth 4: *My electricity bill will go way up.*

Reality: While you’ll spend more on electricity, savings on gas will more than cover it. If you drive a pure battery electric vehicle 12,000 miles a year at current electricity rates (assuming \$.12 per kilowatt hour though rates vary throughout the country), you’ll pay about \$389 per year for the electricity to charge your battery, but you’ll save about \$1200 in gas (assuming \$3 per gallon, a 30 miles per gallon vehicle, and 12,000 miles driven). So \$1200 minus \$389 equals \$811 in savings—a 68% reduction in fueling costs. Some utilities are offering EV owners lower off-peak/nighttime rates. The more we successfully advocate for these off-peak incentives, the lower your electricity payments will go.

Myth 5: *Electric vehicles will just fail again.*

Reality: Manufacturers are serious this time—rolling out more than a dozen new plug-in models in the next few years, starting now. With higher gas prices and climate change worrying many consumers, stricter fuel economy standards for new vehicles required of auto manufacturers, and billions of public and corporate dollars being spent on an EV infrastructure and research in the US, EVs are here to stay.

Myth 6: *My battery will run out of juice.*

Reality: The majority of drivers in the US drive less than 35 miles each day, sufficient for a fully charged pure electric vehicle (most can go 80 to 140 miles on one charge), and an extended range electric vehicle (that drives about 35 miles on electric and then the gasoline power kicks in). Using a 220-volt outlet and charging station, a plug-in hybrid recharges in about 100 minutes, an extended range plug-in electric in about four hours, and a pure electric in six to eight hours. A regular 110-volt outlet has significantly longer charging times, but for plug-in hybrids and extended range electrics, this may be sufficient. Most of the time, the battery will not be empty when you plug in, reducing charging time.

Most people will charge at home. However, some businesses and public entities are beginning to install 220-volt public chargers. Some are installing fast-charging stations along highways and in public places that can re-charge a car to 80% of battery capacity in less than 30 minutes.

Global Warming Is Really Real

A report from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration says ten measurable global features all provide evidence that climate has warmed during the past half-century.

Seven indicators showed increases, including air temperature over land, sea surface temperature, air temperature over oceans, sea levels, ocean heat, humidity, and the temperature of the troposphere. Three indicators declined, including the extent of Arctic sea ice, the mass of the glaciers, and Spring snow cover in the Northern Hemisphere.

NOAA Administrator Jane Lubchenco noted that “These independently produced lines of evidence all point to the same conclusion: Our planet is warming.” The State of the Climate report is based on information from scientific institutions around the world, and includes data from satellites, weather balloons, ships, and field surveys.

It gets harder and harder to ignore reality, doesn’t it?



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.

May 12, Thurs, 7:30pm, **Meeting in the Croton Library regarding Indian Point.** Meet with others who want to close Indian Point. Get the facts, find out how you can help.

May 14, Sat, 7:30pm, **Walkabout Clearwater Coffeehouse featuring the consummate musician, John McCutcheon.** At Memorial United Methodist Church, 250 Bryant Ave, White Plains. Advance tickets (\$20) available at www.BrownPaperTickets.com, or at door (\$25). Open seating. Proceeds benefit Walkabout & Clearwater. Refreshments available. Free parking. Informal songfest starts at 6:45 p.m. Info: call 914-242-0374 or www.WalkaboutClearwater.org.

May 20, Fri, 6:30pm, **Riverlovers Potluck** at Croton Point Nature Center. Select & schedule our outdoor hiking and boating events for the coming season. Info: www.Riverlovers.org.

May 22, Sun, 12:30pm, **Riverlovers hike in Hudson Highlands Gateway Park** to the original signal fireplace used in the Revolutionary War. Directions on page 1. Call Warren at 914-319-3379 for details and your reservation.

June 18-19, Sat-Sun, **Clearwater's Great Hudson River Revival at Croton Point Park.** Great lineup, not to be missed. Sign up to help staff the Riverlovers table in the Sloop Club tent and get a reduced rate ticket.

July 27, Wed, 5:45pm, **Riverlovers Annual Clearwater Sail** out of Randy King's Marina in Verplanck. Plan to sign up now, so you don't miss out.

Composting: How to Do It

by Warren Lindholm

Composting is a great way to reduce yard and kitchen waste to usable soil. One has to mix greens such as grass clippings from mowing the lawn, and kitchen waste, a source of nitrogen, with a smaller portion of brown leaves, a source of carbon. Compost results from the activity of billions of microscopic organisms that utilize the two main chemical components of organic matter—carbon and nitrogen—in their life processes. They consume the carbon for energy and the nitrogen for growth and reproduction. The portion they can't digest remains as humus, or partially decomposed matter.

I have ten large maple and oak trees on a one-half acre yard. In Fall I save my fallen leaves in several 4½ foot wire mesh bins. To avoid raking I use my lawnmower with a grass catcher, to pick up the leaves. This breaks up the leaves, and less raking is needed. I call it "mowraking." In Spring I make a new wire mesh bin for that year's compost.

In the summer, grass clippings are mixed with an equal amount of last autumn's leaves in layers to resemble lasagna. The compost pile is aerated with a special tool that opens up to mix the grass and leaves and brings air into the pile. I

bury kitchen waste such as fruit and potato peels, salads and various fruits that have lost their freshness. The pile will heat up to 140°F due to biological activities. Avoid cooked vegetables and meats, which attract pests.

The next spring I have some nice compost. Before using, I push the compost through a half inch wire mesh frame to get rid of twigs and leaves, and it's ready to apply. What is left is dark brown crumbly amended soil, great for gardening and for the lawn.

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

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

May Newsletter Contributors: Art Ansel, Robin Fox, Warren Lindholm



Interest Group Coordinators

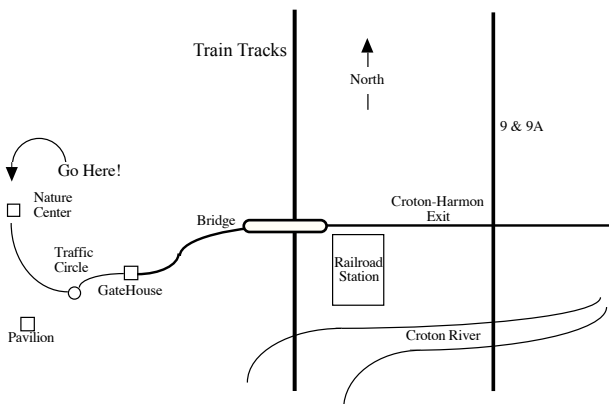
Interest Group	Coordinator	Phone
Envir. Education	Bill Flank	238-8240
Membership	Gunnar Andersen	432-3112
Newsletter	Bill Flank	238-8240
Newsletter Distribution	Cynthia Andersen	432-3112
Outreach		
Photographer/Archivist	Beverly Dyckman	739-5057
Potluck	Warren Lindholm	739-9028
Publicity		
ShadFest	Robin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

Riverlovers Monthly Potluck (and May 22nd Revolutionary hike)



Riverlovers, Inc.

P.O. Box 285

Croton-on-Hudson, NY 10520

Friday, May 20, 2011
6:30pm
Croton Point Nature Center