



Riverlovers Currents

Volume 25, Number 5, May 2012

Message From The President

The last DVD of the winter series, "Power Surge" was well received, with an appreciative crowd of Riverlovers and several new visitors. The basic premise that was shown, that to reduce the rapidly rising levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere due to 7 billion tons of CO₂ emissions produced yearly, was to play the game of wedges. Each wedge on a graph of rising CO₂ levels represents 1 billion tons of CO₂. There are 4 types of wedges, 1st is to increase the fuel efficiency of automobiles, 2nd burying carbon emissions of fossil fuel power plants, 3rd tripling the number of safe nuclear power plants, and 4th harnessing the sun through increasing the use of solar panels and wind turbines. The Earth needs to use at least 7 wedges in any combination to not increase global warming.

On Sunday, April 22nd the Riverlovers had an outreach table at the Westchester County Earth Day celebration at the Kensico Dam plaza. Wow! What a success, with a large turnout of people attending the event despite the weather and many of them visiting our Riverlovers table. I gave out all our *Riverlovers Currents*, informed people to visit our website, and many people signed up their e-mail addresses. All this on a drizzly rainy Earth Day.

Our first Spring excursion will be a walk in the Rockefeller State Park Preserve on Sunday May 6th at 1 pm. We've chosen an interesting and scenic walk among many available ones, crossing 13 bridges over Gorey Brook in the lower part of the Preserve.

Let's meet in the parking lot on the southwest corner of Route 9A and Route 117. If coming south on 9A, go up the ramp on the left leading to Route 117, make a right at the light and an immediate left into the parking area on the south side. If northbound on 9A, take the ramp on the left up to Route 117, make a left at the light and then another left into the parking area on the southwest corner of this large intersection. (If you reach the next traffic light and Route 448, you've gone past our meeting spot.) We'll meet at 1pm and caravan from there to a special parking area for our hike, which won't necessitate paying a parking lot fee at the main section of the Preserve.

The next Potluck meeting will be Friday, May 18th at 6:30 pm at the Croton Point Nature Center. We will explore how we can make ourselves helpful at the Clearwater benefit concert and other events that will take place Friday evening, at the start of Clearwater's Great Hudson River Revival on

Father's Day weekend, and we'll set some dates and activities for the coming season.

In June, let's go kayaking either June 3rd or June 10th at Annsville Paddlesports Center in Cortlandt Manor or at the Hudson Valley Outfitters in Cold Spring. We'll decide details at the May Potluck.

In addition to helping out on June 15th at the start of the Great Hudson River Revival, volunteers for the festival need to sign up and confirm their reservations on the Clearwater.org website if they haven't already done so. We will have an outreach table at the Sloop Club tent and we need Riverlovers to staff it in shifts over the weekend. Call me or e-mail me (Lindholm63@gmail.com) to let me know what time slots you can fill.

And in closing, we have arranged with Clearwater for Riverlovers' favorite activity, a sail on the Sloop Clearwater on August 12. It will be a Sunday evening sunset sail and we'll meet at King Marine in Verplanck at 5:30pm for boarding. One of the advantages of membership in Riverlovers is a low-cost sail on the Sloop Clearwater. We currently ask for a suggested donation of \$10 for members and \$20 for non-members, which we then share with our parent organization. What a bargain for everyone! Contact me to sign up for this annual highlight for Riverlovers.

Walkabout Clearwater Coffeehouse

by Robin Fox

The final Coffeehouse concert of Walkabout's 24th season is scheduled for Saturday, May 12, 2012. Our performer is the great troubadour Bill Staines, who has as his guest, his son Bowen Staines. It will be a terrific evening.

We always try to have an "activist" present at our Coffeehouse evenings, and recently our activists have included, Amnesty International, Children's Cancer Research Fund, our local county food bank, etc., and always Clearwater. This May 12th, we'd like to feature the family of Clearwater Sloop Clubs, including Riverlovers. Come share the evening with us.

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

It cost \$8.50 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!

Water And Climate Change

You might ask how global warming impacts water. Water in its various forms is always on the move, in a complex process known as the water cycle. Global warming is already having a measurable effect on this cycle, altering the amount, distribution, timing, and quality of available water. Water users—from communities, to industries, to ecosystems—are in turn affected. Their activities and functions depend, either directly or indirectly, on water.

Change is underway

With climate change, the water cycle is expected to undergo significant change. For example, a warmer climate causes more water to evaporate from both land and oceans; in turn, a warmer atmosphere can hold more water—roughly four percent more water for every 1°F rise in temperature. Changes like this are expected to lead to specific, and in many cases negative, consequences. Some parts of the U.S.—in particular, the Northeast and Midwest—can expect increased precipitation and runoff, especially in winter and spring, leading to increased flooding. Other areas—notably the Southwest—can expect less precipitation, especially in the warm months, and longer, more severe droughts as storm tracks shift northward leaving arid areas increasingly dry.

Rain versus snow can make a critical difference

The form that precipitation takes is also subject to change in response to warming: climate projections for many regions of North America suggest less snow, overall, and more rain. In areas dependent on the gradual melting of snowpack to supply surface water through the warm months, this means lower flows and greater water stress in summer—a trend already in evidence in parts of the western U.S. While the effects of climate change on groundwater are not fully understood, rising water competition and stress at the surface are likely to drive greater use—and overuse—of this resource.

Overall, wet areas are expected to become wetter and dry areas drier, placing additional stress on the nation's over-taxed water systems as well as water-dependent sectors of our society.

Water quality affects people and ecosystems

Declining water quality is another consequence of climate change. Water temperature, for example, will generally rise in streams, lakes, and reservoirs as air temperature rises. This leads to lower levels of dissolved oxygen in water, hence more stress on the fish, insects, crustaceans and other aquatic life that rely on oxygen. As more—and more intense—precipitation leads to increased runoff in certain regions, we can also expect more pollution to be washed into our waterways: sediments, nitrogen from agriculture, disease pathogens, pesticides, and herbicides. Naturally, the pollution load in streams and rivers tends to be carried to larger bodies of water downstream—lakes, estuaries, and the coastal ocean—where a dramatic consequence of heavy runoff is blooms of harmful algae and bacteria.

The tide is rising

One of the starkest effects of climate change is the anticipated rise in sea level worldwide. This occurs for two main reasons: the expansion of the ocean as it warms, and the increased melt from ice sheets, ice caps and glaciers.

Along with alarming threats to coastal communities, infrastructure, economies and ecosystems, this rise has implications for available freshwater, as rising sea levels drive salt-water into freshwater aquifers. To be useful for drinking or irrigating, more water from our aquifers would then need to be treated, usually by energy-intensive processes. Given the wide range of human activities that depend—directly or indirectly—on water, future climate-driven changes in water resources will affect many aspects of our lives. We need to act now to protect our water resources while we still can.

Did We Miss The Fracking Boom?

Since the moratorium, some of the drilling giants have pulled back. Energy companies swept through the Southern Tier and into the Catskills in 2008, eager to lease natural gas rights from landowners sitting above the resource-rich and suddenly accessible Marcellus Shale formation.

Close to four years of regulatory review and a *de facto* moratorium later, New York's portion of the Marcellus remains untapped by high-volume hydraulic fracturing. Now, natural gas giants like Chesapeake Energy, Lenape Resources and Consol Energy are pulling back on shale gas drilling in other states and focusing on so-called "wet gas" not found in New York. This is largely because natural gas prices have dropped to lows not seen for a decade.

So, has New York missed the gas drilling boom? Most experts say no, but several say that low natural gas prices could have an effect on the pace of drilling if the state should decide to allow high-volume hydrofracking. When New York's Department of Environmental Conservation began creating a regulatory structure for the techniques used in fracking in 2008, natural gas sold for an average of \$10.79 per thousand cubic feet at the wellhead. As of a few months ago, it sold for \$3.35, and this price plunge is due to a glut of natural gas in the market, largely because of a steady increase in production in other states.

Since the initial rush of leasing activity in 2008, gas companies have cooled considerably toward New York because the lower price makes a lot of projects non-economic. Gas firm employees have been shifted elsewhere and new lease offers to landowners have virtually disappeared.

One reason for this is that parts of the Marcellus formation in Ohio and western Pennsylvania have "wet gas" that contains a little less methane and more of other hydrocarbons like the more valuable ethane, which can be separated out and sold separately. New York's Marcellus formation is believed to contain only "dry gas" and affords less profit.

Permits for high-volume hydrofracking can't be issued in New York until the DEC completes its review and renders a decision on whether and how to proceed. That decision is months away, and it's not certain how much influence the pricing situation will have. Environmental groups say there are many unanswered questions about safety and the potential effects on water resources and the state's landscape, and they need to be fully resolved before a decision is made on how, and if, to proceed. Once the genie is out of the bottle, it can't be put back, because the damage will have been done already.

(Thanks to Art Ansel for forwarding a recent article on this from The Journal News.)



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 6, Sun, 1pm, **Riverlovers Spring hike in Rockefeller Preserve.** See details and meeting place in President's Message on page 1.

May 12, Sat, 7:30pm, **Walkabout Clearwater Coffeehouse featuring Bill Staines,** with special guest Bowen Staines. At Memorial United Methodist Church, 250 Bryant Ave, White Plains. Advance tickets (\$17.50) available at www.BrownPaperTickets.com/producer/5602, or at door (\$20). Open seating. Proceeds benefit Walkabout & Clearwater. Refreshments available. Free parking. Sing with the Walkabout Clearwater Chorus at its informal Teachabout starting at 6:45 pm. Info: call 914-603-3383 or www.WalkaboutClearwater.org.

May 18, Fri, 6:30pm, **Riverlovers Monthly Potluck,** plan, set and sign up for outdoor events for Spring and Summer, Revival participation. Info: www.Riverlovers.org.

June 15-17, Fri-Sun, **Clearwater's Great Hudson River Revival at Croton Point Park.** Mark the date and plan to be there. Sign up to help staff our outreach table in the Sloop Club tent. You don't want to miss this year's outstanding festival lineup.

Can We Produce Enough Energy with Green Sources or Must We Rely on Coal, Oil, and Nuclear?

In the past year we have seen too many examples of just how costly our reliance on coal, oil, and nuclear energy can be. The Upper Big Branch coal mine explosion, the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, the current ongoing nuclear crisis in Japan—all have starkly highlighted the dangers of using these sources of energy to power our lives, not to mention the climate impacts of burning coal and oil, and processing nuclear fuel.

The truth is, it doesn't have to be this way. There are cleaner, safer options available and ready for use today. According to a 2009 Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) report, *Climate 2030: A National Blueprint*, and according to the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Special Report on Renewable Energy Sources and Climate Change Mitigation, renewable energy has the technical potential to exceed the current global energy demand by a considerable amount, and the economic potential to be more competitive than nuclear power, fossil fuels with carbon capture and storage, and other low-carbon energy options.

We have the technology and we know how to implement it. But we also have entrenched interests. What we don't yet have is the will.

Fracking Update

In two separate decisions, New York judges recently ruled that local municipalities may prohibit natural gas drilling within their boundaries. Both judges found precedent for local government's zoning control of land uses. While the rulings are likely to be appealed, they represent a milestone in the fracking debate in New York State.

(reprinted from the Beacon Sloop Club's Broadside)

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 2012 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		
ShadFest	Robin Fox	271-6088

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.

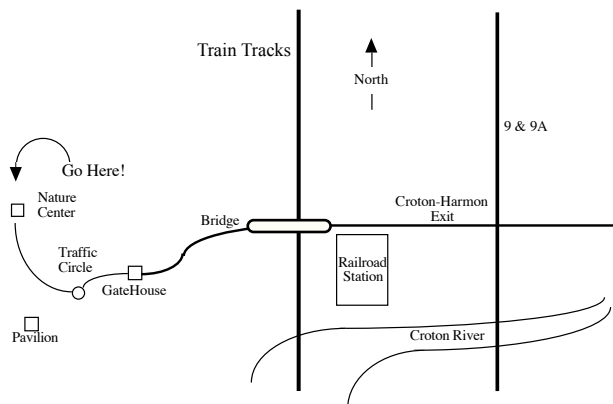
Back issues of *Riverlovers Currents* are available at our web site, www.riverlovers.org

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

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

Riverlovers Monthly Potluck

Revival and Outdoor Events Planning



Riverlovers, Inc.

P.O. Box 285

Croton-on-Hudson, NY 10520

Friday, May 18, 2012

6:30pm

Croton Point Nature Center