



Riverlovers Currents

Volume 30, Number 5, May 2017

Message from the President

The leaves in the lower Hudson Valley are just starting to bud in unison. Several weeks earlier in April, Riverlovers did four hikes in Blue Mountain Reservation. We marveled at giant rock formations as we followed the various trails, on the way to climb Mt. Spitzenberg, and a week later Blue Mountain. Both have spectacular views of the Hudson River, from Yonkers to Iona Island. This was an ideal time to visit, with no leaves on the trees. One can see through the bare branches and the clear openings between the trees.

At Vassallo Park in Croton Village off of Old Post Road on Saturday, April 29th from 10am till 3pm, Riverlovers will have an outreach table for the Croton Earth Day.

Riverkeeper's annual RiverSweep is on Saturday, May 6th from 12 noon till 3pm at Georges Island Park, on Dutch St., which is off Rte. 9A (Old Albany Post Road). Daria and I will be co-captains. We need to know who is volunteering. Call me at the number listed on page 4. We will meet afterwards at the Peekskill Brewery for a free beverage.

Westchester County Department of Environmental Facilities is holding its Annual Earth Day event on May 13th from 9am to 3pm at the Kensico Dam Plaza. We have been invited to host an exhibit for this event.

We visit the Pepsico Sculpture Garden on Saturday, May 20th at 1pm. Admission is free; just obtain a visitor's pass from the guard at the gate. Directions: Exit 28 off of the Hutchinson River Parkway, then head north on Lincoln Ave. to Anderson Hill Road and make a right turn, and the next right will be the Sculpture Gardens. Proceed to parking area. The Pepsico Garden has been compared to a smaller version of the Storm King Art Center, but with fewer hills.

For the May 19th Potluck at 6:30 pm, we will screen a PBS nature special, "Soul of the Elephant." Ironically, every dead elephant with its ivory intact is cause to celebrate. An elephant died of natural causes, not bullets, snares or poison, and a soul was celebrated and mourned by its herd.

For the April Potluck, we screened "Burning the Future—Coal in America." The movie dealt with the Massey Coal Company and the horrible way it ruined the ecology of West Virginia with its mountaintop removal and its dumping of open pit mine tailings into the valleys. Bill Flank brought up that Massey Coal went bankrupt and its CEO is in jail for bribery. I researched the fact that Alpha Natural Resources has now replaced Massey. The new corporation has entered into a consent agreement as of

March 5, 2014 with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Department of Justice and three states regarding claims under the Clean Water Act.

For the Summer, we will get canoeing dates for Iona Island and Constitution Marsh. We will also get a date for our most popular activity, a sail on the mighty Hudson River Sloop Clearwater. Watch for further details.

Is My Water Clean?

Here are signs to look for when assessing your tap water quality. If you have any concerns, contact your local Town government. If you have well water, it needs to be tested.

Is your water cloudy or have visible sediment after standing for a short time? Minerals are commonly present and generally safe in drinking water, but they shouldn't be visible to the naked eye. They do, however, contribute to water hardness and scum formation.

Does your water have a chlorine odor? It is routinely added as a disinfectant to purify water and make it potable. It should not smell like swimming pool water, however, and the chlorine odor is most easily detected while showering. High levels can affect your stomach and can irritate mucous linings, and it can interact with trace contaminants to form disinfection byproducts that are hazardous over time.

If you have well water, can you detect a sulfury or musty smell? While some groundwater does contain smelly sulfur compounds and should only be ingested in limited amounts, the most likely cause is bacteria growth in wells that are only sporadically used. Clorox disinfection and thorough flushing is the best cure for that.

Is there an orange or brownish tint, and do dark particles settle out? This is a sign of too much iron or manganese, either in the source water or caused by rusty pipes. Tarnished silverware is sometimes also seen. Cartridge filters are a stopgap solution.

Is there an oily film? This is best seen in toilets and tubs, and indicates that your water supply is contaminated with oil or grease. You might want to use bottled water until you identify and remove the contaminant source.

Can you detect a bitter or metallic taste? This could be a sign of pesticides, herbicides, medications and industrial chemicals. This can be quite dangerous to your health, and the source needs to be promptly identified and remedied.

Water suppliers are required to promptly notify consumers if EPA testing standards are exceeded, but you need to be vigilant as well, and take any necessary steps.

Fracking: The Objections

by Bill Flank

[*This is the second in a series of articles on fracking.*]

New gas and oil technology is responsible for a number of changes in the economy, in land use, and in impacts on people's lives. For example, farms or forests are turned into sterile, noisy drill pads or pipeline easements that are not good neighbors. Let's look at some of the major objections.

- *Water pollution:* A large fraction of the anti-fracking reports deal with the risk of water pollution. The rush to get wells into production compounds the problem. Operators proceeded without first establishing baseline contaminant levels. Current best practices, however, require monitoring the potentially affected water prior to drilling, and then monitoring the operation and the post-abandonment period as well. Then, of course, the chemical additive cocktail is introduced during operation of the process, and many of the components used to facilitate the process are toxic and enter the environment as "flowback water" and as "produced water." (These terms were discussed in an earlier article.) The potential for affecting potable water supplies is quite high, and very expensive tertiary wastewater treatment has thus far not been required of the well operators.

- *Air pollution:* This quality-of-life concern arises because oil and gas wells, pipelines, storage tanks and other equipment can leak. Some of the volatile substances released are really smelly and not very healthy. Large motors on the well site are often powered by fuels with loud and smelly exhaust as well.

- *Radiation:* "Produced water" from some wells, in the Marcellus region especially, contains high concentrations of naturally-occurring radioactive materials, principally decay products from uranium deposits underlying the shale. Radium and radon are of particular concern, but their "daughter" isotopes include lead and polonium. Barium, strontium and calcium, which contribute to water hardness, are found in the Marcellus region. Radioactive material trapped in sediment and hardness-induced scale deposits can exceed radiological safety limits by significant factors.

- *Aesthetics:* Some oil and gas fields are in desolate areas. Others, such as those in the Marcellus region, are in forested areas of Pennsylvania, Ohio and potentially in New York as well. If people live nearby, their landscape and infrastructure will be affected by well drilling and production operations. Past industry practices show that these operations are disproportionately located in areas with lower economic status.

- *Induced seismic activity:* Re-injection of wastewater in Ohio and Texas has been shown to induce earthquake swarms, and most dramatically in central Oklahoma. In the latter case, a multimillion dollar damage suit has been filed in the Native American court system, which has sovereign jurisdiction over legal actions concerning tribal lands.

There are lots of things not to like, if you have a fracking neighbor. While some jobs and some economic activity in the local area may be created for some number of years, and a few people will do handsomely, there is a price to be paid. Not only is it not sustainable, but the local environment and way of life are permanently altered, and the bulk of the profits go elsewhere. That's a high price to pay.

GMOs And The American Diet

The gap between what scientists and the public believe about genetically modified organisms (more affectionately known as GMOs) is now wider than it is on any other issue, according to a recent survey by the Pew Research Center and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. While 90 percent of scientists believe GMOs are safe to eat, only 37 percent of the public thinks that is true.

Today, nearly all our calories—essentially, nearly all our food—are grown from genetically modified plants. Chances are that three fourths of everything you put in your mouth today—the eggs, the yogurt, the cereal, the chicken sandwich, the tortilla chips, the mayonnaise, the salad dressing, the cheeseburger, the French fries, the soda, the cookies, the ice cream—were processed (or fed) from plants grown from seeds engineered in a laboratory. The same is true for the food you feed your baby and the food you feed your dog.

The reason for this is simply that the American diet is composed almost entirely of processed foods that are made from two plants—corn and soybeans (and you can include canola if you want your food fried). Their seeds, which are full of dense calories, can be broken down and reconstituted into an infinite variety of prepackaged foods.

The vast majority of the 40,000 food products Americans choose from every day are built from ingredients made from engineered plants. Fully 85 percent of the feed given to cattle, hogs and chickens is grown from genetically modified crops. What's more, about half of the sugar we consume is grown from engineered sugar beets.

On the other hand, one place you mostly won't find engineered food is in the produce aisle. Your carrots, lettuce and peaches are all grown the old-fashioned way, and this is true whether or not the produce is labeled "organic."

In contrast, just go over to the middle of your typical supermarket, or into most fast-food restaurants, convenience stores or gas station snack shops, and you will find genetically modified foods at every turn. They are everywhere, and have been for decades, whether we were aware of them or not.

There have been claims of GMOs increasing the risk of allergies, kidney and liver disease, cancer and immune disorders, but the FDA, the World Health Organization, the National Academy of Sciences and other major science organizations have monitored and studied the safety and nutrition of GM foods for decades, and have found no evidence of harm and no scientific evidence to support claims of increased risk.

With GMOs, we often gain shelf life and decrease waste, but lose taste. Our food is cheaper but less tasty, because farmers can produce more food using less land and other natural resources to feed a growing global population. We really don't define what we mean by GM crops very carefully, and there are a lot of baseless fears, along with some risks in a few areas, mostly where there is the potential for monopoly and large profits.

As with most things, there are pluses and minuses, and we need to try to maximize the former and minimize the latter. What really matters is that we maintain a healthy balanced diet, utilizing all the recommended food groups.



What's Happening When

Sundays, 10am-3pm, **Farmers' Market** at the Beacon Sloop Club, at Long Dock Park in Beacon. Local cheeses, eggs, pasta, bread, lamb, fruits and vegetables.

April 29, Sat, 10am-3pm, **Riverlovers outreach table** at Croton Earth Day at Vassallo Park. See page 1 for more information.

May 3, Wed, 7:30pm, **Ferry Sloops Spring Lecture Series: Past, Present and Future of the Hudson River.** Presented by local historian Scott Craven, at Shattemuc Yacht Club, Westerly Road, Ossining. Potluck supper at 6:30.

May 6, Sat, 12-3pm, **Riverkeeper's annual RiverSweep** at George's Island Park. Daria and Warren will be co-captains. Call Warren to pre-register, and meet afterwards at the Peekskill Brewery. See page 1 for more information.

May 6, Sat, 1:30pm, **Pete Seeger Birthday Open House**, at the Beacon Sloop Club Clubhouse, Beacon waterfront.

May 11, Thurs, 7pm, **Beacon Sloop Club Winter Lecture Series: Nature's New Deal**, with Neil Maher, PhD. At Beacon Sloop Clubhouse, Beacon waterfront.

May 13, Sat, 7:30pm, **Walkabout Clearwater Coffeehouse featuring legendary Tom Chapin.** *Upstairs* in the Sanctuary at Memorial United Methodist Church, 250 Bryant Ave, White Plains. Tickets are \$20.00 in advance online (until 7:30 a.m. on the day of the concert) and \$25.00 at the door. Students with ID are \$15.00 and children ages 6 to 12 are \$10.00. 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 & tickets: www.WalkaboutClearwater.org, or call 914-946-1625.

May 19, Fri, 6:30pm, **Riverlovers Monthly Potluck Supper** at Croton Point Nature Center. We will screen the PBS special, "Soul of the Elephant." Info: www.riverlovers.org.

May 20, Sat, 1pm, **Riverlovers visit to Pepsico Sculpture Garden.** Admission free, get pass at gate. See page 1 for directions and details.

Walkabout Coffeehouse In May

The final concert of the 29th season of the Walkabout Clearwater Coffeehouse, on Saturday, May 13th, is in the upper Sanctuary at Memorial United Methodist Church in White Plains. Tom Chapin, the multi-talented singer/songwriter/guitarist and actor, is featured.

Tickets are \$20.00 in advance online (until 7:30 a.m. on the day of the concert) and \$25.00 at the door. Students with ID are \$15.00 and children ages 6 to 12 are \$10.00. For tickets, visit www.WalkaboutClearwater.org.

Doors open at 6:30pm and the concert begins at 7:30. The trademark informal audience songfest with the Walkabout Clearwater Chorus begins at 6:45. Come sing with us!

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

It cost \$9.30 a year to send you the *Riverlovers Currents*. Please consider adding at least that much to your annual dues. Support your Newsletter, Clearwater, and the river, and get your friends to join you. We'll all be the beneficiaries.

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 2017 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:

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| <input type="radio"/> Family | \$65 | <input type="radio"/> Sailing-Master | \$1000 |
| <input type="radio"/> Contributor | \$100 | <input type="radio"/> Benefactor | \$5000 |
| <input type="radio"/> Sponsor | \$200 | <input type="radio"/> Other | \$25 |

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Please include check payable to Clearwater, or charge by credit card

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| <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, River-lovers' 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	Warren Lindholm	739-9028
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):		
Secretary:	Cynthia Andersen	432-3112
Treasurer:	Daria Gregg	944-8396
President-Emeritus	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: Bill Flank, Warren Lindholm

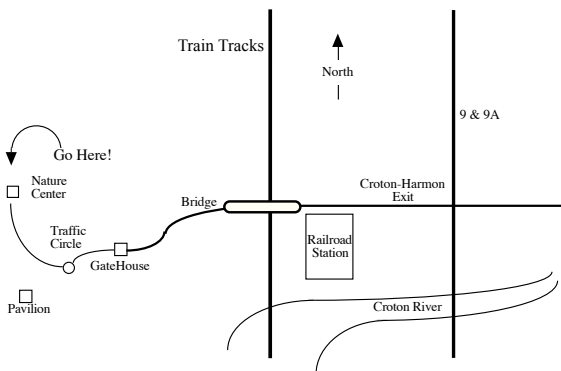
Riverlovers Monthly Potluck and showing of PBS nature film *Soul of the Elephant*



Riverlovers, Inc.

P.O. Box 285

Croton-on-Hudson, NY 10520



Friday, May 19, 2017

6:30pm

Croton Point Nature Center