



# Riverlovers Currents

Volume 28, Number 10, October 2015

## Message from the President

Ah! Late September. Warm sunny days and cool nights. One knows summer is over. However it's still pleasant outside for various outdoor activities. The leaves on all the trees are still green, still taking in carbon dioxide and producing oxygen. The earth breathes! (As said in the film *Inconvenient Truth*).

We had a wonderful summer. We had three sails on our members' sailboat, the *Solar Wind*, crossing the Hudson from Senasqua Park to Haverstraw Bay. One sail had barely enough wind to cross back, the other two sails had very high winds which made for very exciting trips. As for kayaking, we had four trips from the Croton Train Station launch on the Croton River, up-river to the rapids where we beached the kayaks. Some of us went swimming, and I went snorkeling in the cold clear water and saw fish swimming, while Bill was fly-casting from his kayak.

We had a wonderful sunset sail at the end of July on the Hudson River Sloop *Clearwater*, out of the Beacon dock. As is the tradition on *Clearwater*, the captain asked for a minute of silence, and then we were treated to the crew singing and playing folk songs.

We even managed to get in a sunset canoe trip at Constitution Marsh at Bob's urging. Next year, I want to return to Constitution Marsh, and to Iona Island Marsh. I plan to contact both groups for dates, and I will need quick response from our members.

For the September meeting to start the Fall season, we screened the uproarious spoof Civil War mockumentary "The Battle of Pussy Willow Creek." You had to be there to see history turned on its head!

We'll initiate our Fall outdoor hikes on Sunday, October 11th at 1pm with an easy scenic walk at the Sunny Ridge Preserve. Going south on Rte. 9 across the Croton River, keep left to Rte. 9A and go up the hill to the light, then make a left and head north-east on Rte. 134 (Kitchawan Road) for 0.3 miles to Grace Lane and then a few hundred feet more to the Sunny Ridge gravel parking lot on your left. From the Taconic Parkway, get off at the Rte. 134 exit and head south-west on Rte. 134 (Kitchawan-Croton Dam Road) for approximately 2 miles, and just before Grace Lane, the gravel parking lot will be on your right.

I would like the Riverlovers to do other walks and hikes in October and November, such as the Croton-Ossining bridge, Sylvan Lake Park Preserve, Granite Knowles Pre-

serve and others. We can talk about them at our next Potluck meeting.

For the Friday, October 16th Potluck meeting at 6:30pm at the Croton Point Nature Center, we will screen "Crude Awakening." This environmental video explores future oil shortages. As one example, even with today's low-budget airlines, fuel may become so restricted and so expensive that it's possible that our grandchildren may never get to experience much air travel.

For the Friday, November 20th meeting at 6:30 pm we will screen "Pandora's Promise". This will be a DVD instead of streaming, and the sound will stay in sync. This movie explores the idea that wind and solar power will not be enough to mitigate climate change in a rapidly prospering world with increasing electrical demand. There are other solutions. I have contacted the N.Y. Times environmental blogger Andrew Revkin (Dot Earth) as a guest speaker.

For the Friday, December 18th Potluck at 6:30 pm, I will present a talk on "Air" and how fragile our atmosphere is. Our satellites orbit over 100 miles up in space, but do we have a hundred miles of air over our heads? I will discuss why not!

Come on out to our meetings, and participate in our activities. Members and non-members are welcome. Together we can educate ourselves and others to protect the Hudson River, and save the Earth and its climate for ourselves and future generations to enjoy.

## Quote Without Comment

The American Chemical Society's Chemical & Engineering News reported in July on a study by Argonne National Laboratory of the greenhouse gas emissions associated with all the steps involved in the production and use of Canadian oil sands products refined in the U.S. Canada's Alberta Province produces the equivalent of two million barrels of crude oil per day and has one of the world's largest oil reserves. The study concluded that "Emissions from oil-sands-derived fuels are about 20% greater than those produced from conventionally extracted crude oil in the U.S."

## *In Memoriam*

Condolences to Warren and Bruni on the passing of Brunilda's brother, Raymond Virola, who passed away on August 6, 2015 at the age of 70. He was an Air Force veteran. He is survived by his wife, Patricia, and son, Raymond, and two grandchildren.

## Privatizing Nuclear Waste Storage

Because there is no national geologic repository for nuclear waste, spent fuel from U.S. electricity generation is stored in cooling ponds on-site at active nuclear power plants. When it is cool enough, the waste is moved into more secure dry cask storage, which is also on-site at the nation's nuclear power facilities.

Currently, the country has about 60 commercially operating nuclear plants. In addition, there are so-called orphan sites where the plants have been decommissioned and their waste is stored on-site. More than 70,000 metric tons of nuclear waste are being held on the grounds of power plants in 35 states, despite the fact that used fuel wasn't supposed to be stacked up at electricity generating sites.

The Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 mandated that the Department of Energy develop a permanent repository for nuclear waste and start using it by 1998. When DOE could not complete a repository, it began to owe the power plants storage fees. A year ago, the Government Accountability Office reported that the cost of nuclear waste storage had reached \$3.7 billion, and is expected to reach more than \$21 billion in 50 years.

It has been said that the future of nuclear energy lies in finding a solution for high-level waste. Since the storage project at Yucca Mountain has been suspended, attention has shifted to southeast New Mexico's "nuclear corridor" extending miles through the desert. For years, people in this part of the state have relied on trans-uranium waste storage and uranium enrichment from governmental nuclear weapons programs to maintain their economy.

A company has been organized to meet private-sector waste storage needs, and it has contracted to build an interim underground storage facility for used commercial nuclear fuel. The 32-acre facility, on a 1000 acre site, can hold as much as 75,000 metric tons of nuclear waste. If approval for the storage site is obtained, the facility could be receiving commercial used fuel within five years.

This is a great example of environmental discrimination, shifting the environmental and health burdens to the economically disadvantaged, where it will become "out of sight and out of mind" in a place where nobody cares except for the poor folks who have to live there.

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### Oil Boom, Or Oil Bust?

The stories from modern boom-town places like the Bakken field in North Dakota sound fantastic—great-paying jobs, lots of money being made all around, the promise of energy independence. Is there a darker back-story here, which we've not been hearing? Unfortunately, there is.

In recent years, as the oil and gas fracking boom exploded, we've seen a corresponding explosion in reported spills, leaks, blowouts and fires. The rate of increase in spillages has outpaced the increase in oil production, according to an in-depth investigation by The New York Times. But officials in North Dakota don't want to talk about that, and don't even release any statistics about environmental incidents, or what they are doing in the way of oversight and enforcement.

What's worse, the Industrial Commission, North Dakota's regulatory authority for the oil industry, is made up of

three top elected officials including the governor, who rake in huge political contributions each year from—you guessed it—the oil industry. So it's no surprise that the few complaints of transgressions by the oil companies that are actually pursued, are typically settled for about 10% of the nominal penalties.

Spills are steadily rising, from one environmental incident for every 11 wells in 2006 to one for every six wells in 2013. Through the first nine months of 2014, 3.8 million gallons of oil were reported spilled, as much as 2011 and 2012 combined. In the past 8 years, spillage has amounted to almost 20 million gallons. These numbers, however, are only estimates reported by the industry, and are likely to be seriously under-estimated, according to the many farmers who were harmed by the spills.

The largest on-land oil spill in American history occurred in North Dakota about a year ago, and it went unreported to the public for 11 days. Over a year later, no penalties have been assessed by either the state or federal governments, an indication of the lax oversight being exercised. The company, Tesoro Logistics of San Antonio, admitted that the leak in their pipeline, which had not been inspected in eight years, had gone undetected for several months while thousands of barrels of oil spilled out. This does not engender confidence.

There's this widespread idea in the industry and among many state officials that spills are just part of the cost of doing business. However, some companies, like Norway's Statoil, manage to produce 9,000 gallons of oil for every gallon of spillage, while Continental Resources produces only 3,500 gallons. There's no technical justification for all these spills, and they certainly are not acceptable as just business-as-usual.

This clearly shows how poorly the oil and gas industry is doing its job, and that nobody—least of all state officials—is making the industry do things right. This sad story is repeated in Texas, in Pennsylvania, and in other states where the fracking boom is riding high. That's got to change.

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### Gas Overtakes Coal For Electric Power

It finally happened. For the first time ever, this past Spring, natural gas eclipsed coal as the top fuel source for electric power generation in the U.S. Roughly 31% of electric power came from natural gas, compared to only 30% from coal, according to the Department of Energy.

Analysts say financial backing for coal-fired power plants is shrinking, particularly in the bond markets, and eroding demand for coal. They report that, unlike many other countries, the U.S. continues to experience growth in demand for natural gas to supply feedstock for industrial production of chemicals and fertilizers.

It's significant to note that although EPA regulations are depressing the coal sector, data from DOE suggest that price competition from solar and wind energy is also, and increasingly, becoming a factor. The emergence of sustainable energy is key to building sustainable economic growth. We're more than ready to give up on dirty coal, and recognize that just because it's there, doesn't mean we are forced to use something so harmful to our health, our climate and our environment.



# 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.

Oct 7, Wed, 7:30pm, **Ferry Sloops' Fall Lecture Series.** "Hudson River Water Quality," results of monitoring at Engel Park, with Riverkeeper & Ossining High School students. At Shattemuc Yacht Club in Ossining. Potluck supper at 6:30, business meeting at 7:00, program 7:30-9:00pm. Info: <http://www.ferrysloops.org> All Riverlovers are invited.

Oct 10, Sat, 7:30pm, **Walkabout Clearwater Coffeehouse featuring Modern Man's farewell performance.** This will be an historic final performance by a legendary group. At Memorial United Methodist Church, 250 Bryant Ave, White Plains. Advance tickets via credit card (\$18) at [www.BrownPaperTickets.com/producer/5602](http://www.BrownPaperTickets.com/producer/5602), or \$23 at door. Open seating. Proceeds benefit Walkabout & Clearwater. Refreshments available. Free Parking. Sing with the Walkabout Clearwater Chorus's Teachabout at 6:45pm. Info: 914-946-1625 or [www.WalkaboutClearwater.org](http://www.WalkaboutClearwater.org).

Oct 16, Fri, 6:30pm, **Riverlovers Monthly Potluck** at Croton Point Nature Center. We'll show the environmental video "Crude Awakening" exploring future oil shortages. See page 1. Info: [www.Riverlovers.org](http://www.Riverlovers.org).

Oct 17, Sat, 7:15pm, **Ferry Sloops' 4th Annual Concert for the River.** Fundraiser featuring Tom Chapin, with singer songwriter Elaine Romanelli. \$30. At Shattemuc Yacht Club, Ossining. Info: <http://www.ferrysloops.org>.

Oct 18, Sun, noon-5pm, **Beacon Sloop Club's Annual Pumpkin Festival**, at Pete & Toshi Seeger Riverfront Park, Beacon (just north of the train station). Pumpkins, food & drink, live music, kids' activities, displays. Info: 845-463-4660 & [www.beaconsloopclub.org](http://www.beaconsloopclub.org), under "festivals."

## Oil Train Regulation Bill

At last something is being done to prevent oil train explosions that have been occurring with increasing frequency. A wave of derailments and explosions in the U.S. and Canada by these "bombs on wheels" have threatened lives and ecosystems with massive fireballs that rage unchecked for days.

A bill introduced by Washington Senator Maria Cantwell, with Public Citizen's input, would set a federal safety standard for the maximum volatility of tar sands and shale crude oil being transported by rail. It would require rail cars to be protected by more puncture-resistant steel shells as well as by thermal "jackets" that increase fire resistance.

Under the proposed bill, oil producers and rail carriers would have more safety inspections and larger penalties for non-compliance. They would have to improve their spill response plans, and notify state and local authorities prior to trains moving through local communities.

In 2013, trains carrying crude oil exploded, spilled or derailed 117 times. Accidents hit record levels in 2014, and

in 2015 there have been four derailments in the first few months. As noted by Public Citizen, "Transporting oil—whether by rail, pipeline or tanker, from offshore oil rigs or onshore oil operations—is an inherently dangerous activity. We should do all we can to prevent future oil disasters by requiring adequate safety measures." Let's hope sanity prevails over politics, and we implement realistic safety standards before we see any more disaster headlines.

*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 2015 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:  
 Individual \$40       Mariner \$500  
 Family \$55       Sailing-Master \$1000  
 Contributor \$100       Benefactor \$5000  
 Sponsor \$200       Student \$10  
Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Please include check payable to Clearwater, or charge by credit card  
 Visa       MC       Discover       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

October Newsletter Contributors: Bill Flank, Warren Lindholm

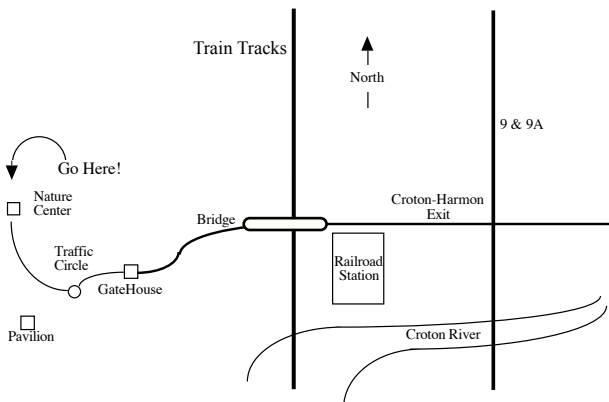
## Riverlovers Monthly Potluck and screening of *Crude Awakening*



**Riverlovers, Inc.**

P.O. Box 285

Croton-on-Hudson, NY 10520



**Friday, October 16, 2015**  
**6:30pm**  
**Croton Point Nature Center**