



Riverlovers Currents

Volume 30, Number 10, October 2017

Message from the President

As summer draws to an end, and we begin Autumn it is time to reflect.

Riverlovers participated in many exciting activities this Summer. We canoed at both the Iona Marsh near Bear Mountain Park and the Constitution Marsh near Cold Spring. We sailed on our members' sailboat, the Blue Monk, and had an inspiring sail on the Sloop Clearwater. We were treated with great music from singers Lydia Adam Davis, Melissa Ortquist and Karen Jean Brooks on a beautiful sunset cruise. Thank you, ladies!

We visited the New York Botanical Garden on September 14th and Daria Gregg led us through the various outside gardens, such as the herb and wild-flower gardens, and then inside to the lush displays of flora. All this, while admiring the beautiful and colorful Chihuly glass sculptures.

We are planning a revisit to the New York Botanical Garden on Friday October 13, 2017, at 12 noon. We will meet in Croton at the ShopRite parking lot at the northeast corner, to car-pool from there. Call me at 914-319-3379 to let me know if you want to attend.

For the September Potluck we screened a PBS Nova special, Nuclear Option. Nova investigates how the realities of climate change, the inherent limitations of renewable energy sources, and a new generation of nuclear engineers is seeding a renaissance in nuclear technology. With rising seawater temperatures from climate change spawning ever larger and more frequent hurricanes, we have to change our way of thinking! Fossil power is the real problem!

My wife Brunilda is heartbroken over the extensive damage in Puerto Rico. We are all troubled by the hurricane damage in Houston, Florida, the Caribbean, the earthquake damage in Mexico, and the loss of life in these areas. If you wish to help by donating, the Sierra Club will send 100 % of the donated funds to the various hurricane areas.

For the October 20th Potluck at 6:30pm at the Croton Point Nature Center, we will screen "Yosemite," a PBS Nature special. Yosemite was forged by time and shaped by the power of water. With climate change, Yosemite is feeling the heat. Water is scarcer and the threat of wildfire is more common. Gunnar and Cynthia Andersen, who just toured Yosemite Park, will talk about their experiences.

We would like to visit the Storm King Art Center, and we will set a date at the October meeting. I have been exploring the Peekskill-Briarcliff Trailway, which is 13.1

miles long, and I would like it if we can hike a small section. We'll also plan that at our October Potluck.

For the November 17, 2017 Potluck we will screen a PBS Special, "The Great American Eclipse." I drove to the center-line in Tennessee with my 6-inch diameter reflector telescope. What an experience!

Come to our meetings and our activities. Members and non-members are welcome. Together we can be educated and educate others to protect the Hudson River and save the Earth and its climate for ourselves and future generations.

A Success Story In West Virginia

This is the home of mountaintop removal-style coal mining, acid mine drainage pollution and other environmental abominations. But another side to the story is starting to emerge in West Virginia. "Save the Tygart Watershed Association," a non-profit organization, was incorporated in 2001 to reclaim streams in this environmentally and economically damaged state. This all-volunteer organization conducts periodic sampling and analysis of a number of key stream health indicators, to facilitate mitigation and abatement of water pollution related to coal mining, past and present.

An important reclamation project has been the restoration of streams like Three Fork Creek to a viable fishery, to attract sport fishermen and tourists. Lime dosers on stream tributaries are neutralizing acid mine drainage, resulting in the return of sport fish and aquatic insects to the stream, which has been barren for over fifty years.

Other stream restorations using lime dosing are being carried out in the Sandy Creek watershed, along some of the tributaries, and an acid mine drainage mitigation project is underway as a part of the Sandy Creek revitalization.

I've seen before-and-after pictures, going from murky brown to clear blue water, and the difference is truly striking. When people act, and get some help from the state's environmental agency, even the worst water pollution cases can be brought back from the dead.

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 and the river, and get your friends to join you.

Coal Is Losing Ground In Coal Country

Even in coal country, power plants are turning away from coal. Coal is definitely on the defensive. Utilities are shifting to more solar and wind power at the urging of their corporate customers.

The pressure to shift more of the country's electric power supply to renewable sources is not just a rallying cry for environmentalists. Some of the power industry's biggest customers, like General Motors and Microsoft, have made a commitment to clean energy. And to help them meet it—and keep them from taking their business elsewhere—utilities are changing the ways they operate.

Even West Virginia, where coal is king, is no exception. Appalachian Power, the leading utility there, is rapidly shifting over to natural gas and renewable sources like solar and wind, despite Donald Trump's call for a coal renaissance. They have closed three coal-fired plants and converted two others to gas, reducing their dependence on coal from 74% in 2012 to 61% in 2016. Their plan is to increase the renewables share of their energy capacity from 17% today to 34% by 2031.

It's the same story in Virginia, Kentucky and Wyoming, where the utilities in those states are promoting renewable energy packages to attract new customers. Almost half of the Fortune 500 companies have adopted at least one climate or clean-energy goal, and 23 of them are pledging to eventually run their businesses on 100% renewable energy. This includes such companies as Walmart, Bank of America and Google.

One reason for the rapid acceleration for renewables is that utilities and regulators—often with technical assistance from environmental groups—are learning how to devise rate structures to accommodate very large customers who want access to low-carbon energy.

There is pressure from both shareholders and major customers to move to a sustainable clean energy economy, and utilities are responding to customer demand regardless of any policies dictated in Washington. To quote American Electric Power's chief executive, "We are trying to make our company long-term sustainable regardless of administration." That's commendable leadership, in contrast to what's been coming out of Washington lately.

Methane Fracking Leakage Fraud

It turns out that the lead author of an influential study that has heavily impacted the debate over methane releases from oil and natural gas operations in the U.S. is now under attack. A formal complaint filed by environmental activists with the EPA's inspector general alleges that Professor David Allen of the University of Texas "committed systematic fraud, waste, and abuse" when doing the study.

The complaint, filed by chemical engineer Touché Howard, who invented the technology and instrumentation several decades ago, says that Allen knowingly used a flawed instrument beyond its accuracy range in the research that claimed that U.S. oil and gas operations leaked very little methane, a potent greenhouse gas. According to EPA, methane has a climate change impact 25 times as great as carbon dioxide.

The North Carolina environmental group NC Warn was joined by 130 other organizations whose members are affected by oil and gas drilling and production operations. They provided evidence to show that Professor Allen's measurements are flawed and that he deliberately covered up that fact. This affects the evaluation of some 500,000 oil and natural gas drilling sites operating in the U.S.

Allen's study was the largest of its kind and the first non-industry survey of 190 sites where researchers were allowed to enter the site and make measurements directly. His study reported leak rates of 0.42% on average, which were even lower than EPA estimates. The device he used was known to yield inaccurate and extremely low results from high methane-leaking wells under certain common conditions, but he ignored warnings that he could be under-reporting methane levels by a factor of 10 to 100.

Requests to review Allen's raw data and discuss his results brought no response, although he has issued statements defending his study methods. Other researchers have criticized his unwillingness to release his data to clear up the controversy. In the meantime, studies by other groups, including the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the University of Colorado, are showing methane losses as high as 6 to 12% of natural gas production, well above the EPA leakage estimate of 0.5 to 1% of production.

One research team recently found higher emissions on the unregulated Utah side than in Colorado, which has a host of new methane control regulations, in an oil and gas field spanning both states. That's a pretty strong indicator of what we should be doing at a minimum to forestall what many regard as a planetary emergency. Time is not on our side.

Superfund Cleanups Are Taking Forever

Nearly 40 years ago, a dump oozing waste chemicals in upstate New York triggered a state of emergency, and Love Canal entered our vocabulary and become synonymous with hazardous waste in the U.S. Congress created a federal program called Superfund that pays for cleanup of contaminated sites. However, decades later, responsible leaders are asking what's taking so long to finish the job.

There are more than 1300 Superfund sites across the country, with the biggest one being GE's contamination of the Hudson River with PCBs. The law established liability for companies responsible for hazardous waste contamination and levied a tax on chemical and petroleum industries to offset cleanup costs when the responsible parties can't be identified or are no longer in business.

There are now 1337 sites on the National Priorities List. In 2013, the EPA found that roughly 17% of the U.S. population, including 18% of all children younger than 5, lived within 5 kilometers (3.1 miles) of a Superfund site. In New Jersey, 50% of the population lives within that distance from a Superfund site. People's health remains at risk.

Though Donald Trump emphasized infrastructure improvements during his campaign, the White House's recent budget proposal for fiscal 2018 reduces Superfund support to \$762 million. That represents a decrease of \$330 million, or 30%, from the 2017 level. That certainly tells us where his priorities are.



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 4, Wed, 7:30pm, **Ferry Sloops Fall Lecture Series: "Sense the Wind."** At Shattemuc Yacht Club, Westerly Road, Ossining. Documentary on sport of blind sailing presented by filmmaker Christine Knowlton. Potluck supper at 6:30. Info: www.ferrysloops.org. Free admission.

Oct 8, Sun, 3-6pm, **Ferry Sloops Fall Foliage Hudson Highlands Cruise**. Live music, commentary, potluck supper, drinks available. Tickets & info at www.ferrysloops.org.

Oct 13, Fri, noon, **Riverlovers revisit to NY Botanical Garden**. Guided tour with Daria thru indoor & outdoor gardens, plus Chihuly glass sculpture exhibit. Meet in Croton ShopRite parking lot, NE corner, & carpool from there. Info & reservations: Call Warren at 914-319-3379.

Oct 14, Sat, 7:30pm, **Walkabout Clearwater Coffeehouse featuring legendary John McCutcheon**. *Upstairs* in the Sanctuary at Memorial United Methodist Church, 250 Bryant Ave, White Plains. Tickets are \$20.00 in advance online at www.BrownPaperTickets.com (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: www.WalkaboutClearwater.org.

Oct 15, Sun, Noon-5pm, **Beacon Sloop Club Pumpkin Festival**, Pete & Toshi Seeger Riverfront Park, 1 Flynn Drive, Beacon. Hudson Valley pumpkins, all sizes & shapes, pumpkin pie, cider, & stone soup. Two solar powered music stages. Children's activities, environmental displays. Free sails on the Woody Guthrie. Free Admission. Info: (845) 463-4660 & www.beaconsloop.org.

Oct 20, Fri, 6:30pm, **Riverlovers Monthly Potluck Supper** at Croton Point Nature Center. We will screen "Yosemite," a PBS Nature special. With climate change, Yosemite is feeling the heat. Gunnar and Cynthia Andersen, who just toured Yosemite Park, will talk about their experiences. Info: www.riverlovers.org.

Nov 1, Wed, 7:30pm, **Ferry Sloops Fall Lecture Series: "Lives & Legends of Hudson River Fishes."** At Shattemuc Yacht Club, Westerly Road, Ossining. Presented by Estuary naturalist Tom Lake. Free admission. Potluck supper at 6:30. Info: www.ferrysloops.org.

Quote Without Comment

A new study by researchers at the University of Delaware has shown that tree trunks in upland forests emit methane rather than store it. This surprising finding represents a new and previously unaccounted source of this powerful greenhouse gas.

Methane is 25 times stronger than carbon dioxide as a greenhouse gas, and is critical to global warming. This research, if replicated and confirmed, can fill in some gaps in determining methane budgets in global ecosystem models.

While we already know a great deal about the planet's climate, there's still a lot we don't, and the scientific method and the evolving nature of science are the tools to help us fill in more details. (*OK, so that's a comment.*)

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 2018 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 | \$50 | <input type="radio"/> Mariner | \$500 |
| <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

- | | | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <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

October Newsletter Contributors: Bill Flank, Warren Lindholm

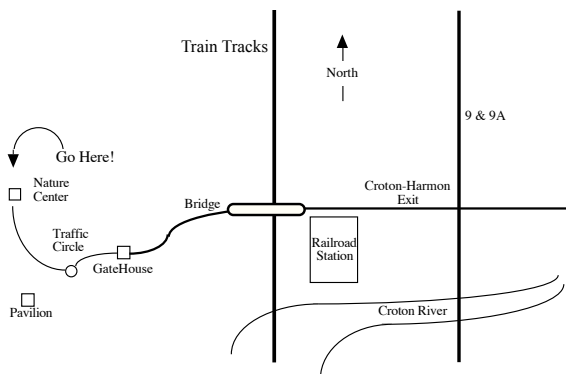
Riverlovers Monthly Potluck PBS Nature special "Yosemite" with a talk by the Andersens



Riverlovers, Inc.

P.O. Box 285

Croton-on-Hudson, NY 10520



**Friday, October 20, 2017
6:30pm
Croton Point Nature Center**