



The Quinnehtukqut Connecticut Chapter

The Monthly Newsletter for Events, Information, and Action

WELCOME TO THE SEPTEMBER 2017 ISSUE

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REQUEST FOR CONTENT

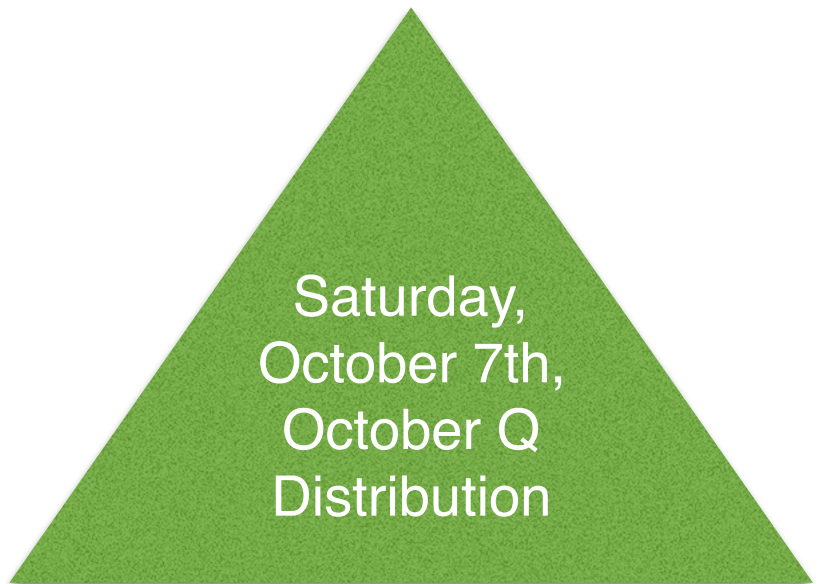
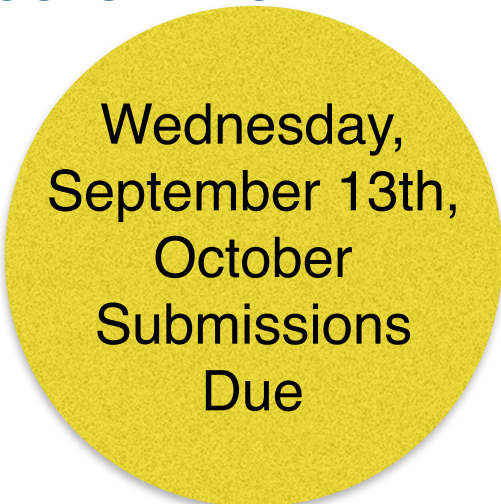
All Connecticut Sierra Club members are invited to contribute to the *Quinnehtukqut*. We accept articles, book reviews, puzzles, events, photos, poems, etc. Articles, limited to 500 words, should be on a subject of local or national interest to the Connecticut Chapter membership. The goal of the newsletter is to inform, educate, motivate and involve our members.

If you post information to the website and want it in the newsletter as well, you must submit those postings separately to the newsletter.

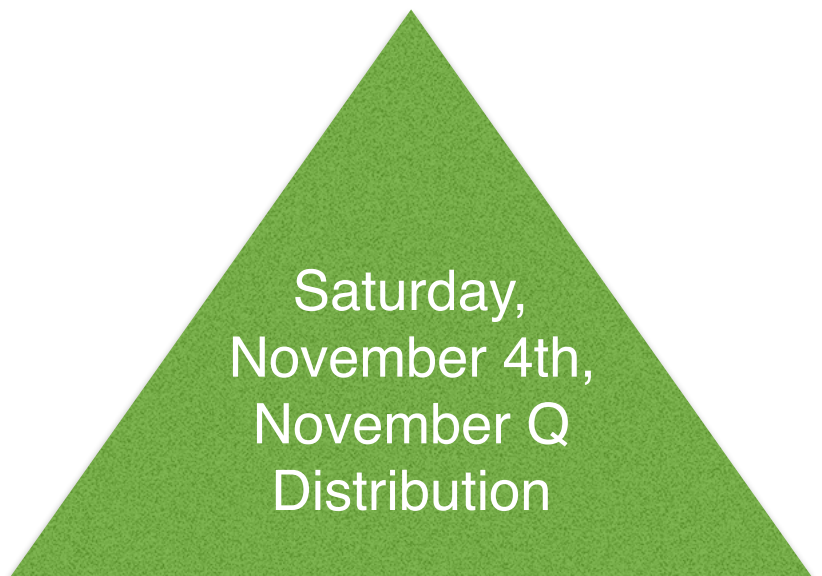
We have developed a newsletter calendar for the next two 2017 submission dates. Please read dates carefully. The calendar is intended to make it easier for you to plan your *Quinnehtukqut* contributions for publication.

The *Quinnehtukqut* is distributed at the beginning of the month. Comments, letters to the editor and all submissions may be sent to ctsierraq3@gmail.com for inclusion in future newsletters.

OCTOBER CALENDAR:



NOVEMBER CALENDAR:



All decisions regarding use are made by the Communications Committee.

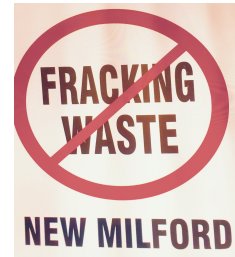
CHAPTER REPORT

In July and August, 2017, Your Connecticut Chapter Sierra Club accomplished the following:



On a WPKN, Independent Community Radio radio show, aired on August 1st, host Richard Hill interviewed Martha Klein, Chair of the Connecticut Chapter Sierra Club on Natural Gas Pipelines, Gas Power Plants and Infrastructure Expansion.

Unanimous approval was received at New Milford's July Town Council meeting to pass an ordinance banning fracking waste from their community. CT Chapter Sierra Club worked in tandem with leaders from Food & Water Watch and community residents, to achieve this victory.



We've changed our Facebook page in the hopes of appealing to more of our members. Read daily items of local interest regarding the environment.

Articles are culled from a variety of publications and citizen activity. See photos and read about monarch butterflies and solar eclipses, pipelines and national parks, etc. Like and Follow us on our Facebook page: [CONNECTICUT CHAPTER SIERRA CLUB](#)

Our thoughts and prayers are with the communities impacted by Hurricane Harvey. To help, you can [donate to local groups](#), [create a fundraising page](#), or [donate directly to Sierra Club](#).

ARTICLES

CES Report: The Good, The Bad and The Ugly

by Clark Devoto

The Comprehensive Energy Strategy (CES) was brought into existence four years ago, "to advance the State's goal to create a cheaper, cleaner, more reliable energy future for Connecticut's residents and businesses." Given the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) stated goals, it seems reasonable to expect that this year's CES would call for more renewables and less methane. That is not the full story.

There are some good parts to the report, such as increasing the State's mandate to purchase renewable energy to 30 percent of total by 2030, when the previous report only went as far as to require 20 percent by 2020. We are currently at 16 percent.



Report Lacks Climate Mitigation

The strategy is, however, severely lacking in the areas of solar expansion and natural gas reduction. The Acadia Center, an outspoken clean energy advocacy group said the report, "appear[s] to raise significant new challenges to distributed solar deployment that put[s] its crucial climate mitigation at real risk."

Report on Solar Development

An obstacle to the development of solar is revealed in the directive, “Focus on grid modernization, strategic electrification, increasing efficiency, and improving reliability and security.” Interpretation: Move towards exclusively large solar or renewable energy generation, and away from rooftop or similar projects, that have been great options for families and businesses.

There are two additional areas where the CES fails to promote and may inhibit the development of solar: continuing with a low net metering cap that has prevented towns from building the solar infrastructure they want; and the Shared Community Solar study, which is unnecessary and should be stopped in favor of state wide initiation of a Shared Solar program.

Report Promotes Increased Pipelines for Natural Gas

The report also proposes increases in Connecticut’s natural gas pipelines, which the Sierra Club has fought bitterly on the basis that they are unnecessary, subvert the necessary switch to renewable power and are often funded by placing taxes on ratepayers. Natural gas has no future in Connecticut, unless we are willing to make our electricity even more expensive and produce even more greenhouse gases.



Report’s Missed Opportunities

In such a chaotic political time nationally, Connecticut should have taken the lead on a state level, when country-wide action seems unlikely. Better goals would have been to move away from natural gas and towards solar or other renewables, not the other way around. We are all consumers of electricity and are going to be effected by the policies that are derived from this report.

If this is something you care about, you can send in comments until September 25th at 4:00 pm, to DEEP.EnergyBureau@ct.gov, and you can view a draft of the full report at: www.ct.gov/deep/energystrategy. After public comments and review has occurred, a final version of the report will be published,

There will be a Clean Energy Rally at the Connecticut Agricultural Extension Station at 123 Huntington Street on September 7th at 6:00pm, followed by a hearing at 6:30pm. You can click on this link to add your name to our online petition to DEEP and Governor Malloy asking for an improved CES: [CES Petition](#)

Clark Devoto, is a CT Chapter Sierra Club Student Summer Volunteer

GRASSROOTS ACTIVISM

A Guide to Becoming an Effective Grassroots Lobbyist

by Norman Adler

The men and women who hold public elected office are guided primarily by three rules:

Rule 1: Get elected

Rule 2: Once elected, plan on getting re-elected

Rule 3: Never forget Rule 1

Getting to rule 1, and then to rule 2, requires votes. Politicians know that everyone who is eligible to become a voter isn't a voter, and everyone who is eligible to vote, doesn't vote. So they concentrate on those who vote frequently. They know that a motivated voter is the most desirable, and dangerous, participant in the process of government.

One way that politicians identify and measure the voting potential of eligible voters is by learning who they are. Grassroots lobbying campaigns exploit that interest by informing the "elected" of their existence, issue interests, positions on those issues and intensity of their commitment to their positions.

Contact Your Representatives

A caring voter needs to communicate with her/his representatives clearly, directly, with intensity and regularly.

The easier it is to communicate, the less meaningful the communication. A petition is valued less than an e-mail. An e-mail less than a phone call, a phone call less than a personal letter that does not copy a sample. At the top of the list is a personal visit.

If you are writing, begin by stating specifically what it is you are writing about and whether you are for or against it. If there is a specific bill, refer to its title and, if you have it, the number it has been assigned (e.g., Senate 341).

Elected office holders are interested in people who are eligible to vote for them. Writing to someone who cannot seek your vote, is not useful. Therefore, always include your home address and state where you are a voter. If you voted for the official in the past, say so.

Washington and Hartford have methods of handling large numbers of communications from constituents. If you want to make an impact, send your letter to the official's district office or address (unless, of course, if you are writing to the governor or president). The elected's employees back home are more likely to take note of your letter or call, and are often the people who participate in the re-election effort.

If you are phoning, begin by stating why you are calling and what your position is "I am calling on bill number 34, and I am opposed." Then follow the rules for writing (above).



Congresswoman Esty speaks to voters
Photo Credit: News Times

Meet Your Representative

If you are going to meet directly with the official or his representative, a group (not too large) is better than one person. Choose a spokesperson. Bring along a written memo to leave behind stating what you are meeting about, who you represent, and the reasons for your position.

Preparing for a meeting is important. Everyone in the group should understand that they must not bring up other issues or personal problems. Personal examples related to the issue are useful. Someone who has participated in the person's election campaign or knows her personally is useful, too. Arguing or threatening is out! The person with whom you are meeting may not agree with you on the current matter, but there will be other votes or actions that she may take in the future. Don't burn your bridges.

Do's and Dont's

What doesn't work? Picketing the home or business of the official will not win you points and can harden the resolve of someone who might be won over at a later date. The same holds true for threatening communications.

Letters to the editors of local publications are effective. Newspaper ads are not.

Invite the "elected" to speak at your group's meeting. Be nice.

Do not limit your contacts to "elected" who are on the fence or against you. Contacting a traditional ally and saying "Thank You" is a good way of strengthening an ally. Often, public officials are asked how many people contacted them in favor, as well, as against a position they have taken.

Always ask to be informed about how the issue is proceeding, which is why you provide contact information in several forms (address, home phone, cellphone, e-mail).

Wait awhile, and do it again. If you mailed, phone, and if you phoned arrange a visit. Twenty repeat activists seem like a hundred when they are persistent. As the saying goes, "It ain't over, till it's over."

If you win, good for you. If you don't, there's always next time.

Norman Adler is a Connecticut resident and a CT Chapter Sierra Club member.

Note: Look for CT Chapter Sierra Club's "Citizen Lobbying Handbook" in 2018. Meanwhile, 2017 may be a mayoral election in your town. Practice becoming a grassroots lobbyist by applying the ideas in this article to your local election.

New Milford Residents Form Coalition to Fight Solar Plant

by Lisa Ostrove

On June 28th, Ameresco, dba Candlewood Solar, LLC, a Massachusetts based company, petitioned the Connecticut Siting Council requesting no Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need be required for its proposed 20 megawatt (AC) solar photovoltaic electric generating facility. This facility, commonly known as a solar farm, would be the largest solar power plant in the state and its proposed location will be on the top, south and western sides of Candlewood Mountain in New Milford.

Candlewood Mountain is part of a core forest and home to numerous wildlife species, vernal pools and upland wetlands as well as a part of the Housatonic Range trail and Connecticut's Blue Trail system. The proposed project (163.5 acres), will be leased from Commercial Services Realty for an initial period of 20 years with options to renew. Learn more about core forests at: [Core Forests](#)

Phase One

The (phase one) solar project area will cover approximately 80+ acres, 68+ acres of core forest and 12+ acres of farmland. At an average of 209 trees per acre, it is estimated that approximately 15,215 trees six inches wide DBH (diameter at breast height) will be clear cut to accommodate this project. These trees will not be replaced. Ameresco says it will hire some

local manual laborers to cut and cart trees, but have not identified a tree removal company.



Candlewood Mountain Today

According to Petition No.1312, the plan is to clear cut and install 75,000 industrial solar panels mounted on steel racking supports with eight inverters and eight transformers. Inverters enable monitoring so a power company can see how the panels are performing. Transformers are large and installed on concrete pads.

All power generated goes directly into the New England NE ISO power grid with area residents receiving no benefits on their utility bills. Proposed height of the completed panels would be 9-10' above ground when mounted and tilted to a 15

degree angle. Construction of the project is estimated at six months and will potentially create over 250 construction jobs. These jobs will then disappear and the plant will operate with minimal staffing.

The Arrangement

According to a July 15, 2017 article in the *NewsTimes*, "This project was one of several proposals accepted in October 2015 as part of a tri-state effort to promote clean energy projects in Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island. "Connecticut passed on the Ameresco project because officials believed the projected power prices were too high, but the other two states approved it, said Dennis Schain, a spokesman for the Connecticut Department of Energy and

Environmental Protection (DEEP).” So New Milford is getting a project that Connecticut did not want, but neighboring states greenlighted.

Martha Klein, Chair, CT Chapter Sierra Club notes: “Herein lies the greatest and most bitter irony about this solar farm: DEEP has claimed that “energy sprawl” or the building of solar energy facilities on prime forest or farmland in Connecticut is such a problem that they must conduct a study to insure that solar facilities are properly sited, which will slow the development of solar in the state. Yet, the only community where residents are protesting a poorly sited solar farm is in New Milford, where DEEP is responsible for the procured project. The Sierra Club does not believe that energy sprawl from solar development is a problem, but recognizes that individual projects can be poorly sited. In this case, DEEP is to blame for the poorly sited project and in the future will conduct studies about the problem of ‘energy sprawl.’”

Candlewood Solar negotiated with Mayor David Gronbach and the New Milford Town Council for tax abatement, without which they could not afford to do this project. Candlewood Solar will have no financial transparency going forward. In the agreement, the town has given up any right to “Audits, Inspection of Records or Request for Declarations.” So for the next 20 years New Milford taxpayers will be subsidizing this utility, helping its investors realize profits. After 20 years, Candlewood Solar can remove the panels and sell the property for development, or negotiate an extension of the PILOT program. There is no indication the property will ever be available for farming or open space again.

The Rescue Committee

Rescue Candlewood Mountain is a coalition of Greater New Milford and Sherman residents seeking to provide a fact-based overview of Candlewood Solars’ proposed solar power plant in New Milford to fully inform the community of what they are buying. We strongly support renewable energy but believe it must be appropriately sited. There should not have to be a tradeoff between preserving our forests, farms and neighborhoods and clean energy.

Clear cutting 68+ acres of core forest does not save our environment. Indeed, our state lawmakers agree and passed Public Act 17-218, originally Senate Bill No. 943, which took effect July 1, 2017, no longer allowing approval of solar power plants on core forest lands without DEEP’s written representation to the Siting Council that such projects will not materially affect the status of such land as core forest. See Act at: [Public Act](#).

To learn how the group is taking action, go to: RescueCandlewoodMountain.org

Lisa Ostrove is spokesperson for Rescue Candlewood Mountain.

How Do You Run a Grassroots Campaign?

by Helen R. Applebaum

I found out about running a grassroots campaign this past June when I volunteered to bring a petition to the Town Council of New Milford to ban fracked waste. I love our town. I certainly didn't want it contaminated from fracked waste brought in from Pennsylvania where they have more waste than they can handle.

I became aware of the hazards of fracked waste as editor of the Connecticut Chapter Sierra Club newsletter, the *Quinnehtukqut*. There was a bill before the state legislature that went nowhere, but Jen Siskind of *Food & Water Watch* was writing articles about how individual towns were changing the law locally. Ten towns had already passed a bill. I stepped up. Jen said she would help me.

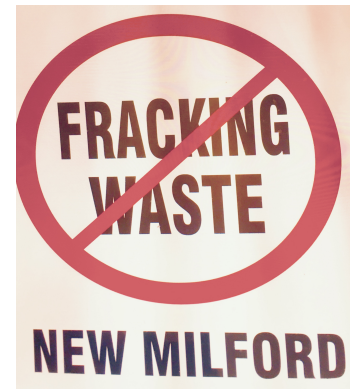
Team Building. My next step was to put a team together. Jen's New Milford contact, Cindy Davis and I met to discuss strategy. Cindy had already brought the wording on the bill to the Democratic Town Committee, hopefully for their approval. The meeting was the next night. I agreed to attend.

The Argument. We gathered facts, statistics and stories and went off to press our argument. When Cindy was invited to make our case, questions were asked and we provided the answers we could. Many in attendance didn't see banning fracked waste as an issue because the state already has a law on its books banning fracking. What became clear to us that night was that there's a difference between banning fracking in Connecticut and banning the import of fracked waste from another state. Once the differences were clear, the Committee held a vote and unanimously approved support of a ban on fracked waste for New Milford.

Legal Petition Requirements. High on our first step toward success, I spoke to Jen who emailed me the New Milford petition. I saw four friends and each signed my petition. I thought we were on our way. I learned from Jen I had neglected to go to the Town Clerk to have my petition verified as a legal document, permitting me to gather signatures on the document as a local resident. I also learned that we needed one percent of the voting public to sign our petition or 160 verified signatures. I immediately realized we would need 200 signatures to account for those signatures that wouldn't qualify.

Social Media. Cindy Davis promised to get signatures and we discussed strategy and decided we needed social media. I posted on Facebook and several local people expressed their opposition to fracked waste in our town. I replied to each and invited all to attend a committee meeting. I prepared a folder for each person with copies of the petition and a couple of informative articles. We talked about the do's and don't's of asking people to sign and I stressed the importance of leaving the back of the petition heading blank as that required a signature by the petitioner before the Town Clerk. Colin Cogle and Irene Squidbailo agreed to join our committee and obtain signatures on their own verified petitions.

Again, using social media, I organized a committee location on Messenger to speak to the group on a daily basis. This proved useful in keeping everyone current and encouraging members to overcome any reluctance in approaching people.



Graphics. Another woman joined our group, Leah Gill who brought experience in defeating Panda, a power plant threat to the town. Leah had a sign made that she carried everywhere she went. It became our graphic for the campaign.

Personal Style. Each person had a means of gathering signatures. Irene and Leah did well at the Farmer's Market; Colin went after Green Party members while Cindy contacted Democrats. We stalled at 100 signatures, but Leah and I pushed through by going to the locations that we found productive and finalized the committee count at 164 validated signatures. Now, the petition would go to Mayor David Gronbach who agreed to bring it before the Town Council for a vote. This was crucial. We had one shot to change town law with a new ordinance.

Testimony. At Jen's suggestion, we broke out the aspects of the issue. Some of us took a subject. Cindy did an overview, Irene spoke about the health issues referencing a local woman who was affected with cancer that could be related to the environment and I spoke about protecting our water.

Supporters. We contacted everyone we knew to get a large turnout for the Town Council. We miniaturized Leah's sign, printed them at 2"x3" and gave them to our forces to pin on their shirts. We had about 24 people who came to support us—a significant number for our town. Diane Lentakis 350CT and Jen Siskind attended, too. Jen is the best closer I have ever witnessed. We wound up with a unanimous vote to ban fracked waste from New Milford, subject to recommendation of legal counsel, which has been received. As of August 30th, the New Milford Town Clerk received the ordinance to publish in the local newspaper. New Milford is Town number 21 to enact the ban!

We accomplished what we set out to do. It's a success story right from the grassroots. Here we are right after the vote.



Far left to right: Colin Cogle
Pink: Jen Siskind
Next: Diane Lentakis
Yellow: Helen Applebaum
Next: Cindy Davis

Mayor Gronbach, far right and committee members and townsfolk who testified at the Town Council.

Citizens' Election Program (CEP)

Protecting Our Democracy

by Martin Mador



The Citizens' Election Program (CEP) is in jeopardy until a state budget approves its funding. Why the program exists and what it does for us is a Connecticut story. In 2005 the former corrupt Governor John Rowland was sent to federal prison. To clean house, the Connecticut General Assembly passed and Governor Jodi Rell signed into law the Citizens' Election Program. CEP, intended to eliminate the tapping of dirty special interest money, provides public funding to candidates running for the state Legislature and statewide offices. It is a national model because it is the strongest, although not perfect, public election financing program we have.

How CEP Works

Participating candidates and their treasurers must sign a contract to only use CEP funds to run their campaigns. Both are then subject to civil and criminal penalties for malfeasance. To obtain the public money, candidates have to raise modest qualifying funds from the public [maximum: \$100 per person (individuals only), no corporations and no PACs]. Candidates for the senate have to raise \$15,000, for the house \$5,000. CEP comes at no cost to the taxpayer; it is funded from the sale of abandoned property and escheats (returns) on bottle deposits. Now people have the strongest voice in our state government, not lobbyists and special interests,

Eighty to ninety percent of the General Assembly has campaigned on public money over five elections. All current holders of state constitutional offices were elected on CEP funds. CEP is ably administrated by the State Elections Enforcement Commission.

Personal Observations

The first CEP election was held November, 2008. When the next legislative session started two months later, legislators were already telling me how the world had changed. The influence of special interests was successfully limited. It is a signature model for the country in how to do this right. It is a source of pride for those who value clean government.

As the campaign treasurer for a house representative (strong environmental supporter and winner of a national Sierra Club Award), not having to run after contributions in 2008, as we had for the previous four elections, proved to me how effectively the public interest in Connecticut is now being served.

We must assure CEP remains intact and well funded. *To Protect our Environment, we first have to protect our Democracy.*

Martin Mador is CT Chapter Sierra Club Legislative co-Chair and helps run CEProud with others from the League of Women Voters.

WATER VULNERABLE IN CONNECTICUT

Connecticut's Wake-Up Call

by Anne Hulick and Melissa Everett

When it comes to water, Connecticut is waking up. As a New England state that is used to thinking of itself as water-rich, Connecticut has had a series of attention-grabbing experiences.

Connecticut is not alone in waking up to the vulnerability of our water. States and communities alike are developing ambitious goals for keeping water in the ground in a changing climate, including the use of porous pavement and vegetated “green infrastructure” (like Philadelphia and increasingly, Hartford.)

Water Wake-Up Calls

More than a year ago, however, Niagara Bottling made its move into Bloomfield to sell Metropolitan District Connecticut (MDC) water on the open market, enabled by town tax breaks, under-the-radar permitting and a legal loop-hole that allows water transfers between natural “basins” without a permit, providing that water is not moved by a pipe. If you truck it, you get carte blanche.



In spite of the momentum from citizens challenging Niagara, a bill to close that loop-hole died last year in a short, rushed legislative session. More troubling, the same legislation did not get traction this session – a nice, long one that was dominated by budget issues rather than longer-range stewardship.

The next wake-up was the two-year drought that was most dramatic last summer but only ended recently (the state lifted its Drought Advisory in June 2017). By the time the rains returned, the Metropolitan District Commission had re-thought its pricing policy which had favored high-volume users, taking new precautions to protect local water for local use.

State Water Management Plan

Spurred on by these wake-ups, the state is developing a comprehensive water management plan – a collaboration between the Department of Health and the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP). The Plan has engaged hundreds of experts and citizens’ inputs – and is still digesting them into a consensus document that will at least set limits on the most brazen water grabs.

We hope.

But another loop-hole has shown up. Through the water planning process, new regional jurisdictions for managing water have been created – Water Utility Coordinating Councils or WUCCs. To better coordinate and manage the state's waters, CT has been divided into three large WUCCs or service areas. Currently, water utilities possess registered diversions that were exempt from permitting *if the diversions were used to supply their “service areas.”*

Environmental Impact Threats

While service area diversions may have made sense at one time, current WUCCs process and consolidation of service areas aimed to better coordinate water use and management will result in a registered diversion to be used for a much larger service area without any environmental impact review. Clean Water Action and many other advocacy groups submitted formal comments to the Regulatory Docket supporting a revision to the current regulation that closed this perverse loophole. Thanks to everyone's efforts, this critical revision to the law was passed in early 2017!

These threats as well as recent reports of chemical contaminants like triclosan found in water in Durham are a significant wake up call and highlight that we can not be complacent about the quantity and quality of our water. Advancing policies that genuinely protect water from waste or depletion takes more than reacting in a policy crisis. It takes building up a water-savvy electorate and community commitment to shifting water policy for conservation—before the next drought.

Note: Service areas are defined in Section 22a-377(b)1(a)(7) of the Regulations of the CT State Agencies as “any area identified in any applicable permit or registration filed under Section 22a-368 of the General Statutes or an exclusive service area established under Section 25-33g of the General Statutes.”

Want to learn more? Clean Water Action is setting up community briefings on the latest water issues and what we can all do to protect and conserve our water. To learn more or to request a briefing in your town, go to: www.cleanwater.org. Questions: ahulick@cleanwater.org. See a summary of the new state water plan at: http://www.ct.gov/water/lib/water/executive_summary.pdf

Melissa Everett, PhD is CT Energy and Sustainability Program Manager and Anne Hulick is State Director of Clean Water Fund CT.

DOCUMENTARY FILM REVIEW

Climate Reality from Al Gore

by J. Roger Guilfoyle

Al Gore's an “Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power” continues his journey to engage the public, politicians and others with power in a discussion about the implications of human endeavors for life on Earth. The subtext is that, before we search for life on other planets, perhaps we should make Earth secure for the life it supports.

At a time when the multiplexes are crowded with apocalyptic thrillers, Gore's latest retelling of the saga of the real impact of environmental changes on the Earth's surface is a real scary movie. The film opens with Gore in a greener, less icy Greenland. The visual drip, drip, drip of a melting glacier in this case portends something other than the onset of Spring.



Photo credit: Paramount

It is in images as these that the sequel departs most from its predecessor. This movie exploits the power of film as a narrative medium. There are segments obviously shot from the air and the camera moves more seamlessly to contribute to enhanced production value. Gore himself is more gray haired, heavier and while still not handsome, is in this bulkier version more comfortable before the camera. It is interesting that Gore like Jimmy Carter seems in post electoral defeat more believable than today's camera-ready, contemporary politicians.

This is Gore's film. The camera follows him from conferences and meetings to wading in rubber boots through the flooded streets of Miami in high tide. We see him on the phone, watching



events in real time on laptops and other small screens accompanied by his limited staff. This sense of intimacy suggests the viewer is eavesdropping. Gore is getting ready for a scheduled appearance when the massive terrorist attack in Paris occurs. His response is a cinematic realistic moment.

Ultimately, it is the images of fish swimming in the high-tide flooded streets of Fort Lauderdale and the indescribable poignancy of a Syrian farmer walking on the cracked-open earth of his drought-stricken farm, that speak the "truth" of the film's title. That this drought drove this farmer

and many others off the land into Syrian cities and contributed to the current civil war dramatizes the tragic human implications climate poses for ordinary people.

Gore strikes an upbeat posture as he discusses the progress in alternate energy solutions. This appears to have been the ending for the film which was reedited to include President Trump walking the United States away from the Paris Accords. Truth in cinema, indeed.

The phrase "Truth to Power" has its origins in a charge given to the Eighteenth Century Quakers at the time of the American Revolution. It implies that when Truth is spoken by ordinary people, it challenges Power. More commonly known as "Speaking Truth to Power."

At a time when truth seems to have lost its luster, Gore's film provides a visual rebuke to climate deniers. While some reviewers have suggested that the film is an exercise in self-aggrandizement and/or that Gore is preaching to the choir, the film's images from such climate-stricken places as the Philippines are graphic "tweets" with extraordinary visceral impact.

An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power, a film by Bonni Cohen and Jon Shenk.

J. Roger Guilfoyle is a writer, poet, educator and critic. He worked under grants from the New York State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities at WNET Channel 13. He is a professor in the MFA program of Graduate Communications Department at Pratt Institute and a CT Chapter Sierra Club member.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Global Warming Facts and Causes

Date: Thursday, September 14th

Time: 7:30pm

Location: Westmoor Park, 119 Flagg Road, West Hartford, CT

Sponsor: Greater Hartford Group Connecticut Sierra Club

Speaker: Henry Auer, Ph.D.

Description: Dr. Auer will discuss the science of global warming and assess the extent to which humanity is responsible for it. He will also examine some counter arguments, taking questions at end.

Time: 7:00pm for activist letters; 7:30pm for presentation

Refreshments: Provided

Donation: \$4 requested to defray hall rental

Questions: Renee at mchawigirl@yahoo.com



Henry Auer Ph.D

Auer Biography: Dr. Auer also shares his interests in the political, economic and social environment on his Global Warming Blog (<https://warmgloblog.blogspot.com/>).

He is a retired scientist with a career in biotechnology research and development as well as a medical school faculty member. He graduated magna cum laude in chemistry from Princeton, received his Ph.D. from Harvard and was a postdoctoral research fellow at the Weizmann Institute of Science and at Cornell

Learn How to Reduce Electric Consumption

by Geneva Renegar

Energize CT Center is a flagship store whose purpose is to promote and educate the public about how we consume electricity generated in Connecticut, the many forms in which the state acquires that energy and renewable energy sources. The Center is funded by electric

companies United Illuminating (UI) and Eversource and you. Taxpayers incur a three percent subsidy fee on their monthly bill to support this center and other outreach enterprises intended to further the understanding of all things electric.



The myriad displays highlight the variety of forms of electricity including solar energy which is prominently promoted as the visitor begins touring the center and continues on to see displays for geothermal, dual heat and natural gas.

Here you can see over 25 individual types of LED lighting, a means to lower electricity demands and costs. There are also numerous energy efficient appliances on display with their corresponding yearly cost, efficiency standards and STAR ratings.

Phantom Loads Leak Money

One feature of the center is a compelling display of appliances that are commonly left turned on at the base thus creating “phantom loads.” When turned off at the device, the appliance still creates an electrical current. "A phantom load is any device that consumes electricity when turned off but still plugged into an outlet. These electronic devices...waste energy and cost money. The U.S. department of Energy says on average, 75 percent of the electricity used to power home electronics is consumed while the products are turned off." [Take Control and Save](#). Power strips, when turned off, are a means to abolish “phantom loads.”



Climate Change finds a place in the Center with very large signage citing the intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). It reads: “it is unequivocal that the climate is warming” while noting the evidence of that warming by increased temperatures, retreating and melting glacial ice, increased Winter temperatures rising at a rate of 1.3 degrees Fahrenheit per decade along with other manifestations of climate change.

As an adjunct to the center's self-guided tours, tours for children from kindergarten to the ninth grade are offered every day school is in session. On tour,

children learn the multiple forms of electricity generation and are educated about climate change and renewable energy. Aiming to change behavior with wiser and more efficient choices for the home and office, several inter-active games can be played to identify one’s own carbon footprint regarding electricity consumption.

Energize Connecticut Center welcomes and encourages conversation regarding renewable energy sources; however, in practice their portfolio is not as infused with renewables as their prolific signage and displays would suggest. Yet, it is encouraging that Energize Connecticut Center is at the forefront of illuminating our children’s awareness of climate change, energy efficiency and renewable energy. They even have signage that identifies the relationship between composting and recycling and reusing as well as energy efficiency.



Geneva Renegar is a CT Chapter Sierra Club Volunteer.

OUR NATURAL WORLD

Weeds, the Outlaw Plants on Gardeners' Lists

by Michele MacKinnon

Call me crazy, but periodic weeding is a mindless task I enjoy until late summer when rampant undesirables outpace my determination to defeat them. Weeds emerge and bulk up like steroid-popping maniacs as fall approaches because they have one purpose—seed production.

Beat seeds to the punch

Make strategic choices to win the weed war. First, tackle ripe seeds. Shake a seed head over your hand. If seeds pepper your hand then proceed with gentle collection to prevent seeds from falling on the ground. Dispose of seeds in durable clear garbage bags left in the sun to bake. Never add seeds to a compost pile unless the pile registers 160 degrees Fahrenheit for several days, hot enough to destroy seeds. Trim or mow stalks, rake them up and discard in an out of the way corner. Second, pull and discard new weeds as they appear, an easier chore after a soaking rain when soil is more yielding. Third, be vigilant about keeping weeds out of your garden. Weed seeds piggyback in potted plants so don't pay for unwelcome stowaways. Ask other gardeners for reliable sources before purchasing topsoil. The trucks and construction equipment involved in topsoil operations may be unwitting contributors in spreading weeds due to the nature of the work involved.

Pervasive invasives

Some of the worst weed offenders in late summer are invasive plants. Extensive stands of Japanese Knotweed (*Polygonum cuspidatum*) are common sights along Connecticut roadsides and streams. This east Asian native has arching three-to five-foot high stems and heart shaped dark green leaves. The bare brown stems look like bamboo, hence its common name, Mexican Bamboo. This noxious interloper flowers in August and develops thousands of small winged fruits which disperse seeds. Also, roots withstand scouring floods, so extreme rain events which precipitate flooding do little to slow its spread. Thankfully, there is good news to report. Petie Reed and Abby Stokes, both of Niantic, shared the results of a chemical-free control method they developed at the 2016 [Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group Symposium](#). Knotweed stems are cut three times during the growing season below the first node, a bumpy ring a few inches above the soil. The stems are bagged for safe disposal and native plants are introduced to the site. The latter step is an essential but often overlooked step for effective invasive control—the need to replant with non-invasive material. Otherwise, invasives and weeds will be happy to take up residence again.



Japanese Knotweed in flowering phase (*Polygonum cuspidatum*)
Photo credit: Michele MacKinnon

Know thy enemy

Contact your local [Cooperative Extension office](#) for help identifying weeds and for advice on controlling them. The free booklet, "[Invasive Plants In Your Backyard!](#)" was developed for Connecticut residents who seek help identifying and controlling common invasive plants. Many of the controls mentioned involve chemical products, however intrepid homeowners might want to experiment with Reed and Stokes' chemical-free method. After all, there's nothing to lose except some nasty invasive plants.

Michele MacKinnon, is a UCONN Certified Advanced Master Gardener, garden educator and speaker.

To contact MacKinnon for speaking engagements, to obtain a list of upcoming classes or to ask gardening questions, email beehappygardener@gmail.com. We'll publish answers in the next edition of the newsletter.

Coyotes: Why Trapping is a Poor Choice

by Annie Hornish

For some, seeing a coyote trotting around town is an exhilarating experience; for others, it can be frightening. Coyotes are resilient animals that do extraordinarily well in human environments and are now an embedded part of the Connecticut landscape. Coexisting with coyotes is possible, and many communities, and even large cities, are making great strides. But far too often, individuals and communities have a knee-jerk reaction to the presence of coyotes and respond with ineffective and lethal methods—including the use of leghold traps.



Coyote in Connecticut
Photo credit: [DEEP](#)

One such community is the town of Westport, whose Representative Town Meeting (RTM) will soon be voting on an ordinance to repeal its long-standing ban on trapping. The RTM should reject this ill-advised proposal for three reasons:

1. Leghold traps, whether "padded" or unpadded, are cruel. They can break the bones of a captured animal, and once caught, the animal can dislocate joints and break teeth as he or she struggles for hours. An animal caught in a leghold trap can even twist or chew off his or her limb in a desperate attempt to escape. This horror happens with enough frequency that trappers have names for it: "wringing" or "wring-offs."
2. Trapping is ineffective. Indiscriminate trapping and killing of coyotes disrupts their pack population and hierarchy, which leaves room for new coyotes to enter the territory. It also allows the remaining coyotes in the area to reproduce more successfully, resulting in more coyotes.

3. Finally, the indiscriminate nature of trapping means that “non-target” animals are caught with high frequency, presenting a lethal danger to other wildlife, birds and even dogs and cats.

If trapping isn't the answer, then what is a community experiencing conflicts with coyotes supposed to do? Fortunately, there are humane, effective and science-based solutions.

Remove Attractants/Secure Trash. Coyotes are attracted to places we live largely because of the food we unintentionally provide them, like pet food left outside, fallen fruit, spilled bird seed and unsecured/accessible trash and compost.

Safeguard Companion Animals. Dogs (especially small dogs) should not be left outside



Trapped dog chewed off paw
Photo credit: PETA2.com

unattended and should be kept on a leash in public areas. Cats should remain indoors and any outdoor time should be under supervision while wearing a harness and leash or in a secure enclosure, such as a “catio.”

Hazing. If an individual coyote becomes habituated to humans, hazing methods can be employed to reestablish or maintain a coyote's fear of humans and help deter them from neighborhood areas. Hazing can involve making loud noises (wear a whistle!), spraying water, or by throwing an object toward the coyote.

If you live in a community that is experiencing issues with coyotes, please urge your local officials to adopt humane solutions. If you are a Westport voter, please call your RTM members at 203.341.1110, or r RTMMailingList@westportct.gov. Urge them to oppose the coyote trapping ordinance. For additional information, including a model coyote management and coexistence plan, see www.humanesociety.org/coyotes.

Annie Hornish is the Connecticut Senior State Director for The Humane Society of the United States. She is also a former state representative for Connecticut's 62nd District (2009-10) and a supporting member of CT Chapter Sierra Club

The Gray Squirrel

Gray squirrels are numerous throughout the state of Connecticut. They normally inhabit deciduous woodlands, but have been able to adapt as woodlands disappear, being cleared for housing, agriculture and industry. In the fall, gray squirrels gather and bury their food supply for the winter



Illustration by Peggy Adler

OUTDOOR EVENTS: SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER

Common info for each outdoor event

Dress: Be sure you dress for the weather. We suggest you bring water and a snack. Bug repellent and sunscreen are advised.

Free event open to Sierra Club members and the public

Sierra Club Outing Waiver: You may review the waiver by clicking the attachment here: [Waiver](#)

Hike and Explore Nature and History on the Metacomet Trail

Date: Sunday, October 8th

Time: 9:00am

Description: Hike is about 4.8 miles with some steep climbs and rocky single track. Views are great along the ridgeline. Trail passes the Granby "small pox" cemetery. Read about it here: [Granby 'small pox' cemetery](#)

GPS: 2-8 Newgate Road East Granby, CT

Parking: Park on the shoulder of Newgate Road or Holcomb Road.

Leader: Christine Loudon, Certified Chapter Outings Leader

RSVP: Christine christinelouden@att.net with the number in your party. If your plans change please let me know so I have a proper head count

Logistics: We will carpool from finish on Hatchet Hill Road back to the start. If you wish to leave a car on Hatchet Hill road parking is on the shoulder. Approximate address is 51-99 Hatchett Hill Road.

Option: After we carpool back to our cars there is an option to meet at the Grass Roots Creamery for some creative ice cream. [Grass Roots Ice Cream](#).



Along the trail.

Photo credit: meetupstatic.com

Kayak Bluff Point, Groton

Date: Saturday, September 16th

Time: 11:00am

Description: Paddle on shallow open water near 800-acre peninsula that includes the state park, a coastal reserve and natural preserve. Mumford Cove will be to the east, Fishers Island Sound to the south and the Poquonnock River to the west. Travel down the river then behind a large sandy peninsula requiring a 50 foot portage. Enjoy the beach or launch from there to explore harbor islands. Return is to original launch site.



Leader: Renee Taylor, Certified Chapter Outings Leader

Meet and park: State boat launch; no fees to put in or park

GPS: 44 Depot Road, Groton, CT

Directions: Follow Route 95 along the shore to Route 1, south. On Depot Road, go under train trestle and launch. Meet us at end of road to the west of park entrance.

Requirements: Safety vests must be worn at all times. No cell phone use or smoking on the water.

RSVP: mchawigirl@yahoo.com, Yes only by September 14th. Leave cell phone number in case winds or weather require site change or cancellation.

Options: Bring lunch or we can go to town for a meal after we paddle.

POETRY

This Soup is Too Hot

by Bob Lorentson

Life began in a primordial soup
With a recipe in its debut
And all sorts of creatures then added a scoop,
Including eventually you.

It was heated and chilled through billions of years
By a chef that nobody knew,
Until humans said, "No thanks, we'll take it from here"
And turned up the heat on that brew.

So now we are left with a soup that's too hot
And apparently starting to spoil.
I feel like a lobster inside of a pot,
Just waiting for the water to boil.



Photo credit: aerasnews.gr

Bob Lorentson is an East Haddam resident and a member, CT Chapter Sierra Club



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