

Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

SIGNIFICANT CHANGES AHEAD FOR RECYCLING

At the great program on October 27, we learned about new “blue binable” items, especially those prevalent #5 plastics. So check those tubs and cups and pitch in. Andrew Radin, Director of Recycling and Waste Reduction, and Tom Rhoads, Executive Director, *Onondaga County Resource Recovery Agency* (OCRRA), spoke about recent recycling changes, and the “significant changes ahead.” Several audience members were inspired by the session to pool their notes, and share the news in this *Iroquois Messenger*.

Andrew led off with a discussion about what we as a community would like to see down the road. Tom then spoke about the concept of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), which focuses on product stewardship from cradle to grave. Currently, society only manages the “end of life” of a product. He said we need to think about the whole process and know where things are going when they have outlived their usefulness. Recent initiatives in New York support the idea of EPR.

New York State passed two laws this year to go along with the bigger better bottle bill. This additional legislation supports a rechargeable battery program and an e-waste disposal initiative. The latter will take effect in April 2011, and

will provide for convenient and no cost consumer drop off, pick up, collection events or mail back programs to remove electronics from the waste stream. The law will also accommodate electronic devices that were purchased from stores or companies that no longer exist, and will provide for a paper trail for new purchases. To get all this started, in January 2011, electronic device vendors will be required to register and submit a plan for recovery and recycling of their electronic waste.



The *Environmental Protection Agency* (EPA) will influence EPR nationally, but EPR will probably remain a state initiative for the foreseeable future. Many items, including carpeting and thermostats, are being considered for EPR in a number of states; the *Product Stewardship* web site has additional information:

www.productstewardship.us. Additional information about the e-waste legislation is available at: www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/65583.html.

Tom spoke about “paradigm shifts” in thinking about what we buy, where we buy it, and how we buy it. He reiterated that consumers influence choice—we can choose to buy locally or in smaller quantities. We can also choose products with less or recyclable packaging.

The session closed with questions and suggestions related to recycling, as audience members wondered what to do with the following:

- *flex pack shipping containers*—these are difficult to recycle; cardboard boxes are preferable
- *bubble wrap*—try to re-use
- *styrofoam*—try to re-use, or take to a shipping business
- *grocery bags*—there are vendor take-back programs for #4 plastic; paper receipts and food debris must be removed for sanitation of the recycling process.

Audience members expressed interest in EPR for large appliances, and one audience member suggested a regularly scheduled parking lot trade-in for furniture.

Lastly, Andrew and Tom spoke about the future of OCRRA and the Rock Cut Road Waste-to Energy Facility. In 2015, OCRRA’s contract expires and Covanta assumes ownership of the facility. There will

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RECYCLING (CONTINUED)

be public hearings prior to this. Will the Waste-to Energy Facility go private in 2015? Will it stay under OCRRA control? There are lots of options for discussion. OCRRA is still working on what the status and funding of the recycling program would be in these scenarios. Plans have yet to be completed or decided.

The OCRRA board meets the second Wednesday of the month at 100 Elwood Davis Road in Liverpool and welcomes visitors. ■

FROM THE CONSERVATION CHAIR

by Linda A. DeStefano

Hydrofracking update

The good news is that there is a groundswell of activity against hydrofracking for natural gas and there are many opportunities to learn more about it from a variety of speakers. Two of the people working hard to protect our precious water are Anita Williams, President of the *Otisco Lake Preservation Association*, and Mary Menapace, activist with *ShaleshockCNY*. Anita has approached the towns in the Otisco Lake watershed to request they pass a resolution in favor of a moratorium on fracking. The Town of Onondaga has already passed a resolution stating that fracking would not be welcome in the town, and several other towns, both within and outside the Otisco Lake watershed, have voted for a moratorium. You may contact Anita at aniwil-lia3@aol.com or 492-6126 or 382-1503 (8:30 a.m. to 11 p.m.)

Mary Menapace is on a citizens' committee in Skaneateles that initiated a lecture series, beginning with James Northrup, who used to work for the oil and gas industry and who regards fracking as a dangerous practice. Mary is also working with *Gas Drilling Awareness for Cortland County* on a sign-on letter for physicians identifying the health problems associated with polluted air and water from fracking.

Join my Iroquois conservation e-list to learn more. Ask me for a sign, button, and/or sticker that says "No Frack."

Mudboils and Onondaga lake

The *Environmental Protection Agency* (EPA) Region 2, NY, held a Public Scoping Meeting to: "Alleviate Sedimentation to Onondaga Creek from Mudboil

Activity in the Tully Valley" on Friday, November 5, 2010, in Lafayette, NY. The intent was to get public comment on a variety of possible actions, ranging from extensive dams and creek relocating projects to "no action." Several Sierra Club members were on hand, asked questions and offered input. Don Hughes presented a good analysis of his views. Jack Ramsden and Martha Loew commented, and Sam Sage, Sierra member and President of *Atlantic States Legal Foundation*, was also in attendance. The presenter from EPA, Maria Clark, is a Sierra member and very interested in receiving our comments; the comment period ends on March 15.

To read the whole document go to:

www.oci2.org/Program_TullyValleyMudboilRemediation.html.

Bion Update

Good news! Through the persistence of Karen Hall and others in *Citizens for Family Farms*, the Town Board of Schroepel recently rescinded its resolution to work with Bion on its proposed operation involving 72,000 cattle in a closed loop ethanol energy system and a slaughterhouse. The town kept open its option to cooperate with Bion, so *Citizens for Family Farms* will continue to be vigilant. Stay informed at phoenix-talks.com. Request a button and/or lawn sign, "Stop the Deathanol Plant" (a play on the word "ethanol") from Karen Hall, khall3721@windstream.net or 436-1039. Bion has stated its intent to explore other areas of upstate NY. Ask your town and/or county representative if they have received any communication from Bion. If so, please let me know. ■



FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Tree Huggers,

I am still finding safflower seeds stored in strange places by the chipmunks that lived in my house a year ago this past summer. Fortunately no critters made this home this past year. I do like all the fuzzy and feathered friends but prefer not to share my house with them. Best they stay in the nests and boxes that are too exclusive and restricted for me to share. This applies to a couple of snakes that were in here for awhile and were escorted gently outside.

My resident skunk (I know he/she has been here a long time because it is a negative skunk, white with a black stripe, and probably not very common) is only a yard resident. Skunks may not really hibernate, but do take a long winter snooze. It seems to reside under my back shed and has never been a problem. Although they are supposed to be mostly nocturnal, this one does appear in late afternoon sometimes. One reason I call my

cats in around four! When I came home at dusk last week, it was beside my front steps. I approached softly and it nicely moved to the side—no rush and no tail up, but I have been more observant of the space recently. Maybe with the recent freezing weather it will start the winter nap soon or at least stay in the back yard. It would be appreciated.



I enjoy telling about my backyard and outdoor experiences, and all these years it would not have been possible without the work of our past-editor & mailer, Debby Shanahan. At Fall issue time, something came up for Debby at the last minute and she needed help getting that issue out in time. Jenna and Tasha stepped in and all got out. Now Debby has decided that leaving that responsibility would be a great idea and is retiring from the post. Fortunately Jenna has accepted the position and Debby will have time to devote her many naturalist skills to other endeavors.

So thank you Debby, welcome Jenna!

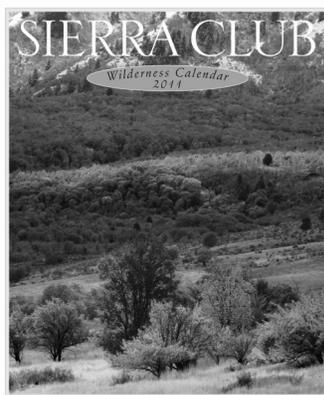
One message from the new *Messenger* team: information about environmental events, issues, ideas for hikes, programs, book reviews is welcome. Please send to Jenna at jennamayotte@gmail.com.

My feeder is really busy with the usual visitors. Question: if it is poor practice to feed wildlife, is it ok to feed the birds to compensate for our destruction of their habitat?? Are we helping preserve species or just doing because it is fun to do?? Ideas welcome.

For the earth and all its critters,
Martha Loew

P.S.—Don't forget those calendars before we run out. ■

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SEASONAL EVENTS

Sierra Club Indoor and Outdoor events encourage us to Explore, Enjoy and Protect the Planet. They are free and open to everybody. Parks may charge entry fees.

ExCom meetings are held the 2nd Wednesday of the month (December 8, January 12, February 9) at 7:15 p.m., at the Jamesville train station. Sierra Iroquois members only for business and strategy sessions.

INDOOR EVENTS

Indoor programs are held the 4th Wednesday of the month at 7:30 p.m., at University United Methodist Church, 1085 E. Genesee St. Park and enter on University Avenue.

Updates, cancellations and information at newyork.sierraclub.org/iroquois or 492-4745.

ONONDAGA LAKE HABITAT RESTORATION—JANUARY 26

Craig Milburn (Honeywell) will talk about the Onondaga Lake habitat restoration process and bring along local habitat experts to share ideas and answer questions. Info: 424-1454; 492-4745.

SAVE THE RAIN—FEBRUARY 23

A report on the ambitious County public campaign to remove 250 millions gallons of rain water from the sewer system—will include the projects completed in 2010 and the more than 50 green infrastructure projects for 2011. Get updated and learn how to do your part in this important campaign. From rain barrels, to green roofs, to wetlands, we all are part of this effort. It can prevent the building of more sewage treatment plants and enhance our lives. Information-492-4745

PROGRAM ON LITTER—MARCH 23

Details to be announced.

OUTDOOR EVENTS

Unless otherwise noted outdoor events are on Sundays at 2 PM at various interesting locations.

Field guides for birds, plants and trees are available.

ANNUAL CHILI FEST—FEBRUARY 6

Join us for the Annual ChiliFest at Danny and Rhea Jezer's place. Meet at 1:00 p.m.; weather permit-

ting, we will hike, snowshoe or ski around or across the lake. At 2:00 p.m. we will gather inside. Please bring vegetarian chili and other vegetarian dishes to share.

Directions: Take Preble exit off of Route 81. Turn right onto 281. Take first right turn (hairpin turn) onto Song Lake Road. After the Song Lake sign count 8 garages on the right to #7426. Park on the side of the road, and walk to the house on the lake. RSVP 727-0123 to help us plan.

CLARK RESERVATION STATE PARK—MARCH 6

This outing will have choices! There will be a guided Trees in Winter Identification Walk led by Gordon Heisler of the *Council of Park Friends*, and for those who prefer just to walk with company, a Trail Tromp on one of the Clark trails. Trails will be selected for late winter accessibility.

Meet in the main parking lot and look for the *Sierra Club* sign. Information: 492-4745. ■