

July 2007

RENewsLetter

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"I am convinced that ecology cannot be kept secret. Environmental openness is an inalienable human right. Any attempt to conceal any information about harmful impact on people and the environment is a crime against humanity." -- Alexandr Nikitin, Russian environmentalist.

The Free environmental newsletter from RochesterEnvironment.com

<http://rochesterenvironment.com>

"The news you need, not what you crave"

Opening Salvo

RENewsletter has a new format. Starting this month, you can view the July 07 RENewsletter in PDF format where you can either print it out or view it online. You'll need Adobe Reader on your browser to read this newsletter, and I assume most people have that now. If not, surf over to <http://www.adobe.com> and download it.

If you print this newsletter it will be much easier to read, but it won't have any of the

important links that make this newsletter a dynamic Internet document with hundreds of crucial links. (**Copy & paste hyperlinks on to your browsers to get appropriate pages on the web.** Soon I should have this feature fixed so they work properly.)

I have created easy links to each of the above, so you can quickly skim the articles and go online to the source (if it still exists, otherwise you may have to order the article

from that news service). Or, in the case of events and actions, the link will send you to my calendar, which will be updated daily, and actions that change by the day—making this newsletter more dynamic. I've changed the newsletter this way to make it easier to read and give it a



It's where you live.

Hottest Issues of June 2007

My vote for the hottest environmental stories for the month of July 2007 are issues surrounding the Great Lakes and the impacts of Global Warming for our area.

While there is an article about Senate approval for \$600,000 on soil erosion around our lakes and an effort by Great Lakes mayors (including Mayor Duffy) to stop pollution and diversion (others removing large quantities of water from the Great Lakes/St. Lawrence River basins), there are sobering reports that our largest fresh water supply is

still in great peril.

There is a report out of Canada that we may have only twelve years to save the Great Lakes environment. Also there are other stories this month about Invasive species (like the Zebra Mussels), VHS, or *Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia*, and diseases like botulism that continue to plague these waters.

Speaking VHS, I have been continually updating information on this quickly-spreading fish disease and this month we find that it has

spread to three new areas: "Little Salmon River in Oswego County and the Seneca-Cayuga Canal, as well as an isolated farm pond in Niagara County."

Many throw up their hands and say there's nothing we can do about this disease that will affect possibly twenty species of sport fish, which will certainly change the ecology of the lakes it hits, but the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has issued "Fish Health Regulations in Response to



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Opening Salvo -continued

more professional look, while trying to accommodate most e-mail firewalls and reduce download times.

I realize that this newsletter takes in a lot—all of the environmental news, actions, events, and a summary for the whole month. I don't expect everyone to read every news link or Daily Update, but to skim over them quickly and sometimes zero in on particular items so that instead of checking our area's environmental news every day, you can easily find out about the critical environmental issues once a month.

Last month, I mentioned that I'd be speaking on WXXI Radio "1370 Connection" with Bud Lowell, Friday, July 13, at 1 PM -2 PM, on an 'overview of feelings about wind development in the region.' But, this event did not happen because of

schedule changes at WXXI.

If WXXI reschedules this event, I'll be sure to pass that information to you. This issue of placing wind farms in our area is very hot with the public and critical to our energy profile. I'd like to get the public and the media more engaged on this discussion and place it in the context of Global Warming.

Lastly, when gathering environmental news I use many sources, including e-mails, podcasts, radio, (rarely television), and especially my News Source page.

I have gathered possible sources for online articles on Rochester-area environmental news for almost ten years and now (in keeping with the times) have added environmental blogs.

Blogs are online discussion groups where you can write in your own comments on an

issue.

My blog Environmental Thoughts is where I post environmental topics for discussion, which will hopefully encourage and advance the dialog about our area's environment.

The Internet is about connecting and communicating and RochesterEnvironment.com is about both and our environment also.

Hottest Issues - continued

VHS." Doing nothing is not the way to solve chronic environmental problems like Invasive Species.

Particularly disturbing is a major report by Environmental Defence "Up To the Gills, Pollution in Great Lakes Fish". The report is a reminder that we no longer use the Great Lakes as a food source: "While the days of pulling dinner out of the lakes have long since passed for most of the population, there is still a

substantial Great Lakes fishing industry, including more than five million sport anglers who fish in the lakes each year." And, those fish are in trouble by toxins we have put into the waters. Quite an indictment. To those who think that human don't have much effect on our environment; this is a truly fantastic admission. In a relatively short time, we have made the most of the fish in the Great Lakes (a fifth of the world's fresh water) so

contaminated that no one would consider pulling large amounts of fish for our daily diet. You have to pause and think: How did things get to this point?

NYS signs a compact to limit (but not stop) diversion of (continued, page 3) waters from Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River basin.

My view is that this is going to be a very difficult agreement to keep as other states and countries from our

Hottest Issues - continued

waters as they get desperate for water.

At first glance, it seems as though we are being selfish, but beyond all the other issues of lake levels, fishing, and hydroelectric power, is that substantial water removal from the Great Lakes basins could further (global warming is going to reduce water levels anyway) change our climate in this area.

We have come to a very strange point in our human history that our species is deciding how all life will change by our decisions—and not doing anything is a big decision.

On Global Warming, I've written a short essay "Climate change will hit home—it's only a matter of how hard." based on a report "NEW YORK" a sub report in

"Northeast Climate Impacts Assessment" by Union of Concerned Scientists.

There are many articles this month on the growing concern about Global Warming and the Great Lakes.

By reading them, you can get an idea of the possible changes that manmade climate change may wrought on our area:

temperatures rising, a migration of plants and animals north as our climate adopts a Southern visage (though, most (especially plants)) won't move quickly enough), droughts, change in precipitation, lowering of Great Lakes water levels, coastal flooding, sea-level rise, shore-line change, extreme heat in our cities,

more diseases (like Lyme disease, West Nile Virus, and maybe malaria) and more potent cases of poison ivy, air quality loss, agriculture changes, changes in the fisheries, changes in the dairy industry, changes in spruce/fir forest of the Adirondacks, alterations in winter recreation (did you know the NYS has "more ski areas than any other state in the nation"?), and an increase in ozone pollution."



Rochester at Dusk.

Overall, you cannot come away from even just one month's encapsulation of just one city's environmental news and not see how humanity now drives Nature.

Like it or not the anthropogenic affect of man on Nature is so profound (and continuing to grow) that as you look for man's footprint in each story, you will understand how our relationship with our environment is forever changing the direction of evolution.

We are warming the planet, determining what species thrive and what species fail, what chemicals interact with everything, what bodies of water rise and which one fall—in short we (as a species) are no longer just bystanders in our environment—we are at the helm.

Other Hot Environmental Issues

Energy and brownfields come up second for online environmental articles for our area. Few topics are as hot locally as the placing of wind farms and some communities embrace this renewable source of energy and some do not.

Personally, I'd like to see Global Warming and our area's contribution to curbing it as part of how we decide where we place wind farms. New York State has a policy of upping our renewable

energy supply by 25% by 2013 and we need to be a part of that. There are articles on ethanol, which is coming under closer scrutiny because of farm subsidies and whether or not there is a net green house gas advantage to this source of fuel.

In my May 07 RENewsletter, I wrote about the relatively quiet (there's no major public dialogue) issue of replacing the coal burning power plant at Russell Station in Greece

with "clean coal" technology, and I've heard little about it since. If we are to get a large portion of our energy in the future by coal (and it looks as though we are), there should be a public debate about that, including the viability of 'clean coal.' Is there such a thing as clean coal? Many think this merely a catch-phrase to quiet environmental concerns with little real environmental advantage.

On Brownfields, there are (continued on page 4)

Other Hot Environmental Issues -- continued

RochesterEnvironment.com calendar, is updated every day, lists all environmental events, educational programs, activities, seminars, and rallies.

<http://www.rochesterenvironment.com/calendar.htm>

many articles, including the Victor pollution issue which still goes on. The D&C did an excellent article on "Midnight Dumping" and we must wonder just how many other brownfields there might be in our area.

It's bad enough that there are many brownfields and superfund sites we know about that are not getting funded and cleaned up. But, what about those possible polluting sites that may be

causing health problems and spoiling our waters that we don't know about?

Brownfields, as we are discovering in Victor, just don't go away because the evidence has been buried.

They eventually surface as problems more difficult to deal with as times goes by.

Related, there's an article about Senator Schumer trying to deal with this issue

On the Positive Note

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<http://www.rochesterenvironment.com/about%20REcom.htm>

As an environmental lawyer recently stated, "The environment is an easy sell lately," because it is getting easier to find articles about environmental concerns.

I would like to see more of our area's media hire dedicated environmental reporters for preemptive reporting, like ferreting out buried dump sites, finding out the reasons for cancer clusters, and the effects of toxins and pharmaceutical drugs in our local waters (just to name a few), though lately there has been some good reporting on dumping by the *Democrat and Chronicle* and the relationship between Recycling and Landfills by City Newspaper.

Dedicated (meaning, that's all they would do) environmental reporters

would (and did, because we have had several like Jack Bradigan Spula and Cory Ireland) continually monitor our environment through their contacts and deep knowledge of our particular history of issues in our area.

Also, (and this notion may just lodge solely in my mind) is there a competition between Monroe County Executive Maggie Brooks and Rochester Mayor Duffy on who is Greener? I mentioned these accomplishments by Brook in June's 07 RENewsletter "methane gas use from a landfill, green, recycling computer events, and hybrid buses."

This month, there are several articles about Mayor Duffy's contributions to our environment: Rochester Port Plans, an award for

renewable energy, "Green Team" energy audits, the mayor's attendance at a major Great Lakes conference on cleaning up the lakes--Great Lakes & ST. Lawrence Cities Initiative, and an award for city water operations.

Hey, a challenge between our political leaders on who can be the greenest, what could be finer? Added this month is an article about Rochester being number one for quality of life.

Finally, it was good to get an article from our great environmental reporter, Jack Bradigan Spula on "WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU: THE FARM BILL AFFECTS US ALL". I hope we get more.

Check Jack's Blog THE ROCHESTER DISSIDENT
<http://jackbradiganspula.tripod.com/>

The silent stories (important stories we didn't hear much about):

Oil based paints were banned on July 16th, so many of those paints, stains and sealants will no longer be available in New York State. The products contain high levels of volatile organic compounds, or VOC.

The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) says when not disposed of properly VOCs

pollute the environment and increase the risk of respiratory illness.

I note this environmental law because it's rare that we see this kind of ban appear so quickly. (I didn't even know it was coming.)

But, it is an example of how quickly we can identify an environmental health

problem and start measures to prevent it.

This news story not be so remarkable if there were not so many environmentally bad products on the market that will probably remain on the market for years and years.

Also, if other states don't adopt this law, many will just order oil-based paint in another state and use it.



This is a Brownfield. Would you want to build here?

On-Going Concerns

On invasive species: We knew years ago that the Zebra Mussel was coming and would infect a lot of our waters. There's an article this month assessing the damage this invasive species has done to our local waters. Often, I think, there's a sort of paralysis and inevitability when we think of Invasive Species, but there lots we can do about them.

The Emerald Ash Borer, the bane of the Midwest, is now invading our area and there's also an article about the Japanese beetle. Of course the problem of invasive species (those beautiful Purple Loosestrife plants we see all along our highways, brought from Europe long ago for beatification, is an example) has been in our area for a long time, but we must not get complacent about them because Global Warming is going to seriously affect the number, kinds, and potency of this problem.

Also, I've written an essay "Is

our new Notification Law quietly disappearing?" because I am concerned about the apparent lack of attention the Monroe County website is now giving this law.

Canadian Geese are on this month's agenda that we periodically notice because the prevalence and the droppings of these birds finally get to us. Hopefully, our area will find a suitable way to control these creatures, whose habitats we have taken away, before sinking to killing contests or something worse.

There are more articles on coyotes and bears, which has surfaced as a dangerous-concern issue in our area. I tend to think that training dogs to fight is a far more serious concern for dangerous encounters, but I'm no authority.

There are more troubling environmental signs: bird declines, something on the pernicious problem of bee colony collapse syndrome (by

the way, for an excellent update on this subject check out "Stung", by Elizabeth Kolbert: The mysterious decline of the honeybee" in the August 6th New Yorker Magazine), which I have described at length in earlier articles, articles on recycling (especially old computers), landfill issues, mercury poisoning, updates on the City/County/water/Hemlock/C anadice/lakes/reservoir issue, the removal of the Bald Eagle from the Endangered Species List, which itself is endangered, and lastly a change in the wetlands rules that have been narrowed—a major article out of the New York Times.

Considering that wetlands are the kidneys (filtering a lot of natural and unnatural waste) of our environment and that over 50% of the wetlands in the United States have been destroyed since the time of the Pilgrims, that's pretty serious.

Get all Rochester-area Environmental News-links!

Our news links offer a distinct opportunity for our community to keep abreast of all that is happening with our environment, and because of our news archives and Update Archives, keeps these stories forever for further research.

<http://www.rochesterenvironment.com/news.htm>

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Environmental Thoughts

RochesterEnvironment.com has been blogged:-so now you can discuss Rochester's Environment instantly. Add your comments, be a part of Rochester's environmental discussion.

<http://rochesterenvironmentny.blogspot.com>

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News Summary for this month

There are a lot of environmental news stories for our area this month. But, the links, with a short description each, makes them easily to skim.

Many of the news links may already be out of date because these online news sources do not archive their stories. However, most all you to buy their archived articles online—one you know the name and date of the article.

**go to July 07 News Links

http://www.rochesterenvironment.com/news%20archive/july_2007_news.htm

Environmental Actions you can take for our area

I've come across several online action items this month, though be sure to check at the bottom of this page for on-going environmental actions.

This month you can tell the EPA you want more protection from ozone smog

(there's an article on that in the news too), pipe in on the 2007 Farm Bill, a rally for protecting New York rivers, and the Center for Environmental Information (CEI) is now accepting nominations for the 2007 Hugh E. Cumming Environmental Quality

Award. CEI is one of our city's great environmental institutions and you should periodically check out their site and join up.

Go to **ACTIONS online

<http://www.rochesterenvironment.com/action.htm>

Environmental events going on this month

This month and beyond there are several environmental events for our area, including a couple of (what has become yearly) the International Coastal Cleanup Day.

And as an educational part of

this exhibit, "In Abeyance: two lakes, two alternatives, two concerned, citizens," there will be talk a talk by Stephen Lewandowski, an environmental consultant who will give a talk about the preservation of the lakes.

Because I am now simply linking (instead of reproducing the whole list) the Event Calendar will be continually updated.

Go to **Calendar online

<http://www.rochesterenvironment.com/calendar.htm>

Rochester-area Environmental Site of the Month

Speaking about environmental blogs, this site is not specifically an environmental site, but seeing how bikes don't pollute and get us around quickly, we ought to give serious thought to helping those who do commute by

bike some attention: Surf to over "**RocBike.com**" and let them know your ideas on making Rochester a better place to bike.

Site of the Month :

RocBike.com
<http://www.rocbike.com/>

Updates for the Month of July 2007

These daily updates pertain to what is going on in our environment in Rochester.

Go to July 2007 Updates:

http://www.rochesterenvironment.com/Updates%20Archive/updates_july_2007.htm