

Oct. 2007

# RENewsLetter



## This Month's Articles:

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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

Certainly, Al Gore and [The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\)](#) winning the Noble Peace Prize in October is going to change the public dialogue on Global Warming. For one, it will be more difficult for the Global Warming detractors to dismiss the plethora of evidence behind the most important issue of this century. This is critical because the kinds of changes in energy use and ultimately the changes that we will have to make in our own lives will depend on the majority 'getting' the message that our planet is really warming up. It's not just an issue among many: it is the issue.

Gore's winning the Nobel also explains something profound to those pinning for an Al Gore presidency. Why Gore chooses not to reenter the presidential race and affect climatic policies from the White House is instructive because his explanation, as discussed with [LivingOnEarth.org](#), shows why getting the message out about the peril we are in and not trying again for the presidency is so important.

In the Interview, [Nobel Peace Prize Goes Green](#), Gore said, "I tried my best [as Vice President] and I learned in the process that the opposition to the kind of dramatic changes that are needed is so deep and so ingrained that it may well be that the only way to bring about the kind of policy

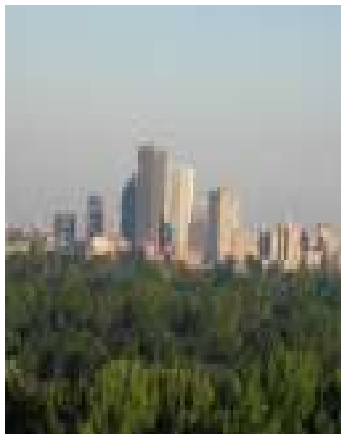
changes that are needed is to first of all bring about the changes in public opinion that make it possible for political leaders in both parties to do what's necessary."

This says volumes to me. The assumption that I, and probably many environmentalists have labored under for the last ten years, is that in order for mankind to curb mankind's increase in global warming gases, it is necessary to provide the public with all the new information (that gets missed by the mainstream media) and then



encourage the public to communicate their concerns to their public officials so that they can support the kind of wholesale changes necessary for a sustainable environment. And we were right. Those who have assumed that if Global Warming was such an important matter that their public officials would just take care of the matter assumed wrong.

For politicians, Global Warming is but one of the issues a political leader's constituents must address. Indeed, they have a responsibility to abide by the interests of those who they represent. But these interests can be short-term and self-serving interests that oftentimes



conflict and compound the difficulties in solving the Global Warming problem. Take energy costs for example, any solution that a politician adopts for providing cleaner energy will butt up against the public's budgetary concerns. So, it becomes paramount that those publicizing the dangers of Global Warming help politician understand the primacy of addressing Global Warming—connecting the dots. We must prod, explain, and make clear to our public officials that all other concerns of the public—education, energy, health, safety—cannot be solved in a world that cannot be inhabited. The public then needs to express their concerns to their public officials so that those in power can act with the knowledge that their constituents are behind them.

## Hottest Issues This Month

### Downtown Rochester

My vote for the hottest environmental issue this month is Drought. Affordable and clean water is one of the many reasons why Rochester, NY is a great place to live--as you already know. But, the droughts going on in the South and West should be of particular concern to Rochestarians who have a quarter of the world's fresh water next door. Because the effects are more dramatic in other places and because the effects here of the drought do not seem to impact most of us here in the Northeast immediately this story just doesn't get its do. It should.



### Bear in our region?

In my opinion, it is inevitable that major amounts of waters will be diverted from the Great Lakes in the future—called 'diversion'. I believe so for several reasons: 1. The droughts in the West and South are so damaging that peoples in these area will soon be in great need of fresh water. 2. Because of continual population growth in these areas, there will be no political will to curb that growth and so force high water prices and draconian water saving measures that the populace in these places will be clamoring for new water sources. 3. The water in the Great Lakes already has a sort of distribution system for taking this water by the network of existing water systems throughout the country (mostly in and around major metropolitan areas) making it possible for the South and West to get connected a lot easier than most people think.

I know my theory seems a bit far fetched for most, but looking far ahead (as we environmentalists tend towards) Diversion is going to be a serious environmental issue because the Great Lakes water levels are already dropping because of some dredging projects and Global Warming. Studies on how climate change will impact on the Great Lakes suggest that there will be a drop the source for new waters for the lakes—glaciers—because there won't be as much water in yearly melts, and also because as the winters are warming, there will be less ice cover on the lakes, which means more evaporation.

Of course, there will be mad dashes to regulate and legislate against far-off communities diverting waters from the Great Lakes, because it is such tight system (mostly the water stays in the system, what gets out through the St. Lawrence Seaway gets back by glacier melt, about one percent), but I don't think that will be enough. Fresh drinking water is fundamental to human life and we got lots of it. Our distance fear of the profound disturbance caused by diverting large amounts of water from this enclosed system will pale against the immediate and desperate need for fresh water in places that do not have it. My points are: Diversion of waters from the Great Lakes should be on our radar because Great Lake water levels, our weather, and our ecosystem could be compromised. Secondly, I have no idea how we in the Northeast can say no to other large portions of our country who will be in desperate need of fresh water.

*Help Promote* If you believe in the concept of [RochesterEnvironment.com](http://RochesterEnvironment.com), we invite you to help promote this unique and useful website.

*Environmentalists can help promote this site also by listing* [RochesterEnvironment.com](http://RochesterEnvironment.com) on your site.

Here are some reports about this issue that back up my concern: [NCDC: Drought spread through US in Sept. - Yahoo! News](#) The Great Lakes, which together make up about 20 percent of the world's fresh surface water, have been in decline since the late 1990s. Lakes Huron and Michigan were about 2 feet below their long-term average levels, while Lake Superior was about 20 inches off, Lake Ontario 7 inches below and Lake Erie a few inches down. [Yahoo! News - Top Stories](#) Also the drought issue brings up the continual threat of diversion : [States eye lakes water management :: News :: Post-Tribune](#) Great Lakes water levels are near historic lows. And with droughts in the Southeast and Southwest, the



pressure to turn to the Great Lakes as a source of fresh water is growing. So is the need for states to pass the Great Lakes Compact to prevent diversions. (Oct. 26, 07) [Post-Tribune of Northwest Indiana](#)

[Recycling in Rochester – Get all the information online.](#)

## Other Hot Environmental Issues

There are several stories this month about lead poisoning, which Rochester has taken the lead in solving. (Other cities, probably most have this problem too, but Rochester is taking this issue by the horns.) It looks like we got a check for 1.6 million dollars from U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development towards detoxifying old homes in the Rochester area. Nationally, Lead Prevention Week (Oct. 21-27) reminded us (or hopefully so) that lead poisoning also occurs elsewhere in children's lives, specifically in the toys made for them. One article suggests that you surf over to [www.cpsp.gov](http://www.cpsp.gov) for a list of products that have been recalled because of lead.

Finally, on lead poisoning there is a story from the [City of Rochester](#) about lead dust from an old firing range--[LEAD CONTAMINATION FROM OLD FIRING RANGE FOUND AT PUBLIC SAFETY TRAINING FACILITY](#). Close to this subject, there have been stories in the past about contamination from other firing ranges around the county from lead bullets left in the ground. It's not an environmental problem that comes to many as an important issue, but over time lead bullets lying around on the ground for years can eventually cause a problem. I've talked in the past with a representative from the EPA on this subject. He said that other parts of the country, like the South, have this issue on their radar. You can find these stories and learn more about [Lead Poisoning](#) in the Rochester area from my web page.

[Brownfields](#), which are abandoned sites, usually in urban locations, that are tainted by either real or perceived contamination, making them undesirable for private redevelopment efforts, are in the news headed by stories about the Victor contamination. This is a story that, like the toxins that define brownfields, won't go away. Rochester also is receiving a large New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) grant to clean up another brownfield site. At [Brownfields](#) you can also find these stories and [Scorecard](#) where you can type in your zip code and find all the brownfields

near your location. Recently, there's been a big victory in keeping this information open to the public, after the public piped in and told the EPA they wanted to know.

Other than Gore and the UN winning the Nobel Peace Prize for publicizing [Global Warming](#) there are stories on how this issue might affect the Rochester-area. Interestingly, your sewer bills could rise because of Global Warming, bird behaviors could be changing, and the [Democrat and Chronicle](#) did a good story ("[Climate change already upon us](#)") on what the next fifty years might look like with



[Air Quality in Rochester, NY](#)

Global Warming. For other local reports on possible changes due to climate change, you can check out my [Weather & Climate](#) page. Finally, Governor Spitzer has begun a program for cutting Global Warming gases from NYS power plants by ten percent.

As always [Energy](#) issues, usually in the form of [wind power](#), are in the news. Fifty wind turbines are coming to Cohocton, under some protest. Because of [Article X](#) there is concern about how New York State energy issues will be implemented in the future. In Canada wind farms are causing a strange problem: so many people are stopping to look at the wind farms along Lake Erie that safety is a concern. The Hemlock/Canadice Lake watershed issue gets a positive story this month as the NYS Environmental Commissioner paid a visit to the area and liked the idea of preserving it. This has been a long concern of the area to keep the watershed of this area pristine and maybe there's hope that it will remain so.

### [Rochester Issues](#)

[Animals](#) [Commuting](#)  
[Wetlands](#) [Food](#)  
[Air Quality](#) [Energy](#)  
[West Nile Virus](#)  
[Urban Sprawl](#)  
[Brownfields](#)  
[Rabies](#) [Lead Poisoning](#)  
[Lyme Disease](#)  
[Recycling](#)  
[Plants](#) [Finger Lakes](#)  
[Invasive Species](#)  
[Deer Problem](#)  
[Geese Problem](#)  
[Pesticides](#) [Parks](#)  
[Water Quality](#)  
[Genesee River](#)  
[Zebra Mussels](#)  
[Great Lakes](#) [Wind Power](#)  
[Environmental Health](#)

*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.*



[RochesterEnvironment.com calendar](#), updated every day, lists all environmental events, educational programs, activities, seminars, and rallies.

## On the Positive Note

Mayor Duffy has an upbeat message for this year's operation of Duran Beach and the City of Rochester is implementing a "bicycle enhancement program." This program could mean "new bike lanes, signs and parking in Rochester." –from "[Region to make way for bicycles](#)" (Oct.18, 07) [Democrat & Chronicle](#).

[Commuting in Rochester](#) could be greatly enhanced by a more robust bicycling program for our city, but it's going to need a lot of work and public education. Right now it is not easy to commute by bicycle in Rochester: Many drivers don't know or don't care about bicycling rights on the road, our beautiful and numerous trails don't interconnect to most businesses, and for the most part vehicles are dangerous to bicyclists and they are dangerous to pedestrians. As a City resident who walks a lot, I'm aware that many bicyclists fearful of the city streets without shoulders prefer the sidewalks, which they believe are legal bike lanes—they are not. There seems to be a desire for our city to move into the future, enhanced by bike technology, and this next step by the City could make commuting by bicycle a viable form of transportation.

Also, this month there are many stories on open space. [Urban Sprawl](#) in our area could be greatly reduced by protecting pristine land and not allowing unused farmland to go to development. I'm not against development, but in a county where the population is not growing, it makes a lot more environmental sense to use land already developed and abandoned than to churn up unused land. Helping out is the [DEC](#), which is offering a [Habitat Access Stamp Program](#).

## On-Going Concerns

It's Flu season again and Rochester is ready. New research on the flu suggests that our mother's were right; the flu virus does flourish when it's cold outside (below 40 degrees and dry). Granted there are many reasons to get your flu shot this year, including reducing the affects of the flu, preventing others from getting it, and another I believe is pertinent. Another reason for seriously considering getting your flu shot is to increase the market for flu serum production, thus readying ourselves for a possible pandemic flu. (Read: What to do locally in a Flu Pandemic: [Bird Flu Brochure](#) by [Public Health | Monroe County, NY](#)) By getting your flu shots (my reasoning goes) this encourages more companies that produce flu serum by creating a healthy market for these companies, which in turn means that in case there is a possible flu pandemic a large infrastructure will be ready to copy, produce, and distribute the necessary antidote. It also would lower the price of flu shots, which means more people would get flu shots, which means there will a population less inclined to get and pass on this very contagious disease. BTW: If you go to [Flu Tracker](#) you can find out about rate of flu outbreaks in Rochester—just type in your zip code.

As long as I have the floor, I have a few observations about our economics and the environment (always an on-going concern), since reading Alan Greenspan's new book: [The Age of Turbulence: Adventures in a New World](#). Number one: Greenspan hardly mentions that the state of our environment has had or will have much affect on our economic health, though he does mention his concerns about how Global Warming might possibly screw things up sometime this century. Other than mentioning negative externalities, economists rarely mention the system that keeps us all alive, even though our environment provides all of the (seemingly magical) resources that industry and our economy needs. Economic theories and practices don't bother to get involved with the pollution caused by its consequences. I suggest that Greenspan check out [The Center for Sustainable Economy](#) because if our economic leaders don't understand the threat our economy presents to our environment, we are going to get presidents who say things like we won't join in with other nations who are trying to curb Global Warming because it will hurt our economy. There's something very unsustainable about that kind of priority reversal. (I'd love to hear your comments, especially if you have read Greenspan's book. Contact me at [FrankRegan@RochesterEnvironment.com](mailto:FrankRegan@RochesterEnvironment.com) )

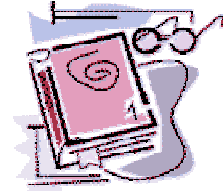


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## The silent stories [important stories we didn't hear much about]:

A new deer disease, epizootic hemorrhagic disease, or EHD, is on the horizon and the DEC is asking that hunters be aware. Albany County has its first positive result on this disease caused by biting flies and the disease does not seem to be a threat to humans. Continuing on with [Animals](#), there are stories this month about dogs, bears, and coyotes. Public education and input about bear control in our area comes up in this month's news and a bear was caught near Braddock Bay.

There's a story out of the [Messenger Post](#) about coyotes, [Never say never, when it comes to coyotes - Rochester, NY - MPNnow](#), which includes some troubling observations about the coyote. I believe that the state should conduct a comprehensive study on the increasing population of coyotes and nail down some of the fantastic stories attributed to this misaligned animal. A couple of more stories about coyotes attacking everything in sight will produce killing contests among those itching for something else to shoot at.

There's also an interesting story about a drop in [pesticide](#) use for Monroe County. A couple of years ago, our county passed the [Pesticide Neighbor Notification Law](#) and maybe, just maybe this law has had an affect.

[Essays](#) – by Frank J. Regan

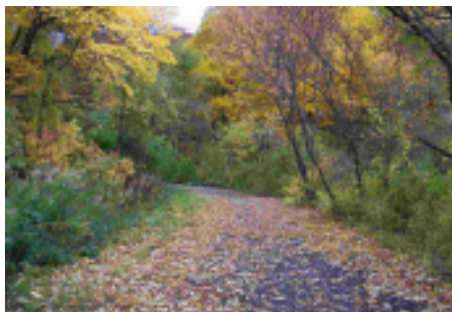
## Environmental Actions you can take for our area

Get all the up-to-date online Rochester- area environmental actions at:

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

My vote for the most important online environmental action you can take is to become aware of the threat again to minority media in this country. As Bill Moyers's said, "Until five years ago, people like you — the public — didn't matter very much at the FCC. Then, when the FCC Chairman Michael Powell announced that the commission was about to change the rule and allow a few media giants to own even more television and radio stations in one town, you said enough's enough. And somewhere between two or three million of you spoke up and deluged the FCC and Congress with phone calls, emails, letters, and postcards." [Bill Moyers Journal . Transcripts | PBS](#)

Now we are under threat again of having our media under our FCC rules hijacked by the few media giants, which means you and this issues you care about, like Rochester's environmental, will be solely framed by the media giants. That is a great threat to your ability to make sure your environment remains sustainable, because you will only hear the reports approved by the corporate media, which they might filter because it won't make money or will conflict with their values. Find out what you can do and learn more about this issue here: [AlterNet: Minorities and the Media: Little Ownership and Even Less Control](#) & [Save the Internet : Fighting for Internet Freedom](#) & [Media Matters with Bob McChesney on WILL-AM](#)



[Weather & Climate Change for Rochester, NY](#)



**[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.*

**News Help**

*Please consider sending me (verifiable) Rochester-area environmental stories that would be appropriate for [RochesterEnvironment.com](#) and this newsletter Sent to [Frank Regan](#).*

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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. Also get this blog into your favorite reader as a feed:

<http://rochesterenvironmentny.blogspot.com/feeds/posts/default>

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## Environmental Events for this month

Go online for the most up-to-date listings:  
<http://www.rochesterenvironment.com/calendar.htm>

There are several Rochester-area events and some outlying areas nearby with environmental events. Some films, conferences, book club meetings, lectures and more. Be sure to check this page often because I am continually updating the events list. Be sure, if your group has a Rochester-area environmental event that you send me the details.



Think: Environmental Health

## News Summary for this month

Get all the Rochester- area environmental news links for the month of October 2007

Go October 2007 News-links

[http://www.rochesterenvironment.com/news%20archive/october\\_2007\\_news.htm](http://www.rochesterenvironment.com/news%20archive/october_2007_news.htm)

## Environmental Updates for this month

Get all the Rochester- area environmental Updates for this month and find out what RochesterEnvironment.com has done.

Go to October 2007 Daily Updates

[http://www.rochesterenvironment.com/Updates%20Archive/updates\\_october\\_2007.htm](http://www.rochesterenvironment.com/Updates%20Archive/updates_october_2007.htm)

## Rochester-area Environmental Site of the Month

This site represents a great integration of Rochester-area environmentalism, the Internet, and the future of green business in our area. Find out lots of Rochester-area information on living green in Rochester and ways you can get involved. Environmentalism is not anti-business and this site proves it.

[Rochester Green Living](#) "Our goal is to help lower the environmental impact of the homes and lives of those living in the greater Rochester area. To reach that goal we will provide workshops in sustainability, promote local green events, be a free local resource in sustainable information, and create connections to other green businesses/groups throughout New York. We hope we will be the first stop on your journey to a deeper understanding of sustainability."