

Nov. 2007

# RENewsletter



## This Month's Articles:

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\* Though easier read when printed, this hyperlinked newsletter is best read online.

*"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

**Kill Your TV!** When you're in a hole, stop digging: Stop listening to the same media that misinformed you about the Iraq War and the dangers of Global Warming!

Why do most American say they are concerned about the environment (at least in some polls), but don't vote for candidates with strong environmental records? Why do we continue to living our destructive, non-sustainable way of life (the United States has only a fraction of the world's population and uses 25% of the fossil fuels) despite all the evidence that it's going to be a terrific cost to future generations?

Is it because Americans are especially selfish or dense? I don't think so. I think the answer to most of our environmental problems is that we really don't get it; we don't understand the depth of our environmental problems because most of us are still trying to inform ourselves about the world in the same old way that led us to the state we are in--our environment on the brink of disaster. (By the way, if you think this last statement is an exaggeration, it's an indication that your listening to the same deluding media.)

If you live in the Rochester, NY area, there are several environmental issues that should be on your radar: [Great Lakes Health](#), [Finger Lakes](#), [Energy](#), [Lead Poisoning](#), [Recycling](#), [Wetlands](#), [Brownfields](#), [Air Quality](#), [Zebra Mussels](#), [Deer Problem](#), [Lyme Disease](#), [Rabies](#), [Urban Sprawl](#), [Invasive Species](#), [Global Warming](#), [Commuting](#), [Parks](#), [Genesee River](#), [Pesticides](#), [Water Quality](#), [West Nile Virus](#), [Geese Problem](#), [Wind Power](#), [Food and the Environment](#), [Animals and our Environment](#), [Plants and our Environment](#), and

Environmental Health. But are they? Granted most of these concerns won't titillate or leave you breathless, but they're important anyway because they'll define your existence.

Your radar? Well, this is a metaphor for those things that would have raised the hackles of our ancestors when their lives or the lives of their children were in danger. Here in the twenty-first century with our sophisticated shelters, cars, etc, we have conquered most of the things that usually kill us off immediately. But we have new long-term concerns: Mankind now influences, like never before, our environment. However, we have so cushioned ourselves from the



dangers of the weather, dangerous animals, and starvation that we tend to forget that Nature can still get in our face. We tend to forget because our media (which likes to please us and its corporate sponsors) tells us that things are pretty much OK and just keep listening to them. Most of the mainstream media—TV and radio—nurture the illusion that someone, somewhere is taking care of things for you.

But, they're not. There were murmurs that Iraq was not an immediate threat and not associated with 9/11, but our media played it down. Our planet is warming up from man-made fossil fuels, but until recently (reports from the [IPCC - Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#)) this information was allowed to be blurred by critics who did not want you to change your buying habits—especially how you used energy.



### [Downtown Rochester](#)

#### **Be Proactive:**

If your local media is not being preemptive (meaning investigative reporting) in providing you with all the environmental information you need to make informed decisions about our Rochester-area environment, contact them and let them know you think this information is vital.

And/or, come to this site often.

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

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

Indeed, there are numerous important environmental issues that get but scant coverage from our mainstream media, which is just now trying to slip a new provision through the FCC to take over both electronic and print media in your home town. (Check out: [FCC Chief Proposes Letting Newspapers Own TV Stations](#) - from [FreePress](#) )

In today's world of uber media hype and the consistent mischaracterization of important issues, many of the problems that truly need our attention are being subverted, ignored, or dismissed by critics with their own agenda.

How can I tell? Read some other newspapers around the world: Why is Europe more concerned about Climate Change than Americans? Look around you: Why are there so many invasive species in our area? Why do so many non-corporate media that don't get seen or heard have so many stories, substantiated by a majority of scientists that many of our ecological systems are breaking down? Just remember: When is the last time you could eat the fish you caught without worrying about mercury contamination? The last time you could drink from a stream without man-made toxins? When was the last winter that was filled with snow? Just reason: Why is transported oil considered so safe when there are so many major oil spills--note the recent San Francisco and Black Sea fiascoes? Why do so many claim nuclear power safe, when no one wants to store spend rods near them. Or, why people push the necessity of nuclear power, yet they get nervous unless the undeveloped countries are crawling with experts to see that they don't get the nuclear bomb? Why do our bodies have so many man-made toxic chemicals in us (called the 'body burden')? Why is the animal and plant extinction rate today (now caused by humans) about the same as 65 billion years ago when the dinosaurs began to crash?

In short, there are countless instances that all is not right, that is, in a profound environmental way, but most know or care little about it all? What's with that? What kind of self-deluding species are we? Is it just too depressing to think about the very real possibility that our way of life is threatening our very existence--or at least our children's existence? Or, are we too busy? Maybe, like a speeding train, we've built up too much momentum living the way we do to consider that there might not be enough tracks to take us where we want to go?

Take a look at some of these [Rochester issues](#) that should be on your radar and consider the consequences of a bad trend. And remember, like the train analogy, most environmental trends cannot be stopped on the proverbial dime. Once upset, Nature balances itself, not caring how we might fare in the process.

What is the answer to our present dilemma? I believe that the answer is we need to change how we get information. We need to kill our corporate driven TV, radio, and movies. Or, we need to demand that mainstream media inform us correctly and continually on environmental issues in a responsible manner and with a concerned attitude. We need to consider the hypotheses of thousands (maybe millions) of environmentalists and scientists that there is something to this world-wide concern about the dismal state of our environment and actively check it out. Don't continue to listen to your favorite TV or radio host, who have their own agenda, but go research this issue yourself. Because you are alive today, you are responsible for educating yourself about the true state of affairs.

How can you, or any political party, dismiss the potentially most important issue of this century--our environmental plight--without actually checking it out yourself? Dismissing it, or forming a hostile attitude towards those bringing you messages about our environment that you don't want to hear, or getting angry, but especially continually listening to the media that misinforms will have no effect on our environment. Ignoring our environmental situation may make you feel better, but it won't alter our plight.

When we increase global warming gases, continue to pollute our air, land, and water, destroy our biological diversity, there will be consequences that no state of denial will stop. Nature rules, there's no getting around it. When we change our environment so we cannot live in it--there you are. So, if you're serious about informing yourself about our present Environmental plight, check out alternative choices for environmental news at [Global Environmental News](#)--and shut off the darn TV.

## **Hottest Issues This Month**

My vote for the hottest environmental issue of **November 2007** is (again) [Energy](#). Now that we have a promise from [Rochester Gas & Electric](#) (RG&E) that the renovation at Russell Station, one of the dirtiest coal power plants in the state, will not include coal for our future, Rochester has taken a major step forward in a clean energy future.

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### 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](#)

Practically and psychologically this makes it worthwhile for all of us to pursue anti-fuelish measures in our own lives because to continue powering our area with coal would have made anything else we tried to do to curb Global Warming meaningless—because of the net effect on our environment.

This month we are seeing another Ethanol plant coming to our area (Shelby), higher appliance efficiency standards by from the Department of Energy (DOE) (check out [U.S. DOE Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy \(EERE\)](#)), a movement by our NYS Attorney General to insure that our nuclear plants (our is Gina) up the standards on safety, a ban locally on outdoor wood burning furnaces, a serious debate on putting up wind turbines in Hamlin and even another installation for renewable energy from the municipal landfill at Auburn. Monroe County has already launched such a project.

While I personally don't think we are there yet in actually achieving a sustainable energy policy that will solve Global Warming, I do believe we are on the right track. Ethanol may help local farmers, but it's a gamble on whether its net affect will decrease global warming gases. As an intern program to lower our need for oil, it's probably a good thing. And, while we have not solved the storage issue of spent fuel on nuclear power, at least our government is addressing some of the safety issues. Wind power, one of the best solutions for renewable energy, is actually coming into our area—albeit under serious debate by communities troubled by some of the environmental questions wind power raises.

All in all, a sustainable energy policy is maturing in our area because it's on our radar. The public, our local government, and industry understand that we cannot supply our energy needs in the future the way we have in the past—without regard to our environment. This change of attitude will not only make Rochester cleaner and fulfill their responsibility to making this a more sustainable planet; it will make our area itself more sustainable economically by being an innovator for clean, renewable energy solutions.

## Other Hot Environmental Issues

The cleanup of the Victor contamination issue goes on. One of the positive aspects of this disaster is that citizens are demanding that the government be more forthright in finding out about and dealing with toxic contamination—"particularly industrial solvents such as trichloroethene (TCE)". On that note, the NYS Attorney General Cuomo, and other state governments, are suing the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for lowering its standards on informing the public of toxic pollution in their area. This fight is critical because you cannot fix a problem if you don't know it exists.

How can you monitor what dangerous chemicals your community might be exposed to if our government has made it more difficult for you to know what has been dumped into your environment? The answer is simple—you can't. You can argue all day about how the expense to businesses that this reporting of chemicals release burdens industry, or that you don't particularly want to know, or any number of lame excuses. But, there are no excuses for the public being denied full information about what chemicals their communities are exposed to.

Another Hot Issues this month is the release of "[Climate Change and Great Lakes Water Resources November 2007](#)" by the [National Wildlife Federation](#). This comprehensive and very readable report is available online and it



[Air Quality in Rochester, NY](#)

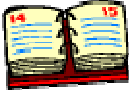
chronicles the possible damage Global Warming could have on our area's greatest asset. Rather than assume an attitude of frustration an denial about what may or may not happen to our area's environment when Global Warming takes hold, we need to completely understand what possible consequences there might be and how our future will change because of it. Foremost is the very wide opportunity for action that can be taken now to mitigate the worst effects of Global Warming on our area.

The worst thing we can do is deny the obvious: that we too are going to be adversely influenced by Global Warming. The next worst thing is that we do nothing. Logically, because we capable of creating anthropogenic climate change, we can also influence positive changes. Standing by, believing that it's hopeless is irrational. If we had the power to create this problem, we are capable of doing something about it.

*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.*



## On the Positive Note

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

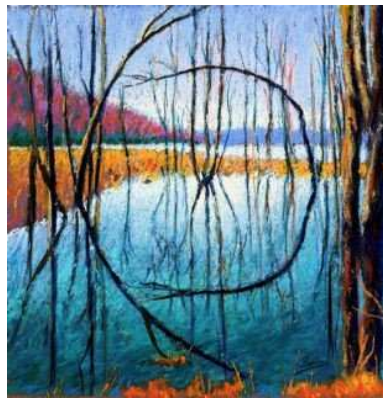


[Environmental Site of the Month Award](#)

Each month, included in the RENewsletter goes out an environmental award for the best Rochester-area environmental web site or blog that best helps promote the need to protect and offers solutions to our area's environmental issues.

In the past months our local media seems to be on this kick about former residents of our state making a comeback: mountain lions, bears, coyotes (well, OK, coyotes weren't endemic, but they're coming anyway), moose, and now there's a story about beavers in our area. That those who were once exterminated in large numbers would think our area fit to return is positive, but my hope is that we learn this time around how to treat these animals better. They were some of the creators of our environment by their very existence and their role in our area's environmental history—which is not merely an academic story, but a real story of creation. These animals once shaped our environment; we still have things to learn from them and what vital role they may have played in how things around us look today.

Another positive story this month is Mayor Duffy's tree planting program, a volunteer program to help city and park trees. You cannot beat trees for a simple, easy, (and beautiful) solution to Global Warming. Recently, I read a story that the UN believes two billion trees were planted this year around the world. Maybe our species is not hopeless.



Finally, [Hemlock & Canadice Lakes](#) is a new book on the Hemlock & Canadice Lakes Watershed issue: If you have been following the major environmental story of the year about the possible sale of the Canadice/Hemlock Lakes watershed that the city of Rochester now owns, this new book offers some suggestions and some great photographs about this area. I don't usually promote local environmental books, except when someone has taken the trouble to research and explain a specific Rochester-area environmental concern.

Gloria (one of the authors says, "The book (and actually the whole project) has been an amazing experience, leading us to learn about groups such as yours and meeting some great folks."



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Our monthly RENewsletter is best when read online because of dynamic links. It encapsulates all the [news](#), [actions](#), and [events](#) and goes right to your e-mail free.

For a quick tour of all that [RochesterEnvironment.com](#), check [Contents](#) or find out all [About RochesterEnvironment.com](#).

## On-Going Concerns

Hope you got your flu shots. As I explained last month, flu shots not only protect you from the worst symptoms of the flu, it could be a part of the solution to a possible pandemic flu. Check on Monroe County's brochure for more information on this issue: [Bird Flu Brochure](#) by [Public Health | Monroe County, NY](#)

Also, there's more information about the new deer disease Epizootic hemorrhagic disease (EHD) that seems to be spreading across this state. Those who hunt have to be particularly aware says the [NYS DEC](#).

Bird deaths on the Great Lakes hits the news this month. It is speculated that perhaps botulism from some invasive species on these lakes are responsible. Read the articles, the numbers of bird deaths are astounding.

Another on-going concern that should be on all of our radars in the presidential horserace is the environmental credentials of the candidates. Who better to assess the environmental records of the candidates than the [League of Conservation Voters - The Independent Political Voice for the Environment](#)





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

I came across an interesting story about how tree bark in an area near us may help us determine the environmental health of our area. There is, according to the article, "Dechlorane Plus in the bark of trees across the northeastern United States" and some of the highest concentrations near our area.

What encourages me about this story is that scientists are preemptively researching all possible indicators of environmental disruptions. Rather than stick our heads in the sand and wait for every little toxin we have produced to come back and haunt us, many are actively looking for problems. As in cancer solutions, the sooner you know the better chance you have of a cure.

[Essays](#) that connect the environmental dots – by Frank J. Regan

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[Recycling](#) -There is no good reason why to not recycle. We could be creating new industries from waste, instead of lethal toxins.

## Environmental Actions you can take for our area

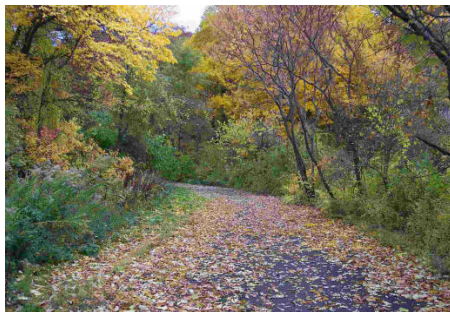
Get all the up-to-date online Rochester- area environmental actions at:

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

I've only come up with this online action. If you have one, send it to me. –

[FrankRegan@RochesterEnvironment.com](mailto:FrankRegan@RochesterEnvironment.com)

**\*\*ACTION\*\*** - [Reduce Our Dependence on Oil with a Good Energy Bill](#) Last week, the price of oil hit a near record high \$99 per barrel, and with it, gasoline rose to an average of \$3.09 per gallon. With winter coming, heating prices could rise too. This is a real threat to us all. Congress needs to act now to pass a comprehensive energy bill to reduce these threats. --from [Center for American Progress](#)



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

## News Summary for this month

Get all the Rochester- area environmental news for this month and find out what's hit the Rochester's area media attention.

Go **November 2007** News-links

[http://www.rochesterenvironment.com/news%20archive/november\\_2007\\_news.htm](http://www.rochesterenvironment.com/news%20archive/november_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 **November 2007** Daily Updates

[http://www.rochesterenvironment.com/Updates%20Archive/updates\\_november\\_2007.htm](http://www.rochesterenvironment.com/Updates%20Archive/updates_november_2007.htm)

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**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](#).**

# Environmental Events for this month

RochesterEnvironment.com  
"It's where you live."

CONTACT - E-MAIL:  
[FrankRegan@RochesterEnvironment.com](mailto:FrankRegan@RochesterEnvironment.com)



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

It's the holiday season and I'm not finding as many environmental events as the autumn, but things are going on. If your group is doing something for the environment, or if you have come across an interesting event, please contact me. I can say the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Environmental Forum by the Rochester Group of the Sierra Club (one of the biggest environmental events in our area) is coming up in April and the theme is transportation in Rochester's future. If you know of a good speaker on this topic that would bring in the public, drop me a line.



## Rochester-area Environmental Site of the Month



When it comes to [Recycling](#), we need innovative, profitable, and really useful solutions to putting our most toxic products back to work instead of into the ground, where they leach toxins for generations. Innovation means a new industry based on using recycled products should not only help the community by simply recycling but help the community by creating a product that the community needs.

So, this site of the month really helps get computers out of the ground, kept from being sent overseas where it goes into their ground, and provides Rochester with a useful, really inexpensive product. Computers are for everyone now and if you don't have one, you're not going to have the same chance to excel in our country, or have the same freedoms as those who do have a computer. So, at \$24, getting a computer is the real deal, something needed, something really within the grasp of everyone that was going to poison us down the road if simply tossed into the ground.

**SITE OF THE MONTH:** [Micrecycle](#) "Our mission is to provide computers for education. [Micrecycle](#) refurbishes donated equipment to supply high-quality, affordable computers to families, schools and community organizations. We support community technology access and training for all members of the greater Rochester community. [Micrecycle](#) is a volunteer-based program dedicated to the vision that all people have affordable access to the benefits of computer and information technology. [Micrecycle](#) is a program of the [Rochester Museum & Science Center](#)."