

# The Trailblazer

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## Stop Niagara County CWM From Expanding!

By Charles Lamb and Pamela Hughes

The Chemical Waste Management site located in Niagara County has been in operation since the 1990's. The landfill will soon exhaust their current landfill area previously designated for dumping waste from all around the Northeastern United States. Therefore, they have proposed the construction of a new landfill covering 44 acres that would extend CWM's permit to receive hazardous waste for an additional 20 to 30 years in the Lewiston-Porter town regions.

Governor Andrew Cuomo appointed an eight member siting board to evaluate CWM's proposal in order to determine if the relevant certificates of environmental safety/public necessity should be approved or denied based on health and safety, water supplies (including groundwater), and the necessity of the site.

There is large public opposition to this proposal including the Town of Lewiston, Village of Lewiston, Village of Youngstown, Niagara County Legislature, Lewiston Porter School Board, and others who have been very vocal since this application was first submitted. Every unrestricted municipality in this area has stated opposition to a new landfill permit. Environmental groups, such as the Sierra Club, have

long been in the front ranks of opposing hazardous waste disposal here in the watershed area of Lake Ontario. In 2010, the DEC stated that additional and expanded hazardous waste management facilities were unnecessary in New York. The disproportionate amount of waste disposal in this region compared to other counties and states deem this area unnecessarily weighted. In addition, landfilling is the least desirable method of disposing of hazardous waste. The existing elevated cancer rates in the surrounding regions to CWM compared to state averages, and the fact that this proposed site borders the Lew-Port school system and residents, certainly is a contraindication to this future project. And the immediate economic benefit of expansion is gravely offset by disincentives to new businesses as well as promotion of this region as a center for tourist attraction with a newly expanded landfill presence. The landfill would retard economic growth and lower property values. Lastly, the morality of endangering the viability of the environment is not good stewardship of our earth.

Money talks, but so does 'People-Power'. Large numbers of people need to become active in fighting against this new hazardous waste facility that would

result in trucks bringing hazardous waste materials across our state. This is the last chance for the residents of Western New York to voice their opposition to the proposed landfill. Public hearings are scheduled for July 16<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 pm and 6:30 pm at Lewiston-Porter High School. Petitions are being prepared, and public comments can be sent now. Please help us in opposing this landfill expansion. Relevant addresses, contacts, and information are provided below.

Copies of the application are available through <http://modelsite.wm.com/>. Hard copies of DEC's fact sheet, draft permit, and CWM application are also available at: DEC, Division of Environmental Remediation, 625 Broadway, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor, Albany, NY 12233, and at DEC Region 9 Office, 270 Michigan Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14203, contact person: Mark Passuite (716-851-7165), the Youngstown Free Library, and the Porter Town Hall. Comments can be sent to: James T. McClymonds, Chief Administrative Law Judge, NYSDEC Officer of Hearings and Mediation Services, 625 Broadway, First Floor, Albany, NY 12233-1550, or via email to [CWMR-MU2@gw.dec.state.ny.us](mailto:CWMR-MU2@gw.dec.state.ny.us).

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## RECYCLING CORNER - *Ever-Changing and Mostly for the Better!*

By Ron Missel

Recycling used to be simpler. Some 25 or so years ago, a blue or green box earmarked for recycling was dropped off in your driveway by your trash company, typically with an accompanying list from your municipality outlining what could go in it. Generally, it was the simple stuff like paper, bottles, cans and some plastics. Soon after, larger receptacles began showing up at the work place and other public facilities. Paper went in one; cans and bottles in another. Then the supermarkets offered "plastic or paper"? Paper bags were recycled at home and plastic bags returned to a bin at the supermarket. Later, electronics, with their varied internal materials, began to proliferate. Computers had about a 4-5 year 'life', and TVs not much more. Electronic recycling became both a critical and monumental challenge.

All said, the recycling business is booming, and it is more inclusive than ever. The processes to generate the reconstituted materials are vastly improved, and the number and type of products made from these materials has grown exponentially. Consider the following:

**PLASTIC BAGS** – As an avid recycler, I know that mixing the wrong materials during reprocessing can result in a contaminated batch – wasting the material and adding time and cost to the re-manufacturing process. That's one of the big reasons why there are many rules governing recycling. However, those rules can and do change. For example, while I've been diligent about placing only the shopping bags in the return bins at the supermarket, guess what? I recently discovered that the following items can be recycled in the bins along with the standard-issue supermarket bags: **newspaper bags, dry-cleaning bags, produce bags, bread bags, cereal box liners, frozen food bags, wrap from paper products like towels and toilet paper, plastic stretch/shrink wrap, zipper-type bags, and so on.** (Bags should be clean and dry, and remember to remove plastic handles or zippers.) In short, the current industry sorting processes allow for the 'mix' of materials.

**ELECTRONICS** – Recycling and disposal options were limited primarily because it was both difficult and costly to separate the assorted plastics, metals, composites and toxic materials (like lead and mercury) within the devices. Back then, for example, if the 1x2 inch plastic manufacturer name plate got mixed in with the plastic housing, it would contaminate the entire batch of reprocessed material. Today, however, the remanufacturing processes are greatly improved, including the capability to separate and filter materials to prevent contamination. And while you might have been charged a fee to recycle your electronics a while ago, most of it is free today (with the possible exception of CRT monitors and TVs). In addition, there are many more options to dispose of these items. In Western New York, the city and counties sponsor 'electronics' recycle days once or twice a year, as do many other large municipalities. Some allow for periodic drop-off. SunnKing now has about 20 locations, and Best Buy will accept most items. Check the web-sites and/or call. As always, use the [earth911.com](http://earth911.com) website for assistance.

The point to all of this is simple: The entire process of **recycling** is continually improving, but changes are not always readily apparent. Periodically check your municipality's web site for changes, or call them direct. Use [www.earth911.com](http://www.earth911.com), or the Sierra Club Niagara Group web site <http://niagarasierraclub.wordpress.com/recycle-corner/> and related links. Most importantly, adopt the mindset that there's something positive you can do with an item before **throwing it out**. When you can, **reuse**. If not, then **recycle**. The trash can should be the last resort.

# Sierra Club Niagara Group Annual Report - June 2013 to May 2014

By Lynda Schneekloth, Chairwoman

We have had an incredibly active year with our Executive Committee and affiliated volunteers working on many environmental issues! I'd like our membership to get a sense of what has been happening over the past twelve months.

First, we have spent considerable time this year working on our organizational structure and practices so that we can be more effective in all of our campaigns. To that end, five of our Ex Com members participated in a seven week SC Leadership Training that was then brought back to the group for discussion and changes to our operating procedures. We also engaged in a strategic planning session where we identified and confirmed that climate change and renewable energy will continue to be our primary campaign even while we attend to the diversity of issues facing us in WNY.

We are fortunate to have the head of the Atlantic Chapter Energy Committee, Bob Ciesielski, on our ExCom. We have also been working closely with the Beyond Coal campaign with both Jenn Tuttle and Charley Olena for three months. Our Energy Committee, headed up by Diane Ciurczak, has been working to institute good energy policies including a wind campaign, collaborating with the schools on solar energy generation, partnering with other organizations and unions to assist in the transition to a new energy economy. Under the leadership of Bill Nowak and Ellen Bank, we now have a 'Writer's Group' that has had great success getting environmental articles published regionally. We continue to be concerned with the Governor's proposed Energy Plan and have promoted renewables and conservation, and to move away from the proposed methane infrastructure development.

Although we are focusing on energy issues, we have not forgotten our long-standing commitments to West Valley and CWM nor shied away from new threats such as the proposed transport of high-level

## Just Transition Conference 2014

**How do we prepare for a "Just Transition" from a fossil fuels economy to a renewable one that protects workers, the community, and the environment?**

This was the question posed at the recent conference in Buffalo sponsored by the Clean Air Coalition and Niagara Group. *Just Transition: Good Jobs and Healthy Communities* was held on June 7, 2014 at the NYSUT headquarters and was attended by nearly 100 people representing environmental, labor, social justice and community people. In light of the increasing decline of the coal industry in the US, it is likely that Huntley will be closing. What does that mean to our community? Who will be impacted? How do we replace the tax dollars? This conference brought together people who love our Western NY community with people who have already experienced such transitions, experts on industry, and labor engaged in renewables. This is the beginning of our community conversation to prepare for a closing in a way that preserves the community and its economy.

## Buffalo State Volunteer Opportunity

Become a host of an environmental show on the campus radio. Jack Kanack, WBNY Alumnus is the current host of the Environmental Justice show on WBNY 91.3 FM broadcasting 1,150 watts from Buffalo State College to metro Buffalo, surrounding suburbs, and to the world at [www.wbny.org](http://www.wbny.org). Responsibilities include hosting summer recess shows and running the radio station operations in the fall. All college majors are considered and Jack Kanack will offer full training opportunities, including talk show hosting and formatted music shows, this summer in preparation for the fall of 2014. Assistance with guest lineups is also included. This is a great resume builder for any Buffalo State College student. If interested please email Jack Kanack at [info@weathermedic.com](mailto:info@weathermedic.com).

Please listen every Monday this summer from 1 pm to 2 pm to radio channel 91.3 WBNY, the internet at [www.wbny.org](http://www.wbny.org), and podcast on [www.thescooppress.com](http://www.thescooppress.com)

liquid nuclear waste from Chalk River, Ontario to Savannah River, SC. We continue our partnerships to build a large base for our key issues with groups such as the WNYEA, NREC, ADK, Buffalo Recycling, NYS Drilling Defense, WNY Peace Center, CAC, and labor unions. Together, we show greater resolve toward challenging local environmental issues.

### 2014 Annual Awards

The **Bruce Kershner Award** for individual stewardship was given to Jay Burney for his sustained efforts to protect the heritage of our region. Naturalist, ecologist, educator, and advocate, Jay Burney has done exceptional work, past and present, with a variety of environmental groups. He currently is WNYEA's Habitat Executive Committee Chair and manages the Habitat working group. Jay has accomplished many victories through his Learning Sustainability Campaign, his journalism on key issues, his management of the WNYEA Habitat Working Group, and most critically, his key role in the protection of Times Beach on the Outer Harbor of Buffalo. Thank you, Jay, for your dedication and unrelenting advocacy and activism for our environment!

The **Blake Reeves Award**, given in honor of the founder of the Sierra Club Niagara Group, recognizes an organizational effort to further environmental causes such as clean water, renewable energy, and climate justice. This year's award goes to ArtVoice editor, Geoff Kelly. Since 2006, ArtVoice has been one

of the few media outlets in our region that publishes clear progressive articles about social, economic and ecological implications of our current cultural practices. ArtVoice is a twice/monthly magazine started by Jamie Moser in 1990, initially focusing on those issues exclusively on arts and culture. In 2006, Geoff Kelly was hired as editor to build a broader base and add subject matter that included the political and economic scene from a more edgy and progressive position. For example, the section "NEWS Briefly" is always filled with amazing insights and carefully researched specifics that reveal the shenanigans of our elected officials and those with power. As Editor, Geoff has brought on excellent writers: Bruce Fisher (Director of the Center for Economic and Policy Studies at Buff State, Political and economic analysis, focus on water and infrastructure), Mike Niman (Professor of Journalism and Media Studies at Buff State, political analysis that uncovers hidden and not-so-hidden agenda of the rich and famous), and Buck Quigley (Regular on ArtVoice Daily, and was the one who identified past reported hydro-fracking fiasco at the University at Buffalo). They have conducting in-depth analyses and critical writing about the important issues that impact our everyday lives. From our perspective and mission, ArtVoice has not shied away from critical environmental issues that seem to be ignored in other media venues. When I think of the slogan, 'the people are too big to fail', I think it is in part because of media like ArtVoice and people like Geoff, Mike, Bruce and Buck. We owe them a huge "thank you" for their vigilance and insight.

## Getting Outdoors

*The Sierra Club wants YOU to get outdoors and experience the beauty of the natural world. We are proposing some excellent opportunities in the following listing and encourage you to be involved. And if you would like to join a committee that will plan and coordinate Sierra-sponsored outings (hiking, biking, kayaking, x-country skiing and nature walks), or serve as a trip leader, please contact Ron Missel (716-913-7866 or [rmissel3@gmail.com](mailto:rmissel3@gmail.com)). If you know of other groups offering similar activities and would like to see them listed in the future, also contact Ron.*

**ADK (Adirondack Club)** – ADK sponsors frequent local day and evening hikes, bike trips, paddles, x-country skiing, as well as regional Adirondack and Canadian overnights – both tent camping and lodge stays. Each event has a group leader. You are allowed to participate in two activities annually before joining ADK. Annual membership fees are \$50 - \$75. <http://adk-nfc.org/joomla/>

**Foothills Trail Club** – Activities include group hiking on numerous Western New York trails. You are allowed to participate in three activities annually before joining. Annual membership fees are \$22 - \$30. <http://www.foothillstrailclub.org/>

**Buffalo Audubon Society** – Local activities and nature hikes occur frequently throughout the year. Memberships are \$25 - \$35 annually, but you can attend some programs as a non-member for a small fee. <http://www.buffaloaudubon.org/>.

**Sierra Club National** – A wide range of national and international paid trips are available throughout the year for all ages and interests, including 'service' trips at reduced rates. Consult the back pages of *Sierra* magazine, or peruse the web-site. <http://content.sierraclub.org/outings/national>

**Tift Nature Preserve** – At the Buffalo Museum of Science, the affiliated Tift Nature Preserve offers hiking trails and nature programs. Located across from the Small Boat Harbor, it is open 10 am to 4 pm, Wednesday through Saturday, and 12 to 4 pm on Sunday. <http://www.science-buff.org/tift-nature-preserve/visiting-tift/>

**Reinstein Woods Nature Preserve & Environmental Education Center** – Conveniently located in Depew, DEC-managed Reinstein Woods is open to the public weekdays and weekends and includes guided hikes, scheduled programs, and public hiking trails. Check the web-site for times and activities. <http://www.dec.ny.gov/education/1837.html>

**Meet Up** – "Meet-Up" is the world's largest online social network of local groups. The intent is to get local

people together with common interests. Log on to the following link, then 'click on' **Find** top left to browse the numerous listings, or type a group name in the 'search box' mid-page. <http://www.meetup.com/about/>

**Buffalo Niagara RiverKeeper** – RIVERKEEPER is a community-based organization dedicated to protecting the quality and quantity of water, including cleaning up pollution, restoring fish and wildlife habitat, and enhancing public access through greenways that expand parks and open space. There are numerous volunteer opportunities and occasional public programs. <http://bnriverkeeper.org/>

### LOCAL OUTDOOR COMPANIES SPONSORING ACTIVITIES & TRIPS

**Paths, Peaks and Paddles** – Activities include free weekly paddles on Ellicott Creek across from the store on Ellicott Creek Road, paid overnight excursions, outdoor education, equipment rentals (kayaks, canoes, snowshoes), and whitewater rafting on Cattaraugus Creek. Check the web-site for activities and contact information. <http://www.pathspeakspaddles.com/>

**Adventure-Calls** – Activities include paid whitewater rafting and kayaking trips on Cattaraugus Creek and the Genesee River in the Letchworth State Park gorge. (Seeing the gorge from the top is spectacular, but paddling through it and looking up provides an altogether different view.) <http://adventure-calls.com/>

### MEMBER TRIP/ACTIVITY RECOMMENDATIONS

**NOTE:** *If you've had a particularly memorable outdoor excursion, let us know about it and we'll share with the Niagara Sierra Club membership. Send a brief email summary to Ron. Include the date and relevant contact information.*

October 27, 2013 (Submitted by Ron Missel)

I spent the weekend kayaking at **Fish Creek Cabin Resorts** in Taberg, NY, a little northeast of Oneida Lake. The resort includes a dozen cabins on the banks of Fish Creek. The cabins are all new, sleep 2 - 4 people, and have all amenities. The owners, Tim Schoen and his brother, are gracious hosts. Activities include shuttles for whitewater kayaking and rafting in the spring, still water kayaking/canoeing in summer and fall, fly fishing and canoe fishing all season, and access to snowmobiling and x-country skiing. If nothing else, the fall foliage is outstanding. Feel free to call me direct at 716-913-7866 if you have questions. <http://fishcreekcabinresort.wordpress.com/>