

Great Leaks

The aquatic ecosystem of the five freshwater inland seas we call the Great Lakes would seem to be an unlikely place to confront the world's looming water shortage. After all, they contain a fifth of the earth's available fresh water. The vastness of the lakes, however, cannot guarantee the security of the aquatic resources of the Great Lakes Basin. Because 99 percent of the Great Lakes are made up of static, prehistoric waters, withdrawals must be kept within the one percent that is annually recharged through groundwater feeding, precipitation and tributaries. Of course, this does not deter the burgeoning private water industry, currently estimated by *Fortune Magazine* to be worth a trillion dollars, with profits approaching half those of the oil sector, from their attraction to the sheer amount of fresh water in the lakes. Five years ago, for instance, a Canadian firm received a provincial permit to ship 158 million gallons of Lake Ontario water a year to Asia via tankers, and more recently the Perrier Group, the largest bottler of water in the US, used its clout to overpower local opposition and gain permission – after minimal environmental review – to divert up to 210 million gallons of water annually from a Great Lakes Basin spring in Mecosta County, Michigan.

With surrounding water resources fast becoming depleted, these relatively small withdrawals serve as warning signals for much larger bulk diversion schemes to come. An assessment of the international legal situation, however, demonstrates just how powerless individual governments are to prevent water pilfering, especially in the era of free trade agreements like NAFTA and GATT. The eight Great Lakes governors and their Canadian counterparts have moved to provide some protection by amending the Great Lakes Charter, the 20 year-old agreement that regulates water management in the Basin. The draft amendment document, called Annex 2001, is a good one. New or increased water withdrawal from the Basin must demonstrate good water conservation, cause no significant harm to the Great Lakes ecosystem, and demonstrate some net benefit to the lakes or their tributaries. Governor Pataki has been supportive, but still must endorse the change. Eventually, nearly all New York's public officials will be involved in the process to some degree. They – and the public – need to be informed on this important and complex issue. For more information, contact David Higby at 518-462-5526 ext 239 or dhigby@eany.org. *

On the Alert

■ **A Question of Lead-ership:** New legislation to address the dangers of lead poisoning – the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Act of 2002 (Intro 101) – has recently been introduced in the New York City Council. Intro 101 would replace the outdated Local Law 38. A joint hearing of the Council's Housing and Buildings and Health Committees will take place at City Hall on November 14th at 11:00AM. Intro 101 was introduced by Councilman William Perkins from Central Harlem and 30 other members but to date, Council Speaker Gifford Miller refuses to sponsor the bill. The NYC Coalition to End Lead Poisoning (NYCCELP) expects the pro-landlord lobby to turn out a sizable crowd. It is important that the lead bill's supporters turn out as well. NYCCELP is asking citizens and organizations to be at City Hall on November 14th at 10:00AM for a large rally and news conference prior to the hearing. For more information, contact Timothy Logan at own@nyceja.org or 212-239-8882.

■ **Gas Attack:** The Millennium Gas Pipeline, proposed to carry natural gas to the metropolitan area, is currently planned to start in Canada, travel through New York State, cross the Hudson River and enter Westchester County in the Town of Cortlandt. Along much of its path, there will be extensive blasting, including in the Hudson River. In May, 2002, the NYS Department of State ruled that the Millennium Pipeline project is inconsistent with the state's Coastal Zone Management Act. Millennium appealed to the US Department of Commerce, which has the power to override New York's decision. The Commerce Department will hear comments from the public on the proposed route November 13th starting at 10:00AM at the Tarrytown Hilton. Not Under My Backyard (NUMB), a Westchester-based organization opposed to the project, is asking citizens to also gather at the Hilton at 7:00PM as a show of support. For more information call Dani Glaser at 914-736-1322 or visit: www.numb-in-ny.org.

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to oppose threats to the
environment, to preserve natural
resources and human health, and
to fight for high drinking water
and air quality standards.

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■ **Under Pressure:** Thanks to state Assemblymember David Koon and Senator James Alesi, a new law just signed by Gov. George Pataki will limit children's exposure to arsenic, a known human carcinogen. The law prohibits the use of chromated copper arsenate (CCA) treated wood in public parks and school playgrounds and requires existing playground equipment to be treated to seal and prevent leaching from the wood. CCA has been used for decades to treat lumber to render it virtually impervious to insect infestation, rot and decay. This lumber, commonly known as pressure-treated, has been used extensively in a variety of outdoor building projects including decks, fencing, picnic tables and playgrounds. However, recent testing shows that high levels of carcinogenic arsenic leaches from pressure treated lumber and can get on children's clothing and hands. Schools and municipalities must now respond to assure that children are safe. Schools should not accept donations of CCA-treated wood scraps or products, and no new playground equipment should be installed using CCA-treated wood. For more information, call the Healthy Schools Network at 518-462-0632 or email healthyschools@aol.com.

The Month Ahead



November

1-2: *Planning Into Practice: A Conference for Community-Based Groups, Professionals & Institutions*, sponsored by the Municipal Art Society Planning Center and Hunter College Urban Affairs and Planning. Brookdale Campus, Hunter College, 425 E. 25th St. (at 1st Ave.), Manhattan. \$15. Call 212-750-3972.

4: *Native American Environments: Struggle for Land and Life*, talk by Winona LaDuke, Native American activist and writer. Siena College, Roger Bacon Science Building, Key Auditorium, Route 9, Loudonville. 7:00PM. Email: jlobbard@nycap.rr.com.

11: *The 2002 Advocate Awards*, Environmental Advocates of NY's annual gala. This year's honorees are CIVITAS, Federated Conservationists of Westchester County and Residents for a More Beautiful Port Washington. Laura Belle, NYC. 5:30PM. Call Deb Sgambelluri at 518-462-5526 ext. 230.

13: Public hearing on the proposed route of the Millennium Gas Pipeline through Westchester County. Held by the US Department of Commerce. Tarrytown Hilton, 455 South Broadway,

Tarrytown. 10:00AM. Call Dani Glaser at 914-736-1322. (See *On the Alert*.)

14: NYC Council hearing on the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Act of 2002 (Intro 101). City Hall, Manhattan. 10:00AM rally. Contact Timothy Logan at New York City Environmental Justice Alliance, 212-239-8882. (See *On the Alert*.)

14-15: *Energy in Schools 2002*, conference for educators, administrators and facility managers organized by the Northeast Sustainable Energy Association and NYS Energy Research and Development Authority. Email Chris Mason at cmason@nesea.org or visit: www.nesea.org.

15-16: Youth Energy Summit, sponsored by Kids Against Pollution as part of their Kid Power! campaign. Kids will learn about the importance of energy consumption, where it comes from, the impact that it has on their environment and more. Albany. Call 315-266-0185 or email: kap@kidsagainstpollution.org.

16: *Three Perspectives on Agriculture & Health: Individual, Farm, & Community*, a forum sponsored by the Regional Farm & Food Project. St. John's Lutheran Church, 160 Central Ave., Albany. 1:00PM-5:00PM. Followed by the 9th Annual Community Harvest Dinner at 5:30PM. Call Chris Reed at 518-672-7743.

16: *How to Build a Better, Greener House: A Seminar on How You Can Have a Better House*

and Save Money by Building Green, sponsored by the Hudson Valley Sustainable Communities Network. Ski Lodge at Thomas Bull Park, Rt. 416, Montgomery. 8:30AM-12:45PM. \$10. Call 845-687-9253.

20: *Cool New York – A Global Warming Summit*, organized by Environmental Advocates. Join local activists, environmental groups and faith community leaders to help plan how to reduce our impact on global climate change in local communities. Keynote by author Bill McKibben, luncheon address by Mark Van Putten, president of the National Wildlife Federation. Albany. Call Christine Vanderlan at 518-462-5526 ext. 240.

20: Sierra Club speaker social featuring author Peter Kick with his new book on hiking in the Catskills. Highland Cultural Center, 54 Vineyard Ave. Highland. 7:30PM. Free. For directions, call 845-691-6008. For info, call 845-255-5528.

22-23: *The Promise of Place: Community-Based Education in the Northern Forest Region*, a regional conference presented by the Northern Forest Center in partnership with Shelburne Farms. Eagle Mountain House, Jackson, NH. Fees vary. Call Lidie Whittier Robbins at 207-824-8263.

23: *Smart Growth Success in the Hudson Valley*, conference sponsored by the Hudson Valley Smart Growth Alliance. Mohonk Mountain House Conference Facility, New Paltz. 9:00AM-1:00PM. Call Mary Ann Johnson at Scenic Hudson, 845-473-4440 ext. 267.

For Your Information



Water World: The Metropolitan Water Alliance's (MWA) new *H₂O Access* map shows how to get on, along and in the Hudson River in New York and New Jersey between the Verazzano Narrows and Piermont Marsh. *H₂O Access: The Lower Hudson* maps nearly 100 places citizens can access the river, including marinas, boat ramps, launches, parks, cultural facilities, landmarks, and places to fish, swim, birdwatch, bike or enjoy a meal. All sites are located along the Hudson River. Purchase *H₂O Access* by mail for \$4.50, plus \$2.50 for shipping. It is also available at Urban Center Books, 457 Madison Ave. at 51st St. in Manhattan. For more information, contact Carter Craft at 800-364-9943.

Facelift: The Washington Toxics Coalition (WTC) recently launched a redesigned and improved website. WTC is a non-profit organization dedicated to protecting public health and the environment by identifying and promoting alternatives to toxic chemicals and pollution. The revamped website includes informative fact sheets and other publications, a healthy schools pesticide action kit and an action center. Visit WTC at: www.watoxics.org.

Power Points: On Long Island and in the Great Lakes region, New Yorkers are planning for clean, sustainable energy. Take a look at Great Lakes United's (GLU) draft Green Energy Action Agenda or the draft Long Island Citizens Energy Plan published by the Long Island Sustainable Energy Alliance. These plans chart the way from New York's reliance on dirty fossil fuel burning plants toward non-polluting energy sources such as wind and solar, and emphasize getting more from less by improving energy efficiency. Read the draft Green Energy Action Agenda online at www.glu.org, or contact Maria Maybe at 716-886-0142 or mmaybee@glu.org. The Long Island draft energy plan is available at www.seali.org or by calling Gordian Raacke at 631-537-8282.

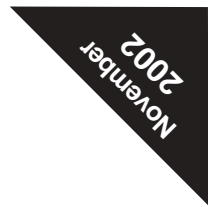
CaN Do: YouthCaN is a youth run organization that uses technology to inspire, connect and educate people worldwide about environmental issues. YouthCaN's 2003 conference is set for May 5 at the American Museum of Natural History in NYC, with other projects ongoing throughout the year. Students can attend the conference, host an event at their school, collaborate with other students on a project and more. To get involved, email youthcan@us.learn.org or visit: www.youthcanworld.org.

Activists' Corner

WHEAT's Up: The Westchester Health and Environmental Alliance Team (WHEAT) was formed by a small group of activists working to uncover local public health threats. WHEAT uses research, media exposés, grassroots organizing, advocacy and litigation in its fight to end any hazards it uncovers.

WHEAT is currently seeking to have Shore Park, located in Pelham Manor on Long Island Sound, tested for environmental pollutants such as lead. For decades prior to being converted to a park, the Shore Park site was a shooting range. In addition, the Village of Pelham Manor used the site as a landfill. Fly ash and bottom ash generated from Pelham Manor's incinerator is also buried at the site. WHEAT is collecting signatures for a petition that will be presented to federal, state and local agencies in support of testing Shore Park. Sign the petition at: www.wheatny.org.

Contact WHEAT at 70 Willow Dr., New Rochelle, NY 10805 or 914-633-6832.



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