



The Environmental Justice Report

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Department of
Environmental
Conservation

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper, a non-profit organization dedicated to protecting drinking water and connecting people to waterways for the past 25 years, recently received a Community Impact Grant from DEC's Office of Environmental Justice. The grant allowed Riverkeeper to expand their environmental education programming to include high school students from environmental justice communities. Through a partnership with the Buffalo public school system, Riverkeeper established the Young Environmental Leaders Program, wherein groups of students engage in an intense environmental health and environmental justice training program. Through hands-on activities and direct experiences, students increased their knowledge of their community's exposure to environmental stressors and were empowered to organize and seek solutions. Students participated in workshops on topics such as community organizing, water quality pollution and monitoring, green infrastructure, and Buffalo River remediation. Each year, two students with strong interests in science careers were given the opportunity for a paid internship with Riverkeeper conducting their own scientific investigations on water quality.

In addition to the Young Environmental Leaders Program, the grant gave students the opportunity to participate in the Riverwatch Water Quality Monitoring Program, annual Shoreline Cleanups and the River Academy college credit course.

Based on the program's initial success, Riverkeeper was able to secure funding from the First Niagara Foundation and the Cameron and Jane Baird Foundation to sustain the effort through 2018.

"The grant has fostered strong connections with local environmental

justice communities, all starting with our relationships with partner schools South Park and Riverside High Schools," said



Students in Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper's Young Environmental Leaders Program sample water from Buffalo Creek.

Chris Murawski, Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper's director of citizen engagement. "Both schools are within environmental justice communities and are extremely diverse in racial and ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. Our first year's class included students from 13 different countries of origin!"

Students especially enjoyed using Riverkeeper's "Floating Classroom" where they were trained to use kayaks and learned about the ecology and water quality of the Niagara River while on the water.

Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper is one of many Community Impact Grant recipients that has been able to foster a stronger relationship with their local community and make strides toward providing environmental justice for all.

TAG GRANTS

Did you know that DEC offers up to \$50,000 in Technical Assistance Grants?

Technical Assistance Grants, also known as TAGs, help community groups explain environmental cleanup activities to the public. Non-profit community groups located near a State Superfund site or Brownfield Cleanup Program site can apply for these grants. State Superfund or Brownfield sites are inactive hazardous waste disposal sites that pose a significant threat to public health and/or the environment. When these sites are being cleaned up, important technical data becomes available, which can be difficult for the public to understand. TAGs help community groups obtain independent technical assistance to interpret scientific information, comment on site remedial activities and proposals and share information with the public.

DEC understands the importance of public awareness about remediation activities happening within a community. There is no deadline to apply for a

TAG; an eligible group must certify that its membership represents the interest of the affected community, and that its members' health, economic well-being or enjoyment of the environment are potentially threatened by the site.

To learn more about Technical Assistance Grants, please visit: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/regulations/2590.html>

GOVERNOR ANNOUNCES NEW SOLID WASTE REGULATIONS

Revisions to address solid waste management to protect groundwater and reduce contamination; public comments accepted through July 15

On February 29, Governor Andrew Cuomo announced proposed revisions to the state's solid waste regulations to increase protections for public health, safety, natural resources and the environment. The proposed changes include measures to regulate previously unregulated facilities, activities and waste streams within the state's existing solid waste management program. The proposed revisions also streamline and reduce regulatory burdens for entities while maintaining environmental protections.

The revisions proposed by DEC include measures to improve the state's regulations over facilities that handle solid waste, including waste transfer stations, landfills, biohazard waste facilities, and facilities that manage recyclable materials. In addition, previously unregulated facilities, including mulch processing facilities will now be regulated. The regulations will also increase oversight of construction and demolition (C&D) debris and historic fill, reducing the potential for these waste streams to affect water quality and the environment on Long Island and throughout the state.

Highlights of the proposed regulations include:

NEW REGULATIONS FOR MULCH PROCESSING FACILITIES

The mulch industry is vital to the local economy and environment in communities across the state, but it is currently exempt from state regulation. Runoff from these facilities can endanger local water supplies. Under Governor Cuomo's direction, the proposed regulations will provide enhanced safeguards and increased oversight of mulch and compost facilities. The regulations require facilities to establish water runoff management plans to protect groundwater and restrict pile size and storage volume to reduce the risk of fire, odor and dust.

IMPROVED CONSTRUCTION & DEMOLITION DEBRIS MANAGEMENT

Throughout the state, improper disposal of C&D debris has generated many illegal landfills and disposal sites, leading to significant environmental concerns. To ensure this waste is properly disposed, the regulations would require companies to track C&D debris from its point of generation to an acceptable disposal facility. The proposed regulations will also require separate processing of asphalt pavement to enhance the recycling opportunities for both asphalt and the remaining C&D waste. The proposed regulations also identify beneficial uses for various types of C&D debris. In addition, facilities that receive 250 or more tons/day of concrete, asphalt, rock, brick and soil would be required to obtain a DEC permit. Taken together, these various proposals would drastically reduce improper disposal of C&D debris, and reduce threats to groundwater contamination and other environmental degradation.

INSTALLING RADIATION DETECTORS

To prevent the illegal disposal of radioactive waste, DEC proposes to require radiation detectors at facilities that handle municipal solid waste including landfills, combustion facilities, municipal composting facilities, processing facilities and transfer facilities. Additionally, the regulations propose new operating requirements including daily background radiation readings, weekly field checks, annual detector calibration, staff training, and increased documentation to ensure that no radioactive materials are being disposed of illegally.

DEVELOPING BENEFICIAL USE DETERMINATIONS FOR OIL AND GAS BRINE

To clarify the appropriate use of brine (highly concentrated salt water from oil and gas extraction), the regulations propose specific application criteria and maximum pollutant limits for use on roads. The proposed regulations specifically prohibit the use of high-volume hydraulic fracturing brine from use in New York State.

In addition, the proposal updates existing regulations governing waste transport, simplifies the process municipalities use to produce local solid waste management plans, and revises the process for awarding state assistance grants to direct available funding to municipalities in a timely manner.

Copies of the proposed rule can be found at: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/regulations/propregulations.html>. DEC has established a public comment period to solicit feedback from residents and affected facilities, and will accept comments through July 15, 2016. Comments can be sent to

SolidWasteRegulations@dec.ny.gov or by mail to:

Melissa Treers, P.E.,
New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
Division of Materials Management
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-7260

Public hearings will be held in Hauppauge on June 2, in Albany on June 6, and in Rochester on June 7. Additional public information meetings and workshops will also be held across the state.



The new regulations will limit the size of mulch piles and require more oversight and better environmental protection.

FREE FISHING CLINICS

Free fishing clinics are family-friendly events where participants can fish for free; no freshwater fishing license or enrollment in the Recreational Marine Fishing Registry is required.

Knowledgeable staff are on hand to teach participants about fishing equipment and techniques, fish identification, fisheries management, angling ethics and aquatic ecology. In addition to the free sport fishing events listed below, other free fishing days in New York include June 25-26 and November 11, 2016.

COUNTY	NAME OF EVENT	LOCATION	DATE	TIME	CONTACT	PHONE
Saratoga	Learn to Fish at Clifton Park Open Space Day	Barney Road Park, Clifton Park	May 14, 2016	9:00 AM - 1:00 PM	Jennifer Viggiani, Town of Clifton Park Open Spaces, Trails & Riverfront Committee	518-371-6054 ext. 256
Wyoming	Free Learn to Catch a Fish/Kids Conservation Day	Letchworth State Park, Castile	May 28, 2016	11:00 AM - 4:00 PM	Douglas Kelly, OPRHP	585-493-3605
Suffolk	Surfcasting Clinic	Fire Island National Seashore Beach-Wilderness Visitors Center (Atlantic Ocean), Smith Point	June 4, 2016	12:00 PM - 2:00 PM	Bob McCormack, NYS DEC	631-444-0283
Chautauqua	Youth Hook & Learn Fishing Event	Falconer Rod & Gun Club, Falconer	June 4, 2016	10:00 AM - 2:00 PM	Nick Costanzo, Falconer Rod & Gun Club	716-664-2426
Columbia	Drop In Hudson!	Henry Hudson Waterfront Park (Hudson River), Hudson	June 8, 2016	11:00 AM - 2:00 PM	Michelle Vedder-Drew, Columbia Co. Soil & Water Conservation District	518-828-4386
Columbia	Drop In Hudson!	Henry Hudson Waterfront Park Hudson	June 15, 2016	10:00 AM - 2:00 PM	Bob McCormack, NYS DEC	631-444-0283
Suffolk	Deep Pond Father's Day Fishing Clinic	Schiff Boy Scout Camp (Deep Pond), Wading River	June 18, 2016	10:00 AM - 2:00 PM	Bob McCormack, NYS DEC	631-444-0283
Otsego	Father's Day Fishing Clinic	Neahwa Park, Oneonta	June 19, 2016	11:00 AM - 3:00 PM	David Plummer, Dave Brandt Chapter 210- Trout Unlimited	607-563-1978
Otsego	W.O.W. (Wear it on the Water) Paddle Fest	Gilbert Lake State Park, Laurens	July 16, 2016	10:00 AM - 3:00 PM	Ro Woodard, NYS Parks	518-408-1028
Columbia	Drop In Hudson!	Henry Hudson Waterfront Park (Hudson River), Hudson	July 20, 2016	11:00 AM - 2:00 PM	Michelle Vedder-Drew, Columbia Co. Soil & Water Conservation District	518-828-4386
Columbia	Drop In Hudson!	Henry Hudson Waterfront Park (Hudson River), Hudson	July 27, 2016	11:00 AM - 2:00 PM	Michelle Vedder-Drew, Columbia Co. Soil & Water Conservation District	518-828-4386

For a complete list of free fishing clinics throughout the summer, visit: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/27123.html>



LEAVE NO TRACE: TIPS FOR RESPONSIBLE NATURE EXPLORATION

The Office of Environmental Justice encourages all New Yorkers to explore the great outdoors this season. New York has wonderful state lands, parks, beaches, hiking trails and lakes just waiting to be enjoyed! DEC has an online list of outdoor recreational opportunities and destinations; visit it at www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/82098.html. There you will find county maps and information of interest such as costs, location, activities, rules, directions, accessible features and other general information.

Whether you are a new user of state lands or an avid outdoor enthusiast, you should be aware of basic out-

door etiquette when interacting with nature. DEC is a cooperating agency with Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics. Leave No Trace is built on seven core principles to help you enjoy the outdoors responsibly and with minimum impact.

Below are two of the seven 'Leave No Trace Principles' for you to be aware of before you head outdoors:

BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHER VISITORS

- Respect other visitors and protect the quality of their experience.
- Be courteous. Yield to other users on the trail.
- When possible, take rest breaks away from trails and choose campsites away from other visitors.

- Let nature's sounds prevail. Avoid loud voices and noises.

DISPOSE OF WASTE PROPERLY

- Pack it in, pack it out. Inspect your campsite and rest areas for trash or spilled foods. Pack out all trash, leftover food and litter.
- To wash yourself or your dishes, carry water 200 feet away from streams or lakes and use small amounts of biodegradable soap. Scatter strained dish-water.

For more information on Leave No Trace, visit: www.lnt.org.

Contact us:

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518-402-8556 justice@dec.ny.gov
EJ Hotline 1-866-229-0497

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