



Pioneer Valley Sustainability Network

Network News

Pioneer Valley Sustainability Network Newsletter November-December 2008 Vol 1, Issue 2

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Network Meetings

PVSN November

Meeting: 8:00am-11:00 am
Wednesday, November 12,
2008

- Location: Westfield State College, Bldg 333, Garden Level Room B
- Meeting Agenda: 8-8:30-breakfast and informal networking
8:30-9-breakfast and more formal networking
9-10-EPA grant funded deliverables
10-11-Network business

Greetings!

Greetings Pioneer Valley Sustainability Network!

Congratulations to all of you who worked to help elect our new President Barack Obama. I know many of us have been busy these past two months and have not had much time for extra work. We apologize for the delay in mailing the second issue of the Pioneer Valley Sustainability Network News and we hope to see you all next week, November 12th at Westfield State College for our next meeting of the Pioneer Valley Sustainability Network. We will be meeting from 8-11 a.m. in Building 333 Garden Level Room B.

These are incredibly exciting times for people working to make our communities and our region sustainable-a place where we can meet the needs of the present inhabitants without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Three new tools became available to us three months ago, and we are taking time in this newsletter to "wet your appetite" about these tools. They are three new acts passed by our Massachusetts Legislature and signed into law by Governor Patrick: the Green Communities Act, the Global Warming Solutions Act and the Green Jobs Act.

Sincerely,

Catherine Miller

Are there topics you would like to see included in future issues? Do you have a success story you would like to share with the community? Are you hosting an event? Please let us know your thoughts by sending an e-mail to adover@pvpc.org with "Newsletter" in the Subject field.

Tony Dover
Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

Member Profile

"Knowing the Network"

an interview with Artist Jane Wegscheider
Winner of the "Art of Sustainability" Contest

How long have you lived in the Pioneer Valley? Why here?

My son, Zeek, and I moved here from Kansas in the Fall of 2000, partly to be closer to my family, partly because of a teaching job I had been offered, and partly because it is beautiful.

We live here now because we are part of it and it is part of us. 'It' is 'this place': our community, home, friends, the hills, the trees, the river, the way we know people and are known, and the spiritual and political 'open-ness' of this region. We also live here because it is beautiful.

Tell us about your vision for your art & how it relates to sustainability.

My art, in general, is about making connections between memory, nature, everyday experiences, and the stories and metaphors that I've inherited and/or learned about from my own and other cultures. My art/art-making is also so interconnected with my life that I basically think about it as a way of living and a way of processing how I think and experience life, and how I make meaning out of it all. I like to use collage as a physical and metaphorical way to explore how different things, different meanings, different stories, can coexist, interact, and influence each other.

I also love the idea of making something beautiful as a way of reflecting on the beauty all around me. It's a gift to me and a gift from me, and that cycle relates to my own personal sustainability. My hope is that it is also a gift to others, helping in some small way to sustain them.

"A Table Set For Forever" is my attempt to 'represent' the diversity of meanings that the word 'sustainability' has for people in the Pioneer Valley, and to create a venue for sharing ideas as well as inspiring each other. My hope is to continue to develop the piece so that it is increasingly interactive.

Why are you interested in sustainability (Why do you do what you do)?

I don't really think so much about survival so much as I think about 'gift'. And 'gift' requires giving, implies a continuous cycle. I feel blessed and I want to pass that on. I'm hesitant, I'm not sure why, to use the word 'love', but I think it basically comes down to love. Love for the Black-eyed Susans drying up in my garden right now, their seed-heads providing food for the birds whose singing I love.

Love also inspires a sense of response-ability. I care about what is happening to our planet. I care about what we as people, nation, community, family, and individual person are doing to make things better or worse. I can be incredibly judgmental of myself and others, but if that doesn't lead to an active personal response, then I haven't really responded with love.

The hard thing is, that once you really open up to the idea that living sustainably is an act of love, the hard thing for me, at least, is that almost everything I do needs to be examined. Which can slow things down incredibly AND be exhausting. However (and luckily), I live amongst some really inspiring people in the Pioneer Valley, who help me see the path ahead a little or a lot more clearly!

Why did you get involved with the PVSN art contest?

Grant opportunities come and go all the time, and I am definitely always on the look-out for opportunities that make sense to the kind of work I do. I like to do public/community-building/grant-funded art projects, in part because I struggle with the whole commodification of art and the dilemmas of putting a price on something that is so personally and spiritually connected to my whole identity/life.

The PVSN art contest was refreshingly different from standard art grants just in how it was conducted. When I first heard

about it from an art group I am peripherally associated with, I thought, WOW! This connects to so much of what I've been thinking about. I need to apply for this. The timeline was also perfect for my teaching schedule. AND most importantly, it felt like 'good work' to do.

What is the future of sustainability in the Valley? State? Nation?

That is a big question! I think 'sustainability' is a buzzword, but I also think that people really are doing things to change, and that like anything, it will grow. There is a movement. We're further along in it than many, and not as far as many others. But I'm not sure that that matters as much as that people are moving, changing, thinking, doing, etc.

Book recommendations: Influential readings for you.

Mary Oliver's *The Leaf and The Cloud*

Suzi Gablik's *The Reenchantment of Art and Conversations Before the End of Time*

Lynda Barry's *What It Is*

Carl Sandburg's *Rootabaga Stories*

Lewis Hyde's *The Gift* (subtitled: *The Erotic Life of Property*)

Sappho, Emily Dickinson, W.S. Merwin, Flannery O'Connor, Barbara Kingsolver

Lucy Lippard's *The Lure of the Local*

Network Feature

On July 2, 2008, Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick signed into law the **Green Communities Act** (the Act). The Act is a comprehensive bill that encourages energy reform in multiple ways.

- Directs the state to purchase new hybrids or alternative fuel vehicles (AFVs) to the maximum extent feasible to replace old vehicles. It requires the state to have replaced at least 50 percent of its vehicles with hybrids or AFVs by 2018.
- Requires the State Board of Building Regulations and Standards to adopt the latest edition of the International Energy Conservation Code as part of the State Building Code, ensuring that Massachusetts buildings conform to the highest international standards of energy efficiency.
- Elevates and expands the Division of Energy Resources into the Department of Energy Resources. The Department of Energy Resources will now include a Green Communities Division, which will provide technical and financial assistance in the form of grants and loans to municipalities and other local government bodies that undertake renewable energy and energy efficiency efforts. The Green Communities Program will receive \$10 million annually to provide this assistance.
- Requires utility companies to purchase all available energy efficiency improvements that cost less than it does to generate power. This will reduce consumers' electricity bills. In addition, the utility companies will provide incentives for customers to upgrade to more efficient models of lighting, air conditioning and industrial equipment.
- Establishes a pilot program where electric companies will be required to enter into 10-to-15-year contracts with renewable energy developers. This program will aid the renewable energy developers in funding their projects.
- Establishes "net metering" for renewable installations of up to 2 MW. This permits people who own wind turbines or solar power generators to sell their excess energy into the grid. The Act also authorizes utility companies to own solar electric installations to be placed on customers' roofs. Each company may own solar facilities of up to 25 MW for the first year and up to 50 MW after two years. The Act provides that the Department of Public Utilities must assess the effectiveness of the program by 2011 and recommend whether to continue, expand or eliminate it.
- Strengthens the Renewable Portfolio Standard by doubling the rate of increase from 0.5 percent to 1 percent per year, with no cap. This results in requiring utilities and other electric suppliers to obtain renewable power equal to 4 percent of sales in 2009, then increasing to 15 percent in 2020 and 25 percent in 2030.

- Approves Massachusetts' participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI). Under the Act, all the permits for emissions issued under the program will be auctioned to ensure that the program reduces greenhouse gas emissions while minimizing costs and maximizing consumer benefit. The proceeds of these auctions will be used in several ways, including to reimburse municipalities that lose property tax receipts because of RGGI mandates, to provide financial assistance for municipal energy efficiency efforts in the form of no-interest loans, to fund Green Communities and to promote energy conservation.
- Creates the Office of the Ratepayer Advocate under the Attorney General to intervene in proceedings affecting ratepayers. The Act also establishes a new governing board and a five year strategic plan for the Renewable Energy Trust Fund, under the management of the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative.
- Requires a percentage of the generation sold by electric suppliers to come from coal gasification, combined heat and power, flywheel energy storage, steam technology and other alternative energy sources.

In addition, the Act establishes commissions to examine the environmental and economic impact of instituting a green building plan for Massachusetts, the siting of energy facilities in the Commonwealth, and the burning of construction and demolition waste as it relates to the renewable energy portfolio standard program. It also requires Mass Turnpike to develop a plan for the availability of AFV stations on the Mass Pike by 2014, and requires the MBTA to study the feasibility of incorporating AFV and hybrids into its fleet.

<http://www.mass.gov/legis/laws/seslaw08/sl080169.htm>

Global Warming Solutions Act

Governor Patrick also signed the Global Warming Solutions Act, the second of its kind in the nation, which advocates say would sharply reduce the state's greenhouse gas emissions and curb global warming. The law implements greenhouse gas emissions caps at 20 percent below 1990 levels by 2020 and 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. For those failing to comply, the law imposes fines of as much as \$25,000 per day for violations.

In other highlights, the bill also:

- establishes the Green Building Revolving Loan Fund, which will provide low-interest financing for new construction or major renovation projects that exceed the energy efficiency requirements of the state building code by 30 percent; and
- prohibits permits for new construction or expansion of existing construction where emission rates exceed 1,100 pounds of carbon dioxide per megawatt-hour.

<http://www.mass.gov/legis/laws/seslaw08/sl080298.htm>

The **Green Jobs Act** creates the

MassachusettsCleanEnergyTechnologyCenter (the "Center") to direct the development of the clean energy sector in the Commonwealth. Operating under the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA), the Center will work to create clean energy jobs; promote research and workforce training in clean energy technology in the state's public colleges and universities; support the expansion of existing clean energy companies; and foster collaboration between industry, state government, research universities and the financial sector to advance clean energy technology in Massachusetts.

The Center will also oversee the newly created Massachusetts Alternative and Clean Energy Investment Trust Fund (the "Fund"). The Fund's goal is to reduce overall energy costs while protecting the environment, by making the following investments:

- stimulating public and private financing for the construction of state-of-the-art clean energy research and development facilities;
- providing grants to state educational institutions to develop clean energy curriculum;
- developing clean energy technologies by investments in research and manufacturing; and

- matching grants to colleges and universities to attract federal funding for R&D in clean energy.

To make such investments in clean energy projects with state dollars, the Fund must follow certain guidelines. Applications for state funding will be evaluated on several factors, including: the proposed project's potential to expand clean energy employment in Massachusetts; the ability to leverage additional funding to the state through private sources or the federal government; the potential for environmental advancements and cost containment; the potential to attract more renewable energy; and the prospect of improving economic self-sufficiency for low and moderate income individuals and communities in the clean energy industry.

The Green Jobs Act also directs state funding to several areas of the clean energy sector, including the allocation of \$5,000,000 annually from the Renewable Energy Trust Fund to the Massachusetts Alternative and Clean Energy Investment Trust Fund. The new law also authorizes the Secretary of EOEEA to make the following expenditures in FY09:

- \$1,000,000 on the newly established Clean Energy Seed Grant Program, which will award grants to clean energy researchers, companies, nonprofits and community-based organizations, and institutions. This program will also build public-private partnerships with clean energy investors, entrepreneurs, and institutions based in Massachusetts;
- \$1,000,000 for a workforce training and development program, targeting public colleges and universities, vocational-technical schools and community based organizations; and
- \$1,000,000 for a "pathways out of poverty" initiative that will award five grants to clean energy companies that serve low and moderate income citizens.

<http://www.mass.gov/legis/laws/seslaw08/sl080307.htm>

(Summaries of new laws provided by www.mondaq.com)

Status of Deliverables

Developing Sustainability Indicators

We are moving along in our project to develop sustainability indicators for the Pioneer Valley. Last year we developed a set of Fundamental Objectives for sustainability in the valley. These fundamental objectives focused on human health and safety; ecological health; cultural vitality; social equity; social connectivity and stability; and resource efficiency. We then developed a set of potential indicators, based on the results of a study of a number of indicator projects and on input from the members of the Sustainability Network.

The members of the network volunteered to provide rationales for each of the potential indicators. We have received rationales for 21 different indicators! We really appreciate the work of the members of the network. We are now in the process of putting all this information on the web. We are developing a web-based survey, which will ask for votes on which specific indicators should be chosen to measure sustainability. We will be looking for the help of all the members of the network, not just to vote, but also to disseminate the survey as widely as possible. The more participation we get on the survey, the greater our confidence that these indicators are really measuring what people in the valley care about.

We appreciate the help and support of the members of the network,
Erin Baker

Moving Toward Sustainability

Garden Like The Forest

excerpts from www.edibleforestgardens.com by Dave Jacke

Picture yourself in a forest where almost everything around you is food. Mature and maturing fruit and nut trees form an open canopy. If you look carefully, you can see fruits swelling on many branches-pears, apples, persimmons, pecans, and chestnuts. Shrubs fill the gaps in the canopy. They bear raspberries, blueberries, currants, hazelnuts, and other lesser-known fruits,

flowers, and nuts at different times of the year. Assorted native wildflowers, wild edibles, herbs, and perennial vegetables thickly cover the ground. These plants support one another as they store energy in their roots for later harvest and winter storage. This is an edible forest garden.

Forest gardening is an idea whose time has come. We can consciously apply the principles of ecology to the design of home scale gardens that mimic forest ecosystem structure and function, but grow food, fuel, fiber, fodder, fertilizer, "pharmaceuticals," and fun. Indeed, we must begin learning to apply ecological principles to the design of our food production systems now—we are rapidly approaching or are already at the peak of planetary oil production, and the world of energy descent is upon us. This sea change in our culture will require that we learn to live within our energetic means and begin to rebuild ecosystems that support human and humane lives without diminishing the ability of the ecosystem to support our children and grandchildren.

While this global problem is huge, most of the solutions available to us are local, personal, empowering, and potentially enlivening, enlightening, and fun. Edible forest gardening is one of these solutions, and we now have the resources at hand to transform our own yards and gardens into productive paradises.

Forest gardens have much to offer on a practical level, and they have much to teach us about how to live in community as free and interdependent beings in a functional way. We hope that you will trust your innate ability to learn and contribute to the larger community of human beings who care about living sanely and humanely as we journey through energy descent. Welcome to the adventure of our lifetimes.

Upcoming Events

November

[Green Building Materials '08: Definitions, Design and Delivery](#)

November 3 and 4

UMASS Campus Center Amherst, MA

This conference (chaired by David T. Damery, associate professor/director, Building Materials & Wood Technology program, Dept. of Natural Resources Conservation, Univ. of Massachusetts, Amherst) aims to answer questions such as:

What are green building materials?

How to interpret and satisfy requirements of a variety of rating systems

What's the process for designing, specifying and sourcing green building materials?

Documentation issues in the green chain-of-custody

What's new in green building materials?

Innovations in local sourcing of materials

For more information or to register, visit <http://www.forestprod.org/confgreenbuilding08.html>.

[MA. Municipal Association - Green Communities Act Information Session](#)

Friday, November 7, 2008

8:30am - 12:00pm

Location: Old Sturbridge Village, Sturbridge

Contact: Jackie LeGrand at the MMA (ext. 104 or JLeGrand@mma.org)

The MMA and the Department of Energy Resources will present a comprehensive information session for local officials on the new Green Communities Act. The cost for the session is \$25, which includes breakfast.

["Burning Issues" Woodlot Management, Farm Bill Funding and Wood/Pellet Stove Safety"](#)

Wednesday, November 12

Sponsored by the Franklin Conservation District at 7pm at the Shelburne Grange Fellowship Hall, 17 Little Mohawk Road, Shelburne. UMass Extension educator Paul Catanzaro will offer valuable information about strategies and resources for managing woodlots for firewood. USDA/NRCS coordinator Beth Schreier will provide the latest news about forestry funding in the new Farm Bill. Curt LaBell will provide information on wood and pellet stove safety for homeowners. For more information call 413-772-0384, ext.110.

[District Heating: A Renewable Energy Solution for our Communities](#)

Thursday, November 13, 2008

6:00 - 8:30 p.m.

Greenfield High School Auditorium.

The Franklin Regional Council of Governments is pleased to announce a public information session with the Danish Board of District Heating and Dr. Morris Pierce from the University of Rochester to discuss District Heating, how these community-based systems work and why they have been the major source of heating in Denmark for decades. Please join us to learn more about how District Heat can replace individual building heating systems with an efficient, community wide heating network based on clean, local, renewable resources.

[THE BIG MANUFACTURERS EVENT!](#)

Friday, November 14th

"Beyond Compact Fluorescents - Energy Saving Methods for Manufacturers", 7:30 AM to 1:00 PM at NuCedar Mills, Chicopee, MA; a special half-day event and tour for the region's manufacturers. This first of two, half-day programs will cover techniques for reducing energy usage in manufacturing. We will provide specific methods - going beyond compact fluorescents - and information about resources that will support energy reduction efforts specifically for manufacturers. The second of these two events will explore alternative energy that is already available to manufacturers. If you have additional ideas and success stories for energy reduction that might help manufacturing, please let us know by sending your ideas to MMTN Chair, Ann Latham, at ann@uncommonclarity.com. To get you started, go to www.mass.gov/doer/cert/cert-business-approach.htm to see ALL that your Commonwealth Energy Resource Teams (CERT) now offer you in energy saving solutions. Please contact Ann Latham or Ellen Bembem ebembem@rtccentral.com for details. Please contact Suzanne Parker at sparker@rtccentral.com at 413-755-1301 with yours.

[MCAN 2008 Climate Action Conference:](#)

Sunday, November 16, 9 am to 5 pm

Where: Stata Center, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Kendall Square, Cambridge

The registration website for MCAN's Annual Conference <http://massclimateaction.net/conference/2008-conference.html>. Because this is a financially challenging year for everyone, we have reduced conference fees across the board. Remember, early registration means even more of a discount.

[Geothermal heating & Cooling for Homes & Small Businesses:](#)

Tuesday, November 18, 6:30 -8:30pm

Cummington Community House, Cummington, MA

Learn the "nuts & bolts" of ground coupled heating and cooling (aka geothermal) including technology overview, system types, siting considerations, distribution methods, space requirements, costs, benefits and payback scenarios, updates on available incentives, local installers, and energy efficiency measures.

Pre-registration is required. \$10 suggested donation. Please contact Tomasin Whitaker at tomasin@cetonline.org / 413-586-7350 x 25.

[Greenbuild International Conference & Expo:](#)

November 19-22

Boston - the historic cradle of the American Revolution, home to innovations that have far-reaching impact and the perfect place to celebrate Greenbuild 2008's theme of "Revolutionary Green: Innovations for Global Sustainability." Join us at the U.S. Green Building Council's Greenbuild International Conference and Expo in Boston November 19-21, 2008.

Buildings play a critical role in protecting and improving our environment and the health of the people who occupy them. USGBC's Greenbuild conference and expo is an unparalleled opportunity to connect with other green building peers, industry experts, and influential leaders as they share insights on the green building movement and its diverse specialties.

For information and registration see: <http://www.greenbuildexpo.org/>

[UMass Clean Energy Connections](#)

November 22

At the MassMutual Center in Springfield. This 1st Annual Conference and Career Fair is an interactive forum for the individuals and organizations that will accelerate the growth of our clean energy economy. For information about sponsorship opportunities, contact Loren Walker 413-577-3725 or loren@research.umass.edu. For exhibitor, presenter, and attendee information, contact Michelle Wonsey 413-545-2706 or mwonsey@research.umass.edu.

[Seeds of Solidarity at the Red Apple Farm Thanksgiving Harvest Festival](#)

November 22- 23

Saturday and Sunday www.redapplefarm.com

Massachusetts News

New Report says Clean Power Feasible for Massachusetts

Massachusetts has the potential to turn renewable resources into a combined 10 million megawatt hours of power annually by 2020, according to a new study. The state's top energy official said the findings dispel any notion that Massachusetts would have to import much of the renewable power it will be required to use under recent legislation aimed at reducing dependence on fossil fuels. Those requirements say that by 2020, 15 percent of the power purchased by utilities must come from renewable energy sources built in the last decade. Source: Erin Ailworth, The Boston Globe, Sept 8. Read more [here](#).

National News

Lawsuit Seeks to Force EPA to Limit Oil Refineries' Global-Warming Emissions

WASHINGTON -Massachusetts is one of the states in a new multistate lawsuit challenging the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's failure to regulate oil-refinery emissions. Plaintiffs in the case include 12 states, the District of Columbia and the City of New York. They assert that, by failing to set limits on refineries' emissions of greenhouse gases, the EPA is violating the federal Clean Air Act. Source: Susan A. Baird, Providence Business News, Aug 26. Read more [here](#).

Federal Report Says Extreme Weather Due to Climate Change

The U.S. Climate Change Science Program, a joint effort of more than a dozen government agencies including the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, has issued a new report. It concludes that the extreme weather we've been experiencing will become more extreme and is due to climate change. Droughts will get drier, storms will get stormier and floods will get deeper with a warming climate across North America.

Source: Janet Ritz, The Environmentalist, Sept 12. Read more [here](#).

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