

The Valley Green Journal

Grassroots connections – agriculture, communities, nature

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

❄️ Discreet Solar Arrays- p. 2-3
❄️ All Natural Ice Melting- p. 5

❄️ Making Homemade Ornaments- p. 7
❄️ Community Celebration- p. 8

❄️ Osprey Nesting Platform- p. 8

Arctic National Wildlife Refuge -No Drilling Please!

Join the campaign to save native culture and wildlife in Alaska preserve!

By Jan Lambert

Five years ago *The Valley Green Journal* publicized



Dave Shaw photo-courtesy of Audubon Alaska
Rebecca Sentner of Alaska Audubon wrote of her visit the ANWR. "I have never seen a place so full of life....the number of amazing birds we saw was overwhelming." Many of the birds of the refuge migrate to and from all fifty states and six continents to feed and reproduce, taking advantage of the burst of biological growth which blossoms there in the long days of the Arctic summer. The American Golden Plover, a declining species occasionally spotted in New England, migrates many thousands of miles every year from its nesting grounds on the Arctic tundra to the southern tip of South America.

the threat of proposed oil drilling in the northernmost area of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR), known as the Coastal Plain. Today the survival of numerous species of wildlife as well as the Gwich'in indigenous culture continue to be at risk, even as the majority of Americans oppose such drilling. Currently the pressure for both oil and gas drilling has intensified, even as environmentally-friendly options such as solar power are expanding and proving to be cost effective alternatives.

The ANWR is one of the most intact and untouched ecosystems in America, home to more than 200 species

Continued on page 4

Citizens Working to Save Ancient Forest on Mt. Sunapee

"These forests represent the last vestige of wilderness in this region of New Hampshire: they are what make Mount Sunapee State Park unique, and we should do everything we can to ensure that they are permanently protected."

--Steve Russell, President of Friends of Mount Sunapee

Information Contributed by Friends of Mount Sunapee

Mount Sunapee State Park, located in both Merrimack and Sullivan Counties NH is known chiefly for its downhill ski area, a public beach and other developed tourist attractions. But a grassroots group, Friends of Mount Sunapee, is raising public awareness that the park includes a very rare ancient forest. As such it is part of the less than one-tenth of one percent of New Hampshire's forests that are considered old growth, and the only documented exemplary natural community system of its type in the state.

Through the years, ski area development has cut into and diminished the mountain's old forest. If future resort development proceeds as planned, even more fragmentation and threats to the forest will result. This forest is an irreplaceable part of New Hampshire's natural and cultural heritage which deserves and requires permanent protection.



Steve Russell photo
Sue Russell, of Friends of Mt. Sunapee is standing in front of a Yellow Birch that is approximately 350 years old. Old growth forest is very rare in New Hampshire.

Continued on page 6

MISSION STATEMENT: Our mission is to foster grassroots connections, locally and globally, to help grow caring communities based on sustainable agriculture; we emphasize living in concert with nature and conserving lands, waters, and wildlife.



Solar Panels Can Be Discreetly Arrayed —Signs of Successful Renewable Energy

By Jan Lambert

Sometimes people object, understandably, to solar arrays that take over prime agricultural land or interfere with scenic views. But many solar projects utilize land that is out of view and already serving utilitarian purposes. We present here just two of the many projects that are progressive yet discreet.



Jan Lambert photo

This large solar array serving Cedar Hill Continuing Care Community is located in a formerly vacant field that also contains power lines, well out of view of the residents, and also providing goldenrod and other flowering plants for pollinators.

Norwich Solar Technologies has installed solar panels this year at Cedar Hill Continuing Care Community in Windsor VT. The solar array is projected to save the facility \$100,000 annually by providing for a large percentage of its electrical power needs. This will add up to \$3 million in savings over the life of the project! Environmental benefits are equivalent to 13 million pounds of CO₂ not produced, 26 million miles not driven, or 153,000 trees planted.

The installation is in a large field that is not visible from the facility, which has extensive landscaped grounds. I hiked up a road

Continued on page 3

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Solar Panels

Continued from page 2

through the woods to take a look at the array. I noticed that the panels are in a field that was not scenic to begin with, because of high voltage power lines located there. On the other hand, this use of the field is benefitting pollinators because of the many wildflowers growing there. An annual mowing schedule required to maintain access to the panels, will as a side benefit maintain open field habitat.

Mother and daughter owners Mary Louise Sayles and Patricia Horn said of their motivation to install solar arrays to power their facility, "Our new solar field will produce most of Cedar Hill's electricity and help us keep costs down, benefiting the residents and the business. As a business, we know we consume fossil fuels and other items that hurt the environment. The solar investment helps us to mitigate those affects and hopefully inspires other businesses in our field to follow suit."

In Brattleboro. Home to the Windham County Solid Waste District, there is an amazing variety of environmentally friendly projects, including a 20 acre solar array situated over a capped former landfill. "The project is the culmination of more than five years of work, much of it by volunteer representatives to Windham Solid Waste Management District," said Robert Spencer, Executive Director.

In operation since June 2018, the project boasts almost 16,000 solar panels that help power many customers including area towns, schools, and non profits, while saving them money. A unique challenge was that the support posts could not penetrate the landfill but had to be installed above ground. That challenge was met by placing

over 3100 tubs filled with concrete over the existing landfill cover.

The 5 MW project was jointly developed by Sky Solar and Encore Renewable Energy. Encore is a Burlington, Vermont-based clean energy development company. Sky Solar Holdings, a global solar investment company, designed, funded, and managed the project construction. The project was recently purchased by Greenbacker Capital, which is headquartered in New York City but has offices in Vermont and Maine.



Windham County Solid Waste District solar array.

Courtesy photo

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Look for the next issue on Friday, February 7, 2020



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Drilling

Continued from page 1

of birds, 42 species of fish, and 45 mammal species—including more than 120,000 head of caribou. While a sizeable portion of Alaska is open to oil and gas drilling, oil and gas interests continue to lobby hard to drill in the refuge's pristine habitats. Such drilling would not benefit our country. I read that the US Geological Survey estimates that the Refuge would likely yield less oil than our country consumes in a single year. It is true that some needy Alaskans depend on oil handouts from the state that come from oil revenues, but no money would be realized for at least 10 years, and the destruction of the environment on which the Gwich'in people depend, could mean many more residents going on the welfare rolls. Indigenous peoples of the Gwich'in Nation have depended on caribou for their subsistence way of life for thousands of years. They have spoken in clear opposition to this dangerous rush to drill, which threatens to alter migrations and lower birth rates of the caribou. Protecting the caribou is a matter of basic human rights.

The Department of the Interior has been pushing forward with plans for destructive oil and gas exploration and drilling, apparently disregarding the serious biological, cultural and climate impacts fossil fuel extraction will have in the rapidly-warming Arctic. A review of North Slope oil spills from 2006 to 2009 shows that three to six major spills a year are the norm. The 2017 Tax Cuts and Job Acts, however, mandated oil and gas leasing, development and production on the coastal plain of the Arctic Refuge. That was slated to begin in January 2020. A last-minute reprieve has surfaced due to delays in the environmental review process.

Now it is essential that Congress pass legislation to restore protections for the Arctic Refuge, and there has been significant progress made. In September of this year, the US House of Representatives passed H.R.1146- Arctic Cultural and Coastal Plain Protection Act, bipartisan legislation that would halt efforts to pursue oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. This bill prohibits the Bureau of Land Management from administering an oil and gas leasing, development, production, and transportation program in and from the Coastal Plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska.

In step with their House colleagues, Senate Bill 2461 has been introduced, the Arctic Refuge Protection Act of 2019. Now it is especially important for us all to contact our US Senators. Just dial the U.S. Capitol Switchboard at (202) 224-3121, and the switchboard operator will connect you directly with the Senate office you request. (The Senators for Vermont are Patrick Leahy and Bernie Sanders. For

New Hampshire they are Margaret Hassan and Jeanne Shaheen.) If you prefer going online just click on this link for full directions: https://www.senate.gov/senators/How_to_correspond_senators.htm.

In our local area a citizen coalition group has formed. A video of a press conference in Lebanon NH provides much more information from local speakers. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G42uVA-aSt0&authuser=0>. An online petition for the local effort can be found at <https://forms.gle/XaqBQqb9zmibD6LA>. More information about the Arctic defense campaign can be found on a website at www.werearthearctic.org/.



Kilii Yuyan photo- courtesy of Audubon Alaska
Caribou near pipeline in Alaska's western Arctic. Note how the caribou are all on one side as the development creates a barrier for them.



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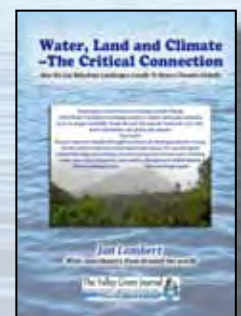
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Jan Lambert, editor of The Valley Green Journal, has just published her first book, with the help of contributors from around the world. It is entitled, *Water, Land and Climate – The Critical Connection: How We Can Rehydrate Landscapes Locally to Renew Climates Globally*. Find out the latest thinking and action showing how important it for all of us, from homeowners to entire communities, to welcome rain back into our landscapes, and restore local water cycles to renew our climate, for humanity for all life on Planet Earth.



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All Natural Ways to Melt Ice

By Carmen Bywater

Winter is already off to the races this year, with snow and ice plaguing New England with difficult and slippery conditions. Time to get the ice scrapers and shovels out! I've done some research and come up with some interesting natural alternatives and ways to melt ice.

Salt or urea (fertilizer) — Are probably the most popular go-tos for melting ice, but they should be handled with caution. Both are corrosive and can damage clothing, carpeting and metal, and can shorten the life of your car. They can also dry out and damage your skin, and your pets' paws. Runoff from salted roads, driveways, and sidewalks can contaminate groundwater, lakes and rivers. Trees and grass planted near salted areas can also be affected.

Alfalfa Meal — A lesser known, but effective, ice melting substance is alfalfa meal. It is 100% natural, and is primarily used as a commercial fertilizer. Alfalfa meal does contain nitrogen, but in lesser concentrations. Bags of alfalfa can be purchased at most gardening stores.

Pickle Brine — The brine from pickling helps to melt ice and snow. There are claims that it is better for the environment than

straight salt, as it prevents ice from sticking to the road. Using pickle brine instead of straight salt means that less chlorine gets into groundwater. You can make your own brine recipe by mixing 2 lbs. of salt per gallon of water. Add a glass of sugar beet juice to make it the ultimate deicer.

Sugar Beet Juice — The juice from sugar beets (which can be effective to temperatures of -20 degrees F) helps to deice slippery roads and sidewalks. Some communities have even been using beet juice mixtures to melt ice on municipal roads. Sugar Beet Juice is odorless and colorless and harmless to humans, animals, plants, cars, fabrics, and water systems.

Rubbing Alcohol — Rubbing alcohol has a much lower freezing point than water. You can harness the ice melting potential of rubbing alcohol in a couple of ways. You can just pour the rubbing alcohol on any icy areas. You can also combine the alcohol with water in a spray bottle. Mix 3 parts alcohol to 1 part water. This works well on frozen locks and windshields.

Vinegar — Vinegar can also be used as a deicer. Mix 3 parts vinegar to 1 part lukewarm water. Spray the windshield until you see ice melting. A very inexpensive method.



Photo by Carmen Bywater

Sometimes you can make icy areas safer by simply adding a bit of traction. Coco mats are becoming more popular. They are made from coconut husk fibers and bound in a heavy-duty vinyl backing. They come in cut-pieces or rolls. Some other naturally occurring substances that can add traction to slick surfaces are sand, wood ash, non-clumping clay-based kitty litter, and sawdust and straw. Coffee grounds are effective in that they give off heat as well as melt ice. Be advised you may end up tracking stuff into the house. You might want to keep a heavy-duty outdoor rug right inside the door.

Voices of Water for Climate



Jan Lambert photo
Street drain in Keene NH USA directs stormwater into rain garden, creating attractive vegetated area in urban setting.

“soil carbon sponge” that supports vegetative lushness, agricultural and forest productivity, and habitat for wildlife— and cools the atmosphere leading ultimately to an improved climate.

Throughout history, and especially in the last century we humans have allowed water to flow off bare farm fields, down deforested slopes, and literally down the drain as storm water in our developed areas. This constant “bleeding” of water from our human-managed landscapes must be slowed down because it is contributing mightily to excessive drought, floods, heat waves, severe storms and sea level rise. We can manage our landscapes effectively to bring barren land back to a



Find out more at our website, www.vow4climate.org



Mt. Sunapee

Continued from page 1

Efforts to conserve Mt. Sunapee's old forest date back to the early 1900s when the timber industry was clear-cutting much of the mountain. Some of the original forest was spared and eventually purchased by the Forest Society with much help from local residents. When the state acquired the Forest Society's by then 1,185-acre reservation in 1948 to establish Mt. Sunapee State Park, the memory of the ancient forests which spurred the original acquisition of the land had faded. It wasn't until 1997, almost 50 years after the creation of Mt. Sunapee State Park, that "rediscovery" of Sunapee's rare forests occurred. Documentation by New Hampshire Natural Heritage Bureau from 1998 to 2015 delineating a 484 acre unique forested system ignited public interest in the preservation of Mount Sunapee's forests of statewide significance, which continues to this day.

Within Sunapee State Park, the Summit Trail that starts at the end of Old Province Rd. in Goshen is the only four-season trail that can be accessed by the public. The Summit

Trail lies within the 484 acre Exemplary Natural Community System documented by the Heritage Bureau.

Vail Corporation, which currently holds the lease to the ski area in Mt. Sunapee State Park, has adopted the "West Bowl" expansion proposal which includes a ski lift that would bisect 16 acres of Sunapee's unique forested system. The hiking trail which previously avoided ski infrastructure will now be impacted by the proposed ski lift and trails in multiple locations. In addition hikers will be subject to restricted use of the trail at the discretion of the lease holder. In short the trail that was approved and built by the State so the public would have a year-round hiking outdoor experience will no longer serve its original purpose. It is not necessary to expand skiing in an area where an equally important public use of the park already exists. (Editor's note: I have personally hiked the Summit Trail and

In the early 1900s, Herbert Welsh, working with the Forest Society, led the first campaign to preserve Mount Sunapee and its natural heritage for public good.



could see that its surroundings were indeed exemplary. Why ruin this unique opportunity to provide to hikers, tourists, teachers and researchers an area of unique opportunity for learning firsthand about the vital importance of old growth forests?)

For more information contact Friends of Mount Sunapee at 603-863-0045 or email info@FriendsOfMountSunapee.org. Visit their website at www.FriendsOfMountSunapee.org.



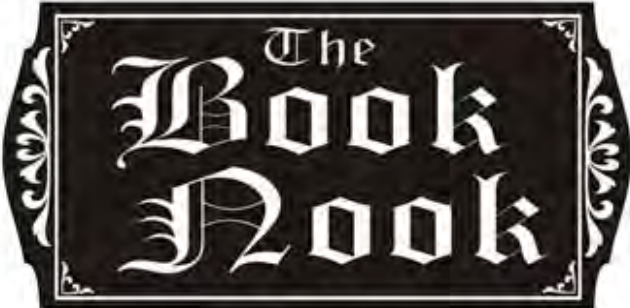

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MAKING HOLIDAY ORNAMENTS

Custom Christmas and holiday ornaments are a fun, easy craft project the whole family can enjoy together. Here are 2 wonderful recipes requiring just a few ingredients. One recipe is no-bake and the other is over baked. Have fun decorating!

No-Bake Salt Dough Ornaments

2 cups all-purpose bleached flour

1 cup salt

1 cup warm water

1 tablespoon vegetable or olive oil (optional)

• Add 2 cups all-purpose flour to a mixing bowl. Add 1 cup of salt. Pour 1 cup of warm water over the dry ingredients. Stir the mixture until it's well combined. If the dough is sticky, add 1 tablespoon cooking oil. Roll out the dough with a rolling pin until it's about 1/4-inch thick. Cut dough with cookie cutters into desired shapes.

Use a straw to create holes for hanging. Remove excess dough and roll out the remaining dough to make additional ornaments. Line a cookie sheet with parchment paper and place the ornaments on the paper to dry. Flip ornaments every 24 hours until dry. The drying process will take 3-4 days depending on humidity.

Baked Salt Dough Ornaments

4 cups all-purpose flour

1 cup salt

1 1/2 cups water

• Preheat oven to 300 degrees F. Combine the flour, salt and water; mix well and knead for 10 minutes. Roll out on a lightly floured surface. Cut into desired shapes and make holes for hanging. Bake for 30 minutes; allow to cool. Allow to dry and enjoy decorating. Use ribbon or yarn pieces to hang.



Photo by Julia Fain

Decorate with poster paints or tube paints! You can use holiday stamps and an ink pad to create rustic, vintage-looking designs. You can also decorate them with paint or glitter to create custom ornaments. Tip: Salt dough ornaments can be fragile. When they're dry you can spray them with clear polyurethane on both sides to preserve them. Pack carefully for use next year.

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The Sustainability Project's 15th Annual Seed Celebration & Sustainability Community Fair

The Sustainability Project's 15th Annual Seed Celebration & Sustainability Community Fair will be held on Saturday, February 8th from 8:30 - 4:30 at the Hannah Grimes Center in Keene. Join us for a day of education and networking, plan your garden & stock up on seeds, learn about local initiatives and organizations, and celebrate the season to come. For more information or to be a part of the event please visit: <https://www.facebook.com/events/2798295993516905/> or email: info@emersonbrookforest.org.



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Save Our Songbirds ...and more New Osprey Nesting Platform At Herrick's Cove



Story and photos by Don Clark

After years of trying, the dream of an osprey nest platform at Herricks Cove in Rockingham has come to be. At Audubon Mt. Audubon Society we owe a world of thanks for this project to Great River Hydro and Green Mountain Power. It would never have happened without the help of Matt Cole (GRH), who worked with me to clear the hurdles, and Great River Hydro's permission to set the pole on their land. They also donated their crew to clear the area of trees and brush. Dave Ward and the crew of GMP generously furnished the pole and the materials for the



platform, built the platform, and took the time from their busy schedule to set it all in place. All that's needed now is Spring and the osprey's return.

Save migrating songbird habitat!

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