



IROQUOIS MESSENGER

COAL GASIFICATION IN JAMESVILLE

PLANT PROPOSED NEAR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Empire Synfuels, LLC, has submitted an application to the Town of DeWitt for a coal gasification plant at the former Alpha Cement plant in Jamesville, N.Y. Coal gasification is an old process, but this plant will use a new version of the technology. With no model for comparison it is not easy to predict hazards.

This is what we know about the site:

- Former Alpha Cement plant and quarry in Jamesville — 126 acres
- Abuts Jamesville elementary school
- Abuts Clark Reservation with endangered plant and animal species and a NY State protected wetland.
- Only 2 miles from hospitals, colleges, city and town centers
- Many residences to the north and south

This is what we know about the process:

- 10,000 tons of coal per day will arrive from Pennsylvania and West Virginia on 110-car trains, six days per week, traversing the city.
- Trains will idle their diesel engines for four hours or more while unloading.
- The process will require 4 million gallons per day for cooling from the Dewitt water supply.
- The 4 million gallons of waste water will be sent to metro water treatment facility.
- 80 vehicular trips per hour are expected to and from the site.
- A Westinghouse Plasma Gasifier develops 5000°F heat for this process.
- The process generates synthetic natural gas, called synfuel.
- The developers plan to sell this as a natural gas substitute.

- Other products are mercury, sulfuric acid, carbon dioxide and slag.
- 6 train cars of sulfuric acid will leave the site per day, traveling through the city.
- 100 train cars of CO₂ will be outgassed.
- 60,000 tons per month of process residue (slag) will be buried on site.

Because there is no other USA facility that uses this process, there are things we don't know, such as:

- How safe is the gasifier?
- What are the hazards of the slag? Is it inert as asserted?
- How will the CO₂ be handled and how will it effect global warming?

But this is a unique process, so we don't even know how to formulate the appropriate questions that would help us understand any other hazards.

In order to educate ourselves and the public, Iroquois Group wants to form a coalition with other local groups for a coordinated effort and to obtain party status, if needed, at a hearing. We would like as many residents of the communities as have the time to join us and are particularly interested in those with scientific, legal, planning and environmental expertise. The application (EmpireSynfuels) is on line www.townofdewitt.com. Visit our website for links to information about coal mining, syngas, and similar syngas facilities that we will add as they are submitted. <http://www.newyork.sierraclub.org/iroquois/index.htm>

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ONONDAGA CREEK

SIERRA CLUB INVITED TO THINK BIG

BY MEREDITH PERREAULT

The goal of the Onondaga Creek Revitalization Plan (OCRCP) project is to develop a community-based revitalization plan for the Onondaga Creek watershed, bringing ecological, economic, social, and recreational benefits to the surrounding area. The plan has not yet been created.

The key to the planning process is community input. Seven Community Forums were held in 2006. In 2007, the OCRCP project is reaching out to organizations and businesses that have a stake in what happens in Onondaga Creek's watershed. The main stakeholder meeting will be held at 8 AM the Museum of Science and Technology in Armory Square on March 20. Sierra Club members are invited. Stakeholders will be asked to "think big," beyond a Creek Walk, beyond Destiny to link Onondaga Creek with their dreams for the area's future. The event will also be an opportunity for networking with others committed to a bright future for our community. Further information can be found on the project's website, www.esf.edu/onondagacreek.

IROQUOIS GROUP INFORMATION

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SUBJECT LINE MUST BEGIN WITH IM-**

TEETH OF THE LION

REVIEWED BY MARTHA LOEW

The Teeth of the Lion, by Anita Sanchez, is the story of the beloved and despised dandelion.

The book filled with light-hearted, well-researched information on the dandelion's history, adaptability and value. Once the strongest herb in the medicinal cabinet, its present-day status is "unwanted," the victim of our passion for the perfect lawn.

Dandelion is anglicized French "dent-de-lion" — lion's tooth — presumably for its notched leaves. The author speculates that it really is because the plant's lion-like power in fighting disease. So powerful, that the pilgrims brought seeds on their long journey and planted them as a convenient "drug store." The plant is rich in vitamins, and was an early source of valuable spring food.

The Dandelion is probably the most successful species in the world. It has enslaved the human species in an expensive and emotion-ridden pesticide battle, while it grows cheerfully and strong. The strength comes from its ability to propagate by either seed or root spreading — an unstoppable combination.

Its best source of success is our lawn-fetish. It requires sunshine and fails in forests, but succeeds in our mown lawns, which provide the sunshine they need. So the unmistakable conclusion is lawns beget dandelions, begets herbicides. They are stronger than our need to mow. They are stronger than we are and have lovely yellow flowers. Peace.



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register now. As a sponsor of this event, the Iroquois Group urges members to register and attend. Go to <http://www.cazenovia.edu/energy>.

WILDFLOWER WALK — MAY 20

Walk with an expert on Sunday at 2 PM in Clark Reservation. Learn about and admire the new Native Plant Garden at the Nature Center and about new ongoing efforts to control exotic species in the Park. Clark Reservation is on Route 173, 2 miles west of Jamesville.

ENVIRONMENTAL DIGEST

STATE

BIGGER, BETTER, BOTTLE BILL

The prospects for finally getting this important bill passed are much better in 2007. The new state budget includes the millions that will be generated by the unclaimed deposits on non-carbonated drinks, including bottled water.

The bottlers are fighting back hard — resorting to things like posters in grocery stores showing cockroaches hanging out on bags of returned bottles. They do not want to lose the millions in unclaimed deposits that the old BB dropped into their pockets. They are getting a lot of press calling the bill a “tax” on children’s juice drinks, depriving them of this nourishment. Of course, it is not a tax — it is as deposit. Take it back and get your nickel back. Litter it and the unclaimed deposit goes to community recycling programs or to citizens who “mine” the roadside for profit.

The bottle battle is pitched with the bottlers, environmental groups and individuals all determined to win. It will be interesting to see if the most bodies or the most money carry the day.

NATIONAL

STEP IT UP 2007

Step it up 2007 is a plan to send a message to Congress on April 14: “Step it up, Congress! Cut Carbon 80% by 2050.” It is the brainchild of Bill McKibbin, noted for his environmental work and a book, *The End of Nature*.

This is an e-mail driven rally across the country. All communities and organizations are asked to get together to send the message. Photos of the event will be linked electronically on the web before the weekend is out.

There are already events planned in 48 states.

Iroquois Group would like to be part of the event and asks each of you to do two things:

1. Submit ideas of what you’re doing and where, and
2. Contact groups you belong to and ask them to save the date for a rally and press conference.

A rally could be just people with signs, planting a tree, weeding exotic species, giving away florescent light bulbs, handing out global warming information.

So please send us your ideas. Central New York can be part of Step it Up 2007. Keep it simple and get lots of people! Martha: mloew@twcny.rr.com, Janet: janet.allen1@verizon.net.

GENERAL

BOTTLED WATER PURITY

According to a report released by the Natural Resources Defense Council (full report at www.nrdc.org), bottled water is not necessarily cleaner or safer than most tap water. NRDC found that about one-third of 103 brands of bottled water tested contained chemical or bacterial contaminants at levels exceeding the industry’s own guidelines or the most stringent state standards. Next time you drink bottled water, check where it came from and contemplate the global warming gases created on the trip.

EAT YOUR LAWN

Under that blanket of snow is next year’s lawn, garden, all that green stuff. Front lawns can be a problem in a neighborhood of manicured perfection. But there are ways to reduce that water-guzzling, industrial lawn and grow a freedom lawn.

Check out the designs by Edible Estates <edibleestates.org> to see how you can have a front yard artistically designed with vegetables, herbs and fruit trees. Use similar designs to plant for birds, bees, etc. How could the neighbors complain?

Have a Freedom Lawn suggestion or experience? Write to Iroquois Messenger.



The Sierra Club Energy Filmfest has taken on a life all its own. Designed as a follow up to *An Inconvenient Truth* it has spread around CNY to schools, churches, libraries, and clubs. At this time there have been over 30 screenings at more than 8 locations, with more to come.

Slated to end on March 31, it will continue to the end of April. So if you still want to screen any of the 25 plus films, through your organization, Iroquois Group can furnish them to you. **No admission may be charged**, but snacks and other goodies may be sold. Call Janet Allen 4875742 Or Martha Loew 4924745 for information.

SPRING EVENTS

Indoor and Outdoor Sierra Club educational programs encourage us to Explore, Enjoy and Protect the Planet, and are **free and open to the public**.

ExCom meetings (for Sierra members only):

March 21, April 11, May 9, June 13. Locations vary so check our website or e-mail the chair 492-4745.

INDOORS

Indoor programs are held the **last** Wednesday of the month at 7:30 PM, downstairs at University United Methodist Church (UUMC), 1085 E. Genesee St. Park and enter on University Ave. Information 492-4745.

FILMFEST FILMS — MARCH 28

Too Hot Not To Handle: A primer on global warming, this HBO documentary features leading scientists. It shows how people are taking positive actions to reduce global warming emissions.

The True Cost of Food: an animated video explaining the hidden costs of most packaged, imported, convenience foods. UUMC

COEXISTING WITH BEAVERS — APRIL 25

Sharon Brown of The Beaver Sanctuary (founded by Dorothy Richards, AKA Beaver Woman) will help us walk the tightrope between allowing beavers to destroy our wetland environments and allowing humans to destroy beavers. This is especially topical in light of the recent beaver damage to Green Lakes State Park. UUMC

ANNUAL ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM — MAY 30

Save the date. There will be speakers on energy news and opportunities in CNY, plus table space for groups. Details in next *Messenger*. Information online at our website <http://www.newyork.sierraclub.org/iroquois/index.htm>. UUMC

OUTDOORS

Outdoor programs are usually on Sundays at 2 PM at interesting locations in the Iroquois Group area. Information and cancellations: 492-4745 or 446-3750.

ONONDAGA LAKE WALK — MARCH 10

Meet at Liverpool Library on Tulip Street at 12:15 on **Saturday**. Filmfest will follow at 1:30: *Rising Waters* shows the physical and cultural impacts to the **Pacific Islands** caused by global warming. *Appalachians* is an excerpt from the longer film about the region, featuring the powerful segment about **mountain-top removal** coal mining in West Virginia.

WOODCHUCK HILL PRESERVE — APRIL 15

Join us Sunday at 2:00 PM to walk this Save the County property. Learn about plans to designate the **Onondaga Escarpment** in Manlius as a Critical Environment Area. Fill a bag with exotic weeds – bring digging tools.

Directions: Turn onto driveway at the STC sign on Woodchuck Hill Road. It is 1.6 miles east of Maple Drive and 0.5 mile west of NY 92 past Lakeview Drive and Cranberry Lane. Drive past the stables on your left and park near the other STC sign.

ENERGY SYMPOSIUM — APRIL 20

This year's *Symposium on Energy in the 21st Century* at Cazenovia College will focus on Energy Sustainable Communities. It will feature an excellent group of speakers from the scientific, environmental and government agency communities, which will be followed by a panel discussion. Tours will be offered after lunch.

Noted as one of the primary energy conventions of the year, this FREE Symposium has limited seating so

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