



Northfield Riverbank Views

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GNWA Annual Meeting: Organic Lawn Care

The speaker at this year's annual meeting on September 16th was Cathy Harragian, founder of the landscaping company *Organic Garden Design*. Harragian has a background in chemistry and water protection and also maintains a large organic apple orchard. She spoke about the importance of protecting the watershed environment by reducing use of chemicals on our lawns and gardens. The biggest problem for pollution of the watershed is the use of chemical fertilizers so she suggested many alternatives available, including natural compost, chicken manure, and fish or malaginite fertilizers. She also noted that while the law is changing to reduce phosphorus content in commercial fertilizers it is also important to control nitrogen inputs. Harragian advised planting fescues or rye grasses for their tolerance of drought and traffic rather than Kentucky Bluegrass. To slow runoff near storm drains or other sensitive areas she advised planting native perennials as vegetative buffers (e.g. lobelias, Joe Pieweed, willows, etc.). Harragian discussed the pros and cons of nematodes and milky spore bacteria and advised against using imadiclopid which is believed to be harmful to bees. Other questions: Go to the Organic Material Review Institute website @ <http://www.omri.org/links> -----Kate Rossiter, GNWA Director

Transition Northfield News

Transition Northfield has a new Working Group: **Wired West/Northfield** is poised to join a cooperative of towns that is actively trying to bring Fiber Optic Broadband to all residents and businesses. The cooperative was formed because many rural communities in western Massachusetts are unserved or underserved by companies such as Verizon and Comcast. The goals are to make broadband available to all homes and businesses in town. The **Northfield Food Pantry** is currently reorganizing under leadership from Lynne Warrin. **The Third Place** working group seeks to establish an informal community gathering place that is neither home nor work. The **Waste Management** group will look at businesses and churches in town that might benefit from help with waste reduction. There will be signs up at the Transfer Station about benefits of recycling and waste reduction. **Film Festival** entries are online at

<http://www.transitionnorthfieldma.org>.

Source to Sea Cleanup

Fall is traditionally a time for the Connecticut River Watershed Council 's *Source-to-Sea* clean-up. On September 29th members of GNWA, Elementary School teachers and students, and other volunteers teamed up with Lane Construction crews to help out. Everyone was eager to make a dent in watershed debris once again. The day before, NMH students had gathered material along the river itself. As has been our tradition, the focus for GNWA was roadways and streambeds, as ultimately that debris impacts the river and threatens wildlife. Every year that we carry out quantities of trash, much of it old, we feel progress is happening! By day's end we had gathered almost 3000 pounds of trash, along with 16 tires and of course the many bottles, cans and paper items that went directly to recycling. Many thanks to LANE Construction for both crews and trucks! We couldn't handle many of the bigger items without them. ----- Andrew Vernon, GNWA Director

Green Communities Update

Now that Northfield has been designated as a Green Community, the Northfield Energy Committee has submitted the first round of grant proposals and is moving ahead to sign a contract with the Mass Department of Energy Resources. Then it's on to project work, mostly energy efficiency upgrades for the Town Hall and Dickinson Memorial Library. Town Hall will be having the attic air sealed and insulation improved as well as transparent window treatments put on some windows. The Library awaits basement and attic air sealing, insulation, and transparent window treatments for 40 windows. In the spring a 4.8 kw PV array is proposed for the Senior Center pavilion and work begins on roadway lighting upgrades. Funds are also allocated for engineering studies of other project ideas such as: Town Hall heating conversion from oil to pellets; Library heating system conversion from steam to hot water; increased insulation at the Highway Garage; exterior lighting upgrade at the Town Hall. All these projects will account for about \$90,000 of the total award of \$143,750. So we can still do more with our first round grant to reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions from our publicly owned town buildings, vehicles and infrastructure.

-----Bob Pasteris, Energy Committee Chair

Recycling Training Session

On the heels of the annual *Source to Sea* Cleanup your local watershed advocacy group continues to seek ways to eliminate unwanted trash and change habits that threaten our rivers and streams. One of our most valuable local resources is the Franklin County Solid Waste Management District (FCSWMD) which is hard at work supporting local Transfer Stations to reduce the amount as well as the cost of solid waste disposal. At a recent training for Transfer Station Attendants, GNWA President Jenny Tufts, invested the better part of a day in understanding what happens to our trash. She reports:

- There are only 10 Municipal Composting Programs in our state; Northfield has one of four in our region
- Not only is trash an environmental concern, it's also EXPENSIVE! Recycling, on the other hand, saves energy, saves space in landfills, and has a positive impact on natural resources and wildlife habitat
- Everything we compost rather than sending our waste to a landfill reduces methane gas, once of the major contributors to global warming
- Recycling is responsible for providing 19,000 jobs in Massachusetts
- Paper recycled in Massachusetts was used to make "Harry Potter" hardcover books

-----Jenny Tufts

New Open Space and Recreation Plan

The Northfield Open Space Committee has spent almost two years revising the 2005 Open Space and Recreation Plan for the Town of Northfield. This plan is an important part of the Master Plan currently being developed by the Planning Committee. You can find the newly updated OSRP online at:

<http://northfieldmass.org/open-space-plan.html>