

Wilton Conservation Commission Newsletter



SPRING CLEANING

Electronics Recycling Is Back Saturday, April 14, 2007

On Saturday, April 14, 2007, the Conservation Commission will be hosting a free Connecticut Resources Recovery Authority (CRRA) sponsored one-day electronics recycling collection at the Wilton High School. Last year the Conservation Commission was lucky enough to host a collection in Wilton and due to the high level of participation, the CRRA has asked Wilton to host the event again this year.

As we continue to upgrade our computers and home electronic equipment, we have a growing responsibility to dispose of our old electronic devices in an environmentally safe manner. These products often contain components that are made with lead and mercury, which are toxic to people and the environment. By recycling electronics, residents can be assured that those toxic metals will not end up in a landfill or in our drinking water.

For the future, the Town is actively working on a permanent in-town electronics recycling program. This program will provide Wilton residents with annual one-day collections similar to the household hazardous waste collection or a permanent electronics recycling collection facility where residents can bring their electronics on a regular basis.



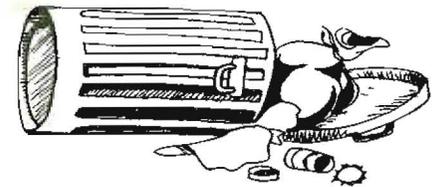
For more information regarding the April 14th Electronics Recycling Collection, visit www.crra.org or contact the Conservation Commission office.

*Michael Conklin
Environmental Analyst*

Townwide Cleanup Day is Back Saturday, April 28, 2007

Every spring the Conservation Commission ushers in the warm weather by sponsoring its annual Townwide Cleanup Day. This year's event will be held on Saturday, April 28, 2007 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Residents can either focus on their own neighborhoods, or meet up with other volunteers at the Town Green (the gazebo opposite Village Market) and target community areas.

Last year's event was very successful despite some April showers. Volunteers from the Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts and Trout Unlimited picked up litter and debris from public areas around town and along the Norwalk River. Stefano's Pizza supported the cleanup effort by donating vouchers for a free slice of pizza for each volunteer and Stefano's Pizza has once again agreed to provide vouchers to participants of the cleanup.



If you or your organization wishes to clean up a target area, come to the Town Green on April 28th and choose from a list of sites or contact the Conservation Commission office in advance for an assignment. Garbage bags will be available at the Town Green on Saturday morning and a truck will be provided to remove the litter collected. Volunteers are encouraged to bring their own work gloves.

*Michael Conklin
Environmental Analyst*

Surface Water Pollution

When people think of water pollution they commonly think of industrial discharges and sewage pouring directly into a body of water. Because this type of pollution enters the water at a specific point – such as a pipe or drain – it is called point source pollution.

While point source pollution is a problem in some areas, the much greater concern here in Wilton is non-point source pollution (NPS) from storm water runoff or polluted runoff.

Runoff can become polluted by many different contaminant sources, including pesticides, oil, metals, and fertilizers {containing significant amounts of phosphorus (P) and nitrogen (N)} that cling to grains or soil as rain and snowmelt wash through the watershed. Faulty septic systems and detergents with phosphate content (today, primarily dishwasher detergents) can also increase the nutrient load into surface waters. The runoff carries these contaminated sediments over impervious surfaces (roads, parking areas, and roofs) which collect and channel storm water runoff and associated pollutants into surface waters.

In areas like Wilton that are heavily impacted by human activity and development, the balance between organisms in surface water and such naturally occurring nutrients as P and N can easily get out of whack through the addition of these nutrients via fertilizers. Organisms respond to the P and N loading by multiplying and growing. So, limiting use of just these two nutrients (i.e., fertilizers) is a great way to begin to limit non-point source pollution.

Additionally, we need to take good care of our wetlands. Wetlands act like nature's sponge, trapping and containing excess amounts of water flowing through a watershed. They also provide erosion control, as they slow down the waters running off the land in times of storm and snowmelt. Wetlands can also act as a pollution filter as excess nutrients are taken up by the plants in a wetland before reaching the surface water. The canopy of trees and shrubs within the wetlands provides an excellent buffer to absorb rains, nutrients, and the water that runs off the pavement.

Suburban land use is tough on our surface waters, but with some awareness we can make decisions that minimize this impact.

- Defer using fertilizers and pesticides, allowing lawns to be more diverse
- If these chemicals are used, strictly follow the manufacturer's application rates: more is not better, its pollution
- Read detergent labels and choose low phosphate products
- Appreciate and protect our wetlands; they in turn will protect our water quality.

Kristen Begor
Conservation Commissioner

Did You Know?

Did you know that Compact Fluorescent Light Bulbs (CFL's) cannot be thrown out in the regular trash? The screwy looking bulbs that so many of us have switched to in order to reduce our energy consumption, save money, and reduce greenhouse gases contain mercury and need to be disposed of properly. For us in Wilton, disposing of the bulbs properly means bringing them to our Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Collection Day in the fall.

With the knowledge that these bulbs contain mercury, the question that begs to be asked is whether CFL's are still the better environmental choice. The answer is yes. When we use the regular incandescent bulbs, more electricity is needed and the portion of this electricity that comes from coal-fired plants contributes more mercury to the atmosphere than improperly disposed CFL's. Clearly the best answer is to use CFL's and dispose of them properly.

It is well recognized that the key to successfully getting all sorts of hazardous waste out of our waste stream is ease of proper disposal. Since much of our refuse is brought to a waste-to-energy plant, i.e. it's burned, the byproduct of what we throw away is released into the atmosphere. A sobering thought. At this point, the only retail outlet that collects CFL's is IKEA, although the federal Environmental Protection Agency is trying to work with other retailers to move

this option forward. The Town of Wilton is also investigating options beyond our one-day household hazardous collection event to collect these bulbs continually.

Until other collection options materialize, fluorescent bulbs need to be properly stored until HHW Day. Place old long bulbs in the box of the new bulb. For the small screw shaped bulbs, it is recommended that they be tucked into the replacement bulb's box and/or sealed in a plastic baggie and stowed in a safe location until the collection day. If a bulb breaks, sweep up the pieces with a paper towel, do not vacuum, and place the pieces and paper towel in a plastic bag and seal.

CFL Benefits and Tips

- CFL's use 66 - 80% less electricity than regular bulbs and last up to ten times longer.
- CFL's save you \$30 over its lifetime.
- CFL's generate 70% less heat. A conventional light bulb exterior is about 300 degrees as opposed to a CFL's 100 degree exterior.
- Only certain CFL's will work with dimmers or in recessed fixtures. Read the packaging.
- Look for CFL's with a color temperature of 2,700-3,000K for a warmer white light.
- If CFL's are used in the bathroom, expect a shorter life as humidity may adversely effect their longevity.

Patricia Sesto
Director Environmental Affairs

WILTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Town Hall Annex
238 Danbury Road
Wilton, CT 06897
(203) 563-0180



David Hapke, Chairman

Kim Young	Kate Throckmorton
Naomi Dempsey	Kristen Begor
Nick Lee	Patrice Gillespie

Patricia M.P. Sesto, Director
Mike Conklin, Environmental Analyst
William Brennan, First Selectman

Schenck's Island Update

This winter a battle was being waged against the tangled mass of invasive vines enrobing Schenck's Island. You may have noticed there was work going on in the trees, often on cold days when no one else would have been gardening. Thanks to the generous efforts of CJ Robinson, Evergreen, Ridgewood Lands, Laurel Rock and Lee Horticultural Services the restoration process of Schenck's Island continues. When asked to help in the huge undertaking of reclaiming and restoring the Island to its former natural beauty these companies offered their skills pro bono.

Winter is the best time to remove vines that threaten the health and survival of our trees. Without leaves the vines are easier to see, unravel, and remove. Over the last 3 years citizens of Wilton have watched great changes transform Schenck's Island from a foreboding and almost impenetrable mess toward a more people friendly place. My sincere thanks to the owners and crews.

Stay tuned or better yet come take a walk and check out our progress. It's only going to get better.

Teresa Mucci
Wilton Land Conservation Trust

Canada Geese – An Attractive Nuisance

Canada geese are heralded for their beauty as they pass overhead in "V" formation, heading south in the fall. They are also cursed for their droppings, overgrazing, and shoreline erosion in the grassed areas they call home. This apparent mix of emotions comes from the fact that we have two types of Canada goose populations, migratory and resident. The migratory populations represent "the way it should be." That is, Canada geese are supposed to move from far north to the south each year, using our area as a stop over.

Continued on page 4

Continued from page 3

Canada Geese

This migratory pattern changed many years ago when the wings of some geese were clipped to create live decoys, luring migrating geese to stop in on hunted water bodies. The decoy geese subsequently bred and molted here, setting up a pattern of permanent residency for the following generations. It is the resident geese that monopolize our athletic fields, ponds and streams with lawned buffers, and other open grassed areas.

To combat this problem the Norwalk River Watershed Initiative is recommending egg oiling to reduce the size of future populations, thereby reducing a contributor of non-point source pollution. Chasing geese is also an option to address the problem site by site, but in the end the problem is just moved somewhere else. Also, the key to chasing is to move the geese before they molt, because once they molt they are literally grounded until their new feathers come in.

Recently, two members of the Town's staff were

trained by GeesePeace to oil eggs; a program that is accepted by the Humane Society. Staff will be looking for nests on town property and will be willing to work with neighbors of privately owned properties to teach them the process. By oiling the eggs rather than destroying the nests, the geese continue to incubate the eggs. By the time the pair realizes the eggs are not viable, it is too late in the season to lay a new clutch. The second advantage to oiling is that once the clutch has failed, the adult geese are more likely to leave the area prior to molting, alleviating the density of the adult population as well.

For more information on egg oiling and the simple federal permitting requirements, please contact the Conservation Department.

Patricia Sesto
Director Environmental Affairs

SPRING HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE DAY

Town	Date	Town	Date
Weston	4/28/07	Shelton	9/22/07
Greenwich	5/12/07	New Canaan	10/13/07
Norwalk	5/19/07		



BULK RATE
U.S. Postage
PAID
Wilton, CT
Permit No. 11

RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER
WILTON, CT 06897

