

Appalachian Alternatives

Appalachia - Science in the Public Interest

Summer 2011 Number 99

A Message from Executive Director Alan Whetsel

Folks have been asking me how the new job's going. I have to say it's going pretty well. Having done so much research into ASPI before I got here, I almost feel like I've been here for years. I've been meeting the people I read about and it's been a pleasure. Here's a little sample of what's going on in each of our areas of concentration...

Sustainable Energy Andy McDonald has done a good job of getting me introduced the SE community. We've got a lot of irons in the fire. As you can see from his report in this newsletter, he has been busy finalizing the details of his SE Training Series. It is shaping up to be a pivotal year. Be sure to read Andy's section.

Education and Demonstration We've been working hard to get the demonstration gardens here at Mt. Vernon together. Many of our friends and supporters have donated seeds and plants. We have also begun planning a community garden with Mt Vernon's Healthy Community's Committee.

There may be some other big surprises in Education and Demonstration forthcoming, but it's too early to say more about it just yet.

Water Shed Watch Deb Bledsoe has trained me as a citizen water tester. Mark Spencer and I attended her workshop here at the Mt Vernon office last month. I was privileged to have Deb accompany me to my test site at Fletcher Cave this past Derby Saturday. She's a treasure trove of information. Read about Deb's award too.

I wanted to close by saying how impressed I have been with our donors. There has been a lot of disaster in the world here lately and donor fatigue is to be expected. In spite of these global hardships you all have hung in there with us during these critical times. My hat is off to you, thank you all very much.

Solar Photovoltaics Training Classes Scheduled for August and October



The Kentucky Solar Partnership (KSP) will be hosting a series of trainings for contractors and others interested in gaining skills to work with solar photovoltaic systems. The first series of workshops will be held August 16 - 19 in Frankfort, Kentucky at the Franklin County Cooperative Extension Office. Then in October, we will offer an advanced hands-on photovoltaics class at Kentucky State University in Frankfort. During this five-day class participants will install a complete battery-based, off-grid solar electric system on KSU's environmental education trailer.

Chris LaForge of Great Northern Solar in Port Wing, Wisconsin, will be the instructor for all classes. Chris is a NABCEP-certified solar PV installer and an ISPQ-certified solar PV instructor. Participants can earn training hours towards their eligibility for the NABCEP certification exam. NABCEP is a national voluntary certification organization for solar electric and solar thermal professionals and requires a minimum level of training and experience for people to qualify to take their exam. Visit www.NABCEP.org.

CEU's are available for Kentucky licensed Master Electricians and Electrical Electricians for the August classes.

AUGUST SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAICS WORKSHOPS

Introduction to Solar Photovoltaics - August 16 - 17, 2011.

Time: 8:30am - 5:00pm each day. Fee: \$275

Solar Site Assessments & PV System Design - August 18, 2011.

Time: 8:30am - 5:00pm. Fee: \$140

Prerequisite: Introduction to Solar PV or equivalent training or experience.

Solar PV & the National Electric Code - August 19, 2011.

Time: 8:30am - 5:00pm. Fee: \$140

Prerequisite: Introduction to Solar PV or equivalent training or experience.

Location: Franklin County Cooperative Extension Office, 101 Lakeview Court, Frankfort, KY 40601

OCTOBER HANDS-ON SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAICS WORKSHOP

Advanced Solar PV Hands-On Installation Training – October 24 – 28, 2011. Fee: \$825

Time 8:30am – 5:00pm each day.

Location: Kentucky State University, Center for Sustainability of Farms and Families,
1525 Mills Lane, Frankfort, KY 40601

Registration fee includes lunch and refreshments.

To register, download a registration form at www.kysolar.org or call 1-888-576-6527 to request a registration form. More detailed descriptions of workshops can also be found at www.kysolar.org.

Watershed News

In November, friends, family, and conservationists from around the state gathered to recognize the lifetime environmental achievements of Deb Bledsoe, former interim director of ASPI. She was selected as the 5th Annual Stuart Butler Award recipient by Kentucky Heartwood and a banquet in her honor was held at the UU Church in Lexington. Kentucky Heartwood established the Stuart Butler Memorial Award in 2006 with the desire to recognize environmental heroes during their lifetime.

Service Learning

In the fall of 2010 and this spring, ASPI was proud to host groups from Loyola University - Chicago, and University of Notre Dame. We again worked with many partners to provide opportunities for the volunteers to learn about local ecology and issues which we all face. The theme for this year has been: "The questions are all the same; how can we obtain fresh clean water, shelter, and food without damaging



Loyola students with community partner John Holbrook

or depleting our region?" Student volunteers learned that the carrying capacity of an area is affected by many factors including population, geology, and resources such as water supplies and transportation. The answers vary widely and depend on the locality and the extent that sustainability is taken into account. Our programs encourage critical thinking on these subjects, for which answers have, in the recent past, tended to be of a "one size fits all" consumer culture and development nature.

This school year we have focused on clean water issues with tours of Straight Creek along Pine Mountain, studying the special problems of water contamination in mining and karst areas, and gathering water from a local drinking water spring possibly threatened by logging and pesticide use. A new threat to the area's clean water and air is unregulated hydraulic fracturing for natural gas. This process is known as "fracking."

Students took part in activities including organic gardening at ASPI and local sustainable homesteads, historic dump abatement working with Rockcastle County PRIDE, trail building and maintenance on the Michael Zalla Memorial Trail, ASPI chores at the office and Mary E. Fritsch Nature Center, large tree planting projects with the Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative (ARRI), as well as participation in local cultural activities and some touring of the region's extractive industry hotspots.

No matter our activities or current focus, having student volunteers is a major boost to our positive outlook and energies through the year, and we never fail to learn as much from them as they (we hope) do from us! We owe gratitude and thanks to all who participate and hope to continue our associations over the years.

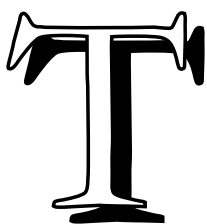
Citizen Water Quality Monitoring



Deb Bledsoe leads a water testing workshop at ASPI

In April, ASPI hosted a small Upper Cumberland Watershed Watch Samplers' Training, and new ASPI director Alan Whetsel was trained along with Mark Spencer, Nancy Seaberg, Sue Koplowitz, and Jean Ray. UCWW citizen sampling took place in May. Testing will continue with dates in July and September. In the past, we have uncovered water quality issues such as high bacteria counts and many small acid mine drainage seeps in the Rockcastle region. We can always use volunteers, and at this time sample runners are needed for the Whitesburg to Corbin route.

If you are interested in learning more about these issues or volunteering to sample or run, please contact Deb Bledsoe at ASPI, or by email at Deborah_Bledsoe@yahoo.com.



THANKS

Werner Jud
Carl Callenbach
Nancy Jackson
Sonya Herschberg
Leonard Levine

University of Notre Dame: 2011
Loyola University - Chicago
Annalou Ritchie, Anne Romance
Terrie Curd

Citizen's Conservation Corps of WV
Wendell & Tanya Berry
Stephen & Patricia Boyce
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth
Tona Barkley
Ruth Straus
Ian Rudick, Ruben Angel
Courtney Spears
Lyle Starr
James & Hildegard Wachob
Carolyn Brandenburg
Robert & Debra Ross

Steve & Erika Solberg
Fr. Walt Bado & KY Jesuit Mission
Church of the Epiphany
Pfizer Foundation Matching
Gifts Program
Charlotte Pyle
L.A Farris
Louise & Rodrigo Botero
Nancy Seaberg
Bill and Irmgard Best
Tim Hensley & Jane Post
Susana Lein

Rebates Available for Home Energy Efficiency Improvements!

The Kentucky Home Performance Program provides rebates up to \$2,000 and trained, certified home energy evaluators and contractors for homeowners to perform home energy efficiency improvements. To learn more, visit www.kyhomeperformance.org or call 877-741-4306.

WISH List

ASPI is looking for: 2 good-condition area rugs to cover spaces of 12' x 12' and 5' x 10', and horse manure/top-soil and hay for the Mt Vernon demonstration garden.


Another Way to Support our Work

Sign-up for discounted long distance service for your home or business. Mention this ad and designate (at no cost to you) 3% of your bill to ASPI. For more information or to order this service, contact Ian Rudick with Come From The Heart at 888-622-0957.

ASPI Board of Directors: Tammy Clemons, President; Joshua Bills; Terrie Curd; Henry Jackson; Margie Stelzer; Alan Whetsel, Executive Director.

ASPI Office: 50 Lair Street, Mount Vernon, KY 40456

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