

## Falmouth Recycling and Energy Advisory Committee (REAC)

“Energy News You Can Use” Volume 3, Issue 7 July 2015 – Falmouth, Maine

- Summer has arrived! How are keeping your home cool, before having to turn on the air conditioner?
- What are your home energy plans to prepare for the warm days, while keeping the cold in mind?
- Have you had an energy audit or assessment done through Efficiency Maine or independently? Drop us a line at [reac@falmouthme.org](mailto:reac@falmouthme.org) and share your home energy story with us!
- Any ideas or suggestions on how Falmouth can be greener? More sustainable? Use less energy? We’d love to hear your thoughts, and ways in which *you* live sustainably, give **your** Energy and Sustainability Coordinator a shout at [kdarling@falmouthme.org](mailto:kdarling@falmouthme.org) and share your ideas!
- How do you keep the waste down while hosting a get-together or party? We’d love to hear your tips!





### **Environmentalist—Paul Relis at the Falmouth Memorial Library!**






July 23<sup>rd</sup>—6:30pm


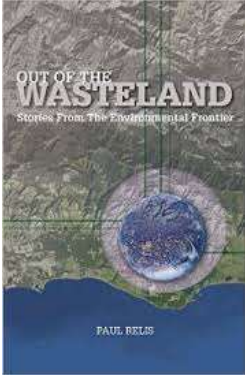

*Save the date!*

*See events calendar below for more detailed information.*

## Calendar of Local Green Events- July 2015

<b>Event</b>	<b>Date/Time/Location</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Wild Edibles Walk at Gilsland Farm</b>  	July 3 9:00-10:00am 20 Gilsland Farm Rd., Falmouth	Join naturalist and forager Josh Fecteau for an early summer wild edibles walk at Gilsland Farm. A diversity of habitats, from fields to wetlands to woods, makes this a fine location to engage the senses and observe a variety of edible plants. This walk is geared toward adults, but children are welcome to come along. For more information, contact Doug Hitchcox at (207)781-2330 x 237
<b>March for Solar in Freeport</b>  	July 4 9:00-11:00am Freeport Middle School 19 Kendall Ln., Freeport	March with the Freeport Climate Action Team in the Town’s famous 4 <sup>th</sup> of July parade and stand up for a clean energy future in Freeport and throughout the state. There will be banners, sunshine and “solar panels” for people to carry. This fun event highlights the importance of solar and making climate conscious choices. Dogs and children are welcome! RSVP by <a href="#">clicking here</a> .

<p><b>Portland Green Drinks</b></p> 	<p>July 14 5:30-8:00pm Maine Audubon 20 Gilsland Farm Rd., Falmouth</p>	<p>Portland Greendrinks is part of the international Greendrinks network—an informal, volunteer-managed social networking group built around a common interest in the natural environment. It occurs the second Tuesday of each month, starting at 5:30pm. This month’s event will be co-hosted at the Maine Audubon in Falmouth with Maine Rivers and Trout Unlimited. For more information, follow <a href="#">this link</a>.</p>
<p><b>Points and Pints Green Building Discussion</b></p> 	<p>July 16 5:30-8:30pm Novare Res Bier Café 4 Canal Plaza, Portland</p>	<p>Points &amp; Pints is an informal monthly gathering of green builders and green building enthusiasts. This month’s gathering will be held at Novare Res Bier Café. Come for good conversation and good company—U.S Green Building Council Maine Chapter Members are especially encouraged to attend!</p>
<p><b>Maine Narrow Gauge Railroad</b></p> 	<p>July 17 6:00-8:00pm Shipyard Brewing Company 86 Newbury St., Portland</p>	<p>The Maine Narrow Gauge is pleased to introduce Rails and Ales, the newest event of 2015! In partnership with some award-winning local breweries, join this group for a beer tasting and train ride along the waterfront. Come drink local beer and learn about the importance of Maine’s railways. For more information, <a href="#">click here</a>.</p>
<p><b>Maine Lobster Ride</b></p> 	<p>July 19 6:30am-4:00pm Oceanside High School 400 Broadway, Rockland</p>	<p>The Bicycle Coalition of Maine’s Lobster Ride &amp; Roll follows winding, country lanes and the breathtaking rockbound Maine coast past lighthouses, lupines and lobster boats. As a bonus, every first-time rider who is not a member of the coalition will receive a FREE six-month trial membership! Follow <a href="#">this link</a> to learn more.</p>
<p><b>Portland Local Food Networking Breakfast</b></p> 	<p>July 21 8:30am Local Sprouts Café 649 Congress St., Portland</p>	<p>All are welcome for breakfast and talk of local food! Casual breakfast will be served with food organizers—advocates and producers of the community. All the food served is cooked with only local ingredients. Networking is encouraged! Come out and promote your work and organizations to your peers, and eat some tasty local food!</p>

<p><b>Portland Community Solar Open House</b></p> 	<p>July 22 6:30-8:30pm St. Luke's Church 143 State St., Portland</p>	<p>Find out more about Portland's first community solar farm at this event. Learn how you can reduce your energy costs through clean, renewable solar power by attending this free public open house sponsored by the Portland Climate Action Team. RSVP for this event by following <a href="#">this link</a>.</p>
<p><b>Environmentalist Paul Relis Talk—<i>Out of the Wasteland: Stories from the Environmental Frontier</i></b></p> 	<p>July 23 6:30pm Falmouth Memorial Library 5 Lunt Rd., Falmouth</p>	<p>Join REAC as they co-host Paul Relis with the Falmouth Memorial Library on July 23<sup>rd</sup>. At the age of 23, Mr. Relis became the first Executive Director of the California Environmental Council (CEC) after the Santa Barbara oil spill. Under his leadership, the CEC was at the ground floor of sustainable development, launching some of the nation's first and most ambitious urban gardening, recycling and green building programs in America. Mr. Relis has graciously agreed to speak while visiting Maine on vacation—come join us and learn about how he has made a difference in the environmental frontier!</p>
<p><b>Solar Open House—Brunswick</b></p> 	<p>July 23 6:00-7:30pm The Plante Residence 71 Rossmore Rd., Brunswick</p>	<p>Come learn how solar can work for you, the homeowner! Join ReVision for some light refreshments and a tour of the Plante's solar energy system that powers their home. This is a great opportunity to get answers to questions regarding the cost of solar, your return on investment, and solar heating systems and how they operate in our Northeast climate.</p>

## Energy News

**Trains for Maine**—the Maine Legislature is considering putting a \$25 million transportation bond on the November 2015 ballot for expanding passenger rail service in Maine. The bond would be used to provide passenger train service connecting Portland and Lewiston-Auburn. This investment is an important first step to expand passenger rail service across the state. This bond could leverage up to \$100 million in federal matching funds. Sign the Sierra Club's petition for *Trains for Maine* by following [this link](#).

**King Proposes Bill to Promote Personal Energy Independence**—on May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2015, Senator Angus King introduced The Free Market Energy Act of 2015, which would establish a set of parameters for the governance of distributed energy resources (DER) such as solar power, stored energy or demand response. Existing policies discourage investment in DER. The proposed act would protect the right of consumers to connect their distributed resources to the grid for a reasonable price. To read more, [click here](#).

**Efficiency Maine Increases Incentives on Heat Pump Water Heaters**—Efficiency Maine has announced that effective April, 2015, the mail-in rebate on qualifying heat pump water heaters will be increased from \$100 to \$300. This means that, after rebates, a \$1,000 heat pump water heater costs only \$300 more than a traditional electric water heater. With average savings of \$250 a year, a heat pump water heater will pay for itself in 1.2 years—an 83% return on investment after taxes, according to Efficiency Maine. Follow [this link](#) for more information.

**Future of Solar Energy in Maine Still Cloudy**—disagreements persist over how generators, ratepayers and utilities may benefit from the clean power of the sun. In some states, utilities are major solar developers. In Maine, utilities were forced to sell their generating assets when the electric industry was restructured 15 years ago. Maine is the only state in the Northeast where utilities can't own or develop solar generation—utility-size solar systems produce electricity at half the cost of home installations. John Carroll, a CMP spokesman noted, “people keep pointing out that Maine is falling behind in solar, but that's largely because Maine utilities aren't building grid-scale solar”. Read more [here](#).

## Green Consumer Tips & How-To's

**Low Spray & Organic Pick-Your-Own Strawberries, Blueberries and Apples**—summer and fall are the best times to indulge in some locally-grown food. Picking your own fruit is not only a fun-filled family activity; it's also the perfect way to gather large amounts of fresh food for canning and preserving. For a list of Maine farms where you can pick your own strawberries, blueberries and apples, [click here](#).

### 10 Tips to Improve Your Home Air Quality—

1. ***Control Moisture to prevent mold and building rot***

Mold is a common allergen and has been linked to asthma. Fix any leaks promptly and dry wet areas completely and quickly. Keep your relative humidity between 30-50% and always vent high moisture areas such as kitchens, bathrooms and laundry rooms directly to the outdoors.

2. ***Let fresh air in***

Ventilate your home to let fresh air in and exhaust stale air and pollutants out. Actively use your operable windows, exhaust fans or whole-house mechanical ventilation if you have one.

3. ***Vacuum at least once a week***

Dust particles, allergens, and chemical residues can settle onto the surfaces of your home quite easily. Regular use of a good quality vacuum with a HEPA filter will remove those tiny microscopic contaminants from the home and keep you breathing easier.

4. ***Test your home for radon***

With radon being the second leading cause of lung cancer nationwide, it is very important to test your home for radon. Many Maine homes have high levels of radon—to be sure you don't, contact the Maine Radiation Control Program at [\(800\)232-0842](tel:8002320842) for more information.

5. ***Maintain your heating system and avoid combustion by-products***

Burning nearly anything and everything releases chemicals. All heating systems should be serviced on a regular basis by a licensed professional and vented outdoors. Install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors if you haven't already, and contact your service provider to make sure your heating system is in check.

**6. Never scrape off or sand paint without first checking for lead**

It is estimated that 80% of Maine homes built before 1978 could have some lead in them. Lead is a poison that attacks the nervous system, and is particularly dangerous to children. If you think you may have some lead paint in your home, contact Maine Lead Positioning Prevention Program at [866-292-3474](tel:866-292-3474).

**7. Control pests without pesticides**

The health effects associated with pesticides are significant. Strategies exist to control pests without using chemical pesticides. Contact the Maine Board of Pesticide Control [\(207\)287-2731](tel:207-287-2731) to learn more.

**8. Landscape correctly**

Poor landscaping can allow both moisture and pests to enter your home. Place plants at least 2 feet away from the foundation and keep the earth pitched and sloped away from your home.

**9. Inspect your home annually**

Take the time to thoroughly inspect your home inside and out. Look for stains, wet spots, condensation, insects and insect damage, peeling paint, roof integrity, and overgrown trees and plants. Take a look at the plumbing under sinks and in the basement. Check all windows, doors, tubs, showers, sinks and toilets. Inspect the roof and the attic, as well as the basement or any crawlspaces. If a problem is detected, address those areas as soon as possible.

**10. Ask questions!**

When hiring home service professionals, be sure to ask for and review their credentials and confirm that they carry both workers' compensation and liability insurance. Ask how their work will affect your home *and* the environment. Finally, be sure to obtain a contract for all work over \$3,000—which is required by state law.

## Did you know ...?

...that Maine features the highest percentage of households that heat with oil? Approximately 70% of Maine households use oil as their primary heating fuel.

...that the legislature approved "An Act to Improve Maine's Energy Security ("the Act") in 2011, which shortly became law thereafter? Most importantly, the Act sets reduction targets for total oil usage—30% below 2007 levels by 2030, and 50% below 2007 levels by 2050.

...that refrigerators in the U.S. consume about the same amount of energy as 25 large power plants produce each year?

...that enough sunlight reaches the earth's surface each *minute* to satisfy the world's energy demands—for an entire year?

...that the amount of energy Americans use doubles every twenty years?

...that from 2008 to 2030, world energy consumption is expected to increase more than 55%?

...that Google accounts for roughly 0.013% of the world's energy use? Google data centers used 260 million megawatts of power in 2010—enough energy to continuously power 200,000 homes.

**REAC'S Mission:** The Town of Falmouth Energy and Recycling Advisory Committee advises the Falmouth Town Council on matters relating to the town's solid waste recycling program, energy efficiency and other related matters deemed appropriate by the Council. Duties shall include but not be limited to the following: (1) Endeavor to save local taxpayer dollars through increased energy-efficiency of municipal facilities and operations; (2) Prioritize the ad hoc Falmouth Green Ribbon Committee's 2010 recommendations that the Council wants to pursue; (3) Educate Falmouth residents and businesses about energy-efficient, waste-reducing, clean energy opportunities and choices; (4) Enhance and promote the town's recycling program; (5) Promote the use of clean, renewable energy sources in Falmouth's public and private facilities through education and outreach; (6) Work with surrounding communities on potential regional energy efficiency and clean energy strategies; (7) Monitor new developments and options in the fields of energy and waste management as technologies evolve and change; educate the public and advise the Council on same; (8) Research and report policies to accomplish the above goals and/or other related goals deemed appropriate by the Town Council.