



**TOXICS
ACTION
CENTER**

TOXICS ACTION CENTER

2010 Annual Report



ORGANIZING WITH RESIDENTS TO
CLEAN UP AND PREVENT POLLUTION
IN NEW ENGLAND SINCE 1987



To Our Members



Meredith Small
Executive Director

"Responsible citizens must step forward, not just to point the way, but to lead the way to a better world."

– Judy Bonds
1952 - 2011

Cover:
Toxics Action Center
Organizing Director
Sylvia Broude stood with
members of GreenCAPE
to call on the electric
company NSTAR to stop
spraying toxic pesticides in
Cape Cod, Massachusetts.

Dear Friends,

On Jan. 3, 2011, our movement lost one of its most powerful and best-loved heroes, Judy Bonds. The daughter of a coal miner, Judy was born and raised in West Virginia. She became a leading voice of the grassroots movement against mountaintop removal mining, a practice unique to Appalachia where peaks are blown off with explosives to expose the coal below. She died of cancer at age 58.

Judy was a formidable community leader cut from the same cloth as Lois Gibbs, Diane Wilson and so many of the unsung heroes that Toxics Action Center staff had the pleasure of working with every day. In this annual report, you'll catch a glimpse into the work of many of these people. There's Marsha Smith of Camden, Maine—a woman who's taken her local fight to protect her grandson and reduce exposure to toxic pesticides to the state level. There's also Michaelann Bewsee of Springfield, Massachusetts—a seasoned community leader and environmental justice advocate who has helped drive a regional movement toward zero waste and an end to harmful trash incineration.

When she accepted the distinguished Goldman Environmental Prize in 2003, Judy said, "When powerful people pursue profits at the expense of human rights and our environment, they have failed as leaders. Responsible citizens must step forward, not just to point the way, but to lead the way to a better world." I couldn't agree more. It's that spirit of citizen action that drove Toxics Action Center's work in 2010 and onward.

To see excerpts from Judy's keynote speech at Toxics Action Center's 23rd annual citizens' conference, held on April 11, 2010, please visit www.toxicsaction.org/news/judybonds.

In 2010, Toxics Action Center staff organized in more than 90 communities throughout New England to clean up or prevent pollution. As always, thank you so much for your generous support of our work and the community leaders who live these campaigns every single day.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Meredith Small".

Meredith Small
Executive Director

Curbing Toxic Pesticide Spraying

This year, Toxics Action Center fueled a surge in the movement to reduce the use of toxic pesticides across the region. From organizing with Boston leaders to stop pesticide spraying on MBTA rail lines, to preventing agricultural sprays near schools in Vermont, to supporting the New Hampshire Children's Alliance's effort to ban pesticide use at parks and school grounds, residents across the region took action against toxic spraying.

Maine: Community Leaders Came Together To Push For Statewide Change

Three years ago, the community group Citizens for a Green Camden passed a local policy to eliminate pesticide spraying on municipally-owned properties. Camden's success ignited similar organizing efforts across the state. By 2010, citizen groups formed to reduce the use of pesticides had sprung up in Cumberland, Falmouth, Gorham, Hiram, Kennebunkport, Ogunquit, Scarborough, Yarmouth, and York. Recognizing the power behind this momentum, Toxics Action Center brought together more than 60 leaders from 25 communities across the state for the Maine Pesticide Summit. At the Summit, community activists strategized ways to make the biggest impact, and decided to coordinate efforts to pass local pesticide policies and push for policy change at the state level. The Safe School Grounds Bill, which sprang out of the summit and is currently pending in the state legislature, will protect Maine's children by restricting cosmetic pesticide use on public school playgrounds and athletic fields.

"Toxics Action Center's dedication and excitement in helping people is contagious, and our state of Maine will be a safer and greener place because of their work."

– Dennis Morton
Friends of the Rails to Trails, Gorham, Maine

Cape Cod, Mass.: Residents Mobilized Communities To Stop Toxic Spraying Plan

On Cape Cod, members of GreenCAPE came together to convince the electricity provider NSTAR to abandon plans to spray 150 miles of power lines across the Cape with pesticides, some of which have been linked to cancer. Early action by GreenCAPE delayed the spraying, but more was needed. Toxics Action Center's Organizing Director Sylvia Broude joined GreenCAPE to develop a campaign to pressure NSTAR directly. In August, we sent eight staff to the Cape to work side-by-side with residents to collect nearly 1,000 petition signatures to NSTAR and sign 125 local businesses onto a coalition letter. In response to the effort, NSTAR offered some concessions. Continuing the campaign, GreenCAPE and Toxics Action Center have convinced 15 towns to pass resolutions against the spraying, kept the issue in the news, and won the support of state legislators. As a result, NSTAR has established a moratorium on spraying for 2011.

Local Leader Spotlight: Marsha Smith Leads the Way to Safer Lawns



Marsha Smith's activism earned her an award from the Environmental Protection Agency.

Marsha Smith is a long-time resident of Camden, Maine. Camden, known as the "Jewel of the Maine Coast," is where the mountains meet the sea and the area is renowned for its natural beauty. Marsha has always felt a deep respect for nature, but it wasn't until she saw a sign that read "Danger: Pesticides" posted on a town lawn where her grandson plays that she became an environmental leader. Reaching out to her neighbors, she formed Citizens for a Green Camden and began working to reduce pesticide use on lawns in the town. Their first campaign eliminated the use of pesticides on municipally-owned properties. Marsha's activism earned her an Outstanding Activism Award from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. She continues to help lead the way for better pesticide policy in Maine.

Tackling Our Waste Problem

When it comes to waste disposal, state governments across the region inadequately protect public health and the environment—and communities that host the landfills and incinerators that process the bulk of our waste are the ones paying the price. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency states that all landfills will eventually leak, posing a contamination risk to drinking water. Incinerators belch cancer-causing chemicals into the air, generating even more greenhouse gases than coal-burning power plants and seriously harming the health of surrounding residents.

For years, Toxics Action Center has worked with community groups and agencies across the region to promote zero waste, a way of dealing with trash so as to maximize recycling and reuse and minimize waste. As more and more cities and regions elsewhere in the world move successfully towards zero waste, it becomes even clearer that we need a new direction here in New England. This year Toxics Action Center made strides in changing how Massachusetts, in particular, deals with trash, and continues to work on the ground in communities to help residents tackle proposals to build the first new incinerators in the state in twenty years.

Massachusetts: State Proposed A “Pathway To Zero Waste”

In July 2010, Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) released their draft Solid Waste Master

“Throughout our group’s fight, Taryn’s passion and energy have inspired us to continue our goal of stopping this environmental danger. With her guidance, I feel we have a great chance to succeed.”

– Captain Robert Bastis
StopGasification!, Taunton, Mass.

Plan, entitled “Pathway to Zero Waste,” that will guide how the state deals with waste for the next decade. Incorporating many of the principles that Toxics Action Center staff and activists have called for throughout the past year, it’s clear that MassDEP had shifted its approach toward waste in a big and encouraging way. The plan upheld the state’s 20 year moratorium on building new incinerators and sets a goal of reducing waste by 80 percent. This is a direct result of the work of Don’t Waste Massachusetts over the past two years. Toxics Action Center helped form the coalition in 2008 and led the way in garnering media attention and public support for a state waste plan that prioritized recycling and reuse.

Unfortunately, loopholes in the draft plan would open the door to new types of waste burning in the state, including gasification, pyrolysis and plasma arc technologies that burn waste with little to no oxygen but still release toxic chemicals into our air. Even before the plan was finished, companies proposing these types of incinerators came out of the woodwork all across the Commonwealth. Toxics Action Center organized with these communities to help residents stand up for their health. In addition to working locally to build support against hosting these toxic waste burning facilities in their towns, activists worked at the state level for policy change. Toxics Action Center worked with residents from these communities, collected petitions, held call-in days to the governor, and spoke at public hearings to ask the MassDEP to close the loophole for incinerators anywhere in the state.

Attleboro, Mass.: Residents Took Action To Stop A Toxic Industrial Waste Incinerator

In Attleboro, Residents with Important Safety Concerns (RISC) launched a campaign against a proposal by Boston-based Ze-Gen to build a plant that would burn toxic creosote-soaked telephone poles and railway ties, wood pallets, carpet, and other industrial waste—all within one mile of four schools, a hospital, a YMCA camp and an elderly living center. Toxics



StopGasification! members, Captain Bastis (right) and Toxics Action Center Community Organizer Taryn Hallweaver (center) at a hearing in Taunton.

Action Center staff worked with RISC to develop a compelling message to convince the Board of Health to deny the toxic proposal and began meeting with local politicians to garner their support.

Taunton, Mass.: Local Activists Stalled A Massive, Regional Trash Facility

For the last two years, the city of Taunton has pursued a massive gasification facility that would import household trash from across the South Coast. As noted, studies indicate that gasification, like traditional trash burning, still releases high levels of dangerous chemicals into the air. When Taunton Fire Captain Robert Bastis found out about the proposal he was concerned. As a firefighter, he knew that burning trash was not something that he would want the city, or his four children, breathing in.

To date, the city had spent more than \$5 million on the project, largely behind closed doors. This past fall, Toxics Action Center worked with firemen and residents to form the citizen group StopGasification! to bring the proposal to light

and convince the city to abandon its plans. Group members recruited more than 60 residents to come to a public forum on the proposal where, for many, it was the first time they found out about the city's plans. Because of Toxics Action Center and StopGasification!'s work, the proposal was put on hold and the Mayor is now discussing the possibility of increasing recycling and composting programs for the city instead.

Somerset, Mass.: Community Members Pressured A Polluter To Keep Its Promise

In January, Toxics Action Center worked with Pauline Rodrigues, Al Lima, Dave Dionne and other residents from the Coalition for Clean Air to successfully shut down an 86-year-old coal plant that had refused to install modern pollution controls. Later in the year, plant owners proposed to resurrect the plant in order to burn construction waste. Determined not to let their victory for clean air be overturned, members of the coalition turned out in force to the final public hearing on the state's Solid Waste Master Plan, and urged the state to close the loophole for new incinerators like the one threatening their town.

Local Leader Spotlight: Michaelann Bewsee Works For Environmental Justice In Springfield, Mass.



Michaelann Bewsee stands on the steps of Springfield's City Hall, prepared to deliver the hundreds of postcards collected to stop the incinerator proposal in her city.

Michaelann Bewsee began her career in activism in the anti-nuke and anti-war movements during the Vietnam era. In 1985, she and three other women founded Arise for Social Justice, a low-income organization that focuses on organizing for voting and housing rights, health care for all, and to end social injustice and homelessness. For some time, Arise leaders talked about how to build environmental awareness among their membership as well, but it wasn't until a massive incinerator was proposed right in the heart of East Springfield that the group sprung into action.

Springfield is a community suffering from environmental injustice, already overburdened with toxic polluters, and with childhood asthma rates more than double the rest of the Commonwealth. This new incinerator was planned less than five miles from more than 50 schools and daycare centers, threatening the most vulnerable population with toxic pollution. So Michaelann and others formed Stop Toxic Incineration in Springfield, bringing together Arise members with others from the nearby community to stop the plant. Toxics Action Center's Organizing Director Sylvia Broude has been working with Michaelann and the group for the past two years, supporting their efforts to convince the City Council to stop the incinerator.

Cleaning Up And Preventing Pollution

17 Westbrook, Maine: Neighbors Threatened By Blasting Proposal Near Hazardous Waste Spill

In Westbrook, just outside of Portland, Pike Industries, a subsidiary of the multi-national company CRH, proposed building a permanent rock crushing facility and asphalt plant a mere 300 feet from a large hazardous waste spill, threatening to disturb the waste and expose the community to very serious health risks. The spill is composed of trichloroethylene, or TCE, the chemical made infamous by its role in the Woburn, Mass. cancer cluster and *A Civil Action* story. In June, the City Council voted to approve Pike's application for the quarry. Meanwhile, a pending court case and potential settlement between Pike Industries and local businesses could allow the quarry to operate within certain restrictions.

19 York, Maine: Residents Spoke Out To Save The Beach

Lobstermen, fishermen, surfers and others joined together in York to prevent the U.S. Army Corps of Engineer from dredging the Piscataqua, a river known for its long history of pollution, and dumping one quarter million cubic yards of sand and silt onto Long Sands Beach. More than 60 residents made their voices heard at a public hearing and they successfully convinced the Army Corps to withdraw their plan.

21 Bethlehem, N.H.: Citizens Worked To Stop Expansion Of Mega-Landfill

Residents in Bethlehem won an initial victory in stopping a massive expansion of Casella's local landfill when reports came back showing high levels of dangerous chemicals. Unfortunately, the Department of Environmental Services later approved the project, and neighbors redoubled their efforts to stop the already leaking facility's expansion.

24 Franklin, N.H.: Residents rallied To Keep Industrial Pollution Out Of Their Town Center

Asphalt plants are some of the most toxic industrial sites, releasing arsenic, benzene, formaldehyde, and other toxins into the air. This summer, when the Franklin Planning Board began discussing the idea of constructing an asphalt plant right off of Main Street and across from the Merrimack River, residents began organizing to stop this poorly-sited industrial plant. The group formed the Concerned Citizens of Franklin and Toxics Action Center Community Organizer Brendan Gallagher began organizing with the group to demonstrate broad-based public opposition to the plant.

41 Moretown, Vt.: Mad River Valley Protected In A Long-Fought Victory

Six years ago, a developer proposed an industrial rock quarry on a hillside along Rte. 100B, the northern section of the scenic highway accessing Vermont's beautiful Mad River Valley. The quarry threatened the water quality of the Mad River and promised an onslaught of diesel dump trucks, dynamite blasts, and fly rock pelting nearby properties. Toxics Action Center State Director Jessica Edgerly worked with citizen group Mad River Neighborhood Association (MRNA) to oppose the irresponsible and dangerous proposal. Over the years, MRNA worked to win decisions from local and state authorities against the proposal from the town board and the state land use commission, but the developer persisted. In 2010, the Vermont Environmental Court upheld the earlier decisions and ruled definitively against the developer, halting this dangerous project.

54 Billerica, Mass.: Locals Called On The EPA For A Speedy Cleanup

For 25 years, community members in Billerica have waited for a cleanup of the Iron Horse Park Superfund site. The industrial park is the former site of McFarland Cascade, a business that stored hundreds of utility poles treated with toxic a chemical called pentachlorophenol. The EPA came up with two cleanup plans, one that costs roughly \$5 million and takes 5 years to complete; the other would drag out for 20 years and cost roughly \$4 million. Billerica Watchers are working to convince EPA to choose the faster plan in order to protect the community's health.

55 Boston, Mass.: New Recycling Coalition Formed

As recently as 2009, Boston's recycling rate hovered around 15 percent —abysmal in comparison to Nantucket at 92 percent, San Francisco at 72 percent and Chicago at 55 percent. Boston's low recycling rate drags down overall rates for the rest of the state and has devastating effects on our health and the environment. Toxics Action Center launched a new coalition with Clean Water Action, MASSCOSH, the Teamsters Union and other groups to pressure Mayor Thomas Menino to make a real commitment to recycling in a way that protects the environment, respects waste workers, and brings good jobs into Boston-area communities.

78 North Providence, R.I.: Residents Organized Against A Noxious Neighbor

Neighbors in North Providence are forced to stay inside most months of the year due to the smell and likely health

Throughout New England

risk of a nearby asphalt plant. Residents joined together to speak out against this toxic threat—recently gaining media attention—and began to pressure the state to close the plant.

79 Tiverton, R.I.: Neighbors Pressed For A Full Cleanup

In Tiverton, more than one hundred homes are contaminated with coal gasification waste from the Fall River Gas Company. After eight years of organizing, work began on the cleanup last summer. Shortly after, the company hired to start the cleanup went bankrupt, leaving many people with yards half-dug up and still laden with toxic soil. Neighbors continue to tirelessly push for a cleanup of the Bay Street neighborhood, despite the fact that the cleanup is now, unfortunately, at a standstill.

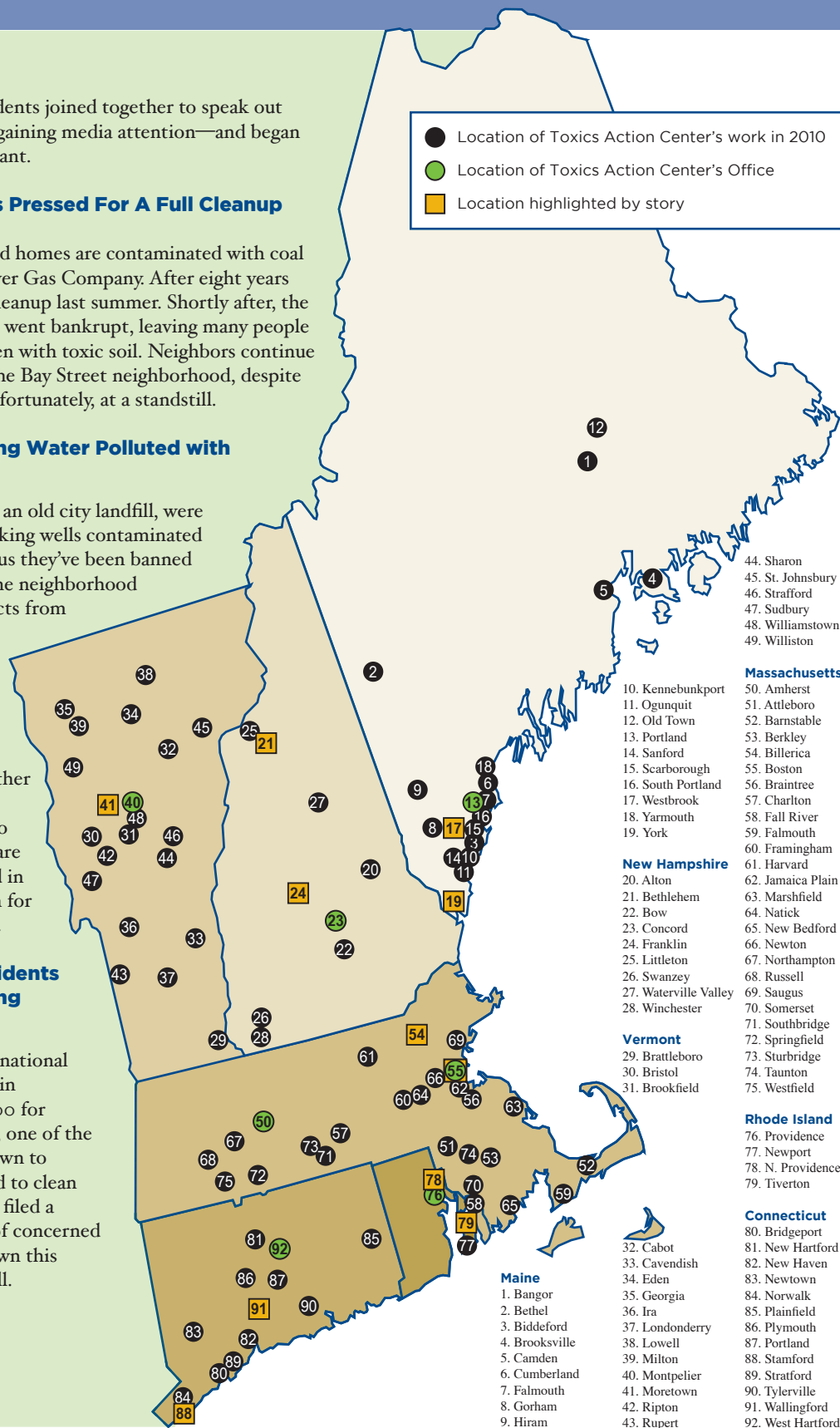
88 Stamford, Conn.: Drinking Water Polluted with Banned Pesticides

Neighbors near Scofieldtown Park, an old city landfill, were horrified to find many of their drinking wells contaminated with pesticides that are so dangerous they've been banned for decades. Families throughout the neighborhood were concerned about health impacts from the contamination. Early work by the group helped compel the city to agree to connect some residents to the city water supply, but the mayor's action stopped there. Then the group uncovered evidence of pollutant releases on other nearby properties, including an arboretum, a middle school and two assisted-living facilities. Residents are organizing for a cleanup of the land in the area and are continuing to push for access to clean, safe drinking water.

91 Wallingford, Conn.: Residents Sought To Close Polluting Incinerator

In recent years Covanta, the multi-national trash company with an incinerator in Wallingford, has been fined \$355,000 for emitting illegal amounts of dioxins, one of the most cancer-causing chemicals known to humans. Since the company refused to clean up its act, the state of Connecticut filed a lawsuit against the plant. A group of concerned citizens in town formed to shut down this horrendous polluter once and for all.

- Location of Toxics Action Center's work in 2010
- Location of Toxics Action Center's Office
- Location highlighted by story



- 44. Sharon
- 45. St. Johnsbury
- 46. Strafford
- 47. Sudbury
- 48. Williamstown
- 49. Williston

Massachusetts

- 50. Amherst
- 51. Attleboro
- 52. Barnstable
- 53. Berkley
- 54. Billerica
- 55. Boston
- 56. Braintree
- 57. Charlton
- 58. Fall River
- 59. Falmouth
- 60. Framingham
- 61. Harvard
- 62. Jamaica Plain
- 63. Marshfield
- 64. Natick
- 65. New Bedford
- 66. Newton
- 67. Northampton
- 68. Russell
- 69. Saugus
- 70. Somerset
- 71. Southbridge
- 72. Springfield
- 73. Sturbridge
- 74. Taunton
- 75. Westfield

New Hampshire

- 20. Alton
- 21. Bethlehem
- 22. Bow
- 23. Concord
- 24. Franklin
- 25. Littleton
- 26. Swanzey
- 27. Waterville Valley
- 28. Winchester

Vermont

- 29. Brattleboro
- 30. Bristol
- 31. Brookfield

Rhode Island

- 76. Providence
- 77. Newport
- 78. N. Providence
- 79. Tiverton

Connecticut

- 80. Bridgeport
- 81. New Hartford
- 82. New Haven
- 83. Newtown
- 84. Norwalk
- 85. Plainfield
- 86. Plymouth
- 87. Portland
- 88. Stamford
- 89. Stratford
- 90. Tylerville
- 91. Wallingford
- 92. West Hartford

Maine

- 1. Bangor
- 2. Bethel
- 3. Biddeford
- 4. Brooksville
- 5. Camden
- 6. Cumberland
- 7. Falmouth
- 8. Gorham
- 9. Hiram
- 32. Cabot
- 33. Cavendish
- 34. Eden
- 35. Georgia
- 36. Ira
- 37. Londonderry
- 38. Lowell
- 39. Milton
- 40. Montpelier
- 41. Moretown
- 42. Ripton
- 43. Rupert

Building A Better Energy Future

Throughout our history, Toxics Action Center has taken on some of the oldest and dirtiest power plants in New England. In Connecticut, we forced the cleanup of the state's six dirtiest fossil-fuel powered plants. In New Hampshire, we helped ban the burning of toxic construction waste for energy. In January 2010, we forced the shut-down of one of Massachusetts's oldest coal plants that had refused to install modern pollution controls. At Toxics Action Center, we know that the more we shut down or stop the building of polluting power plants, the more opportunity we create for renewable energy development.

Vermont: State Senate Voted To Shut Down Vermont Yankee On Time in 2012

In March 2010, by a margin of 26 to 4, Vermont's Senate voted to allow Vermont Yankee, one of the oldest nuclear power plants in the country, to close as scheduled in 2012.

In 2006, Toxics Action Center's Vermont State Director Jessica Edgerly began working with Nuclear-Free Vermont, a group of residents living near the plant, and other coalition partners, to build local opposition to Entergy's proposal to extend the aging plant's operations to 2032. Along the way, the public health and safety concerns of the coalition were confirmed. In 2004, a major electrical fire caused a full shut down of the plant. In 2007, plant workers voiced concern over declining safety margins. Two days later, one of the plant's cooling towers collapsed. Four months later, the third radioactive water leak of the year was reported. In January of 2010, radioactive tritium was found in groundwater nearby at more than 100 times drinking water limits.



As Vermont Yankee continued to tally safety failures, our coalition built momentum. VPIRG and Citizens Awareness Network went door-to-door in towns across the state, getting postcards signed and taking photo petitions. Toxics Action Center launched a letter-writing campaign, sending dozens of handwritten letters from constituents to decision-makers. Vermont Yankee Decommissioning Alliance organized town meeting day votes, winning resolutions in more than 50 towns. Safe and Green organized a 150-mile walk from Vermont Yankee to the Statehouse.

Through it all, the numerous community groups that Toxics Action Center has organized with to win their local campaigns came together and took on the challenge of closing an aging nuclear plant. Members of Friends of Rochester submitted letters to the editor and contacted their legislators. Members of the Mad River Neighborhood Association volunteered in the Statehouse the day of the vote. Members of the Cavendish Community and Conservation Association held a local press conference, signed on local businesses, and met with their elected officials. The victory to close the plant showed that a well-trained and engaged citizenry can hold even the largest, most entrenched polluting companies accountable.

Local Leader Spotlight: Robin Timko Takes On Polluters



Robin Timko keeps busy by gardening and running her local bakery and café, but in response to an industrial mining proposal in her community, she formed the neighborhood group Concerned Cavendish Citizens Association (CCCCA). Working with Toxics Action Center, CCCC generated public opposition to the permits. Robin also raised the \$200,000 needed to hire lawyers and environmental experts. The mining proposal was denied, but the group of local leaders decided to continue working to protect Cavendish's health and the environment.

Last year, Toxics Action Center State Director Jessica Edgerly reached out to Robin around the Vermont Yankee campaign and asked her to coordinate the effort for closing down the plant in her part of the state. Robin pulled together a meeting of CCCC members and got right to work. Robin's efforts resulted in dozens of handwritten letters to state officials and local papers, hundreds of photo petitions, a press conference with a local solar business and regular meetings with CCCC members and their elected officials. All this work paid off when Robin's state senator, who had remained undecided on the issue, voted with the majority to close down Vermont Yankee on time in 2012.

Protecting Our Water Resources

Congress passed the Clean Water Act in 1972 with a goal of eliminating most water pollution by 1985. This law was a response to major environmental crises, including fires on polluted rivers. Since its passage, water bodies across the country have been revitalized. Unfortunately, evidence shows that enforcement of pollution laws has declined over the last decade.

In Massachusetts alone, more than 125 communities have lost all or part of their water supplies due to toxic contamination, and more than 85 percent of cities and towns in the Commonwealth have groundwater supplies that are contaminated with toxic chemicals.

Historically landfills have been a major source of water contamination, and the Environmental Protection Agency says that all landfills will eventually leak. The leachate from dumps often contaminates groundwater.

Northampton, Mass.: Victory for Water Not Waste

This summer marked an important victory for Mimi Odgers and her neighbors, who succeeded in stopping the expansion of a landfill in Northampton that threatened the drinking water source for 60,000 Pioneer Valley residents. The landfill, located across the street from Mimi's home, was already a substantial nuisance to the neighborhood and many feared it was responsible for well-water contamination.

Three years ago, the Northampton City Council had proposed to expand the landfill directly over the Barnes Aquifer drinking water protection area. Despite a regulation banning landfills over drinking water protection zones, the state granted the town a waiver. Toxics Action Center's Director Meredith Small began working with Northampton residents. We helped community members gather thousands of petition signatures, and trained them on working with the media and making their case to elected officials.

More recently, Mimi Odgers and other residents formed the community group Water Not Waste, working to educate their community about the dangers of the expansion, while presenting zero waste solutions that could raise recycling rates and make the expansion unnecessary. Their work put a question on the city-wide ballot and won, proving to the City Council that most residents opposed the dump's expansion.

Following the vote, the City Council abandoned the expansion plan and called for the dump's permanent closure. Now they plan to install solar arrays on the land over the aquifer recharge zone to generate clean energy for city. After four long years, residents now have a much safer, more secure water supply.



Brendan Gallagher, Community Organizer, held a press conference to release the Toxics in VT Report.

Vermont: Communities Joined Together To Protect Water From Junkyard Pollution

Junkyards dot Vermont's landscape with piles of tires and rusting vehicles. While junkyards can play a key role in recycling metal, more than 200 junkyards operate illegally and threaten water by leaking toxic fluids and heavy metals. In 2010, Toxics Action Center Vermont State Director Jessica Edgerly and Community Organizer Brendan Gallagher worked with community groups in Milton, Williamstown, Strafford, Georgia, Sudbury and Sharon to clean up polluting junkyards.

In January 2009, leaders from these communities came together to push for statewide action, and won the establishment of a state Salvage Yards Program at the Agency of Natural Resources to regulate junkyards. In 2010, Toxics Action Center and these community groups worked with state legislators to win funding for the new program and establish key environmental protections and notification requirements, such as setbacks from drinking water.

Connecticut: Residents Pass Statewide Regulations to Protect Water

This year a community group working to protect water resources from a leaky trash storage facility cleared a major hurdle. In June, the Connecticut General Assembly voted unanimously to override a veto of legislation making it more difficult for the Housatonic Railroad Company to build a hazardous waste and trash transfer station in Hawleyville, CT. A big victory for residents across the state, the law will prevent trash facilities from being sited less than 1,000 feet from drinking water aquifers.

Toxics Action Center community organizers Megan Jenny and Claire Miller worked for more than a year with the Hawleyville Environmental Advocacy Team (HEAT) when a proposed trash facility first threatened their drinking water. The group is continuing to work to stop the project for good.

Partnerships For Better Organizing

In addition to organizing assistance, Toxics Action Center provides communities facing pollution threats with information on the toxic threat they are facing and the relevant laws and regulations, both what they say on paper and how they work in practice. We connect community leaders with technical assistance experts who can add credibility to a community's concerns. Over 2010, Toxics Action Center continued to build strategic partnerships to better support the work of community groups.

Statistics for Action: Adult Numeracy meets Environmental Organizing

For community members who are working to clean up a hazardous waste site or stop a polluting facility, the sight of thick binders of test results are not uncommon. Similarly, when a new industrial facility is proposed, the permit application often comes with technical engineering drawings and models of air pollution impacts and track patterns. To help provide community members with the tools and know-how to tackle this scientific accounting of the pollution impacts, we have partnered with TERC to create exercises and materials that break down the math and science and enable laypeople to approach and begin interpreting the data effectively. TERC is a nonprofit education research and development organization dedicated to improving mathematics, science, and technology teaching and learning. The project, *Statistics for Action*, includes exercises to help community members effectively communicate math and science in a meaningful way to a broader audience and to decision makers.

Statistics for Action is already helping drive local organizing efforts. For example, in Southbridge, MA the community group Residents for Alternative Trash Solutions (RATS) is working to stop the expansion of a polluting landfill. To demonstrate the scope of the pollution, TERC staff and Toxic Action Center Community Organizer Taryn Hallweaver worked with RATS leaders to set up a hotline where community members can report foul odors or other landfill impacts and then use those reports to generate a map of the emissions. In Billerica, Mass., *Statistics for Action* exercises helped a local group boil down complicated information around a hazardous waste cleanup into a concise message that they could use to help communicate with the larger community.

Learn more and download resources at www.toxicsaction.org/how-we-can-help/information.

Increasing our Capacity by Partnering with Universities

Toxics Action Center also benefits from partnerships with the Environmental and Natural Resources Law Clinic at Vermont

"Toxics Action Center has given us hope. They made us realize we are strong together and that maybe, we just might prevail."

– Gail Rosseau
Concerned Citizen of Franklin, N.H.

Law School and the Boston University School of Public Health. Through our joint program, Partnership for Justice, Vermont Law School professors and law students take on local community groups as clients and provide free research and guidance when the laws or regulations relevant to a toxic threat are complicated. In Vermont, clinic research helped communities tackling the threat of polluting junkyards understand how other states regulate the facilities. Concerned community members took these policy ideas to their legislators and created environmental standards for Vermont's salvage yards. Likewise, when community members in Williston, VT raised concerns around lead contamination, likely from a nearby shooting range, clinic staff helped the group understand the extent and limits of the state's jurisdiction on the issue.

In addition, Toxics Action Center partners with the talented team at Boston University's School of Public Health as part of their Superfund Research Program. Together the partnership has created a shared database of technical experts willing to provide assistance to community groups, informational materials on specific pollutants, and a guide to community health studies. The guide is designed to help community members like those in Springfield, MA where government agencies have launched a health study and residents want a say in its focus and design. Likewise, the guide can help community groups that are considering launching their own study.



Community leaders worked with TERC Research Associate Martha Merson to learn how to use statistics for action.

Thank you!

All our supporters' gifts are greatly appreciated. We would like to especially thank the following organizations and individual citizen contributors.

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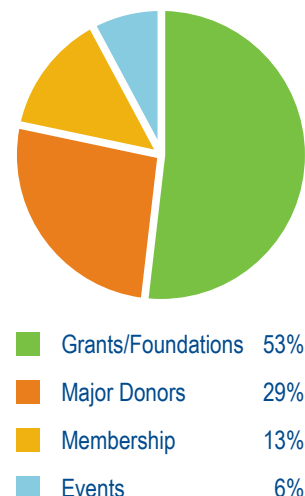
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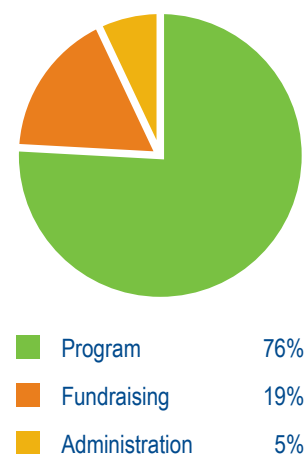
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At Toxics Action Center, we pride ourselves on our ability to get an incredible amount done with limited resources. We are able to maximize our impact by focusing on building the capacity of neighborhood groups for the long run. We are so thankful for your contribution. Together, we are moving towards a New England where everyone can drink clean water, breathe clean air and live in a healthy community.

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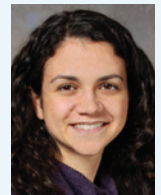
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