



Biochar News & Views

Newsletter of

Carbon-Negative Network NE

44 Gilligan Road, East Greenbush, NY 12061

to advance the ethical use and creation of biochar

www.carbon-negative.us

dyarrow@nycap.rr.com



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Spring 2010

Confront Climate Change by Sequestering Carbon

Biochar NorthEast gets organized

Dale Hendricks

for the Communications Committee

Welcome to the first BNE newsletter.

BNE Founding Members Meeting was November 13, 2009, after the Symposium at UMass Amherst. 31 people declared their membership, and 12 formed an initial board of directors.

Late in January, the new Board had a 2-day retreat in Orleans, MA to adopt a mission statement, raise \$3000, elect officers, form committees. We visited nearby Redberry Farm to see the new Adam Retort version 2 in operation.

April 11, 2010, the Board resolved to incorporate as **Biochar NorthEast, inc. (BNE)**. This clearly expresses our emphasis on Biochar, our web domain and our primary mission. We are pleased to announce this name is now official.

We're building a regional organization for this important, hopeful work. We have 13 Board members from seven states and one province, and we are encouraging local initiatives to explore and implement biochar strategy in gardening, farming, forestry, water quality, and energy.

Joining the BNE Board are Dr. Touria Eaton (UMass Soil, Plant & Insect Science) and Cornelius duPlessis (Rainbow's End Farm). Board member David Yarrow is preparing 501c3 tax exemption so BNE can accept deductible donations and foundation grants. BNE's website will be launched soon.

Please join BNE. We urge you to be a \$25 Founding Member. Contribute and participate. Get involved. Learn and teach about biochar and carbon-negative solutions to environmental problems that threaten our human future.

Climate Changed new geological era

David Yarrow

This spring, apple trees bloomed two weeks ahead of normal. At Saratoga Apple, instead of May 10-20, trees were in full bloom May 1. Dandelions to tulips bloomed 14 days early.

Climate has changed. Not a theory. Not 50 years in the future. Climate change is now. We are in a new earth era.

An ominous sign nature is accelerating into an exponential adventure of upheaval and transformation as the temperate zone collapses, as arctic and tropical air rush at each other in more extreme weather—as our largest-ever oil spill smears the Gulf.

To have a future, we must change our way of life, remake our relation to nature. Biochar is our best way to suck CO₂ out of air into safe storage. Humans have much difficult work to do. It began now.

What on earth are we waiting for?

Shelburne Farms excited about Biochar!

Dale Hendricks

April 8-11 Shelburne Farms hosted four days of biochar events, including the second BNE Board meeting. Peter Hirst and Bob Wells of New England Biochar demonstrated their Adam Retort, making four batches—a ton and a half—for use in Shelburne Farms research test plots.

Shelburne Farms co-owner Marshall Webb was host and helper as New England Biochar produced biochar to demonstrate their carbon-negative technology—their ongoing work to be the best possible environmental citizens.

A cooperative program with the Univ. of Vermont Biology Dept. will test if biochar can filter their farm runoff to Lake Champlain. A major source is non-point water pollution is phosphorus and

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Grower Gatherings

David Yarrow

One fact makes biochar carbon-negative: we add it to soil, where it stays for at least 100 years. Thus, carbon is sequestered out of the air into a super-stable form.

Since soil is biochar's final destiny, growers are key partners in this strategy, and need to learn how to make biochar, its benefits to soil, and effective methods to put it there. Pragmatically and politically, growers must organize to advocate this strategy and put it into practice.

Therefore, in 2010, gatherings will be organized to teach farmers and gardeners this carbon-negative strategy, and support experiments to make and use biochar.

The first gathering is 1-3pm Saturday, May 15 in Great Barrington, MA, hosted by BNE Board member Barry Hollister.

May 16, a Peterborough NH gathering hosted by Ideal Compost, co-sponsored by NOFA-NH, will feature a full day of demonstrations and talks, including both Adam Retorts, Chip Chapman oil tank, Doug Clayton 3-barrel, Dr. McLaughlin 2-can stoves, & other home-built burners.

Eagle's Flight Farm in Orwell VT hosts a grower gathering Sunday, Aug. 8.

Summer NOFA conference has two biochar workshops, a biochar debate, and Sunday after lunch, a meeting to form an interstate network to advance farm-scale biochar production and use.

Growers must organize to pursue biochar education and use. An interstate council can communicate, coordinate, network, get funding, advocate policy.

Another key goal is research funding.

A longer goal is demonstration and education sites where people see biochar made, and its effects on soil & plants.

More grower gatherings on biochar are planned for summer and fall. Hold a

grower gathering in your community.

To host a local grower gathering, call:
802-778-0663

May 15

North Plain Farm, Great Barrington MA

May 16

Ideal Compost, Peterborough NH

June 5

Two Rivers Center, Montpelier VT

June 19

Saratoga Apple, Schuylerville NY

July 3

Permaculture Convergence, Unity, ME

July 10-12

Solarfest, Tinmouth VT

Aug. 8

Eagle's Flight Farm, Orwell VT

Aug. 15

NOFA Conference, UMass, Amherst MA

tba

Hickory Farm, North Leverett, MA

tba

Rainbow's End Farm, Pawling, NY

Biochar at Summer NOFA

August 13-15, Amherst MA

Summer NOFA conference at UMass Amherst will offer several biochar events.

Friday, BNE Board members Barry Hollister and David Yarrow teach a workshop on "The Promise of Biochar."

Saturday, NERDI chair Dr. Hugh "Toucan" McLaughlin talks on biochar's physical and chemical character.

Saturday evening is a debate between Dr. McLaughlin and a Biofuel Watch representative opposed to biochar.

Sunday after lunch, Barry and David host a forum to form a Growers Interstate Task Force to aid farmers to buy biochar, make their own, research benefits to soil & crops, and develop biochar technology.

Green Energy Expo

March 13, Middlebury VT

by Ron Slabaugh

ron.slabaugh@gmail.com

Biochar had a presence on March 13 at the third annual Green Energy Expo in Middlebury Vermont. Indoors, BNE Board Member Jock Gill presented a 60-minute workshop with slides. and I did demonstrations.

Outside, BNE Board member John McLaughlin was burning his TLUD 1G Toucan stove. I had my 50-gallon, 2-barrel system on display. Jock had his dragon stove. We were in front of the high school, and many folks attending the Expo stopped to talk about making and using biochar.

Combined Heat & Biochar

August 8-13, Belchertown MA

A Combined Heat And Biochar (CHAB) Camp will be held August 8-13 at New England Small Farm Institute in Belchertown MA. CHAB will be led by Dr. Hugh McLaughlin and Dr. Paul Anderson. The focus is all devices that make biochar and produce useful heat. This includes TLUD cookstoves, and biochar-makers not intended for cooking, such as the large Adam Retort.

Information about CHAB Camp will be posted soon by Dr. McLaughlin:

wastemin@net1plus.com

Biochar NorthEast 2010 Board of Directors

Executive Committee

Peter Hirst, President

peter@newenglandbiochar.org

Jock Gill, Vice President

jock@jockgill.com

Catherine Rooney, Secretary

designerofgreens@gmail.com

John McLaughlin, Treasurer

jsmlkdun@gmail.com

Hugh McLaughlin, NERDI Chair

wastemin@net1plus.com

Barry Hollister, Massachusetts

barry@berkshireharmony.com

NEXT MEETING: July 13, Middlebury VT

Doug Clayton, New Hampshire
dnclayton@wildblue.net

Rob Diermair, Ontario
rdiermair@npca.ca

Dale Hendricks, Pennsylvania
dale@greenlightplants.com

Touria Eaton, Massachusetts
eaton@umext.umass.edu

William Stepchew, Maine
bluebill88@aol.com

Cornelius duPlessis, New York
katnip827@aol.com

David Yarrow, New York
dyarrow@nycap.rr.com

