

January, February, March 2020

NEWSLETTER

Serving the Residents of
Culpeper, Orange, Spotsylvania, Stafford, Fredericksburg,
Caroline, King George



MEMO FROM THE CHAIR, LINDA C. MULLER

Looking Back-Moving Forward

Immediate Past Chair, RGSC

When I was elected RGSC Chair in 2011, I would have never believed that we would make so much progress in Virginia as we did in 2019. Please review RGSC Chair Bill Johnson's Virginia General Assembly Summary and you too will be "pinching yourself". Yes, progress is possible!

I take this time to reflect on lessons learned over the years as RGSC Chair.

Grassroots Is Where Change Unfolds

As Chair, I have emphasized the importance, power and excitement of working at the grassroots level. RGSC is a local group that covers a vast territory: Orange County to Westmoreland County. We have worked and supported members and friends with environmental challenges through-out our membership territory: wetland protections, destruction of tree canopy, shoreline erosion, construction run-off, applications of toxic sludge, trash incinerators, hydraulic fracturing, failing well systems, toxic storage tanks. Local citizens who are passionate and concerned about their own "backyard" have stepped up to make their voices heard and their issues known. What starts at a local level can move into a state level, and perhaps into a national level. One little spark can ignite a movement of change.

Expand the Network-Expand the Influence

This was an early lesson for me and pre-dates my time as Chair of the Rappahannock Group.

The year was 1989, pre-internet, pre-social media and concerned citizens in Prince William County (PWC) didn't want yet another large expensive trash incinerator spewing tons of dioxins and green house gasses into the air. I joined a local citizens environmental group: C.A.S.E., Citizens Advocacy for a Safe Environment. We slowly grew in numbers but needed more resources and influence. C.A.S.E. members attended a special 1 day organizing workshop in Richmond that featured environmental justice speaker Lois Gibbs. Ms. Gibbs is the environmental justice activist who exposed "Love Canal" and now serves as the Executive Director of the Center for Health Environment and Justice. C.A.S.E. expanded their citizen reach and supported local Prince William supervisor candidates who opposed building the incinerator. The candidates we supported won. The lesson? We networked with other organizations to expand our knowledge base and we reached out and worked with other local groups who shared our common interests. We created an influential community coalition. FYI, the proposed "1989" PWC incinerator failed and the former site is home to the Jiffy Lube Live Arena.

Fast Forward 2019 Virginia State Elections: A similar coalition building strategy applied in the recent Virginia State Elections. Groups and organizations joined together to help elect a diverse and environmentally supportive Virginia General Assembly.

At a local level in 2020: "Fredericksburg Green Drinks" was launched in an effort to bring together an informal yet informational gathering of persons and organizations who share a common interest in the environment. Fredericksburg Green Drinks is held every 3rd Wednesday of the month at Tapas Rio Restaurant, Fredericksburg, VA (6:00 - 7:30)

Get Outdoors- Have Fun

"It's always something"..a famous line from a beloved comical Saturday Night Live character, "Roseanne Roseanna Danna" played by the late Gilda Radner.

Every year presents new challenges for persons committed to exploring, enjoying and protecting the environment. Under the current Whitehouse Administration, it has been especially challenging to head-off the plethora of policy plunders that are designed to set back years of environmental progress.

Re-charging in the natural world can serve as a restorative balm and reminder of why we stay engaged. Watching and observing nature's cycle: spring blossoms, nesting birds, cool flowing rivers, filling the lungs with fresh air offers a grounding base to re-settle. It is worth our time and effort to protect and preserve our natural world.

MEMO FROM THE CHAIR, LINDA C. MULLER CONT.

The most memorable learning experiences happen in times of joy, and having fun is a big part of the experience. Working with a creative and inspiring Executive Committee has been key to these experiences. "Trashion Shows" (fashion show based on recyclables), Living Green Awards, Eco-skits, environmental themed student art exhibits, children's "pledge" trees, are just a few of the ways RGSC has encouraged citizens of all ages to share or learn something new about the environment.

Pass It On

Since the early 2000's Rappahannock Group Sierra Club has encouraged and supported RGSC student interns who have selected an environmental study project, action or proposal. Some of our former interns have continued on working in environmentally related professions or organizations. It is important that we continue to encourage and support our next generation of environmental activists. The catastrophic impacts of climate change are front and center especially with student activists. We have seen great organizing at the February 29, 2020 Student Climate Crisis Conference held at Colonial Forge High School, sponsored by Fossil Free Fredericksburg. RGSC was a co-supporter of the conference. We witness the energy and dedication of our "next generation" and must continue to be an active co-partner and supporter.

Thank-You and Join Us

I want to thank the dedicated and dynamic members of the RGSC Executive Committee. They have been a source of inspiration and motivation.

My next steps? Well, I can never say good-bye. I was elected Vice Chair of RGSC and will continue the joyful journey. But, I need to bring more inspiring leaders to become active with the Rappahannock Group Sierra Club. Executive Committee meetings are open to Club members, and if you are interested in lending your lessons and/or experience, please join us. Let's keep moving forward!

Links:

Center for Health, Environment and Justice

<http://chej.org>

Fossil Free Fredericksburg

<https://fossilfreefredericksburg.com>

Virginia League of Conservation Voters: Newsroom

<https://valcv.org/newsroom/>

And just in case you wanted to know

MEMO FROM THE CO-CHAIRS, BILL JOHNSON & RICHARD EGGELING

We want to thank Linda Muller for her dedicated service over the years. She has stepped up countless times to help shape the future of the Rappahannock Group's (RGSC) activities, from tabling events, to writing articles on pertinent environmental issues, to helping shepherd critical legislation through our sometimes completely dysfunctional state legislature.

As a measure of her abilities, we now have 2 Co-Chairs to help do the things she has done for the past decade. The good news is that Linda is still here, working to make the future better, as RGSC Vice Chair. We probably couldn't function without her help. Richard Eggeling and I have very large shoes to fill, indeed.

This coming year, there are lots and lots of things we have to do, and we could use your help. If you have any interest in working with us, please get in touch with us and tell us what you are interested in doing. Let's move forward together in making the future a place where our grandchildren can play outdoors in weather that is tolerable for us and all the creatures that surround us.

As we often tell new SC interns, our generation is responsible for the mess we are in, but probably won't be around for the worst of it to hit. It's really sad that we are leaving this mess for others to fix. We need to step up and take responsibility for what is now occurring on our watch. Let's see what we can do to fix it together.

Westmoreland County and solar in schools: Sun Tribe installs Virginia's first gold-certified pollinator-friendly solar project

<https://www.solarpowerworldonline.com/2020/03/sun-tribe-virginia-gold-standard-pollinator-friendly-solar-project/>

Wow! A solar installation that saves money and provides a natural habitat for native plants and pollinator species. Yay!

The ground-mounted solar system at Cople Elementary School meets 100% of the school's energy needs and will save Westmoreland County Public Schools an estimated \$3.6 million in energy costs. The height of the system's 2,100 panels will allow native, pollinator-friendly species to be planted under the array, while it was also designed to consider other factors (detailed in the scorecard) including seed mix, grass diversity, educational collaboration opportunities and vegetation management plans.

2020 LEGISLATIVE VICTORIES, BILL JOHNSON & LINDA MULLER

Virginia Clean Economy Act

The Virginia Clean Economy Act (SB851) has been enacted into law. This historic climate bill puts Virginia on a path to a 100% carbon-free electricity grid, eliminating pollution by Virginia's utilities by 2045. The VCEA commits the Commonwealth to joining the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI). RGGI uses market forces to incentivize utilities to reduce carbon pollution and uses revenues to invest in energy efficiency."

This win was made possible by a team of environmental partners dedicated to making the future a better place. We should thank Will Cleveland from the Southern Environmental Law Center; Harrison Wallace and Mike Tidwell from the Chesapeake Climate Action Network; Mike Town and Danielle Simms from the Virginia League of Conservation Voters, our own Corinna Beall, Bob Shippee, and Mary-Stewart Torbeck from the VA Chapter of the Sierra Club; and all the other members of the Virginia Conservation Network.

The Virginia Mercury has a good discussion of the problems encountered in passing this critical legislation.

<https://www.virginiamercury.com/2020/02/11/virginia-clean-economy-act-passes-as-debate-reveals-deep-partisan-and-regional-divides/>

Fracking Prohibition: Protecting Virginia's Groundwater Management Areas

Senator Scott Surovell's Bill SB106, (House Sponsor Delegate Joshua Cole) was introduced to prohibit hydraulic fracturing within the Eastern Virginia Ground Water Management Area (EVGMA). The Taylorsville Basin rests in the EVGMA and includes King George, Caroline, Westmoreland, King and Queen, and Essex Counties.

Passed on a bi-partisan basis with the support of Senator Richard Stuart, the final bill language: "No person shall conduct any hydraulic fracturing in any well that has been drilled through any portion of a groundwater management area declared by regulation prior to January 1, 2020, pursuant to the provisions of the Ground Water Management Act of 1992 (§62.1-254et seq.). For purposes of this section, "hydraulic fracturing" means the treatment of a well by the application of hydraulic fracturing fluid, including a base fluid and any additive, under pressure for the express purpose of initiating or propagating fractures in a target geologic formation to enhance production of oil or natural gas."

It took a coalition of organizations across Virginia including the Virginia Conservation Network, Friends of the Rappahannock, the Virginia Chapter of the Sierra Club, and the Rappahannock Group to see this bill through.

Ratepayer protection bill.

Protections for ratepayers when a power plant closes early are heading to the Governor's desk after Del. Subramanyam's legislation passed the House and Senate. This bill would allow the SCC to set appropriate recovery periods, including requiring potential refunds to ratepayers. The AP said it best: "[in a rare move, Senate OKs bill over Dominion's objections.](#)"

Hampton Roads transit funding.

The bill that made it out of conference and passed the House and Senate is a positive one and dropped the House's reenactment clause. The bill has been sent to the Governor's desk for signature.

RGSC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (EXCOM)

Chair: Bill Johnson, billatthelake@comcast.net & Richard Eggeling rich.sue.sc@gmail.com

Vice Chair, Linda C. Muller, lmuller@mindspring.com

Program Chair: Paula Chow, paulachow132@gmail.com

Treasurer: Diana Johnson, dianaatthelake@comcast.net

Membership & ExCom Member: Michael Johnson, johnson2000m@aol.com

Webmaster & ExCom Member: Doug Ferguson,

dougferg@verizon.net

Conservation Chair: vacant

Newsletter Editor: Bill Johnson, billatthelake@comcast.net

Hospitality Chair & ExCom Member: Jody Lochmiller, jody_lochmiller@hotmail.com

Outings Leaders & ExCom Members: Suzanne and Richard Eggeling, lizzigo@gmail.com

Interns:

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF EARTH DAY, PAULA CHOW & BILL JOHNSON

EarthDay.org gives an excellent history of the inception and history of Earth Day. Go to the following link to read about the history of this day.

https://www.earthday.org/history/?gclid=CjwKCAiAnfjyBRBxEiwA-EECLMdZhn6c0onfZj7e_TiWinUCA9ePtWhAIM-uX9YOnc0bNZEK8zKQYhoC148QAvD_BwE

The first Earth Day was on April 22, 1970. Fifty years later, it is still being celebrated. That day gave a voice to an emerging public consciousness about the state of our planet.

We have moved from vehicles driven by leaded gas to a future where electric vehicles will rule. Mainstream America has finally realized how a polluted environment threatens human health.

On that first Earth Day, 20 million Americans, 10% of the total US population took to the streets, parks and auditoriums to demonstrate for a healthy, sustainable environment in massive coast-to-coast rallies.

That first Earth Day achieved a rare political alignment, with bi-partisan support from Republicans and Democrats, rich and poor, urban dwellers and farmers, business and labor leaders. The greatest achievement of that day was the creation of United States Environmental Protection Agency and the passage of the [Clean Air](#), [Clean Water](#) and [Endangered Species](#) Acts.

We still face enormous challenges in this 50th anniversary year. Nations got together and signed the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change, including the United States. Unfortunately, our current leadership chooses to ignore the crisis we are in, preferring to let industry backtrack on progress we have made so far. Now is the time for citizens to call for greater commitment to tackle our climate crisis.

Climate change is the biggest challenge to the future of humanity and the systems that make our world habitable. Unless everyone steps up and takes action, we are consigning current and future generations to live in a largely inhospitable environment where many of the species that exist today won't be there tomorrow. We are facing the 6th mass extinction, with humanity as the clear cause.

No matter what some say, humanity is the cause, and humanity is the only possible solution. Act today to safeguard the future for our kids and grandkids. Let them have a future where whales still roam the oceans, where koala bears roam the forests, and where honey bees still pollinate our fruit trees.

17TH ANNUAL EARTH DAY ON THE RAPPAHANNOCK, PAULA CHOW

Mark your calendars for Saturday, April 8th, 11am – 4pm at Old Mill Park, Fredericksburg, for the 17th Annual Earth Day on the Rappahannock festival. As 2020 marks the 50th anniversary of Earth Day, this year's festival will have many new exhibits and stage presentations.

RGSC will be located on the parking lot side of the field across from the Main Tent where the raffle is located. This year's display will focus on the climate crisis. RGSC organizes the students who judge the booths and is sponsoring the plaques to be placed on the birdhouses for the winners.

One of the most exciting things that will occur on this momentous 50th anniversary of Earth Day is the "Passing of the Torch" to the youth. The majority of the Earth Day Committee volunteers are septuagenarians. We plan to "Pass the Torch" to several area youth groups who will take the helm as volunteers under Fredericksburg's Department of Parks & Recreation in planning the annual Earth Day festival. A ceremony to mark this transition will occur in the afternoon on stage.

Also in the afternoon is the awarding of the Living Green Award. 2020 is the eleventh year of RGSC's Living Green Award. This award recognizes our area's businesses, organizations, agencies, and/or individuals who have implemented sustainable and ecologically sound practices in their daily activities. Anyone can make a nomination. The profiles of the recipients are posted on our website and on RGSC's Facebook page, to encourage patronizing and supporting the recipients. RGSC submits an article in the Virginia Sierran about the recipients.

RGSC organizes the student judging of the vendors booths. The students work in teams and must come up with a consensus among the teams for the three categories of winners: "Best Earth Day Idea," "Most Creative Display" and "Most Interactive Display." They are served pizza and given a certificate for their

work.

Three tent canopies are needed this year for RGSC's display on the climate crisis. Included in our booth will be a box to collect worn-out, ready for discarding athletic shoes for the Nike Program to recycle them for new shoes, clothing and playground surface material. Please remove the shoelaces before dropping them off.

RGSC will be asking for festival-goers to make serious pledges that will have a larger impact for the climate crisis. Think about what you can do to have a broader impact, such as writing letters to the editor or to legislators, helping implement programs at schools or the workplace to eliminate plastic or polystyrene, working with businesses to become green, finding funding to acquire and plant trees, getting the entire extended family to understand and take action on their personal carbon footprint, etc. Moreover, if you are still buying new plastic bags (except large trash bags – difficult alternatives), apledge to refuse all new plastic (produce bags, Ziploc type bags, as well as containers) is a daily action that has an impact because, hopefully, other households are doing this, too.

RGSC has been working diligently to recruit youth and encourage involvement in the Earth Day festival. This year may bring about a "Trashion Show" from area high schools. With an average attendance of 5,000 people, this event is an excellent opportunity to educate and advocate on issues locally, nationally and globally.

Volunteers are also needed to help with our booth. Contact Paula Chow –

paulachow132@gmail.com

OTHER LINKS

Virginia Conservation Network www.vcnva.org	Center www.southernenvironment.org
Virginia League of Conservation Voters www.valcv.org	Friends of the Rappahannock www.riverfriends.org
Southern Environmental Law	Tree Fredericksburg www.treefredericksburg.org

RGSC MAILING ADDRESS

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OUTINGS REPORT, RICHARD & SUZANNE EGGELING, OUTINGS CO-CHAIRS

Our Outings this year have included a nature hike at Belmont, and film screenings in Richmond.

Jan. 26, 2020 -On a mild and sunny day on Jan. 26th, we enjoyed a nature walk on the historic nature trails of Belmont Estate. About 15 of us walked the trail heads from the garden or fields into the woods, to the falls of the Rappahannock River. The river was up so the rushing waters were pretty remarkable. If you haven't walked here before, you'll see Interpretive markers featuring descriptions and photographs detailing historic resources along the trail. The trail was approximately 1 mile long and passed remnants of an old ice pond, the canal that powered mills in Falmouth, a cemetery and a spring. Thanks to Helen R., we had a good description of the historic features of the estate and surrounding area. Afterwards we enjoyed the free film on the grounds called 'Eating Up Easter', presented by the Clean and Green Commission.

Feb. 8, 2020 -Not sure of the weather this winter, we decided to venture indoors again and this time carpoled to Richmond (Carytown), to the historic Byrd Theater to enjoy films presented by the RVA Environment Film Festival. Six of us enjoyed the beautiful features in the theater. I've seen a few older theaters over the years but none as impressive as the Byrd. After viewing 4 thought provoking and rather fascinating environmental films covering everything from the rare Philippine Eagle (largest eagle in the world), to everyday trash and litter problems in our neighboring rivers and streams here in Virginia. Afterwards we had a delicious organic meal of Vietnamese food at Zen Small Plates in Carytown. What a wonderful end to a great day.

Upcoming outing on March 28th- Roadside trash clean up in Spotsylvania County.

People believe its not their problem and like climate change, someone else will come along and 'fix' it. Cleaning up trash is a strange sight unless you are a sanitation worker. But the earth is our home. Shouldn't we take care of it?

Come and join us for this productive project on what we hope is a mild, sunny Sat. We can make big gains with just 1 - 2 hours of work. All waste not picked up, ends up in the waterways; being washed down culverts, into creeks, rivers, the Chesapeake Bay and eventually the oceans. So picking up litter keeps neighborhoods beautiful, but it also protects our children and protects wildlife.

Please take a little time out of your schedule and join us on March 28th (10:00am). All equipment is provided by sponsors Spotsylvania Parks and Rec. (gloves, safety vests, grabbers and trash bags).

Organizers Richard and Suzanne will have a Sierra Club banner displayed in the parking area nearest the Sheetz on Overview Drive.

<https://www.mapquest.com/search/result?slug=%2Fus%2Fvirginia%2Ffredericksburg%2F22408%2F9825-hospital-blvd-38.222508,-77.491970&query=9825%20Hospital%20Blvd.%20Fredericksburg.%20VA%2022408&page=0&index=0>

Email to let us know you're coming:rich.sue.sc@gmail.com

We'll work together to clean up Overview Drive and enjoy ourselves afterwards by having a casual lunch at an area restaurant (Paneras or Goumeltz) in nearby in Cosner's Corner. You'll be glad you helped on the 28th, and we thank you in advance for your efforts.

Green Drinks Report

Richard Eggeling

RGSC thanks Adam Lynch (River Steward, Friends of the Rappahannock) for a most interesting presentation at our second social on the February 19th.

Adam shared the history, accomplishments, short- and long-term plans to expand the reach of FOR (while remaining focused on local issues) in a manner that set the stage for a lively question and answer session, and indeed a very informative evening. Keep up the good work Adam!

We also thank Councilman Matt, and Jon, for updating us on local issues related to the Rappahannock and progress in recycling; to Anne for sharing her efforts to protect the river from pavement litter and other serious matters; to Bill for summarizing fracking issues in the Taylorsville Basin and the Potomac Aquifer; to Sarah for promoting woman leaders; to Marcia, Mitzi, Amanda, Ruth, and Pauline for interesting questions, suggestions and contributions to the evening. To witness this level of engagement and information sharing was a tonic!

We also would like to thank Ruth (Manager, Tapa Rio) for hosting this monthly event.

Please note that last names are deliberately omitted in the interests of privacy.

RGSC now extends the invitation to all to attend our next social on March 18th, at Tapa Rio, 6:00 - 7:30 pm for presentations by women leaders in our community. March is dedicated to recognizing women who are leading the charge confronting local environmental issues, including climate change. Our thanks to Bridget McGregor for coordinating with the following prominent woman who will make presentations: Amanda Stebbins with Fossil Free Fredericksburg, Anne Little with Tree Fredericksburg, and our own Paula Chow with RGSC.

These women will be sharing wins they've had in 2019 and more recently, and what they would like to accomplish in 2020; we look forward to an interesting evening!

RAPPAHANNOCK GROUP CONSERVATION CHAIR (VACANT)

January to March 2020

RGSC Outings, Tabling, Events, and Community Outreach:

January 15, 2020:We held our first "Green Drinks" event in Fredericksburg, VA. Eric Bonds discussed his environmental efforts to get high school and college students to become activists for the climate crisis. In addition to teaching at the University of Mary Washington, Eric is the founder of Fossil Free Fredericksburg, a group of activists that have been successful in getting the Fredericksburg City Council to pass a resolution to go fossil free by 2050. The Sierra Club's *Ready for 100* campaign provided extensive support to the effort, including training and funding. Alice Redhead made major contributions to this effort, along with several RGSC ExCom members who helped mentor some of the students.

January 18, 2020:RGSC had its annual planning meeting, where we discussed our plans for the coming year, including our quarterly Open Houses, planned Outings, monthly ExCom meetings, and tabling events for the year.

January 26, 2020 Outing: We walked the historic nature trails at Belmont Estate, home of Impressionist painter Gary Melchers, which overlooks the Rappahannock River's falls. Afterwards we enjoyed the free film called 'Eating Up Easter', presented by the Fredericksburg Clean and Green Commission.

January 31, 2020:Met with Daryl Downing and Kate Addison to discuss Chapter Strategic Plans. We had a potluck meal afterwards.

February 8, 2020:We carpoled to Richmond to the historic Byrd Theater to enjoy films presented by the RVA Environment Film Festival, where we saw four fascinating environmental films covering everything from the rare Philippine Eagle (largest eagle in the world), to everyday trash and litter problems in our neighboring rivers and streams here in Virginia. Afterwards we had a delicious organic meal of Vietnamese food at Zen Small Plates in Carytown.

February 19, 2020:We held our second "Green Drinks" event featuring Adam Lynch, the River Steward, with the Friends of the Rappahannock. He spoke about the recent history and local issues affecting the Rappahannock River.

February 29, 2020:RGSC co-hosted the second annual Youth Climate Crisis Conference at Colonial Forge High School. It was completely set up and run by high school students working with Fossil Free Fredericksburg. RGSC provided funds for snacks and mentors for some of the students.

March 18, 2020:We will hold our third Green Drinks event, with guest speakers from women leaders in our community. March is dedicated to recognizing women who are leading the charge confronting local environmental issues, including climate change. Our own Paula Chow will talk about her efforts to eliminate single use plastic through her program "Pass on Plastic". Additionally, Amanda Stebbins with Fossil Free Fredericksburg and Anne Little with Tree Fredericksburg will talk about their efforts to safeguard our environment.

March 28, 2020:We will participate in a roadside trash clean up in Spotsylvania County.

March 29, 2020 Spring Open House:RGSC will host our Spring Open House, with Union of Concerned Scientists Dr. Edwin Lyman, Director of Nuclear Power Safety. His topic will be "Nuclear Power Safety & Security Considerations In a Low-Carbon Future". The event is open to the public. We serve light refreshments give out door prizes.

To see pictures of events be sure to check out our Face Book Page...thanks!

YOUTH CLIMATE CRISIS CONFERENCE, PAULA CHOW & BILL JOHNSON

The student members of Fossil Free Fredericksburg successfully organized the second annual Youth Climate Crisis Conference held on Feb. 29 at Colonial Forge High School. Catherine Webbert and Makayla Wright were the student leader organizers. Konrad Heller, a Colonial Forge science teacher, teaches environment-related classes and oversees the Colonial Forge Environmental Club. Visit their webpage <https://www.staffordschools.net/Page/20078>

[start here] The keynote address was presented by Ben Watson, Climate Scientist, spoke on the Current Climate Crisis in Virginia. Breakout sessions included Youth Advocacy, Reducing Your Carbon Footprint, Coral Reef Conservation, Climate Medicine, Regenerative Agriculture, Sustainable Energy, Public Policy and an overview of Environmental Justice. Eric Bonds

ended with a talk on Hope and Action.

Refreshments were sponsored by RGSC. Kudos to the student organizers who held close to zero waste principles in serving the refreshments. Many local businesses contributed to the sustainable raffle. Area environmental and related groups tabled with Pass On Plastic campaign giving away reusable net produce bags with a pledge "from now on to refuse any new plastic bag including ziploc type bags but excluding large trash bags."

The conference was well attended by area high school and middle school students, their parents, interested adults, community leaders and government officials.

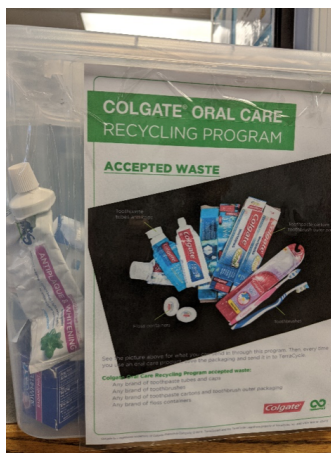
The 50th anniversary of Earth Day

Start a new tradition - give the earth a meaningful gift every year. What would this gift look like? Here are 10 things you can do.

1. Plant some trees every Fall or Spring.
2. Make a significant pledge - "REFUSE all new plastic bags (except products that are already packaged), including Ziploc type bags but excluding large trash bags."
3. Organize a river, stream, or lake clean up quarterly.
4. Talk with your favorite restaurant owner to go green - discuss ways to support it with your own social media advertising it to help them succeed
5. Start a petition to get a huge local chain store/restaurant to stop providing single-use plastic bags.
6. Take your own mug to the coffee shop - do not use any "to go" products or sit down and drink from a ceramic mug.
7. Spend an hour to set up your reusable kit for each of your vehicles: mug, cup, utensils including chopsticks and a straw, cloth napkins, many reusable bags, reusable produce bags, newspaper (for those times there's damp things you must transport, a small towel, empty reusable water bottle, "reused" plastic bags, etc.
8. Educate and influence one more person each quarter to do one more thing.
9. Green your work environment.
10. Work with your clubs, organizations and churches to become eco-friendly.

Recycling:

The Dorothy Hart Community Center (Dept. of Parks & Recreation) has a drop box collecting dental waste for recycling. This includes toothpaste tubes with caps on, dental floss containers, toothbrushes, and electric toothbrush replacements. Work with your dentist to have drop boxes. You would organize the pickups and where to send them. The organizer for this started at the Food Co-op.



Think about what other community events you attend and how they can participate in this recycling effort. Terracycle (www.terracycle.com/en-US) will recycle almost anything. Use the link to find out what they will recycle. Then pick a product and use your community to recycle it.

CONFRONTING DENIALISM, BILL JOHNSON

It is difficult today to separate fact from fiction, especially when there are monied interests involved. No company wants to abandon the products that have been extremely profitable for them, regardless of the impact they have had, and will continue to have. The oil and gas industry won't stop drilling for oil and gas, even though it's been proven that it is one of the major direct causes of global warming. That's how they make their money, and they won't give up their cash cow without a fight. Deniers hire lobbyists, pay politicians to support their legislation, and hire "scientists" to muddy the water.

Their strategies haven't changed much since the days of "tobacco is good for you" and "leaded gas doesn't cause health problems". They have gotten more sophisticated, however, adopting the very arguments environmentalists use, with misleading caveats. Half truths are their standard device.

A joint investigation by Correctiv and Frontal21 reveals how the American Heartland Institute is supporting climate change deniers in Germany with the goal of undermining climate protection measures. The investigators went undercover to meet with the institute's chief strategist, who told them how the network of climate change deniers works, how donations are disguised, and how they intend to use a German YouTuber affiliated with the AfD to reach young people. They realized how effective Greta Thunberg has been and decided to create the anti-Greta.

There are ways to combat denialism. Foremost is understanding the science. Here is a really good story by CBS News discussing 10 common myths about climate change – and what science really says. They poke holes in commonly used denier statements including: It's the sun; CO2 levels are tiny and can't make a difference; Scientists disagree on the cause of climate change; The climate has always changed – it's natural; It's cold out, so what happened to climate change?; In the 1970s scientists predicted a coming ice age. They were wrong, so why should we believe them now?; The temperature record is rigged or unreliable; Climate models are not accurate; Grand Solar Minimum is coming and it will counteract global warming; and Scientists claim climate change will destroy the planet by 2030. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/climate-change-myths-what-science-really-says/>

The best thing you can do is to become familiar with what global warming really is, and how deniers attempt to mislead you. It's simple, really. GHGs released into the atmosphere trap heat, preventing it from escaping back into space. GHG atmospheric levels have increased from around 280 ppm to over 415 ppm today, in less than a century. Those levels that have not occurred in many thousands of years, and not in such a short time. CO2 began its rapid increase at the start of the industrial revolution, as humanity began to extract and burn fossil fuels. The entire process of extracting, shipping, and burning natural gas releases methane gas into the atmosphere, while burning it converts it into CO2. Methane is 80x more potent trapping heat than CO2, and historically, it has been underreported just how much has leaked in extraction and shipping. Oceans absorb the excess heat, but they are reaching the point where they cannot handle continued heat.

We must stop putting these gases into the atmosphere if we are to have any chance of keeping our planet livable. We are facing massive extinctions of earth's creatures, increasing number of severe weather events, food shortages caused by excessive heat and water shortages, rising seas, and massive migration problems. We need to rejoin the Paris Climate Accord, something that every country in the world joined, with only one backing out, us, the U.S. Then we need to move the needle even further and cut GHGs before we cross the tipping point.

NATIONAL SC ELECTIONS - PLEASE VOTE

National Sierra Club Elections are Underway - VOTE!

A Democratic Sierra Club Demands Grassroots Participation

The annual election for Sierra Club's Board of Directors is now underway.

Those eligible to vote in the national Sierra Club election will receive ballots in early March by mail (or digitally if you chose the electronic delivery option). This will include information on the candidates and where you can find additional information on Sierra Club's election website.

Your participation is critical for a strong Sierra Club.

The Sierra Club is a democratically structured organization at all levels. Sierra Club requires the regular flow of views on policy and priorities from its grassroots membership in order to function well. Yearly participation in elections at all Sierra Club levels is a major membership obligation.

Our grassroots structure is strengthened when participation is high and provides an opportunity for members from all walks of life to have a say in what the future of the Sierra Club looks like

How can you learn about the candidates? Members frequently state that they don't know the candidates and find it difficult to vote without learning more.

Each candidate has provided a written statement about themselves and their views on the official election ballot. You can learn more by asking questions of your group and chapter leadership and other experienced members you know. You can also visit the Sierra Club's election website for additional information, including campaign videos from each candidate:

<http://www.sierraclub.org/board/election>

Voting Online is Quick and Easy!