

UPCOMING EVENTS! RG Fall "Open House"



**Thursday, September 10, 2009
7 – 9 p.m.**

Rappahannock Group Sierra Club's annual "Open House" is Thursday September 10, 7-9:00 pm at the United Methodist Church, Fredericksburg, VA. Join us as we launch another exciting year of conservation programs, events, outings and environmental initiatives.

It's a great way to meet and re-connect with fellow RG club members and learn more about RG's activities and programs. Learn about RG's energy, recycling and Greenways initiatives.

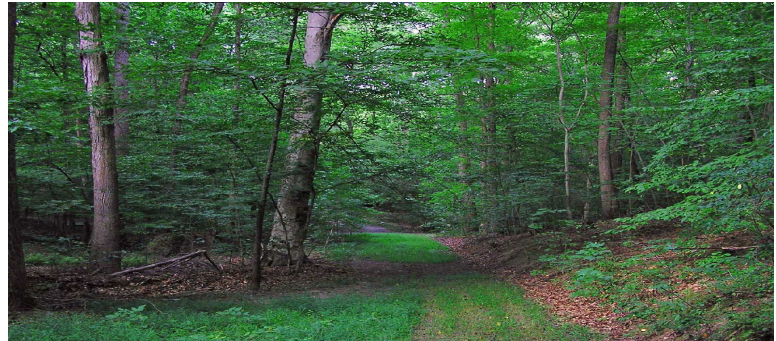
Representative Albert Pollard, (VA 99th) will join us at our Open House. Del Pollard served as Director, Virginia Chapter, 1995-1998, and received RG's 1st Green Award November 2005 in recognition of his environmental leadership in conserving Virginia's natural resources.

Bring a friend and an item for FUMC Food Pantry. Open to the public, refreshments served. Information: Doris Whitfield, dalw@va.metrocast.net

Virginia Chapter Annual Gathering September 18 to September 20 Pocahontas State Park-

Sierra Club President Allison Chin will be the keynote speaker at the banquet during the Sierra Club Annual Gathering to be held September 18-20. Saturday features a full day of workshops focusing on global warming and energy issues. A presentation on off-shore wind power and solar power are planned. Glen Besa, Virginia Chapter director, and Chapter staff will update us on efforts to stop coal-fired power plants, and other issues of concern to the chapter. more info: <http://virginia.sierraclub.org/calendar/e026.html>

Spotsylvania Greenway Initiative



(photo by L.Muller)

by **Scott Howson**

RG's project to create a network of bike-pedestrian trails throughout the Rappahannock valley has taken major steps forward with the creation of the Spotsylvania Greenways Initiative (SGI). SGI is the first of the citizen groups that will work closely with their local governments to design and build the trails network.

Under the dynamic leadership of Chris Folger, and a board of citizens representing such interests as the YMCA, National Parks Service, George Washington Regional Commission, Spotsylvania Government and Schools, Luck Development Partners (owners of the land the first trail will be built on) and of course the Sierra Club, SGI is moving through the permitting process, and we're planning a kick-off event in late September.

In addition to working on the trail, SGI is partnering with Spotsylvania Planning Dept. to develop a County-wide trails plan to be included in their Comprehensive Plan, and coordinating closely with the East Coast Greenway and the Potomac Heritage Trail, to ensure that all the planned corridors connect seamlessly.

Within a decade it's expected that there will be trails from the mountains to the bay, and from Maine to Florida. You'll be able to ride your bike or walk wherever you want to go, enjoying not only the beautiful scenery and peaceful sounds of nature with friends and family, but be healthier and happier too.

RG thanks the continued efforts of Scott Howson, Jim Lynch, and Donna Pienkowski for making this happen.

Links: Luckstone www.lucklegacy.com
Million Mile Greenway: www.millionmilegreenway.org
East Coast Greenway: www.greenway.org



NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

by Doris Whitfield

Ground Breaking! King George County Landfill Will Convert Methane to Electricity

by Eric Lawrence Stott

On Tuesday, August 4th, I had the pleasure of attending the groundbreaking of the NEW GREEN POWER PLANT IN King George County. This state of the art Power plant, owned and operated by Waste Management, will be the largest landfill gas- to-energy plant(LFGTE) in The State of Virginia.

The methane gas will be piped into three turbine engines which will create electricity, to be sold to energy providers along the East Coast. This plant will generate about 9.8 megawatts of electricity-enough to power about 10,000 homes.

Note: The King George plant is the sixth LFGTE plant constructed by Waste Management in Virginia.

For more information:

http://www.wm.com/wm/environmental/renewable_energ.asp

Mercury Impairment Report List includes Virginia Rivers/Streams

by Linda C. Muller

On August 19, 2009, the U.S. Geological Survey released a report that detected mercury contamination in every fish sampled in 291 streams across the country. The report includes detailed data listings by state and contaminants. The report's Virginia list of mercury impaired river/streams includes sections of: Blackwater River, Dan River, New River, Mattaponi River, Motts Run Reservoir, Pamunkey River, Roanoke (Staunton) River, and Shenandoah River. (see link below for comprehensive listing)

According to the study "Mercury, a neurotoxin, is one of the most serious contaminants threatening our nation's waters. The main source of mercury to natural waters is mercury that is emitted to the atmosphere and deposited onto watersheds by precipitation. However, atmospheric mercury alone does not explain contamination in fish in our nation's streams." The comprehensive report can be found at this link:

<http://water.usgs.gov/nawqa/mercury/>

Stay up to date! Check the RG website:

<http://virginia.sierraclub.org/RG/>

VOTE GREEN VIRGINIA and HELP "MAKE A DIFFERENCE!"

Greetings to all and a special "WELCOME" to our new and transferred-in-members as we kick off the 2009/2010 RG year.

Helping to "make a difference" is one of the many roles the Rappahannock Group and other Sierra Club members play in order to highlight and support a viable environmental issue or project, change the status quo or defeat a harmful or unnecessary initiative or bill. This is especially true when our natural resources and our communities are at stake.

There is now universal agreement that we are long over due in reforming energy policies. The priority focus is to move our country from a reliance on fossil fuels to clean and renewable sources of power.

The national spotlight continues to focus on the American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009 that narrowly passed the House. Sierra Club National and the Virginia Chapter are leading, coordinating and responding to these energy challenges and opportunities. It's now up to us to contact and urge our senators to strengthen the ACES.

The goals of the Sierra Club's Climate Recovery Partnership were announced in June. Last month I attended a Club-wide teleconference "Call to Action on Global Warming and Energy" where the launching of the SC Climate Leaders program was announced. Find out more at www.sierraclub.org/climateleaders.

Clean, green energy efficiency continues to top agendas for Virginia Chapter and our partner conservation organizations. Working together, the Wise Energy for Virginia Coalition achieved a momentous victory in halting the construction of Dominion's Wise County coal plant. To learn how to REPOWER VIRGINIA, Efficiency First for a Clean Energy Future, see: www.wiseenergyforvirginia.org

In early August, Glen Besa, Virginia Chapter Director joined Chesapeake Climate Action Network (CCAN) for an informational meeting in Fredericksburg to educate and encourage Rappahannock Electric Co-op members to oppose a new coal-fired plant in nearby Surry County. Stay tuned for an Energy rally being planned for September 17th.

Virginia's future environmental and economic health is at stake in November's elections. Virginia Chapter's all-volunteer nonpartisan political action endorsement process is under way. For information on the 14 Fast Track Endorsed candidates and future updates, go to Chapter web site: (www.virginia.sierraclub.org) and type in Vote Green Virginia. Eric Stott, RG Political Chair, is working with committee members to review, interview and finalize local candidate endorsements.

Expanding and connecting the "environmental dots" are the key to success. Chapter, Group members and staff take a leadership role in helping to coordinate community action with the Virginia Conservation Network (VCN) and Virginia League of Conservation Voters (VALCV). The 2009 Virginia General Assembly Conservation SCORECARD represents GA member voting records and offers constituents the opportunity to review these votes. We can then write appreciation letters or emails, or if we disagree, hold them accountable. To learn more: www.VALCV.org and www.vcnva.org.

Join us for our Annual OPEN HOUSE, Sept 10.7:00, enjoy an Outing, become a "one-minute" activists, volunteer for an hour or two, share your ideas and togetherHELP MAKE A DIFFERENCE!
Contact Doris Whitfield: dalw@va.metrocast.net



MORE RG NEWS!

New EXCom Member Thank-you Volunteers !

RG's volunteers are the strength of the Sierra Club. We are pleased to welcome newly elected EXCom member, Carol Buffum to our Board. We appreciate the many contributions of Christine Carlson, Hospitality and Recycling Chairs and Emily Bowman, former UMW Intern and RG Program Chair. Thank you all!!

New RG Energy Chair

Frank Jewel, newly appointed Energy Chair is forming and will be leading RG's Energy Committee. He also serves as President of the Northern Neck Audubon Society. Please contact Frank if you would like to join the committee or be involved in energy topic discussions. (bfjewell@hughes.net)

Frank offers an in-depth review of the many issues involved with coal, carbon capture and storage technology, and energy efficiency which will be posted to our RG website. He draws from many sources including Sierra Club's June 2007 report:

“The Dirty Truth About Coal..” which can be found at this link:

<http://www.sierraclub.org/coal/dirtytruth/>

Volunteer for National Recycling Kick-Off

RG's Recycling Committee is looking for volunteers /partners for this year's National Recycling Day kick-off event to be held Sunday November 8th at noon at 10,000 Villages in Central Park, Fredericksburg, VA. Please contact Eric Lawrence Stott, 540-429-0898, or email: recyclingcommitteesc@yahoo.com

RG Welcomes New UMW Fall Intern

Laura Pilati Sr, University of Mary Washington majoring in Environmental Science with French as her second major has already begun her fall internship. Laura will focus on Energy Conservation and Efficiency while coordinating activities, events and programs with other leaders and members of the UMW Ecology Club.

Chesapeake Coalition Launched

More than 60 organizations, including Virginia Conservation Network and Virginia League of Conservation Voters have launched a coalition to address needed action for a clean Chesapeake Bay. More information:

www.choosecleanwater.org

RG Program Schedule

Note: All RG meetings are free and open to the public. We do request that members and visitors bring a canned good to support UMC's food bank.

September 10 , 7-9 pm, UMC, Fredericksburg RG “OPEN HOUSE”

Come out and meet fellow RG club members, learn more about RG club activities, outings, and events. We will have informational displays and materials that will assist our members and visitors in “enjoying, exploring and protecting” the environment. Refreshments will be served. Free and Open to the public

October 8th , 7-9 pm, UMC, Fredericksburg Program: Candidate Forum

The RG Political Committee will sponsor a “Candidate's Forum”. Local and regional candidates are invited to attend the Forum which will offer members and guests an opportunity to hear candidate's positions on important environmental issues. For more information/volunteer please contact RG Political Chair, Eric Lawrence Stott, 540-429-0898

November 12, 2009, 7-9 pm, UMC, Fredericksburg Program: RG UMW Intern Programs and Projects

RG Interns have not only served our Club, they have also worked locally, nationally, and traveled the world in support of environmental issues and projects. We are pleased to partner with UMW Ecology Club members of their accomplishments and have set aside a special evening for them to educate and inspire us.

December 12, 2009, 7-9 pm UMC, Fredericksburg Annual Holiday Party

Outings/EVENTS

RG Sponsored Outing:

Saturday September 12, 2009 Little Devil Stairs, SNP

Educational features: Old Hemlock Forest and Bolen Cemetery, Leave No Trace (LNT) hiking principles

Moderate difficulty – it does cover an elevation gain of around 1500' in just under 2 miles, total round trip is 5.5. miles. Carpooling: meet at the Ukrops parking lot (Rt.3 & Leavells) at 6:50am - we will leave promptly at 7:00a.m. return @ 3 pm

Make sure to bring AT LEAST 1 liter of water and a substantial snack or lunch.

Everyone must sign a Liability Waiver prior to departing. Hiking map/details:

www.hikingupward.com/SNP/LittleDevilsStairs/

Contact Roland RG Outings Chair: rolandmh@verizon.net.

EVENTS: (Sierra Club and Non Sierra Club Events)

September 11-12, Virginia Conservation Network Annual Environmental Assembly, Staunton, Virginia; details: www.vcnva.org

September 18-20th, Virginia Chapter Sierra Club Fall Annual Gathering, Pocahontas State Park; details: <http://virginia.sierraclub.org/calendar/e026.html>

September 17, 2009, RALLY “Clean Energy, Bright Future” Fredericksburg, VA location TBA check RG website for updates

September 19 Riverfest 5-7 pm Farley Vale Farm, Friends of the Rappahannock, details: www.riverfriends.org

September 23, Forum Fredericksburg Pathways Partners, 7-9pm Rappahannock Central Library, info: www.pathwayspartners.org

September 26, Birding for Beginners, 1 – 4 pm Caledon State Park. More info: (540) 663-3861 http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state_parks/cal.shtml

October 3-4, Autumn Conservation Festival, Smithsonian Conservation & Research Center, Front Royal, Virginia.: <http://nationalzoo.si.edu/ActivitiesAndEvents/Celebrations/ACF/default.cfm>

November 8th RG National Recycling Day kick-off noon to 2 pm at 10,000 Villages, Central Park, Fredericksburg. Refreshments served. Contact: Eric Lawrence Stott, 540-429-0898 or recyclingcommitteesc@yahoo.com

CHECK RG WEBSITE FOR UPDATES: <http://virginia.sierraclub.org/RG/>