



October, November, December 2019

NEWSLETTER

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



MEMO FROM THE CHAIR, LINDA C. MULLER

"The beginning is the most important part of the work." –Plato

"Great doesn't happen through impulse alone, and is a succession of little things that are brought together." Vincent Van Gogh

Farewell 2019 and Welcome 2020!

It's been an eventful and exciting year for the Rappahannock Group Sierra Club (RGSC). As I attempt to "catch my breath" at this year end, I reflect on many of the accomplishments, special events and educational sessions our group has engaged in this past year. Hint: we've been extra busy in 2019.

Climate and climate action took center stage in 2019 and many of RGSC's events and co-sponsored events focused on the science, policy implications, and possible solutions to climate change. We kicked off the new year 2019 with an immediate environmental concern in Virginia: the proper storage and treatment of massive coal ash ponds. In 2019 Virginia's General Assembly was able to pass significant legislation that addressed the safe and proper treatment of designated coal ash ponds. Please see RGSC's Jan-Feb-March 2019 E-newsletter for the coal ash overview:

<https://www.sierraclub.org/sites/www.sierraclub.org/files/sce-authors/u730/newsletter-jan-feb-mar-2019.pdf>

In April RGSC co-sponsored Fossil Free Fredericksburg's "Solutions for Climate Change" Conference held in Fredericksburg. The conference brought the talents, skills and creativity of local high school and college students to address the challenges of climate change with an emphasis on proposed solutions. The good news: another conference is in the planning stages for February 2020 and RGSC will provide details as they are available!

RGSC's booth theme for Earth Day Along the Rappahannock 2019 was Climate Change with a focus on specific impacts in Virginia. We even had RGSC Outings Leaders Richard and Suzanne Eggeling display their solar enhanced R.V. for onsite inspection. RGSC's August 2019 film screening "The Human Element" captures striking visuals of impacts of climate change through-out the United States and includes personal stories of concerned citizens who live in Virginia's flood prone Hampton Roads and Tangier Island. The film is available for groups interested in screening the movie.

RGSC's 2019 Fall Open House featured guest speaker Shana Udvardy, a climate resilience specialist from the Union of Concerned Scientists. At our December Holiday Open House, we welcomed back University of Mary Washington Professor, Dr. Pamela Grothe, who provided an update on her studies of corals and impacts from climate change.

2019 RGSC Outings: Outdoors- Educational & Fun!

RGSC's Outings took off in 2019 and proved a success with members and friends of RGSC. Suzanne and Richard Eggeling share their deep love of outdoors and environmental education with a well rounded series of regional hikes and educational outings: Crows Nest (2x!), Chester VA Recycling Center, Calendon State Park litter-pickup, Packard Theatre Outdoor Tour and movie, Montpelier Estate to Grelen Nursery Hike, "Butts Are Litter Too" support clean-up, Rappahannock Regional Landfill Tour, and the Fredericksburg Canal Hike.

Outings: Looking forward to 2020

RGSC's Outings leaders are currently in the planning stages for new outings. If you have a suggestion for a hike or educational environmental event, please contact our outings leaders: rich.sue.sc@gmail.com. Also, there has been a lot of interest in creating an informal gathering of environmentally interested citizens a la "FXB Green Drinks" of past years. It is still in the formation stage and is envisioned as a community-based gathering at a local restaurant/pub featuring a guest speaker/topic. If interested, please contact the RGSC Outings Leaders.

PASS ON PLASTICS

If you visited the Fredericksburg Farmers Market in 2019, you probably saw RGSC Program Chair Paula Chow (and volunteers) stationed behind a sewing machine creating handmade netted produce bags to encourage the use of non plastic bags at the Farmers Market. Paula secured a special "Keep Virginia Beautiful" grant to promote alternatives to plastic bags. Scores of volunteers helped sew and distribute the netted produce bags to Farmers Market visitors. Paula and her enthusiastic volunteers have demonstrated that simple solutions can "net" significant outcomes; one produce bag at a time.

MEMO FROM THE CHAIR, LINDA C. MULLER CONT.

Board Elections 2020-2021

We have three candidates running for RGSC ExCom Board for the 2020-2021 term, and RGSC members with an email address will receive an email with ballot instructions. This year the VA Chapter has offered to send out all electronic ballots (a first) for all SC Groups, to facilitate both Group and Chapter elections. Candidate statements are published on the RGSC website: <https://www.sierraclub.org/virginia/rappahannock/issues>

2020: Ready to Go! Virginia General Assembly, 50th Anniversary of Earth Day-25th Anniversary of RGSC

It will be a very special 2020. The new year will open with a more environmentally "friendly" Virginia General Assembly. Make no mistake, citizens will need to contact elected officials to voice concerns and support for legislation. Be sure to sign up for **Conservation Lobby Day 2020** sponsored by Virginia Conservation Network:

Tuesday January 28th, Richmond VA 7:30 am-1:30pm

More info/sign-up for Conservation Lobby Day:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2020-conservation-lobby-day-tickets-85501985741>

Earth Day along the Rappahannock : Saturday April 18th rain date April 25th. We are also planning a special RGSC 25th Anniversary Celebration in October 2020.

The Heart Beat of RGSC : Looking Forward to 2020

As Chair of RGSC, nothing is possible without a passionate and committed group of Executive Committee Members, the "heartbeat" of RGSC. If there is success in an organization, it is measured by its dedicated and creative team of volunteers. At RGSC, we are ALL volunteers. I want to personally thank RGSC Executive Committee Members: Paula Chow, Richard Eggeling, Suzanne Eggeling, Doug Fergusson, Bill Johnson, Diana Johnson, Michael Johnson, and Jody Lochmiller. And as always, if you wish to get more involved with YOUR RGSC, please contact me or any of our Executive Committee Board members.

Wishing All our RGSC Members and Friends a Fantastic New Year!

Yours in Exploring Enjoying and Protecting the Planet

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

RGSC
PO Box 7972
Fredericksburg, VA 22404

EMAIL NEWS GROUP SIGN UP

rappsierragroup@gmail.com

CONSERVATION CHAIR, BILL JOHNSON

September to December 2019

RGSC Outings, Tabling, Events, and Community Outreach:

September 18, 2019 Annual Fall Open House: We hosted our Fall Open House. Excellent information was shared by our guest speaker, Shana Udvardy, a resilience analyst from Union of Concerned Scientists. She spoke on Climate Change/Killer Heat. It was well attended, and free and open to the public. We served light refreshments & door prizes.

September 20-22, 2019 Outing: We participated in the Sierra Club Chapter's Annual Gathering in Westmoreland County. As it is in our territory, we hosted a hike through the beautiful forest trails.

September 27, 2019 Event: We participated in the Fredericksburg Climate Strike event.

September 29, 2019 Outing: Eager hikers enjoyed a 3 mile hike thru beautiful forest and nursery gardens, walking from Madison's Montpelier to Grelen Nursery. This area was mentioned in the October issues of Southern Living and Nat'l. Geographic Traveler magazine. We enjoyed lunch and socializing afterwards at the Grelen Market.

October 13, 2019 Award: Richard and Suzanne Eggeling received a VA Chapter Sierra Club Outstanding Volunteers Award for their fantastic work as RGSC Outings Leaders! Yay!

October 26, 2019 Outing: We participated in a great discussion and tour of the exterior of the Library of Congress National Audio Video Center in Culpeper. We enjoyed the most amazing dark comedy call "The Witches", and had great food afterwards at 'Pinto Thai'. We thanked Andrea for the tour.

November 9, 2019 Outing: We took a tour of the local environmental gem, Crows Nest. Mr. Mike Lott started the tour by explaining the history of Crows Nest, and providing information about the various trails. We then walked the trails through beautiful forests to the Potomac Creek overlook, before enjoying a relaxing meal at a local restaurant.

November 16, 2019 Outings: We participated in the Fredericksburg City Coffee and Clean-up effort in conjunction with the UMW Sustainability office and the Fredericksburg Clean & Green Commission. We walked the Fredericksburg City streets collecting discarded litter. Later that day, we went to the Stafford/Fredericksburg landfill. The Stafford County R-Board guided us on a tour to see how the site operated, including how recyclables are handled. It was informative.

December 1, 2019 Annual Holiday Open House: RGSC hosted our annual holiday Open House, with University of Mary Washington Professor Dr. Pamela Grothe speaking on "UMW in Bonaire - Coral, Climate and Conservation". It was well attended, and free and open to the public. We served light refreshments & door prizes.

December 8, 2019 Outing. We took a 3.5 mile trek along the Rappahannock River, through parts of Fredericksburg, and ended up at our starting point, Old Mill Park in Fredericksburg. Several of us enjoyed lunch afterwards.

December 12, 2019: Meeting with Fossil Free Fredericksburg: Several RGSC members will meet with FFF to discuss the planned February 29, 2019 Youth Conference, including mentoring several student groups in their selection of and research into topics for the conference.

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

RGSC CELEBRATES 25TH ANNIVERSARY IN 2020 , PAULA CHOW

Originally called Battlefields Group Sierra Club when established in January 1995, Rappahannock Group is planning a celebration event for the Silver 25th Anniversary on Sunday, October 6, 2020. We are in search of a venue and ideas for the event. We hope to see the past and current executive members, interns and members. If you have ideas, suggestions and/or stories, please contact Paula Chow at paulachow132@gmail.com. **SAVE THE DATE - OCTOBER 6, 2020.**

CHAPTER FRACKING ISSUES CO-CHAIR, BILL JOHNSON

Ban Fracking In Virginia? There's Hope.

We have a chance, based on legislation that has been re-introduced in the 2020 legislature. Senator Surovell is proposing fracking legislation that would ban fracking in the region to the east of Fredericksburg. SB 106 would ban fracking in the Eastern Virginia Groundwater Management Area (EVGMA), while Delegate-elect Joshua Cole is proposing a complete ban (the bill number has not yet been assigned). Here is a Blue Virginia article on Senator Surovell's legislation:

<https://bluevirginia.us/2019/12/senator-scott-surovell-introduces-fracking-ban-to-virginia-senate>. That legislation almost made it to the floor, dying in the Senate Finance committee, on a tie vote.

The Taylorsville Basin runs from Richmond to Baltimore, through King George, Caroline, and Westmoreland Counties. To frack in the Taylorsville Basin, all drilling would have to go through the Potomac Aquifer, the Region's only source of groundwater. Based on Halliburton's own analysis, 5% of all drilled wells fail in the first year, and half within the next few decades. With approximately 85,000 acres leased for fracking, and estimating 1 well per 4 acres, that means approximately 21,000 wells could be drilled. If 5% fail the first year, that means approximately 1,000 well failures in the first year alone, with 10,000 expected to fail with 30 years. That's a lot of places for really bad stuff to leak into the only source of water. Not "if"; "when".

Even if a landowner refused to allow fracking on his/her land, they could still be impacted - eminent domain for pipelines. All wells are interconnected through pipelines, and if the driller(s) want to ensure that they can use eminent domain to take the land, all they have to do is claim that they will be shipping the gas across state lines. That ensures that FERC, the agency that has only turned down 2 pipelines in its 30+ years of existence, will have final say over eminent domain.

In SW Virginia, drillers use fracking for a different reason, to help with coal mining. Just to be clear, I think coal mining should be stopped, but the coal industry still has lots of political power. Fracking is used to release trapped methane (yes, into the atmosphere) during coal mining. They do it to

minimize methane-caused explosions. Virginia's DEQ states that there have been over 3,000 fracked wells in SW Virginia. So banning fracking there might cause safety issues when coal mining.

It is also my understanding that fracking there is different than the type of fracking that would be used in the Taylorsville Basin. In SW Virginia, they drill straight down (not down then out), for only a short distance, approximately 300 feet, to allow the methane gases to escape into the atmosphere.

I agree that we should try to ban fracking throughout Virginia, with special emphasis on the Taylorsville Basin. But the health, air, and water issues are everywhere that fracking is done.

The most risk is drilling through aquifers and destroying ground and surface water. Those risks are compounded by allowing greenhouse gases and other air pollution to escape into our environment. All of those impact residents' health.

So my suggestion is this: ban fracking in the Taylorsville Basin, while also including a legislative mandate that Virginia conduct a multi-departmental (Health, DEQ, and Water) study of the impact of fracking on SW Virginia's air, water, and resident's health. This could be done just like the NY Physicians for Social Responsibility study, published in June 2019, known as Compendium 6. (

<https://www.psr.org/blog/resource/compendium-of-scientific-medical-and-media-findings-demonstrating-risks-and-harms-of-fracking/>).

Doing so would most likely disclose how bad that fracking has been on life there, while providing a solid justification for banning fracking altogether in Virginia. The basis would mirror the rationale used by New York in banning fracking statewide. A nice addition to banning fracking would be to provide training and jobs in green technologies for those impacted. Wind turbines in the mountains destroyed by coal mining?

I have a website (TaylorsvilleBasin.com) that contains references to articles and studies on fracking along with other climate issues if you want to do some research. Here is the link:

<http://taylorsvillebasin.com/category/fracking/>

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF EARTH DAY 2020, PAULA CHOW

Earth Day was established in 1970 as a result of the environmental movement for reducing air and water pollution and to support conservation of wild places, resources and endangered species. 50 years later in 2020, activists are still working and campaigning to curb pollution and protect wild places, resources and endangered species. Our climate crisis needs more activists, more folks to help with solutions.

The annual festival, **Earth Day on the Rappahannock, will be held on Saturday, April 18, 11am - 4pm at Old Mill Park, Fredericksburg.** RGSC would like to have a celebratory program at the festival. We also seek volunteers to help with the efforts for this important 50-year mark. RGSC welcomes ideas for the booth display. Contact Paula Chow at paulachow132@gmail.com - the sooner the better!

TIPS COLUMN

Just because we can't get to Zero Waste doesn't mean we do zero.

Zero waste ideas:

Gift giving of a different ilk – make a utensil pack for the purse, backpack and car. Use a tube sock or children's sock (because they are smaller) to contain metal fork, spoon, knife, ice-tea spoon (long handle), metal or bamboo straw and chopsticks. Also include a sturdy plastic knife. The metal knife needs to remain at home if this pack goes to school, airport or other areas where check security measures occur. These are items that can be found at a thrift shop. Make sure these are lightweight. Other pouch/pack ideas that can be used are an umbrella pouch or cosmetic bag. Avoid using a plastic bag as it will tear and end up in the landfill.

The ice-tea spoon is a good idea because if you don't want to use the metal straw for milkshakes or smoothies, the ice-tea spoon is ideal.

To tie the sock, use hair bands. Ideally, the hair band should be sewn on so it will not get lost.

If you are already seated in the restaurant and after ordering, realize that the restaurant only offers disposable utensils, simply go back to your car to retrieve your utensil pack. Just do it! If you don't change your behavior at this moment, it's most likely you will not change and that's more plastic once again.

Holiday spirit - it's not so difficult to wrap or decorate gifts without spending money on wasteful wrapping and ribbon. Do you have tree lights that no longer work no matter how many light bulbs you replace? Don't throw it out! The lights can be your creative ribbon! It is fun, unique and ultra-festive.

WATER FOUNTAIN INSTALLED, PAULA CHOW



Kerry Devine, City of Fredericksburg At-Large Council Member, initiated the idea that the City Hall could install a water fountain that refills water bottles in the building. She wanted to encourage staff and visitors to the City Hall building to stop using bottled water and refill their reusable bottles. The city staff pursued the idea and succeeded to install the first city water refill fountain station in city government buildings. Congratulations on reducing single-use plastic disposable water bottles.

"LETS DISCUSS IT" AT GREEN DRINKS, RICHARD & SUZANNE EGGELING

Richard Eggeling, Sierra Club Executive Committee member, and Suzanne Eggeling, RGSC Outings Co-Chair are looking forward to restart a monthly 'Green Drinks' event in Fredericksburg, VA. We have three main goals:

1. Establish a public forum to discuss and inform our community about local environmental issues in a relaxed, informative, and constructive setting.
2. Partner with local environmental groups/individuals to participate, make presentations and strengthen support for local 'green' initiatives.
3. Influence and educate as many members of the community as possible of the urgent need to address climate change by supporting 'green' initiatives.

Our first get-together will be January 15th, 2020, 6-7:30 PM

Where: Spencer Devon (To Be Confirmed)

106 George St, Fredericksburg, VA 22401

www.spencerdevonbrewing.com/.

Speaker: Eric Bonds, Ph. D. Associate Professor of Sociology, UMW

Subject: Fossil Free Fredericksburg

Anyone interested in understanding local environmental issues is welcome to join us for drinks, food, and socializing. The speaker may be from academia, government, or environmental groups and will talk for about 15-20 minutes on their chosen topic. Different groups will be invited to speak each month to build and expand a sense of common purpose across all groups.

RGSC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (EXCOM)

Chair: Linda C. Muller, lcmuller@mindspring.com

Vice Chair, Bill Johnson, billatthelake@comcast.net

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: Bill Johnson, billatthelake@comcast.net

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:

RGSC OUTINGS AND EVENTS, SUZANNE & RICHARD EGGELING

We have enjoyed getting acquainted with regular attendees on our autumn hikes and tours, hopefully everyone sees these events as opportunities for social interaction and discussing 'green' interests and issues. View the Rappahannock group Sierra Club facebook page for pictures of past outings.

We plan on walking/hiking and learning about relevant environmental issues year round, through tours, gatherings and lobbying events. If no local outing is planned we invite you to check our VA Chapter events calendar, go to the link:

<https://www.sierraclub.org/virginia/events-calendar>

Here is what we've enjoyed the past few months:

On December 8th ten keen walkers/talkers braved the cold and burned off calories on the Heritage Trail, starting at Old Mill Park. Although cold and crisp the sunny day produced some smiles as we posed on the banks of the Rappahannock River. Thanks to (left to right), Nancy, Rosemary, Diana, Helen, Richard, Bill, Jane, Rik, and Deb for joining us.

Nov. 18th - Tour of the Stafford landfill by the R-Board (Rappahannock Regional Solid Waste Management Board) allowed us to be educated on landfill activities as we toured the facility in the relative comfort of the company van. Thanks to remarks from ever-cheerful M.C. Morris and Sophia, 17 of us were educated in daily plant operations, collection of waste and recyclable material, retention ponds and methane production. Our concerned group had plenty of questions about operations and the effects of methane emissions and recycling on the environment. Afterwards we enjoyed gathering for a late lunch and chat at Mason-Dixon Cafe.

Nov. 9th - We returned to Crow's Nest to hike the Boykins Landing Trail. 22 of us walked the easy/moderate 3.5 miles roundtrip, through a mature hardwood forest and tidal wetlands, to a lovely water viewing point. This 750 acre nature preserve provides habitat for bald eagles and about 60 species of songbirds. We enjoyed a very informative talk of the history and significance of establishing this area as a nature preserve by Mr. Mike Lott, Northern Region Steward. Thank you Mr. Lott. Some of us warmed up afterwards at the Mason-Dixon Cafe.

October 26th - Tour of the exterior of the Library of Congress - Packard Theater in Culpeper. The Library of Congress Packard Campus for Audio Visual Conservation is a state-of-the-art facility funded as a gift to the nation by the Packard Humanities Institute. The Packard Campus Library acquires, preserves and provides access to the world's largest and most comprehensive collection of motion pictures, television programs, radio broadcasts and sound recordings (loc.gov/avconservation/). Sierra Club member Andrea Leigh, employed with the Library of Congress, was our knowledgeable tour guide being well-versed in daily operations and the history and preservation of old and contemporary film. We learned that the building was re-purposed from its former function as a center for the Federal Reserve, many 'green' elements have been incorporated in the building design. After the tour we enjoyed a very entertaining movie from the nineties called "Witches", with Angelica Huston. Lunch at Pinto Thai in Culpeper was delicious and a great way to end the day with group.

September 29th - Thirteen of us hiked 3.9 miles on the beautiful Montpelier-Grelen Trail, from James Madison's Montpelier Estate in Orange County, to Grelen Nursery. This trail was designated a "Virginia Treasure" by the Office of the Governor in 2015. Despite the record 90 degree temp's. we enjoyed beautiful views of the Blue Ridge, great camaraderie with fellow hikers followed by a wonderful lunch afterwards at Grelen Nursery.

Future trips to an organic farm, and more hikes are in the works for 2020.