

ANNUAL RGSC HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE!



Featuring Guest Speaker
 Maranatha Alpaca Farm

Thursday December 13, 2012
7:00- 9:00pm at the Fredericksburg United
 Methodist Church, 308 Hanover Street,
 Fredericksburg, VA (enter from the
 Charlotte Street parking lot).

Plan to attend our Holiday Open House! Our special guest speaker will discuss the many aspects of raising, tending and using alpacas “wool”. Did you know that alpaca fur is hypo-allergenic, an ideal product for anyone. Maranatha Alpaca Farm will also have a selection of products available for purchase-just in time for the holiday season.

We will have special RGSC raffle prizes, gift baskets and lots of holiday cheer to share. We will also have the latest updates on conservation and environmental issues coming up for 2013. Light refreshments and snacks will be served. See you there!

RGSC Board Elections



We have 4 Board positions up for election (see ballot page 5). Members will serve for two years: 2013 to 2014. Be sure to mail your ballot by December 31, 2012. Thank-you for your participation in YOUR RGSC.

2012 America Recycles Event

By Paula Chow



10,000 Villages manager Kathy Rivers assists with the raffle drawing.
 Photo by Paula Chow

The Fourth Annual America Recycles Event (ARE) was held Oct. 27th – Nov. 11th. This event was scheduled to coincide with National America Recycles Day, Nov. 15th. RGSC, in conjunction with Ten Thousand Villages, a fair trade non-profit retail store, organized the event. The same businesses as previous years continued to sponsor ARE this year and generously donated door prizes for the closing event. Some of the activities this year included a Swap Meet, upcycling crafts, Bluebirds and Native Plants workshop and a tour of the new Goodwill Warehouse on Market Road. ARE commenced with the Fall river clean-up with the Friends of the Rappahannock on Oct. 20th.

ARE was widely advertised and an article in the “Free Lance Star” was featured on the front page of the Region section. RGSC wants to thank all the participating sponsors, who, without their participation, the event could not happen. **Special thanks to:**

Meadows Farms • Rappahannock Goodwill Industries • Monkee’s • VA Runner • Parcel Plus • Harvest Market • Ten Thousand Villages • Edible Arrangements • Sequels Upscale Resale Shop • 360 Farm & Pet • The Cats Closet • Re-Run Shoppe • Great Clips Central Park • Crave Yogurt • VA Wine Experience • Navy Federal Credit Union • Habitat for Humanity Re-Sale Store • Jack Wills, O.D • America’s Best • Chick-Fil-A • Rob’s Car Wash • Aikido Fredericksburg • Sunnyside Nursery • Forage • Friends of the Rappahannock

The goals of ARE were to increase the awareness, participation and activities of reducing, re-using and recycling, as well as to connect non-profit organizations with local businesses and to get people to shop locally. (next page)

ARE con't. P.Chow

Because of the time and extra volunteer commitment to plan ARE and lower than expected public participation this year, RGSC is re-considering ARE.

Initial feedback from participants indicate that ARE offers a fun and educational way to recycle, re-use, and even shop local while learning about recycling. However, it does require more public participation to make it an annual event.

RGSC Recycling Committee will reconsider alternate ways to continue the campaign of increasing the public's awareness of the need to reduce, re-use and recycle. If you have ideas and are interested in volunteering, RGSC can certainly use the help. Please contact Paula Chow: paulachow132@gmail.com if you can help with our Recycling Committee.

“RGSC Fall Open House with Dr. Firth”

By Paula Chow

RGSC's Fall Open House on September 13th featured guest speaker Dr. Penelope Firth, Deputy Director of the Environmental Science division at the National Science Foundation. She leads the NSF 'Dimensions of Biodiversity' team. Her background is in stream ecosystem ecology and she presented some of her findings.

One of the most interesting finding (citing Doug Tallamy) is that a variety of native oak trees can grow 534 species of caterpillars, all of them nutritious bird food. His research has shown that native ornamentals support twenty-nine times more biodiversity than do alien ornamentals. They have planted Kousa dogwood (*Cornus kousa*), a species from China that supports no insect herbivores, instead of our native flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*) that supports one hundred and seventeen species of moths and butterflies alone. For more information:

<http://www.wildones.org/download/Gardening%20for%20Life%20Doug%20Tallamy.pdf>

The Open House was well attended and even RGSC's former Chair of many years, Doris Whitfield, who now lives in Raleigh, North Carolina, attended.

Dr. Firth's daughter, Ria, is RGSC's intern, for the second consecutive year. Ria is a sophomore at the University of Mary Washington.

Notes from the Chair

By Linda C. Muller

Dear RGSC Members, Friends and Supporters,

2012: An Active Year –Look Out 2013!

We approach the final month of 2012 with a “wipe of the brow” and a smile. Simply put, we worked hard to reach out to our member communities by participating in a number of events through-out the year.

I am especially pleased that RGSC participated and supported several “first time” events including:

- The Friends of the Rappahannock Wild & Scenic Film Festival
- GEICO's Green Day
- American Canoe Association's Paddle Green Festival
- Mountain View High Schools Learn & Serve “One World” Symposium
- Trail Opening for Stafford County Parks & Rec (Falmouth Trail)
- UMW's ESL Learning Lab: Presentation on Reduce, Reuse, Recycle
- Keep Virginia Beautiful: special grant awarded to RGSC to promote the use of reusable shopping bags w/ co-participants: Lowes & Giant.

Additionally we participated in multiple Earth Day Events, concession sales at Bluemont Concert, tabling at Stafford's Community Sale and First Night Out. Each event provided an opportunity to share information about Sierra Club's mission of Explore, Enjoy and Protect the Planet. We also provided important information on local and state environmental concerns and issues such as [Keep The Ban](#) on Uranium Mining.

Our September 2012 Open House proved to be one of our most successful with Special Guest speaker Dr. Penelope Firth. Former RGSC Chair Doris Whitfield even attended the Open House with her daughter. It was like a real RGSC “homecoming”.

I personally want to thank members of the RGSC Board who were key in supporting and planning RGSC events: Program Chair, Paula Chow, Membership Chair Michael Johnson, Webmaster Doug Ferguson, Treasurer Josephine Dodt, Jim Lynch member at large, and UMW Intern Ria Firth. I also want to thank Ed Sandter who graciously volunteered as “Master of Ceremonies” for our September Open House. I was in Washington State preparing for a Mt. Rainier Summit attempt (a separate article forthcoming on that adventure!)

Elections 2012

RGSC club members worked the phones, canvassed in their communities, and volunteered at the polls on election day to help re-elect President Obama and elect Tim Kaine as Virginia's next Senator. Through-out the campaign season, there was scant mention of impacts of climate change until Mother Nature broke the silence late with Hurricane Sandy. We can hope that our state and federal policy makers will look more closely at real impacts of climate change-and work towards solutions.

Our own RGSC Board members are up for election. Be sure to review the ballot on page 5 of the newsletter, complete and mail the ballot by December 31, 2012.

Please join us for our Annual Holiday “Open House” on Thursday December 13 @ 7pm. It will offer an opportunity for RGSC members, friends and supporters to share some Holiday cheer and even learn a thing or two about alpacas. Look forward to meeting you!

Yours in Exploring, Enjoying and Protecting the Planet,
Linda C. Muller, Chair RGSC

“The Plastics Problem”

By Josephine Dodt

Most people use plastic bags just once. Worldwide, 500 billion bags are used annually, and 97 percent are not recycled. They may land in the garbage, but often end up along roads or "decorating" trees. Every year, 12.5 million tons of plastic go unaccounted for in the U.S.

If the U.S. wants to reduce the use of oil, it should take a cue from China. It recently reduced its plastic bag use 66 percent and saved 1.6 million tons of petroleum when it banned ultra-thin plastic bags from its stores. The type of bags used in U.S. supermarkets is so small and thin that I often see just one item placed in a bag. One cloth bag easily holds the quantity of three plastics.

If you are concerned about recent reports of reusable bags having a build up of bacteria, just toss a bag or two into a load of wash. But, realistically, the way everything in a supermarket is packaged and wrapped these days, it's hard to think of anything being "contaminated with dangerous bacteria" and that banning plastic bags would be, as some people may think, "a bad public health policy."

A really bad public health policy was the use of plastic that contains BPA (biphenyl A) for baby bottles and toys, which manufacturers have since removed.

Lab tests have shown that BPA and also PCBs contain endocrine disruptors that mimic natural estrogen, upsetting normal hormonal balance. They stimulate the growth and development of reproductive tumors, and interfere with testosterone and hormones responsible for male sex characteristics.

Six billion pounds a year of BPA is produced worldwide. It is found in the linings of most food and beverage cans, in plastic food storage containers, plastic cutlery, and water pipes. It is in printer ink and newspapers. It is absorbed by foods, especially those acidic or carbonated (salad dressings, soda, fruit juices). BPA leaches into groundwater from plastics disposed of in landfills. A study by the centers for Disease Control and Prevention found BPA in 95 percent of urine samples; it is in blood, amniotic fluid, fetal tissues, and breast milk. BPA can also be inhaled and absorbed through the skin from bath water.

PVCs are another category of endocrine disruptors that can be found in many products: children's toys, cosmetics, air fresheners, insect repellents, detergents, vinyl products, plastic medical equipment, the plastic in breast pumps (from which PVC migrates to infants), pool liners, food packaging.

The "Keep America Beautiful" campaign, intended to reduce the accumulation of trash along our roads, hasn't been very effective. The trash is a mixture of paper, cans, cigarette butts, and plastic--but the plastic bags end up in the treetops. (see Paula Chow's article below)

The Pacific Ocean garbage patches mentioned which you may have heard of, are not the only ones; there are patches in the Atlantic, also. They are loosely connected items--bubble wrap, soda bottles, tennis balls, bits of Styrofoam, packing pellets, and more. Some of this collection winds up in the ocean after severe storms. In 2005, after a big storm, researchers found an estimated 60 tons of trash had floated out to sea from the San Gabriel and Los Angeles rivers.

Much of the garbage in the Pacific winds up on the shores of northern Hawaiian Islands. Sea birds, seeing the brightly colored plastic scrap, mistake it for food. The weight of the plastic junk in their stomachs prevents them from flying, and they eventually die from malnutrition. One of the islands has a beach littered with the bodies of dead birds.

Many researchers are concerned about the "nurdles" that make up an estimated 10 percent of these floating islands. Fifty million tons of nurdles are manufactured every year; they are the raw feedstock that factories turn into finished products, from Xerox machines to Frisbees. Most of these are manufactured in Texas and Louisiana, where the oil and natural gas from which they are made is pumped out of the ground. Nurdles are shipped from coast to coast by truck or train.

Some ways to avoid BPA: Use canned foods as little as possible; find a BPA-free plastic wrap; use ceramic or glass containers to warm or store food; avoid bottled water; and use metal or wooden utensils for cooking. To avoid PVCs: Look for "phthalate-free" on the labels of personal-care products; use fragrance-free products; and avoid products made of vinyl plastic. (Note: Look up "Mother Earth News" and search dangerous plastics.)

“Keep Virginia Beautiful”

By Paula Chow

RGSC completed the Keep Virginia Beautiful grant awarded in April 2012. The grant was specifically aimed at reducing single-use plastic bag usage. With the \$750 grant, RGSC was able to purchase reusable bags and make posters to display to educate the public about single-use plastic bags. The targets were the Farmers Market at Hurkamp Park, Giant at Eagle Village and Lowe's Central Park. Both Lowe's and Giant were able to match the same number of reusable bag purchases to double our reusable bag giveaway. Gayle Price, manager of the Farmers Market was able to obtain 35 Virginia Grown reusable bags to giveaway. Ten Thousand Villages teamed up with RGSC and provided volunteers.

UMW students who shop at Giant were very receptive and appreciative of getting a free bag, however, we noted only a slight percentage increase of use of reusable bags. One of our display posters continues to hang on Giant's "Green Practices" bulletin board. (con't next page)

“Keep Virginia Beautiful” con’t

We encourage shoppers to continue to use their re-usable bags for all of their shopping needs and reduce the use of plastic bags to help Keep Virginia Beautiful!

More information on KVP:
<http://www.keepvirginiabeautiful.org/>



**Connect with Rappahannock Group
Sierra Club**

“Like” RGSC on FACEBOOK!
www.facebook.com

RGSC Website
<http://virginia.sierraclub.org/rg/>

RGSC Email News Group
send an email to sign-up
rappsierragroup@gmail.com

RGSC Mailing Address:
RGSC
P.O. Box 7972
Fredericksburg, VA 22404

RGSC Board Member Contacts:
(thru 12/12)

Chair: Linda C. Muller
rgscchair@gmail.com

Program Chair: Paula Chow
paulachow132@gmail.com

Treasurer: Josephine Dodt
jodana@earthlink.net

Acting Secretary/UMW Intern
Ria Firth rfirth49@gmail.com

Membership: Michael Johnson
johnson2000m@aol.com

Webmaster: Doug Ferguson
dougferg@verizon.net

Board Member: Jim Lynch
jplynch@crosslink.net



RAPPAHANNOCK GROUP
SIERRA CLUB

RGSC Programs, Events & Outings

*** RGSC meets at the **Fredericksburg United Methodist Church, 308 Hanover Street. Enter on Charlotte Street Entrance.** All meetings are open to the public. Donations of canned goods accepted for FUMC Food Pantry. Bring a Friend! Check website for updates:
<http://virginia.sierraclub.org/rg/>

Note: Our December 13, 2012 Open House at Fredericksburg United Methodist Church will be our final meeting of the year. The RGSC Executive Committee will re-organize January 2013 and begin strategic planning for 2013. Our next RGSC Event will be scheduled in March 2013. Please check our Facebook page and website for event updates.

Sierra Club/ RGSC Programs

Thursday, December 13, 7:00 pm- 9:00 pm RGSC Annual Holiday Open House w/special guest speakers Lisa and Perry Darley of Maranatha Alpaca Farms, Stafford Virginia. Raffle door prizes, gift baskets, and Alpaca specialties available. Light snacks and refreshments served! Doors open at 7pm. Bring a friend! Donation of canned goods for FUMC food pantry appreciated. Contact Program Chair: Paula Chow paulchow132@gmail.com

Other Events/Non RGSC Sponsored Events

Saturday December 1, 2012 9am to 2pm VA General Assembly Preview: Capitol Building Richmond, VA. Sponsored by the Virginia Conservation Network. Registration \$20.00 includes lunch. \$10.00 students.
www.vcnva.org

Monday January 28, 2013. Conservation Lobby Day. Richmond Center State/Rhythm Hall, Richmond. Join hundreds of conservationists and environmentalists from across Virginia in an active day of lobbying Virginia State representatives on important issues. Be a citizen lobbyist for the environment! Virginia Conservation Network: www.vcnva.org

Virginia General Assembly Session January 2013-February 2013

We encourage all RGSC members to contact their representatives on important environmental issues. We want to [Keep the Ban](#) on uranium mining. Have you contacted your representative on this issue? NOW is the time. Below is a link to the upcoming VA General Assembly 2013 session. Track bills, plan to attend important committee meetings-BE ACTIVE: <http://virginiageneralassembly.gov/>

OUTINGS

There are many outings offered via SCPRO- Sierra Club's Potomac Outings Program. Please contact the SCPRO website for listings:
<http://www.sierrapotomac.org/>

Additional Hiking/Outings Non Sierra Club:
Northern Virginia Hiking Club:
<http://www.nvhc.com/>

Potomac Appalachian Trail Club:
<http://www.patc.net/PublicView/>

RSG EXCOM ELECTION

We will be filling **four** seats on the ExCom this year, with members serving from January, '13 through December 2014. Please mail your ballots so we receive them no later than **Dec. 31!**

CANDIDATE STATEMENTS

Paula Chow Paula is a life member of Sierra Club and currently serves as RGSC's Program Chair. Paula is a commissioner of the Fredericksburg Clean and Green Commission is instrumental in organizing the annual America Recycles Event. Through Paula's efforts RGSC was awarded a Keep Virginia Beautiful Grant in 2012. She is an avid outdoor enthusiast and enjoys travel. She started climbing the Sierra Nevada Mountains in college which served as her source of inspiration to protect and preserve the environment.

Doug Ferguson-Doug moved to Fredericksburg in 1997 from Washington, DC, following service in the US Navy and Merchant Marine and considerable experience in the hospitality industry. He has been an active member of Sierra Club for seven years, and has served RG as Webmaster for the past six years. Doug provides technical media support for our special events and continues to refresh and update the RGSC website. Doug serves as co-chair of the Spotsylvania Democratic Committee. Having grown-up near a West Virginia State Park, he has always been interested in conservation, and admired John Muir and his disciples.

Michael O. Johnson Michael has been a member of Sierra Club since 2003 and currently serves as RGSC's Chair of Membership. As a retired Officer in the U.S.Army, Michael has extensive background and experience in logistics, environmental risk management, planning, and training. He was born in Contonou, Benin (West Africa) is fluent in French and Spanish, and is currently a teacher. Michael has been instrumental in support and outreach to members and community including the annual Fort A.P. Hill Earth Day Event .

Linda C. Muller An active member of the Sierra Club since 2003, Linda is the current RGSC Chair (Jan 2011) . She has served as Vice Chair 2008-2011, Political Chair 2007-2008.and Newsletter Editor 2008-current. She served on the Board of Friends of the Rappahannock (2007-2008), and an active member of the Virginia League of Conservation Voters Legislative Contact Team since 2006. An avid hiker and outdoor enthusiast, she recently attempted to summit Mt. Rainier, WA(9/12). Linda has worked on environmental/conservation issues at the local grassroots level and believes that the Rappahannock Group can play an integral part in helping preserve and protect our regional natural resources



Please mail your ballot postmarked no later than 12/31/12 to:

**Rappahannock Group Sierra Club
P.O. Box 7972
Fredericksburg, VA 22404**

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RGSC EXCOM BALLOT

(See Candidate Statements above)

Please vote for no more than 4 candidates.

If you have a joint membership, please use both columns, one for each member voting. After marking your ballot, separate page and fold so that RG return address above is showing and ballot is inside. Then stamp, seal and mail. Please do not remove the mailing label or you will invalidate your ballot! To insure privacy, you may black out the name on your mailing label; however, DO NOT cross out the membership number, as we need this to validate your ballot.

Single Membership

Joint Membership

- PAULA CHOW**
- DOUGLASS FERGUSON**
- MICHAEL O. JOHNSON**
- LINDA C. MULLER**
- WRITE-IN _____**

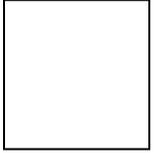
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Rappahannock Group of the Sierra

Club

PO Box 7972

Fredericksburg, VA 22402



RGSC Holiday Open House

December 13, 2012 7pm (pg 1)

Board Election Ballot (pg 5)

HARVEST MARKET
7610 Heths Salient Street
Suite 112
Spotsylvania, VA 22553
www.hrvstmkt.com

2012 RGSC's Green Living Award