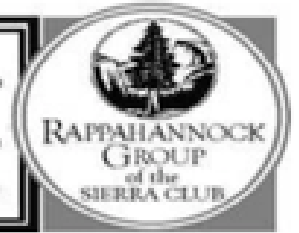


*January, February and March 2018*

## NEWSLETTER

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



## MEMO FROM THE CHAIR, LINDA C. MULLER

It has been a long cold winter, and finally it's Spring! And with it, our very first snowstorm (better late than never). It has been an exciting time for Virginia Sierra Club groups and we are pleased to announce some exciting news for the Rappahannock Group.

First, our club is growing! In fact, the entire VA Chapter membership is growing. The VA Chapter announced that we have over 21,000 Sierra Club members statewide. RGSC individual membership is over 600, and we hope to meet more of you at our upcoming events.

Second, RGSC is very pleased to welcome our two new outings leaders: Suzanne and Richard Eggeling. Suzanne and Richard are world travelers and are currently wrapping up their official Sierra Club Outings training. We will make a special announcement when they are ready to schedule their 1st official RGSC outing. In the meantime, if you have a specific interest regarding an outings event, please send your suggestions to [rappsierraclub@gmail.com](mailto:rappsierraclub@gmail.com), subject line: outings.

Third, we expanded our club meeting/events schedule in 2018. There has been considerable interest in offering more frequently scheduled club member meetings. In February, we had Dr. Jeremy Hoffman speak on Climate Change Impacts in Virginia. Dr. Hoffman is the climate and Earth scientist at the Science Museum of Virginia, and his talk discussed the impact climate change is having on Virginia.

Mark your calendars:

- April 21 is Earth Day Along the Rappahannock (see Paula Chow's article in this issue) ;
- June 19 we will enjoy a Galapagos travelogue with one of our UMW Interns;
- September 16 we have scheduled Marcia Delong from the Union of Concerned Scientists; and,
- December 2, we will have our annual Holiday Open House.

We will post details on all of our meetings, outings and events on our website, on Facebook, and via email. And though it's early, RGSG will be celebrating its 25th anniversary in 2019, and will be planning a special event for the "silver" occasion!

And finally, we are very fortunate to have dedicated UMW interns who helped develop RGSC social media marketing, as well as undertake a special geological based research project. RGSC Conservation Chair Bill Johnson and RGSC Programs Chair Paula Chow are working closely with the interns on their projects.

As a volunteer organization we are grateful for the dedication and support of our volunteers, and I personally want to thank all of the RGSC Executive Committee members who have put their time and effort in making RGSC a vibrant club!

Yours in Exploring, Enjoying, and Protecting the Planet

Linda C. Muller

Chair, Rappahannock Group

## TIPS COLUMN

### Green onions (& Green Ham)?

Throw away the green ham, but green onions? If you buy them, cut one inch up from the roots, then plant the root stub, covering the stub with about ½ inch of soil. When the green onion grows tall enough to use, cut the onion at the soil level. It will regrow and continue to do so every time you cut it at the soil level. In this current climate, even with the single digits, green onions are hardy survivors. What is especially annoying is that green onions wilt and go bad quickly after purchase. And often, one only needs one or two stalks for a recipe.

Conveniently growing your own solves the problem of wasting. So you don't have a garden or yard? Flower pots work just as well. Forgot to water it? No problem, as it may come back to life if you begin watering it again.

### Knit or Crochet?

If you have leftover cotton yarn, make small hand rags to take the place of paper towels and sponges. These make great gifts, too.

## EMAIL NEWS GROUP SIGN UP

[rappsierragroup@gmail.com](mailto:rappsierragroup@gmail.com)

## CONSERVATION CHAIR, BILL JOHNSON

We have had some successes and setbacks in our Region. We've had some small gains against fracking as we progress towards Earth Day in April.

### Fracking:

- Westmoreland County Zoning Ordinances and Comprehensive Plan have been tightened to restrict fracking in the County. It is a major step forward, especially since the County Board of Supervisors Chairman stated that the changes were interim, a prelude to possibly banning fracking entirely.
- The County of Richmond recently banned fracking. Richmond is in the bottom part of the Taylorsville Basin, which spans to Baltimore, MD. That makes 2 Counties in Virginia that have banned fracking, the first being Augusta, to the west of us, in the mountains.
- We have University of Mary Washington (UMW) student-interns, in conjunction with a UMW Geology Professor (Dr. Whipkey), working on an analysis of the Taylorsville Basin geology. There are over 86,000 acres under lease for fracking there, and we want to have a science-based analysis completed before any drilling occurs.
- We applied for a grant from National, but did not receive it. They reported that they received 58 applications, but did not mention how many winners there were. Nonetheless, we are progressing ahead on fracking.

### Earth Day Planning, April 21st

- We are currently looking for candidates for our annual "Living Green Award", presented at Earth Day. These awards go to companies located with RGSC territory who are examples of how businesses and people can have a positive impact on the environment.
- We are working on obtaining sponsors for Earth Day in Fredericksburg, VA, April 21st.
- We are working materials for Earth Day at Fort AP Hill, on April 19th.

### RGSC Open Houses & Tabling Events

- At our December 2017 Open House, Dr. Grothe, UMW, made a presentation on the health of Pacific Ocean Coral Reefs, her specialty. She is going back to the Galapagos Islands this month, for further study. We hope she will provide an update at a future RGSC Open House.
- At our February 2018 Open House, Dr. Hoffman, from the Virginia Science Museum in Richmond, made a presentation on how climate change is affecting Virginia.
- We hope to schedule a presentation by Dr. Whipkey for our June Open House on that topic. And another in September with a *Union of Concerned Scientists* scientist, to talk about the intersection of the environment and agriculture, from industrialized to family farms.
- We will table at the Fredericksburg Wild and Scenic Film Festival, on March 31st.

### RGSC Members

- We will soon be voting on new RGSC ExCom members. After that, the new ExCom members will elect Group Chairs.
- We have two new members who have been appointed as RGSC Outings Leaders, Suzanne and Richard Eggeling; they have been taking SC outing certification training and hope to begin holding outings this summer.
- We are continuing to grow, up to over 560 members in our Group.

## TIPS COLUMN CONTINUED

### Bar Soap

Have you ever wondered how much trash your hand soap produces? Consider bar soap. Bar soap uses much less packaging and last so much longer. The extra soap you have waiting to be used can be unwrapped and put in an open container that will add a nice fragrance to the room, while allowing the soap to cure (harden) and last even longer. When you have only a little bit left, save the small pieces and put in a soap saving bag. The bag can then be used as pre-soaped washcloth.

## RGSC MAILING ADDRESS

RGSC  
PO Box 7972  
Fredericksburg, VA 22404

## SINGLE STREAM RECYCLING- GOOD OR BAD? DEFINITELY BAD

Single Stream recycling is not an accurate name. It should be called “Single stream – the road to the landfill” or perhaps “Single stream – a prelude to incineration”. Here’s why:

You need to know how single stream works. The concept is you dump your recyclables (paper, glass, and plastic) into a single garbage can and industry sorts out the recyclables. But do they actually sort them out? No, not really.

The sorting process goes like this: Your garbage truck delivers the recyclables to the landfill, where it is dumped onto a floor, and reloaded onto much larger trucks to be shipped to a central processing site called a material recovery facility (MRF). In Stafford, it is shipped to a location south of Richmond, where it is again dumped on a huge warehouse floor and “sorted”.

At the MRF, huge fans blow materials apart based on weight. A good theory, if you only think about cans versus paper. But here are the problems: fans cannot distinguish between light plastic and paper; cardboard and paper is only recyclable if kept clean and dry and not contaminated with other things like broken glass and liquids; plastic bags jam up equipment and cause fires and result in “contaminated” recyclables. When any of these occur, they cannot be recycled; they are sent to landfills.

So why do we do it? Because public officials think we are too stupid or too lazy to properly recycle, and garbage haulers provide significant political contributions to politicians.

So who benefits from single stream recycling? Garbage haulers mainly, as they

have fewer workers, fewer trips to the landfill, and have no need for different types of trucks to carry recyclables sorted at the pickup sites.

And the result: significantly less recycling than if the components are collected separately, resulting in lower prices for recyclables.

Last, why did I say “single stream – a prelude to incineration”? Remember that in 2013 the Stafford Board of Supervisors (BOS) attempted to ram through a tire-burning incinerator at the landfill on Eskimo Hill Road under the guise of generating electricity? For an incinerator to be able to produce electricity, it needs to burn high-heat materials like tires. It cannot effectively use low-value waste like kitchen scraps to generate enough consistent heat to produce electricity. What else provides high levels of heat? Wood and plastics, both of which could be recycled, unless contaminated.

Should we worry about another attempt to install an incinerator in Stafford? Revenue generated by recyclables continues to go down, partly due to contamination and partly due to China’s refusal to take contaminated recyclables. We should all keep an eye out to see whether the BOS attempts to travel down that path again. Remember, incinerators generate toxic waste, spew toxic materials like dioxins into the air we breathe, and concentrate heavy metals in the ash buried in our landfills.

If you google “single stream recycling” you can get more information.

Bill Johnson, Conservation Chair, RGSC

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

**Earth Day** – RGSC is one of the several organizations (or individuals) volunteering with the City of Fredericksburg Dept. of Parks & Recreation to plan the annual Earth Day on the Rappahannock every April. The planning meetings are chaired by Linda Bailey who coordinates the ever growing Earth Day event. Meetings are held once a month on a Friday at 9:00am beginning in October through April at Eileen's Cafe and Bakery on Caroline Street in Fredericksburg. Volunteers need not commit to major amounts of time, rather, whatever capacity a volunteer can serve will be helpful. If you are interested in helping out for even a few hours, contact Paula Chow at [paulachow132@gmail.com](mailto:paulachow132@gmail.com) and enter "Earth Day" on the subject line.

**Fracking** - Anyone interested in helping to educate residents of Caroline County about FRACKING, contact Paula Chow - [paulachow132@gmail.com](mailto:paulachow132@gmail.com).

## 15TH ANNUAL EARTH DAY ON THE RAPPAHANNOCK

It has been 15 years since the first Earth Day festival was established in Fredericksburg. For the first festival, Scott Howson collaborated with Fredericksburg Dept. of Parks and Recreation to create the event at Alum Springs Park. With the growth of the Earth Day festival, it moved to Old Mill Park to accommodate the increased number of vendors and attendees. The last couple of years have numbered around 5,000 attendees.

Earth Day is an annual event officially celebrated on April 22. [Worldwide](#), various events are held to demonstrate support for [environmental protection](#). First celebrated in 1970, Earth Day events in more than 193 countries are now coordinated globally by the Earth Day Network.

The 15th Annual Earth Day on the Rappahannock will be held on Saturday, April 21st, 11am – 4pm at Old Mill Park. The rain date is the following Saturday, April 28th. There will be new vendors as well as a new band. Check the website at [www.earthdayfred.com](http://www.earthdayfred.com) for the program schedule including the bands, the vendors, the food trucks, and schedule of activities.

Rappahannock Group Sierra Club is a major contributor and presenter at the Earth Day festival. The booth will feature hands on activities with a focus on personal actions on “refusing, reducing, and reusing” with caution on recycling. The Art Invitational artwork of climate change issues submitted by UMW students will be on display.

RGSC created the Living Green Award in 2010 and presents the award at the Earth Day festival. Recipients are any organization, agency or business in RGSC’s membership catchment area that has implemented environmentally friendly practices. The recipient is listed on RGSC’s website with the story of their green practices, encouraging members and others to support them. Anyone can nominate a potential recipient. The website has the nomination form.

We hope to see you at the festival. Tell us that you read our newsletter!

## OTHER LINKS

Virginia Conservation Network  
[www.vcnva.org](http://www.vcnva.org)

Virginia League of Conservation Voters  
[www.valcv.org](http://www.valcv.org)

Southern Environmental Law Center  
[www.southernenvironment.org](http://www.southernenvironment.org)

Friends of the Rappahannock  
[www.riverfriends.org](http://www.riverfriends.org)

Tree Fredericksburg  
[www.treefredericksburg.org](http://www.treefredericksburg.org)

# DON'T TOSS PLASTIC BAGS INTO THE RECYCLING

Ever since the three R's of "Reduce Reuse Recycle" was coined, recycling has taken off, but Reduce and Reuse have not. Everyone takes pride in recycling but, as programs evolved, most consumers never gave reducing and reusing a second thought. This article attempts to inform readers of the serious negative impacts of using plastic bags to contain recyclables and then depositing the full bag into the recycling stream.

Over the years, there have been articles in the media about the volatile recycling market. In 2013, China instituted its Green Fence program, to crack down on the contaminated loads of recycling materials that they were importing. More recently, China's National Sword initiative has implemented more restrictions on recyclables. The benefit on the East Coast is that there is diversification of markets for recyclable materials, with more industry than on the West Coast. There, when exporting recyclables, most were shipped to China.

In the Fredericksburg/Stafford area, the volatility of this market is evidenced by the decrease in profits paid to the Regional Solid Waste Management Board (R-Board) from \$51.70 per ton in July 2017 to \$20 per ton in December 2017.

R-Board Recycling Coordinator Diane Jones states that plastic bags of all sorts are the biggest problem. Plastic bags jam the machines. These machines, used to sort and move large amounts of recyclables, jam because of plastic bags. These huge machines break down, costing the recycling industry thousands of dollars in repairs. Hence, when a hauler brings in a load and the spotter sees a number of contaminating plastic bags, the load is rejected for recycling and then hauled to the landfill. Spotsylvania County reports the same problem with plastic bags clogging the equipment.

This scenario means that each person should responsibly look at their recycling habits. All recyclables should be **loose** and deposited in the proper receptacles at the transfer and waste stations, in the recyclable containers at apartment complexes, or in recycling totes provided by the city or the hauler. Absolutely no plastic bags should be used to deposit any recyclables. If you take them to the landfill, often you bring cardboard boxes to be recycled - use them to temporarily store the recyclables, instead of plastic bags.

Plastic bags DO NOT get recycled with recyclable plastic. Plastic bags can be returned to the bins at many grocery stores where they are collected to be recycled into a product called Trex, a hardened wood-simulated plastic used for outdoor decking and park benches, made in Virginia.

In summary, do not deposit ANY full or empty plastic bags into the recycling or single stream recycling; return them to the source. Better yet, avoid plastic bags entirely, by bringing reusable bags when you shop. Doing the right thing helps our community make progress with our recycling efforts.

## RGSC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (EXCOM)

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Vice Chair, Bill Johnson, [billatthelake@comcast.net](mailto:billatthelake@comcast.net)

Program Chair: Paula Chow, [paulachow132@gmail.com](mailto:paulachow132@gmail.com)

Treasurer: Diana Johnson, [dianaatthelake@comcast.net](mailto:dianaatthelake@comcast.net)

Membership & ExCom Member: Michael Johnson, [johnson2000m@aol.com](mailto:johnson2000m@aol.com)

Webmaster & ExCom Member: Doug Ferguson, [dougferg@verizon.net](mailto:dougferg@verizon.net)

Conservation Chair: Bill Johnson, [billatthelake@comcast.net](mailto:billatthelake@comcast.net)

Newsletter Editor: Bill Johnson, [billatthelake@comcast.net](mailto:billatthelake@comcast.net)

Hospitality Chair & ExCom Member: Jody Lochmiller, [jody\\_lochmiller@hotmail.com](mailto:jody_lochmiller@hotmail.com)

Outings Leaders: Suzanne and Richard Eggeling, [lizzigo@gmail.com](mailto:lizzigo@gmail.com)

Interns: Maddie Reid, Alyssa Zanzucchi, Suzanne Caitlin and Marion Panches