



July, August, September 2019

NEWSLETTER

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



MEMO FROM THE CHAIR, LINDA C. MULLER

"Get action. Seize the moment. Man was never intended to become an oyster." Theodore Roosevelt

"There are risks and costs to action. But they are far less than the long-range risks of comfortable inaction." John F. Kennedy

For those of us who are committed to keeping and maintaining a clean and healthy environment, we have seen how swiftly the political and policy pendulum can swing. The Trump Administration has moved quickly to roll back or eliminate environmental regulations and protections. A September 12, 2019 *New York Times* article cites more than 80 environmental rules the Trump Administration has eliminated or is in the process of rolling back. Article here:

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/climate/trump-environment-rollbacks.html>

As a reminder, one of the earliest bills the President signed into law revoked a rule that prevented coal companies from dumping mining debris into local streams. (2/2017).

Impacts and Protections at the State and Local Level

While the environmental fights continue at the national policy level, our Virginia state and local governments play an essential role in protecting and preserving our environment. Clean air, clean water, renewable energy, recycling, preservation of natural/open spaces, climate change and climate change resilience, transportation; all "happen" at the state and local level. And the good news is, an active and engaged citizenry has a significant impact on how our state and local elected officials address our environmental concerns. Every year is an election year in Virginia, and this year all of the Virginia House of Delegates and State Senators are up for election. Supporting and electing strong environmental candidates will make a difference for Virginia's environmental health and future. Election Day is November 5, 2019 and now is the time for action. The Virginia Chapter Sierra Club PAC has a list of endorsed pro environment candidates: <https://www.scvapac.org/endorsements/>. The list is updated as endorsements are completed. Not sure which House or Senate District you live in? You can find out at this link: <https://whosmyviriniageneralassembly.gov>. Now is the time to step up and take action.

Yours in Exploring, Enjoying and Protection the Planet

CONSERVATION CHAIR, BILL JOHNSON

My Journey Into Activism

Like many of you, for most of my life I was busy working long hours, paying off a home mortgage and car loan, raising a family, and occasionally, very occasionally, relaxing. It wasn't until my kids had grown, graduated from college, and went off on their own, that I was able to spend some time taking a breath. Only then could I retire. That gave me the opportunity to look around and see what else interested me, to find something that I could enjoy, rather than have to do.

In 2013, something hit me like a ton of bricks - the Stafford County Board of Supervisors (S-BOS) signed a contract with a private company to build a pyrolysis-based incinerator at our Stafford County landfill on Eskimo Hill Road. The Rappahannock Regional Solid Waste Management Board (R-Board) operated the local landfill jointly with 3 members each from Stafford County and the Fredericksburg and they approved a contract to build an incinerator at the landfill.

But that's where the 2 entities differed in their approach. In order to make changes to the landfill, the S-BOS had to follow rules contained in the Conditional Use Permit (CUP) ordinance in place at the time. Fredericksburg had no such requirements because the landfill was located in Stafford. The CUP ordinance required the landfill to: (1) post signs at the landfill to inform citizens of two public hearings; (2) mail public hearing notifications to all abutting property owners; (3) advertise two public hearings in the newspaper; (4) hold 2 public hearings; and (5) conduct impact statements on the effects to traffic volumes and capacities, public water and sewer capacities, noise, dust and smoke emissions.

Stafford knew the incinerator would be controversial, so what did they do? Change the rules? Yes, actually. Supervisor Paul Milde, who was also the Chair of the R-Board and who signed the contract, made a motion to approve O-13-09, which passed unanimously in March 2013. It changed the rules to a "by-right" ordinance, and that eliminated all 5 steps above - no public notice, no public hearings, and no impact assessments. The contract could be awarded without citizens knowing anything about it. Clever, eh? Soon thereafter, the S-BOS met again and approved the contract to have the incinerator built. They also later eliminated the Business Machinery and Tool tax, which would dramatically lower taxes for the incinerator. The only local tax the company would have to pay is a tax on the shell of the warehouse building, while Stafford residents would have to foot the bill for \$6.4M in road improvements. Additionally, Stafford residents would have to pay the cost of extending county water 1.5 miles to the landfill.

The fly in the ointment was the Fredericksburg City Council, who jointly operated the landfill. They would have to sign the contract as well. But they felt that citizens should know about what was going on, so they published the contract on their website, and held a public hearing in July to solicit the public's input. They deserve the public's thanks for bringing this to light.

It didn't take long for us to react. Stafford citizens flocked to S-BOS meetings and spoke against the incinerator. I created a website, StopTheStaffordIncinerator.com, and the resistance took off. Outcry forced the S-BOS to rescind the signed contract. It helped that it was an election year for the S-BOS and the populace was angry.

We were especially angry when we found out that, deep within the contract was a provision that allowed the incinerator operator to import and burn an unlimited number of tires from anywhere. Dioxins would be generated during every start-up and shutdown, including maintenance; a very toxic liquid oil waste would be created that could not be legally burned in the US; and a very toxic residual ash would have to be buried in the landfill. The incinerator would be monitored by the US EPA and Virginia's Department of Environmental Quality as an incinerator, despite repeated protestations from Mr. Milde that it wasn't an incinerator. The air, water, and land pollution would not be pretty.

Finally, public outcry forced the S-BOS to rescind the contract, and we thought everything would be ok. How naïve of us. After the election, a new RFP was issued for another incinerator. The first one would have been built and paid for by the contractor, in exchange for sweetheart lease. The second RFP received responses, but no contractor was willing to build it at their own expense. So the S-BOS stated that awarding the contract would not be beneficial for Stafford, and the idea was finally killed.

I joined and became active in the Sierra Club because the local Rappahannock Group helped me in this effort. There's a lot going on locally here, from air pollution from transportation, to land and water pollution from fracking, to plastics pollution, to siting chemical dumps in poor neighborhoods (environmental justice). When something rotten occurs that is near where you live or work, you tend to take notice. There is always the tension between those who want something but don't live there, and those who live there and will be impacted by it. Find something local that needs fixing and get involved, even if it's just writing a letter to the editor about climate change. The health of the environment, your family, and your neighbors will be the better for it.

PERSPECTIVES FROM TURKEY, ANTALYA , PAULA CHOW

I am not usually able to attend the Chapter's Annual Gathering because it is my prime travel time of the year. This year my husband and I are in Turkey.

Our tour guide was an economics professor at the University in Istanbul but turned tour guide over 25 years ago. He can skillfully connect ancient history with Turkey's evolution to its current geography, sociology, psychology, culture, and current state of affairs. As such, he stated that Turkey had too numerous dire issues to be taking on yet another overwhelming issue of the environment.

A few positive observations are to be noted. Solar hot water heaters are the norm in many of the big cities, sitting on the rooftops of high-rise apartment buildings. Hanging clothes to dry is the general practice. Wind turbine blades used to be imported from the USA, but Turkey has developed their own manufacturing of wind turbines.



For city waste, there were either 2 or 3 bins every so many blocks that were about 5ft. below ground level with the opening with a pull at waist level.

On the downside, locals everywhere say that the tap water is not safe to drink. Not only is bottled water used everywhere, I

saw no evidence of recycling the empty plastic water bottles, except for bin at the Radisson Hotel, a Green Travel hotel in Izmir (previously called Smyrna). And only one Turk did I witness use a reusable bag.



TIPS COLUMN

Buying new products:

Look for eco-friendly products that biodegrade. An example is a phone case from pelacase.com.

Polystyrene???????

There are occasions that you can't avoid polystyrene. The good news is that **Publix**, the newest grocery store at Cosners Corner in Spotsylvania, takes CLEAN polystyrene. There is a bin outside the store alongside a bin for CLEAN plastic bags. If it is stained or not clean, it contaminates the rest of the bin.

Reducing plastic:

Buy bar soap instead of liquid soap in a plastic container. There are many handmade good soaps to entice you to make the switch.

Have excess reusable bags?

Bring the gently used bags to the Farmers Market. We will

redistribute them to folks who have forgotten their bags.

T-shirts you no longer want:

Bring them to the Farmers Market. Food Co-op volunteers will make reusable bags from these T-shirts!

Newspaper

Include newspaper in your "reusable" box in the trunk of your vehicle. You can wrap cut flowers, cover something, use as a mat for muddy or sandy shoes or plants that you buy, wrap stuff as makeshift containers.

Get the Free Lance-Star?

Tear out the weekly "Kid Scoop" and the "Insight" page (usually Mondays) and "The Mini Page" (usually Sundays). Take them to any center for kids where they have after school programs or other programs in your area where there are kid programs. A second use!

WILDFIRES, BILL JOHNSON, CONSERVATION CHAIR

Researchers have been able to connect the world's dramatic increase in wildfires across the planet with the climate crisis. The news channel, *WKTU*, has an [article](#) entitled " 'There's no doubt about it' -- Researchers suggest increased fire activity, and cost, due to climate change in Alaska." Conservative estimates of the [costs of wildfire response in Alaska's changing climate](#), ranging from \$1.2 - \$2.1 billion by 2100.

This *NY Times* [article](#) discusses wildfires in the Amazon, Siberia, the Arctic, central Africa, and Indonesia. "The growing intensity of wildfires and their spread to new corners of the globe raises fears that climate change is exacerbating the dangers." This *Rolling Stone* & *Grist* [article](#) discusses why insurance companies are pulling out of California because of the threat of wildfires. "The industry ranked climate change as the top risk in 2019." This *CBC* [article](#) is entitled: "Arctic wildfires breaking records, in numbers and emissions". One notable quote from the article: "between 250 and 300 fire detections, or "hot spots," have been recorded north of the Arctic Circle each day. That's four to five times higher than

previous years. Normally, [Mark] Parrington [senior scientist at the European Centre for Medium-range Weather Forecasts] sees between 50 and 60 hot spots a day, which he estimates amounts to between 100 and 200 fires." The last [article](#), from *Oregon Live*, describes 'Unprecedented' Arctic wildfires are raging, showcasing how region is warming much faster than rest of world."

#actonclimate

climate change:

it's here

it's us

it's bad for people

and it's solvable

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

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CLIMATE CHANGE DENIAL, BILL JOHNSON, CONSERVATION CHAIR CHAIR

How do you convince people who deny the scientific evidence that global warming is real, man-made, here now, and fixable? In many cases it is difficult, if not impossible. A case in point is described in a *Yale Climate Connections* [article](#) which discusses two sisters with opposite beliefs; one based on science and the other on conspiracy theories. The article points to [research](#) that shows that “only 16% of American adults believe that global warming is not happening”. It suggests that it may not be possible for you to change your sister’s mind, but you may be able to convince others in her circle that it is true. The article points to another *Yale Climate Connections* [article](#) that suggests how to identify people open to evidence about climate change, starting with understanding your audience. It discusses different types of nonbelievers, from ideologues, to trolls, to the uniformed. The [Chalmers University of Technology, Sweden](#), has created the world’s first global research network looking into climate change denial called *A Centre for Studies of Climate Change Denialism*. It is an absolutely excellent description of the main categories of deniers. It also provides links to scientific publications on climate denial, focusing on right wing nationalism, extractive industries, and conservative think tanks.

So why do people believe that the climate crisis is a “hoax perpetrated by China” (besides the obvious)? One reason is described in an [article](#) from *The Print* entitled “Climate change deniers dominate YouTube searches on warming crisis”. The study was conducted by a senior researcher at RWTH Aachen University, Germany, and [published](#) in July 2019 in the journal *Frontiers of Communication*. If you want to confuse the issue,

write about it as if you were a real scientist, using misleading terms and quoting intentionally incorrect “facts” that sound true. A *Mother Jones* [article](#) entitled “Americans Trust Scientists, Until Politics Gets in the Way”, discusses why politics gets in the way of science. “The idea is that your partisan identity kind of trumps the role of knowledge in your beliefs.”

Right wing think tanks, funded by people and industries that would lose big time if their industry and their source of income is severely cut back, are the major culprits. This *NY Times* [opinion piece](#) discusses David Koch – the ultimate climate change denier, and how a playboy billionaire built a political army to defend his fossil fuel empire. This *NY Times* [article](#) discusses the legacy of David Koch, and his brother Charles, who ran a business colossus while furthering a libertarian agenda that reshaped American politics. This *New Republic* [article](#) discusses the David Koch’s legacy of pipelines. He built his fortune on exploiting the earth while funding an empire dedicated to smothering free speech. In an *The Intercept* [article](#), some oil and gas lobbyists are caught in an audio recording bragging about getting laws passed to criminalize pipeline protests. If you see a “scientist” or organization quoted, check out the *DeSmogBlog* [Climate Disinformation Research Database](#). While not complete, it lets you put in a person’s name or an organization, and if they are suspect, you might find them listed (alphabetically), along with an explanation of why they are there, who they work for, who funds them, etc. For instance, try the [American Legislative Exchange Council](#) (ALEC).

RGSC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (EXCOM)

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Vice Chair, Bill Johnson, billatthelake@comcast.net
Program Chair: Paula Chow, paulachow132@gmail.com
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RAPPAHANNOCK GROUP CONSERVATION REPORT, LINDA MULLER

June 2019 to August 2019

(Note: It was "summer break" time but we still had a few events scheduled during the summer despite some weather issues. We canceled our planned RGSC members and friends picnic for June 9th due to flooding. Paula Chow has promoted the Keep Virginia Beautiful, Pass On Plastics Project, at the Fredericksburg Farmers Market on Saturdays through-out the summer)

RGSC Tabling, Events and Community Out Reach:

June 11, 2019: Stafford County D.A.R.E. Graduation & Field Day, Purpose of D.A.R.E. "To provide all fifth grade students of Stafford County who have completed the requirements of the D.A.R.E. Program an opportunity to interact with accomplished people whose good choices have helped them to become and stay successful in their careers or hobbies, while working to make their community a better place.

June 15th, 10am to 7pm Juneteenth-"Day of Remembrance" New City Fellowship, Fredericksburg, VA. Juneteenth (which is actually June 19, but the event is Saturday, June 15) celebrates the day in 1865 that slaves in Galveston, Texas were told that slavery had ended, the last slaves to be notified in the South.

August 6, 2019 National Night Out: Stafford, National Night Out is an annual community-building campaign that promotes police-community relationship and neighborhood camaraderie to make neighborhoods safer, more caring places to live.

August 13, 2019: RGSC Executive Committee Meeting, 6:30pm to 8:30 pm

August 14, 2019: Environmental/Political Overview @ Lake of the Woods Dem. Committee, Orange County. With VA Chapter Legislative Chair Bob Shippee & RGSC Chair Linda Muller. Informational meeting with members of the LOW's Dem Committee. Also brought archive RGSC Book. RGSC got its official start at LOW in January 1995.

August 18, 2019 RGSC Event: Climate Change Film Screening and discussion "The Human Element" at Howell Branch Library, Stafford

Conservation June-August 2019: "Pass On Plastics" w/Keep Virginia Beautiful. Paula Chow's project with volunteers to help promote the use of re-usable net produce bags. Farmers Market Fredericksburg. Link to story in Free Lance Star:

https://www.fredericksburg.com/news/local/activist-sews-up-support-for-pass-on-plastic-campaign-at/article_9a786e90-10ce-5f56-ba76-0d50d9f3245c.html?fbclid=IwAR1uMUCr8tE62odB5HbeYMofRC7iqtgFmO-RP9hMjyYfJTP4-7Ehj4eeQBs

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

SEA LEVEL RISE, BILL JOHNSON, CONSERVATION CHAIR CHAIR

A *Mother Jones* [article](#) discusses the impact of sea level rise on Indonesia. The combination of rising oceans and sinking land is forcing Indonesia to move its capital to the Island of Borneo, hundreds of miles to the northeast of the current capital, Jakarta. A *CBS Miami* [story](#) discusses how Florida's small cities are struggling to defend against rising seas. That story points out that an engineering report submitted to the Delray Beach city commission found that eliminating flooding in the city's most vulnerable neighborhoods would cost an estimated \$378 million, for a city with an annual budget of \$130 million. Then there is this headline from *Science Magazine*: "Faced with global warming, rising sea levels, and the climate-related extremes they intensify, the question is no longer whether some communities will retreat—moving people and assets out of harm's way—but why, where, when, and how they will retreat." The last [article](#) I suggest you look at is from the *International Business Times*; it's headline is "Move Away From Coastal Areas While You Still Can, Scientists Sound Warning On Climate Change." That article focuses on the financial implications of not doing so. You don't want to be the last person selling property in a neighborhood that is underwater. If you want to see how the Commonwealth of Virginia will fare because of sea level rise, google "sea level rise in Virginia".

RGSC OUTINGS AND EVENTS, RICHARD EGGELING

Thanks to the hard work of several RGSC members we are influencing the behavior of local (Fredericksburg) citizens, slowly, but to the good. A recent example was a front-page article in the local newspaper reporting Paula Chow's efforts to persuade Farmers' Market vendors and customers to use re-useable, washable, mesh produce bags instead of single use plastic bags. (See 'Awards' below.) This is an excellent example of our commitment to support local events promoting environmental awareness (see the list below), including collaborating with local organizations (such as Fossil Free Fredericksburg and the new Fredericksburg Food Co-Op) that energize us and demonstrate how much we can accomplish through commitment and teamwork.

PAST EVENTS – Tabling Events and Community Outreach initiatives:

June 11, 2019 – Stafford County D.A.R.E. Graduation Field Day. Purpose of D.A.R. E. “To provide all fifth grade students of Stafford County who have completed the requirements of the D.A.R.E. program an opportunity to interact with accomplished people whose good choices have enabled them to become, and remain, successful in their careers or hobbies, while working to make their community a better place”.

June 15, 2019 – “Juneteenth – Day of Remembrance” in Fredericksburg. ‘Juneteenth’ (June 19th), celebrates the day in 1865 that slaves in Galveston, Texas were told that slavery had ended. They were the last slaves to be notified in the South.

August 6, 2019 – ‘National Night Out: Stafford’. National Night Out is an annual community-building campaign that promotes police-community relationships and neighborhood camaraderie to make neighborhoods safer, more caring places to live.

August 13, 2019: RGSC Executive Committee Meeting, 6:30pm to 8:30 pm

August 14, 2019 – Environmental/Political Overview at Lake of the Woods Dem. Committee, Orange County. The VA Chapter was represented by Legislative Chair Bob Shippee and RGSC Chair Linda Muller. Information was shared at this meeting with members of Lake of the Woods (LOW), Democratic Committee. RGSC had its official start at LOW in January 1995. One of our original RGSC books was shared with LOW members.

August 18, 2019 – RGSC Film screening and discussion “The Human Element”. Howell Branch Library, Fredericksburg. This award-winning film by James Balog (National Geographic photographer), is a follow up to “Chasing Ice”. This film presented striking images of the impacts of climate change in the US. Of particular interest was the coverage and interviews of Tangier Island residents in our own Chesapeake Bay.

FUTURE EVENTS

RAPPAHANNOCK GROUP FALL OPEN HOUSE Sept. 15, 2019, 2:00 - 4pm at the American Legion Hall Post 55, 461 Woodford St., Fredericksburg, VA 22401 - “Living in a 1-degree World”: Climate Change Impacts at National & State Levels and Policy Solutions to Limit Warming & Increase Resilience”. Special Guest Speaker – Shana Udvardy, Climate Resilience Analyst, Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS).

Per the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report on 1.5 degree C, burning of fossil fuels is the major contributing factor to the continued rise in emissions directly affecting global warming. This talk will provide an overview of climate change related impacts as well as recent analysis by the UCS, including the Killer Heat report released this July. UCS identifies how the choices we make today will determine how often we experience extreme heat in the future. The talk will present findings with solutions to limit future warming and the frequency of days with extreme heat. Additionally, policy solutions to increase the resilience to extreme heat will be covered. FREE to Public. A good article from The Atlantic explaining the IPCC report can be found here:

<https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2019/08/how-think-about-dire-new-ipcc-climate-report/595705/>. The report itself can be found here: <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>.

VA Chapter Sierra Club Annual Gathering!

Sept. 20-22nd, 2019, Westmoreland State Park – Special Guest Speaker/Author: Sandra Steingraber, “Living Downstream” – a personal journey into the study of synthetic chemicals and impacts to human health. Also, educational workshops, guided hikes, fishing, kayaking, yoga etc. Stay for the day or full weekend. Cabins and camping available.

<http://vasierraclub.ticketspice.com/draft-2019-annual-gathering-westmoreland-park>

Sept. 29th, 2019 – RGSC Outing – Escorted hike from Madison's Montpelier Estate to Grelen Nursery, Orange County. Meet at Montpelier at noon, but sign up in advance with Richard or Suzanne, rich.sue.sc@gmail.com

Hike the beautiful Grelen trail from James Madison's Montpelier. This connector trail was officially designated a “Virginia Treasure” by the Governor's Office as it represents an outstanding recreational asset open to the public. The 3.9-mile moderate hike over Chicken Mountain is set in one of Virginia's most important ecological, and scenic, hiking areas. End the hike with a fresh sandwich or drink at the open air Market at Grelen Casual Café.

Other outings in the planning stages for fall:

Vintage film at The Library of Congress, Packard Theater in Culpeper. We will have an escorted tour of the grounds before the film, and a meal before or after the film (dependent on screening times).

Hike ‘Crows Nest Natural Area’ Preserve in Stafford County. There are three miles of hiking on a wonderfully maintained nature area in the heart of Stafford County. Simply a beautiful place considered highly significant due to varied topography, and scenic views of the Potomac and Accokeek Creeks which border the trail.

Tour the Materials Recycling Facility (MRF), Waste Management site, in Chester, Virginia (just south of Richmond). MRF management will lead

RGSC OUTINGS AND EVENTS, RICHARD EGGELING CONT.

an informative tour through the facility and explain how we can improve recycling practices, the labor-intensive sorting operation, and the next destination of the recovered recyclables. Lunch afterwards at Antonios Italian Restaurant in Chester.

Contact Richard and Suzanne at rich.sue.sc@gmail.com

October 13th, 2019 (9am-1pm), Old Mill Park, Fredericksburg - Fossil Free Fredericksburg 2nd annual "Walk and Pedal past Fossil Fuels" rally to call attention to the overall mission: Get Fredericksburg off of fossil fuels by 2050. <http://fossilfreefredericksburg.com/>

Dec. 1, 2019 – RGSC Holiday Open House at the American Legion Building, in Fredericksburg. Guest Speaker, Dr. Pamela Groethe, Assistant Professor, Earth and Environmental Sciences, University of Mary Washington.

AWARDS – Our own Paula Chow was awarded a \$1000 grant from Keep Virginia Beautiful, for the purpose of reducing the use of plastic bags at the Fredericksburg Farmers Market. Paula and her team of volunteers sew, promote, and actively market the use of re-useable net produce bags. These are donated free-of-charge to shoppers and to several of the vendors' stalls. This concept has been well received and is increasing awareness of the dire need to minimize, if not eliminate, the use of single purpose plastic bags. Have a few spare minutes for a good cause? Paula can always use help with sewing; the most basic sewing skills will do the job and you can work from your own home. Contact Paula at

paulachow132@gmail.com. A link to the Free Lance-Star story is here:

<https://www.fredericksburg.com/news/local/activist-sews-up-support-for-pass-on-plastic-campaign-at/>

[article_9a786e90-10ce-5f56-ba76-0d50d9f3245c.html?fbclid=IwAR1uMUCr8tE62odB5HbeYMofRC7iqtgFmO-RP9hMjyYfJTP4-7Ehj4eeQB](https://www.fredericksburg.com/news/local/activist-sews-up-support-for-pass-on-plastic-campaign-at/article_9a786e90-10ce-5f56-ba76-0d50d9f3245c.html?fbclid=IwAR1uMUCr8tE62odB5HbeYMofRC7iqtgFmO-RP9hMjyYfJTP4-7Ehj4eeQB)s

PASS ON PLASTIC, PAULA CHOW

It has been encouraging to see so many shoppers using reusable bags AND reusable produce bags at the Saturday Farmers Market at Hurkamp Park in Fredericksburg. The **Pass On Plastic** campaign has received wonderful press with the article about the **Pass On Plastic** on the front page of the Free Lance-Star on July 23, 2019, with the large photo of Paula Chow sewing a net bag at her sewing table at the Farmers Market.

The shoppers who bring their own reusable bags have been around less than 25% (subjective visual survey) in the beginning of the Farmers Market in May. The Pass On Plastic campaign was at the market from the start of the season, giving away reusable net produce bags made by volunteers. The Food Co-op has also had a stand giving away reusable bags weekly. This coupling of an outer bag (with handles) from the Food Co-op and an inner bag (reusable net produce bag) from Pass On Plastic for shoppers seems to be the winning strategy. While there are shoppers who refuse to use reusable bags, the shoppers who bring their own and the shoppers who stop to get a reusable handled bag also seek to obtain to have a reusable net produce bag, or the other way around. The sewing table has received a lot of traffic which is the opportunity for educating the shoppers.

As of the end of August, a subjective tally of the shoppers who are avoiding plastic is about 65%. Interestingly, the last hour of the market is when most shoppers are using the single-use plastic bags.

Pass On Plastic has been working with two vendors, Valdez Produce and C&T Produce. They have signage and the

volunteers are stationed in their booths to hand out reusable net produce bags with a brief educational conversation.

At the August 24st market, Alvarez Produce, a vendor, asked to participate. They were equipped with signage and colanders and at the August 31st market, they reported that the colanders made a difference whereby the shoppers dumped their loose produce directly from the colanders into their reusable handled bags. The owner is thinking about asking her sister to make the reusable net produce bags and convert their business to not using any of the single-use plastic bags. The rest of the vendors, as of the August 31st market, have strongly stated their interest in joining the effort to do away with the single-use plastic bags.

Pass On Plastic continues to need volunteers to forward the campaign. As you have read, we are making definite progress. The vendors want change and are asking for help. It can only happen with volunteers. Volunteers can do a number of selected tasks: cut the netting, sew the bags (this is the most needed), hand out the bags at the Farmers Market, help with social media (this is sorely missing), write an LTE, write to Parks and Rec to encourage a plastic-bag free market and/or help with purchase of the netting (only good quality netting from Joann's Fabrics as poor netting from other retailers results in tears which defeats the purpose).

If you are interested in joining the effort to convert the Farmers Market at Hurkamp into a plastic bag free market, contact Paula Chow at paulachow132@gmail.com.

NOAA DESIGNATES MALLOWS BAY A NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY, BEVERLY JOHNSON, MEMBER, RGSC

Amid concerns about global warming and climate change (not to mention the current administration's systematic dismantling of the EPA and important environmental regulations), environmentalists have, of late, had little to celebrate. On July 8, 2019, however, that changed, as the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), in conjunction with the State of Maryland, designated Mallows Bay a National Marine Sanctuary. It had been nearly 20 years since NOAA's last designation, and Mallows Bay is the first sanctuary to be located on the East Coast.

<https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/aa-updates/mallows-bay-070819.html>

For those unfamiliar with Mallows Bay, it comprises an 18 sq. mi. section of the Potomac River approximately 90 minutes north of Fredericksburg off the southwestern shore of Charles County Maryland. Mallows Bay is the final resting place of more than 100 wooden-hulled merchant ships that were towed there, salvaged for scrap, and systematically sunk following WWI.

In 1917, Woodrow Wilson committed the US to undertaking the largest shipbuilding effort in history in support of the Allied war effort in Europe – 1,000 ships in one year's time. Allied shipping was struggling mightily against German U-boats, which were sinking upwards of 100 cargo ships per week. Even though America lacked sufficient shipyards, trained shipbuilders, and the necessary infrastructure to support such a massive initiative, she answered the call. Unfortunately, many of the wooden replacement vessels, constructed at 58 individual shipyards across 16 states, never saw maritime service, because the war ended before they could be launched. You can read about this in marine archaeologist and author Donald Grady Shomette's 2017 article, *Tidal Wave: The Greatest Ship Launch in History*.

Although the NOAA designation is meant to affirm the historical significance of the site and protect the ships at Mallows Bay from looting and other possible acts of vandalism, it has the residual benefit of directly preserving the area's surrounding environment. Since being scuttled, many of Mallows Bay's ships have become vibrant marine habitats – replete with trees and vegetation that support aquatic birds and wildlife, amphibians and reptiles. The submerged sections of the hulls serve as reefs for the many varieties of fish that spawn in the Potomac's marshes and tributaries.

The individuals primarily responsible for bringing this amazing historic landmark to the public's attention are Mr. Shomette and Maryland environmentalists Bonnie Bick and Jim Long – Co-founders of the Mattawoman Watershed Society (<http://www.mattawomanwatershedsociety.org/>).

Mr. Shomette first visited Mallows Bay with his father when he was just a child. The area always held a special fascination for him, and in 1980, with support from the National Geographic Society and the State of Maryland, he set about physically exploring the fleet and measuring and cataloguing

each individual ship. An account of his journey can be found in his 2015 book, *Ghost Fleet of Mallows Bay (and Other Tales of the Chesapeake)*.

Designating Mallows Bay a National Maritime Sanctuary was a long, involved process. Besides the initial nomination application, there were public hearings to organize, petitions to circulate, comments to solicit, and letters to the editor to write. Approval had to be obtained at the county, state, and national levels. Charles County was fortunate, at that time, to have a majority of environmentally friendly Commissioners in office. Three of the five had been endorsed by the Sierra Club along with several other Maryland state representatives and officials.

Many local environmental clubs and organizations, such as Smarter Growth Alliance for Charles County (comprised of representatives from 20 local and regional organizations), 1000 Friends of Maryland, the Mattawoman Watershed Society, Chapman National Forest Foundation, and the Sierra Club joined forces to help educate the public, host town meetings, set up informational websites, provide tabling at public events, and lobby county officials and the local Chamber of Commerce.

The Southern Maryland chapter of the Sierra Club was at the forefront during the scoping process for the DEIS at the local level. The Maryland Chapter handed out fliers and lobbied at the State level, kept members abreast of progress through individual e-mails and their website, and sent out e-mail blasts urging members to show their support during the comment period.

I was pleased to be a member of the Southern Maryland chapter at that time and cannot stress enough how exciting it is to come together with other like-minded individuals and groups when taking on a project of this magnitude and actually winning. Strength in numbers is vital when going up against developers with deep pockets and politicians who do not always champion environmental causes. Many voices saying the same thing have a much more powerful impact than one small group can possibly hope to muster. It is essential to vote for political candidates at all levels who support the environment, are not climate-change deniers, and value the health and wellbeing of individuals over corporate profits.

If you have never visited Mallows Bay, I would encourage you to do so. The State Parks Service in Maryland now offers guided kayak tours among the submerged vessels. You can find more information on Mallows Bay by visiting the following websites:

- <https://www.charlescountymd.gov>
- [GhostFleetofMallowsBay](#)
- www.marinesanctuary.org
- Google "Mallows Bay" for a wide array of photos