

July-November 2018

NEWSLETTER

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



PAULA CHOW - "SOCIAL WORKER FOR THE EARTH"

The Rappahannock Group of the Sierra Club Program Chair Paula Chow has received a special community "Difference Maker" award. The paper published a special magazine section that highlights all the 2018 difference maker award winners. There is a great article by Cathy Dyson on Fredericksburg.com about Paula. Please congratulate Paula Chow on her receiving this well-deserved award.

MEMO FROM THE CHAIR, LINDA C. MULLER

"I go to nature to be soothed and healed, and to have my senses put in order."

— John Burroughs

Outings-Get Outdoors

Autumn colors are arriving a little later than usual thanks to a warm and rainy fall season. On this last day of October, the trees are pitching a color storm of fiery red, orange and yellow. A brisk walk in the cooler fall air revs up the senses and re-charges our batteries. It's truly a great time to enjoy nature's colorful canvas.

The Rappahannock Group re-introduced our very own "Outings" programs through the excellent leadership of Suzanne and Richard Eggeling and mentoring assistance of Jim Lynch. The Outings are educational "field trips" that cover a variety of "terrain" and educational subjects. Our first scheduled outing was a hike in Fredericksburg, followed by other scheduled outings to the King George Landfill and the Dahlgren Heritage Rail Road Trail. The next scheduled outing is Saturday November 10, 2018, a 3.5 mile Crow's Nest Hike.

If you want to stay informed about upcoming RGSC Outings or want to share ideas for an outing in the RGSC region (includes Culpeper, Orange, Spotsylvania, Stafford, Fredericksburg, King George, Caroline, Westmoreland Counties) Please contact Suzanne and Richard Eggeling at [lizzigo\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:lizzigo(at)gmail.com)

Climate Change - "Re-Scheduled Due to Flooding or Potential Flooding"

It seems there was a recurring theme over the summer that spilled into early Fall. Heavy rain events from Hurricanes Florence & Michael threw RGSC scheduled events "overboard". Heavy rain storms in July cancelled our first outing due to severe flooding along the Rappahannock River, and the early storm trajectory of Hurricane Florence was enough of a threat to cancel our September Fall Open House. We apologize to all for any inconvenience this may have caused.

Remnants of Hurricane Florence and Hurricane Michael (in early October) did impact regions around Virginia with deadly tornados and localized flooding. We are experiencing more intense rain events and persons who live in flood prone areas are susceptible to a repeating pattern of damage due to flooding. Some real estate markets located in coastal regions are all ready seeing a diminution of property value. In a [Wall Street Journal Series: "Price of Climate"](#) the 10/31/18 article focused on the real estate market, pointing out:

"Up and down the eastern seaboard, many home prices near water's edge aren't doing as well as homes inland in the same county, a Journal examination found. Real-estate brokers, homeowners and prospective buyers say a big reason is the perception that climate change is making such properties a riskier investment."

MEMO FROM THE CHAIR, LINDA C. MULLER CONT.

Some may argue that the rainy and unsettling weather we experienced this summer and into the early Fall was just an "anomaly", an "outlier", a "once in a 100 year" event and not due to climate change. Those who suggest the "anomaly" theory should seriously re-consider. The insurance industry is dependent on number crunching actuaries who analyze the financial consequences of risk. If there is a loss trend, premiums can go up or the insurance company may decide to stop offering coverage all together. In a Wall Street Journal article titled: "[Climate Change is Forcing the Insurance Industry to Re-Calculate](#)"(10/2/18)

"Big insurers are expanding teams of in-house climatologists, computer scientists and statisticians to redesign models to incorporate the effect of the warming earth on hailstorms, hurricanes, flooding and wildfires. Insurers such as Swiss Re Group say hurricanes like Harvey and Florence, which caused widespread flooding, could represent a more common occurrence in the coming decades."

The impact of climate change varies depending on geographic location. It may be floods, drought, wild fires, melting permafrost. The common cause of climate change is an alarming and consistent increase of atmospheric greenhouse gases, primarily carbon dioxide and methane. Extraction and burning of fossil fuels exacerbates the problem. In Virginia, Sierra Club volunteers can engage in several climate and energy [campaigns](#) (click on "Our Work"): Climate Action, #Readyfor100, More Solar More Places, Turn Not Burn (Wind Energy). In Fredericksburg, volunteers can sign up with "[Fossil Free Fredericksburg](#)". Taking action is required at the local, state and federal level.

PLEASE JOIN US FOR RAPPAHANNOCK GROUP'S ANNUAL HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE!

Sunday December 2, 2018 2-4pm, Rapp. Central Library
1201 Caroline Street, Fredericksburg, VA

Guest Speaker: **Sarah Reinhardt, MPH, RD, the Union of Concerned Scientists: "From Farm to Fork: Ranking Our States on Farm and Food Health"**

Free and open to the public. Light refreshments, door raffles, camaraderie.

SPOTSYLVANIA PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING DECEMBER 5TH 2018

The [Spotsylvania Planning Commission](#) is holding another meeting to hear from citizens about the proposed solar farm for Spotsylvania. Be there if you want to influence members about the proposed solar farm.

Day and Time of Meetings: 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.

Location: Board of Supervisors Room at the Holbert Building, 9104 Courthouse Road, Spotsylvania, VA

EMAIL NEWS GROUP SIGN UP

rappsierragroup@gmail.com

CONSERVATION CHAIR, BILL JOHNSON

Plastic Pollution - here's some links to issues caused by plastics:

- [Report: Greenhouse Gas Emissions from plastics are predicted to rise](#)
- [Study: Looking at how plastics affect climate change](#)
- [Marine plastic: Hundreds of fragments in dead seabirds](#)
- [Studies: Microplastics found in human stools for the first time](#)
- [Plastic particles in bottled water could be killing you: study](#)
- [Plastic to outweigh fish in the sea if waste keeps flowing](#)

RGSC Student Interns:

Maddie Reid, from the University of Mary Washington (UMW), has returned for another year of interning with RGSC. Additionally, we have three new RGSC interns from UMW. They are Shannon Harmon, Adrienne Matute, and Rina Murasaki. Please welcome these students as new Sierra Club members and activists.

We have been discussing local and national environmental topics. During this semester, we intend to research, write, and send Letters to the Editor (LTEs) to multiple news organizations. That will lay the groundwork for additional environmental research and papers documenting local problems that are national issues.

RGSC Open Houses & Tabling Events:

August 8 - National Night Out in 3 locations this year - Stafford, Spotsylvania and Fredericksburg

Aug. 28 - Hazel Hill Back to School

Aug. 29 - Lafayette Elementary School - Back to School orientation

Sept 6 - Bike Decorating Party for Saturday's Walk & Pedal for the Program event

Sept 6 - Joining national and global movement Rise for the Climate, Jobs & Justice - Fredericksburg and area's event "Walk & Pedal for the Planet"

RGSC and the Sierra Club Grassroots Network:

Last year we applied for a grant to enhance our outreach for fracking in the Taylorsville Basin. Unfortunately, the grants are very competitive, and we did not get one. However, the program has been opened again for this year. We intend to apply again, working with Fossil Free Fredericksburg to help move the Sierra Club's national campaign *Ready for 100* forward in Fredericksburg. This campaign seeks to get local and state governments to commit to moving towards satisfying 100% of its energy needs through renewable sources, like wind and solar. The four goals of the [Sierra Club Grassroots Network](#) are to:

- Advocate a national or regional conservation issue;
- Engage and empower grassroots leaders and volunteers - especially multiple Club entities;
- Reach out to and partner with new communities; and,
- Proposals that actively support the [Sierra Club Jemez Principles](#).

CONSERVATION CHAIR, BILL JOHNSON CONT.

Spotsylvania County and Solar Power:

There has been a lot of controversy over a proposed solar farm in Spotsylvania, near Fawn Lake. We have been attempting to understand the issues involved.

The [Free Lance-Star](#) (Fredericksburg.com) published a story about the issue at the Spotsylvania County Board of Supervisors meeting. Here is an extract from that story, addressing what residents' say are their concerns: "The Fawn Lake citizen committee's list of requirements covers a range of issues residents have repeatedly brought up at public meetings. The concerns include water usage, toxic chemicals in the solar panels, erosion control, setbacks from adjoining properties and protecting property values."

Each solar project is unique with its own site requirements. The permitting process and local rezoning requirements provide the opportunity for local governments and the public to raise concerns and address outstanding questions, Ivy Main, the Virginia Chapter Renewable Energy Issues Chair, and who writes extensively on all aspects of solar energy in her blog [powertothepeopleva.com](#) commented: "Most of the concerns are the same as with any development—erosion, visual concerns. The ones specific to solar strike me as ones driven by fear of the unknown, and the developer should be able to address them adequately. I think many people don't understand how solar works. Water usage? You don't need water to install solar panels. After they're installed, rain washes the panels. Maybe if it doesn't rain for weeks they'd have to rinse pollen off. But compared to agricultural uses? or any human uses? As for toxic metals, yes, solar panels are made with small amounts of toxic metals, but they don't wash off onto the soil in the rain. They would only pose a threat if you smashed them up and left them there. The permit doesn't allow that."

There are many outstanding issues that have been raised for this particular project. Some of them include: What is the track record of the company installing the panels? Is there an alternative site that wouldn't require destroying thousands of acres of woodland and destroying local wildlife? How will the installation affect nearby property values? What are the site restoration and panel recycling plans and are they included with the initial permit application? What are the bonding requirements and will there be sufficient financial assurances should something bad happen? What are the erosion controls to be implemented? What is the impact on the neighborhood because of truck traffic and road damage and who will pay for those costs? Will there be chemical leakage from the panels as they age? What are the setback requirements from other properties? If the net gain in electric power enough to offset the loss of forests, and how long will it take to break even ('tree math')? The Spotsylvania Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on December 5, 2018 on the proposed solar project.

<http://www.spotsylvania.va.us/content/27452/20993/>

Coal Ash:

While there are no coal ash dump sites in RGSC territory, we are downstream from Possum Point, in Prince William County, and what they do with that coal ash could float down the river to us.

There have been 2 late-breaking developments on coal ash. [The Northam Administration announced an agreement](#) between the Commonwealth of Virginia and Dominion Energy to ensure that the coal ash at Dominion's Chesapeake Energy Center will be required to meet the same regulatory standards as all coal ash facilities across the state. [Dominion published a report](#) mandated by the Virginia legislature to consider the feasibility and cost of recycling coal ash in Virginia.

Here is a [link](#) to information produced by the Virginia Conservation Network (VCN) on coal ash. Here is an article in the Virginia Mercury on a [bi-partisan response](#) to this development, and the prospects that the Virginia legislature will address this issue in the 2019 General Assembly.

Chapter Executive Committee (ExCom) Elections:

Chapter ExCom elections will be held for 4 At-Large volunteer members in January. Look for your ballot in the next Virginia Sierran, cut it out, and mail it to the Nominating Committee, c/o Bill Johnson, PO Box 5787, Fredericksburg, Va 22403.

There are 8 At-Large members on the ExCom, and every year, half come up for vote. This year, Marjorie Leach-Parker, Bill Penniman, and Emily Bowman are up for re-election. Now is the time to nominate additional candidates for this important position in the Chapter. Nominations should be emailed to billatthelake@comcast.net no later than December 1, 2018, so they can be included in the Sierran.

Sierra Club By-laws state that ExCom members who have won 3 successive terms, must take a year off before running for election again. Unfortunately, one of our volunteer stalwarts, Susan Stillman, has been a Chapter At-Large ExCom member for the past 3 terms and cannot run this next election. She has done great work for the Sierra Club, and we should all thank her for it.

Rappahannock Group (RGSC) Executive Committee (ExCom) Elections:

Our group also is holding elections for members to join our local ExCom. We need volunteers to join our ExCom to help address local environmental issues. Look for an email blast from our Chair Person, Linda Muller, and please vote on line.

OCTOBER 2018 - OUTINGS UPDATE

On July 13th we really enjoyed an interesting, well attended outing to Waste Management Group in King George County. This outing for the Rappahannock Group included an informative presentation of day to day operations of the WM plant, the process of generating energy from methane produced by waste materials, followed by a tour of the power generation rooms. This enterprise is both profitable for the county and reduces the amount off methane polluting our fragile atmosphere. A sincere thanks to WM management for their hospitality!

On October 14th we enjoyed beautiful weather, hiking part of the fascinating Dahlgren Rail Heritage Trail (DRHT), in King George County. We learned about the history of the original rail line which has been repurposed into a most pleasant trail maintained by volunteers. These 'Friends of DRHT' perform all of the maintenance on the 15.7 mile trail, which is popular for walkers, dog owners/walkers, runners and cyclists. Overhanging tree limbs provide shade in the summer, and the level grade is ideal for quiet and peaceful outdoor activities, including horseback riding in organized groups, even (inclement weather permitting!) cross-country skiers and those wishing to snow shoe - a rare trail for all seasons!

The trail has recently been named a National Recreation Trail by the Department of Interior and has been designated a segment of the Potomac National Heritage trail, which extends from Pittsburg Pennsylvania, to Virginia's Chesapeake Bay. The plan is for the trail to become part of the state park system, so Friends of the DRHT encourage Sierra Club Virginia Chapter and all users to contact Senator Richard Stuart to support this effort: "Make the Dahlgren Rail Heritage Trail part of the Virginia state park system".

Thank you Jim Lynch for enlightening us on the history and evolution of the DRHT.

For the second time this year, we had to change the date for an outing due to weather. Unfortunately, some people weren't able to make it on November 11th. We took a 3.5 mile hike in Stafford County at [Crow's Nest Natural Area Preserve](#). We hiked to a scenic turnaround point overlooking Potomac Creek. This preserve is a critical habitat for migrating song birds, eagles, and home for a wide variety of marine life. We then headed off to a small restaurant in Embry Mills, enjoying conversation and good food.

Check out our Facebook page for some pictures. <https://www.sierraclub.org/virginia/rappahannock>

Future Outings:

End of January. We're off to Chester (south Richmond, VA) to visit the main recycling facility for our region: TFC Recycling. This is a county single stream Materials Recycling Facility (MRF). Many have come to us with questions about single stream recycling so we heading south to get some answers. Following the plant visit we look forward to a pleasant lunch at Howlett's Restaurant and Tavern in Chester for our typical 'post outing discussion' (POD) where we solicit ideas for future outings. More details to come on our Facebook page.

Do you have any ideas for future outings in our Region? If so, please contact us with suggestions.

OTHER LINKS

Virginia Conservation Network
www.vcnva.org

Virginia League of Conservation
Voters
www.valcv.org

Southern Environmental Law
Center
www.southernenvironment.org

Friends of the Rappahannock
www.riverfriends.org

RGSC MAILING ADDRESS

RGSC
PO Box 7972
Fredericksburg, VA 22404

OUTING LEADERS INTRODUCTION, RICHARD & SUZANNE EGGELING

At our January meeting Richard and Suzanne Eggeling jointly volunteered to be our 'Outing Leaders'.

Their motivation is driven by a longtime interest and participation in outdoor activities and hobbies. Prior to working and eventually retiring in Fredericksburg (Suzanne, Special Ed. Teacher; Richard, Product Management) the Eggelings raised their two daughters in Roanoke, where for twenty five years they enjoyed hiking sections of the nearby Appalachian Trail, canoeing on the James and New rivers, bicycling on the Blue Ridge Parkway, and competitive and recreational sailing on Smith Mountain Lake.

Now, as we all witness the dismantling of protections to open spaces, rivers and even aquifers, Richard and Suzanne, like so many of us, realize that future generations may not take for granted all that mother nature has provided in the past. It is clear, preservation of the environment demands that as many of us as possible engage in the process; we must be proactive, we must be positive, and we must be balanced.

It is with this mindset (consistent with Sierra Club philosophy) that Richard and Suzanne would like to expose 'Outing' participants to the pleasure of hiking local trails (where appreciation promotes interest) and, equally relevant, touring regional power generation and waste management facilities (where education and understanding promotes commitment). A 'post-outing discussion' (pod) will be held after each event at the nearest 'down home' coffee shop, microbrewery or vineyard, to get immediate feedback from participants, solicit ideas for future outings, and promote participation.

To date, overseas travel to Thailand and Indonesia, followed by Suzanne's hip surgery, have unfortunately interfered with the Outings schedule. Current plans are to arrange two or three outings between mid-June and July-end, these will be advertized in the appropriate format and space. Richard and Suzanne have simple objectives for every outing: exercise, enlighten, and engage!

Our first outing is scheduled for Saturday, June 30th, 4:00pm meet at Old Mill Park, near main picnic shelter at end of gravel parking area, (look for Sierra Club banner) then walk the Canal Path Heritage Trail (1.8 miles). For those willing to do so, garbage bags will be provided for loose trash picked up (especially plastic bags!) during our walk. Please note trash pickup is not mandatory. Following the walk we will retire to the Red Dragon Brewery for our 'post-outing discussion' (pod), and libation.

For those able to participate in a weekday outing, on July 13th we have arranged a one hour, supervised tour of the Waste Management Systems facility at the King George Landfill. Meet-up time for the tour is 12 noon, with the location of POD (yes, 'post-outing discussion') to be confirmed.

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 and enter "Earth Day" on the subject line.

Fracking - Anyone interested in helping to educate residents of Caroline County about FRACKING, contact Paula Chow -

TIPS COLUMN

Paula Chow:

In keeping with the reducing and eliminating waste (especially plastics), these tips are about the holidays and entertaining and plastic use. Seriously consider changing how you do things. When folks know your intentions, they become educated and will want to be part of the effort.

If you are hosting a large group, have every guest bring their own beverage glass (wine glass, beer mug, etc.) and even service ware. Sounds *inconvenient*, cheap and *unappealing*? Well, the marine life in the waterways and oceans find plastics from humans *unappealing* in their home. And environmental groups are *inconveniently* having to incessantly fight to keep our air clean (plastic pollution from cradle to grave). OR, you can rent the wine glasses and silverware (or buying another couple of sets are just as inexpensive if you entertain a lot).

If you have a small sized party, use regular glasses, plates and silverware. Ask for help with washing the dishes.

Dare to bring your own wine glass to the cocktail party that you know will have plastic ware.

Be the change you want to see in this world!

Diana Johnson:

'Alternate glasses'

If you do any canning, you might have all the glasses you need, unless, of course, you have a nice bounty from a good harvest. People who can their garden food usually have lots of ball jars of multiple sizes. If you have the small ones, they are nice-sized emergency glasses for all occasions.

You Are What You Eat

Buy organic and you will be happy you did. Perhaps not now, but years from now when your body is not filled with glyphosate and many other chemicals that are used regularly for fertilizing and pest killing. The mega farms that only produce one crop are not only slowly killing us they are also killing the organisms that should be living underground aerating and nourishing the soil that feeds the plants. By regenerative farming, rotating the crops every year, the soil remains healthy and there is less infestation of bugs. Organic farms do that. You can spend your money now paying a bit more for your healthy food or you will pay later for medication with all their side effects that you will be prescribed later. Your really are what you eat.

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: Suzanne and Richard Eggeling, lizzigo@gmail.com

Interns: Maddie Reid, Shannon Harmon, Adrienne Matute and Rina Muraski