



# Catoctin News

Newsletter of the Catoctin Group serving  
Carroll and Frederick Counties

Volume 10 Issue 3

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## Update on Quantum Loophole Construction Activities & Data Center Approvals in Frederick County

*Sierra Club Catoctin Group continues to partner with  
Sugarloaf Alliance and Smarter Growth Alliance of Frederick County  
to achieve due diligence at all levels*

By James P. Wagner

Over the summer, Sierra Club Catoctin Group (SCCG) remained engaged in the issue of Quantum Loophole's (QL's) construction activities, and in the broader issue of data center approvals in Frederick County. The following are a few brief updates.

Broadly, we continued to partner with Sugarloaf Alliance and with the Smarter Growth Alliance of Frederick County (SGAFC) to try to achieve due diligence at all levels. The issues surrounding Quantum Loophole specifically, and data centers generally, continued to receive considerable attention in the local press.

On June 22, County Executive Jessica Fitzwater signed an Executive Order creating a 12-member Data Center Work Group which is tasked with examining County policy and regulations related to data centers. County Executive Fitzwater has acknowledged the need to strengthen current critical digital infrastructure (CDI) regulations to insure the well-being of the community and the environment. The Work Group is expected to present its recommendations by December 1, 2023, and the County Council will presumably promptly review and act on them.

On July 13, Quantum Loophole held a Community Information Meeting at Hood College. Many

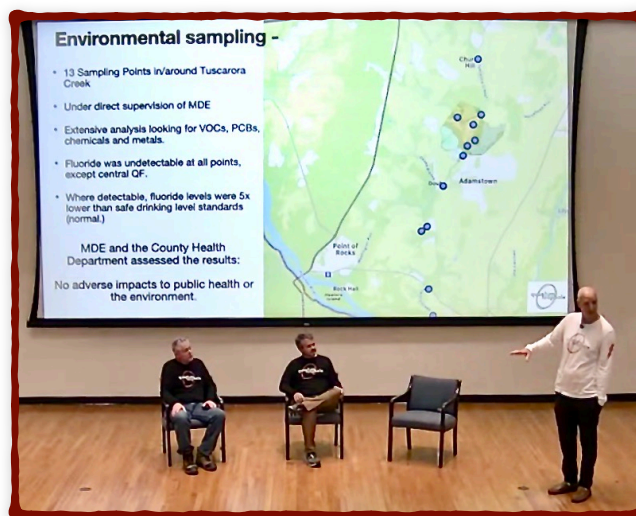
members of SCCG were present and expressed their concerns in questions and comments to company management.

On July 27, 2023, to the dismay of many, the Frederick County Board of Zoning Appeals voted to grant QL's request for a special exception to County zoning law, allowing QL to drill in the floodplain of the Monocacy River in southern Frederick County in crossing the river with their "QLoop" fiber optic conduit.

And most recently, on September 10, in solidarity with SGAFC, SCCG sent a letter to County Executive Fitzwater expressing support for a moratorium on all data center site plan approvals until the newly established Work Group makes its recommendations and the County has had time to act on those recommendations.

It is expected that our involvement in this, including our collaborations, will continue. Such centers, built properly, may well

benefit the County, but the specific problems noted here (and in the previous Newsletter article), as well as the broader issues of energy, water and other infrastructure demands intrinsic to these facilities, have got to be thoroughly examined and addressed.



Quantum Loophole Community Information Meeting. Live streamed, July 13.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a-vmQ1rZw64>

# 5,000,000 Trees For Maryland

In 2021, the Maryland General Assembly passed legislation in support of planting and maintaining 5 million native trees in the State by 2031.

A key focus of this pledge is supporting tree equity through targeted planting in underserved urban communities. In 2022, Maryland released its final “Plan for Growing 5 Million Trees in Maryland” with the support of the state’s Commission for the Innovation and Advancement of Carbon Markets and Sustainable Tree Plantings.

As part of the initiative, native tree seeds are needed for growing trees at the Maryland

across Maryland and Delaware.

A Recommended Tree List from the Department of Natural Resources includes both large and small native trees. [Tree List](#)

You can also get \$25 of the purchase price of a native tree at participating nurseries under the [Marylanders Plant Trees program](#).

To grow all these trees one needs seeds. The Antietam-

Conococheague Watershed Alliance (ACWA) has organized several seed collections this year. The one remaining is in the list below.



[Antietam-Conococheague Watershed Alliance - ACWA](#)

State Tree Nursery. The John S. Ayton State Tree Nursery on Maryland’s Eastern Shore near Preston produces millions of trees and shrub seedlings each year for reforestation projects

## October 7, Saturday, 1pm—3pm:

The ACWA will be hosting a Tree Planting & Redbud Seed Collection at Smithsburg Lions Community Park. To participate in this event fill out the [form](#) for the Antietam Conococheague Watershed Alliance.

## October 28, Saturday, 10:15am—2:30pm:

The ACWA and Beaver Creek Watershed Association will cohost a free and open to the public talk and walk to provide updates on issue concerning watersheds and volunteer stewardship events. The walk will be to a local beaver dam on Beaver Creek.

As another indication of climate change, the paw paw collection date at Washington Monument State Park had to be changed from October 7 to September 19 — maybe they will repeat the event next year. More seeds will be needed next year. The Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basis (ICPRB) has [information](#) on setting up a collection event.





# SCCG ExCom - Now and Future

by Jane Ladner

Paul Walker resigned as SCCG ExCom Chair on August 5. He will remain on the ExCom until the end of his present term which is the end of the calendar year. Thank you, Paul, for all your work and leadership.

At the present, Kerri Hesley and Ron Kaltenbaugh are SCCG's acting co-chairs.

By the time this newsletter is published, the SCCG nominating

committee (Cindy Pole, chair; Paul Walker and Jane Ladner) will have sent their nominations for the SCCG ExCom to the chapter.

There are 4 positions open this year. The election is held via electronic and (for those without email) paper ballots between November 3 —

December 2, 2023. Candidates who are elected will serve for two years. The terms begin in January, 2024.

***"Thank you, Paul,  
for all your work  
and leadership."***

## RECENT SCCG ACTIVITIES



SCCG was present for Frederick In The Streets. Cindy Poole and James Wagner (photo left) are shown on duty at the information booth.

Washington County Sierra Club and SCCG held a joint picnic at Washington Monument State Park, September 17. The company and food were great, conversations flowed, and rain reinforced commitments to return to appreciate the views and hike the trails.



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Stream-link Education Job Opening

Many members have planted trees with Stream-link over the years. Stream-link is a local non-profit organization. Its mission is to connect community to conservation through educational volunteer tree planting experiences to improve water quality in our local streams.

There is a job opening for Director of this organization. If you are a tree person and would like to apply, the job description and procedure are on the [web](#).

### Stream-link Volunteer Opportunities

#### Nursery Teams

Help grow native trees in outdoor nurseries. \*Must be at least 10 years old.

#### Tree Planting

Community tree-planting events are fun and suitable for ALL AGES.

#### Tree Teams

get out in wild fields and maintain young forests. \*Must be at least 10 years old

### Upcoming Volunteer Activities

October 14, 21, 28; November 4, 11 — Tree Planting

October 7; December 2, 9, 16 — Nursery Teams

November 18; December 2, 9, 16 — Tree Teams

#### SIGN UP AT

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C4CA4A72EA7FCCF8-streamlink#/>

### Officers/Committee Chairs

<b>Chairperson</b>	Kerri Hesley and Ron Kaltenbaugh, acting
<b>Vice Chair</b>	Open
<b>Secretary</b>	Open
<b>Treasurer</b>	Patty O'Malley
<b>Membership</b>	Cindy Poole
<b>Executive Committee</b>	Patti Fredericks, Ron Kaltenbaugh, Bob Ladner, Patty O'Malley, James Wagner, Paul Walker
<b>Newsletter</b>	Manager/Editor: Jane Ladner, Design Editor: Dee Dolan



#### Further Information

<http://www.sierraclub.org/maryland/catoctin-group>