

NATURAL PLACES NEWS



Andrew Mayovsky for Shutterstock

Welcome to the April 2020 Issue of Natural Places News!

This newsletter is a publication of the Maryland Sierra Club Natural Places Committee. The purpose of this newsletter is to provide information and access to recent articles, publications, outings, and website resources that promote our mission. Our mission is to explore, enjoy, and protect natural areas in Maryland, and support the Natural Places Committee members. We value native biological diversity of all plants, animals, and fungi, including native flowers, ferns, mushrooms, birds, mussels, butterflies, frogs, and racoons. We value the diverse native habitats, including forests, meadows, wetlands, rivers, mountains, and coastal areas. Our NEXT MEETING will be Saturday, May 16th, 2:30pm - 4:30pm on Zoom. We hope you can join us! [Register here](#)
<https://www.sierraclub.org/maryland/calendar>.

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NATURE'S RESTORATION OF BALANCE ON OUR INTERCONNECTED EARTH



(Photo source: <https://newearth.media/native-american-code-ethics/>)

"There's a prophecy that says that at this time in Earth's history, the eagle and the condor will rejoin, remembering they are one. They will reconnect and remember their common origin and share knowledge and wisdom and save each other. The eagle and the condor will fly together and the world will come into balance at a point of near extinction. We are at that point now."

-Eriel Deranger, Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation

[\(https://bioneers.org/eriel-deranger-indigenous-communities-leading-environmental-justice-movement-ztvz1709/\)](https://bioneers.org/eriel-deranger-indigenous-communities-leading-environmental-justice-movement-ztvz1709/)

INDIGENOUS WISDOM FOR A MODERN WORLD

Indigenous teachings long have been quieted -almost to a whisper- by the noise of modern day's ever-accelerating pace of life, but as we experience this screeching halt of our "normal" lives, the age-old wisdom of indigenous peoples is proving hard to ignore any longer. Indigenous wisdom teaches that humans are *not* the center of the universe with the right to take anything and everything we can possibly want, but rather are one integral part of an interconnected web with all other life forms on Mother Earth. Humans are not respecting the land and animals we have taken so much from. Mother Earth cannot come close to replenishing her resources at the rate we are taking them, therefore we are "in debt" with no way to pay. Nature is always seeking balance, but right now, the scales are tipped severely against her. Could our current pandemic be our wake-up call to restore Earth's balance?

This month, Natural Places News turns to indigenous wisdom to examine what lessons can be learned if we are willing to listen. Daniel Christian Wahl, author of “Designing Regenerative Cultures, believes that humans can be a keystone species that helps hold an ecosystem together, rather than being [“an ecological disaster agent.”](#)

<https://medium.com/age-of-awareness/valuing-traditional-ecological-knowledge-and-indigenous-wisdom-d26ebdd9e141>) Historically, humans have used techniques such as forest-gardening, composting, and burning to shape the environment in sustainable ways (Pearce, 2013). These types of indigenous knowledge are on the verge of being lost. Wahl and others are visionaries for the non-profit organization Bioneers (https://youtu.be/9xhC__wfS0U) which is dedicated to preserving and developing indigenous knowledge.

[Valuing Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Indigenous Wisdom](#)



<https://medium.com/age-of-awareness/valuing-traditional-ecological-knowledge-and-indigenous-wisdom-d26ebdd9e141>)

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND RACIAL JUSTICE ARE INTERTWINED



(Photo source: <https://sites.psu.edu/theculturalcatharsis/2018/01/18/our-multicultural-missteps/>)

In addition to the loss of indigenous wisdom, many Sierrans are concerned about environmental injustice that particularly impacts Native Americans and other minority groups. Their protests have gone mostly unheard for many years until the nation started paying attention in 2016 to the conflict at Standing Rock over the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL). As we begin to look closer, DAPL appears to be just the tip of the iceberg of environmental injustices in our country.

(<https://www.sierraclub.org/articles/2020/02/fighting-dakota-access-pipeline-expansion-state-state>).

Locally, Natural Places members discussed concerns about the following environmental injustices that have now become even more apparent:

- More people are using local parks, especially apartment residents without yards, and inadequate access to parks for everyone equally has been an issue.
- Areas of heavy air pollution are contributing to racial disparities in COVID-19 deaths due to higher rates of asthma and other chronic health conditions caused by living near industrial pollutants such as incinerators.
- The increased number of sirens in urban areas create higher rates of anxiety and fear.
- Some persons of color worry that wearing bandanas and masks may make them a target of police.
- Inadequate access to healthcare and sick leave expose economic and health injustices contributing to higher rates of Covid-19 deaths in minority communities.
- Food access is a problem due to food deserts in low-income neighborhoods and shortages due to panic buying.

Natural Places members have committed to establishing programs in underserved areas. As one member stated, environmental injustice has been an issue for years, and the message did not sink in, but this virus is bringing the message home.

Another Maryland Sierra Club Natural Places Steering Committee Member, Melina Frame, stated that “the current pandemic is showing with terrible clarity all the weaknesses in our country. There is a hidden and underappreciated but powerful connection between environmental injustice and proper functioning of our systems. A huge swath of our population does not have access to natural places or good foods and this affects their health and yet these very same underpaid, underinsured, underhoused people are the same people growing our food, delivering and selling it, working the frontlines of our electrical network, and making sure water comes out of the faucet. So we are in the situation of having to address our environmental injustice as we work to come out of this crisis alive and even thriving. As Hop Hopkins said in Sierra Club, **Community Gardening** offers another solution to environmental justice issues, although the overlap between meeting the immediate need of housing for the ‘very disenfranchised’ and the urban planning of affordable and ecological housing in high density urban environments is not immediately visible”.



Some examples of nearby organizations that are working to erase food deserts are DC's Three Part Harmony Farm (<https://matteroffact.tv/seeds-of-change-how-urban-farming-is-helping-erase-food-deserts/>) and Baltimore's Filbert Street Community Garden, pictured here (<http://filbertstreetgarden.org/>). For more information on how to start or find a Community Garden in your area, check out <https://extension.umd.edu/hgic/topics/community-gardens> .

RESOURCES



Another type of resource for increasing environmental justice is local conferences. Audubon Naturalist Society's recent Taking Nature Black Conference took place on February 16th, 2020. People from many walks created a rare space for native-Americans, African-Americans, native Spanish speakers and many others from various and diverse ethnic backgrounds. The daylong event featured singing, dancing, teaching, rapping, praying, hiking, meditating and many other forms and styles of creative and environmental self actualization (<https://anshome.org/taking-nature-black/>).

[Highlight video of Taking Nature Black:](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s2Q2zyGteFY&fbclid=IwAR118UqOEHwuPRhzVTxMmg-Zn69c0HdR0yhYN97BE2RZi9VcbSxMPB0gg2Q>

An additional resource is the work of famous advocate Dr. Robert Bullard, a professor of Urban Planning and Environmental Justice at Texas Southern University. He is known by some as the “Father of Environmental Justice” and has written 18 books centered around racial and environmental justice. The article below delves into the relationship between environmental and racial justice and everything we do affects this relationship.



“The environmental justice movement has basically redefined what environmentalism is all about. It basically says that the environment is everything: where we live, work, play, go to school, as well as the physical and natural world. And so we can’t separate the physical environment from the cultural environment. We have to talk about making sure that justice is integrated throughout all of the stuff that we do.” -Dr. Bullard

<https://www.goldmanprize.org/blog/environmental-racism-in-america-an-overview-of-the-environmental-justice-movement-and-the-role-of-race-in-environmental-policies/>

NATURAL PLACES ECO-ADVOCATE OF THE MONTH



INTERVIEW WITH Staci Hartwell, NAACP Maryland State Conference Co-Chair and Prince George's NAACP Chair, Solar Energy Advisor. Natural Places' Lily Fountain was impressed with Staci's insightful questions at the Maryland Recycling Facility tour sponsored by Maryland Sierra Club. We asked her for an interview, and she agreed!

1. (Natural Places News, NPN) Welcome, Staci. Please tell our audience about your background relating to environmental justice. (Staci Hartwell, SH). *I am a native Washingtonian. As an Energy Advisor, I have been responsible for the installation of over 40 MW of residential, commercial and industrial solar in Washington, DC and the State of Maryland. In July of 2019, I was asked to join the Prince George's County Branch of the NAACP as the Energy Chair and in November, 2019 was appointed as Environmental and Climate Justice Co-Chair for the twenty-four counties of the Maryland State Conference of the NAACP. I work with teams of professionals and local government, institutions of higher learning, legislators, community-based organizations, and more on "green initiatives." I also work with local governments to address climate- resilience planning.*

2. (NPN) What are some barriers and some solutions to environmental justice in Maryland? (SH) *It may sound altruistic, but we should embrace the mindset that "we are our brother's keeper." And as we build a vision for the changes we would like to see in our community for a better environment, we should include interests benefitting all members of our community. We need to make a commitment to help bridge the disparity gap in our planning and our aspirations for a better planet.*

A solution that fosters a better understanding of the needs of a diverse community is to become active in that community – reach across the table. Join a group or organization which addresses the needs of a diverse community. Most people don't know the NAACP was founded by white members and is open to ALL people. Join the NAACP. Become an active member. Conversely, invite members

of the African-American community to participate in ALL levels of leadership within the Sierra Club. Make it a goal to have your leadership reflect the diversity in the community it serves.

3. **(NPN) What resources for learning about environmental justice can you recommend? (SH)** They say “if you read three books on any subject, you will be more knowledgeable than eighty percent of the population.” My library includes books on environmental and climate justice, corporate social responsibility and the impact of climate change including *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate*, by Naomi Klein; *The Politics of Climate Justice*, by Patrick Bond; *Toward Climate Justice*, by Brian Tokar; *Contours of Climate Justice*, by Ulrich Brand; and *Greenhouse Gangsters vs. Climate Justice*, by San Francisco-based Corporate Watch Group, to name a few.

4. **(NPN) What do you see for the future for environmental justice in Maryland? (SH)** I see STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics) education and programs helping our students understand the challenges of climate change and inspiring them to find solutions. I see our kids “finding their way,” through activism. Also, let’s focus on changes we can make, as individuals, to help the environment. They do not have to be monumental changes; let’s start small. Let’s begin with things like learning how to recycle more accurately; embracing vegetarianism – start with “Meatless Mondays,” and see how that works; etc. Small changes can yield big results. At the least, small changes can help us adjust our mindset to be more receptive to greater change – it is a beginning. Also, please complete the 2020 Census survey to secure resources for your community. And finally, **VOTE!** This year may be particularly challenging, with Covid-19 challenges, so consider voting via absentee ballot or voting early.

HUMAN ACTIVITIES AND THE EMERGENCE OF THE PANDEMIC

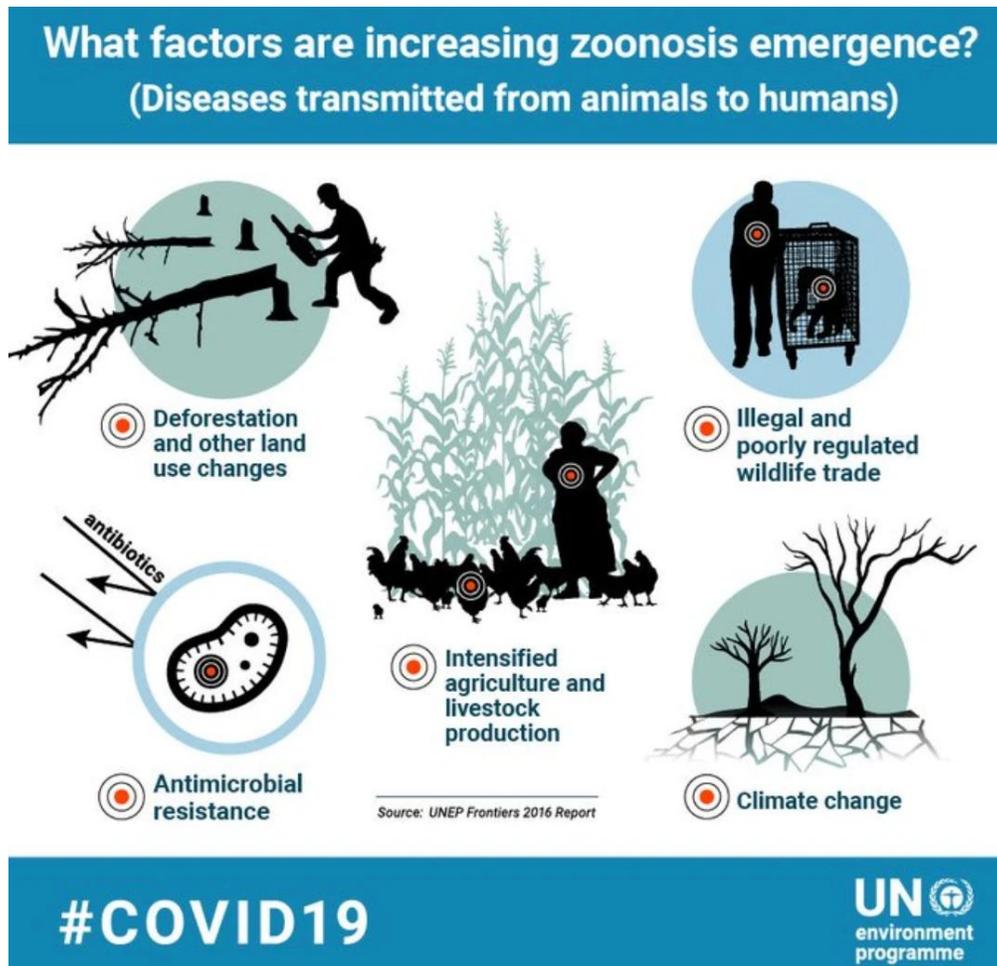


Ecology of Disease by Olaf Hajek

https://bioneers.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Olaf_Hajek_Ecology_of_Disease_WEB-2048x1731.jpg

In order for us to truly understand how to prevent future pandemics, we must take a look at how our actions have made conditions favorable for Covid-19 to enter our lives. A few connections may surprise you! Below is an infographic on the factors that increase the likelihood of a zoonosis emergence and a link to an article that explains the relationship.

“The health of people and the health of the planet are one and the same.”



https://www.plantbasednews.org/lifestyle/-we-must-change-how-we-treat-planet-animals?utm_content=buffer06ac&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook.com&utm_campaign=buffer

CALL TO ACTION

LEGISLATION SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS

Legislative Update:

- The Secretary of DNR has responded to the request for information about the status of a regulation change request from DNR to the Federal Government regarding the Maryland Joint House and Senate Resolutions urging the U.S. Congress to amend 21 U.S.C. § 601(w) to **exempt the wild catch of domestic catfish from certain inspection requirements**. Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio responded that “The USDA has not responded favorably to our previous requests

to have the regulations changed. It was our hope that passage of these Joint Resolutions would help raise awareness of the issue since the Chesapeake Bay is in a unique situation in that they are invasive species in our waters.

- The good news is that SB114 passed was successfully passed (see <http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgaweb/legislation/details/sb0114?ys=2020RS>), which provides DNR with broad pilot program authority.”



More Actions: Find out what you can do!

- [Write a letter to your editor](#) (see Marc’s example below) (<https://actionnetwork.org/letters/call-for-action-to-prevent-pandemics-by-protecting-wildlife/>)
- Contact your representative
[Demand a fair and just response to Covid-19](#) that prioritizes the most impacted communities in the US from your representative.
(<https://actionnetwork.org/letters/demand-a-globally-just-recovery-from-the-pandemic/>)
- Sign, Pledge, Contact, etc. [Endangered Species Coalition’s Action Page](#) has multiple ways to act: (<https://www.endangered.org/action/>)
- [Sign this petition](#) from the Center for Biological Diversity to ban cyanide bombs used to kill wildlife
(https://act.biologicaldiversity.org/onlineactions/Ji7_fNjoX0GEXThP6WMdoQ2?sourceid=1006372&fbclid=IwAR21RwBKTgdcsCVgV5RXzN77IBfjEz8L_bNaT5ifw4ajqZcWZxHrHdOzh4U)
- [Project Drawdown](#)
We already have the solutions, so which one will you choose to tackle?
(<https://www.drawdown.org/>)
- We need your ideas on how to lobby our legislators during the Stay At Home order. Please send your ideas to: naturalplacesnews@gmail.com .

OUTINGS AND EVENTS

CITY CLIMATE CHALLENGE BIOBLITZ INATURALIST

We’re continuing to work with nature lovers all around the world to make a record of the plants and animals that share the earth with us in 2020. Join the Maryland Chapter [here](#) and download the [iNaturalist](#) app on your phone.

(<https://act.sierraclub.org/events/details?formcampaignid=7013q000002CKlaAAO> & www.inaturalist.org)

ROCK CREEK PARK

Rock Creek Park is a great place to get your daily dose of nature if you live near the city! [Here’s a map](#) of all the trails at Rock Creek Park! (<https://www.nps.gov/rocr/planyourvisit/maps.htm>)

THE POWER OF OPEN SPACE

As most of us have been spending more time outdoors in our natural places, it is strikingly clear how valued those places really are, as discussed in this article from Preservation Maryland:

https://www.preservationmaryland.org/smart-growth-maryland-statement-the-value-of-open-space/?utm_source=Preservation+Maryland&utm_campaign=655711aa39-EMAIL_PHOENIX_APR_2020_4&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_d05c8ce9db-655711aa39-131614633

CHESAPEAKE OPEN SEED QUEST : A Citizen Science & Library Co-op Project.
May 2, 4pm Webinar & Hands On Project

CHEARS and School of Living (SOL) Heathcote Education invite you to an join a virtual and hands on home-based Seed Project

<https://act.sierraclub.org/events/details?formcampaignid=7013q0000028aYtAAI&iframe=true>

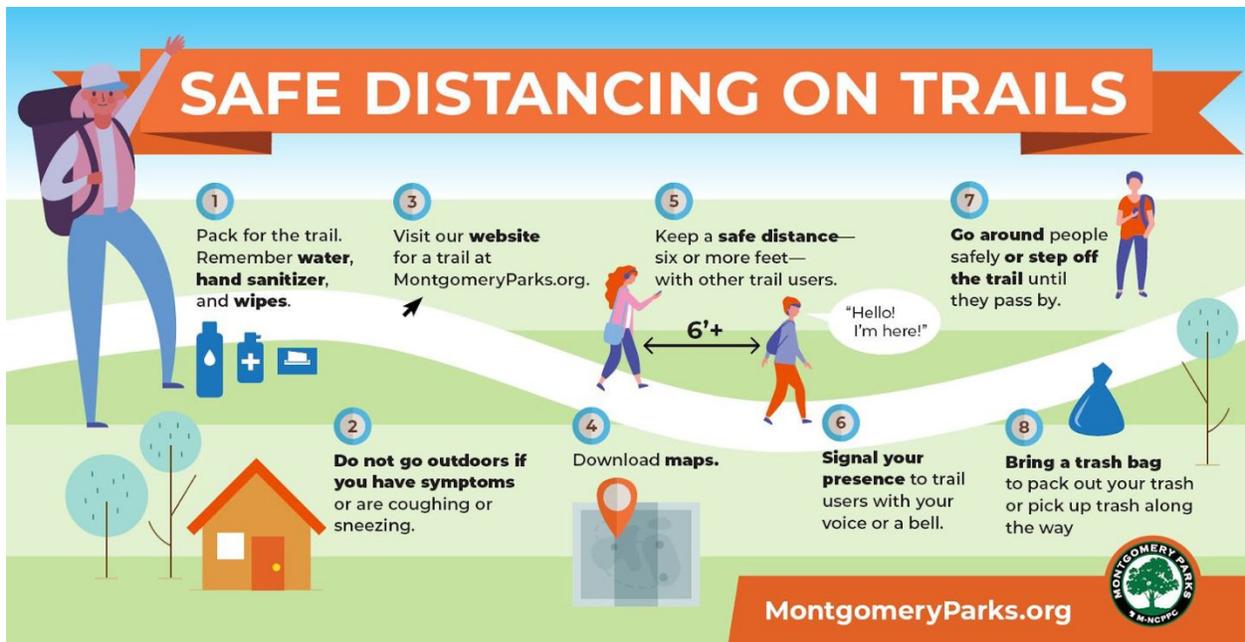
ENVIRONMENTAL BOOK GROUP

May 12, 7:30 PM

The Prince George's County Sierra Club will host an online discussion of "American Wasteland: How America throws away nearly half of its food" by Jonathan Bloom. Register, read the book, and get ready to share what you think, especially about the solutions proposed by the author. The discussion will be led by Na'ilah Dawkins.

<https://act.sierraclub.org/events/details?formcampaignid=7013q0000028cfiAAA&mapLinkHref=>

SAFE DISTANCING ON TRAILS



Always remember to stay safe while outside enjoying nature. This infographic from Montgomery Parks is a handy reminder to help you use best practices and enjoy your outside time to the fullest.

MARYLAND EDIBLE WILD PLANTS

By Dr. Marc Imlay

Earth Month is a great time to celebrate wildflowers. Native edible wild plants in Maryland include:

1. Spring Beauties
2. Sorrel
3. May Apples

4. Paw Paws
5. Fresh Greenbrier leaves
6. Cutleaf Toothwort
7. Smartweed
8. Violets
9. Sweetgum sap
10. American Persimmon
11. Native Licorice
12. Peppergrass
13. Service berry



Sorrel in particular is one of my favorite native herbs. It makes great soup. I use the native American species. Sorrel soup is also very popular in France with their French species (<https://nativeamericanherbalism.com/body-aches/sorrel-full-of-benefits/>). Sorrel provides numerous health benefits. Sorrel has an enormous amount of vitamins A, many minerals, citric acid as well as other attributes. Sorrel is a plant with small and strong branches that grows very easily. It is grown in Paraguay and is known as the *Rumex acetosa*, with abundant plant acids. It is possible to obtain very pleasantly flavored preparations in Native American herbal teas and juices. Sorrel does not require much water and favorably grows in warm climates and needs plenty of sunlight. Sorrel is underused mainly because the information about its important benefits for human and animal consumption are not well known.

Find a nursery near you to purchase your native plants!

[Maryland List](https://mdflora.org/nurseries.html) (<https://mdflora.org/nurseries.html>)

[Northern Virginia List](https://www.plantnovanatives.org/native-only-sellers) (<https://www.plantnovanatives.org/native-only-sellers>)

NATURAL PLACES COMMITTEE IN THE NEWS

Maryland Independent (Newspaper) April 8, 2020

https://www.somdnews.com/independent/opinion/letters_to_the_editor/dont-let-congress-gut-the-endangered-species-act/article_ba750233-26a0-5e06-b20f-944cdaaaf5f.html

Don't let Congress gut the Endangered Species Act

LETTER TO THE EDITOR Marc Imlay, Bryans Road

With all the congressional drama happening in Washington, D.C., I don't want to forget about one of our most fundamental environmental laws: The Endangered Species Act. Passed practically unanimously in 1973 during the Nixon administration, the Endangered Species Act protects our imperiled plants, wildlife and habitat and recognizes that they "are of esthetic, ecological, educational, istorical, recreational, and scientific value to the Nation and its people," according to the Act's preamble.

Let's add economic value to that list.

According to a 2017 report by the Outdoor Industry Association, the outdoor recreation economy generates \$887 billion in consumer spending, 7.6 million jobs, \$65.3 billion federal tax revenue, and \$59.2 billion state and local tax revenue. Yet, without clean habitats and biodiversity, we wouldn't have the privilege to enjoy the prosperity that comes from the recreation industry.

Right now, some members of Congress are promising to gut the Endangered Species Act to make way for fossil fuel development in critical habitat areas, including our public lands. We need the Endangered Species Act and other environmental laws to protect our disappearing wildlife and public lands.

Our senators should protect the Endangered Species Act.

Marc Imlay, Bryans Road

COOL STUFF!!!

ENVIRONMENTAL BOOKS, MOVIES, & PODCASTS

Members from Natural Places Committee put together a list of resources to help you enjoy natural places anytime:

[Adventure Media Books, Movies, and Podcasts for Environmentalists](#)

DAILY RAY OF HOPE

Need some good news to lift your spirits or just something new to check out? See below!



Subscribe to the [Daily Ray of Hope](https://www.sierraclub.org/sierra-club-email/daily-ray-of-hope) and every morning we'll send you a beautiful picture from the natural world along with some words of wisdom from Sierra Club. You can even submit your own photos for a chance to be shared with the community.

<https://www.sierraclub.org/sierra-club-email/daily-ray-of-hope>

A CASE FOR OPTIMISM

Feeling pessimistic? Read on to see why being optimistic is a political act.



(<https://medium.com/@AlexSteffen/the-politics-of-optimism-37a5006e8ba8#.5z6krxxkm>)

NATURE'S RIGHTS

In February, local groups in nine different Florida counties came together to attempt to secure the Rights of Nature. It is presently the only statewide Rights of Nature Initiative in the United States.

https://news.pachamama.org/local-florida-groups-form-the-only-statewide-rights-of-nature-initiative-in-the-u.s?_ga=2.122032269.725066773.1586967671-18812490.1584718033

GREENER THOUGHTS PODCAST

Prince George's Sierra Club Activist Na'ilah Dawkins shares her research and thoughts on all things Green! Check out her [Greener Thoughts Podcast](#) & the Sierra Club [blogpost](#) about Na'ilah and her

podcast (<https://anchor.fm/greenerthoughtspodcast> & <https://www.sierraclub.org/maryland/blog/2019/06/prince-george-s-sierra-club-activist-na-ilah-dawkins-her-podcast-greener>)

WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE YOU?

If we knew what it was like to be someone else, would we treat them differently (or vice versa)? Would we have more compassion? Would we continue to fight? Check out this thought-provoking [video](#) and decide for yourself.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uStmnoDUpOo&feature=emb_logo

MESSAGE TO THE WORLD FROM THE CEREMONIAL ELDERS OF WHAPMAGOOSTUI, Quebec, Canada

<https://bsnorrell.blogspot.com/2020/03/message-to-world-from-ceremonial-elders.html>

THE STORY OF THE EAGLE & THE CONDOR

Curious about the story Eriel was referring to in her quote at the top of the newsletter? Find out more [here](https://exploreddeeply.com/live-your-purpose/insight-into-your-spiritual-awakening-prophecy-of-the-rainbow-warriors). (<https://exploreddeeply.com/live-your-purpose/insight-into-your-spiritual-awakening-prophecy-of-the-rainbow-warriors>)

A CLOSING THOUGHT...

“Developing the sense of the common good is extremely useful and necessary in this time of renewal when difficulty and uncertainty about the future threaten to cloud our minds. Many questions can be quickly answered when using this sense. Fear will always lead us to isolate ourselves and stay defensive and confused. The sense of the common good leads us to work with others, staying open to discover the solutions that we can all find together. It is good to practice having little councils with those closest to us, making decisions by consensus. Hopefully, we will all engage in the larger council of the human race at this crucial time, and looking for the well-being of all, participate in making decisions that support change. Instead of watching the news every night to be told what is going on, we can all make the news together – really good news.” - Arkan Lushwala, *The Time of the Black Jaguar*



Supermoon 2020 by Lily Fountain

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Thanks to Natural Places Committee members and others who contributed to or edited this newsletter, in particular Staci Hartwell, Melina Frame, Na'ilah Dawkins, Linda Reiger, Sydney Jacobs, Laurel Imlay, Paula Posas.

**We welcome your contributions for our May newsletter to
naturalplacesnews@gmail.com**

**Hope to see you May 16th 2:30pm-4:30pm at our Natural
Places Committee Zoom Meeting!**

**[https://act.sierraclub.org/events/details?formcampaignid=7013q0000028diTAAQ&mapLinkH
ref=](https://act.sierraclub.org/events/details?formcampaignid=7013q0000028diTAAQ&mapLinkHref=)**

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Go on an Outing, or Donating <https://www.sierraclub.org/maryland/get-involved>