



# Catoctin News

Newsletter of the Catoctin Group  
Serving Carroll, Frederick and Washington counties

Volume 1 Issue 2

Summer 2014

## Landscaping for Wildlife

In case you haven't heard, many of our native creatures are in serious trouble. Our songbirds, pollinators, butterflies, and amphibians are declining in numbers.

The biggest reason for this decline is the loss of habitat. Parks and nature centers help, but are just small islands amongst all the human development—shopping centers, housing developments, roads, and parking lots. Small islands only support small populations of creatures—and small populations go extinct.

The best thing you can do to aid our native wildlife is to make your backyard into wildlife habitat. You do this by providing four basic needs—food, water, shelter, and space.

Unfortunately, turf grass, is not native and does not support wildlife. Before our land was a variety of habitats--forests, meadows, prairies, and wetlands. Different animals live in different kinds of habitat, and within a habitat, different creatures reside in different zones.

Even if you have only a small place for plants, you can increase the available support for wildlife by thinking vertically—trees, shrubs, perennials, and groundcover. Oak trees are one of the best things you can plant to support wildlife—including support for over 200 kinds of butterflies and moths!

A native plant garden can be beautiful and takes less time to maintain than mowing that lawn every few days.

### Food

The basis of life on our planet is plants and the insects that feed on them. Biodiversity is the key. Native plants are better than non-native because our critters evolved to eat our native plants.

Provide food for each season of the year. Leaves, flowers, berries, fruits, and nuts all feed wildlife. And don't forget that to have butterflies, you have to have caterpillars first. We need to provide caterpillar host plants, and we need to stop spraying pesticides that kill the larvae.

You can find recommendations for good native plants for Maryland wildlife in the publication *Native Plants for Wildlife Habitat and Conservation Planting* at <http://www.nps.gov/planTs/pubs/chesapeake/index.htm>

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## Remember to Vote in the Primaries Tuesday, June 24<sup>th</sup>

### Catoctin Group endorsements:

#### Carroll County

**Maria Warburton—County Comm Dist 3**

#### Frederick County

**Ron Young—Senator Dist 3**

**Jan Gardner—County Exec All Districts**

**Richard Maranto—Council Mem Dist 1**

**Annette Breiling— Council Mem Dist 2**

**M.C. Keegan-Ayer—Council Mem Dist 3**

**Jessica Fitzwater—Council Mem Dist 4**

**Mark Long—Council Mem Dist 5**

**Linda Norris—Council Mem At Large**

**Susan Reeder Jessee—Council Mem At Large**

**Explore, enjoy and protect the planet**

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See also: <http://www.bringingnaturehome.net/>  
<http://www.dnr.state.md.us/wildlife/Habitat/WildAcres/index.asp>

## **Water**

You do not have to build a huge pond to provide water. A small birdbath will provide water for many creatures. A shallow saucer of water with a rock in it for a landing place will suit butterflies. For the winter, you can buy a heated birdbath or install a small heating element.

If you do have a pond, provide a shallow end so wildlife can access the water. Also, if you want to have frogs, don't put in goldfish or koi, which will eat the amphibians' eggs.

## **Shelter**

The same plants that provide food can provide shelter. Animals need shelter for several purposes:

- o Cover from the elements
- o Protection from predators
- o Cover while feeding
- o Places to rest
- o Safe corridors for travel to food and water
- o Dens in which to sleep
- o Sites to breed and to nest
- o Places to rear young

Evergreens provide winter shelter for birds. Hedgerows, thickets, brush piles, rock piles, and meadows all provide shelter. Dead trees (snags) provide homes to over 400 species of birds, mammals, and amphibians. Edge habitat, where the treeline intersects with lower growth, is preferred by many creatures. You can also provide nesting boxes.

## **Space**

Some animals are territorial and require large areas. But even non-territorial animals need enough space to provide adequate food and shelter. Generally, the larger an animal, the more space it needs. Enlist neighbors in order to join smaller spaces.

Wildlife need connected habitats to safely disperse, breed, forage, and maintain genetic diversity. Migratory birds and animals need stopover habitat. Stream buffer plantings can provide ideal corridors. Small properties can buffer larger blocks of habitat.

## **Designing your habitat garden**

It can seem overwhelming to take an area that is all lawn and convert it into a different kind of landscape.

The key is to develop a plan and then just tackle it one piece at a time over several seasons. Both spring and fall are good planting times in the mid-Atlantic area.

You can find books on how to create an environmentally-friendly landscape design in your local library or from county extension offices via the internet. Keep in mind that animals need all four of their basic needs within a reasonable distance of each other and cover to safely move from one area to another.

<http://www.purdue.edu/wildlife/homeowners/baekyard.html>

<http://www.clemson.edu/extension/hgic/plants/other/landscaping/hgic1723.html>

As well as providing habitat, your new landscape can afford shade to reduce air conditioning costs, provide a windbreak to keep away winter winds, and capture water runoff in a rain garden. Wildlife friendly landscapes are also good for the quality of our waterways, and trees act as carbon sinks to mitigate climate change!

## **Personal benefits**

Landscaping with trees, shrubs, perennials, and groundcovers provides:

- o Beauty
- o Increased property value
- o Energy savings
- o Less time mowing
- o Cost savings—no need to buy mulch, fertilizers, and pesticides.
- o Reduced water runoff
- o Improved air quality

From my own experience in landscaping a one-acre wildlife habitat, I can vouch that this switch will save money and time once established.

If you would like more information on how to provide habitat for a particular species, Maryland's Wild Acres program provides a great deal of information. See:

[http://www.dnr.state.md.us/wildlife/habitat/wild\\_acres/](http://www.dnr.state.md.us/wildlife/habitat/wild_acres/)

You can certify your new habitat garden at:

<http://www.nwf.org/Home/How-to-Help/Garden-for-Wildlife.aspx>

or

<http://extension.umd.edu/baywise/program-certification>

Carolyn Puckett

Master Naturalist, Carroll County Master Gardener

## Alternatives to Manage Waste

by Ronnie Poklemba

The **No-Incinerator Alliance (NIA)** sponsored a public briefing on **Alternatives to Manage Waste** in Urbana, MD on June 4 at the Urbana Library. Speakers from the **Institute for Local Self Reliance** and the **NIA** presented information on recycling, composting, source reduction and Resource Recovery Parks. It was evident that there are many ways to reduce waste and that there is the possibility of creating a system that can add jobs, is financially viable and offers more flexibility for the future. Dan Andrews, of the Catoctin Group of the Sierra Club, shared the options being considered by Carroll County since they have decided to withdraw from the joint incinerator project, which has been on the books for both counties for the last seven years. Frederick County has the option of removing itself from the incinerator project on August 1, 2014.

There has been a great deal of concern regarding the health and environmental effects of waste incineration, as well as increasing evidence of the projects' financial infeasibility. It also became clear during the program that incineration is a system that encourages the creation of more waste to support the cost of the project: a cost that would also require the importation of waste into Frederick County. Twenty of the current candidates running for office in Frederick County accepted the invitation to attend this briefing, and many actively participated in the question and answer portions of the program. Three of the four candidates for county executive attended, including, Mark Sweadner, Jan Gardner and David Gray. There was also a good turn out from the community with questions indicating serious interest in this subject and a desire to behave in a more environmentally friendly way.

## Catoctin Creek Nature Center Sensory Trail

by Teresa Baker

The **Catoctin Creek Park and Nature Center** in Middletown, MD is the newest addition to Frederick County Parks and Recreation. The Park has 4 miles of hiking trails that provide visitors the chance to explore Catoctin Creek as well as learn about native ecosystems through the Nature Center's rich variety of nature programs. Through summer nature camps, school field trips and Discovery Cove, the Nature Center provides ongoing educational outreach that allows children to interact directly with live animals and their natural world.

The latest addition to this experience is the **Sensory Nature Trail**. The 0.1 trail encourages a deeper understanding with twelve interactive touch, smell and listening stations positioned throughout three different wildlife habitats. Eight tree bark touch stations are also located along the trail. Visitors with visual impairments and children with special needs are provided a guide rope to aid their exploration of this unique environmental experience.

Groups are welcome but reservations are required. Wheelchairs are not recommended on the trail.

For further information contact the Catoctin Creek Nature Center at 301-600-2052 or <https://frederickcountymd.gov/index.aspx?nid=4069>

## 7 Billion Plus

by Dan Andrews

Following the tradition of my father and grandfather, I've continually subscribed to National Geographic magazine since 1985. I often find the articles so informative that I keep the proverbial stack of National Geos around the house as reference material. Therefore, I'd like to share with you some information from a January 2011 article entitled – "7 Billion" – about human population.

In the late 1600's, there were about 500,000,000 people on Earth. That number rose to one billion by 1830 and two billion one hundred years later. By 1960, the year I was born, three billion people shared the globe. During my 53 years on the planet, four billion more have been added to bring our current population to over seven billion. That computes to a net increase of 80 million people per year or over 140 people per minute. U.N. demographers project human population to reach nine billion by 2045. According to the article, "There will be billions more people wanting and deserving to boost themselves out of poverty. If they follow the path blazed by wealthy countries – clearing forests, burning coal and oil, freely scattering fertilizers and pesticides – they too will be stepping hard on the planet's natural resources."

That's why I feel it's so important that people "think globally – act locally". Population figures matter, but how people deplete resources matters a lot more. In Carroll, Frederick and Washington counties, we should all be cognizant of our consumption. Resource efficiency and full circle recycling should be employed in all aspects of daily living. Our choices of fuel for our transportation, energy for our homes, and food and water for our health determine the environmental legacy passed on to future generations. The amount of waste produced by this lifestyle further defines this legacy.

How many of us can fit on the planet is unpredictable. But we can attempt to mitigate potential problems by improving education so that human ingenuity is ready to deal with population growth issues and by adopting truly renewable energy technologies (not waste incineration), cleaner transportation, and better waste resource management practices. And most importantly, we can lessen harm by being very conscious of our impacts to the planet.

There was a popular saying in the 1970's for those hiking in nature that stated, "take only memories, leave only footprints". Perhaps we should adopt this philosophy to our total lives as we journey forward into a more crowded future.

Kunzig, Robert. "Special series: 7 billion." National Geographic 219 (2011): 42-69.

**The next Executive Committee Meeting is scheduled for Saturday, July 5, 2014 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. at the Thurmont Public Library, 76 East Moser Road, Thurmont, Maryland in Frederick County.**

**Executive Committee Meetings are held the first Saturday of every month. Location varies between Taneytown, Thurmont and Frederick.**

**All are welcome, members and non-members alike.**

**Contact Dan Andrews at [Dooze@qis.net](mailto:Dooze@qis.net) for exact date, times and location.**

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*Officers/Committee Chairs*

Chairman & Energy  
Dan Andrews

Treasurer  
Al McKegg

Secretary & Outreach/Social Media  
Amy Andrews

Conservation  
Lew Sherman  
Anthony Iacovelli

Invasive Plant Removal Stewardship  
Carolyn Puckett

Outings  
Harry George

Membership & Newsletter  
Teresa Baker

For further information visit

<http://maryland2.sierraclub.org/pages/local-groups>

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**Outings**

**Stay tuned to the Catoctin Group's website for upcoming hikes.**

<http://maryland2.sierraclub.org/pages/local-groups>

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