



Catoctin News

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

Volume 1, Issue 3

Fall 2014

People's Climate March New York City

by Teresa Baker

On Sunday, September 21, Frederick area residents joined hundreds of thousands of citizens in New York to demand action on climate change from international leaders. Signs and flags identified the broad mix of people's backgrounds that felt compelled to attend - Veterans for Peace, Republicans are Green too, Mormons for Climate Action, Don't Drown the Clowns, and Youth Choose Climate Justice.



Hurricane Sandy survivors from the Rockaways and Native Americans on the front lines of tar sands extraction and Keystone XL led the March's voices for climate justice. Veterans and peace activists marched to stress wars' insatiable need for fossil fuels and complicity in climate change. Many, including faith communities, urged divestment from fossil fuels. Religious members from diverse persuasions marched out of a sense of moral responsibility to care for those most vulnerable and to care for the Earth to which we are all so indebted.

Our group from Frederick, led by David Smedick and Sharon Garlena as bus captains, quickly dispersed after disembarking the bus. A small contingent that I was with first settled in at 81st St. since by 11:30, participant numbers were already making it difficult to weave any closer to the start of the March at 59th St. and Columbus Circle. We watched with anticipation two large green balloons on 79th St. that read, DisruptDenial.com, for movement forward to signal the March was about to begin for us. And we watched. And we watched. And we watched. We stood there through the moment of silence for those already harmed by climate disruption and the cacophony of noise to sound an alarm immediately following at 1:00. We finally walked to 77th St. by way of Columbus Ave., and to our delight the crowd had begun to move. Our restlessness was countered all along by our speculation as to the real size of this protest. At 3:00, we reached the start of the People's Climate March, three and one half hours after it had

Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

officially begun.

As yet we don't know the impact of our presence that Sunday on the outcome of international climate negotiations. And I can only speak for myself when I say that I felt something important happened that day. But it is certainly harder to feel powerless about climate disruption when you are walking with so many others that care as deeply as you. ■

Washington County Member Meeting

Where: Williamsport Library
Date: Saturday, October 25, 2014
Time: 10:00 AM

We hope to enlist some active members in Washington County and to discuss the proposed Recycling, RDF/gasification plant at the Forty West landfill. All are welcome to attend.

For additional information contact Dan Andrews at: dooze@qis.net

Tiny Home Living Presentation (supported by the Catoctin Group)

Where: Westminster Branch Library-Carroll Co.
Date: Saturday, November 8, 2014
Time: 1:00 PM
Cost: Free

Dee Williams, author of ***The Big Tiny: A Built-It-Myself Memoir***, co-owner of Portland Alternative Dwellings, teacher, and sustainability advocate, will present how you can simplify your life and have more time for other things.

She's been featured on Good Morning America, NBC Nightly News, NPR, PBS, MSNBC, CNN, and CBC.

http://library.carr.org/programs/show_events.asp?date=11/8/2014&location=8

Carroll County Weed Warriors

Where: Bear Branch Nature Center,
300 John Owings Road, Westminster,
MD 21158
Date: Saturday, October 18, 2014
Time: 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM
Presented by: Catoctin Group
Leader: Carolyn Puckett -
410-876-1995
ccforestryboard@gmail.com

Join the Carroll County Weed Warriors in invasive exotic plant removal at Bear Branch Nature Center/Hashawha Environmental Center. Please wear long sleeves, long pants, sturdy shoes and heavy gloves. Bring drinking water.

Email ccforestryboard@gmail.com to register. **Registration required before October 15, 2014, 6:00 PM**

Recycling, RDF and gasification plant scheduled in Washington County

by Al McKegg and Dan Andrews

In August of last year, the Washington County Commissioners approved a two-phase project with a company known as **Green Kinetics Gateway, LLC** to build a facility at the Forty West landfill.

In Phase 1, Green Kinetics Gateway will build a plant to recover and reclaim certain recyclables, and, process the remaining MSW (municipal solid waste) into fuel pellets commonly known as RDF (refuse-derived fuel.) These materials would then be sold, with forty percent of the potential profit going to Washington County. The process of converting MSW into RDF is not simple compaction, it involves heating. The County pays Green Kinetics Gateway to receive "Acceptable Waste".

In Phase 2, some of these pellets (and some other waste) would be super-heated to turn other MSW into synthetic fuels and nitrogen fertilizer in a process known as gasification. These products would then be sold, with thirty percent of the potential profit going to Washington County. This process involves substantial heat. Again, the County pays Green Kinetics Gateway to receive "Acceptable Waste".

A "fact sheet" about this project was distributed at this year's Boonsboro Greenfest. This "fact sheet" projects substantial income to Washington County, claiming that sale of material in Phase 1 will result in more than \$50,000 in income to the County per month, and that the County's share of Phase 2 profits will exceed \$200,000 per month. These numbers are obviously very attractive to a cash-strapped county. Nonetheless, we have reservations about certain aspects of this project.

Negligible public input: Public input on this project appears to have been minimal. No member of the public posed a question or expressed an opinion in the brief segment (10 minutes) County Commissioners devoted to this project during the November 19, 2013 meeting. This is puzzling.

Air Pollution: There's the possibility that this project will result in worse air quality in the County, particularly downwind of the Forty West landfill. Phase 1 and possibly Phase 2 involve heating of MSW and may release some pollutants; the question is what and how much. Further, the RDF pellets themselves are polluting when burned. They are not suitable for use in home stoves; one probable use is in cement plants, of which there are two in this region. Some materials which contribute to the heat value of the RDF pellets—PVC materials and other plastics—can be very polluting when burned in kilns. Since these materials increase the value of the pellets, there may be little incentive to remove them from the input waste stream.

The project's technologies (including "mining" of old material in the Forty West landfill) are new to Maryland. According to the Maryland Department of the Environment, neither landfill mining nor RDF production has occurred before in Maryland. A concern is that the mining, which involves excavating the existing landfill, could pose pollution problems for the adjacent Conococheague Creek. ■

Making a Difference for Our Environment

by Ronnie Poklemba

All of the counties in the Catoctin Group are in the process of making decisions about how to manage waste. Perhaps not the most exciting topic, but the decisions made can impact the air and water quality in central Maryland. Frederick and Carroll Counties came very close to jointly building an incinerator, which after years of concern expressed by those with financial, logistical, environmental and health concerns, has been put on the back burner - pun intended. Carroll County officially pulled out of the venture due to financial reasons and both counties are now looking at other alternatives. The options being considered by the current Board of County Commissioners in Frederick County appear to include shipping local waste to either an incinerator or landfill in another jurisdiction. Obviously this approach continues to threaten air and water quality, just in another location.

When decisions are made that involve long term contracts for incineration and/or landfilling, there is a commitment to continue to supply consistent amounts of trash. This has a negative impact on any motivation for a municipality to support increased recycling, resource recovery and composting. These approaches are earth friendly and contribute to a mind set that acts to improve rather than just trash our home. This is just one example of a local issue with potential to impact our environment.

So how can we make a difference? Elections for our local officials are coming up in November. By taking the time to understand the views of your candidates on environmental issues in your local community, you can influence the decisions made in the future. Frederick County is moving to a charter form of government. With a new system in place it seems especially important to have a strong group of leaders: both in the County Executive and County Council positions. For County Council, each voter gets to vote for an individual in their district and for two at-large candidates. Decisions will be made by a majority so all of these selections are very important.

The Chesapeake Newsletter includes information on candidates the Sierra Club endorses as friends of the environment. Looking at the record of those candidates currently in office, as well as their websites, are other ways to learn the candidates positions on various issues. The Maryland Board of Elections lists candidates in the districts and local newspapers provide another good source for candidate information.

It is interesting to inform ourselves about the candidates positions; but most importantly, this knowledge can result in improving our influence upon a government process that more carefully considers impacts to our environment when making decisions.

BE SURE TO VOTE!

A list of the candidates endorsed by the Catoctin Group can be found at:
<https://maryland2.sierraclub.org/pages/2014-state-and-local-general-election-endorsements>



September monthly meeting

Officers/Committee Chairs

Chairman & Energy
Dan Andrews

Treasurer
Al McKegg

Secretary & Outreach/Social Media
Amy Andrews

Politics
Laurie Wilmot

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>

The next Executive Committee Meeting is scheduled for Saturday, October 4th, 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 for exact date, times and location.