



Catoctin News

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

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Spring 2015

Catoctin Group Maryland Sierra Club – John Muir Scholarship Program

by Lee Popkin

The Catoctin Group of the Sierra Club, Maryland Chapter, is proud to announce the kickoff of our **Maryland Sierra Club – John Muir Scholarship Program**. The scholarship program is a partnership between the Frederick County Public Schools' Catoctin High School Environmental and Conservation Academy Program and our local Sierra Club Catoctin Group. We have worked closely with Ryan Zimmerman, Catoctin High School Career Center Instructional Assistant, to offer the scholarship to the graduating seniors currently enrolled in the academy program. The Environmental and Conservation Academy was chosen by the Catoctin Group because the goals and objectives of the academy closely align with the mission of the Sierra Club.

The scholarship program accomplishes several goals for our community and our organization. It provides an opportunity for the Catoctin Group to participate in community outreach informing the public of local environmental issues while also raising awareness of our organization and its mission in our local community. Through scholarship fundraising efforts we have an opportunity to attract new members ensuring the Sierra Club remains a functioning and relevant organization in the community for years to come.

We anticipate our first award being given during the first week of June, 2015 with a minimum award amount of \$250. Since our fundraising efforts are just beginning, we hope to gather enough donations to give a larger 2015 award than our \$250 minimum.

In the future, we hope to expand the program and offer the scholarship to many more students throughout Frederick, Washington and Carroll Counties. If you would like to make a tax deductible contribution to the **Maryland Sierra Club – John Muir Scholarship Program**, please follow the instructions below.

To make a contribution please send your donation to:

Yolanda Andersen, Director of Member Services
Sierra Club
85 Second Street, 2nd Floor
San Francisco, CA 94105-3441

- All checks must be made payable to: **The Sierra Club Foundation**
- Please indicate on the memo line of your check:
Catoctin Group Maryland Sierra Club – John Muir Scholarship Program

For more information on the scholarship program and how you can contribute please contact Lee Popkin at lspopkin@gmail.com.

Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

Volunteer to Help Nature

by Carolyn Puckett

Soon, the snow will melt and greenery will start appearing along the roadways and in natural areas. Unfortunately, many of the plants that green out early are "exotic" weeds.

An exotic weed is not native to this area. These plants become invasive weeds because they spread rapidly by producing hundreds of seeds, sending out runners, or even changing the soil chemistry. Without native predators, they out compete and supplant the native plants.

When the native plants disappear, so do the native animals that depend on them. Many of our insects can only digest plants that they coevolved with. When those plants disappear, so do the insects. Then the birds, frogs, rabbits, chipmunks, skunks, even black bears that eat the insects have no food. While butterflies can eat nectar from many plants, their caterpillars often can only digest the leaves of specific native plants.

Several counties in Maryland have started volunteer groups to tackle these invasive exotic weeds on public lands. Montgomery County was one of the first and labeled their volunteers "weed warriors." That moniker has spread to other counties. In the Catocin group counties, Carroll County established a Weed Warrior program in 2010. Now, Frederick County parks are starting their own Weed Warrior program.



There are three free Weed Warrior training sessions in the works. If you would like to join us--or just learn more about invasive exotic weeds--we encourage you to sign up for one of the following classes.

Carroll County

The training consists of a one-hour online training session to take at home followed by a two-hour field training session. Children under the age of 13 must be accompanied by an adult for both the field training and the weeding sessions.

Field training dates:

Date: April 11, 2015

Time: 2:00 to 4:00 pm

Place: Bear Branch Nature Center, 300 John Owings Road, Westminster MD 21158

Who: Adults and students age middle school and older.

Deadline to register: April 4, 2015

How to register: email ccforestryboard@gmail.com

Date: April 25, 2015

Time: 10 am to 12 pm

Place: Piney Run Nature Center, 30 Martz Road, Sykesville MD 21784

Deadline to register: April 18, 2015

How to register: email ccforestryboard@gmail.com

If neither of these dates works for you, we can add you to a notification email list for future classes. Just email ccforestryboard@gmail.com.

Weeding events

After you take the training, we hope you will join us to help remove invasive plants from our nature centers. The schedule is as follows:

Piney Run Nature Center, 30 Martz Road, Sykesville MD 21784: second Saturday of each month from 9 to 12, and the third Saturday from 2 to 5.

Bear Branch Nature Center, 300 John Owings Rd, Westminster, MD 21158 third-Saturday weeding from 9 to 12, beginning April 18.

We will also be announcing ad hoc sessions at these and other county locations.

Frederick County

Join staff for a free introductory training to the Weed Warriors Program at Cunningham Falls State Park. The mission of this program is to identify, locate, and remove invasive plant species to help promote the growth of native plant species within Cunningham Falls and Gambrill State Parks. Details for the training are listed below:

Date: April 15, 2015

Time: 2:00pm-4:00pm

Place: Cunningham Falls State Park Manor Area Visitor Center, 14039 Catoctin Hollow Rd, Thurmont, MD 21788

Who: The Program is open to everyone! Volunteers under 16 years of age must be accompanied by a parent or guardian at all times.

Deadline to register: April 5th.

Contact information to register: jeremy.hulse@maryland.gov (301-271-7574) ■

Did you know?

by Dan Andrews

The Eastern Sycamore tree is generally thought to be the most massive tree in the eastern United States. Native Americans used them for dugout canoes, with one such canoe weighing 9,000 pounds and spanning 65 feet in length.

These trees are found in lowland areas and seem to like stream and river floodplains. They are easily recognized by their mottled brown bark which flakes off and exposes a yellowish or whitish underbark. The leaves are also easy to distinguish by their three to five lobes, edged with large teeth. The tree bears round ball-type fruit with a $\frac{3}{4}$ " to $1\frac{1}{4}$ " diameter, and its canopy is open, large and irregular.

Deer and muskrats eat the twigs, and raccoons and opossum find shelter in the tree's hollow cavities.

The next time you're traveling in the country, perhaps take notice of the native Eastern Sycamores. Point them out to friends and family and ask if they know the name of this long-lived tree species.

It's a good tree to practice beginning dendrology and others will learn about a beautiful native tree that can live for centuries.



Rob Routledge, Sault College, bugwood.org

Sierra Club Outings

by Anthony Iacovelli

Spring has finally arrived and it will soon bring warmer weather, budding trees, and ample opportunities to enjoy the great outdoors in Maryland and beyond. With the busy nature of modern life it can be difficult to find time to get outside. To help our members connect with nature, the Sierra Club administers an Outings Program that offers a wide range of opportunities to hike, bike, kayak, and more within a group setting.

The Club offers many types of outings that encompass a range of skill levels. On the local level, the Catoctin Group leads monthly day hikes in many different parks and trail systems in the region. These are typically of an easy to moderate level and last about a half day. If there is enough interest from our members we will be leading some longer day hikes for those with more hiking experience. Many of the local hikes are within Maryland, but we are also looking to plan day trips in northern Virginia and Pennsylvania to help locals discover new natural spaces outside of our immediate area. Upcoming hikes will be listed in future issues of the newsletter and on the [Sierra Club Maryland Outings calendar](#). The online calendar also includes outings led by other Sierra Club groups in Maryland and Virginia.

The national [Sierra Club](#) leads national and international multi-day trips. These trips can last two days or two weeks and include activities at all skill levels: backpacking, biking, skiing, snowshoeing, kayaking, dogsledding and pack animal-supported trekking. There are backpacking trips deep in the wilderness, kayaking trips around tropical barrier islands, and laid back lodge trips where participants are free to choose whether they want to relax or hike on any given day. The Sierra Club does charge a fee for these trips which goes to offset the cost of meals, equipment, transportation and lodging. Like the local outings, these trips are led by volunteer leaders who freely give their time to ensure the participants have an exceptional experience. Last year, I was lucky to be able to take part in a ten-day Sierra Club backpacking trip on the Wonderland Trail encircling Mt. Rainer in Washington. It was a beautiful and challenging trek around the mountain that was made all the more incredible by having two passionate experienced leaders and an enthusiastic group to share it with. It was certainly a trip I will never forget and one that strengthened my desire to become an outings leader so that I could help others get outside and experience the natural world. For more information on the Catoctin Groups' upcoming hikes and the Sierra Club Outings Program, see the links below and look for our e-mail updates. Hope to see you on the trail soon!

Maryland Outings Calendar:

<http://maryland.sierraclub.org/pages/outings-calendar-maryland>

National and International Outings:

<http://content.sierraclub.org/outings/>

Catoctin Group Hike to Annapolis Rocks on the Appalachian Trail

Date: 3/28/2015

Join the Sierra Club Catoctin Group on a moderate 5 mile out-and-back hike to one of the most scenic overlooks on the Appalachian Trail in Maryland. Our destination, Annapolis Rocks, has beautiful views to the west of Greenbrier Lake and the Cumberland Valley. The total elevation gain for this hike is less than 1000 feet but there is a half mile section that is a bit steep as we climb to the South Mountain ridgetop. The hike should take approximately 3 to 3.5 hours including a half hour stop for lunch or a snack at the overlook. If you are interested in coming along, please e-mail the hike leader, Anthony Iacovelli, at Anthony.iacovelli@yahoo.com to RSVP and receive the meeting time and location. Thanks and hope to see you on the trail!

Upcoming Events

Dancing Rabbit Ecovillage Speaking Tour: Sustainable is Possible. This talk introduces the model of ecovillages and also discusses how those principles can be applied to individual lives and communities.

When: Saturday, April 11, 2015, 6:30 pm - 7 pm - meet and greet Ma'ikwe, light refreshments. 7 pm - 8:30 pm - Talk, Q&A, and Next Steps.

Where: Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Frederick, 4880 Elmer Derr Road, Frederick, MD.

Sponsors: Catoctin Group, Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Frederick and Mare Cromwell.

Further Information: 240-405-4265, www.dancingrabbit.org/speakingtour/

Boonsboro Green Fest. The Catoctin Group is once again a vendor at this year's Green Fest. Green crafts and products, energy saving information, good food, live music, and clothing and sports equipment swaps are just a sample of what can be enjoyed at this year's festival. Come join us!

When: Saturday, May 9, 2015, 10 am - 5 pm.

Where: Shafer Park, Boonsboro, MD.

Further Information: <http://www.boonsborogreenfest.com/>

Fall Jamboree - Catoctin Mtn. Park - Camp Round Meadow - Oct. 16-18. More info. to follow.

Officers/Committee Chairs

Chairman & Energy
Dan Andrews

Treasurer
Anthony Iacovelli

Secretary & Outreach/Social Media
Amy Andrews

Political
Laurie Wilmott

Conservation
Lew Sherman
Anthony Iacovelli

Invasive Plant Removal Stewardship
Carolyn Puckett

Outings
Harry George
Anthony Iacovelli

Membership & Newsletter
Teresa Baker

For further information visit

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

The next Executive Committee Meeting is scheduled for Saturday, April 4 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. at the Urbana Regional Library, 9020 Amelung Street, Frederick, Maryland 21704 in Frederick County.

Executive Committee Meetings are held the first Saturday of every month. Location varies.

All are welcome, members and non-members alike.

Contact Dan Andrews at dooze@qis.net for exact date, times and location.