



Notes from the Chair: Local Progress, and Work Ahead

By Dean Amel

While the Trump administration continues to hammer away at environmental protection, a number of local efforts have yielded results that can counter the depression many of us feel when reading the national news.

The excitement of weekly marches for science, the environment, and other issues has faded-- but many of the people who came out for those marches continue to work for progress on environmental issues. The Mount Vernon Group has worked with new allies and attracted new activists to the Sierra Club to revitalize our efforts on local issues. In addition, we're gearing up to help the candidates we endorse win in local and state elections this November.

Our local group's main conservation issue remains the Club's [Ready for 100](#) campaign, in which we're working to get Alexandria and Arlington to commit to get 100% of their energy from renewable sources. While we were sad to lose our local organizer, Taylor Bennett, who moved out of the area, we're fortunate to have hired Alice Redhead to replace Taylor and to have had some overlap between the two to allow Alice to get up to speed more quickly. Please see the article by Rick Keller elsewhere in this issue to learn more about the Ready for 100 campaign.

Another local issue on which the group has been active is the effort to reduce water pollution caused by untreated sewage overflows from Alexandria's combined sewer system. In response to state legislation mandating that Alexandria address all of the current sources of sewage outflows, Alexandria's city council has been working to address the issue as expeditiously as possible. It's encouraging to see Alexandria's leaders working to address this long-time source of water pollution.

The Mount Vernon Group has begun to work with new organizations that formed in response to the 2016 election results. In late spring, we participated in a forum organized by Indivisible Arlington on local environmental issues. One of the fruits of that effort was recruitment of a new transportation issues chair for our group. Ray Atkinson, an experienced transportation planner who recently moved to our area, has filled a position that had been vacant for the last few years. Ray has begun working on Lee Highway and I-66 planning issues. If you're interested in working on local transportation issues, please contact Ray at gismap1@gmail.com.

On August 30, the Mount Vernon Group cosponsored a showing of [Awake: A Dream from Standing Rock](#), with Our Revolution Arlington and ARL Reinvest. The showing drew a packed

room at Busboys & Poets in Shirlington. After the film, Kelsey Crane, one of two Sierra Club staff organizers in Northern Virginia, spoke about the threat of planned natural gas pipelines in Virginia.

On the political front, local Club members are in the process of interviewing candidates for the open position on the Arlington County Board, the only race in a local jurisdiction this fall. If you're interested in our group's political work, please contact Pat Soriano, our political chair, at patemail@comcast.net.

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