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Winter Newsletter Content

Climate Action Update page 2

SC Maglev page 3

Guilford Woods page 4

100% Clean Energy page 5

Zero Waste page 5

Winter Social page 6

Upcoming events page 7

Community Meeting

The Prince George's County Department of the Environment is hosting the first virtual community meeting on the Climate Action Plan on Thursday, March 4, 6:30-8:30 PM. Come hear about the progress of the Climate Action Commission and join the conversation about the County's priorities and strategies for reducing greenhouse gases and helping our communities adapt to the changing climate. Register at

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/community-meeting-1-cac-tickets-140920012551>



Virtual Outing

Join a Maryland Master Naturalist and other nature enthusiasts to share tips for winter walks and for a virtual excursion to some beautiful spots near home. Sunday, Feb 28 at 4 PM. Register at <https://act.sierraclub.org/events/details?formcam-paignid=7013q000001kqPXAAY>

Good News From Brandywine

By Janet Gingold

In response to decreasing profitability of fossil-fuel powered electricity generating stations and years of stiff opposition from local residents, Mattawoman Energy, LLC has withdrawn its plan to build a power plant in Brandywine. This 90-megawatt gas-fired power plant would have been the fifth power plant clustered within a 13-mile radius, adding ever more contamination in a majority-minority neighborhood already overburdened with air and water pollution.

Since before Maryland's Public Service Commission approved this project in 2015, members of Clean Air Prince George's and the Brandywine TB Coalition, including Hank Cole, Joyce Dowling, Joanne Flynn, Caryl Alexander, Vontasha Simms, Fred Tutman, Kamita Gray and many others, including Sierra Club volunteers, have put up one roadblock after another in attempts to prevent or delay its construction. Persistence paid off. Whether it was the threat of Delegate Ivey's bill to ban coal- and gas-fired power plants in Prince George's County, the arguments by residents testifying before the Public Service Commission, or market forces heralding a transition to renewables under the Biden administration, we will never know. But Mattawoman Energy LLC finally got the message: There is no place for another gas-fired power plant in a just transition to a sustainable future for our County. Not here!

Residents of Prince George's and neighboring Charles County can all breathe a little easier knowing that there will be no gas pipeline threatening the Zekiah Swamp and the Mattawoman Creek, no methane leaks near the elementary school and less particulate pollution and other contaminants in the air they share. To all the air monitors, suit bringers, document preparers, testifiers, sign makers, artists, jugglers, event planners, letter writers, demonstrators, phone callers, meeting goers, event planners, web-masters, article writers, and everyone else who helped—your work mattered.

Join the Prince George's Sierra Club Zero Waste team to address plastic pollution, food waste, and more. [Team meeting March 6!](#)
Contact martha.ainsworth@mdsierra.org

Climate Action Update

By Janet Gingold

Change is hard. Even people with a firm grasp on the connection between human activities and climate change often find they can't do what they think they should to curb their own contributions to greenhouse gas emissions. Everything we do—the [food](#) we eat, the [clothes](#) we wear, the [houses](#) we live in, the jobs we do, the [vehicles](#) we use, the waste we produce—all depend on systems that run on fossil fuels. We – quite literally – can't breathe without emitting [carbon dioxide](#)! What can we do? Check out Audubon's [Climate Action Guide](#) for an excellent menu of actions that individuals can take. What might you do today? Get the conversation started with your family and friends to get more people thinking about the problem. By sharing ideas about better alternatives for lower emissions, we can shift norms about how people decide what to do and what to buy. What more would you do if you knew how or if you could afford it? What barriers do you see to actions you might take? What can the county do to remove barriers and change systems to make it easier for us all to do right by the planet and still take care of each other? Share your ideas with the Climate Action Commission!



The [Climate Action Commission](#), under the leadership of Dawn Hawkins-Nixon, is pulling together possible strategies for decreasing greenhouse gas emissions and for making our communities more climate-ready. The Commission will prioritize strategies using guiding principles to identify actions the county can take that will have the greatest impact while ensuring equity and inclusiveness and making the best use of county resources. We encourage you to share your ideas about how county actions might remove some of the barriers that residents like you face as they try to decrease their carbon footprints.

The Prince George's County Department of the Environment is hosting the first [virtual community meeting](#) on the Climate Action Plan on Thursday, March 4, 6:30-8:30 PM. This will be an opportunity to learn about the principles guiding the ongoing climate action planning process, as well as findings from the county's greenhouse gas inventory and climate vulnerability assessment. There will also be an opportunity for public comments and questions. We hope to see many engaged community members from all over the county at this event. Please spread the word to friends and neighbors and register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/community-meeting-1-cac-tickets-140920012551> to get the meeting link. Also, the Climate Action Commission is looking for Prince George's resident volunteers to serve on the Resident Experts Implementation Advisory Panel to provide expert perspectives on practical aspects of implementing climate solutions. If you are interested in sharing your expertise to improve implementation of climate mitigation and adaptation strategies, please contact janet.gingold@mdsierra.org or mabe@co.pg.md.us to find out how you can help.

Meetings of the Climate Action Commission are open to the public through the county's livestreaming website. Presentations and updates are available on the County website at <https://pgccouncil.us/810/Climate-Action-Commission>.

Share your observations, experience, and wisdom in the online Issues Forum or the quarterly Newsletter. Contact janet.gingold@mdsierra.org

Using iNaturalist for the City Nature Challenge

Get ready to document the spectacular biodiversity in the DC metro region. In this virtual learning session, on April 3 at 4 PM, Maryland Master Naturalist Janet Gingold will show you how to use your smart phone and the [iNaturalist](#) app to participate in the City Nature Challenge. Get tips about how to take better pictures for better species identification and practice with others in small groups. Beginners welcome! Bring a friend! Register at <https://act.sierraclub.org/events/details?formcampaignid=7013q000001ktSVAAY>



In the [City Nature Challenge](#), nature-lovers around the world document the flora and fauna in places near home using the iNaturalist app. Join the fun! April 30-May 3.

Baltimore-Washington Superconducting Maglev Draft Environmental Impact Statement

By Maureen Fine

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Superconducting Magnetic Levitation Train is currently open for comment until April 22, 2021. Please visit <https://www.bwmaglev.info/index.php/project-documents/deis> to read the document and to submit comments. For help and additional talking points, go to mcrt-action.org, the SCMaglev Opposition page, for in-depth expert analyses of the issues, including environment/biology, safety, economics, community impacts, etc.

Although the current comment period will end on April 22, Senator Van Hollen and Representatives Hoyer and Brown have requested that the FRA and MDOT extend the comment period on the DEIS from 90 days to a length of time that ensures all stakeholders' voices are heard, and substantive comments can be developed. County Executive Alsobrooks, the County Council, the Prince George's County Delegation of the Maryland General Assembly, and many local leaders had previously submitted comment extension requests.

Research scientist Dr. Owen Kelley has written an excellent [review of the data](#) regarding Maglev's claims that the project would decrease traffic congestion, concluding that "the proposed Baltimore-Washington Maglev would do little to improve regional road congestion." Kelley adds: "the DEIS provides no evidence that the maglev would be more cost effective than, for example, promoting teleworking, modifying the interchanges that produce the worst rush-hour bottlenecks, or funding projects that help create affordable and desirable neighborhoods close to employment centers. greenbeltonline.org/maglev-would-do-little-to-reduce-road-congestion-says-federal-railroad-administration/

In his article "[Would the Proposed Baltimore-Washington Maglev Increase Greenhouse Gas Emissions?](#)" Dr. Kelley asserts that constructing and operating the proposed maglev would actually increase greenhouse gas emissions, contrary to the assertions of BWRR and the Northeast Maglev.



Virginia Bluebells along the Little Patuxent River at Patuxent Research Refuge, North Tract

I recently heard someone describe beloved natural areas as “incubators of human spirituality.” For many of us, the Patuxent Research Refuge and Beltsville Agricultural Research Center have been a source of physical, intellectual, and spiritual renewal. It’s difficult to contemplate the degradation and destruction that maglev construction could cause in these special habitats. At BARC, 901 different species of plants have been documented. PRR is home to 282 bird species, 221 bee species, 72 butterfly species, and (more than any national wildlife refuge or U.S. national park) 112 dragonfly and damselfly species. Wildlife biologist Sam Droege says Maglev’s train yard would destroy some of the most biologically diverse and precious lands in the world; fragment a “whole” system whose biodiversity is supported by all its points; and set a terrible precedent that “takes” public land and hands it off to a private company.

Please provide comments for the public record on the [DEIS website](#) and also write to your state and federal legislators and any others who you think will help [Stop This Train](#).

Save Guilford Woods

By Janet Gingold



Diverse old trees at Guilford Woods

A rare patch of mature forest at the edge of the University of Maryland, College Park, is threatened with destruction by a development of townhouses and graduate student housing. Too often, developers see places with no buildings as “empty” and without value. But this lovely spot at the headwaters of Guilford Run, is not empty. It is full of living things and serving valuable ecological functions. It is home to at least 19 different species of trees, with some specimens up to 150 years old, as well as a variety of wildlife. It is a precious refuge for students in need of a dose of nature. It cools the air and the water, takes carbon from the atmosphere, and slows the floodwaters running from the impervious surfaces of the campus on their way to the Anacostia. Of course, we want graduate students to have nice places to live within an easy walk of the Purple Line. But there are other places,

already devoid of trees, where new housing could be built. There are vanishing few patches of woods full of big old trees. Preserving our green infrastructure should be an essential pillar of the University’s sustainability plan. Tell University President Darryll Pines not to sacrifice Guilford Woods -- build that housing someplace else. For more information, visit [Save Guilford Woods](#).

Zero Waste

by *Martha Ainsworth*



Join Zero Waste activists in Prince George's County on Saturday, March 6th, 10 am, for a discussion of priorities for action in 2021 and an update on ongoing initiatives. Find out how you can help with the roll-out of the plastic straw ban, expanded curbside food waste collection, other composting initiatives, and zero waste in the County's climate action plan, and more! RSVP [here](#). Contact martha.ainsworth@mdsierra.org

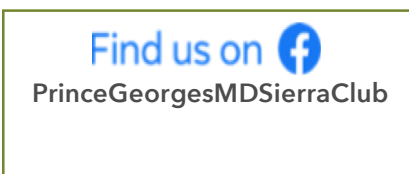
100% Clean Energy Schools

by *Joseph Jakuta*

The campaign to get Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) to commit to transition to 100 percent clean, renewable electricity by 2030, and all other energy usages, including boilers, HVAC, and transportation by 2040, as well as 100 percent zero waste by 2030 is moving along. On January 14, the Board unanimously voted to move the resolution forward to this second vote. We couldn't have done this without the video testimonies submitted by the Eleanor Roosevelt High School Environmental Defense Club, which you can see here: <https://climateparentspg.org/topics/community-support/video-testimonials/>,

The resolution also commits to the creation of a Focus Workgroup to develop a Climate Change Action Plan to implement the goals in the resolution. All 19 members of the Focus Workgroup have been finalized. Additionally, 15 letters of support have now been submitted to the Board of Education and 332 people have signed a petition to the Board. We are amazed by the great support in the community for 100% Clean Energy Schools and are thankful for all of the support.

Unfortunately, the final vote was expected on February 11 and was delayed due to an unexpected cancellation of the Board meeting. If you would like to sign the petition and have not yet please visit <http://bit.ly/cppg-petition> and if you work with an organization that would like to submit a letter of support such as a PTA, green business, or civic association please email [Joseph Jakuta](mailto:Joseph.Jakuta@sierraclub.org)



Find more events on the calendar at <https://www.sierraclub.org/maryland/calendar>

Find out more about activities of the Prince George's Sierra Club at <https://www.sierraclub.org/maryland/prince-georges>

2021 Winter Social – Shades of Green!

By Lily Fountain

The 2021 Winter Social was not bad considering it was a zoom meeting with no potluck. Prince George's Group Chair, Janet Gingold started off with a salute to our green infrastructure, encouraging



Ingenious layered solar panels in Watkins Park

us to participate in the development of our county Climate Action Plan. Our Prince George's County green infrastructure network includes waterways, wetlands, woodlands, wildlife habitats, and other natural areas of countywide significance that provide us with ecosystem services whose value is often not captured in our usual accounting of costs and benefits. She reminded us the first solar panels were LEAVES. With increasingly frequent excess heat days and extreme precipitation events, it becomes all the more important to value the functions of green infrastructure for cooling the air and water and absorbing floodwaters. Continue to speak for the trees!

Then Dr. Sara Via, Professor and Climate Extension Specialist at the University of Maryland College Park, shared tips on what you can do with your own community and home landscapes to be part of the climate solution instead of the climate problem. Because trees and deep-rooted native plants soak up and filter water, add habitat, sequester carbon and rebuild the soil, Dr. Via recommended the following key actions:

- Where lawn is required, replace it with slow-growing grasses that look like lawn but need less fertilizer, water and mowing. They need 10% as much mowing and can cut CO₂ emissions by up to 80%.
- Plant hedgerows of native trees and shrubs for privacy and biodiversity.
- Plant deep-rooted perennials in beds and channels designed to concentrate and convey storm-water runoff while removing debris and pollution.
- Reduce paved (impervious) surfaces that can't absorb water and grade your land for storm-water management, like rain gardens.

Changing lawn care practices can help decrease carbon emissions and decrease property damage from extreme weather events.

After that inspiration, we played Shades of Green, a *storytelling game*. We broke up into groups and each created a story that included something green. Funny stories ensued – even a ballad -- with some lessons about green spaces, green characters and green action.

Looking forward to seeing you at our summer event in July for more fun and camaraderie!

Upcoming Events

Environmental Book Group discussion of The Climate War by Michael Mann on February 24 at 7 PM
<https://act.sierraclub.org/events/details?formcampaignid=7013q000001kqvxAAY>

February Virtual Outing on February 28 at 4 PM <https://act.sierraclub.org/events/details?formcampaignid=7013q000001kqPXAAY>

Department of Environment Virtual Community Meeting on the Climate Action Plan March 4, 6:30-8:30 PM <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/community-meeting-1-cac-tickets-140920012551>

Zero Waste Meeting March 6, 10AM. <https://act.sierraclub.org/events/details?formcampaignid=7013q000001kvxcAAAY>

March Virtual Outing on March 7 at 4 PM <https://act.sierraclub.org/events/details?formcampaignid=7013q000001ktSQAAY>

Zoning Hearing about National View in Forest Heights March 24

How to use iNaturalist for the City Nature Challenge April 3 at 4PM <https://act.sierraclub.org/events/details?formcampaignid=7013q000001ktSVAAY>

Earth Day April 22

City Nature Challenge April 30-May 3