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photo by Arlene Rodenbeck

Marilyn Metz, Jason Broehm, Ellen Jones and Jim McCarthy (left to right) lead the march in support of expanded recreational use of Beach Drive.

Park Lovers Rally for Rock Creek Park

by Jason Broehm

On July 24, lovers of Rock Creek Park gathered for a rally in support of expanded recreational access to Beach Drive in the heart of the park. Three segments of Beach Drive are closed to automobiles on weekends, making the park a popular spot for bicycling, walking, running, rollerblading and other recreational pursuits.

In 2003, the National Park Service released a draft management plan for the park that recommended extending the road closures to weekdays outside the rush hours, that is, between 9:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. During the plan's public comment period, two-thirds of the written public comments favored weekday road closures to enhance recreational use of the park, but opponents persuaded local elected officials in the District and Montgomery County to oppose the Park Service plan. Since that time, the Park Service has backed off its original proposal.

The rally, which was organized by the People's Alliance for Rock Creek, was also

attended by members of the Sierra Club, the Washington Area Bicyclist Association and Washington Parks and People, joined by other lovers of the park. Speakers described the long history behind efforts to expand Beach Drive closures to weekdays and called on the National Park Service to implement a plan that would close Beach Drive to traffic on weekdays between the morning and evening rush hours.

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Election 2004

Get on the Road to Somewhere

This fall political eyes everywhere will be focused on the handful of battleground states where experts say the presidential election will be determined and many other races will be decided. It is in these same states that the Sierra Club will be focusing its efforts to

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Letter from the Chapter Chair

Capital Sierran Editors

Chris Craig, Yoma Ullman, Anna Kinsman and Gwyn Jones

To submit letters to the editor or other materials for publication or inquire about display advertising, write to:

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So Sorry...

Our apologies to those who showed up for the chapter's general membership meeting on June 21 only to find out that it had been cancelled. Unfortunately, the Sierra Club office space, where we had planned to meet, suffered major water damage just prior to that event. Building repairs are in progress and we hope to schedule new general membership meetings as soon as the problem has been resolved.

New Threats to the Mountain State

by Mark Wenzler

Dolly Sods, Cranberry Wilderness, Spruce Knob. Those of you who look up at the changing leaves and feel the urge to head to the Mountain State will recognize these as some of our local wilderness treasures. They may not be as large and pristine as western parks, but they're our mountains, and their steeply rolling contours seem even more precious if you consider what they've been through.

On a recent hike, some friends and I came across an old railroad spike miles deep in dense woods. This wasn't the first time I'd seen such rusting ghosts in West Virginia's mountains. In every national forest and wilderness area of the Mountain State, there are traces of a vast network of logging rails that hauled nearly every last tree from 10 million acres of the state's forest in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The destruction was so complete that even now only bedrock remains in many places where hemlock, oak and poplar eight foot and more in diameter once crowded out the sky.

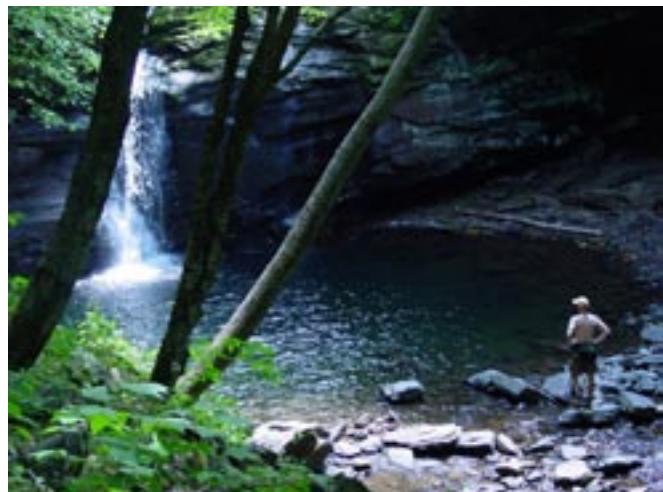
Today, many of these mountains are slowly healing. The scars of the past are now washed by tumbling creeks and swathed in groves of rhododendron and stands of red spruce. Black bear, deer, fox and bobcat have claimed the grades laid for locomotives, while vast meadows of blueberry and wildflowers cover some high-elevation plateaus used by bombers for target practice during World War II.

But for other West Virginia mountains the

wounds are only growing deeper. Mountain top removal—a mining process whereby mountains are blasted away, layer by layer, to expose their inner seams of coal, and the shattered rock is dumped in valley streams—is creating a moonscape out of formerly majestic highlands in vast swaths of Appalachia. To date, more than 700 miles of headwater streams across central Appalachia have been buried. Unlike the logging of the past, this new destruction will never heal—these mountains are being utterly eliminated from the face of the earth.

Clearly illegal actions by state and federal officials permitted mining by mountain top removal to flourish in the 1980s and 1990s. But then the lawyers for our side began to slow and stop it (notably through the work of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy and Trial Lawyers for Public Justice). That is, until the Bush administration eased mining rules in 2002. Now the coal industry, which has raised \$9 million for Republicans since 1998, has few obstacles between it and the mountains it seeks to tear down. One federal study projects that if current trends hold, over the next decade affected land will encompass

Continued on page 4



Seneca Creek, West Virginia—how long will it be safe?

photo by Ryan Valdez

Conservation

Metro Needs Increased Funding

by Chris Carney

For the second year in a row, Metro riders are facing rising fares and potential service cutbacks. Many riders blame the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) for the budget problems, having read stories of mismanagement and theft by parking lot attendants. We know, however, that even with the best oversight and none of the recent parking lot scandals, there would still be a critical need for major reinvestment to shore up an aging system.

Metro requires \$1.5 billion to rehabilitate deteriorating stations, tunnels and tracks, and to purchase new rail cars and buses just to keep up with demand (see *Capital Sierran*, Winter 2003-04). This fall, Metro has a chance to buy 120 new rail cars at a greatly reduced price, allowing the system to run eight-car trains by 2006. Without these funds, the Metro system faces a crisis involving more frequent breakdowns and dangerous overcrowding in the next few years.

Metro D.C. Sierrans have not taken this news lightly. Twice this summer, Sierra Club volunteers have taken the issue directly to their fellow Metro riders, urging them to tell their local public officials to fund their share of the budget shortfall. On July 15, Sierrans greeted suburban Metrorail riders as they boarded in Virginia and Maryland and again as they exited in downtown D.C., handing out almost 5,000 flyers at 14 Metro stations. On August 12, Sierrans held a "Citizen Call-in Day" so riders could call Maryland's Gov. Robert Ehrlich directly to ask for the state's commitment. On the same day, volunteers handed out 3,000 flyers at 10 Metro stations to keep up pressure on officials.

Thanks to the Sierra Club, officials in the individual jurisdictions are now

fully aware of how important Metro is to their constituents—they've heard from them directly by phone calls, letters and e-mails. WMATA itself has worked with legal and financial staff from all Metro jurisdictions to craft a six-year plan to finance the \$1.5 billion and allow Metro to meet purchasing deadlines, such as this fall's cost-saving opportunity to buy rail cars.

At press time, we are still waiting for individual jurisdictions to formally commit to the six-year funding plan. A signed agreement is needed by October to allow Metro to purchase new Metro rail cars in November. Meanwhile, the Sierra Club will continue to help constituents remind their public officials how important Metro is for our air quality, our commutes and our economy.

For more information, or to get involved in these efforts, contact Chris Carney with the Metro D.C. Challenge to Sprawl Campaign at 703-312-0533 or chris.carney@sierraclub.org. You can get involved by attending a meeting of the D.C. Chapter's Air Quality and Transportation Committee—see the Chapter calendar on page 19.

Rock Creek Park

Continued from page 1

Following the rally, participants marched (and biked) up Beach Drive from Broad Branch Road to Boulder Bridge, chanting in support of week-day recreational use of Beach Drive. This is a particularly beautiful part of the park, but it lacks space for a trail alongside the road, making the road the only option for bicyclists and other recreational users wishing to enjoy this part of the park.

For more information or to get involved, please contact Jason Broehm, 202-299-0745 or jason_broehm@hotmail.com.

McMillan Reservoir Development Plans in the Works

The District of Columbia Government is preparing to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the 25-acre McMillan Sand Filtration Site at North Capitol Street and Michigan Avenue. The RFP will focus upon creation of publicly accessible open space, preservation of key site elements, housing (including affordable housing) and retail services. This is not the first attempt to develop the site. In 2000-2001, the District convened a series of community meetings to discuss the future re-use of this historic site. It was determined at that time not to issue the RFP because of limited public funding to offset development costs, particularly for the public amenities. Over the past few months, however, several private development teams have expressed serious interest in revitalizing the McMillan site to achieve the community benefits with no public funding. The projected RFP will solicit the interest of creative, private sector investors to partner with the District in restoring this public site to active use.

This process is being led by the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development, the Department of Housing and Community Development, and the D.C. Office of Planning. The Office of Planning's 2002 recommendations for McMillan are on the Web at planning.dc.gov under "Project Summaries."

The District plans to introduce an RFP to the D.C. Council in October. Prior to that, the District will convene one community meeting in late September to discuss the RFP process. Please contact Kevin Brady, Office of Planning staff assistant, at 202-442-8964 to be added to the McMillan notification database. To get involved in Sierra Club's planning and efforts at the site, contact Dan Emerine at 202-635-3183 or demerine@earthlink.net.

Conservation

Election 2004

Continued from page 1

educate and mobilize its members and voters sympathetic to the environment. Sierra Club activists who live in those states will be at the center of the action and will have countless opportunities to participate—attending and organizing rallies, making phone calls, walking neighborhoods.

But what about the rest of us? Isn't there some way for us to be a part of what is arguably the most important election for the environment in our lifetime? Yes, there is. The answer is to get on the Road to Somewhere—either literally or figuratively.

This fall, the Sierra Club will be trying to talk to more people, knock on more doors, make more phone calls and mobilize more members and voters than in any previous election. And we need your help to do the job. Whether you want to help by making calls from the comfort of your home, organizing a mailing party at your local group or chapter, or taking a working vacation to help with on-the-ground efforts in a nearby state, you will find something to meet your needs in the Road to Somewhere program.

We have already scheduled the first of our fall volunteer-to-volunteer weekends for September 18-19, during which there will be an opportunity to travel to a nearby state to talk one-on-one with people who are Sierra Club members but often don't vote.

Go to <http://www.sierraclubvotes.org/> for more information. And get in touch with us today. We will be sure to get back to you with the full menu of Road to Somewhere options to choose from. Send your name, address, phone number and e-mail address to road.somewhere@sierraclub.org.

Join the D.C. Chapter for weekend trips to Philadelphia each Saturday from now until the election. Help mobilize the environmental vote in the key battleground state of Pennsylvania. For information, go to www.dc.sierraclub.org/calendar.htm.

Mountain State


Continued from page 2

2,200 square miles, an area larger than Rhode Island.


The Bush administration's gutting of mining rules is only one of countless rollbacks of environmental protections it has pursued in the past three and a half years—weakened regulations on arsenic in drinking water, mercury in fish, smog and soot in the air and growing global warming pollution are just some of the others.

But the destruction of our mountains is as tangible as it is personal. These are the places that define and sustain us. And they've done their service to commerce; a great many of our Washington area homes are built of lumber from their former ancient forests. It will take centuries for those forests to fully recover. But once the mountains are torn down, they're gone forever.

The Sierra Club is doing all it can to stop the Bush administration's assault on the environment. Given the odds against us, everything you can do to help will increase our chances of success. Whether you're motivated by a love of the mountains, concern about global warming, or something else, it's getting involved that counts. You can find out how at www.sierraclub.org.



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**Sierra Club Celebrates
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Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

Conservation

Talking Trash:

District Seeks to Improve Poor Recycling Record

by Brenda Moorman

At 6 a.m. on Friday, August 6, I put out on the curb one bag of garbage and a recycling bin along with several paper bags of newspapers, magazines and office-grade “white paper.” What happened next has been an all too common occurrence in Washington. The garbage was soon picked up, but the recycling sat through rain until Tuesday afternoon, August 10. While it waited, several dropoffs of discarded ice-cream cones, pet waste and general trash were added to the recycling bin. In the past I have usually brought my recycling back into the house when it wasn’t picked up, but this time I decided to wait it out as some of my neighbors do.

Having given testimony last October before the District’s Committee on Public Works, chaired by Councilmember Carol Schwartz (R-At Large), I was aware from the comments of three D.C. Councilmembers that constituents keep the council’s telephone lines red hot with complaints about missed recycling pickups. I decided to call my councilmember. I was referred to a staff member who was described as “covering recycling” and I left a message. After a week my call was returned and I made my complaint about the very late recycling pickup. I was told that such complaints were common. The staff member said he advised constituents to simply stop putting out their recycling if their service is bad! Is it any wonder that the residential recycling rate in the District is less than 14 percent?

Is there any good news in this sad tale? Yes, I think there is. The city is definitely going to adopt in-house recycling using the single-stream model and residential curbside customers are to be issued covered rolling bins (smaller



Photo by Brenda Moorman

Sierra Club dumpster divers (left to right) Angela Wallis, Jim Dougherty and Matthew Tisdale catch D.C. corporations violating recycling laws.

than the existing “supercans” now used for garbage) for the recyclables. All types of recyclables will be placed together in the new bin and will be sorted at the processing plant. It costs more to process this way, but our recycling authorities believe it will result in a higher compliance rate. In fact, single stream is already in use in a pilot project in Ward 7 with excellent results. Even though an overall report has not yet been compiled, it appears from existing numbers that the compliance rate has indeed increased.

The first city recycling trucks are planned for rollout in February 2005. All wards will be in the program by May. According to Tom Henderson, Administrator of the D.C. Solid Waste Management Administration, residents will be issued covered rolling bins to replace the old, open bins. Residents of a few older, more congested areas of the city will have the option, however, to stay with their existing bins if their house configuration restricts use of the rolling bins.

Is this good news? You bet! Other cities that use the single-stream model have had good results. One of the most important things leading to greater success is public education about the new system and how it works. A com-

prehensive public education campaign on the change is planned, so keep an eye out for announcements. I’m not so naïve as to think the new plan will make everyone a good recycling citizen, but at least the service should be better. After all, if we are not happy with the service, public officials can be voted out of office, which was never an option with Waste Management.

By the way, this plan will not address the disgracefully low 6 percent recycling rate in commercial buildings. To keep this problem before the public, the Sierra Club Recycling Committee is continuing its dumpster-diving operation in which we check dumpsters to see if companies are actually recycling as they are required to do by law. Scofflaw companies are then sent letters telling them what they must do to come into compliance. We’ve had some success in raising compliance and also putting enforcement officials on notice that they need to do a much better job. Stay tuned.

Information about the new program and the Sierra Club recycling efforts can be found on our Web site, www.SierraClub.org. We welcome all members and volunteers at our monthly meetings, which you will find in the D.C. calendar (see page 19).

Conservation

Asthma Costs District Residents Millions

Poor air quality causes almost 20,000 asthma attacks a year in the D.C. metropolitan area. Poor air quality sends an additional 3,700 people to the emergency room annually. Air quality is so bad in the District that we got an “F” from the American Lung Association.

Help is just around the corner. Tell your councilmember and the D.C. Council to vote “YES” on the Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) Bill—Bill No.15-0747.

The bill will help clean up our air by requiring utilities that do business in the city of Washington to provide a percentage of their energy from clean, renewable sources. Cleaner energy will reduce the number of Code Purple and Code Red days—days when the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) says it is unsafe to be outdoors.

Make your voice heard! Contact your councilmember today and tell him/her to vote Yes to RPS.

See letter below—just fill it out and drop it in the mail

Complete this letter and mail it to your D.C. Councilmember at

Council of the District of Columbia
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20004

- Jim Graham (Ward 1)
- Jack Evans (Ward 2)
- Kathy Patterson (Ward 3)
- Adrian Fenty (Ward 4)
- Vincent Orange (Ward 5)
- Sharon Ambrose (Ward 6)
- Kevin Chavous (Ward 7)
- Sandy Allen (Ward 8)
- Harold Brazil (At Large)
- David Catania (At Large)
- Linda Cropp (At Large)
- Phil Mendelson (At Large)
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John Calaway
Director, Gift Planning
85 Second Street, 2nd Floor,
San Francisco, CA 94105
(415) 977-5639 or e-mail:
planned.giving@sierraclub.org

We Need Your Support for Clean Air in D.C!

Dear Councilmember:

As a concerned citizen of the District of Columbia, I request that you vote Yes on the Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard (RPS) Bill, Bill No.15-0747.

A Renewable Portfolio Standard bill is feasible and it's healthy for the residents of D.C.

Asthma-related hospital visits cost District residents millions each year. Employee downtime is reaching record levels due to bad air!

In one year alone, 3,700 people were sent to emergency rooms with respiratory-related illnesses and almost 20,000 more people suffered asthma attacks.

The RPS bill will help reduce the number of Code Purple and Code Red Days. During these days air quality exceeds the EPA's health-based standards, making it unsafe for people to be outdoors, especially children and the elderly.

On behalf of the Concerned Citizens of the District of Columbia Vote YES to RPS.

Renewable Energy. It's a Natural.

Name _____

Address _____

Ward # _____

Telephone # _____

Email _____

**Council of the District of Columbia
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20004**

More Housing Choices Means Less Sprawl

by Dan Emerine

What does affordable housing have to do with protecting the environment? A lot, say many advocates of smart growth.

The Sierra Club and its allies have been working for several years now toward a better vision for the Washington region—a vision that includes neighborhoods friendly to bikes and pedestrians, communities connected by reliable public transportation and a mix of homes, offices, shops and schools within walking distance of each other. This kind of smart growth not only delivers less reliance on the automobile: it also promises to protect our region's farms, forests and open spaces because as communities become more compact, development is less likely to spread out into the countryside in the form of suburban sprawl.

But is it enough for development to be compact, walkable and convenient? Experience suggests that to be truly "smart," smart growth must include other elements that benefit all residents. One of these elements is housing that is affordable to a wide range of income levels, improves access to jobs for residents and is distributed across the region equitably without segregating low-income households from the rest of the community.

Currently, much of the region's low-cost housing is in the District of Columbia and in Prince George's County. Housing prices are also relatively affordable in parts of many outer jurisdictions, such as Prince William County, where inexpensive townhomes are being built. Such housing may, however, carry costs that make it less than truly affordable. According to the Surface Transportation Policy Project, "the average American family living in a highly sprawling area pays roughly

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Neighborhood Group Helps Government Officials Close Regulatory Loophole

by Linda Fennell

Earlier this year, a representative from Alabama PMG, a petroleum marketing company, told a crowded recreation center in the Fort Davis area about the company's plans to construct a new Citgo gasoline station in their neighborhood.

The gasoline station would have an adjoining Dunkin' Donuts/Baskin Robbins minimart but no automotive services. The construction was slated for the property of the former Shell gasoline station at 4107 Alabama Avenue S.E., a site that is known to be contaminated. Three other gasoline stations within a four-block section of the neighborhood have a history of underground storage leaks.

The Fort Davis community and the Fort Dupont Woods Condominium Association have experienced three serious gasoline leaks over the last 15 years. One leak forced some residents to evacuate their homes, and over 1,000 gallons of gas have seeped into the soil, contaminating residents' properties. With seven existing gas stations in the immediate area, neighbors are concerned that an unnecessary eighth station will further threaten their health and safety.

The announcement of the developer's plans stirred to action a group of citizens that included pastors of the two neighborhood churches, two Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners and residents of the affected communities. A Fort Davis/Fort Dupont Citizen's Task Force is now attempting to halt construction of this new gas station.

First, the Task Force brought to the attention of officials at the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs that community residents believed Ala-

bama PMG had not been open about its intentions for the site and had attempted to sidestep the environmental review process. Second, in public hearings at which residents and the developer sparred, it was discovered that Alabama PMG had not gone through the proper regulatory process.

The relevant law is D.C. Law 13-130, the Retail Service Station Amendment Act of 2000. This legislation established a moratorium until October 1, 2005, on the conversion of full-service retail gas stations to limited-service stations. Since the former Shell station was a full-service station offering gasoline and automotive services, Task Force members believe the law would apply to the Alabama PMG proposal. Yet at an ANC-sponsored public meeting, a spokesperson for the developer stated that he thought the law had expired.

The law directs the developer to place an application with the Gasoline Station Advisory Board, which is under the auspices of the D.C. Department of Energy. After the application has been filed with the board, a public hearing is held and citizens can comment on the decision. The Task Force is also calling for a full environmental impact statement (EIS) to be made.

The city has the building application on hold until the developer applies for an exception under the authority of the Gasoline Station Advisory Board. The community believes this itself is a victory because city officials will have to enforce District regulations.

“Green” Dry Cleaning Arrives in the District

by Jason Broehm

Within the last year, a few dry cleaners in the D.C. region have begun to convert to new, more environmentally friendly technologies. In December 2003, shortly after reading an article about one such dry cleaner in the D.C. suburbs, I was pleased to notice a sign which advertised “organic” dry cleaning at U Street Cleaners, a dry cleaner at 1513 U Street N.W. After confirming that the business had recently begun using a “green” dry-cleaning process I became an instant convert and switched dry cleaners.

Nationwide, about 90 percent of dry cleaners use traditional dry-cleaning technology involving the use of perchloroethylene, commonly known as “perc,” a solvent that has been used in the dry-cleaning industry since the 1930s.

Perc is a toxic substance that is known to cause cancer in animals and is suspected of causing cancer in humans. It is a toxic air pollutant of special concern because dry cleaners frequently are located close to residences, schools, child-care centers and other businesses. It is also a volatile organic compound (VOC), which contributes to ozone (smog) formation. Dry cleaners are subject to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency regulations that require the disposal of perc at hazardous waste facilities but due to poor disposal practices in the past perc has contaminated groundwater at hundreds of sites across the country.

Several new alternative technologies have emerged that use nontoxic cleaning agents instead of perc. Professional wet cleaning, which uses water and biodegradable soap, is considered the most environmentally friendly alternative. A second technology uses a silicone-based solvent. Another uses a

synthetic hydrocarbon solvent, which though nontoxic does contain VOCs. A fourth technology, which uses carbon dioxide pressurized to a liquid state, is extremely expensive compared to the other alternatives.

According to Tracy Cho, daughter of the owners of U Street Cleaners, when it became apparent last year that they would need to replace their old perc machine, she investigated the alternatives. Some of the “green” technologies had received mixed reviews, but she found a hydrocarbon machine that had received good testimonials, including one from the Willard Inter-Continental Washington, a top downtown hotel serving diplomats and other dignitaries.

For her father, providing the best possible quality for his customers was of the utmost concern, and the family became convinced that the hydrocarbon machine would meet his high standards. Cost was also, however, an important consideration. The hydrocarbon machine the Cho family ended up buying cost twice as much as it would have cost to buy a new perc machine. To help pay

for the more expensive technology they had to raise their prices slightly, but so far the risk has paid off.

Operating the new machine saves them time and money because it requires less maintenance and they no longer have to pay a hazardous waste hauler to collect used perc. Cho’s parents, who have been working in the dry-cleaning business for more than 20 years, believe that the hydrocarbon solvent cleans better than perc, and it leaves clothes feeling softer and without perc’s toxic residue and odor. Importantly, they have received positive feedback from a number of their customers, and they have won over new customers who are drawn to their new environmentally friendly process.

Cho reports that her family is very satisfied with the new hydrocarbon machine, saying that it has been a very good switch for them. The family is also happy that their new process is better for the environment. Cho added, “In time, I’m sure the environmental issue [related to perc concerns] will come to D.C. We’d rather be a leader than a follower.”



photo by Jason Broehm

More than 20 people (and one dog) joined the Sierra Club for a hike through Northwest D.C. in late July.

Healthy Housing Emerges as an Environmental Concern

by *Rebecca Morley
and Ralph Scott*

The 20th century brought substantial progress in federal, state and local environmental policies and programs. But an emerging area of science and practice reveals that these policies largely overlook dangers that exist literally right under our noses—environmental health hazards in the home.

As far back as 1987, a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) study reported that indoor exposures far exceeded outdoor levels for most pollutants—often by a factor of at least 10 for many pollutants of concern. Moreover, most people spend about 90 percent of their time indoors. Infants and toddlers, whose developing bodies and brains make them most sensitive to pollutants, spend the most time at home. Older people, who are very sensitive to environmental toxins, also tend to stay at home more than most other age groups.

Hazards in the home also are a drain on our economy. One study, led by P.L. Landrigan and published in 2002 in *Environmental Health Perspectives*, estimated the annual costs for environmentally attributable childhood diseases in the United States—lead poisoning, asthma and cancer—at more than \$54 billion.

Each year in the United States, 2 million people make emergency room visits for asthma, according to the *American Journal of Public Health*. Damp, cold and moldy housing is associated with asthma and other chronic respiratory problems. Pest infestations are also associated with asthma. In particular, cockroaches have been found to trigger asthma attacks. Yet inappropriate treatment for pest infes-

tations can create more problems than it solves because pesticide residues in homes pose risks for neurological damage and cancer. Lead poisoning affects some 434,000 U.S. children. Lead-based paint in older housing is the primary cause of the disease, which results in reduced intelligence and learning and behavior problems. Exposure to asbestos particles, radon gas, carbon monoxide and second-hand tobacco smoke is far higher indoors than outside. Annually, radon causes between 15,000 and 22,000 deaths in the United States, according to the EPA and the National Academy of Sciences, and carbon monoxide claims more than 200 lives.

In truth, housing has long been recognized as a factor in the health of its occupants and a determinant of health inequality. In the 19th century, public health officials reduced infectious disease rates dramatically by addressing poor sanitation, crowding and inadequate ventilation in lower-income housing. Today a new generation of science confirms that poor housing conditions—particularly environmental exposures—remain a major public health threat and policies and programs for addressing them have reemerged as the relatively new field of “healthy housing.”

Healthy housing takes a holistic view of the home environment, emphasizes the interrelationship of health problems in housing and advocates comprehensive solutions. It also encompasses the use of products and materials that, at a minimum, do no harm to human health and ideally improve it. While homes of any age and value can pose serious environmental hazards, older, low-income properties in substandard condition typically

present the greatest risks. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 6 million homes are currently classified as substandard. Health care providers, government officials, property owners and consumers all need to realize the importance of decent, safe and sanitary housing. Children who live in homes that are well ventilated, dry, and free of pests, poisons and dangerous gases will be healthier and lead fuller lives. Throughout the country, community groups are working to prevent and correct housing-related health hazards; numerous state legislatures and health departments are grappling with lead paint, mold and other such hazards; and there is growing interest in Congress in pursuing national legislation to promote healthy homes.

Locally, the D.C. Asthma Coalition (contact: Lisa Gilmore, lgilmore@aladc.org) has an environmental committee working to develop home assessment and remediation interventions for environmental conditions that trigger asthma in Washington homes. Also, a relatively new organization called Lead-Safe D.C. (contact: Harrison Newton at harrison_newton1sdc@yahoo.com) is starting to work on lead poisoning prevention.

On the national level, two nonprofit organizations—the National Center for Healthy Housing (www.centerforhealthyhousing.org) and the Alliance for Healthy Homes (www.afhh.org)—are developing a national policy and research agenda for healthy homes.

Rebecca Morley is executive director of the National Center for Healthy Housing, and Ralph Scott is community projects director for the Alliance for Healthy Homes.

Twenty-year-old Georgetown University Building a P

The GU Intercultural Center was an early experiment in solar energy. Bottom left: Entrance on Red Square. Upper right: Solar panels cover the roof. Lower right: Students gather in ICC atrium.

story and photos by Yoma Ullman

The summer students gathered around the coffee kiosk in the atrium of the Bunn Intercultural Center (ICC) at Georgetown University probably have no idea that they are standing in a historic building. On the slanting, south-facing roof of the building, 3,318 square meters of photovoltaic (PV) panels convert the heat of the sun into electricity for the building's use. When it was turned on in September 1984, this array was one of the largest in the world.

The first academic building to be built on

campus in 12 years, the ICC was designed to gather many international and other programs into one location. Planning began during the energy crisis of the 1970s, when the federal government was eager to fund alternative forms of power generation. The university joined with the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), in the words of the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, "to demonstrate the viability of large-scale building-integrated PV systems for commercial and institutional facilities." A DOE grant of \$10 million paid for the PV panels and the framing system that supported them—a third the total cost of the ICC. The architect, Metcalf and Associates of Washington, D.C., worked closely with PV system engineers to design a structure that would best accommodate the panels. The ICC was dedicated in September 1982, but the PV system was only turned on two years later.

The ICC is an early example of a green building. Unlike conventional sources of energy, the ICC's solar panels contribute none of the gases that cause acid rain, contribute to global warming or intensify air pollution. Although it is an architectural anomaly on the predominantly Gothic campus, its sloping roof speaks of shelter and inclusiveness, the red brick of its masonry envelope helps to insulate it, and the steel blue of the roof, contrary to persistent rumor, does not dazzle pilots on their way to Reagan National Airport.

The ICC's array was designed to activate itself when the available light could produce a minimum of 5 kilowatts (kW) and turn itself off again when the light fell below that level. Apart from the period from December 1985 to October 1986, when it was shut down for the installation of further safety measures, and infrequent short outages, the system has operated for 20 years, generating a total of 5.8 million kilowatt-hours (kWh). At its best, it produced 300 peak kW and 360,000 kWh per year. Although this amounted to only 8 percent of the 3.55 million kWh per year used by the ICC, the system could meet 30 percent of the building's midday requirements.



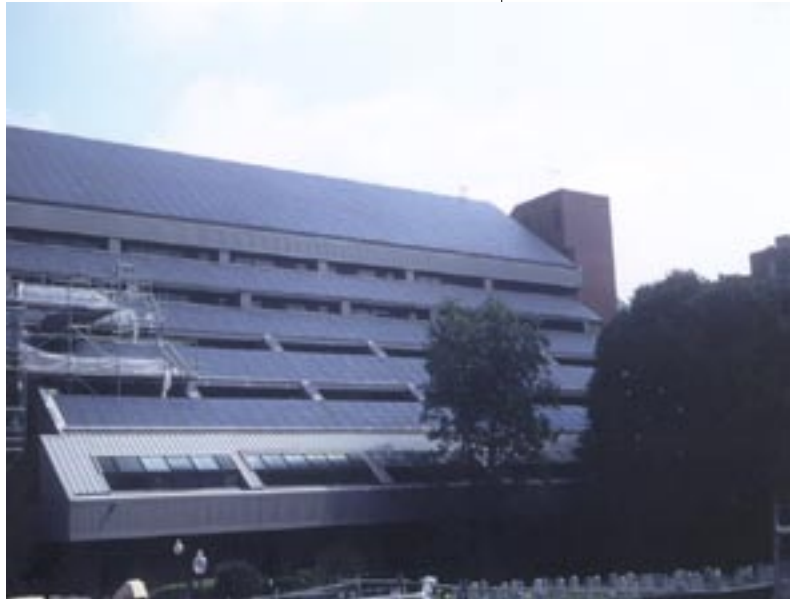
Pioneer in Green Design

Over time, the accumulation of grime on the array's surfaces led to a drop in production of about one-third. After the surfaces were scrubbed in 1993, production went up again to 240 peak kW and 300,000 kWh per year. Fewer of the photovoltaic cells are operating today and the energy they produce is only 120 peak kW and 200,000 kWh per year.

At their best, the panels saved the ICC about \$40,000 in energy costs a year. But if the university had had to meet the initial cost of the solar panels, with no federal grant, it would have gained no savings overall. The ICC is, as was originally intended, a demonstration project, but one that has proved a useful contributor to the university's power needs.

Systems like the ICC's have a potential life cycle of 50 years at the outside. The ICC array is still productive, but it is deteriorating with age. For the moment, replacement cannot be contemplated because of the high capital costs, which would not be offset by the value of the solar energy produced over the expected life of the panels. As solar energy technology becomes more competitive, however, and especially when society begins to take into account the true costs associated with the use of fossil fuels, the university may well find that replacement is feasible.

Countless people have been in the ICC without being aware of its unusual technology. Informal polls of students turn up the answer—if they know anything about it at all—that the roof is not functioning. Its generating capacity may be waning, but the roof of the ICC remains a case study of what can be done when a socially responsible client, state-of-the-art technology and farsighted federal intervention come together.



Affordable Housing

Continued from page 7

\$1,300 more per year in transportation expenses,” due to the high costs of car ownership. Studies of several metropolitan areas suggest that “the higher cost areas tend to be in outlying neighborhoods where sprawling development means everything is far apart and other transportation options are few.” In transit-accessible neighborhoods, transportation costs tend to be lower, but unfortunately housing prices tend to be higher.

If D.C. teachers, firefighters and nurses must live in Prince William County (or further out) to find an affordable home, their long commutes on the highways will create more pollution. By making it possible for people with moderate incomes to live close to their jobs, the region can go a long way toward solving both its transportation and air quality problems.

But doesn't the District already have a lot of affordable housing? Yes and no. According to a recent report by the Washington Regional Network for Livable Communities (WRN), the District accounts for only 23 percent of the region's affordable housing units. The same report also determined that large numbers of affordable housing units are being lost. For example, between 2000 and 2005, federal Section 8 contracts will expire on nearly 10,000 units. WRN has calculated that the Washington region will need to add more than 62,000 affordable homes by 2010. The District alone will need nearly 5,500 affordable units.

How will the District produce enough homes that low- and moderate-income residents can afford? Housing prices in the District continue to rise, and much of the new housing being built is in the form of luxury apartments and condominiums. While an overall increase in supply may alleviate rising prices, more is needed: the government will have to play a role.

Several possible solutions are available. First, under an inclusionary

zoning policy, the District could require that a certain percentage of new units being built be made affordable for low-income groups. Under such policies, developers are compensated for the lower-priced units by density bonuses or expedited permitting. Montgomery County has had an inclusionary zoning policy since 1976 and has used it to produce more than 11,000 affordable homes. According to an estimate by the nonprofit research and advocacy organization PolicyLink, if the District had a similar policy in effect, it would have created 2,336 affordable homes between January 2000 and May 2003 alone.

Another solution is already in effect but has not been used to its full potential: the Housing Production Trust Fund. Under a law passed by the D.C. Council in 2002, 15 percent of the real estate transfer tax and recordation fees are to be dedicated to the fund, which provides money to produce and preserve affordable housing in the city. Unfortunately, Mayor Anthony Williams has undercut this “dedication” by proposing to reduce the amount going into the fund. Recently, Mayor Williams has proposed a scheme that would issue bonds to securitize the fund, but affordable housing activists are concerned that this plan would reduce funding for housing and waste money on debt service.

The District cannot meet the entire region's affordable housing shortfall by itself. Fortunately, other jurisdictions are beginning to step up to the plate. In addition to Montgomery County's inclusionary zoning policy already mentioned, Arlington County has set a goal of creating 400 new affordable units per year and is encouraging developers to set aside 10 percent of new projects in its Metrorail corridors for affordable housing. A regional dialogue would be a good start toward further measures.

As the region continues to grow, more people of all incomes and back-

grounds will need homes. By using land around our Metro stations, we can create neighborhoods that will reduce car use and increase convenience. And by planning for affordable housing, we can ensure that District residents will have decent places to live—and that they are not forced out into the suburbs to find them.

What You Can Do To Promote Affordable Housing

Call Mayor Williams at 202-727-2980 and tell him that you support the Housing Production Trust Fund and that the revenue must be dedicated to the fund as the law provides. You can also register your support with “Friends of the Fund” at <http://www.cnhed.org/>.

Tell the members of your city council that you support an inclusionary zoning policy for the District.

Support affordable housing in your neighborhood. Counteract negative reactions to the idea by asking if a teacher or a child-care worker can afford to live in your neighborhood.

Contact the D.C. Office of Planning to learn about planning activities in your neighborhood.

Further Reading:

“Expanding Housing Opportunity in Washington, DC: The Case for Inclusionary Zoning.” PolicyLink, 2003. <http://policylink.org/Research/DCIZ/>

“Smart Growth and Affordable Housing: A Partnership for Success.” Sierra Club fact sheet. <http://www.sierraclub.org/sprawl/affordable.pdf>

“Affordable Housing and Smart Growth: Making the Connection.” Smart Growth Network, 2001. www.smartgrowth.org

“The Affordable Housing Progress Report.” WRN, 2004. <http://www.washingtonregion.net/html/AffHsgProgRpt.htm>

Bush Administration Misses the Train

by Eric C. Olson

The Bush administration's transit policies are missing the train, and American workers are paying the price. That's the conclusion of a new Sierra Club report which details how local economic pressures feed a growing demand for rail and other public transit projects and how the administration's bias against transit is out of touch with America's communities and commuters. (See www.sierraclub.org/sprawl/report04 for a copy of the report, entitled "Missing the Train.")

In recent years, demand for public transportation has increased significantly, and new transit ridership has greatly exceeded projections. Since the last time Congress took up a major transportation funding bill, in 1998, public transit ridership has increased 21 percent. New transit lines are greatly exceeding projected ridership in Houston, Dallas, Denver, Salt Lake City and elsewhere. New Starts, the federal program that helps promising transit projects get off the ground, has a record backlog of over 200 projects, reflecting the fact that more and more communities are embracing, and clamoring for, public transportation.

The growing popularity of public transportation underscores an important realization that is taking hold in communities across the country: that public transit spurs revitalization and redevelopment and fights smog and traffic. It does so without feeding sprawl the way haphazard roadbuilding does.

The benefits of transit seem lost on the Bush administration, which has proposed, as part of its six-year transportation plan, a radical change to the ratio for federal matching transit funds. Currently, the federal/state funding match for new transportation projects is 80:20. The Bush administration,

however, would like to dramatically increase the state share to 50 percent for all new transit projects. In doing so, this administration would put hundreds of transit projects across the country in jeopardy, and with them, the jobs and economic benefits those projects bring locally.

The new Sierra Club report documents the benefits of transit and the costs of the Bush administration policies, arguing that the United States deserves a balanced transportation plan that is sensible for both the environment and the economy. It lays out the economic issues behind the growing support for public transit in America's communities, looking at employee stress levels, the challenges facing low-wage commuters, redevelopment linked to transit and jobs directly in the transit sector.

Among the hundreds of public transportation projects that could be significantly stalled due to the Bush administration's transportation proposal, the report highlights a dozen. These include:

- Florida – Tampa Bay Regional Rail System
- Georgia – Atlanta-Athens Commuter Rail
- Indiana – Northeast Indianapolis Corridor Rapid Transit
- Louisiana – Jefferson, Orleans, and St. Charles Parishes light rail
- Maryland – Bethesda to New Carrollton Purple Line
- Michigan – Downtown Detroit to Metro Airport Rail Project
- New Hampshire/Massachusetts – Lowell-Nashua Commuter Rail Extension
- Ohio – Cincinnati Interstate 75 Corridor Light Rail
- Oregon – Portland South Corridor Light Rail
- Texas – Houston Light Rail Extension

- Virginia – Williamsburg-Newport News-Hampton Light Rail
- Wisconsin – Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee Metra Extension

While dozens more projects would be likely to suffer under the Bush administration proposal, this is a representative sample. Delaying or preventing them from getting built would harm commutes, economic revitalization, better jobs and improvements to our environment.

The Sierra Club is not alone in criticizing the Bush administration over its policies toward public transportation. Paul Weyrich, of the conservative Free Congress Foundation, in a recent commentary called the Bush administration "THE most anti-rail administration in the history of federal involvement in mass transit" and noted "the Bush folks are not pro-transit."

We can enjoy easier commutes, more sensible development, jobs in better locations and a better environment with a stronger commitment to public transportation. Unfortunately, the Bush administration has chosen to reward its friends in the road lobby rather than promote a balanced transportation policy. What's more, although communities across the nation are eager for public transportation, they will be waiting longer and paying more for transit under the Bush administration's plan.

To make your voice heard on these important public transportation issues with your members of Congress, visit: <http://whistler.sierraclub.org/action/?alid=280>.

Eric C. Olson works for the Sierra Club's national Challenge to Sprawl Campaign.

Opinion

Climate Collapse and Energy Policy: What's the Rush?

by Bob Morris

Remember all those “mad scientist” movies where the crazy guy in the white coat and wild hair tries out his miracle potion on himself with horrible, unforeseen consequences? We are currently engaged in a giant experiment on our whole biosphere, with no controls, to see how much carbon dioxide we can add to the atmosphere before we do unalterable damage to the earth and make it unable to support most current forms of life. We know the harm is occurring, and virtually every credible new study points to shorter time frames and greater consequences. Even organizations such as the Pentagon and oil company executives recognize the urgency and importance of action to reverse the process. Ron Oxburgh, chairman of Shell Oil, told the Guardian newspaper of June 17 that “the time scale [for change] might be impossible, in which case I’m really very worried for the planet.” Regarding “abrupt climate change,” in February Fortune reported on a study group led by legendary Pentagon planner Andrew Marshall which concluded that “by 2020 there is little doubt that something drastic [will be] happening.” But the experiment goes on, unchecked.

The widespread knowledge of looming climate collapse among energy companies, academics and governmental experts has not resulted in the formulation of any plan to address the issue. There isn’t even a widespread effort to educate the public about the need to make changes now before natural forces impose more drastic and tragic consequences. Our current political leaders, who are charged with protecting the public interest, are at best afraid to rally the public to confront uncomfortable

facts. At worst, they are abetting the carbon-based industries as they take as much profit as possible before public awareness or natural events close their window of opportunity.

The Sierra Club, with its unparalleled reputation and record, is uniquely suited to take the lead role in educating the public and demanding action from government officials. Some steps have been taken, but the reality is that the club has yet to recognize that, in order to meet the greatest challenge of at least this century, it needs to make combating climate collapse and changing U.S. energy policy its top priorities. In order to make such a major change outside normal procedures, every chapter will need to put forward a resolution asking that the Board of Directors declare as a top priority a campaign to address climate collapse and energy policy and, following the elections in November, apply club resources accordingly. The club surely recognizes that, if nothing else, current carbon-based energy policies will likely wipe out most of the environmental gains it has made over its long history.

We don’t know when we will pass the “tipping point” at which action to reverse carbon dioxide buildup in the atmosphere will no longer be effective. We may have passed it, or it may be next year, or in 5, 20 or 30 years. We do know that it will take decades to replace carbon-based energy with clean, renewable energy. How long we do want to wait before we put our best efforts into making these changes? The “mad scientist” carbon experiment is already in full swing.

Contact the members of your D. C.

Chapter Executive Committee, listed on the last page of this newsletter, if you want to make your views known regarding a climate collapse resolution. Contact Bob Morris (arccbob@earthlink.net) if you want to take part in the effort to address both climate collapse and energy policy.

Bob Morris is chair of the Appalachian Region Conservation Committee.

“The Planet” is the Sierra Club’s monthly newsletter guide to environmental activism at the national and international levels. Educate yourself on hot conservation issues, learn how to get involved in club campaigns, and find out how you can take individual action. You can read “Planet” online at www.sierraclub.org/planet. Or to subscribe, write Sierra Club Activist Desk, 85 Second St., Second Floor, San Francisco, CA 94105 or e-mail activist.desk@sierraclub.org.

To subscribe to “Sierra Club Current,” an electronic listserv for environmental activists interested in and willing to respond to action alerts on various local, national and international issues, send an e-mail to SIERRACLUB-ACTION-SUBSCRIBE-REQUEST@LISTS.SIERRACLUB.ORG. No subject line or message content is required. You will receive an action e-mail two or three times per week with recent information and suggested action. You will not receive other unsolicited e-mail.

Announcements

Sierrans Enjoy July Potomac Cruise

by Mark Wenzler

Bright and early on July 24, about a dozen Sierrans gathered at the dock in Old Town Alexandria for a spectacular cruise down the Potomac to Mason Neck. The cruise on the luxury motor yacht R & R was donated to the club by owner Rob Hartwell as an auction item for our December 2003 holiday party. Auction winner Nancy Egbert graciously offered to share her prize with fellow Sierrans.

No sooner had the boat passed under the Wilson bridge than the group spotted a bald eagle cruising along the Maryland shore. By the time we reached Mason Neck, the eagle sightings had climbed to over two dozen—a ship record according to Captain Rob. In addition to bald eagles, we enjoyed the company of herons, cormorants and ospreys too numerous to count.

Rob shared his stories of growing up on the banks of the Potomac, pointing out several of his favorite spots along the way. His love for the river is a legacy from his mother, Elizabeth Hartwell, who crusaded tirelessly for decades to save much of the Mason Neck area from destructive development projects.

We sincerely thank Rob for providing us with this fantastic river cruise. For information about chartering the R & R, you can contact Sue Hamilton at 202-236-5032.



photo by Mark Wenzler

Rob Hartwell hosts Sierra Club members and staff on the R & R.

Quiz Shows Effect of Lifestyle Choices on Animals

by Kate Mindlin

How do the choices you make in everyday life affect animals? During its 50th anniversary year, the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) is asking people to take a quiz to discover their “Humane Living Pawprint.”

The 21-question on-line quiz inquires about a range of everyday choices we make that can have an effect on the welfare of animals. Shopping, pet care, recycling, home products, yard landscaping and vacation choices are just some of the topics explored. The quiz gets people thinking about how they make an impact on the world and provides suggestions to help animals and the environment.

In the spirit of the Olympics, quiz-takers will receive a gold, silver or

bronze rating depending on their chosen answers. The questions will lead the quiz-taker to learn more about humane issues and alternatives that benefit animals, people and the environment and will ask them to retake the exam after they’ve made some changes and try to improve their score. The last question encourages people to share their comments or stories about the choices they’ve made that have had a positive impact on animals. These stories will be displayed on the HSUS Web site at www.hsus.org.

The Humane Living Pawprint quiz (www.humanepawprint.org) will be accessible from the first week of September through the HSUS’s 50th anniversary on November 22, 2004. HSUS is the nation’s largest animal protection organization with more than 8 million

members and constituents. It is a mainstream voice for animals, with active programs in companion animals and equine protection, wildlife and habitat protection, animals in research and farm animals and sustainable agriculture. HSUS protects all animals through legislation, litigation, investigation, education, advocacy and fieldwork. The nonprofit organization is based in Washington, D.C., and has 10 regional offices across the country.



Announcements

Thank you, Donors!

The following members have responded to our March Window fund-raising campaign since the last issue of this newsletter. Thank you for your support of the Washington, D.C., Chapter and its programs. For the rest of you, it's never too late to contribute—just contact our treasurer, Karen Cordry, at 301-933-3640 or karenc425@aol.com.

Melinda Beard
Deborah Brouse
Lawrence Cohen
Karen Cordry
Amelia Davis
Peter F. Gimbrere
Sharon L. House
Gwyn Jones & Jim Dougherty
Lara K. Levison
Kenneth A. Mazzer
Patricia M. Nesley
Loretta F. Neumann
Jeffrey Rasmussen
Jo Ann Scott
Florence S. Stone
Marta Wagner
Mary Wheeler
Evelyn Wirin

ARCC Meeting Set for Dec. 4-5

FutureVision, a meeting of the Appalachian Regional Conservation Committee (ARCC), will take place December 4-5 at a location to be determined. The agenda will include a post-election victory celebration, awards for excellent work by environmental volunteers, and presentations on Climate Change: What Will 2054 Look Like; top initiatives put forward by chapters; and Dismantling Racism. A work plan for 2005 will also be developed. Contact Bob Morris (arccbob@earthlink.net) to be added to ARCC information list.

Chapter Staff Assistant Departs

Dain Roose-Snyder, the Washington, D.C., Chapter's half-time staff assistant, left the organization in August. He was the chapter's first-ever paid staff person, and in his 11 months on the job he helped chapter leaders reach out to you, our members, more effectively. He was instrumental in planning, publicizing and coordinating numerous social, educational and recreational events and in recruiting members to become actively involved in the chapter's conservation campaigns such as recycling. Among his many achievements, Dain was responsible for securing the donation of a Potomac River cruise, which was raffled off at the chapter's annual holiday party in December 2003. Having worked closely with him as membership chair and as his supervisor during his tenure with the club, I can say on behalf of the chapter leadership that his assistance will be sorely missed. We wish Dain well in his future endeavors!

Chapter Seeks New Chapter Assistant

The Washington, D.C., Chapter is currently accepting applications for the staff position of chapter assistant. The chapter assistant performs various administrative duties in support of the day-to-day operations of the chapter and the Executive Committee, interacts with volunteers, coordinates chapter activities and meetings, and responds to routine inquiries from members, volunteers and the general public. It is currently a half-time position, paying an hourly wage and providing benefits. A complete job description may be found at www.dc.sierraclub.org/volunteers.



Dain Roose-Snyder has helped the D.C. Chapter over the past year as staff assistant.

Wastewater Treatment Plant Tour Oct. 15

Have you ever wondered when you flush the toilet where the wastewater goes? Then we invite you to join us on Friday, October 15, for a tour of the D.C. Water and Sewer Authority's Blue Plains Wastewater Treatment Plant in Southwest D.C.

We will meet at 8:00 a.m. for a light breakfast and pre-tour discussion about water quality issues in the District before shuttling over to the Blue Plains facility for a 9:00 a.m. tour that is expected to last about two hours.

The Blue Plains facility is the largest sewage treatment facility of its kind in the country and one of the largest treatment facilities in the world. It provides a very high level of treatment, meaning that the water it releases into the Potomac is cleaner than water released by other treatment facilities across the country.

Because of space limitations in the facility's tour van, we are limited to 13 participants so if you are interested please sign up as soon as possible. To RSVP or for more information, please contact Jason Broehm at 202-299-0745 or jason_broehm@hotmail.com.

Announcements

Be a Fat Cat Donor the Easy Way!

Ever wanted to make a big donation to help the local chapter with all of the great things it's doing? Here's a way you can help without breaking your own piggy bank.

Does your office provide calendars for the staff? And can the staff choose to get the Sierra Club calendar? The chapter makes a substantial amount on each Sierra Club calendar sold, so if we could find even 10 or 15 chapter members whose offices will buy the calendars, this could provide a healthy influx of cash. I myself racked up 15 calendars sold in an office with only about 30 people.

If you're interested, please check with your office and e-mail me, your treasurer Karen Cordry, at karenc425@aol.com, to let me know how many calendars you could use. Get in touch ASAP because we'll be making up the orders soon. Please also include contact information so we can make arrangements to get the calendars to you. We hope to hear from you. It's a great way to help the chapter AND to beautify your office.



The advertisement features two Sierra Club calendars. The larger one in the background shows a mountain range under a cloudy sky with the text 'SIERRA CLUB' and 'WILDERNESS CALIFORNIA 1993'. The smaller one in the foreground shows a close-up of flowers. Below the calendars, the text reads: 'Buy from us and support local conservation work'. Underneath that, it says 'To order, call: 301-933-3640'. At the bottom, there is the Sierra Club logo (a tree in a circle) with the text 'SIERRA CLUB' and 'FOUNDED 1913', and the slogan 'Explore, enjoy and protect the planet'.

Annual Holiday Party Set for December 7

Please join us for the Washington, D.C., Chapter's annual holiday party! This is an excellent opportunity to meet your chapter leaders and fellow members for an enjoyable evening of socializing over pizza and beer.

The party will take place Tuesday, December 7, 6:30-9:00 p.m. at Pizzeria Uno at Union Station (Metrorail Red Line). A donation of \$10 per person is suggested to help cover the cost of food. There will be a cash bar.

RSVP by Friday, Dec. 3, to Chris Craig, 202-554-5502/ccraig@zzapp.org.

Chapter E-mail Alerts

Would you like to receive e-mail alerts from the chapter about upcoming events and opportunities to speak up for the District's environment? To join, please submit a request by e-mail to washingtndc.chapter@sierraclub.org.

Paddle the Potomac Under a Full Moon

Join us Tuesday, September 28, for a Sierra Club kayaking/canoeing adventure on the Potomac under a full moon. We will gather at 6:00 p.m. for a brief program and then head out on the river as the sun is setting.

Meet at Jack's Boathouse, 3500 K Street N.W., on the Potomac under the Key Bridge (www.jacksboathouse.com). Please bring a flashlight to attach to your kayak. Rentals are \$15 per hour or \$25 for two hours and must be paid in cash. All participants must sign a liability waiver. RSVP by September 27 to Lisa Swanson, 202-291-5972 or melatar@yahoo.com.

Chapter Elections Open for Nominees

D.C. Chapter elections will be held at the end of 2004 to fill four positions opening up on the Executive Committee. Nominations are needed.

"ExComm" members serve two-year terms, meet monthly and are expected to assist in at least one of the various functions of the chapter. The chapter is especially interested in finding people with skills and an interest in fund raising. If you wish to nominate yourself or another chapter member to office, please send the name and contact information to Chris Craig at 202-554-5502 or ccraig@zzapp.org. Additional volunteers are also welcome to serve on the Nomination Committee.

Any chapter member may also be nominated to the Executive Committee by petition, providing he or she agrees to serve. The petition must be signed by at least 15 chapter members and must be received by Chris Craig before November 15, 2004.

Calendar

Outings

Following is a *partial list of activities offered by the Metropolitan Washington Regional Outings Program (MWROP)*. For a more complete and up-to-date list and additional information, visit www.mwrop.org or call 202-547-2326.

ONE-DAY EVENTS

Sat. Sep 11 (rated D). AT-Pa.: Rt. 94 to Pine Grove Furnace. 10.9 mi., 2,000 ft. elev. change. Meet 8 a.m., Shady Grove Metro station, old parking garage, lower level, near Garage Office sign. Leader: Russ Norfleet 703-501-7953 or rnorfleet@arlingtonva.us.

Sun. Sep 12 (rated C). Bull Run Mountains Conservancy. Enjoy a 6-mi. circuit through a recently created preserve. Bull Run Mountains, the easternmost range in rapidly growing northern Virginia, will play an essential role in a future greenway that will someday link several hundred mi. of trail. Enjoy outstanding views of the Virginia Horse Country from the White Cliffs. Meet at the Vienna Metro (north lot) at 9 a.m. Joint event with AMC/DC. No pets. Leaders: Glenn Gillis 703-430-0568 and Paul Elliott 703-256-6351.

Sun. Sep 12 (rated C). Monocacy River and Nearby Ridges, Quarries & Artifacts. 7.5-mi. conservation/exploratory hike in the Monocacy Natural Resources Management Area adjacent to Sugarloaf Mtn Preserve in Md. Several stream crossings lead to quarries that provided stone for C&O Canal, remains of an iron furnace, a lime kiln, and a midden that archeologists will treasure someday. Some bushwhacking up and down ridgeline, and an optional dip in the Monocacy. Leader: Larry Broadwell 301-215-7135.

Sat. Sep 18 (rated C). Brunswick to Weverton Cliff and Back. A moderate 9-mi. hike from Brunswick, Md., to the heights over Weverton. We'll start on the C&O Canal towpath before picking up the AT to head north and uphill for spectacular views. On the way back to Brunswick, some/all of us will test the cool, curative waters of the Potomac River (so bring wettable footwear, clothing) and also do some light trail-keeping by collecting towpath-side trash (bags provided). Call leaders for directions to Brunswick trailhead or carpooling meeting place (Grosvenor-Strathmore Metro station)—plus meeting times (or check www.mwrop.org a few days earlier). No pets. Joint event with AMC/DC. Leaders: Mike Darzi 301-593-4551 and Paul Elliott 703-256-6351.

Sun. Sep 19 (rated B). Carderock/Gold Mine Tract—suburban Maryland. Easy 8-mi. hike along the C&O towpath and the Gold Mine Tract to Great Falls Tavern, and return via the towpath and Berma Road. Meet at 1:30 p.m. at Carderock Park, Md., at the farthest parking lot to the right; driving directions on mwrop.org, click on Directions. Leader: Pat Hopson 703-379-1795 before 10 p.m.

Thu. Sep 23 (rated B). Wakefield/Lake Accotink Parks, Va. Moderate to fast paced circuit hike of 9-mi. From Beltway, near Annandale, take Exit 54A west on Braddock Rd. At traffic light, about 100 yards beyond outer beltway, turn right into Wakefield Park and meet at first lot on left. Bring lunch/water but no pets. Hike starts at 10 a.m. Leader: Henri Comeau 703-451-7965 or HenriComeau@aol.com.

Sat. Sep 25 (not rated). Local Canoe Trip—Dealers Choice. We will canoe on a local creek/river, the choice depending on water level. This will be a practiced novice canoe trip. Canoe and life jackets required. Sponsored by Sierra Club, Canoe Cruisers Association and Blue Ridge Voyager Canoe Club. Leader: Jim Finucane 301-365-3485 before 9 p.m.

Sun. Sep 26 (rated B). Watkins Regional Park. Enjoy 8-10 mi. circuit through fields, wetlands and mildly hilly woodlands in Prince George's Co. east of District. Expect moderate pace, diverse scenery, informative nature center, old farm buildings and post hike access to park's working century-old Dentzel carousel. Meet at nature center at 9 a.m. Call for driving directions or if carless (or check www.mwrop.org a few days earlier). Leashed pets okay. Joint event with AMC/DC. Leaders: Paul Elliott 703-256-6351 and Mike Darzi 301-593-4551.

Fri. Oct 1 (rated A/B). Moonlit Hike on the Mall. Explore the beauty of D.C.'s Mall and monuments by the full moon. Meet at parking lot by Washington Monument at 7 p.m. Use Federal Triangle Metro or park on street. Kids who can walk 7+ mi. (or 3 mi.) on relatively level terrain are welcome. Leader: Jim Finucane 301-365-3485 before 9 p.m.

Sat. Oct 2 (rated A). Fall Wildflower/Geology Walk with naturalists from the EcoStewards Alliance. 10 a.m. Attendance limited to 15 people. Call leader to register and for the location. No pets. Leader: Jim Fremont 301-962-4703 before 9 p.m.

Sat. Oct 2 (rated A). The Arboretum Nobody Knows About. An easy 4 mi. through beautiful grounds and forest trails of Cylburn Arboretum, plus 2 mi. in adjacent northwest Baltimore neighborhood, where we'll stop for a bite around noon. Back by 3 p.m. Also, possible visit to mansion and museum on the Cylburn grounds. Meet at 8 a.m. sharp for an early getaway from the C&O Canal Carderock meeting spot—opposite the Navy's Model Basin off Maryland's Clara Barton Parkway, one mi. outside the Beltway. After going under canal, turn right at T and then take first left, into parking lot. Leader: Dave Burd 703-998-9390 or dburd301@netzero.com.

Sat. Oct 2 (Unrated, but likely to be interesting). Fall Meeting of Metropolitan Washington Regional Outings Program (MWROP) Leaders. The event—intended for leaders, but also open to guests—will include a discussion of current and future MWROP activities, a presentation entitled "Preserving Open Space and Creating Parklands," and a sequence of options: a potluck lunch and boat ride (possibly combined), a lakeshore hike and a carousel ride. At Lake Accotink Park in Springfield, Va. Details will be e-mailed to MWROP leaders and posted on www.mwrop.org in September, and comments and questions will be welcomed at any time by the MWROP Executive Committee; contact Paul Elliott 703-256-6351.

Sun. Oct 3 (rated B). Seneca Creek: Black Rock Mill to Riley's Lock. 9-mi. conservation hike downstream

along this stressed but still lovely stream celebrates area history and explores a trail built by Sierrans and other conservation groups. Tread over ground that has seen Confederate raiders, C&O Canal builders and millers of grain and stone. Leader: Larry Broadwell 301-215-7135.

Sat. Oct 9 (rated G). Opochee and Waonaze Peaks in central Massanutten. Meet at Oakton Shopping Center at 7:30 a.m. Inexperienced hikers call for hiker requirements. Leaders: William Needham 410-884-9127 or Needham82@aol.com and Jack Thorsen 703-339-6716 or Thorsen4@juno.com.

Sun. Oct 10 (rated C). U.S. National Arboretum in Get-to-Know-D.C. Series. Enjoy remarkable color displays on 7.5-mi. (but shortenable) circuit hike in former farmland filled with exotic plantings. Expect botanical and Capitol surprises, 2,200 ft. of up and down (but reducable), serene bonsai museum, and one of District's highest points. Metrobus accessible. Meet at 10 a.m. at parking lot just inside arboretum's R St. entrance. Joint event with AMC-DC. Leader: Paul Elliott 703-256-6351.

Thu. Oct 14 (rated B). Rock Creek Park, D.C., in Get-to-Know-D.C. Series. Hike sections of the Western Ridge and Valley Trails, about 8 mi. Meet at 10 a.m. at the Rock Creek Nature Center, 5200 Glover Rd. N.W. Joint hike with PATC. Bring lunch and water. Leader: Henri Comeau 703-451-7965 or HenriComeau@aol.com.

Fri. Oct 15. Sierra Club Social at the Bethesda home of Jim Finucane. 8 p.m. Jim will show slides of his recent backpacking trip to the Galapagos Islands. For reservations and directions, call Jim at 301-365-3485 evenings before 9 p.m.

Sat. Oct 16 (rated F for trail part and OOH! for river part). Hike 'n Paddle Combo along east edge of Shenandoah Valley. Enjoy one-way, 12-mi. hike on fall-foliaged Massanutten Mtn (4,100 ft. of up and down); followed by canoe trip back to trailhead on rapids-dotted South Fork of Shenandoah River. Expect strenuous hike, vigorous river convoy in two-person canoes (we'll pair novices with veterans), long day starting in Centreville at 6 a.m., and request for about \$25 in cash for canoe rental. Reservations essential: call by 9 p.m. Oct. 13. Also call for updates on weather, river conditions. No pets. Joint event with AMC/DC. Leaders: Paul Elliott 703-256-6351 and Gary Kosciusko 703-765-0306 before 9 p.m.

Sat. Oct 23 (rated A). Rock Creek Park/Lake Needwood Conservation Walk. 10 a.m. to noon. A leisurely 2 mi. hike along Mill Creek, ground zero for the Intercounty Connector (ICC), a controversial proposed highway that would cross and devastate many sections of Montgomery County's best stream valleys. Discuss the ecological, economic and political issues involved in this project. Joint hike with the Audubon Naturalist Society. Leader: Ron LaCoss 301-946-1106 before 9 p.m.

Hike Rating System

One point is assigned to each mile and each 400' elevation change, up & down. The higher the point total, the more difficult the hike. For example, a five-mile hike with 1,200' elevation change (400' up, 800' down) gets a point total of 8 and is rated B; an 8-mile hike with an elevation change of 3,600' gets a point total of 17 and is rated E.

Rating	Points	Rating	Points	Rating	Points
A	7 or less	B	8-10	C	11 - 13
D	14 - 16	E	17 - 19	F	20 - 22
G	23 - 25	H	more than 25		



Calendar

Outings (continued)

Fri. Oct 29 (rated A/B). Moonlit Hike on the Mall. Explore the beauty of D.C.'s Mall and monuments by the full moon. Meet at parking lot by Washington Monument at 7 p.m. Use Federal Triangle Metro or park on street. Kids who can walk 7+ mi. (or 3 mi.) on relatively level terrain are welcome. Leader: Jim Finucane 301-365-3485 before 9 p.m.

Sat. Oct 30 (rated E). Signal Knob on Massanutten Mtn, Va. 10-mi. circuit hike with about 3,200 ft. elev. change. Exceptional views to west, north and east. Meet at 8 a.m. at Vienna Metro Station north entrance. Leader: Marcia Wolf 301-565-3165 before 9 p.m. or wolfmk@comcast.net.

Sun. Oct 31 (rated B). Rock Creek Park in Get-to-Know-D.C. Series. Explore the beauty of Rock Creek Park in "early fall." Meet at the Rock Creek Nature Center (Military Road and Oregon Ave. N.W.) at 1 p.m. Bring water and a snack. Kids who can walk 7+ mi. on relatively level terrain are welcome. Leader: Jim Finucane 301-365-3485 before 9 p.m.

MULTI-DAY EVENTS

Fri.-Sun. Oct 8-10 (unrated). GPS Backpack: Dolly Sods Wilderness, W.Va. Unscouted, up to 12 mi. a day, starting along Red Creek, seeing waterfalls, going to arguably the best overlook of the area, then heading north to explore a recently added section of the wilderness. Last day includes short walk back to the cars, then gathering cranberries, visiting Bear Rocks with the famous Alligator Rock, and—time permitting—going to the Dobbins Slashing bog. Short car shuttle required. Leader: Dimitri Tundra 301-770-9639 or tartakd@hotmail.com.

Fri.-Mon. Oct 29-Nov 1 (rated C). Western End of the C&O Canal Towpath. Join us as we initiate a series to cover the entire 184.5 mi. of the C&O Canal Towpath in segments. We'll begin with 4 day-hikes covering the westernmost 48.3 mi., with overnights at a Cumberland motel. Fall colors should be at their peak, and we'll see attractions such as the Paw Paw Tunnel. Daily car shuttles required. Limited to 8 people including the 3 leaders. Two-day version negotiable. Leaders: Pat Hopson, Carol Ivory, Frank Wodarczyk. Sign up by Fri. Oct 22 with Pat Hopson 703-379-1795 before 10 p.m.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Trail Work in Rock Creek Park, one or two Saturdays each month, Apr.-Oct. All meet at Rock Creek Park Nature Center on Glover Road, south of Military Road in northwest D.C. at 8:15 a.m. Bring work gloves. Tools provided by National Park Service. Learn to deal with erosion and other environmental concerns. Protect nature while helping to make the park accessible to future generations, including your own. Each day's project should be done by 11:30 a.m. Leader: Walter Wells 202-362-0250 mornings or evenings until 9:30 p.m. Call for dates.

Sat.-Sun. Sept 25-26. Shelter repair and maintenance. The shelter crew will be doing maintenance on shelters in the Shenandoah Park. We will overnight at one of the maintenance huts closest to where we will be working. Bring water, food, work clothes and, if you plan to stay overnight, your sleeping bag. Contact Henry Horn 301-498-8254 before 9 p.m. or athike@aol.com for more information.

D.C. Chapter and Related Events

Following is a list of activities of the D.C. Chapter at press time. Because of the possibility of changes, please confirm with the contact person or by checking our Web site, <http://dc.sierraclub.org/>.

Mon. Sep. 13

Sierra Club Second Monday Happy Hour, 5:30-7:30 p.m. The Exchange, 1719 G St. N.W. (Farragut West).

Tue. Sep. 14

Air Quality and Transportation Committee meeting. 7 p.m. Location to be announced. All members welcome. Contact Tom Metcalf at 202-832-3809 evenings or thmetcalf@mac.com or Melanie Mayock at 202-546-5363 or MKMayock@yahoo.com.

Tue. Sep. 14

D.C. Primary Election. For Sierra Club endorsements, go to www.dc.sierraclub.org.

Thu. Sep. 16

Recycling Committee meeting. 6:30-8:00 p.m. George Washington University Marvin Center, Room 307, 21st and I Streets N.W. (Foggy Bottom). Contact Brenda Moorman at 202-333-5424 or brendamoorman@aol.com.

Sat.-Sun. Sep. 18-19

Washington, D.C., Green Festival. Sat. 10 a.m.-9 p.m., Sun. 11 a.m.-7 p.m. Washington, D.C., Convention Center, 801 Mount Vernon Place N.W. Cost \$10. For information, go to www.greenfestivals.com. Sierra Club volunteers needed. Contact Jason Broehm at 202-299-0745 or jason_broehm@hotmail.com.

Sun. Sep. 19

Potluck Picnic in Rock Creek Park. 4 p.m.-dusk. Rock Creek Park, Grove #9 on Beach Drive N.W. Sponsored by Sierra Club's National Sustainable Consumption Committee and the Vegetarian Society of D.C. Bring vegetarian dish to share, serving utensil, reusable plate, cup and utensils. For directions and more information, see www.vsd.org/picnics.html.

Thu. Oct. 7

Executive Committee meeting. 7-9 p.m. Club offices, 401 C St. N.E. All members welcome. Contact Mark Wenzler at 202-547-3410 or mwenzler@net.org.

Mon. Oct. 11

No Second Monday Happy Hour.

Tue. Oct. 12

Air Quality and Transportation Committee meeting. See Sep. 14.

Fri. Oct. 15

Tour of Blue Plains Wastewater Treatment Plant. (See announcement, p. 17.)

Thu. Oct. 21

Recycling Committee meeting. 6:30-8:00 p.m. Location to be determined. Contact Brenda Moorman at 202-333-5424 or brendamoorman@aol.com.

Sat. Oct. 23

Household Hazardous Waste and Home Electronics Recycling. 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Rock Creek Park Carter Baron Parking Lot. Sponsored by the D.C. Department of Public Works. For information, call the D.C. Recycling Hotline at 202-645-8245.

Thu. Nov. 4

Executive Committee meeting. See Oct. 7.

Mon. Nov. 8

Sierra Club Second Monday Happy Hour. 6-8 p.m. Café Nema, 1334 U St. N.W. (U Street-Cardozo).

Tue. Nov. 9

Air Quality and Transportation Committee meeting. See Sep. 14.

Thu. Nov. 18

Recycling Committee meeting. 6:30-8:00 p.m. Location to be determined. Contact Brenda Moorman at 202-333-5424 or brendamoorman@aol.com.

Thu. Dec. 2

Executive Committee meeting. See Oct. 7.

Tue. Dec. 7

Sierra Club D.C. Chapter Annual Holiday Party. 6:30-9:00 p.m. Pizzeria Uno, Union Station. See announcement, p. 17.

Mon. Dec. 13

No Second Monday Happy Hour.

Tue. Dec. 14

Air Quality and Transportation Committee meeting. See Sep. 14.

Thu. Dec. 16

Recycling Committee meeting. 6:30-8:00 p.m. Location to be determined. Contact Brenda Moorman at 202-333-5424 or brendamoorman@aol.com.

WASHINGTON, D.C., CHAPTER DIRECTORY

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Explore, enjoy and protect the planet.



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