



CAPITAL SIERRAN

Newsletter of the Washington, D.C., Chapter

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photo by David Winer/drawing by Frank Morgan

A private facility (shown here in drawing at same scale as neighboring Canoe Club facility) threatens trees, a hiker/biker trail and historic structures.

Boathouse or Bloathouse?

Private Boathouse Would Consume Parkland

by Amber Jones and Sally Sherman

In the 1980s, the National Park Service (NPS) worked with local interest groups to develop a plan for a boathouse zone along the Georgetown waterfront that would accommodate both public and private boathouses. The Sierra Club has recently discovered, however, that the NPS made a backdoor agreement to transfer to Georgetown University for an exclusive facility a rare tract of undeveloped, historically significant land inside the C&O Canal National Historical Park. In exchange, the public would get an unbuildable parcel upstream.

The site slated for the private boathouse extends beyond the boathouse zone, poses safety hazards for recreational boaters and users of the Capital Crescent Trail (CCT), and threatens the Potomac riverbank, the C&O Canal and historic structures in the vicinity with flood and erosion damage.

Furthermore, the original plan for a building of 4,000 sq. ft. has grown to almost 20,000 sq. ft., with a corresponding increase in height

and obstruction of river views. The NPS shepherded the proposal for the larger building through the D.C. zoning and historical review processes in 2003-2004, despite public opposition and without evaluating the building's impact or considering alternative sites.

After more public opposition and a lawsuit brought by the C&O Canal Association and Washington Canoe Club, the NPS is

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Hazmat Train Win!



The D.C. Council voted to ban trains carrying hazardous cargo, thanks to chapter efforts. At left, Jim Dougherty, lead volunteer, appears with Mayor Williams as he signs the bill into law. See story, page 3.

Letter from the Chair

You, Our Members, Are Crucial to the Sierra Club's Success!

by Jason Broehm

Capital Sierran Editors

Chris Craig, Yoma Ullman, Gwyn Jones and Jim Dougherty (photography)

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

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Since assuming the position of chair of the D.C. Chapter in January, I have been reflecting on our chapter's successes in 2004 and thinking about ways we could be even more successful in 2005.

We can celebrate several important achievements in 2004. We helped pass legislation requiring utilities serving the District to use clean, renewable energy. We gained approval of regulations implementing the 2002 Urban Forest Preservation Act. We helped get a "green" stadium provision included in the baseball stadium financing legislation to ensure that the stadium incorporates environmentally conscious design features, particularly those that will minimize its impact on the Anacostia River. And we have already achieved a big success in 2005 in helping to pass the "toxic trains" emergency legislation, which bans the transportation of hazardous substances through the heart of the city.

At our recent chapter leadership retreat, about 20 volunteer leaders spent the better part of a Saturday setting goals and planning strategy for 2005. This group of talented and dedicated individuals and others like them collectively give thousands of hours of their time each year to advocate for a cleaner and greener environment here in the District.

Our core group of committed activists has been able to accomplish much over the years, but I believe we can be even more effective. We depend on support from you, our members, to achieve success. Some of you already volunteer your time or contribute financially, and both types of support are crucial. My main goal for this

year is to get more of our 3,400 chapter members actively involved.

We are very pleased to welcome Beth Tredwell, our talented and energetic new chapter assistant, who started work in February. She and Chasta Jones, our new membership chair, will help us to reach out and get more of you involved. You should be hearing from Beth soon, or you may wish to get in touch with her at 202-543-0552 or beth.tredwell@sierraclub.org.

I would like to highlight another important way that you can support our chapter's efforts. Soon you will be receiving the chapter's annual fund-raising letter in the mail. The funds that we raise from this mailing are essential to our success. This year, I would like to raise the bar by challenging you with my own donation of \$200. I urge you to be as generous as you can possibly afford to be.

We face many challenges in the year ahead, among them advocating for a dedicated source of Metro funding, monitoring implementation of the District's new single-stream recycling system, ensuring that the baseball stadium's design is "green," defending the "toxic trains" legislation in court and influencing the Klinge Road environmental impact statement process. We hope that we can count on your support to help us meet these challenges by giving us the volunteer and financial support that we need.

If you have ideas to share or would like to learn more about how you can get involved, please get in touch with me at 202-299-0745 or jason.broehm@dc.sierraclub.org.

Conservation

Council Passes Hazmat Transportation Law Railroad Sues in Federal Court

by Jim Dougherty

An 18-month campaign by the local chapter of the Sierra Club was rewarded on February 1 when the D.C. Council passed the the Terrorism Prevention in Hazardous Materials Transportation Emergency Act of 2005. The new law, signed by Mayor Anthony A. Williams on February 15, prohibits shipments of ultrahazardous chemicals, by truck or train, through a “Capitol exclusion zone” consisting of all points within 2.2 miles of the Capitol. (The ban would cover all such shipments without a special permit by the D.C. Government.)

The February 1 passage of the law was a signal achievement for the bill’s supporters. The same bill had been voted on in October 2004, when it found only five votes in support. Effective lobbying through the winter, combined with a large-scale grassroots mobilization, shifted the council’s thinking on the matter and produced a 10-1 vote in favor. Councilmember Carol Schwartz (R-At Large), who believes that the railroad and the federal government are adequately protecting the public, was the lone dissenter.

Within days after passage of the law, CSX Railroad, which runs the trains the bill is intended to reroute, filed papers with the U.S. Surface Transportation Board, seeking to have the law declared unconstitutional. Lawyers for the city and the Sierra Club led briefs in opposition days later. Since January, the Sierra Club has been circulating a legal memorandum showing that the law does not pose an undue burden on interstate commerce and that it is consistent with all federal laws governing the transportation of hazardous materials.



photo by Jim Dougherty

Thanks to recent legislation, hazardous shipments like this may be a thing of the past.

On the day after Mayor Williams signed the bill into law, CSX also filed suit in federal court in a parallel effort to have the law struck down. Judge Ellen Huvelle has called for briefs from interested parties by February 28. Through its lawyers—Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr—the D.C. Chapter intends to intervene in order to mount a strong defense of the statute.

The law is intended to address the threat to public safety posed by huge cargoes of highly toxic chemicals that for years have passed through the District virtually every day and night. Dubbed “potential weapons of mass destruction” by the U.S. Department of Transportation, these shipments—if attacked by a terrorist—would release a deadly, ground-hugging cloud that would travel up to 14 miles and cover an area of 50 square miles. The result would be up to 100,000 deaths within the first 30 minutes, according to testimony before the D.C. Council by an expert at the U.S. Naval Research Laboratory.

The bill seeks to force the railroad to reroute the most dangerous chemicals around Washington. Alternative rail routes pass as close as 50 miles from the city. Trucks carrying large quanti-

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Council Agrees to Make Stadium Green; Chapter and Allies Birddogging to Make Sure

by Gwyn Jones

By now, everyone knows that baseball is coming to the District. But the Sierra Club and our allies have declared an initial victory because the stadium bill passed by the D.C. Council includes the “green stadium amendment,” which requires the new facility to incorporate environmentally sustainable design.

With the selection of the design architect scheduled for February 28, the alliance of the Sierra Club, Natural Resources Defense Council, Chesapeake Bay Foundation and others continued to press for green design with a letter to the Sports and Entertainment Commission, reminding the commission of the stadium bill’s green mandate and urging the selection of a design team with sustainable design experience.

As this and other development projects along the Anacostia River move forward, the D.C. Chapter’s involvement on the waterfront will be increasingly important to ensure that the environmental initiatives laid out in the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative are implemented. Some of these initiatives include public access to the riverfront, enhanced green space, protecting and cleaning up the river by controlling stormwater runoff, and better mobility through improved pedestrian, bicycle and transit access.

If you are interested in participating in the chapter’s efforts, contact Gwyn Jones, conservation chair, 202-607-7094 or gwynjones@aol.com.

Conservation

Funding Metro—For a Change

by *Chris Carney*

In the District, everyone knows how crucial the Metro system is. Metro brings us to work, gets customers to our businesses and provides a decent alternative to gridlock on our streets. Members of the Sierra Club's D.C. Chapter know that for over 30 years Metro has been vital to improving our local air quality by taking cars off the roads and protecting our dwindling open space by fostering intelligent development around Metro stations.

After all these years, Metro's trains, buses, tracks and stations are starting to show their age, even as ridership continues to grow. At a time when we should be looking for Metro's next

expansion projects—such as building the Purple Line and putting rail on the Woodrow Wilson Bridge—Metro's ability to continue to provide existing core services is being questioned instead.

Unlike other transit systems of its size, Metro has no dedicated source of funding. Every year, the transit authority must ask the jurisdictions it serves for the resources to keep the trains and buses moving. After several lean years, Metro is facing huge shortfalls for its capital and operating budgets. A recently convened blue ribbon panel to study the issue is now calling on public officials and the federal government to

make dedicated funding a top priority.

D.C. Sierra Club activists played a major role in winning last year's fight for the \$1.5 billion Metro Matters emergency funding package: now they will be leading a fight for dedicated funding for Metro. They will also be calling for a renewed commitment to building the Purple Line, but dedicated funding must come first. In the months ahead, the D.C. Chapter will be gearing up a grassroots campaign to build demand for Metro funding. Please sign up to volunteer in this important campaign by contacting Chris Carney at chris.carney@sierraclub.org.

Building Environmental Communities Campaign

Aims to Energize Members

by *Ralph Garboushian*
and *Chris Carney*

The goal of the Sierra Club's Building Environmental Community (BEC) Program, now under way and planned to run for a decade, is to influence the environmental policies of decision makers by creating both a robust, environmentally aware community within the general population and a strong public demand for environmental progress. BEC has the potential to create a powerful grassroots voice at both the local and national levels on behalf of livable and sustainable communities and a healthy environment.

The Sierra Club is focusing on targeted communities around the country using traditional grassroots organizing methods implemented by Sierra Club activists and organizers.

The strategic approaches for the program include building environmental community through one-on-one

relationships and offering visionary solutions to environmental problems. Club activists are making contact with people through neighbor-to-neighbor outreach using canvassing, phone banks, or tabling at fairs and festivals. Nationally, we are presenting a range of visionary proposals including a fresh start on a solution to the nation's energy problems, revitalizing urban communities, and restoring a national commitment to a healthy environment.

In the D.C. area, the BEC campaign will energize volunteer activists to engage residents and educate them about local campaigns that are helping to build more livable and sustainable communities. Throughout the coming year, volunteers from the D.C., Maryland and Virginia chapters will sponsor a series of house parties, happy hours and other social events to inform people

about local campaigns and the many available volunteer opportunities associated with them. The campaign will also use "Sierra Club 101," which is a hands-on workshop for new members, and other educational events to illustrate the basic workings of the Sierra Club and how best interested people can contribute.

Locally, BEC has the goal of recruiting 150 new volunteers in the coming year. Though these goals are ambitious, the high-profile nature of many local campaigns, from combating sprawl-inducing highways to securing dedicated funding for Metro and building the Purple Line, gives our local BEC campaign the potential to be successful in building a deeper and stronger activist base.

Conservation

Metro Branch Trail Makes Progress



photo by Wayne Phyllaiter

Bikers and pedestrians will soon be able to pass over the dangerous intersection of New York and Florida avenues on this Metro-side skypath.

by Paul Meijer

In the Dutch language we have an expression: “She is in a state of blissful expectation.” It’s a euphemism for being visibly pregnant. This is an apt description of the present status of the Metropolitan Branch Trail—for while nothing has been delivered, what’s coming about is quite remarkable.

For instance, a skypath has been built along the New York Avenue Metro station that will carry hikers and bicyclists over the busy intersection of New York and Florida avenues. This section of the trail will be open once an aluminum railing has been installed.

Trail connectors to the skypath are also nearing approval or completion. The District government is negotiating with Pepco, the landowner to the north, to bring about a link between Harry Thomas Way (a street) and the asphalt trail under New York Avenue.

And connecting trails to the south along both sides of the Metro tracks appear to be a certainty.

The trail is also progressing in Maryland, where a link between the Silver Spring transit center and a finished section along Takoma Avenue has entered the design stage. A hearing will be held in March.

Activists and volunteers have worked for 10 years on the Metropolitan Branch Trail, which will eventually provide green space and a safe corridor for self-propelled travelers between Union Station and Silver Spring. It now appears that major sections of the trail will be open in a few months.

Midwives needed! Help deliver the Metropolitan Branch Trail to the citizens of Washington. To get involved, contact Paul Meijer at Meijer@cua.edu or 202-726-7364.

DDOT Implements Tree Regulations

by Jim Dougherty

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) has published in the D.C. Register the final regulation implementing the Urban Forest Preservation Act of 2002 (D.C. Law 14-309; D.C. Official Code 8-651.01 et seq.). As of January 21, a property owner must obtain a permit from the D.C. government before removing a “special tree,” defined as one with a circumference larger than 55 inches when measured at a height of 4.5 feet. This definition applies to trees growing on either public or private property.

A permit can be issued if: (a) the tree is certified as “hazardous” by an arborist from DDOT’s Urban Forestry Administration or by one certified by the International Society of Arboriculture; (b) the property owner commits to planting a quantity of saplings whose aggregated circumference equals or exceeds the circumference of the removed tree; (c) the owner pays a fee of \$35 per inch of circumference into the Tree Fund; or (d) the tree is exempt from the law (Norway maple, tree of heaven, mulberry). A permit can also be obtained through a combination of (b) and (c).

The permit application procedure is available online on the DDOT Web page, ddot.dc.gov, under Urban Forestry, or at the Public Space Permit Office, 941 N. Capitol St. N.E., Suite 2300, tel: 202-645-6140, or fax at 202-645-0168. Applications can be filed electronically.

This development caps a three-year campaign by the D.C. Chapter and other environmental groups to protect the grand old trees that make up such a crucial component of the city’s declining “urban forest.” Questions? Call Jim Dougherty at 202-488-1140.

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 washingtondc.chapter@sierraclub.org.

Conservation

Dumpster Divers Target Chain Stores

by Sharon M. Hannon

On a windy Friday night in February, with the temperature in the 20s, two members of the Recycling Committee of the Sierra Club's D.C. Chapter bundled themselves up and ventured out into the District's alleys to comb through dumpsters. Matthew Tisdale and Heather Kerst are dumpster divers—activists committed to checking dumpsters to confirm whether busi-

nesses are recycling. And for them, this is a year-round pursuit.

In 1988, the District enacted a law requiring all commercial properties in the city (apartment buildings and condos with four units or more, businesses, and office buildings) to file a recycling plan with the Department of Public Works. In addition, these commercial enterprises were required to

contract a company to haul away their recyclables.

Has the law worked over the past 17 years? No, according to the statistics. The District's original goal was to recycle 45 percent of the total solid waste stream by 1994. By 2003, the city only had a 25 percent diversion rate.

So last spring, the Recycling Committee decided to take action and find out what local businesses were recycling and what they were throwing away. Then, armed with photos of discarded recyclables in dumpsters, the group sent letters to landlords or business owners to let them know they were breaking District law and risked a fine for further noncompliance.

The group had an early success when the owner of the office building they targeted at 1900 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W. agreed to begin recycling. They then decided to focus on chain stores—Starbucks, CVS, Cosi—and hotels. "We're trying to get to the people who generate the most waste," says committee member Angela Wallis.

Each committee member is responsible for following up with a specific company, but the group eventually wants to establish autonomous teams that can operate independently. With so many apparent violators in the city, the Recycling Committee is always looking for volunteers who are willing to take part in dumpster dives, track correspondence or call and write to corporate contacts.

New committee member Kate Mindlin recently completed her first dive. "Handling other people's trash isn't exciting," she says, "but documenting it is! We need proof to change the world, and it starts in this case in the dumpster."

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Campaign Works for Smoke-Free Workplaces

by Eric Marshall

The campaign led by the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network to pass a smoke-free workplaces law in the District is gaining significant momentum. The campaign has picked up significant support throughout the area, and the smoke-free campaign is now endorsed by over 70 organizations, including the Washington, D.C., Chapter of the Sierra Club. We've also begun to garner support from District restaurateurs, which is vital to the passage of a smoke-free law. With the continued support of such organizations and interested parties, we are confident 2005 will be the year D.C. goes smoke-free.

On December 15, 2004, the campaign sent more than 60 registered D.C. voters, including the Sierra Club's own Chasta Jones, to descend on the D.C. Council to advocate for smoke-free workplaces. We followed up with at least 380 phone calls from supporters to the council's offices over a two-day period. With all this activity, we are confident the council heard our message: smoke-free is an issue that is not going away.

The campaign closed out 2004 with a great Smoke-Free Workplaces

Advocacy Day and hasn't slowed down since.

In January 2005, we held our first Smoke-Free Workplaces Steering Committee Meeting. The meeting took place at Ben's Chili Bowl. A great group of volunteers came out and discussed ways to make D.C. smoke-free in 2005. The meeting also served as the kickoff for our "We Support Smoke-Free Workplaces" yard and window sign program. Since then, hundreds of signs have popped up all over the District.

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network-led campaign is going to continue to have inspiring smoke-free events. Our next is the March Smoke-Free Workplaces Steering Committee Meeting. The meeting will take place on Tuesday, March 8, at Ben's Chili Bowl from 6:30 p.m.–7:30 p.m. If you would like to attend, or want information on other smoke-free events, please contact Eric Marshall at Eric.Marshall@cancer.org or 202-661-5722.

Eric Marshall is a field representative for the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network.

Will Metro Really Open Its Doors?

by Dennis Jaffe

So you say you favor improving Metro to reduce pollution? And maybe building the outer Purple Line, and seeing the elevators run properly for riders with physical disabilities or for people who travel with newborns—or bicycles?

For that Metro needs a stable source of adequate funding. And who is going to demand it? It has to be the public, putting pressure on local governments through the political process. But people will not make the effort unless they have confidence in Metro.

Unfortunately, public confidence in Metro has seriously eroded in recent months following mishaps and mismanagement that have been widely reported. This is a significant concern for the Sierra Club's D.C. Chapter. A strong Metro means efficient travel, protection of our environment and of

public health, and support for sustainable commerce. And we recognize that securing more stable funding, which the system so urgently needs, will require not only winning back public confidence in Metro but also raising it to a higher level than it has been in the past. Without that level of confidence, it will be impossible to galvanize popular demand for the transit system that we, and our environment, deserve.

The chapter's Transportation Committee has therefore decided that the public must be truly integrated into Metro's decision-making process and that in consequence fundamental reforms in the process are required. Metro management must echo the voice we hear on the trains—"doors opening"—and demonstrate to its public that it deserves their confidence.

In December, we launched a ma-

major campaign with the title "10-Step Program for Metro Accountability." This program calls for detailed policy proposals to achieve that accountability, for media outreach, and for in-depth meetings with the Metro's leaders and staff.

On February 7, the new chairman of the Metro board, Dana Kauffman of Fairfax, announced his intention to bring riders into the agency's decision-making process. In doing so, he adopted several of our recommendations:

- establishing a Passengers' Advisory Committee;
- initiating public comment periods at board meetings;
- making agency documents available on the Internet; and
- strengthening customer service.

Chairman Kauffman has begun his tenure by taking some significant steps, but we are still working out details and pressing to gain approval of the remaining components of our proposal—such as posting the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority e-mail addresses of individual board members on the Web. This will make it possible for citizens to contact board members who have so far been inaccessible. We are also urging Metro to make service evaluation reports more easily available.

We hope soon to focus pressure from our members on the prompt enactment of these crucial accountability measures, which aim not only to win back the public's trust and confidence in Metro, but also to create an environment more open to sound policies that meet the needs of our region.

You can read the proposed "10 Step Program for Metro Accountability" at: <http://www.SierraClub.org/DC/Sprawl/SierraClub-Letter-to-Metro-12-7-04.htm>.

Dumpster Divers Take on the Chains

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Mindlin, who has taken on local coffeehouse and non-recycler Cosi, says "So far I've corresponded with the corporate office and three local Cosi restaurants to let them know they're in violation of District law and [to] seek a valid recycling plan." While she hasn't convinced Cosi to recycle yet, she finds her efforts worthwhile. "The committee is a team, all committed to making the District a better community. I am pleased to be a member and help in any way I can," she explains.

Even if you don't have time to volunteer with the Recycling Committee, there are other ways every Sierra Club member can help. "Next time you're in



Recycling Committee volunteer Heather Kerst discovers recyclable aluminum headed for the dump. (photo by Matthew Tisdale)

a Starbucks, Cosi or CVS, ask the staff or managers if they recycle," Tisdale suggests. "If they say 'no,' ask them why not."

Interested in working with the Recycling Committee? Contact Brenda Moorman, committee chair, at 202-333-5424 or brendamoorman@aol.com.

Measuring Environmental Sustainability

by *Elon Danziger*

Imagine a measure as simple and vivid as the national debt, but applied to environmental sustainability: a quantified relationship between a nation's natural resources and the impact the nation has on the environment. Tracked by the media, the measure would guide citizens and policymakers. Picture a U.S. president crowing about an environmental surplus, or a presidential challenger demonstrating a growing environmental deficit during the incumbent's term.

The power that authoritative environmental metrics could have has spurred numerous efforts to create them over the past few decades. The best funded and best publicized is the Environmental Sustainability Index (ESI), which made the national news cycle recently with the completion of its 2005 edition. In the past, most headlines read: Finland is the most sustainable country in the world! The news stories went on to mention that the United States ranked 45th (out of 146), and offered little more.

The ESI, in contrast, distills 76 "data sets" for each country in the world into a single score (ranging, this year, from 29.2 for North Korea to 75.1 for Finland). "The higher a country's ESI score," the report explains, "the better positioned it is to maintain favorable environmental conditions in the future." Thus Russia, in 33rd place, outranks the United States, not because it has developed more responsibly (its western regions suffer from serious environmental devastation) but because its unsettled land and unpolluted water in the east constitute vast natural resources it can draw on in the future.

This paradox is a problem that even the ESI's director, Daniel C. Esty, acknowledges. Esty, a high-ranking official in the Environmental Protection

Agency under President George H.W. Bush who has been publicly critical of the present administration, conceived the index six years ago at Yale, where he is a professor. The first full ESI was published in 2002. For both editions, the World Economic Forum has been a collaborator, which to some environmentalists provides an explanation for a report they see as an affirmation of the status quo in the industrialized world. While most of the data sets are obvious choices, others seem debatable (freedom of the press) or ideological (all energy subsidies are considered distorting and unsustainable). Further, ESI scores do not take into account "outsourced" resource use and pollution that occur at the place of origin of imported goods.

Nonetheless, with some further development, the ESI could be an extremely powerful tool. The emphasis on rank adds a vividness that the score alone doesn't have; and if the United States slips from 45th to, say, 70th, over the next three years, a savvy politician could make hay over the nation's dismal performance.

Other less well-known indices of national sustainability exist. Earth systems scientists have developed a measure of the proportion of yearly plant growth (trees, crops, etc.) that humans use (called HANPP, for Human Appropriation of Net Primary Production).

Human appropriation of this wealth has been charted across the world by a team of researchers headed by David Imhoff. The ratio of appropriated to available NPP varies from 6.09 percent in South America to 80.39 percent in South Central Asia, with North America on the low end with 23.69 percent. Ecological footprint, a concept developed

by Mathis Wackernagel of the nonprofit Redefining Progress, is a broader assessment of "the cropland, forests, and other natural resources [such as fossil fuels] that are required to produce the products consumed by a given population." By the reckoning of his 2004 report, the per capita footprint of an American is 23.6 acres, the highest in the world.

In 1992 David Pearce and Giles Atkinson attempted to express natural resources in dollar terms and compare their availability with their use (the points the ESI gives for natural resources are incommensurate with the points lost for overuse of them, so that the index offers no balance or absolute assessment of sustainability). They defined sustainability as annually saving "more than the depreciation on its man-made and natural capital," by which criterion the United States and most of the countries of the developed world were sustainable (although not by much), while many less developed countries, such as Indonesia, Mali and Ethiopia, were not. The authors admitted that their notion of sustainability was "weak" because it considered natural and economic wealth to be interchangeable.

Many more metrics exist, only underscoring the complexity of quantifying what is sustainable. Despite all its flaws, the ESI may be the best hope for tracking and encouraging environmental progress. Comprising a wide spectrum of national resource measures and consumption rates, it may not suggest where a country "should" be, but it shows where it has been and where its peers are. An environmentalism of national competition could be more effective than an environmentalism of international despair.

Environmental Justice

Community Activists Win Victory over Gas Station Developer

by Linda Fennell

After a nine-month battle with the residents of the Fort Davis and Fort Dupont communities, the owners of the PMG Marketing Group have decided not to continue their attempt to develop a 24-hour gasoline station at Massachusetts and Alabama Avenues Southeast. Worn down by pressure from a citizens' task force, PMG sold the property to the New Macedonia Baptist Church for future development purposes. The church, located across the street from the property, has been a positive force in the neighborhood for 30 years.

"We are so proud that a long-standing institution in our community has stepped forward to purchase the property. This victory has signaled to the rest of the city that east-of-the-river residents can control what comes into their communities," said Johnnie Scott Rice, commissioner for the Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) for 7E. Thetus Boyd, ANC commissioner for 7B04, agreed. "We want to keep our neighborhood healthy, not expose it to the health and safety risks posed by another gas station. New Macedonia has been a faithful community partner for years. We are elated that they have acquired the property." Leon Hobbs, past president of the task force agrees. "I hope that we have demonstrated that when our communities work together, we can make a difference."



For 15 years the residents of Fort Davis and Fort Dupont have been on constant alert for the next gasoline leak, having experienced three serious leaks within that time. A 2001 leak forced some residents to evacuate their homes, and over 1,000 gallons of gas have seeped into the soil on their properties. With seven existing gas stations in the immediate area, residents did not want an unnecessary eighth station threatening their health and safety. Their worries were exacerbated by their perception that PMG was not open or forthcoming with its intentions for the site and had attempted to sidestep the environmental review process to build there. Through research and vigilance, the task force was able to pressure the D.C. city government to enforce regulations and conduct an environmental review.

"The acquisition would not have been possible without the steadfast and diligent work of the task force," said Patrick Walker, pastor of New Macedonia. "Twenty-five percent of my congregation lives within walking distance of the church. Now, we will be able to maintain the quality of life in our neighborhood that is important to our residents."

DDOT Transportation Workshops to Explore Kenilworth Corridor

The District of Columbia Department of Transportation (DDOT) will hold three public workshops during the month of March at which the community can comment on the transportation study for the Kenilworth Avenue Corridor. This is the third in a series of studies to analyze the transportation patterns in the Southeast areas of the city. The first examined the 11th Street Bridge/South Capitol Street area. The second studied the Middle Anacostia Crossing to determine the impact of increased traffic on the Sousa Bridge and the I-295 corridors.

Workshop #1 will be held from 6:00-8:30 p.m. on March 8 at the Kenilworth-Parkside Recreation Center, 4300 Anacostia Ave. N.E.

Workshop #2 will be held from 6:00-8:30 p.m. on March 10 at the Fort Dupont Ice Arena, 3779 Ely Place S.E.

Workshop #3 will be held from 9:00 a.m.-12 noon on March 12 at the River Terrace School, 34th & Dix Streets N.E.

Locations are tentative. For more information, contact Steve Lee at Justice and Sustainability Associates, LLC at 202-610-0005 or steve@jsallc.com.

Volunteers needed

Energy Expo Set for March 31

The spring 2005 East of the River Energy Expo, sponsored by the Office of the People's Counsel of the District of Columbia, will be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Thursday, March 31, at the Pennsylvania Avenue Baptist Church. The Environmental Justice program of the Washington, D.C., Chapter will have a table at this event. If you are interested in helping, contact Linda Fennell at 202-610-0200 or Linda.fennell@sierraclub.org.

A Bit of Canada on the Anacostia

by Maggie Brasted

While growing up in Rockville, I don't think I ever saw a Canada goose up close. Geese wintered on the Chesapeake Bay, but suburban kids went to the bay in the summer. Now, though, Canada geese are all over Rockville and settled into comfortable habitat in the District as well.

Unfortunately for metro D.C. geese, the places people want to use the most have the grass geese love to eat and the open vistas and open water they need. Golf courses, parks, playing fields and shorelines throughout the metro area and in many other parts of the United States host growing flocks of Canada geese. And being birds of a feather, geese flock, eat and defecate together—leaving places with the best food littered with the most droppings.

Why are these formerly seasonal bay visitors now common city residents? They didn't get lost on the way to the Arctic. After hunting and market killing reduced populations to near extinction, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act protected Canada geese. In the early 1960s, small groups of one "race" thought to have vanished were discovered. Government agencies introduced young geese of this race in the historic range of the Canada goose and in some places where the geese had not been found before, in part to create hunting opportunities.

Unfortunately, the geese of this race weren't strong migrants to begin with. Then, raised in captivity and moved around by wildlife agencies, they never had migrating parents to teach them migratory behavior and routes. Joining these birds were the offspring of captive geese released from private hands—also lacking migratory teachers. Descendants of these geese now thrive year round in the ideal goose habitat people have created in cities and suburbs.

While most city geese live on grass, geese also eat wetlands vegetation if they can find it. In the

1,200-acre Anacostia Park, which is part of National Capital Parks-East (NCP-East), ball fields stretching along the eastern shore of the river and the Langston Golf Course on the western shore offer ideal goose habitat right next to reconstructed wetlands. If left unprotected, wild rice planted as part of restoring the 45-acre Kingman Marsh offers a tempting goose buffet. Between 2001 and 2003, an average of 175 resident geese were counted in Kingman, joined each winter by about 85 migratory geese. NCP-East found that these geese were literally eating into efforts to restore the wetlands.

Where the presence of large flocks of geese conflicts with how people want to use a piece of land, humane solutions exist. The most long-term and cost-effective solution is to change the ideal goose habitat by maintaining as little area as possible in mowed grass and breaking up open sight lines. If people are feeding waterfowl, curtailing this artificial lure also reduces goose concentration. A large toolbox of products and techniques is available to harass geese so they learn to avoid sites where they are unwelcome. These range from high-tech lasers to trained herding dogs to farmers' old standbys for protecting their crops from birds.

I visit goose-attractive sites in Montgomery County each spring to limit the number of goslings hatched by using "goose birth control." Our volunteer team interrupts egg development by addling, which means coating eggs with corn oil to prevent air exchange through the shell, or by simply removing them



A volunteer for the Humane Society of the United States oils Canada goose eggs to limit flock growth. photo by J. Hadidian/HSUS

from the nest to end incubation. NCP-East is addling for a second season this spring throughout Anacostia Park. Addling has become a widely adopted technique, with programs in many cities and suburbs in the Northeast, Midwest and Northwest regions of the United States.

Limiting the numbers of goslings at a site helps in two ways. The most obvious is that there will be fewer geese in the future. Second, Canada geese are philopatric—they tend to return to nest where they hatched. Fewer goslings means fewer adult geese nesting and rearing goslings at that site in two or three years.

Realizing that goose grazing was retarding the Kingman restoration, the Anacostia Watershed Society has for two years planted inside areas called exclosures that have been fenced. These are too small to provide the open space Canada geese need to land or take off. The exclosures are working well at Kingman for the vegetation growing inside them. Susan Rudy, resource

Continued on page 12

Environmental Film Festival Screens Films on Food and Water

by Helen Strong

The vital connections between healthy food, clean water and the environment constitute a special theme of the 2005 Environmental Film Festival in the Nation's Capital. The 13th annual festival will screen 108 films selected to provide fresh perspectives on local, national and international environmental issues from March 10 to 20 at venues throughout Washington, D.C. A wide range of topics, from the world's threatened coral reefs to the impact of global warming on our own Chesapeake region, will also be explored.

In cooperation with Slow Food DC, the festival will present three film programs on food at the AFI Silver Theatre. The prize-winning documentary, "The Future of Food," directed and produced by Deborah Koons Garcia, spotlights the changing direction of food and farming in America with the advent of biotech food, the patenting of genetically modified seeds and animals and the impact of scientific experimentation on global consumers. A panel discussion with experts on food safety and genetically modified foods will follow the film's screening on March 19.

Nationally acclaimed independent filmmaker Les Blank will present two mini-retrospectives of his work focusing on American regional cuisines and

the environment at AFI Silver on March 11 and 12. The whimsical "Werner Herzog Eats His Shoe" and Blank's award-winning "Burden of Dreams" about environmental challenges in filmmaking will be screened March 11. "Garlic Is as Good as Ten Mothers," illuminating the greater glories of garlic; "Yum, Yum, Yum," a mouthwatering venture into the spicy, down-home cooking of Louisiana's Cajuns and Creoles; and "Chicken Real," a surrealistic look at a large-scale chicken farm, will be shown March 12.

On March 18 the Sierra Club and Worldwatch Institute will present a double feature: "Think Globally, Eat Locally," produced by Greentreks Network, and "The True Cost of Food," a gripping but humorous animation produced by Free Range Graphics for the Sierra Club National Sustainable Consumption Committee. These films stress the benefits of locally grown, organic food and question the long-term effects of agribusiness on the environment and human health. A panel discussion will follow with Diana Artemis of the Sierra Club Committee on Sustainable Consumption; Maria Erades, vice president and senior producer, Greentreks Network; Jonah Sachs, principal, Free Range Graphics; and Brian Halweil, senior researcher, Worldwatch Institute, and author of "Eat Here."

The environmental and social implications of getting coffee from the plantation to our mugs will be examined in the "Change is a Brewin'" program on March 18. Maria Erades and Brian Halweil will discuss coffee-growing methods



photo courtesy of Free Range Graphics

Scene from "The True Cost of Food" animation, to be shown March 18 at the Charles Sumner School.

that help to preserve and restore the rainforest while Ms. Erades will present a multimedia collage on coffee plantations in Nicaragua.

The world's water crisis will be considered in two programs at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. On March 10, two episodes from the "Thirsty Planet" series will explore the mounting global challenge of providing millions of people in urban areas with potable water and the struggle to supply water for agriculture around the world. The film "Thirst," shown on March 15, visits communities in Bolivia, India and the United States, providing a piercing look at the corporate drive to control water as it becomes the most valuable global resource of the 21st century.

At the National Geographic on March 16, "Troubled Waters," an episode from "Strange Days on Planet Earth," will examine the impact of toxins in the earth's waterways. Producer Mark Shelley will introduce the film: discussion will follow with two scientists who appear in the film, Tyrone Hayes and Tierney Thys.

For a complete schedule of Environmental Film Festival films, visit the festival Web site at www.dcevironmentalfilmfest.org or call 202-342-2564 for a festival brochure.

Helen Strong is the public relations director for the Environmental Film Festival in the Nation's Capital.

photo courtesy of Bullfrog Films



A protest against water privatization, from the film "Thirst," to be screened March 15 at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

Conservation

Hazmat trains

Continued from page 3

ties of ultrahazardous chemicals would be diverted to the Beltway.

The D.C. law was introduced by Councilmember Kathy Patterson (D-Ward 3) in October 2003. Persistent attempts by the councilmember and environmental activists to persuade the Department of Homeland Security to adopt protective regulations fell on deaf ears. Though federal regulators promised that meaningful protective measures would be put in place by last summer, they ultimately decided that they would not compel private industry to reroute the trains. Federal legislation addressing the threat never made it out of committee.

Following a year and a half of inaction by the federal government, the D.C. Council felt that it had no choice but to take action to protect the city. The emergency law will remain in effect for 90 days. Legislation to make the law's requirements permanent is pending before the council.

To get involved in the D.C. Chapter's "toxic train" campaign, call Jim Dougherty at 202-488-1140.

Geese

Continued from page 10

manager for NCP-East, describes the thriving vegetation inside the enclosures at Kingman as a sharp contrast to the sparse vegetation on the mud flats surrounding them. As enclosed plants grow and expand outside the fencing, additional fencing is added to protect new areas. Once the plants are well established over a larger area, enclosures should not be needed.

Whether it is adding, habitat modification, harassment or enclosures, all such tools work best as part of an integrated plan to manage geese. NCP-East is starting work to develop such a goose management plan for Anacostia Park. Just beginning the process, Rudy could not say just when the plan and the necessary environmental compliance document would be ready for public review. Interested District residents can check the NCP-East Web site at www.nps.gov/anac/ or contact the organization at 202-690-5185.

Maggie Brasted is assistant director of the Wild Neighbors Program at The Humane Society of the United States.



photo by M. Brasted/HSUS

Boathouse

Continued from page 1


finally proceeding with an evaluation of the impact of the boathouse as required by the National Environmental Policy Act. The NPS, however, is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA)—the minimum documentation required—rather than a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that would consider alternative sites.

As the National Park Service moves forward with its proposal for an exclusive Georgetown University boathouse in the C&O Canal Park, the Sierra Club and 11 other activist groups have joined forces to oppose transfer by the NPS of prime parkland for private development without regard for the public interest. The club supports the clustering of public and private boathouses on the previously developed Georgetown riverfront downstream from the C&O Park and CTT or in other locations along the Potomac or Anacostia rivers. It also supports the development of an EIS for the proposed boathouse.

The public comment period on the draft EA, expected in spring or summer 2005, will be a critical time for members to reiterate the Sierra Club's position. Members are asked to write to the Secretary of the Interior, 1849 C St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20240, to demand that the National Park Service:

- preserve national parkland for public use, not develop it for private facilities;
- build private boathouses outside the C&O Canal National Historical Park; and
- prepare an EIS on the boathouse proposal.

To receive e-mail updates on the EA comment process, contact the Defenders of Potomac River Parkland, c/o Sally Strain at seawalk@starpower.net or check for updates at www.savethecanal.org.



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National Forum

15 Candidates Compete for 5 Slots

Club Members to Vote on Directors, Immigration Limits

Another potentially contentious Sierra Club election is upon us. This year, not only are 15 candidates running for the Board of Directors, but there are also three ballot measures, two of which would alter rules for future elections, and a third about whether the club should adopt a policy on limiting immigration into the United States.

The Sierra Club is a democratically structured organization that depends on members to make important decisions about its governance. "Democracy works," says Larry Fahn, president of the club, "but only if everyone participates."

Voting in elections at all levels of the club is both a privilege and a responsibility of membership, Fahn says, and the club requires a free flow of views on policy and priorities in order to function effectively.

Members will elect five representatives to serve three-year terms on the 15-member board, which oversees staff and volunteer activities, sets conservation priorities, and approves the annual budget. The candidates are listed below.

The Population Ballot Question asks members: "Shall the Sierra Club policy on immigration, adopted by the Board of Directors in 1999 and revised in 2003, be changed to recognize the need to adopt lower limits on migration to the United States?" The club's Board of Directors recommends a "no" vote on this question.

The two other ballot measures propose changes to the bylaws that affect the election. Bylaws Change #1 would remove the requirement to provide space for write-in candidates on the ballot. Bylaws Change #2 requires one year of continuous membership in the Sierra Club in order to run for the board. (Currently, members can file a petition to run for office on the same day they become a member.) The Board of Directors recommends a "yes" vote on the two bylaws changes.

Last year, shortly after the club's election cycle ended, Fahn created the Sierra Election Reform Task Force, chaired by longtime leader Susan Heitman and including representatives from various groups within the club. The task force's recommendations led to the proposed bylaws changes.

In addition, the board adopted a new rule giving chapters the opportunity to endorse board candidates and publish their endorsements in their newsletters and Web sites. (This is a one-year experiment.)

Two-thirds of a chapter's Executive Committee must vote to endorse, and the statement of endorsement can only be one sentence: "The [name of chapter] recommends a vote for [name(s) of candidates] in the upcoming election for the Sierra Club Board of Directors." Chapters and groups may take positions on ballot questions and publish their recommendations in newsletters and Web sites as editorials. Other published material, such as letters to the editor or official statements by ballot question position coordinators, must be balanced for pro and con views when published. Newsletters and Web sites cannot accept advertising promoting positions or candidates.

Seven of the board candidates were selected by the Nominating Committee, an eight-member body that reviews aspiring candidates every year and puts forward a slate of candidates. Eight candidates are running as petition candidates, which means that they have collected signatures supporting their candidacy from one-twentieth of 1 percent of members. (That's 381 signatures for this election.)

Overseeing the election to ensure fairness and resolve disputes are three "inspectors of election" appointed by the board. Chief Inspector Marvin Baker, a retired University of Oklahoma geography professor and member since 1968, says that the board acted in response to calls from grassroots lead-

The Washington, D.C. Chapter recommends a vote for Jim Dougherty in the upcoming election for the Sierra Club's Board of Directors.

ers to involve the chapters in a more meaningful way in the election. "Our goal is to make the elections as fair and participatory as possible," he says.

Last year's election controversy generated a spate of coverage in local and national newspapers, even a New York Times editorial. Due to the extensive publicity, more club members voted than ever before—171,616 voters, or 22.7 percent.

To find out more about the candidates and measures, visit www.sierra-club.org/bod/2005election, which will include a candidate forum in which candidates answer questions posted by members.

Club members should receive their ballots in the mail by mid-March. Votes must be cast by noon eastern daylight time on April 25. To vote online, follow the instructions in your printed ballot.

An independent company with long experience in conducting elections for national organizations will count the ballots.

Nominating Committee Candidates are: Joni Bosh, Jim Catlin, Jim Dodson, Jim Dougherty, Jennifer Ferenstein, Barbara Frank, Chuck McGrady.

Petition Candidates are: Jim Bensman, Gregory Bungo, Richard Fiddler, Christine Garcia, Alan Kuper, Jim McDonald, Robert Roy van de Hoek, Tony Ruckel.

National Forum

Sierra Club Convention to Welcome Thousands to San Francisco, Build Vision for Future

Sierra Summit 2005, the Sierra Club's first-ever large-scale convention, is to be held September 8-11, 2005, in San Francisco. An unprecedented gathering of 3,000 members is expected, of whom 1,000 will be summit delegates who will work together to plot the direction of the club for the coming years.

The summit will feature speakers and entertainment, an exposition featuring more than 150 green and outdoor businesses, a cooking stage, a climbing wall and an on-site eco-house.

Workshops at the summit will focus on international tourism, technology and activism, leadership development, campus organization and much more. Activists will have a chance to share their success stories.

Between now and the summit, the club will be surveying activists about the goals the club should set, the roles it should play, the strengths it should nurture and how it can best build involvement and support for its work in local communities.

The delegation-selection process is still being refined, but it will reflect the broadest possible participation. Each group will send one summit delegate, and each chapter will send four. Another 163 at-large delegates will be selected, based on chapter membership size, with one at-large delegate per 5,000 members. In addition, there will be about 285 national delegates, including members of the Board of Directors, the Governing Committee for Conservation and other national leaders. (For more about the summit's delegate process, go to clubhouse.sierraclub.org/sierrasummit/delegates.)

The registration fee varies depending on whether you are a member, leader or delegate, as well as whether you attend the whole or part of the

summit. If you sign up by May 31, you save \$75 off the regular Sierra Club member rate.

To register, go to www.sierrasummit2005.org and either complete the form on-line or mail or fax it in. Please also contact Brian Turnbaugh, who is coordinating local participants, at 646-645-8299 or bturnbaugh@earthlink.net.

Bush's Science

EPA Scientists Told to "Justify" Higher Mercury Limits

Wondering whether you have any capacity left for outrage? Try this on for size: According to a February 3 report by Nikki Tinsley, inspector general of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), agency political appointees set "modest" new mercury pollution limits that just so happened to coincide with those in President George W. Bush's "Clear Skies" proposal. They then told EPA scientists to work backward to justify those limits. She also found that the EPA did not adequately evaluate the environmental health effects of the proposed rule on children. "Rather than basing its decision on good science, the administration stacked the deck to give its industry friends what they wanted," says Nat Mund, a Sierra Club clean-air expert.

In the mean time, one in six American women has mercury levels in her blood high enough to put her baby at risk from mercury poisoning. For more information, go to www.sierraclub.org/cleanair/mercury/.

Help Save Northern Right Whale and Defend the ESA

The northern right whale, whose migratory path is just off the Virginia coast, is the most endangered of the large whales. Only approximately 350 remain; so few that scientists have names for each one of them. The whales bear their young each winter in the warm waters off Georgia and Florida and then migrate along the Atlantic coast to spend their summers feeding in northern waters including the Bay of Fundy.

Today's ocean traffic, with its larger, faster ships, has increased the likelihood of ship strikes on these slow-moving whales. In the past few months, four northern right whales have been killed as a result of ship strikes or of entanglement in fishing gear.

Survival of the northern right whale will require stricter enforcement of the Endangered Species Act in the United States and prevention of habitat destruction and disruption.

The Sierra Club's Atlantic Coast Ecoregion has identified saving the right whale as one of its two priorities for 2005. With murmurs in Congress about weakening the federal Endangered Species Act and budget cuts in the Bush administration, there may never be a more urgent time to get involved to save the northern right whale and to defend the act.

For the past 30 years the Endangered Species Act has proven itself effective in bringing about the recovery of species like the bald eagle, alligator, grey wolf and grizzly bear.

Volunteer today to save the right whale—write letters, help in publicity, develop school curriculum, or lobby Congress. Contact Tyla Matteson at tmatteson1@mindspring.com or at 804-275-6476.

Inner City Outings

Inner City Outings Needs You!

by Caroline Vollmer

Over the last year I have had some wonderful experiences with the D.C. Chapter of the Sierra Club's Inner City Outings (ICO).

ICO is a volunteer program that pairs Sierra Club members with children ages 6 to 14 from all over the D.C. area.

The purpose of ICO is to give these kids—kids who would otherwise not have access to the world outside their city block—an opportunity to learn about nature and the environment and have fun doing it.

With my group I have gone snorkeling in the Shenandoah River. We have been hiking at Great Falls. We have looked for bugs alongside a naturalist from the Jug Bay Wetlands Sanctuary. I have also taken a class in orienteering from a ranger at Catoctin Mountain Park. These are just a few of the activities I've enjoyed and all were in the company of some great kids and some great volunteers.

My favorite trip by far was an overnight camping trip over Halloween weekend to Shenandoah River State Park. The kids were so excited and who could blame them? Many of them had not spent a weekend so far from home, and that is to say nothing of spending the night snuggled down in a sleeping bag. Luckily for us it was lovely fall weather. We enjoyed going on hayrides, painting faces, sharing ghost stories and

wading in the river. To top it off there was a "Haunted Hike" that was put on by the Park Rangers. This was such a complete success it was scary! The hike took place late at night. No one was allowed to bring flashlights. Bats and other Halloween decorations were hung from the trees. Every few feet a zombie, mummy or witch (in civilian life a Park Ranger) would jump from the darkness screaming. Every child insisted bravely, "I'm not scared!" when minutes before small hands had gripped at mine with a force that seemed, well, almost supernatural.

So, are you interested in getting involved? ICO desperately needs volunteers. Visit our Web site at www.sierraclub.org/ico/dc to learn more. The Web site lists events in a calendar format. Every month there are three to five different outings. The calendar is updated regularly and it is a snap to sign up online.



photo by Alisa King

Above: A naturalist at Jug Bay Wetlands Sanctuary in Lothian, Maryland shows ICO kids a spider.

Below: ICO kids from the Community of Hope enjoy ice skating by the National Gallery.



photo by Harlan Blynn

At present the program sponsors four groups, though by spring we hope to add two more. ICO leaders plan trips for each D.C. area site to take place on one Saturday a month. Trips normally depart a given area at 10:30 a.m. and try to return before 5:00 p.m. If you live in D.C. or the surrounding area, please consider volunteering your time with us.

Maybe getting out and exploring nature isn't your thing, but you'd still like to help us out? If so we also need armchair volunteers who can help with raising funds and writing grant proposals. If you are willing to give us your time on these kinds of projects contact Lisa Freda at l_freda@yahoo.com.

Want to Save the Planet? Then subscribe to it!

The monthly newspaper *The Planet* and the twice-weekly e-mail update *The Current* are guides 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. Both publications are free to all Sierra Club members and other active environmentalists. To subscribe to either, e-mail planet@sierraclub.org or visit www.sierraclub.org/planet.

Announcements

Population Activist Training Set for

April 2-4

The Bush administration has cut funding for the United Nations Family Planning Agency and the International Family Planning Program. It has also imposed a global gag rule on family planning programs.

In response, the Sierra Club will host the 2005 National Population Activist Training event in Washington, D.C., on April 2-4, 2005. Learn valuable activism skills, meet inspiring people, become better advocates for international family planning and attend forums covering the latest population issues.

Most costs for attendees will be covered by the Sierra Club. For more details, please contact Sarah Fairchild at 202-675-2396 or sarah.fairchild@sierraclub.org. Limited spaces are available for the 2005 training.

To find out more about the Sierra Club's Global Population and Environment Program, please visit our Web site, www.sierraclub.org/population.

Tour of Wastewater Plant Set for April 8

Have you ever wondered when you flush the toilet where the wastewater goes? Then we invite you to join us on Friday, April 8, 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 7:45 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 the 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, jason.broehm@dc.sierraclub.org. (This tour was originally scheduled to occur in October 2004 but was canceled by the facility. Members who signed up for the previous tour will be given first priority.)

Club to Form Hunters and Anglers Group

Are you one of the 20 percent of Sierra Club members who hunt and/or fish? If so, the West Virginia chapter of the Sierra Club would like to hear from you.

We are interested in learning what hunters and anglers believe the Sierra Club can do to help us reach our conservation goals. Tell us what we are doing right; what we are doing wrong; what we can do better; and how you can help us conserve America's natural resources.

We would also like to start some outings that include fishing trips in West Virginia and events like flyfishing clinics. In addition, we would like to start some service outings that are directly related to, and beneficial for our state's wildlife populations.

If you're interested in getting involved in these activities, or in just dropping us a line, please send a letter or e-mail to Paul Wilson, chapter chair, at 504 Jefferson Avenue, Charles Town, W.Va. 25414 or pjgrunt@lycos.com.

New ExComm Seated

At the January meeting of the D.C. Chapter's Executive Committee (ex-comm), the results of the chapter's 2005 election were announced and approved. Newly elected to the committee is Ralph Garboushian, who has been active on the Political and Transportation committees. Incumbents Mark Wenzler, Bob Morris and Chasta Jones were also returned to the excomm.

Also at the January meeting candidate Matthew Tisdale was chosen to complete the term of Danilo Pelletiere, who announced his early retirement from the excomm. Tisdale has been an active member of the Recycling Committee for the past two years.

New officers chosen at the meeting include new chair Jason Broehm, vice-chair Lisa Swanson, and Council of Club Leaders delegate Bob Morris. (For a complete list of officers see the chapter directory, p. 20.)

In addition to Pelletiere, Sheila Hogan is retiring from the excomm. We thank both Sheila and Danilo for their long and faithful service to Washington's environment and to the club. We also thank Mark Wenzler, who is retiring as chair to spend more time on his new duties as a daddy (see photo).



D.C. Sierra Club's newest member, Antonina, was born February 12 to proud parents Mark Wenzler and Dare Johnson.

photo by Dare Johnson

Announcements

Newsletter Editor Wanted

The D.C. Chapter needs a new managing editor for the *Capital Sierran*, beginning with the fall issue 2005. This volunteer position requires extensive hours four weeks each year and occasional hours at other times. It is not a “Lone Ranger” position—the editor works with a large number of writers, photographers and production volunteers. Rewards include a quality product, interaction with collegial volunteers and the satisfaction of working for a good cause. The best candidate would have computer skills and some experience in writing, editing, layout and preparation for print. The most important quality, however, is a high level of organization. Some training is available for the person who volunteers in time for work on the summer 2005 edition (mid-May). For more information, contact Chris Craig at 202-554-5502 or ccraig@zzapp.org.

True Cost of Food Campaign Monthly Outings

The D.C. Chapter of the Sierra Club is introducing monthly True Cost of Food Campaign restaurant outings to our calendar of activities.

The True Cost of Food Campaign is a Sierra Club initiative that encourages consumers to eat lower on the food chain and to eat organically produced food and locally grown food when possible. The monthly restaurant outings will provide fun and social opportunities for Sierra Club members and friends to check out D.C. restaurants that support these values. The restaurant visits will take place on the last Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m. For details, see the D.C. Calendar, p. 19. For more information about the True Cost of Food Campaign, please visit http://www.sierraclub.org/sustainable_consumption/truecost/.

Also see related films detailed in the DC Filmfest article, p. 11.

Earth Day Cleanup at Kenilworth on April 23

The National Park Service and the National Parks Conservation Association invite you, rain or shine, to an Earth Day celebration and cleanup at Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens in Northeast Washington, D.C., on Saturday, April 23, 2005, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Help with dike reconstruction, azalea care, invasive species removal and boardwalk cleanup. Wear appropriate clothing if you plan to join the work teams. Special events will include: Carolyn Rapp reading from and discussing her new book, “Stories of Women in Their Gardens”; local historian Joe Lapp talking about the history of the Kenilworth neighborhood; and Ranger Kate Bucco describing native and invasive plant species in the park. For more information contact Allyson Woods at 202-390-0510 or awoods@npca.org.

Support Your Chapter Through Our Annual Fund-Raising Appeal

You will soon be getting an important letter in the mail. Although you may receive other fund-raising letters from the Sierra Club, the “March Window” is the only time of the year that your D.C. Chapter asks you by mail to contribute to our work.

Until recently, we called only on volunteers to achieve our many goals. We have now grown in numbers and goals to where we need staff support, and we are fortunate to have found a highly qualified, energetic, and talented young woman to work with us. That is one reason we need your contributions more than ever.

So when you receive that letter, please open and read it carefully. If you share our goal of making D.C. a cleaner, healthier home, give generously.



photo by Moira McKernan

New Chapter Staff

Meet Beth Tredwell!

The D.C. Chapter is proud to introduce its new staffperson, Beth Tredwell. A native of upstate New York, Beth is a graduate of the State University of New York at Potsdam, with a master’s in environmental science/communication policy and participatory processes. She has served internships in media relations and in grassroots organizing with the American Heart Association and the Alaska Wilderness League.

As a student she worked summers at Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park in California, where she discovered that her love of nature and conservation could become part of her career goals. “My admiration for the outdoors (and its conservation) is the centerfold in my life,” says Tredwell. “I’m delighted to wear multiple hats for [the D.C. Chapter’s] many different environmental campaigns. It’s exciting and fantastic to be here, and I’m restless to see where we can take the Sierra Club this year.”

Beth is anxious to talk with all our members and find suitable jobs for every prospective volunteer. She’s in the office from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays, and you can contact her at Beth.Tredwell@sierraclub.org or at 202-543-0552.

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.

Sun. Mar. 6 (rated B). Carderock-Gold Mine Tract, suburban Md. Easy 7-mi. walk along C&O Towpath and the Gold Mine Tract to Great Falls Tavern, return via towpath. Meet at 1:30 p.m. at Carderock Park, Md., off the Clara Barton Pkwy, 1 mi. west of Beltway. Pass under the canal, turn right and drive to the farthest parking lot. Bring water and snack. Leader: Jim Finucane 301-365-3485 before 9 p.m.

Sun. Mar. 6 (rated B). Conservation Hike on Seneca Creek Greenway, 8 mi. over rolling countryside between Seneca Creek Park and Huntmaster Road to explore recent addition that facilitates link between Potomac and Patuxent River watersheds. Car shuttle required. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at Shady Grove Metro—east side by Metro tunnel. Leaders: Bob Goldberg 301-540-2915 and Larry Broadwell 301-215-7135 before 9 p.m.

Sun. Mar. 13 (rated B-C). Small Part of Rock Creek Park, All of Fort Stevens Park, and Some In-Between Streets. In Get-to-Know-DC Series. Moderately paced, 7-3 mi. circuit hike through areas that have historic links to Civil War and such key players as Jubal Early, Abe Lincoln, and Oliver Wendell Holmes, as well as Joaquin Miller and Walter Reed. Optional posthike side trip to pay homage to hidden-away partial remains of Capitol's 1828 east portico. Meet at 10 a.m. at Rock Creek Nature Center and Planetarium, off Military Rd. Call for driving directions or if carless. Joint hike with AMC-DC. Leader: Paul Elliott 703-256-6351.

Thu. Mar. 17 (rated C). St. Patrick's Day Hike. Potomac Heritage Trail (Va.-D.C.) to Chain Bridge and over to C&O Canal for return trip. Some rocky sections and minor stream crossings. Lunch stop on towpath. About 10 mi. with optional foray into Georgetown to join any revelers that may be there. Meet 10 a.m. at Theodore Roosevelt Island parking lot off northbound G. Washington Pkwy. Easy walk from Rosslyn Metro Station. Joint hike with PATC. Leader: Henri Comeau 703-451-7965 or HenriComeau@aol.com.

Sat. Mar. 19 (not rated). Dealers Choice Creek Canoe Trip. Experienced novice-level, (class 1-2 white water). You must have your own canoe; life jackets required. Sponsored by Sierra Club, Canoe Cruisers Association and the Blue Ridge Voyager Canoe Club. Contact: Jim Finucane 301-365-3485 before 9 p.m.

Sun. Mar. 20 (rated C). Potomac Heritage Trail Hike #1. Enjoy the first day of spring with an 11-mi. one-way hike along the spectacular Potomac River gorge. This first hike in a new ecological-recreational series will head downstream from Scotts Run Nature Preserve to Theodore Roosevelt Island past the cliffs, streams and waterfalls that highlight this vista-rich route. Meet at 9 a.m. at the Theodore Roosevelt Island parking lot, off the northbound G. Washington Pkwy—also reachable by 0.8-mile tromp from Rosslyn Metro Station (Orange-Blue Lines)—to carpool to the trailhead. Joint hike with AMC-DC. Leaders: Paul Elliott 703-256-6351 and Glenn Gillis 703-430-0568.

Fri. Mar. 25 (rated A-B). Moonlit Hike on the Mall. Explore the beauty of D.C.'s Mall and monuments by the full moon. Meet 7 p.m. on the south side of Constitution Ave. opposite the middle entrance to the Ellipse. Park on Constitution Ave. in the same area. Nearest Metro is Federal Triangle. Bring water. Kids who can walk 7+ mi. (or 3 mi.) on relatively level terrain are most welcome. Leader: Jim Finucane 301-365-3485 before 9 p.m.

Sat. Apr. 2 (unrated). 16th Annual Potomac Watershed Cleanup (not a Sierra Club event). Many sites along the Potomac and other rivers in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed will serve as trash cleanup sites needing volunteers. Event is sponsored by the Alice Ferguson Foundation (see fergusonfoundation.org for details).

Sat. Apr. 2 (unrated). Spring Meeting of Metropolitan Washington Regional Outings Program (MWROP). This event, to be held at a close-in location, will feature an informative program, an efficient business meeting, and an outdoor recreational-educational activity. Although intended primarily for MWROP's 40-plus volunteer leaders, the event is open to guests. Details will be e-mailed to MWROP leaders (and any prospective guests) and posted on www.mwrop.org by Mar. 1. Comments and questions will be welcomed at any time by the MWROP Executive Committee. Contact: Paul Elliott 703-256-6351.

Sat. Apr. 2 (rated B). Change of Seasons. 10-mi. hike combining Potomac River trails & C&O Towpath. Early spring flowers and pastel budding trees at this lower elev. (see Apr. 24 hike). Optional no-charge guided tour of Clara Barton House at end of hike. Meet in Glen Echo Park lot closest to Clara Barton House (well marked signage) at 9 a.m., located at end of Goldsboro Rd. at MacArthur Blvd.; 3 mi. north of Chain Bridge sandwiched between Clara Barton Pkwy and MacArthur Blvd. Leader: Dave Burd 703-998-9390 or dburd301@netzero.com.

Sun. Apr. 3 (rated B). Rock Creek Park. Explore the beauty of Rock Creek Park in early spring. Meet next to the ground level of the elevator at the Cleveland Park Metro at 1 p.m. (Daylight Saving Time). 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.

Sat. Apr. 9 (rated A). Towpath Stroll. Easy 7 mi. on picturesque towpath segment between Pennyfield and Seneca. Explore the ruins of the Seneca Stone Cutting Mill. Meet in Pennyfield Lock parking lot at 1 p.m. Kids, strollers and mannerly dogs welcome. Leader: Carol Ivory 703-476-8730 or carolivory@verizon.net.

Sun. Apr. 10 (rated A-B). Bloomin' Monumental Hike. In Get-to-Know-DC Series. Celebrate the coming of spring in Washington with an easy 4-plus-4 mi. walking tour of major memorials and monuments during peak bloom of the beautiful cherry blossoms—after the tourists leave. The first part includes the Tidal Basin and West Potomac Park; the optional second half includes Hains Point in East Potomac Park. Meet at 9:30 a.m.

near Ripley Center kiosk, in front of Freer Gallery (Mall exit of Smithsonian Metro Station). Leashed dogs OK. Leader: Mike Darzi 301-593-4551.

Fri. Apr. 15 (not rated). Dinner & Slides Social, 8 p.m. At the Bethesda home of Susan Gartner, who will present slides on two Earthwatch projects in Australia. Hear tales from down under about the health of tropical streams that feed the Great Barrier Reef and about the egg-laying mammal, the echidna. Bring a potluck item to share and call Susan 301-656-7338 before 10 p.m. for directions.

Sat. Apr. 16 (rated A). 9 a.m.-1p.m. Northwest Branch Conservation Hike. A leisurely 6-mi. walk through one the most beautiful stream valleys in the Metro area, with discussion of some of the conservation issues and potential threats (ICC) to this park. Leader: Ron LaCoss 301-946-1106 before 9 p.m. or ronenviroed@aol.com.

Sun. Apr. 17 (rated B). McKee-Beshers Wildlife Management Area and Kunzang Palyul Choling Buddhist Temple's Meditation Park. Moderately paced, two-loop hike totaling 10 mi. in scenic riverfront area in Poolesville section of Montgomery County, with on-trail discussion of management practices. First loop: 8 mi. in flat woodlands, fields, and wetlands, and including portion of C&O Canal Towpath. Intermission: Lunch in temple or on temple grounds—either bring-your-own or pick up preordered inexpensive meal there (call leaders for details by Fri., Apr. 15). Second loop: 2 mi. in gently undulating, stupa-dotted woodlands of temple's meditation park. Meet at 9 a.m. at trailhead, located on River Rd. near temple. Visit www.mwrop.org or call leaders after Apr. 1 for precise trailhead location and driving directions. Call if carless. Joint event with AMC-DC. Leader: Paul Elliott 703-256-6351.

Fri. Apr. 22 (rated A). Earth Day Hike through Theodore Roosevelt Island and along the Potomac River waterfront. Celebrate Theodore Roosevelt, our greatest environmental president, who started the movement for national monuments, wildlife refuges and many of our national forests, with this 7-miler. Leader: Glenn Gillis 703-430-0568.

Fri. Apr. 29—Sun. May 1 (unrated). GPS Backpack. Cranberry Wilderness, W.Va. One of the best places to see spring flowers and undisturbed mountain streams. Third annual backpack to the wilderness. On the first day we will explore the parks surrounding the wilderness and on the second and third hike the trails of the south section of the wilderness itself. Up to 13 mi. per day. Backpacking experience required. Limit: 10 people (wilderness regulation). Leader: Dimitri Tundra 301-770-9639 or tartakd@hotmail.com.

Sat. Apr. 30 (rated H+). OneDayHike to Harpers Ferry, on C&O Canal Towpath. 32nd Annual 100K hike with concurrent 80K and 50K options. For details and volunteer opportunities, visit www.onedayhike.org or call leaders (registration closes April 25). Leaders: Paul Elliott 703-256-6351 and Carol Ivory carolivory@verizon.net.

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	E	8-10	C	11-13
D	14-16	B	17-19	F	20-22
G	23-25	H	more than 25		



Calendar

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/>.

March

Tue. Mar. 8

Transportation Committee meeting. 7 p.m. Club offices, 401 C St. N.E. Contact Tom Metcalf at 202-832-3809 or thmetcalfmac.com.

Smoke-Free Workplaces Steering Committee meeting. 6:30-7:30 p.m. Ben's Chili Bowl, 1213 U St. N.W. See article, p. 6. Contact Chasta Jones at 202-320-1205 or nckaos@aol.com.

Thu. Mar. 10

Executive Committee meeting. 6:30-8:30 p.m. Club offices, 401 C St. N.E. All members welcome. Contact Jason Broehm at 202-299-0745 or jason.broehm@dc.sierraclub.org.

Mar. 10-20

Environmental Film Festival in the Nation's Capital. See article, p. 11.

Wed.-Thu. Mar. 16-17

Smoke-Free Workplaces Phone Bank. See article, p. 6. 5:30-9:00 p.m. 901 E St. N.W., Floor 500 (enter on 9th St.) (Gallery Place Metro). Contact Chasta Jones at 202-320-1205 or nckaos@aol.com.

Fri. Mar. 18

"True Cost of Food" and "Think Globally, Eat Locally," films and discussion sponsored by the Sierra Club and Worldwatch Institute. 2 p.m. Charles Sumner School, Lecture Hall 102, 1201 17th St. N.W. (Farragut North Metro). See article, p. 11.

Mon. Mar. 23

D.C. Chapter Fund-Raising Letter Mailing Party. 6-11 p.m. Club offices, 401 C St. N.E. (Union Station). Join chapter members stuffing envelopes in preparation for this year's direct mail fundraising. Enjoy great conversation, delicious pizza, and the satisfaction of helping out your local conservation organization. Contact Matthew Tisdale at mtisdale@gmail.com.

Mon. Mar. 28

True Cost of Food Campaign Restaurant Outing. (\$) 6:30 p.m. Harmony Café, 3287 M St. N.W. (Georgetown). See announcement, p.17. Contact Susan Prolman at 202-667-1162.

Thu. Mar. 31

East-of-the-River Energy Expo. See announcement, p. 9.

April

Apr. 2-4

Sierra Club National Population Activist Training. See announcement, p. 16.

Fri. Apr. 8

Tour of Blue Plains Wastewater Treatment Center. 7:45-11:00 a.m. See announcement, p. 16.

Mon. Apr. 11

Second Monday Happy Hour. (\$) 5:30-7:30 p.m. Sette Osteria, 1666 Connecticut Ave. N.W. (Dupont Circle Metro). Contact Chasta Jones at 202-320-1205 or nckaos@aol.com.

Tue. Apr. 12

Transportation Committee meeting. See Mar. 8.

Thu. Apr. 14

Executive Committee meeting. See Mar. 10.

Sat. Apr. 16

Toxic Trains Slideshow Presentation. 7-9 p.m. Club offices, 401 C St. N.E. (Union Station Metro). Contact Chasta Jones at 202-320-1205 or nckaos@aol.com.

Sat. Apr. 23

Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens Earth Day Celebration and Cleanup. See announcement, p. 17.

Mon. Apr. 25

True Cost of Food Campaign Restaurant Outing. (\$) 6:30 p.m. Nirvana, 1850 K St. N.W. (Farragut North Metro). See announcement, p.17. Contact Susan Prolman at 202-667-1162.

Due date for Sierra Club National Election Ballots. See article, p. 13.

May

Mon. May 9

Second Monday Happy Hour. (\$) 5:30-7:30 p.m. My Brother's Place, 237 Second St. N.W. (Union Station Metro). Contact Chasta Jones at 202-320-1205 or nckaos@aol.com.

Tue. May 10

Transportation Committee meeting. See Mar. 8.

Thu. May 12

Executive Committee meeting. See Mar. 10.

Sat. May 21

Canal Boat Ride. (\$) 1:30-2:30 p.m. C&O Canal National Historical Park, 1057 Thomas Jefferson St. N.W. (Foggy Bottom Metro). Contact Chasta Jones at 202-320-1205 or nckaos@aol.com.

Mon. May 30

True Cost of Food Campaign Restaurant Outing. (\$) 6:30 p.m. Java Green Café, 1020 19th St. N.W. (Farragut North Metro). See announcement, p.17. Contact Susan Prolman at 202-667-1162.

June

Thu. Jun. 9

Executive Committee meeting. See Mar. 10.

Mon. Jun. 13

Second Monday Happy Hour. (\$) 5:30-7:30 p.m. Tequila Grill, 1990 K St. N.W. (Farragut West Metro). Contact Chasta Jones at 202-320-1205 or nckaos@aol.com.

Tue. Jun. 14

Transportation Committee meeting. See Mar. 8.

Mon. Jun. 27

True Cost of Food Campaign Restaurant Outing. (\$) 6:30 p.m. Soul Vegetarian, 2606 Georgia Ave. N.W. (Metrobus 70/71). See announcement, p.17. Contact Susan Prolman at 202-667-1162.

September

Sep. 8-11

Sierra Summit, San Francisco. See article p. 14.

(\$) = event involves a cost to individual participants

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