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Poplar Point Development Proposal Favors Economics Over Environment

by Gwyn Jones and Irv Sheffey



Photo by Jim Dougherty

On Feb. 14, Mayor Adrian Fenty announced that Clark Realty had been chosen as the developer of Poplar Point, a 150-acre parcel of land along the east side of the Anacostia River at the terminus of the South Capitol Street Bridge.

The parcel, 110 acres of which is National

Park Service (NPS) land, has been in the news frequently as the favored site of a new stadium for the D.C. United soccer team. But, dating back to the mid-90s, it was a key site in the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative (AWI), which would have combined restoration of parkland and habitat along the waterfront with development at the edges, near the Metro and Howard Road (see <http://www.planning.dc.gov/planning>).

As envisioned in the AWI – which incorporated the input of hundreds of citizens from both sides of the river – Poplar Point would be a cultural center and include the Frederick Douglass Memorial Gardens and perhaps an amphitheater in addition to a river walk and restored wetlands.

The Clark proposal doesn't leave much of that vision intact: its intense development leaves only a fraction of the riverfront parkland untouched. To comply with the requirements of the transfer of the land from the NPS to the city, at least 70 acres must remain parkland. In the Clark proposal, this 70 acres is a mostly inland "preserve" with minimal river frontage.

The Clark development was one of four plans under serious consideration by the mayor's office. The shortlisted teams presented their proposals at a community meeting of over 300 convened in Anacostia on Dec. 12, 2007, by the deputy mayor for Planning and Economic Development. The Clark scheme comprises 6.4 million square feet of develop-

ENERGY WATCH IN D.C.:

The Clean and Affordable Energy Act of 2007

by Larry Martin

Councilmember Mary Cheh (D-Ward 3) introduced major new energy legislation in 2007 titled The Clean and Affordable Energy Act of 2007. Nine other council members, including Council Chairman Vincent Gray, co-introduced bill, 17-0492, which was referred to Cheh's Committee on Public Services and Consumer Affairs. A hearing was held on January 31, 2008, and the D.C. Chapter of the Sierra Club was among a long list of organizations and people who testified. The centerpiece of the legislation is the creation of a "sustainable energy utility" (SEU) that would operate to install efficiency measures and renewable sources of energy for the D.C. energy market.

The SEU, also known as a "conservation utility" or "energy efficiency utility," is a utility

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The Importance of Protecting Public Parkland

by Damon Luciano

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Like many of you, I joined the Sierra Club to make my voice heard in the face of so many threats to our natural environment and quality of life. In the time I've spent with the club I've learned that a dedicated and informed group of citizens is a powerful force for change.

Locally, our members and volunteers have accomplished a great deal in past years, but the coming year brings many new challenges. To ensure we have the resources to match these challenges, I urge you to consider making your voice heard by volunteering and sending a financial response to our chapter's annual fundraising letter this March.

At our annual leadership retreat, our chapter's leaders reaffirmed our commitment to improve the livability of our city and to fight climate change locally. This effort is not new to our club, but it continues to be an urgent one.

While many national leaders were only beginning to wake up to the reality of climate change, our club was hard at work implementing a broad range of smart energy solutions to fight climate change here at home in Washington, D.C.

In past years the club successfully lobbied for one of the most ambitious green building laws in the country, mandating that all large buildings built in the District meet stringent requirements for energy efficiency and environmental protection.

We face an equally tremendous opportunity this year as the City Council is considering legislation that could steer millions of untapped dollars toward implementing smart energy solutions locally in Washington, D.C. The club is actively engaged in ensuring that the Clean and Affordable Energy Act of 2007, introduced by Councilmember Mary Cheh

(D-Ward 3), will have the greatest possible impact on our environment.

Also in the past year, the club embarked on an ambitious grassroots campaign in support of a citywide network of streetcars to make our city more livable and our transportation system environmentally sustainable.

The movement to bring premium public transit back continues to grow as more residents join us in supporting energy-efficient streetcars as a critical feature of a balanced transportation system that would include pedestrians, cyclists, car-sharing and transit. In stark contrast to the freeway expansion that divides our

neighborhoods for the benefit of suburban commuters, a 40-50 mile network of streetcars would place city residents first in line to reap the rewards of our city's transportation investments.

Despite our past accomplishments, much remains to be done, including close attention to the following four issues: Mayor Adrian Fenty's plan to develop 40 acres of national park-

land at Poplar Point, which endangers the public's use of the park; our city's recycling rate, which is abysmally low; our air quality, which ranks among the worst in the country; and the Anacostia River, which remains fragile and in need of help.

Like every year before it, 2008 will be a critical year for our environment. If you would like to get involved, please contact me at 202-374-1245.



Photo by Grace Cunningham

Rebuilding a Treasure for the Community: Streetcars in the Capital City

by Ralph Garboushian

The Washington Post Magazine recently ran a feature about a debate that raged a century ago over where to locate the Lincoln Memorial. Most of the era's leading architects favored the site on the Mall with which we are all familiar. House Speaker Joseph Cannon (R-Ill.) favored a site between the Capitol building and Union Station. In the end, Cannon lost and the Lincoln Memorial was built on the Mall. The battle cost Cannon his leadership post and eventually his House seat.

The Post story ends in 1915 with Cannon, since returned to the House, running into Glenn Brown, a well-known architect and one of the leading proponents of the Mall site. According to the story, Cannon graciously conceded to Brown that he had been wrong on the issue and in hindsight was glad to have lost the Lincoln Memorial battle. What strikes me most about this conversation is not Cannon's graciousness, but where the two men, a major political figure and one of the nation's leading architects, met: on a streetcar!

Another interesting part of the story is that an early version of the vaunted highway lobby – the oil industry, the rubber companies, the cement makers and, most of all, the automobile manufacturers – seized on the Lincoln Memorial debate as an opportunity to push road construction. The nascent highway lobby convinced Representative William Borland (D-Miss.) to propose a highway linking Washington and Gettysburg as the best way to memorialize Lincoln and threw all of their fledgling weight behind it.

Though their proposal lost, the road warriors need not have worried. In a few years, our nation would throw itself full force into a decades-long frenzy of building increasingly costly and elaborate highways to accommodate the automobile, with no silly or archaic thought given to similar investments in mass transit or intercity passenger rail. In our area, our vast regional network of interurban streetcars had disappeared by the Second World War. Streetcars held on in the District until 1961, when they too gave way to the unrelenting push to reconstruct our cities to accommodate motorists, whatever the cost in treasure and quality of life.

Thankfully, current city leaders are seeking to reverse the shortsighted decision of their unelected 1961 forebears and bring surface rail transit back to the District. Earlier this month, Mayor Adrian Fenty joined other city and neighborhood leaders in the official groundbreaking for a new streetcar line that will serve the H Street and Benning Road corridors in Northeast. Much, however, remains to be done. Plans for a comprehensive, 45-mile streetcar network have fallen off track. Indeed, even as tracks are laid on H Street, District officials have yet to finalize plans to connect the H Street/Benning Road line to Metro stations at either end of the corridor. I urge you to join us in the coming months as the Sierra Club continues to advocate for transit that promotes mobility, reduces congestion and improves the quality of life for District residents.

Georgetown University Boathouse Status Report

by Sally Strain

Good news – for now! The National Park Service (NPS) announced in December its decision to conduct an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for a Georgetown University boathouse proposed for a site within the C&O Canal National Historical Park in Washington, D.C. The decision came following four years of public protest about the location proposed for the \$15-17 million private facility. As many as 2,500 comments from groups and individuals, including the D.C. Chapter of the Sierra Club, were sent to the NPS regarding the Environmental Assessment (EA) carried out in 2006 with regard to the plan. The EA endorsed a private boathouse the length of a football field to be built on a section of wooded tidal floodplain containing wetlands at the entrance to the C&O Canal National Historical Park, the Potomac Gorge and the Capital Crescent Trail.

D.C. Sierra Club members are to be congratulated for their past contributions to this effort to protect the C&O Canal, an urban and national treasure, and are urged to submit comments on the EIS when it is released for public review (perhaps as early as this fall). For background about the proposal, including the comments on the EA from 2006 as well as information about the scoping for the EIS, visit the Defenders of Potomac River Parkland website at www.savethecanal.org under “News Flash.”

Sally Strain, lives in D.C. and is D.C. coordinator for Defenders of Potomac River Parkland.



Environmental Film Festival

Water, War, the Ivory-Billed Woodpecker and E.O. Wilson: Environmental Film Festival Marks 16 Years in D.C.

by Helen Strong

From the global water crisis to the life of naturalist E.O. Wilson, the 16th annual Environmental Film Festival in the nation's capital will present 115 films offering fresh perspectives on a wide variety of environmental subjects. The legacies of Ansel Adams, Rachel Carson and Lady Bird

Photo courtesy of The Hudson River Sloop Clearwater Collection



The film, "Til the River Runs Clear," will be screened on March 13 at the Charles Sumner School as part of the Environmental Film Festival.

Johnson, the advent of peak oil, what you can do to combat global warming and America's obsession with green lawns are among the topics to be examined from March 11 through 22 at 46 venues across the city.

The film "Scarred Lands and Wounded Lives: The Environmental Footprint of War," exposing the environment as war's silent casualty, will have its world premiere on the Film Festival's opening night, March 11. The screening will be followed by a panel discussion with the filmmakers, Washingtonians Alice and Lincoln Day, and with participants in the film.

The Washington, D.C., premiere of "The Lord God Bird," director George Butler's film about the elusive ivory-billed woodpecker, will take place on March 14 at the National Geographic. Long a symbol of hope in the American conservation movement, the bird has recently been sighted in Florida.

"Darwin's Natural Heir," also a Washington, D.C., premiere, about the life and pioneering work of the eminent naturalist, biologist, professor, writer and environmental advocate Dr. E.O. Wilson will be shown on March 18 at the National Geographic. Winner of two Pulitzer Prizes, Dr. Wilson, a professor emeritus at Harvard University and considered one of the leading thinkers of the 20th century, will be present for a post-screening discussion.

The world premiere of "American Prairie Reserve," about restoring the land and wildlife

of Montana's Great Plains, will take place on March 19 at American University. The film will illustrate the progress being made to reclaim land and streams along with the American bison, the endangered black-footed ferret and other wildlife.

Recognizing the vital importance of water to all life, the festival will present a selection of films that approach this subject from diverse perspectives. The premiere of the IMAX theater film "Grand Canyon Adventure: River at Risk" on March 20 will call attention to the scarcity of fresh drinking water and the need for watershed conservation on a trip down the Colorado River. "Til the River Runs Clear" on March 13 will document the role of the sloop "Clearwater" in the cleanup of the Hudson River over the last four decades. A post-screening discussion with Robert Boone, president of the Anacostia Watershed Society, Hedrik Belin, president of the Potomac Conservancy, and Roger Stone, president of the Sustainable Development Institute, will focus on the troubled state of our local rivers.

A new episode, "Dirty Secrets," from the cutting-edge series "Strange Days on Planet Earth" will expose the mysterious toxins in our world water systems, from the flesh-eating bacteria that are destroying fish in the Ches-

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Photo copyright Elizabeth Ruml

The film, "American Prairie Reserve," will be shown on March 19 at American University as part of the Environmental Film Festival.



Photo courtesy of MacGillivray Freeman Films.

The IMAX film, "Grand Canyon Adventure: River at Risk," will be shown on March 20 at the National Museum of Natural History as part of the Environmental Film Festival.

Gearing up for 2008 D.C. Elections

by Lisa Swanson

Are you working to reduce your household's carbon footprint and do you want your city to reflect your commitment? Would you like improved transit, maybe even a streetcar, for your travels around the District? Do you want to hold our elected leaders accountable for their use of public lands and open spaces in development? All of these issues are decided in large part by the D.C. Council and the mayor's office.

While Mayor Adrian Fenty and six council members are midway through their four-year terms, a full half of the council is up for election this fall. They are:

- Ward 2 Jack Evans (D), incumbent
- Ward 4 Muriel Bowser (D), incumbent
- Ward 7 Yvette Alexander (D), incumbent
- Ward 8 Marion Barry (D), incumbent
- At-large Carol Schwartz (R) and Kwame Brown (D), incumbents

Bowser and Alexander were elected last year in a special election to fill the unexpired terms of Fenty and Council Chairman Vincent Gray. Congressional Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton's seat in the U.S. Congress will be on the ballot as well.

The D.C. Chapter needs you to be involved in the process. Soon, the chapter's Political Committee will begin work on its questionnaire to send to the announced candidates in council

racers. Once responses are in, we will interview any candidates who seem to be worthy of the chapter's endorsement. In 2006, Mary Cheh credited her Ward 3 win to the chapter's endorsement. If you would like to be part of the process of selecting candidates who support the Sierra Club's mission, please send a message to Lisa Swanson at melatar@yahoo.com. Please include which ward you live in.

It's important to understand that in the District, most local elections are decided in the primary elections. As a result, the election process winds up nearly two months sooner than the national elections.

By **July 2**, all potential candidates must file petitions to be included on the ballot.

Voter registration deadline for the primary is **August 11**.

The primary election is held on **September 9**. In D.C.'s closed primary, you may vote for candidates only of the party in which you are registered.

The deadline to register for the general election is **October 6**.

The general election is **November 4**.

If you need to register to vote, or change your address, see www.dcboee.org. For more information about your elected officials, visit the D.C. Government website.

Legislation

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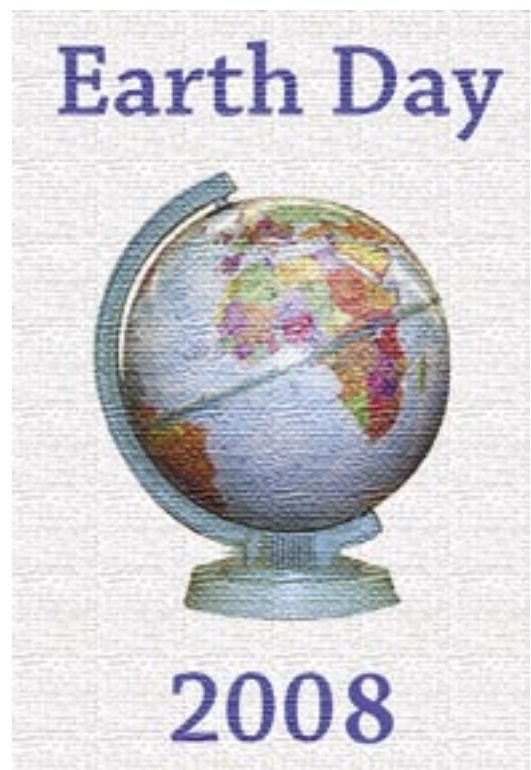
designed to address the gaps in existing energy utility services, as well as some of the inherent conflicts in having existing energy utilities deliver energy conservation services and "reverse metering" (where electricity users are also generators). Studies show that investments in energy conservation cost roughly a third the price of new power generation. It has been said that such utilities will generate "negawatts" rather than megawatts. So instead of relying exclusively on traditional power sources, the SEU will introduce efficiency and conservation as another means to meet our energy demands – and at a lower price than prevailing generation rates. Currently, citizens seeking energy-efficiency services must navigate an array of contractors and companies.

Cheh's legislation modeled the SEU on recent legislation in Delaware. As a utility the SEU will be managed for cost-effectiveness and integrated into the region's energy planning. The SEU will be funded from a reorganized version of what is now called the Reliable

Energy Trust Fund (RETF). The RETF is a source of funds established through collection of a fee attached to electric and gas bills. Although the RETF has never been assessed to its legal limit, it could raise annual revenue of approximately \$20 million. That could buy a lot of negawatts, go a long way toward building a renewable energy infrastructure for the District and contribute to reductions in the emission of CO₂.

The D.C. Chapter recommends a key modification to the bill. As written, the SEU will be contracted out to a winning bidder by the Department of Environment's Energy Division (DDOE/ED, formerly the D.C. Energy Office). Oversight of the SEU would be conducted by an appointed board of 11 members and chaired by the DDOE. The chapter proposes that

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Conservation

Poplar Point

Continued from page 1

ment, including retail, residential development along with a memorial honoring Frederick Douglass, a charter school and an international environmental center that will host companies involved in green, sustainable technology. An optional soccer stadium remains in play, contingent upon further negotiations between D.C. United and the mayor's office. (See <http://www.poplarpointdc.com/> for details.)

While the D.C. Chapter has supported much of the development proposed in the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative, the scale and character of the Clark proposal are hardly in keeping with the AWI plan.

In October 2007, Jason Broehm, then chapter chair, testified at a council roundtable on the Poplar Point development, laying out three key principles:

(1) To protect the Anacostia River from runoff pollution, the 70 acres of parkland should be contiguous and oriented to the river, acting as a buffer to protect the river from runoff pollution from the up to 40 acres of development;

(2) The 40 acres of development should be away from the river, clustered toward I-295 and oriented toward the Anacostia Metrorail Station to ensure that the area is well served by transit; and

(3) To protect the Anacostia River from runoff pollution, development at Poplar Point should adhere to the strong environmental standards adopted by the Anacostia Waterfront Corporation Board of Directors on June 1, 2007, and as required by the legislation that abolished that corporation.

"We recognize that there is a desire among the communities surrounding Poplar Point for development on some of the 110 acres that comprise Poplar Point, and the federal legislation that transfers the property to the District

authorizes development on up to 40 acres of this land," Broehm said in his testimony. "We want to ensure that this development is appropriately sited and constructed in a way that will minimize harm to the Anacostia River. We also intend to stand up for the remaining 70 acres, which the legislation sets aside as parkland in perpetuity, to ensure that this parkland is protected and realizes the vision of a vibrant green space laid out in the Anacostia Waterfront Framework Plan."

It will take several years before ground is formally broken and construction begun – most likely 2011 or 2012. Besides relocating the NPS facilities, an environmental study will have to be conducted and at least one section remediated due to known dumping of toxic chemicals from earlier uses by the Architect of the Capitol and the Navy.

Construction will probably not start until about 2010, or more likely 2012. Residents of Ward 8 are eager for development to move east of the river, and many see Poplar Point as a linchpin.

Chapter leaders are strategizing on next steps needed to ensure that the community and the city do not lose vital riverfront in the interest of short-term gains. To get involved, contact Gwyn Jones (gwynjones@aol.com).

If you are interested in seeing Poplar Point for yourself, an eco-walk is being planned for the spring. Check the chapter calendar at <http://www.dc.sierraclub.org/calendar/> for more information.



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet



**With your help,
we can clean up our water.**

Over the last 50 years, we've made great progress cleaning up our water. But the Bush Administration is threatening that progress, proposing that "isolated" small streams, ponds and wetlands no longer be covered under the Clean Water Act. Work with us to strengthen the Clean Water Act and its enforcement. Together we can leave our children a legacy of clean water, air and wild lands.

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Supporting	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100
Contributing	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150	<input type="checkbox"/> \$175
Life	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1250
Senior	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> \$35
Student/Limited Income	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> \$35

Contributions, gifts and dues to Sierra Club are not tax deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to Sierra magazine and \$1 for your Chapter newsletters.

Enclose a check and mail to Sierra Club,
P.O. Box 52968, Boulder, CO 80523-2968
or visit our website www.sierraclub.org

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Outings

Now's the Time for D.C. Area Hikers to Spring Forward

by Paul Elliott

Are you ready for spring, that sometimes magical transitional period between Washington's glum winter and its subtropical summer? According to astronomical convention, it will officially arrive this year on March 20 in the form of the invisible vernal equinox. By then, however, daylight saving time will already be 11 days old, and nature will already be tangibly on the move, with grass greening, trees budding, flowers sprouting, birds courting and temperatures rising.

By then, too, local hikers will also be on the move, some of them lured by the rising sap and the ambitious 50-events-in-two-months schedule of the Sierra Club's Metropolitan Washington Regional Outings Program (MWROP). And you can be one of them.

Consider the temptations and opportunities. There are usually several MWROP outings available every weekend, and an aptly named Vigorous Tuesday hike every week, plus a hike on most official holidays.

You'll find that our MWROP offerings are a mix-and-match assortment of easy, tough, short, long, flat, hilly, circuitous and

one-way hikes. Some take place in the District, others unfold in suburban Virginia and Maryland, and still others explore mountain wilderness areas to the west. Some are mostly recreational and social. Others are more educational, featuring a close look at, say, the natural world, places of historical interest or sites under environmental threat.

Some outings are old standbys that have long been popular. Among them are excursions on the Mall (including a full-moon stroll), in Rock Creek Park, along the C&O Canal towpath, in Shenandoah National Park and on Massanutten Mountain and Great North Mountain. Our old-

est—and most challenging—standby is what we benignly call the One Day Hike, from Washington to Harpers Ferry, which is preceded by four months of weekly training hikes (visit www.onedayhike.org to learn just how challenging) that we also label suggestively as Get-Fit-for-Spring Hikes.

Other outings are either quite new or brand-new. Some feature such probably unfamiliar locales as Beaverdam



Reservoir, Merrimac Farm Wildlife Management Area, Nanjemoy Natural Resource Management Area, and Cosca Regional Park. Several are on Fairfax County's Cross County Trail, including a 36-miler and also a short one featuring a maple syrup boil-down. There's also a hostel-based weekend in Harper's Ferry.

Some of our March-April outings are not hikes, but instead involve such other activities as trailwork, canoeing, a visit to Pennsylvania's glorious Longwood Gardens and a backpacking trip to Virginia's Reddish Knob.

For details on all of the 50 MWROP events set for March and April, visit www.mwrop.org (or call, on a weekly basis, 202-547-2326). For a sampling of them, turn to the back of this newsletter. For more information, contact the leaders (they're all listed). And then be sure to come out with us.

Paul Elliott is MWROP's outgoing chair and author of 60 Hikes within 60 Miles: Washington, D.C.

Photos left to right:

(1) Invasive and alien plants thrive in some parts of Rock Creek Park. One of the hikers on this outing addressed the enveloping and threatening kudzu as Audrey.

(2) Little Bennett Regional Park in Montgomery County includes some lovely upland meadows, as well as the ruins of tobacco barns from another era.

(3) Last spring, conservationists in Prince William County led this tour of threatened-by-development Merrimac Farm; a year later, the farm is a new Virginia wildlife management area, and the mud stays.

Announcements

SUPPORT OUR CHAPTER

Taking it to the Next Level

by Karen Cordry

Last year, we told you our annual request for contributions to the chapter (the “March Window” letter) was coming and we urged you to give generously to help the chapter keep up the great work it has been doing. You responded to that appeal, with almost 100 donations and just shy of \$7,000 in contributions – both records for the chapter.

We thank each of you who donated last year and this year’s March Window letter will tell you about the equally great work the chapter has been doing this year. Our goals are to take steps to confront the challenge of global climate change – to make this a sustainable world – and to make those steps contribute to making the District better for all of us by creating a livable city. The best thing about working with these issues is

realizing that we really can have it all – a better city and a better world.

But for us to keep pushing these issues forward, we will need the support of all of you. We’d like to build on our prior successes and take them to a new level. That means we need to have your help this year also.

We need to see everyone in the chapter contribute something, but at a minimum, our challenge goal is to have at least 150 people donate something – a large or small donation, we appreciate them all! Our dollar goal is \$10,000 this year – a big jump over last year, but eminently doable from a chapter with almost 3,000 members. Watch for the challenge match in your March Window letter from the chapter leadership.



NEW CHAPTER LEADERSHIP

Executive Committee Election Results for 2008

In December 2007, the D.C. Chapter held its annual Executive Committee Elections. We counted your votes and announced the results on Jan. 15. They were as follows:

Voting Members:

Damon Luciano, new chapter chair
Lisa Swanson, vice chair, re-elected
Jason Broehm, re-elected
Dennis Chestnut, newly elected
Grace Cunningham, re-elected
Jeff Gustafson, re-elected

Chasta Piatakovas, re-elected
Josh Stebbins, newly elected
Brian Van Wye, newly elected

Non-Voting Members:

Karen Cordry, treasurer
Moira Annelin, secretary

The chapter leadership thanks all members who sent in their ballots, and we extend our gratitude for their work on the committee to our departing Executive Committee members Gwyn Jones, Bob Morris and Scott Williamson.

Call for Volunteers: WikiWaste

by Jeff Gustafson

In light of the extremely low recycling rates in the District, the D.C. Chapter’s Waste Reduction Committee is working to make recycling easier for both residents and businesses. Currently, there is no single source of information for where or how to recycle. The committee is looking to work with a volunteer with web design experience to build an interactive wiki-style web page to serve as a comprehensive one-stop guide to recycling in and around the city. The web page, based on collaborative editing, will also allow residents and business owners to review recycling and trash haulers, update contact information and more. If you are interested in building this invaluable wiki web page, contact Jeff Gustafson at jeff.gustafson@mac.com or 925-209-9898.



WE’RE GLOBAL!

Check out our
chapter website at:

dc.sierraclub.org



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

Announcements

The 20s & 30s Going Out Meetup Group presents...



Earth Week Semi-Formal Gala

Live Band* *Hot Food* *Open Bar

Friday, April 18th 8:30pm-1:00am

*Galleria at Lafayette Center
1120 20th St NW, Washington, DC*

Tickets not available at the door. Please go to <http://dc.sierraclub.org/calendar/> for more details and to buy tickets online in advance.

Anyone 21 and older welcome!

Volunteers are needed and will get in free, contact Chasta at washingtondc.chapter@sierraclub.org if interested in volunteering.

A portion of the proceeds from ticket sales will benefit the DC SIERRA CLUB COOL CITIES campaign.

Legislation

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rather than establish a new oversight board, the Public Service Commission (PSC) should become the oversight body. The PSC already has the needed expertise (staff for the oversight board would wastefully duplicate it), and the PSC is in a superior position to immediately begin the work of establishing performance measures for the SEU. Moreover, the RETF and its potential successor are funds raised through utility bills, and it is the specific function of the PSC to regulate their use, as it does currently. Finally, good governance generally advises that management and oversight not be conducted by the same organization.

The chapter also highlighted other key features in the bill, such as the important addition made to the statutory mandates of the PSC and the Office of the People's Counsel to "minimize the negative effects of energy company operation on public safety, the economy

of the District and its residents, the conservation of natural resources and environmental quality." Neither of these offices was previously mandated by its statutes to address environmental conditions in its deliberations, and this single step would make an immediate and long-lasting improvement in the environmental outcome of the decisions of both.

Good green governance is something that we can expect to see more of from the District Council. With the election of Councilmember Mary Cheh, in part due to a strong Sierra Club endorsement, the council is as green as it has ever been. The chapter's energy activists will continue to work with Councilmember Cheh's office ensure passage of a strong energy bill that will emphasize conservation and renewable energy as critical to planning a healthy, livable city.



Outings

Following is a *partial* list of activities offered by the Metropolitan Washington Regional Outings Program (MWROP).

No pets unless listing says otherwise.

For a more complete and up-to-date list and additional information, visit www.mwrop.org or call 202-547-2326.

Sun. Mar. 9. Rated A. Southern Fairfax Cross County Trail, Old Lorton Prison Area. About 6 moderately paced mi. along the Fairfax Cross County Trail (CCT) and recently opened section Giles Run Meadow-Laurel Hills Park; about 400 ft. of ups and downs. Bring snack and water. Meet at 10 a.m. in Fairfax South County Secondary School's parking lot (8501 Silverbrook Road, Lorton, Va. 22079). Leaders: Henri Comeau, hencom75@msn.com, and Frank Wodarczyk, fwiker44@cox.net or 703-569-6737.

Sun. Mar. 9. Rated B. Rock Creek Park. Explore the beauty of Rock Creek Park in early spring. Bring water and a snack. Kids who can walk 7+ mi. on relatively level terrain are welcome. Meet at 1 p.m. next to the ground-level elevator door at the Cleveland Park Metro Station. Leader: Jim Finucane, 301-365-3485 (before 9 p.m.) and Bob Mathis, 301-589-7539.

Tues. Mar. 11. Rated H. Fairfax Cross County Trail (Vigorous Hike). Approximately 36 mi. hike traversing numerous parks and streambeds of the county from the start near Lorton to the parking area at Georgetown Pike and Difficult Run. Plan on early start and fast pace. Leaders: Mike Moran, 703-281-4630 or mjm.9406@cox.net, and Cliff Noyes 540-373-8267 or hclmnoyes@yahoo.com.

Sat. Mar. 15. Rated D or F. Rachel Carson Greenway/Sligo Creek Trail (Get Fit for Spring/ODH). Circuit hike of 15 mi. or 21 mi. Combination of natural-surface and paved trails, with a few stretches of sidewalk, and mostly in wooded Northwest Branch and Sligo Creek stream valleys, in Montgomery Co., Md. En route, we'll learn about suburban environmental threats. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at athletic field's parking lot, Wheaton Regional Park, near restrooms and soda machines. Call leaders for driving directions or Metro station pickup (Wheaton). Leaders: Russ Norfleet, 703-294-6068 or russnorfleet@verizon.net, and Mike Darzi, 301-593-4551 or Michael.darzi@saic.com.

Sun. Mar. 16. Rated A. Cosca Regional Park, (mostly). Enjoy an early-afternoon hike in Prince George's Co. near Clinton in what has been called "a small gem of a little-known nature preserve." We'll do a moderately paced circuit hike of 5.5 mi. on attractive and slightly hilly woodland trails and visit the park's nature center to see live birds of prey. Post-hike options: Visit to Surratt House Museum (Mary Surratt was executed for involvement in the plot to kill Lincoln), and early dinner at Mama Stella's. Call for directions to meeting place or trailhead. Leashed dogs okay. To carpool, meet in Alexandria at 11 a.m. at the Van Dorn Metro Station's Park & Ride lot (Metro riders should cross the Kiss & Ride lot to get there). Joint event with AMC/DC. Leader: Paul Elliott, 703-256-6351.

Mon. Mar. 17. Rated B. St. Patrick's Day Key-Chain Hike. From Rosslyn area, we'll start upstream along the Va. shoreline, mostly flat but with some ups and downs, rocky patches, minor stream crossings, and maybe a little mud if it has recently rained, to Chain Bridge. There, we'll cross and go downstream on the C&O Canal towpath to Key Bridge and return to the start. After the hike, optional trip to Clyde's in Georgetown.

Bring water and lunch. Total distance of 9 mi. Meet at 10 a.m. at Theodore Roosevelt Island parking lot off the George Washington Pkwy. (limited parking there, but it's an easy walk from Rosslyn Metro). Leader: Ray Evert, hikerdude22@msn.com or 703-893-3792.

Fri. Mar. 21. Rated A/B. Moonlit Hike on the Mall (Get to Know D.C.). Explore the beauty of D.C.'s National Mall and monuments by the full moon. Kids who can walk 7+ mi. (or 3 mi.) on relatively level terrain are welcome. Bring water. Meet at 7 p.m. on the Mall side of Constitution Ave., halfway between 15th and 17th sts. Nearest Metro station is Federal Triangle. Leader: Jim Finucane, 301-365-3485 (before 9 p.m.).

Sat. Mar. 22. Rated G or D. Parade of Parks (Get Fit for Spring/ODH). Circuit of 23 mi. (or 14.4 mi. option) on paved and dirt trails in D.C. and Md. parklands, with some gentle elevation change. Meet at 8 a.m. at Fletcher's Boathouse lower parking lot, off Canal Rd. Leaders: Mike Darzi, 301-593-4551 or michael.darzi@saic.com; Frank Wodarczyk, 703-569-6737; and Mike Gingerich, 703-590-3188 or m.gingerich@comcast.net.

Sun. Mar. 23. Rated B. Nanjemoy Natural Resource Management Area. Meander up to 10 flattish mi. through woodlands and wetlands along the lower Potomac River in Md.'s Charles Co., roughly 30 mi. south of D.C. We'll encounter a rich assortment of birds and emerging plants along the way, see the huge ship graveyard in Mallows Bay, and beachwalk in the Douglas Point area. Leashed dogs okay. To carpool, meet in Alexandria at 9 a.m. at Van Dorn Metro Station's Park & Ride lot (Metro riders should cross the Kiss & Ride lot to get there). Joint event with AMC/DC. Leader: Paul Elliott, 703-256-6351.

Sat. Mar. 29. Rated B. Beaverdam Lakeshore Trail. First-ever Sierra hike on new trail in Loudoun Co. We'll circle Beaverdam Reservoir and do a stretch along Goose Creek State Scenic River; 8 mi. over mostly level terrain. En route, you can learn about plans to create Goose Creek Greenway, a 20+ mi. trail from Journey through Hallowed Ground NHA to Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail. To carpool, meet at 9 a.m. at Dulles Town Center. To get there from the Capital Beltway (I-495), take VA 7 (Leesburg Pike) into Loudoun Co., then go left at City Center Blvd. and Countryside Blvd. Park in front of Dicks Sporting Goods on right. Leader: Glenn Gillis, 703-430-0568.

Sun. Mar. 30. Rated B/C. Northern Rock Creek Park (Get to Know D.C.). Early spring is a fine time for this 6.7 mi. circuit hike in the relatively wild and moderately hilly northern reaches of the park. Trees should be leafing out, wildflowers rising, and birds on the wing. We may see signs of deer, even coyotes. We'll stop creek-side at Miller Cabin for lunch, talk about the creek's new fish ladders, and discuss Joaquin Miller. After the hike take a short, pseudo-archeological side trip to Stone City. Leashed dogs okay. Meet at 9:30 a.m. in nature center parking lot, just off Glover Rd. south of Military Rd. Call for driving directions or if carless. Joint event with AMC/DC. Leaders: Paul Elliott, 703-256-6351, and Helen Epps, 202-363-1278 (leave message).

Sun. Mar. 30. Rated D. Fairfax Cross County Trail. Hike the 15 mi. northern half of this beautiful trail in the middle of a major suburban area starting at the Potomac River. Meet at 7 a.m. at Oak Marr Recreation Center in Oaktown, Va. Joint outing with Northern Va. Hiking Club. Leader: Michael Fischetti, 703-771-8559 (leave message).

Sat. Apr. 5. Rated B. Little Bennett Regional Park. Explore a peaceful stream valley and adjacent ridges in upper Montgomery Co., Md., with historic sites, Allegheny Mound Builder ant colonies, and possibly some beaver activity; 8 mi., 500 ft. of total ascents (in reasonable increments), and some stream crossings. Leader: Larry Broadwell, bakpacker1@verizon.net or 301-215-7135 (before 9 p.m.).

Sat. Apr. 5. Rated E, F, G, or H. C&O Canal Towpath (Get Fit for Spring/ODH). Out-and-back hike on a particularly scenic towpath segment. Begin at Edwards Ferry (towpath mile 30.8) and turn around at Whites Ford (mile 40), Monocacy Aqueduct (mile 42.2), Nolands Ferry (mile 44.6), or "downtown" Point of Rocks (mile 48.2) for round-trip hike of 18.4 mi., 22.8 mi., 27.6 mi., or 34.8 mi., respectively. Meet at 8 a.m. at Edwards Ferry parking lot, off River Rd. Visit www.onedayhike.org or call leaders for driving directions. Leaders: Frank Wodarczyk, 703-569-6737, and Tom Kloster, twk07@comcast.net.

Sun. Apr. 6. Not Rated. Spring Meeting of Sierra Club's Metro Washington Region Outings Program features election of officers, summary of 2007 activities, and plans for 2008, including a regional training event. Open to the public as well as current outings leaders, prospective leaders, and other Sierra Club members. Optional post-meeting 5 mi. hike around historic Georgetown. Location: Patagonia Store adjacent to C&O Canal on Wisconsin Ave. in Georgetown. Sierra leaders will be emailed details. Others check www.mwrop.org or contact Paul Elliott, 703-256-6351.

Sun. Apr. 6. Rated B. Carderock/Gold Mine Tract. Easy 7 mi. walk in suburban Md. along C&O Canal towpath and Gold Mine Tract to Great Falls Tavern; return via towpath. Meet at 1 p.m. at Carderock Recreation Area, off the Clara Barton Parkway, 1 mi. west of Capital Beltway (I-495). 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.).

Sat. Apr. 12. Rated H+, F, or D. C&O Canal Towpath between Point of Rocks or Brunswick, Md., and Harpers Ferry (Get Fit for Spring/ODH). Options: Long hikers will start at Point of Rocks and hike to Harpers Ferry and back (28 mi.), with the option of going up to 4 mi. past the start before returning (for up to 36 mi.). Short hikers will start at Brunswick and hike to Harpers Ferry and back (14 mi.), with the option of going to Point of Rocks (21 mi.). Turnaround point in Harpers Ferry will be the Bolivar Community Center, the ODH's end point. To carpool, meet at Grosvenor-Strathmore Metro Station's Park & Ride open-air lot (in back of garage). Long hikers meet in that Metro lot at 7 a.m. or in parking lot along the towpath at Point of

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

Rocks by 8:15 a.m.; short hikers meet in Metro lot at 8:45 a.m. or in parking lot near the towpath under the MD 17 bridge in Brunswick by 10 a.m. Leaders: Mike Darzi, 301-593-4551 or michael.darzi@saic.com, and Gary Kosciusko, 703-765-0306.

Sun. Apr. 13. Rated C. Caledon Natural Area and Dahlgren Railroad Heritage Trail. Moderately paced two-part hike of about 10.5 mi. in deeply rural part of Va.'s Northern Neck starts with 6 mi. mostly hilly woodland loop through 2,500-acre, rich-in-wildflowers-and-birds natural area. After lunch break on banks of the broad and eagle-patrolled lower Potomac (bring field glasses), we'll walk through wetlands along a shady former railroad right-of-way that's likely to become part of the Potomac National Scenic Heritage Trail. Post-hike: optional early dinner at Popes Creek to sample expansive river views and good seafood. Leashed dogs okay (outdoors). To carpool, meet at 9 a.m. in Alexandria at Van Dorn Metro Station Park & Ride lot (Metro riders should cross the Kiss & Ride lot to get there). Call for driving directions to the station or trailhead (\$3/car park fee). Joint event with AMC/DC. Leaders: Paul Elliott, 703-256-6351, and Helen Epps, 202-363-1278 (leave message).

Fri. Apr. 18. Rated A/B. Moonlit Hike on the Mall (Get to Know D.C.). Explore the beauty of D.C.'s National Mall and monuments by the full moon. Kids who can walk 7+ mi. (or 3 mi.) on relatively level terrain are welcome. Bring water. Meet at 7 p.m. on the Mall side of Constitution Ave., halfway between 15th and 17th sts. Nearest Metro station is Federal Triangle. Leader: Jim Finucane, 301-365-3485 (before 9 p.m.).

Sat. Apr. 19. Rated A. Two Views of the Potomac: Red Rock Wilderness Overlook and Balls Bluff Battlefield Regional Parks. Two little gems on the outskirts of Leesburg, with Potomac River vistas and wonderful wildflowers. Meet at 9 a.m. at Red Rock Park (43098 Edwards Ferry Rd., Leesburg, Va. 20176). Leaders: Carol Ivory, 703-476-8730 or carolivory@verizon.net, and Dave Burd, dave.burd@verizon.net.

Sat.–Sun. Apr. 19–20. Rated D (each day). Spring-time in Harpers Ferry. Enjoy a weekend around beautiful and historic Harpers Ferry National Historical Park. On Saturday, we'll explore the town by hiking through the historic district at the junction of the Potomac and Shenandoah rivers and then climbing majestic Maryland Heights. On Sunday, we'll hike the AT and Loudoun Heights Trail, with spectacular views from the cliffs at Loudoun Heights and along the C&O Canal. We'll spend Saturday night at the charming Harpers Ferry Hostel at Sandy Hook. For reservations and further information, contact leader Glenn Gillis, 703-430-0568 or glennpotomacfalls@yahoo.com.

Sat. Apr. 19. Rated G or C. C&O Canal Towpath North of Whites Ferry. (Get Fit for Spring/ODH). Out-and-back hike of about 25 mi. (or 13 mi. option) is a final "tune-up" for the 100K or 50K versions of Apr. 26 One Day Hike event and will familiarize those planning to do the 50K ODH option with their starting point. Meet at 8 a.m. at Whites Ferry parking lot. Leaders: Gary Kosciusko, 703-765-0306, and Mike Gingerich, 703-590-3188 or m.gingerich@comcast.net.

Sun. Apr. 20. Rated B/C. Woodstock Equestrian Park. Scenic circuit hike of 10.5 mi. in spacious new park near Beallsville in Montgomery Co., Md. We'll look and listen for signs of early spring in fields and rolling woodlands against the backdrop of Sugarloaf Mountain and the Dickerson smokestack. Leashed dogs okay. To carpool, meet at 9:30 a.m. at the Grosvenor-Strathmore Metro Station (Red Line) just outside garage in Park & Ride lot. Or call for the trailhead location and meeting time. Joint event with AMC/DC. Leader: Paul Elliott 703-256-6351.

Film Festival

Continued from page 4

peake Bay to the contaminants that are wreaking havoc on coral reefs around the world. The film will be shown March 19 at the National Geographic. "The Water Front," to be screened March 19 at the National Museum of Women in the Arts, documents the struggle against water privatization in Highland Park, Michigan. Discussion with the filmmakers will follow the screenings.

The Washington, D.C., premiere of "The Unforeseen" on March 21 at the AFI Silver Theatre will explore how the American dream of owning a house with a white picket fence clashes with environmental sustainability as rampant development threatens Barton Springs, a favorite watering hole in Austin, Texas. Filmmaker Laura Dunn will be on hand to discuss her film.

The Film Festival's final day, March 22, coincides with World Water Day, designated by the United Nations to highlight the importance of water issues. The festival will present a day-long tribute with films from Mexico, India, Austria, Slovenia and Chile, accompanied by a panel discussion with experts on the need to provide clean, safe water, sanitation and hygiene throughout the world. The day will end with "Flow: For Love of Water," an unflinching look at politics, pollution, corruption and human rights from Africa to America.

Screenings will take place at museums, embassies, universities, libraries and local theaters. Many films are free. For a complete schedule, visit the festival website at www.dccenvironmentalfilmfest.org or call 202-342-2564 for a festival brochure.

D.C. Chapter and Related Events

Following is a partial list of activities of the D.C. Chapter at press time. All events are free unless indicated by (\$). Please RSVP where indicated. Always check online for new events or to RSVP: dc.sierraclub.org.

Tue. Mar. 4

Transportation Committee Meeting. 7:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m. Teatism, 400 8th Street N.W. RSVP. Contact Ralph Garboushian at 202-547-3764 or ralphgarboushian@gmail.com.

Mon. Mar. 10

Second Monday Happy Hour (\$) 6:00 p.m.-7:30 p.m. The Exchange Saloon, 1719 G Street N.W. Contact Chasta Piatakovas at 202-320-1205 or cpiatkovas@netzero.com.

Tue. Mar. 18

Executive Committee Meeting. 6:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m. Sierra Club Legislative Office, 600 14th Street N.W., Suite 750. All members welcome. Contact Damon Luciano at 202-374-1245 or damonluciano@gmail.com

Thu. Mar. 20

True Cost of Food Restaurant Outing (\$) 7:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m. Location TBD. Contact Bowen Cho by March 18 at bowencho@gmail.com.

Tue. Apr. 1

Transportation Committee Meeting. 7:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m. Teatism, 400 8th Street N.W. RSVP. Contact Ralph Garboushian at 202-547-3764 or ralphgarboushian@gmail.com.

Tue. Apr. 15

Executive Committee Meeting. 6:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m. Sierra Club Legislative Office, 600 14th Street N.W., Suite 750. All members welcome. Contact Damon Luciano at 202-374-1245 or damonluciano@gmail.com.

Fri. Apr. 18

Semi-Formal Gala to Benefit Cool Cities. (\$60-\$90) 8:30 p.m. – 1:00 a.m. The Galleria at Lafayette Center, 1120 20th Street N.W. Tickets must be purchased in advance. From March 1 to April 12, ticket price will be \$75 and from April 13-17, ticket price will increase to \$90. Visit email washingtondc.chapter@sierraclub.org for more information or visit <http://dc.sierraclub.org/calendar/detail.asp?ID=440> to order online.

Tue. Apr. 22

Earth Day 2008

Mon. May. 12

Second Monday Happy Hour (\$) 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. Location TBD. Contact Chasta Piatakovas at 202-320-1205 or cpiatkovas@netzero.com



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