

## Great Falls Group Conservation Report for the period May-June 2009

Steve Bruckner / Conservation Chair / GFG

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### Great Falls Group Initiatives

#### **Cool Communities/Cool Neighborhoods –**

- With the disengagement of Fairfax County from sponsoring the Cool Neighborhoods program we were instrumental in defining and using to reach out to our community, we have looked into other models that might work, while still maintaining a community wide outreach. One alternative was presented by Diana Christopulos at the Chapter ExCom about the RVCCC (Roanoke Valley Cool Communities Coalition) which she started, separate from Sierra Club, to engage the overall community, including business and industry that would not be expected to join with Sierra Club endeavors. In the interim, in the County, we are continuing with outreach via the Cool Neighborhoods program.
- Most recently Rekha and Steve met with a congregation, Temple Rodef Shalom, about starting a program of their own. Previous outreach engagements have been with Sully, Great Falls, Kings Park, Mantua and McLean/Broyhill.
- We are also investigating a Long & Forster initiative of Green Realtors where they educate and certify their realtors about various green issues such as Green Mortgages. We are seeking to open a dialog with them about energy rating systems for homes to help with the process of generating monetary value to home efficiency investments and the recognition of this metric in mortgages.

**Jim Woolsey at The Energy Conversation** – Linda Burchfiel and Steve Bruckner attended a lecture by Jim Woolsey, previously head of the CIA, on energy issues. He was focused entirely on getting the nation off oil for national security reasons because of the balance of payments problem and that the oil suppliers are almost all dictatorships, some of whom finance radical Islam. He favors PHEV's and bio-fuels as a solution to the use of oil for transportation.

**EPA Hearing on Endangerment Finding** – A good number of us testified at the EPA's public hearing supporting their Endangerment Finding.

**BRT** – Roger and Scott attended a DC regional presentation on Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) with descriptions of systems already operating around the country. This technology may provide good solutions to increase the mass transit options in the county with lower capital investment than is required by LRT or Metro.

**Tyson's Tunnel** - We continue to monitor the activities around planning for Tysons Corner. We have not been able to get a commitment from any attorneys for a lawsuit on the tunnel decision. Prognosis is bleak.

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### VA Chapter Initiatives of Great Falls Group

**Go Green Virginia** – Go Green Virginia is an environmental initiative of the Virginia Municipal League to engage local city and county governments in Virginia to promote energy efficiency and GHG emission reduction. At the current time they have defined two challenges – a Government Challenge and a School Challenge that encourages these public units to become more efficient. They are now working on defining a

Community Challenge as well for outreach into the overall community. Steve Bruckner discussed having Sierra Club participate on their Advisory Committee to help define the Community Challenge. They agreed and Diana Christopulos will be our primary and Steve Bruckner our alternate representative. We are hopeful this program may give us a state-side vehicle that all Sierra Club groups can participate in to increase our traction in achieving our objectives of increased sustainability and energy efficiency more than we can achieve acting on our own. Diana and I will continue to grow this partnering relationship and will continue to report on it as it evolves.

**Green Power for Virginia** – Working with Bob Vanderhye, we looked into Dominion Virginia Power’s Green Power program which sells REC’s, Renewable Energy Credits, to its customers who are interested in green solutions. However we determined it was a weak program because of its high overhead of > 50% and that customers continued to buy coal-fired power the same as any other Dominion customer. We are engaged in a search to find an alternate supplier of real renewable wind energy to Virginia customers, as mentioned in our recent ODS article.

**Ice-Energy for Virginia** – Not that this is yet a Sierra Club initiative but I’ve been following a company, ice-energy.com, that has a new technology for shifting demand for Air Conditioning from peak to off-peak hours by using the A/C’s compressors to make ice at night, which is off-peak, and rely on that ice during peak hours, for cooling. Their units are retrofitted to standard air conditioning units – primarily targeting commercial buildings. Based on my alerting them to the SCC’s request for efficiency alternatives for Virginia, they decided to submit their offering to the SCC by the July 31<sup>st</sup> deadline. They propose these units be bought, deployed and maintained by utilities just as they would deploy other demand response equipment such as smart meters. Their submission will provide a good opportunity for this technology to be exposed to the electricity efficiency experts at the state’s utility companies. If found worthwhile, this may lead to its adoption in the state. The potential is that this solution, if deployed widely enough, could eliminate the peak demand problem in Virginia which is all due to summertime air conditioning loads and which causes the utilities to build additional peaking plants just to handle this load.

**Transit Planning** –

- Roger and Steve attended a Smart Growth and Transit presentation that discussed objectives for mass transit for the rewrite of the federal Transportation Bill, which is being worked on at the current time.
- Roger attended and spoke for the Chapter at the VDOT and DRPT six year plan hearings in early June and again for their Long Range (2035 Plan) in late June.