



Blue Ridge Outdoor Program

Join us July 26th 8am-5pm

Come learn about local birds and butterflies, enjoy a picnic lunch with fellow Sierrans, and tour an organic farm, on Saturday July 26th. Join the Great Falls Group (GFG) for all or part of the day at the beautiful, 900-acre Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Stewardship (BRCES) in Loudoun County.

- Start the day at 8am with a guided bird tour by the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy (LWC), hiking through varied habitats that are home to more than 150 bird species.
- Join us for a potluck picnic lunch about 11:30am, there's shelter in case of bad weather.
- Look for butterflies on a family-oriented meadow walk starting about 1pm, led by the LWC.
- Tour the BRCES seven-acre organic farm at 2pm with the farm manager, to find out about farming methods and see their 8 baby goats.

In addition to scheduled activities, guests are free to roam the trails and enjoy the different habitats, from wetlands and meadows to woods and rock outcrops. Bring your old cell phones and inkjet cartridges for BRCES to recycle in an environmentally friendly way.

The BRCES is just north of Neersville, at 11661 Harpers Ferry Road (Rt 671). From Leesburg: Go west on U.S. 7, right on Rt. 9., then right on Rt. 671/Harpers Ferry Rd. Go 6 miles to the BRCES entrance on the left, just past the Neersville Fire Station. See www.brces.org, for additional directions, their bird list and a trail map. Check the GFG website, www.virginia.sierraclub.org/greatfalls, for updated event information.

Want to carpool? Questions? Contact Linda Burchfiel at 703-506-4310 or larva@attglobal.net.

by Karen Grycewicz

GFG October Program will be held in McLean!

The October 7 program, "Elections and the Environment," will be held at the McLean Government Center at 1437 Balls Hill Road, McLean, 22101 (off Lewinsville Road near Routes 123 and 267 inside the Beltway). Note that this is different from the Community Center, where Sierra Club and Beer was held in March. October is the first month of our experiment of rotating locations among Reston, McLean, and preferably Annandale or Fairfax. This is to accommodate people who want to attend our programs but cannot reach Reston by 7:30 during rush hour.

The November program will probably be held at the Fairfax County Government Center, but watch this space!

by Linda Burchfiel

Re-Insulating My Attic Brings Unexpected Benefits

I live in a house built in 1963, an era when energy was perceived as an unlimited resource available from an irrepressibly resilient Earth. As I gradually attempted to correct my house's wasteful design assumptions, I became aware of serious openings between the living space and the attic. However, it was not until a recent re-insulation project, that I learned the full extent of how these breaches violated the living space envelope. The local insulation service company I selected proposed removing the old fiberglass, vacuuming the space clean, and foaming the envelope's "penetrations" by which is meant the openings at electrical boxes, plumbing vent pipes, and the seams between the ceiling wallboard and the wall headers. Blown cellulose insulation to achieve an R49 thermal insulating rating would replace the fiberglass. Because the company did not have the portable carpentry capacity to custom-cut planks to enclose the large openings, the removal and installation were scheduled on separate days to allow me time to close off the openings thus repairing the building envelope.

One recent morning George and his assistant removed

the old insulation and sealed the small "penetrations" with polyurethane foam. The removal of the old fiberglass revealed two large open areas, each bigger and more serious than I had anticipated. In one section that contained duct work I could see into the interior of the walls below me, the entire 8 feet down to the



This large opening let attic air into the living space, wasting energy.

bedroom floor level. I had 4 days to do my part and the rainy May conveniently kept the attic space cool. To close off the openings from the attic, I cut pieces of 1/2 inch plywood of sufficient length to run from one wall header to another and width to fit snugly between the rafters. I used deck screws to secure them into the wall headers. The other opening was the top to a shaft that housed the heating/air conditioning

return duct and the gas hot water heater's galvanized flue. I could see three stories down the shaft, into the basement! I cut a piece of plywood to block off this opening, about 18 inches square. Next I sealed the edges of the boards I installed as George had done, thus the building envelope was finally secured, 45 years late.

When George returned with his assistant, I asked if they often saw such breaches to the building envelope.

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Working for Cleaner Streams

The previous evenings' rain had cleared into a crisp, sunny morning on Saturday April 5, perfect for the 20th Annual Alice Ferguson Foundation Potomac River Watershed Cleanup. Over 130 Volunteers and Staff from Ellanor C. Lawrence County Park had worked the previous weekend, removing over 7 tons of trash from the park and stream areas. The Park Manager selected a portion of Flatbush Branch of Rocky Run for Sierra Club volunteers to tackle on April 5th.



Trash at Flatbush Branch of Rocky Run

At Flatbush Branch, a great blue heron disturbed at his fishing spot could be seen through the trees as he lazily flew off over the meandering stream. A pileated woodpecker provided constant accompaniment throughout the morning as she noisily chiseled away at a dead limb. But that was the enjoyable part...two backwater pools upstream of a erosion-undercut tree laying across the stream

were not pretty. Dozens and dozens of ubiquitous, light blue bottled-water containers (both empty and half

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The Herndon, Virginia, based Friends of Runnymede Park (FRP) has recently launched an exciting new project known as the Native Plant Project (NPP). Funded by a grant from the Nelson J. and Katherine Friant Post Foundation, the project is designed to highlight the value of landscaping with native plants. Plant species that are native to this area require less fertilizer and water, are attractive together, and are beneficial to the land and to bird, insect, and other wildlife.

FRP has partnered with Meadows Farms Nurseries to promote the use of native plants in the landscape. A large banner at both Route 7 stores anchors a special display that features locally native plants. There also are handouts that list the native plants in stock, along with a colorful brochure that explains the project. A NPP sticker is attached to the display sign for each native plant certified as being native to this area. We hope to expand our partnership to other nurseries and landscaping companies in the future.

Herndon's 58-acre Runnymede Park has been listed on the Virginia Department of Natural Resources and the Virginia Native Plant Society Native Plant Registry since 1999. Because the parkland was formerly a lightly grazed dairy farm that was never altered by farming techniques that removed the native seed stock from the soil, there are more than 400 native plant species growing in Runnymede. There are more than eight distinct habitats that help to broaden the plant and animal diversity of the park, which is fed by Sugarland Run.

As the project grows, we will be encouraging developers and commercial landscapers to use Native Plant Project principles as they landscape new commercial and residential projects throughout Western Fairfax County. Projects that are certified as NPP gardens will receive an attractive permanent plaque featuring the NPP logo. In addition to the recognition and the improved natural habitat, these projects will enjoy the benefits of enhanced storm water management and real dollar-cost savings because these plants have evolved to thrive in this area.

Native Plant Project gardens can be of various sizes and types, as a broad range of appropriate native plants is available. The newly created native interpretive garden at Runnymede Park can serve as a resource for those who want to see what our locally native plants look like. A visitor there will see how these plants can thrive and be used together to improve habitat.

The purpose of the Friends of Runnymede Park is to protect, enhance, and preserve the physical, natural, and cultural heritage of Runnymede Park. We hope that you will have a chance to visit soon and remember to **Plant Native: It's the Right Thing to Do!** For more information contact Dave Swan at DTSwan@aol.com, or go to friendsofrunnymedepark.org or fpweb.org

by Dave Swan, Friends of Runnymede Park

Sierra Student Involvement Passing the Torch: Preparation for the Next Generation of Environmental Leaders

Leaders in conservation and environmental awareness currently fight daily for the improvement of human impact on the world. However, the future of conservation will rely heavily on the response of rising generations, which will be vital to solve today's environmental problems, as well as repair the damage of the past. With this in mind, it is also imperative that education and outreach are available to these generations, to provide the motivation and capability for young adults to take on serious roles in the environmental action community. As an undergraduate at George Mason University, pursuing a Bachelor of Science in biology, I have been eager to explore such opportunities, and have been involved with organizations that also encourage this transition.

Most recently, I was a student in the inaugural Smithsonian-Mason Semester. This 16-credit residential program takes place at the National Zoo's

Conservation and Research Center in Front Royal, Virginia. The integrated program delves into all aspects of conservation studies, from human-wildlife conflict to the science of reproduction and captive breeding. The diverse subject matter is taught by Smithsonian and GMU faculty, allowing topics to be taught by experts in their field. Through interaction with a wide range of professionals, students are given opportunity to explore and expand their interests, and make connections that will be extremely valuable in pursuing those objectives. In just the first semester, students were extremely successful, as most students left with internships or job offers, much accredited to the advantage of participating in such a program. In my personal opinion, the semester has been the best experience of my undergraduate career at GMU, and with plans for expansion of the facilities and

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Cheers! It's a Sierra Social

The Great Falls Group (GFG) took a break from its usual advocacy work on March 20 at our first Sierra Social, held at the McLean Community Center. Our neighbors, the Mount Vernon Group, joined us as we celebrated the First Day of Spring, St. Patrick's Day (late), and environmentalism. The event was open to all, Sierra Club members or not, and over 80 people celebrated with us.

We introduced our newest staff member, Northern VA Energy Organizer Kayti Wingfield, members of the Executive Committees of the Great Falls and Mount Vernon Groups, and the national Power2Change campaign. (Power2Change is a bipartisan campaign urging voters to demand a new energy policy from all candidates. Two temporary staff members will be working out of our McLean office to spotlight energy policy and to collect signatures for the candidates' petition. You will probably get a phone call from them or meet them at a Metro stop, so please help them out!)

Besides the introductions, we were there to socialize and network. Music (favorite songs from the GFG),

beer, wine, soft drinks and food sparked the evening. Unfortunately, we had not realized how hungry environmentalists can be, and we ran out of pizza! More pizzas arrived at 8:45, but by then many had left hungry. Next time we'll order more.

Our membership chair, Norbert Pink, solicited written comments, and the consensus was that it was a fun evening. "Great chance to network. ...impressed with so many enlightened and motivated people . . . great opportunity to learn of new issues . . . great way to get to know others in the community." A few others

wanted more substance to the evening, for example, a program. We do have meetings with programs monthly, and will be rotating to different locations starting in October. A meeting may well be coming to a venue near you.

A reminder: if you would like to recommend a speaker or a topic for a program, please contact Linda Burchfiel, Program Chair, at 703-506-4310, or larva@attglobal.net.

by Linda Burchfiel

Another reminder: Sign up for our email announcements on our website www.virginia.sierraclub.org/greatfalls so that you will receive our weekly email announcement with notices for future Sierra Socials, GFG programs, and other environmental events in the community. We also send occasional special environmental alerts.

Great Falls Group Executive Committee

The monthly meeting of The Great Falls Group's (GFG) Executive Committee is usually held on the first Monday of the month and is open to all Sierra Club members. Contact Linda Freimark for time and location.

Officers:	Chair, Linda Freimark	703-222-9240	Linda.Freimark@virginia.sierraclub.org
	Vice Chair, Chris Koerner	703-715-2204	Chris.Koerner@virginia.sierraclub.org
	Treasurer, Joe Apple	703-860-1254	Joe.Apple@virginia.sierraclub.org
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	Conservation, Steve Bruckner	703-883-3622	sbruckner@cox.net
	Membership, Norbert Pink	703-264-7445	norbertsierra@aol.com
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	Social Chair, Bobbi Beck	703-464-4755	Bobbi.Beck@virginia.sierraclub.org
	Website Maintenance, Linda Stevens	703-787-8861	
	Environmental Education, Amelia Kissick		

Cleaner Streams (continued from page 1)

full, and over half Dasani), were jumbled with colored soda/vitamin drink bottles/cans/cups, 7-11 coffees, toys, and styrofoam, as well as a couple shopping carts buried in the sediment. It was stark evidence that the cost of these consumables did not include proper disposal in America's current, though incomplete, version of a "free market economy." A nominal fee in the form of a "bottle bill" to create incentive for responsible redemption would easily cut that mess in half. No one could dispute the need for such incentive when viewing this site, especially since it was evident that this pile was just the residue since the latest storm, as any rain of intensity would have washed all these over the log and further downstream. While working on this creek segment, one couldn't help but think that the residents of our metropolitan area do not do justice to the concept of civilization, and are most insensitive to this beautiful planet.

By mid afternoon, five large trash bags filled with recyclable containers were emptied into the appropriate bins at the I-66 transfer station, hopefully to be reincarnated as another product with a longer lifespan. An additional half-dozen or so heavy bags of trash, maybe two hundred pounds, were left for park staff to pick up on Monday morning, building on their 7 ton total. The Park manager called and gratefully expressed her appreciation to the Sierra Club. Our thanks also to everyone who helped on April 5, and to the Great Falls Group members who were site captains for the March 29 Fairfax County clean-up the week before.

The partial reporting on the website of the Alice Ferguson Foundation showed that over 4,276 volunteers worked at 146 sites to remove an estimated 102.2 tons of trash, including over 76,000 beverage containers from the Potomac watershed.


by Chris Koerner

YES,
I want to join the Sierra Club!

Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____ Zip _____
Telephone # _____
Email Address _____

Annual dues include subscriptions to SIERRA (\$7.50) and chapter publications (\$1.00). Dues are not tax deductible. Enclose check and mail to:
Sierra Club, PO Box 52968, Boulder, CO 80322.

Membership Type	Individual	Joint
Introductory	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25.00	N/A
Regular	<input type="checkbox"/> \$39.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$47.00
Supporting	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100.00
Contributing	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$175.00
Life	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1,250.00
Senior	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32.00
Student	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32.00
Limited Income	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32.00

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My Attic (continued from page 1)

"In houses built in the 60s and early 70s like yours we do," George replied. He explained that the insulation company closes off such openings with cardboard, which saves on labor costs and provides permeability so moisture is not trapped during the winter. To prevent the cellulose from falling into the attic access opening, they formed a dam around the opening using very high quality 12-inch thick fiberglass bats. George and his assistant carefully ran a 6-inch diameter hose to the attic from their truck. Bales of cellulose were placed in a machine located in the truck that mechanically broke them up. After some moisture was added, the light fluffy product was blown through the hose into my attic. After three hours the job was completed, done in a neat and dust-free manner. The cellulose manufacturer's label states that the product is derived from recycled newspapers collected by civic groups. This seems to be more benign than fiberglass and nearly a half ton of carbon is locked up for the remaining life of my house.

Cleaner air, quieter house

The next day I noticed that the interior air is more pleasant and the odors that warm weather consistently brought were not noticeable! Sealing off the living space removed the means for drafts originating from the attic to bring the attic's odors into the living space. The second thing I noticed is that outside noise intruding into the second floor bedrooms is substantially reduced. Of course I will realize substantial improvements in comfort and energy savings too.

The re-insulation job cost \$1,800 for my 850 square foot attic, considerably more than a \$650 alternative of adding cellulose to the existing fiberglass to achieve R49. Nonetheless, I bought more than the energy conservation, so consideration of the payback period is misleading. When the U.S. Green Building Council promotes its LEED criteria for commercial buildings, they point out that LEED's superior energy management designs achieve improvements to workplace air quality, temperature, lighting and noise that yield increased employee productivity levels. Thus paying attention to improved efficiencies will yield economic returns on the investments of considerably greater value than the usual cost accounting's simple analysis of energy savings. The improved air quality and comfort in my home means I will become a more productive Sierran and feel richer for it.

by Ross Shearer

Local Outings Program Changes Name, Keeps on Hiking

The Sierra Club's Metropolitan Washington Regional Outings Program (MWROP) is now **Potomac Region Outings** (PRO), with a new website address:

www.sierrapotomac.org

PRO is a special activities section of the Sierra Club Virginia Chapter that organizes hikes and other events for the general public on behalf of the Sierra Club's Washington, DC chapter and the close-in groups of the Maryland and Virginia Chapters. Check their website for information about upcoming events, or to request a free subscription to their calendar. Their information hotline number will be discontinued shortly.



Fairfax County Board Recognizes Sierra Club in Public Health Week

The Fairfax County Board extended a cordial hand in approving a Certificate of Recognition to the Sierra Club at their March 31 meeting for its efforts in raising public awareness of climate change. The recognition came as a part of their Proclamation to designate April 7-13, 2008 as Public Health Week in Fairfax County, recognizing that climate change may result in significant health impacts and that residents should support efforts to address the challenges. The award was received by Great Falls Group Political Chair Bob Pearson and Virginia Chapter ExCom member Roger Diedrich. Roger responded with brief remarks about the seriousness of the issue, its relationship to public health and thanked the Board for supporting the work being done in the Cool Counties campaign.

by Roger Diedrich



Front row, left to right: Rosalynn Foroobar, Director of Patient Care Services. Bob Pearson. Roger Diedrich. Board Chairman Connolly. Dr Gloria Addo-Ayensu, Director of Health. Mr. Thomas Crow, Director of Environmental Health.

Sierra Student (continued from page 2)

program capabilities, it will only improve for future participants.

The Sierra Club is also active in engaging young adults, through the Sierra Student Coalition. In the near future, I am excited to be receiving a scholarship from the Sierra Club to attend the SPROG Environmental Leadership Training in Pennsylvania, granted in part from donations from the VA Chapter. SPROG programs are student run, week long training events which gather students from all over the nation to facilitate student activism. The programs aim to build capabilities in grassroots organizing, giving students a voice in the future of conservation initiatives. Skills in organizing, communication, and informative sessions on current issues will prepare participants to return to their communities as environmental leaders. More information can be found on the SPROG website <http://www.ssc.org/sprog/index.php>.

Clearly, support for the next wave of leaders in the conservation community is providing opportunity for the advancement of interested individuals. With these programs in place, it is now in the hands of our generation to become interested and active, taking advantage of the available training. Continued encouragement of youth in your life will be the best support, increasing awareness of the existing opportunities.

Look for a follow-up article, following the PA SPROG, taking place August 10-18! This article will describe my experience with SPROG, and how Sierra Club has shaped my future environmental involvement.

by Kristin Thomas

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If you would like to recommend a location, speaker or a topic for a program, please contact Linda Burchfiel, Program Chair, at 703-506-4310, or larva@attglobal.net.

Check our website for meeting updates or changes:
<http://www.virginia.sierraclub.org/greatfalls/>

Also See Inside:

Old Dominion Sierran

The Sierra Club's Newsletter for Virginia

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The Cascade

The Great Falls Group Newsletter

July-August 2008

www.virginia.sierraclub.org/greatfalls

Upcoming Programs – Everyone Welcome!

Sat. July 26th – Sierra Club Outing at Blue Ridge Center Learn about local birds and butterflies, enjoy a picnic lunch with fellow Sierrans, and tour an organic farm. Come for all or part of the day at the beautiful, 900-acre Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Stewardship (BRCES) in Loudoun County. *Details on page 1.*

Sat. August 9th 1:30-4:30pm – Sierra Club 101 Explore how you can get more involved in the Sierra Club, from making a phone call or writing a letter, to leading a campaign or taking a vacation to Bryce Canyon on a Sierra Club service trip. Learn more about the Sierra Club and its complex website, Clubhouse. Held at the new, LEED-designed **Oakton Library, 10304 Lynnhaven Place, Oakton, VA 22124-1785, 703-242-4020.**

***Tues. Sept. 23rd 7:30pm – Energy and Environment Issues on Alaska's North Slope and Arctic Seas** Alaska's North Slope and the surrounding Arctic Seas hold extensive oil and gas resources that energy companies and public officials want to exploit to increase energy supplies. These same regions however contain globally significant biological hot spots essential to iconic species, such as Polar Bears and migratory bird species, that are threatened not only by oil and gas activities but also by global warming. Learn about these important public policy issues and the competing interests interested in them.

A new rotating system for our monthly programs will begin in October 2008.

Tues. Oct. 7th at McLean Government Center 1437 Balls Hill Road (from 123 just N of 267 turn onto Lewinsville Rd, make an immediate right onto Balls Hill Rd).

Nov. TBD

Mon. Dec. 15 7pm – Holiday Party! At Lake Anne Community Center.

***Socializing at 7PM, program 7:30-9PM, at Lake Anne Community Center: 1609 Washington Plaza N, Reston (703-476-4500).** From Rte. 7 take Baron Cameron Ave., turn south (left) onto Village Rd., left onto Northshore Dr., then immediate sharp right into the Village Center parking lot. From Fairfax County Pkwy go east on Baron Cameron Ave., turn right onto Village Rd., continue as above.

The Cascade is published 5-6 times per year by the Great Falls Group of the Virginia Chapter of the Sierra Club. We welcome contributions from members, including stories and photographs. We reserve the right to edit all submissions, both editorial and advertisements. The views expressed are those of the authors and may not be those of the Sierra Club. Deadlines are the first of the month before each issue. For consideration, mail articles or photos to Karen Grycewicz, 3508 Winston Place, Fairfax, VA 22030 or email them to karen.grycewicz@virginia.sierraclub.org. For placing an ad, please contact Bobbi Beck at 703-464-4755 or bobbi.beck@virginia.sierraclub.org for details.



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