

Old Dominion Sierran



September/October 2007

Virginia Chapter Sierra Club

virginia.sierraclub.org

Fight against coal power plant in Alexandria continues

by Ana Prados

The March/April 2006 issue of Old Dominion Sierra featured an article about the ancient coal burning power plant in residential Old Town Alexandria, and efforts by citizens and Mount Vernon Group volunteers to shut down this polluting facility. The good news is that quite a bit has happened since, including recent victories to help clean up and, hopefully, pave the way towards shutdown of the Mirant-owned Alexandria plant. This couldn't have happened without continued pressure from citizen activists.

In September 2006, the Virginia Air Pollution Control Board voted to take over Mirant's state operating permit, leading to recent decisions favoring increased clean-up at the plant and the issuance of a comprehensive state operating permit later this year.

However, Mirant's definition of "clean-up" includes plans to merge its five stacks into two stacks, a modification that would dilute pollution levels in Alexandria, only to send them further away, primarily across the Potomac River into D.C and Maryland.

The City of Alexandria, Sierra Club members, and citizen activists spoke at a March 26 public hearing in Richmond against Mirant's plans to continue operating in its present form due to continued health concerns in Alexandria.

More recently, citizens and city officials were able to temporarily stop a Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) decision, apparently supported by Governor Tim Kaine, to approve the stack merge project being proposed by Mirant.

As an Air Board Member said at the March hearing, "Dilution is not the solution

"Dilution is not the solution to pollution."

to pollution."

The Board is expected to make a decision on this in September.

Meanwhile, Mirant propaganda, under the guise of a group called "Bright Ideas Alexandria," has been flooding mail boxes and phone lines of Alexandria residents. Mirant portrays itself as the "good neighbor being hunted down by a small group of ferocious citizens, City of Alexandria officials, state legislators, and the

Virginia State Air Pollution Board." In fact,

you may have recently received a communication from them.

Mirant does not stop there. In desperation, it currently challenges the Air Board's latest decision to clean up the plant. It also challenges DEQ's and the Air Board's decision **not** to allow Mirant to purchase pollution credits from other dirty coal burning power plants.

Many challenges lie ahead, but citizens in Alexandria are not giving up

Mirant threatens to proceed without permits

Mirant is threatening to proceed with the stack merge without a permit required by the Clean Air Act — all of this in the name of profit and in complete disregard for their continued adverse impact on the health of residents in Old Town Alexandria.

Many challenges lie ahead, but citizens in Alexandria are not giving up. This year's St. Patrick's Day parade in Alexandria featured a "Close Mirant" contingent, followed by a rally at the plant this past May.

A July rally in Old Town Alexandria, organized by citizen activist, Dick Moose, and Mount Vernon Group member and citizen activist, Ernie Lehman, featured several speakers, including citizens, state legislators and city officials supporting the clean-up or shut-down of the plant.

For questions, contact Ana Prados, Virginia Chapter Air Quality Chair at ana_prados@yahoo.com

If you would like to become involved (additional rallies and many activities are on the way and we need your help,) contact Ana.

Protestors march in Alexandria's St. Patrick's Day parade



Mt. Vernon Group members joined the St. Patrick's Day parade. (l.) Dignitaries in the viewing stand applaud those protesting the filthy toxins spewing from the Mirant coal plant's stacks. (m.) Jim Hutzler of the Mt. Vernon Group is on the



left holding the large Close Mirant sign. (r.) Pat Morano (l.) and Ana Prados take a break with their sign.



Photos by Pat Morano

Notes from the Chair

by Charles Price



Vital work on smart energy plan underway

Commensurate with the public's growing concern over the causes and destructive effects of global warming and climate change, these twin evils are causing a flurry of highly-charged activity throughout the environmental community, especially the Sierra Club. The club's staff and many volunteers are feverishly working overtime to "lead the pack" in compiling and disseminating the latest information about these fearsome phenomena.

The Sierra Club is distributing "state of the art" materials designed to offer solutions and inspire sufficient commitment from individuals and institutions to act in the public's best interest to solve these horrific weather changes.

The club's primary altruistic motives behind its engagement in this important effort are acknowledged. The epic crisis is providing the opportunity for reassertion of the Sierra Club's perception as the "900-pound gorilla" among environmental organizations.

It is no secret the Sierra Club stands to increase its "market share" of new members, financial contributions, and political clout as the result of its high-profile leadership in seeking solutions to this potential doomsday problem.

A steady increase in the interest and involvement of members in planning and executing campaigns focusing on global climate change and smart energy solutions is evident in the Virginia Chapter. During the past year, "Cool Communities" campaigns were initiated in four Virginia cities and one county.

A spring retreat, attended by 25 highly-motivated members and staff, began the development of the "Virginia's Smart Energy Solutions" (VA SES) plan, and the start of the campaign to implement it. This summer, a highly-dedicated core group of volunteers continued work on the introductory phase of the VA SES plan, known as the "Citizens Energy Plan" (CEP).

Volunteers working on the CEP are currently completing plans for a series of four "Town Hall" meetings in September, to introduce the initiative to Virginia government leaders and elected officials, the general public, and Sierra Club members around the state.

There is nothing like a threatening environmental problem to excite and energize our membership.

National Sierra Club to honor Dean Amel, Virginia Chapter treasurer

Dean Amel, Virginia Chapter treasurer for the past 16 years, has been awarded the 2007 Susan E. Miller Award by the National Sierra Club. This prestigious award "honors individual Sierra Club members for exceptional contribution to Chapters in organization and management."

Joni Bosh, current chair of the Sierra Club National Finance Committee, wrote in his behalf, "This spring I traveled to San Francisco to attend the treasurer's training, a two and a half day marathon, run by Dean. He worked closely and effectively with the staff to put on an event that received more positive comments than any Sierra Club training I have ever heard about. He really does epitomize the best volunteer 'can do' spirit, focusing his ef-



forts not on self-aggrandizement, but on helping others be more effective."

Dean will travel to San Francisco September 29 to be honored at the National Sierra Club Honors and Awards Banquet.

Congratulations Dean. We extend our deepest appreciation for your many years of patient and kind help with club finances to generations of group treasurers, chapter chairs and executive directors.

Fall Tour de Cut in Allegheny Highlands to be held October 6

by Sherman Bamford

George Washington National Forest: Protecting the Forest in Your Backyard is the theme of the October 6 Tour de Cut in the Allegheny Highlands. This hiking event highlights the threats on our Virginia public lands and their outstanding features.

The 1.1 million-acre GWNF contains significant backcountry areas, wildlife habitat, and water resources, unrivaled among eastern national forests.

The GWNF plan revision, setting the direction for the Forest for the next 15 years, is underway and expected to continue until 2009 or 2010. Initial drafts give the Forest Service more leeway to log, build roads, and develop minerals on public lands, but fail to protect special places, like citizen-identified "Virginia Mountain Treasure" areas and Virginia Natural Heritage's identified habitats.

(See <http://virginia.sierraclub.org/> (go to "Protect the George Washington National Forest") and <http://www.forestsforthefuture.org/>)

This fall hike features a morning walk to Hoover Creek, a centuries-old forest in Allegheny County that was partially logged by the Forest Service a few years ago. We will break for lunch (please bring your own).

In the afternoon, we will hike in the vicinity of the 7,800 acre Warm Springs Mountain, a scenic Virginia Mountain Treasure



Forest Service logging over stream and riparian area in Little Allegheny Roadless Area. Photo by Sherman Bamford

Area abounding with old growth, trails and important rare fisheries habitat.

Meet at 9:30 a.m. From I-64, take Exit 55 (Lexington, Va.). Go north on Rt. 11, North Lee Highway (away from Lexington). Meet at the parking lot in front of the Dollar Tree along US 11, just beyond the turn-off to US 39. For those coming from Roanoke and west, meet at 8 a.m. at the Forest Supervisor's office parking lot, 5162 Valleypointe Pkwy., Roanoke, for carpooling.

Contact Sherman Bamford at (540) 343-6359, bamford2@verizon.net, and watch the Sierra Club-Virginia Chapter website for updates. Most of the hike is classified moderately strenuous, with some short strenuous sections. **Bring sturdy boots, water, food for lunch, and rain gear.**

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A publication of the Virginia Chapter Sierra Club
422 E. Franklin St., Room 302, Richmond, VA 23219
www.virginia.sierraclub.org

The Virginia Chapter Sierra Club's mission is to explore, enjoy and protect the wild places of the earth and to practice and promote the responsible use of the earth's ecosystems and resources.

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OLD DOMINION SIERRAN is published bi-monthly. The editor welcomes editorial contributions, photographs, news releases and art work.

- Submissions should be related to Virginia's environment.
- Submissions can be investigative articles, reports, alerts, photographs. Include as much background information as possible. Please e-mail the editor with questions prior to submitting material

Editor

Barbara Null
bnull@comcast.net

Shenandoah Group reorganizes -- will hold get-acquainted picnic September 16

by Rickie Wertz

All Sierra Club members who live in the area west of the Blue Ridge Mountains and north of Lexington are invited to a picnic. The Shenandoah Group has reorganized and, on September 16, will have a get-acquainted (or re-acquainted) family picnic.

It will be held in Harrisonburg in Hillandale Park, Shelter #9, starting about 3 p.m. Drinks, ice, cups, plates, napkins, and plastic ware will be provided. Please bring a covered dish. We will sit down to eat about 5 p.m. For more information, call Theresa Sayre, 540-383-8902; Ralph Grove, 540-433-1323, or Rickie Wertz, 540-383-9600.

Reorganization of Shenandoah Group

The Shenandoah Group began to reorganize when eight willing and able Sierra Club members met on July 28. Meeting with us was our "shepherd" - Bob Egbert from the Roanoke Group - to help ease the process.

Since a previous incarnation of this group existed a few years back, and the infra-structure was still in place (website and checking account still exist), we unanimously decided to forge ahead and fill the necessary functions.

The result is an "interim" Executive Committee. Proper elections will be held this

fall to install a legitimate slate of officers.

President	Ralph Grove 540-433-1323
Vice Chair	Erik Curren 703-340-8669
Treasurer	Carey McCallum 540-241-0358
Secretary	Rickie Wertz 540-383-9600
Conservation Chair	Jill Stephens 540-290-6093

Website
Ralph Grove and/or Rickie Wertz
Programs/Membership
Theresa Sayre
540-383-8902

The next business meeting will be on September 10, at 7 p.m. at the Massanutten Regional Library on Main Street in Harrisonburg. Sierra Club members and the public are invited.

We are very excited at this renewed interest in getting started (again) and hope that many other Sierra Club members in this area will feel the same.

A map at <http://virginia.sierraclub.org/groups.html> shows boundaries of the different groups.

Ours is the blank area at the top.



Have you responded to March Mailer?

In March, the Sierra Club Virginia Chapter sent an appeal to all members asking for contributions. These funds go directly to the Chapter to be used for our important work protecting the environment.

If you have not yet responded, please send us your contribution for the Chapter's ongoing environmental initiatives, making check payable to "Sierra Club-VA." For our efforts to assist candidates committed to our work, make check payable to "Sierra Club - VA PAC." If you wish to contribute to both funds, please send a separate check to each.

Mail to: Virginia Chapter Sierra Club
P.O. Box 2303

Merrifields, VA 22116-2303

Please note, contributions to the Sierra Club are not tax-deductible.

Sincerest thanks

NOTICE

Members of the Shenandoah Group

(recently-reactivated)

This Notice is to current Sierra Club members of the Shenandoah Group who live in the Counties of Augusta, Clarke, Frederick, Highland, Page, Rockingham, Shenandoah, and Warren, or in any of the independent cities that lie within the boundaries of those counties

Upon receipt of this Notice, the names of nominees to serve on the nine-member elected Executive Committee (Ex Com) of the recently reactivated Shenandoah Group, along with each nominee's postal mailing address, phone number, e-mail address (if available), and a 100-word or less "petition" of the nominee that summarizes his/her work for the environment and interest in serving on the Shenandoah Group elected Executive Committee, may be postage-mailed or e-mailed to the chair of the Shenandoah Group Nominations Committee as follows:

Nominations Committee

1940 Kimberly Court
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

E-mail: graylc@CISAT.JMU.EDU

Only nominees who are members of the Shenandoah Group, and give their consent to be nominated, shall be considered. The closing date for receipt of nominations and accompanying information is September 29.



Diana Christopulos and Mark McClain, of the Roanoke Group, show the meter-comparator, an educational device that dramatically demonstrates the impact on energy consumption by incandescent versus compact fluorescent light bulbs. This photo appeared on the cover of *Prime Living Magazine*. Photo by SBK Inc.

Check out Virginia Chapter's all-new, easy-to-read web site

Virginia Chapter Sierra Club has a new and improved website. The hard work of web master Karen Wetmore Grycewicz and Joshua Low has paid off and we now have a website that looks good, is chock full of information and easy to navigate.

Karen and Joshua spent months compiling the information and the national Si-

erra Club developed the site, which is similar in format, typeface and color scheme to the national site.

To learn all you ever wanted to know about the Virginia Chapter Sierra Club - outings, issues, past newsletters, group information, and how to take action - go to <http://www.virginia.sierraclub.org>.

Leaders wanted to serve on Chapter Executive Committee

The election of four at-large members to the Virginia Chapter Executive Committee (Ex Com) will be held in November. They will serve a two-year term beginning in January.

Sierra Club members of the Virginia Chapter who are in good standing and wish to be considered should submit their name, contact information, and a 100-word or less "petition" that summarizes their work for the environment, and their interest in serving on the Chapter Ex Com, to:

Nominations Committee
4896 Burnham Road
Richmond, VA 23234-3712
tmatteson1@mindspring.com
Phone: 804-275-6476

Individuals nominated by others must give their permission to be considered and submit the above-requested information to the Nominations Committee.

Closing date for nominations and accompanying information is September 29.

Corrections

Hopewell Community Organizers

The community organizers in Hopewell who wrote about their summer work for the Sierra Club in the July/August issue of *Old Dominion Sierran* are designated as Community Organizing Fellows, not interns as stated. Interns are not paid and not held to as high standards as fellows.



The person in this photo used to illustrate an article in the July/August issue of *Old Dominion Sierran* about a film series in Roanoke was misidentified. He is Mark McClain, chair of the Roanoke Group.



Farmer Joel Salatin shows a group of environmentalists his portable pens for roasting chickens and his battery-powered cattle fence.

Environmentalists visit organic farm

Government regulations oppress small farmers -- feel helpless as at Wounded Knee

by Sharon Baiocco

The message was dire from Joel Salatin who spoke to about 30 of Thomas Jefferson Memorial Church UU's and Sierra Club members at a hayride tour of his organic farm in the Shenandoah Valley in June.

"We are at Wounded Knee," he said, but this time it is the federal government's regulations that have small farmers surrounded. A passionate spokesperson for sustainable farming, his life has changed dramatically, he says, since Michael Pollan wrote about him in *The Omnivore's Dilemma*. Several congressmen have tried to enable his testimony regarding new federal farm bills, but so far have been unsuccessful.

Despite this, a visit to Polyface Farm is a treat in so many ways. Salatin's ecological farming pays tribute to "the chicken-ness of the chicken" and "the interdependent web of all existence," as well as to modern environmental science.

His farm, set into the rolling hills of the Shenandoah, is a carefully planned system — not of crop rotation — but of **animal** rotation.

Our tour, organized by Deborah Judson-Ebbets, chair of the TJMC Environmental Concerns Committee, began at the cow pasture, where a small herd was grazing on part of a hillside field surrounded by a battery-powered, moveable fence. Salatin daily moves the cow pasture across the field, followed about

Salatin's ecological farming pays tribute to "the chicken-ness of the chicken" and "the interdependent web of all existence"

four days later by a moveable chicken coop and its residents of insect-devouring hens.

In another battery-powered fenced field, a dog and two geese patrol a moveable chicken pen and coop for laying hens, guarding the chickens from underground predators (like weasels) and overhead predators (hawks). Salatin moves the coops frequently to give his chickens fresh, clean fields to live in.

A winter hay barn for cattle has an ingenious feeding trough on a pulley — as the animal manure piles up, the trough is raised.

No need to wait

Green electric power now available to Virginia consumers

by Glen Besa

Dominion-Virginia Power customers don't have to wait for Dominion to clean up its act with renewable energy -- we could be waiting a long time. Under the old de-regulation legislation consumers had the opportunity to elect to buy green power from another provider. Though Dominion has now opted to be re-regulated on their own terms, we are still able buy green power from another provider -- PEPCO.

PEPCO provides electricity to our neighbors in District of Columbia and parts of Maryland. While PEPCO is by no means a friend of the environment, at least we can buy green power through this company.

Determining how to buy green power through the Dominion-Virginia Power website is near impossible — it is buried so far down on the Dominion site that most folks just give up. Dominion recently invested in a wind farm, which is under



Meanwhile, the manure is mixed with straw and corn which together produce heat while composting, keeping the cows pleasantly warm while they eat. In the spring, Salatin's pigs arrive to enjoy the hunt for corn amidst the compost, aerating it cheaply and getting fat, too.

On a lovely June day, the green valley below Staunton is dotted with centuries-old farms, but it is unlikely many of them can sustain as much as Polyface Farm, which Salatin boasts produces eight times as much per acre. Salatin sells his meat and eggs through Rebecca's and his own farm shop.

The author of many books, his next book, *Everything I Want to Do is Illegal*, describes — he says in a humorous way — the government's regulations that he views as most destructive. It was scheduled for release in July. For more information, go to www.polyfacefarms.com

Love the Earth Live the Simple Life

Major attitude changes necessary for greener living

- Consumers' attitudes toward Compact Fluorescent Lights might take years to develop, just as resistance to smoking did.

- Everyone used to smoke 40-plus years ago. Then we started to find out that it wasn't a good thing.

- Beginning with opinion leaders, opposition to smoking grew in the body politic.

- Significant anti-smoking forces have in recent decades relegated smokers outdoors, placed heavy taxes on the product and now are angling to have the FDA regulate cigarettes as drugs.

- It took years for smoking to become uncool.

- I hope we will break the incandescent habit more quickly.

- We'll feel better, the air will be cleaner, we'll save money."

-- Mark McClain, chair Roanoke Group --
comments made in an interview with **The Roanoke Times**

development in West Virginia; however, it is not clear how they will use or promote this clean energy when it comes on line.

Consumers' electing for green power will send Dominion a message that we want green power and we are willing to pay for it.

(Oddly, Dominion doesn't charge more for its nuclear power, the most expensive power there is—but that's another story.)

Go green now and cut your carbon emissions to zero for your electricity

Step 1 - Conserve electricity. Replace incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs. Disconnect chargers, TV sets and other phantom loads when not in use. Do this for environmental reasons, but also because green power from PEPCO costs about 70 to 85 percent more than dirty coal and nuclear power. Look at it as an investment in Mother Earth—putting your money where your beliefs are.

Step 2 - Go to <http://www.powerchoice.com/ProductsAndServices/residentialServices.aspx> and sign up.

The Cost of Going Green

Based upon current pricing Dominion is charging \$0.0596 per KWh but that will soon be rising. PEPCO will charge \$0.1098 per KWh for new wind energy and \$0.1018 per KWh for 100 percent green energy. The PEPCO website provides more detailed descriptions of these energy sources.

In addition to the cost of the power, Dominion is authorized to levy a distribution charge for the use of their power lines, and a flat \$7 per month charge, plus \$0.0233/KWh for the first 800 KWh (in our household we use much less than 800 KWh) and \$0.0126/KWh over 800 KWh.

It's not cheap, but then again the costs of coal and nuclear are borne by all the people, particularly our children, and by all the creatures of the earth poisoned by mercury, threatened by nuclear waste and facing global climate change.

Glen Besa is director of the Appalachian Region of the Sierra Club

Virginia Chapter shapes Citizens Energy Plan

*Will reduce need
to burn fossil fuels*

by Dick Ball



This scenario shows that we do not have to build new coal-fired power plants, such as the one proposed in Wise County, to supply Virginia's electricity needs.

CEP would reduce CO₂ emissions in 2030 by 44 percent relative to 2008 and by 59 percent relative to the BAU case. This projection shows CEP achieving the Sierra Club's *Two Percent Solution* for global warming by 2030. It must be pointed out that emissions will not be reduced at a steady two percent rate in earlier years.

Use of coal to produce electricity nearly eliminated by 2030

An important feature of the CEP projection is that use of coal in electricity generation would be nearly eliminated by 2030, as a result of reduced demand for electricity and substitution of wind power for much of the coal-fired generation. Since coal is the most carbon-intensive of all fossil fuels, eliminating coal combustion would achieve major reductions in greenhouse gas (CO₂) emissions.

This scenario shows that we do not have to build new coal-fired power plants, such as the one proposed in Wise County, to supply Virginia's electricity needs. If they are built, they may well become economic "white

elephants," shut down ahead of their intended useful lifetime to achieve national and international carbon caps.

The CEP projections are not necessarily a prediction of the future, but they illustrate how changes in policies and technologies could achieve environmental goals while providing citizens' energy services.

Thanks to Virginia Chapter members Dick Ball, Roger Diedrich and Brooks Cressman for researching and writing the Citizens Energy Plan.

Citizens Energy Plan to be released at Town Meetings

The Citizens Energy Plan will be introduced and explained to the public and Sierra Club members at four Smart Energy Solutions Town meetings in September.

Learn:

- How global warming will impact Virginia
- How Virginia can reduce its carbon footprint
- How **you** can take action at the local and state levels to move Virginia toward a sustainable future

September 5 - Falls Church

Mary Ellen Henderson Middle School
7124 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA
Doors open 6:30 p.m. – panel starts 7 p.m.
For further information, contact
Virginia Chapter, Great Falls Group, Mount Vernon Group
Linda Burchfiel, 703-506-4310
larva@attglobal.net

September 10 - Richmond

Science Museum of Virginia
2500 W. Broad Street, Richmond, VA
Doors open 6:30 p.m. – panel starts 7 p.m.
For further information contact:
Virginia Chapter, Falls of James Group
Joshua Low, 804-225-9113 x 103
joshua.low@sierraclub.org

September 19 - Virginia Beach

Tidewater Community College
Library Auditorium
College Crescent, Virginia Beach, VA
Doors open 6:30 p.m. – panel starts 7 p.m.
For further information contact:
Virginia Chapter, Chesapeake Group
Joshua Low, 804-225-9113 x 103
joshua.low@sierraclub.org

September 27 - Roanoke

Richard Wetherill Visual Arts Center
Hollins University, 7916 Williamson Road, Roanoke, VA
For further information contact:
Virginia Chapter, Roanoke Group
Diana Christopulos
dianak16@earthlink.net

The Virginia Chapter's Energy and Global Warming Campaign committee has been working all summer developing a plan to combat global warming while meeting the energy service needs of Virginians. Called the Citizens Energy Plan (CEP), it will be released to the public during four town meetings to be held around the state in September.

CEP is based on the Sierra Club's national *Smart Energy Solutions* principles, as they apply to Virginia's circumstances. A synergistic combination of energy efficiency measures and the utilization of renewable energy would reduce the need for burning fossil fuels.

CEP recommends new policies to be adopted by the State of Virginia, as well as by local city and county governments, especially those signed onto the Sierra Club's *Cool Communities* program. Also suggested are actions to be taken by businesses, non-profit institutions and individuals.

Advocating energy efficiency policies and use of renewable energy

For example, the plan advocates the State adopt an aggressive program promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy use. It assumes new Federal energy policies will be adopted as well, including more stringent fuel economy (CAFÉ) standards for automobiles and light trucks.

CEP provides quantitative projections of energy use and energy supply solutions to illustrate how efficiency and renewables reduce energy use and carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions. Two plausible scenarios of future energy use are presented:

- A *Business As Usual (BAU)* projection assumes no change in existing policies and a continuation of current energy supply

and consumption patterns.

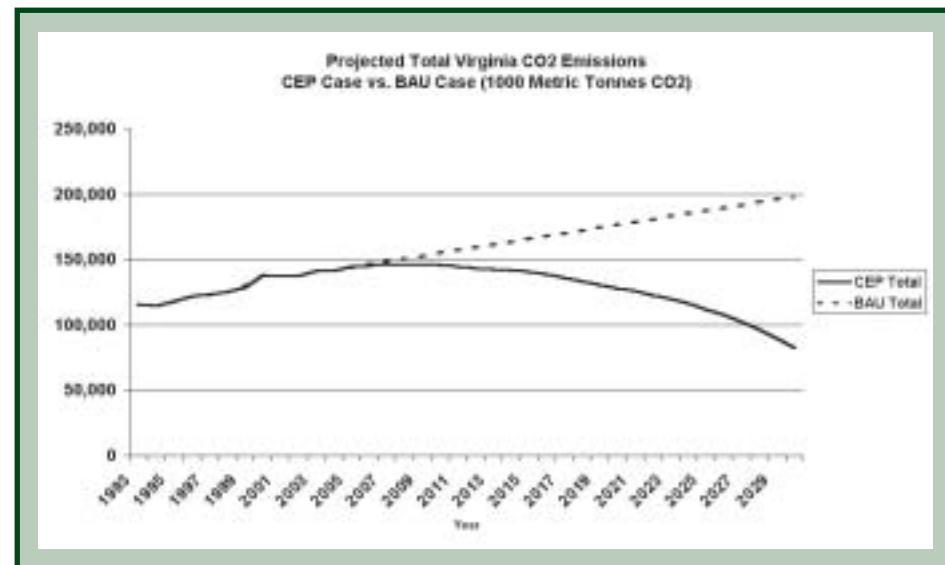
- The *Citizen's Energy Plan (CEP)* projection assumes new policies resulting in altered patterns of energy consumption and energy supply.

Projections based on policy and technology

The CEP projections are based on a number of policy and technology assumptions, including:

- Using highly efficient building methods
- Efficient equipment and renewable energy systems for residential, commercial, and institutional buildings
- Substantial increases in fuel efficiency
- Use of sustainable biofuels by new autos and trucks
- Substantial amounts of electrical generation by offshore wind power

Past and projected carbon dioxide emissions for Virginia from 1993 to 2030 for each of the two scenarios are shown in the graph below.



Take the 100 Hour Challenge Get involved in state, local political races

by Tyla Matteson

We've all been hearing that the time is right for changes in our political representation. Election Day, Tuesday, November 6, is just around the corner. On that important day, seats for all of Virginia's 100 state delegates and 40 state senators will be up for election. Many Virginia cities, towns, and counties will also hold elections for their mayors, city councils and boards of supervisors.

You can play an important role in the election of legislators who will work to protect our natural resources, who will introduce and enact bills that we champion.

Call your local voter registrar to learn who is on the ballot. This information is also available on the Virginia State Board of Election website: <http://sbe.virginia.gov/cms>, click on *election information*, then on *candidates list*.

Attend meet-the-candidate events or forums. Some newspapers announce candidate forums. Or you might call one of the political parties.

At these events, ask questions. For example, ask what steps a candidate has taken or will take to address global climate change.



If the answer is, "We need to recycle more," you might assume the candidate needs more education. While recycling is important, there are more effective solutions you could provide, many commonly found in environmental publications and most mainstream magazines.

Contact your Sierra Club group and suggest holding your own candidate forum. Several Virginia Chapter groups have experience to share. This event is always well-attended, exciting, and has many positive outcomes.

The Virginia Chapter plans to send all members a special edition newsletter in October, listing our endorsed candidates with their contact information.

Meanwhile, offer help to your favorite candidate, assisting with phone banks, door-to-door canvassing, or stuffing envelopes. Be sure to inform the campaign you are a Sierra Club volunteer.

100-Hour Challenge Keep a tally of every hour you volunteer for any candidate, with the date and activity, and send it to me. Those who meet the 100-hour challenge will

Grassroots Activists

be listed in the ODS. If possible, have a photo taken of you and the candidate at work. Those hours will quickly add up, and the candidates will appreciate your help.

There are many do's and don'ts with political work. Some activities and expenditures are not permitted by election laws. Working directly with a particular campaign and donating as an individual to a campaign is fine.

If you are not sure, or if you have any questions, please contact me at 804-275-6476, tmatteson1@mindspring.com. Or contact chapter director, Mike Town, at 804-225-9113, michael.town@cavtel.net.

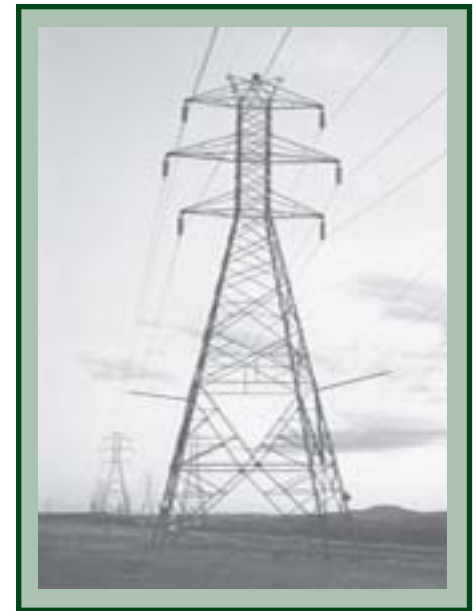
Residents say conservation, not more power lines

Conservation and clean energy supporters gather to oppose proposed power lines and dirty coal energy

by Johsua Low

Rejecting a plan to import more polluting energy to their communities via Dominion Virginia Power's proposed destructive new power lines across Northern Virginia, Sierra Club members and activists spoke out at four public hearings of the State Corporation Commission.

With a message in support of smart en-



ergy solutions to address global warming, Dominion's intended power consumers joined the ranks of residents in the power line's corridor communities to support energy efficiency, common sense conservation measures, and renewable energy as more responsible alternatives to the power line plan and its associated dirty coal energy.

"I'm personally taking steps to cut back our home electric bills," said Jenny Abel, Arlington County resident and Sierra Club member.

"Our county leaders have just launched one of the most ambitious energy conservation plans in country, our neighbors in Fairfax County are right there with us. So why is Dominion pretending no one is thinking about conservation?"

Arlington and Fairfax Counties recently joined with Sierra Club to launch Cool Counties Climate Stabilization, a groundbreaking initiative to combat global warming.

Rally at transmission line hearing



Norbert Pink prepares a sign for the rally held by Sierra Club and other environmentalists prior to an August 9 hearing in Bristow, Virginia. Dominion Power plans to build a 65-mile long electrical transmission line in northwestern Virginia. The Virginia State

Corporation Commission was collecting testimony to determine whether there is a need for an additional line and, if so, where the line should be routed. About 30 Sierra Club members and other environmentalists held the rally, vigorously opposing the line.



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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,
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or visit our website www.sierraclub.org **50001**

Group Directory

Groups are organized to conduct the work of the Sierra Club in local areas, cities and towns. Groups in Virginia include:

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Who is Responsible? Fish Kills in Northwest Virginia

by David Bernard

Ben Grumbles, Federal Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) water chief, advocates full-cost pricing to ensure customer rates for water reflect the full value of services provided. This is a position Virginia has yet to embrace.

In 2007 Virginia agreed to borrow \$250 million to subsidize sewage treatment plants, legislation that was supported by most legislators and most environmental groups. This subsidy reduces incentive to conserve water. Further, it allows municipalities to escape the full cost of building sewage collection and treatment systems. Those who supported the measure say it is the only way progress can be made on cleaning Virginia's water.

You could infer from Mr. Grumbles' stance that polluters should bear the cost of cleaning up their own mess. In the case of northwest Virginia's fish kills, the Commonwealth has yet to insist on such individual responsibility.

Virginia has borne significant costs from these widespread fish deaths. The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), and scientists from Virginia Tech, the University

of Virginia, and Virginia Commonwealth University have all done studies. So far the hypothesis of a virus has not been substantiated.

Shenandoah Riverkeeper Jeff Kelble's research, looked at the distribution of poultry litter onto Virginia farms. Two decades of chicken and turkey poop have been more than Shenandoah Valley farms could absorb. Therefore, it was trucked to the Cowpasture and Maury watersheds and, in spring 2007, fish kills occurred there. While we can't yet prove the connection between poultry litter and fish kills, the correlation is compelling.

In the natural cycle, feces fertilize plants. But this cycle is complicated by the additives in poultry feed. I don't pretend to address the science of these additives, but it helps to illustrate the problem to point out that Roxarsone, which contains arsenic, is legally used by all the poultry growers. (Tyson voluntarily stopped in 2004.)

Poultry litter also contains a higher percentage of phosphorus than required by most

crops, making runoff in surface and ground water a problem.

What to do? The poultry growers told Mr. Kelble, who accepts the value of poultry poop as fertilizer if dangerous contaminants are removed, they do not wish to change their practices. The Virginia Farm Bureau "opposes any additional requirements on off-site poultry litter."

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) "strongly disagrees" with the Virginia Tech scientist who said removing poultry litter is the solution to the fish kills. CBF fears placing new hardships on farmers could result in Shenandoah Valley farmers turning to developers for their income.

A stakeholder meeting on poultry waste reached consensus on expanding state and Federal funding for nutrient management. There you have it. The cost of disposing contaminated poultry feces is to be subsidized by the taxpayer, with no assurance that fertilized acreage will not become an ongoing source of toxic waste, only that spreading excessive amounts at one time will be curtailed.

Mr. Kelble, who presumably signed off on the above consensus, recently issued a statement, "it is inappropriate for the majority of the burden of litter disposal to be placed on the individual farmer and Virginia." He believes the poultry industry has a responsibility to dispose of its own waste. That is a position we support.

Additional staff to be hired to increase Sierra Club's effectiveness in Hopewell and Hampton/Tidewater areas

by Michael Town

The Virginia Chapter is excited to announce several changes to our staff structure. Josh Low, the chapter's organizer in Richmond, is moving to Northern Virginia to lead our Smart Energy Solutions campaign in that area. Those of you in

Northern Virginia can expect to hear from Josh in the months ahead about how you can be more involved in the Sierra Club's energy campaign.

Josh's move means the chapter will soon fill the Richmond organizer position to work on smart growth and transportation and its impact on global warming.

We are also hiring an organizer to work in Hampton Roads on smart growth and transportation, global warming and other local environmental issues. We believe this position will help increase Sierra Club's involvement in issues affecting communities

in the Hampton Roads/Tidewater region.

This past summer, we had two student Fellows working in Hopewell with the goal of building volunteerism on environmental and pollution issues. The staff did such a great job, the chapter has decided to hire a part-time position to continue that work. Our

goal is to involve more Hopewell residents in efforts to reduce pollution and give citizens more of a voice in decisions that im-

act the community.

These additions mean expanding our Virginia chapter staff from two to five in just a couple of months, which allows our organization and volunteers to be even more effective throughout Virginia.

In our next newsletter, we will introduce you to our new staff members. Anyone interested in inquiring about the Richmond position, contact Michael Town at michael.town@sierraclub.org.

Outings

by Joe Apple

Chapter Outings Policies soon available for groups

This is the first in what I hope will be an ongoing series of columns on the Virginia Chapter's outing program. First, I feel I should introduce myself. A Sierra Club member since 1989, I'm in the Great Falls Group, currently serving as its treasurer and delegate to the Virginia chapter executive committee, where I have agreed to be the new chapter outings chair.

I love the outdoors. It is outings that introduced me to the Sierra Club. In 1989, I found a notice published by the Great Falls Group in the Washington Post advertising its outings program. I called the contact listed in the announcement, went on that week's outing, and the rest is history. I joined the Sierra Club, became active in its outings program, and later served on the Great Falls Group and Virginia Chapter executive committees.

In future columns, I will describe the purpose of Sierra Club outings programs from the national and international levels down to the local groups, and list the different types of outings available. Finally, I hope to promote outings within the Virginia Chapter.

My preliminary efforts as outings chair have been to survey the state of outings throughout the chapter and to develop Chapter Outings Policies that can be used by groups to develop their own outings policies.

The survey has been completed. I cannot say the results have been encouraging. Only two groups, Falls of the James and Rappahannock, have official outings programs. Great Falls and Mount Vernon Groups use the Metro Washington Regional Outings Program (MEROP) for their outings, but have no official outings program of their own.

The creation of the outings policies manual has been more successful. I received an example of an outings policy manual at the spring outings chair training session in San Francisco, which I have adapted for use by the chapter, group, and MWROP activities committees. It is currently being reviewed by those organizations and a final draft will be submitted to the chapter executive committee for approval.

I'm holding a photo contest to find a photo of a scenic view in Virginia to be used as the heading for this column. Submit the picture in digital format to me at joe.apple@comcast.net, electronically post-marked by Oct. 31, 2007.



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Anti-Noise activities can further goals of Sierra Club

by Arline L. Bronzaft

A growing body of literature has demonstrated that noise is more than an annoyance - it is a mental and physical health hazard. It diminishes a decent quality of life. Anti-noise activists are seeking ways to reduce noise, which includes urging citizens not to impose their loud music, cell phone conversations, late parties, etc. on others.

Sierra Club members are similarly involved in protecting citizen health in their campaigns to restrict energy use, reduce waste, and slow down global warming.

Having recently conducted a study on air and noise pollution, I learned it is easier to document adverse impacts of airport-related noise than the adverse effects of airport-related emissions.

Advocates calling for reductions in air traffic, especially short trips between cities, and the improvement of rail transportation may be more readily assisted by the findings of noise studies than air pollution research.

Airport-related noise does not just refer to aircraft noise but to the noise generated by cars, trucks and other vehicles that travel to and from the airport, and this highway traffic similarly increases air pollution. The

United States must improve its rail transportation system and view rail travel as a way to reduce noise and air pollution. The Europeans are moving in this direction.

When I worked at the New York Transit Authority as a consultant on noise, I learned that noise reduction can also lead to waste reduction. When the Transit Authority pur-

If the air outside were cleaner and our streets quieter, we could open our windows and save energy.

chased quieter traction motors for their subway cars, it turned out quieter motors were longer lasting.

Rubber resilient pads placed on elevated train tracks not only brought

about a quieter, smoother elevated train ride but these pads caused less wear and tear on the elevated train structure. Dollars invested in noise abatement delayed the purchase of new equipment and saved on repair bills.

Years ago people opened their windows on cool evenings; today they turn on their air conditioners. External noises, e.g. overhead airplanes, neighborhood boom cars, roaring motorcycles, loud traffic, etc. have contributed to the idea that if we want quiet in our homes, it is best to keep our windows closed. If the air outside were cleaner and our streets quieter, we could open our windows and save energy. This is an example of how noise, energy, and air pollution interact.

The slowing down of global warming, the reduction of waste, the savings of energy, and the curtailment of noise, to a large degree, depend on the willingness of people to change their behavior so that it is less "me-oriented" and more "other-directed."

However, our society, especially through its Bill of Rights, tends to stress individual rights rather than one's responsibilities toward others. The goals of anti-noise activists and Sierra Club members can best be met if the two groups joined forces to persuade people to focus more on their civil responsibilities.

Arline L. Bronzaft, Ph.D, Professor Emerita, Lehman College, CUNY, is a member of NYC Council on the Environment.



Protesting Mirant's filthy air in Alexandria



During a St. Patrick's Day parade, citizens carried signs protesting Mirant coal plant's spewing pollutants into Old Town Alexandria. Citizens, environmentalists and city officials have made progress in their fight against Mirant. See article on Page 1.

Photo by Pat Morano

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