

Old Dominion Sierran



May/June 2007

Virginia Chapter Sierra Club

virginia.sierraclub.org

Working towards a new Fort Monroe National Park

by Tyla Matteson

Fort Monroe is a well-known name to many Virginians who have either heard of the historic Chesapeake Bay military base or visited the fortress. Presently serving as a military headquarters for the Army, it was selected in 2005 for closure by the federal Base Realignment and Closure Commission, or BRAC.

Fort Monroe is located on a 570-acre peninsula at the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay, in the City of Hampton. The base resembles an old-fashioned college campus, which leads to fine old tree-lined residential neighborhoods.

Its many attributes include a long stretch of beach front, huge old live oak trees, a sea-wall promenade, and a hexagon shaped fortified moat, the largest in the nation.

Productive wetland areas support many species of waterfowl and fish. Its location near the Atlantic coast makes it a migratory bird flyway.

Historically, Fort Monroe is of tremendous importance. For 400 years it has fortified the region, beginning with a wooden stockade built in 1609 to protect Jamestown. Shortly after the Civil War began, hundreds of slaves seized their freedom by escaping, at great risk, to Fort Monroe. The Union general in command declared them "contraband" and refused to send them back.

Its history also includes Stonewall Jackson, Robert E. Lee, Edgar Allan Poe, Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis, who was confined there after leading the Confederacy in the Civil War.

The term, Freedom's Fortress, where freedom for all Americans truly began, is used today on the insignia of the Training and



Aerial view of Fort Monroe at the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay

Doctrine Command at Fort Monroe.

When the Army leaves in 2011, plans for the best reuse of Fort Monroe must be in place. The City of Hampton predicts it will lose seven percent of its revenue when the facility closes, and in anticipation of this, it commissioned a planning team to develop several reuse plans. Three plans were presented to the public for comment; however all included some park amenities and new private development. Green areas would be lost in an effort to produce local revenues.

A group of citizens who rejected these plans as short-sighted organized "Citizens for a Fort Monroe National Park," believing that the entire area must be preserved, to protect its cultural, ecological and recreational resources.

A growing number of supporters to the concept of a Fort Monroe National Park regard Fort Monroe as a treasure for all Americans. Few Atlantic coast locations—and almost nothing in Virginia—offer publicly owned recreational potential like Fort Monroe:

- At the north end, beaches, campgrounds, picnic areas and green space.
- At the south end, a deep-water fishing pier, with room for more piers.
- Playing fields and sports and fitness facilities.
- A well-sheltered marina, with room for more slips.

A properly constructed plan would produce revenues for the region, as it would draw visitors nationally and internationally, according to studies done by the National Park Service. The self-sustaining system being developed at the Presidio National Park in San Francisco provides a model for Fort Monroe.

At the end of March, Governor Tim Kaine signed a bill requesting a reconnaissance survey, a first step in the process of creating a national park.

Congresswoman Thelma Drake, in whose district Fort Monroe falls, said she will ask for the survey. This survey will help the Fort Monroe Federal Development Authority determine whether to recommend Fort Monroe be affiliated with the National Park System.

We need to encourage her to ask the U.S. Department of the Interior to begin the survey. Please contact Thelma Drake at her D.C. office, 202-225-4215 or website email: http://www.house.gov/formdrake/IMA/issue_subscribe.htm

Her address is 1208 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515.

For further information, check website for Citizens for a Fort Monroe National Park, <http://www.cfmnp.org/>

Tyla Matteson is political chair of Virginia Chapter Sierra Club.



The hexagon-shaped fortified moat



A typical winding street at Fort Monroe



Notes from the Chair by Charles Price

Funding Virginia Chapter projects depends on generosity of each and every member

March Mailer letters and forms to make contributions to the 2007 Chapter Fundraiser have arrived in the mailboxes of every current member of the Virginia Chapter Sierra Club. The March Mailer is the "window of opportunity" set aside by the National Sierra Club for its chapters to solicit donations from their members, absent fundraising competition from any other SC entities or campaigns.

Out of nearly 17,000 letters mailed to Virginia Chapter members in 2006, only three percent, or 512 members responded, with donations totalling \$25,707—and this was our best year ever! Contributions in 2006 averaged \$50.21 per member.

Each year, in preparation for the March Mailer fundraiser, a great deal of time and effort goes into gathering accurate information on statewide campaigns and local group initiatives to report to our members. The Mailer's printing, mailing, and handling costs have averaged around \$8,000 each of the past couple of years.

For the amount of time, effort, and expense that go into the March Mailer, we should be realizing much better results. The cost to effectiveness ratio of Virginia Chapter initiatives and campaigns is steadily increasing, and we must do more to support political candidates who will protect Virginia's environment. If every member of the Virginia Chapter contributed just \$10 to

the March Mailer this year, we would realize \$162,000 in net proceeds. These funds are desperately needed to finance our struggle to protect and restore Virginia's environment

A reminder -- **the March Mailer is an Every Member Canvass.**

If you haven't already done so, now is the time to make your contribution to this year's Virginia Chapter March Mailer, according to instructions on the contributor's form that accompanied your letter.

If you've misplaced your form, make your check payable to either "**Sierra Club-VA**" to fund our Chapter's environmental efforts at the state and local levels, or to "**Sierra Club-VA PAC**" to contribute to campaigns of political candidates we know will protect Virginia's environment. If you wish to contribute to both funds, make out separate checks, respectively.

Mail your check(s) to **Virginia Chapter Sierra Club, P.O. Box 2303, Merrifield, VA 22116-2303.**

Contributions and gifts to the Sierra Club are not tax deductible; they support citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts.

Join the Tour de Cut in George Washington Nat. Forest May 20

On May 20, the Sierra Club joins other groups to sponsor the Tour de Cut, a two-part hike. The first hike highlights the threats (logging, etc.) to Virginia National Forests, the second highlights the amazing beauty of pristine locations of the Forest. This year, the theme is *Inspiring a Long Term Vision for the New GWNF Plan*. This is an opportunity to learn more about GWNF and meet with other concerned citizens.

The May 20 Tour de Cut will feature a hike in the Wild Oak National Recreation Trail in the 27,000 acre Little River Roadless Area. We will leave at 8:30 a.m. from Java Java (2214 Ivy Rd.) in Charlottesville, then at approximately 9:15 a.m. from the Holiday Inn north of Staunton (Exit 225). Sierra Club members may carpool from either location. Bring water, packable lunch, rain gear, and sturdy hiking boots.

A second Tour de Cut is tentatively planned for mid-June, closer to northern Virginia, D.C., and Harrisonburg. The hike is expected to take place near Paddy Run Trail and the long-distance Tuscarora Trail, just outside of Big Schloss Roadless Area.

See <http://virginia.sierraclub.org> for further details on either hike. Call Sherman Bamford (540) 343-6359, bamford2@verizon.net with any questions.

See the article on the new GWNF plan on back page.

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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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THE 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

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Barbara Null
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Step it Up 2007



Sierra Club members and friends gathered in Monroe Park in Richmond April 14, National Day of Action to Protect Our Climate, Mountains, Water, and Air, to see what others are doing to protect our climate and to urge Congress to require an 80 percent cut in carbon dioxide emissions by 2050.

Environmentalists in towns and cities throughout the state came out in the thousands to stand up and be counted. Photo by Barbara Null



Always remember,
when you throw some-
thing away, there is
no away.

PCC Sound Consumer



Virginia Ridge and Valley Act could pass this summer

by Pete Bsumek

The Virginia Ridge and Valley Act protects nearly 55,000 acres of Virginia's most majestic and ecologically important public lands in the Thomas Jefferson National Forest. The lands protected by this bill harbor some of the most unspoiled and impressive landscapes in Virginia.

In these special places we can find clear mountain streams, deep woods, century-old trees, an astonishing array of wildlife and songbirds, breathtaking Blue Ridge views, rock outcrops that reveal Ice Age secrets, and a place to renew our spirit while contemplating the complexity of nature and our role in it.

The Virginia Ridge and Valley Act was introduced in both houses of Congress this spring. In the Senate it was introduced and sponsored by Senator John Warner and co-sponsored by Senator Jim Webb. On the house side Representative Rick Boucher sponsored—representatives Tom Davis, Joanne Davis, Frank Wolf, Jim Moran and Bobby Scott all signed on as co-sponsors.

Unfortunately, in previous years, this bill has not made it out of committee. This is no longer acceptable. Wilderness advocates in Virginia worked tirelessly for nearly ten years to craft a wilderness bill for the Jefferson National Forest that is fair to local communities, endorsed by a wide array of stakeholders and encourages sustainable ecological stewardship.

The Board of Supervisors in Bland, Craig, Montgomery and Smyth counties all passed resolutions supporting the Virginia Ridge and Valley Act as it applies to their county. The list of local businesses and civic organizations endorsing the bill is impressive. There is no reason this bill should not pass this year.

The last remaining wild places in Virginia are part of our nation's natural heritage, and we all have a responsibility to protect them. *Pete Bsumek is wilderness chair of Virginia Chapter Sierra Club.*

Clean water, safe and legal access to water our goal

by David Bernard

I recently became Water Quality Chair for the Virginia Chapter. My training for the job has been canoeing or swimming (and in some cases swimming when I meant to continue canoeing) in waters all over the state, from Assateague National Seashore in our northeastern corner to the Russell Fork River which runs into Kentucky. I am a licensed Master Plumber and plumbing contractor — I know a little about how humans control water.

I wish I had a stronger background in water law and water chemistry. I also wish I had more time to devote to this task beyond work and recreation.

Our dirty water will be no cleaner than the laws require. Whether legal pressure comes from the Federal government, commitments made by the Commonwealth, or from action of citizens for cleaner water is up to us.

Many good people both in and out of government have been working on Virginia's water problems for decades. Yet, despite these efforts, we have a long way to go.

One problem in Virginia is gaining ac-



cess to streams and other recreational waterways. Fear of pollution, trespassing, and dangers of the unknown have made the swimming hole a relic of the past.

The shift from rural to urban life is not the only factor. Our Commonwealth does not have a program to provide access for paddlers or swimmers to the wonderful water-

ways of Virginia. There is no position on which streams are considered navigable for public use. Many nice streams are caught up in disputes with owners of adjacent lands.

In every county and city, Sierrans need to insist on safe and legal access to Virginia water. We need to insist water is fit for human contact. Your council or supervisors, your delegates and senators, need to know what you want. Clean water is a right. Discarding waste, even ignorantly, into our watercourses is not a right.

I invite you to join me in building a Water Quality Committee to work for the clean water we all deserve. We can meet by email, phone, or letter. It would be ideal to have a member from each major watershed — Shenandoah, Potomac, Rappahannock, York, James, smaller tributaries of bay and ocean, Chowan, Roanoke, Dan, New (mine), Tennessee, and Big Sandy. Contact me at david@aquariusplumbing.com or 540-392-5096.

The Clean Water Act was passed more than 30 years ago. Your state representatives will tell you they are doing this and they appropriated that. They talk about meeting Chesapeake Bay goals now.

Do not wait for politicians, bureaucrats, and courts. This is not a technical problem. Virginians deserve clean water and safe and legal access to it.

Take Action Now

Write for support of Va. Ridge and Valley Act

Write to the sponsors and co-sponsors of the Virginia Ridge and Valley Act (see article to left) to thank them for their support and politely encourage them to pass the bill this year. If your congressional representative is not a sponsor, write and encourage him/her to co-sponsor this bill (H.R.1011, S.570).

Rep. Thelma Drake is "on the fence." It is time to let her know how we feel. If you live in Virginia's second district, write Rep. Drake and ask her to sign on as a co-sponsor of Virginia Ridge and Valley Act. Contact her at her Eastern Shore Office, P.O. Box 447, Accomac, VA 23301, or e-mail from her website: www.house.gov/drake. Remind Rep. Drake:

- The Virginia Ridge and Valley Act protects nearly 43,000 acres of Jefferson National Forest in southwestern Virginia as wilderness and nearly 12,000 acres as National Scenic Area.
- Each of the new Wilderness and National Scenic Area designations has been endorsed by the U.S. Forest Service and/

or the Board of Supervisors of the county in which the area is located.

- Virginia Wilderness makes good economic sense. Virginia Tourism Corporation has endorsed the Virginia Ridge and Valley Act. As Kim Cash of Nelson County Hospitality and Travel Association explains, "Since the 2000 passage of a wilderness bill for The Priest and Three Ridges, Nelson County has benefited from increased eco-tourism. Outdoor enthusiasts have traveled to the county, spending at local businesses along the way."
- Wilderness designation protects important wildlife habitat, which is crucial to the preservation of Virginia's native birds, plants and animals.
- Wilderness areas are nature's water filters, ensuring continued availability of clean drinking water for our communities, and helping to prevent flooding.
- In wilderness we find solitude, escape and a chance for quiet and peaceful contemplation. Save some for future generations.



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Contributing	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150	<input type="checkbox"/> \$175
Life	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1250
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Student/Limited Income	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32

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 80522-2968 or visit our website www.sierraclub.org #B4Q W 5000 1



Growing a healthy, thick patch of grass is easy if you grow it organically.

START WITH THE SOIL

Grass grows best in soil high in organic matter — dead plants in various stages of decay. Organic matter helps sandy soils hold water and nutrients. It prevents the compaction of clay soils. In every kind of soil, organic matter nourishes microorganisms and they make essential nutrients available to grass roots.

INCREASING SOIL ORGANIC MATTER

First, when the leaves fall from the trees, don't bother to rake them up. Instead, chop them into small pieces by running over them with the lawn mower; then let them rest in peace. They will quickly break down and disappear.

Second, leave the grass clippings on the lawn when you mow. As they decompose, they contribute nitrogen (the nutrient that makes grass grow thick) to the soil, almost 2 pounds per 1,000 square feet of soil each season. If you didn't get nitrogen from grass clippings you'd have to add in fertilizer. Grass clippings also add organic matter to the soil.

Clippings left on the lawn do not contribute to thatch, as commonly thought. Fresh clippings stimulate earthworm activity, which breaks down thatch. Overfertilizing is the most common cause of thatch.

Leaving grass clippings on the lawn is the best thing you can do to grow a thicker, healthier lawn. William Dest, Ph.D., at the University of Connecticut, compared lawns where the clippings had been left behind with lawns where they had been removed. The lawns with the clippings had:

- 45 percent less crabgrass
- Up to 66 percent less disease
- Up to 45 percent more earthworms
- 60 percent more water reaching plant roots
- 25 percent greater root mass (which means less room for weeds and more drought tolerance for grass)

- 50 percent reduced need for nitrogen fertilizer

Organic matter regularly added to the soil provides many, but not all, the nutrients your turf needs. You may also want to apply granular organic lawn fertilizers, which are sold in most garden stores. Organic fertilizers decompose and release their nutrients more gradually than synthetics, nourishing the turf more steadily over a longer time.

WATER RIGHT

Lawns should be watered only when they really need it, and then watered slowly and deeply — one inch of water once a week. The idea is to grow deeper, stronger roots, which will make your grass more drought-resistant and able to tolerate disease and insects

MOW YOUR LAWN HIGHER

About 2.5 to 3.5 inches — is another easy way to improve its health. The taller leaves allow for more photosynthesis and a deeper root system. Greater root mass means better access to water and nutrients, so plants are more tolerant of drought. Tall grass also outcompetes annual weeds and conserves moisture by shading the soil.

KEEP MOWER BLADES SHARP

A dull lawn-mower blade will tear grass, and the jagged wounds make the plants susceptible to infection and allow for more rapid evaporation.

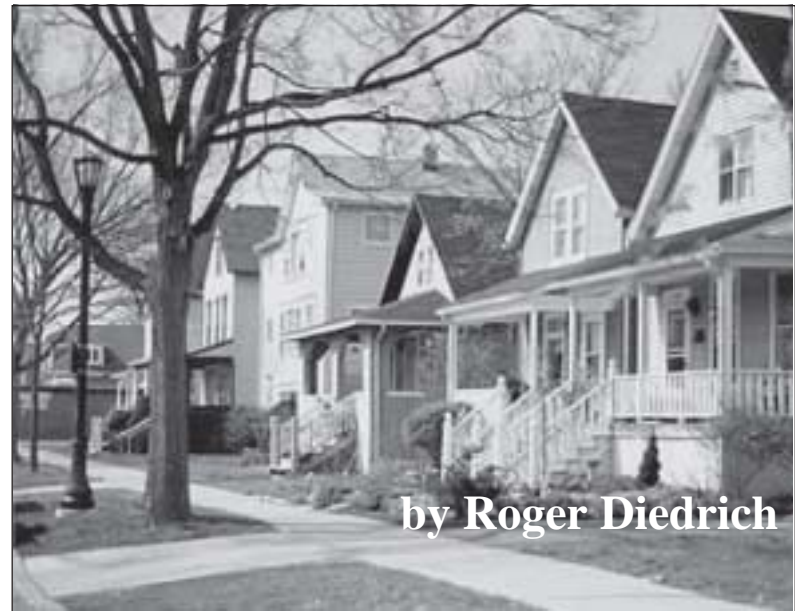
Homeowners who keep their yards healthy often don't have to do much more to keep pests at bay. Use natural pest control to keep the occasional pests at bay.

Scrapping pesticide use will welcome a host of beneficial insects, such as lacewings, praying mantises, ladybugs, as well as birds. These creatures were born to prey on pest insects (and they're nice to have around). Synthetic pesticides actually keep these allies away.

Thanks to *Chicago Wilderness* and *Organic Gardening*

Love the Earth Live the Simple Life

Smart growth -- important element in reducing global warming



by Roger Diedrich

Often when we read about how society can change to reduce our carbon footprint, we find the solutions grouped under “auto efficiency, electricity and buildings.” That seems to be the big three, and they are important. Another area to consider, however, is the design of our communities, which could present choices that would yield significant results.

Planning, building and living in transit-oriented, compact, bikeable and walkable mixed-use neighborhoods offer a means to address half our current sources of carbon dioxide.

Focusing on auto efficiency improvements as a way to reduce CO₂ emissions, while necessary, may come up short. Even if Congress were to adopt California Standards tomorrow, lowering the CO₂ emission rate of vehicles to 75 percent of current levels by 2030, the result would be a 17 percent increase of total CO₂ emissions, according to an analysis by the Center for Clean Air Policy. This is the consequence of a projected 60 percent increase on vehicle miles traveled (VMT). These VMT increases are due to sprawling development patterns, which continue today.

Typical suburban residents drive four to six times as much as those in central cities like San Francisco, Boston or Washington.

Likewise, a green building may have super-insulated walls, but compact communities have shared walls, where there is less opportunity for heat transfer. Compact community construction takes less energy. In-

formation from the U.S. Department of Energy shows that multifamily apartments use about 40 percent of the energy used by single family houses. An earlier study showed that single family houses typically use less concrete, but up to 50 times the lumber of apartments. A smaller home requires less furnishings and the resource demands they create.

John Holtzclaw from the Sierra Club calls it “Location Efficiency.” The Mayor of Vancouver, Canada calls it “Ecodensity.” If we choose to live where our activities are more proximate to each other, and if there is attention to design, this closeness will provide benefits, such as more time with our families in exchange for less commuting time, fewer accidents and better health from more physical activity.

Transit becomes more attractive if we are able to walk to it. Transit is more economical when it serves a dense area. The use of public transit results in fewer cars on the road and cars that are driven less.

Notably, the housing in transit-oriented developments is usually expensive, but that is more a reflection of its desirability and relative shortage.

Expect to see more information from the Sierra Club on how neighborhood design should factor into your efforts to reduce carbon emissions.

Roger Diedrich is chair of Smart Growth and Transportation Committee, Virginia Chapter Sierra Club.

Legislative Wrap Up

How did we do with our predictions?

by Michael Town

I just re-read the predictions for the 2007 General Assembly I made in the January/February issue, and two things come to mind:

1. Were my expectations cynical!
2. We have work to improve my expectations for next session. I think we have the plan and are on a path to making that happen.

So, how did we do?

Energy

I predicted the electric utility re-regulation would pass, the legislation would include incentives for new coal and nuclear power plants, but would also include some energy efficiency and renewable energy incentives.

Overall, I was correct. The incentives for renewables are voluntary (a weak voluntary renewable energy standard that was strengthened slightly by the Governor).

The energy efficiency measures were contained in a study to be completed by the State Corporation Commission by next December. That study includes looking at the feasibility of a "public benefits fund," a program that funds energy efficiency improvements statewide. Many states have a public benefit fund, and those states credit funds for significantly reducing their energy demand.

Now, we have the opportunity to use the SCC's study to promote more energy efficiency measures and a public benefit fund. With the state's energy plan to be developed by this summer, we will have plenty of opportunities to talk about smart energy solutions throughout the coming year.

The Bay

I predicted the legislature would pass a bond measure of \$150 million. I was wrong. Surprisingly the original \$250 million passed. This is great news and will help us significantly on our way to meeting our state's obligations to cleaning up the Chesapeake Bay. Of course, more work is needed, but we are finally on our way to making the commitment to do our part to clean our precious Bay.

Citizen Boards

The environmental community was successful in stopping the consolidation of the three environmental citizen boards. The legislature, however, made it clear they were interested in making changes to either how

the boards are structured or in what they are empowered to do. The issue will be discussed throughout 2007. We will

work to extensively involve the public in these discussions.

Transportation/Land Use

Evaluating the result of this outcome is difficult. Some good things came out of the final transportation package – some minor land use reforms like additional impact fees for by-right zoned development and increase in funding for transit, to name a couple.

However, our state leaders have a long way to go before making significant policy changes needed to adequately address our traffic and land use problems in a way that

The environmental community will be talking more about how better transportation and land use planning would help reduce Virginia's contribution to global warming.

creates more livable communities. The environmental community will be talking more about how better transportation and land

use planning would help reduce Virginia's contribution to global warming.

Much work left to do

The results of this session show how much work we have left to do. As the discussion of global warming enters more and more households and the impacts become more and more evident, it is obvious we have a lot of work to do in a short amount of time.

Next month, about 20 of us will meet in Highland County to develop our global warming and energy campaign for the next few years.

Sierra Club to attend shareholder meetings of two large corporations

by Joshua Low

Sierra Club members and staff will attend the shareholder meetings of both DuPont and Dominion later this month. A corporation puts on a show at its shareholder meeting for its large shareholders and analysts.

Since activists can attend if they own stock or a if shareholder lends its "proxy," we have a great opportunity to impact a company.

Shareholders have the right to ask questions of the board and executives. Sierra Club will be attending DuPont's meeting in Wilmington, Delaware and Dominion's meeting in Boston.

As reported previously in *Old Dominion Sierran*, we are working to protect the health of the workers and community in and around the DuPont Spruance plant from a toxic chemical called PFOA used to make Teflon and other fibers. Along with the United Steelworkers and the Ampthill Rayon Workers, Inc., we asked DuPont to do a full investigation of PFOA contamina-

tion and clean up any contamination found.

So far, there have been some gains, but the workers and community are still at risk. We will ask DuPont's CEO Chad Holliday in person to clean up this PFOA problem in Richmond and elsewhere.

Dominion, largest polluter in Virginia

Dominion is the largest polluter in Virginia and the second largest utility in the country by market capitalization. Dominion has stalled or minimized any environmental or consumer protections related to energy or global warming in Virginia.

Their record in New England is not much better. They have been undermining the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), which is an initial step for the New England states to address global warming.

We have joined with Piedmont Environmental Council, Clean Water Action, Environment Massachusetts, and PACE to demand Dominion clean up current plants and invest in smart energy solutions, such as renewables and energy efficiency.

We will hold a demonstration and at-

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A portion of the proceeds
come back to Sierra Club!



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

We aren't leaving there until we're finished. We'll talk more about what we can do to reduce our impact on the planet, at the same time save energy and promote American innovation.

From that point forward, we will have many opportunities to involve you, our members and volunteers, to make the changes needed to make next year's legislature a success.

Michael Town is executive director of Virginia Chapter Sierra Club whose duties include lobbying on environmental issues.

tend the meeting to support two shareholder resolutions requiring Dominion to be more responsible in terms of its destructive power line proposal and global warming.

Shareholder Activism

If you own stock, you can get involved in shareholder activism. In many cases, shareholders present resolutions for a more socially responsible company. Please vote your shares in support of these resolutions.

If you own a large amount of stock or know other shareholders, you can introduce a resolution. You also have the right to attend the shareholder meeting if you own just one share. If you are interested in getting a particular company to be more socially responsible, you might consider purchasing stock.

To become more involved in Sierra Club shareholder activism, call Joshua Low at 804-225-9113.

Joshua Low is conservation coordinator of Virginia Chapter Sierra Club.



Grassroots Activists News From the Groups



A panel discussion on bio-fuels included experts from James Madison University's Alternative Fuels program, Dr. C.J. Brodrick, JMU; Dr. Diana Christopulos, Sierra Club panel facilitator; Chuck McCarty, JMU, and Dr. Chris Bachmann, JMU.

Global warming and energy film festival huge success in Roanoke

by Mark McClain

Putting a Chill on Global Warming was the title of the Roanoke Group's global warming and energy film festival. Co-sponsoring the event were Hollins University, SmithLewis Architecture, and Roanoke Valley Cool Cities Coalition.

Capacity crowds flocked to Hollins University each of four Thursday evenings in February and March. Four films were featured, each dealing with energy policy or global warming. Each film was followed by a panel discussion by local and regional experts. In all, 20 speakers, representing environmen-

tal groups, local governments, universities, and the media, participated in panel discussions.

Each evening had a theme, but all were focused on global warming and smart energy solutions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Our first program featured the science and consequences of global warming. The film, *Too Hot Not To Handle*, was the perfect vehicle to get people thinking about this issue.

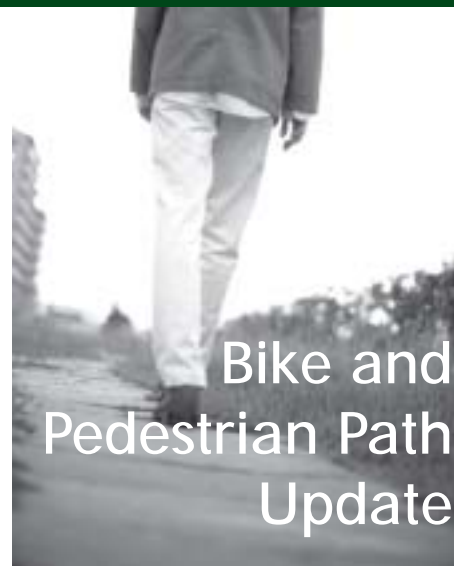
Week two saw the discussion move to the international scene, featuring *Rising Waters*, the story of the impact of rising sea levels on Pacific Island nations.

The third week, our theme was personal actions for smart energy solutions, and our feature film was Jeff Barrie's fabulous film on energy, *Kilowatt Ours*. Winding up the festival, we had two feature films and two panel discussions. The theme for the evening was the transition to alternative energy sources.

The first film, *French Fries to Go*, led into a panel discussion that included bio-fuels experts from James Madison University, Christy-Joy Brodrick, Chris Bachman, and Chuck McCarty. That evening we also tackled the controversy over wind farm siting in the final film, *Wind Over Water*.

Leading the discussions over the course of the festival were Diana Christopulos and Mark McClain.

Everyone agreed this was the most successful event the Roanoke Group has been associated with. We are already making plans for an event next fall to continue our momentum on this important issue. We would like to extend our thanks to other Sierrans who helped make this event such a great success by helping out with event-day logistics and crowd control -- Grace Terry, Becky Reiff, Ed Kyle, and Bob Egbert.



by Scott Howson

During a December 2005 planning meeting, it was suggested the Rappahannock Group develop a "signature project," something that would show the Group as an active and capable member of the community while making a positive impact on our region.

It didn't take us long to realize that RGSC was in the perfect position to advocate for, and possibly help create, a regional network of bike and pedestrian paths that would get people to stores and commuter stations throughout the Rappahannock Valley.

We first contacted the stakeholders: VDOT, local Planning and Parks staff, the National Park Service, and area bike and pedestrian enthusiasts. We hosted a workshop in spring of 2006 to discuss local interest in our ideas, which resulted in RGSC offering to act as facilitator, bringing together the interests of all the parties and developing a comprehensive regional strategy.

To get the community involved, we hosted a Public Forum this past October. VDOT's statewide bike-ped coordinator, Chapter Chair Charles Price, East Coast Greenway's David Brickley, the executive

director of the Fredericksburg Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO,) and the president of a local Pathways Partners organization led the discussion. They explained to the packed audience the process of designing, funding, and building a bike-ped network, and spoke of specific successful projects we could learn from. The audience asked a lot of questions and left enthused about the possibility and reality of regional pathways.

As a result of the momentum building around the idea of bike-ped paths, our local MPO offered to staff and fund the creation of the regional plan. This was a major step forward. Since December, a committee composed of area planning, parks, and schools staff, the NPS, VDOT, Sierra Club, the regional transit system, and bike and pathways organizations, has been meeting monthly to tie together existing planning and identify likely corridors for additional paths.

We're circulating a comprehensive survey to assess community attitudes and identify potential origins and destinations. By the end of this summer a plan will be ready to take to the community and to VDOT and the Commonwealth Transportation Board in Richmond.

The Rappahannock Group has agreed to spearhead the community aspect of the campaign, making presentations to area civic and professional organizations, PTAs, and Homeowner's Associations. We're asking for their support as we go to Richmond for approvals and funding, and requesting dollars and manpower to help us with lighting, benches, landscaping, signage, and other amenities.

We're now standing side-by-side with VDOT (an admittedly unlikely partner), local governments, bike riders and walkers to make a positive contribution to our community. It's a nice place to stand.

Scott Howson is Chair of the Rappahannock Group

Group Directory

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

Rappahannock: Scott Howson
540-373-4704 showson@infionline.net
Blue Ridge: Al Fioretti
540-982-5050; atmanon200@yahoo.com
Chesapeake Bay: Fred Adams
757/467-2775; warbler2@cox.net
Falls of the James: John Zeugner
804-288-5005; jjzeugner@comcast.net
Great Falls: Linda Freimark
703/222-9240; lindyf@cox.net
Mount Vernon: Pat Soriano
703/671-3129; patemail@verizon.net
New River: David Bernard
540/951-2716; david@aquariusplumbing.com
Piedmont: John Cruickshank
434/973-0373; jcruciks@peoplepc.com
Roanoke: Mark McClain
540/387-0930; mcclainmark@comcast.net
Shenandoah: Vacant
Thunder Ridge: Brian Jablonski
434/384-1213; brj2a@virginia.edu
York River: Tyla Matteson, 804/275-6476
tmatteson1@mindspring.com

Easter Parade in Richmond

The Falls of the James Group has tabled each year at the annual Monument Avenue Easter Parade in Richmond. Despite the cold weather, 25,000 people gathered for the festivities.

Here Joshua Low gets signatures on Sierra Club postcards urging Dominion Electric to seek alternative sources of energy.



Greening the Grassroots workshop in Roanoke June 9

The Virginia Chapter Sierra Club will present a four-hour introductory workshop on the basics of community organizing for environmental protection on June 9, from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. in Roanoke.

Many huge environmental issues are of concern in the U.S. and around the world, such as global warming, endangered species, air and water pollution and suburban sprawl. These issues often appear overwhelming to people at the community level. However, just as America is composed of thousands of smaller communities, our big environmental problems are composed of thousands of smaller parts. A forest is made of many trees, not just one block of wood.

The *Greening the Grassroots* workshop is intended to help you get started in "greening" the community where you live. You are on the front lines and know your local environmental issues. All environmental activism is local and the Sierra Club is here to help.

The *Greening the Grassroots* workshop is based on the Sierra Club's *Grassroots Organizing Training Manual*. To be held at the Roanoke Higher Education Center, June 9, from 10a.m. to 2:30 p.m., it is free to Sierra Club members. Materials and lunch are included. The cost to non-members is \$15. Participation is limited to 20.

Please send the registration form below to Bob Egbert by June 4. Placement can't be assured without pre-registration.

Ken Burns wants you in his next film

In the fall of 2009 PBS will air *The National Parks*, a major documentary film series produced and directed by Ken Burns and written and produced by Dayton Duncan.

They are asking for your help. The film series will tell the powerful, human story of how the parks came into being and what they have meant to Americans for more than a hundred years.

It will be filled with major historical figures, from John Muir to Theodore Roosevelt to Ansel Adams. It will also tell the stories of many lesser-known Americans, from cowboys to immigrant artists, wealthy philanthropists to dirt-poor farmers who turned their passion for a part of the American landscape into crusades for their permanent protection.

As it tells the story of this uniquely American, democratic idea of setting aside special places for the benefit and enjoyment of *everyone*, it will reveal a larger story of people passing on a love for these special places from one generation to another.

To help tell this story, they are collecting home movies of visits to National Parks by families and individuals for possible use in the film. The home movies should be from the 1920s through the 1980s, footage of families and tourists in the parks. If your home movies are used in *The National*

Parks, you will receive a DVD of the series. If you happen to have footage of the Yosemite firefall and it is included in the series, you will receive the DVD, plus your choice of one other Ken Burns film.

To submit home movies, follow the criteria listed below:

- Home movies should be from the 1920s, 1930s, 1940s, 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, 1980s.
- They should be of families and tourists in the national parks, not scenery without people.
- Do not send original footage — VHS or DVD copies only. The material will not be returned.
- Clearly mark the tape or disc with your name, address, phone number and e-mail (if available), so they can contact you if your footage is selected.
- Include a brief description, e.g., the Smith family, George and Martha, Bill and Sally, in Grand Canyon, 1955.

Send by August 1, 2007 to Anne Harrington, WETA, 2775 S. Quincy Street, Arlington, VA 22206, eod@weta.com.

Student environmental leadership training to be held July 9-15

This summer the Sierra Student Coalition is running a week-long Environmental Leadership Training program at Prince William Forest Park in northern Virginia from July 9-15. This program will focus on giving high school and college students the skills needed to be effective grassroots organizers in their schools and communities.

Over the course of the week, students will learn from other students how to start or sustain a group, recruit and develop new leaders, plan a strategic campaign, plan effective events, work with the media, lobby and much, much more.

Additionally, students will enjoy playing games, hiking, and meeting other like-minded students.

Led by some of the nation's top student environmental leaders, this program is a once in a lifetime experience. Past participants have gone on to become the National Director of the SSC, sit on the Sierra Club's National Board of Directors and dozens of



other prominent leadership positions on national and local levels.

According to David Bronstein, a past participant, the program, "bridges the gap between wanting to make a difference, and actually being able to make one."

To register and for other dates and locations, see www.ssc.org/sprog.

Wildlife and wild places photo contest open to all

In the March issue of *Virginia Wildlife* can be found captivating photos of wild places and wildlife of Virginia, taken by the winners of the annual photography contest. Wildlife photographers should check out this annual contest, which is open to any photographer, amateur or professional.

All images submitted must have been taken in Virginia within the past five years. The photographs are separated into eight categories – Birds of a Feather, Cold and Clammy Critters, A Bug's Life, Fantastic Flowers, Marvelous Mammals, Scenic Seasons, The Sporting Life and Kids and Cameras. Each photographer may enter up to three images per category.

The photographs may be:

- Prints - high quality eight by ten images labeled on the back with your name, phone number and subject matter.
- Slides submitted in clear plastic storage sheets, each identified with your name, phone number and subject.
- Digital images, high resolution JPEG or TIFF files at 360 dpi and a file size of at least eight and a half by 11. One CD per category.

Each category must be labeled and placed in separate envelopes. Deadline for submissions is Nov. 30, 2007.

For further information and to enjoy the winning photographs of this year's contest, look at a copy of March 2007 *Virginia Wildlife* found at newstands or in your library. Or visit www.dgif.virginia.gov.

Registration Form

GREENING THE GRASSROOTS
An Introduction to Community Organizing for the Environment
June 9, 2007, 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Roanoke Higher Education Center
108 North Jefferson St.
Roanoke, Virginia 24016

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ E-Mail: _____

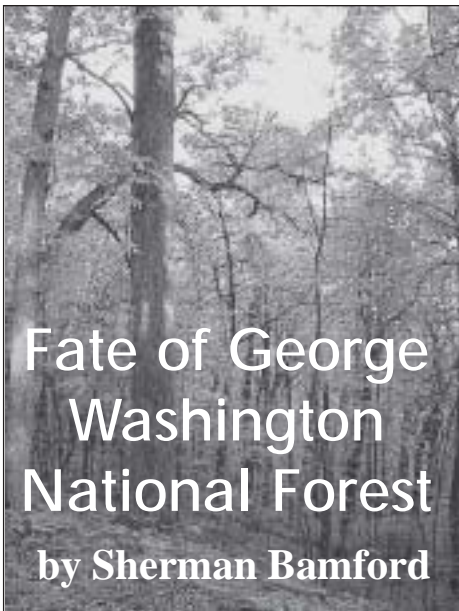
Sierra Club member? Yes No Please include your Sierra Club membership number and membership renewal month below.

Membership # _____ Membership renewal month: _____

Non-member registration fee \$15.00
Non-members please include check payable to Virginia Chapter Sierra Club.
Note: Participation is limited to 20 on a first come, first serve basis.

Mail this registration form to:
Bob Egbert
3571 Bradshaw Rd.
Salem, Va. 24153

For more information contact Bob at rsegbert@comcast.net or 540-384-7448



Fate of George Washington National Forest by Sherman Bamford

Sierrians everywhere live to “Explore, enjoy and protect the wild places of the earth.” To protect the wild places of the George Washington National Forest, we invite you to *Dig in! Speak out! Have patience!* and *Take at hike!*

Dig in

The 1.1 million acre GWNF covers much of mountainous northwestern Virginia. This national forest belongs to us all. It is a place with outstanding hiking trails, fishing streams, old growth forests, black bear habitat, and more. It is a remaining stronghold

for southern Appalachian roadless areas, possessing 35 percent of all such areas on Forest Service lands.

The Forest Service is revising its 15-year management plan for GWNF. Initial drafts of the plan would give the Forest Service far greater leeway to log, build roads, and develop minerals on public lands (see www.fs.fed.us/r8/gwj/forestplan/revision/plan-home.shtml).

The current scheme fails to protect special places the public would like protected, such as the Toms Knob area, the Great North Mountain area, Peters Mountain North special biological area, and Paddy special biological area. It's important to dig in, and get involved. Without a strong public outcry, the GWNFs' amazing natural resources could be jeopardized.

Speak out

The Forest Service promised an intensive schedule of meetings and other opportunities for comment. The first meetings took place at locations near each of the ranger districts in early March 2007. Many Sierrians were there. But many more Sierra Club voices are needed at future meetings. These meetings featured small break-out sections intended to invite collaboration and an ini-

Winding Trail to Set Forest's 15-Year Direction

tial exploration of citizens' concerns. Future meetings will probably include similar breakout sections, as well as other forest-wide meetings to discuss major issues on the Forest, for example, wilderness and roadless areas.

You can learn more by going to the Virginia chapter's GWNF webpage at <http://virginia.sierraclub.org> and reviewing a Forest primer, *Our Land, Our Water, Our Home*, and a short introductory document, *Forests for the Future*. The website will give updates on future meeting dates and comment opportunities.

Get involved and speak out.

Have patience

The GWNF Plan Revision was launched under the Bush administration's experimental 2005 Planning Regulations. These regulations rolled out utilizing a set of bizarre arguments that thumbed their noses at America's bedrock environmental and citizens' participation laws. The GWNF is to be the guinea pig, since it is the first large national forest in the nation to use the 2005 Planning Regulations.

However, on March 30, 2007, California district judge Phyllis Hamilton enjoined the

Department of Agriculture from “implementation and utilization of the 2005 Rule” until the agency complies with NEPA, the Endangered Species Act, and other laws. For the time being, the Forest Service cannot rely on this illegal planning regulation anywhere nationwide.

While the ultimate effect on the GWNF Plan Revision is unclear, Judge Hamilton's decision bolsters arguments against the 2005 Planning Regulations made all along by the Sierra Club and others.

We can savor this victory. To be sure, there will be many other small victories and many difficult setbacks before the GWNF Plan Revision is finally complete many months from now.

The trail may be a winding trail in the future, full of switchbacks, but it is important to have patience and keep our eyes on the prize — protection of the wildlands of the GWNF and the restoration of lands degraded by past logging, roadbuilding, and extractive development.

Be ready to speak out when the time comes to speak out.

Take a hike

(See article on Tour de Cut on Page 2)

Sherman Bamford is forests chair of Virginia Chapter Sierra Club

Trees at Hunting Camp Creek



This area in Thomas Jefferson National Forest is part of a vast area that would be protected by the Virginia Ridge and Valley Act, recently introduced in Congress. See article on Page 3.

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