

Old Dominion Sierran



Virginia Chapter Sierra Club

November/December 2009

www.virginia.sierraclub.org

Our valiant efforts over the past 13 years to Save the Mattaponi have a happy ending. Newport News terminated their project to construct the proposed King William Reservoir.

Our story goes back to 1996 when the Sierra Club began the campaign to stop a giant and unneeded drinking water reservoir that would have flooded 430 acres of valuable wetlands in King William County and would break a 1677 treaty with the American Indians.

The same year, the Alliance to Save the Mattaponi was formed, with myself and Albert Pollard, then Virginia Chapter director, at the first meeting, along with Shirley "Little Dove" Custalow of the Mattaponi Tribe and several residents from King William and King & Queen Counties. Those at the first meeting were concerned the proposed reservoir was a done deal.

Over the following months and years, dozens of environmental groups and thousands of individuals joined the campaign, attending and speaking at hearings, sending



Victory is Ours

Newport News gives up on plan to build reservoir on Mattaponi River

by Tyla Matteson

letters and comments to decision makers, talking to supervisors in King William County and council members in Newport News.

Many will recall walking with the Mattaponi Indians and other tribal members, when over 600 individuals joined the Trail of Hope in Jamestown on May 15, 1999. We addressed each regulatory body along the way throughout the permitting process, with some wins and some losses.

The Corps of Engineers issued their permit to build the reservoir in 2005, and soon after, Sierra Club, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Southern Environmental Law Center and the Alliance filed a lawsuit, joined by the Mattaponi Tribe. Our opposition never wavered, and the breakthrough came on March 31, 2009, when a federal judge ruled the Corps permit "arbitrary and capricious" regarding harmful impacts to

the wetlands and to the salinity of the Mattaponi River. The Corps suspended their permit, and on May 12, 2009, Newport News suspended further work on the reservoir project, having spent almost \$55 million over 22 years.

Newport News already runs five drinking water reservoirs, and to their credit, one recommendation is to now protect

the watersheds of these reservoirs. We are confident future water needs will be met, as usage has flattened despite a larger population, and several viable alternatives are available.

Hundreds of individuals should be thanked for this victory. One in particular is Glen Besa, whose energy and direction were vital to bring us to this ending. Two others who began the fight are Peg Babyak, who lives at Whitehall on the Mattaponi and her daughter Dori Chappell. Peg, Dori and husband Robert will host a Victory Party at their home Saturday, November 21. For more details, contact me at 804-275-6476 or email: tmatteson1@mindspring.com.

Signs seen during West Point Crab Festival parade celebrating victory



Photos on this page by Glen Besa

Volunteer in the Spotlight

Roger Diedrich -- Mr. Virginia Chapter -- Dedicated Volunteer and Mentor



by Charles Price

So you don't know all the things that Roger's involved in. You say he's laid back and closed mouth about what he's doing. Fact is, he's too busy to tell you what he's up to. For openers, you should know that Roger is nearing his 33rd year of continuous membership in the Sierra Club

"Mr. Virginia Chapter" received a B.S. in mechanical engineering from University of North Dakota in 1967. He earned a Masters in cybernetic systems from San Jose State University in 1972.

Roger worked three years for the Aerospace Division of Douglas Aircraft before earning his Masters degree. After completing his M.S. in 1972, Roger married Mary Eckert and moved to Northern Virginia where he worked for the Bureau of Mines on energy data, forecasting and reporting.

His Bureau of Mines group was merged into the U.S. Department of Energy in 1977. Thereafter, Roger analyzed data on renewable energy and nuclear power until he retired in 2003.

Roger joined Sierra Club in 1972 in California. After moving to Virginia, he became active in 1974 with the Inner City Outings program in Arlington. Around 1978, he joined the Metropolitan Washington Group (Potomac Chapter).

When the Washington group moved to the Virginia Chapter in the 1980s, Roger represented it on the executive committee.

He has been active in the Virginia Chapter ever since. Among his many roles and accomplishments, Roger organized the Mount Vernon Group in 1985, and was its chair for two years. He also was MVG's conservation chair.

In 2000, Roger moved his membership to the Great Falls Group and revitalized that group, serving as chair for two years. He

continues to work with Great Falls on Smart Growth and Cool Cities issues.

In the 1980s, Roger was appointed Virginia Chapter solid waste chair and served also as conservation chair from 1993-97. In 2003, he was elected chapter chair and served four terms. Roger currently serves as smart growth and transportation chair, waste chair, on the personnel committee, is "Emeritus Everything" and mentor to us all.

Roger's National Sierra Club roles include his appointment, in 1990, to the national Solid Waste Committee, on which he served six years. Sierra Club's policy on waste was rewritten during that time.

He was then appointed to the Environmental Quality Strategy Team (EQST), an administrative entity that managed eight national issues committees. Roger chaired EQST until 2009, when it was phased out under the club's "Project Renewal." With the sunset of EQST, Roger became chair of the national Zero Waste Team.

In recognition of his boundless commitment to protect the environment through his outstanding, lifelong service to Sierra Club, in 1990, Roger was awarded the prestigious Susan Miller Award. In 2007, he was presented a special Virginia Chapter Award recognizing his 30 years of service.

In addition to his outstanding environmental work and lifelong commitment to Sierra Club, perhaps Roger's best contribution has been his example as a dedicated leader and tireless worker to protect and save our planet.

He has advised, assisted, or mentored nearly every leader in the Virginia Chapter over the past 20 years. For all this, the title of "Mr. Virginia Chapter" is unquestionably his, and richly deserved.

Virginia Chapter office sees changes in staff personnel

The only thing constant is change, certainly true with our chapter staff. Jim Gould, who has done a fine job leading our climate campaign work in Virginia, has left to relocate in Australia for at least the next year. Jim also led our organizing efforts for cleaner air in Hopewell, where he lives. Good luck Jim.

We have the good fortune to have hired Antigone Ambrose to step in for Jim on our climate work. Antigone worked for both the Chesapeake Climate Action Network and Al Gore's RePower America Campaign. If Antigone calls or e-mails, you'll know she is calling about action on climate.

Jayme Hill announced she will be leaving in early November to return to her home state of Georgia where she will be working with the newly formed Flint Riverkeeper in southwest Georgia. Most recently, Jayme spearheaded our series of showings across the state of the documentary on mountaintop removal coal mining, *Coal Country*. Best of luck to Jayme.

We have two temporary Sierra Club staff working on our political program. You may have gotten a call from Amy Matthews or Dorothy Allen if you live in one of the House of Delegates Districts we are targeting. Both Amy and Dorothy will leave November 4, immediately following the election. Thank you Amy and Dorothy for your hard work in this election.

Glen Besa continues as chapter director and Eileen Levandoski is chapter organizer in the Hampton Roads region. Kate Pollard is the Moving Beyond Coal organizer working in Northern Virginia. Technically Kate works for the National Sierra Club but her work is centered in Virginia.

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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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Please e-mail the editor with questions prior to submitting material

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Environmentalists' Conviction



This sign carried in the Mattoponi victory parade says it for all environmental campaigns, the underlying principle of all activists in their pursuit of clean air and clean water.
Photo by Glen Besa

I-81 corridor issue keeps on truckin'

by Roger Diedrich

With a stake in the heart of the Mattaponi reservoir project, the I-81 battle seems poised to take over the distinction of Virginia's epic environmental campaign. It was 2002 when we started to see multiple proposals to widen I-81 to address the congestion and safety issues resulting from heavy truck traffic.

Private corporations used Virginia's flawed Public Private Transportation Act process to promote their corporate interest. The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) did not fairly consider a rail option. However, massive outpouring of citizen objection assured defeat of the STAR Solutions proposal to privatize I-81 and construct a tollway with four truck-only lanes.

RAIL Solution was organized to rally citizen and local government opposition to the costly and environmentally destructive proposals to widen 325 miles of I-81 from four to eight lanes. RAIL Solution advanced the notion that upgrading existing Norfolk Southern track would be a far cheaper, more economically advantageous, safer and environmentally preferable approach.

Allies like Sierra Club, Virginia Conservation Network, Virginia Organizing Project, and land and historic preservation groups joined the fight. RAIL Solution's vision is that I-81 corridor between Harrisburg, PA, and Knoxville, TN, should become the pilot project for a National Steel Interstate System (NSIS). This concept would build infrastructure for fast passenger and freight rail across the nation, increasing productivity of rail transport just as the Eisenhower Interstate System did for highways.

This vision is congruent with the



Photo by Steve McMullen

Obama Administration's interest in an energy-efficient 21st century rail infrastructure. Currently, freight is one of the fastest growing contributors to greenhouse gas emissions. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates trains produce one-third the emissions of trucks per ton-mile of freight. Electrifying the rail line as dirty sources on the grid are replaced would further reduce carbon emissions while reducing reliance on a foreign energy source.

Congressman Rick Boucher proposed a federal study of the potential for a Steel Interstate in the five-state I-81 corridor. Virginia Secretary of Transportation Pierce Homer announced if such a study were approved, he would not accept the money.

In 2006, Governor Kaine promised to fix safety spots on I-81 first, while also addressing rail capacity. Instead of addressing any of the seven unsafe locations identified in its EIS, VDOT is using \$142 million earmarked for freight safety to construct two large projects expanding the highway to an eight lane profile,

In 2006, the Virginia General Assem-

bly unanimously passed H 1581, requiring a multi-state rail study of the I-81 corridor. The charge to the Department of Rail and Public Transit was to determine the cost for diverting 60 percent of through-state truck traffic from I-81 to intermodal rail. VDOT estimated it is necessary to divert up to 60 percent of the trucks to obviate the need for more highway capacity.

While the General Assembly charge was clearly meant to look forward to what sufficient public investment in rail infrastructure could provide, Secretary Homer stated the study is based on **current** corridor and market conditions. This assures the study results, expected to be released soon, will be meaningless—comparing the freight-carrying potential of a late 20th Century highway to a 19th Century railroad.

Sierra Club members should talk to their state legislators about this issue and ask that they assure the legislative effort is not nullified by a rogue state Secretary of Transportation.

Roger Diedrich is Virginia Chapter Smart Growth and Transportation Chair

Stormwater runoff rules weakened by Soil and Water Conservation Board

by David Bernard

The runoff from development, both during and after construction, is a major source of water pollution. An advisory panel to the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), which included environmental scientists and development engineers, had, in September 2008, drawn up new regulations that would have eliminated much of the nutrient and toxic pollution that comes off development.

The destruction caused by high volumes of stormwater would have been ameliorated. The higher standards would not have been cost-prohibitive by any means.

In the weeks before submitting these regulations to the Soil and Water Conservation Board for final approval, DCR recommended a number of changes, all of which seriously weakened the new rules. These changes include:

- Allowing higher phosphorus runoff in non-Chesapeake watersheds, despite the nutrient pollution problem in Albemarle Sound and the Gulf of Mexico.
- Raising the threshold for regulated lands from 2500 square feet to an acre.
- Allowing Urban Development Areas (a planned high density development) in the Chesapeake watershed to establish a weaker phosphorus runoff standard.
- Allowing a higher rate of runoff into an "unstable channel" (a streambed that had already suffered from urban stormwater runoff) and exempting smaller parcels of land from the volume restriction altogether.
- A grandfather clause that allows developments permitted by 2010 to be built according to the old rules, even if construction is not completed until 2019.

Runoff from development is the fastest growing new source of water pollution in Virginia. Despite this, the SWCB accepted all of these recommendations.

The developers win, Virginia's water loses.

Office in Wise County, 275-523-8100, and ask that Ison Rock Ridge be spared from mountaintop removal.

DMME is currently reviewing a mountaintop removal coal mining permit for Ison Rock Ridge in Wise County that would destroy nearly three miles of streams and devastate the communities of Inman, Andover, Derby, and the Town of Appalachia.

Kate Pollard is Moving Beyond Coal organizer in Northern Virginia

Dirty coal, mountaintop removal protested in Alexandria

by Kate Pollard

On September 29, 35 people gathered in Market Square in Old Town Alexandria to stop the mountaintop removal that is devastating our Appalachian Mountains. The news conference brought attention to the connection between Alexandria's dirty coal plant, Mirant, and the mining process that delivers its fuel.

Dirty coal continues to provide over half our electricity, though it is the most carbon-intensive generation process in existence.

The Sierra Club hosted the gathering in coordination with our Wise Energy for Virginia Coalition partners. J.W. Randolph from Appalachian Voices; Glen Besa, director of the Virginia Chapter; and Kent Baake, CEO and founder of Continuum Energy Solutions, spoke about the threat



Kent Baake, of Continuum Energy Solutions advocates clean energy.

of coal mining to Black Mountain at Ison Rock Ridge, and other landmarks in the oldest mountain range in the world.

Baake offered evidence of the reliability of cleaner alternatives, such as solar, to

improve our energy future. Members of local communities of faith were also present, contributing a moral sense of responsibility to protect our environment.

Nearly 50 attendees signed postcard petitions, sent to Nancy Sutley of the Council on Environmental Quality, calling for a freeze on new mountaintop removal mining permits. Also signed were 25 glowing photo petitions to be sent to Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in support of clean energy.

The Alexandria event was one of dozens held nationwide on the Sierra Club National Day of Action Against Coal. The resounding statement is a readiness for change that considers clean energy central to a sustainable future.

If you missed the event, there is still time to call Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy's (DMME) Big Stone Gap

Advancement of offshore wind production has Governor's backing, interest from developers

by Ivy Main

On September 22, the Governor's office issued a press release announcing the state intends to develop offshore wind resources and has requested the formation of a federal-state-local task force "to guide and facilitate the leasing process."

This announcement caps a series of moves that brings the commonwealth closer to having a wind farm off the coast of Virginia Beach, where the combination of strong, steady winds and shallow water makes for an ideal location.

Interest from the business community has also picked up, and two wind developers recently filed lease applications with the Mines and Minerals Service to construct wind farms in federal waters off the Virginia coast.

One of the developers, Sea Wind, proposes to build 200 wind turbines at a distance of 12 miles from shore. They estimate the energy produced would be sufficient to power more than 300,000 homes. The second developer, Apex Wind Energy, has not released details.

The Virginia Chapter Sierra Club has made offshore wind energy one of its core priorities in advocating for sensible, sus-

tainable energy policies in the commonwealth. We are continuing to educate politicians, our membership, and other members of the public about the opportunity we have to produce renewable energy affordably, bring new business and green jobs to the state, and shift electric generation away from dirty coal plants fed by coal obtained in part through the destructive practice of mountaintop removal mining.

Our efforts were greeted with skepticism initially but have paid off over the past year and a half in the form of increased understanding and interest on the part of both leaders and the public. Support for an offshore wind farm has built steadily, as the governor's press release shows.

The chapter co-sponsored an Environmental and Energy Study Institute presentation, *Offshore Wind: A Nearby Energy Resource*, on Capitol Hill to educate legislative and government staffs about the potential. The 100 plus attendees listened to

experts from Virginia, Delaware and New Jersey discuss the technology and state initiatives. The presentations can be viewed at http://www.eesi.org/071709_offshore.

Recently the concept has been endorsed by the mayor of Virginia Beach and numerous state legislators, and is being studied by the U.S. Navy, a potential first customer. Dominion Virginia Power also indicated they are studying the idea.

The Virginia Chapter joined forces with other Atlantic Coast chapters to share information and to support each other's efforts to promote offshore wind energy, which holds out promise for the entire east coast. The Virginia Chapter developed a fact sheet and a PowerPoint presentation that can be modified for use in any of the participating states. In conjunction with partners in other states, we also produced a short video promoting offshore wind energy. More information is available at our web site, www.va4wind.com.



Members who would like to get involved in this effort are invited to use the PowerPoint presentation at meetings of their group, school, or civic association. Several Chapter volunteers are available to answer questions and get you started, or they may be able to come to your event to give the presentation. For more information, contact ivymain@cox.net.

Ivy Main is Virginia Chapter Sierra Club Renewable Energy Chair.

JMU team engaged in wind power research, educational outreach

by Remy Luerssen

The Wind Power Applications and Technologies Team (WPATT), formed at James Madison University in 2007, serves as a central body to support efforts of both Virginia Wind Energy Collaborative and Virginia Coastal Energy Research Consortium (VCERC). WPATT engages faculty, staff, students and other stakeholders in promoting a broad range of research, development, and outreach to advance wind power deployment throughout the Commonwealth.

WPATT administers the Virginia State Based Anemometer Load Program, which provides private landholders with state-

of-the-art meteorological towers equipped with anemometers, wind vanes and a data logger. Since 2001, WPATT instrumented towers at 36 sites throughout Virginia, most recently installing a 50-meter system at Port Isobel on Tangier Island, an education and training facility of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. WPATT presently is conducting a comprehensive analysis of all wind data collected along the Eastern Shore since 2002.

In support of the broader effort by VCERC to characterize the offshore wind resource, WPATT developed a geographic information system (GIS) with over 25 data layers, to understand the realistic potential for offshore wind energy across the outer continental shelf of Virginia.

Taking into consideration all military training areas, shipping lanes, and dump sites, the team showed that Virginia could install over 3,000 MW of rated turbine capacity. This energy output would be more than sufficient to meet Virginia's voluntary renewable portfolio standard of 12 percent by 2020.

WPATT receives dozens of calls monthly from residents and businesses across Virginia inquiring about their wind resource and whether a wind turbine would be economically feasible.

Team members are developing an online economic calculator called NextStep that will allow a user to log in, enter their street address, and access the AWS Truewind map for Virginia to provide a basis for performance and economic calculations. NextStep estimates installed costs, payback times, and energy generation, and is supported by wind resource and economic models as well as a turbine optimization algorithm.

Team members also developed educational programs and materials designed to bring information on wind power and other alternative energy technologies, as well as energy conservation, to classrooms throughout the Commonwealth.

WPATT offers classroom visits, teacher workshops, and campus visits/tours of JMU's solar power and hybrid wind/solar systems, and other resources.

Members of the Chesapeake Group helped in these efforts during Earth Day events in their area to spread the word about the potential in Virginia for offshore wind energy.

Remy Luerssen is with Virginia Coastal Energy Research Consortium at JMU.



Meteorological Tower

Offshore wind video debuts

China has one, Europe has a lot of them, and it's time the U.S. did, too. We're talking about offshore wind farms, which could power the entire East Coast with clean, renewable energy. The Virginia Chapter Sierra Club has been educating legislators and the public about the opportunity that lies just off our coast, and now a new tool is helping to spread the word.

Renewable Energy Chair Ivy Main and Conservation Chair Steve Bruckner have produced the Sierra Club's first video promoting offshore wind energy for the East Coast. The three minute YouTube video can be seen on the club's national website at <http://clubhouse.sierraclub.org> as well as on the Virginia chapter website and our page devoted to offshore wind, www.va4wind.com.



All it takes is one spill

Images of Australia's oil spill as plotted onto Virginia's waters

by Eileen Levandoski

On day 46 (October 6) of the devastating oil spill that continues to dump oil into Australian seas, Virginia Chapter Sierra Club released images of that spill plotted off Virginia's coast.

The images were commissioned from SkyTruth, which used NASA and other government generated satellite images to depict the Australian oil spill that as of September 3 had grown to almost 9,900 square miles -- larger than the area of Vermont.

The simple overlay of the Australian spill originating at a hypothetical well in Lease Area 220 shows an oil spill of this size reaching Virginia Beach, Virginia's Eastern Shore and the northern Outer Banks.

"Supporters of offshore drilling have been saying there is no risk of a spill in Virginia waters with modern drilling technology. What is happening in Australia right now with a new rig built in 2007 proves that claim wrong," remarked Glen Besa, Sierra Club Virginia Chapter director.

"Plotted off Virginia's coast, the Australian oil spill should give Virginia great pause" continued Besa, "All it takes is one spill to virtually shutdown Virginia's coastal economy, both tourism and fisheries, for years. Oil is still disrupting the natural environment in Prince William Sound 20 years after the Exxon Valdez spill."

In 2005, Virginia's commercial and recreational fishing industry generated a total of \$1.23 billion and 13,015 jobs. Last year, tourism in Virginia Beach alone generated more

\$1.5 billion and almost 12,000 jobs.

Coastal communities up and down the Atlantic seaboard are reliant upon a thriving tourism business to drive their economies. Behind Florida and New Jersey, Virginia is third with \$26 billion and over 210,000 corresponding jobs.

Oil is extremely toxic to a wide variety of marine species, plants, and microscopic animals. It poisons birds, mammals and fish. Those not killed outright from oil spills suffer a slow death from debilitating illness and injury as a result.

Sighted off Virginia's shores are a number of species protected by the Endangered Species Act. Located in Virginia's Norfolk and Washington Canyons are coral reefs home to complex, diverse and

economically valuable ecosystems.

Officials estimate it will take another two weeks before the Australian spill can be brought under control. Using the oil company's estimates, 400 barrels per day, more than 750,000 gallons of oil, have spilled since the blowout on August 21. Using an alternative estimate of 3,000 barrels per day based on actual published flow rates of nearby oil wells, almost six million gallons may have been spilled so far. By comparison, in 1989 the Exxon Valdez spilled 11 million gallons in Alaska's Prince William Sound.

Take action **now** to chill the drills off Virginia's coast. Visit www.onespill.org. Eileen Levandoski is Virginia Chapter Organizer in Hampton Roads area.

Could Virginia be facing water shortages?

by David Bernard

When you look at a Virginia river surging with springtime flows, it is hard to imagine our state facing a water shortage. Yet population and water usage growth, along with a lack of planning, inadequate research, and disincentives for conservation lead to stress on groundwater supplies and new demands for surface water withdrawals.

The Virginia Water Commission was formed to take the long view on the problem. A July 9 meeting revealed some of the problems:

- Virginia law provides no means to allocate limited water supplies. "...when an applicant meets all statutory requirements they get a permit," noted Delegate Harvey Morgan, VWC chair.
- Groundwater west of the coastal plain has not been systematically studied. But even if the coastal plain is better understood, "Nowhere in Virginia do we know how much groundwater we have," said Scott Kudlas, director of Water Supply Planning.
- Many water withdrawals are "grandfathered" from a bygone era, including "some of the biggest users in the state."
- Utilities are reluctant to encourage conservation, because of the loss in revenue.
- When surface water is withdrawn, the law requires that instream flows adequate to protect aquatic life and human recreation be protected, but there is no formula to establish such flows.

Delegate Morgan said if a coastal plain aquifer is exhausted of available water, it will collapse, and cannot receive new water.

We can be thankful for the foresight of public servants such as Delegate Morgan and Mr. Kudlas, who are currently conducting meetings to revise Eastern Virginia Ground Water Management Regulations. The next meeting is at the Smurfit-Stone paper plant in West Point on October 28. Without citizen involvement, Virginia will face ongoing pressure to use our water resources in ways that leave nature worse off.

David Bernard is Virginia Chapter Water Quality Chair.



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet



We all deserve clean water, right?

The Clean Water Act has been protecting us for 40 years. While the Act has been instrumental in keeping millions of tons of sewage and toxic chemicals out of our waterways each year, we are still a long way from cleaning up ALL of the nation's water bodies. In fact, the majority of Americans live within 10 miles of polluted water. We need to strengthen the enforcement of the Clean Water Act, and we could use your help to do it. Clean water is not a privilege. It's a right.

JOIN Sierra Club to help keep the Clean Water Act strong.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (____) _____

Email _____

Check enclosed. Please make payable to Sierra Club.
Please charge to: Visa MasterCard AMEX

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Membership Category	Individual	Joint
Special Offer	<input type="checkbox"/> \$28	<input type="checkbox"/> \$47
Student	<input type="checkbox"/> \$39	<input type="checkbox"/> \$67
Supporting	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100
Contributing	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150	<input type="checkbox"/> \$175
Life	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1200
Senior	<input type="checkbox"/> \$34	<input type="checkbox"/> \$52
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 efforts to protect our environment and conserve our planet. Your membership (P.O. #) is a contribution to our organization and it is your Sierra membership.

Be the change you wish to see in the world. For more information, visit www.sierraclub.org or call our website: www.sierraclub.org

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Annual Gathering has great weather, good meals and motivating discussions

by Ann Moore

The stars shone at the Sierra Club Annual Gathering September 18-20 at Pocahontas State Park. More than 40 people turned out to enjoy the fabulous meals of Melanie Roborchick, the witty, informative natural history presentations of Ranger Christen Miller and her daughter Emma, the supple voice and warm, personal musical presentation of Narissa Bond, and the straightforward, positive assessment of the club's status and current objectives given by Sierra Club National President Allison Chin.

The mild weather provided comfortable conditions for the bat hike, tree identification walk, and for lying in our cabins at night listening to owls call through the faintly moonlit woods.

The schedule included presentations on environmental issues, such as offshore drilling, mountaintop removal and the state elections this fall. A motivational session showed why it makes economic and environmental sense to plan for Zero Waste. We heard success stories on the benefits and pleasures of bee-keeping and the establishment of a successful farmer's market in an at-risk Norfolk neighborhood.

Glen Besa and his staff kept the program running smoothly while Melanie and her kitchen volunteers served up one glorious meal after another. Non-human par-

ticipants that added to the fun included one bat, two dogs, one West African fat-tailed gecko, one land tortoise, one painted turtle, three snakes and a humming drawerful of bees (safely contained behind glass).

Regrettably, the event had to be scheduled on the one available weekend at the park, which turned out to be during Rosh Hashanah. Unfortunately some members were unable to attend. Efforts will be made to avoid this conflict in the future.

The Annual Gathering gets better every year. Don't miss the next one.

Roanoke Group News Roanoke Group ExCom Election Notice

Members of the Roanoke Group (counties of Roanoke, Botetourt, Franklin, Rockbridge, Alleghany, Bath, Patrick, Henry and the independent cities within their boundaries) are eligible to vote in the annual election to select members of the group executive committee. Ballots and voting instructions will be available on the Group web site <http://virginia.sierraclub.org/roanoke/> on December 1. If you do not have access to the Internet, or if you would like to receive a ballot by regular mail, contact Mark McClain (540)387-0930, mcclainmark@comcast.net, 907 Greenbrier Ct, Salem, VA 24153. Voting deadline is December 29, 2009.

Roanoke Group Executive Committee

meetings are open to all Sierra Club members and are held on the second Wednesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. Come at 7 p.m. for refreshments and social. The usual meeting place is Mill Mountain Coffee and Tea, but contact group chair Bill Modica 540-387-2782 or modicabill2@aol.com to confirm.

Earth Friendly Friday

Sierra Club sponsored monthly program series starts at 6:30 p.m. the second Friday of each month at The Unitarian Universalist Church of Roanoke, 2015 Grandin Road SW (at Brandon), Roanoke. Free and open to everyone.

November 13 - noted journalist Tim Thornton will recount stories of his adventures by canoe on the New River.

December 11 will be our traditional holiday potluck party. See <http://virginia.sierraclub.org/roanoke/> for more details or contact Bob Egbert 540-384-7448

Clean Energy, Bright Future Rally in Arlington

"The State of Virginia must pull itself out of the bottom tier of states promoting clean energy and give up its addiction to mountaintop removal coal mining so the state can achieve greentech job growth."
Scott Sklar, President, The Stella Group, Ltd.



Activists join Clean Energy, Bright Future rallies in six locations across the state

by Kate Pollard

Virginians across the Commonwealth gathered at Clean Energy, Bright Future Rallies in September to demand a new energy future that reduces our dependence on dirty fossil fuels. The events were hosted by the Virginia Climate Campaign, a coalition of environmental, faith, business and advocacy groups from all parts of Virginia, of which Sierra Club is a member.

The rallies were to signal broad public backing for clean energy, seen as necessary to get Senators Jim Webb and Mark Warner to support comprehensive energy and climate legislation this fall. Legislation being considered in the Senate could redefine the means by which Virginians receive their power and increase investments in energy efficiency.

Joined by hundreds of supporters at six locations across Virginia, the group asked

attendees to take action for clean energy. Participants signed postcards, submitted letters to the editor and some called Senators Warner and Webb on the spot.

The coalition believes a strong clean energy bill will include:

- A 25 percent renewable energy standard, requiring utilities generate 25 percent of our electricity needs by renewable sources by 2025. This would begin to tap into Virginia's potential for wind and solar power.
- A 10 percent energy efficiency resource standard, requiring utilities to work with consumers to make our homes, businesses and industry more efficient, saving consumers money by doing so.
- Full restoration of the Environmental Protection Agency's authority to enforce the Clean Air Act and ensure that our dirtiest power plants meet new requirements.

Kate Pollard is the Moving Beyond Coal organizer.

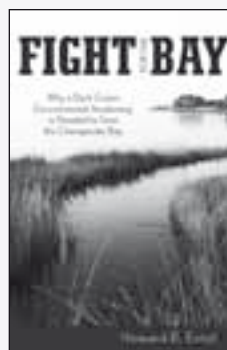
GROUP DIRECTORY

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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The Book Shelf



Fight for the Bay: Why a Dark Green Environmental Awakening Is Needed to Save the Chesapeake Bay

By Howard R. Ernst

Dr. Ernst's new book pulls no punches. *Fight for the Bay* describes the Chesapeake Bay as "functionally dead," an ecological zombie that succumbed to a "light-green" environmental movement that too often adopted a philosophy of compromise over confrontation. This challenging book provides a wake-up call for everyone concerned about the future of the Chesapeake Bay and other ecological treasures. The book is available in local book stores.



Nature is Calling: *Habitat at Home* DVD

Do you enjoy seeing birds and other wildlife around your home? A new *Habitat at Home* DVD, produced by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, is a 40-minute program showcasing different types of beautiful habitat gardens, with tips for improving wildlife habitat on your own property. The \$12 DVD, which includes an informational brochure and plant list, is available at www.dgif.virginia.gov. Or, call (804) 367-2569 to place a phone order.

Vote for delegates to Virginia Chapter executive committee

Four at-large Virginia Chapter Sierra Club executive committee (ex-com) members are up for election in December 2009. Balloting will take place between now and December 1. At-large members join group delegates to make up the Virginia Chapter ex-com, serve two-year terms, and elect Chapter officers. The ex-com sets policy not already determined by the Sierra Club National Board and conducts the affairs of the Chapter.

All members of the Virginia Chapter Sierra Club are eligible and are urged to vote for up to four of the four candidates running. Use the ballot on this page to cast your vote.

Candidate Statements

John Cruickshank - Charlottesville

I joined the Sierra Club in 1985 and became active in group and chapter projects in 2003. I have served as the chair of the Piedmont Group and delegate to the Virginia Chapter for five years. During the past two years I have also been the chapter's vice-chair. I enjoy working with other club members on campaigns to preserve parkland, prevent the expansion of nuclear power, global warming, and clean energy. We have organized several "environmental forums" in the Charlottesville area and successfully encouraged local governments to sign the Climate Protection Agreement.

My professional career included 35 years working in public schools as a teacher and principal. As an educator I worked to promote awareness of environmental issues. I continue to do this as a volunteer



Joe Apple (third from left on port side of raft) gets his adrenaline up paddling through Class 3 rapids in New River Gorge, West Virginia.

in local schools. The future of our planet depends on a renewed respect for natural ecosystems and new attitudes about "quality lifestyles."

Roger Diedrich - Fairfax

For over 30 years I served in many different Sierra Club capacities (e.g. Group Chair and Conservation Chair, Chapter Conservation Chair, Legislative Chair and Chapter Chair). I now serve as Chapter Smart Growth and Transportation Chair. As such, I stay connected to our allies in the Virginia Conservation Network on statewide issues, such as the undesirable behaviors of VDOT and challenges from the development community.

Continuing to take steps toward a modern transportation future will help build better communities and play an important role in carbon emissions reduction. More recently, I have returned to an issue that I had worked on years ago, to explore the possibilities of a Zero Waste future.

As I continue to focus locally on these

issues, I am learning how to build environmental community. I recognize there are benefits to connecting with our allies, but I also value the Sierra Club's unique ability to bring issues into the public arena through our grassroots network. Reaching out and inspiring our members to action on carefully selected campaigns provides our best chance to produce results.

Ivy Main - McLean

I have served on the ex-com only for the past year, after being asked to fill a vacancy. It has been a privilege to serve with this dedicated group of activists.

I am a lawyer by training, a writer by trade, and an activist because the climate crisis requires it. I am fortunate to be able to devote much of my time to the Sierra Club, and so for the past two years, I have worked extensively on energy policy, especially renewable energy. Most recently, I have been involved in advocating for offshore wind energy, through meetings with legislators, public education, and this fall, production of a video.

I would be grateful for the opportunity to continue serving on the ex-com.

Ann Moore - York River Group

Serving on the chapter ex-com is an honor, a challenge and a responsibility. As co-chair of the Annual Gathering, I concentrate on planning programs that are enjoyable as well as informative. I'm not a scientist, just a concerned citizen who is willing to devote time and energy to the club. That's really all it takes for anyone to get involved with the Sierra Club.

The challenges didn't end with the 2008 election; the pushback has begun in earnest and we can't let up on our efforts to get the message out there about global warming. I hope I will have the chance to continue working on this as a delegate-at-large to the ex-com.

OUTINGS

by Joe Apple

Camping, hiking, biking and rafting on family outing

When Sierrans think of national outings, they usually think of outings involving individual achievement. However, the family outing is an outing the entire family can enjoy. The family can enjoy it together, teach children about the outdoors, and develop future environmentalists.

In August I went on the Sierra Family New River Gorge outing held near Fayetteville, West Virginia. This outing included hiking, biking, and overnight white water rafting. We were four single men, one family with two teenagers, and three mothers each with a teenager.

We camped in Babcock State Park in tents and cooked our meals in a cooking/eating area we created from picnic tables and several tents. Camp chores were assigned on a rotating basis with one of the teenagers assigned to each detail.

The first day of the outing we took a gentle hike along the rim of the gorge and a hike that descended down onto the gorge floor where we saw a coal mine that had been abandoned for years.

The next two days were the highlight – white water rafting. We were instructed to bring our clothes, toiletries, other supplies in waterproof bags and report to the outfitters in bathing suits. The first day of white water rafting was through class 1 and 2 rapids using rubber ducky kayaks that ensured we could feel the rapids.

We reached our campsite for the night where the outfitter had set up tents and was preparing a steak dinner complete with baked potatoes and roast corn. The campsite was comfortable except for the 11 trains that passed by through the night.

The next day was paddling through class 3 to 5 rapids where we experienced many spills and thrills. The following day we were dirt biking along an abandoned railroad track to a town that had served as a railroad hub in bygone days. We saw the abandoned company store and several banks.

The final day we broke down our campsite and returned home with many happy memories particularly those of our white water rafting experience.

If you have young children, why don't you give them the same experience. You may create a new environmentalist in the process.

Cast Your Vote

Members must sign this ballot on the back. Joint members sign both names on the back. Vote the left column for single membership. Vote both columns for joint membership (if two names appear on your membership label.) Vote for up to four candidates. More than four votes will invalidate your ballot. Mail this ballot, postmarked no later than December 1, to:

Elections Committee
3571 Bradshaw Road
Salem, VA 24153-8715

John Cruickshank	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Roger Diedrich	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ivy Main	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ann Moore	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Cap and Trade – a Republican, market oriented approach that works

by Glen Besa

There is a lot of confusion and misinformation circulating about the cap and trade mechanism in the energy and climate legislation being debated before Congress. By capping and trading carbon emission we can reduce greenhouse gases that cause global warming.

While cap and trade may seem like a confusing concept, it has actually been around for almost 20 years effectively reducing sulfur dioxide that causes acid rain and nitrogen oxides that cause smog.

The 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments, signed into law by George H. W. Bush, established the first cap and trade program that now serves as a model for the program being proposed to reduce carbon emissions.

Cap and trade was proposed by business interests and Republicans as a means of using market forces to reduce pollution more efficiently than the alternative of requiring each polluter to reduce their pollution by a fixed amount.

How does cap and trade work? First, we calculate all the pollution being emitted and by whom; this becomes the initial “cap.” In the 1990s, that pollution was sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides; today it is

While cap and trade may seem like a confusing concept, it has actually been around for almost 20 years effectively reducing sulfur dioxide that causes acid rain and nitrogen oxides that cause smog.

carbon. Under the legislation being considered in Congress only very large emitters would be included.

Next you determine your goal for reducing that pollution. Let’s say our goal is to reduce carbon, global warming pollution, 20 percent by 2020. That means each year the total amount of pollution that may be released, the “cap,” would decrease by two percent per year between now and 2020.

Here is where the trading comes in. Each year the large companies that emit carbon regulated under the cap have to decide how they will effectively reduce their carbon by two percent. Some businesses will find it in their best interest to make an investment that could substantially reduce their carbon pollution emissions by more than two percent.

Let’s say Company A emits 10 million tons of carbon per year. In the first year it would be obligated to reduce its carbon emissions by 200,000 tons or two percent.

If it is able to reduce its carbon pollution by five percent or 500,000 tons, it has 300,000 in surplus carbon “credits.”

Now suppose another business, Company B, which also emits 10 million tons of carbon per year determines it cannot reduce its pollution this year for whatever reasons. It is obligated to reduce its pollution by 200,000 tons as well. Instead of making that reduction, Company B is able to buy the surplus credits Company A generated. These surplus credits are traded on an open market, just like stocks. This is the “trade” in cap and trade, and Company B pays the market rate for these pollution credits.

So cap and trade creates a market in which those companies which find it in their best interest to reduce their pollution more quickly than is required are able to sell those credits to other companies that chose not to make those reductions.

The forces of the market promote the most efficient means by companies to reduce their pollution, and because the “cap” goes down every year by two percent, each year society makes progress on its goal of

reducing global warming pollution.

The good news is that cap and trade has been around for almost 20 years and has worked to significantly reduce acid rain from the sulfur dioxide emitted from coal burning facilities like power plants.

It is also now being used to reduce nitrogen oxides that cause smog. In each case, the market forces have worked and the costs of making these pollution reductions have been substantially less than were predicted. For example, the predicted cost of sulfur dioxide pollution reductions was projected to be \$776/ton or more in 1991, but in September 2008 SO₂ allowances were selling for \$140/ton.

Of course, if you don’t believe in global warming, then cap and trade may seem unnecessary, but with polls showing 75 percent of Americans believing that climate change is real and wanting their government to take some action, cap and trade is a proven approach to reducing pollution efficiently. Many companies will reduce their carbon pollution by investing in efficiency measures and renewable energy stimulating our economy and moving us toward a clean energy future.

Glen Besa is director Virginia Chapter Sierra Club. This OpEd was printed in the October 2, 2009 edition of the Richmond Times Dispatch.

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Virginia’s contribution to nuclear safety

by Emile Derek Boyle

Virginia is going nuclear, but not in the way you would think. Newport News has been selected to produce the rare and highly specialized nuclear containment vessels, currently produced only by a few facilities worldwide.

Areva, France’s largest nuclear producer, with a U.S. headquarters in Bethesda, Md. and an engineering facility in Lynchburg, is expanding in Virginia by building a \$363 million plant in Newport News to produce the large containment vessels for its fourth generation evolutionary power reactors (EPR).

This facility is projected to create more than 540 full time production and engineering jobs, with a direct and indirect economic impact of over \$2.8 billion in regional and national benefits for each project. The large containment vessels will supply both domestic and international projects.

According to Areva’s Newport News president and general manager, Chris Levesque, the Virginia site was chosen primarily for its location and existing skilled labor force.

Areva has a long history in renewable energy production. They also produce five megawatt (MW) wind turbines for offshore wind applications, biomass plants -- including 100 facilities producing 2.9 gigawatt annually -- hydrogen power storage solu-

tions, and smart grid technologies.

Areva is currently building two 1,600 MW EPR reactors in China, which plans to build 18 new nuclear reactors by 2020. India is expanding its nuclear fleet of facilities ten-fold by 2050 and currently has 17 in operation and six under construction.

Virginia, as a manufacturer of containment vessels, has the benefit of producing and exporting devices to make nuclear plants safer, unlike the commonwealth’s export of tobacco products, which are the leading cause of deaths in the world.

Whether we like it or not, the urgency of climate change, rising unemployment, and limited fossil fuel resources, often owned by oppressive regimes or profiteering industries, are creating a market for expanded nuclear power. The world’s needs will be addressed by Virginia workers in the most constructive manner by providing high quality nuclear safety products while greatly benefiting the state economy and ability to provide education and services.

Personally, if I were to live in a region with a nuclear power plant, I’d prefer the most important aspect of safety to be built by Virginia workers rather than low paying and questionably conscienceless companies in India or China.

Emile Derek Boyle is a member of Great Falls Group