



Baltimore Sierran

Serving members in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, & Harford County November 2006

Sierra Club Mission: Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

Opportunities for Involvement (see inside for more information):

Jan 4 - Outings Planning Meeting

Jan 11 - Executive Committee Public Meeting

2nd Thursday of each month - Young Sierrans Socials

Saturday after 2nd Thursday of each month - Young Sierrans Outings

See Outings Schedule in newsletter and on website

Volunteer to:

Serve as Conservation Chair or Membership Chair. Serve on committees or form a new committee: Contact Ron Henry at 410-838-9119 or

RonLHenry@msn.com

Be an outings leader: Contact Jack Wise at 410-256-3963

Share your enthusiasm for the outdoors with Baltimore City youngsters. We need leaders and co-leaders for outings with youth at the three schools with which we partner. Contact Walter Jones at 410-655-3133 or at

TinaWalter.Jones@att.net

Check out the Baltimore Inner City Outings at www.sierraclub.org/ico/Baltimore

UPDATE - LNG

By Ron Henry

Monitoring continues of the preliminary permit process for a proposal from AES Sparrows Point Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) for an off-loading terminal and storage tanks at Sparrows Point.

Also proposed is a pipeline crossing Baltimore County and Harford County. As of this date, no decision has been made by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) with respect to issuing a permit to go forward with the project, pending more required information and data from AES for input into the final decision-making process. It is believed that FERC will fully consider the matter after receipt

of all inputs during January - February 2007.

The Baltimore County Council and Executive approved a resolution this year to limit placement of an LNG facility at no less than five miles from a populated area. That resolution is being contested by AES, but no ruling is known at this time.

The Greater Baltimore Sierra Club (GBSC) position with regard to this proposal remains as "opposed to the proposed Sparrows Point terminal/storage tank facility location and the proposed location/routing of the pipeline through Baltimore County and Harford County." This is due to LNG being an extreme "high

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UPDATE - BRAC

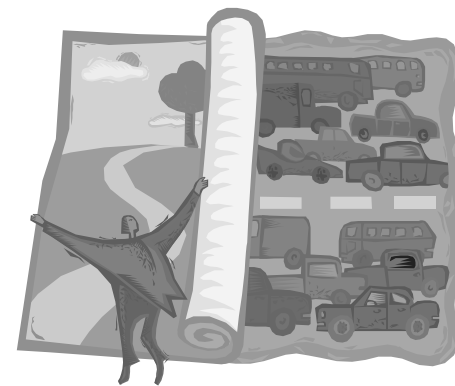
By Ron Henry

BRAC (Base Realignment and Closure) continues to be of paramount importance for ALL of the Greater Baltimore Sierra Club (GBSC) area. It will affect not only Harford County in an intense manner, but Baltimore County and Baltimore City will be significantly affected by BRAC and the resultant growth.

For the Harford County area alone, it is estimated that BRAC will bring some 8,000 jobs to Aberdeen Proving Ground and an

estimated 15,000 to 20,000 associated contractor jobs with companies moving into the region. Based on an average family size of four, it is readily apparent that the county will get a substantial population increase in a relatively short period of time. Given that many of those moving in will live in other counties such as Cecil, Baltimore, and Baltimore City, that burden will be stretched over those areas as well. But, even so, Harford County is estimating it will see BRAC related increases of up to 60,000 residents in the next 20 years.

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Are We M.A.D. Marylanders Against Development?

By Mary C. Corddry

M.A.D.? I don't know about you, but I am. I like winding around narrow country roads in Baltimore and Harford Counties, because I know that such roads discourage development. I like looking out over farms, meadows, and forests. McMansions on three-acre, carefully mowed lots just aren't the same. I like to see streams running free with fish, vegetated banks, and little sediment, rather than directed and controlled like storm-water runoff through culverts.

I don't say, "Not in my backyard," because my little backyard looks into my neighbor's windows. My dead end street of a couple city blocks holds 75 townhouses. That's a lot of people and cars concentrated in one place. But I believe in having pockets of dense development, in order to preserve open, natural spaces for my child and her child. I don't want for us to pave over this beautiful planet

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SIERRA CLUB CONTACTS

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**FROM THE CHAIR –
October 2006**

Well! It's hard to believe, but several weeks of autumn have already passed, and by the time this newsletter is published, the Election Year 2006 tasks will be "History"! What an incredibly intense and time-consuming effort and task for all it has been since March. It has been especially so for those intimately involved in the process on the Political Committee (PolCom) and Executive Committee (ExCom)! My deepest and profound thanks to all on the PolCom and ExCom for their time and efforts in the Election Year 2006 process.

Many lessons were learned for all who served on the PolCom! We learned that the process doesn't stop now that the election is over! One of the lessons painfully learned is that we very much need to develop an on-going process for effectively gathering each County and City elected official's voting positions on environmental matters! We need this, so that the process of evaluating candidates for Sierra Club endorsement will be both encompassing and straightforward which, sadly, it has not been!

To that end, we are soliciting Sierra Club members in Baltimore City, Harford County, and Baltimore County to become proactive and volunteer for the PolCom. The purpose is to meet, discuss new ideas, decide upon a course of ac-

tion, and implement it. It will be imperative to have a continual staffing for collecting and collating factual, objective data on each council district member, county executive/mayor, and council president, so that effective candidate evaluations can be realized for future election endorsements.

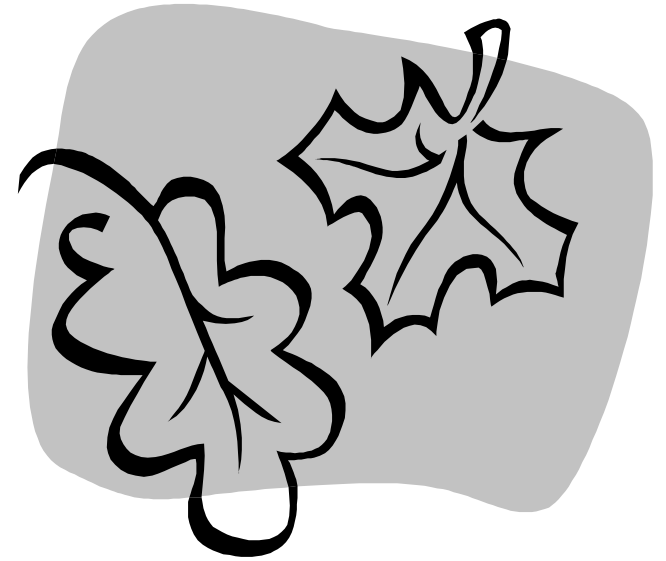
This can only be accomplished through more members volunteering and committing time and effort to make this happen. It is Step 1 in ensuring that we will be selecting the most viable, environmentally oriented candidates for future elections. Please consider being a volunteer in this very important part of your commitment to the environment! **YOU ARE NEEDED!!**

At this point, I sincerely thank Ms. Janet Schollenberger, a Baltimore County member who was a very active member of the Election Year 2006 PolCom, for stepping forward and accepting the Chair of the PolCom. I know she'll do an excellent job! BUT, she will need your support! Please contact her and volunteer your services. **NO PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE REQUIRED!!**

Now, lest one may think that I am remiss in only discussing PolCom and ExCom efforts for Election Year 2006, I wish to thank all of those members who actively supported us in each County, City, and General Assembly campaign. Those efforts were most appreciated! Thank You!!

Until next time!

Cheers,
Ron Henry



Upcoming Greater Baltimore Group Meetings

Executive Committee Public Meeting

Sierra Club members and non-members are invited to attend the next quarterly public meeting of the Greater Baltimore Group's Executive Committee. The meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, January 11, 7:30 – 9:30** at the Maryland Presbyterian Church near Towson. Come to participate in the discussions and planning.

Take the Baltimore Beltway (695) to Exit 28 (Providence Road). Take Providence Road north. The church building is on your right just outside the Beltway. Parking lots are in front and at the side of the building.

Outings Planning Meeting

The next meeting of the GB Outings Committee is scheduled for **Thursday, January 4 at 6:30**. New and prospective outings leaders are welcome. Pot luck dinner at 6:30 p.m. Call Joyce at 410-254-7240 for directions. Come plan new outings and meet other outings leaders. If you're interested in leading outings and are curious about what is involved, come and talk with the outings leaders.

Happy Hour Social

On **Friday March 9, 5-7 pm**, join fellow members (and non-members) for a relaxing evening of all-you-can-eat fajitas and tacos, as well as reduced prices on drinks. Stop by for a little while or stay the whole night. So come out, bring a friend, and get acquainted without the need for boots, sunscreen, or trekking poles. No hills to climb or streams to cross, just a complimentary Tex Mex buffet with indoor plumbing included at no extra cost. Located at 8810 Waltham Woods Road at North Plaza Mall off Joppa Road (Beltway Exit 30). Call Joyce at 410 254-7240.



In Search of Newsletter Contributors:

The deadline is **January 11th** for submissions to the mid-February Baltimore Sierran newsletter. We are seeking contributions from environmentalists of **all ages** and interests. We need articles, news, ideas, photographs, or poems related to the environment, conservation, or outings in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, or Harford County. Send contributions or ideas to Mary Corddy at 410-248-0423 or XxDiTz4LyFxX@aol.com or 75 Perryfalls Place, Nottingham, MD 21236.

Vote to Fill Executive Committee Vacancy

The Executive Committee of the Sierra Club's Greater Baltimore Group has a vacancy. Please vote for whether you approve for the following volunteer to represent you on the nine-member committee. Contact the Group Chair Ron Henry to register your vote at: 410-838-9119 or RonLHenry@msn.com or 40 E. Jarrettsville Rd., Forest Hill, MD 21050.

Submitted by Charles L. Taylor:

Can you use a "Communicator" on the Ex Com of the Baltimore Sierra Club? We have to let people know about our mission (The Sierra Club) before it is too late. The glaciers are melting rapidly and time is running out. I would like to put my skills, with the spoken word (50 years in the pulpit), the written word (first published at age 18 sixty years ago) and with my camera (six years recently working for the East County Times) to work to help make people aware of the disaster on our doorstep. I have five and 5/9 great-grandchildren and I want them to have a world to live in, to enjoy nature as I once did, to take their children camping as I did their parents and grandparents. I would be more than happy to serve on the Ex Com. I can still snap a shutter, write a soul-searching commentary on the computer, or do a television interview if you need one.

Young Sierrans Socials and Outings

The Young Sierrans Group of the Greater Baltimore Area holds monthly **Socials** on the **second Thursday of each month at 7:00: December 14, January 11, and February 8**. Since locations are being rotated, check the Young Sierrans' website for the next location at: <http://maryland.sierraclub.org/baltimore/youngsierrans> or contact Kathy Harget, Young Sierrans Chair, at 410-440-9896 or hargetk@yahoo.com. Stop by and have a cup of coffee, a

drink, or some food with like-minded folks. These socials provide an informal way to meet other young people concerned about environmental issues and interested in organizing group hikes, activism activities, and other outings.

The Young Sierrans **Outings** are scheduled for the **Saturday after the monthly Social on the 2nd Thursday of each month** (2nd or 3rd Saturday). For details, check out the Young Sierrans web site at <http://maryland.sierraclub.org/baltimore/youngsierrans/>

FORT DETRICK'S THREAT TO FREDERICK AND HUMANITY

This article is edited from a memorandum authored by Messrs. Barry Kissin (Democratic Party candidate, Frederick, MD) and Richard Ochs (Green Party candidate for MD House of Delegates, District 43 – NE, Baltimore City). This edited version, with verified documented references cited in the above memorandum, contains additions and other insights of Ron Henry, Chair of the Greater Baltimore Sierra Club. It is based on his expertise garnered from a 42-year career with the Department of the Army at Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD. That expertise included weapons and munitions testing and many years of Survivability/Vulnerability/Lethality analysis/ testing experience encompassing ballistics and Nuclear, Biological and Chemical (NBC) evaluations for major Army weapons systems.

The authors' commentary was written after reviewing a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) concerning expansion of Ft. Detrick as part of an effort to accommodate an \$ 8 billion dollar budget for biological weapons (bioweapons) research. USAMRIID at Ft. Detrick is the Army's lead laboratory for biodefense and is the likely receiver of the lion's share of that bioweapons budget - a significant funding "plus-up"! Thus, the planned expansion.

This planned expansion at Ft. Detrick in Frederick, MD is huge in terms of adding to the physical plant! It will require great community infrastructure changes, great cost, and have significant environmental impact on the city of Frederick and surrounding county areas. It also signifies a "huge expansion" in biological weapons (bioweapons) research. That, in

itself, is a most significant change with rather ominous portent!

“Much time and effort was expended in recent decades negotiating for and finally obtaining a hard-won global agreement to desist from any future major Research and Development (R&D) efforts and to destroy stockpiles of biological agents.”

Much time and effort was expended in recent decades negotiating for and finally obtaining a hard-won global agreement to desist from any future major Research and Development (R&D) efforts and to destroy stockpiles of biological agents. The purpose is to effectively remove the biological agents' availability and possible use by terrorists as a world threat.

The former chief American negotiator of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), James Leonard, has warned that the Administration's bioweapons research initiative could be interpreted as "Development" in violation of the BWC. The Administration has opted to reject the International Protocol on Inspection and Verification of biological weapons activity. This protocol is supported practically by all of the 130 other nations that are a party to BWC. Thus, there is NO LEGALITY!

To date, there appears to be NO CREDIBLE BIOLOGICAL TERROR THREAT. Although significant federal expenditures are appropriated in the biological weapons/agents arena, no threat analyses support the imminence of

the use of biological agents by terrorist organizations.

A serious concern was raised in March 2005 when 750 U.S. biologists signed a letter protesting what they saw as excessive study of biological terror (bioterror) threats. Research of bioterror threats has resulted in the diversion of research funds from other areas, causing a crisis for NIH-supported microbiological research. From the biologists' perspective, "real medical threats are going unfunded, such as staphylococcus, which is now largely unaffected by penicillin and other antibiotics. Any bioterror threat pales in significance as compared with

“A serious concern was raised in March 2005 when 750 U.S. biologists signed a letter protesting what they saw as excessive study of biological terror (bioterror)”

diseases that already kill tens of thousands.”

There is NO MEDICAL PRIORITY! Germ warfare agents can be genetically modified, and each modification may require a differ-

ent vaccine or countermeasure. USAMRIID's stated mission is to anticipate biological threats. It follows that standard plans would be to genetically modify diseases on which to test vaccines. This can quickly lead to unlimited new diseases with no known cures, which may become a continuous plague for all. If local security at Ft. Detrick is breached by sabotage/terrorism, those technologies could be stolen and used against us.

There are NO LIMITS to creating new diseases in order to create new vaccines, in order to create new diseases...The difference between defensive and offensive R&D is defined by intention! There is no reason to believe that a given administration's intentions with respect to expansion of bioweapons is purely defensive. Indeed, once the expansion becomes fact, it is difficult to control and varies as a function of intent. There is NO CREDIBILITY when intent is always elusive.

The city of Frederick has contracted to help pay for an expensive pipeline 30 miles long to the Potomac River (containing

dioxin, PCBs, mercury, and fecal bacteria). During droughts, Washington, D.C. can bar others from drawing water from the Potomac, leaving Frederick to compete with Ft. Detrick for

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Stony Run— Is This Stream Restoration?

By Mary C. Corddry

Baltimore City is in the midst of a \$10 million project to restore Stony Run, a lovely stream that meanders for more than 3 miles through north-central City neighborhoods in Roland Park, Wyman Park, and Hampden, before going underground to join the Jones Falls and empty into Baltimore harbor. A \$2 million repair or replacement of sewer lines along the stream is being done at the same time, to stop leaks.

At a public meeting on September 7, many of the approximately 130 attendees expressed concern about what the City's contractors have done to the stream near Friends School between Wyndhurst Avenue and Northern Parkway. They asked that work between Wyndhurst Avenue and Cold Spring Lane be put on hold, so that the success of what has been done so far can be assessed and alternatives can be reviewed.

Neighbors and other citizens using the parks and trails beside the stream became concerned when trees were clear-cut between the stream and the chain-link fence of Friends School. Even though they had attended similar briefings by the City over the years, they were surprised and shocked by the extent of the deforestation and bulldozing conducted along the upper stream for the stream restoration and sewer repair. Another clear-cut area is a steep bank down to the lower stream from the bridge at Wyman Park Drive. A much-loved community park with trees and a playground in Roland Park is being used as a staging area for storage of supplies for the project. A sewage pumping station is being built at Sisson and 29th streets, above the stream.

Representatives of the City's Public Works Department said at the meeting that there is no choice but to proceed with the project, because the stream's rapidly deteriorating condition requires aggressive intervention now. Sewer lines and storm drains are being compromised by the stream's erosion. Sediment from the stream banks is being washed downstream. The City says that it held meetings to obtain public input, hired experts with a proven track record, and used peer experts to review the plans.

Sections of the upper stream are being bulldozed to create curves, dams, pools, backwash areas, boulder-lined stream banks, and a bed of cobblestones to slow erosion of the banks and downcutting of the streambed. The City is trying to limit the number of cut trees to about 150. It says that some of the trees were dead or dying already or ready to fall from eroded stream banks. More than 200 new trees and thousands of native shrubs and wetland plants will be planted.

At the meeting, arranged by City Council Vice President Stephanie C. Rawlings Blake with the Roland Park Civic League, representatives of the City and its contractors explained its comprehensive reconstruction of Stony Run. The project was selected in response to a mandate from the Maryland Department of the Environment to reduce runoff of nutrients, sediment, and polluted storm water into the Chesapeake Bay by 2010. Also, the federal Environmental Protection Agency, in accordance with recently passed amendments to the Clean Water Act, issues

five-year permits to municipalities, requiring monitoring, reduction of nutrient and sediment loading, and cleanup of polluted urban stream systems, such as Stony Run.

Nationally, the failure rate for stream reconstruction projects is 10% - 40% or higher, with stream reconstruction destroyed by storms and with restoration of the natural environment not achieved. Failure can mean denuded stream banks, stagnant pools, continuing erosion, and loss of natural habitat and esthetics. According to an article last year in the [Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment](#)



journal, there have been at least 4,700 stream restoration projects costing about \$426 million in the Chesapeake Bay watershed since 1990, but there has been little research as to whether they work as intended. The "science" of stream restoration is still evolving, with learning by doing.

Rocky Powell, design consultant for Stony Run's middle section told the group, "Trust me," because he claims a higher success rate with similar projects. He showed slides of the current status of a private project on which he worked at Dulaney Valley Branch.

At the meeting, the City's representatives said little about their work on the upper Stony Run, for which there is much controversy. They focused on plans for the middle section, which has a different approach and team. A natural channel design will be used to rebuild the stream's crumbling banks, raise the incised stream bed, create steps and drops for the

stream, and plant native vegetation to hold the banks and provide a beautiful, natural habitat. Then, the stream will be allowed to meander naturally. To reduce erosion and dissipate the energy of runoff from the City's storm drains emptying into the stream, they will construct riffles, log and boulder step pools, rock vanes, J-hooks, and cross vanes.

Richard Klein of the Sierra Club urged that further work on the stream be postponed until "we can see the alternatives and best solutions." He said that the City's plan for the project was written in 2001, and does not have data or present alternatives.

Erica Schoenberger spoke for concerned citizens to ask for a moratorium on further implementation of the plan "until we see the success of what was done so far and its impact on sediment and erosion." She said that they want to "maintain the look and feel of the stream and not destroy the park to save the stream." They oppose "unnecessary destruction to reach our common goals." She talked about what makes the Park so special, and that it should be "kept as a small space of wildness in the City." She stated that the community needs to be involved with designing the general strategy and plans, rather than being presented with plans for comment. Also, the community needs to be mobilized to support the City. Residents should do their part to help manage storm water by reducing runoff from roofs and downspouts. Nutrient runoff can be reduced by limiting the use of fertilizers in yards and gardens. The community needs to collaborate with the large educational institutions bordering the stream to be "better citizens"--Friends, Gilman, Loyola College, Bryn Mawr, and Johns Hopkins University.

Upcoming Transportation & Planning Meetings & Events

Consolidated Transportation Plan: Projects for the Next 6 Years

Each year the Maryland Department of Transportation puts together a Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP). The CTP is a detailed listing and description of all capital projects (new construction and system preservation) that are proposed for the next six-year period. Once drafted, the CTP is presented to local elected officials and citizens in every county and Baltimore City during the fall. This is also an opportunity for the public to share their input on the CTP. Following the tour meetings, the final CTP is presented to the General Assembly in January. The Baltimore County and Baltimore City meetings were held on November 13th. The Harford County meetings have also already been held.

Transit Oriented Development Speaker Series

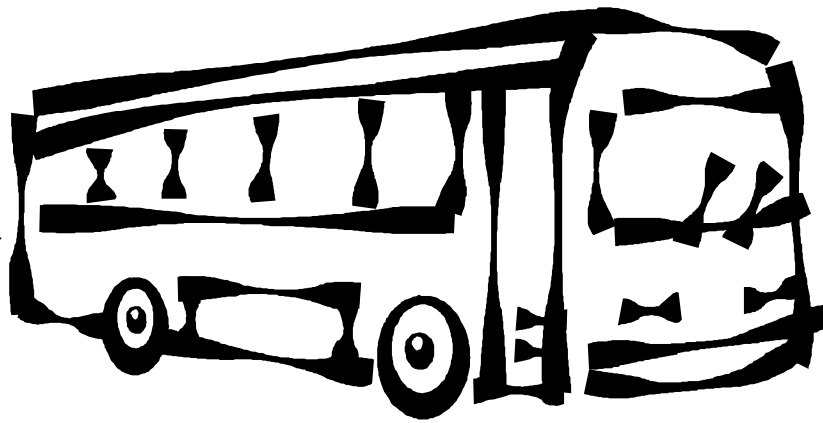
What is Transit Oriented Development?

What are the benefits for communities?

How should TOD be designed and marketed for the greatest benefit?

These are the kinds of questions being explored in a speaker series which began on October 5th in Baltimore County, and continued with speakers in November on New Vitality for Older Communities and Getting It Right: TOD Best Practices.

Find out about upcoming meetings and events related to transportation and development by going to: <http://www.baltometro.org/eNews/BMoreInvolved.htm> You can also sign up there to get regular updates about important meetings coming up in the Baltimore region.



For information about the Chesapeake Bay Crossing Task force, go to:

<http://www.mdt.state.md.us/mdta/servlet/dispatchServlet?url=/BayCrossing/baycrossing.jsp>

For information about the Baltimore Region Environmental Justice and Transportation Project, go to: <http://www.brejtp.org/>

For information about the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board Public Involvement Process, go to: http://www.baltometro.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=699&Itemid=0

For more information about these or other transportation issues contact Patrick McMahon, Transportation Chair, at patrick@mcmahon.com or 410-599-5123.

UPDATE - LNG

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value” asset from a terrorism perspective for sabotage, with highly probable and totally unacceptable devastating effects if a sabotage event occurs in populous areas. Please refer to previous newsletters or the GB Group’s website for further details. We do not oppose LNG as a fuel source, since it is preferable over other fossil fuel sources.

I encourage all of GBSC to monitor this LNG proposal process, to ensure that it doesn’t get beyond this preliminary phase for the Sparrows Point location. Let’s ALL be proactive in this matter, not only concerning the terminal location, but the routing of the pipeline as well. This is a matter that requires continual vigilance and citizen participation.

FORT DETRICK’S THREAT TO FREDERICK AND HUMANITY

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Monacacy River water, also inadequate during droughts. There are many other infrastructure costs for this expansion that will affect environmental issues (water, sewer, land use, open space, green area availability) and other quality of life issues.

The Greater Baltimore Sierra Club opposes the expansion of Ft. Detrick’s biological warfare Research & Development (R&D) effort! (1)Expansion of bioweapons R&D is not justifiable from a threat analysis perspective. (2)It violates the Biological Weapons Convention Protocol International for Inspection and Verification and, therefore, is not legal. (3)The funding used for

bioweapons R&D seriously detracts from other higher priority microbiology R&D that is indicated and justified. (4)It is a non-indicated, major step backwards with respect to a type of R&D that most of the rest of the world agrees should never again be. (5)It severely impacts the Frederick area with respect to a totally dependable available water supply and increases both city and county infrastructure costs. And, (6)The environmental effects and associated costs with respect to the total increased infrastructure costs for expansion must be considered, including other state and regional growth needs. Those interactions are not fully understood or known.

This proposed expansion is indeed a “Pandora’s Box” and one that should not be opened.

Reality Check Plus: Envisioning How New Development Will Happen in Maryland

By Patrick McMahon

As described in the last newsletter, four “Reality Check Plus” visioning exercises were held in May and June to brainstorm how to best plan for the significant increases in population and jobs that are currently projected for the State of Maryland. While we may hope that population growth will slow, it is essential to look realistically at the projections and do what we can to create a framework that will minimize the environmental impact of that growth.

The outcome from the visioning exercises in Central, Southern, Western, and Eastern Maryland were summarized in a report released on September 26th. The report outlines the vision developed during the collaborative process, where it differs from current trends and plans, and ways to modify existing programs, funding, and policy in order to achieve a more sustainable vision. Among the statewide principles supported by participants at the events were:

?? More stringent measures should be taken to protect environmentally sensitive areas, watersheds, and other natural areas, as well as farmland and forests, before they are forever lost to development;

?? Land use plans should concentrate new development inside Priority Funding Areas or in other existing communities, in part by encouraging infill development and revitalization of older areas;

?? Plans should give priority to new development in areas where infrastructure already exists and efforts should be made to provide new infrastructure to support new

development in a timely fashion;
?? More housing for citizens of modest incomes must be provided;
?? Housing should be located closer to jobs, and vice versa;
?? The rural and/or historic character of Maryland’s small towns and communities should be preserved;
?? More transit services, especially rail, should be provided in all four regions of the state, but especially in Central Maryland;
Greater regional cooperation should be encouraged, and regional planning authorities or regional plans should be created.

Under current zoning, the State of Maryland has capacity for far more housing units than are projected to be needed for the next 25 years. However, the visions developed in the Reality Check Plus workshops created greater density in urban areas than currently allowed and advocated for far less development in rural and forested areas than currently allowed. This was especially prominent on the Eastern Shore and in Southern and Western Maryland, outside of the Baltimore-Washington corridor.

Much needs to be done now to look at the workshop results in more detail, incorporate the results



of this effort in existing local and regional planning processes, monitor new development, and advocate for changes to existing legislation and policies that allow for and even promote sprawling development. The National Center for Smart Growth Research & Education, the Urban Land Institute, and 1,000 Friends of Maryland are taking the lead on these issues but I hope that the Sierra Club and its members will be actively involved. For more information and to download the “Today’s Vision, Tomorrow’s Reality” report, go to <http://www.realitycheckmaryland.org/>

UPDATE - BRAC

(Continued from page 1)

Counties south of Baltimore City will also see a lot of increased BRAC-related growth, since Ft. Meade will experience similar job increases and associated contractor growth. BRAC is, thus, an overriding issue for us all. Be assured that all related issues are being thoroughly reviewed and discussed with joint participation by the State, developer groups, environmental/conservation groups, county and municipal officials, and local community groups.

During the last several months, a coalition of these groups created a function called “Reality Check Plus.” Conferences were held in four regions of the State (Central MD, Eastern Shore, Southern MD, and Western MD) with representatives from each area, to try to get a handle on planning Maryland growth responsibly.

Patrick McMahon of the GBSC Executive Committee (Transportation Chair) attended the Reality Check meetings. His assessment is that the regional planning was, in general, handled quite well, with the constraints of each area being considered. But much, much more planning is needed!

Much more needs to be done, of course, and I urge all to stay informed and participate in these growth issues at all levels (local, county, municipality, and State), so that we can have sustainable growth that is environmentally friendly. So we can pass onto our future generations something of which we can be deservedly proud! We will continue to update you on this extremely important topic!

“Cool City” Initiatives in Baltimore City and County

Baltimore City Mayor Martin O’Malley signed the U.S. Mayors’ Climate Protection Agreement in February, joining over 200 American cities. The

City Council passed “Cool Cities” legislation in August. By so doing, the City has stated its commitment to implementing plans and taking concrete steps to reduce

citywide greenhouse gas pollutants, with the goal of meeting or exceeding the Kyoto Protocol to reduce emissions by 7 percent below 1990 levels by the year 2012.

As a signatory city, Baltimore should conduct an inventory of global warming emissions in its city operations, to identify the major sources of CO2 citywide and opportunities for reductions. It will also establish a baseline against which to measure progress. And it will enable Baltimore to develop a solutions plan that will lower emissions while also lowering its energy costs. Other cities have reduced emissions through green vehicle fleets (e.g., hybrids and other fuel-efficient vehicles), energy efficiency, and renewable energy. Improving automobile fuel efficiency is the single biggest step to curb global warming. Washington, D.C. has switched from diesel buses to compressed natural gas (CNG) powered vehicles. Baltimore can also curb emissions and energy use significantly by adopting energy-efficient building codes, such as the LEED standards for new and existing buildings. Street lighting and traffic signal light fixtures can be replaced with light

The Sierra Club has a “Cool Cities” campaign to engage Sierra Club members to meet the Kyoto goal.

emitting diode (LED) bulbs. Baltimore City can set a target date for purchasing a specific percentage of its total municipal electricity portfolio from renewable sources such as wind, solar, and biomass. A number of other environmental initiatives are being considered by

the City Council (Styrofoam ban, green building incentives), and an Office of Sustainability may be created to manage them.

Now Baltimore County is con-

sidering signing on to the U.S. Mayors’ Climate Protection Agreement. Sierra Club members in Baltimore County are working to educate the County Council members and County Executive about the Cool Cities program and what could be done in Baltimore County to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The Sierra Club has a “Cool Cities” campaign to engage Sierra Club members to meet the Kyoto goal. The objective is to use practical and innovative energy solutions that reduce energy waste and pollution. Thereby, we will cut our dependence on oil, benefit public health, and save money. We need to keep the City’s focus on the issue and spread “Cool Cities” to the surrounding jurisdictions.

Find out how you can get involved in the Cool Cities campaign. For more information go to <http://www.CoolCities.us> or <http://www.sierraclub.org/coolcities>, or contact Patrick McMahon of the Greater Baltimore Group at 410-599-5123 or patrick@mcmahon.com.

Green School in Baltimore City

There is a new school in town. The Green School of Baltimore opened for 60 children in kindergarten through 2nd grade this school year. It is the only Baltimore City free, public charter elementary school focused on environmental education. The school will add grade three next school year and grades four and five in the third year, by when it hopes to have 240 students and a permanent and larger facility.

The school is housed in Kromer Hall at the Church of the Guardian Angel on W. 27th Street in the Remington neighborhood. This is a diverse, neighborhood school, important to the community, although enrollment is open to all City residents. Parents and supporters have held fund-raisers and helped to furnish the facility.

The schools’ nine founding teachers formerly worked with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation’s Bay School Program at Baltimore’s Morrell Park Elementary/Middle School, which ended in 2004. They decided to establish their own school with the same philosophy of incorporating environmental awareness into all classes, but at the earliest levels of education. The educational approach is called “using the Environment as an Integrating Context (EIC) for learning.” All instruction integrates project-based learning with “balanced literacy” for an educational approach exploring the theme of: “What impact do we have as individuals on our environment?”

The children learn from textbooks, real-life experiences, and problem-solving opportunities. They participate in hands-on environmental related activities and projects using

the school’s surroundings and the community, such as developing a recycling program, composting, creating rain gardens, planning and growing an edible organic garden, building birdhouses, creating a tree nursery, and growing Bay grasses. They look at what’s around them and learn from it. At a recent open house and Green Fair in which the Sierra Club participated, the children were excited to see worms converting kitchen scraps into garden soil.

The school has a non-profit arm. It an “E3”: Experimental Environmental Education, Inc., which is dedicated to growing an educational community that is committed to increasing environmental stewardship through experimental environmental education. The school and its E3 sponsor quarterly service projects for family participation in and around Baltimore, such as stream clean-ups, tree plantings, and garden installations.

A charter school provides a free public education through the City Board of Education, but operates independently according to approved guidelines and standards. The schools’ teachers and administrators manage all aspects of the school and its budget and develop their own curricula.

For more information about The Green School, call 410-483-5784 or see <http://www.greenschoolofbaltimore.org>. For information about EIC learning, see <http://www.seer.org>.

Marketing Opportunity for Green Building Businesses and Green Building Professionals!

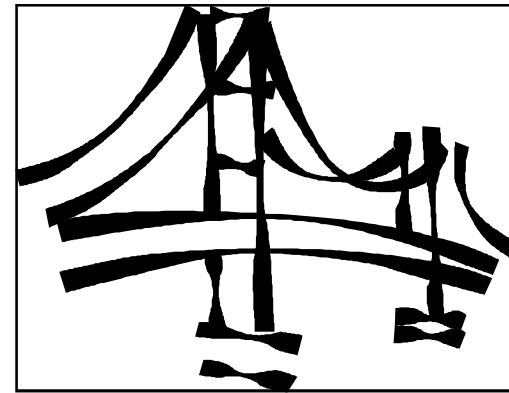
The Greater Baltimore Urban League and the Baltimore Regional Chapter of the U.S. Green Building Council coordinated with the Home Builders Association of Maryland (HBAM) to promote a Green Building Section at the HBAM annual Builder Mart event in Timonium on March 21, 2007. The event is consistently sold out and only for building professionals. There are 600 booths and about 7,000 participants. HBAM is excited about highlighting green building at this event as they are embracing a new green rating system. Ideas are being sought for hands-on workshops. For information, to be a potential vendor, or to offer a workshop, contact Wendy Cooper at 410-308-8867 or email WendyCooper8@comcast.net.

Bridge Crossing Task Force Completed, Future Uncertain

By Patrick McMahon

In July, the Maryland Transportation Authority (MdTA) put together a report detailing the work of a Task Force that reviewed options for a new bridge crossing of the Chesapeake Bay. The report presents some useful information but falls short in a number of important regards.

Most of all, the core of the report doesn't seem to clearly recognize the extent to which adding a new bridge will increase traffic and development on the Eastern Shore, but instead just takes massive expansion in traffic demand as a given. The report also does not address the opportunities for transit or other measures to manage the use of the existing Bay Bridge spans. Luckily, these is-



sues were brought up in the public meetings held on the issue and even by some of the Task Force members, and are mentioned in the Appendices. As a result of the number of comments about transit, the MdTA and MTA in March 2006 started a study of a transit-only crossing. This option would face significant challenges due to the significant costs of creating any new crossing (auto or transit) and the ongoing operations costs. While the comments from the

Task Force members and the public meetings show significant concerns about and opposition to a new bridge, the report concludes by looking forward to a future NEPA study following the completion of the transit-only study.

The full report and more information about the project can be found at <http://www.mdt.state.md.us/mdta/BayCrossing/>

Baltimore City Environmental Legislation

The City Council's Taxation and Finance Committee held a hearing on City Council Bill, 06-0454, "Property Tax Credits - Energy Devices" on November 9. If enacted, the bill will grant a property tax credit for buildings for which certain energy devices have been installed, i.e. "(A) SOLAR PANEL THAT GENERATES ELECTRICITY FOR A BUILDING; (B) SOLAR WATER-HEATING EQUIPMENT FOR A BUILDING; AND (C) GEOTHERMAL ENERGY DEVICE FOR A BUILDING. The bill, sponsored by Councilman Kraft, was co-sponsored by Council members Nicholas C. D'Adamo, Bernard C. 'Jack' Young, President Dixon, Mary Pat Clarke, Edward L. Reis-

inger, Stephanie Rawlings Blake and Agnes Welch. You may view/download the bill at <http://legistar.baltimorecitycouncil.com/attachments/1053.pdf> and check on its status at <http://legistar.baltimorecitycouncil.com/detailreport/?key=3003>.

Councilman Jim Kraft introduced two bills at a Baltimore City Council meeting in August, to advance sustainable development in the City. Together, these bills will help put Baltimore on the map in the fight against global warming.

The first ordinance, City Council Bill 06-0507, "Property Tax Credits - High-Performance Buildings" would create a tax credit program to offset the costs of commercial buildings that meet green building standards and guidelines that have

already been approved by the State. Eligible property owners would receive a tax credit equaling 100 percent of the city property tax imposed on their building.

The second bill, City Council Bill 06-0506, "Baltimore City Office of Sustainability" would create an office to move Baltimore City's environmental agenda. The Office would be responsible for the City's green building, renewable energy, recycling and other environmental initiatives.

These bills are significant in light of Baltimore City's recent commitment to become compliant with the Kyoto Protocol and reduce emissions by 7 percent by 2012. If passed, lower energy bills, more green space, better air quality and transportation choices, and job

creation in new sustainability sectors will improve the quality of life for City residents.

Councilman Kraft sponsored the bills described above as part of an ongoing commitment to make Baltimore City a better place to live, work and play for generations to come. "The City has the opportunity right now to become the shining star of urban East Coast America by investing in and encouraging green buildings and sustainability," Councilman Kraft noted. "We don't, and we shouldn't, have to leave the same ecological footprint to future generations that we inherited."

Maryland Forest Conservancy District Boards

In 1943, the State Legislature created the Maryland Forest Conservancy District Boards for each county and Baltimore City. The local boards are comprised of citizen volunteers, who assist and advise the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in matters related to improvement of the environment through the promotion of best management practices for forests as a renewable resource. Each Board is also responsible for educating the public about the benefits of trees and forest cover.

For 35 years, the Forestry Boards and the DNR have presented and sponsored a week-long program for Natural Resource Careers at the Hickory Environmental Education Center in Garrett County. As of 2005, over 1,200 Maryland high school students had participated. Each Board is responsible for selecting and paying the fees for local high school students to attend. For more information, see: www.mdforest.sailorsite.net or www.dnr.state.md.us/forests.



Non-Sierra Club Outings

Check out the websites of the following non-Sierra Club organizations for information about their outings:

?Baltimore Bike Club:

www.baltobikeclub.org

?Baltimore Canoe Club:

www.baltimorecanoecub.org

?Biotrek Naturalists: www.biotrek.org

?Maryland Outdoor Club:

www.marylandoutdoorclub.org

?Mountain Club of Maryland:

www.mcomd.org

Camp for Careers in Forestry

By Glenn Langan, a 15-year-old home school student in Howard County

Once every year the local forestry boards in each county send two high school students to the Natural Resources Careers Conference in Garrett County. The students spend one week listening to professionals and doing field work. They get to see various possible jobs in fisheries, forestry, park management, and wildlife. Representatives from different colleges and universities come and talk about their forestry programs. It's a great opportunity to learn and have fun.

Each day has a different schedule. When you arrive at the camp, one of the first things you do is meet with your group. Each group consists of 5 or 6 students and a counselor. You do field work and assignments with your group. Each day you listen to several interesting lectures about the different fields of natural resources and spend time playing games like

soccer. After most of the lectures, you get to try using instruments outside with your group. You learn about GPS and GIS and use them to plot a map of the campground. You go on a couple of field trips, including a tour of an operating sawmill.

Two tree care companies came to demonstrate what they do. One company showed us how to prune and plant trees, and the other demonstrated tree climbing. Afterwards, we got to prune a little, plant our own tree, and climb some white oaks with ropes and harnesses.

All through the week we learned about different types of plants and animals as well as ways to collect data. We went through the camp measuring trees and making tables of the trees' density in different areas.

Near the end of the week, we made a park management plan for the camp's property, with the data we had been collecting all week. A management plan is a plan of how to improve an area of land accord-

ing to the owner's wishes. Each group met with a person who said what they would want to do with the property if they owned it. Our owner wanted to make some money by harvesting a few of the trees and also to improve the area for wildlife. He also wanted to grow food plots for wild turkeys in the field.

Our plan was to harvest some of the medium sized hardwoods for lumber and then plant new ones in their place. We would keep the larger trees so they could produce genetically superior offspring and improve the forest. The smaller ones could get bigger without the medium sized trees taking most of the nutrients and sunlight. The new trees could take root in the openings. We noticed a lot of smaller trees that were dead or dying when we were collecting data, so we thought some areas would do better if some openings were created. The turkeys already had most of the things they eat in the field, such as seeds and grasshoppers; so we decided to plant chinquapin bushes as a source of nuts and cover. We presented our man-

agement plan at the end of the week to the assembled parents.

If the owner doesn't want to harvest some trees that need to be removed, it is best just to girdle a few trees and let them stay there. Then when they rot away, they can return the nutrients they took from the soil. But if the owner wants to sell them for timber, it is better for the forest if a management plan is made, rather than having a logger come and cut down everything. Once the plan is made, the owner can't cut down anything else for 15 years, or he loses the tax break he got for the plan.

The camp is a good opportunity to learn and have fun. I learned many interesting facts about plants, animals, and waterways. This experience may help you decide on a future job or a college. I suggest that high school students apply.

Forest Management Programs

Maryland forest landowners may lower their property taxes by enrolling in a forest management program, qualifying for an agricultural assessment, or donating or selling a conservation easement. Two options for a forest management program are offered by Maryland's Department of Assessments and Taxation—a Forest Conservation Management Agreement (FCMA) and a Forest Management Plan (FMP). Neither option impacts the property's fair market value, which is used for assessing estate taxes. To take advantage of a FCMA or FMP, a landowner is required to have a forest stewardship plan for the property, developed by a licensed professional forester in consulta-

tion with the landowner. The plan must meet the basic requirements for a Forest Stewardship program (which requires at least five forested acres) or a Tree Farm program (which requires at least ten forested acres).

Any owner of at least five connected forested acres is eligible to enter into a FCMA with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The plan must outline several forest management activities for completion. It is a legal agreement recorded in land records, binding for 15 years, and renewable. The plan and activities can be modified with the agreement of a State forester. In return, the property is assessed at \$125 per acre for the plan's 15 years. If the plan is not followed, the landowner is assessed penalty taxes for

the years out of compliance.

Although a FMP is not a legal agreement, it also requires a forest stewardship plan. The landowner submits the plan to the county tax assessor. A Maryland registered forester must inspect the land every three years. In 2002, land under a FMP was valued at \$187.50 per acre, which may change during the three-year agreement.

According to a paper written by the University of Maryland's College of Agriculture and Natural Resources: "Forest stewardship is the management of forest resources in a way that meets the needs of the current owners, but does not adversely affect use by future generations. A forest stewardship plan is a working guide

that allows the landowner to maximize the wildlife, timber, recreation, aesthetic value, and other benefits of owning woodland. A good plan combines the natural and physiographic characteristics of the woodlot with the interests and objectives of the owner to produce a set of forest management recommendations. This plan, if followed, should transform the forest into one that is enjoyable and productive for the owner and for future generations."

For more information, check out the Md. Department of Natural Resources website at www.dnr.state.md.us/forests or the Md. Cooperative Extension Service website at www.agnr.umd.edu/MCE.

Wanted: Weed Warriors for Invasive Plant Removal

Learn how to identify and remove the non-native invasive plant species that are creeping into our yards and spreading from roads, trails, and other disturbed areas into our parks and woodlands. Since these weeds grow and spread rapidly and face little opposition to their invasion except from Weed Warriors, they are threatening our native forest ecosystem and even our backyards by smothering, strangling, and out-competing native species and other desirable plants. These pests are difficult to remove and control, and some even attack the Warrior with barbs or thorns.

If you are interested in outings for invasive plant removal, contact Mary Corddry at 410-248-0423 or XxDiTz4LyFxX@aol.com. For non-Sierra Club activities, contact the following organizations for information about training sessions and removal outings:

?? Cromwell Valley Park, call 410-887-2503 Mon–Fri 9-2 or check cvpark@bcpl.net for information about invasive plant removals in the park the 2nd Saturday and 4th Thursday of each month, 9am-noon. Come for great, productive exercise. Tools and refreshments are provided. You may also call to volunteer to participate in trail maintenance outings at the park. Check out the park's varied activities, such as an Owl Prowl on December 9, 4-5:30 p.m.

?? Herring Run Watershed Association, 410-254-1577, volunteer@herringrun.org

?? Irvine Nature Center, 410-484-2413, www.explorenature.org

?? Jones Falls Watershed Association, 410-366-3036, www.jonesfalls.org or email sgreene@jonesfalls.org. Join them for invasive plant removals on the 2nd Saturday of each month, 9:30 –12, at sites in the Jones Falls Watershed.

?? Maryland Native Plant Society, www.mdflora.org

?? Urban Weed Warrior Program, Baltimore City Recreation & Parks, 410-396-0359, weeds@baltimorecity.gov



New Trail Book

Have you been looking for a book that accurately shows the current routing of local trails? Check out 60 Hikes Within 60 Miles - Baltimore by Evan Balkan, published this year by Menasha Ridge Press. It describes trails in Baltimore City and Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, and Howard Counties. For each trail, it has a trail map, description, directions to the trailhead, key at-a-glance data (mileage, hiking time, difficulty, trail surface, etc.), and information about nearby activities.



Area Environmental News

??In June, the Baltimore County Council passed a zoning ordinance to prohibit a liquid natural gas (LNG) terminal from being located within 5 miles of a residential zone. A similar proposal failed to pass the State legislature this year. In September, AES Corporation filed a lawsuit in U.S. District Court to challenge the legality of county's zoning law, which would block its proposal to build an LNG terminal at the former Sparrows Point shipyard. The terminal would be less than 2 miles from houses in Dundalk. AES is expected to file its formal application in December with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

??The MD Nature Recordists Group has been formed for audio ecology—nature recordings. Most of the members are sound engineers. A webpage was created to showcase some of their recordings. Check out www.dannymeltzer.com/mdnr.html.

??Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway Inc. received an \$80,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation to design a plan for a heritage trail network for biking and hiking along 40 miles of roads beside the Susquehanna River in Harford and Cecil Counties. The plan will also be used as an application for a National Scenic

Byway designation, which would lead to more federal funding.

?? According to a September *Farmland Preservation Report*, Montgomery, Carroll, Baltimore, and Harford Counties rank, respectively, 1st, 5th, 7th, and 10th for total saved acres among the nation's farmland preservation programs. Montgomery County transfers development rights, in order to concentrate growth in planned areas.

??An E-Cycling Center opened at Baltimore County's Resource Recovery Facility on Warren Road in Cockeysville. This unloading site for recycling electronic items is open Monday – Saturday from 7 – 4. It accepts TVs, VCRs, DVD players, cell phones, stereos, and computer equipment. Not accepted are microwaves, other household appliances, or business or institutional material. Electronics that are fixable will be reused. Unfixable equipment will be broken down to its component parts and recycled if possible. Previously, 839,000 pounds of electronics were collected on 9 days for recycling electronics in the past 5 years. For more information, call 410-887-2000 or go to www.baltimorecountymd.gov/recycling.

??A Forest Conservation Directive was signed by the Governors of Maryland, Virginia, and Pennsylvania, the Mayor of Washington, D.C., and the Environmental Protection Agency's Administrator. Prompting the Directive is a report on The State of the Chesapeake Forests, published by the Conservation Fund in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forestry Division and various conservation groups. The conclusion is

that, acre for acre, forests are the most beneficial land use for protecting water quality, due to their ability to capture, filter, and retain water, as well as absorb pollution from the air. Loss of forestland contributes to impairment of the Chesapeake Bay. Forests are essential to assuring clean drinking water for the watershed's residents and provide valuable ecological services and economic benefits including assimilation of nitrogen and other pollutants emitted into the air, sequestration of carbon, flood control, and provision of wildlife habitat and forest products. The report can be accessed at: <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/stateoftheforests.htm>.

??In October, public meetings about the Mid-Chesapeake Bay Island Ecosystem Restoration Project were conducted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Maryland Port Administration. Proposed is to place dredged materials, mostly from the approach and navigation channels to the Port of Baltimore and the Honga River area, behind dikes at James Island and Barren Island in Dorchester County. The materials will be shaped and planted to protect the island ecosystem habitat, which provides valuable nesting and nursery areas for many species of fish and wildlife.

??In July, over 40 volunteers from the Jones Falls and Herring Run Watershed Associations participated in the 4th Annual Snapshot, to test water quality at 45 sites in Baltimore City and County. They measured dissolved oxygen, pH, turbidity, and ammonia. See the findings at www.jonesfalls.org.

??The Gunpowder Valley Conservancy was awarded a \$30,000

grant from Baltimore County's Department of Environmental Protection and Resource Management to conduct pilot projects for helping neighborhoods monitor the health of local streams, identify problems, and work with the County to make streams healthier. If you would like someone from the GVC to speak at your community group's next meeting, contact Dave Greene at d7greene@gmail.com.

??Baltimore City reached a deal with the University of Baltimore to lease 48 acres for 80 years. This popular recreational area in Mount Washington near Cylburn Arboretum is used for sports and dog-walking. It is the most significant addition of open space to Baltimore's park system in about 30 years, and preserves the land from development.

??Baltimore County Executive Jim Smith won the County Courthouse Award from the National Association of Counties for government leadership, innovation, and community involvement in enactment of the Renaissance Redevelopment Pilot Program by the County Council in 2004. The program enables the County Council to create "renaissance opportunity areas" where the community is empowered to fast-track specific projects based on a collaborative design process involving the community and a developer. As the first project, the County purchased the rundown and crime-infested Kingsley Park Apartments in Middle River, then held a weeklong, community-driven "charrette" process to develop a legally binding plan for a new community of homes.

Holiday Gift Swap and Recycle

Do you want to recycle cool stuff and participate in a holiday social event? Join the Howard County Group of the Sierra Club for a Gift Swap & Recycle. The event is scheduled for Monday, December 4 at the Howard County Recreation and Parks Headquarters in Columbia, 7:30 – 9:30 p.m. Buy, sell, or trade unwanted gifts or lightly used items. The goal is to encourage reusing and recycling. Attendance and table space are free. Interested sellers should contact Kim Birnbaum, preferably before November 20, at 410-379-1075 or ksmiles@myfastmail.com. From Washington: Take I-95 north, exit on Rt. 32 west, exit on Broken Land Parkway north, 1st right onto Snowden River Parkway, at 3rd light turn right onto Oakland Mills Rd, and just before railroad crossing turn right into parking lot. From Baltimore: Take I-95 south, exit on Rt. 175 west, turn left on Snowden River Parkway, at 3rd light turn left on Oakland Mills Rd., and just before railroad crossing turn right into parking lot.



Do YOU Want To Be On TV?

Well you can. It's easy and it's free. All you have to do is volunteer to answer phones for the Spring pledge drive for Maryland Public Television. There is absolutely no solicitation involved! Donors call in and you take down the information, say thanks, and wait for the next call. Shifts are 4 and ½ hours long, but you only work while on air. The rest of the time you are free to tour the studio, relax, talk, read, or munch. MPT provides a brief training session and refreshments. We are looking for up to 40 volunteers for the night. Wear bright clothes and a brighter smile and bring your friends, family, spouses, significant others, and older children. Unfortunately, pets and humans under 15 years old are not allowed in the studio. Location is in Owings Mills. Stay tuned for the time and day, or call 410-254-7240 AFTER February 15th for details. Learn about the inner workings of local media and kill two birds with one stone by helping to get free publicity for the Sierra Club. You can go home feeling quite smug and noble knowing you have helped your club and public television. After all, if you don't do it, who will?



We Need Your E-mail Addresses!

The Sierra Club is most effective when our members show up at community meetings or hearings or contact their elected officials to voice their opinions and advocate for the environment. We can use e-mail to contact you more than the four times a year this newsletter affords us, in order to let you know about upcoming meetings or important legislation. **If you want to join this environmental hot-mail**, give your e-mail address to Cliff Terry at: Cliff.Terry@maryland.sierraclub.org.

If you don't want to rummage around looking for outings scheduled before each weekend, get on the **e-mail notification list for upcoming outings**. Send your e-mail address to Alan Penczek at: f_pencze@mail.vjc.edu.

Are We M.A.D. Marylanders Against Development?

(Continued from page 1)

lot by lot. It concerns me how rural land is being rezoned and bulldozed for housing developments and strip malls into perpetuity. I don't own any land that I can put in a land trust or in agricultural preservation, but I can support having my taxes go to this public good.

I believe that zero population growth is possible, and imperative. Continuous development and job expansion are neither necessary nor sustainable. Just when we are struggling with land use and public infrastructure issues to address the steadily increasing pressure of population growth, the Pentagon has given us BRAC--Base Realignment and Closure, which greatly intensifies all problems. As BRAC brings

about 40,000 jobs to Maryland, mainly Fort Meade in Anne Arundel County and Aberdeen Proving Ground in Harford County, it may draw 2,146 new households to Baltimore City, 2,438 to Baltimore County, and 8,046 to Harford County over the next decade. Infrastructure to support this incoming population will be paid for with our taxes and the degradation of our environment and quality of life.

This massive population influx will need housing. Although Baltimore City has more than enough vacant housing to meet the demand from job expansion at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Harford County will probably have to provide much of the needed housing, due to its proximity. Already congested roads will become more crowded. Overcrowded schools will sprout more trailers. Public safety is becoming an increasing problem, as

gangs and drug use move out into the countryside. In some areas, wells are already going dry during droughts or are becoming contaminated. Streams are being siphoned off for public water supplies. There will be more pressure for the State's new Flush Tax to fund greatly expanded public sewer systems, rather than just cleaning up discharge from current residents.

Maybe we need to get M.A.D. We need a common vision for the future--for what we want to see as we drive down the roads, what we want to preserve, how we want to live, where we want to live and work. What are our priorities? Once we decide, we need to make it happen.

Follow your beliefs to: Vote. Volunteer. Participate. Lead. Monitor. Research. Report. Lobby. Teach. Speak. Act.

In Search of: More Outings and Outings Leaders

Calling all leaders and outdoors enthusiasts. Help enhance the outings offerings for the Greater Baltimore Area with more activities of all types, locations, and difficulty—hiking, trail maintenance, watershed cleanup, invasive plant removal, tree planting, strolling, nature exploration for children, stargazing, canoeing, tubing, kayaking, bicycling, car camping, backpacking, orienteering, cross country skiing, bird watching. If you are interesting in sharing your outdoors pursuits and special places with others, find out how to get started. Talk to an outings leader. Attend the quarterly Outings Planning Meeting. Participate in an outing. Contact Jack Wise, Outings Chair, at 410-256-3963.

Steps to Becoming an Outings Leader

Experience is not required. You don't need to be a naturalist. Training and mentoring are provided.

??To find out how to get started, contact Jack Wise, Outings Chair, at 410-256-3963. Jack has information and resource materials that are useful for new leaders.

??Outings leaders are required to be a Sierra Club member and at least 18 years old.

??Take the Sierra Club Outings Leader training (Basic OLT 101) or comparable training from a local outings entity. Jack will give you the access codes for the on-line course of the National Sierra Club. The course is available from Jack in hard copy. Also, check out the Maryland Chapter's Chesapeake newsletter for training given by Dan Soeder, the Chapter's Outings Chair.

??Arrange to take a Red Cross basic first aid course or a comparable or higher level course (e.g., wilderness first aid courses offered by Stonehearth Open Learning Opportunities, the Wilderness Safety Council, etc.). Purchase the required first aid kit. The Sierra Club will reimburse you for your expenses. Contact Joyce Fletcher, Outings Treasurer, at 410-254-7240 about reimbursement.

??Provisionally lead at least one outing, accompanied by an experienced outings leader.

??Once you have completed these requirements, inform Jack and contact Bette Thomson, Outings Gatekeeper, at 410-666-2696 or bette@bcpl.net. She will add you to the list of outings leaders.

Participating in Sierra Club Hikes & Other Outings

1. Sierra Club outings are open to everyone—member and non-members. Activities are normally “rain or shine” at the leader's discretion. Check with the leader if the weather appears threatening. Reservations are not required, unless noted in the announcement.
2. Beginners are welcome. If the outing requires experience or good conditioning, this will be stated in the announcement. Call the outing leader if you have questions about the terrain, difficulty, duration, or recommended clothing or equipment.
3. Children under 18 years old must be accompanied by a parent, guardian, or other responsible adult. Call the leader ahead of time to find out if the hike is suitable for children. If older teenagers want to attend without their parents, they must have the outing leader's prior consent and have the Minor Medical Treatment Authorization form and a permission slip signed by their parent/guardian.
4. Dogs and other pets are not allowed on Sierra Club outings, unless the activity is specifically advertised in the announcement as being “dog friendly.”
5. Participants must have the proper clothing, shoes, equipment, and stamina for the event. Bring at least one quart of water with you for every five miles or two hours of hiking. Bring a lunch, snacks, or more. **Always** bring rain gear. In cold weather, dress in layers with synthetics or wool against your skin. Avoid cotton. During hunting season, wear bright clothing; don't impersonate a deer. Wear good hiking boots that support your ankles, which you've broken in **before** the hike. Carry a personal first aid kit. Bring any medications that you may need. A hiking stick can come in handy when crossing streams or navigating slippery or rocky slopes.
6. Practice low impact hiking. Keep on the trail to avoid trampling things or getting hurt.
7. Keep with the group. A “sweep” is usually designated to go last and make sure no one gets lost or runs into trouble.
8. Since there are rarely bathroom facilities, every hour or so the outing leader will announce a “separation”. Men and women walk out of sight of each other to answer Nature's call. Pick a spot at least 200 feet from any water. You may want to bring some toilet tissues, a small spade, and double zip-lock plastic storage bags to carry out any soiled tissues.
9. It is encouraged that outings participants carpool between a meeting place and the trailhead. However, the Sierra Club does not have insurance for carpooling arrangements and assumes no liability. Carpooling is strictly a private arrangement among the participants, who assume full responsibility and liability for all risks associated with such travel.
10. The Greater Baltimore Group suggests a \$1 or \$2 donation to help defray the expenses associated with the outings program.
11. All participants in Sierra Club outings are required to sign a standard liability waiver before the outing begins. If you want to read the waiver beforehand or get a copy of the Minor Medical Treatment Authorization form, see <http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms/index.asp> or call 415-977-5630.



Outings of the Sierra Club Greater Baltimore Group

November 2006 – March 2007

Also, see the outings schedule of the Sierra Club's Howard County Group at: www.maryland.sierraclub.org/bc

NOVEMBER

Sat. Nov. 18 GB – Easy to Moderate. Soldier's Delight (Child/Dog Friendly)

5 miles through woodlands and serpentine grasslands with rock outcrops and abandoned chromite mines in the Soldier's Delight Natural Environmental Area of northern Baltimore County. Learn about this diverse habitat. Children under 18 must be able to walk this distance and be accompanied by a parent or other responsible adult. Dogs must be friendly. Meet at 11 A.M. in the Visitor Center parking lot on Deer Park Road. Call Mary at 410-248-0423.

DECEMBER

Sat. Dec. 2 GB – Moderate.

Glen Ellen – Seminary Trail

7 miles beside Loch Raven Reservoir, along streams, and through woodlands, walking along paths and a fire road. Meet at 11 A.M. on Seminary Ave. to the left off of Dulaney Valley Rd., north of the Baltimore Beltway. Call Mary at 410-248-0423.

Sun. Dec. 10 GB – Moderate.

Gunpowder River Hike

Moderate 6 to 8 miles below Prettyboy Dam. Expect some hills and a rocky area. Meet at Mt. Carmel Park & Ride at 11:00 A.M. Call Jack at 410-256-3963.

JANUARY

Anytime Jan. GB - Moderate.

Cross Country Ski Trips

Ski locally in the Baltimore area or in Western Maryland when there is enough snow. Call Jack at 410-256-3963.

Mon. Jan. 1 GB - Moderate. New Year's Day Hike (Child/Dog Friendly)

Begin the new year with a fresh start by getting up, going outside, and working on those resolutions with this moderate hike around Oregon Ridge Park. The trail is well maintained over somewhat hilly terrain with a number of stream crossings. Distance is about 5 miles. We will see and learn about the quarry, ski slope, amphitheatre, sugar bush, and remnants of the old mining/logging settlements. The area has gone through a number of transformations and is currently resisting encroachment from residential and commercial development. Kid friendly, dog friendly trip with a high risk of enjoyment so be prepared for unbridled fun. Meet at 1 PM at the Nature Center parking lot. Call Joyce at 410 254-7240.

Thurs. Jan. 4 GB - Outings Committee Meeting

Come plan new outings and meet other outings leaders. New and prospective outings leaders are welcome. Pot luck dinner at 6:30 PM. Call Joyce at 410-254-7240.

Sat. Jan. 6 GB – Moderate. Cromwell Valley Park (Child/Dog Friendly)

4 miles in this Baltimore County park that is a working farm with woodlands, hilly meadows, and streams. Learn about the park's historical and natural features, including limestone kilns and a brook bubbling out of the ground. Children under 18 must be accompanied by a parent or other responsible adult. Optional brunch afterwards at Sander's Corner Restaurant. Meet at 11 A.M. in the parking lot beside the house in the park's Sherwood Farm section on Cromwell Bridge Road off of Loch Raven Boulevard. Call Mary at 410-248-0423.

John Muir, founder of the Sierra Club, said: "If people in general could be got into the woods, even for once, to hear the trees speak for themselves, all difficulties in the way of forest preservation would vanish."

FEBRUARY

Sat. Feb. 3 GB - Moderate. Great Falls Hike and Dinner

History meets nature at Great Falls section of the C&O Canal in Potosi, MD. We will examine how the canal and locks were constructed and operated. We will take the boardwalk to the Great Falls overlook on Olmsted Island. Length of hike will be 4 miles or less depending on weather and condition of trails. Entrance fee required. There will be a dinner stop in Rockville after the hike. Meet at 1:00 PM at the South West Park & Ride (for map to park & ride see http://www.mtmaryland.com/services/sports/ravens/New_Southwest_Map.cfm). Call Bill for details at 410-574-1453.

Sat. Feb. 10 GB - Easy. Urban Trot (Dog/Child Friendly)

Easy walk of about 5 miles around Lake Montebello and Herring Run Park. We will skirt by the water filtration plant and learn about the treatment process and the recreational improvements being made to the lake area, descend into the stream valley, and return through a beautifully designed and well maintained neighborhood of posh houses and lush gardens. Good cushioned walking shoes recommended as we will be on paved surfaces most of the way. As usual, all are welcome. Optional lunch stop afterwards at a local pub. Meet at the parking lot on the corner of Hillen Road, 33rd Street and Curran Drive at 10 AM. Call Joyce at 410-254-7240.

Fri. - Mon. Feb. 16-19 GB - Moderate. Cross Country Skiing in Western Maryland

Cross country skiing at New Germany State Park. If not enough snow, day hikes will be held. For details, call Jack by February 3rd (if possible) at 410-256-3963.

Sat. Feb. 24 GB – Moderate. Gunpowder at Belair Rd. (Child/Dog Friendly)

4 miles along the Gunpowder River. Learn how river habitat changes in the winter. Dress for the weather. Children under 18 must be accompanied by a parent or other responsible adult. Meet at 11 A.M. in the parking lot for the trails on Belair Road, on the north side of bridge over the river. Call Mary at 410-248-0423.

Sun. Feb. 25 GB - Moderate. Local Cross Country Skiing

If not enough snow, a hike will be held. Meet at Loch Raven High School – Cromwell Bridge Road and Cowpens Avenue at 11:00 AM. Call Jack at 410-256-3963.

MARCH

Sat. Mar. 3 GB - Easy. Jerusalem Mill

Good beginner hike: 2.5 miles with optional additional mile to a covered bridge. Easy-paced but may be muddy. Bring water and lunch. Meet at Jerusalem Mill parking lot on Jerusalem Road at 10:00 AM. For details, call Betsy at 410-569-5202.

Fri. Mar. 9 GB - Easy. Happy Hour

Join fellow members (and non-members) for a relaxing evening at Bill Bateman's to meet and mingle. Happy hour runs from 5 to 7 PM. Located at 8810 Waltham Woods Road at North Plaza Mall off Joppa Road (Beltway exit 30). Call Joyce at 410 254-7240.

Sat. Mar. 24 GB – Moderate. Loch Raven (Child/Dog Friendly)

4 miles through woodlands and along the drive at Loch Raven Reservoir. Learn how watershed habitat changes in the winter. Dress for the weather. Children under 18 must be accompanied by

a parent or other responsible adult. Meet at 11 A.M in the parking area on Morgan Mill Road off of Loch Raven Drive. Call Mary at 410-248-0423.

Sat. Mar. 31 GB - Moderate. North Point State Park: From Carousels to Conservation

Explore the history of this southeastern Baltimore County state park that was once the site of a popular amusement park. Hike approximately 5 flat miles with a stop at the park visitor center to look at old photographs. Park is located off of Old North Point Road in Edgemere. Meet at parking lot near park entrance (entrance fee required) at 10:00 AM. Call Bill for details at 410-574-1453



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