



# Baltimore Sierran

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

February 2010

**Sierra Club Mission: Explore, enjoy and protect the planet**

## Opportunities for Involvement (see inside for more information):

- ◆ April 3 - Project Clean Stream
- ◆ April 15, 7:30 p.m. – GB Sierra Club Executive Committee Public Meeting
- ◆ April 17 - Ecofest and April 15-24 – Baltimore Green Week
- ◆ April 22, 6:15 p.m. – GB Sierra Club Outings Planning Meeting
- ◆ April 22, Earth Day, 6:30 p.m. – Potluck and Slide Show
- ◆ 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month - Young Sierrans Socials
- ◆ Saturday after 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month – Young Sierrans Outings
- ◆ See Outings Schedule in newsletter and on website

## Volunteer to:

- ◆ If you want to get involved with local environmental action but don't know how to get started, contact Caroli Mullen, GB Membership Chair, at 410-366-6953 or [carolimullen@verizon.net](mailto:carolimullen@verizon.net).
- ◆ Volunteer to get involved with political action at the State or local level. Contact Janet Schollenberger, GB Political Chair, at 443-386-5054 or [jscholle4@yahoo.com](mailto:jscholle4@yahoo.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 Bob Burchard at [bobburchard@yahoo.com](mailto:bobburchard@yahoo.com). Check out the Baltimore Inner City Outings at [www.ico.sierraclub.org/Baltimore](http://www.ico.sierraclub.org/Baltimore)

**Save the Date:** Sunday March 7. At 12:30 PM preceded by lunch at noon. A community forum on energy efficiency and how to save on your energy bills. Cosponsored by a coalition of environmental organizations, including the Greater Baltimore Sierra Club, at Messiah Lutheran Church on O'Donnell Square in the Canton neighborhood of Baltimore City.

## Earth Day Potluck Social and Slide Show

By Joyce Fletcher

The Greater Baltimore Group's next potluck will be on Earth Day, April 22<sup>nd</sup>. Tired of weeding, fertilizing, and babying your garden plants along only to have them droop, yellow, then pass over into the great compost pile in the sky? Want more time to enjoy your garden rather than spend it cajoling exotic plants to grow, then worry that they won't make it through our muggy summers and freezing winters? Or worse, they will spread like wildfire and take over. Launch into spring with a short introduction to native gardens.

Kim Barnes, a Master Gardener and member of the Native Plant Society and Wiltondale Garden Club, will give a talk on how to design gardens using plants native to Maryland. She will teach how natives benefit wildlife and habitats, how to



Photo by Sherry Dowdell

work natives into an existing garden, and where to find and buy plants. Come early and bring a dish to the potluck, then stay and learn how to plant a low maintenance garden to enjoy all year.

Bring a dish (with serving utensils) to share to the potluck. It can be anything you enjoy whether homemade or store-bought, sweet or savory. We will have plates, napkins, and drinks. The potluck and talk are open to all ages with an appetite for

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## HARFORD COUNTY UPDATE

By Ron Henry, Chapter Chair

Many thanks to Carol Nau, a Sierran who moved into Harford County last year and has been active with both the Sierra Club's Greater Baltimore Group (GBG) and the Friends of Harford (FOH). With FOH, Carol was a lead in evaluating Harford County's transportation plans, submitting comments, and participating in presentations with FOH at County meetings.

Carol also took the lead initiating and meeting with a group in early December 2009 to explore assembling a GBG Harford/Cecil Conservation Section. Sierra Club members in attendance were Carol Nau, Ron Henry, Chris Yoder, Mike Burns (Cecil), and Alana Wase, our MD Chapter Conservation Coordinator. Plans for a February meeting to continue this effort are in the making.

Carol will be in contact with both Harford and Cecil Sierrans with a meeting location and date and a presentation of issues and campaigns that apply to and are linked with National, MD Chapter, GBG and Harford/Cecil priorities. Please be proactive

with these plans when contacted by Carol or others, reserve the date, attend, and get this much-needed project underway. Despite the downturn in the economy, it is imperative that Harford/Cecil Sierra Club members become well organized and well-functioning. The BRAC and related changes in land use, highway projects, and increased commercial and residential development impacts associated with increased missions at Aberdeen Proving Ground are going to make tremendous environmental differences in these Upper Chesapeake Bay counties. For the sake of our future generations, let's ensure that those changes are as environmentally friendly as possible – our children and their offspring deserve it!

## SAVE THE ROCKS OF DEER CREEK CAMPAIGN

During the early part of December 2009, Deborah Bowers, a Harford County resident, became aware of State Highway Administration (SHA) plans for widening MD Route 24 through Rocks State Park.

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## GREATER BALTIMORE GROUP SIERRA CLUB CONTACTS

**Chris Yoder, GB Group Chair**  
5701 Rusk Ave.  
Baltimore, MD 21215  
E-mail: [chris.yoder@mdsierra.org](mailto:chris.yoder@mdsierra.org)  
410-466-2462

**Greater Baltimore Group:**

[www.maryland.sierraclub.org/baltimore](http://www.maryland.sierraclub.org/baltimore)

**Group Facebook:**

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=76458501970>

**Young Sierrans Website:**

<http://maryland.sierraclub.org/baltimore/youngsierrans>

**Young Sierrans Email:**

[youngsierrans@gmail.com](mailto:youngsierrans@gmail.com)

**Young Sierrans Facebook:**

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=51601732426>

**Baltimore Inner City Outings:**

<http://www.ico.sierraclub.org/baltimore/>

NAME	PHONE/EMAIL	POSITION
Bob Burchard	410-744-0510 <a href="mailto:bobburchard@yahoo.com">bobburchard@yahoo.com</a>	Inner City Outings Co-Chair Cool Cities – Baltimore County Ex Com Member
Mary C. Corddry	410-239-4590 443-386-0862 cell <a href="mailto:XdTz4LyFxX@aol.com">XdTz4LyFxX@aol.com</a>	Newsletter Co-Editor (copy)
Sherry Dowdell	410-852-8901 <a href="mailto:sierrasherry@comcast.net">sierrasherry@comcast.net</a>	Newsletter Co-Editor (design)
Doug Gaede	410-357-0007 <a href="mailto:sierra@gaede.net">sierra@gaede.net</a>	Webmaster
Kathy Harget	410-440-9896 <a href="mailto:hargetk@yahoo.com">hargetk@yahoo.com</a>	Young Sierrans Chair Ex Com Member
Katja Kjelgaard	<a href="mailto:kkjelgaard@verizon.net">kkjelgaard@verizon.net</a>	Interim Treasurer
Patrick McMahon	410-599-5123 <a href="mailto:Patrick@mcmahon.com">Patrick@mcmahon.com</a>	Transportation Chair Interim Secretary Ex Com Member
Caroli Mullen	410-366-6953 <a href="mailto:carolimullen@verizon.net">carolimullen@verizon.net</a>	Social Justice Chair Membership Chair Ex Com Member
Paul Schoen	410-667-4889 <a href="mailto:paul@peschoen.com">paul@peschoen.com</a>	Group Vice-Chair Ex Com Member
Janet Schallenberger	443-386-5054 <a href="mailto:jscholle4@yahoo.com">jscholle4@yahoo.com</a>	Group Rep.- Chapter Ex Com Political Chair Ex Com Member
Cliff Terry	410-944-9477 <a href="mailto:Cliff.Terry@maryland.sierraclub.org">Cliff.Terry@maryland.sierraclub.org</a>	Population Chair
Bette Thomson	410-666-2696 <a href="mailto:bette888@verizon.net">bette888@verizon.net</a>	Outings Gatekeeper
Jack Wise	410-256-3963 <a href="mailto:Hikingjack@Netzero.net">Hikingjack@Netzero.net</a>	Outings Chair Ex Com Member
Charles (Chris) Yoder	410-466-2462 <a href="mailto:chris.yoder@mdsierra.org">chris.yoder@mdsierra.org</a>	Group Chair Ex Com Member

### February 2010 From the Chair

What you missed because we don't have your e-mail address.

One of the most important opportunities for Maryland citizens to influence the Maryland Assembly's consideration of legislation affecting our environment was the January 26 Legislative Summit organized by a coalition of environmental groups including your Sierra Club. Unfortunately, details of time and place were not decided before the deadline for your last newsletter. This newsletter won't be delivered until after the event. If your Club didn't have your e-mail address, we couldn't tell you about the event.

Alison Chin, National President of the Sierra Club, was scheduled to speak at the Anne Arundel Group's annual potluck on January 30. Deadline and production schedules meant that if we didn't have your e-mail address, you missed the opportunity hear her speak.

If we didn't have your e-mail address, you missed the opportunity to get a first-hand introduction to Maryland's Mattawoman Creek, the Bay's most ecologically sound tributary, and your Chapter's campaign to protect it from onrushing development.

You missed the opportunity to hear the chair of the Club's national grazing committee speak about environmental damage to your public lands and what you can do to protect them. You didn't know about a February 3 symposium on transportation issues or the January 31 program on the dangers of nuclear energy and safer cheaper alternatives. We couldn't tell you about a February 2 program on Global Warming.

Baltimore Sierrans are blessed with one of the finest Group newsletters in Maryland, if not our nation. We all owe a debt to Mary Corddry and



Photo by David Rader

Sherry Dowdell for the countless hours and masterful skills they devote to the editing and production of the newsletter you now read.

But, skilled and dedicated as they are, Mary and Sherry have not the power to vanquish the immutable march of the calendar. Your newsletter reaches your home only four times a year. That gap of time between issues, as well as the time needed to bridge the gap between the deadline for articles and delivery to your home, means that you won't find out about many of the opportunities available to you to transform your interest in protecting our planet into effective action.

We don't share e-mail addresses with anyone. We don't spam you. Club policy limits the Chapter to two messages a month and the Group to the same number. It doesn't take long to delete a message if you are not interested.

I know that not every Sierran wants to, or even can, answer every call to action or respond to every opportunity to expand his or her horizons. But I do hope you would like to know the opportunities and options available to you. E-mail is the best way we have to keep you informed. Share your e-mail address with the Club (e-mail me at [chris.yoder@mdsierra.org](mailto:chris.yoder@mdsierra.org)) and open the door to more timely information and opportunity for action.

Chris Yoder, Chair

## 2010 Maryland Legislative Session Underway

By Janet Schollenberger, GB Political Chair

Legislative session 2010 of the Maryland General Assembly is underway. The Environmental Summit on January 26 at St. Johns College in Annapolis marked the kick-off of efforts in support of a variety of environmental bills. Special interests opposing some of these bills will be fierce, so assistance from individual Sierra Club members is critical in getting these bills passed. Writing letters to your representatives is most effective. If you have time, plan a visit to the office of your representative. For updates on proposed legislation, more detailed information, the names of your General Assembly representatives, or letter-writing talking points, contact Janet Schollenberger at [jscholle4@yahoo.com](mailto:jscholle4@yahoo.com) or 443-386-5054.

The Sierra Club's Legislative Committee has prioritized a variety of energy bills and waste reduction bills this year.

### Public Disclosure of Energy Use in Buildings

#### *Environmental Challenge*

In the United States, buildings are responsible for 40% of our greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption, larger than any other sector. The Sierra Club is working with the Institute for Market Transformation, which helped pass a similar bill in New York, the District of Columbia, and other places.

#### *Bill Framework*

Sponsored by Senator Lenett from Montgomery County and Delegate Stein of Baltimore County, this bill requires that the energy use of all government and commercial buildings be disclosed in a publicly accessible online database. Citizens will be able to see how buildings in the State rank from most efficient to least efficient. Energy efficiency is determined through the Environmental Protection Agency's free Energy Star Program, which provides each participant with an energy star rating as well as recommendations for improvement. This is a simple and inexpensive step to reducing energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions while yielding a cost savings.

### Promotion of Renewable Energy Environmental Challenge

Currently, the vast majority of Maryland's electricity is produced by coal-fired power plants. Coal is a dirty energy source that emits large amounts of greenhouse gases and particulate matter, contributing to global warming as well as public health problems such as respiratory troubles. Our State needs to focus on supplying power for people's homes and businesses with clean, renewable energy, which would help the quality of our air and water and give our State an economic boost. Fortunately, the potential is immense for harnessing the power of clean energy in our State.

#### *Bill Framework*

Legislation this session that will promote clean energy includes the following:

- Establish a clean energy loan program so people can pay for solar panels over long periods of time, making solar energy affordable for the average homeowner.
- For homes and businesses with solar panels that generate more power than they use, require the local utility to pay them for their excess power.
- Require Maryland utilities to negotiate long-term contracts with renewable energy providers.



### Comprehensive Energy Planning Environmental Challenge

Amazingly, there is no statewide plan for where our energy should come from. When the electricity industry was deregulated in 1999, long-range planning halted. The Public Service Commission (PSC) now decides on energy company proposals one at a time without comparing them to a clear statewide vision.

The PSC also does not have a clear mandate to make sure the proposals it approves are in line with the State's environmental laws and goals. Marylanders worked hard to pass the nation's most ambitious cap on global warming pollution in the spring of 2009. We cannot let that law get undermined by the approval of dirty energy projects. It is imperative to have a long-term plan in place to achieve the goals set out by the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Act and other environmental laws in Maryland.

#### *Bill Framework*

This bill would require the PSC to oversee the creation of a State energy plan that is consistent with all of the State's environmental laws. The PSC would then be required to follow that plan when considering proposals from energy companies and to consider each proposal's environmental impact with respect to State environmental laws such as the Greenhouse Gas Reductions Act.

### Waste Reduction

There are a number of bills that we know will be introduced this session that we will support:

- A bill to charge a 5 cent fee for plastic and paper bags, similar to the legislation being implemented in DC.
- A bill to mandate recycling in bars and restaurants.
- A bill to require counties to set up a program for recycling CFL's.
- A bill to require the PSC to consider water-saving devices in energy conservation programs.

**State budget priorities** – the Chesapeake Bay Fund, Program Open Space, and Maryland Strategic Energy Fund are among the programs that will be cut without a formidable effort of the coalition.

**Transportation** - reforming the process for deciding which projects are included on the list for planning. Mass transportation is often overlooked in the process of prioritizing projects for funding.

**Stormwater** - implementing a stormwater utility fee in each county, related to the amount of impervious surface, and implementing systems to track the amount of impervious surface in each county and by watershed. There is no doubt that development poses a major threat to the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. No real progress will be made in restoring our waterways without managing the amount of impervious surface.

Additional bills are supported by a coalition of 20 environmental organizations, including the Sierra Club. All of these bills remain the coalition's priority so we are working on these in conjunction with the other bills. At the time you receive this newsletter, the details of these bills will have been worked out. If interested, contact Janet Schollenberger for more information.

## Election 2010 - Opportunity to Shape Your Future

By Chris Yoder, Group Chair

In the 2008 session of Maryland's General Assembly, a strong Global Warming Solutions Act went down to defeat. While Sierrans can take some comfort in the Green House Gas Reduction Act that passed in the Assembly's 2009 session, the most significant product of that achievement will be a plan that will mean nothing unless the plan is endorsed by the Assembly in 2016. In short, the Assembly elected in 2006 punted on what may be the most significant issue of the century.

In the primary election this fall, political parties will choose their candidates for the November general election. At each stage, participation and campaign action by Sierrans will help determine if the next Assembly will actively support measures to protect our environment. Members of the Greater Baltimore Group will have a vote for almost 34% of Maryland's State Senate and over 30% of the House of Delegates. These legislators will not answer to the voters again for four years. Our votes and our action will have a major impact on the legislation that will shape the environment we bequeath to our children and grandchildren.

Many of the decisions that produced the deplorable state of the Chesapeake Bay were made by our County Councils and Executives. Many of the decisions that created an automobile-centric culture and automobile-dependent lives are the product of decisions made by County planning and zoning boards. This year's election provides Sierrans with an opportunity to help shape the decisions of the future by shaping the composition of County government.

In Maryland's first Congressional District, the 2008 election saw a contest between a candidate who denies the existence of global warming and a candidate who understands the importance of protecting the planet. This fall we can expect a rematch.

Unlike for most environmental organizations, contributions to the Sierra Club are not tax-deductible. This is because we work to have a direct impact on the composition of elected government by organizing and working to elect or defeat candidates for public office. However, our effectiveness is determined by the willingness of our members to commit their time (and money) to shape the future. Janet Schollenberger (443-386-5054 [jscholle4@yahoo.com](mailto:jscholle4@yahoo.com)) chairs our Group's Political Committee. Contact her to find out how you can help ensure this election returns candidates who will protect our environment to Washington, Annapolis, and our county seats.

## Baltimore County Sustainability Progress

By Bob Burchard

(adapted from the January 2010 Executive Summary of the Baltimore County Sustainability Network's County Operations Recommendations)

Baltimore County Executive Jim Smith established the Office of Sustainability in 2008, to oversee the development and implementation of sustainability strategies for County operations and the community at-large. David Carroll was appointed Director. Additionally, a Sustainability Network (SN), an advisory committee of citizens, private sector, and county representatives, was tasked to work with the Director. The SN established four working groups:

- Natural resources management
- Operations of County facilities
- Our built environment
- Education and outreach

Each work group called in technical or operational advisors from County departments as well as the private sector to better understand how the County operates and the approaches taken by other organizations or jurisdictions. County departments were asked to prepare an inventory of existing and planned programs that they believed could be classified as sustainable approaches to specific operations. A major SN goal is to achieve a 10% greenhouse gas reduction from 2006 levels by 2012, consistent with the State's goal. The County Executive has endorsed this goal.

In June 2009 the work groups reported 121 recommendations, of which the following 12 were identified as critical:

### 1. Baseline Information and Policy Adoption

- Complete the baseline greenhouse gas emissions inventory for all County entities.
- Create a comprehensive energy policy/plan for County operations and community-wide.
- Adopt and implement a no-net-loss trees and forestry policy.

### 2. Implementing Energy Efficiency and Conservation with Employees and County Operations

- Hire a County energy coordinator.
- Develop department energy champions to report back to department heads/Director of Sustainability/County Executive the status of conservation programs, next steps, etc.



- Develop a professionally designed, effective, on-going energy conservation plan/program for all County employees, to be made available as a turnkey model that can be utilized by other County public and private organizations. This would include an assessment of the implementation of recycling at all government facilities.
  - Provide training and the capacity for technical and operations personnel to understand and implement energy savings techniques, LEED standards, etc.
  - Maximize efficiency in operation of all County vehicles.
- ### 3. Implementing Audits, Building and Landscaping Standards
- Analyze and prioritize buildings for audits to determine comprehensive reductions in energy usage.
  - Have all County buildings, either new construction or renovated, meet the LEED silver standard, or be implemented in a way to maximize efficiency that meets LEED guidelines.
  - Develop and implement conservation landscaping measures for County buildings and new and redevelopment projects.
- ### 4. Addressing Employee Commute Options
- Actively promote Commuter Choice Maryland and other programs to give employees a variety of options to reduce vehicle miles traveled. Work with the private sector when appropriate.

Based on the above recommendations, the County has recently received a \$7.4 million U.S. Department of Energy (DoE) *Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant*. This will support development during 2010 of the community-wide sustainability strategy by the SN, County staff, and outside consultants. Input from community groups, conservation organizations, and the business sector will be actively sought.

We look forward to receiving the full reports of the Sustainability Network.

## Nominees for the Executive Committee of the Greater Baltimore Sierra Club

The Sierra Club's Greater Baltimore Group has two vacancies on its nine-member Executive Committee (Ex Com), which provides direction and leadership for the Group's diverse activities from fighting global warming, to advocating for legislation and local conservation issues, to reviewing candidates for public office, to outings. The Ex Com meets quarterly at a public meeting, which is advertised in this newsletter, and communicates regularly by telephone and email.

Members of the Greater Baltimore Group vote for the Ex Com. Following are the biographies of members who volunteered to run for election. To vote, email or mail your selections to the Group's Chair, Chris Yoder, by **April 8**.

### **Jim Bonnett**

I am running for the position of an at-large member of the Greater Baltimore Executive Committee. I have been a member of the Sierra Club for going on 41 years. I was outings chairman for the Seattle Group from 1977 through 1981. I organized outings for the Seattle Group during that time period. I was also on the Greater Baltimore Group Ex Com in the early 2000's. Also, I have been active in the population committee of the Maryland Chapter.

A few of the issues I am interested in working on as an Ex Com member include:

- issues that are important to the Group in Annapolis
- outreach to candidates for political office that are supportive of Sierra Club goals
- decreasing our dependence on fossil fuels
- striving for a clean energy future
- the problems of overpopulation at all levels

I am also very concerned about the future of light rail in the Greater Baltimore Area.

## Ballot for Winter 2010 Election for Vacancies on the Executive Committee of the Sierra Club's Greater Baltimore Group (vote for no more than two)

\_\_\_\_ Jim Bonnett

\_\_\_\_ Joyce Wolpert

Send to:

Chris Yoder at [chris.yoder@mdsierra.org](mailto:chris.yoder@mdsierra.org) or  
5701 Rusk Ave., Baltimore, MD 21215

### **Joyce Wolpert**

I am Joyce Wolpert of Baltimore City, a Sierra Club member for many years, taking part in some day hikes and last spring a lovely canoe trip on the Patuxent. For the first time, this past summer, I went on a national Sierra Club trip, a week of canoeing, hiking and camping in Montana. What a glorious, well-organized, renewing and healing experience.

I would like to introduce a healing element in Club activities. I am a Movement Therapist and Licensed Counselor who uses nature imagery and im-

mersion in my efforts to help people feel stronger and more alive. While enjoyment of the outdoors and physical exercise are already part of the Sierra experience, I would also facilitate bringing body-mind healing methods to help soothe the jangled nerves and bruised egos that many of us tote around. I think this can contribute to people's quest for wholeness and meaning and stay in line with the Club's overall mission. I am a hard worker who brings focus and passion to whatever I am involved with.

## HARFORD COUNTY UPDATE

*(Continued from page 1)*

She then attended two SHA poorly publicized "public meetings" later in December. It became apparent that the planned changes were, in her words, "monstrous"! In early January 2010, she set up an ad hoc committee meeting at her residence and invited various community and environmental groups to attend. Her research findings and her personal video defining the planned SHA changes provided very convincing evidence that the SHA plans did not address the central issue of stream bank erosion – the core issue needing correction. The opposition of the ad hoc group, that included FOH and Sierra Club members, was unanimous.

A publicity committee was formed, a Facebook site was developed, and contacts were made to all Harford County State Delegates, State Senator Glassman, County Executive Craig, and County Council members to request their investigation and position. Within less than two weeks, the Facebook site received in excess of **5,700** comments. The vast majority of respondents gave either thoughtful opposition or angry, defiant comments that adamantly opposed the current SHA plan. County Councilman Chad Shrodes, Delegate Donna Stifler, and State Senator Glassman, whose districts include the

Rocks State Park, have come on board opposing the plan.

Two newspaper Letters to the Editor articles were printed in the Harford County *Aegis* paper and one in the *Baltimore Sun* (January 19, 2009). As a result of these efforts, the SHA is re-evaluating the project, has committed to considering a new range of alternatives based on public comments, and will present its new range of alternatives at a public meeting later (around September) this year.

The Sierra Club will continue working on this issue, as members of the "Save The Rocks" Committee. This will be a continuous, proactive effort until the next SHA presentation, to ensure compliance with all environmental issues and citizen concerns.

The "Rocks Area of Deer Creek" is a place of special natural scenic beauty, with beautiful hillsides of unique rock formations. Two of them are called the "King and Queen's Seats," facing each other on opposite sides of the creek and used by indigenous Native Americans as sacred ceremonial sites. The area was designated as a State Park to preserve these aspects as well as the historical values of the region itself.

For further information, please visit the Facebook website called "Save The Rocks", contact Deborah Bowers of the Save The Rocks Committee, or contact our local Sierra Club members serving on the committee, as follow:

Deborah Bowers – E-Mail: [farmland-pres@gmail.com](mailto:farmland-pres@gmail.com)

Carol Nau - H: 410-692-0610; E-Mail: [nau.carol@gmail.com](mailto:nau.carol@gmail.com)

Jack Dettner – H: 410-638-1433; E-Mail: [jdettner@comcast.net](mailto:jdettner@comcast.net)

Ron Henry – C: 443-474-744; E-Mail: [RonL-Henry@msn.com](mailto:RonL-Henry@msn.com)

## Baltimore County's Wetlands of Special State Concern Preliminary Progress Report

By Janet Schollenberger

*Our findings illustrate how small wetlands are a microcosm of the stressed condition of our natural environment caused by the far-reaching negative impact of human activity.*

*This preliminary report represents the first steps in WSSC activities. If you would like to get involved to help restore and preserve these and other WSSCs, please contact Janet Schollenberger (jscholle4@yahoo.com).*

In our last newsletter, I reported on the Sierra Club's collaborative effort with the University of Maryland to study Wetlands of Special State Concern (WSSC) in Baltimore County. Today, I am delighted to report that we have made progress after completing field assessments of seven WSSCs. Many thanks go to the graduate students of the University of Maryland's Problem Solving Team-- Daniel Brizuela, Matthew Erdman, Janine Harris, and James Stillwell, who researched and developed a methodology for collecting data and evaluating these wetlands. Each brought to this project a terrific amount of knowledge, technical skills, and all around enthusiasm on the field trips.

This project was conceived by members of the Greater Baltimore Sierra Club who believe that if we are to protect the Chesapeake Bay and our drinking water supplies, action should be directed at both small and large environmental habitats. Wetlands of all sizes act like sponges. They slow down and retain runoff from surrounding properties and roads, a vitally important function in a time of heavy rainfall or rapid snow melts. Wetlands with good organic soil also soak up excessive sediments, nutrients, and other pollutants, thereby preventing these substances



from entering local streams, rivers, and reservoirs. If stressed or damaged by human activity, a wetland cannot perform its water gatekeeper duties. So, no matter if the wetland is as large as the pristine Mattawoman tributary in Charles County, or the impaired, urbanized Harbor Watershed east of Baltimore City, or a little swamp in northern Baltimore County. Collectively, wetlands are vital for sustaining healthy aquatic habitats for wildlife and a safe source of clean drinking water for human consumption.

In 2002, the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) estimated that 4,000 acres of wetlands remain in Baltimore County, representing merely 1% of the County's total land mass. These wetlands make up an intertwined network of nature's workhorses positioned in coastal plains, forests, and meadows and within headwaters and floodplains of streams and rivers. They can be permanently flooded in submerged aquatic beds, tidally flooded by the bay or tidal rivers, or seasonally flooded by non-tidal rivers and streams or groundwater springs. The most common type of wetland in Baltimore County is seasonally flooded meadows that were forested but later cleared.

Wetlands of Special State Concern are non-tidal wetlands, consisting of swamps or small streams that eventually lead to a nearby river or

reservoir. What sets these wetlands apart for special State protection is their exceptional ecological value due to their beauty and natural diversity of wildlife and native plants that are now rare or threatened. These wetlands and expanded buffers of 100 feet are regulated by the MDE to prevent clearing, filling, excavating, flooding, or draining without its approval.

***Summary of our observations characterizes most of these wetlands impacted by invasive plant species, intersecting roadways, litter, or other human projects.***

***Pikall River Bank.*** Straddled between Baltimore County and Howard County in Patapsco State Park, this wetland is a prime example of a forested wetland containing many diverse plant species and clear streams. It resides in a valley between the Patapsco River and an operational railroad. Although it rained non-stop on the day of our field trip, we remained steadfast in making the descent into the river valley. It was hard to tell where the wetland was situated, as most of the area was saturated with the day's rain and filled with standing water in some areas. Situated in the middle of the park, this wetland well was shielded from the litter and debris that often comes from local commercial and residential developments. Nevertheless, remnants of dead invasive Japanese Stiltgrass and hardy residential garden

-variety shrubbery (Japanese Barberry) were reminders of the far reaching impact of human activity.

***Gwynn Falls North.*** This wetland consists of a small swamp located in an electric utility easement between the Patapsco River and Owings Mills Blvd. There were no visible pollutants or sedimentation in the standing water of the wetland itself, despite its close proximity to Owings Mills Blvd and to a utility easement access ramp. Nearby was an eroded stream bank with leftover plastic fencing, evidence of some possible restoration activity. A small amount of litter, such as paint brushes and mirrors, most likely thrown from the roadside, was scattered in the area. Again, invasive plant species were quite evident within and outside the wetland. Amongst the trees growing in the water, we found poison ivy and multi-flora rose. Mile a minute, honeysuckle, and garlic mustard grew abundantly in the surrounding area of the wetland.

***Big Gunpowder Falls.*** A concrete walkway underneath I-95 north provided access to this WSSC, a stark contrast to this forested area along the Gunpowder River. The wetland is bordered one side by the Gunpowder River and on the other side by a large hillside dotted with private homes at the top. The most striking characteristics of this site included a large free-standing pond, approximately 80 feet in diameter, possibly created by an old quarry. Another feature was its unnatural topography that included a series of water channels, signs of a possible mill built in an earlier century. There were some identifiable native plants. Unfortunately, there were also large patches of garden-variety plants, such as daffodils and pacasandra, most likely spread from the residential yards.

***Putty Hill.*** Believe it or not, a WSSC has managed to survive not far from Belair Road, just north of the Baltimore Beltway. It is situated within an electrical utility easement and separated by a county roadway.

*(Continued on page 10)*

## 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, April 15, 7:30 – 9:30 p.m.** at the Maryland Presbyterian Church near Towson. Come to participate in the discussions and planning.

Directions to the Maryland Presbyterian Church: 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 Public Meeting

New and prospective outings leaders are welcome to attend the next quarterly meeting of the Greater Baltimore Group's Outings Committee on **Thursday, April 22** at the Oregon Ridge Nature Center. 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. The meeting will be held at 6:15 p.m. before the Group's Earth Day potluck social at 6:30 p.m. and a slide show at 7:15. See the first page of this newsletter for directions and details about the potluck social.



Photo by Sherry Dowdell

### Earth Day Potluck Social and Slide Show

*(Continued from page 1)*

food and facts. So grab a friend or two and come to stuff yourself silly and find out about planting the garden you've dreamed about.

We will be at the Oregon Ridge Nature Center from 6:30 to 9 PM (talk beginning at 7:15) on Thursday, April 22. The Nature Center is at 13555 Beaver Dam Road and can be reached from the Shawan Road West exit (#20B) from I-83. Take Shawan Road to the traffic light at Beaver Dam Road, make a left and stay to the right, following the road up to the nature center's parking lot past the swimming area. The nature center is a short walk uphill. Call Joyce at 410-254-7240 if you need further details.

Many thanks to Oregon Ridge for the use of the Nature Center for our winter potluck in January. Many thanks to our substitute speaker, Laurel Imlay, who came up from the Sierra Club Maryland Chapter's office in College Park on such short notice to talk about protecting Massawoman Creek in Charles County from development issues. Many get well wishes to our scheduled speaker, Dale Shelton, who was very ill and was forced to postpone his presentation. The geology talk will be rescheduled later this year. As always, a special thanks goes out to those who attended in spite of a winter storm forecast.

### Join the Young Sierrans

By Kathy Harget, Chair of Young Sierrans

Join the Young Sierrans (generally ages 25-45) for Socials, Day Hikes, & Other Outings. With more than 200 people on the email list, the Young Sierrans attract between 10 and 25 people from all around the Baltimore area to each outing. Our group includes many city dwellers, so we usually meet at the City Cafe in Mount Vernon for carpooling to our hikes and outings.

We also gather for libations and socializing on the second Thursday of every month at 7:30 PM, usually at a city watering hole like Rocket to Venus, Midtown Yacht Club, Joe Squared, or Club Charles.

Each spring we also do at least one service event. And in between the regular monthly events, we get together for fun and to support and learn about various environmental causes and city issues. We have four certified outings leaders, and we're always looking for new ideas and leaders.

For more information and details on upcoming outings, please visit our website: <http://maryland.sierraclub.org/baltimore/youngsierrans>. You can also feel free to contact the Chair of this group, Kathy, at [youngsierrans@gmail.com](mailto:youngsierrans@gmail.com), or 410-440-9896. Hope to see you on the trail or at one of our socials!

### Interested in Population Issues?

The Population Committee of the Sierra Club Maryland Chapter is looking for new members. If you are interested in the problem of overpopulation—local, State, or world—contact Cliff Terry, GB Population Chair, at 410-944-9477 or [Cliff.Terry@maryland.sierraclub.org](mailto:Cliff.Terry@maryland.sierraclub.org). We offer fellowship and opportunities for you to take meaningful action.

### In Search of Newsletter Contributors:

The deadline is **April 15<sup>th</sup>** for submissions to the mid-May 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 410-239-4590 or 443-386-0862, [XxDiTz4LyFxx@aol.com](mailto:XxDiTz4LyFxx@aol.com), or 4512 Willow View St., Hampstead, MD 21074.

### 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 Chris Yoder at: [chris.yoder@mdsierra.org](mailto:chris.yoder@mdsierra.org).

If you don't want to rummage around looking for outings schedules before each weekend, get on the **e-mail notification list for upcoming outings**. Send your e-mail address to Alan Penczek at: [apenczek@stevenson.edu](mailto:apenczek@stevenson.edu).

## Greater Baltimore Group Works to Tap Wind Energy in Baltimore County

By Chris Yoder, Group Chair

Baltimore County is developing an ordinance to regulate small wind turbines. Unfortunately, the first draft of the proposed ordinance contains far too many arbitrary and counter-productive provisions that would restrict the opportunities of County citizens to tap a renewable and carbon-free source of energy.

Group Chair Chris Yoder testified at a January 7 hearing of the County Planning Board that the draft policy would be a step backwards at a time when the need for progress is more glaringly apparent with every passing day.

Some specifics: Limiting wind-turbines to residential properties makes no sense at all. There is no logical reason to deprive owners of commercial properties or farmers the opportunity to offset some of their energy costs. Recent reductions in energy costs may have dulled the memory of crippling electric bills. However, those charged with anticipating the future must also remember that costs go up as well as down. The future is likely to see the return of high utility bills. Then, a source of renewable non-utility energy may be the lifeline that keeps a County business or farm solvent.

The provision regulating the sale of wind-generated energy is another example of constraint rather than encouragement of energy independence for Baltimore County citizens.

A blanket limit of one turbine per property also makes no sense. The County should make allowance for the size of the property. One size does not fit all.

Baltimore County citizens and businesses are dependent upon electric power. If our lives are to remain the same, if we are to continue to enjoy the privileges of a life with electricity, we have to acknowledge that some things are going to have to change. One of those inevitable and necessary changes will be a transition to non-fossil fuels.

The position of the Greater Baltimore Group of the Sierra Club is not complex. The County should facilitate rather than impede opportunities for renewable energy. The County should increase, not constrain, its citizens' options for independence from utility-furnished fossil fuel generated power. Carroll County has done this and so can Baltimore County.

## Baltimore Green Week

**April 17 – 24** will mark the 7<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Baltimore Green Week (BGW), a week-long program of community events, forums, lectures, and hands-on activities throughout Baltimore City. BGW promotes a healthy sustainable environment and is linked with Earth Day celebrations on April 22.

The week kicks off with the EcoFestival, Baltimore's premier green event, on **Saturday, April 17**, 11 AM – 5 PM by the Reservoir at Druid Hill Park. The EcoFestival offers fun, family events and resources that promote sustainable living. It will in-

clude workshops and demonstrations, vendors with sustainable products, music, art, and healthy food. The location in Druid Hill Park is near bus lines and the Baltimore Zoo. The Jones Falls Trail runs through the park to the Woodberry light rail stop.

BGW will continue for 7 days of free or low-cost events focusing on sustainability topics that affect our lifestyle, health, environment, and community. For more information about BGW events, visit <http://baltimoregreengreenworks.com>.

## Project Clean Stream – April 3

Have you recently seen a stream or shoreline covered with trash? Volunteer for Project Clean Stream to help clean it up. The Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay is coordinating the event, which is sponsored by the Chesapeake Bay Trust, watershed associations, and local governments.

On Saturday, **April 3**, 9 AM -noon, volunteers will clean up local streams and shorelines all around Central Maryland and the Eastern Shore as part of the annual Project Clean Stream. Events are also being scheduled on other days.

- The Prettyboy Watershed Alliance will have a watershed project on **April 3**. For information, email [prettyboywatershed@gmail.com](mailto:prettyboywatershed@gmail.com) or check out the website at [www.prettyboywatershed.org](http://www.prettyboywatershed.org).
- The Jones Falls Watershed Association will have trash clean-ups on **April 3**, 9 AM – noon throughout Baltimore City and County. Contact David Flores for more information at 410-366-3036 or [dflores@jonesfalls.org](mailto:dflores@jonesfalls.org).

Pick your stream or have one assigned to you. Sign up to lead a clean up as Site Captain or to participate as a crew member. Students may earn service-learning hours.

To volunteer or suggest a clean up site, contact the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay at 410-377-6270 or [vstinson@acb-online.org](mailto:vstinson@acb-online.org). Check out the Alliance's website at [www.alliancechesbay.org](http://www.alliancechesbay.org). The website has a map of sites and indicates which sites need Site Captains. The Site Captains are provided with training, a first aid kit, gloves, trash bags, and other clean up supplies. Arrangements are made to pick up the cans,



Photo by Pam Suarez

bottles, plastic bags, tires, and other finds. Wear shoes and clothes that can get wet and muddy.

The event drew about 2,638 volunteers in 2009. They gathered more than 320,310 pounds of trash at 156 sites in 12 central and eastern Maryland counties and Baltimore City, and even sites in Accomac, Virginia and Sussex County, Delaware. The Irvine Nature Center began the event over 30 years ago as a clean up in the Jones Falls watershed.

Check out other upcoming stream clean up events:

\* Patuxent River Clean Up on **April 3** - contact Lauren Webster at 301-249-8200 ext 6 or [www.cleanpatuxent.org](http://www.cleanpatuxent.org)

\* 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Potomac River Watershed Cleanup on **April 10** 9 AM – noon. Last year's clean up resulted in a haul of over 290 tons of trash at over 500 sites in the Potomac River Watershed in D.C., Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia. For more information, check out <http://www.fergusonfoundation.org> or contact Ginny Harris Crake, the coordinator, at [potomac-cleanup@fergusonfoundation.org](mailto:potomac-cleanup@fergusonfoundation.org) or 301-292-5665. Since 1989, more than 50,000 volunteers have teamed with 375 partner organizations to remove 3 million tons of trash from the watershed's streams, rivers, and bays.

\* Lower Susquehanna River Sweep—contact Nancy Clark at 410-642-9322 or email [susquehannagreenway@direcway.com](mailto:susquehannagreenway@direcway.com)

## Area Environmental News and Activities

- The Baltimore Harbor Waterkeeper and the Herring Run, Jones Falls, Gwynns Falls, and Baltimore Harbor watershed organizations are discussing joining forces in a merger or strategic restructuring. They agree that restructuring will benefit their capability to accomplish their common mission, chance to be heard and change public policy, ability to attract and retain quality staff, collective program effectiveness, administrative efficiency, capacity to lead, sustainability, and true impact. A Good Faith Resolution was signed to move forward with evaluating restructuring to form a single organization focusing on water quality issues in the greater Baltimore area.
- The Gunpowder Valley Conservancy received a \$100,000 grant through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to conduct an environmental education program and implement upland restoration projects in the Jennifer Branch Watershed. The GVC will work with partner organizations to protect and restore Jennifer Branch, a suburban stream in the Carney and Cub Hill neighborhoods of Baltimore County. The stream has been negatively impacted by stormwater runoff from increased impervious surfaces in stream buffer areas. Workshops will be offered on restoration techniques. Technical and financial support will also be offered to help residents take action.
- Project Tree Save is being planned for next fall to attack invasive plants in the area's watersheds. Look out for more information. This effort is inspired by the very successful Project Clean Stream, held the first Saturday every April, when volunteers remove trash and plant trees in watersheds around the State.

- The Baltimore Metropolitan Council of Governments issued in August 2009 a Biennial Progress Report for 2006-2007 for the Baltimore Reservoir Watershed Management Program. The Reservoir Watershed Management Agreement of 2005 outlines steps for improving the conditions of the Liberty, Loch Raven, and Prettyboy Reservoirs that supply drinking water to over a million residents in the Baltimore area.
- The Baltimore Downspout Disconnection Program began in the fall of 2009. The initial goal is to disconnect 4,000 downspouts and decrease nitrogen by about 650 pounds, phosphorus by 98 pounds, and sediment by 11 tons in stormwater runoff. A three-year grant of \$450,000 was received from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to implement action steps in the Lower Jones Falls and Upper Back River Small Watershed Action Plans. About 35,000 gallons of water drain from the average Baltimore roof annually. Most of the stormwater runs across driveways and streets, picking up pollutants, sediment, and trash before entering the stormdrain system, where it flows untreated into streams and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay. For more information about the program or disconnecting your downspout for free to redirect water into your yard or garden, contact [dpuzey@jonesfalls.org](mailto:dpuzey@jonesfalls.org) of the Jones Falls Watershed Association or Ashley of the Herring Run Watershed Association at 410-254-1577 ext. 103.
- In the Marylanders Plant Trees campaign, State agencies are working to plant 1 million new trees by 2011. Coupons for purchasing trees were provided to encourage private citizens to plant 50,000 trees by 2010. Trees protect the water quality, clean the air, and provide wildlife habitat. One large tree can eliminate 5,000 gallons of stormwater runoff each year. Also, trees can help reduce energy costs by 15 to 35 percent.



Photo by Pam Suarez

- Starting February 1, Baltimore County began single-stream recycling, with weekly curbside collection of paper, bottles, and cans that no longer have to be separated. Also, a broader range of recyclables will be collected. Information is available at [www.Bcrecycles.com](http://www.Bcrecycles.com). In 14 years, the county has collected more than 1.5 billion tons of recyclables.
- Volunteers planted 100 Chestnut saplings, provided by the American Chestnut Society, in Oregon Ridge Park of Baltimore County. This is part of a national experiment to find a strain or inherited trait of this species that is resistant to the Chestnut Blight. Over a century ago before the blight, the Chestnut tree, standing over 125 feet high, constituted 25 percent of the hardwood forests in the Appalachian Mountains. It was an important source of food for wildlife and was much appreciated for the quality of its timber. Saplings still grow in our forests, but are killed by the blight before they mature.
- Forbes Magazine named Patterson Park in southeast Baltimore City as one of the nation's top 12 city parks, along with Central Park in New York City, Golden Gate Park in San Francisco, and Grant Park in Chicago. For more information on Patterson Park, see <http://www.pattersonpark.com/>.
- The EPA and a coalition of 19 companies and governments are nearing completion of field investigations at the 270-acre 68<sup>th</sup> Street Landfill Superfund Site in Rosedale, Baltimore County. In December 2009, the EPA held a public information session to discuss the initial results and next steps for remediation and reuse. The field investigations at about 200 locations in the area were required to better understand and delineate environmental conditions throughout the 68<sup>th</sup> Street dump site, to determine clean-up alternatives for improving the human and ecological systems. An Early Removal Action was completed to address immediate areas of concern by removing specific drums, containers, contaminated soils, and some surface debris. Signs were placed to warn the public. Portions of the site were once used as landfills and received primarily industrial and commercial refuse, incinerator ash, and waste oils from the mid-1940s through the early 1970s, and had some illegal dumping since then. In 2006, the EPA entered into an agreement with the coalition for a comprehensive environmental investigation and a remediation plan including preliminary reuse of the site. The EPA Office of Superfund Remediation and Technology Innovation provides information and technical assistance on ecological restoration and revegetation of contaminated sites in order to reclaim them for productive uses. For further information, check out <http://www.68thstreetlandfillsite.com/>.

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### Local Environmental List-Serves and Web Addresses

For information on local environmental activities, join one of the following list-serves or check out a website:

- Community Greening Monthly Update of Parks & People Foundation, Inc.: [info@parksandpeople.org](mailto:info@parksandpeople.org)
- E-news Stream of the Baltimore County Department of Environmental Protection and Resource Management (DEPRM): [water-sheds@baltimorecountymd.gov](mailto:water-sheds@baltimorecountymd.gov) and DEPRM website at <http://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/go/deprm>
- Information about activities at Baltimore's reservoirs: <http://www.baltimorecity.gov/government/dpw.water/rnrs/index.php>

### Baltimore County's Wetlands of Special State Concern Preliminary Progress Report

(Continued from page 6)

One side of the roadway was marked by a wooded area of standing water at the bottom of a hill. The hillside was vegetated with small trees – a healthy sign. However, the hillside was also marked by patches of gravel that slid down from an uphill parking lot. Also included in this area was a remarkably clear running stream, runoff from rain the night before. The stream bank was supported by what appeared to be planted tulip poplar trees as well as some man-made materials, including horizontally laid telephone poles and poured concrete. The stream was channeled underneath the roadway. Litter, including plastic bags, a washing machine, a rusted pipe, an oil drum, and some construction wire, was scattered here and there on both sides of the road. As we followed the stream on the opposite side, we noticed that it remained clear and was populated with some small fish. The stream buffers and surrounding area were overrun with garden-variety vegetation, such as ivy and myrtle, most likely from nearby residential homes along the perimeter of the buffering woodlands.

**Glencoe Sparks.** This was the most northern wetland that we visited and the only one on private property. The owners graciously granted us access to the wetland. The wetland is marked by a stream that is channeled underneath a road before entering into the Gunpowder River. Although located in an area of very limited development, this stream has not evaded the weedy species of wetlands commonly found in streams of urban areas and other garden-variety species, such as Silver Maple trees and honeysuckle bushes. However, there were two beautiful large native trees, an old Sycamore and a Silver Maple, and a variety of native plants, such as common chickweed – still in flower in November.



Photo by Sherry Dowdell

**Phoenix Marsh.** This wetland runs parallel to a busy two-lane road in northern Baltimore County. It is also cut in half by another road. Overall, both sides of the WSSC are overtaken by the invasive Japanese Stiltgrass. On one side of the road, the wetland is bordered by a golf course. Some native plants were still growing along the bank of a small stream, but interspersed with garden-variety bulb plants. Unfortunately, algae were present in the stream, a sign of nutrient runoff. Most disturbingly, one section of the wetland was scarred by deposited mounds of sand and tree/shrubbery trimmings and branches. On the other side, the wetland is bordered by an open wooded hillside and the Loch Raven Reservoir. This area was not as noticeably impacted by human activity.

**Loch Raven-Hampton.** This wetland is listed as an inundated fine silt and gravel shoreline of Loch Raven reservoir with lots of endangered plant species. We are not sure if it was mapped incorrectly or disappeared due to high water levels. After finally reaching the designated site, we were surprised to see an elevated rock-laden area of very dry soil, heavily impacted by human activities as evidenced by litter. It must be noted that the reservoir in this area has been overrun by Japanese Stiltgrass with no sign of native vegetation.

### Earth Day – April 22



Earth Day is celebrated nationwide in cities and towns large and small. Check out observances of Earth Day 2009 on **April 22** or on the weekends. Celebrate Mother Earth in a manner of your choice. Participate in local events for stream cleanup, tree planting, trash pickup, invasive plant removal, etc. Take a hike.

See the outings list in this newsletter for details about Greater Baltimore Sierra Club events to celebrate Earth Day: an Earth Day potluck and gardening slide show at Oregon Ridge Park on **Thursday, April 22** and a trash pickup as we walk through Double Rock Park on **Saturday, April 24**.

The modern environmental movement began on March 21, 1970 with the first Earth Day celebration. Twenty million Americans took to the streets, parks, and auditoriums coast-to-coast to demonstrate for a healthy, sustainable environment. This led to the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency and the passage of the Clean Air, Clean Water, and Endangered Species Acts.

The International Earth Day is observed on spring's vernal equinox, which is March 20 this year. For International Earth Day on March 21, 1971, United Nations Secretary-General U Thant proclaimed, "May there only be peaceful and cheerful Earth Days to come for our beautiful Spaceship Earth as it continues to spin and circle in frigid space with its warm and fragile cargo of animate life."

## Local Environmental Activities

For non-Sierra Club invasive plant removal activities, planting of trees and other native species, stream cleanup, and stream monitoring, contact the following organizations for information about training sessions and outings:

- Cromwell Valley Park, contact the park office at 410-887-2503 Mon-Fri 9-2 or [info@cromwellvalleypark.org](mailto:info@cromwellvalleypark.org) or contact Bill Breakey at [breakeys@comcast.net](mailto:breakeys@comcast.net) for information about invasive plant removals in the park the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of each month, 9 am-noon. Tools and refreshments are provided. You may also call to volunteer to participate in trail maintenance outings. Check out the park's varied activities at its website [www.cromwellvalleypark.org](http://www.cromwellvalleypark.org).
- Gunpowder Valley Conservancy, 410-343-3478 or [info@gunpowderfalls.org](mailto:info@gunpowderfalls.org), [www.gunpowderfalls.org](http://www.gunpowderfalls.org). Volunteers are needed for tree plantings, Stream Watch, and other activities. During 2009, GVC planted 1,476 trees on 7.25 acres with the help of 626 volunteers and 23 community groups. The trees have a survival rate of 95 percent. As one of the few land trusts in Baltimore County, GVC places land, which it obtains through purchase or donation, in perpetual conservation easements for protection and monitoring. Contact Peggy Perry, Assistant Program Director of Education and Restoration, at 410-668-0118 or [little-owl@msn.com](mailto:little-owl@msn.com).

- Gwynns Falls Watershed Association, 443-429-3183, [info@gwynnsfalls.net](mailto:info@gwynnsfalls.net). Volunteers are needed to monitor local streams and report sewer leaks to responsible local agencies. Help to reduce storm water runoff by promoting the restoration of vegetation cover through stream-friendly landscaping and land-use practices as well as community planting projects. Community clean-ups are organized to reduce litter and dumping that degrade the streams and communities.
- Herring Run Watershed Association, 410-254-1577, [volunteer@herringrun.org](mailto:volunteer@herringrun.org), [www.herringrun.org](http://www.herringrun.org). During 2009, 2,627 volunteers gave 6,448 hours of service to the watershed, planting 1,110 trees and removing 14,630 pounds of trash from streams. Volunteers adopt sections of Herring Run to monitor, report, and prevent pollution. A trail through Herring Run Park is maintained, and invasive species are removed. Workshops are held for disconnecting downspouts and constructing rain barrels. Native plants are grown and sold at the Herring Run Nursery. The Watershed Center at 3545 Belair Road is certified as a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Gold building by the U.S. Green Building Council.
- Irvine Nature Center, 410-484-2413, [www.explorenature.org](http://www.explorenature.org). Irvine Nature Center is happily settled into its new facility at 11201 Garrison Forest Road in Owings Mills. Besides the nature center with interactive, informative exhibits and an extensive gift shop, the center has hiking trails through woods and meadows, including blinds for bird-watching.

*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. —John Muir (Sierra Club Founder)*



Photo by Pam Suarez

- Jones Falls Watershed Association, 410-366-3036, [www.jonesfalls.org](http://www.jonesfalls.org). Join them for watershed restoration projects (invasive plant removals, tree planting, etc.) 9:30 –12 on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of each month. During September – November 2009, more than 735 volunteers planted trees and cleared invasive plants in stream buffers. Hundreds of native trees are available for planting. They have a Stream Waders program to monitor local streams for aquatic life. Citizens are asked to report sewage leaks to the City by calling 311. Contact David Flores, the new Environmental Restoration Manager, for more information about activities and volunteer opportunities at [dflores@jonesfalls.org](mailto:dflores@jonesfalls.org).
- Maryland Native Plant Society, [www.mdflora.org](http://www.mdflora.org)
- Patapsco State Park, 410-461-5005 or 1-877-620-8DNR, [park-patapsco@dnr.state.md.us](mailto:park-patapsco@dnr.state.md.us), [www.dnr.Maryland.gov](http://www.dnr.Maryland.gov). Check out the on-line newsletter for events and volunteer opportunities for trail maintenance and invasive plant removal in the various sections of Patapsco State Park at [http://www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/spring\\_summer\\_2008\\_tributary\\_public.pdf](http://www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/spring_summer_2008_tributary_public.pdf).
- Prettyboy Watershed Alliance, <http://www.prettyboywatershed.org/> or email [prettyboywatershed@gmail.com](mailto:prettyboywatershed@gmail.com). The Alliance sponsors stream cleanups, stream testings, tree plantings, and trail maintenance.
- Urban Weed Warrior Program, Baltimore City Recreation & Parks, 410-396-0359, [weeds@baltimorecity.gov](mailto:weeds@baltimorecity.gov). Get trained as a weed warrior and help to eradicate invasive species in the City's parks. For information about upcoming invasive plant removals, contact Elizabeth Concra, Environmental Training Specialist, at 410-396-0339 or 443-602-5264 or [Elizabeth.Concra@baltimorecity.gov](mailto:Elizabeth.Concra@baltimorecity.gov).



## Area Environmental News and Activities

(Continued from page 9)

- Baltimore County will spend \$6 million in State and local funds to begin improvements to Robert E. Park near Mt. Washington. The County plans to restore the 415-acre site into a regional facility including a nature center, dog park, hiking and biking trails, fountains, benches, restrooms, and improved access to Lake Roland. This will be the County's 7<sup>th</sup> regional park and the 5<sup>th</sup> with a nature center. The park, owned by Baltimore City but in the County, has been closed since its access bridge was condemned and demolished last year. Construction of a new bridge will begin in March, and in late spring construction will begin on a fenced dog park and trails. Erosion and contaminated soil along the 100-acre, man-made lake will be addressed. Hikers, dog walkers, and bicyclists still enjoy the area through access trails from Falls Road.
- Harford County is seeking money for road improvements near Aberdeen Proving Ground. The post is expected to gain about 10,000 civilian jobs in the next few years under the Pentagon's nationwide Base Realignment and Closing (BRAC) process. About 3,800 military positions will be added by this summer. The base is working to fully implement the BRAC changes by September 2011. At least half a dozen office parks near the U.S. Army post are being prepared or constructed for the influx of related jobs. It is estimated that 8.5 to 10 million square feet of commercial office feet are needed on and off the Army post for workers coming by 2011.



- Free, 7-day a week shuttle service on Baltimore City's new fleet of hybrid EcoSaver IV buses began in January. The buses are circulating on three downtown routes from the Inner Harbor Visitor Center north to Penn Station and from Harbor East west to the B & O Railroad Museum.
- Parks & People Foundation is providing trainings on green careers in urban forestry, soil science, urban hydrology, and green building to Baltimore City students enrolled in After School Matters II. After receiving training, the students will participate in paid internships with Parks & People or other enrichment providers including Baltimore City Department of Recreation & Parks, the After School Institute, and the Aramark Corporation. After School Matters II is an after-school, career-focused program of the Mayor's Office of Employment Development. It helps students aged 14 to 19 build life and work readiness skills, gain career-related work experience, and obtain unsubsidized employment during the summer.
- The Community Greening Resource Network, a project of the Parks & People Foundation and the University of Maryland Cooperative Extensive Service, is accepting membership applications for 2010. Members receive access to materials and educational resources including a quarterly newsletter, workshops, and celebrations. For more information, contact Sarah Ritter at [community.greening@parksandpeople.org](mailto:community.greening@parksandpeople.org) or 410-448-5663 ext. 128.

## 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. 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 on **April 22**. (See the Outings Schedule.) Participate in an outing. Contact Jack Wise, Outings Chair, at 410-256-3963.



Photo by David Rader

- In December, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) wrote Maryland, the District of Columbia, and five other States in the 64,000-square-mile Chesapeake Bay watershed, outlining the consequences of failure to tighten regulations and spend more money on cleanup for restoration of the Bay. Federal action may impose roadblocks to growth such as by blocking wastewater permits for businesses or sewage treatment plants, requiring more pollution reductions from industries and sewage plants to offset runoff from development, and placing strings on or redirecting Federal grants for cleaning up water pollution. In May 2009, President Obama issued an Executive Order directing Federal agencies to take the lead in Bay cleanup and requiring States to come up with detailed plans for significantly reducing pollution flowing into the Bay by 2025. By 2017, the States must have controls in place to re-

move 60 percent of the nitrogen and phosphorus flowing into the Bay. This nutrient over-load feeds massive growths of algae every summer, which create extensive dead zones and deprive fish, crabs, and oysters of oxygen. In a largely voluntary, multi-state collaboration since 1983, the States have repeatedly failed to meet self-imposed cleanup goals and compliance deadlines. Environmental activists, including the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and the State's network of Waterkeepers are considering suing the EPA for not pushing Bay cleanup more aggressively, in order to get a Federal judge to impose a cleanup plan. The States and EPA are accused of going easy on nutrients, sediment, and other pollutants discharged from businesses, sewage plants, farms, and developments, from urban storm water runoff, and also entering the water as fallout from smokestack and motor vehicle exhaust.

## 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. He also has a paper copy of the course.

✓ Arrange to take a Red Cross basic first aid course or a comparable or higher level course. Purchase the required first aid kit, such as the basic kit sold by REI. The Sierra Club will reimburse you for your expenses. Contact Katja Kjelgaard, Group Treasurer, at 410-455-0408 or [kkjelgaard@verizon.net](mailto:kkjelgaard@verizon.net) 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 [bette888@verizon.net](mailto:bette888@verizon.net). She will add you to the list of outings leaders and will publicize your outings in the Group's and Chapter's newsletters and websites and with local media.



## Participating in Sierra Club Hikes & Other Outings

1. Sierra Club outings are open to everyone—members 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 and there is no charge**, unless noted in the announcement.

2. Beginners are welcome. If you haven’t hiked before or not for a long time and aren’t sure about your capabilities, choose an easy outing to start out. The outing’s difficulty level is stated in the announcement. Call the leader if you have questions about the terrain, difficulty, duration, or what you should bring.

3. Children under 18 years old must be accompanied by a parent, guardian, or other responsible adult. Check out the outing’s details and call the leader ahead of time to find out if the hike is suitable for children, particularly if you want to bring a very young child. If older teenagers want to attend without their parents, they must have the outing leader’s prior consent and have a permission slip signed by their parent/guardian.

4. Dogs and other pets are not allowed on Sierra Club outings, unless the announcement specifies that the outing is “dog friendly.”

5. Participants must have the proper clothing, shoes, equipment, and stamina for the event. Bring at least one quart of water 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. 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.

6. All participants in Sierra Club outings are required to sign a standard liability waiver before the outing begins.

7. Practice “Leave No Trace” hiking. Keep on the trail to avoid trampling things or getting hurt.

8. Keep with the group. A “sweep” is usually designated to go last and make sure no one gets lost or runs into trouble.

9. 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.

10. 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.





*In every walk with nature one receives  
far more than he seeks.  
—John Muir (Sierra Club Founder)*

#### Non-Sierra Club Outings

- Check out the websites of the following non-Sierra Club organizations for information about their hikes, trail work trips, educational and conservation activities, and invasive species removals:
- Appalachian Mountain Club, D.C.: <http://www.amc-dc.org/Events/date.htm>
- Baltimore Bike Club: [www.baltobikeclub.org](http://www.baltobikeclub.org)
- Baltimore Canoe Club: [www.baltimorecanoeclub.org](http://www.baltimorecanoeclub.org)
- Biotrek Naturalists: [www.biotrek.org](http://www.biotrek.org)
- Center Hiking Club: [www.centerhikingclub.org](http://www.centerhikingclub.org)
- Chesapeake Audubon Society: <http://www.chesapeakeaudubon.org/fltrips.htm>
- Chesapeake Paddlers Association: <http://www.cpakayaker.com/index.html>
- Harford Senior Outings Club: contact Jack Dettner at 410-638-1433 to join their email list.
- Maryland Native Plant Society: <http://www.mdflora.org/events/currentevents.html>
- Maryland Outdoor Club: [www.marylandoutdoorclub.org](http://www.marylandoutdoorclub.org)
- Mid-Atlantic Off-Road Enthusiasts (MORE): [www.more-mtb.com](http://www.more-mtb.com)
- Mountain Club of Maryland: [www.mcomd.org](http://www.mcomd.org)
- Potomac Appalachian Trail Club: <http://www.potomacappalachian.org/>

#### Outings of the Sierra Club Greater Baltimore Group February 2010 – June 2010

*Also, see the outings schedule of the Sierra Club's Howard County Group at:  
[www.maryland.sierraclub.org/hc](http://www.maryland.sierraclub.org/hc)*

#### **Anytime – Cross Country Skiing**

When snow conditions allow, trip to Western Maryland or West Virginia maybe planned. Call Jack for details at 410-256-3963.

#### **FEBRUARY**

#### **Sat. Feb. 6 GB – Easy. Cromwell Valley Park Hike (Children and dogs are welcome)**

3 miles through this Baltimore County park that is a working farm with draft horses, woodlands, hilly meadows, streams, old limestone kilns, and a brook bubbling out of the ground. Learn about the invasive plant removals and native plantings. Meet at 10:30 AM in the parking lot beside the house in the park's Sherwood Farm section on Cromwell Bridge Rd. north from the Baltimore Beltway. Children under 18 must be accompanied by a responsible adult. Stay for brunch at Sander's Corner Restaurant nearby. For information, call Mary at 410-239-4590 or 443-386-0862 (cell), or email at [XxDiTz4LyFxx@aol.com](mailto:XxDiTz4LyFxx@aol.com).

#### **Fri. – Mon. Feb. 12-15 GB – Cross Country Skiing in Western Maryland**

If there is not enough snow for cross country skiing, moderate day hikes will be held in Western Maryland. Call Jack at 410-256-3963 by January 31 so that plans can be made.



#### **Sat. Feb. 20 GB – Moderate. Patapsco Hike (Older children and dogs are welcome)**

4-5 miles through the forests in the Patapsco Watershed and across a swinging bridge. Learn about the flora, fauna, geological, and historical features. Several stream crossings. Meet at the Rolling Road Park & Ride north of I-95 in Catonsville, just south of Wilkens Ave, at 11 AM. For more information, contact Alan at 443-212-5082 or [APENC-ZEK@stevenson.edu](mailto:APENC-ZEK@stevenson.edu).

#### **Sun. Feb. 28 GB - Easy. "Last Sunday Easy Hike"**

Meet at 2:00 PM at the Paper Mill Road parking lot for the NCRR trail. Hike at an easy pace on flat paved surface to the Phoenix Rd parking lot and back, which is about 3 miles roundtrip. Scenic rest stops and historical sites along the route. Dogs, children, and wheelchairs are welcome. We will finish the hike in time to attend the Baltimore Green Forum at MD Presbyterian Church 4:30-6:30. Optional dinner afterwards. For details, contact Paul at 410-667-4889 or [paul@peschoen.com](mailto:paul@peschoen.com).

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## Outings

(Continued from page 14)

### MARCH

#### Sun. Mar. 14 GB – Moderate. Prettyboy Trail Hike (Older children and dogs are welcome)

7 miles along the shoreline and hillsides and through forests around Prettyboy Reservoir on the old Prettyboy Trail, walking a loop between Prettyboy Dam and Tracey Store Rd. The trail is maintained by neighbors, Boy Scouts, and the GB Sierra Club in collaboration with the Prettyboy Watershed Alliance and Mountain Club. Learn about this isolated trail and its wildlife and pristine drinking water for Baltimore. The trail is cleared to varying degrees and has hills and one stream crossing. Children under 18 must be able to hike this distance and be accompanied by a parent or other responsible adult. Dogs must be friendly. Meet at 11:00 PM at the Mt. Carmel Rd. Park and Ride just west off I-83 north of the Baltimore Beltway and past the Shawan Rd. exit. For more information, contact Mary at 410-239-4590 (home), 443-386-0862 (cell), or email at [XxDiTz4LyFxx@aol.com](mailto:XxDiTz4LyFxx@aol.com).

#### Sun. Mar. 28 GB - Moderate. Gunpowder River Hike

6 to 7 miles along the Gunpowder River. Meet at 12:00 noon at the Shawan Road Park 'n Ride off I-83 north of the Baltimore Beltway. Call Jack 410-256-3963 for details.

#### Sun. Mar. 28 GB - Easy. "Last Sunday Easy Hike"

Meet at 2:00 PM at the Paper Mill Road parking lot for the NCR trail. Hike at an easy pace on flat paved surface to the Phoenix Rd parking lot and back, which is about 3 miles roundtrip. Scenic rest stops and historical sites along the route. Dogs, children, and wheelchairs are welcome. We will finish the hike in time to attend the Baltimore Green Forum at MD Presbyterian Church 4:30-6:30. Optional dinner afterwards. For details, contact Paul at 410-667-4889 or [paul@peschoen.com](mailto:paul@peschoen.com).

### APRIL

#### Sun. April 4 GB – Easy/Moderate. Easter Sunrise Service and Hike at Rocks State Park

Celebrate the true meaning of Easter at a non-denominational Sunrise Service at Rocks State Park in Harford County. It will be followed by fellowship with coffee, cocoa, and donuts, and an easy to moderate hike of about 3-4 miles. We can also have a really good buffet breakfast at the Geneva Farm Golf Course clubhouse nearby (check out <http://www.infosports.com/golf/1697902.htm>, 410-452-8800. 217 Davis Rd., Street, MD 21154). Children OK with prior approval. Meet at the church parking lot on Seminary Ave. west of Dulaney Valley Rd. just north of the Baltimore Beltway at 5:30 AM. Call Paul at 410-667-4889 or email [pstech@smart.net](mailto:pstech@smart.net) for details.

#### Sun. April 18 GB - Moderate. Muddy Run Hike

7 to 8 miles along the Muddy Run and the Susquehanna River. This hike goes through a very scenic gorge with large Hemlock trees. Good chance of seeing bald eagles. Meet at K-Mart on Rt. 1 (Belair Rd.), north from Baltimore Beltway Exit 32 at 11:00 AM. Call Jack at 410-256-3963 for details.

#### Thurs. April 22 Earth Day – Easy.

Celebrate Mother Earth and protect her future! Take a hike, plant a tree or garden, pick up trash, eradicate invasive plants, write a letter, make a call, read an article, lie in the sun, talk to a child.

#### Thurs. April 22 GB – Easy. Outings Planning Meeting

New and prospective outings leaders are welcome to attend the next quarterly meeting of the Greater Baltimore Group's Outings Committee at Oregon Ridge Nature Center. 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. The meeting will be held at 6:15 PM before a potluck social and a slide show beginning at 6:30. For details, see the notice that follows.



#### Thurs. April 22 GB - Easy. Potluck Social and Talk (All are welcome)

Celebrate spring, gardening, and Earth Day with potluck grub and a learning experience on the native plants of Maryland by Master Gardener Kim Barnes. Potluck social begins around 6:30 at the Oregon Ridge Nature Center. Bring a dish you enjoy and would like to share--sweet or savory, homemade or store-bought--along with a friend or two. We will have plates, napkins, utensils, cold drinks, and hot tea. The talk will follow starting about 7:15 and ending no later than 9 p.m. Open to non-members.

The Nature Center is at 13555 Beaver Dam Road and can be reached from the Shawan Road West exit (#20B) from I-83. Take Shawan Road to the traffic light at Beaver Dam Road, make a left and stay to the right, following the road up to the nature center's parking lot past the swimming area. The nature center is a short walk uphill. Call Joyce at 410-254-7240 if you need further details.

#### Sat. April 24 GB – Moderate. Earth Day Stream Cleanup at Double Rock Park (Child-Friendly Outing)

Celebrate Earth Day a few days late by cleaning up trash (bottles, cans, plastic bags, etc.) in and around the stream at this neighborhood park that includes a waterfall and trails through woodlands. Children under 18 must be accompanied by a parent or other responsible adult. Wear footwear for wading in shallow water. Trash bags and gloves will be provided. Meet at 10 AM in the parking lot at the park's entrance at the end of Texas Ave. east off Harford Rd. between Taylor Ave. and Putty Hill Ave. in Parkville, Baltimore Co. For more information, contact Mary at 410-239-4590 (home), 443-386-0862 (cell), or email at [XxDiTz4LyFxx@aol.com](mailto:XxDiTz4LyFxx@aol.com).

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# MOVED?

Report your address change to:  
**(415) 977-5653**

Sierra Club Member Services  
P.O. Box 52968  
Boulder, CO 80328-2968

## Outings

(Continued from page 15)

### Sun., April 25 GB - Easy. "Last Sunday Easy Hike"

Meet at 2:00 PM at the Paper Mill Road parking lot for the NCRR trail. Hike at an easy pace on flat paved surface to the Phoenix Rd parking lot and back, which is about 3 miles roundtrip. Scenic rest stops and historical sites along the route. Dogs, children, and wheelchairs are welcome. We will finish the hike in time to attend the Baltimore Green Forum at MD Presbyterian Church 4:30-6:30. Optional dinner afterwards. For details, contact Paul at 410-667-4889 or [paul@peschoen.com](mailto:paul@peschoen.com).

## MAY

### Sat. May 15 GB – Moderate. Eden Mill Hike (Child and Dog Friendly Outing)

4-5 mile hike looking for wildlife and wildflowers in woodlands and meadows with some hills along Deer Creek at Eden Mill Nature Center in Pylesville. Afterwards, visit the Nature Center and the Historic Grist Mill Museum to learn about the local history, floral, and fauna. Bring a picnic lunch to eat in the gardens beside the Deer Creek. Meet at 10 AM in the parking lot at the park entrance at 1617 Eden Mill Rd. near the Nature Center. Find out more about this Harford County park at [www.edenmill.org](http://www.edenmill.org). For more information, contact Mary at 410-239-4590 (home), 443-386-0862 (cell), or email at [XxDiTz4LyFxx@aol.com](mailto:XxDiTz4LyFxx@aol.com).

### Sat. & Sun. May 15 & 16 GB - Moderate. Shenandoah National Park Car Camping at Big Meadows

Day hikes along the AT and other side trips to waterfalls. Call Jack at 410-256-3963 for details.

## JUNE

### Sat. June 12 GB – Easy. AM Hike and PM Kayak at Piney Run Park (Child and Dog Friendly Outing)

4-5 mile hike through woodlands and along the 300-acre lake at Piney Run Park in Sykesville. For the hike, meet at 10 AM in the parking area beside the Nature Center. Afterwards, visit the extensive Nature Center with natural history exhibits and live animals. Bring a picnic lunch to enjoy in this 825-acre Carroll County park.

Bring your own kayak or canoe or rent one to explore Piney Run Reservoir, with a couple stops along the shores. For the boating, meet at the boat launch at 2:00 PM. There is a launch fee of \$8/boat (paid at the park's entrance booth). The rental fee is \$8/hour or \$30 per day.

The park is at 30 Martz Rd., just off Rt. 26 or 97 north of I-70. There is an entrance fee of \$5/car for Carroll County residents and \$10 for others. For more information, contact Mary at 410-239-4590 (home), 443-386-0862 (cell), or email at [XxDiTz4LyFxx@aol.com](mailto:XxDiTz4LyFxx@aol.com).

### Sun. Jun. 27 GB – Easy. Gunpowder Tube Trip

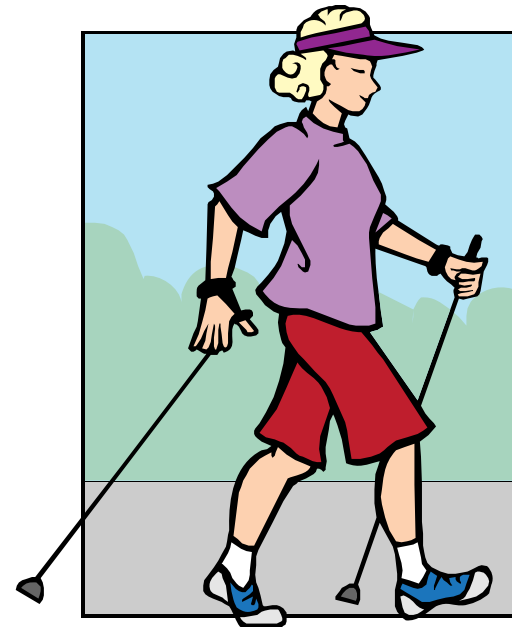
Meet at the Monkton Station at 1:00 PM. Bring a tube or rent one there. Wear old shoes or water shoes. Call Jack at 410-256-3963 for more details.

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**Baltimore Sierran**

Sierra Club mission: Explore,  
enjoy and protect the planet

7338 Baltimore Ave, Suite 101A  
College Park, MD 20740



*"Walking is the best  
medicine."*

*From Hippocrates, regarded the founder of Western  
medicine, circa 460 BC-circa 370 BC*