



The Sierra Log

Newsletter of the Anne Arundel County Group of the Sierra Club, Maryland Chapter

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Homeport Farms Park Needs You

Liz Vanden Heuvel

The Homeport property was indeed a farm until a few years ago, when it was sold to a developer. Homeport Farms is now a development of upscale homes with one really great saving grace. Twenty-five acres were set aside—a requirement—for a passive-use park. Homeport Farms Park is in the planning stages at this time, and I am representing the Sierra Club on the planning advisory committee for the park. The park will become what we, the users, want as long as we stay within the guidelines in the deed.

Several ideas have been proposed, but only a few are certain at this time. There will be community gardens, probably available for use this spring, and there will be a non-motorized boat launch onto Church Creek.

Reforestation on the park property is an excellent possibility in some areas of the park. I am proposing that our Sierra Club Group become a sponsor of reforestation there. The Executive Committee endorses this idea. What we need to get started are some people who can assist in this work. We need –

- people who have knowledge about native trees
- people who know where to get such trees
- people who could help us locate the right place for these trees
- people who can dig holes, plant trees, and look after their welfare.

Are you one of these people? Please email me your interest and any questions you may have. This is a real opportunity for any of us to do something small-to-large for the environment and for ourselves and our neighborhood. Email liz2vh@olg.com if you see yourself anywhere in this project—and thanks!

Calendar of Events

Sierra Club Outings are open to all members and non-members.

All outings begin at the trailhead. In the interests of conservation and convenience, the Sierra Club encourages carpooling to outings from the meeting place. However, the carpool is not part of the actual outing, and the Sierra Club assumes no liability for it. Participants assume the risks associated with this travel. A modest driver reimbursement, if any, can be arranged between the driver and passengers.

Reservations are not necessary for outings unless so stated. In order to participate in one of the Sierra Club's outings, you will need to sign a liability waiver. If you would like to read a copy of the waiver prior to the outing, please call 415-977-5630 or see the website:

www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms/

For general information about the local club, call David Prosten at 410-263-6341.

Ex-Comm Meetings—

The Executive Committee meets on the second Thursday of every month, except August and December, in Room 114 at Calvary United Methodist Church on Rowe Blvd in Annapolis. All are welcome – bring a friend! 6:30 pm.

Newsletter Deadline – Monday, March 16

For the April/May issue. Call 410-224-3384 or email patchurch@comcast.net.

June 18-22 – 2009 Patuxent Sojourn

Mark your calendars for this year's Patuxent Sojourn, which will take place from June 18-22. This year we will be in the upper part of the river and spend a lot of time exploring the many creeks and interesting nooks and crannies in the Jug Bay area. We feel that getting people out on the river is a good way of getting folks aware and involved—not to mention that it's fun! We have music, good food, good company, speakers, restoration projects, archeology, and five days of paddling. You can come for one day or more. Families and kids are welcome.

We, the Sojourn Planning Committee, feel that it is important to teach people about the Patuxent River, its history, flora, and fauna, and the environmental issues facing it. The Patuxent is the only long river that is all in Maryland—110 miles. Perhaps you know about former Senator Bernie Fowler. He has been a champion of restoring the river and the Chesapeake Bay for over 30 years. He is, at 84, still a strong voice for cleaning up the Patuxent and the Bay. He says that cleaning up the water is the first step. We cannot continue to use the river like a sewer. The Sojourn's goal is to enlist you as a defender of this river and the Bay and to show you what a treasure the Patuxent is for us all.

We hope you consider joining us this June and lending us your enthusiasm and concern. Contact me at 410-267-9009 or by email at liz2vh@olg.com for more information or with any questions.

We're Going Greener – You Can Help

Help us save paper, postage, labor – and ultimately a few trees – by opting to see this newsletter on the Web.

Instead of mailing you a printed copy every two months, we'll send you a notification via e-mail, containing a link to an electronic edition on our Club website.

Please let us know if you'd like to do this. Just send an e-mail to JHoff2370@verizon.net, with "electronic newsletter" in the subject line and your name and address in the body of the message (so we can remove you from the printed version mailing list). We are developing a database exclusively for this project and will not share your e-mail address.

This is not mandatory – if you do not respond, you will still receive a paper copy in the regular mail.

Thanks!

Judges Needed for Annual Science Fair - March 14

Judy Mauriello

Each year the Sierra Club Anne Arundel Group presents an award for an outstanding environmental science project at the annual Anne Arundel County Public Schools Regional Science and Engineering Fair. Our 2008 prize winner, middle school student Luke Andraka, from Chesapeake Science Point Public Charter School, went on to receive one of the runner-up awards in the National Middle School Science Fair.

This year over 250 middle and high school students from over 30 public, charter, and private schools in Anne Arundel and Queen Anne's counties will participate in the fair. Typically, about 40 to 50 of the projects are environmentally related. The judging for this year's fair will be Saturday, March 14th from 9:00 am to 12:30 pm at North County High School, 10 E. First Ave., Glen Burnie, MD. The projects are available for judges to preview from 8:00 am-9:00 am, and we ask as many judges as possible to participate in this preview process.

We need at least 9 members of the Anne Arundel Group to help in judging for the Sierra Club Award at this year's Science Fair. Each year our judges report that they truly enjoy the experience of talking with these talented, motivated, and interested students about their environmental projects. You do NOT have to have a scientific background to serve as a judge for the Sierra Club award, just an interest in the environment and in talking with students about their projects.

We rate the student projects on the following criteria:

- The topic has environmental implications for the Chesapeake Bay area
- The expected results of the study are not totally obvious
- The student has collected and analyzed data
- The student is able to support the conclusion using the data gathered.

Thanks to the efforts of the parents of Mike Rixham, we are able to give an award for the top environmental project (a plaque and \$100 gift certificate) and awards for 2 or 3 additional exemplary projects (certificates of merit and \$50 gift certificates). Past winners have studied how to mitigate the effect of acid mine drainage on streams, the raising of horseshoe crabs, bluebird habitat, using lichens as indicators of the effects of acid rain, and the best ways to prevent sediment loss and thus prevent soil runoff from polluting nearby waterways.

If you can help with this enjoyable and rewarding activity by serving as one of our judges, please contact Judy Mauriello by telephone at (410) 647-9641 or through email at jzmaur@gmail.com no later than February 25, 2009.

Thanks in advance for your help.

Preserving Southern Anne Arundel County

Earl Bradley

The County Council in December voted unanimously to defeat Bill 82-08, which would have allowed the construction of a private school complex in southern Anne Arundel County to settle a lawsuit brought by a religious institution. The proposed 100,000 square-foot development would have been contrary to the rural character of the area, and would have caused heavy traffic on the area's narrow roads, caused pollution in the streams flowing through the property, and adversely affected the Jug Bay Wetlands Sanctuary located adjacent to the property. If the

legislation had passed and the project had been approved, it would have set a dangerous precedent, encouraging religious institutions to sue the County any time they wanted a project approved. The County administration admitted it would not have approved the project if it had not been proposed by a religious institution that had sued it. The County Council's vote against Bill 82-08 preserved the rural character of southern Anne Arundel County and the integrity of Jug Bay Wetlands Sanctuary.

General Development Plans (GDP)

Earl Bradley

Citizens of Anne Arundel County and the City of Annapolis have an opportunity right now to help shape development and land use for the next 10 years. Both the County and the City are in the process of updating their long-range development plans. Once finalized, these two documents will serve as blueprints for everything from zoning and development to housing and economic development to transportation and environmental protection. Several key dates and opportunities for input are coming up soon.

Anne Arundel County's General Development Plan

On January 20th, the County will release the draft GDP on its website. The County will then hold four public forums to present the plan and receive public input. The forums will be in small table discussion format lasting 20-25 minutes. All forums will run from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. at the following locations:

- January 26 at Annapolis High School
- January 28 at Old Mill High School
- February 3 at Southern High School
- February 5 at Meade High School

The County will also accept input in writing or by email through February 16th.

After this public outreach effort concludes, the County will revise the draft and present a revised draft to the Planning Advisory Board for its review. The final proposed plan will be submitted to the County Council shortly thereafter. Once the County Council receives it, the Council will hold public hearings of its own. It is likely that Council members will hold special public forums in their districts to highlight local changes and to receive constituent input.

City of Annapolis' Comprehensive Plan

The City has already posted the public draft of its Comprehensive Plan online. The City's Planning Commission will hold a public hearing to receive input on Thursday, February 5th at 7:00 p.m. at City Hall, 160 Duke of Gloucester Street.

The City will also accept comments in writing or by email through February 9th.

I encourage all citizens to make the most of this opportunity to be heard and to shape the future of our city and county.

Club Officers Elected, Committees Set for 2009

The newly elected executive committee of the Anne Arundel Sierra Club has chosen its officers and named committee chairs for 2009.

David Prosten will continue on as Chair; Judy Mauriello as Vice-Chair; Gene Milgram as Treasurer; and Joan Willey as Secretary.

The conservation committee will be co-chaired by Steve Satzberg and Judy Mauriello; Thomas Higdon will serve as Program Chair and Legislative Chair for statehouse activity; Jan Hoffmaster will be Outings Chair and Database Manager; Cherie Yelton and

Dawn Schulman will co-chair the group's Cool Cities program; Sue Youngs is Recycling Chair; Judy Mauriello will be Education Chair and share website oversight with John Cochran.

Liz VandenHeuvel will handle publicity; David Prosten will continue as Political Chair and serve as delegate to the Maryland state chapter of the club, with Ellen Pepin as an alternate; Adele Degnan will continue on with her membership committee responsibilities; and Pat Church will continue as newsletter editor.

Creek Cleanup Draws 40 Volunteers

David Prosten

More than 40 volunteers turned out on January 19 to help clean up the Church Creek stream valley, hauling out hundreds of pounds of debris from one of the 15 creeks that feed the South River and, ultimately, the Chesapeake Bay.

The Anne Arundel Sierra Club worked with the South River Federation to arrange the project, responding to President-Elect (and now President) Barack Obama's call for a National Day of Service on Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday. The project was one of a reported 11,000 held across the nation that cold, but clear day.



The volunteers hauled an incredible array of trash from the area of the headwaters of the creek, over which is Aris T. Allen Blvd.

Among the “take” by the enthusiastic participants, who ranged in age from five to 80, were more than 40 large trash bags of plastic bottles and shopping bags, styrofoam cups, beer bottles and other things you don't even want to think about. They also removed 15 tires, including two truck tires; a propane tank; a 40-gallon oil tank; dozens of roadside real estate signs; and a mattress.

The valley is partially privately owned, partially state-owned. The private landowner is hoping to put a conservation easement on his portion so that it can never be developed.

At least five shopping center parking lots and commercial operations contribute to the stormwater runoff that brings the debris into the creek. Participants learned about the fragility of the area and the impact of development on the area's waterways.

Become a Member!

Membership Form

FRIP No. F94QW22071

Contributions, gifts, and dues to the Sierra Club are not tax-deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Annual dues include a subscription to *Sierra* magazine (\$7.50) and chapter publications (\$1.00). Enclose a check or money order and mail to: Sierra Club, PO Box 52968, Boulder, CO 80322-2968.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Membership categories (check one)

	Individual	Joint
Introductory	\$ 25	
Regular	\$ 39	\$ 47
Supporting	\$ 75	\$ 100
Contributing	\$ 150	\$ 175
Student	\$ 24	\$ 32
Senior	\$ 24	\$ 32
Limited Income	\$ 24	\$ 32
Life	\$1000	\$1250

Dues are not tax-deductible.