



# The Montgomery SIERRAN

*Serving the People and Land of Montgomery County, Maryland*

October/November 2008

## It's Time to Kill the Inter-County Connector

The time is long overdue for Governor O'Malley and the General Assembly to kill the Inter-county Connector (ICC) and to redirect those billions of dollars to projects and programs that would help put Maryland on the path to sustainability. Because the question is less and less about whether Maryland can pay for the ICC, but whether, after spending more than \$3 billion on this one ineffective, destructive mega-project we would be able to afford much else – including projects and programs essential to fighting global warming.

Even though the State has issued contracts for the ICC and begun clear cutting forests and bulldozing homes and stream valleys, the Governor and the Assembly still can cancel the ICC. Doing so would cost far, far less than the ICC's \$3 billion-plus total cost. After consulting with the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) last March, General Assembly analysts reported that canceling the project, including two major contracts worth more than \$1 billion, would cost \$80 million.

Canceling the ICC would liberate more than \$2 billion in funding and debt capacity for better uses. It would also save irreplaceable forest and wetlands, protect healthy headwaters of the Anacostia River and Rock Creek, and pull us all back from a multi-billion-dollar leap toward global warming.

Most of the state and federal transportation dollars budgeted for the ICC could and should be redirected toward alternatives that would help revitalize communities, protect the environment and public health, and reduce oil consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

With the State slashing funding to critical projects even as rising oil prices sharply increase demand for public transit, and with concern about global

warming steadily mounting, county and state legislators recently have stepped up to call on Governor O'Malley to cancel the ICC.

The Sierra Club and its allies in the environmental, civic and progressive transportation communities are in an intensive, grassroots effort to convince the Governor and the General Assembly to take those bold and necessary steps. Your help is needed in this vital campaign. The time is now.

### Six Clear Signs That It's Time

The ICC never has made sense environmentally or economically, and with the confluence of numerous events, this mega-project makes less sense by the day.

First, on September 25, the Global Carbon Project reported that in 2007 global carbon emissions rose even faster than the "worst-case scenario" presented by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in its 2007 reassessment. Atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations now exceed 380 parts per million (ppm), well above the 350 ppm mark that prominent climate scientists say we must drop back down to in order to avert runaway climate change. Building yet another emissions trigger is exactly the wrong move, yet Governor O'Malley has refused to assess the ICC's climate impacts even though MDOT estimates that the ICC would trigger 700 million miles of new driving annually – a 20 percent increase on local roads and highways.

Second, the price of oil has averaged about \$113 per barrel this year. That's roughly twice what oil cost when O'Malley was elected in November 2006. Increasing gas prices has led to record increases in public transit ridership and a decrease in the number of miles driven in private vehicles.

Third, driven partly by rising energy costs, highway construction costs

have skyrocketed by 50 percent since January 2005. Two major ICC contracts issued in 2007 and 2008 have cost a total of \$170 million to \$290 million more than MDOT had estimated just months prior. Yet MDOT insists that its 2004 ICC cost estimate still holds.

Fourth, in mid-September, O'Malley announced he was cutting \$1.1 billion from transit and road projects across the state – including the Purple Line and Corridor Cities Transitway in Montgomery County, the Red and Green lines in Baltimore, MARC commuter rail improvements, road and pedestrian safety projects, and projects to address congestion in Bethesda and elsewhere related to the expansion of military facilities in our region. Yet O'Malley is preparing to issue another \$425 million (plus interest) in debt to keep the ICC bulldozers rolling.

Fifth, the Federal Highway Trust Fund, which funds highways and public transit through a tax on gasoline, was expected to slide into deficit this September, thanks partly to rising oil

prices that have resulted in less driving and a resulting reduction in gas purchases. Revenues have fallen so far short of projections that the Federal Highway Administration has rescinded more than \$200 million from Maryland over the last three years.

Sixth, Maryland faces a massive shortfall yet again in its General Fund, the State's main source of funding for education, public health and safety, environmental protection, and other programs. Yet O'Malley might seek to raid more than \$100 million from General Fund for the ICC this coming fiscal year, FY 2010.

### Massive Public Debt

The ICC financing plan established by Ehrlich and the 2003-07 General Assembly saddles Maryland with more than \$2.5 billion in debt, including interest. It also places the ICC ahead of all other transportation priorities and arguably ahead of many non-transportation priorities. It includes:

- **\$264.9 million** to be transferred

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## Letter from the Chair

# How Will We Pay for Transit?

Events are conspiring to make the need for a greatly expanded and improved public transit system in Montgomery County increasingly obvious. Yet, at the same time, looming budget deficits in Maryland and the county, combined with the exhaustion of Federal transit dollars, makes paying for it increasingly difficult.

Greenhouse gas emissions are growing even faster than recent predictions. Transportation accounts for close to 40 percent of those emissions and, while higher mileage standards will get us part of the way towards reducing those emissions, we have to find ways to reduce the number of miles driven as well. Higher gas prices are causing people to drive less and use public transit more. So now is the time to build more public transit, but how are we going to pay for it?

### Finding the Money

I am coming to the conclusion that if we are ever to see the quality public transit represented by the Purple Line (running from Bethesda to New Carrollton through Silver Spring and College Park) and the Corridor Cities Transitway (running from Shady Grove north along I-270) Montgomery County is going to have to pay for most of it by itself. Expecting financial help from Maryland that is now squandering its future transportation dollars on the ICC or on the Federal government, is a losing bet. If these projects and others are going to be built in any foreseeable future, the county will need to step up and do most of it.

But where will Montgomery County find the money? It won't be easy, but here are a few ideas to get us started.

Council member Floreen is proposing an excise tax on parking spaces in office buildings and parking lots with the proceeds to go towards improving transit. Parking requirements for new buildings could be reduced thereby freeing up more space for more lucrative rentals. A portion of the higher rental income could be taxed to help fund transit.

### Six Options for the Purple Line

We may also need to reconsider the type of public transit we want. The Sierra Club generally favors light rail over bus rapid transit because of the higher ridership numbers light rail attracts. But light rail costs more to build than bus rapid transit and its annual operating and maintenance costs are also higher. The Purple Line provides a clear example of this.

The six options for the Purple Line show that

building a system that attracts more riders also costs more. So, where do we strike the balance?

### Our Role

If I'm right that decisions on public transit and finding money to fund those choices will increasingly be done at the county level, then we, as the local Sierra Club, have an important role to play. Through this newsletter, public testimony and hosting events where these choices can be presented and discussed, we can help determine whether the public transit improvement we so desperately need ever get built.

So, if you're interested in the transportation choices Montgomery County will make in the future and would like to help the Sierra Club play a role in those choices, please send me an email at Hauck\_D@msn.com or give me a call at 301-270-5826.



*David Hauck*

Alternative	Ridership (Daily Boardings)	Capital Costs (Millions-2007\$)	Operating & Maintenance Costs (Millions-2007\$)
<b>Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)</b>			
Low Investment BRT	37,000 – 40,000	\$420 – 460	\$17.3
Medium Investment BRT	49,000 – 52,000	\$620 – 700	\$15.6
High Investment BRT	56,000 – 59,000	\$1,120 – 1,240	\$14.4
<b>Light Rail Transit (LRT)</b>			
Low Investment LRT	57,000 – 59,500	\$1,160 – 1,270	\$26.4
Medium Investment LRT	60,000 – 63,000	\$1,175 – 1,350	\$25.0
High Investment LRT	65,000 – 68,000	\$1,580 – 1,750	\$22.8

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## News and Letters

# Is the Road Code for People or Cars?

Although it may seem dry and somewhat esoteric, the county's current efforts to revise its road code can have a large impact on our quality of life and whether or not we successfully address climate change. Changes proposed by the county's Dept. of Transportation would make our communities less friendly to pedestrians and discourage walking. On the other hand, changes put forward by the staff of the Planning Board and its staff would favor pedestrians, encourage walking and reduce the number of car trips with all the greenhouse gas emissions that result.

To paraphrase Joe Passonneau, one of my favorite urban thinkers, streets can either bind a community together or split it apart. Depending on a road code's mandates, our roads will either become a multi-purpose travel link and public place for people who live, work and shop on both sides and cross it readily; or a wide single-purpose artery dedicated to speed and efficiency for cars traveling on it, but a dangerous barrier between people on each side.

When setting standards for streets, the lane width, pedestrian crosswalks, and the presence of parked cars have a major influence on how fast people drive, more so than the speed limit. Road designs that favor cars tend to make roads wide,

unpleasant to walk along, and hard to cross. High speed roads with their wider lanes also have more impervious area and stormwater runoff than slower roads with narrower lanes.

For several years, County officials have recognized that the current design of our roads favors speeds that are too high. A year ago, the County Council set up a working group to suggest changes to the road code to correct this. The group includes representatives from the planning and transportation agencies as well as a few public members

### A Surprising Result

Under the domination of the Dept. of Transportation, the working group's proposed road code favored cars over people. Instead of proposing narrower lanes and lower "target speeds", the proposed road code would, in some cases, *increase* the width and speed of existing urban boulevards like Wisconsin Avenue in downtown Bethesda and Georgia Avenue in downtown Silver Spring. The planning staff has countered with, and the Planning Board has approved, standards that undo this damage and retain what's good in the working group's report. On Sept. 30, seven of the nine county council members voiced their support for the Planning Board's position.

Due to the outcry over the proposed road code, it has been referred back to the county's Dept. of Transportation for further work. In mid-October, the outcome of trying to reconcile these competing versions of the road code will reach the County Council. The Council will ultimately decide where the compromise falls. The Montgomery County Sierra Club wants to make sure that the final road code favors people and community over the single dimension of travel speed.

### Other Aspects of the Road Code to Watch

The road code report deals with several other important issues:

- Accommodating bicycles. The need of cyclists for their own paved space sometimes conflicts with the

goal of narrowing roads. The draft road code offers a possibility of wide curb lanes or bike lanes on major roads. But as roads become wider, it becomes more difficult for pedestrians to cross. In the cycling cities of Europe, the problem is solved by giving both their own space at the expense of drivers. Until we adopt that solution, we need to balance the interests carefully. This road code proposal does not yet do that.

- Stormwater infiltration. The Audubon Naturalist Society and the advocacy group Stormwater Partners worked hard on road code standards to greatly increase the amount of rainwater that soaks into the ground near roads.
- Street trees. The Planning staff proposals deal thoughtfully with the placement and health of street trees. The road code proposed by the working group is more concerned with the minimizing the effect of trees on traffic speed.

The planners point out that master plans for urban areas rely on street trees for their traffic calming function in addition to their environmental and esthetic benefits. Their traffic slowing effect depends on putting trees near the road which also gives pedestrians both the feeling and reality of being shielded from traffic. Yet the draft road code does not allow for tree placement of this sort.

The planning staff wants the code to encourage tree planting in road medians that are at least eight feet wide to keep trees healthy. Yet the proposed road code fails to require that.

Finally, the planners point out a potential conflict between using roadsides and medians for stormwater infiltration, and the health of street trees. Planners are hoping to find tree varieties that withstand the wet, compacted soil and car-generated poisons in stormwater infiltration areas.

—Pam Lindstrom

(*Master Plans*, continued from p. 4) to get to work in West Gaithersburg. JHU asked that this estimate be increased to 32 percent]

### Public Needs To Be in Process

The public needs to be part of this process, to make sure decisions are made with a concern for all interests in the master plan area. Most importantly, the Sierra Club and other environmental and transit groups want to make sure the public is heard in the master plan review process. We were delighted that Nancy Sturgeon of the Montgomery County Planning Department spoke at the October 6th workshop. We are also encouraged by Ms. Sturgeon's pledge to hold additional community meetings this fall to make sure that the public will be involved in the West Gaithersburg planning process.

The Montgomery County Sierra Club plans to hold similar workshops in other parts of the county. We will target places where master plans are under review. However, please contact us if you would like us to speak to your community or group about the county planning process and how to advocate for smarter growth within this process. We would love to hear from you.

—Kate Konschnik

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## News and Letters

# Master Plans and Your Community

On Monday, October 6, representatives from the Sierra Club's Montgomery County Group ("SCMC"), the Montgomery County Planning Department, Coalition for Smarter Growth, and the Action Committee for Transit ("ACT") met with Gaithersburg residents to discuss upcoming changes to the West Gaithersburg Master Plan. The goal of the meeting was to give residents a chance to learn about the planning process and the role that the county's master plans play in shaping development.

### Four Master Plans Up for Review

Every year Montgomery County reviews several of the master plans for communities around the county. This year, in addition to the plan for West Gaithersburg, master plans for Germantown, Twinbrook and White Flint are up for review.

The Sierra Club has been involved in the county planning process for some time, advocating for smart growth. (For a complete list of our "Smart Growth Criteria" for master plans and development projects, please go to our website, [maryland.sierraclub.org/montgomery/](http://maryland.sierraclub.org/montgomery/) and click on "Newsletters" in the left-hand column. The

criteria are on p.3 of the February 2008 newsletter.) Over the next few months, we are planning several more events aimed at encouraging broader participation among county residents in the planning process as for a way to achieve smart growth in Montgomery County.

### Dominance of Developers

The particular concern in West Gaithersburg is the dominance of a handful of developers in the review process to date. In particular, Johns Hopkins University ("JHU") has been very involved in behind-the-scenes talks with county officials about the development it would like to see in West Gaithersburg. JHU wants to greatly expand its research and business park, located at Darnestown and Muddy Branch Roads, including the Belward Farm.

JHU's plans for West Gaithersburg fail the "smart growth" test in two crucial ways:

- 1) the plans would throw the jobs-housing balance off-kilter in the area (22,500 jobs to 5,600 households) and
- 2) the area's transit could not support the expansion; JHU has been pressuring the county to

change the design of the Corridor Cities Transitway ("CCT") to meander its way through JHU's development, which would make the CCT much less time-efficient and therefore much less useful for commuters into Washington, DC.

Moreover, this month, the State of Maryland announced \$1.1 billion in proposed cuts to road and transit projects, including cuts to the design phase of the CCT, making this project less likely to occur any time soon. As a result, West Gaithersburg will have to absorb a lot more commuter traffic as people from other communities drive in for work.

Of even greater concern is that JHU has enjoyed a significant amount of behind-the-scenes access to the West Gaithersburg master plan review process. For instance, this summer, JHU was given a draft traffic impact study of its development at least a month before environmental and transit groups were provided copies. [The planning department, using its standard modeling programs, estimated that once the meandering version of the CCT was built, 16 percent of commuters would use mass transit and carpools

*(Continued on p. 3)*

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## News and Letters

(ICC, continued from p. 1)

from Maryland's General Fund to the ICC from Fiscal Year 2007 to FY 2010. All of this money could have gone to other priorities, and much of it still can.

- **\$180 million** to be transferred from the Transportation Trust Fund to the ICC from FY 2005 to FY 2010. All of this money could have been invested in other transportation priorities, and much still can be.
- **\$750 million** in GARVEE debt, plus roughly \$250 million in interest. To repay this \$1 billion debt, MDOT has pledged roughly 14 percent of *hoped-for* federal transportation funding – roughly one in seven federal transportation dollars – over 14 years. But if federal appropriations continue missing the mark, the ICC could consume more than one in five federal transportation dollars. Maryland still could invest much of this \$1 billion in truer priorities including road and bridge maintenance, transit, and other projects that would help relieve congestion and improve air quality.
- **\$1.233 billion** in additional state debt, plus hundreds of millions of dollars of interest, to be paid mainly with revenues from Maryland's other toll facilities. Tolls on the ICC may exceed \$7.50 for a full round-trip in the road's first year and rise from there, but would pay less than one-fifth of the ICC's cost. The State plans to increase toll rates statewide by 70 percent by 2013. It appears that nothing in Maryland law prohibits the State from using similar bonds to pay for transit and other projects instead.

### Less Damaging Alternatives Cost Less and Work Better

Recently, a rigorous 2005 study conducted by Smart Mobility and commissioned by the Sierra Club and its allies compared the ICC to five alternatives on a wide range of transportation, cost and environmental measures. The ICC generally came in sixth (last) and did no better than fourth, compared to five alternatives

### What You Can Do

Join the grassroots campaign to defund the ICC. Whatever your talent or interest, we need you! To learn more or to volunteer, visit [www.stoptheicc.org](http://www.stoptheicc.org) or write to [icccaction@igc.org](mailto:icccaction@igc.org).

—Greg Smith

## Small Actions Add Up in Saving Habitats

**W**e're organizing two events in October that will raise awareness of habitat and biodiversity destruction and, at the same, show how these problems can be solved.

- The field trip on Saturday, October 18 (see "Save the Date!" on p.8 for more details) will be a real attention grabber as we see how the ravages of stormwater on a small stream is affecting our health and drinking water, increasing our taxes, and destroying habitats and wetlands.
- On Saturday, October 25 (see p. 8 for more details) join us at an invasive removal event from 10 a.m. to noon in Rock Creek Park near the intersection of Beach Drive and East-West Highway. The County plans on restoring a streamside buffer but first we need to remove the vines and invasive plants that are killing the trees.

### We Need Your Help!

- **Certified Weed Warriors:** A number of our members are taking a proactive stand in invasive plant removal by becoming Certified Weed Warriors with the Maryland National Capital Parks and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC). This will allow them to lead others and independently remove invasive plants from Montgomery County Parks that threaten our forests, meadows, and wetlands. To become a Certified Weed Warrior, volunteers must complete a two-part online course and participate in a two-hour field training session with a forest ecologist.
- **Database Manager:** One person who can update our database of native plant nurseries; landscape architects who specialize in wildlife habitats, rain gardens, and wetlands; and licensed tree arborists involved with the care and planting of trees in upland forests, flood plains, and urban areas. This volunteer would e-mail, phone, and visit Web sites to determine who is in business, update the contact information, and verify the products and services.
- **Field Trip Coordinator:** One

person who will increase public awareness by arranging trips and trip leaders to damaged and restored habitats and wetlands, National Wildlife Federation wildlife gardens, butterfly gardens, tree plantings, and rain gardens.

- **Lobbyist:** Lobbyist who will work with our experts, local garden centers, and County Council to pass Forest Conservation amendments and a law prohibiting the sale, introduction, and propagation of certain invasive species. The nature of this position requires daytime hours.
- **Private Property Coordinators:** We need a person who can commit daytime hours to work with the people at Holy Cross and Suburban Hospitals to design, build, and maintain wildlife gardens, butterfly gardens, rain gardens, and tree plantings on their property. These projects will be funded through proposals and grant applications submitted by Sierra Club as well as donations from private individuals.

We are also targeting corporate campuses, shopping malls, and small property owners. You can't help but notice corporate campuses covered with grass, a runoff pond, and a gaggle of Canadian geese. Wouldn't you like to make our County a better place to live by helping large and small property owners with gardening that attracts birds and butterflies, improves water quality, and adds beauty.

Please contact Steve Lonker at [md.sierraclub@comcast.net](mailto:md.sierraclub@comcast.net) or 301-438-3453 for more information on these positions.

### Impact of Deer

Everyone has noticed the increase in deer in our suburban neighborhoods and parks. Increasing deer population brings increased deer-vehicle collisions; more ticks that carry Lyme disease; malnutrition and disease in the deer, and increased damage to our gardens, landscapes, agricultural crops, and habitats. Deer can change the plant and tree community by over-browsing everything from the ground to about 4 feet up. Not only is the

shrub layer destroyed, but tree regeneration becomes impossible when the seedlings have been consumed. Songbirds disappear and the forest is left susceptible to natural disasters, disease, and invasion by non-native plant species.

The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection gives five control methods, and the cost per deer: trap and relocate (\$400 to \$2,931), fertility control (about \$1,000), sharpshooting (\$91 to \$300), controlled hunting (\$162 to \$622), and trap and euthanasia (\$400 minimum). Other deer control methods include repellents and fencing and contraceptives, which are prohibitively expensive and work over small areas.

There are few people trained in sharpshooting in urban/suburban areas and the cost can be expensive. Traditional hunting using licensed men and women with firearms or bows and arrows is the most economical and effective way to manage deer populations, but it is limited in some developed areas due to real or perceived safety concerns, laws, and social concerns, i.e. the thought of shooting Bambi is repulsive to some people.

So what can we do? We can lobby to create an Urban Deer Control Program that allows for the taking of deer outside of the regular hunting seasons in developed areas. Deer feeding should be discouraged and local ordinances that prohibit deer feeding in developed areas should be supported.

A landowner/hunter database template can be developed that can be used by communities and municipalities to identify hunters for controlled hunts. The shotgun permit season can be expanded along with increased bag limits to increase the antlerless deer harvest. In developed areas where hunting deer is not feasible, we can encourage non-lethal means of deer control.

What do you think of these ideas? Would you be interested in volunteering to work with local and state deer management programs and with hunting organizations? Please send your feedback to Steve Lonker at [md.sierraclub@comcast.net](mailto:md.sierraclub@comcast.net) or 301-438-3453.

—Steve Lonker

# Take a Hike!



The following trip list is a **partial** reprint of the Sierra Club Potomac Region Outings calendar. **You can see the entire calendar through the SCPRO website at: [www.sierrapotomac.org](http://www.sierrapotomac.org)**

## Events

**Sat. Oct. 25. Rated F. Fair Hill Natural Resources Management Area.** Join us for this fall-colors special: a fast-paced 12-mile hike of moderate difficulty exploring gently rolling hills. Fair Hill is in the northeastern corner of Maryland and was one of the largest land holdings in the east, owned by avid fox hunter William DuPont, Jr. It is a varied, bucolic, 5600-acre park that is especially beautiful in the fall. Bring lunch/snacks and 3 quarts of water. Optional dinner stop at nice restaurant on return trip. Meet at 8 am at Greenbelt Metro's main entrance by bicycle stands. Leader: Mike Darzi, Michael.Darzi@saic.com

or 301/881-7068.

**Sun. Oct. 26. Rated B. Along the Potomac River (Change of Seasons Series).** Fall colors! Good pace while hiking, with many momentary points of interest; 9 miles total circuit. Good dogs can bring their owners - please contact Leader. Meet at 10 am, in Glen Echo, MD, at Glen Echo National Park parking lot, adjacent where Goldsboro Rd. terminates at MacArthur Blvd. (same National Park complex as Clara Barton House), next to the pedestrian bridge over Minehaha Creek. Bring a good lunch. Leader: David Burd; dburd26@hotmail.com or 703/998-9390.

**Sun. Oct. 26. Rated B/C. Woodstock Equestrian Park.** A moderately paced circuit hike of 10.5 mi. in a spacious new park in the Beallsville area of Montgomery Co. We'll look and listen for signs of fall in serene fields and rolling woodlands against a contrasting environmental backdrop of Sugarloaf Mountain and the Dickerson smokestack. Leashed dogs are welcome. To carpool, meet at 9:30 am at the Grosvenor-Strathmore Metro station (Red Line) just outside the garage in the Park & Ride lot. Or call for the trailhead location and meeting time. Leader: Paul Elliott 703/256-6351.

**Tue. Oct 28. Rated H. Vigorous Hike in SNP.** Climb Buck Howell and Meadow Spring Trails to AT then South to Corbin Cabin Cutoff, Nicholson Hollow, Hannah Run,

Catlet Spur Trails, up Hazel Mountain Trail and down Buck Ridge. 18 miles and about 4000 ft. climb. Leader: Mike Moran, 703/281-4630 or mjm.9406@cox.net.

**Tue. Nov 11. Rated H. Central SNP Rose River Bushwhack and Big Meadows Loop.** (Vigorous Hike). Circuit begins at the Rose River trailhead. Instead of following the fire road, we will bushwhack along the Rose River to see the falls, cascades, and pools on this route. We will then visit Big Meadows before descending to the trailhead via Rapidan Fire Road and Upper Dark Hollow Trail; about 15 miles with 3500 ft. of ascent. Leader: Dave Green [dkgreenva@hotmail.com](mailto:dkgreenva@hotmail.com) or 703/536-5189.

**Tue. Nov. 18. Unrated, Hike & Bike - Massanutten Mtn & along Shenandoah River.** We will hike about 8 miles on the Massanutten ridge via Kennedy Peak, pick up our previously stashed bikes at Rt. 675 and coast 5 miles down the ridge on the road, turn north and pedal 8 miles back to our Fosters Landing Trailhead. Leader: Cliff Noyes 540 / 373-8267 or [hclmnoyes@yahoo.com](mailto:hclmnoyes@yahoo.com).

**Sat. Nov. 22. Not rated. Edwards Ferry cleanup.** Pick up trash, enjoy a beautiful part of the C&O Canal Towpath. Join Pat Hopson and Carol Ivory to clean up the towpath and riverbanks near Edwards Ferry. We'll work until noon, then (optional) have lunch in Poolesville, MD. Leaders will supply trash bags; please bring work gloves and water. Meet at

## General Information

(202) 457-2326

## Rating Key

A-B Easy  
C-E Moderate  
F-G Hard  
H Very Hard

9 am at Edwards Ferry; driving directions at [www.sierrapotomac.org/directions](http://www.sierrapotomac.org/directions); but please contact one of us, so we know how many people to expect. Leaders: Pat 703/379-1795 (9am-10pm) and Carol, [carolivory@verizon.net](mailto:carolivory@verizon.net).

**Sun. Nov. 30. Rated D. Harpers Ferry, Maryland Heights.** Work off the bird and desserts on this 7 mile conservation hike to the top of Maryland Heights opposite Harpers Ferry. See historic Civil War sites with spectacular views. Meet at 8:30 at Shady Grove Metro - East side by Metro tunnel. Bob Goldberg 301/540-2915 (before 9 pm).

**Tue. Dec 9. Rated H. Northern SNP The Peak and Big Devils Stairs.** (Vigorous hike.) Circuit begins at Mt. Marshall trailhead and climbs to Thoroughfare Gap where we will loop over The Peak via abandoned trails. We will then visit Big Devils Stairs from the Bluff Trail before returning to the trailhead via Harris Hollow; about 15 miles with 3500 ft. of ascent. Leader: Dave Green [dkgreenva@hotmail.com](mailto:dkgreenva@hotmail.com) or 703/536-5189.

## CHINCOTEAGUE, VA

3-bedroom, 2-bath house within walking distance of town.  
Sleeps 10 comfortably.

Enclosed outdoor hot/cold shower and screened-in porch. Short drive to wildlife refuge and protected beach.

Summer: \$675/week

March - May: \$65/night

September - November: \$65/night

December - February: \$55/night

Non-summer holidays: \$65/night

Call Sara at (301) 622-2888

## SECLUDED RETREAT IN CANAAN VALLEY, W. VA

3 Bedroom, 2 bath cedar home on private 5-acre lakefront lot. Direct access to Timberline Conservancy, Canaan Valley Refuge, and Dolly Sods Wilderness Area. Cross country skiing, mountain biking and hiking from property. Short drive to Timberline, Canaan Valley and White Grass ski areas. Outdoor hot tub, indoor Jacuzzi, wireless Internet access.

Discount for Sierra Club Members

Email [jideupree@gmail.com](mailto:jideupree@gmail.com) for rates and availability

# Save the Date

(Continued from p. 8)

**November 8** (Sat.) 10:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m. and **Nov. 9** (Sun.) 11:00-6:00 p.m.

## Washington D.C. Green Festival

Come to the Washington area's largest exhibit of groups and companies working for sustainability through energy efficiency, water conservation, habitat protection and renewable energy—sort of sounds like what the Montgomery County Sierra Club is doing! In fact, stop by to visit our booth. And, if you volunteer to table for a two-hour slot, you'll get in free that day. Don't worry if you haven't been that active, we'll pair you up with a more experienced member who can answer all the hard questions. To volunteer, contact Barbara Newland, [bnewland@verizon.net](mailto:bnewland@verizon.net) or 301-926-5922.

## Other Invasive Species Events

- **Friends of Sligo Creek** – What: Invasive plant removal. Where: Sligo Creek, Colesville Road to Forest Glen. When: Saturday, Oct. 11, 18, and 25 from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. Meet at the Dallas Avenue parking lot bridge between Brunett and Dallas. Gloves and tools will be provided, or bring your own. For more information, contact Ross Campbell at [CmpbellR@gao.gov](mailto:CmpbellR@gao.gov) or 301-587-6898 (H).
- **Friends of Sligo Creek** – What: Invasive plant removal. Where: Sligo Creek, Dennis Avenue to University Blvd. When: Saturday, Oct. 25 from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. Meet at the north playground on the Parkway near University Blvd. Gloves and tools will be provided, or bring your own. For more information, contact Jane Barrett at [janeandmin@aol.com](mailto:janeandmin@aol.com) or 301-649-4939 (H).
- **Library of Congress** – What: Lecture entitled Invasive species in the U.S. Where: Pickford Theater, 3<sup>rd</sup> fl., Madison Building. When: Tuesday, October 21 from 11:30 am – 12:30 pm. Cost: free. For more information, call 202-707-5664.
- **Little Falls Watershed Alliance** – What: Invasive plant removal. Where: Little Falls Stream Valley Park. When: Saturday, Oct. 11 and 25 from 8 a.m. – 10 a.m. Meet at the gravel parking lot at the intersection of Massachusetts Ave and Little Falls Parkway.
- **Maryland National Capital Parks and Planning Commission** – What: Certified Weed Warrior Training. Where: M-NCPPC Park Headquarters, Natural Resource Stewardship Offices, 2000 Shorefield Rd., Wheaton, MD 20902. When: Wednesday, Oct. 29 from 4 p.m. – 6 p.m. Cost: free. To register, please call their Volunteer Coordinator at 301-942-4709. For more information, go to <http://www.weedwarrior.org/>.
- **Maryland Native Plant Society** – What: Invasive plant removal. Where: Northwest Branch of the Anacostia. When: Saturday, Oct. 18 and Nov. 15 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Meet at 10204 Big Rock Road. Bring water and gloves. RSVP Jane Osburn at [jgosburn@earthlink.net](mailto:jgosburn@earthlink.net) or 301-754-1564.
- **Smithsonian Environmental Research Center** – What: Lecture entitled Weeds, Pests and the Fates of Ecological Communities. Where: Schmidt Building, 647 Contees Wharf Rd., Edgewater, MD. When: Wednesday, November 19, 7 pm – 8:30 pm. Cost: free. More information at [http://www.serc.si.edu/public\\_programs/event\\_calendar.jsp?year=2008&month=11](http://www.serc.si.edu/public_programs/event_calendar.jsp?year=2008&month=11)
- Visit <http://maryland.sierraclub.org/action/p0005.asp> for a comprehensive list of invasive plant removal events in Maryland.

## Habitat Restoration Events

Learn more about urban landscapes; designing with native plants; our forest, meadow, and wetland ecosystems; and habitat restoration at these events.

### Chincoteague Retreat

Comfortable 2-bedroom, 2-story home on 1/3 acre on a private lane near bay. Quiet! Surrounded by cedars, pines and spruces. Near protected beach, biking, hiking. Includes TV/Cable, w/d, heat/AC, phone, cozy cast-iron stove, 1.5 baths, small porch, Sleeps 6.

Off-season, non-holiday weekends: \$150  
Summer week: \$600

Call for flyer: (240)-683-7100  
email: [tim@charitychoices.com](mailto:tim@charitychoices.com)

**Brookside Gardens** – What: Lecture entitled Less Lawn, More Natives. Visitor Center, 1800 Glenallan Ave., Wheaton, MD. When: Friday, November 7 from 10 a.m. – 11:30 p.m. Cost: free. Registration required. More information at [http://www.mc-mncppc.org/parks/brookside/documents/Xper\\_Fall08Winter09\\_000.pdf](http://www.mc-mncppc.org/parks/brookside/documents/Xper_Fall08Winter09_000.pdf).

**Smithsonian Environmental Research Center** – What: Lecture entitled Oyster Regeneration in the Chesapeake. Where: Schmidt Building, 647 Contees Wharf Rd., Edgewater, MD. When: Wednesday, October 15, 7 pm – 8:30 pm. Cost: free. More information at [http://www.serc.si.edu/public\\_programs/event\\_calendar.jsp?year=2008&month=10](http://www.serc.si.edu/public_programs/event_calendar.jsp?year=2008&month=10)

**University of Maryland** – What: Sustainability Speaker Series. Where: Microbiology Building, Room 1127. When: Most Wednesdays from 12 pm – 12:50 pm. Cost: free. More information at <http://www.greensomd.com/node/268>



# Big Sky

## Mountaintop Retreat Lost River State Park, WVA

Award-winning contemporary home, designed as a meditation retreat; absolute privacy.

Spectacular 22-acre mountaintop site. Panoramic views: sunrise, sunset over National Forest mountains. State park hiking trails.

Floor to ceiling windows, 3 sides. Three large bedrooms each with vaulted ceiling, skylight, and balcony. Sleeps 3 couples or a group of 8-10. Fully equipped kitchen. Jacuzzi, decks and private picnic area.

2 ½ hours from D.C. Jeep provided for access on private 2-mile secondary road.

Negotiable week, weekend, and short-term rates.

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# Save the Date!

**October 18** (Sat.) 9:30 am – 12:30 pm

## ***After the Deluge—Stormwater Hike to View Problems and Solutions***

Capital View Branch of lower Rock Creek and Northwood High School  
Meet at the McKenney Hills Alternative Center, 2600 Hayden Drive; Silver Spring, MD

This will be a 2-stop trip to learn first-hand about stormwater problems and solutions. We will investigate the ravages of stormwater on a small stream in lower Rock Creek and then visit a school site that showcases “low-impact” solutions. Learn why stormwater is the number one water pollution source in Montgomery County and how it threatens our clean drinking water supplies, our public lands, and our backyard streams with erosion and contamination.

For more information on the field trip, contact Diane Cameron at [dcameron@audubonnaturalist.org](mailto:dcameron@audubonnaturalist.org) or 301-652-9188x22. Directions:

*From the Beltway* – Take Georgia Ave. north for three blocks; left on Arthur Ave., and right on Hayden Drive to 2600 Hayden Drive. School is located near Kohler Rd. and Hayden Drive.

*From the North* – Take Georgia Ave. south; right on Dennis Ave; left on Gardiner Ave.; right on Hayden Drive.

**October 19** (Sun.) 2:00-4:00 p.m.

## ***Annual Royce Hanson Award***

Sugarloaf Mountain Vineyard  
18125 Comus Road; Dickerson, MD (near Sugarloaf Mountain)

Come and celebrate our Agricultural Reserve at this annual event sponsored by the Montgomery Countryside Alliance honoring people who have helped to protect the reserve. There will be barbecue and Bluegrass; vineyard tour, wine tasting and grape stomping competition. Free (but \$10 for wine tasting).

For more information, visit [ruralmontgomery.org](http://ruralmontgomery.org) or call 202-244-4408, ext 125

**October 23** (Thurs.) 7:30-9:00 p.m.

## ***Putting Your Home on a Low-Carbon Diet***

Chevy Chase

Been thinking of doing something to save energy around your house? Feeling a bit overwhelmed about where to start or what to do next? Wondering if low-cost actions really save that much energy? Come to a house party where these and other questions will be discussed. Come prepared to talk about what you

hope to do, what you have done and what the results were. Leave with a short list of next steps you commit to take. Discussion will be led by Sierra Club members who've done it and have the lower utility bills to prove it!

RSVP to Barbara Newland at [bnewland@verizon.net](mailto:bnewland@verizon.net) or 301-926-5922 to get the address of the home energy efficiency house party.

**October 25** (Sat.) 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

## ***Invasive Plant Removal Outing***

Intersection of Beach Drive and East-West Highway

Montgomery County's 22nd Annual Community Service Day is Saturday, October 25, 2008. Support your community and join us at a Sierra Club-sponsored invasive plant removal event in Rock Creek Park. The Montgomery County Parks and Planning Commission has plans to reforest a streamside buffer here, but before they can do that they need volunteers to remove the vines and other invasive species that will kill the saplings if they are not removed.

Pruners will be provided but other tools are limited so please bring your own saws and loppers if you can. Long sleeves, pants, gloves, comfortable walking shoes or boots, and water are recommended. For more information, contact Jeremy Arling at [md.sierraclub@comcast.net](mailto:md.sierraclub@comcast.net) or 240-398-3635.

Directions. From the Beltway: Take the Connecticut Ave exit South towards D.C. Turn left on East West Highway in about 1 mile. Turn right on Beach Drive. We will meet at the parking lot alongside the soccer field at the intersection of Beach Drive and East West Highway.

**November 6** (Thurs.) 7:00-8:30 p.m.

## ***Maryland Home Performance with Energy Star***

Bethesda Regional Services Center; 4805 Edgemoor Lane; Bethesda

The Sierra Club is co-sponsoring this presentation that will cover cost-effective steps you can take to make your home more energy efficient. It also will provide information on how to find qualified energy auditors and contractors trained to do energy efficient retrofits. Depending on how many actions you take, a homeowner can realize savings on their utility bills of 20 to 30 percent. Open to Sierra Club members and non-members alike. Bring your friends and neighbors! *Maryland Home Performance with Energy Star* is funded by the Maryland Energy Administration.

RSVP to [info@mdhomeperformance.org](mailto:info@mdhomeperformance.org).

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