



THE MOUNT VERNON

SIERRA

Mount
Vernon
Group ExCom
Elections
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The Newsletter of the Mount Vernon Group of the Virginia Chapter of the Sierra Club November / December 2002 / January 2003

Upcoming Events/Meetings/Actions

GROUP MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

MVG membership meetings are held at the National Rural Electrical Cooperation Association (NRECA) Building, 4301 Wilson Blvd, Ballston, Arlington, within walking distance of the Ballston metro or free underground parking is available in the building. (Take a parking ticket when entering. Upon leaving, write Sierra Club meeting on the ticket and hand it to the attendant.) The meetings run from 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm with refreshments provided starting at 7:00 pm, and are open to the public at no charge. Reservations are not required to attend. Please bring a guest.

For more information on these meetings, contact **Terri Lamb, Programs Chair**, at terri.lamb@cox.net, or 703-538-6065.

November 12, 2002, Tuesday, 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Topic: Four Mile Run.

Four Mile Run is a nine-mile long urban stream that drains its Northern Virginia valley with 200,000 residents—adjacent to Washington, DC. The history, current resources, problems, and future possibilities for revival of this urban stream can be generalized as the story of thousands of urban streams throughout North America. Jim Fowler, the wildlife wrangler of Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom, grew up along Four Mile Run in the 1930s, and developed his love for the natural world there. Fowler returns to his home for the first time since 1946 to host this film and to provide a context for viewers to appreciate and seek to revive these abused, piped, channelized, and polluted urban waterways. The stream's surprising history and the bold plans for its future provide hope that our urban streams can be revived.

December 11, 2002, Wednesday, 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm.

2002 Holiday Party and Silent Auction at the Shirlington Community Center in Arlington. If you would be interested in learning more or assisting in our Silent Auction, please contact Cheryl Zebrowski, Silent Auction Chair at jzebrowski@worldnet.att.com.

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So, You Think You Know Water Quality in Virginia...

by **Andrew Nicholls**, Conservation Chair,
aknicholls@cox.net

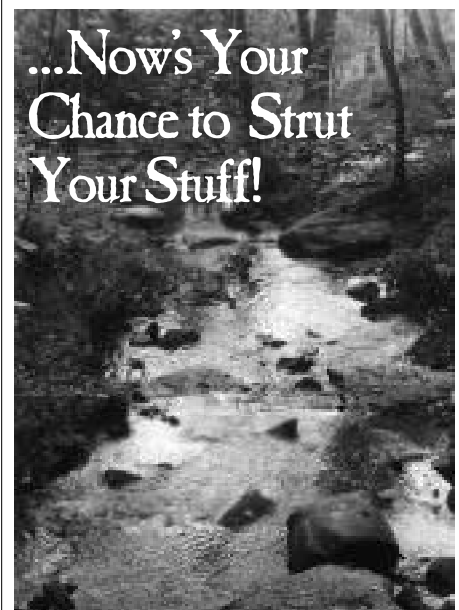
As required by law, the Commonwealth of Virginia submitted a water quality assessment report to the Environmental Protection Agency on September 30, 2002. The report describes water quality conditions in Virginia – rivers, streams, and estuaries - between January 1, 1996 and December 31, 2000. The primary purpose of this report is to satisfy the water quality reporting requirements under various sections of the Federal Clean Water Act and the Virginia Water Quality Monitoring, Information and Restoration Act. Virginia also submitted to EPA a report on the State's "impaired" waters. The word "Impaired" is not music to our ears.

Many members of the Mount Vernon Group of the Sierra Club are understandably concerned about the environmental health of the streams in our part of the Commonwealth, be it Four Mile Run in Arlington, Holmes Run in Fairfax or Neabsco Creek in Prince William. Using the recent reports to EPA as a basis for an exploration of water quality issues, as well as recent reports by Arlington and Fairfax Counties on the state of their streams, I've developed a quiz format to convey some

key definitions and findings.

1. Overall, Virginia has approximately how many miles of free flowing perennial rivers and streams?

- a) 20,000
- b) 100,000
- c) 50,000
- d) 10,576



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Don't Be Silent About the Silent Auction

THE MOUNT VERNON GROUP'S ANNUAL SILENT AUCTION is fast approaching. This event is one of our group's biggest fundraising opportunities of the year, so let's all join in to make it a success.

The Auction will feature a variety of goods and services for purchase, and 100 percent of every sale will go to support local Mount Vernon Group environmental programs. Examples of items that will be fea-

SILENT AUCTION & HOLIDAY PARTY
Wednesday, December 11th; 7:00-9:15 p.m.
Fairlington Village Community Center
Admission: \$5.00; Children 5 and under free

tured include a sunset kayak trip, a one-hour massage, gift certificates to local restaurants and gift baskets from local merchants. There will also be homemade goodies for sale; buffet

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The Mount Vernon Sierran welcomes articles, news releases, first-person experiences, poetry, photos and artwork. We reserve the right to edit all contributions for clarity, style, and length. Submissions are preferred in electronic format pasted into emails or as attachments. Photos can be scanned and emailed as JPEG files or mailed to the editor. Please contact Bill L'Hommedieu (703/527-4690) at 4013 North 18th Road, Arlington, VA 22207 or any Excom member for info. Views expressed by contributors are their own and may not necessarily be those of the Sierra Club. To place advertisements or classifieds in this newsletter, please contact Bill L'Hommedieu at 703/527-4690. The national Sierra Club web page can be found at: www.sierraclub.org. The Mount Vernon Group's web page is: <http://virginia.sierraclub.org/mvg>. The Mount Vernon Sierran is a publication of the Mount Vernon Group of the Virginia Chapter of the Sierra Club in Alexandria, Arlington, Fairfax, Falls Church, and Prince William County and is published 4 times a year for all Group members and the local public. Its primary mission is to inform and engage group members in activities for the protection and enjoyment of the local environment.

Notes from The Chair

by Pat Soriano



On November 5, 2002, northern Virginia voters – including all Mount Vernon Group members – will vote on whether to increase the sales tax to raise \$5 billion over 20 years to pay for transportation projects.

BEFORE YOU VOTE, consider the following:

- No analysis has been conducted to see if the projects will reduce traffic congestion.
- New roads only add up to more traffic, as new land is open to development.

Think about it: we have been building roads for decades in cities from Los Angeles to Atlanta, and the congestion has not diminished. The example of Los Angeles should demonstrate that no amount of new roads will reduce traffic congestion, especially during peak travel times. In fact, as one study has stated, peak-hour congestion will inevitably get worse in large cities throughout the world as populations in cities increase and higher proportions of those growing populations use private vehicles for travel. In the U.S. alone, since 1980, we have added 1.2 vehicles for every new person added to our population. Unless we change our travel patterns, we could have over 60 million more vehicles in

- Do you want to invest in publicly owned companies that demonstrate concern for our environment?
- Do you want to invest in tax-favored securities of public jurisdictions that are funding environmentally friendly projects?
- Do you need help identifying suitable investments?

If your answer is yes, please contact:

Clement Dinsmore
registered representative, A.G. Edwards and Sons, Inc. Friendship Heights, Washington, D.C., Member SIPC.
202-364-1611

less than 20 years. Other studies show that once peak-hour congestion appears, no amount of new roads will eliminate it because as drivers discover those new roads, they will soon be overloaded. Furthermore, studies show that new roads attract more development and generating more traffic!

- More traffic will run through Arlington and Alexandria only worsening cut-through traffic.

The complete failure of Fairfax and Prince William counties to implement smarter growth, combined with the unrestrained widening of highways promoted by the sales tax, will lead to higher traffic volumes pressing to cut through the inner suburbs. Prince William County, for example, recently approved 5,000 more homes and 16 million square feet of development at Gainesville (one-half the size of Tyson's Corner). Think of the additional car trips that this development will generate. (For more information, see the Washington Post: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp dyn?pagename=article&node=&contentId=A3850-2002Aug10¬Found=true>).

- There is no guarantee against widening of I-66 inside the beltway.

Despite the commitment of Arlington's elected officials, community leaders, and environmental groups to fight any proposals to widen I-66 through Arlington, the sales tax would dramatically increase the pressure to widen I-66. Under the "Coleman Agreement" in the 1970s, the federal government agreed to limit I-66 to 4 lanes within Arlington in exchange for Arlington giving up its 16-year fight against the highway. Given that the Coleman Agreement has been ignored in the past by federal and state legislators, it is unlikely that the non-binding resolution Arlington got from the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTa) will protect Arlington from federal, state, or NVTa efforts to widen the highway.

- Metro Rail gets less than 5% of the tax revenues.

Metro Rail needs \$6.2 billion just to keep maintenance and ridership growth, yet only \$250 million of the sales tax revenues over 20 years goes to Metro Rail. Transit should be our number one priority. Transit overall

continued on next page

Inside Outside Activism and EQAC

by George Lamb, Vice Chair, Virginia Chapter

Many things we do in the Sierra Club are designed to effect change by raising public awareness and getting the grassroots activated. This type of activism is called outside, because we work outside the official decision making channels. We go right to the people and make political changes happen.

The other type of activism, inside activism, works through the government process and established decision-making bodies. I've been involved with the Sierra Club for about 12 years and recently got an opportunity to participate in the inside process. My County Supervisor, Gerry Connolly, appointed me to the Fairfax County Environmental Quality Advisory Council, or EQAC. Being both an outside and inside activist gives me a much better appreciation for the role each plays in influencing decisions.

EQAC is a 14-member group appointed to advise the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors on environmental matters. Each Supervisor appoints one member, Chairman Kate Hanley appoints four at-large members, and there is one student member. Our staff liaison, Noel Kaplan, from the Department of Zoning and Planning, makes sure we have access to the County resources and manages the calendar. All meetings are open to the public, and recorded as part of the public record.

Each year EQAC prepares an Annual Report on the Environment that summarizes environmental conditions, trends, programs, legislation, and issues in Fairfax County and presents to the Board EQAC's recommendations on a variety of environmental issues. The Annual Report contains a wealth of information, both background information necessary to understand the issues, and recommendations to the Board on how to improve environmental quality. I've been looking for such a report ever since moving to Virginia, and was pleasantly surprised to find it (although I felt quite silly learning about it after being appointed to the commission that writes it!).

The 2001 report is available at the EQAC website: <http://www.co.fairfax.va.us/gov/eqac/eqac.htm> and the 2002 report,

which goes to press next month, will be there as well. The 2002 report includes a scorecard for the 2001 recommendations. Over the past several years, EQAC has stressed stream quality and natural resource management. Significant improvements have been made in these areas so this year the key recommendations focus on Air quality.

The EQAC also holds a public hearing in December and awards the Fairfax County Environmental Excellence Awards to recognize individuals, associations, and businesses for outstanding contributions to better our environment. These outreach programs encourage citizen participation and provide a way for the county to officially recognize citizens.

After working on the inside it's clear that both outside activists and inside commissions are necessary to effect change. EQAC provides a forum for representatives from each District, with a mixture of political ideologies, to regularly meet and deliberate the state of the County environment. Grassroots activists use many different mediums to get their message to the Supervisors. In the end, our elected officials still make the decisions that we all live by. ☺

Notes from The Chair

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is only guaranteed 22.6% of the total sales tax revenue.

• There are better traffic solutions.

Arlington is a national model for smarter growth, transit-oriented development, and multi-modal transportation choices. We need this traffic solution throughout northern Virginia. Just recently, The Coalition for Smarter Growth, which the Virginia Chapter is allied to stop the sales tax, announced their plan to address our traffic and growth issues. At our October Mount Vernon Group membership meeting, Laura Olsen, Assistant Director for the Coalition, described this plan, which includes four ways to save open space and create better communities with less traffic by (1) creating more walkable neighborhoods, (2) linking transit and our communities, (3) protecting parks and open

space, and (4) growing in the right places. For more information, see www.nosprawltax.org.

What you can do!

1. VOTE "NO" on the Northern Virginia Sales Tax Referendum
2. Write or call your elected official (see list below) and ask them to help our region grow smarter. Tell them you support:

- Making it easier to walk by building sidewalks and bike lanes, calming traffic and ensuring better development.
- Development near Metro stations and a purple (circular) rail line.
- Protecting open space.
- Smarter growth plans for the region that will attract new jobs to existing centers and revitalize existing communities.

Fairfax County

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703-324-2321

Arlington County

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Pat Bonan

Sales Tax Referendum



...the Silent Auction, from page 1

dinner will be served, and you will have a great opportunity to meet and mingle with fellow members.

The support and involvement of every member is crucial to the success of this event, especially since many local businesses are feeling the effects of the weak economy. There are so many ways we can show our support. Here are just a few. Try one or try them all!

- **Ask Your Community for Support**

– Each of us frequent businesses in our communities – local bagel shops, day spas, restaurants, dry cleaners and carwashes, just to name a few. Ask these companies to make a donation to the Auction. Most businesses are more than willing to donate to loyal customers. Also consider asking your own place of business or those of your family and friends. This is a great opportunity for businesses to show their support for the community; each company that donates will receive recognition both at the event and in the Mount Vernon Group newsletter. Just e-mail or call Cheryl Zebrowski, chairperson of the Silent Auction committee, for a letter that you can present to the company when you make your request.

- **Make a Donation** – You may be able to make a donation yourself. Have season tickets to the ballgame, symphony, or theater? If you know in advance that you won't be able to make a specific date, don't let them go to waste. Donate them instead. Can you perform a service, like landscaping, massage therapy, or photography that you would normally charge for? Donate your efforts. Know you won't be going to the beach in August? Donate a week at your beach house. Be creative. Call Cheryl with your ideas.

- **Bring Homemade Goodies** – Whether it's a family recipe for cookies or your own custom beer brewed in your basement, bring your favorite homemade goodies, wrapped and ready to be sold. Funds brought in from the sale of these goodies add a much-needed boost to the night's fundraising goal.

- **Volunteer Your Time** – Whether you are interested in helping out the night of the event, purchasing and preparing food, or helping with publicity, your help would be greatly appreciated. Just call Cheryl!

- **Come with Bells On** - The most im-

portant thing you can do is to support the Auction: Come on out! Bring your family and friends, bid on items, and have a great time. We'll see you there!

Questions? Comments? Want to volunteer? Call or e-mail Cheryl Zebrowski, Chairperson, Silent Auction Committee jzzebrowski@worldnet.att.net or (703) 824-3676

Directions: From I-395, exit King St. West. Make immediate right onto S. 30th St. (approx. 1 block after the I-395 overpass). Follow S. 30th St. to S. Abington St. (3 blocks, second stop sign). Community Center is across St. to the right. From King St. going East, turn left onto S. 28th St. Go about 100 feet and bear right at the fork onto S. 29th St. Turn Right at stop sign onto S. Abington St. Community Center is the second building on the left. Park in the lot adjacent to the Center or on Abington St. ☺

Volunteers Needed for Sierra Club Arlington Office

Would you like to see how Sierra Club works from the inside? Are you interested in helping fight sprawl in Metro DC? Do you have free time during the day?

If you answered yes, consider volunteering at Sierra Club's Mid-Atlantic Office in Arlington. We're looking for volunteers to help with administrative tasks such as filing, clipping newspaper articles, data entry, phone-banking, and help with mailings.

If you have one hour a week, or twenty hours a week, we want you!

Our office is located at 200 N Glebe Rd, Suite 905, in Arlington (about one mile from the Ballston Metro and a few blocks off Route 50), and is open Monday-Friday, roughly 9am-5pm.

If you're interested or would like more information, please contact Melanie Mayock, at (703) 312-0533x110; Melanie.mayock@sierraclub.org.

Join Sierra Club's Virginia Action Network

Virginia Sierra Club is one of the first chapters in the country to utilize a brand new activist tool-our web and e-mail based Action Network! If you have not yet signed up, please visit our web site at <http://virginia.sierraclubaction.org>

The Virginia Action Network is a free, fast and easy way to respond to important environmental alerts.

Using the system, you can send an e-mail or a fax (even if you don't own a fax machine) to your elected officials with a click or two of your mouse.

Signing up for the Virginia Action Network is as easy as 1-2-3!

1. Go to our web site: <http://virginia.sierraclubaction.org>
2. Click on "sign up" at the top of the page
3. Enter your name, residential address, and e-mail address.

Once you're signed up, we will send you occasional alerts by e-mail that you can respond to with a couple clicks of your mouse. Don't delay, sign up today! ☺

VOTE "YES" ON THE VIRGINIA PARKS AND NATURAL AREAS BOND.

- \$78 million for construction, improvement and repair projects (70 in all) in the State's 34 existing state parks, including Mason Neck, Leesylvania, and Sky Meadows State Parks;
- \$30 million for purchasing land for three new state parks and 10 new natural area preserves, including Northern Virginia Woodlands in Culpeper and Northern VA Appalachian Caves;
- \$6.5 million to purchase additional land for existing parks;
- \$4.5 million to protect park land from shoreline erosion;
- and, \$2.0 million for trail improvements statewide.

For more information, including a complete list of projects, go to <http://www.dcr.state.va.us/bond/index.htm> ☺

Important Contact Information

SIERRA CLUB HEADQUARTERS: 415-977-5500;
Membership info: 415-977-5653; Sierra Club Legislative Hotline 202-675-2394; National Headquarters: 85 2nd Street, 2nd floor, San Francisco, CA 94105-3441; Sierra Club website: www.sierraclub.org
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CONGRESSMAN TOV OFFICE 202-225-149; tomdavis@hr.house.gov
CONGRESSMAN MOF OFFICE: 202-225-437 jimmoran@mail.house.gov
THE WHITE HOUSE: C line 202-456-6213; F/ 456-2461, email the Pr and Vice President by going to www.whitehouse.gov and following the email prompts use



Water Quality, *continued from page 1*

2. How many miles of streams does Fairfax County have?

- a) 250
- b) 850
- c) 10,000
- d) 5

3. A watershed consists of a water body such as stream, river or lake and all of the land surface that drains to that water body. Everyone in Virginia therefore lives in a watershed.

- a. True
- b. False

4. The overall water quality for Virginia is assessed based on whether or not the condition of the stream or river permits citizens to enjoy them safely, based on specified criteria. What criteria (numeric and narrative) does Virginia use to evaluate water quality?

- a. Aquatic life use – assessed via levels of dissolved oxygen, pH, temperature, and toxic contaminants
- b. Fish consumption use – assessed via advisories or restrictions limiting consumption (PCBs in fish) issued by the Virginia Department of Health (VDH)
- c. Shellfish consumption use – restrictive actions for harvesting and selling of shellfish issued by the Division of Shellfish Sanitation within VDH
- d. Swimming use – Presence of fecal coliform bacteria, which can be indicative of fecal contamination from humans or animals
- e. Public water Supply – closures or advisories by the VA Dept. of Health
- f. All of the above

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Products and services must be compatible with Sierra Club philosophies and principals

5. Waters are defined as "impaired" by Virginia when they do not support, or only partially support, one or more of the five criteria listed above.

- a. True
- b. False

6. In the report on water quality submitted to EPA, Virginia assessed about 9,272 of the total statewide 50,239 miles (19.4%) using *monitored* water quality data, following EPA or DEQ monitoring protocols. According to this report, what percent of the 9,272 miles are impaired, and do *not* fully support all assessed uses?

- a. 10%
- b. 90%
- c. 44%

7. Again, according to the report, which Northern Virginia waterway(s) were *not* defined as "impaired?"

- a. Four Mile Run, in Arlington and City of Alexandria
- b. Pimmit Run, Fairfax
- c. Pohick Bay, Fairfax
- d. Backlick Run, Fairfax and City of Alexandria
- e. Neabsco Creek, Prince William
- f. Cameron Run, Fairfax

8. The leading cause of "impaired" status in Virginia's rivers and streams, and of those in northern Virginia as well, is violation of which standards?

- a. PCBs in fish tissue
- b. Heavy metals, such as mercury, magnesium and the band "Metallica"

- c. Fecal coliform bacteria
- d. pH
- e. Total phosphorous

9. What is *not* a source of fecal coliform bacteria?

- a. Fish
- b. Humans
- c. Geese
- d. Dogs
- e. Raccoons

10. When the four jurisdictions through which Four Mile Run flows conducted a Fecal Coliform Study in 2000, using DNA samples, what were the two leading causes of the bacteria that could be matched?

- a. Deer
- b. Humans (and their dogs) and waterfowl
- c. Raccoons other critters

11. If a stream is impaired and in violation of water quality standards, then a *Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL)* study must be prepared. A TMDL Study identifies sources of pollution and the reductions needed to attain water quality standards. Therefore, TMDL studies and implementation plans must be conducted for a large number of waterways in northern Virginia.

- a. True
- b. False

12. The Clean Water Act requires public participation in TMDLs, that is, you can participate in the process.

- a. True
- b. False

YES!

I want to join the Sierra Club and help safeguard our nation's precious environmental heritage!

New member's name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____ If this is a gift, giver's name _____

Membership category _____ Check enclosed Charge my VISA Mastercard Exp. date ____/____/____

Cardholder name _____ Card number _____

Signature _____

Membership Categories	Indvid	Joint
Introductory	\$25	-
Regular	39	\$47
Supporting	75	100
Contributing	150	175
Life	1000	1250
Senior	24	32
Student	24	32
Limited	24	32

Annual dues include subscriptions to SIERRA (\$7.50) and chapter publications (\$1). dues are not tax deductible. enclose your check and mail to: **Sierra Club, P.O. Box 52968, Boulder, Colorado 80322-2968**

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Upcoming Events/Meetings/ Actions,
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January 14, 2002, Tuesday, 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Topic: Hiking in Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR)

You read about it in the Washington Post (*In Alaska, The Last Refuge* by Steve Hendrix, June 21, 2002, page E01, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A32699-2002Jul19.html>), now come see the pictures and meet the hike leaders: our very own MVG Sierra Club members, Leslie Nicholls, lead guide, and Andrew Nicholls, assistant trip leader (and Vice Chair and Conservation Chair of the MVG). The 19 million-acre Refuge in remote northeast Alaska harbors an unparalleled diversity of wildlife in untamed wilderness. Unfortunately, the area also has been targeted for drilling and industrial development by the oil industry and its allies in Congress. In addition to sharing their slides, Leslie and Andrew will discuss the Club's views on this push to open the pristine Arctic Refuge oil and gas development. For more information on the Refuge, please see <http://www.sierraclub.org/wildlands/arctic/> on the national Sierra Club website.

GROUP EXCOM MEETINGS

We often get calls from members asking for our assistance in addressing an issue in their neighborhoods, involving perhaps a new mega-store development or the promotion of a local park. If you have an issue that you would like the group to address, we invite you to attend the Group ExCom meetings to discuss your issue. The Sierra Club is run by volunteer members like you. With your time and involvement, we can be a more potent force in our area to address not just your issue but those of the group at large!

November 20, Wednesday 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Your volunteer Group leaders meet periodically to discuss local conservation issues, vote on conservation proposals as well as to plan the next newsletter and member activities, including group

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SALES AND LEASING

membership meetings, outings, and volunteer opportunities. All MVG Sierra Club members are welcome to attend the meeting. If you are interested in learning more about what the MVG does, please join us. RSVP to host Terri Lamb, 703-538-6065 or at terri.lamb@cox.net, who lives in Fairfax County.

January 4, Saturday, 9:00 am to 2:00 pm.

The ExCom will hold its annual planning meeting at the Sierra Club Mid-Atlantic Office, 200 N. Glebe Street, Suite 905, Arlington, Va., 22203. After welcoming newly elected ExCom members for their 2003-2004 terms of office, we will decide the leadership positions for the group. We then will review our annual calendar of events, and discuss and determine the content of group membership meetings, newsletter, and website. In addition, we will decide the main issues and campaigns on which we will focus our energies. All Mount Vernon Group members are welcome to attend this meeting.

GROUP CONSERVATION/POLITICAL MEETINGS

Call Andrew Nicholls, Conservation Chair, at 703-536-5047 or at aknicholls@cox.net for the time and place of the next meeting.

GROUP OUTINGS

The Metropolitan Washington Regional Outings Program (MWROP) at <http://mwrop.org/index.html> provides a wide range of mostly day hikes in our area led by experienced hike leaders. Instead of these traditional hikes, the Mount Vernon Group intermittently offers various group outings such as bird walks or nearby kayaking. For information on offerings, if not listed here, please see our website at <http://virginia.sierraclub.org/mvg/> or contact Terri Lamb, Socials Chair, at terri.lamb@cox.net or 703-538-6065.

NEWSLETTER LABELING

January 23, Thursday, 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Location: Sierra Club Mid-Atlantic Office, 200 N. Glebe Street, Suite 905, Arlington, Va., 22203.

Join us for some pizza, refreshments, and about 4000 labels! If you have the evening free, this is your opportunity for some easy volunteering on behalf of the group while also enjoying some friendly discussions on wide-ranging topics with your fellow members. For more information, contact George Lamb, Volunteer Coordinator, 703-538-6065, or Pat Soriano at 703-671-3129, psoriano79@hotmail.com ©

You are invited to the **Arlington Community Wildlife Habitat Open House**

Please join fellow residents interested in making Arlington more wildlife friendly!

What: Arlington Community Wildlife Habitat Open House (in conjunction with the Arlington Habitat Stewards Training Program)

When: Saturday, November 9, 1-3 p.m.

Where: Long Branch Elementary School
33 N. Fillmore Street, Arlington

Who: Anyone interested in creating a wildlife habitat site in a backyard, schoolyard, apartment/condominium, or other community area.

The program includes:

- Displays and information tables
- Free resources
- Mingling
- Light refreshments

Sponsored by the Arlington Community Wildlife Habitat Team. For more information, please contact Arlingtonians for a Clean Environment at 703-228-6427 or office@arlingtonenvironment.org.



Thanks to Our Labeling Volunteers!



*Dean Amel
Rob Swennes
Jane Simpson
Chuck Mills
Terry Savela
Susan Taylor
Bill L'Hommedieu
George Lamb
Pat Soriano*

Annual Election of the Mount Vernon Group's Executive Committee



The Sierra Club, at the Group level, is a completely volunteer organization. At this level, the Group is run by an Executive Committee, or ExCom, which is responsible for determining and carrying out the policies and direction of the Group as well as managing the activities of the group – all in accordance with Club purposes and policies. As per our Group By-Laws, we have nine Executive Committee members elected by the Group membership for terms of two years. Every year, no fewer than four terms expire and are up for election.

Following are the statements from the members that are running to fill the expired terms this year. (Per Group By-Laws, any ExCom vacancies may be filled by vote of the other ExCom members.)

TERRI LAMB

I think the Sierra Club should be an organization that protects our environment while providing interesting and informative programs as well as enjoyable activities for our members. As Programs Chair, I expanded the position to include social activities. This year we organized some new activities, such as a morning bird-watching expedition and an evening kayak trip. These social activities give us a chance to experience the natural world with others who share our concern for the environment. I also served as the Silent Auction and Fundraising chair for 3 years and continue to work on the committee. Fundraising is an important part of be-

ing an effective organization, and the Silent Auction allows us to raise money and socialize at a fun and relaxing event.

I look forward to continuing to improve our local and global environment and quality of life as a member of the Mount Vernon Group Executive Committee.

ANDREW NICHOLLS

If elected to serve on the Executive Committee (ExCom), I will work with other interested volunteers to establish no more than three specific and measurable environmental goals for our group, to be achieved over the next three years. That goal setting process should include a very sober assessment of what we're good at, what other single-focus environmental groups are doing, and what is politically feasible. Next I'd work with other Excom leaders to develop operational plans for success. Having served on the Excom since 1997, I am convinced that anything less leads to dissolution of energy and focus. Which in turn leads to low odds of environmental success. A significant inescapable challenge is that most of the Group's work is done by a small number of active volunteers, all of whom have full-time commitments. All this implies the absolute necessity of setting and stick to priorities.

Criteria for setting our goals should include: 1) the potential magnitude of the air/water and land benefits gained; 2) a dispassionate assessment of the likelihood of success; 3) the degree of active interest and

commitment by members to achieving the goal.

My preliminary sense is that one of our priorities must be preservation of whatever forests and river habitat we can save through parkland acquisition, especially in Prince William and Fairfax counties. Two attractive attributes of a goal like this: 1) you can measure your success or failure clearly; 2) if successful, you can spend an afternoon or day enjoying the park you helped create and preserve.

I'd welcome your vote – and your input as to what our priorities should be.

BRUCE PARKER

Since joining the Sierra Club seven years ago, I have taken an active leadership role both within the Mt Vernon Group and the Virginia Chapter. My main environmental interests are the sprawl issues in Northern Virginia and the linked issues of global climate change and energy use. These are long-term problems that require us to educate the public and our elected officials. The Sierra Club, which we have helped make the most effective environmental organization in the country, is uniquely positioned to provide the leadership to work with our elected officials to make the right decisions for the environment.

As the current Chapter Chair, I am working on ways to make the groups more effective in promoting the both theirs and the Chapter's conservation priorities. As the group's representative on the Metro EPEC committee, I have helped direct the club's sprawl activities in the DC area. ☺

Please be sure to mail in your ballot for the Mount Vernon Group Executive Committee by December 15th

MVG Executive Committee Ballot

VOTE FOR NO MORE THREE CANDIDATES.

If you have a joint membership, please use both columns – one for each member voting.

Please cut out this ballot with your mailing label on the back. Please do not remove the label or cross out your membership number or you will invalidate your ballot. **Please mail your ballot by December 15, 2002 to: Rob Swennes, MVG Election Chair, 6101 North 22nd Street, Arlington, VA. 22205.**

SINGLE MEMBERSHIP

JOINT MEMBERSHIP

Terri Lamb

Andrew Nicholls

Bruce Parker

13. Point sources such as direct municipal and industrial pollution discharges are always much more significant than non-point sources such as pollution from residential, urban, or agricultural runoff.

- a. True
- b. False

14. TMDLs are required, per the Clean Water Act, to address only major "point" sources of pollution.

- a. True
- b. False.

15. In general, it is much more difficult to control pollution from non-point sources, due to their large number and dispersed nature. Put differently, it is easier to regulate wastewater treatment plants than to impact homeowners' decisions about fertilizing lawns and gardens.

- a. True
- b. False

16. If you want to help "repair" Virginia's impaired waterways, what are some actions you might take?

- a. Become more educated about water quality issues. Browse Virginia DEQ's Water Quality programs at <http://www.deq.state.va.us/water/> and find out more about the streams in your neighborhood.
- b. Ask your local elected officials what they are doing, specifically, to repair impaired waterways in your county or city. Indicate you know what a TMDL is, as that will show you mean business.
- c. Support parks bond referendums, to help preserve the quality of our remaining natural waterways and to maximize vegetated areas, which serve as

natural pollution filters.

d. If you must have a lawn, fertilize it using low phosphorous fertilizers, to minimize nutrient runoff.

e. If walking your dog along streams, ensure Fido doesn't leave anything behind.

f. All of the above.

ANSWERS

1.c, 2.b, 3.a, 4.f, 5.a, 6.c, 7.f (According to the report, 0.1 square miles of Cameron Run and Hunting Creek are impaired, but the upstream part of Cameron Run "fully supports" the four relevant criteria.) **8.c, 9.a, 10.b, 11.a, 12.a, 13.b** (As is also true with air pollution, nonpoint sources are actually the bigger challenge for many pollutant sources.) **14.b, 15.a, 16.f**

REFERENCES

1. Virginia Department of Environmental Quality *2002 305(b) Water Quality Assessment Report* <http://www.deq.state.va.us/water/305b.html> **2.** Virginia Department of Environmental Quality *2002 303(d) Report on Impaired Waters* <http://www.deq.state.va.us/water/303d.html> **3.** Fairfax County, Environmental Quality Advisory Council, *Annual Report on the Environment 2001* http://www.co.fairfax.va.us/gov/eqac/pdf_files/chapter_1.pdf

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MVG Web site address changed to:
<http://virginia.sierraclub.org/mvg/>

The Mount Vernon Sierran invites members to participate by submitting articles, photos and first person experiences for publication. Also, if you're willing to attend and report on relevant area events and political meetings, contact the Group Chair for assignments.

Next issue:

FEBRUARY / MARCH 2003

Submission Deadline is January 10th.

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