



THE MOUNT VERNON

# SIERRAN

<http://virginia.sierraclub.org/mvg>

The Newsletter of the Mount Vernon Group of the Virginia Chapter of the Sierra Club February/March 2004

## Upcoming Events/Meetings/Actions

### GROUP MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

Mount Vernon Group membership meetings are held at the National Rural Electrical Cooperation Association (NRECA) building, 4301 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, VA, within walking distance of the Ballston Metro. Free underground parking is available in the building. (Just take a parking ticket when you enter the garage, and when you leave, write "Sierra Club meeting" on the back of the ticket and hand it to the attendant.) The meetings run from 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. with refreshments provided starting around 7:00 p.m. The meetings are open to the public at no charge, and reservations are not required to attend. Please bring a guest. For more information on these programs, contact Andrew Nicholls, Programs Chair, at 703-536-5047, [aknicholls@cox.net](mailto:aknicholls@cox.net).

**February 10, Tuesday, 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.**

**TOPIC: Wild Utah: America's Redrock Wilderness**

Please join the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance (SUWA) for a breathtaking journey through the spectacular redrock country of Southern Utah. Presented by SUWA's DC Outreach Coordinator, *Wild Utah: America's Redrock Wilderness* is a multimedia slideshow featuring stunning images by noted wilderness photographers and a reading by Pulitzer Prize-winning author Wallace Stegner from his famous *Wilderness Letter*.

**March 9, Tuesday, 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.**

**TOPIC: Appalachian Treasures at the Crossroads**

Come learn about the Sierra Club's national campaign, Forest Protection & Restoration, and how you can join

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### Fundraising Chair Needed

For the past six years, the Mount Vernon Group has been able to raise much-needed funds through our annual Silent Auction. In order to continue this tradition, we are in need of a fundraising chair for 2004. We are looking for someone with ideas to either continue the Silent Auction or come up with new fundraising ideas. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Group Chair Pat Soriano at 703-671-3129 or [patemail@verizon.net](mailto:patemail@verizon.net).

## FCPA Proposes Plan on Laurel Hill Park

by Rick Rio, Northern Virginia Parks Coordinator, Virginia Chapter, [RicRio@aol.com](mailto:RicRio@aol.com)

**O**N JULY 15, 2002, FAIRFAX COUNTY received title to the former D.C. prison facility at Lorton. This property is located in southeastern Fairfax County west of I-95; it is bordered by the Occoquan River to the south. The transfer was made possible through the Lorton Technical Corrections Act, which was passed by Congress in October 1998 and required Fairfax County to develop a reuse plan that would "maximize use of land for open space, parkland or recreation" prior to the County's acquiring the property.

Today the property is referred to as Laurel Hill. With more than 300 buildings and

1,600 acres of land, redeveloping Laurel Hill represents an unusual opportunity to preserve relatively large parcels of undeveloped land. The Fairfax County Park Authority and the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority are developing a set of ideas and recommendations for the park and recreational areas identified in the Comprehensive Plan.

### WHERE WE ARE NOW

The new Laurel Hill Conceptual Plan proposed by the Fairfax County Park Authority and the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority presents a multitiered approach to possible recreational uses at Laurel Hill.

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## A Fun Time in Fairlington

by Cheryl Zebrowski, Silent Auction Chair

**O**ur annual Silent Auction and Holiday Party was held on December 9 at the Fairlington Village Community Center, and as in past years it was a hit, this time raising \$2,147 for the Mount Vernon Group. In addition to socializing and shopping, a crowd of some 40 members and friends enjoyed a wonderful Mediterranean-style buffet dinner catered by Leslie Nicholls.

At the auction guests bid on many exciting items, including the now famous North Carolina beach-house weekend donated by group member Andrea Walker. Many members donated other items as well as their talents. Among these items were a rowing session on the Potomac River, a manicure/pedicure, a massage, pet sitting, gutter cleaning, and a hand-knit holiday stocking. Local vendors provided outdoor equipment, restaurant certificates, outdoor adventures, gourmet goodies, and more. Be sure to take a look at the complete list of donors printed below.

Once again we found longtime supporter Dave Hagerty of Casual Adventure answering questions about the newest trends in outdoor equipment, including the JanSport Europack donated this year. We were also joined by two members of the Alexandria City Council, Del Pepper and Rob Krupicka.

Special thanks go to all the committee members, donors, and guests, without whose contributions, hard work, and support the event would not have been a success.

*Listed below are the companies and individuals who donated their goods, services, or time. The members of the Mount Vernon Group of the Sierra Club thank them for their support.*

### COMPANIES

Atlantic Kayak, [www.atlantickayak.com](http://www.atlantickayak.com)  
Build-a-Bear, [www.buildabear.com](http://www.buildabear.com)  
Casual Adventure, Arlington, VA

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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](http://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



AS WE DO EVERY YEAR, the Executive Committee, or ExCom, met in early January to welcome newly elected members and plan our activities for 2004. New to the ExCom are Mary Halnon and Steve Beretzky. Leaving the ExCom before the end of her term is Terri Lamb, whom we will miss greatly as a Group leader. Terri started out as our Fundraising Chair and then moved on to be both Programs and Social Chairs. Terri brought a lot of energy and dedication to these roles, but since her family is growing, she thought it best to resign as a Group leader. If you run into Terri, please be sure to thank her for all her years of dedication to environmental action!

Another departing activist is Cheryl Zebrowski, who ran our Silent Auction and Holiday Party for the last few years. Cheryl is leaving the area with her husband, Joe, and we wish them both well in their further adventures in life. Cheryl's departure does leave a critical opening among our volunteers for someone with fundraising skills. If you have any interest in this role, please let me know.

Moving on to 2004, the Group leadership discussed how we could best reach out to local politicians and other community activists to realize our conservation goals. As a start, we decided to form working groups for the two localities that are most in need of action: Alexandria and Fairfax County. Political leaders in these jurisdictions are not as mindful and progressive in terms of environmentally sensitive land-use planning and in their support of public transportation as are the leaders in Arlington County. Without these sensitivities and commitments, we can only expect further deterioration in our air quality and worsening traffic. Therefore, we will focus on these jurisdictions in the coming year by making our views known to local politicians, reaching out to other groups with similar interests, and attending relevant public meetings and forums. If you would like to join one of these working groups, please let us know. Patrick Eddington, Political Chair, is the contact for the Alexandria working group, and I am the contact for the Fairfax working group.

All the best in 2004!

*Pat Soriano*

*Without New Funds, Severe  
Overcrowding Likely by 2008*

## Metro Faces Funding Crisis

by **Melanie Mayock**, Conservation Organizer  
[melanie.mayock@sierraclub.org](mailto:melanie.mayock@sierraclub.org)

IF YOU'RE A REGULAR RIDER of Metrorail or Metrobus, you've probably noticed that Metro's popularity is booming. During Fiscal Year 2003, Metrorail achieved its highest ridership total ever, carrying over 184.3 million passengers, nearly 4 million more than in 2002. While this is good news for air quality and helps reduce traffic congestion, it also means that more money is needed to continue to serve all these new riders, as well as to repair and replace Metro's aging infrastructure. In fact, Metro has recently announced that the system is on the brink of a fiscal crisis, and unless new funding is forthcoming in the next year, severe overcrowding and frequent breakdowns will be a major problem beginning in 2008.

### The Importance of Metro

The Metro system is a critical part of the region's transportation network. Metrorail and Metrobus combined carry over 1.1 million passengers a day and account for nearly 20 percent of all rush-hour trips in the metropolitan area. Furthermore, the funding crisis comes at a time when the Washington region is struggling to reduce harmful air pollution. Since Metro reduces

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## 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](http://www.sierraclub.org)

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[jimmoran@mail.house.gov](mailto:jimmoran@mail.house.gov);

**THE WHITE HOUSE COMMENT line**

202-456-6213; FAX line 202-456-

2461, email the President

and Vice President by

going to

[www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov)

and following the

email prompts.



# I-66 Widening Inside the Beltway: The Bad Idea That Won't Go Away

by **Jason Rylander**, Arlington Coalition for Sensible Transportation

**T**HE HIGHWAY LOBBY HAS BEEN pushing for more lanes on I-66 inside the Beltway for many years, and the fight to stop them is beginning to heat up again. When original proposals to build I-66 surfaced in the 1960s and 70s, Arlington County residents and public officials strongly opposed construction of the highway. In 1977, after years of legal fights, Arlington County reached a compromise agreement with U.S. Secretary of Transportation William Coleman. The agreement stipulated that the highway would be four lanes in Arlington, and would include Metrorail in the median, HOV-4 restrictions, and a ban on trucks. In 1999, U.S. Representative Frank Wolf and Governor James Gilmore announced their proposal to widen I-66 inside the Capital Beltway with one westbound and one eastbound lane from the Capital Beltway to the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge.

## What's New

In early 2003, Virginia eliminated funding for the proposed study of widening I-66 inside the Beltway. However, in July, U.S. Representative Frank Wolf inserted \$1 million for a study on adding an additional westbound lane to I-66 from Rosslyn to the Dulles Connector into the House Transportation Appropriations bill. On September 4, Governor Warner sent a letter to Reps. Wolf and Davis, agreeing to go forward with the study. However, Warner made it clear that widening was just one option among many alternatives that VDOT and the Federal Highway Administration should explore, including a "no-build" option, transit, and HOV or HOT lanes.

## Why Widening Is a Bad Idea

Widening is a waste of taxpayers' money because it will not solve our congestion problem. Instead, widening will prolong and exacerbate the problem. While there clearly is an urgent need to reduce congestion, the proposed widening fails to recognize that adding lanes will rapidly result in more cars.

Rather than wasting money on pavement that will quickly fill beyond capacity with more cars, the Arlington Coalition for Sensible Transportation (ACST) strongly recommends that those dollars be put toward improvements such as upgrades to Metro capacity, expansion of feeder bus routes, Metrorail extension to Tyson's and Dulles, enforcement and expansion of I-66 HOV in both directions, evaluation of bus rapid transit, and value pricing. ACST's white paper, *Alternatives to Widening*, is available at <http://www.acstnet.org/Alternativestol-66Widening.pdf>.

**For More Information:** Visit the ACST website at [www.acstnet.org](http://www.acstnet.org), or e-mail Jason Rylander at [JasonR11@aol.com](mailto:JasonR11@aol.com). The Arlington Coalition for Sensible Transportation, a citizens' organization formed in 1999, has worked hard to ensure that a review of the full range of alternatives be included in any study of I-66 widening inside the Beltway. ©

## Capitol Hill Basics: Players, Procedures and Follow-up

FOR THE INDIVIDUAL CLUB MEMBER living in the average Congressional district, it's important to know who makes the decisions about what will or will not get reported to the Washington office for consideration. Here's a quick guide to how Congressional district offices are generally organized:

- **DISTRICT DIRECTORS/DEPUTY DIRECTORS.** Every district Congressional office will have somebody in charge of assuring that the mail gets answered, that phone calls are returned, and that the member of Congress is kept informed of what's going on back in the district while he/she is in Washington during the week. That person will generally be called the district director, office manager, or some other similar title. Normally, constituents will only deal with the district director if there is a serious problem that other staffers have not been able to address... or that they have ignored until you, the constituent, have felt compelled to "go over their heads" to the district director.

- **CONSTITUENT CORRESPONDENTS/CASEWORKERS.** These are the

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# Growth and Development in Alexandria

by **Ginny Hines Parry**, Sierra Club member and President, Alexandrians for Sensible Growth, [ghparry@fortebrio.com](mailto:ghparry@fortebrio.com)

**T**HE CITY OF ALEXANDRIA is now the 10th-densest city in the United States. Just a few years ago, it was the 11th densest. Alexandria's promotion to 10th place is due to the commitment of the Alexandria City Council since 1996 to put economic development on a fast track while ignoring the basics of land-use planning partnered with support of public transportation, as has been so long and vitally demonstrated by the County Board in neighboring Arlington.

In the face of that commitment to development, Alexandria's citizens have vigorously fought many development initiatives that would bring more traffic to neighborhoods, most notably a connector road from Eisenhower Valley to Duke Street. A final decision on the Eisenhower-to-Duke connector was deferred by City Council in November 2002, just prior to the kickoff for the May 2003 Council elections.

In the next few months, the new City Council will be making decisions on several issues that will affect Alexandria's quality of life. Among the hottest issues to watch is that relating to the Patent and Trademark Office (PTO). As explained below, the efforts to bring the PTO to Alexandria are part of a continuing process on the part of city officials to make it easier for developers to conduct business in the city.

The mammoth PTO complex, with more than 7,100 employees, opened in early December 2003 at Duke and Dulany Streets. A key is-

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**SALES AND LEASING**

Metro Funding, *continued from page 2*  
pollution in the D.C. region by 10,000 tons every year, a shortfall in funds could severely affect the region's ability to meet federal clean air standards.

**Funding Shortfall: \$1.5 Billion**

Metro has estimated that it needs an additional \$1.5 billion in capital funds over the next six years to preserve the existing system and serve expected new riders. These funds would meet the following needs:

**1.) Replace and rehabilitate assets: \$516 million.** As the Metro system has aged, equipment and assets (trains, buses, track, etc.) have begun to wear out and need to be repaired and replaced. Without new funding for this, Metro service will deteriorate. The rail system will have more door-closing problems, mechanical breakdowns, and delays, and buses will break down more frequently, making bus schedules less dependable.

**2.) Purchase new rail cars and buses: \$796 million.** Metro needs additional funds to purchase more rail cars and buses to alleviate overcrowding and serve expected new riders. By 2025, regional population is expected to grow by 31 percent. Transit work trips would naturally grow by 35 percent during this period, but restrictions in rail and bus capacity could reduce this by half.

Although Metrorail is designed to operate with trains that have up to eight cars, Metro operates only four- and six-car trains because of insufficient funding. The cost of equipping one-third of Metrorail trains with eight-car trains is \$625 million. Eight-car trains will add capacity to carry almost 30,000 additional passengers during peak periods. In addition, Metro needs \$171 million over the next six years to purchase 185 buses and invest in bus facilities.

**3.) Infrastructure protection: \$150 million.** Metro is critical for national security in the D.C. region. On September 11, Metro successfully evacuated hundreds of thousands of workers safely and quickly, whereas the roads were clogged for hours. But in order to ensure that Metro will be ready for a future emergency, the agency estimates that an additional \$150 million is needed for infrastructure protection. This would eliminate potential vulnerabilities in the operating system and improve Metro's ability to respond and recover during a regional emergency.

**Will the Feds Weigh In to Preserve Metro?**

The federal government is currently

considering a massive transportation spending bill known as the Transportation Equity Act, or TEA-3. Because of Metro's unique importance to the federal government, Metro officials are hoping local members of Congress can come up with a significant part of the needed \$1.5 billion from TEA-3.

**MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD!**

Local members of Congress need to hear from you about the importance of federal funding for Metro. Please call or write Congressmen Jim Moran or Tom Davis, as well as Senators John Warner and George Allen. Urge them to secure federal dollars to preserve the Metro system. Contact information is available at [www.congress.org](http://www.congress.org).

For more information, contact Melanie Mayock at 703-312-0533 x 110; e-mail [melanie.mayock@sierraclub.org](mailto:melanie.mayock@sierraclub.org).

**Volunteers Are Needed to Attend City and County Government Meetings**

The Mount Vernon Group is looking for volunteers to attend local city and county meetings in our region, which includes the City of Alexandria, the City of Falls Church, Arlington County, Fairfax County, and Prince William County. We are looking for volunteers to attend meetings to keep us informed of key issues and decisions relating to environmental issues, especially those affecting regional air quality, transit, new roads, etc. If you have any interest in this respect, please contact Pat Soriano at [patemail@verizon.net](mailto:patemail@verizon.net).

**Recycle Your Grocery Bags.** The Arlington Food Assistance Center uses hundreds of paper and plastic grocery bags every week. You can help this worthy organization by saving your grocery bags and dropping them off at their distribution site at 2708 South Nelson Street, Arlington, VA 22205. (Map and directions are at <http://www.afacinfo.org/>) Telephone: 703-845-8486.



**Please join the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance (SUWA) for a breathtaking journey through the spectacular redrock country of Southern Utah. Presented by SUWA's DC Outreach Coordinator.**

**Wild Utah: America's Redrock Wilderness** is a multi-media slideshow featuring stunning images by noted wilderness photographers and a reading by Pulitzer Prize winning author Wallace Stegner from his famous *Wilderness Letter*.

**Where:** NRECA building, 4301 Wilson Blvd, Arlington, Va. Within walking distance of the Ballston Metro. (Parking under the bldg from N. Taylor Blvd)

**When:** Tuesday, February 10, 2004, 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m..

**For more information:** Andrew Nicholls, [aknicholls@cox.net](mailto:aknicholls@cox.net) or log onto our website <http://virginia.sierraclub.org/mvg/>

Capitol Hill Basics, *continued from page 3*

staffers who get paid to answer your mail and address your concerns/problems on behalf of the member of Congress. Once you get past the receptionist, this will probably be the person you'll end up dealing with.

•**LEGISLATIVE ASSISTANT (LA):** These are the Washington, D.C.-area staffers responsible for specific legislative issues (e.g., the environment).

When communicating with any Congressional staff (from either the district or Washington offices), there are some key things to bear in mind:

•**IN THE POST-9/11, POST-ANTHRAX LETTER WORLD, E-MAILS AND FAXES ARE THE ORDER OF THE DAY.** All surface mail sent to Congressional offices is sent to™ a facility in Ohio for irradiation prior to being routed to the appropriate Hill office. The process takes six weeks, and materials are often damaged by the process. If you want to get your view across quickly with an assurance that your letter will be seen, fax or e-mail is by far the best method.

•**BE POLITE, SUCCINCT, AND ACCURATE.** Whether you're talking on the phone or sending a letter or e-mail, be polite and come quickly to the point. Keep any letters/faxes to two pages or fewer if possible. Congressional offices get bombarded with mail; if your communication is well written and to the point, you're a lot more likely to get action than somebody who rambles endlessly before getting down to business. The quickest way to discredit yourself (and the Club is to exaggerate or embellish your facts or position. *When dealing with members of Congress, provide credible, authentic documentation regarding your position.* KNOWINGLY PROVIDING FALSE OR MISLEADING INFORMATION TO MEMBERS OF CONGRESS IS A FEDERAL CRIME. Always remember: our ability to persuade others of the soundness of our views and the legitimacy of our complaints is founded upon our credibility, both as individuals and as an organization. Guard that credibility jealously.

•**Get names and numbers.** Be sure to get the voice and fax numbers of the person you're dealing with; get their private e-mail address if possible as well. Try to deal with the same person in that office, so long as that person continues to be assigned to deal with your issue or case. This will help to avoid the possibility of your issue falling through the

cracks. More importantly, it will help you develop a genuine personal relationship that will serve you, the Club, and the Congressional office in question well.

•**SEND COPIES OF ALL OF YOUR CLUB-RELATED CORRESPONDENCE TO THE MVG POLITICAL CHAIR.** This is critical to our ability to follow up with your legislator's office on issues of concern to you and to the Club as a whole. *It is absolutely essential that you send the MVG Political Chair copies of any letters you author asking your legislator to support a Club-sponsored bill.* We use your letters to reinforce the message to your member that you (a Club member and registered voter) support a given bill.

•**FOLLOW UP WITHOUT BEING A PEST.** Once you've stated your concerns to your Congressperson, give the staff at least a week to 10 days to get back to you. If you haven't heard by then, call back and politely inquire about the status of the request. Also, be sensitive to the flow of the Congressional session. Members are generally in their districts Mondays and Fridays; these are the best days to call staff as they are less busy. Also, calling early in the session is better than late in the session, when many issues have already been aired and legislative priorities essentially fixed. The very best time to get to Congressional staff is during a scheduled recess; this is when they have the most time to deal with you and your issue. Showing sensitivity to their work environment wins you big points with Hill staff.

## Congressional Relations Checklist: Do's and Don'ts

**Do:**

- Try to establish a friendly and professional rapport with your legislator's office;
- Be polite, succinct, and accurate in all legislative correspondence;
- Use e-mail or faxes for the quickest, most reliable means of getting your views into the hands of legislators and their aides.

**Never:**

- Embellish or falsify information provided to legislators or staff.

**Always:**

- Provide the MVG Political Chair with copies of any copies of your legislative correspondence, especially letters urging your member to support a Club-approved bill;
- Coordinate closely with the MVG Political Chair, especially if you anticipate problems dealing with legislative staff.

With the exception of mail irradiation, the above political tips apply equally to communicating with your state or local elected officials. Don't be bashful; avail yourself of every opportunity to reach out to your elected leaders at the federal, state, and local levels. It's the only way they have of knowing that you care!

## 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

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|-----------------------|-------------|----------|
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| 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

**F94Q W5011 1**

**Alexandria Growth**, continued from page 3  
 sue for our community is that the PTO developer missed its original December 31, 2003, deadline for completing a pedestrian tunnel under Duke Street. In fact, work on the tunnel did not start until October 2003. The tunnel is critical for safe passage of the 3,000-plus PTO employees expected to use the King Street Metro station to get to their Duke Street offices.

In September, the City Council extended the deadline for completing the tunnel to June 30, 2004, and issued Certificates of Occupancy (COs) to allow the first two buildings of the PTO complex to open on time without the tunnel. The COs were issued despite the explicit requirement in the project's special use permit that the tunnel be completed before the PTO opened to ensure the safety of PTO employees and visitors using Metro. The pedestrian tunnel will also lessen gridlock on Duke Street caused by thousands of pedestrians crossing Duke Street aboveground during rush hours.

Prior to City Council's discussion in September 2003 about the missed deadline, Alexandria's City Manager, Philip Sunderland, unbeknownst to Council, two months earlier had signed an agreement with the tunnel developer that settled this violation of the special use permit by requiring the developer to provide a shuttle bus service until the tunnel opened. The settlement agreement was not made available to either City Council or the public until December 8, 2003, nearly five months after it was signed. The agreement signed by the City Manager

also allows the developer to withdraw from the settlement agreement if City Council withholds future COs.

Nonetheless, the City Council is still considering whether or not to withhold future COs, despite the risk of losing the shuttle bus service. In a memo to Council dated January 8, 2004, Alexandria's City Manager urged the Council not to withhold future COs from the PTO even if the pedestrian tunnel under Duke Street is not completed by its extended deadline of June 30, 2004. The memo did not address the consequences of withholding COs as stated in the settlement agreement.

The Council considered the City Manager's recommendation at their January 13, 2004 meeting. Vice-Mayor Del Pepper and Councilmen Ludwig Gaines and Andrew Macdonald pushed for but lost a vote to withhold the COs if the tunnel is not completed by June 30, 2004. Councilwoman Joyce Woodson put forth a motion, supported by Councilmen Paul Smedberg and Rob Krupicka and Mayor Bill Euille, to postpone the decision to withhold COs until May 25, 2004. The motion that passed did not include the City Manager's recommendation to issue the COs even if the developer fails to finish the tunnel on time.

In addition to the safety and traffic issues related to the completion of the pedestrian tunnel, Alexandrians are concerned about the lack of full and timely disclosure of agreements the City Manager has entered into with the tunnel developer without appropriate public discussion. To restore integrity to the city's process for enforcing agreements with developers, citizens are urging City Council

to retain independent counsel to advise it on its options and to conduct an independent review of the City Manager's actions regarding the construction of the PTO pedestrian tunnel.



## Our National Forests are *not* protected from logging!

In 1998 the George Washington & Jefferson National Forest in Virginia allowed private companies to log over 30 million board feet of timber from public lands at a net loss to the taxpayer of almost two million dollars!

Nationally, there are enough Forest Service roads to go to the moon and halfway back, and taxpayer-subsidized roadbuilding for timber sales alone annually costs over half a billion dollars!

**FIND OUT** about the federal timber program on public lands, how it works, and what we can do to stop it.

**Become informed about the Bush Administration's** attempts to unravel decades of environmental protection for our public lands while cutting American citizens out of the decision-making process.

**Come learn about the Sierra Club's** national campaign to protect and restore our National Forests and how you can join your friends in Virginia to bring logging to an end on *our* National Forest.

**When:** March 9, Tuesday, 7:30 PM to 9:00 PM  
**Where:** NRECA building, 4301 Wilson Blvd., in Arlington

**What:** *Appalachian Treasures at the Crossroads*, a colorful slideshow featuring an overview of the Southern Appalachian Forests with images from Virginia to Alabama, followed by a miniworkshop on the National Forest timber sales program and an overview of the campaign to end the commercial logging of our National Forests.

**Get involved in protecting our National Forests before it's too late!**

For more information, contact: Andrew Nicholls (703) 536-5047 [aknicholls@cox.net](mailto:aknicholls@cox.net) or Dave Muhly (276) 688-2190 [david.muhly@sierraclub.org](mailto:david.muhly@sierraclub.org)



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## Auction Recap, continued from page 1

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Eastern Mountain Sports, [www.ems.com](http://www.ems.com)  
Five Guys, [www.fiveguys.com](http://www.fiveguys.com)  
Giant Food Stores, [www.giantfood.com](http://www.giantfood.com)  
Great American Restaurants,  
[www.greatamericanrestaurants.com/gmp.htm](http://www.greatamericanrestaurants.com/gmp.htm)  
Green Mountain Roasters Coffee Sampler,  
[www.gmcr.com](http://www.gmcr.com)  
Heidelberg Pastry Shoppe,  
[www.heidelbergbakery.com](http://www.heidelbergbakery.com)  
Honest Tea, [www.honesttea.com](http://www.honesttea.com)  
Italian Store, Arlington, VA  
Lebanese Taverna, [www.lebanesetaverna.com](http://www.lebanesetaverna.com)  
Maid Brigade, 703-823-1726  
Metro Gutter, 703-354-4333  
The Metropolitan Chorus, [www.metchorus.org](http://www.metchorus.org)  
Potomac Cannons, [www.potomaccannons.com](http://www.potomaccannons.com)  
Red Hot and Blue, [www.redhotandblue.com](http://www.redhotandblue.com)  
REI, [www.rei.com](http://www.rei.com)  
Robyn Webb Associates, [www.robynwebb.com](http://www.robynwebb.com)  
Santa Barbara Botanicals  
Shoe Fly, Arlington, VA  
Skyline Caverns, [www.skylinecaverns.com](http://www.skylinecaverns.com)  
Spokes Etc., [www.spokesetc.com](http://www.spokesetc.com)  
Springriver Corp., [www.springriver.com](http://www.springriver.com)  
Sun and Moon Yoga Studio,  
[www.sunandmoonstudiocom](http://www.sunandmoonstudiocom)  
Trader Joe's, [www.traderjoes.com](http://www.traderjoes.com)

### INDIVIDUALS

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### THANKS TO

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*Program layout*

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|                  |                  |
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## FCPA, continued from page 1

Many interest groups in Northern Virginia are competing to have their projects included in future uses for the site, from ball fields and a golf course to an area for model airplanes and even a rocket-firing range. Of particular interest to the Sierra Club is the inclusion of northern and southern conservation areas, and a connecting greenway.

Laurel Hill breaks down into four generally distinct areas: the northern conservation area; the central prison farm area south and west of that; the landfill south of the central prison farm; and below that the southern conservation area. The central prison farm area and the landfill are the most developed. The northern and southern conservation areas are the least developed, the least accessible, and the most valuable for preservation purposes. They both cover about 350 to 400 acres, and have a nearly contiguous strip running along the western edge of the entire area, presently planned to serve as a greenway connecting the northern and southern conservation areas. The possibility exists of ensuring that the planned greenway also will serve as a narrow wildlife corridor to connect the northern and southern conservation areas, as connecting isolated conservation areas is a basic principle in preserving healthy animal populations.

This will leave most of the central prison farm area for a mix of recreational uses, with the adjacent landfill being available for future expansion. It is clear the Fairfax Board of Supervisors will allow significant recreational development in the Lorton complex, and these two areas, the central prison farm and the landfill, appear to be the best candidates. There is already significant development in this section, with the necessary supporting infrastructure of roads, sewers, etc., in place, and traffic will naturally flow into it in any event. It appears to be much more manageable to concentrate development in the central prison farm area, leaving the landfill for future recreational expansion, and protecting the northern and southern conservation areas for use as wildlife sanctuaries and corridors, and for such passive recreational uses as bird watching and hiking (called passive because they involve no alteration of the land).

If any significant development were to occur in either the northern or southern conservation area, it would require the construction of considerable additional infrastructure—roads, parking, sewers, and so forth—

simply to allow for access. At the same time, any preserved natural areas in the central prison farm area would be subject to heavy overflow from the existing and proposed recreational activities that will take place there. Consistent with the Sierra Club's mission, we believe that the proposed greenway and wildlife corridor should be extended along the eastern edge of the public golf course and then through the community park between the high school and the middle school to connect with the northern conservation area. These areas should be limited to conservation and passive recreational uses. This leaves approximately 75% to 80% of the total Lorton area for schools, active recreational and cultural activities, and related developmental needs and expansion.

Obviously, any development must not interfere with any environmentally sensitive parts of the central prison farm area. It is our hope that a Park Ranger force will soon be created to enforce restrictions in such areas. The inevitable natural expansion of recreational uses into protected areas (rogue bike trails, etc.) will be most easily contained by the natural geographic characteristics of the entire complex, especially the landfill, which serves as a natural buffer between the central prison farm and the southern conservation area. Because of the present lack of a Park Ranger staff, the Park Authority needs to rely on passive natural barriers such as the landfill to contain the inevitable overflow problem.

### WE NEED YOUR HELP!

We request Sierra Club members to contact Judy Pedersen of the Fairfax County Park Authority at 12055 Government Center Parkway, Suite 927, Fairfax, VA 22035, phone 703-324-8662, FAX 703-324-3974, e-mail [parkmail@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:parkmail@fairfaxcounty.gov) to support our proposal. For more information, including maps, go to <http://www.co.fairfax.va.us/gov/cex/laurelhill/>. The best summary of the overall plan is at <http://www.co.fairfax.va.us/parks/laurelhill/images/LaurelHillDraftCDP.pdf>. ☺

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Design and layout of The Sierran

## Upcoming Events/Meetings/Actions

*continued from page 1*

your friends in Virginia to bring logging to an end on our National Forest. Find out about the federal timber program on public lands, how it works, and what we can do to stop it. Be informed about the Bush Administration's attempts to unravel decades of environmental protection for our public lands while cutting American citizens out of the decision-making process. *Appalachian Treasures at the Crossroads* is a colorful slideshow featuring an overview of the Southern Appalachian Forests with images from Virginia to Alabama, followed by a miniworkshop on the National Forest timber sales program and an overview of the campaign to end the commercial logging of our National Forests.

**April 13, Tuesday, 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.**

**TOPIC: Global Climate Change**

Program details to be provided at a later date.

### GROUP COMMITTEE MEETINGS

#### EXECUTIVE (ExCom) MEETINGS

Join the Group's elected leadership at these meetings where we direct and plan Group actions and activities. All Mount Vernon Group members are welcome to attend. For more information, including meeting location and agenda and to RSVP, please contact Pat Soriano, Chair, at 703-671-3129 or by e-mail at [patemail@verizon.net](mailto:patemail@verizon.net).

Dates of upcoming scheduled meetings are:

March 4, 2004, Thursday, 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

April 21, 2004, Wednesday, 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

#### POLITICAL MEETINGS

Location: 2900 Cameron Mills Road, Alexandria, VA 22302. For more information, including meeting agenda and to RSVP, please contact Patrick Eddington, Political Chair, via e-mail at [eddingt@mindspring.com](mailto:eddingt@mindspring.com) or by phone at 703-535-8778. Dates of upcoming scheduled meetings are:

January 31, 2004, Saturday, 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

March 20, 2004, Saturday, 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

May 22, 2004, Saturday, 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

### CONSERVATION MEETINGS

The MVG Conservation Committee now meets the third Thursday of every month (except December) at the Sierra Club Mid-Atlantic Office at 200 N. Glebe Road, Suite 905, in Arlington. For more information, including meeting agenda information and to RSVP, please contact Andrew Nicholls, Conservation Chair, at [aknicholls@cox.net](mailto:aknicholls@cox.net), 703-536-5047, or Melanie Mayock, Conservation Organizer, at [Melanie.mayock@sierraclub.org](mailto:Melanie.mayock@sierraclub.org). Light dinner and refreshments are offered.

Dates of upcoming scheduled meetings are: February 19, 2004, Thursday, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. March 18, 2004, Thursday, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. April 15, 2004, Thursday, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

### NEWSLETTER LABELING PARTY

Location: Home of Gordon Johnston and Karen Helbrecht in the Del Ray neighborhood of Alexandria. Join us for some pizza, refreshments, and over 4,000 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 Andrew Nicholls, Newsletter Labeling Coordinator, at 703-536-5047, [aknicholls@cox.net](mailto:aknicholls@cox.net). To RSVP and for directions, you may also call Gordon at 703-548-5784.

Date of upcoming labeling party is:

March 25, 2004, Thursday, 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

### 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 Sierra Club offers various alternative outings and social events as described above. For information on any additional offerings, please see our website at <http://virginia.sierraclub.org/mvg/>.

### ADDRESS CHANGES

Member address changes: Sierra Club Member Services, P.O. Box 52968, Boulder, CO 80328-2968. Send old and new addresses and a *Sierra* label; phone 415-977-5653; e-mail [address.changes@sierraclub.org](mailto:address.changes@sierraclub.org). For nonmember subscription inquiries and address changes: call 1-800-765-7904 toll-free or write to Sierra, P.O. Box 52968, Boulder, CO 80328.

### Mount Vernon Sierran Publishing Schedule

| Article Deadline             | Labeling               |
|------------------------------|------------------------|
| February/March 2004-1/5/04   | 1/29/04                |
| April/May/June 2004-3/5/04   | 3/25/04                |
| Sept./Oct. 2004-8/5/04       | labeled electronically |
| Nov/Dec '04/Jan. '05-10/5/04 | 10/28/04               |

### Join the MVG Group Announcement Listserv

Did you remember to attend the Mount Vernon Group Holiday Party and Silent Auction in December? Do you fail to schedule other Sierra Club functions that you really want to attend? If so, sign up for the new Group announcement listserv. You'll get automatic reminders of key upcoming events a few days before they take place. On occasion you'll also receive timely notices of breaking environmental issues and action opportunities. You will receive only one to four messages a month (we promise!), and your e-mail address will not be disclosed to others.

To subscribe, simply send an e-mail (with no subject line) to [listserv@lists.sierraclub.org](mailto:listserv@lists.sierraclub.org) and put in as the message (without quotation marks) "subscribe virginia-mvg-news." You'll get a message back asking you to confirm your subscription request. Do so. You are then fully subscribed. If you want to unsubscribe at some future date, simply follow the same procedure but send the message "unsubscribe virginia-mvg-news". It's that simple.

Join the growing ranks of those local Sierra Club members who are taking more advantage of all the local Mount Vernon Group has to offer! ☺

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