

News from the Foothills

March 2008

Newsletter of the Piedmont Group of the Sierra Club

P.O. Box 5531, Charlottesville, VA 22905

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

Calendar of Events

March 19 Sierra Club Program

Tim Beatley of the U.Va. Dept. of Architecture will lead a discussion on *Designing Sustainable Local Food Systems and Community Gardens*. 7:00 p.m. St. Mark Lutheran Church (corner of Ivy Rd. and Alderman Rd. in Charlottesville). (434) 973-0373

April 12 Third Annual Wildflower Hike at Key West Bluffs along the Rivanna River. Enjoy an early Spring hike amongst the wildflowers growing along the river. We will meet at Darden Towe Park tennis courts at 10:00 a.m. and carpool to the trailhead. Wear sturdy shoes and be aware it may be muddy along the path. Please pre-register with Allie Crowell at (434) 295-1395.

April 18 Earth Friendly Friday

David Hannah, executive director of Wild Virginia, will share information and pictures of the George Washington and Thomas Jefferson National Forests. David leads eco-tours ("tours de cut") into these forests, which are threatened by clear-cutting. 7:00 p.m. Thomas Jefferson Memorial Church (717 Rugby Rd. in Charlottesville).

April 19 Eco Fair Volunteers are needed to work at the Sierra Club table at this Earth Day festival near McIntire Park. We will be greeting visitors, sharing literature and giving away tree seedlings. Please contact Shirley if you would like to help.

Act Now - Stop Dirty Coal!

You can help make a difference on an urgent environmental matter currently under deliberation by our state government, but time is running out. Dominion Virginia Power is proposing a controversial new coal-fired power plant in Wise County. This plant is vigorously opposed by the Sierra Club for a number of reasons, including:

- Sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, and fine particulates would worsen smog, haze, and acid rain in our national parks and wilderness areas. Soot from the plant would increase rates of heart attacks, strokes, cancer, asthma, and even cause premature death.

The U.S. Forest Service has warned that air pollution from the plant would violate federal environmental laws.

- The Department of Health has imposed mercury-related fish advisories on hundreds of miles of waterways within Virginia. Several studies have linked this mercury contamination to coal-fired power plants.
- The Wise County plant would worsen Virginia's contribution to climate change, spewing more than 5.3 million tons of carbon dioxide into our air each year. Shockingly, Dominion has invested no money or resources to design or engineer a plant that could one day capture and store its greenhouse gas pollution.

The public comment deadline is March 12.

Fortunately, registering your opinion about this critical issue will only take a few minutes of your time. Go to the coalition website at **WiseEnergyVa.org** and select "Write a comment to DEQ" from the SITE MAP on the left side of the home page.

You can also write directly to the DEQ: Rob Feagins at grfeagins@deq.virginia.gov or Southwest Regional Office, 355 Deadmore St., PO Box 1688, Abingdon, VA 24212-1688. Please send a copy of your letter to **Governor Kaine** at Office of the Governor, Patrick Henry Building 3rd Floor, 111 East Broad St., Richmond, VA 23219 or <http://www.governor.virginia.gov>, or call him at: (804) 786-2211.

Sierra Club, Piedmont Group
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Piedmont Group of the Sierra Club Environmental Agenda for 2008

“Better Piedmont communities through respect for the environment.”

Climate Protection/Air Quality - Foster local government commitments to climate and air quality protection programs (including U.S. Mayors’ Climate Protection Agreement & “Cool Counties”). Educate the public regarding steps individuals can take to reduce their carbon footprint. Examine and report on data from the new air monitoring station in Albemarle County.

Energy - Promote energy conservation and efficiency, renewable sources of energy and recycling. Oppose new regional nuclear power plants (North Anna) and coal-fueled power plants (Wise County).

Transportation - Encourage alternatives to the single-rider automobile (walking, bicycles, car pooling, public transit). Oppose new roads such as the Meadowcreek Parkway and Eastern Connector that will intersect public parks.

Growth/Sprawl - Support study of limits to human population growth (including ASAP study of optimum sustainable population size). Support land use planning tools that protect open spaces (including clustering of residential development in rural areas).

Water Quality - Protect our local drinking water supply. Support stream buffering. Oppose factory farming, a major cause of water pollution.

Biological Resources - Preserve native species and ecosystems. Seek local government recognition of biological resource conservation areas and establishment of protection programs (including conservation easements). Oppose the use of pesticides in the Shenandoah National Park.

Agriculture - Encourage sustainable production of healthful foods (including organic agriculture). Educate the public on the true costs of foods. Promote direct marketing of local agricultural products. Support preservation of farmland in the Piedmont. Oppose policies that discriminate against small farmers.

Education/Activism - Promote understanding of sustainable lifestyles. Foster skillful participation by members and other environmentalists in local government decision-making processes. Alert activists about important environmental issues as they come before government decision makers.

Environmental Justice - Advocate for equitable treatment of all people in environmental decision-making. Support creation of affordable housing.

Healthy Communities - Support the use of integrated pest management (IPM) in public and private buildings. Discourage unnecessary use of pesticides.

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Receive weekly updates on environmental issues and events in our area. To subscribe simply go to our website and click on “Join the Piedmont Group’s email list.”

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