

News from the Foothills

October 2008

Newsletter of the Piedmont Group of the Sierra Club

P.O. Box 5531, Charlottesville, VA 22905

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

Vote for the Environment on Nov. 4

Each year Sierra Club volunteers select candidates we believe are worthy of the Club's support. We first send all candidates a questionnaire on environmental issues, examine their voting records, and conduct interviews. If the Club believes that a candidate will act to protect the environment once in office, we give them an endorsement.

The Piedmont Group urges our members to support the following endorsed candidates on November 4:
Barack Obama & Joe Biden - President & Vice President

Tom Perriello - 5th Congressional District

We believe these people will be strong advocates for clean energy, healthy communities, and the preservation of natural areas.

Our volunteers have been working at phone banks, canvassing neighborhoods, and stuffing envelopes because we believe these candidates will bring positive change for the environment.



Sierrans Jennifer Monaghan, JoAnn Dalley, Suzanne Michaels, John Cruickshank, and Ruth Morrison working for Obama & Perriello.

Calendar of Events

Nov. 4 **Election Day** 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Nov. 19 **Sierra Club Program**

"The Future of Passenger Rail in Virginia."

Meredith Richards will describe the current status of rail service in our area and what we can do to bring improvements. Dr. Richards is a former Charlottesville vice-mayor and city councilor who is the founder of *Charlottesville Citizens for Better Rail Alternatives*.

7:00 p.m. St. Mark Lutheran Church (Ivy Rd. & Alderman Rd. in Charlottesville).

Jan. 21, 2009 **Sierra Club Program**

"Recreational Outings in Central Virginia" with

outdoor specialist John Holden. Come and learn about the wonderful opportunities for hiking, camping, boating, and x-country skiing in our area.

7:00 p.m. St. Mark Lutheran Church

March 4 **Sierra Club Program**

"Creating a Butterfly Garden in Your Backyard" with Deborah Judson-Ebbets. Deborah is an organic gardener and herbalist who will give helpful hints on landscaping your yard. 7:00 p.m. St. Mark Lutheran Church

(For more information on any of these events, please contact John at 434 973-0373 or jcruckshank4@gmail.com.)

Sierra Club Calendar Sales

Sierra Club 2009 calendars are on sale now!

Engagement calendars are \$13.95 and Wilderness wall calendars are \$12.95. When calendars are purchased directly from the Piedmont Group, the profit stays with the group for its local activities. To obtain your calendar, email Audrey at aadann@gmail.com.

Sierra Club, Piedmont Group
P.O. Box 5531
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Conservation Initiatives

Rivanna Reservoir Task Force Meetings

The Rivanna Water and Sewer Authority recently created a task force to develop recommendations related to the future of the Rivanna Reservoir. The task force has been meeting twice a month and is expected to report its recommendations later this year. Recent meetings have included a boat tour of the reservoir and presentations by scientists on factors affecting it. Wren Olivier represents the Sierra Club on this committee.

Five members of the task force, including Wren, have indicated they believe that maintenance of long term water storage capacity of the reservoir should be a recommendation of the task force. Other members have asserted that discussions of dredging to restore full water storage capacity of the Rivanna Reservoir do not fall within the charge of the task force. They are committed to the adopted water supply plan which calls for a new dam at the Ragged Mountain Reservoir.

The Piedmont Group of the Sierra Club takes the position that a technical study of the costs and feasibility of dredging the Rivanna Reservoir to restore water storage capacity should be completed before any steps are taken to implement the currently adopted plan. If costs and benefits of dredging are found to be favorable, we believe development of an alternative long-term water plan using the Rivanna Reservoir as a principal water storage facility should be considered. A petition urging the task force to recommend a study of capacity-restoring dredging can be downloaded at the Piedmont Group web site. We urge members and supporters to sign our petition!

Members of the public will be allowed to speak at task force meetings on October 27. A survey questionnaire for members of the public is available at www.albemarle.org/SouthForkReservoir. (For more information please contact Tom Olivier at 434 831-2408 or tolivier@starband.net.)

Preserving McIntire Park The Piedmont Group has worked for many years to protect this Charlottesville park from unnecessary road construction. We experienced a setback when the city council recently approved easements of park land to VDOT for the construction of McIntire Road Extended (a.k.a. Meadowcreek Parkway) and the concept design for a new interchange at the intersection of Rt. 250 & McIntire Rd.

However, we are continuing our struggle to save the park as VDOT attempts to obtain the necessary permits

to begin construction. Fortunately there are federal laws (section 4(f) of the 1966 Transportation Act, section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act) that we believe can be used to save this natural area in the heart of Charlottesville. (For more information please contact John Cruickshank at 434 973-0373 or jcruickshank4@gmail.com.)

Nuclear Reactors at North Anna The Piedmont Group and the Virginia Chapter of the Sierra Club are opposed to Dominion Power's current plan to construct additional nuclear reactors at the North Anna Power Station in Louisa County. Our members have concerns about the on-site storage of radioactive waste, security risks, detrimental effects on water quality in the York River Watershed, and the discharge of hot water into Lake Anna. Lake temperatures have risen to 106 degrees Fahrenheit, causing a serious clam die off and creating a spawning ground for the brain eating *Naegleria fowleri* amoeba.

The Sierra Club is supporting a legal appeal initiated by the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League and the People's Alliance for Clean Energy to a decision of the State Water Board that granted a permit allowing Dominion to discharge hot water into Lake Anna without any temperature limits. We are also contesting the Combined Operating License for a third reactor at the site. (For more information please contact John Cruickshank.)

Wise County Coal Power Plant The Sierra Club has joined with other environmental groups in opposing the construction of Dominion's new coal plant in Wise County, Va. The Southern Environmental Law Center is representing our coalition in three separate legal appeals. We firmly believe that this coal plant, as permitted, fails to meet the requirements of the U.S. Clean Air Act. Dominion customers should not have to pay for a 1.8 billion dollar plant that will pollute our air and contribute to global warming. (For more information go to www.WiseEnergyForVirginia.org.)

Join the Piedmont Group email List

Receive weekly updates on environmental issues and events in our area. To subscribe simply go to our website <http://virginia.sierraclub.org/piedmont/> and click on "Join the Piedmont Group's email list."

