

News from the Foothills

August 2006

Newsletter of the Piedmont Group of the Sierra Club

P.O. Box 5531, Charlottesville, VA 22905

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

Calendar of Events

Sept. 17 "Wild, Edible & Medicinal Plant Walk" 4:00 p.m. Meet at the Key West Parking lot. Call Deborah at (434) 296-9637 for more information.

Sept. 20 Sierra Club Meeting 7:30 p.m. at St Mark Lutheran Church (corner of Ivy Rd. & Alderman Rd.) This meeting will focus on energy issues. We will view and discuss the documentary *Kilowatt Ours*. For more information call John at (434) 973-0373.

Sept. 30 Vegetarian Festival at Lee Park in Charlottesville, 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Volunteers are needed to work at the Sierra Club table. Please call John at (434) 973-0373 if you can help.

Sept. 30 Helen Caldicott comes to Charlottesville. This internationally known environmentalist will speak on nuclear issues at 5:00 p.m. at TBD. This event is co-sponsored by the Piedmont Group. Attendees are asked to make a \$5.00 donation.

Oct. 6 "Earth Friendly Friday" 7:30 p.m. at the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Church at 717 Rugby Rd. in Charlottesville. Sierra Club leader Dr. Thomas Ellis will speak on *The Gaia Theory*. This event is co-sponsored by the Piedmont Group. For more information call Deborah at (434) 296-9637.

Oct. 17 True Cost of Food Outing at 6:30 p.m. Enjoy a healthy meal and interesting conversation with other Sierrans. Call Deborah at (434) 296-9637 to make reservations.

Oct. 28 Pond Clean-up. 9:30 a.m. The Piedmont Group has adopted the pond at the corner of Greenbrier Dr. and Hillsdale Dr., across from the Senior Center in Charlottesville. Please bring work gloves, old shoes, and a rake. For more information call Barbara at (434) 973-0373.

Charlottesville Becomes a Cool City

On July 17 the Charlottesville City Council unanimously voted to sign the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement. Charlottesville has joined the 240 other cities that have agreed to follow the Kyoto Protocol International Global Warming Treaty that strives to reduce carbon dioxide (CO₂) pollution to 7 percent below 1990 levels by 2012. The city council took this action after hearing a report on Sierra Club's "Cool Cities" campaign and receiving a petition with 1330 signatures from the Charlottesville Center for Peace & Justice and the Sierra Club.

The "Cool Cities" program was recently developed by the Sierra Club to help localities meet the CO₂ reduction targets of the Climate Protection Agreement. The three major strategies include:

Green Vehicles

- hybrids and other gas efficient cars for city use
- vehicles powered by compressed natural gas
- incentives for citizens to drive fuel efficient cars

Energy Efficiency

- stronger efficiency requirements in municipal building codes
- modern lighting, heating, cooling, and insulation in existing buildings
 - street lighting and traffic signals with light emitting diodes (LED)
 - combined heat and power systems that use electricity & steam for heating & cooling

Renewable Energy Solutions

- a renewable energy standard of 20%
- solar panels on public buildings
- incentives for residents & businesses to use renewable power.

Charlottesville can also create more green spaces, plant trees and expand efforts to educate citizens about conservation and alternative energy sources. These solutions will save taxpayer dollars and improve public health by reducing energy waste & pollution.

Residents of Charlottesville should be proud to live in one of the three Virginia cities to sign the Mayors Climate Protection Agreement. We thank the councilors for their commitment to a healthier planet and hope that government leaders in surrounding counties will follow their example.

Green Tips for Saving Energy

1. Dry clothes on a clothesline or wooden clothes rack.
2. Unplug your TV, stereo, microwave, etc. when not in use. These appliances continue to use significant amounts of electricity when they are in the "standby" mode.
3. Replace your incandescent lightbulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs where possible. (Please be sure to recycle these properly as they contain mercury.)
4. Consolidate auto trips and walk, bicycle, or use public transit whenever you can.
5. Check your tires: Properly inflated tires can improve gas mileage by more than 3%.
6. Use less hot water: install a low flow showerhead and wash your clothes with cold or warm water. Adjust the thermostat on your hot water heater to 120 degrees.
7. Reuse, Reduce, & Recycle: You will save energy and put less trash in the landfill.
8. Avoid products with a lot of packaging.
9. Mow less: by reducing the size of your lawn and mowing less frequently you will use less energy and cut down on CO₂.
10. Plant a tree: a single tree will absorb one ton of CO₂ over its lifetime.

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Receive weekly updates on environmental issues and events in our area. To subscribe simply go to the Piedmont Group website

(<http://virginia.sierraclub.org/piedmont/>) and click on "Join the Piedmont Group's email list."

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