

News from the Foothills

January 2006

Newsletter of the Piedmont Group of the Sierra Club

P.O. Box 5531, Charlottesville, VA 22905

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

A Word from the Chair

In October ninety concerned citizens met on a rainy Saturday at the University of Virginia for an **Environmental Forum**. Seventeen organizations made presentations and the whole group agreed on a list of "**Environmental Imperatives**" that we are sending to the new governor and legislature. This list includes recommendations for protecting Virginia's natural areas, air and water resources, and for dealing with the challenges of energy, transportation, and growth. *(The complete text can be found on the Piedmont Group website.)* It was a day that gave many of us new hope.

I believe the tide may be turning. An increasing number of people in Virginia and around the world are ready to make necessary changes to protect the Earth for future generations. Americans are finding ways to conserve energy, corporations have discovered that environmentally friendly products can be profitable, and over 180 U.S. cities have signed the **Climate Protection Agreement** that strives to meet or exceed the terms of the Kyoto Protocol.

The Sierra Club is hopeful that our new governor and legislature will make the environment a top priority in 2006. One way you can help is by contacting your state legislators and the new governor and urging them to pass Delegate Jack Reid's **Clean Smokestacks Bill** that will significantly reduce pollution from power plants, including sulfur oxide, nitrous oxides, and mercury. What better gift could we give to our children?

- John Cruickshank

Calendar of Events

Jan. 21 Three Ridges Summit Hike

(Sponsored by the Blue Ridge Group) Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the parking area at Reed's Gap on the Blue Ridge Parkway. For more information, please call Janet at (434) 263-6199.

Feb. 4 Rivanna Trail Hike

Join us on this Saturday morning at 9:30 for a midwinter hike on the Rivanna Trail. We will meet at Panera (next to Blue Ridge Mt. Sports) in the Barracks Rd. Shopping Center in Charlottesville. After exploring the inner city trails for about an hour and a half we can warm up with a bowl of hot soup and friendly conversation. Bring water and warm clothes. Call Allie at 295-1395 if the weather is questionable.

Feb. 15 Piedmont Group General

Meeting 7:30 p.m. Dudley Rochester & Tom Olivier will speak about "Air Pollution, Our Health, & Climate Change." St. Mark Lutheran Church at the corner of Ivy Rd. & Alderman in Charlottesville.

April 22 Earth Day Celebration

The Greater Charlottesville Community is planning an "Earth Festival" with exhibits and activities for the whole family. Look for details in our next newsletter.

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (LZW) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

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EXCOM Elections

Please complete your ballot for the following "Executive Committee" candidates and mail it to:

Piedmont Group of the Sierra Club
P.O. Box 5531
Charlottesville, VA 22905

Ballot

(You may vote for all candidates. Two votes may be cast by joint membership households.)

Diana Abbott	_____
Betty Black	_____
Allie Crowell	_____
John Cruickshank	_____
Deborah Judson-Ebbetts	_____
Shirley Napps	_____
Tom Olivier	_____
_____	_____

Speak Out on North Pointe

Developers are hoping to build another huge complex in northern Albemarle County. Please take a few minutes to contact the Albemarle Board of Supervisors (296-5843 or bos@albemarle.org) and express your opinions. A public hearing is scheduled for Feb. 8 at 6:00 p.m. Please call John at 973-0373 for more information. Here are some of our concerns about North Pointe:

- **Commercial space:** The plan for North Pointe includes four large stores, restaurants, hotels, a multiplex movie theatre, and business offices for a total of 840,242 sq. feet. This is in a part of Albemarle County that already has an excess of commercial space.
- **Transportation:** The proposed development would intensify traffic problems that already exist around Hollymead, Forest Lakes, and

Airport Road. It will put a great deal of stress on Proffit Road as cars travel to the new stores from the Pantops area via Rt. 250 E, Rt. 20 N and Proffit Road, which is narrow, winding and has a one-lane bridge.

- **Damage to landscape:** The current plan, which includes large buildings and parking lots, would require extensive excavation of the hilly landscape.
- **Degradation of the Rivanna River:** The excavation of acres of steep slopes will cause large amounts of sediment to wash into the Flat Branch, a tributary of the North Fork of the Rivanna River. The excavation of land for the planned residential community would occur within 100 ft. of the Rivanna. After construction is completed, pollution will continue to wash from roads and parking lots into the Flat Branch (and Rivanna).
- **Poorly-planned community:** The plan for North Pointe bears very little resemblance to the neighborhood model as envisioned by the people of Albemarle County. It is residential on one side and commercial on the other. The stores, hotels, and offices are designed to attract people from outside the community.

Join the Piedmont Group email List

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."

Sierra Club, Piedmont Group
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