



News from the Foothills

January/February 2005

The Newsletter of the Piedmont Group of the Sierra Club

P. O. Box 5531, Charlottesville, VA 22905



Info/voice mail line: 434-990-0996

Upcoming Events

Sierra Club Piedmont Group Meeting

Wednesday, February 16, 2005, 7:30 p.m.
St. Mark Lutheran Church
(Corner of Ivy Rd. & Alderman)

Please join the Piedmont Group of the Sierra Club for a discussion of important environmental issues that affect Central Virginia. Topics of discussion will include:

- New nuclear reactors at North Anna
- Rapid commercial development on Rt. 29
- The Albemarle Rural Areas Plan

Contribute your ideas and become an advocate for a cleaner, safer community. Refreshments will be provided.

Please call John at (434) 973-0373 for more information.

NRC Public Hearing on New Reactors at North Anna

Feb. 17, 2005 6:00 p.m.
Louisa County Middle School, Mineral, Va.
(For more informational call John at (434) 973-0373)

Piedmont Group Activities

Trees and transportation have been the focus for our group during the past few months. On October 16 Sierra Club members organized an environmental project at Chris Greene Lake. About thirty-five people (including fifteen Girl Scouts) picked up bags of trash on the nature trail and planted three large deciduous shade trees on the beach. The intermittent drizzle could not dampen the enthusiasm of this group.

Our group meeting on November 17 examined the complexities of transportation in central Virginia. Tripp Pollard of the SELC gave an informative talk on the workings of VDOT. This was followed by a lively discussion of the many challenges we face. Representatives from several groups working on transportation issues shared what they were doing to promote alternatives to the auto-mobile. There was general agreement that a higher percentage of the VDOT budget should be used to support public transit, freight rail, walking, and bicycling. Our meeting ended with a report by Tom Oliver on the Albemarle County Biodiversity Work Group. This team has prepared a report that will serve as a foundation for a standing County biodiversity committee that will develop a protection plan for Albemarle's biological resources.

The Piedmont Group has taken a leading role in the opposition to construction of new nuclear power plants at North Anna in Louisa County. Sierrans from across the state are collaborating

with the People's Alliance for Clean Energy, Public Citizen, and other environmental groups to inform citizens of the danger nuclear power presents to the environment and public safety.

There are a lot committed environmentalists in central Virginia. Please join them at our next meeting on February 16, at 7:30 p.m., at the St. Mark Lutheran Church.

Group Treasurer Needed!

The Piedmont Group needs a volunteer to succeed Diana Abbott as our treasurer. (She loved this job so much she held onto it for 17 years.) Duties include managing a checking account, paying bills and maintaining financial records for our group. The time commitment is about three hours a month. Please contact John at (434) 973-0373 if you would like more information about this opportunity.

Our National Forests in Virginia continue to be threatened by policies that put the special interests ahead of special places

Problem: Increasingly, the U.S. Forest Service is placing damaging activities ahead of the necessity to protect our clean water supplies, wildlife, and the low-impact recreational opportunities that our public lands provide for all citizens. All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) are a growing threat to wildlife habitat and streams, producing noise, disturbance, and erosion in areas previously free of such damage. The Jefferson National Forest is proposing a new ATV trail in a remote area of the Clinch Ranger District in far Southwest Virginia, a trail

which will have negative impacts for years to come

Action Needed: Send a comment to the Jefferson National Forest telling them you oppose the construction of the Old Sawmill ATV Trail in the Clinch Ranger District. Let them know you want the comment period extended another 30 days and tell them to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for this highly controversial project.

Contact: Clinch Ranger District, 9416 Darden Drive, Wise, VA 24293

More details at: <http://virginia.sierraclubaction.org/showalert.asp?t=1&aaid=992>

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