

# Old Dominion Sierran



Virginia Chapter Sierra Club

Fall 2011

[www.virginia.sierraclub.org](http://www.virginia.sierraclub.org)

## Three plant retirements announced in one week

### Big Victories for Sierra Club's Beyond Coal Campaign in Virginia by Glen Besa

**E**nvironmental advocacy is never easy in Virginia, a state that allows unlimited campaign contributions and whose coal and utility industries buy legislators and governors wholesale. For that reason it was all the more unlikely that in one week, Sierra Club and our Wise Energy for Virginia Coalition would be celebrating the announcement of three coal plant retirements.

Mayor William D. Euille of Alexandria and GenOn Energy, Inc. announced on August 30 the planned retirement of the Potomac River Generating Station, a 62-year-old coal-fired power plant on the banks of the Potomac River in Alexandria. The announcement set the retirement date for October 1, 2012.

Since 2003, the Sierra Club has worked on an extensive organizing campaign targeting the plant for retirement due to the plant's pollutants extensive health effects on the families of Washington, DC and Northern Virginia.

"We're pleased to see that GenOn is taking steps to retire this plant as soon as possible," said Phillip Ellis, Sierra Club field organizer. Not only is this plant unnecessary, it's contributing to illness on both sides of the Potomac. We're glad it will be taken offline as soon as possible."

#### **Bloomberg Philanthropies makes \$50 million commitment to Beyond Coal Campaign**

Just five weeks before the GenOn announcement the Sierra Club joined forces with Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor of New York City, and his Bloomberg Philanthropies to combat the dangerous health effects coal-fired power has on children and families across the nation. The announce-

ment of a \$50 million gift to roll back the threat of coal-fired pollution was held on a boat in the Potomac River anchored near GenOn's Potomac River Plant.

Two days later on September 1, Dominion Virginia Power announced its planned retirement of the Yorktown and Chesapeake coal plants in Hampton

Roads, two of the oldest and dirtiest coal plants in Dominion's fleet.

As director of Virginia Chapter Sierra Club, I believe these plant retirements are great news. Everyone in Hampton Roads will be breathing a whole lot easier with the

#### **The Sierra Club is disappointed Dominion still has not committed to major wind or solar projects in Virginia**

major reductions in air pollution we will experience once the plants go off line.

#### **The Challenge Ahead Wind Yes, Gas No**

The retirement of the Potomac River Coal Plant in Alexandria appears to be a done deal, but Dominion's proposed retirements of the Yorktown and Chesapeake plants are subject to State Corporation Commission approval. In announcing plans to retire the two coal plants, Dominion proposed to develop two new 1300 megawatt natural gas plants while making no commitment to utility-scale wind or solar.

The Sierra Club is disappointed Dominion still has not committed to major wind or solar projects in Virginia. Dominion owns wind farms in West Virginia, Pennsylvania and Illinois, but those projects don't create green jobs in Virginia.

Sierra Club will take the Dominion fight to the State Corporation Commission where we will defend the coal plant retirements while advocating for efficiency, wind and solar investments instead of natural gas.

You can sign our petition to the State Corporation Commission as well as volunteer to assist with our Beyond Coal Campaign by going to [www.sierraclub.org/coal/va/](http://www.sierraclub.org/coal/va/) or visit [va4wind.com](http://va4wind.com).

*Glen Besa is director Virginia Chapter Sierra Club. He will be honored as a Climate Hero at a special Chesapeake Climate Action Network event in Washington, DC, October 13.*



The GenOn Potomac River Generating Station, which has been spewing dangerous pollutants into Alexandria's and Washington's air for many years, will soon be fading from existence.



## From the Chair

## More roads not answer to better transportation



by John Cruickshank

It is unfortunate so many people in our state legislature and the governor's office believe you can build your way out of traffic congestion. They are ignoring many years of research on a phenomenon known as induced traffic that has been recognized by traffic engineers for decades. When a new road is built, there is an increase in vehicle miles traveled.

In 1969, J.J. Leeming wrote, "motorways and bypasses generate traffic, that is, produce extra traffic, partly by inducing people to travel who would not otherwise have done so by making the new route more convenient than the old . . ."

In his book *Traffic*, Tom Vanderbilt wrote, "When more lane-miles of roads are built, more miles are driven, even more so than might be expected by 'natural' increase in demand, like population growth."

In 1996 the Commission on the Future of Transportation in Virginia stated, "Congestion increases as people move outward from urban centers, and additional lane-miles of roads to accommodate the people lead to more development, more people, more congestion, and more lane-miles."

Most VDOT traffic engineers understand you can't build your way out of congestion, but the political appointees in charge want more roads, more development and more sprawl. The community gets paved over, becomes less livable, and a few people get very rich.

An intelligent solution, adopted by many communities, is to stop investing in new roads. They improve public transit, create walkable communities, and make it safe to utilize the most efficient means of transportation, the bicycle.

Think what this will do for the physical and mental health of our people. We could also use the savings to make our existing roads safer and more efficient.

I am grateful the Virginia Chapter has been a leader in promoting alternatives to the automobile. Our transportation specialists, Roger Diedrich, Vasily Kisunko and David Dickson, have worked tirelessly to promote sound transit proposals and stop wasteful road building projects.

Virginians will not stop driving cars anytime soon, but we desperately need viable choices so that we can all spend less time behind the wheel.

## National Sierra Club honors Virginia chapter leaders Ivy Main and Charles Price

Virginia Chapter activists Ivy Main and Charles Price were recognized for their outstanding contributions at the Sierra Club Annual Meeting and Awards Banquet in San Francisco on September 23.

Ivy, accepting the Sierra Club National 2011 Communications Award, was recognized for her outstanding work producing and integrating video into our Virginia chapter website.

Ivy trained herself in basic video production and editing and her efforts are reflected in several videos on YouTube that are embedded in our website, <http://vasierraclub.org/>. One of her videos introduces members to the Sierra Club. Another is on offshore wind power and a third is a montage of our 2010 Annual Gathering. Kudos also to chapter staffer Eileen Levandoski for her work with Ivy uploading these videos to our website.



Charles received the Sierra Club 2011 Special Achievement Award for his work with an urban community in North Richmond to develop the Cannon Creek Greenway, destined to be a link in the East Coast Greenway from Maine to Florida. Charles' vision and determination brought an inner city community together to construct a greenway from city land along Cannon Creek, which for too long had served as an informal dumping ground.

Charles recruited community support as well as city government backing, then convinced the local Virginia National Guard unit to take on the Greenway as a community service project. Currently under construction, the Cannon Creek Greenway is to be completed in 2012.

Charles is the immediate past chair of the Virginia chapter.

Join us in congratulating Ivy and Charles for their outstanding work on behalf of the Sierra Club.



## 2011 Annual Gathering

## Last chance to join the fun and camaraderie

by Ann Moore

Every year Virginia Sierra Club members join together for a weekend of hiking, music, fun and, of course, learning about how to protect our natural environment in Virginia. This three-day, two-night gathering includes nature hikes, campaign briefings and gourmet food.

There is still time to register. If you've never been, this is definitely the year to try it out, and for gathering veterans this is the year not to miss.

Join us for the Virginia Sierra Club Annual Gathering September 30 through October 2 in Camp Mahwavi, Prince William Forest Park. Enjoy a weekend of delicious meals, a Friday night singalong and a Saturday night skiffles band, with opportunities for plenty of socializing.

In the daytime, choose from nature hikes, a yoga class, outings leader and Red Cross first aid training (separate reg-

istration required) and even a workshop on bicycle repair. There will be exciting featured speakers as well as a host of informative sessions on ways to get active and protect our environment. Timely briefings on our most important campaigns will be included.

Registration is required. Register either on the Virginia Sierra Club website, <http://vasierraclub.org/2011/06/2011-annual-gathering/>, or by contacting Joe Apple, [joe.apple@comcast.net](mailto:joe.apple@comcast.net). The fee covers lodging, meals and weekend activities (certain training sessions have a separate fee). Overnight and day passes are available for those who cannot attend the entire weekend.

For the latest updates on the program, directions for getting to the event, and further information about registration options, check the Sierra Club website. A video posted on the website shows how much fun we had last year.

We hope to see you there.

We could have saved the earth,  
but we were too damned cheap.  
Kurt Vonnegut Jr.

## Old Dominion Sierran

## Fall 2011

A publication of the Virginia Chapter Sierra Club  
422 E. Franklin St., Room 302, Richmond, VA 23219  
[www.virginia.sierraclub.org](http://www.virginia.sierraclub.org)

Our mission is to explore, enjoy and protect the wild places of the earth and to practice and promote the responsible use of the earth's ecosystems and resources.

## Chapter Leadership

**Chair:** John Cruickshank  
434-973-0373; [jcruckshank4@gmail.com](mailto:jcruckshank4@gmail.com)

**Vice Chair:** Ivy Main

[ivyvmain@cox.net](mailto:ivyvmain@cox.net)  
**Secretary:** Tom Ellis  
757-722-9785; [tiellis@gmail.com](mailto:tiellis@gmail.com)

**Treasurer:** Tim Stevens  
703-534-7311; [tk505@verizon.net](mailto:tk505@verizon.net)

## Staff

**Director:** Glen Besa  
804-225-9113; [glen.besa@sierraclub.org](mailto:glen.besa@sierraclub.org)  
**Assistant Director for Legislation & Development**

J.R. Tolbert, 804-225-9113; [jr.tolbert@sierraclub.org](mailto:jr.tolbert@sierraclub.org)

**Conservation Program Mgr:** Eileen Levandoski  
757-277-8537; [eileen.levandoski@sierraclub.org](mailto:eileen.levandoski@sierraclub.org)

**Grassroots Organizing Mgr:** Mary Rafferty

804-225-9113; [mary.rafferty@sierraclub.org](mailto:mary.rafferty@sierraclub.org)

**Conservation Program Coordinator:** Vasily Kisunko; [vasily.kisunko@sierraclub.org](mailto:vasily.kisunko@sierraclub.org)

## Environmental Action Chairs

**Air Quality:** Ana Prados  
703-338-2119; [ana\\_prados@yahoo.com](mailto:ana_prados@yahoo.com)

**Chesapeake Bay:** Fred Adams  
757-467-2775; [warbler2@cox.net](mailto:warbler2@cox.net)

**Communications:** Ralph Grove  
540-433-1323; [ralph.grove@gmail.com](mailto:ralph.grove@gmail.com)

**Conservation:** Steve Bruckner  
703-883-3622; [sbruckner@cox.net](mailto:sbruckner@cox.net)

**Energy:** Dick Ball  
703-256-9309; [acericardo@mindspring.com](mailto:acericardo@mindspring.com)

**Environmental Justice:** Barbara Williamson  
804-221-2358; [bawmson1027@juno.com](mailto:bawmson1027@juno.com)

**Forests:** Sherman Bamford  
540-343-6359; [bamford2@verizon.net](mailto:bamford2@verizon.net)

**Group Boundaries:** Jim Lynch  
540-775-7002; [jplynch@crosslink.net](mailto:jplynch@crosslink.net)

**Membership:** Susan Stillman  
703-255-0426; [susan.stillman@gmail.com](mailto:susan.stillman@gmail.com)

**Outings:** Joe Apple  
703-860-1254; [joe.apple@comcast.net](mailto:joe.apple@comcast.net)

**PAC Treasurer:** George Calvert  
804-358-5178; [calvertge@comcast.net](mailto:calvertge@comcast.net)

**Parks/Public Lands:** Charles Price  
804-358-0256; [fewmit@comcast.net](mailto:fewmit@comcast.net)

**Political/Legislative:** Tyla Matteson,  
804-275-6476; [tmatteson1@mindspring.com](mailto:tmatteson1@mindspring.com)

**Assistant (Political):** Bob Pearson  
703-690-3071; [bob\\_pearson@cox.net](mailto:bob_pearson@cox.net)

**Recycling/Solid Waste:** Roger Diedrich  
703-352-2410; [roger.diedrich@sierraclub.org](mailto:roger.diedrich@sierraclub.org)

**Renewable Energy:** Ivy Main  
[ivyvmain@cox.net](mailto:ivyvmain@cox.net)

**Smart Growth & Transportation:**  
Roger Diedrich (see Recycling/Solid Waste)

**Assistant (Transportation)** Jim Wamsley  
703-751-6086; [jawamsley@comcast.net](mailto:jawamsley@comcast.net)

**Sustainable Consumption:** Diana Artemis  
703-241-1766; [artemdi@yahoo.com](mailto:artemdi@yahoo.com)

**Water Quality:** David Bernard  
804-658-3712; [david@aquariusplumbing.com](mailto:david@aquariusplumbing.com)

**Webmaster:** Eileen Levandoski

**Wilderness:** Pete Bsumek  
540-568-3386; [bsumekpk@jmu.edu](mailto:bsumekpk@jmu.edu)

**Old Dominion Sierran** is published quarterly. The editor welcomes editorial contributions, photographs, news releases and art work. Submissions should be related to Virginia's environment. E-mail the editor with questions prior to submitting material.

## Editor

Barbara Null  
[bnull@comcast.net](mailto:bnull@comcast.net)

All state legislative seats up for election**Anti-environment politicians trying to send Virginia in wrong direction**

by JR Tolbert

**T**he stakes for this year's General Assembly elections could not be higher. Over the past two years, we've seen what happens when anti-environmental politicians hold elected office.

In just this short period of time, Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli filed a lawsuit against University of Virginia alleging a prominent climate scientist committed fraud in demonstrating the link between CO<sub>2</sub> and global warming. And because Cuccinelli doesn't believe in climate change, he sued the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to block proposed actions to clean the air.

Governor Bob McDonnell endorsed Cuccinelli's law suit against the EPA and he even disbanded the Virginia Commission on Climate Change established by Governor Tim Kaine.

Meanwhile in the General Assembly, Delegate Bob Marshall filed numerous pieces of legislation that would remove Virginia from any future federal climate change legislation.

All these examples show the stark reality that Bob McDonnell and his allies want to send Virginia in the wrong direction. The only thing that stands in the way of McDonnell and his climate denier allies having complete control of Virginia's government is a razor thin environmental firewall in the State Senate.

Recently, Bob McDonnell joined forces with the coal industry to

try and flip control of the Senate. In just the past six months, Governor McDonnell received more than \$350,000 in campaign contributions from coal companies and their executives.

Working with environmentally-minded legislators in the State Senate, we've been able to defeat many of the worst bills put forward by the McDonnell Administration. We know if the McDonnell team wins two Senate seats this fall that the out-of-touch policies they've been pushing will

**We know if the McDonnell team wins two Senate seats this fall that the out-of-touch policies they've been pushing will have no opposition in the legislature.**

have no opposition in the legislature.

The Virginia Sierra Club Political Action Com-

mittee (PAC) is already working to train activists, providing candidates with the knowledge they need to defend our priorities, and deploying campaign resources in the field to win our targeted elections. Our goal is clear, to maintain the razor thin firewall in the Virginia Senate that is standing up for the Commonwealth's environment.

For more information on those candidates Sierra Club has endorsed or to contribute to Virginia Sierra Club PAC visit our website at [www.votegreenva.com](http://www.votegreenva.com). Together, we can stop the extreme agenda of the McDonnell-Cuccinelli Administration in its tracks.

**Vote November 8**

*JR Tolbert is Virginia chapter assistant director for legislation and development.*

Recent study by Yale and James Mason Universities**The marginal nature of Tea Party opinions on climate change and energy issues**

**A** review of this study might help us better understand how others may vote in upcoming elections.

- Majorities of Democrats (78 percent), Independents (71 percent) and Republicans (53 percent) believe that global warming is happening. By contrast, only 34 percent of Tea Party members believe global warming is happening, while 53 percent say it is not happening.
- A majority of Democrats (55 percent)

say that most scientists think global warming is happening, while majorities of Republicans (56 percent) and Tea Party members (69 percent) say there is a lot of disagreement among scientists about whether or not global warming is happening.

[Consensus reports supported by more than 95 percent of climate scientists say global warming is "unequivocal"]

- Tea Party members are much more likely to say they are "very well informed" about global warming than the other groups. Likewise, they are also much more likely to say they "do not need any more information" about global warming to make up their mind.
- Majorities of all four political groups support funding more research into renewable energy sources such as solar and wind power and providing tax rebates for people who purchase energy efficient vehicles or solar panels.
- Majorities of Democrats, Independents and Republicans support requiring electric utilities to produce at least 20 percent of their electricity from renewable energy sources, even if it cost the average household an extra \$100 a year. A majority of Tea Party members, however, oppose this policy, with 39 percent strongly opposed.
- Likewise, majorities of Democrats, Independents and Republicans support an international treaty to cut carbon dioxide emissions. A large majority of Tea Party members, however, oppose a treaty, with 55 percent strongly opposed.
- A majority of Democrats oppose building more nuclear power plants (65 percent), while majorities of Independents (52 percent), Republicans (62 percent) and Tea Party members (67 percent) support building them.

However, only a majority of Tea Party members (52 percent) would support building a nuclear power plant in their own local

area. All other groups would be opposed.

- Majorities of all four groups say that protecting the environment either improves economic growth and provides new jobs or has no effect on economic growth or jobs. Tea Party members are the most likely to say environmental protection reduces economic growth and costs jobs (33 percent).
- Tea Party members are more than twice as likely than any other group to say they don't want to change the light bulbs in their house to energy-efficient compact fluorescent lights (CFLs).

For further information on this study go to <http://www.climatechangecommunication.org/images/files/PoliticsGlobalWarming2011.pdf>

[Go to the back page of this issue of *Old Dominion Sierran* for a review of *Merchants of Doubt*, a book on how and why climate denial has spread and how to respond to it.]

**VOTE  
November 8**

**Save Virginia from  
extremist agenda**

**Support the  
environmental  
candidate in your  
district**



**Tax credits and incentives  
available for renewable  
energy and efficiency**

The following search data base is a good place to see what kinds of incentives are being offered to business and residential users at the local and state levels.

<http://www.dsireusa.org/>

*Thanks to Diana Christopolos*

## Wise Energy for Virginia Coalition leads fight against proposed massive coal-fired electric generating plant in Surry County

by Kate Pollard and Seth Heald

Old Dominion Electric Cooperative (ODEC) is the wholesale power supplier to 11 rural electric cooperatives, including nine in Virginia. ODEC has plans to build a huge new coal-fired generating plant in Surry County, just south of Williamsburg and west of the Hampton Roads area.

The proposed Cypress Creek power station would, if built, be the largest coal-fired generating plant ever built in Virginia, and would likely be in service for many decades emitting carbon dioxide and other dangerous pollutants.

ODEC is owned and controlled by its member rural cooperatives. Those rural cooperatives, in turn, are owned by their individual customer/members. Sierra Club organizer Kate Pollard, aided by Sierra Club volunteers and staff from the Chesapeake Climate Action Network, have worked hard in the past two years to stop the proposed new coal plant.

This spring and summer, efforts to defeat the proposed Surry County coal plant focused on two ODEC member-cooperatives—Rappahannock Electric Cooperative (REC) and Northern Neck Electric Cooperative (NNEC). Throughout the year we canvassed REC and NNEC members, building support for efforts to steer ODEC away from coal and towards energy efficiency as the cheapest and cleanest way to meet Virginia's electricity needs.

Our efforts paid off in August when REC and NNEC held their annual member meetings. Members elect the co-ops' boards of directors, therefore they ultimately control the co-ops' significant decisions.

At REC's annual meeting, more than a dozen members proudly sported bright blue t-shirts stating "Efficiency First! No ODEC coal plant!" Six of the eight members in attendance who spoke at the meeting spoke against Cypress Creek coal plant and in favor of aggressive efforts to improve energy efficiency.

Not one member spoke in favor of the coal plant. REC's management and board of directors heard from members that investing in a new coal plant is environmentally and financially unwise. They acknowledged that the increasing cost of coal makes it a less attractive option now than when the plant was originally proposed.

REC has increased its attention to energy efficiency measures in the past year, but still has a long way to go.

At NNEC's annual meeting, attendees were met in the parking lot with a six-foot sign "Before you sign a petition against the postponed Cypress Creek Power Plant, review all the facts at ODEC's booth inside." NNEC's acknowledging our efforts shows that member concerns have reached the co-op, and pressured them to the point they felt it necessary to try to preempt further opposition.

Despite the effort to dissuade others planning to raise their concerns at the meeting, two members spoke in opposition to the proposed Surry coal plant. Their concerns, unfortunately, were quickly

dismissed, though NNEC's CEO, Greg White, conceded that coal is no longer as cost-competitive and that ODEC's next project would be natural gas.

The battle against Cypress Creek is hardly over. We have made significant progress this year and strengthened our resolve to work harder to defeat the ill-advised coal plant. We need to engage more cooperative members in this effort.

If you are an REC or NNEC customer/member, or belong to one of the other seven Virginia electric cooperatives that own ODEC, please get in touch with us by calling or writing Kate Pollard (571-970-0275, [kate.pollard@sierraclub.org](mailto:kate.pollard@sierraclub.org)) or Seth Heald (540-937-3404, [seth.heald@gmail.com](mailto:seth.heald@gmail.com)) to get involved.



## Huge inhaler attracts attention in three cities on summer Road to Clean Energy Tour

by Ivy Main and Kate Pollard

Visitors to Oronoco Bay Park in Alexandria on August 18 were greeted with a sight to stop traffic:

an 18-foot tall inflatable hand holding a giant red inhaler, as if Gulliver were reaching up from among the Lilliputians to deal with an asthma attack. It was the third and final

stop on the Wise Energy for Virginia Coalition's Road to Clean Energy Tour. The Lilliputians, in this case, were local clean energy activists, wielding mock wind turbines and bearing signs reading, *We need clean air!*

We gathered near the GenOn Potomac River electric generation plant to draw attention to the health risks of air

pollution from power derived from fossil fuels, and to urge the EPA to protect the health of Virginia families and children by enacting strong air quality standards to reduce toxic air pollution. (The following week brought news that GenOn intends to close the plant. See page 1. Was it the inhaler?)

Among the activists present were neighbors of the coal plant who have worked for years to shut it down. As they explained to members of the press who came to the event that morning, burning coal to generate electricity produces toxic air pollutants like soot and smog, which aggravate asthma and contribute to four out of the five leading causes of death in the U.S. Asthma is of particular concern to Virginians, because it affects 279,000 adults and 96,000 children across the state.

The Road to Clean Energy Tour made similar appearances at Neptune Park in Virginia Beach on August 16, and Richmond on August 17. The Virginia Beach stop focused on air quality concerns facing

Hampton Roads residents, due in large part to the Chesapeake, Portsmouth and Yorktown coal plants. Already more than 40,000 children in the region suffer from asthma, a number that would increase by adding Old Dominion Electric Cooperative's proposed 1500 megawatt Cypress Creek coal plant rather than pursuing energy efficiency and renewables like offshore wind.

The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America recently ranked Virginia Beach No. 8 in the nation for asthma, and ranked Richmond No.1 – making it the "Asthma Capital" of the nation.

At the visit to the state capitol, the inflatable inhaler posed for a photo op with the headquarters of Dominion Virginia Power as a backdrop. As Virginia's largest utility and a powerful player in state politics, Dominion's actions will be key for our state to achieve a sustainable, renewable energy future.

*Ivy Main is Virginia chapter vice chair. Kate Pollard is chapter coordinator of Beyond Coal Campaign*



The Tour in Alexandria

photo by Beth Kemier

## Former negative opinion of wind turbines changes to a belief in their ultimate value

by Rupert Cutler

“**W**hy do you oppose taking advantage of free wind to generate electricity in a non-polluting way in your own backyard?”

My brother Ed Cutler, a professor of biology, asked me that question as soon as the words, “I’m going to fight the installation of wind turbines on a mountain near Roanoke,” were out of my mouth. Ed, who has since died, was an environmental activist in Utica, New York. His question made me stop and think.

Did I object to wind turbines because I’m a hiker and hate to see and hear mechanical contraptions near my wilderness trails? Because I’m a birder and don’t like to think of birds and bats hitting the blades of wind turbines? Because “I love mountains” and don’t like to see giant windmills astride familiar ridgelines?

Or was it because I jumped to that conclusion without considering the possibility that, while some mountain top locations might be unacceptable for wind turbines from an environmental impact standpoint, such as in a national park or wilderness area, other sites might not be so bad, and the tradeoff of clean energy for some alteration of the environment there might be worthwhile?

Brother Ed’s question sent me back to the drawing board. I decided to find out what the environmental-protection groups I used to work for thought of wind energy development. Then I would look at an operating wind farm, to see and hear for myself what they’re like — to temper my initial “gut” negative opinion with the research findings of others and with a dose of reality.

### Here’s what I found

In 1962 I edited the National Wildlife Federation’s magazine, *National Wildlife*. An NWF representative recently stated, “wind turbines can be fatal for wildlife — but at a smaller percentage than animals and birds suffer from pollution, pesticides and natural predators.” That reminded me of the pollution created by alternative sources of electricity, such as mountaintop removal coal mining.

In the late 1960s I worked for the Wilderness Society to create political support for new wilderness areas. Now the Wilderness Society monitors wind energy development on public land and says, “By harnessing the wind to create electricity, wind power has the potential to help transition

us away from fossil fuels and combat the effects of climate change. Guiding development to the right places and ensuring the best practices to minimize impacts will be crucial in establishing a sustainable clean energy future. Habitat fragmentation and soil erosion can be mitigated by keeping the impacts on land to a minimum by using existing roads, reclaiming the topsoil, and the use of standard erosion controls.”

I was senior vice president of the National Audubon Society in the early 1980s. Surely those bird-protectors are on the lookout for bad effects of wind turbines. Here’s what NAS says: “Audubon strongly supports properly-sited wind power as a clean alternative energy source that reduces the threat of global warming. Wind power facilities should be planned, sited and operated to minimize negative impacts on bird and wildlife populations.”

Before I moved to Roanoke in 1990, I was president of Defenders of Wildlife. A recent Defenders newsletter quotes Senator Jon Tester of Montana as saying wind energy development has been good to Montana’s economy because “. . . wind energy is low-cost, it’s easy to create, and it creates jobs.”

### Sound of a calm surf

What does a wind farm look and sound like? On August 4 I joined a group organized by James Madison University and traveled to the Mount Storm wind energy project near Petersburg, West Virginia, to see for myself. This is a huge project with 132 turbines on a former stripmine.

What did I see and hear? A long row of tall, thin, white pinwheels going about their energy-producing business, so quiet that, standing under them, I had to concentrate to hear any noise at all. Have you ever been to the ocean shore on a calm day and heard the surf roll on to the beach with a regular light, rushing sound? That’s what it sounded like.

My reaction to the turbines’ appearance surprised me. I found them inoffensive. There are places they don’t belong, such as the Blue Ridge Parkway. But where a ridgeline already is accessible, has been developed for other uses, and has an electric transmission line running through it, adding wind turbines there to generate clean energy is something I could live with, as a lifelong advocate of protecting the natural environment.

*Rupert Cutler of Roanoke is a former assistant secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.*

## Wind turbine activity in Roanoke area by Diana Christopulos



As the result of Roanoke County’s passing a small-wind zoning ordinance this past spring, a turbine was installed at a private home near 12 O’Clock Knob. Local volunteers and wind activists came for a modern barn raising to help install the 10 kilowatt turbine.  
Photo by Mark Hanson

### Large-Wind

Roanoke County has been working on a large-wind zoning ordinance for more than two years, with a proposed site on Poor Mountain waiting in the wings. Sierrans joined forces with a local renewable energy club to place pro-wind signs in prominent locations. At an August 23 public hearing on the large-wind ordinance, wind supporters outnumbered opponents. Almost every member of the Roanoke Group Ex Com spoke out in favor of reasonable rules for wind. On September 13, the Board of Supervisors by a 4-0 vote, passed the large-wind zoning ordinance, setting the ground rules for large-wind energy proposals in the county.



Conrad Grundlehner, a Roanoke County wind supporter, places a supportive sign in front of his home.  
Photo by Diana Christopulos

## Virginia Offshore Wind Conference discusses issues in bringing offshore wind to state

by Ivy Main

More than 300 leaders from business, law, academia, government and the environmental community came together at the Virginia Beach Convention Center on June 22 to discuss the nuts and bolts of bringing offshore wind energy to the coast of Virginia. More than 60 speakers on a dozen panels addressed topics including cost, supply chain needs, permitting, transmission, and environmental issues.

The Sierra Club was instrumental in organizing this first-ever Virginia Offshore Wind Conference, but we were readily joined by hosts and sponsors ranging from the City of Virginia Beach and the law firm of McGuireWoods to the Virginia Coastal Energy Research Consortium (VCERC) and Dominion Virginia Power.

“This allowed us to realize our goal of bringing in key experts and decision makers who will be critical in moving the process forward,” said Susan Stillman, vice chair Virginia chapter renewable energy.

The line-up of speakers included developers from other states and Europe, who explained conditions that have allowed projects to proceed there and offered advice to Virginia.

Another panel addressed possible environmental issues. Unfortunately marine life in the waters off Virginia has not been well studied, making it difficult to choose



sites for wind turbines with any assurance they will pass scrutiny when it comes time for environmental impact statements. Finding funds to conduct baseline environmental studies was one of the recommendations that emerged from the conference.

A major discussion point, one on which there was no agreement, was the cost of offshore wind energy. Mary Dossell of Dominion cited high costs as a key reason to proceed cautiously, while George Hagerman of VCERC suggested with domestic manufacturing and utility financing, an offshore wind farm could be competitive with a new coal plant. Thus another suggestion coming out of the conference was to refine cost models.

“The overall tone on conference day was one of enthusiasm and optimism,” said Eileen Levandoski, Virginia Sierra Club program manager for the VA4WIND campaign. “Attendees were there to launch a new industry in Virginia, one they hoped would generate revenue for their businesses, jobs for their communities, and clean, locally-produced energy for Virginia.”

## Keep the Ban

### Citizens to learn how lifting the ban on uranium mining will impact their communities

by Mary Rafferty

Virginia has a nearly 30-year ban on uranium mining. A well-financed push by the uranium industry is trying to lift that ban as early as January 2012 so they can mine and process uranium starting in Southside Virginia.

The radioactive waste produced from uranium mining is a major threat to drinking water and public health, not to mention the agricultural heritage and future economic viability of rural and urban communities across Virginia.

In partnership with League of Conservation Voters Education Fund and Virginia Conservation Network, Virginia Sierra Club hosted a series of six summer workshops across the Commonwealth talking to more than 325 citizens about risks uranium mining could have on their community and what they could do to Keep the Ban.

Citizens learned that drinking water sources from Virginia Beach to Fairfax are at risk if the statewide ban is lifted.

The uranium industry is trying behind closed doors in Richmond to rush the decision to lift the ban. It is up to us to get the facts out to town halls and front porches across Virginia. History shows that communities across the globe have lost access to clean, safe drinking water as a direct result of uranium mining and processing.

Don't let the uranium industry put your

community's drinking water at risk. Get the facts and ask your public officials to support the current ban on uranium mining in Virginia.

As a continuation of the summer workshop series, the Keep the Ban presentation will travel across the state this fall speaking with local Sierra Club and Keep the Ban community groups.

Attend one of the following public events this fall in a town near you or send an email to [Mary.Rafferty@SierraClub.org](mailto:Mary.Rafferty@SierraClub.org) to request a presentation in your community.

#### Sept 21 – Blacksburg

New River Group monthly meeting  
5 p.m. at Blacksburg Rec Center

#### Sept 23 – Floyd

UBAN Floyd Benefit Concert  
(contact [Mary.Rafferty@SierraClub.org](mailto:Mary.Rafferty@SierraClub.org) for details)

#### October 1 – Triangle

(just South of Fairfax) Sierra Club's Annual Gathering at Prince William Forest Park)  
Time: TBD – register at [www.vasierraclub.org](http://www.vasierraclub.org)

#### October 6 – Nelson County

Blue Ridge Group monthly meeting  
7:30 p.m. at Nelson County Public Library

#### October 14 – Halifax

Keep the Ban Symposium  
7 p.m. at Halifax County High School auditorium

#### October 19 – Hampton

York River Group monthly meeting  
(contact Tyla Matteson [tmatteson1@mindspring.com](mailto:tmatteson1@mindspring.com) for details)

#### November 16 – Charlottesville

Piedmont Group Monthly Meeting  
7 p.m. at St. Mark Lutheran Church

#### November 21 – Fairfax

Great Falls Group monthly meeting  
7 p.m. at Oakton Library meeting room

Want to learn what you can do to Keep the Ban? Contact [Mary.Rafferty@SierraClub.org](mailto:Mary.Rafferty@SierraClub.org) or call (804) 225-9113 ext 105.

*Mary Rafferty is Virginia chapter grassroots organizing manager.*



## Earth-shaking event prompts questions, concern

by Suzanne Smith Sundburg

On August 23, a 5.8-magnitude earthquake struck near Mineral, Virginia (roughly 55 miles northwest of Richmond). It was Virginia's strongest earthquake recorded since 1897.

The epicenter lay within the Central Virginia Seismic Zone, an area riddled with faults. Almost immediately after the quake, people began asking whether hydraulic fracturing (fracking) used to drill horizontal natural gas wells in West Virginia could be responsible.

### Fracking known to trigger localized earthquakes

Just this year, experts in Britain concluded that a hydraulic fracturing test well likely triggered a 2.3-magnitude earthquake in England. Similar concerns were expressed about 800 minor quakes (from 1.8 to 3.5 magnitude) in Arkansas, where frack drilling is commonplace.

At issue is whether fracking can trig-

### The ultimate question is whether state legislators are capable of accurately assessing risks and putting Virginian's health and safety first.

ger stronger, more widespread quakes like the one here. Although the fracking process itself isn't believed to be the culprit, some geologists suggest that the deep well injection method used to dispose of frack drilling wastewater or other fluids may be responsible. According to the EPA, Arkansas has about 1,000 of these deep wells, and Virginia appears to have approximately 75.

### Whatever its cause

The recent quake also prompted safety concerns about the North Anna nuclear power plant. Not only did the plant lose power after the quake, one of its backup generators failed to start. According to the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, the “earth-

quake was so powerful that it caused 25 massive casks holding used nuclear fuel—each weighing 115 tons—to move on their concrete pad. . . . The movement of these casks was the first caused by an earthquake in the U.S.”

Beyond the questionable wisdom of locating a nuclear plant in a known seismic zone, regulators also failed to require plant operator Dominion Virginia Power to adequately secure the spent fuel casks. Luckily, there was no structural damage in August.

### But what about next time?

Virginia faces many critical energy-related decisions—including a January 2012 vote to overturn the statewide ban on uranium mining. The ultimate question is whether state legislators are capable of accurately assessing risks and putting Virginian's health and safety first.

*Suzanne Smith Sundburg, environmentalist and freelance writer, lives in Arlington.*

**Fighting opponents of smart, safe public transit options in the Commonwealth**

**Sierra Club and Laborers Union (LiUNA) create Friends of VA Transit**

by Roger Diedrich

**E**arly this year, the DC region’s Metro transit system was facing serious budget difficulties. Bus lines and train service after midnight on weekends were in danger of being cut. Such changes would harm both the workers and riders of the system our region heavily depends on.

In response, the Sierra Club met the local leader of the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) at the Good Jobs First “Transit Rider Organizing Boot Camp” conference. An active joint campaign of petitions and testimony eventually succeeded in retaining an adequate budget.

From that experience, Virginia chapter transportation campaign leaders then began actively engaging with Laborers International Union of North America (LiUNA) on a different, but related interest, largely to do with the Metro Silver Line Phase II discussions among governmental entities.

The Silver Line has broad public and

political support and, to us, it could demonstrate that transit can be built in a reasonable fashion and therefore provide a precursor for additional transit in the region. As was done successfully in Phase I of the

DC Metro construction project, we believe the use of a Project Labor Agreement (PLA) is an essential element for assuring the success of the project.

However, it seems apparent Governor McDonnell’s administration is willing to hold the project hostage to the point of risking its failure, and leverage the broad local support for the Silver Line to extract a concession to drop the mandatory PLA as sought by the Airport Authority. Insisting that Phase II use non-union labor has



DC Metro construction

and long-term cost increases.

LiUNA makes numerous sound arguments for employing a PLA, which allows for—but doesn’t require—the use of union labor. These arguments include better controls on schedules, design changes and worker training and safety rules. The Sierra Club accepts these arguments and the broader case that we share a common vision with the union of creating healthy, safe and prosperous communities across Virginia.

We also recognize that we face com-

mon enemies in corporate polluters and corporate spenders and their right-wing enablers. This viewpoint is fully consistent with Sierra Club’s continued participation in the Blue-Green Alliance.

We have therefore partnered with LiUNA to create the Friends of VA Transit, focused on fighting McDonnell, Cuccinelli, and any other opponents of smart, safe public transit options in the Commonwealth.

We ask that our members show their support by visiting our campaign’s Facebook page. Simply go to Facebook and search Friends of VA Transit. From there click the “like” button and share it with all your friends and family.

*Roger Diedrich is Virginia chapter transportation chair.*

**Virginia’s labor unions endorse offshore wind energy development**

**Virginia’s largest unions call on leaders to move forward with offshore wind power to create clean energy and good jobs for Virginia**

**S**everal of Virginia’s largest labor unions just announced their support of offshore wind energy development in Virginia and called on Governor McDonnell and Dominion Virginia Power to take swift action toward its development.

Standing in solidarity were representatives of the United Steelworkers (USW), International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), Laborers’ International Union of North America (LiUNA), Iron Workers, and the Hampton Roads Building and Construction Trades Council.

“This is an opportunity to develop thousands of good paying union jobs in Virginia, which would enable our children and our children’s children to raise a family and share in the American dream,” said Bill Harriday, international staff representative for United Steelworkers.

“Our workers stand uniquely-equipped and trained to tackle green energy projects like offshore wind power. We believe our workforce to be one-of-a-kind when it comes to constructing advanced-tech wind turbines,” said Josh Collins, Virginia political and policy director for the Laborers’ International Union of North America (LiUNA).

“We welcome this opportunity to join forces with our allies in VA4WIND Coalition to push for long-term sustainable energy solutions that will be a boon to thousands of unemployed workers.”

According to the Virginia Coastal Energy Research Consortium (VCERC), a 3,000 megawatt Virginia coastal wind energy project built out over 20 years would create 10,000 jobs for Virginians. Specifically, it could create more than 6,000 construction jobs and 5,000 ongoing operation and maintenance jobs.

“For decades, most of those jobs critical to the wind industry have been union jobs,” said Eileen Levandoski, conservation program manager with Virginia Sierra Club. “Thus Virginia’s unionized labor force will be large and powerful advocates for offshore wind.”

Leaders from Virginia’s union, industry, and environmental communities agree that Dominion and Governor McDonnell

should coordinate efforts to develop offshore wind energy. Because Dominion is the commonwealth’s largest power provider, owns much of its transmission capacity, and has a great deal of political clout, Virginia’s offshore wind industry could flourish with the company on board. Governor McDonnell should take a leadership role in this process by making Virginia “the Clean Energy Capital of the East Coast.”

“This is all about new manufacturing, fabrication, and construction jobs right here in Virginia. If the McDonnell Administration fails to act and Dominion does not move forward with offshore wind development, the commonwealth could lose thousands of jobs to other states in the region,” said Randy Flood, executive director of Green Jobs Alliance.

In addition to thousands of new jobs, offshore wind energy offers countless benefits for Virginians—cleaner air and water, stable electricity prices, increased energy security, and reduced global warming emissions.

Beth Kemler, Virginia state director for the Chesapeake Climate Action Network, said: “Especially in the wake of a global warming-fueled hurricane, it’s more important than ever that we take aggressive steps toward the development of clean energy sources like offshore wind.”



Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_  
 Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_



Join today and receive a FREE Sierra Club Weekender Bag!

Check enclosed. Please make payable to Sierra Club.  
 Please charge my:  Visa  Mastercard  AMEX  
 Cardholder Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Card Number \_\_\_\_\_  
 Exp. Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
 Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Categories	Individual	Joint
<b>Special Offer</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	
Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> \$39	<input type="checkbox"/> \$49
Supporting	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100
Contributing	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150	<input type="checkbox"/> \$175
Life	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1250
Senior	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> \$35
Student/Limited Income	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> \$35

Contributions, gifts and dues to Sierra Club are not tax deductible, they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to Sierra magazine and \$1 for your Chapter newsletters.

Enclose a check and mail to Sierra Club, P.O. Box 431041, Palm Coast, FL 32143-1041 or visit our website [www.sierraclub.org](http://www.sierraclub.org) P940 IW 5000



## Nation's march towards "corporate personhood" a slow but steady one

by Charles Price

In the last issue of *Old Dominion Sierra*, Roger Diedrich reviewed the Sierra Club's objection to the Supreme Court 2010 decision that removed decades-old restrictions limiting corporate campaign spending.

Roger and I agreed his initial article would focus on the Sierra Club's opposition to the "Citizens United" decision and in a subsequent article I would tackle a brief review of the historical background and evolution of the broader concept of rights and protections of corporations known as "corporate personhood."

Corporations, as we know them today, did not exist when the United States began. American colonists had unfavorable experiences with British corporations and didn't want a repeat of those experiences.

Early U.S. corporations had basic rights to organize, raise money and share profits with shareholders for clearly de-

fining business purposes from which the public benefited. The construction of roads and canals were examples of business enterprises from which the public clearly benefited.

Early American corporations had charters that were limited in duration, and restricted from influencing elections and legislation. A growing number of business leaders at the time wanted more freedom, protections, and rights for corporations.

The beginning of the movement to further empower corporations prompted Thomas Jefferson to write in 1816, "I hope we shall...crush in its birth the aristocracy

**"I hope we shall . . . crush in its birth the aristocracy of our moneyed corporations, which desire already to challenge our government to a trial of strength and bid defiance to the laws of our country."**

Thomas Jefferson 1816

of our moneyed corporations, which desire already to challenge our government to a trial of strength and bid defiance to the laws of our country."

Beginning in 1816, the march towards increased constitutional rights, protections, and eventual "corporate personhood" (same rights as natural persons) for U.S. corporations was affirmed in the rulings of at least 11 Supreme Court decisions over nearly two centuries.

The exception to this trend included a century of federal court precedents and several Supreme Court rulings that prevented corporations from influencing

elections and public policy development through political contributions. This impediment to full corporate achievement of "corporate personhood," i.e., having all the same Constitutional rights as natural persons, was overturned by the recent Court ruling in "Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission" (2010).

In addition to the reinstatement of the prohibition against unrestricted corporate political contributions, i.e., reversing the ruling in "Citizens," the greater, but fundamentally necessary, imperative of the Sierra Club might be to end the broader personhood status now accorded to corporations.

A Constitutional Amendment would probably be required to accomplish this, and, thus, prevent the ultimate destruction of the planet by corporations, if they are left empowered and unfettered to do so.

*Charles Price is former chair Virginia Chapter Sierra Club*



Linda Burchfiel (from bottom l.to r.) , Jessica Gray, Roger Diedrich, Vasily Kisunko, and Susan Stillman take a break from planning a Moving Planet event in Dunn Loring Park in Fairfax County. Photo by Ivy Main

### Moving Planet events held around state

## Sierra Club, bicyclists plan event in Fairfax

by Vasily Kisunko

The Virginia Chapter Sierra Club along with Fairfax Advocates for Better Bicycling (FABB) started planning for Moving Planet in August. Moving Planet and 350.org are rallies to action occurring once a year on September 24.

Events planned around the world by locals in their communities and cities call on governments to end dependence on fossil fuels, the leading cause of climate change. The Sierra Club and FABB teamed up to call on Governor McDonnell to invest part of the \$4 billion of the transportation budget into public transit options instead of building more roads.

We want more transportation choices that will reduce our dependence on cars

and oil. One choice is construction of the Purple line, which would run westward from Tyson's Corner to Largo, the line eventually encircling Washington, DC.

With this added demand for the stations, we need to expand bike accessibility of the public transit system, including the construction of more bike lanes

On September 24 people biked, walked or took public transit to gather at Dunn Loring Park and walk .8 mile to the metro station where they were to hear speeches advocating for alternatives to cars and roads that lead to more traffic congestion and contribute to climate change.

*Vasily Kisunko is conservation program coordinator.*

## Governor's administration unwilling to pursue sensible solutions to transportation woes

by David Dickson

We know that Virginia has some of the worst transportation problems in the nation. Northern Virginia, in the Washington, DC metropolitan area, has the fourth worst traffic congestion in the country. The Hampton Roads region ranks No. 30.

Rapid growth, a pattern of suburban sprawl, and its associated highway projects bring about increased miles driven, congestion, more harmful air pollution with its accompanying human health risks and increased green house gas emissions.

The solutions to our transportation woes are to shift priorities away from car-centric highway construction and toward providing more transportation choices, like the recently opened Norfolk light rail project, Tide.

Governor McDonnell, however, continues down the wrong road with his road oriented transportation policy.

In August, his administration continued pursuit of the wasteful and destructive Route 460 public-private partnership tolled freeway from Suffolk to Petersburg. VDOT put out a "Request for Detailed Proposals" to three private partnerships that had expressed interest in the project. VDOT promised a down payment of \$500 million for construction of the project and potentially put the state on the hook for substantially more funds in the future.

This summer the Governor resurrected the long dead Route 29 bypass in Char-

lottesville. Through political arm-twisting, vague promises for other projects, and parliamentary shenanigans, the administration persuaded the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors and Charlottesville/Albemarle Metropolitan Planning Organization to drop their longstanding opposition to this useless, and environmentally risky project.

In July, the state pledged more than \$200 million for construction. Because the project had been shelved for many years VDOT is required to reevaluate the old environmental analysis, a process the Virginia Chapter and Piedmont Group will be watching carefully.

The Governor is potentially killing completion of the extension of Metrorail to Dulles Airport and beyond. While the first phase to Reston is to be completed by 2015, phase two has been threatened by the increase in estimated costs from \$2.8 to \$3.8 billion.

Under the leadership of U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood, all local funding partners—Washington Airports Authority, Fairfax and Loudoun Counties and Metro—have been seeking a way to reduce costs. In early July, Secretary LaHood announced proposed changes to the project that will save almost \$1 billion, but it will put additional costs on Fairfax and Loudoun Counties and seeks \$150 million from the state. So far the Governor has refused to commit, apparently holding out for relaxation of labor agreements and other political concessions.



A stream runs through the Lee Ranger District of George Washington National Forest. Photo by Sherman Bamford

## Virginia Sierra Club plans celebration of 50 year anniversary of Wilderness Act

by Pete Bsumek

The Wilderness Act was signed into law in 1964. Already, the Sierra Club is planning for the 2014 celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act. Nationwide Congress has added more than 100 million acres to the National Wilderness Preservation System. We continue to work on designating and protecting more wilderness.

Wilderness designation is the strongest and most permanent protection that can be extended to our Federal public lands. For nearly 50 years wilderness volunteers in Virginia and the Virginia Chapter Sierra Club along with dedicated staff have been successful in convincing Congress to add nearly 215,000 acres of Virginia's federal lands to the national system.

Wilderness areas include wild places in national parks, national forests, wildlife refuges, and western lands of the Bureau of Land Management. In Virginia we can be proud of our accomplishments preserving areas like the St. Mary's Wilderness, Ramseys Draft Wilderness, James River Face Wilderness and The Shenandoah Wilderness, which preserves nearly 80,000 acres in Shenandoah National Park.

The Virginia chapter plans to host our

own local celebration with public events, possibly concerts, lectures, fairs, and certainly outings—walks in local parks and hikes in nearby Wilderness areas. This activity will be coordinated with the national Sierra Club and agencies that manage our Federal wilderness areas.

### Volunteer needed to coordinate celebration

We are now seeking a Virginia chapter member to volunteer to lead and coordinate our efforts to celebrate the anniversary of the Wilderness Act. Can you help?

We will keep you posted in the *Old Dominion Sierran* as our plans develop. We need involvement by many chapter members. If you are interested in helping and have ideas about ways to promote and publicize wilderness during the 2014 celebration, contact Pete Bsumek at 540-421-4105, or online at [pkbsumek@gmail.com](mailto:pkbsumek@gmail.com).

### Volunteer needed immediately to contact museums

There is one specific task we need a volunteer for right now. Museums plan exhibits long in advance and we need someone to contact a couple of museums in Virginia. If you can step up to the plate and take this on, we'll send more detailed information about a message for museums.

## GW Forest comment period extended

Due to a number of errors found in the U.S. Forest Service document, the comment period for the George Washington National Forest Plan revision has been extended from September 1 to October 17.

Go to <http://vasierraclub.org/2011/06/george-washington-national-forest/> for details including a review of major issues.

Mailed comments can be sent to the Forest Service at George Washington Plan Revision, George Washington and Jefferson National Forests, 5162 Valleypointe Parkway, Roanoke, VA 24019.

Electronic comments can be submitted to [comments-southern-georgewashington-jefferson@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-southern-georgewashington-jefferson@fs.fed.us) Mailed comments must be postmarked by Oct. 17 or email received by the Forest Service by midnight Oct. 17.

## Training planned for leaders of national multi-day outings

Interested in leading multi-day outings in the Northeast or the Southeast as seen in *Sierra Magazine*? This training might be for you. The training trip provides trainees the opportunity to learn trip planning skills specific to the national outings program. It helps develop the leadership and technical skills necessary to lead successful outings.

Trainees will plan, design and submit their own mock national outing in the months prior to the field section. The training experience culminates in a four-day trip in Shenandoah National Park next summer, June 20-24. To learn more and apply, visit: <http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/training/upcoming.asp>

## Early Fall WFA certification courses

Learn how to save life and limb in a wilderness or rural area or urban disaster zone. Matthew Rosefsky, a Wilderness EMT is offering wilderness first aid classes in early fall. The hands-on first aid course includes:

- How to care for an injured or ill person during the critical minutes or hours before ambulance or hospital hand-off
- Blend of classroom instruction and rescue scenario practice
- Two-year WFA certification
- Recertification for WFR and wilderness part of W-EMT

A fall course will be held in Blacksburg Oct. 29-30, with a fee of \$175.

Register at [www.solowfa.com](http://www.solowfa.com) or for more information, contact Matt Rosefsky at [wfa@outdoorsocial.com](mailto:wfa@outdoorsocial.com) or 434-760-4453.

## OUTINGS

by Joe Apple

## Status of Virginia Sierra Club outings program needs update

Every January the President of the United States addresses Congress and gives the State of the Union address. Other organizations do the same. Earlier in August the Virginia chapter chair asked me about the status of the outings program in Virginia.

The good news is Sierra Club Potomac Region Outings sub-section is in excellent health.

Currently there are only two known groups with certified outings leaders in addition to the Sierra Club Potomac Region Outings. A member of the Shenandoah Group became a certified outings leader and has led three outings. Outings have been held by other groups, but the overall number and the groups that conducted them are unknown.

Where does this leave the Virginia chapter outings program? I don't know. I hate to think it has become a dead fish floating belly side up. If group leaders think this is not true, please contact me and let me know the status of outings in your group.

Ever since I became a Sierra club member 20 years ago, I have noticed that a number of members are content to work on a variety environmental issues without participating in outings. I would ask them, "Don't you want to see what you're trying to save?"

I have had the opportunity while hiking to see numerous examples of their achievements in different environmental areas.

An outings training program complete with wilderness first aid is being offered during the Annual Gathering weekend September 30 through October 2. If you're the least bit interested in becoming an outings leader, please sign up to take the leadership training portion of the course.

I will be surveying the chapter to determine the overall status of the outings program. In the meantime please contact me if you have any ideas as to

- Why you feel it difficult to participate in an outings program or
- How the Virginia chapter outings program can be improved. I can be reached [joe.apple@comcast.net](mailto:joe.apple@comcast.net).



Activists on the Road to Clean Energy Tour visit Richmond August 17. The inflated inhaler makes an impression even in front of the tall Dominion Virginia Power headquarters.



The Falls of the James Group donated 60 copies of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* to J.R.Tucker High School in Henrico County for use in their International Baccalaureate (IB) program. Next year students will read and discuss the book in both English and science classes. Pictured (l. to r.) Jacob Harless, rising 10th grader in the IB program; Dr. Gwen E. Miller, principal; Paige Tucker, 10th grade English teacher. Standing are Sierra Club members Catherine Welsh and Tamara Smith.

Photograph by *The Henrico Citizen*

**Activists, undeterred by summer heat, were busy demonstrating and working towards a better, cleaner environment**



Students from the Albemarle High School Key Club plant three crab apple trees at houses built by Habitat for Humanity in Charlottesville. The Piedmont Group purchased the trees and organized the activity. The three students digging are (l to r) Sam Melton, Jeannie Kim, and Amory Fischer. Photo by John Cruickshank



Randy Flood of the Green Jobs Alliance prepares for his presentation at the Virginia Offshore Wind Conference held at the Virginia Beach Convention Center in June.



On May 11 demonstrators at the Free Speech Wall in Charlottesville show Dominion Virginia Power shareholders their views on sustainable energy. The shareholders' meeting was held the next day at the Boars Head Inn. Photo by John Cruickshank

## Letter to the Editor

### What are Virginia's nuclear accident precautions?

Dear Editor,

After Hurricane Irene I received emails and phone messages from several local Fairfax county politicians, including John C. Cook, Pat Herrity, Sharon Bulova, Eileen Filler-Corn, Dave Marsdon, and others not in office. County residents are certainly covered for wind and water precautions.

After the 5.8 magnitude earthquake and subsequent Lake Anna nuclear facility shutdown, these folks were strangely silent, despite continued earthquake aftershocks.

The 1,950 megawatt Lake Anna nuclear facility is currently shut down for U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) inspections. The plant is not to resume operations until Dominion Virginia Power can prove there has been no "functional" damage to operations equipment.

In the meantime electricity normally provided by the two reactors is being provided from other resources. Both Dominion and the (NRC), which is responsible for nuclear safety, admit that the 5.8 earthquake may have exceeded the reactors' design capacity for ground motion.

Onsite nuclear waste storage is also over design capacity. A March Associated Press article, *US spent-fuel storage sites are packed*, reported "Virginia has 1,533 tons of nuclear waste in dry storage and 1,105 tons in spent fuel pools."

Many tools and equipment can operate safely beyond design recommendations, but when it comes to ruptured pipes, corroded components beneath a facility, internal cracks and other potential maladies, and their impact on public safety when applied to nuclear reactors and waste, wouldn't you want to know what to do in case of a radiation leakage event?

In Japan, the Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO) constantly misled the public regarding most aspects of the Fukushima nuclear disaster.

Where are the timely public updates from Dominion and those responsible for public safety?

*Emile Derek Boyle  
Burke, Virginia*

## At-large delegates for Virginia Chapter ex-com to be elected in Nov.

**F**our at-large Virginia Chapter Sierra Club executive committee (ex-com) members are up for election in November 2011. Balloting will take place between now and November 15.

At-large members join group delegates to make up the Virginia Chapter ex-com, serve two-year terms, and elect chapter officers. The ex-com sets policy not already determined by the Sierra Club National Board and conducts the affairs of the chapter.

All members of the Virginia Chapter Sierra Club are eligible and are urged to vote for up to four of the four candidates running. Use the ballot on this page to cast your vote.

### Candidate Statements

#### John Cruickshank

I joined the Sierra Club in 1985 and became active in group and chapter projects in 2003. I enjoy working with other club members on campaigns to preserve parkland and promote green transportation.

I served six years as chair of the Piedmont Group and four years as the Virginia

Chapter vice-chair. In January of this year I was honored to be elected chapter chair.

My professional career has included 35 years working in public schools as a teacher and principal. As an educator I worked to promote awareness of environmental issues. I continue to do this as a volunteer in local schools and Master Naturalist.

The future of our planet depends on a renewed respect for natural ecosystems and new attitudes about "quality lifestyles."

#### Roger Diedrich

For over 30 years I served in many different Club capacities, e.g. group chair and conservation chair, chapter conservation chair, legislative chair and chapter chair.

I now serve as Virginia Chapter smart growth and transportation chair. As such, I stay connected to our allies on statewide issues, monitoring VDOT and challenges from the development community. Continued steps toward a modern transportation future will support better communities, while helping to reduce carbon emissions.

I will continue working to build the environmental community. I recognize we should connect with our allies, but I also value the Sierra Club's unique ability to bring issues to the public through our grassroots network. Inspiring our members to action on carefully selected campaigns provides our best chance to produce results.

#### Ivy Main

I am seeking reelection as an at-large member of the executive committee so I can continue to lead our renewable energy team as we intensify our efforts on wind and solar energy. The Virginia chapter has

put together a terrific group of volunteers to push this forward, with exceptional staff support from Eileen Levandoski.

In addition to working with the renewable energy team, I also serve as chair of the legislative committee, where my background as a lawyer and writer is especially useful writing bills, reviewing other legislation, drafting position papers, and developing strategy. I, with other committee members, take active lobbying roles in meeting with legislators and testifying before committees in the General Assembly.

If you have been on the chapter website you may be familiar with some of the videos I have created over the past two years. Videos are a fun sideline to the serious work we do—and fun is good.

The work I do on behalf of the Virginia chapter is the most important work of my life. I would do it even if I weren't on the ex-com, but I can do it far more effectively from that position. I hope you will give me your vote.

#### Ann Moore

I am running for the executive committee because ordinary people like me are the backbone of the club. You don't need expertise, all you need is the desire to team up with others to help protect Virginia's waters, air and natural features. By speaking truth to power, we can all make a difference. I've served on the personnel committee, helped with nominations and with planning the Annual Gathering. I'm active in our local group. I've had fun doing it, and I invite you to join me.

### Roanoke ExCom Nominations

**T**he management of the Sierra Club Roanoke Group is the responsibility of an Executive Committee of seven members elected by the general membership. The Roanoke group includes the counties of Roanoke, Botetourt, Franklin, Rockbridge, Alleghany, Bath, Patrick, Henry and the independent cities within their boundaries.

Any member in good standing may be a candidate for election to the Executive Committee. A Nominating Committee will consider prospective nominees and submit a slate of candidates to the membership on a ballot available to members on December 1. Candidates not selected by this committee may be nominated by petition.

To be considered for nomination, or to submit a recommendation, contact Diana Christopoulos (540)387-0930, dianak16@earthink.net, 907 Greenbrier Ct, Salem, VA 24153. Deadline for submitting names is October 20.

### Roanoke ExCom Elections

**M**embers of the Roanoke Group are eligible to vote in the annual election to select members of the Executive Committee. Ballots and voting instructions will be available on the Roanoke Group web site <http://virginia.sierraclub.org/roanoke/> on December 1. If you do not have access to the Internet, or if you would like to receive a ballot by regular mail, contact Mark McClain (540) 387-0930, 907 Greenbrier Ct, Salem, VA 24153. Voting deadline is December 20.

## Cast Your Vote

Except for Great Falls Group members, this official Virginia Chapter election ballot must have your printed membership label on the back. Vote the left column for single membership. Vote both columns for joint membership (if two names appear on your membership label). Vote for up to four candidates. More than four votes will invalidate your ballot. If you choose to do so, you may ink out your name(s) and mailing address printed on the reverse side of this ballot, **but please do not ink out the bar code or remove the mailing label.** Great Falls Group members sign this ballot on the back. Joint members sign both names on the back.

Mail this ballot, postmarked no later than November, 15, to:

**Elections Committee  
3571 Bradshaw Road  
Salem, VA 24153-8715**

<b>John Cruickshank</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Roger Diedrich</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Ivy Main</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Ann Moore</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

# Climate Denial — Attack of the Radical Deregulators

by Ivy Main

*A lie can travel halfway around the world while the truth is putting on its shoes. - Mark Twain*

Every Sierran has experienced it — you are in a townhall meeting advocating for a coal plant shutdown, or talking energy policy with friends or colleagues, or even just explaining to relatives at a family dinner why you care about reducing your carbon footprint, when someone says, “Oh, climate change, that’s a hoax!”

Or merely, “Well, since the science is unsettled, I’m not going to worry about it.”

Of course, it’s not a hoax, and the science isn’t unsettled, but making people believe so is the primary tactic of those who oppose government action to slow climate change. Their arsenal consists of lies, distortions, personal attacks, and manufac-

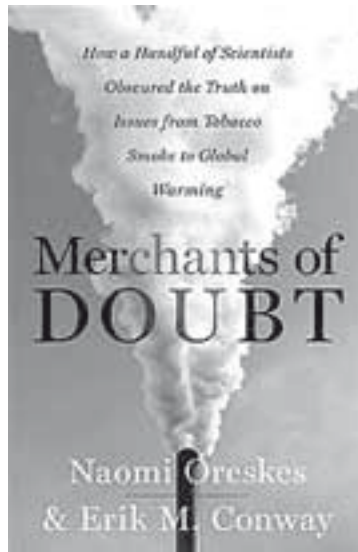
tured “science.”

But who are these people, and why are they so obsessed with denying the science of man-made climate change? The answer, interestingly, is not that they are mere tools of Exxon Mobil. Yes, money from Big Oil and Big Coal often funds their work, usually after being laundered through respectable-sounding groups.

But their primary motive is political and philosophical: they are opposed to government regulation of any kind, from anti-smoking legislation to pesticide controls to action on acid rain and the ozone hole. Climate change denial is only the latest incarnation of a campaign that dates back to the Cold War.

The full story is laid out

in *Merchants of Doubt: How a Handful of Scientists Obscured the Truth on Issues from Tobacco Smoke to Global Warming*, by Naomi Oreskes and Erik M. Conway (Bloomsbury Press, 2010).



The book is an eye-opener for those of us who assumed the reasons for climate denial actually had to do with the facts of global warming. It turns out that patiently arguing the facts, as we have been doing, won’t persuade the deniers, because they are not interested in facts.

*Merchants of Doubt* is critical reading for climate activists, but it should also be required reading for politicians and members of the media, who are repeatedly taken in by assertions that the science is uncertain or that a real debate exists about the role of humans in climate change. (Indeed, the book details how some leading newspapers have actually been complicit in suppressing the truth.)

Reading this book will better prepare climate activists for the next outburst at a townhall meeting or misinformed letter in the paper. Patiently explaining the facts remains important, but the radical anti-regulatory agenda must be exposed, too.

Understanding that the same people behind the climate change “debate” have used identical tactics to prevent, delay and weaken regulation of cigarettes, pesticides and coal plant pollution, offers our neighbors a frame of reference by which to judge today’s attacks on the science of global warming.

If we’re lucky, that may force the lie to pause long enough in its travels for the truth to put on its shoes.

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage Paid  
Richmond, VA  
Permit # 1673

Sierra Club Virginia Chapter  
422 East Franklin Street, Room 302  
Richmond, VA 23219

Time Sensitive Information.  
Please Mail Immediately.



## INSIDE OLD DOMINION SIERRAN

Page 1

Big Victories for Sierra Club’s Beyond Coal

Page 2

Notes from the Chair

Sierra Club honors Ivy Main and Charles Price

Last chance to join the fun and camaraderie

Page 3

Anti-environment politicians trying to send Virginia in wrong direction

Tea Party opinions on climate change and energy issues

Page 4

Wise Energy Coalition leads fight against Surry County coal plant

Huge inhaler attracts attention in three cities

Page 5

Former negative opinion on wind turbines changes Wind turbine activity in Roanoke area

Page 6

Virginia Offshore Wind Conference held Citizens to learn how uranium mining will impact communities

Earth-shaking event prompts questions, concerns

Page 7

Sierra Club, Laborers Union create Friends of VA Transit

Labor unions endorse offshore wind development

Page 8

Nation’s march to “corporate personhood” slow but steady

Administration unwilling to pursue sensible solutions to transportation woes

Sierra Club, bicyclists plan event in Fairfax

Page 9

Va. Sierra Club plans celebration of Wilderness Act GW Forest comment period extended

Training planned for leaders of national outings Status of Va. Sierra Club outings programs needs update

Fall WFA certification courses

Page 10

Activists busy demonstrating, working towards better, cleaner environment (photo page)

Page 11

What are Virginia’s nuclear accident precautions? At-large delegates for chapter ex-com to be elected in November

Page 12

Climate Denial - Attack of the Radical Deregulators