

COUNCIL PRESERVES 45,000 ACRES OF BALTIMORE COUNTY FARM & FORESTLAND

Our Deepest Thanks To Councilman Bryan McIntire and Councilman Kevin Kamenetz as well as Councilmembers Bartenfelder, Gardina, Moxley, Oliver, and Olszewski

By Richard Klein

On the evening of August 31st, the seven-member Baltimore County Council gathered to decide the fate of more than 73,000 acres of farm and forestland. At issue was the zoning applied to each acre, which determines the type and intensity of development allowed. Over the course of two hours the Council voted on numerous rezoning issues; each issue encompassing from one to thousands of acres. By the end of the evening roughly 45,000 acres of rural lands had been rezoned to categories which greatly increase the likelihood sensitive and important natural resources will be preserved.

Most of the 45,000 acres had been zoned for Watershed Protection (RC-4) and Rural Residential (RC-5). The RC-4 zoning category allows about one house for every five acres of land. The density on RC-5 land is one house per 1.5-acres.

When the RC-4 Watershed Protection category was adopted in the 1970s it was thought that a density of one house per five acres would effectively protect aquatic resources. Numerous scientific studies conducted since then shows that sensitive streams, wetlands and other waters fare best when watershed development intensity is less than one house per eight- to ten-acres.

The bulk of the 45,000 acres is now assigned to four zoning categories: Agricultural Protection (RC-2), Rural Conservation & Residential (RC-6), Resource Preservation (RC-7), and Natural Resources Preservation (RC-8). On both RC-2 and RC-8 lands development intensity is generally limited to one house per 50 acres, though in some cases intensity may be a bit higher. The base density on RC-6 lands is one house per five acres, though if a site contains an abundance of forest with high habitat value then density may drop to one house per ten acres or less. One house per 25 acres is permitted on RC-7 lands.

Baltimore County has a long history of leadership in growth management in general and rural preservation in particular. In fact, much of what is now called “smart growth” started in Baltimore County. But prior to the mid-1970s most of the quarter-million acres of rural land in the county was zoned for one house per acre. In 1976, the Baltimore County Council adopted a number of “Resource Conservation” zoning classifications which reduced development density from a maximum of one house per 1.5-acres to as little as one home for every 25 to 50 acres.

Nearly 90% of the 73,000 acres at issue were located in the third district, which is represented by Councilman T. Bryan McIntire. The third district covers northern and central Baltimore County. Over the past ten years Councilman McIntire has initiated other rezoning efforts which preserved approximately 19,000 acres of rural land. With the August 31st success, Councilman McIntire holds the honor of having preserved more rural land than any other Baltimore County Council member. And Councilman McIntire

has probably preserved more rural land than any other elected official in Maryland, perhaps even in the United States.

Councilman Kevin Kamenetz represents the second district where the remaining 10% is situated. The second district includes portions of Glyndon, Owings Mills, Pikesville, Reisterstown, and Stevenson. The other five members of the Council supported the position of both Councilman Kamenetz and Councilman McIntire. For this we are also deeply grateful to Councilman Joseph Bartenfelder, Councilman Vincent Gardina, Councilman Samuel Moxley, Councilman Kenneth N. Oliver, and Councilman John Olszewski. Councilman Gardina is a former Conservation Chair for the Greater Baltimore Sierra Club.

Finally, we wish to thank the many Greater Baltimore Sierrans who urged their Council representatives to support preservation of our rural lands. Council staff commented on the number of calls and e-mails they received from Sierrans. Your support helped make this tremendous victory possible. On behalf of the Greater Baltimore Sierra Club Executive Committee, I thank you for your overwhelming response to our call to action.

SIERRA CLUB HOSTS PRESENTATION ON SPRAWL, SMART GROWTH, AND POPULATION GROWTH

By Cliff Terry

Ed Stennett, author of the highly praised book *In Growth We Trust: Sprawl, Smart Growth, and Rapid Population Growth*, will give a 35-minute audio-visual presentation on Wednesday, Oct. 13th, beginning 7:00 pm at the Towson Library, 320 York Road, located 1.2 miles south of Beltway exit 26. For further information call Cliff Terry at 410-944-9477.

Mr. Stennett's talk is sponsored by the Greater Baltimore Group of the Sierra Club. Carl Pope, the Club's national executive director, calls Stennett's book "some of the most creative thinking on fertility and the American future in the last decade." Tom Horton, environmental columnist for the Baltimore *Sun* and winner of a national Sierra Club award for environmental reporting, calls it "highly recommended."

Maryland's population grew by 11% from 1990 to 2000, contributing to sprawl, road congestion, water shortages, and the degradation of our natural environment, according to Mr. Stennett.

Ed Stennett

Population Expert
Will speak on his new book

In Growth We Trust: Sprawl, Smart Growth, and Rapid Population Growth

Wednesday, October 13th, 7:00 pm
Towson library, 320 York Rd,
1.2 miles south of beltway exit 26.
For info call Cliff Terry at 410-944-9477

He asserts that "Smart Growth is part of the solution to problems such as these, but only part." Using specific examples, *In Growth We Trust* shows that even with Smart Growth, our quality of life will worsen with each generation if we do not curb population growth itself.

"*In Growth We Trust* unmasks the 'growth is good' myth. It exposes those who promote the myth for personal profit."

Mr. Stennett says his presentation will outline how U.S. population can be stabilized through voluntary means. He is Maryland Sierra Club Chapter population chair.

Ed's book is \$8.95, plus \$4 shipping, and can be ordered from:

Growth Education Movement, Inc.
P.O. Box 2876
Gaithersburg, MD 20886-2876

GREATER BALTIMORE GROUP VOLUNTEERS PURSUE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

By Justin Bishop & Crystal Heshmat

Local, regional, and Chapter Sierra Club volunteers and staff joined with concerned Baltimore community members at the Cecil-Kirk Community Center on July 24th for an introductory Environmental Justice (EJ) workshop presented by two members of the National Sierra Club's EJ Organizer Site Selection committee, Barbara Coman and John McKowan. This came about due to the activism of Dundalk Avenue Area Residents Together (DAART) and residents near the Maryland Transportation Administration's (MTA) Kirk Avenue Bus Depot. These community members approached Sierra Club staff last spring regarding the possibility of obtaining help via a full-time, paid EJ Organizer to work with the community residents, local activist groups and NGOs, as well as industry and government, for the purpose of rectifying the environmental injustices which they experience on a daily basis.

Sierra Club staff connected with Justin Bishop and Crystal Heshmat, who have since become the Greater Baltimore Group's lead volunteers in this project. With the application deadline imminent, Crystal, a Mechanical Engineer who is pursuing a master's degree in Environmental Engineering from The Johns Hopkins University School of Engineering, and Justin, a Registered Nurse who is pursuing a master's degree in Environmental Health Nursing at the University of Maryland School of Nursing in Baltimore, took on the formidable tasks of composing and submitting a formal Sierra Club EJ proposal that outlines in detail just two of the unique environmental injustice concerns in Baltimore City and County. Together with the Greater Baltimore Group Executive Committee (ExCom), Maryland Chapter, and other area supporters, the Baltimore region made it into the next stage of consideration, which included a "Toxic Tour" for the EJ Site Selection representatives.

At the July workshop, community and Sierra Club members were introduced to the Sierra Club's EJ Principles and Guidelines, the history of the program, and the basic summary of what the program could offer, should there be sufficient funding and merit in the proposal. Community members took advantage of the majority of the session to explain some of the local problems of environmental injustice, especially the harmful social, health, and financial effects of the very poor air quality in the Kirk Avenue residential neighborhood which houses the MTA bus depot and whose residents have suffered from years of gross and excessive diesel bus exhaust and a continuous barrage of extreme noise. Mr. Al Cordell, representing Dundalk Avenue residents, explained the severe negative impact of illegal diesel truck traffic, with many trucks using Dundalk Avenue as a way to avoid inspections that could expose serious safety hazards, including potential terrorist activity.

Following the workshop, Justin and Crystal represented the Baltimore region at the annual Sierra Club Environmental Justice In-Gathering held near Pittsburgh, PA Aug. 20-22. This event included sessions on how to recognize and deconstruct racism, environmental justice with respect to clean air and water, and tactics for winning, as well as an extensive tour of the catastrophic results of greedy mining companies on individual's homes and properties.

News regarding a decision by the national EJ site selection committee as to whether or not Baltimore will be awarded the grant is expected to be received by Oct. 1st. If the Greater Baltimore Group is selected to support an EJ organizer, a Group search, hiring and support committee will be needed to search and interview applicants for the full time Sierra Club staff position. If you are interested in volunteering, please let us know.

More information may be obtained by contacting Justin Bishop or Crystal Heshmat by email at EJBaltimore@yahoo.com, or visiting the Sierra Club EJ web site: http://www.sierraclub.org/environmental_justice/

ANNOUNCING THE NEW YOUNG SIERRANS GROUP OF THE GREATER BALTIMORE SIERRA CLUB!

By Angela Buffington

A new group is forming in the Greater Baltimore Sierra Club – the Young Sierrans. The group will host socials and outings for young people (20-30-somethings and the "young at heart") looking to make an impact on our environment. The goals of the Young Sierran's Group are:

- to increase overall membership by recruiting new members through social events and Sierra Club outings
- to increase the activism of members by making them aware of the environmental issues addressed by the Sierra Club.



The First Young Sierrans Hike

The social events will be similar to the wildly successful 'Sierra Club and Beer' socials hosted by the Atlanta young adults group. The socials will serve as an informal way for young people to get together to address environmental issues, and there is the possibility of having guest speakers. Stop by and have a cup of coffee, a drink or some food with like-minded folks. The Baltimore group's first social was held on September 16 at City Cafe in Mt. Vernon and the group had their kick-off hike Saturday September 18 at Gunpowder Falls State Park. Monthly socials will be held on the second Thursday of every month and the group will have outings on the second Saturday of every month (October 14 & 16, November 11 & 13, December 9 & 11). Stay tuned for a report on the socials and outings in the next issue of the newsletter.

The group welcomes you to join! For details on upcoming events send a message to Young_Sierrans@yahoo.com. Or contact co-chairs Angela Buffington at 410-783-0680 or Kathy Harget at 410-440-9896 for more information.

BICYCLES, PEDESTRIANS, TRANSIT, AND HIGHWAYS – LOCAL, REGIONAL, STATEWIDE, AND NATIONAL

by Patrick McMahon, Group Transportation Chair

As usual, there are a number of important transportation issues being debated and decided on a variety of levels that will have impacts on the environmental health of our neighborhoods and our planet. On all of these issues there meetings to attend and/or letters to write where we can help to push for decisions that can help us move away from our destructive development patterns toward more sustainable ways of meeting our transportation needs. From a bicycle lane in Baltimore to the Federal funding for all roads and transit for the next six years, these decisions will shape our environment. While bicycling, walking, and taking transit won't eliminate congestion on our roadways, improving these facilities provides viable options for people to get out of the traffic and make more environmentally responsible transportation choices.

More in Bikes in Baltimore

In Baltimore City there are two on-going bicycle planning issues, one site-specific and one Citywide. In the first, Charles Street is being reconstructed between University Parkway and 25th Street, just by the Johns Hopkins University Homewood Campus and the new Jones Falls Greenway. The proposed boulevard design is still being finalized and a lot of effort has been made to ensure that it includes facilities for bicycles and transit. Dozens of cyclists have shown up at project meetings and have been a visible presence in the process. For more information about the project go to <http://www.charlesstreet.mdprojects.com/>.

Bicycle facilities on Charles Street will be all the more important in the coming months because the City just made the valuable decision to create a citywide bicycle plan. The public meetings to develop the plan will most likely be held this fall and we will need members from throughout the City to attend these in order to show strong support for improved bicycle facilities and to create the best possible plan. The consultants that the City has hired are very good, but you know your neighborhoods better than any consultant and we need to do everything we can to help them design the best system

possible. We will be posting information about these meetings on the Greater Baltimore Group's web site <http://www.maryland.sierraclub.org/greaterbaltimore/>, but these projects show how important it is to have the ability to communicate with our members about upcoming events, so I hope that those of you reading this will sign up for our e-mail list.

Our Regional Transportation Funding Decisions

As mentioned in Winter 2004 newsletter, the counties and cities in the Baltimore region are developing a plan for what transportation projects to fund, as required to apply for Federal funds for these projects. Within this work there is a short-term plan, covering projects to be built from 2005 through 2009, and a long-range plan for all large projects considered for funding between now and 2030. Each of these will help determine what roads, transit facilities, sidewalks, and bicycle paths get built during our lifetimes and information about each of these projects is listed on the Web and at your local library. While I attend regional transportation meetings on behalf of the Sierra Club I need your input about whether the projects proposed for your community are appropriate and needed or if they are will have a negative impact on livability and encourage the sprawling development that is creeping over our farmlands, forests, and stream valleys.

The short-term projects proposed are posted on the Web at

http://bmc.baltometro.org/tips_web

and while public input on this plan is over, the site still will show you the projects that are going to be built in your community over the next five years.

The long-range plan has not yet been finalized and there is still time for public input. It takes a long time to change transportation policy, we have to start now and push for the plan to include more transit projects and fewer roadway widening projects. While some of the most egregious projects (widening MD 32 from 4 lanes to 8 lanes) have not been included, the extension of the existing Metro subway/Green Line from Johns Hopkins Hospital to Morgan State University isn't even being considered for construction in the next 30 years. Although the Green Line is not included in this plan, it is still being studied and it's important for us to be involved in that study, to make sure it is designed well, to build support for its eventual extension to White Marsh, and to push for changes in the funding sources and priorities so that it will be included in future plans.

A copy of the proposed plan (now called the Preferred Alternative and soon to be called the Draft Plan) can be found at:

<http://www.baltometro.org/T2030/T2030preferredalternative.pdf>

and more information about the process can be found at:

<http://www.baltometro.org/T2030/T2030public.html>

There are a series of public meetings in October and November where you can let your elected officials know what you want to see in your transportation system.

Here are dates and locations for the local public meetings on Transportation 2030:

Baltimore County	Wed, Oct 20, 7:00 p.m., County Council Chambers
Carroll County	Mon, Oct 25, 7:00 p.m., Public Meeting Room (Room 003/004)
Howard County	Tues, Oct 26, 7:00 p.m., Howard County Government Center
Harford County	Thurs, Oct 28, 7:00 p.m., County Council Chambers
Annapolis/AA County	Thurs, Nov 18, 6:30 p.m., Annapolis High School
Baltimore City	Date and Location TBD

In addition, there will be a Baltimore Regional Transportation Board meeting with all of the region's elected executives on Tuesday, November 9th at 5:30 p.m. at the BMC offices (2700 Lighthouse Point in Canton). Finally, there will be a general public meeting on the draft plan on Wednesday, November 17th at the BMC offices (2700 Lighthouse Point in Canton). For more information contact Monica Haines at 410-732-0500 x1047 or mhaines@baltometro.org.

Transit Funding in Annapolis

Overall the environment fared quite well in this year's legislative session in Annapolis, despite gridlock on budgetary issues, a variety of environmentally friendly bills were passed, often shepherded through the House by Baltimore Delegate Maggie McIntosh in her role as Chair of the House Environmental Matters Committee. Among the positive developments were an extension of the 40% Farebox Recovery Cap for service by the Maryland Transit Administration. This helps ensure that some transit routes won't be cut for lack of funding. The long-term goal is to increase ridership by improving the conditions, route design, and frequency of transit service, but in the interim this measure will help maintain some important transit routes.

At the same time, environmentalists and transit advocates were able to get a commitment from MD Transportation Secretary Flanagan to adequately fund the planning efforts for the proposed Red and Green Lines within the Baltimore Regional Transit System Plan. Now that the funding is there for the study, we need to ensure that the study is done well, considering all options. So far Sec. Flanagan has refused to let the consultants hired even check to see whether a "heavy rail" option like our existing Metro could make sense for the Red Line from Dundalk to I-70, despite the possibility that it could potentially save money by using the existing subway tunnel through downtown Baltimore. For more information about this study go to: <http://www.baltimoreregiontransitplan.com/>

Gridlock in Washington on TEA-21 Reauthorization

While the House and the Senate have each passed their own versions of the six-year Federal transportation-funding bill, they differ in price by roughly \$100 billion and on several major policy issues. While the debate continues in Washington about the appropriate level of funding (\$250-\$375 billion), an won't be decided until after the election, there are a lot more issues around the role of transit, clean air regulations, and public involvement requirements.

The Sierra Club's Policy Priorities for TEA-3 are:

- Defend and enhance environmental protections for transportation projects
- Protect and enhance public transportation funding sources and the following programs
- Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)
- Transportation Enhancements
- Job Access and Reverse Commute Grants (JARC)
- Transportation and Community and System Preservation Pilot Program (TCSP)
- Encourage a "Fix-It-First" policy
- Encourage integrated transportation, land use and environmental planning

Please contact your U.S. Representative and Senator's Mikulski and Cardin to thank them for their support of these priorities and asking them to continue to fight for them.

If you're interested in any of these transportation issues contact Patrick McMahon at 410-235-1512 or patrick@mcmahon.com to get involved.

BALTIMORE INNER CITY OUTINGS (BICO)

By Angela Buffington

Sierra Club members are well aware of two major Club activities – promoting issues targeted at protecting and offering ways for people to enjoy and appreciate our natural world. But there is another important Club activity that gets less press – Inner City Outings (ICO). Inner City Outings, an all-volunteer, urban outreach program of the Sierra Club. ICO's mission is:

- To promote and develop greater understanding of other cultures, foster respect of self and others, and provide leadership skills.
- To protect and appreciate all wilderness through outdoor exploration, education, sharing and spiritual growth.

Sierra Club members participate in more than fifty chapters nationwide; Baltimore Inner City Outings (BICO) is Baltimore's chapter of ICO. BICO was founded in 1999 with the goals of providing under-served Baltimore City youth with educational, enjoyable and safe outdoor experiences at no cost to them. Dr. Bob Burchard, longtime Sierra Club member, and Beth Ruekberg, also a Sierra Club member and local teacher, came together to achieve their common goal of helping inner city kids by teaching them about the great outdoors and the environment. Since 1999, BICO has conducted 200 outings, serving more than 2,100 youngsters.

BICO consists of four groups that partner with local agencies:

1. The Choice Program, of UMBC's Shriver Center, which provides structure, accountability and guidance to Baltimore's "at risk" youth. The BICO-Choice partnership focuses on providing an outdoor and environmental component to the Choice program.

2. The Learning Inc. (LI) fosters resiliency in Baltimore City's vulnerable youth (ages 12-17) through focusing on literacy and life skills. Learning Inc., a small non-profit organization, operating from the basement of a Hampden church, offers three distinct programs providing academic instruction and youth development programs. The BICO-Learning Inc. partnership focuses on providing an outdoor and environmental component to Learning Inc.'s after school program.
3. Digital Harbor High School (DHHS) - BICO works with 9th graders from DHHS, a technology-focused high school located in Baltimore next to Southern High School.
4. College Gardens Community Center (CGCC) - The YMCA at College Gardens Community Center seeks to build strong kids, strong families and a strong community through programs which focus on the development of mind body and spirit. Comprehensive afterschool and summer programs for children and teens encompass a variety of activities including academic assistance, cultural arts, recreation, sports, outdoor education as well as leadership development, service learning and monthly family nights. The CGCC-BICO partnership will provide CGCC kids environmental education.

Each group provides one trip per month throughout the year. On each of the trips, kids have the opportunity to enjoy an outdoor activity, sometimes learning an activity for the first time. BICO outings have taken youngsters hiking, biking, caving, backpacking, camping and canoeing, to name a few. On BICO outings, youngsters have had the opportunity to explore and learn about the natural world and wildlife – opportunities they might not have otherwise. Searching for insects and wildflowers on a nature scavenger hunt along the NCR Trail, seeing emus and llamas at Woodberry Crossing and harvesting maple syrup at Oregon Ridge are highlights from recent trips. Additionally, several groups have partnered with Baltimore City on service outings, picking up trash on hikes and seeing the effect humans have on their everyday environment. Youngsters have also taken boat tours on the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's (CBF) Snow Goose, learning about the Bay and Baltimore Harbor's role as a commercial center. Along the outer edges of the Harbor, CBF guides caught fish and culled for oysters, allowing youngsters to examine the samples and learn about the relationship between the health and variety of the samples and the surrounding water.

BICO is funded by donations and grants from local foundations, companies, clubs and individuals. This summer, BICO was nominated for and received a \$3,000 grant from REI in recognition of BICO's providing outdoor recreation opportunities for youth. The grant will be earmarked for equipment purchases. REI has also been supportive of BICO by way of REI personnel giving their time to help with BICO outings. In preparation for a recent backpacking trip, REI personnel spent several hours teaching the youngsters how to pack their backpacks.

BICO welcomes new volunteers! If you are interested in learning more about BICO, please check out the website at <http://www.sierraclub.org/ico/baltimore> or contact Bob

Burchard at rpburchard@att.net or 410-744-0510. Following is a listing of upcoming BICO outings.

Oct.

2 (16**) LI – Hiking, Sugar Loaf Mt. & corn maze
16 CGCC – Hiking, Sugar Loaf Mountain & pumpkin patch
17 Choice – Farm visit
22-24 Mid-Atlantic ICO Retreat
29-31 DHH – Camping at Assateague Island

Nov.

1 BICO Meeting & Election of officers
12-14 LI – Camping at Blackburn Cabin- Appalachian Trail
6 CGCC & DHH – Environmental Ed. on CBF's Snow Goose
tba Choice – Hiking the Billy Goat Trail

Dec.

4 DHH – Community service with Rec & Parks & ice skating
4 (11**) LI – Orienteering in Canton & ice skating
11 CGCC – Audubon Society at Patterson Park and holiday party at CGCC
tba Choice – National Aquarium

* BICO Teams:

Choice = the UMBC Shriver Center's Choice program

DHH = Digital Harbor High School

LI = Learning, Inc.

CG CC = College Gardens

** rain date

HEMLOCK GORGE THREAT AVERTED

Many Thanks to City Watershed Manager Gene Scarpulla, Baltimore County Police Captain Mark Warren, and Baltimore County Councilman T. Bryan McIntire

By Richard Klein

If you were to ask veteran hikers to list the most beautiful trails in the Baltimore region, most would put Hemlock Gorge near the top. As the name implies, the Gorge is a deep, rocky valley carved by Big Gunpowder Falls which is filled with massive Hemlock trees. To get a better sense of the unique beauty of the Gorge, read the excerpt from Bryan MacKay's book *Baltimore Trails* accompanying this article. The Gorge is situated at the head of Prettyboy Reservoir in northwestern Baltimore County.

Earlier this year Howard County Sierra Club outings leader Mike Jukelis led a hike through the Gorge. Mike was appalled by what he found. A group of people had decided Hemlock Gorge was a great place to camp (camping is prohibited on all reservoir lands). Not only had the campers built fire rings and spread litter throughout the Gorge, they had also felled a number of large trees.

If you've never hiked the Gorge then it may be difficult to appreciate the reverence with which it is viewed by Mike and many others. The place is about as close as you can get

to a natural shrine and many would use the word sacred when talking about Hemlock Gorge. To see it defiled in this way incensed Mike and many others as he quickly spread the word.

I was one of the people Mike contacted. I decided to see the problem for myself, so immediately after the June 19th Loch Raven Forest Stewardship outing I hiked down into the Gorge. The vandalism was as bad as Mike had said it was. In fact three tents were pitched in the Gorge that afternoon. Nearby, four people were sitting around a blazing campfire on that 90 degree day. I said to them “Gee, I didn’t know camping was allowed in the Gorge.” They shrugged their shoulders nonchalantly. I decided there wasn’t much point in continuing the discussion so I immediately hiked back out to search for a solution.



Unbeknownst to Mike and me another group, the Prettyboy Watershed Alliance, had also discovered the problem and was seeking a solution. Alliance director Mare Cromwell, Mike and I put our heads together. We figured the best first step was to contact City of Baltimore Watershed Manager Gene Scarpulla. Hemlock Gorge is located on City watershed property and thus falls under Gene’s jurisdiction. We had been working quite successfully with Gene on a plan to conserve the City’s 17,580 acres of reservoir forests, which includes Hemlock Gorge. Mare and Alliance volunteers also conducted a clean-up of the Gorge.

We contacted Gene who moved very quickly. He identified a couple of factors contributing to the problem and promptly set about correcting them. Specifically, the campers were parking their vehicles by driving down next to the river at the Gunpowder Road bridge. Within a day after contacting him, Gene and his staff had installed a massive concrete barrier that closed off the area next to the river. His staff also posted “no parking after dark” and “no camping” signs along Gunpowder Road.

We all crossed our fingers and hoped that the barrier and signs would chase the campers away. Unfortunately they proved more persistent. In the latter part of July Gene and his staff walked Hemlock Gorge with Mare, Mike and I to kick around possible next steps. We all concluded that increased enforcement of the no parking/no camping restrictions was the key and the Baltimore County police were the logical enforcement agency. After our walk ended Mare and Alliance volunteers returned to the Gorge and conducted a second clean-up of all the litter. They also dismantled the fire rings. Mare then posted a tactfully worded sign asking visitors to respect the Gorge by not camping, not building fires, not cutting trees, not littering or engaging in other thoughtless acts.

We contacted Councilman T. Bryan McIntire who represents the northern and central portions of Baltimore County, including Hemlock Gorge. Councilman McIntire is well

known for his tireless efforts in support of farm and forest preservation. We asked the Councilman if he could request Baltimore County police enforcement. Within a day or two we received a call from Officer Walter Cornett, of the Seventh Precinct Baltimore County Police. Officer Cornett and his commander, Captain Mark Warren, were keenly interested in the problem. Seventh District officers have a history of taking special interest in Hemlock Gorge. A former officer assigned to the area used to carry maps he'd pass out to hikers looking for trail information. Officer Cornett asked us for details on the problem and assured us that action would be taken.

In late August we hiked the Gorge to see how things were going. Though we all feared the worse, we were delighted by what we found; no new fire rings, no litter, no evidence of recent camping, and no more trees had been felled! Apparently whatever the County police had done was working. In fact, Mare's sign was right where she'd posted it a month before and no doubt was part of the solution. Later, we spoke with Officer Cornett in hopes of learning how they'd worked this miracle. He described some of the enforcement actions he and other officers had taken. It is obvious to us that these actions succeeded in convincing the campers to move on, hopefully to a place where camping is permitted.

We are all hoping that the Hemlock Gorge camping/vandalism problem has been corrected permanently. The City and the Alliance are working on two interpretive signs which will be posted at the Gorge. You can help to ensure that the solution is lasting by keeping an eye out for evidence of these illegal activities in the Gorge. If you spot something please contact either Mare (410.239.0640) or me (410.654.3021). I also urge you to support the Alliance in their efforts to preserve Hemlock Gorge and other parts of the Prettyboy watershed by becoming a member and volunteer. Just give Mare a call for details.

Tom Horton

Baltimore Sun Environmental Columnist
Turning The Tide author
Winner of the national Sierra Club award for
environmental reporting *Plus*

Dan Boone

Forest conservation biologist & Maryland Sierra Club
Conservation Chair

Will speak on

PRESERVING FORESTS

Wednesday, November 17th, 7:00 pm
Pikesville library, 1301 Reisterstown Road,
0.8 miles south of beltway exit 20
For info call Richard at 410.654.3021.

On Wednesday, November 17th, Baltimore *Sun* environmental columnist Tom Horton will give a talk, beginning at 7:00 pm, on *Preserving Forests* at the Pikesville library, 1301 Reisterstown Road, located 0.8 miles south of beltway exit 20. Following Tom, Maryland Sierra Club Conservation Chair Dan Boone, a widely respected forest biologist, will discuss opportunities to enhance the 17,580 acres of forests adjoining Liberty, Loch Raven and Prettyboy reservoirs. Among the issues we'll explore that evening is how we might increase resources for preserving areas such as Hemlock Gorge.

In closing we wish to thank the following City and County officials who made this success possible: the Honorable T. Bryan McIntire, City Watershed Manager Gene Scarpulla and his staff, Captain Mark Warren, and Officer Walter Cornett.

BRYAN MACKAY'S DESCRIPTION OF HEMLOCK GORGE FROM *BALTIMORE TRAILS*

The forest primeval: shafts of sunlight slant through the branches of giant hemlocks, illuminating the swirling mists above the river. The water slips over rocks with hardly a sound, carrying the crimson leaf of a maple toward the sea. The morning quiet is broken only by the rattle of a kingfisher sweeping up the river, a small fish clasped tightly in her bill. There is no evidence of humankind, and the scene is at once peaceful and time-less. Every hiker wants to find such a special place, where beauty and solitude promote contemplation and serenity.

Such a place exists, even in Baltimore County. Hemlock Gorge, on the Big Gunpowder River upstream of Prettyboy Reservoir, is a tiny slice of Appalachia far from the mountains. Deeply incised into the surrounding landscape, the rocky gorge of the Gunpowder is lined by the trail's namesake hemlock trees, some of which are hundreds of years old. Given the scenic beauty of this trail, it is surprising how lightly it is used. When you visit such a pristine surrounding, be sure to haul out any trash you create; and if others have not been as respectful, you might take their debris as well. Minimize your impact on the fragile soils by staying on the trail and avoiding slopes where erosion is likely. The greatest threat to beautiful places like Hemlock Gorge is that they will be loved to death by too many of us.

RESERVOIR TRAILS & USER FEES???

Your Thoughts Requested

By Richard D. Klein

To preserve and enhance the health of our 17,580 acres of reservoir forests, more funds are needed. If you've followed previous articles on Liberty, Loch Raven and Prettyboy forests, then you know that the lack of funds is impeding much needed maintenance, forest restoration, and other essential actions. In fact, one might argue that the Hemlock Gorge crisis was a result of insufficient reservoir management funding.

The 113 miles of trails on reservoir lands are enjoyed not just by Baltimore City and Baltimore County residents, but by people from throughout Maryland. Therefore the funds for conserving these forests should come from city, county, and state coffers. I believe those of us who cherish these woodlands and frequently hike or bike the trails ramifying places like Hemlock Gorge should consider an additional contribution towards reservoir forest preservation and



Trailhead Fee Station at Fair Hill NRMA

enhancement. If we Sierrans agreed to this then I think we'd have an easier time convincing elected officials to increase funding for reservoir watershed management.

Reservoir Forest User Fees

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Yes, I support user fees for reservoir forest trails.

No, I do not believe user fees should be charged for reservoir forest trails.

Comments _____

How might a user-fee system work? There are several examples I know of which work well. At many of the trailheads at Fair Hill Natural Resource Management Area there are pay stations like the one pictured next to this article. Envelopes are available at the pay station. You write your tag number on the envelope, enclose \$3, drop the envelope into a safe resembling a metal post, hang your receipt from your car mirror, then head off down the trail. To use Patuxent

River Park trails your car must display a sticker, which cost \$5 and is good for a year. You can get the sticker by mail or at the park office. Of course a user-fee system should have some provision for waiving charges for those of low-income or others for whom the fee might be burdensome.

So what do you think of this proposal? Should the Greater Baltimore Sierra Club urge adoption of a user-fee system for those of us who hike, bike, horse ride, or enjoy reservoir trails in other ways? Let us know by either sending an e-mail to Reservoirs.Forests@ceds.org or use the ballot accompanying this article. Also, on Wednesday, November 17th, Baltimore *Sun* environmental columnist Tom Horton and forest biologist Dan Boone will give a talk, beginning at 7:00 pm, on *Preserving Forests* at the Pikesville library, 1301 Reisterstown Road, located 0.8 miles south of beltway exit 20. Among the issues we'll explore that evening is how we might increase resources for preserving forests through measures such as trail user fees. If you have any questions, please call Richard at 410.654.3021.

HARFORD COUNTY LAND USE MASTER PLAN 2004

By Ron Henry

On June 4th Ron Henry gave the following presentation to the Harford County Council on behalf of the Greater Baltimore Sierra Club. Ron represents Harford County on the Group Executive Committee (ExCom).

Good evening Mr. Council president, Councilpersons and all!

Thank you for this opportunity to make comments concerning the 2004 land use master plan.

My name is Ron Henry of 40 E. Jarrettsville Road, Forest Hill, MD. I have been a citizen of Harford County since 1954, graduate of North Harford High School class of '59, and have resided at 40 E. Jarrettsville Road for 33 + years.

I recently retired as a Department of Army civilian with 42 years service at Aberdeen Proving Ground.

I am a practicing native American (I walk the "red road" so to speak!) as well as a native American teacher.

During the child-rearing years I was active in various community groups (Forest Hill Rec Council, centre umc, PTA's & girl scout troops). I am now active with the red cross, native American activities and the Greater Baltimore Area Sierra Club. I am currently serving as the harford county representative on the Executive Committee of the Sierra Club and that is the primary thrust for my remarks this evening.

The Sierra Club fully endorses the well-stated position of the Baltimore Regional Partnership / Friends of Harford:

"Responsible growth = a desirable future for all"

We also want the following included in the 2004 plan:

- require community input meeting on new development policies & plans
- retain target goal of 55,000 acres for agricultural purposes by 2012
- no public water & sewer utilities outside the development envelope
- no mixed office (mo) land use north of I-95

Comprehensive TDR (transfer of development rights) program to direct growth out of the rural area

I congratulate the Council for their courage in making the recent lower percentage school capacity decision; it would be nice if the percentages were less than three figures!

My native American walk in the last several years has provided me with a philosophy I wish to share.

When native American councils were making major decisions that would affect their people, the ramifications were projected out to seven generations, so that succeeding generations would have ample resources available to them. It seems very appropriate to me to apply a healthy dose of that thinking in our decisions concerning the 2004 land use master plan!

Allow me to leave with you some thoughts espoused by Kevin "Thunderhorse" Wright, a Lakota Sioux:

“ there was a time when man took no more than he needed,
That time is gone.....
There was a time when he gave something back,
That time is gone.....
There was a time when he worshiped the creator and
Honored creation, that time too is gone....
And now the waters are polluted, our natural
Resources are all but gone and creation is dying.....
It is time.... To find our way back to the earth!

In your consideration of the 2004 master land use plan there is an opportunity to provide a way back!!

Thank you for your time and kind attention!!

MEET THE SIERRA CLUB AT THE FAIR!

By Justin Bishop

The Greater Baltimore Group is planning to table at the 38th Fell's Point Fun Festival 2004, which will take place on Saturday and Sunday, October 2nd and 3rd from 11am to 7pm both days at the area around Broadway and Thames streets in Baltimore City. We are planning to distribute Chapter and Group newsletters, membership applications, informational brochures, flyers about Sierra Club Socials and Outings, and other neat-o stuff full o' Sierra Club goodness!

However, we need more willing volunteers to staff the table during both days, or else it won't happen; I have part-day commitments both days and can't do it alone! If you can volunteer an hour or more to sit behind a table, act friendly, hand out harmless Sierra Club things to people, and enjoy the fair, please, please, PLEASE contact Justin Bishop ASAP at gaoisnurse@yahoo.com or (410) 274-7966 or (410) 539-0556 ! Thanks! J

There is no admission fee. The Festival's web site at:

<http://preservationsociety.com/fellspointfunfestival2004.html>

has directions, transportation and other information, and advertises:

40+ food vendors in four food courts, such as La Plaza Hispana, featuring Latino music and bands, salsa lessons, South American cuisines, and retail goods.

100+ Arts and Crafts vendors exhibit handmade, homemade wares,

250+ retailers featuring items from around the world, Fine Arts displayed in the City Pier, Local Non-Profit Groups outreach tables, Fun Fest Flea Market,

Five stages featuring rock and roll, bluegrass, jazz, blues, folk, cajun, country, gospel, barbershop, dancing, and much more.

The Family and Children's area spotlights a variety of entertainment and creative activities to delight children of all ages.

For More Information And/or to Help Table:

Justin Bishop, Sierra Club Baltimore Group Volunteer
Email: gaoisnurse@yahoo.com
Phone: Cell: (410) 274-7966 or Home: (410) 539-0556

NEW GROUP LOGO

Thanks to Richard Messick, co-editor of the Baltimore Sierran, our Harford County members may feel a bit less ignored. Richard was kind enough to donate his time to revise our logo. Our old logo pictured just Baltimore City and Baltimore County. Our new logo shows our entire service area - including Harford County.



New Group Logo



Old Group Logo