



Virginia Sierran

The Official Newsletter of the Sierra Club Virginia Chapter
Summer 2019

Day of action for a new economic climate

by Jessica Sims and Gabby Gillespie

On Wednesday, May 22, Sierra Club and its partners kicked off the Invest Virginia campaign for a new economic climate at distributed events across the state. This campaign is the culmination of years of engagement on divesting from fossil fuels by the Virginia Chapter, Sierra Club National's Beyond Coal and Beyond Dirty Fuels campaigns and grassroots community leaders.

The kickoff event, which was free and open to all, introduced the Invest Virginia campaign to the public, and the day's events received significant press coverage, especially in the western part of Virginia. Invest Virginia is a coalition dedicated to urging financial institutions to pull their support for fossil fuel industries. It will work to hold Wells Fargo and other big banks accountable for their funding of projects like the Mountain Valley Pipeline and the Atlantic Coast Pipeline that threaten our climate and communities and to show them that investing in fossil fuel projects is bad business. Preparations for the May 22 Day of Action included a dynamic action alert, which produced over 800 action takers; an informational webinar about the history of divestment projects and how to make an event in your community; and a toolkit with social



Participants held signs at the May 22 day of action in Salem, Virginia (photo courtesy of Freeda Cathcart).

media materials, sample letters and divestment resources.

At 12 separate locations in Virginia, attendees took simultaneous community-based actions at noon encouraging financial institutions to divest from harmful fossil fuel projects. From letter deliveries, rallies, meeting with bank managers, to public flyering and gathering public awareness through signage, honks and greeting the public, the statewide actions were customized by each community host and specific to issues impacting that region. Engagement from the public was very

high at the events, and the actions were used as a way to promote responsible investment in Virginia communities and to encourage discussion about what the investment looks like for each community. Actions were held in Big Stone Gap, Norton, Loudoun, Harrisonburg, Richmond, Chesterfield, Roanoke, Salem and other locations.

Most actions included delivering a list of demands to particular financial institutions, which also generated a myriad of responses. In Wise County, bank managers were prepared to send off letters to upper

management and greeted letter deliverers with kindness and respect. At other locations, including Bank of America in Richmond and Wells Fargo in Leesburg, letters were refused by bank management. We will be continuing to follow up with these institutions on responses to the demands.

We are excited to have made so many new connections, built solidarity around the many issues in fossil fuel-impacted communities and laid the groundwork for continued collaboration and movement building. Many participants were interested in seeing what this will look like next time we take action, which shows us that this action model resonated with people on the ground. Some people are even looking at taking similar actions on a monthly basis. The campaign toolkit we provided to hosts is free and available to the public.

Contact gabby.gillespie@sierraclub.org or investvirginia@gmail.com to learn more about Invest Virginia!

Jessica Sims is the Richmond community outreach coordinator for the Virginia Chapter. Gabby Gillespie is the southwest Virginia organizing representative for the Sierra Club.

It's time for a serious energy, climate and jobs agenda

by Bill Penniman

Climate change is rapidly altering our lives and our children's future. With an average temperature increase of 1 degree Celsius, we are already experiencing massive harms (hurricanes; wildfires; flooding; crop damage; health harms and seas that are rising, warming and acidifying), and we are on track for a 3-degree Celsius increase this century. The scientific consensus is that we must reduce net greenhouse gas emissions by half in ten years and to net-zero by 2050 or we risk an out-of-control escalation of temperatures and harms that will be irreversible for centuries.

Fortunately, there are steps we

can take to address the problems; but legislators must pass effective climate-protection bills quickly, not years from now. Common-sense, job-creating measures, which have already been implemented in other states, include:

- A formal commitment to steadily cut greenhouse gas emissions in Virginia to net-zero by 2050 or sooner with all government agencies obligated to use their authority to achieve these goals.

- Joining the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative as soon as possible with revenues used to reduce

emissions and climate harms.

- Stronger requirements to use energy efficiency instead of building generators and producing energy, particularly carbon-emitting fuels.

Virginia should adopt Energy Efficiency Resource Standards that require utilities to make efficiency improvements their first energy resource, reduce overall customer energy usage by 2.5 percent annually and offer customers on-bill financing for efficiency improvements. Virginia should also implement a revolving fund to finance energy efficiency improvements by local governments, schools and possibly others.

- Stronger efficiency components of statewide building codes to industry-leading levels.

- Implementing a renewable portfolio standard requiring utilities to rapidly increase zero-carbon renewable energy and opening markets to give customers and independent providers freedom to expand solar production and use in the state.

- Building and operating solar- and battery-powered emergency

See Agenda on page 7.

Notes from the chair

by Daryl Downing



From the chair

Greetings Fellow Sierrans & Friends,

I served as Chapter Chair for the first time at the Executive Committee meeting on June 1. I thought

the meeting went well, which was due in no small part to the fact that I allowed others who are far more knowledgeable than I am to speak.

Perhaps you've been reading and listening to news reports about major environmental issues. Each report sounds more dire than the last, yet there are far too many Neros who elect to fiddle while Rome burns. Unfathomable!

I don't think we're going to recycle or compost or electric vehicle our way out of this crisis but they are part of the solution. I do these things (and countless more) religiously and encourage others to do them too. Our Club is working on many fronts to ensure we and future generations have a livable planet.

It's important that policies be in place to guide businesses and individuals to operate more sustainably.

Recent examples are the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, the Transportation & Climate Initiative, the federal tax credit for buyers of a new electric vehicle and many others. While our individual decisions matter a lot, it's important to have far-reaching programs in place to force highly polluting industries to be less so.

Some of you have heard my pleas to support national events like National Drive Electric Week, Sept. 14-22, and the National Solar Tour, Oct. 5-6, (see <https://driveelectricweek.org/> and <https://www.nationalsolartour.org/> for more information). It's immaterial whether or not you drive an EV or have solar panels. What's needed are environmentalists who want to promote technologies that are markedly better than existing technologies. Perhaps there's an ex-

isting event in your region that would allow you to set up a table or allow a few EVs to park in a prominent location (e.g., a farmers market). "Plan it and they will come." Work with your local Sierra Club group and other environmental organizations in your area if you need volunteers or other support. Your event could be family friendly, singles friendly, two hours or all day, large or small. You're only limited by the amount of time and resources you're willing and able to commit. Please plan an event for at least one of these worthwhile efforts.

Thanks for being an environmental activist (however you choose to define it).

Yours in Conservation,
Daryl

Daryl Downing is the chair of the Virginia Chapter.

Environmental Justice and Equity Volunteer Team

by Riley Varner

Over the past nine months, Environmental Justice Program Coordinator Gustavo Angeles has presented to local Sierra Club groups about environmental justice and equity issues in an effort to raise awareness about communities that have been disproportionately affected and targeted by polluting industries. After the seven presentations, which were free and open to the public, three local groups, the York River Group, Chesapeake Bay Group and Falls of the James Group, started their own local environmental justice groups.

Environmental justice, or EJ, as defined by the EPA, refers to "the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and en-

forcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies."

The Chapter's local EJ groups host monthly meetings about issues relevant to their areas, and attendance at these meetings is also free and open to the public. Anyone interested in environmental justice and equity issues is welcome.

All of the groups are researching current environmental justice and equity campaigns that would best serve their communities and will work with directly impacted communities. They will support the work that has already been done by other groups and campaigns, prioritizing solidarity and mutuality that is consistent with the Jemez Principles.

The Jemez Principles are guidelines on democratic organizing that emphasize the importance of inclu-

sion and equity in the organizing process. They emphasize inclusivity, bottom-up organizing, letting people speak for themselves, working together in solidarity and mutuality, building just relationships and committing to transformation.

In addition to the group presentations and the formation of local environmental justice groups, a statewide volunteer environmental justice and equity issue group is coming together for individual-level actions.

We are looking for new members for the Environmental Justice and Equity Volunteer Team, which focuses on how we as members can make the Sierra Club a more inclusive place for everyone and how the Club can best use its institutional resources to add capacity to existing community-based environmental

and social justice work. This group has conference calls every other week and anyone is welcome to participate. Fill out the interest form at <https://vasierra.club/ejjoin> if you would like to join the team.

Please contact Gustavo Angeles at gustavo.angeles@sierraclub.org if your group is interested in receiving a presentation or learning more about environmental justice and equity. All presentations provided are free and open to the public. And fill out the interest form at <https://vasierra.club/ejjoin> or email Gustavo if you are interested in joining the Environmental Justice and Equity Team.

Riley Varner is an intern for the Virginia Chapter.

Virginia Sierran

Virginia Sierran is the official newsletter of the Sierra Club Virginia Chapter and is published quarterly.
100 West Franklin St., Mezzanine, Richmond, Virginia 23220
<https://sierraclub.org/virginia>

The Virginia Chapter of the Sierra Club is over 20,000 members strong. We are your friends and neighbors working to build healthy, livable communities and to conserve and protect our climate and environment. The Virginia Chapter is part of the national Sierra Club, the nation's largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization.

Information about our staff, executive committee and environmental action chairs can be found on the Virginia Chapter website under "About."

Virginia Sierran Editor: Sevim Kalyoncu, editorvirginiasieran@gmail.com

The editor welcomes editorial contributions, photographs and art work. Submissions should pertain to Virginia's environment and/or climate change. Email the editor with questions on submissions.

Please contact member.care@sierraclub.org for membership and mailing issues and address.changes@sierraclub.org to change your mailing address.

Pipelines diary

by Kirk Bowers

We began the pipelines campaign five years ago in June 2014 when the Southeast Energy pipeline project—now called the Atlantic Coast Pipeline—was announced. Since then, the Mountain Valley and Atlantic Coast pipelines have raised intense opposition from environmentalists and impacted communities in central and southwest Virginia. These pipelines run through fragile mountain terrain and significantly diminish property values, threaten residents' safety, abuse eminent domain laws for private gain and are not needed to meet energy demands.

These past three months have been active with ongoing legal challenges and community group meetings to fight the pipelines. Events and meetings included:

- March 21, 2019: Great Falls Group pipelines update in Oakton, VA;

- March 27, 2019: ABRA Steering Committee meeting in Staunton, VA;

- April 9, 2019: Falls of the James Group pipelines update presentation at Virginia Science Museum, Richmond, VA;

- April 28, 2019: Mountain Valley Watch Observer Training Session at Bent Mountain Community Center, Bent Mountain, VA;

- May 17, 2018: End Environmental Racism Now: March with Union Hill in Richmond, VA;

- May 18, 2018: Herring, Stand with Appalachia: No Mountain Valley Pipeline rally in front of the Loudoun County Courthouse, Leesburg, VA;



Scott Ziemer of Albemarle County replaced one of the tree-sitters at the Yellow Finch tree-sits near Elliston (photo by Heather Rousseau; copyright, the Roanoke Times, republished by permission).

In April, 69-year-old Scott Ziemer, a member of the Piedmont Group ExCom, climbed up a white pine in a construction easement for the Mountain Valley pipeline in Montgomery County to replace another protester. The Yellow Finch tree-sits began on September 5, 2018 and is the longest active blockade of a pipeline on the East Coast. Scott spent eight days sitting in the tree. About a dozen other protesters, who have sat in trees or chained themselves to construction equipment at various points along the pipeline's route, have come down voluntarily or been removed by police over the past year.

Current permit and legal status for both pipelines are as follows:

- Army Corps of Engineers Nationwide permit 12: These permits are in the process of being restored. MVP stream crossing permits may be re-issued late Summer 2019.

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Biological Opinion/Incidental Take Statement: ACP is still unresolved. No current decisions from federal courts.

- Sierra Club attorneys requested re-initiating consultation for MVP. Additional information requested from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission by the Fish and Wildlife Service for the Biological Opinion. The extensive list of "information/data needs" in the service's letter make it clear that its Biological Opinion and incidental take statement are based on incomplete informa-

tion and flawed analyses. A decision to initiate review is pending.

- US Forest Service Special Use Permit and Right-of-way Permit: Struck down by the Fourth Circuit Court for both pipelines. Neither pipeline has received renewed permits.

- Appalachian Trail crossings: The 4th US Circuit Court of Appeals threw out permits issued by the US Forest Service to allow the natural gas pipelines to tunnel beneath the Appalachian Trail. The AT crossing permits are still unresolved for both pipelines and are major roadblocks.

EQT Corporation predicts that the MVP will be finished next year, but the Appalachian Trail and Forest Service property crossings still remain uncertain. Dominion Energy has not given a recent completion date estimate for the ACP.

This is my last article as a member of the Virginia Chapter staff. After five years working as the Chapter's conservation program coordinator on fracked-gas pipelines, I will be retiring at the end of June. It's been an intense and challenging five years working to Stop the Pipelines in Virginia.

I've made many contacts, new friendships and acquaintance along the way. I want to share my heartfelt thanks to all who have created the good memories I will take with me into my retirement years.

Kirk Bowers is the pipelines program advisor of the Virginia Chapter.

Virginia Chapter staff updates

We are happy to announce that Tim Cywinski has joined our staff as the Chapter's new communications coordinator. Tim previously served as the director of engagement for Virginia21 and is an active member of the Richmond Urban League's civic engagement committee. He is a graduate of Roanoke College. Tim will be supporting both online communications and media needs. He is based in Richmond and can be contacted at tim.cywinski@sier-raclub.org

Billy Davies has returned as a part-time, limited-duration outreach coordinator for our pipelines campaign and will also assist with PAC fundraising efforts through the fall.

At the end of June, Kirk Bowers will be retiring from the Virginia Chapter staff after working for five years as coordinator of the conservation and pipelines programs. During this time, he fought tirelessly to "Stop the Pipelines" in Virginia, admitting himself that there was never a dull moment. He will stay active as pipelines co-chair alongside Lee Williams and will continue to work on construction monitoring of the pipelines with the Construction Surveillance Initiative and Mountain Valley Watch.

In addition, Zach Jarjoura and l'esha Wynn will be stepping down this summer as conservation program managers. Zach has been

with the Virginia Chapter for five years organizing on numerous climate and energy campaigns and, more recently, managing the majority of our staff organizing team. His position will be replaced by that of a new campaign and policy director, which will include the responsibilities of conservation program manager as well as add capacity in other areas. (The hiring process is already underway.)

Working out of the Norfolk office during the past year, l'esha has led efforts on our offshore wind and drilling campaigns as well as on climate action. Both will be sorely missed, but we wish them the best in their next endeavors.



Tim Cywinski, the Chapter's new communications coordinator.

SCPRO: National Trails Day

by Ellen Hill

Sierra Club Potomac Region Outings celebrated National Trails Day, traditionally the first Saturday in June, by leading a group of approximately 40 participants on a hike at Prince William County's Neabsco Regional Park, newly dedicated that very day with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. Six properties in the county combined to create the park. The Neabsco Wetlands Preserve features a stunning three-quarter mile boardwalk—the longest, most environmentally friendly one of its kind in Northern Virginia. An abundance of flora and fauna inhabit the preserve's peaceful but vibrant ecosystem—fox, deer, beavers, herons, ospreys, eagles and other birds, reptiles and fish aplenty. The ten-foot-wide boardwalk, featuring a lovely two-story observation deck, completes Prince William County's section of the Potomac Heritage Na-



The stunning three-quarter mile boardwalk at the Neabsco Wetlands Preserve in Prince William County (photo courtesy of Patrick Wamsley).

tional Scenic Trail which, in its eventual completion, will stretch between the Laurel Highlands of Pennsylvania to the Chesapeake Bay.

The June 1 SCPRO hike, which was free and open to the public, was led by Glenn Gillis, Gary Kosciusko and Ray Evert with several other SC-

PRO leaders in attendance. Glenn has, for years, been an important player in the making of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail, often single-handedly creating and blazing new sections. He is one of our group's most prodigious outings leaders, leading everything from day hikes in the area to weekend backpacking, biking and kayaking excursions further afield. SCPRO is grateful to him and to all of our 50 dedicated leaders who keep our outings group relevant in the Washington metropolitan area.

We look forward to participating in a state-wide outings leader training weekend slated for August 3-4 at Pocahontas State Park near Richmond.

Ellen Hill is the chair of Sierra Club Potomac River Outings.

What Lies Upstream presentation by Great Falls Group

by Catherine Carver

The Great Falls Group presented the film *What Lies Upstream* and discussion afterwards on March 15, 2019. The event was free and open to the public.

The film is an investigative documentary about a mysterious chemical spill in West Virginia that left 300,000 people without drinking water for months. The director and investigator Cullen Hoback discovered scientific cover-ups and political malfeasance across all levels of government, corrupting the entire system meant to protect drinking

water.

Nancy Raine and Steve Stevick, two members of the Sierra Club's Wastewater Residuals Team, led the discussion after the film. Due to the absence of meaningful regulatory oversight, contaminants in wastewater residuals such as sewage sludge threaten our food, water and health. Toxic chemicals come from leaking storage tanks and runoff from land where sewage sludge and other industrial wastes are being spread as fertilizer.

Stephen Lester from the Center

for Health and Environmental Justice described how his organization trains local leaders in the rural, low-wealth or working-class neighborhoods that are dumping grounds for toxins, air pollution and other environmental degradation. The center's training helps local activists build confidence and power by providing them with the strategies, networking methods, policy analysis and scientific perspective necessary to make their communities healthy and green.

Citizen action can be power-

ful. Educate your neighbors about threats to water quality in your community. Research Virginia's Department of Environmental Quality to obtain information about where biosolids are being spread in your community. Advocate for local emergency response plans that include safer storage and more frequent inspections of any tanks or other facilities that stockpile industrial chemicals.

Catherine Carver is the newsletter editor for the Great Falls Group.



The Piedmont Group hosted a Candidates Forum on Environmental Issues in Charlottesville on May 7. All registered candidates for the three open seats on the Charlottesville City Council participated. Another forum for the Albemarle Board of Supervisors is planned for October. Like the Charlottesville event, the Albemarle forum is free and open to the public (photo courtesy of John Cruickshank).

Roanoke Group Earth Friendly Friday

by Dan Crawford

Earth Friendly Friday is held on the second Friday of each month in collaboration with the Unitarian Universalist Church of Roanoke and is free and open to the public. Go to our website at <https://sites.google.com/site/roanokesierra/> for more details on these upcoming programs.

•**July 12**—Friends of the Blue Ridge Parkway: Stephanie McCullough and staff will describe challenges, successes, goals, programs and opportunities for involvement;

•**August 9**—Trees Roanoke: The economic downturn left the City of Roanoke unable to plant trees to replace routine losses since 2008.

The goal is to plant 1,250 trees in Roanoke! Learn of plans and how you can help.

•**September 13**—Hydropower: Frank Simms has 32 years in the utility industry, including eight years as manager of the hydroelectric department for a major multistate utility. Expect to learn all you ever wanted to know about this key energy source.

Though engaged in pipeline opposition, we are also behind RAIL Solution, the only smart, green way to address I-81 truck problems. Please google it to learn more.

Dan Crawford is the chair of the Roanoke Group.

Rappahannock Group Pass on Plastic and upcoming events

by Paula Chow and Linda Muller



Paula Chow sewed reusable nylon net produce bags at the Fredericksburg farmers market (photo courtesy of Linda Muller).

On June 3, 2019, the Rappahannock Group was awarded a grant of \$1,000 as a part of the Keep Virginia Beautiful, 30 in 30 Green Grants program for its Pass on Plastic (#passonplastic) campaign.

Program chair Paula Chow created the campaign to target the local Saturday Fredericksburg farmers market to reduce and eventually eliminate plastic produce bags. The campaign aims to help shoppers realize that putting plastic produce bags in reusable bags defeats the purpose of reusable bags. The alternative to a plastic produce bag is a reusable nylon net produce bag made by volunteers. The nylon net bag is durable, strong, washable, breathable and colorful.

Currently, the campaign works with two vendors, Valdez Produce

and C & T Produce, where different signage encourages market shoppers to use the nylon net bags instead of the plastic bags.

Once a month, RGSC volunteers give away these bags (one per family) between 9:00 and 11:30 a.m. to shoppers at Valdez Produce or C & T Produce. The Rappahannock Group has also provided the vendors with colanders for shoppers to use instead of the single-use plastic bags. The shoppers put all their produce in one or two colanders then proceed to the cashier who separates the produce to weigh and places them in the handled reusable bag.

During Saturday market hours, volunteers set up a sewing machine and sew "live" reusable bags under an umbrella adjacent to the vendors. This attracts shoppers to the issue

of plastic waste and its alternatives. We also use displays of shopping bags, single-use plastic bags (plastic bags within plastic bags), paper bags and reusable produce bags within reusable handled bags.

We engage with market shoppers to discuss the benefits of the reusable nylon net bags: veggies can breathe, it's washable, it's durable and, best of all, it's a reusable alternative to plastic bags. We hope the Pass On Plastic campaign will encourage other vendors and shoppers to embrace alternatives to plastic.

Persons interested in the Pass On Plastic campaign can sign up as a volunteer with Paula Chow. More information can be found on our website. #passonplastic

Upcoming Rappahannock Group Events

•**August 18**, 2:00-4:00 p.m.—Rappahannock Group film screening of the documentary "The Human Element," England Run Library (Howell Branch), 806 Lyons Blvd., Fredericksburg, VA, 22406

•**September 15**, 2:00-4:00 p.m.—Rappahannock Group fall open house, American Legion Building, 461 Woodford St., Fredericksburg, VA, 22401. Scheduled speaker: Ms. Shana Udvardy, climate resilience analyst from the Union of Concerned Scientists. Both events are free and open to the public.

Paula Chow is the program chair and Linda Muller is the chair of the Rappahannock Group.

Group Directory

Groups are organized to conduct the work of Sierra Club in local areas, cities and towns.

The information listed below is for the chair of each group.

Information regarding groups' geographical area can be found on our website under "Find a Group Near You."

Blue Ridge: Tom Eick
434-277-5491
tigerilla600@gmail.com

Chesapeake Bay: John Luker
716-489-8891
4solar+SC@gmail.com

Falls of the James: Joe Brancoli
804-502-9502
omethid@hotmail.com

Great Falls: Norbert Pink
703-264-7445
norbertsierra@aol.com

Mount Vernon: Rick Keller
703-625-9055
rkeller49@verizon.net

New River: Joe Scarpaci
540-230-3143
joescarpaci@gmail.com

Piedmont: Donna Shaunesey
434-996-0392
shaunesey@hotmail.com

Rappahannock: Linda Muller
540-720-2848
lcmuller@mindspring.com

Roanoke: Daniel Crawford
540-343-5080
dbcrawford@cox.net

Shenandoah: Pete Bsumek
540-421-4105
pkbsumek@gmail.com

Sierra Club Potomac Region Outings (SCPRO): Ellen Hill
703-994-9493
ellenwhill@gmail.com

York River: Tyla Matteson
804-275-6476
tmatteson1@mindspring.com

New River Valley Group's Trail Angels

by Joseph Scarpaci

The New River Valley Group was pleased to sponsor its 12th annual Trail Angels event that celebrates the volunteer work done on the Appalachian Trail. Held June 2, this free and open event provided grillables, veggies, sushi, libation and other hearty foods and beverages to through-trail hikers in Giles County. About 20 or so hikers dropped in between 4:00 and 7:00 p.m.

The driver behind this little bit of "trail magic" was Maria Bowling, who sweated it out behind the grill the whole time.

Each year about 2 to 3 million visitors walk a portion of the A.T., which stretches 2190 miles from Maine to Georgia.

Joseph Scarpaci is the chair of the New River Valley Group.



The New River Valley Group served AT hikers as part of its 12th annual Trail Angels event (photo courtesy of Gilda Machin Scarpaci).

Everybody hit the trail!

by Jim Lynch

One of the things that most of us enjoy is a nice walk on a trail! Whether it's an afternoon stroll on a path in a local park or a more remote and rugged trail in the wilderness, that's where we want to be.

Our friends who are wheelchair bound are generally confined to paved surfaces like sidewalks. Lately, their opportunities have expanded thanks to a visionary group known as Ainsley's Angels of America. The mission of Ainsley's is one of inclusion, especially among the road racing community.

Severely mobility handicapped individuals can participate in road races using special wheel chairs ("racing chariots") with a team of pushers known as Angel Runners. Local chapters raise funds to buy these specialized chairs and loan them to individuals who want to participate in a race. It's a great way for our mobility-challenged friends to get out as part of the road racing community.

So what does that have to do with trails? With their narrow road tires, the chairs are not suitable for trails, and trails may be too rugged or narrow for safety and comfort of the rider. But, a local group in King George learned about our new railroad trail, the Dahlgren Railroad Heritage Trail,



Matt Hoioos and his team of runners enjoyed the "Sheetz-to-Sheetz" fun run on the Dahlgren Railroad Heritage Trail (photo courtesy of Judy Thompson).

and thought it might serve as a way to get mobility-challenged individuals out on a wooded trail!

A local runner, Chris Chalkley, had started an annual fun run on the trail and was also an Angel Runner! So he got together with other Ainsley members and recruited a rider and a team of pushers. It should be noted that the DRHT, as it's known, is a work in progress: fairly easy grades (except for one spot slogging up a muddy hill), but the surface is some-

times rough. The rider had to be prepared to be jostled around a bit. Matt Hoioos, a Fredericksburg resident with a rare genetic disorder, and his mom thought that he would be up for it.

The fun run is known as the "Sheetz-to-Sheetz" run because there is a Sheetz store at each end of the course. The managers at both are extremely supportive of the annual run. The total length is 14 miles, 12.5 on the DRHT. So Matt, his four

pushers and 60 runners took off on a cool morning in March escorted for the first mile along a busy highway by local sheriff deputies.

The run was a great success. All the runners, some of whom had never been on the DRHT, were very complimentary of the trail and the volunteers who maintain it. Matt thoroughly enjoyed himself. A number of the runners came up to Matt and his team during the run and asked if they could take a turn pushing. Great teamwork by a great community!

I noted earlier that the racing chairs are furnished with standard narrow street-capable tires. In order for the chariots to be used off road, special wide tires have to be obtained. Chris raised enough money to buy a set of tires for the chair that Matt used as well as a second set for the future. Everyone hopes that we'll have even more Ainsley's participants on the trail for the next run.

For the future, we hope to have more such events on the trail. We think Matt will be back! And we also look forward to the day when the DRHT will be part of the state park system making the trail available for even wider use!

Jim Lynch is the group boundaries and public lands and parks chair of the Virginia Chapter.

Summer Outings Leader Training Register now!

On August 3-4, the Sierra Club Virginia Chapter will be teaming up with the Sierra Club Potomac Region Outings trainers to offer a weekend training for new outings leaders at Pocahontas State Park. This training will prepare leaders to conduct hiking, mountain biking and kayaking day trips. This is an exciting opportunity to grow our outings program across the state, and we encourage anyone interested to sign up.

Vist <http://vasierra.club/oltva> to register.

This effort is in keeping with the recently released "Outdoors for All" theory of change, which outlines Sierra Club's vision for a just, equitable and sustainable future where all people benefit from a healthy, thriving planet and a direct connection to nature.

We believe that "by naming and reducing barriers to entry and ensuring all people have opportunities to explore and enjoy nature, we will improve lives while inspiring and empowering a new generation of leaders to protect the environment."

Hope to see you at this summer's training!

Grassroots group seeks to reform Virginia electric cooperative

by Seth Heald

On July 1 the 139,000 member owners of Rappahannock Electric Cooperative receive proxy ballots for the REC board of directors election, where three of the co-op's nine board seats are at issue. This year a slate of three reform candidates, Mike Biniek, Jack Manzari and Andrea Miller, is challenging the three incumbent REC board members who are up for re-election.

We hear a lot about the need for energy democracy these days. The cooperative form of business, where the customers own the business, can be an excellent vehicle for ensuring energy democracy and giving customers a say in where their energy comes from. But that's true only if the member-owners participate by voting and have enough information about their co-op and the board candidates to cast an informed vote. For the past year a grassroots group

called Repower REC has worked to inform REC members about serious issues with their co-op, including anti-solar positions the co-op management has implemented and lobbied for.

Voting in REC's board election is easy. You need only fill out and return a postage-paid card that is attached to the July issue of the co-op's Cooperative Living magazine. Yet only a small fraction of members at REC and other Virginia electric co-ops bother to vote.

Go to <https://RepowerREC.com> for more information on the REC education and reform campaign and <https://RECreformcandidates.com> for more information about the three pro-solar reform candidates running for REC board this summer.

Seth Heald is the climate change chair of the Virginia Chapter.

Fifty years and counting

by Ed Sandtner

It was 1968. Having finished graduate school in New Orleans, I was heading west, a flat-lander going to his first real job in Northern California with visions of San Francisco, wine country and real mountains in his head. Leaving the moss draped trees and bayous of Louisiana, I hit the brutal summer sun and endless space of Texas before crossing the painted deserts and mesas of the southwest. There was something wild, open and even exotic about this landscape that gripped me, someone who had spent his entire life in cities east of the Mississippi.

After settling into my job and a rented apartment and exploring the coast and San Francisco, still reflecting the Summer of Love, I wanted to see the mountains, the Sierras. Quickly finding day trips too short and limiting, my first wife and I, along with a friend, decided to try an overnight among the trees and under the stars. Woefully under-equipped with bulky sleeping bags strapped to cheap frame backpacks, we left

our car at a turnout at the side of the road and headed cross country towards a lake I had seen on a map.

After a long trudge through pine forest, we saw open sky and clear ground ahead. The fantasy of a cozy campsite at the edge of a sapphire lake drew us the last hundred yards. As we came up on a rock ledge above the water, we were stunned. It wasn't a lake at all, but a reservoir, and across from us was a drive-in "campground" filled with RVs and trailers. A loud mix of calls, laughter and conversation drifted over to us. Then a young teenage boy came by with a 22 rifle, shooting at fish in the water. Totally dejected, we wandered back the way we came, finding an open space beneath the trees to spend the night.

After that, we went to Yosemite National Park, which, having been established October 1, 1890, is one of the oldest nature preserves in the US. It, like the state parks we also visited, was much better protected than the first location. But

the memory of that first venture into the mountains stayed with me, and I recognized the fragility and vulnerability of all wilderness. I wanted to protect these lands and the next summer when I discovered the Sierra Club and saw that its mission was the same as mine, I became a member. That was 50 years ago. I went on to hike those mountains and climb peaks from Mt. Shasta, the potentially active volcano in the Cascade mountain range, to Banner Peak, the second tallest peak in the Ritter Range of California's Sierra

Nevada. My old wooden shaft ice axe hangs from a rafter in the attic, a tangible memory. I couldn't let it go.

The Club has changed since then when the emphasis was on protecting and preserving wild places. Now we are fighting to preserve the whole damn planet. But I wonder if I would have joined the Club if I had not gone out into those mountains from which it takes its name.

Ed Sandtner is a member of the Rappahannock Group and a Life Member of the Sierra Club..

How to become a Virginia Chapter leader

The Executive Committee, or ExCom, is the governing body of the Virginia Chapter of the Sierra Club. This group consists of about 25 volunteer members and meets four times a year to discuss issues and make policy decisions.

Eight members are at-large delegates, 12 people represent the local groups and several environmental action chairs and staff members attend the quarterly ExCom meetings.

Any member of the Sierra Club is welcome to join us when we meet in Charlottesville. Our next meeting will be held on September 7.

Nominations to become an at-large delegate to this committee are now being accepted. Please contact the Virginia Chapter chair, Daryl Downing, at dtdowning@comcast.net if you are interested in becoming a delegate and would like to learn more about this position.

Agenda

from page 1

centers and microgrids around the state to meet reliability and safety needs of low-income and vulnerable communities, as well as other emergency needs.

- To cut climate pollution, implementing the Advanced Clean Car efficiency standards that have been adopted by 14 states and the District of Columbia and joining other states in the Transportation Climate Initiative to reduce climate pollution.

Electric vehicles and other zero-emission vehicles should be encouraged for bus fleets in schools and high-pollution areas as well as for general use, and building codes should require charging capabilities in multifamily and other dwellings. (Even with today's generation, electric vehicles are less polluting than gas vehicles, and they will get better as clean electric energy expands).

- Addressing environmental justice in many ways, including establishment of a permanent advisory council and state office to inform the governor, legislature and local governments about environmental just issues and solutions. All Virginia agencies and local governments

should consider the health and environmental justice impacts of their actions.

- Empowering local governments to require stronger efficiency, clean energy and other pollution-reducing measures applicable within their jurisdictions.

While some argue that all we need is carbon fees for greenhouse gas emissions, those theoretical arguments are misguided. While well-structured pollution markets (including the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative) have sometimes worked for utilities, experience shows that politicians and fossil fuel sellers will work hard to block or undo pollution fees, particularly when they are charged to the general public. The public is less troubled by practical policies that promote efficiency and clean energy.

In short, now is the time for strong actions to address climate change. It would be immoral to leave an irreversible climate burden for our children and theirs.

Bill Penniman is an at-large ExCom member of the Virginia Chapter.

Disaster/Travel/Wilderness First Aid Certification

For adults and teenagers with solid attention spans. Learn hands on how to save life and limb during the critical minutes or hours before ambulance or hospital arrival.

Earn the SOLO WFA 2-year certification, approved by the ACA, BSA, GS-USA, BCUNA and more. No prerequisites.

Aug. 31-Sept. 2 ... SPECIALTY SERIES: Mountain-top retreat pleasantly spread over 3-day holiday weekend with on-site trails, lake & sandy beach, free boats, optional Appalachian Trail short hike to rock outcropping sunset view, grill, campfires & s'mores. Cabins \$9/bed on-site or free camping nearby, optional CPR/AED & more at Mountain Lake Biological Station, near Blacksburg, VA

Oct. 5-6 ... Nellysford, VA

Oct. 26-27... Newport News, VA

Nov. 9-10... Washington, DC (SC Members \$15 off)

Nov. 16-17 ... Charlottesville, VA (with optional CPR/AED/Choking eve. of Nov. 15)

Classes instructed by Matthew Rosefsky, Geo Medic, SOLO Instructor-Trainer and Sierra Club Outings leader. Cost is \$195. See <https://solowfa.com> for more information and online registration.

How do we make offshore drilling (nearly) impossible?

by I'esha Wynn and Ann Creasy

Most everyone in Virginia seems to understand that offshore drilling is a looming threat to our military readiness, tourism industry, local economies and prize waterways such as the Chesapeake Bay. Coastal advocates like Reps. Donald McEachin and Elaine Luria repeatedly speak about the dangers of offshore drilling and its harmful impacts on Virginia. Over 24 localities across Virginia, along with the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission, have passed resolutions opposing seismic testing and offshore drilling. A majority of Virginia's congressional delegation, Virginia's entire executive level and a large bipartisan list of state lawmakers have come out in opposition to offshore drilling.

Now that it is clear how much Virginia does not want offshore drilling, let's get up to speed on the current offshore drilling situation. In January 2018, the Trump administration announced a draft plan to open up almost 90 percent of federal waters to oil and gas drilling, including the coast of Virginia. This plan was followed by a public comment period which garnered a massive response of opposition to the plan. The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management reviews these comments and makes amendments to the draft in order to release an updated drilling plan. The comment period ended in March of 2018, but there's been no sign of the updated plan since then.



For the tenth year, the Virginia Chapter participated in Hands Across the Sand, an international day of action demonstrating opposition to offshore drilling and support for clean energy like offshore wind (photo courtesy of Frankie Valentine).

A final plan was expected as early as November 2018. However, as of June 12, the administration has released no such plan. Why are they taking their time to release this plan? What's the hold up? Well, the answer is: WE are the hold up! Organized opposition and courtroom battles are putting up obstacle after obstacle to limit the possibility of the federal administration moving forward with offshore drilling.

The Trump administration is evidently shaking in its proverbial boots with its reluctance to move forward with its drilling plan. In March, a federal judge in Alaska declared that President Trump's order revoking

a ban on oil and gas drilling in the Arctic and Atlantic oceans is illegal. The Department of the Interior is appealing that decision, but movement on their appeal is yet to be seen. Secretary of the Interior David Bernhardt has reported that this ruling slows down the possibility of moving forward. As with so many of our conservation fights, we win by attrition. With multiple, diverse efforts to address offshore drilling, we can continuously wear away at the plan to drill off our coast until we render it nearly impossible.

In the spirit of attrition, Sierra Club has also mounted lawsuits in federal courts pushing back against

permits allowing seismic airgun blasting. Recently, the Club and other green groups filed a lawsuit against the Trump administration for rolling back drilling protections put in place after the deadly Deepwater Horizon disaster. These courtroom battles paired with noisy, relentless communities who would face the impacts of drilling most immediately are what will squash the feasibility for offshore drilling in the Atlantic and elsewhere.

In spite of all our hard work and victories to prevent offshore drilling, it is far from over! We proactively continue to assume release of the final 2019-2024 drilling plan at any moment. Following its release, there will be a 90-day comment period. Then the plan comes before Congress for review. That will be the time to really ramp up the opposition and direct our collective voice to Congress.

If you would like to join in on the effort to make offshore drilling (nearly) impossible, please contact Ann Creasy at ann.creasy@sierraclub.org or 757-513-2844. You can also visit <https://sierraclub.org/virginia/offshore-drilling> for more information.

I'esha Wynn is the Hampton Roads conservation program manager and Ann Creasy is the Hampton Roads community outreach coordinator of the Virginia Chapter.

Virginia Chapter email lists

Join these email lists to get more informed about and involved with Virginia Chapter activities.

Virginia Climate Movement

This is a statewide list of folks active in the Virginia climate movement. You can receive and send emails on climate-related news, events, webinars and actions going on across the state. *Monthly call 4th Tuesday at 12 p.m. and 7 p.m.* **Contact Mary-Stuart Torbeck at mary-stuart.torbeck@sierraclub.org**

Virginia Environmental Justice

Join our email list to work towards achieving environmental justice in Virginia. Our purpose is to identify environmental justice communities across the state, to develop EJ leadership, to provide room at the table for these organizations in statewide policy discussions and to share resources. *Monthly call 2nd Wednesday at 11 a.m. and 2nd Thursday at 5:30 p.m.* **Contact Tim Cywinski at tim.cywinski@sierraclub.org**

Sierra Club Virginia Chapter Equity, Inclusion and Justice

This space is for asking questions, voicing concerns and sharing ideas as we move forward in our work to create a more equitable environment and chapter. **Contact Tim Cywinski at tim.cywinski@sierraclub.org**

Hampton Roads

Join this list to get updates about actions, events, and ways to get involved in Hampton Roads. **Contact Ann Creasy at Ann.Creasy@sierraclub.org** or visit <https://vasierra.club/hr>

Richmond

This email list contains updates about actions, events and ways to get involved in the Richmond metropolitan area. **Contact Jessica Sims at jessica.sims@sierraclub.org** or visit <https://vasierra.club/rva>

Northern Virginia

Join this list to get updates about actions, events and ways to get involved in Northern Virginia. **Contact Kelsey Crane at kelsey.crane@sierraclub.org** or visit <https://vasierra.club/nova>

Lies, damned lies, and advertising by Ivy Main

Back in the 1980s, I had a boss who had a habit of saying, in response to some observation or other, "That is a true fact." And then we would both laugh, because what other kind of fact was there?

Those were innocent times. Trump's America has room for all kinds of facts. And why should anyone restrict themselves to the true ones, when there are so many others to choose from?

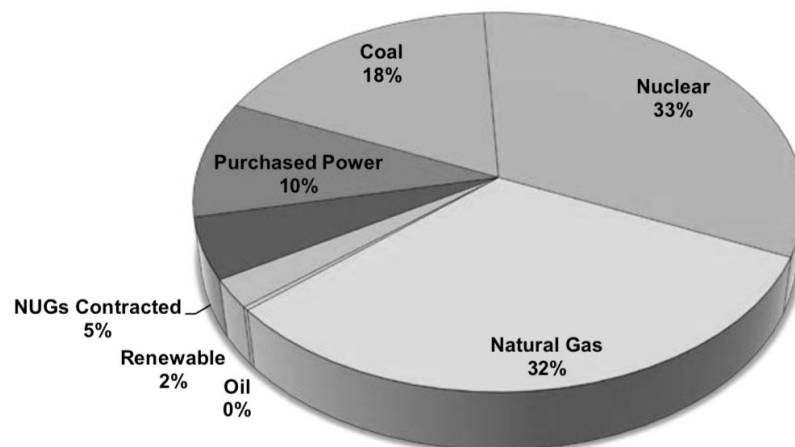
Making stuff up is practically an art. Are you not in favor of art?

Dominion Energy is very much in favor of art after suffering through a string of bad months. Regulators at the State Corporation Commission rejected the company's 15-year planning document, and later its grid modernization plan. Then Dominion was forced to back down from a scheme to pocket hundreds of millions of dollars the General Assembly had told it to spend on energy efficiency.

As if that weren't enough, over the course of just two days in May the SCC lit into the company for telling Wall Street one thing and regulators another. The corporate customers behind Virginia's data center boom filed a letter saying they want no part of Dominion's fracked-gas build-out; and a coalition of libertarian, environmental and social justice groups called for a breakup of Dominion's monopoly.

Fortunately, Dominion had already begun to deploy an artful series of newspaper ads and tweets to persuade us the company is doing many good things it is not doing. One ad touts the company's solar investments, informing us Dominion

Figure 3.1.1.5 - 2017 Actual Energy Mix



Dominion Energy's 2017 energy mix for Virginia (source: Dominion Energy Virginia's 2018 Integrated Resource Plan).

"is the 4th largest solar producer in the nation."

It's not. Minimal fact-checking reveals it is, at best, the fourth largest solar owner among energy holding companies that own electric utilities. That doesn't sound as good though.

Another newspaper ad, predictably light on detail, promises the company will cut its climate-heating methane emissions in half. That would be a nice trick from the company whose Atlantic Coast Pipeline will be responsible for more greenhouse gas emissions than all Virginia's power plants put together.

In what might be termed performance art, Dominion recently joined a corporate coalition calling for a price on carbon. This must have been in the works about the same time Dominion was opposing Virginia's entry into the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, which actually

puts a price on carbon.

Finally, there is the (literally) incredible claim that recently appeared in Dominion Energy's Twitter feed: "The future of our planet depends on clean energy, which is why more than 85% of our generation comes from clean energy sources such as solar."

Let us pause for a moment to reflect that this tweet comes from a company whose solar generation amounts to a rounding error. Dominion Energy Virginia's most recent Integrated Resource Plan includes a handy pie chart revealing what is actually in its energy mix:

Nuclear: 33 percent
Natural gas: 32 percent
Coal: 18 percent
Purchased (wholesale) power: 10 percent (that's coal and gas)
Non-Utility Generation (purchased

under contract): 5 percent (more coal)

Renewable: 2 percent (almost all hydro and biomass, plus a smidgen of solar)

Oil: 0 percent

Now, it is true that Dominion Energy the holding company owns more generation than Dominion Energy Virginia the electric utility. For one thing, it just bought another utility in South Carolina. According to the information Dominion provided to investors in March, its South Carolina generation looks like this:

Natural gas: 39 percent
Coal: 36 percent
Nuclear: 21 percent
Hydro: 3 percent

Nobody looking at these figures could find a basis in reality for a claim of 85 percent clean energy. It is so preposterous that I just have to ask: Why only 85 percent?

I mean, seriously, if you have traveled this far into the realm of fantasy, why not claim 100 percent? Or heck, with a nod to Spinal Tap, why not 110 percent? Clearly the people making this stuff up are rank amateurs.

Maybe this is the problem with lying as an art. If you're not very good at it, you might be better off sticking with true facts.

Ivy Main is the conservation chair and renewable energy chair of the Virginia Chapter.

Virginia Chapter welcomes its summer interns!

The Chapter's Richmond office is happy to have the support of three interns this summer.

Megan Bolten is our community outreach intern. Before starting with Sierra Club, Megan graduated from Virginia Commonwealth University with a bachelor's in English Literature. Her writing pursuits in school came from a lifetime of fascination with journalism and hearing the world's stories. This interest also lead her on a path of activism and campaigning for social and climate justice. While at VCU, she co-founded a student organization for climate and animal rights and lead multiple demonstrations and campaigns with

the group.

Throughout her internship, she hopes to gain a deeper understanding for improving communities and influencing environmental stewardship and intends to be a valuable asset to the Virginia Chapter. Along with social and environmental justice, Megan is enthusiastic about science, music, plants, mountains and books.

Peter Friesen grew up in the area surrounding Richmond, VA before going to James Madison University in 2016. While in Richmond, he achieved the rank of Eagle Scout, played guitar in a metal band for four years and camped avidly. At

JMU Peter is a writing, rhetoric and technical communications major with a minor in music industry. Located in the Shenandoah Valley, the area around JMU has no shortage of trails and natural beauty that Peter can take advantage of. Peter has always enjoyed the outdoors and wants to see to its preservation in any way he can. So, he decided to seek an internship in the field of conservation and put his newly harnessed rhetorical skills to the test at the Sierra Club.

Riley Varner is a senior at the University of Colorado-Boulder majoring in Environmental Studies with a minor in Ecology and Evolution-

ary Biology. He grew up in Richmond, learning to love the outdoors through Passages Adventure Camp where he developed a passion for rock climbing. He has been fortunate to travel to wild and wonderful places across the United States, experiencing firsthand how beautiful and inspiring our planet is when properly protected and respected. He's particularly excited to work with the Sierra Club on issues regarding energy policy and hopes to make science more digestible for public understanding."

Threatened communities lead weekend of action against pipelines

by Billy Davies and Jessica Sims

On May 19, 1968, during the civil rights movement, Virginians experiencing severe injustice and cruelty took to the streets of Richmond demanding action by the government to ensure equality and justice for all people. On May 17-18, 2019, the 51st anniversary weekend of that historic march, communities being harmed and marginalized by the two proposed massive fracked-gas Atlantic Coast and Mountain Valley Pipelines rallied once again. Leading allies from across the commonwealth in demonstrations, the attendees demanded that elected officials act to protect communities from unnecessary and dangerous fossil fuel projects that pose immediate threats to human health and the environment and jeopardize our future.

The weekend of action, Virginians for Justice: Progress Not Pipelines, began on Friday, May 17 in Richmond as residents of the Union Hill community in Buckingham County led 250 people in a march across the Robert E. Lee Bridge—the same route followed by civil rights leaders in the Poor People’s Campaign 51 years ago—calling out systemic racism and environmental injustice caused by fossil fuel expansion, in general, and Dominion Energy’s proposed Atlantic Coast Pipeline in particular. The march aimed to lift up all directly impacted communities who have led the fight against the pipelines to protect Virginia’s future and was attended by community members and activists fighting the MVP, ACP, Southside Connector, and MVP Southgate.

The event, titled End Environmental Racism Now: March with Union Hill, also included speeches by impacted community members, indigenous tribe and faith leaders and leading environmental experts and social justice advocates who all called attention to widespread injustice caused by the ACP, including its impacts on the historic Union Hill community, which is under threat from and leading the fight against the proposed ACP compressor station. Friends of Buckingham, comprised of leaders in the community, are currently suing the State Air Pollution Control Board for granting a permit for the industrial facility shortly after Gov. Ralph Northam fired two members of the board who questioned

its validity and the ACP’s impacts on environmental justice communities and climate change.

Keynote Addresses were delivered by Karenni Gore, director of the Center for Earth Ethics at New York’s Union Theological Seminary, and William Barber III, co-chair of the North Carolina Poor People’s Campaign Ecological Justice Committee, who cited agencies’ approv-



The Union Hill community and environmental justice advocates led the march across Robert E. Lee Bridge on May 17 in Richmond (photo courtesy of Tim Cywinski).

al of permits for both the ACP and MVP—eight of which have been thrown out by federal courts—as examples of systemic racism that contribute to environmental injustice. They further emphasized Union Hill’s call for action by public officials to take immediate, decisive steps to protect communities from fracked-gas projects like the ACP and to prevent continued harm to human health and the environment in a time of climate crisis.

The call for protective action against the pipelines continued on Saturday, May 18 as community members impacted by the Mountain Valley Pipeline, faith and social justice leaders and allies convened in the hometown of Attorney General Mark Herring. Staged at the Loudoun County Courthouse, Herring, Stand with Appalachia: No Mountain Valley Pipeline! brought together over 100 people. Attendees urged Attorney General Herring

to facilitate a stop work order on the MVP, a project subject to a current lawsuit brought by the attorney general’s office. The lawsuit, submitted by request of the Department of Environmental Quality, addresses 300 environmental regulation violations that have occurred along the proposed route. Community members highlighted that this lawsuit does not achieve what it should to prevent

es included BJ Brown’s “Water is Life” anthem, which spread through the courthouse square while attendees danced and sang. The sense of community at the May 18 event bolstered the collective call for immediate action against the Mountain Valley pipeline and additionally served as welcome outreach to the Northern Virginia community, whose concern about and resistance to both the Mountain Valley and Atlantic Coast pipelines, continues to grow. The collective community voice was audible on May 18, as the messages, speeches and songs echoed in the courthouse square and around the town.

In addition to Rev. Yearwood, notable speakers at the May 18 rally included Emily Hammond, energy law expert, who called for Herring to protect Appalachia and the rule of law; Glen Earl Weston, research professor at George Washington University Law School; Jammie Hale, impacted landowner from Giles County whose farm has suffered due to the MVP; Tammy Belinsky, attorney and advocate for impacted landowners, communities and organizations; Brayton Mello, resident and concerned youth citizen from Elliston, VA, and again, in a strong show of support for Virginia communities, Karenni Gore.

The Virginians for Justice: Progress Not Pipelines weekend united Virginians from across the state to stand in solidarity with impacted communities, to stand for environmental justice and the climate and to stand in continued and growing opposition to the unjust, unneeded fracked-gas pipelines.

We would like to recognize the Sierra Club Falls of the James and Great Falls groups for their generous support and assistance for these events, for which the organizers are so grateful. Thanks also to the coalition of community members and groups who helped make these events possible.

Please contact jessica.sims@sierraclub.org and william.davies@sierraclub.org to further engage on the Stop the Pipelines Campaign.

Billy Davies is the pipelines community outreach coordinator and Jessica Sims is the community outreach coordinator of the Virginia Chapter.

Saturday’s musical performanc-

Dominion and offshore wind: Pretty words, but nothing on the books

by Eileen Woll



Old Dominion University and the Sierra Club Virginia Chapter presented a Virginia Offshore Wind Town Hall on May 28 in the Big Blue Room at the Ted Constant Convocation Center in Norfolk. The event was free and open to the public with over 300 people in attendance (photo courtesy of Eileen Woll).

Ivy Main hit the nail on the head with her recent [https://Powerforthe-PeopleVA.com](https://PowerforthePeopleVA.com) post entitled At long last, Dominion decides it's game for offshore wind. "Dominion follows the money," she writes. "None of the reasons Virginians want offshore wind—clean energy, jobs, business development, climate mitigation—mattered until a pathway to profit opened up."

At our recent Offshore Wind Town Hall, Dominion Energy's Mark Mitchell talked about how construction of the onshore infrastructure

supporting the Coastal Virginia Offshore Wind project was starting in June this year and that it was on course to be operational by the end of 2020. The two test turbines will be the first project in the nation in federal waters, which is a very big deal for the entire nascent U.S. offshore wind industry.

Mark also reiterated Dominion CEO Tom Farrell's March announcement at an investors' meeting that the company was investing \$1.1 billion into offshore wind. Mark also reiterated Dominion's announce-

ment that the first Virginia commercial wind farm would be online by 2024. No word on the size of that first phase (my money's on 440 megawatts MW). But wow! We have a timeline, of sorts!

A timeline for building out Dominion's commercial area—an area capable of powering over 500,000 homes with its 2,000 MW—is critical for a number of reasons.

Thomas Brostrom with Ørsted also spoke at the Offshore Wind Town Hall. He talked how a buildout of 1,000 to 1,500 MW per year was necessary to support a U.S.-based supply chain. Thomas knows where-in he speaks. Ørsted is the world's largest developer of offshore wind, and they have the largest presence in the U.S. as well. The Danish company is currently in the throes of developing almost 6,000 MW of projects in the Atlantic.

Bottom line, if Virginia wants to be a major player in that supply chain, draw manufacturing firms to our state and create thousands of green jobs for Virginians, we need to be major players in supplying at least 1,000 MW to the grid—and soon. The commonwealth must provide economic certainty to the industry and must demonstrate confidence in standing up its own offshore wind projects.

So far we have pretty words from Dominion. Nothing is "on the books," so to speak.

While Virginia's energy plan has a goal of fully building out its 2,000 MW commercial area by 2028, Dominion has offered no plan to achieve it. The electric monopoly does not include the large commercial project in its Integrated Resource Plan—a plan projecting electric generation for the next 15 years. As it stands right now, the commonwealth presents none of the market certainty that the wind industry needs in order to invest in Virginia.

So the Chapter is stepping up its game to reach out to state legislators, update them on all the latest offshore wind news and recruit each to enroll as "Offshore Wind Champions." Champions publicly challenge Dominion to produce a timeline and include its commercial lease area in its next Integrated Resource Plan.

Do you have a relationship with your state delegate or senator? If so, would you be willing to talk to them about offshore wind? If you are, I'm here for you—happy to assist those efforts however need be. There are 140 legislators to get to and we want this campaign wrapped up by early September. Please email me at eileen.woll@sierraclub.org ASAP.

Let's get this thing blowing!

Eileen Woll is the offshore energy program director of the Virginia Chapter.

Get your ticket for the 2019 Annual Gathering!

vasierra.club/gathering

Hikes - Lectures - Live Music - Yoga + More!

Friday, September 20 - Sunday, September 22

Westmoreland State Park, Montross, VA

Legislature blocks rule requiring Virginia power plants to reduce carbon emissions

by Bill Penniman

On April 19, Virginia's Air Pollution Control Board approved regulations to require operators of large power plants to reduce carbon-dioxide emissions by 30 percent over ten years through participation in the multistate carbon market known as the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative. The regulatory process began two years ago with Gov. McAuliffe's Executive Directive 11. The Sierra Club and many other groups vigorously supported the proposal as it was developed by the Department of Environmental Quality.

The final rule approved by the Air Board would require fossil-fuel fired generating plants with a capacity greater than 25 MWe to acquire enough carbon-emission allowances from the RGGI market to cover their carbon output. The total pool of available carbon-emission allowances was set to decline by 3 percent

per year. Virginia's emission allowances would decline a total of 28MM tons of carbon dioxide in 2020 to 19.6MM tons of carbon dioxide in 2030.

The obligation to purchase allowances from a steadily shrinking pool of allowances incentivizes each generator to reduce its carbon dioxide emissions, and RGGI's declining allowance cap guarantees that total emissions from covered generators will decline by at least 3 percent annually. In practice, generators in RGGI states have reduced their emissions even faster than the declining allowance cap, and states have benefited from growing economies and better health outcomes.

Because of a legal anomaly, the Air Board's final rules provided that Virginia-based generators would receive Virginia's share of revenues from RGGI's auction, with utilities expected to pass

their shares of those revenues through to customers. In the other RGGI states, proceeds from the carbon-emission auctions go to the member states, which can use the money to support measures like reducing energy usage and assisting low-income residents.

Gov. Northam sought, but failed to get, legislative authority to have Virginia formally join RGGI, but that did not prevent the final carbon reduction rules from going forward.

Unfortunately, on a party-line vote, the Republican-dominated legislature enacted budget limitations prohibiting the state from spending money to implement the Air Board's carbon dioxide-reduction rules. And, with questions about his constitutional authority to veto such a budget limitation, the governor refrained from vetoing that budget restriction.


The result is that Virginia has a final regulation that would require large Virginia generators to efficiently reduce carbon emissions by 30 percent through the RGGI carbon market, but the regulation cannot be implemented unless and until Virginia's General Assembly has a majority of legislators willing to take meaningful action to protect the public from carbon-pollution and climate change. The current legislative majority will not act to mitigate climate dangers and pollution will continue unabated.

Bill Penniman is an at-large ExCom member of the Virginia Chapter.

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

Time Sensitive Information
Please Mail Immediately

Sierra Club Virginia Chapter
100 W. Franklin St, Mezzanine
Richmond, Virginia 23220



SIERRA CLUB
VIRGINIA CHAPTER

Inside Virginia Sierran

Page 1

Invest Virginia campaign
Energy, climate and jobs

Page 2

From the chair
EJ volunteer team

Page 3

Pipelines diary
Staff updates

Page 4 • Group Updates

SCPRO: National Trails Day
Great Falls Group: What Lies
Upstream
Piedmont Group: Candidates forums
Roanoke Group Earth Friendly Friday

Page 5 • Group Updates

Rappahannock Group Pass on Plastic
New River Valley Group's Trail Angels

Page 6

Dahlgren Railroad Heritage Trail
Outings Leader Training
Rappahannock Electric Co-op

Page 7

Ed Sandtner's 50 years
Become a Chapter leader

Page 8

Stopping offshore drilling

Page 9

Dominon's lies
Summer interns

Page 10

Weekend of action against pipelines

Page 11

Dominion and offshore wind

Page 12

Legislature blocks carbon emissions rule