



# Baltimore Sierran

*Serving Baltimore City, Baltimore County & Harford County • Fall 2003*



*Sierra Club members and friends enjoy tubing the Gunpowder on a recent club outing.*

## Sensitive Waters Project Proceeds

by Richard Klein

In the last issue of the *Baltimore Sierran*, we introduced the Sensitive Waters Project and asked if you felt this effort was worthy of support. The response was overwhelmingly positive and prompted us to take the first steps towards winning greater protection for sensitive streams, wetlands, rivers, tidal creeks, and the Bay.

The initial focus of the project will be on our most-sensitive aquatic resources: natural trout streams and "wetlands of special state concern."

Natural trout waters are those so clean and cool that they support reproduction of brook trout or brown trout. Our service area (Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Harford County) contains 35% of the 623 miles of natural trout waters found in Maryland, a large number of which are in the Gunpowder River basin.

There are also 30 *Wetlands of Special State Concern* in our service area. Most support threatened or endangered species. They are about equally divided between Baltimore County and Harford County.

Land development, especially sprawl, poses the greatest single threat to our sensitive waters. Over the past two decades, great strides have been made in reducing the aquatic-resource impact of development. Impact reduction is mostly achieved through the use of various Best Management Practices (BMPs), such as ponds, filters, buffers, and so forth. However, these BMPs have yet to reach a level of reliability where protection of highly sensitive resources is assured. Instead, limiting watershed development is a more reliable approach.

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## Transportation Bill Presents Challenge

**Legislation could erase decades of progress ... or build on successes**

by Eric Olson and Neha Bhatt, Sierra Club Challenge to Sprawl Campaign

In the coming months, Congress will pass a mammoth transportation bill, which could either continue moving transportation priorities in the direction of smart growth or take us backward toward a narrow focus on road-building and promoting more sprawl. We are especially concerned that environmental reviews and public involvement processes that help protect communities may be dramatically weakened.

TEA-3, as the federal transportation bill is now termed, will guide spending over the next six years to the tune of \$250-\$375 billion. The last transportation bill, passed in 1998, was \$217 billion. Because the funding

authorization runs out on September 30, 2003, Congressional committees are working this summer to draft a new bill. However, some in Congress want to use TEA-3 to undo many of the gains made during the last decade.

Because the wrong transportation choices can result in dangerous impacts on air and water quality, public health, our natural and historical heritage, and quality of life, it is critical to make our priorities known to Congress in the coming few weeks. August and September are the critical months to give your input on this legislation.

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## Environmental Quality Commission Proposed

by Richard Klein

Baltimore County Councilman Vince Gardina, a former Greater Baltimore Group Conservation Chair, has introduced legislation for the creation of an Advisory Commission on Environmental Quality. This vitally important bill is tentatively scheduled for a hearing on September 23<sup>rd</sup>, at 2:00 p.m., in the County Council Work Session Room of the Olde Courthouse, located at Washington and Chesapeake Avenues in Towson. We urge all our Baltimore County members to support the bill. Please visit the Events/Meetings page in the Baltimore section of the website <http://maryland.sierraclub.org> in mid-September for a confirmation of the date, time, and location.

With the support of fellow Councilmembers S.G. Samuel Moxley (District 1), T. Bryan McIntire (District 3), and Kenneth N. Oliver (District 4), Gardina (District 5) proposes a commission consisting of 15 members. The members should have demonstrated interest, knowledge, or training in environmental issues, environmental preservation, resource conservation, or related disciplines.

The commission will be responsible for developing a dialogue on environmental issues affecting Baltimore County, including the adjacent waterways of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. The commission will make recommendations concerning any environmental question

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# TEA-3 Top Priorities

## (Transportation Bill continued)

No “gutting” of the environmental and public review processes, which offer protections for communities, parks, wetlands, wildlife refuges, historic sites, and more. The Bush administration and some Congressional leaders have proposed damaging changes that would gut the environmental review provisions outlined in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and remove protections on parklands, historical sites, wildlife refuges and other environmentally sensitive areas.

- NEPA is a landmark environmental law, passed with broad bipartisan support thirty years ago and signed into law by President Nixon. Now, President Bush and some members of Congress want to impose unrealistic deadlines on conducting environmental reviews of transportation projects, severely limit timeframes for citizens to challenge bad aspects of projects in court, and transfer more power over environmental reviews to state and local departments of transportation. These changes would weaken those reviews and the public input process. Within TEA-3, we must preserve the protections offered by NEPA.

- The Bush Administration would also transfer power to evaluate transportation- project impacts on historic sites, parklands, and recreation areas from resource managers—whose focus is on environmental preservation—to the U.S. Department of Transportation. This move would drastically weaken the protections on our nation’s most important sites from irreversible impacts.

**Don’t weaken clean air protections.** As asthma rates and respiratory ailments continue to rise around the country,

and the health threats of bad air—especially for children and seniors—grow annually, we cannot allow any deterioration of our clean-air protections.

- In an attempt to ignore the long-term effects of transportation projects on air quality (and to circumvent impediments to new road construction), some in Congress would require that air pollution consequences of new roads be projected for only 10 years. This is *half* of the 20-year projections that are now required. Cutting back these projections would ignore important data and only lead to dirtier air in the long run.

- Other attacks on clean air include lengthening the time between air-quality check-ups from every three years to every five years. It is important to balance the air pollution budget frequently enough to catch problems before they become serious, just as people should balance their checkbooks regularly. We must resist attempts to lengthen intervals between air quality check-ups.

- In order to clean up the nation’s air, Congress should increase funding for transportation that improves air quality. The Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality improvement program (CMAQ) provides funding for clean-transportation projects in regions with unhealthy air. CMAQ provides essential emergency funds to help areas with the worst air pollution implement measures, such as clean buses, transit, and pedestrian and bike infrastructure, so they can meet acceptable air quality standards while also solving transportation needs. The number of regions with unhealthy air will more than double in the next few years; thus the CMAQ program should be at least doubled to meet the growing need.

**Protect and Grow the Transit Program.** In order to build upon the gains in mass transit over the last decade and promote alternatives to sprawl, we must insist on the following:

- Oppose a crippling proposal by Senators Max Baucus (D-MT) and Charles Grassley (R-IA) that would raid the transit fund in order to bolster the highway fund. The Baucus-Grassley proposal would push responsibility to come up with the missing funding onto states and localities through a bonding mechanism, which would prove risky and would destabilize the program, putting transit further out of reach for our communities.

- Maintain a level playing field between the transit and highway programs. Currently, states and localities must pay for 20 percent of new transit and highway projects, while the federal government pays 80 percent. Due to high competition for transit projects, communities often will pay a higher percentage to get a transit project. The Bush Administration wants to require states to come up with 50% of the cost for new transit, setting a prohibitive threshold to get new projects started for the least affluent communities, who would need them the most. At the same time, however, the Bush proposal maintains an 80-20 federal-state split for road projects. Effectively, communities that are trying to solve transportation needs would be encouraged to build roads, not transit. This would be a devastating change in policy that would only create more sprawl and greater air pollution.

- In order to meet the growing demand for transit in metro, suburban, and rural communities around the country, Congress should grow the transit program. The current 4:1 highway/transit-funding ratio should be changed to 3:1. For every \$3 spent on highways, transit should receive at least \$1. In-

creasing transit’s slice of the transportation budget will move our transportation priorities in the right direction to clean up our air, increase our transportation choices, and revitalize businesses in our towns and cities.

Because the transportation bill is only authorized every six years, it is a massive piece of legislation with only a narrow window of opportunity for us to influence the outcome. Once this bill passes, the next opportunity to influence federal transportation priorities will be 2009.

Please contact your Senators and Representative, and ask them to prioritize public transit, public health, and the environment; also, let them know that TEA-3 should not be used to weaken public involvement in transportation planning or the environmental review processes. The victims of a bad TEA-3 bill will be our air and water, the health of our children and seniors, those individuals without access to cars, and those with respiratory ailments.

Contact information for your congressional delegation may be found at [www.congress.org](http://www.congress.org)

For more information about TEA-3, please visit [www.sierraclub.org/sprawl](http://www.sierraclub.org/sprawl)

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## Commission Proposed (cont.)

or issue referred by the County Council or the County Executive. Gardina envisions the members of this commission having a role in educating the residents of the county on issues that should concern all citizens with regard to the natural environment and protection of natural resources within Baltimore County.

Each of the seven councilmen will name an appointee to the commission. The County Executive will appoint the remaining eight members. The legislation suggests that the diversity of the commission should include a repre-

sentative of an organization active in environmental issues, a representative of the home builders industry, an individual primarily engaged in agriculture in the county; a teacher, curator, or scientist at an institution in Baltimore County who has professional expertise in environmental issues; an individual who is actively involved in business or industry in the county; and three at-large representatives who are residents of Baltimore County.

Councilman Gardina’s legislation also stipulates that there should be three non-voting members

who would represent the Baltimore County Departments of Environmental Protection and Resource Management, Planning, and Public Works. These three designees would be available to provide any technical assistance that the commission might need.

“The protection of the environment should be a major priority of government. This advisory commission will help review and advise on issues that affect the natural and human environment in Baltimore County,” stated Councilman Gardina.

Again, if you live in Baltimore County, we urge you to contact your County Council representative about this important bill. Contact informa-

tion and a map showing the areas represented by each Council member can be viewed at <http://www.baltimorecountycouncil.org> If you are represented by Council members Gardina, Mcintire, Moxley, or Oliver, please thank them for sponsoring the bill. If you are represented by Joseph Bartenfelder (Dist. 6), Kevin Kamenetz (Dist. 2), or John Olszewski (Dist. 7), please urge support for the Environmental Quality Commission bill. After speaking with your Council representative, call 410-654-3021, or send an e-mail to GBSierra@ceds.org to let us know the outcome.

## Baltimore City Primary Election September 9

These endorsements by the Baltimore City League of Environmental Voters are furnished for the information of our members and does not indicate endorsement by the Sierra Club.

Mayor Martin O'Malley  
Council President Carl Stokes  
Comptroller Joan Pratt

District	
1st	Jim Kraft
2nd	Lois Garey
3rd	Robert Curran
4th	Kenneth Harris
5th	no endorsement
6th	Charese Williams
7th	Shawn Tarrant
8th	David Maurice Smallwood
9th	C.D. Witherspoon
10th	Nicole Pastore-Klein
11th	Keiffer Mitchell
12th	Bernard C. "Jack" Young
13th	Mel Freeman
14th	Mary Pat Clarke

## Save Maryland's Forests

The Maryland Chapter of Sierra Club is holding an auction to raise funds for our Forest Preservation Campaign. We are asking for donations that will be auctioned off at our Jamboree in October at Catoctin Park in Thurmont. There will be a silent auction as well as one led by an auctioneer.

The Maryland Chapter Campaign seeks to preserve and protect the state's remaining public forests. These forests help keep pollutants from entering the Chesapeake Bay as well as helping to keep our air clean and healthy. Our work has led to additional protections for thousands of acres through the Wildlands program, helped gain funds for purchasing more lands, and helped ensure the public lands we do have are used for the best interests of the people of Maryland.

Because we advocate for legislation and work to elect good environmentalists, we are not a tax-deductible charity, and therefore your donations are not tax deductible.

For more information, contact Joan Willey at 410-267-0716 or herbals@erols.com.



# Maryland Chapter SIERRA Club Jamboree

Friday evening to Sunday afternoon  
October 10-12, 2003  
Catoctin Mountain Park  
Thurmont, MD

Features: Bird Walk, Auction, Saturday Night Dance Band, Speakers and Workshops. Come have fun, explore the mountains, and meet others from your local Sierra Club!

Accommodations: Rustic dormitory accommodations included in registration price. For more private accommodations, campgrounds and hotels are also nearby.

Food: All meals are included, with Saturday dinner catered by Cozy restaurant of Thurmont.

Travel: It takes about 1 1/2 hours to drive from Washington or Baltimore.

Price: \$50 per person, \$30 for students/seniors/limited income. Children ages 5 and under are free. We will need a limited number of cooks and cleanup helpers, who may sign up for \$20 until all spaces are filled. Prices increase by \$10 after September 15 and again by \$10 after October 1.

### Jamboree Registration Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (h) \_\_\_\_\_ (w) \_\_\_\_\_

Names in your party, including ages of any children \_\_\_\_\_

I am willing to give someone a ride. \_\_\_\_ I need a ride. \_\_\_\_

Will your party be joining us for dinner Friday evening? \_\_\_\_

Are you vegetarian? Vegan? Allergic to any food? Anything else we should know?

Please check your preferred registration levels. We will reimburse you if that category is full & we cannot accommodate you. Children up to age five are free.

Regular \_\_\_\_ x \$50 = \$ \_\_\_\_

Low income/student/senior \_\_\_\_ x \$30 = \$ \_\_\_\_

Worker (kitchen/setup/cleanup) \_\_\_\_ x \$20 = \$ \_\_\_\_

Late fee: Sept. 15-30 \_\_\_\_ x \$10 = \$ \_\_\_\_

After Oct 1 \_\_\_\_ x \$20 = \$ \_\_\_\_

Total payment = \$ \_\_\_\_

Mail registration to Sierra Club Maryland Chapter, Attn: Maryland Chapter Gathering, 7338 Baltimore Ave, Suite 101A, College Park, MD 20740

For more information, call Sara Shirk at 443-745-0624 or the office at 301-277-7111 or 410-813-2225 or visit our website at <http://maryland.sierraclub.org>

## Sensitive Waters (Cont.)

Scientific studies conducted since the 1970s show a generally consistent relationship between aquatic-resource health and the intensity of watershed development. Highly sensitive resources begin exhibiting adverse effects when there is an average of one house for every six to eight acres of land draining to a wetland or stream.

Protecting sensitive aquatic resources by limiting development intensity is not new. The Chesapeake Bay Critical Area regulations may restrict lands within a thousand feet of tidal waters to no more than one house per twenty acres. In Baltimore County's watershed protection zone, development intensity is limited to one house per five acres. To preserve farmland, Baltimore County's agricultural zone carries a limit of one house per fifty acres. Development in Harford County's agricultural district results in about one house for every seven or eight acres.

It appears, though, that the watersheds of many of our sensitive waters are zoned for development more intense than one house per eight acres. The Greater Baltimore Group Executive Committee recently requested an opportunity to meet with Baltimore County officials to discuss the merits of adjusting zoning in sensitive watersheds to an intensity compatible with trout and threatened and endangered species. The response thus far has been open, and we anticipate a first meeting soon. A similar request has been sent to Harford County officials. Recently, Harford County completed a Site Planning Roundtable, which considered various options for reducing the aquatic-resource impact of development. Greater Baltimore Sierran Tim Niblett represented us on the Roundtable.

To learn more about the Sensitive Waters Project, including how you can play an active role, call 410-654-3021 or send an e-mail to [GBSierra@ceds.org](mailto:GBSierra@ceds.org).



## Baltimore Sierran

# Outings September 2003 – January 2004

### September

Sat. Sept. 13 - GB Moderate. Fox & Turners Gap Hike

7 easy-paced miles on the Appalachian Trail, from Fox Gap to the Washington Monument, and back, with a 600 foot elevation change. This is the site of the battle of South Mountain (Sept 14, 1862). Lunch will be at the Washington Monument, which provides an excellent view of the Hagerstown Valley, to the west. Depart Giant/Walmart Parking, SE Corner of Route 40 & Rolling Rd., at 9:45 AM. John: 410-752-0104 (before 9PM)

### October

Sat.-Mon. Oct. 11, 12, 13 – GB Moderate. Michaux Forest Camping at Caledonia State Park

Day hiking along lakes and streams with good mountain views. For details, call Jack at 410-256-3963.

Sat.-Mon. Oct. 10, 11, 12, 13 - Maryland Chapter Jamboree

Join Sierrans from across Maryland for a fun weekend in the Catoctin Mountains, west of Thurmont. Dormitory accommodations, all meals, a Saturday evening dance, hikes, and birdwalks are included in the \$50 per adult reservation fee. For more information, and reservations call Sara Shirk at 443-745-0624, or the Chapter office at 301-277-7111 or 410-813-2225. You may also find Jamboree information on the Chapter web site <http://maryland.sierraclub.org/>.

### November

Sat. Nov.1 – GB Moderate. Kelly's Run & Pinnacle Overlook

7-8 miles with great views of the Susquehanna River. Good chance of seeing bald eagles. Will also see hawks and water fowl as they migrate down the Susquehanna River. Meet at K-Mart on Bel Air Road (Rt. 1) just north of Beltway exit 32 at 10:00 AM. For details, call Jack at 410-256-3963.

Sun. Nov.9 – GB Moderate. Muddy Creek Hike

7-8 miles on Mason Dixon Trail through a very scenic steam valley. Will discuss the geology of the area. Meet at K-Mart on Belair Road (Rt. 1) just north of Beltway exit 32 at 10:00 AM. For details, call Jack at 410-256-3963.

### December

Sun. Dec. 7 – GB Moderate. Loch Raven Hike

4-6 mile hike. Moderately hilly country adjoining Loch Raven. Will see and learn about artesian springs. Meet at 12:00 noon at Willow Grove Farm off of Cromwell Bridge Road 1.5 miles northeast of Loch Raven Boulevard. Call Jack at 410-256-3963.

Sun. Dec. 14 – GB Moderate. Gunpowder River

4-6 miles along the Gunpowder River and side trails. Will see the stream where Indians built sweatshouses in the area known as the Sweathouse Branch. Meet at Belair Road (Rt.1) and the Gunpowder River at 12:00 noon. Call Jack at 410-256-3963

### January 2004

Thur. Jan. 1 GB – Moderate. New Years Afternoon Hike

Approximately 5 easy-paced miles in Oregon Ridge Park, with 2 or 3 short steep hills. Be prepared for ice/snow on the trails. Meet in the nature center parking lot at 1:00 PM. Call John: 410-752-0104.

Fri.-Mon. Jan. 16-19 – GB Moderate. Cross Country Skiing in Western Maryland

Cross Country skiing at New Germany State Park. Beginners welcome. For details, call Jack at 410-256-3963.

Sun. Jan. 25 – GB Moderate. Local Cross Country Skiing

If there is not enough snow, a hike in Loch Raven will be held. Meet at Loch Raven High School, Cromwell Bridge Road and Cowpens Avenue, at 11:00 AM. Call Jack at 410-256-3963.

## Participating in Sierra Club Hikes & Other Outings

1. All participants on Sierra Club outings are required to sign a standard liability waiver. If you would like to read the liability waiver before you chose to participate on an outing, please go to <http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms/> or contact the Outings Department at (415) 977-5528 for a printed version.

2. In the interest of facilitating the logistics of some outings, it is customary that participants make carpooling arrangements. The Sierra Club does not have insurance for carpooling arrangements and assumes no liability for them. Carpooling, ride sharing, or anything similar is strictly a private arrangement among the participants. Participants assume the risks associated with this travel.

3. You don't need to register in advance for most outings. If this is required, it will be stated in the outing announcement.

4. Beginners are welcome on most outings. If the outing requires experience or good conditioning, this will be stated in the announcement.

5. Bring at least one quart of water with you for every five miles or two hours of hiking.

6. Bring a snack or lunch.

7. **Always** bring rain gear. In cold weather, dress in layers with synthetics or wool against your skin. Avoid cotton.

8. During the fall and winter, when hunters share the woods, wear an orange or red hat, bandana, etc. Avoid clothing colored tan, buff, or brown. If you carry a handkerchief, bring a red one, not white, which looks like a deer tail when you pull it out.

9. Carry a first aid kit (including moleskin or firstskin), a map of the area where you'll be hiking, and a compass.

10. Wear good hiking boots that support your ankles and you've broken in before the hike.

11. If you suffer from allergies, asthma, diabetes, or other medical conditions, be certain to bring any necessary medication, and inform the outing leader so he or she can help if an emergency arises.

12. Always practice low-impact hiking by walking on the most durable trail surface present. For example, if you have the choice of walking on vegetation or bare earth, walk on earth. It's better to walk on stony surfaces than bare earth. But safety is always paramount; don't walk on larger stones or rocks, which may roll under your boot.

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