



Virginia Conservation Network

The Voice of Conservation...

A PUBLICATION OF THE VIRGINIA CONSERVATION NETWORK

SUMMER 2009

CONSERVATION CELEBRATION DINNER & ENVIRONMENTAL ASSEMBLY SLATED FOR SEPT. 11-12 IN STAUNTON

Valley Conservation Council joins with the Virginia Conservation Network to host the 2009 Virginia Environmental Assembly conference.

Join us for a weekend in the beautiful Shenandoah Valley. Learn more about the people and nonprofits helping to preserve the region's history, culture and natural beauty.

Friday afternoon's Green Tour of Staunton will feature historic architecture, urban land conservation, and innovative stream restoration projects.

In addition to a local foods dinner and music, Friday evening features a silent auction to support VCN's environmental education programs.

On Saturday, Sept. 12, attend the breakfast breakout session "Coalitions and Grassroots Advocacy: The Interstate 81 Case Study" by the Shenandoah Valley Network. For over five years, diverse stakeholders have been working to achieve a reasonable solution to address improvements to I-81. This campaign has enjoyed major successes in scaling down the New Jersey turnpike-style truckway that was originally proposed. Come and learn from the ongoing campaign to save the historic Shenandoah Valley from I-81 super-widening.

Keynote speaker Timothy J. LaSalle, Rodale Institute (invited), will address "how famers can fight climate change and feed the world."

Conference-goers can choose from a variety of workshops, including a tour of the Wildlife Center of Virginia or a guided mountain hike sponsored by Wild Virginia.

The first features a behind-the-scenes look at the nation's leading wildlife hospital. Join us and meet some of the wildlife that serve as the Center's educational ambassadors, including Scarlett, the red-tailed hawk from which the VCN Scarlett Award is given for exemplary leadership in wildlife protection.

The second features a guided mountain hike. The Shenandoah Mountain Trail in the George Washington National Forest is an easy to moderate hike that winds along the ridge line of the mountain. With Ramsey's Draft to the east and Cowpasture River to the west, this is considered one of the most beautiful trails in the area. It travels through an inventoried roadless area (as identified by the Forest Service) and is partially flanked by Ramsey's Draft Wilderness Area. The area has also been identified as a Virginia Mountain Treasure in a recent publication by The Wilderness Society.

Visit www.vcnva.org to register or call 804-644-0283 for details.

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Virginia Conservation Network Welcomes Our Newest Members!



Clinch Coalition

Mission: To protect the forest, wildlife, and watersheds of the Clinch Ranger District of the Jefferson National Forest and surrounding areas.

Location: Southwest Virginia

Phone: (276) 479-2176

Visit online: <http://www.clinchcoalition.net/>



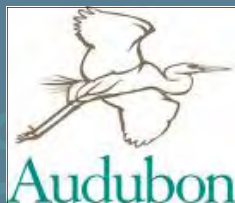
Shenandoah Valley Network

Mission: Coordinates with and provides support to local community groups working on land protection, land use and transportation issues .

Location: Shenandoah Valley

Phone: (540) 303-7404

Visit online: <http://www.svnva.org>



National Audubon Society — Virginia Important Bird Areas Program

Mission: Part of a global effort to identify and conserve areas that are vital to birds and other biodiversity.

Location: Richmond

Phone: (804) 788-7660

Visit online: <http://www.audubon.org/bird/iba/virginia/>

“Choose Clean Water” Campaign launched

Dozens of groups throughout the Chesapeake Bay Watershed have joined together to push for stronger federal action to restore rivers in Virginia and the six-state Chesapeake Bay watershed.

The Chesapeake Bay Watershed Coalition has identified several opportunities to improve water quality at the federal level, including implementation of President Obama’s recent executive order on Chesapeake Bay restoration. “With President Obama’s new executive order seeking a stronger federal response to bay restoration efforts, we have a unique opportunity to shape the federal role and ensure everyone’s right to clean water,” said coalition director Hilary Harp Falk.

Everyone has the right to have and use clean water

wherever they live, and in fairness no one has a right to keep others from having clean water. Clean water and healthy rivers are vital to support communities, people and livestock as well as fish, wildlife and plants.

Clean water is a choice that must be made by individuals, communities, states and countries. The poor condition of Virginia’s rivers is evidence that we can choose clean water and enjoy dramatic results. Hundreds of choices are being made today, that will have results for our rivers and surface waters. We have to make sure those results improve our lives and our communities, and lead to cleaner water, not more pollution. We all have a responsibility to make choices, and take responsibility for them.

For details, visit www.choosecleanwater.org.

NWF View: American Clean Energy and Security Act update

Last month, Jeremy Symons, Senior Vice President of Conservation and Education Programs at National Wildlife Federation, was on TV, on CBS's Washington Unplugged, answering questions about why we need the American Clean Energy and Security Act now. "Fundamentally, there's no better time with the economy where it is. We need to create new jobs."

This bill and the stimulus package will create 1.7 million clean energy jobs. "It's a fundamental choice," he said. "At the end of the day, do we give in to the scare and fear of change, or do we move forward with a new energy plan for America that creates jobs, helps our energy security and protects the environment for our children's future?"

Just two days later, Symons was on Capitol Hill to watch the U.S. House of Representatives pass the American Clean Energy and Security Act with a 219 to 212 bipartisan vote. He credited the positive outcome to "the strongest grassroots effort I have witnessed on any conservation or environment issue in my professional career."

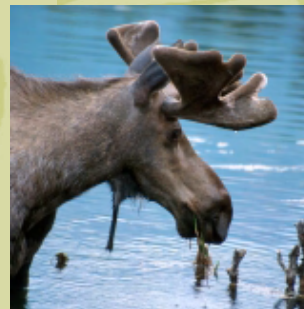
That means 44,600 jobs for Virginia, according to University of Massachusetts research. The core of the bill is a cap on carbon pollution that steadily reduces emissions by about 2 percent per year starting in 2012. It also includes dedicated funding to the states to safeguard nature to protect people and wildlife; additional funding at the federal level and a new federal strategy to focus on safeguarding wildlife resources; building codes that will help cut the energy use of new buildings in half by 2015; approximately \$10 billion annually in new funding to renewable energy and energy efficiency; and a program

to reduce deforestation around the world that NWF helped design.

Reacting to the House passage, Larry Schweiger, President and CEO of the National Wildlife Federation, said, "This is the most important conservation vote in a generation. The House showed great resolve to undo a flawed energy policy and move America toward a fundamentally different energy future. The American people prevailed today despite stiff opposition from Big Oil. Now we take this cause to the Senate with the winds of change at our back."

In the Senate, the bill will pass through six Senate committees, including the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, with a goal to pass the legislation before December, when U.N. climate negotiations continue in Copenhagen, Denmark.

We at NWF are proud to join millions of Americans who agree with Schweiger that this is indeed the most important conservation vote in our lifetimes.



By Julie Lalo
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Virginia Conservation
Network

www.vcnva.org

The Virginia Conservation Network is proud to be the National Wildlife Federation's Commonwealth of Virginia affiliate. NWF members in Virginia care deeply about protecting wildlife and habitat. A strong connection to the land is a Virginia tradition shared by VCN and its member groups. We are excited at the opportunity to provide them with a link to our member groups that are working on the ground to preserve these resources in their neighborhoods and rural communities.



Spotlight On:

Wild Virginia
P.O. Box 1065
Charlottesville, VA 22902
(434) 971-1553
www.wildvirginia.org



Wild Virginia is a grassroots organization dedicated to preserving wild forest ecosystems in Virginia's national forests – remote and inaccessible mountaintops, large expanses of undisturbed forest, wild animal populations, cool mountain streams, intact natural communities, rugged landscapes, and more. Since its beginnings in 1995, Wild Virginia has fought to keep these natural features a reality. With more than 300 members around the state, the ability to protect these wild areas is growing.

The mountainous regions of western Virginia are home to two national forests – the Jefferson and George Washington. At almost 1.8 million total acres combined (including 123,384 acres in West Virginia), the opportunity for meaningful conservation is real. Since a Forest Plan for the Jefferson NF was approved in 2003, Wild Virginia has focused its attention on the George Washington NF (GWNF).

At the heart of Wild Virginia's work is the desire to enhance the ecological integrity and biological diversity of our national forests and ensure they are maintained for future generations. The Shenandoah Mountain area of the GWNF is a special place and a focus of our work. It contains many headwater and wild trout streams, a healthy black bear population, and a diversity of natural communities and rare species (including the Cowknob salamander, *Plethodon punctatus*, and least trillium, *Trillium pusillum* var. *monticulum*). It is also known for areas of high elevation forest where more northerly occurring birds like the red crossbill (*Loxia curvirostra*) and winter wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*) are sometimes known to breed.

In addition to ongoing efforts to monitor U.S. Forest Service activities and projects, educate and mobilize

citizens, and encourage people to get outside and enjoy our forests, Wild Virginia has several specific goals and areas of interest.

A recent report by Wild Virginia, *The State of Our Water: Managing and Protecting the Drinking Water Resources of the GWNF*, describes the tremendous importance of the GWNF as a source of public drinking water. More than 22 communities in western Virginia obtain some or all of their drinking water from surface waters of the GWNF. The watersheds providing this drinking water cover approximately 44% of the GWNF land in Virginia. As a result of the report, Virginia Conservation Network and 32 other organizations (including 14 localities) adopted resolutions calling on stronger protection of drinking water resources in the national forest.



A cascading stream on Shenandoah Mountain.

Another huge priority is permanent protection of the Roadless Areas in our national forests. The Roadless Area Conservation Rule was established by the Clinton administration in 2001 and protected these large, critical areas from commercial use. During the Bush administration, a series of changes were made to dismantle the rule in an effort to allow new roads, timber and mineral extraction, and other

development. Some changes to the rule were deemed illegal by a federal judge in November 2006, but a final and decisive legal ruling has not occurred.

In June 2009, President Obama effectively issued a one year "time out" on all projects in roadless areas, while his administration determines their long term strategy for these areas. The fate of roadless areas should not be determined by changing administrations, more legal challenges and future judicial interpretations.

Federal legislation is the safest and most appropriate manner to permanently protect roadless areas.

The Forest Plan for the GWNF is being revised to replace the existing one, which was completed in 1993. The Forest Plan is very important, as it will outline how the forest is to be managed for the next 10-15 years. Revising the plan is a public process. Wild Virginia is heavily involved to make sure drinking water resources, roadless area protection, wilderness recommendations, protection of rare species and natural communities, and many other issues are properly addressed. Wild Virginia actively seeks involvement by all concerned citizens, and encourages everyone to participate by attending public meetings and submitting comments about the plan to the U.S. Forest Service. Through its website, newsletters, and email list, Wild Virginia keeps all interested parties informed about how to become involved.

Day to day efforts to protect our forests can take a variety of forms. Working with various agency employees and legislative staff, even on the most critical of issues, can sometimes leave concerned citizens and dedicated conservationists feeling some

what unfulfilled. That is one reason why Wild Virginia sponsors monthly outings, which are usually day hikes to some of the beautiful spots our mountains have to offer. Hikers are often able to clear their minds and cleanse their spirits during a day outdoors. The outings are free and open to anyone who is interested and physically fit enough to enjoy them. Visit www.wildvirginia.org to read descriptions of upcoming hikes and see pictures of past ones.

Virginia's national forests are truly natural treasures, full of many diverse gems. Please get out and enjoy them! From wild trout streams, challenging trails, wildflowers and shrubs in full bloom, wilderness areas, incredible views, bird migrations and more, there is something for everyone. Please join Wild Virginia in helping protect these resources.

To get involved or learn more about Wild Virginia, contact Conservation Director David Hannah at P.O. Box 1065, Charlottesville, VA, 22902, or 434-971-1553, or dhannah@wildvirginia.org, or visit www.wildvirginia.org.

Teaming with Wildlife Coalition

Consider joining the Virginia Teaming with Wildlife Coalition (endorsement form found at <http://www.teaming.com/states/virginia.html>).

Comprised of fish & wildlife agencies, biologists, hunters & anglers, birdwatchers, hikers, nature based businesses and other conservationists. Teaming with Wildlife is the strongest and most diverse conservation coalition in the country.

By joining Teaming with Wildlife, your organization adds its voice to the call for new and greater funding for wildlife conservation, which will be essential in implementing the state wildlife action plans. If your organization has chapters, affiliates or other close partners we hope you'll encourage them to join the coalition as well.

Ultimately our goal is to educate decision makers on the need for new and greater funding for wildlife conservation and related recreation and education. Your organization can play a key role in making that

happen by sending action alerts on key legislative issues related to State Wildlife Grants and the state wildlife action plans.

Anytime is a great time for your members to contact Members of Congress and the Administration in support of the State Wildlife Grants Program...but for the latest specifics go to www.teaming.com/action.

There is enormous power in working together. We will continue to keep you informed of our activities over the next several months and we hope that you will contact us to get more involved in this critical effort.

We have got to act now to ensure a future teaming with wildlife!



Viewshed Photo Competition

Scenic Virginia, a VCN Member and an organization dedicated to the preservation, protection and enhancement of Virginia's scenic beauty and community character, is looking forward to receiving digital images of the Commonwealth's beauty.

- ◇ The five categories for entry are:

Coastal/Chesapeake Bay
Mountains
Open Space/Farmland
Rivers/Waterways
Urban Landscapes.



- ◇ Deadline: September 7, 2009
- ◇ Website: http://www.scenicvirginia.org/photocontest_test.html
- ◇ Questions: 804-643-8439 or email@scenicvirginia.org

The Garden Club of Virginia Conservation Forum

Building Sustainable Communities
Save the Date: November 6-7, 2009
UVA Darden School of Business, Charlottesville

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At **LetsGoGreen.biz** we have a great selection of “green” products for every home, office or business. From water conservation products to energy-saving CFL light bulbs, biodegradable plates, cups and utensils, BPA-free water bottles, natural cleaning products, recycled paper goods and more, you’ll feel great knowing your purchase helps save energy and reduces your carbon footprint while helping to support your favorite fundraiser. Order today and **25% of your purchase** will go to our group at checkout.

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VCN LEGISLATIVE WORKSHOP

Saturday December 5, 2009
9:00 am - 12:30 pm
Capitol Building • Richmond, VA

Hear from experts with Sierra Club, CBF, SELC, PEC and other leading environmental groups about the challenges and opportunities for conservation and receive the *2010 Conservation Briefing Book*.