

Sierra Club ExCom Elections: Candidate Statements

Table of Contents

MARYLAND CHAPTER CANDIDATE STATEMENTS	2
ANNE ARUNDEL GROUP CANDIDATES	4
CATOCTIN GROUP CANDIDATES	5
GREATER BALTIMORE GROUP CANDIDATES	7
HOWARD COUNTY GROUP CANDIDATE STATEMENTS	10
LOWER EASTERN SHORE CANDIDATE STATEMENTS	12
MONTGOMERY COUNTY GROUP CANDIDATES	14
PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GROUP CANDIDATE STATEMENTS	17
SOUTHERN MARYLAND GROUP CANDIDATES	19
WASHINGTON COUNTY GROUP STATEMENTS	21

(Note that candidates' photos are not included this year, as it would have been hard to comply with the Sierra Club's image use policies in a timely manner. We apologize to voters who find the photos helpful, and we plan to explore this issue further next year.)

MARYLAND CHAPTER CANDIDATE STATEMENTS

Vote for Up to 3

JANE LYONS-RAEDER

I was appointed to the Maryland Chapter's ExCom and as the Transportation Co-Chair in June 2023, and am excited to hopefully continue on the ExCom. As an ExCom member, my focus is on ensuring organizational strength so that the Chapter can continue winning its advocacy campaigns. My decisions as an ExCom member are guided by science and data, racial equity and social justice, and creating a positive environmental movement focused on creating a better world for everyone.

Although I'm relatively new to Sierra Club leadership, my past experiences have given me organizational management, environmental policy, and advocacy skills. I previously worked professionally in environmental advocacy, often in close collaboration with Sierra Club staff and volunteers, including on the campaign to stop the expansion for I-495 & I-270. In that role, I won major local legislative changes, drafted and provided testimony before various bodies, formed new coalitions, hosted dozens of advocacy and educational events, and created a new grassroots community organization that gained 160 members within the first year. This has given me a wide-ranging understanding of state and local environmental issues and connections with the players involved, including key allied elected officials and organizations.

Additionally, I bring to the ExCom the perspective of being a renter, an adult under 30, and frequent transit rider. I care deeply about building sustainable communities and creating a strong civic culture through organizations like Sierra Club for people of all backgrounds to take part in building those communities.

TERESA BALL

The impacts of global warming on the environment are easily identifiable; however, the effects and threat to the well-being of people are not always easily understood or discussed. For this reason, as a member of the Executive Committee I would like to continue to ensure the policy-making efforts of the Chapter include considerations for the impacts on humans, human health, local economies and individuals from marginalized communities.

I am public policy professional with experience in the areas of communications, government affairs, and regulatory policy. I also run a small consulting business and known for building relationships with stakeholders from diverse populations and backgrounds. I am interested in using my skills and experience to continue community organizing, recruiting people from under-represented groups and focusing on the equitable roll-out of the Climate Solutions Now legislation.

I am an African American woman living in Southern Maryland. I have often heard, “the environmental movement is a White movement” as such people of color are not welcome in this space. I hope my continued service within the Sierra Club helps to dispel this myth and encourages other persons from underrepresented communities to join the fight.

MARK COSTELLO

I am passionate about enriching the outdoor experience and helping others build a connection with nature. I hope to guide decision making to further the mission of a storied organization like the Sierra Club. Climate Change is the most pressing issue of our time, and we need to take swift action to reduce emissions, conserve habitats, and transition our economy to avoid the worst effects of a warming world.

I am an avid outdoorsperson who wants to make outdoor recreation accessible to more people so they can be motivated to be a more conscious resident of this earth. I worked at a Scout summer camp for seven years and thru-hiked the entire Appalachian Trail. I know the profound benefit that intentional time in nature can produce.

I live in Baltimore City and nature is all around us. You should not have to go to a remote wilderness area to experience, but rather improve access to green spaces near where you live.

DANIEL JACOBSON

Over the years, I have contributed to a range of environmental causes, including Sierra Club. I am eager to expand my contributions by spending even more of my time and energy on such critical goals. Specifically, I look forward to making progress towards growing the use of renewable energy sources, improving waste management in our communities, preserving our natural resources, and influencing others to effect change towards these ends.

Throughout my career, I have worked as an executive in major media organizations, including Netflix, NPR, and The New York Times. I helped guide these companies through complex and significant strategy decisions to grow their businesses, organizations, and engineering initiatives. I also serve on boards and as an advisor to help lead other companies through their growth and evolution. A common thread throughout all of these experiences is my commitment to advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB), a commitment that I will bring with me to ExCom.

I believe my experiences and skills are well suited to ExCom and look forward to applying them to the Maryland chapter of Sierra Club. Thank you for your consideration.

ANNE ARUNDEL GROUP CANDIDATES

3 open seats to fill

LOUISE TAYLOR

What would you like to accomplish as an Executive Committee member?

Contribute to stopping/slowing global warming by the following:

- a. Promoting household composting: With members of Annapolis Composting, Inc. in Admiral Hts. Gradually develop liaison between private composters and the Sierra Club leading to an outreach campaign to increase composting participation in Annapolis (and beyond).
- b. Saving trees, especially mature trees, habitat, natural spaces: Build on the local Annapolis Neck community's campaign to save the new "Retreat" section of Quiet Waters Park in its natural state; Develop policy in the Land Use and Conservation Committee and the A.A. Group to expand efforts to optimize preservation of park resources; Help develop statewide policy regarding natural spaces and further the FCA.

What skills, experience and/or new ideas will you bring to the Executive Committee?

Experience: 30 years Sierra Club activism: A.A. Group (MD), multiple officerships in Hudson-Meadowlands Group (NJ); Knowledge of Club norms and history.

Skills: Increasing knowledge of zoning, environmental law; Paralegal skills; organizational dynamics: Ability to recruit new members.

New ideas: See above.

How will your role on the Executive Committee reflect diversity?

Ally; Life member of the NAACP; Promoted coalition between NOW and the NAACP on Pittsburgh civil rights issues; Helped start Eliminating Racism in NOW Statewide Task Force (PA). In NJ, fought to protect urban land for parks for all rather than high-rise development on the Hudson shoreline; Trustee of the Hudson River Walkway now enjoyed by diverse urban population.

CATOCTIN GROUP CANDIDATES

Vote for up to 4

JAN RUBENSTEIN

I am applying for a position on the Sierra Club Catoclin Group Executive Committee because I am interested in helping to improve the world we are leaving behind for our children and their children. I feel climate change, consumer wastefulness, dirty energy, and pollution, to name a few, are major problems that our generation and those before us have created. We have a duty to do what we can to stop these issues from continuing to destroy our world and life as we have been privileged to know it. I need to learn more about these issues and what steps can be taken to address them. My particular passion is to reduce waste and encourage reuse of materials. I do not have a lot of experience as an activist, having only joined the SCCG Zero Waste group about 2 years ago. But I have experience with other organizations, such as 4H, and was involved in PTA when my children were in school. I am a retired veterinarian with experience running a multi-doctor practice. I live in Carroll County, which gives me a unique perspective compared to most of the SCCG members. I hope we will be able to grow participation in Carroll County.

KERRI HESLEY, MD

My most immediate goal as a member of the Executive Committee would be to reach out to our youth and broaden our scope of members. We have a wealth of environmentally minded young people who may not know how to channel feelings of frustration and helplessness as we see the ravaging effects of climate change, plastic waste, pollution, water issues, etc. Joining our local Sierra Club is a way to effect change at the grassroots level while being a member of a larger organization with a rich history of action. I want to create meaningful but also fun activities that will attract newer members.

Prior to my retirement as a radiologist, I was leader of a team involved in creating the Center for Breast Health in Hagerstown and was the medical director for the Center. I developed and sharpened many skills, particularly organization and communication, that have served me well when operating with groups.

I have a passion for Zero Waste and want to see our Club be more active in promoting it. We have so far to go in the U.S. including right here in Frederick and Carroll Counties. We recently convinced the Frederick City Council to ban plastic bags. It's a small step but an important one.

My background as a physician contributes to a diversity of professional background. Through a campaign to attract others that are of different ethnicities, backgrounds, and ages, I hope to contribute to diversity within the group.

KATHLEEN RALL

I grew up on a cattle ranch in Texas, became a vegetarian and native tree grower 30 years ago, and fought fracking around my home 20 years ago. Since 2008 I've been involved in many political and climate campaigns, mostly in Virginia and Maryland. The battle to save a livable planet is my main effort now.

1. As an ExCom member I hope to increase participation with SCCG in both Frederick and Carroll Counties through offering a variety of outdoor activities as well as learning opportunities. Whether we invite others to plant and care for trees, to visit local farms, to campaign for climate champions at the polls, or to join us for drinks and conversation, we can reach out.

2. Previously I served as political chair for SCCG and an ExCom member, so I've become familiar with great leadership skills, welcoming new members, and most political campaign activities.

3. As for reflecting diversity, I'm just a white grandmother, but I do have connections with more diverse groups via participation in faith organizations and campaigning with Sunrise Frederick for the Climate Emergency resolution. I know people of all ethnicities are concerned about the climate crisis and we need to understand and respond to the concerns of each ethnic group as they express them (food scarcity, air or water pollution in their communities, for example). If we want to diversify SCCG membership, we have to collaborate with outside groups on their particular problems.

JAMES P. WAGNER, PH.D.

I have been serving on the Catoctin Group ExCom since April 2022, and have been active with the Group since 2019. I want to continue to contribute my skills and collaborate with others in the work of the Sierra Club to restore our natural world, both locally, and more broadly. Real change has always started with the people, in grass-roots organizations like the Sierra Club, leading those in power to right action.

I am a Licensed Environmental Health Specialist with the State of Maryland, and I worked as an environmental inspector with the Maryland Department of the Environment for 15.5 years. I have a Ph.D. in Molecular Biology. I am involved with many environmental groups. I regularly attend meetings of the Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Work Group of the Maryland Commission on Climate Change. I have been an Electric Vehicle owner for over 8 years, and I am a member of EVA-DC. I have been an activist in Peace, Social Justice and the Environment for over 20 years. I have led and served on many committees. I'm a conscientious team player, with broad interests and a broad skill set--qualities that I'm sure will continue to be helpful to the Committee.

Regarding diversity, it is imperative that everyone, regardless of race, gender or other biological characteristic, or socio-economic status, be embraced and supported in their desire to participate in our Group. And the Catoctin Group ExCom should continue to assure equitable treatment of all, in all we do.

GREATER BALTIMORE GROUP CANDIDATES

Vote for up to 5

BETH JARRETT

I have been working with the Greater Baltimore chapter of the Sierra Club for just over a year and I believe fully in the mission and vision. The climate crisis is now, and we must do everything in our power to make change happen through legislation, education, research, and making lifestyle changes to protect the earth. As an Executive Committee member, I would like to help expand our reach. We need support in order to be stronger and more effective, and we can get more support with more visibility and understanding of our cause. I believe that I can bring diversity to the group by engaging young people in this critical climate crisis. With three children living at home, I know they are concerned and are looking for ways to make a difference through understanding the issues, making positive changes, and sharing their knowledge. I am the right person for this role because I have passion for the cause, I have experience working with Sierra Club, I have a love for science and a Chemistry background, I have worked as a teacher, and I worked in corporate America for many years. I understand how to conduct research, how to educate people on complex topics, and how to elicit change through persuasion and negotiation. Please consider me for a seat on the Greater Baltimore Executive Committee.

DENISE DAVIS

I am a member of the Sierra Club, treasure the natural world, and enjoy hiking and bicycling. I am inspired by the potential to advance social justice as well as environmental and climate progress. I want to increase my impact. One idea/goal I have is to develop ways to make climate progress by bringing the financial advantages of laws like the Empower Act, the IRA, etc. to lower-income families in our region.

In my career as a county library director in Maryland and as a lawyer, advocacy in communities and government, strategizing, planning and implementing have all been part of my work. I have been particularly focused on opening doors of opportunity for lower-income and marginalized people. I am a good public speaker and facilitator. I left full-time work several years ago and have volunteered with several organizations. I served as the Maryland Library Association president and on the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Task Force. I volunteered for NRDC Action Fund for several years and volunteer for Maryland Sierra Club on District advocacy teams and as a District Captain. I recently tabled for the Sierra Club and investigated MTA progress in transitioning to zero-emission in Baltimore. I volunteer with Weed Warriors removing invasive weeds in Baltimore parks. The Maryland Chapter and GBG are impactful. I hope to learn more and work with GBG ExCom to further advance our climate and social justice goals.

SUZANNE RICHARDSON

1. Main Interest: Living in balance with nature and our sustaining environment is essential to human life and happiness. I am interested in working on all the issues pertaining to this health with a special emphasis on ensuring the benefits of a healthy environment accrue to everyone.

2. Professional Skills: writing and communication, journalism and landscape design:

B.S. in Economics, UC Berkeley; Country Studies writer for the Dept. of Agriculture, Middle East division.

Director of Marketing and Communications for GeoResearch, an environmental and mapping company.

Freelance journalist for the Washington Post, covering arts, culture and nature.

Professional degree in Landscape Design from George Washington University.

Owned and ran my own landscape design company in the D.C historic district and suburbs.

Board Service:

The Dupont Circle Citizens Association, a D.C. citizens group working to enhance and protect the lives of local residents.

The Governing Board of The Friday Morning Music Club, a venerable arts organization promoting the musical arts in schools and the community. Ran major International String Competitions, providing funds and performance opportunities for aspiring soloists.

3. Diversity: I have experienced the geographic diversity of interests in Maryland. Having lived in Cabin John along the C&O canal, as well as the Chesapeake Bay in Dorchester County (where I supported the Eastern Shore Land Conservancy) and now Baltimore County, I may bring a broader view of the state's challenges and competing interests.

RICH NORLING

Climate change is real, and we need strong actions now. Burning trash puts CO2 and dangerous chemicals in the air. The Baltimore area needs the Red Line and other transportation options that do not require fossil fuels. Elected officials need to step up and take meaningful action now on these crises.

As a member of the Greater Baltimore Group's Executive Committee and chair of the Maryland Chapter's Political Committee, I led successful efforts to elect new pro-environment officials in Baltimore in 2020 and statewide in 2022.

I've been a Sierra Club member since 1993, when I lobbied for passage of Smart Growth policies. While at DNR during the O'Malley Administration, I managed Governor O'Malley's bill that expanded the amount of State-owned land designated as Wildlands by 21,887 acres – a 50% increase in the amount of land protected by law to remain forever wild.

If reelected to the Greater Baltimore Group's Executive Committee, I will continue working to keep elected officials accountable for their actions on climate change and other key environmental issues, to increase our capacity to elect pro-environment officials, and to strengthen our connections with other like-minded organizations in the Greater Baltimore area. I am the only current Executive Committee member from Harford County.

ATARA BERNSTEIN

Hi, I'm Atara. As an ExCom member, I'd like to spend my time making an impact and inspiring others to join the climate movement. For too long I've been waiting on the sidelines as some politicians have failed us by not protecting the interests of the people and planet. I'm done waiting idly by while the earth becomes less and less habitable. I would love to be involved in advocating for local Green New Deal policies, conservation efforts, and direct action against big oil. Here's a bit more about me: I'm a 33 year old Mom living in Pikesville. I just came back to Baltimore after living in DC, NYC and Upstate NY. For the

past 6 years, I've been building my company, Pineapple Collaborative; a community for women and food. The business is equal parts content and pantry products (olive oil, apple cider vinegar and salt). The products are made by women, traceable, single-origin, and come from sustainable domestic farms. I sold the business 6 months ago (after achieving \$2 million in sales), and am now working for the company that acquired it. Prior to this, I worked for sweetgreen running their social impact programs. I have a degree in environmental science (University of Maryland) and photography (The Fashion Institute of Technology) respectively. I'm passionate about nature, food, art, music, and design. I have a wide swath of skills including graphic design, team-leading, marketing strategy, email design, social media, brand strategy, content creation, organizing, recruiting, hiring, operations and more.

MARIE LAPORTE

For over 20 years, I've been a proud member of Sierra Club, which was instrumental in establishing our National Park system and has grown as a grassroots organization to address a growing number of environmental issues, including climate change. A few years ago after retiring from a career in business, I started volunteering with the Chapter zero-waste team and was later asked to consider joining the Greater Baltimore Group executive committee. During my two year term, I continued to assist zero-waste and helped to successfully pass "Bring Your Own Bag" legislation in Baltimore County, which will substantially reduce the 300 million single-use plastic bags used in Baltimore County.

I now chair the political committee and natural places teams and assist with membership. On natural places, I've helped assemble a wonderful team working to improve the Baltimore County landscape with more native trees and plants in commercial settings and collaborated with other groups to develop and pass Maryland native plant legislation in 2023. I'm also working to educate people on the health, safety, and environmental concerns around synthetic turf.

The political team supported and recommended the endorsement of 31 candidates across Baltimore city and Baltimore and Harford counties, with 30 winning their elections! Helping elect good leaders to serve in our government is critical to the success of our environmental issues. I hope to have your support to continue to do this important work and hope you'll consider volunteering to help effect change.

HOWARD COUNTY GROUP CANDIDATE STATEMENTS

5 open seats to fill

VICTOR LEVI

1. As an Executive Committee member, I would like to accomplish preservation of Howard County green spaces for the support of plants and animals. I would also like to be privy to Howard County legislation as it pertains to new housing development and how it may impact future natural areas in Howard County.

2. I served at the U.S. Department of Interior, Patuxent Wildlife Research Center as a Physical Science Technician. I worked in the chemistry lab prepping animal tissues, plant tissues and soil/water samples for pesticides. I worked at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Beltsville Agricultural Research Center, as a Physical Science Technician for the Insect Chemical Ecology Laboratory to perform chemical reactions for insect pheromones and repellents. I worked for USDA, Bee Research Laboratory as a Biological Science Technician studying diseases of the honeybee. I retired in 2016.

3. I belong to the Howard County Bee Club, Maryland State Beekeepers Association and Eastern Apicultural Society. I have varied interests: fishing, hiking, gardening and beekeeping. I have mentored and given talks on honeybees. My role would be to help pollinators in Maryland and provide ways for the Executive Committee to address and resolve problems that might arise. I have many science colleagues who I can consult for complex problems pertaining to land use, water quality and educational ethics for carrying out preservation and nature activities.

Thank you for this opportunity to have a chance to support our community.

CARL LATKIN

My primary motivation for seeking reelection to the Howard County Sierra Club Executive Committee is to contribute to the fight against climate change, with an emphasis on mitigation efforts. To enact the sweeping changes required for a carbon-neutral society, we must leverage the Sierra Club's influence on policymakers to enact policies to increase renewable energy and restore natural environments for carbon sequestration.

To foster a more inclusive environment within Sierra Club, we must work to eliminate financial obstacles that inhibit broader participation and membership. Collaborating with organizations that already have diverse memberships will enable more individuals to become acquainted with the Sierra Club and its initiatives. As a senior faculty member at the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, one of my responsibilities includes promoting diversity and mentoring in diversity.

My academic training also equips me to advocate for the electrification of new buildings in Howard County. Electrification will contribute to sustainability and reduce illness from methane gas pollution. Moreover, methane gas exposure disproportionately affects lower-income communities and people of color, further emphasizing the need for policy interventions to subsidize household electrification.

Currently, the Sierra Club does not endorse candidates for school board positions. However, given that the Howard County Public School System is a significant energy consumer, we should reconsider this

stance. Supporting the election of School Board members who are committed to the electrification of schools and school buses, as well as educational excellence in climate change mitigation and adaptation, should be a priority for the Sierra Club.

PATRICIA SOFFEN

I have been on the Executive Committee in the Howard County Group for the past 7 years, during that time, I have worked to increase participation with our membership by coordinating programs and outings. I have been active in coordinating our Zero Waste campaign and the Political Committee. I am also the editor of our semi-monthly newsletters that you receive in your inbox.

In the future I will continue to work to expand both the conservation/environmental work here in the county and expand programs to include newer members in activities and involvement in the club while making it a priority to continue to diversify the membership of the Sierra Club in Howard County. I will also work to bring the Sierra Club into more collaborations with other local environmental groups. Our group is becoming more active in the community and it is exciting to be part of that!

RUTH ALICE WHITE

I want to continue to share my interest in clean energy in our Howard County Sierra Club Group and in the broader community. In 2023 I was part of Electrify HoCo, which the Sierra Club supported in advocating for a Howard County local bill, CB5 about encouraging building electrification. This successful bill requires (1) a report on progress on the HoCo Climate Action Plan and (2) a study to facilitate the county council's action in 2024 to amend building codes to provide for new building electrification.

Since my participating in the campaign to ban fracking in Maryland, I have opposed increasing use of methane gas. The IPCC says that the solution to the runaway climate crisis is to cut back on methane gas emissions asap. We can do this by getting gas out of buildings and electrifying them. Cleaning up landfills and other methane gas sources is important but will take longer.

I will continue to support campaigns for clean energy sources in Maryland for our electrical grid and to promote efforts to move off methane gas and other fossil fuels.

I am a senior from Columbia MD. I am committed to local and state climate efforts that dedicate Federal and state money and resources to those who face financial challenges. I testified against BGE proposed rate increase in August 2023 and I support efforts to reign in utility's excess spending to expand gas infrastructure.

LOWER EASTERN SHORE CANDIDATE STATEMENTS

Vote for Up to 3

PAT TRATE

Ocean City restaurants generate a vast amount of waste, much of it compostable material such as food scraps. The LES Group is providing hands-on support to divert a portion of this material to a composting site where it is processed into mulch. Otherwise, it would be trucked to an incinerator in Chester, PA. I would like to continue supporting this effort. I also want to continue supporting the Group's outreach and educational efforts via its website and, eventually, other social networking.

I now have two years of experience as a member of the LES ExCom. In that time, I have supported or served as lead for close to a dozen "tabling events," which sharpened my face-to-face communication skills and ability to engage people without turning them off. One new idea I brought was the "Adopt a Bucket" project as a way of re-purposing 4-gallon plastic buckets. Approaching people at events such as farmer's markets and asking if they want to adopt a bucket is a great ice-breaker and segue into discussion of the 5 R's. I also would like to get more involved in grass roots government, all the way down to community committees, as a way of spreading the word and trying to influence citizens and consumers to be more "green."

I'm a 71-year-old white man, so I don't think I'll contribute to the Club's diversity.

KATHRYN MASTEN

On ExCom, I hope to leverage my experience as co-founder of a frontline environmental organization in Texas to focus on Sierra Club's efforts to address human-induced climate change issues facing Maryland's Eastern Shore. My skills include conducting research, interpreting legislation and regulations, writing grant proposals, providing detailed comments on permits, shaping press releases, maintaining websites, and teaching others how to do these things.

I am a climate refugee. I fled the South Texas Gulf Coast in 2021 due to worsening tropical storms, sea level rise, coastal flooding, and dirty air, exacerbated by the rapidly expanding fossil fuel export industry where I lived. In moving to Dorchester County, I encountered another rural area suffering disproportionately from the negative impacts of climate change. As a former university professor with small town rural roots, I specialize in rural community informatics, using information and communication technology to connect people in sparsely populated areas to relevant resources. In addition, my husband and I have a business dedicated to fossil-fuel-free boating. I believe that my experience and expertise will be valuable assets for the Sierra Club Lower Eastern Shore ExCom.

JACKY GRINDROD

I would like to advance our presence in the community and have it become a touchstone for folks who have questions about the issues we are fairly expert about, including plastic use reduction, single-use

plastic bag bans, and knowledge of various state-wide newly-enacted environmental bills, their practical application, and the opportunities they may hold for the people in our Group. (This last item relies heavily and with good relationships upon our contacts with the State Chapter and its many knowledgeable staffers.)

I'm a fairly uncreative person with mostly only practical skills. I'm an acceptably competent writer and so I am a good newsletter editor. I am a dedicated adherent to the ways in which we can limit and/or reduce our "carbon footprint," although I admit the excruciating difficulty our presently-constructed society imposes upon us in trying to avoid plastic. It is everywhere and, practically speaking, unavoidable. I would like to emphasize that – recycling isn't enough. We need changes at the top.

I'm a happy 70 years old, so I bring the dinosaur-yet-sometimes-valuable viewpoint of the experienced. I'm a woman – there has been no more oppressed group than that across the spectrum, though I readily acknowledge that Black women, women of color, and people of any group marginalized because of their sexual identity, or their choice of, or their biological determination of, who they are have been even more oppressed than White women. It has been a disgusting history. I live my life in opposition to that disgusting history.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY GROUP CANDIDATES

Vote for up to 5

KAREN METCHIS

I filled a MoCo ExCom vacancy because I was concerned that Sierra Club needed to be more actively and visibly engaged with other locally oriented environmental groups. Sierra Club has a powerful voice, but this voice should not be just an echo of national or state Sierra Club policies. We need to be attuned to what is needed in Montgomery County to advance priorities at the local level. Protecting the environment is a collaborative effort – we must engage with watershed groups, climate change activists, environmental justice voices, transportation alternative advocates, and more.

I retired from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency where I worked on climate change and water resources, and I decided to apply my knowledge locally. While we need to stop emitting greenhouse gases, the impacts of climate change are now built into the system. We are already experiencing the effects from dangerous heat waves, flooding from intense rain events, stress on our natural environment, and more. So, my priority is to improve our resilience. Forests and trees, stormwater, socio-economic equity and social cohesion, and preservation of agricultural resources to protect food and fiber supply chains, are examples of my priorities.

Change happens by simultaneously putting in place societal structures (regulations, ordinances, standards of practice, technology), changing public behavior, and ensuring our politicians address the urgency to invest in solutions.

Joining Sierra Club's voice along with dozens of other local groups will help move us in the right direction and avoid undermining what we all want to achieve.

PATRICIA THOMAS

A lifelong resident of Montgomery County, I still live where I grew up, in Holly Grove in Cloverly. I have been an environmental advocate since my college days. While at Frostburg University, I protested against strip mining in Western Maryland. I protested building the Intercounty Connector, and to this day I refuse to use it. I have served on the Anacostia Watershed Advisory Committee and am active in the Cloverly Civic Association on many issues affecting our community. I got Holly Grove Road added to the Rustic Roads Functional Master Plan this year. It is particularly troubling that the County's Park and Planning Board, under Casey Anderson, approved construction of the gigantic Jesus House complex on New Hampshire Avenue. I testified against this project and worked with the Concerned Citizens of Cloverly to oppose it. The property is located along Bryants Run, in the sub-watershed of the Northwest Branch. County Resolution 14-334 passed in 1999 was intended to preserve the 200 year old forest in these headwaters. But when the land was cleared for construction of Jesus House, many acres of forest were destroyed, just as the birds were nesting.

I am running because I am so concerned that the Montgomery County leadership leans more toward the interests of developers as opposed to the Master Plans and what is best for the environment. The result

is ever more intrusive projects in our communities. I will work to give citizens and local communities a much stronger voice.

MARK POSNER

Since retiring as a civil rights attorney in 2015, I have dedicated my activism to working to protect and enhance the environment in Montgomery County and statewide.

Now in my second term on the Group Executive Committee, I am focusing on increasing solar energy in the County, reducing the use of fossil fuels in buildings, and implementing the County's climate plan. I also have played an integral role at the Maryland Chapter level, including serving as the Chapter's Legislative Chair from 2017 to 2021, more recently acting as lead for Chapter testimony on General Assembly energy bills, and serving four years on the Chapter ExCom. As such, I can provide historical and organizational knowledge to the Group ExCom.

Our County is at a critical juncture in its climate mitigation efforts, and I hope to continue to contribute to the Montgomery Group's ongoing and impactful advocacy efforts by being re-elected to the Group ExCom. I'm knowledgeable on a wide range of environmental issues and reform efforts in the County and statewide, particularly with regard to clean energy generation and siting issues. From my service as Legislative Chair and as lead on statewide energy bills, I have experience and insight into lobbying state and local officials, and am able to place our local county issues in a statewide context. I also have strong writing skills, from overseeing the Chapter's submission of hundreds of General Assembly testimonies and from my many years working as a civil rights attorney.

RICH MANDEL

After a career as a safety & environmental compliance manager for both governmental and private organizations I was appointed to fill a vacancy on the Montgomery County Group's Executive Committee in April 2023. In this capacity I have participated in the International Energy Code and Green Construction Code (IECC & IgCC) working group and was appointed Alternate Delegate to the Maryland Chapter's Executive Committee. In addition, I participated in the Maryland Chapter's most recent lobby day specifically advocating for the Advanced Clean Truck Bill.

Going forward I would like to continue utilizing my expertise towards the promotion and advocacy of progressive environmental causes in Montgomery County and the State of Maryland. As a Sierra Club member since 1981 I have been a participant on numerous national outings and am a graduate of the club's national outdoor leadership training program to include certification in both Wilderness First Aid and Adult CPR. I would like to apply the knowledge that I gained from the club's training program towards reinvigorating the Montgomery County Group's outings program. Other activities in support of progressive causes have included serving as a Member of the Board of Directors and Treasurer of the Rachel Carson Council since 2003, serving as a member of Montgomery County's Solid Waste Advisory Committee from 1993 – 1995, as well as being actively involved in progressive electoral politics since the early 1990's.

LINDA SCHADE

Motivation: Passion and commitment to civic engagement and supporting the web of life. Local action feels especially important now. I know, appreciate and work well with numerous members of the current ExComm. Passionate about ecosystem restoration.

Skills and Experience: Organized two stormwater engagement events in Montgomery and Prince Georges County on behalf of MD Sierra Club and MS4 permitting issues. Long term experience with civic engagement and coalition building. Worked for Audubon Naturalist Society on Montgomery County's Ten Mile Creek campaign. Spearheaded the passage of the 2005 state paper ballot/election integrity bill in Annapolis. Former campaign manager for Marc Elrich. Former candidate for State House in District 20. My professional background includes state climate action plan work in US states and in Mexican and Chinese at subnational levels. Owner of the Sanctuary Urban Farm and Native Plant Nursery which has active partnerships in the local food security movement with Koiner Farm Conservancy and Impact Silver Spring. My two Masters degrees seem relevant in Forestry and Environmental Studies from Yale, and Regional Planning from Cornell. Mushroom forager and grower.

DEI: I strongly support racial justice and understand that environmental justice is not a side dish but inextricably linked to protecting our planet. I was a police accountability activist for many years.

ADDITIONAL WORK/ Interests: Biodiversity and climate change, local food security and native plants.

CARRIE WITKOP

Carrie is an environmental activist, artist, educator and bicyclist committed to protecting our natural environment. She began her career working with local governments on infrastructure and water use issues and later for the ski industry focused on public lands..

A long term resident of Montgomery County, Carrie is a founding member of her neighborhood environmental committee. She organizes community environmental activities focused on composting, tree awareness, and the importance of native plants. She has been involved in the Montgomery County Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions and worked on issues including divestment in fossil fuels, reducing single use plastics and reuse of contractor waste. While on the PTA she worked on improving pedestrian safety including installation of signage, crosswalks, and calming islands in busy roadways. Carrie was instrumental in the 2008 passage of the Lawton Farms to School Lunch Bill by the Maryland State House, a bill that supported adding local foods into our school lunches through a collaboration between farmers and schools, as well as introducing a K-12 healthy food curriculum.

As a print maker and painter, Carrie features environmental themes in her work such as the impact of climate change on our oceans, coral, and sea-life, as well as pieces celebrating pollinators and native butterflies. Carrie's storm drain art, "If it Goes this Way it Flows to the Bay", was installed by volunteers under her direction in downtown Wheaton. In addition to her teaching, art and activism Carrie enjoys hosting neighborhood gatherings for candidates running for elected office.

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GROUP CANDIDATE STATEMENTS

7 open seats to fill

KATHLEEN BARTOLOMEO

I am Kathy Bartolomeo, resident of Greenbelt.

My background is in music education (Baltimore City and Prince George's County public schools) and school counseling. Grew up in Prince George's County and learned much from our family's large garden.

As a member of the Executive Committee, I might share knowledge from the PGC Zero Waste Committee, Climate Justice Wing, Greenbelt's Zero Waste, Green Team and the GHI Woodland's Committee, Maryland Coalition for Responsible Transit (opposes Maglev) and Greenbelt Climate Action Network. I attend meetings with various organizations dealing with climate.

I do hope the committee might be able to do more to encourage students to get involved. I would be a supportive member in the activities of the Prince George's Sierra Club. I would not be adding to the diversity of the group as I am white and a senior.

LILY FOUNTAIN

Lily Fountain has been on the Prince George's Sierra Club Executive Committee since 2020 and serves as its Secretary and Conservation Chair. She has successfully implemented sustainable potlucks and lunches for our group events and hopes to expand all Sierra Club events to be more sustainable. She has a special interest in preserving natural places in Prince George's including Guilford Woods and other mature forests, meadows, stream valleys. She looks forward to working on the Fossil Fuel Transition with particular focus on natural solutions and increased coordination of resource use. She also is an outings leader and has led hikes at Greenbelt Park, Cosca Regional Park, and other area parks as well as assisting at regional events.

TYRAH COBB-DAVIS

I am currently involved in the County's CRA group in the County Ops group. This experience has provided me with new skills and experiences. As an ExCom member, I would like to see continued engagement with the community in various capacities. I see that county-focused events are part of what this group does. That makes me excited because community engagement is something that I am passionate about. I am not as familiar with environmental policy but am interested in learning more. I know that advocating for policy is a great way to advocate for change.

I think that my involvement would highlight diversity in many ways. I am currently in graduate school at UMBC and have focused my research on flooding and other challenges that the Baltimore area (and greater Maryland) will experience as a result of climate change. I recently started a job that focuses on outreach in underserved areas to achieve tree equity. I have worked in PG County, Frederick County,

Baltimore City, and on the Eastern Shore of MD in addition to Nashville, TN and a handful of places in Virginia. I think that my diverse experiences doing field work and working in the environmental space in these areas really provided me with an opportunity to learn about some of the environmental challenges and solutions in these areas. Some subject areas of the work I supported included but was not limited to: water quality, air quality, green energy, renewable energy, stormwater management, urban forestry, etc.

JANET GINGOLD

As a member of your Prince George's County Sierra Club Executive Committee, I hope to engage more of the general public in exploring, enjoying and protecting our local environment. To augment our efforts to accelerate the transition to renewable energy, improve climate resilience in our communities, and protect the natural places that sustain us, we need everybody involved. That means we need communications and activities that will engage the diverse residents of our County. As a member of the PGSC ExCom since 2017, I have been involved in planning outings and educational events, developing testimony about local environmental issues, and communications using the Sierra Club Sales Force platform. As a retired health care professional, biology teacher, and writer, I bring experience in communicating with diverse audiences as well as proficiency with various applications from presentations and zoom rooms to spreadsheets and google forms. I can help bring people together with in-person, virtual, or hybrid meetings. My favorite thing is to put to use my training as a Maryland Master Naturalist and Sierra Club Outings Leader, planning and leading excursions that help people connect with natural places near home. I have lived and worked in Prince George's County since 1980. With openness to learning from others, intentional readings, and conversations about lived experiences different from my own, I hope I can help build bridges, open doors, and eventually leave the Sierra Club a more diverse and inclusive organization than I found it.

JAMES LAWSON

I have served two terms on the Prince George's County Executive Committee and one year on the Maryland Executive Committee. If re-elected, I hope to work to get more people involved to promote environmental justice. We must get people involved in the climate change movement who do not realize that climate change will adversely affect their way of life.

I live in the southern part of Prince George's County. I am a senior citizen and a member of a minority group. This group will be more affected by climate change than the population that has the income and net worth to insulate them from climate change.

SOUTHERN MARYLAND GROUP CANDIDATES

5 open seats to fill

JULIA NICHOLS

What would you like to accomplish as an Executive Committee member?

As a Southern Maryland Group ExCom member, I primarily wish to help the Group meet its short- and long-term goals to improve life and the environment in southern Maryland. I would be happy to continue to serve as Treasurer for the Group and as Chapter Delegate.

What skills, experience and/or new ideas will you bring to the Executive Committee?

I bring a lot of organizational and leadership skills to the ExCom and would continue to work to improve the way we operate.

How will your role on the Executive Committee reflect diversity?

I believe that one of the roles of an ExCom member is to continually seek ways to increase and reflect diversity. I will continue to advocate for projects that will benefit our entire region and for projects that allow for affiliations with under-represented groups.

JOHN POSEY

My primary goal is to improve the quality of the environment, primarily locally within Southern Maryland but also on state, national, and global scales. Specifically, I would like to accomplish making the chapter more effective by supporting current club leadership. My effort has been in the areas of Tree and Garden teams and have started Outing Leader training. In the future, I would like to implement projects dealing with the rivers surrounding Southern Maryland as this has been the focus of my education and much of my career.

I have a varied set of skills and experiences that will benefit the Committee. I spent 5 years as a chemistry technician and sewage plant operator at Chalk Point Power Plant. 5 years as a data scientist at Chesapeake Bay Program Office (CSC contract to EPA). 5 years as a data scientist at Chesapeake Biological Laboratory. 3 years as a data scientist modeling fishery populations. 16 years as a data scientist and project manager at the Census Bureau. AA in Estuarine Resource Technology from CCCC May 1981. BS in Computer Science from UMUC Dec 1988. Master's Certificate in Project Management from GW University. Enjoy working with my hands, and in 2022 built 10 bluebird boxes, 3 screech owl boxes, and a tabletop garden with wheelchair access. And most importantly, knowledge and love of Southern Maryland.

I would reflect diversity by proactively embracing people of all backgrounds and model behavior in adherence to Sierra Club policies.

SANDRA GWYNN

What would you like to accomplish as an Executive Committee member?

I would like to assist the Executive Committee in combating climate change by advocating and lobbying for green/sustainable energy sources and environmentally friendly solutions for transportation, building materials, and food production. I would also like to assist the Sierra Club Southern Maryland Chapter with its commitment to environmental justice. There is a vital role for the Sierra Club in advocating for environmental improvements in marginalized communities.

What skills, experience and/or new ideas will you bring to the Executive Committee?

I am a skilled researcher and communicator. I worked as a reporter, editor, and photographer for a monthly industry magazine. I also served as a member of the Board of Directors of the Project Management Institute Southern Maryland as Website Content Manager and Communications Director.

I have been a hands-on volunteer as a citizen scientist. I volunteered for the Lake Preservation Committee of Chesapeake Ranch Estates, Lusby, MD, where I collected and processed water samples from Lake Lariat and its tributaries. With Sierra Club Southern Maryland, I have helped with trail maintenance at Calvert Cliffs State Park and assisted with invasive species removal at Hellen Creek Forest and Wildlife Preserve.

How will your role on the Executive Committee reflect diversity?

I am sixty and would like to encourage older people to continue to enjoy and protect the environment. I am an advocate for women exploring and enjoying the outdoors.

ASHLEY COBAUGH

What would you like to accomplish as an Executive Committee member?

I would like to continue advocating for the SOMD community and build new relationships with locals who share the same love for the area.

What skills, experience and/or new ideas will you bring to the Executive Committee?

I have volunteered with the SOMD Sierra Club Group since 2018, so I am very familiar with how they operate. I believe that I can continue contributing to the Executive Committee by regularly working to recruit younger volunteers to help expand our demographic reach. I frequently look into new ways to engage with more people in the area.

How will your role on the Executive Committee reflect diversity?

My role in the Executive Committee reflects diversity because I am one of the youngest members, allowing me to advocate for people in our community in the same age group.

WASHINGTON COUNTY GROUP STATEMENTS

2 open seats to fill

MICHAEL BRANDT

I hope to continue to grow the membership of the Washington County Group, raise awareness of the group within the community, improve our group's interactions with other environmental organizations like ACWA and the Riverkeepers, and become more involved with the political decision-making process in the county.

I've been serving as Group Chair for two years. In that time, I've learned a lot about the issues of the county and, even more important, gotten to know a lot of the amazing activists working in Washington County. I hope that continues.

I'm most proud that our group maintained an active presence during the worst of the pandemic, and in the last year has expanded on the outings and activities we hold in addition to the fantastic guest speakers who have attended our meetings. There is still a lot of room for more growth, however, and I hope to see more in the coming years.

I am a member of a multi-racial family that has afforded me the opportunity to see the benefits of diversity and experience the outrage and frustration that comes with our unequal society. Addressing those inequalities as much as possible is a lifelong mission for me personally, and I'm glad to see that the Sierra Club shares those aspirations.