



## CATOCTIN GROUP YEAR IN REVIEW

*Dear Members,*

*I've listed our 2016 Catoctin Group accomplishments for you. As you will see our local volunteers have been very active. Please consider attending one of our monthly meetings or events. Members and guests are always welcome. We often visit a local restaurant for lunch after meetings.*

- Held 11 **Monthly Group Meetings** (combined Executive Committee & General Membership) on the first Saturday of each month
- Published three **Catoctin Group e-newsletters**
- Tabled three events:
  - **Boonsboro Green Festival** 5/7
  - **Middletown Earth Day** 4/23
  - **Frederick City "In The Streets"** 9/10
- Presented a 1½ hour Sierra Club overview and Group work to **Thurmont Residents & Thurmont Green Team**
- Attended six **Carroll County Solid Waste Advisory Meetings** to keep tabs on local waste issues
- Attended two **Frederick County Zero Waste Alliance** meetings to interact with the Alliance
- Held two **Frederick County High School Scholarship** planning meetings
- Met with a **McDaniel College** student to discuss the local Sierra Club/Catoctin (SC-CG) work
- SC-CG member **Lee Popkin** assisted w/**Chapter communications**
- Awarded four \$750 Frederick County **"John Muir" high school (H.S.) scholarships** to students pursuing environmental related careers:
  - Two to **Middletown H.S.** students
  - One to a **Thomas Johnson H.S.** student
  - One to a **Catoctin H.S.** student
- Several Group members assisted with recycling at the **"Common Ground on the Hill Roots Music & Arts Festival"** in Carroll County
- Supported one **Frederick County elementary school garden** with a \$1,000 donation
- **Veronica Poklemba** led the **Frederick County Hydrofracking Ban** work for the Group
- **Veronica Poklemba** led the **Frederick County Zero Waste** work for the Group
- Hike **Leader Anthony Iacovelli** led three **hikes** and helped with one **tree planting**:
  - Saturday, March 19<sup>th</sup> **C&O Canal Hike: Monocacy Aqueduct to Lock 26** (easy 6-mile walk, 8am-11am)
  - Saturday, April 16<sup>th</sup> **Frederick Watershed Trash Pick-Up** organized by the Common Market (9am-1pm)
  - Sunday, April 17<sup>th</sup> **Catoctin Mountain Park** hike to commemorate the **National Park Service Centennial** (strenuous 8.5 mile hike, 8am-1pm)
  - Saturday, May 14<sup>th</sup> **Tree Planting with Stream-Link Education** in Frederick, MD
- Supported the **Carroll Co. Weed Warriors work at Piney Run Park** with a \$750 donation

- Participated in **Sierra Club (S.C.) National gratis calendar program**. Participating scholarship high schools, local environmental group leaders, local politicians and other notable S. C. supporters will receive free calendars.
- Two SC-CG members, **Veronica Poklebma** and **Harry George**, attended the **1000 Friends of Maryland - Frederick County Coalition** meetings to discuss local land development, Monocacy River health and water issues.
- **Veronica Poklebma** attended the two day **Sierra Club Leadership Retreat** to meet other statewide leaders and attend various classes.

*Sincerely,*  
**Dan Andrews**  
*Volunteer Catoclin Group Chairman*



## John Muir, Nature's Visionary

ON THE WILD SIDE FOR SEPTEMBER 16 BY CHRISTINE SCHOENE MACCABEE

“Choked in the sediments of society, so tired of the world, here will your hard doubts disappear ... and your soul breathe deep and free in God's shoreless atmosphere of beauty and love.”

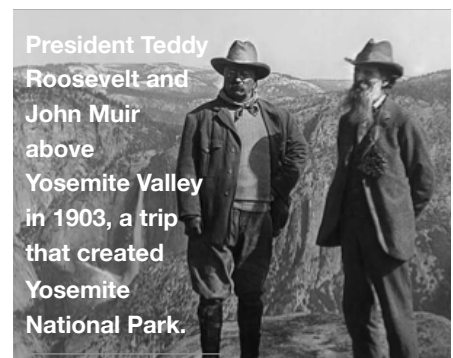
John Muir, 1903

The above quote was part of John Muir's impassioned invitation to President Roosevelt and Vice President Howard Taft to join him in Yosemite and camp out under the stars. Together they talked about protecting the giant redwoods from timbering, as well as preserving the ecological wonders only Muir, and the natives who had lived there, knew intimately. Upon returning East the Roosevelt Administration created 5 national parks, 23 national monuments, and added more than 148 million acres of woodland to the national forest system. Muir was also founder of the Sierra Club of which most of us are aware and some of us members.

In my 20's I knew next to nothing about the person of John Muir until I read a book, *Baptized into Wilderness*, which is filled with many inspiring writings from his years spent as caretaker in Yosemite. How he managed to brilliantly overcome the trauma of living with his tyrannical father, a Scottish Calvinist Minister of the worst sort who beat him daily, is nothing short of a miracle. As Muir wrote in his autobiography, “by the time I was 11 years of age I had about three-fourths of the Old Testament and all of the New by heart and by sore flesh.”

Fortunate to be nurtured by the love of his mother and sisters, and due to his fascination with nature and inventing, he grew into a strong young man, fully determined to make his own way in life once the family moved from Scotland to Wisconsin. Helping to clear land and create their homestead was no easy life, but in his free time, Muir invented all sorts of crazy things made from scraps of iron and wood. At age 22 he decided to show his inventions at the state fair in Madison and was a smash hit with his “early rising machine” which tipped a person out of bed at an appointed hour. His father accused him of the sin of vanity.

He avoided the Civil War on the grounds of pacifism while attending the University of Wisconsin, which he dropped out of after his sophomore year, little knowing that 34 years later he would receive an honorary degree, Dr. of Laws, from that same college. With a beard as bushy and long as any had seen, he headed to Canada on foot, “botanizing” along the way. The things of nature were always his first love.



President Teddy Roosevelt and John Muir above Yosemite Valley in 1903, a trip that created Yosemite National Park.

**Explore, enjoy and protect the planet.**

After losing his eyesight due to a freak accident at a machinery factory, Muir gasped, "My right eye is gone! Closed forever on all God's beauty." His left eye also failed, leaving him blind. However, after endless nightmares and despair while convalescing in a darkened room, his vision slowly returned. Muir proclaimed "Now I have risen from the grave" and he forever shunned the work of factories. Instead, he took to further journeys by foot, with his plant press on his back, heading south to "anywhere in the wilderness" which took him through the Appalachian Mountains and swamps of Georgia. He sketched and journaled and pressed plants along the way.

That first long walk of 1,000 miles took him to Florida along the Gulf of Mexico. However, his longest journey by foot, which he called "my grand sabbath day three years long" drew him West, climbing Mt. Rainer, exploring glaciers in Alaska, and ultimately settling in the California Sierras. It was there that he wrote his most inspiring words describing the beauty and wonder of the plant life, animals, boulders, sequoias, and experiencing ecstatic moments at the top of a tree during a hurricane. Muir proclaimed his reverence for all life forms, becoming a "voice for the voiceless" as he worked to convince others as to the need to preserve as much of the untouched purity of the natural world as possible.

**"Muir's invitation to go out and become 'steeped in the wonder of creation' was not only for people back then. It is still an invitation to us all today."**

Muir's invitation to go out and become "steeped in the wonder of creation" was not only for people back then. It is still an invitation to us all today. My own life has been shaped by Muir and many other voices for the voiceless; that is how I have come to write of my own passion to preserve and enhance wild places, allowing even more habitat on our properties and in our backyards.

Fortunately for us there is a monthly meeting of the Sierra Club at our library in Urbana! This month we will meet on Saturday, January 7 from 10-12. Do come join us as we work on a variety of projects to help preserve the goodness of our planet for generations to come.

With John Muir's Vision as our inspiration we can make progress in spite of adversities. If he did it, so can we!

*Christine is a member of Thurmont's Green Team and a Master Habitat Naturalist. She is happy to help you with habitat, particularly plant ID on your property, and can be reached at [songbirdschant@gmail.com](mailto:songbirdschant@gmail.com)*

### — *Upcoming* —

#### **Executive Committee/General Meeting**



Saturday, January 7, 2017

10:00 am – 12:15 pm

**Urbana Regional Library**

9020 Amelung Street

Frederick County

Executive Committee/ General Meetings traditionally are held the first Saturday of every month. Locations vary. Everyone is welcome to attend — members and non-members alike.

**Contact Dan Andrews: [dooze@qis.net](mailto:dooze@qis.net)**

# Forest Bathing

BY LEW SHERMAN

A forested area often is the environment that people seek to mull over difficult issues or gain some momentary peace in their hectic lives. Perhaps that is why Americans put so much land into public parks and forests. A chattering squirrel, wind in the trees, a shaft of sunlight in a sparkling stream soothes us, quiets our racing thoughts, and pushes some of bad feelings away; a temporary health improvement perhaps. Poets and authors often use such tranquil settings in their writings to set the mood of the story. We just seem to feel good when we experience nature, but do we really know why.


In recent years researchers have taken a great interest in the apparent health benefits of time spent in the woods. The Japanese have been in the forefront of such work. In the 1980's, the Forest Agency of Japan began advising people to stroll in the woods for better health. The practice was called "Forest Bathing" and was shown to lower stress. Since then, studies from Japan and other countries have catalogued many health benefits from walking in the woods including, improved immunity, lower blood pressure, improved cognitive skills, lower levels of inflammatory compounds in the body, better manual dexterity, increased feelings of generosity towards others, weight loss, lowered levels of the stress hormone cortisol and symptom relief for health issues like heart disease, depression, cancer, anxiety and attention deficit disorders. The emission of aromatic compounds called phytoncides from certain evergreens is one of the reasons given for the beneficial biological changes. Less polluted air in forests and more exercise are others.

To help optimize the health benefits of nature walks, the California-based Association of Nature and Forest Therapy Guides and Programs helps woodland wanderers focus on

specific elements of their surroundings such as sounds, sights, smells, colors and movements. In Ontario, Canada Certified Forest Therapy Guides are being trained under a similar enviro program. It is being referred to as "The Forest Bathing Movement". People pay these guides a fee for a woodland stroll to help them optimize their sensory experience. Other similar Ontario initiatives include the "Healthy Parks Healthy People" campaign and the Mental Health Association's "Mood Walks," which promotes a daily stroll as something that can be as effective in treating mild cases of depression as taking an antidepressant.

A large June 2016 Australian study asserts that nearly 10% of people with hypertension could get their condition under control if they spent at least 30 minutes a week in a park. Other studies have revealed that even minimal exposure to trees, such as in a cityscape, can have positive health benefits. How could this be? The majesty of God's

work, the solitude it seems to impart, the hypnosis of its swaying branches or a remnant of our most basic subsistence roots, i.e. dependence on the natural world for survival? Traditional Native Americans revere "Mother Earth" and all that naturally comes from it. For them it is life itself.

If this research really has substance, we may be overlooking vital preventive health care regimens right under our noses and suggests environmental groups are missing an opportunity to benefit mankind even more than some other issues we champion. We have long encouraged people to enjoy and protect nature. Maybe we should do a lot more to educate the public on the health benefits of nature. Meanwhile, stop and stare at a big tree on your way home from work today. Maybe you will be in a better mood at dinnertime. 



Sifferlin, Alexandra, the "Healing Power of Nature", *Time*, July 25, 2016; 24-26.

Locke, Robert, "7 Amazing Health Benefits of Walking in the Woods You Probably Don't Know", *Lifhack Communication*.

Szklarski, Casandra, the "Unlikely Benefits From Walking in the Woods", *Huffington Post*, June 19, 2016.

On November 9, 2016, nationally renowned waste disposal expert Gary Liss, from Zero Waste USA, conducted an all-day workshop in Frederick, introducing the philosophy and concepts associated with “zero waste”. The Sierra Club’s Catocin Group was one of the principle organizations supporting the event. More than 75 individuals participated, representing one of the largest gatherings to date for this workshop. While targeted for Frederick County, attendees included representatives from Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Howard, Montgomery, Prince George’s and Washington Counties and included both government personnel and the general public.

As a result of wisely vacating the pursuit of a waste-to-energy facility (aka “incinerator”), Frederick County is investigating options for dealing with the county’s waste. Jan Gardner, County Executive, established a “What’s Next Committee” consisting of 10 citizen volunteers and Geosyntec, a

consulting firm with which the County has contracted to assess waste options.

The workshop was an effort to educate attendees, including key stake-holders, on more environmentally friendly and economically feasible ways of dealing with waste, and to begin to embrace the concept of a “zero waste hierarchy” for waste management, as depicted in the illustration shown here.

Zero Waste refers to waste management and planning approaches that emphasize waste prevention, as opposed to focusing on end-of-pipe waste management, such as incineration or landfilling, as has historically been done. A well-known example is requiring a deposit on glass beverage containers, which encourages their return and reuse, as opposed to disposal in landfills, or even recycling. (The MD Chapter of the

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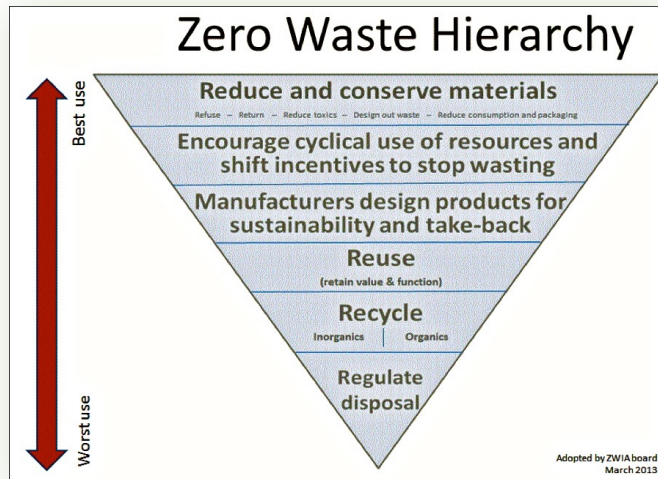
Sierra Club has, and continues to, promote a “bottle bill” in the MD legislature). While there was some voiced concern about how long it would take to implement such a system and change consumer mindset and habits, the important point is that it is a journey, not an instantaneous event, and that there is no better time than the present to begin that journey. It is more of a goal or an ideal, rather than a hard target, and provides principles for continually working towards eliminating waste over time.

One topic in particular that kept resonating during the workshop was the need to consider

recycling food waste via composting, which is considered the “low hanging fruit” of waste disposal. Experts estimate that Americans trash more than 40% of all the food we produce! Seventy million tons of food is tossed annually, occupying 18 percent of the country’s landfill space. Imagine the savings from not having

to haul those 70 million tons of food to landfills, nor to pay the landfilling cost, and instead use that compostable material to enrich the soil of home gardens and farmer’s fields; a win-win for all!

The “journey” to reduce, reuse and recycle continues. Frederick County is in an ideal position and at a critical time to proudly demonstrate our commitment to a better and cleaner environment by embracing the philosophy of a zero waste hierarchy. Stay tuned for further information on this important topic as the “What’s Next Committee” and the County deliberate over the coming year on what strategies and options to take. In the meantime, please consider contacting your local representatives and voice your support for this important initiative.



**Officers/Committee Chairs**

**Chairman & Energy**

Dan Andrews

**Treasurer**

Anthony Iacovelli

**Secretary & Outreach/Social Media**

Amy Andrews

**Conservation**

Anthony Iacovelli

Lew Sherman

**Invasive Plant Removal Stewardship**

Carolyn Puckett

**Outings**

Anthony Iacovelli

Harry George

**Membership**

Patti Fredericks

**Newsletter**

Lew Sherman

**Further Information**

<http://www.sierraclub.org/maryland/catocin-group>

**Upcoming Workshop  
Past, Present and Future  
Challenges for Our Forests**

*Feeling stressed?*

Unfortunately, it is not only people who suffer from stress. Drought, non-native insect pests, imported pathogens, and climate change are stressing our forests and our landscape trees. Join the



**Carroll County  
Forest Conservancy  
District Board**

**Saturday, January 21, 2017**

for an all-day workshop to hear about some of the major challenges to our eastern woodlands and steps to help our trees recover from these stressors. For more information about the workshop and how to register, visit this website:[http://](http://www.carrollcountyforestryboard.org/index.cfm?objectid=819CD780-8AB9-11E4-AACF0050560F037A)

[www.carrollcountyforestryboard.org/index.cfm?objectid=819CD780-8AB9-11E4-AACF0050560F037A](http://www.carrollcountyforestryboard.org/index.cfm?objectid=819CD780-8AB9-11E4-AACF0050560F037A) <<http://www.carrollcountyforestryboard.org/index.cfm?objectid=819CD780-8AB9-11E4-AACF0050560F037A>>.

To request a paper registration form call  
**Maryland Forest Service  
410-848-9290**

*“The mountains are fountains of men as well as of rivers, of glaciers, of fertile soil. The great poets, philosophers, prophets, able men whose thoughts and deeds have moved the world, have come down from the mountains — mountain dwellers who have grown strong there with the forest trees in Nature’s workshops.” — John Muir*

