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GPCA

GREATER PATAPSCO COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Issue #452 **GPCA Newsletter** **December 2025**

Happy Holidays!

From the GPCA Board

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GPCA General Meeting

Monday December 8, 2025, 7:00 pm

Social Hall, Granite Presbyterian Church
10637 Old Court Road

GPCA Holiday Party!

T'is the Season! Join us on December 8 at 7:00 PM at Granite Presbyterian Church for the annual GPCA Holiday Party. Everyone is welcome; membership is not required to attend. Joyful music will be provided by saxophonist Dominique Johnson

of Devine Sounds, and our State Senator Ben Brooks will be bringing the turkey. We will provide the refreshments, you bring your cheer and a dish to share if you like! You just can't miss this wonderful way to wrap up our calendar year.

Upcoming Meetings and Events:
January 13, 2026 – Guest Speaker Phil Herndon will discuss drones. *Following the elections of GPCA Officers and Directors,* Phil will give a presentation on drones including: drone basics, flying drones, and the things to consider before flying them--they're not just simple toys!
February 9, 2026--General Meeting. Representatives from SunPower, LLC will present an update on the Hernwood Landfill Solar Project

Please come join us

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President's Note

Dear Friends and Neighbors,
As 2025 comes to a close, I want to thank each of you for making this such a meaningful year for the Greater Patapsco Community Association. Through every meeting, event, cleanup, and conversation, you've shown what it means to truly care for a community — not just in words, but through action.

We've welcomed powerful guest speakers, preserved pieces of our history, supported local projects, and strengthened our connections with one another. It's been a full year — and a good one — because of your involvement and commitment.

To celebrate, I hope you'll join us for our **GPCA Holiday Party** at our final General Meeting of the year on **Monday, December 8 at 7:00 PM**. This is always one of our favorite gatherings — a chance to slow down, share good food and laughter, and enjoy the warmth of community as we head into the holidays. Whether you've been attending meetings all year or are joining us for the first time, we'd love to see you there!

Wishing you and your loved ones a joyful, peaceful holiday season and a bright start to the new year. Thank you for continuing to make GPCA strong, welcoming, and full of heart.

We may be small, but we are mighty.
With holiday cheer,
Chris Brock
President, Greater Patapsco Community Association (GPCA)

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Last Month's Meeting
November 10, 2025

Speaker: Jesse Thomas-Blate
American Rivers

At our November monthly meeting, we were honored to welcome Jesse

Thomas Blate of American Rivers.
Jesse discussed the ongoing feasibility study for removing Daniels Dam, focusing on river restoration and community involvement. In her introduction, she noted that the mission of American Rivers is to protect wild rivers, restore damaged rivers, and conserve clean water for both people and nature. She emphasized the interconnectedness of rivers, ecosystems, and communities, as well as the role of individuals in advocating for and contributing to river restoration efforts.

Some key points in her presentation included:
Healthy rivers support recreation, hydropower, and climate resilience. Unhealthy systems are characterized by the presence of toxicants, reduced oxygen levels, and stressed aquatic life.
Dam Removal--Maryland has over 600 dams, with an average age of 59 years. The Patapsco-Gunpowder subwatershed has 123+ dams impacting the Chesapeake Bay. Regarding Daniels Dam:

- A drawback of dam removal is the loss of recreational use in that area, especially for canoeing, kayaking, and stand up paddle boarding.
- A benefit of dam removal is the restoration of natural river functions including reconnecting habitats for aquatic species.

Additionally, dam removal improves public safety by removing hazards.
Patapsco River Restoration Project
Recent dam removals include Union Dam (2009-2011), Simkins Dam (2010-2011), and Bloede Dam (2018-2019). Objectives include reconnecting migratory fish habitats and improving water quality.
Regarding Bloede Dam, Jesse noted that nine migratory fish species were observed upstream of the dam after removal, and that 99 % sediment loss occurred in the first year following removal.
Daniels Dam Feasibility Study
The study involves engineering work and community input to evaluate options, which are: *do nothing, fix the dam, or remove the dam.*

Community feedback was sought on the future of the Daniels area in Patapsco Valley State Park.
The community was invited to Email their thoughts to:
DanielsDamOutreach@americanrivers.org
Or they could participate in an online survey at;

https://dnr.maryland.gov/publiclands/Pages/daniels-dam-feasibility-study.aspx

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Hernwood Landfill Solar Project

Background of the Hernwood Landfill Solar Project

In 2021, Baltimore County announced its partnership with SunPower, LLC to build a solar energy facility at the former Hernwood Landfill. The project involves the construction of a solar plant on 57.7 acres leased from the county. The intent is for Baltimore County to purchase the electricity generated by this facility, which will support the county's goal of sourcing 100% of its electricity from renewable energy by 2026.

Progress on Renewable Energy Initiatives

Together with a recently completed solar installation at the former Parkton landfill, the Hernwood Landfill Solar Project is expected to play a significant role in advancing the county's sustainability objectives. These two facilities combined are projected to provide 55% of the electricity used by Baltimore County government.

Project Timeline and Current Status

Although 2026 is approaching, construction at the Hernwood site has not yet begun. According to Baltimore County Energy and Sustainability Coordinator Seth Blumen, construction mobilization for the project is anticipated to start in November 2026. Once underway, the facility—designed to generate approximately 13.5 megawatts DC (9.9 megawatts AC)—is expected to become operational by January 2028.

Community Engagement and Upcoming Meeting

To keep the community informed about the project's status, Mr. Blumen, along with SunPower Project Managers Brian Bettencourt and Bradley Darake, have been invited to speak at the general meeting scheduled for February 9. They will provide an update and answer questions about the Hernwood Landfill Solar Project.

Thank you!

~ Cathy Wolfson, Public Affairs

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Election of GPCA Officers and Directors

January 12, 2026, Election of Officers and Directors

As previously reported, the GPCA By-Laws direct us to hold annual elections at our January general meeting.

The following rules apply:
To be eligible to serve on the Executive Board the candidate must be a member of the GPCA for a minimum of 6 months immediately preceding the election.
Officers are elected for a one-year term. There are no limits on consecutive terms, except for the president, who may only serve for two consecutive one-year terms and may again become eligible after a one-year lapse.
Directors serve for one 3-year term and may again become eligible after a one-year lapse.

At this point we have the following nominees for the open Officer and Director slots:
President – Chris Brock
Vice President – Butch Oakman
Secretary – Brenda Strohmer
Treasurer – Cathy Wolfson
Director – open – 1-year term to finish out Patrik Bavoil's term, who is retiring
Director – open – full 3-year term

We have three candidates for the two open Director slots. Thanks to Pamela Germain, Sandy Fallin and Steve Goodmuth for stepping up and throwing their hat in the in the ring. Also thank you to Chris, Butch, Brenda and Cathy who all agreed stay on if they get reelected.

The third Director slot currently held by Gabriela Summerer-Herndon, is not up for election since the 3-year term doesn't expire until January 2028.

We are currently accepting nominations for all open positions.

What's the commitment?
In addition to attending GPCA's General Meetings on the 2nd Monday of

the month from
September to June, the Board meets on the 3rd Monday of each month at 7:00 pm via Zoom.

All Officers and Directors shall contribute impartially to decisions of the board and support the objectives of GPCA which per our By-Laws are:

“To preserve and enhance the tranquility and beauty of our rural environment and to encourage orderly and positive growth of the community within the framework of prescribed regulations and laws. The Association shall provide a forum for all residents to express their concerns and interests and shall attempt to provide informative and interesting programs that will keep members informed and be better able to address any of their concerns or problems. The Association’s objective is also to foster a spirit of community among the residents.”

Nominations for candidates are being taken at this time and will continue until the election when nominations will also be taken from the floor. If you’re interested in serving on the board, would like to nominate a candidate, or have any questions about the process please contact Gabriela Summerer-Herndon, Nominating Committee Chair, at gpcagsh@gmail.com.

Thank you!

~ Gabriela Summerer-Herndon, Director of the Board and Election Committee

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.....A Message from the GPCA Clean Up Committee

GPCA Community Clean Up Initiatives

The GPCA Clean Up Committee is committed to maintaining the beauty and cleanliness of our community through various clean-up events. In addition to the annual spring community-wide cleanup, the Committee organizes mini cleanups throughout the year. These targeted efforts are based on input from community members and observations of litter hotspots that are noticeable when traveling in and around the area.

Recent Mini Cleanup Event

The most recent mini cleanup took place at the intersection of Granite Road and Harrison Grant Road on November 22, 2025. This event was led by Jim Raistrick, the GPCA Cleanup Committee Chair, who was joined by dedicated community members Judy Plaskowitz and Dave Hutchins. Together, the group collected approximately four bags of trash and recycling, making a noticeable improvement to the area. During the cleanup, a couple of neighbors stopped by to thank the volunteers for their efforts. To further highlight the ongoing commitment of GPCA to environmental stewardship, a sign reading “This Area Cleaned by GPCA” was placed at the location.

Upcoming Mini Cleanup and Call for Volunteers

Another mini cleanup event is scheduled for December 20, 2025. The tentative location for this effort is the intersection of Old Court Road and Granite Road. The Committee is seeking volunteers to help with this initiative. If you are interested in participating and contributing to the preservation of our community's environment, please contact the GPCA Cleanup Committee Chair at [communitycleanupgpca@gmail.com].

Thank you!

~ Jim Raistrick, Clean Up Committee Chair

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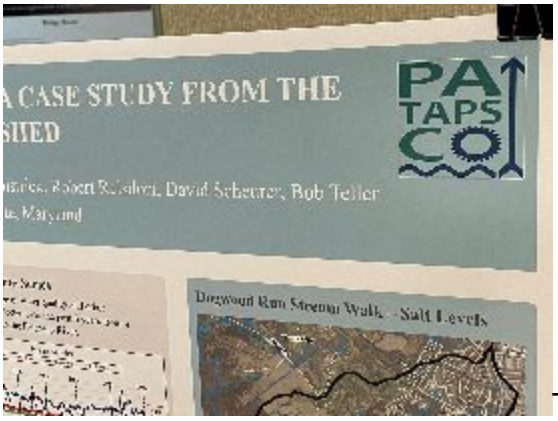
....*A Message from the GPCA Small Watershed Conservation Committee*

2025 Maryland Water Monitoring Conference

SWCC Participation and Poster Presentation

The SWCC team played an active role in the 2025 Maryland Water Monitoring Conference. Dave Scheurer represented SWCC by presenting a poster that detailed the work the team has been conducting. In addition to Dave's presentation, SWCC members Pam Germain, Andy Grosko, Judy Plaskowitz, and Bob Reisdorf also attended the conference, which was held on November 20 in Linthicum, MD. The event offered valuable opportunities for networking and learning about current research and advanced water monitoring methods.



The poster presented by SWCC showcased data collected over the past four and a half years. Sharing these findings at the conference allowed the team to connect with other professionals involved in stream surveys. The high salinity levels documented by SWCC volunteers in Dogwood Run attracted significant interest from attendees, including a Maryland DNR Geologist and a Towson University professor. Both offered their assistance and technology tools to support SWCC's ongoing salinity investigations.

Other Research Topics and Environmental Issues Discussed at the Conference

Researchers at the conference presented on a number of environmental issues and warned on toxins in everyday materials. Back in 2023 there was a serious fish kill in Beaver Creek right after a strong August

thunderstorm dumped 2 inches of rain onto Route 70 and the surrounding area. Now researchers are working to determine whether chemicals used to protect tires from UV breakdown could have caused the fish kill after contaminated road runoff poured into the creek.

Technological Advances: Satellite Monitoring of Submerged Aquatic Vegetation

The use of high-resolution satellites is allowing researchers to assess the status of Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV) throughout the Chesapeake Bay. Currently, nearly the entire bay is mapped. The convenience of satellite assessment of bay SAV allows the researchers to view changes of SAV throughout the year. The data will enable researchers to ask questions about the role of SAV populations in the coastal carbon cycle.

Groundwater Quality: Chloride Sources and Impacts

Other research centered on identifying and documenting potential chloride sources impacting groundwater quality in Central Maryland. Elevated chloride in drinking water (>250 mg/l) makes water taste salty and can pose a health hazard to people on salt-restricted diets. Chloride also speeds corrosion of infrastructure, and increases maintenance costs. Chloride does not degrade or absorb, leading to long-term buildup in groundwater. Sources of chlorides in groundwater include septic effluent, landfills, road salt, saltwater swimming pools, agriculture, and natural brine.

~ Laurie Donnelly, Small Watershed Conservation Committee, Chair

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Wreaths Across America at Granite Presbyterian Church

Remember the Fallen Honor Those who Served

Saturday December 13, 2025

Where:10637 Old Court Road, Woodstock, MD, Maryland 21163

Please arrive no later than 11:30. A ceremony honoring veterans laid to rest at the cemetery will begin promptly at noon
Information on Facebook at: Wreaths Across America at Granite Presbyterian Church

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Know Someone New to the Community?

Please share this newsletter and let them know they can sign up for their own free subscription at gpca.net No membership required!GPCA Membership Thanks to all of you who have joined GPCA this year. Membership is open year-round and you can join anytime at gpca.net or just use this QR code Not sure if you joined, or if your membership is up to date? Just contact me, Cathy Wolfson Treasurer / Membership Chair at gpca.treasurer@gmail.com and I'll be glad to let you know!

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Around the Neighborhood

Holiday Happenings!

Gingerbread House Decorating! Lots of Fun!
Granite Presbyterian Church Social Hall
Sunday December 7, 2025 at 11:30
Information on Facebook at Gingerbread House Decorating

Randallstown Holiday Gift & Craft Show Sat, Dec 6, 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM Randallstown Community Center (3505 Resource Dr) A festive day featuring over 50 local vendors and crafters for unique holiday shopping. Includes **free admission**, photos and a meet-and-greet with Santa.

Natural Holiday Sale Sat, Dec 6, Howard County Conservancy (10520 Old Frederick Rd) Shop from local artisans for nature-inspired gifts, enjoy live music, participate in raffles, and let kids make free critter crafts. Admission and registration are free.

What's happening in your HOA?
What's going on around the neighborhood, along the roads or near you?
Let your community know!

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