



PO Box 31, Granite, MD 21163

Issue #417

GPCA Newsletter

May 2022

Next Meeting: Monday, May 9 th, 7:00 P.M. – Virtually via Zoom

Guest Speaker – Dr. Philip Piccoli

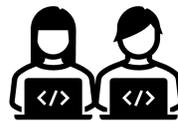
Woodstock Granite: Rare in Significance, Small in Location, with a Very Large History

For over 100 years, geologists and naturalists have studied the rocks and soils around Granite, Maryland, thought to be hundreds of millions of years old, in one of the smallest mapped areas of its kind, with rare mineralogy important to both history and science.

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From the Editors' Desk

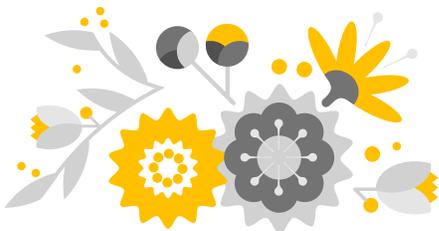


2022 is the year of soil health. While you are busy with your spring planting, grab a fistful of soil from your vegetable or flower bed and appreciate that this insignificant mixture is actually an elegant ecosystem teeming with billions of bacteria, fungi, and other microbes. Our precious Earth is composed of more than 400 ecosystems, among which "fresh water" is one of the major categories. A healthy stream ensures a balanced ecosystem supporting the growth of aquatic animals, vegetation and us humans who rely on clean water for our daily activities. Kudos to the members of GPCA small watershed conservation committee who have been monitoring the streams in our neighborhood. Read Laurie Donnelly's article in this issue on how she is training to become a "Master Watershed Steward". Kathy Skullney also contributed an interesting article about agrivoltaic farming under solar panels. Please share your knowledge and interest with our community by submitting articles to the GPCA Newsletter. As always, we love to hear any feedback and comments from you.

~ Editorial Team

EditorGPCANewsletter@gmail.com

*Happy
Mother's Day*



From the GPCA President



A confession. I'm going to miss it. I've opened my mailbox to the GPCA newsletter 10 months a year for more than 30 years. Members and non-members, email subscribers and residents that haven't, can't or won't go digital have been linked together by our newsletter for decades. Can't count how often folks have brought something to my attention that they read there. Your GPCA board has voted for the newsletter to go all electronic starting with the August 2022 issue. Skeptical? You bet. I received 96 emails today. 22 went directly to spam and I deleted 34 others based on the subject line alone. Of the remaining 30, I opened only 12, keeping the other 18 "just in case". This reality adds to my anxiety about whether the GPCA message will reach the 1,650 residents we mail the newsletter to each month. I'm assured most of those issues go in the trash (I hope optimistically into recycling), but at least I know 1,650 of you have been delivered information about our efforts to support GPCA's objective of "preserving our rural environment and encouraging orderly and positive growth within our community". The GOOD NEWS is that this transition is in the talented and committed hands of our newsletter editors, Ru-ching Hsia and Patrik Bavoil who make it browser friendly and interactive. So it is up to you, readers to sign up for GPCA's emails and newsletters by contacting our Communications Chairperson at gpc21163@gmail.com who will add you to the list and send you the link to the newsletter on publication of each issue. Alternatively, you can visit, gpc.net anytime for the latest issue (and back issues) and other timely news and share it with your neighbors. I challenge you to prove me to be the skeptic I am. When GPCA sends out the call to support our mission at hearings, meetings and events, please show digital is just as effective as print communication with your participation. We count on you so you can count on us.

~ *Cathy Wolfson, President*

In Memoriam



With profound sadness we share the news that Denise Maranto of Rices Lane passed away on Easter Sunday. Like many of us, Denise joined GPCA to alert the greater community to a

code compliance and zoning violation issue in her own neighborhood, which was the conversion of a single-family home to a mosque without the county's approval for a change of use to a house of worship. Thanks to Denise's efforts working with county agencies to hold Randallstown Islamic Center accountable and mobilizing the support of her neighbors, it now meets Baltimore County building codes and regulations. Denise showed her appreciation for GPCA's support of her efforts by working as our longest serving secretary for 6 years until taking a leave of absence in January for health reasons. Denise's activism on behalf of her community is an inspiration for achieving the best results within the framework of our county's zoning and code enforcement regulations. We miss her sorely but her work on behalf of the Rices Lane community endures.

Community Cleanup Update



After a week of cold windy weather, it was a relief to see the sun shining on April 2, clean-up day! It was also a relief to see everyone's smiling faces, 'unmasked' in the open air!! Things are slowly getting back to normal, I think.

Always, we extend a heartfelt thank you to the St. Alphonsus Church for their ongoing support of the GPCA community by allowing us to use their spacious parking lot for our Annual Clean-Up.

Here are the 2022 teams:

Old Court "Adopt-A-Highway": Patrik Bavoil, Jim Raistrick, Brigitte Hisky, Dana Weant, Bob and Susie Reisdorf, Harold Jarvis, Alyson Bradford

Hernwood Road: Richard Strohmer, Dee Cutler, Brenda Strohmer, Bud Strohmer, Steve Jones, and Nate Kroneberoer, Ken Jordan, Fred and Ann-Eliese Jordan, Julian Jones

Granite Road: Arnie Gries, Peter Malinovsky, Ralph Wright, Adrien Malick, Bob Teller

Mardella Run: Jackie and Joyce Myster, Rhoda L Jones (behind the scenes support)

Davis Ave: Sandy Fryer, Tim Tucker, Joyce Utmar
Dogwood Road: Melanie and Sandy Parker, Scott and Christine Mullin

Offutt Road: Philip Machado,

The much appreciated snacks were provided this year by Nadine Merkle!

I can't thank Butch Oakman and Cathy Wolfson enough for all they do behind the scenes from setting out the *Prepare to Stop* signs early in the morning to collecting all the roadside bags well after we've all cleared out. Thanks also to Patrik Bavoil who worked hard picking up on Old Court as well as later retrieving bags along the roads. My thanks to Bill Skullney who helped me directing traffic and monitored the incoming loads all morning and to my son, Ezra Link, for doing a lot of the heavy work in preparation.

On behalf of GPCA, I want to say thank you for showing up. It was great to see you all again.

Somehow shaking hands has never seemed so special.

~Carol Link, *Community Clean-up Chair*

Land use/Zoning Update



The current status of active development cases affecting our community and in which GPCA has participated is as follows:

Patapsco Glen II on Johnnycake Road:

Development Plan – Opinion and Order of approval as affirmed by the Board of Appeals per the February 17 deliberations and written decision dated March 1, 2022.

Variances Petition - The Board of Appeals publicly deliberated GPCA's Motion for Reconsideration on March 29, 2022 for 4 minutes, unanimously deciding to deny the Motion and approve the variances. There is not yet a written decision.

Patapsco Fields PUD on Johnnycake Road – – The written decision reaffirming the Administrative Judge's approval was issued on April 6, 2022. Any further actions would have to be filed in the Baltimore County Circuit Court within 30 days of that date.

Serenity Ridge Natural Burial Cemetery (Berg property) on Ridge Rd – Petition for Special Exception was heard by the Administrative Judge on April 4, 2022, and GPCA participated in the hearing, stating its support. The written decision granting the Special Exception was issued on April 8, 2022.

Site drone pictures, each with map of shot, are posted on the GPCA website at www.gpca.net.

~Kathy Skullney, *GPCA Zoning Chair*

Baltimore County Redistricting



The federal Court approved the redrawn map submitted by Baltimore County by Order dated March 25, 2022. The plaintiffs had challenged the redrawn map as only marginally changed, and thereby failing to meet the Court's order. The Court disagreed in its Order, and gave an April 29, 2022 deadline for any further actions to be filed.

The case is identified as *Baltimore County NAACP, et al. v. Baltimore County, Maryland, et al*, Civil Action No. 21-cv-03232-LKG, U. S. District Court for the District of Maryland. More information and a copy of the lawsuit and Order can be found at www.aclu-md.org.

Small Watershed Conservation Committee (SWCC)



What is a Master Watershed Steward?

You have probably heard of a Master Gardener, and maybe of a Master Naturalist; another similar program is the Master Watershed Steward. This is a nationwide program, managed by individual states and counties. Master Watershed Stewards are leaders who engage communities to reduce polluted runoff. To become certified, they complete 4 months of classroom and hands-on training, followed by the design and implementation of a capstone project which takes about 9 months. These activities are led by a local Watershed Academy (WSA).

When Bob Teller, the Chair of the SWCC, mentioned this program to me last year, I was motivated to enter the program so that I could learn more about watersheds and contribute to the GPCA SWCC activities. Baltimore County does not have a WSA, but luckily the Howard County WSA, led by Program Coordinator Terry Matthews, was willing to accept me. Last December, I completed my training and am currently in the middle of my capstone project.

My project is taking place in the Glenmont community in Columbia, where I am working with 2 other students to educate the community about polluted runoff, specifically from pet waste and lawn fertilizers. We will be conducting surveys, doing community events, and measuring the local stream health to determine whether our efforts have produced cleaner streams. It is a challenging and exciting program because we will actually measure the results, for which my GPCA SWCC experience has prepared me.

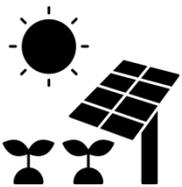
After completion of the capstone project, we (my fellow WSA students and I) will present our results to the Howard County WSA board in October to become certified. To maintain certification, Stewards must perform a minimum of 40 hours a year of community service related to watersheds and complete 8 continuing educational units every year.

Once certified, Master Watershed Stewards assess watersheds to identify sources of pollution, educate and work with communities to reduce pollutants, and help communities reduce polluted runoff by coordinating the installation of rain gardens, rain barrels, and other Rainscaping methods to “slow the flow”. Experienced storm water management practitioners provide Stewards with on-going support for community projects. The Howard County WSA provides a strong network of support to Stewards to continue to contribute to their communities.

For more information, visit <https://www.howardwsa.org> or contact me at imdonna1@yahoo.org.

~Laurie Donnelly, SWCC member

Agrivoltaics – Real Solar “Farming”



As we in GPCA know only too well, the highly desirable production of energy by solar panels raises the equally undesirable effect of altering the physical character and functionality of our local landscapes.

The conversion of acres and acres of formerly productive farms to solar power facilities can result in what seems to be endless stretches of metal and wire, without much else related to the well-being of the land itself. It’s really “energy sprawl,” not farming. But the choice doesn’t have to be clean energy or crops – it can

be both! The Natural Resources Defense Council recently published two articles on the emerging field (no pun intended) of “agrivoltaics”. See *Made in the Shade: The Promise of Farming with Solar Panels*, 2/23/2022, and *Sheep (and Soil Scientists) Juice Up the Solar Farm*, 2/20/2022 at NRDC.org.

Agrivoltaics is the synergistic combination of solar photovoltaic power production with agricultural uses such as crop production and grazing. It explores “ways of incorporating solar arrays into farmland without sacrificing that farmland’s arability...” Research shows that growing crops beneath photovoltaic displays can actually yield a distinct set of agricultural and environmental benefits. Thanks to the shade provided by the panels, for example, the soil can retain more water...protect crops from severe weather...with evidence now indicating that certain crops may even “grow better, stronger and longer” with such protection.

The value of agrivoltaics is demonstrated on a farm near Boulder Colorado which has a 24-acre site hosting 3,200 photovoltaic panels, producing 1.2 megawatts of electricity – about 300 homes worth. The same site produced 8,600 pounds of organic vegetables in 2021, all of which grew beneath the “cool, partially shaded awnings of the photovoltaics.” More remarkable, as research continues, is evidence that plants beneath the panels may actually improve the performance of the panels as seasons grow hotter. Higher heat tends to have a negative effect on the panels’ efficiency, but the plants under and around the panels keep them cooler, which lessens the negative impact by as much as 10%!

Grazing animals can be equally valuable to the integration of renewable energy and traditional farming. This has been successfully demonstrated with sheep herds in particular in the UK. Sheep are relatively small, don’t climb, and generally docile, so don’t damage solar equipment. They fatten and grow wool while controlling all the vegetation around the panels. Most important to ecosystem protection and restoration, however, and often overlooked, is the need to offset carbon trapped in soil by organic soil replenishment (fertilization) which the sheep also provide. This spring, a large solar facility in Georgia with 350,000 panels, will introduce 1,000 sheep to graze and be raised around those panels. The concept is well beyond “just solar plus sheep.” It is “about regeneration and holistic management for the land.”

Locally, Howard County has joined with the non-profit Community Ecology Institute to demonstrate the viability of agrivoltaics by awarding CEI a grant with Power52 to install a solar panels and garden site on the historic Freetown Farm in Columbia. With its success, Howard County will promote agrivoltaics on its larger farming community.

Agrivoltaics → the combination of renewable electricity generation, ecosystem preservation and restoration, with real farming = **real** solar farms.

~Kathy Skullney

The Granite Historical Society Spring Hike

The Granite Historical Society (GHS) has scheduled its 2022 Spring History Hike for **Saturday, May 14**. We will meet in the **Granite Presbyterian Church parking lot at 1PM sharp** and from there drive to a private parking area along Wright’s Mill Road graciously made available to us by one of our members.



We will hike west along Brice Run and then northwest along the Patapsco to the Dorsey Railroad Tunnel, built in 1906.

The total distance is just over a mile. There’s a bit of “up and

down” to the trail. A few spots are “slightly steep”, but not overly so. Be forewarned that the trail is somewhat narrow and not at all flat or smooth. It’s fairly rocky in spots, so I would suggest that you wear sturdy shoes or boots. I might also suggest that you bring drinking water, as no water is available along the route.

Three or four days ahead of the scheduled date, I will email a packet of information to those who are attending. The packet will include a short history of the B&O Main Line “second division” (the section of track between Daniels & Sykesville) along with some maps and drawings. The construction of the “second division” in the early 1830s was of monumental importance in the development of Granite, Maryland, as a community – thousands of tons of granite from both the Waltersville and Fox Rock Quarries provided the B&O with “stone stringers” on which rails were laid and with building blocks for bridges and culverts.

If you’ve already contacted me as to your interest in the hike, you’re already on the list to receive the

aforementioned packet and don’t need to do anything else. Otherwise, please respond to me at john.ghs@fullduplex.com or email the GHS at info@granitehistoricalsociety.org.

Let’s pray for great weather!

~John Brantley, GHS Treasurer

Warm Spirit Massage

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Tissue



Pregnancy
Hot
Stone

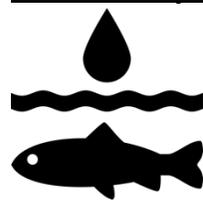
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How does your stream rate?



Our Small Watershed Conservation Committee has been collecting and testing samples taken from 4 of our local streams, every month since September 2019. Our June issue will feature a “report card” of data compiled from 32 months of samples taken from Dogwood Run, Bens Run, Brice Run and Granite Branch, all sub-watersheds of the Patapsco River. Look for it in the June issue of GPCA Newsletter!

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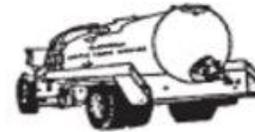
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Renew GPCA annual membership online at <https://www.gpca.net>



- Individual - \$20
- Joint (2 members in same household) - \$30
- Associate (non-resident & business) - \$10

*GPCA General Meetings are held on the second Monday of each month, **except July and August**. Everyone is invited to attend. During the pandemic, meetings will be held virtually. Details to join the meetings will be communicated using email.*

Contact gpca21163@gmail.com or <https://www.gpca.net/contact-us/> to add your email address to the GPCA list to continue receiving the digital Newsletter and meeting announcements.



GPCA

PO Box 31, Granite, MD 21163



YOUR COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

NEW FOR 2022 JOIN ONLINE @ www.GPCA.net

Attend our meeting **May 9, 2022 @ 7 PM** via Zoom

Guest Speaker: Dr. Philip Piccoli,

Research Scientist, Department of Geology, U of Md

Title: Woodstock Granite: Our Rock - Rare in Significance, Small in Location, with a Very Large History.

Details about how to join the virtual call will be sent to the GPCA email group. To be added to the group and receive the agenda and zoom call-in link, email gpc21163@gmail.com. You can unsubscribe at any time.

GPCA Objectives: 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 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. The Association will only become directly involved in matters which affect the safety and welfare of the community as a whole. This involvement will be directed at actions which violate existing laws or regulations or which will assist in implementing new laws or regulations to further and achieve our objectives.

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<p>GPCA reserves the right to accept, edit, or refuse advertising.</p> <p><u>To place an ad:</u> Send the ad copy by email as a pdf attachment to the Editor by the 20th of the month prior to publishing.</p> <p><u>Payments for ads:</u> Make check payable to GPCA and mail to GPCA, P.O. Box 31, Woodstock, MD 21163 prior to publication deadline. Checks must indicate ad size and months to be published. No payment received = no ad placement.</p> <p><u>Rates and ad sizes:</u> 1/8 page = \$15; 1/4 page = \$30; 1/2 page = \$50; full page = \$80. Personal ads up to one column inch = \$3 for GPCA members and \$5 for non-members. Ads should avoid excessive dark areas that do not copy well. Hard copy ads appear in black and white.</p> <p><u>For articles and letters:</u> Submissions to the newsletter become the property of GPCA unless otherwise agreed upon. GPCA reserves the rights to accept, reject, edit, or hold submitted articles/letters for future publication.</p> <p><u>Submission Deadline</u> the 20th of the month previous to publication.</p>	<p><u>President:</u> Cathy Wolfson 410-245-8708 oakknob@comcast.net</p> <p><u>Vice President:</u> Zulma Santiago Ortiz 410-750-7279 zoom49@msn.com</p> <p><u>Secretary:</u> Vacant</p> <p><u>Treasurer:</u> Maribeth Diemer 410-461-4988 maribeth-13@att.net</p> <p><u>Directors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maurice Dixon - Term Ends 2023 410-393-4025 mauricedixon714@gmail.com • Lisa Charyszyn - Term ends 2024 443-763-0850 Lcharyszyn@gmail.com • Butch Oakman- Term ends 2025 443-314-6415 oakelectric@comcast.net <p><u>Editors:</u> Ru-ching Hsia & Patrik Bavoil editorgpcnewsletter@gmail.com</p> <p><u>Communications:</u> Bob Teller gpc21163@gmail.com</p>