



# *The Arlington* ENVIRONMENT

[www.arlingtonenvironment.org](http://www.arlingtonenvironment.org)

## *Ozone Pollution Is Unhealthy for Many Residents*

### **Bad Air Quality Conditions Prevail in Washington, DC Region**

**H**ot, humid, and hazy. This combination is an everyday part of a Washington, DC summer. With the DC region's air quality ranked by the American Lung Association as the 11<sup>th</sup> worst in the country for ozone pollution, summers in Washington, DC are not only hot and smoggy, but can be unhealthy for the elderly and many with chronic breathing conditions.

Why is air pollution worse in the summer? The principal pollutant causing health problems in the DC region is ozone. On hot, sunny days, ozone is produced when pollutants from sources such as cars and power plants chemically react. Sunlight is needed for this reaction to take place.

In the atmosphere, ozone forms a protective layer that shields us from harmful ultraviolet rays. On the ground, ozone is a pollutant, damaging the lining of the lungs, making breathing difficult, and aggravating breathing for those with asthma.

How bad is air quality in the region? In 2003, there were a total of four days, all in June, during which ozone action day forecasts warning of

poor air quality were issued. Two days were code orange and two were code red. (See box on p. 2 for explanation of color codes.) The year 2002 was much worse, with 12 code red days and three code orange days.

The future of our region's air quality looks better. Federal laws regulating air pollution have recently been updated, requiring more actions by state and local governments to improve air quality.

The Clean Air Act, amended in 1990, sets limits for how much ozone

and other pollutants can be in the air. Under this law, states have to submit State Implementation Plans (SIPs) to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that include how the state will set regulations for cleaning up the pollutants.

The Washington region submitted its most recent SIP to EPA in February 2004. The Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee (MWAQC) of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

*(continued on page 2)*



*Sixth-grade students from Guston Middle School participate in a stream exploration field trip in Four Mile Run Park led by Americorps \* National Civilian Community Corps volunteers and ACE. A total of 660 students participated in field trips in April, performing water quality tests, sampling for macroinvertebrates, and picking up litter.*



## Unhealthy Air Quality Continues During DC Summers

(continued from page 1)

prepared the plan and EPA is expected to complete review of the plan by mid-2005.

The plan calls for various regulatory control strategies including controlling point sources such as power plants, reducing vapors from vehicle refueling and auto body refinishing, implementing national controls on boats and lawn and garden equipment, and improving controls on cars and trucks such as by requiring cleaner engines on all new vehicles.

In April 2004, the EPA announced new designations of regions across the country that had not met air quality standards for ground-level ozone. The designations were made using a new 8-hour ozone standard, a more stringent standard designed to better protect human health. The regions are ranked by severity, and areas that do not meet the standards are classified as non-attainment

areas. The categories for non-attainment areas are marginal, moderate, serious, severe, and extreme.

Each area is assigned a deadline for meeting the standards according to the severity of the designation. Deadlines for meeting air quality standards range from 2007 to 2021. Areas with more severe pollution, such as Los Angeles, have longer to reach the standard.

The Washington, DC region is designated as a moderate non-attainment area. The deadline for meeting the air quality standard is 2010 and the Washington region must submit a new SIP by 2007.

According to Beth Lowe, Air Quality Planner with the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, "the DC region will need to significantly expand emission controls to meet the new standard." The MWAQC is examining various

additional controls to add to the SIP. Once EPA has released final guidelines for the new standard, the MWAQC will complete a timetable for developing a new SIP in order to meet the 2007 deadline. ♠

### Web Resources:

- **American Lung Association State of the Air 2004:**  
[lungaction.org/reports/stateoftheair2004.html](http://lungaction.org/reports/stateoftheair2004.html)
- **Environmental Protection Agency AIRNOW:**  
[www.epa.gov/airnow/](http://www.epa.gov/airnow/)
- **Metropolitan Washington Council of Government's Air Quality Information:**  
[www.mwcog.org/environment/air/](http://www.mwcog.org/environment/air/)

### What is the Air Quality Index?

The Air Quality Index (AQI) is a yardstick that runs from 0 to 500. The higher the AQI value, the greater the level of air pollution and the greater the health concern. The AQI levels are color coded, ranging from green for good air quality levels to purple for very unhealthy levels. Levels above 100 are unhealthy for sensitive groups (orange); levels above 150 are unhealthy (red); and levels above 200 are very unhealthy (purple).

To get information about the DC region's air quality forecast visit the Metropolitan Washington Council of Government's Web site: [www.mwcog.org/environment/air/forecast/](http://www.mwcog.org/environment/air/forecast/). ♠

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## What Residents Can Do to Reduce Air Pollution

We know the air quality is bad in this area, but what can we do about it? Many people believe that the bulk of air pollution comes from industries, but in the Washington, DC area, individual resource consumption and practices create far more pollution than industries. In fact, motor vehicles account for about 30 to 40 percent of the ozone-causing pollutants in the Washington region.

There are many actions we can take that will help. Minimizing contributions to air pollution is even more critical on code-red days when ozone levels are high.

Besides emissions from motor vehicles, other less obvious sources

of air pollutants include oil-based paint and emissions from gasoline powered lawn and garden equipment.

Some of the most important actions we can take:

- Reducing car emissions by carpooling, telecommuting, taking mass transit, and combining your errands;
- Biking or walking instead of driving;
- Refueling all vehicles after dusk;
- Minimizing use of lawn and garden equipment or using the equipment after dusk;
- Postponing use of aerosols; and

- Postponing use of oil-based paints.

In your workplace, ask if your employer is part of the Ozone Action Day Employer Program, an outreach program sponsored by Clean Air Partners. More than 250 companies, government agencies, and educational institutions are part of the program.

Through this free program, employers receive notices of ozone action day forecasts. Participating employers also receive educational information to share with their employees about air pollution and how individuals can help.

For more information visit [www.cleanairpartners.net](http://www.cleanairpartners.net). ♠

## History Comes Alive at Arlington County Fair in August

It's summer, which means it's time again for the Arlington County Fair. This year, the fair will take place August 19-22 at the Thomas Jefferson Community Center with the theme, "History Comes Alive."

Please stop by the ACE booth (#F14) to enter our raffle, see our wildlife habitat display and learn about volunteer opportunities.

Thomas Jefferson Community Center is located at 3501 South Second Street. Free shuttle buses are available from the Arlington Career Center, Washington-Lee High School, and the Ballston, Clarendon and Courthouse Metro stations.

For more information, visit [www.ArlingtonCountyFair.org](http://www.ArlingtonCountyFair.org). ♠



Visitors interact with former ACE board member, Leib Kaminsky, at the 2001 Arlington County Fair.



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# The Nature of Arlington

*Answers to Questions About Annoying, Bizarre, and Fascinating Happenings in Nature*

by Sue Eisenfeld

**Q:** What smells like salad dressing when I mow my lawn?

**A:** “Onion grass.”

Characterized by slender leaves that resemble grass, “onion grass” is not really a grass at all, but a member of the Lily family. It is from the genus *Allium*, which is often referred to as wild onion, but apparently means “garlic” in Latin, and includes chives, onions, and garlic plants. The plants (weeds, really) in your yard are most likely *Allium vineale*, more commonly known as field garlic, wild garlic, or

crow garlic. This is an introduced species that has been named by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation as a moderately invasive species in Virginia.

Another species of wild onion that has been found in very rich woodlands in Arlington is *Allium canadense*, a native species also known as meadow garlic, or sometimes wild garlic or wild onion. Nearby, in Great Falls Park, you can find *Allium cernuum* (nodding onion).

The common characteristic of all *Allium* species is the odor of onions. All species are also edible to humans,



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although some—such as ramps (*Allium tricoccum*), which are found in the Virginia Piedmont and mountain areas—are more palatable than others.

*Do you have a question about the flora or fauna of Arlington? If so, send it to the ACE office at: [office@arlingtonenvironment.org](mailto:office@arlingtonenvironment.org). ♠*

## Wildlife Habitat #39,307 - A Douglas Park Haven for Birds

Corinne de Jesus has created a beautiful habitat garden in her home in Douglas Park in Arlington. Corinne was inspired by her love of wildlife, especially birds, plus a desire to change her yard’s almost complete lack of trees and plants. Completing an ACE Habitat Stewards class in 2003 was also a source of inspiration and ideas.

She is focusing on reducing the grass in her yard and started in 2000 by adding several trees and shrubs. From there she has planted lots and lots of perennials each year, targeting species that attract birds and insects. Her husband and son have helped with the construction but she is the primary person planting the garden. She has recently started incorporating more native plants. Her garden now contains a spectrum of colors and “gets better and

better each year.”

One of Corinne’s favorite plants is sunflowers, which is also a favorite of the goldfinches. Birds are also very attracted to the berries of Virginia creeper growing over a trellis. For a water source, she started with two bird baths and has recently added a pond.

For Corinne, the act of creating a habitat garden has been a tremendous source of pleasure, and the garden itself has become a soothing place to relax. She has plans to add to the garden, continue reduction of the lawn, plant new flowers, and expand



the pond.

*For more information about the Arlington Community Wildlife Habitat project or to request a free packet of resource materials, contact ACE at 703-228-6427 or [office@arlingtonenvironment.org](mailto:office@arlingtonenvironment.org). ♠*



## Student Photographs Highlight Northern Virginia Environment

ACE is pleased to announce the winners of our third student photography contest, "Our Environment: Photographic Perspectives by Northern Virginia's Students."

More than 100 photos were received from 70 students, ranging in age from 9 to 18.

We chose winners in two categories. The first was scenic landscapes of the local environment showing interesting features of local nature, such as waterways and natural landscape features. The winner for scenic landscapes is **Daniel Ryan of Wakefield High School**. The runner-up is **Gabriela Arellano of Yorktown High School**.

The second category, interpretations of human impact of the local

environment, showcased how we affect our environment for better or worse.

The winner for interpretations of human impact is **Joseph Firman of Wakefield High School**. The runner-up is **Christina Jeffers of Yorktown High School**. The winners receive a \$200 gift certificate from Penn Camera and the runners-up receive a \$50 gift certificate.

Thank you to noted Arlington commercial photographer, Jake McGuire, who served as contest judge. ♠

*The winning photograph in the interpretation category, "No Parking," by Joseph Firman of Wakefield High School.*



© Joseph Firman

## New Project Restoring Lower Portion of Four Mile Run

The 2.3-mile flood control channel in the lower portion of Four Mile Run was built by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers during the 1970s and early 1980s. The channel has safely conveyed the storm flows through Arlington and Alexandria for twenty years.

Although successful in flood control, many think the channel section could be improved aesthetically and environmentally.

Through an exciting convergence of effort and funds, citizens and staff from Arlington County and the City of Alexandria; the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; and the Northern Virginia Regional Commission, along with Congressman Jim Moran (Virginia, 8th district), have coordinated an effort for environmental

restoration and urban planning focused on the channel section of Four Mile Run. Benefits of restoring Four Mile Run include an enhancement of aquatic (in-stream) and riparian (adjacent-to-stream) habitat and establishment of the stream as a focal point reflecting its value as a community resource.

An 18-member joint task force, comprised of citizens from both jurisdictions, was formed in 2003. It is charged with garnering public input and fostering support for the project. They will accomplish this through a

series of public events that will include regular meetings and community workshops starting this fall. More information about the project can be found at [www.novaregion.org/restoration.htm](http://www.novaregion.org/restoration.htm). If you would like to be added to the interested parties e-mail list for the project, e-mail [bhicks@novaregion.org](mailto:bhicks@novaregion.org). ♠

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## Neighbors Join Together to Protect Water Quality

by Alex Forasté

“Don’t Be An Oil Drip,” “Aqua Tech,” and “Cut It High and Let It Lie.” In June, five local residents participated in a workshop to learn about these actions to fix oil leaks, install water saving devices, and mulch with grass clippings.

These volunteer leaders, interested in improving the quality of life in their neighborhood and health of the Four Mile Run watershed, will be forming teams in their neighborhood to help improve local water quality. They are part of the Water Stewardship Program, a pilot program led by ACE in partnership with Arlington County, the Cities of Alexandria and Falls Church, and the Empowerment Institute.

So far this year, 15 people have taken part in the program. The program components are: 1) **Water Conservation Actions**, including installing water saving devices and using less water on the lawn and garden, 2) **Water Quality Actions**, including installing rain barrels, and reducing toxics and fertilizers, and 3) **Helping Out Actions**, describing ways to involve your neighborhood in group projects and local issues.

A six-hour training session provides

citizens with background information about water issues plus skills in recruiting neighbors, facilitating meetings, and working as a team.

Team leaders invite their neighbors to join a team for a five-meeting series. On average, 80 to 90 percent of the neighbors who are invited by a team leader express interest in attending a neighborhood meeting and approximately 45 percent of those join the program. Teams are generally eight households in size. All teams are supported by coaches who help start the teams, lead meetings, and answer any questions about the actions and related water issues. Meetings involve participatory exercises outlined in a program workbook.

Before starting the program, many team leaders stated that they did not know their neighbors very well. The program allows neighbors to meet while learning new ways to improve their neighborhood together. It “enriches team members’ understanding of the issues and enriches their relationships,” said Annette Mills, a coach in Falls Church.

“One team in Arlington has started to produce a newsletter for their



Members of a water stewardship team in South Arlington celebrate their successes in incorporating water-friendly lifestyles into their homes.

neighborhood,” said Annette Hanada, a coach for several teams in Arlington. An issue of the newsletter recently reported on how local car wash facilities dispose of used water.

The next training for the program will be Sunday, September 19 from noon to 6 p.m in the Fairlington Community Center. Participants must live in the City of Alexandria, Arlington County, or Falls Church. The program is free.

To request an application form, please contact the ACE office at [office@arlingtonenvironment.org](mailto:office@arlingtonenvironment.org) or 703-228-6427. ♠



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## Mark Your Calendars!

### Barcroft Park Stream Events

Two upcoming events will take place in Barcroft Park, 4200 S. Four Mile Run Drive, Arlington. More information: 703-228-6427 or [volunteer@arlingtonenvironment.org](mailto:volunteer@arlingtonenvironment.org).

- Join Community Spokes, ACE, and the Remove Invasive Species Program (RIP) for a stream cleanup and invasive plant removal project on **Friday, July 23, 1:30-3:30 p.m.** at Barcroft Park. Park in one of the Sports and Recreation Center lots and meet at the Community Spokes building.
- Celebrate National Public Lands Day, Clean Virginia Waterways Day, and the International Coastal Cleanup. Join ACE on **Saturday, September 18, 10 a.m. to noon** to pick up trash from Four Mile Run at Barcroft Park. We will be tallying categories of trash collected. Meet in front of the Sports and Recreation Center.

### Support ACE at Summer Festivals

Look for the ACE booth at the following festivals this summer. Volunteers are needed to help staff the exhibit and lead educational activities for children. Spanish-language speakers are especially needed. To help, contact ACE at 703-228-6427 or [volunteer@arlingtonenvironment.org](mailto:volunteer@arlingtonenvironment.org).

- **July 25** - Peru Festival
- **August 8** - Bolivia Festival
- **August 19-22** - Arlington County Fair

### Backyard Wildlife Habitat Workshop

**Saturday, September 11, 10 a.m. to noon.** Long Branch Nature Center, 625 S. Carlin Springs Road, Arlington. Explore the many exciting ways that you can make your landscape wildlife friendly. Learn what elements are needed to provide habitat for birds, butterflies and other wildlife. Free. Call 703-228-3403 for registration information.

### Thanks to Our Donors and Supporters

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#### Volunteers this Quarter:

**Groups:** *Americorps \* NCCC, Burgundy Crescent, Edward Jones, General Accounting Office, Lebanese Taverna, Paychex, SRA*

**Individuals:** *Jennifer Abel, Grace Abi-Najin, Rob Aldrich, Jessica Anderson, Nina Andgren, Tammy Barbee, Maggie Bernard, Charles Bianchi, Maria Bihunu, Robert Bozzi, Stockton Butler, Jonathan Chapell, Rick Cohen, Kathy Collins, Halle Cowen, Corinne de Jesus, Laura Dely, Sue Eisenfeld, Maureen Farrell, Jan Ferrigan, Janine Finnell, Dave Fitzpatrick, Joe Glassman, Stephanie Gould, David Goure, Miles Grant, Anne Johnson, Joyce Johnson, Susan Johnson, John Kipps, Francois Krodol, Mary Ann Lawler, Danny LeSueur, Steve LeSueur, Michelle Mandolia, Ed Milch, Ingrid Morroy, Michael Murtha, Marty Nielsen, Marge Olson, Marge Olson, Jeff Perlow, Kathy Reeder, Jon Rose, Cori Russell, Ingrid Russell, Tom Sabanosh, Paul Scott, Jim Serfis, Jennifer Snow, Denise Taranov, Jessica Wexler, Doug Yarroll*

**ACE is grateful to our supporters, and we apologize if we overlooked anyone!**



ACE is seeking Friends of ACE volunteer leaders to help with information technology and web design, organize fundraising events, lead stream cleanups, and write newsletter articles. Contact the ACE office to help: 703-228-6427.



**150 Stafford Avenue, Suite 110  
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# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## Featured Events and Announcements

**Four Mile Run Restoration Project Underway.** The public is invited to learn about and help plan a project to restore the lower, channelized portion of Four Mile Run. Visit the Web site [www.novaregion.org/restoration.htm](http://www.novaregion.org/restoration.htm) to see the schedule of public meetings. *(Read more - see the article on p. 5.)*

**The Arlington County Fair** begins Thursday evening, August 19 and continues through Sunday, August 22 at the Thomas Jefferson Community Center. Stop by the ACE booth, #F14! More information: [ww.ArlingtonCountyFair.org](http://www.ArlingtonCountyFair.org).

**International Coastal Cleanup**  
Did you know that the top three debris items found in water bodies during International Coastal Cleanup events are cigarettes, food wrappers, and caps/lids? (See [www.coastalcleanup.org](http://www.coastalcleanup.org).) In 2003, ACE volunteers picked up 1,060 items. Join ACE and participate in the 2004 Four Mile Run cleanup and data collection at Barcroft Park on **Saturday, September 18, 10 a.m. to noon.** We will meet in the Barcroft Sports and Recreation Center parking lot, 4200 S. Four Mile Run Drive, Arlington. To register, contact the ACE office at [volunteer@arlingtonenvironment.org](mailto:volunteer@arlingtonenvironment.org) or 703-228-6427.

**Water Stewardship Leader Training. Sunday, September 19, noon to 6 p.m.** Fairlington Community Center, 3308 S. Stafford Street, Arlington. Join residents of Arlington, Falls Church, and Alexandria in an exciting program that focuses on household actions to protect local streams. The training is free and all participants receive a leader handbook and workbook with information on lifestyle changes in the areas of water quality and water conservation. To request an application form, please contact ACE at [office@arlingtonenvironment.org](mailto:office@arlingtonenvironment.org) or 703-228-6427. *(Read more - see the article on p. 6.)*

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