

## **President's Letter by Dr. Geoff Patton, Acting President, MAGIC - Maryland Alliance for Greenway Improvement and Conservation**

As the final newsletter of 2007, we look back on the passing of Founding President Robert DeGroot and turn to look forward to the future of MAGIC. It was with deep sympathy yet joy that we shared with Carolyn DeGroot the memories of Bob's life at his memorial service with many friends and family members from near and far. As I said in my remarks at the time, Bob did his share and I am happy to report to you that the Board of Directors has renewed its commitment to continue Bob's work. Our Mission Statement, as posted on our website at <http://www.magicalliance.org/>, declares that "MAGIC will work to connect and expand the greenway system in Maryland and adjacent states to provide corridors for wildlife and plant propagation."

MAGIC is seeking a volunteer President to take over the reins of the organization under the guidance of the Board of Directors. You might have seen ads placed in newspapers and other places. The full announcement is at the end of this newsletter. If you are in a position to help us attract an even broader suite of candidates by helping us fund a salary, either this year or next, please contact me at 301-221-9536 or [gwpatt01@yahoo.com](mailto:gwpatt01@yahoo.com). MAGIC is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.

Continuing Bob DeGroot's legacy, we'd like to report on several items of interest to greenway conservation.

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### **Study: Urban Sprawl Increasing Beyond the 'Burbs**

Source: *Environmental Protection* magazine e-news, 20 Dec 2007 <http://tinyurl.com/3678pc>

Despite reports to the contrary, urban sprawl has continued to grow significantly for the past several decades, according to researchers. A study of changing land-use patterns in the state of Maryland found substantial and significant increases in sprawl between 1973 and 2000.

"We found that the areas where sprawl increased the most were in the exurban areas -- out beyond even the suburbs," said Elena Irwin, co-author of the study and associate professor of environmental economics at Ohio State University.

The study looked for evidence of fragmented land use -- areas where housing was juxtaposed with agriculture or forested areas, for example.

That's one of the basic hallmarks of sprawl, the researchers said.

According to the results, the level of peak land-use fragmentation was 60 percent greater in 2000 than it was in 1973 and shifted outward from the central cities to a distance of 55 miles in 2000, up from about 40 miles in 1973.

Fragmented land use increased the most in non-urban areas located about 80 miles from the nearest city, the researchers found.

"People are moving further and further away from the center of cities and increasingly more people are living on larger lots," she said.

"That's increasing the level of sprawl."

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## A new Organization specific to Neighborhood Trees

MAGIC supports all manner of positive environmental issues, including other organizations working toward similar goals. A fairly new organization out of College Park, MD is **ACT**, Alliance For Community Trees. You can get on their email list by writing to: [info@actrees.org](mailto:info@actrees.org). Indeed, MAGIC got its start when Bob Degroot got concerned with plans to destroy trees in his community of Rockville, MD. So, our hat is off to ACT and we hope that they can develop public support for stronger protection of neighborhood trees.

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## Green Projects Generate Splits in Activist Groups

(Note from the MAGIC President – expect MAGIC to make a statement on this issue soon!)

From article at <http://tinyurl.com/2mwlfh>

By GREG HITT, Wall Street Journal, December 13, 2007; Page B1

On Capitol Hill, the Audubon Society is leading the fight to increase production of climate-friendly power. So why are Audubon enthusiasts battling a wind farm that could help meet that goal?

For one thing, there are trout in nearby streams, which activists say are at risk from chemical and sediment runoff from construction of 30 turbines, each soaring about 400 feet -- taller than the Statue of Liberty. Then there are the bats and hawks, which might be puréed by the giant blades that would catch the wind gusting along the Allegheny Mountains of Western Pennsylvania.

"They're enormous," says Tom Dick, a retired veterinarian who founded the local Audubon chapter. "When you start looking at this, it's like, 'hell, this is not right.'"

Even as Americans become convinced they need to change the way they power their lives, the environmental community is splintering over how to do that. Does ethanol promote clean fuel or destroy the rural landscape? Is emission-free electricity worth turning mountains into wind farms?

Thomas Kuhn, president of the Edison Electric Institute, which represents investor-owned utilities, says he sees "a disturbing disconnect on this issue." EEI is quarreling with Audubon, the Sierra Club and other groups over a proposal requiring utilities to use more renewable energy. The concept, which appeared to wither during negotiations over a big energy bill, is currently being pushed by House Democrats in an end-of-year challenge to President Bush, who has threatened to veto the legislation.

Dan Becker, a former top lobbyist at the Sierra Club, one of the leading U.S. environmental groups, concedes that local fights can undercut the group's national goals. "It doesn't help," he says. Mr. Becker says local activism is a source of the

movement's strength. "I'd rather have the debate...than to have a Stalinist approach and say you cannot speak," he says.

In Southern California, a project to expand solar-power is imperiled because activists don't trust San Diego Gas & Electric Co., the local utility, which has proposed building a 150-mile transmission line.

Chief Operating Officer Michael Niggli says the line, which will help his company meet California's own environmental and energy mandates, will connect to a substation near the Arizona border. Mr. Niggli said it will also draw and transmit power from a solar field in the desert.

(Illustration Omitted: Windmills like these drew howls from Pennsylvania environmentalists.)

San Diego Gas & Electric is a subsidiary of California-based Sempra Energy, which actually supported the renewable-fuels mandate approved by the House. The bill is now pending in the Senate.

Micah Mitrosky, a Sierra Club community organizer, complains the line would run through the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. She also isn't comfortable with the idea that it would be used to transmit power generated by fossil fuels, and questions whether the line will ever be used to carry alternative energy. Local Sierra Club officials enlisted opponents at concerts, farmer's markets and street fairs and in late October escorted a delegation of community leaders to Sacramento.

Mr. Niggli says the Sierra Club is missing the point. "We don't understand their opposition," he says. "This is a transmission line that will clearly help meet the goals they have," because the line will carry solar power.

David Hamilton, head of the Sierra Club's effort in Washington to curb global warming, says he's not aware of the fight or the project in San Diego. He says his group wants to cooperate with companies when it has "some confidence" projects will boost green energy. "We've realized...you have to give a little," he says.

In Maine, the Audubon Society, founded more than a century ago to protect birds, has worked with developers to draw up guidelines for wind projects. But even this cooperation has limits.

A proposed site near Sugarloaf ski resort has been a potential location for wind-power generation for years. The project gained momentum in 2006 when Maine Mountain Power LLC -- a partnership between Maine's Endless Energy Co. and a California-based subsidiary of Edison International -- proposed a 30-turbine project on Redington and Black Nubble mountains.

The Audubon Society worried about the impact to Bicknell's Thrush, a bird that lives at high elevations in northeastern U.S., and old growth fir trees. Jody Jones, an ecologist for Maine Audubon, says the group has supported wind projects elsewhere but adds "not every location is appropriate." Over the summer, Maine Mountain offered a scaled-back project with 18

turbines; now the same fight is unfolding. Some environmental groups have decided to support the revised project. Audubon remains opposed.

Charley Parnell, spokesman for the Edison unit backing the plant, says the company is "disappointed" given the "clamor for this type of technology, from a whole host of folks." Edison International backed the House mandate on renewable fuels.

Betsy Loyless, Audubon's senior vice president for policy in Washington, says she isn't aware of details of the Maine and Pennsylvania fights. She says local offices "are largely supportive of renewable energy," but she stresses the importance of responding to local concerns. "It's a tough situation," she says.

In Pennsylvania, Democratic governor Ed Rendell has made wind power a priority. In 2004, he persuaded Gamesa SA, a Spanish energy company, to establish its U.S. headquarters in his state. Gamesa's Shaffer Mountain project in Somerset County was proposed last year.

Among those leading the opposition is Mr. Dick, who worries about the hawks and eagles. The mountain's ridges form a sort of highway for migrating birds, says Mr. Dick, who founded a "hawk watch" staffed by Audubon volunteers. Along with Audubon Society allies and others, he has put out signs, circulated petitions, lobbied state officials and set about fighting a water-drainage permit.

Gamesa says the project will have "minimal or no impact" on birds and bats. The company says it will use tubular towers on which birds can't perch, and will set turbines to the less-trafficked west and no closer than 400 feet to the mountain top.

"The birds are not actually flying directly above" the ridge top, says Tim Vought, Gamesa's manager for the project.

Mr. Dick says he understands the pressure to shift electricity production from fossil fuels to renewable sources, but wants to use care in placing projects. "The problem, to me, is worse than urban sprawl," he says.

Write to Greg Hitt at [greg.hitt@wsj.com](mailto:greg.hitt@wsj.com)

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**Ad Placed for a new Volunteer President (*Washington Post, Gazette, others; in various forms – please post. Position is open until filled.*)**  
Non-Profit Executive Director

Maryland Alliance for Greenway Improvement and Conservation (MAGIC) is a regional environmental activist 501(c)3 non-profit group with a small Board of Directors, agreements with about 30 other groups and an information network of more than 1000 people. MAGIC has 3 main initiatives, protection of forests, connection of greenways, and support of general environmental causes.

We recently lost the prime leader of MAGIC to cancer and now seek a volunteer to take on the responsibilities of Executive Director.

The Executive Director (ED) serves several roles. As an expert in forest issues in the Maryland region, the ED does public speaking, meets with officials on legislative and policy matters, and is responsible for growth of the organization. In general, the ED manages communicating the message of habitat protection, preservation, and expansion. The duties are far-ranging, from managing the membership database to directing lawsuits for access to public information. A new effort is planned for a major meeting on regional forest management issues. MAGIC has a modest budget and tremendous potential to become an agent against global warming.

The ED sits as Chairperson of the Board and runs about 8 meetings per year. Substantive decisions are typically decided by the Board with guidance from the ED. Please see the MAGIC website for further information at: <http://www.marylandalliance.org> .