****

**SUMMARY REPORT**

**CSGA Meeting for Learning**

**Thursday, February 18, 2016, 7 – 9 pm**

**Annapolis Friends Meetinghouse**

**351 Dubois Rd. Annapolis, MD**

**Speaker: Don Boesch, President, UMCES**

**Subject: “Vantage Point from the Front: Climate Science Meets Public Policy.”**

**Synopsis of meeting: Boesch recalled personal experiences in his bringing science into policy making processes for addressing climate change at both the national and state levels, and for restoration of the Chesapeake Bay**

**A More Complete Discussion of the Meeting:**

Attended by an audience of over three dozen, this lecture was the latest in a continuing Speakers Series intended to be presented monthly on a continuing basis and hosted jointly by the Climate Stewards of Greater Annapolis and the Maryland Climate Coalition. On this evening we enjoyed a wide ranging discussion of climate change issues of national and local import by Professor Boesch, the President of the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (UMCES). He spoke for about an hour and then entertained questions from the audience that lasted about another hour.

Dr. Boesch is a biological oceanographer who has published two books and more than 90 papers on various subjects including environmental assessment and monitoring and science policy, and whose current research focuses on the use of science in ecosystem management. He is an important contributor to our national climate policy understanding and strategy. One of his recent projects was to help develop the 2013 National Climate Assessment to inform the President, the Congress, and the nation about the current state of scientific knowledge regarding climate change effects. Earlier he was a chairman of the Scientific and Technical Working Group that produced a Comprehensive Assessment of Climate Change Impacts in Maryland.

Professor Boesch reiterated the position acknowledged by the vast majority of climate scientists in our country and around the world that climate change is indeed a problem of serious global importance, and one that is certainly impacted by unrestrained burning of fossil fuels with the concomitant release of carbon-based effluents into the world’s atmosphere.

Dr. Boesch spoke optimistically about the recent results of the COP21 gathering in Brazil, while taking some questions from the audience that reflected a somewhat more skeptical assessment. He further discussed legislation working its way through the Maryland legislature targeted toward reducing greenhouse gas emission in the coming decades and urged public scrutiny and activism to promote positive outcomes. He spoke of the disparities between Europe and the United States citizens’ perceptions of the threat of global warming, while also stating that the numbers in Maryland were much more aligned with the higher global numbers reflecting perhaps the greater educational level in the state. As a follow on to this he emphasized the need to promote science education and literacy in our schools at all levels. He noted several principles of communication for scientists to employ:

1. In writing documents, use nontechnical terms and visually appealing images;

2. Relate issues to people’s direct interest; for example in the Mid-Atlantic Area, speak to the local impact of flooding;

3. Begin with the K-12 public school system, but understand that teachers there are already overburdened, so attach efforts to ongoing programs such as “Next Generation Science Standards” and Maryland’s “Environmental Literacy” requirement.

Detailed reports mentioned by Boesch throughout his presentation, and many others, may be found at http://www.umces.edu