



# WENOCA SIERRAN

Newsletter of the  
Western North Carolina Sierra Club

Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

MAY - JULY 2014

## Upcoming Events:

Unitarian Congregation  
1 Edwin Place, Asheville  
(corner of Charlotte St. & Edwin Pl.)  
Social: 7 pm / Program: 7:15 pm  
*Free and open to the public*

**Wednesday, May 7**  
**Cassie Gavin**

*Upcoming North Carolina  
Legislative Session*

**Wednesday, June 4**  
**Richard Kark**

*River Canoeing Adventure:  
Paddling Utah's  
Dirty Devil River*

**Saturday, July 19**  
**5th Annual Summer Picnic**

*Noon - 4 pm*  
*Blue Ridge Parkway  
sheltered picnic grounds  
(Bull Mt. Rd. off Riceville Rd.)*

WENOCA will hold meetings on the first Wednesday of the month. Executive Committee meetings will be held at 5:30 pm prior to the monthly programs.

All members are invited to attend.

For more information, call  
Judy Mattox at 828-683-2176  
or email [judymattox@sbcglobal.net](mailto:judymattox@sbcglobal.net).

WENOCA SIERRAN is the newsletter of the Western North Carolina Sierra Club. The newsletter is published four times a year. Articles and comments are welcome.

## Upcoming North Carolina Legislative Session - May 7

Join us on Wednesday, May 7 at 7 pm to welcome Sierra Club's state lobbyist, Cassie Gavin who will present a legislative preview of upcoming issues expected to be addressed by the North Carolina General Assembly in the short session beginning May 14.

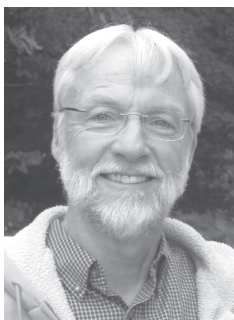
Cassie will update members on the status of a possible coal ash bill and other environmental legislation we may expect including: a bill to reduce protections for isolated wetlands; a good bill removing the requirement of a unanimous vote for local environmental ordinances; and a possible energy bill to allocate revenues from offshore oil drilling which currently is not allowed off of NC, and more bills concerning FRACKING. Come learn what you can do to make a difference.

*Cassie is the NC Chapter Sierra Club Director of Government Affairs. She attended undergrad and law school at UNC. She is responsible for tracking legislation affecting the environment and lobbying legislators in Raleigh on Sierra Club's priority issues. Before starting with the Sierra Club early last year, Cassie worked in conservation and land protection in eastern NC with NC Coastal Land Trust for seven years. Cassie's interests include kayaking, hiking and travel.*



Cassie Gavin

## River Canoeing Adventure: Utah's Dirty Devil River - June 4



Richard Kark

Sierra Club invites you to join us on June 4 for Richard Kark's River Canoeing Adventure, this time in Utah. Richard has been canoeing rivers ever since his youth on Iowa's Cedar River. He has canoed over 300 rivers in Wisconsin and more than 50 Class III and IV white water streams in Appalachia. His most extended and exciting adventures have included the American West, this time the Dirty Devil.

The Dirty Devil is a very small river which flows through a very deep canyon in Utah. It is a seldom paddled gem with many great attributes. Paddling it was almost like seeing all the great National Parks of Utah with no one else around.

The June monthly meeting will be an account of a journey down this stream but much more. Attendees will see beautiful photos but will also get "into the heads" of two veteran adventurers who make it up as they go

along. It should be interesting to understand the complicated logistics of a trip like this and how the two adventurers arrived at all their decisions. Three days before their trip started Richard Kark from Asheville and Pat Brennaman from St. Paul were backpacking nearby and were, as yet, unsure whether they would even be canoeing on a river at all. The challenges were daunting but the rewards were great.

Even those who are uninterested in river trips should find something to like about this presentation. That's because other parts of this "vacation" included a backpacking trip and a visit to Canyonlands National Park which will also be part of the presentation.

*Richard Kark is a retired family physician who moved to Asheville three years ago. Most of his career he worked at the Student Health Service at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. He grew up in Osage, Iowa before going to college at St. Olaf in Minnesota. Wellness is a passion for Richard including physical fitness and he enjoys Asheville's many cultural and recreational amenities. In addition to exploring nearby rivers, he enjoys hiking and taking courses at the North Carolina Center for Creative Retirement.*

## ***Primary Election Time and Early Voting is Here***

The Sierra Club has endorsed Brownie Newman in District 1 and Ellen Frost in District 2 for re-election to the Buncombe County Commission in the Democratic Primary. Both Brownie and Ellen have been strong supporters of protecting our local environment.

Brownie and Ellen led efforts for the Buncombe County Government to set a goal of reducing their carbon footprint by 80% by 2050 which will save the county over \$1 million dollars over the next 10 years. In addition they have supported funding for farmland preservation and expansion of greenways. They have been joined in many of these initiatives by current Republican Commissioner David King who is running for re-election in District 3. Early voting began on Thursday, April 24 and continues

through Saturday, May 3 at 1 pm.

Primary Election Day is Tuesday, May 6. Early voting locations in Buncombe County are the North Buncombe Library, South Buncombe Library, Black Mountain Library, West Asheville Library, Skyland Fire & Rescue, Heaven's Cloud Retreat Ctr. and the Girl Scout Office on Weaver Blvd.

These candidates have done their part by being strong supporters of our environment, it is our turn now to do our part by voting to help them get re-elected. If you have questions or would like to volunteer to help their re-election efforts contact Ken Brame at [kenbrame@sbcglobal.net](mailto:kenbrame@sbcglobal.net) or 828-683-2176.

## ***River Clean Up Slated for May 17***

By Richard Kark

The French Broad River is a local treasure, but not everyone treats it like one. Far too many people consider it to be a giant trash can for their bottles, tires, shopping carts, traffic cones, etc. Removing all that stuff is great fun and the results are not subtle. If you are tired of the subtleties of life and like to see immediate results, join fellow Sierra Club members on a river cleanup. You will be rewarded by seeing mounds of incredibly varied trash towering above the gunwales of Asheville Greenworks canoes. Your reward will also include good food and drink at the River Link building afterward. The party is to be sponsored by Sierra Nevada Brewing. And of course, you will take pleasure in contributing to the beautification of the French Broad River.

**The season's first clean up is on Saturday, May 17 from 10 am - 3 pm**, but you can put in shorter amounts of time. We will be joined by many other groups on this official "Clean Streams Day." Some of us will be on the river and others along the shore all tending to the section of the French Broad which our Sierra Club Chapter has adopted. Canoes, grabbers, gloves, etc. are all supplied by Asheville Greenworks, so all you need to bring is your body, your energy and your enthusiasm.



We have a list which includes many of you who have indicated interest in the past. Those on our lists will be contacted by email or phone about the May 17 event. If you think you are not on our list, there are two ways to be added. There will be a sign up sheet at the May monthly meeting, but you also can call Richard Kark at 828-253-2650 to let him know you are interested. Be thinking about whether you would like to be on the river or on the shore. Experienced canoeists are preferred for the river crew because of the need to dodge limbs along the banks. Kayakers with their own boats are welcome, too, because they can carry small amounts of trash and deliver some of it to nearby canoes.

## ***Join us for the 5th Annual Summer Picnic - July 19***

On Saturday, July 19, the Sierra Club will enjoy its 5th Annual Summer Picnic from noon to 4 pm at the Blue Ridge Parkway sheltered picnic grounds located on Bull Mt. Rd. near the VA Hospital on Riceville Rd.

**Directions:** Exit 7 on I-240; go east on Tunnel Rd for 2 miles; turn north on Riceville Rd; go 1.3 miles and turn west on Bull Mt. Rd. The fenced-in, sheltered picnic area is on the left about ½ mile up the road. Please bring a pot luck dish to share and your own settings. Drinks will be provided. Badminton, horseshoes and music will add to the festivities. We hope to see you there!



David Reid & Ken Brame enjoying badminton

PHOTO BY DUEFF

## Coal Ash Crisis in North Carolina

In February 2014, a storm-water pipe ruptured underneath a coal ash pond in Eden, North Carolina, spilling up to 40,000 tons of toxic coal ash and 27 million gallons of wastewater into the Dan River. Duke Energy owns 33 toxic coal ash pits across North Carolina where toxic chemicals like arsenic, lead, and selenium are known to be leaking into the groundwater. Duke Energy has known about the problems with their coal ash ponds for years but done nothing to significantly clean them up.

### What you can do:

Tell leaders in the legislature to hold Duke Energy accountable and require them to clean up their toxic coal ash pits next to our waterways!

### Call & email legislative leaders today:

NC Senate Pro Tempore, Sen. Phil Berger - 919-733-5708 - Email: [Phil.Berger@ncleg.net](mailto:Phil.Berger@ncleg.net)

NC Speaker of the House, Rep. Thom Tillis - 919-733-3451 - Email: [Thom.Tillis@ncleg.net](mailto:Thom.Tillis@ncleg.net)

## "Years of Living Dangerously" airs on Showtime

"Years of Living Dangerously" is a new Showtime environmental documentary series that tells the stories of the people impacted by climate change and those working to fight it. Celebrities appearing in the show include Harrison Ford, Matt Damon, Ian Somerhalder, Arnold Schwarzenegger, as well as western North Carolina's own Anna Jane Joyner of WNC Alliance.

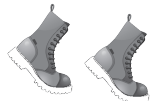
Episode 4, which airs on May 4 at 10 pm, called "The Preacher's Daughter," focuses on Anna Jane's interaction with her fundamentalist Christian preacher father who is a

climate change denier. It also focuses on western North Carolina's Beyond Coal campaign to close the Asheville coal power plant. There will be a local screening on May 8 at 7 pm hosted by Beyond Coal with the location TBA.

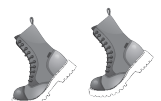
The series airs on Sundays at 10 pm. For information, contact [annajane@wnca.org](mailto:annajane@wnca.org) or [emma.greenbaum@sierraclub.org](mailto:emma.greenbaum@sierraclub.org).



Anna Jane Joyner



## Summer Hiking Schedule



**SAT, JUNE 7 - DEVIL'S COURTHOUSE HIKE VIA MOUNTAINS-TO-SEA TRAIL** – Meet at 10 am in Asheville, back around 5:30 pm. Distance is approx 6 miles round trip, rated as Moderate/Easy. It is a there-and-back hike, taking a beautiful stretch of Mountains-to-Sea trail, starting where it crosses Black Balsam Rd & ending at the Courthouse (short distance on a connector trail), then returning via the same route. This hike is mostly shaded with evergreens, offering refuge from the sun. Also offers a few nice vistas along the trail. When we reach our high point, Devil's Courthouse, provided we have good visibility, we'll view mountains in 3 other states. Also, an opportunity to learn about the ravens which are often seen from the rock outcrops along the trail, and learn to identify them by their calls. There is somewhere around 500 ft elevation change, and the trail is rather rugged, with intermittent tree roots and 10" steps/rocks. Makes good footwear essential, and maybe hiking poles as well. Sorry no dogs this hike due to rugged terrain. **Experienced hikers only.** Contact hike leader to sign up. Lisa McWherter at [lisamcw2@gmail.com](mailto:lisamcw2@gmail.com), or call 828-713-4994.

**FRI-SUN, JULY 11-13 - CAMPING TRIP** - Tentatively planned for Montreat Campground, which is a beautiful family campground offering shady trees & rhododendrons. Most sites offer some privacy and are within hearing distance of a mountain creek. This trip includes opportunities for hiking as well as wading in the creeks. Sharing a site is fine if requested. **COSTS:** The charge is \$20 per night per site for 4 adults with up to 2 tents or a family with up to 2 tents; add \$8 for each additional tent. Then add sales tax, plus a \$1 community services fee per adult per night. **NOTE:** Each site must be paid for BOTH nights per Montreat rules. However, it might be possible for folks to trade-off on nights at a given site. **CONTACTS:** Please contact outings leaders for more info & to sign up. Lisa McWherter at [lisamcw2@gmail.com](mailto:lisamcw2@gmail.com) / 828-713-4994 or Jane Laping at [janelaping@sbcglobal.net](mailto:janelaping@sbcglobal.net) / 828-772-0379.

**SAT, AUG 2 – SPLASHING WATERFALL HIKE - JOHN ROCK AREA** – Cat Gap Trail to Butter Gap Trail (following Grogan Creek). Moderate/easy, approx 4 miles R.T. on this there & back hike. Offers 2 nice waterfalls. There will be a splashing opportunity (self-splashing only, please!) on Butter Gap trail's waterfall. Kids that do hiking are welcome w/accompanying parent/guardian (with signed liability waiver). **NOTE:** There are optional trails (very short) to reach the base of the falls, but they are steep and possibly muddy. Makes good footwear essential, and maybe hiking poles as well. RSVP to hike leader Lisa McWherter at [lisamcw2@gmail.com](mailto:lisamcw2@gmail.com) or 828-713-4994.



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The Executive Committee meets monthly. For more information, please contact Judy Mattox at 828-683-2176 or at judymattox@sbcglobal.net. All WENOCA members are invited to attend.  
**Our website is [www.wenoca.org](http://www.wenoca.org).**

## WENOCA OFFICERS - 2014 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Judy Mattox – Chair - 828-683-2176  
Lisa McWherter - Outings Leader  
Rich Wasch - Treasurer  
Mark Threlkeld - River Cleanup - At Large  
Ken Brame - Political Committee

Anne Marie Doherty - At Large  
Gene Keil - Website/Membership Committee  
Rober Zieber - At Large  
Elaine Lite - Newsletter Editor  
Emma Greenbaum - Beyond Coal - 828-251-1272



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ORGANIZATION  
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## *Volunteers Needed to Raise Vegetables for the Hungry*



Looking for an opportunity to get your hands dirty to increase your vegetable gardening skills and donate fresh, organic produce to the needy at the same time? The Home Grown Garden will give you that and more. Volunteers meet every Saturday morning from 9 – 11 am to work in the garden. A volunteer leader will greet you to show you what needs to be done and how to do it. Previous gardening experience is not necessary. We have the tools and the expertise to show you where your help is needed most.

Plan to attend our first 'Mulch and Munch Brunch' on Saturday, May 3 from 9 – 11 am for an introduction to the Garden and an opportunity to chat with other volunteers over drinks and breakfast snacks.

The Home Grown Garden is a community organic garden located in the lower fields of the Black Mountain Home for Children, Youth and Families. Produce not used by the Home is donated to area food pantries and other organizations that distribute food.

Contact Jane Laping [janelaping@sbcglobal.net](mailto:janelaping@sbcglobal.net) or 828-277-7342 for more information and like us on Facebook.  
**Please note:** There is no bathroom at the garden and we ask that you bring your own drinking water.

**Directions to the Home Grown Garden:** From Asheville, take I-40 East to Exit 59, Swannanoa. Turn left at the traffic light, and then right at the next light onto Highway 70. At the next traffic light turn left onto Whitson Ave and then right at the stop sign onto Old US 70. Follow this road for almost 2 miles to the next traffic light. Turn left onto Lake Eden Road. Look for the 'Garden' sign before you get to the main entrance of the home and turn right into the lower field area near the stone silo.