



WENOCA SIERRAN

Newsletter of the
Western North Carolina Sierra Club

Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

FEBRUARY - APRIL 2016

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, Feb 3
Josh Martin

*Do You Know
What's in Your Paper?*

Wednesday, Mar 2
Tim Pharis & Frosty Levy

*Wildflowers and
Rocky Fork State Park*

Wednesday, Apr 6
Jason Walls & Amy Musser

*Duke's Power Plant and
Home Energy Efficiency*

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.

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.

Do You Know What's in Your Paper? - Feb 3



Josh Martin

Do you know your choices have power that impacts what happens in the world's forests?

At our Feb. 3 meeting, Josh will share information and resources about how individuals can make responsible wood and paper buying choices and be part of a vibrant, global movement for transformation of the paper industry.

The program will include photos and stories from Joshua's own travel to endangered

rainforests in Indonesia and his first hand experience of the devastating impacts of tropical deforestation to make pulp and paper products.

Joshua is the Director of the Environmental Paper Network (EPN), an international coalition of more than 145 organizations working together to accelerate social and environmental transformation in the pulp and paper industry. Prior to EPN, Joshua ran national campaigns to change the forest product sourcing policies of several major corporations, and worked with grassroots conservation organizations on the protection of forests on US public land. Joshua lives in Asheville with his wife Kelly and three young children. (Note: The Sierra Club is a member of the Environmental Paper Network and signatory to the Global Paper Vision)

Wildflowers and Rocky Fork State Park - Mar 2



Tim Pharis

Rocky Fork State Park, created in Oct, 2012 and just a short 40 minute drive on I-26 N from Asheville, is located in the southern Appalachian Mountains of east Tennessee. The park is surrounded on three sides by the Cherokee National Forest and its steep, rugged terrain is drained by numerous cool mountain streams including its namesake, Rocky Fork Creek. The Rocky Fork Watershed (10,000 acres) has 100+ foot waterfalls, thriving bear populations, as well as 15 miles of wild trout streams.

Tim Pharis, ranger at Rocky Fork, will introduce the park and Frosty Levy, Professor Emeritus of Biology at East TN State University will delight us with slides of the park's wildflowers.

Tim Pharis is an avid hiker, fly fishermen, fiddler, banjo picker, as well as the 1st park ranger at Tennessee's newest state park, Rocky Fork State Park. He has been a ranger in Northeast TN for five years and is a Certified Interpretive Guide as well as an EMT. Tim is excited to highlight Rocky Fork as an up and coming premier destination for outdoor enthusiasts.

Growing up in the borough of the Bronx in NYC, Frosty sometimes tells people he saw his first tree when he was 21 - and he liked it, so he became a botanist. It was then he realized it was possible to earn a living doing things that he would have been glad to do for no pay. After graduating with a B.A. in history from City College of New York, he earned a M.S. in biology from CCNY. Plants of unusual habitats have always piqued his curiosity -- intrigued by how they got there and how they adapted. Those questions were the focus of his doctoral research at Duke University where he earned a Ph.D. in botany and genetics.

After spending 12 years collaborating on the genetics and epidemiology of antibiotic resistance in human pathogens, he applied new approaches toward understanding disease occurrence and impacts in natural plant populations. This led to studies of the hemlock woolly adelgid on Carolina hemlocks, the balsam woolly adelgid on Fraser fir, and the lily leaf spot disease of Gray's lily and a rust fungus of piratebush. Levy has also conducted plant inventory work in east Tennessee sites worthy of protection - including Rocky Fork State Park, Roan Mountain State Park, the Elizabethton Watershed in Hampton, and the Doe Mountain Recreation Area in Johnson County.



Frosty Levy

Duke's Power Plant and Home Energy Efficiency - Apr 6



Jason Walls

Join us on April 4 to learn how you can reduce your energy usage so that Duke doesn't have to build a bigger power plant.

Duke Energy has dramatically revised their plan for the Asheville Power Plant. The company had initially proposed a single 650-megawatt natural gas-powered plant; however, it now intends to build two side-by-side 280-megawatt natural gas units, 90 megawatts less than what was originally proposed.

Jason Walls, District Manager of Duke Energy will outline Duke's plan to work with the City of Asheville on our Clean Energy Framework. He will detail that construction of an additional 190 MW peaking unit (one that is only used when power demand is at its high) in the mid-2020s could be delayed through greater collaboration on energy efficiency programs, renewable energy, demand-side management, and new technologies.

Amy Musser, an energy efficiency expert, will talk about techniques that we all can use to reduce our use of electricity.

Jason Walls is employed by Duke Energy as District Manager for the Asheville region. His duties include fostering relationships and partnerships across the community for Duke, as well as serving as the principal contact for local government, educators and area community and civic leaders. He joined Duke in 2002 as an associate scientist and has held numerous positions with Duke. He holds degrees from Emory and Henry College and a Master's degree from Queens University in Charlotte. He and his family are residents of Asheville. Jason has expertise in conserving energy and developing solutions to modernize the electrical infrastructure that will both protect the environment and provide sufficient energy to meet the needs of a growing community.



Amy Musser

Amy Musser is co-founder and principal of VandelMusser Design, PLLC. Amy earned her Bachelors and Ph.D. degrees in Architectural Engineering and an M.S. degree in Mechanical Engineering from the Pennsylvania State University. She has taught at the university level and is a member of numerous professional boards. She and her company provide technical consulting services and certification services to builders, architects, developers and homeowners in several states focused on green houses that are highly energy efficient. She is passionate about conserving energy and has numerous suggestions for homeowners that will help protect our environment and save money.

Sierra Club Annual Awards Honor Local Community

On Dec 2, Sierra Club honored the following community members and volunteers:



Sierra Club volunteer Joe Mazelis (L) presents the club's Green College of the Year Award to Dr. Steve Solnick of Warren Wilson College.

Green College of the Year: Warren Wilson College

Warren Wilson has achieved a number of impressive ecological goals. Outstandingly, Warren Wilson will divest its nearly \$55 million endowment from fossil fuels businesses over the next five years. Its EcoDorm has received a 5-year Platinum re-certification under the LEED Building Operations and Maintenance System by the U.S. Green Building Council, and it was named second nationwide among College Magazine's "Top 10 Green Campuses."

It was also among the first schools in the country to establish a Department of Environmental Studies in 1970. The department offers more than 35 courses as well as 4-year degrees in several areas of concentration.



Sierra Club's Judy Mattox (L) and Ken Brame present Emma Greenbaum (2nd from L) and Kelly Martin with the club's award for the retirement of the Asheville Coal Plant.

Retirement of Asheville Coal Plant: Sierra Club Asheville Beyond Coal Campaign - Emma Greenbaum & Kelly Martin

Emma & Kelly worked for three years to get Duke Energy to agree to close the Asheville Coal Powered Electrical Plant, which paid off when Duke announced this summer it would close the plant by 2021. Duke also agreed to abandon its plan to build a mega gas-powered

plant, with miles of new transmission lines.

Environmental Partner of the Year: MountainTrue

Mountain True & Sierra Club worked together to get Duke Energy to stop coal ash pollution, and to close the local Coal Powered Electric Plant. We are also working together to protect our Nantahala and Pisgah Forests. Julie Mayfield accepted the award.

Outstanding Environmental Reporting: Jack Igelman

As a contributing environmental reporter with Carolina Public Press, Jack's articles over recent years have focused on the Forest Lookout Series, water rights, mountain top development and coal ash inspection. He also has been involved with the Hominy Creek Greenway, helping create a 14-acre park. He is co-author of *Trekking the Southern Appalachians*.

Green Elected Official of the Year: Marc Hunt

Marc served four years on the Asheville City Council and five years leading the city's Greenway Commission. He led the successful 2012 City Council effort to strengthen the conservation easement on the city's 18,000-acre watershed to essentially wilderness status forever, and strongly supported the reduction of the community's reliance on fossil fuels.

Non-profit Environmental Award of the Year: St. Eugene Catholic Church

St. Eugene Catholic Church, 72 Culvern St. in Asheville, raised more than \$143,000 in six months to purchase and install 147 solar panels. This renewable energy system is providing more than 22% of the Church's power needs. Since the panels were turned on October 28, 2015, they have saved 2,102 lbs. of CO2 emissions.

Green Business of the Year: Sundance Power Systems

Sundance started in 1995 and now operates in five states designing, installing and servicing systems for solar electric, solar water heating, radiant floor heating, wind power and micro hydroelectric. Companies such as Sierra Nevada, Broadwing

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Some Good News from Congress!

By Ken Brame

The final budget passed in December by Congress contained some welcome good news for a change. It contained a number of good environmental measures thanks to our champions in Congress, strong lobbying work by our Sierra Club Staff in DC, and calls and messages by our activists across the country

- Alternative Energy - The final budget bill passed in December included a 5 year extension of tax credits for wind and solar producers.

- Clean Water - Efforts to block the Environmental Protection Agency's recent update of clean water regulations, known as the "Waters of the United States" rule, which extended federal protection to new U.S. waterways were defeated.

- Land and Water Conservation Fund - The spending bill includes a three-year reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, a federal program dating to 1965 that helps public entities purchase property for environmental protection.

The three-year renewal is considerably shorter than the 25-year renewal it last received, but it had lapsed this summer and had not been renewed.

- Transit Benefits - The tax package includes a big win for public transit users who buy benefits pre-tax. The bill permanently matches the level of pre-tax transit benefits to pre-tax benefits for parking.

- Climate Change - Efforts to attack President Obama's climate change agendas on two fronts were blocked. There were efforts to strike down or delay the Clean Power Plant rules issued by the Environmental Protection Agency, the first federal effort to limit carbon emissions from U.S. power plants. There were also efforts to include language blocking Obama from sending federal funds to the global Green Climate Fund, a centerpiece of the international climate-change agreement reached this past weekend in Paris. Obama has pledged up to \$3 billion in U.S. spending on the fund, which is meant to help poor countries cope with climate change.



Mid Winter - Early Spring Hiking Schedule



SAT, FEB 20 – HOMINY PARK - Peaceful two-mile round-trip walk on level pavement along the French Broad River. Close-up views of the river and Biltmore property on the other side. Learn about the route this river takes from Asheville. Wear good walking shoes. Meet in Asheville at 10 AM. Contact hike leader Jane at janelaping@sbcglobal.net or 828-772-0379.

SAT, FEB 27 - PANTHERTOWN VALLEY I (Moderate) - This 6-mile loop hike in one of the most interesting valleys in the Southern Appalachians and features four waterfalls including Wilderness Falls, Frolictown Falls, Granny Burrell Falls, and Schoolhouse Falls. The 3-hour round trip drive makes this an all day trip so plan accordingly. Experienced hikers only. Good hiking shoes/boots required with possibility of 1-2 wet stream crossings. Hiking poles encouraged. Call or email trip leader David Reid if interested at 828-713-1607, daviddbreid@charter.net.

SAT, MAR 12 - OLD DAM AT WARREN WILSON COLLEGE - Easy two-mile hike downhill through open woods to the Swannanoa River and back. Learn about the natural history of the area. Wear good walking shoes. Meet in Asheville at 10 AM. Contact hike leader Jane at janelaping@sbcglobal.net or 828-772-0379.

SUN, MAR 19 – GREEN RIVER GAMELANDS/PULLIUM CREEK TRAIL - Meet in Asheville at 10 AM and return around 5:30 PM. Moderate with some easy level of difficulty. Approx 6 miles R.T. on this there & back trail with elevation gain of 900 ft. It's a beautiful trail that ends at the Green River just below the narrows, with rapids moving through large boulders. On the way there, there's a tedious creek crossing with wiggly step-stones, so wear good footwear & consider a hiking pole. Plan to learn about the beautiful early-blooming wildflowers there as well. NOTE: Sorry, no doggies this trip due to Pullium Creek crossing. RSVP to hike leader Lisa McWherter at lisamcw2@gmail.com or 828-713-4994.

SAT, MAR 26 - SOUTH MILLS RIVER AT TURKEY PEN GAP (Moderate) - This 5-mile loop hike is on the Riverside Trail in the South Mills area of the Pisgah District of the Pisgah National Forest. Round trip driving time is 1½ hours. Lots of stream-side hiking with multiple wet crossings. Learn about a proposal from conservationists for a National Recreation Area in the Pisgah District, and what that would entail. Good hiking shoes/boots required. Hiking poles encouraged. Call or email trip leader David Reid if interested and for more details at 828-713-1607, daviddbreid@charter.net.

SAT, APR 16 - OLD DAM AT WARREN WILSON COLLEGE - Walk about 2 miles on dirt trails and roads through labeled plantings and natural areas. Learn about spring ephemerals. Wear good walking shoes. Meet in Asheville at 10 AM. Contact hike leader Jane at janelaping@sbcglobal.net or 828-772-0379.

SUN, APR 17 – TROMBATORE TRAIL HIKE - Meet in Asheville at 10 AM and return around 5 PM. A new Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy trail which is near the Bear Wallow Mtn trail. The Trombatore hike is a there-and-back hike, being 5 miles round trip, with a 1000 ft. elevation gain to reach its end point. This beautiful trail winds through lush wooded areas with bountiful ferns & occasional boulders. The trail ends in a high meadow, with views of all the surrounding area. It would be considered "moderate" difficulty due to elevation gain. The trail has some up & down with steps, but it is not steep. Learn about the area birds and wildflowers and how you can support birds and other wildlife by what you grow in your own backyard. RSVP to hike leader Lisa McWherter at lisamcw2@gmail.com or 828-713-4994.

SAT, APR 23 - PANTHERTOWN VALLEY II (Moderate) - Hold the date for a return trip to Panthertown Valley. This time the 5-mile hike follows the Greenland Creek Trail. There are at least 3 waterfalls planned on this trip, with an option by unanimous consent to hike a little further for an additional waterfall. There may also be some early wildflowers. Learn about the management plan for the Panthertown Valley area, its unique features, and how the tract was acquired by the US Forest Service. The 3-hour round trip drive makes this an all day trip so plan accordingly. Experienced hikers only. Good hiking shoes/boots required with possibility of 1-2 wet stream crossings. Hiking poles encouraged. Call or email trip leader David Reid if interested at 828-713-1607, daviddbreid@charter.net.

NC Sierra Club Priorities for 2016

The North Carolina Sierra Club State Chapter voted to work on the following conservation priorities for 2016:

- Clean Energy (a combination of Solar, Wind, and the Clean Power Plan to reduce carbon emissions)
- Dirty Fuels (a combination of stopping Offshore Drilling and fighting Coal Ash pollution)
- Transportation (a combination of limiting highway growth and promoting mass transit)
- Healthy Forests (protection from industrial logging and wood pellets) including the Nantahala Pisgah Forest Revision Plan in western NC
- A continuation of the Stop Titan Campaign (stopping construction of the largest coal powered cement plant in the country near Wilmington, NC)

These priorities will guide the chapter's use of volunteer and staff resources for 2016. Please donate to make these goals a reality. Go to nc.sierraclub.org and click on the "Donate Now" button at the top of the page. Donations can also be mailed to: NC Sierra Club, 19 W. Hargett St., Suite 210, Raleigh, NC 27601.



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Sierra Club Annual Awards Honor Local Community - Continued from page 2

Farms, Deltec Homes and Spinning Spider Creamery, along with Henderson High School, Warren Wilson College Appalachian State University and 17 local Asheville restaurants are benefiting from Sundance Power Systems.

Friend of Rivers: Richard Kark

Richard has a decade's long history of being a Friend of Rivers. Currently, he takes weekly samples of Swannanoa River water in support of MountainTrue's efforts to monitor water quality. He co-leads the Sierra Club's biannual French Broad River clean-up. He has paddled more than 50 Appalachian rivers and has written an on-line book, *Kark's Canoeing and Kayaking Guide to 309 Wisconsin Streams* describing the 309 rivers he has paddled in Wisconsin.

Volunteer of the Year: Anne Marie Doherty

Anne Marie is recognized for her two-year service on the Western North Carolina Sierra Club executive committee. Her knowledge of websites and the electrical utilities industry was greatly appreciated.

Update on the Nantahala-Pisgah Forest Plan Revision

The NC state chapter of the Sierra Club has recommended 15 areas be designated as wilderness in the upcoming forest plan to be adopted in 2017 or 2018: Black Mountains, Craggy Mountains (Big Ivy), Ellicott Rock Extension, Harper Creek, Joyce Kilmer-Slickrock Extensions, Linville Gorge extensions, Lost Cove, Mackey Mountains, Middle Prong Extension, Overflow Creek, Shining Rock Extensions, Snowbird, Southern Nantahala Extensions, Tusquitee Bald, Unicoi Mountains.

Also recommended are two new National Recreation Areas in the Pisgah and Grandfather districts to be designated by Congress and, in the meantime to be managed consistently with such future designation by Congress, with an emphasis on scenic values and traditional recreational opportunities including hunting and fishing, climbing, mountain biking, and stock use.