



**SIERRA CLUB**

FOUNDED 1892

# WENOCA SIERRAN

Newsletter of the  
Western North Carolina Sierra Club

Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

MAY - JULY 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, May 4**  
**Meghan Baker**

*Organic Backyard  
& Patio Gardening*

**Wednesday, June 1**  
**Danny Bernstein**

*Celebrating 100 years of  
the National Park Service  
in the Southeast*

**Wednesday, July 16**  
**7th Annual Summer Picnic**

*Noon - 4 pm*  
*Blue Ridge Parkway  
sheltered picnic grounds*

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.

## Organic Backyard & Patio Gardening - May 4



Meghan Baker

Gardening on a small scale can have enormous impacts on your backyard ecosystem, your health, and the planet.

Learn tips to create successful vegetable & berry gardens through site selection, building soil health and managing

pest problems... just in time for spring planting season!

Meghan is an Extension Educator for the NC Cooperative Extension Service in Buncombe County. She advises small farmers on a wide range of production and farm business topics ranging from vegetables to medicinal herbs and alternative crops. An avid naturalist and conservationist, Meghan advocates for agricultural and gardening practices that restore ecological balance.

## Celebrating 100 years of NPS in the Southeast - June 1



Danny Bernstein

To celebrate the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service, Danny Bernstein visited 71 park units in the Southeast and wrote the book, *Forests, Alligators, Battlefields: My Journey through the National Parks of the South*.

Readers meet the historic figures, rangers, volunteers, park partners, and visitors—the people who bring each park to life with human stories as well as celebrating the great scenery.

In the Southeast, icons like Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the Everglades, exist along with the one square block of Tupelo National Battlefield, and Salt River Bay in the Virgin Islands, where Christopher Columbus landed. Visiting the Southeastern parks is a very different experience from the once in a lifetime visit to Yosemite or Yellowstone. Here, folks visit often volunteer, adopt a trail, and support their parks.

Author Will Harlan offers advance praise for *Forests, Alligators, Battlefields*: Danny's adventures are a must-read for any outdoor

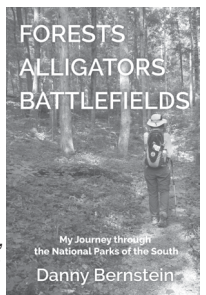
enthusiast. No one has logged more miles in national parks or explored them so thoroughly.

Danny's mission is to get people out of their cars and walking. She's been a committed hiker for over forty years, completing the Appalachian Trail, all the trails in Great Smoky Mountains National Park, the Mountains-to-Sea Trail, and many other hiking challenges.

Danny hikes and leads hikes for the Carolina Mountain Club, Friends of the Smokies, and other outdoor groups. She's written two hiking guides, *Hiking the Carolina Mountains* and *Hiking North Carolina's Blue Ridge Mountains*, and a narrative on her MST hike, *The Mountains-to-Sea Trail across North Carolina*. She blogs at [www.hikertohiker.com](http://www.hikertohiker.com).

After the Sierra Club talk and slideshow, Danny will sign books and donate two dollars per book as she does at all non-profit group presentation. (Cash or checks only, no credit cards, please.)

In her previous life, she worked in computer science for thirty-five years, long before computing was cool, first as a software developer, then as a professor of computer science. Her motto is "no place is too far to walk if you have the time." She plans to die with her boots on.



## Join us for the 7th Annual Summer Picnic - July 16

On Saturday, July 16, the Sierra Club will enjoy its 7th 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 past VA Hospital & turn left 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!

## ***Can You Help with the French Broad River Clean-Up?***

By Mark Threlkeld

Every spring, the French Broad River needs our help getting spruced up for the summer paddling season.

This year we'll be walking and paddling for trash on May 28, from 10 am to 2 pm. The clean-up is in conjunction with Asheville GreenWorks "Clean Streams Day," when hundreds of volunteers work to clean up creeks and rivers in the area. GreenWorks will supply all we need in terms of supplies - we just need your valuable volunteer time and energy!

Once again, there will be the usual after-party with free beer from 2 to 4 pm. So mark your calendars! This event is always a lot of fun and a great way to get to know other Sierra Club members in a more personal way as we work together. A reminder email will be sent in late April with additional details. For more info, email Mark Threlkeld at [focusmdt@gmail.com](mailto:focusmdt@gmail.com).



## ***Conserving Energy: A Personal Responsibility***

By Sam Harben

At our meeting on April 6, the WENOCA Sierra Club was fortunate to have two energy experts speaking on how each of us can protect the environment by conserving our use of energy while saving money. The speakers were Amy Musser, co-founder and principal of Vandemusser Design, and Jason Walls, District Manager for Duke Energy.

Through Vandemusser Design, Amy provides technical consulting and certification services for green energy construction to builders and homeowners not only in Asheville but other states as well. Jason is the Duke Energy contact person for local governments, educators and community leaders and is building partnerships with local governments to collaboratively plan to provide responsible clean energy for Western North Carolina.

Amy provided valuable tips on how we as individuals can conserve energy and lower our energy bill each month. Go to [wncgbc.org/blog/category/amy-musser](http://wncgbc.org/blog/category/amy-musser) to view Amy's blog and energy conserving tips for homes, including:

- Install low flow shower heads;
- Use a clothesline;

- Eliminate phantom loads from computers and AV equipment;
- Lower hot water temperature to 120 degrees;
- Insulate water heater with insulating blanket;
- Change furnace filters regularly;
- Replace incandescent lights with compact fluorescent or LED bulbs;
- Unplug, when not in use, cell phone and other equipment chargers.

Jason reviewed Duke Energy's numerous recommendations for conserving energy, which in some instance may result in rebates to home owners that qualify. Check Duke Energy's web page ([www.duke-energy.com/north-carolina/savings.asp](http://www.duke-energy.com/north-carolina/savings.asp)) for a number of energy saving suggestions, including:

- Check attics for leaks and seal spaces where air is escaping or coming in the attic from outside;
- Add additional insulation to attics;
- Wash clothes in cold water-- most detergents work just as well in cold water wash;
- Rinse dishes before placing them in dishwasher and turn off pre-rinse option;
- Use ceiling fans both in winter and summer.

## ***GOOD NEWS! OBAMA'S LEGACY: Pipeline & Off-shore drilling***

By Maryanne Rackoff

President Obama killed the Keystone XL pipeline! In January he closed all public lands to further coal leasing, and put an immediate suspension on all future and modified coal leases. The Executive Director of Sierra Club Stated, "...This is the kind of action that furthers America's international leadership following the historic climate agreement in Paris."

Obama recently took another giant step forward, when on March 15 the Interior Department announced that his administration was yanking the earlier proposal to open the southeastern and mid-Atlantic to oil and gas drilling. Yes, that's you and me, our state of North Carolina. No offshore oil and gas drilling on the Atlantic coast! Interior Secretary Jewell said, "When you factor in conflicts with national defense, economic activities such as fishing and tourism, and opposition from many local communities, it simply doesn't make sense to move forward with any lease sales in the coming five years."

## ***Nantahala and Pisgah National Forest Share Building Blocks of the Forest Plan***

The Forest Service is providing an opportunity now (Spring, 2016), for the public to see draft building blocks of the Nantahala and Pisgah Forest Plan as they are being developed. Some initial building blocks of the plan are available on the National Forests in North Carolina website. The developing plan language, as well as a video from Deputy Forest Supervisor James Melonas, is available on the Nantahala and Pisgah Forest Planning Home page of the National Forests in North Carolina site ([www.fs.usda.gov/nfsnc](http://www.fs.usda.gov/nfsnc)). New content will be updated as it is developed on the Forest Plan Under Construction page. As we receive feedback, the versions on the web will be updated to reflect our evolving thinking," says Melonas. Since 2012, the Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests have been in the process of revising their forest plan. The forest plan is a required document that guides what activities can take place on a particular piece of Forest Service land. Forest plans are typically revised every 15-20 years. A formal draft plan and associated Environmental Impact Statement are expected for release in Fall 2016. Stay tuned for further details.

## *You Made a Difference!*

### *From Sulfur Dioxide to Duke's 3rd gas plant*

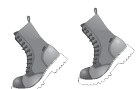
By Ken Brame

Your hundreds of letters and showing up at public hearings made a big difference in protecting our environment here in Western NC. We packed the public hearing in Asheville asking the Public Utilities Commission not to approve Duke's third proposed natural gas power plant. The hearing lasted for hours with all but one person supporting our position. We won! The PUC denied Duke's request for the third unit.

Last year, hundreds of Sierra Club members and supporters showed up at a public hearing and submitted comments demanding that the local Air Quality Board lower the limits of Sulfur Dioxide allowed to be emitted from Duke's Asheville Coal Powered Electric Plant which exceeded safe limits. Again, we have success. The Air Quality Board is requiring that the amount of SO<sub>2</sub> emitted be reduced from 2.3 lbs per million BTU to 0.5 pounds. a reduction of over 75%.



## *Spring & Summer Hiking Schedule*



**SAT, MAY 7 – DEVIL'S COURTHOUSE HIKE** via Mountains-to-Sea Trail. Walk a beautiful stretch of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail to Devil's Courthouse. Meet in Asheville at 10 am and return around 5:45 pm. Distance is approx 6 miles round-trip, rated as mostly Moderate with some Easy, and we hike a moderate (not fast) pace. 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, we'll view mountains in three other states if we have a clear day. Also, there will be opportunity to learn about the birds in the area, some of which are easily identified by their calls. We'll have some wildflower ID as well. There is somewhere around 500 ft elevation change, and the trail is rather rugged, with intermittent tree roots and an occasional 10" step/rock. Makes good footwear essential, and maybe hiking poles as well. Experienced hikers only. RSVP to hike leader or for any questions/concerns; Lisa McWherter at [lisamcw2@gmail.com](mailto:lisamcw2@gmail.com) or 828-713-4994.

**SAT, MAY 14 - AVERY CREEK/TWIN FALLS** - Trail in Pisgah National Forest near Brevard. Easy to moderate, 4 mile round-trip hike along Avery Creek to three waterfalls. Wear sturdy footwear and dress in layers. Bring water and lunch or a snack. Meet in Asheville at 10 am and return about 4 pm. RSVP to hike leader, Jane at [janelaping@sbcglobal.net](mailto:janelaping@sbcglobal.net) or 828-772-0379.

**SAT, MAY 21 - COMMISSARY HILL/CAMP ALICE TRAIL** - This is as flat as it gets in the Black Mountains. Easy to Moderate hike along old railroad bed at high elevation. Length is 3.6 miles round-trip. We will learn about the recommendations to preserve a large area of the Blacks as wilderness, history of Camp Alice, and look for wildflowers in bloom. Sturdy shoes are recommended. Dress in layers as high elevation hiking can range in temperature, and be cool even in late May. Meet in Asheville at 9:30 am and return around 3 pm. RSVP to hike leader, David Reid at [daviddbreid@charter.net](mailto:daviddbreid@charter.net) or 828-713-1607.

**SAT, JUNE 4 – DOUGLAS FALL** - Hike in the Craggy Mountains Wilderness Study Area, 7.4 miles round-trip. Rated strenuous for steep descent to Douglas Falls from the Blue Ridge Parkway, then hike back up. We will learn about the Craggy Mountains WSA and recommendations for protection. Sturdy hiking shoes are required. Hiking poles are encouraged due to steepness. Elevation loss/gain is 1876 feet. Experienced hikers who are used to mountainous terrain only. Leave Asheville at 9:30 am, return around 3:30 pm. RSVP to hike leader, David Reid at [daviddbreid@charter.net](mailto:daviddbreid@charter.net) or 828-713-1607.

**SAT, JUNE 11 - CRAGGY GARDENS** - A 2-mile long round-trip hike through a heavily wooded area, north of Asheville on the Blue Ridge Parkway. The trail is easy to moderate with ups and downs and some rock steps and great views of the mountains. We will visit the bald at the high point and learn about the theories on why it is there. Wear sturdy shoes, dress for the weather, and bring water and a snack or lunch. Meet in Asheville at 10 am and return about 2:30 pm. RSVP to hike leader, Jane at [janelaping@sbcglobal.net](mailto:janelaping@sbcglobal.net) or 828-772-0379.

**SAT, JUNE 25 - ROCKY FORK STATE PARK** - Includes a Splash in the Creek (not swimming) opportunity to cool off. Moderate level w/ short areas that are a bit steep, distance 4-5 miles (more details to come). Meet in Asheville at 10 a.m., return by 5:30. Ranger Tim Pharis will lead us on a guided hike. Learn about this new Tennessee State Park that is in Unicoi County, not far from Asheville. Opportunities for wildflower ID, and possibly water wildlife ID. NOTE: Hikers must be sufficiently fit for hiking in hot weather. Please RSVP to hike leader Lisa McWherter at [lisamcw2@gmail.com](mailto:lisamcw2@gmail.com) or 828-713-4994.

**SAT, JULY 23 – EAST FORGE OF PIGEON RIVER TRAIL** - Meet in Asheville at 10 am and return around 5:45 pm. This hike is Easy/Moderate, with a distance approx 5-1/2 miles round trip. The hike follows the beautiful, rushing Pigeon River, but most it offers the cover of some beautiful & quiet woods. Be prepared for a few muddy places, wearing good footwear & considering hiking poles. Learn about how the river changes over time, as it changes its path, widens & creates sandy areas and about areas that are designated "Wilderness." Since this trail goes into the Shining Rock Wilderness, **only 10 folks are allowed in a group**. Hence, please cancel ahead if your plans change to make room for others. Sorry no doggies on this hike. RSVP to hike leader Lisa McWherter at [lisamcw2@gmail.com](mailto:lisamcw2@gmail.com) or 828-713-4994.

**SAT, JULY 30 - RATTLESNAKE LODGE** - A mostly easy 2.6 mile hike with several moderate switchbacks at the beginning to gain most of the 500 feet rise in elevation to an old wagon road. We will learn about the fate of Rattlesnake Lodge and the natural history of the area. Wear sturdy footwear, dress in layers, and bring water and a lunch or snack. Meet in Asheville at 10 am, return around 2:30 pm. RSVP to hike leader Jane at [janelaping@sbcglobal.net](mailto:janelaping@sbcglobal.net) or 828-772-0379.



---

## ***Tips on buying sustainable lumber and paper***

By Tracey Roizman

Josh Martin, director of the Environmental Paper Network, presented an informative program in February on how our wood and paper buying choices impact the world's forests. Included in his program were tips for how you can reduce your paper use and make the most environmentally sustainable choices when purchasing paper and lumber products. Here are Josh's suggestions:

### **Lumber Purchasing Guidelines:**

For selecting sustainable lumber Josh recommends avoiding tropical hardwoods, buying local native species, if possible, and looking for the label of the Forest Stewardship Council. **It's**

**important to ask about FSC certification** when you are buying, and to seek the assurance that its certification provides rather than vague promises of sustainability. **Avoid products with the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) logo.** This is the less meaningful certification, done by the industry itself.

### **LOOK FOR THIS ONE:**



### **AVOID THIS ONE:**



**Article continues below the address fold** ↓



WENOCA GROUP  
SIERRA CLUB  
PO Box 469  
Asheville, NC 28802-0469

EDITION 05-07-2016

NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
PERMIT NO. 260  
ASHEVILLE, NC 28801

---

## ***Buying Sustainable Lumber and Paper - continued***

### **Paper Purchasing Guidelines:**

Look for a high percentage of post-consumer recycled content first. If only virgin fiber paper is available, look for the label of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) for certification it is sourced from well-managed forests. FSC also certifies recycled-content products so it may be there, as well. Josh also recommended agricultural residue papers, especially those produced with wheat straw. And lastly, if possible, look for paper that is bleached Totally Chlorine Free (virgin) or Processed Chlorine Free (recycled) to support the cleanest methods of production. These products are now available at most major retailers including Office Depot and Staples, and by delivery through online retailers such as Greenline Paper ([www.greenlinepaper.com](http://www.greenlinepaper.com)).

### **Additional Resources:**

The website for the service to get off junk mail and catalog lists: [www.catalogchoice.org](http://www.catalogchoice.org).

To get your name removed from telephone directory lists: [www.yellowpagesoptout.com](http://www.yellowpagesoptout.com).

---

## ***WENOCA Volunteers Needed***

**WENOCA Group of the Sierra Club** is seeking volunteers to help with Facebook posts, newsletter articles, kitchen duty at monthly meetings, helping to transport folks with no cars, working our booths at festivals & events ... and more. If you're interested in getting involved, please contact Judy Mattox at 828-683-2176.