



**SIERRA  
CLUB**

FOUNDED 1892

# WENOCA SIERRAN

Newsletter of the  
Western North Carolina Sierra Club

Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

AUG - OCT 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, August 3 Phyllis Stiles

*How Gardeners Can  
Save the World Through  
Pollinator Conscious  
Landscaping*

### Wednesday, September 7 Energy Innovations Task Force Panel and Amber Weaver

*How Can We Prevent a 3rd  
Gas Powered Plant by Duke?*

### Wednesday, October 5 Cassie Gavin

*Environmental Legislative  
Update: The Good,  
the Bad, the Ugly*

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.

## Pollinator Conscious Landscaping - August 3



Phyllis Stiles

On August 3, Bee City USA's Phyllis Stiles presents a discussion of pollinators, the plants they like, the toxins they hate, and the special danger posed by Roundup. She will also report on the latest encouraging positions taken by Home Depot and Lowes.

Three-quarters of the world's plant species rely on animal pollinators for their reproduction. However many pollinators are in decline due to pesticide use, parasites, diseases, land uses changes and habitat fragmentation, large scale

agriculture practices, and climate change. Stiles, founder and director of Bee City USA, will talk about their certification program aimed at making communities across America more "PC" (pollinator conscious).

*Named the United States Pollinator Advocate for 2015 by the North American Pollinator Protection Campaign, Phyllis Stiles is founder and director of national programs Bee City USA® and Bee Campus USA. An Asheville resident since the 1970s, Stiles has spent her career serving communities from West Africa to the Mississippi Delta, and non-profit organizations in fields ranging from natural resource protection to civic leadership development and farmland protection. She enjoys hiking, trying to speak French and playing her upright bass.*

## How Can We Prevent a 3rd Gas Powered Electric Plant by Duke Energy? - September 7

Join us on September 7 as we welcome Brownie Newman of Buncombe County Commission, Julie Mayfield Asheville City Council and Jason Walls of Duke Energy. They will provide an update on the work of the Energy Innovation Task Force, which is developing the plan to move WNC to cleaner energy and avoid construction of a new gas "peaking" unit at the Asheville plant in 2023.



Amber Weaver

In addition to the Innovation Task Force, we welcome Amber Weaver of the City of Asheville's Office of Sustainability who will be discussing projects that created the foundation and culture of the City's work today. The City is looking towards the future to meet the goal of reducing carbon by 80% by 2050. Ms. Weaver will also highlight future projects as well as opportunities for citizens to take action within their own environments.

*Amber Weaver works in the City of Asheville's Office of Sustainability and is a LEED Green Associate. In her previous position in Atlanta, Georgia, Amber worked in State and local government applying principles of*

*sustainability to generate environmental action and awareness. She received her undergraduate degree at the University of Georgia for Environmental Economics and Management. Her expertise is in creating policy around the subjects of watershed protection, beautification, waste reduction and recycling, and sustainability.*

*Julie Mayfield is a member of the Asheville City Council, and is the city's representative on the newly created Energy Innovation Task Force. She is the co-executive director of Mountain True. Previously, she was the Vice President and General Counsel for the Georgia Conservancy where she worked on policy issues in the areas of air and water quality, natural areas, quality growth, and coastal conservation.*

*Brownie Newman is on the Buncombe County Commission, and is the county's representative on the Energy Innovation Task Force. He has served two-terms on the Asheville City Council. In 2012 he was elected to the Buncombe County Commission where he currently serves as Vice-Chair. Since 2008, Brownie has worked in the solar industry where he served as VP of Business Development at FLS Energy for seven years. Last year he started a new company called Headwaters Solar where he is an owner and partner.*

*Jason Walls is employed by Duke Energy as District Manager for the Asheville region and is their representative on the Energy Innovations Task Force. 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.*

## ***Environmental Legislative Update: The Good, the Bad, the Ugly - October 5***



Cassie Gavin

Join us on October 5 for our North Carolina legislative update with Cassie Gavin. The presentation will be a discussion of the 2016 short session which ended July 1: updates on coal ash, water quality, waste management, clean energy and recycling - along with what we can expect to see in 2017.

*Cassie is the NC Chapter Sierra Club Director of Government Affairs. She is the Chapter's primary lobbyist at the state legislature. Cassie attended undergrad and law school at UNC-Chapel Hill. She is responsible for tracking legislation affecting the environment and lobbying legislators on the Sierra Club's priority issues. Before starting with the Sierra Club in 2013, Cassie worked in conservation with NC Coastal Land Trust for seven years. Cassie's interests include kayaking, hiking and travel.*

## ***Great Turnout for River Cleanup***

By Mark Threlkeld

A strong and hearty crew of 20 Sierra Club volunteers cleaned trash from the French Broad River and nearby roadways on May 28th. It was the best showing anyone could remember and the group pulled an amazing amount of debris from the river. A ground crew of volunteers also cleaned adjacent Emma Road, to prevent garbage from washing into the river.

A big thank you goes to the staff from Asheville GreenWorks and RiverLink who supply boats and other gear, as well as hosting a volunteer party at the end! An additional cleanup is being planned for late August. If you would like to be added to the email notification list to volunteer, please email Mark Threlkeld at [focusmdt@gmail.com](mailto:focusmdt@gmail.com).



*Always grateful for our wonderful volunteers!*

## ***How to See the Future: Project Sunroof!***

The debate over the merits of renewable energy is over. For the overwhelming majority of Americans, the advantages of replacing coal, oil, and gas with clean, renewable energy sources come under the heading of glaringly obvious.

Our challenge then, is not to convince people that renewable energy makes sense, but to help them see for themselves that the wave of the future is already breaking all around them. And although that *seems* like it should be easy, people have spent their entire lives in a fossil-fuel economy that has an illusion of permanence that can be hard to shake off. But The Grid is not *The Matrix*. People don't need a mysterious red pill to have their eyes opened to a world that's powered by renewable energy. It can be as simple as looking out the window.

Fact: Once someone sees solar panels appear on their neighbor's roof, they are far more likely to go solar themselves. This viral solar effect has been documented by researchers. One house gets solar and then it spreads outward from there. Despite the fact that most people agree that renewable energy is a good idea, seeing it happen in their own neighborhood somehow makes it more real.

This viral effect is helping to drive dramatic double digit growth for rooftop solar installations year after year after year. Last year the U.S. set a record for rooftop solar installations, and this year is expected to have about twice as many. It took 40 years for solar to be installed on 1 million rooftops in the United States. We should hit the next million within two years.

And there are ways to make this growth happen even faster. One is through public awareness campaigns like the Sierra Club's Ready for 100, which just launched a national tour of 10 cities across the U.S. to showcase the demand for clean, renewable energy. For instance, Aspen, CO is a town that has *already* achieved 100 percent renewable electricity, and it's fantastic.

But here's an idea: What if we could supercharge that rooftop solar viral effect by making it easy to see the solar potential of every home? To that end, the Sierra Club is collaborating with Google to help map the solar possibilities of residential rooftops across the U.S. Google's solar mapping tool is called **Project Sunroof**, and it's both powerful and incredibly easy to use. Enter your address into the mapping tool and — bam! — you'll see your home's solar potential based on your roof's position, shading, and usable hours of sunlight each year. At the same time, you'll get an estimate of your potential energy bill savings, details about different financing options, and next steps to explore making solar work for you.

Project Sunroof is currently available in 43 states (not yet included are Texas, Hawaii, Rhode Island, Idaho, South Dakota, Mississippi, Tennessee, Alaska, and the District of Columbia). If you haven't already gone solar and are curious about how much you could save, you should check it out. Fighting climate change isn't just an obligation; it's an opportunity to create the future we want. To learn more, go to <https://www.google.com/get/sunroof>.

## Legislative Report

By Cassie Gaven, Sierra Club Director of Government Relations

The legislature adjourned on Friday July 1, 2016 after passing a bad coal ash bill and another delay of Jordan Lake cleanup rules - but failed to pass several other proposals for environmental protection rollbacks. We can expect to see these ideas again in 2017.

**Water Quality Update** - Unfortunately, the environmental provision delaying the Jordan and Falls lakes cleanup plans remains in the budget (Section 14.13 of H 1030). The provision was narrowed to remove the automatic repeal of buffer protections for the Neuse River, Tar-Pamlico watershed, Catawba River and Randleman Reservoir. And the mussels study was eliminated - but replaced with an algaecide study that is worrisome. Science says protecting our waters requires limiting pollution flowing in with strategies like buffers - not adding things to our lakes like SolarBees or chemicals. The Senate was reportedly dead set on delaying the Jordan Lake Rules for the fourth time.

**Coal Ash Update** - A bill passed that eliminates the Coal Ash Commission, gives DEQ the ability to reclassify coal ash pits at half of the sites to low-risk allowing them to be covered and stored without being in lined pits. It also deletes surface and groundwater contamination considerations from current law and gives DEQ more latitude to grant variances to deadlines. The bill also includes some positives - water lines for residents near coal ash pits and requirements for Duke Energy to recycle more coal ash - but in this case the bad outweighs the good and the Chapter opposed this bill as a giveaway to Duke Energy. The legislature could have chosen to provide water lines and

encourage beneficial reuse without also giving Duke Energy the option to potentially cap in place half of the coal ash pits in the state.

**Farm Act Update - Some good news** - the Farm Act S 770 - was changed to delete the section that would have exempted agriculture and forestry from water use permitting requirements in areas of the state facing major water supply concerns. And the other section of concern to the Chapter - which would create a loophole in sedimentation pollution control rules - was narrowed. Thanks for contacting your legislators about this bill - all the calls and emails must have made a difference. Rep. Chuck McGrady (R-Henderson) was key in securing the positive changes to this bill and deserves thanks.

**Regulatory Reform Update - More good news:** there were many bad environmental proposals still left on the table at the end of the 2016 session. These included the Senate's wind bill - H 763 - that would have limited wind energy development in much of the state, rollbacks of stream protections, and the elimination of North Carolina's electronics waste recycling program. The legislature adjourned without the House and Senate able to agree on a final regulatory reform bill or wind bill - so that's great news for clean energy and the environment. This is the first time in 5 years that a bad Regulatory Bill didn't pass. Rep. Chuck McGrady played an important role in pushing back against overreaching Senate regulatory rollback proposals.

Thanks to everyone who called or wrote your representative in Raleigh. Please let Sen. Terry Van Duyn and Rep. John Ager, Susan Fisher, Joe Sam Queen, and Brian Turner know that you appreciate their opposition to the bad bills. Let Sen. Davis and Hise and Rep. Presnell and West know that you are disappointed in their votes to support the bad bills.



## Late-Summer - Early Fall Hiking Schedule



**FRI, AUG 12 – BLUEBERRY HIKE** - Easy to moderate blueberry picking hike on Mount Mitchell. Leave Asheville at 9:30 am and return by 4 pm. It's a 4-5 mile in-and-out hike on a gravel road. We will stop to pick blueberries and blackberries and hopefully there will be enough for you to eat your fill. We will talk about types of blueberries and who eats them. Wear sturdy shoes, dress in layers, bring water and a lunch or a snack. RSVP to leader at [janelaping@sbcglobal.net](mailto:janelaping@sbcglobal.net) or 828-772-0379. .

**SAT, AUG 27 - SPLASHING WATERFALL HIKE** - (Splashing is optional!) Area below John Rock. Meet in Asheville at 10 am and return by 4:30 pm. Cat Gap Trail to Butter Gap Trail (following Grogan Creek). Moderate/Easy, approx 4 miles R.T. on this there & back hike. Minimal elevation change. Offers 2 nice waterfalls. There will be a splashing opportunity (self-splashing) on Butter Gap trail's waterfall. We'll have opportunities to learn some wildflowers, and also to gain understanding of protection of fragile stream side habitat. Kids that do hiking are welcome w/accompanying parent/guardian (with signed liability waiver). Check w/ hike leader if you wish to bring a well-behaved doggie. 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 may be hiking poles as well. Please RSVP to hike leader Lisa McWherter at [lisamcw2@gmail.com](mailto:lisamcw2@gmail.com) or 828-713-4994. .

**SAT, SEPT 17 - BLACK BALSAM & TENANT MTN HIKE** - This is moderate 5-6 mile round trip hike with some great rock outcrops – one of my FAVORITE PLACES. Meet in Asheville at 10 am and return around 5:30 or 6 pm. Has beautiful panoramic views from the top of two balds which are above 6000 ft. Good footwear required, and be prepared for heavy winds on top. Consider hiking pole for rocky areas. This hike is for experienced hikers or those in good condition. There will be learning opportunities related to what wilderness designation means and what it could do for this area. Also, possible wildflower & bird ID. All hikers please RSVP to hike leader Lisa McWherter at [lisamcw2@gmail.com](mailto:lisamcw2@gmail.com) or 828-713-4994. .

**THUR, SEPT 22 – PINK BEDS** - Easy, 5-mile loop hike in a mostly level wooded area with streams, boardwalks and beaver activity. Meet in Asheville at 10 am and return between 4 and 5 pm. We will talk about beaver habits and habitat. Pink Beds is in the Pisgah Forest near Brevard. Wear sturdy footwear, dress in layers, bring water and a lunch or snack. RSVP to leader at [janelaping@sbcglobal.net](mailto:janelaping@sbcglobal.net) or 828-772-0379.

**SAT, OCT 15 - FALL FOLIAGE HIKE** - Location TBA. Contact hike leader for details - Lisa McWherter at [lisamcw2@gmail.com](mailto:lisamcw2@gmail.com) or 828-713-4994.

**MON, OCT 17 - RAINBOW ROAD IN MONTREAT** - A mostly easy 4-mile in and out hike on a wide trail with gradual elevation gain. Meet in Asheville at 10 am and return around 3:30 pm. Leaf color should be close to peak and we will talk about what factors affect it. Wear sturdy footwear, dress in layers, bring water and a lunch or snack. RSVP to hike leader at [janelaping@sbcglobal.net](mailto:janelaping@sbcglobal.net) or 828-772-0379.



---

## ***Eliminate the Monster in Your Electric Bill***

Sierra Club partner, Arcadia Power, is offering you, as a Sierra Club supporter, **4 free energy-saving LEDs** when you sign up to support 100% wind energy.

**It takes just three minutes to sign up for Arcadia Power,** and your free LEDs will be delivered to your door as a thank you.

**Fun fact:** LEDs use less than 75% of the energy of incandescent bulbs, and can last 25 times longer.\*

Arcadia Power's clean energy program is available in all 50 states and to both homeowners and renters - the only requirement is that you pay an electric bill. Once you sign up, they will support their partner wind farms in proportion to the amount of electricity you use.

This is an opportunity to support renewable energy and get rewarded with free LEDs. Plus, for each person who signs up, Arcadia Power will make a donation to the Sierra Club.

So what are you waiting for?

Join Sierra Club supporters across all 50 states, and **sign up by July 31st to get your 4 free LEDs.** For more information and to sign up, go to <http://goo.gl/5ctKhh>.

---

## ***WENOCA Volunteers Needed***

**WENOCA Group of the Sierra Club** is seeking volunteers to help with the newsletter, data, kitchen, transportation, and many other activities. If you're interested, please contact [judymattox@sbcglobal.net](mailto:judymattox@sbcglobal.net), or call 828-683-2176.

---



**SIERRA  
CLUB**  
FOUNDED 1892

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

EDITION 08-10-2016

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

---

## ***Pisgah/Nantahala Planning Update***

The Revision to the Pisgah and Nantahala National Forest Management Plan is underway this summer with preliminary data on wilderness evaluations due later this summer. In 2015 the US Forest Service (USFS) expanded its wilderness inventory to include close to 360,000 acres of the two National Forests. The Sierra Club has joined conservation groups in asking the USFS to recommend over 100,000 acres of the inventory as new wilderness.

The Sierra Club added two current Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) to the recommendations, Lost Cove and Harper Creek in the Grandfather Ranger District (Pisgah National Forest). The USFS will hold public meetings in July in each Ranger District to review the "results" of their evaluations. It will be important for wilderness supporters to review these results and provide feedback before the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) is released later this



fall. It is not known at this time to what extent the USFS will embrace or respond to conservationists wilderness recommendations; always a hot local political issue in WNC.

Sierra Club members are urged to become involved by signing up for email updates from the USFS at their planning website at <http://goo.gl/44b88U> and clicking on **"Sign Up For Email Updates."**

---