



WENOCA SIERRAN

Newsletter of the
Western North Carolina Sierra Club

Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

FEBRUARY - APRIL 2017

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 1
Drew Jones

*Grounded Hope
for the Climate*

Wednesday, Mar 1
Scott Varn

*Preserving a
Picturesque America*

Wednesday, Apr 5

*Clean Energy in NC
Where are we now and
what does the future look like?*

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.

Grounded Hope for the Climate - Feb 1



Drew Jones

Join us on Feb. 1 when Drew Jones with Climate Interactive returns for a briefing on the national and international progress to address global warming.

Drew will share his recent experiences at the UN negotiations in Marrakech and discuss the feature articles he wrote for the New York Times and the Washington Post. Drew always uses his simulations to help us see how our regional actions can combine with other forces to work toward success.

Drew Jones is Co-Founder and Co-Director of Climate Interactive, a top-rated climate change think tank that creates accessible, policy-maker-oriented simulations. He and his team at CI and MIT Sloan developed "C-ROADS", the user-friendly climate simulation in use by the U.S. State Department, John Holdren in the White House, and the analysts for the Chinese Government. Trained in system dynamics modeling at Dartmouth College and MIT, Jones has worked at Rocky Mountain Institute and served dozens of clients ranging from the CDC to Harley Davidson to the U.S. Government Climate Change Negotiators. He teaches Systems Thinking and Sustainability at MIT and the UNC Chapel Hill's Kenan Flagler Business School. Drew also attended both the Paris and Marrakech UN climate summits.

Preserving a Picturesque America - Mar 1

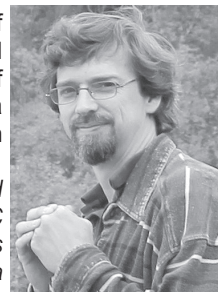
If you love history, art, and adventure, join us on March 1 to see how an organization is combining ALL of them to help preserve beautiful natural treasures.

Scott Varn of Preserving a Picturesque America (P.A.P.A.) will present a program on how his group has been seeking the locations of the adventure artists of the 1800s and then finding ways to preserve those natural and historic places.

Early artistic representations and tales of natural wonders were key in creating the concept of conservation in 1800s America. PAPA believes stories and art can be used again as tools for preservation. Scott will be

sharing these stories of discovery, plus art and photos from hundreds of locations around America and even ways you can join in on the adventure.

Scott is a Fine Arts and Media Arts graduate from USC who is rarely caught without his hiking boots or sketch pad. As a story teller, artist, counselor, Scout Master and long time environmental educator, founding PAPA is simply the merging of his skills to help save our amazing natural wonders.



Scott Varn

Clean Energy in NC - Apr 5



Join us on April 5 to learn about the status of installing solar and wind clean energy generation in North Carolina. Hear from experts about our success in becoming a national leader in installed solar generation and the beginnings of wind power in our state.

Find out what the future holds for both expanding solar and onshore/off shore wind energy generation.

Sierra Club Annual Awards Honors Local University, Businesses & Leaders

On Dec 7, more than 90 guests enjoyed a potluck holiday party as we honored this year's recipients of the Sierra Club's Environmental Awards at the UU Congregation of Asheville.

Outstanding Environmental Journalism: Carolina Public Press (CPP)



Mayo Taylor (R) recognizes CPP Exec. Dir. Angie Newsome.

CPP Executive Director Angie Newsome accepted the Outstanding Environmental Journalism Award on behalf of Carolina Public Press, a non-profit news organization.

The award was presented by Mayo Taylor. Carolina Public Press was recognized for its outstanding coverage of critical environmental issues affecting our region. Its ongoing reports have been exceptionally thorough on two particular issues:

(1) The National Forest Service development of the Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests Land and Resource Management Plan, and (2) Coal ash management in NC. Unlike other WNC news organizations, CPP maintains a presence in Raleigh enabling it to cover these issues and others in the depth it deserves.

Green University of the Year: UNC Asheville

Sonia Marcus, Director of Sustainability accepted the award as UNCA was recognized for its significant sustainability initiatives, among which are the inclusion of sustainability as one of three core values guiding the university's new strategic plan, the university's Bee Campus certification and installation of its Bee Hotel, its 2nd Annual Farm-to-Table Dinner on the Quad, the establishment of an Environmental Social Governance fund, a student-drafted letter to the UNC Managing Committee supporting clean energy endowment investments, and a Student Government resolution on green building setting LEED Gold as the minimum standard for all new construction and major renovations.



Sonia Marcus accepting award on behalf of UNCA.

Green Restaurant of the Year: Neo Burrito

Walter Godfrey accepted this award on behalf Neo Burrito, a local, quick-service restaurant specializing in burritos, tacos, quesadillas, and salads. Neo Burrito exemplifies how a restaurant can be run sustainably. Its goal is to maintain quality while reducing waste. Their key initiatives include using solar panels to generate electricity; collecting rainwater and reusing it as grey water; composting waste food and reusing it on its farm as soil and feed; providing eggs, fresh from its own farm, for its breakfast menu items; filtering used vegetable oil from its restaurants and reusing it to power the company's cars and trucks; using glasses rather than Styrofoam and using compostable or recyclable cups, boxes, and utensils for takeout.



Walter Godfrey of Neo Burrito.

Green Business of the Year: Farm Girl

Laurie Newman-Waters was honored for Farm Girl, which was named Green Business of the Year. Several Farm Girl designed properties have been designated as Certified

Wildlife Habitat by the National Wildlife Federation. Epitomizing an ethically driven business, Farm Girl (1) never uses pesticides, herbicides or fertilizers that are unhealthy for Earth, wildlife, pets or people; (2) only uses machinery when it makes good sense, (3) mulches with only cardboard and mulch; doesn't use Round Up or landscape fabric; (4) uses native, drought tolerant, edible, medicinal and pollinator-friendly plants in its landscape installations; (5) encourages clients to invest in drip irrigation and rainwater harvesting; (6) looks locally first for plants, materials and products; and (7) takes all debris that can be composted to appropriate places, not the landfill.

Outstanding Environmental Political Leadership: David Gantt

David Gantt, who had served as Chair of the Buncombe County Commission from 2008 to 2016, was honored for his outstanding environmental political leadership. He accepted the award from Ken Brame. Gantt led the passage of the first land use planning and zoning in the county, worked for funding for farm land preservation, and for the adoption and funding of a greenway plan, as well as for funding to support its implementation. Under his leadership, the county adopted building restrictions on steep slopes, passed a lighting ordinance to protect night skies, and passed an initiative to reduce our carbon footprint by 80% over time. The county also allocated more than \$800,000 to fund the first phase of its implementation. Recently the commission voted to call on Duke Energy to reduce its Sulfur Dioxide emissions to safe levels and adopted a resolution calling for Wilderness Protection for the expanded Craggy Mountains Wilderness Study Area in Pisgah-Nantahala National Forest.



Ken Brame (L) makes presentation to David Gantt.

Outstanding Contributions as Sierra Club Political Action Committee Treasurer: Julie Montanea

Ken Brame presented this award to Montanea in recognition of her commitment to keep the club's PAC financial records accurate and up-to-date.

Sierra Club Volunteers of the Year: Joyce Birkenholz and Michele Nichols

Judy Mattox recognized Joyce Birkenholz and Michele Nichols as the volunteers of the year. Their dedicated service to the club included selflessly taking on kitchen duty during club meetings for more than three years running.

Outstanding Volunteer Leadership: Judy Mattox

Judy Mattox, Chair of WNC Sierra Club (Wenoca) was honored for the dedication and vision she demonstrated as chair of the WENOCA group for the past five years. Under her leadership, the group has grown to more than 2,000 members, making it the second largest in the state. Attendance at meetings has grown from 20 or less to more than 75 and at times to even standing room only attendance of more than 100. This past fall Judy helped recruit and organize a veritable army of 218 volunteers. They covered more than 475 shifts, handing out the club's endorsement cards for the election.



Gail Solomon (L) presents Outstanding Volunteer Leadership Award to Judy.

2016 Election Results - We Made a Difference

By Ken Brame

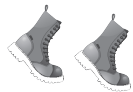
While it was a very difficult year nationally and for Federal races in NC, **thanks to the efforts of 218 Sierra Club Volunteers and generous donations from our members**, we were able to narrowly elect a pro-environmental Governor, Attorney General, and to take control of the NC Supreme Court. In addition, 6 of our 10 priority state house candidates won election. We were able to replace four anti-environmental incumbents with 4 good environmental candidates and also were able to re-elect two of our hero incumbents including John Ager in Buncombe County, who had won only narrowly two years ago.

In Buncombe County, **volunteers covered almost 500 early voting and election day shifts handing out 30,000 Sierra Club Endorsement Cards** for our candidates. The goal was to encourage unaffiliated, third party voters, and others to vote down ballot for our endorsed candidates below the presidential level. The results were significant.

Statewide vs. Buncombe County:

- **Roy Cooper** running for Governor received 2.5% fewer votes than Clinton, but in Buncombe County he received 8.6% more votes than Clinton or a difference of **6410 additional votes**.
- **Beth Wood** in the NC Auditors race received 4.5% fewer votes than Clinton, while in Buncombe County she received 1.3% more votes than Clinton or a difference of **2528 more votes**.
- **Mike Morgan** running for NC Supreme Court Associate Justice received 8.8% fewer votes than Clinton, while in Buncombe County the drop off was only 4.9%. That resulted in Morgan improving 3.9 percentage points or **an extra 2923 votes**.

This effort, along with significant donations from the Sierra Club PAC to our candidates, **made a difference** in a number of close races in NC and locally.



Mid-Winter - Early Spring Hiking Schedule



SAT, FEB 18 - PANTHERTOWN VALLEY - Beat the wintertime blahs with a Panthertown Valley Hike. We'll enjoy the valley without the crowds. Hiking from the East Cold Mtn. Trailhead, we'll make a loop and take in Schoolhouse Falls, the white sand beach on Panthertown Creek, and up to Little Green Mtn. for a view. Learn about the watershed and headwaters of the Tuckaseegee River. A moderate 6-mile round trip. Leave Asheville 9 AM, return 5 PM. Call or email trip leader David Reid if interested at [828-713-1607](tel:828-713-1607), daviddbreid@charter.net.

SAT, FEB 25 - PINK BEDS - This trail is considered Easy, but it is rugged with tree roots & occasional rocks, requiring good foot wear. It is a mostly level 5-mile loop hike that is wooded, offering some cover from the wind. It offers a variety of habitats, from hardwoods to a board walk over a small wetland. Opportunity to see and learn about beaver dams and their effect on the wetland. There will also be some tree ID. Wear good footwear. Meet in Asheville at 10 AM, return about 5 PM. All hikers please RSVP to hike leader Lisa McWherter or contact her if any questions at lisamcw2@gmail.com or [828-713-4994](tel:828-713-4994).

MON, FEB 27 - DANIEL RIDGE - A Moderate 4-mile loop hike in Pisgah Forest near the Fish Hatchery has a nice waterfall at the end. We will learn about the history of logging in the area. Wear sturdy shoes or hiking boots, bring water and a lunch or snack. Leave Asheville at 10 AM and return by 4 PM. RSVP to leader at janelaping@sbcglobal.net or [828-772-0379](tel:828-772-0379).

MON, MAR 13 - COVE CREEK/CANEY BOTTOM - A pleasant, easy to moderate, 4.6-mile loop hike near Looking Glass Rock in Pisgah National Forest. The trail follows a stream part of the way and a short side trail leads to Cove Creek falls. We will talk about the reason the hemlocks are dying in this area. Wear sturdy shoes or hiking boots, bring water and a lunch or snack. Meet at 10 AM in Asheville and return around 4 PM. RSVP to hike leader, Jane at janelaping@sbcglobal.net or [828-772-0379](tel:828-772-0379).

SAT, MAR 18 - 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 RT 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 dogs this trip due to Pullium Creek crossing. RSVP to hike leader Lisa McWherter at lisamcw2@gmail.com or [828-713-4994](tel:828-713-4994).

SAT, MAR 25 - LOOKING GLASS ROCK - Strenuous due to elevation change. 6.5 miles up and back. Be rewarded with great views of the Pisgah National Forest and learn what an exposed granitic pluton is. Leave Asheville at 10 AM, return by 4 PM. If interested and for more details, call trip leader David Reid at [828-713-1607](tel:828-713-1607) or email daviddbreid@charter.net.

FRI, APR 7 - BIG CREEK - An easy to moderate, 5-mile in-and-out hike in the Great Smoky Mountains. The trail follows a dirt road along rushing rapids, Mouse Creek Falls, huge boulders, and deep swimming holes. Wildflowers should be abundant and in masses, so we will learn how to identify them. Wear sturdy shoes or hiking boots, bring water and a lunch or snack. Meet at 10 AM in Asheville and return around 5 PM. Contact hike leader Jane at janelaping@sbcglobal.net or [828-772-0379](tel:828-772-0379).

SAT, APR 29 - ROCKY FORK STATE PARK HIKE - Meet in Asheville at 10 AM and return around 5:30 PM. This State park is our closest state park, just across the state line in Unicoi County, TN. This hike is rated mostly "Difficult" (but not strenuous). Distance approximately 5-miles round-trip. The trail is rugged in places and there is some up & down, but the elevation gain is unknown. The trails are mostly wooded, there is some beautiful creek side hiking, and there is also a nice waterfall. There will be opportunities for wildflower ID & bird song ID. This hike is for experienced hikers, or one can contact the hike leader with questions/concerns. RSVP to hike leader Lisa McWherter at lisamcw2@gmail.com or [828-713-4994](tel:828-713-4994).

Environmentalists Get Some Good News

By Michael Grunwald (abridged - published online by POLITICO on 11/18/16)

Even though President Obama's historic Clean Power Plan was stayed by the Supreme Court and appears doomed in the Trump Administration, the electric sector is getting so green so fast that it has already met the plan's 2024 goal for slashing carbon emissions and its 2030 target for reducing coal use, new data show.

The primary cause of the sharp decline in power-plant emissions is clear: Utilities are rapidly abandoning coal for cleaner-burning natural gas and zero-emission renewables. It's also clear that this shift, driven by rising prices for coal and falling prices for climate-friendly alternatives, is happening independently of Obama's controversial climate rules, which were only finalized in August 2015 and then suspended by the Court six months later. Even if President-Elect Trump fulfills his pledge to withdraw from the Paris climate deal, the U.S. is on track to fulfill its pledges under that deal, a glimmer of good news for environmentalists mourning his election.

(Coal producers') problems have gotten even more severe this year. An analysis of government energy data provided by the Sierra Club, which has led a national Beyond Coal campaign to try to kill the industry, shows that U.S. power plants are on track to emit 1.76 billion metric tons of carbon this year, a 27 percent reduction from 2005. That's already below the Clean Power Plan's interim goal for 2024, and most of the way to the 32 percent reduction the plan envisions for 2030. If you subtract emissions from the 71 operating



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coal plants that already have announced retirement dates, the electric sector has just about met the plan's final emissions goals 15 years early, even though the plan does not now have and may never have any legal teeth to compel compliance.

The overall trend is unmistakable. Power-plant coal consumption in 2016 is projected to drop to 640 million short tons, down 38 percent from 2005. That's significantly lower than the EPA expected after 15 years of Clean Power Plan implementation, and with another 15 percent of the remaining coal fleet already scheduled to shut down, those numbers will drop much lower. **Last year, two thirds of all new U.S. power generating capacity came from wind and solar, and just about all of the rest came from natural gas.** Megan Berge, a Washington attorney who represents power companies, says they're abandoning coal primarily because wind and solar prices have dropped by more than two thirds in the Obama era, while gas prices have hovered near historic lows. Federal tax credits for renewables and state mandates promoting renewables have contributed as well.

Climate activists like former New York City mayor Michael Bloomberg, who has donated \$80 million to the Sierra Club's Beyond Coal campaign, argue that the market forces squeezing coal are stronger than anything Trump can do to prop up the industry. Coal is even struggling in China, and it's not because that government fears eco-activists.

"Coal is dying because of economics, not politics, and it's not coming back," Bloomberg said in a statement.



Help us save trees ... let us e-mail your newsletter!

WENOCA member emails are requested.

Send your email address to: judymattox@sbcglobal.net.

