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CLUB**  
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# WENOCA SIERRAN

Newsletter of the  
Western North Carolina Sierra Club

Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

AUGUST - OCTOBER 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, Aug 2**  
**Dr. Robin Cabin**  
*Can Science Save Us  
from Climate Change,  
and from Ourselves?*

**Wednesday, Sept 6**  
**Pana Columbus  
& Dave Erb**  
*Electric Vehicles: Local  
Movement, Global Impact*

**Wednesday, Oct 4**  
**Peter Krull**  
*Fossil Fuel Divestment &  
Responsible Investing*

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.

## **Can Science Save Us From Climate Change, and From Ourselves? Wed, Aug 2, 7pm**

*Robert J. Cabin, Professor of Ecology and Environmental Studies at Brevard College*



Robert J. Cabin

We like to think that science is pure, powerful, progressive, and non-partisan. If only we could cut through all the propaganda and teach the illiterate masses the unassailable scientific facts about, say, climate change, we could break the logjams and actually start solving our ever-more pressing problems. The truth is more complicated, and more interesting!

Professor Cabin will discuss the power and limitations of using science to analyze, predict, and address the increasingly urgent challenges associated with environmental problems such as climate change. Cabin has written numerous professional and general audience articles on the complex relationship between science and its applications and implications in the messy real world. He has also authored two books on this subject: *Intelligent Tinkering: Bridging the Gap Between Science and Practice* (Island Press, 2011) and *Restoring Paradise: Rethinking and Rebuilding Nature in Hawaii* (University of Hawaii Press, 2013).

*Cabin has been on the faculty at Brevard College since 2005, coordinates the College's Environmental Studies major and Honors Program. Before coming to Brevard, he taught at Kenyon College and The State University of New York at Plattsburgh. After graduate school Cabin lived and worked in Hawaii as a Post-Doctoral Fellow in Restoration Ecology at the National Tropical Botanical Garden and as a Research Ecologist for the US Forest Service.*

## **"Electric Vehicles: Local Movement, Global Impact." Wednesday, September 6, 7 pm**

Many of the world's most challenging problems are strongly rooted in the extraction and consumption of fossil fuels, especially oil. For several years, though, solutions to the petroleum problem have been widely available, at reasonable prices. The primary hurdles now are societal inertia and disinformation. Please join Wenoca Group Sierra Club for our monthly meeting on Wednesday, September 6, when Pana Columbus and Dave Erb will present an optimistic, achievable vision of first steps toward transforming transportation in western North Carolina and beyond.

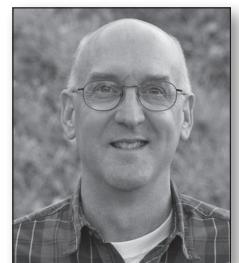
Asheville's celebration of National Drive Electric Week will be at the Asheville Outlets mall, 12:00 noon-4:00 pm on Sunday, 10 September 2017. More information available at <https://driveelectricweek.org/event.php?eventid=939> and <http://www.blueridgeevclub.com/>



Pana Columbus

*Pana Columbus is a writer, director, and producer of theater and film. Her film production company, Mystic Blue Films, was founded in 2013 to "foster collaboration and catalyze transformation for the common good." Her current project, the feature film "The Apple and The Radish", will be shot in the greater Asheville area. The purpose of the movie, co-produced by singer/producer Kat Williams, is to help catalyze an electric car movement in response to our current environmental/social justice crisis.*

*In a 36-year career as an automotive engineer, "Professor Plug-In" Dave Erb has developed vehicles using gasoline, diesel, biodiesel, natural gas, alcohol, electric, and (since 1986) hybrid electric powertrains. A public transit advocate, he served on the Asheville Transit Committee until reaching the term limit. He is a former chair of Wenoca Group's Executive Committee. Dave and his wife Beth live in a net-zero house (which also powers their electric car) on a small lot within walking distance of UNC Asheville, where he teaches Mechatronics Engineering.*



Dave Erb

## ***Fossil Fuel Divestment and Responsible Investing Wed, Oct 4, 7 pm***



Peter Krull

Peter Krull will be talking about fossil fuel divestment and responsible investing. How to judge the different investment opportunities out there and pick the ones that are aligned closely with your values. He will answer questions such as: What does performance look like for responsible investments? What's really under the hood of your mutual fund? We'll also look at portfolio screening, shareholder advocacy and community investing. Finally, we'll take a look at some real-life examples.

*Peter Krull is CEO and Director of Investments at Earth Equity Advisors (Formerly Krull & Company). Pete started in the financial services industry with Merrill Lynch in 1998, and founded Krull & Company in 2004 because of a desire to help clients align their investments with their values.*

*Since 2004, the firm has grown to well over \$50 million in assets with clients in 22 states and employs 7 people. Client investments are socially and environmentally responsible and fossil-fuel-free.*

*Pete has been quoted in the Washington Post, US News & World Report, and various local newspapers. He was selected as a 40 under 40 business leader by the Savannah Business Report & Journal in 2009. In 2015, he traveled to Washington, DC with Environmental Entrepreneurs (E2) to advocate for environmentally responsible legislation.*

## ***North Carolina Legislative Update July, 2017***

*By Cassie Gavin, Director of Government Affairs, NC Sierra Club*

The NC Sierra Club is an environmental and political organization that advocates for environmental protection and supports the election of environmental champions to office. The Chapter has an office and staff, including lobbyists, in Raleigh to advocate for the environment at the state legislature. It's important for local Sierrans to also lobby legislators in-district to ensure they know that protecting the environment is a top priority and to thank them for standing up against environmental rollbacks.

### ***Billboard bill that would have tarnished North Carolina's scenic views defeated***

The House voted down the billboard bill (House Bill 581) 49-66, which would have allowed more digital billboards, more trees to be cut down along our highways, and would have taken away local government controls to determine where billboards may be located. Thanks to all of our members who contacted legislators in opposition to this bill; it worked! Thank Senator Terry Van Duyn (D-Buncombe), Representatives Brian Turner (D - Buncombe), Susan Fisher (D - Buncombe), John Ager (D - Buncombe) and Chuck McGrady (R - Henderson) who all voted no.

### ***Sunshine for solar***

In other good news – a number of anti-solar efforts did not succeed this year. There appears to be growing support among lawmakers generally for solar. Good defeats of bad bills from the legislature include defeating the requiring of state permitting of solar on private property, as well as proposals to freeze North Carolina's Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard that requires NC utilities to have a percentage of their energy come from renewables. Duke Energy has met the target easily so far with solar and is expected to easily meet the 2021 target as well. North Carolina is the only state in the Southeast with a target.

### ***Bad News - Senate leader wins push for wind energy moratorium in energy bill***

"Competitive Energy Solutions for North Carolina" (House Bill 589)

was a mix of proposals – some with potential to hinder solar and some that may expand access to solar. It became complex when, the Senate, added to the House bill that wind energy development would be stopped for 5 years. As a compromise the House voted to concur with an energy bill that included an 18 month wind moratorium without grandfathering in two wind projects that are planned in eastern North Carolina. It is unclear whether work on the two projects will continue if the moratorium becomes law, but the developers have stated that they may suspend the projects.

While North Carolina is second only to California in installed solar, the state only has one wind farm – so wind was essentially not part of the original stakeholder discussion.

### ***Riparian buffer exemptions, plastic bag ban repeal and more remain on the table***

Legislators left town without addressing a handful of regulatory reform bills that contain provisions Sierra Club has long opposed. But since the legislature plans to return for several special sessions later this year, these provisions are still in play – including the following:

- Outer Banks plastic bag ban repeal: the bag ban protects endangered sea turtles and prevents litter, and local communities support it.
- A "contested cases" provision to limit citizen access to the courts to challenge environmental permits.
- Several unnecessary exemptions to riparian buffer and stormwater control rules that protect water quality.

Because of the special sessions, it's important to keep contacting our legislators to remind them that the environment is important to constituents.

**The NC Sierra Club is always in need of funds for lobbying! To donate to the NC Chapter please go to: [nc.sierraclub.org](http://nc.sierraclub.org) and click "Donate Now". If you'd like to sign up for weekly legislative updates or sign up to join the NC Sierra Club volunteer lobby corps, please email [cassie.gavin@sierraclub.org](mailto:cassie.gavin@sierraclub.org).**

## ***WENOCA Volunteers Needed***

Wenoca group of the Sierra Club is seeking volunteers to help with our newsletter, kitchen duty at monthly meetings, helping to transport folks with no cars, working our booths at festivals & events, conservation issues committee...and more. Contact: Judy Mattox, [judymattox@sbcglobal.net](mailto:judymattox@sbcglobal.net), 828-683-2176

## The Nantahala-Pisgah Forests need your help

Please contact the Forest Service by Aug 31 (addresses at end) to provide input on the development of the revised Nantahala Pisgah National Forest plan. In general, the preliminary draft treats the vast majority of the forest as being the same, (which would technically allow for timber cutting), and it doesn't recognize many special places that are important for backcountry recreation, exceptional biodiversity, old growth, and connectivity.

Below are MountainTrue's recommendations based on the current pre-draft plan materials with specific comments suggested to make regarding each area of the forests. Please personalize what you know, love, and recommend about the forests.

### By Ranger Districts:

- **Grandfather Ranger District:** Linville Mountain should be placed in backcountry management. The Upper Creek Gorge/Sugar Knob Backcountry area should be expanded. The Upper Wilson Creek Backcountry area should be expanded.
- **Appalachian Ranger District:** Snowball Mountain, Coxcombe Mountain, and Shope Creek should be included in the Craggy Mountains/Big Ivy Special Interest Area. ( We are pleased by the creation of a new Special Interest Area in Big Ivy, though it should cover all of Big Ivy, and not just a portion of it.)
- **Pisgah Ranger District:** Upper Courthouse Creek, Daniel Ridge, Cedar Rock Mountain, and upper Lickstone Ridge should be placed in backcountry Management to protect their remote character and the species that depend on them.
- **Nantahala Ranger District:** All of Panthertown Valley and Flat Creek should be in backcountry management. Tellico Bald, Siler Bald, and Fish Hawk Mountain should be placed in backcountry

management. The backcountry area around Terrapin Mountain should be expanded to 4,000 acres. Corbin Knob, Hench Knob, and Chunky Gal Mountain should be Special Interest Areas.

- **Cheoah Ranger District:** Upper Santeetlah Creek should be a Special Interest Area or backcountry area.
- **Tusquitee District:** Gipp Creek should be placed in backcountry management. The Unicoi Mountain backcountry area should be expanded.

### Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests in general:

There are many special places that are in the wrong management area and lack the amount of protection they require. In particular, Daniel Ridge, Cedar Rock Mountain, Upper Santeetlah Creek, Ash Cove, Tellico Bald, Snowball Mountain, Lickstone Ridge, and dozens of smaller natural areas are not protected by the forest plan. The Bartram Trail, Benton McKay Trail, Art Loeb Trail, and Mountains-To-Sea Trail lack a management area that would preserve the special character of these long-distance hiking trails. They should be designated as special corridors, similar to the Appalachian Trail and the Trail of Tears which have such protection.

The national forest planners say they're open to adjusting the plan based on public feedback, and that's why we need you to speak up for the values that are important to you.

**Email: [NCplanrevision@fs.fed.us](mailto:NCplanrevision@fs.fed.us) with subject line "Spring 2017 material Plan Building Blocks"**

**Mail: Attn: Plan Revision, National Forests in North Carolina, 160A Zillicoa St. Asheville, NC 28801**

## Hiking Schedule

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 12 – (Rescheduled from June 21) Mackey Mountain Trail** – Meet at 9:00am, return 5:00pm. This is a rugged hike in a little traveled area of the Pisgah National Forest. Inventoried by the US Forest Service as a potential wilderness, the Mackey Mountain area of the Grandfather District is truly the trail less traveled. We'll learn about the history of the first National Forest Tract in the East purchased under the 1911 Weeks Act. Hiking experience required. RSVP to hike leader, David Reid, at [daviddbreid@charter.net](mailto:daviddbreid@charter.net) or 828-713-1607.

**WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 23 – (Rescheduled from May 31) GREEN KNOB HIKE.** Leave Asheville at 9:00am, return around 4:00pm. This hike is designed as a car shuttle to facilitate an approximate 4 mile descending hike from the Blue Ridge Parkway, down the the Black Mountain Campground. Includes great views of the Blacks. Learn about the potential wilderness areas and the current Pisgah National Forest planning process which could result in the wilderness recommendation. RSVP to hike leader, David Reid, at [daviddbreid@charter.net](mailto:daviddbreid@charter.net) or 828-713-1607.

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 26 – Warren Wilson College Hike: Bull Creek Trail & River Trail, w/ Splashing Opportunity** – Easy, approx 4 miles one-way on this shuttle hike (a thru-hike w/ cars parked at each end). Meet at 10:00 in Asheville. Back around 3:00. These shady trails follow Bull Creek & then the Swannanoa River. We will also go by the old dam site. Despite it's "easy" rating, there are places with tree roots & rocks, plus a few up/down-hill stretches. There will be an OPTIONAL SPLASHING OPPORTUNITY to cool yourself off. (Sorry, No Swimming.) There will be learning opportunities related to tree & wildflower I.D., and perhaps some bird song I.D. Must contact Hike leader to sign up. NOTE: Young hikers are most welcome, but please give hike leader a call about it, because a special liability form is required. Hike Leader: Lisa McWherter at [lisamcw2@gmail.com](mailto:lisamcw2@gmail.com), or call 828-713-4994.

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19 – HOLD THE DATE** – Hike to be announced in the Pisgah District of the Pisgah National Forest. Watch Meetup for details. Hike leader, David Reid, at [daviddbreid@charter.net](mailto:daviddbreid@charter.net) or 828-713-1607.

**FRIDAY-SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 22nd-24th – CAMPOREE HOLD THE DATE!** – the NC Chapter of the Sierra Club is planning another group "Camporee" to explore potential wilderness areas near Mt. Mitchell at the Briar Bottom Black Mountain Campground. Modest registration fee. Contact David Reid at [daviddbreid@charter.net](mailto:daviddbreid@charter.net) or 828-713-1607 for more details and how to register. Group camping, good food and fellowship as outings leaders from across the NC Sierra Club Chapter lead hikes.

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23 - Location TBA.** Have a beautiful area in mind, but need to scout the trail before announcing. Approx 5-6 miles distance, probably Moderate to Easy level of difficulty. Wildflower late-bloomers will be id'd, and also bird songs. More Info to come, or contact Hike leader Lisa McWherter at [lisamcw2@gmail.com](mailto:lisamcw2@gmail.com), or call 828-713-4994.

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 14** – Devil's-Courthouse-to-Black-Balsam-Rd Hike: Should offer some great views of fall foliage. Meet in Asheville at 10:00 (location TBA) and return around 5:45. Distance is approx 6 miles round trip, rated as mostly Moderate with some Easy. This hike offers an unusually beautiful section of firs & spruce, as well as some spectacular views. When we reach our high point, Devil's Courthouse, we'll view mountains in 3 other states if we have a clear day. Also, there will be an opportunity for tree I.D., & to learn about the well being of the evergreens there. There is somewhere around 500 ft elevation change, and the trail is rather rugged, with intermittent tree roots and an occasional 10" step/rock. Experienced hikers only. Please contact hike leader to sign up, or for any questions/concerns; Lisa McWherter at [lisamcw2@gmail.com](mailto:lisamcw2@gmail.com) or 828-713-4994.

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 20- RAINBOW ROAD IN MONTREAT.** A mostly easy 4-mile in-and-out hike on a wide trail with gradual elevation gain. 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. Meet in Asheville at 10:00 AM, return around 3:30 PM. RSVP to leader at [janelaping@sbcglobal.net](mailto:janelaping@sbcglobal.net) or 828-772-0379.





## ***River Clean Up a Success!***

*by Mark Threlkeld*

The WENOCA Sierra Club had a very successful river clean up on May 20th, as part of Asheville GreenWorks Clean Streams Day.

About 20 people participated in pulling all kinds of trash out of the French Broad riverbed and picking up loose garbage along the river banks between the Haywood Road and Pearson Bridges. This year a local fisherman donated the use of his "drift boat" as a garbage scow, allowing those in canoes to off-load old tires and other heavy items, so canoes could keep picking up more without swamping.

Speaking of swamping, we did have three canoes capsize this time. That's a first we hope not to repeat! The paddlers were all able to get to shore safely, then continued finding more trash. Stalwart Sierrans!

**The second and last river clean up this year will be September 9th.** For more information or to sign up, contact Mark Threlkeld at [focusmdt@gmail.com](mailto:focusmdt@gmail.com).



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## ***Kids to the Country***

Sierra Club created a program for Asheville city kids ages 7-15, at Hillcrest Apartments and Pisgah View Apartments, to be introduced to the country. We call this program affectionately "Kids to the Country." Our first outing was on June 23 with 7 kids and 8 adults. Our partners are the Unitarian Congregation of Asheville, the Asheville Housing Authority, Asheville City Schools, Hillcrest community, and MotherRead, a program of the Unitarian Congregation and Hillcrest Community.

We have scheduled an outing every two weeks during the summer on a Friday morning. June 23 was a trip to the Blue Ridge Visitor Center where JD Diefenbach introduced our young people to the junior forest ranger program, and Joanne Lazar led a 1 mile hike. July 7 was a trip to Carl Sandburg National Park and goat farm. July 21: the Asheville North Carolina Arboretum. August 4: blueberry picking. August 18: the Warren Wilson animal farm and garden.

Thanks to all our volunteers who make "Kids to the Country" happen: Beth Pape, Judy Mattox, Eleanor Lane, Joanne Lazar, JD Diefenbach, Marta Alcala-Williams, Nikita Smart, Sade Mustakem, Maryanne Rackoff, Mayo Taylor, Susie Bell, Ellen Feingold, Marsha Fretwell, Scott Varn. For further information: Beth Pape, [adwoman123@yahoo.com](mailto:adwoman123@yahoo.com), 978-729-3356.



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