



SIERRA CLUB
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WENOCA SIERRAN

Newsletter of the Western North Carolina Sierra Club
August - October 2019

Explore, enjoy, and protect the planet

Upcoming Events:

Unitarian Congregation
1 Edwin Place, Asheville
(Charlotte St. & Edwin Pl.)
Social: 7pm / Program: 7:15
Free and open to the public

Thursday, Aug 1st

Hiking the Rim of the Swannanoa Valley: "Eastern America's Highest and Most Historic Skyline" by Joe and Mary Standaert

Thursday, Sept 5th

City and County Efforts to fight climate change by Brownie Newman and Julie Mayfield

Thurs, Oct 3rd

Nantahala-Pisgah Forest Plan Revision by Josh Kelly, Sam Evans, and David Reid

WENOCA will hold meetings on the first Thursday of the month. Executive Committee meetings will be held at 5:30pm prior to the monthly programs.
Open to the public

For more information, call Judy Mattox at 828-683-2176
judymattox@sbcglobal.net.

WENOCA SIERRAN is the newsletter of the Western North Carolina Sierra Club. The newsletter is published four times a year. Articles, comments welcome.

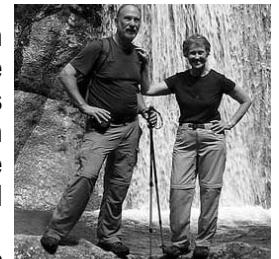
Hiking the Rim of the Swannanoa Valley: "Eastern America's Highest and Most Historic Skyline", August 1st

Mary and Joe Standaert will present an overview of the important historical aspects of the Swannanoa Valley and its natural features as covered by the Swannanoa Valley Museum's Rim Explorer hike sections. The presentation will include historic postcard images, archival photos and current views from various points on the valley rim.

For ten years the Swannanoa Valley Museum and History Center in Black Mountain has been leading an annual series of eleven hikes in the upper Swannanoa Valley to illustrate the culture, history, and natural features of the valley. The "Rim Explorer" hike series has been extremely popular with over 3,000 hike participants, and some 175 people have completed the whole series. The emphasis of the hikes has always been on the history and geography and biodiversity of the area.

Joe and Mary co-authored two Arcadia Press books detailing the histories of Montreat and The Swannanoa Valley as illustrated by their extensive collection of vintage local postcards. Mary has documented and published a history of "The Montreat Gateboys and Their Stories"

Joe is the current chairman of the Swannanoa Valley Museum hike committee and has for 10 years led a series of hikes which over the course of a year circumnavigates the entire rim of the upper Swannanoa Valley. Joe has completed the Rim Hike series more than 8 times, and Mary 3 times.



Joe and Mary Standaert

City and county efforts to fight climate change, Sept 5th

Buncombe County and the City of Asheville recognize the urgency of fighting Climate Change. Over the past 18 months both the City of Asheville and Buncombe County have passed resolutions committing the city and county to power their government operations with 100% Renewable Energy by 2030 and for the entire county to be powered by 100% Renewable Energy by 2042. Brownie Newman, Chair of the Buncombe County Commission, and Julie Mayfield, of the Asheville City Council, will talk about the city and county's plans and initiatives to begin the process of meeting these goals.



Brownie Newman

Brownie is chair of the Buncombe County Commission. Prior to his

election to the County commission, Brownie served on the Asheville City Council where he led the efforts to get the city of Asheville to adopt the 80% carbon reduction goal. In 2015, he cofounded Headwaters Solar, a commercial business to partner on solar projects from small roof-top to utility scale. From 2007 to 2015, Brownie was a partner of FLS Energy.

Julie Mayfield was elected to Asheville City Council in 2015, and she leads council's work on transportation, the environment, and clean energy. She chairs council's Planning and Economic Development Committee and Housing and Community Development Committee. She is also the co-director of



Julie Mayfield

MountainTrue, a regional environmental advocacy organization. Prior to moving to Asheville and MountainTrue in 2008, she was the Vice-President and General Counsel for the Georgia Conservancy.

Nantahala-Pisgah Forest Plan Revision, Oct 3

An update on the final stages of the Nantahala-Pisgah Forest Plan Revision, will be presented by Sam Evans, lawyer with Southern Environmental Law Center (SELC), Josh Kelly, public lands biologist with Mountain True, and David Reid, forest representative for the Sierra Club. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the new Forest Plan is expected to be released in September, followed by a 90 day public comment period. Josh, Sam and David will give a review of the content of the Draft Forest Plan and provide attendees with tips on how to write impactful comments on DEIS, **which we will write during the meeting**. The draft plan will be amended based on public comment to produce the Final Decision and Environmental Impact Statement. This DEIS comment period is the most important time for public participation in the forest planning process.

Sam Evans is a Senior Attorney and Leader of SELC's National Forest and Parks Program, Asheville office. He graduated from the University of Tennessee College of Law with highest honors.

Josh Kelly is the Public Lands Field Biologist for Mountain True. Josh is a native of Western North Carolina and studied biology at UNC-Asheville. Since 2004, Josh has worked to promote ecological restoration and protect the outstanding natural areas present on Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests.

David Reid is Vice Chair and Forest Issues Chair of the NC Chapter of the Sierra Club, as a volunteer. Having worked on the first round of the Pisgah/Nantahala NF planning in the early 90's, he now coordinates the Club's involvement and response to the forest planning process.

Our Forests are in Danger—August 1st—TAKE ACTION!!!

The forest service is looking to curtail public comment. Under the guise of acting more quickly, and responding to climate change and natural disasters, they are looking to be able to cut large tracks of forest land without advance warning and without accepting public comment.

Please come to our Sierra Club meeting August 1, where Sam Evans of the Southern Environmental Law Center will present these issues, and we will write public comments to the forest service.

The following is written by Sam Evans summarizing the basic issue which is to change the rules of NEPA, the National Environmental Policy Act:

The Forest Service is proposing to eliminate public participation and science-based analysis for nearly every decision affecting national forests, from timber sales to road construction to pipeline rights of way. The Forest Service is required by law to take public comments on this proposal, but if we don't speak up now, it could be our last chance. If the proposal moves forward, the public won't receive notice or a chance to object to specific projects in the future. **Comments are due August 12.**

The address for sending comments is <https://www.fs.fed.us/emc/nepa/revisions/index.shtml>. Look for "comment now!". Start your comments with your personal involvement with the forest.

Public participation is essential for good decisions affecting public lands. When the Forest Service considers allowing logging, road-building, mining, or fracking on our national forests, it must balance those uses with impacts to wildlife, clean water, backcountry areas, recreation on rivers and trails, and other social and economic impacts. That balancing act is impossible without listening to the people who would be affected by its decisions.

Among other things, this proposal would cut the public out of:

- Commercially logging up to 4,200 acres (6.6 square miles!) at a time;
- Building up to 5 new miles of roads at a time;
- Adding illegally created roads and trails to the official roads and trails systems;
- Closing roads used by the public to access hunting areas, streams for fishing, and trails;
- Bulldozing new pipeline or utility rights of way up to 20 acres (e.g., 4 miles at 40' across)

The logging loophole created by this proposal is so big that every single timber sale in the Southern Appalachians would fit through it—meaning no more public input or science-based analysis. To give a sense of scale, 4,200 acres of harvest would cover, in a single decision:

- 5 years' worth of commercial logging at current levels on the Nantahala-Pisgah National Forest;

Not only would these decisions be made without public input; they would also be made without environmental review and without considering whether there are less harmful ways to meet the same needs.

(See further comments from Sam on our Sierra Club website: Wenoca.org)

<https://www.southernenvironment.org/news-and-press/news-feed/u.s-forest-service-proposed-to-cut-more-trees-by-cutting-public-input>

Help us save trees...let us e-mail your newsletter! Send your email to judymattox@sbcglobal.net

Hikes Aug-Oct 2019

SATURDAY, AUGUST 17 - EAST FORK OF THE PIGEON RIVER - Meet in Asheville at 10:00 (location TBA) and return around 5:45. This hike is Easy/Moderate, with a distance of 4.5 to 5 miles round trip. Opportunities to Splash Off & Cool Down. The hike follows the beautiful, rushing Pigeon River, and it offers the cover of some beautiful & SHADY woods. Be prepared for a few muddy places, by wearing good footwear & considering hiking poles. Learn about how the river changes over time, as it changes its path, widens & creates sandy areas. Learn about areas that are designated "Wilderness", too. Speaking of which, this trail goes into the Shining Rock Wilderness, which means that only 10 folks are allowed in a group. Sorry no doggies on this hike. Please RSVP to hike leader Lisa McWherter at lisamcw2@gmail.com or 828-713-4994.

Saturday Aug 24 - Camp Alice/Commissary Ridge Hike - An easy high elevation hike in the Black Mountains near Mt. Mitchell to get away from the August heat. The trail follows an old railway grade for a gentle walk with nice views of the forest and meadows. Length is 4 miles round trip. We'll learn about the Black Mountains, and the National Forest lands studied potential wilderness on the eastern flank of the Blacks. Contact leader, David Reid at daviddbreid@charter.net or 828-713-1607 to RSVP.

Wednesday Sept 18 - Laurel River Trail - A repeat of a favorite hike near Hot Springs, out to the confluence of Laurel River with the French Broad River. Rated easy due to relative flatness. We'll look for Fall wildflowers, and learn about the Appalachian Ranger District North of Asheville. Contact leader, David Reid at daviddbreid@charter.net or 828-713-1607 to RSVP.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 22 - FLAT LAUREL CREEK HIKE - (which is in vicinity of Black Balsam). We will stop off to check out Raptor Migration at an overlook along the way. Meet in Asheville at 10 a.m. and return around 5:45 p.m. Hike along the beautiful Flat Laurel Creek. The level is mostly Easy w/ some moderate; 5 to 5.5 miles R.T. on this there & back hike. Be prepared for creek crossings. Will include some beautiful Fir, Spruce, Hemlock, & Yellow Birch trees. There will be learning opportunities related to wildflower & tree ID. Will also discuss the welfare of our local evergreens (hemlock & fir). All hikers please RSVP to hike leader Lisa McWherter at lisamcw2@gmail.com or 828-713-4994.

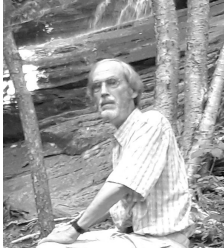
September 27-29 - Annual Ted Snyder Memorial Camporee! - NC Chapter of the Sierra Club. Come join Sierra Club Outings Leaders from across the state at a campout at Black Mountain Campground's Briar Bottom group camp for a weekend of hiking and fun, including a Saturday evening group meal. Various hikes are planned at different levels for participants. Registration required. To register go to the Eventbrite website at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/outings-leader-training-101-tickets-63178991063>

Saturday October 12 - South Mills River loop hike near Turkey Pen Gap. Exact route to be determined by trail conditions closer to the date. Six-miles total. Rated Moderate to Strenuous due to elevation gain. Bring your water shoes for several wet stream crossings. We'll learn about the Pisgah Ranger District and the many trails and recreation opportunities. Contact leader, David Reid at daviddbreid@charter.net or 828-713-1607 to RSVP.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 20 - FALL COLOR HIKE - LOCATION TBA. Will go to either higher or lower elevation, depending on the schedule of our fall color. Distance approximately 5 miles. There will be learning opportunities with Tree ID & conservation. Contact hike leader for more info, and to sign up ... Lisa McWherter at lisamcw2@gmail.com or 828-713-4994.

September 15th River Clean Up

Our Spring river clean up event was canceled due to high water on the French Broad River. We will try again on Sunday September 15 at 11:00AM. Typically we are on the river for less than three hours. The event will be sponsored by Greenworks, but only our Sierra Club group will be involved, and we like it this way because we will not be "lost in the crowd". Greenworks' big fall clean up event will be held the following weekend on Saturday September 21. It is not yet certain which river or which river section we work, but, typically we tackle part of the French Broad River. Greenworks will supply canoes, paddles and PFD's, so participants need only bring water bottles and suitable clothing including shoes which can get wet. Some canoeing experience is preferred but not required because those who are inexperienced can usually be paired with an experienced canoe partner. Kayakers can bring their own craft. There may or may not be shore crews who stay off the water, so let me, Richard Kark, know if that would be your preference. Many of you who have participated in the past or who have signed up for past clean ups will receive an email in advance of September 15 which will provide more details as they become known. If you are interested, you can let me know if you would like to be on that list. BY THE WAY, THESE CLEANUPS ARE FUN, SATISFYING AND VERY WORTHWHILE. And we will plan to gather afterwards for refreshments and food, probably at New Belgium Brewing or the original Wedge Brewery. So plan ahead to be hungry and thirsty after we finish. Richard Kark karka@uwec.edu



Jarvis Hudson

In Memory of Jarvis Hudson

Our local Sierra club recently lost a dear member and friend, Dr. Jarvis Hudson, who also happened to be our #1 local biologist-hiker, and an enthusiastic lover of nature. Jarvis was a retired professor of Biology/Ecology, who many of our hikers will remember as our go-to person for Tree/Flower/Bird ID on our many local Sierra Club hikes. Jarvis was also an avid environmentalist, and his home was almost off the grid. On May 29, Jarvis passed peacefully at his home, with family/friends present. Hiker Lisa McWherter expresses her great gratitude to Jarvis, for generously teaching and inspiring her, and thus enhancing her appreciation and enjoyment of every simple walk in the woods.

National Drive Electric Week - free show - Saturday, September 14, noon - 4 pm Asheville Outlets ([800 Brevard Road, Asheville](http://www.ashevilleoutlets.com))



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UNC Asheville divests from fossil fuels, by James Smith

As of June 21 2019, UNC Asheville has committed to divest \$5 million, about 10% of its endowment away from investments in the fossil fuel industry. UNC Asheville made the decision to pursue new investment management for this portion of the endowment following student pressure to divest from fossil fuels. The decision to begin a sustainable investment track of the endowment marks the first commitment of its kind in the UNC system. See @UNCADivest on Facebook & Asheville Citizen Times, June 24 front page https://www.citizen-times.com/story/news/2019/06/22/unc-asheville-first-school-unc-system-divest-fossil-fuels/1524101001/?fbclid=IwAR1wCh4AVinD_5nR5WRZOBIVyIJ2-L0aZhFIGI78ZageiiuPr-KGabDdZrg for more information.

James Smith graduated from UNCA in May with honors, especially in the area of sustainability. He was on our western North Carolina Sierra Club (Wenoca) executive committee for the last two years. Congratulations to James for successful work on divestment and on his graduation. He is currently traveling to Thailand and Japan to celebrate!

Energy Savers Network Update, By Alice Wyndham

Energy Savers Network is a volunteer driven organization with the mission of helping with climate change by helping people, partnering with Buncombe County to reduce residential energy use. Low- income family homes have become more energy efficient with weather stripped doors, LED lights, wrapped water heaters, and leaking holes filled. 150 homes were completed in 2018. A goal of 250 homes to be completed is set for 2019. To help: info@energysaversnetwork.com or call: 828-656-3649. Thanks to Sierra Club for the Environmental Organization of the Year Award given to Energy Savers Network this past December!