



WENOCA SIERRAN

Newsletter of the Western North Carolina Sierra Club
November 2019 - January 2020

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, Nov 7th
Climate Reality and
What You Can Do
About It
by Brad Rouse

Thurs, Dec 5th
Holiday Party and
Recognition Awards

Thurs, Jan 9th
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.

Climate Reality and What You Can Do About It – Nov. 7

Brad Rouse, executive director of Asheville’s Energy Savers Network, will present the Climate Reality Project, an organization founded by Al Gore with the mission to build a mass movement of concerned climate activists. Brad first attended the Climate Reality training in 2012 in San Francisco, and in March of this year he served as a mentor to local Asheville residents who attended the training in Atlanta with VP Gore and Rev. William Barber. Many of the slides in the presentation, much shorter than the original due to time constraints, came from Gore’s presentation with additional content that Brad developed around a way of thinking about how the listener can be involved in climate action. Basically, climate action should be taken at every level of a person’s influence, from self-understanding and awareness to carbon footprint to associations in the local community to influence that can be brought to bear at the state, national, and global level. The presentation focuses on starting where you are, looking at actions that have side benefits beyond climate, taking actions every day, and never giving up, even as we try to convince government to change course.



Brad Rouse

A native of NC, Brad holds a BA in economics from Yale and an MBA in finance from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Brad spent his entire professional career involved in the fields of energy forecasting, electric utility resource planning, and personal financial planning. He has worked with over 100 utilities on utility planning issues, including Duke Energy, Virginia Power, Georgia Power, Florida Power & Light, and others.

After 25 years working in energy, Brad sold his financial practice to focus 100% of his time on climate change solutions. When he and his wife, Karen, moved to Asheville in 2015, he and Alice Wyndham co-founded Energy Savers Network (ESN) to expand low-income energy efficiency in our area. Since 2017, ESN has helped over 300 income qualified families in Buncombe County reduce their energy consumption. In 2018 ESN was awarded Western NC Sierra Club’s “Environmental Organization of the Year Award”, and in 2019 they received the “Energy Innovator Award from the Energy Innovation Task Force.”

Holiday Party and Recognition Awards - December 5th

All are warmly invited to Western North Carolina Sierra Club’s 10th Annual Holiday Party and Recognition Awards at 6:30 PM on Thursday, December 5 at Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Asheville. Last year about 80 folks ate, drank, and were merry. Recognition awards are presented to Environmental leaders. Please bring a potluck dish to share, listing ingredients.



The Sierra Club website is wenoca.org

Nantahala-Pisgah Forest Plan Revision, Jan 9th

(note: changed to second Thursday)

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 November, 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 ideas 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 for our Nantahala and Pisgah Forests.

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 MountainTrue. 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.



River cleanup smashing success!

It was Sunday September 15 from Craven St. Landing to Pearson Bridge. 19 Sierra Club volunteers in canoes and kayaks plus two on the Riverside Drive ditches, under the leadership of Richard Kark, with the equipment of Asheville Greenworks. Lots of trash retrieved on a very warm day. Beer and truck food afterwards at New Belgium. A good time was had by all!

In Honor of Molly Diggins, NC State Sierra Club Chapter Director, on her retirement after 22 years

In 1997, the NC Chapter took a deep breath, dug deep into its pockets, and opened a statewide office in Raleigh...Growing public interest in and demand for what Sierra Club had to offer meant it was time to take the next step if the Chapter were to continue to grow and thrive/

Taking the big step to open a statewide office also meant hiring the Chapter's first director. In 1997, the Chapter made another leap of faith, and hired a volunteer, Molly Diggins, from Winston-Salem's Foothills Group, for that role. Molly had come to NC some years before to help friends launch a horse farm in the area, never planning to stay. But the beauty of the state proved too strong a pull. And so for 22 years Molly has served as the NC Chapter's first and only State Director.



Molly Diggins

Today, with more than 100,000 members and supporters in North Carolina and an excellent Chapter staff, Molly has worked to build public and political support for the passage of wide-ranging and groundbreaking environmental policies on both the local and state level. She has been at the table on our behalf for so many landmark accomplishments, such as the Clean Smokestacks Act (2002), and the Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard (2007).

Here is what the Charlotte Observer had to say back in 2002 about Molly in honoring her as a Guardian of the Environment:

"It would be difficult to name a single environmental issue in North Carolina that Molly Diggins and the staff of the state chapter have not been involved in."

The same could be said today. But the future will be under new leadership, as Molly will be stepping down as state director in early November. While she plans to remain active on the issues, Molly is looking forward to spending more time exploring the great natural heritage she has spent so many years protecting.

Please join us...

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

Hikes Nov 2019 - Jan 2020

SAT, NOV 9: PINK BEDS/BARNETT BRANCH WATERFALL HIKE: Meet at 10:00 a.m. in Asheville, back around 5:30 pm. This hike is approx 5.5 to 6 miles, rated Easy/Moderate (due to occasional rugged terrain w/ tree roots & occasional rocks, requiring good foot wear). Part of the hike will be on the Pink Beds Loop trail, but we will also take Barnett Branch to a nice waterfall. These trails offer some tunnels of rhododendrons & laurels. We will also have opportunity for some winter tree id. There will be a variety of habitats, including a small wetland with a board walk. All hikers please RSVP to hike leader Lisa McWherter at lisamcw2@gmail.com or 828-713-4994, or contact her if any questions.

THURSDAY NOVEMBER 21st - MULLINAX-POUNDING MILL LOOP – This moderate 4 mile loop hike is in the South Mills River area of the Pisgah Ranger District. Expect some wet stream crossings. Trail is steep in places. We will use sections of the Squirell Gap Trail and Mullinax Trail to form a loop from the starting point of Turkey Pen Gap. We will learn about inventoried roadless areas on the Pisgah District, and how they contribute to backcountry experience. Call or email trip leader to RSVP. Leader – David Reid, 828-713-1607. daviddbreid@charter.net.

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 18th – RAINBOW ROAD IN MONTREAT – This moderate 4 mile loop climbs gently up to the intersection with the Old Toll Road and Trestle Road, notable for their ties to the history of Black Mountain and Mt. Mitchell. Some steep decent at the last part of the loop shared with the Lookout Mt Trail. We will learn about the history of the Toll Rd from Black Mountain to Mt. Mitchell. Call or email trip leader to RSVP. Leader – David Reid, 828-713-1607. daviddbreid@charter.net.

WED, DEC 25 (CHRISTMAS DAY): CHESTNUT COVE OVERLOOK Trailhead, on Mtns to Sea Trail (MST). 5.4 miles R T. ... Meet in Asheville at 10:30 and return around 4 pm. A dear old favorite of mine, this Easy/Moderate stretch of MST veers off and away from the sounds of the parkway. It is mostly sheltered from the wind, and offers interesting landscape & shallow stream crossings. Also, tunnels of Rhododendren & Laurels. The trail is mostly level terrain, but it is rugged, with tree roots and rocks along the way. Includes opportunities for some easy winter plant/tree ID, and to discuss the fate of the American chestnut tree. This hike is for those w/ adequate conditioning for a 5.4 mile trail, though the pace is moderate (not fast) w/ an occasional brief break & lunch break. Please contact the hike leader with questions/concerns. All hikers please RSVP to hike leader Lisa McWherter at lisamcw2@gmail.com or 828-713-4994.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 18: - HIKE, LOCATION TBA. A mostly easy hike, approx 4 to 5 miles in length. There will be learning opportunities r/t Tree ID & conservation. More info to come. Contact hike leader for more info, and to sign up ... Lisa McWherter at lisamcw2@gmail.com or 828-713-4994.

Some Good News in NC

In October 2018, Gov. Roy Cooper issued Executive Order 80, which set a target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in North Carolina by 40% (from 2005 levels) by 2025 - a major step to address climate change. This goal is in line with the 2015 Paris Agreement goals and honors the state's commitments to the U.S. Climate Alliance. On September 27, the N.C. Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) presented the highlights of the state clean energy plan to Gov. Cooper and the Interagency Climate Council. The good news is that the final plan will call for a 70% reduction in greenhouse gases statewide by 2030 and to attain carbon neutrality by 2050. The final plan was released on October 1, 2019.

Sierra Club's Dirty Fuels campaign is fighting two pipelines proposed to enter North Carolina: the Atlantic Coast Pipeline (ACP) and the Mountain Valley Pipeline (MVP). Sierra Club is engaged in the courts and local communities to oppose these unnecessary fossil fuel infrastructure projects.

Dominion Energy and Duke Energy continue to try to build the ACP despite a string of court losses that have, for now, stopped its construction. Courts have thrown out permits that the pipeline builders need to cross the Blue Ridge Parkway, streams and rivers in West Virginia and the Appalachian Trail. And a federal court tossed a U.S. Fish and Wildlife endangered species permit. The decision to deny the crossing of the Appalachian Trail has been appealed to the Supreme Court who will hear the case.

Two dozen cities and counties in NC have joined Asheville and Buncombe County in passing carbon reduction goals. Asheville and Buncombe County have set goals to replace all energy used by city and county governments with 100% clean energy by 2030 and the entire county by 2042, eight years earlier than the state goal.

A state court recently ordered that the voting maps for about half of North Carolina's legislative districts must be redrawn by legislators because they were illegally drawn to favor Republicans. While the maps are still being finalized, it is clear that the 2020 election for members of the General Assembly in NC will be much fairer and less gerrymandered than the current districts.

Polling consistently shows that North Carolinians want clean energy and want to protect our air and water, but the laws passed by the legislature in recent years haven't always reflected these values. Voting rights advocates including the N.C. Sierra Club hopes that less partisan districts will lead to fairer elections and better balance at the General Assembly - in other words, representation that better reflects North Carolinians' values and their concern for the environment.



Youth For Environmental Stewardship

Youth For Environmental Stewardship is a coalition of all of our nine public high schools. Students representing all of the high schools, along with community representatives, presented over 2000 petition signatures to Buncombe County Board of Education and to Asheville City Board of Education on October 3 and October 7 requesting that the school systems join with Buncombe County government and Asheville City government in a request for proposal (RFP) for companies to bid on the feasibility and pricing to place solar on public properties as a way of fulfilling the 100% Renewable Energy resolutions passed in 2017 and 2018. Asheville City Board of Education voted unanimously October 7th to join the request for proposal!

**Sierra Club volunteers needed. Please contact Judy Mattox at
judymattox@sbcglobal.net, 828-683-2176**



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SIERRA CLUB
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Kid's Adventure Club

The Kid's Adventure Club is a Sierra Club program which is in its 3rd year. It is designed to have fun with children in the natural world. This summer on June 21 we took roughly 30 young ones, primarily aged five and six from Hillcrest Community summer camp, to Warren Wilson College Farm and Owen park. There they saw a dairy cow being milked, young piglets, and chickens. At Owen Park they did a scavenger hunt and a leaf rubbing.



-On June 12 we rode the Craggy Mountain trolley to Woodfin River Park on the French Broad River.

-On July 26 we stomped in the creek at the North Carolina Arboretum finding stone flies, and then petted snakes and box shell turtles.

On October 28 Carlton Burke, naturalist, will tell stories and present a variety of animals, birds, reptiles to the Marvelous Math club at Pisgah View Apartments. Thanks to all of our 20 Sierra Club volunteers who made our program happen, and to Miss Earle and her staff at Hillcrest Community summer camp as well as the Housing Authority, and the Marvelous Math Club at Pisgah view Apartments for partnering with us.

If you are interested in donating or helping with this program contact: Judy Mattox, judymattox@sbcglobal.net, 828-683-2176