



Sierran

To Explore, Enjoy and Protect the Planet

Sunset on the Coal Era in Georgia

Pages 8-9



2012 Legislative Outlook *Pages 3-6*



Sierrans Celebrate Holidays *Pages 14-15*

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Georgia, Beyond Coal? Yes!

By Colleen Kiernan

We're about ready to turn the page, I can feel it. Phase One of the Beyond Coal Campaign is almost over in Georgia. Back at the Sierra Summit in 2005, Sierrans agreed almost unanimously that climate change was the biggest threat to our planet, and needed to be our top priority if we are to protect everything else we care about. Because coal is the biggest single contributor to the problem, we must challenge the power of the industry in order to put effective policy in place to stabilize our atmosphere.

Sierra Club and our partners have been remarkably effective at Phase One: stopping new coal proposals, and Georgia is catching up. In December, we announced the cancellation of the Longleaf Energy Station (#160), and now Cobb EMC, the founder and largest investor in POWER4Georgians, has announced it is pulling out, leaving Plants Washington and Ben Hill on life support. These two will be #163 and #164 when they are officially cancelled. Check out <http://www.sierraclub.org/environmentallaw/coal/map/default.aspx> to see all the plants, defeated and still kicking, on a map. Now we join most of the rest of the country in Phase Two of the Beyond Coal Campaign, retiring existing coal and replacing it with clean energy.

The economy will be a big help in making room for our aging fleet of coal plants to retire. EPA rules that so many of you helped us support, especially the Mercury Rule, will be the driver in Georgia Power's decision to retire, rather than upgrade, several of its older, smaller plants.

The real challenge we face will be whether the retiring coal will be replaced with clean energy, like solar, wind and efficiency, or whether Georgia will chose the path of least resistance, to



Colleen Kiernan, Chapter Director

fill the gap with the glut of under-used natural gas plants that were overbuilt in the early 2000s. The National Renewable Energy Laboratory estimates that we can meet 136% of our current electricity demand from the offshore wind resources in Georgia and 19% of our current electricity demand from solar.

The only way we will get solar and wind to scale is for Georgians from all walks of life to demand it. We can keep energy dollars in Georgia, create jobs, and clean up our environment for our families and for our future.

Will you join us?

About Georgia Sierran

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Note: in accordance with Chapter bylaws, all members will receive the annual election issue by mail.

State Budget Continues to Occupy Center Stage

By Neill Herring

Georgia's state budget, like those of most states that don't produce fossil fuels, remains funded at a level far below that realized during the Great Credit Boom earlier this century. State spending has sunk from well over \$20 billion a year to a Fiscal Year 2012 budget of \$18.3 billion. Despite the fact that revenue collections have slowly recovered over the last months, the coincident growth of expenditures for budget items such as medical care, education and incarceration have soaked up those additional funds even before they were collected.

Several environmental and conservation budget matters are of interest in the Fiscal Year 2013 budget. Two of these are expected requests for bond financing for capital projects, both additional appropriations for projects that are already underway. Neither of these can be characterized as beneficial for the natural environment. The Sierra Club supports neither of them, nor has it ever supported them.

The first of the budget boondoggles is the proposed Georgia Ports Authority plan to deepen 32 miles of the Savannah River from the its docks to the Atlantic Ocean to accommodate the largest container ships now afloat. These big vessels, known as Post Panamax or New Panamax ships, can each carry 5000 20 foot long containers, known in the trade as TEU's, which stands for Twenty foot Equivalent Units. (The terms Post and New Panamax refer to the fact that they are larger than vessels that can use the Panama Canal.) These ships can be navigated to Savannah's docks now, but only on high tide. The dredging is designed to allow their passage on low tides.

According to the studies of the federal regulatory agency, the US Army Corps of Engineers, the volume of

freight using the Savannah harbor is not expected to increase with greater use of the larger ships, nor will the number of port-related jobs increase. The largest possible changed result of the proposed dredging will be a reduced number of ships calling at Savannah.

Whether the numbers of 5000 TEU ships increase is presently in doubt, given the world economic recession and the current glut of existing vessels on the world's oceans. Shipping line economic

been built anywhere on such a scale.

Funds for the harbor expansion have traditionally come from the Corps, but the end of budget "earmarks" in the US Congress has interrupted that direct source of funds. Now all of the east coast's ports must compete for appropriations for harbor work. New York-New Jersey, Norfolk-Hampton Roads, Charleston, Savannah and Miami all have projects now underway, all seeking funds from the same pot. Georgia has

proposed paying a larger share of harbor dredging costs than it has historically, and that money would come from the sale of bonds. During the "earmark era," Georgia was expected to provide a place to dump the sand dredged from the harbor, but that may not be enough to secure the federal funds for the work in the future.

The competition among the various harbors was acknowledged in the last federal "continuations budget bill" with token appropriations for most of the harbor projects, but nowhere near the level of funding needed

for even a single one of them. South Carolina's legislative leaders have fallen to fighting with their Governor over the Savannah vs. Charleston issue since Gov. Nikki Haley seems to have taken Georgia's side in the dispute, a reversal of her earlier statement that, "Georgia has had her way with us for too long."

The Georgia legislature, and most of official Georgia, is rabidly enthusiastic over the Savannah harbor dredging, but Georgia is ill-equipped to pay the full freight for the project, particularly given its largely neutral fiscal impact on the state's economy.

The second boondoggle that will be in the FY 2013 Budget is a second year installment in Gov. Deal's Water Supply Program, which is run through GEFA,

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reports show flat or falling earnings. The present European economic crisis has idled even more shipping.

Savannah harbor dredging comes at a high environmental and economic cost. Much of the present Savannah National Wildlife Refuge, upstream from the harbor, is expected to be lost if the dredging occurs. The volume of oxygen in the deeper river will drop so current pollution dischargers are expected to have to upgrade their treatment plants to accommodate the next reduced assimilation levels. Mitigation of the environmental damage will require a very expensive purchase of additional land to expand the Wildlife refuge, as well as construction of onshore oxygenation plants to inject oxygenated water into the harbor. No such plants have ever

Full Agenda for Georgia Water Coalition

By Neill Herring

The Georgia Water Coalition, of which the Sierra Club was a founding member, observed its 10th anniversary in November of 2011. At that event it released a report of the “Dirty Dozen” worst offenses against Georgia’s waters in 2011 (see page 10). The list of issues ranged over the whole state, literally from the mountains to the sea, and was extensively covered in the state’s news media.

The funding issues mentioned above are of course all involved in the Dirty Dozen offenses, along with other issues, most of which can be included under the general term of “interbasin transfers” (IBTs). Interbasin transfers are a tool of water use management in which water is withdrawn for use from one river basin but discharged into another basin as wastewater. Because Metro Atlanta sits astride five river basins, and contains about half of the state’s population, it is also the site of most large Georgia interbasin transfers. These arrangements were built as financial and engineering conveniences for the water systems, but if they are allowed to continue to grow, with more and more water being moved around, harm to the donor basins is almost inevitable.

For example, the Flint Riverkeeper has found that interbasin transfers at the very top of that river basin, streams that flow from the area of the Atlanta Airport and southern Fulton County, have already harmed the aquatic life of the stream. One stretch of the river below a dam at Peachtree City has already run dry during the current drought, while water has been diverted to other river basins. Downstream government and business leaders, as well as conservationists, have objected to continued unregulated interbasin transfers in Georgia, and the EPD has acted on the matter, in its own cunning way.

Because of all of the pressure to “do something” the State Water Plan, (which has just now been completed), after a



Buford Dam at Lake Lanier. Could new reservoirs be on the way?

lengthy regional planning process, contains recommendations for regulation of IBTs. The State Water Plan has no force of law, and is unenforceable, but the EPD took the Plan’s IBT recommendations and made them into an official rule of the agency, pursuant to its power under the Georgia Administrative Procedures Act. But the IBT Rules were made optional!

The EPD Director “may” consider a long list of criteria in considering water withdrawal and discharge permits; he is not required to make such a consideration. The appearance of regulation is substituted for its substance, by using the word “may” instead of the word “shall.” In 2012 legislators have an opportunity to correct this problem. The fact that the EPD Director who presided over the bogus rulemaking has been replaced may make this change more easily obtained.

Many of the reservoir projects contemplated in the program outlined above will require new interbasin transfers to be feasible, and the streams supporting them will be doubly harmed by the construction of the impoundment and by the permanent shift of stream-flow away from that donor basin.

Meanwhile, there have been 4 major spills of pollutants into Georgia streams since May of 2011. The first of these was the worst, so far, and killed fish for

80 miles in the Ogeechee River, from Screven County to the Atlantic estuary. Three other spills have sent kaolin clay and waste products from the industry into streams in Twiggs, Jefferson and Burke counties, in middle Georgia. EPD has had a difficult time in responding to these spills in a timely fashion, a pattern already established in its negligent mismanagement of a formaldehyde spill in an Athens creek in 2010.

EPD’s severe underfunding plays a role in these spills. Not having enough staff to adequately investigate spills of pollutants is a problem, but in the case of the Ogeechee spill that killed the fish in 80 stream miles the staffing problem was even worse. It turns out that the polluter, King Finishing, a textile plant that treats fabrics for defense contractors, had been running a separate product line, with a toxic discharge, without any permit at all for five years, even though the plant was regularly inspected by the EPD.

As mentioned above, a Constitutional Amendment to allow “dedication” of funds collected under programs designed to protect natural resources is going to be needed before these programs are trustworthy. For more information, see the Dirty Dozen report at www.garivers.org/gawater/dirtydozen.htm or just google Georgia Water Coalition.

Transportation a Challenge for Lawmakers, Again

By Neill Herring

Georgia's inability to deal with its transportation problems, either traffic congestion in Metro Atlanta or simple road and bridge maintenance in the state's more rural corners, is notorious. The problem is how to fund clearly identified needs, a problem that is entirely political. SR 845, Constitutional Amendment that would have begun to provide remedies, infamously failed in the State Senate in the closing minutes of the 2008 Legislative Session.

The failure of SR 845 was produced by Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle, acting under instructions of the state's largest highway contractor, C. W. Matthews, who was displeased at the idea that some money collected for motor fuel taxes might be used for public transportation instead of being sent to the General Fund, as it was then, and is now. Instead of going back and simply having a "do-over" to fix that failure, Gov. Perdue caused the passage of Transportation "Reform," giving himself a larger role in planning and spending on roads; then he lost interest in the use of that power once he got it.

Instead he proposed what is now known as the T-Splost proposal. That contraption sets up transportation regions around the state with planning "roundtables" to devise "project lists" that will then be put before the voters in each region, who can decide whether the list of projects merits their support for a new 1% general sales tax to fund the list. The vote was set for July 2012, during the party primary elections. Since then, the roundtables have brought forth their project lists, and a campaign, of sorts, has commenced to pass these referenda.

During the Special Session of August 2011 when new maps were drawn for Congressional and Legislative Districts, a bill was offered that would have moved the date of the regional transportation referenda for 1% general sales tax increases for transportation from the July 2012 Primary Elections to the November General Election. It is believed by some that the broader (read: more Democratic) electorate of the Presidential election will be likelier to pass the new sales taxes than the partisan voters in the largely Republican primaries. The bill got out of the Transportation Committee in the House, and promptly dropped dead, thanks to the opposition of the anti-tax Tea Party.

An attempt to satisfy that group by changing the law that allows cities and counties to schedule their own local sales tax referenda during low-turnout elections, to require that all of those votes must also be held during the General Elections as well, was thwarted by the organized lobbies of the cities and counties, fearful their ability to get their local supplemental sales taxes would be damaged.

The 2012 Session may, or may not take up the question of shifting the date of the T-Splost referenda from July to Novem-



Local control for MARTA is expected to a contentious issue again.

ber. What is very likely to be taken up is a related matter that is called "transit governance."

The biggest of the T-Splost referenda is that in the Metro region. Where the other regions have project lists of overpasses and road widening, plus maintenance work that used to be routinely funded out of gas taxes, with local variations, the Metro 1% sales tax revenue stream is projected to be large, and is proposed to fund a large list of projects. The majority of those projects are for additional road work, but there is to be some spending on public transportation, the very first such expenditure ever under the aegis of the state government.

Heretofore, transit has been a local matter, with local funding. MARTA, the transit system serving the core of Metro Atlanta, is funded by a general sales tax in Fulton and DeKalb Counties and the City of Atlanta. Under T-Splost, those two counties must vote on an additional 1% of general sales tax for transportation, while the suburban counties that surround them will also vote on that same 1% for themselves.

Opposition to the T-Splost seems to be higher in the presently untaxed outer counties, but the way the T-Splost is arranged, if a majority of the region's voters vote for the tax, then all must pay it. The thinking, such as it is, seems to be that a large margin must be run up in Fulton and DeKalb to make up for narrower margins and countywide "no" votes in the outlying counties. The idea seems to be that those already paying a 1% general sales tax for transportation will more gladly pay another 1% general sales tax for the same purpose, with the new money being more widely distributed into other counties. This is difficult to understand.

The thing that is apparently going to convince the voters of the three MARTA jurisdictions, Fulton, DeKalb and Atlanta, that they should be willing to take this second 1% plunge, is this matter of "transit governance."

The motivation for this "governance" initiative is to make

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State Budget, continued from page 3

the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority, and through the Dept. of Community Affairs. This "Governor's Reservoir Fund" has been widely advertised to total \$300 million over four years. An existing fund of almost \$30 million left over from the Perdue Administration was supplemented by additional bond funds of about \$45 million in the FY 2012 Budget, and the FY 2013 appropriation is expected to equal that latter sum. A similar amount is expected to be in the FY 2014 Budget as well.

The total of General Revenue Bond funds to be appropriated for this work reaches a total short of the \$300 million level by \$88.5 million. That sum is projected to be supplied by the sale of GEFA revenue bonds, to be funded with money from sales of water from reservoir project(s). Obviously, a reservoir project must be completed before it can yield any revenue from sales. The lead times for such facilities as have been recently completed in Georgia is such that the expectation of a viable revenue stream for even one of them within a few years is extremely optimistic.

As in the case of the Savannah harbor dredging, unwelcome practicalities seem of small matter to our state's leaders. These projects share inflated projected economic benefits, doubtful economic necessity, very high environmental costs, significant regulatory barriers, and enthusiastic support of almost manic proportions.

The "magic" of bond appropriations is what allows these things to proceed in spite of the mountains of very stubborn negative facts they must surmount: The state can borrow a million dollars over 20 years by appropriating about \$100,000 for each year of those twenty. The annual cost of the \$45 million that will go to reservoirs this time is about \$4.5 million, a mere bagatelle among the many billions of dollars in the state budget.

Meanwhile, the Dept. of Natural



The existing Savannah River port, which state leaders seek to drastically expand.

Resources, and its Environmental Protection Division, continue to struggle along, having absorbed a string of budget cuts that began during the "fat years" of the Miller administration and have continued, with few interruptions, ever since. "Trust Funds" that are supposed to be used to clean up used tire dumps, old landfills and hazardous waste sites have been regularly looted by Governors and Legislatures, and are forced to work with mere fractions of the monies collected under their authority. This is why we now have numerous tire dumps decorating remote countryside and urban watercourses.

Additional funds for soil erosion regulation and control are similarly taken for General Funds use. A new Georgia Outdoor Recreational Pass, at \$19 per person per year will create a similar fund that will undoubtedly also be looted, as have the license fees already collected from hunters and anglers for many years.

What the legislature needs to do is to permit the voters to pass a Constitutional Amendment that would allow funds collected for the protection of natural resources to be "dedicated" solely for those purposes.

If what we have now were being done by a private business, would be called a fraud. What would be a felony for a business, is now the orderly functioning of our state government.

To learn more about the proposed deepening of the Savannah River, go to www.portbarrel.com.

Transportation, continued from p. 5

public transportation a regional project that extends beyond the boundaries of the MARTA referendum counties. MARTA could already be that agency under current law, counties need only pass a referendum and start collecting the 1% general sales tax to join, but MARTA is historically viewed as somehow tainted by its origins; an "original sin" compounded of race, reluctance and reaction. Gov. Barnes got the legislature to create the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority, GRTA, to bridge the gap between MARTA and the outer counties, but then he was defeated for reelection and Gov. Perdue turned GRTA into a glorified bus line serving the suburbs with what it is pleased to call "luxury coaches."

The "transit governance" bill is apparently an effort to revive GRTA in the mold of the original Barnes vision, or something like that, inasmuch as that image never actually came clear. How that will work, or not work, is anyone's guess at this point. How MARTA fits into GRTA, and more importantly, how the MARTA taxpayers and their hard-earned and invested capital fit into "governance" is the question in every mind that is considering the matter. Similar questions on the relationships of Cobb or Gwinnett or Clayton Counties' transit systems and GRTA are also pending.

How commuter rail projects, if we ever see any, will be executed, funded and operated, is another question for the "governance" bill.

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Congressional Outlook

The Worst U.S. House in History?

By Mark Woodall

The first year of the 112th Congress has finally ended. The U.S. House of Representatives voted 191 times in 2011 to weaken protection of the environment. The anti-environmental House votes included 77 votes to weaken clean air act protections, 28 votes to weaken clean water protections, 47 votes to weaken protection of public land and coastal waters and 27 votes to block action to address climate change.

In a press release for the December 15, 2011, issuance of the House Energy Committee Minority staff report "The Anti-environmental Record of the U.S. House of Representatives 112th Congress, 1st Session", Congressman Henry Waxman said: "The House Republican assault on the environment has been reckless and relentless. In bill after bill, for one industry after another, the House has been voting to roll back environmental laws and endanger public health. The Republican anti-environmental agenda is completely out of touch with what the American public wants."

Some might think that the situation today in the U.S. House is similar to 1995 when then U.S. Representative Newt Gingrich promoted the "Contract on America" and was then elected Speaker. However, Newt's contract had only one anti-regulatory provision which the new GOP majority of 1995 failed to enact in any meaningful way. In 2011, for comparison, new GOP Majority Leader Rep. Eric Cantor brought forward a "Death Package" which was primarily composed of measures to gut the Clean Air Act.

So how did we get from Newt's Contract on America to Eric Cantor's Package of Death? Some answers may be found in an article by Emory University Political Science Professor Alan Abramowitz. In an article that appeared at salon.com, "Get ready for the most conservative Congress ever", Professor Abramowitz writes "In the Gingrich House, moderate Republicans actually outnumbered very conservative Republicans by a wide margin. In the 112th House, however, very conservative Republicans will greatly outnumber moderate Republicans."

Abramowitz goes on: "Moderate Republicans have been disappearing for some time now and are now a truly endangered species. According to my estimate, there will only be three in the new House."

If the near extinction of moderate Republicans in the House isn't bad enough, consider the effects of the infamous Supreme Court Citizens United decision. Two years ago, the Supreme Court overturned a 100 years of settled law to release an unlimited flow of anonymous corporate money into politics. As a result, we now see the rise of the SuperPACs.

If you want to help to get corporate money out of politics, contact Don Dressel at don776@bellsouth.net.

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Longleaf Defeat Marks End to Longest Running Coal Fight

Agreement Marks Milestone of 160 Coal Plants Canceled

The country's longest-running campaign against construction of a new coal plant ended in December as LS Power, a New Jersey-based power company, announced that it will cancel plans to build the Longleaf Energy Station in Blakely, GA. Sierra Club, Friends of the Chattahoochee and GreenLaw have been organizing against the Longleaf coal plant since it was first proposed in 2001. This victory comes as part of a legal agreement between LS Power and Sierra Club.

This victory marks the 160th proposed coal plant canceled since Sierra Club launched its Beyond Coal campaign in 2005. This victory is particularly noteworthy because the struggle lasted for a decade and involved numerous hearings and appeals, and sustained local opposition by hundreds of Georgia residents. Longleaf was one of the very first plants proposed when, in 2001, the coal industry attempted to block clean energy development by building more than 150 new coal plants across the US, a move which would have affectively locked the nation into dependence on coal-fired electricity for the foreseeable future. Longleaf was one of the last remaining new coal projects proposed anywhere in the United States, counting 160 proposals that have now been defeated or abandoned in the past decade.

Several times over the past decade it looked like LS Power would move forward with its proposed coal plant, but local residents continued their opposition through multiple tactics, including holding a call-in day this past June when more than 250 Georgians called LS Power asking the CEO to cancel the proposal.

"This is not just a victory for the individuals and organizations fighting this plant, but also for all Georgians, who

are now safe from a major new source of toxic air pollution," said Colleen Kieran, Director of the Georgia Chapter of the Sierra Club. "This victory represents our best work: combining the power of the courts, the power of the people and the power of the press."

Sierra Club and Friends of the Chattahoochee were represented by GreenLaw, an Atlanta-based nonprofit law firm, in a series of legal challenges to the permits issued for the plant. The legal battle over the Longleaf coal plant



made national and international news when Fulton County Superior Court Judge Thelma Wyatt Cummings Moore issued a ruling that the plant's air quality permit was illegal because it failed to provide any limits on emissions of CO₂. While Judge Moore's decision was later overturned, the United States Environmental Protection Agency adopted much of the legal reasoning of the decision in promulgating rules to limit CO₂ emissions from larger industrial facilities.

"Longleaf's cancellation is one of dozens that have swept the nation, which raises the question – when will

state officials finally learn that Georgia's citizens deserve better than coal?" said GreenLaw's Executive Director, Justine Thompson. "Georgia has a promising future – but to be a serious player in the global economy while also ensuring that we have clean air and water, Georgia needs to embrace energy efficiency and more renewable sources of energy."

The announcement comes as part of a nationwide agreement with Sierra Club that also requires LS Power to abandon its proposed Plum Point 2 coal plant in Arkansas and imposes strict new limits on air pollution from the new Sandy Creek coal plant in Texas. The agreement requires the company to withdraw all requests for permits in Georgia and Arkansas, and that any issued permits be rescinded or revoked.

Local residents, who would have been most significantly affected by the plant's construction, were active in opposing the plant. "When we found out the truth about what this plant would do to our lives, we had no choice but to oppose it. We were just regular people who want our grandchildren to breathe clean air," said Bobby McLendon, President of Friends of the Chattahoochee. "Helping to stop this plant is probably the most important thing I have ever done for my family, my community and the Earth."

If built, Plant Longleaf would have contributed 88 pounds of toxic mercury per year, 1938 pounds of lead per year, and more than 8000 tons of soot and smog per year, to Georgia's atmosphere and water system. Mercury pollution can cause neurological disorders and birth defects in babies, and soot and smog contribute to respiratory illness and trigger asthma attacks.

Sierra Club, GreenLaw, and several other environmental and public health

continued on next page

Cobb EMC Withdraws from Washington, Ben Hill Projects

Sierra Club Calls on Other EMCs to Follow Suit

In a closed meeting on the afternoon of January 24, the Cobb EMC Board of Directors voted to stop funding the Power4Georgians proposed coal plant projects, Plant Washington and Plant Ben Hill, in Central Georgia. Sierra Club and the Georgians for Smart Energy Coalition have been calling for Cobb EMC and the four other electrical membership corporations in the Power4Georgians consortium to cancel the projects since they were proposed in 2008.

"The Directors did the right thing today," said Seth Gunning, with Sierra Club. "Funding this project was an expensive mistake for EMC members. We are thrilled that the Board made this smart, honorable decision, and all EMC members and Georgia residents will reap the benefits."

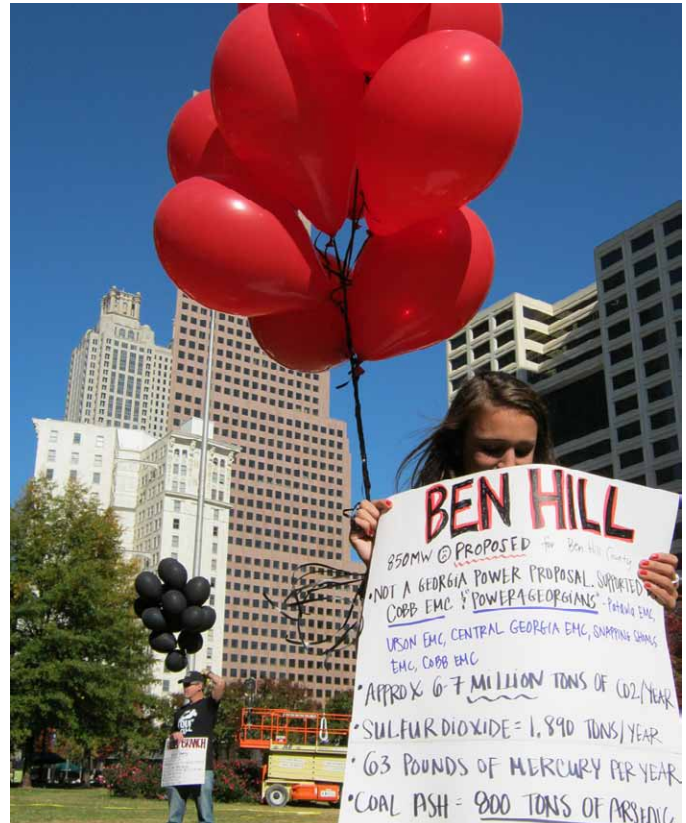
POWER4Georgians, LLC, was organized by indicted former Cobb CEO Dwight Brown. The consortium is currently operated by Dean Alford, former Cobb Energy Vice President and one-time holder of \$750,000 in preferred Cobb Energy stock. Mr. Alford's company, Allied Energy Services – once a wholly owned subsidiary of Cobb Energy – was awarded a no-bid contract to develop the consortium's coal projects. Snapping Shoals, Central Georgia, and Washington EMCs fund Power4Georgians to develop the proposed coal plant projects.

"I'm happy to see that my EMC has woken up, smelled the coffee, and cancelled funding for this terrible project. Dirty coal plants are no longer a good option. Now, the other three EMCs should follow Cobb's lead and immediately cease funding Power4Georgians," said Don Dressel, Cobb EMC member and Sierra Club leader.

Katherine Cummings, Washington EMC member and director of the Fall Line Alliance for a Clean Environment, said, "For the people in Washington County, this has always been about clean air and clean water for our children. As an EMC member and as a person who would have been affected by the proposed coal plant daily, I call on Washington EMC to follow Cobb's lead and step-away from this project."

After LS Power cancelled its proposed coal plant in Blakeley, Georgia, the economic picture for new coal plants in Georgia grew dimmer. To date, Power4Georgians has not provided cost projections or evidence supporting the need for additional electrical generation. Georgians for Smart Energy coalition member Georgia Watch commissioned a report from financial analyst Tom Sanzillo, whose analysis showed the Plant Washington proposal will increase Cobb EMC members' yearly bills by \$200. Cobb EMC has already spent \$13.5M on the Plant Washington proposal. Each 850MW proposed plant would cost more than \$2B.

Sierra Club's Beyond Coal campaign has successfully prevented 161 new coal plants from being built in the United States since 2001.



A November 2010 rally in Atlanta's Woodruff Park, sponsored by the Sierra Club and partner organizations, sought to raise awareness of the dangers of coal energy in Georgia. The proposed Longleaf, Washington and Ben Hill plants were among those targeted.

Longleaf, continued from page 8

organizations continue to fight the two remaining coal plant proposals in Georgia proposed by POWER4Georgians in Central and Southeast Georgia. These groups' work to transition Georgia off of imported coal and onto homegrown clean energy like wind and solar is part of a national effort involving unprecedented collaboration by more than a hundred organizations nationwide. Over the past decade this national campaign has stopped 160 proposed coal plants and secured record investments in clean energy. Since November 2008 only one coal plant has broken ground anywhere in the United States, a highly-subsidized Southern Company project in Mississippi.

A timeline, avoided emissions, and other documents related to Longleaf can be found at: www.greenlaw.org/Longleaf

More information about the Sierra Club's Environmental Law Program can be found at: www.sierraclub.org/environmentallaw/

Georgia Water Coalition's 'Dirty Dozen' Exposes Worst Offenses to State's Waterways

This article originally appeared in the Winter 2012 issue of RiverChat, the newsletter of the Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper. It is reprinted in the Sierran by permission of UCR.

Celebrating 10 years of advocating for clean water, the Georgia Water Coalition last November named its Dirty Dozen for 2011, exposing the worst offenses to Georgia's water. Two of the 12 offenses are located in the Chattahoochee watershed: the state's failure to monitor river flow at Atlanta, and a proposed new reservoir on a tributary to Lake Lanier.

The state's leading water protection group, the Coalition is a consortium of more than 180 conservation and environmental organizations, hunting and fishing groups, businesses and faith-based organizations representing more than 300,000 Georgians. Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper is a founding member of the Coalition.

"This is more than a list," said Jerry McCollum, president of the Georgia Wildlife Federation. "This is a call to action for Georgia's citizens and its leaders. The sites populating this list are only poster children for the larger problem of a system that is failing to protect our water, our fish and wildlife, and our communities."

Dirty Politics on the Chattahoochee

In the 1970s, the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) established a minimum flow standard of 750 cubic feet per second (cfs) in the Chattahoochee at Peachtree Creek to dilute discharges from sewage treatment plants in metro Atlanta. EPD and metro water utilities led by the Atlanta Region-

al Commission have refused to support real-time monitoring at this critical location. This makes compliance impossible to verify, thereby threatening the river's health downstream.

Moreover, EPD has not conducted a comprehensive study to confirm that the flow standard established 30-plus years ago is still adequate to protect Georgia's most heavily used river from growing demands. To ensure protection of the Chattahoochee, EPD must insist that agencies share important data, fund real-time water monitoring stations and



conduct a study to confirm, or recommend revision to, the minimum flow requirements to protect all downstream users.

With a price of more than \$350 million, the proposed Glades Reservoir on Flat Creek in Hall County illustrates what is wrong with Georgia's strategy to "drought proof" metro Atlanta. Promoted by powerful insiders, Glades involves building a dam to create an amenity lake for a residential development masquerading as a water supply reservoir. It would siphon massive quantities of water from the Chattahoochee River immediately upstream of Lake Lanier.

Other members of the Dirty Dozen include a textile manufacturing plant on the Ogeechee River blamed for a massive fish kill; Rayonier's pulp mill on the Altamaha River; the proposed Savan-

nah River Harbor deepening project; a proposed coal-fired power plant on the Oconee River; depletion of flows on the Flint River; destruction of coastal marshes; and fish kills in middle Georgia linked to kaolin processing.

Funding Cuts, Political Cronyism

The Coalition blames continuing funding cuts to EPD and a lack of political will to aggressively enforce state and federal environmental laws and implement state policy that better protects and manages Georgia's water. Since 2008, EPD has seen its funding slashed by 44 percent, on the heels of steady cuts of around 40 percent since the 1980s, but the Coalition asserts that political cronyism also plays a part in the agency's failure to enforce laws.

At least half of the 18 citizens serving on the governor-appointed Department of Natural Resources Board, which oversees EPD, have ties to business interests that are directly or indirectly regulated by EPD. By contrast, there are no full-time environmental advocates, scientists or biologists serving on the board.

"Too often in Georgia, the fox is watching the hen house," said UCR's Sally Bethea, a former member of the DNR Board who was removed during a purge in 2007 that also eliminated other conservationists. "Some of the problems on this list have been happening for decades, and the agency that is supposed to fix the problems can't, or won't. The failures go deeper than lack of funding."

The Coalition's report details the history of each site and provides solutions to correct these ongoing pollution problems and eliminate the listed threats. Visit <http://www.garivers.org/gawater/dirtydozen.htm>.

Will Solar in Georgia Ever Break Through?



Have you ever wondered why you don't see solar panels everywhere you go in Georgia? Despite the recent rainy spell, Georgia is a pretty sunny place, right?

In fact, the National Renewable Energy Laboratory says that Georgia could produce 19% of its current energy demand, as we have the second highest photovoltaic solar resources, next to Florida, east of the Mississippi.

Yet utilities like Georgia Power and parent company Southern Company continue to argue that Georgia does not have significant solar resources, and that there "is no demand" for clean energy.

With Georgia Power's support, Georgia passed "net-metering" legislation in 2001. The law requires utilities to connect solar power generators to the grid, but restricts the size of systems to a mere 10kw for residential and 100kw for commercial. These limitations are artificial barriers that greatly hinder the growth of a potentially large industry in the state, and should be either removed or increased to at least 2 MW.

Additionally, the law links the amount of solar power that Georgia Power must buy from solar producers to the demand for their "premium" green power program, which asks consumers to pay an extra \$5.50 for a block of 50% solar and 50% landfill gas-to-energy. Thus, Georgia Power doesn't have to buy solar energy from producers if Georgia Power customers aren't paying more for "green energy."

The Georgia Chapter of the Sierra Club wishes it could encourage customers to sign up for the program, but we don't believe landfill-gas-to-energy is green, or renewable. Much like coal plants, landfills harm the communities surrounding them and produce myriad harmful environmental effects. What's more, because garbage-based power is less expensive than coal, we don't think anyone should have to pay extra for it. We en-

courage Georgia Power to create a 100% Solar Power program.

Georgia is one of just three states in the US, along with North Carolina and Florida, where utilities oppose Solar Purchase Agreements. In many other states, companies like Sungevity and SunRun are helping people go solar without a huge financial commitment upfront. These companies install the panels on your roof and sell you the electricity. Try to do that as a Georgia Power customer and you will receive a "cease and desist" letter. According to Georgia Power, they are the only ones who can sell you power.

Recently, a pair of innovative and courageous doctors on Georgia's coast sought to challenge this prohibition. They formed a company called "Lower Rates for Customers, LLC" and installed solar panels on the Bethesda Home for Boys and the Driftaway Cafe in Savannah. They are selling the power back to Bethesda and Driftaway for 1% below what Georgia Power charges. The Georgia Chapter of the Sierra Club supports these initiatives, which extended on a grand scale could provide millions of Georgians with a cheaper and clean source of energy, while boosting the economy, and creating jobs.



Chattooga River at Risk from US Forest Service Decision

Georgia ForestWatch, Georgia Sierra Club, and Wilderness Watch today announce they will challenge the US Forest Service's decision to open nearly all of the Wild and Scenic Upper Chattooga River to whitewater kayaking, including in the Ellicott Rock Wilderness.

Made up of hikers, hunters, anglers, nature watchers and photographers, walkers, leaf peepers, swimmers, and conservationists, the three organizations have banded together to try to preserve the solitude and sanctity of one of the last truly wild pieces of public lands on the East Coast. The agency's decision would allow the removal of fish habitat-- large wood--in the river channel, prompt the development of new parking lots, boater access routes, and boat put-ins and take-outs to accommodate use of the river for paddling on what is often no wider than a small creek.

"Everyone can enjoy the Upper Chattooga and the Ellicott Rock Wilderness, but to preserve what is special about this place, all of us must be willing to give something," said George Nickas, executive director for Wilderness Watch. "As more and more people discover our magnificent public lands, the Forest Service must set reasonable rules so that we leave these places in great shape for future generations. Restricting how and when the most sensitive areas are used is the only way to do that."



Larry Winslett of the Georgia Sierra Club's Wildlands Committee, echoed that sentiment. "For me this flies in the face of the intent of the Wilderness Act. They are supposed to be places where 'nature' comes first and people are just visitors."

"This is the exact opposite--it argues that people should always be able to put themselves first--even in Wilderness," Winslett added. "When the Forest Service can't be trusted to protect what needs protection, it is time for wilderness-minded individuals and nature-conscious organizations to do their best to push back on this terrible decision."

The agency's proposal would open 17 more miles of the Chattooga Wild and Scenic River to unlimited numbers of boaters at high water December through April. The newly opened stretches cut through the middle of some of the most sensitive and wild territory, including the Chattooga Cliffs area, the Ellicott Rock Wilderness and the remote Rock Gorge reach, where historically the Forest Service has allowed nature to prevail.

The decision to open this area in response to heavy lobbying by "creekers" (as people who paddle in small, shallow wa-

continued on next page

North Carolina Gets Great Clean Air News

Great clean air news out of North Carolina - the Sierra Club and four of our key allies are announcing a settlement that will retire 1,600-megawatts of dirty coal power. North Carolina has long been a clean air leader, from passing the landmark Clean Smokestacks Act a decade ago, which requires all coal plants in the state to install pollution controls, to taking legal action calling on neighboring states to clean up the coal pollution blowing into the Tar Heel State. From the Smoky Mountains to the Outer Banks, the people of North Carolina are passionate about clean air.

As part of the settlement, our organizations have agreed to drop our challenges to Duke Energy's new Cliffside Power Plant, which we been vehemently opposing for several years. While we would have preferred that Cliffside was never built - I personally spent several years fighting Cliffside when I was the director of Appalachian Voices - we are heartened to secure these clean air gains for North Carolina.

Under the terms of the settlement, Duke will retire old coal plants that have double the electric generating capacity of Cliffside, and will make those retirements legally binding. The Southern Environmental Law Center negotiated the settlement on behalf of Environmental Defense Fund, National Parks Conservation Association, Sierra Club, and Southern Al-

liance for Clean Energy. For more about the settlement, read the joint press release.

I grew up just across the state line from North Carolina, in the Smoky Mountains of East Tennessee. Clean air was not just an environmental issue growing up - it was an economic issue as well. Smog from coal plants threatened the million-dollar views that brought billions of dollars in tourism revenue to the region.

Decision makers and political leaders from both parties fought hard for clean air, and supported measures to reduce coal pollution, which was the biggest cause of dirty air in the Smokies. By retiring these coal plants, the region is adding one more important accomplishment to its long history as a clean air leader.

Retiring these coal plants also gives North Carolina even more reason to aggressively pursue clean energy solutions, including offshore wind. The Sierra Club will be working hard with our allies in the year ahead to ensure North Carolina leads the way on clean energy, just as it has done on clean air for so many years.

**- Mary Anne Hitt, Director
Sierra Club Beyond Coal Campaign**

New Group Seeks to Shift Georgia Poultry from Factories to Farms

Georgians for Pastured Poultry (GPP), launched a new campaign to educate Georgians about the damage chicken factories are having on the state, and to promote a humane and sustainable alternative: pasture raised chicken.

GPP is made up of Georgia-based farmers, chefs, animal welfare advocates, environmentalists, and health professionals, and stresses pasture-raised chicken as an alternative to the harmful chicken factories that dominate the state's geographical and political landscape.

"For the first time, we know the price Georgia is paying to be the largest producer of chicken meat in the country," said Leah Garcés, USA Director of Compassion in World Farming, the lead founding member of GPP. "The cost to people, to our environment and to the welfare of chickens is simply too great. We want a future for Georgia that is better than the future that chicken factory farming has to offer. To that end, we have formed Georgians for Pastured Poultry (GPP)."

Colleen Kiernan, Georgia Chapter Director of Sierra Club, also a founding member of GPP said, "We plan to work



with food citizens, farmers and businesses alike to shift the market toward pasture raised chicken."

The report reveals Georgia's industrial poultry operations produce enormous volumes of excrement, which washes into waterways. Collectively, they generate approximately 2 million tons of poultry litter annually, about 20% of the US total. The factory farming of chicken is having a negative impact on human health in the form of foodborne illnesses and antibiotic resistance. Food illnesses related to poultry consumption cost the United States over \$2.4 billion annually, more than any other food.

In addition, the modern broiler

chicken is unnaturally large and has been bred to grow at an unnaturally fast rate, resulting in devastating leg disorders and heart and lung problems, the report states.

Attendees at the launch event are expected to include food retailers, food writers, chefs, legislators and media. This launch comes just weeks after the International Poultry Expo was held in Atlanta, where 25,000 poultry professionals gathered to discuss the industry's future.

Will Harris, owner of White Oak Pastures and a GPP founding member says: "Chickens were born to scratch and peck. These are natural instinctive animal behaviors. Unfortunately, industrial commodity livestock production removes costs from meat production systems by raising animals in mono-cultural confinement systems that do not allow these instinctive behaviors."

The launch comes of Georgians for Pastured Poultry and the release of this report comes at a time when fair, humane and sustainable food choices are on the rise in Georgia.

Since 2005, Georgia has seen a 600% increase in farmers markets.

"This trend shows that people are increasingly interested in where their food comes from and how it is produced," says Jennifer Owens, Director of Advocacy for Georgia Organics, also a founding member of GFPP. "It's all about choice in the market, and more and more people are choosing the fair, humane and sustainable option."

GPP's vision is for Georgia to become the leading state in the production and consumption of pasture raised poultry, where animal welfare, human and environmental health, and farmer and worker well being are equal to economics in the farming of chickens.

GPP would like to thank Whole Foods Market® South Region for its contributions as a Special Advisor. For more information and to take the pledge visit www.georgiansforpasturedpoultry.org

Chattooga, continued from p. 12

terways call themselves) does not bode well for the three national forests that border this part of the river. Managing recreational use is becoming a primary task of rangers in near-urban National Forests like the Chattooga, Sumter, and Nantahala. Use restrictions limit the damage that too much love can impose on public lands.

Under existing Forest Service rules, between 40,000 and 70,000 boaters paddle the 37 miles of the Wild and Scenic Chattooga below Route 28 every year, and countless others do the same on the nearby West Fork and Overflow Creek. The agency has prohibited boating on the 21 miles of the Upper Chattooga since 1976, two years after Congress designated the entire river as a

Wild and Scenic River.

"The Forest Service restricts unfettered use of public lands by hunters, anglers, off road vehicle users, campers, horseback riders, mountain bikers, and hikers," said Joe Gatins, a ForestWatch district leader. "Why should boaters be treated any differently, particularly when they already have full and free access to the Lower Chattooga and many miles of equally challenging whitewater nearby and across the Southeast?"

"We will review every legal option in dealing with this assault on a sensitive and wild place," Gatins added.

The three organizations filed joint comments on previous Forest Service boat-friendly proposals. They currently are represented by Rachel Doughty of Greenfire Law.

Sierrans Celebrate Holidays with Party, Screening

“Revenge” is Sweet

On the evening of Monday, December 5th, over 100 guests of the Sierra Club gathered at the Midtown Arts Cinema for a free screening of the newly released documentary, *Revenge of the Electric Car*. An array of EV's were on display outside the theater – the Atlanta-based Wheego; a Nissan Leaf; a converted Porsche; a Tesla Roadster, a battery EV sports car; and the Chevrolet Volt, a combo electric/hybrid. Wheego was also offering test drives in the parking lot.

A mere 6 years after the release of 2006's “Who Killed the Electric Car?,” which examined GM's controversial decision to repossess and destroy its entire line of EV1 electric cars in 2003, the electric car is making a global resurgence and changing the future of the automobile. In his 2011 follow-up, “Revenge of the Electric Car,” director Chris Paine follows four automakers over the span of three years as the race is now on to capture the EV market. Paine offers us an unprecedented insider's view, and the cast of characters – from high-powered GM and Nissan Execs Bob Lutz and Carlos Ghosn to Tesla Motors innovator Elon Musk and independent car converter Greg “Gadget” Abbot – a broad spectrum of industry offerings... While the future looks very promising, there are still some speed bumps on the road ahead.

“Revenge” was released in Atlanta for just one week. Several local organizations worked to promote the film and organize group screenings. Thanks to sponsorship by Wheego, Worry Free Power, and Imagine Atlanta, the Sierra Club's event was free to guests. Several EV owners also generously loaned us their cars for the evening.

“Revenge of the Electric Car” is now available on DVD. Learn more about EV's at www.pluginamerica.org and www.pluggingeorgia.com. View photos from the screening on Facebook at www.facebook.com/groups/gasieraclub



(l-r) Ruthie Taylor, City of Atlanta Office of Sustainability; Samantha Sayer, Atlanta Green Drinks; Brion Fitzpatrick, Atlanta Green Drinks; Chandra Farley, Southface/Architecture for Humanity; Cecie Harrington, Rainwater Pillow

A Year In Green

This December, four local organizations with common goals and interests partnered up to throw a single, very special holiday party celebrating all things green: Atlanta Green Drinks, the Sierra Club Georgia Chapter, Architecture for Humanity Atlanta, and the Georgia Solar Energy Association organized ‘A Year in Green,’ held at Midtown's Aurum Lounge on Wed, Dec 14th.

The evening was pleasantly warm. Upon entry, guests walked the green carpet and could have their photo taken in front of a step and repeat (that's the backdrop on a red carpet runway) which featured logos from all of the host orgs.

The inside decor was simple. The lights were turned down and all of Aurum's bulbs were replaced with green CFLs. Comfy green velvet pillows covered the couches and seasonally-scented soy candles burned on the tables. Aurum mixed up a special sweet cocktail for the party, “The Green Drink.”

As the room glowed green, music played, and guests chatted over drinks and gourmet snacks, a giant TV screen played footage highlighting notable environmental developments within Georgia from the past year and activities from the participating groups. Delectable finger foods were provided by Georgia's very first green-certified restaurant, Radial Cafe, Chef Shaun Doty from YEAH! Burger, and Hand in Hand. RUBBLOX cubes, which are made from no longer usable, recycled rubber, were brought in to mix up the decor and used as extra seats and

continued on next page



Membership

Year in Green, continued from p. 14

tables. Mannequins draped in beautiful clothing from Mae Couture were on display throughout the room – their pieces are all made from vintage military parachutes and other repurposed material.

Later in the evening, Southface's Summer Solstice event – held that same night – spilled into Aurum for their after-party. Former Good Day Atlanta host Suchita Vadlamani drew names of all the door prize winners, who had their pick of eco-friendly gifts from the Sierra Club, Gorilla Sacks, Bicycle Tours of Atlanta, the Mostess Hostess and RUB-BLOX, and free memberships to Southface, GSEA, the Atlanta Bicycle Coalition and Zipcar.

It was a great night, a great opportunity to meet new friends and like-minded allies.

- Samantha Sayer

View photos from the event online at: www.facebook.com/groups/gasierraclub

Zombies March for Clean Air



The Sierra Club walked in support of clean air at the Little 5 Points Halloween Parade on October 22, 2011. Our masked zombies passed out organic green apples to the kids alongside environmentally friendly car-sharing service Zipcar.



photo by Marcia Sautt

GOING, GOING... GONE?

Sea turtles date back nearly 90 million years and are among the Earth's oldest surviving species. All 6 species of sea turtles are protected under the Endangered Species Act. Sierra Club has mounted a major effort to defend and preserve threatened habitats before their inhabitants are gone forever.

Help protect our animal friends; because once they're gone, they're gone. Join Sierra Club now.

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Life	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1250
Senior	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32
Student/Limited Income	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32

Contributions, gifts and dues to Sierra Club are not tax deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to *Sierra* magazine and \$1 for your Chapter newsletters.

Join today and receive a FREE Sierra Club Weekender Bag!



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Georgia Giving Society 2011

The Georgia Chapter of Sierra Club established its Georgia Giving Society to honor individuals making significant gifts to the Georgia Chapter. Their partnership and commitment to our work leaves a lasting legacy.

Contributions from the Georgia Giving Society are integral to the hard work from volunteers and staff all around Georgia including promoting renewable energy, monitoring and protecting Georgia's pristine coastal marsh, and protecting our public forests in the North Georgia mountains. Please join

us in thanking current members.

Listed below are the supporters who donated at the Live Oak Champion, Longleaf Pine Protector, Southern Magnolia Society, and Evergreen Partner levels in 2011. If you would like to join or renew into the Giving Society for 2012 please contact Colleen Kiernan at 404-607-1262 x.224. Your support is much appreciated.

Thank you to the Georgia Giving Society of 2011.

Live Oak Champions

\$1000+

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Sam and Laurie Booher
Charles and Mary Bosserman
Thomas and Betsy Boyle
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Mark Woodall

Longleaf Pine Protectors

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(continued from previous page)

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Explore, enjoy and protect the planet



SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL SIERRA CLUB

We send out an appeal in March to each of our members, asking for contributions directly to our Chapter. These contributions really do make a difference to us, and are an important part of our Chapter's budget.

When you make a donation to the Chapter, you support the Sierra Club's work in your own backyard. You allow us to continue our work to protect wilderness and wildlife, to improve the quality of life in our cities, and to promote the enjoyment of nature.

Please be as generous as you are able - and remember, these funds directly affect your way of life in your neighborhood.

Contributions, gifts and dues to the Sierra Club are not tax-deductible.

Mail your contribution to:

Sierra Club, Georgia Chapter, 743 East College Avenue, Suite B, Decatur, Georgia 30030

New Faces at the Office

The Georgia Chapter is excited to announce that **Sybil Cypress** has joined us as Assistant Chapter Director! Sybil brings a wide array of professional experience, everything from Sales & Marketing at Turner to developing technical trainings. She was even in the Army! Most importantly, Sybil brings passion and energy for protecting the environment and making the Georgia Chapter the best it can be. You can reach Sybil at sybil.cypress@sierraclub.org and at 404-607-1262 x221.



We also say goodbye and thank you to **Genie Strickland**, who has stepped down as our Chapter Administrative Coordinator, where she had been helping keep the Georgia Chapter humming since 2002. We all appreciate Genie's friendly assistance in keeping everything from the move of the office from Midtown to Decatur to membership retreats and other events moving along efficiently. You can send Genie a note of thanks to genie7@bellsouth.net.

Also, special thanks go out to **Lynn Beach**, who has stepped up and filled in where needed over the last few months and led the charge to clean up, renew and refresh our office space. Thank you, Lynn!

- Mark Woodall, Georgia Chapter Chair

Check Out Our New Look!

The next time you visit the Chapter office in Decatur, you may notice that things look a little different, thanks to a major rearrangement undertaken by Chapter staff and volunteers in January. Gone is blank wall that once greeted visitors upon entry, replaced by an open and welcoming reception area. Another welcome change is more flexible meeting space, with separate large and small conference areas now available. Stop by and take a look!



Welcome New Chapter ExCom Members

Thanks to everyone who voted in the annual Chapter and Group Executive Committee (ExCom) elections last fall, and please help us welcome two new at-large elected members to the Chapter ExCom: **Bruce Morton** and **Norman Slawsky**, both of Atlanta. In addition, current at-large ExCom members **Mark Woodall** and **David Emory** were elected to serve additional two-year terms. Congratulations to all!

The Chapter would also like to recognize **Mary Drake** and **Stacey Kronquest**, who chose not to seek re-election as at-large members and will transition off ExCom this year. Thank you Mary and Stacey for your years of dedicated service!



Welcome Bruce Morton (l) and Norm Slawsky (r)

Upcoming Meetings & Programs

We meet the 2nd Tuesday of each month. Doors open at 7:00 p.m., program begins at 7:30.

February 14: Regular Meeting

Neill Herring (Georgia Chapter lobbyist) and Mark Woodall (Legislative Committee Chair and Chapter Chair) will again come to give a rundown of the legislative action under the Gold Dome. See our website for updates.

March 13: Regular Meeting

April Ingle will explain the 'Dirty Dozen' waterways. For more details, please go to our website.

Adopt-A-Stream Program events:

A biological monitoring event will be held at 10 AM on Saturday, March 10.

Adopt-A-Stream activities involve Peachtree Creek in Medlock Park, at 10 AM-noon. For our next biologic monitoring, we'll need a lot of eyes to find the critters found in the creek. During December's monitoring, participants found clams, red worm, insect larvae, and a gilled snail, which is quite rare in the creek.

Willivee Drive runs between North Decatur Road and North Druid Hills Road, with Scott Circle in between those, turn here go about 1/4 mile to near 948 Scott Circle (use for GOOGLE Maps or GPS) to the parking lot on the left (lots of baseball fields). Park at far end, then follow Sierra Club Signs and find us at the picnic table near Peachtree Creek behind Ball Field 5.

For more details call Nancy Wylie at: 404-256-1172.

*For more information please see
<http://georgia.sierraclub.org/atlanta/>*

Meeting Location: *Meeting Location: Unless otherwise indicated, Metro Atlanta Group General Membership meetings are held at the Episcopal Church of the Epiphany, 2089 Ponce de Leon Ave. at the intersection of with East Lake Drive; the entrance to the church is off East Lake Dr. From MARTA's East Lake station, it's a 15 minute walk northeast along East Lake Dr. MARTA Bus 2 runs on Ponce de Leon between North Avenue Station and Decatur Station.*

Air Pollution Issues and Victories

The most recent outdoor air victory has been the halting of the LH Longleaf coal-fired electric power plant in Early County. Even though many miles away, some of the pollution, including mercury could travel to the Atlanta area, like the smoke from the Okefenokee wildfires did a few years ago.

The efforts to reduce air pollution indoors has seen some victories also, such as the Savannah clean indoor air ordinance that went into effect January of last year with banning of smoking in all public places such as restaurants and bars.

Two coalitions have formed to advocate for reduction of smoking in public areas: Smoke-Free DeKalb and Smoke-Free Fulton County Coalition. For more information on how you can help, contact Georgians Against Smoking Pollution at nonsmoke4ga@hotmail.com.

A lot of pollution is produced when 400,000 tons of tobacco are burned in the United States each year. But there are other environmental issues about this crop: pesticides and fertilizers run into creeks, and a half million acres of trees around the world are cut down to cure the crop (coal, coke or natural gas is used in the US), and there is always the cigarette butt litter.

Be aware of what you are breathing, indoors or outdoors. We have made much progress in both arenas, but there is still much to be done to reduce pollution of our vital air supply. It is better to keep the pollutants out of our air rather than try to clean the air

- D. Gordon Draves

Metro Atlanta Group Election Report

Eddie Ehlert and Larry Kloet were re-elected with Jack Harich newly elected. Congratulations to all!



Presentation Highlights Socially Responsible Electronics Recycling



On Thursday, January 5, 2012, the Centennial Group was truly fortunate to have a presentation by Mike Davis, COO of Recycletronics, a business owned and operated by the Tommy Nobis Center in Kennesaw.

Recycletronics is a socially responsible electronics recycler, and in fact, the only one in Georgia with recognized EPA-sanctioned responsible recycling practices. You can bring your old TVs, computers and components, smart phones, cell phones, and virtually any other electronics, and be satisfied that they will be disposed of in a responsible manner. They will not end up in landfills or in developing countries, where the health and safety of those working on them is a low priority... if indeed, it is a priority at all.

In addition, by taking your old gadgets to Recycletronics, you are also providing a social service by helping to create employment for people with disabilities and other barriers to employment. Which also means that if these people are employed, they are not getting government assistance, such as welfare, and are contributing to the tax base.

As much as the phrase is overused, this is indeed, a "win/win" situation.

Mike's presentation, of course, went



into far greater detail than time and space permit here. And it was exciting and gratifying to know that someone so close to home takes electronic recycling and disposal seriously.

Anyone can hang an "Electronics Recycling" sign on a truck, but chances are that your formerly beloved gadgets will still end up in a landfill.

For those not familiar with the Tommy Nobis Center, it is an entity established in 1977, by Tommy Nobis, former linebacker with the Atlanta Falcons. Their stated mission is "... to develop and provide job training, employment, and vocational support for youths and adults with disabilities and other barriers to employment..."

The next time you get a new TV, laptop, or portable GPS/HD Radio/Geiger Counter and it's time to get rid of the old one, don't just stick it in the trash, under the burrito wrappers. Contact Recycletronics.

Better yet, don't wait until then. If you want to find out the real story, use one of your "gadgets" to give them a call at 770.426.1700 or visit them on the web at www.TommyNobisCenter.org.

And in the words of Ben Franklin, "Do well by doing good."

Upcoming Meeting Topics

March - Member Mark Banks on astronomy

April - Life University professor Humberto Dutra on invasive species

ExCom Election Report

The following board members will serve for 2012:

Joanna Baxter: Adopt a Stream Coordinator

Laura Breyfogle: Chair

Mary Drake: Treasurer / Chapter Ex-com alternative representative

Ellen Parkhurst: Communications/ Hospitality Chair

Dean Rogers: Vice chair/ Chapter Ex-com representative

Renee Warrick: Social Chair

Claire Zens: Secretary

Additionally, **Donna Weathers** will serve as our Outings Chair.

2012 Group Priorities

The LaGrange Group has identified the following four priorities for 2012:

(1) Work in conjunction with the Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeepers to provide training/recertification for our members and increase participation in the Adopt a Stream program. We are currently working with the UCRK and local officials to target key tributaries to the Chattahoochee to monitor on a monthly basis. We hope to set up Adopt a Stream training in March.

(2) Increase the number of outings offered from 1/month to 3/month. We have an enthusiastic and ambitious new Outings Chair Donna Weathers.

(3) Continue to provide thought provoking and educational programs at our monthly meetings. Provide an "action item" at each meeting.

(4) Continue to provide at least 2 social functions per year, our annual Christmas party and 1 or 2 summer parties.

Upcoming Meetings

February 21: Mark Woodall and Neill Herring will give a legislative update.

March 20: speaker TBA

Meetings are held from 6:30 to 8:00 at St. Mark's Episcopal Church, 207 N. Greenwood St.

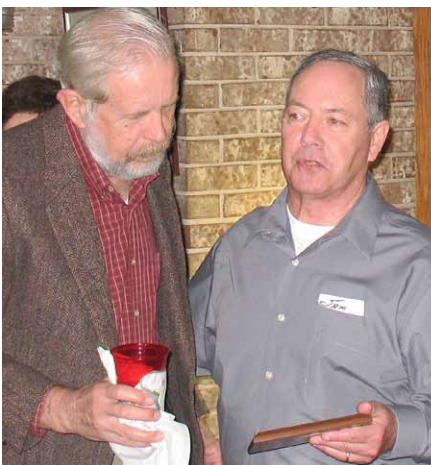
Awards, Owls Kick Off New Year for SRG



December found us celebrating the holiday season with our usual drop-in hosted by Sam and Laurie Booher. In addition to good food and camaraderie we honored three of our members for years of service to the Savannah River Group: Susan Bloomfield has served as both Nuclear and Political Chairs; Margaret Tuck has been our long-time Secretary and an active EXCOM participant; and Bill Mareska has served as our Communications guru.



A pair of live screech owls, a barred owl, and a red tail hawk visited us at our January meeting when Carol and Larry Eldridge brought their feathered friends and described their experiences in raptor rehabilitation. Our February meeting featured Judy Gordon and Greg Sutherland sharing a video on coral reef destruction due to contamination from human sewage plus a PowerPoint on some of the less well-known problems associated with global warming, including the possible effects on coral reefs.



Our members have managed to stay busy with Adopt-A-Stream monitoring, Adopt-A-Highway, local day hikes, and making plans for Earth Day celebrations. Conservation Chair Frank Carl and Co-Chair Sam Booher have been busy attending meetings in Jefferson County to oppose a biomass facility whose operation will not be sustainable and could possibly contribute to air and water pollution if not closely regulated.

- Judy Gordon, Co-Chair

Pictured left: awards recipients (top to bottom: Susan Bloomfield, Margaret Tuck, Bill Mareska, plus Co-Chair, Sam Booher)

Pictured right: birds from January program (Carol Eldridge with barred owl, Larry Eldridge with red tailed hawk, and screech owl.)



Contacts

Executive Committee

Chair: Mark Woodall, 706-674-2242,
markwoodall@windstream.net
At-Large Elected Member

Vice Chair: Steve Willis, 912-341-0718
snwillis@yahoo.com
Coastal Group Delegate

Sam Booher, 706-863-2324, sbooher@aol.com
Savannah River Group Delegate

Todd Daniel, 678-567-2052, todddan@mac.com
At-Large Elected Member

Eddie Ehlert, 770-402-0087,
edehkert@bellsouth.net
Metro Atlanta Group Delegate

David Emory, 404-433-4914,
david.emory@gmail.com
At-Large Elected Member

Dan Friedman, 404-610-5770, dan3688@aol.com
Greater Gwinnett Group Delegate

Kelly Jordan, 404.522.8629,
kellyjordan@earthlink.net
At-Large Elected Member

Bruce Morton, 404-569-5896
brucekmorton@gmail.com
At-Large Elected Member

Tom Neff, 770-565-3869, tsneff2003@yahoo.com
Centennial Group Delegate

Dean Rogers, 706-837-0037,
dean@mediamindz.com
LaGrange Group Delegate

Norman Slawsky, 404-299-1211 x25
nslawsky@gmail.com
At-Large Elected Member

J. Michael Walls, 404-643-5283,
mwalls@ellijay.com
At-Large Elected Member

Appointed Officers & Chairs

Secretary: Todd Daniel, todddan@mac.com

Treasurer: Tom Neff, tsneff2003@yahoo.com

Assistant Treasurer: Lynn Beach,
lynnmichaelbeach@gmail.com

Conservation Chair: Alan Toney,
mudflat@comcast.net

Conservation Vice Chair: Sam Booher,
sbooher@aol.com

Conservation Vice Chair: Larry Winslett,
winfog@windstream.net

Finance Chair: Sam Booher, sbooher@aol.com

Fundraising Chair: Clay Tucker,
tuckerwf12@aol.com

Human Resources: J. Michael Walls
mwalls@ellijay.com

Inner City Outings: Naomi Bock, atlantaico@gmail.com

Legislative: Mark Woodall,
markwoodall@windstream.net

Litigation: Mary Drake, mdrake126@charter.net

Newsletter Editor: David Emory,
gasierran@gmail.com

Outings: Scott Sanders,
thebrittinggroup@gmail.com

Outreach: Lynn Beach,
lynnmichaelbeach@gmail.com

Political Chair: Eddie Ehlert,
edehkert@bellsouth.net

Sierra Student Coordinator: Kelsea Norris,
keseanorris@gmail.com

Training Team Coordinator: *vacant*

Webmaster: Charlotte Gardner,
ga_sierra_webmaster@yahoo.com

Conservation Campaigns

RAIL Committee:

David Emory, david.emory@gmail.com
Meeting: 4th Mon., 7 p.m., chapter office.
Committee sometimes skips months. E-mail first.

Smart Energy Solutions:

Mike Walls, mwalls@ellijay.com
Meeting: 1st Monday, 7 p.m. chapter office

Wildlands and Wildlife:

Mike Murdock, murdock1@mindspring.com
Meeting: 3rd Tues., 7:00 p.m., Location TBA
Committee sometimes skips months. E-mail first.

Beyond Factory Farming:

Leah Garces, leah.garces@ciwf.org
Meeting: 2nd Mon., chapter office

Issue Leaders & Contacts

The Conservation Committee is organized by issues. To get involved in Conservation issues, please contact the Issue Leader of your choice below.

Chattahoochee National Recreation Area:

Alan Toney, mudflat@comcast.com

Clean Air: Curt Smith, chsmith@speakeasy.net

Coastal: Judy Jennings,
judyjennings@comcast.net

Coastal Marsh: Mark Mosely, msmosely@aol.com

Cumberland: *vacant*

Factory Farms: Leah Garces,
leah.garces@ciwf.org

Federal Endangered Species: Larry Winslett,
winfog@windstream.net

Federal Public Lands: Shirl Parsons,
kparsons@mindspring.com

Historic Places/ Arch. Sites: Brian Thomas,
bthomas@trcsolutions.com

Marine Species/Habitat: Karen Grainey,
karengrainey@bellsouth.net

National Forest Issues: *vacant*

Nuclear Waste: Stacey Kronquest,
stacey@kronquest.com

Okefenokee Swamp: Sam Collier,
scollier@mindspring.com

Organic and Locally Grown Foods: Bryan Hager,
bhager@mindspring.com

Population: Todd Daniel, todddan@mac.com

Rivers and Wetlands: Keith Parsons,
kparsons@mindspring.com

Savannah Port: Judy Jennings,
judyjennings@comcast.net

State Lands/Georgia DNR: Phil Zinsmeister,
pzinsmeister@oglethorpe.edu

State Lands/Stone Mountain: Larry Winslett,
winfog@windstream.net

Stop I-3: Sam Booher, sbooher@aol.com

Transportation: David Emory,
david.emory@gmail.com

Waste/Recycling: Larry Winslett,
winfog@windstream.net

Water Sentinels / Adopt-a-Stream:
Sam Booher, sbooher@aol.com

Georgia Chapter Staff

Chapter Director:

Colleen Kiernan, 404-607-1262 x.224
colleen.kiernan@sierraclub.org

Assistant Chapter Director:

Sybil Cypress, 404-607-1262 x.221
sybil.cypress@sierraclub.org

National Staff

Associate Press Secretary:

Jenna Garland, 404-607-1262 x.222
jenna.garland@sierraclub.org

Beyond Coal Organizer:

Seth Gunning, 404-607-1262 x.223
seth.gunning@sierraclub.org

Standing Meetings

Inner City Outings

Meetings: 4th Tuesday, 7:30 p.m., Chapter Office

Fundraising Committee

Third Wednesday of the month. Contact Clay Tucker at tuckerwf12@aol.com for more info

Local Groups

A great way to get involved in your Chapter is by joining and participating in a local group. Some groups take certain months off, so it's a good idea to email first. Each group has a website. For maps and additional information on each group, visit the website: <http://georgia.sierraclub.org/local/>

Centennial Group

Serving Cobb, Cherokee & North Fulton

Chair: Carina O'Bara,
gacentexcom@gmail.com

Outings Chair: *vacant*

Meetings: 1st Thursday, welcome/refreshments 7:00 p.m., program 7:30 p.m.; Life College, 1269 Barclay Cir. SE, Marietta. For directions contact Carina O'Bara at carina_do@yahoo.com.

Coastal Group

Serving Savannah & surrounding counties

Chair: Steve Willis, snwillis@yahoo.com

Outings Chair: Steve Wagner,
sjwgnr@hotmail.com

Meetings: 3rd Thursday, 7:00 p.m., First Presbyterian Church, 520 E. Washington Ave, Savannah

Greater Gwinnett Group

Serving Gwinnett Co.

Chair: Dan Friedman, dan3688@aol.com

Conservation Chair: Beth Remmes,
bremmes@hotmail.com

Outings Chair: Jake Hardison,
jake.hardison@ssa.gov

Meetings: 3rd Thursday, 7:00 p.m., Berkmar High School, 405 Pleasant Hill Rd, Lilburn 30047

LaGrange Group

Serving the LaGrange area

Chair: Laura Breyfogle, breyfogle@charter.net

Conservation Chair: Nancy Green,
mngreen@wirelesshometown.com

Outings Chair: Elizabeth Appleby,
ecappleby@yahoo.com

Meetings: 3rd Tuesdays; 6:30 pm welcome and refreshments / 7 pm program; St. Mark's Episcopal Church Parish Hall, 207 N. Greenwood St., LaGrange (no meetings June-August)

Metro Atlanta Group

Serving Atlanta, Dekalb, & South Fulton

Chair: Gordon Draves,
nonsmoke4ga@hotmail.com

Outings Chair: Martin McConaughy
mcmarty@bellsouth.net

Conservation Chair: Nancy Wylie,
nancywylie@mindspring.com

Meetings: 2nd Tuesday, 7:30 p.m., Episcopal Church of the Epiphany • 2089 Ponce de Leon Ave. (between Atlanta and Decatur).

Savannah River Group

Serving Augusta & surrounding areas

Co-Chair: Judy Gordon, Ph.D.,
gordonjudith@att.net

Co-Chair: Sam Booher, sbooher@aol.com

Conservation Chair: Frank Carl, frankcarl@knology.net

Outings Chair: Cathy Black,
sonnyandcathyblack@gmail.com

Meetings: 3rd Tuesday, 6:30 p.m., Unitarian Church on Walton Way, Augusta at 7:30 pm.

Regional Contacts

LeConte Group/Athens & NE Ga.

Terry Jones, wolpers4@aol.com

Forsyth County

Jim Callison, jimcallison@juno.com

Macon

Fletcher Winston, winston_f@mercer.edu

North Ga. Conservation Group

Larry Winslett, winfog@windstream.net

Valdosta

Brian Day, bjday@valdosta.edu

Looking for a Group near your home?

The Georgia Chapter website (<http://georgia.sierraclub.org/>) contains a map showing the locations of all Groups. Or, call the Chapter office at (404) 607-1262.

CLIMATE
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Georgia Chapter Office

743 East College Avenue, Suite B
Decatur, Georgia 30030
404-607-1262 • FAX: 404-876-5260
georgia.chapter@sierraclub.org
<http://georgia.sierraclub.org>

Directions to take MARTA to the Sierra Club

office: Our office is an easy 1-2-minute walk from the MARTA Avondale station (E7). We encourage you to take MARTA when possible. Exit the MARTA station towards the SOUTH PARKING LOT, located on the East College Ave side. Once outside, proceed to the right towards Sams Street. Cross over Sams St. and the office is the building located right behind the convenience store. The office is the second door from Sams St. — Suite B.

Stay Informed!

SIERRA CLUB WEB SITES

GA Chapter Web Site:
<http://georgia.sierraclub.org/>
GA Chapter Outings:
<http://georgia.sierraclub.org/outings/>
GA Chapter Email Lists Site:
<http://georgia.sierraclub.org/lists/>

EMAIL LISTS

Subscribe to a Georgia Chapter e-mail list. Just send an e-mail to:

LISTSERV@LISTS.SIERRACLUB.ORG

Your message should read:

SUBSCRIBE LISTNAME FIRSTNAME LASTNAME

LIST NAMES:

GA-OUTINGS (chapter outings list)
GA-NEWSLETTER-ANNOUNCE (online newsletter updates)
GA-ENERGY-FORUM (Smart Energy Solutions Committee)
GA-RAIL-NEWS (RAIL/Transit Advocacy Committee)

Subscribe to Georgia Chapter Online E-Newsletter at:
http://action.sierraclub.org/CHP_GA_Signup

Visit the Ga. Chapter web page and click on "Local Groups" for info on local groups e-mail lists.

Chapter ExCom Meeting

The next meeting is Sat., March 17th at the Chapter office in Decatur. Meetings are open to the membership. For more information, call the Chapter office at 404-607-1262 x. 221.



PERIODICAL POSTAGE PAID

Outings & Events

Saturday, February 25

Blood Mountain Loop Day Hike

Time: 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM

Location: Union County

Rated: Strenuous

Description: Join us for a hike to Blood Mountain, Georgia's fourth highest peak at 4,458 feet. Starting from the Byron Reece Memorial trail head (just north of Neels Gap), this 5.5 mile loop connects three trails: Reece, Freeman, and the AT. Elevation gain: 1,390 feet. This is a winter hike for experienced hikers. Limit: 12. Contact Jake Hardison at 770-904-4893 (home) or by email at jake.hardison@ssa.gov (Wed-Fridays only). There are several reviews of this hike on the internet.

Saturday, March 3 - Sunday, March 4

Canoe Camping (no Boat Required)

Location: Oconee River

Registration: Required before March 1, 2012, 9pm

Rated: Easy

Description: Come spend a relaxing weekend floating down a river and camping on a sand bar. We will be using an outfitter for canoe rentals and shuttles on Saturday and Sunday. Plus a safe place to leave our cars. Cost will be \$75 per person. Saturday we will meet at Three Rivers Outdoors in Uvalda Ga about 2.5 hours south of Atlanta. We will float/paddle about 10-11 miles on the Oconee river and find a nice big sand bar to set-up camp. Spend the evening around the campfire telling tall tales of past trips and dreams of future trips. Sunday we will get on water and float/paddle about 1 mile to the confluence of the Oconee and Ocmulgee where the mighty Altamaha starts. We will paddle/float another 8-9 miles on the Altamaha. Since we will be using canoes this is like a cross of car-camping and backpacking. No experience required. This is easy flat water canoeing. With a current of 2-2.5 mph so not a lot of paddling required. Limit of 12. Contact Sammy 404-775-7660 or sammy.padgett@covingtonford.net

Sierra Club 101



Are you new to the Sierra Club and want to get involved but not sure how? Do you know what issues the Georgia Chapter is working on and how to get involved? Do you want to know who we are and what we're doing?

Join us on **Saturday, May 12th** from 10:30 AM to noon for Sierra Club 101, your crash course on the Club, the Georgia Chapter, and our issues. Meet with volunteer leaders and staff at the Sierra Club office at 743B East College Ave., Decatur as we introduce you to our Sierra Club.

Go to georgia.sierraclub.org/sc101 to RSVP or contact Sybil Cypress at gasierraclub101@gmail.com if you have questions.

Sierra Club Outings provide a variety of opportunities for people to enjoy the beautiful outdoors. To find out more about what outings are being offered, please visit our web-site at <http://georgia.sierraclub.org/outings>.