



Sierran

To Explore, Enjoy and Protect the Planet

The Wilderness Act Turns 50

Special Feature: Pages 4 - 9

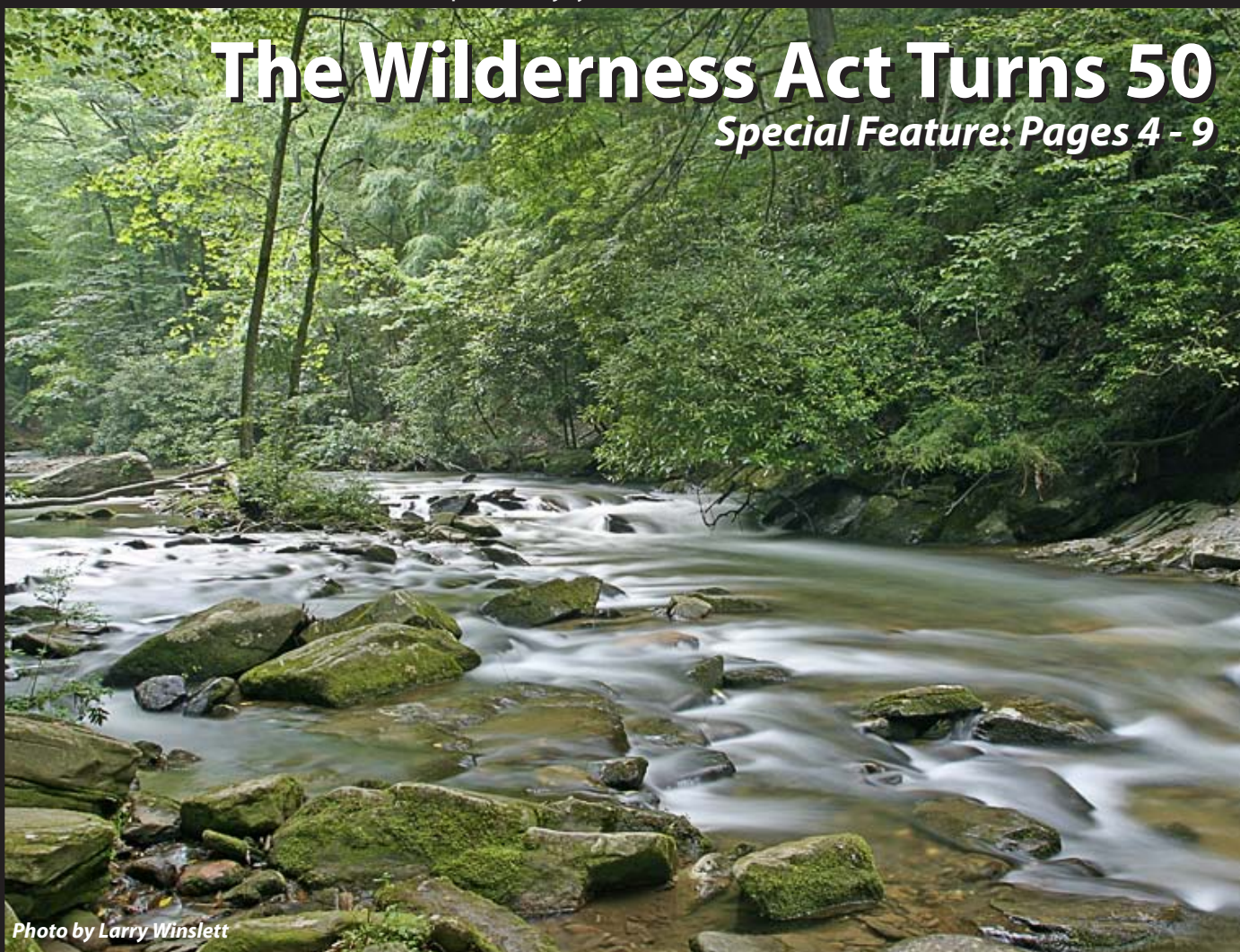


Photo by Larry Winslett



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Wilderness Act Anniversary Brings Challenges, Opportunities

By Colleen Kiernan

Over the last decade, environmentalism has become “cool,” but what has it meant for land conservation? Al Gore’s movie, *An Inconvenient Truth*, helped climate change skeptics become an increasingly rare breed. Driving a Prius meant you were a savvy consumer, both saving yourself money at the pump and having a smaller ecological footprint. Buying local, seasonal and organic not only tastes better, but reduces food miles traveled and helped local economies. More and more buildings achieved LEED certification and the emphasis shifted from the opening of the building to its ongoing performance.

Sadly, while discussion of many environmental issues has been robust in recent years, conversation about our public lands seems to have faded. Tight budget times have meant closures of state parks and Wildlife Management Areas. Gridlock in Washington has meant very few new wilderness acres designated. Until President Obama used his executive authority to designate five new National Monuments last March, he was behind G.W. Bush in new acres protected. To make matters worse, Georgia is home to the first-ever “de-designation” of Wilderness, when a rider pushed by Rep. Jack Kingston took the main road on Cumberland Island out of the Wilderness boundary in 2004.

The silence is deafening about land conservation in Georgia, where the ambitious program created by Governor Barnes and tweaked by Governor Perdue is not even on the table for the Deal Administration.

The good news is this vacuum of leadership presents great opportunities in 2014. Not only will we be celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act, where events and activities will re-engage and re-inspire Georgians to care



Colleen Kiernan, Chapter Director

about and care for Georgia, we have an important election year. In 2014 Georgians will choose a replacement for Sen. Chambliss and either re-elect Governor Deal or choose to go down a different path. Conservation is an issue that unites, rather than divides people.

A national poll conducted by the Nature Conservancy in 2012 found that the overwhelming majority of Americans believe that conserving the country’s natural resources is patriotic.

- More than 70 percent of registered voters in every U.S. region
- Voters younger than 35 (84 percent) and those 65 or older (83 percent)

- Urbanites (79 percent), suburbanites (85 percent) and rural residents (83 percent)
- Hunters (80 percent), anglers (80 percent) and wildlife watchers (82 percent)
- Hikers (80 percent), mountain bikers (78 percent) and ATV users (77 percent)

Hunting and fishing are allowed in Wilderness, and both activities are on the rise in America. From 2006 to 2011, hunting was up 9 percent and fishing is up 11 percent, according to a new U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service report. In all, over 37 million Americans took part in hunting, fishing or both, spending \$90 billion. So it’s no surprise that voters are twice as likely to say wilderness conservation has a positive impact on job growth (41 percent) than they are to say it has a negative impact (17 percent), or little impact one way or the other (33 percent).

Sources:

<http://www.mnn.com/earth-matters/wilderness-resources/blogs/conservation-is-patriotic-in-us-poll-finds>

<http://www.ourpubliclands.org/sportsmen-poll-public-lands-protection-trumps-energy-production#sthash.kladgBaX.dpuf>

About Georgia Sierran

Articles: Send materials to: gasierran@gmail.com. Maximum word length: 750 words with one photo. Please include high-resolution digital photos (200 dpi) with your story.

Moving? Send address changes to: Sierra Club, P.O. Box 52968, Boulder, CO 80322-2968. Send changes by email: address.changes@sierraclub.org

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2014 Georgia Legislature: Short Session, Agenda Anticipated

By Neill Herring

Because of a federal judge's decision on the effect of the timing of Georgia primary runoff elections on absentee ballots from overseas military voters, the legislature is expected to begin the 2014 session by moving Primary Election dates from July, up into May. Because legislators are up for reelection in these primaries, and are prohibited from raising campaign funds during the Session, they plan to meet for the shortest time in many years.

All the legislature is required to do is pass a budget, and they will certainly do that, with a bit more revenue than has been available in recent years. They will also change the dates of the Primary and runoff elections.

Numerous issues of importance to the state's future will apparently not be seriously considered this time, mostly because of the importance of campaign fundraising to elected officials. There is agreement that transportation funding alternatives to the T-Splost fiasco are needed, and two bills addressing that are left from 2013: H.B. 195 by Rep. Ed Setzler would allow two or more counties to combine to enact local taxes to fund specific transportation projects. This is a concept the Sierra Club has supported for almost a decade, but which has languished for lack of leadership. S.B. 92 by Sen. Vincent Fort has passed the Senate and died in the House Rules Committee at the end of the 2013 session. It would allow any locality that taxes rental cars to use that income to support public transportation projects.

The problem transportation bills face is a widespread agreement that "there won't be enough time" to do anything this session. Many state and local leaders are in favor of "more study" instead of action. Voters may force discussion of issues like this in the election campaigns that the short session will



presumably allow to be fully funded.

Water issues have become perennial in recent years, and even the short session may not stop consideration of them. The Georgia Water Coalition, in which the Club is a leading member, will be working on the issue this year.

Left over from last Session is S.B. 213, an Environmental Protection Division (EPD) project to boost Metro Atlanta water supplies by increasing flows in the Flint and Chattahoochee Rivers at the Florida line. This project requires an impairment of Georgians' traditional common law property rights, and that stopped it last time. It should stop it again.

H.B. 549 is also left over from last year; it makes EPD Emergency Response to spills into Georgia waters a statutory duty. The bill was unopposed in 2013, but 2014 is a new year. This is a much-needed change in Georgia law to restore a vital function that was diminished in budget cutting.

The legislature, over the objections of successive administrations, has prohibited injection of water into groundwater supply aquifers for many years, but the ban expires this June, and an attempt to renew it will come from coastal legislators and the Georgia Water Coalition.

GWC will also make sure that the mandatory renewal of the Solid Waste Trust Fund includes language like that successfully added to the similar Hazardous Waste Trust Fund last year that cuts any fees collected under the fund programs that are not also appropriated back to them by the legislature. These funds have been used as a piggy bank by a succession of Governors and legislatures, and this reform limits the use of those funds to the programs under which they are collected.

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Join Us for Capitol Conservation Day!

Wednesday, February 19th, 8:30am-3pm

Meet at Central Presbyterian Church:

201 Washington St. SW, Atlanta, GA 30303
(Five Points or Georgia State MARTA)

Sign up at www.georgiawater.org



The Wilderness Act: 50 Years Later



Photos by Larry Winslett

“The idea of wilderness needs no defense. It only needs more defenders.”

Edward Abbey

By Alan Toney

When William Bartram traveled through Georgia in the 1770's, he described it as wilderness. He marveled at the primeval forest draped with Spanish moss including 100 foot tall Magnolia trees inhabited by Carolina parakeets. He saw crystal clear rivers filled with fish and alligators. He walked through endless expanses of longleaf pines that blanketed the coastal plain. The rivers and wetlands were filled with giant cypress that seemed older than time itself. Both habitats were filled with ivory-billed woodpeckers, passenger pigeons, panthers, and red wolves. He was awestruck by the rich and unspoiled landscape he encountered.

When Bartram returned to Georgia 30 years later he was surprised and saddened to see that it was all gone replaced by towns, farms, and slave powered rice, tobacco, and cotton plantations. Slavery was not only a terrible human tragedy, its forced labor allowed for the accelerated clearing of forest. This willful and callous disregard of nature by European settlers is difficult to comprehend today. Many of the creatures Bartram saw were soon gone forever and by 1895 even Georgia's white-tail deer were virtually extinct. Later they were reintroduced

in waves from places like Mexico, Wisconsin, Tennessee and Texas. No wonder our deer are a little schizophrenic.

Thomas Jefferson, who was responsible for both the Louisiana Purchase and Louis and Clark's Expedition, became increasingly concerned about the loss of wild America and proposed a massive National Park in the central US to preserve wilderness complete with wildlife and native peoples. Unfortunately Jefferson's idea was never acted upon so the destruction of Native peoples, their cultures and their confiscated lands continued at an alarming pace. Finally toward the end of the nineteenth century, more and more people were increasingly concerned that we might completely destroy the incredible natural beauty of America. This movement was advanced by people like John Muir and Teddy Roosevelt who combined forces to try and protect what was left. First came the places Muir called “Cathedrals of Nature.” Yellowstone, Yosemite, Glacier and Rainier formed the core of our National Parks. Ancient Groves of redwoods and sequoias were also saved and the need for better forest management became obvious.

In 1905 the Forest Service was officially created as an agency in the Department of Agriculture. The following year Roos-

continued from previous page

evelt signed the Antiquities Act allowing for the protection of lands as National Monuments which led to many of our National Parks and later Wilderness.

These two important pieces of legislation punctuate the philosophical schism that developed over how and why our public lands should be protected and used. The Forest Service's primary focus has been to manage its forest and grasslands as agriculture for recreation, timber, livestock grazing and watershed protection while preservationist want to maintain and celebrate of our public and especially wilderness lands and wildlife in their natural state.

Aldo Leopold, Art Carhart, Bob Marshall and Mardy Murie lead the early movement for wilderness, but Howard Zahnister who wrote the Wilderness Act said it best "The wilderness that has come to us from the eternity of the past we have the boldness to project into the eternity of the future." This spiritual view of wilderness is sometimes associated with deep ecology, a radical idea that the Natural World has a right to exist for its own sake outside of a human context. This philosophy is still resisted by those who think of public lands only as resources for human needs.

Wilderness got its official definition when the Wilderness Act was passed into law in 1964: "A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man him-

self is a visitor who does not remain."

The original 9 million acres that was designated wilderness has expanded to 109 million acres today and while this sounds impressive, only 2% of the lands in the lower 48 States are currently designated Wilderness.

In 1975 the Eastern Wilderness Act expanded the concept to areas, that did not always meet the original unspoiled criteria used west of the Mississippi, but had the potential to return to a pristine state thorough preservation. This allowed well-trampled areas like Georgia to add 14 parcels to Federal Wilderness protection under this expansion of the law. This includes coastal areas on Wolf and Blackbeard Islands, parts of the Cumberland Island National Seashore, and 353,000 acres of the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge. There are also 10 Chattahoochee National Forest parcels stretching over rugged Blue Ridge Mountain terrain with old growth and spectacular waterfalls. A diverse assemblage of flora rarely seen in forest managed for timber is common in Georgia's mountain wilderness areas. The largest of these parcels is the Cohutta Wilderness which includes the headwaters of the biologically diverse Conasauga River.

Last spring my son and I were camped in the Cohuttas when a huge storm hit. I later documented it as a 4.5 inch rain event. As a Soil and Water Supervisor I'm somewhat familiar with how a typical stream behaves during a powerful rain event. You should expect flooding of heavy silt-laden waters that can scour and undercut banks, uproot trees, and smother aquatic wildlife habitat. However, when I crawled out of my jungle hammock with some concern about how close we had camped to the river, I noticed that the Conasauga was still clear. It finally rose about 10 inches and a slight hint of tannin became visible, but there was no muddy torrent rushing toward the Gulf of Mexico. Upstream a fragrant mist rolled through the forest. The trees heavy with water creaked in the wind. Below them a



thick blanket of leaf litter had absorbed the rain like a huge sponge. This storm was not going to flash-flood and damage homes and farms downstream; no, it would be absorbed into the ground and released slowly over time, providing badly needed water through the hot dry days of summer.

As I stood there a large trout rose to take a moth as it floated between ripples and birds began singing happily about the storm's passing. I thought to myself this is the way it is supposed to work, the way God intended. No man made silt fences or ugly detention ponds needed. I chuckled to myself, "when it comes to soil and water management "the best management practice" is simply to leave your stream in an old growth forest." So wilderness does have practical value it protects watershed and ridgelines so it improves and protects adjacent property values and it gives us a standard against which to measure the lands we manage.

We have additional places that deserve wilderness status, but there has been a persistent resistance to adding more wilderness areas here in Georgia. Somehow the opinion of a few vocal "sportsmen" seems to outweigh the majority of our citizens who support wilderness. The irony is its perfectly legal to hunt and fish in Wilderness but you have to walk because no mechanized vehicles are allowed. We have an abundance of lands available for pickup truck camping, so we can certainly afford this additional protection for the special areas identified as old growth. It is time to push for wilderness again and our Wildlands committee is leading the effort.



The Future of Wilderness in Georgia

By Larry Winslett

In 2014 we will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act and its establishment of our National Wilderness Preservation System. The Act's author, Howard Zahniser, charted America's Wilderness course in *The Need for Wilderness Areas*. He wrote, "First we must see that an adequate system of wilderness areas is designed for preservation, and then we must allow nothing to alter the wilderness character of the preserves." The system that Zahniser, David Brower, and others fought to achieve has grown beyond their wildest dreams — from its original 9.1 million acres to nearly 110 million acres today. While it is an appropriate time to reflect on, and celebrate, what has been accomplished under this landmark law we also must look to the future.

As we look to the future we must recognize the law is not absolute and is constantly under attack from varied special interest groups who would undermine its intent if not outright repeal it. In recent years there has been no shortage of Wilderness-destroying proposals. A few of the worst precedents just in our own area include motorized tours in Cumberland Island Wilderness, using dynamite to fell trees in the Joyce Kilmer Wilderness, and a massive prescribed burn plan for the Linville Gorge Wilderness. Other assaults on existing designated Wildernesses include everything from building a commercial lodge in a northern Rockies Wilderness to aerial-gunning wolves and gassing their pups in an Alaskan Wilderness.

There are also a growing number of other challenges to the great promise of the Wilderness Act and the secure future Wilderness should enjoy. These threats include: waning federal agencies' support for wilderness programs,



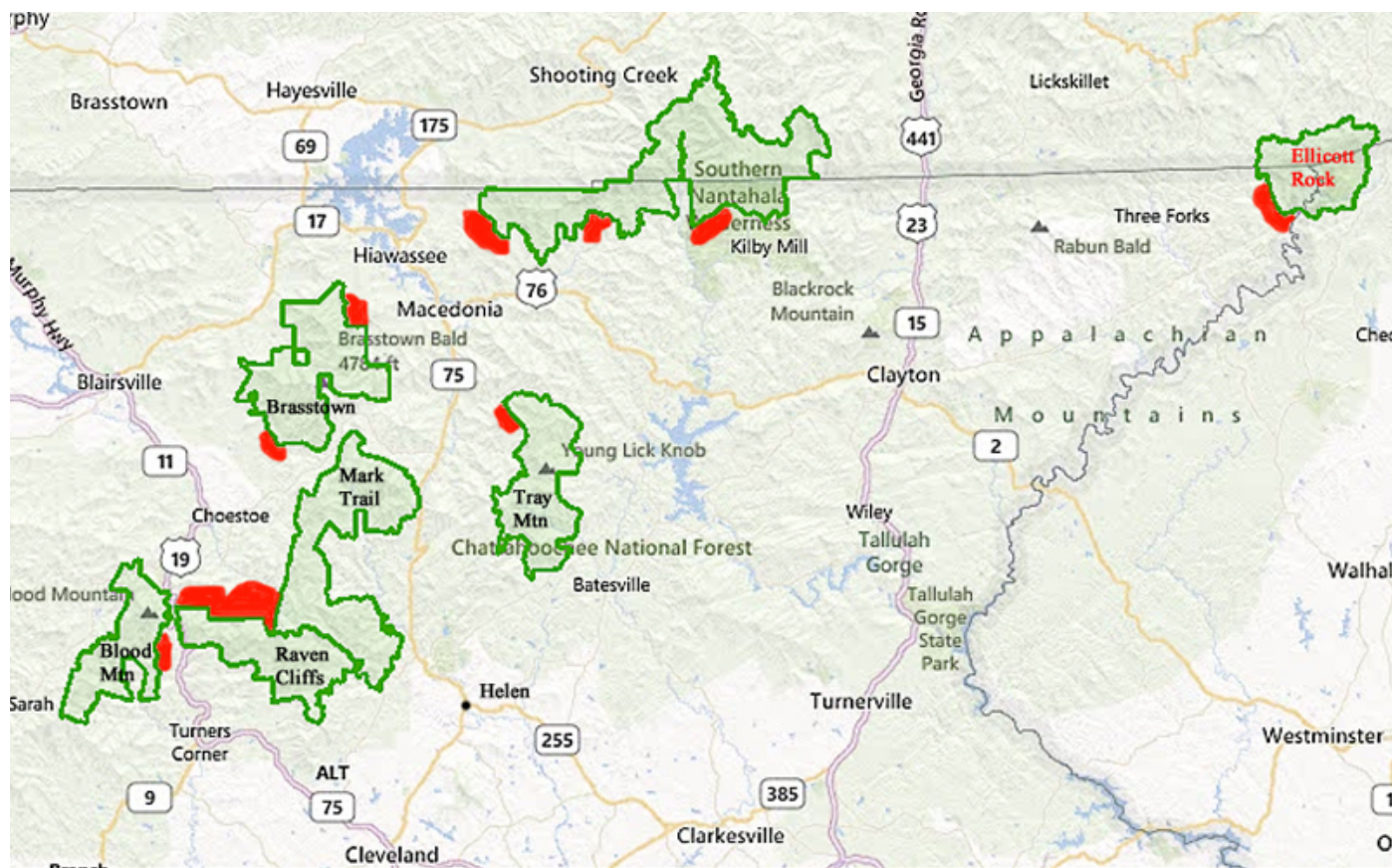
Photo by Larry Winslett

an increasing use of motorization and mechanization in Wilderness Areas, and State wildlife and game agencies' increasingly pushing to invade Wildernesses with predator control, bulldozers, roads, chainsaws, aircraft, and water developments. Congress has also become lax in ensuring that the Wildernesses in their care are protected. Instead, we now have a House of Representatives that has twice voted to essentially repeal the Wilderness Act. Most disappointing is the loss of commitment to Wilderness

protection by many in the conservation community. Even climate change has become an inappropriate excuse to manipulate Wilderness ecosystems. This accelerating tsunami of "management" threatens the core values of what Wilderness means.

One could look at all this and feel the future for Wilderness is in serious trouble, but that is not necessarily true. It does mean that we must be diligent in protecting our existing Wilderness Areas and recognizing new threats, continue

Focus: Wilderness Act at 50



A map of potential wilderness expansion areas in North Georgia

to educate the general public why wilderness is important, and to work for new Wilderness designations. We must be engaged with the public, law makers, and agencies and not be afraid to stand up and defend Wilderness. As Edward Abbey once put it “Wilderness needs no defense, just more defenders.”

In Georgia we still have great possibilities for future Wilderness Areas. In the current Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest plan 8,448 acres were classified as “Wilderness Study” areas meaning they only need congressional approval to be designated as Wilderness. This will require a strong lobbying effort aimed at our representatives and senators to make it happen. Getting these areas designated is doable but it will require hard work. Numerous states do have new Wilderness bills introduced, including our neighbor Tennessee.

The next National Forest planning process is likely to begin in 2015. This will be a big chance for us to work for additional Wilderness recommendations. During the last planning process the Wilderness Society produced “Georgia’s Mountain Treasures.” This book was a roadmap for areas in north Georgia that deserved permanent protection. It recommended approx. 65,000 acres of new Wilderness Areas and extensions to existing ones. Areas like Rock Gorge, Mountaintown, and

Patterson Gap still need the protection they didn’t get in the last planning process. In addition to our National Forests, our coastal area also offers significant possibilities for additional Wilderness designations.

Strategic road closings in our National Forests would also offer additional possibilities. In 2014 the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest will issue its long overdue roads study. For those who don’t know the Forest Service maintains the largest road system in the country, much of it in disrepair with no money to maintain them. Many of these roads will have to be closed. Which ones and where could create additional contiguous blocks of land that in the future would meet the requirements for Wilderness designations.

In closing, while the threats to the Act and existing Wilderness Areas are serious, the possibilities for preserving the existing areas and creating new ones are equally great. If the next 50 years of the Act are to be as successful as the first it will require diligence by groups like the Sierra Club and committed activist for forest protection to be fully engaged. Wallace Stegner once wrote that “Something will have gone out of us as a people if we ever let the remaining wilderness to be destroyed.” There is still much work to do to make sure that never happens.

Get Hands-on with Land Conservation in Georgia by Adopting a Wilderness

By Jerome Walker

One of the best things you can do for Wilderness in Georgia -- and for yourself -- is to pick one of our state's 14 wilderness areas and "adopt" it. What does it mean to "adopt" a wilderness? First of all, you should know that you have a wonderful choice of wildernesses in our state. Georgia has more usable wilderness acreage than any other state east of the Mississippi.

If you decide to adopt a wilderness, you take on three obligations. First, you should plan to visit the wilderness you've chosen at least once a year, as wildernesses are meant to be totally wild, and so are always changing. Second, be in touch with the managing Federal agency. Ask to be on their mailing list to be aware of issues that come up affecting your wilderness, and pay a visit to their office to let them know you're monitoring what kind of job they are doing taking care of the public's land -- your land and mine. Third and finally, make notes about what you learn and report any important issues that concern you to the Georgia Sierra Club's Wildlands Committee.

In the North Georgia mountains there are ten different wilderness areas managed by the U.S. Forest Service. All exist thanks to the work of Democratic Congressman Ed Jenkins, who worked hard to get them designated by Congress in the '70's and '80's. Moving from west to east, these wildernesses are: Big Frog, Cohutta, Rich Mountain, Blood Mountain, Brasstown, Mark Trail, Raven Cliffs, Tray Mountain, Southern Nantahala, and Ellicott Rock. The largest is Cohutta Wilderness at 35,000 acres. The second largest is the Nantahala

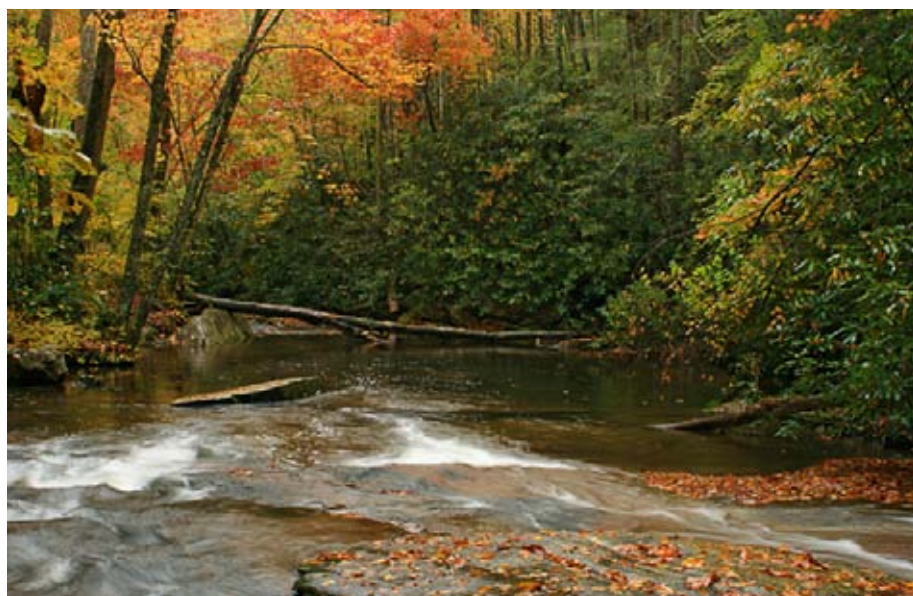


Photo by Larry Winslett

Wilderness, which has roughly 24,000 acres, a little more than half in Georgia and the rest in North Carolina. It has a wonderful trail that allows a 12 mile circular day hike or overnight backpack ending up where you parked just north of Tate, Ga.

On the coast, our largest wilderness is the Okefenokee Wilderness at over 350,000 acres, large enough for several-day canoe/camping adventures. The Okefenokee Wilderness is administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. If you go there you'll probably be camping on one of the raised wooden platforms along the canoe trails. The Fish and Wildlife Service also manages Blackbeard Island Wilderness on the coast, named after the famous pirate, and the small Wolf Island Wilderness, which serves solely as a sanctuary for migratory birds. Wolf Island is one of the very few wildernesses in America not allowing the public to visit.

The jewel of the coast, though, is the Cumberland Island Wilderness, admin-

istered by the U.S. Park Service. Measuring 8800 acres, it's located on Georgia's largest barrier island, accessible only by ferry from St. Mary's, Georgia. Where else can you hike along a beach without encountering another soul for miles? At 16 miles the beach is so long you can literally appreciate the curvature of the earth, as you can't see from one end of it to the other. While on Cumberland be sure to also check out the ruins of Thomas Carnegie's Dungeness Mansion on the south end of the island.

Some of Georgia's wilderness areas may have already been adopted by other Sierra Club members, others haven't been yet. No matter -- the more people watching our state's precious wild areas, and letting the appropriate Federal agencies know they are being watched, the more likely our Wilderness heritage is to remain wild! For more info on how you can adopt a wilderness in Georgia contact Mike Murdock, chair of the Wildlands Committee, at murdock1@mindspring.com.

Threats to Wilderness

There are enormous challenges that threaten the great promise of the Wilderness Act and the secure future Wilderness ought to enjoy. These long-term threats include:

- Federal agencies' support for wilderness programs is eroding and they no longer seem to believe in keeping Wilderness wild.
- Increasing motorization and mechanization as helicopters, backhoes, motorboats, and chainsaws routinely invade many Wildernesses.
- State wildlife and game agencies' growing push to invade Wildernesses with predator control, bulldozers, roads, aircraft, and water developments.
- A Congress that has lost interest in ensuring federal agencies protect Wildernesses in their care. Instead, we now have a House of Representatives that has twice voted to essentially repeal the Wilderness Act.
- Loss of commitment in the wilderness/conservation community as some organizations no longer support (actively) the principles of the Wilderness Act, including trading away existing Wilderness protections to curry political favor or pass new bills.
- Climate change routinely used as an excuse to manipulate wilderness ecosystems—to create manager-desired landscapes rather than allowing nature to evolve to ever-changing conditions. This accelerating tsunami of "management" threatens the core values of what Wilderness means.

So now more than ever we must be vigilant. or as Another favorite Wilderness quote states: "Something will have gone out of us as a people if we ever let the remaining wilderness be destroyed." - Wallace Stegner

50th Anniversary Celebrations Planned Across the State and the Nation

With the 50th commemorative events is shifting into high gear. Events will be conducted on the national stage as well as the state and local levels. Federal agencies are joining with private conservation groups to sponsor cooperative activities around the nation. A website has been created to provide a national source for wilderness related events and materials.

The site, Wilderness50th, is continually updated with new materials and announcements. There will be a National Wilderness Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico, October 15-19 of 2014. It should be a great event for those able to attend. For more information take a look at www.wilderness50th.org. Another source of nationwide wilderness data is www.wilderness.net.

In Georgia numerous events are being planned by a diverse group of partnering organizations. In early September a wilderness festival will be held in Dahlonega. It is being co-sponsored by the Sierra Club Wildlands Committee, the US Forest Service, Georgia Forest Watch, as well as the Appalachian and Bartram trail groups and others. It will be a mix of hikes, displays, educational booths, vendors, art, and music. Youth programs are also planned. The theme for the event will focus on the inspired stewardship of the wilderness, both historical and contemporary.

There will also be local events sponsored by the Forest Service District offices and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. During 2014 the Sierra Club and other conservation groups will host a series of outings in wildland and wilderness areas. These outings will focus on the history and value of wilderness and the need to preserve and expand them. If they are lost we will never get them back. Sierra Club members should keep an eye on the club webpage and the Sierran for breaking news through the year.

Be Green, Save Green – Become an E-Subscriber Today!



Did you know that the Georgia Chapter spends roughly 6 percent of its annual budget printing and mailing the *Sierran*? Looking for an easy way to help the chapter – and the environment? Remember that at any time you may "opt out" of receiving the printed *Sierran*. Members who do so will continue to receive every issue in its entirety (in full, brilliant color, no less) – only it will arrive in your inbox, not your mailbox.

If you prefer to continue receiving the printed newsletter, there is no need to do anything. But if you'd like to switch to the electronic edition please contact the Chapter office at **404-607-1262 x.221** or georgia.chapter@sierraclub.org. Our budget – and our trees! – will thank you.

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

Poll Shows Strong Support for Expanded Clean Energy in Georgia

In a December poll conducted by Public Policy Polling, both Georgia voters and Georgia Power customers show widespread support for expanding clean energy resources in the state. The poll, conducted on behalf of the Sierra Club, also shows that nearly 7 in 10 voters opposed Georgia Power's proposed rate increases, which the Georgia Public Service Commission approved in December, which could increase the average consumer bill by more than \$100 each year.

"The poll shows that voters and customers overwhelmingly agree: we don't want to pay to keep polluting and obsolete coal-fired power plants going," said Colleen Kiernan, director of the Georgia Chapter of the Sierra Club. "Georgia Power customers know that there are cleaner, cheaper, safer sources of electricity, like wind and solar. We shouldn't have to carry their proposed changes on our backs. People know Georgia Power's proposal doesn't make sense and it's the wrong option for consumers."

Georgia Power proposed its new customer rate plan earlier in 2013, originally including a new tax on property owners who install solar panels on their homes or businesses starting in 2014. The plan also proposed charging customers, beginning in January 2014, for upgrades to coal-fired power plants planned that would not be in service until 2016 or later. After a groundswell of public opposition and strong testimony from solar and consumer advocates, Georgia Power removed the proposed solar tax from its new plan and modified its plans to pre-charge customers for coal plant upgrades. The new proposal, which Public Service Commissioners approved December 17, still allows the company to charge customers up to one year in advance and base those charges on cost projections, rather than actual dollars spent.



Key findings from the poll include:

- If the decision were up to them, nearly 7 in 10 (67%) Georgia Power customers would deny Georgia Power's proposed rate increase. A larger number – 69% – of statewide voters would also deny the increase.
- More than 7 in 10 voters statewide (73%) say they would not allow Georgia Power to charge customers for coal plant upgrades before they begin, as Georgia Power has requested in its current rate proposal.
- Nearly 8 in 10 voters support the expanded use of renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind, in Georgia.
- More than 3 in 5 voters agree with the statement, "We need to reduce our need for coal and other fossil fuels."
- After hearing about the positive impacts of solar power on Georgia's economy, nearly two-thirds of voters statewide (64%) agree that utility companies should invest in more solar power.
- Nearly 7 in 10 voters support increasing energy efficiency and clean energy to phase out coal-fired power plants if the costs are similar to or less than installing pollution controls on those plants.
- "These are strong results that echo what we see nationwide, no matter how liberal or conservative the state. Georgians support clean energy and want to see state leaders doing more to expand

solar and wind," said Jim Williams, Issue Polling specialist with Public Policy Polling. "We also see a gut reaction against new rate hikes to keep older coal plants running, rather than investments that expand clean energy."

Williams added, "This poll is also unique – and should get the attention of Commissioners – because it shows customers are instinctively opposed to utility companies charging customers in advance for expensive projects, like upgrading coal plants with pollution controls."

Earlier this year, the Sierra Club partnered with consumer advocacy group Georgia Watch to hold four public meetings in Savannah, Columbus, Gainesville and Athens, where more than 200 Georgia Power customers and community members voiced their opposition to the proposed solar tax and pre-charges for unnecessary coal plant upgrades.

"The commissioners have heard directly from so many rate payers at the town hall meetings. Nearly every attendee and I spoke out against rate increases for cost recovery and the solar tax," said Sara Black, a student at the University of Georgia, Udall Scholar, and member of the Campuses Beyond Coal campaign. "My colleagues who have installed solar panels on their homes are relieved that the Commission struck down the solar tax, but the rate increases will affect all of our power bills, only to prolong dependence on dirty coal when so much opportunity exists in solar and wind power."

Nationwide, leading utilities are phasing out their coal-fired power plants and replacing them with cleaner, more affordable power sources like wind and solar. Since 2010, 158 coal-fired plants have been set on a path to retirement, and 182 new plant proposals have been canceled.

Conservation

Legislative Preview, continued from page 3

One project that was stopped last year was a pair of revisions to the Coastal Marshlands and Shore Protection Acts that would reduce protection from development. There was an effort to revive those changes again in 2014 but the Governor's office, aware that Georgia's coast can be a very emotional issue for many voters, wisely chose to postpone doing the coastal developers this favor in this election year.

A piece of Energy Legislation from 2014 is HB 267 by Rep. Jeff Chapman. He is expected to make a strong push for this measure in this election year session. The bill would stop the collection of funds from Georgia Power Co. ratepayers under the Plant Vogtle Nuclear Tariff that represent profits accruing from cost overruns at the expensive construction project. Georgia Power was able to kill the bill last time, but it remains alive, and is popular among people who have become known as the Green Tea Coalition.

There are efforts every session to reduce protections for natural resources and the natural environment, and even this short session will undoubtedly see more of those. The Club relies on its members contacting their state legislators to urge that they protect these vital resources, and to promote laws that continue and extend such efforts.

You can sign up for Legislative Alerts by going to action.sierraclub.org/CHP_GA_signup and following us on Facebook.



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Georgia Giving Society 2013

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 2013. If you would like to join or renew into the Giving Society for 2014 please contact Colleen Kiernan at 404-607-1262 x.224. Your support is much appreciated.

Live Oak Champions

\$2,500 - \$50,000

Anonymous
Carroll Smith Walraven
B. Wardlaw
Mark Woodall

Longleaf Pine Protectors

\$1,000 - \$2,499

Stephanie Stuckey Benfield
Sam & Laurie Booher
Rex Fuqua
Hannah Solar, LLC
Scott & Carol James
Kelly Jordan
Rebecca & Mark Klein
Norman Slawsky & Marcia Abrams

Southern Magnolia Society

\$500-999

Lee Adrean
Anonymous (2)
Jeanne Barsanti
Krista Brewer
Aubrey & Carol Bush
Don & Linda Dressel
Eddie Ehlert
David Emory
Steve & Debbie Gill
Gilbert Martinez
Leslie Parham
David Root & Barbara Banks
Terry Stewart
Zolinda Stoneman
John & Midge Sweet
Pamela Woodley
Philip & Dorothy Zinsmeister

Evergreen Partners

\$100-499

Anonymous (4)
Daniel Baba
Mirza & Sunita Balic
Delon Barfus
Lynn & Michael Beach
Steven Beach
Lovett Bennett
Bonnie Boatright
Sam & Laura Breyfogle
Max & Carolyn Brown
Carl Buice
Jeb & Tyra Byers
Jim Callison
Catherine Carter
Nancy Carter
W. Alan Chapman
Ross & Eleanor Cheairs
Tom & Stephanie Coffin
Charles Cook
Jim Darby

Support Your Chapter

Evergreen Partners

(continued from previous page)

Ted & Lynda Doll

David & Mindy Egan - Initiative to
Protect Jekyll Island

Michael Elliott

Anne & Martin Emanuel

Bob & Connie Fletcher

Robert & Anne Gantt

Jannah Goodell & Konrad Hayashi

Hildegard Hall

Camille Hammond

Eleanor Hand

Robert & Carolyn Hargrove

Steve & Susan Hauser

Neill Herring

Arthur Hughes

Cindy Jeness

Charles Johnson

Roger & Jean Johnson

Jennifer & Bill Kaduck

Henry Kannapell

Michelle & Scott Kegler

Elizabeth Knowlton

Nancy Krecklow

William & Mary Bal Long

Gary & Maria Ludi

Laura & David Majors

Kerry McArdle

Jeanne McCarthy

Sandra & Simon Miller

Terry Nations

Tom & Marie Neff

Doug Oetter

Bonnie Perry

Jim & Karen Powell

James & Elberta Prestegard

Mark Rappaport & Susan Briskie

Thomas & Margaret Rasmussen

John Raymer & Virginia Ferrell

Stewart Roberts

Martin Rosenman

Nancy Scott

Donna Shapiro

Joshua Shubin

Curt Smith & Lynn Razaitis

Kathy Smith

Bob & Jane Springfield

Tally Sweat

Marianne Tanner

Andrew & Naomi Taylor

Lee Thomas

Wolfgang & Susanne Tiedtke

William Tietjen

Jerome Walker

Lynn Walston

Janet Wantland

David Wappler

Samuel Wethern & Jane Cronin

Phillip Wiersen

John Willingham

Steve Willis

Amelia Woolums & Philip Santan-
gelo

Nancy Wylie

Thank You to Georgia Giving Society of 2013!



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

Membership

Urban Planning, Energy Experts Speak to Sierra Club & Beer



Sierra Club & Beer, the Chapter's environmental happy hour series, continues to draw enthusiastic crowds and engaging speakers to the Edgewood Speakeasy in Atlanta. In September we welcomed **Michael Dobbins** (above), former planning commissioner for the City of Atlanta, who spoke about the role of community benefit agreements in large-scale public investments. At the November event, GreenLaw attorney **Ashten Bailey** (below left, with Colleen Kiernan) spoke about recent developments in clean energy policy in Georgia. See below for details on the next event! *Photos by Lawrence Andrade.*



Sierrans Head to the Hills for Chapter Retreat



The Georgia Sierra Club returned to Camp Wahsega near Dahlonega this year for our Chapter Gathering, featuring a packed schedule of outings, workshops, a drum circle, and the annual awards banquet featuring keynote speaker Allison Chin, former Sierra Club national president. Many thanks to the Retreat Committee for a wonderful event!



JOIN US FOR SIERRA CLUB & BEER



Join us on **February 5th** where our topic will be water, featuring speaker Chris Manganiello, Policy Director at Georgia River Network.

Wednesday, Feb. 5th
7:30 - 9:30 pm
Edgewood Speakeasy
327 Edgewood Ave SE
Atlanta, GA 30312

Suggested Donation: \$5

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, February 1st** 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 the Chapter Office at gasierraclub101@gmail.com if you have questions.

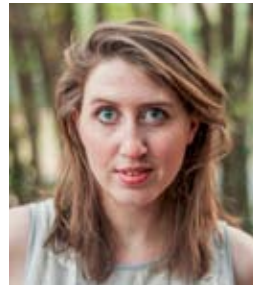
Membership

Festive Crowd on Hand for Chapter Holiday Open House



A spirited crowd of Sierra Club staff, members, and friends kicked off the holiday season at the annual open house at the Chapter office in Decatur. See additional photos on the Chapter Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/gasierraclub/>).

Welcome New Chapter ExCom Members



Many 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: **Sara Black** of Athens (above left) and **Jackie Echols** of Atlanta (above right). In addition, current at-large ExCom members **David Emory**, **Normal Slawsky**, and **Mark Woodall** were re-elected to additional two-year terms. Congratulations to all!

The Chapter also recognizes outgoing ExCom members **Thomas Jackson** and **Bruce Morton**. Thank you T.J. and Bruce for your dedicated service!



photo by Martin Scharf

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.

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone (____) _____
Email _____

☐ Check enclosed. Please make payable to Sierra Club.
Please charge my: ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ AMEX

Cardholder Name _____
Card Number _____ Exp. Date ____/____
Signature _____

Membership Categories	Individual	Joint
Special Offer	<input type="checkbox"/> \$15	
Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> \$39	<input type="checkbox"/> \$47
Supporting	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100
Contributing	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150	<input type="checkbox"/> \$175
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!



F94Q W 3400 1

Enclose a check and mail to Sierra Club,
P.O. Box 421041, Palm Coast, FL 32142-1041
or visit our website www.sierraclub.org

Outings Leaders Wanted!

**Interested in being an Outings Leader?
Join us for Outings Leader Training 101
& First Aid Certification**

*Saturday, February 8, 9am to 3pm
Chapter Office, Decatur*

As a local outing leader, you have the opportunity to share your local wild areas with Sierra Club members and other community members - whether day hiking, peak scrambling, birdwatching, or multi day trekking. Local outings also introduce trip members to the Sierra Club - often laying the foundation for future participation with the Sierra Club and local conservation efforts.

We are always looking for knowledgeable, outdoor-savvy people to join as Outings leaders. If that is you, why not become one, yourself?

The **Sierra Club Outings Leader Training 101** is designed to provide participants with the skills and confidence required to lead day trips and overnight car-camping trips for the Sierra Club. The goal is to create trip leaders who lead safe and fun trips while inspiring their participants to become more involved in protecting their environment.

9:00 - 1:00: Outings Leader Training 101
Cost: \$10 (Includes Lunch)

1:00 - 3:00: First Aid Certification
Cost: \$30

For more details, and to sign up, visit:
<http://bit.ly/1kBVKDD>

Find your local chapter outings
@ www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter



Saturday, February 1, 2014

Winter Hike to Blood Mtn. from the North

Leader: Lee Graham - 678-384-0171,
leeolah3@gmail.com

Presented by: Georgia Chapter

Rated: Moderate

Registration: Required before January 30, 2014, 12AM

Location: Vogel State Park, Chattahoochee National Forest, 405 Vogel State Park Road, Blairsville, GA 30512

Description: Winter Hike to Blood Mtn from the North. We will begin at Vogel State Park and hike to the Coosa Loop trail clockwise to its intersection with the Duncan Ridge Trail, then follow the Duncan Ridge Trail over to the Appalachian Trail and end up to Blood Mtn. On the way back we will take the Bear Hair Gap trail and go to an overlook with a view of Lake Trahlyta. There are nice views at the top of Blood Mountain and the overlook. We will take a moderate pace. 10 miles and 2300 feet of elevation gain. Approx 5 hrs hiking time. Early February may possibly mean cold weather and snow/ice on Blood Mtn. Please register with Lee via phone 404-202-9065 or email.

Sierra National Outings Include Three in Georgia

In addition to our Chapter outings program, several national Sierra Club outings are planned for Georgia in 2014. Read more about the following at <http://content.sierraclub.org/outings/national>

Georgia Gems: St Mary's, Cumberland Island, and Okefenokee Swamp (14071A): Sunday, March 30, 2014 to Saturday, April 05, 2014

Kayak or Canoe Way Down Upon the Suwannee River (14073A): Sunday, April 13, 2014 to Saturday, April 19, 2014

Georgia Wilderness Sampler (14177A) - Sunday, October 19 to Saturday, October 25, 2014

Sierrans on the AT



In October Sammy Padgett led a group of 8 Sierra Club members for a week of hiking the Georgia Appalachian Trail. Even though we want to protect our environment we actually do get out and enjoy it!

Annual Holiday Giftwrapping Drive a Success



A huge round of thanks go out to all our volunteers who made our Inner City Outings fundraiser a success. At the REI store on I-85 and Clairmont Road, it took more than 60 of us to wrap all those gifts, from the first shift on December 13 to the last one at 4:30 on December 24.

Thanks to our ICO chair, Naomi Bock, who quietly guided the whole thing and unobtrusively solved problems. Thanks also to our many new wrappers, as well as our veterans, too numerous to list.

In total, the Clairmont location raised \$6,007 and the Perimeter location raised \$2,554 for a total of \$8,561, all of which will be used to get kids outside!

- Dolly Katz

East DeKalb Boys & Girls Club Day-Hikes Berry College

We went up to Berry College and started our hike up to the reservoir with 16 students from East Dekalb Boys and Girls Club. It was a perfect fall day with some trees leaves as bright as a tangerine. Along the trail one of the students found a bright orange crab spider and another



student found a little snake! We packed in our lunch and had a picnic along the trail right next to the reservoir. There we sat in silence for 5 minutes to enjoy the sounds around us; 3 minutes in a few of the students started throwing rocks in to the water to help with the ambiance! After enjoying the area we packed up and headed back on the trail. While walking back students were encouraged to pick up any trash they saw along the trail to leave it in tip top shape for the next hikers to enjoy. Off the trail we saw a huge family of deer including the buck with his antlers. All in all another great day on the trail with 16 fantastic students!

ICO at the Chapter Retreat



The Chapter was pleased to be joined at our fall retreat at Camp Wahsehga by an ICO contingent from the A. Worley Brown Boys and Girls Club in Norcross. Thanks to Fiserv in Norcross for providing scholarship money for these teens to join us!

Warren Boys & Girls Club Visits Dauset Nature Center

Atlanta ICO volunteers and kids from the Warren Boys & Girls Club went to Dauset Nature Center to observe the animals and take a few short hikes. The kids were very excited about seeing the animals. We had lunch and then drove down to High Falls State Park for a short hike. While there, the kids discovered two guys fishing. They were nice enough to let the kids touch and pick up the fish they had caught. The kids were thrilled to actually be touching fish that were still moving. Fun day and no rain!



25 Years of Photos for National Geographic

By D. Gordon Draves

Peter Essick shared his National Geographic photos at the Metro Atlanta Group meeting in December. This very enjoyable program featured beautiful photos as well as hard-hitting ones starkly addressing numerous environmental issues. He has visited many of the sites involving nuclear energy such as Three Mile Island; Savannah River Site, SC (15 miles from Augusta, GA), which has radioactive gators; and he witnessed Sami (Lapp) people eating Chernobyl-enhanced reindeer meat.

Peter reported on several climate changes, including photos of “drunken forests” where the permafrost has melted and the trees lean. Arctic villages are being moved away from the coast because ice no longer protects the shore as it did before. Lake Mendota, MN, which used to freeze four months of the year, now freezes during only three.

Sea level rise threatens Male, walled capital of the Maldives (Indian Ocean), which has an elevation of 7.9'. In Mi-



*Photographer Peter Essick displays his latest book, *Our Beautiful Fragile World*, as Gordon Draves presents him with a SC Calendar as a speaker's gift. Photo by Eileen Stratidakis.*

ami, the ocean could advance as much as 250' inland from where it is now. On the other hand, dry farming in the Sahel area of Africa south of the Sahara will become even more difficult as rainfalls lessen.

Peter had just returned from assignment in Yoho National Park, BC, where the pine bark beetles are wreaking havoc on pine forests. Lodgepole pines (used in tipis) have suffered for years. Because of warming, the beetles are moving farther north and higher up the mountains. Thus, beetles (and blister rust) may make grizzly bears skinnier since they are moving deeper into the whitebark pines that produce good nuts to fatten bears for winter. Also, with shorter winters and more dead trees comes

the threat of greater fires, which send more CO₂ into the atmosphere.

The reaping of oil from tar sands in Alberta endangers wildlife, indigenous peoples, and the Athabasca River—third largest in North America. [Production is 1.6 million barrels a

Upcoming Meetings & Programs

We meet the 2nd Tuesday of each month. Snacks at 7:00 PM, program begins at 7:30 (directions at bottom)

February 11 Meeting: News From Under the Gold Dome

Neill Herring and Mark Woodall will again come to our February meeting to tell us about what the Georgia General Assembly is up to since the session began on Jan. 13.

March 11 Meeting: Fukushima and Other Nuclear Issues

Glenn Carroll, coordinator for Nuclear Watch South (formerly Georgians Against Nuclear Energy) will discuss nuclear issues local and far away—coinciding with the third anniversary of the triple nuclear meltdowns at Fukushima Daiichi, Japan.

April 8 Meeting: Update on Solar Power in Georgia

Sol Haroon with Suniva will discuss aspects of using solar energy.

Adopt-A-Stream Program events

- **Saturday, February 15** (Chemical monitoring)
- **Saturday, March 15** (Biological & Chemical monitoring)

We meet 10 AM to noon on South Fork of Peachtree Creek in Medlock Park, north of Decatur. For biologic monitoring, we need many eyes to find the critters found in the creek.

From Clairmont Rd. (between N. Decatur and N. Druid Hill roads.) take Desmond Dr. (third street north of N. Decatur Rd.) until it intersects with Willivee Dr. Turn left and follow Willivee around to Scott Circle where you turn right. Parking is on your left when you reach the park.

Park in the middle, and walk the dirt road with the 2-story building on your left and ball fields on either side, go into the woods behind ball field #5. Bear left and you will see us at a picnic table by the stream.

For information about chemical monitoring and dates, call Larry Kloet at 404 636-7226. For more details about biological monitoring, call Nancy Wylie at 404-256-1172.

General Membership meetings are open to the public and held at the Episcopal Church of the Epiphany, **2089 Ponce de Leon Ave.** at the intersection with East Lake Drive; the entrance to the church is on East Lake Dr. **MARTA** Bus 2 runs on Ponce de Leon between North Avenue Station and Decatur Station.

For more information, updates, and new events please see: <http://georgia.sierraclub.org/atlanta/>

Metro Atlanta Group

day or 47% of Canada's oil.] The world's biggest trucks haul out bitumen from open pits. Boom times produce boom towns, with an increase in single men, exotic dancers, drugs, alcohol, and expensive housing.

Minarets Wilderness no longer exists, though it was among the first designated wilderness areas in the Sierras in 1964. However, in 1984 it was expanded and renamed to honor the famous photographer who spent time in the area. It will be celebrated in Peter's next book coming on April 15, *The Ansel Adams Wilderness*, from which the following quote is taken:

"On the first night of many hikes into the Ansel Adams Wilderness, I made camp at the Clark Lakes. At midnight, I took the trail up to Summit Lake, and it lay in total darkness. Eventually, the moon cleared the mountains to the east and lit up Banner Peak. It was still rather dim out, but with an exposure of 30 seconds on the sensor of my digital camera I could see the mountains and a silhouette of the pine tree. The moon's opacity allowed me to see the Milky Way filling up the sky. I couldn't help but wonder what Ansel Adams would have thought of this scene. I'm sure he would have loved the sparkling Milky Way in the dark skies over a wilderness named for him. I'm sure he would have loved knowing that the sheer splendor of this place would always be enjoyed by generations to come—particularly with his dimension added to it."

Peter has spent about seven weeks in this wilderness retracing Ansel's steps—in the green and warmth of August and coolness of October 2010, and in the cold and snow of February 2011. To view some of his photos, do a search for the article "The Mountains That Made the Man", October 2011 *National Geographic*. There will also be links to his work on our website.

2014 Big Year for 50-Year Milestones

As you may have read in this issue's cover story, 2014 is the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act. This year also marks 50-year milestones for several other landmark environmental and social justice policies, including:

- The 50th anniversary of the first Surgeon General's Report on smoking. It was released on January 11, 1964, a Sunday, so the stock market would not crash. There were 50 million cigarette smokers at the time, now 45 million, a drop of 10% in 50 years.
- The 50th anniversary of "Freedom Summer," a campaign to register black voters in Mississippi. Volunteers from around the country came to Mississippi in an effort to bring national and international attention to the state.
- The 50th anniversary of the "War on Poverty," announced by Lyndon B. Johnson in 1964 with legislation introduced that would expand the federal government's role in poverty-reduction programs.

- D. Gordon Draves & Lynn Beach

Metro Atlanta Group ExCom Changes

We congratulate the winners of the election to the Metro Atlanta Group Executive Committee: **Jeff Bragg**, **Martin McConaughy**, and **Eddie Ehlert** (re-elected). They meet the first Tuesday of each month at Athens Pizza House, 1341 Clairmont Rd., Decatur. Members are invited to attend.

We heartily thank the two members retiring from the board: **Larry Kloet** has served as secretary for 6 years, and **Jack Harich** has developed the attractive E-mail newsletter sent before the meetings.

Greater Gwinnett Group

Today is Christmas, a time of peace and harmony. My portion of the Christmas is cooking and will soon be done. Then it is over the river and through the woods, actually quite literally, to the Christmas dinner. But at this point in the day, I'm reflecting back on 2013 and looking ahead to 2014.

The Georgia Sierra Club has had great success in having coal plants taken and scheduled to be taken off line, to have renewable energy included in Georgia Power's plans and so much more. In Gwinnett we have added our voices to the efforts to migrate Georgia Power from coal burning plants to renewable smart energy and we have continued our work in monitoring streams to ensure they are clean as well as beautiful.

Looking ahead to 2014, we will continue our work in these efforts and energize our efforts to reach out to Gwinnett citizens of all demographics. We will look for new ways

to communicate with our membership and involve our members in our conservation activities. Whether you're interested in spending 5 minutes or 5 hours a month, we want to get our membership involved in our activities. Our monthly meetings will be more informative about issues ranging from gardening to energy and provide ways to become involved.

We will kick off 2014 with our Director, Colleen Kiernan, discussing the issues on which the Sierra Club will be focusing. In February, our meeting will be concerned with the Georgia Legislature. Begin the New Year by learning what the Sierra Club is doing. I guarantee you will find the issues interesting. Ahhh, there's the bell – my sweet potatoes are ready and the Ratatouille will be ready in 5 minutes. Happy New Year to all.

- Dan Friedman

LaGrange Group



Ellen Parkhurst and Henry Jacobs preparing for fall party



Sim and Caroline's historic home in Mountville

A highlight of our fall activities was working with Seth Gunning, National Sierra Club Conservation Organizer, on the Georgia Power rate case. A dozen of our volunteers participated in phone banking Columbus Sierra Club members, encouraging them to attend a town hall meeting set up in Columbus, as well as attending the town hall meeting and speaking out against Georgia Power's proposal to 1) impose fees on residents/businesses with solar panels and 2) raise rates to pay for coal plants upgrades upfront. Efforts made by Sierra Club, in collaboration with the Tea Party and other groups, were successful as far as influencing Georgia Power's decision to nix the solar panel fees. This was gratifying (and fun) work. Yes, work can be fun!

Speaking of fun, we enjoyed an outdoor fall party hosted by local board member Sim Blich and his "better half" Caroline Nelson, who live in a historic church building in Mountville, Georgia. We had a blast enjoying 4 fires, music, good food (including s'mores) and friends. Thank you, Sim and Caroline!

Upcoming Meetings

When: Tuesday, Feb. 18, 6:30-8 pm

Where: location to be decided; either St. Mark's Episcopal Church or LaGrange College

Speakers: Neill Herring, Sierra Club Lobbyist, and Mark Woodall, Sierra Club Chapter Chair

Topic: 2014 Legislative Update

When: Tuesday, Mar. 18, 6:30-8 pm

Where: location to be decided; either St. Mark's Episcopal Church or LaGrange College

Speaker: Sara Black, UGA Sierra Club Student Coalition activist

Topic: Sierra Club Student Coalition

Savannah River Group

With the new year comes EXCOM elections; Cathy Black, Judy Gordon, Richard McCrary, and April Wilson will be returning for two more years of toil and trouble (just kidding). Our Group directory will remain the same except that we have added a new position, Outreach Coordinator. Linda McBurney has graciously agreed to take on this task and already has several projects in mind. She has recently added our Group activities to more local listings.

Our January meeting featured Matthew Kelly of Honey Creek Mushrooms. He spoke on how mushrooms help heal our environment and has agreed to con-



duct a future workshop on mushroom culturing. In February, Bruce Wood of Sunstore Solar will discuss the pros and cons of going solar for homes and small businesses.

Our Outings Chair, Cathy Black, and her committee have all sorts of trips and adventures scheduled, including a trip to Cumberland Island in March. As many of you Sierrans know, Cumberland Island offers many outings adventures, including wilderness experiences. The Island has long been a focus for various protective campaigns and the Georgia Sierra Club has long been at the forefront of these endeavors to preserve the wilderness areas on Cumberland.

- Judy Gordon, Co-Chair

Holiday Gathering Recap

The Centennial Group wrapped up 2013 with a successful December 5th holiday potluck and fundraising auction with more than 40 in attendance and generously hosted, once again, by Centennial member Shae Avery at the Avery Gallery in Marietta (www.averygallery.com). The auction of items donated by members resulted in almost \$900 in funds raised for our group—a record for the event.

Special thanks go to our skilled and entertaining auctioneer, Ron Warnken. Besides members of the group and their guests, we welcomed Georgia Chapter staff members, Colleen and Seth; Metro Atlanta group chair, Gordon Draves; and several newcomers to our festive party. We also recognized Mark Banks, Jim Darby, and Shae Avery for their contributions to the Centennial Group.



Local Issues in the News

With the announcement in November by the Atlanta Braves of plans to relocate and build a new stadium in Cobb County between Cobb Parkway and I-75, just north of the I-285 N. interchange, the Centennial ExCom voted to express opposition to these plans and the haste, manner, and secrecy with which they were drawn up and disclosed. Chapter Director Colleen Kiernan and several Centennial Group leaders appeared at a November 25th joint press conference in Cobb County with other community groups to express opposition and ask the county commission to postpone its vote to allow further study and explanation.

Centennial volunteers were also present at several “town hall” commission meetings that same day and in writing and making phone calls to commissioners. The commission, as you know, proceeded the next day with their vote to approve the proposal and to proceed. The future costs to taxpayers; the potential air and water impact to the Rottenwood Creek watershed and the Chattahoochee NRA; the added traffic impact to such an already congested area and the lack of support for regional transit; the encouragement of northern perimeter sprawl; and the abandonment of an existing structure in the city are but some of the reasons that the Sierra Club supports delaying this “runaway train” for further study and disclosure. To read more about these reasons, visit <http://bit.ly/1j7kNge>.

Kicking Off the New Year

In January, we will review results from our Centennial Group membership survey that was distributed in December as a way to build support for the group and better understand the preferences of members and the community for activities and program offerings. Thank you to the LaGrange Group for its survey example. Our Excom also plans to revisit the “Healthy Group Checklist” (created and distributed by SRG member Sam Booher at the Fall Chapter Retreat) as a tool for strengthening groups.

Upcoming group meetings, held on the first Thursday of each month, include: Legislative Update with Neill Herring & Mark Woodall (Feb 6th); Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act with Photographer Larry Winslett (Mar 6th).

Chapter Contacts

Executive Committee

Chair: Mark Woodall, 706-674-2242,
woodallmark8@gmail.com
At-Large Elected Member

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

Sara Black, 205-612-3204
saratomblack@gmail.com
At-Large Elected Member

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

Laura Breyfogle, 706-845-7235,
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LaGrange Group Delegate

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At-Large Elected Member

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At-Large Elected Member

Eddie Ehlert, 770-402-0087,
edehlert@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

Bettye Harris, 770-578-1186,
bettyeharris@gmail.com
Centennial Group Delegate

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

Midge Sweet, 404-667-4476,
sweetsmidge@gmail.com
At-Large Elected Member

Appointed Officers & Chairs

Secretary: Todd Daniel, todddan@mac.com

Treasurer: Tom Neff, tsneff2003@yahoo.com

Assistant Treasurer: vacant

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: vacant

Human Resources: Norman Slawsky, nslawsky@gmail.com

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

Legislative: Mark Woodall,
woodallmark8@gmail.com

Litigation: Norman Slawsky,
nslawsky@gmail.com

Membership/Outreach: Ross Cheairs,
cheairsjr@aol.com

Newsletter Editor: David Emory,
gasierran@gmail.com

Outings: vacant

Political Chair: Eddie Ehlert,
edehlert@bellsouth.net

Sierra Student Coordinator: Ian Karra,
ikarra23@gmail.com

Webmaster: Charlotte Gardner,
ga_sierra_webmaster@yahoo.com

Conservation Campaigns

RAIL Committee:

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

Smart Energy Solutions:

Eleanor Hand, eghand@bellsouth.net and
Cecilia Harris, ceciliaharris@gmail.com
Meeting: 1st Monday, 7 p.m. chapter office

Wildlands and Wildlife:

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

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.net

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

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

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

Chapter Program Assistant:

Brionte McCorkle, 404-607-1262 x.232
brionte.mccorkle@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.233
seth.gunning@sierraclub.org

Standing Meetings

Inner City Outings

Contact Naomi Bock (atlantaico@gmail.com) for more information.

Fundraising Committee

Fourth Tuesday of the month, 6:00 p.m., Chapter Office. Contact the Chapter office at 404-607-1262 x221 for more information.

Local Group Directory

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 / Meetings Contact: Lynn Walston,
lynnwalston22@yahoo.com

Outings Chair: Anderson Mycroft,
awmycroft@yahoo.com

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: Karen Grainey,
karengrainey@bellsouth.net

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: Art Sheldon,
asheldon.cp81@gtalumni.org

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: Sim Blitch simblich@charter.net

Outings Chair: Joanna Baxter,
joannabbaxter@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, (404) 766-3456
nonsmoke4ga@hotmail.com

Outings Chair: Martin McConaughy
mcmarty@bellsouth.net

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, callisonjim@bellsouth.net

Macon

Fletcher Winston, winston_f@mercer.edu

North Georgia

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 3-4 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-RAIL-NEWS (RAIL/Transit Advocacy Committee)

Subscribe to the Smart Energy Solutions listserve at gasmartenergycommittee@googlegroups.com

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 will be Saturday, March 15th at the Chapter office in Decatur. Meetings are open to the membership. For more information, call the Chapter office at 404-607-1262 x221.



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JOHN MUIR OUTINGS

Celebrate Earth Day – and Georgia’s spectacular beauty – all month long. Each Saturday in April, we’re hosting an outing where you can learn about our state’s threatened areas and how to protect them. To support the Georgia Chapter’s work, a donation of \$25 per person per outing is requested. What better way to honor Earth and our founder, John Muir?

Look for more info by March 1st at
georgia.sierraclub.org/johnmuiroutings



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