

GEORGIA



SIERRAN

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SIERRA CLUB GEORGIA CHAPTER • OCT / NOV / DEC 2020



The Georgia Sierran is going digital!
Details on page 3

INSIDE: 2020 SIERRA CLUB ENDORSEMENTS

**PLUS CHAPTER & GROUP ELECTIONS • REMEMBERING JOHN LEWIS • CLEANING UP COAL ASH
LATEST ON UTILITY SHUTOFFS • LOCAL GROUP REPORTS AND MORE!**

FROM THE CHAPTER CHAIR

Some few people will win a Nobel Prize this year. Others will welcome new babies into their family. And, God willing, Joe Biden will be elected President of the United States. For the rest of us, 2020 will likely be remembered as an Annus Horribilis, a year of horrors.

If, like me, you were looking forward to a new decade as a chance to turn the page on all that seemed small and selfish about American life in the 2010s, this year has been a huge disappointment. I thought 2020 would be a triumphant march through a political sea-

son that carried forward the Blue Wave of the 2018 midterms. I thought that we would be setting the stage for a return to global leadership on climate change. I hoped that we would be striding from strength to strength, building on the momentum that made me hopeful about progressive policies gaining ascendancy in America.

That is not how 2020 has felt. This year has been as cramped and depressing as any time in living memory. We are living our lives fearful of a disease, stuck in our homes and our quarantine bubbles. We have watched the rollback of environmental protections and the damage done by neglect or malfeasance of those in power. We are daily reminded of what we have lost: more than 200,000 Americans who died needlessly; millions of lost jobs and lost security; and what may be still worse, we have lost trust in our institutions and our faith that the strength of our democracy and nation would carry us through any crisis.

Still, I am not without hope. The movement to end systemic racism gained significant strength and attention in this dismal year. At its center is a belief that the arc of history really does bend toward justice. And this is the year when we will put behind us the anemic efforts to rein in Trump and Trumpism. We will simply vote him out of office.



JEFF SCHOENBERG

I am convinced that America can be great because most Americans are good. 2020 will end with a demonstration of our national goodness. 2021 will be better.

We can look forward to a world with a COVID-19 vaccine. To an American government run for the benefit of its citizens. To policy makers who are not in thrall to a want-to-be-despot and can work on building a sustainable world for us and our children. 2021 will see the return of moral leadership.

For the Sierra Club here in Georgia, we will return to a way of working that brings people together in real life, not just online. We will celebrate the gains we will have made in the General Assembly, and seek to translate those immediately into cleaner land and water, greener energy and communities. We will double down on our commitment to stamp out the systemic racism that underlies the environmental injustices that we have fought against for years.

And finally, as I look ahead to 2021, I am encouraged that the test of 2020 will have made our community stronger. We did not

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Editorial Team

Kendall Dennis, Bettye Harris, Ricky Leroux, Jessica Morehead, Cynthia Patterson, Jeff Schoenberg, Hobart Stocking

Submissions & Volunteering

Articles: Send materials to gasierran@gmail.com. Maximum word length: 750 words with one high-resolution digital photo (200 dpi). For more information, or to join the committee, email gasierran@gmail.com.

Address Changes

Send address changes to:
Sierra Club Georgia Chapter
743 East College Avenue, Suite B
Decatur, GA 30030
Or by email to:
address.changes@sierraclub.org

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On the Cover

Photo: An early voting location in Fulton County is ready for voters.
Credit: Ricky Leroux

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stop working for change in this difficult year. Through everything, this organization and you, our membership, stood up for what is right and worked to make our communities better. We were strong enough to stand tall in 2020. I am hugely optimistic about what we can do in 2021 and beyond.

Thank you all for what you have done and will do in 2020. On to an Annus Mirabilis (a wonderful year) in 2021!

Jeff Schoenberg
GEORGIA CHAPTER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CHAIR

CHAPTER NEWS

LATEST UPDATES ON OUR COVID-19 RESPONSE

We hope this issue finds you and your loved ones safe and healthy. COVID-19 continues to impact us in Georgia, changing the way we interact, the way we shop, and the way we vote.

Georgia Chapter staff members are continuing to work from home as they have since March and will do so throughout the rest of 2020. The Chapter office in Decatur remains closed, our events and meetings are being held virtually, and all outings are on hold until further notice.

Please continue to take precautions to protect yourself, your family, and your community: wear a mask in public places, practice physical distancing, wash your hands frequently and thoroughly, and stay home as much as possible.

For the latest on our response to the COVID-19 pandemic and links to many available community resources,

visit sierraclub.org/georgia/coronavirus-updates. And be sure to check our calendar at sierraclub.org/georgia/calendar for all our upcoming virtual events.

CONGRATS TO JILLIAN ELLER!

The Georgia Chapter extends a warm congratulations to Jillian Eller, our newest Conservation Organizer! Jillian worked with the Chapter for 11 months as a Conservation Fellow and earned a full time position, officially starting in their new role on August 10.



JILLIAN ELLER

Jillian grew up in central Pennsylvania and graduated in 2018 from Temple University with a B.A. in Environmental Studies, concentrating on the nexus of environmental concerns in urban settings. After seeing their great work over nearly a year, we're so glad Jillian is sticking around!

THE SIERRAN IS GOING DIGITAL!

Starting with the first issue of 2021, everyone will receive a digital version of the Georgia Sierran in their email inboxes instead of a paper version in their mailboxes.

Switching to digital will save paper and money,
but we need some info from you to make this happen:

Go to bit.ly/Sierran

Use this form to:

- provide or update your email
- request to continue receiving a paper version of the Sierran
- submit any other Georgia Sierran problem

Find past Georgia Sierrans: sierraclub.org/georgia/news/GASierran

SIERRA CLUB GEORGIA CHAPTER DIRECTORY

LOCAL GROUP CONTACTS

CENTENNIAL GROUP

Chair, Lynn Walston
lynnwalston22@yahoo.com

Conservation Chair, Andrea Searles
andreasearles@gmail.com

Outings Chair, Lee Graham
leegrah3@gmail.com

COASTAL GROUP

Chair, Vacant

Outings Chair, Steve Wagner
sjwgnr@hotmail.com

Events Coordinator, Lilli Hutto
medi8@mindspring.com

GWINNETT GROUP

Chair, Dan Friedman
dan3688@aol.com

Conservation Chair, Art Sheldon
asheldon.cp81@gtalumni.org

Outings Chair, Vacant

LAGRANGE GROUP

Co-Chair, Mary Lou Dabbs
mldabbs05@gmail.com

Co-Chair, Eric Simpson
elamar109@yahoo.com

Outings Chair, Laura Breyfogle
breyfoglel@gmail.com

METRO ATLANTA GROUP (MAG)

Chair, Nina Dutton
niddutton@gmail.com

Conservation/Outings Chair, Max Brown
maxbrown@bellsouth.net

Political Chair, Eddie Ehlert
edehlert@mindspring.com

Treasurer/Webmaster, Matthew Evans
matthew.evans2012@yahoo.com

SAVANNAH RIVER GROUP (SRG)

Co-Chair, Sam Booher
sbooher@aol.com

Co-Chair, Linda McBurney
msmcb@outlook.com

Conservation Chair, Frank Carl
frankcarl@knology.net

Outings Chair, Cathy Black
sonnyandcathyblack@gmail.com

REGIONAL CONTACTS

Forsyth County

Jim Callison
callisonjim@bellsouth.net

Macon

Joseph Jackson III
joseph.tjax@gmail.com

North Georgia

Larry Winslett
winfog@windstream.net

Valdosta

Brian Day
bjday@valdosta.edu

ISSUE CAMPAIGNS & COMMITTEES

Clean Energy Committee

Angela Jiang, Neil Sardana
angela.jiang@sierraclub.org; neil.sardana@sierraclub.org

Legislative Committee

Mark Woodall
woodallmark8@gmail.com

Political Committee

Eddie Ehlert
edehlert@mindspring.com

Ready For 100 Team

Scott Presson
spress51@gmail.com

Regional Action to Improve Livability (RAIL) Committee

Tejas Kotak
tkotak013@gmail.com

Wildlands and Wildlife Committee

Larry Winslett
winfog@windstream.net

Water Sentinels/Adopt-a-Stream

Ina Allison (Centennial)
iallison@hotmail.com

Michael Hallen (Gwinnett)
michael_hallen@hotmail.com

Frank Carl (SRG)
frankcarl@knology.net

Tim Nelken (SRG)
td.nelken@gmail.com

For a complete listing of conservation committee chairs and issue leaders, please visit: sierraclub.org/georgia/directory.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Chair

Jeff Schoenberg
schoenbergjhe@gmail.com
(770) 394-0639
At-Large Elected Member

Vice Chair - Conservation

Mark Woodall
woodallmark8@gmail.com
(706) 601-1118
At-Large Elected Member

Vice Chair - Administration

Stacy Shelton
stacy@shelton.net
At-Large Elected Member

Secretary

Seth Gunning
srgunnin@gmail.com
(404) 434-9745
At-Large Elected Member

Treasurer

Tom Neff
tsneff2003@yahoo.com

At-Large Elected Member

Nancy Daves
nancydaves0711@gmail.com
(270) 461-1738

At-Large Elected Member

Berneta Haynes
berneta.haynes@gmail.com

CHAPTER LEADERS & CHAIRS

Fundraising Chair: Vacant

Human Resources Chair: Vacant

Legal Chair

William Tomlin
wmltom@gmail.com

Legislative Chair

Mark Woodall
woodallmark8@gmail.com

At-Large Elected Member

Tejas Kotak
tkotak013@gmail.com

Centennial Group Delegate

Bettye Harris
bettyecharris@gmail.com
(678) 463-7827

Coastal Group Delegate

Vacant

Gwinnett Group Delegate

Dan Friedman
dan3688@gmail.com
(404) 610-5770

LaGrange Group Delegate

Mary Lou Dabbs
mldabbs05@gmail.com
(706) 402-0310

Metro Atlanta Group Delegate

Rotating among several members

Savannah River Group Delegate

Linda McBurney
msmcb@outlook.com
(706) 631-1489

Membership Chair: Vacant

Outings Chair: Vacant

Political Chair

Eddie Ehlert
edehlert@mindspring.com

CHAPTER OFFICE

Sierra Club Georgia Chapter
743 East College Avenue, Suite B
Decatur, GA 30030
(404) 607-1262

CHAPTER STAFF

Chapter Director

Jessica Morehead
jessica.morehead@sierraclub.org

Development Associate

Gina Webber
gina.webber@sierraclub.org

Communications Coordinator

Ricky Leroux
ricky.leroux@sierraclub.org

Administrative Assistant & Volunteer Coordinator

Tia Fay
tia.fay@sierraclub.org

Conservation Organizer

Angela Jiang
angela.jiang@sierraclub.org

Conservation Organizer

Jillian Eller
jillian.eller@sierraclub.org

NATIONAL STAFF

Southeastern Campaign Representative, Military Outdoors

Lornett Vestal
lornett.vestal@sierraclub.org

Beyond Coal Organizer

Neil Sardana
neil.sardana@sierraclub.org

NATIONAL PROGRAM CONTACTS

Inspiring Connections Outdoors

Terri Lyde
lydeterri@bellsouth.net

Remembering John Lewis

A look back on the life and legacy of the Civil Rights icon and how the Sierra Club played a role in his first election to Congress

BY SAM COLLIER

John Lewis was a featured speaker at the Southern Environmental Assembly '88, a 15-state environmental conference with a presidential candidate debate. Georgia Chapter Chair Chuck McGrady introduced the first-term Congressman to the conference, reminding everyone that the "Sierra Club was one of the first national organizations in the country to endorse Congressman Lewis, back in the 1986 primary."

As the Congressman began his remarks he said, "Actually, Chuck, the Sierra Club was THE first national organization to endorse me."

John Lewis always appreciated our early endorsement. He never forgot it, and the Club never regretted it. The Congressman's leadership on environmental issues was unwavering, and often quite vocal. His voting record was exemplary: an impressive lifetime League of Conservation Voters score of 92%.

Entering Congress at the end of the Reagan Administration meant Rep. Lewis was just in time to join the defense of the major Federal laws passed in the early 1970s, such as the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, and the Endangered Species Act. By the mid-80s, America was finally benefiting from clearer skies and cleaner rivers after decades of pollution and degradation, and it was no time to turn back.

Sierra Club's early endorsement of John Lewis over Julian Bond in 1986 took a lot of people by surprise.



Bettye Harris, the Centennial Group's delegate to the Georgia Chapter Executive Committee, left, Congressman John Lewis, center, and Sam Collier pose for a photo in 2003.

Julian Bond was a dear friend of Lewis and fellow civil rights hero. Bond enjoyed national name recognition as a civil rights leader and traveled widely speaking on justice issues. In fact, national Sierra Club leaders, both volunteer and staff, thought Bond the sure winner.

But, as Chuck McGrady described in the Georgia Chapter's 30th Anniversary newsletter, it was the considered wisdom of us, the local volunteers, that John Lewis had truly distinguished himself on the Atlanta City Council as a strong advocate for, in Lewis' words, "this lil' planet we call home."

After his courageous work in the Civil Rights Movement leading the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee but before he ran for Congress, Lewis was an Atlanta City Councilman who steadfastly supported intown neighborhoods, fighting Georgia DOT's disastrous plan for an interstate highway from

downtown to Stone Mountain.

With bulldozers poised to tear through Candler Park, Goldsboro Park, and the historic Olmsted linear parks along Ponce de Leon Avenue, Councilman Lewis encouraged the neighbors as they were being arrested, "This is our land ... We must be ready to use the tactics, yes, the techniques of nonviolent direct action to stop this road!" In TV interviews, he called it the most political — and expensive — road in Georgia and perhaps the nation.

This bold action put the Councilman at odds with a mayor, a former president, the daily newspaper, the chamber of commerce, and several of his fellow councilmembers, but John Lewis had campaigned on a no-roads promise, and, unlike his dear friend Mayor Andrew Young, John Lewis would not break his promise to the voters.

It is only fitting and proper then that

today, those fragments of super-highway he helped stop — and the resulting parkway and "X-shaped" park formed from condemned right-of-way for the two interstates — now bears his name. The "John Lewis Freedom Parkway" links the Martin Luther King Center for Non-Violent Social Change with the Carter Center, especially fitting since John Lewis was a bridge between these two Nobel Peace Prize laureates.

Also while on City Council, Lewis gave the keynote to a local Clean Air Conference and his speech was both inspiring and specific on policy — he knew of what he spoke. It was only a year later that, despite the power structure's displeasure and because he had stood with neighborhoods, he threw his hat in the ring to run for the open Congressional seat.

+++

Sierra Club's "secret sauce" is the collaboration among volunteers and staff. Volunteers — who put so much time and effort into leading groups and chapters, organizing outings, and being active in communities where they live and work — enrich the work of staff with wisdom, "intel," muscle, and hours. This makes the Club a more powerful force and sets us apart from staff-run organizations.

The Georgia Chapter had no staff when we insisted that John Lewis was strong enough on our issues and a viable enough candidate that he deserved our early support, when it mattered most. His primary runoff against Julian Bond was the only close election in Lewis' long Congressional career.

We locals knew that Lewis' proven environmental concerns were genuine and he also had strong backing amongst all the neighborhoods he helped spare from an expressway through their core, including Inman Park, Candler Park, Lake Claire, Poncey-Highlands. That support

was a crucial difference in the primary runoff, and turnout in those neighborhoods was very high for a primary runoff.

I have several great memories of John Lewis:

Election night, 1992 — John Lewis leading a conga line with dozens of happy people, weaving in and out among the revelers as they celebrated the election of President Bill Clinton.

Spring, 2003 — Lewis standing on the banks of Utoy Creek at a press conference kicking off an ambitious nine-point plan formed by parks, tree, and trail advocates across the city to rescue Atlanta parks. Rep. Lewis was the honorary first signatory to the plan, which drew considerable media coverage. Following his lead, nearly all candidates for Mayor and City Council signed on, making parks a top-tier issue in the open seat for Mayor and a large turnover in Council seats. This was the beginning of a transformation in parks management in Atlanta.

October, 2003 — The Congressman agreed to give the keynote address at the Georgia Chapter's retreat in Dahlonga, and I was asked to introduce him. I described to the audience how Lewis' memoir "Walking with the Wind" changed my life, teaching me of the transformative power of nonviolent direct action, and how he forgave his hate-filled attackers as they were attacking him. I got pretty choked up, but made it through the introduction. He came to the podium, we hugged, and then he said "Thank you, my friend, my brother." I treasure the photo of Bettye Harris and myself standing with him following the speech. In his tribute to the Congressman, then-Chapter Chair Jim Callison remembers in a recent online tribute: "Lewis spoke for over an hour, and it was one of the most powerful, inspirational speeches I have ever heard".

And then there is the tour of the Capitol that Rep. Lewis gave me and my son. Chris was 8 and while in Washington D.C., we visited the Congressman's office. He autographed his book, then led us over to the Capitol, taking us onto the House floor. He showed Chris how he takes his Official Congressional Voting Card and inserts it into the machine to cast his ballot. He said if we returned to visit when Congress was in session, he would let Chris help him cast a vote.

Then, he walked us to the Rotunda and led us over to look out of a thin window, which looked out over the National Mall, all the way to the Lincoln Memorial. He gave Chris a personal history lesson, describing how, in 1963, tens of thousands of people gathered at the other end of the Mall, and how he, as a young man, stood on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, and gave a speech for equality. That was the same day that Dr. King gave his famous "I Have A Dream" speech.

As we left the Rotunda, he was greeted by visitors from another part of the country. They got a photo with him and said they couldn't find their member of Congress and were trying to get passes to the White House tour. Congressman Lewis said, "I'll be your Congressman today, let's go to my office and get you some passes."

John Lewis was everyone's Congressman. He stood for love and acceptance and forgiveness and working together for the "Beloved Community." And fully integral to that Beloved Community for John Lewis was the work of leaving this lil' planet we call home "a little bit cleaner, a little bit greener" than we found it.

Sam Collier served on the Chapter Political Committee in the 1980s and served as regional field staff in the 1990s.

All hands on deck: VOTE!

BY EDDIE EHLERT, CHAIR, POLITICAL COMMITTEE

You just can't blink without it being Election Season again. At least everything is going great, the environment we share is not under attack, and our natural resources are receiving the protection and respect they deserve.....

Wait a minute, that isn't the case here in Georgia — or even in the rest of the United States!

Unfortunately, the same problems we faced in 2018 in Georgia are still staring us in the face. Champion Incumbents and new faces in the General Assembly know what the problems are and how to fix them, but they need a large enough voice (16 more voices in the House and 8 more voices in the Senate) to get a fair hearing for the necessary protection of air, water, and land. Meanwhile, we have 26 Incumbent Champions to protect in the House and 11 to protect in the Senate.

The Public Service Commission (PSC) needs at least two environmental champions to offset the massive power wielded by our monopoly utility. Accepting industrial solar a few years ago was a good start, but until there is solar on every roof and power storage in every home, we aren't making any legitimate progress toward our climate change and clean energy goals. The current PSC has made clear "the Southern Company isn't a charity." At the otherwise unattainable levels of profit they have engineered, one wonders what sort of business they are. It's almost as if there is some magical belief that protecting shareholder dividends will slow climate change. That sort of protection won't ensure expansion of carbon-free electricity or a grid hardened against an ever increasing number of more destructive storms.

It's probably worth mentioning that ever increasing temperatures coupled with ever receding wildlife habitat puts people in contact with more animals and the diseases they can carry. Remember when that was just a standard plot of horror movies? The problem is only going to worsen.

Yet surrender is not an option. We have the power to stop moving backwards and ensure the appropriate actions are taken. We can VOTE! While we are at it, we can ensure everyone around us knows the climate crisis is not a "hoax" and ensure they vote as well. We are at an all-hands-on-deck moment where everyone who has ever considered volunteering with the Sierra

KEY INFO TO CAST YOUR VOTE

What are the key dates for this election?

October 12, 2020 - Early voting begins in Georgia

October 30, 2020 - Last day of early voting

November 3, 2020 - ELECTION DAY

How do I check my voter registration?

Go to the state's My Voter Page website at mvp.sos.ga.gov to check or update your voter registration.

How do I get an absentee ballot?

Eligible voters must fill out and submit an absentee ballot application to obtain a ballot. You can request a ballot online at securevotega.com/secureabsentee.

When should I return my ballot?

We recommend getting your filled-in ballot in the mail at least two weeks before the election, or Oct. 20.

Go to sierraclub.org/georgia/vote2020 for more information about this year's election.

Club to phonebank, textbank, or write letters is desperately needed. Direct door-to-door canvassing is out of the question this year, and more hands are required to make up the difference. If you have the time and interest, contact Angela Jiang (angela.jiang@sierraclub.org) at the Georgia Chapter to help make a difference. If you want to reach out to me directly, I'll help steer you in the right direction.

Before I forget, let me revisit the difficulties in voting this year. If you have any reason preventing you from voting in person, order your no excuses absentee ballot today. Fill it out, and if possible, deposit it in a ballot drop box (they will be in most every county and every city) to ensure the ballot arrives on time and is counted. If you are not convenient to a ballot drop box, make sure to mail the ballot back with enough postage and in enough time for it to arrive (we recommend getting your completed ballot in the mail at least two weeks before Election Day, or October 20).

I know everyone gets tired of hearing it, but this really may be the most important election in decades. We have plenty to protect and a very real opportunity to make enough gains to finally deal with the environmental threats from coal ash leachate to stream buffers to carbon-free electricity that have been plaguing Georgia for a long, long time. It's up to each of us to put our shoulders to the wheel and protect our planet for us, our children, and all the generations to come.

And WEAR YOUR MASK!

SIERRA CLUB GEORGIA CHAPTER 2020 ENDORSEMENTS

To ensure the Sierra Club only endorses the best environmental candidates, we use a multi-step process and a wide array of criteria for selecting which candidates receive our support.

First, volunteers on our Chapter's Political Committee examine candidates' records and public statements, then distributes questionnaires to potential Environmental Champions with questions about our key issues. The questionnaire responses are then evaluated, and interviews with candidates are conducted.

Every endorsement is voted on by two volunteer committees. Presidential Endorsements originate with the National Sierra Club Political Team (SCPT) Endorsements Subcommittee, move to the whole SCPT and are then ratified by the National Board of Directors. For Congressional endorsements, votes are taken by our Chapter's Political Committee and the National

Sierra Club Political Team. For state legislative and other statewide races, a first vote is taken by the Chapter Political Committee, followed by a second approval by the Chapter Executive Committee. For local races, a first vote is taken by the Local Group Political Committee or Group Executive Committee, followed by a vote by the Chapter Political Committee. Municipal and county endorsements must originate in the Local Group.

Throughout our process, volunteers and staff evaluate the environmental and public health records of candidates, their electability, and their propensity to be a true champion on our issues.

Questions? Seeking endorsement? Please contact our Political Committee Chair, Eddie Ehlert, at edehlert@mindspring.com or visit us online at sierraclub.org/georgia/political.

U.S. President

Joe Biden

U.S. Senate

Jon Ossoff

U.S. House of Representatives

CD-4 Hank Johnson

CD-6 Lucy McBath

CD-7 Carolyn Bourdeaux

Georgia Senate

SD-2 Lester Jackson

SD-6 Jen Jordan

SD-8 Treva Gear

SD-10 Emanuel Jones

SD-15 Ed Harbison

SD-34 Valencia Seay

SD-35 Donzella James

SD-36 Nan Orrock

SD-38 Horacena Tate

SD-39 Nikema Williams

SD-40 Sally Harrell

SD-42 Elena Parent

SD-56 Sarah Beeson

Georgia House of Representatives

HD-24 Natalie Bucsko

HD-25 Christa Olenczak

HD-35 Kyle Rinaudo

HD-37 Mary Frances Williams

HD-38 David Wilkerson

HD-40 Erick Allen

HD-42 Teri Anulewicz

HD-43 Luisa Wakeman

HD-44 Connie Di Cicco

HD-45 Sara Tindall Ghazal

HD-50 Angelika Kausche

HD-51 Josh McLaurin

HD-52 Shea Roberts

HD-53 Sheila Jones

HD-57 Stacey Evans

HD-77 Rhonda Burnough

HD-79 Mike Wilensky

HD-80 Matthew Wilson

HD-81 Scott Holcomb

HD-82 Mary Margaret Oliver

HD-83 Becky Evans

HD-89 Bee Nguyen

HD-93 Dar'shun Kendrick

HD-95 Beth Moore

HD-96 Pete Marin

HD-97 Mary Blackmon Campbell

HD-101 Sam Park

HD-104 Nakita Hemingway

HD-105 Donna McLeod

HD-106 Rebecca Mitchell

HD-117 Mokah Johnson

HD-125 Shelia Clark Nelson

HD-132 Bob Trammell

HD-136 Carolyn Hugley

HD-137 Debbie Buckner

Georgia Public Service Commission

District 1 - Robert "Bobby" Bryant

District 4 - Daniel Blackman

County Commissions

Cobb Board of Commissioners

Chair - Lisa Cupid

District 2 - Jerica Richardson

Dekalb Board of Commissioners

Super District 6 - Ted Terry

Gwinnett Board of Commissioners

Chair - Nicole Love Hendrickson

District 1 - Kirkland Carden

District 3 - Jasper Watkins

Constitutional Amendments & Ballot Initiatives

Amendment 1:

Dedicating Tax and Fee Revenue Amendment (HR 164) - **YES**

Amendment 2:

Allow Residents to Seek Declaratory Relief from Certain Laws Amendment (HR 1023) - **YES**

Gwinnett County Transit Referendum - **YES**

For the most up-to-date list of endorsed candidates, go to sierraclub.org/georgia/2020endorsements.

BEYOND COAL

Cap in place vs. excavation: What's the big deal?

BY EMILY BOSCH, ASSOCIATE PRESS SECRETARY,
BEYOND COAL, SOUTHEAST

Over the next several months, the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) will accept public comments about Georgia Power's plans to deal with its toxic coal ash repositories across Georgia.

There are three options:

- "Cap in place," which leaves coal ash sealed in unlined pits;
- Excavate all coal ash and move to lined landfills; or
- Some combination of both.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of each approach? It's important to be informed, because these decisions being made now will impact Georgians and our groundwater for decades to come.

With a "cap in place" approach, water is pumped out of the wet coal ash ponds and the footprint of the ash basin is consolidated. The pit is "capped" with an impermeable tarp over the top.

This plan leaves the coal ash pits vulnerable to groundwater infiltration from below, from the sides, and from rain. The ash basin is also vulnerable if the cap is not constructed properly, fails over time, or if vegetation that is supposed to grow on top of the cap fails to do so properly.

Excavating the ash basins also involve pumping water from the wet coal ash ponds, but with this approach, all the coal ash is completely removed for storage in lined landfills, which can be off-site or near coal ash plants.

Closure plans for Georgia Power's coal ash ponds

- Leave all ash in unlined pits
- ◐ Excavate some ash and remove to lined landfill
- Excavate all ash and remove to lined landfill



Source: lweimer@selcnc.org from U.S. Geologic Survey; Georgia Power; U.S. Census Bureau; Natural Earth v. 4.0; and NOAA

Placing the ash in lined landfills prevents the risk of further contamination of groundwater.

Georgia Power says that they'll excavate some ponds, while leaving others in place permanently. They are seeking approval for these plans from the Georgia EPD. There may be a coal plant — either retired or still operating — near you, and near those plants are coal ash ponds.

Get involved at this link: bit.ly/cleanupgacoalash.

CLEAN ENERGY COMMITTEE

No shutoffs: Don't let the PSC leave us in the dark

BY JILLIAN ELLER, CONSERVATION ORGANIZER,
SIERRA CLUB GEORGIA CHAPTER

The COVID-19 crisis has not passed and continues to disproportionately harm Black, Indigenous, and Latinx people and other communities of color. The pandemic

reveals how the communities hardest hit are often the same communities that suffer from high levels of pollution and poor access to healthcare. The fight for environmental justice cannot be separated from the fight for racial justice.

There isn't enough help out there for Georgians in crisis. Protections such as rent and mortgage deferrals, unemployment insurance, and paycheck protections are expiring or have already run out. One of these protections is a

moratorium on the ability of utility companies to shut off service for customers with outstanding bills, which was lifted by the Georgia Public Service Commission (PSC) earlier this summer.

Thousands of people in Georgia have had their electricity shut off by Georgia Power since the moratorium was lifted in July, despite our state continuing to face unprecedented public health and economic crises.

When we demanded a halt to utility shutoffs, many decision-makers said that charities and churches would take care of folks who are behind on their utility bills. This is wholly inadequate. Charities are vital examples of human compassion, but they are not a substitute for comprehensive government policy solutions. And the solution is obvious: We must suspend shutoffs across the state and provide relief for those that are straddled with utility debt.

These shutoffs will continue to disproportionately impact communities of color and low-income families that are at greater risk of contracting and dying from COVID-19.

"The disconnection of Black, Brown and poor residents' utilities in the state of Georgia is a form of systemic environmental injustice," said Valerie Hill Rawls, director of the New Georgia Project Black + Green Agenda, a Sierra Club partner.

Our work and the work being done by our allied organizations have caught the attention of the PSC and Georgia Power, but they haven't halted shutoffs yet. On behalf of the Georgia Beyond Coal Campaign and the Sierra Club Georgia Chapter, we encourage you to push them to do the right thing. They know that Sierra Club is a powerful voice for change in Georgia. We are a network of dedicated and vocal advocates who are committed to a vision of a better world, and we will work to make that world a reality, even amid the chaos of the current pandemic.

Please sign our petition calling for the utility shutoff moratorium to be reinstated at this link: bit.ly/noshutoffsga.

Thanks again for what you have already done and your continued commitment to protecting our neighbors. We will continue the fight with you for a just and affordable energy system for all.



LEGISLATIVE

Vote YES on Amendment 1!

BY MARK WOODALL, CHAIR, LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Everyone knows we have an important election this year. But did you know that one of the last questions on this November's ballot Georgia voters will ask: "Shall the Constitution of Georgia be amended so as to authorize the General Assembly to dedicate revenues derived from fees or taxes to the public purpose for which such fees or taxes were intended?"

Riveting stuff, right? While the language sounds wonky, this issue will have an enormous impact on Georgia's environmental and public health.

In plain terms, if this amendment passes, we can finally ensure that fees collected specifically to clean up hazardous waste sites or scrap tire piles are only spent on these important programs that help our environment and our local communities.

Right now, the state collects fees from tire retailers and landfills that are intended to pay for the cleanup of abandoned contaminated sites and illegal tire dumps. Fees for producing, handling, and disposal of hazardous waste are also collected to pay to clean up contaminated sites

left behind by those industries all over Georgia.

However, due to a legal loophole, these funds are regularly looted by the General Assembly and used to pay for other parts of the budget.

As a result, more than \$200 million in funding for clean community programs has vanished since the late 1990s while hundreds of toxic sites and tire dumps await cleanup. This is not merely a fluke of the 2008 recession either. In 2019 alone, over 70% of these funds were redirected into the General Fund to the tune of \$16.3 million.

While lawmakers should have financial flexibility during a recession to redirect a portion of the fees for essential purposes, this legislative looting should not continue to be annual business as usual when state revenues are healthy.

Thanks to everyone who lobbied their lawmakers earlier this year to pass HR 164, which put this constitutional amendment on the ballot. This legislation has been a Sierra Club priority for at least 16 years.

Vote "Yes" on Amendment 1 in November! Let's fight together for honest budgets and vote for a cleaner Georgia.

Updates from Gwinnett, Augusta transit campaigns

BY TEJAS KOTAK, CHAIR, R.A.I.L. COMMITTEE

Gwinnett County has another chance at expanding transit this November. The county government has put a 30-year special purpose sales tax program on the ballot that will specifically fund transit expansion. While we had hoped for the county to finally join the MARTA family, this expansion of Gwinnett County transit will still yield a lot of improvements in connectivity, equity, and air quality.

Project highlights include a heavy rail extension from Doraville to Jimmy Carter Boulevard (which MARTA will operate), four bus rapid transit routes, seven rapid bus routes, 16 new local bus routes and enhancements to the six current routes, and commuter routes connecting to Hall County and Athens.

If you vote in Gwinnett, then make sure to go all the way down the ballot to vote YES for transit.

AUGUSTA CAMPAIGN

The R.A.I.L. Committee is working to expand our activities outside of metro Atlanta, and we have connected with our Savannah River Group in the Augusta region to work on expanding transportation options there. The Augusta Regional Transportation Study (ARTS) is a regional government association that developed long-range transportation plans for the four-county area.

They recently developed a draft transportation plan looking towards 2050, and we submitted public comments encouraging ARTS to consider shifting more money to transit, carpool incentives, and infrastructure for bicycling and pedestrian movement instead of dedicating billions of dollars to highway expansions that will only create more traffic and pollution. We expect the final report later this fall, and are currently engaging with local governments in the region to develop support for more sustainable transportation options.

STATE FUNDING AND BRT PROJECTS

This year the state legislature passed HB 105, which

will create a dedicated source of state funding for transit. The money from this will come largely from added fees on rideshare (e.g., Uber and Lyft) trips, and some money coming from hotel/motel fees and heavy truck fees. It is estimated that more than \$45 million per year could be raised through these new fees. It is far from the billions that could be used if our gas tax revenue were opened up for transit use, but it is a start towards state funding.

Another avenue for state funding comes via the ATL Authority. The agency is required to recommend transit projects to the governor that should receive money via state bonds. It has recommended nine projects totalling \$2.1 billion dollars to the governor's office. These projects include four expansion, two enhancement, and three state-of-good-repair projects. With any luck, Governor Brian Kemp will see that investing in transit is a good investment, and will allocate state bond money to fund some or all of these projects.

Two bus rapid transit (BRT) studies in metro Atlanta are racing to be the first in the state to show off this type of service: MARTA's Summerhill BRT and Gwinnett's Satellite Boulevard BRT. Both these projects are envisioning not just high quality transit service, but also rezoning and transforming these corridors to become more walkable, liveable, active spaces.

Several other BRT lines are being planned by MARTA and Gwinnett County that could significantly transform how we view bus service in the Atlanta region. All these projects could be sped up significantly with more state or federal funds, so remember that come November.

NOVEMBER ELECTION

Speaking of which: This November holds a key election for Georgia to elect more environmentally-friendly and pro-transit candidates for federal, state, and local offices. We need more funding and support from all these levels in order to build a state with more diverse and equitable transportation options that can connect people, jobs, and communities.

Take a moment to register to vote and request your absentee ballot. Go to sierraclub.org/georgia/vote2020 to find more information about how to request and submit your ballot.

And check out our endorsed candidates list on page 9 to find out who best supports our core issues.

Great American Outdoors Act puts billions in public lands

BY RICKY LEROUX, COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR, SIERRA CLUB GEORGIA CHAPTER

The passage of the Great American Outdoors Act earlier this summer was a rare bit of good news to come out of Washington. The new law passed both the House & Senate with bipartisan support and was introduced by the late Georgia Congressman John Lewis.

The law will put \$900 million each year into the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), used to purchase property in order to protect it. In Georgia, money from the LWCF has been used at the Chattahoochee National Recreation Area, Cumberland Island National Seashore, the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests, and the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site, according to the Land & Water Conservation Fund Coalition.

The law also provides up to \$9.5 billion over five years to address the backlog of maintenance projects in national parks and other public lands.

“The Great American Outdoors Act is one of the most important conservation bills in a generation,” said Michael Brune, the Sierra Club’s executive director, adding, “Securing funding for the LWCF and to restore our parks means that we can not only begin to address the woeful state of many of our parks and public lands, but also allow us to expand investments in state and local park projects in communities that have for so long been denied access to nature and the outdoors.”

If you’re curious, Georgia Sens. David Perdue and Kelly

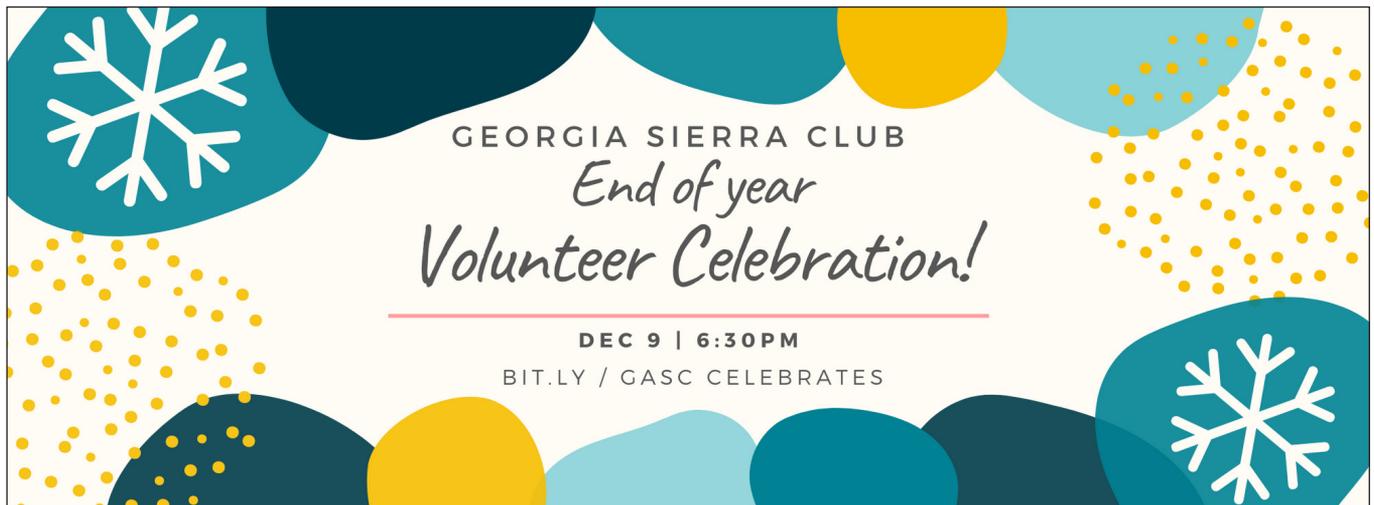
Loeffler voted in favor of the bill. In the House, Georgia Reps. Rick Allen, Doug Collins, Drew Ferguson, Tom Graves, Jody Hice, and Rob Woodall voted against the bill, while Reps. Sanford Bishop, Buddy Carter, Hank Johnson, Lucy McBath, Austin Scott, and David Scott voted in favor. Rep. Barry Loudermilk did not vote on the bill.

In other news, we’re pleased to report that the Sierra Club Georgia Chapter is a founding member of the newly-announced Okefenokee Protection Alliance (OPA). This coalition grew out of our work with our partner organizations to stop a mine planned for an area right outside the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge.

The goal of OPA is to build on the partnerships we’ve formed with other allied organizations to continue to monitor and address threats to the Okefenokee long after this mining proposal is (hopefully) defeated. Learn more about OPA at protectokefenokee.org.

On August 21st and 22nd, Georgians across the state took to their yards and gardens to count the bees, butterflies, and other insects on a single plant for the second annual Great Georgia Pollinator Census, a citizen science project conducted by the University of Georgia.

Sierrans throughout the state joined in on the fun, helping to gather important data to be used for research and conservation efforts, but we didn’t stop celebrating and learning about our pollinators there. On August 24th, the Sierra Club Georgia Chapter’s Wildlands and Wildlife Committee hosted a virtual reconvening, allowing participants to come back together to discuss their experiences. Dr. Elizabeth McCarty, a forest entomologist at the University of Georgia, also joined us and gave a fascinating presentation on the connection between pollinators and forest health. Both the census and the reconvening were a success, and the Wildlands and Wildlife Committee looks forward to participating again in August 2021.



FALL 2020 GROUP NEWS

CENTENNIAL GROUP

SERVING COBB, CHEROKEE & NORTH FULTON

BY **BETTYE HARRIS**, CENTENNIAL GROUP DELEGATE TO CHAPTER EXCOM, & **LYNN WALSTON**, CHAIR, CENTENNIAL GROUP

CENTENNIAL STAYING BUSY & KEEPING THE FAITH



Although a few of our regular leaders were missing, we captured this 'gallery-view' pic at our Centennial ExCom Zoom Meeting on August 20th. We hold our leadership team meetings on the 3rd Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. All members are welcome. It's a great opportunity to check in on each other and help manage group projects, priorities, and interests. Please join us. Contact group chair Lynn Walston for more information (lynnwalston22@yahoo.com). Thanks, and "YAY" to Gloria Keegan (not pictured) who recently stepped up to serve as our ExCom secretary.

REGULAR GROUP MEETINGS RESUME ... VIRTUALLY

We took a summer hiatus from hosting regular Centennial Group program meetings, but resumed on Thursday, September 10th with a virtual group meeting via Zoom. Members Linda & Steven Bell reported on their 5,000-mile pandemic camping journey in August to North Dakota and beyond (concluding with a visit to the George Floyd Memorial in Minneapolis); plus we had election/campaign updates and chapter updates. We will continue hosting regular Centennial (Program) meetings on Thursday, October 1st and Thursday, November 5th via Zoom. Details and meeting link information coming soon. Contact Lynn Walston (lynnwalston22@yahoo.com) with questions or to help us with planning or hosting.

NO IN-PERSON SIERRA CLUB OUTINGS OR GATH- ERINGS ... STILL



Thanks to everyone for your efforts to stay involved, stay safe, and support others while helping us follow COVID-19 guidelines. We appreciate reports from individuals who are enjoying small, private, informal, masked, socially-distanced, and safe outings when possible. We urge you to remain prudent when addressing your own risk assessments. Please keep in touch, ask us questions, and let us know how you are doing. Although many area parks and trails have reopened, not all facilities have. You should research carefully, check on changing restrictions, and continue to use good judgment when getting outside.

POLCOM NEWS

Our Centennial Group Political Committee remains busy reviewing questionnaires, arranging interviews, making endorsement decisions about county and state races, and gearing up for the home stretch. We are asking everyone to pitch in with this work as much as you can: to help with our GOTV efforts and to offer your campaign assistance to our endorsed candidates. There are many opportunities to help at the national, group, or chapter level. For more information send an email to elbell51@yahoo.com or lynnwalston22@yahoo.com. Be sure to review the list of endorsements made so far that are featured on page 9 in this issue.

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HONORING AND REMEMBERING GWENDA



We are saddened about the sudden passing of our dear friend, Gwenda Avery, on August 4th, 2020. Gwenda and husband Shae are founding co-owners of the Avery Gallery in Marietta and long-time members and supporters of the Centennial Group. They have also been gracious hosts for our annual Holiday Party & Auction for almost 10 years. We honored them at our December 2019 gathering. We send sympathy and best wishes to Shae, family, friends, and to the staff at the Avery Gallery.

GROUP INFORMATION

Website: sierraclub.org/georgia/centennial
Facebook: facebook.com/Centennial.Sierra.Club

GREATER GWINNETT GROUP

SERVING GWINNETT COUNTY

BY DAN FRIEDMAN, CHAIR,
GREATER GWINNETT GROUP

Six months ago, we thought the coronavirus would be a momentary blip on our lives. As we all know now, that has not been the case. Many of us have been sick or have known people who suffered from this disease. We are here for you.

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The Gwinnett Group has called for the removal of the Lawrenceville Confederate Memorial. The memorial commemorates confederate soldiers and the Confederacy. The monument was erected in 1993, which was more than 100 years after the Civil War and the Reconstruction Era. The monument is an insult to every minority and should be an embarrassment to every white person; indeed, the monument is an affront to modern Southern life.

Despite our self-quarantine, the Gwinnett Group has lobbied the Gwinnett Board of Commissioners (BOC) for a transit referendum through phone calls, emails, and even face-to-face meetings. We have continued our stream monitoring program and have even had

good turnout approaching pre-COVID-19 levels. Our Suwanee Creek (the stream we monitor) is healthy, although I discourage people from drinking directly from the stream.

Our ExCom lost a member recently, but we have quickly found a replacement with Jorge Granados who, having an intense interest in politics, has also joined the Political Committee.

Our Group meetings have continued with our June and July meetings spotlighting a hands-on decision-making tool for evaluating various factors in climate change and the state of coal energy production, respectively. Over the next two months, our programs will include the interaction of COVID-19 and global warming and the national Sierra Club's response to President Trump's emphasis on coal.

There is a lot going on in Gwinnett. Get involved. Stay safe and be well.

GROUP INFORMATION

Website: sierraclub.org/georgia/Gwinnett

LAGRANGE GROUP

SERVING THE LAGRANGE AREA

BY LAURA BREYFOGLE, OUTINGS CHAIR, LAGRANGE GROUP

Though the LaGrange Group has been actively participating in legislative work since our formation 12 years ago, we have recently expanded our activity in the political realm. As we all know, in the last four years, political activism has become imperative for any group whose cause is protecting our environment.

In December, our group conservation chair Sam Breyfogle organized a climate rally/march in downtown LaGrange which drew a crowd of 70 citizens. Speakers included LaGrange Mayor Jim Thornton, Troup County Manager Eric Mosley, State Sen. Randy Robertson, West Georgia Farmer's Cooperative leader Eric Simpson, Dr. Margaret Schaufler, Georgia Interfaith Power and Light staff member Codi Norred, Chattahoochee Riverkeeper staff member Henry Jacobs, businessman and Public Service Commission candidate John Noel, LaGrange College student Gage Bailey, and middle school student Jack Hurd. Singalongs were led by LaGrange College student Coral Douglas, and chants were led by Sam Breyfogle. LaGrange College Chaplain Adam Roberts opened and closed this event with prayer.

More recently, in support of the Black Lives Matter movement, one of our group's Executive Committee members, Travis Towns, organized a rally on Lafayette Square in downtown LaGrange where several dozen citizens made and displayed signs. Also, we invited our members to attend a faith-based anti-racism public event organized by Pastors Iris Lovelace (Bethlehem Baptist



LaGrange residents participated in a climate rally earlier this year.

Church in West Point) and Cade Farris (First Baptist Church on the Square). Though only religious leaders, the mayor, and the chief of police were invited to speak, Sierra Club members attended to support the call to combat racism in our community.

Laura Breyfogle has joined the Georgia Chapter Political Committee, which works to endorse federal, state, and local candidates by reviewing their submitted Sierra Club surveys and interviewing them with further inquiries about their commitment to supporting and introducing environmental legislation.

We encourage our members not only to vote, but also to vote in favor of Sierra Club endorsed candidates and constitutional amendments. Fortunately, we have a wonderful relationship with Georgia House Minority Leader Bob Trammell, who has spoken on several occasions at our meetings. We recently posted his campaign ad on our Facebook page and hope to support him in more substantial ways during his campaign. Bob

introduced HB 756, which requires that all coal ash must be stored in lined landfills. Unfortunately, it did not pass during the 2020 legislative session, but hopefully it will pass next year!

In efforts to educate our group about Georgia Chapter's political involvement, we have invited two of the chapter staff, Angela Jiang and Tia Fay, to give our first general meeting presentation since the pandemic shut down all live gatherings in March. They will be sharing with all Zoomers the many ways Sierra Club participates in the political arena on the chapter level. Importantly, we will learn how we can volunteer via text banking and phone banking prior to the general election. One of our members, Travis Towns, has already participated in pre-runoff text banking.

Although this pandemic may seem to have shut down the LaGrange Group activities (no outings or live meetings allowed until after February), we are very much involved. All of our opportunities are posted on our Facebook page. Please join us!



GROUP INFORMATION

Website: sierraclub.org/georgia/lagrange
Facebook: facebook.com/groups/300840033370271

METRO ATLANTA GROUP

SERVING ATLANTA, DEKALB & SOUTH FULTON

BY NINA DUTTON, CHAIR, METRO ATLANTA GROUP

GETTING OUT THE VOTE, AND BEYOND

We know that electing environmental champions makes it easier to enact policies to help protect our environment for everyone. So, of course, we encourage all eligible voters in the Sierra Club community to vote in alignment with their values and especially to turn out in this crucial election year. But we also know that voting is just one tool in the political toolbox, one of many levers to pull to enact change in a process that does not begin and end at the ballot (drop)box. Candidates must hear from us while they are still shaping their platforms, and we would do well to consider not only the substance of their specific policy proposals, but also their broader commitment to justice and ability to work in coalition to accomplish their goals. Elected officials must come to expect us on their phones and at their doors (even if virtually during the COVID-19 pandemic) if they wish to say they represent us. And we must use our advocacy and activism, in all its forms, to push the limits of what seems possible in the minds of those running for or serving in office, among others.

KNOW HOW TO EXERCISE THE RIGHT TO VOTE, AND HELP OTHERS TO DO SO

If you are eligible and registered to vote, we encourage you to vote for candidates who will work to protect our environment for all. Whether or not you are eligible to vote, you can still support candidates aligned with your values by phonebanking, making a financial contribution, and more. The Sierra Club Georgia Chapter has endorsed candidates in several current races, including local ones. Check out the rest of this Georgia Sierran issue to find out how to get involved in electoral work and get out the vote.

Voting by mail is a helpful option this year to avoid crowds and long lines at polling places. You can submit vote-by-mail (a.k.a. absentee) ballots by sending them through the mail (which requires paid postage), or by submitting them at a dropbox in your county (no postage required), following the instructions included with the ballot. Find vote-by-mail information on your county's website. Here's where to find ballot dropbox information for several metro Atlanta counties:

- Fulton: fultoncountyga.gov/inside-fulton-county/fulton-county-departments/registration-and-elections

- DeKalb: dekalbcountyga.gov/voter-registration-elections/voter-information
- Clayton: claytoncountyga.gov/government/elections-and-registration
- Henry: dropbox outside front door of Henry County Elections and Registration Office, 40 Atlanta St., McDonough, GA 30253
- Fayette: dropbox at 140 Stonewall Ave W, Suite 208, Fayetteville, GA 30214

RECENT GROUP MEETINGS

Starting with our April meeting this year, we have been holding our meetings remotely, accessible online and by phone.

At our July 14 meeting, we hosted as our guest speaker Dr. Jairo Garcia, co-chair of the Atlanta Chapter of the Climate Reality Project and the city of Atlanta's former director of climate policies and renewables. Dr. Garcia spoke to our group about why and how local governments can take actions to address both the climate crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Here are some key takeaways from the meeting:

- Climate action should be central to our reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic. By addressing climate change, we are addressing this and future pandemics, because these issues are linked environmentally, socially, and economically.
- For example, destruction of mature forests and other ecosystems reduces our planet's ability to absorb the greenhouse gases that human activities release, while also bringing humans into contact with unfamiliar disease-causing agents (such as viruses and bacteria).
- We also have an opportunity to respond to the COVID-19 economic crisis not by rebuilding the same exploitative economy we had before, but instead by creating economic systems that serve the needs of all, putting people and planet first (rather than profit for a few).
- Cities are an important focus of attention for this work, since the world's population is continuing to move into cities. Many efforts can be done locally, including with investment and support from city and local governments.
- For example, many cities are buying local utilities so that they can be a public service (rather than run by companies extracting profits from "customers," also known as residents). Meanwhile, Georgia's Public Service Commission has allowed Georgia Power to resume electricity shutoffs at

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the height of summer and in the midst of COVID-19-related income loss for many.

- Cities such as New York City and Oakland are closing streets so that people can get around at a safer distance, without having to depend as much on cars for social distancing. This kind of measure also offers the opportunity for residents to find out what kinds of more sustainable transportation options are viable for their lives. Atlanta has not done this yet.
- Cities can also support use of community gardens and vertical gardening, to reduce the need for new land-clearing and fossil fuel-powered transport of food from rural areas. The city of Atlanta does offer support for urban agriculture.
- Support from states and federal governments can help the work move further. For example, the state legislature would need to change the Territorial Act in Georgia to end the monopoly Georgia Power has in the locations where it operates.

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS, STAY UP TO DATE

Want to pitch in by helping out at meetings, planning events or actions, or keeping on top of local news, policy, politics, events, and opportunities? Please

email our chair, Nina Dutton, at nddutton@gmail.com.

If you don't get our monthly meeting announcements, sign up for email updates through the Georgia Chapter website (sierraclub.org/georgia) and be sure to include your Atlanta-area zip code.

The Metro Atlanta Group generally meets on the second Tuesday of each month. Typically our meetings feature a speaker on a timely topic. Then, we discuss and present info on how to take action on important issues. Some months we do not hold a regular meeting, so please check the Chapter calendar, our webpage, and our Facebook page for updates.

Our executive committee meetings are open and generally held on the evening of the first Tuesday of the month. Contact Nina Dutton (nddutton@gmail.com) to confirm details.



GROUP INFORMATION

Website: sierraclub.org/georgia/atlanta
Facebook: facebook.com/groups/SierraClubATL



SAVANNAH RIVER GROUP

SERVING AUGUSTA & SURROUNDING AREAS

BY LINDA MCBURNEY, CO-CHAIR, SAVANNAH RIVER GROUP

On March 20, 2018, the Augusta Richmond County Board of Commissioners approved a Goal of 100% Clean Energy by 2050 Resolution that states "... that the county establish a transition from a fossil fuel-based economy to a 100% clean renewable energy for all energy sectors, including transportation by Dec. 31, 2050, to avoid climate catastrophe, to promote job creation and economic growth, and to protect the Earth for current and future generations from climate catastrophe, Further, the county shall achieve 80% clean renewable energy for all energy sectors by December 2030..." The Resolution was presented by Rev. Charles Utley, Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League.

In the Spring of 2019 a diverse group of people from the Georgia and South Carolina Sierra Club and other organizations including the Imani Group and

the Unitarian Universalist Churches of Aiken and Augusta, participated in a Central Savannah River Area (CSRA) Community Dialogue, a series of discussions facilitated by Penny Cothran, Sierra Club Organizing Representative in Columbia, SC, on clean and affordable energy to create more liveable communities in the CSRA.

Savannah River Group began meeting to identify how we and the CSRA community can build on these major works. We welcome anyone in the CSRA that would like to join us in this effort. If you are interested or have questions please contact either Greg Sutherland at greg30808@mac.com or Christopher Hall at ipaddle4fun@gmail.com.



GROUP INFORMATION

Website: sierraclub.org/georgia/Savannah-River

CHAPTER & GROUP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

CANDIDATE BIOS

GEORGIA CHAPTER

GUSTAVO ARCE

At the age of 14 my father, who works in construction, would take me to work with him every Saturday and school vacation I had. At every construction site there would be a large container with 2 tons worth of building trash and scraps. Very early on I saw this issue and in college I decided to learn about how businesses can be built for sustainability to benefit society and the planet. By joining my college's environmental club, becoming a Solarize Atlanta volunteer through the Sierra Club, serving as a sustainability ambassador for the city of Atlanta and now by helping start a woman of color owned solar energy company in downtown Atlanta, I have gained a wide range of experience in sustainability and environmental protection early on. I decided to use my experience to join the fight to protect our planet. Serving the Sierra Club's executive committee would be an opportunity for me to contribute to the organization and help reach out to a generation of young advocates. I have a diverse perspective on how environmental issues affect communities of color and I would be a leader in the Sierra Club's efforts to fight back for our planet's future. I am excited to collaborate with local influencers, businesses, media outlets, and nonprofits to push for a sustainable, equitable Georgia for all.



MICHAEL BOVINGDON

I wish to more efficiently implement vertical and horizontal integration of our various local groups; keeping in mind our differing initiatives. I will work to prioritize our most feasible initiatives while also not ignoring our ongoing commitment to our local projects, with an emphasis on local lobbying. I will be committed to the preservation and restoration of our existing ecology, as well as of our work raising public awareness of the need to preserve our ecosystem for the foreseeable future. I grew up on a black-water river in South Georgia. It was full of life. Due to negligence, incompetence, and corruption that river is almost dead. I don't want to be asked by my (currently) six year old ward why she can't



enjoy the great wilderness I did when I was her age; if I have to answer that question I don't want to say that I did nothing.

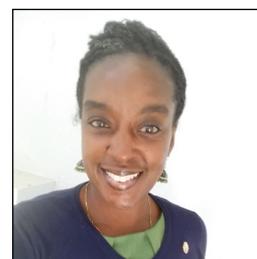
NANCY DAVES

I retired from the international office of NOAA's fisheries service four years ago and moved from Washington, DC, to Atlanta. Volunteering with the Georgia Chapter of the Sierra Club has given me an outlet to act locally in my new home on the values I learned globally in my previous job. My activities in the Georgia Chapter have focused on things I know best: commenting on regulatory requirements for proposed mining near the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge and conservation efforts for Georgia's 100 miles of coast. But in addition, I've contributed to the Sierra Club's lobbying efforts at the Georgia legislature and support for candidates for Georgia's Senate and House of Representatives who pay attention to environmental issues. I look forward to contributing to our efforts in issues of environmental justice and to a more diverse Sierra Club.



NATASHA DYER

Since I was a child, I can remember being concerned with climate change. After spending 12 years in the garment manufacturing industry and watching its stability shift with the housing market crash in 2008, I knew my next career was going to be in climate change mitigation. Now more than ever, I know I have picked the right pathway and realize the importance of choosing and communing with the next leaders to help us win this fight between nature and capitalism, of finding the equilibrium between both. I am the former Co-Chair of Atlanta Recycles, former board member of Sustainable Smyrna and the former Board Vice President with Green Education Inc (Los Angeles). If selected to serve on the Executive Committee with the Sierra Club, it is my goal to do just this, pushing the work forward with like-minded individuals who know the importance of clean air, water, and land for all of the Earth's people that only a healthy climate can deliver.



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PHYLLIS RICHARDSON

I have thirty plus years of serving in high level government and political positions, beginning in the late 1980's in South Florida. Upon moving to Georgia and now living in Loganville, I continued my civic engagement as the Senate and Legislative Aide to Georgia State Senators Gloria Butler, and Valencia Seay. In 2014, I was appointed as the First African American Municipal City Clerk for the City of Snellville. As the Governmental Affairs Director at Georgia WAND Education Fund, Inc. I have been able to combine my love of effective government and equitable and fair environmental justice. Standing up against Georgia Power IRP and Fee Hike proposals affecting marginalized communities, working with the Georgia Water Coalition, on their Waterways pollution and Coal Ash legislation, demanding nuclear harm reduction for residents of Burke County, lobbying with Alliance for Nuclear Accountability in DC and fighting for Peace with the National Korean Peace Now Organization. If elected, I hope to continue to use my experience to help guide the Sierra Club towards creating a more equitable and fairer Georgia.



CASSIDY SCHWARTZ

Sierra Club Georgia connected me to an incredible community of people fighting for the planet's future. I am so grateful, and I intend to pay it forward. My time with GASC has shown me that we can be more inclusive and equitable in our operations. If selected for ExCom, I would bring a strong commitment to environmental justice and knowledge of environmental policy. For the past year, I worked to support Atlanta's efforts to achieve the targets in their 100% Clean Energy Plan. I am also a highly engaged environmental advocate and leader in a range of environmental organizations - including, Climate Reality Project, Sunrise, and, of course, GASC – which enabled me to develop expertise in project management, meeting facilitation, and interpersonal communication. Through ExCom, I would engage actively with chapter members to listen to your needs and use my platform to amplify your voices. Together, we will succeed.



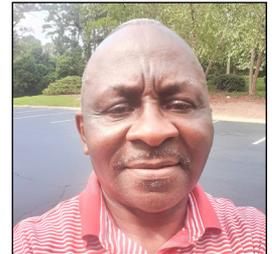
CENTENNIAL GROUP

LINDA BELL

I have been a long time Sierra Club member and became involved with the Centennial Group when we moved here 7 years ago. For several years I have been the Political and Legislative chairs for our group as well as being on the Chapter Political and Legislative committees. I am proud of the work that our local Political Committee has done; we have helped to elect several state house and senate members who have strongly advocated for our environmental issues. I have been actively involved with increasing greenspace for Cobb County and working on expanding transit options. I have been on the Centennial executive committee for several years and would be pleased to continue.



need to respect and protect Mother Nature. After high school graduation in Cameroon, I left home to further my education, first in Paris and later in Montreal for graduate studies. I came to the United States and the Atlanta area in 2000, and formerly was an Assistant Professor of French and Education at Kennesaw State University. Thanks to a friend, I became a Centennial Sierra Club member in 2010, and have tried to make my little contribution to the protection of the environment (the only one that we have). I've participated in and helped with local cleanups; Juneteenth celebrations; East Cobber parades; monthly meetings; and I especially enjoy hikes. I believe I can take on more responsibility. I would appreciate the opportunity to serve on the Centennial Group executive committee.

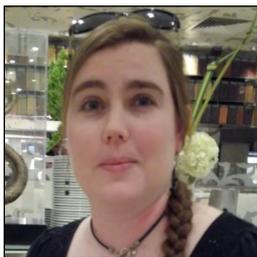


DEIDRE MEIGGS

When I was an undergrad in college, I changed my major four times. The last switch was to the environmental sciences. When I told my mother, who was incredibly grateful for scholarship funding by that point, she unexpectedly laughed. Apparently, she had made a wager

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with my grandmother when I was younger that I would end up as an environmental advocate. A few years and many pieces of paper later, I possess postgraduate degrees in Earth and Atmospheric Science and Inorganic Chemistry from Georgia Tech. At present, my advocacy partially manifests in my employment as a passionate educator and Associate Professor of Natural Science at Life University in



Marietta, where I teach courses in environmental ethics, food industry sustainability, and environmental science. I have also been an active Sierra Club member since 2015 and am a member of the Climate Reality Project. I was honored in December 2019 to be the recipient of an Outstanding Service award for the Centennial group in appreciation of my diligent efforts to facilitate the group's meetings on the Life U campus. I am thankful to the members of the group for allowing me to expand my environmental stewardship efforts as a candidate seeking an appointment to the Centennial Group executive committee.

GREATER GWINNETT GROUP

JORGE GRANADOS

My name is Jorge Granados. I am a young professional that manages 2 small businesses (Bruster's Real Ice Cream) in Gwinnett County and been very politically involved for the past 4 years. I want to join the Gwinnett Sierra Club Executive Committee because I want to learn and be more involved in fighting for environmental issues in Gwinnett and throughout Georgia. As an Executive Committee member, I would like to accomplish by setting an example for other young professionals to be more involved and become more environmentally friendly in their daily lives.



Sierra Club for many years. ... I have been honored to serve on the Executive Committee for a portion of this year and have decided to run for the 2021 Executive Committee.

Things I would like to help with going forward are: finding presenters for our monthly meetings, assisting with our communications and social media, creating group outings, assisting with the work of bringing the organization into right relations with the BIPOC community, attending Public Commissioners meetings to comment on behalf of our Sierra Club chapter, becoming more involved with Sierra Club committees, and in general putting my passion for sustainability into action by supporting our chapter.



Currently I am employed at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Gwinnett as the Office Administrator where I support the mission there of creating beloved community by including everyone in the Circle of Love. I am also doing a temporary gig working for the Census for my third time in a row because it is important to me that everyone is counted.

SHARON YUN

Hello, my name is Sharon Yun. I have been a member of

LAGRANGE GROUP

MARY LOU DABBS

I've been a Sierra Club member since 2002, and have been active in outings and events like West Point Lake clean-up work days. I worked with local community members to encourage and facilitate the beginning of curbside recycling in the city of LaGrange. I currently serve as LaGrange Group Co-Chair, and LaGrange Group Delegate to the Chapter ExCom. My special interests are gardening, environmental sustainability, and everything outdoors. Previous volunteer experience includes 20+ years with Literacy



Volunteers of America, and various roles at St. Mark's Episcopal Church.

COLLIE GRADDICK

Collie Graddick is a Consultant with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) a Partner in the Community Table Association of Cooperatives (CTAC) and a life-time member of the West Georgia Farmer's Cooperative (WGFC) and the Federation of Southern Cooperatives (FSC). Collie has been with the MDA for 28 years, working in the Seed, Noxious Weed, Fertilizer, Endangered Spe-



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cies and Pesticide Regulatory programs. He has been a partner and trainer at CTAC for 11 years, assisting immigrant, minority and small farmers with working together on developing Local Community Cooperative Food Systems throughout MN. Collie grew up on a 200-acre sustainable farm in Hamilton, Georgia producing fruits, vegetables and livestock. He received his B.S. degree in Agronomy from Fort Valley State University, GA and his M.S. degree in Commercial Fruit and Vegetable Production from Tuskegee University, Alabama.

BRIAN HUNTER

I grew up on a goat farm in rural Indiana near Lake Michigan, where people worship the sun for the 6 days

of the year it's visible, battle chilly winters, and depend on their knowledge of the natural world to grow corn. I've been traveling all over ever since, and am still trying to recreate a warmer and sunnier rendition of my youth. When I moved to LaGrange alone from Mexico in 2018, I joined Sierra Club to find active hiking and biking buddies with a hankering for the outdoors. There were at least 6, all of whom are now my friends. Lucky me! Now I've got this chance to be around them more, and set up some post-covid outings, and I'm excited to see what's going to happen next.



METRO ATLANTA GROUP

JUSTIN BRIGHTHARP

I am Justin Brightharp and I am running to be on the Executive Committee for the Sierra Club Metro Atlanta Group. Since graduating from college, my work has been in the clean transportation space, specifically on projects related to zero-emission vehicles. My experience with the Sierra Club has been through my work at the City of Atlanta, where I worked on electric vehicle projects and policy, and educating the City of Atlanta through Neighborhood Planning Units and workshops of the 100 percent clean energy goal in 2017. I believe that the Sierra Club Metro Atlanta Group has opportunities to be a space for sustainability and how it interacts with technology, especially as the metro area continues to grow. As technology continues to progress rapidly, I believe the group can serve as a facilitator to discuss ideas where technology enhances the message of the environment, equity and justice, and the natural space is celebrated and protected.



shops (MazdOnly and ToyOnly) so my understanding of the crucial importance for reduction of emissions and appropriate protection of stormwater runoff is an intrinsic part of my daily life. Zero-emission vehicles, ultra low-emission vehicles and low-emission vehicles are entirely necessary if we intend to continue a pattern of individual transportation. Over the last six years, I have been deeply involved in bringing a 32-acre tract of forest into permanent conservation and public control in Brookhaven for public passive recreation. I'm also a paddler, boater, and am involved in protection of the waters in Lake Lanier as well as everything downstream. Protecting the environment we all share is a goal I believe in, work for and live out.

MATTHEW EVANS

I have been a member of the Sierra Club for almost four years. I decided to join because I wanted to turn my individual environmental values into collective action. Environmental justice, and "green" affordable transportation are the two aspects of the environmental movement that I am most interested in. Serving on the Executive Committee as Treasurer, I would raise funds for the Sierra Club, as well as help expand the reach of the Club's environmental goals. I have been an active member so far by showing up to every Atlanta group meeting and attending several events, such as the People's Climate March in Washington, D.C. I have also updated the Atlanta group webpage to bring members' attention to upcoming events and trainings. My previous experiences include being Secretary and Treasurer for other organizations, such as Circle K, at my alma mater. I look forward to serving the Sierra Club and the local community further as Treasurer of the Metro Atlanta Group.



EDDIE EHLERT

I have been a member of the Club since the early 1990s and have been the Political Chair since 2009. I have been a member of the Metro Atlanta Group ExCom and Chapter ExCom at various points since 2010 as well. Since January 2017, I have been a member of the National Sierra Club Political Team and am liaison to most of the states in the Southeast. My day job is owning and operating auto repair



CHAPTER & GROUP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

BALLOT & INSTRUCTIONS

Follow the steps outlined here to cast your vote in our annual elections for Georgia Chapter and Local Group Executive Committees positions.

Georgia Chapter members may vote in these elections by filling out the ballot below and mailing it to the Chapter office **OR** using our online ballot system, **but not both**.

Members are encouraged to cast their ballots online at sierraclub.org/georgia/ExComElections2020. The online system is easy to use and does not require a stamp or envelope.

All members of the Georgia Chapter are eligible to vote for Chapter Executive Committee candidates. Members may also vote in **ONE** local group election. Not all groups are using the Georgia Sierran for their leadership elections. If your group is not listed, contact your group leadership (see directory on pages 4-5).

Your ballot must be cast online or received at the Chapter office by 5 p.m. on Nov. 20, 2020.

Questions? Please call the Chapter office at 404-607-1262, or email georgia.chapter@sierraclub.org.

Mail ballot instructions:

- Vote for up to the number of candidates indicated below. If too many boxes are checked in either column, **the ballot will be declared invalid**.
- If there is only one name on your mailing label, please **vote in column A only**.
- If there are two names on the mailing label on the back of this magazine, you have a joint membership and get two votes. **One member should vote in column A, and the other should vote in column B**.
- After voting, mail this entire page to the Chapter office. **The page must contain your mailing label on the back**, which is used to verify your membership. After your ballot is verified, your label will be removed to ensure anonymity during counting.
- Mail or deliver your ballot to:
Georgia Sierra Club Elections
743 East College Avenue, Suite B
Decatur, GA 30030

GREATER GWINNETT GROUP

Executive Committee Candidates
Candidate statements on pg. 21

Vote for up to TWO candidates

2

Jorge Granados
Sharon Yun

A	B
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

LAGRANGE GROUP

Executive Committee Candidates
Candidate statements on pg. 21

Vote for up to THREE candidates

3

Mary Lou Dabbs
Collie Graddick
Brian Hunter

A	B
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

METRO ATLANTA GROUP

Executive Committee Candidates
Candidate statements on pg. 21

Vote for up to THREE candidates

3

Justin Brightharp
Eddie Ehler
Matthew Evans

A	B
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

GEORGIA CHAPTER

Executive Committee Candidates
Candidate statements on pgs. 19-20

Vote for up to THREE candidates

3

	A	B
Gustavo Arce	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Michael Bovingdon	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nancy Daves	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Natasha Dyer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Phyllis Richardson	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cassidy Schwartz	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

CENTENNIAL GROUP

Executive Committee Candidates
Candidate statements on pgs. 20-21

Vote for up to TWO candidates

2

	A	B
Linda Bell	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Edouard Kamdem	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deidre Meiggs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Check out our website (sierraclub.org/georgia) to learn more about the Georgia Chapter, access our library of resources, learn about volunteer opportunities, and more. You can also find a complete listing of all conservation committee chairs, staff members, issue leaders, and group leaders.

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA: @GASierraClub