

GEORGIA



SIERRAN

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SIERRA CLUB GEORGIA CHAPTER • OCT / NOV / DEC 2021



CHAPTER AND GROUP ELECTIONS ISSUE!

INSIDE: 2021 GEORGIA CHAPTER ENDORSEMENTS • THE COAL ASH FIGHT CONTINUES

2022 LEGISLATIVE PREVIEW • ROCKETS OVER CUMBERLAND ISLAND? • LOCAL GROUP REPORTS AND MORE!

AT THE TRAILHEAD

An Invitation to Save the Planet by Ending White Supremacy

A racist system that values some lives over others helps to fuel the climate crisis

BY HOP HOPKINS, DIRECTOR OF ORGANIZATIONAL TRANSFORMATION FOR THE SIERRA CLUB

At one of my first meetings as a manager at the Sierra Club, the introductory prompt was "What brought you to the Sierra Club?"



HOP HOPKINS

I stood up and said that I came to the Sierra Club to strike the biggest blow against

white supremacy I could imagine. And, yeah, people looked really confused.

But my response makes sense if you understand that the Sierra Club has a valuable role to play as part of a multiracial, intergenerational, cross-class, anti-racist movement. That role is to undermine white support for white supremacy. Black folks—along with Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) groups—have been calling on majority-white organizations like the Sierra Club to step up to this work for decades.

In 1966, members of the Atlanta Project, an affiliate of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, wrote, "White people who desire change in this country should go where that problem

(of racism) is most manifest. That problem is not in the Black community. The white people should go into white communities where the whites have created power for the express purpose of denying Blacks human dignity and self-determination."

Those words read like they could be from a 2021 social media post. Some things may have changed since the civil rights movement, but the call for white people to do their part to end white supremacy has yet to be answered en masse.

In my six years at the Sierra Club, I and many other volunteers and staffers have worked to better understand how racism fuels the climate crisis, how some people are deemed disposable and their hometowns or homelands treated as sacrifice zones. For example, part of the fracked-gas Atlantic Coast Pipeline was slated to run through Virginia's Union Hill, a Black community founded by freedmen after the Civil War. It would have further burdened residents with pollution—while exacerbating the climate crisis. Many of us within the Sierra Club have also learned how important it is to be in what Quakers call "right relationship" with those impacted first and worst by climate change.

And still, there's much more we can do to reorient this organization to be in alignment with the struggle for Black liberation. What does that mean? It means coming to understand that climate justice is racial justice. If we can grasp that the climate crisis has its roots in racism, it becomes clear that the solution lies in anti-racism. From Puerto Rico to Oakland, California, corporations have targeted communities of color

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On the Cover

Photo: Centennial Group outings leaders lead a hike across the rim of Cloudland Canyon.

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to host major polluters like coal plants because the corporations know that these communities lack their white counterparts' political clout. The Sierra Club has an open invitation from BIPOC-led groups to support solutions that marry the fight to end white supremacy and the fight for a livable planet—like the Indigenous Environmental Network's call to keep fossil fuels in the ground.

I put this invitation to you, the people of the Sierra Club: Are you ready to be part of a movement to end white supremacy? Are you willing to put some of your privilege on the line, get uncomfortable, move beyond conversations, and take courageous action?

I hope so, because the fight to end white supremacy is the fight for all our lives. A racist system that values some lives over others creates the sacrifice zones that fuel climate chaos. Only by ending that system can we

create a new economy that prioritizes the health of all over the wealth of a few, an economy that doesn't depend on destroying the ecosystems that humans and wildlife need to survive.

And let me be clear: Folks who identify as white don't need to end white supremacy for people who look like me. Y'all need to end it for yourselves. Ask yourself, what have been the internal costs of complicity with white supremacy, and how has that affected your own humanity?

We may have different roles to play, but we all need to be in the fight to end white supremacy and together save the planet.

This article originally appeared in the Fall quarterly edition Sierra Magazine with the headline "Different Roles, Same Struggle."

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CHAPTER NEWS

UPDATES ON OUR COVID-19 RESPONSE

The Sierra Club Georgia Chapter has begun holding local outdoor outings again, following new protocols to protect outings participants from COVID-19.

The Chapter continues to hold most meetings virtually, and Chapter staff members will continue to work from home while Sierra Club leaders determine the safest way for staff and volunteers to return to holding in-person meetings. The Chapter office in Decatur remains closed.

Meanwhile, the availability of COVID-19 vaccines in Georgia continues to increase. To find a vaccine appointment near you, go to vaccinefinder.org or dph.georgia.gov/covid-vaccine.

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 GINA WEBBER!

A round of congratulations are in order! Gina Webber has been promoted to Deputy Director of the Georgia Chapter. Gina has been working as the Chapter's Development Associate since 2019. As Deputy Director, Gina continues working on fundraising and has taken on additional responsibilities at the Chapter. Congratulations, Gina!

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

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2021 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING SCHEDULE

The Sierra Club Georgia Chapter's Executive Committee (ExCom) meets every other month. The meetings are being held virtually until further notice.

Georgia Chapter ExCom meetings are open to the public, and all are welcome to attend.

Meeting dates are subject to

change, so email gasierraclub@gmail.com to confirm the dates.

The Georgia Chapter ExCom's remaining 2021 meetings are scheduled for:

- November 20 - Noon

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The fight to protect our communities from coal ash continues

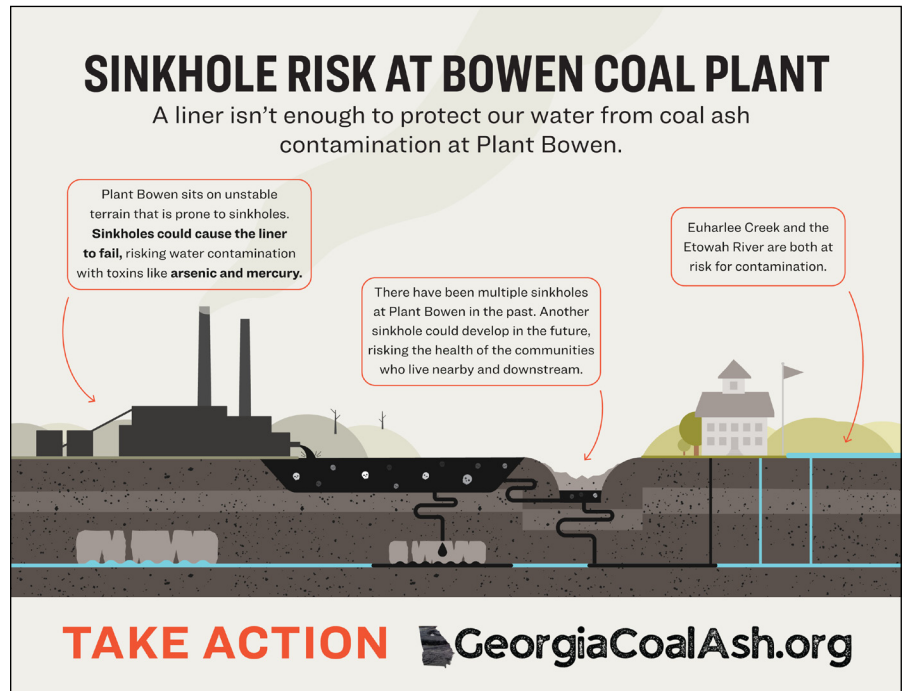
BY NEIL SARDANA, GEORGIA ORGANIZING REPRESENTATIVE, BEYOND COAL CAMPAIGN

In July, the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) released the first of Georgia Power's proposals to store coal ash, which concerned Plant Hammond's Ash Pond-3 (AP-3), just outside of Rome. Georgia Power's plan was to permanently and unsafely store coal ash at AP-3 without a liner to protect groundwater from the dangerous substances found in coal ash, like mercury, cadmium, chromium, and arsenic.

Plant Hammond sits on highly unstable karst terrain, which is prone to catastrophic sinkholes. Georgia Power, really, is asking for permission for work it has already completed. Georgia Power closed AP-3 years ago, and testing data has already shown widespread coal ash contamination in the groundwater, threatening the Coosa River and all water downstream.

But thanks to Georgia Sierrans and concerned citizens throughout the state, this permit did not go unnoticed. We packed the EPD's virtual hearing. We submitted more than 630 comments through our GeorgiaCoalAsh.org portal.

We made it clear to EPD that we want only the safest coal ash cleanup: full excavation and removal to be stored at a properly lined and permitted facility.



Public advocacy matters because it's critical to supporting healthy and thriving communities. Our families, friends, and neighbors deserve to live without fear of water contamination from coal ash pollution, but it takes all of us coming together to let decisionmakers know what we expect and deserve to make that vision a reality.

The EPD has now released a draft permit for Georgia Power's plans for Plant Bowen's Ash Pond-1 (AP-1), which is just outside Cartersville. While the proposal for AP-1 would store the coal ash in a lined pit, Plant Bowen and AP-1 also sit on unstable karst

terrain that is prone to sinkholes. This threat isn't hypothetical. A four-acre sinkhole opened below Plant Bowen's AP-1 in 2002 and released millions of gallons of coal ash into Euharlee Creek. And multiple sinkholes formed on the site in December 2008. New sinkholes could result in millions of tons of toxic coal ash waste spilling into Euharlee Creek and the Etowah River, which are directly next to the ash pond.

Send a message to the Georgia EPD that Georgia Power's plans for Plant Bowen are inadequate and risk endangering communities near the plant and those downstream by going to GeorgiaCoalAsh.org.

Help us tell Congress: It's time to #ActNOW for climate!

BY JILLIAN ELLER, CONSERVATION ORGANIZER, SIERRA CLUB GEORGIA CHAPTER

The latest news on our efforts to push for climate action at the federal level is that we are on track to make a once-in-a-generation investment in climate through the Congressional budget reconciliation process. (Note: Things can change quickly in Washington, DC, so the proposal and its timeline for adoption might be different by the time you read this article.)

Our Senators, Jon Ossoff and Rev. Raphael Warnock, both voted to pass a broad \$3.5 trillion budget reconciliation figure, which the House moved forward late August with a budget resolution. With Speaker Nancy Pelosi toeing the line of bipartisan support and direct action, we expect a vote for the bipartisan infrastructure deal and budget reconciliation sometime this fall.

This summer, the Sierra Club Georgia Chapter hosted a virtual letter to the editor (LTE) writing party targeting our senators to encourage them to continue to push for the biggest, bold-est investments in climate and our future. In partnership with Georgia Interfaith Power and Light, we convened 15 activists to write and submit their own LTEs to local newspapers. Topics included the Justice40 initiative (which



Photo credit: Erik Voss

Elected officials, faith leaders, solar installers and manufacturers, transit experts, and health care professionals met with Rep. Lucy McBath (D-Marietta) to discuss the local impacts of the Build Back Better budget.

focuses on environmental justice), transit, clean energy transition, and expansion of well-paying jobs through the Civilian Climate Corps.

Additionally, we supported an event in Georgia's 6th Congressional District that gathered grassroots leaders including local elected officials, faith leaders, solar installers and manufacturers, transit experts, and health care professionals. The event included remarks from Rep. Lucy McBath and a conversation between leaders in her district on

the local impacts of the Build Back Better Budget.

A precise timeline for the rest of the process of budget reconciliation and the bipartisan infrastructure deal is still up in the air, but we urge you to stay tuned for updates and look for ways to stay plugged in. With multiple votes pending in Congress, it is imperative our leaders hear support from their constituents. Questions? Want to plug into this work? Contact Georgia Chapter Conservation Organizer Jillian Eller at jillian.eller@sierraclub.org.

CLEAN ENERGY COMMITTEE

Clean up your energy, Georgia!

BY JILLIAN ELLER, CONSERVATION ORGANIZER,
SIERRA CLUB GEORGIA CHAPTER & **SCOTT PRESSON**,
READY FOR 100 TEAM LEADER

Our Clean Energy Committee leadership team has been supporting distributed Ready for 100 campaigns across Georgia, including teams in Decatur, Augusta, and Gwinnett County. On the Decatur team, residents are working towards an educational video to build their base in the city. In Augusta, efforts on 100% clean energy have been focused on transit with opportunities to engage in planning. In Gwinnett County, a Sustainability Commission has been established and a group of energy advocates there are poised to work in step with them.

In addition to volunteer-led efforts, we are also involved with the implementation of the City of Atlanta's clean energy goals. Recently, the city launched its Clean Energy Advisory Board, a group of stakeholders that inform the city's pledged transition to clean energy. The vehicle for those recommendations comes through the Advisory Board's Working Groups. We are pleased to announce that Jillian Eller accepted the invitation to co-chair the City of Atlanta's Equitable Energy Access Working Group, along with partner Dr. Erica Holloman Hill.

One of the tangible ways the City of Atlanta is actualizing its clean energy goals is through the Solarize Atlanta 2.0 program. Solarize is a limited-duration opportunity for residents to join together to buy solar panels and equipment at bulk rates, as well as to support local energy equity work. The Sierra Club Georgia Chapter sits on the steering committee of the program, which has a similar campaign running in Savannah.

Over the summer, our Committee was consulted on and supported energy-specific training sessions through the Summer Climate Activist Training Series, led by Georgia Chapter staffers Angela Jiang and Tia Fay. Highlights include the May edition on coal ash and the June edition on 100% clean energy. If you didn't get a chance to join us, but feel like there's more you want to learn about the foundations of clean energy work in Georgia, reach out to us! We'd be happy to share materials and recordings from the event, and connect you with upcoming opportunities!

Looking forward to next year, our Committee is actively strategizing for pursuing state-wide clean energy advocacy through the Integrated Resource Plan (IRP). You can expect us to engage at the grassroots level with cities committed to a 100% clean energy transition and other partner organizations. We are also collaborating with the Beyond Coal Campaign to develop grassroots efforts to plug in those most directly impacted by our current energy systems.

On August 12, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released its report on the state of the physical science on climate change. The report concludes it is unequivocally true and indisputable that human influence has warmed the atmosphere, ocean, and land. To limit global warming, strong, rapid, and sustained reductions in CO₂, methane, and other greenhouse gases are necessary. See the summary for policymakers at <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/#SPM>. This report shows that our work to transition away from fossil fuels to clean energy is more important than ever.

Interested in taking climate action by joining one of our Ready For 100 Teams or helping promote clean energy at the Chapter level? Email Conservation Organizer Jillian Eller at jillian.eller@sierraclub.org or Ready For 100 Team Leader Scott Presson at spress51@gmail.com.

EQUITY COMMITTEE

Powerful together: The movement is growing

BY JILLIAN ELLER, CONSERVATION ORGANIZER,
SIERRA CLUB GEORGIA CHAPTER & **TIA FAY**,
VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR AND ADMIN ASSISTANT,
SIERRA CLUB GEORGIA CHAPTER

welcoming Jumana Master, Suzanne Haerther, Phyllis Richardson, and Wan Smith to the team.

We know that this work is complex and often messy, and we're grateful to multiple generations of Sierra Club leaders who have given themselves to moving it forward. While we continue to plug away at the Chapter's Equity, Inclusion, and Justice goals, we appreciate the opportunity to grow and shift as our awareness and priorities change.

The Chapter Equity Committee is growing! Join us in

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Have resources to share? Pass them along! Have perspectives to offer? We're interested! As our capacity allows, we want to be investing time in projects that help benefit the work of the Chapter — all its leaders, volunteers, and members. There isn't one perfect path forward for our work, but we're on a journey of continually learning and unlearning, identifying ways we've made mistakes, and planning for the future in ways that center our values. We're

trying to walk the talk, together. Join us?

If you would like to connect with our Equity Committee in order to address the gaps between our equity values and how they play out in practice across the Chapter, reach out to Administrative Assistant & Volunteer Coordinator Tia Fay at tia.fay@sierraclub.org. We'd love to chat with you more!

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Our preview of the 2022 Georgia Legislative session

BY MARK WOODALL, CHAIR, LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

The 2022 Georgia General Assembly will convene on Monday, January 10, 2022. Hopefully, progress fighting COVID-19 will enable the Legislature to allow in-person access to legislators and committee meetings. The lack of citizen access to the Capitol during the 2021 Legislative Session was bad for democracy. Regardless of the status of the pandemic, volunteers are encouraged to participate virtually. See www.legis.ga.gov for info about your legislator and links to all the committee meetings.

While it's always tough to predict what the Georgia Legislature will do, here are a few of the Georgia Chapter's legislative priorities for 2022.

COAL ASH

The Sierra Club and Georgia Water Coalition will once again be working to get over 40 million tons of Georgia Power's coal ash out of contact with the groundwater. Georgia Power proposes to close coal ash pits in place at Plants Hammond near Rome, Bowen near Cartersville, Wansley south of Newnan, McDonough in Smyrna, and Scherer in Juliette. Georgia EPD has issued draft permits for this dangerous activity for Plants Hammond and Bowen (see the Beyond Coal Campaign report on page 6 for more information). This reckless behavior must be corrected by the Georgia Legislature. See georgiacoalash.org for details.

PROTECTING THE OKEFENOKEE

Protecting the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge from the dangerous proposal from Twin Pines Minerals

Legislative Liaisons Needed!

BY ANGELA JIANG, CONSERVATION ORGANIZER, SIERRA CLUB GEORGIA CHAPTER

In March of this past year, myself and other voting rights advocates watched with high anticipation as the Georgia Legislature voted on Senate Bill 202, one of the most devastating attacks on Georgia's voting rights in recent history. When the bill passed, our hearts dropped.

We've been fighting these restrictions ever since.

I know the outcome would have been totally different if there had been more community accountability throughout the process, which was curtailed by the pandemic. That is why I am asking you to join the Sierra Club Georgia Chapter's Legislative Liaisons program to get our democracy and environment back on track.

Apply Here Today: tinyurl.com/2022-Liaisons

History has convincingly shown that repeated conversations and relationship building with legislators can result in major improvements in legislators' voting records on protecting the environment, and, in many cases, even develop new leaders for our efforts in Georgia. The Georgia Chapter is here to help you hold conversations and build relationships with your lawmakers: We'll give you information you need on a weekly basis to stay informed, offer trainings to gain new or sharpen existing lobbying skills, and organize social opportunities to celebrate wins, learn from losses, and most importantly, grow as a community.

We have great opportunities in the next several years to move the environmental agenda forward in Georgia. With your help, 2022 will be a year in which we see victories on all the issues we care about — pure air and water, environmental justice, clean energy, protecting our beautiful lands, and so much more!

Please contact Conservation Organizer Angela Jiang at angela.jiang@sierraclub.org with questions you may have about becoming an official Sierra Club Georgia Chapter Legislative Liaison.

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to mine Trail Ridge, the natural eastern boundary of the Okefenokee Swamp, will also be a key issue under the Gold Dome next year. The Georgia Water Coalition has made protecting the Okefenokee a priority for the 2022 Legislative Session, stay tuned for how that fight shapes up.

ROLLBACKS

Stopping attacks on current protections, commonly called rollbacks, will once again be critical. The Georgia Poultry Federation continues to attack nuisance law with claims that industrial agriculture is more important than citizens' rights. In 2019, House Bill 545 started out as exactly the same legislation as the North Carolina Pork Producers bill that attacked nuisance law.

The North Carolina bill took away the rights of people living near the massive open lagoons of hog manure to protect their homes. This is a huge environmental justice issue as many communities of color are affected by the terrible odors, polluted well water, flies, and other nuisances.

Nuisance law is the original environmental law. The current four-year statute of limitations is needed as most people waste the first two or three years trying to get the Georgia Environmental Protection Division or the U.S. EPA to do something about the pollution. It takes years before people realize their only recourse may be nuisance law.

SOLAR ENERGY

Senate Bill 299 was introduced late in the 2020 Legislative Session to start the conversation on how to keep the Georgia solar rooftop industry moving forward. Georgia has less than 5,000 homes with rooftop solar while Florida has more than 50,000 and South Carolina has more than 20,000.

The Georgia solar industry has a "Scrap the Solar Cap" campaign to address the problem of monthly netting (which allows property owners with solar panels to get credits on their bills for the electricity they create) being capped at 5,000 homes. Senate Bill 299 would fix the cap as well as other critical barriers to solar expansion in Georgia, such as punitive monthly fees and data access. The Sierra Club supports Senate Bill 299.

DEMOCRACY

The Sierra Club recognizes that full participation in democracy is critical to environmental protection. So we will be alert for more rollbacks of voting rights, absentee ballot process, right to peacefully protest, and other rights of a free people. The attack on democracy in 2021's Senate Bill 202 was bad enough.

Volunteer participation is critical to our legislative efforts. Please call, email, or write your State Senator and State Representative on these issues and respond to alerts. Go to the Sierra Club Georgia Chapter Legislative Committee's website to stay informed at sierraclub.org/georgia/legislative.



POLITICAL COMMITTEE

**Local elections matter!
Don't forget to vote Nov. 2!**

BY EDDIE EHLERT, CHAIR, POLITICAL COMMITTEE

As the "off year" municipal elections loom around the state of Georgia, the struggle to maintain our rights, our health, and the safety of the biosphere we all share looms as large as ever.

In September, the Atlanta City Council wasted an opportunity to protect a gem of forest, wetlands, and tributaries inside the perimeter, choosing to fragment and destroy a portion of the South River Forest to build a massive public safety training facility. While government officials and public safety leaders may believe this facility is necessary, it is absurd to think

a forest should be sacrificed to build it in a city flush with already developed areas that would be much better suited to such a use.

Yet that decision was one single vote by one local government. One vote that if not rescinded will impose generations of damage to the watershed that is currently a forest. One vote.

"Elections have consequences," as they say, and Atlantans can hope this year's election results in a more environmentally conscious Mayor and Council. There are certainly bright spots among the respondents to this year's process of selecting the candidates the Chapter will endorse, and we hope they'll give more than lip service to environmental stewardship. In Atlanta and across Georgia, the need to ensure the election of local officials attuned to issues beyond the latest manufactured crisis looms large.

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Every municipal government on the ballot has the obligation of local control, to provide defiance and not compliance to the persistent threats we face. Strong local governments are necessary to serve as first responders in the face of various capitalistic aspirations that privatize the profits and socialize the costs like inappropriate coal ash disposal, unnecessary mining on the perimeter of a treasured place like the Okefenokee, or limiting the rights of property owners to prevent the trespass of foul excesses of industrial animal farming.

We pay so much attention to presidential, gubernatorial, and other statewide elections. Yet the eventual candidates for those offices often start in our various municipal governments. The candidates for City Council, School Board, County Commissions, Mayor, and even Animal Control in some places are the people you and I are more likely to come into direct contact with when we have a conflict with our local governments. They are the people we are most likely to encounter at the grocery store, post office, place of worship, or ball game. Yet we may not take the time to get to know them before they seek office or are elected and therefore miss the chance to make a good, clear choice of who might be best at GOVERNING.

This off year, we are working to break that cycle. As always, the Sierra Club will post a list of endorsed candidates online and in this newsletter. There are so many local elections happening this year, the Chapter will not be endorsing in most races around the state. So that leaves many races with great consequences on our lives up to you! By all means VOTE! We encourage you to equip yourself with information about who you will be voting for and what they might be aiming to accomplish. Seek out your local news outlets, many will be providing information about the candidates in your area.

The people from your neighborhood YOU elect are the people most likely to move up the ladder of state and federal government. Picking the right people from the start prevents allowing people who would sacrifice the life and health of your children to ensure the quarterly revenue of a theme park or a restaurant chain (that's where we are).

Not every candidate has TV commercials or billboards or the support of a failed ex-president, but they all

Sierra Club Georgia Chapter 2021 Endorsements

Atlanta City Council

President - Natalyn Archibong
District 4 - Jason Dozier
District 5 - Liliana Bakhtiari
District 6 - Alex Wan

Brookhaven City Council

District 2 - John Park

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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. 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.

For the most up-to-date list of endorsed candidates, go to sierraclub.org/georgia/2021endorsements.

better have some idea of what they want to do if elected. It's up to all of us to ensure the people who gain the levers of power have the respect of the voters who sent them and the dedication to perform in all of our best interest.

We have seen how bad it can get when we don't.

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

A rebrand and local elections

BY TEJAS KOTAK, CHAIR, TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

We have renamed ourselves as the Transportation Committee! Over the past several years we have called ourselves the Regional Action to Improve Liveability (R.A.I.L.) Committee, and that title encompassed a lot of the core work we do on transit, transportation, and land use issues. When we spoke with newcomers and outside groups, though, we faced a problem of them over-focusing on rail-based transit rather than the broader spectrum of sustainable modes.

We will always continue to advocate for more trains throughout Georgia, and we must also push for other climate-friendly and equitable forms of

transportation like sidewalks, bike lanes, and buses. The simpler name Transportation Committee allows us to more clearly advocate for these.

There are a host of local elections this November, and it is crucial for all Georgia Sierrans to participate in them for the future of our climate. Local politicians and issues — mayors, city councils, and tax referenda — are some of the most consequential pieces of creating a better tomorrow.

The transportation sector contributes roughly 30% of US greenhouse gas emissions, and all of that starts with how our local communities are built. Fixing that means more transit, trails, and walkable neighborhoods. All this requires local action from politicians who share our goals and vision.

Make sure to register to vote, research your candidates and ballot issues, and plan to vote early, by mail, or in person in this fall's election.

WILDLANDS & WILDLIFE COMMITTEE

No rockets over Cumberland Island!

BY WILL HARLAN, NORTH/SOUTH CAROLINA SENIOR CAMPAIGN REPRESENTATIVE, BEYOND COAL CAMPAIGN

"What other national park in America faces the prospect of fiery destruction every month?" asks Rebecca Lang.

Lang is part of a community next to Georgia's Cumberland Island National Seashore and in the flight path of a proposed commercial launch facility on the adjacent mainland. If the facility is built, Cumberland Island could be frequently closed to the public, sometimes for days or weeks at a time.

At least a quarter of the rockets launched each year are expected to fail, resulting in explosions and debris raining down on the island.

No other national park is closed to the public to accommodate a private enterprise.

"No one would close the Smokies or Yellowstone or any Wilderness area to the public so that a private company can engage in business over it," says Carol Ruckdeschel, a celebrated sea turtle biologist on Cumberland Island. "A taxpayer-funded, publicly owned national park should

not be closed to accommodate a private company, especially one that would threaten the health and safety of visitors."

The commercial rocket facility is being proposed by the leaders of rural Camden County in south Georgia, and they have already spent \$10 million in taxpayer money trying to get it approved. In 2018, Camden County withdrew their first proposal just before it was likely to be rejected by the FAA for failing to define and address the serious safety risks.

Camden County filed a scaled-back proposal last year, and in the meantime, quietly granted themselves emergency powers to evacuate Cumberland Island and nearby residences whenever they deem necessary for the commercial interest of the rocket facility.

"They plan to allow a private company to create an emergency every month and then use police powers to remove people from the island and their own property," explains Lang.

The proposed site is only a few miles from the country's largest nuclear submarine base, which has raised concerns from the U.S. Navy. The National Park Service has also expressed alarm about the proposed rocket facility. Former national seashore superintendent Fred Boyles called it "the greatest existential threat that Cumberland Island has faced."

The site has already experienced deadly explosions

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before. In 1971, an industrial fire and explosion killed 29 and injured 50, with shock waves shattering windows up to 11 miles away. The site was owned by Morton Thiokol, Inc., which manufactured booster rockets on the site for NASA, including the space shuttle Challenger in the 1980s. Those Thiokol-built rockets failed and caused the infamous shuttle to explode just 73 seconds into flight in 1986.

Later, Union Carbide purchased the site and produced highly toxic methyl isocyanate gas on the site. The gas is famous for a 1984 tragedy in Bhopal, India, where it spilled at the city's Union Carbide plant and was eventually held responsible for more than 20,000 deaths.

Now owned by Dow Chemical, the site is home to one of most contaminated hazardous waste landfills in the country. Construction of a commercial rocket facility would discharge decades of deadly toxins into the surrounding marshes and waterways.

"It's the worst possible site for a commercial rocket facility," says Kevin Lang, Rebecca's spouse and a Georgia attorney. "It endangers people, wildlife, property, public lands, and national security."

Every other spaceport in the United States launches directly over the ocean. In the history of U.S. space flight, neither NASA nor the FAA have permitted a vertical launch over private homes or people directly downrange.

But the proposed site adjacent to Cumberland Island would launch rockets over dozens of private residences and a national park that hosts 60,000 visitors each year. Part of the island is a federally designated Wilderness Area that protects endangered species and critical wildlife habitat. Cumberland Island is also home to some of the oldest and most important African American cultural sites. Cumberland is part of the Gullah-Geechee heritage corridor. The Gullah-Geechee people protect and maintain structures from a historic slave settlement, a cemetery, and the First African Baptist Church — now directly in the flight path of the proposed rocket facility.

Many of the Gullah-Geechee people still live close to the marshes that would be directly affected by rocket fuel and other hazardous wastes discharged by the facility. And over 2,500 acres of state-owned marsh is being proposed for use as a debris containment area for the rocket launch site, which would likely violate Georgia's Marshlands Protection Act. Georgia's Department of Natural Resources can reject the site permit, and so can the FAA, but they would have to stand up to significant political pressure.

Camden County commissioners say that the proposed rocket facility, dubbed Spaceport Camden, will bring

more jobs and tourism. The Trump administration gutted the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to expedite permits for commercial development and to eliminate public comment. The rocket facility's new permit application will not include any public hearings or comment opportunities. A decision from the FAA is expected soon.

However, that decision may be delayed by opposition to the spaceport from the National Park Service. The federal agency recently pushed back against the proposal in its official comments, saying a chance of explosive misfires over a federally protected island popular with tourists and campers poses an "unacceptable risk."

Most residents of Camden County also oppose the spaceport and the millions already spent. Many millions more could be squandered on a launch pad that never gets used, says Camden County resident Steve Weinkle. After nine years, Camden County commissioners have failed to lure a single company to use the proposed site.

"Taxpayers will be paying for decades," says Weinkle.

Even if Camden County receives a license to construct the site, it is unlikely that the FAA would ever issue an actual launch permit, adds Lang.

A groundswell of local residents and organizations across the region hope to convince the FAA not to issue any permits for the rocket facility. Southern Environmental Law Center has already taken legal action, and the FAA has already received a record-setting 15,600 comments — nearly all of them opposing the proposed rocket facility.

"One rocket failure over Cumberland could destroy centuries- maritime forests, the habitat of multiple threatened and endangered species, and National Historic Districts," says Jessica Howell-Edwards, program director of the nonprofit Wild Cumberland and organizer of the No Rockets Over Wilderness coalition. "National parks like Cumberland Island were not created to become debris fields for private rocket companies. They are cherished public lands that belong to us all."

Want to comment on the proposed rocket facility threatening Cumberland Island? Submit your thoughts to the FAA and sign a petition at norocketsoverwilderness.org.

In addition to being a senior campaign representative for the Sierra Club's Beyond Coal Campaign in North and South Carolina, Will Harlan is the author of "Untamed: The Wildest Woman in America and the Fight for Cumberland Island," a biography of Carol Ruckdeschel and her efforts to protect Cumberland Island.

FALL/WINTER 2021 GROUP NEWS

CENTENNIAL GROUP

SERVING COBB, CHEROKEE & NORTH FULTON

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



HAPPY FALL, Y'ALL! CENTENNIAL GROUP OUTINGS ARE BACK!

We are slowly re-starting our Centennial in-person outings program while observing Sierra Club COVID-19 protocols. Please sign up and join us at a future outing, and please consider signing up for training to become a new certified outings leader so that we can offer even more events.

Contact Lee Graham, Centennial Outings Chair, for more information or to sign up (leegrah3@gmail.com).

Thank you, congrats, and welcome to new Centennial Outings Leader Grant Brown (far left in the photo), who led his first official Sierra Club outing (assisted by Lee Graham). A group of 10 hikers went up, down, and around Cloudland Canyon on September 4th. It was a successful and very fun hike, and a great way to celebrate the arrival of cooler weather.

GREAT TO SEE YOU ALL AT OUR PICNIC!

Thank you to everyone who turned up at our Centennial Group Picnic on October 7! It was wonderful seeing so many of you again after a long time apart and to see some new faces!

The boxed sandwiches from Gathering Industries, a nonprofit catering kitchen in Atlanta that provides culinary training, mentorship, and potential careers to unhoused residents, were awesome (especially the grilled veggie ones — Steven Bell said the best he'd ever had).

We had lovely weather at East Cobb Park, ate ice cream treats for dessert, made some announcements and new connections, sang Happy Birthday to Lee Graham, and took a group photo (see below).

Stay tuned for our next event, we'd love to see you!

REMEMBER TO VOTE IN BOTH OUR GROUP & CHAPTER EXCOM ELECTIONS

Please thank and support the dedicated volunteers who have stepped forward to run. Ballots and instructions begin on page 19.

CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE



OCTOBER EVENTS

October 23 - 9 am: Free! Learn how to install a bird-house. Henderson Road Historic Nature Preserve in Mableton. More info: riverline.org/calendar.

OCTOBER OUTINGS

To be notified of Sierra Club outings as they are announced, signup for the Sierra Club Georgia Outings e-mail list (bit.ly/OutingsEmailList).

Outings planned so far:

- **October 30:** Bike ride on the Western Atlanta Beltline.
- **October 30:** Appalachian Trail hike to Blood Mountain.

Learn more about these outings and RSVP at the Georgia Chapter's online calendar at sierraclub.org/georgia/calendar.

Be sure to also check Fall events on The River Line Historic Area volunteer calendar, including water sampling and restoration efforts at riverline.org/calendar.

GROUP INFORMATION

Website: sierraclub.org/georgia/centennial
Facebook: facebook.com/Centennial.Sierra.Club
MeetUp: meetup.com/Georgia-Sierra-Club



GREATER GWINNETT GROUP

SERVING GWINNETT COUNTY

BY DAN FRIEDMAN, CHAIR,
GREATER GWINNETT GROUP

I hope this October finds you well and that you have survived the heat of the summer and are now appreciating the relative coolness. As I write this, the temperature is 74, a welcomed relieve from the sweltering heat of the Georgia summer. It has been a long few months with the Delta variant, the withdrawal of American forces from Afghanistan, record-breaking heat, forest fires and drought in the West, and Hurricane Ida.

Hurricane Ida actually sped up as it neared the Louisiana coast and strengthened to a category 4 hurricane. This has never happened before and is attributed to climate change. Virtually all of New Orleans was without power, including the Port of New Orleans where 20% of our imported oil enters the country. Additionally, a nuclear power plant was damaged by the storm. As a result, we experienced higher gas prices. The effects of climate change are not just manifesting sometime in the future, climate change is noticeably happening now.

Our monthly meetings have continued (virtually) throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. In July, Jerry Hightower, Chattahoochee National Recreation Area

(NRA) ranger, discussed issues and challenges with the NRA in these times of heat and COVID. In August, Jillian Eller and Jade Wiles provided an update on climate legislation. Our September meeting hosted a panel discussion on what the Athens area is doing to meet the challenges of climate change.

Our Ready for 100 team is meeting regularly with volunteers and with the newly formed Gwinnett Sustainability Commission.

Our Stream Monitoring has continued at the Duluth Greenway, and July was a busy month. Our members have participated in the following cleanups:

- July 3 - Lakes Parkway
- July 9 - Rhodes Jordan Park
- July 10 - Millford Way
- July 12 - Cannon Road
- July 16 - US Hwy 78 & Yellow River
- July 22 - Gwinnett County Fair Grounds

No cleanups for August due to heat and snakes.



GROUP INFORMATION

Website: sierraclub.org/georgia/Gwinnett
Facebook: facebook.com/Gwinnett-Sierra-Club-109645614080930

LAGRANGE GROUP

SERVING THE LAGRANGE AREA

BY LAURA BREYFOGLE, OUTINGS CHAIR, LAGRANGE GROUP

LAGRANGE GROUP FALL OUTINGS RETURN

After severe COVID-19 related restrictions since the pandemic started, the LaGrange Group is delighted to have the opportunity to offer outings once again! We will of course be following safety guidelines according to national Sierra Club requirements and local guidance, and are happy to gather to explore, enjoy, and protect our environment in person again.

This fall, we're opening up with some of our favorite hikes. In September, we hiked Chattahoochee Bend State Park, and earlier this month, we took a group out at Sprewell Bluff Park. We welcome all outdoor-loving Sierrans to experience some West Georgia/East Alabama gems!

Pinhoti-Cave Creek Trail Loop **Saturday, November 13 – 10 am to 4 pm**

This 7.5-mile loop is located near Mt. Cheaha State Park in Eastern Alabama in the Talladega National Forest. This section of the Pinhoti Trail follows Talladega Mountain ridge with beautiful views and some moderately difficult climbs. Elevation will range from 1,800 to 2,344 feet. Expect to see some nice fall

colors in the trees and enjoy a picnic lunch on a rocky outcrop with a view. This moderate-to-difficult hike is predicted to take 5-6 hours with a lunch stop. No restrooms are available at the trailhead or along the trail.

The trailhead is located on Highway 281 (Talladega Scenic Drive) near Cheaha State Park. Meet at Cheaha trailhead at 9:45am EST. Hike will start at 10 am.

Bring a picnic lunch, daypack, water, and snacks. Wear sturdy hiking shoes with good tread and appropriate clothing.

COVID-19 guidelines: By going on a Sierra Club outing, you are potentially on a trip with individuals vaccinated and unvaccinated. Masks are required indoors and in close quarters, like vehicles and visitor's centers, regardless of vaccination status. Masks are not required outside. Any registered participant with COVID symptoms or sickness should not attend the outing. Anyone receiving positive COVID test results within two weeks after outing should report to the outing leader.

Contact Laura Breyfogle (breyfoglel@gmail.com) to register. Limited to 10 participants.

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

Outings are back on, local elections are here, and the efforts to protect the South River Forest continue.

OUTINGS ARE BACK!

With updates to Sierra Club's national outings policies, outings have returned at limited capacity. Our group's Outings Chair, Max Brown, led a hike on Aug. 28 at Gold Branch in the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area, followed by a hike on Sep. 18 at Panola Mountain (see photo at right). The top of Panola Mountain is only accessible to the public if accompanied by a ranger guide, so this outing offered hikers a special opportunity to learn about and enjoy this distinctive monadnock.



GROUP MEETINGS

We have continued to hold group meetings online only, with the option to call in from a phone line or participate from a computer or smartphone. Whether you're new to the Sierra Club Georgia Chapter or if

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you've been a member for years, in metro Atlanta or well outside it, you're invited to our next group meeting!

On July 13, Adam Betuel, Director of Conservation at Georgia Audubon, spoke with our group about Georgia Audubon's bird-friendly community campaigns, community science opportunities, and habitat programs. In the meeting we also discussed effects of the climate crisis and the built environment on birds in Georgia, as well as ways we can help to restore bird populations and the ecosystems of which they (and we!) are part.

In August and September, we did not hold regular group meetings, but instead used emails and our Facebook page to encourage members and volunteers to take part in action opportunities and other events.

LOCAL ELECTIONS ARE HERE — HAVE YOU MADE YOUR VOTING PLAN?

Many cities and counties have elections this fall. To vote in these elections, you must submit your vote (whether by mail, early in-person, or day-of) by Nov. 2. For races where no candidate has won a majority of the votes, runoffs will be on Nov. 30.

At the Georgia Secretary of State's My Voter Page website (www.mvp.sos.ga.gov), you may check on your eligibility to vote and your registration status, request vote-by-mail ballots, find out where and when you may vote, and view sample ballots so that you can prepare to vote.

City of Atlanta voters may find the informational resources at voteatl.org helpful for listing all Nov. 2021 candidates and understanding the offices (mayor, city council, and school board) for which these candidates are competing.

The Metro Atlanta Group political committee endorsed several candidates for local offices. See page 11 for current endorsements.

This year's local elections could be some of Georgia's most important. 2021 will be the first year that voters will experience some of the most drastic changes to our voting system in recent history due to the omnibus voter suppression bill that passed earlier this year: Senate Bill 202. Because of Senate Bill 202, this year's early voting will be dramatically reduced, neighbors providing food and water to voters waiting in hours-long lines will be criminalized, and local elections offices will be overwhelmed with costs of

an unfunded mandate.

Want to help Georgia Sierra Club activate the power of local action in these elections? You can join the #VoteLocal action team on Wednesdays now through election day, taking action from home. Or, if you're in or near Atlanta, you're invited to canvass on the weekends, knocking on doors with in our communities to have conversations and answer any questions people may have about voting this year. Find out more about the #VoteLocal events at sierraclub.org/georgia/votelocal2021.

SOUTH RIVER FOREST UPDATE

Where southeast Atlanta meets DeKalb County, the forest around the South River is under two major threats: DeKalb County's "land swap" and the City of Atlanta's proposal to build a police training facility at the site of the Old Atlanta Prison Farm.

On Sep. 8, Atlanta city council passed ordinance (21-O-0367), approving the lease of about 85 acres of land in the South River Forest owned by the city (including the site of the old prison farm) at \$10 per year for 50 years to the Atlanta Police Foundation to build a regional training facility that would include gun ranges, explosives testing, and chemical weapon testing. There were 10 yes votes, 4 no votes, and zero abstaining.

This approval of the lease came after more than 16 hours of public comment for this meeting alone, where about 70% of comments on the Atlanta Police Foundation lease issue were opposed.

But it's not over yet. Per Sierra Club Georgia Chapter Chair Daniel Blackman's statement on Sep. 10: "The Sierra Club Georgia Chapter will continue to stand up for environmental justice in our city and remains steadfast in our fight against this proposal, which will have an irreparable impact on poor and marginalized communities for generations to come."

For updates and more action opportunities coming up, please check out Metro Atlanta Group's Facebook page and (if you're in our local group) future emails from us, as well as the many groups working on this issue, including Community Movement Builders (communitymovementbuilders.org), Sunrise Movement Metro Atlanta (facebook.com/SunriseATL), Atlanta DSA (atldsa.org/stopcopcity), Poder Latinx (poderlatinx.org), Defend the Atlanta Forest (linktr.ee/defendatlantaforest), and the

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organizations that signed onto this letter (sierraclub.org/georgia/blog/2021/08/SouthRiverForestLetter) in August 2021.

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

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.

STAY UP TO DATE

If you don't get our monthly meeting announcements but would like to, sign up for email updates through the Georgia Chapter website (sierraclub.org/georgia)

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SAVANNAH RIVER GROUP

SERVING AUGUSTA & SURROUNDING AREAS

BY LINDA MCBURNEY, CO-CHAIR, SAVANNAH RIVER GROUP & FRANK CARL, CONSERVATION CHAIR, SAVANNAH RIVER GROUP

GIVE WILDLIFE A CHANCE

Whenever there is a public project that involves a human-made activity, change, or development on the natural environment, an environmental impact study (EIS) or at least an environmental assessment (EA) should be done. The purpose of an EIS or an EA is to make changes in the design or implementation of the project to minimize negative environmental effects.

Large-scale projects, such as highways, mining projects, etc., typically require an EIS. However, only EAs are usually required for smaller, local projects but they are just as important, if less extensive. Unfortunately, some projects slip through the cracks.

For example, about 3.5 miles of the Riverwatch Parkway in Augusta runs parallel to the Augusta Canal and the Savannah River. This section of the Parkway was developed with a median barrier that

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.

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GROUP INFORMATION

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

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obstructs the path of small animals, such as turtles, ducklings, raccoons, and opossums, attempting to cross the road, resulting in too many of them being killed.

Based on the numbers of animals killed along this stretch of the Parkway, it is clear that if an EIS was developed, it either did not propose solutions for wildlife to safely cross the road or it was ignored. However, we will not despair — we will choose to act.

Lenny Birt, from Friends of the Rapids, has initiated contact with DOT about creating options for wildlife to safely travel across the Riverwatch Parkway. Savannah River Group has agreed to partner with him in this effort. If you would like more information about this project contact either Lenny Birt (803-270-9837, Lenny_birt@yahoo.com) or Linda McBurney (msmcb@outlook.com).

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GROUP INFORMATION

Website: sierraclub.org/georgia/Savannah-River
Facebook: facebook.com/groups/241982449162866

CHAPTER & GROUP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

CANDIDATE BIOS

GEORGIA CHAPTER

DANIEL BLACKMAN

Since becoming Executive Committee Chair of the Sierra Club Georgia Chapter, I have learned that there is so much potential for our organization, and there is an abundance of opportunity throughout our beloved state of Georgia that needs our voices and our leadership.



From the first time I showed interest in the Sierra Club Georgia Chapter, I did so for two reasons: the first is the importance of a more diverse and inclusive club that recruits and retains membership across generational and cultural lines. When I first became involved in the environmental conversation, I did so because I saw a tremendous need for Black and Brown voices in conservation and sustainability conversations, especially considering environmental justice and the potential of the clean energy economy. I also realized that young people felt disenfranchised when it came to policies and practices that lead to community building and environmental opportunities. Secondly, I believe in public service, having run for the Public Service Commission in Georgia and pledging not to accept contributions from the fossil fuel industry.

This organization represents the best ideas to protect our environment and our communities. We have a tremendous opportunity to build a better future for all Georgians, while challenging the status quo especially corporations and individuals that would compromise the ability for children to live in a better world and a cleaner environment.

WILLIAM BRYAN

I have spent my career working on environmental issues in the South and am committed to pursuing climate and environmental justice through my work. I am excited to run for the Executive Committee, where I offer more than a decade of experience researching, advocating for, and teaching about climate, conservation, and environmental justice issues. I currently lead research for the Southeast Energy



Efficiency Alliance (SEEA), where my work focuses on regional energy inequities and pathways to climate justice. Prior to joining SEEA, I earned a B.A. from Furman University, and an M.A. and Ph.D. from Penn State, and my academic research explores land, water, and wildlife conservation. I published my first book, on the Southern conservation movement, with UGA Press in 2018. As an environmental educator, I have spent eight years designing and teaching college courses on environmental issues at Emory University, Penn State, and Georgia State. I have also developed and led environmental education programs for the public, including most recently on the Okefenokee Swamp. My work has taught me how to leverage research to bring about policy change, and I am excited about the potential to serve on the ExCom where I can help guide the ways that the Sierra Club uses research, policy, and education to equitably protect Georgia's environment.

PHYLLIS RICHARDSON

I have thirty plus years of serving in high level government and political positions, beginning in the late 1980s in South Florida. Upon moving to Georgia, 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 Policy & Engagement Manager at Common Cause, I have been able to combine my love of effective government along with equitable and fair environmental justice through my work: Demanding Georgia Legislators provide fair and transparent maps for redistricting and 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 D.C., and fighting for peace with the National Korean Peace Now Organization. I have enjoyed serving on the ExCom of the Sierra Club, and if I am re-elected, I will continue to work towards creating a more equitable and fair Georgia.

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DOUG WILLIAMS

I have been a resident of Atlanta and a professional in the natural products industry since 1997. Since 2004 I have been a community organizer actively involved in bringing people together for positive change. I have served our community in many ways, but most relevant to the Sierra Club mission was probably my work for a decade to protect, restore, and care for the parks in my community. I led the restoration efforts at East Lake Parks, which included improving the facilities such as the playground and community center, but also regular cleaning and caring for Dolittle Creek which runs through the park and caring for and clearing invasive plants from the Willow Wood Preserve, a small habitat of old-growth forest that is home to a spring head for our creek. I also have served as a Neighborhood President, NPU officer, and served on the advisory board for the DeKalb Animal Services to help secure funding for the new shelter. In all my work I have tried to bring people together for positive change, with a sense that we have a responsibility to care for our world. Individually we can do good, but together we are capable of more than the sum of our parts.



AMANDA WOOMER

As a lifetime resident of Georgia and a lover of the natural world, I am excited to run again for the Georgia Chapter ExCom. My connection to Georgia's environmental treasures run deep. I am an avid hiker, paddler, and birder and have explored many of the state's rivers, creeks, mountains, and fields. Protecting these places for the many creatures that depend on and enjoy them while also ensuring equitable and inclusive access is the driver behind my involvement with organizations like the Georgia Audubon Society and the Institute for Georgia Environmental Leadership (IGEL). My engagement with the Sierra Club specifically has deepened over the last few years, from Wildlands meeting attendee to currently serving as the Vice Chair of the Conservation Committee. While I am still learning the ropes, I hope to bring my experience and expertise in strategic planning, monitoring, and evaluation to the role by supporting the development of concrete, actionable, and impactful goals and processes for achieving them. This is something I have already done as a Georgia Audubon board member and through my work with Habitat for Humanity International, the Environmental Law Institute, and Conservation International. With a clear road map and unique guiding compass, I believe we can focus our efforts for deeper and more sustainable impact.



CENTENNIAL GROUP

TODD DANIEL

I recently celebrated 20 years as a Sierra Club member. Since joining in 1997 I have held positions on the local, state, and national levels, and have received 10 awards. I am currently the Centennial Group treasurer, a position I have held since 2019, and I am running for re-election on the Excom. The issues closest to my heart are population growth and climate change. In my free time, I'm an environmental blogger and passionate hiker. Thanks for your consideration.



TANIA ROBINSON

I believe that part of being an inhabitant of a community is appreciating and protecting the natural home that God has given us. In addition, holding individuals and organizations accountable for their negative actions and

addressing environmental racism in communities has been a passion of mine. I became keenly aware of corporate misconduct upon finding out about the cancerous gases that were being emitted in my community by Sterigenics. My belief is that it could have played a factor in my husband's pancreatic cancer as well as health issues experienced by friends and community members. I became more involved with the Sierra Club through its political advocacy in 2020 by text and phone banking and attending information sessions to bring awareness to voting and supporting candidates. I have also been featured in a couple of Sierra Club articles around my volunteer work and voting rights advocacy. Recently, I have served on the Field Coordinator hiring team and helped represent Sierra Club at an August recess congressional visit. I have been a resident of Cobb County for over 20 years. I am a proud former candidate for GA State Senate District 38. I am an Army Veteran widow, residing in Mableton with my daughter Nia.



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LYNN WALSTON

I'm the current Chair of the Centennial Group and have been a member of Sierra Club for over 30 years. I have served on the ExCom for the past nine years and look forward to our campaigns and initiatives going forward. The issues we are dealing with are extremely important, such as climate change, clean air and water, and environmental equity and justice. Activism has become a long-time pas-

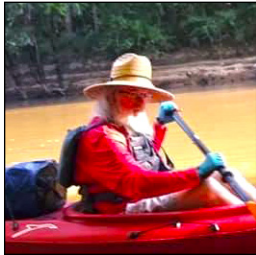
sion and concern for me. Currently I am particularly passionate about preserving land for parks and hiking, transit expansion, coal ash and other toxic waste removal. These issues affect us all, regardless of age or income distinctions, and I hope to continue to work to advance these initiatives.



GREATER GWINNETT GROUP

MICHAEL HALLEN

I am Michael Hallen, from Snellville, and I have been a member since 1999. I currently lead the stream Monitoring program and participate in community cleanups. I want to continue to lead that program in Gwinnett. I have been an active activist in county, state, and national elections and would continue these activities in the all important election year in 2022.



level and as a member of the Gwinnett Group ExCom. My focus is working with Sierra Club staff and members to create as robust a response to the climate emergency as we can. Examples include the Sierra Club's Ready for 100 program and the Beyond Coal Campaign. I will work towards, and hope to see, Gwinnett County and the cities within make a Ready for 100 commitment. I regularly attend the Gwinnett Group meetings, and I look forward to continuing to contribute as a member of the Gwinnett ExCom.

CURT THOMPSON

I'm a lifelong Gwinnettian and former State Senator who represented parts of Gwinnett where I earned several Conservation Voter Awards. I have been a longtime member of the Sierra Club and was most recently active in the Gwinnett Group until COVID hit and have recently become more active again. I'd like to continue giving back to my county by being more involved in the Gwinnett Group working to expand our membership as well as help us focus on getting our local governments involved in implementing the Ready for 100% campaign. I have the time and energy to devote to this and hope you will give me that opportunity.



SCOTT M. PRESSON

I am Scott M. Presson, and I am a candidate for the Gwinnett ExCom. My wife and I have been joint Sierra Club members since 1988, and we have resided in Lawrenceville for 20 years. I am retired from a career in public health. I have become an active volunteer in the GA Sierra Club for the past 4 years, volunteering for the Clean Energy for All Committee on the Chapter



LAGRANGE GROUP

JOANNA BAXTER

My brother and I got our love and appreciation of the outdoors from our mother. She became an avid, outspoken environmentalist with the Georgia Conservancy and was instrumental in the preservation of the Swamp of Toa in Albany. My brother became a National Park Ranger and spent many years working in Yosemite. It was



during my visits there that I learned about John Muir and began reading about him, his passion for the environment, and the beginning of the Sierra Club. I have been a member of the Sierra Club since 2000. I served our local group as the outings leader for several years and now am involved in their Bluebird Nest Box Monitoring Program and Pollinator Garden project. I like keeping the Sierra Club name and positive work for the environment visible in our community. People are noticing.

TROY KELLER

Troy Keller serves as a Professor of Environmental Science in the Department of Earth and Space Sciences

at Columbus State University (Columbus, Georgia). He teaches a broad range of graduate and undergraduate courses including Foundations of Environmental Science, Sustainability and the Environment, Stream Ecology, and Geographic Information and Global Positioning Systems. After receiving his Bachelor's in Zoology at Ohio Wesleyan University in 1991, he moved to Michigan to complete his graduate studies at the University of Michigan (M.S. 1994, Ph.D. 1997). His thesis research examined the importance of nutrient enrichment and predators in structuring stream algal and invertebrate communities. Currently, Dr Keller is conducting research on bioremediation using algae to treat municipal waste water (Columbus Water Works, Inc), biological recovery of headwater streams after dam removal (in partnership with The Nature Conservancy), and conservation and ecology of crayfishes (in collaboration with US Fish and Wildlife Service). He has taken a leadership role in sustainability-related initiatives as a founding member of CSU's Sus-



tainability Committee and the faculty advisor for CSU's Students for a Sustainable World. Although a life-long fan, he has been an member of Sierra Club since 2019.

MARDI SCHAUFLE

Mardi hails from LaGrange, GA. She grew up on the Chattahoochee river, skiing, swimming, sailing. From a young age she wondered why we can't reuse things like old houses, when does "development" ever cease, and how wide highways must become. At the University of Georgia in the 70's her favorite courses were astronomy, philosophy and water pollution microbiology. She became a gynecologist with a mind for influencing and improving the health of mothers, girls and families. She loves horses, dogs, music, porch-sitting and a little silliness. She has been a Sierran for a couple of decades and believes that through an organized effort humankind can learn to respect and protect the earth we inherited.



METRO ATLANTA GROUP

MAX BROWN

I have been a Sierra Club member since 1984 and have served my Metro Atlanta Group as Outings Leader for four years now. I serve on the Wildlands Committee, as well as volunteering to table events such as the Banf Film Festival and the Hemlock Festival. I support our Sierra Club frequently at rallies and protests. I also work part-time at REI and volunteer for the Georgia Audubon Society. These activities allow me the opportunity to promote my love of nature and to defend our public lands. Being a part of Sierra Club is the very best way to explore, enjoy and protect the planet.



Club to host a rally against the Keystone XL pipeline. I then began to take part in clean energy campaigns and help with events.

After joining Metro Atlanta Group's Executive Committee in 2015, I became chair and was elected to subsequent terms in 2017 and 2019. As Chair, I maintain group communications and collaborate on planning meetings. Over the past six years I have made an effort to connect the Sierra Club community with ways to make a difference by plugging into Chapter campaigns and the work of local aligned organizations.



Last time in my candidate statement, I set forth aims to build relationships more intentionally between Sierra Club and aligned groups, as well as to work smarter to help people in our area become effective environmental activists. I have more to do in each of these regards and would greatly appreciate another opportunity to carry on in this role to continue this work.

NINA DUTTON

In early 2014, along with Marinangeles Gutiérrez Rivera, I responded to a request from Georgia Sierra

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/ExComElections2021. 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. 17, 2021.

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 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 3
candidates

3

Michael Hallen
Scott M. Presson
Curt Thompson

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

LAGRANGE GROUP

Executive Committee Candidates
Candidate statements on pg. 21-22

Vote for up
to 3
candidates

3

Joanna Baxter
Troy Keller
Mardi Schaufler

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. 22

Vote for up
to 3
candidates

3

Todd Daniel
Tania Robinson
Lynn Walston

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

Vote for up
to 2
candidates

2

Max Brown
Nina Dutton

A	B
<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 4
candidates

4

Daniel Blackman
William Bryan
Phyllis Richardson
Doug Williams
Amanda Woomer

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

CENTENNIAL GROUP

Executive Committee Candidates
Candidate statements on pgs. 20-21

Vote for up
to 3
candidates

3

Todd Daniel
Tania Robinson
Lynn Walston

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

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Decatur, GA 30030

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VISIT US ONLINE

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