

Mountain State Sierran

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November/December 2016

Mountain Valley Pipeline DEIS Released

Hearings to be held in WV and VA

Jim Kotcon

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) released a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) on the Mountain Valley Pipeline (MVP) on Sept. 16, and will accept public comments through Dec. 22. An Environmental Impact Statement is required by the National Environmental Policy Act and is supposed to document the impacts of a project so that the public and decision-makers can make informed decisions. That means that this is YOUR chance to have input on this pipeline project.

What is the MVP?

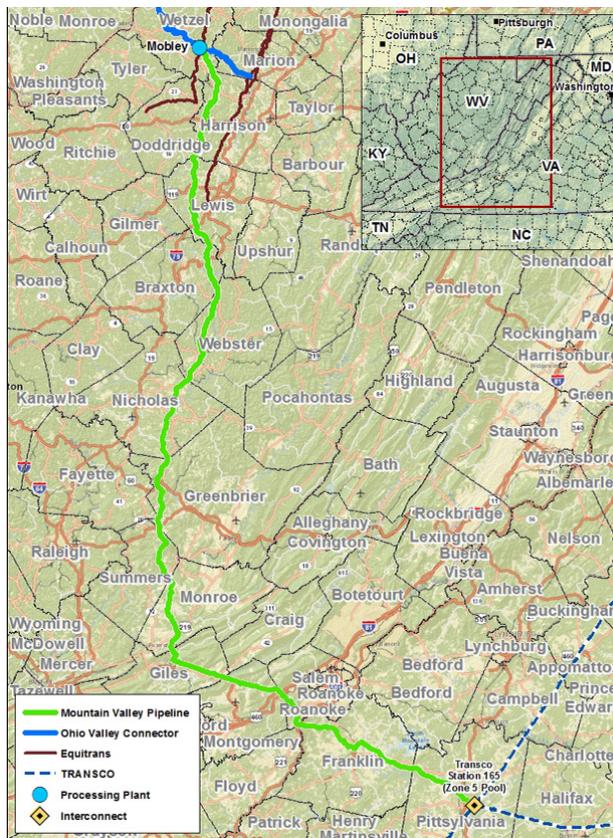
The MVP is a new 301-mile-long, 42-inch-diameter pipeline in West Virginia and Virginia intended to transport about 2 billion cubic feet per day of natural gas from production areas in the Appalachian Basin to markets in the Mid-Atlantic and Southeastern United States. The project is being developed by EQT Midstream Partners, a subsidiary of EQT Corp. in Pittsburgh. Five other gas companies are minority investors in the project.

An unrelated project, the Atlantic Coast Pipeline, would be of similar size and location in West Virginia, but is being developed by different gas companies and is not addressed in the DEIS.

The pipeline would originate in Wetzel County, and cross Harrison, Doddridge, Lewis, Braxton, Webster, Nicholas, Greenbrier, Fayette, Summers, and Monroe counties in West Virginia, and parts of Virginia. It would also cross the North Bend Rail Trail, Monongahela River, the Appalachian Trail, the Jefferson National Forest, and more than 1,000 waterways.

Why is the MVP bad for the environment?

The MVP DEIS estimates the GHG emissions at 40 million tons per year. This is larger than emissions from the three largest coal-fired power plants in West Virginia (John Amos, Harrison and Mount Storm) combined. The DEIS indicates that this gas, if it displaces coal, might actually reduce net emissions, but nowhere is there any analysis of whether these emissions are "instead of" versus "in addition to" those existing emissions. In October, EPA told FERC that they are not satisfied with the analysis of greenhouse gases for pipeline projects.



The MVP would also disrupt water quality in the hundreds of streams, rivers and other waterways it crosses. It crosses areas of porous limestone (karst), which creates extreme threats to groundwater. It damages wildlife habitat, impacts private properties, and would leave massive areas vulnerable to soil erosion.

What is wrong with the MVP DEIS?

The DEIS fails to document whether the pipeline is even needed. Recent studies suggest no new capacity is needed to serve area consumers, but the DEIS fails to analyze whether there is a realistic need that might justify the adverse impacts. Analyzing the NEED for action is a critical requirement of the DEIS process, but FERC failed to do this.

The DEIS also fails to provide essential information to document the impacts of the project and, instead, proposes to release this information after the public comment period, meaning there will be no opportunity for the public to make informed comments. Impacts not fully disclosed or analyzed include: Landslide hazards and mitigation plans, endangered-species habitats, historic impacts, and many site-specific impacts. The DEIS also fails to analyze indirect impacts associated with additional gas drilling and fracking, stimulated by the MVP.

What can you do?

Send comments to FERC by Dec. 22, 2016. Links to file electronic comments are at: <https://www.ferc.gov/industries/gas/enviro/eis/2016/09-16-16-eis.asp>

Or attend one of the three hearings scheduled in WV:

Tue, Nov 1, 5 – 8 p.m. — Lewis County High School, 205 Minuteman Drive, Weston, WV 26452, 304-269-8315.

Wed, Nov 2, 5 – 8 p.m. — Nicholas County High School, 30 Grizzly Road, Summersville, WV 26651, 304-872-2141.

Thur, Nov 3, 5 – 8 p.m. — Peterstown Elementary School, 108 College Drive, Peterstown, WV 24963, 304-753-4328.

Ask FERC to prepare and circulate a Supplemental DEIS that fully analyzes Need for the pipeline, the greenhouse gas impacts, and provides complete information on environmental impacts.

Alternatively, ask FERC to conclude that the MVP is NOT needed, and the application should be rejected.

Chapter's Political Endorsements p. 2

Upcoming ExCom Meetings

Sat, Nov 12: Morgantown

Sat, Jan 14: Morgantown

All members are welcome. Contact Jim Kotcon for more details, jkotcon@gmail.com.



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

WV Sierra Club Endorses Pritt for Governor

Jim Sconyers, Political Committee

The West Virginia Sierra Club has endorsed Charlotte Pritt for Governor. Analysis of Pritt's decades-long record made this an easy decision.

Pritt has the experience — political, professional and personal — and principles that make her stand out as the exemplary choice in the gubernatorial contest now under way.

Pritt's public service — as teacher, legislator and educational consultant — has focused on the needs and issues that align her cvclosely with the WV Sierra Club's goals for West Virginia: clean air, clean water, healthy citizens in a healthy state environment, and a sustainable and diversified economy that's fair for all.

Pritt has an admirable record from her years in the West Virginia House and Senate. She stands poised today to lead our state with smart decisions in our challenging times.

The Time to VOTE is Now

Jim Sconyers, Political Committee

Get up and boogie! ... Hope that got your attention. While you boogie, get up and VOTE.

The time is now. You can vote early, from Oct. 26 until Nov.5. Find hours and locations at www.sos.wv.gov/elections/vote/earlyvoting/pages/default.aspx.

If you don't vote early, vote on Election Day, Nov. 8. For your personal polling place, go to <https://services.sos.wv.gov/Elections/Voter/FindMyPollingPlace>

In any case, the message is: Get up and VOTE — it matters.

The West Virginia Chapter has made a number of endorsements. These are candidates who share our values and views on the important West Virginia environmental issues of our time.

They are listed here by office and district. They need, and deserve, our votes. Feel free to take the list with you when you go to vote.

Our endorsements, including the candidate's name, office and district, are listed to the right.

WVSC Chapter Endorsements

Mike Manypenny	U.S. House, 1st District
Charlotte Pritt	WV Governor
Samantha Fooce	WV House 14
Joe Fincham	WV House 17
Kristen Ross	WV House 31
Margaret Staggers	WV House 32
Nancy Guthrie	WV House 36
Larry Rowe	WV House 36
Mike Pushkin	WV House 37
Stephen Baldwin	WV House 42
Richard Iaquina	WV House 48
Tim Miley	WV House 48
Wayne Worth	WV House 48
Mike Caputo	WV House 50
Linda Longstreth	WV House 50
Tim Manchin	WV House 50
Barbara Fleischauer	WV House 51
Rodney Pyles	WV House 51
Evan Hansen	WV House 51
Alan Tomson	WV House 53
Rod Snyder	WV House 67
Stephen Skinner	WV Senate 16

WV Chapter Awards for 2016

Sally Wilts, Awards Committee

Each year, our Awards Committee selects individuals who we feel are worthy of recognition. Traditionally, we have honored them at either SierraFest or our Leaders' Retreat. This year's honorees were celebrated at an SierraFest awards ceremony on Oct. 29, at Blackwater Falls State Park.

The **Founder's Award**, which is for "those who have helped the chapter further our goals of having industry respect the environment and people's health, moving away from fossil fuels and toward green energy, and regulation of industries to keep the world and us safe," was presented to **Angie Rosser**, director of WV Rivers Coalition.

Angie gained national attention in the aftermath of the 2014 Freedom Industries spill into the Elk River that poisoned the water supply for an estimated 30,000 people. She was, and is, a well-informed and well-spoken advocate for clean water in our state. Forming alliances with many groups and agencies, she has been at the forefront of lobbying our state legislature for source-water protection and rules to protect the quality of our waters. Additionally, her nonprofit has taken on the role of promoting the Birthplace of Rivers National Monument. For more information, check their website at wvrivers.org or Facebook page at "WV Rivers Coalition."

The **Mountain Laurel Award** is given to a WV Sierra Club volunteer who has contributed to the Chapter's success. **John Bird** has been a leader with the Monongahela Group since 2014 and has been the delegate of the group to the Chapter ExCom in the past. He is very passionate about climate change and has written articles and presented talks to several groups on this topic. For the past three years, he has been involved with the chapter's Energy Efficiency Campaign and developed a hands-on program to teach others about steps they can take to make their homes more weatherproof and waste less energy.

John is also a most generous donor, having paid the fees for rental of pavilions for Mon Group social activities for several years.

A second **Mountain Laurel Award** was

given to **Karen Yarnell**. At the suggestion of Jim Kotcon, Karen joined the WV Environmental Council (E-Council) about 10 years ago. The WV E-Council is the umbrella lobbying organization for the major environmental groups in West Virginia.

Soon, Karen became Secretary of the WV E-Council. Her penchant for keeping meticulously accurate notes of Board of Directors meetings and of committee meetings soon became legendary. More recently, as WV E-Council's Communications Committee Chair, Karen has worked diligently and diplomatically to help bring together divergent opinions about how to modernize the E-Council's communications capabilities. Now, unlike just a few years ago, WV E-Council designated volunteers, staff and lobbyists can independently issue action alerts and other important communications to its member organizations and individual supporters. This allows quick turnaround responses to legislators, regulators and other decision-makers on legislative, rulemaking and other important citizen lobbying actions.

Karen has also filled the important role of leading Chapter event planning and being registrar for such events as SierraFest and WV E-Council annual conferences.

When the WV Mountain Party was a new and struggling progressive political party, Karen accepted the party Chair's request that she become the Mountain Party's Secretary — a role she performed for nearly a decade. She served steadily as the party Secretary under four different party Chairs.

Another of Karen's current volunteer roles is as Sierra Club's representative to, and now president of, the WV Wilderness Coalition — an organization whose purpose is to work towards the permanent protection of special areas on federal public land in West Virginia. Working since 2001, the Coalition reached a major milestone in 2009, with the passage of the Wild Monongahela Act, which protected more than 37,000 acres of special wild places as Wilderness. Karen considers her work on behalf of Wilderness, including the ongoing Birthplace of Rivers National Monument campaign as the core of her work toward preserving the natural world for future generations.

Run for It! ... the WV Chapter Executive Committee, that is

What is the Executive Committee, you may ask? Known more fondly as the ExCom, it is the leadership panel that other organizations call their Board of Directors. The ExCom, simply put, governs the Chapter. The ExCom:

- Makes policy decisions.
- Creates the Chapter's annual budget.
- Takes responsibility for carrying out policy.
- Works with our leaders and volunteers on activities and events.

The Chapter elects members to the ExCom every year, as terms of incumbents expire. And that's where you come in. Every year our Nominating Committee presents a list of nominees to run for the ExCom. These can include incumbents running for re-election, or fresh faces and newcomers who want to offer their service to the Chapter.

Again, that's where you come in. Each year, we look for new candidates to throw their hats into the ring. If you might be interested, contact Jim, at jimscon@gmail.com or 304-698-9628, to talk more about running. *Nominations are due no later than Nov. 15.*

Bottom line: The Chapter needs you.

DONATE TODAY



Help your Chapter stay strong for the hard work we do to keep West Virginia wild and wonderful.

One fee covers membership in the national Sierra Club, the West Virginia Chapter and, if you live in the designated region, the Monongahela Group.

Make a quick and easy donation or join "the Club" from the Chapter's home page:

sierraclub.org/west-virginia

Join Online

View from the Chair

— Jim Kotcon, Chapter Chair

Bad Business?

Well, it happened again. Right-wing commentators and politicians blame environmentalists for coal company bankruptcies. Or they blame EPA's "War on Coal." Or the Obama Administration. Some even blame the gas industry.

The truth is that all those factors have been going on for a long time. The seeds of coal company bankruptcy are actually much more recent.

All of these factors may have contributed somewhat, and the Sierra Club can be justifiably proud of our efforts to reign in rogue coal operators. But the Sierra Club can only insist that mining companies follow the law. Coal companies that obey the rules are immune from any serious threat from the Sierra Club, though not necessarily immune from market realities. By early in 2016, more than one-fourth of U.S. coal production was from companies in bankruptcy.

It was 2011. Arch Coal had just acquired the International Coal Group for \$3.4 billion. Alpha Natural Resources bought Massey Energy for \$7.1 billion. Peabody acquired MacArthur Coal of Australia for \$5.2 billion. These and other major purchases occurred when coal prices reached record levels, and all relied on borrowed money. Much of this was metallurgical coal, intended to supply China's booming steel industry. But China's demand collapsed as economic growth slowed. New supplies came on the market, further depressing prices. Energy efficiency reduced electricity consumption, and demand for steam coal collapsed as well.

As coal prices fell in subsequent years, these companies owed more on their debts than they could recover in coal sales. In addition, these companies acquired environmental liabilities in the form of water treatment costs and mineland reclamation costs that ballooned. And benefits for retired mine workers and their families created more expenses, with little income to cover these obligations.

By 2015, bankruptcy was their only option. In this process, "senior" creditors have first crack at any remaining assets, so the lenders retained the profitable mines. Mine workers and retirees were left without their promised pension and medical benefits. States were left to negotiate the environmental clean-ups. Arch Coal re-emerged from bankruptcy in September, having "shed"

\$4.7 billion in debt. Other coal companies are doing the same. In most cases, the liability for environmental clean-ups remain, but it is not clear that the surviving company remnants will ever have the resources to pay for reclamation costs, meaning the states (we the taxpayers) may end up assuming these costs.

Mine workers and retirees were generally left with nothing. But what happened to the coal company execs who made such bad deals? Did any get fired? Go to prison?

No, most got bonuses. Arch Coal CEO John Eaves earned \$3.9 million in 2012. As Arch Coal stock plummeted, Arch INCREASED his total compensation to \$7.3 million by 2014. Arch argued that they had to increase his salary BECAUSE the company was failing, in order to retain those talents. Alpha Natural Resources also tried to retain their CEO with a \$2 million retention bonus, even as their company stock declined, but it didn't work. He left and the company declared bankruptcy, whereupon they sought approval from the bankruptcy court for \$14.8 million in retention bonuses for other execs.

We have known, and these coal companies had to have known, that climate change would reduce demand for coal. This has been common knowledge for 30 years. And these same coal companies insist that the problem is the EPA's "War on Coal." If they really thought the regulatory environment was that unfriendly, why were they borrowing billions to buy more coal?

Could it be that their "War on Coal" rhetoric was just made up? Could it be that they just believed their own propaganda, insisting that climate change was not real?

Or could it be that these coal company execs are just really bad businessmen, who make billion-dollar investments that ignore realities, and then have the gall to demand bonuses for their poor decisions?

Poor businessmen make bad investment decisions every day, and the market usually punishes them. The real question should be: "Why do so many political leaders still believe that these crackpot, bankrupt businesspeople will somehow provide an economic recovery for West Virginia?"

Why do our leaders keep falling for the same coal company lies?

Book Review

The Madhouse Effect by Michael E. Mann and Tom Toles

Richard Mier, Martinsburg

As our warmer-than-ever-before Earth zips along on its elliptical orbit around the sun, coming every closer to Thanksgiving, "The Madhouse Effect" is the book you definitely need to read. Who can forget how "Uncle Fred" came after you at last year's groaning board, cranberry sauce dripping from the corners of his mouth, for being a woolly-headed, tree-hugging ninny? Well, this year, prepare yourself with Michael Mann and Tom Toles' little gem of a book designed to combat not only global warming, but climate-change deny-niks like Uncle Fred, as well.

Tom Toles is the Pulitzer Prize-winning cartoonist for *The Washington Post*. He has a special interest in climate change — has had for some time — and his passion reflects itself in the on-point cartoons included in the book.

Michael Mann is the distinguished climatologist who first published the "hockey stick" curve, demonstrating the unprecedented rising temperature of our planet over time, a contribution he has paid dearly for after vicious attacks from right-wing deniers and fossil-fuel apologists.

"The Madhouse Effect" is concise rather than encyclopedic, but it tells you — or reminds you — of what you need to know, and does it in a straightforward style, engagingly backstopped by Toles' sardonic cartoons. The combination is devastatingly convincing. The basics are there, but also chapters on denial and the deniers, the war waged against climate science, how the media has been manipulated, plus the politics and the hypocrisy that undergird it all.

When your uncle, or your aunt for that matter, starts blabbing on about the technological fixes for climate change, which are just around the corner, the chapter on geoengineering ("What Could Possibly Go Wrong") will help you to convince them otherwise. Maybe most importantly, there is an energizing final chapter on the what-we-need-to-do to get out of the mess we now find ourselves in.

These two front-line climate activists have nailed it here, and instead of skewering another slab of turkey this Thanksgiving, read this book, and you'll find it easy to skewer Uncle Fred instead. It will be so much more satisfying.

New blood needed to aid aging leaders

Candice Elliott, Editor

During the past several months, a few of our long-time Chapter leaders have reduced the time and energy they put into their Club activities, not always by choice. Some have serious health issues; some have just been doing the same thing for so long, they want a break. (I count myself in the latter category.)

Thirty-two years ago, when the Chapter first formed, most of the movers and shakers were in their 30s, young professionals with new families. Yet, somehow, they still found time to dedicate a portion of their energies to working toward the goals of this Chapter.

Since that time, leaders have come and gone. Some moved on to other organizations with narrower or different focuses. Some moved away. Others simply drifted away.

The core group of die-hard leaders are now in their 60s, or older. The Chapter cannot sustain itself without attracting new, younger members who are excited and committed to furthering the Chapter's causes.

I wish I knew how we could do that.



Like us on Facebook to get more up-to-date information about our "doings."

Sierra Club West Virginia
Mon Group of the WV Sierra Club
WVSC Marcellus Shale Campaign



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Blowing in the Wind

It's time for America to get smart about energy and become less dependent on fossil fuels.

We need to increase our use of clean, renewable energy sources like wind and solar power.

Giving's a Breeze. JOIN Sierra Club.

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Join today and receive
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Membership Categories	Individual	Joint
Special Offer	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 15	N/A
Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 39	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 49
Supporting	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 75	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 100
Contributing	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 150	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 175
Life	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 1000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 1250
Senior	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 25	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 35
Student	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 25	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 35
Limited Income	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 25	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 35

Contributions, gifts & dues to Sierra Club are tax deductible; they support our effective, citizen based advocacy & lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$ 7.50 for a subscription to SIERRA magazine & \$ 1.00 for your Chapter newsletter.

Enclose a check and mail to:
Sierra Club, PO Box 421041
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or visit our website: www.sierraclub.org

Explore the Birthplace of Rivers

West Virginia Sierrans have been key supporters of the proposal to designate Birthplace of Rivers National Monument in the Southern Monongahela National Forest. If you've never visited the area, here are a few hikes to whet your appetite — and to see why the monument is a priority for the Sierra Club.

Whether you're looking for an easy stroll to outstanding views or a rugged overnight in the deep forest, you'll find it in abundance here. Be sure to stop at the Cranberry Visitor Center for area maps and to learn about the incredible natural history of this special place.

Black Mountain Loop

Here's a perfect not-too-challenging hike to accompany a drive along the Scenic Highway. It departs and returns to the Williams River Overlook, offering astounding views from the Williams River and Big Spruce overlooks, and open skies as you wander through fields of fern. At 4.6 miles, the hike allows you to spend a few hours on foot atop the ridge while enjoying a drive from overlook to overlook.

At a glance: The hike begins at the Williams River Overlook on the Highland Scenic Highway, 6.3 miles north of the visitor center. There is a lot of up-and-down on the hike, but the overall elevation changes are modest, with the exception of a 200' climb near the end.

Cranberry Glades Loop

This hike travels the mostly level Cow Pasture Loop as it encircles the famed Cranberry Glades, the southernmost tundra environment in the U.S. In the warm months, this means a display of plants you typically don't see south of Canada. Highlights include the quiet seclusion of the Cranberry Wilderness, long views of Kennison Mountain, a side trip to Cranberry Glades Botanical Area, crossings of the South Fork Cranberry River, and the shady tunnel of sugar maple and yellow birch.

At a glance: From the Cranberry Visitor Center, follow Rte. 39/55 west a quarter mile. Turn right onto FS 102, and follow it 1.2 miles to the of Cow Pasture Trail head. Begin



Chad Cordell

Girls hiking in the Birthplace of Rivers.

by heading southeast, or right, on the trail. You will emerge back onto FS 102 after about 5.5 miles, and return via the road, passing the Cranberry Glades Botanical Area where there are restrooms.

Tea Creek Mountain Loop

This rugged, scenic, 2-day hike offers solitude, swift moving water, spruce woods, and sheer adventure. There are few pure spruce forests like it. You'll experience its glorious microclimate, full of bogs and wet rocks and mist, as well as secluded swimming holes and utter darkness at night. There are numerous stream crossings, some on bridges, some requiring rock hopping. It's a strenuous 10-mile hike that a fit hiker with only a daypack can do in a day. For some alone time in the woods, though, bring a tent or plan to stay at the shelter at the confluence of Tea Creek and Right Fork.

At a glance: Entering the Scenic Highway from Marlinton, go south 5.7 miles to the Tea Creek Mountain/Right Fork trailhead (across from the Little Laurel Overlook). Follow Right Fork Trail

and the babbling sounds of Right Fork 3.5 miles to North Face Trail. You can detour right along the Tea Creek Trail to a trail shelter and pools.

Resources

There are several hiking guides to West Virginia that feature hikes and backpacking trips in the Cranberry area. Here are just a few: "Hiking West Virginia," by Mary Reed (Falcon Guides); "Day & Overnight Hikes in West Virginia's Monongahela National Forest," by Johnny Molloy (Menasha Ridge Press); and "50 Hikes in West Virginia," by Leonard M. Adkins (The Countryman Press).

Support the Monument!

You can add your voice to the effort — as so many WV Sierrans have already — by signing a letter to President Obama asking him establish Birthplace of Rivers National Monument.

It's easy to do: Just visit <http://bit.ly/2dyL2ws>.



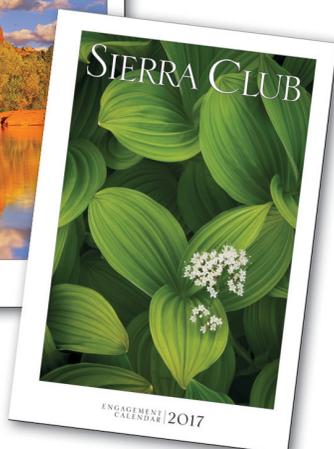
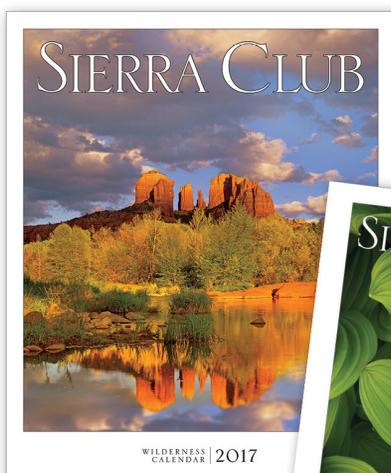
Chad Cordell

Storm clouds over Williams River Valley.



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2017 Sierra Club Calendars



Order Form

Item	Cost	Qty	Total
Engagement Calendar <input type="checkbox"/>	\$13.00	_____	_____
Wilderness Calendar <input type="checkbox"/>	\$12.00	_____	_____
Make checks payable to: WV Sierra Club		Subtotal:	_____
Mail orders to: Candice Elliott - Calendars 414 Tyrone Avery Rd Morgantown WV 26508		Shipping: \$6.00	_____
		GRAND TOTAL:	_____

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Please contact the Editor for submission guidelines or advertising rates. Contributions to the newsletter may be sent to the Editor at:

celliot2@comcast.net

414 Tyrone Avery Rd

Morgantown, WV 26508

**Deadline for
January/February issue**

December 2

Opinions expressed in the **Mountain State Sierran** are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Sierra Club. This newsletter is published bimonthly by the WV Chapter of the Sierra Club and distributed to all paid members.

OUTINGS

Sat, Nov 12

Day Hike: Catoctin Mountain Park, MD

rated strenuous — This hike will be 6-7 miles and includes several steep climbs. Allow about 3-1/2 hours. We will meet at 10 a.m. in the Visitor Center parking lot. The park allows dogs on a leash. Catoctin Mountain Park is a national park located near Thurmont, MD.

Leader: Pam Peitz, pspeitz@hotmail.com, 240-818-6554

Nearest town: Thurmont, MD

Sat, Nov 12

Service Outing: Coopers Rock SF, Autumn Adopt-a-Trail

rated easy (hiking) and easy-to-moderate (work intensity) — Join the fun with the fall trail maintenance for Sierra Club's adopted Intermediate Cross-Country Ski Trail, at Coopers Rock South. Fall clean-up emphasizes clearing fallen leaves, drainage restoration and trail clearing along a 1.25-mile loop. Volunteers should wear sturdy boots and carry work gloves, water and snacks. Useful tools to bring are long-handled pruners, rakes, and pointed shovels. Adults and adolescents are invited to help. Those

under age 18 must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. Volunteers will be required to sign a standard Sierra Club Liability Waiver and a DNR Volunteer Work Program Agreement. Please pre-register with the leader.

Leader: Ann Devine-King, atdking@gmail.com, 304-594-2636

Nearest town: Morgantown, WV

Web info: coopersrockstateforest.com/coopersrock.org

Sat, Nov 19

Day Hike: North Bend SP, Overlook Trail

rated easy/moderate — Meet at 1 p.m., at the cabins beyond the Park Administration building and Nature Center, for a 1- to 2-hour hike, depending on group. All hikers welcome, from beginners to advanced. This 1.2-mile loop trail includes three elevation changes and a variety of ecosystem habitats, including pine forest, creek bed, mature forest, river, and rocky outcrops. Wear sturdy shoes and weather-appropriate clothing.

Leader: Autumn Long, autumnlong11@gmail.com, 304-841-3539

Nearest town: Cairo, WV

West Virginia Chapter Outings

Updated outings are listed on the Chapter's website: sierraclub.org/westvirginia, and also on two **Meetup.com** groups: "West Virginia Chapter Sierra Club" (Morgantown) and "WV Sierra Club-New River." Outings are added to these sites weekly.



Sierra Club Liability Policies For Chapter Outings

Sierra Club outings are open to everyone, members and non-members alike. Each outing is intended to be a wholesome, safe, and enjoyable experience in the outdoors. Participants must have suitable clothing, gear, and stamina, and are encouraged to select activities that match their individual abilities for outdoor adventures.

The Club offers a variety of outings from "easy" to "moderate" to "strenuous" that suit all activity levels. The difficulty of each outing is clearly designated in the announcement. Reservations are generally not required unless noted, but the outing leader may be contacted in advance for questions about the terrain, the difficulty and recommended gear.

Activities are normally held "rain or shine," but may be postponed at the leader's discretion for safety reasons in the event of inclement weather. Participants are reminded that all outdoor activities carry a degree of risk, and some take place in locations where professional emergency medical aid may be two or more hours away. People with health concerns should consult a physician to determine the advisability of participating in these or similar activities. The leader is responsible for the safety of all participants, and has the final authority to decide whether or not an individual may participate on a specific outing. Sierra Club safety policy requires that helmets be worn on bicycling outings, and a personal flotation device (PFD) be worn when using personal watercraft such as kayaks or canoes.

Unless noted in the announcement, Club outings are intended for adults. Children and

dogs are not normally permitted, unless an outing is so designated. Minors (under 18 years of age) must be accompanied by a parent or a legal guardian, or they must have both 1) a signed permission slip, and 2) the leader's prior consent to participate in the Club outing. Sierra Club outings officially begin and end at the trailhead.

Travel to the official starting point and back, even from an advertised meeting place, is the sole responsibility of each participant. While the Club encourages car-pooling, such arrangements are strictly between the riders and the drivers, and are not a part of the outing. Participants assume full responsibility and liability for all risks associated with such travel.

All participants on Sierra Club outings are required to sign a standard liability waiver, which can be viewed at www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms or by calling 415-977-5630.

The Sierra Club does not charge for chapter outings, although payment of park entrance fees, a share of campsite rental costs, permit fees, equipment rental charges, etc. may be required from the participants. The Sierra Club practices "leave-no-trace" trail techniques, including hiking and camping on durable surfaces, minimizing campfire impacts, packing out all trash, respecting wildlife, being considerate of other visitors, and leaving the environment as it was found.

The Sierra Club's California Seller of Travel identification number is CST 2087766-40. Registration as a seller of travel does not constitute approval by the State of California.

Perspectives on Outings

— Mike Price, Outings Chair

Nature's Healing Ways

Nature can heal us in mind, body and spirit. Every time we walk outdoors, we feel refreshed. A simple walk in the backyard, a stroll along a stream or passing through a forested place can rejuvenate you.

There is just something magical that happens whenever our bodies reconnect with nature. The senses come alive as we feel the wind, smell the scents and see the beauty that nature has to offer us. Nothing on TV or any electronic device can come close to how our bodies respond whenever we take the time to reconnect with the awesome power of the outdoors.

Nature has provided us with many cures for our bodies. A multitude of plants and herbs have been used for centuries to heal. A lot of pharmaceutical drugs come from compounds found in plants. Aspirin came from the bark of a willow tree, which was used by our ancestors long ago. Some other plants do not get the proper studies needed to prove their effectiveness in fighting disease — another way big corporations and laws are controlling the lives of everyone.

In July this past summer, two hikers and I headed into the Otter Creek Wilderness near Parsons, WV. I had hiked many times in this wilderness area on most of the trails more than 20 years ago. With this in mind, I planned a two-day backpacking trip into this beautiful wilderness area.

We would cover about 18 miles hiking up Otter Creek and circling back to the beginning, at Dry Creek. We started with Ann Devine-King's day hikers, who planned to spend the day exploring the lower part of the stream. They had a delightful time experiencing nature's healing ways.

Twyla, Martha and I continued upstream with the trail in fair condition, but it started to get worse as we hiked deeper into the wilderness. Trees were

down across the trail, and the once well-marked trail signs were not to be found, having been removed years ago. The undergrowth of laurel and rhododendron was closing in and choking off the trail, with many slides and detours around and over them and lots of fallen trees. It was like an obstacle course challenging us every step of the way.

The heat and humidity was like being in a tropical jungle. The forest floor had so many species of mushrooms that had grown to enormous sizes. We camped for the night, having reached our planned destination area. Exhausted as we were, we all seemed refreshed and spirited by the experience. That night, I sat on the boulders along the creek and watched the stars above and listened to the gurgling stream at my feet.

The next morning, we continued upstream, trying to follow a path that was quickly disappearing. Rock cairns are the only markers along these trails these days. We finally reached the marker that linked us to the trail taking us back to the beginning of our journey at the Dry Creek Trailhead.

Every step on this hike was a challenge, as we hiked into true wilderness. As rugged and hard as the experience was for us, it made us stronger. We hiked 18 miles into wild country and met the challenges it set before us. Nature healed us in so many ways. None of us will ever forget this experience. From now on, when meeting anything that life might throw at us, we can look back on this experience and say, "This is nothing, I hiked for two days into the wilderness, and it made me strong. I can do this."

Get outdoors and let nature heal you. Don't wait until tomorrow. Do it today and every day. Life is a journey. Enjoy it.

MEETINGS

Next in the Series

Solar Open House Roane County

Sat, Nov 5, 1-4 p.m.
Home of Bob and Jan Mertz

This event will be held rain or shine. The Mertz's came to one of our open houses last year, and they have since set up their own "grid-assisted system." They will also have some other homesteading projects on display, for those interested.

Info and directions: Contact Mary Wildfire, wildfire@spectrumz.com or Robin Wilson, robin@wvcag.org.

MONONGAHELA GROUP

Wed, Dec 17, 6 – 9 p.m.

Winter Potluck

Home of Jim Kotcon/Candice Elliott
414 Tyrone Avery Rd, Morgantown

Besides enjoying good food and convivial company, we will be discussing the I-79 connector that could come through the WVU Arboretum. Activities for younger folk will be provided. Please plan to attend and bring some food to share.

Info: celliot2@comcast.net, 304-594-3322

For additional Mon Group activities, contact John Bird, 304-864-8631, or watch for email announcements from Sally Wilts. To be added to the Mon Group email list and receive monthly activity reminders, contact Sally, sallywilts@yahoo.com.



**SIERRA
CLUB**

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(Put name of recipient under subject)

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Mail address:
Member, WV Senate or
House of Delegates
Bldg 1
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website: www.legis.state.wv.us
has contact information for all state legislators.

Regional Sierra Club Staff
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Preserve the Future

Not everyone can make a large gift to protect the environment during their lifetime, but you can preserve the environment for generations to come by remembering Sierra Club in your will. There are many gift options available. We can even help you plan a gift for your local Chapter.

For more information and confidential assistance, contact:

Sierra Club
Gift Planning Program
85 Second St, Second Floor
San Francisco, CA 94105
gift.planning@sierraclub.org • (800) 932-4270

For planned giving in West Virginia, contact Paul Wilson at 304-279-1361

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