



SIERRA CLUB
GEORGIA CHAPTER

Savannah River Group

Dear Savannah River Group Members and Friends;

Happy summer members and friends of the Sierra Club Savannah River Group! Time to get out and experience the great outdoors. We are so fortunate to have so many National and State Parks available to us. I hope you can take advantage of visiting some of these beautiful places this summer.

The Sierra Club Savannah River Group is on hiatus this summer while we all have a chance to enjoy summer with our families in the great outdoors. We will therefore not have any monthly meetings. Our Outings Leaders are also busy traveling to North Carolina, Maine, and Europe so we will not have any outings until September.

We will reconvene this September with an Ice Cream Social and monthly meeting. Until then, have a great summer!

Cathy Black

Co-Chair & Outings Chair
Savannah River Group

Upcoming meetings

Tuesday, September 17, 6:30 PM: For many people across the CSRA, driving a personal vehicle is simply not an option. Come join us as Brian Mosely (Walton Options) and Wallace White (AARP) discuss the many challenges people with some limitations face with our public transportation system.

The Savannah River Group is glad to offer our members and supporters the option to attend our hybrid meetings either in person or virtually via Zoom. For those attending in-person, we meet at the Unitarian Universalist Church at 3501 Walton Way Extension, Augusta. For those attending virtually, here is the Zoom information:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89905968431>

Meeting ID: 899 0596 8431

To Dial in: 305 224 1968

Tuesday, October 15, 6:30 PM: Record breaking heatwaves. Catastrophic natural disasters. Trash building up all around us. If we are to sustain life on earth, we must find better ways to live in harmony with our natural world. Join us as Chris Hall discusses some key elements to sustainability and how to build this into a movement.

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The Savannah River Group holds six Executive Committee (ExCom) meetings each year, always on the fourth Monday of the month. ExCom meetings for 2024 are scheduled for February 26, April 22, June 24, August 26, October 28, and December 30, all starting at 6:30 PM. Any Sierra Club members are welcome to join. For more information, contact Cathy Black at sonnyandcathyblack@gmail.com.

Upcoming events

Adopt-A-Stream: Our Adopt-A-Stream team meets every month to test the water in our local streams. Contact [Frank Carl](#) if you would like to participate.

Upcoming water monitorings:

- July 7, 8, & 9
- August 4, 5, & 6
- September 1, 2, & 3

Transportation: Augusta Transit Citizen's Advisory Committee (TCAC) is currently seeking new members. Members must live in Richmond County. The committee meets every month on the fourth Thursday at 4 PM. Please contact Oliver Page for further information: 706-823-4400 or Opage@augustaga.gov.

The Sierra Club and partners transportation committee has been working hard. We meet the 3rd Saturday of each month from 1 to 3 PM at the Savannah Riverkeeper's office, 328 Riverfront Drive, Augusta.

Annual Group Picnic: Our Annual Group picnic will be held at Pendleton King Park this year under the Franke Pavilion on September 14th. Mark your calendars now! This is a great time to socialize and catch up with friends that you haven't seen all summer. The picnic will be a potluck luncheon from 10:30 AM to 2:30 PM. Please email [Ann Brown](#) or [Cathy Black](#) and tell us what you are bringing. We hope to see everyone there!

Nature Artist: Mark Albertin, an Augusta filmmaker, photographer, and longtime friend and supporter of Sierra Club and our Savannah River Group, will have a special exhibit later this year titled "Sacred Waters of the Okefenokee: The View in Black and White - Photographic studies documenting the beauty and mystery of a rare and endangered environment."

The exhibit will run from Dec. 6 to Jan. 17 at Candl Fine Art, 1128 Broad Street, Augusta.

Mark your calendar to see this special exhibit.

Georgia Chapter and National Sierra Club news

Sierra Club National announced a 10% reduction in personnel in June due to a budget shortfall. Donations have been down over the past year, well below the levels reached during the Trump presidency. The Georgia Chapter will not be impacted by these cuts directly and expects to hire multiple new staff this summer/fall.

The Georgia Chapter's budget for 2024 was reviewed and approved at the Chapter Executive Committee's June meeting. Our financials look excellent, and administrative costs are minimized by remote work, that is, we don't have a Chapter office. Our Chapter continues to enjoy strong funding from donors for both legislative and educational work. Protection of the Okefenokee Swamp continues to be our top priority for land preservation. Clean energy generation and residential solar are also high priorities.



Sen. Jon Ossoff, left, and Jeffrey Holder

The Sierra Club Wildlife & Wildlands group conducted a “Volunteer Fly-In” to the Sierra Club's D.C. office in May, and I was given the opportunity to represent the Georgia Chapter. The purpose was to lobby members of Congress on pending legislation relevant to the protection & preservation of wildlife and wildlands. Each volunteer was responsible for arranging constituent meetings with their legislators. We went through a morning of orientation and training on the talking points. We also met with Ben Jealous, Sierra Club Executive Director, and he gave an overview of his vision for the SC and took questions. He was very impressive, and invited me to speak with him as he was headed to another meeting.

The Farm Bill, a massive piece of legislation, was under active negotiation at that time. When meeting with legislators, we lobbied for various sections of that bill and provided both educational information and the Sierra Club's preferences. SC staff and other volunteers accompanied me to my meetings with Senator Warnock's office (staff only), Senator Ossoff and his staff, and Representative Rick Allen. They were all very receptive to my presentation. With Rep. Allen, I also discussed the issues surrounding the lock & dam just downstream from Augusta on the Savannah River; he was adamant that the Army Corps Of Engineers should repair the dam and turn it over to local authorities (Augusta & North Augusta).

Overall, the three days of the “Wildlands Volunteer Fly-In” were productive, informative, and inspiring. It was a pleasure to work with the SC staff and to collaborate with the volunteers from across the country.

Jeffrey Holder

SRG Delegate to the Georgia Chapter ExCom

Transportation Update

Summertime is here and it's getting HOT outside! I mean fry-an-egg-on-the-pavement hot! Many of us will simply handle that issue by turning down the temperature on the A/C and staying inside, but what happens when you can't?

Homelessness isn't a new issue by any means, but what does heat and public transportation have to do with the unhoused population? If people are unable to stay in shelters and cooling centers are not yet available (or are overwhelmed), how will people get out of the heat? Simple: the buses of Augusta Transit. It's been reported that people will get on the bus and ride all day.

When we think about the barriers to better public transportation, this issue demonstrates the complexity and interconnectedness of the many challenges we face in our communities. We know that temperatures will only continue to rise, so we must adequately prepare for the new reality that comes with a warming globe.

When Augusta Transit submitted their first grant application for electric buses, one of the pieces of information that they needed to pull together was a climate action plan. Among other things, this plan includes topics such as transitioning to clean energy fueled vehicles and operational efficiencies. It's apparent that the leadership takes this topic seriously as they have submitted an application for additional electric buses (the purchased buses should arrive in 2025).

Considering the transit department's actions, including building the climate action plan, why hasn't all of Richmond County also considered this? With a commitment to 100% clean energy by 2050 (and 80% by 2030), how will they get there if steps aren't taken to create a plan?

We can look across the landscape of Augusta and see that changes are taking place and Augusta Transit is a clear example of that. We must be diligent and hold the commission accountable. Augusta Transit can do all the right things, but in our interconnected world, all eyes must be looking forward to our future and we must be marching together.

Chris Hall

Transportation Chair, Savannah River Group

Meet the Savannah River Group

Get involved with your local Savannah River Group! Plug in to one of our issue committees by contacting the leaders below. Not sure where to start? Reach out to our co-chairs and let them know what you're interested in!

Your new 2024 Executive Committee for the Savannah River Group is:

- Co-Chair: [Cathy Black](#)
- Co-Chair: [Greg Sutherland](#)
- Secretary: [Bridget Brown](#)
- Treasurer – [Moirra Nonnweiler](#)
- Georgia Chapter ExCom Delegate: [Jeffrey Holder](#)
- At-Large Member: [Ann Brown](#)
- At-Large Member: [Chris Hall](#)

The Savannah River Group's leaders also include:

- Conservation Chair: [Frank Carl](#)
- Fundraising Chair: Vacant
- Membership Chair: [Bill Jackson](#)
- Newsletter Editor: [Sam Booher](#)
- Outreach Coordinator: [Linda McBurney](#)
- Outings Chair: [Cathy Black](#)
- Political Chair: [Tim Nelken](#)
- Transportation Chair: [Chris Hall](#)
- Web Master: [Charlotte Gardner](#)
- Adopt-a-Stream Program Coordinators
 - Richmond County: [Frank Carl](#)
 - Columbia County: [Tim Nelken](#)

Thanks for all you do to help protect the environment in the Augusta area, across Georgia, and beyond. Hope to see you at one of our upcoming meetings or events!

P.S. - If you ever need to contact the Savannah River Group by "snail mail," you can reach us at this address: Savannah River Group, Sierra Club, PO Box 14463, Augusta, GA 30919.