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WVSC and BOR Collaborate in Battle for Public Lands

Matt Kearns and David Lillard

People who care about public lands know that the past few years have been challenging. Advocates have fought off several Congressional attempts to kill the Land and Water Conservation Fund, streamline industrial development and change how federal lands are managed — even to sell them off or give them to the states. The current political climate makes it clear that this Congressional anti-public-lands fervor will become even more intense.

Against this backdrop, President Obama left office without a proclamation for Birthplace of Rivers National Monument. The monument campaign continues with a longer-term horizon. The reality is that advocates for Birthplace of Rivers will need to focus resources on keeping public lands and their protections across the Monongahela National Forest and other federal lands. We need to ensure we have a landscape worthy of future permanent protection.

Consider the new Congress. On the first day in session, the House — with the support of all three West Virginia Representatives — passed a new budget rule that says, in effect, public lands are worthless. Now it will appear “budget neutral” whenever federal lands are sold or transferred, regardless of the land’s value to taxpayers.

In week three of the Congressional session, Sen. Shelley Moore Capito co-sponsored a bill to take away presidential authority under the Antiquities Act to proclaim national monuments, a conservation tool used by nearly every president over the past 100 years. The new bill states that only Congress can establish national monuments, and that they can do so only with the approval of the state legislature and local governments where the proposed monument is located.

Remember, national monuments are created only on existing federal land. Senator Capito’s bill would have Congress abdicate its responsibility for the land that belongs to all Americans. The bill takes authority away not only from the president, but also from Congress itself.

This paved the way for a bill by Rep. Chaffetz of Utah to require the federal government to dispose of 3.3 million acres of public land across the West. That’s almost the size of Connecticut! But then something happened. Sportsmen and outdoorspeople in Utah and across the West raised their voices and said, “No!” On Feb. 2, Rep. Chaffetz announced via social media that he would pull the bill because he heard loud and clear from constituents.

These broadsides show why we need to have permanent protections for the incredible ecosystem and recreational resources for places like Birthplace of Rivers — and why it’s important for us to keep raising our voices.

Loss of federal ownership could be detrimental to all public land users. Federal lands are managed with mandatory public input and “multiple use” provisions that value clean water and recreation alongside timber and minerals. States often have different priorities. Western

Looking out over Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge at sunrise.

This is one of the many public lands protected by Federal law. Others like it could now be in jeopardy.

Randall Sanger
Photography



sportsmen have found themselves shut out of state lands following profit minded sell-offs. Mineral rights have been sold beneath some of West Virginia’s Wildlife Management Areas. Because our state legislature is prohibited from passing a deficit, selling or developing state land could become a quick fix for our financial woes.

Contrary to the House of Representative’s opinion, public lands are far from worthless. Public lands form the foundation of an outdoor recreation economy currently estimated at \$646 billion. The Monongahela National Forest supports 1.3 million visitors who spend approximately \$82 million dollars annually. The New River Gorge National River provides another \$53 million to the local economy. There is likely even more tangible value in the “ecosystem services” offered by public lands — much of West Virginia’s drinking water originates in the headwaters of the Monongahela National Forest.

The return on our investment in public lands goes far beyond dollars and cents. The camaraderie around a campfire. The freedom and solitude of open spaces. The accomplishment of a day’s hike, paddle or hunt. The wonder from a scenic view. For many of us, public lands serve as our only venue for these intangible feelings and experiences. The “Mon” serves as a common denominator among hunters, birders, boaters, fishers, campers, RV towers, bikers, hikers and climbers. We may enjoy the land

in different ways, but every Mountaineer takes pride in our public lands, the most “Wild and Wonderful” part about living in West Virginia.

The Birthplace of Rivers Coalition understands the value of our most special public landscapes and will continue to advance the monument initiative. But the immediate battleground has shifted, and we must adapt. West Virginia Wilderness Coalition, Sierra Club WV, the Highlands Conservancy, West Virginia Rivers, Trout Unlimited WV, Friends of the Monument — we all will need to work together to keep public land in public hands. We must rally our members for action alerts, letter writing and calls to Congressional offices to raise our voices in protection of our public lands.

In the long run, this also will help us protect the Birthplace of Rivers.

Visit <http://sierraclub.org/west-virginia> to stay informed.

Upcoming ExCom Meeting

Sat, May 20: Lewisburg

All members are welcome.

Contact Laurie Ardison for details

ikeanddash@yahoo.com



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

View from the Chair

— Jim Kotcon, Chapter Chair

Where the Jobs Are

Everyone knows that West Virginians need jobs. Politicians from Donald Trump on down insist that we need to bring back the coal industry and simply refuse to even consider any information about adverse impacts of coal mining. And when idiotic business decisions by coal execs lead to bankruptcy, the politicians insist it is about a “War on Coal.” We have known for 30 years that climate change would reduce demand for coal, but the coal companies keep on buying up reserves, then blame the government, the workers, the environmentalists, or anyone but themselves when their bad deals fall apart.

But we need energy, right? And coal is the low-cost provider, right? Turns out, not so much.

Today, wind energy is the low-cost provider. While many gas companies are buying up gas reserves in the hopes that they will replace coal, two-thirds of the new electric generating capacity added to the grid in 2014 was from renewables. It happened again in 2015. And the data look like 2016 will be more of the same. The market has spoken, and it is talking about wind and solar, not gas or coal.

Solar energy keeps getting cheaper. Many thought that the low gas prices last year would stall the solar industry, but it did not happen, and in some places, solar is cheaper than gas. Today!

Estimates suggest that, within a few years, solar will be the low-cost provider. And that does not consider the cost of the health and environmental impacts.

So how do we get jobs in West Virginia?

First, we must recognize that the market is the major driver of energy industries. Major high-tech employers, such as Apple and Amazon, as well as traditional companies, such as Walmart and General Motors, are demanding 100 percent renewable energy. To

attract these employers, West Virginia needs a lot more renewables.

Consumers also want clean, renewable energy. One survey showed that 80 percent of U.S. consumers want renewable energy, and 48 percent are willing to pay a higher price for it. Affordable energy is important to West Virginia, but the market is shifting and our energy industry needs to keep up ... or get left behind.

The Solar Foundation reported that 260,000 Americans worked in the solar industry in 2016. That is expected to grow to 286,335 in 2017. Solar employment grew 17 times faster than overall employment in the U.S.

The American Wind Energy Association reported just over 100,000 jobs in wind. Maryland just adopted their “Clean Energy Jobs Act,” which increased their renewable energy requirement to 25 percent by 2020. This is expected to create 4,000 jobs in wind and another 1,000 in solar.

But to get employment benefits, nothing beats energy efficiency. The American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy estimates that 830,000 people were employed in energy efficiency in the U.S. in 2010, and an aggressive approach to cost-effective energy efficiency could create over half a million new jobs.

The Sierra Club’s West Virginia report showed that our utilities could create 19,000 jobs while saving money for consumers, right here in West Virginia.

Tax breaks for coal will spur mechanization and more profits leaving the state. We have seen it before, and the coal companies themselves are saying it again. They do not want to create high-cost jobs and get buried under the health and retirement costs of a large workforce exposed to hazardous conditions.

Tell your legislators that if they want to create jobs, they need to be looking at clean energy.

Energy Efficiency Campaign 2017

Pamela Ellis, Chapter EE Liaison

West Virginians deserve clean air, clean water and an opportunity to work in high-quality, energy-efficient employment positions. Far too often, the promise of health, safety and a favorable economic future is denied by historical and present-day pollution from fossil fuel industries and public officials, without sufficient concern for compliance with national and state regulations. Energy efficiency delivers the best avenue for safe jobs and least-cost energy resources for West Virginia and the nation.

From February 2012 until the end of 2016, records from the WV Public Service Commission (PSC) indicate that First Energy companies projected a reduction of electricity usage by only 0.5 percent of total retail sales, based on 2009 levels. In comparison, the Maryland PSC reports that by 2015, it had achieved 99 percent of goals required by the

2008 EmPOWER Maryland Energy Efficiency Act: a 10-percent reduction in per capita electricity consumption and a 15-percent reduction in per capita electric demand, base on 2007 levels. In 2015, Maryland saved 8 percent on total electric sales through energy efficiency measures.

A similar robust Energy Efficiency Resource Standard (EERS) needs to pass during the 2017 WV Legislative session, requiring utilities to meet any new generation demand from energy efficiency savings. The Harrison transfer to FirstEnergy has already unnecessarily cost Mon Power and Potomac Edison customers an extra \$160 million, when an EERS would have required energy efficiency cost savings to meet generation capacity needs for decades with new energy efficiency job creation and without increased respiratory hospital admissions from coal-fired plant pollutants.

On Jan. 12, the Chapter held a public rally in Fairmont at the MonPower office to

deliver personal letters and petition signatures to FirstEnergy, opposing the proposed noncompetitive, coal-fired Pleasants plant transfer to MonPower and Potomac Edison ratepayers. The goal of 1,000 more letters and petition signatures is within reach by *Sierran* readers. We are contacting members and residents throughout the state to engage in local action community forums during March and April in the Lewisburg and Harrison/Clarksburg areas, respectively, prior to a public rally at the PSC in Charleston. There are also plans for solar open houses, and Co-op forums, in addition to statewide webcasts to provide more rapid response updates on how to be more involved in energy efficiency community outreach. Chapter member delegations will visit local, state and federal halls of government and offices, and encourage letters to the editor and media and voter awareness campaigns.

In 2017, we cannot settle for only a “clicktivist” mindset. Local and statewide actions are catalysts to attain our mission.



Carol Nix (right) joins some friends at the Women's March in D.C., Jan.21.

REPRISE OF WOMENS MARCH

Carol Nix, WV Chapter Member

Charter buses rolled by, one after the other, on I-68 as we waited for our ride in the cold darkness the day after the inauguration. Four hours later we were still in line(!) with thousands of others(!) to board the Metro, as a photographer on the Washington Monument was taking that famous photo of record pink crowds at the Women’s March.

The day was more drizzly than cold, but a woman in front of us was wearing extreme cold weather gear — she came prepared from California — and she looked like the Michelin man. Someone else was documenting all the states represented, and we all marveled at how two committed and angry women had spread a viral idea that put most of us in “pussyhats.”

The March had over-spilled the streets when the Metro spit us out, too late to hear the speakers, but in time for the messages from the hearts of the marchers, on countless homemade, clever signs: “Mock me to my face” (from a disabled guy); “Show Up, Stay Put, Keep at It”; “True Patriots Resist Trump”; “Super callow fragile ego Trump you are atrocious”; “Facts do exist”; and my favorite, “Icebergs are not political, they just melt.”

Doubtless you have seen the photos and heard your friends’ stories, or you have memories of your own march in D.C. or Charleston or Pittsburgh. Unfortunately, we’ll have to do this again and again. We’ll have to write more letters, make more phone calls, sacrifice more time and money if we hope to keep our country out of despair and ruin. Get active, y’all.

No One is Safe as WV Legislature Convenes

Jim Kotcon

Although the budget will dominate the 2017 session, we already have hints that the anti-environmental 2016 session may be just a prelude to the damage planned for 2017. Gov. Justice, in his State of the State address, took time out to critique WV-DEP environmental inspectors who are always “there to tell you no.” He failed to mention the energy efficiency programs he had talked about during the campaign, but after a long list of proposed tax increases on state residents, suggested ways to lower the severance tax on coal.

Working with the West Virginia Environmental Council, Sierra Club will seek adoption of an energy efficiency bill

called LEEP (Local Energy Efficiency Partnerships). We will also seek to protect state water quality standards, address energy facility siting rules, and require full disclosure of election campaign funding.

Our biggest efforts, however, must be on defense. At this writing, the gas industry has already introduced SB 244, which would allow gas companies to force the sale of gas on private property. Whether it is called forced pooling, unitization, or “efficient development,” this bill is simply un-American. Another bill, SB 245, would overturn a recent WV Supreme Court decision by saying that a gas company can enter your property for surveying without your

permission, even if you say, “No.” Both these bills amount to an effort to legally take private property from one person for the private gain of another company. Both bills were defeated last year, but the industry is back to try again.

Other bad bills likely to come up include rollbacks of state water and air pollution rules, and efforts to subsidize the fossil fuel industry.

It is important to speak up. Call your legislators and insist that clean air and water are important. Do not let the lobbyists’ voice be the only one your legislators hear. For more information, get on the WVEC mailing list by contacting: info@wvecouncil.org.

Jim Sconyers: A WV Sierra Club Icon

November 16, 1943 – December 12, 2016

Mary Wimmer remembers

Working with others on this special tribute to Jim has been a labor of love, accompanied by a range of emotions. Here are some of my reflections:

When the WV Chapter of Sierra Club was formed in 1984, I met Jim Sconyers among the other founding mothers/fathers with whom I shared a love of the outdoors and a strong desire to protect and preserve our earth and its special wild places. Jim was a Sierra Club activist in the truest sense. He had studied and appreciated the history of the Club, giving him firm ground on which to stand. He understood every aspect, from conservation to outings to education, nationally, regionally and locally, and was committed to making a difference through Club actions. He recognized the importance of getting others involved — expanding Club membership was an underlying theme in all his activities. And he realized the critical role of sustained Chapter leadership. There was great joy in the West Virginia mountains upon learning of his return from New Hampshire! He was a main anchor to which the Chapter was firmly moored for many years.



Paul Turner (left), Jim, unidentified woman, and Bob Coit meet in Buckhannon to begin process of establishing the WV Chapter of Sierra Club.

Jim had an amazing environmental activism skill set. He knew from years of experience how to mount a campaign, how to organize and deliver public testimony, how to lobby, how to get media attention, how to put on workshops and tours, and how to motivate people to act. His work on any issue was supported by careful research and sound argument. He was an excellent writer and speaker. And he was not averse to dressing up to represent an adversary in demonstrations at the State Capitol! He was simply great at exposing issues in a way that empowered and energized people. The extensive amount of conservation work Jim did over three decades is well documented elsewhere in this special supplement to the *Sierran*.

During a large workshop for Conservation Committee Chairs put on by National Sierra Club in our Eastern Panhandle back in the 1980s, each participant had to give an example of how they did NOT act in an environmentally sound way. There were the usual stories (driving when one could have walked, not recycling, etc.), but Jim brought down the house when he simply exclaimed, with perfect emphasis for a West Virginian, “I heat with coal!”

After returning from a few years in New Hampshire, Jim made a significant change in that lifestyle, committing to living “off the grid.” In November 2013, I visited Jim and his dog Max at his last home, a true “green house,” with solar panels, windmill and woodstove, and backup electric heat. No coal in sight!

He took me on a hike around the place, telling stories, of course. My favorite involved the old dilapidated house

trailer that he and wife Judy had occupied in that very spot when they first got married. It apparently evolved into the place where teenage son, Jacob, and his friends would enjoy partying, while Jim complained that he was destroying the place. The evidence was clear, Jacob, beer cans included!

Jim appreciated the volunteer nature of the Club’s conservation activists. He understood that with all the hard, and often frustrating, work must come time for R&R, fun and laughter — time to further bond with fellow activists and find strength for the work at hand. Indeed, Jim was one of my favorite companions as we enjoyed WV Sierra Club outings of all sorts, reminding us of what was at stake. (Of course, delightful son Jacob was often along!) Although we enjoyed wildflower walks near his home and canoeing the newly designated Ohio River Islands NWR, we were most in our element when hiking and camping in and around the wildlands of the Monongahela National Forest. Whether watching comets while camped on the North Fork of the Cranberry, enjoying spectacular views from the cliffs of North Fork Mountain, kicking back at our Otter Creek Wilderness camping spot, or delighting in the spring peepers’ singing around the pond at Middle Mountain Cabins, Jim was always relaxed, engaging and fun, exuding happiness at being there.

He and I worked together with the U.S. Forest Service to maintain and protect the places we loved. We organized lots of trail work, especially after the 1985 flood, and became deeply involved in Mon NF management. After working in Laurel Fork Wilderness, High Falls of Cheat and on other trails, there was always a cooler of beer awaiting tired bodies, with time to sit, reflect and enjoy the satisfaction of a productive day’s labor. Our Forest Plan work in the ’80s and beyond protected key areas from roads and timbering. Jim single-handedly began the drive toward permanent Congressional Wilderness designation for Dolly Sods North after federal acquisition. This ultimately laid the groundwork for our 2001-’09 Wilderness campaign (while he was in New Hampshire), in which this area was designated, along with several others.



Jim (left) and Paul Turner enjoy a cold, refreshing brew after a day of trail work in the Laurel Fork Wilderness.

When I heard Jim was organizing the northern WV busses for the Climate Change Rally in D.C. on a cold February day in 2013, I had to go, as much for Jim as for the issue itself. I had not seen him, or been involved in environmental activism, for several years prior, and I can still feel the warmth, delight and welcome in the looks we gave each other at first sight!



Dedication, commitment, caring. Tenacity, perseverance, inspiration. Intelligence and enthusiasm. A deep love for the Earth’s community of life, and the ability to connect profoundly with it. These are words that come to mind when I reflect on the legacy that Jim Sconyers is leaving to the West Virginia Sierra Club. Jim never let his illness get in the way of this. I suspect that John Muir would be proud of his achievements. I consider it an honor that he was my long-time friend. He will always be a presence in my life.

And so, I will sign off as Jim did at the end of every email he sent: “Remember, Mother Nature bats last.”

Mary Wimmer is a founding mother of WV Sierra Club, a former Conservation Committee Chair and outings leader, and a Mon National Forest activist.

Loosestrife

Fragile whorls of lemon yellow
blooms proffered on long reaching stems
eager to share harmony, sheltered
by pale soothing leaves.

Set strife loose

lose strife

loosestrife

Lysimachia quadrifolia

Herbal secret of peace

Fed by ancient *Lysimachus* to raging bull
Pacified, gentled, calmed, strife lost.

Cooperation, mandatory for yoked oxen
straining sinews to fructify land
of New World

Achieved by lacing grassy hay
with liberal additions of loosestrife.

Oxen lose strife, find harmony,
unite, pull as one,

advance common cause, progress.

Lesson for today in lore of ancients?

What is *Lysimachia* for humankind?

Shall we graze in Appalachian meadows,
or subversively slip loosestrife leaves in,
disguised as lettuce or spinach or
other indigenous greens?

Will we then see blossoming
of peace, love, mutuality,
as strife is lost?

Loosestrife holds red beacon

at heart of flower,

symbol of unity’s strength, of kinship’s force.

— a poem by Jim Sconyers

From Those Who Worked on Conservation Issues with Jim

Julie Archer

Project Manager for WV CAG

I was sorry to hear of Jim's passing. He was one of the people I met when I first became active on environmental issues. It was 2000 or 2001 and I was volunteering at the WV CAG/WVEC office. He and Jim Kotcon stopped by while they were in Charleston doing something at the PSC related to electricity deregulation. More recently, I got to know Jim better through the collaborative work of our and other organizations on Marcellus Shale-related issues. I always admired and appreciated his enthusiasm and dedication. He was a kind curmudgeon with a sense of humor, and he'll be sorely missed!

Sam White

Leaning Pine Farm, Mount Savage, MD
<http://www.leaningpinefarm.com>

The first time I met Jim was in a carpool ride to the Southern Appalachians regional training in South Carolina for Sierra Club volunteers and staff, back in the late 1990s. He was a tried-and-true rural member of the Club who valued all things "nature" and a good beer.

There were several hundred people there, and like a good Appalachian, he was

the only one wanting to go grab some beer with me. He made that weekend for me, talking about forest issues and the Club over several good beers. He could really make us laugh.

Last time I saw him was on the bus he organized to pick up Tristan Apple, Desiree Bullard and me for the February 2013 Climate March in Washington, D.C. We talked about First Energy's plans to increase their coal consumption, and how the West Virginia Chapter and the Western Maryland Group should team up to stop this.

He will be missed.

Dave Saville

former WVSC ExCom member, and long-time forest activist with the WV Highlands Conservancy

Many people will recall fun times with Jim: outings, events, celebrations, etc. Not to throw cold water on the time I spent with Jim, but my recollections are mostly not of the "fun" type. Not that we weren't happy to do it, or that we didn't enjoy it, but Jim and I were Forest activists together, comrades who were birds-of-a-feather when it came to protecting our public lands. Especially the Monongahela National Forest. We were brothers-in-arms!

Back in the 1990s and before, the focus

of the land managing agencies was "get the cut out." Meaning that timber harvesting was the number one priority, and any of the other multiple uses the agency was supposed to be managing for were secondary. We were strategizing, gathering information, studying the laws and guidelines, mobilizing people, interacting with managers, getting the help from lawyers, developing media and outreach materials, and organizing campaigns. We were butting heads with timber beasts, arguing about the value of old-growth forests, clean streams, unfragmented forest habitat, and quiet, contemplative recreation. We were advocating and speaking up for our collective constituency whom we believed were not being represented fairly, nor were our interests receiving the consideration they were due. It wasn't always fun and games. But it was our shared vision, our similar interests and staunch resolve that brought us together and allowed us to keep up the fight.

I'm glad we both lived long enough to see a turnabout within these agencies. Some of them anyway. Then, it was called "ecosystem management," and now, clean water, forest soils, wildlife and recreation enjoy a much-elevated status and receive the important consideration in management decisions that they deserve.

I like to think it was the work of people such as Jim who were the force behind these important changes in management priorities. I think, in recent years, Jim could sleep better at night knowing he'd played a part in those changes. I think his concerns diversified and his resolve was focused on other issues he felt were important, like global climate change. Indeed, the Forest Service on the Monongahela National Forest is now doing much more to restore

the original forest than they are to destroy it. It was Jim, and others like him, whom we can thank for that.

Yes, we were able to enjoy the forest together, too, and those were very fun times. But when I think of Jim, I think of making a difference, about fighting for what's right. Cheers to Jim and the Mon!

Bill Hughes

Marcellus Shale activist, Wetzel County

Jim had a very long-time connection and contribution to the Sierra Club in WV. Mine has been short, and rather narrowly focused just on Marcellus Shale topics. It is interesting that my most memorable conversation with Jim took place a few years ago at West Virginia Wesleyan College during a Sierra shale workshop between my presentations. But our conversation had nothing at all to do with the environment or shale gas or even the Sierra Club. It was much more simple, a topic that binds all of us, in due time. We shared some of our insights and concerns. As older guys, both with similar and serious health concerns and circumstances, we comfortably disclosed our fears and hopes on death, and dying; pain and suffering; and the miracle of medical health interventions when combined with the healing and powerful good wishes and prayers of friends. We knew we each had a limited number of days and were on borrowed time. Jim must have borrowed a few less days than I did. I think we reflected on using our days well and being more grateful for our allotted time. I do not remember any other conversation topics with Jim, and to be honest, none of the others seem important now. We shared the important ones. Life and death, hopes and fears — not much more to discuss, is there?

Kathy Gregg shares

I think that the first time I met Jim Sconyers was at an outing in May 1983. It was one of the first outreach outings that the West Virginia Group of Potomac Chapter held as we were thinking seriously about applying for Chapter status. In August that year, Jim led what was probably his first official Sierra Club Group outing to Cranesville Swamp Nature Preserve, in Preston County. He also hosted a Group Executive Committee meeting at his home in Cranesville that same day. Those were the early days, when Chapter status was but a small, though growing, spark in our imaginations.

Jim was also present at our first official organizational meeting held in Buckhannon, in October 1984. Toward the end of the year, he was appointed as an alternate delegate from our Group to the Appalachian Regional Conservation Committee of Sierra Club. Also, during 1984, Jim led four Group outings and another in early 1985. The WV Chapter was established in May 1985. What I am trying to convey here is that Jim has been with us, taking leadership roles, from the beginning of our Chapterhood. I remember his enthusiasm about being a steward for the Planet, and his great, friendly, outgoing spirit that was contagious! These traits served the Sierra Club well for more than THIRTY years!

As the WV Chapter became established, Jim continued to serve in many different capacities (see Timeline, 6). In addition to administrative and other leadership duties, Jim made time to get involved in a multitude of conservation issues. Several years ago, I was surprised, proud and pleased to see him at an important hearing in Buckhannon meant to educate the public — from the power company's point of view, of course — about the high voltage PATH transmission line being proposed. Jim was there representing the Chapter, with lots of Sierra Club handouts that portrayed this project as the ill-planned —and now fortunately defunct — scheme that it was. The reason I emphasize this is that Jim didn't live close to Buckhannon, and he cared enough about this project to make a special 2-hour trip (one-way) over and around mountains for an evening meeting to spread the Sierra Club word.

Jim took time to make sure our members met and enjoyed each other. I for one appreciate very much that he restarted our Chapter galas after a long hiatus. He has been with the WV Chapter from the beginning, fighting for the beautiful hills of West Virginia alongside the rest of us. He was ALWAYS THERE for us.

Kathy Gregg is a founding mother of the Chapter, past Mon NF activist and outings leader, and current Chapter Historian/Archivist.

Jim Kotcon pays tribute

Current Chapter Chair

I knew Jim for many years. We got a lot of comments about "the two Jims" in Sierra Club, and while I have certainly been active, no one worked harder, cared more passionately or loved the outdoors more than Jim Sconyers. He had a passion for the Mon Forest, Blackwater Canyon, and all the wild places of West Virginia. Even as he battled the cancer that ultimately took his life, Jim lived for Sierra Club. He served as Chair of the Chapter's Political Committee through most of 2016, fighting to help elect better leaders to our Legislature and Congress. I know that was tough for him, but those who knew him best also said it gave him purpose. I join the others here in offering tribute to one of our proudest, most active and longest-serving members.

More photos in online Supplement

For an expanded version of this Tribute, including additional, full-color photos of Jim through the years with WV Sierra Club, go to the Chapter website and check out the "Jim Sconyers Tribute Supplement (Mar/Apr 2017)" in the Newsletter Archives.

Also, a special memorial fund has been set up with the Sierra Club Foundation to support sustainable trail construction and maintenance throughout West Virginia's natural areas. To donate, contact our Chapter Treasurer, Sally Wilts, 304-379-7567, sallywilts@yahoo.com, or "Donate" online from the Chapter web page with a memo that it is in memory of Jim Sconyers.

From Those Who Shared Outings with Jim

Greg Good

A founding member of WV Sierra Club in 1984, and former Outings Leader

I don't remember when or where I first met Jim Sconyers. Despite his and my love of hiking and the mountains, I am sure it wasn't outside. It was likely at a Sierra Club ExCom meeting, almost definitely. In 1983 and 1984, he and I both were at lots of them. So, I met him as he usually was, engaged in protecting the trails and mountains he loved.

I remember many trailhead meetings, with Jim and Judy and Jacob perched on the tailgate of a pickup truck, Jim's crooked smile and laugh and that direct way he looked into my eyes, anyone's eyes.

My clearest memory came back just yesterday, thanks to Cindy O'Brien. As often is the case, a deep memory was triggered by a smell: Ramps! Cindy, Mary Wimmer and I, around 1986, were staying at Shot Cherry Cabin near Spruce Knob. We were on a trail work planning trip. I had been out on my own the afternoon before they arrived, gathering ramps. That evening, we cracked a few beers and fried up the ramps in butter, and had a feast!

The next day we were to meet a few people in Glady to hike into the Cheat Mountain 6.2 Area from the north, to see if there was any possible route to develop as a trail. We drove over to Glady, got out and started walking the hundred feet or so toward where Jim Sconyers was parked. We hadn't gotten but

a few steps when Jim's smile turned around and he let loose a few choice words and said something like, "Stop right there! How many ramps have you eaten?" A keen nose and a sharp tongue!

But we went on to explore Cheat Mountain that day, hiking old logging roads and dense rhodo thickets. We hiked many more mountains together over the years, but I never ate ramps on a trip with Jim again. I saved them 'til I got home!

Beth Little

Long-time WV Sierra Club activist on Wilderness/Mon NF and Marcellus Shale

I had the pleasure of shuttling Jim in Pocahontas County when he hiked the entire Allegheny Trail in West Virginia as a celebration of the Sierra Club Centennial. There was quite a stretch of the trail on roads between Marlin Mountain and Watoga State Park. I provided vehicular travel on that stretch and got to hear how he wandered around lost on Marlin Mountain, where logging roads intersected and scrambled the trail without any helpful signs. But Jim was a deeply experienced hiker, and a life member of the Sierra Club, so he managed. This is just one of many good memories I have over the years of knowing Jim, and I will miss him.

Sally Wilts/Duane Lazzell

Friends and hiking partners

My husband Duane and I, like so many

others, first met Jim as he led a Sierra Club outing. By this point in his life, he had retired and built his off-grid, energy efficient home on his property adjacent to Cranesville Swamp Preserve. He lived the life he knew was necessary to reduce our impact on the environment and avert the worst of global warming, and he spread that message to everyone he knew.

Jim had returned to WV after living out of state for several years, and he made his adopted state and the WV Chapter of Sierra Club the center of his life. He applied his considerable intellect, passion and energy to defending our environment. It is astonishing to me that he was so devoted to our Chapter and brought so much determination and effort to us. He became Chapter Chair and, working with others, developed a Marcellus campaign that won a National Sierra Club Communications Award in 2012. While he was Chair, he helped to organize Marcellus Academies for three years, to develop an online course on inspecting natural gas facilities, to conduct workshops on accessing, analyzing and reporting on self-reported ash landfill water quality discharges, and participated in lobbying in Charleston, attended WV DEP hearings, organized protests, wrote letters to the editor, wrote for our Chapter newsletter, restarted an annual Sierra Club event for our members, and did so much more.

Duane and I continued to go on outings with him, and our friendship grew. Jim was open-hearted and shared so much of himself in his stories of his life and adventures. We enjoyed all the times we

spent with him, whether paddling kayaks or hiking or exploring for wildflowers. He was an excellent naturalist and reacted with wonder each time he saw wildlife, a beautiful landscape or a new plant.

He seemed to have an insatiable curiosity and loved having his Smart phone as a reference and camera. Posting on Facebook allowed him to share his experiences with a wide group of friends and family.

Carpe diem was his motto, and he did not want to be identified by his illness. He continued to live his life as fully as his pain allowed and was very courageous as he faced setback after setback. His family was incredibly supportive, and it was wonderful to see them answer his needs.

We feel tremendous gratitude that our friendship with Jim enlivened our lives with his well-read knowledge and critical thinking skills, and sharing magazines, books and film recommendations. His legacy is all those whom he influenced by sharing himself, whether as a teacher, a leader or as a friend.

Bill Potter, *Hiking companion*

Several years ago Jim Sconyers, Tom Prall, and I were hiking on Dolly Sods. We started talking about doing our laundry. It went on for about half an hour. We covered favorite detergents, mixing lights and darks, and permanent press; and our laundry failures.

The idea of three bachelors hiking on a beautiful summer day and talking about washing clothes seems a little surreal.

Graeme Donovan reminisces

WV Sierra Club Outings participant

Dolly Sods Hike: On Sunday, Aug. 16, 2009, I left home at 6:30 a.m. and drove to the Foodland in Oakland to meet Jim Sconyers for the first time. We rode together in Jim's Toyota Tacoma truck to Dolly Sods and parked at the Red Creek Campground. At 10:45 a.m., our party of nine (Jim, Gentry, Cheryl, Tom, JoNell, Bill, Carol, Fred and me) started the day's hike. We had a late lunch, then retraced our steps, eventually finishing up at Bear Rocks, where we rode back in Jim's truck to the Red Creek Campground.

At the Davis Shop'n Save, three of the party left while the remaining six stayed for dinner at Siriani's Restaurant in Davis, before Jim returned me to Oakland by 10 p.m., and I drove home by 11. It was a long, long day, which testifies to something Jim insisted on in leading this hike, as he did with all his hikes, "stopping to smell the roses."

For him, this meant his intense and prolonged savoring of the Dolly Sods atmosphere in which he so openly and unabashedly reveled, as well as an extended tutorial for hike participants in the botany and ecology of the area, which Jim knew intimately and exhaustively. On this day, the landscape was lush with swelling blueberries, which we picked all along the way; some were better prepared for this than others, carrying containers they filled to take home.

The weather was beautiful at 4,000 feet, with that unique Dolly Sods "feel in the air," and Jim's ability to teach (honed by his school career) deepened everyone's appreciation of all the berries (blue, black, cran, mul, and elder), not to speak of Golden Rod, St. John's Wort, Gentian, Aspen, Alder and Norway and Red Spruce, many young trees slowly repopulating a landscape laid bare

by clear-felling an ancient forest, wildfires that literally scorched the dried earth, and then intentionally shelled and bombed by the military. Jim opened our eyes to how beavers had reshaped this landscape, as well as to the dynamism of all the natural processes going on beneath our feet and before our eyes.

Charleston MTR Rally: On Monday, Dec. 7, 2009, Jim met me at Ashebrooke Square (Cheat Lake) at 10:40 a.m. (having driven from his home at the edge of Cranesville Swamp), and we rode together in his maroon Prius to Charleston, to the Department of Environmental Protection HQ. We were there to attend a rally organized by Coal River Mountain Watch and the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition, and to protest blasting off the top of Coal River Mountain. There were about 300 protesters present, with 200 miners heckling, symbolically, between us and the DEP, with police in a no-man's land in between.

The rally proceeded from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m., with a keynote address by Robert Kennedy, Jr., who presented a raft of devastating statistics about the true costs of coal, including the long-term effects of mercury poisoning on children's IQ. Kathy Mattea sent a message that was read to the rally, and other speakers included Episcopal and Unitarian ministers, Lorelea Scarbro (a miner's widow), Larry (a retired coal miner), the modern "Mother Jones" of the region, and numerous others, including Judy Bonds and Maria Gunnoe.

Massey Energy had organized a stream of large coal trucks that continuously circled the streets surrounding the protest venue, honking loudly each time they passed. Kennedy took to shouting out amid his speech, "Honk if you want to save Coal River Mountain," and of course, the passing trucks honked loudly, as if on cue. Kennedy had also taken considerable time before the rally to speak to

the coal miners who were mounting their counter protest (again organized by Massey), engaging them on issues as important to them as to anyone else in the communities surrounding the mountain.

For me it was an important lesson in political protest: how to deal with adversaries in the fight to prevent environmental damage, and in the companionship of the struggle — thank you, Jim, for inviting me, and once again widening and deepening my experience! He even took well my teasing for burning so much wood through the winter that it surely added quite a lot of carbon to the atmosphere, a minor glitch in his decision to live off the grid.

Blackwater Falls State Park Outing: On Saturday, Feb. 19, 2011, Sally Wilts, Duane Lazzell, Jim and I hiked in the snow (not quite heavy enough for the promised snow shoes), from Pendleton Lake along the trail to Pase Point above the Blackwater River, with Jim — as was his wont — identifying trees all along the way (for me, at least — the others probably knew them well already). Then we visited the Blackwater Falls Overlook, heavily crusted with ice and snow but swollen with winter torrents, before driving to Douglas, and taking the high trail from Douglas Falls along the North Fork to the confluence with Blackwater. It was a striking day for me, not the first that Jim had helped etch beautifully in my memory.

I'm deeply grateful to him for these three trips that he guided, on which I was a fortunate beneficiary of his knowledge and experience. His determined, dedicated, humane activism on behalf of the environments he loved continue to bear fruit in those environments, as well as in the lives of his companions on the way. Thanks for the wonderful and enduring memories.

Timeline of Jim's WV Sierra Club Activities

Compiled by: Kathy Gregg & Sally Wilts

1980s and '90s

Spent much time backpacking in Monongahela National Forest with son Jacob.

May 1983: Kathy Gregg first met Jim at an official West Virginia Group Sierra Club outing to Tygart Lake in Barbour County. This was one of the first outings the Group held, as our WV Group (of the Potomac Chapter) began publicizing to members our hopes about becoming a full-fledged Chapter.

August 1983: Jim and Judy Sconyers hosted an outing to Cranesville Swamp and a Group Executive Committee meeting at their home in Cranesville, WV.

October 13, 1984: First Chapter organizational meeting was held in Buckhannon, WV. Jim was one of the participants!

December, 1984: Second Chapter organizational meeting was held at the Catholic Conference Center in Huttonsville. Jim was appointed as an alternate delegate to the Appalachian Regional Conservation Committee of Sierra Club. Also, during 1984, Jim led four Group outings.

May 1985: The West Virginia Chapter of Sierra Club was officially established. Jim became a member of the Conservation Committee, and led one Group outing in 1985.

1986-'89: As a Chapter Outings Leader, Jim led three Chapter outings each in 1986 and 1987, and participated in the numerous WV Sierra Club trail work outings on the Mon NF after the 1985 Flood.

In 1986, Jim became Newsletter Editor for the Mountain State Sierran, serving until the end of 1989. During that time, he also became very active with Beth Little and Mary Wimmer on Monongahela National Forest issues as a member of the Chapter's Forestwatch Team.

1994-early 1996: Served as Chapter Rivers Chair/Canaan Valley Task Force Chair

1997: Applied for and received a \$30,000 grant from REI for Forest issues, and Forest Watch continued working on the comprehensive plan for the Mon National Forest. Also, served as Chapter Chair in 1997.

1998-1999 (2 years): Served as Chapter Conservation Chair.

2000s and '10s

As the Chapter's first paid staff person, Jim was hired by National Sierra Club as an Organizer on Blackwater Canyon and the Mon National Forest, and when funding

ran out in 2000, the Chapter continued his funding for that year.

2000-Mar/April 2001: Served as ARCC Delegate and Blackwater Canyon Chair.

2001-'06: Jim lived in New Hampshire, where he became Chair of the SeaCoast Group of Sierra Club. Worked on White Mountain and energy issues.

2007: Jim finally returned to WV, and WV Sierra Club, and built his Green Home. Yeah!

2008-2015: After a short stint as Chapter Vice Chair, Jim became Chapter Chair again in late 2008, and served continuously in that role until early 2015.

After returning to WV, Jim's activities were many and diverse, summarized here:

- Restarted the Chapter's Annual Sierrafest, helping organize our 25th Anniversary celebration in 2009 at Camp Virgil Tate, and our 30th Anniversary celebration at Blackwater Falls in 2014.

- Campaign to defeat PATH transmission line

- Helped form the Chapter's Marcellus Shale Committee and organize Marcellus Academy three times. Marcellus campaign included media blitz, website, logo and bumper sticker, and brochure.

He represented the West Virginia Chapter at a major hearing in Buckhannon.

This campaign won the Chapter a Communications Award from National Sierra Club in 2012.

- Organized Coal Ash Permit workshop

- Organized Gas Well Watchers workshops on-line
- Organized buses to carry activists to the DC demonstration against fracking, the "Forward on Climate" Rally
- Organized demonstrations at Rep. David McKinley's office in opposition to his efforts to pass bills to disallow EPA from regulating coal ash
- Longtime WVSC Outing Leader, with a special focus on Blackwater Canyon and Dolly Sods North. More recently, restarted water outings, kayaking the Cheat and Blackwater Rivers.

Environmental Awards

1988 1st Jan Tyler Memorial Special Service Award from WV Sierra Club "for his initiative and creativity in producing the chapter's excellent publications."

1992 Outstanding Outings Leader from WV Sierra Club

1994 Monongahela Award from WV Sierra Club

1999 Mother Jones Award from the WV Environmental Council "for his work on the Forest Watch and Blackwater Canyon campaigns"

2012 Communications Award to WV Chapter of Sierra Club from National Sierra Club for primarily Jim's work on the Marcellus Shale Campaign.

2013 Special Service Award from National Sierra Club

MONONGAHELA GROUP

Sun, Mar 19

Day Hike at Valley Falls State Park

Refer to the Outings Calendar in this newsletter or online (www.sierraclub.org/west-virginia) for details. RSVP with outing leader Autumn Long, 304-796-4677, autumlong11@gmail.com.

Sat, April 8

'Make It Shine' Rail Trail Cleanup

North Bend Rail Trail between Salem and Wolf Summit (Harrison County). Start time and location TBA. Check the web calendar (www.sierraclub.org/west-virginia) for updates, or contact event organizer Laura Yokochi, 304-695-1523, lyokochi@aol.com.

Members of the Mon Group of the WV Sierra Club have elected Emily McDougal and Emily Bushman to serve two-year terms on the Mon Group Executive Committee.. McDougal and Bushman are WVU students and members of the Sierra Student Coalition. The Mon Group looks forward to closer collaboration with the SSC through these relationships.

The Mon Group welcomes your feedback and participation! Contact us to get involved. Here is a full list of current Mon Group leaders. Contact information is in the Chapter Directory on the back page.

Autumn Long: Chair, Alternate Delegate to the Chapter ExCom, Outings Chair,

John Bird: Vice Chair

Laura Yokochi: Delegate to the Chapter ExCom

Emily Bushman: Secretary, Membership Chair

Emily McDougal: Conservation Chair

Sally Wilts: Group Treasurer

WVU SSC: Saving the Campus

Braley Burke

What was the best, most achievable goal for the WVU Sierra Student Coalition? We spent a lot of time considering our options and came up with three campaign ideas: Find a way to clean up the trash behind the Morgantown Lock and Dam, work with the Food Recovery Network to reduce waste in dining halls through composting, and reduce plastic waste on campus caused by single-use plastic water bottles.

Our first campaign, cleaning up the Mon, did not go so well. We considered it, and groups had pushed for cleaning efforts before, but funding was not available. We concluded that we would save this campaign for a later date, but we still plan on having river trash cleanups in the spring.

The campaign to reduce food waste in the student dining halls has made progress. Our overall goal is to compost food from dining halls. We are staying in contact with Conscious Harvest, a local community garden that would like to use the compost we would generate. We have more than 500 signatures asking for composting of student food. and we are working on gathering funds

to make a compost area. We still need to hold a fundraiser, make a survey, and get volunteers to build a structure to hold the composting material and transport the waste.

Our final campaign for the first semester seemed to yield the best results. We sent out a questionnaire asking the student body different questions pertaining to their single-use water bottle consumption. One of our questions asked what would encourage them to use reusable water bottles. More than 80 percent of the 1,000+ responses said they would like more filter stations to fill their reusable water bottles.

We made a petition, got more than 100 signatures, and shared the results with the Office of Sustainability. They are now adding filter stations to the list of necessities in new and renovated WVU buildings. They are also looking for a map of all the water fountains on campus so we can figure out which should be replaced as soon as possible and what a reasonable goal would be.

We will continue with that campaign this semester, as well as our Earth Day Celebration plans! We plan to host a celebration on Friday, April 21, with music, speakers, food and activities. We're still working out the details.

Election Results for Chapter and Group ExCom

Of 1,914 Chapter ballots mailed, 264 were returned, representing 300 members (some ballots were mailed to joint members) and a 13.8 percent return rate. The winning candidates were April Keating, Mike Price and Chris Hale.

Of 493 Mon Group ballots mailed, 78 were returned, representing 87 members and a 15.8 percent return rate. In a close race, Emily Bushman and Emily McDougal were elected.

Contact information for all ExCom members may be found in the Chapter Directory on the back page of every newsletter, as well as on the Chapter website.



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Contributing	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150	<input type="checkbox"/> \$175
Life	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1250
Senior	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32
Student/Limited Income	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32

Contributions, gifts and dues to Sierra Club are not tax deductible. They support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to Sierra magazine and \$1 for your Chapter newsletter.

Enclose a check and mail to Sierra Club, P.O. Box 52968, Boulder, CO 80322-2968 or visit our website www.sierraclub.org

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SIERRA CLUB
ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE FUND

Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

OUTINGS

Sun, March 19

Day Hike: Valley Falls State Park

rated moderate — Meet at noon in the parking lot near the waterfalls and picnic area. We will hike the trails that circle the perimeter of the state park boundary, about 5 miles total. Starting on Rhododendron Trail, uphill to Dogwood Trail, connecting to Red Fox Trail at the park office. Red Fox Trail descends to Deer Trail and continues downhill to the river. Deer Trail ends along the road not far above the waterfalls and parking lot, where we began. Wear sturdy shoes and weather-appropriate clothing. Bring water and snacks. Steady rain cancels.

Leader: Autumn Long, 304-796-4677, autumlong11@gmail.com

Sat, April 1

Day Hike: Highland Scenic Highway, Elephant Rocks

rated moderate — Meet at 10:30 a.m. at Forks of Cranberry Trailhead off Rt. 150 (Highland Scenic Highway), in Pocahontas County, for this 4-5 mile out-and-back hike to Elephant Rocks along the Forks of Cranberry Trail. Bring good hiking shoes/boots and proper clothing for weather conditions. Bring snack and water. Hiking poles recommended. Heavy snow or ice cancels. Contact leader to sign up.

Leaders: Susan Chappell and Beth Little, susan2hike@frontiernet.net or blittle@citynet.net, 304-653-4770.

Sat, April 1

Adopt-A-Trail Spring Clean-up: Coopers Rock SF

rated moderate — The WV Sierra Club will lead spring clean-up on a 1.25-mile loop at Coopers Rock State Forest, including the Intermediate Cross Country Ski Trail. Starting at 1 p.m., we will coordinate with longtime trail maintenance leader Adam Polinski for bridge repair. Additional work will include cleaning out and restoring drainage ditches and culverts clogged from the winter's processes, as well as general trail clearing. The work is meant to be rewarding and at a pace to enjoy each other's company; however, some moderate-intensity work will be necessary, using shovels, rakes and pruners, and moving reasonably sized rocks. Volunteers should wear sturdy boots and carry

work gloves, water and snacks. Adults and adolescents are invited, but those under 18 must be accompanied by a parent or a legal guardian. Volunteers will be required to sign a standard Sierra Club Liability Waiver and a DNR Volunteer Work Program Agreement.

Directions: Enter Coopers Rock South off of I-68, pass the Day-Use Parking on the right. Turn right onto Henry Clay Furnace Rd. Go about 1/4 mile and park on the side of the road near the trail crossing for Advanced Ski Trail. This is near the Roadside Trail and overhead power lines. For more info and to register, contact the outing leader.

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

Webinfo: <http://www.coopersrockstateforest.com>; <http://coopersrock.org>

Sat, April 15

Day Hike: Cranesville Swamp

rated easy — Located in northeastern Preston County, the Cranesville Swamp was one of the first National Natural Landmarks designated by the National Park Service in 1965. The mountain peatlands created by this rare mix of altitude, temperature and precipitation are home to a spectacular range of plants, birds and mammals. We'll walk the boardwalk and look at plants (including carnivorous), bog, trees, etc., and then complete the walk on the woods trail. Expect a couple of muddy spots. Hiking distance is about 2 miles with a relatively flat landscape. We will start mid morning, with the possibility of adding additional miles to explore more of the conservancy's 2,000 acre preserve. This area was home to the late, great Jim Sconyers, WV Sierra Club leader and mentor to many. His presence will be felt on this hike.

Leader: Ann Devine-King to preregister and for directions.

Nearest town: Terra Alta, WV

Sat, April 29

Bus Ride to D.C.: Climate March

Several busses are being arranged to carry activists to D.C. for this event. More info about when and where to catch a bus, and how to sign up will be forthcoming on the Chapter's webpage.

There were three New Year's Day outings this year: at New River Gorge, Appalachian Trail/Keys Gap and Coopers Rock. All were successful. Here, our group at Coopers Rock enjoys a fire-ringing and hot beverage.

Ann Devine-King



Perspectives on Outings

— Mike Price, Outings Chair

A Season for Every Purpose

We walk through the woods and float along the rivers in our wild places to unwind from everyday life and the world's conflicts. Camping under the stars. Enjoying a campfire with family. Yes, the trails can be hard or easy, but we reconnect with ourselves and with all Creation. Continue throughout your life to spend as much time as possible outdoors, or indoors working to protect our wild spaces for the future, especially in today's world of so much uncertainty.

We lost a great Chapter leader this winter. Jim Sconyers was dedicated to his work with the WV Sierra Club. He will be sorely missed. His brave fight with cancer is over. He has passed through the spring, summer, fall and winter seasons of his life — proudly defending our environment the whole time.

Seasons change, as do events in our lives. Go into each season with a purpose. Turn each one into an adventure. Join us on our outings. Become leaders. The WV Sierra Club Chapter has been blessed by many great leaders in all of its offices, but we still need you, both new and old members, to become involved in our committees and offices.

Since I became a Club member, the list of Outings Chairs has included some great leaders: Nate Parr, Dan Soeder, Russ Flowers. They have led many outings for our members to enjoy, and directed the outings program with great success. I have followed in their footsteps, trying to maintain what they and others before them had built. With our new and more experienced outings leaders, we hope to continue to offer you, both members and non-members, opportunities to enjoy the great outdoors.

We will continue to list some outings in the newsletter. ALL outings will be posted on the Chapter's webpage and on these Meetup websites: West Virginia Chapter Sierra Club (Morgantown area) and WV Sierra Club-New River (Fayetteville area). Outings and Events are listed in the calendar, with a description and contact information. Please, always contact the outings leader for details. It is important to communicate with the leader about the outing. Your safety and enjoyment is very important to us.

Get outdoors. Now. Not tomorrow. The seasons are changing.

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.

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
March/April issue
April 8**

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.

West Virginia Chapter Outings

Updated outings are listed on the Chapter's website: sierraclub.org/west-virginia, 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.



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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email: governor@wv.gov

To Contact STATE LEGISLATORS

email to WV Legislature:
cglagola@mail.wvnet.edu
(Put name of recipient under subject)

Messages for legislators can be left at:
1-877-565-3447 or 304-347-4836
Mail address:

Member, WV Senate or
House of Delegates
Bldg 1
State Capitol Complex
Charleston, WV 25305

website: www.legis.state.wv.us
has contact information for all state legislators.

Regional Sierra Club Staff
Environmental Justice/Beyond Coal Bill Price
304-389-8822, bill.price@sierraclub.org



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

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:

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