

Mountain State Sierran

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September/October 2012

Jim Kotcon & Beth Little recognized by national Sierra Club for years of service

Chapter's Modern-Day Muirs Win Club's 2012 Special Service Award

In San Francisco on August 4, James Kotcon and Elizabeth Little were presented with Sierra Club Special Service Awards following a reception with hors d'oeuvres, beer, and wine. Karen Yarnell accepted the award for Beth Little and Jim Sconyers accepted the Communication Award for the WV Chapter (see article in Jul/Aug *Sierran*).

Jim Kotcon

Dr. James Kotcon is an educator of students, volunteers, club members, legislators, and other officials. He is Associate Professor of Plant Pathology and Environmental Protection at WVU and longtime advisor of the Student Sierra Coalition. Jim has served on the Chapter Executive Committee most of the past 25 years, and was a founder of the WV Environmental Council.

Jim is a respected authority on energy and air and water quality issues, authoring Sierra Club new matter forms, letters to public agencies, guest editorials, and newsletter articles. He is at the forefront of citizen organizing and lobbying the WV legislature to protect water and air quality. Jim was instrumental in the City of Morgantown signing on to the US Mayor's Climate Protection Agreement.

Some of Jim's noteworthy campaigns are: a successful lawsuit by the US Justice Department, environmental groups, and northeastern states over federal Clean Air Act violations; chair of Citizens against Longview Power, a coalition opposing construction of a coal-burning power plant resulting in mitigation and reduced emissions; helping to defeat the Western Greenbrier Co-Generation Plant; and fighting the high voltage electricity transmission lines TrAIL and PATH as an organizer and expert witness.

Currently Jim is leading initiatives to protect our land and water from toxic coal ash pollution, and he continues to be instrumental in organizing for more effective Marcellus Gas drilling regulations. The WV Sierra Club owes much of its success to the leadership, intelligence, knowledge, and boundless energy of James Kotcon.

Beth Little

In addition to more than 25 years of activism in protecting the Monongahela National Forest, Beth led the campaign for increased awareness and stronger protections from unregulated natural gas development in West Virginia. She recognized early on that technologies associated with horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing (fracking) created substantially greater impacts and that existing regulatory structures were completely inadequate to mitigate the adverse environmental impacts of shale gas development.



Flanked by Executive Director, Michael Brune, and Club President, Allison Chin, Karen Yarnell (accepting for Beth Little) and Jim Kotcon display their Special Service Awards. Not shown: Jim Sconyers accepting Communication Award for the WV Chapter

Beth's efforts began in the 1990s when the Thornwood gas pipeline was proposed for the Monongahela National Forest. The recognition that a pipeline would open the interior forest to numerous wells led to long-term protections in the form of a mineral development amendment to the MNF Land Use and Management Plan.

Beginning in 2009, Beth began raising the alarm over unrestricted drilling statewide. Brine disposal in MNF sites had resulted in dead trees and polluted streams and there were leases being proposed for State Parks, but the horror stories on private lands were substantially worse. Beth began researching cases and compiled a multi-media slide show to illustrate the scale of the impacts.

For two years, Beth was the primary contact for citizens concerned about gas development. She became expert in gas leasing and property rights issues. In addition, with frequent talks to local groups statewide, she helped raise awareness to the lack of adequate regulation of the industry, the Halliburton loopholes, and the problems with the lack of inspectors and the inadequate enforcement. She identified the need to further refine Sierra Club policy on natural gas at a time when there was a tendency to ignore the adverse impacts.

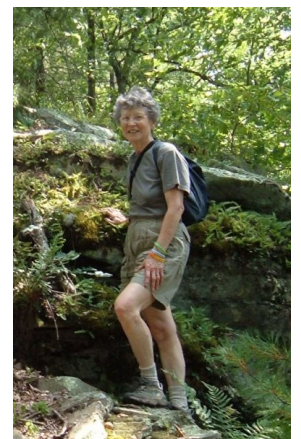
But this was not a story of one person crying in the wilderness. In fact, the problems were real, and a growing cadre of activists began demanding better regulation. In 2010, the WV Chapter established a formal Marcellus Shale gas campaign, with Beth as Chair. This campaign was focused on developing grassroots activism. The words from the victims and local activists helped clarify the reality of the problems. Over and over, the response from local officials was "I had no idea it was this bad."

In addition, Beth headed an informal statewide coalition of environmental groups working on gas issues. Biweekly calls addressed state rule-making, National Forest issues, and local concerns. Contacts with Chapters and activists in other states began developing a nation-wide message that called for a moratorium on fracking until an adequate regulatory structure could be put in place. Beth helped organize weekly lobby visits, provided most of the technical content for the new web page (www.marcelluswv.org), held screenings for the award-winning documentary *Gasland*, and much, much more. Beth led the Chapter campaign through the summer with a new slogan, *Water is Life; Keep It Clean*. Dozens of local groups were formed as farmers, homeowners, local community groups, churches, and businesses all became alarmed at

how quickly the industry was moving into previously pristine rural countryside.

Beth continues to organize at the local level, making the connection between local issues and international markets. Her efforts represent the best in the old slogan, "Endless pressure, endlessly applied."

Beth Little enjoying some of the planet she helped protect.



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

SierraFest 2012

September 28-30

Canaan Valley State Park Lodge/Resort

Set in the heart of some of West Virginia's most beautiful landscapes at the height of the fall foliage season, *SierraFest 2012* will take place at the Canaan Valley State Park Lodge/Resort. This annual event is the West Virginia Chapter's combination conference, annual meeting, reunion, and so much more. Look for more outdoor and active sessions this year.

What do we do at *SierraFest*?

- Meet old friends and make new friends.
- Get informed, educated - and inspired.
- Hands-on projects.
- Outings and hikes - short to long, all levels.
- Music, film, auction.
- And more!

We look forward to seeing you at *SierraFest 2012*
— it's going to be fun!

Questions or comments?

Contact Jim Sconyers: jimscon@gmail.com or 304-698-9628

Rooms and Meals

To foster maximum flexibility for individuals, families, friends, etc., we have reserved a block of rooms at the Lodge/Resort. You can make your own reservation by email or phone.

Go to <http://canaanresort.com> & click on Reservations + Groups
Our group ID is 14367 and our password is 37001404.
Or call 1-800-622-4121 and mention West Virginia Sierra Club.

We have reserved 20 double non-smoking rooms for Friday and Saturday. Room rates prior to Sept 15 are \$79 single or double, \$89 triple and \$99 quadruple. Rates go up after that date.

Cabins and camping are also available at Canaan and Blackwater Falls State Parks, as well as primitive camping in the Monongahela National Forest in the area.

Meals are also "do-it-yourself." There are full dining facilities in the Lodge/Resort, for which information is available at:

<http://canaanresort.com/canaan-valley-resort/dining/>

There are also numerous restaurants and bistros nearby in Canaan Valley, Davis, and Thomas.

Registration

Registration is free and informal. Please email or call Sally Wilts with the number in your group, and the days (Friday and/or Saturday and/or Sunday) you will be with us at *SierraFest 2012*. This helps us get a "headcount" for planning purposes. Thanks.

Sally is at: sallywilts@yahoo.com or 304-379-7567

Schedule of Activities for SierraFest 2012

Friday, September 28

Informal Get-Together / Snacks — pizza, chips, veggies, etc.

Silent "Auction for Action" begins

7:00 pm Film (TBA)

8:30 pm **The Valley at Night** (outdoors) — "Sights & Sounds" with Gwen Jones

Saturday, September 29

9:00 am **Welcome**

9:30 am **Keynote Speaker: Health Impacts of the Gas Boom in West Virginia**

Dr. Alan Ducatman, Interim Dean & Founder of WVU's School of Public Health

10:30 am **The Future Fund:**

How West Virginia's Mineral Resources Could Provide for the Future

Ted Boettner, West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy

11:15 am **The Future of Coal in West Virginia**

Evan Hansen, Downstream Strategies

1:00 pm **Fall and Rise of the WV Red Spruce Forest** (includes field trip)

Dave Saville

4:00 pm **Outings Leader Training**

Dan Soeder, WV Outings Chair

7:00 pm **Victory Celebration**

7:30 pm **Awards**

8:00 pm **Live Music** with *Aurora Celtic*

Sunday, September 30

8:30 am **Auction Wrap-Up**

9:00 am **Mountaintop Removal — Lawsuits and Health Studies Update**

Diane Bady, Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition (OVEC)

SUNDAY OUTINGS & ACTIVITIES

10:00 am – 1:00 pm **Hands-On Project: Red Spruce Tree Planting**
in Canaan Valley with Dave Saville

10:00 am – 1:00 pm **Historic Coke Ovens and Douglas Falls**

Visit the historic coke ovens near Thomas, part of West Virginia's industrial history. Then hike about one mile each way on the Blackwater Canyon Rail Trail to awesome Douglas Falls and the confluence of the North Fork and the mainstem Blackwater. Easy, nearly level trail.

1:00 pm **A. Citizen Water Testing** — North Fork Watershed Project demonstration of citizen testing for acid mine drainage in Thomas.

B. Plant Identification Walk — with Canaan Valley Resort naturalist Melissa Brown at the Resort.

HIKES

A variety of hikes led by experienced Outings leaders will be available in the Canaan Valley – Dolly Sods – Blackwater area. Watch for details to be posted, and sign up, at SierraFest.

SHORT OUTINGS: 10am–1pm & 2–5pm

LONGER OUTINGS: 10am – 4pm



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Life	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1250
Senior	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> \$35
Student/Limited Income	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> \$35

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 newsletters.

Enclose a check and mail to Sierra Club, P.O. Box 421041, Palm Coast, FL 32142-1041 or visit our website www.sierraclub.org

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Appeal for Auction Items

It's SierraFest time again and your Chapter needs "Auction for Action" items for the silent auction to be held during our 2012 celebration at Canaan Valley Lodge on September 28-30. Thanks to the generosity of our members our last two SierraFest silent auction fundraisers have been a success. We hope to continue the tradition.

This year we are looking for nonperishable food items, sporting goods, nature photography, books, wine, pottery, household or gardening items in good condition and small craft or decorative items that can be included in the baskets we will put together. Last year we had some nesting baskets, several large sporting goods items and two popular (and valuable) weekend accommodations offered by Laurel Lodge and Joan's Guesthouse. Do you know of a local business that might be willing to contribute a coupon for a meal, lodging, etc.?

If you plan to bring something for the auction (or need something to be picked up), please contact Regina Hendrix at 304-725-0223 (home) or 304-590-4943 (cell) or at regina.hendrix@comcast.net.

See you at Sierra Fest 2012!

View from the Chair

We Are the New Nero — *Jim Sconyers*

I recently had a slightly heated online exchange. Why? Because I would not embrace natural gas as a “bridge fuel.” Why not?

Natural gas is methane. Methane is a greenhouse gas much more potent than carbon dioxide (CO₂) in driving global climate change. Methane is released, or deliberately discharged, at every step of the gas development process, from drilling to production to transmission and beyond. Methane is a hydrocarbon fossil fuel. That means it, too, pours CO₂ into the atmosphere when it is burned in a power plant or factory or home or car.

Bridge fuel? A bridge does not carry us across from one peril to another. This is no bridge fuel.

But my interlocutor in the exchange — was it a conversation? — wanted to paint a warm and fuzzy near-term future in rosy pastel hues. Why? Because a bridge fuel, if there were one, would get America off the hook. It is, frankly, one more form of denial, and an insidious one at that. These folks are desperate for any reason, however harmful, to keep from facing squarely the reality of climate change and taking forthright and resolute action. Action without which, we know, our blue-green planet will become a hostile place for us humans and the rest of all living creation.

The news is in. We know what the problem is — too much CO₂ already in the atmosphere, too much more being pumped there every minute of every day. And the causes — fossil fuel power plants among the leaders — and the consequences — disastrous climate disruption in the form of sea level rise, catastrophic drought, and more — are just as well known.

Does our reaction come down to a moral question? Here is one way to frame it. Do we have the right to rob the next generations of the friendly livable planet we ourselves have enjoyed? Is it our right to live like there's no tomorrow?

Our collective shame is that we know all this ... and turn our eyes away. We know how to solve the problem — the greatest one facing Earth — and we willfully refuse to do it. We let our corporate and political masters (is there a difference?) obfuscate and manipulate to the point where we line up with the very forces leading us to disaster.

We are the new Nero. Everyone has heard the adage, “Nero fiddled while Rome burned.” That's us. We fiddle while the planet burns. I fear our children and grandchildren — mine included — will curse us bitterly for what we seem hell-bent on leaving them.

Little Blue Coal Ash Pond Ordered Closed A Strong Rebuke To Congressman McKinley

The Little Blue coal ash pond has been ordered closed — finally.

This gigantic coal ash dump sits on the Pennsylvania-West Virginia border. As the largest coal ash pond in America, it has been leaking and polluting our water for decades with truly scary toxics. The facility was never engineered to even marginal safety standards. Yet owner First Energy poured billions of gallons of toxic coal ash slurry into the pond — or should we say lake?

Now the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) has ordered Little Blue closed. First Energy will have to find another way to dispose of its coal ash if they keep producing ash there. And the company is required to remediate contaminated home water supplies in the vicinity of the dump.

This comes as a stern rebuke to our Congressman David McKinley. Ever since going to Washington in 2011 McKinley has waged an unholy jihad in the service of coal ash and the companies who benefit from disposing of it cheaply and unsafely. The Congressman has made no effort to hide his loyalty to the corporations who create and must dispose of coal ash — in particular the owners of coal fired power plants — and not to the health and safety of the people he is supposed to represent.

Mr. McKinley has constantly demanded that regulators keep their hands off coal ash. He has continuously insisted that coal ash is no more dangerous than the dirt in your yard. Now PADEP and the court have made it crystal clear that coal ash is dangerous stuff, and we in West Virginia deserve to have regulations in place that protect our health.

I would like to think that this decision will begin to open Congressman McKinley's eyes to the dangers of toxic coal ash and to his compelling moral responsibility to protect his constituents' health and safety — not his corporate cronies' bottom lines.

"Stop the Frack Attack" Rally & March at the Capitol — July 28

A WV contingent of about 40 rode the bus from Morgantown to D.C. to join the rally in front of the Capitol. About 5,000 people braved the 100°F temperatures to march in protest of the unregulated "fracking" gas industry.



Josh Fox, writer and director of the documentary Gasland, raises his hand in salute and support as marchers pass by.

Organizers went up and down the column bearing bags of ice and bottles of water to sustain flagging marchers in the 100°F weather.



^ WV Chapter proudly carries our banner along the march route.

< Thousands of supporters cheer while speakers motivate.

D.C. Tour of Solar Homes & Buildings

October 6–7, Sister Tour in Maryland and West Virginia

Attention all homeowners, green advocates, and smart investors! The 22nd Annual Metro Washington, D.C. Tour of Solar Homes & Buildings will be held on October 6th and 7th from 11 am to 5 pm. This fall, green enthusiasts like you have the unique opportunity to view 65 energy-efficient homes and buildings throughout D.C., Maryland and Virginia.

D.C. metro area residents will open their homes and buildings on the tour to showcase a variety of solar design, technology and sustainable living concepts, including solar electric (photovoltaic) and solar hot water systems, passive design, radiant heat, energy-efficient appliances, and energy-saving building construction techniques. Many homeowners also practice energy and water con-

servation measures, recycle and compost, and drive fuel-efficient or alternative energy vehicles.

Get your “passport” or Tour Guide for \$5 at Bicycle SPACE and the Bike and Roll bike station at Union Station in D.C. and other participating distributors in the suburbs — check the website for the date the guides go on sale and for an updated list of distributors.

This guide is your admission to the tour. Not only does it serve as a map with locations and directions to each home, but it provides a wealth of information on what's hot in renewable energy: new technologies for residential homes, solar leasing, and the incentives and affordability of green systems. The guide can also be downloaded for free in September at <http://solartour.org/download.html>.

For carbon-free bicycle tour-goers: Enjoy a self-guided bike tour planned for select homes on the tour.

Our sister tour, the 3rd Annual Maryland Tour of Solar & Green Homes will highlight 35 green homes and buildings from Frederick and Washington Counties to West Virginia. The tour includes a variety of residential solar homes featuring many energy efficient improvements as well as renewable energy improved buildings and properties. The Maryland Tour Guide can be purchased for a tax-deductible \$2 fee from participating distributors in Maryland.

For the latest information on both tours, Like us on Facebook or visit

<http://www.solartour.org>

MONONGAHELA GROUP

Saturday, Sept 8

Wellness and Water:

Health Impacts of Fossil Fuel Extraction

First Presbyterian Church, Morgantown. **Keynote Speaker:** Wilma Subra. Workshops and panels with impacted residents and experts including Dr. Ben Stout and Dr. Michael Hendryx. Registration begins at 8 am. Keynote at 9 am. Closing reception at 1 pm. Suggested donation for Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition \$10. Contact Robin at robin@ohvec.org or call 304-522-0246 for more information.

Thursday, Sept 13

Evening / Night Kayak on the Mon River

Meet at the Uffington boat launch ramp at 7:30 pm and go upriver, returning just after sunset. Loaner or rental kayaks may be available, and everyone must wear PFD's and a glowstick. A flashlight is also recommended. Gwen Jones will be outing leader for this easy paddle event. Rain will cancel. Contact Gwen at gwenjones23@yahoo.com or 304-599-5815.

Directions to Uffington Ramp (on Mon River just south of Morgantown): I-79, exit 146; follow Goshen Rd west 0.2mi., turn right on WV-73; continue 4mi. to ramp, on left.

Sept 28-30

SierraFest 2012 at Canaan Valley SP

We have an excellent program scheduled and it is Leaf Peepers Weekend in Canaan Valley. Mark your calendars and join us for a great weekend full of outings and excellent speakers. See p. 2 this issue for more details.

Thursday, Oct 4

FLOW! For Love of Water

Showing at the Friends Meeting House in Morgantown at 7:30 pm.

This award-winning documentary investigates what experts label the most important political and environmental issue of the 21st Century: the world water crisis. Building a case against the growing privatization of the world's dwindling fresh water supply, the film focuses on politics, pollution, human rights, and the emergence of a domineering world water cartel. Potluck dinner follows the movie. Bring food to share.

Thursday, Nov 1

Speaker from the Climate Reality Project

The speaker may present in person or via Skype at the Friends Meeting House at 7:30 pm. It should prove to be both an energizing and interesting evening.

Jim Sconyers is trying to locate all the food pantries in Monongalia County for his WV Energy Savers Project, which gives compact fluorescent bulbs to low income families. Please contact him with food pantry information at jimscon@gmail.com.

Chapter ExCom Meeting

Saturday, Nov 10

Scheduled to be held at Chief Logan State Park. All members are welcome to attend or submit material for the ExCom to consider. Contact Jim Sconyers for details.

Perspectives on Outings

Modern Gear — Dan Soeder, Outings Chair

I was going to do this essay on my June trip to Alaska, but another issue came up instead. I was asked by a writer for a university magazine for my thoughts on how technology affects the way we enjoy nature. I thought Sierran readers might find this interesting.

The biggest technological impact on the outdoor experience has to be modern materials. Heavy canvas tents, cotton rucksacks, enameled cookware and gasoline-powered steel stoves and lanterns have been replaced with a host of lightweight, high-performance gear made of strong, water-proof and flame-resistant materials.

My wife hiked the Appalachian Trail years ago with a surplus British Army poncho she used for weather protection. It consisted basically of rubberized canvas, and while it kept rain out, it was also bulky and heavy. My modern rain jacket weighs about two ounces, folds up to the size of a pair of socks, and consists of a Gore-Tex®/Teflon®/nylon laminate that keeps liquid water out, but allows water vapor to pass through. I stay dry and the wet weather stays outside. Gore-Tex lining in hiking boots makes them waterproof, eliminating the need to coat the outside with wax or "bear grease" around the campfire.

The modern shock-corded nylon dome tents are much quicker and easier to set up than the old Boy Scout-style A-frame canvas tents, and the dome structure eliminates the center poles, which were always a hazard when stumbling around in the dark.

Modern LED or compact fluorescent lights run for days on a set of batteries, and have replaced the old gasoline lanterns that used incandescent mantles. The LED lights can be safely used inside a tent, which could not be done with a hot lantern.

Even food and water have changed: the modern microfiltration water pumps remove pathogens from raw water without adding the bad taste that came from treating with iodine or chlorine. And freeze-dried trail food has gotten so good that adding a cup of boiling water to a bag makes a gourmet meal

that simply cannot be achieved any other way on the trail without a lot of work and a lot of weight.

So has all this technology inspired more people to embark on camping trips and other nature outings? I think it has helped in some ways and hurt in others. Some people who are just getting into nature outings go a bit gear-crazy and load up on the technology. Others are intimidated by all the products out there, and think they have to spend a ton of money just to get started. There are a lot of high-tech necessities and accessories for sale at the outfitter stores, but sometimes what is critical and what is just handy are hard to tell apart. The stores are probably not the best place to get advice on things you don't need to buy.

Advertisers feature lots of high tech gear in commercials that inspire the outdoors. Interestingly, most of these ads are not for the outdoor gear itself, but use it to sell other products. People kayaking in whitewater sell granola bars, a group of hikers who go the extra mile to see a sunset represent an investment firm, and an attractive young woman climbs a pinnacle in Monument Valley to sell a credit card. The upshot of this kind of commercial exposure is that many people see outdoor activities as something that requires a lot of expensive gear. In reality, all that is really necessary for hiking a trail is a good pair of boots, but it is hard to learn this among all the hype.

One of the downsides to the tech revolution is that electronic devices like cell phones, laptops, MP3 sound systems, battery powered televisions and so forth are

showing up on outdoor activities, and detracting from the experience. Camping is for nature. I'm fine with something mellow like the Pink Floyd "Animals" CD playing quietly in the background around the campfire, but if you want to talk on the phone, work on financial spreadsheets, watch the ballgame, or post your life on Facebook, stay home. The 4G network coverage is probably better there anyway.

Modern technology also encourages people to take more risks. Sure, being able to call for help on a cell phone may make a trail seem safer, but it also encourages people to go out in risky weather conditions or someplace they are not competent to traverse because if they run into trouble, they can always call for rescue. I've seen this happen more times than I care to remember, and the rescuers can't always get there in time.

There were some hikers in Oregon a few years ago who elected to climb Mount Hood one early spring weekend. There was a big storm coming into the Pacific Northwest that was all over the news, but they went anyway. They got trapped on Mount Hood in an enormous blizzard, and even though they could talk to their families and the authorities on their cell phones, no one could get to them in the snow. They were stranded and all of them died, which could have been avoided if they had simply postponed it to another weekend. High tech should never replace common sense.

I'll tell you about my trip to Alaska next time. Just one word for now: awesome!

See you outside!

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 on the web 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
Nov/Dec issue
October 11**

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.

Upcoming Outings — Autumn

Abbreviations Used

AMC	Appalachian Mountain Club
AT	Appalachian Trail
GWNF	George Washington National Forest
JNF	Jefferson National Forest
MG	Monongahela Group
MNF	Monongahela National Forest
NPS	National Park Service
NRA	National Recreation Area
NWR	National Wildlife Refuge
PFD	Personal Flotation Device (lifejacket)
SF	State Forest
SP	State Park
SNP	Shenandoah National Park

Sun, Sep 2

Endless Wall Trail, New River Gorge

rated easy to moderate — Family and pet friendly activity. Hike along the edge of West Virginia's most spectacular canyon. Meet at the National Park Service Canyon Rim visitor center on Route 19 near Fayetteville, on the north end of the famous bridge pictured on the back of the WV state quarter. Children must be accompanied by a responsible adult. Pets must be well-behaved and on a leash (children must also be well behaved, but a leash is optional). Step off at noon for a 3.5 mile circuit hike. Heavy or steady rain cancels. Please pre-register with the leader.

Leader: Dan Soeder, 304-568-2164, Dan.Soeder@sierraclub.org

Nearest town: Fayetteville, WV

Web info: www.midatlantichikes.com/id191.html



Sat, Sep 8

Dolly Sods North Day Hike

rated moderate — Dolly Sods North was added to the Dolly Sods Wilderness in 2009. Come and see why! We'll explore the forest, savanna, streams, and the natural and human history. Dolly Sods North is a high alpine landscape with spectacular scenery, encompassing the headwaters of Red Creek. Our trail distance is approximately 8 miles over moderate grades at a leisurely pace. There will be numerous stops to "smell the roses." Our route focuses on the more northerly trails in the upper parts of the headlands. Day hiking gear is needed, along with plenty of water, sunscreen, and weather protection. Contact leader to pre-register; size of hiking parties entering wilderness areas are limited.

Leader: Jim Sconyers, 304-698-9628, jim_scon@yahoo.com

Nearest town: Harman, WV

Web info: www.patc.us/hiking/destinations/dolysods.html

Sat, Sep 15

Coopers Rock Circuit Hike

rated strenuous — This challenging hike will loop through about 13 miles of forest. Starting at the Overlook Area, we'll hike down to Cheat Lake, and then back up by looping out to the front gate, and returning to the Overlook Area. The trail is very steep in places, rocky and uneven. This hike is for EXPERIENCED hikers only, will take 5-6 hours to complete, and is not recommended for beginners. Participants should carry plenty of water and snacks, wear proper footwear, and trekking poles are highly recommended. Contact leader for information on parking. Meet at 9:00 AM.

Leader: Aaron Vedock, 540-805-0019, amvedock@hotmail.com

Nearest town: Morgantown, WV

Web info: www.coopersrockstateforest.com/http://coopersrock.org

Sat, Sep 22

Caledonia SP and Michaux SF

rated moderate — This beautiful 7-8 mile hike starts in Caledonia State Park and heads north on the AT crossing streams (with bridges) and walking through rhododendron tunnels until reaching the Michaux State Forest. We will loop back onto the Hosock and Locust Gap Trails. Bring a bandana as you may be tempted to wade in the stream. Allow 3-4 hours; bring plenty of water and lunch. Meeting time 10:00 AM. Pre-register with leader.

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

Nearest town: between Chambersburg and Gettysburg

Web info: www.dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks/findapark/caledonia/; www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/stateforests/michaux/index.htm



Sun, Oct 7

Snake Hill Wildlife Management Area

rated moderate — Acquired in 1996 by the State of WV, the SNWMA is across the Cheat River Gorge from Coopers Rock State Forest. This 6-8 mile loop trail hike with moderate elevation changes will connect with several scenic views including Table Rock and Cheat View and also several lesser known views along Snake Hill's canyon rim. We'll be following established and semi-established trails, some gas well roads and some "paths" that will lead us across streams, along rock outcroppings and through hardwood forests. Overall, this is a moderately challenging, exploratory hike with rewarding, little known views of the Cheat River Gorge. Please pre-register with the leader.

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

Nearest town: Morgantown, WV

Web info: www.coopersrockstateforest.com/www.coopersrock.org

Sat, Oct 13

Mon River Rail-Trail Bike Ride

rated moderate — Join us for a relatively level, scenic bike ride along the Morgantown Waterfront. Most of the trail is paved; unpaved portions are fine, packed gravel suitable for street tires. Length of bike ride will depend on the desires of the group, but expect a ride of about 15-20 miles. Sierra Club requires that helmets be worn on all bicycle outings. Bring along some water, and make sure your tires are properly inflated. Show and go - meet at 10 AM at Ruby-McQuain Park in Morgantown. Contact the leader for questions or directions.

Leader: Aaron Vedock, 540-805-0019, amvedock@hotmail.com

Nearest town: Morgantown, WV

Web info: www.montrails.org

Sat, Oct 13

Catoctin Mountain Park during fall foliage

rated moderate — This six-mile hike has several steep sections as we approach Wolf Rock, Thurmont Vista and Blue Ridge Overlook, so anticipate some uphill climbs as we start at 850 ft and climb to 1610 ft. We will hike down to Cunningham Falls (part of Cunningham Falls State Park) then cross back over to Catoctin Park to finish. Please allow 3 to 3½ hours; bring water and lunch. Meet up time 10 AM. Please pre-register with the leader.

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

Nearest town: Thurmont, MD

Web info: www.nps.gov/cato/

Sun, Oct 21

GAP trail bike ride: Ohiopyle to Confluence

rated moderate — Get on your bicycle for a fall foliage ride along the scenic Youghiogheny River from Ohiopyle State Park upstream to the dam in Confluence, PA, and back. Roundtrip is about 22 miles on a level rail-trail consisting of fine, packed gravel suitable for street tires. Meet at the Ohiopyle Visitor Center (the old Railroad Depot) at noon.

Sierra Club requires that helmets be worn on all bicycle outings. Please pre-register with the leader. Heavy or steady rain cancels.

Leader: Dan Soeder, 304-568-2164, Dan.Soeder@sierraclub.org

Nearest town: Ohiopyle, PA

Web info: <http://www.atatrail.org/>

Sat, Nov 3

Adopt-a-Trail Service at Coopers Rock

not rated — The WV Sierra Club will be leading trail maintenance on Coopers Rock Intermediate Cross Country Ski Trail. Rated easy hiking and easy to moderate work intensity, the fall clean-up emphasizes clearing the fallen leaves, drainage restoration and trail clearing. Trail length is .6 miles and total hiking length is a 1.25 mile loop. Volunteers should wear sturdy boots, and carry work gloves, water, snacks. Adults and adolescents are invited to help and those under 18 years of age 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. Please pre-register with the leader.

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

Nearest town: Morgantown, WV

Web info: www.coopersrockstateforest.com/www.coopersrock.org

Sat Nov 10

Valley Falls SP Day Hike

rated moderate — Join us for a moderate hike at Valley Falls State Park. We will do an out-and-back hike on the Rhododendron Tail to see the "Hidden" waterfall at the end of the trail. This is a short hike of about 4 miles, with some steep sections. Bring your camera, as there are some great photographic opportunities. Sturdy foot-wear, water and snacks are necessary; trekking poles can be helpful. Show and go: meet at 9AM at the main parking lot, near the water falls. Contact the leader for directions or questions.

Leader: Aaron Vedock, 540-805-0019, amvedock@hotmail.com

Nearest town: Fairmont, WV

Web info: www.valleyfallsstatepark.com

Maryland Chapter Outings

Our neighboring chapter to the east has an active outings program, with many trips coming into West Virginia or western Maryland. These outings, by highly experienced leaders, range from easy to strenuous, and are open to everyone. Join an outing by checking out their calendar at

maryland.sierraclub.org

Allegheny Group Outings

Sierra Club members in the Pittsburgh area belong to the Allegheny Group. They have a moderately active outings program as well as links to other local outdoor activities. Visit their website for an outings calendar and more details at

alleghenysc.org

Potomac Region Outings (PRO)

This is an activity section of the Sierra Club Virginia Chapter, with an extensive outings program run by leaders who live in and around the Washington, D.C., area. A calendar of activities, information and updates can be found on their website at

www.sierrapotomac.org

West Virginia Chapter Outings

For updated listings of outings sponsored by the West Virginia Chapter, check our Chapter website at

westvirginia.sierraclub.org





Sierra Club

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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



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:

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 304-725-4360

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