

# M Mountain State Sierran

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Summer 2019

## Appalachian Storage Hub and the Elephant in the Room

*Jim Kotcon, Conservation Chair*

The Appalachian Storage Hub (ASH), sometimes called the Appalachian Storage and Trading Hub, is a proposal for underground storage of various natural gas byproducts that could support a plastics industry.

Natural gas is mostly methane, but in some formations, significant amounts of other gases and liquids (including propane, butane, and especially ethane) occur with the methane. These are usually separated from methane because they burn hotter or have more value for manufacturing purposes.

Without a market, these may be “flared” (burned off to eliminate them). But converting ethane to ethylene and polyethylene makes the ethane valuable for plastics. The process requires multi-billion-dollar “cracker” plants, several of which are proposed for West Virginia and adjoining states to take advantage of the ready supply from the fracking boom and the large volumes of these liquids.

But a cracker plant wants a steady supply of ethane, and the ASH is needed to store the large volumes needed. Neither the ASH nor the crackers are economically viable without the other. Proponents argue that the ASH is the key to \$100 billion in investments and tens of thousands of jobs.

### So, Where’s the Elephant?

In 2015, almost all nations signed the Paris Climate Agreement, committing these nations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to keep global warming below 2° C, and striving for 1.5° C. The IPCC and most other scientific organizations agree that this means we must drastically reduce use of fossil fuels. The world must reduce emissions from fossil fuels by 50 percent within 10 years and be almost entirely off fossil fuels within 30 years.

Construction of a large gas industry is fundamentally incompatible with that goal. Yet none of the proponents will discuss this issue, or even admit that it is real. None of the major investors in the ASH or cracker plants or related industries are including greenhouse gas mitigation in their business plans. The West Virginia Department of Commerce and the U.S. Department of Energy are offering major incentives and subsidies to develop the ASH. Political leaders including WV’s U.S. Senators and all three Representatives, the Governor, and the overwhelming majority of state legislators and county commissioners and all state and local economic development agencies are advocates for these increased federal subsidies.

But no one will talk about the greenhouse gas issue, or even plan for it.

### Why is This Relevant to the ASH?

Ethane crackers create more demand for fracking and natural gas wells, pipelines and related facilities. These all emit methane, and some emit a lot. Methane is 84 times more effective at capturing heat than carbon dioxide (over a 20-year life span).



Power plants and pipelines are other fossil-energy infrastructure that contribute greenhouse gases and slow the transition to renewables. Pictured here is the Hammerhead pipeline, an extension of the Mon Valley Pipeline, under construction on steep slopes in Monongalia County (May 8).

Ethane crackers also use tremendous amounts of electricity, most of which is expected to come from fossil fuels. It is expected that the plastics industry will account for one-sixth of all greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

Most importantly, investments in fossil fuel infrastructure slow the transition to sustainable, renewable energy sources.

### What You Can Do

Call or e-mail our Congressional delegation and ask them to oppose federal subsidies for the ASH. Send a copy of your comments to U.S. Senate Majority Leader, Mitch McConnell, and Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi.

## SierraFest 2019

November 1-3

Pipestem Resort State Park

3405 Pipestem Drive  
Pipestem, WV 25979

Join Sierra Club friends for an enjoyable weekend at one of our beautiful WV State Parks! Our theme is “Climate Change: Opportunities and Solutions.” We have outdoor activities planned, as well as organizing workshops, panel discussions, and inspiring speakers. On Saturday evening, we will celebrate the 35th anniversary of our State Chapter with a banquet, awards and entertainment. The Fall Newsletter will have the full schedule of activities.

**Lodging:** Arrangements are on your own. We have blocked rooms for the Chapter at McKeever Lodge, so be sure to say you are with the WV Sierra Club. Call McKeever Lodge, 304-466-1800, to make reservations. Standard double rooms are \$70/night.

**Registration:** The registration fee of \$35 per person includes a buffet dinner (with vegetarian options) on Saturday night. Late registration (after October 1) will be \$45. Register on our Chapter website or by mail using the form below.

**Questions?** Contact Laura Yokochi, 304-695-1523, [lyokochi@aol.com](mailto:lyokochi@aol.com) or Laura Miller, 304-776-4677, [aepicysta@gmail.com](mailto:aepicysta@gmail.com).

### SierraFest 2019 Registration Form

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Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Diet restrictions or preferences \_\_\_\_\_

Enclose check payable to **WV Sierra Club** for \$35 (or \$45 after Oct. 1) per attendee. Children under 12 are free.

Total Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to:  
**Laura Yokochi**  
142 Liberty St  
Salem WV 26426



# A Dozen Dastardly Deeds at the 2019 WV Legislature

Jim Kotcon, Political Chair

The WV Chapter advocated for a number of good bills during the past WV Legislative session but made little progress. Instead, bad policy and bad legislation carried the day for most of the session.

1) **SB 163. Water Quality Standards.** The Clean Water Act requires that water quality standards get reviews and, where

appropriate, get updated every three years. Unfortunately, the WV Legislature stripped 60 proposed updates at the request of polluters. So, if EPA's best science says the maximum safe level of cyanide in your drinking water is 4 ppm but polluters say let's allow 5 ppm, a majority of legislators say, "sure, cyanide is candy, let's drink up!" Thank the clean-water heroes who voted "No" on this bad bill.

P.S. It's not over yet; there will be another opportunity to update these standards in the coming years.

2) **HB 3142. Coal Severance Tax Cut.** This \$60 million per year gift to the coal industry had absurd comments from supporters, including one who said, "If this saves just one miner's job, it is worth it." (How many jobs could you create for \$60 million a year?)

3) **HB 3144. Add Insult to Injury Bill.** This bill creates another huge tax credit for coal mine machinery, allowing out-of-state coal companies to avoid even more taxes. The actual amount on this one is unknown, but could exceed the Severance Tax Cut.

4) **SB 622. Campaign Finance.** The Legislature raised allowable levels of campaign contributions from wealthy donors, special interests, and Political Action Committees. Most people cannot afford to donate \$1,000 to a politician, but that cap was almost tripled to \$2,800, allowing the very

wealthiest to buy politicians more efficiently. Yet some supporters of this bill have the nerve to call it a "free speech" issue. When you pay \$2,800, the speech is not "free"!

5) **HB 2673. Plugging Abandoned Wells.** A relatively minor effort to start addressing the looming disaster of unplugged gas wells, yet even this minimal start on the problem was vetoed by Gov. Justice.

6) **SB 665. Allowing Expedited Gas Permits.** This monster passed the State Senate, but fortunately died in the House.

7) **SB 409. Power Purchase Agreements.** This is actually a very good bill that promotes solar energy by allowing direct sales from commercial-scale solar farms to third parties. The dastardly deed is that the bill never made it onto a committee agenda for a vote, even though that Committee's Chair was one of the bill's sponsors.

8) **HB 2589. Modern Jobs Act. (aka MoJo!).** This bill would authorize solar farms built on old surface mines for large commercial customers. Many corporations want solar energy, but WV cannot compete for those jobs because we don't have enough existing solar capacity. Another great idea that never got a committee vote.

9) **HB 2973. Local Energy Efficiency Partnerships.** A very pro-business bill, totally voluntary, that could help create jobs by encouraging energy efficiency investments. Never got a vote.

10) **SB 115. Would require disclosure of "Dark Money" campaign contributions.** Never got a vote!

11) **SB 118. To create an Independent Redistricting Commission.** This would help end political gerrymandering and help assure competitive elections. Never got a vote.

12) **SB 635. "The Coal Bill."** The bill was introduced at the last minute but included every wish from the coal industry rolled into one; everyone just called it "The Coal Bill." It created exemptions for aboveground storage tanks, largely eliminated requirements for community impact statements, and weakened coal miner safety laws. Yet this disastrous bill passed unanimously in both houses and was signed by Gov. Justice.

## Things You Can Do

In spite of these awful deeds, many other disasters were prevented. We owe a debt of gratitude to those legislators who kept bad policy from passing and who continue to work for good policies.

- Contact the Chapter Conservation Chair or your Group ExCom to learn how you can help.
- Volunteer with the WV Enviro. Council.
- Consider volunteering with the Chapter Political Committee to help elect better legislators.



**Explore, enjoy and protect the planet**



## Blowing in the Wind

It's time for America to get smart about energy and become less dependent on fossil fuels. We need to increase our use of clean, renewable energy sources like wind and solar power.

**Giving's a Breeze. JOIN Sierra Club.**

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## 'March for Minden' receives city permit

*The community of Minden has been fighting the toxic legacy of PCB dumping for decades. The WV Chapter stands with Minden as they raise awareness of their plight, demand justice for their community, and honor those who fought before them.*

*At 3 p.m. on June 8, community members and allies from around the state will gather at Minden's old company store to begin the "March for Minden." Those who would like to participate but are unable to march are invited to join the motorcade.*

*Take a moment to read the press release below for background on the March. You may also contact organizers at 304-640-3653 or search "March for Minden!" on Facebook for full details. We encourage everyone moved by Minden's story to join the action.*

*In solidarity, Chapter Co-Chairs, Natalie Thiele and Aileen Curfman*

Members of the Minden community and their allies are thrilled to receive notice that their proposed march for Saturday, June 8, has been permitted by the City of Oak Hill. The march is a planned reenactment of the one that took place 30 years ago. The first march was organized by Minden activists to bring attention to the PCB issue and show solidarity on the 1989 Toxics National Day of Action. Present-day Minden community members are planning to walk the same 1989 route and keep the 2019 march as historically accurate as possible.

The residents of Minden, WV, have lived

with the threat posed by the toxic chemical Poly-Chlorinated Biphenyl (PCB) for many decades. In the 1980s and '90s, a group of dedicated activists started the Concerned Citizens to Save Fayette County (CCSFC) to address issues in Minden after learning of the toxic effects of PCBs.

Sue Workman, a member of the original activist group, said, "Being a part of CCSFC was, I felt, my obligation to my family and friends." Today, concerned Minden residents address these issues through the Minden Community Action Team (MCAT).

Susie Worley-Jenkins, of MCAT, explained, "This march is to show people we are still trying to get help for the people of Minden. We are also remembering and paying respect to people like Lucian Randall, who helped with testing and even pushed a drum to the city park in the 1989 march. He later passed away with cancer. Larry Rose, chairman, also walked the walk. Thirty-five people of Minden and many environmentalists from other states participated."

The purpose of the march is to raise awareness about the issues facing Minden, remember the many lives that have been lost, show support for those that are currently suffering from PCB-related illness, and show respect for the work done by the CCSFC in the 1980s and 1990s.

The Minden Community Action Team is seeking support and participation from communities surrounding Minden, local churches, organizations, businesses, and the general public. Workman was consulted for historical accuracy and direction in

planning the event. MCAT has also invited other groups that are living with the issues of toxic pollution in their communities.

MCAT wants to make the public aware that the CCSFC laid the groundwork for the current fight in Minden. "The EPA made many mistakes with this; I hope they get it right after four attempts to fix it. The original group was right all along," said Worley-Jenkins.

People of all ages and abilities are encouraged to participate in the "March for Minden." The Minden Community Action Team is currently planning logistics to make the event as accommodating as possible, with water, bathrooms, and shade stops along the route. For those who cannot walk the 2.8-mile route, a motorcade has been permitted to follow immediately behind the march so that supporters can drive the route if needed.

### DETAILS

- When:** Saturday, June 8, 3 p.m.
- Where:** Meet at the old company store, (1574 Minden Road, Minden) to walk the 2.8 miles to Oak Hill City Park, followed by a short walk to Collins Park.
- Goals:** Relocation for those who want to relocate, decision-making power for those who wish to stay, and lifelong PCB-related health resources for all Minden residents.
- Info:** Family-friendly event. Food, water, trained medics and a shuttle back will be available.
- Contact:** 304-640-3653

## Find Your Niche, Get Trained, Become Agents for Change

We hope your winter and spring have been fantastic so far. A lot has happened since our last column.

First, we'd like to extend our sincerest congratulations to the newly formed Eastern Panhandle Group — we are excited to see their energy and determination to form their group, grow, and create bylaws, and succeed at every step.

Our Organizing Representative, **Chela Barajas**, along with our regional organizing team have unveiled our Chapter's 2019 organizing strategy. If you're fired up about building power and promoting clean communities through citizen action, you may want to join us for volunteer leadership trainings in the coming months. We can help you develop the skills to oppose unnecessary fossil-fuel infrastructure buildout like the Mountain Valley Pipeline, the Atlantic Coast Pipeline, and the Appalachian Storage Hub.

You may not envision yourself in a leadership role, but these trainings can help

you hone your unique skills in order to be a more effective advocate for your homes, families, and neighbors. Please contact Chela at [chela.barajas@sierraclub.org](mailto:chela.barajas@sierraclub.org) if you're interested in learning more.

Another organizing emphasis this year is partnering with other local groups. We encourage our members to work on common goals with people in our communities. Our Conservation Chair, **Jim Kotcon**, suggests that we find ways to work with groups outside of environmental circles to move West Virginia communities toward sustainable economic development free from the boom-bust cycles of fossil fuels. Let's take our place at the table with local economic development organizations and chambers of commerce to educate and advocate for healthy communities and responsible growth.

As we focus on ways our members can build power for good in the state, we would also like to develop a stronger outings program in our Chapter. Outings are a tried and true source of dedicated members. Although it isn't possible to offer an in-

person group training this year, most of the training can be done online.

As a newly trained Outings Leader, **Aileen Curfman** welcomes the opportunity to serve as a mentor and cheerleader to anyone who would like to undertake or complete the OLT 101 course. If you would like support or troubleshooting help as you work through the course, please contact her at [acurfman@gmail.com](mailto:acurfman@gmail.com).

In April, it seemed we saw more media coverage about the environment than we generally see in an entire year. You may have noticed corporations or political bad actors giving token speeches, making flashy donations, or taking one-time actions to seem environmentally friendly. Perhaps you felt increasing pressure to make individual consumer changes to "fix" our global environmental crisis. Individual actions have their place in our battle against climate chaos, but we can't allow the monied and powerful to trick us into believing all can be mended if we each just spent a bit more of our personal resources. To rapidly transition the entire world to

cleaner, safer, renewable practices, we must demand drastic action from those with the power to do the most good.

In the work we do, it's sometimes difficult to understand how immediate and urgent climate crisis is for some, like climate refugees and those living in places that are rapidly becoming unlivable due to floods, fires, drought, or heat. Like the young, who are uniquely affected by the leaders of the world refusing to act in the face of the scientific community's firm 12-year deadline to prevent irreversible climate catastrophe.

That's why we are so grateful, WV Sierrans, for everything you are doing to defend and restore your communities. We're so proud of everyone in our Chapter who wants to take a stand for clean water, air, and soil — and we're here to support you in any way we can. Please contact us with any training questions or needs. All this work is really about preserving a livable place for ourselves and for future generations.

## Might Media FINALLY Take Climate Crisis Seriously?

Eric Engle

Twelve years. That's the timeframe last year's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 5th Assessment Report advised that the world must dramatically reduce global greenhouse gas emissions in order to avoid a scenario where runaway anthropogenic (human-caused) climate change could make this planet uninhabitable. But what did we see and hear from some of the largest corporate media outlets where most Americans get their news? Well, we saw and heard about Trump's latest fit on Twitter or something similarly pointless and mind-numbing.

It doesn't have to be this way. Recently, *The Nation Magazine* and the *Columbia Journalism Review* announced an initiative called **Covering Climate Change: A New Playbook for a 1.5-Degree World**, "a project aimed at dramatically improving U.S. media coverage of the climate crisis." (2019 April 22, "The media are complacent while the world burns").

According to *The Nation*, the project launched on April 30 with a conference at the Columbia School of Journalism in New York City. The goal of the conference was to serve as the beginning of a conversation among American journalists and news organizations about how to engage with the public they are supposed to be serving about the biggest crisis our species, and countless others, have ever faced.

So how can the media improve their coverage of climate change and convey this crisis to the American people and to the world in the most meaningful and complete way possible? *The Nation* suggests that there are three important ways the media can be "all in": knowing the science, focusing on substance, and attracting eyeballs without being frivolous. How does the media do this? *The Nation* breaks this down:

(1) **Don't blame the audience, and listen to the kids** — a majority of Americans are interested in and want to learn more about climate change, according to polling from *Yale Climate Communications*, and kids are speaking the loudest on this issue right now (see "Our Children's Trust" and the Juliana v. U.S. lawsuit, "This is Zero Hour," and the "School Strike 4 Climate").

(2) **Establish a diverse climate desk, but don't silo climate coverage** — climate change is a factor in everything humans are involved in and it is THE social justice issue.

(3) **Learn the science** — the media must understand the science in an intimate way to convey it completely and fairly.

(4) **Don't internalize the spin** — *Yale Climate* found in polling last December that 81 percent of registered voters support a Green New Deal. The broader media cannot fall into the Fox News trap of denialism and delay on climate action.

(5) **Lose the Beltway mind-set** — what Congress and the White House will do and what the American people say they want are often two very different things.

(6) **Help the heartland** — we know how much Appalachia needs help transitioning from an extraction, fossil fuels-based economy. The Midwest is being devastated by flooding and the West is being devastated by droughts and wildfires. The media needs to talk about helping these communities address climate impacts and transitioning to a zero emissions way of life.

(7) **Cover the solutions** — the science is settled, the verdict is in, now the media needs to talk about how to act. There are many, many solutions at all levels of society and government.

(8) **Don't be afraid to point fingers** — the media must accurately and fairly place the blame for the crisis we face where it belongs, namely on the fossil fuels-funded industry puppet show that much of the media has been complacent in, which has misinformed and lied about climate change for decades.

We can prevent the worst and most catastrophic of climate change and mitigate the disaster we've locked in, but the media has got to help as many people as possible understand where we are and what we must do. The time to worry about ratings and profits is over, but ratings and profits do not necessarily have to be sacrificed for the media to do its crucial job on climate. Will the broader media do its job, the way outlets like *The Guardian Newspaper* have done? Or will we continue down this road where too many are wearing blinders because the broader media has failed them? The time to decide is NOW!



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

**[celliot2@comcast.net](mailto:celliot2@comcast.net)**

414 Tyrone Avery Rd  
Morgantown, WV 26508

Deadline for the  
2019 Fall issue  
**August 3**

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 quarterly by the WV Chapter of the Sierra Club and distributed to all paid members.



## Schoolhouse Ridge Hike

March brought blustery but bright weather for our hike on Schoolhouse Ridge (Harpers Ferry NHP). The mix of meadow and woods — with a little history mixed in — made for a great early spring hike. Near the end of their walk, the group gathered at the ruins of an old farmhouse for a cheery group shot.

## Rare species of the Southern Mon National Forest: A series

*Matt Kearns, WV Rivers Coalition & Tom Kloehn, The Wilderness Society*

The wild mountains, hollows, rivers, and bogs of the southern Monongahela National Forest hold a rare and valuable treasure: some of the last populations of the Eastern United States' most at-risk species. These small amphibians, mammals, plants, and fish often go unseen, but they are a vital part of the varied ecosystems that would be protected by the proposed Birthplace of Rivers national monument.

The survival and recovery of these species is important for the scientific community, outdoor enthusiasts, and anyone who wants to see these plants and animals continue to be part of the landscape of the Mountain State, as they have since the ecosystem came into being.

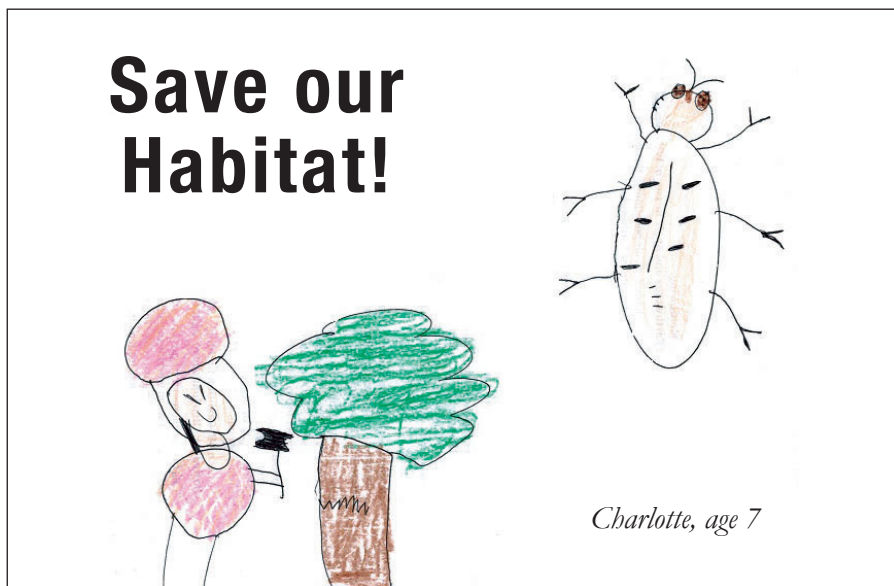
This is the fourth in a series of quick looks at the endangered and threatened species in the southern part of the Mon National Forest and areas downstream. These species are either known, or very likely, to be found in the region known as the Birthplace of Rivers.

### No. 4: Cheat Mountain Salamander



Cheat Mountain Salamander (*Plethodon nettingi*): This tiny amphibian occurs only in West Virginia, and nowhere else. Like many of the Mountain State's native species, it originally lived in the spruce forests found at high elevations. Since these forests were largely destroyed, it has begun adapting to life in mixed deciduous woodlands. The species needs wet, dark forest floors to survive, partly because they have no lungs and absorb oxygen directly through their moist skin. Because of this, anything from direct sunlight to the creation of a hiking trail can disrupt their habitat. Although it is listed as threatened, the species has achieved a certain amount of stability, and, as long as the unique Birthplace of Rivers landscape is preserved, will be a defining part of West Virginia wildlife for the foreseeable future.

## Save our Habitat!



We have forgotten that we must take care of the planet! About 40 football fields of trees are being cut down every 60 seconds. Many endangered species live on our planet. Some are endangered because they don't have enough room to live, like the Northeastern Beach Tiger Beetle. People have used too much of their beaches. Here's a picture of a Northeastern Beach Tiger Beetle and a tree cutter cutting down a tree. Now you know how important the world is!

## DID YOU KNOW ... ?

1. Recycling one aluminum can save enough energy to run a TV for three hours.
2. Around 25,000 trees are cut down each day just to produce toilet paper.

3. Approximately five million tons of oil produced in the world each year ends up in the ocean.
4. Seventy-eight percent of marine mammals are threatened by accidental deaths, such as getting caught in fishing nets.
5. A glass bottle can take 4,000 years to decompose.
6. Rainforests are being cut down at a rate of 100 acres per minute.

7. The United States is the No. 1 trash-producing country in the world.
8. Ford Motor Company has said that 75 percent of every vehicle is recyclable.
9. If the entire world lived like the average American, we'd need five planets to provide enough resources.

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## Hemp Discussion Draws a Crowd

Laura Yokochi

A diverse group of West Virginians excited about the possibilities of hemp attended our March 27 event, INDUSTRIAL HEMP: Economic Opportunity and a Solution to Climate Change, at the Waldomore in Clarksburg. This event was sponsored by the Mon Group and organized by April Keating and Laura Yokochi.

A panel discussion with hemp experts from around the state was followed by questions from the audience. It was a great opportunity to share ideas and learn more about the uses of hemp as well as the business of growing and selling hemp products. Panelists included James McCormick, State Director of the Farmers' Veteran Coalition; Joe Hatton, Deputy Commissioner of Agriculture; Mike Manypenny, former WV legislator and longtime hemp farmer; Rusty Williams, hemp and medical marijuana patient advocate to the WV Cannabis Medical Advisory Board; and Don Smith, hemp grower and advocate. Each brought a unique viewpoint to the discussion.

James McCormick, veterans' advocate, said, "The opportunity for veterans in Industrial Hemp goes beyond just the financial; this puts veterans back in the game of life and allows us to be part of something greater than just ourselves. It

is selfless service to our environment and future generations."

Mike Manypenny and Don Smith, the two experienced growers on the panel, emphasized that this is an opportunity for small farmers, but warned of unscrupulous out-of-state businesses that will take advantage of our work and keep the money for themselves.

Rusty Williams is most interested in the medical uses of cannabis and told the audience a little about the history of the unfair demonization of this plant. He pointed out that making it illegal provided an excuse to imprison Mexicans and other groups that those in power did not like.

There are various legal hoops to jump through for those who want to become involved in the hemp industry and Joe Hatton was able to answer questions about the state's rules and regulations.

The event drew the attention of local news media, and an editorial in favor of hemp, quoting participants in the forum, appeared in the *Clarksburg Exponent-Telegram* the following Sunday.

"We see hemp as a job provider, a purifier, and an economic alternative to fossil fuels," said April Keating. "Hemp is a burgeoning industry with huge economic potential. I don't want to see us be left behind again. We need to seize this opportunity."

## Mon Group Celebrates Earth Day

Laura Yokochi

The sun shone on our April 20 Earth Day Celebration in Morgantown despite the predicted rain. Various community groups joined us at the Farmers Market Pavilion for a relaxing day of live music, exhibits, and games. The focus was on learning more about the natural world and finding positive solutions to the climate crisis

Talented local musicians Lina Bird, Michael Attfield, Richard Eddy, Andrew and Annabelle Dacks, and Tom Rodd provided a background of classical and traditional tunes on the violin, harp, banjo, and mandolin.

Tom Rodd's fascinating Kitchen Science Show was a hit with both children and adults, as were the birds from the Avian

Conservation Center of Appalachia. Other groups included Mountain SOL, Citizens Climate Lobby, League of Women Voters, WV Herb Association, 25 Solar, WV Botanic Gardens, WVU Water Research Institute, Solar United Neighbors of West Virginia, Morgantown Green Team, and Tanner Leather Works.

One of the highlights was a display of posters submitted to our Earth Day Poster Contest. The contest, meant to inspire children to illustrate their ideas about enjoying, exploring, and protecting the planet, was open to Mon County students in grades 1-8. Awards were presented during the event. The children present enjoyed showing the posters to their parents and having their pictures taken.



## Mon Group Summer Events

### ICE CREAM SOCIAL

Sat, June 15, noon-3 p.m.

Coopers Rock State Forest

This has become one of our favorite annual traditions! Take a turn on the hand-cranked ice cream maker and enjoy the fellowship. Bring a dish to share and discuss local Conservation issues.

### CORN ROAST

Thur, Aug 22, 5-7 p.m.

Krepps Park, 1235 Parkview Dr, Morgantown

Fresh corn grown by our members is roasted over an open grill. Bring a dish to share. Meet other local Sierrans and find out what's happening in our area.

For timely updates, be sure to check your monthly email from the Mon Group, which is sent to all Group members with a valid email on file. Additional activities may be added.

Questions: John Bird, 412-805-9624, johnbird@frontier.com, Laura Yokochi, 304-695-1523, lyokochi@aol.com



Nick Penix (left), Olivia Cochran, SSC President Abby Minihan, and Maya Rowe spent a weekend in April planting hundreds of red spruce saplings in Canaan Valley.

## SSC Plants Red Spruce at Canaan

Abigail Minihan and Maya Rowe

In April, members of WVU's Sierra Student Coalition (SSC) set out to join the annual tree planting trip in Canaan Valley, hosted by the Canaan Valley Wildlife Refuge. The goal of the trip was to plant 3,000 red spruce trees, which once covered vast expanses of our beautiful state. However, due to industrial deforestation in the 20th century, a high percentage of red spruce trees in the area have been removed — the loss of which is a primary threat to the endangered Cheat Mountain salamanders. SSC members, along with a hoard of other volunteers, woke up bright and early to spend the morning planting seedlings along the banks of a stream in hopes that one day the natural ecosystem could be restored. As always, the trip was a wonderful success and SSC members are already looking forward to returning next year.

# Eastern Panhandle Group News

Maggie Loudon, EP Group Secretary

After submitting its Bylaws document, a list of members, and its boundaries to the WV Chapter, the Eastern Panhandle Sierra Club (EPSC) was formally approved by the Chapter ExCom and became the newest Group in the WV Chapter. The EPSC Group continues its active schedule of bimonthly conservation meetings, bimonthly public educational meetings, and a robust schedule of outings.

## Update

### Mountaineer Gas Pipeline Expansion

Despite strong opposition to the expansion of the pipeline into Jefferson County, Mountaineer Gas continues to cut down trees; build temporary roads that turn to mud in the rain; and dig trenches near bike pathways, homes (without testing well water first), and the historic Black cemetery in Kearneysville. In general, they are changing the pristine environment into an unrecognizable one.

Without holding a required and promised public hearing, the WV Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) issued a storm water permit on March 29 so pipeline construction could proceed.

Folks here in the Eastern Panhandle continue to work to stop the pipeline construction. One of the latest responses is to set up a resistance camp, Camp Granny Smith, headed by EP Sierran **Tracy Cannon**. A group set up camp on April 15 at the Old Quarry and then moved to a private homeowner's land that is being affected

by construction. They are documenting and posting the destruction of beautiful Jefferson County, and protecting families and natural communities from poisoned water and air.

## Conservation Meetings

**April 23 (recap):** Members of the EP Group met at **Gail and Allyn Kohlhorst's** home for our bimonthly Conservation Meeting.

During the meeting:

- Plans were made to join other Eastern Panhandle groups traveling to the State Capitol for the Legislature's special session interim committees on May 20-21 for the purpose of informing our legislators that people in the Eastern Panhandle are still adamantly opposed to the construction of the **Rockwool plant** due to toxic particle emissions into the air and its presence near schools, farms, tourist attractions, and neighborhoods.

- We discussed a postcard campaign to coincide with the lobby trip to Charleston.

- Information was provided regarding Jefferson County Board of Education's (JCBOE) offer to buy the land on which Rockwool is planning to build, in order to construct a Regional Student Support Center.

To receive services, students with serious special needs are often required to travel to neighboring states, riding school buses for hours. "Jefferson County Schools is committed to developing a regional student support center to meet these needs in a way that creates a more positive and productive experience for our students, families and staff. We have a responsibility



On a breezy, but beautiful day in April, 23 folks joined Sierra Club's hike from Keys Gap, VA/WV, to Harpers Ferry on the Appalachian Trail. They ended the hike at Harpers Ferry's Flip Flop Festival, where they enjoyed food, music, AT-related workshops, and vendor booths. The festival is a celebration of Harpers Ferry and Bolivar's rich outdoor offerings and a promotion of "flip-flop" through hikes on the AT. Instead of hiking from one end of the trail to the other, flip-flop hikers start in the middle twice in a year, hiking to both ends. Find more at [flipflopfestival.org](http://flipflopfestival.org).

to be champions for our children, pioneers in innovation and models for best practice in education in the State of West Virginia."

Rockwool's lawsuit against JCBOE was also discussed.

**June 25 (next meeting):** The next Conservation meeting will be hosted by **Aileen Curfman** at her home.

Cacapon State Park, will talk about the world of beauty and adventure awaiting visitors to our State Parks. She'll help us discover and plan visits to these gems of the Mountain State. We'll learn how WV Parks are re-introducing elk to our state and how the Parks promote pollinators. And we'll learn about some of the fun things to do at Cacapon, right in our own back yard.

## Program Meetings

We continue to present relevant topics at our bimonthly public programs, held on alternate fourth Tuesdays at St. John's Lutheran Church, Martinsburg (St. John's is not affiliated with the Sierra Club). Programs run from 6:30-8:30 p.m. No programs are held during July and August.

**March 26 (recap):** **Diana Pavlik** of the Berkeley County Chapter of the Izaak Walton League of America presented an informational program on the League's and the Berkeley County Chapter's focus on work to conserve special places for present and future enjoyment.

The Berkeley County Chapter has been monitoring local streams, especially the Opequon Creek. They have begun to monitor changes in the Potomac watershed and are concerned about how the proposed fracking in Maryland might affect the watershed.

They monitor the health of the Opequon watershed and hosted a "Fun Float on the Opequon" on May 18 to attract folks interested in participating in their monitoring efforts.

**May 28 (next meeting):** **Clint Hogbin**, of the Berkeley County Solid Waste Authority, will share information about its series of education, enforcement, and solid waste collection programs. The Waste Authority's primary objective is to make source reduction, reuse, recycling, and recovery priorities in the management of solid waste, instead of committing refuse to landfills.

**Sept 24 (upcoming):** **Valerie Chaney**, Park Activities Coordinator and Naturalist for



A hardy group of Sierrans joined newly minted Outings Leader **Aileen Curfman** on a bitterly cold February hike around Yankauer Nature Preserve, an educational and recreational preserve of the Potomac Valley Audubon. The hikers stopped for a photo-op along the banks of the Potomac River in Berkeley County. Organized by Aileen, this outing served as the final requirement for her certification as an approved Outings Leader for the WV Chapter.

The WV Sierra Club Outings Program needs more volunteers to cover other areas in the State. If you enjoy sharing your outdoor experiences and knowledge with others and would like to become a certified Sierra Club Outings Leader volunteer, contact **Laura Miller**, [aepicysta@gmail.com](mailto:aepicysta@gmail.com), for more information.

## EPSC Summer Picnic

**Tue, Aug 27, 6:30–8:30 p.m.**

**Poor House Farm Park, Kester Pavilion  
Almshouse Road, Martinsburg, WV**

We've had hikes long and short. We've heard speakers on topics from recycling to satellite monitoring of mountaintop removal. We've sat in meetings to discuss pipelines and bylaws. Now it's time to get down to the serious business of socializing and picnicking!

Please join us for a late-summer potluck picnic at Poor House Farm. We ask you to bring a dish to share — salad, vegetable, casserole, dessert, or other. The EPSC Group will provide drinks and eating implements. No business is planned other than some introductions and invitations to upcoming hikes and meetings. There will be plenty of time to socialize and talk over ideas with your fellow friends and Sierra Club members, and we might go on a short, easy pre-picnic lakeside stroll. Watch your email for more details later in the summer.

## Outings

Outings led by **Chris Craig** and **Aileen Curfman** continue to attract many participants. Often, a hike will have a waiting list. Some hikers come to subsequent EPSC meetings and become interested in the Sierra Club. Outings are a great way to recruit new members and build the environmental community.

See Outings listed on the next page or check the Chapter website for details about more upcoming outings.

# SUMMER OUTINGS

For additional details about any outing, or to RSVP your intent to participate, please contact the designated leader ahead of time. To view Sierra Club's Liability Policy for Outings, go to [sierraclub.org/west-virginia](http://sierraclub.org/west-virginia) under Events. Be advised that Sierra Club assumes no responsibility for shuttle/carpooling. Carpooling is at the sole risk of the participants.

## Sun, May 26

### Day Hike, with drive in middle: WV High Points — Spruce Knob- Seneca Rocks Nat. Rec. Area

For members who receive their newsletter electronically a couple weeks earlier than the print version is mailed, please check the details for this outing on our Chapter website: [sierraclub.org/west-virginia](http://sierraclub.org/west-virginia).

## Sat, June 8

### Educational: Birds, trees, wildflowers

**Day Hike:** Kanawha State Forest  
**Distance/Difficulty:** about 3.5 miles, MODERATE  
**Duration:** 3.5-4 hours

**Description:** This will be an educational hike guided by Kanawha State Forest volunteer Naturalist Sara Miller. We will focus on bird watching and learn bird calls to help identify the birds when not on sight. We expect to hear, and with luck, spot Cerulean Warbler, a bird whose populations have been steadily declining since 1966, due to habitat destruction. This bird inhabits and breeds in this Forest, which also has the second highest number of Cerulean Warblers in all of West Virginia. As we hike along, we'll identify trees and wildflowers common to this forest. Most of the hike will be at a moderate pace and with frequent stops to allow for observations. We will hike Polly Trail and Polly Hollow, Beech Glen, and Wildcat Ridge Trails to complete our loop. There is some tricky footage in spots, particularly when wet, so bring footwear with adequate tread for hiking. Be prepared for several creek crossings. If water is too high at the time, we'll reroute the hike. **Meet:** 10 am. Contact outings leader Laura Miller to RSVP and for meeting location details.

Bring: Binoculars if you have them. Hiking boots or sturdy shoes with good tread, preferably water proof or water repellent. Packed lunch and/or snacks. Plenty of water if it's a hot day. Walking stick or poles can be helpful on creek crossings. Insect/tick repellent

**Leader:** Laura Miller, [aepicysta@gmail.com](mailto:aepicysta@gmail.com), 304-776-4677

**Nearest Town:** Charleston, WV

**Additional info:** Some creek crossings could be a little high depending on how much it has rained, thus waterproof or water repelling hiking boots or sturdy footwear are suggested.

**Cancellation policy:** Steady or heavy rain will cancel the outing. We will continue in light drizzly precipitation.

## Sat & Sun, June 29 & 30

### Harpers Ferry NHP 75th anniversary

**Day Hikes:** Maryland Heights/Stone Fort Loop, Harpers Ferry National Historical Park. The same hike route is offered both days.

**Distance/Difficulty:** The hike is divided into two sections for those who don't want to hike the whole route. First section, or Overlook hike only, is 3.5 miles. Total hike, Overlook hike plus Stone Fort Loop hike, is 6.5 miles. Both hikes are MODERATELY DIFFICULT.

**Duration:** 2.5 hours for Overlook hike section only; 3.5 hours for Overlook plus Stone Fort Loop hike, including shuttle time.

**Description:** The same hike takes place both Saturday and Sunday. These hikes are in partnership with Harpers Ferry National Historical Park (NHP) and are in celebration of the 75th anniversary of the Park. The hikes will include historical interpretation of Harpers Ferry and the formation of the Park. After the group visits the overlook, hikers may return to the Lower Town directly or continue on the Stone Fort Loop. Both hikes feature wonderful views and Civil War fortifications, but the long route is especially rich in history. Both the short and long hikes are on steep and sometimes rugged trails, and the full hike includes 1,400 feet of elevation gain. We will meet at the Harpers Ferry NHP Visitor Center and take the Park shuttle\* to begin the hike in Lower Town Harpers Ferry. The hike is open to all adults, and minors accompanied by adults, who are fit for a challenging, multi-hour hike at a moderate pace. Hikers must pay Park admission, but there is no extra charge for the hike, though donations to the Harpers Ferry Park Association are welcome.

**Meet:** 8:30 am, Harpers Ferry NHP Visitor Center, 171 Shoreline Drive, Harpers Ferry (off US340, opposite the towns). We will depart on bus\* at 8:45; it is recommended that you arrive at the Park between 8 and 8:15.

**Bring:** You must carry water with you; snacks are recommended. Boots or hiking shoes fit for the trail are required, and you must dress appropriately for the weather and sun expected that day. Hiking poles or a walking stick may be helpful.

**Leader:** Chris Craig, [ccraig@laurellodge.com](mailto:ccraig@laurellodge.com), 304-433-1260.

**Nearest Town:** Harpers Ferry/Bolivar, WV

**Additional info:** Attendance each day is limited to 25 individuals, and reservations are required. We ask those who cancel their reservation to let us know to allow others to take their places. Hikers must pay Park admission. The

75th anniversary celebration will have lots of fun and educational events. For more information, go to [www.harpersferryhistory.org](http://www.harpersferryhistory.org).

## Sat, July 20

### Day Hike: Appalachian Trail, MD I-70 to Wolfesville Road

**Distance/Difficulty:** 8.6 miles/ MODERATELY DIFFICULT

**Duration:** 4.5 hours, including shuttle time

**Description:** We will pick up our series of Maryland AT hikes where we left off in the snows of last winter. This stretch will take us through forests of oak and hickory, with expansive views at Black Rock and Annapolis Rock. The trail is generally smooth with a couple of rocky or rutted areas. The hike will begin at the AT parking lot off I-70 and will involve a shuttle\* back there at the end, so allow extra time. Please contact hike leader to RSVP. The hike is open to any adult or minors (accompanied by adult) of adequate fitness for a multi-hour, strenuous hike. The hike is free.

**Bring:** Packed lunch, plenty of water, and snack. Sunscreen and bug repellent recommended.

**Meet:** 9:30 am, AT Trailhead & Parking at I-70, 11196 Baltimore National Pike (US40), Myersville, MD 21773. (This lot is on US40, ¼ mile east of Greenbrier State Park and just east of I-70 overpass. GPS N39.53516, W77.60314. Meet at AT informational signage.)

**Leader:** Chris Craig, [ccraig@laurellodge.com](mailto:ccraig@laurellodge.com), 304-433-1260

**Nearest Town:** Myersville/Boonsboro, MD

**Additional info:** \*This hike involves a shuttle back to cars.

**Cancellation policy:** We will cancel hike if heavy downpours are expected.

## Sat, Aug 31

### Day Hike: Catoctin Mtn Park, MD

**Distance/Difficulty:** 8.5 mile loop / MODERATELY DIFFICULT

**Duration:** 4.5 hours

**Description:** Catoctin Mountain Park is a low but rugged front range for the Appalachians in Maryland. It is a popular hiking and recreational park for the Washington, D.C., region and is the home of the Presidential retreat, Camp David. The 8-Mile Loop is a combination of trails on the east side of the park. We will see several park highlights: Cunningham Falls, several summits and viewpoints, and the Wolf Rock and Chimney Rock formations. Trail surface varies from smooth to rocky. Some of the areas we will visit are designated pet-free, so Fido will

not be allowed on this hike. The hike is open to any adult or minors (accompanied by adult) of adequate fitness for a multi-hour, strenuous hike. The hike is free.

**Bring:** Packed lunch, plenty of water, and snack. Sunscreen and bug repellent recommended.

**Meet:** 9:30 am, Catoctin Mountain Park Visitor Center, 14707 Park Central Road, Thurmont, MD. From US 15, take MD Route 77 west about 3 miles. We will gather in front of the visitor center

**Leader:** Chris Craig, [ccraig@laurellodge.com](mailto:ccraig@laurellodge.com), 304-433-1260

**Nearest Town:** Thurmont, MD

**Additional info:** No pets are allowed on this hike.

**Cancellation policy:** We will cancel if heavy downpours are expected.

## Sat, Sept 21

### Day Hike: Armory Canal Trail, Potomac Street, Harpers Ferry

**Distance/Difficulty:** 1.5 miles/EASY

**Duration:** 1 hour

**Description:** Potomac Street, Harpers Ferry, is a center for shops and restaurants that hops with tourists in season. But cross the railroad tracks and leave the pavement behind, and you'll enter a quiet (except when trains pass), forested area that will soon be developed as a hiker/biker trail. This out-and-back walk will take us past Potomac River views, the remains of the Harpers Ferry Dam and the old Federal Armory Canal. We'll have a bit of historical interpretation and news about plans and dreams for future trail networks, but we'll also have a peaceful, easy walk along the river. This hike is free but see note\* about Park admission.

**Bring:** Water. Bug protection suggested.

**Meet:** 10 am, Harpers Ferry train station, Potomac Street.

**Leader:** Chris Craig, [ccraig@laurellodge.com](mailto:ccraig@laurellodge.com), 304-433-1260

**Nearest Town:** Harpers Ferry, WV

**Additional info:** Parking at the train station is limited and requires NPS admission fees. There is limited, on-street metered parking. You may also park at the main Harpers Ferry NHP Visitor Center off US340 and ride the shuttle into Lower Town, but arrive there by 9:15am to get to the station in time. \*Harpers Ferry NHP admission is \$15/car, \$7.50/ pedestrian or bicyclist, or free with a Park pass. There will be lots of time after our hike to explore the Park's history and trails on your own.

**Cancellation policy:** We will carry on in light rain but cancel in a downpour.

## Perspectives on Outings

— Laura Miller, Outings Chair

# Nature's Pharmacy At Our Feet

On a recent early spring Sierra Club outing, at Kanawha State Forest, two participants and I hiked up to the Wildcat Ridge. We dedicated a good amount of time to observing nature unfold at this beautiful time of year; the wildflowers in particular took most of our attention.

Days later, I did a little research on the wildflowers we had encountered. Turns out that a number of them had medicinal properties and had been used by the Native Americans. Some are still used today as folk remedies for diverse ailments.

One of them in particular, the Mayapple, scientifically known as *Podophyllum peltatum*, caught my attention. I had heard stories from some that it was poisonous, and from others that it was not. My search results said that the fruit is edible in small amounts (don't take my word for it), but the leaves and roots are poisonous, even in very small amounts; hence, its other common name: American Mandrake.

Though I didn't quite get all my questions answered, I found out something else interesting about it. A medication named Etoposide, used in present time for the treatment of small-cell cancers, such as warts, is a semi-synthetic derivative obtained from an anti-tumor compound (podophyllotoxin) found in Mayapple plants. It's fascinating to learn more about these common West Virginia wildflowers we love so dearly for their beauty, yet we often take them for granted, as if they only existed in the springtime.

I want to invite you to spend some time learning about wildflower stories and what's behind their beauty; you'll be surprised over and over again, not only by how useful they can be for us, but by the role they play in the ecosystem. Flower colors and shapes are not only there for us to enjoy, but for other creatures to find and recognize as food sources, such as nectar and pollen. There are very intimate

relationships between plants and insect pollinators that have co-evolved throughout thousands of years.

Being outdoors with nature gives us the opportunity to calm our busy minds, feel joy, and be fascinated by its marvels. I believe we can extend that pleasure when we go "behind the scenes" to learn and understand its processes.

Our late Outings Chair, Mike Price, once wrote in one of his columns: "Nature can heal us in mind, body and spirit. Every time we walk outdoors, we feel refreshed.... There is just something magical that happens whenever our bodies reconnect with nature.... Nature has provided us with many cures for our bodies. A multitude of plants and herbs have been used for centuries to heal. A lot of pharmaceutical drugs come from compounds found in plants.... Get outdoors and let nature heal you. Don't wait till tomorrow. Do it today and every day. Life is a journey. Enjoy it."



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Summer 2019

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Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

# A Will is a Way

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