

# M Mountain State Sierran

Volume 45, Number 3

sierraclub.org/west-virginia

Fall 2019

## Two un‘Pleasant’ power developments in the state

### Special Session passes more tax breaks for coal

*Jim Kotcon*

Late on a Friday afternoon in July, Governor Justice issued a call for a Special Session of the Legislature to include a bill to exempt “certain merchant power plants” from Business and Occupation taxes.

The Governor said this bill was targeted to save the Pleasants power plant, which is no longer competitive and faces closure. The Legislature was told that the bill would apply only to the Pleasants power plant because it is the only “merchant” plant in WV that pays the B&O tax. The exemption would save the plant (or cost the state) \$12 million per year and help the plant compete in a “capacity auction.” The plant’s owner, FirstEnergy Solutions (FES) of Ohio, insisted that the plant would close within months without the tax break, costing 160 jobs. This tax break would benefit an out-of-state company at the expense of WV state revenues.

Regular readers of the *Mountain State Sierran* will recall that our FirstEnergy subsidiary, Mon Power, proposed to purchase this plant last year, claiming it would save ratepayers money. But when the PSC made the claimed savings for ratepayers a condition of the sale, Mon Power said they were not interested. It is clear that FirstEnergy was really hoping to saddle West Virginia ratepayers with an uneconomic plant. So, does it make sense to raid the taxpayers to bail out the same plant?

Unfortunately, nothing in the Bill (HB 207) restricts the tax bailout to the Pleasants plant. It refers to “certain merchant power plants,” but it seems likely the same tax breaks could eventually go to Longview (which claims to already be profitable) as well as proposed new gas-fired power plants such as the Harrison County, Moundsville, or Brooke County plants. FES argues that these other plants operate under a Payment In Lieu Of Taxes (PILOT) agreement, so they already are exempt from B&O taxes. But the bill makes the B&O tax break permanent, so it seems likely to apply to these plants after their PILOT agreements expire.

Importantly, there is no guarantee that the Pleasants plant would not close anyway. While a reduction in B&O taxes will probably keep them afloat a little longer, the market trend is inevitable. Coal is no longer the low-cost



supplier. It has not been for several years, and competition from gas and renewables will get stiffer, even without addressing the environmental impacts from coal.

Nothing in the bill makes the tax break conditional on FES protecting the workers’ jobs. Nothing in the bill requires FES to prepare the community for the inevitable transition. Nothing requires FirstEnergy to implement energy efficiency programs or lower costs for the consumer.

**Final note:** Legislators got their first look at the Bill late Sunday, it was introduced on Monday, passed the House of Delegates Tuesday morning and the State Senate that afternoon. Governor Justice has signed the bill. This tax break for coal follows another \$60 million reduction in coal severance taxes passed by the Legislature in March.

Please send thanks to Delegates Doyle, Fleischauer, Hansen, Lavendar-Bowe and Pushkin, who all voted, “No.”

### Point Pleasant public meeting reveals air permit problems

*Aileen Curfman*

On July 30, WV Sierra Club members traveled to Point Pleasant to comment on the air quality permit for a proposed facility that would convert coal to liquid fuels. Domestic Synthetic Fuels I, LLC, proposes to build the facility on 221 acres in Mason County. Using a process known as H-technology, the coal would be subjected to heat and pressure, and a variety of fuels including diesel and gasoline would be produced. The company claims that byproducts would be marketable products that would not end up as waste.

The hearing was well attended, with several community leaders saying the plant would bring badly needed jobs.

Club members expressed that while they are deeply aware of the need for economic development, this project would result in poor health for residents — not a recipe for a better future. Sierra Club experts questioned the absence of monitoring data regarding the current air pollution status of the area and demonstrated that the amount of pollutants to be emitted were underestimated, calling into question the permitting process itself.

The plant is being classified as a “minor source” of air pollutants, but a review of the facility’s maximum “potential to emit” pollutants shows that it should be classified as a “major source” of hazardous air pollutants. If properly permitted as a major source, the plant would have to comply with additional legal requirements, such as climate monitoring, pollutant modeling, and installing and using more protective pollution control equipment to diminish serious health risks to the local community.

The permit does not require appropriate air monitoring for the facility and also fails to require appropriate monitoring and recordkeeping of emissions. The proposed permit was issued without checking if the plant would comply with certain air and water safeguards. It was issued without receiving sufficient information from the facility, failing to check crucial calculations and inappropriately taking DSF’s representations at face value.

The permit fails to consider — let alone limit — various pollutants, including odorous emissions and greenhouse gases. No Health Risk Assessment was completed, meaning there is no clear understanding of health impacts to the community.

The coal, gas, and oil that would be used at the facility are not environmentally friendly energy sources, yet the community was not fully briefed on the pollution the plant can emit, or what it will do to the surrounding air, water, and ecosystem.

WV Sierra Club is calling upon the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to withdraw the proposed permit, stating the DEP did not do its due diligence and that DEP has a legal obligation to correct these errors and ensure that DSF cannot build such a harmful facility without undergoing a thorough and proper permitting process.

#### Primer on ‘Pleasants’

[above left] Pleasants Power Station is a 1.3-gigawatt coal power plant located near Belmont, in Pleasants County, WV.

[above right] A public meeting was held July 30 in Point Pleasant, the seat of Mason County, WV, where Domestic Synthetic Fuels plans to break ground in October on a new fuel conversion center.

Both counties are situated along the Ohio River.





## HELP WANTED

### Looking for Editor and Graphic Designer

The WV Chapter's *Mountain State Sierran* is looking for an individual (or two) who can edit and lay out the Chapter's quarterly print and online newsletter, as well as create a mobile-friendly Web version. Preference will be given to individuals able to fill all roles or able to quickly learn any unfamiliar roles. We will, however, consider dividing the roles into two coordinated positions.

#### Job description for Newsletter Editor

Excellent copyediting skills are required. Familiarity with Sierra Club's mission and policies is desirable. The editor will send reminders to regular contributors to solicit submissions for each issue; collect submitted articles and photos; determine suitability of submissions; edit, refine and organize content; occasionally write headlines or short filler material; and send results to the layout person by deadline. Estimated time spent per issue: 8-12 hrs.

#### Job description for Graphic Designer

Must be familiar with — and have access to — Adobe InDesign or similar layout software. May work with an existing template (11" x 14" tabloid format) or, with input from the Chapter's Editorial Board, create a new template. Facility with Adobe Photoshop or similar software is helpful. The designer will place content provided by the editor into a professional looking, print-friendly document; may need to occasionally compose headlines or other short filler material; and will send a PDF version to our printer and the Chapter webmaster. Must be able to meet deadlines. Estimated time spent per issue: 10-15 hrs.

#### Job description for Tech Designer

We would like to have a more app-friendly version of our newsletter and are looking for someone to help set that up for the Chapter. Once developed, either of the two positions above might be responsible for transferring content to the Mobile App for each issue.

#### Compensation

We propose to pay \$500-\$750 per issue (in total), commensurate with experience. While an annual contract would start Jan 1, 2020, work on the first issue (Spring) would take place primarily in early February, and then every three months, thereafter. To reference past newsletters, go to <https://www.sierraclub.org/west-virginia/newsletter>.

#### To apply

If interested in any or all positions, send samples of (or links to) your work and a short resume with references, **by September 20**, to: [candice.kelliott@gmail.com](mailto:candice.kelliott@gmail.com). Our committee will conduct phone interviews with qualified candidates starting in October.

## More Open Volunteer Positions

The Volunteers holding the following positions have been doing their jobs for a long time and would also like to find replacements to take over for them. Each position requires a minimal time commitment, but all are crucial to the efficient management of our Chapter.

If you would like to offer your time and energy to support our effective programs to protect and enjoy the environment, please contact the incumbent listed for more details about what the position entails.

#### Chapter Treasurer

Experience with bookkeeping – or better, an accounting background – would be valuable in this position. Because we are part of the national Sierra Club, all of our bookkeeping is tied to their system by online QuickBooks. We receive monthly online account reports and prepare an annual financial report. All income and expenses are handled by the Chapter Treasurer, so you will need to become familiar with the membership database system. National training is available to learn the intricacies of the reporting system. For info: Sally Wilts, [sallywilts@yahoo.com](mailto:sallywilts@yahoo.com), 304-379-7567.

#### Chapter Secretary

You must be available to record and produce Minutes by attending – either in person or via web conference – four long-day ExCom meetings scheduled around the state each year. The ExCom occasionally conducts business via additional teleconference meetings, and these also need to be chronicled for the Chapter's records. If you'd like to know more about the inner workings of the Chapter and its leadership, this would be a perfect way to learn without committing to too much at once. For info: Mel Waggy, [melwaggy@gmail.com](mailto:melwaggy@gmail.com).

#### Chapter Webmaster

Manage the Chapter website and keep it updated. Routinely post outings, pictures, the quarterly newsletter and other items sent by Chapter leaders. Become familiar with the Chapter's web interface and software (or suggest/create improvements). Must become familiar with Sierra Club policies regarding websites. Training is available for anyone who wants to learn how to manage a website. For info: Autumn Long, [autumnlng11@gmail.com](mailto:autumnlng11@gmail.com), 304-841-3539.

## Editor bids Farewell

My tenure as Chapter newsletter editor encompasses 12 years — a two-year stint from 1992-94 plus my current stretch that started with the Sept/Oct 2009 issue. This is a longer reign than any other single Chapter newsletter editor in our 35-year history. Even so, each of us volunteered our services because we knew the value of keeping our members informed and that the newsletter gave voice to our members and Chapter leaders, alike.

Even with a small stipend to help offset some basic expenses, such as software, computers, and paper, and occasional help from other volunteers and contractors, the job has grown to be more than one volunteer can easily manage on their own. To maintain a quality product, we felt it was time to look for someone who does this for a living to keep things on track (see job descriptions at left).

With upcoming changes to Sierra Club's electronic dissemination and database management on the horizon,

this feels like a good time for me to transition out of the position. I will fulfill my commitment as editor through the end of this year, making the Winter issue in December my last.

I have learned much in this position over the years and felt gratified that I could contribute my skills in furthering the Chapter's goals. But technology is advancing faster than I care to keep up, and the task of completing each issue brings more stress and less joy than it used to. I would much rather be spending my time doing other things, like getting outdoors and finishing up some projects around the house.

It will be with a sense of relief that I hand over the reins to another person or entity. That said, I will still be around, and I'm more than willing to share my institutional memory during the transition and beyond.

Thank you, all, for the wonderful ride, but it's time for me to get off and try something new.

*Candice Elliott*



*A July heat advisory and summer vacations kept turnout low – only three of us – for our summer hike on Maryland's Appalachian Trail. Here, Darryl Ramai is rewarded with a spacious view of the valley below, from Black Rock.*

### Call for Candidates

Each year in December, we hold elections to fill expiring terms on our Chapter Executive Committee (ExCom). We are always looking for new, passionate, dedicated members to accept a 2-year commitment to help run and make important decisions for the Chapter. If interested, please contact a current ExCom member by November 3 to let them know of your interest.

#### NOTE: ExCom Ballot to be in Winter Sierran

We no longer mail a separate Chapter ExCom ballot to members. Instead, it is incorporated into the Winter *Sierran*, which will be mailed to ALL active members. Please take the time to vote and return your ballots.

Please contact the Editor for submission guidelines or advertising rates. Articles and photos for consideration may be sent to the Editor at:

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

Deadline for the 2019 Winter issue  
**November 4**

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.



# SierraFest 2019 – 35th Anniversary of WV Chapter

## Register NOW for SierraFest 2019, Nov 1-3 Pipestem Resort State Park

Help us celebrate the 35th Anniversary of our Chapter by joining us at Pipestem Resort State Park on Nov. 1-3. There will be opportunities to learn more about becoming an effective advocate for the environment or to simply spend time outdoors enjoying the natural beauty of our state. Families with children are welcome and will find plenty of activities to enjoy.

Andrew McKnight — folk musician, writer, and storyteller — will be the keynote performer. Our Celebration Banquet on Saturday evening will include an awards ceremony, music, and a dynamic after-dinner talk by Danielle Walker, Delegate to the WV State Legislature.

### To Register

The registration fee of **\$35 per person** includes a buffet dinner (with vegetarian options) on Saturday. **Late registration (after October 1) will be \$45 per attendee.** Children under 12 are free.

### Online:

<https://act.sierraclub.org/events/details?formcampaignid=7010Z00001aSyNQAU>

This registration link can also be found on our Chapter website and Facebook page.

### By mail:

Send your name(s), address, phone, email, and any diet restrictions or preferences, along with a check made out to **WV Sierra Club**, TO: Laura Yokochi, 142 Liberty St, Salem WV 26426.

### Lodging

Arrangements are on your own. We have blocked rooms for the Chapter at McKeever Lodge. If you wish to stay at the lodge, call 304-466-1800 to make your reservations. Be sure to mention you are with the WV Sierra Club when booking your room. Standard double rooms are \$70/night.

Cabins and campsites are also available to reserve.

## About Our Guest Presenters

### Andrew McKnight

Since permanently leaving his corporate environmental engineering career in 1996, award-winning folk/Americana artist Andrew McKnight's musical journey has traced nearly a million miles of blue highways, and earned him a wealth of critical acclaim and enthusiastic fans for his captivating performances and seven recordings. Andrew's solo performances are powerful and entertaining one-man theatre, delivered with warmth and down-home comfort. He weaves his finely-crafted songs and nimble flatpicking together with humorous stories and poetic drama.

See more at: <https://www.andrewmcknight.net>

### Danielle Walker

A political newcomer, Walker was elected to the state House of Delegates in 2018. She represents District 51, which includes most of Monongalia County. She is an advocate and an activist for survivors of domestic violence and abuse, gun violence, poverty, addiction and discrimination.

## SCHEDULE

*Climate Change – Opportunities and Solutions*

### Friday, Nov 1

6-7 pm SierraFest check-in (McKeever Lodge)  
7 pm Campfire (Lodge or Group Cabin), Social Time

### Saturday, Nov 2

Breakfast on your own (Cabin, or Lodge restaurants)  
Indoor activities at McKeever Lodge, Faulkner Room

8:30-9 am SierraFest check-in, coffee, get acquainted

9-9:15 am Opening Comments and Announcements

### 9:15-10:15 am – Session 1

Option 1: “Ready for 100” *Jocelyn Travis*

Option 2: **Organizing Part 1** – “Power-Building:

How to make change when the deck is stacked against you” – *Justin Raines*

### 10:15-11:15 am – Session 2

Option 1: Bird watch at Nature Center, or short hike

Option 2: **Organizing Part 2** – “Grow Your Team:

How to build the broad movement we need” – *Justin Raines*

### 11:15 am-noon – Keynote Performance

*Andrew McKnight*, singer, guitarist, storyteller

noon-1 pm Lunch on your own (Lodge restaurants, or BYO to Group Cabin)

### 1-3 pm – Session 3

Option 1: (choice of two hikes) Easy/Moderate

2-hour hike with Laura Miller, or Moderately

Strenuous 3.5-hour hike with Chris Craig

Option 2: Panel Discussion – “A Green New Deal

for West Virginia” – Q & A with *Emmett Pepper*,

*Cheryl Johncox*, *Doyle Tenney*

3-3:30 pm – Yoga Break with *April Keating*

### 3:30-4:30 pm – Session 4

Option 1: Nature Center Visit with Park's Naturalist (children and adults welcome)

Option 2: **Organizing Part 3** – “Step by Step: A

walk through planning your campaign” – *Justin*

*Raines*

4:30-5:30 pm – Free time

5:30-6 pm – Pre-dinner Social Time

Live Auction or Raffle Drawing

6-9 pm – Dinner Buffet, Awards Ceremony

After-Dinner Talk, *Danielle Walker*

Musical Performance, *Andrew McKnight*

### Sunday, Nov 3

Lodge Check-out by 10 am

10 am-1 pm – Chapter ExCom Meeting (all members welcome), Group Cabin or TBA

*Adjustments to this schedule may be made due to weather or other factors. The final schedule will be available when checking in.*

## Benefit Auction

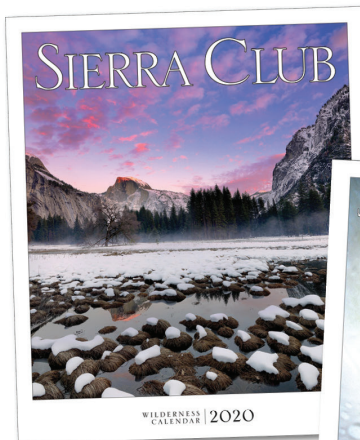
Do you have neglected items languishing in your closets that deserve a better home? Do you have camping equipment you no longer use? Books or beautiful objects that no longer spark joy? If you'd like to pass these on and benefit our Chapter at the same time, then please donate to our SierraFest Auction. Bring them along with you to SierraFest, or arrange for pick-up if you are not attending.

Please contact Candice Elliott, [celliot2@comcast.net](mailto:celliot2@comcast.net), or Laura Yokochi, [lyokochi@aol.com](mailto:lyokochi@aol.com), if you have items to donate.



Enjoy, explore, and protect the planet

### 2020 SIERRA CLUB CALENDARS



### ORDER FORM

ITEM	COST	QTY	TOTAL
Wilderness Calendar	<input type="checkbox"/> \$13.00	_____	_____
Engagement Calendar	<input type="checkbox"/> \$14.00	_____	_____

Please make check payable to  
“WV Sierra Club” and mail to:  
Candice Elliott  
414 Tyrone Avery Rd  
Morgantown WV 26508

Or [celliot2@comcast.net](mailto:celliot2@comcast.net) to arrange in-person delivery

Subtotal: \_\_\_\_\_

Shipping: **\$6.50**

GRAND TOTAL: \_\_\_\_\_

### SHIP TO:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

# Reasons & Opportunities for Action Abound

Summer has brought many of us the opportunity to travel to our favorite natural areas. As Aileen writes this, she is still basking in the memories of a campsite in the Roaring Plains, a few hours' hike from the nearest road. Nothing clears the mind like focusing on where to put your feet, especially when walking on stepping stones that are under a few inches of murky water. The wet trails are the result of heavy rains this season. These same rains brought disastrous floods to many of our valleys, reminding us of climate change and damaged mountain sides that are unable to absorb runoff water. It's time to get back to the business of taking care of West Virginia's environment.

This summer, we endured the hottest June on record, and July was the hottest month that Earth has experienced since humans began keeping track. These extreme summer temperatures have had disastrous effects around the world — ice in Greenland is melting at unprecedented rates, wildfires rage in the Arctic, and people abroad and here at home have died due to the heat. Our desperate need for public officials who truly represent us, who defend and protect us, is greater than ever before.

This is one of the reasons we were disappointed to learn that Delegate Paul Espinosa, who represents the Eastern Panhandle in District 66, has announced his

new job as a public affairs manager for Rockwool (see related commentary on this page). We find this move ethically dubious, especially given the overwhelming number of citizens and the coalition of organizations who have come together to fight the threat Rockwool poses to their schoolchildren, their water and air, their health, their livelihoods, and their property values. West Virginia has a tarnished history of legislators and other government officials accepting cushy positions in the industries they are tasked to legislate and regulate. We feel very strongly that Delegate Espinosa should drop the double-dipping and concentrate on what is best for his constituents instead of what is best for an out-of-state, fossil-fuel-burning, multinational polluter. If he prefers to work for Rockwool, he should give serious thought to resigning from the legislature.

Things are grim. The time to fight for the future of human life on Earth is now.

We believe that taking care of West Virginia can — and should — be an enjoyable, joyful experience. Too often, fighting environmental and social justice battles is draining. Working for a clean, healthy, fair future demands our time, our energy, and emotional and financial resources that may already be stretched fairly thin by the demands of daily life.

This is why we would like to share an exciting opportunity with our members. At our meeting this past July, the WV Chapter Executive Committee voted to make scholarship money available to Sierra Fest attendees who will complete three organizer training sessions that weekend: Power-Building, Grow Your Team, and Step by Step (which walks you through the campaign planning process).

SierraFest is November 1-3 at Pipestem Resort State Park (see p. 3 for the full event schedule). If you are interested in participating in organizer training at SierraFest and would like to request an organizer scholarship, please contact Justin Raines, [justinrainswv@gmail.com](mailto:justinrainswv@gmail.com). We very much hope to see you at SierraFest this fall.

A final note: As we look forward to cooler months, the *Mountain State Sierran* will be transitioning to a new editor; our current editor, Candice Elliott, looks forward to her retirement from this position. A committee of three — Candice, Laura Yokochi, and Aileen Curfman — has undertaken the job of finding a new editor/graphic designer and is working hard to make the transition as smooth as possible. Once again, we find ourselves indebted to Candice, not only for her many years of service, but also for her hard work to help the *Sierran* continue to be the excellent newsletter that it is now. Thank you, Candice!

## SHAKEN FOUNDATIONS

Lisa Hayes Minney

*This is an excerpt from an original essay published in "Mountains Piled upon Mountains: Appalachian Nature Writing in the Anthropocene," from West Virginia University Press, reprinted here with permission from the author.*

I was reading in bed one early Saturday morning when Daisy, our beagle, jumped up from her quiet nap at my side and looked at me as though I had pinched her.

And then the entire house shook.

I first thought something had hit the house. Something immense — a plane or a truck. My second thought was more accurate: an earthquake. The new Marcellus gas well was nearby, fracking currently under way.

The quaking only lasted a few confusing, rattling seconds.

Neighbors reported seeing the early morning dew shake off the trees. Pocket change stirred in silver bowls; wind chimes rang out a quiet chord. Aluminum siding on hillside trailers popped.

We found cracks in the cement block walls of our home, sunlight shining through from outside. Our well water now tasted of sulfur and was clouded with bubbles, as if slightly carbonated. I began decanting our tap water, and we bought ice by the bag and dumped it into our freezer's ice dispenser.

The company representatives denied, of course, any connection between their fracking and the earthquakes. The head of the Geoscience Section of the West Virginia Geological and Economic Survey said, "I do not suspect there is a connection to human activity." I wondered whose payroll he was on, wondered who was funding his grants.

The epicenter of the July 20th earthquake in Normantown, WV, was less than a mile from the company's cement slab drilling pad, two miles directly beneath their permitted, active drilling path in the Marcellus shale. A local surveyor created a map overlaying

the epicenter of the quake onto the site's permitted maps and drill path. The epicenter of the quake was directly under the hydraulic fracturing, the second of eight holes and paths permitted for that pad. He made me swear to keep the map to myself, not to share it or use it in any public argument. He made good money surveying for oil and gas businesses. His house shook as well as ours.

West Virginia is not a state prone to earthquakes. The first quake was a mere 2.7 on the Richter Scale, but the earth moved. I kept repeating it to myself and others: "They MOVED the EARTH."

The second earthquake hit July 30, and woke us from a deep sleep around 2 a.m. When the shaking stopped, we cursed the name of the drilling company, rolled over, and went back to sleep. This second quake was slightly stronger, a 2.8.

At breakfast, I wondered aloud if our neighbor was making a new map, if he would finally make it public. This quake was closer to his house. My husband responded, "He still needs a paycheck."

We added "repair new wall cracks" to our to-do list.

The third quake, a 2.6, rattled me awake on August 16 around 7 a.m. In an instant, I was up and standing in the bedroom doorway where the framing was supposed to provide additional protection if the ceiling fell. My husband came in a rush from the kitchen to check on me, and laughed to find me in the doorway, hands pressed white against the doorframe.

Pressure was shifting among the ancient rock slabs beneath us, and a pile of earthen slabs is nothing more than a house of cards on a planetary scale. A shift here could result in a settle there, a shimmy over there, another shake... a ripple effect. Sink holes. Aftershocks.

How many cracks could our walls handle? How long would the foundations of our lives be shaken?

Heated discussions sprung up at the counter of the local general store, cross comments exchanged at the gas pumps. Drilling representatives no longer returned calls. A local oil & gas service business owner, who lived less than a mile from the new well pad, took his profits from servicing the well and left the county.

Without ever admitting any connection, the company fracking in the Marcellus of Normantown decided not to drill all the paths permitted for the local well pad (at this time). Normantown's well is an experimental well after all, the first of its type so far south in the Marcellus shale deposit of the east coast. Here, the

Marcellus shale is thinner and, apparently, less stable.

The fracking stopped and the earthquakes stopped. But the effects still linger.

No one should have the right to rattle my home, my town, then shrug it off as nothing. No one should be able to shake the morning dew without facing a consequence.

In the two years following the 2013 Normantown earthquakes, officials and geophysicists declared that drilling was directly related to similar earthquakes in Ohio, Oklahoma, and Missouri.

I do not expect big changes in the world. I just want the company that drilled here to acknowledge the connection. To admit they shook us, disrespected us, lied to us.

I expect an apology, and I am still waiting.



**With your help we can clean up our water**

**Sierra Club Water Sentinels are the first line of defense of America's waters. We live on the water planet. However, water is a finite resource with only about 1 % of the world's water actually being available for human consumption. Water pollution & over-use are threatening both the quality & quantity of our water resources at an alarming rate.**

**Keep our water safe. Join Sierra Club.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
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Check enclosed. Please make payable to Sierra Club  
 Please charge my:  Visa  Mastercard  AMEX  
 Cardholder Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
 Signature \_\_\_\_\_

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

Join today and receive a FREE Sierra Club Weekender Bag!



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

**F94Q [W5700] 1**

Enclose a check and mail to:  
 Sierra Club, PO Box 421041  
 Palm Coast, FL 32142-1041  
 or visit our website: [www.sierraclub.org](http://www.sierraclub.org)





# Group educates legislators on Rockwool

Gail Koblhorst, Harpers Ferry, WV

After a couple of scheduling setbacks, citizen groups opposing Rockwool in Jefferson County, WV, made a trip to Charleston to visit the WV legislature during a Special Session. The purpose of the trip was to demonstrate to the government that there is serious opposition to the construction of a Rockwool manufacturing plant in Ranson, WV. (See <http://www.toxicrockwool.com> for facts about the hazards of Rockwool Manufacturing in Jefferson County). The group originally planned to go in May, but the Special Session didn't materialize. They next scheduled a bus for Monday, June 17, and had riders committed to fill it, but the state's teachers then planned a big rally for that day, and the group didn't want to take away from teacher efforts. So, the date was changed to Wednesday, June 19, and the trip was on.

With a very early morning start, the bus finally arrived around 12:30 pm at the Capitol, where the group met up with others who had driven on their own or come with different local organizations. Together, there were about 65 individuals, all wearing yellow shirts which read, "Say No to Toxic Rockwool."

The first order of business was to visit the offices of every Delegate and Senator. A cover letter and fact sheet were distributed with each visit, and the group looked forward to speaking with legislators to voice concerns about what was happening in Jefferson County. Most Delegates were on the floor discussing and voting on the education bills being considered. Where possible, the group talked to officials they found in their offices or left information on desks. Most of the Senators had gone home since the Senate was not in Session. An effort was made to contact every legislator. Opposition to Rockwool is not a political issue, but those who promote it will most likely be voted out of office in 2020.

At 2:30 pm, a press conference was held in the AG Rotunda of the Capitol. Key speaker Tim Ross, retired meteorologist and member of Jefferson County Vision, provided an overview of the Rockwool protests to date as well as the dangers posed by the plant. Delegate John Doyle, of Shepherdstown, also spoke briefly to a very receptive crowd of citizens and press.

Other speakers included leaders from group sponsors, including Eastern Panhandle Sierra Club, Jefferson County Green Coalition, WV Citizens Action Group, WV Rivers Coalition, Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition, and the Eastern Panhandle Women's March of WV. The conference received radio, TV, and news coverage by the press, most of whom were local to the Charleston area.

After the press conference, the group proceeded down the hall to the Governor's Reception Room carrying anti-Rockwool signs and



Group spokesperson Catherine Jozwik presents a petition against Rockwool with more than 13,000 signatures to Governor's assistant.

chanting, "Go Away Rockwool, Go Away." Spokesperson Catherine Jozwik asked to speak with the Governor to present a petition with more than 13,000 unique signatures opposing the construction of the Rockwool plant in Ranson. Though the Governor was unavailable, his Assistant for Constituent Services did meet with the group and accepted the petition on the Governor's behalf. He thanked the group for their efforts and promised to share the document with the Governor. Accompanying the petition was a folder containing the many anti-Rockwool resolutions passed by city governments and organizations within Jefferson County, along with some submitted by nearby governments and organizations in Maryland and Virginia.

Next stop was the Governor's mansion, where the group hung 200 paper anti-Rockwool tags on the fence surrounding the building. People gathered at the main gate for a group picture and admired the beautiful paper tags with pictures and messages on them. At the request of security, the tags were later removed from the fence and some were passed along to legislators.

On a beautiful, hot day in Charleston, the Anti-Rockwool protestors were received graciously by many of the teachers they met in the Capitol hallways. Teachers seemed to know about the fact that Rockwool was building its plant directly across from an elementary school and within 2-3 miles of three other schools. What about the Legislators? How many will look at the White Paper on Rockwool? How many will stand up to support WV citizens instead of Rockwool's toxic manufacturing?

A very tired group of citizens arrived back in Charles Town around 11:30 pm and made their ways home. Follow-up correspondence with Delegates and Senators is planned for the future in hopes that Jefferson County voices may be heard from 300 miles away. Jefferson County is currently prosperous and fast growing. Will Legislators help to keep it that way?

## Does Del. Paul Espinosa have conflict of interest?

Marie Tyler-McGraw  
Shepherdstown, WV

This letter was previously printed in the Spirit of Jefferson newspaper.

Paul Espinosa, Republican delegate to the WV State Legislature from Jefferson County, has accepted a full-time position with Rockwool, the highly contentious Danish insulation company building an industrial plant in Jefferson County. While part-time state politicians have to have full-time employment somewhere, it is not good when politicians take jobs with a clear link to their power as legislators, but to take a job with an international industrial company actively opposed by thousands of the citizens he is supposed to represent is breathtaking in its contempt for the citizenry.

West Virginia has a long history of members of the legislature being "bought" by industry. Over and over for 150 years extractive industries from outside the state — timber, coal, oil and gas — have either flattered or paid off the legislators to allow industries to take what they want and then leave a damaged economy and environment behind. This is the core explanation for our position at the bottom of every national health and educational measurement. These are the conclusion of every piece of serious research on West Virginia for three generations.

Rockwool must have known that this was the reputation of the West Virginia legislature and known the low state-level environmental standards and acted accordingly. Did their assessment of West Virginia make this international company think that they could buy a legislator right under our noses? Apparently so.

What Espinosa was thinking, I can't imagine. Does he really think he can get away with this? How can he possibly claim to represent all Jefferson County? He has taken pro-Rockwool positions for the last year and dismisses all criticism, backed by evidence or not, of polluted air and a ruined water supply in our future. He is not our delegate to the legislature; he is the PR guy for Rockwool. His every action will rightly be attributed to his paycheck.

His statement of rationalization saying that he will recuse himself from bills regarding Rockwool or industry is laughable. What kind of legislation affecting Jefferson County is NOT related, ultimately, to air and water quality in the county?

He says "other states" have worked this out. What are these examples of "other states" where between a third and a half of the citizens have opposed, or have reservations about, a looming commercial or industrial enterprise and then had a legislator go to work for it, claiming impartiality? If this situation is allowed to stand and Espinosa remains both a delegate and the PR guy for Rockwool, it is a signal to every business and industry that Jefferson County can be as manipulated and debased as any of the coal counties.

The foxes are once again guarding the chicken coop, with predictable results.

## New affiliation in works with Choose Clean Water Coalition

Tanner Haid, WV Rivers Coalition  
Aileen Curfman, WV Sierra Club

We are excited to announce that at the invitation of the WV Rivers Coalition, WV Sierra Club has applied to enter a partnership with "Choose Clean Water Coalition." Sierra Club chapters and groups often enter such partnerships, but the process is more complicated than a simple handshake.

Because Sierra Club has many campaigns nationwide, all affiliations with other groups must be carefully considered. In this case, Choose Clean Water Coalition and WV Sierra Club share the mutual goal of cleaner water in the Chesapeake Bay. We are looking forward to working more closely with WV Rivers Coalition and other member organizations in the Choose Clean

Water Coalition. Watch for opportunities to become involved as our relationship grows.

WV Rivers Coalition's mission is to conserve and restore West Virginia's exceptional streams and rivers. The group advocates for safe water for all West Virginians and works to empower communities to join in protecting their rivers and defending their public lands.

The Eastern Panhandle, an eight-county area spanning from Jefferson County all the way down to Pendleton County, is West Virginia's portion of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. Every drop of water that lands in this area drains into our local streams, then the Potomac River, and ultimately, the Chesapeake Bay.

This partnership harnesses the collective power of more than 230 groups to advocate for clean rivers and streams in all communities in the Chesapeake Bay

region. By coordinating policy, messaging, action, and accountability, the Coalition is able to speak louder with one voice toward our collective goal — clean water.

As the state lead for the Choose Clean Water Coalition, WV Rivers works to engage new partners, such as the WV Chapter of Sierra Club, to work collectively to advocate for clean water for all West Virginians.

The Coalition protects and restores our natural resources through our policy priorities, which are adjusted each year to ensure our work is focused on the most pressing issues.

For more information about the Choose Clean Water Coalition, visit [www.choosecleanwater.org](http://www.choosecleanwater.org) and read their 5-year Strategic Plan. You might also want to sign up for WV Rivers Coalition's eNews and Water Policy Updates, <https://wvrivers.org>.



# Monongahela Group Meetings

## Mon Group Planning Meeting

Sun, Sept 8, 1:00pm

Blue Moose Cafe

248 Walnut Street, Morgantown

We need your ideas and your help! We will begin planning the 50th Anniversary Celebration of Earth Day as well as other events for the upcoming year.

If you would like to see us offer a more varied and exciting program to attract people like yourself, please join us and share your thoughts and ideas.

## National Solar Tour

Sat & Sun, Oct 5 & 6

Some of our members will be holding open houses to show off their solar and energy efficiency upgrades. Check the map for updates: <https://www.nationalsolartour.org>

## Chat with Legislators

Sat, Nov 16, 3:00pm

Downtown Panera Bread

207 Willey St., Morgantown

For updates, be sure to read your monthly email from the Mon Group. Additional activities may be added.

If you have questions, contact: John Bird, 412-805-9624, [johnbird@frontier.com](mailto:johnbird@frontier.com), or Laura Yokochi, 304-695-1523, [lyokochi@aol.com](mailto:lyokochi@aol.com).

## Call for Candidates!

Are you a strong advocate for a clean environment who is looking for a way to do more? We need you to join our team! The Mon Group Executive Committee (ExCom) will have four vacancies in 2020. If you would like to be more involved in your local Sierra Club, now is the time to step forward. Attend one of our meetings or call one of the current members to learn more. You won't regret it!

# Eastern Panhandle Group News and Meetings

## New Happenings

Thanks to our web administrator, Roz Eiler, EPSC now has a web site (<https://www.easternpanhandlewvsierraclub.org>) and a Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/easternpanhandlesierraclub>). Come visit us!

## Plan of action for 2020

On July 23, Justin Raines, past chair of the WV Sierra Club, facilitated a strategic planning session for EPSC, in Shepherdstown. The intent was to help EPSC set their goals and actions for the coming year. Using materials from <https://www.trainingforchange.org>, Justin introduced the concept of four roles that individuals can assume when working for social change. He summarized these roles as follows:

**Helper** is someone inclined to work directly with people and often provides some sort of support services or programming. The challenge is that the work or support doesn't always address the root causes of the problem.

**Organizer** is someone who tends to mobilize people to push for change. An organizer often works behind the scenes to support mobilization efforts, to build up people power. The challenge is that one can get tunnel vision. Also, when there is a charismatic leader, the role can develop into one where other voices are stifled.

**Advocate** is a person who represents people with a need, using their voice to represent those who may face injustices. They work within the system to get policies changed. The challenge is that while working within the system, one can get co-opted by the power holders and undermine a campaign's clarity, sometimes settling for less.

**Rebel** is someone who mobilizes to take direct action and say, "No" to injustices. Rebels put pressure on decision makers to create change. The challenge is that an action may go too far. Also, there might not be any support structures in place to facilitate change.

The next step forward is to use the planning structure provided by Justin to set goals for 2020. We will continue this planning and discussion at the August 27 picnic.



A group enjoys a postcard view of Harpers Ferry on the National Park's 75th anniversary, June 30.

## UPDATES

### Pipeline Protests

On May 30, in Hancock, MD, Sierrans from the Eastern Panhandle joined our Maryland neighbors to demonstrate against the pipeline carrying fracked gas under the Western Maryland Trail, the C&O Canal, and the Potomac River, after TransCanada/Columbia Gas sued the State of Maryland, which had blocked this part of the pipeline project. TransCanada/Columbia Gas planned to connect their Pennsylvania pipelines to the Mountaineer Pipeline in Morgan County by transporting fracked gas under the two trails and the Potomac River. Maryland's Board of Public Works (BPW) voted unanimously against their access to this public land.

Mountaineer Gas' construction of their pipeline is about finished in Morgan, Berkeley, and Jefferson counties. Its new terminus is at the Rockwool Plant in Jefferson County. When Mountaineer Gas first informed residents of the Eastern Panhandle pipeline expansion, it stated it was to improve supplying gas to its current customers. Now it seems that bringing fracked gas to Rockwool might have been a goal all along.

During April and May, members of the Eastern Panhandle Protectors, led by Sierran Tracy Cannon, camped in two areas in Jefferson County near pipeline construction. During their time at Camp Granny Smith, they documented and posted the destruction of beautiful Jefferson County.

### Rockwool Plant Opposition

Residents of Jefferson County and the Eastern Panhandle, including many Sierrans, continue to work to prevent the construction of the Rockwool Plant. This includes demonstrating at the Rockwool site and at the various county commissions and authorities, informing the public through the media, and filing suits in court focusing on the unfair tax benefits that have been bestowed on Rockwool and Ranson's failure to follow laws preceding its annexation of Jefferson County land and rezoning it to allow heavy industry. Opposition continues, with many WV Sierrans working with groups and individuals who want to protect Jefferson County's environment and people.

On June 19, a busload of citizens from Jefferson County joined state environmental groups at the WV State Capitol to lobby legislators concerning their struggle to keep Rockwool from being built (see related story on p. 5). One reason for the trip was to counter Rockwool's and Ranson's contention that most citizens of Jefferson County have accepted the Rockwool plant.

## Special Events

### Film/Discussion: Paris to Pittsburgh

Sat, Aug 24

Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church  
100 W Washington St., Shepherdstown

### EPSC Summer Picnic

Tue, Aug 27, 6:30-8:30pm

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

## Upcoming Program & Conservation Meetings

Program meetings are held in alternate months, from 6:30-8:30pm, at St. John's Lutheran Church, 101 W Martin St., Martinsburg. Conservation meetings are held from 6:30-8:30pm the other alternate months, at the homes of different members.

### Tue, Sept 24

#### Getting the most from state parks

**Valerie Chaney**, Park Activities Coordinator and Naturalist for 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.

### Tue, Oct 22 — Conservation Mtng

**Roz Eiler's** home, 488 Doe Run Road, Inwood WV

### Tue, Nov 19

#### Dangers of the Appalachian Storage Hub

**Alex Cole**, a community organizer for the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition (OVEC), will speak on the battle against, and the dangers of, the Appalachian Storage Hub. This proposed facility would use gas from West Virginia fracking facilities to produce plastics and chemicals. It would be a major contributor to toxic pollution, climate warming, and single-use plastics. Since 1987, OVEC has worked for an improved West Virginia environment through education, grassroots organizing, litigation, and coalition building. The public is welcome to this program, free of charge. Light refreshments will be served.

## Outings

See the Outings List on the next page for upcoming outings. To keep up with changes or additions, check the calendar on the Chapter's website, or go to <https://www.meetup.com/Sierra-Club-Eastern-Panhandle/events>.

All of us working together can make a difference. Come join us!



# FALL OUTINGS

## Perspectives on Outings

— Laura Miller, Outings Chair

## Make the Most of the Outdoors

For many people, hiking is an enjoyable activity. There are numerous reasons why people hike, from a leisurely stroll along a trail to relax and enjoy the outdoors, to the other extreme of a physically challenging hike up a mountain in difficult terrain, whether to reach a summit with an outstanding view or simply for the exhilaration that it produces. Others also enjoy learning along the way — sometimes in historical sites, sometimes in areas that have unique or great diversity of flora and fauna, or with particularly interesting geology.

Our Chapter Volunteer Outings Leaders have strived to offer a great variety of outings over the years, with different topics and levels of difficulty. In recent times, we have led hikes to historical sites, nature preserves, old-growth forests, and simply beautiful areas in our mountains and beyond that also deserve being protected. With several of these hikes, leaders have provided diverse educational information in support of the Club's and Outings Program conservation mission. As the Club's founder and conservationist, John Muir wrote, "if people in general could be got into the woods, even for once, to hear the trees speak for themselves, all difficulties in the way of forest preservation would vanish."

So, come and join us! Let's make the most of enjoying the outdoors by connecting with nature, discovering and learning about the outdoors, and protecting our natural resources for ourselves and future generations. As our late Outings Chair Ann Devine-King once wrote, "...let's all plan for what we can do IN the outdoors, as well as what we can do FOR the outdoors."

If you enjoy sharing your outdoor experiences and knowledge with others and would like to become a certified Outings Leader volunteer, contact Laura Miller, [aepicysta@gmail.com](mailto:aepicysta@gmail.com), for details.

For additional details about any outing, or to RSVP your intent to participate, please contact the designated leader. To view Sierra Club's Liability Policy for Outings, go to [sierraclub.org/west-virginia](http://sierraclub.org/west-virginia) under Events.

### 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 home to the Presidential retreat, Camp David. The 8-mile loop is a combination of trails on the east side of the park. We will see park highlights, such as 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 child (accompanied by adult) of adequate fitness for a multi-hour, strenuous hike. The hike is free.

**Bring:** Packed lunch, plenty of water, and a 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 allowed on this hike.

**Cancellation policy:** Hike will be cancelled 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. The hike is free but see Additional Info below about Park admission and parking.

**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 metered, on-street parking. You may also park at the main HFNHP Visitor Center off US340 and ride the shuttle into Lower Town, but arrive there by 9:15 to get to the station in time. Harpers Ferry NHP admission is \$15/car or \$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.

### Sun, Oct 20

#### Day Hike: Appalachian Trail, MD Penn Mar Park to Wolfsville Road

**Distance/Difficulty:** 10 miles/DIFFICULT

**Duration:** 5.5 hours

**Description:** After being cancelled last winter due to snow, our series of hikes along Maryland's AT ends with this interesting and varied northern stretch, including the dazzling views from Penn Mar Park at the Mason Dixon Line and at High Rock, a favorite launch site for hang gliders. The hike will include the rockiest and most strenuous section of the AT in Maryland as well as some easier sections. The hike will begin at Penn Mar Park and involve a shuttle back to the park at the end, so allow extra time and notify the trip leader if you wish to attend.\* The hike is open to any adult or child (accompanied by adult) of adequate fitness for a strenuous hike.

**Bring:** Packed lunch, plenty of water, and a snack. Wear clothing and footwear appropriate for potentially changing weather. The hike is free, though contributions are welcome.

**Meet:** 9:30 am, Penn Mar Park, 14600 Pen Mar High Rock Rd., Highfield/Cascade, MD. From I-70 in MD, exit 35 north 19.6 miles on MD66. Turn right on MD491 for 14 miles to Pen Mar High Rock Rd. Park near and meet at the overlook pavilion in the park.

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

**Nearest Towns:** Waynesboro, PA; Highfield-Cascade, MD

**Additional info:** Be advised that Sierra Club assumes no responsibility for shuttle/carpooling. Carpooling is at the sole risk of the participants.

**Cancellation policy:** We will cancel if there is predicted heavy precipitation.

### Sat, Nov 2 – SierraFest 2019

#### Day Hike: Pipestem Resort SP, River Trail to Farley Loop

**Distance/Difficulty:** 7.5 miles/ MODERATELY STRENUOUS

**Duration:** about 3.5 hours

**Description:** This hike is part of Sierra Fest, held throughout the weekend, but will be open to anyone up to a challenging hike on varied terrain. Due to uncertain conditions and possible seasonal closure of the tram, this hike may be significantly altered. Keep apprised of updates on the Chapter website or at [Meetup.com](https://www.meetup.com).

Starting at McKeever Lodge, we will descend under the Aerial Tramway to the Bluestone River, approximately 3.0 miles downhill from McKeever Lodge. After crossing the river (see Note), we will hike the rugged Farley Loop Trail, which will take us via switchbacks to the Raven Rock overlook and tremendous views of the gorge. Returning to the river, we will ride the Tramway to the upper tram station and hike back to the lodge via the River Trail.

**Note:** The first crossing of the river could be by wading, depending on the depth and water temperature at the time. Participants may want to have extra footwear for this crossing. If such a crossing is too chilly or deep, we will alter our plans to include a round-trip tramway ride.

**Bring:** Water and a snack. Hiking poles may be helpful. Extra footwear (water sandals or such) recommended for river crossing.

**Meet:** 1:00 pm at McKeever Lodge, 3405 Pipestem Dr, Pipestem Resort Park, Pipestem, WV. Meet in back of the lodge at the trailhead for the River Trail.

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

**Nearest Town:** Princeton, WV

**Additional info:** There is a \$7 charge for the round-trip tram ride, though the fee is often waived for those staying overnight in the park.

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

### Sat, Nov 2 – SierraFest 2019

#### Day Hike: Pipestem Resort SP, Lake Shore Trail

**Distance/Difficulty:** 3.5 miles/MODERATE

**Duration:** about 2 hours

**Description:** This hike is part of the Outings activities to be held during SierraFest, but you don't have to be registered for SierraFest to attend the hike. The hike is opened to adults and children (accompanied by an adult) of adequate fitness. We will hike a short distance on a paved road at the beginning to meet the trail. The trail encircles and follows the lake shore most of the time, with good vistas of the lake; it is mostly wide and relatively level with a few moderate ascents and a few sections of uneven terrain.

**Bring:** Water and snack. Footwear with some good tread recommended. Dress for the weather.

**Meet:** 1:00 pm at Arboretum area, right across from McKeever Lodge parking lot.

**Leader:** Laura Miller, [aepicysta@gmail.com](mailto:aepicysta@gmail.com), 304-776-4677 (before Nov 1). Alternate number (for Nov 1-2), 304-932-6377

**Nearest Town:** Pipestem, WV

**Additional info:** Well behaved pets on a leash are allowed on this hike.

**Cancellation policy:** Steady or heavy rain will cancel the hike.

### Sun, Dec 15

#### Day Hike: Harpers Ferry NHP, Camp Hill/Virginus Island

**Distance/Difficulty:** 2.5 miles/MODERATE

**Duration:** 2 hours

**Description:** This hike will give us a chance to enjoy the park and the town on the last day of Olde Tyme Christmas. We will meet at the Park Visitor Center off US340 and ride the Park shuttle to the lower town. From there we will walk the stone steps to Jefferson Rock and continue on the Cliff Trail to Virginus Island for an easy return to the shuttle station. Winter always offers expansive and rocky views in Harpers Ferry as well as occasional chances to see some wildlife. We'll also view some of the history along the way, including the remains of mills that once bustled along the Shenandoah River. Changes in the weather have the potential to alter or shorten our plans. Gathering for an early supper at one of the local restaurants will be an option after the hike. This hike is free and open to anyone able to handle uneven footing on varied terrain, but Park admission is required.

**Meet:** 1:00 pm in front of Visitor Center, Harpers Ferry NHP, 171 Shoreline Drive, Harpers Ferry (just off US340, opposite the towns of Harpers Ferry and Bolivar).

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

**Nearest Town:** Harpers Ferry, WV

**Additional info:** Park admission for 2019 is \$15/ car or \$7.50/pedestrian or bicyclist, or free with Park Pass.



Six Sierrans took advantage of a beautiful Memorial Day weekend for a double hike: 4.5 miles on the Huckleberry Trail from Spruce Knob and (pictured here) 3 miles to the Seneca Rocks overlook.





**SIERRA  
CLUB**

## Sierra Club

West Virginia Chapter  
PO Box 4142  
Morgantown, WV 26504  
[sierraclub.org/west-virginia](http://sierraclub.org/west-virginia)



Change Service Requested

Fall 2019

## West Virginia Sierra Club Chapter Directory

**Chapter Executive Committee** (term ends at first ExCom meeting of indicated year)

**Co-Chair, Natalie Thiele ('20)**, 630-926-8988, [natalie.a.a.thiele@gmail.com](mailto:natalie.a.a.thiele@gmail.com)

**Co-Chair, Aileen Curfman ('21)**, 304-433-5321, [acurfman@gmail.com](mailto:acurfman@gmail.com)

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**Eric Engle ('20)**, 304-488-4384, [ericengle85@yahoo.com](mailto:ericengle85@yahoo.com)

**Laura Miller ('20)**, 304-776-4677, [aepicysta@gmail.com](mailto:aepicysta@gmail.com)

**Monongahela Group ExCom** (term ends at first ExCom meeting of indicated year)

**Chair, John Bird ('20)**, 304-864-8631, [johnbird@frontier.com](mailto:johnbird@frontier.com)

**Chapter Delegate, Laura Yokochi ('20)**, 304-695-1523, [lyokochi@aol.com](mailto:lyokochi@aol.com)

**Mark Tauger ('20)**, 304-599-4268, [mbtauger@gmail.com](mailto:mbtauger@gmail.com)

**David Sturm ('21)**, 304-363-7160, [davidsturm@ymail.com](mailto:davidsturm@ymail.com)

**Vacant ('21)**

**Eastern Panhandle Group ExCom** (Interim ExCom, elections to be held in summer)

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**Deputy Chair, Gail Kohlhorst**, 304-885-0733, [kohlhorst@comcast.net](mailto:kohlhorst@comcast.net)

**Treasurer, Aileen Curfman**, 304-433-5321, [acurfman@gmail.com](mailto:acurfman@gmail.com)

**Secretary, Maggie Louden**, [maglouden@gmail.com](mailto:maglouden@gmail.com)

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

### Other Chapter Leaders

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**Energy Efficiency** — Laura Yokochi, 304-695-1523, [lyokochi@aol.com](mailto:lyokochi@aol.com)

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**Political** — Jim Kotcon, 304-594-3322, [jkotcon@gmail.com](mailto:jkotcon@gmail.com)

**Secretary** — Mel Waggy, [melwaggy@gmail.com](mailto:melwaggy@gmail.com)

**SCC, WVU** — Abby Minihan, 304-208-3063, [arm0051@mix.wvu.edu](mailto:arm0051@mix.wvu.edu)

**Treasurer** — Sally Wilts, 304-379-7567, [sallywilts@yahoo.com](mailto:sallywilts@yahoo.com)

**Webmaster** — Autumn Long, 304-841-3539, [autumlong11@gmail.com](mailto:autumlong11@gmail.com)

**Wilderness Coalition** — Karen Yarnell, 304-657-0812, [karen.yarnell@fairmontstate.edu](mailto:karen.yarnell@fairmontstate.edu)

### Regional Sierra Club Staff

**Chapter Organizing Rep** — (in transition)

## Inside this Issue

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• Does Del. Paul Espinosa have conflict of interest?  
• New affiliation in works with Choose Clean Water Coalition
- 6 • GROUP NEWS – Monongahela and Eastern Panhandle Groups
- 7 • *Perspectives on Outings* – Make the Most of the Outdoors  
• FALL OUTINGS

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### To Contact STATE LEGISLATORS

[WVlegislature.gov](http://WVlegislature.gov) has contact information for all state legislators. Messages for legislators can be left at: 1-877-565-3447 or 304-347-4836

Mail address:  
Member, WV Senate or  
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