



Mountain State Sierran

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SUMMER 2020

Sierra Club-Endorsed Candidates in the 2020 WV Primary

The Sierra Club is one of the few environmental groups that endorses candidates in public elections. And we take it seriously!

Endorsements involve analyzing voting records and past positions, evaluating candidate surveys, and incorporating input from members. An endorsement requires a two-thirds vote of the Political Committee and the Chapter ExComm, and federal

candidates must also get approval from the National Political Team. While there are many more good candidates, the Political Committee chose to limit the number of endorsements for the 2020 WV Primary Election to a few key races where our support can make a difference.

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, the primary has been postponed until June 9. The WV Chapter encourages every member to request an absentee ballot, and vote. To do more, please tell your neighbors, friends, family and co-workers about these endorsements, and consider volunteering for endorsed candidates. There are lots of ways to help remotely, and candidates especially need that help this year.

FEDERAL RACES

US SENATE, PAULA JEAN SWEARENGIN (D)

This is Swearengin's second run for the US Senate. From a coal mining family, she has a long history of activism including efforts to diversify the economy, promote industrial hemp and medical marijuana, support education, oppose mountaintop removal, and work for clean water for all. Incumbent Shelley Moore Capito (R) has a long history of backing corporate polluters and opposing environmental protection. | CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

YOUR VOTES AND SUPPORT ARE NEEDED!

BY JIM KOTCON



US SENATE, PAULA JEAN SWEARENGIN (D)



US HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, SECOND DISTRICT, CATHY KUNKEL (D)



WV GOVERNOR, STEPHEN SMITH (D)

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SIERRACLUB.ORG/WEST-VIRGINIA

From the Editor: Thoughts on Earth Day

BY CHRIS CRAIG

April 22 was the 50th anniversary of Earth Day, and it made me think back to my experience on that first celebration in 1970. Far removed from the big-city rallies or college campus theatrics (think burying a Ford Maverick or the trial “People vs. the Internal Combustion Engine”), my youth group in Cottonwood Falls, Kansas, nevertheless marked the day with a litter cleanup and a walk around our little town carrying homemade signs and colorful flags.

How were we to know that we were part of a movement that would bring about the Clean Water Act, the Endangered Species Act, the National Environmental Protection Act, and other legislation that would clean up our nation, protect our wilderness, and improve Americans’ health? We could only feel we were part of a celebration of our

planet. Somehow even to us teens in that tallgrass prairie country the Earth seemed smaller and more fragile than it might have to our parents as they grew up. For me personally Earth Day was the beginning of greater environmental awareness and civic engagement that has continued to this day.

Ironically, this year the holiday that promotes joint action and celebration passed with most people isolated in their homes, barricading themselves against a frightening and invisible threat. The President promised he would “begin to reopen our national parks and public lands for the American people to enjoy,” even as he continued dismantling the legislation the first Earth Day had brought about.

Today is a time of disease, economic distress, and frightening signs of climate change. Still, we must remember, with ever greater

urgency, the lessons of Earth Day 1970.

We must remain engaged and vigilant. How so? This publication provides a few ideas. It reminds us we can vote for responsible candidates, work and write letters for renewable energy, be mindful in our travel, and volunteer in community gardens or use native plants in our yards.



We wish you safety and good health in these challenging times. Thank you for your membership, your volunteerism, and your financial support. Together let us work for a hopeful and bright Earth Day 51!

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From the Chair: Action in a Time of Crisis

BY ERIC ENGLE

We're living through incredibly frightening times. As I write this, over 60,000 of our fellow Americans have been lost to this terrible global pandemic, and over 30 million of us are unemployed. Both numbers are growing. We're grateful for our essential workers, but we know that words of gratitude are not enough. These employees need pay that reflects the risks they're taking; they need access to affordable healthcare and better benefits; they need personal protective equipment and employers who take social distancing requirements and sanitization seriously. And what we all need is a government that treats not only COVID-19 but the climate crisis as the enormous, urgent threats that they are.

Like the rest of the economy, the fossil fuels industry has taken an enormous hit from COVID-19. While coal, oil and gas industry workers need the same urgent assistance as other laborers and families hurt by this crisis, now is a time to focus on transitioning away from these energy sources and related product creation (i.e. plastics and petrochemicals) and to focus on an economy structured

around renewable energies, sustainable development and agriculture, and energy efficiency. The International Energy Agency (IEA) puts it this way:

“Renewable electricity will be the only source resilient to the biggest global energy shock in 70 years triggered by the coronavirus pandemic . . . The most severe plunge in energy demand since the second world war will trigger multi-decade lows for the world’s consumption of oil, gas and coal, while renewable energy will continue to grow.”

The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) recently released a report “warning that 1.7 million unidentified viruses known to infect people are estimated to exist in mammals and water birds. Any one of these may be more disruptive and lethal than COVID-19.” Humankind must live more sustainably! This is not about fascist population control measures. It is not about individuals and

households changing their habits while policymakers and the wealthy change nothing. This is about structural, systemic, substantive change that we all must make together.



The West Virginia Chapter of Sierra Club will continue to work for social justice. Taking up the causes of climate, the environment, ecology and wildlife is social justice! All life is precious, and we will never stop fighting to bring about a world where life is valued more than profit margins, shareholder dividends and market performance. Amidst this horrid disease and these tragic losses there is a glimmer of hope for a future where greed and extravagance are replaced by a desire for collective well-being and a new appreciation for the word “enough.”

Please do all you can to keep yourself and others safe and healthy.

2020 Endorsements | CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

US HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, FIRST DISTRICT

While no candidate earned a full endorsement, we oppose re-election of incumbent David McKinley (R) who has consistently ignored the needs of the District in order to help coal and corporations. Among Democrats, Natalie Cline responded to our survey with very favorable environmental policies.

US HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, SECOND DISTRICT, CATHY KUNKEL (D)

Kunkel is an energy analyst and has been a long-time supporter of sound energy and environmental policy. She has promoted clean water policy and has explicitly tackled climate change as part of her campaign. This is her first run for Congress, and she will have a tough fight against the better-funded incumbent, Alex Mooney (R). However, Mooney is not well liked in the District, and

has a Lifetime LCV Score of only 2%, so this is an important race.

US HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, THIRD DISTRICT

This will be a tough District, but the Chapter opposes re-election of incumbent Carol Miller (R) who has one of the worst environmental records in the House. (See Scorecard)

STATE RACES

WV GOVERNOR, STEPHEN SMITH (D)

Smith has emphasized helping people and has organized an incredibly powerful grassroots campaign under the WV Can't Wait banner. He has support from both Democrats and Republicans, but faces a tough campaign against Democrat establishment candidates. This may be the most important race in WV. No Republicans returned our survey nor were any endorsed.

WV HOUSE OF DELEGATES

DISTRICT / COUNTY	CANDIDATE(S)
10TH / WOOD	TRISH PRITCHARD
16TH / CABELL	DAKOTA NELSON and SEAN HORNBUCKLE
35TH / KANAWHA	KATHY FERGUSON and KAYLA YOUNG
49TH / TAYLOR	MIKE MANYPENNY
51ST / MONONGALIA	BARBARA FLEISCHAUER, EVAN HANSEN, and DANIELLE WALKER
53RD / TUCKER & PRESTON	CORY CHASE
65TH / JEFFERSON	SAMMI BROWN
67TH / JEFFERSON	JOHN DOYLE

Look for more endorsements for the November General Election. To get more information or to learn how to get involved, contact Jim Kotcon, jkotcon@gmail.com, 304-594-3322 (home).

Heroes and Zeroes for Clean Air & Clean Water

The West Virginia Chapter of Sierra Club has released its final Voter Scorecard for the 2019-2020 session of the WV Legislature and the WV Congressional delegation. The Legislative Scorecard includes votes on key environmental bills by all incumbent delegates and senators for the 2019 and 2020 legislative sessions. Bills were chosen based on roll call votes where a clear pro-environment position was identified, and where at least 5% of the chamber voted in opposition. (Votes on which 100% agree do not help distinguish pro-environment attitudes.)

During 2019 and 2020, there were 25 recorded votes that met these criteria in the WV House of Delegates, and 9 votes in the State Senate. The Scorecard consists of a separate spreadsheet for each chamber, with a third sheet arranged by district. To find your legislators, find the districts with your County. A brief description of the vote and the roll call number are listed at the bottom of each page. In addition, those votes are used to calculate a pro-environment percentage score, with 100% being perfect.

The complete Scorecard is available at: www.sierraclub.org/west-virginia/political. For scores for West Virginia's Congressional leaders in 2019, visit the League of Conservation Voters at: <https://scorecard.lcv.org/>.

Among our heroes, 15 West Virginia state legislators voted to protect the environment at least 70% of the time. We need to thank these leaders every time we drink clean water, breathe clean air, or pay lower electricity prices due to a phase-out of dirty energy and an increase in the availability of solar power.

Another 15 voted against environmental protection every single time over two years, earning a "Zero" score. While we may not agree on issues every time, it is disappointing to see so many zeroes.

Facts Matter. We need to look at the voting records of our political leaders to really determine who has been working to weaken air and water standards and hamstringing enforcement efforts. Unfortunately, legislators are good at hiding their real attitudes by keeping contentious votes out of the public eye. That is why it is so important to evaluate their actual voting records.

Clean Fifteen

Heroes who work to protect our Environment, Voting records 70% or higher

- State Senator Stephen Baldwin
- State Senator Robert Beach
- State Senator William Ihlenfeld
- State Senator Glenn Jeffries
- State Senator Richard Lindsay
- State Senator Mike Romano
- Delegate Mick Bates
- Delegate Sammi Brown
- Delegate John Doyle
- Delegate Barbara Fleischauer
- Delegate Evan Hansen
- Delegate Mike Pushkin
- Delegate Rodney Pyles
- Delegate Larry Rowe
- Delegate Danielle Walker
- Delegate John Williams

Dirty Fifteen

Legislators with Zeroes, Voting Against the Environment Every Time

- State Senator Dona Boley
- State Senator Greg Boso (2019)*
- State Senator John Pitsenbarger (2020)*
- State Senator Tom Takubo
- Delegate Tom Bibby
- Delegate Scott Cadle
- Delegate Mark Dean
- Delegate Tom Fast
- Delegate Jason Harshberger (2019)*
- Delegate Ray Hollen
- Delegate Kayla Kessinger
- Delegate Sharon Malcolm (2019)*
- Delegate Tony Paynter
- Delegate Chris Toney
- Delegate S. Marshall Wilson

* Partial Term, served only in the year indicated

Federal Legislators' League of Conservation Voters Scores

U.S. Senator Shelly Moore Capito

LCV Score for 2019 = 29%. Voted Against the environment on 10 of 14 recorded votes. Lifetime score = 17%

U.S. Senator Joe Manchin

LCV Score for 2019 = 86%. Lifetime score = 49%.

First District – Rep. David McKinley

LCV Score for 2019 = 7%. Voted Against the environment on 27 of 29 recorded votes, tied for worst record of the WV Delegation. Lifetime score = 6%.

Second District – Rep. Alex Mooney

LCV Score for 2019 = 10%. Voted Against the environment on 26 of 29 recorded votes. Lifetime score = 2%.

Third District – Rep. Carol Miller

LCV Score for 2019 = 7%. Voted Against the environment on 27 of 29 recorded votes, tied for worst record of the WV Delegation. Lifetime score = 7%.

News from Longview Important for WV's Environmental Future

BY BETSY JAEGER LAWSON

Longview I, a coal-fired power plant commissioned in 2011 as a wholesale electricity producer, lies on the Monongahela River at Madsville, near the older and still operating Fort Martin coal-fired power plant. More recently, a gas-fired power plant, Longview II, was proposed to be built nearby. It would feed electricity to the wholesale producer PJM, a regional transmission organization that markets and manages electricity in 14 states. Stopping Longview II's construction has been a goal of the Monongahela Group of Sierra Club since it was first proposed. Two recent newsworthy events occurred amid the pandemic coverage.

Siting Certificate Goes Forward: On April 3, the Public Service Commission (PSC) granted a siting certificate to Longview II for the construction and operation of a 1200 megawatt natural gas-fired electric combined cycle gas turbine facility, related transmission line and a 70 megawatt direct current utility



This photo was taken in 2009 when Longview I was under construction. Note its proximity to the older Ft. Martin power plant. PHOTO BY BETSY LAWSON.

scale solar facility. All would be located in WV except for part of the solar facility, which would be in Pennsylvania.

At an evidentiary hearing in Charleston on January 30, James F. Wilson, a Sierra Club energy expert, testified that the western PJM region, where the project would be located, is a “generation-rich area with a strong

transmission network that rarely experiences significant transmission constraints; therefore, power plants compete with one another in this area through PJM's wholesale energy and capacity markets to serve loads.”

However, the Commission, ignoring the testimony, “found that there is a need in the PJM region for the capacity and energy that the

project will provide. Additionally, it is in the public interest to develop competitively efficient generation capacity utilizing diverse sources of fuel to generate electricity including alternative sources.”

As of late April, the Monongalia County Commission had not issued a PILOT agreement (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) to

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New Sierra Club Rep Works on Energy & Environmental Justice

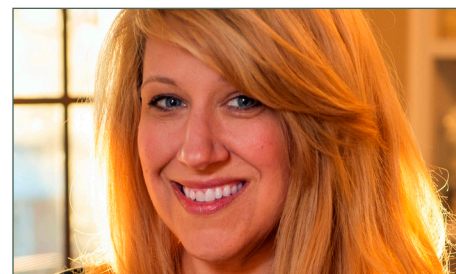
Karan Ireland is the new Sierra Club Senior Campaign Representative for Central Appalachia. In this capacity, she will be working on the Beyond Coal and Beyond Dirty Fuels campaigns, as well as working to further a plan for economic diversification and a just transition to a sustainable future.

Karan has been working as an environmental advocate since 2014, when she and 300,000 of her neighbors lost access to their tap water for several weeks. She and many others were sickened by the water, which had been contaminated by the coal-cleaning chemical, crude-MCHM. The chemical was stored and sold by Freedom Industries on the banks of the Elk River, a half mile from the area's sole drinking water intake.

Her anger at this event, and her late realization that fellow West Virginians in the

coalfields had struggled to gain access to clean water for decades, led her to this work. She became one of the first citizen leaders organizing in response to the chemical leak and went on to advocate for sound environmental and energy policy as the Program Director for West Virginia Solar United Neighbors (SUN), where she helped expand access to distributed solar energy across the state. She stayed with SUN to become the lead representative of the West Virginians for Energy Freedom campaign to oppose the transfer of the Pleasants Power Station into WV's regulated utility market. For the past three years she has served as the government affairs director (lobbyist) for the West Virginia Environmental Council.

In 2015, hoping to push municipal governments to move toward a sustainable future,



Karan Ireland joins Sierra Club's team after working as lead lobbyist for the West Virginia Environmental Council.

Karan ran for office and was elected as an at-large City Councilor in Charleston, where she chaired the Environment and Recycling committee.

Karan lives in Charleston with her husband, photographer Roger May, one of their four children (the other three having flown the coop) and two cats. She has a contract with Ohio University Press for a book about the Elk River chemical leak and intends to fulfill it, if only because she has already spent the \$500 advance!

WV 2020 Legislative Season: The good, the bad, and the ugly...

BY KARAN IRELAND

Before I was hired by the Sierra Club, I served the Club in another capacity: as the lead lobbyist for the West Virginia Environmental Council. Following is a sample of bills we worked on during the 2020 WV Legislative session. For a more complete list of our wins and losses, go to wvecouncil.org/the-good-the-bad-and-the-ugly.

Good News:



SCR46 - Requesting Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and Department of Health and Human Resources propose public source-water supply study plan.

This Senate Concurrent Resolution authorizes these two agencies to conduct a sampling and study of untreated water at 259 water treatment plants around the state to determine where the forever chemicals PFAS might be located.

SB316 - Relating to oil and gas conservation commission membership.

This bill would have taken important areas of expertise out of the requirements for commission membership. It died, and we're glad it did.

SB583 - Creating program to further development of renewable energy resources.

This bill passed and allows the state's two electric utilities (First Energy in the form of Mon Power/Potomac Edison, and AEP in the form of Appalachian Power) to develop 200 megawatts each of solar generation.

SB589 - Creating Critical Needs/Failing Systems Sub Account.

Senator Jeffries' bill to create a fund to address the most serious water/sewer projects across the state passed and will help communities strengthen their infrastructure.

HB4079 - Altering the definition of an aboveground storage tank.

This terrible bill, introduced on the anniversary of the Freedom Industries' chemical leak, exactly six years to the day, would have deregulated aboveground oil and gas storage tanks close to drinking water sources. Thanks to an outpouring of opposition from environmentalists and others, this bill never made it to the committee agenda, in spite of the support of House leadership.

HB4690 - Relating to solid waste facilities.

The bill would have allowed the former Fola mine site in Clay County to begin accepting solid waste via rail from the Northeastern United States. It died a timely death after calls and emails opposing it flooded the Capitol.



Bad News (Much of it Ugly):

SB 793 - Relating to B&O taxes imposed on certain coal-fired electric generating units.

This bill is another tax break for coal-fired power plants similar to the one given to the Pleasants Power Station last year, but this time it includes nearly all coal-fired plants in the state. Its passage continues a long WV tradition of taking money from communities and putting it in industry's pockets.

SB 611 - Permitting third-party ownership of renewable and alternative energy generating facilities.

This power purchase agreement (PPA) bill would have made solar energy more accessible to residents, businesses, and tax-exempt organizations. Though it failed, our efforts to promote renewable energy will continue!

SB 802 - Relating to public utilities generally (PPAs for large gas users).

Despite the push against PPAs by utilities and the Public Service Commission, this bill, which allows large gas users to bypass utilities and buy directly from producers, passed both houses and became law. We say these deals are indeed power purchase agreements, but ones that benefit the oil/gas industry and downstream manufacturing, not consumers!

HB 4542/SB679 - Creating Clean Drinking Water Act of 2020.

This bill, developed by our champions Delegate Hansen (D-51) and Senator Ihlenfeld (D-1), would have regulated PFAS chemicals by setting safe limits of them in our water supplies, setting a statewide maximum contaminant level of them, requiring polluters to report and monitor their use, and creating an interagency WV PFAS Response Team. Unfortunately, there was resistance to the bill, and it died. Thankfully, SCR 46 will allow West Virginia to take some proactive steps in addressing the problem of PFAS.

HB 4574 - Establishing Just Transition support for coal and timber related jobs.

This bill was supported by the Secretary of Commerce and would have allowed an advisory panel to identify and manage funds available to stimulate the economies in communities hit by the decline in coal jobs. It passed the House easily but was stopped in the Senate, where it was sent to the Workforce Development committee that rarely met. We, and our allies, were unsuccessful in keeping it from dying there.

HB 4615 - West Virginia Critical Infrastructure Protection Act.

This is essentially an anti-protest bill pretending to protect national security interests by stiffening penalties for trespassing on or damaging "critical infrastructure." It actually is a way to restrict pipeline protestors. Fortunately, we were able to wrangle bipartisan support in the Senate to make the bill more reasonable.

What One Person Can Do: Be a Mindful Guest!

BY AILEEN CURFMAN



Ed. Note - This essay on responsible travel was inspired by the author's recent camping trip to Florida with her husband as news of the Coronavirus pandemic was just breaking.

"Ocala National Forest is the best!" Matt declared. "Even at the height of tourist season this place isn't crowded. The village has groceries and a laundromat. The ponds, the prairies, the pine woods—it's so serene. This snowbird is thinking about roosting here."

"We might have to," replied Cheryl, stepping out of their truck with a half-filled grocery bag. "You remember that virus that was going around in China when we left home? First there were a few cases in New York. Now it's spreading everywhere. Everything is closing. The store is crammed with people buying whatever they can. I'd head home tomorrow, but I'm thinking this is the safest place we could be."

After Cheryl put the groceries in the camper, she lounged in the hammock while Matt hiked through nearby pine woods. Then the camp host stopped by. "I've got bad news," she warned. "All National Forest campgrounds have been ordered to close. Everyone has to leave tomorrow."

They hit the road at dawn. I-95 was packed with Northerners returning home. Travelers were elbow-to-elbow in rest area bathrooms. After a night at an overpriced, rundown RV park, they stopped at a gas station just off the highway. Matt was pumping gas when he saw a car careening down the exit ramp. It crashed into a pickup, crumpling both

vehicles and sending them helter-skelter. Matt noticed that the car had a Key West bumper sticker and a Maine license plate, and he wondered if the driver was even more sleep deprived than he was.

"This county has just one ambulance," said the station attendant. "I wonder who goes to the hospital first?"

Cheryl thought, "What if one of the accident victims brings COVID-19 to the local hospital?"

We treasure visits to remote areas. But it's easy to forget that the folks who live in vacation spots aren't on vacation. In good times, their hometowns are crowded with tourists, bringing desperately needed dollars, but increasing the need for public services that may be inadequately funded. In times of emergency, small-town resources are strained just looking after the needs of the residents. Visitors add to the burden, whether they're buying the last box of Kleenex at the Dollar General, or occupying the only ambulance in the county.

When we travel we owe it to our hosts to be informed about our destination. In normal times, that means following local ordinances, camping only where allowed, and being aware that some things will be different—in fact, that's why we travel.

If we avoid the news during vacations we become part of the problem when emergencies arise. Just like residents, travelers must keep abreast of events that endanger the region. Sometimes that means staying away or going home early. It always means being aware of our actions and how they affect the communities we love to visit.

Postscript: "Matt" and "Cheryl" are relieved to be back home in West Virginia, safe and healthy.



Top photo: During the Coronavirus shutdown, folks from the Washington region looking for a place to hike or explore faced this message when arriving in Harpers Ferry. PHOTO BY CHRIS CRAIG.

Longview | CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

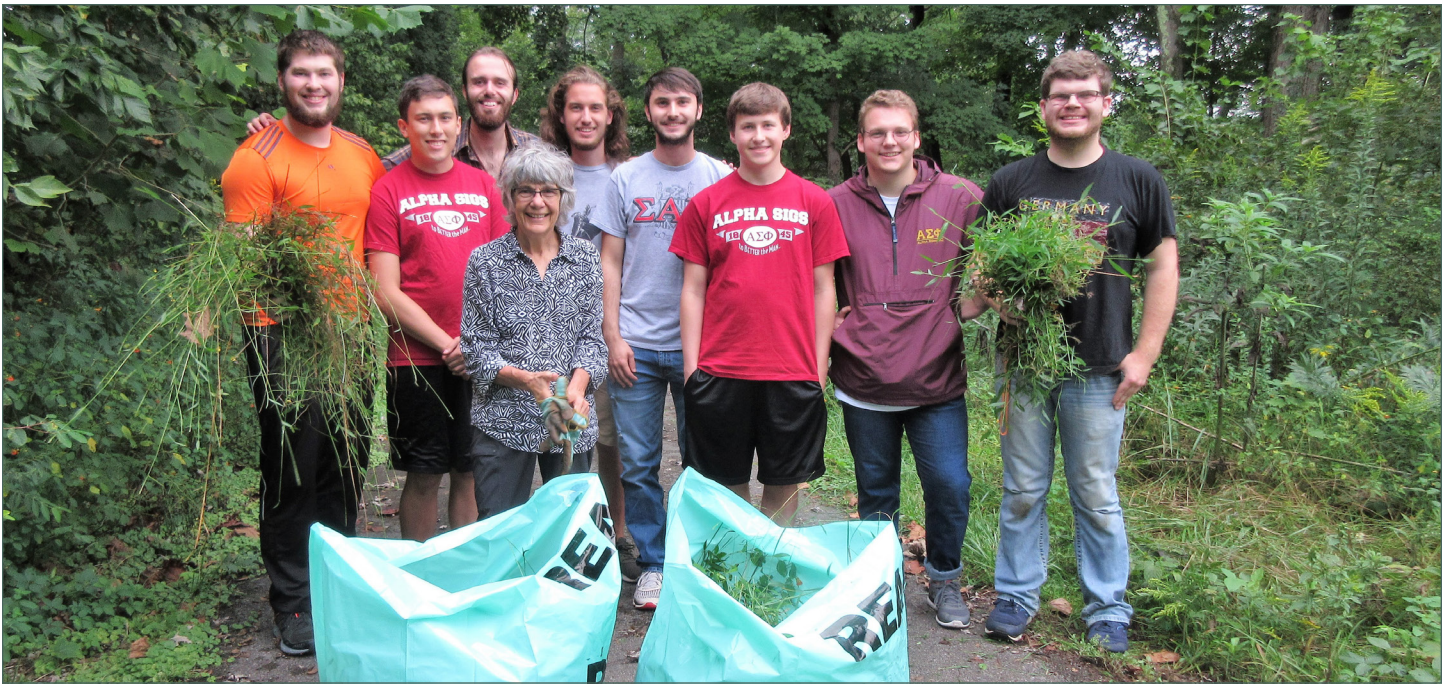
determine how much Longview II would pay as "rent" to the county rather than taxes, one of the last hurdles before construction and a requirement for the siting certificate. But the PSC issued the certificate anyway, saying that since Longview was to be a merchant plant, it wasn't necessary to demonstrate need (supply and demand) and only investors would be on the hook—not ratepayers. They also said they had enough information without the hypothetical tax estimate. (The WV Center on Budget and Policy estimates a potential loss of \$275 million in taxes over the 30-year life of the PILOT deal.)

Bankruptcy—Again: The second newsworthy item occurred on April 14, when Longview I filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy for the second time in its short life. It blamed "substantially lessened demand for electricity due to long-term power-pricing pressure caused by cheap natural gas, an unseasonably warm winter, and the COVID-19 pandemic with its resulting economic impact, which collectively have severely depressed power prices." Although Longview publicly blames COVID-19, their bankruptcy filing shows that they had already begun bankruptcy negotiations in January, well before any Coronavirus impacts on electricity demand.

Longview I said it will continue operations as it works to restructure its balance sheet by entering into an exit facility or financing plan, which will be a \$40 million term loan, though from whom is unspecified. Longview I's previous Chapter 11 action in 2013 said that construction defects and failures prevented it from operating at its designed capacity.

Note that Longview II (the gas plant) would be a for-profit generator that would not directly benefit West Virginia rate payers. Depending on the outcome of the Chapter 11 bankruptcy and the availability of coal, Longview I (the coal plant) will either be supplemented by Longview II or be replaced by it. If Longview II drives Longview I and Fort Martin out of business, there will be a net loss of jobs rather than an increase, as well as lost tax revenue from Fort Martin.

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Nature Park board member Linda Cronin and members of WV Wesleyan's Alpha Sigma Fraternity attack stilt grass in Buckhannon's Nature Park and Learning Trail. PHOTO BY KATHY GREGG.

Creating a Little Wild and Wonderful in Buckhannon

BY KATHY GREGG

It began with a vision and a grant written by Buckhannon's leadership to extend the city's popular River Walk where residents already enjoyed walking, jogging, and bike riding. In a 2009 Recreational Grant submitted to the WV Department of Transportation, we proposed to extend the River Walk, develop two handicapped-accessible trails, and transform a jungle-like area of privet and litter into a showplace for native plants. Because the property was co-owned by WV Wesleyan College and the City, it offered a grand opportunity for a cooperative venture that could benefit everyone in the community.



As the college botanist, I was asked to help with designing and establishing the natural aspect of the project. After grant approval in 2011, I entered the jungle to see what species of plants were there. Pushing back prickly privet branches, I made my way down a narrow, makeshift path, probably *not* used by folks interested in nature. At my request, the Buckhannon street crew removed much of the privet, creating open space and allowing us to see where trails could be laid out. In next few months, I developed a wish-list for native plants that would enhance the park, studied topographic and city maps, and made plans for two loop trails. By fall 2012 the River Walk extension was well underway and the loop trails were graveled and packed.

With much excitement we discovered

Enchanter's Garden Nursery of Hinton was relocating and wanted to sell its remaining stock. We purchased 180 plants, labeled, mapped and planted them with help from the city crew and my husband.

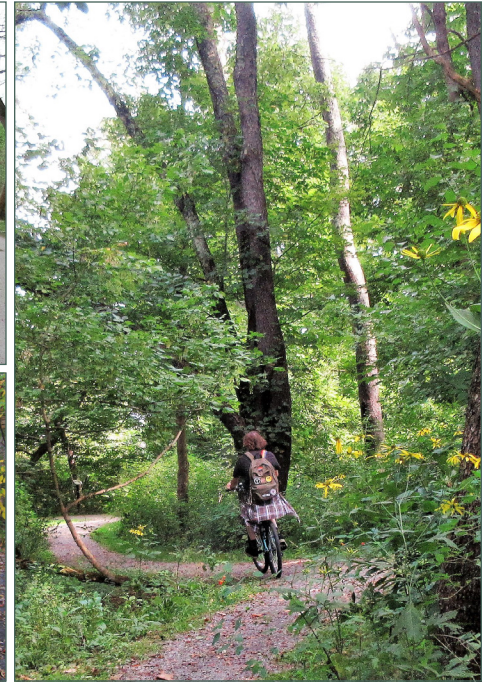
By summer 2013 asphalt had been laid for the River Walk extension, and the area was beginning to look like a real park. Paths were lined with jewel weeds sporting perky yellow and orange blossoms, and other wildflowers began appearing!

A student intern researched established nature parks and helped design signage for both native and exotic plants. The signs, fabricated by a local graphics company, included pictures, names, geographic distribution, and uses of the plants. By September 2014 the signs had been installed, and Buckhannon's Nature Park and Learning

Trail was officially dedicated.

A colorful brochure advertising the trail was distributed through local businesses.

Now our focus is on enhancement and maintenance. Boy Scouts, AmeriCorps volunteers, Mormon sisters, Wesleyan fraternities, service scholars, environmental science classes, and a host of other local volunteers help out. We remove invasive species: knotweed, stilt grass, multiflora rose, and many more. Saplings of native trees also are pulled to maintain open space for shrubs and herbs. Once a week during summers Buckhannon's horticulturist and street crew clear fallen trees and take on other big jobs. We have replaced early signs on wooden posts with vandal-proof metal ones secured with concrete bases.



Clockwise from bottom left: Signage at the Nature Park and Learning Trail provides drawings, names, distribution, description, habitat, and uses of plants found along the trails; Sierra Club and Garden Club members were among those who enjoyed a special presentation by the WV Native Plant Society at the Buckhannon Nature Park and Learning Trail; People on foot and bicycle now enjoy the expanded River Walk and the nature trails in all seasons. PHOTOS BY KATHY GREGG Kathy Gregg with new native plants ready to go in at Buckhannon's Nature Park and Learning Trail. PHOTO BY ROB BARBOR.

Most of our planted shrubs and trees are thriving, flowering, and fruiting: hazelnuts, paw paws, spice bushes, silver bells, and mountain pepperbushes. Our efforts have been further rewarded by the appearance of native species that had been hidden or suppressed by competition: trout lilies, moonseed vine, Dutchman's pipe, Joe-Pye weed, and cardinal flower. Clusters of turquoise berries from silky dogwoods appeared as their plants were freed up to grow and mature. And we watch carefully for signs of invasiveness from other species: Norway maples, ornamental viburnums that produce beautiful spring blooms and bright orange summer berries, and white mulberries whose fruit cover the River Walk during summer.

After Buckhannon's Volunteer Center was established in 2018, new helpers volunteered, including Linda Cronin and Allen Nash as board members. Their fresh ideas led us to think more about park enhancement. We have installed blue bird houses and planted redbuds, native spiderworts, Christmas and hay-scented ferns, and a bald cypress tree grown from the seed of a large "mama" in Buckhannon. When we found flowering

clumps of the common milkweed, we introduced monarch butterfly larvae.

In April 2019 the Nature Park was highlighted in a program for the WV Native Plant Society that included a tour of the park involving local Garden Club and Sierra Club members. A donation from the regional Garden Clubs purchased small plant markers that can be put out or removed as small herbs bloom or fade.

Of course, the park isn't just about plants. We've seen shaggy mane fungi, earth stars, dead man's fingers, greenbrier caterpillars, garter snakes, and pipevine swallowtails. There's a small village of groundhog holes and a beaver lodge under the riverbank. The park is now being enjoyed in all seasons for walking, biking, family outings, plant identification, ecological and conservation education, wildlife discovery, photography, and volunteering!

Tempted to establish a nature park in your own community? The next issue of Mountain State Sierran will include an article outlining the main lessons we've learned from this project. Feel free to email me questions any time: gregg@wwvc.edu.

Longview | CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

The only certain increase in jobs would be during the construction phase.

The future of Longview II will depend on the sense of its investors, the impact of the Chapter 11 refinancing of Longview I, and the impact of the recent dramatic drop in oil prices. We also await the decision of the Monongalia County Commission on the PILOT agreement. Sierra Club launched an email alert in mid-April, asking its members and supporters to put pressure on the Monongalia County Commission to decide against the PILOT. Longview II will not be built in WV without it.

What You Can Do?

Longview still needs an air pollution permit, and securing the needed financing may prove difficult given that they have declared bankruptcy twice in seven years. Please contact the Monongalia County Commission, and urge them to oppose any PILOT Agreement for fossil fuel facilities. Go to: www.monongaliacounty.gov/contact_us/index.php or call 304-291-7257. You can also write to Monongalia County Commission, 243 High St, Morgantown, WV 26505.

Nature's Lessons During Quarantine

BY ADRIENNE EPLEY BROWN

For me, COVID-19 has been an existential crisis and a rollercoaster of emotions. Its uncertainties and disruptions have redefined every role that I play in life: bemused citizen, environmental activist, mental health counselor, daughter of elderly parents, and wife. As a mother, I now work from home while my children require homeschooling. And it is this changed role that has been the most challenging, yet rewarding.



My children have assigned schoolwork, but some days assignments are very short. It's then I go to nature for guidance, and I am grateful for this great resource in my life. Even while practicing social distancing, my children have learned to identify birds and flowers and now can use a compass. But they've also acquired vital wisdom.

Nature is resilient. While walking in the forest, we've observed spring in full swing—a time of hope and renewal for the earth. We've studied life cycles in close detail. We've watched baby birds hatch, tadpoles become frogs, and buds turn into leaves. Even after difficult winters spring always returns. So when my children miss their friends or favorite places, I remind them that this time is temporary like winter, and they will not have to endure it forever.

Nature is full of connections. Although we cannot see our human friends right now, there are other beings close by that often go unnoticed. On Arbor Day we planted a tree in our yard to replace a pine we had removed last year. My children were delighted when they saw a cardinal atop the new tree days later, and I reminded them of my promise to the cardinals residing in the old tree that I would replace their home. I then informed them that the bird had been at our feeder all winter; they just hadn't noticed. Tending our pollinator garden, my children were happy to see some of last year's flowers return, as well as the garden's resident bumblebees. Those bees had just been asleep underground! Now my children see these animals and plants as part of our home and family that we care for.

Nature teaches perseverance. Children often get frustrated with schoolwork, especially when it doesn't come easy. In these past weeks at home together, my children have gained confidence by challenging

themselves on trails. Last year, my son was ambivalent about walking through our creek because of the unknown creatures living there. He needed his older siblings' example and my reassurance to get wet. But on our walk there on a warm day this past March he was the first one in the water—braving the cold temperatures and shrieking with



From top: Briar, the author's daughter, checks out the Virginia bluebells at Core Arboretum. The author's son becomes a young Tarzan during a walk in the woods.

PHOTOS BY ADRIENNE EPLEY BROWN.

joy. During these past months my daughter has likewise gained confidence to cross wider streams and climb higher trees than ever before. These successes led to her decision that she also really could ride a bicycle. She is now proud of that accomplishment as well. Both children now know they can do hard things if they just keep trying.

Nature helps us celebrate. I wasn't sure what to expect this Easter, with the quarantine leaving me with little ability to find coins or jellybeans for baskets. Deciding to focus on activities and resources that were available, I filled my children's eggs with handwritten positive affirmations. The children loved them and thanked me for my encouraging words. Some of those words were silly: "You are Eggstra Special," but they giggled and said not a word about coins or candy. Later, we foraged and used pantry items to make candied violets. My children loved the whole process, and it was a holiday that we will never forget.

Nature teaches impermanence. After finding a dead baby bird in our garden my children were upset but watched as I buried it in the garden with some seeds. I explained that the bird will take a new form and in this way, it is not actually gone. I thought this might be a difficult concept for my daughter to understand. But hiking later that week, we stopped to rest by a downed tree. The rotting wood was giving life to saplings, moss, and ferns. Staring in wonder, my daughter said, "It's giving so much life even though it's dead!" She took pictures of the trunk and sat by it pointing out all the different organisms that it was supporting. It was incredible to see her discover the cycle of life.

Some quarantine days are overwhelming, frustrating, and full of fear. Some days I do not want to get out of bed. Other days, however, are full of beauty, light and love. Most of these are the days we spend outdoors. My family will emerge from this experience more connected, more grateful, and more capable than ever. We will have nature to thank. The COVID-19 experience has added yet another reason for me to fight for the Earth.

Train Derailment Interrupts Appalachian Trail

BY CHRIS CRAIG

During the wee hours of this past winter solstice (Dec. 21), some Harpers Ferry residents were jolted awake by a crash. A CSX train making its way across the 1890s Byron Bridge over the Potomac River had derailed. The engine car and its two-person crew remained safe on the bridge, but empty freight cars following buckled, causing several cars to dangle or fall completely into the Potomac below. Dramatic photos of the scene went viral in the region and were published internationally.



While this scene lasted but a day, the damage from this December train derailment in Harpers Ferry had an impact on tourism and trails that is lasting throughout 2020. PHOTO BY NADINE SNOWDEN.

The Byron Bridge, on the historic Winchester & Potomac Line, is the older of the two railroad bridges at Harpers Ferry. It connects the busy main CSX line (the historic B&O line) with points south. Lightly used by trains, the bridge is nevertheless important to pedestrians and bicyclists, because it has a walkway that allows them to pass between Harpers Ferry and the C&O Canal Towpath or the popular Maryland Heights Trail. It also is the route of the Appalachian Trail (AT) between West Virginia and Maryland, and the National Park Service estimates over 740,000 people used it in 2019.

Fortunately, the pre-Christmas derailment was at a time of the day when no pedestrians were on the bridge and no one was injured. Also, railroad crews quickly removed cars from the river and had trains running on the bridge the following day. However, the derailment destroyed over 100 feet of the walkway. Without it, people have no safe way to cross the river on foot or bicycle, and the trip between the two popular tourist areas requires a convoluted three-state shuttle on narrow, busy roads.

CSX quickly took responsibility for the damage (likely brought about by human error) and agreed to repair the walkway and to fund a Park-managed shuttle until the breach in the trail is reopened.

However, repairs and changes can go slowly, especially when they involve federal facilities concerned with safety and impact on natural and historical resources. Small businesses in Harpers Ferry, some of which recovered only recently from a devastating 2015 fire, buckled down with the realization that the bridge outage would greatly reduce the important trail-oriented tourism in the town. But as we now know, these businesses, like counterparts worldwide, have faced an even greater blow from shut-downs due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In late April, with Harpers Ferry sadly quiet even during a beautiful spring, residents were heartened to hear good news about the bridge from AT Superintendent Wendy Janssen and from CSX. The railroad has secured and the Park has approved a contractor for walkway reconstruction. The work is scheduled to begin mid-May and be

completed by mid-July. While negotiations are not yet complete on shuttle service, an interested service provider has been found, and shuttle services should be ready if needed between trail and town reopening and completion of construction. If this all holds, Harpers Ferry could be ready for a busy trail season during late summer and fall 2020. Stay tuned.

We can all sigh with relief that this wreck resulted in no loss of life and no more damage than it did. But what if the derailment had been at a time of day when the bridge was loaded with tourists? What if it had been on the main line? And what if, instead of being empty, freight cars loaded with chlorine or other dangerous chemicals were involved? It has certainly taken place elsewhere, with varying levels of damage and injury. For years environmentalists and others have been concerned about potential damage from accidents or terrorist incidents on the busy rail lines. This accident reminds us that we need to stay vigilant and involved.



Eastern Panhandle Group Sponsors Environmental Roundtable

BY GAIL KOHLHORST

On Feb. 29 the Eastern Panhandle Sierra Club (EPSC) and the Eastern Panhandle Green Coalition sponsored a Regional Environmental Roundtable at the Hospice Educational Facility in Kearneysville. The event was funded, in part, by a grant from the Sierra Club. Club members Aileen Curfman and Gail Kohlhorst worked on the committee to make the Roundtable successful.

Over 70 leaders and local officials from 30 organizations in WV, Maryland and Virginia participated in the event. The theme was how industrialization of Jefferson County could affect the entire Chesapeake Bay watershed and how groups can work collaboratively to insure clean air and water in communities. Three breakout discussions focused on finance issues, government and corporate relations, and public relations, with each group identifying steps for future action.

Four speakers presented at the Roundtable. Brent Walls of Potomac Riverkeepers spoke on the nature and dynamics of karst geology. Mary Anne Hitt, Director of the Sierra Club Beyond Coal Campaign, shared how the campaign has helped close numerous coal-fired power plants and worked to insure a just transition for affected workers. Kallan Bensen, a 16-year-old national organizer of Fridays for Future, inspired the group with her insights and dedication to grassroots organizing. Brooke Harper, 350.Org Regional Campaign Specialist, closed the day with a call to sustained efforts, recognizing that it takes time to see results.



At top: Over 70 group leaders and activists attended February's Environmental Roundtable in Kearneysville; Beyond Coal Organizer Mary Ann Hitt stands in front of artist Chris Ridler's impressive banner of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The banner provided an inspiring backdrop for February's Roundtable. PHOTOS BY GAIL KOHLHORST.

Among other Roundtable achievements, leaders of the organizations had a chance to meet and talk, forming important bonds and connections for future cooperation on meeting common environmental goals.

EPSC thanks Lew Prillaman and Catherine Jozwik for their dedicated leadership of the the Green Coalition. And among the many people who worked on the event, breakout session facilitators deserve special recognition. Jeff Feldman, Leah Graham, Susanne Griffin, Jennifer Jones, Cathryn Polonchak, and Beth Rosenberg saw that groups engaged in lively, focused conversations that generated tangible ideas.

Monongahela Group News

At our meeting on Feb. 23, the Mon Group welcomed three new ExComm members. Michael Attfield, Kurt Greibel, and Betsy Lawson were elected for two-year terms and join Adrienne Epley Brown and David Sturm, who each have one year remaining. For the entire list of officers, see the Chapter directory in this issue.

Alas, all of our spring activities, including our 50th Anniversary Earth Day Celebration, had to be cancelled, but we are optimistically scheduling activities for the summer. Of course, these are subject to change depending on new COVID-19 guidelines, so be sure to call or email Adrienne for the latest information.

Watch your monthly emails for updates, and if you have questions contact one of the Mon Group officers listed on page 2.

EPSC Events

The Eastern Panhandle Sierra Club's events through the spring were, not surprisingly, cancelled. But our environmental work and advocacy have continued online. And we are hopeful that we will be able to resume summer activities. The following are subject to postponement, cancellation or alteration based on Club or local health restrictions or advisories.

Tuesday, July 28, 4 pm **EPSC Tour of Entsorga Facility in Martinsburg**

We will tour a facility that takes a creative approach to two environmental challenges—reducing material that goes into landfills, and reducing the amount of fossil fuels burned. Entsorga WV is a partnership between Apple Valley Waste LLC, Entsorga USA, and BioHiTech Global. The facility is not an incinerator. It instead recovers carbon-based materials from household waste by sorting, composting, drying, and shredding it. The resulting product is a material that the EPA recognizes as a renewable alternative fuel. This fuel has helped a local cement factory reduce its use of coal, resulting in reduced greenhouse gas. On this tour we will learn about this fascinating process, which is in use in Europe but is unique in the US. Participants must wear closed-toe shoes. Other safety equipment will be provided. Signing a liability waiver form will be required. Children are welcome if accompanied by an adult, but they must be able to stand still and listen to a speaker. For more information or to reserve your space, contact Aileen Curfman at acurfman@gmail.com or 304-433-5321.

Tuesday, August 25, 5 pm **EPSC 2nd Annual Picnic at Poor House Farm Park**

Join us for a pot luck picnic at the Kester Pavilion, Poor House Farm Park, Almshouse Road, Martinsburg (west of town off Poor House Farm Road). Set up will start at 5 pm, and supper is at 6. Last year we enjoyed a fine evening of great food, fellowship, and a leisurely walk around the lake. Let's do it again! Bring your appetite, a dish to share, and your own plate and eating utensils. For more information, contact Aileen Curfman at acurfman@gmail.com or 304-433-5321.

Tuesday, Sept. 22, 6:30 pm **2020 WV Election Candidate Meet and Greet**

Our September meeting will offer a chance to meet, hear from, and express concerns to Sierra Club-endorsed candidates in the 2020 election. We will meet at St. John's Lutheran Church, 101 W. Martin St., Martinsburg. The public is welcome, and refreshments will be served. For more information, contact Gail Kohlhorst at kohlhorst@comcast.net or 304-283-7222.


Saturday, June 27 **Hike at Tom's Run Preserve** (see Outings for details)

Saturday, July 18 **Ice Cream Social at Coopers Rock State Forest**

Meet at noon in Shelter #2 near the lookout and bring something to share for a picnic lunch. Ice Cream will be provided, but you will have to take your turn at the crank!

August 27 or 29 **Corn Roast at Krepps Park in Morgantown**

Meet at 5:30 pm and bring food to share. Delicious locally grown corn will be provided by our gardening members. The date is uncertain, as the park is not taking reservations at time of publication.




EARTH DAY
50th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

The astronauts of Apollo 8 were the first humans to see and photograph the earth as a complete orb in space. They were forever transformed. This photo led directly to NASA's modern fleet of Earth-observing satellites. It also energized grassroots green movements.
Earth Day was proposed the following year.

Celebrate Earth Day!
Turn out lights that aren't needed
Stop using herbicides and insecticides
Plant some wildflowers for bees and butterflies
Put out a birdbath and keep the cat indoors.
Walk instead of drive when possible
Have a vegetarian day each week
Vote for leaders who will protect the environment

The earth and all life on it is threatened by too much carbon dioxide and methane in the atmosphere.
Visit
www.wvclimateaction.org
or
www.sierraclub.org/topics/earth-day



Mon Group volunteer Betsy Lawson designed this lovely ad for the Morgantown Dominion Post after the Group's Earth Day celebration was cancelled due to the pandemic.

Outings



At time of publication, all Sierra Club outings and other in-person events had been **cancelled** due to the COVID-19 pandemic through **June 14**. These summer outings are subject to alteration, postponement or cancellation, based upon Club or local advisories and restrictions.

Please contact the trip leader closer to time to check on status.

Saturday, June 20, 2020

DAY HIKE: **Loudoun Heights, Harpers Ferry NHP**

Hiking on Loudoun Heights provides a rich history of industrial and Civil War history as well as one of the great views of Harpers Ferry and the Potomac River. Our hike will include some historical and environmental background of the area. It contains some steep ascents (inc. 1700 ft. elevation gain) and rugged trails broken up by more moderate and smooth areas. This hike is open to any adult or child (accompanied by an adult) capable of a multi-hour rugged hike. Well-behaved dogs on leashes are welcome. There is no charge for this hike, but it does require HFNHP Park admission or Park pass.

Distance/ Difficulty: 7 miles/MODERATELY DIFFICULT

Duration: 3.5 hour

Bring: Water, a bagged lunch, and a snack if desired. Wear footwear and clothing appropriate to the terrain and weather.

Meet: 9:30 am. Old Shipley School parking lot, 850 Fillmore Street, Harpers Ferry. (Note, this is not Shipley Elementary School on US340. Instead, it is the old school building in the historical town on Camp Hill.)

Leader: Chris Craig
ccraig@laurelodge.com
304-433-1260

Nearest town: Harpers Ferry, WV

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

Additional information: Well-behaved dogs on leashes are welcome. Harpers Ferry NHP admission or Park pass is required for this hike (a pay slot will be available early on in the hike).

Saturday, June 27, 2020

DAY HIKE & PRESENTATION: **Tom's Run Preserve**

Tom's Run Preserve is a 318-acre conservation trust owned and managed by the West Virginia Land Trust. It is just a few miles south of Morgantown and has a small network of recently constructed trails through hilly woodlands. We will hike the easy Elizabeth's loop and the moderate Hollenhorst loop, crossing several streams on bridges or stepping stones. We will also have a brief presentation from Land Trust staff on the preserve and the research underway there.

Distance/ Difficulty: .7 mile/EASY, followed by .5 mile/MODERATE. May do either or both.

Duration: 2 hours

Bring: a snack, water, sunscreen, and shoes for the varied terrain.

Meet: 10:30 am. Tom's Run Preserve parking lot, Little Falls Road. From I-79 south of Morgantown, take the Goshen Road exit, turning right on Goshen Road, left on Smithtown Road, and immediately right on Little Falls Road. Continue .4 mile and turn right on the new gravel road. You will see a Tom's Run sign on your right at the parking lot entrance.

Leader: Adrienne Epley Brown,
adrienne_epley@yahoo.com
702-465-9119

Nearest town: Morgantown

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

Additional information: There are no restrooms at the preserve. To learn more about Tom's Run Preserve, go to www.wvlandtrust.org/rec-access/toms-run/.

Saturday, July 18, 2020

DAY HIKE: **Spruce Knob Trails**

Spruce Knob is the highest point in West Virginia and has a nice network of trails. We will hike sections of the Huckleberry, Judy Springs, Lumberjack and Seneca Creek Trails. Be prepared to hike moderately rugged trails with several creek crossings and some mud.

Distance/ Difficulty: 9 miles/MODERATE

Duration: 4-5 hours

Bring: plenty of water, lunch and snacks, and sturdy footwear. Dress for changes of weather at a high elevation.

Meet: 10 am. Seneca Creek Back Country Trail Head. From US 33, turn onto Briery Gap Rd. in Western. After 2.4 miles, continue onto Forest Rd. 112. The trail head and parking will be in 11.4 miles.

Leader: Brent Carminati
brentcar1@frontiernet.net
703-999-8679

Nearest town: Riverton, WV

Cancellation policy: We will cancel if heavy rains are forecast.

VOLUNTEER NEEDED: Chapter Treasurer

Experience with bookkeeping, or better yet, an accounting background, and Quickbooks Online would be valuable for this volunteer position. You will also need to become familiar with the membership database.

For more information, contact Sally Wilts at sallywilts@yahoo.com.



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.

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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

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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 SIERRA magazine and \$ 1.00 for your Chapter newsletter.

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

Saturday, July 25, 2020

DAY HIKE: **Appalachian Trail: Keys Gap (WV/VA) to Buzzard Rock**

Our exploration of the Appalachian Trail in the Mid-Atlantic continues with this hike along the VA/WV border. We will hike out and back from Keys Gap, where Route 9 crosses the Blue Ridge to the scenic outcrop at Buzzard Rock. The hike is along the ridge, avoiding major climbs or descents. The hike is open to any adult or child (accompanied by an adult) fit for the distance and substantial elevation changes. NPS regulation restricts our group size to 25, and parking is limited at Keys Gap. Please reserve your space. The hike is free, though donations are welcome.

Distance/ Difficulty: 7.2 miles/MODERATE

Duration: 3.5 hours

Bring: plenty of water and a sack lunch. Hiking poles or sticks may be helpful.

Meet: 9 am. Keys Gap parking area on the AT, at State line on Route 9. (Recommended approach is from the Virginia side (east). Parking is limited; park close to your neighbor.)

Leader: Chris Craig
ccraig@laurellodge.com
304-433-1260

Nearest town: Bolivar and Harpers Ferry, WV, and Hillsboro, VA

Cancellation policy: We will carry on in light rain but cancel in a downpour. If heat is intense, the hike may be shortened.

Saturday, August 15, 2020

DAY HIKE: **Blackwater Falls State Park**

We will hike Dobbin House Trail and a side trail around Pendleton Lake. The walk will include a reclaimed strip mine and Passé Point overlooking the Blackwater River Valley. This is an easy hike that's good for beginners.

Distance/ Difficulty: 5 miles/EASY

Duration: 2-3 hours

Bring: plenty of water and a snack. Wear sturdy footwear and dress for the weather.

Meet: 10 am. Pendleton Lake parking lot, Blackwater Falls State Park. From Davis, take WV Route 29 west into park and turn off at Pendleton Lake Road.

Leader: Brent Carminati
brentcar1@frontiernet.net
703-999-8679

Nearest town: Davis, WV

Cancellation policy: We will cancel if heavy rains are forecast.

Saturday, August 22, 2020

DAY HIKE: **Big Schloss, Great North Mountain, VA/WV**

This hike will take us through one of the loveliest areas of George Washington National Forest. We'll walk along a clear, bubbling trout stream, climb to a rocky ridge full of laurel and scrub oak, and through mature forest with dense undergrowth. One highlight will be the rocky ledge of Big Schloss, named by early German settlers for its castle-like appearance. Our loop will include some level walks, but also 2300 feet of elevation gain and areas of mountain switchbacks. The hike is open to those able to maintain a moderate pace on mountain terrain for a long day's hike. There is no charge for the hike, though contributions are welcome.

Distance/ Difficulty: 12.7 miles/DIFFICULT

Duration: 7 hours

Bring: plenty of water, a bagged lunch, and ample snacks.

Meet: 9 am. NFS parking lot on FDR 92 next to Little Stony Creek crossing. From I-81 go west on VA 42 (Exit 283) 5.4 m., turn right on SR 768/623 for .3 m., then another right on SR 675. Follow SR 675, cross creek and bear left, still on SR 675 (Wolf Gap Rd.). Bear right at junction with SR 717 to remain on 675, and in 2 m. turn right onto unmarked FDR 92 (Johnstown Rd.). Continue on FDR 92 for 4 m. to parking area on right after crossing Mill Creek and just before Little Stony Creek. Or from Wardensville, take Trout Run Rd. 13.3 m. and continue onto VA Rt. 675 (Wolf Gap Rd.) 1.4 m. Turn left onto FDR 92 (Johnstown Rd.) for 4 m. to parking lot.

Leader: Chris Craig
ccraig@laurellodge.com
304-433-1260

Nearest towns: Woodstock, VA and Wardensville, WV

Cancellation policy: We will cancel if weather predictions indicate likely serious precipitation.

Saturday, September 19, 2020

DAY HIKE: **Murphy Farm, Trail to Lower Town, Harpers Ferry NHP**

The Murphy Farm is a branch of Harpers Ferry NHP where many stories intersect: Civil War invasion, Union fortifications, John Brown. Plus, it boasts one of the prettiest Shenandoah views anywhere. Our walk will take us from the Park visitor center, around the farm meadow, followed by a hike to Lower Town Harpers Ferry through Virginius Island, once home to mills and factories powered by water. Hikers may return to the visitor center via the Park shuttle or walk back on their own. Those wanting a short, easy hike may join us for only the Murphy Farm section. The walk will be along a gravel road, earthen trails, and grassy meadow. Terrain is flat to rolling hills. The hike is open to any adult or child (accompanied by adult) prepared for such walking. There is no charge for this hike, but Park admission or permit is required.

Distance/ Difficulty: 3.5 miles (with a shorter 1.5mi option)/MODERATELY EASY

Duration: 2.5 hours (Total hike. Shorter option approx. 1 hr.)

Bring: water, snack.

Meet: 10 am, in front of Visitor Center, Harpers Ferry, NHP, 171 Shoreline Dr., Harpers Ferry (Just off US340, opposite the towns of Harpers Ferry and Bolivar).

Leader: Chris Craig
ccraig@laurellodge.com
304-433-1260

Nearest towns: Bolivar and Harpers Ferry, WV

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

Additional information: Park admission or permit is required.

Please be advised that Sierra Club assumes no responsibility for shuttle/carpooling. Carpooling is at the sole risk of the participants.



All spring outings of the WV Chapter were cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In February, however, 27 Sierrans discovered the trails at the Rolling Ridge Foundation near Shannondale, WV on a cold but bright morning. The Foundation maintains and shares a great trail system on their property on the west flank of the Blue Ridge. PHOTOS BY CHRIS CRAIG.



Sierra Club

West Virginia Chapter

PO Box 4142

Morgantown, WV 26504

sierraclub.org/west-virginia

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Summer 2020



This newsletter is printed by Progressive Printing in Martinsburg, WV on 100% post-consumer, recycled paper, using vegetable-oil-based inks.

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

Deadline for the 2020 Fall issue:
AUGUST 1

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. \$1 of each member's annual dues helps offset the cost of producing this newsletter.



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

A Will is a Way

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