

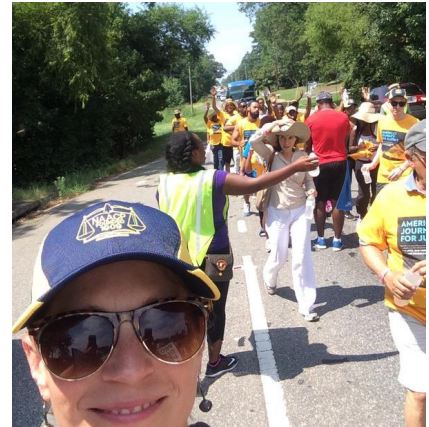


## Georgia Chapter

Footnotes Issue #105: August 21st, 2015

### Joining America's Journey for Justice

On Friday I marched 20 miles from Lilburn to Auburn, Georgia as part of the NAACP America's Journey for Justice---an 864-mile march from Selma, Alabama to Washington, D.C. that began August 1st and will enter Washington, D.C. on September 16th. [The Sierra Club is supporting the effort](#) because we know that it will take everyone participating in our democracy to make sure our elected officials are making decisions in the best interest of us all. I was heartened by the support we received along the way, honking, waving, fist-pumping, even as we slowed down traffic on a busy Friday afternoon.



**The march and its teach-ins, rallies, and other events along the way aim to raise awareness of the types of injustice Americans still face in the 21st century---from environmental injustice to racial injustice.** Marchers are calling on decision-makers for an improved national agenda that protects the right of every American to a fair criminal justice system, sustainable jobs with a living wage, equitable public education, and uncorrupted and unfettered access to the ballot box.

That last part---access to voting--- is particularly significant as August marks the 50th anniversary of President Johnson's signing of the Voting Rights Act (VRA) into law, prohibiting racial discrimination in voting. In the last couple of years, that monumental law has come under attack, and some states have since passed laws that prevent minority communities from voting. When all Georgians have equal access to the ballot box, we have a much better chance at electing officials that care about the cleaning up our state, protecting our families from pollution, and standing up and fighting against environmental threats like climate disruption.

The Georgia Sierra Club is focused on three priorities: clean energy, expanding transportation, and protecting our national forests--- and protecting our democracy is vital to achieve all of these. If we are successful in transitioning to a clean energy economy based on solar, wind, and energy efficiency, Georgians will spend a lot less of every paycheck on their power bill, and we will exponentially grow Georgia's already 20,000 jobs in the clean energy sector, according to Southface's Clean Energy Census report. If we are successful at expanding our transit network in Metro Atlanta, more people will have more options and access to jobs, doctors, schools and shopping. And if we successfully protect our national forests, Georgians will be sure they have a place to recharge.

**If any of our voices are silenced and our access to voting is interrupted, we**

[don't stand a chance to protect the environment for all Georgians.](#)

Unfortunately in Georgia, access to the ballot box is not as easy and universal as it should be. In 2011, the Georgia legislature cut early voting days from 45 to 21 and eliminated voting the weekend before the election, preventing participation by voters who can't easily access a polling location on election day. In 2014, nearly 40,000 new voters mysteriously vanished from the rolls, and turnout was only 34 percent, down six points from 2010. The Sierra Club will continue to support the NAACP this summer and beyond in their journey for justice and act to protect and expand access to the ballot box and for a fair and equitable society for everyone. **As Sierra Club founder John Muir said, "When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe."**

The Sierra Club joined 54 other organizations within the Democracy Initiative to commemorate this historic day. [Click here to view a Storify that shows the various ways Democracy Initiative groups engaged.](#)

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## Georgia's Attorney General to Challenge EPA Emissions Rule



Last week Georgia's Attorney General Sam Olens [filed a challenge to a new EPA rule](#) that closes a Clean Air Act loophole which allowed polluters to violate their permit limits at any time and claim later that the violations were legal because they happened during startup, shutdown or malfunction. Olens has developed a bad habit of putting polluters over people, challenging mercury and other clean air programs at the request of utilities and over the

objection of state agencies. EPA must close the loopholes to make sure that people living near plants can enforce the law when air pollution violations, which have real-world consequences of compromising air quality and public health, occur. **Please call the Attorney General's office at (404) 656-3300 to express your disappointment.**

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## Sierra Club Meetings

**RAIL Committee, Monday, August 24, 7:00 p.m.**

Contact Colleen Kiernan, [colleen.kiernan@sierraclub.org](mailto:colleen.kiernan@sierraclub.org)

**Smart Energy Solutions, Monday, September 7, 7:00 p.m.**

Contact Cecilia Harris, [ceciliaharris@gmail.com](mailto:ceciliaharris@gmail.com)

**Wildlands & Wildlife Committee, Monday, September 21, 7:00 p.m.** Contact William Tomlin, [wmltom@gmail.com](mailto:wmltom@gmail.com)

**Don't live in Atlanta? Check out our [Local Groups](#).**

## Other Events

### **August 22 & November 14th - Georgia River Network Hidden**

**Gems Paddle** - Save the date for excursions to rediscover some of the hidden gems on Georgia's waterways. Each one-day river trip includes lunch and presentations along the route, ranging from natural history and water quality testing to cultural history and river cleanups. On Aug 22: South River - From Urban Wasteland to Wet & Wild Oasis - Go with the flow and explore this nearly forgotten beauty. On Nov 14: Ochlockonee River - Tea-Stained Waters, Cypress Knees & Rich Wildlife Diversity - Discover this majestic river in the Red Hills of Southwest Georgia. [Click here to register.](#)



### **August 29th - Cork Pullers, Beer, Wine and Spirits**

**Festival** - The Georgia Chapter's Wildlands & Wildlife Committee will be tabling at the Cork Pullers festival to raise awareness on [proposed clear-cutting at Cooper Creek](#). Be sure to visit us as you sample great local & national beers, wines, and liquors; listen to live music; and shop with amazing artists and merchants. Check out Food Truck Alley for great Atlanta food and snack options! Ticket purchase grants you

entry and a souvenir cup to sample all of our beer, wines, and spirits. No additional ticket purchase is required for any of our beer, wine, or spirits. Are you ready to celebrate? Cheers! [Click here for more information and to register.](#)

**September 12th - SGI "Seeds of Hope" Exhibit** - The Soka Gakkai International USA's Atlanta Buddhist Center in Atlantic Station (421 17th St NW, Atlanta, 30363) will host its Second Annual Open House on September 12th and 13th, Saturday and Sunday. Please join us by participating in the opening ceremony for this event on that Saturday at 10 am. This year our theme is "visions of sustainability, steps towards change" and we are presenting a special exhibit called "Seeds of Hope." The "Seeds of Hope" exhibition stresses our interconnectedness with the rest of the community of life and the need to broaden our sphere of compassion and concern. [Click here for more information.](#)



**Atlanta ContactPoint**  
empowering you to play

### **September 26th - Pullman Yard Showcase** - Atlanta

Contact Point, in partnership with the Savvy Foundation, is producing a dynamic event in September to demonstrate its vision for the transformation of the Pullman Train Yard, an abandoned 25-acre industrial site located in the heart of Atlanta, into active play fields & indoor activity space. Come meet our historic preservation expert; environmental and structural engineers; environmental law firm; reps from MARTA, PATH, and Atlanta BeltLine to highlight the alternative means of transportation; our energy solution & water conservation



experts; our train donor; and many more people engaged in creating a gem for the city and state. [Click here for more information.](#)

**September 24th - GreenLaw Environmental Heroes Celebration** - Save the date for GreenLaw's Environmental Heroes Celebration, an evening dedicated to honoring environmental heroes who have made significant contributions to defending Georgia's public health and natural resources. This year, the Georgia Sierra Club Lobbyist team of Neill Herring and Mark Woodall will be honored. [Click here to register.](#)



**REGISTRATION OPEN! October 23 to 25th - 2015 Georgia Chapter Retreat** - The Georgia Chapter's bi-annual gathering will take place at Crooked River State Park in St. Mary's, GA. Join us and experience a weekend of fun, adventure and learning with your fellow Sierra Club volunteers and leaders from all over Georgia. In addition to several planned hikes, Sierrans will participate in workshops, including Intro to Activism Training and Backpacking 101. The Chapter has also arranged for an exclusive visit to Cumberland Island, Georgia's largest and southernmost barrier island! On Saturday evening, we will gather for a special Awards Banquet to recognize our volunteer leaders, with Sierra Club President Aaron Mair and Author Janisse Ray joining us as our amazing Keynote Speakers! [Click here for more information and to register!](#)

[\*Looking for more? Check out our Georgia Sierra Club Meetup Group for even more events!\*](#)



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