



# Georgia Chapter

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## Legislative Updates

Ending at midnight on Thursday, April 29th, the 2010 Legislative Session was the longest in modern times. The session saw many successes on a number of important environmental priorities and a few setbacks. **Thanks to the face-to-face meetings by environmental lobbyists, phone calls and emails from thousands of concerned citizens including many Sierrians, and support by many environmental groups, the General Assembly delivered positive results for our environment here in Georgia with a few disappointments.**

### Georgia Water Coalition

Straight from the Georgia Water Coalition report for the 2010 Legislative Session, "The 2010 legislature adopted the Water Stewardship Act of 2010 in response to Judge Magnuson's decision limiting Metro Atlanta's access to Lake Lanier for water supply and to help the water sharing negotiations with Alabama and Florida. The GWC worked for a number of years calling for many of the measures included in the bill and provided extensive input to the Governor's Water Contingency Task Force, which was formed in part to make recommendations to be included in the bill." The bill includes measures to reduce water waste including restrictions on outdoor watering and standards for new construction efficiency.



### Transportation Funding

Legislation was passed that will lift spending restrictions on MARTA for three years so the agency can improve operations and maintenance. The bill removes restrictions that were hurting the development of transit in Metro Atlanta and takes steps toward creating a regional transit agency. Much more work remains to be done to ensure MARTA survives the current funding crisis and Metro Atlanta achieves a world class transit system. The ongoing oil spill disaster in the Gulf of Mexico reminds us that public transit cuts our dependence on oil, reduces greenhouse gases and provides people with choices to move easily from home, work and play.

### Preserving Independent Judges for our Environment

Legislation that ensures citizens and businesses get a level playing field when appealing environmental permit decisions in court in front of Administrative Law Judges did not make it onto the Senate floor, which ensures the preservation of independent judges for our environment. An attempt by Waste Management and other garbage companies to allow as much as a million tons of yard trimmings a year to be placed in lined landfills was defeated.

### Keeping our water clean

Lastly, threats to clean water were defeated. Legislation to use state funds and allow private companies to build reservoirs that do not have to meet the same water quality standards as public reservoirs was amended and ultimately failed to make it out of House committee.

While the successes of this Legislative session were important, the Sierra Club and other environmental groups are always looking for more ways to help protect our environment and to improve Georgia's environmental laws. **The Legislature did not adopt protections against unnecessary and harmful water transfers this session.** The bill faced stiff and well-financed opposition from the Metro Atlanta and Georgia Chambers of Commerce and ultimately, the bill did not pass out of the House Rules Committee.

**We need your help to make important changes. [To stay updated on current issues and to have opportunities to take action for our environment, sign up for our local Georgia Chapter communications by clicking here.](#) Your voice can make a difference.**

\*For information on the Legislative session and more information on our representatives please visit [Georgia Conservation Voters](#) and the [Georgia Water Coalition](#).

## Quick Links



**Georgia Chapter Sierra Club on Facebook!** Facebook is one of the most used social networking services and the Georgia Chapter wants to keep you informed at your convenience. The *Sierra Club – Georgia Chapter Group* announces Sierra Club meetings, socials, and outings to bring us together for fun times while supporting our campaigns. We hope that you can join us and will invite your friends! [Click here](#) to join now.

### Support Appalachian Trail license plates!

The Georgia Appalachian Trail Club has announced the establishment of an Appalachian Trail specialty plate for Georgia. If ATC does not reach 1,000 paid applications before April 2011, the special interest plate will not be manufactured. All revenues received by ATC will be used for Appalachian Trail projects in Georgia. These projects include: trail and facilities maintenance, scenic easements and view preservation, environmental monitoring, increased public information, and education and outreach to Georgia residents. For more information please [click here](#).



## Sierra Club Meetings

**Executive Committee Meeting**, Saturday, May 15th, Savannah, GA, Contact Genie Strickland at [genie.strickland@sierraclub.org](mailto:genie.strickland@sierraclub.org)

**Wildlands & Wildlife Committee Meeting**, Tuesday, May 18th, 7p.m., Phil Zinsmeister - Chair, [pzinsmeister@oglethorpe.edu](mailto:pzinsmeister@oglethorpe.edu)

**RAIL Committee Meeting**, Monday, May 24th, 6:45p.m., Jim Dexter – Chair, call 678-313-2407, [jimdex@aol.com](mailto:jimdex@aol.com)

**Inner City Outings Meeting**, Tuesday, May 25th, 7:00p.m., Allison Williams, call 404-664-4199, [adwilliams8@yahoo.com](mailto:adwilliams8@yahoo.com)

**Fundraising Committee Meeting**, Wednesday, May 26th, 7:30p.m., Erin Wetty – Chair, call 404-607-1262 x 225, [gregory.schwartz@sierraclub.org](mailto:gregory.schwartz@sierraclub.org)

**Smart Energy Team Meeting**, Monday, June 7th, 6:30p.m refreshments, 7p.m. start, Colleen Kiernan - Chair, [colleenkiernan@mindspring.com](mailto:colleenkiernan@mindspring.com)

## Environmental Events



### East Palisades Trail/CNRA Hike

Saturday, May 29th

Atlanta, GA

Join the Sierra Club for a moderate, 4.6 mile hike with a loop with some backtracking on one section. Part of the trail is along the Chattahoochee River with a great river view from a cliff at one point. Another portion of the trail follows along the bottom of the "palisades" (a line of high cliffs) from which this area gets its name. Please contact Bob Springfield at [bob@bobspringfield.com](mailto:bob@bobspringfield.com) to reserve a spot. For more information [click here](#).

### Activist Network Online Community Training

Tuesday, June 15th, 12:30p.m. – 1:30p.m.

Georgia Chapter Office

The Activist Network online community is a place where you can get things done. Teams are forming in the Activist Network from all over the country, including Georgia. They are working at all levels on a wide range of topics: energy policy, water monitoring, coal, zero waste, toxics, leadership development in the club, newsletters, hydrofracking, and more. Learn how Georgia can take advantage of this wonderful network. Please RSVP to [jennifer.waggoner@sierraclub.org](mailto:jennifer.waggoner@sierraclub.org). For

**Activist  
Network**

more information [click here.](#)

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