



Georgia Chapter

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Despite Dabbling in Renewables, Georgia Power Holding on Tight to Coal

The Georgia Power 2013 Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) process is underway at the Public Service Commission, the first of the hearings happened last week. [Both Commissioners and Georgia Power officials acknowledge it is the most significant IRP anyone can remember.](#)

As [reported earlier this year](#), Georgia Power is proposing to retire about 25% of Georgia's coal fleet. The company is also dabbling in renewables, with [210 megawatts of solar](#) and [250 megawatts of wind from Oklahoma](#) set to power Georgia by 2016.



While the good news has generally overshadowed the bad news, the assumptions Georgia Power uses to make their decisions are extremely biased in favor of coal. The most concerning way this plays out is Georgia Power's proposal McIntosh Unit 1 coal fired power plant in Rincon, near Savannah, open for the next 30 years. Georgia Power would do this by switching it from burning central Appalachian coal to coal shipped all the way from Wyoming and paying for numerous pollution control devices being installed at ratepayers' expense, and burdening coastal residents with extra pollution for years.

The coal unit at Plant McIntosh did not operate at all in 2012 because it was too expensive to operate compared to other power plants. The plant isn't needed, and retiring it won't impact reliability of the grid.

Georgia Power's analysis assumed that the cost of coal from Wyoming will not increase, in constant dollars, for the next 39 years. This is completely unrealistic. Asia, in particular China, is hungry for Wyoming coal and is willing to pay much more for this coal than Georgia Power is projecting. In addition, while there is still a fair amount of coal left in Wyoming, the cheap, high quality coal has almost all been mined. Thus, the price of Wyoming coal will likely continue to rise and the quality will go down over the next 30 years.

Georgia Power also assumes that it will not have to build a cooling tower at McIntosh over the next 30 years, even though they will use one at every other plant in the fleet. Cooling towers dramatically reduce the amount of water coal fired power plants use, thus leaving more water for other uses like homes, businesses, farmers and fish.

Finally, Georgia Power assumes that they won't have to install the most effective air pollution controls at McIntosh, despite the fact that Savannah is on the brink of failing the federal health-based standard for ground-level ozone. If Savannah does fall into this category and EPA requires the more effective and expensive smog control device, McIntosh would fail the economic tests used to determine if the plant continues to operate or needs to retire.

Quick Links - Immigration

In recent months, Athens Beyond Coal activists and [Immigration Rights Coalitions](#) have been working to build a movement. This emerging climate and immigration rights coalition interrupted an October Board of Regents meeting, chanting "[All students on campus, dirty energy off!](#)" to oppose both a ban the Board placed on undocumented students from attending specific universities and the UGA Administration's refusal to close the campus coal boiler. Last week, the

Sierra Club met with groups hoping to continue and grow our work together. At the same time, [Governor Nathan Deal signed into law HB 160 which increasingly criminalizes undocumented residents](#) and the [Sierra Club's Board of Directors unanimously passed our Club's support of a pathway to citizenship for undocumented residents.](#)

Sierra Club Meetings

Smart Energy Team Meeting, Monday, May 6, 7:00 p.m.
Robert Feria, rferia@gmail.com

Wildlands Committee Meeting, Monday, May 20, 7:00 p.m.
Mike Murdock - Chair, murdock1@mindspring.com

Fundraising Committee, Wednesday, May 22, 7:00 p.m.
Sybil Cypress, sybil.cypress@sierraclub.org

RAIL, Monday, May 28, 7:00 p.m.
David Emory - Chair, david.emory@gmail.com

Other Events



May 6 - Support the Georgia Chapter at Bantam + Biddy -
[Bantam + Biddy](#) is donating 10 percent of their daily proceeds after 5:00 p.m. to the Sierra Club. Located in Ansley Mall, 1544 Piedmont Rd. in Atlanta, Bantam + Biddy provides a casual, family-friendly eatery featuring regional, all-natural pastured poultry. The restaurant offers breakfast, lunch and dinner daily.



May 9 - The Power of Policy Luncheon - Southeast Green invites you to join Georgia Chapter Director Colleen Kiernan, Sally Bethea, Denise Quarles, Suzanne Burns and Stephanie Stuckey-Benfield explore how these female leaders are shaping Georgia's landscape from a policy perspective. The event is from 11:30-1:00 at Peachtree Road United Methodist Church, 3180 Peachtree Road, NW, Atlanta, GA 30305. Tickets are available [here](#).



May 15 - Sierra Club & Beer - Join Rebecca Serna with Atlanta Bicycle Coalition and Joshua Mello with the City of Atlanta as they update us on all the exciting happenings in development of bike infrastructure in Atlanta! The event is from 7:30-9:30 at Camelli's Pizza in Little Five Points. Enjoy Red Hare brew until it runs out and get involved with us to explore, enjoy and protect the planet.

June 1 - Photo Contest Deadline - To help celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act, the Georgia Chapter Wildlands Team is holding a photo contest! There will be a series of events over the next 18 months that will culminate in October 2014 in a [national conference in Albuquerque](#). For more details on how to enter, click [here](#), deadline is June 1.

Save the Date! Semi-Annual Chapter Retreat Oct. 4-6 - Every other year, the Georgia Chapter hosts a retreat with workshops, outings, wine tasting and all things Sierra Club! This year we'll be at Camp Wahsegah near Dahlonega. Look for more details and registration information soon!



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