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Georgia Chapter

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Footnotes Issue #91: January 9, 2015

Georgia Officials Out of Touch with Reality of Climate Change



Despite a 97 percent consensus among the world's scientists that climate change exists and is caused by humans, climate denial fueled by polluter junk science and PR is alive all across the nation and in our state. Although climate change is no longer a "debate"-- scientific consensus has been reached and has concluded that the warming effect will lead to catastrophic changes in our global climate, which threatens communities, wildlife, wildlands, and life as we know it on our planet.

In a [recent article by the Atlanta Journal Constitution](#), more than a dozen of the state's top elected officials and officials in charge of protecting the state's environment were asked whether they believe climate change is occurring, and also whether they think pollution caused by human activity is a cause. Several didn't respond, many don't believe that climate change is happening. Even worse, for those that did believe it is occurring, they remained unconvinced that human activity is the cause or that they have a responsibility to address it. Finally, none of our top leaders expressed support for federal mandates to reduce the amount of greenhouse gasses produced in our country. The AJC goes on to point out the generous campaign contributions from big polluters to the elected officials propagating climate denial.

These positions are out of step with Georgians, though. A [poll conducted by Stanford a year ago found that 81% of Georgians believe that climate change is happening and 85% think the federal government should take action](#). An overwhelming 73% supported reducing emissions from power plants. Georgians also overwhelmingly support the solution to climate change, which is much more quickly transitioning to a clean energy economy, fueled by wind, solar and energy efficiency. A poll the Sierra Club conducted a year ago found that [8 in 10 Georgians support expanding the use of wind and solar](#).

Governor Nathan Deal, who deferred the responsibility of dealing with climate change to federal officials in response to the AJC, has a history of punting on climate. In 2011, he [removed University of Georgia professor David Stooksbury as state climatologist](#), a position he had held for more than a decade. The State Climate Office was moved to the Georgia Environmental Protection Division--a concerning move considering that calls from the AJC to respond to climate questions were not returned by The Department of Natural Resources' chairman, Philip A. Wilheit, Jr., nor the director of the DNR's Environmental Protection Division, Judson Turner.

There is much work to be done to educate our elected officials on the issue of climate change. One thing is certain: States will be making decisions on issues of critical importance to both our health and the health of our environment. **As we enter the 2015 legislative session, please consider contacting your state officials to let them know how you feel about climate change and our environment!**

Thank You to Mark Woodall!



Mark Woodall, our Chapter Chair, who served for six long years, handed his gavel to David Emory in November. To commemorate his service, we enlisted volunteer leaders, staff and partners to submit videos to thank him for all his hard work. During his time as Chapter Chair, he oversaw, the protection of freshwater turtles, the end of two (almost three) proposed coal-fired power plants, approval of 900 megawatts of solar and 250 megawatts of wind, and expansion of MARTA to Clayton. Mark will continue to serve as our Legislative Chair and

on our Executive Committee. [**Please take a moment to check out our thank you video to Mark!**](#)

Sierra Club Meetings

Smart Energy Committee Meeting, Monday, January 12, 7:00 p.m.
Cecilia Harris, ceciliaharris@gmail.com

Wildlands Committee, Tuesday, January 20, 7:00 p.m.
Mike Murdock - Chair, murdock1@mindspring.com

RAIL Committee Meeting, Monday, January 26, 7:00 p.m.
Marcus Sharpe - Chair, marcusseattle@live.com

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

Other Events

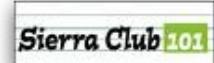


January 12th - MMGA "People's State of the State - Forward Together Teach In & Rally" - Moral Monday Georgia's legislative platform is bold and lifts our values and not our fears. Last year we made news; this year we want to make change. The coming legislative session is likely to be brutal. Our most vulnerable communities will surely face new attacks. Join us in Atlanta as we lift our agenda, collective voices and present our demands to the General Assembly. We must move forward together and not one step back. [Click here for details.](#)

January 14th - Atlanta Green Drinks - Looking to mingle with fellow environmentalists? The next Green Drinks will be at Hop City Craft Beer & Wine's brand new Krog Street Market location. Join us at the adjacent Hop City Bar, located just inside the market - 60 beers on tap + wines by the glass - and feel free to browse the rest of the market as you drink. Free entry, cash bar drinks. Casual, open format, all social. [Click here to RSVP.](#)



January 21st - Sierra Club & Beer - Every other month, Sierra Club and Beer provides a space and great beer from our new partner, [Park Tavern](#) in Piedmont Park, for meeting like-minded people, while learning something new. This month, the Sierra Club will discuss legislation under the Gold Dome. Come learn about the Sierra Club's annual Capitol Conservation Day. [Please RSVP Here!](#)



January 24th - Sierra Club 101 - You joined the Sierra Club to help protect the environment -- now what? Come learn about the Sierra Club and how to get involved in our local efforts. Open to members and non-members alike--bring a friend! Please [register here](#) so we can bring enough refreshments for everyone!



January 28th - Activist Training - This year, the Georgia Chapter will launch an activist training series. Youth and adults interested in taking actions on issues they care about, from local conflicts to national dilemmas, should attend. Attendees will receive training in leadership and advocacy skills, including practical tips on how to mobilize communities and influence decision makers when advocating for causes they care about. To RSVP, email [Brionté McCorkle](#).

January 31st - A Winter Hike from Vogel State Park to Blood Mtn - Join us for a winter hike from Vogel State Park up to Blood Mountain via the Coosa Loop, Duncan Ridge Trail and Appalachian Trails. We will have lunch on top of Blood Mtn at the CCC Shelter. We will return to Vogel via the same trails, but take the parallel Bear Hair trail with a short loop trail to the Lake Trahlyta overlook on the return. Bring gloves, warm hats, good boots and layers of clothing as we enjoy the woods in the winter. [Click here for more details and RSVP instructions.](#)





Save the Date! Feb 18 - Capitol Conservation Day - Come down to the Gold Dome and make your voice heard by joining the Georgia Water Coalition for its annual Conservation Day. The day kicks off with an issue briefing and tips on how to lobby, followed by a seasoned lobbyist showing you "the ropes" on the third floor of the Capitol. We'll get our picture taken and our strong presence will remind our lawmakers that their constituents care about environmental protection.



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