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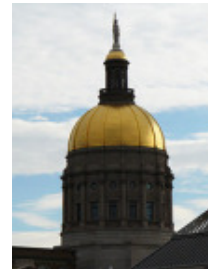
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Footnotes Issue #95: March 28th, 2015

Legislative Homestretch

This year at the Georgia Legislature has been a lively one for environmental issues. Here's an update on a few that we have been following since the session began:

[SB 101](#) restores the 25-foot buffer that protects our salt marsh which was eliminated by Georgia EPD in a memo last Earth Day. The bill as proposed contained a number of major loopholes, but the Georgia Water Coalition, working with their over 200 member groups fixed the two major exemptions. The Senate agreed to the changes late yesterday afternoon. Victory!



[SB 139](#) was a very controversial bill pushed by the chemical, grocery and restaurant lobby that we are seeing pop up in a number of states. As passed by the Senate, the bill would have prohibited local governments from regulating plastic bag and any other "auxillary container." Plastic bags can take up to 1,000 years to break down (and they never fully decompose, they just break into smaller and smaller pieces). A broad coalition of Democrats and Republicans voted this down on Friday; the proponents only got 67 of the 91 votes they needed to pass it. Please thank your State Representative if they voted "no" on this issue.

Another victory was the passage of the Solar Freedom bill, [HB 57](#), by a 51-0 vote in the Senate on Friday morning. The Solar Free-Market Financing Act will allow Georgia homeowners, businesses, and schools who want to install solar panels on their property to finance those projects instead coming with the tens of thousands out of pocket.

[HB 255](#) will prevent the state agencies from constructing LEED-certified buildings (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design). This legislation is the result of a long standing disagreement between the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) and the forestry industry over how LEED awards credits for timber products. Unfortunately, this bill passed the Senate today with a 41-7 vote.

The big ticket proposal of this session, [HB 170](#), The Transportation Funding Act will be decided over the last two legislative days this coming week. Despite months of platitudes of Georgia leaders saying that they've come around to the importance of public transportation, the AJC summed up the current bill with the headline, "[\\$1 billion for roads, not a dime for transit.](#)" As the Conference Committee negotiates the deal that will go to the Governor's desk, now is the time to make sure our elected officials make transportation policy that will keep Georgia competitive with our neighbors in Texas, Florida and North Carolina, who are rapidly building public transportation networks and setting themselves up for success in the 21st Century and beyond. [Please contact your legislators and ask them to support Public Transportation Funding in the HB 170 Compromise!](#)

Take Action!

You can stay up to date with all that's happening under the Gold Dome by following our [Legislative Blog!](#)

Take Action to Protect the Warwoman

The Forest Service's Chattooga River Ranger District has released a [Draft Environmental Assessment](#) for an extensive vegetation management project in the [Upper Warwoman](#)



Watershed on roughly 12,500 acres of federal land. The project will allow commercial logging on steep slopes, and it will involve burning, thinning, and the construction of new roads. The Forest Service says that these treatments will encourage oak and yellow pine regeneration by creating more open canopies in existing oak and yellow pine forests, but instead they threaten more runoff into a watershed already impaired by sedimentation and literally pave the way for more logging in the future. While the Forest Service has taken steps in the draft Environmental Assessment to acknowledge and limit the negative

environmental impacts of proposed actions in the Upper Warwoman Vegetation Management Project, we believe they can do more to protect our forest.

Please take action by Monday, April 6, 2015 to submit a written comment to the Forest Service urging them to do more to protect the Warwoman!

Take Action!

Sierra Club Meetings

Smart Energy Committee Meeting, Monday, April 6, 7:00 p.m.
Cecilia Harris, ceciliaharris@gmail.com

Wildlands & Wildlife Committee Meeting, Monday, April 20, 7:00 p.m.
Contact georgia.chapter@sierraclub.org

RAIL Committee Meeting, Monday, April 27, 7:00 p.m.
Brionté McCorkle, brionte.mccorkle@sierraclub.org

Don't live in Atlanta? Check out our Local Groups.

Other Events



April, all month long! - The 2015 John Muir Outings Series - Join us for our annual John Muir Outings Series as we Explore and Enjoy Georgia's beautiful wild places on each Weekend in April, and discuss how you can be a part of protecting them for generations to come. Based on the philosophy of the Sierra Club's famed founder, John Muir, these unique outings offer you the opportunity to learn about conservation efforts happening to protect the environment while also enjoying and exploring some of the most beautiful places Georgia has to offer. Join us,

along with our special guests, as we share our environmental visions of how to enable a grand and sustainable Georgia, one of which our founder would be proud. There is a \$25 suggested donation for each outing. [For additional details on each specific outing and to sign up, please click here.](#)

April 3rd - Sustainable Atlanta Roundtable: Electric Vehicles in Atlanta

Atlanta is the number two metropolitan market for electric vehicles (EVs) in the nation, largely due to state subsidies above the national average, electric power prices below the national average and access to carpool lanes on congested highways. Georgia Power's \$12 million "Get Current" program, which incentivizes property owners to construct new EV charging stations, is contributing to further market expansion. As the market for EVs continues to expand, so does the need for standard practices and protocols among EV drivers. Join us to discuss the market for EVs in Georgia as well as how we can foster EV driver behavior that will help the market flourish. [Click here to register.](#)



April 15th - ATL Raise Up National Day of Action - Join workers, students, community members, and clergy from across the South for one of the largest labor actions in history, as we converge on Atlanta. All over the country the #Fightfor15 is growing as more and more workers demand living wages, the right to unionize, justice, dignity and a future for all, not just the super rich. [Click here for more information.](#)

April 17th - 13th Annual EarthShare Earth Day Leadership

Breakfast - The Earth Day Leadership Breakfast on Friday, April 17, 2015 will be held at 200 Peachtree. Now in its 13th year, the Breakfast will feature a keynote speaker, environmental updates from several environmental leaders, displays from area environmental groups supported by EarthShare of Georgia and business networking. [Click here to register.](#)



April 19th - GreenLaw Earth Month Celebration - Join GreenLaw for its Earth Month Celebration at The Falls on Sunday, April 19 from 2:00 - 5:00 pm. There will be a brief presentation at 3:00 pm followed by a guided tour of the property on McConaughey Nature Preserve & Historic Site. For more information, [click here.](#)

April 22nd - 20th Annual EarthShare Earth Day Party - The Earth Day Party on Wednesday, April 22, 2015 is a celebration that includes food, music, and an Eco-silent auction and will be held at The Garden at Community Smith at the Renaissance Atlanta Midtown Hotel. The hotel welcomes guests with a trendy setting for music, the eco-silent auction and a locally sourced menu created by Chef Scott Keefer. We're bringing Earth Day to this urban retreat under the stars! [Click here to register.](#)



Looking for more? Check out our [Meetup Group](#) for even more events!

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