

Mountain State Sierran

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Marcellus Campaign Plan updated at Marcellus Academy

Jim Sconyers

Marcellus Academy 5 in late June was very successful, with more than 35 participants and many cogent and informative speakers. One goal of this year's Academy was to begin updating the Chapter's Marcellus Campaign plan.

With that goal in mind, planners set aside sessions for brainstorming among Academy participants. We recognized that many of the problems with the Marcellus gas boom are seemingly intractable, and not amenable to being addressed short of new legislation or regulation — not likely outcomes given the tenor of the current makeup of our Legislature.

Instead, we looked for issues or concerns satisfying a few basic criteria. We wanted to identify issues that are:

- significant in their impact
- urgent
- able to be addressed or solved at the grassroots level
- strongly likely to resonate with our citizens locally and statewide

Working from these ground rules, we brainstormed lists of issues. Finally, we narrowed these down to two that were felt to epitomize problems that satisfied those criteria very well. These will form the starting point of a new updated campaign plan.

Roads and Traffic

It is well known that gas drilling is having a destructive impact on roads in "Frackistan" — the region where drilling and fracking are most intense. Heavy traffic of massive trucks is crumbling many roads. In addition, huge numbers of these oversize trucks, often travelling in long convoys on narrow winding roads, create traffic jams of epic proportions, often completely blocking and closing roads for hours on end. Why does this matter? Because there are numerous documented cases where:

- school buses can't pick up children or return home
- fire and other emergency personnel can't respond to calls or even get out of their own bases
- citizens can't get to their jobs
- postal carriers can't deliver the mail
- much more

A task force was established to take on this issue. Its members hope to bring together the gas companies and those impacted by the congestion to ultimately develop common-sense protocols or guidelines, including scheduling and other aspects of the problem. Currently these folks are in a research phase, working to learn as much as possible about road bonding, required but unenforced driller traffic plans, and relevant highway department policies. The desired outcome is a Win-Win, for the citizens with improved planning that will result in repaired roads and open, safe travel conditions, and for the gas companies who suffer too many losses from accidents, and whose reputations have been badly tarnished in affected communities.



Trucks jam the road delivering hydrochloric acid and other frack fluid components to an active frack job in Mobley, WV.

Frackers Must Pay for Our Water

Here's a very short lesson from Marcellus 101. Horizontal Marcellus wells are fracked, in many cases more than once. Every time a well is fracked, an average of about 4 million or more gallons of water is used. The water is mixed with a cocktail of chemicals and pumped underground.

Where does that water come from? In too many cases it is sucked out of our pristine rivers and streams. It is then turned into industrial waste and disposed of as dangerous garbage. In effect, pure river water is destroyed. It is often pumped underground into disposal facilities. The water is forever removed from the water cycle you learned about in school. And here's the kicker — the frackers don't pay one thin dime for taking this water and ruining it.

But, wait a minute, that's my water! And your water! If someone is taking it and using it in their business and throwing it away, they owe us. It's our water, because West Virginia law says so.

According to the West Virginia Water Resources Protection Act (West Virginia Code 22-26-3), "The waters of the State of West Virginia are claimed as valuable public natural resources held by the state for the use and benefit of its citizens." Citizens — that's us.

We think it's high time these companies pay for our water. How about a modest proposal? Truly modest. How about requiring them to pay a penny a gallon? A trivial amount for these multimillion-dollar operators. They need

to pay for taking and using our most precious resource. After all, as our slogan says so eloquently, "Water Is Life." If you're going to use it and throw it away, you gotta pay for it. As citizens, we're tired of indirectly and subtly being required to pay the costs of fracking and drilling by blindly giving away such a vital resource to enhance the profits of the gas companies.

A second task force will be working on this modest proposal. Let us know if you have a caring legislator who could help.

(By the way: West Virginia needs every bit of revenue it can muster. Here we have a perfect opportunity — new revenue that can help balance the state's distressed budget.)

What You Can Do

We need your help. If you would like to become active on either — or both — of these issue groups, please contact:

Roads and Traffic: Jody Mohr, jodynic7@hughes.net
Paying for Water: Jim Sconyers, jimscon@gmail.com

Watch for developments at:
westvirginia.sierraclub.org
facebook.com/groups/marcelluswv

Volunteers needed

- The WV Chapter is searching for a volunteer to be our secretary for the Executive Committee. This individual attends four meetings per year in different locations around the state and takes minutes of the meetings, later distributing them by email. Interested? Contact Liz Wiles, liz_wiles@comcast.net.

- The Monongahela Group, which includes Monongalia, Preston, Marion, Harrison and Tyler counties, needs a volunteer membership chair. This job entails being trained to access the Sierra Club's online member database and sending out welcome notices by email or postcard to new members on a monthly basis. Interested? Check with Sally Wilts, sallywilts@yahoo.com.



Membership

It's a Cooperative Effort

Chuck Conner, Membership Chair

Over the past five years, our membership has grown by only 114 memberships. Growing our membership is less about raising funds to do our work (very important), but more about growing the numbers of activists who will take on the responsibilities necessary to strengthen our position in the work we do. As members, each of us needs to be involved in recruitment in some manner.

The national office of the Sierra Club has refined the Field Recruitment and Incentive Program (FRIP) from now until March of 2016. For every new member who joins the WV Chapter, we will keep the total amount of that membership fee (other than lifetime memberships). This is a wonderful opportunity to increase our funding base as well as bring in new supporters and continue to train new leadership.

To be part of the effort

- Give a membership to a friend.
- When special occasions such as birthdays, graduations or holidays come up, give a gift of a Sierra Club membership.
- When completing the membership application, write "5700" in the box at the bottom next to the number F94QB. This indicates the WV Chapter and will assure that the funds come to us.

To be even more effective

We need a few individuals to step up and take on specific, limited roles within membership. Here is what we need:

- Individuals to distribute extra newsletters to various locations near you, especially in areas of high use for outdoor recreation where potential supporters enjoy our state beauty and resources. Individuals are needed in the Northern and Eastern panhandles (1 or 2 each, depending on proximity to one another), in the Charleston area, Lewisburg area and other parts of the state if interested.

- An individual willing to identify publications and resources that target a more diverse population in the state, to increase the diversity within our membership. This individual would get our membership ads and other Sierra articles in those resources to better inform those populations of our work and its relevance to their lives.

- An individual to mail membership resources such as applications and other PR materials to state members who are attending events where we could potentially pick up new members (conferences, environmental gatherings, etc.).

Please contact me at chuckrayconner@yahoo.com if you are willing to take on one or more of these limited roles. It would be very much appreciated.

Another way we inform and engage our membership is through email. What we are encountering with new and current members is a reluctance to provide an email address. I know we are all inundated with more emails than we want, but email is the most effective way for us to inform our members of timely issues we are working on. I encourage everyone who has not provided this information to do so. We DO NOT misuse or abuse the privilege of access to your email. It is used strictly for Sierra Club information sharing.

EPA Issues Final Clean Power Plan Rule

Jim Kotcon

After 4.3 million public comments and a year of review, EPA issued a final rule on Aug. 3 to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from electric power plants. Fossil-fuel-fired power plants are the largest unregulated source of greenhouse gases and account for one-third of all domestic greenhouse gas emissions. This rule puts the U.S. firmly on track to address climate change. The full rule, more than 1,500 pages, is available at: epa.gov/airquality/cpp/cpp-final-rule.pdf.

While broadly similar to the draft rule proposed in June 2014, some important changes were made:

- The final rule will require a 32-percent cut in emissions nationwide by 2030, up from the 30-percent proposed in 2014.

- It allows states to request a 2-year extension (until 2018) to submit final plans for compliance.

- The final Clean Power Plan (CCP) proposes that natural gas generation remain stable, reduces the role of coal and nuclear power, and predicts a much expanded role for renewable sources of electricity.

- While energy efficiency is expected to remain a key part of compliance with the CPP, EPA dropped it from the list of "Building Blocks" required in state plans.

- Emissions reductions required from West Virginia's power plants increased from the proposed 19 percent in the draft to 29 percent in the final rule. EPA's final rule established more uniform goals among states. Details are available at: epa.gov/airquality/cpptoolbox/west-virginia.pdf.

Utility IRPs

West Virginia's electric utilities are already engaged in planning. A 2014 law requires utilities to submit an Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) to the WV Public Service Commission (PSC). An IRP predicts the expected demand for electricity over the next 10 years and describes how the utilities plan to meet that

demand. The PSC ordered the utilities to describe in their IRP how they will comply with the CPP, and it further requires the utilities to evaluate energy efficiency and demand-side management as cost-competitive tools to meet expected electricity demand. Thus, these IRPs (due by Dec. 31) will play a big role in determining West Virginia's energy future.

What Will WV Do Next?

Some Congressional Republicans have asked states NOT to cooperate with EPA, and to refuse to submit a SIP. As of this writing, Gov. Tomblin had not decided whether to submit a SIP. He has called the emissions limits "unattainable."

If West Virginia does not submit a SIP, or a request for an extension, by Sept. 6, 2016, EPA will impose a federal implementation plan. A proposal for a draft federal plan was also published Aug. 3 and will be finalized over the next year (available at: epa.gov/airquality/cpp/cpp-proposed-federal-plan.pdf).

West Virginia's utilities have resisted implementing energy efficiency programs at cost-effective levels. Under a federal implementation plan, utilities would have to meet emission limits, but are likely to minimize energy efficiency, which would cost consumers more.

Attorney General Patrick Morrisey has already promised to challenge the CPP in court. Most legal analysts suggest that EPA has a firm legal basis for the CPP.

Opportunities for WV?

While there are concerns that the CPP will result in electricity rate increases, much depends on how a SIP is written. The CPP encourages demand-side energy efficiency as the best way to reduce emissions, create jobs, and lower costs for consumers.

Reducing coal-fired electricity generation should also produce significant health benefits for West Virginians, with reductions in asthma attacks, heart disease, and several lung diseases. EPA estimates the CPP will

produce up to \$4 in health benefits for every dollar in costs.

Power Plus Plan

Even with these benefits, coal-mining communities can expect significant economic burdens. President Obama has proposed funding for these communities in a "Power Plus Plan." This would include money for job re-training, health and retirement benefits for miners, and economic diversification. A major initiative would allocate \$200 million per year for five years for mineland reclamation. This billion-dollar initiative would restore communities devastated by bad water and abandoned mines, while creating hundreds of jobs in the affected areas. The House Budget Committee has allocated only \$30 million for mine cleanups, and the Senate version has no money at all.

The Abandoned Mineland Fund is paid for by a tax on mined coal, so these are dollars already in the U.S. Treasury. All that is needed is to allocate them for their intended use. West Virginia's House representatives (McKinley, Mooney, and Jenkins) have so far declined to support bringing more of this money back to West Virginia.

What You Can Do

The WV Chapter Climate Action Team is planning for public participation in upcoming hearings and meetings. Get involved by contacting the Climate Action Team, at jkotcon@gmail.com.

- Write to your utilities or the PSC and ask that utilities be required to invest in energy efficiency as a major program to comply with the CPP. Ask that utilities reduce consumer demand by at least 1-2 percent per year.

- Write letters to the editor supporting the Clean Power Plan.

- Contact your Congressional representatives (addresses on back page) and ask that they fully fund mineland reclamation at \$200 million per year for five years.

Introducing the Club's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy

Liz Wiles

In May, the national Sierra Club Board of Directors approved a new Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) policy that provides a road map for integrating DEI practices into every aspect of the Club's and chapters' operations.

While the Club has a history of leading programs and projects that reach out to communities and demographics underrepresented among the Club's members, this new policy is a comprehensive approach that seeks to make DEI not just something else we do but something that is a part of the very fabric of how the Club operates.

Every member is encouraged to read the "Multi-Year Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Organization Plan" found on the new DEI resource page, sierraclub.org/dei.

The plan describes the importance of why the Club is doing this, how the plan was developed, how it will be implemented and the many resources and trainings available for each chapter to integrate

the policy into their own campaigns and practices. It also provides short-term and long-term goals and a timeline for meeting those goals.

Members also are encouraged to peruse the entirety of the DEI resource page to better understand the vision of the DEI.

For the WV Chapter to meet DEI goals, we are establishing a new committee that will be responsible for developing the chapter's own DEI plan based on the specific demographics and needs of our state. We are recruiting members now to be a part of this committee, and aim to have committee members located throughout the state to reflect the geographic diversity of the chapter.

If you're interested in joining or have questions about the DEI committee, please contact Chapter Chair, Liz Wiles, at liz_wiles@comcast.net.

It is only when we truly represent the communities in which we work that we will win on our issues. Please consider joining the DEI committee to ensure the future success of our chapter and to bring important environmental victories to the Mountain State.

Now join Sierra Club online

Go to our website, westvirginia.sierraclub.org, and click on "Join Sierra Club."

The West Virginia Chapter needs you! We need the financial support we get from new members, and we need new members who may one day decide to get involved in our critical conservation campaigns. Size matters — and we would like to grow our size.

A note about membership: When you join, you will become a member of the national Sierra Club, the West Virginia Chapter and, if you live in the designated region, the Monongahela Group. One payment covers all.

The Chapter has a Place for Every Member

At the recent Marcellus Academy and WVSC Chapter Retreat, I was reminded of how the Sierra Club is different from most national environmental organizations. While the Club has national campaigns and programs, each chapter is (somewhat) autonomous. Chapters choose the issues to work on based on local and regional environmental impacts. This structure allows for the engagement of grassroots volunteers in active roles that make a difference in the lives of their families, friends and communities, while also giving them the name recognition and political clout the Sierra Club offers.

This structure also offers a variety of opportunities for members to get involved in the chapter based on what they like to do and what their strengths are.

Is there a specific environmental issue or degradation that directly affects you? Do you want to learn more about or help raise awareness and develop actions on an issue? Our chapter has several campaign committees you could join: Marcellus Campaign (includes gas well development and infrastructure,

pipelines, development), Energy Efficiency Campaign, Beyond Coal to Clean Energy Campaign, and the Climate Action Team.

Each campaign offers different roles for committee members, ranging from committee coordinators who help organize conference calls and meetings, disseminate notes and keep track of action items, to outreach coordinators who engage local communities through workshops, open houses and events tied to specific actions.

Are you a policy wonk? Do you like to engage political leaders on legislative action? Join our Political Committee that develops and then lobbies for specific actions and legislation at the state and local level. This committee also develops the questionnaire that is used for Chapter-specific endorsements of candidates during election years.

Are you a people-person who wants to raise awareness of the WV Sierra Club's important work throughout the state and engage others to become active? Join the Membership Committee and attend local events, fairs and festivals with a chapter

"information and action" table (see related article for more specifics).

Do you like to hike, kayak, ski or otherwise be outdoors as much as possible? Train as an Outings Leader so you can connect others with nature, instilling a passion for the state's natural beauty and a desire to help protect and preserve it.

Are you a strong writer or photographer, or have artistic skills? You can help write and edit articles for this newsletter, write email action alerts, write letters to the editor or design flyers, brochures and banners for our different campaigns.

Do you want to see the chapter better reflect all West Virginia communities and demographics? Do you want to see more environmental victories throughout the state? Join our new Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committee to expand the work and impact of the chapter (see related article).

Whether you have a lot of time to offer or just a little, these and many other opportunities are just waiting for you to take the next step. For more information, contact specific committee or program chairs listed on the back page of this newsletter.

Hard Truths from Two Churches

Frank E. Grant, Ph.D.

Two churches made headlines for vastly different reasons. Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, S.C., was the scene of murderous abuse and racial violence where nine people died. And the pope of the Catholic Church issued a *chamade* — a call for discussion and dialog — regarding our species' abuse of the earth.

Murder and environmental abuse are not typical religious topics; some figure them to be only political (and thus perhaps more easily dismissed) rather than the moral and ethical topics they are.

It is estimated that there is at least one gun mass-killing in America every 34 days. President Obama said in response to the AME tragedy that the United States is "awash in guns." Is it luck that these gun rampages do not occur more often?

Environmental abuse occurs every day. Our species is the abuser; the more highly industrialized we are, the more we destroy our fragile environment. It is of no use to blame James Watt and his steam engine, which signaled the advent of the Industrial Revolution: He did a good thing by making it possible for people to work outside their homes and farms, to manufacture goods more cheaply than ever before. However, this is one revolution that has gotten way out of hand!

Of more than 20 recorded extinctions, five are considered major. It is thought that homo sapiens is in danger of fomenting a sixth, during which our species may become extinct because of ecosystem destruction. Currently, it is estimated that some 20,000 species of plants and animals are at risk of vanishing from the earth, never to return. In our busy lives, we may not see this, but we all have witnessed Katrina, Sandy, wildfires, drought, glacier melt, sea rise and vast floating islands of the world's refuse — if only on the evening news.

What to make of the pope's call for dialog on the environment? Industrial abusers, and legislators bought by them, will deny it. One Congress member published a book, "Hoax," meant to denigrate global warming. It is a great title: His book, after all, is the hoax.

And a local coal-paid executive suggested that the pope visit West Virginia coalfields to see how environmentally sound they are. I can only assume that the invitation will not include a fly-over of a mountain devastated by explosive "removal" techniques. This is nonsense: If you have been to a coal town, then you know how hardscrabble it is. With the diminishing resource of coal in this state, the coal companies are simply pulling out, leaving miners to fend for themselves in the one-industry towns the companies created to keep other, more sustainable, development out. Coal has been excellent at taking, a failure at giving back.

What do you think will happen as the result of the murders at

the AME Church? So far, the legislators we chose to protect us and make our lives better have been quick to talk about removal of Confederate flags from government property. On the other hand, they have been slow to talk about gun proliferation and control. This is not because of public sentiment: More than 80 percent of us believe that background checks would be a good thing. It is because of special interests buying legislators as though they were commodities. We witness their success with every murder.

We must elect legislators who will enact laws to keep guns out of the hands of the most dangerous — and how do we know who they are without background checks? It also seems reasonable to have laws to prohibit weapons of war from being carried on our streets. Laws like these are completely within the scope of our constitutional right to bear arms. And, they will keep us safer than we have been.

It may be said that environmental and human violence is part of our 200,000-year evolutionary nature, part of "survival of the fittest." Except that it isn't.

Homo sapiens are special in that we use language and thought to make things better. We are inherently creative. Once a problem is identified, we can solve it — if there is the will.

The pope asked us to look hard — very hard — at ourselves and at what we are doing to the environment. The AME church murders call for us to look hard — very hard — at what we are doing to each other. Some AME survivors have already expressed forgiveness of the shooter. Is that not special? Our planet is also forgiving — but extinctions take a lot longer to make right.

Where to start? The hard truths wrought by the encyclical and by the shooting must be considered by the affected churches — and by all of us. William Penn wrote, "Love is the hardest lesson." One commonality of churches is the theme of love. Does a church love through upholding the commandment not to kill, while still celebrating those who make war? Does the Vatican show love by not sharing its fabulous wealth, or by not supporting population control? Do churches love by prohibiting same-sex marriages (even though they are newly legal in all 50 states)? Does "love" include ignoring a discussion of white privilege, of male privilege?

Any one of us cannot solve extraordinary problems like murder and environmental abuse alone, but we can be effective if we band together. Unions of people are a force that even a lobby-enriched legislator cannot ignore. Groups are formed in families, communities, churches, in clubs and organizations. "Speak truth to power" is something Quakers preach. It is difficult to do. However, the worst thing is to do nothing: that makes us less than the humans we are, and victims of the basest and most selfish amongst us.

Dr. Frank E. Grant is a psychologist living in Charleston.

Book Review

All the Wild That Remains: Edward Abbey, Wallace Stegner and the American West

by David Gessner

Review by Richard Mier, Martinsburg

This book by David Gessner is a perfect trifecta. Not only is it a well-researched literary biography of Edward Abbey and Wallace Stegner, it is also an extended and thoughtful essay on the American West and its environmental plight (drought, drilling, overpopulation). Plus it is an entertaining record of the extensive road trip Gessner took through the West while researching the book, visiting people and places Abbey and Stegner knew.

Abbey and Stegner are of course seminal, both as writers and as combatants in a variety of environmental battles to preserve the West, which both of them loved so much. They were very different, both as writers and as people. Stegner was prolific, prophetic, a workaholic. He won the Pulitzer Prize for "Angle of Repose" in 1972 and the National Book Award in 1977 for "The Spectator Bird." He is the author of the now-famous quote about our national parks: "the best idea we ever had." Abbey was something else completely, mercurial and notorious. We reviewed his singular masterpiece, "Desert Solitaire," in the Nov/Dec 2013 issue of this newsletter.

Their lives intersected only once, in California, at Stanford's Creative Writing Program that Stegner had founded in 1946. Other Stegner students, in addition to Abbey, included Ken Kesey, Wendell Berry and Larry McMurtry. Abbey stayed only one semester, however, perhaps, according to Stegner, "too lonesome for the desert."

We get a chance to meet most of the important players as Gessner takes us on his travels, either face to face (Wendell Berry) or through their writings (Ken Kesey). But Gessner casts his net widely and we also meet Ed McClanahan, one of the original Merry Pranksters of Ken Kesey and an office mate of Stegner's at Stanford, Terry Tempest Williams, whose book "Refuge" was reviewed here in the Jan/Feb 2014 issue, and a myriad of other lively people, all with important things to say about the Desert West. Also Mark Twain, Robinson Jeffers, Thomas Wolfe, Whitman, Emerson and Montaigne — a wide net indeed.

It's worth mentioning, however, that this is a down-to-earth book. It is a writer's book and a very personal one. The emotional resonance that Gessner displays toward the western landscape he travels through has something of Abbey's transcendent writing in "Desert Solitaire" and a lot of Stegner's truth-telling as well. Without mentioning it much, the testicular cancer he is recovering from as he sets out on his journeys seems to inform his perspective. The wildness of the title is not all outside. He writes about our need for inside wildness as well.

Abbey's and Stegner's writing is, as Gessner says, "not far short of miraculous.... Through the simple act of reading... we can suddenly be back in the desert or at the pond." For miracles like this we should be grateful to Stegner and Abbey, of course, but also to David Gessner for writing this book.

Chapter and Group Events

Solar Open House on Oct. 3, near Spencer, WV

Learn how to produce your own energy at a Solar Open House from 1-4 p.m. Oct. 3, at Hickory Ridge, a few miles from Spencer, in Roane County, WV.

"Be the change you wish to see in the world." Many readers of this newsletter would love to see a world run solely on clean, renewable energy, but nevertheless continue to pay large sums of money each month to an energy industry that relies on fossil fuels. Do we have a choice? Since the community of Hickory Ridge was founded in 1975, residents have demonstrated their commitment to peace and sustainable living.

Robin and Brenda Wilson use a grid-tied array of 16 solar panels to power their home, while neighbors Mary Wildfire and Don Alexander are off the grid with just four panels. The panels are field mounted and uniquely designed to change angles each season.

Those who want a hands-on experience will have the chance to help Robin adjust the panels for their fall setting. Don will be happy to discuss the more technical aspects of power supplies and micro inverters while Mary gives an introduction to solar power in laymen's terms.

Food production is also an important part of energy independence. Free-range chickens roam the property and there are extensive fruit and vegetable gardens. Discuss organic techniques while enjoying homemade apple cider and refreshments.

Everyone interested in solar energy and sustainable living is invited.

For pictures and information about the solar panels, visit spectrumz.com/photos-low-cost-solar-panel-rack.

For directions to the Solar Open House, contact Mary Wildfire 304-927-4970, wildfire@spectrumz.com, or Robin Wilson 304-927-5833, robin@wvcag.org.



Like us on Facebook to get more up-to-date information about our "doings."

Sierra Club West Virginia
Mon Group of the WV Sierra Club
WVSC Marcellus Shale Campaign

Please contact the Editor for submission guidelines or advertising rates. Contributions to the newsletter may be sent to the Editor at:

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Loren Howley, left, holds the posthumous award for her husband, Bill Howley, alongside award winners Ann Devine-King and Laura Yokochi, at the 2015 Chapter Retreat, at Camp Horseshoe. The award plates were hand-crafted by area potter Gail Anderson.

2015 Chapter Retreat Wrap-up

Liz Wiles

The WVSC held its biannual retreat July 31-Aug. 2, at Camp Horseshoe, near Parsons in Tucker County. This was a great opportunity for new and active members alike to meet and get to know each other better, learn about new Sierra Club initiatives and specific WV Chapter campaigns and discover strategies they can use to support the chapter's work.

Retreat attendees were introduced to the Club's new Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) initiative, approved by the Board of Directors in May, and began the conversation on how best to implement the policy within the WV Chapter. Attendees learned about two new strategies in West Virginia to make solar power more affordable for both homeowners and community organizations: the Solar Holler funding initiative (solarholler.com) and solar co-ops. These strategies were discussed along with a variety of inexpensive, sustainable living choices that work to decrease not only the amount of electricity we use in our homes, but also the amount of energy used to produce consumer goods.

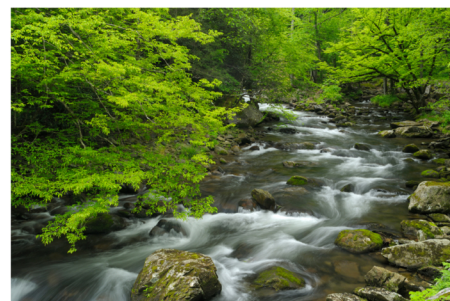
On Sunday, Michael Barrick, with the *Appalachian Chronicle*, led a discussion on Pope Francis' encyclical on climate change, focusing on questions the encyclical raises for those of us working in West Virginia and greater Appalachia within the environmental and social justice movements. This was also an opportunity to start looking at ways the Chapter can engage with diverse religious communities throughout the state on the issues of the environment, poverty and income inequality, and health.

There also were opportunities for members to learn more about the chapter's Energy Efficiency campaign, our Outings program, and online resources available to members and volunteers through the Clubhouse website.

On Saturday evening, the chapter honored some of our heroes. Loren Howley accepted a posthumous award for her husband, Bill Howley, who helped all of us to understand energy issues and helped to defeat the PATH power line. Ann Devine-King was honored for her outstanding work as an outings leader and for leading work on our Adopt-a-Trail at Coopers Rock State Forest for the past five years. Laura Yokochi was awarded for her diligent work as the volunteer coordinator for our Energy Efficiency Campaign. The award plates presented to each honoree were hand-crafted by area potter Gail Anderson.

Evening entertainment included a Friday screening of a portion of a new documentary highlighting the impacts of Marcellus gas development in West Virginia, "In the Hills and Hollers," by Keely Kernan. Graham Smith-White delighted the group on Saturday with his music inspired by nature and powered by solar energy.

A wonderful weekend filled with inspiring people, blessed by perfect weather in a magnificent West Virginia setting — thanks to all who attended!



With your help we can clean up our water

Sierra Club Water Sentinels are the first line of defense of America's waters. We live on the water planet. However, water is a finite resource with only about 1% of the world's water actually being available for human consumption. Water pollution & over-use are threatening both the quality & quantity of our water resources at an alarming rate.

Keep our water safe. Join Sierra Club.

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____
Email _____

Check enclosed. Please make payable to Sierra Club
Please charge my: Visa Mastercard AMEX

Cardholder Name _____
Card Number _____ Exp. Date ____/____/____
Signature _____

| Membership Categories | Individual | Joint |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Special Offer | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 15 | N/A |
| Standard | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 39 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 49 |
| Supporting | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 75 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 100 |
| Contributing | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 150 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 175 |
| Life | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 1000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 1250 |
| Senior | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 25 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 35 |
| Student | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 25 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 35 |
| Limited Income | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 25 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 35 |

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or visit our website: www.sierraclub.org

WVU's SSC has big plans for upcoming school year

Amanda Stoner

West Virginia University's Student Sierra Coalition (SSC) has developed a strong base of dedicated members who have helped increase public awareness about environmental problems and advocate for the environment in our local and state governments. Many members of the SSC are outdoor enthusiasts who love going on hiking and camping adventures. We believe that one of our most important objectives is to acquaint new members with the beautiful public lands and natural resources that we work to protect. Each year, WVU's SSC continues to grow. As we begin the 2015-'16 school year, we look forward to launching several new projects and embarking on new adventures. Here are some of the things we hope to work on this year:

- We kicked off this school year with two trips in August: a hiking trip to the Endless Wall Trail in Fayetteville, WV, on Aug. 8-9, and an overnight camp at Dolly Sods, on Aug. 29-30, to introduce interested incoming freshman to the Sierra Club.

- We plan to begin a rain barrel fundraising project. We will build rain barrel kits to sell to the community for \$55 at the farmers market and other events. Rain barrels connect to gutters on homes to collect and store rain water so it can be recycled. If anyone is interested in purchasing a rain barrel, please contact us.

- Throughout the fall, we will partner with Morgantown High School's Green Initiative Club and the City of Morgantown to increase Morgantown's recycling output and educate citizens about recycling to reduce the rate of contamination in the city's recyclable collections.

- The SSC will discuss issues surrounding the Atlantic Coast Pipeline and the Hands Across our Land movement, a movement concerned about the industrialization of rural America and the environmental degradation that would accompany the pipeline. The projected path of the pipeline would cross the Appalachian Trail, the George Washington and Monongahela National Forests, and the Blue Ridge Parkway.

- We plan to discuss the advocacy efforts needed to ban microbeads in West Virginia. Microbeads are the tiny plastic exfoliators found in many facial scrub products. Sewage treatment facilities are unable to filter them out of wastewater, and they make their way into our oceans and rivers, where they never break down. They act as sponges for toxins and are extremely detrimental to animals that ingest them, and that then transfer the toxins up the food chain.

WVU's SSC is a student organization that works to increase public awareness of local, regional, national, and global environmental issues while encouraging our peers, faculty and administration to adopt sustainable practices and limit the impact we, as students and citizens, have on our environment.

SSC is open to students from all majors and backgrounds interested in learning about environmental issues. The group meets at 7 p.m. every Tuesday during the school year, in Room 106 Oglebay Hall, on WVU's downtown campus.

Info: Amanda Stoner, amstoner@mix.wvu.edu.

Mountains and Glens of Ireland Call

My wife, Sue, and I had a wonderful opportunity to travel to the Republic of Ireland (Ireland) and Northern Ireland (NI) this summer for two weeks. We'd traveled to Ireland on our honeymoon and wanted to return to see some of our cherished places, plus some new ones. We were planning to go in two more years to celebrate our 20th anniversary, but with the U.S. dollar being so strong against the Euro and prices approximately 30 percent lower than last year, we jumped at the opportunity.

We traveled mostly along the coast, immersing ourselves in Ireland's beautiful green countryside and small-town landscapes. As we drove on the little back roads, I started noticing several similarities between Ireland and my beautiful home state of West Virginia. Along with being about the same size, both are ruggedly beautiful, mostly rural, and very diverse in their topography.

There are two main ways to tour Ireland: by bus (usually with a tour group) or by renting a car and driving oneself. For me, renting a car was the only choice. I understand that it is not for everyone, especially the faint of heart. In Ireland, as well as the United Kingdom (England, Wales, Scotland, and NI), drivers travel on the "other" side of the road, and the steering wheel is on the other side of the car. To be honest, it was a bit challenging, but certainly well worth it.

This was one of the most diverse vacations we've ever taken. We visited multiple castles (even having afternoon tea in one of them!), three national parks, multiple nature reserves, and World Heritage sites. We also

visited some old churches, ancient ruins, and even a famous old whiskey distillery. The Irish would want you to notice that the Irish version ends with "e-y." Among our favorite things we checked off of our "must do" list were taking boat rides in the North Atlantic. One such trip was around the hauntingly high west-coast cliffs of Slieve Lieg; another was out to Rathlin Island where we were amazed by the variety and incredible number of sea birds. Being the birders that we are, we were delighted to add about 30 new birds to our "Life Lists."

Most of our meals were taken in tearooms and pubs, where we were able to enjoy lots of fresh Atlantic seafood and taste many new dishes and desserts. While in the pubs, we enjoyed live Irish music. We enjoyed learning Irish drinking songs in their authentic settings. As soon as the locals in one of the pubs found out we were from West Virginia, the musicians sang and played "Country Roads" in our honor. It seems it's a favorite around the world. The whole place broke out singing. It gave me goose bumps.

When traveling, it always comes back to the people. Irish folk often asked us, "What brought you to Ireland?" We always answered, "The country is so beautiful, but most of all, it's the people." In my opinion (and not just because Sue and I have Irish ancestors), I believe the Irish are some of the nicest and friendliest people in the world.

Our travels took us to some amazing and breathtaking places. Everywhere we looked could have been a beautiful painting. We drove over 1,000 miles, took at least five times that many pictures, met some of the kindest and friendliest people

on Earth, made a lot of lasting memories, and experienced more than I can mention in this article. All in all, it is the experiences we have with friendly people and exploring the awesomeness of the outdoors that makes any trip special.

If you have the opportunity to travel abroad, I highly recommend a trip to Ireland. To find national and international trips organized by Sierra Club and led by trained outings leaders, go to sierraclub.org/outings. For something closer to home, sign up for one of the outings listed here. We have fun and friendly people, too.

Outings List

Sat, Sep 12 Workshops: Nature Interpretation, North Bend SP

not rated — Join WV Master Naturalists for this fun, interactive, hands-on, two-part workshop on Nature Interpretation and Names/Classification/Dichotomous keys at North Bend State Park. The workshops are free and open to members and nonmembers. Please pre-register with the leader; seating is limited. Meet at the park lodge lobby. Contact the outing leader for further directions, questions and start times.

Leader: Russ Flowers, 304-482-7919, russwvu@gmail.com

Nearest town: Harrisville, WV

Web info: northbendsp.com

Sun, Sep 13 Day Hike: Sleepy Creek WMA

rated moderate — This will be a 7-mile hike through the Sleepy Creek Wildlife Management Area, including a portion of the Tuscarora Trail with one very steep, long section. We will begin in the Woods Resort development. Meet at the Woods Resort Golf course parking area at 9:30 a.m. Please register with trip leader.

Leader: Pam Peitz, 240-818-655, pspeitz@hotmail.com

Nearest town: Hedgesville, WV

Web info: wvexplorer.com/attractions/wildlife-management-areas/sleepy-creek-wildlife-management-area

Sat, Sep 26 Day Hike: Olson Tower/Blackwater Canyon Area

rated moderate — Join us for this 6-mile out-and-back hike on the Canyon Rim Trail, starting near Olson Lookout Tower, with great views of Blackwater Canyon and solitude. Contact leader for more details.

Leader: Ann Devine-King, 304-594-2636, atdtking@gmail.com

Nearest town: Parsons, WV

Web info: Day and Overnight Hikes: West Virginia's Monongahela National Forest-Johnny Molloy-Google Books; Monongahela National Forest-Olson Observation Tower

Sat, Oct 10 Workshops: Recording & Sharing Nature / Terrestrial Habitats, Ohio River Islands NWR

not rated — Join WV Master Naturalists for this fun, interactive, hands-on, two-part workshop on Recording & Sharing Nature and Terrestrial Habitats, at the Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge. The workshops are free and open to members and nonmembers. Please pre-register with the leader; seating is limited. Bring bag lunch (fridge and microwave available). Workshop is from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Meet at refuge headquarters in Williamstown at 8:30 a.m. Contact the outing leader for further directions and questions.

Leader: Russ Flowers, 304-482-7919, russwvu@gmail.com

Nearest town: Williamstown, WV

Web info: fws.gov/northeast/ohioriverislands

Sat, Oct 10 Day Hike: Valley Falls SP

rated moderate to strenuous — Join us for this 7-mile hike at Valley Falls State Park. We will do a loop through the park and stop to see the waterfalls along the way. There are steep, rocky sections that can be a bit tricky. As such, sturdy, waterproof footwear is highly recommended. Trekking poles can be helpful; bring snack and water. Contact outing leader for start time and rendezvous location.

Leader: Aaron Vedock, 540-805-0019, amvedock@hotmail.com

Nearest town: Fairmont, WV.

Web info: valleyfallsstatepark.com

Sat, Oct 24 Day Hike: Keys Gap to Harpers Ferry, on the Appalachian Trail

rated moderate — This will be a 6.1-mile hike starting at Keys Gap and ending in historic Harpers Ferry. We will leave vehicles at each end. There is significant elevation change and a section with rocky footing. Meet at the Keys Gap Trailhead at 10 a.m. Please register with trip leader.

Leader: Pam Peitz, 240-818-655, pspeitz@hotmail.com

Nearest town: Harpers Ferry, WV.

Web info: backpacker.com/trips/west-virginia/appalachian-trail-keys-gap-to-harpers-ferry

Sat, Nov 14 Autumn Adopt-a-Trail Service Outing: Coopers Rock SF

rated easy hiking, easy to moderate work intensity — Join the fun with the fall trail maintenance for Sierra Club's adopted Intermediate Cross-Country Ski Trail at Coopers Rock South. Fall clean-up emphasizes clearing fallen leaves, drainage restoration and trail clearing along a 1.25-mile loop. Volunteers should wear sturdy boots and carry work gloves, water, and snacks. Useful tools to bring are long-handled pruners, rakes, and pointed shovels. Adults and adolescents are invited to help. A parent or legal guardian must accompany those under 18. Volunteers will be required to sign a standard Sierra Club Liability Waiver and a DNR Volunteer Work Program Agreement. Please pre-register with the outing leader.

Leader: Ann Devine-King, 304-594-2636, atdtking@gmail.com

Nearest town: Morgantown, WV

Web info: coopersrockstateforest.com:coopersrock.org

Sierra Club Liability Policies For Chapter Outings

Sierra Club outings are open to everyone, members and non-members alike. Each outing is intended to be a wholesome, safe, and enjoyable experience in the outdoors. Participants must have suitable clothing, gear, and stamina, and are encouraged to select activities that match their individual abilities for outdoor adventures.

The Club offers a variety of outings from "easy" to "moderate" to "strenuous" that suit all activity levels. The difficulty of each outing is clearly designated in the announcement. Reservations are generally not required unless noted, but the outing leader may be contacted in advance for questions about the terrain, the difficulty and recommended gear.

Activities are normally held "rain or shine," but may be postponed at the leader's discretion for safety reasons in the event of inclement weather. Participants are reminded that all out-door activities carry a degree of risk, and some take place in locations where professional emergency medical aid may be two or more hours away. People with health concerns should consult a physician to determine the advisability of participating in these or similar activities. The leader is responsible for the safety of all participants, and has the final authority to decide whether or not an individual may participate on a specific outing. Sierra Club safety policy requires that helmets be worn on bicycling outings, and a personal flotation device (PFD) be worn when using personal watercraft such as kay-aks or canoes.

Unless noted in the announcement, Club outings are intended for adults. Children and

dogs are not normally permitted, unless an outing is so designated. Minors (under 18 years of age) must be accompanied by a parent or a legal guardian, or they must have both 1) a signed permission slip, and 2) the leader's prior consent to participate in the Club outing. Sierra Club outings officially begin and end at the trailhead.

Travel to the official starting point and back, even from an advertised meeting place, is the sole responsibility of each participant. While the Club encourages car-pooling, such arrangements are strictly between the riders and the drivers, and are not a part of the outing. Participants assume full responsibility and liability for all risks associated with such travel.

All participants on Sierra Club outings are required to sign a standard liability waiver, which can be viewed on the web at www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms or by calling 415-977-5630.

The Sierra Club does not charge for chapter outings, although payment of park entrance fees, a share of campsite rental costs, permit fees, equipment rental charges, etc. may be required from the participants. The Sierra Club practices "leave-no-trace" trail techniques, including hiking and camping on durable surfaces, minimizing campfire impacts, packing out all trash, respecting wildlife, being considerate of other visitors, and leaving the environment as it was found.

The Sierra Club's California Seller of Travel identification number is CST 2087766-40. Registration as a seller of travel does not constitute approval by the State of California.



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cglagola@mail.wvnet.edu
(Put name of recipient under subject)

Messages for legislators can be left at:
1-877-565-3447 or 304-347-4836

Mail address:

Member, WV Senate or
House of Delegates
Bldg 1
State Capitol Complex
Charleston, WV 25305

website: www.legis.state.wv.us
has contact information for all state legislators.

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