

M Mountain State Sierran

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An Unprecedented Plethora of Pipeline Proposals

FERC says, “Business as usual”

Jim Kotcon, Chapter Energy Chair

Because of the dramatic number of recent proposals for gas pipelines, the Sierra Club joined 31 other environmental groups in October in calling for the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to conduct a “Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement” (PEIS). Several political leaders have joined the call. The goal is a single, comprehensive regional review of direct, indirect and cumulative impacts of the numerous pipeline proposals facing the Mid-Atlantic region.

Although no 42-inch pipelines currently exist in West Virginia, three proposals are under consideration and more pipelines up to 36-inch diameter are also being proposed. A PEIS would assess how many, if any, are actually needed and provide general guidelines as to how to minimize environmental impacts. This approach would help citizens respond to new pipelines, and would also help companies by clarifying the requirements and expectations of federal agencies.

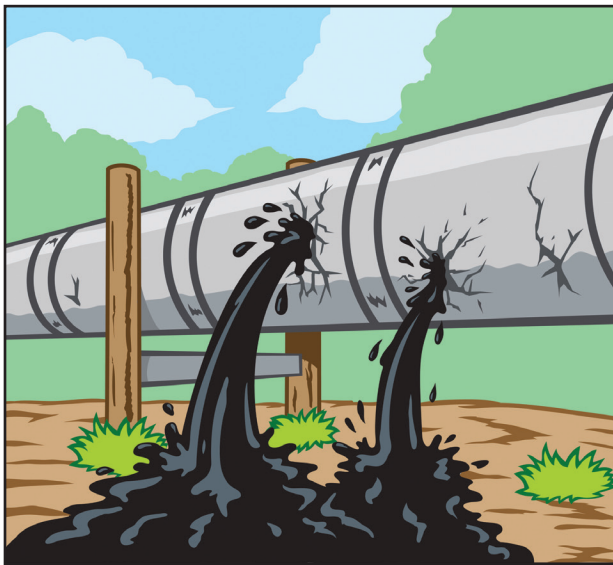
But in a recent letter, FERC Chairman Norman Bay wrote:

“Because the Commission will not direct the development of the gas industry’s infrastructure, either on a broad regional basis or in the design of specific projects and does not engage in regional planning exercises that would result in the selection of one project over another, Commission staff has not determined that it would be appropriate to prepare a programmatic environmental impact statement.” (Yes the grammar really is that bad).

FERC appears to be saying that they can cover the relevant issues by looking at cumulative impacts of related actions in an individual EIS for each pipeline. Doing a separate EIS for each pipeline means that the first one approved will impact all later pipeline decisions, so this approach by FERC rewards the proposal that gets done first, rather than the proposal with the fewest environmental impacts. That also suggests that FERC will likely stick to their traditional minimalist approach to analyzing issues piecemeal, rather than taking a “hard look” at the overall regional needs and issues.

Problems with the ACP

One of the first applications submitted was for the Atlantic Coast Pipeline (ACP) by Dominion and three partners on Sept. 18, 2015. This line would extend from Harrison County through the Monongahela National Forest, across Virginia, and into North Carolina. The purported purpose is to serve new gas-fired power plants and retail customers, although many fear that gas exports are the eventual goal.



Troubles began shortly after the filing when the proposed North Carolina power plant was downsized, lessening demand for the gas. But major snafus developed with the Monongahela National Forest and the WV-DNR.

Soil surveys discredited

A Nov. 5 letter from the U.S. Forest Service to FERC complained about ACP’s use of improper soil survey protocols and unqualified staff. In essence, in spite of repeated requests by the Forest Service, ACP failed to follow required sampling protocols and attempted to mislead the Forest Service regarding the qualifications of the field workers doing the soil sampling. The Forest Service had clearly identified the need for a professional soil scientist to supervise the work and had repeatedly asked to review the qualifications of field personnel before the work was done. ACP did not submit resumes until after the work was done, and the only professional soil scientist identified by ACP later stated that she had not been in the field, had not been retained by ACP at the time of the sampling, and had no knowledge of the work done. The U.S. Forest Service reported these deceptions by ACP to FERC in a Nov. 5 letter and indicated that they could not rely on any of the data and recommends that FERC not use those data to evaluate the project effects on National Forest Service lands.

Bat surveys also discredited

The WV-DNR reported in a letter to FERC that bat surveys purported to be conducted for Dominion’s “Supply Header Project” were also inadequate. The Supply Header Project is a series of pipelines in northern West Virginia that would gather gas to be shipped via the ACP. Portions of a required survey for endangered bat species were conducted outside the proposed pipeline corridor. The consultants recommended that foot surveys of the corridor be conducted, but none were. And while the company’s application to FERC indicated that no caves or mine portals likely to support bats were reported, the application missed a known bat cave that lies less than 1,500 feet from the proposed route. WV-DNR concludes the bat survey data “should be deemed insufficient to develop an Environmental Impact Statement...”

New ACP route requested by FERC

In a Dec. 4 letter to ACP, FERC asked ACP to consider an alternative route that would use more of existing utility corridors. FERC also asked for additional information on literally hundreds of additional issues, and indicated that their EIS could not be completed until this information was filed.

Of particular concern, while FERC is asking for detailed information on impacts to wildlife, water quality, land use and historic structures, there does not appear to be any additional information requested regarding indirect or cumulative impacts, or on the impact of the pipeline on additional gas well development or on releases of greenhouse gases.

Mountain Valley Pipeline

The Mountain Valley Pipeline (MVP application to FERC was filed Oct. 24.) MVP is being proposed by EQT and four partners and would run 301 miles from northern WV into southern Virginia. Various environmental groups also asked FERC to include the MVP in a PEIS, but FERC also has declined that request.

Greenhouse gases?

Many pipeline project proponents claim that the EPA’s Clean Power Plan will drive a switch from coal to natural gas for electric generation, but EPA indicates that their Plan does not require any new natural gas infrastructure. The Sierra Club has also adopted a position opposing major new natural gas infrastructure because it locks in continued use of fossil fuels for at least 30-50 years, at a time when we must be investing in clean energy. While many proponents insist that gas produces fewer greenhouse gas emissions than coal, they fail to account for losses from leaking wells and pipelines and the need to end most fossil fuel use by 2050.



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

Push is on to get state's only national monument over finish line

Birthplace of Rivers on Obama's short list for action in 2016

Mike Costello

With one year remaining in his term, President Obama is expected to make some big moves on the conservation front. Those actions will certainly include permanent protections for special places on federal public lands. Which of those lands become protected remains to be seen, but there's a strong possibility the Monongahela National Forest could soon host the only wildlands national monument in the Eastern United States.

An unprecedented coalition of West Virginia business owners, sportsmen, local elected officials and conservationists has pushed to make the Birthplace of Rivers National Monument a strong candidate for protection by the Obama Administration. Through executive action, President Obama has protected more land and waters than any other president — more than 260 million acres. He has used the Antiquities Act to either create or expand national monuments 19 times.

For years, the Birthplace of Rivers National Monument has been on the short list of areas considered for designation by President Obama. The proposed monument — including the Cranberry Wilderness, Falls of Hills Creek, Highland Scenic Highway, Cranberry Glades and Tea Creek Backcountry — would be the only national monument of its kind in the East. The monument is projected to increase visitation for countless recreation activities, supporting local economies in need of a boost. The designation would provide stronger protection against expanded industrial development and would enhance

current efforts to restore native trout streams and high elevation spruce forests in the area.

"The Obama Administration places a high priority on supporting conservation efforts that encourage a strong recreation and restoration economy," Forest Service Chief Thomas Tidwell wrote in a 2013 letter to the Pocahontas County Commission.

West Virginia's efforts got a tremendous boost this fall, when Birthplace of Rivers landed on a short list of five of the nation's top conservation campaigns. KEEN Footwear teamed up with local advocates and outdoor industry leaders to put on the Live Monumental Tour, a cross-country tour aimed at generating support for protection of these five special areas, which were widely considered some of country's most likely candidates for national monument status. Over the course of several months and many tour stops, including two in West Virginia, the Live Monumental Tour generated more than 100,000 letters of support, asking President Obama to protect Birthplace of Rivers and four other proposed national monuments across the United States.

Thanks to the hard work and perseverance of so many supporters, Birthplace of Rivers is well positioned heading into 2016, but now is no time to let up. The Obama Administration needs to hear from West Virginians to ensure this incredible honor for the Mountain State and its wild places can become a reality.

Get involved

If the southern Monongahela National Forest gains the protection it deserves as the Birthplace of Rivers National

Monument, it will be because West Virginians continued to push for action in 2016. Here are some easy ways you can get involved:

Send a message to the President

Visit birthplaceofrivers.org to send a message to President Obama. Tell him what the Monongahela National Forest means to you and why you think the Birthplace of Rivers deserves special protection.

Tell your Birthplace of Rivers story

Do you have a favorite hike in the Cranberry Wilderness? What about a fishing tale from the Cranberry or Williams River? Send your stories to info@birthplaceofrivers.org so we can be sure the story of West Virginians and our strong connection to 'Wild and Wonderful' is told through designation of the Birthplace of Rivers National Monument.


Sign up for Birthplace of Rivers e-news

Stay up to date on news, action items and events. Sign up for the monthly Birthplace of Rivers E-Newsletter at birthplaceofrivers.org.

Become a monumental leader

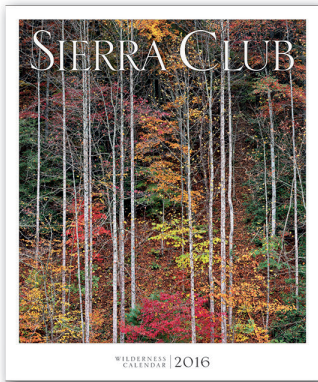
Do you want to host a house party of Birthplace of Rivers supporters? Lead an outing in the proposed monument? Recruit businesses and community organizations to ask President Obama to protect the Birthplace of Rivers? Visit the "Get Involved" section of birthplaceofrivers.org and let us know how you would like to push West Virginia's only national monument over the finish line.

Discounted Pricing — 15% off

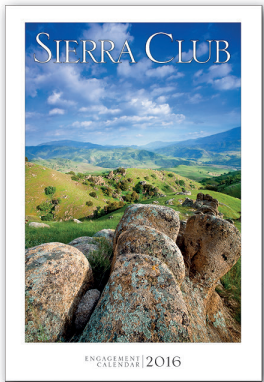


Enjoy, explore and protect the planet

2016 Sierra Club Calendars



Wilderness Wall Calendar



Engagement Calendar

Item	Cost	Qty	Total
Engagement <input type="checkbox"/>	\$11.00		
Wilderness <input type="checkbox"/>	\$10.00		
Post New Year discount prices 15% off		Subtotal:	
		Sales Tax:	
		Shipping: \$5.00	
GRAND TOTAL:			

Ship To: Please make checks payable to "WV Sierra Club" and mail to Candice Elliott, 414 Tyrone Avery Road, Morgantown WV 26508

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (____) _____

Email _____

LEEP bill: Something good for West Virginia's people

When the WV Legislature begins meeting in January, a priority for the Sierra Club will be adoption of the Local Energy Efficiency Partnerships (LEEP) bill. We are working with Energy Efficient West Virginia and the West Virginia Environmental Council. This bill would authorize local governments to develop a revolving loan program to help businesses implement energy efficiency projects. The cost of the investment would be paid back through property tax assessments, and energy audits would assure that projects would create savings for businesses. The program would be entirely voluntary and would be an easy way for cities and counties to help local businesses. Another benefit is it's good for the environment.

What you can do?

Contact local delegates and state senators. Ask them to support the LEEP bill. The Legislature convenes Jan. 13. For more details, go to eewv.org/leep.

Morgantown Power Plant wants revised air permit

The Morgantown Energy Associates (MEA) power plant has applied for a revision to their air pollution permit to install "Selective Noncatalytic Reduction" (SNCR) to lower their emissions of nitrogen oxides. Under the Mercury and Air Toxics Rules (MATS), changes to their operation to reduce sulfur and mercury emissions are likely to increase nitrogen oxide emissions.

The MEA plant was constructed in the late 1980s as a circulating fluidized bed boiler with the goal of burning waste coal with high sulfur content. Although it was relatively clean at the time, most older power plants have either closed or added scrubbers, so MEA is now one of the dirtiest power plants remaining in operation in West Virginia.

The issue is whether to upgrade this old dinosaur or close it down. For details, contact Jim Kotcon, jkotcon@gmail.com or 304-594-3322.



Help your Chapter stay strong for the hard work we do to keep West Virginia wild and wonderful.

One fee covers membership in the national Sierra Club, the West Virginia Chapter and, if you live in the designated region, the Monongahela Group.

Make a quick and easy donation or join "the Club" from the Chapter's home page:

westvirginia.sierraclub.org

Join Online

View from the Chair

— *Liz Wiles, Chapter Chair*

Change status quo with election involvement

There are many reasons to applaud the recent verdict in the Don Blankenship trial. Never before has a coal company CEO been convicted of conspiracy to violate federal mine safety regulations. And while he wasn't charged with negligent homicide of the 29 miners killed in the Upper Big Branch explosion, everyone knows his blatant disregard of regulations led to those deaths, and the guilty verdict should be a deterrent to all other fossil fuel executives who willfully put profits over workers' health and safety.

However, how strong a deterrent is it when the charge is only a misdemeanor and carries a maximum one-year prison sentence? I was appalled, but not surprised, to hear that the other two charges in the case — making false statements to investors and the SEC — are felonies and would carry a combined 25-year maximum prison sentence. Think about that for a moment — the crime of willfully conspiring to violate federal regulations, which in this case led to human deaths, is considered less egregious than lying about money to very rich people and government officials.

This injustice isn't the fault of the U.S. prosecutor or the jury. It is the fault of decades of elected officials who, encouraged by big campaign contributions from special interests, consistently put the priorities of the very wealthy above the best interests of the vast majority of their constituents. And of officials who think the ultimate sin is NOT that company executives might cause the deaths of the very people off of whose backs they have made all their money, BUT that they could cause the balance sheets of their investors to dip a single percentage point.

So how do we change things? Elections, elections, elections! For 2016 in West Virginia, we need candidates at all levels of government (city, county, state, federal) who recognize the contributions and sacrifices that coal miners and their communities have made for this country, and who want

to honor that sacrifice and contribution with smart initiatives and legislation that provide opportunities for coal miners and their families to transition their communities from a coal economy to more sustainable and diverse economies that the communities themselves help to create.

We need candidates who will hold coal companies accountable for the commitments they make to their employees for pensions and post-retirement health benefits. And who will not allow those companies to place the cost and burden of those responsibilities on the general taxpayer, as they have done for decades through the cost of environmental cleanup.

We need candidates who will call out incumbents and others in the race who continue to delude coal communities with false hope of a return to the glory days of coal and thousands of jobs, if only all health and safety regulations were eliminated. Candidates who can offer communities a sense of pride and hope for a better future by tapping into these West Virginians' vast potential that has been squashed for a century by coal executives and politicians who say all we are capable of is only running coal.

This means we also need YOU — and every member of the West Virginia Sierra Club — to be very active in this year's elections, at all levels. We need to support those candidates who are saying the right things, tell our friends and families about those candidates, and ask tough questions to those candidates who fail to see the writing on the wall and who continue the tired rhetoric of the "war on coal."

If every one of us gets involved, we can return West Virginia's state legislative majority to the Democrats, not with status quo politicians, but with delegates and senators who truly see the potential of all Mountaineers and want to inspire all of us to create a better future for ourselves in Almost Heaven.

Bitter Victory: Blankenship Convicted

Jim Sconyers

Don Blankenship, CEO of Massey Energy when Upper Big Branch exploded in 2010 killing 29 miners, was convicted in federal court.

Blankenship faced three federal charges, ranging from conspiracy to securities fraud. He was found guilty on one count of conspiracy to violate federal mine safety standards and not guilty on the other charges.

Sentencing has not yet been passed; it is scheduled for March. The guilty verdict finds Blankenship guilty of a misdemeanor. Sentencing can be up to a year in federal prison. A potentially huge monetary fine is also a possibility. As expected, Blankenship's legal team has declared their intent to appeal the conviction. Currently, he is

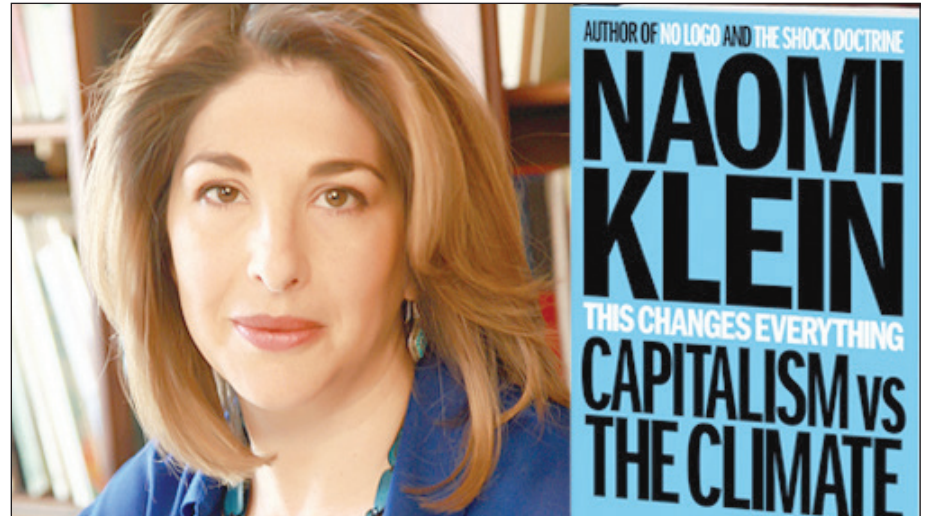
free on \$5 million cash bond with severe travel restrictions.

Although the charges did not address Upper Big Branch, in the eyes of much of the public, Blankenship was seen as being on trial for his

personal responsibility for causing the explosion there and the deaths of the 29 miners killed in the explosion. His record of evading safety measures while demanding high output of coal production was widely seen as causing the fatal Upper Big Branch disaster.



Don Blankenship



Book Review

This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. The Climate by Naomi Klein

Review by Richard Mier, Martinsburg

The "this" in Naomi Klein's latest book, "This Changes Everything," is of course global warming, and the "everything" is, well, everything else, our economic and social systems. Klein has achieved increased visibility recently, not only for this book, but also because of her alliance with Pope Francis and her appointment by the Vatican as co-chair of the Vatican summit "People and Planet First: the Imperative to Change Course," which took place in Rome in July 2015. A self-styled "secular Jewish feminist," she shares with the Pope deep concerns about where 21st century capitalism, the global economy and consumerism are taking us. And, also like Francis, she worries a lot about how climate change, global warming, drought, flooding and sea level change will most negatively affect those in developing countries who are least able to accommodate these changes.

Deeply moral, "This Changes Everything" is a well-written and well-constructed vehicle for her premise: that the aggressive capitalism of the past 20-30 years has resulted in huge and increasing carbon emissions and that it is beyond unrealistic for anyone to expect that business as usual will pull us out of this deadly spiral. Only by addressing our "savagely unjust economic system" will we be able to save ourselves. Because our "economic system and our planetary system are at war," system change will need to occur for there to be climate change.

She starts by taking us into the belly of the beast, the Heartland Institute's International Conference on Climate Change held in June 2011. This is where global warming denials fit hand-in-glove with right-wing politics and free-market fundamentalism. She writes that what was said there is as follows: If you believe that climate change is a rapidly appearing reality, then government intervention would be a necessity. But since government is the enemy, global

warming must be a myth, invented by left-wing zealots. According to deniers, action to radically reduce emissions would result in the end of capitalism. The surprise here is that Klein thinks they're right and she's looking forward to it. She was, in fact, initially "propelled" into climate activism "partly because it could be a catalyst for forms of social and economic justice in which I already believed."

And this may be the rub here — lots of ideological skin in the game. It is not a bad thing, necessarily, and her beliefs make for a compelling and inspiring read, but it makes one wonder about the biases she brings to the table. As she writes, "Put another way, if there has ever been a moment to advance a plan to heal the planet that also heals our broken economies and our shattered communities, this is it." Hard to argue with that, although she doesn't exactly spell out what that plan would be.

Instead, in the last part of the book, she writes about a variety of local interventions, often by indigenous groups to fight extractivism in their communities. She calls these "regenerations," and believes they will form the fulcrum upon which our global economic system will change. How exactly this will happen and how it will lead to radically reduced emissions is unclear, at least to me.

Having said that, this is an important book, and I think that you should read it. It's a very personal book with a worldview many (most? all?) of us can be sympathetic with, "...embedded in interdependence rather than hyperindividualism, reciprocity rather than dominance, and cooperation rather than hierarchy." It's full of optimism and passion, both of which seem to be in short supply currently. Without agreeing with everything she writes, it's easy to see why Pope Francis likes what she has to say and why he wants her on his team.

RIP Keystone Pipeline

Jim Sconyers

After years on the drawing boards, the Keystone Pipeline has finally met its fate. Here is a little background for those who have spent the past five years in a cave or under a rock.

The Keystone was a pipeline planned to carry filthy tar sands oil from its source in Alberta (Canada) to refineries on the U.S. Gulf Coast. Getting the oil out of the ground is extreme — steam has to melt the oil to extract it from the tar sands. Then, burning this oil is itself dirtier than burning conventional oil. The Alberta tar sands are a perfect example of what's been dubbed "extreme energy." This extreme category also includes West Virginia's mountaintop removal coal mining and deep-ocean oil drilling.

Keystone became the poster child for everything that is wrong with American energy practices and policies. Resistance began slowly but rapidly built, ultimately giving birth to the group 350.org and its charismatic leader Bill McKibben. The number 350, of course, is the maximum allowable number of parts of CO₂ per million in the atmosphere if we are to have any hope of limiting the devastation due to climate disruption. McKibben realized that if there were to be a serious climate movement — rather than just an event — then 350.org needed to come up with a strategy to catapult climate into the public and political consciousness. Thus was born the Keystone campaign.

The kickoff of the new campaign took a page out of the books of other

movements — sit-ins and arrests at the White House. This was a far cry from the gentle, and even genteel, events that had often characterized earlier environmental demonstrations. This would be different; our people would be "putting their bodies on the line."

And so it begins. In late summer of 2011, people gathered in Washington, D.C., for training in nonviolent protest methods in preparation for demonstrations to come. Hundreds would rally and march to the White House. Those ready to risk arrest identified themselves and received extra training. A humorous side note: We were urged to use a Sharpie to write a help-line phone number on our legs, just in case we did get arrested. And off we all went.

At the White House fence, after speeches were made and banners were waved, came the moment of truth. Massed police announced three times that the group was illegal, we had to leave, and those who didn't would be arrested. And one by one they were.

In the beginning, the D.C. police were in charge so those arrested were taken to a D.C. jail, where they actually spent a couple of nights — not pleasant. Soon the authorities realized the scale of the protests. There were soon hundreds of folks being arrested as the protest continued every day. D.C. Police were not able or interested in handling these numbers, and jurisdiction was transferred to the U.S. Park Police.

The Park Police smoothed out the process. As long as we had the \$100 cash

needed, we were arrested with hands zip-tied behind our backs, loaded into paddy wagons, taken to Park Police jail to pay our fines, and released after a couple of hours. By the final day, 1,200 intrepid volunteers had been arrested at the White House.

All of a sudden, the campaign had zoomed "Keystone" and "Climate" into national news and awareness. The 2011 arrests were the first of a series of huge demonstrations. There was "Surround the White House," with thousands, five people deep, encircling the White House and several adjoining city blocks. "Reject and Protect" featured real cowboys and Indians from the plains states where Keystone was planned to run. And there were others. Many West Virginian Sierrans participated, either individually or by the busloads we sent to Washington.

After years of protests that made Keystone and Climate national and international defining issues, and with the President delaying a decision, the day finally came in 2015 when the President issued an unequivocal decision: No, Keystone will not be built.

I won't belabor the endless editorializing and bloviating that ensued. Let me just say that, apart from the fact that the tar-sands "climate bomb" would not be detonated, the strategic and symbolic victory was possibly more important. The Keystone campaign had elevated Climate to the top of the national agenda and rejuvenated the whole environmental movement.

So — RIP Keystone. Good-bye and good riddance.



EECT co-sponsors energy forums in Clarksburg

The Energy Efficiency Campaign Team (EECT) and North Central Democracy for America worked together to plan two public forums at the Caperton Center in Clarksburg.

The first, on Nov. 9, "Jobs in the New Energy Economy," promoted the economic benefits of energy efficiency and solar power. Speakers were Cathy Kunkel, a Fellow at the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis; Jill Watkins, chair of the U.S. Green Building Council, WV Chapter; and Dan Conant, founder of Solar Holler.

The second forum, on Dec. 7, "Policy Solutions in the New Energy Economy," emphasized legislative issues. Speakers (pictured above, from the right) included Evan Hansen, of Downstream Strategies, who spoke on The Clean Power Plan; Jim Kotcon, our Chapter Energy chair, who talked about The Power Plus Plan; and Delegate Barbara Fleischauer, who explained H.B. 2945: Local Energy and Efficiency Partnerships.

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

celliot2@comcast.net

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Deadline for
March/April issue

February 5

Opinions expressed in the *Mountain State Sierran* are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Sierra Club. This newsletter is published bimonthly by the WV Chapter of the Sierra Club and distributed to all paid members.



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



(left) Volunteers at the White House fence about to be arrested for refusing to disperse.



(above) We were advised to write the arrest helpline phone number on our legs with a Sharpie.



photos courtesy of Jim Sconyers

Thousands of people from the plains states threatened by the Keystone pipeline demonstrate at the "Reject and Protect" rally, with teepees and the Washington Monument in the background.



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.

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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
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Limited Income	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 25	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 35

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Plug Into the Natural World

Seasons change, as do events in our lives. Outings Chair Russ Flowers resigned due to changes in his life. He has been an outstanding leader and will be missed as the Outings Chair, but he will still be involved in leading outings with the WV Chapter.

As the new chair, I am experienced as an outings leader and served as the Outings Chair some years ago. I have a love for the outdoors in our beautiful state, which offers many experiences such as hiking, biking, canoeing, camping, visiting historical places and exploring nature in its many varieties. There are so many ideas for outings to explore that we can offer our members. And you as members need to unplug from all the new electronic gadgets and the virtual world and participate in outings that bring you closer to nature.

Winter is upon us, but don't let Old Man Winter keep you from enjoying outdoor activities. There is beauty in nature even during these cold months. We can enjoy activities like cross-country skiing or hiking, and with the proper clothing, the outdoors can be very rewarding during these cold months.

One of my most memorable hikes was in winter on a very cold morning along the Bluestone River. I like to go out very early and it was just breaking daylight that morning. There was a heavy frost and the moon was shining brightly, making the landscape look surreal. It was a wonderful experience that I will never forget.

Being prepared for your outdoor experience is a must. Often the weather can change quickly and nature has no mercy on the person without proper clothing or equipment. This is especially important during the cold winter months.

Always discuss with your outings leader before an outing what to bring with you. Our outings leaders are trained and well qualified to lead you on exciting outdoor experiences.

So let's get out of the confines of our comfortable homes and get out into the wilderness to experience all of nature's wonders. There is nothing more comforting than being in the outdoors and enjoying it with people who feel the same.

And to you who have yet to experience the great outdoors but have yearned to do so, now is the time to get started. Unplug from the virtual world we live in today and plug into the natural world. Come join us on one or more of our outings. Bring your family and friends along. You will be thrilled by the experience and will want to be in the wild places as much as possible.

See you on the trail...

Outings List

Sat, Jan 2

Day Hike: Caledonia State Park (SP)

rated strenuous — This 7-mile strenuous hike will start at the parking lot of the park on Rt. 30. We will hike on the trails in the park and hook up with the Appalachian Trail. This hike has steep elevation gains, a beautiful rhododendron tunnel and one stream crossing. For more info contact the leader.

Leader: Pam Pietz, 249-818-6554, pspietz@hotmail.com

Nearest town: Chambersburg, PA

Web info: dncr.state.park.us

Sat, Jan 9

Day Hike: Coopers Rock State Forest

rated moderate/strenuous — Join us for our 5th annual Coopers Rock winter hike to the Overlook. This is a moderate to strenuous

(depending on the weather and condition of the trails) hike of about 7 miles. We will start at the Day Use Lot, hike the Scott Run Trail, and then continue on the Roadside Trail to the Overlook. The plan is to eat lunch at the Overlook, and then hike back to the cars. Bring snack/lunch and water; trekking poles can be helpful, as sections of Scott Run trail are fairly steep in places. Be sure to dress for the weather. Contact leader for directions, rendezvous location, and start time.

Leader: Aaron Vedock, 304-365-4396, amvedock@hotmail.com

Nearest town: Morgantown, WV

Web info: coopersrockstateforest.com

Sat, Jan 9

Day Hike: Bluestone SP

rated moderate — Join us for a 5-mile hike in the park. We will hike along the River View Trail,

Big Pine Trail, Boundary Trail and Rhododendron Trail. Some elevation gain and steep descents. Pipestem State Park will also be conducting a bald eagle survey, and we will look for and report any sightings.

Leader: Mike Price, 304-400-8354, mikeprice54@suddenlink.net

Nearest town: Hinton, WV

Web info: bluestonesp.com

Fri- Sun, Jan 22-24

Educational Weekend: Pipestem SP

not rated — This is a Primitive Bush Craft Weekend Workshop at Pipestem State Park, conducted by Forest Manna Outdoors. You will learn bush-craft skills that include establishing shelter, creating fire, foraging wild edibles, procuring and purifying water, land navigation and many other bush-craft skills. For registration

and rates, contact Dale McLaughlin or Brenda Cooper, 304-466-1800. For more info, contact leader.

Leader: Mike Price, 304-400-8354, mikeprice54@suddenlink.net

Nearest town: Pipestem, WV

Web info: pipestemresort.com

Sun Feb 7

Backpacking Workshop: Location TBA

not rated — Learn basic skills and what types of equipment are needed to get you started on an enjoyable outdoor experience for a day hike or longer. Unplug from the electronic and virtual worlds that we live in and get into the outdoors to enjoy the natural world. Contact leader for location and time.

Leader: Mike Price, 304-400-8354, mikeprice54@suddenlink.net

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 out- ing 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 re- quired from the participants. The Sierra Club practices "leave-no-trace" trail techniques, in- cluding 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. Reg- istration as a seller of travel does not constitute approval by the State of California.



Maryland Chapter Outings

Our neighboring chapter to the east has an active outings program, with many trips coming into West Virginia or western Maryland. These outings, by highly experienced leaders, range from easy to strenuous, and are open to everyone. Join an outing by checking out their calendar at

maryland.sierraclub.org

Allegheny Group Outings

Sierra Club members in the Pittsburgh area belong to the Allegheny Group. They have a moderately active outings program as well as links to other local outdoor activities. Visit their website for an outings calendar and more details at

alleghenysc.org

Potomac Region Outings (PRO)

This is an activity section of the Sierra Club Virginia Chapter, with an extensive outings program run by leaders who live in and around the Washington, D.C., area. A calendar of activities, information and updates can be found on their website at

www.sierrapotomac.org

West Virginia Chapter Outings

For updated listings of outings sponsored by the West Virginia Chapter, check our Chapter website at

westvirginia.sierraclub.org

Welcome New Chapter Volunteers

Two of our members have stepped up to fill voids left by retiring volunteers.

Mike Price hails from a small town in Fayette County and is a former Chapter Outings Chair. He returns to manage the Outings Program once again. Contact him with suggestions for outings or if you might be interested in leading some outings yourself. His inaugural column is above.

Melissa "Mel" Waggy, of Lewisburg, has been a Sierra Club member for several years. Now that she's retired, she wants to get more involved with the Club and is excited to serve as Chapter Secretary.

Results of the Chapter and Group ExCom elections will be announced at the Jan. 9 Chapter ExCom meeting in Morgantown. The list of new ExCom members will be published in the next issue of this newsletter.

All members are welcome to attend Chapter ExCom meetings. If interested in attending, contact Chapter Chair **Liz Wiles** for details.



**SIERRA
CLUB**

Sierra Club
West Virginia Chapter
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Morgantown, WV 26504
www.westvirginia.sierraclub.org

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Charleston, WV 25305

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email: governor@wvgov.org

To Contact STATE LEGISLATORS

email to WV Legislature:
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.

Regional Sierra Club Staff

Environmental Justice/Beyond Coal Bill Price
304-389-8822, bill.price@sierraclub.org



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

A Will is a Way

Make a commitment to the next generation by remembering
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Sierra Club
Gift Planning Program
85 Second St, Second Floor • San Francisco, CA 94105
(800) 932-4270 • gift.planning@sierraclub.org

For planned giving in West Virginia, contact Paul Wilson at 304-279-1361

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