

# M Mountain State Sierran

Volume 42, Number 3

westvirginia.sierraclub.org

May/June 2016

## Chapter supports area paddling group, offers more outings

Mary Wimmer

As a WV Sierra Club Outings Leader for more than a decade after the Chapter's 1984 birth, I confirmed the benefits of being outdoors with friends in our Wild, Wonderful West Virginia. Back then, I did a lot of backpacking, as well as hiking, X-country skiing and biking. After the 1985 flood, Paul Turner and I organized trail work outings, and I paddled some in my canoe. When my son, Ben, was about 2, we got two 9-foot Dagger Zydeco kayaks, and we were smitten. He rode in front of me until he got too big, at age 7, and started paddling on his own.

Last summer, I retired after 37 years teaching biochemistry at West Virginia University's School of Medicine. I immediately ratcheted up the outside activities — adding snowshoeing to the mix, thanks to Heidi Kammer — but also doing much more flatwater boating. While paddling on the Mon River, I met a paddler from Virginia who asked if we had a local paddling group, and I said I didn't think so. Research showed only the WVU Whitewater Club was active in our region. I knew a good number of folks who liked flatwater paddling, so I emailed a bunch (82) of known outdoor enthusiasts around Morgantown to see if there would be interest in such a group; only three unsubscribed. Thus was born the Morgantown Area Paddlers (MAP).

MAPers Gwen Jones and Chris Linton helped me organize and plan activities. Last fall, we hosted 20 paddling trips, averaging 5 paddlers per trip. We boated several sections of the Monongahela River and its tributaries between Fairmont, WV, and Greensboro, PA; Cheat Lake's backwaters; the Cheat River, upstream from Cheat Lake as well as from its mouth near Point Marion; and the flatwater section of the Big Sandy River from Bruceton Mills to Clifton Mills. The highlight, besides beautiful fall colors, was a Halloween Paddle on the Mon River through the Morgantown lock with 22 kayaks. Seven of our trips included Morgantown or Point Marion lockages. The Halloween Paddle was covered by WBOY TV and the local paper, and we gained 18 MAPers from that one event. Photo albums for all these trips are posted on our MAP Facebook page.

For a while, it felt as though I'd let a wild horse out of the barn and was doing my best to corral it. So many folks told us how glad they were that such a group was getting organized. People kept emailing us, or contacting us on our MAP Facebook page, asking how they could be added to the group. Word of our paddling trips spread, and as of April, our email list has grown to 156 people, from Elkins and Bridgeport to Kirby, PA. A frequent comment is, "I love to paddle on flat water, but prefer not paddling alone, and until now, there was no group."

Over the winter (note: we did have a paddling trip on Dec. 15), Cindy O'Brien and I worked with two students,



**MAP**  
Morgantown Area Paddlers

A group of 22 paddlers wait for passage through the Morgantown lock on the Mon River, this past Halloween.

photo courtesy of the Morgantown lockmaster

Abbey Estep and Angelo Ilegan, from Dr. Eve Faulkes WVU Design Class, to develop a logo for MAP (Angelo's version was chosen). We set up a survey of our members to see when, where and how long they preferred to paddle, and whether they were interested in helping out with MAP activities. Many folks, led by Adam Polinski, expressed interest in getting the river access points in better shape, which will start this year.

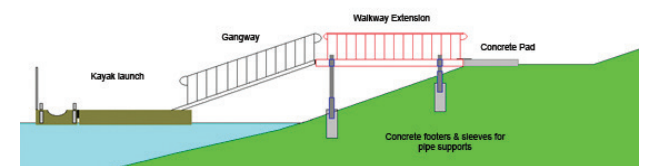
Our MAJOR activity of the winter, by far, was raising more than \$38,000 for the purchase and installation of a kayak/canoe launch at the Van Voorhis Trailhead of the Upper Mon River Water Trail north of Star City. The site is a reclaimed industrial brownfield site, significant for WV Sierra Club because I co-chaired Governor Caperton's Brownfields Task Force, on which Jim Kotcon also sat, that was charged with drafting the legislative rules for reclaiming these sites. Furthermore, WV Sierra Club was one of the many contributors who will be recognized on a sign at the site.

Videos of the operation of a similar launch in Greensboro, PA, are posted on the MAP Facebook page. The safety aspect is significant: a boater gets safely seated in their boat while it is in the chute, out of the water, avoiding bobbing and slipping, and then rolls the boat gently into the water using the hand rails along the chute. River exit is the same in reverse. Our fundraising goal was reached March 31, and it is hoped that the launch will be installed and open for use by June.

This year, MAP is collaborating with several other outdoor groups, including the WV Sierra Club, to conduct joint flatwater paddling outings. One is set for June 18 (see the list of Outings on p. 5). Keep an eye out for more paddle trips listed in this newsletter, on the Chapter's website and on the Morgantown Area Paddlers Facebook page.

As one Fairmont MAPer emailed, there is "[n]o better way to spend your summer exercising in fellowship with the kayaking community. Please let us know about upcoming events. Thanks."

This canoe/kayak launch is the type proposed for the site on the Mon River.



A schematic drawing of the proposed launch at the Van Voorhis Trailhead on the Mon River.



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet



## Book Review

### The Invention of Nature: Alexander Von Humboldt's New World by Andrea Wulf (2015)

Review by Richard Mier, Martinsburg

Dozens of places are named for him, including Humboldt County, California, and Pico Humboldt in Venezuela; plus, rivers, glaciers, salt marshes and, most famously, the Humboldt Current off the western coast of South America. Students go to schools named for him in Lima, Mexico City, Sao Paulo, Caracas, Saint Paul and Berlin. Three monkeys, a bat, a squid, a penguin, a skunk and a dolphin bear his name, as well as six plants, several ships, two asteroids, a lunar crater and an international research prize. He may be the most famous scientist no one knows anything about. Alexander Von Humboldt (1769-1859) was the most famous scientist of his age and, if Andrea Wulf has anything to say about it, he will be again.

Her new book, "The Invention of Nature: Alexander Von Humboldt's New World" (Alfred A. Knopf, 2015), is both a truly fascinating look at this extraordinary person and an insightful cultural history of his time. Arguably the last of the brilliant generalists, Humboldt was friends with Goethe, Schelling, Schiller, Agassiz, Darwin, Bolivar and Lyell, among others. His radical notion of the interdependent unity of nature, in his words the "wonderful web of organic life," broke with the mechanistic philosophies of the day and influenced a vast multitude of scientists, philosophers,

writers and poets, including Coleridge, Thoreau, Berlioz, John Muir, Wordsworth, Whitman, Aldous Huxley and Jules Verne.

He was a brave and adventurous traveler to wild and uncharted places, something quite literally death-defying at the end of the 18th century. He spent five years studying the peoples, geology, plants and animals of South America between 1799 and 1804, as well as a later trip to Russia in 1829. He was the foremost mountain climber of his time, tested on the never-before climbed Chimborazo volcano in what is now Ecuador and thought at the time to be the world's highest mountain. He was also a progressive, an abolitionist, anti-royalist and, perhaps, the world's first environmentalist. He recognized and wrote about human effects, including deforestation, on the environment and potential climate change as a result.

He was, in short, an intellectual rock star, and Andrea Wulf tells his story well indeed. Her book, one of the *New York Times* 10 Best Books of 2015, is like his interests: wide-ranging. She provides the reader with deep insight into a time when the way a person saw themselves philosophically guided explicitly the way they saw the external world. It's a great story and worth your time.

## View from the Chair

— Liz Wiles, Chapter Chair

### Improved Quality of Life is Good for Business

Shortly after I moved back to West Virginia in early 2012, I heard an anecdote about an out-of-state tech business owner who visited Morgantown as a potential site for setting up a new office. This business would have provided a couple dozen, highly-skilled and highly-paid jobs. In the end, the owner decided against setting up shop in Morgantown. His reason? The Morgantown and greater West Virginia community didn't care about itself. What evidence did he offer for that? Litter and trash found throughout the city, dirty creeks and rivers, dirty power plants spewing noxious fumes not far from downtown, and large diesel trucks snaking their way through downtown while tearing up the roads.

Basically, it boiled down to the fact that the community didn't provide a good quality of life. We know that we need to diversify our economies throughout the state, and communities already are pursuing strategies to do just that. However, we will fail at economic diversification and transition if all we do is implement policies that provide an attractive tax environment for businesses. While taxes certainly are considered as part of where businesses choose to start up or expand, unless businesses can offer a good quality of life for their employees, they will be unable to recruit and attract the kind of talent they need to make their business successful.

A good quality of life starts with protecting our most basic survival needs — water and air. People literally can't live without access to clean, abundant water and healthy, fresh air. It is only when we have water and air security that we can begin to participate in exercising our freedoms and pursue happiness. The same is true for business. Think of all the industries that must have clean water for their success, from the traditional — restaurants, hotels, hospitals — to ones that could play a big role in WV's

future — tourism and recreation, microbreweries, local agriculture. The list goes on. And of course, what goes for water, also goes for air.

We need clean air and water in our schools. We risk our children's capabilities and future success if they're exposed for years to unprotected water and air that stunts brain development and induces asthma attacks. Potential business owners and employees with families will consider how a community protects its children when deciding to move or expand a business. Young entrepreneurs are more likely to stay in their hometowns if they know the community values its children by ensuring healthy air and water for schools.

Businesses care about water and air because of increased healthcare costs caused by degraded water and polluted air that are borne by the entire community. It also costs them money directly due to employees who have chronic health conditions arising from unprotected water and air.

Before West Virginia can begin to attract the kinds of diverse businesses we need to ensure a prosperous future, we have to demonstrate that we care about our communities by demanding a better quality of life. We need to demand that our elected officials enact legislation to truly protect our access to clean water and clean air, that puts the health of West Virginia communities and ecosystems above the greed of a monolithic industry. And we must show that we deserve these protections by doing whatever we can as individuals to keep our water and air clean, and by holding our government and ourselves accountable to protect a better quality of life.

Only then can we start to re-shape our state's image from one that puts the interests of a single industry above all else to one that values its most important natural resources — clean water, fresh air and healthy communities. A better quality of life is best for business.

## Court Decision Protects Blair Mountain, For Now


Sierra Club, Washington, D.C.

On April 11 — in a decision applauded by environmental, labor and community groups — the United States District Court for the District of Columbia announced that the U.S. Interior Department failed to justify its 2009 decision to remove the site of the 1921 Battle of Blair Mountain labor conflict from the National Register of Historic Places. The lawsuit challenging the de-listing was brought by a coalition of environmental and historic preservation groups, including Sierra Club, the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition, Friends of Blair Mountain, West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, the West Virginia Labor History Association and the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

"This is a major victory over the relentless efforts of coal companies who want to sacrifice our history for profits by conducting mountaintop removal coal mining on a site that is a proud part of West Virginia's heritage," said Bill Price, an organizer for the Sierra Club based in West Virginia. "Blair Mountain is an asset to Appalachia and must be protected for future generations to visit and explore. We celebrate this decision and will continue to fight to get the Battlefield back on the National Register."

The Battle of Blair Mountain is a central event in labor history in the United States and one of the best known of the many labor struggles in West Virginia. The Battlefield was, in 1921, the site of the largest armed insurrection in the United States since the Civil War, as 10,000 coal miners clashed with mining-company financed forces over the right to unionize. After many nominations and revisions, the site was finally listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2009, only to be de-listed nine months later in a move that the coalition believes was unlawful. Since Federal coal mining laws provide stronger protection for sites actually listed on the National Register, removing Blair Mountain from the Register put the future of this important place at risk. In August 2014, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit allowed the lawsuit to move forward after it determined that the proposed mining presented an actual threat to the historic site.

"My great-grandfather Milton White fought at Blair Mountain. This decision is a huge step forward and I applaud the efforts of everyone who worked so diligently to protect this important piece of our history," said Dustin White, an organizer with the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition. "This isn't just a victory for labor, health, history, and future generations of the state. It is also a victory for the miners who were denied it nearly a century ago."



**Join Online**

**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](http://westvirginia.sierraclub.org)



**You don't need a resolution to make a big change.**

This year, say goodbye to old habits and hello to new beginnings.

**Join Sierra Clubnow!**

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**YES!** I would like to give a New Year's gift membership to

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Check enclosed. Please make payable to Sierra Club.

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Cardholder Name \_\_\_\_\_

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Categories	Individual	Joint
<b>Special Offer</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> \$15	
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/Limited Income	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> \$35

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Contributions, gifts and dues to Sierra Club are not tax deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to Sierra magazine and \$1 for your Chapter newsletters.

**Enclose a check and mail to** Sierra Club, P.O. Box 421041, Palm Coast, FL 32142-1041 **or visit our website** [www.sierraclub.org](http://www.sierraclub.org)

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# Heroes and Zeroes on the Environment

## Sierra Club releases Legislative Scorecard

Want to know if your state legislators voted to protect the environment? Now you can find out. The West Virginia Chapter of Sierra Club combed records for roll call votes on environmental bills. We found 20 key votes in the House of Delegates and 12 in the State

Senate. Votes were chosen based on bills or amendments where there was a clear pro-environment choice. Votes that were unanimous or nearly so were not included, as these do not help separate good guys from bad guys, or pro-environment legislators from those who vote to weaken environmental laws.

For details on specific bills, see the full scorecard at: [westvirginia.sierraclub.org/political](http://westvirginia.sierraclub.org/political)

## West Virginia House of Delegates →

\* Delegate Districts often include multiple counties, or counties may include multiple Delegate Districts. To save space, only the county of residence is indicated. Check your local voting precinct to determine your Delegate District.

(#) Score based on partial term

### West Virginia Senate

District	Senator	Party	Score
1	Ferns, Ryan	Rep	0
1	Yost, Jack	Dem	73
2	Kessler, Jeffrey	Dem	45
2	Leonhardt, Kent	Rep	8
3	Boley, Donna	Rep	0
3	Nohe, David (#)	Rep	0
3	Ashley, Bob (#)	Rep	0
4	Carmichael, Mitch	Rep	0
4	Hall, Mike	Rep	8
5	Plymale, Robert	Dem	25
5	Woelfel, Mike	Dem	42
6	Cole, Bill	Rep	0
6	Maynard, Mark	Rep	0
7	Kirkendoll, Art	Dem	42
7	Stollings, Ron	Dem	36
8	Gauch, Ed	Rep	0
8	Walters, Chris	Rep	25
9	Cline, Sue (#)	Rep	20
9	Hall, Daniel (#)	Rep	0
9	Mullins, Jeff	Rep	9
10	Laird, William	Dem	91
10	Miller, Ronald	Dem	67
11	Boso, Greg	Rep	0
11	Karnes, Robert	Rep	17
12	Facemire, Douglas E.	Dem	75
12	Romano, Mike	Dem	67
13	Beach, Robert	Dem	75
13	Prezioso, Roman	Dem	64
14	Sypolt, Dave	Rep	17
14	Williams, Bob	Dem	25
15	Blair, Craig	Rep	0
15	Trump, Charles	Rep	8
16	Snyder, Herb	Dem	67
16	Unger, John II	Dem	92
17	Palumbo, Corey	Dem	45
17	Takubo, Tom	Rep	8

District	County *	Delegate	Party	Score
1	Hancock	McGeehan, Pat	Rep	10
1	Hancock	Zatezalo, Mark	Rep	5
2	Brooke	Weld, Ryan	Rep	11
3	Ohio	Fluharty, Shawn	Dem	75
3	Ohio	Storch, Erikka	Rep	11
4	Marshall	Evans, David	Rep	16
4	Marshall	Ferro, Michael	Dem	47
5	Wetzel	Pethtel, David	Dem	40
6	Tyler	Romine, William	Rep	5
7	Ritchie	Ireland, Lynwood "Woody"	Rep	6
8	Wood	Anderson, William	Rep	5
9	Wood	Border-Shephard, Anna	Rep	5
10	Wood	Azinger, Michael	Rep	0
10	Wood	Deem, Frank	Rep	17
10	Wood	Kelly, John R.	Rep	5
11	Roane	Ashley, Bob#	Rep	8
11	Roane	Atkinson, Martin (#)	Rep	13
12	Jackson	Westfall, Steve	Rep	11
13	Mason	Cadle, Scott	Rep	10
13	Jackson	Ihle, Michael	Rep	5
14	Mason	Butler, Jim	Rep	10
15	Putnam	Foster, Geoff	Rep	5
16	Cabell	Hornbuckle, Sean	Dem	61
16	Cabell	Miller, Carol	Rep	5
16	Cabell	Morgan, Jim	Dem	38
17	Wayne	Reynolds, Doug	Dem	45
17	Cabell	Rohrbach, Matthew	Rep	15
18	Cabell	Sobonya, Kelli	Rep	5
19	Wayne	Hicks, Kenneth	Dem	53
19	Wayne	Perdue, Don	Dem	80
20	Mingo	Marcum, Justin	Dem	28
21	Mingo	White, Harry Keith (#)	Dem	22
21	Mingo	White, Phyllis (#)	Dem	25
22	Lincoln	Eldridge, Jeff	Dem	47
22	Putnam	Moffatt, Michael	Rep	11
23	Boone	Nelson, Joshua	Rep	11
24	Logan	Phillips, Rupert	Dem	11
24	Logan	Rodighiero, Ralph	Dem	26
25	Wyoming	Blackwell, Frank (#)	Dem	14
25	Wyoming	Phillips, Linda Goode (#)	Dem	22
26	McDowell	Moore, Cliff	Dem	69
27	Mercer	Ellington, Joe	Rep	6
27	Mercer	Gearheart, Marty	Rep	5
27	Mercer	Shott, John	Rep	15
28	Summers	Cooper, Roy	Rep	10
28	Raleigh	O'Neal, John	Rep	10
29	Raleigh	Moye, Ricky	Dem	35
30	Raleigh	Bates, Mick	Dem	40
31	Raleigh	Arvon, Lynn	Rep	6
32	Fayette	Fast, Tom	Rep	10
32	Fayette	Kessinger, Kayla	Rep	5
32	Fayette	Perry, David G.	Dem	42
33	Hanshaw	Hanshaw, Roger	Rep	6
34	Braxton	Boggs, Brent	Dem	37
35	Kanawha	Byrd, Andrew	Dem	55
35	Kanawha	McCuskey, John	Rep	21
35	Kanawha	Nelson, Eric	Rep	5
35	Kanawha	Stansbury, Chris	Rep	15
36	Kanawha	Guthrie, Nancy Peoples	Dem	74
36	Kanawha	Rowe, Larry	Dem	47
36	Kanawha	White, Brad	Rep	10
37	Kanawha	Pushkin, Mike	Dem	90
38	Kanawha	Lane, Patrick	Rep	32
39	Kanawha	Walters, Ron	Rep	6
40	Kanawha	Armstead, Tim	Rep	15
41	Nicholas	Hill, Jordan	Rep	5
42	Greenbrier	Ambler, George	Rep	10
42	Greenbrier	Canterbury, Ray	Rep	20
43	Randolph	Campbell, Denise	Dem	47
43	Randolph	Hartman, William	Dem	25
44	Webster	Lynch, Dana	Dem	65
45	Upshur	Hamilton, Bill	Rep	20
46	Lewis	Smith, Peggy D.	Dem	35
47	Barbour	Wagner, Danny	Rep	5
48	Harrison	Hamrick, Danny	Rep	5
48	Harrison	Miley, Tim	Dem	60
48	Harrison	Trecost, Patsy Samuel	Dem	42
48	Harrison	Waxman, Terry	Rep	5
49	Taylor	Summers, Amy	Rep	10
50	Marion	Caputo, Mike	Dem	65
50	Marion	Longstreth, Linda	Dem	58
50	Marion	Manchin, Tim	Dem	74
51	Monongalia	Flanigan, Bill (#)	Rep	20
51	Monongalia	Fleischauer, Barbara	Dem	100
51	Monongalia	Frich, Cindy	Rep	10
51	Monongalia	Kurcaba, Brian	Rep	6
51	Monongalia	Pasdon, Amanda (#)	Rep	8
51	Monongalia	Statler, Joe	Rep	5
52	Preston	Shaffer, Steven (#)	Dem	67
52	Preston	Williams, Larry (#)	Dem	50
53	Preston	Smith, Randy	Rep	5
54	Grant	Evans, Allen	Rep	5
55	Pendleton	Sponaugle, Isaac	Dem	40
56	Mineral	Howell, Gary	Rep	5
57	Hampshire	Rowan, Ruth	Rep	5
58	Morgan	Cowles, Daryl	Rep	16
59	Berkeley	Blair, Saira	Rep	5
60	Berkeley	Faircloth, Larry V.	Rep	10
61	Berkeley	Duke, Walter	Rep	20
62	Berkeley	Overington, John	Rep	5
63	Berkeley	Folk, Michael	Rep	10
64	Berkeley	Householder, Eric	Rep	5
65	Jefferson	Upson, Jill	Rep	15
66	Jefferson	Espinosa, Paul	Rep	5
67	Jefferson	Skinner, Stephen	Dem	88

## Recap of the 2016 session of the WV Legislature (And you thought 2015 was bad!)

Some important legislative efforts struggled, but lots of defense staved off a tidal wave of really bad ideas. The West Virginia Environmental Council Lobby Team, helped by lots of citizen volunteers, convinced legislators to kill some bad bills, and modify others.

### Top Sierra Club priorities

**LEEP (Local Energy Efficiency Partnerships):** This bill would create a revolving loan fund so that local governments could help small businesses install energy efficiency measures. The costs would be reimbursed through tax collections. The bill, SB 370, passed one committee and was headed for a Senate vote when utilities convinced the Senate President to block it. A House version, HB 4684, never came up in committee. FirstEnergy said that utilities could do energy efficiency better than small businesses, but three weeks later, FirstEnergy filed their Energy Efficiency Plan with the WV Public Service Commission that included no new additions to their required energy efficiency goals.

**Pay-for-Water bill.** Activists at the WV Chapter's Marcellus Academy proposed legislation to require gas drilling companies to pay for the water they use during fracking. SB 523 imposed a one-cent-per-gallon tax for extracting water from streams. A more comprehensive bill, HB 4567, established a "cradle to grave" water monitoring system for fracking and established a one-cent fee for water withdrawals when the water is not returned to the hydrologic cycle. Neither bill saw committee action.

continued on p. 4 — Recap

## Chapter makes endorsements in West Virginia Primary

The WV Chapter has made several endorsements in the May 10 West Virginia Primary Election. We urge all members to go to the polls and vote. It's the best way to get pro-environment candidates — who we believe will advocate for clean air, clean water and more — elected.

To receive an endorsement, a candidate must be approved by two-thirds or more votes of both our Political Committee and the Executive Committee, our equivalent of a "board of directors." Endorsements for federal office require similar additional approvals at the national Club level.

The Political Committee makes endorsements based on a combination of the following information:

- Candidate questionnaires
- Candidate interviews
- Voting records
- The WVSC 2016 Legislative Scorecard
- Personal knowledge of, or experience with, the candidate
- Other information

Note that we are not currently endorsing state-level candidates running unopposed in their primary. They may be endorsed later if appropriate. Also, at this point, we are only making endorsements in a small number of electoral contests. Keep in mind that this is Round 1 of the voting. We vote again in Round 2, the general election in November. The Chapter will have more endorsements to announce after the Primary results are in.

**We endorse the following candidates:**

<b>Mike Manypenny</b>	US House of Reps, District 1
<b>Nancy Guthrie</b>	WV House 36
<b>Larry Rowe</b>	WV House 36
<b>Mike Pushkin</b>	WV House 37
<b>Richard laquinta</b>	WV House 48
<b>Tim Miley</b>	WV House 48
<b>Wayne Worth</b>	WV House 48
<b>Mike Caputo</b>	WV House 50
<b>Linda Longstreth</b>	WV House 50
<b>Tim Manchin</b>	WV House 50
<b>Barbara Fleischauer</b>	WV House 51
<b>Evan Hansen</b>	WV House 51
<b>Rodney Pyles</b>	WV House 51
<b>Stephen Skinner</b>	WV Senate 16

For information about candidates, see the abbreviated scorecards on this page. The detailed Legislative Scorecard compiled by the WVSC Political Committee may be viewed at [westvirginia.sierraclub.org/political](http://westvirginia.sierraclub.org/political). This comprehensive document gives the voting records for all incumbent state delegates and senators during the 2015 and 2016 legislative sessions. Each incumbent was given a score based on the percentage of "correct" votes on key environmental bills.

If unsure of your voting district or the name of your current state representatives, go to the West Virginia Legislature's website at [legis.state.wv.us](http://legis.state.wv.us). Click on House or Senate, then on District Maps.

Questions? Contact Political Committee Chair Jim Sconyers, [jimscon@gmail.com](mailto:jimscon@gmail.com).



*Mountain State Sierran*

**Reader Survey**

To improve the usefulness of this newsletter to our members, we are asking for your feedback.

Please fill out the survey below (or answer on a separate piece of paper) and return to: **SC Newsletter Survey, PO BOX 4142, Morgantown WV 26504.**

Or, you may take the survey online at:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DDKLJPG>

1. How do you receive your *Mountain State Sierran*? (paper, email, both, other)

2. How much of the *Mountain State Sierran* do you read? (every article, most articles, some articles, every edition, some editions, never read)

3. Which sections of the *Mountain State Sierran* do you read? (1=never, 2=rarely, 3=sometimes, 4=often, 5=always)

- Front-page article
- List of Outings
- Perspectives on Outings
- View from the Chair
- Book Review
- Upcoming Events
- Take Action stories
- News stories
- Editorials/Opinion pieces
- Reports on past meetings and events
- Photo captions
- Chapter Directory on back page
- Table of Contents

4. What do you like best about the *Mountain State Sierran*?

5. What is your least favorite thing about the *Mountain State Sierran*?

6. Have you ever visited the WV Sierra Club Chapter website? Why?

7. Have you gone on a Chapter outing in the past year? How did you find out about it?

8. Do you have any suggestions for improving the *Mountain State Sierran*?

*Perspectives on Outings*

— Mike Price, Outings Chair

**Challenge Yourself to Spend More Time Outdoors**

**E**NJOY, EXPLORE AND PROTECT THE PLANET! These words say it all. This is what the Sierra Club is all about. Outings are for members to have the opportunity to get outdoors and explore and enjoy nature. Our list of outings give you a variety of places to join us in exploring nature's awesome beauty. Our Outings Leaders are well qualified to lead you on an unforgettable experience that will make you want to join us on many more adventures into the wild places. So take that first step and contact one of our leaders about an outing. It will be followed by many more steps enjoying the great outdoors.

In January, I signed up for the NEW RIVER GORGE NATIONAL PARKS "100 MILE CHALLENGE." This was started by the National Park Service (NPS) on January 2 at Grandview, which is now part of the NPS. The kickoff was an easy 3.5-mile hike out to Turkey Knob Overlook and back. Around 100 people showed up for the event.

I took up the challenge for my health and to get out and enjoy the outdoors. I hiked many trails in the New River Gorge trail system: Long Point, Endless Wall, Fayetteville, Arrowhead Trails, Southside, Brooklyn, Keeny's Creek, Stonecliff, Bluestone River and others. I hiked in the cold and snow, rain and wind, but nothing stopped me from obtaining my goal. I completed my 100 miles on March 2 as the 11th person to complete the challenge.

Several of my hikes were Sierra Club hikes that I led. I continue to chalk up more miles in the New River with 150 miles hiked as of March 30. The New River Gorge is a beautiful place to explore, with great views, wildlife and a rich history. You can still sign up

for this event and get in your 100 miles. Check out our outings and join me on a hike in the Gorge.

The Sierra Club is listing 100 Outings for the NPS's 100th Year Anniversary this year. Watch for outings in the New River Gorge National River here in our beautiful state. I challenge you to set your own goals to get out into the wild places and enjoy nature. It is good for your mind, body and soul. We connect back with nature. Each step is an adventure. Each mile a smile. We experience the beauty of the land, the plants and the wildlife. We also get to share this experience with like-minded people. So join us on our outings and chalk up your miles on the trail.

The WVSC needs volunteers to become Outings Leaders. The Chapter offers training for anyone interested in leading hikes. OL 101 is a very easy instructional course designed to teach you how to properly lead an outing. If you enjoy the outdoors and like being around others who do, too, please contact us. Outings can be hikes, bike trips, canoe/kayak paddle trips, visiting historical places, classes about nature, etc. So join us as a leader and offer members great experiences on outings.

**ATTENTION VETERANS!** The WV Sierra Club is offering an outdoor experience in June for veterans (see the outings list). A backpacking trip with fishing in the Cranberry or Williams rivers will be offered. Paul Wilson and I will lead this outing. Paul is with the Sierra Club Military Outdoors Program and is also a WVSC Outings Leader. This outing will focus attention on the proposed Birthplace of Rivers National Monument that is located in the Cranberry Wilderness and surrounding areas. For info, visit [birthplaceofrivers.org/landscape.html](http://birthplaceofrivers.org/landscape.html).

**A 'Glocal' Conversation on Coal**

On March 22, more than two dozen people gathered in Fairmont to participate in a global and local conversation about coal. The discussion began with four guest speakers followed by an open dialogue among the group. The evening's moderator was environment reporter Erica Peterson, with WFPL News in Louisville and formerly with West Virginia Public Broadcasting.

The Heinrich Boll Foundation, a think tank affiliated with the Green Party of Germany, hosted the evening. Rebecca Bertram, program director, featured research and data from the foundation's recent publication, "The Coal Atlas," about the current global status of the coal industry. The 56-page book "contains facts and figures on the use of coal and its environmental and social consequences." She highlighted specific information relevant to West Virginia, while noting that everything that happens in the coal industry around the world impacts our state.

Dale Boulis, a resident of Loudendale outside of Charleston, shared her personal story of having to live at the foot of a mountaintop removal mine site, 5 miles from the capitol. She voiced her frustrations about not only dealing with state agencies operating under old, bad or non-existing laws, but also her neighbors who have resigned themselves to the idea that the mining will happen no matter what they try to do, and so do nothing.

She was followed by Bill Price, senior organizing representative for the Sierra Club's Beyond Coal to Clean Energy Campaign, based in Charleston. Bill talked about recent lobbying efforts by the Club to rally support for the RECLAIM act (Revitalizing the Economy of Coal Communities by Leveraging Local Activities and Investing More). The act would release \$1 billion in Abandoned Mine Lands (AML) funds to revitalize

Appalachian communities affected by the decline of the region's coal industry.

Amanda Workman, director of community engagement at the WV Community Development HUB, next presented updates on HUB initiatives, such as Turn This Town Around, that provide resources and support to communities that are committed to creating a new economy and opportunities for their residents. These programs are designed specifically to empower residents to take the lead in developing a new future for themselves.

The group was then invited to share their own thoughts, which included frustrations with backward-thinking and single-minded elected officials, as well as the apathy and complacency of our fellow West Virginians. Attendees came away from the evening armed with important data on the current state of the global coal industry as well as solutions for moving West Virginia forward to a more prosperous future.

**Recap** — continued from p. 3

**A few useful bills passed**

**SB 625** revised FOIA exemptions for aboveground storage tanks to improve public right to know.

**SB 691** improves ability for DEP to implement the EPA Clean Power Plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from power plants. Small but very important changes.

**Bad bills that passed**

**SB 619.** Regulatory "reform." Included numerous provisions to restrict rule-making, but many of the worst provisions were removed.

**HB 4435** authorizes cost recovery for coal-fired boilers. Although it is unlikely to be used, it is still a really bad idea for consumers and the environment.

**HB 4726.** Transfers blasting regulation to DEP; directs DEP to approve or deny requests for site-specific water quality standards within 90 days; limits appeals of those standards. Weakens mine safety standards.

This was a year when even minor pro-small-business bills such as LEEP died at the behest of large out-of-state polluters. The good news is that it could have been much worse. While dozens of bad bills failed to get through, it is a concern that these were even introduced.

**What You Can Do**

Check out the Legislative Scorecard on p. 3 to see how your legislators did. And do more than just get out and vote. Volunteer with the campaigns of the Sierra Club-endorsed candidates nearest to you.

**MONONGAHELA GROUP**

**Thursday, May 19, 5-7pm**

**Green Drinks at Evansdale Black Bear, Morgantown**

The Mon Group will host the May event. Green Drinks is usually held once a month. Join us and people from the many green groups in Morgantown. Black Bear is at 3119 University Ave., Morgantown, 304-777-4867.

**Sunday, June 5, 12-3pm**

**Ice Cream Social at Coopers Rock, Shelter 2**

Coopers Rock State Forest is off I-68 exit 15. Coming from Morgantown, turn right at exit 15 and go to the end of the road. Shelter 2 is adjacent to the parking lot. We will make ice cream the old-fashioned way — with ice, salt and a hand-cranked ice cream maker. Bring a dish to share. Plates and flatware will be provided. We have the shelter all day, so come early or stay late. Many trails to explore.

The Mon Group will also be at **Cheat Fest on May 7, in Albright.** We will be handing out information and getting people interested in the Sierra Club. See you there.

# Outings — Summer

**Sun, May 1**

**Day Hike: New River Gorge, Southside**

*Easy/moderate* — Beautiful 7-mile hike along the New River on the Southside Trail in the New River Gorge National River. Shuttle between Thurmond and Cunard.

**Leader:** Mike Price, 304-400-8354, [mikeprice54@suddenlink.net](mailto:mikeprice54@suddenlink.net)  
**Web info:** [nps.gov/neri](http://nps.gov/neri)

**Thur, May 12**

**Festival: Pearisburg, VA, AT Community**

*Not rated* — Hikers and trail enthusiasts are invited to this festive celebration in the Appalachian Trail community of Pearisburg, VA. This festival is right before the 30th annual Appalachian Trail Days Festival in Damascus, VA, on May 13–15. Many events will be offered and you are invited to attend.

**Leader:** Mike Price, 304-400-8354, [mikeprice54@suddenlink.net](mailto:mikeprice54@suddenlink.net)

**Fri-Sun, May 13–15**

**Outings Leaders Weekend:**

**Blackwater Falls SP**

*Not rated* — This meeting is for all current WVSC Outings Leaders and anyone interested in becoming an Outings Leader. Contact leader for more details.

**Leader:** Outings Chair Mike Price, 304-400-8354, [mp54wv@gmail.com](mailto:mp54wv@gmail.com)  
**Web info:** [blackwaterfalls.com](http://blackwaterfalls.com)

**Sat, May 21**

**Day Hike: Pipestem SP/ Bluestone River**

*Moderate* — 8-mile hike down the Bluestone Turnpike Trail. We will take the tram at Pipestem down to McKeever Lodge and hike downriver to Bluestone State Park. This is a beautiful hike in a remote area of the Bluestone National Scenic River. A shuttle is required between the parks.

**Leader:** Mike Price, 304-400-8354, [mikeprice54@suddenlink.net](mailto:mikeprice54@suddenlink.net)

**Sun, May 22**

**Day Hike: AT to High Rock**

*Strenuous* — The hike will be about 6.5 miles and will take about 3 ½ hours. We will leave from Route 491 in Smithsburg, MD, and hike the AT up to High Rock, which affords beautiful views of

the valley below. Do not expect tranquility at the top as there is also a road that leads there. This is considered to be the steepest section of the AT in MD. Pack a lunch to eat at the top. We will meet at the Food Lion in Smithsburg.

**Leader:** Pam Peitz, 240-818-6554, [pspeitz@hotmail.com](mailto:pspeitz@hotmail.com)

**Sat, June 4**

**Day Hike: Canaan Valley Wildlife Refuge**

*Easy/moderate* — A 7-mile hike out and back along Brown Mountain Trail and Brown Mountain Overlook Trail. The trail heads north-northeast from the Camp 70 Road parking lot. This is a pleasant trail through the forest with a gently increasing grade. The overlook trail loop provides a beautiful view of Canaan Valley's wetlands. Great habitat for viewing birds and native plants. Remember to dress for the weather, bring drinking water, wear sturdy footwear, snack/lunch optional.

**Leader:** Brent Carminati, 703-999-8679, [brentcar1@frontiernet.net](mailto:brentcar1@frontiernet.net)

**Sat, June 11**

**Bike Ride: Cranberry Backcountry**

*Moderate* — 16-mile bike trip along the Cranberry River. We will start at Cranberry Glades and bike to the Cranberry Campground, with a shuttle between the two points. This is in the proposed Birthplace of Rivers National Monument.

**Leader:** Mike Price, 304-400-8354, [mikeprice54@suddenlink.net](mailto:mikeprice54@suddenlink.net)

**Web info:** [wilderness.net/index.cfm?fuse=NWPS&sec=wildView&WID=141](http://wilderness.net/index.cfm?fuse=NWPS&sec=wildView&WID=141)

**Sat, June 18**

**Paddle Trip: Monongahela River**

*Easy* — This is a joint outing with the Monongahela Area Paddlers (MAP), which recently formed to provide flat water float trips on the Monongahela River and other waterways near the Morgantown, WV, area. This is a relaxing and enjoyable way to enjoy nature. Extra kayaks and canoes are available.

**Leaders:** Mary Wimmer, [mwimmer@hsc.wvu.edu](mailto:mwimmer@hsc.wvu.edu); Mike Price, 304-400-8354, [mikeprice54@suddenlink.net](mailto:mikeprice54@suddenlink.net)

**Sun, June 19**

**Day Hike: Watoga State Park**

*Moderate* — A 5-6 mile loop hike on upgraded trails in the park. Watoga is a beautiful place to visit and hike.

**Leader:** Beth Little, 304-653-4277, [blittle@citynet.net](mailto:blittle@citynet.net)

**Nearest town:** Marlinton, WV  
**Web info:** [watoga.com](http://watoga.com)

**Wed-Sat, June 22-25**

**Veterans Weekend: Birthplace of Rivers**

*Not rated* — This multi-day outing for veterans will take place in the proposed Birthplace of Rivers National Monument. We will offer fishing and backpacking in the wilderness areas of the proposed monument. Paul Wilson, Sierra Club Military Outdoors, and Mike Price, WVSC Outings Chair, will lead this outing.

**Leaders:** Paul Wilson, 304-279-1361, [pjgrunt@gmail.com](mailto:pjgrunt@gmail.com); Mike Price, 304-400-8354, [mp54wv@gmail.com](mailto:mp54wv@gmail.com)

**Web info:** [birthplaceofrivers.org](http://birthplaceofrivers.org)

**Sat, June 25**

**Day Hike: Gambrill State Park**

*Moderate* — This 6-mile hike will meander through Gambrill State Park, in Frederick, MD. There are plenty of short hills and a nice view of the valley from the South Valley Overlook. We will meet at the large parking area where all the trails intersect in the park. Allow 3 hours for this hike. To register or for more information, contact the leader.

**Leader:** Pam Peitz, 240-818-6554, [pspeitz@hotmail.com](mailto:pspeitz@hotmail.com)

**Web info:** [dnr2.maryland.gov/publiclands/Pages/western/gambrill.aspx](http://dnr2.maryland.gov/publiclands/Pages/western/gambrill.aspx)

**Sat, June 25**

**Day Hike: Canyon Rim, Roaring Plains Wilderness**

*Strenuous* — This is one of West Virginia's treasures: the Canyon Rim Trail in Roaring Plains Wilderness Area. An 8.2-mile out-and-back hike, it is for experienced hikers only. Portions of the hike use "unofficial trails," and reference to GPS, topo maps and compass will be used. Overnight camping can be found at Red Creek Campground in Dolly Sods and in nearby Canaan Valley State Park. Contact leader for details.

**Leader:** Ann Devine-King, 304-594-2636, [atdking@gmail.com](mailto:atdking@gmail.com)

**Nearest town:** Davis, WV

**Web info:** [fs.usda.gov/recarea/mnf/recreation/recarea/?recid=12371;canaanresort.com/13/accomodations/camping](http://fs.usda.gov/recarea/mnf/recreation/recarea/?recid=12371;canaanresort.com/13/accomodations/camping)

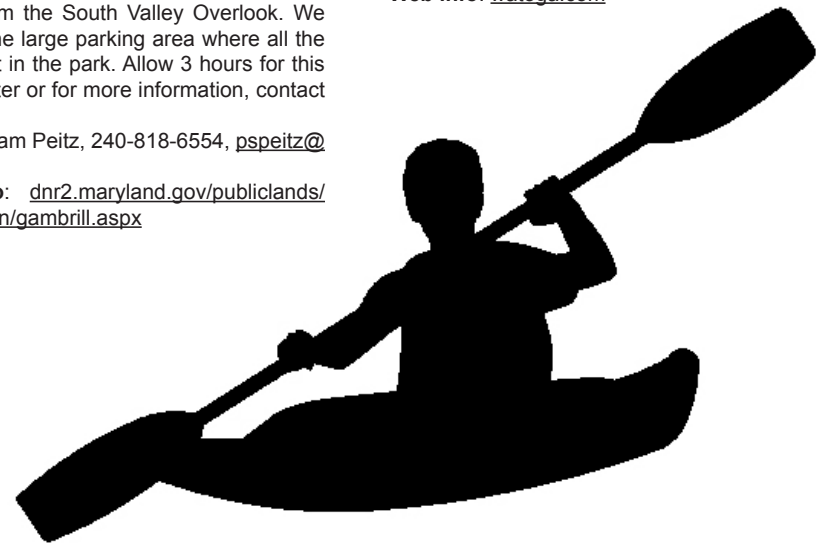
**Sun, June 26**

**Paddle Trip: Greenbrier River**

*Easy* — Join us for a canoe/kayak paddling trip on the Greenbrier River, from Marlinton to Watoga State Park Campground. Paddle 12 miles downriver along this scenic river section.

**Leader:** Mike Price, 304-400-8354, [mikeprice54@suddenlink.net](mailto:mikeprice54@suddenlink.net)

**Web info:** [watoga.com](http://watoga.com)



## 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 outdoor 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 kayaks 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](http://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.

## Abbreviations Used

- AMC Appalachian Mountain Club
- AT Appalachian Trail
- GWNF George Washington National Forest
- JNF Jefferson National Forest
- MG Monongahela Group
- MNF Monongahela National Forest
- NPS National Park Service
- NRA National Recreation Area
- NWR National Wildlife Refuge
- PFD Personal Flotation Device (lifejacket)
- SF State Forest
- SP State Park
- SNP Shenandoah National Park

### West Virginia Chapter Outings

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

[westvirginia.sierraclub.org](http://westvirginia.sierraclub.org)

### 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](http://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

[allegheny.org](http://allegheny.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](http://www.sierrapotomac.org)

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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**Deadline for  
July/August issue  
June 3**

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.





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(202) 224-7665 (SMC)

White House Comments Line:  
(202) 456-1111 Fax: (202) 456-2461  
Capitol Switchboard (202) 224-3121

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(202) 225-3452 (EJ)  
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(202) 225-7856 (AM)  
(202) 225-9061 (EJ)

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email: [governor@wv.gov](mailto:governor@wv.gov)

### To Contact STATE LEGISLATORS

email to WV Legislature:  
[cglagola@mail.wvnet.edu](mailto: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](http://www.legis.state.wv.us)  
has contact information for all state legislators.

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Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

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Make a commitment to the next generation by remembering  
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others preserve the intricate balance of nature

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85 Second St, Second Floor • San Francisco, CA 94105  
(800) 932-4270 • [gift.planning@sierraclub.org](mailto:gift.planning@sierraclub.org)

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

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