

GEORGIA SIERRAN

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GEORGIA SIERRA CLUB • APR / MAY / JUN 2019



GET OUTDOORS IN 2019 • PAGES 8-9

**PLUS • 2019 LEGISLATIVE WRAP-UP • ATLANTA PASSES CLEAN ENERGY PLAN
GEORGIA MOUNTAIN TREASURES UPDATE • LOCAL GROUP REPORTS • AND MORE**

FROM THE CHAPTER DIRECTOR

We don't pause often to celebrate our wins and all the progress we've made in Georgia—because we know this work is too important. But now that we have officially closed the books on 2018 and are well into the new year of campaigns, legislative actions and building the environmental movement in Georgia, I want to use this issue of the *Sierran* to pause and thank all of our contributors from the last 12 months.



Ted Terry, Chapter Director

2018 was an incredible year for the Georgia Chapter, and we could not do this work without the generous support of the donors, foundations and national Sierra Club partnerships noted in our Georgia Giving Society. We broke all previous fundraising records, putting us in expansion mode for 2019.

The next year is one full of promise for the Georgia Chapter of the Sierra Club. We are poised to grow our chapter capacity in fundraising, communications and membership engagement. Our Clean Energy for All committee is expanding its work into energy efficiency campaigns in Cobb County and the City of Atlanta, as we continue to promote more community resolutions for 100% Clean Energy plans in Athens, Savannah and Augusta, to name a few. We are also partnering once again with the national Beyond Coal team to put pressure

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GEORGIA SIERRAN

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Subscriptions

Subscription fees: \$1.00 annually for Chapter members (included with membership dues) or \$12.00 annually for nonmembers.

Visit the Georgia Chapter Office

Our office is a two-minute walk from the MARTA Avondale station (E7). We encourage you to take MARTA when possible. Exit the MARTA station towards the South Parking Lot, located on the E. College Avenue side (currently under construction). Once outside, proceed down the temporary stairway and turn left toward Sams Street. Cross over Sams Street and the office is behind the bakery. Look for the playground behind the building. Enter the fenced gate. The office is the second door from Sams Street on the right.

On the Cover

Photo by Sean Keating

SPRING 2019 CALENDAR

TUESDAY, MAY 7

Clean Energy Conversations: West Georgia, Carrollton. (Details/RSVP at bit.ly/cleanwga)

SATURDAY, MAY 11

Outing: Hikes in the Lula Land Trust Preserve (see p. 8 for details)

TUESDAY, MAY 14

Metro Atlanta Group Meeting (See pp. 18-19)

THURSDAY, MAY 16

Gwinnett Group Meeting (See p. 19)

FRIDAY, MAY 17

Outing: Explore the Natural World of Fort Benning (See p. 8)

MONDAY, MAY 20

Wildlands & Wildlife Committee Meeting

TUESDAY, MAY 21

Savannah River Group Meeting (See p. 21)
LaGrange Group Meeting (See p. 20)
Protect Trees: Coastal Group Event

THURSDAY, MAY 30 TO SUNDAY, JUNE 2

Three-day Outings Leader Training at Mulberry Gap (See p. 8)

THURSDAY, JUNE 6

Centennial Group Meeting (See pp. 16-17)

TUESDAY, JUNE 11

Metro Atlanta Group Meeting (See pp. 18-19)
LaGrange Group Meeting (See p. 20)

MONDAY, JUNE 17

Wildlands & Wildlife Committee Meeting

TUESDAY, JUNE 18

Savannah River Group Meeting (See p. 21)

THURSDAY, JUNE 20

Gwinnett Group Meeting (See p. 19)

For a full listing of our upcoming events, along with details on meeting times, locations and more, visit the Chapter Calendar at sierraclub.org/georgia/calendar.

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on the Georgia Public Service Commission to expand solar energy and retire dirty polluting coal plants in the triennial Georgia Power Integrated Resource Plan. Thank you for helping make the Georgia Chapter of the Sierra Club a strong voice for the environment throughout Georgia.

Finally, I want to extend a warm invitation to join us for an outing over the next few months as we head into spring outing season! Our mission with the Georgia Chapter Sierra Club Outdoors program is to reach across economic lines, cultures and communities to engage everyone—including military and youth—to explore and enjoy the natural world, connecting people to nature, benefiting both.

Join your fellow Sierra Club members out there on the trails, riverways, beaches and forests this spring. I hope to see you outdoors soon!



Ted Terry
CHAPTER DIRECTOR

P.S. New to Georgia and need some guidance on where to go and what to see? Or looking for some new adventures in 2018? Check out our Outdoors Page at www.sierraclub.org/georgia/outings for a complete calendar of upcoming guided outings, notifications of new outing sign-ups and information on how to become an official Sierra Club outings leader. All are welcome!

Georgia Chapter Welcomes New Staff Members



Gina Webber (l) and Jacqueline Lunsford (r)

The Georgia Chapter is excited to welcome two new members to the Sierra Club team: Development Associate **Gina Webber** and Administrative Assistant **Jacqueline Lunsford**.

Gina is a native Georgian and grew up in Dunwoody. She graduated from Georgia College in 2015 with a B.A. in political science. In recent years, she has worked in fundraising on local and statewide Democratic campaigns. As development associate, Gina works with donors and partners to secure funding for the Georgia Chapter. She is passionate about social and economic justice, queer rights and grassroots political movements. In her free time, Gina enjoys hanging out with her dog, playing music and traveling with friends.

Jacqueline is a Decatur native and brings many years of experience in administrative and office management to the Sierra Club. She has always felt connected to and protective of our planet and all its inhabitants, and is thrilled to be joining other like-minded individuals. She is working on her Creative Writing Certificate from Emory Continuing Education, and in her spare time is writing a novel as well as developing a website. She supports the Georgia Chapter's staff by helping with event planning, calendar management, bookkeeping and other administrative tasks.

Welcome aboard, Gina and Jacqueline!

Your IRA was always designed to be used in the future.



Now, you can use it to help ensure the future.

YOU CAN PUT YOUR IRA TO WORK FOR THE PLANET AND SAVE ON YOUR TAXES THIS YEAR

An IRA Charitable Rollover provides an opportunity to make a charitable gift to count toward your required minimum distribution and potentially reduce your taxes - even if you are taking the standard deduction for 2018.

If you are at least 70 ½ years old, you can now transfer up to \$100,000 directly to the Sierra Club Foundation from your IRA without paying income tax on the withdrawal.

Questions? Contact Ted Terry at [ted.terry@sierraclub.org](mailto:tad.terry@sierraclub.org)

Please note the Sierra Club Foundation does not offer legal, tax, or financial planning advice. You are encouraged to consult your own legal counsel, tax advisor, and/or financial planner.

The Foundation for a Healthy Planet.
SierraClubFoundation.org



2018 GEORGIA SIERRA CLUB GIVING SOCIETY

The Georgia Chapter of the Sierra Club established its Georgia Giving Society to honor individuals making significant gifts to the Georgia Chapter. Their partnership and commitment to our work leaves a lasting legacy. Contributions from the Georgia Giving Society are integral to the hard work of volunteers and staff all around Georgia including promoting renewable energy, monitoring and protecting Georgia's pristine coastal marsh and protecting our public forests in the North Georgia mountains. Please join us in thanking our current members.

Live Oak Champion

\$50,000+

Thalia and Michael C. Carlos Foundation • Klaus Family Fund

Dogwood Defender

\$10,000 - \$49,999

Valeria Adams Memorial Charitable Trust • Charles and Mary Bosserman • Donna and Doug Curling
The Sapelo Foundation • Edna Wardlaw Charitable Trust • William and Gertrude Wardlaw

Longleaf Pine Protector

\$2,500 - \$9,999

Carey and Douglas Benham • Sam and Laurie Booher • Matthew Dickason • Earth Share of Georgia
Mamatha Gavini • Derek and Gillian Jackson • Daniel Marks and Keri Powell • Mark Woodall

Redbud Advocate

\$1,000 - \$2,499

Martha and Tom Black • Debbie and Steve Gill • Jannah Goodell and Konrad Hayashi
Seth Gunning • Jennifer and Bill Kaduck • Susan and Max Key-Seymer • John Light • Stu Lipkin
Margaret Reiser • Martin Rosenman and Angie Netterville • Norman Slawsky and Marcia Abrams
Bob and Jane Springfield • Travis Towns

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Southern Magnolia

\$500 - \$999

Riddick Beebe • Felicia Bianchi • Stephen Bick • Centennial Group • William Chapman
Charles Cook • Camille Hammond and Gary Phillip • Carolyn Hinderliter • Cynthia Jeness
Henry Kahn and Mary Gillmor • Michelle and Scott Kegler • Valerie and Ray Kelleher
Colleen Kiernan • Roger King • Jason Konzelmann • Michael and Ellen Krause • Judy Lawrence
Gary and Maria Ludi • Bruce and Dell MacGregor • Thomas and Margaret Rasmussen
Midge and John Sweet • Wolfgang Tiedtke • David Worley

Evergreen Partner

\$100 - \$499

James Albert • Peter Ash • Mirza and Sunita Balic • Jan Barlow • David Barrett
Jeanne Barsanti • Woody and Carol Bartlett • Kenneth Bass • Lynn and Michael Beach
Linda and Steven Bell • Don and Judith Bender • Alexander Bermudez • Brian Bishop
Lori Blank • Bonnie Boatright • Thomas Bordeaux • Samuel and Laura Breyfogle • Pam Bridges
John Brower • Max and Carolyn Brown • Karen Burch • James and Tyra Byers
Jim Callison and Tamara McClelland • Sheryl Cantwell • Christine Carroll • Catherine Carter
Virginia Causey and T. Chitwood • William Chandler • Mike Chapman
Ross and Eleanor Cheairs • Beverly Chenault • Cathy Cortright • Carolyn Crutchfield
Sandra Daniell • James Darby • Diana and John Day • Theodore and Lynda Doll
Mary Fenton Doyle • William Dreyer • Francine Dykes and Richard Delay • William Dynan
William Eisenhauer • David Emory • Rita Enfinger • Rebecca and Jeffrey Engel
Joe and Cindy Erni • Daniel Evans • David Evans • Joseph Fausnight • Beth Fernandez
Michael Firment and Connie Dassinger • Lavonda and Amanda Forbes • Daniel Friedman
Susan Gamble • Edward Garland • Eric Geissinger • Charles Goetz • Kathe Gowland
Karen Graber • Karen Grainey • Earline Ham • Eleanor Hand • Art Hansen
Robert and Carolyn Hargrove • Jane Harmon and Mikell Jones • Susan Harmon
Chad and Kristy Helmick • Neill Herring • Tom Herring • Benjamin Hesse
Bruce and Lilly Higgins • Paula Hill • Frances Howard • Shepherd and Sarah Howell
Art and Lisa Hurt • Gaby Ivie • Yeou-Rong Jih • Victor and Lisa Johnson • Colleen and Barry Jones
John Juricek • Howard Kaplan and Julie Edelson • Laura Kearns • William Keir
Donald and Joan Kent • Sat Mohinder Khalsa • Markus Klass • Muriel Knope
Elizabeth Knowlton • Lynn Koehnemann • Ralph Kolbeck • Arnold and Nancy Kraby
Andrew Kurlansky • Patrick Lammie and Maureen Braun • Phil Langford • Kayron Laska
Neal Law, Jr. • Oanh Le • Roderick Lee • Patricia Lesko • Sarajane Love • Sara Madden
Christine Mastin • Cynthia McConnell • Claudia McDavid • Patricia and Laughlin McDonald

John and Helen McLaughlin • Harold McPheeters • Phillip Meade • Alfred and Linda Merrill
 Beatrice Meyer • Katherine Meyers • Jackie Mickle and Megan Phillips • Phyllis Miller
 Sandra and Simon Miller • Kathy Miner • Ralph Miriello • Anne Moore • Carol Morgan
 Susan Muller • Joyce Murlless • Terry Nations • Thomas and Marie Neff
 Richard and Nancy Negley • Kevin Nuffer • Randall O'Neal • Randy Oven and Kathleen Kiernan
 William and Claudia Parks • Keith and Shirl Parsons • Cynthia Patterson • Suchitra Patton
 Jeff and Shelly Peller • Michael Petelle • Robin Peterson • Mary Phillips • John Piazza
 Margaret Pierce • Robert Powell • Paul Prenovitz • Scott and Lorraine Presson • Jonathan Price
 Neal Priest • Mary Provost and Dan Demko • Carolyn Puckett • Janet Quirk
 Mark Rappaport and Susan M. Briskie • Louise Reaves • Edna Roberts • Laura Robinson
 Cindy Roesel • Beth Roth • Mark Schisler • David and Carolyn Schomer • Troy Schor
 Nancy Scott • Thomas and Linda Serra • Donald J. and Cathy Sharp • Diane Shearer • Teri Sims
 Henry Slack • Christopher Slay • Emily Smith • Virgil and Joann Smith • William Smith
 Michael Snyder • Margaret Spivey • James Steinberg • Terry Stewart • Lee Stocking
 Claudette Sukenick • Tally Sweat • Edward and Anne Terry • Reed and Svitlana Thomas
 Chris and Cynthia Thompson • William Tietjen • Karen Torghele and Larry Ander
 Carl Tyler • Kilsup Van Lieu • Denise Vercosa • Linda Vinal • Joseph and Carol Vivona
 Jerome Walker • Lynn Walston • Susan Wang • Burdett and Shirley Wantland • Janet Wantland
 Mary Margaret Ware • Rose Warner • Cecelia Weinbender • Elke Weiss • Margaret Weiss
 John Willingham • Susan and Elliott Winton • Harry Wolfe • Pamela Woodley • James Wootan
 Rhonda Wright • Nancy Wylie • Holly Yeagle • Dorian Zevos • Philip and Dorothy Zinsmeister

Wildlife Guardians

MONTHLY SUSTAINERS

Mark Albertin • Vicki Assafi • Jennifer Bartee • Susan Beckett • Jacqueline Belwood
 Marcia Borowski • Natalie Brown • Shelby Buso • Rachel Campbell • Catherine Carter
 Andrea Cervone • William Chapman • Susan Clymer • Bob Coleman • Barbara Coley • Sam Collier
 Judy Collins • Sarah Cool • Paul Cooper • Nathan Crenshaw • Nicole Jozwiak Crenshaw
 David Curry • Richard Danne • Nancy K. Daves • Diana Day • Bonnie Devaughan • Nina Dutton
 Ann Edmonds • Dan Friedman • Susan Gamble • Robert Gantt • John Garnham • Stephen Goldfarb
 Seth Gunning • Lisa Gunning • Chaz Gunning • Bruce Gunning • Jane Hamil • Bettye Harris
 Carrie Lee Hedrick • Tom Jack • Moshe Jacobson • Victor Johnson • Weyman Johnson
 Thomas Keeler • Valerie Kelleher • Sat Mohinder Khalsa • Arnold Kraby • Craig Kubik
 Kimble Lemen • Gary Ludy • Cheryl Lusnia • Jeffrey Luther • Sara Madden • David Marcus
 Elizabeth Marks • Chris Mastin • Linda McBurney • Claudia McDavid • Rebecca Mitchell
 Judith Moore • Jim Nigrelli • Suchitra Patton • Don Perryman • Mary Provost • Rocky Raffle
 Imani Raines • Dora Rice • Rama Roy • Linda Sabo • Samuel Sapp • Troy Schor • Joseph Searcy
 Thomas and Lin Serra • Eleanor Smithwick • Lee Stocking • Greg Sutherland • Travis Towns
 Linda Travers • Shauna Trepp • Kilsup Van Lieu • Denise Vercosa • Linda P. Vinal • Lynn Walston
 Cassandra Webster • Laura Wolfberg • Maggie Zwettler

FOCUS: GET OUTDOORS

Join Us for an Outings Leader Training in the Cohuttas!



Sierra Club Military Outdoors, Inspiring Connections Outdoors and the Georgia Chapter are coming together to provide a comprehensive training that will get new folks ready to lead their first outing and give existing leaders the skills they need to lead outings under any of our three programs. Whether you want to take groups of kids or veterans outside, you want to become an outings leader trainer or you simply want to help anyone explore, enjoy, and protect our wild places—this training is for you!

Date/Time: Friday, May 31 to Sunday, June 2
(Arrive Thursday evening)

Location: 400 Mulberry Gap Rd, Ellijay, GA

Organizers: Lornett Vestal (lornett.vestal@sierraclub.org, (404) 607-1262 ext. 222) and Jessica Morehead (jessica.morehead@sierraclub.org, (404) 607-1262 x232)

Featured Upcoming Outings

HIKE IN THE LULA LAND TRUST PRESERVE

Date/Time: Saturday, May 11, 9:30 a.m.

Location: 4370 Lula Lake Rd, Lookout Mountain

Leader: Lee Graham, leegrah3@gmail.com

Level: Moderate

On a day when the preserve is closed to the public, we will explore the hiking trails, high bluffs, deep canyons, waterfalls and cold splash pools that harbor interesting and diverse plant communities, including the 120-foot freefall Lula Falls. Join us for one of two moderate-paced hikes to observe the natural wonders.

EXPLORE THE NATURAL WORLD OF FORT BENNING

Date/Time: Friday, May 17, 9:30 a.m.

Location: 1146 Dixie Rd, Fort Benning

Leader: Laura Breyfogle, breyfogle1@gmail.com

Level: Easy

Spend the morning with staff from the Fort Benning Natural Resources Branch and get an up-close look at the diverse natural world that lives and thrives on this 182,000 acre military Installation. Pre-registration is required for this field trip and participation will be limited. Please contact Laura Breyfogle at breyfogle1@gmail.com to register.

For a complete list of upcoming outings or to register, please visit
<https://www.sierraclub.org/georgia/outingscalendar>

Get to Know Your Georgia Sierra Club Outings Programs



INSPIRING CONNECTIONS OUTDOORS (ICO)

Established in 1988, the Atlanta chapter of Inspiring Connections Outdoors seeks to serve youth by partnering with youth groups located in Atlanta and nearby cities. It is our goal to help these young people discover the beauty of wild places, to foster an appreciation for nature, and to help them acquire the necessary skills to enjoy these places safely. Through active involvement with nature, the program increases participants' environmental awareness, interpersonal skills and self-esteem.

For more information, check out the ICO blog at <http://atlantaico.blogspot.com> or contact Terri Lyde at atlantaico@gmail.com.

SIERRA CLUB MILITARY OUTDOORS (SCMO)

Military Outdoors organizes outdoor trips for veterans, other service members and their families, because we know that time spent in nature provides a unique experience to foster mental and

physical health, emotional resilience and leadership development. For many veterans, spending time in the outdoors can also help ease the transition to civilian life.



Spend three days from May 16 to 19 with veterans, military and their family members on the Chattooga River, in the beautiful Southeast. Nantahala Outdoor Center will serve as our guide as we journey down one of the most charming and exciting rivers in the South. For more information, contact Lornett Vestal at lornett.vestal@sierraclub.org.

LOCAL OUTINGS

Volunteer outings leaders lead trips all year round through our six local groups in Atlanta, Savannah, Augusta, LaGrange, Cobb and Gwinnett. Venture out through the Chapter's local outings to explore Georgia, hike the Appalachian Trail, paddle along the coast, ride the Atlanta BeltLine or find those special spots of nature close to home. Come hike, paddle, ride or camp with us as we explore, enjoy and protect #OurWildGA.

Check out our calendar for upcoming outings across Georgia (www.sierraclub.org/georgia/calendar) or contact Jessica Morehead at jessica.morehead@sierraclub.org for more information.

2019 Georgia Legislature Recap

MARK WOODALL

The 2019 legislative session began with a new governor and lieutenant governor, producing a learning period as the new leadership settled in. The usual steady hand of House Speaker David Ralston was distracted by an AJC investigation into the delay of criminal cases for Ralston's clients. The "heartbeat" abortion bill and school vouchers led to much divisive debate. Thanks to the efforts of Sierra Club activists, many harmful bills did not pass and some progress was made.

Go to www.protectgeorgia.org for the latest alerts. Go to www.legis.ga.gov for legislators' contact info and to watch tapes of the session and committee meetings.

ENVIRONMENTAL ROLLBACKS

HB 545 is an attack on nuisance law by the Georgia Poultry Federation and the Georgia Farm Bureau. Rep. Tom McCall's attempt to gut nuisance law was passed through the House in what amounted to a sneak attack on property rights and clean water. HB 545 repeals a law that was written by the late Rep. Denmark Groover in 1988 that was passed as a genuine compromise to protect farming activity against the threats posed by urban sprawl. The Groover version of Right to Farm has worked for over 30 years with no notable harm to anyone.

HB 545 was copied from a law passed by the North Carolina Pork Producers in 2018 to try to stop litigation concerning the 10 million hogs that are ruining lives, health and property values in North Carolina. Smithfield and other producers are running tons of hog waste into open lagoons and spraying the waste. HB 545 repeals the current law which has prevented people from



Ted Terry and Jessica Morehead at 2019 Capitol Conservation Day. Photo by Erik Voss.

"moving next door to a nuisance," like a farm, and suing to get rid of it next to their new home. That sensible and effective protection for land uses is to be replaced with a bully law. It that says Big Ag can move a hog factory into a rural neighborhood and the neighbors have little to no legal rights.

The Farm Bureau and Poultry Federation lobbyists ran into determined opposition in the Senate. The fight to protect private property rights, clean water and human health will continue over the summer and into the next session.

HB 445, the so-called "Shore Destruction Act," was the only major rollback to pass. Rep. Don Hogan's bill started as a joint project of the Sea Island Company's lobbyist, Jerry Keen of Tanner and Associates, and the Coastal Resources Division of the Department of Natural Resources. The exact nature of that relationship was revealed in emails and documents obtained by the Center for a Sustainable Coast and analyzed by Wes Woolf, a writer at the *Brunswick News*.

Sen. William Ligon grew up in the same community as the Sea Island Company and has seen its growth, and bankruptcy. He has watched the hedge fund operators who got control of it. Along with many of his neighbors, he has grown skeptical of Sea Island's increasingly bigger than its britches behavior. Ligon removed the Sea Island exemption from their bill.

HB 445 provides only minimal protection to the shorefront sand sharing system that shields private property from storm damage. While the

law would still apply to Sea Island, the minimal protections that remain offer that crowd more opportunities for abuse that will be rubber-stamped by the Coastal Resources Division.

TRANSPORTATION

HB 511, Rep. Kevin Tanner's "Mobility and Innovation" transit bill, was held in the Senate Transportation Committee by Chair Brandon Beach, who is running for Congress. HB 511 has been thrown into the mix of other transportation legislation, including the proposed state takeover of the Atlanta airport, the Delta Airlines jet fuel tax break, and a new Tanner project to make GDOT account for its use of the non-motor-fuel tax revenues it has been spending for the last few years. Those provisions are now in **SB 131**.

Despite a personal appeal by Gov. Brian Kemp, the Delta jet fuel tax break did not pass. The last minute attempt by Gwinnett GOP legislators led by Rep. Brett Harrell to delay a Gwinnett MARTA vote until 2026 did not pass. **HB 365** would have given Cobb County another two years to consider a special transit district but it failed to pass. Scooter regulation failed to pass.

ENERGY

HR 48, a resolution by Rep. Carl Gilliard urging against offshore petroleum development, passed on the last day of the session. Following the passage of HR 48, U.S. Rep. Buddy Carter wrote a letter asking that the Georgia coast be excluded from drilling or seismic testing.

SB 43, Sen. Chuck Payne's bill letting Dalton utilities borrow for Plant Vogtle without a referendum, stalled in the House Rules Committee but its content was added to another House bill, HB 322, in the Senate. In a dramatic last-night revote, HB 322 was defeated and then Payne got the Senate to recede from his amendment, allowing the underlying bill to pass.

SB 112 by Sen. Tippens would stop the

Vogtle tariff for schools and is still in committee.

HB 711 (phase-out of carbon-based electric production in Georgia) by Rep. David Dreyer sets a schedule for closing first coal plants, by 2030, then other remaining fossil fuel power plants by 2040. It will not be considered until 2020.

HB 732 by Rep. Todd Jones will put a \$2,500 electric vehicle tax credit back on the books. Electrification of transportation is the future, so Georgia needs to get on the bandwagon.

Several coal ash bills and resolutions await action including **HB 93** (dewatering notice), **HB 94** (landfill coal ash notice) and **SB 123** (doing away with an exemption for coal ash from the minimum local host fee). **HR 257** by Rep. Mary Frances Williams urges that millions of tons of coal ash on the Chattahoochee River in Cobb County be fully excavated and put in lined landfills.

CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

HR 164 (Trust Fund Honesty) by Rep. Jay Powell passed the House but Sen. Jack Hill amended it in his Appropriations Committee to Amend the Constitution to do what is being done now: charge the money and spend it any way the legislature wishes. The struggle to properly fund tire dump and hazardous waste site clean-up will continue in 2020.

DEREGULATION

HB 493 (Private Building Permit Review and Inspection) by Rep. Kevin Tanner was amended in the Senate to remove language that was harmful to the Soil and Water Conservation Commission and harmful to protections for Georgia's streams. HB 493 is on the Governor's desk.

Thanks to all who contacted your elected officials. Thanks to contract lobbyist Neill Herring for another session of outstanding work. We have a lot of unfinished business for the 2020 session, so stay tuned.

Atlanta Passes Clean Energy Plan

On March 4, the Atlanta City Council renewed its commitment to transition to 100% clean and renewable energy for the whole of the City of Atlanta by unanimously adopting the Clean Energy Atlanta Plan.

This plan outlines how the city will achieve a just and equitable transition to 100% clean energy. It is deeply grounded in the tangible and varied needs of community members. Pathways for transitioning include creating an energy efficiency renter assistance program, developing an equitable community-solar program, deploying large-scale solar on municipal property, expanding electric vehicle charging infrastructure

throughout the city, expanding education programs for residents and more.

The passage of Atlanta's 100% clean energy plan marks a milestone on many levels.

The plan advances the narrative of the Ready for 100 campaign, both regionally and nationally, by providing quantitative and qualitative information about the transition to 100 percent clean energy. It also positions Atlanta as a national leader in developing a strong transition road map grounded in equity and highlights the benefits that 100 percent clean energy offers everyone.

This is a plan for all Atlantans, and it reflects the priorities of the community. The transition will create around 8,000 new local jobs and reduce electricity bills for residents by at least 25 percent—in some cases up to 95%.

Through community conversations, neighborhood meetings and online research, the City

CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE



INVEST IN YOUR ENERGY FUTURE



SOLAR ENERGY - SUSTAINABILITY BEGINS AT HOME

Benefits:

- Most Reliable and Affordable Clean Energy Source in GA
- Save on Electricity Bills for 30+ Years
- Increase the Value of Your Home
- Optional Batteries for Power Outages and Daily Use
- Reduce Your Carbon Footprint

Why Now?:

- 30% Federal Tax Credit Fades After 2019
- Improved Financing Options Now Available
- Avoid Utility Rate Increases
- The Sooner You Start, the Greater Your Overall Return

Why Creative Solar?:

- Most Residential Installations in GA
- 25 Year Warranty for Equipment
- Best in Industry 5 Year Warranty on Workmanship
- Specializing in Residential and Commercial Installations

CONTACT US AT 770-485-7438
OR VISIT CREATIVESOLARUSA.COM
TO SCHEDULE A FREE CONSULTATION.

of Atlanta engaged over 3,500 residents in over 25 neighborhoods. This plan is the first of its kind. Atlanta can serve as a model for other communities pursuing 100% goals.

Atlanta is one of 109 cities across the United States that have committed to transitioning to 100 percent clean and renewable energy. Augusta and Clarkston have also set 100% renewable goals. On the horizon, other Georgia cities are working toward making similar commitments, and the Sierra Club continues to partner with these cities, counties and communities to achieve just and clean energy for all.

Way to lead the way, Atlanta!

Gwinnett Says No to MARTA – For Now

A Gwinnett County voter referendum on whether to join MARTA failed on March 19, with 46% voting in favor and 54% voting against. The referendum would have funded a major expansion of Gwinnett's existing skeletal bus network, including a one-station extension of MARTA's Gold Line and a variety of new and expanded bus routes. Expansion of MARTA into Gwinnett has been a longstanding priority for the Georgia Sierra Club's RAIL campaign, and the Chapter invested significant resources in voter education and mobilization efforts ahead of the election.

As expected, turnout for the referendum was low, with only 17% of registered voters casting ballots on March 19. The Sierra Club and other pro-transit groups had originally pushed for the vote to be held on last November's general election day, a date that would have ensured a much larger and more representative cross-section of the County's electorate (as well as saving Gwinnett the expense of a special election). Ultimately, the Gwinnett County Commission, at the time all Republicans, chose the special

election instead.

While transit supporters are disappointed by the results, the population of Gwinnett County continues to move in a more transit-supportive direction, and attention has already turned to the prospect of another referendum. The composition of the county commission has also changed, with two Sierra Club-endorsed candidates, Ben Ku and Marlene Fosque, defeating longtime incumbents in November. Both Fosque and Ku campaigned on a pro-transit platform.

Perhaps sensing momentum in favor of another referendum, several of Gwinnett's dwindling Republican state representatives, led by Rep. Brett Harrell of Snellville, staged a last-minute effort at the Capitol to prohibit another MARTA referendum in Gwinnett until 2026; that effort thankfully was not successful. Stay tuned for further news regarding the expansion of MARTA into Atlanta's most populous suburban county.



Georgia's Mountain Treasures Report Gets Update

LARRY WINSLETT

Over the last few years Georgia Forest Watch (GAFW) staff and volunteers, including many Sierra Club members, have surveyed and researched over 300,000 acres of some of the last remaining wild places in the Chattahoochee National Forests—places that lack roads and are home to some of the most remarkable wildlife and plant species in the world. Unfortunately, many of these areas remain at risk from logging and exploitation that could alter their special character or affect their recreational use. These areas are the subject of the new edition of Georgia's Mountain Treasures—The Unprotected Wildlands of the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests. They deserve special consideration when the current Land and Resource Management Plan (“forest plan”) is revised.

Each national forest is governed by a forest plan that sets its management, protection and forest-use goals and guidelines for the next 10–15 years. The plan revision process provides an opportunity for the public to request changes in management of specific areas. Many of our Southern Appalachian National Forests will likely be undergoing forest plan revisions in the next decade, including the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests. During the process there will be opportunities for the members of the public to speak on behalf of places that are special to them, and ensure that these places—our “mountain treasures”—are protected and sensibly managed to maintain their special character.

GAFW has been the lead in updating



Photo by Larry Winslett

the 1995 Georgia's Mountain Treasures report, originally compiled by the Sierra Club and The Wilderness Society. That effort led to the formation of GAFW during the previous forest planning process for the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests. The original Mountain Treasures series identified and described the unprotected wildlands in six national forests in the southern Appalachians. The purpose of the Mountain Treasures series was very specific: to give the public enough information about the forests' special places that they could speak effectively on behalf of them.

As we approach the next forest planning process, the new Georgia Mountain Treasures report will be a valuable resource for our members and forest activists. Times have changed, the forests have changed and so has Georgia's Mountain Treasures. But the purpose remains the same: to serve as a guide for members of the public as they navigate the process of creating a new forest plan.

The new report is now available in PDF format as a free download on the Georgia Sierra Club website. Check it out; you may find some of your favorite places inside. Also attend our Wildlands Committee meetings to learn more, and look for Sierra Club outings to some of the highlighted areas.

Here's how Georgia Sierrans celebrated **EARTH MONTH**

MOVIES TO WATCH

Truth to Power
Chasing Coral
The Last Dragons
Wall-E



JOIN A LOCAL GROUP

Centennial
Coastal
Gwinnett
LaGrange
Metro Atlanta
Savannah River



GET OUTSIDE!

Find a Trail
Join an Outing
Local Farmer's Markets

SPOTLIGHT: CompostNOW

CompostNow collects food scraps from residents and businesses to help them reduce waste and support local gardens.

#OurWildGA

Check out what fellow Sierrans are up to and post your own outdoor adventures using our hashtag, #OurWildGA.

SPOTLIGHT: Solarize

With campaigns across Georgia, Solarize is a community-based solar energy group that makes solar more affordable and accessible.

Get links for all of our Earth Day
action items: linktr.ee/gasierraclub

SPRING 2019 GROUP NEWS

CENTENNIAL GROUP

SERVING COBB, CHEROKEE & NORTH FULTON

Springing Into a Busy Spring

LYNN WALSTON & BETTYE HARRIS

We expect to continue our busy schedule of meetings, outings, outreach and tabling events as we celebrate Earth Month and focus on our priority conservation initiatives: Cobb Transit, Cobb PARKS, and Cobb CEFA (Clean Energy for All). We will also sprinkle in some river, trail and Adopt-a-Mile cleanups. We invite you to join us and to also give us your feedback by responding to our Centennial membership survey that we will distribute later this spring. Please visit our Centennial webpage and Facebook page, and the Georgia Chapter Outings page, at sierraclub.org/georgia/outingscalendar.

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GROUP INFORMATION

Monthly meetings: 1st Thursday, welcome and refreshments at 7 p.m., program at 7:30 p.m.; Life College, 1269 Barclay Cir. SE, Marietta. For directions please contact Lynn Walston, lynnwalston22@yahoo.com.

Visit our webpage at
sierraclub.org/georgia/centennial

Join us on Facebook at
facebook.com/Centennial.Sierra.Club



Cobb Clean Energy for All kickoff meeting and dinner with community partners in January. Thanks to Mary Miller for organizing!



Centennial volunteers stepped out at the Annual MLK, Jr. March in Atlanta, January 21



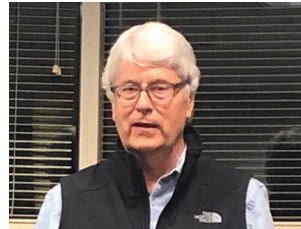
Always thankful to have Dr. Deidre Meiggs (Life University professor & advisor) join us and bring her students to our meetings and activities!

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Thursday, May 2: Updates on CEFA (Clean Energy for All) from chapter leader Sam Collier, and on solar and electric vehicle programs from Cobb EMC representatives.

Thursday, June 6: Annual Picnic (likely at East Cobb Park). Stay tuned for details to be announced. We could use some extra help in planning this event; please contact lyn-nwalston22@yahoo.com if you can help.

Also note that on **Saturday, June 15**, we'll need extra hands to help with our tabling booth at the annual Cobb NAACP Juneteenth Celebration. Please contact bettyecharris@gmail.com to volunteer.



Thanks to our first quarter guest speakers (clockwise from top left): Byron Rushing of Atlanta Regional Commission on regional walk and bike trails, plus Eric Meyer of Cobb DOT on Cobb Transit survey (January); Mark Woodall and Neill Herring, plus Rep. Mary Frances Williams with the 2019 Legislative Update (February); and Hobart Stocking, "Saving the Earth with Better Communications" (March)

RECENT AND UPCOMING OUTINGS



Ten Sierrans, led by Lee Graham and Bob Springfield, hiking the Gold Branch Trail on February 2.

Lee Graham reports that chapter and group outings leaders have been busy scouting and hiking a number of trails. Over 60 people were involved with hiking and scouting in the last few months. He continues, "Before we lead outings, we need to scout the destinations. In January, many trails were damaged and

impassable due to flooding and downed trees due to the heavy rains and winds. We scouted trails and corresponded with rangers and other hiking groups to learn about damaged trails. The federal government shutdown also prevented rangers from repairing trails. We assisted with trail cleanup and encouraged other hikers to help clean up the trails and parking areas."



Here's our Centennial scout group on a soggy day in February, scouting the Lula Land Trust Preserve for our upcoming May outing.

METRO ATLANTA GROUP

SERVING ATLANTA, DEKALB & SOUTH FULTON



Contact Congress About a Green New Deal

NINA DUTTON

The Sierra Club has been asking supporters to contact members of Congress about supporting a Green New Deal, a framework for a 10-year plan to transform the U.S. to 100% clean and renewable energy by 2030 while prioritizing benefits for workers and frontline communities in this transition.

The Metro Atlanta Group and Georgia Chapter worked closely with Sunrise Movement Atlanta and other local organizations to organize and support constituents in calling on Rep. Hank Johnson (GA-4) and Sen. David Perdue to support the Green New Deal resolutions.

At visits to Rep. Johnson's district office on Feb. 13 and Sen. Perdue's Atlanta office on Feb. 22, we and other constituents and supporters delivered letters explaining our position and spoke with local staff members about the need for a Green New Deal.

Organizations co-signing the letters included the Sierra Club—Georgia Chapter, Sierra Club—Metro Atlanta Group, Sunrise Movement Atlanta, Our Revolution Georgia, Science for the People—Atlanta, Metro Atlanta Democratic Socialists of America, National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum—Atlanta Chapter and 350atl.org.

RECENT MEETING REPORTS

January 8: Author/photographers Ren and Helen Davis illuminated local history through the lens of hikes and walks in our area. For more about their work, visit www.davisguides.com.

February 12: Georgia Sierra Club lobbyist Neill Herring and the chapter's executive committee vice-chair for conservation, Mark Woodall, presented the state legislative update, in accordance with annual Metro Atlanta Group tradition. They brought us up to speed on key bills from this session, from ones worthy of support—such as those to prevent contamination from coal ash ponds or at least require public notification of coal ash pond dewatering—to those threatening our rural lands and coast. They also stressed the importance of building relationships with our state legislators both during and between legislative sessions.

March 12: Beyond Coal organizer Neil Sardana made an informative presentation, leading to a productive discussion, on our opportunity this year to shape Georgia Power's 20-year plan (Integrated Resource Plan) in a way that better meets our need for a just and timely transition to clean energy. Keep up with the Georgia Clean Power Campaign if you want to get involved. Please contact Neil at neil.sardana@sierraclub.org to find out more.

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS! ADOPT-A-STREAM AND MORE

Do you like getting a little muddy? Feel alive exploring creeks and forests? Want to serve as sentinel for the health of a stream? Metro Atlanta Group Adopt-a-Stream needs new leaders!

We appreciate the longtime dedication of volunteers Nancy Wylie and Larry Kloet, who are now ready to step down. To find out more about stepping up, please read about the existing program at <http://sierraclub.org/georgia/atlanta/adopt-stream-program> and email our chair, Nina Dutton, at nddutton@gmail.com.

Want to pitch in in other ways, such as by helping out at meetings, planning events or actions, or keeping on top of local news, policy, politics, events and opportunities? Again, email Nina Dutton, nddutton@gmail.com.

GROUP INFORMATION

The Metro Atlanta Group typically meets the second Tuesday of each month. Our meetings usually feature a speaker on a timely topic. Then we present info on how to take action on important issues. Recently we have been meeting at the Georgia Chapter office at 743 E. College Ave. Suite B, Decatur, GA, 30030, but the location is subject to change. Please join us at 7 p.m. to socialize and 7:30 p.m. for the program!

Our executive committee meetings are open and generally held the evening of the first Tuesday of the month. Contact Nina Dutton (nddutton@gmail.com) to confirm details.

Web page: <http://sierraclub.org/georgia/atlanta>,

Facebook: <http://facebook.com/sierraclubatl>.

If you don't get our monthly meeting announcements, sign up for email updates through the Georgia Chapter website (<http://sierraclub.org/georgia>) and be sure to include your Atlanta-area zip code.

GREATER GWINNETT GROUP

SERVING GWINNETT COUNTY

DAN FRIEDMAN

The Gwinnett Group spent much of early 2019 focused on the referendum to approve the contract that the Gwinnett County Commission negotiated with MARTA. Members of the Gwinnett Group—notably Art Sheldon, Susan Gamble, and Gloria Hallen, among others—worked steadily for two months registering residents, encouraging people to vote and talking about why approving the referendum is important to Gwinnett's future.

The referendum vote did not go our way, but we substantially closed the gap from 2:1 to 1.2:1. There is no doubt that if the referendum was held during a normal election, the referendum would have passed. The closeness of the vote has only made us more motivated to win when the referendum is held again.

Our February meeting brought the electric Mark Woodall for his annual State of the Legislature analysis. Our March meeting had Stephen Stetson, the Sierra Club national staffer responsible for Southern Company as well as Georgia, Alabama and Mississippi Power, discuss where these power companies are in converting to renewable energy and the issues involved with that conversion. Our Stream Monitoring program, led by Michael Hallen, continues to ensure that our monitored stream meets environmental guidelines.

These are exciting times—"the best of times and the worst of times." Come see why these times are not like any other times as we lay the foundations for the next century.

GROUP INFORMATION

Monthly Meetings: 3rd Thursday, 7 p.m., Berkmar High School, 405 Pleasant Hill Road, Lilburn.

Visit our webpage at
sierraclub.org/georgia/Gwinnett

LAGRANGE GROUP

SERVING THE LAGRANGE AREA

LaGrange Group Active at Capitol for 2019 Session

The LaGrange Group has been very active this winter in promoting Sierra Club-backed legislation to our national and state legislators. Our efforts in helping the Sierra Club and other national environmental groups to lobby for the permanent funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund were rewarded this winter when the bill finally passed both houses of Congress. The bill will now go to the president and he is expected to sign it.

The LaGrange Group February meeting was an update presented by Sierra Club lobbyist

GROUP INFORMATION

Monthly Meetings: 3rd Tuesday, 6:30 p.m. refreshments, 7 p.m. program, St. Mark's Episcopal Church Parish Hall, 207 N. Greenwood St., LaGrange.

Visit our webpage at
sierraclub.org/georgia/lagrange

Mark Woodall on bills pending before the Georgia General Assembly. Members present were given the names of bills backed and not backed by the Sierra Club and asked to contact their local representatives about the legislation.

LaGrange sent four members to Capitol Conservation Day on Feb. 20. They spoke with legislators on bills backed by the Sierra Club.

LOCAL INITIATIVES

LaGrange Group on March 19 sponsored a program at LaGrange College about Al Gore's Climate Change Reality Project in order to increase community awareness of climate change.

Locally, the LaGrange group continues to cultivate a pollinator garden we established on The Thread walking trail within the city of LaGrange. As a winter project, members built 20 bluebird birdhouses and installed them along The Thread and in Pyne Road Park on West Point Lake.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Tuesday, May 21: Lecture and slides of The Ray, one of the first highways in the nation that will be sustainable, regenerative and carbon neutral. St. Mark's Episcopal Church Parish Hall, LaGrange.



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SAVANNAH RIVER GROUP

SERVING AUGUSTA & SURROUNDING AREAS

Larry Kopp Honored with Volunteer Award

LINDA MCBURNEY AND FRANK CARL

Kudos to Larry “Larr” Komp, SRG’s outings vice chair! Larr received the state’s 2019 Adopt-a-Stream Volunteer of the Year award.

Larr had been volunteering with Adopt-a-Stream (AAS) for some time when he decided to take the plunge and, in 2013, became certified. Since then he has participated in 275 chemical monitorings, 275 bacterial monitorings, 92 macro-invertebrate monitorings, 90 flow determinations and 25 habitat evaluations.

Larr’s dedication to AAS is amazing. Since he started volunteering with AAS he has participated in over 90% of the 250 group monitoring activities, missing only one monthly cycle for knee surgery, and then two weeks after his abdominal hernia surgery he participated in the monitorings without getting in the water!

Larr has participated in identifying pollution sources, which sometimes meant walking the creeks to find them. For example, after walking one creek for over three hours, he discovered that the culprit was an overflowing sewer. As an avid bicyclist Larr has been on some backroads where he observed potential water issues by a few local plants and developer violations and then contacted the local AAS coordinators. Without Larr we would definitely not be able to effectively monitor nine streams each month.

Larr is a very active outings leader. He promotes Sierra Club and AAS to his biking and kayaking friends, some who have become members and certified AAS volunteers. He was also a guest speaker at the Sierra Club Aiken Group to talk about the AAS program.

Larr’s participation in AAS expanded to his getting involved in the political scene. He lives in Columbia County, one of the fastest growing counties in the state which means lots of development. He was concerned what this development would do to the waterways so he decided to run for a position as a supervisor in Columbia County’s Soil and Water Conservation District. He won the election, and the knowledge he gained as an AAS volunteer will be vital to him in this position.

GROUP INFORMATION

Monthly Meetings: 3rd Tuesday, 6:30 p.m., Unitarian Church on Walton Way, Augusta.

Visit our webpage at
sierraclub.org/georgia/savannah-river

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COASTAL GROUP

SERVING SAVANNAH & SURROUNDING AREAS

Local leaders in the push for a greener Savannah met on Tuesday, March 19th to discuss the city’s prospects for a move toward 100% clean energy. Representatives from the Sierra Club in Atlanta presented on the momentum building in other cities nationwide and around the world, and Atlanta’s own progress in its commitment to 100% clean energy by 2035. The resulting discussion centered on the challenges and possibilities of powering Savannah with renewable energy. The group also debated ways to move public will toward demanding clean energy. We need all hands on deck to elevate spokespeople to speak truth to power, highlight our victories, mobilize the student population, and inspire local businesses to get involved. To join the fight for the world we want, contact Lilli Hutto of the Coastal Group at medi8@mindspring.com.

GROUP INFORMATION

Visit our webpage at
sierraclub.org/georgia/coastal

Join us on Facebook at
bit.ly/CoastalSCFB

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For a complete listing of conservation committee chairs and issue leaders, please visit: sierraclub.org/georgia/directory.

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Head to our website for all sorts of great resources and opportunities, including a complete listing of all conservation committee chairs, issue leaders, and group leaders at **sierraclub.org/georgia/directory**.

VOLUNTEER

Be a part of the legacy! Sign up today to help us protect Georgia's environment: **bit.ly/GASCVolunteer**

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