



# WENOCA SIERRAN

Newsletter of the  
Western North Carolina Sierra Club

Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

AUG-OCT 2012

## Upcoming Events:

Unitarian Church  
1 Edwin Place  
(corner of Charlotte St. & Edwin Pl.)  
Social: 7 pm / Program: 7:15 pm

### Wednesday, Aug 1 Brent Martin

*The Bartram Trail:  
A Gem for WNC*

### Wednesday, Sept 5 Dave Erb & Yuri Koslen

*Bus 101:  
Asheville Redefines  
Transit*

### Wednesday, Oct 3 Travis Hargett & Ken Brame

*Fracking:  
Dirty, Dangerous  
and Run Amok*

Includes Legislative Update

WENOCA will hold meetings on the first Wednesday of the month. Executive Committee meetings will be held at 5:30 pm prior to the monthly programs.

All members are invited to attend.

For more information, call Judy Mattox at 828-683-2176 or email [judymattox@sbcglobal.net](mailto:judymattox@sbcglobal.net).

WENOCA SIERRAN is the newsletter of the Western North Carolina Sierra Club. The newsletter is published four times a year. Articles and comments are welcome.

## The Bartram Trail: A Gem for WNC - Aug 1



Brent Martin

Join us on Wed., August 1 when Brent Martin will speak on the history and significance of naturalist William Bartram's visit to western NC in 1775, and on the trail and society created to honor this visit.

The Bartram Trail traverses for over sixty miles some of the most spectacular ridges in western North Carolina. Starting in north

Georgia and ascending out of the upper west fork of the Chattooga River, it winds its way across the Nantahala Range into the Nantahala gorge and back up to the summit of the 5,200 foot Cheoah Bald in the Snowbird mountains of Graham County.

*Brent currently serves on the board of the North Carolina Bartram Trail Society and works full time as the Southern Appalachian Regional Director for The Wilderness Society.*

*He lives in the Cowee community, where Bartram's visit and rich descriptions of the area in 1775 assisted in making this community one of the largest National Historic Districts in western North Carolina.*

## Bus 101: Asheville Redefines Transit - Sept 5

Asheville has recently begun implementing the first phase of the city's Transit Master Plan (TMP). To mark the switch, the bus system's name has been changed from ATS (Asheville Transit System) to ART (Asheville Redefines Transit). While most current and potential riders



Dave Erb

have seen significant service improvements, some have experienced service reductions. Other patrons have struggled to understand and adapt to the changes. Still others wonder why the city isn't pursuing more aggressive changes than those prescribed by the TMP.

Please join Wenoca Group on Wednesday, September 5, when Dave Erb and Yuri Koslen will present a program entitled "Bus 101: Asheville Redefines Transit." While concentrating primarily on describing the layout, rationale, and future direction of the new ART system, the talk will also discuss the broader context of multi-modal transportation. For those who have yet to

experience ART, "Bus 101" will provide a short introductory lesson in riding the bus and navigating the system comfortably and conveniently.

*In 30 years as an automotive engineer, Dave Erb has developed vehicles employing gasoline, diesel, biodiesel, alcohol, natural gas, electric, and hybrid electric powertrains. He began working on hybrids while employed by a transit bus manufacturer in 1986, and has focused his career on electric and hybrid electric vehicles since 1991. He is the Vice Chair of the Asheville Transit Commission, and serves on the Wenoca Group ExCom. Dave lives on a small lot within walking distance of UNC Asheville, where he teaches Mechatronics Engineering.*



Yuri Koslen

*Yuri Koslen is Transit Projects Coordinator for the City of Asheville, working on virtually all aspects of the ART ("Asheville Redefines Transit") bus system. A long-time advocate for multi-modal transportation options, Yuri was formerly employed as the Transportation Coordinator at UNC Asheville.*

## FRACKING: *Dirty, Dangerous and Run Amok - Oct 3*

On Wednesday, October 3, WENOCA Sierra Club will present a program on fracking, which will include a State Legislative Update by Travis Hargett of the NC Sierra Club, and Ken Brame, political chair.



Travis Hargett

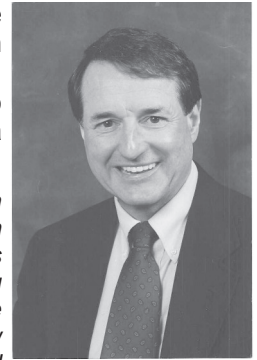
Natural gas drillers exploit government loopholes, ignore decades-old environmental protections, and disregard the health of entire communities. "Fracking," a violent process that dislodges gas deposits from shale rock formations is known to contaminate drinking water, pollute the air, and cause earthquakes. If drillers can't extract natural gas without destroying landscapes and endangering the health of families, then we should not drill for natural gas.

Robin Mann, Sierra Club President, has concerns that are echoed by many on the environmental front. "Fossil fuels have no part in America's energy future - coal, oil, and natural gas are literally poisoning us. The emergence of natural gas as a significant part of our energy mix is particularly frightening because it dangerously postpones

investment in clean energy at a time when we should be doubling down on wind, solar and energy efficiency."

Fracking has now been passed into law by the 2011-12 North Carolina legislature.

*Travis Hargett graduated from North Carolina State University w/ a degree in Political Science. For the last 2 years he's worked with the NC Sierra Club. During his time there he has worked to improve energy efficiency standards in new homes, staffed the State Political Committee and organized members to take action on various environmental issues in the legislature. He lives and works in downtown Raleigh, sits on the Wake County Energy Commission, and is a recent graduate of the Institute of Political Leadership.*



Ken Brame

*Ken Brame is currently WENOCA's political chair, a position he has held for the past 3 years. He also serves as Chair of the Club's National Political Committee and as a member of the NC Chapter Political Committee. In addition, he serves as the co-chair of the Sierra Club's national campaign to re-elect President Obama. Ken received the National Sierra Club's Special Service Award in 2011.*

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## Legislative Watch: A Shameful Session

By Ken Brame, Political Chair

It was a shameful end to a legislative session filled with poorly-reviewed and ill-advised changes to laws and programs which had been crafted over decades for the protection of public health and our environment.

On Sunday July 1, Governor Perdue vetoed SB 820, the fast-track fracking bill. Everyone knew the decision on whether to override that veto would come down to a few votes in the state House. The future safety of groundwater as a drinking water supply in several North Carolina counties could be riding on a razor's edge.

That Monday evening, immediately after the House voted to override Perdue's budget veto, House leadership called up SB 820 for the vote. No debate was allowed. The totals flashed on the board: 72-47 in favor of override, the minimum 72 votes needed. But Rep. Becky Carney (D-Mecklenburg) jumped up, waving and calling out for the Speaker's attention. She'd pushed the wrong button - 'yes' instead of the 'no' she intended - and recognized her error as soon as her vote appeared with the others on the board. A simple, late-evening mistake made in good faith. She was completely ignored.

While the fracking veto override may illustrate the worst of this legislative session, it hardly begins to encompass the environmental damage done. In the final week of the 2012 "budget session" alone, the legislature approved these environmental regressions:

- State agencies, including the Coastal Resources Commission, were blocked from establishing rules to respond to rising sea level for another four years.
- Jordan Lake cleanup rules affecting development were delayed another two years.

Earlier legislative actions weakened controls on toxic air pollution and defunded the Clean Water Management Trust Fund. These laws moved our state backwards in the defense of our clean water, air, and land.

At the same time, we should recognize that the environmental damage could have been even worse. One of the gubernatorial vetoes never overridden was Perdue's rejection of SB 709, the so-called energy jobs act, which would not only have promoted fracking but environmentally dangerous offshore drilling as well. In the final week, legislation which would have forced cities to extend water/sewer service to badly planned and environmentally harmful developments outside their boundaries died. Other bad bills which were adopted were reined back to a degree by the need to ensure sufficient supportive votes to avoid a veto.

As a result, we are left by the session with this recognition: It could have been worse, and it almost certainly will get worse next year—unless supporters of a clean and healthy environment do better at the state's polls this fall than in 2010.



## CAMPAIGN WATCH: *Time for a Change!*

If a legislative session ever demonstrated the truth that "**who we elect matters**," it was the 2011-2012 North Carolina General Assembly. It's time for conservationists in our state to step up and **work together to take back the future of our state for a clean, green, and beautiful North Carolina.**

Here's a first step. **Contribute today to the NC Sierra Club PAC.** Send your check to NC Sierra Club PAC, PO Box 469, Asheville, NC 28802-0469. Be sure to list your occupation and employer.

On July 4, the day after this disastrous legislative session adjourned, the Sierra Club turned our sights to holding our legislators accountable for these bad decisions. We have only until November 6. Your support today means that the Sierra Club can work in key districts to support or oppose candidates. We must let the voters know how the decisions made by their representatives are going to impact their communities, their landscapes, their drinking water. We must make sure everyone knows that ***the most important thing we can do for the environment is to vote for candidates who share our environmental values.***

### Adopt-a-Stream

Sierra Club has "Adopted-a-Stream!" It's a 1.5 mile stretch of the French Broad River as part of a multi-community cleanup effort. We have committed to volunteering one Saturday in the spring and one in the fall.

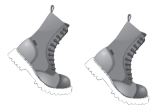
On Saturday, May 12, at 10 am at the Jean Webb Park, (which is under the Haywood Road / Riverlink bridge in the River Arts District), 10 to 20 people pitched in to help. The stream team put in at that location, and the shore squad began their cleanup at that point as well. We had trash bags, gloves, sturdy shoes

### Adopt-a-Stream



for the shore squad, water shoes (or old sneakers) for the stream team, who had both canoes and kayaks. The take out point was at the Pearson Bridge. At the end of the day we had mounds of overflowing trash bags and four water saturated mattresses piled up for Asheville garbage trucks. Shuttles then took us all back up to the Riverlink Sculpture Park (near Jean Webb) for food, drinks, and a celebration!

If you would like to sign up for the fall river clean-up, please contact Tom Morrissey at [thmorrisey@gmail.com](mailto:thmorrisey@gmail.com) or call 404-513-4069.



## Summer-Fall Hiking Schedule



**Saturday, July 28 - Waterfall Hike & Splash** - Meet at 10 am in Asheville and return about 4:30 pm. We'll see some waterfalls and do some splashing in the vicinity of Fish Hatchery near Pisgah Forest. Hike is approximately 4 miles of easy to moderate level. Wear good footwear because there can be some slippery slopes. Kids are welcome, accompanied (closely) by parent/guardian. Contact hike leader Lisa McWherter to sign up: [lisamcw2@gmail.com](mailto:lisamcw2@gmail.com) or call 828-713-4994. Questions are welcomed, too.

**Saturday, August 18 - Blueberry Picking near Mount Mitchell (depending on where the berries are ripe)** - Meet in Asheville at 10 am and return around 4 pm. RSVP to hike leader Jane at [janelaping@sbcglobal.net](mailto:janelaping@sbcglobal.net) or 828-772-0379.

**Saturday, August 25 - East Fork of the Pigeon River** - Meet at 10 am in Asheville and return around 5:30 pm. Distance approximately 5.5 miles. Moderate-to-easy hike along this beautiful roaring river on a trail that is mostly shaded. There will be opportunity to get your feet wet and have lunch beside the water on this there-and-back hike. Recommend good footwear due to rocky and occasional slippery areas. This area is part of the Shining Rock Wilderness, so group size is limited to 10 hikers. Must contact hike leader to sign up. Lisa McWherter at [lisamcw2@gmail.com](mailto:lisamcw2@gmail.com) or 828-713-4994.

**Saturday, September 15 - Montreat (exact location to be announced)** - Meet at 10 am in Asheville and return about 5 pm. Distance approx 5.5 to 6 miles. Difficulty level is mostly moderate with a little easy, but for conditioned hikers. This hike will be mostly shaded. Other details to follow. Must contact hike leader to sign up - Lisa McWherter at [lisamcw2@gmail.com](mailto:lisamcw2@gmail.com), or 828-713-4994.

**Saturday, September 22 - Avery Creek-Twin Falls Trail** - Meet in Asheville at 10 and return around 3-4 pm. An easy, 4 mile round-trip hike along Avery Creek to three waterfalls in Pisgah National Forest near Brevard. Good hike for families with children ten years and older. Lush vegetation and great views of the waterfalls and creek. RSVP to hike leader Jane at [janelaping@sbcglobal.net](mailto:janelaping@sbcglobal.net) or 828-772-0379.

**Sunday, October 21 - Shining Rock** - Meet in Asheville at 10 am and return around 5:45 pm. Distance approximately 8.5 miles of moderate / easy trail. Hike along Ivester Gap Trail and Art Loeb Trail up to the white quartz boulders on Shining Rock. Must contact hike leader to sign up - Lisa McWherter at [lisamcw2@gmail.com](mailto:lisamcw2@gmail.com), or 828-713-4994.



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The Executive Committee meets monthly. For more information, please contact Judy Mattox at 828-683-2176 or at [judymattox@sbcglobal.net](mailto:judymattox@sbcglobal.net). All WENOCA members are invited to attend.

**Our website is [www.wenoca.org](http://www.wenoca.org).**

## WENOCA OFFICERS - 2012 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Judy Mattox – Chair - 828-683-2176  
Lisa McWherter - Outings Leader  
Dave Erb - Transportation Committee  
Kris Cunningham - Membership Chair

Grace Curry  
Ken Brame - Political Committee  
Elaine Lite - Newsletter Editor

**The Executive Committee has two open seats. Please call Judy Mattox if you are interested.**

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## Get acquainted with Sierra Club members through these social networking venues!

Find the WENOCA Group of the Sierra Club on Facebook at

[www.facebook.com/pages/Wenoca-Group-of-the-NC-Sierra-Club/119353431450105](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Wenoca-Group-of-the-NC-Sierra-Club/119353431450105).

We're also on Meetup at [www.meetup.com/WENOCA-Sierra-Club-WNC](http://www.meetup.com/WENOCA-Sierra-Club-WNC).



## Help us save trees ... Let us e-mail your newsletter!



WENOCA member emails are requested.  
Send your email address to: [judymattox@sbcglobal.net](mailto:judymattox@sbcglobal.net).