



# WENOCA SIERRAN

Newsletter of the  
Western North Carolina Sierra Club

Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

AUG - OCT 2013

## Upcoming Events:

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

### Wednesday, Aug 7

**Julie Mayfield &  
Bob Wagner**

*Smart Growth in  
Our Communities*

### Wednesday, Sept 4

**Thomas Llewellyn,  
Emma Hutchens  
& Danna Smith**

*The Campaign to Stop  
Genetically Engineered Trees  
and  
Our Forests Aren't Fuel*

### Wednesday, Oct 2

**Torin Kexel,  
Emma Greenbaum  
& Katie Bray**

*Community Action on Energy  
Production and Efficiency*

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.

## Smart Growth in Our Communities - Aug 7



Julie Mayfield

Join us on Wed., Aug. 7 when Bob Wagner and Julie Mayfield, co-directors of Western North Carolina Alliance, discuss various community efforts occurring around smart growth and transportation, including a deeper focus on the I-26 Connector Project. Smart Growth is a set of design principles that, among other things, encourages the development of compact, pedestrian-friendly communities, provides transportation and housing choices, encourages mixed-use development, and preserve and enhances downtowns and other urban centers. Environmental, design, and transportation advocates have long advocated smart growth, but health and aging advocates in Asheville are now picking up the baton. Hear about their efforts and what we hope to accomplish working with them.

*Julie Mayfield is the executive director of the Western North Carolina Alliance. Previously, she was the Vice President and General Counsel for the Georgia Conservancy where she worked on*

*policy issues in the areas of air and water quality, natural areas, quality growth, and coastal conservation. Prior to the Conservancy, she directed the Turner Environmental Law Clinic at Emory University School of Law and practiced environmental law at Kilpatrick Stockton. She is a graduate of the first class of the Institute for Georgia Environmental Leadership and a graduate of Leadership Atlanta. She received her undergraduate degree in religion from Davidson College in 1989 and her law degree in 1996 from Emory University School of Law, where she was a Woodruff Fellow.*

*With a business degree from Wake Forest University, 12 years overseeing house building programs in Africa with Habitat for Humanity and the last 9 years working at the Community Foundation to strengthen nonprofits in Western North Carolina.*

*Bob Wagner joined the Western North Carolina Alliance team in April 2013. While working with the Community Foundation Bob spearheaded WNC's Mountain Landscapes Initiative bringing land use planning and decision making tools to government officials, developers and private citizens. He also served as chair of WNC Nonprofit Pathways.*



Bob Wagner

## Stop GE Trees & Our Forests Aren't Fuel - Sept 4



Emma & Tom

Join us on Wed., Sept. 4 for an informative program about protecting our trees and forests.

Thomas Llewellyn and Emma Hutchens, co-Founders and Coordinators of the REAL Cooperative (Regenerative Education Action and Leadership), a collaborative project of Activists and Educators, as they discuss their STOP GE Trees Campaign. The goal is to work with forest dependent communities to protect native forests from the uncontrollable and irreversible threats posed by the release of genetically engineered trees (GE trees or GM trees) into the environment.

Also speaking, will be Danna Smith, Executive Director of Dogwood Alliance. Danna will discuss the urgency to address climate change and move away from coal and

other dirty energy, which has increased our society's need for truly renewable energy like wind and solar. Unfortunately, lumped into the category of renewables is biomass, essentially burning whole trees for electricity. The forests of the Southern US are ground zero and are now the largest exporters of wood pellets in the world. Right now utilities in Europe and the United States are lining up to burn our forests, even though recent science shows that burning wood could be worse for our climate than burning coal. Hear Danna talk about their new campaign to stop the rush to burn, learn why the national Sierra Club and NC Sierra Club signed on - and see how you can make a huge difference.



Danna Smith

**Bios continued on page 2**

## Issues Update By Ken Brame

### Federal

Let's start with some good news at the **Federal level**. In June, President Obama announced his strategy to fight climate change. His plan focuses on three main areas: (1) cutting carbon pollution; (2) preparing the United States for the effects of climate change; and (3) coordinating the U.S. effort with other countries. Obama is looking to essentially side-step Congress, relying on the EPA's power to regulate climate change under the Clean Air Act.

**Instituting new carbon pollution standards on power plants** is the most ambitious part of Obama's proposal. Power plants produce 40 percent of the country's carbon dioxide. Putting limits on carbon pollution from power plants would be a huge step toward reaching the White House's goal of cutting greenhouse emissions to 17 percent below 2005 levels by 2020.

Obama's plan also calls for \$8 billion in **loan guarantees for clean energy projects** and a vast increase in the number of permits for renewable energy projects on public lands.

He would create **stricter fuel standards for heavy-duty trucks**. The White House also wants to create **new efficiency standards for appliances** that would cut 3 billion metric tons of carbon pollution by 2030.

In addition, he would create task forces to analyze problems related to climate change, giving local authorities federal assistance, and providing \$200 million in award money to communities that **build infrastructure with "enhanced preparedness" for climate change-related disasters**. The White House also plans to **cut \$500 billion in international fossil fuel subsidies** per year from the 2014 budget. Obama promised that the United States is going to stop financing new coal power plants overseas, with the exception of plants in poor countries that have no other economically feasible option.

### North Carolina

Unfortunately the news on the state level is not good. The NC Legislature continues its attacks on the environment and local control. The legislature is still in session so we will have to wait a while before we know the true extent of the damage they are doing. Here are some of the bills being considered:

- In addition to the forced taking of the Asheville Water System and water shed they are considering bills that would require the City of Durham to provide water and sewer to the controversial

751 South development and, eventually, force Durham to annex the area.

- **Senate Bill 112** – would override local control over billboards, and would allow environmental (and other) regulations to expire if not renewed by the state legislature.

- **House Bill 201** would regress NC commercial energy efficiency building code requirements back to 2009 - 30% less efficiency than is now required.

- **House Bill 94, "Amend Environmental Laws 2013"** (1) would prohibit disclosure of chemicals used in fracking; (2) would prohibit costs & benefits of fracking regulation rules from being disclosed; (3) would allow any facility to pollute up to the edge of its property line rather than to the current 500 foot limit before the edge. If passed, this could put water bodies, such as the French Broad River that have coal ash ponds nearby, at greater risk of contamination.

- **Senate Bill 76**, would speed up the issuance of fracking permits.

- **Senate Bill 328, the "Solid Waste Management Reform Act of 2013"** - the **landfill bill** - takes aim at landmark legislation passed in 2007 to protect NC from becoming a dumping ground for out-of-state trash.

Some good news on the state legislature: we appear to have been successful in our fight to prevent the elimination of the requirement that NC Utility companies continue to provide an increasing percentage of their power from renewable sources.

Our lobbying staff continues to fight these bills and we will not know until the legislature session ends which of these bills will pass and which we can block. Thanks to all of you who have contributed to fund our lobbying program and for the calls and letters to your elected officials on these bills. Go to [www.nc.sierraclub.org](http://www.nc.sierraclub.org) to make a contribution to support our lobbying program.

### Mark your calendars for two upcoming events:

**August 5 - Join thousands of us in a Western NC version of a Moral Monday protest to let our NC Legislature know how upset we are with all of the things they are doing.** It will be held at Pack Sq. Park in downtown Asheville at 5 pm.

**August 24 - Join us for a rally to move Western NC beyond coal** at Pack Square Park in downtown Asheville from 2 to 4 pm.

### Continued from page 1 - Bios

**Thomas Llewellyn and Emma Hutchens** are Co-Founders and Coordinators of the REAL Cooperative (Regenerative Education Action and Leadership), a collaborative project of Activists and Educators working to advise new organizers, educate in creative ways, coordinate and collaborate on actions, tours and events for advancing regenerative initiatives and stopping environmental destruction. For the last two years they have focused most of their time educating and organizing about GMOs and the need for labeling and long term testing and have recently joined the Campaign to Stop

Genetically Engineered (GE) Trees. Thomas and Emma currently reside in Asheville, NC.

**Danna Smith**, Executive Director, Dogwood Alliance - Danna helped found Dogwood Alliance, and has guided and managed the organization's programmatic work since then. She has successfully negotiated forest protection commitments from some of the world's largest paper producers and corporate consumers, and serves as the Carbon Canopy co-chair. She earned her law degree from Emory University and earned her environmental stripes as a campaigner with Greenpeace.

## Community Action on Energy and Efficiency - Oct 2



Torin Kexel

Be sure to attend our program on Wed., Oct. 7 as we learn from Torin Kexel, Green Opportunities Building Performance Director, about the Asheville **Green Streets!** Program. The organization's goal is to take one concrete step towards moving Asheville beyond coal by promoting energy awareness at a neighborhood level, empowering communities to reduce their energy use through

neighbor action and peer-to-peer education. This initiative will cultivate an inclusive local green economy by driving the market for energy efficiency retrofits and ultimately create on-the-job training opportunities for people that have traditionally been left out of the building performance industry.

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## ***River Cleanup volunteers and canoeists needed for Sat., Aug. 3***

By Richard Kark

The French Broad River desperately needs your help. Its loveliness has been marred by floating garbage carried and deposited along its shores by all the rain and high water we have experienced this year. Thanks to those who signed up for the May 18 Cleanup only to have it canceled because of rain. Here is another opportunity. Many of you know that our WENOCA group is responsible for sprucing up the river from Jean Webb Park near downtown Asheville to the Pearson Bridge. Tackling this task as a group is more fun than work!

What we are looking for are competent paddlers to reach the debris from boats. There will be no shore crews this time. Kayakers are OK but what we really need are paddlers who can maneuver canoes among those tricky "strainer" trees along the shore. We even have canoes, paddles, PFD's and "grabbers" available to help accomplish our task. You do not need to bring your own equipment though you are welcome to do so. You do not necessarily need to have a partner as we will probably be able to pair you with someone. Chances are good we will head to the Wedge Brewery or some similar establishment afterwards, so please join our merry crew. If you have some canoeing



*Preparing for our inaugural French Broad River cleanup in May 2012*

experience or would like to join us in your kayak give one of us a call. Kayakers will be able to feed their picked up garbage into the "cargo" canoes. We will meet at Jean Webb Park on Saturday, Aug 3 at 1 pm.

For info, contact:

Richard Kark - [karkra@uwec.edu](mailto:karkra@uwec.edu), 828-253-2650

Mark Threlkeld - [focusmdt@gmail.com](mailto:focusmdt@gmail.com), 612-599-3570

Tom Morrissey - [tmorrissey@environcorp.com](mailto:tmorrissey@environcorp.com), 404-513-4069

## ***August 2-4: Pisgah Rivers & Waterfalls Cycle Trip***

**Join the WNC Alliance on their 2013 Summer Cycle and Camping trip!**

Come for the ride ... and the fun! August 2 - 4 beginning cyclists are welcome as we explore Pisgah National Forest while camping under the stars at North Mills River and Davidson River Campgrounds. During the cycle trip the group will join WNCA Ecologist Bob Gale as we explore the Pink Beds hiking trails that uncover rare mountain bogs, crystal clear brooks, wildlife meadows, and scenic fern-filled woods.

Cost is \$50 for WNCA members/\$60 for non-members or \$25/\$30 for one day of riding. Register with Rachel Moore at [Rachel@wnca.org](mailto:Rachel@wnca.org) or 828-258-8737, ext. 201.



## ***Late Summer Hiking Schedule***



**SAT, AUG 24 - WARREN WILSON RIVER TRAIL** – Easy, approx 4 miles round-trip on this there & back hike. The trail follows a shady section of the Swannanoa River. There will be an optional splashing opportunity to cool yourself off. Swim wear or shorts might not be a bad idea. Kids that do hiking are welcome w/waiver signed by parent. Meet at 10 am in Asheville, back around 4 pm. Wear good footwear because there are a few rocky & muddy places. Contact hike leader to sign up. Lisa McWherter at [lisamcw2@gmail.com](mailto:lisamcw2@gmail.com), or call 828-713-4994.

**SAT, SEPT 14 - DEVIL'S COURTHOUSE** - Easy to moderate, 5 mile, in-and-out hike in the Black Balsam area with great views to the south. We will follow the Mountains to Sea Trail (MST) to the Devil's Courthouse Connector and cross over the Blue Ridge Parkway. The ascent to Devil's Courthouse is steep but short. Wear sturdy shoes, bring rain gear, water and a lunch or snack. Meet in Asheville at 10 am and return about 4 pm. RSVP to hike leader Jane at [janelaping@sbcglobal.net](mailto:janelaping@sbcglobal.net) or 828-772-0379.

**SAT, SEPT 28 – BLACK BALSAM/TENANT MTN** – A moderate 5 mile hike with rock outcrops – one of my favorite places. Has beautiful panoramic views from two peaks above 6000 ft. Good footwear required, and be prepared for heavy winds on top. Meet in Asheville at 10 am and return around 5 or 5:30 pm. This hike is for experienced hikers. RSVP to hike leader Lisa McWherter at [lisamcw2@gmail.com](mailto:lisamcw2@gmail.com) or 828-713-4994.

**SAT, OCT 26 - DUPONT STATE FOREST** - Approximately 4.5 miles round-trip. Meet in Asheville at 10:30 am and return around 5:30 pm. More details to come. Contact hike leader for more details & to sign up. Lisa McWherter at [lisamcw2@gmail.com](mailto:lisamcw2@gmail.com), or call 828-713-4994.





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Emma Greenbaum

Emma Greenbaum, NC Associate Organizing Representative for the Sierra Club Beyond Coal Campaign will also be updating us on recent activities and future plans for the program.

Our final presenter for the evening will be Katie Bray, Program Director at Blue Ridge Sustainability Institute, who will discuss their newest nationally tested initiative, *Solarize Asheville*.

We all use energy to power our homes and where this energy comes from affects our carbon footprint, human health, and the health of the environment. Currently, in WNC we import virtually all of the energy at a cost of \$3.2 billion each year. By installing solar panels on your roof you can *go local* in energy production, lower your energy bills, reduce your carbon footprint, and increase the value of your home – all while leading the way toward a clean energy future.

**Solarize Asheville** will simplify the process and reduce the costs, since the program offers a support system for neighborhoods that want to use the power of group purchasing to go solar.



Katie Bray

In 2008, **Torin Kexel** (GO Building Performance Director) helped create the GO Energy Team, a social enterprise branch of Green Opportunities in Asheville, NC. The goal of the GO Energy Team is to promote environmental justice by giving people with barriers to employment a chance to earn employment in the building performance industry. Torin has worked at all levels of the business from air-sealing attics to performing trainings to writing grants. He is a certified HERS Rater, BPI Building Analyst, Envelope Professional, and Accessible Areas Air Leakage Control Installer. His greatest aspiration in this position is to help Western North Carolina move towards a greener more equitable economy by creating jobs accessible to all communities and creating better building performance throughout the region.

**Emma Greenbaum** joined the Sierra Club's Beyond Coal campaign in September of 2012, after serving a year with Green Corps, the field school for environmental organizing. During her time with Green Corps, she worked on several campaigns including the successful Beyond Coal campaign in Chicago, IL and Food and Water Watch's Fair Farm Bill Campaign in New York state. In August 2010, Emma graduated with her BA in Economics and International Development, with a focus on Latin America. During her time at American University, she was a student leader and organizer, working on campaigns ranging from fair trade to workers rights on campus.

**Katie Bray**, Program Director at Blue Ridge Sustainability Institute, graduated Phi Beta Kappa from the University of Colorado, Boulder, where she completed original research in cost benefit analysis and served as the Vice President of a student-run investment management fund. After graduating she worked for an economic think tank in Washington, DC, until she was hired by Paul Hawken's World Index of Social and Environmental Responsibility to create an international volunteer program from the ground up. In 2012 she started working at the Blue Ridge Sustainability Institute in a finance and administrative capacity. Charged with the mission of creating a catalyst for residential clean energy development, she is the architect and director of BRSI's latest initiative, *Solarize Asheville*.

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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 - 2013 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Judy Mattox – Chair - 828-683-2176

Lisa McWherter - Outings Leader

Rich Wasch - Treasurer

Mark Threlkeld - River Cleanup - At Large

Grace Curry - Publicity Committee

Ken Brame - Political Committee

Gene Keil - Website/Membership Committee

Rober Zieber - At Large

Elaine Lite - Newsletter Editor

Kelly Martin - Beyond Coal - 828-251-1272

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