



**SIERRA
CLUB**
FOUNDED 1892

WENOCA SIERRAN

Newsletter of the
Western North Carolina Sierra Club

Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

NOV 2016 - JAN 2017

Upcoming Events:

Unitarian Congregation
1 Edwin Place, Asheville
(corner of Charlotte St. & Edwin Pl.)
Social: 7 pm / Program: 7:15 pm
Free and open to the public

Wednesday, Nov 2
Hartwell Carson

*Water Quality in
Western North Carolina*

Wednesday, Dec 7
Holiday Party!

*All are warmly invited to
attend our 7th Annual
Holiday Party and
Recognition Awards.
Please bring a potluck dish.*

Wednesday, Jan 4
Simon Thompson

Birds Around the World

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.

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.

2016 - Time to Elect Environmental Champions

After an unprecedented assault on environmental regulations by the current Governor and the anti-environmental majority in the NC General Assembly, we have an opportunity to send a clear message that we want change. After an extensive process of reviewing the environmental voting records, positions, and conducting interviews, the Sierra Club has endorsed the following candidates for the November 8th General Election.

President: Hillary Clinton

US Senate: Deborah Ross

Governor: Roy Cooper

Lt. Governor: Linda Coleman

Attorney General: Josh Stein

NC Auditor: Beth Wood

NC Commissioner of Insurance:

- Wayne Goodwin

NC Commissioner of Labor:

- Charles Meeker

NC Secretary of State:

- Elaine Marshall

NC Superintendent of Public Instruction:

- June Atkinson

NC Treasurer:

- Dan Blue III

NC State Senate: District 49:

- Terry Van Duyn (Buncombe County)

NC State Senate - District 50:

*- Jane Higgs (Cherokee, Clay, Graham,
Haywood, Jackson, Macon, and Swain Counties)*

NC House of Representatives

District 114: Susan Fisher (Buncombe County - mostly city of Asheville)

District 115: John Ager (Northern & Eastern Buncombe County)

District 116: Brian Turner (Western & Southern Buncombe County)

District 118: Rhonda Cole Schandavel (Madison, Yancey, and parts of Haywood Counties)

District 119: Joe Sam Queen (Jackson, much of Haywood, and parts of Swain Counties)

Buncombe Co. Commissioners

Commission Chair: Brownie Newman

District 1: Jasmine Beach-Ferrara

District 2: Nancy Nehls Nelson

District 3: Ed Hay and David King

Register of Deeds: Drew Reisinger

NC Judicial Races

NC Supreme Court Assoc. Justice:

- Michael Morgan

NC Court of Appeals: Linda Stephens

NC Court of Appeals: Margaret Eagles

NC Court of Appeals: Bob Hunter

NC Court of Appeals:

- Richard Dietz or Vince Rozier

Know where, when, and how to vote!

Oct. 20 - Nov. 5 - Early Voting - (Voter ID is not required to vote in NC)

Nov. 8: General Election Day - (Voter ID is not required to vote in NC)

To find a polling place for Early Voting, visit www.ncsbe.gov
click on Voter Tools - then select one stop voter site **or call 919-733-7173**
Not registered to vote? You can register and vote during the early voting period.

To find your polling place for Election Day, visit www.ncsbe.gov
click on Voter Tools - then select polling place look-up **or call 919-733-7173**

This election, the stakes couldn't be higher.
Make sure you **cast your vote for the environment!**

Election Help Needed

Did you know that 15% of voters in presidential election years only vote at the top of the ticket and don't vote for judges and local elected officials? Please let your friends and family know about our endorsed candidates and encourage them to vote all the way down the ballot. We also need volunteers to help hand out our endorsement cards at the polls for early voting and on election day, as well as volunteers to call our members and supporters to make sure they vote. If you can help or have questions, please contact Judy Mattox at judymattox@sbcglobal.net or 828-683-2176.

Water Quality in Western North Carolina - November 2



Hartwell Carson

Join us on Wednesday, December 2 as we welcome French Broad Riverkeeper, Hartwell Carson, who will introduce us to a phone application called "Muddy Waters" that allows citizens to report clean water violations. He will also talk about water quality in WNC, fish habitat, sedimentation, the French Broad paddling trail, and the riverkeeper networks.

Hartwell has worked to protect and defend the French Broad River as the Riverkeeper for the last 10 years. He has played a key role in reducing sediment pollution, starting and expanding

bacteria, sediment, and coal ash monitoring programs, implementing over two miles of stream restoration, and ensuring regulations are adequate and enforced to meet the goals of the Clean Water Act to have all waters fishable and swimmable.

He completed his undergraduate work at the University of Georgia studying Recreation and Resource Management. While a student there, he worked with the Outdoor Recreation Center as an environmental educator and guide. After working for the Forest Service in Colorado, Hartwell earned his Master's of Science from the University of Montana, where he conducted extensive work examining social and ecological impacts on the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument.

He has also served as a community advocate on the City of Asheville's Flood Damage Reduction Task Force and Watershed Policy Committee, and currently serves as the president of Tennessee Riverkeeper, board member of the Asheville Affiliates and North Carolina Paddle Trails Association.

7th Annual Holiday Party & Recognition Awards - December 7

Birds Around the World with Simon Thompson - January 4



Simon Thompson

Join us on Wednesday, January 4 at 7 pm as we welcome ornithologist Simon Thompson for a discussion about birding adventures around the world.

Most people like to travel and some people like to travel a lot. Some people like to look at museums or sit on beaches, while some of us look for birds! It may sound a bit extreme, but it takes you to so many out of the way places.

Simon Thompson of Asheville's Venture Birding Tours has been to six continents in search of birds and plans to eventually visit Antarctica to see more penguins.

Simon Thompson owns and operates his own bird watching and natural history tour company, Ventures Birding Tours, based in Asheville, NC and leads small groups of naturalists and birders both within North America and to many locations throughout the world. Destinations include the Peruvian Amazon, Belize, Galapagos, Greece, France, England and Australia. Ventures also runs daytrips throughout North and South Carolina and offers weekends and longer trips to many of the top birding sites throughout the U.S.

Since moving to the US in 1989, Simon had been the ornithologist and nature director at the Foothills Equestrian Nature Center (FENCE) in Tryon for 7 years until he started Ventures. He is active locally on the board of the Elisha Mitchell Audubon Society. To view his tours for 2016 and 2017, visit Birdventures.com. Or on Facebook, search Venture Birding Tours.

Your Help is Needed for Nanthala/Pisgah Forests Wilderness Comments (including the Craggy Mountains)

The US Forest Service has been working on the 20+ year revision of its management plan for the Nanthala/Pisgah National Forests since 2012-3. In 2015 the Forest Service expanded its wilderness inventory to include close to 360,000 acres in the two forests. In July 2016 the US Forest Service released their draft wilderness evaluations of this inventory, which unfortunately failed to take many deserving areas forward into analysis and whittled this acreage down by roughly 80% or more. The results fail to properly document the wilderness characteristics of the areas evaluated. This will inevitably prevent deserving areas from being recommended for wilderness and could potentially block them from even being protected under backcountry management, which could leave them open to logging.

The Forest Service is accepting public comments on the [evaluation](#). They need to properly evaluate these areas to consider the most deserving for wilderness recommendations.

1) Please advocate for the Craggy Mountains

On Sept 20, 2016 Buncombe County Commission voted unanimously (7-0) to adopt a resolution recommending that the extended Craggy Mountains Wilderness Study Area be recommended for Wilderness designation to the US Forest Service and thereby, for them to recommend this to the US Congress for such a law to be passed. Buncombe County resolved that 7900 acres be designated as wilderness.

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Forest Service Management Plan - continued from p. 2

However, in the Forest Service July Wilderness Evaluation, they stated that only under 5000 acres could be considered for Wilderness.

2) Tell the Forest Service to reconsider and greatly expand the areas carried forward for analysis. All of the 52 areas in the Wilderness Inventory have excellent wilderness characteristics and should not be so quickly dismissed by the Forest Service as having “no wilderness character.”

3. Ask the Forest Service to include in alternative plans deserving areas that were promoted by the public such as: Terrapin Mountain, Tellico Bald, Wesser Bald, and Dobson Knob.

4. Tell the Forest Service to reinstate the Overflow Wilderness Study Area in their recommendations - an area that has already been designated by the US Congress as a wilderness study area.

5. Tell the Forest Service that Mackey Mountain, and Tusquitee Bald should be included in Wilderness recommendation at a larger size than the Evaluation document suggests. Tusquitee Bald was inventoried at 29,000 acres, but the current evaluation whittled it down to 8500 acres. Mackey Mountain was inventoried at 14,985 acres, but the current evaluation whittled it down to 7355 acres. The Forest Service should **NOT rule out or whittle down** areas that have better

Wilderness qualities, more solitude, and less intrusions of sites and sounds from the outside world than existing Wilderness areas like Shining Rock and Linville Gorge.

6. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement must include a broad range of reasonable alternatives for Wilderness Designation. The current draft alternatives are too narrow.

Comment may be submitted online or mailed to the Plan Revision Leader as follows:

Email: NCplanrevision@fs.fed.us and use the subject line Summer Building Blocks.

Mail to:

Attn: Plan Revision Team Leader
National Forests in North Carolina
160 Zillicoa Street, Suite A
Asheville, NC 28801

Wilderness Society Links online

For general information and critique of the evaluations:

ncmountaintreasures.org/nantahala-pisgah-forest-plan-revision

To make area specific comments

ncmountaintreasures.org/nantahala-pisgah-forest-plan-revision/usfs-wilderness-evaluations-and-tws-responses



Late Fall-Early Winter Hiking Schedule



WED, NOV 9 – DANIEL RIDGE - Meet in Asheville at 10 am and return around 4 pm. A moderate 4-mile loop hike in Pisgah Forest near the Fish Hatchery has a nice waterfall at the end. We will learn about the history of logging in the area. Wear sturdy shoes or hiking boots, bring water and a lunch or snack. RSVP to hike leader janelaping@sbcglobal.net or 828-772-0379.

SAT, NOV 19 - HIKE TO THE TOP OF JOHN ROCK - Meet in Asheville at 10 am and return around 5:30 pm. Moderate-easy loop hike, approx 5-miles long, with elevation gain of approx 1000 ft. This is a beautiful area to hike through and near the top there is a large smooth rock outcrop, which offers a nice view of the surrounding area, including Looking Glass Rock. The trail also offers a lovely waterfall which is on an optional side-trail. There will be learning opportunities related to fragile stream habitat and on indicators of water purity. This hike is recommended for experienced hikers, or talk with hike leader. RSVP to Lisa McWherter at lisamcw2@gmail.com or 828-713-4994.

THUR, DEC 9 - COVE CREEK/CANEY BOTTOM - A pleasant, easy-to-moderate, 4.6-mile loop hike near Looking Glass Rock in Pisgah National Forest. The trail follows a stream part of the way and a short side trail leads to Cove Creek falls. We will talk about the reason the hemlocks are dying in this area. Meet at 10 am in Asheville and return around 4 pm. RSVP to hike leader, Jane, at janelaping@sbcglobal.net or 828-772-0379.

SUN, DEC 11 – LOOKOUT MTN at MONTREAT - Via the Lookout Mountain & Rainbow Rd. Trails. Meet in Asheville at 10 am and return around 5 pm. Moderate-Easy approx 5.5-miles on this loop hike. We will start by going up hill on the beautiful Lookout Mtn. Trail, going to the rock outcrops which offer some beautiful vistas of neighboring mountains. The trail is steep toward the top; recommend hiking poles and good footwear. After the summit, the hike will follow the Rainbow Rd. Trail, which provides a more gradual descent. There will be learning opportunities regarding the impact of the loss of hemlocks on the streams, along with some information on conservation. This hike is for experienced hikers, or you can contact the hike leader with questions/concerns. All hikers please RSVP to hike leader Lisa McWherter at lisamcw2@gmail.com or 828-713-4994.

SAT, JAN 14 - CAESAR'S HEAD, RAVEN CLIFF FALLS AREA IN SC - Moderate-Easy hike, approx 6.5-miles round-trip. More hike details to come. We will learn more about some of the birds that winter here, including recordings of their songs. Meet in Asheville at 10 am and return around 6 pm. Be prepared for \$2/person park admission fee. **NOTE:** if there is snow we will come up with an alternate hike that's closer to Asheville, as long as the roads are open. RSVP to hike leader Lisa McWherter at lisamcw2@gmail.com or 828-713-4994.

FRI, JAN 20 - CORN MILL SHOALS - DuPont Forest is a favorite location for hikers and this easy to moderate loop trail is my favorite in DuPont. We will hike up and over the granite slabs of Cedar Mountain for a total of 5-miles and 700 foot elevation gain and learn about the geology of the area. Meet at 10 am in Asheville and return around 4 pm. RSVP to hike leader, Jane, at janelaping@sbcglobal.net or 828-772-0379.

How to Prevent a 3rd Gas-Powered Electric Plant by Duke Energy

At the Sierra Club meeting on September 7, a panel of city and county officials gave suggestions on how we CAN prevent a third gas-powered, "peaking" electric plant to be built by Duke Energy. The following are suggestions:

- Duke Energy offers a **free home assessment** to see where you might be able to conserve power and save money. If you own your home, have an electric water heater, electric heat or central air, then sign up for a free Home Energy House Call. This free in-home energy assessment, valued at \$180, is designed to help you learn how your home uses energy and how you can save on your monthly bills. Their experts will check your home for air leaks, examine your insulation levels, check your appliances and more. Plus you'll get a free energy efficiency starter kit, valued at \$30, to help you start saving right away. Call 844-346-4366 or go to duke-energy.com/north-Carolina/savings.asp to learn more.

- **EnergyWise Home** - At no cost to you, Duke Energy Progress will install a small device at your home that enables them to cycle power off and on to select appliances during periods of critically high power demand. Cycles are short, automatic and require no effort from you. You may enroll any or all of the following appliances: your central air conditioner, heat pump with emergency heat strips

- Continued below -



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and/or electric water heater. You'll receive up to \$75 a year – a \$25 annual energy bill credit for each appliance type you enroll. For more info, call 866-541-8886 or go to progress-energy.com/carolinas/home/save-energy-money.

- **Duke Energy offers rebates and free referrals** for energy saving. They can recommend reputable contractors for your HVAC, insulation, plumbing and electrical needs. Up to \$1,675 in rebates are available with quality assurance inspections by Duke Energy.

- **NC Weatherization Program** - This program is designed to help low-income citizens in North Carolina save energy and reduce expenses through the installation of energy conservation materials, the implementation of energy efficiency measures in their homes and energy education. Go to duke-energy.com/north-carolina/savings.asp.

City of Asheville's Program for Energy Reduction for businesses and organizations in Asheville & Buncombe County

The City of Asheville and the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce have teamed up to launch the **Asheville Workplace Challenge**, a free self-assessment tool that gives local businesses ways to save money and reduce their environmental impact. Through the Asheville Workplace Challenge, businesses can increase awareness of environmental issues and reduce energy use, water consumption and waste. Businesses that join the Challenge can improve their operations and reduce costs and have an opportunity to become part of a larger network with similar sustainability goals that will provide support and recognition along the way. To participate, businesses complete an online survey assessing current energy and water use, how employees get to work, and what types of waste are generated. This baseline data provides a starting point to help the business understand how they are currently performing so they can apply tips to help them save money, increase awareness and become more sustainable. Awards in several categories will be presented at the first annual Green Workplace Challenge Ceremony. Visit their website at asheville.municipalchallenge.com.