



**SIERRA
CLUB**
FOUNDED 1892

WENOCA SIERRAN

Newsletter of the Western North Carolina Sierra Club
February - April

Explore, enjoy, and protect the planet

Upcoming Events:

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

Changed to Thursdays

Thursday, Feb 1
Bill (Skywalker) Walker
Hiking the Himalyas

Thursday, Mar 1
Steffi Rausch
*Engaging with
Conservatives on a
Bipartisan Climate
Solution*

Thursday, Apr 5
Dave Rogers
*A Pathway to a Cleaner
Energy
Future for NC*

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

All members are invited

For more information, call
Judy Mattox at 828-683-2176
judymattox@sbcglobal.net.

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

Hiking the Himalayas -- Thursday, Feb 1, 7 pm, 1 Edwin Place

Bill Walker was a commodities trader in Chicago and London before being replaced by a computer. At age 44, he decided to undertake the world's great long-distance hiking trails. He thru-hiked the Appalachian Trail and Pacific Crest Trail, losing 33 and 43 pounds, respectively. At almost 7-feet tall, he picked up the trail name, Skywalker. He wrote popular narratives about those journeys, before turning his attention to the most popular overseas treks.



Bill Walker

Bill (Skywalker) was looking for the best way for an average person to see the world's greatest mountain range—the Himalayas. But he did not want to do it in a touristy manner. He chose the famous Annapurna Circuit in Nepal. It reaches 17,768 feet at Thorung La Pass, and situates the trekker right in the middle of some of the world's greatest peaks. Walker was to find out the Annapurna Circuit presents its own peculiar challenges different from anything he had ever done. It is the most popular trek in Asia, with a brilliant array of nationalities and spectacular views of the snow covered mountain peaks, many over 20,000 high. Skywalker will show some of these pictures!

Engaging with Conservatives on a Bipartisan Climate Solution -- Thurs, Mar 1, 7 pm at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation, 1 Edwin Place

Come learn how you can engage positively with your legislators and conservative friends and relatives on the issue of climate change. Learn what terms to avoid and what language to use to actually reach areas of agreement. The same lessons can be used to lobby elected officials who may be skeptical of climate change.

Citizens Climate Lobby (CCL) is a non-profit, non-partisan international organization with 80,000 members worldwide that focuses on empowering and educating citizens to engage respectfully with their legislators on the issue of climate change as well as pushing for a bipartisan solution on the federal level. A big part of their outreach is reaching out to people with differing views to help bridge the partisan divide on the issue of climate by finding common ground between us. They work towards keeping a respectful bipartisan dialogue that is supported by a bipartisan advisory board that includes conservatives, liberals, scientists, and military. Their proposed solution is called Carbon Fee & Dividend and has been adopted in various forms by four countries around the world, including Canada recently. It is a revenue-neutral, market-based, national alternative to regulations and the most effective, least intrusive, and government-free solution possible that will put more money back in to the pockets of low to middle income households while growing our economy, jobs, and GDP. Top economists say it is the best and easiest way to fix a carbon market failure and incentivize producers and consumers to lower their carbon consumption while not regulating how they do this. Come out and learn how you can engage positively with your family, friends, legislators and conservatives on a climate solution.



Steffi Rausch

Steffi Rausch is the owner and lead designer at Evolv.com, an Asheville-based website design company, and lead organizer for Asheville chapter of the CCL.

Help us save trees...let us e-mail your newsletter! Send your email to judymattox@sbcglobal.net

A Pathway to a Cleaner Energy Future for North Carolina -- Thursday, April 5, 7 pm

Dave Rogers is the North Carolina Campaign Representative for the Sierra Club's Beyond Coal campaign. He will be presenting on the recent Sierra Club report "A Pathway to a Cleaner Energy Future for North Carolina," which shows how Duke Energy can reliably meet the state's energy needs and save their customers money by shifting away from coal and natural gas and towards clean energy.



Dave Rogers

Dave's main responsibility is to push Duke Energy away from dirty energy sources like coal and gas and towards cleaner energy technologies like energy efficiency, wind and solar. Additionally, he works with the North Carolina chapter to promote the electrification of the transportation sector here in the state. Dave has worked as an environmental activist and advocate for 17 years, and prior to his joining the Club he was the director of Environment North Carolina. Up until a few months ago, he spent most of his free time running, reading and hiking

in the North Carolina woods, but he recently welcomed twins to his family so he doesn't quite remember what free time is. He's based in Durham.

WNC Sierra Club Honors Local Individuals, Institutions, Businesses

The WNC Sierra Club presented its annual Environmental Recognition Awards on December 6 at its Potluck Holiday Party. The awards were made in recognition of local individuals, institutions and businesses whose actions reflect their commitment to preserving the environment.

This year's nine awards are:

Green Legislator of the Year: Senator Terry Van Duyn As the Democratic Party Whip, for the state of North Carolina, Senator Van Duyn led strong resistance in the face of the strongly anti-environmental majority, championing protection for the environment.

Volunteers of the Year: Jane Laping and Ann Perry Jane and Ann served as the "dynamic duo" for the WNC Sierra Club's presence at the 2017 Climate Change March in Washington by organizing a bus from Asheville to Washington, D.C. They marketed and managed ticket sales, coordinated transportation logistics, and covered all communications, including trip updates, poster-/sign-making, and post trip debriefing.

Volunteer of the Year: Mark Threlkeld For five years, Mark has been the force behind the club's river cleanup. In conjunction with Greenworks, he has recruited and led hundreds of volunteers to clean the French Broad and Swannanoa Rivers. He also served on the WNC Sierra Club's executive committee for four years.

Green School of the Year: French Broad River Academy This school prepares students for a lifetime of service and environmental stewardship. It has logged 2,278 hours of community service, working with organizations such as Greenworks and Riverlink for river cleaning, trail maintenance, and other environmental work. It lives by "Leave No Trace" for all of its weekly outdoor activities, including camping, canoeing, and hiking.

Citizen Activists of the Year: Helen Hyatt, Mike Wasmer, Betsy Sterling and John Sterling This intrepid foursome worked on ensuring that a new Duke Energy electric substation would not be built on a highly trafficked corner with minimal buffering for public safety and using outdated technology for



French Broad River Academy

urban sites. The activists educated the Asheville City Council and staff, as well as the local neighborhood about the problems associated with an old-style air-cooled steel and cable sub-station that had only a minimal public safety buffer. Instead, they advocated for a new gas-coiled technology that would greatly improve local conditions and aesthetics. Their advocacy resulted in Duke changing its plan and location. Instead of the old style station proposed to be built at the corner of Hilliard and Ashland, a new "GIS" sub-station is being installed in a brick building at a former Volvo dealership, on a 5-acre tract, on Patton Ave and Clingman, offering better technology and much more of a buffer for public safety.

Green Business of the Year: New Belgium This brewery achieves a 99.9% annual waste diversion rate. All of its facilities feature LED lighting, radiant floor heating, and a solar hot water system. It also revitalized an 18-acre urban brownfield.



Citizen Activists

Kids to the Country Sierra Club Volunteers of the Year: Beth Pape, Nikita Smart, Sade Mustakem and Marta Alcalá-Williams *This team organized six outings to introduce kids to the wild, hoping to install a permanent love of nature in the next generation. From June 23 to Sept. 30, city kids visited the Blue Ridge Visitor Center, the Carl Sandburg National Park and Goat Farm, the Asheville North Carolina Arboretum, a blueberry picking farm, the Warren Wilson Animal Farm and Garden, and Craggy Pinnacle on the Blue Ridge Parkway. They partnered with the Housing Authority, Asheville City Schools, the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Asheville, Hillcrest Community, and MotherRead.*



Thanks to all of the other volunteers who made this program a success: Judy Mattox, Eleanor Lane, Joanne Lazar, JD Diefenbach, Maryanne Rackoff, Mayo Taylor, Susie Bell, Ellen Feingold, Marsha Fretwell, and Scott Varn.

Volunteer of the Year: Diane Bauknight *Managing the Sierra Club's Facebook page, Bauknight tripled readership within a year. She freshens the page every day with new environmental posts.*

Kids to the Country

Volunteer of the Year: Sam Harben *Harben generously donated his time as the WNC Sierra Club's representative on the Beyond Coal Committee and the Asheville Regional Transit Coalition. He also served two years on the WNC Sierra Club's Executive Committee.*

Hiking Schedule

SATURDAY, FEB 24 – CRAVEN GAP HIKE *w/ Winter Tree ID, Mountains-to-Sea trail. Meet in Asheville at 11:00 a.m., return around 2:30 p.m. Mostly Easy level of difficulty, approx 4.4 miles. Shuttle Hike from road crossing (just N of Folk Art Ctr) to Craven Gap. Will venture past the rock outcrops over Haw Creek. This hike is mostly sheltered from winds. Offers a variety of trees/shrubs to identify, including Hop Hornbeam, Sourwoods, & Spice bush. Bring lunch & layered clothing. NOTE: This section of B R Parkway is usually open in winter. All hikers please RSVP to hike leader Lisa McWherter at lisamcw2@gmail.com or 828-713-4994.*

SATURDAY, MARCH 17 – GREEN RIVER GAMELANDS HIKE, *Mostly Pullium Creek Trail. Meet at 10:00 in Asheville. Back around 5:00 or 5:30. Moderate with some easy level of difficulty. Approx 6 miles R.T. on this there & back trail with elevation gain of 900 ft. It's a beautiful trail that ends at the Green River just below the narrows, with rapids moving through large boulders. On the way there, there's a tedious creek crossing with wiggly step-stones, so wear good footwear & consider a hiking pole. Plan to learn about the beautiful early-blooming wildflowers there as well. NOTE: Sorry, no doggies this trip due to Pullium Creek crossing. This hike is for experienced hikers, or one 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*

SATURDAY, MARCH 24th - GREENLAND CREEK TRAIL. *There are at least 3 waterfalls planned on this trip, with an option by unanimous consent to hike a little further for an additional waterfall. There may be some early wildflowers. Meet in Asheville at 8:30am, return by 5:00pm. We will learn about unique features, and how the tract was acquired by the US Forest Service. Again, plan for an all-day trip for the estimated 5 mile hike and 3 hours round trip driving time. Experienced hikers only. Good hiking shoes/boots required. Hiking poles encouraged. Call trip leader for details. Leader – David Reid, 828-713-1607. daviddbreid@charter.net.*

SATURDAY, APRIL 21st – COONTREE LOOP. *This moderate 3.7 mile loop trail begins and ends at the Coontree Picnic area on Hwy 276 near Brevard. A perfect spring outing along Coontree Creek. We'll pool our knowledge to learn some common tree and wildflower identifications. RSVP to hike leader, David Reid, at daviddbreid@charter.net or 828-713-1607.*

Looking for a way to fight climate change? Try **Meatless Mondays!**
Animal production creates large amounts of methane which is a huge contributor to Global Warming.

Big Win for the Environment in Buncombe County

After an extensive grassroots lobbying effort, on December 5th, the Buncombe County Commission passed a resolution that sets a goal of Buncombe County Government being run on 100% renewable energy by 2030 and for all businesses and homes to be on 100% renewable energy within 25 years. This is the most aggressive schedule of any government in NC and the Southeast. After the resolution was defeated by a vote of 5-2 against in October, the Sierra Club organized an extensive grassroots effort to get it passed. We enlisted a number of other environmental organizations, and generated hundreds of emails and calls to commissioners. We organized high school and college students to gather over 1800 signatures on petitions calling for clean energy. We packed the meeting with speakers and supporters, including 17 students who spoke and presented their petitions. This led to two of the commissioners changing their votes for it to pass 4-3. It demonstrated the power of the Sierra Club and grassroots organizing.



WENOCA GROUP
SIERRA CLUB
PO Box 469
Asheville, NC 28802-0469

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Youth for Environmental Stewardship (YES!)

YES! is a coalition of students from all our 9 public high schools in Buncombe County along with UNCA and Warren Wilson. Sponsored by Sierra Club and Asheville Greenworks, YES students have had 3 environmental work days on the first Sundays of the month, including a French Broad River cleanup, a road clean up next to Hominy Creek, and an invasive plant removal at Haw Creek Park.

On Dec 5, 17 students from all 9 high schools and UNCA presented Buncombe County Commission with more than 1800 signatures on petitions that supported a 100% renewable energy resolution for the county to transition to renewables over the next 10 years. The commissioners had voted NO on this resolution in October by a vote of 5-2 against. On this night they changed their vote to 4-3 in favor of YES!

YES meetings are held every 2nd Wednesday from 5:45 - 7:15 pm at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Asheville, 1 Edwin Pl, downstairs in room 3. Workdays are every 1st Sunday. Contact: Judy Mattox, judymattox@sbcglobal.net, 828-683-2176; Jamileh at jamilehmikati@icloud.com, text 850-264-0996



(Top) YES Invasive Plant removal
(Bottom) YES at Buncombe County Commission