



**SIERRA
CLUB**
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WENOCA SIERRAN

Newsletter of the Western North Carolina Sierra Club
August - October 2018

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

Thursday, Aug 2
Prof. Dee Eggers
Climate Change in WNC

Thursday, Sept 6
Ken Brame
*Protect Our
Environment-Who We
Elect Matters*

Thursday, Oct 4
Marci Spencer
*Cultural & Human
History of the Pisgah &
Nantahala Forests*

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.

Turn Around and Take a Big Step Forward on Climate Change in WNC -- Aug 2, 7 pm, Unitarian Congregation 1 Edwin Place

Even the most optimistic scenarios of carbon emission reduction will create a variety of challenges and opportunities for WNC. We are uniquely situated to become a model of climate change adaptation and demonstrate ways to become carbon negative or "climate positive." Dr. Eggers will address updated estimates of climate impacts on WNC, ways we can increase regional resilience, and opportunities to go beyond carbon neutral.



Dr. Dee Eggers is an Associate Professor in UNCA's Environmental Studies Department. Dr. Eggers served on the NC Legislative Commission on Global Climate Change from 2005-2010. She teaches a variety of courses including environmental policy, natural resources management, the greening of institutions, and the humanities senior capstone, Cultivating Global Citizenship.

Dr. Dee Eggers

Protecting Our Environment – Who We Elect Matters — Sept 6, 7pm, 1 Edwin Place

Tired of all of the attacks on our environment by the NC General Assembly? Ken Brame, NC Sierra Club Political Chair, will talk about why we need to elect good environmental state legislators, why this fall's election will be a "wave election" that will strongly favor Democrats, and what each of us can do to take advantage of the "wave" to elect an environmental majority to the NC State House and the Buncombe County Commission. A "wave election" is one in which one political party significantly out performs expectations allowing that party to win seats that ordinarily would not be likely.

Ken Brame is chair of the NC Sierra Club Political Committee as well as a member of the NC Chapter Executive Committee. He is also a member of the National Sierra Club Political Committee and past chair of that committee and chair of the local WNC Sierra Club Political Committee. When not working to elect good environmental elected officials, he has lobbied local elected leaders to pass good environmental legislation. He enjoys travel and hiking.



Ken Brame

Cultural & Human History of the Pisgah & Nantahala Forests — Oct 4, 7pm, 1 Edwin Place

Join us Oct 4 when Marci Spencer, author of numerous books on our local forests will tell stories of the cultural and human history behind the spectacular scenic and recreational opportunities of Pisgah and Nantahala National Forests. Her presentation will discuss some of the conservation groups, activists, USFS staff, and individuals themselves who have worked to protect valuable treasures today, like Chattooga River, Wilson Creek, Whiteside Mountain, Shining Rock Wilderness, Joyce Kilmer-Slickrock Wilderness, Max Patch Mountain, Linville Gorge, Cherokee Heritage Sites and historic fire towers. Her latest book is **Nantahala National Forest, A History.**



Marci Spencer

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

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A master's of science degree from East Tennessee State University prepared Marci for a career as a nurse practitioner in the fields of cardiology, emergency services, family medicine and overseas medical missionary work. Weekends found her piloting a private aircraft or climbing a mountain somewhere. Now retired, Marci has volunteered in public resources at Great Smokey Mountains National Park, stationed at Clingmans Dome and a volunteer educator for Appalachian Bear Rescue. She has authored three regional histories: "Clingmans Dome, Highest Mountain in the Great Smokies," (2013) "Pisgah National Forest: a History," (2014) and "Nantahala National Forest: a History," (2017), all published by History Press. Grateful Steps Publishing Co. of Asheville published her children's book, based on true events, "Potluck, Message Delivered: "The Great Smoky Mountains are Saved!" in 2015. The Yosemite Conservancy included Marci's essay, "Pine Siskins Make History" in its book, "The Wonder of it All: 100 Stories from the National Park Service," published to celebrate the centennial of the NPS.

French Broad River Clean Up -- Saturday, Sept 8, 1:00 pm, by Richard Kark



The North Carolina Big Sweep River Clean up is a statewide work day charged with removing trash from our streams. Locally Asheville Green Works coordinates the effort and our local WENOCA Sierra Club group always participates. They always count on us to provide a good sized clean up crew which works diligently and always finds lots of trash. So, let's not disappoint the organizers this year.

Plan to join us on Saturday, September 8 in the early afternoon. We usually spend about two hours on the river which will be the French Broad, the Swannanoa or Hominy Creek.

The exact time will be announced later as will sign up instructions. Most of us will be in canoes and kayaks but there may also be an opportunity to join a shore clean up crew. It is not too early to save the date on your calendar. The event is always lots of fun and is followed by a social gathering which features food and drinks (including beer). Again details will come later but if you have a question about the event now feel free to call or email Richard Kark at 828 253-3650. karkra@uwec.edu

The Blue Horizons Project

by Anna Shugoll of Greenbuilt Alliance & Julie Mayfield, Asheville City Council

Sign Up for the Energy Wise program with Duke Energy, to help prevent a 3rd gas power plant from ever being built!

A new community campaign, the Blue Horizons Project, was launched this spring to provide a comprehensive hub of energy-efficiency programs and empower Buncombe County residents and businesses to save money and help create Western North Carolina's clean energy future.

For over a decade, the City of Asheville has been working to reduce its carbon emissions and protect the land that we call home. In May of 2015, after the three year Asheville Beyond Coal campaign led by the Sierra Club and MountainTrue, Duke announced it would retire the coal plant. Unsatisfied with Duke's replacement plan, which included a large natural gas plant and 40 miles of high voltage transmission lines, the community again organized its opposition and pushed Duke to try again. In November, 2015, Duke responded by, proposing two smaller natural gas units, no transmission lines, 5 MW of battery storage, and 15 MW of solar. Due to annual increases in electricity demand, this plan also called for the construction of a third 190 MW peaker power plant in 2023 to accommodate spikes in energy demand that occur for only a few hours on a few days each year (such as the coldest winter mornings, when residential heaters are working their hardest).

Most importantly, Duke's revised plan also called for a collaborative effort aimed at delaying or avoiding the third peaker plant. In response, in early 2016, Buncombe County, the City of Asheville, and Duke Energy created the Energy Innovation Task Force (EITF) — a partnership including businesses, non-profits and environmental leaders aimed at preventing the peaker plant and to transition the region to a clean energy future. This two-year collaboration resulted in the Blue Horizons Project, a campaign developed to enlist public support in this effort.

Today less than 10 percent of eligible customers are participating in the energy efficiency and peak demand programs, especially Energy Wise, that are available in Buncombe County. If participation merely doubles to 20 percent, we could reduce peak energy demand by 100 MW over the next 10 years, thus avoiding the need for the peaker power plant.

Be a part of the clean energy solution. Visit www.BlueHorizonsProject.com for more information and to find out how you can upgrade your home or business and get involved.

WENOCA Volunteers Needed: contact judymattox@sbcglobal.net, 828-683-2176

Update from the N.C. General Assembly on the Environment

By Cassie Gavin, Director of Government Affairs, N.C. Sierra Club

The N.C. General Assembly passed a number of harmful environmental bills this summer during their so-called "short session". There were a number of harmful environmental provisions in the state budget - Senate Bill 99. The budget was vetoed by Governor Cooper but his veto was overridden by the legislature.

The Budget & Water Quality:

The budget funding and policy provisions addressing GenX and other emerging chemical contaminants fails to provide DEQ with adequate resources to respond to this kind of chemical contamination across the state. The majority of funding to address chemical contamination (about \$5 million) will go to the N.C. Policy Collaboratory at UNC rather than to DEQ, the agency responsible under federal law for enforcement of water quality laws.

In other water quality impacts, the budget further delays the Jordan Lake and Falls Lake cleanup rules that were supposed to go into full effect in 2009 but have not to date. These lakes provide drinking water to more than 750,000 people in the Triangle and are valuable recreational areas.

On a more positive note, conservation funding - including the Clean Water Management Trust Fund, Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, and Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund - was increased by more than \$22 million.

Budget Takes NC Backwards on Clean Transportation:

A provision in the budget appeared intended to kill the planned Orange-Durham light rail project. The budget technical corrections bill included a fix for this provision. The new language gives the project until 2019 to secure funding but if the project misses the deadlines in the bill, it could still be lost.

The budget also puts at risk \$92 million in Volkswagen settlement funds that are intended to compensate North Carolina for pollution caused by Volkswagen's emissions cheating scandal. The budget requires that the VW settlement funds go into the N.C. State Treasury and then be distributed via an appropriation by the N.C. General Assembly, rather than go directly from the official VW Settlement Trust to DEQ and then to third parties.

Giveaways to Favored Industries:

The Farm Act - Senate Bill 711 - was passed by the General Assembly and who then overrode Gov. Cooper's veto. This measure would severely limit the ability of landowners to seek redress in court when they have suffered a loss of use or value of their property due to neighboring farming or forestry activities. Those landowners include neighbors of industrial hog operations who report suffering from foul odors and noxious animal waste spray.

The legislature also passed several "regulatory reform" bills that tinker with water, waste, and air protections to the detriment of the environment. One provision in House Bill 374 "Regulatory Reform Act of 2018" would exempt an estimated 150 subdivisions from stormwater rules that serve to protect water quality in the sensitive coastal region of the state.

Please thank House Representatives Susan Fisher, John Ager, Brian Turner and Chuck McGrady and Senator Terry Van Duyn for opposing all of these bills. If you live outside of Buncombe County, please let your representatives know how disappointed you were with their votes, supporting these anti-environmental bills.

Hiking Schedule

SATURDAY AUGUST 25 – EAST FORK OF PIGEON RIVER Trail. Meet in Asheville at 10:00 (location TBA) and return around 5:45. This hike is Easy/Moderate, with a distance approx 5-1/2 miles round trip. The hike follows the beautiful, rushing Pigeon River, but most it offers the cover of some beautiful & shady woods. Be prepared for a few muddy places, by wearing good footwear & considering hiking poles. Learn about how the river changes over time, as it changes its path, widens & creates sandy areas. Learn about areas that are designated "Wilderness", too. Speaking of which, this trail goes into the Shining Rock Wilderness, which means that only 10 folks are allowed in a group. Hence, please cancel ahead if your plans change, to make room for others. Sorry no doggies on this hike. Please RSVP to hike leader Lisa McWherter at lisamcw2@gmail.com or 828-713-4994.

Saturday, September 1st – CAMP ALICE/COMMISARY RIDGE HIKE. Cool off with this high elevation hike in the Black Mountains in and around Mt. Mitchell State Park. Learn about the US Forest Service inventoried wilderness potential area in the Black Mountains. Leave around 9:00am and return by 4:00pm, RSVP to hike leader, David Reid, at daviddbreid@charter.net or 828-713-1607.

Weekend Sept 14-16: Save the Date for the 3rd Annual NC Sierra Club Camporee. This year the NC Sierra Club will host the 3rd annual Camporee and weekend hiking extravaganza at the Davidson River Campground near Brevard September 14-16. Multiple day hikes will be planned in and around the area on the Pisgah District of the Pisgah National Forest. This year's Camporee is expected to coincide with the release of the draft plan for the Pisgah and Nantahala National Forest. Participants will have a chance to write comments and make their desires known during the 90-day public comment period. In addition to day hikes and camaraderie, a group meal is planned for Saturday evening. Stay tuned for details later this summer on the WENOCA Group's Meetup page, or let David Reid know of your interest by email at daviddbreid@charter.net.

WENOCA is now on Instagram! Follow us @wnc_sierra_club

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 29 – FLAT LAUREL CREEK Hike (which is in vicinity of Black Balsam). Meet in Asheville at 10 a.m. and return around 5:30 p.m. Mostly easy w/ some moderate; 5 miles R.T. on this there & back hike. We'll hike along the beautiful Flat Laurel creek, which includes a creek crossing. We'll then venture into a densely shaded evergreen area, and up to another creek for lunch. There will be learning opportunities related to wildflower & bird identification, as well as the welfare of the local evergreens (hemlock & firs). All hikers please RSVP to hike leader Lisa McWherter at lisamcw2@gmail.com or 828-713-4994.

Saturday, October 20th – WALKER'S KNOB - The Montreat Conference Center manages a protected network of hiking trails in its land in the coves abutting the Asheville Watershed on the West, the Blue Ridge Parkway on the North, and the Pisgah National Forest on the East. We will take the Greybeard Trail to Walker's Knob for a view of the Swanannoa Valley. Six mile round trip. Moderately strenuous due to elevation change. Learn about the Conference Center's conservation philosophy, and how this land fits into the larger protected lands puzzle in the region. RSVP to hike leader, David Reid, at daviddbreid@charter.net or 828-713-1607.

SATURDAY, OCT 27 – FALL FOLIAGE HIKE. Includes some tree ID. Location TBA. Can contact hike leader for details (after Oct 1) ... Lisa McWherter at lisamcw2@gmail.com or 828-713-4994.



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Pathways to Parks by Tanya Cummings

The goal of our group is to introduce underrepresented black and brown people to local and state parks and nature preserves. This is the gateway to encouraging them to become interested in, and take ownership and care of, our country's National Park System. These groups seldom use our public lands and are getting the least benefit. Apart from the relaxation and inspiration of being in nature, doctors are now writing prescriptions for "nature therapy" to help improve diseases such as hypertension and obesity.



The genesis of our group derived from a presentation by national parks advocates, Audrey and Frank Peterman, on March 26, 2018. Three intrepid, and adventurous women, and two men, signed on creating the charter members of our group. We are: Larry Pender (Pender), Tanya Cummings, Kathey Avery, Florence (Flo) Mayberry, and Tony Beurskens (not in photo). Pathways to Parks engages in - nature walking, hiking, picnicking, sightseeing, bicycling and all of the adventures that nature preserves, local, state and national parks offer. Our intention is to expand nationally with leadership in various states to be qualified

to offer workshops, guided nature walks and educational outings at surrounding nature preserves, local/ state parks & some national. We are hoping to make a difference in the number of black and brown faces visiting our country's national parks! Contact: tanyamariacummings@yahoo.com