

GEORGIA



SIERRAN

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SIERRA CLUB GEORGIA CHAPTER • OCTOBER / NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2022



TIME TO VOTE!

INSIDE: SIERRA CLUB ENDORSEMENTS • THE CLEAN WATER ACT AT 50
RECAPPING THE IRP • LOCAL GROUP REPORTS AND MORE!

CHAPTER NEWS

COVID-19 RESPONSE UPDATE

The Sierra Club Georgia Chapter has resumed holding local outings and a limited number of in-person events. The Chapter has new protocols and guidelines for holding events and outings. Chapter leaders seeking to hold in-person events should reach out to Tia Fay for more information about these protocols (see directory on pages 3-4 for contact information).

For the latest on our response to the COVID-19 pandemic and links to many available community resources, visit sierraclub.org/georgia/coronavirus-updates.

HAPPY TRAILS TO JESSICA MOREHEAD

The Georgia Chapter extends our thanks and well wishes to former Chapter Director Jessica Morehead, who resigned earlier this summer.

Jessica has been involved with the Georgia Chapter for more than five years and has left a lasting impact on our staff and volunteers. We wish her well as she moves on from her work with Sierra Club.

In Jessica's stead, Deputy Director Gina Webber has been named Interim Director. The process for hiring a permanent director is ongoing.

GEORGIA CHAPTER'S OFFICE IS OFFICIALLY CLOSED

The Georgia Chapter has officially moved out of our old office on East College Avenue in Decatur. The property is being redeveloped and the existing structures there are expected to be demolished, necessitating our move.

Since March 2020, Chapter staff

have been working remotely and no meetings have been held in the office, so this closure will not impact our work in any way.

Special thanks to all the volunteers who helped organize the move and physically helped get furniture, important records, event supplies, and everything else from the office: Dan Friedman, Will Bryan, Mary Lou Dabbs, Travis Towns, Mardi Schaufler, Nina Dutton, Max Brown, Bettye Harris, Scott Presson, Linda McBurney, and Grant Brown.

A team of volunteers and staff is working on determining our needs with regards to an office. Stay tuned for more information on that front.

Please direct all physical mail correspondence (including donations and Executive Committee election ballots) to our new address:

Sierra Club Georgia Chapter
PO Box 1281
Decatur, GA 30031

REORIENT YOURSELF WITH SIERRA CLUB'S VALUES

As we end 2022, we encourage all Sierra Club members to spend time learning and in conversation with fellow Georgia Sierrans about the Sierra Club's core values.

The Sierra Club's Board of Directors officially adopted these values in November 2021, but the Club has recently released new resources, trainings, and more that offer more details and examples of how to incorporate these values into our work.

Read more about our values at sierraclub.org/sierra-club-values. Please reach out to our Equity Committee if you'd like more resources or information.

GEORGIA SIERRAN

Volume 47 • Number 4

October / November / December 2022

The Georgia Sierran (ISSN 1044-836) is published quarterly by the Sierra Club Georgia Chapter, PO Box 1281, Decatur, GA 30031. Periodicals Postage Paid at Oakland, CA, and other mailing addresses.

Submissions & Volunteering

Articles: Send materials to gasierran@gmail.com. Maximum word length: 750 words with one high-resolution digital photo (200 dpi). For more information, or to join the committee, email gasierran@gmail.com.

Address Changes

Send address changes to:

Sierra Club Georgia Chapter
PO Box 1281
Decatur, GA 30031

Or by email to:

address.changes@sierraclub.org

Subscriptions

Subscription fees: \$1.00 annually for Chapter members (included with membership dues) or \$12.00 annually for nonmembers.

On the Cover

Hikers on the Slaughter Creek trail take in the changing colors of the leaves.

Credit: Photo courtesy of Lee Graham

IN THIS ISSUE

Chapter News • Page 2

Directory • Pages 3-4

Committee Reports • Pages 5-13

Group News • Pages 14-17

ExCom Elections Info • Pages 18-23

SIERRA CLUB GEORGIA CHAPTER DIRECTORY

LOCAL GROUP CONTACTS

CENTENNIAL GROUP

Chair, Lynn Walston
lynnwalston22@yahoo.com

Conservation Chair, Deidre Meiggs
deidre.meiggs@life.edu

Outings Chair, Lee Graham
leegrah3@gmail.com

GWINNETT GROUP

Co-Chair, Michael Hallen
Michael_hallen@hotmail.com

Co-Chair, Curt Thompson
curtbthompson@bellsouth.net

Conservation Chair, Art Sheldon
a.sheldon@charter.net

LAGRANGE GROUP

Chair, Mary Lou Dabbs
mldabbs05@gmail.com

Outings Chair, Laura Breyfogle
breyfoglel@gmail.com

METRO ATLANTA GROUP (MAG)

Chair, Nina Dutton
nddutton@gmail.com

Conservation/Outings Chair, Max Brown
maxhbrown@bellsouth.net

Political Chair, Eddie Ehlert
edehkert@mindspring.com

Treasurer/Webmaster, Matthew Evans
matthew.evans2012@yahoo.com

SAVANNAH RIVER GROUP (SRG)

Co-Chair, Sam Booher
sbooher@aol.com

Co-Chair, Linda McBurney
msmcb@outlook.com

Conservation Chair, Frank Carl
frankcarl@knology.net

Outings Chair, Cathy Black
sonnyandcathyblack@gmail.com

REGIONAL CONTACTS

Forsyth County

Jim Callison
callisonjim@bellsouth.net

Macon

Joseph Jackson III
joseph.tjax@gmail.com

North Georgia

Larry Winslett
winfog@windstream.net

Valdosta

Brian Day
bjday@valdosta.edu

ISSUE CAMPAIGNS & COMMITTEES

Clean Energy Committee

Neil Sardana
neil.sardana@sierraclub.org

Legislative Committee

Mark Woodall
woodallmark8@gmail.com

Political Committee

Eddie Ehlert
edehkert@mindspring.com

Ready For 100 Team

Scott Presson
spress51@gmail.com

Transportation Committee

Christi Nakajima
Jason Lathbury
GASCTransportationCommittee@gmail.com

Wildlands and Wildlife Committee

Vacant

Water Sentinels/Adopt-a-Stream

Ina Allison (Centennial)
iallison@hotmail.com

Michael Hallen (Gwinnett)

michael_hallen@hotmail.com

Frank Carl (SRG)

frankcarl@knology.net

Tim Nelken (SRG)

td.nelken@gmail.com

For a complete listing of conservation committee chairs and issue leaders, please visit: sierraclub.org/georgia/directory.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Chair

Phyllis Richardson
moreland.richardson@gmail.com
At-Large Elected Member

Vice Chair, Administration

Jumana Master
Jumana.m.master@gmail.com
At-Large Elected Member

At-Large Elected Member

William Bryan
bryanwilld@gmail.com

At-Large Elected Member

Nancy Daves
nancydaves0711@gmail.com

At-Large Elected Member

Doug Williams
DouglasMWilliams@gmail.com

At-Large Elected Member

Sarina Sawyer
ssawyer@seealliance.org

Centennial Group Delegate

Bettye Harris
bettyecharris@gmail.com

Gwinnett Group Delegate

Michael Hallen
michael_hallen@hotmail.com

LaGrange Group Delegate

Mary Lou Dabbs
mlldabbs05@gmail.com

Metro Atlanta Group Delegate

Eddie Ehlert
edehlert@mindspring.com

Savannah River Group Delegate

Linda McBurney
msmcb@outlook.com

Treasurer

Tom Neff
tsneff2003@yahoo.com

CHAPTER LEADERS & CHAIRS

Conservation Chair

Mark Woodall
woodallmark8@gmail.com

Legal Chair

Vacant

Legislative Chair

Mark Woodall
woodallmark8@gmail.com

Outings Chair

Grant Brown
sierrageorgiaoutings@gmail.com

Personnel Chair

Vacant

Political Chair

Eddie Ehlert
edehlert@mindspring.com

2022 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING SCHEDULE

The Sierra Club Georgia Chapter's Executive Committee (ExCom) meets every other month. The meetings are being held virtually until further notice.

Georgia Chapter ExCom meetings are open to the public, and all are welcome to attend.

Meeting dates are subject to change, so email gasierraclub@gmail.com to confirm the dates.

Upcoming ExCom meeting dates:

- Saturday, November 19, 10 AM

CHAPTER OFFICE

Sierra Club Georgia Chapter
PO Box 1281
Decatur, GA 30031
(404) 607-1262

CHAPTER STAFF

Interim Director

Gina Webber
gina.webber@sierraclub.org

Communications Coordinator

Ricky Leroux
ricky.leroux@sierraclub.org

Senior Coordinator, Activist and Volunteer Programs

Tia Fay
tia.fay@sierraclub.org

NATIONAL STAFF

Senior Campaign Representative, Military Outdoors

Lornett Vestal
lornett.vestal@sierraclub.org

Beyond Coal Organizer

Neil Sardana
neil.sardana@sierraclub.org

NATIONAL PROGRAM CONTACTS

Inspiring Connections Outdoors

Vacant

The Clean Water Act at 50

A look back at five decades of Sierra Club legal advocacy

BY PETER MORGAN

When Congress passed the Clean Water Act 50 years ago this month, it marked a major step forward in protecting the nation's waters and the communities that rely on them. Over the ensuing decades, Sierra Club litigation has played a pivotal role in giving effect to the law's protections and in resisting efforts to narrow or weaken critical safeguards.

ENSURING THE CLEAN WATER ACT APPLIES AS BROADLY AS CONGRESS INTENDED

The Clean Water Act functions by prohibiting all discharges of pollutants from "point sources" — defined as "discrete conveyances" like pipes, ditches, or wells — into waters of the United States, unless those discharges are authorized by a permit. It was reasonably clear from the beginning how that approach applies to a factory or a power plant that seeks to discharge pollution directly from a pipe into a river. What about the many other ways polluted water reaches streams, rivers, and other bodies of water? Sierra Club lawsuits have repeatedly produced decisions applying the Clean Water Act to pollution from sources other than piped discharges.

In an early case interpreting the Act, *Sierra Club v. Abston Const. Co.*, the US Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit agreed with the Sierra Club that a permit was required where a coal mine operator gathered pollution-generating materials into piles and then did nothing to prevent the resulting



Photo courtesy of Ricky Leroux

For 50 years, the Sierra Club has been fighting to uphold the Clean Water Act to protect our natural places, like this stream in the Cohutta Wilderness.

polluted runoff from reaching a nearby stream. More recently, the US Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit held in *Sierra Club v. El Paso Gold Mines, Inc.* that the owners of an abandoned gold mine were liable for discharges of heavy metals draining from their property through a more than two-and-a-half mile tunnel. Sierra Club suits also resulted in decisions holding that coal dropped into a water body from railcars, and from a ship-loading conveyor belt, constituted pollution discharges requiring a permit.

In one of the most significant environmental cases decided by the US Supreme Court in recent years, the Sierra Club and its co-plaintiffs secured a decision holding that discharges of pollution that travel through groundwater before reaching a jurisdictional water may also require a Clean Water Act permit. In that case, *County of Maui v. Hawaii Wildlife Fund, et al.*, the Sierra Club and its co-plaintiffs had challenged the unpermitted discharge of sewage waste injected into groundwater on

the island of Maui, which tracer dye tests determined reached the ocean, where it harmed coral reefs. The Supreme Court agreed that such discharges should be regulated under the Clean Water Act, holding that Act applies "to a discharge (from a point source) of pollutants that reach navigable waters after traveling through groundwater if that discharge is the functional equivalent of a direct discharge from the point source into navigable waters."

GIVING FULL EFFECT TO THE PROTECTIONS OF THE CLEAN WATER ACT

An environmental statute is only as strong as the enforceability of its provisions. Lofty goals and broad pronouncements do little good if polluters can't actually be held accountable. Sierra Club lawsuits have established clear precedents ensuring that all aspects of the Clean Water Act's protections are enforceable in court.

In *Sierra Club v. Simkins Indus., Inc.*, the US Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit agreed with the Sierra Club that a permit holder violated the Act when it failed to sample and to file the required quarterly discharge monitoring reports for more than two years. This decision not only shored up a critical part of the Act's reporting and enforcement scheme, it also broadened the scope of violations that could be addressed directly through a citizen-enforcement suit, particularly where government regulators refuse to act. Similarly, in *Sierra Club, Lone Star Chapter v. Cedar Point Oil Co. Inc.*, the Sierra Club brought a citizen enforcement suit not to enforce the terms of a permit, but because an oil company was discharging its drilling wastewater pollution into Galveston Bay without a permit. The US Court of Appeals agreed that a permit was

required, even though regulators had not yet established water quality standards for drilling wastewater, and further agreed that such a suit was an appropriate use of the Act's citizen suit provisions.

A decision from the Supreme Court in a Sierra Club lawsuit against a wastewater treatment facility not only stopped ongoing discharges of the harmful pollutant mercury, but highlighted the important role of enforcement suits brought by the Sierra Club and other environmental groups in securing compliance with the law. The Court held that citizen enforcement suits to secure penalties are available in some circumstances even if the polluter has entered into a compliance agreement with a friendly regulator, and even if the polluter has taken some steps to address its pollution.

LEVERAGING THE CLEAN WATER ACT TO STOP BAD PROJECTS

In addition to enforcing the Clean Water Act against existing operations, the Sierra Club has also successfully brought litigation to stop bad projects from securing needed permits. For example, the Sierra Club successfully challenged reissuance of the Clean Water Act Section 404 Nationwide Permit 12, which was used to fast-track approval of oil and gas pipelines. That decision effectively halted construction of the highly controversial Keystone XL oil sands pipeline. The Sierra Club has similarly challenged Clean Water Act permits for destructive mountaintop removal coal mines in Appalachia.

FIGHTING TO KEEP RULES AS STRONG AS POSSIBLE

While the Clean Water Act statute sets out the broad framework for how the regulatory regime functions, the rubber hits the

road with the regulations promulgated by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Sierra Club litigation has defended EPA's rulemakings from industry attacks, and has pushed EPA to go further where necessary to achieve the purposes of the Act.

In *Southwestern Electric Power Company, et al. v. EPA*, the Sierra Club and partners challenged a weak EPA rule that set inadequate pollution limits for coal fired power plants. The US Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit agreed and sent the rule back to EPA to try again. Similarly, when the Trump administration issued a rule severely narrowing which waters fall under the Clean Water Act's protections, the Sierra Club joined allies in challenging that rule. That rule has been remanded to the EPA, and the Biden administration plans to issue a replacement rule by the end of this year.

LOOKING AHEAD

This list provides only a small sample of the many lawsuits the Sierra Club has brought under the Clean Water Act to protect our communities. As critical as it is for preventing harm to our waterways and communities, the Clean Water Act remains under constant threat. Industry groups and their backers in Washington want to limit the scope of the activities and waters subject to the Act to make it easier to destroy wetlands and dump pollution. The Sierra Club will continue to remain at the forefront of legal efforts to defend the Act and to give effect to its protections.

Peter Morgan is a senior attorney with the Sierra Club's Environmental Law Program. Reprinted from [sierraclub.org/default/2022/10/clean-water-act-50-five-decades-sierra-club-legal-advocacy](https://www.sierraclub.org/default/2022/10/clean-water-act-50-five-decades-sierra-club-legal-advocacy)

Georgia Power's energy plan fails to meet the moment

BY THE SIERRA CLUB BEYOND COAL TEAM

Every three years, Georgia Power has to prepare an Integrated Resource Plan, also known as an IRP. The IRP outlines how Georgia Power will generate the electricity it will sell to its customers for the next 20 years, deciding whether that electricity comes from clean, renewable sources or from dirty fossil fuels like coal and fracked gas.

The Georgia Public Service Commission (PSC) approved Georgia Power's plan on July 21, 2022. The PSC is a five-member elected governmental body responsible for regulating utilities in Georgia, including electric, gas, and telecommunications services.

The final IRP leaves a lot to be desired. There are some positives, including a commitment to retiring nearly all of Georgia Power's coal plants, moderate investments in clean energy, and a modest increase in energy efficiency targets.

However, the timeframe for retiring coal plants is still far too slow, the investments in solar energy capacity is half of what Sierra Club's expert modeling proposed, and Georgia Power will be purchasing a massive amount of electricity generated by fracked gas from one of its sister companies.

Here are some of the key points from Sierra Club's analysis of the final IRP. For the full breakdown, visit sierraclub.org/georgia/IRP22-Final-Grades.

THE GOOD

- Georgia Power has signaled that it intends to shut down almost all of its coal plants in the near term, including some units at Plant Wansley and Plant Scherer. In total, Georgia Power committed to retire more than 2,700 megawatts of coal capacity.
- The utility plans to double its renewable energy capacity by 2033, including bringing 2,300 megawatts of solar online in the next three years.
- No new gas-fired power plants were proposed or approved.
- The utility's energy efficiency targets were increased by 15%, a modest but welcome improvement. Georgia Power will have to use programs like expanded weatherization or

equipment upgrades to meet this new goal.

- Georgia Power committed to removing coal ash at Plant Wansley to a dry, lined landfill. Originally, the toxic coal ash was planned to stay in place without a liner to prevent dangerous substances from seeping into groundwater.

THE BAD

- Georgia Power is replacing coal-fired electricity capacity with energy generated by fracked gas, which contains the potent greenhouse gas methane.
- The overall plan fails to make enough progress to hit Georgia Power's own goal of "net zero" carbon emissions by 2050.
- In its initial proposal, Georgia Power wanted to lock in retirement dates for Plant Bowen units 1 and 2, but the PSC declined and instead punted the decision to the next IRP in 2025.
- Plant Bowen units 3 and 4 will remain in operation until 2035.
- The utility signaled its plans to build new gas plants in 2040 and potentially will ask for approval in a future IRP. This highlights Georgia Power's lack of commitment to its climate goals.
- The final IRP made hardly mentioned electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure. EV sales are increasing rapidly, and this increase requires careful infrastructure planning to ensure EV charging does not harm our electric grid.

HELP US FIGHT THE HIKE!

Next on the PSC's docket is the Georgia Power "Rate Case," which determines how much we pay for electricity. Like the IRP, rate case proceedings happen every three years.

Georgia Power is requesting an increase of about 12% in electricity rates, which would cost the average customer about \$200 more each year.

The Sierra Club is fighting to stop this rate increase and other Georgia Power proposals to squeeze more money from ratepayers to cover its bad decisions. Join us in fighting this rate hike at bit.ly/2022-Rate-Case.

CLEAN ENERGY COMMITTEE

Clean energy takes a big step forward in GA

BY SCOTT PRESSON, READY FOR 100 TEAM LEADER

Have we had enough drama? Clean energy advocates had quite an up and down ride these past months, but the Senate came through to pass the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). Although modest compared to the proposed Build Back Better Act, it does contain substantial clean energy programs that will benefit Georgia. Much thanks to our Chapter staff and volunteers, as well partner organizations, for all the effort to help bring this to fruition.

The Clean Energy Committee will be assessing how we can help educate the community about its benefits in bringing more renewable energy and efficiency improvements to Georgia. More work will also be needed to

continue to promote the other policies and programs that were not included in the IRA but are still needed if we are to move forward with the urgency these times call for.

Clean energy volunteers and staff continued work with the Beyond Coal Campaign (BCC) on the Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) and Rate Case which has just begun. We worked closely with BCC on the IRP and the Southern Company's shareholders meeting. We worked closely with partner organizations and promoted making comments to the Public Service Commission (PSC) regarding the GA Power IRP. See the Beyond Coal Campaign article in this issue for more information.

Our Ready for 100 efforts continue in Georgia. Local campaigns are still making progress with municipalities to advance clean energy. Decatur is the latest city in Georgia to adopt a plan to transition to 100% clean energy! Congratulations to all who have been working on this project for so long.

In Atlanta, Mayor Andre Dickens announced the enhancement of the Office of Sustainability and Resiliency by naming Chandra Farley as the City's Chief Sustainability Officer and the promotion of John R. Seydel III to Deputy Chief Sustainability Officer. Ms. Farley was formerly the Director of the Just Energy Circle at the Partnership for Southern Equity.

In Athens-Clarke County, the Commission recently approved a transition plan to 100% clean energy. In Gwinnett County, a coalition of organizations is advocating for the creation of a county sustainability office to coordinate climate action across county departments. The County Sustainability Commission has recommended the establishment of such an office to the Board of Commissioner.

Care to help us in any of these clean energy efforts? Have an interest in volunteering to help us move forward on climate action? Contact Scott Presson at spress51@gmail.com.

EQUITY COMMITTEE

Chapter now offering grants to environmental justice orgs

BY THE GEORGIA CHAPTER EQUITY COMMITTEE

To better support leaders on the frontlines of environmental justice work, the Chapter seeks to redistribute power and resources to organizations that are working in/with communities that have been traditionally marginalized, oppressed, and/or denied access, and which align with our vision, values, and work. We're thrilled to announce the availability of mini-grants available to support brilliant organizing, activism, and community work across the state that directly and indirectly impacts the environment.

To better understand this effort, the committee encourages Georgia Sierrans to read a piece about racial and environmental justice written by Leslie Fields, the Sierra Club's National Director of Policy, Advocacy, and Legal.

A key passage reads, in part:

"The Sierra Club works with people from all walks of life—from prison and police abolitionists to legacy

CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE

civil rights groups, environmental justice groups, faith-based organizations, young people, unions, and old-school conservationists. These cross-sector alliances have spurred us to reimagine public safety amid these syndemics—and also to imagine new ways to incorporate justice in our long-standing efforts to enjoy, explore, and protect the planet."

Read Leslie Fields' full article at sierraclub.org/sierra/racial-justice-environmental-justice.

We invite our members connected with partner organizations for whom a small amount of funding

would make an impact, to fill out a short intake form requesting funds. You can find the form at bit.ly/GA-Mini-Grants.

We'll do our best to honor requests up to \$500 for 501(c)3 organizations that are:

- In line with Sierra Club's mission (sierraclub.org/about-sierra-club), vision, and values (sierraclub.org/sierra-club-values).
- Working with annual operating budgets such that this donation would be impactful
- Headed by leaders who are from the communities they're working with.

.....

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Will Georgia legislators try to kill the EV again?

BY MARK WOODALL, CHAIR, LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Now that Georgia has only two coal burning power plants open (Plants Bowen and Scherer), transportation is the number one source of carbon pollution in our state.

In addition to more transit, the answer to the problem is electrification of transportation. SK battery, Rivian, and Hyundai/Kia are investing billions to manufacture electric vehicles (EVs) in Georgia. So you would expect the Georgia Legislature to establish policies promoting EVs.

However, the main concern of the Joint Study Committee on the Electrification of Transportation is funding the Georgia Department of Transportation (DOT) and road contractors. Presentations and video of the Study Committee's meetings are available online at bit.ly/Electrification-Transportation-Committee.

In 2015, the Georgia Legislature passed HB 170, which destroyed the EV market in our state by repealing a \$5,000 state tax credit for purchasing EVs and replaced it with the highest EV annual fee in the country. That same year was the last time the Georgia Legislature increased the state's motor fuel tax. We need to make sure lawmakers don't kill EV sales again.

In his closing remarks at a recent meeting of the Study Committee, Co-Chair Sen. Steve Gooch said some thought that the current \$200 a year EV fee was too much and some thought too little. (It's actually \$213.70 a year and still the highest in the US.) Gooch also mentioned that Amazon will soon have an electric delivery fleet in Georgia paying zero motor fuel tax while putting tens of thousands of miles on the road every year. Gooch seems interested in how to "capture" that revenue from charging EVs.

According to a presentation at the October 3 Study Committee meeting, the national average for annual fees for electric vehicles in states that impose them is \$121, while the national average for the amount of gas tax paid by residents with an internal combustion engine is \$134. So there is no

crisis caused by EVs. Georgia EV drivers now are paying more than what their motor fuel tax would be on a similar gasoline powered vehicle.

So our first message to Georgia legislators is no more fees or taxes on EVs. If anything, the annual EV registration fee should be reduced and the state tax credit for EVs should be reestablished.

In other energy related legislation, Georgia Power refuses to pay a fair price for power generated by its customers' rooftop solar. "Net metering" is a billing mechanism that provides credits to households with solar energy systems when they provide excess electricity back to the grid. It serves as a strong incentive for individual consumers to install solar panels. However, Georgia Power capped the number of households that can participate in the program at 5,000 and has shown no support for expanding the program. Expanding the "net metering" program will be an issue in the Georgia Power Rate Case (see page 7). Still, legislation is likely to be needed for Georgians to be able to invest in solar power.

CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE

Additionally, the threat of mining Trail Ridge next to the Okefenokee is unfortunately still alive. Twin Pines Minerals, LLC, an Alabama-based mining company, is seeking permits to establish a mining operation on the doorstep of the Okefenokee Swamp. The proposed mining site is on an ancient sand dune called Trail Ridge

that serves as the eastern barrier of the Okefenokee Swamp. Experts say mining in this area could have significant and potentially catastrophic impacts on the hydrology of the Okefenokee and the surrounding wetlands. A bill to outlaw mining in this area failed to get a vote in the 2021 Legislative Session, so passage

of similar legislation that would prevent mining of Trail Ridge will be a priority for 2023.

Sierrans should let their state legislators know how they feel on these issues. Go to sierraclub.org/georgia/legislative and gawater.org for more info and to get involved.

OUTINGS

Welcome new leaders!

BY GRANT BROWN, OUTINGS CHAIR

As we continue to focus on growing our grassroots outreach in the area of outings, I am pleased to announce that several of our leaders from the April leader training session have stepped forward to complete their field training and will soon become full Sierra Club Outings leaders! Congratulations to Molly, Kevin, Sarah, and Katherine! I am also excited that this group represents the next generation of Sierra Club. Here in Georgia, we have struggled for years to reach a younger demographic in our outings program and I am pleased that we are slowly beginning to do that.

In September, we held a second training class for leaders. We had a variety of people from the Atlanta and Augusta areas and began the training for leaders in our regular and military outings programs.

Have any of you wondered where the paddling events have gone? Well, Sierra Club made a national-level change to the paddling policy that resulted in a barrier for leaders to conduct self-guided paddling. This was so significant that it essentially shut down this type of local outing. We have voiced our concern and we are slowly getting the national governance committee to reconsider that decision. We are hoping to be able to offer paddling events led by our local leaders again this winter or spring.

We held 10 events during the third quarter of 2022 with nine leaders hosting 53 registrants on trips across Georgia and beyond, including outings in F.D. Roosevelt State Park; Aiken, South Carolina; and Great Smoky Mountains National Park! Thank you for your great leading work Cathy, Lee, Brian, Kevin, Molly, Katherine, Sarah, Lornette, and Laura! You are making it all happen!



Photo courtesy of Grant Brown
Hiking at Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area with our trail mascot Charlie!

We are also leading outings at Stone Mountain Park, and I wanted to offer some comment on this. As you may know, the carving on Stone Mountain is a tribute to the military and political leaders of the Confederate States of America. This has become a point of pain and anger for many in our contemporary society. Our Chapter officially joined the conversation to resolve and heal from the issues now created by the Stone Mountain memorial. We launched a sister campaign related to our Outdoors For All initiative called Stone Mountain For All. The Sierra Club is participating with others in seeking positive change at Stone Mountain.

We realize it was a mountain first. It was a highly sacred place for Indigenous peoples for millenia. We are grateful for and want to protect and enjoy the amazing nature it offers in our local Atlanta area. We don't plan to boycott Stone Mountain just because of the controversial carving. Instead, we want to lead outings there to educate others about the controversy as well as the proposals being considered to reconcile it. Indeed, we've recently held

CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE

Photo courtesy of Lee Graham

Autumn leaf changes can be a colorful spectacle of nature. They are best experienced on trails deep in the forests where you are surrounded by vibrant colors, such as Blood Mountain (right). Leaves change in the Southeast at different times starting in early October. First in the north and high elevations then gradually further south and in lower elevations. Leaf changes are also subject to seasonal weather patterns. Check leaf tracking websites such as gastateparks.org/leafwatch in October for seasonal tips.



service outings there to eradicate invasive plant species that are choking the beautiful indigenous plants that live there. I hope this explanation is helpful and please reach out to me with any questions or concerns.

Join us outside! Please attend an outing and please

tell a friend. And we are always looking for new leaders. Just have them contact Grant at sierrageorgiaoutings@gmail.com.

To sign up for our outings email list and find out about new outings as soon as they get posted, go to bit.ly/Outings-GA.

.....

POLITICAL COMMITTEE

It's time to vote!

**BY EDDIE EHLERT, CHAIR,
POLITICAL COMMITTEE**

Ok folks, the 2022 midterm elections are staring us down, and the stakes are sky high.

From a climate and liveability perspective, the issues confronting us and informing our choices in the voting booth are dire. We have a U.S. Senate race between a dedicated public servant and a former football player with a penchant for bending the truth. We have a lieutenant governor's race between a career prosecutor and a guy who is under investigation for attempting to overturn a legitimate election. The differences

between the candidates could not be more clear.

It seems absurd that there are still elected officials who deny the reality of climate change, but you can find them at nearly every level of government. It is a threat to our very health and lives to allow such people to retain a hand on the levers of power.

I know I bark a lot about "most important election ever," but given the efforts to prevent us from even HAVING another election, this just may be it! We cannot expect any progress on our issues (or any other basic human issues) unless we elect new leaders in the state government and the General Assembly. Full stop. The Georgia Legislature sat on bills to require coal ash to be safely stored in lined pits and to

protect the Okefenokee Swamp from risky mining operations. Nor did it take action to increase clean renewable energy in Georgia. Instead, state lawmakers spent their time making it harder to sue massive agricultural operations when they pollute, imposing new voting restrictions, and taking away access to reproductive healthcare and abortion.

It has to stop. We have to elect a government (starting with our state government) that is willing to confront the true problems we face and take the steps necessary to address them. The current majority has no interest in taking those steps and already has their eyes on making things worse.

Many of those in power and those

CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE

seeking elected office have signaled that they want a total ban on abortion with no exceptions, the outlawing of contraceptives, and more power to overrule voters if an election doesn't go the way they want. I shudder to think of how much worse things can get.

Is this what we are willing to tolerate from those we put in office? It has been said before that we get the government we deserve, but do we really deserve THIS? Are we really that willing to go out with a whimper? I sure hope not.

The November ballot will present us with some of the best candidates we've seen in years at all levels of government. Candidates who will develop and implement sane and sustainable policies for ALL Georgians.

At this point, I must apologize for the muted response from the Chapter Political Committee so far in this election year. The loss of key volunteer officers and the difficulty in replacing them has impacted our ability to do much besides research and endorse good candidates. Our ability to raise funds and even to make public announcements of our endorsements has been hampered.

Nevertheless, we still have the power to communicate with and mobilize our network of members and supporters. The campaigns of our endorsed candidates always need phone bankers, letter writers, and, at last this year, canvassers. If you have time to spare and always wondered if you would be good at helping a campaign, now might be the time to take the plunge. Or if you prefer, every campaign appreciates your contribution! If you need

Sierra Club Georgia Chapter 2022 Endorsements

U.S. Senate

Raphael Warnock

U.S. House of Representatives

District 4: Hank Johnson

District 5: Nikema Williams

District 7: Lucy McBath

Governor

Stacey Abrams

Lieutenant Governor

Charlie Bailey

Attorney General

Jen Jordan

Secretary of State

Bee Nguyen

Georgia Senate

District 5: Sheikh Rahman

District 9: Nikki Merritt

District 14: Josh McLaurin

District 36: Nan Orrock

District 40: Sally Harrell

District 41: Kim Jackson

District 42: Elena Parent

District 55: Gloria Butler

Georgia House of Representatives

District 37: Mary Frances Williams

District 38: David Wilkerson

District 52: Shea Roberts

District 57: Stacey Evans

District 77: Rhonda Burnough

District 81: Scott Holcomb

District 82: Mary Margaret Oliver

District 83: Karen Lupton

District 85: Karla Drenner

District 89: Becky Evans

District 95: Dar'shun Kendrick

District 96: Pete Marin

District 97: Ruwa Romman

District 107: Sam Park

District 108: Jasmine Clark

District 137: Debbie Buckner

District 141: Carolyn Hugley

County Commissions

Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners District 2: Ben Ku

Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners District 4: Marlene Fosque

To ensure the Sierra Club only endorses the best environmental candidates, we use a multi-step process and a wide array of criteria for selecting which candidates receive our support. First, volunteers on our Chapter's Political Committee examine candidates' records and public statements, then distributes questionnaires to potential Environmental Champions with questions about our key issues. The questionnaire responses are then evaluated, and interviews with candidates are conducted.

Every endorsement is voted on by two volunteer committees.

For local races, a first vote is taken by the Local Group Political Committee or Group Executive Committee, followed by a vote by the Chapter Political Committee. Municipal and county endorsements must originate in the Local Group.

For state legislative and other statewide races, votes are taken by the Chapter Political Committee and the Chapter Executive Committee. For national races, votes are taken by our Chapter's Political Committee and the National Sierra Club Political Team.

Throughout our process, volunteers and staff evaluate the environmental and public health records of candidates, their electability, and their propensity to be a true champion on our issues.

Questions? Seeking endorsement? Please contact our Political Committee Chair, Eddie Ehler, at edeherlert@mindspring.com or visit us online at sierraclub.org/georgia/political.

For the most up-to-date list of endorsed candidates, go to sierraclub.org/georgia/2022endorsements.

CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE

help connecting, my contact info is listed in the directory under "Political Chair" (see page 4).

As always, our list of Endorsed Candidates is printed in this fourth quarter issue and posted online, and each candidate deserves all the support we can supply. You can look for Sierra Club endorsed candidates on your ballot by going to the Secretary of State's "My Voter Page" website at [mvp.sos](http://mvp.sos.ga.gov).

ga.gov, logging in, and checking your personalized sample ballot.

If you aren't sure about the candidates on your ballot, look them up and familiarize yourself before you vote. These choices are much easier to make in advance with time to read up on the candidates seeking your vote.

Our air, water, and land are not going to clean themselves up. Our

markets aren't either, given the failure of the last 40 years coupled with intense deregulation. Those in office who cherish the contributions from the industries they are supposed to regulate have become quite comfortable at turning a blind eye.

That means it's up to US. Don't let your chance to have a say in Georgia's future pass you by. VOTE!

.....

WILDLANDS & WILDLIFE COMMITTEE

Pollinator Week festival & update on Okefenokee

BY THE WILDLANDS AND WILDLIFE COMMITTEE

Wildlands and Wildlife Committee members have long helped educate the community on the importance of pollinators and contributed to citizen science projects. In June, members Joy, Debby, and Josh tabled for the Georgia Chapter at the 2022 National Pollinator Week Festival in Decatur.

The festival attracted many organizations dedicated to healthier habitats for pollinators, including the Georgia Audubon Society, Trees Atlanta, and Roots Down.

Our volunteers shared information with attendees on the key issues that the Sierra Club engages in to sustain and grow pollinator populations and invited attendees to join our work. The volunteers themselves learned a great deal about the importance of native plants and trees from fellow presenters at the festival.



Photo courtesy of Josh Hogan

Rows of canopies lined the sidewalk at the National Pollinator Week Festival in Decatur in June.

In our last issue, we let you know that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers had reasserted federal jurisdiction over a proposed mining operation that would set up shop just outside the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge.

Well, bad news on that front. After the company proposing the mine (Twin Pines Minerals) filed a lawsuit against the Corps of Engineers, the Corps re-reversed itself and gave up federal oversight over the proposed mine.

What does this mean? Basically, we're back where we were in June: state regulators will be the

ones deciding whether Twin Pines gets the permits it needs to begin mining.

Despite this setback, the campaign continues. In September, the Sierra Club organized a press conference in Fargo, Georgia, just outside the Okefenokee, that featured one of the leading hydrologists in Georgia, local business and faith leaders, and activists discussing the threats posed by Twin Pines Minerals' proposed mine.

Watch the full press conference and learn more about the speakers at bit.ly/OKE-Press-Conference.

FALL/WINTER 2022

GROUP NEWS

CENTENNIAL GROUP

SERVING COBB, CHEROKEE & NORTH FULTON

BY **LEE GRAHAM**, CENTENNIAL GROUP OUTINGS CHAIR, **BETTYE HARRIS**, CENTENNIAL GROUP DELEGATE TO CHAPTER EXCOM, & **LYNN WALSTON**, CHAIR, CENTENNIAL GROUP

RECAP OF RECENT EVENTS

In July and August, we took a break from regular group meetings and formal hikes, but stayed busy supporting our partners and community activities (including the Marietta Independence Day Parade; Get Out The Vote kickoff rallies; the Cobb International Festival & Tabling; and the NAACP Annual Education Forum).

Thanks to Lee Graham and other outings leaders for arranging some informal mountain hikes as we awaited cooler weather and for promoting an online Outing Leader Training for September. Be sure to check the chapter outings link regularly for upcoming fall hikes: bit.ly/Outings-GA.

We had lots of fun on September 19th as we joined our friends from "Cobb-4-Transit" at Truist Park for a Braves night game. Our transit fans used an alternative (non-gasoline) form of travel to the park and documented/shared their experiences. On September 28th, we teamed with the

Marietta-Roswell Alumnae Chapter Delta Sigma Theta Sorority and the Cherokee Branch NAACP to co-host a candidate forum (via Zoom), featuring candidates for several Georgia Senate and House district races and several state-wide races. Environmental equity and inclusion issues were the focus of this Forum.

COMING UP

Thursday, November 3 at 7 PM: Join us for the monthly meeting of the Centennial Group. Contact Group Chair Lynn Walston (lynnwalston22@yahoo.com) for details.

Keep an eye on our Facebook page and the Centennial Group newsletter for details about our upcoming events, including holiday plans.

And be sure to vote in both the Centennial Group and Chapter Executive Committee elections (more information on how to vote can be found on page 23)!

.....

GROUP INFORMATION

Website: sierraclub.org/georgia/centennial
Facebook: facebook.com/Centennial.Sierra.Club
MeetUp: meetup.com/Georgia-Sierra-Club



Bettye Harris tabled at a Get Out The Vote event (above left). Sierrans enjoy a night at Truist Park to watch the Atlanta Braves play (above right).

Photos courtesy of the Centennial Group

GREATER GWINNETT GROUP

SERVING GWINNETT COUNTY & SURROUNDING AREAS

BY MICHAEL HALLEN AND CURT THOMPSON, CO-CHAIRS, GREATER GWINNETT GROUP, & **SCOTT PRESSON**, EXCOM MEMBER, GREATER GWINNETT GROUP

The Greater Gwinnett Group began offering hybrid in-person/virtual meetings in July, meeting at Seaside Grille in Lilburn where we have hosted the likes of Clarke County Commissioner Russell Edwards and recently have focused on educating members about the upcoming November elections.

Since our group includes members from Gwinnett, Barrow, Forsyth, Hall, Rockdale, and Walton counties, we continue to offer a virtual option via Zoom for these "hybrid" meetings. We normally meet on the first Thursday of the month at 7 PM. We are still working towards restarting outings with locations in different counties within the group's region, but are finally tabling events in our region to promote getting involved with the Sierra Club.

One of our most active committees continues to work on our Gwinnett Ready for 100 Program and have had some success in advocating for Gwinnett

County to create an Office of Sustainability. The Gwinnett County Sustainability Commission has recommended that Gwinnett establish such an office. If you'd like to be involved with those efforts please reach out to Scott Presson at spress51@gmail.com.

Do you have suggestions for outings? Contact our Co-Chair Michael Hallen at michael_hallen@hotmail.com. You can follow us on Facebook using the link below and look for us soon on Instagram.

Lastly, we wouldn't be advocating for the environment if we didn't remind you to vote this November 8 in our General Election, to learn about the candidates, and vote down the ballot in every race. For information on how to get involved in efforts to turn out the vote this November, please contact our Co-Chair Curt Thompson at curtbthompson@bellsouth.net.

We hope you can join us as we build our group community.

GROUP INFORMATION

Website: sierraclub.org/georgia/Gwinnett

Facebook: facebook.com/Gwinnett-Sierra-Club-109645614080930

LAGRANGE GROUP

SERVING THE LAGRANGE AREA

BY THE LAGRANGE GROUP LEADERSHIP

The LaGrange Group did several farm and garden tours this summer visiting a regenerative farm, a permaculture farm and a family garden farm, learning a lot about different ways to grow things sustainably.

We now have the capability to offer hybrid Zoom/in-person meetings! Our September meeting highlighted the design, implementation and success of our Pollinator Garden project. Our planned meeting topic for November is a Columbus State University professor presenting "Growing Intersex among Bass Populations in the Chattahoochee River."

The Group recently coordinated a hike in F.D. Roosevelt State Park. Additional outings in the planning stages include a bike outing on the Man O' War trail in Harris County in November. Be sure to monitor the LaGrange Group Facebook page (link below) and the Chapter website calendar (sierraclub.org/georgia/calendar) to find

information and sign up for email notifications to participate in these outing plans. Interested parties are also encouraged to use the Group's Meet-up site to find out about our offerings (meetup.com/lagrange-group-ga-sierra-club-new).

The Group participated in the National Public Lands Day - West Point Lakeshore clean-up service project in September, and partnered with the Chattahoochee Riverkeeper in an activity designed to raise awareness of local water quality issues and concerns.

The Group continues to remain active in the Chapter Political Committee through this election cycle. Several Group members have been active individually in the Get Out The Vote effort in West Georgia.

Public relations efforts have included tabling at LaGrange College where numerous new students expressed interest in our efforts and activities.

GROUP INFORMATION

Website: sierraclub.org/georgia/lagrange

Facebook: facebook.com/groups/300840033370271

METRO ATLANTA GROUP

SERVING ATLANTA, DEKALB & SOUTH FULTON

BY NINA DUTTON, CHAIR, METRO ATLANTA GROUP

GROUP MEETINGS

Whether you're new to the Sierra Club Georgia Chapter or if you've been a member for years, in metro Atlanta or well outside it, you're invited to our next group meeting! Our meetings have been online-only since spring 2020, but we may be holding some more in-person events this fall.

On July 12, Metro Atlanta Group joined with other local groups to hold a meeting to hear from Sierra Club's Okefenokee Action team about efforts over the last several decades to protect the Okefenokee Swamp. We learned about the jurisdictional issues involved with the oversight of the permitting process and ways to get involved now to support the Okefenokee in the long term.

To learn about the Okefenokee Protection Alliance (of which the Sierra Club Georgia Chapter is a partner) and ways to take action through this coalition, you may visit protectokefenokee.org.

While we did not meet in August, at our Sep. 13 meeting, Dr. Jairo Garcia spoke with us about UrbanHeatATL, a community research campaign dedicated to mapping and studying urban heat islands in Atlanta. Sharing of the data collected in this campaign, and analyses of these data, can help with understanding the inequitable distribution and effects of extreme heat in our city. We discussed ways to get involved in UrbanHeatATL's campaign, as well as how projects such as this can fit into broader work toward climate justice.

To learn more, check out the data yourself, or sign up as a volunteer with the project, you may visit

SAVANNAH RIVER GROUP

SERVING AUGUSTA & SURROUNDING AREAS

BY LINDA MCBURNEY, CO-CHAIR, SAVANNAH RIVER GROUP, & **CHRISTOPHER HALL**, TRANSPORTATION CHAIR, SAVANNAH RIVER GROUP

The United States southeastern region is one of the poorest regions and has had more polluting facilities than anywhere else in the country, resulting

urbanheatATL.org.

A playlist of video recordings of MAG-hosted meetings is available online at bit.ly/MAG-Playlist. (Time-saving tips: try skipping ahead to featured speakers' presentations, or listening to the videos at 1.25x speed.)

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

Want to pitch in by helping out at meetings, planning events or actions, or keeping on top of local policies, politics, and opportunities? Please email our chair, Nina Dutton, at nddutton@gmail.com.

STAY UP TO DATE

If you don't get our monthly meeting announcements but would like to, sign up for email updates through the Georgia Chapter website (sierraclub.org/georgia) and be sure to include your Atlanta-area zipcode.

The Metro Atlanta Group generally meets on the second Tuesday of each month. Typically our meetings feature a speaker on a timely topic. Then, we discuss and present info on how to take action on important issues. Some months we do not hold a regular meeting, so please check the Chapter calendar, our webpage, and our Facebook page for updates.

Our executive committee meetings are open and generally held on the evening of the first Tuesday of the month. Contact Nina Dutton (nddutton@gmail.com) to confirm details.

GROUP INFORMATION

Website: sierraclub.org/georgia/atlanta

Facebook: facebook.com/SierraClubATL

in a greater number of climate related impacts. In spite of this, there is still much work with positive impacts being performed everyday in the south. Recently, on August 12, a Justice First Tour of 2022 came to Aiken, SC, and Augusta with the purpose to "bring awareness about the issues in the community and to bring people together in unity."

CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE



Photo courtesy of the Savannah River Group

Speakers at the August 12 meeting of the Justice First Tour of 2022 stand together for a photo.

Presenters at this event included:

- Rev. Brendolyn Jenkins Boseman, Executive Director of The Imani Group (theimanigroup.org);
- Rev. Leo Woodberry, founder & CEO of the New Alpha Community Development Corp. (newalphacdc.com);
- Reginald Cofer from Senator Jon Ossoff's office;
- State Representative Sheila Nelson;

- Jordan Johnson, Augusta Commissioner;
- Tonya Bonitatibus, Savannah Riverkeeper (savannahriverkeeper.org);
- Rev. Charles Utley, Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League (bredl.org); and
- Kelli Walker, Augusta 311 (augustaga.gov/311)

Also presenting was SRG's Transportation Chair Christopher Hall. Christopher highlighted some of the work that Augusta is doing around electric buses and pedestrian and bicycle pathways. The Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan was last completed in 2012 and is now being reviewed and will be updated in 2023. The Steering Committee is asking for community input by completing the Bicycle & Pedestrian survey by December 1, 2022. Go to surveymonkey.com/r/ARTSBikePedPlan to weigh in on the new update.

To learn more about the Bike & Pedestrian Plan, see its interactive map, and a list of events, checkout its website at artsbikepedplan.altago.site.

.....

GROUP INFORMATION

Website: sierraclub.org/georgia/Savannah-River
Facebook: facebook.com/groups/241982449162866

Give Your Vehicle
a **New Purpose.**

Donate Your Vehicle Today!

**SIERRA CLUB
FOUNDATION**
VEHICLE DONATION PROGRAM

We make donating your vehicle easy!
1-844-6-SIERRA | scfch.careasy.org

CHAPTER & GROUP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

CANDIDATE BIOS

GEORGIA CHAPTER

HASEENA CHARANIA

I'm thrilled to join the Georgia Chapter of the Sierra Club and expand my professional horizons. From working in nonprofit, corporate, and government environments, I have multi-sectoral expertise in international sustainability communications, science and business. Before joining Quantis as an ESG communications consultant, I founded my own sustainability education consulting company. My projects included consulting on a packaging company's first Corporate Social Responsibility Report and creating a Digital Sustainability 101 course for Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson Airport employees. I've also worked with UPS, Park Pride, and the United Nations. I attended Emory and Duke for my undergraduate and graduate degrees, respectively.



JUMANA MASTER

As an Atlanta resident and lifetime Georgian, I'm excited to run for re-election to our Georgia Sierra Club ExCom. I have spent my career creating resourceful ways to build more sustainable and equitable communities. Having worked in the nonprofit sector and led strategy to mitigate environmental harms within Georgia communities, I bring strong experience in grassroots organizing and movement building. I have served as Co-Chair for the Partnership for Southern Equity's Just Energy Circle Policy Committee and have publicly represented a coalition of 15 nonprofit organizations. I've educated lawmakers at the national level on Georgia's environmental issues and have authored climate analysis on the U.S. South read by the UN and Pope Francis. My academic background in public health & human rights includes a strong race/class/gender lens and systems-thinking perspective to environmental issues. It's important that



our movements continue to center those most affected by the climate crisis. The issues and solutions affect us all and it's critical that we involve youth and communities of color so that our movement is inclusive, informed, and sustainable. If re-elected, I would use the opportunity to strengthen our base and continue to promote our club's mission in every way I can.

KRUPESH PATEL

I lived in Georgia pretty much my whole life and currently reside in Gwinnett County. I joined the Sierra Club in 2017. I have been active in many different campaigns by the local affiliate chapters of the Sierra Club such as the Beyond Coal campaign, Ready for 100 Gwinnett, and the campaign to get MARTA to Gwinnett. In 2019, I helped organize a town hall in Gwinnett County about what a Green New Deal could mean to Gwinnett. I currently serve on the Sustainability Commission for District 2 in Gwinnett County where I along with other commission members are tasked with providing advice and making recommendations regarding sustainability to the Gwinnett Board of Commissioners. I hope to bring my activism on environmental issues as well as my professional background in data science to help push the causes and mission of the Sierra Club Georgia Chapter.



SARINA SAWYER

I believe everyone deserves safe, healthy, and beautiful places to live. I am personally and professionally committed to this belief. For this reason, I am honored to run for the Executive Committee. Before moving to Atlanta, and staying for the past six years, I worked for Sierra Club national in DC doing major gifts fundraising for the 12 states in the Southeast. Through working with the Chapters and organizers, I learned how focusing on local issues is an effective strategy and makes the most



CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE

impact on our daily lives. This experience inspired me to move into a career in urban planning and community development, which is what brought me to Atlanta, where I received my Master's degree in City and Regional Planning from Georgia Tech. Since then, I have worked in comprehensive planning and affordable housing. Currently, I am the Workforce Training and Partnerships Manager at the South-

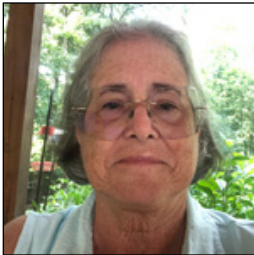
east Energy Efficiency Alliance (SEEA). I administer SEEA's portfolio of workforce development activities, resources, and training programs to cultivate a thriving and skilled clean energy workforce across the Southeast. Outside of work, I spend most of my time snuggling my four dogs, dreaming of better public transit and bike infrastructure, playing soccer, and trying to grow my own fruit and veggies.



CENTENNIAL GROUP

LINDA BELL

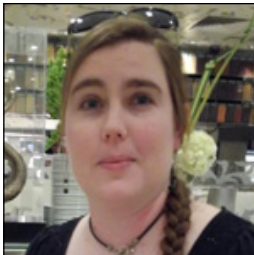
I have been a long time Sierran (since college!) though not able to participate personally until about nine years ago when we retired and moved close enough to join the Centennial Group. Since that time, I have been involved with many Group and Chapter activities, but the areas I personally find most motivating are political and legislative; thus, I am a member of the Chapter Political and Legislative Committees. Electing government representatives who understand our environmental challenges and are eager to enact legislation directed toward those challenges is critical to saving our planet. Climate change must be addressed vigorously if my grandchildren and yours hope to inherit a livable world. For that reason, I choose to focus on transportation issues and, along with several other Centennial members, am involved in encouraging our Cobb County Commission to place a transit expansion referendum on the ballot. I've become increasingly concerned also about plastics: their production (here comes that fossil fuel industry again!), the vulgar accumulation of them in our environment, and some so-called recycling efforts that I believe to be largely a ruse. I hope Sierra Club will be more involved in this issue and am sure we will with members' increasing concerns.



DEIDRE MEIGGS

When I was an undergrad in college, I changed my major four times. The last switch was to the environmental sciences. When I told my mother, who was incredibly grateful for scholarship funding by that point, she unexpectedly laughed. Apparently, she had made a wager with my grandmother when I was younger that I would end up as an environ-

mental advocate. A few years and many pieces of paper later, I possess postgraduate degrees in Earth and Atmospheric Science and Inorganic Chemistry from Georgia Tech. At present, my advocacy partially manifests in my employment as a passionate educator and Associate Professor of Natural Science at Life University in Marietta, where I teach courses in environmental ethics, food industry sustainability, and environmental science. I have also been an active Sierra Club member since 2015 and a member of the Centennial Group Executive Committee for the past two years. I am thankful to the members of the Centennial Group for giving me the opportunity to expand my environmental stewardship efforts as a member of the Executive Committee and look forward to the opportunity to continue my service if reelected.



VANESSA SUAREZ

My name is Vanessa Suarez, and I am currently pursuing a master's degree in Wildlife Conservation & Management from Unity College. I received my bachelor's in Biology from Florida State University, and throughout school and my career I've focused on plant sciences. I've worked for the FSU Herbarium, Tallahassee's IFAS Extension, Bass Laboratories, and two years ago, I had the opportunity to initiate and manage a greenhouse at Ladds Farm Supply. Executing a greenhouse sounded like a dream to me, but throughout the growing season, I realized that I was going against my passion for conservation and environmental protection. I couldn't have a career in which I continually utilized nonrenewable resources in order to grow non-native plants that required heavy use of



CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE

fertilizers and water. Therefore, I decided to take a different direction in my career. Now that I am further into my masters, I feel as if I've truly found my calling. I have never enjoyed learning about a subject more. I deeply understand the importance of maintaining a healthy planet whilst focusing on

environmental justice and sustainability. As my knowledge in the environment grows, I look forward to being thoroughly immersed in environmental protection while learning from like-minded individuals and scientific research.

GREATER GWINNETT GROUP

JORGE GRANADOS

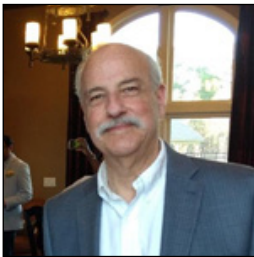
I'm running to continue to be a part of the Sierra Club Greater Gwinnett Group Executive Committee to continue to fight hard for a better environmental future, increase youth membership, and support candidates that will work hard to create policies to protect our greenspace, better our water and air quality, and educating our families, friends, and neighbors in Gwinnett.



ARTHUR I. SHELDON

My interest in public policy dates back to my youth discussing politics while still in high school. I went to college and received my Bachelors in Environmental Studies then applied to and was accepted into the graduate City Planning program at Georgia Tech.

I have been a long time Sierra Club member and currently serve as conservation chair for the Greater Gwinnett Group, as well as being a former executive committee member and vice-chair of that group. I also have co-chaired the state Sierra Club Sustainable Communities Committee and serve on the state Transportation Committee and am our representative to the national Transportation Committee. In 1996, I served on the first SPLOST citizens' project selection committee as a homeowners' representative. Subsequently I served on the same committee for the three most recent SPLOSTs as the environmental group representative or alternate. In between those roles, I was one of the original appointees to the Gwinnett County Transit Advisory Board. I eventually was reappointed for a second four year term and served as the board chair and vice-chair. Recently, I served on the county transit study stakeholders committee for the transit expansion study before the MARTA referendum in 2019.



LAGRANGE GROUP

COLLIE GRADDICK

Collie Graddick is a Consultant with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA), a partner in the Community Table Association of Cooperatives (CTAC), and a lifetime member of the West Georgia Farmer's Cooperative (WGFC) and the Federation of Southern Cooperatives (FSC). Collie has been with the MDA for 28 years, working in the Seed, Noxious Weed, Fertilizer, Endangered Species, and Pesticide Regulatory programs. He has been a partner and trainer at CTAC for 11 years, assisting immigrant, minority, and small farmers with



working together on developing Local Community Cooperative Food Systems throughout MN. Collie grew up on a 200-acre sustainable farm in Hamilton, Georgia, producing fruits, vegetables, and livestock. He received his B.S. degree in Agronomy from Fort Valley State University, GA and his M.S. degree in Commercial Fruit and Vegetable Production from Tuskegee University, Alabama.

AMBER HENDRIX

I have always had a great fascination with nature; the way a flower grows and a bee pollinates — there cannot be one without the other. Every living organism has a purpose and a story to share. As a young child, I wanted to spend



CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE

every waking moment outside exploring the woods, playing in creeks, and so on. I became infatuated with the art of gardening about a decade ago, entrancing myself in learning as much as I could about the organic process of growing one's own food. I met an amazing mentor and father figure that took me as one of his own. He taught me a great deal about vegetable gardening, and I was able to take that knowledge and apply my own organic concepts to it. Thus I started my very own vegetable garden with a large amount of pre-planning and prepwork. Then I tapped into all the wonderful herbs that grow naturally without human interception and found my soul calling: herbal medicine! I am still in the early stages of educating myself on the processes as well as my foraging abilities. There is still much for me to learn before I start dabbling in my own tincture and tea making. I am incredibly eager to find my way into a career that is centered around plants, focusing on what I love as well as serving others with an open mind and an open heart.

CATHY KNIGHT

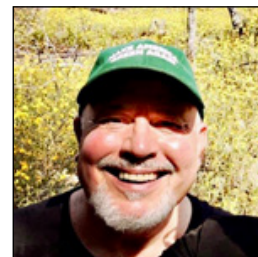
I learned to love the outdoors from my Dad and to love books from my Mom. My interests led to a degree in biology. I spent my medical sciences career working in laboratories. It was interesting and dynamic with many opportunities to learn. I feel lucky to have lived in 6 of our diverse and beautiful states: Florida, Georgia, Texas, New Mexico, California, and Idaho. They are as different as apples are to oranges. Beauty is perceived with an open mind. Moving to LaGrange has been good for me. It has great places to pursue my hobbies of birding, walking, biking, kayaking, and camping. I have been a member of Sierra Club for six years but have not lived where there was an active group nearby. I am very excited to be part of the LaGrange Group as well as a member of Chattahoochee Riverkeeper Neighborhood Water Watch. Since retirement, there has been a lot more time to be outdoors. A lot more time to read books too. Reading books outdoors is a double win for me! By looking and listening there



are wonders revealed in even a short time spent outdoors. I am always overwhelmed by what I don't know. We need our world and it needs us to do what is necessary to protect these wonders. Everyone needs a chance to look, listen, marvel, learn and enjoy!

TRAVIS TOWNS

Growing up in the countryside of Mountville and spending a lot of time outdoors gave me a reverence for Mother Nature from an early age. Going hiking, camping and all sorts of outdoor activities in Boy Scouts further instilled a respect for our environment. My Eagle Scout project was the creation of a nature trail, complete with identification of native trees behind our local elementary school. For the past two decades, I have been a member of the Wilderness Network of Georgia, a men's outdoors club, and have held office in the past. Being more active in our local Sierra Club for several years, I served three years as delegate to the Georgia Chapter Executive Committee and have served as the LaGrange Group Program Chair for the past four years.



Support Your Passion for a Just and Sustainable World

Create a legacy that protects and restores the natural world for future generations by naming Sierra Club's Georgia Chapter in your will or trust. Or, name Sierra Club Foundation as the beneficiary of your retirement plan for the benefit of your local chapter and leave less highly taxed assets to your loved ones.



To learn more about the advantages of making a planned gift and to become a member of the Rachel Carson Society, please contact us.



SIERRA CLUB
GEORGIA CHAPTER

Julia Curtis • (800) 932-4270 • giftplanning@sierraclub.org • myplan.sierraclub.org

JUSTIN BRIGHTHARP

I am Justin Brightharp and I am running for re-election to the Executive Committee for the Sierra Club Metro Atlanta Group. My work has been in the clean transportation space, specifically on projects related to zero-emission vehicles in the southeastern United States. I still believe the Sierra Club Metro Atlanta Group has incredible opportunities to be a space for sustainability and how it elevates our communities through education and recreation. Atlanta and Georgia are at the center of federal investments focused on climate and clean technology, and Metro Atlanta Group's focus on community would be valuable in ensuring climate benefits are felt in our communities.



EDDIE EHLERT

I'm Eddie Ehlert and I'm hoping to return as a member of the Metro Atlanta Group Executive Committee (ExCom). I have been a Member of the Sierra Club since the mid 1990s and a member of the Chapter Political Committee since 2008. I became Chapter Political Chair in 2009. I have served on the Metro Atlanta Group ExCom since 2011. Additionally, I joined the Sierra Club Political Team (National) in 2017. I grew up in Metro Atlanta and have witnessed the ever increasing pressures on the air, water, and land we share as our population has bulged while our infrastructure seems stuck in the past. It has become ever more obvious to me that preserving livability in our area requires strict adherence to air quality rules, stream buffer rules, and enhancement of water conservation. Doing so requires electing and keeping members of our Legislature who understand how dependent we are on air and water. It's up to Georgians to keep our area healthy for all of us. I plan to do my part!



SIERRA CLUB GEORGIA CHAPTER EXCOM ELECTION RULES

The rules below can be found in the latest version of the Georgia Chapter Bylaws found at sierraclub.org/georgia/excom.

4.1 Annual Election. An Annual Election shall be held in the fourth quarter of each year to choose ExCom members. This election and any special elections shall be conducted by secret ballot. A printed ballot shall be mailed and a electronic ballot shall be made available via a secure website for online voting to all Chapter members of record at least four weeks before the closing date of the election, and shall be conducted in such a manner in order to ensure facility of voting and tabulation, and the secrecy of each ballot. A member may vote with the printed ballot or with the electronic ballot but not both. In the event a member submits more than one ballot, the ballot with the latest date shall be counted. The ballot shall allow each voter to vote for as many candidates as there are positions to be filled. A voter may not cumulate votes for any candidate. The ExCom shall specify the calendar dates and deadlines for appointing the Nominating Committee (NomCom), production of eligible voter lists, receipt of names for consideration by the NomCom, receipt of ballot issue petitions, the NomCom report of names of nominees, receipt of candidate petitions, appointment of the Election Committee, printing and mailing dates for ballots allowing at least four weeks for return of the ballots, receipt of returned ballots, and the date, time and place for counting ballots. The ExCom shall provide written notice of this schedule and of the opportunity to nominate candidates by petition to all Chapter members.

4.2 Nominating Committee. A Nominating Committee (NomCom) of at least three Chapter members, at least one not an ExCom member, none of whom may be a candidate, shall be appointed annually by the ExCom not later than four months before the designated closing date of the election. Sufficient opportunity shall be given for Chapter members to submit names for consideration by the NomCom. The NomCom shall attempt to nominate at least two more candidates than the number of ExCom members to be elected, and shall report the nominees' names to the ExCom at least two weeks before the deadline for submission of nomination petitions and five weeks before the scheduled mailing and electronic availability of the ballots. Nominees shall be Chapter members who give their consent. If the NomCom chooses not to nominate a willing

candidate, the NomCom shall promptly inform that candidate of the opportunity to seek nomination by petition.

4.3 Petition Candidates. The name of any Chapter member proposed in writing by at least 15 Chapter members prior to the deadline for submission of petitions, and who gives consent, shall also be included on the ballot. The nomination petitions shall be retained until the ballots are destroyed.

4.4 Election Committee. An Election Committee of at least three Chapter members, at least one not an ExCom member, shall be appointed annually by the ExCom prior to the scheduled date of mailing and electronic availability of ballots. No candidates may serve on the Election Committee. The Election Committee shall cause the ballots to be prepared, mailed and made available electronically, and shall count the returned ballots. Challenges of the conduct of candidates or their campaigns shall be referred to the Election Committee. Decisions of the Election Committee may be appealed to the ExCom.

4.5 Mailing and Availability of Ballots. Ballots shall be mailed and made available electronically to all Chapter members of record according to the voter list obtained prior to the election.

4.6 Return of Ballots. Ballots shall be returned to the Election Committee as directed in the ballot instructions. Return of a minimum number of valid ballots shall not be required for the validity of an annual or special election.

4.7 Counting Ballots. The Election Committee shall count the ballots on the closing date of the election, or as soon as practical after the closing date of the election. The candidates or their authorized representatives shall be permitted to be present. The candidates receiving the highest number of votes shall be elected. Any tie shall be resolved immediately, first by a recount, then if necessary by lot at the ballot counting. The Election Committee shall report the results immediately to the Secretary. The Secretary shall immediately notify the candidates, the ExCom members, and other interested parties, and shall report the results to the ExCom at its next meeting. The ballots and nomination petitions shall be retained until their destruction is directed by the ExCom.

CHAPTER & GROUP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

BALLOT & INSTRUCTIONS

Follow the steps outlined here to cast your vote in our annual elections for Georgia Chapter and Local Group Executive Committees positions.

Georgia Chapter members may vote in these elections by filling out the ballot below and mailing it to the Chapter office **OR** using our online ballot system, **but not both**.

Members are encouraged to cast their ballots online at sierraclub.org/georgia/2022ExComElections. The online system is easy to use and does not require a stamp or envelope.

All members of the Georgia Chapter are eligible to vote for Chapter Executive Committee candidates. Members may also vote in **ONE** local group election. Not all groups are using the Georgia Sierran for their leadership elections. If your group is not listed, contact your group leadership (see directory on pages 3-4).

Mail ballot instructions:

- Vote for up to the number of candidates indicated below. If too many boxes are checked in either column, **the ballot will be declared invalid**.
- If there is only one name on your mailing label, please **vote in column A only**.
- If there are two names on the mailing label on the back of this magazine, you have a joint membership and get two votes. **One member should vote in column A, and the other should vote in column B.**
- After voting, mail this entire page to the Chapter office. **The page must contain your mailing label on the back**, which is used to verify your membership. After your ballot is verified, your label will be removed to ensure anonymity during counting.
- Mail your ballot to:
Sierra Club Georgia Chapter Elections
PO Box 1281
Decatur, GA 30031

GEORGIA CHAPTER

Executive Committee Candidates
Candidate statements on pgs. 18-19

Vote for up
to **THREE**
candidates

3

Haseena Charania
Jumana Master
Krupesh Patel
Sarina Sawyer

A	B
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

CENTENNIAL GROUP

Executive Committee Candidates
Candidate statements on pgs. 19-20

Vote for up
to **TWO**
candidates

2

Linda Bell
Deidre Meiggs
Vanessa Suarez

A	B
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Your ballot must be cast online or received at the Chapter office by 5 p.m. on Nov. 15, 2022.

If you have any questions, please send an email to georgia.chapter@sierraclub.org or call 404-607-1262.

GREATER GWINNETT GROUP

Executive Committee Candidates
Candidate statements on pg. 20

Vote for up
to **TWO**
candidates

2

Jorge Granados
Arthur I. Sheldon

A	B
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

LAGRANGE GROUP

Executive Committee Candidates
Candidate statements on pgs. 20-21

Vote for up
to **FOUR**
candidates

4

Collie Graddick
Amber Hendrix
Cathy Knight
Travis Towns

A	B
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

METRO ATLANTA GROUP

Executive Committee Candidates
Candidate statements on pg. 22

Vote for up
to **TWO**
candidates

2

Justin Brightharp
Eddie Ehlert

A	B
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

PERIODICAL POSTAGE PAID



PO Box 1281
Decatur, GA 30031

Change service requested

VISIT US ONLINE

Check out our website (sierraclub.org/georgia) to learn more about the Georgia Chapter, access our library of resources, learn about volunteer opportunities, and more. You can also find a complete listing of all conservation committee chairs, staff members, issue leaders, and group leaders.

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA: @GASierraClub