



Sierran

To Explore, Enjoy and Protect the Planet

Get Outdoors in 2015

Outings Special Feature: Pages 8-14



2015 Legislative Recap *Pages 3-7*



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With Session Over, Let's Get Outside!

By Colleen Kiernan

What started out as a tough legislative session for environmental issues in Georgia turned out to be better than expected. The Georgia Water Coalition was able to fix the major loopholes in the legislation to restore the coastal marsh buffer that was nixed in an Earth Day memo last year by Environmental Protection Division Director Jud Turner. However, the other main priority for the GWC, protecting the Floridan Aquifer from "aquifer recovery and storage" projects by renewing the moratorium, was stalled for another year. We, along with our partners, were able to defeat a ban on the prohibition of "auxiliary containers," including plastic bags, after SB 139 came flying out of the Senate four days after being dropped. The Soil and Water Conservation Commission was significantly re-tooled but not eliminated. The brightest victory was House Bill (HB) 57, the Solar Free-Market Financing Act, which once and for all allows Georgia consumers to finance photovoltaic arrays. A bill pushed by the Georgia Forestry Association to ban LEED certification for state buildings passed.

Perhaps the biggest disappointment for our legislative team was the outcome of HB 170, the Transportation Funding Act. Our hopes on the final day of the



Colleen Kiernan, Chapter Director

session were that, despite the wave of new asphalt that \$900 million annually can fund, there would be something to expand Georgia's biggest transit system,

MARTA, which was the deal the Democrats cut in order to support the funding package. The bill punishes electric vehicle drivers by assessing a \$200 fee for personal cars and \$300 for commercial vehicles, which is twice as high as any other state charges.

Now that the session is behind us, I look out the window and see that spring has sprung! I'm delighted that we are bringing you our 4th Annual John Muir Outings Series to take you out to some of the places the Georgia Chapter is working to protect. In this issue, we feature some of the folks who are critical to our Outings Program! We hope it will inspire you. Being an Outings Leader is one of the best volunteer jobs; you get to go where you want, when you want, and you get to introduce others to places you love, or explore somewhere new! 🌲

About Georgia Sierran

Articles: Send materials to: gasierran@gmail.com. Maximum word length: 750 words with one photo. Please include high-resolution digital photos (200 dpi) with your story.

Moving? Send address changes to: Sierra Club, P.O. Box 52968, Boulder, CO 80322-2968. Send changes by email: address.changes@sierraclub.org

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If you prefer to continue receiving the printed newsletter, there is no need to do anything. But if you'd like to switch to the electronic edition please contact the Chapter office at **404-607-1262 x221** or georgia.chapter@sierraclub.org. Our budget – and our trees! – will thank you.

Note: in accordance with Chapter bylaws, all members will receive the annual election issue by mail.

“Solar Freedom” Bill Passes Legislature

Third-Party Financing Could Revolutionize Solar Power in Georgia

By Colleen Kiernan

Solar got its launch in Georgia in 2001 when the legislature passed Senate Bill (SB) 51, The Georgia Cogeneration and Distributed Generation Act. This bill required utilities to allow customers to connect to the grid with a solar, wind or fuel cell application and provide either a second meter or a bi-directional meter. The legislation also set up Georgia Power’s Green Energy Program by detailing when a solar-generating customer had to be paid above “avoided cost” for excess kilowatt hours they put on the grid. There was a cap to the amount of generation utilities had to buy, .2% of the previous year’s peak demand, which was pretty low. However, there was no limit to the amount of power a customer could put on the grid and get “avoided cost,” somewhere in the ballpark of \$.03/kilowatt-hour. Unfortunately, the main staple of Georgia Power’s Green Energy Program was Landfill Gas-To-Energy (LFGTE), and as such, Georgia Power was asking green-minded customers to pay extra in the form of blocks of “green electricity” that had very little solar and were, by industry standards, very expensive.

Not willing to ask our members and supporters to join this program, in 2002 the Georgia Chapter of the Sierra Club dabbled in community solar power by setting up Sevananda Natural Foods in Atlanta with a 2.4-kilowatt system. We helped sell 35 blocks at \$5 a month to cover the costs and allow like-minded people to support 100% solar. Thirteen years later, the panels are still going strong.

Meanwhile, throughout the 2000s, states all over the country, except in the South, developed renewable portfolio standards, which helped jumpstart the solar industry. With solar costs about triple the costs for fossil fuels, Georgia did not make great progress. In 2010, Georgia Power had less than 10 megawatts (MW) of capacity installed, which was supported by the Green Energy Program and other customers who chose the avoided cost route.

In 2011, the Georgia Public Service Commission required Georgia to go out to bid for up to 50 MW of utility-scale solar, and they contracted Simon Solar to do a 30 MW project near Social Circle, and SD&D Greenbuilt to build three projects in Mitchell, Upson and Meriwether Counties.

At the same time, consumers in other states were beginning to take advantage of the quickly plummeting price of solar through third-party financiers who would set up systems on homes or businesses and contract with the home or business owners to purchase the power over a 10- or 20-year contract. Georgia Power took the position that such arrangements were not allowed in Georgia because regulated utilities are the only ones who can sell power to consumers. Free-



The passage of HB 57 gives rooftop solar a needed boost in Georgia

market enthusiasts were outraged at this limit, and entrepreneurial ones like Dr. Sidney Smith in Savannah challenged Georgia Power by creating a company called Lower Rates for Customers, LLC and setting up a lease arrangement in the Savannah area. Groups like the Georgia Solar Utilities also tried to find creative ways to break the hold on the system, which culminated in their proposal to be a solar monopoly. Given the success of the Large-Scale Solar program, the Commission went on to set up the Advanced Solar Initiative (ASI), which required Georgia Power to procure another 210 MW of solar power: 120 MW would be utility scale and 90 MW would be rooftop solar, also known as “distributed generation,” and the program would take place over three years. After the successful beginning of that program, the Commission set up another one (ASI 2) as part of the 2013 Integrated Resource Plan, this time for 525 MW, again split between utility scale and rooftop solar.

With all of this success driven by the Public Service Commission, many free-market supporters, solar installers and environmentalists continued to beat the drum about the nonsensical interpretation of the monopoly rights of utilities which prevents third-party financing of rooftop solar. Then State Senator (now Congressman) Buddy Carter introduced SB 401 in 2012 to clarify the Cogeneration and Distributed Generation legislation to allow this type of financial arrangement. In a showdown Senate committee hearing, consumer advocate Clark Howard accused Georgia Power of being “dead wrong” on this issue. Unfortunately, the legislation died in committee.

After a long summer of negotiations, Rep. Mike Dudgeon, R-Johns Creek, worked out all the issues of various stakeholders and this year introduced House Bill 57, which allows third-party financing. According to GreenTech Media, “Last year, 200,000 residential solar systems were installed in the U.S. More than two-thirds of those systems were third-party financed through leases or power-purchase agreements.” The future looks bright for Georgia! 🌱

Legislators Approve Road-Funding Bonanza Transportation Bill Punishes EV Owners, Does Little for Transit

By David Emory

Legislators made good on their promise to do something “big” about transportation in 2015, approving House Bill (HB) 170 in the final days of the session. The bill will generate nearly \$1 billion annually in additional revenue for transportation projects. Most of the new funding will be restricted to road spending unless current policies change.

The heart of the package is a historic increase in the state gas tax, the primary source of state-level transportation funding in Georgia, and one that remains dedicated to spending on roads and bridges. While the new money for roads is disappointing, the final bill does at least represent an improvement over an earlier version of the proposal, which would have raided existing local sales taxes for schools and other vital programs in a failed attempt to fund new roads without a tax increase. Furthermore, legislators created a new revenue stream for transportation in the form of a new \$5 tax on hotel rooms in Georgia, a surprise last-minute addition to the package. The hotel revenue will be allocated annually by the legislature and is theoretically available for non-road uses.

While the highway lobby was the big winner in the HB 170 scramble, among some of the biggest losers are drivers of electric vehicles (EVs), who take a double hit in the form of the elimination of the popular EV tax credit, which has made Georgia one of the leading markets for EVs in recent years, as well as a new \$200 annual fee that will be levied on the owners of personal EVs (\$300 for commercial EVs). Sierra Club and other EV advocates worked hard on a compromise that would soften the blow to EV owners, but the legislative leadership was determined to include these punitive measures in the final proposal.

On the transit side, HB 170 is a big disappointment. While there was much talk among legislators about their supposed newfound regard for transit, no dedicated transit funding found its way into the final version of HB 170. The biggest potential breakthrough came in the final days of negotiations, when a proposal was floated to allow the existing MARTA jurisdictions to increase the MARTA sales tax by a half-cent. The proposal would have generated up to \$200 million annually in additional dedicated transit funding, and would have been guaranteed through 2057. While the MARTA half-penny proposal passed the Senate with bipartisan support, it was ultimately scrapped by the House in the



Jammed highways like this one could become a more common sight thanks to HB 170

final hours of the session. In the end, no viable local transit funding option was included.

The final bill does include a provision allowing counties to create a 1-cent T-SPLOST, which could potentially be used for non-road projects. However, this tax would have a five-year sunset, an insufficient time frame for funding major transit projects, which are typically financed with long-term bonds and must demonstrate a long-term operational funding commitment to qualify for federal matching funds. (A viable transit funding source generally needs to be guaranteed for 30 years or more, as is the case with the current MARTA sales tax.)

Despite these disappointments, the news is not all bad for transit supporters. The one major concession for MARTA that survived the final scramble is the long-sought permanent elimination of the so-called “50/50 handcuffs,” a policy that forbids MARTA from using more than 50 percent of its annual budget on operating expenses. While MARTA’s finances are currently in good shape and the immediate impact of the change is not likely to be noticeable, elimination of the handcuffs ends a longstanding game of political football at the Capitol over the policy, freeing up transit supporters to focus on more impactful priorities, such as increased funding, in the coming sessions.

The other small concession for transit is a one-time infusion of \$75 million for transit projects through state bonds (legislators initially proposed a package of \$100 million, but

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\$25 million was diverted in the session's final days to an economic development incentive program intended to lure, of all things, a car plant). The remaining amount will be distributed among transit agencies in the state. Specifics of the distribution are yet to be determined, but the money is expected to primarily fund small-scale maintenance and state-of-good-repair projects.

Looking ahead, the passage of HB 170 presents new challenges for advocates of multimodal transportation in Georgia. While the prospect of nearly \$1 billion annually flowing to unneeded road expansion is discouraging, there are opportunities for more responsible spending of this revenue. The state has a massive backlog of roadway maintenance needs; by ensuring that these projects are prioritized over sprawl-inducing highways to nowhere, much of the potential damage from the additional road spending can be averted. There is also the potential for a portion of the money to be spent on transit or other multimodal needs, either via the new hotel tax revenue (which is not constitutionally restricted to roads) or by opening the gas tax to all transportation purposes through amendment or reinterpretation of the existing policy.

Achieving either of these outcomes will require an improved culture of responsiveness and accountability at both the legislature and particularly at Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), the agency in charge of spending most of the new revenues from HB 170, and one that remains overwhelmingly focused on road expansion despite increasing calls for a more multimodal approach from the general public. Expect "GDOT reform" to be a major area of focus for the Chapter's transportation campaign going forward.

Finally, the conversation about transit funding is far from settled. Support for transit is at an all-time high in Georgia, as evidenced by the successful expansion of MARTA to Clayton County (see sidebar), and demand for walkable, bikeable and transit-accessible places for both residents and businesses continues to intensify. The highway lobby may still run the show at the Gold Dome, but as long as attitudes among the voting public continue to shift in favor of a more balanced approach to transportation funding, that dominance will not last forever. Expect a renewed push for multimodal transportation at next year's session and beyond. 🌲

get involved

The Georgia Chapter's R.A.I.L. (Regional Action to Improve Livability) committee guides transportation policy for the Chapter; meetings are held monthly. Contact Brionte McCorkle (404-607-1262 x232, brionte.mccorkle@sierraclub.org) for details or visit <http://www.sierraclub.org/georgia/rail>.

MARTA Rolls in Clayton County!



While the state legislature remains stuck in reverse on transportation policy, local government is thankfully showing some much-needed leadership on the issue. Exhibit A is Clayton County, which officially launched MARTA service on March 21 when the first three bus routes entered into service. Additional routes and a regional rail line are expected to follow. The Clayton MARTA vote was the Chapter's flagship transportation campaign in 2014, with 74 percent of voters approving expansion in the November election. Next stop: Cobb and Gwinnett!

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Mixed Results for Water Issues in 2015 Session

Victories on Marsh Buffers & Plastic Bags; Soil & Water Commission Weakened

By Neill Herring

The Georgia Chapter of Sierra Club is a member of the Leadership Team of the Georgia Water Coalition (GWC), a collective of over 250 organizations in the state who are working on water issues. These organizations range from churches, businesses and streamwatch groups, to statewide conservation organizations, and together they represent thousands of Georgians. Each year the Coalition sets legislative goals that seek improvements in the conservation of natural resources, and always includes resistance to legislative rollbacks designed to undo or limit protections in place or available.

In 2015 the GWC priorities were limited to two issues: restoration of the legally required 25-foot vegetated marsh buffer struck down by a memorandum by the Director of the Environmental Protection Division (EPD) on Earth Day in 2014, and restoration of a moratorium on the practice of aquifer storage and recovery (ASR) in eleven counties that rely on the Floridan Aquifer for most of their water supplies.

Senate Bill (SB) 101 was introduced to restore the marsh buffer. The EPD had circulated a plain vanilla version of a bill over the summer and fall that would legislatively establish a 25-foot vegetated buffer in place of the one removed in the “Earth Day Massacre.”

There appeared to be widespread agreement on the matter, which had been the policy of the state for over a decade, until late in the pre-session process. At that time, Patricia Barmeyer, King & Spalding lawyer for Sea Island Acquisition, intervened, particularly with the sponsor of the bill who had been identified as Sen. Ben Watson of Savannah.

Ms. Barmeyer was able to convince Watson that certain exemptions that were very convenient for her clients needed to be included in the bill. Those exemptions were in the version that passed the Senate. The exemptions, or variances, would allow anyone to build a bulkhead on the edge of the high ground next to the marsh, and EPD opined that no vegetated buffer would be required in such locations. A photograph of the jellyball factory, which produces seafood from jellyfish in Darien, was circulated at the Capitol to show what was being legalized by one of the Sea Island amendments.

Coastal legislators and legislative leaders were revolted, even though the Senate version of the bill had been reported Recommend Do Pass by Chairman Lynn Smith’s Natural Resources & Environment Committee. An amendment to fix

the problems was circulated by Rep. Jeff Jones of St. Simons Island, supported by the Rules Chairman and the Speaker, and easily passed the House. The Senate agreed to the correcting amendment, despite the fact that Sen. Watson and the EPD had proclaimed that any amendment might kill the bill. That threat was misplaced.

SB 101 represents a solid victory for the Sierra Club and the GWC, and we are grateful to the leadership of the One Hundred Miles organization on this important issue.

SB 36 by Sen. William Ligon and **House Bill (HB) 116** by Rep. Alex Atwood were introduced to reinstate the moratorium on ASR in the Floridan. An existing moratorium that had been in place through four renewals and for 15 years was cynically allowed to expire in July of 2014. This was a second blow to coastal environmental protection following the marsh buffer issue on Earth Day of that same year. Coastal legislators and citizen groups, including both GWC groups and several local organizations of the Georgia Federation of Republican Women, spent the summer and fall working on the matter of protecting groundwater quality with a moratorium on the practice of injecting surface water into the aquifer for withdrawal for sale at a later time, during droughts.

Such water can contaminate groundwater that is naturally highly pure, both chemically and biologically. The question of the legality of someone’s claiming ownership of water they injected into the aquifer is another problem the moratorium was designed to forestall. Research by the GWC found a record of failure to only modest “successes” for ASR projects in the Southeast. Among the facts uncovered: if 40% of the surface water injected can be successfully recovered, the project is a “success.”

The House bill was ignored by Natural Resources & Environment Committee Chairwoman Lynn Smith, while her counterpart in the Senate, committee Chairman Ross Tolleason, was resistant to restoring the moratorium. The source for the reluctance in both Chairs turned out to be the Georgia Chamber of Commerce, which consistently views ASR as a “tool in the toolbox” for “water management.” The Chamber is unconcerned with potential harm to the principal water supply for the Coastal Plain, and has actively sought to eliminate common law water rights in favor of privatizing the resource, to manage water with “market allocation,” as is the case in the western states, which are being hammered by drought at the moment.

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The EPD and the Governor's office soon joined the opposition, and Sen. Ligon was informed that even if he were to pass a moratorium the Governor would veto it. The Senator and the GWC then rewrote the bill to take out the moratorium provision, and to substitute new provisions stating that property owners had a right to a continuing supply of clean water from the groundwater beneath their property, and that the Board of Natural Resources should make rules that protect that water quality. That bill passed the Senate easily on the 30th day of the session, the last day allowed for bills to pass from one Chamber or the other.

The Chamber of Commerce sprang into action in the House and caused a "Study Committee on Saltwater Intrusion" to be formed and passed ever so quickly by Chairwoman Lynn Smith, who then used the instant creation of that body as an excuse to kill SB 36 for the rest of the 2015 Session. SB 36, Groundwater Quality Protection, remains a work in progress to be enacted in the 2016 Session.

Among the rollbacks that were proposed in 2015 were:

HB 397 by Rep. David Knight would shift the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission (GSWCC) to the Department of Agriculture, as well as make other significant changes to operation of the small but venerable (1937) and effective agency. This is a project that was attempted in 2014 and failed, but in 2015 a new narrative emerged that showed that Gov. Deal was serious about it, and it moved forward with considerable momentum.

The GSWCC has 370 District Supervisors around the state, and half of them are elected in general elections in November of even years. One of them, in Newton County, stopped some developers who were scraping a site for an industrial development which turned out to be Baxter International. The developers told the Supervisor that he didn't know who he was messing with, and that the Governor wanted the site cleared.

Apparently those men were right. The Governor is moving the GSWCC into an "attached" status under the Commissioner of Agriculture. He is firing its 5-member governing board of Commissioners, and replacing them with his own choices of people from outside the agency. Control of the "Manual for Erosion and Sediment Control in Georgia," a best management practices publication often referred to as "The Green Book," is being handed over to the Department of Transportation and its contractors.

This bill has passed and awaits the Governor's signature. This is not good for Georgia water quality.

SB 139 by Sen. Tyler Harper and **HB 444** by Rep. Tom McCall was nicknamed "Plastic Bags Everywhere" by GWC lobbyists. This one was a nationwide project of chemical manufacturers, grocers and fast food chains. The local cause was Tybee Island's considering a ban on plastic disposable grocery bags because of the threat they pose to turtles and other sea life who mistake them for seafood. Athens was also thought to be considering a similar regulation because of the contribution of the bags to street and streamside litter.

The "American Progressive Bag Alliance" of chemists and grocers were whining about their fear of "regulatory mayhem," citing hundreds of local ordinances in California, and that state's embrace of a statewide ban on the bags as an example of why Georgia should prohibit any local control.

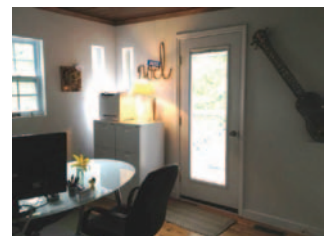
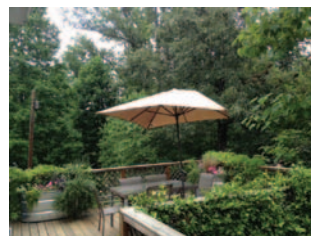
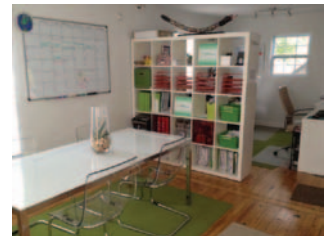
It was the issue of local control that did in the crusade against regulatory mayhem on the House floor, when the Progressive Baggers got 67 votes, and their opponents, people who want to regulate bags and those who think such questions should be left to local communities, got 85 votes. It takes 91 votes to pass a bill, so SB 139 died.

This was a solid win for the Sierra Club and the GWC. ♣

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In the last issue, we featured some of the activists who are central to the “protect” part of our mission “to explore, enjoy and protect the planet.” We heard from many readers who were inspired to action by these stories. As we are shaking off our winter doldrums and the spring blooms are coaxing us outdoors, our editorial team decided to profile some of our leaders who are critical to the “explore, enjoy” part of our mission. We hope these stories will inspire you as well!

My Journey to Becoming a National Outings Leader

By Donna Weathers

About 10 years ago, I was struggling to reconnect with my 11-year-old son. I'd been separated from him for a few years because of military orders. I recalled how much I had enjoyed camping as a kid, but I hadn't done it for over 30 years, and my son had never been. Feeling like I only had one chance to get it right with him, I signed myself up for a service outing to Big Bend National Park in Texas.

Going alone was a chance for me to see if camping and hiking were still things I could enjoy and be good at. They WERE! Over the next few summers we explored the Texas Hill Country through day hikes and backpacking trips with local Sierra Club groups, and we went on a few other service outings to California's Big Sur region and New York City. Having really enjoyed the Sierra Club outings and having been inspired by volunteers leading them, I applied to be an Outings Leader after I retired from the Navy. I was hesitant at first because I didn't come from an outdoorsy background and didn't know much about the Sierra Club. The Outings Leader Training (OLT) and mentor programs have been outstanding, and I've grown and developed my outdoor leadership skills and confidence over the past few years. This spring I will earn my OLT Train the Trainer certificate so I can share my experiences and help develop more Outings Leaders.

Since 2011, I've led five service outings in both front and back country. Each trip reminds me how valuable our public lands are and how important it is that we continue to cultivate active and vocal stewards of our resources. I've always enjoyed helping people succeed in their efforts, so for me, the best part about leading trips has been watching the volunteers gain new confidence in themselves or step out of their comfort zones. Many volunteers on my most recent trip to Anza-Borrego Desert State Park in California (Women Weeding in the Wild) were novice campers, but they all had a great time and learned



so much from each other and about themselves. Many were motivated to get more involved in their local groups and chapters.

As for my son, he's still enjoying the outdoors. Last fall he even invited me to go camping with him over fall break! That's a huge win for mom! 🌲

try a national outing

Donna will be leading “To Hell and Back: Service in Hells Canyon, Idaho” in April. To find details for all upcoming national outings, see:

<http://content.sierraclub.org/outings/national>

A Deeper Appreciation for “Leave No Trace”

By Moshe Jacobson

As an overnight certified trip leader for the Sierra Club, my preferred outdoor activity is wilderness backpacking.

My appreciation for protected wilderness began during the summers of 2007 and 2008, while I was on summer vacation from my job as a school teacher. During these summers, particularly the summer of 2008, I spent weeks traveling through the national parks around the U.S. These summers were my first experience with camping, albeit mere car camping. But more importantly, they were the first time I really came to appreciate the beauty of our country’s protected wilderness spaces and cultivate my own gratitude that the generations before us decided to set them aside for our enjoyment and that of our children and their children.

In the summer of 2009, I decided to take things up a notch with the 30-day National Outdoor Leadership School’s (NOLS’s) Educator Course with Wilderness First Responder (WFR). This monthlong course took place in the stunningly beautiful Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness located in the Rockies of southwest Montana. I earned my WFR certification by learning and practicing the skills required to care for health emergencies in the backcountry: broken bones, altitude sickness, twisted ankles, poisoning, etc.

Through this course I also received my Leave No Trace (LNT) Master Educator certification. The rigor with which NOLS upheld the LNT principles was humbling. It was because of their extraordinary focus on low-impact wilderness principles that they were given special permission to use this particular wilderness area for their course. My LNT training gave me a deep appreciation for, and awareness of my impact on,



life forms as simple as lichens on rocks, which in the arid Rockies can take years to grow but can be destroyed with one careless footstep. I also learned the art of reducing impact while hiking by staying on the trail where one exists, or walking side by side to avoid creating a trail where one does not.

Arguably the most useful trip leader skill I learned with NOLS was expedition behavior, or the ability to operate as a cohesive unit with deep consideration for the other members of one’s expedition. It is not always obvious how to handle the social, emotional and physical challenges that arise during such an extended period spent together with a small group. Overcoming these challenges and learning to work in harmony with my peers equipped me to be a strong group leader and outdoor educator during future wilderness excursions.

During the summer of 2010 I decided to spend my vacation hiking the Colorado Trail, a 486-mile trail from Denver to Durango. NOLS had taught me almost nothing about lightweight

backpacking, so I naively set out with a pack weighing over 50 pounds, wearing rugged but very bulky boots that I hadn’t spent the time to break in. Needless to say, I didn’t make it very far. After 90 miles my feet were so torn up that I was forced to call it quits.

Since that time I have been improving my ultralight backpacking skills with frequent trips into the wilderness. At the end of 2013 I spent a week hiking the 76-mile Georgia portion of the Appalachian Trail with Sammy Padgett and other Georgia Sierra Club members.

These days I visit the North Georgia mountains often, preferring to take very small, quiet groups of friends and Sierra Club members who can appreciate the serenity of nature. I recently returned to Colorado to spend a week hiking in Rocky Mountain National Park, one of my favorite parks, but I have not yet attempted the Colorado Trail again. I hope that one day I will have the opportunity to retry my aborted mission and see it through to completion, this time with a much lighter pack! 🍄

A Brief History of Inspiring Connections Outdoors (ICO)

On July 1, 2014, the Sierra Club program formerly known as Inner City Outings became Inspiring Connections Outdoors. Its mission remains the same: "To provide opportunities for people (especially youth) with limited access to the outdoors to safely explore, enjoy and protect the natural world." ICO has about 900 outings involving about 14,000 participants each year. The goal of the 55 national ICO groups is to double the number of people getting out-

doors with Sierra Club by 2020. The Club's belief is that people who have wilderness experiences are much more likely to get involved in helping preserve it.

In February 2015 President Obama announced the "Every Kid in a Park" initiative to help get the next generation more involved in the outdoors. It grants free admission to U.S. public lands for all fourth graders and their families, which should provide a boost to ICO programs.

Catching Up with Terri Lyde, Atlanta ICO Chairperson

Georgia Sierran caught up with Terri for a phone interview before she left town to lead a group of bicycle riders through Death Valley. A software engineer by profession, Terri became the Chairperson of Atlanta Inspiring Connections Outdoors in 2014.

How did you become involved with ICO?

Well, I first became an outings volunteer, and then about a year ago, I took the job of Chair because I enjoy helping kids learn about the outdoors and I wanted to become more involved in outdoor education leadership.

Did you grow up camping and enjoying the natural world?

No, I grew up in Atlanta and my family never went camping when I was a kid. I discovered camping as an adult. My first camping experience came about because I was playing on a softball team and was invited to go camping with teammates in north Georgia. I really loved the

experience, so I went out and bought myself a cheap tent and started venturing out more, taking my brother with me. Then the outdoors became a passion.



What are your 2015 goals for ICO?

To get more volunteers to help with outings. Since I've been involved with ICO over the past four or five years, we have averaged about 10 volunteers to help with outings. Over time, people's lives change and they naturally become involved with other things. Right now ICO is hurting for volunteers. More volunteers mean more outings.

We also need to do more fundraising, which naturally has to be part of our work. Generally, we take 12-15 kids on an outing and have two or more adult guides. ICO provides food, park fees and other miscellaneous expenses. Our big fundraising activity is holiday gift wrapping at REI, but we need to develop another fundraiser.

How do you find the kids to involve in outings?

Generally, we partner with the Boys & Girls Clubs, and the Club often provides a bus or van and the kids. We are also starting a relationship with the International Rescue Committee.

What are some recent outings?

A group went to the Ocmulgee Indian Mounds in Macon in January, and another group went hiking at Arabia Mountain. In April a group is going to DeSoto Falls in north Georgia.

Are there any special qualifications needed to become an adult volunteer?

No special skills are needed. You just need to enjoy helping kids learn about the outdoors and be available on an occasional Saturday.

get involved

To find out more about ICO Atlanta, to sign up to volunteer or to donate, see the website (<http://www.sierraclub.org/georgia/atlanta-ico>) or email Atlantaico@gmail.com.

Inspired by the Outdoors



On a chilly March Friday, The Sierran met the three Jefferson siblings at the Warren Boys & Girls Club. Amber (14) and her twin brothers Nicholas and Nathan (13) were excellent ambassadors for the Inspiring Connections Outdoors program.


Words tumbled forth amid smiles and laughter as they described some of their adventures over the past two years of involvement with ICO. Although they weren't always sure of the names of the sites and hikes, they were sure they had fun on every one of them. For kids, components of outings such as food, games, kite flying and being accompanied by good leaders seem just as important as the destination.

Recent ICO outings have included the Ocmulgee Indian Mounds and Arabia Mountain (with a tour of the AWARE Wildlife Center). Nathan said that on trips they have also learned about different insects, plants and rocks, and even got to see what sort of critters live in a creek when they attended a Sierra Club Metro Atlanta Chapter stream-monitoring Saturday.

So far the Jefferson kids have only had one overnight camping trip: Providence Canyon. They had no idea that Georgia

had such a place as this "little Grand Canyon." Amber was quick to say that learning about new places is the best reason to go on an ICO trip. She said other kids should try it because "There are other mountains in Georgia besides Stone Mountain. Besides it's fun, and you get a good experience."

All three are enthusiastic about going on more outings. Nicholas stated it simply: "I would cancel other things to go on an outing." 🌲



**SIERRA CLUB
OUTINGS**

Outings Leader Training (OLT101)

The Sierra Club has been offering outings for over 100 years, furthering the Sierra Club's conservation goals across the country & around the world with the help of volunteer leaders like YOU!

You can begin your Sierra Club leadership development with Outings Leader Training – Basic (OLT 101) offered by the Georgia Sierra Club.

When: Saturday, May 16, 2015
Time: 10 am – 1pm (3 hours)
Where: 743 E. College Ave Decatur, GA 30030
For More Information:
Email: Georgia.Chapter@sierraclub.org
or call (404) 607-1262 ext. 221



Outings Leader Profiles: Ted and Lissa Jackson



Ted and Lissa Jackson have been active Sierra Club members for 25 years. They enjoy hiking and taking time to observe the variations that nature presents in our national parks and forests. As a member of several conservation organizations, Ted is knowledgeable about the ecological concerns of the Southeast.

What is your most memorable experience in nature?

Ted Jackson: My wife and I went on our first Sierra Club National Outing almost 30 years ago. We joined a base camp trip at the bottom of the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco. We were the last participants to show up to set up our tent and had to make do pitching our tent next to the commissary tent with foodstuffs and cooking gear. In the wee hours of the morning, we heard the ripping of a canvas tent next door. My wife told me since I was the one with the flashlight that I had to go out to investigate. As I unzipped the tent, a raccoon about twice the size of a house cat scampered by to his next door feast. I growled at it to scare it off – and the raccoon hissed right back.

Lissa Jackson: My first memorable experience was kayaking along a small river, the Toe River, in western North Carolina. The weather was beautiful and the participants were fun and supportive. As we paddled along the river, we noticed a pair of white swans and our group of paddlers had disturbed their normal behavior pattern. One of the birds was injured, one wing being out of place. We gave them more space and observed them as they floated down the river. The male (we assumed) adopted a protective attitude and stayed with his mate. As there were a few ripples and small drops along the way, he would stay on the injured side of his mate, ensuring she was safe. This experience showed me the compassion in nature; everything has a place and relationship to one another. Despite all the hype about the danger of wilderness, you only have to watch and learn about the beauty of this world.

Upcoming Georgia Outings

Sierra Club Outings provide a variety of opportunities for people to enjoy the beautiful outdoors. To find out more about what outings are being offered, please visit our website at:
<http://georgia.sierraclub.org/outings>

Saturday, April 18, 2015

2015 John Muir Outing: Explore Cooper's Creek

Time: 9:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Leaders: Angelica Netterville - 770-552-7262, ecoangie@yahoo.com and Loretta English - 678-467-2340, loretta_hikes@comcast.net

Presented by: Georgia Chapter

Rated: Strenuous

Location: Ocmulgee Landing, Highway 83

Description: We will see several stands that are part of the Forest Service's Cooper Creek Watershed Project at a leisurely pace, taking time to examine the stands and talk about the proposed treatment (cutting) of them. Join us for one of two hikes: David Govus will lead a leisurely hike along an old logging road, stopping for lunch on the trail. A more strenuous hike will also be available that offers both trail and road walking, as well as cross-country trekking over steep terrain and dense forest. Note, this hike is approximately 5 miles. For more details and to register, visit <http://www.sierraclub.org/georgia/get-outdoors>.

Friday, April 17 to Saturday, April 19, 2015

Car Camping and Kayaking at Skidaway Island State Park

Time: 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. (tentative)

Leader: Terri Lyde - 678-770-9664, lydeterri@bellsouth.net

Presented by: Georgia Chapter

Rated: Easy

Location: Skidaway Island State Park, 52 Diamond Causeway, Skidaway Island Park Road, Savannah, GA 31411

Description: Join us for a multi-sport getaway to Skidaway Island State Park. Located near historic Savannah, this park borders Skidaway narrows, a part of Georgia's intracoastal waterway. Trails wind through maritime forest and past salt marsh, leading to a boardwalk and observation tower. Visitors can watch for deer, fiddler crabs, raccoon, egrets and other wildlife. Inside the park's interpretive center, birders will find binoculars, reference books and a window where they can look for migrating species such as painted buntings. Children will especially enjoy seeing the towering, 20-foot giant ground sloth replica and reptile room. Car camp in a tent, bring your RV or rent a cabin (there are only three cabins available for rent). A scenic campground is nestled under live

oaks and Spanish moss, and some RV sites have sewer hookups. Leashed pets are allowed. If it happens to be warm enough, Tybee Island's beaches are 25 miles away.

Kayak – Kayak Skidaway Narrows. On Sunday morning from 9 - noon, the park will celebrate Earth Day by hosting Skidaway Narrows Cleanup. You can bring your own boat or use one of the park's (limited number). Call the park at 912-598-2300 if you plan to use one of theirs.

Bike Ride – Bring your bike and bike the off-road trails around the park and/or the roads through the neighborhoods around the park.

Hike – There are 6 miles of trail at the state park for hiking.

Frolic in the Surf – If it happens to be warm enough, Tybee Island's beaches are 25 miles away.

Accommodations – There are 87 tent, trailer, and RV campsites. You reserve online but choose your spot at arrival time. The information and pricing can be found online: <http://www.gastateparks.org/SkidawayIsland>.

Saturday, April 18, 2015

Arkaquah Trail: Track Rock Gap to Brasstown Bald

Time: 9 a.m. (tentative)

Leader: Lee Graham - 404-202-9065, leegrah3@gmail.com

Presented by: Centennial Group

Rated: Strenuous

Registration: Required before April 16, 2015 9 p.m.

Location: Track Rock Gap Petroglyph Site, Chattahoochee National Forest, Trackrock Gap Road, Blairsville, GA 30512

Description: We start at Track Rock Gap, with a long climb up to a high ridge, then follow one of the highest ridges in Georgia, with views in both directions, to the top of Brasstown Bald, the highest point in Georgia. We'll eat lunch with 360 degree views at the top of Brasstown Bald then hike back down to Track Rock Gap. Strenuous. 6.5 hours hiking, .5 hour lunch. 11.6 miles round-trip. Elevation gain: 3252. Limit: 8.

Wednesday, April 22 & 29, 2015

Wednesday Walk in the Park

Time: 9:30 a.m.

Leader: Linda Sealey - 770-229-9847, linda.sealey@armhc.org

Presented by: Georgia Chapter

Rated: Moderate

Description: Wednesday Walk in the Park is back for April. Every Wednesday in April (weather permitting) we will hike the Cherokee Trail around Stone Mountain. Meet in the playground parking lot located near the lake on Robert E. Lee Boulevard. Five-mile moderate (mostly easy) hike. Bring water and lunch. Linda Sealey, 404-731-2140 (text/call) or email bimmy@bellsouth.net.

Outings Listing Continues on Next Page

Outings Leader Profiles: Lee Graham



What is your most memorable experience in nature?

In October of 2000, I was out West and about four hours away from the Grand Canyon. I had never been there, so I decided I should see it in person. I left the lodge at 5:30 a.m. and walked into the cold morning air. With the sound of deer hooves around me on the sidewalk in the dark, I walked to the ledge, sat down and gazed at the twinkling stars.

A slow sunrise quietly unveiled the vast panorama of the canyon before me. As a longtime runner, I thought I'm in shape, and started down for a short four-hour venture, followed by daylong leg pains. Afterwards I realized I wanted to return there with strong hiking legs so I could explore this amazing natural beauty.

I moved to Cobb County in 2004 and started training at Kennesaw Mountain followed by hiking the Mist Trail in Yosemite; the Teton Crest Trail in Grand Teton National Park, Wyoming; and Longs Peak in Colorado. Finally, in 2009, I backpacked alone for three days in the Grand Canyon. All these were amazing to see, and I would recommend others hike these places. Being there provides sensations far beyond what you can perceive through TV and film.

Has there ever been a time when you were inspired to protect a place after you visited?

As a Sierra Club member, I did some Club hikes and met like-minded people. I took Outings Leader Training in 2010 so I could share some beautiful natural places, and so my fellow hikers and I could prepare our legs to go farther. I also love the sweet air, clear water, grand forests, mountains, plants and animals. These places need to be experienced by people and then people will understand why they need to be protected. This is why we need the Sierra Club.

Saturday, April 25, 2015

2015 John Muir Outing: Love the Coosa Paddle

Time: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Leader: Brionte McCorkle - 478-919-5326, brionte.mccorkle@sierraclub.org

Presented by: Georgia Chapter

Rated: Easy

Location: Lock and Dam Park, 181 Lock and Dam Road SW, Rome, GA 30161

Description: Join us for a 10-mile float on the Coosa River as it winds through western Floyd County on its way to Weiss Lake in Alabama. The trip begins at Lock and Dam Park, a historic site where steamboats laden with cotton once stopped. The journey will also take in two significant industrial sites: International Paper's pulp mill and Georgia Power's Plant Hammond, a coal-fired power plant. An estimated 30,000-60,000 fish each year may perish at this power plant's water intake and the warm-water discharge from the plant further disrupts fish habitat downstream. Representatives from the Sierra Club and Upper Coosa Riverkeeper will help participants understand how these problems can be corrected and how individual citizens can take action to protect the Coosa. For more details and to register, visit <http://www.sierraclub.org/georgia/get-outdoors>.

Sunday, April 26, 2015

2015 John Muir Outing: Bonaventure Excursion

Time: 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Leader: Karen Grainey, 912-961-6190, karengrainey@bellsouth.net

Presented by: Georgia Chapter

Rated: Easy

Location: 330 Bonaventure Road, Thunderbolt, GA 31404

Description: Savannah figures prominently in the life of the great naturalist John Muir, who started out life as a mechanical genius with a successful career in manufacturing; until at age 28, he embarked on a life-changing 1,000-mile walk from Indiana to the Gulf of Mexico. His money ran out when he reached Savannah, so he camped out for five nights under the famously beautiful tillandsia-draped oaks of Bonaventure Cemetery awaiting the money he needed to resume his journey. What better way to celebrate John Muir's legacy than to explore with a naturalist's eye the place where he "camped among the tombs." For more details and to register, visit <http://www.sierraclub.org/georgia/get-outdoors>.

Sunday, April 26th, 2015

Ride the Silver Comet!

Time: 9:45 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Leader: Anderson Mycroft, 678-933-2025, awmycroft@yahoo.com

Presented by: Georgia Chapter

Rated: Easy

Registration: Required before midnight April 25, 2015

Location: 4342 Floyd Road SW, Mableton, GA 30126

Description: Join us for a leisurely ride east from the Silver Comet Depot past Mile Marker 0 to the Silver Comet Extension and on to South City Kitchen restaurant in Smyrna. We'll arrive at the South City Kitchen in time for brunch after which we'll return to the depot. The Silver Comet is a multi-use trail constructed on an old rail bed and is mostly flat. Our riding speed will be in the 8 to 10 mph range (easy). We'll meet at the Silver Comet Depot (4342 Floyd Road SW, Mableton, GA 30126) at 9:45 a.m. and leave promptly at 10:00 a.m. As part of the ride Roberta Cook, founder and coordinator of the River Line Historic Area, or Wendell Burks of Connect the Comet will give a brief talk about the effort to connect the Comet to the Atlanta Beltline, and show us where the connection will be made to the existing trail. This connection will make it possible to take the Freedom Parkway Trail from Stone Mountain to the Beltline over to the Silver Comet to the Alabama state line, then continue on the Chief Ladiga Trail to Anniston, Alabama, among other options. In a larger sense this connection will transform the Silver Comet from a recreational trail to a fully functional transportation asset, a truly exciting possibility for many cyclists. It's a chance to enjoy some fresh air, excellent food and to connect with people doing their part to make Atlanta a cycling friendly city! To learn more, and to sign the petition to build the connection, go to <http://connectthecomet.org>.

Saturday, May 2 to Sunday, May 3, 2015

Pine Mountain Trail Backpack, F.D.R. State Park

Leaders: Jake Hardison, Jr. - 770-904-4893, jake.hardison@ssa.gov & Mirza Balic - 770-982-0111, mirza.balic@georgia.sierraclub.org

Presented by: Georgia Chapter

Rated: Moderate

Registration: Required before April 27, 2015 8 p.m.

Description: Come join me on this provisional hike, co-led by Mirza Balic and me, which will allow me to complete my Sierra Club Leadership Training 201 (Overnight) certification requirement. This hike is open to those who have had some previous backpacking experience, and have all of the necessary backpacking gear and proper hiking boots. The Pine Mountain Trail (PMT) is the longest single trail in Middle Georgia, and is located within FDR State Park near Pine Mountain, GA. We will do a 10-mile loop hike on this trail beginning at the eastern terminus trailhead parking lot just off Highway A-27 at the WJSP-TV tower. In late April to early May, azaleas and rhododendron bloom along this trail, and this section of the PMT will take us past ancient trees and five cascading waterfalls. We will hike 6 miles on Saturday, and camp at the Big Oak Springs Campsite. On Sunday, we will follow the Beaver Pond and White Candle Trails to Odie Overlook (3 miles from the campsite), a west-facing rock promontory with sweeping views to Dowdell's Knob. From Odie Overlook it is .6 mile back to our cars at the eastern terminus trailhead. Participant Questionnaire required; see <http://www.sierraclub.org/georgia/get-outdoors>.



KEYNOTE SPEAKER - JANISE RAY

Janise Ray, environmental activist and poet, is the award-winning author of *Ecology of a Cracker Childhood*, a highly praised book that combines elements of ecology and autobiography into a fascinating portrait of Georgia. Janise will speak Saturday evening Oct. 24th.

GEORGIA SIERRA CLUB RETREAT OCT. 23-25, 2015 CROOKED RIVER STATE PARK

GEORGIA RETREAT

Experience a weekend of fun, adventure, and learning with your fellow Sierra Club volunteers and leaders from all over Georgia. Save the date now, reservations open online in May.

This event is sure to fill up so don't miss out on a chance to meet new friends and learn more about the challenges and rewards of working to preserve Georgia's wonderful environment.

- Kayaking
- Canoeing
- Bird Watching
- Biking Awards Banquet
- Hiking
- Yoga
- Workshops
- Cumberland Island Day Trip

For more info and to register: georgia.sierraclub.org/retreat



SIERRA CLUB
FOUNDED 1892

Membership

Take Your Involvement to the Next Level at Sierra Club 101



Attendees at the January Sierra Club 101 created "photo postcards" to Georgia Power urging improved conditions at its Hammond coal plant.

The Georgia Chapter's members and supporters are more than 45,000 of your friends and neighbors. Inspired by nature, we work together to protect our communities and the planet. We're America's oldest, largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization.

You'll find us where Georgians are fighting for clean air, clean water, and protecting special places. Over the years, we've protected Cumberland Island as Wilderness, established the Chattahoochee National Recreation Area, elected Congressman John Lewis, stopped mining in the Okefenokee Swamp, prevented three new coal-fired power plants from being built, and brought MARTA to Clayton County.

We lead fun outings such as hikes, paddles, bike trips and more. Join in and

help us protect our Georgia from the foothills of the Appalachians all the way to the coast. You can learn more about the Sierra Club and how to get involved in our wide variety of programs at **Sierra Club 101**.

This event is open to members and non-members alike – bring a friend! Please register here so we can bring enough refreshments for everyone! 🌲

get involved

Join us at the next Sierra Club 101!

When: Thursday, May 14, 2015
from 6:30 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Where: Sierra Club Office (743-C E. College Avenue, Decatur, GA 30030)

For More Information: email
Georgia.Chapter@sierraclub.org



photo by Marco Scurati

GOING, GOING... GONE?

Sea turtles date back nearly 90 million years and are among the Earth's oldest surviving species. All 6 species of sea turtles are protected under the Endangered Species Act. Sierra Club has mounted a major effort to defend and preserve threatened habitats before their inhabitants are gone forever.

Help protect our animal friends; because once they're gone, they're gone. Join Sierra Club now.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (____) _____

Email _____

Check enclosed. Please make payable to Sierra Club.

Please charge my: Visa Mastercard AMEX

Cardholder Name _____

Card Number _____ Exp. Date ____/____

Signature _____

Membership Categories	Individual	Joint
Special Offer	<input type="checkbox"/> \$15	
Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> \$39	<input type="checkbox"/> \$47
Supporting	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100
Contributing	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150	<input type="checkbox"/> \$175
Life	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1250
Senior	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32
Student/Limited Income	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32

Join today and receive a **FREE Sierra Club Weekender Bag!**



Contributions, gifts and dues to Sierra Club are not tax deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to Sierra magazine and \$1 for your Chapter newsletters.



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Enclose a check and mail to Sierra Club, P.O. Box 421041, Palm Coast, FL 32142-1041 or visit our website www.sierraclub.org

Ian Karra Joins Georgia Office



Please help us welcome Ian Karra, the newest addition to the Beyond Coal Team, as Organizing Representative in the Decatur office. Ian will advance the Beyond Coal campaign to retire the remaining coal-fired power plants in the state while moving Georgia toward a real commitment to renewables and efficiency in the upcoming Georgia Power Company Integrated Resource Plan.

A native of Roswell, Ian comes to the Sierra Club staff after running a successful campaign at the University of Georgia to move the campus off coal, which secured a commitment from the administration to close the university's on-campus coal boiler. During this four-year campaign, Ian was active with the Sierra Club in Georgia as well as the Sierra Student Coalition and the Southern Energy Network. After university, Ian has worked with Southface Energy Institute in Atlanta as a Fellow in the Residential Green Building Services program. In 2013, Ian represented Georgia and the Sierra Student Coalition at the Club's national Movement Strategy Task Force's focus group to provide the Board of Directors with movement building and chapter alignment recommendations. 🌲

New Georgia Chapter Website is Live!

You may have noticed a new, cleaner look when visiting the Chapter's website. All across the nation, Sierra Club chapters and local groups have switched to the new Drupal website platform to enable leaders to maintain local websites with ease, streamline and unify the visual appearance of all Sierra Club websites, and enhance sharing of content. Now, when you visit our website, you can easily find information about the Club, our campaigns, outings, and upcoming events. Plus, you can find easy ways to connect with the work that we do by visiting our "Get Involved" tab to take action, join an issue committee, or sign up for a newsletter. Finally, you can find us on whichever social media platform you use the most! The Chapter has Meetup, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Flickr accounts. We hope that these edits are helpful to all who want to become more engaged with the Georgia Chapter!



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet



SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL SIERRA CLUB

We send out an appeal in March to each of our members, asking for contributions directly to our Chapter. These contributions really do make a difference to us, and are an important part of our Chapter's budget.

When you make a donation to the Chapter, you support the Sierra Club's work in your own backyard. You allow us to continue our work to protect wilderness and wildlife, to improve the quality of life in our cities, and to promote the enjoyment of nature.

Please be as generous as you are able - and remember, these funds directly affect your way of life in your neighborhood.

Contributions, gifts and dues to the Sierra Club are not tax-deductible.

Mail your contribution to:

Sierra Club, Georgia Chapter, 743 East College Avenue, Suite C, Decatur, GA 30030

Centennial Outings Program: Off and Running Again

We revived our Centennial Outings Committee last year and tried to recruit new leaders and increase and diversify our outings. Four recruits completed Outing Leader Training (OLT) in December; two of them just finished their provisional hikes; and two new prospects will take OLT on April 25.

New outing leader (and Group Chair) Lynn Walston comments on her Jan. 28 provisional hike: "With Lee Graham's support, I led nine intrepid souls (including a 13-year-old, a Gwinnett member and a Metro Atlanta member) to Kennesaw Mountain Battlefield Park, one of my favorite 'backyard' hiking locations. Though chilly and windy, we had a great interactive hike (with historical commentary) to the top of the mountain; excellent views of Stone Mountain, Pine Mountain, the Atlanta skyline and the Appalachian foothills; and an optional museum tour at the end. Since then, I've led another of my favorite hikes to Red Top Mountain State Park. I wasn't sure I wanted to become an outing leader or would have the time (while also serving as Group Chair), but it has worked out well and I'm enjoying it. Our trainers and mentors offer excellent support and I'm proud of our progress. Please join me on the trail and consider taking OLT yourself. It can become habit-forming and contagious!"



New OLT trainees Bettye Harris, Angie Netterville and Lynn Walston, shown with veteran outing leader Bob Springfield. Angie and Lynn have led their provisional and second hikes! (Not shown: trainee Gigi Burke.)



Recent Centennial-Led Outings

January 31 Winter Hike: Vogel State Park to Blood Mountain. Thirteen hikers enjoyed a snowy hike via the Coosa Backcountry, Duncan Ridge and Appalachian Trails. (Leader: Lee Graham)

March 15 Bike Ride: Silver Comet Trail to Smyrna Area (12 miles). A leisurely ride from Silver Comet Depot to Silver Comet Extension and to South City Kitchen restaurant in Smyrna for brunch. (Leaders: Andy Mycroft with Roberta Cook)

March 21 Hike: Homestead Trail at Red Top Mountain State Park, Cartersville Area (3.7 miles). An easy-to-moderate hike with a wide, shaded trail, mostly along the lake. (Leader: Lynn Walston)

March 28 Hike: Sweetwater Creek State Park, Lithia Springs (3 miles). Easy trail that passed along the creek and through beautiful hardwood forests in the park. (Angie Netterville)

March 28 Hike: Lake Winfield Scott to Blood Mountain (Appalachian Trail Intro, 8 miles). Hiked to Jarrard Gap, then to historic Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) shelter for lunch. Great views in several directions; returned via Slaughter Creek Trail. This moderate hike included a steep 0.7-mile climb. (Lee Graham)

April 2: "Stump the Chumps." Panel of gardening/tree/native plant enthusiasts and Q&A, plus native plants for sale from Roger Buerki's backyard.

Upcoming Outings

April 25 - Sierra Club Outings Leader Training (OLT), 10 a.m.-1 p.m. - REI Kennesaw (Town Center Mall area). Hosted by the Centennial Group. If there is enough interest, Basic First Aid will be offered immediately following OLT (for a nominal fee). Contact Lee Graham, leegrah3@gmail.com or 404-202-9065.

Centennial Group

Celebration at the Park Honors Centennial Leaders



We honored two Centennial leaders, Rush Netterville and Roberto Moraes, who passed away in 2014 with a party at East Cobb Park on Feb. 8. More than 50 members, friends and relatives were there as we dedicated a tree, a bench and engraved cobblestones; enjoyed a jazz band; served refreshments; and had a short program of speakers and a ribbon-cutting. On Feb. 28, we also honored Rush Netterville by dedicating the special 2.5-mile segment of Lower Roswell (“The Rushway”) that Centennial adopted under the Adopt-A-Mile program.



Centennial Group Meetings

Usually held the first Thursday of each month. Social time begins at 7 p.m.; programs are from 7:30-9 p.m. Life University Gymnasium, Room 311, 1269 Barclay Circle, Marietta

Our **March 4th** meeting featured an evening with Susan Castor, who recounted her 2014 thru-hike adventure along the Pacific Crest Trail to a packed house.

Upcoming Meetings

May 7th - Bill Witherspoon, Geologist with Fernbank Science Center: “Geological and Natural Communities in North Georgia.” Preceded by optional on-site tour of Rottenwood Creek geology at 6 p.m. Meet Bill at 6 p.m. at the historic cabin at the entrance to Life University; social and meeting follow at 7 and 7:30 p.m., respectively. Room 311.

June 4th - Jim Bearden of the Green Meadows Preserve Bluebird Trail shares his fascinating tours in “Where Birds Come to Life!”

Can You Help?

The Centennial Group is in need of a **Website Wizard & Assistant** and a **Newsletter Editor & Assistant**. Contact Lynn Walston, lynnwalston22@yahoo.com, or Todd Daniel, gooseboy1@gmail.com, for details.

Greater Gwinnett Group

Spring! While Georgia escaped the worst of the cold and snow (think Boston!), we did have a longer period of cold than we normally have. This last week saw trees blooming and soon my car will turn that yellow-green that signals that spring has actually arrived. So, what does spring and warmer weather have to do with the Sierra Club in Gwinnett? Why, everything, of course!

Our March meeting featured gardening. Our featured speaker was the Gwinnett County Extension Agent, Tim Daly. Tim gave a great presentation on how to set up and maintain a garden for growing organic fruits and vegetables.

March began the collaboration between the Gwinnett Chapter of the Sierra Club and the Unitarian Universalist Congregation. We will present an ongoing environmental film

series to highlight, educate and introduce issues that are important to Gwinnett and our nation. Our first film was entitled “COWSPIRACY: The Sustainability Secret.”

For those wanting to get outside, we will have our stream monitoring program. We have been monitoring the chemical, bacterial and stream life for several years and these monitorings are an important element in keeping our streams and rivers clean. Come and join us at Suwanee Creek Park the Saturday after the third Thursday of each month at 11 a.m.

Our April program will bring back one of our most popular speakers, Jerry Hightower, who always has an amazing presentation on the Chattahoochee National Recreation Area.

- Dan Friedman

LaGrange Group

Outings: The Backbone of LaGrange Group



Any of you Sierrans who know much about our founder John Muir will know that spending time outside in the wilderness is what inspired him to protect Yosemite Valley and start the Sierra Club. Protecting our water, air, wildlife and land is best inspired through our getting out and immersing ourselves in the great outdoors! Activism has its roots in appreciation for our planet and her gifts of beauty and bounty.

The LaGrange group strives to offer at least 12 outings per year. We plan diverse experiences for a diverse group: from biking to hiking to kayaking/canoeing. In addition, we like to offer less rigorous field trips such as our annual organic farm tour and shoal lily viewing on Flat Shoals Creek. Most outings are on public land, yet a few are on private land. All outings are organized with the goal of bringing folks together to appreciate each other's company while enjoying an outdoor experience.

Joanna Baxter and I are our group's trained outings leaders. We both enjoy planning and leading outings yet do not hesitate to "piggyback" on other groups' outings, such as F.D. Roosevelt State Park, Chattahoochee Riverkeeper and Georgia Botanical Society, to maximize opportunities for our members. Join us!

Upcoming Outings

April 18, 10 a.m. - noon: Tree ID Hike on West Point River Trails. Join forester Sam Breyfogle to walk along the Chattahoochee River to learn about trees and plants in our Chattahoochee Valley. Contact Joanna Baxter to register: joannabbaxter@yahoo.com.

To learn about future Sierra Club outings offered throughout the state, register for Georgia Sierra Club Meetup online.

- Laura Breyfogle, Chair

Savannah River Group

Outings – Over the past few years our Outings Chair, Cathy Black, and her assistants have organized many popular outings - some so popular we have been repeating them for those who couldn't go the first time around. These include visiting the Congaree National Park, bicycling local trails and camping in areas around Augusta.

Fundraising – On April 1, we held our Annual Rummage Sale, proceeds from which help pay for our newsletter, room rent, etc.

Palmetto Pipeline Update – The really big project for our group is our ongoing efforts to prevent the proposed Palmetto Pipeline, whose construction would run along the Savannah River and its tributaries from Belton, South Carolina to Jack-

sonville, Florida. This line would carry petroleum products, mostly for export. Parent company Kinder Morgan is conducting so-called public hearings on the proposed line. The potential for contamination of the Savannah River is enormous. All relevant Riverkeepers are opposed, and we are working together to see what legal options we may have. The Sierra Club Coastal Group is also fighting this ill-conceived project. Kinder Morgan has a documented history of pipeline accidents. Also consider that the Savannah River is already the third most polluted river in the U.S.! In addition, the river is home to many federal- and state-protected species such as the Shoals Spider-Lily, which William Bartram first discovered in 1791.

By the time you read this, we may be shedding tears or in a legal battle.

- Judy Gordon, Co-Chair

Metro Atlanta Group

Meetings & Programs

Adopt-A-Stream Program Events

We meet on the South Fork of Peachtree Creek in Medlock Park north of Decatur. We meet from 10-11 a.m. for chemical monitoring. Biological monitoring is 10 a.m.-noon, and we need many eyes to find the critters of the creek. From Clairmont Road (between N. Decatur and N. Druid Hill roads), take Desmond Drive (third street north of N. Decatur Road) until it intersects with Willivee Drive. Turn left and follow Willivee around to Scott Circle where you turn right. Parking is on your left when you reach the park. Park in the middle, and walk the dirt road with the two-story building on your left and ball fields on either side. Go into the woods behind ball field #5. Bear left and you will see us at a picnic table by the creek.

April and May: Chemical monitoring. For information and dates, call Larry Kloet at 404-636-7226.

Saturday, June 20: Biological and chemical monitoring. For more details, call Nancy Wylie at 404-256-1172.

For more information, updates and new events please see: <http://georgia.sierraclub.org/atlanta/>



Join us for:
Clarkston Energy Efficiency
Forum

When: Sunday, April 19, 2015, 2-4PM

Where: Clarkston Community Center,
3701 College Avenue,
Clarkston, GA 30021



Save energy and reduce your monthly energy bills \$\$!

Learn how to conserve energy & water in your home, take advantage of energy rebates, use energy efficient light bulbs, interpret your utility bills, and make your home energy efficient and warmer in winter and cooler in summer.

Enjoy free refreshments, movies, energy-saving information packets, and goody bags.

Participate in fun, interactive energy-efficiency activities. Activities for children!

Clarkston Energy-Efficiency Town Hall Meeting, sponsored by Sierra Club and Greenlaw in partnership with Atlanta Light Bulbs, Resources for Residents and Communities, HTS Enterprise & Super Green Solutions.



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

Create an Environmental Legacy.



Bequests have played a key role in Sierra Club's environmental successes over the years.

Planning now may make your gift more meaningful and reduce taxes on your estate. We have many gift options available. We can even help you plan a gift for your local Chapter.

For more info and confidential assistance, contact:

Sierra Club

Gift Planning Program

85 Second Street, Second Floor

San Francisco, CA 94105

gift.planning@sierraclub.org • (800) 932-4270

Chapter Contacts

Executive Committee

Chair: David Emory, 404-433-4914,
david.emory@gmail.com
At-Large Elected Member

Vice Chair - Administration: Norman Slawsky,
404-664-6259, nslawsky@gmail.com
At-Large Elected Member

Vice Chair - Conservation: Mark Woodall,
706-674-2242, woodallmark8@gmail.com
At-Large Elected Member

Sam Booher, 706-863-2324,
sbooher@aol.com
Savannah River Group Delegate

Laura Breyfogle, 706-845-7235,
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LaGrange Group Delegate

Jackie Echols, 678-974-7927,
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At-Large Elected Member

Eddie Ehlert, 770-402-0087,
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Metro Atlanta Group Delegate

Dan Friedman, 404-610-5770,
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Greater Gwinnett Group Delegate

Bettye Harris, 678-463-7827,
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Centennial Group Delegate

Jennifer Kaduck, 770-925-2575,
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Tom Neff, 770-565-3869,
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At-Large Elected Member

Diane Shearer, 770-934-7062,
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At-Large Elected Member

Steve Willis, 912-341-0718,
snwillis@yahoo.com
Coastal Group Delegate

Chapter ExCom Meeting

The next Chapter Executive Committee meeting will be Saturday, May 16 in Tybee Island. Meetings are open to the membership. For more information, call the Chapter office at 404-607-1262 x221.

Officers & Chairs

Conservation Chair: Alan Toney,
mudflat@comcast.net

Secretary: Todd Daniel, todddan@mac.com

Treasurer: Tom Neff, tsneff2003@yahoo.com

Finance Chair: Sam Booher, sbooher@aol.com

Fundraising Chair: *vacant*
Meeting: 4th Tuesday of the month, 6 p.m., Chapter Office. Contact the Chapter office at 404-607-1262 x221 for more information.

Human Resources Chair: Norman Slawsky,
nslawsky@gmail.com

Legislative Chair: Mark Woodall,
woodallmark8@gmail.com

Litigation Chair: Norman Slawsky,
nslawsky@gmail.com

Membership Chair: Ross Cheairs,
cheairsjr@aol.com

Newsletter Editors: Diane Shearer and Tanya Frazee,
gasierran@gmail.com

Outings Chair: Sammy Padgett,
sammypadgett@comcast.net

Political Chair: Eddie Ehlert,
edehlert@bellsouth.net

Webmaster: Charlotte Gardner,
ga_sierra_webmaster@yahoo.com

Issue Campaigns and Contacts

Clean Air: Dale Kemmerick,
dalekemm@comcast.net

Coastal Issues: Steve Willis,
snwillis@yahoo.com

• **Coastal Marsh:** Karen Graineey,
karengraineey@bellsouth.net

• **Marine Species/Habitat:** Karen Graineey,
karengraineey@bellsouth.net

• **Okefenokee Swamp:** Sam Collier,
scollier@mindspring.com

• **Savannah Port:** Steve Willis,
snwillis@yahoo.com

Factory Farms: Leah Garces,
leah.garces@ciwf.org

Organic and Locally Grown Foods: Bryan Hager,
bhager@mindspring.com

Population: Todd Daniel,
toddan@mac.com

Recycling: Lori Blank, lblank@hotmail.com

Regional Action to Improve Livability (RAIL): Marcus Sharpe, marcusseattle@live.com
Meeting: 4th Monday, 7 p.m., Chapter office. Committee sometimes skips months. Email first.

Smart Energy Solutions:

Eleanor Hand, eghand@bellsouth.net and
Cecilia Harris, ceciliaharris@gmail.com
Meeting: 1st Monday, 7 p.m., Chapter office

• **Beyond Coal:** Ian Karra,
ian.karra@sierraclub.org

• **Natural Gas:** *vacant*

• **Nuclear:** Glenn Carroll,
atom.girl@nonukesyall.org

• **Solar:** Thomas Jackson, tj31975@gmail.com

• **Wind:** Eleanor Hand, eghand@bellsouth.net

Water Sentinels/Adopt-a-Stream:

Sam Booher, sbooher@aol.com

Wildlands and Wildlife:

William Tomlin, wmltom@gmail.com

Meeting: 3rd Monday, 7 p.m., Chapter office. Committee sometimes skips months. Email first.

• **Chattahoochee National Recreation Area:** Alan Toney, mudflat@comcast.com

• **Federal Endangered Species:** Larry Winslett,
winfog@windstream.net

• **Rivers and Wetlands:** Keith Parsons,
kparsons@mindspring.com

• **State Lands/Georgia DNR:** Phil Zinsmeister,
pzinsmeister@oglethorpe.edu

Georgia Chapter Staff

Chapter Director:

Colleen Kiernan, 404-607-1262 x224,
colleen.kiernan@sierraclub.org

Chapter Conservation Coordinator:

Bronté McCorkle, 404-607-1262 x232,
bronte.mccorkle@sierraclub.org

Chapter Volunteer Coordinator:

Maria Adams, 404-607-1262 x221,
maria.adams@sierraclub.org

National Staff

Beyond Coal Organizing Representative:

Ian Karra, 404-607-1262 x.233
ian.karra@sierraclub.org

Sierra Club National Programs

Inspiring Connections Outdoors

Contact Terri Lyde (lydeterri@bellsouth.net) for more information.

Sierra Student Coalition

Contact Tyler Faby (tfaby@uga.com) for more information.

Local Group Directory

A great way to get involved in your Chapter is by joining and participating in a local group. Some groups take certain months off, so it's a good idea to email first. Each group has a website. For maps and additional information on each group, visit the website: <http://www.sierraclub.org/georgia/get-involved>.

Centennial Group

Serving Cobb, Cherokee & North Fulton

Chair/Meetings Contact: Lynn Walston, lynnwalston22@yahoo.com

Outings Chair: Lee Graham, leegrah3@gmail.com, 404-202-9065

Meetings: 1st Thursday, welcome/refreshments 7 p.m., program 7:30 p.m.; Life College, 1269 Barclay Cir. SE, Marietta. For directions contact Lynn Walston, lynnwalston22@yahoo.com.

Coastal Group

Serving Savannah & surrounding counties

Chair: Karen Grainey, karengrainey@bellsouth.net

Outings Chair: Steve Wagner, sjwgnr@hotmail.com

Meetings: 3rd Thursday, 7 p.m., First Presbyterian Church, 520 E. Washington Ave., Savannah.

Greater Gwinnett Group

Serving Gwinnett County

Chair: Dan Friedman, dan3688@aol.com

Conservation Chair: Art Sheldon, asheldon.cp81@gtalumni.org

Outings Chair: Jake Hardison, jake.hardison@ssa.gov

Meetings: 3rd Thursday, 7 p.m., Berkmar High School, 405 Pleasant Hill Rd., Lilburn 30047.

LaGrange Group

Serving the LaGrange area

Chair: Laura Breyfogle, breyfogle@charter.net

Conservation Chair: Sim Blich, simblich@charter.net

Outings Chair: Joanna Baxter, joannabbaxter@yahoo.com

Meetings: 3rd Tuesdays; 6:30 p.m. welcome and refreshments, 7 p.m. program; St. Mark's Episcopal Church Parish Hall, 207 N. Greenwood St., LaGrange (no meetings June-August).

Metro Atlanta Group

Serving Atlanta, Dekalb & South Fulton

Co-Chair: Jeff Bragg, braggson@springmail.com

Co-Chair: Konrad Hayashi, rainingatl@gmail.com

Outings Chair: Martin McConaughy, mcmarty@bellsouth.net

Meetings: 2nd Tuesdays, 7:30 p.m., Episcopal Church of the Epiphany, 2089 Ponce de Leon Ave. (between Atlanta and Decatur).

Savannah River Group

Serving Augusta & surrounding areas

Co-Chair: Judy Gordon, Ph.D., gordonjudy@att.net

Co-Chair: Sam Booher, sbooher@aol.com

Conservation Chair: Frank Carl, frankcarl@knology.net

Outings Chair: Cathy Black, sonnyandcathyblack@gmail.com

Meetings: 3rd Tuesday, 6:30 p.m., Unitarian Church on Walton Way, Augusta.

Regional Contacts

LeConte Group/Athens & North-east Georgia

Terry Jones, wolpers4@aol.com

Forsyth County

Jim Callison, callisonjim@bellsouth.net

Macon

Fletcher Winston, winston_f@mercer.edu

North Georgia

Larry Winslett, winfog@windstream.net

Valdosta

Brian Day, bjday@valdosta.edu

Georgia Chapter Office

743 East College Avenue, Suite C
Decatur, Georgia 30030
404-607-1262 - FAX: 404-876-5260
georgia.chapter@sierraclub.org
<http://georgia.sierraclub.org>

Directions to take MARTA to the Sierra Club

office: Our office is an easy 3-4 minute walk from the MARTA Avondale station (E7). We encourage you to take MARTA when possible. Exit the MARTA station towards the SOUTH PARKING LOT, located on the East College Ave. side. Once outside, proceed to the right towards Sams St. Cross over Sams St. and the office is the building located right behind the convenience store. The office is the second door from Sams St. — Suite C.

Stay Informed!

SIERRA CLUB WEB SITES

GA Chapter Web Site:
<http://georgia.sierraclub.org/>
GA Chapter Outings:
<http://georgia.sierraclub.org/outings/>
GA Chapter Email Lists Site:
<http://georgia.sierraclub.org/lists/>

EMAIL LISTS

Subscribe to a Georgia Chapter email list. Just send an email to:

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Your message should read:
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LIST NAMES:

GA-OUTINGS (chapter outings list)
GA-NEWSLETTER-ANNOUNCE (online newsletter updates)
GA-RAIL-NEWS (RAIL/Transit Advocacy Committee)

Subscribe to the Smart Energy Solutions listserv at:
gasmartenergycommittee@googlegroups.com

Subscribe to Georgia Chapter Online E-Newsletter at:
http://action.sierraclub.org/CHP_GA_Signup

Visit the Georgia Chapter web page and click on "Local Groups" for info on local groups' email lists.

Looking for a group near your home?

The Georgia Chapter website (<http://georgia.sierraclub.org/>) contains a map showing the locations of all groups. Or, call the Chapter office at 404-607-1262.

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JOHN MUIR OUTINGS

Celebrate Earth Day – and Georgia’s spectacular beauty – all month long. Each Saturday in April, we’re hosting an outing where you can learn about our state’s threatened areas and how to protect them. To support the Georgia Chapter’s work, a donation of \$25 per person per outing is requested. What better way to honor Earth and our founder, John Muir?

Outings are underway! For more info, see
georgia.sierraclub.org/johnmuiroutings



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