



# WENOCA SIERRAN

Newsletter of the  
Western North Carolina Sierra Club

Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

AUG-OCT 2014

## Upcoming Events:

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

**Wednesday, Aug 6**  
**Simon Thompson**

*Birds Around the World*

**Wednesday, Sept 3**  
**Maggie Ullman**  
& **Eric Bradford**

*Solid Waste Reduction & Composting in Asheville*

**Wednesday, Oct 1**  
**Julie Mayfield**  
**WNC Alliance**  
&  
**Sally Morgan**  
**Clean Water for NC**  
*Protecting NC Water  
Impact of Fracking & Coal Ash*

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

All members are invited to attend.

For more information, call  
Judy Mattox at 828-683-2176  
or email [judymattox@sbcglobal.net](mailto:judymattox@sbcglobal.net).

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

## Birds Around the World with Simon Thompson - August 6



Simon Thompson

Join us on Wed., August 6 at 7 pm as we welcome ornithologist Simon Thompson for a discussion about birding adventures around the world.

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

Simon Thompson of Asheville's Wild Birds Unlimited and Venture Birding Tours has been to 6 continents in search of birds and plans

to eventually visit Antarctica to see more penguins.

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

Since moving to the US in 1989, Simon had been the ornithologist and nature director at the Foothills Equestrian Nature Center (FENCE) in Tryon for 7 years until he started Ventures. Simon lives with his partner of 15 years, Chris, in the beautiful forested hills of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

## Solid Waste Reduction & Composting in Asheville - September 3



Maggie Ullman

From the folks who brought Big Blue to your curb and recycling to downtown sidewalks, the City Sustainability Office and Greenworks will present a program about Asheville's long range waste reduction efforts with a specific focus on the role of composting.

One aspect of the composting effort is GreenWorks Lunchroom Composting Program, established in 2011 in partnership with Asheville GreenWorks and Danny's Dumpster. The program's goals are threefold: (1) To reduce the school's impact on the landfill; (2) To educate our next generation on the importance of composting and recycling; and (3) To save the school money in trash dumpster fees. The students also learn about backyard composting and how they can apply these techniques at home. This waste reduction program is currently in nine schools and growing.

Maggie Ullman serves as the Chief Sustainability Officer for the City of Asheville, North Carolina. Responsible for leadership, policy and implementa-

tion of sustainability programs, she plays a centralized management role for the City's climate mitigation and adaptation efforts. Since Ullman started the City's sustainability initiative in 2008, Asheville has reduced their carbon footprint 25% with upwards of \$5M in savings. The flagship program that contributed to these carbon reductions was one of the nation's first city wide LED streetlight upgrades.

Maggie volunteers as a board member of the North Carolina Sustainable Energy Association, a non-profit with a proven track of record of propelling clean energy in North Carolina through legislative and regulatory advancements.

Eric Bradford serves the community in the roles of Volunteer and Clean Communities Coordinator at Asheville GreenWorks. Eric is responsible for leading the GreenWorks' army of volunteers through community-based environmental enrichment projects.

As Clean Communities Coordinator, Bradford is also responsible for reducing our collective dependence on the landfill through waste reduction outreach and education. Through public recycling events, community outreach and school educational programs, Eric is able to offer an alternative to the trash can.



Eric Bradford

## Status of the Coal Ash Bill

Different versions of the coal ash bill - S 729 "Coal Ash Management Act of 2014" have passed both the House and the Senate, but Senator Apodaca (R - Buncombe, Henderson, Transylvania), who is taking the lead on the coal ash bill in the Senate, has said that the Senate will vote not to concur on the bill because changes are needed. Specifically, he noted that he would like changes to:

- 1) the variance procedure added by the House that would allow the Secretary of DENR to grant an extension to deadlines in the bill; and
- 2) the agency location and makeup of the Coal Ash Management Commission.

Procedurally, after the Senate votes to not concur - the coal ash bill will go to conference - which means that House and Senate leaders will appoint legislator conferees who will meet in private to iron out differences and come up with a final bill.

A major environmental concern remaining in regards to the

coal ash bill is the lack of clear standards to ensure that all closure methods are protective of groundwater near coal ash sites. All 33 coal ash ponds at 14 coal plants in North Carolina are leaking toxic heavy metals into the groundwater. Without clear guidelines, this bill could allow coal ash at 10 of these plant sites to stay in place, continuing to pollute our groundwater, lakes, and rivers.

Please contact your legislator asking them to add clear standards to the coal ash bill to ensure that any closure method allowed is protective of groundwater near coal ash sites.

### Please contact State Legislators:

Buncombe County: Tim.Moffitt@ncleg.net -- 919-715-3012

Nathan.Ramsey@ncleg.net -- 919-733-5746

Haywood, Madison, Yancey Counties:

Michelle.Presnell@ncleg.net -- 919-733-5732

Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Macon Counties:

Roger.West@ncleg.net -- 919-733-5859

## NC State Legislature Environmental Update

By Cassie Gavin, NC Sierra Club lobbyist

### Fracking Law

The legislature passed a fracking bill (sponsored by Senators Rucho, Newton and Brock) that lifts the moratorium on the issuance of fracking permits by allowing permits to be given out a certain number of days after the rules are effective. So fracking rules could be adopted and permits issued without another vote by the legislature. This move breaks the promise made by the 2012 legislature to review a completed oil and gas rule set before voting to lift the fracking moratorium.

This law does not address key unresolved issues having to do

with fracking such as compulsory pooling and wastewater disposal. And the bill drastically limits the ability of local governments to protect the character of communities from fracking by prohibiting local ordinances and zoning of oil and gas activities. In addition, the chemicals used in fracking would be kept secret and it would be against the law for even emergency responders to reveal what they are.

At the time this newsletter went to press, other changes to environmental regulations were under consideration but had not yet passed. Check [northcarolina.sierraclub.org](http://northcarolina.sierraclub.org) for updates.

## Becoming a Walk Friendly Community

By Grace Curry

Asheville ranks as a very dangerous city for pedestrians, as highlighted in a May 30<sup>th</sup> Asheville Citizen Times story. The article stated that of all the major NC cities, Asheville ranks #1 in number of accidents involving pedestrians.

Fortunately, Asheville has the Bike and Pedestrian Task Force that is exploring ways to improve the walkability of our community. A recent task force initiative was the City's participation in the Walk Friendly Communities Program, a

national program that encourages communities to support safer walking environments. It's a program that has provided detailed steps that the City could take to improve its walkability. The website, [www.walkfriendly.org](http://www.walkfriendly.org), is a great resource with information on what other cities are doing as well as some of the positive actions Asheville has already taken.

Interested in seeing Asheville become a walk friendly community? Contact the Bike and Pedestrian Task Force. Call Barb Mee, City's Transportation Planner, at 828-232-4540.

## Protecting NC Water from Fracking & Coal Ash - October 1

Join Julie Mayfield and Sally Morgan as they present a program on Protecting NC Water from Fracking and Coal Ash.

During the 2014 legislative session, the General Assembly passed a bill to address coal ash pollution in the state. Come hear the good and the bad about the bill, as well as how it impacts the litigation the Sierra Club, WNC Alliance, Waterkeeper Alliance and other environmental groups have been engaged in for the last two years.



Julie Mayfield

Sally Morgan, a researcher and organizer for Clean Water for NC, will discuss fracking and its implications for North Carolina. Fracking for natural gas has recently been legalized by the NC legislature, and could have broad impacts on communities, environmental

health, and groundwater quality for our state.

Julie Mayfield is co-director of Western North Carolina Alliance. Previously, she was the Vice President and General Counsel for the Georgia Conservancy where she worked on policy issues in the areas of air and water quality, natural areas, quality growth, and coastal conservation. Prior to the Conservancy, she directed the Turner Environmental Law Clinic at Emory University School of Law and practiced environmental law at Kilpatrick Stockton. She is a graduate of the first class of the Institute for Georgia Environmental Leadership and a graduate of Leadership Atlanta.



Sally Morgan

Sally holds a B.S. in Geosciences, an M.S. in Science and Technology Studies, and is passionate about clean water and empowered communities.

## Mountain Moral Monday Returns to WNC on Aug. 4

Join folks from across the region and state for another energizing and inspiring Mountain Moral Monday on August 4, from 5-6:30 pm at Pack Square Park in downtown Asheville.

The Mountain People's Assembly, a coalition of WNC organizations, and regional WNC NAACP Branches, will host the return of Mountain Moral Monday, a non-partisan program that will highlight the destructive policies enacted by the N.C. statehouse over the past year while strongly focusing on the voter empowerment campaign, "Moral March to the Polls."

The event will feature Rev. Dr. William J. Barber, II, President of the NC NAACP and other guest speakers, as well as musical entertainment. In addition, there will be opportunities to get involved in voter registration, education and Get-Out-The-Vote (GOTV) efforts during the current mid-term election cycle. 'Moral Freedom Summer' Organizers and volunteers will be available to help register voters. On Facebook, search **Mountain Moral Monday 2014** or email [info@mountainmoralmonday.org](mailto:info@mountainmoralmonday.org).



An estimated crowd of 10,000 people jammed Pack Square Park to Biltmore Ave. to hear Rev. Dr. William Barber and others speak at the 2013 Mountain Moral Monday in Asheville. The event was named to the Progressive Honor Roll in The Nation Magazine as 'The Most Valuable Protest' of 2013.



## Late Summer-Early Fall Hiking Schedule



**Introductory Hikes in the WNC Mountains** - Outings leader, Jane Laping, will lead a series of hikes to introduce novice hikers to the mountains of Western North Carolina this fall. The hikes will have an educational component and cover basic hiking topics such as what to wear, what to take, how to read a compass, and how to use hiking poles. The series will include one hike each month for five months, each one a little longer than the previous one. The hikes will be easy, on mostly smooth surfaces with only slight elevation gain and will be to a destination such as a waterfall, historic site, or outstanding view. Hikers will be encouraged to join with other hikers to practice their skills during the month.

Let Jane ([janelaping@sbcglobal.net](mailto:janelaping@sbcglobal.net) or 828-277-7342) know that you are interested in participating in one or more hikes and your name will be entered in a drawing to win a Sierra Club backpack. A good way to get ready for the first hike in August is to work up to walking 30 minutes a day, five days a week. The tentative hike schedule and approximate length of each hike is below. More details will follow. The schedule is as follows: Sat., Aug. 23, 10 am / 1 – 2 miles; Sat., Sept. 27, 10 am / 1 - 2 miles; Sat., Oct. 18, 10 am / 2 - 3 miles; Sat., Nov. 1, 10 am / 2 - 3 miles; and Sat., Dec. 6, 10 am / 3 - 4 miles.

**SAT, AUG 2 – SPLASHING WATERFALL HIKE - JOHN ROCK AREA** – Cat Gap Trail to Butter Gap Trail (following Grogan Creek). Moderate/easy, approx 4 miles R.T. on this there & back hike. Offers 2 nice waterfalls. There will be a splashing opportunity (self-splashing only, please!) on Butter Gap trail's waterfall. Kids that do hiking are welcome w/accompanying parent/guardian (with signed liability waiver). **NOTE:** There are optional trails (very short) to reach the base of the falls, but they are steep and possibly muddy. Makes good footwear essential, and maybe hiking poles as well. RSVP to hike leader Lisa McWherter at [lisamcw2@gmail.com](mailto:lisamcw2@gmail.com) or 828-713-4994.

**SAT, AUG 23 - DUPONT STATE FOREST WATERFALL HIKE** – Meet at 10 am in Asheville, back around 5 pm. (Exact location/distance to be announced on Wenoca website.) Distance 4-5 miles with a moderate/easy level of difficulty. This hike will offer an opportunity to take your shoes off and get your feet wet. Good footwear is essential, and maybe hiking poles as well. Sorry no dogs this hike. Please RSVP to hike leader Lisa McWherter at [lisamcw2@gmail.com](mailto:lisamcw2@gmail.com) or 828-713-4994.

**SAT, OCT 18 - BLACK BALSAM-TENANT MTN. HIKE** - Meet at 10 am in Asheville, back around 5:30 pm. This is a moderate 5 mile round trip hike with some great rock outcrops – one of my FAVORITE PLACES. Has beautiful panoramic views from two peaks which are above 6000 ft. Good footwear required, and be prepared for heavy winds on top. Consider hiking pole for rocky areas. This hike is for experienced hikers. Check w/hike leader if you wish to bring a dog. All hikers please RSVP to hike leader Lisa McWherter at [lisamcw2@gmail.com](mailto:lisamcw2@gmail.com) or 828-713-4994.

**SAT, NOV 1 - DUPONT STATE FOREST: CEDAR ROCK AND BURNT MTN. TRAILS** - Meet at 10 am in Asheville, back around 5:30 pm. This hike is moderate/easy with a distance of approximately 6 miles round trip. This hike starts on Corn Mill Shoals trail, then to Burnt Mtn. trail, which offers some interesting rocky areas. Back via Little River trail, and then to the top of Cedar Rock. There we'll have some great rock outcrops & nice views of the surrounding mountains. Experienced hikers only. Please RSVP to hike leader Lisa McWherter at [lisamcw2@gmail.com](mailto:lisamcw2@gmail.com) or 828-713-4994.

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The Executive Committee meets monthly. For more information, please contact Judy Mattox at 828-683-2176 or at judymattox@sbcglobal.net. All WENOCA members are invited to attend.

**Our website is [www.wenoca.org](http://www.wenoca.org).**

## WENOCA OFFICERS - 2014 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Judy Mattox – Chair - 828-683-2176

Lisa McWherter - Outings Leader

Rich Wasch - Treasurer

Mark Threlkeld - River Cleanup - At Large

Ken Brame - Political Committee

Anne Marie Doherty - At Large

Gene Keil - Website/Membership Committee

Rober Zieber - At Large

Elaine Lite - Newsletter Editor

Emma Greenbaum - Beyond Coal - 828-251-1272

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CLUB**  
FOUNDED 1892

WENOCA GROUP  
SIERRA CLUB  
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### ***EPA Hearing on Carbon Protection in Atlanta on July 29. Ride the Bus!***

On June 2, President Obama and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released a historic plan to cut carbon pollution and stop the worst effects of climate disruption. The Clean Power Plan is our nation's first major action to cut dangerous carbon pollution from our largest polluters, 30% by 2030, and will help spur a clean energy economy that can drive down electricity bills and create hundreds of thousands of dependable jobs.

This is the beginning of what could be the biggest climate fight in US history. The proposed plan is already under attack by fossil fuel industry, Georgia utilities, elected officials, and the billionaire Koch Brothers who are mobilizing like never before to send their lobbyists to Washington and fund astro-turf groups like "Georgia Energy Freedom Alliance" and Americans for Prosperity Georgia.

On July 29, EPA will host the first of just four national hearings on the proposed Clean Power Plan - right in Atlanta. Let's show the world that the southeast is ready for serious action to stop climate disruption! Though all of the speaking slots are filled for the 29th, we still need folks to pack the hearing and attend the Atlanta Climate Rally taking place the same day. This is about showing the EPA how strong the movement to curb climate emissions is. We need you there in person!

#### **Asheville Logistics for Bus Riders:**

Depart Asheville: 5:30 am from Westgate Shopping Center

Arrive ATL: 9 am / Depart ATL: 8:00 pm

Arrive Asheville: no later than 12 am

**Sign up for the bus at [www.eventbrite.com/e/bus-to-the-epa-carbon-protections-hearing-tickets-12239930963](http://www.eventbrite.com/e/bus-to-the-epa-carbon-protections-hearing-tickets-12239930963).**

A press conference will be held at the Sam Nunn Federal Building at 10 am and a Rally for Clean Energy Future will take place at 12 noon at Woodruff Park. This will be followed by a March for Climate Justice at 1 pm from Woodruff Park to the Sam Nunn Federal Building. Have questions about the bus trip to the EPA Carbon Protections Hearing? Contact Emma Greenbaum at [emma.greenbaum@sierraclub.org](mailto:emma.greenbaum@sierraclub.org) or call 828-251-1272.