



WENOCA SIERRAN

Newsletter of the Western North Carolina Sierra Club
May - July 2018

Explore, enjoy, and protect the planet

Upcoming Events:

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

Thursday, May 3

Scott Dean

*Wildflowers, Trees,
and Critters in 3
seasons*

Thursday, June 7

**Julie Mayfield,
Brownie Newman,
Jason Walls**

*Pathway to Clean
Energy for WNC*

Saturday, July 21:

**9th Annual Summer
Picnic**

*Blue Ridge Parkway
Sheltered Picnic
Grounds*

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

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

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

"Wildflowers, Trees, and Critters Interacting over 3 Seasons" -- Thursday May 3, 7 pm, Unitarian Congregation 1 Edwin Place

Join us for a presentation by naturalist Scott Dean who says, "We'll look at three seasons in the southern Appalachians. Spend an evening previewing what will be happening out in the woods for the next 6 months: Wildflowers, Trees, and Critters, and how they work together in the natural environment."



Scott Dean

Scott was born and raised in the mountains of southern Appalachia, specifically the coalfields of West Virginia and southwestern Virginia. Western North Carolina has been his home since 1992. He attended UNC-Asheville, earning a degree in biology, with a focus on the flora, fauna and geology of the southern Appalachians.

He was a walk leader and featured speaker for the UNC-Asheville Wildflower Pilgrimage from 1995 until 2015. Scott has led wildlife and wildflower walks at the Western North Carolina Nature Center, where he worked for a year building the cougar and bobcat habitats, and has served as First Vice President of the Friends of the Nature Center as well as serving on the Town of Weaverville Tree Board. He developed curricula, and teaches field classes for the Blue Ridge Naturalist program now offered at the N. C. Arboretum.

Energy Innovation Task Force -- Pathway to Clean Energy for Western North Carolina -- Thurs, June 7, 1 Edwin Place

Come hear City Councilwoman Julie Mayfield, County Commission Chair Brownie Newman, and Duke Energy District Manager Jason Walls talk about the new Blue Horizons Project and how it will lead us to a cleaner energy future. Learn how you can help.

In 2016, the City of Asheville, Buncombe County, and Duke Energy came together in a unique partnership to lead Western North Carolina to a cleaner, affordable, and smarter energy future. A specific goal of the partnership is to delay or avoid construction of a third natural gas plant on Lake Julian that would only run on the coldest and hottest days of the year: called a peaker unit.

Julie Mayfield is co-director of MountainTrue. She was also elected to Asheville City Council in November 2015 where she continues her advocacy for improved public transportation and clean energy. She has served on and/or chaired numerous board and commissions, including Asheville's Multi-Modal Commission, Transit Committee, Mountain Resources Commission, the WNC Chapter of the ACLU, the Environmental Quality Institute, and the North Carolina Conservation Network.

Brownie Newman grew up on a working farm in Pickens County, South Carolina. He is a graduate of Warren Wilson College. Brownie served two terms on the Asheville City Council. He was elected to the County Commission in 2012 and was elected Chairman of the County Commission in 2016. In addition to his service with local government, Brownie has worked in the renewable energy industry since 2007. He is an owner and partner at Headwaters Solar.



**Julie Mayfield, Jason Walls,
Brownie Newman with
Task Force Facilitator
Virginia Lacy (in front)**

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

Jason Walls currently leads Duke Energy's local government and community relations efforts in Avery, Buncombe, Haywood, Madison, Mitchell and Yancey counties. In this job, Walls is responsible for working with governmental, community and environmental leaders on the company's regional issues and initiatives.

He currently serves on the board of directors of Asheville Buncombe Chamber of Commerce, the Buncombe County Schools Foundation, the Asheville-Buncombe Economic Development Coalition, Asheville-Buncombe United Way, the Haywood County Chamber of Commerce and chair of the Haywood County Economic Development Commission.

French Broad River Clean Up -- Saturday, May 5, 1:00 pm, by Richard Kark



Hey you somewhat obsessive-compulsive clean up people! It is again time to tidy up our lovely local river. We always find lots of trash and doing so is fun and very worthwhile work. As in the past, the canoes along with paddles, gloves, trash bags and life jackets will all be provided by Asheville Greenworks. But this time our effort will not be part of a large community clean up effort. In many ways not being part of a large horde should be easier and more fun. If you wish to join us with your personal kayak you are welcome to do so. You can ferry trash to the closest canoe and add to their load. Participants should have at least some canoeing skills because maneuvering along the shore among branches is required. Foot gear which allows wading is also a good idea.

We will gather somewhere along the French River within the City Limits of Asheville at 1:00PM on May 5. Two or three hours later and several miles downstream, we will unload the trash from our canoes. By that time all will likely be thirsty and ready to quench our thirsts together at a local brew pub.

For more information and to sign up please contact Richard Kark at karkra@uwec.edu

Pisgah and Nantahala National Forest Planning Update by David Reid

For the past three years the US Forest Service has been working with stakeholder groups and the public on putting together a new management plan for the combined 1.1 million acres of national forest in western North Carolina. This plan covers all aspects of management, from logging and resource extraction, to recreation and hunting/fishing. Requirements for planning are written into agency rules and laws, including the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) and the National Forest Management Act (NFMA). Unlike other public lands, such as National Parks, the USFS is required to manage National Forest Lands under the guiding principle of "Multiple Use." A concept which gets skewed in favor of oil, gas, and timber extraction.

The NC Sierra Club, led by volunteers in the WENOCA Group, have been at the table with other diverse interests during the years-long discussions about Forest priorities, concerns and objectives. Among the Sierra Club's top concerns are adequate protection for rare old growth, threatened and endangered species, special habitats recognized by the state, and preservation of lands inventoried with backcountry and wilderness attributes not currently protected by law. Without adequate agency protections and recommendations at the Forest Plan level, these resources will be at risk in the coming years for negative impact by logging and other management activities proposed by individual ranger districts.

Sierra Club members and other citizens will have a formal chance to make their concerns and desires known during the required NEPA 90-day public comments period which begins when the draft Plan is released; expected sometime in the summer of 2018. We will be working with our conservation partner groups to analyze the draft plan, when released, and encouraging you to make individual comments that reflect our goals and values during this period. The National Forests belong to everyone, but they – and all federal public lands – are currently under unprecedented attack by policies from Congress and the Trump Administration. Stay tuned with the Sierra Club to learn what you can do to have a voice for the Forest! To review details of the Plan in process, you can visit the planning website: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/nfsnc/home/?cid=fseprd491137>

Join us for our annual picnic - July 21

On Saturday, July 21, the Sierra Club will enjoy its Annual Summer Picnic from noon to 4 pm at the Blue Ridge Parkway sheltered picnic grounds located on Bull Mt. Rd. near the VA Hospital on Riceville Rd.

Directions: Exit 7 on I-240; go east on Tunnel Rd for 2 miles; turn north on Riceville Rd; go past VA Hospital, turn left on Bull Mt. Rd. The fenced-in, sheltered picnic area is on the left about 1/2 mile up the road. Please bring a pot luck dish to share and your own settings. Drinks will be provided. Badminton, horseshoes, and music will add to the festivities. We hope to see you there!

10 Reasons to be Optimistic about our Energy Future

1. Half of the US coal plants that were operating in 2010 are now either retired or announced to retire.
2. NC is number 2 in the country behind only California in installed Solar Capacity.
3. Clean energy development created 82,403 FTE (full-time equivalent) jobs between 2007 & 2015 and there were 7112 solar jobs in NC in 2016. (Source: NC Sustainable Energy Association)
4. Buncombe county is the seventh largest county for solar jobs and activity in NC. There are currently 26 solar companies employing 166 employees in the county. (Source: The Solar Foundation)
5. Solar Installers make a median wage of \$26 per hour (Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics)
6. Duke Energy's current residential rate for energy is 9.9 cents/kWh (Source: Duke Energy), while solar energy is, on average, currently 8.8 cents/kWh and dropping (Source: The Solar Foundation)
7. The price of solar has dropped 64% over the past 5 years and is projected to drop another 60% over the next decade.
8. The city of Asheville has reduced its energy usage by 30% over the past 8 years and Buncombe County has already approved projects to achieve the same level of savings.
9. The cost of Battery Storage for wind and solar is declining rapidly and Duke has already committed to installing at least 18 mw of battery storage in Buncombe County.
10. The Greenlink Group (an energy research firm) has evaluated a clean energy pathway for NC, whereby 23% of electricity demand is met by resources such as energy efficiency, distributed and utility-scale solar, wind, hydroelectric power, demand response, and energy storage technologies. In this Cleaner Energy Plan, none of the new fossil and nuclear capacity that Duke Energy has proposed to construct over the next ten years will be needed, and the seven coal plants currently on Duke's system would be retired between 2018 and 2027 because they are unnecessary to meet system demand. This plan would also reduce the cost of energy for homes and businesses.

Hiking Schedule

SATURDAY, JUNE 2: HAIKU HIKE, Connect with Nature, along a favorite stream. Friend Patty Minx, lover of poetry, will be our poetry guide & Lisa McWherter our hike guide; Nature will be our muse! Patty will provide some brief guidelines on Haiku, and we will have a trail break with an opportunity to sit and write a couple of short Haiku poems (optional). In the spirit of Fun! Meet in Asheville at 10:00 and return around 5:30. The trail is mostly Easy with some Moderate, approx 4 miles Round trip. Two Options for Locations: 1) Most Probable Choice --Warren Wilson College Trails --Anthony Rd to Bull Creek Trail, then to the Old Dam site. Also, a Side trail or two. 2) Other Possible Location: If there are 10 or less who sign up, we will go into the Wilderness area along East Fork of Pigeon River, same trail distance & time frame. ----- BOTH Trails offer ample shade, and stretches along a lovely stream. There will be some tree roots & rocks in places, so good footwear is required. There are level parts but also some up/down hill, though it is not considered strenuous. There will be an opportunity to dip our feet in the water. There will also be some wildflower or tree ID, and perhaps some bird song ID as well. Please contact Hike Leader to sign up or if there are questions. Hike Leader: Lisa McWherter at lisamcw2@gmail.com, or call 828-713-4994.

SATURDAY, JUNE 16th – BLACKSTOCK KNOB. - Blackstock Knob is one of our “sixers” coming in at 6,266 ft. We will car shuttle for a one-way hike starting at NC 128 and hiking back to Balsam Gap Overlook on the Blue Ridge Parkway. The hike is approximately 5 miles along a section of the Mountains to the Sea Trail, and passes through high elevation balsam forests. The NE side of Blackstock Knob is actually part of the Mt. Mitchell State Park, although not contiguous with the main Park. We will learn about efforts to conservation the Black Mountain and Craggy ranges, and discuss unique high elevation habitats. RSVP to hike leader, David Reid, at daviddbreid@charter.net or 828-713-1607.

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

Wednesday, JULY 18th – BIG CREEK TRAIL (Pisgah National Forest) – Not to be confused with Big Creek in the Smokies, this hike will originate from the Little Pisgah Ridge Tunnel on the Blue Ridge Parkway and descend to the North Mills River area using a car shuttle. Mostly wooded hike estimated to be 3 miles through the Laurel Mountain backcountry area. Contact leader for details closer to the date. We will learn about Laurel Mountain's roadless status and what protections that offers. RSVP to hike leader, David Reid, at daviddbreid@charter.net or 828-713-1607.

Environmental Issues & Actions Meetings

Want to learn more about local, state and national environmental issues? Join us for our monthly **Environmental Issues & Actions Meetings**, the second Wednesday of each month from 6:00 – 7:30 PM, upstairs at The Wedge Foundation Brewery, 5 Foundy St., next to 12 Bones Restaurant in the River Arts District in Asheville. Contact: Ken Brame, kenbrame10@gmail.com, 828-423-8045

Medication Disposal in Asheville/Buncombe Ct-- 4 permanent locations with marked white Drop Box:

Buncombe Ct Judicial Complex, 60 Court Plaza in lobby
 Buncombe Ct Sheriff's Satellite Office, 339 New Leicester Hwy, in lobby
 Asheville Police Dept, 100 Court Plaza, in lobby
 Black Mountain Police Dept, 106 Montreat Rd, in lobby



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

EDITION 05-01-2018

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Kids to the Country

The Sierra Club program for Asheville Hillcrest and Pisgah View Apartments city kids ages 8-16, to be introduced to the country, is being organized again for this summer, 2018. We call this program affectionately "Kids to the Country." Our partners are the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Asheville, the Asheville Housing Authority, Asheville City Schools, Hillcrest community, and the Boy Scouts.



Last summer, 2017, every other Friday mornings from June 23 to Aug 18, we hiked and laughed and were introduced to wonderful aspects of nature: snakes, butterflies, tadpoles, goats, cows, chickens, blueberries, blackberries at the Blue Ridge Visitor Center, Carl Sandburg National Park and goat farm, the Asheville North Carolina Arboretum, a blueberry picking farm, and the Warren Wilson animal farm and garden.

In the Fall, on Saturday September 30 we hiked to the top of Craggy Pinnacle on the Blue Ridge Parkway. All were amazed by the 360 degree view of our beautiful mountains. We learned from the Boy Scouts the need to respect and to protect our wonderful heritage.

Thanks to all our volunteers in 2017 who made "Kids to the Country" happen: Beth Pape, Judy Mattox, Eleanor Lane, Joanne Lazar, JD Diefenbach, Marta Alcalá-Williams, Nikita Smart, Sade Mustakem, Maryanne Rackoff, Mayo Taylor, Susie Bell, Ellen Feingold, Marsha Fretwell, Scott Varn. For more information and/or If you are interested in donating or helping with this program contact: Judy Mattox, judymattox@sbcglobal.net, 828-683-2176