



WENOCA SIERRAN

Newsletter of the Western North Carolina Sierra Club
November 2018 - January 2019

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, Nov 1

Citizen Science, Water
Testing and Urban
Trees

Thursday, Dec 6

6:30pm

9th Annual Holiday
Party & Recognition
Awards

Thursday, Jan 3

Observatories in WNC:
Spruce Pine, UNCA,
and Madison County

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.
Open to the public
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.

2018 - Time to Elect Environmental Champions

After an unprecedented assault on environmental regulations by the anti-environmental majority in the NC General Assembly, we have an opportunity to send a clear message that we want change. After an extensive process of reviewing the environmental voting records, positions, and conducting interviews, the Sierra Club has endorsed the following candidates for the November 6th General Election.

NC Supreme Court Assoc. Justice:

-Anita Earls

NC Court of Appeals:

-John Arrowood

-Toby Hampson

-Allegra Collins

Buncombe County Commission:

-Al Whitesides – Dist. 1 – city of Asheville

-Amanda Edwards – Dist. 2 – Northern & Eastern Buncombe County

-Donna Ensley – Dist. 3 – Western & Southern Buncombe County

NC State Senate – District 49

-Terry Van Duyn (Buncombe County)

NC House of Representatives – Buncombe County

-Susan Fisher – Dist. 114 – mostly city of Asheville

-John Ager – Dist. 115 – Northern & Eastern Buncombe

-Brian Turner – Dist. 116 – Western & Southern Buncombe

NC House of Representatives – other

-Rhonda Cole Schandavel – Dist. 118 – Madison Yancey, and parts of Haywood County

-Joe Sam Queen – Dist. 119 – Jackson, Swain, and much of Haywood County

Constitutional Amendments

-Vote AGAINST amendment to cap state income tax rate at 7%. Ties hands of future legislatures

-Vote AGAINST amendment to require voter ID – Makes it difficult for anyone without a drivers license to vote, particularly older, younger, and low income people.

-Vote AGAINST judicial vacancies amendment. Shifts appointments from the Governor to the General Assembly. Would allow the legislature to pack the courts by adding two more seats and appointing them.

-Vote AGAINST Board of Ethics and Elections amendment. Removes unaffiliated representation from the board and will create gridlock.

Take Action for 100% Renewable Energy for Asheville – Tuesday, Oct 23

Last December, we got Buncombe County to adopt a 100% Renewable Energy Goal that requires county operations to be powered by 100% Renewable Energy by 2030 and for the entire county to meet that goal by 2042. We now need the City of Asheville to adopt the same goal. On Oct. 23rd, the Asheville City Council will vote to set the same goal. Please take a minute and send them an email or make a phone call asking them to pass this resolution. You can send an email to all council members by sending to this email address: AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov.

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

Know where, when, and how to vote!

Oct. 17th - Nov. 3rd - Early Voting - (Voter ID is not required to vote in NC)

Nov. 6th: General Election Day - (Voter ID is not required to vote in NC)

To find a polling place for Early Voting visit www.ncsbe.gov and click on Voter Tools - then select one stop voter site

To find your polling place for Election Day:

- Visit <https://vt.ncsbe.gov/PPLkup>

Not registered to vote? You can register and vote during the early voting period.

Election Help Needed

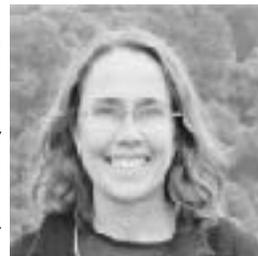
Did you know that many voters only vote at the top of the ticket and don't know who to vote for in judicial and local elected races? Please let your friends and family know about our endorsed candidates and encourage them to vote all the way down the ballot. We also need volunteers to help hand out our endorsement cards at the polls for early voting and on election day, as well as volunteers to call our members and supporters to make sure they vote. If you can help or have questions, please contact Judy Mattox at judymattox@sbcglobal.net or 828-683-2176.

"Citizen Science Protecting Our Environment. How You Can Help." Thurs, Nov 1, 7 pm

Citizen Science is gathering data by the general public, often as part of a collaborative project with scientists relating to biodiversity, such as clean water and urban forestry. Alison Ormsby, Adjunct Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies at UNC Asheville, will be explaining several Citizen Science projects that you can get involved with in the Asheville area, and nationwide.

On a panel with Alison will be Ann Marie Traylor, Executive Director of Environmental Quality Institute which does citizen science water quality monitoring. Also on this panel will be Susan Sertain, Tree Protection Advisory Group member, volunteer coordinator of the "Treasured Trees" program for Asheville/Buncombe County urban canopy.

Alison Ormsby teaches Environmental Studies, Environmental Art, and Humanities at the University of North Carolina Asheville and is a graduate mentor in Environmental Studies at Prescott College (Arizona). She is a human ecologist with 25 years of experience working with people and protected areas, sustainability, environmental education, and sacred natural sites. She has taught a Citizen Science course at UNC Asheville and been involved with community-based projects in several states and countries.



Alison Ormsby

9th Annual Holiday Party & Recognition Awards -- Thurs, Dec 6, 6:30

3 Observatories in WNC: Spruce Pine, UNCA, and Madison County -- Thur, Jan 3, 2019

The Bare Dark Sky Observatory is the centerpiece of the Mayland Earth to Sky Park, located outside of Burnsville, NC in Yancey County. Even though the Observatory has only been open for just over a year, there is a rich history of the dark skies at the site and Margaret Earley-Thiele, the Foundation Director for Mayland Community College, will share information about the importance of dark skies and the role that the Observatory and Earth to Sky Park play for conservation and educational efforts. There is much more to come at the Earth to Sky Park, including a 63 seat planetarium, hiking trails, alternative crop production labs, and gardens. Margaret will explain the impact that this new park will have on our region.

Margaret Earley-Thiele has been the Executive Director of the Mayland Community College Foundation since 2015, when she moved to Crossnore, NC in Avery County with her husband and two children and loves everything about living in the NC Mountains. She and her husband are currently in the design phase of building a "green living" home complete with a living roof and urbanconcrete walls.



Margaret

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

(January 3rd **Observatories Continued**)

The Astronomy Club of Asheville is involved in the operation of two observatories in our region that offer free outreach a few times each month: Lookout Observatory on the UNC-Asheville campus and Grassland Mountain Observatory in Madison County. Bernard Arghiere will share a brief history of the two observatories as well as information about their equipment and when and how to access the facilities. He will explain why it is so important to have these observatories in our community for folks of all ages. He will also give folks an update on the status of recent and proposed changes to the City of Asheville's outdoor lighting ordinance, and will gladly take any questions about local outdoor lighting ordinances.

**Bernard Arghiere**

***Bernard Arghiere** has traveled worldwide, including trips to Africa, Europe and South America, and has observed 4 total solar eclipses. Mr. Arghiere has led the design and construction of 3 observatories in the Western North Carolina region. He has been a leader in the implementation of outdoor lighting ordinances that protect our night sky for the cities of Asheville and Woodfin as well as Buncombe County. He is the past president of the Astronomy Club of Asheville, a lifetime member of the Sierra Club, a Blue Ridge Naturalist, and the current Chair of the Board of Trustees for the NC Chapter of The Nature Conservancy.*

Hiking Schedule

SATURDAY, NOV 3rd – 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.

SATURDAY, NOV 17 – LOOKOUT MTN via RAINBOW Rd & LOOKOUT Mtn trails. Meet in Asheville at 10:00 a.m. & return around 5:15 p.m. Moderate/Easy hike, approx 5.5 miles on this loop hike. We will start by going up hill on the beautiful Lookout Mtn Trail, up to the rock outcrops which offer some beautiful vistas of neighboring mountains. The trail is steep toward the top; recommend hiking poles & good footwear. After the summit, the hike will follow mostly the Rainbow Rd Trail, which provides a more gradual descent. There will be learning opportunities regarding the impact of the loss of hemlocks on the streams, along with information on conservation. This hike is for experienced hikers; though the pace is moderate and there are occasional rest brks. Please can contact the hike leader with any questions/concerns. All hikers please RSVP to hike leader Lisa McWherter at lisamcw2@gmail.com or 828-713-4994.

WEDNESDAY, NOV 28th - LAUREL RIVER TRAIL (Big Laurel Creek) - This is flat hike along Big Laurel Creek Northwest of Asheville. Trail head is close to Hot Springs. Pleasant hike along the river for 3.6 miles to the confluence with the French Broad River. We will discuss the concept of watersheds, and learn how this water reaches the Gulf of Mexico. Work off some of those extra Thanksgiving pounds. Leave Asheville at 9:30am, back by mid-afternoon. RSVP to hike leader, David Reid, at daviddbreid@charter.net or 828-713-1607.

SATURDAY, DEC 8 – WATERFALLS at CAESAR'S HEAD in S Carolina. Moderate hike, approx 5 miles round trip. Offers opportunities for plant/tree ID, waterfall viewing, plus a nice view from Caesar's head. Also, perhaps there will be some bird songs for ID. Meet in Asheville at 10:00 and return around 6:00. Be prepared for \$2.00/person park admission fee (supporting a good cause). This hike is for those w/ adequate conditioning for a 5 mile trail, though the pace is moderate w/ occasional breaks. Please contact the hike leader with questions/concerns. All hikers please RSVP to hike leader Lisa McWherter at lisamcw2@gmail.com or 828-713-4994.

SATURDAY, DEC 29th - END-OF-YEAR MONTREAT LOOP. Join us for this short moderate loop trail in Montreat near Black Mountain. We'll take parts of Greybeard, Harry Bryan and Julia Woodward trails. Suffering from too much holiday? Get out and stretch your legs. Learn about the conservation efforts of the Montreat Conference Center, and how its land abuts other important protected areas. RSVP to hike leader, David Reid, at daviddbreid@charter.net or 828-713-1607.

SATURDAY, JAN 19th - HOLD THE DATE – Hike to be announced in the Pisgah District of the Pisgah National Forest. Tentatively planned for a hike along the Big Creek Trail from the Parkway to the North Mills River area. However, exact trail to be determined by weather and trail conditions. Watch Meetup for details. Hike leader, David Reid, at daviddbreid@charter.net or 828-713-1607.

SATURDAY, JAN 19 - CHESTNUT COVE OVERLOOK Trailhead, on Mtns to Sea Trail (MST). 5.4 miles R T. ... A dear old favorite of mine, this Easy/Moderate stretch of MST veers off and away from the sounds of the parkway. It is mostly sheltered from the wind, and offers interesting landscape & shallow stream crossing. Also, tunnels of Rhododendren & Laurels. The trail is mostly level terrain, but it is rugged, with tree roots and rocks along the way. Includes opportunities for some easy winter plant/tree ID, and to discuss the fate of the American chestnut tree. This hike is for those w/ adequate conditioning for a 5.4 mile trail, though the pace is moderate w/ occasional breaks. Please contact the hike leader with questions/concerns. All hikers please RSVP to hike leader Lisa McWherter at lisamcw2@gmail.com or 828-713-4994.

WENOCA is now on Instagram! Follow us @wnc_sierra_club

Asheville's Urban Forest -- by Steve Hendricks, 2018 Tree Commission Chair (Come to the Sierra Club Nov 1 meeting to hear how you can help.)

Asheville is one of the most ecologically diverse areas in the temperate zones of the world. There are more native tree species within 50 miles of Asheville than on the entire European continent. Unfortunately, Asheville's urban forest is under stress and is shrinking. Primarily because of increased development within the city limits, we have had a net loss of an estimated 5-10% of our tree canopy in the last decade. Loss of tree canopy at that rate is not sustainable.

The Asheville Tree Commission is asking the city Council to provide adequate funding to address the loss of tree canopy, including hiring an urban forester. Also The Commission, in conjunction with Greenworks and citizen volunteers, is involved in several initiatives to improve the management of our urban Forest. The Treasured Tree Program is being revived. The Tree Commission is proposing the establishment of a working group of city departments to do a better job protecting existing trees near development. The Tree Protection Task Force is a group of volunteers that meets monthly at Greenworks to explore ways to help protect and enhance Asheville's urban forest. A non-native invasive plant policy is being recommended for city property.



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

EDITION 11- 2018

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT NO.260
ASHEVILLE, NC 28801

Kids' Adventure Club

Sierra Club in Western North Carolina has created a program for Asheville Hillcrest and Pisgah View Apartments, city kids ages 5 – 13, to enjoy trips to the country. We call this program affectionately "Kids' Adventure Club." (Nationally, it is known as Inspiring Connections Outdoors.) Our partners are the Hillcrest summer camp child center, the Asheville Housing Authority, Asheville City Schools, Pisgah View Apartments & their Marvelous Math Club, and the University of North Carolina Math Department.

During the summer of 2017 we hiked and laughed on 5 events with snakes, butterflies, tadpoles, goats, cows, chickens, blueberries, blackberries at various locations: the Blue Ridge Visitor Center, Carl Sandburg National Park & goat farm, the Asheville North Carolina Arboretum, a blueberry picking farm and the Warren Wilson animal farm & garden.

This summer of 2018, we played with 12 kids at the Nature Center; 24 kids, especially 5 and 6 year olds, at the Hickory Nut Gap Farm; and 20 kids, again especially 5 and 6 year olds, at the Arboretum where we petted salamanders, toads, snakes, and saw a barred owl, ground hog, and snapping turtle. We spent much happy time stomping in creeks.

Many thanks to all our volunteers and partners who made these events happen. For more information and/or if you are interested in helping with this program, contact: Judy Mattox, judymattox@sbcglobal.net, 828-683-2176

