

# M Mountain State Sierran

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## Corridor H “Go North” Campaign Opposes Core Drilling Until Route is Changed



*Albert Falls, one of the West Virginia natural wonders threatened by WVDOH's preferred route for Corridor H.*  
PHOTO BY FRANK GEBHARD, FRIENDS OF BLACKWATER.



**BY JUDY RODD**  
FRIENDS OF BLACKWATER



**The West Virginia Chapter of the Sierra Club, Friends of Blackwater, and Stewards of the Highlands, acting as the Corridor H “Go North Campaign,” are calling for public comments to oppose a request by the WV Division of Highways (DOH) to do core drilling in the Monongahela National Forest, in preparation for a possible route for the Corridor H highway from Parsons to Davis.**

The Campaign says that no drilling should be undertaken until the controversial and flawed route that was first proposed more than 20 years ago is scrapped.

Core drilling requires clearing and grading, construction of access roads, construction of storage/laydown yards and boring pads, geotechnical boring activities, and other preparation for parking, field offices, and equipment storage. DOH's proposal has a substantial number of drilling sites and

would result in a significant and widespread disturbance to sensitive and valuable public lands.

The core drilling proposal is in an exceptionally steep part of the Monongahela National Forest that includes habitat for several rare and endangered species, native trout streams, and the natural landmark known as Big Run Bog. The proposed core drilling for which this permit is being sought also has the potential

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[SIERRACLUB.ORG/WEST-VIRGINIA](http://SIERRACLUB.ORG/WEST-VIRGINIA)

# “We can deepen our connection to the land”



**BY HONEY MAY**

***Hello to all my fellow advocates and outdoor enthusiasts!***

I am filled with excitement and gratitude as I step into the role of Chapter Director for the West Virginia Chapter of the Sierra Club. This new era in my career comes after three fulfilling, if challenging, years as a Senior Campaign Representative for the Club’s Beyond Coal Campaign. I took that position

at peak pandemic in March 2020, and these three years have been a time of growth and learning — experiences I am eager to build upon in my new position.

My journey with the Sierra Club has been a profound testament to what dedicated teamwork and unwavering commitment can achieve. We’ve made some strides in shifting the tide against coal dependency and in ensuring that mine operators clean up their messes through reclamation, while realizing that we are in an incredibly challenging region with regard to both of those outcomes. It’s this momentum that I carry with me as I embrace the challenges and opportunities that come with being the Chapter Director.

As I settle into this role, my vision for the first year is clear: I want to prioritize member recruitment, engagement, and fundraising for our chapter. I’ve always believed that our strength lies in our community — in the shared passion and collective action of individuals like you. It’s my aim to welcome new faces into our fold and to ensure that every member feels valued, heard, and motivated to be an active participant in our mission.

I recognize the indispensable role of fundraising in propelling our initiatives and solidifying our impact. My first year will be dedicated to exploring innovative fundraising strategies that align with our core values and support our ambitious environmental goals. I am committed to securing the resources that will enable us to fight the good fight — to protect, preserve, and enjoy the natural wonders of West Virginia.

There’s nothing quite like the great outdoors to remind us of what we’re fighting for. This is why I am particularly excited to help expand our outings program, with the help and guidance of our Outings Leader, Chris Craig. I want to bring more of these enriching experiences to you, and I’m thrilled to share that I will be training to become an outings leader myself. Through these outings, we can deepen our connection to the land and each other.

This journey isn’t one I embark on alone — it is ours, together. We are fortunate to have a powerhouse Senior Field Organizer, Alex Cole, as well as a complement of strong expertise in our Environmental Law Program and communications colleagues. West Virginia is also lucky to have many dedicated Executive Committee members and

other volunteers to guide the Chapter to new heights. As Chapter Director, I invite you to join all of us in making our chapter a beacon of hope and a powerhouse of action. Let’s recruit passionately, engage wholeheartedly, and fundraise strategically. Let’s expand our reach and deepen our impact.

Together, we can make the West Virginia Chapter of the Sierra Club an example of environmental advocacy at its best. I look forward to collaborating with you, learning from you, and celebrating our successes with you.

With warm regards and shared resolve,

**Honey May**  
Chapter Director  
West Virginia Chapter of the Sierra Club

## West Virginia Sierra Club Chapter Directory

Email contact for all officers and staff: [sierraclub.wv@gmail.com](mailto:sierraclub.wv@gmail.com)

*Term ends at first meeting of indicated year.*

### CHAPTER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

<b>Jim Kotcon, Chair</b>	(*24)	304-594-3322
<b>Kevin Campbell, CCL Delegate</b>	(*25)	304-613-4099
<b>Robert Griffith, Vice Chair</b>	(*24)	304-282-0543
<b>Maura Ross, Political</b>	(*24)	
<b>Chrissy Sandy</b>	(*25)	
<b>David Sturm</b>	(*25)	304-612-0024
<b>Candice Elliott, Treasurer</b>		

### MONONGAHELA GROUP EXCOMM

<b>Michael Attfield, Vice Chair, Chpt Delegate</b>	(*24)	
<b>Jim Kotcon</b>	(*25)	304-594-3322
<b>Betsy Lawson, Secretary, Membership</b>	(*24)	304-983-2980
<b>Sally Wilts, Treasurer</b>		304-379-7567
<b>Marly Ynigues, Conservation Chair</b>		304-579-9653

### EASTERN PANHANDLE GROUP EXCOMM

Currently Inactive.  
For information, contact Chris Craig at [ccraig@laurellodge.com](mailto:ccraig@laurellodge.com).

### OTHER CHAPTER LEADERS

<b>Kathy Gregg, Archives/Chapter History</b>	304-472-4055
<b>Chris Craig, Newsletter &amp; Outings</b>	304-433-1260
<b>Mel Waggy, Public Lands &amp; Membership</b>	304-497-4358
<b>Maura Ross, Webmaster &amp; Political</b>	304-724-7612
<b>Karen Yarnell, Wilderness</b>	

### REGIONAL SIERRA CLUB ORGANIZING STAFF

<b>Honey May, WV Chapter Director</b>	304-356-8774
<b>Alex Cole, Senior Organizer, Beyond Coal/Beyond Dirty Fuels</b>	304-767-8687



These two adjacent solar projects in Howard County, Maryland generate 6.25 MW of power for residents and small businesses who purchase their electricity through Maryland's community solar program.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CHABERTON ENERGY.

### BY DANNY CHIOTOS

Community solar is a way to build local solar facilities that generate power for remote subscribers regardless of where they live in the utility territory. For example, a facility could be built on a 20-acre surface mine or landfill in Grant County with renters and homeowners electing to receive the credits from this generation on their electric bills anywhere in Potomac Edison territory. The same rule would apply for customers of Mon Power, Appalachian Power, and Wheeling Power — anyone who pays an electric bill to one of the above utilities could subscribe to a local solar facility.

As community solar is developed through local facilities, this is a primary way that renters and many homeowners can go solar. Renters are

# Community Solar: A Way for Every West Virginian to Save on Electric Bills by Going Solar

currently barred from getting their electricity from solar, since landlords make the decision on what happens with the home or apartment building. Renters pay their electric bills to their utility company, who ultimately decides where their customers' electricity comes from. Community solar provides renters a choice on where they get their electricity from, and it allows renters to lower their electric bills by choosing to get their electricity from solar. The same choice is available for homeowners who don't have the available funds to purchase solar, who don't want the long-term financing agreement to go solar, or who simply do not have a good location to install solar on their own property.

Here is the basic outline of how community solar works:

- a) A solar facility generates renewable electricity that is delivered to local electric distribution powerlines.
- b) The generation from this facility counts as "credits" by the relevant electric utility (Appalachian Power, Wheeling Power, Mon Power, or Potomac Edison).
- c) These "credits" are assigned to the electric bills of all subscribers to the facility to offset the electricity they would have purchased from the electric utility.

d) The subscribers of the facility pay the solar facility they subscribe to a rate that is typically lower than their electric savings.

In addition, the recently enacted Inflation Reduction Act contains tax credits that incentivize project locations in "energy communities" and low-income communities. This means that projects are likely to be developed in West Virginia due to tax incentives if a program is created. In addition, the Inflation Reduction Act specifically incentivizes projects that pay prevailing wages.

Community solar programs are created through state-level legislation and are run on a state level, meaning that the West Virginia legislature is the body that must move a law forward to allow for a community solar program to be developed. Maryland and Virginia both have robust community solar programs, Pennsylvania may enact a bipartisan community solar program next year, and Ohio's Republican State Legislature majority may enact one of the best community solar programs in the nation next year. The WV legislative session is starting soon, and this is the time for the legislature to create a strong community solar program to offer bill savings, job creation, and energy freedom across the state. 🍃

### CORRIDOR "H" | CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

to cause water pollution from subsurface and surface acid mine drainage, which raises Clean Water Act issues. The streams Big Run, Long Run, Tub Run, Middle Run, and Mill Run and the North Fork of the Blackwater could all be adversely impacted.

The current DOH preferred route for Corridor H would traverse extremely rugged terrain along Backbone Mountain in the Monongahela National Forest; cross important waterways, including the North Fork of the Blackwater; impair the tranquility of Blackwater Falls State Park and the Blackwater River downstream; negatively impact the historic Blackwater

Industrial Complex; and destroy habitat for several federally listed endangered species.

There is a far less damaging and equally feasible "Northern Route" alternative — north of Thomas, WV — that citizen groups believe should be selected. After a recent federal review, DOH promised to study this Northern Route alternative to the route DOH has promoted for 20 years. Yet at the same time, DOH leadership is saying it sees no reason to change its plans.

Until we know that this Northern Route has been studied and chosen, we must oppose all actions — including core drilling — that

would provide impetus for a route that would degrade Blackwater Falls State Park, other area streams, the historic coke ovens in the area, and the Olson Fire Tower.

**Please join the Corridor H "Go North" Campaign in opposing all permits for core drilling and stand by the "Go North" Route.**

To make your comment on the DOH request to the WV Department of Environmental Protection for core drilling in the Monongahela National Forest, go to:

[www.saveblackwater.org/corridor-h](http://www.saveblackwater.org/corridor-h)

# View From the Chair



BY JIM KOTCON

There are lots of opportunities to get involved in the organization's regional initiatives and to make a positive impact on local communities.

## ARCH2

(Appalachian Regional Clean Hydrogen Hub)



This WV-based proposal was one of seven projects approved in October for

almost a billion dollars in taxpayer subsidies. The Sierra Club recognizes the need for hydrogen for “hard to decarbonize industries” (steel, cement, long-haul trucks, etc.) but opposes fossil-based hydrogen. Four of the seven projects approved for funding by the U.S. Dept. of Energy (DOE) involve fossil fuels, including ARCH2. A public information webinar on Oct. 24 by DOE identified seven projects in West Virginia:

- CNX & TransGas, Mingo County – producing “clean” ammonia
- TC Energy & Chemours, Washington and Belle - producing hydrogen with clean energy
- Fidelis, Mason County – Carbon Capture and Sequestration (CCS) and H2 for a data center (perhaps Bitcoin?)
- Hog Lick Aggregates, Fairmont – “Clean Fuel Services Depot” for hydrogen-fueled trucks
- Hope Gas, Morgantown - residential fuel cells
- Empire, Follansbee - “Renewable natural gas” from food waste

- Plug Power & Amazon, Morgantown - H2 Production and use for trucks

Several additional projects were announced for Ohio and Pennsylvania. Two other WV projects — Omnis at the Pleasants power plant and Clean Seas (plastics pyrolysis) in Kanawha County — both propose to generate hydrogen, but do not seem to be part of ARCH2. Several of these projects will involve CCS, which means pipelines and injection wells, often at some distance from the site where hydrogen is produced. We are still waiting for release of details. Meanwhile, DOE will require a “Community Benefits Plan” to assure locals benefit, and we will want to be involved as that develops.

### !! Action Needed

The Community Benefits Plan is an opportunity for us to advocate that WV communities will actually benefit from these projects. We need innovative ideas on how impacted locations might benefit from the projects, since developing this plan is a key requirement before the actual construction of projects begin.

If you are in or near one of these areas, please contact Jim Kotcon at [jkotcon@gmail.com](mailto:jkotcon@gmail.com).

## Sierra Club's Community Advocates Program

Sierra Club is coordinating efforts to get members to engage with local political leaders to apply for federal grant funds under the Inflation Reduction Act for energy conservation, renewables, and other greenhouse gas reduction projects. Morgantown and four other WV communities have applied for an EPA “Solar For All” grant to provide funding for low-income residential solar projects.

Other funds include: Climate Pollution Reduction Grants, Clean School Bus Grants, Coastal Habitat Restoration and Resilience Grants, Environmental and Climate Justice Block Grant Program, Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, Clean Investment Funds, HOMES Rebate, Justice40s, Neighborhood Access and Equity Grant Program, Wildlife Crossings, and more.

### !! Action Needed

As part of the Sierra Club's program, the WV Chapter has agreed to host a member meeting to train how to approach community leaders. Plan to attend a meeting and host an in-person volunteer event to educate members. Event options include community workshops, “Coffee and Correspondence” letter-writing parties, electrification home tours, and more.

**If you're willing to help, contact Jim Kotcon at [jkotcon@gmail.com](mailto:jkotcon@gmail.com).**

# Public Service Commission (PSC) cases

The WV PSC regulates utilities and is an important agency for addressing the environmental impacts of fossil fuels. A key issue over the last year has been a proposal asking MonPower to purchase the coal-fired Pleasants power plant. We opposed this effort to force ratepayers to bail out another outdated, polluting power plant (one of the dirtiest in West Virginia). The PSC case was closed on Aug. 30 because the Pleasants plant was sold. The buyer, Omnis, promises to convert coal to graphite and make hydrogen to generate electricity, but it is not clear how that can be cost-effective. In the meantime, the plant returned to burning coal in August. But the fact that ratepayers don't have to keep paying for this dinosaur is a victory!



Both Mon Power and ApCo have filed cases with the PSC asking for rate increases for their electricity customers. The MonPower case is particularly troubling, because MonPower included a proposal to reduce the rates paid to residential customers who generate solar electricity with their rooftop systems. The net-metering proposal would dramatically reduce the incentive for homeowners to use solar and undermine the growing solar installation industry in West Virginia.

**Send comments to the WV-PSC at [tinyurl.com/psc-wv-comments](https://tinyurl.com/psc-wv-comments), opposing efforts to weaken net-metering programs.**

**As you can see, there are many important issues needing your help. Thanks for your membership and support!**



## Orphan Well Prevention Act

Lucia Valentine and Linda Frame of WVEC organized an abandoned gas well tour for legislators at Kanawha State Forest during October interim sessions. Not many legislators attended, but it was very eye-opening. Thanks to Lucia and Dave McMahon for leading the tour. Betsy Lawson and Alex Cole continue to monitor abandoned wells and may be able to generate local activism.

### !! Action Needed

Members should organize “in-district” meetings with legislators to talk about the need to regulate the gas industry and plug abandoned wells so that more do not become orphaned. Useful legislation was introduced in both the House and Senate last year, and we will likely seek re-introduction in 2024.

**Are you willing to set up a meeting with your legislators? Contact Jim Kotcon for help at [jkotcon@gmail.com](mailto:jkotcon@gmail.com)!**

# Environmentalists Gather at WVEC Meeting to Set State Agenda, Learn About Projects and Resources

**Around 40 environmentalists gathered at Tygart Lake State Park on November 3-5 for the annual meeting of West Virginia Environmental Council (WVEC). During Saturday sessions the group heard presentations on issues ranging from public lands to PFAS contamination of state water systems. They also set environmental goals for the 2024 session of the WV Legislature.**

WVEC is a coalition of 15 state organizations, including the WV Chapter of the Sierra Club, Highlands Conservancy, and WV Rivers. Most prominently, they support lobbyists in the main and interim sessions of the legislature. They publish action alerts for citizen action and organize E-Day (environmental lobby day) at the State Capitol.

During the November meeting attendees celebrated some environmental successes in last year's legislative session, including a bill that shut down additional motorized access in the state's public lands and the passage of a PFAS Protection Bill.

Community solar legislation has received

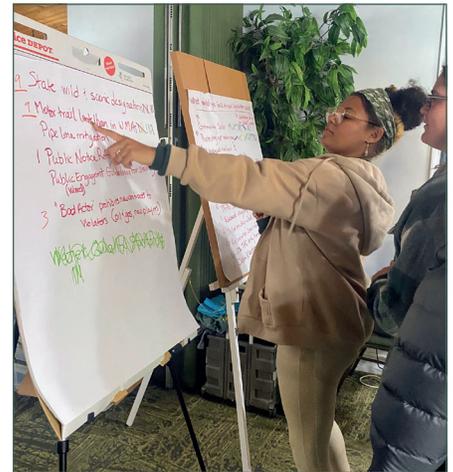


**BY CHRIS CRAIG**

much recent attention in the WV environmental community and was expected to be a priority in this year's legislative session. However, Leah Barbor of Solar United Neighbors said recent threats to the state's liberal net metering policy are seen as a menace to all future development of solar power in West Virginia, so

attendees prioritized fighting those threats in both the Public Service Commission and the Legislature.

The issue of orphaned and abandoned gas and oil wells has been a focus of the WV Chapter of the Sierra Club in recent years, and some attendees at the meeting felt there might be enough support in this year's legislature to see passage of a bill on that topic.



*Members of WVU's Student Sierran Coalition take part in the prioritization of environmental proposals for the 2024 WV Legislature.*

PHOTO BY JILLIAN WELSH.

Along with the legislative focus, several presenters at the meeting shared news of specific causes or offered their services and support on various issues. Assistant U.S. Attorney Max Nogay serves as the Environmental Justice (EJ) Coordinator for the Northern District of West Virginia and spoke on the Justice Department's priorities, help available on EJ issues, and recent or pending court cases he has been involved in.

Morgan King works for the Climate Reality Project and shared news of how that organization fights new petrochemical projects in the Ohio River Valley. Judy Rodd heads Friends of Blackwater Canyon and is leading the fight to move the final stretch of Corridor H north and away from Monongahela National Forest and Blackwater Falls State Park.

Near the end of the meeting, the WVEC board, staff, and members recognized Linda Frame's leadership as President of the organization. Over the past four years, Linda has spearheaded legislative planning, expanded coalition work, and managed crucial initiatives. "Linda's vision and guidance have strengthened the organization and helped create positive environmental changes for the people of West Virginia," said Sandra Fallon, Vice President of WVEC.

Finally, attendees closed the day with a hike to Tygart Dam, guided by State Park Naturalist Jacob Jackson. Participants learned the history of the lake and the dam project. 🌿



*Tygart Lake State Park Naturalist Jacob Jackson led attendees on a guided hike of the lake and the dam site at the end of WVEC's Annual Meeting sessions. PHOTO BY JILLIAN WELSH.*



FROM WVEC

# Environmental Priorities Set for the 2024 WV Legislative Season

As we head into the 2024 legislative session in January, there will be many policy issues to monitor and bills to follow. Each fall, at the West Virginia Environmental Council's (WVEC) annual meeting, members and member groups discuss and decide on its legislative priorities. Attendees list their issues and then rank them by voting. Here are the top four vote-getters. The WVEC will release a complete list of its 2024 priorities later this month. It's impossible to predict everything that will come up during the 60-day legislative session, but WVEC's lobby team will advocate for your priorities!

**Net Metering:** Protect and preserve long-standing net metering rules to ensure all solar users are entitled to the existing fair market retail rate. To learn more, visit [www.energyfreedomwv.org/net-metering](http://www.energyfreedomwv.org/net-metering).

**Orphaned Gas Well Responsibility:** Require bonds to be set before drilling begins to cover plugging costs for gas wells that are abandoned or orphaned. Visit [WVECouncil.org](http://WVECouncil.org) to take action.

**Community Solar:** Promote access to affordable renewable energy through a solar facility subscription service. Customers can purchase an interest in a solar facility to use credits against their electric utility costs. Watch a webinar at [WVECouncil.org](http://WVECouncil.org).

**State of West Virginia Rivers Designation:** Urge legislators to adopt a West Virginia Scenic Rivers bill for our state's rivers. Learn more at [wriver.org/publiclands](http://wriver.org/publiclands).



## Your Presence in Charleston Requested on E-Day

Join the West Virginia Environmental Council (WVEC) for Environmental Day (E-Day) at the WV State Capitol on **Tuesday, February 13, 2024**. E-Day is a unique opportunity to support WVEC's legislative priorities and make your voice heard. Environmental groups, concerned citizens, and policymakers will discuss critical environmental issues and promote legislation. Registration will open on [WVECouncil.org](http://WVECouncil.org) in late November.

# INVASIVE SPECIES: Those Unwanted Guests Who Never Leave



*Invader on farm and field: Johnsongrass.*  
PHOTO BY AILEEN CURFMAN.

**Have you been battling garlic mustard in your yard? Has your favorite grove of hemlocks fallen prey to woolly adelgids? Have you headed to your favorite fishing hole to find disgusting mats of didymo? You, my friend, have had an encounter with an invasive species.**



**BY AILEEN CURFMAN**

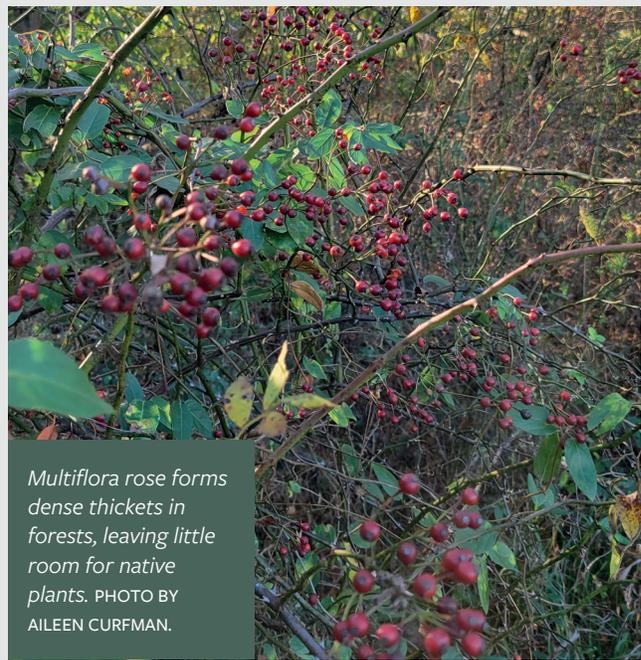
**M**any exotic species inhabit our landscape. Some were brought here by humans who came to this continent and wished to continue to enjoy familiar plants, animals, and even birds. Other introduced species, like the brown rat, were brought by accident.

Some exotic species pose no problem, because they need help to thrive in the place where they have been brought. If you plant mango trees in West Virginia and then forget about them, there is no danger of them taking over your backyard. The first winter will kill them.

By contrast, wineberries, which were introduced in the 1890s, have formed thickets in many spots in the Mid-Atlantic region. The climate and soil here are well-suited for them, and our area does not feature any diseases or plant pests that might keep them in check. Such resilient exotic species overwhelm the local ecosystem and are said to be invasive. The U.S. Geological Survey defines an invasive species as “an introduced, nonnative organism (disease, parasite, plant, or animal) that begins to spread or expand its range from the site of its original introduction and that has the potential to cause harm to the environment, the economy, or to human health.”



*Pretty, but bad news: invasive Amur honeysuckle. PHOTO BY AILEEN CURFMAN.*



*Multiflora rose forms dense thickets in forests, leaving little room for native plants. PHOTO BY AILEEN CURFMAN.*

A healthy ecosystem is a community of living things that all depend on each other. Invasive species often disrupt this circle of mutual benefit, whether the invasive species is stilt grass choking out spring flowers in the forest, or feral cats killing songbirds. The entire ecosystem suffers, and the disruption leads to more opportunities for invasive species to gain a footing.

Note that an out-of-balance ecosystem may produce an overpopulation of native species like the whitetail deer that dine on expensive shrubbery. These species may be classified as pests, but they are not invasive. One naturalist explained the difference by saying, “You can’t invade a place where you already are.”

Invasive species are not “bad.” They are simply doing what they do. We may even be pleased when they colonize an area devastated by

human activities or natural disasters, and some research shows that invasive species may eventually provide new habitats. However, the original habitat is gone forever.

A few species that are invasive in West Virginia are mentioned above. Some others are Asian carp, zebra

mussels, crown vetch, brown marmorated stink bug, spotted lanternfly, and the spotted lanternfly’s preferred host, the tree of heaven.

As a steward of the place you inhabit, you can help control these invaders. It can be as simple as keeping your cat indoors or scraping egg masses off trees. Some governmental agencies or non-profits (including the National Park Service and Potomac Valley Audubon Society) offer opportunities to get more involved with removing invasive species from preserves or public lands. Invasive species may never be eliminated, but we can reduce the damage.

# “You can’t invade a place where you already are.”

## LEARN MORE HERE:

- **What is an invasive species and why are they a problem? (USGS)**  
[tinyurl.com/usgs-invasive-species](https://tinyurl.com/usgs-invasive-species)
- **Natives vs. Non-Natives (albopepper.com)**  
[tinyurl.com/albo-pepper-natives](https://tinyurl.com/albo-pepper-natives)
- **Invasive Species in Your Landscape (WVU Extension)**  
[tinyurl.com/wvu-invasives](https://tinyurl.com/wvu-invasives)
- **What Are Invasive Species? (NPS)**  
[tinyurl.com/nps-invasive-species](https://tinyurl.com/nps-invasive-species)
- **Invasive Plants of West Virginia - PDF (WVDNR)**  
[tinyurl.com/wvdnr-invasives](https://tinyurl.com/wvdnr-invasives)
- **Invaders of the Month (MISC)**  
[tinyurl.com/misc-invaders](https://tinyurl.com/misc-invaders)

# Radioactive Contamination: Result of Fracking in Fairmont

Despite the claims of the oil and gas industry, natural gas is not a clean fuel. The fracking process drags a load of toxic baggage with it. This became especially evident in Fairmont when a May 30 explosion called attention to an abandoned facility that processed fracking wastewater. The site is so radioactive that readings exceeded the measurement capacity of a Ludlum 3000 Geiger counter. Yet the site has not yet been secured or even gated; in fact, graffiti, beer cans, and condoms litter the site.

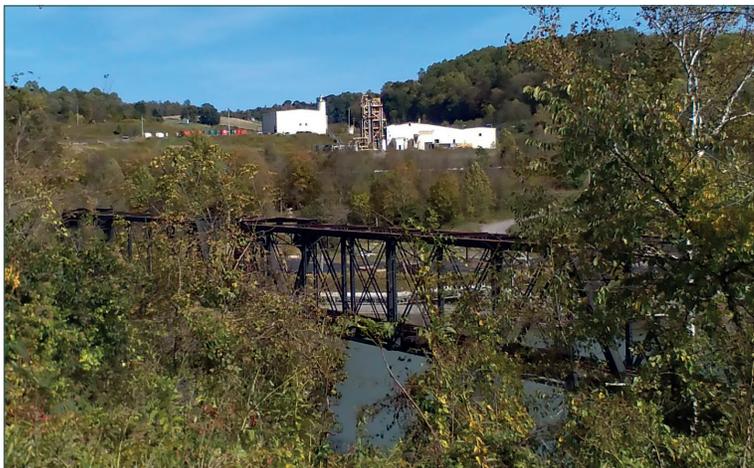
Fracking involves pumping millions of gallons of liquid underground to fracture shale rock in order to release methane gas. This



BY BETSY J. LAWSON

industry from restrictions on injecting hazardous materials into or adjacent to underground drinking water supplies. Eventually, much of this fracking “brine” returns to the surface, bringing with it other chemicals from deep below, like arsenic, strontium, lead, heavy salt concentrations, and **radioactive material**.

In 1980, long before the fracking boom took off around 2010, the EPA declared oilfield waste as nonhazardous. Since then, according to the Groundwater Protection Council, almost 900 billion gallons of fracking wastewater are brought up every year across the country. Most of it is pumped back underground at injection well sites. But



A view of the contaminated Fairmont Brine site from across the Monongahela River. PHOTO BY BETSY LAWSON

liquid contains water, silica sand, and a toxic mix of volatile organic compounds — a recipe that can remain secret, thanks to the Halliburton loophole, a rule developed by former Vice President Dick Cheney’s task force that exempts the oil and gas

this has leaked into nearby drinking water supplies or has caused earthquakes in some areas. No one wants to live near toxic waste injection wells.

**Fairmont Brine Processing (FBP)**, north of downtown Fairmont, was set up to recycle

fracking wastewater. It opened as AOP Clearwater in 2009. In 2015, a Pittsburgh-based company took over the facility and changed the name, with plans to distill the wastewater, creating salts that could be sold for winter road treatment and pure water that could be reused for fracking or dumped into the nearby Monongahela River. It was promoted as environmentally friendly, despite it being long known that fracking wastewater contained radioactive material. But National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits, which FBP had, don’t test for radiation.

In February 2016, the state of Kentucky learned that a WV company had illegally dumped 47 sealed boxes, each 25 cubic yards and full of radionuclide concentrate, in Blue Ridge Landfill in Estill County, Kentucky. That company was Fairmont Brine. In January 2017, Fairmont Brine Processing suspended most of its operations, and its Fairmont site has been abandoned ever since, except for the local kids who go there to party.

Fast forward to May 2023, when the WV Department of Environmental Protection requested EPA assistance for a tank explosion and fire at the Fairmont site. The EPA’s site report stated, among other alarming things:

- The radionuclide Radium 226, a known human carcinogen that can affect the blood, eyes, and teeth, was confirmed in high concentrations.
- At a later September site visit, due to further vandalism and water being illegally pumped from the ponds, which concentrated the sludge, even higher radiation readings were made.
- The site is directly uphill from the Monongahela River. Radionuclides or other hazardous substances have the potential to impact the river either by overflow of the ponds on site or through an existing outfall.

The American Petroleum Institute, in 1982, said that “radioactivity cannot be modified or made inert by chemical means. Any attempt to remove radioactivity is merely transforming a very dilute source of radioactive materials into a very concentrated source.”

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# Appalachian Regional Clean Hydrogen Hub: Maybe Not So Clean

**Sen. Joe Manchin (D-WV) recently wrote a very positive op-ed piece published in the Charleston Gazette-Mail regarding the Appalachian Regional Clean Hydrogen Hub (ARCH2). Manchin, Sen. Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV), and numerous others, especially at the invitation of the WV Chamber of Commerce, have nothing but wonderful things to say about ARCH2. But the rosy picture being painted is not based in reality.**

ARCH2 hydrogen production would be fueled by methane steam reforming, which separates hydrogen atoms from carbon atoms in molecules of methane (aka “natural”) gas. This process is part of obtaining what has been labeled “blue” hydrogen, with the carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) released from the process then captured and stored in underground wells. In the case of West Virginia, the plan is to store the CO<sub>2</sub> beneath wilderness areas, state-owned forests, and other natural and scenic areas in pore space leased out by the state Division of Natural Resources, which falls under the WV Department of Commerce.

There are numerous problems with this, some of them delineated in a 2021 paper by Robert W. Howarth, Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at Cornell University, and Mark Jacobson, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Stanford University. The study, titled “How Green is Blue Hydrogen?” found that “Perhaps surprisingly, the greenhouse gas footprint of blue hydrogen is more than 20% greater than burning natural gas or coal for heat and some 60% greater than burning diesel oil for heat.” This analysis even assumed that captured CO<sub>2</sub> could be stored indefinitely, which the authors called “an optimistic and unproven assumption.”

Carbon capture and storage technology (CCS) is not just unproven at scale; it’s essentially been disproven at anywhere approaching at scale.



**BY ERIC ENGLE**

After decades of effort and at least 15 years of federal tax subsidies in one form or another, CCS isn’t able to successfully capture and store more than fractions of the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> necessary to make continued exploitation of fossil fuels compliant with Paris Climate Accords goals of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius over preindustrial levels. In fact, the process wouldn’t even hit less aspirational temperature goals in the Accords.

CCS is also dangerous. The network of pipelines and storage sites necessary for successful CO<sub>2</sub> storage on the scale needed can leak, burst, or explode just as easily as pipelines or storage sites used for any other purpose. CO<sub>2</sub> is an asphyxiant that displaces oxygen in the air. If it leaks at high pressures in pipelines or in copious amounts from underground storage sites, it will literally stop vehicle engines and, far more seriously, stop people within a certain radius from being able to breathe.

And then there’s fracking. At a recent presentation by the U.S. Department of Energy, Shawn Bennett, Energy and Resilience Division Manager at Batelle, one of the industry partners on the ARCH2 project, told attendees that he saw no reason to believe the ARCH2 project would increase fracking (hydraulic fracturing) in the region. That statement left me a bit speechless. As I told Gazette-Mail energy and

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 13](#)

# Sierra Club Reboot

The Joint Annual Meeting of the Council of Club Leaders (CCL) of the Sierra Club was held on September 6-9 in Chicago. Kevin Campbell, West Virginia Chapter's CCL Delegate, and alternate delegate Chrissy Sandy were in attendance. The Joint Annual Meeting was also attended by several states (via Zoom), the Council of Club Leaders Executive Committee, as well as the entire Board of the Sierra Club.

**BY KEVIN CAMPBELL AND CHRISSY SANDY**

The main topic of discussion was the recent restructuring of the Sierra Club, since a majority of attendees indicated they did not understand the plan or the new guidelines. We were informed that this is an incremental change that will assist in communication with leaders of the Sierra Club. At the same time, board members promised to fully commit to this reorganization and to allow time for the new plan to work.

Twenty-two resolutions were brought before the council for a vote. Several resolutions pertained to the restructuring of the club, while others were related to conservation and environmental issues. Many of the resolutions prompted heated debate when leaders gave the floor to delegates for deliberation.

However, all 22 resolutions were adopted by majority votes. This was a record number of resolutions passed, and all were passed

with overwhelming margins. Later, these resolutions were presented to the entire board. Various chapter delegates presented additional specific issues to the Board. The President and Board promised to decide and act upon these resolutions in a timely fashion.

**“Something need not be our fault to be our responsibility.”**

-African Proverb  
(Quoted by Ben Jealous)

Multiple speakers covered various topics, including BDJJ (Belonging, Dignity, Justice and Joy) Principals, grassroots networks, and “how to reach communities that aren’t your own.”

Breakout groups discussed improvement strategies for the club. New executive committee members were elected.

Each year the Sierra Club honors individuals whose achievements help preserve the environment. Whether behind the scenes or on the main stage, their efforts have created a brighter future for the planet and for all



Tennessee State Representative Justin Pearson (L) with WV Chapter Delegate Kevin Campbell at the annual meeting of the Council of Club Leaders in Chicago in September. PHOTO BY CHRISSY SANDY.

of us. This Celebrating Changemakers award ceremony capped off the conference and was hosted by President Allison Chin and Executive Director Ben Jealous.

The awards ceremony ended by a moving and motivational speech by Tennessee State Representative Justin Pearson, known for fighting the Byhalia Pipeline that was slated to go through Memphis. He touched on the racism of Sierra Club founder John Muir and called for change. “We are running out of time, and now ‘we the people’ have to band together to make changes and stop the policies and the companies who are targeting minority communities.”

After his speech, we were honored to have the opportunity to speak with Rep. Pearson about the abandonment of regulations by federal authorities to ease approval of the Mountain Valley Pipeline. Pearson expressed his support of our efforts to fight completion of the Mountain Valley Pipeline.

At the September annual meeting of the Council of Club Leaders in Chicago: (L to R) Sierra Club Executive Director Ben Jealous, WV Chapter Alternate Delegate Chrissy Sandy, WV Chapter Delegate Kevin Campbell, Sierra Club Board President Allison Chin.



# ASF Awards Autumn Grants

The Appalachian Stewardship Foundation (ASF) has announced their fall 2023 grant recipients. The list includes:

- People's Climate Solutions
- Allegheny Blue Ridge Alliance ([www.abralliance.org](http://www.abralliance.org))
- Wild Virginia ([wildvirginia.org](http://wildvirginia.org))
- Science Museum of Western Virginia ([smwv.org](http://smwv.org))



*Science Museum of Western Virginia*

ASF was formed and funded through mitigation funds awarded in a challenge to the air permit issued by the WV Department of Environmental Protection to Longview Power's coal-fired electric plant in Madsville. In addition to reduced emission limits, mitigation

funds were awarded to the three challengers: the Sierra Club, Trout Unlimited, and the National Parks Conservation Association. Twice a year ASF awards environmental and educational institutions with these funds. For more information, go to [appalachianstewards.org](http://appalachianstewards.org).

## Changes Underway in EPSC

Due to moves and health issues, the Eastern Panhandle Group's Executive Committee has become inactive, and we are currently unable to continue our programs and conservation work. However, we want the conversations to continue. There will be a meeting over lunch at 12 noon, Tuesday, Nov. 28, at Good Natured Market & Vegetarian Café, 209 S. Raleigh St., Martinsburg.

If you would like to attend to discuss the future of environmental concerns in the Eastern Panhandle and the Sierra Club's work there, or if you are interested in more information about the group, contact Aileen Curfman at [acurfman@gmail.com](mailto:acurfman@gmail.com) or at 304-314-2709.

## HYDOGEN HUB

| [CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11](#)

environment reporter Mike Tony, if you're creating demand for methane gas, you're creating demand for expanded fracking.

Fracked wells get tapped fast, and more and more have to be drilled to keep up. Expansion is the entire business model of the fracking industry, which routinely operates in the red because of the costs of having to constantly expand regardless of market price signals for natural gas and oil. And fracking, in case you haven't heard, is an environmental and public health nightmare.

There is definitely an important niche for hydrogen in a 21st-century clean energy economy, especially for hard-to-decarbonize sectors of the global economy like aviation and international shipping. It's just that blue is the wrong color. We need to focus on green hydrogen, which is produced when renewable energy (i.e., solar) is used to power an electrolysis process that separates hydrogen atoms from the oxygen atoms in water molecules. As Tony reported in a piece on ARCH2, "The U.S. Department of Energy ... has projected a time frame of seven to 12.5 years for projects to ramp up operations. That projected time frame would push ARCH2's launch past the date when analysts have said green hydrogen will sink below blue hydrogen in price."

Fortunately, the USDOE Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations is working hard to allow for public feedback and input. You can start by emailing [AppalachianH2Hub@hq.doe.gov](mailto:AppalachianH2Hub@hq.doe.gov) for more information and/or to provide comments. ARCH2 is far from being a done deal, and the people of our state and region must say no to blue hydrogen.

### FOR IMPORTANT SOURCE MATERIAL, PLEASE SEE:

- [concernedhealthny.org/compendium](http://concernedhealthny.org/compendium)
- [carboncapturefacts.org](http://carboncapturefacts.org)

# Outings



## Saturday, December 16, 2023

### DAY HIKE: Tuscarora Trail, Sleepy Creek Reservoir, Morgan County, WV

Cancelled in February for ice and in May for thunderstorms, we'll hope that the third time is the charm for this moderate out-and-back hike on a rolling but rugged trail. We will walk forest roads and trails, with Meadow Branch alongside some of the way. There are several small stream crossings. While we should be able to keep our feet dry, both the hike and the drive to the trailhead are vulnerable to wet or icy conditions. Stay in touch with the hike leader for potential cancellations or alterations. It is suitable for adults and children (accompanied by adults) in reasonable shape. Well-behaved dogs on leashes are welcome. There is no charge for this hike, though contributions will be welcome.

**Distance/** 5.4 miles  
**Difficulty:** MODERATE

**Duration:** 3.5 hours

**Bring:** Water, lunch, and snacks if desired. Poles or a walking stick may be helpful, especially at stream crossings.

**Meet:** 10 am. Sleepy Creek WMA Lower Campground parking. From WV 9, take Back Creek Valley Road (CR 7) south 7.3 miles. South of Jones Spring, turn right (west) on CR 7/9 for 6 miles, passing Sleepy Creek WMA office and registration point. At the Y intersection, go right 1.8 miles to the end of the road, within view of the dam.

**Leader:** Chris Craig  
ccraig@laurellodge.com  
304-433-1260

**Nearest town:** Hedgesville, WV

**Cancellation policy:** We will cancel or change plans if substantial rain, snow, or ice is expected and if prior weather results in very muddy trails.

## Monday, January 1, 2024

### DAY HIKE: C&O Canal Towpath, Snyders Landing to Lock 40

Start out 2024 in a healthy and natural fashion with a Potomac-side walk on our favorite towpath. We will meet at Snyders Landing, near the town of Sharpsburg, MD, and make our way to Lock 40 and back. Along this quiet stretch of the C&O, we'll pass fields and farms, river rapids, and cliffs along the opposite shore. Winter views will mean a good chance of seeing raptors and river fowl, and a few ruins will remind us of the devastating flood of 1936. This hike is open to adults and children (accompanied by adults) ready for a winter walk on a level and well-maintained trail. Well-behaved dogs on leashes are welcome. There is no charge for this hike.

**Distance/** 5.6-mile  
**Difficulty:** EASY

**Duration:** 3.5 hours

**Bring:** Water and a substantial snack, and dress appropriately for winter weather.

**Meet:** 10 am. Snyders Landing parking lot and boat ramp. From the intersection of MD 34 and 65, turn north onto 65 and take the first left on Chapline St. At opposite end of Chapline St., turn right on Snyders Landing Road and follow it 1.6 m. to the end.

**Leader:** Chris Craig  
ccraig@laurellodge.com  
304-433-1260

**Nearest town:** Sharpsburg, MD

**Cancellation policy:** We will carry on in light rain or snow but cancel in heavy precipitation or icy conditions.

## Saturday, January 20, 2024

### DAY HIKE: The Appalachian Trail, Chester Gap to Manassas Gap, VA

Our exploration of the Appalachian Trail in Northern Virginia continues with this strenuous but rewarding hike. The hike involves a shuttle, so a reservation is required, and we ask that you let us know if you need to cancel your reservation. This section of the AT includes a 1000-foot ascent on High Knob and a 600-foot climb on a neighboring mountain. Footing is generally good, and we will be rewarded in our efforts with outstanding views from a former pasture atop one of the climbs. The hike is suitable for individuals in good shape. Dress appropriately for a winter walk during which temperatures and conditions could vary. There is no charge for the hike, but contributions are welcome.

**Distance/** 8.2 miles  
**Difficulty:** DIFFICULT

**Duration:** 4.5 hours

**Bring:** Plenty of water, lunch, and perhaps some additional snacks. Hiking poles or a walking stick may be helpful.

**Meet:** 9 am. AT Trailhead parking off VA 725, 0.1 mile north of its junction with VA 55. From I-66, take exit 13 onto VA 55 at Linden.

**Leader:** Chris Craig  
ccraig@laurellodge.com  
304-433-1260

**Nearest town:** Linden, VA

**Cancellation policy:** We will carry on in light rain or snow but cancel if heavy precipitation or icy conditions are expected.



Chicken in the Woods, anyone? On a gorgeous October day, Sierrans stopped to admire this beautiful fungus on their 12-mile hike from Ashby Gap to Manassas Gap, Virginia on the Appalachian Trail. PHOTO BY CHRIS CRAIG.

FAR LEFT: In August, the heat relented enough for fourteen Sierrans to enjoy a hike on Bolivar Heights and Schoolhouse Ridge, Harpers Ferry National Historical Park. Along with some fine views, an interesting mix of meadows and woods, and friendly interaction, the group got a little background on the Civil War significance of the site.

PHOTO BY CHRIS CRAIG.

## Saturday, February 17

### DAY HIKE: Swallow Falls State Park, Oakland, MD

This hike is open to all. Just a bit over a mile long, it goes through an old growth forest and passes by several waterfalls, including Muddy Creek Falls, the highest free-falling waterfall in Maryland. Moderate in difficulty, due to the winter conditions, trails will likely be snow- and ice-covered. However, it is a beautiful hike. We are doing the hike on the same day as Oakland, Maryland's Winterfest, which offers more things to do in the area after a long drive for most hike participants.

- Distance/** 1.5 miles
- Difficulty:** EASY (But with icy trails likely)
- Duration:** 1.5 hours plus time for Winterfest
- Bring:** Water, snacks, and footwear and clothing appropriate for the conditions.
- Meet:** Swallow Falls State Park parking lot, 2470 Maple Glade Road, Oakland, MD
- Leader:** Ken Kendall  
kekendall65@gmail.com  
304-433-9537
- Nearest town:** Oakland, MD
- Cancellation policy:** Due to the long drive in winter, stay in touch with the trip leader for potential cancellations.

## Saturday, February 24

### DAY HIKE: Maryland Heights, Harpers Ferry National Historical Park

In warmer seasons, this trail is overrun with crowds. Yet in the quieter winter months, Maryland Heights offers even better views of the surrounding landscape, and its fortifications and cannonades are clear of summer vegetation. The hike is open to all adults and children (with adult supervision) in shape for a multi-hour hike on steep and sometimes rugged trails. It includes a 1400-foot climb. Along with the Heights' iconic view of Harpers Ferry, the hike will feature some historic and environmental background of the area.

- Distance/** 6.5-mile
- Difficulty:** MODERATELY DIFFICULT
- Duration:** 4 hours
- Bring:** Plenty of water and a sack lunch. Hiking poles or a walking stick may be helpful. Dress in layers for a winter hike's potential for varying temperatures and conditions.
- Meet:** 10 am. Old Shipley School parking lot, 850 Fillmore Street, Harpers Ferry. (Across from Appalachian Trail Conservancy headquarters, this is not Shipley Elementary off US 340.)
- Leader:** Chris Craig  
ccraig@laurellodge.com  
304-433-1260
- Nearest town:** Harpers Ferry, WV
- Cancellation policy:** We will carry on in light rain or snow but cancel in heavy precipitation or icy conditions.



Once again, the Monongahela Group of the Sierra Club entered a scarecrow in the WV Botanic Garden's annual scarecrow contest, which gives area non-profits the chance to advertise their organizations. PHOTO BY BETSY LAWSON.



A rock outcropping made a good lunch stop for Sierrans on a late September hike on the Tuscarora Trail in Berkeley County.  
PHOTO BY CHRIS CRAIG

## Saturday, March 16

### DAY HIKE: C&O Canal Towpath, Paw Paw Tunnel

This hike is open to all. It will be an easy hike on level ground. We will start at the Paw Paw Tunnel parking lot, walking through the tunnel to the Sorrel Ridge hiker/biker campsite. On our return we may go over the tunnel for some good views of the Potomac River.

**Distance/** 4 miles

**Difficulty:** EASY

**Duration:** 2.5 hours

**Bring:** Water, snacks, footwear appropriate for a hike, and a flashlight for our time in the tunnel.

**Meet:** 10 am. Paw Paw Tunnel campground and parking lot, Oldtown Road (MD-51) at the Potomac River

**Leader:** Ken Kendall  
kekendall65@gmail.com  
304-433-9537

**Nearest town:** Paw Paw, WV

**Cancellation policy:** We will cancel if heavy rain or snow is likely.



## Saturday, March 23

### DAY HIKE: Tuscarora and Pee Wee Point Trails, Berkeley County, WV

Continuing our exploration of the Tuscarora Trail in West Virginia, we will hike out-and-back along a forest ridge in Sleepy Creek Wildlife Management Area, with a detour to a scenic overlook at Pee Wee Point. It is suitable for adults and children (with adult supervision) in reasonable shape and able to handle hills and uneven terrain. There is no charge for the hike, but contributions are welcome.

**Distance/** 7-miles  
**Difficulty:** MODERATELY DIFFICULT

**Duration:** 4 hours

**Bring:** Plenty of water and a sack lunch. Hiking poles or a walking stick may be helpful. Dress in layers for an early spring hike's potential for varying temperatures and conditions.

**Meet:** 10 am. Hampshire Grade Road at the Tuscarora Trail. From WV 7 4.5 miles north of Glengary, turn up the hill on Hampshire Grade Road (CR 7/13) and go 4.5 miles to the top. There is parking along the shoulder near the trail intersection.

**Leader:** Chris Craig  
ccraig@laurellodge.com  
304-433-1260

**Nearest town:** Glengary, WV

**Cancellation policy:** We will carry on in light rain or snow but cancel in heavy precipitation or icy conditions.

*A small but hearty group came out in the morning rain and were rewarded with a beautiful October day on the Appalachian Trail. They were joined at the end of their hike by a Flip Flop thruhiker with the trail name Cash Money (second from left). All are still smiling at the end of their 12 miles at Manassas Gap, Virginia.*

The **Mountain State Sierran** is published quarterly by the West Virginia Chapter of Sierra Club and distributed to all paid members — in print (when requested) or electronically. \$1 of each member's annual dues helps offset the cost of producing this newsletter.

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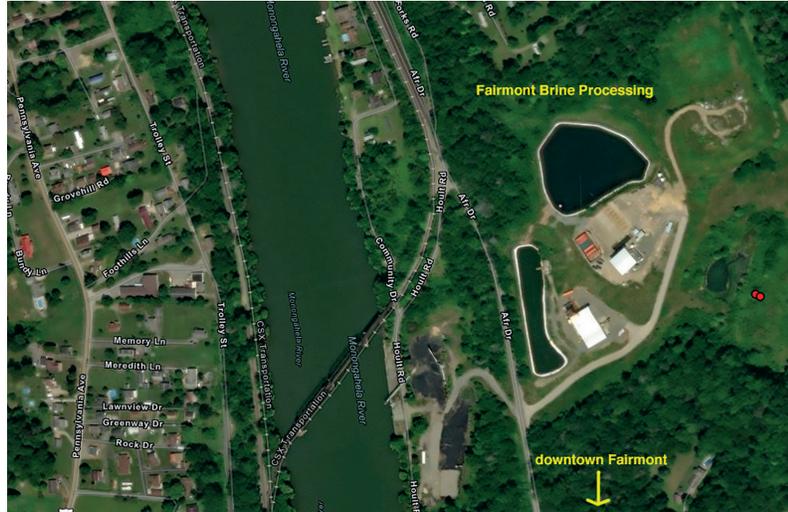
Please contact the Editor for submission guidelines or advertising rates. Contributions to the newsletter may be sent to [ccraig@laurellodge.com](mailto:ccraig@laurellodge.com).

**DEADLINE FOR THE 2024 SPRING ISSUE: FEBRUARY 3, 2024**

Opinions expressed in the *Mountain State Sierran* are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Sierra Club.

Since the discovery of the contamination, local activists and Delegate Evan Hansen (D-Morgantown) have prevailed upon the EPA to at least seal off the site and provide security. Questions about ownership of the site and who has responsibility to deal with the mess have led to delays in action. As of this writing, the EPA Region 3 is taking responsibility to secure the site and open a public phone line and website (<https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-announces-public-phone-line-and-website-residents-fairmont-west-virginia>).

Meanwhile, this past October 13 (a Friday), Appalachian Regional Clean Hydrogen (ARCH<sub>2</sub>) was chosen as one of the seven hydrogen hubs to produce “clean” hydrogen energy due to its unique access to ample, low-cost natural gas. The hydrogen will be produced from the methane of natural gas, leaving behind carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas. This means we’ll see fracking on steroids as the Mountain State remains a sacrifice zone for the energy industry.



NASA image, courtesy of WVDEP.

The radioactive mess in Fairmont screams out how unprepared our state is to treat abandoned and hazardous sites and, more importantly, how unregulated the entire industry is. In the end, the best way to stop these radioactive and chemical-laden wastes from further imperiling communities and the environment is by banning drilling and

fracking everywhere, which would also limit greenhouse gases and slow down our race to climate catastrophe. 🌿

**WEBSITE OF THE EPA REGION 3**

• [tinyurl.com/fairmont-brine](https://tinyurl.com/fairmont-brine)



Enjoy, explore, and protect the planet

**2024 SIERRA CLUB CALENDARS**



**ORDER FORM**

ITEM	COST	QTY	TOTAL
Wilderness Calendar	<input type="checkbox"/> \$15.00	_____	_____
Engagement Calendar	<input type="checkbox"/> \$16.00	_____	_____
Subtotal:			_____
Shipping:			<u>\$7.00</u>
<b>GRAND TOTAL:</b>			_____

*Please make checks payable to "Sierra Club" and mail to the return address shown on your newsletter.*

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# 2024 WV Chapter ExComm Election

The Executive Committee (ExComm) for the West Virginia Chapter of the Sierra Club is the primary decision-making body for the chapter and approves policies, appointments, and budgets. The WV Chapter ExComm consists of seven (7) at-large members elected from among active state members willing to serve a two-year term. Three terms expire in January 2024, and a slate of six (6) is provided, along with their brief statements. Write-in votes are welcome and encouraged if you or a member you know wants to make a difference in our organization. Please consider your choices, mark your ballot, and return it to the designated address postmarked by **January 5, 2024**.

**IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS ABOUT THIS ELECTION,  
PLEASE CONTACT CHRISSY SANDY AT [CNRUNK@GMAIL.COM](mailto:CNRUNK@GMAIL.COM).**

## Candidate Statements

### DAVIS FUNK

MARTINSBURG (BERKELEY COUNTY)

My name is Davis Funk, and I am a senior at WVU, where I am the treasurer of our chapter of the Sierra Student Coalition. I am running for a position in the Executive Committee, as I want to become more involved with the State chapter and directly contribute to the conservation goals of the chapter. As a member of the executive committee, I want to focus on recruiting more members my age to the state chapter. I am also interested in planning outings and leading them. Outside of the Sierra Club I have held officer positions in WVU's chapters of Engineers Without Borders, SIAM, and our Quiz Bowl Team.

### JAMES KOTCON

MORGANTOWN (MONONGALIA COUNTY)

I have been active with the WV Chapter for many years, serving in a variety of capacities. I hope to expand the chapter's outings programs by increasing the number of outings leaders, and I want to work with our new Chapter Director to build outings around conservation issues. Our state faces increasing threats from climate change, yet our political leaders seem oblivious and continue to promote fossil fuels. I want to work with the Club's Community Advocates program to organize members to encourage energy efficiency and renewables in our communities by taking advantage of the federal funding available in recent legislation.

### MAURA ROSS

CHARLES TOWN (JEFFERSON COUNTY)

No statement received.

### DANI PARENT

HUNTINGTON (CABELL COUNTY)

I am currently the Organizing Director at WV Citizen Action Group and the interim coordinator of the WV Climate Alliance. I have also served as a director for the WV Civic Engagement Table and the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition and was formerly a teacher and union leader. I believe strongly that the only force that can affect a timely response to the climate crisis is a grassroots and working-class-centered, intersectional movement. I hope to use my experience in fundraising, campaign planning, advocacy, and organizing to support community-based leadership in the West Virginia Chapter, emphasizing underserved communities and youth.

### BILL PRICE

ROCK CAVE (UPSHUR COUNTY)

I have recently retired after 20 years as a Sierra Club staff member. During that time I served as an organizer, trainer, and manager. I want to expand the leadership development of the WV Chapter and work on a pathway to leadership for new members. I'm very interested in diversity as a chapter goal and particularly interested in how to involve more young people in leadership. I believe that the Chapter should be more engaged with the local communities in West Virginia and involve them more in the strategic direction of the Sierra Club. I also would like to see more collaboration with the surrounding states to form a regional hub with Maryland, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Virginia, and Kentucky chapters.

### KYLE VASS

WAYNE (WAYNE COUNTY)

Hello! I've long had a passion for social justice in West Virginia. Everywhere — but especially in this state — that means fighting for environmental justice. That's why I'd like to help as an ExComm member for WV Chapter of the Sierra Club. Professionally, I'm interested in using my investigative role at the ACLU of WV to research and bring attention to the phenomenon of leaky gas wells. I believe this work will be of interest to the Sierra Club and will help people in the state understand how environmental justice can start in their backyard.

# 2024 WV Chapter of Sierra Club - ExComm Ballot

## ExComm Candidates (vote for up to 3)

_____	<b>Davis Funk</b>	_____	<b>Write-in</b>
_____	<b>James Kotcon</b>	_____	<b>Write-in</b>
_____	<b>Maura Ross</b>	_____	<b>Write-in</b>
_____	<b>Dani Parent</b>	_____	<b>Write-in</b>
_____	<b>Bill Price</b>	_____	<b>Write-in</b>
_____	<b>Kyle Vass</b>	_____	<b>Write-in</b>

**To be counted, ballots must be postmarked by January 5, 2024, and have the membership number visible.**

You may either leave your label attached, optionally crossing out all but your member number, or you may fill in the number from your label here: Membership # \_\_\_\_\_

## VOTING INSTRUCTIONS:

Each individual named on the attached address label is entitled to vote. Single members should use only one column. Joint members may use both columns. To vote, place a mark in the spaces provided for up to three (3) names. After voting, remove the ballot page and EITHER refold the self-mailer, taping all three open sides to reduce jams in USPS sorting machines, OR insert your ballot into a separate envelope and mail to:

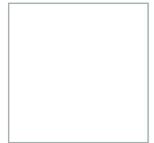
WV Sierra Club Chapter Elections Committee, c/o Chrissy Sandy, PO Box 103, Adrian, WV 26210

FOLD HERE

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



**WV Sierra Club Chapter Elections Committee  
c/o Chrissy Sandy  
PO Box 103  
Adrian, WV 26210**

FOLD HERE



# Sierra Club

West Virginia Chapter

PO Box 4142

Morgantown, WV 26504

[sierraclub.org/west-virginia](http://sierraclub.org/west-virginia)

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

## WINTER 2023

**Official Chapter ExComm Ballot Inside**  
A separate ballot WILL NOT be mailed.  
RETURN POSTMARKED BY JANUARY 5, 2024



This newsletter is printed by HBP, Inc. in Hagerstown, MD on 30% post-consumer, FSC-certified recycled stock, using 0% VOC inks.

# Chapter ExComm Meeting

The next meeting of the WV Chapter of Sierra Club Executive Committee will be held  
**10 am – 4 pm, Saturday, January 13, 2024 at 414 Tyrone Avery Road, Morgantown.**  
A ZOOM option will be available.

Email [sierraclub.wv@gmail.com](mailto:sierraclub.wv@gmail.com) or call 304-594-3322 for more information or to receive the link.

## MEMBERSHIP COUPON

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Contributions, gifts, and dues to the Sierra Club are not tax-deductible; they support our effective citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Annual membership dues of \$25 or more include \$7.50 for a one-year print subscription to Sierra magazine and \$1.00 for your chapter newsletter.

### MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

	INDIVIDUAL	JOINT
INTRODUCTORY	<input type="checkbox"/> \$15	
REGULAR	<input type="checkbox"/> \$39	<input type="checkbox"/> \$49
SUPPORTING	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100
CONTRIBUTING	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150	<input type="checkbox"/> \$175
LIFE	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1,250



F94Q **W 5700** -1

EXPLORE, ENJOY, AND PROTECT THE PLANET

## Public Officials

### U.S. SENATE

Washington, DC 20510

#### The Hon. Joe Manchin (D)

(202) 224-3954  
[manchin.senate.gov](http://manchin.senate.gov)

#### The Hon. Shelley Moore Capito (R)

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