Bullitt County Pipeline Update

LG&E Pipeline Project Threatens Bernheim Forest

Andrew Berry, Director of Conservation, Bernheim Forest

Bernheim and other landowners continue their fight to stop Louville Gas & Electric’s (LG&E) Bullitt County Pipeline. LG&E recently brought Bernheim to trial, claiming that it had the right to take Bernheim’s property for the pipeline. Bernheim argued that LG&E does not have the right to take the property because the property is encumbered by a conservation easement that is held by Kentucky for the benefit of the Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund (KHLCF) Board.

Laws in Conflict

The Eminent Domain Act of Kentucky only allows LG&E to take private property, not public property. Also, once the KHLCF Board approves a conservation project, it is obligated by state law to protect that property in perpetuity. The post-hearing briefing was submitted, and we are awaiting a final decision from the Court.

Recently, the Kentucky Supreme Court also denied Bernheim’s motion for discretionary review to hear a case involving the Public Service Commission’s (PSC) approval of a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity

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The Best Time and Place for Political Contemplation

by Mark Ritter

The Chapter Political Committee decided it is time for an in-person retreat. There are many topics to discuss as we enter the 2023 Kentucky election cycle, including the race for governor. So, we put our heads together and chose the Sisters of Nazareth Retreat Center located in Nazareth as our venue. Go ahead and search the web to peruse the grounds of this 300-acre property, which is dedicated to spiritual contemplation. No matter how you define your spiritual identity, this venue provides the perfect setting to achieve a greater recognition of our intended direction, specifically our preferred political future.

The Political Committee’s retreat will start at noon on Friday, April 7. We will close around noon on Saturday, April 8. The retreat’s agenda is being developed. We intend to have some guests from our last election cycle to help us examine the current political environment. We will get to know Julia Finch, our new Chapter Director, and there will be a discussion on

(continued on page 10)
BACKPACKING THE EASTERN SIERRAS
Welcome to the Bluegrass Group News. We hope you will find an interest in one or more of the activities listed below. Please check the Bluegrass Group website for the latest information and updates, www.siu-club.org/kentucky/bluegrass. You may also contact Joey Shadowen at jshad65@gmail.com or 859-492-6373 with any questions.

Bluegrass General Meetings
Third Monday, March 20, 7:00 PM at Hunter Presbyterian Church “Backpacking the Eastern Sierras.” Experience a ‘Bucket List’ trip to Mt. Whitney in the Inyo National Forest, hearing about challenges to getting a permit, preparing for high altitude hiking and camping, while experiencing the majesty of the Eastern Sierra range and the John Muir Trail in hiking to the highest point in the contiguous United States. Our speaker is Dave Stawicki, an avid and long-time backpacker and current Outing Chair of the Kentucky Chapter. For more information, contact Joey Shadowen at jshad65@gmail.com or 859-492-6373.

Our April meeting will be on the 17th. Join herbalist Lauren Kallmeyer who will talk about the resurgence of herbal medicine and the sustainability implications of its rise in popularity. She will highlight ways to access locally-sourced herbal medicine in Kentucky, as well as things to consider when buying supplements and teas at the grocery store. She will also share her favorite ways to incorporate the healing power of herbs into your daily life.

Executive Committee Meetings on Zoom
First Monday, March 6, 7:00 PM. Everyone is welcome to join in to learn more about our group projects and to become involved in our ongoing activities. For more information and meeting locations you may contact Joey Shadowen at jshad65@gmail.com or 859-492-6373. You may also contact Colleen Kaelin at colleenkaelin@iol.com or 502-395-0947.

Bluegrass Book Group
Third Thursday, March 16, 7:00 PM. This will be our 26th anniversary. Join us for a cordial and often insightful discussion. It will be both in-person and Zoom. The book is “Fen, Bog and Swamp: A Short History of Peatland Destruction and Its Role in the Climate Crisis” by Annie Proulx. Contact Ray Barry for the Zoom link, or for directions, 859-223-0180 or raybarry925@gmail.com.

Dinner Out with Sierrans Group
Fourth Thursdays.
Are you looking for an opportunity to dine out at a local restaurant and socialize with fellow Sierrans? Dinner Out with Sierrans (DOWS) might be for you! Gatherings are held on the 4th Thursday of the month. A monthly email is sent with location and details. If interested in being added to (or removed from) the DOWS mailing list please contact Mary Barry, 859-223-0180 or marywbarry@yahoo.com.

Inspiring Connections Outdoors
Second Monday, March 13, 7:00 PM. The ICO program works with several community organizations to get kids outdoors and connected with nature. There are fun outings scheduled-year-round and volunteers to attend trips with the kids are always needed. Contact Joey Shadowen at jshad65@gmail.com or (859) 492-6373 for more information and meeting location.

Team Meetings in February
• Zero Waste Team: Third Tuesday, March 21, 5:30-7:00 PM on Zoom
• Bluegrass Climate Action Team: Fourth Saturday, March 25, 10:00-11:00 AM by Zoom
For more information and the Zoom link please contact Judith Humble, Chair, at judith.humble@yahoo.com or (859) 576-0002. Text works best for contact by phone.

It Pays to Advertise in The Cumberland
The Cumberland is printed on recycled paper.

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Deadline
Camera ready ad or digital file must be submitted by the first Thursday of the month for the next month’s issue.

For advertising info contact:
Lane Boldman c/o The Cumberland, 2173 Palomar Trace Drive, Lexington, KY. 40503. 859-552-1173

Note: This will be a hybrid meeting, that is, both in-person and virtual. As in the past, once you hit the “RSVP” button, you’ll be taken to the Zoom meeting registration page. If you’re certain you’ll be attending in person, then just ignore that page. But if there’s any chance that you’ll want to attend virtually, then we ask that you go ahead and complete the Zoom registration (this secondary registration enhances security). Whether you register for Zoom or not, you can always
come in person (and we hope you do!). Our meetings are always free and open to the public!

Dr. David Wick is a retired JCPS Environmental Education Coordinator who for 30 years has taught at the University of Louisville. He is chair of the Payne Hollow Board, Vice Chair, and Founder of the Ohio River Way, and in his role as chair of the River City Paddle Sports board, has been a longtime advocate for the restoration of Beargrass Creek.

**Vote for Louisville Sierra Club at Momma’s Mustard, Pickles, & BBQ**

Vote daily for “Louisville Sierra Club” on Momma’s BBQ Website. Momma’s Mustard, Pickles & BBQ donates 2% of its sales to six charitable local organizations. One of these organizations is Greater Louisville Sierra Club. The more votes we get, the greater the proportion of this 2% we get.

Here are three examples of how we have used “Momma’s” money: 1) We’ve funded Bernheim Forest’s innovative educational program, “Restoring Nature’s Classroom.”

2) We’ve awarded Environmental Justice grants to local organizations; and (3) We’ve paid for solar panels on a mobile wellness clinic that targets people who can least afford such a service.

Momma’s BBQ has two locations: 102 Bauer Ave. and 119 S. Hurstbourne Ln. Please patronize these restaurants and thank the staff for selecting GLSC as one of the recipients of Momma’s generosity. The owner is Chad Cooley.

Most of all, please go to https://mommasbbq.com/2-for-louisville/ and vote for Louisville Sierra Club. Thank you!

**STORMWATER RETROFITS**

Northern KY Group Meeting, Monday March 27, 2023, 6:30 - 8 pm.

There is Nothing Retro about the Latest Stormwater Basin Retrofits.

Join us on March 27 from 6:30 pm to 8 pm for a Zoom presentation on Stormwater Retrofits from the Licking River Basin Coordinator Dr. Brian Storz. Dr. Brian Storz is a PhD biologist with some 20 years of experience working in aquatic ecology and is part of the Kentucky Department for Environmental Protection’s Division of Water. This division’s mission is to manage, protect and enhance the quality and quantity of the Commonwealth’s water resources for present and future generations. They accomplish this through various voluntary, regulatory and educational programs.

Brian has spent many years working on biological systems within streams, and now, as a Basin Coordinator, he is moving further ‘upstream’ to assist communities in developing and funding watershed planning, restoration, and preservation efforts in the Licking River Basin. Dr. Storz will be presenting on the latest science behind stormwater detention basin retrofits and how to keep conventional detention basins from doing more harm than good to your local creek.

Check these internet locations for more info about our upcoming events:

- **Northern Kentucky Sierra Club’s Website:** https://www.sierraclub.org/kentucky/northern-kentucky
- **Northern Kentucky Sierra Club’s Meetup:** http://www.meetup.com/Northern-Kentucky-Sierra-Club

It’s also easy to leave us a suggestion or comment or to read posts by others at our Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/groups/NKYSierraClub

**SOLAR ENERGY FOR MARCH**

Steve Hahus was the featured speaker for the Feb. 16 Penryrile Group meeting at the Owensboro Museum of Science and History.

Hahus, who holds a bachelor’s degree in biology and a master’s degree in zoology, is a retired educator, having taught both in high school and at the community college. He continues to serve the Owensboro community by sharing his deep knowledge of the natural world with many local interest groups.

Hahus is a lifelong birder and a backyard beekeeper, which has led to countless hours spent in pollinator habitat. As a result of these experiences, he has created an extensive photo catalog of honey bee forage plants, which was used to great effect in his presentation on bees and other pollinators.

Prior to the meeting, several members joined Hahus for dinner at the Famous Bistro Restaurant, just a few blocks from the OMSH.

The March meeting will also be at the OMSH and will focus on solar energy.

**NEW SPRING HAPPENINGS**

New Spring happenings in Bowling Green! The Mammoth Cave Area group has NEW meeting dates. All Regular and Ex-Com meetings will be held on the 4th Monday of each month. We are meeting at a new place – The Eloise B Houchen’s Center at 1115 Adams St. in Bowling Green. Each meeting will begin with a social 1/2 hour at 6pm, and the Program will begin at 6:50pm.

Find us on Facebook

Check out our NEW FaceBook page with photographer and artist Barbara DeGraves updates of our group’s activities and interests. If you are reading this and are within driving distance, please join us.

**Kentucky Chapter: Who to Call**

**Administrative:**

- **Kentucky Chapter Chair**
  - Drew Foley, 859-377-2141, chair@kentucky.sierraclub.org or Sarah Reeves, Chapter Coordinator, sarah.reeves@kentucky.sierraclub.org
  - 859-377-2144

**Issues:**

- Conservation: Betsy Bennett, 502-228-1870, conservation@kentucky.sierraclub.org

**Climate Action:**

- Sarah Lynn Cunningham, 502-451-2665, greensnc@gmail.com

**Coal/Coal Ash:**

- Kathy Little, 502-448-6333, kathy_little@twc.com

**Energy Efficiency:**

- Ray Barry, 859-223-0180, raybarry925@gmail.com

**Fracking/Pipelines:**

- Mary Miller, 859-858-9983, jomar9983@windstream.net

**Mining/Mountaintop Mining:**

- Alice Howell, 859-420-8092, Lane Baldwin, 859-552-1173, mtr@kentucky.sierraclub.org

**Wildlands/Wilderness:**

- Vacant. Send inquiries to chair@kentucky.sierraclub.org

**National and State Forests:**

- Lane Baldwin, 859-552-1173, lanebald@gmail.com

**Legal:**

- Randy Strobo, 502-417-0781, legal@kentucky.sierraclub.org

**Legislative:**

- **Chair:** Mark Ritter, Legislative Agent: Lane Baldwin, legislation@kentucky.sierraclub.org

**Political:**

- Tom Morris, 270-438-0054, political@kentucky.sierraclub.org

**Recreation/Outings:**

- Dave Stawicki, 859-293-0712, outings@kentucky.sierraclub.org

**Media/Public Relations:**

- Lane Baldwin: 859-552-1173, pr@kentucky.sierraclub.org

For more information on committees, issues, and leaders, visit our website at www.sierraclub.org/kentucky
...Group News

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teeing to Re-Tree our city, please contact ReTreeBG Volunteer Chair Vivienne Strauss at vivstrauss@gmail.com or ReTreeBG chair, Clara Verst at claraverst@aol.com. Contact either of these persons for time and area of the city where the trees will be given away.

Join us for our March Meeting!
Our March Regular meeting on MONDAY the 27th, will be a combination Ex-Com planning meeting and work/planning session for up-coming Earth Day on April 22. At this writing, we are just formulating how we can collaborate with Wild Ones, Lost River Cave, WKU, SKYCTC and others to make Earth Day a true celebration in Bowling Green. Please join us! Always watch our Facebook page.

A Time to Give! Watch for Your “March Window”

A Time to Support Your Local Sierra Club Chapter

March 2023 is an exciting time for Kentucky Sierrans: college basketball is reaching its climax, spring is arriving, national Sierra Club has a new executive director (Ben Jealous), Kentucky Chapter has its first chapter director (Julia Finch), and you’ll be receiving a letter requesting donations to Kentucky Chapter. Oh, wait…that last one is not exciting at all. Hopefully, however, those first four items got you in the mood to respond very positively to the last one!

Kidding aside, it truly does feel like a special, even transformational, time for us. And we do need your financial support to both retain top-notch talent and to fulfill our mission of protecting Mother Earth’s life-sustaining gifts here in Kentucky: air, water, soil, land, and our fellow creatures.

So, when you receive that snazzy Sierra Club envelope, please give as your heart moves you.

The Journey Begins:
A Note From the Chapter Director

by Julia Finch

Greetings from Sierra Club Kentucky’s first Chapter Director! I am excited to join you in fulfilling the Sierra Club’s mission: to explore, enjoy, and protect the wild places of the earth, especially Kentucky’s wilderness; to practice and promote the responsible use of the earth’s ecosystems and resources; and to educate and enlist humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environment. In my first month on the job, I have been overwhelmed by your generous Sierran spirit and your passion for environmental issues and ensuring access to wild spaces for all Kentuckians. I have learned so much and met many environmental leaders across the state, and I am just at the beginning of my journey! Thank you all for welcoming me with open arms and enthusiasm. I know that together we will do great things.

In my role as Chapter Director, I will focus on strengthening and expanding our grassroots volunteer network across the state through more frequent and targeted outreach and communications. I will uphold the Sierra Club’s core values of anti-racism, balance (with nature and between humans), collaboration, justice, and transformation.

Core Values
As my first year as Chapter Director unfolds, you will hear from me on the significance of each of these core values as they relate to our ultimate purpose of caring for our lovely little corner of this planet so that future generations may benefit from the healing power of nature. My work will always center people and relationships, and I hope to amplify the voices that are already crying out for climate justice, especially those raised by people of color and Indigenous people, who are among the strongest defenders of our planet.

Nature’s Beauty
I came to this position from a career in arts, non-profits and higher education. A few years ago, a family member gifted me a t-shirt with the saying, “You can’t spell ‘earth’ without ‘art’!” This saying continues to motivate me and reflects the merging of two of my greatest passions. From pre-historic images of animals and early human handprints found on the walls of caves to contemporary environmental art, humans have always been inspired by nature’s beauty and complexity. I believe that our inherent curiosity and creativity will continue to spark innovation as we work to restore our planet’s health and minimize our ecological footprint.

Connection is Key
In the coming months, I will be inviting all Sierra Club Kentuckians to join me for state-wide Zoom meetings where you can meet community leaders working on issues that affect us all: clean air and water, forest restoration, clean energy, and climate change. This summer, I will make a tour across the state to introduce myself to local groups, visit natural landmarks, and hear more from members about what you feel are the most urgent issues facing Kentuckians.

An Open Invitation
The need for local citizen leaders for the environment is greater now than ever before, and I invite you to join us as we continue the fight to protect Kentucky’s wild places and work towards climate justice for all Kentuckians. Let’s get to work!

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The Life of White Oaks and Bourbon Barrels

by Dave Cooper

To be called Bourbon, whiskey must be aged in new, charred barrels, usually made of white oak, which gives bourbon its amber color and much of its distinctive vanilla and caramel flavor. Driving through Bardstown, it is astonishing to see how many new rickhouses (the warehouses for storing bourbon as it ages) are being built. And not only in Bardstown: the bourbon boom is bringing a lot of tourists – and their money – into Kentucky.

As an official Sierra Club tree hugger, I can’t help but be concerned about the current rate of logging of white oak trees for whiskey barrels. It seems pretty unsustainable. To learn more about the barrel-making industry, Patty and I toured the Kentucky Cooperage in Lebanon. It is a division of International Stave Company, a family-owned company that has recently opened a plant north of Morehead. The stacks of wood aging outside these factories are enormous.

On the factory tour, we watched workers building barrels by hand, inserting the barrel staves into hoops, fitting the wooden staves together perfectly, steam them so the wood can bend, and then charring the insides with open flames. The smell of the toasted wood was delicious. The tour was interesting, and the plant provides about 450 hard-working Kentuckians with jobs on two shifts. The Lebanon cooperage is cranking out barrels as fast as they can – exactly how many is proprietary information – but there are currently about 12 million barrels of whiskey aging in Kentucky, and most bourbon is aged between 4 to 6 years. So every year roughly 2 to 3 million white oak barrels are needed to supply the Kentucky bourbon industry.

We learned that the slow-growing white oak trees are about 80 to 100 years old when they are cut for barrel staves. The wood has to be almost perfect so that it seals properly. No glue or fasteners are used in making whiskey barrels, and the staves are perfectly machined so that they fit together watertight. Cooperages only use the part of the tree, because that’s the part without knots (knots or splits will make a barrel leak).

Our tour guide said that one tree provides enough wood to make about two barrels. So – a very rough estimate – every year at least 1 million 100-year-old white oak trees are logged to make bourbon. That is a scary thought. How long before we run out of white oak trees? Even if they are re-planting millions of white oak seedlings today, it will be 100 years before they can be harvested. And the bourbon boom continues to grow, with more distilleries coming online and more rickhouses being built.

Once the bourbon is finished aging, barrels cannot be reused for making bourbon; many are shipped to Scotland to make Scotch. There are a lot of picky rules and federal legal requirements for making bourbon, and you can learn about them by visiting any of the distilleries. The tours are fun and you get a tasting at the end. Buffalo Trace in Frankfort has a free tour that is very popular.

On the Kentucky cooperage tour I was struck by the fact that wooden barrel-making (an ancient art) is still being practiced in Kentucky. In fact, it is a very big industry. In the old days, wooden barrels were one of the only practical ways to store large quantities of beer, oil, fish or nails. Apparently, one of my ancient ancestors was a cooper, so as a Cooper, I felt a small personal connection to this business, and some pride. Barrel making is hard, physical labor, and although the cooperage in Lebanon is automated, there are still workers rolling 100-pound barrels and banging hoops onto wooden staves with big hammers. They have impressive biceps.

In the visitor center of the cooperage, there were some displays about how the forests are sustainably logged and managed. We were told that there is “more white oak today than 50 years ago.” Nice factoid, but small trees aren’t the same thing as mature trees.

Our tour guide said they buy white oak from 27 states, and mentioned the Ozarks as a favored area. But logging on hilly slopes leads to soil erosion, and soil builds back slowly. On steep slopes I have heard that it takes as much as 10,000 years just to build one inch of topsoil. Our creeks and streams below logging sites in hilly areas are full of sediment, which is also known as topsoil. Once it has washed away, it’s gone, for geologic time.

Our beloved Kentucky forests are slowly being degraded: trees that grow back on previously logged sites have to contend with the invasive species that come charging in, soil compaction and depleted topsoil — so the trees are less healthy. If an oak tree has an insect infestation or disease, it might be hollow or perforated with holes, so it could not be used to make bourbon barrels.

All the leaders in the bourbon industry are undoubtedly concerned about the current consumption of white oak trees, and they should be. Undoubtedly there are some important people wondering if the laws could be changed so that used barrels can be reused to make bourbon. This could be a marketing opportunity for a smart distillery: they could label it as “forest-friendly” bourbon. Reusing barrels would help the industry buy some time while the new white oak trees are growing.

If the shortage of white oak for barrels ever becomes too severe, the scarcity of bourbon will drive prices sky-high and people will once again start drinking vodka or Canadian whiskey or rum.

After the tour, I mused about the possibility of making bourbon in blue plastic barrels: they could use vanilla flavor and artificial caramel color, like Coca-Cola. Oh, the heresy!

Dave Cooper, a longtime SC volunteer activist, lives in Lexington and is a member of the Bluegrass Group. He plans alternative spring breaks for students and is an artist - Kentucky Pallet Artist.
We spent most of January in Quartzsite, AZ. Quartzsite is the location for the Rubber Tramp Rendezvous and The Big Tent, as well as many gem shows and swap meets.

Named for the quartz that was found in the area, Quartzsite is a small town with a population of 2,413 (2020 census). However, up to 2 million visitors come to Quartzsite each winter, approximately 1 million of whom take advantage of dispersed camping available on the thousands of acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land and in the long-term visitor areas that surround the town.

As you enter Quartzsite, you’ll notice that the welcome sign has camels on it. And as you drive through town, many of the businesses have pictures or statues of camels; there is even a place for camel rides. What is up with the camels?

As it turns out, in the 1850s the U.S. government started the U.S. Camel Corps, an experiment to find out if camels could do a better job than mules of transporting supplies across the southwest desert. The Great Camel Experiment didn’t work out, especially with the break of the Civil War. Some of the camels were sold to zoos and circuses, but many were set free to fend for themselves and roamed in the Quartzsite area for many years. More in-depth information about the Quartzsite camels can be found online.

Quartzsite also has The Big Tent – a large RV trade show in late January. In addition to being able to buy RVs and all things related to RVs (and a number of things not related to RVs), you can also find workamping (camping while working) jobs at The Big Tent. Some of the larger concessionaires (Thousand Trails, America Land & Leisure, Digikey, etc.) have booths where you can find more information and fill out applications. Some were even holding interviews and hiring on the spot.

The Home on Wheels Alliance (HOWA, www.howa.org) is a charitable 501(c)3 nonprofit organization whose mission is “Together we are changing lives, building community and preventing homelessness one person at a time.” They are doing this by: helping people move into safe and
secure “mobile dwellings;” holding “van builds,” where volunteers help people build out their vans so they can live comfortably in them; providing emergency assistance funds; and providing opportunities for people to learn more about the nomad lifestyle from others.

Many new nomads can feel alone and overwhelmed by the challenges of living on the road. One way HOWA helps out is by organizing Caravans, locations where a group of nomads can camp together on BLM land. The locations move every two weeks, keeping within the BLM restrictions, and the new locations are posted on the HOWA website. The Caravan locations are marked with a flag and usually there is a greeter at each Caravan.

Another way HOWA connects and educates nomads is by organizing The Rubber Tramp Rendezvous (RTR), a week-long event featuring talks and seminars on the nomad lifestyle. It is held in January in Quartzsite and is free to attend. The RTR was started in 2010 by Bob Wells, president of HOWA. The first RTR was attended by less than 100 people and as word has spread it is now attended by thousands. In 2019, a Women’s RTR was added, which is entirely staffed and attended by women, and includes topics specifically geared towards women. This year, the Women’s RTR was Jan. 7-12 and the regular RTR was held Jan. 13-20. Some of the topics covered this year included: Solar Basics, Mexico Travel, Basic Vehicle & RV Maintenance, How to Find Boondocking, How to Find a Workamping Job, Women’s Safety, Women’s Hygiene and more. This year also included a viewing of the movie Nomandland and a Q&A session with some of the nomads featured in the movie. All the talks are recorded and eventually posted on the HOWA website. The RTR is entirely run by volunteers – about 350 volunteers this year and I was one of them. My job was to staff the sweepstakes table in the afternoons, answering questions and helping people use a laptop on site to enter the sweepstakes.

We plan to attend the WRTR and the RTR again next year.

Terese Pierskalla has been traveling and workamping in a 17ft Casita travel trailer since Feb. 2022. She has been a member of the Bluegrass Group since 1990.
Community-Wide Solar Projects Expand In Kentucky for 2023

Watch for Upcoming “Solarize” Projects in Louisville, Lexington and Frankfort

by Steve Ricketts, Kentucky Solar Energy Society

From one came many, that is certainly the case for Kentucky community-wide solar projects, or Solarize, in 2023!

In 2022 Louisville Metro, The Kentucky Solar Energy Society (KYSES) and the Louisville Sustainability Council (LSC) launched the movement with “Solar Over Louisville” (SOL).

SOL resulted in 10% - 20% discounts on typical street solar prices and paired homeowners up with a highly vetted best of the best solar installer. 92 new homes joined the clean energy revolution, with close to 1MW of solar added and 500 kWh of batteries placed into service. The biggest ever single solar project in Jefferson County and the #3 community solar campaign in the US last year. What a stunning first-time effort!

At KYSES we saw this amazing result as a bright sign that we are onto a truly game-changing idea, and we need to urgently grow access to grassroots discounted solar as fast as we possibly can. With that aim in mind, we have for the past few months been working with other major Bluegrass cities and have just announced the expanded class of 2023! Solar Over Louisville 2023, Solarize Lexington 2023 and Solarize Frankfort 2023.

Solar Gaining Momentum

Combined, these cities, and for Louisville their surrounding counties cover fully one third of this state’s population. A population that now has access to Solarize campaigns where all the pre-work of screening vendors, negotiating sharp prices and finding the best materials has been done for you by a trusted, informed and expert solar non-profit.

Supporting Energy Equity

In addition to increasing the pace of statewide solar adoption, Solarize is designed to foster the growth of our young solar industry, support the growth of local solar trades skills training and increase the equitable adoption of solar across all communities and income groups. Specifically on the equity front, both Louisville and now Lexington projects have built in approaches to significantly increase the penetration of solar into low and moderate income (LMI) communities.

Launching in March

All three cities are in the final stages of installer selection and will debut together by the first week of March latest. On public launch homeowners, small businesses, non-profits, places of worship or agricultural operations can sign-up for a no obligation review of solar suitability and a custom priced proposal. And to be clear, with zero sales pressure and 100% confidence you will be dealing with the cream of the crop professional and ethical installers. All others have already been shown the door.

Help Spread the Word!

Starting at the end of February KYSES, the host cities and the selected installers will be running a full marketing campaign to easily connect people with their local campaign, publicize Solar 101 information events and fill you in on the progress of your local group. Keep an eye on KYSES Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/KentuckySolarEnergySociety/) web pages (www.kyses.org) and routine mailings for more updates. And while you are there, think about joining KYSES and showing your support for the volunteers who are spending their private time make these big changes happen.
Highlights from Chapter Executive Committee’s January 21st Meeting

New ExCom member. The committee welcomed new ExCom member Margaret Stewart, from Louisville.

New Chapter Director. Our new Chapter Director, Julia Finch, participated in the meeting. She is still in training but is looking forward to being a liaison between National and the Chapter to share resources and to educate. She also hopes to connect regularly with the membership.

Chapter Coordinator Sarah Reeves encouraged Chapter leaders to take the training modules offered in the Onboarding program through Campfire (Sierra Club’s website for leaders). Year-end donations were good, soliciting for both the Political Action Committee and the Chapter did not negatively affect Chapter donations.

2023 Chapter officers. The following were approved: Drew Foley, Chair; Tom Morris Vice Chair; Barbara Hedspeth, secretary; and Mary Lowe, treasurer. There were no new committee chairs.

Treasurer’s report and budget. Mary Lowe reported our finances are in good shape. Drew, Joey Shadowen, Mary Lowe, and Dave Stawicki worked on the budget for 2023. There are no major changes, but there are added expenses due to the new chapter director position. The Chair delayed a vote to approve the 2023 budget until later in the meeting.

2023 Annual Gathering. A committee was formed to plan this meeting which will be held at Rough River Dam State Resort Park, November 10-12. Joey will chair the committee, and it will try to incorporate ideas and comments from 2022’s post-annual meeting survey.

Expenditure approvals. The ExCom voted approval of the following expenditures:

• $1,000 deposit to Rough River State Park for the 2023 Annual Gathering.
• Not more than $1,000 for Hank Graddy’s transportation and lodging when he attends the Food, Not Feed Summit, co-sponsored by Sierra Club, in Washington D.C., February 7th and 8th. While there, Hank also hopes to visit KY representatives Andy Barr, James Comer, and others to discuss the Farm Bill.
• $2,000 in expenses to help cover the costs of an overnight April retreat for the Political Committee. The purpose is to evaluate the first year of the Political Action Committee (PAC) and to make plans for the 2023-24 elections.
• The 2023 budget, as presented earlier in the meeting, was approved.

Sponsoring a conference. In response to a request from Hank, Drew said we can spend $250 to sponsor a table at the Black Farmers of KY Conference on March 3rd and 4th in Bowling Green. Hank will be attending. Others are welcome to register.

Legislative update. Mark Ritter, our Legislative Chair, stressed the importance of being involved in the work of the legislature during this session. You can find information on bills at the KY Conservation Committee website, the KY Resources Council website, and in Google Docs. He would like to have one legislative chair in each Group.

Group/Committee Reports:

• Northern KY Group is working on the problem of air pollution generated from a scrap metal facility in the area. The EPA will be installing air quality sensors in Newport. The Group is also working with Ohio’s Miami Group to consider the environmental impact of the proposed new companion bridge to the Brent Spence Bridge connecting KY to Cincinnati.
• Greater Louisville Group reported there is a growing coalition supporting Bernheim Forest’s efforts to ban the gas pipeline that is proposed to go through part of its property.
• Fracking Chair (Mary Miller) reported on the opposition to LG&E-KU’s proposal to build two gas plants, one in Mercer County and one in Jefferson County.
...Political (from page 1)

lessons learned from campaign 2022.

One critical topic is the appropriate environmental message to connect with voters who have opposed or are ambivalent toward issues that seem so obvious to us.

For example, what does the rise in ocean temperatures mean to you? Do you believe the coal industry suppressed economic development in eastern Kentucky to keep wages down? Are these questions truths to voters? How does the Kentucky Chapter promote sustainable economic development?

What do you fear in our message?

We will also review the revised 2022 campaign plan to engage our own members to get out the vote in 2023 and again in 2024. Ultimately, we ask how these complex issues are communicated to win an election.

Those are some heavy questions, and we won’t find all the answers in 24 hours, but we will build better relationships and enjoy a few good meals together. We will take a walk in the woods, which is always rejuvenating. Also, this date is Good Friday, a dark time of despair and confusion. However, the faithful held on and kept working knowing there can be a change for the better. I’m really looking forward to visiting the Nazareth Retreat Center. The science says we must overcome, and surely our neighbors are not totally oblivious to that truth. Please join us if this journey interests you.

Check the Chapter’s website for registration information, if you would like to attend. Overnight accommodations are available at a very reasonable price.

Mark Ritter, a Sierra Club lifetime member, is the political chair for the Bluegrass Group and legislative chair for the Chapter. He is retired from careers with the Kentucky Department for Environmental Protection and the US Army Reserve holding the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

...Pipeline (from page 1)

Earth Day 2023

The global Earth Day organizer EarthDay.org declared the theme for 2023 to be “Invest in Our Planet.” If you are looking for earth day activities this year, here are some that we found in Kentucky. Search for these events on-line for more details.

- **April 15 10:00AM – 2:00PM Earth Day Park Cleanup.** Big Bone Lick State Historic Site, Union, KY 859-384-3522. Arrive at 9:45 in the picnic area.
- **April 14 - 16 Camper Earth Day Weekend.** Blueticks Battlefield State Resort Park, Carlisle, KY 859-289-5507. The park will be providing our campers with many awesome crafts, activities, hikes, canoe trips and music to celebrate Earth Day. The focus will be on learning how to improve the environment for all to enjoy and even do a community clean-up.
- **April 15 11:00AM – 6:00PM Wildhair Studio’s Rock Shop in conjuction with Empowered Solutions for Environmental Sustainability.** Wildhair Studio’s Rock Shop, Paducah, KY. Upcycled jewelry – Bring your broken and mismatched jewelry pieces and convert them into a charm bracelet. Make candles from beeswax. Learn about textiles and their relationship to microplastics. Learn about the issues with plastics and how you can help.
- **April 15 Reforest the Bluegrass.** Hisle Park, Lexington, Tree planting.
- **April 22 1:00PM – 3:00PM Northern Kentucky University Research and Education Field Station.** Guided hikes of the St. Anne Wetlands and Nature activities at the Field Station.
- **April 21-23 American Indian Heritage Weekend.** Cumberland Falls State Resort Park 606-528-4121. Educational programs, hands-on workshops, authentic crafts vendors, art and poetry, music.

Endangered Species

Lastly, in response to Kentucky Resources Council and the Center for Biological Diversity’s Notice of Intent to sue letter under the Endangered Species Act to the Army Corps of Engineers and U.S. Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife has requested that the Army Corps reinitiate consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife to comply with the Endangered Species Act, especially to consider threatened and endangered bat species and their habitat. That has put the Clean Water Act Section 404 (dredge and fill) permitting for the project on hold for now. Approval under Section 404 is one of the authorizations LG&E must have before it can begin construction.

Your Support is Needed to ACT

There continue to be many moving parts to this saga, and if LG&E succeeds in the condemnation trial, will not be able to build the pipeline anytime soon. Bernheim and the other affected property owners appreciate everyone’s support, and encourage everyone to continue contacting your local, state, and federal government officials to oppose the pipeline. More information about the fight can be found at https://bernheim.org/forestunderthreat/ and https://savebernheimnow.org/.

Andrew Berry is the Director of Conservation for Bernheim Forest and Arboretum.

Kentucky Chapter has a new phone system and new phone numbers! Please take note!

Chapter main office: 859-377-2144
Chapter chair: 859-377-2141

Apologies for not having had a working number for so long.
Your Choice of Toilet Paper Can Make a Difference

by Mary Miller

Several years ago, I began purchasing 100% recycled toilet paper. It seemed like another way to help the environment, but I didn’t give much more thought to it. However, during the pandemic I received emails about toilet paper destroying the boreal forest. Perhaps the concern about the forest became a larger issue because of the great demand for toilet paper during the pandemic.

I did some research and had no trouble when I Googled toilet paper and the environment. Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) provided most of the information although there were references to blogs and “America’s Heavy Toilet Paper Usage Contributing to Global Warming” by Ellen Wulfhorst of the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

To understand the impact of toilet paper production on the boreal forest, it is important to realize the significance of the boreal forest, which is located just below the Arctic Circle and covers 1 billion acres across Scandinavia, Russia, China, Alaska and Canada and one-half million acres of wetlands. This area is home to indigenous communities, a nesting ground for migratory birds, and home to other forms of wildlife. It stores about 230 billion tons of Carbon dioxide—12% of the world’s carbon storage.

It is not surprising that the United States, which has 4% of the world’s population, uses 20% of all toilet paper. Most of our toilet paper comes from the boreal forest in Canada. According to “The Issue with Tissue 2.0—How the Tree to Pipeline Fuels Our climate Crisis” by NRDC, “a significant portion of virgin wood fiber from 1 million acres of Canadian boreal forest clear cut every year goes to large American toilet paper producers.” It doesn’t take much imagination to envision what destruction does to indigenous communities, nesting areas, wildlife habitat, and release of carbon.

In one article written by the NRDC, the Forest Products Association of Canada disagreed with some of the information, stating that “they log sustainably and replace trees they log.” However, new trees cannot replace old growth trees. It is ironic also that Canada, despite claiming it harvests the boreal forest sustainably, has opposed the New York Deforestation Free Procurement Act, which requires the state to consider protection of the climate and the rights of indigenous groups when it makes purchases.

One reason the soft wood of the boreal forest is in such demand is that it is used for “soft” toilet paper. The toilet paper from hardwoods such as oaks and maples is not as luxurious. The chemicals used to create the toilet paper are also toxic. The good news is there are alternatives that are much more environmentally responsible, and by using them, toilet paper companies will get the message.

According to the Forest Stewardship Council, Green Forest, Earth First, 7th Generation, and Trader Joe’s brand are the top products. (I have been using Simple Truth toilet paper from 100% recycled paper. It is about half the price of 7th Generation, but I didn’t find any information on how it compares in quality and sustainability with the products recommended by the Forest Stewardship Council.) Using toilet paper and other paper products from post-consumer recycled paper, according to NRDC, cuts emissions by about a third compared to virgin pulp and will make used paper much more marketable. There are still some toxins used in processing toilet paper from recycled paper, but the process is not as damaging.

Proctor and Gamble, Kimberly Clark, and Georgia Pacific Companies have not made toilet paper from recycled paper. However, Kimberly Clark says it will begin in 2025. We need to encourage all of them to make changes.

In addition to toilet products made from recycled paper, there are products made from bamboo, wheat and straw. Also, an alternative to toilet paper is the bidet.

Last, but not least, be good stewards when using your toilet paper!

Find an Outing

Even though The Cumberland is our main vehicle for communicating upcoming outings with our members, there are additional – digital – ways that you can find out about what’s coming up:

Webpage - https://www.sierrachub.org/kentucky

This webpage is everything Sierra & Kentucky, and, if you scroll the page down to near the bottom, you will find a list of events and outings to choose from. Click on any event to find out much more about it, oftentimes there is more detail than what we can print here. For outings, there is sometimes an option to sign-up right from the event description in addition to reading and signing the participant agreement. The opportunity to get more information, and even see an added event or two, makes this a good resource.

Some group events are also listed here, or you can ask your local group if they have a webpage you can check for events. (HINT: at the top of the Chapter home page you can click on LOCAL GROUPS. Here you find a list of the local Sierra in Kentucky and whether we currently have a link to their webpage.)

Facebook - https://www.facebook.com/KySierraClub/

Many of the Chapter events and outings are duplicated here, though the descriptions may be shortened for space and ease of browsing. If you see an event that you are interested in you can always check to see if the Chapter webpage has more details, or call/email the contact listed to get more information. Note that each group in Kentucky has an independent Facebook page where you can go for more information on that Group.

MeetUp – At this time Northern Kentucky Group posts its outings on MeetUp so you can check there for N. KY events.

Local Group Newsletter and Meetings

Some Groups have webpages that list their events, but meeting your local leaders face to face and interacting with other Sierrans is a great way to find out about events, outings and activities occurring in your own backyard.

In all cases, we still recommend that you contact the leader or organizer of an activity you would like to participate in to become fully aware of its details.

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Upcoming Activities

March 2023

March 4 (Saturday) Outdoor Afro/Sierra Club Clifty Falls Outing, Madison IN. We look forward to hike with the Outdoor Afro community out to Clifty Falls State Park in Madison, Indiana – an hour’s drive from Louisville! It has pretty waterfalls that will be perfect to check out in the early spring! We will be doing a 3.2 mile hike over rocks along the creek bed with some views of the falls. The hike will take about 2 hours, but we will also eat lunch during the hike – so plan on the hike taking 3 hours total and bring your lunch. We’ll be hiking leisurely so we can accommodate people with different hiking abilities. Cost: There is a $7 entrance fee for each car so plan on carpooling! Please sign-up online at www.sierraclub.org/kentucky which will allow you to register for the outing and sign the required waiver!
Level: Easy
Leader: Priya Alexander, priyaalex1@gmail.com, (502) 445-3198, and Terrell Holder, thholder@bellsouth.net, (502) 649-0139.

March 11 (Saturday) Trail Service at Clifty Falls, Madison IN. This is a beautiful 213-acre nature preserve in SE Kenton County, just west of the Licking River. Northern KY Sierra Club blazed nature trails at Morning View Heritage Area 2016-21. Now we keep the trails trimmed, cleared and well-marked. Volunteers can use Sierra Club’s tools (manual loppers and weed whips) or bring their own tools, but we’re not permitted to use power tools like chainsaws. The work is light, casual and self-paced. We hike as we work. RSVP by phone or email the leader or through Northern Kentucky Sierra Club’s MeetUp by 5pm Fri Mar 10: https://www.meetup.com/northern-kentucky-sierra-club/events/290855502/. Be sure to read and sign the online waiver (link at the end of the list of outings).
Level: Moderate
Leader: John Robbins, john@johnfrob-bins.com, (859) 363-0376.

April 2023

April 1 (Saturday) Trail Service at Morning View Heritage Area. This is a 213-acre nature preserve in SE Kenton County, just west of the Licking River. Northern KY Sierra Club blazed nature trails at Morning View Heritage Area 2016-21. Now we keep the trails trimmed, cleared and well-marked. Volunteers can use Sierra Club’s tools (manual loppers and weed whips) or bring their own tools, but we’re not permitted to use power tools like chainsaws. The work is light, casual and self-paced. We hike as we work. RSVP by phone or email the leader or through Northern Kentucky Sierra Club’s MeetUp by 5pm Fri Mar 10: https://www.meetup.com/northern-kentucky-sierra-club/events/290855502/. Be sure to read and sign the online waiver (link at the end of the list of outings).
Level: Moderate
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Help Us Expand Our Outings Program

by Dave Stawicki

John Muir inspired many folks with his stories and descriptions of nature and the beauty of the outdoors. He got them hooked on these same attributes by taking the time to guide them in outdoor adventures, primarily in the Sierra Nevada mountains.
As disciples of Muir, and members of the Sierra Club here in Kentucky, we have the opportunity to impact our friends, neighbors and co-workers by offering them opportunities to visit the great and small places in our state that inspire us. In short, we can lead outings to let people experience what words are just too incapable of truly describing.
I’d like to invite YOU to become an Outing Leader with the Cumberland Chapter and help others “explore, enjoy and (ultimately) protect the wild and natural areas” of Kentucky. Where? Wherever you find solace, beauty and inspiration. Your passion for a ‘natural’ Kentucky will become the seed that others will see and want to take part in.

The requirements are few: Be a Sierra Member over 18 yrs. old; be certified in Basic First Aid; and learn how to lead an outing safely. The Cumberland Chapter can help you in meeting these requirements, especially in planning and leading outings. We are constantly planning our outings and would very much like to include you in those plans. Take the plunge, share your favorite outdoor areas, spread the conservation ethic and meet new friends.

To find out more about being an Outing Leader, contact: Dave Stawicki, dave.stawicki@gmail.com, or (859) 293-0712.

The Cumberland Chapter’s Outings Program exists primarily to make participants aware of the natural areas and resources the Sierra Club works so hard to preserve. Outings provide a valuable source of fun and relaxation. The Kentucky Chapter’s Outings Program is managed by the chapter. Any donations to support this program are appreciated but not required. Each leader serves in a volunteer capacity. Each participant must get permission from the trip leader to attend the trip. Outings will take place regardless of weather unless otherwise specified. If you are unable to attend an outing which you have signed up for, please have the courtesy to inform the outings leader as soon as possible. Pets, smoking, radios and guns are not allowed on trips. Guests and children are always welcome. If you have any questions about our outings program, or publicizing any outings, please contact the Cumberland Chapter Outings Chair Dave Stawicki at 859-293-0712 or davestawicki@gmail.com. Happy Trails!!!