

Oklahoma Sierran

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SOLVING GLOBAL WARMING ONE CITY AT A TIME

by Nancy Smart



The Oklahoma Building Environmental Communities (BEC) Campaign is jumping into the fight against global climate change, and we will be enlisting local Sierra Club members and their friends in towns across the state. Our objective is to influence Oklahoma's mayors to sign the Mayor's Climate Protection Agreement and to move their cities and towns towards greener and more climate friendly practices.

The BEC steering committee will be contacting Sierra Club members in Oklahoma towns where our membership is ten or more. We will invite these members to meet with us to talk about their town, current local practices that effect climate alteration, and attitudes of town leaders and citizens toward the idea of reducing global warming. We will ask them to share their ideas and discuss plans to work together toward making their town a "Cool City."

This action will begin in one or two cities

then progress to others. Please be thinking about what might be done to reduce your town's contribution to global warming and how your mayor could be encouraged to sign the Mayor's Climate Protection Agreement. Consider joining the BEC steering committee, working with us on the tasks involved in this undertaking, or contacting us about your town's status as a "Cool City".

You can reach us by calling the Sierra Club Office at 405-521-0345. Email our Organizer, Billie Brown at billie.brown@sierraclub.org, Nancy Smart, BEC Chair, at nsmart1@yahoo.com, or Martha Holland, Membership Chair, at marthaholland@sbqglobal.net. Contact us by mail at Sierra Club, Oklahoma Chapter, P.O. Box 60644, Oklahoma City, OK 73046-0644, attention BEC.

PRIMARY ELECTION . . . SOME WINS AND SOME LOSSES

by Charles Wesner

This year the Sierra Club's Oklahoma Chapter has put major energy and resources into four major primary campaigns. As a rule of thumb we would prefer to avoid primary campaigns. Often the choices of candidates are not clearly differentiated and the effort can be divisive. But sometimes the choices are very stark and clear as in the case of several of our candidates who were endorsed early this year.

Cal Hobson, Norman, lost his bid in the Democratic primary race for Lt. Governor. Cal had a long and distinguished career in the State Senate and was a great friend of the environment and the Sierra Club. Red Earth Sierra Clubbers worked very hard and were bitterly disappointed with the loss of Tim Emrich to John Sparks in the primary primary run-off in Senate District 16. Tim lost a hard fought campaign by a mere 72 votes, was out spent 2 to 1 and suffered from a vicious negative campaign. Dana Orwig, Al McAffrey and Andrew Rice, all from Oklahoma City, won their primaries without a run-off due to receiving over 50% of the votes cast. McAffrey won the House District 88 seat (formerly held by Rep. Debbie Blackburn) due to the lack of a Republican opponent.

With the primary and run-off now over, the Club will be working to elect or re-elect endorsed candidates in the November general election. In state level races, the chapter has endorsed Governor Brad Henry and Attorney General Drew Edmondson (photo on right shows Edmondson with his Sierra Club "Outstanding Public Service Award" received in 2005). Also endorsed are Representative Jeannie McDaniel of Tulsa; Jennifer Seal, Dana Orwig, Representative Al Lindley and Carol Ruth from the metro Oklahoma City area (detailed report of OKC candidates can be found in the Cimarron Group newsletter); and Representative Bill Nations and Wallace Collins from Norman.



View from the Chair

Carpe Diem . . . by David Franklin, Chapter Chair

I have always enjoyed watching Robin Williams perform, from the Mork and Mindy TV series to the movie RV. But I think he was at his best when he played the teacher John Keating in the movie "Dead Poets Society." I especially remember the scene near the beginning of the film where he had the boys stand in front of the pictures of those who had gone before and told them to "Seize the day". It was as if he almost "breathed" it instead of said it. "Carpe Diem" he whispered. "Seize the day boys, seize the day."

Today we are at a point in our collective American experience where we are beginning to experience another wave of environmentalism. The first was over a hundred years ago, when visionary leaders like Sierra Club founder John Muir and President Teddy Roosevelt saw the need to set aside land for future generations. Another major wave was the founding of earth day and passage of the clean air act, clean water act and the creation of the EPA. Once again, this involved the president, a willing congress and thousands of activists.

Today global warming is reaching a point where a new wave of environmentalism is building. People are talking about it like never before thanks to Katrina, Al Gore's movie, the high price of gasoline, a war that has cost 20 times its estimate and climbing that many

perceive is about oil, a really, really hot summer, an extended drought, floods in places that aren't used to floods, retreating glaciers, a chunk of Antarctica ice bigger than Connecticut breaks off and the list goes on and on. It is true that we don't have a Congress or White House like Roosevelt or Nixon that will be signing in new legislation, but that's ok. All politics are local anyway. Cities around the nation are not waiting for the White House to lead the way; they are stepping up on their own.

The Sierra Club's Cool Cities campaign recognizes that we live in an America where true leadership on environmental issues must come from the bottom up and not the top down in politics. Norman has signed on. Other cities are in our sights. We have an opportunity to seize the day. We have an opportunity to make a difference. Now is the time to take the initiative. It may be a whisper today, but soon it will be spoken out loud and soon after that, I believe the next wave will be shouting from the rooftops.

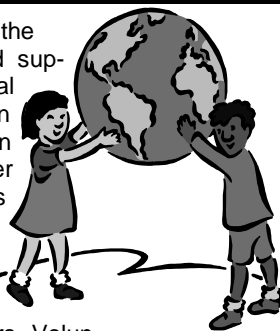
If you want to help, possible by hosting an event in your area to show a DVD on global warming, contact Billie.Brown@sierraclub.org or shoot me an e-mail with suggestions or comments on this article at dfranklin@ussok.com.



SIERRA CLUB SUPPORTS ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION IN OKLAHOMA by Susie Shields

CHAPTER LEADERSHIP DIRECTORY

The Oklahoma Chapter of the Sierra Club has been an avid supporter of many environmental education projects and events in Oklahoma over the past ten years. It is my feeling our Inner City Outings (ICO) program is indeed the most worthwhile. Most students participating in ICO outings are from ages 11-14. ICO is managed completely by Sierra Club volunteers. Volunteers are always needed, so please contact Lois Pokorny (OKC) at lpkomo@cox.net or Dave Zucconi (Tulsa) at davegz_2000@yahoo.com to get involved. You do not have to live in OKC or Tulsa to help chaperone trips, as trips are taken throughout the state. Donations to cover costs of trips (transportation, equipment updates and lunch) are welcome as well.



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Another project all our own is our DVD loan library. These environmental DVDs are available for members to check-out as programs for local Sierra Club groups and other interested groups, including classrooms. The BEC (building Environmental Communities), in partnership with Sustainable OKC, has been sponsoring a free monthly movie night in OKC featuring many of these DVDs. So far we have seen *Future of Food*, *Kilowatt Hours*, *End of Suburbia*, *Wal-Mart: the High Cost of Low Price* and the *Next Industrial Revolution*. We are hoping to show *An Inconvenient Truth* in both October and November this year. Contact Billie.Brown@sierraclub.org to arrange a DVD check-out.

During the past year, we have also co-sponsored several projects and events conducted by other groups. These include the Oklahoma Association for Environmental Education (OKAEE) EE Expo for teachers, Envirothon competition for high school students, and the EnvironMentor newsletter; Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture's "Edible School Garden Guide;" Oklahoma Sustainability Network (OSN) annual conference; Oklahoma Trash Poster Contest; Oklahoma Food Cooperative website; ECO-OSU film fest and Earth Day; and SOSU (Durant) recycling project. If you have ideas for EE projects, please contact me at: sshields@cox.net.