

Oklahoma Sierran

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Will Public Opinion Influence Fate of Arbuckle-Simpson Aquifer?

OSU environmental sociologist Dr. Beth Caniglia has launched a study to examine the influence of science on public opinion with regards to development of the Arbuckle-Simpson aquifer in Southern Oklahoma. Dr. Caniglia's study was sparked by Senate Bill 288, which was passed by the State Legislature in May 2003.

Senate Bill 288 placed a moratorium on the issuance of temporary permits that would result in the usage of water from a "sensitive sole source" aquifer outside its home county until a scientific study is conducted by the Oklahoma Water Resources Board (OWRB). The Arbuckle-Simpson is the only aquifer that fits this description in Oklahoma. The purpose of the OWRB study is to approve "a maximum annual yield that will ensure that any permit for the removal of water from a sensitive sole source groundwater basin or sub-basin will not reduce the natural flow of water from springs or streams emanating from said basin or sub-basin" (ENR. S.B. NO. 288).

According to Dr. Caniglia, Senate Bill 288 highlights the central role that science plays in the creation of environmental policies. However, scientific studies like the OWRB study of the Arbuckle-Simpson aquifer do not always take center stage in the decisions made by citizens and legislators at the end of the day – no matter how sophisticated, accurate or informative the studies are. Sociological research shows that it is a challenge for agencies like the OWRB to communicate their findings in ways that are meaningful to their diverse constituents. If people don't under-

stand the science, they can't really use the science when they draw their conclusions.

These facts form the basis of Dr. Caniglia's study. With the cooperation of the OWRB and other interested citizen groups across the state, Dr. Caniglia hopes to gather feedback from diverse constituent groups over the duration of the Arbuckle-Simpson Hydrology study. The first step is to find out how people feel now about the moratorium, the OWRB study, and the potential commercial development of the aquifer – prior to the completion of the OWRB study. The second stage will entail collecting feedback from various groups to find out if information from the OWRB study has been helpful to them and whether the information has either supported or changed the opinions they held before the scientific findings were available. And the final stage will follow the recommendations drawn from the OWRB study through the legislative process.

As a professional sociologist, Dr. Caniglia adheres to strict codes of ethics and maintains the confidentiality of all groups and individuals who share their views with her. If you would like to participate in this sociological study or just want to learn more about it, you can contact Dr. Caniglia by email at canigli@okstate.edu or by phone at (405) 744-6125. For further information about the OWRB Arbuckle-Simpson Aquifer study, you can visit www.owrb.state.ok.us and click on the Arbuckle-Simpson Aquifer Study icon.



Outdoor Industry Joins Fight for Roadless Rule

In response to Bush administration intentions to open up nearly 60 million acres of national forest land to extractive industries, a trade group representing 4,000 guiding and outdoor equipment companies has launched a campaign to educate consumers about the benefits of saving public land for recreational purposes.



As part of its "Protect Today, Play Tomorrow" campaign, the Outdoor Industry Association (OIA) is coordinating ads in four national outdoor magazines as well as distribution of posters to specialty retail stores. The organization has also

launched a web page (www.outdoorindustry.org) where individuals can generate e-mails to President Bush and Forest Service Chief Dale Bosworth asking to leave undeveloped public lands undeveloped.

Following a Clinton-era initiative, the Forest Service issued the Roadless Area Conservation Rule in January 2001, following the most extensive public involvement in the history of American law-making. This rule provided for protection from future road building and timber harvesting on 58.5 million acres of roadless Forest Service land.

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Chair's Corner

A Dollar A Day for the Environment

by Tom Libby, Chapter Chair

Recently you received a letter outlining the accomplishments of the Oklahoma Chapter and our need for extra help. Following are some of our specific goals.

- (1) To fully fund the monthly newsletter programs for each of our groups so that every member in Oklahoma will receive information about how they can help protect Oklahoma's environment with extra copies for interested citizens
- (2) To hire part-time professionals to supplement and support the efforts of our highly dedicated volunteers with badly needed expertise and experience
- (3) And to buy equipment and materials necessary to make quality presentations at environmental fairs, expos, agency meetings and at our own membership meetings.

To help us achieve these goals, we have begun the **Dollar A Day for the Environment Club**. Members of this group have agreed to give A Dollar A Day For the Environment.

Current members include: Dr. Phillip Bird, John Bruno, Dr. Chester Bynum, Drs. Kenneth and Leah Dick, Bill Kern and Kathleen Duncan, Paul Faulk, Rosemary Ford, David Franklin, Dr. George Hulse, Rick and Debbie Poland, Andy and Kathy Scurlock and Tom Libby. Won't you consider giving a dollar a day for the environment, too?

For less than a daily bottle of water you can invest in protecting of the quantity and quality of Oklahoma's drinking water for everyone.

For less than the daily toll to take the outer loop in Oklahoma City or Tulsa you can invest in stopping the urban sprawl that threatens the air we breathe.

And for less than the daily cost of subscribing to the Oklahoman and the Tulsa World you can invest in educating the public about the need to protect Oklahoma's environment.

To help make it easier for you to give to the environment we have established a special bank draft program that allows you to have a small monthly amount drawn from your account, which over the course of the year will make a big difference for Oklahoma's environment. You can learn more about the Dollar A Day for the Environment program and our new monthly installment program on our website at <http://www.oklahoma.sierraclub.org> or by calling me at 405/615-6390.

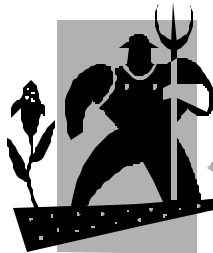
With YOUR help, we *can* make a big difference . . . for Oklahoma's families, for Oklahoma's future.

THINGS I COULD DO THIS SUMMER

by Paul Moore, Chapter Conservation Chair

This is the time of year when a few weeks of pleasure arrive for most of us in the form of vacation. Sometimes it seems like the vacation is from our conservation ethics, involving long drives or air travel and increased consumption of goods and services. All in the name of a good time which is soon over. As a great teacher once said, "A vacation from what?" Here are some other alternatives that may provide as much or more satisfaction come the fall:

Get Outside - Sierra Club began as an outings organization, albeit with a purpose. John Muir wanted to save the Sierra Nevada's from destruction and he figured the best way was for more people to enjoy the experience. The club still operates with that philosophy. Check out your group outings list on their web page and find a local outing that introduces an area that you can return to through the seasons. Don't forget to apply a good environmentally-friendly bug spray, generally one containing lemon works for most critters. Or spend time in the backyard making it more wildlife friendly by adding birdbaths, perennial berry producing shrubs or a bat house. Create a backyard wilderness that you can return to every evening this coming year. Visit some of the new breed of local farmers that are producing wonderful harvests for your local



farmers market. A day visiting their land could change your shopping habits for the rest of the year. (Editor's Note: If a group has formed in your area, join the Oklahoma Food Co-op for a monthly opportunity to purchase family farm products, including beef, pork, poultry, lamb and buffalo. You may join and order large or small amounts of items listed in the online order form: www.oklahomafood.org.)

Get Inside - Perform an energy audit of your house and create a priority list of improvements that will provide satisfaction and money savings throughout the year. A good guide is the book "Homemade Money" by the Rocky Mountain Institute (www.rmi.org). Install water efficient showerheads, use soaker hoses for irrigation and replace that old toilet with a new low volume toilet. Save energy by installing compact fluorescent lamps or ceiling fans. Insulate that drafty floor or ceiling. Come winter you'll be the energy master of your own domicile, even if your vacation fails to attract much interest at the office.



Get Inside Their Head - The next election will determine the fate of many natural areas of our country and perhaps the planet. Kick back and survey the environmental voting records of the candidates that you are considering. For incumbent federal officials, check out the League of Conservation Voters website. Call state or local candidates at their campaign headquarters to ask challenging questions about water quality, water export or air quality and green energy portfolios. Consider working for a candidate that will support the conservation of this planet instead of the exploitation of its resources. Contact your group political chairs to find out who has been endorsed by Sierra Club. Green Country: Larry Shepard, Red Earth: Suzette McDowell and Cimarron/OKC Group: Brian Brandert.

These are the kind of activities that are most difficult to pursue during the busy periods of our lives. Sometimes summer vacation is more of the same busyness. Maybe this is the year to try something totally different, given the price of gas. See you at the hardware store or maybe even on the campaign trail . . .



By Marvin Baker

Longtime members of the Oklahoma Chapter were saddened to learn of the death of Gene Tyner on 12 February 2004.

Gene resided in Norman and was the recipient of the Chapter's Outstanding Service Award in 1982.

Gene earned this high honor principally by his work on behalf of the Club in tirelessly presenting Chapter concerns before legislative committees in the days when we did not have a regular lobbyist. Gene was willing to put in long hours as a volunteer arguing our views and concerns on several environmental bills. His expertise and interests were highly focused on energy policy and he was a forceful and credible spokesperson for our views on legislation dealing with regulation of energy utilities. Over the years he was a regular contributor to the letters to the editor section in the Norman Transcript as well as the author of many articles on environmental and energy issues that appeared on the pages of the *Oklahoma Observer*. Gene also was active for a long time in the Black Fox nuclear power plant fight. Additionally he served for a brief period on the Executive Committee of the Red Earth Group in early 1980s including a stint as Chair of the group.

Politically, Gene was a Democrat. His policy views were of the FDR and Harry Truman variety. He followed the inner workings of the state party closely and was an organizer of the weekly cornbread and beans forum held at a local restaurant in Norman each week for several years in the 1990s. His wife, Dottie, shared his enthusiasm for party work and they were both inducted into the new Oklahoma Democratic Party Activist Hall of Fame. Unfortunately, this honor came in late February of this year, shortly after the death of Dottie in December and Gene in mid February.

Service in the US Air Force formed the bulk of Gene's career and he rose to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. After retire-

ment from service, he and Dottie settled in Norman where he spent the last 30 some years of his life. In his military life, Gene flew many combat missions in Korea and later Vietnam. Certainly this experience can partly explain his passion for peace and his strong antiwar activities in later life.

I got to know Gene well in the early 1980s when I served on his doctoral studies committee at the University of Oklahoma. I directed his study of environmental history and policy. He was an enthusiastic student and later we remained close friends as he used his new degree to consult in the field of energy economics and policy.

Gene's environmental interests were mostly at the national and global level and he was deeply concerned about the questions of energy policy, resource exhaustion, and the sustainability of modern societies. He created a local forum to discuss these issues, the Oklahoma Institute for a Viable Future. This was planned to be an informal "think tank" to focus on policies which would be important to a sustainable Oklahoma. In practice there were few written documents but there were lively and stimulating regular meetings of like minds over lunch and to listen to invited speakers and share viewpoints about the future of Oklahoma.

Gene was a voracious reader and later on an energetic participant in a large number of Internet discussion groups. My most treasured memories of Gene will always be of our informal discussions about the latest ideas and works of scholars and environmental leaders on various aspects of the long range sustainability of industrial society. I never failed to learn from Gene or to have him respond with enthusiasm to a new idea.

All of these interests made Gene profoundly pessimistic about the long-term future of humanity. However, a person would not know about this unless you probed below the surface. Gene exuded a great love for his large family and his many friends, devoting endless hours to the welfare of those needing comfort or support. He tempered his pessimism with the optimism of a teacher for the individual . . . always hoping to persuade his students to improve and learn, thus avoiding a projected grim future. Unfailingly polite in conversation, self-effacing and gentle when working with others, Gene had the patient temperament of the ideal teacher. Any meeting with Gene was a learning moment. I miss him and those learning encounters very much. He left us too soon . . .



By David Franklin

Back in 1992 when I joined the club, there were two members that approached me at one of the first meetings I attended and introduced themselves. They were friendly and offered to answer any questions I might have about the group, and made me feel welcome at the meeting. Over 11 years later, I can remember them clearly.

One of them was Larry Swanson, whom we lost this year on Earth Day. I remembered Larry because he introduced himself as "likeable Larry" and he truly lived up to that name. Evidence of this was shown by the hundreds of folks who attended Larry's memorial service.

Over the years, Larry has won the highest Oklahoma City (now Cimarron) Group awards, Sierran of the year and the Lehman holder award for contributions to our outings program. At the Chapter level, he was honored in 2002 with a Distinguished Service Award. Whenever we needed a volunteer for an event, Larry was there. For seven years, Larry undauntingly prepared and mailed the group newsletter out by the first of each month. He also collected spent ink cartridges for fundraising efforts, worked at exhibits when needed, maintained the camping site on Connors State College land, set up chairs for meetings and so much more.

At the Chapter (state) level of work, Larry always volunteered for the jobs no one else would do. He attended boring agency hearings, traveled long distances to leaflet in a campaign, always helped with Club events by handling registration, contacting speakers, etc. etc. **Larry is already sorely missed by many!**



Explore,
enjoy and
protect
the planet

[www.oklahoma.
sierraclub.org](http://www.oklahoma.sierraclub.org)

CHAPTER LEADERSHIP DIRECTORY

CHAIR: Tom Libby, 405/722-2367, <tomlibby@yahoo.com>

VICE-CHAIR: James Martin, 405/424-0632, <james_e_martin@yahoo.com>

SECRETARY: David Franklin, 405/789-5377, <dfranklin@ussok.com>

TREASURER: Mark Derichsweiler, 405/297-0179, <mderichsweiler@cox.net>

MEMBERSHIP: VACANT—HOW ABOUT YOU?

POLITICAL CHAIR: Charles Wesner, 405/321-2204, <wesner@qns.com>

OUTINGS CHAIR: Tom Libby, 405/722-2367, <tomlibby@yahoo.com>

CONSERVATION CHAIR: Paul Moore, 918/584-6447, <pfmoore001@aol.com>

CONSERVATION VICE-CHAIR: Susie Shields, 405/297-0179, <sshields@cox.net>

CONSERVATION ORGANIZER: Billie Brown, 405/366-5694 billie.brown@sierraclub.org

LEGISLATIVE CHAIR: Charles Wesner, 405/321-2204, <wesner@qns.com>

LEGISLATIVE VICE-CHAIR: Olivia Waldkoetter, 405/821-2304

STATE LOBBYIST: Keith Smith, 405/840-2219, <keith@oklahomalobbyist.com>

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION: Susie Shields, 405/297-0179, <sshields@cox.net>

WEBMASTER: David Franklin, 405/789-5377, <dfranklin@ussok.com>

NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Susie Shields, 405/297-0179, <sshields@cox.net>

Read about the current administration's anti-environmental initiatives in
the Big Book of Bush: <http://www.sierraclub.org/bush/>

Open House Held for First Chapter Office

by Billie Brown, Conservation Organizer

The Oklahoma Chapter recently held an open house in the new Norman office, with over sixty people in attendance. The office is located on top of Harold's Outlet on Buchanan Avenue.

Guest speaker for the event was former Oklahoma legislator, Senator Paul Muegge. Muegge, a recent recipient of the nationwide JFK Profiles in Courage Award, spoke on his experiences. Senator Muegge told the crowd that he believed the fight for environmental issues is far from over, citing the dangers of genetically engineered foods and the massive corporate farms that dominate the food marketplace.

"All of Oklahoma's Sierra Club volunteers will have access to the roomy office, including student coalition groups across the state." Phyllis Dunham said (Regional Director of the Sierra Club's Southern Plains Office, a four-state area). Dunham flew in from Houston to participate in the Oklahoma open house celebration.

Oklahoma Chapter chair Tom Libby said, "The reason the environmental conservation organization picked Norman as the main site is simple—the University is here and we wanted to invite OU student environmentalists to volunteer. The office will validate our commitment to protecting Oklahoma's environment."

Charles Wesner, Norman, said "It's always good to have a place to go when you need something," he said. "And we can utilize the new office is to facilitate grassroots activism and public conservation education."

Outdoor Industry Supports Roadless Rule

(Continued from Page 1)

Soon after taking office, the Bush administration announced its intention to review and update the provisions of the roadless rule. Since that time, the administration has excluded Alaskan forests from roadless rule protection and is currently investigating ways for state forest managers to apply for exemptions and other loophole opportunities.

Given outdoor enthusiasts' abhorrence of clearcuts and other industrial scars on recreational lands, the OIA's involvement in the issue is not a surprise. And with member businesses employing half a million people and generating \$18 billion in revenue annually, the OIA may have some political muscle.



SIERRA CLUB TEACHERS WANTED!

The Oklahoma Chapter of the Sierra Club has materials from Green Teacher (www.greenteacher.com) available free for Oklahoma teachers who are members of the Club. Materials currently available are (check items desired):

Greening School Grounds—Creating Habitats for Learning (K-12)

Teaching About Climate Change (K-12)

Teaching Green—The Middle Years (middle school)

Name _____

Home Address _____

City/Zip _____ AC/Home Phone _____

E-Mail _____

School _____ Grade _____

To qualify for free materials, please complete and return this coupon to :

Susie Shields, P.O. Box 180, Oklahoma City, OK 73101-0180