

Oklahoma Sierran

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An Inconvenient Truth *by Susie Shields*

Al Gore's new documentary, "An Inconvenient Truth," had its world premiere at the Sundance Film Festival in January before an enthusiastic audience that gave the former vice president and his movie a big standing ovation.

When three press screenings were being arranged in Oklahoma June 1, 2 and 14, many of those who were invited (via e-mail) responded to the promotional company with negative comments such as, "Global warming is just a liberal hoax." Michelle Langsdon, local publicity agent for the film, told me she had never had such a negative response in twenty years of arranging press screenings. My response to her was that we live in the land of the Inhofe ostriches.

Having attended the June 1 screening (along with only a dozen or so others), I am indeed convinced this is the most crucial issue of the century for the survival of mankind. It has been foremost in my mind these weeks since, so I am very pleased the Sierra Club BEC Steering Committee is stepping up efforts on the National Club's Cool Cities Campaign.

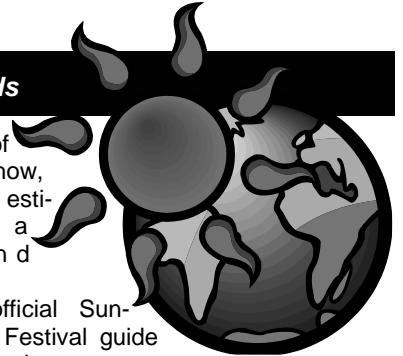
The core of the film is a one-man, ever-evolving multimedia slide show that Gore assembled himself. A little-known fact: Since his defeat by George W. Bush in 2000, Gore has traveled the globe with his bar graphs, staging event after event for small, invited audiences, free of charge. And, he's presented one version

or another of this slide show, by his own estimation, a thousand times.

The official Sundance Film Festival guide calls the documentary a "gripping story" with "a visually mesmerizing presentation" that is "activist cinema at its very best."

In the film, Gore presents the latest evidence to demonstrate how the accumulation of carbon dioxide and other pollutants of the industrial age are increasing temperatures. In addition to timelines and bell curves and stuff about oxygen isotopes in Greenland ice cores, Gore includes several cartoons, one featuring a Mister Sunbeam trapped by the bullies known as Greenhouse Gases.

Gore argues -- with scientific evidence projected on big screens -- that global warming may soon lead to catastrophic sea level rises, which could inundate cities such as New York, producing scary nonlinear runaway spasms of extreme weather (bigger hurricanes and typhoons), global pandemics and, depending on where you live, torrential rains or decade-long drought. *(Continued on Page 4)*



Chapter Political Committee in Full Swing

by Charles Wesner

Your Oklahoma Chapter Political Committee (PolCom) has been busy for several months reading and discussing endorsements for state candidates whose questionnaires were submitted through our website. At this point (one month before the primary at the time of this writing), we have endorsed four (soon to be six) candidates in the Cimarron Group area, three in the Red Earth Group area and one in the Green Country Group area. We have also endorsed one (soon to be two) "friends" of the environment who are running for statewide offices.

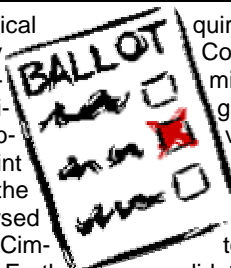
This committee meets frequently in campaign years to determine which candidates we should support based on their environmental positions. We generally support incumbents who have faithfully supported our issues in the past.

An official candidate endorsement is re-

quired to be approved by both 2/3 of the PolCom and 2/3 of the Chapter Executive Committee. Candidates new to the political game in Oklahoma are generally interviewed by several members of the PolCom.

Following the endorsement process, Sierra Club members are appointed to serve as liaisons to each endorsed candidate. These liaisons meet with candidates and/or campaign managers to develop a plan for reaching Sierra Club members in their districts with their message. Also, we always hope our members sign-up to volunteer for the campaign. (See Page 2 for state and local chairs to contact.)

Many volunteers are needed for both primary and general election campaigns. Watch our website: www.oklahoma.sierraclub.org for information on our endorsed candidates that will be soon be available. *(Continued on Page 2)*



View from the Chair

A new way . . . by David Franklin, Chapter Chair



In a recent Sierra Magazine (July/August '06 issue, page 52) a researcher points out that environmentalists' constant "gloom and doom" mantra has turned young people off thinking about the environment. Said one 17 year old, "it's too painful, so I don't think about it." And yet, over the next generation they need to be thinking about it, because we need a new way of doing things if we are to turn the tide of environmental damage.

I realize that every generation says this, but we are at a critical point in the history of our planet. Global warming, peak oil, and other "gloom and doom" issues are all around us. However, I'm still an optimist at heart. Our air today is cleaner than it was when the clean air act was passed. No longer are dozens of belching smokestacks over a city seen as a sign of progress but instead are seen as a sign of corporate irresponsibility. Our water is cleaner today than when the clean water act was passed. No longer are citizens willing to stand by and see waterways reserved only for industrial use, but are instead demanding that they be safe to play and fish in for future generations. There is hope for the future based on how far we've come, but we must continue to look to that hope and not just focus on the doom and gloom.

Last September, thousands of Sierra Club delegates came to San Francisco to help set the direction of the Sierra Club for the next few years. The overwhelming consensus was that a "new way" for the club needed to be found. However, one of the problems we as an organization have, especially here in Oklahoma, is that we have failed to attract enough "new minds." In other words, without additional volunteers providing fresh blood and fresh ideas to the leadership in the club, we will find ourselves gravitating to the same old ways. We have failed to expand beyond our traditional base to include a diverse community of leaders and this is holding us back.

Sierra Club Director Carl Pope has outlined the club's tactics for the near future. First, you need to understand that the following assumptions have been made about the state of the Sierra Club today:

- We control no levers of power at the national level.

- We do not have the power to enact a pro-environmental, pro-active agenda at the national level.
- There will be numerous assaults on the environment/environmental protection at the national level and we cannot engage in each assault.
- We need to take the long view---build grassroots power for the long haul.
- We need to seek out opportunities to win/advance our environmental solutions particularly at the state/local level.

As a result, the following principles are guiding our efforts:

- Building sustainable grassroots power is more important than short-term policy work.
- Enlisting humanity (organizing) is more important than mobilizing our base directed at short-term policy outcomes.
- Building public/community sentiment/collectiveness is more important than issue expertise.
- Focus and going deep are more important than engagement on multiple fronts.

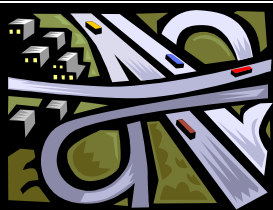
In order to execute this plan, we MUST build our leadership base to represent our target. We are effective at "preaching to the choir" but we must move beyond that. Who is this additional base we are seeking? Well, they are:

- From the heartland
- More blue collar
- Belong to traditional organizations/churches
- More rural
- Less white
- Less liberal

In other words, less like San Francisco and more like Oklahoma. The old way is not going to change our world; we need new leaders, new ideas and a new plan. Do you have some ideas? Are you ready to play a part? E-mail me at dfranklin@ussok.com and let me know. Let's face it, I'm a white guy over 40, with a white collar job...**I need help!**

Proposed Highway to Transect Osage County

by Dave Porter, Green Country Group



Northwest of Tulsa lies Osage county. In the last hundred years it has provided great oil wealth to the Osage Indians and many others. Its expansive native grasses fed the beef that fed the soldiers of World War II. Now the Nature Conservancy owns 37,000 acres of that native grassland which is open to the public—the Tall Grass Prairie Preserve just north of Pawhuska. If you haven't visited it and felt its vastness, you should. To see that much sky at one time, to feel the breeze washing the prairie

and to watch the clouds make the weather makes it worth the trip.

There is a proposal to build an interstate highway from Miami, Florida to Seattle, Washington. Called the Northwest Passage. It will use many existing Interstate highways, including I40 through Arkansas, Oklahoma's Muskogee Turnpike and I70 from Salina to Denver. However the current plan does not use the Cimarron Turnpike and I35 but rather creates a short cut. It will pass within a few miles of The Nature Conservancy's Tall Grass Prairie Preserve, going straight from Tulsa to Wichita. I would hope that the planners could route the proposed highway away from the preserve, or better yet, use the turnpike we already have built, at a cost of a million dollars a mile. Planners foresee thousands of jobs and tax revenue from this project, but at what cost of private land, tax increases and further subdividing of our remaining open spaces?

Chapter Political Committee (Cont'd from Pg. 1)

To get involved with helping Oklahoma's good environmental candidates win their seats, contact your chapter or group political chair:

- Green County Group: Larry Shepard, 918.258.3420 or ldshepard.nbaok@prodigy.net
- Red Earth Group: Suzette McDowell, 405.364.2617 or suzettemcdowell@sbcglobal.net
- Cimarron Group: Susie Shields, 405.297.0179 or sshields@cox.net
- Chapter Political Chair: Charles Wesner, 405.321.2204 or Wesner@okiemail.net

Calling All Volunteers

by Martha Holland

I recently attended a training session at our headquarters in San Francisco with other Membership Chairs from around the country. We did some brainstorming under the tutelage of Greg Casini and came up with a couple of lists that I would like to share with you.

Following is a list of knowledge/skills you have to share with your Chapter (state) or Group (local):

- organizing
- public relations
- campaign planning strategy
- internet/web design
- logo design
- educational events
- PowerPoint
- bird-watching
- clubhouse usage
- listening skills
- how to run an election
- letter to the editor writing
- endangered species act
- open space planning
- media interviews
- LEED certification
- conducting meetings
- WILD usage
- planning fun activities
- event planning
- press relations
- meeting agendas
- lobbying
- public speaking
- drafting a script
- plant id
- enthusiasm
- marketing
- tabling
- hiking
- first aid
- habitat restoration
- editing/polishing
- delegating/involving
- Leave No Trace
- how to phonebank
- computers/software
- how to add members to listserv
- plan ICO programs – funding
- fundraising – making personal ask
- c(3) and c(4) funding differences
- analysis of issues (pros and cons)
- writing a campaign plan
- making people feel comfortable



Here is a list of activities you could get involved in with your Chapter or Group:

- trail clean-ups
- conservation meeting
- planning new member events
- helping with monthly mailing
- membership recruitment
- downtown code writing
- invasive plant removal
- toxic waste clean-up
- open space on excom
- restaurant/live music outings
- lobbying
- event tabling
- newsletter article writing
- water testing
- conservation issue chair
- Brochures/newsletter distribution
- public speaking at schools
- letters to the editor
- attend elected officials meetings
- special event planning
- speakers bureau
- political campaigning
- grant writing
- staff office
- writing/drafting amendments
- phone banking
- youth outreach
- inner city outings
- sierra student coalition
- call in to radio show
- local political endorsements
- publicity

These lists are as diverse as the people in our groups. The point is that everyone has some skill that they are good at or at least like; there is also an activity

that someone would enjoy. So if you have an hour, a month, or more to volunteer, we would love to work with you. Just contact myself or any other group or chapter leader and we will try to connect you with an activity that can help the Sierra Club and will make you feel more a part of this wonderful organization.

—Martha Holland
Chapter Membership Chair
marthaholland@sbcglobal.net
405/946-4962

BEC Spotlights Volunteering Opportunities

by Billie Brown

The Oklahoma BEC program is a one on one outreach program to offer volunteers and members an opportunity to get involved through a variety of ways, such as neighborhood walks, house parties, movies and events, like our Earth Day Fair.

Oklahoma BEC tabled at the TAR Creek Conference held in Miami and has continued to keep the spotlight on the Superfund Site in Picher. We were present as the press release to buy-out the homes in the area was announced.

Oklahoma BEC tabled at the Multi-Cultural Celebration, held in Oklahoma City at the Gold Dome where we handed out information and seeds for planting a garden. To help table at the Farmers Market this summer, contact Martha Holland, marthaholland@sbcglobal.net to sign up!

Sierra Club volunteers (Susie Shields, Martha Holland and Nancy Smart) and Sustainable OKC volunteers (Jennifer Gooden and Laura Brunson) have made movie night fun for everyone! We have had over 70 people attend movie nights, with a full house on the initial debut of our movie night that featured "The End of Suburbia".

Movie goers have also enjoyed "The Next Industrial Revolution," "Kilowatt Ours" and "The Future of Food". Our next movie night is July 13 and every 2nd Thursday of the month, at the Gold Dome. We will feature the "Sierra Club Chronicles" on July 13. Come by early and enjoy a wine and cheese reception before the movie, starting at 5:45, with the movie starting at 6:30. The feature movie for August 10th is the "Wal-Mart Movie: "The High Cost of Low Price". See you at the Gold Dome! Don't miss the fun!

Tired of the high cost of energy? BEC will be looking for volunteers to help promote the SC Cool Cities Campaign. it encourages Mayors across the nation to sign the Mayor's Climate Protection Agreement; currently the Norman Mayor is the only mayor to sign, supporting environmentally smart solutions for energy use in cities across Oklahoma. Want to participate?

Contact information:

- Nancy Smart, BEC Steering Committee Chair, nsmart1@yahoo.com
- Billie Brown, BEC organizer, billie.brown@sierraclub.org



Explore,
enjoy and
protect
the planet

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An Inconvenient Truth

(continued from Page 1)

Extreme poverty, intractable wars, virulent disease, hatred of all stripes—these are a few of the scourges we live with today. And yet global climate change trumps them all; for if it's not addressed, all life on the planet will be devastated, regardless of geography, class, race, or creed.

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE . . .

There are numerous ways you can reduce your emissions through the choices and purchases you make everyday. After reducing your emissions, you may want to do even more. Purchasing carbon offsets can neutralize the effects of your carbon emissions by helping to pay for projects that reduce or remove emissions elsewhere. Go to the web for individual actions you can take to help curb global warming, including neutralizing the emissions you cannot reduce. Both of these websites and many more, have lots of ideas for you: www.sierraclub.org/energy and www.climatecrisis.net/takeaction.html.

To get involved with helping influence change at the government level, volunteer with the Oklahoma Sierra Club Building Environmental Communities (BEC) Cool Cities Campaign "Solving Global Warming One City at a Time." We are hoping to convince additional local mayors (Norman mayor has signed on) in Oklahoma to sign on to the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement. This campaign is a positive, visionary solutions-driven with local leaders all over the country pledging to reduce global warming CO₂ in their cities to 7% below 1990 levels by 2012.

Contact your group conservation chair (see website) or Chapter BEC organizer, Billie Brown at billie.brown@sierraclub.org to help.

CHAPTER LEADERSHIP DIRECTORY

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

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

SECRETARY: Vacant

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

MEMBERSHIP: Martha Holland, 405/946-4962, <marthaholland@sbcglobal.net>

POLITICAL/LEGISLATIVE CHAIR: Charles Wesner, 405/321-2204, <Wesner@okiemail.net>

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

CONSERVATION CHAIR: Larry Edmison, 405/321-8292, <larry.edmison@sbcglobal.net>

CONSERVATION ORGANIZER: Billie Brown, 405/366-5694, <Billie.Brown@Sierraclub.org>

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>

TRAINING COORDINATOR: Vacant

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

CLIMATE CHANGE FACTS FROM THE EARTHDAY NETWORK

- By 2030 the number of automobiles in the world will increase by 50%.
- The world consumes two barrels of oil for every barrel of oil for every barrel discovered. In 20 years the world will consume 40% more oil than it does today.
- New energy discoveries are mainly occurring in places where resources are difficult to extract—physically, technically, economically and politically.
- Oil production is in decline in 33 or the 48 largest oil producing countries, yet energy demand is increasing around the globe as economies grow and nations develop.
- Over half the world's oil supplies lie in just 6 countries.
- It is predicted that global temperatures in 2100 will be 5.8°C warmer than they were in 1990. This will make the Earth warmer than it has been in 50 million years.
- During the last 100 years the global temperature has warmed by an average of 0.6°C. Much of the U.S. has already warmed by as much as 4°.
- None of the lower 48 states in the U.S. has experienced below average temperatures since 2002.
- The current pace of sea-level rise is three times the historical rate and appears to be accelerating. Scientists estimate the sea will rise by 19 inches by 2100, though it could rise as much as 27 inches.
- Since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, carbon dioxide (CO₂) in the atmosphere has increased by 31%.
- Diseases such as malaria are predicted to spread as the world grows warmer, due to the carriers of disease spreading out over a larger geographical area.
- Of particular concern is the stability of the West Antarctic Ice Sheet. A sudden collapse would raise sea levels 16-20 feet, though the likelihood of such a collapse before the year 2100 is low.
- Despite natural emissions of CO₂ emitted by volcanoes, for example, human activities are now adding about 7 billion metric tons of CO₂ into the atmosphere every year.
- Agriculture and biodiversity are already being impacted by global warming. 10% of all known plant species are under threat of extinction.