

Oklahoma Sierran

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Conservation Is A "C" Word

by Paul Moore

Recently the National Press Club luncheon speaker was Secretary of Interior Gale Norton. She used her talk to promote a "new environmentalism" with characteristics such as cooperation, consultation and conservation (there was a fourth "c" word I can't recall, probably something like consensus). It seemed to me that Sec. Norton emphasized the need for citizen participation in the planning process and suggested that this was a new direction worthy of support.

Most conservationists would wonder why her agency's actions don't reflect these ambitions. Since assuming office, the Norton Interior Department, particularly through the Forest Service, has initiated a series of decisions that obstruct citizen participation, from backsliding on the Roadless Rule to trying to log some of the wildest areas of the Bitterroots without allowing public comment. What Sec. Norton means when she says citizen participation is actually yet another "c" word: corporate

participation. The goals she recited for the "new environmentalism" were simply the agenda of the timber, mining and vehicular recreation industries - increased oil and gas drilling and more mining. All accomplished with wonderful new technologies that she promised would ensure "conservation".

Conservation is the act of saving wild places. What is a wild place? The Wildlands Project, an organization of conservation biologists and activists, says it is:

—Extensive roadless areas—vast, self-regulated landscapes—free of mechanized human use and the sounds and constructions of modern civilization.

—Viable, self-reproducing populations of all native species including large predators.

—Natural patterns of diversity at the genetic, species, ecosystem and landscape levels.

This perfectly describes the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. It particularly describes the coastal plain of the refuge, the location that is both the calving area of the migratory caribou herd and the site for use of the new technologies of the oil and gas industry, if Sec. Norton has her way. Has this ever been achieved before? No, it is an experiment.



The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is not the place for untried experiments. There are plenty of opportunities on domesticated private land for the oil and gas industry to experiment, but it should not be allowed in one of the few remaining wild places. This would seem self-evident to a layperson, but will it be clear to a Secretary of Interior that confuses cooperation, consultation and consensus with conservation?

Maybe . . . if citizens are louder than corporations.

2002 Legislative Outlook

by Susie Shields

Now that the 2002 Oklahoma Legislature is in session, deals are churning to get bills out of committees by the necessary deadlines. Here's a brief summary of bills we are watching this year.

Water Sale. Our top priority for 2002 is stopping the sale of water in southeastern Oklahoma to Texas. Several bills have been introduced that would at least cause the postponement of the deal while studies are completed. HB 2895 2895, offered by Rep. Debbie

Blackburn bill is our favorite, but needs to call for a review of environmental impacts of the sale.

CAFO Regulation. A bill similar to one we opposed last year that passed the House and Senate, but was vetoed by Governor Keating, is on the fast track. HB 2330's goal is to revoke hog farm set-back limits for certain recreation facilities.

Poultry Regulation will be necessary to clean up our Oklahoma Scenic Rivers. On the



favorable side, we expect HB 2349, prohibiting the siting of poultry factories in floodplains or near streams or

Scenic Rivers, to fly through the House and Senate. By the time you read this, SB 970, a bill granting a \$5 per ton income tax credit for purchase of poultry litter from a sensitive water shed and transporting it to a non-sensitive watershed

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EPEC 2002 Campaign

by Jeannine Hale

On February 2, 2002, the National Sierra Club approved Oklahoma's proposal for the 2002 Environmental Public Education Campaign (EPEC). To gain approval of our 2002 plan, we were able to show that the Chapter met several key requirements tied to the 2001 EPEC grant, such as generating media stories about our issues, organizing successful events such as our TMDL/Clean Water Rally this past fall, building strong alliances with other organizations and generally getting the Club's message heard. A sincere thank-you has been earned by all those who helped during 2001. As for the rest of you - you will have another chance to help in 2002!

Our 2002 EPEC projects will continue to include work on animal feeding operations, including poultry and swine-related issues. One of our first goals in 2002 is reducing concentrations and loads of phosphorus and other contaminants in our scenic rivers. On March 12, 2002 the Water Board will decide whether to adopt a new Phosphorus standard. Along with allies such as Save The Illinois River (STIR), we have generated an over-whelming majority of comment letters and postcards in favor of a new .02 mg/l Phosphorus standard. Please come on March 12th and be counted!

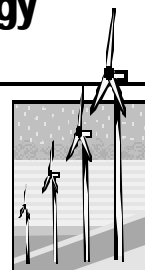


This year we also want to make a special effort to reach out to more corners of the state. Our 2002 EPEC projects include work to protect major stream systems in South Oklahoma from environmental devastation caused by dams and huge water withdrawals. We need lots of volunteers and hope that individual groups may help by adopting at least one stream such as the Glover River, Kiamichi River, Mt. Fork or other waters threatened by the Water Board's greed and secret deals with Texas. Soon, we will put together a brochure and other educational materials to counter myths and explain what we know about the risks and harm caused by dams and water withdrawals. In the long term, we plan to film a video that will help Oklahomans identify with some of these streams and inspire watershed-based support for protecting our rivers.

You don't have to be an expert to play an important part in this year's Campaign. All you need is a few hours you are willing to donate to help preserve Oklahoma's wild places and a little patience. I certainly hope to see old friends and meet some new ones during this year's campaign.

Renewable Energy

by Doug Hawkins



Oklahoma abounds in beauty, diversity and natural resources. Oklahoma's natural resources are not just those that we pump out of the ground, but plenty of sunshine for solar energy and our ever present wind ranking us eighth in the country for potential wind reserves. In addition, Oklahoma has the ability to grow a variety of agricultural products that can be utilized in "biomass" generation of energy.

The Oklahoma Renewable Energy Council (OREC), a non-political and non-profit organization, has been established for the purpose of educating both the general populace and the legislative portions of Oklahoma about alternative energy resources. Its sister organization, the Oklahoma Renewable Energy Foundation, a non-profit but politically active organization has been charged with fund raising and lobbying.

OREC has had three public meetings at the state capital to gain input from the current energy providers and the general public concerning renewable energy. These meetings were also the most opportune time to educate the public, the energy providers, and the legislators about the benefits and actual costs of renewable energy sources. Producers and investors from Texas were at some of these meetings to discuss the legislative factors that made renewable energy sources a viable aspect of energy resources in that state.

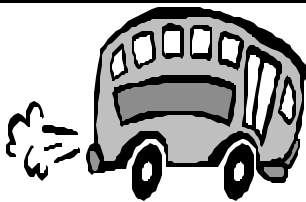
OREC has not taken a negative approach to alternative energy but has stressed the economic benefits of investment and the potential gain to the state of Oklahoma that can be achieved from these constant and renewable sources.

As we have all read in the Daily Oklahoman recently that renewable energy has suffered a tremendous blow this week in the legislative process. The bill, sponsored by Rep. Covey, which would have placed Oklahoma among the top leaders in developing and using renewable energy sources was defeated in the House committee. This bill will not come to a vote on the floor of the State House of Representatives, thus, in effect, killing any chance of major renewable energy legislation for this session.

www.conferencepros.com/conferences/windpower is the new website with details on the "Wind Power and Bio-energy: Oklahoma Crops of the 21st Century" conference April 11 at the Myriad in OKC.

Eco-Motion Needs You!

by Gina Lagaly



Eco-Motion is a mobile environmental program serving Oklahoma's children and schools. The program travels in a "recycled" school bus to communities and delivers a full day of hands-on activities for children in Kindergarten through Grade 5. Eco-Motion is currently looking for a volunteer to join the TEAM for the Spring Tour beginning Mid-March and ending Mid-May. The program has set program dates in thirteen schools in central and south central Oklahoma. In addition to school programs there are two special appearance events that the TEAM and program will be taking part in.

If you are an energetic individual that loves to work with children, has the flexibility and time to devote this spring and you are interested in making a difference in the life of a child, please contact us for an application. The Eco-Motion TEAM will be conducting interviews in early March.

For more information, contact Gina Lagaly, Program Director, via email: Eco-Motion@worldnet.att.net or call 405-823-0353

Chapter Leadership Changes for 2002

The Annual Retreat of the Oklahoma Chapter was held on January 26, 2002 at the beautiful Wilderness Challenge Center outside of Stroud. About 20 Sierrans from all over the state were treated to an interesting and educational array of speakers on a number of subjects.

Charlette Herne of the Southern Oklahoma Water Alliance spoke on the subject of the proposed sale of south-eastern Oklahoma water to Texas. Ayelet Hines, a Sierra Club staffperson from Austin flew up to tell us about the Sierra Club's campaign on Ending Commercial Logging (ECL) on Public lands. Maura McDermott from the Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture and Kim Albro from KWTW in Oklahoma City came to tell us how we could improve our interactions with the print and television media. And, Jeannine Hale, our Sierra Club Field Office representative from Tulsa, spoke on various water quality issues facing Oklahoma and how we might address them.

On Sunday after the retreat, Excom positions and committee positions were filled for 2002. Chris Corbett, Doug Hawkins, Patty Hawkins, and Mark Derichsweiler, all of OKC, were relected as Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer, respectively. Corbett since resigned his position and Doug Hawkins has assumed the chair position in his

place. Among the other chapter-wide committee positions filled were Paul Moore of Tulsa as conservation committee chair, Tom Libby of OKC as outings chair and Council delegate, Wes Johnston of OKC as legislative committee chair, Charles Wesner of OKC as political committee chair, Susie Shields of OKC as environmental education chair, awards chair, newsletter editor, EPEC Coordinator and Sierra Student Coalition liaison, David Franklin of OKC as webmaster, Lynn Musslewhite of Lawton as membership and volunteer development chair.

Members of the Chapter Excom now include Doug Hawkins, Patty Hawkins, Paul Moore, Lynn Musslewhite, Tom Libby, Wes Johnston, George Brenner as chair of the Green Country Group, David Miller as chair of the Red Earth Group, and David Franklin as chair of the Oklahoma City Regional Group. A replacement for Corbett will made at the next ExCom meeting. Other issues facing the chapter were also discussed. Chapter Executive Committee meetings are open to all Sierra Club members. The next meeting will be held on March 16 in Oklahoma City. Details will be available on the chapter website: oklahoma.sierraclub.org

Oklahoma Sierran Selected As Recycling Hero

Congratulations to Mike Bialas, longtime member of the Green Country Group, for his selection as a "recycling hero" by Tulsa's Metropolitan Environmental Trust. Mike was honored for his ten-year involvement with Tulsa's recycling, during which time he attended over 100 city meetings. During this time, Mike continually pushed Tulsans to raise the bar a little higher on their recycling efforts.



Notice of Group Dissolution

by Tom Libby

At the request of Lynn Musslewhite, Chair of the Wichita Mountains Group, the Oklahoma Chapter Executive Committee voted to suspend the Wichita Mountains Group pending dissolution. The action was taken because the group can no longer provide basic membership services for their members. These services include, but are not limited to, a complete slate of candidates for the executive committee and a regular newsletter. During the suspension the Red Earth Group will provide basic membership services to the members of the Wichita Mountains group.

The vote on final dissolution of the group will be held at the regularly scheduled meeting of the Chapter Executive Committee on May 11 beginning at 9:00am. Any members wishing to comment on the dissolution may do so at that meeting. For the location of the meeting, contact Tom Libby at 405/615-6390.

Oklahoma Sustainability Network's First Conference

"Sustainable Solutions: Envisioning Oklahoma's Future"

Friday, May 10, 2002

8:00 am to 4:00 pm

OSU-OKC, 900 N. Portland Ave.

For more information, visit us at www.oksustainability.org or contact Jay Yowell, (405) 232-9554 or jjyowell@e-a-a.com

The Oklahoma Sustainability Network (OSN) serves as an instrument to connect those concerned about and working towards sustainability in Oklahoma.

Conference interest areas will be:

Building and Construction
Sustainable Agriculture
Transportation/Energy
Waste Reduction
Water Conservation
Sustainable Education

Who should attend?

Business, industry, government, groups and citizens interested in sustainable solutions for Oklahoma.

Invited speakers:

Honorable Steve Largent—U.S. Congressman (1st District)
Dr. Jim Home—Kerr Center
Fenton Rood—DEQ
Michael Patton—The M.e.t.
Earl Hatley—NELPI Tribal Environmental Management Services
Dr. Elise Streitz—EPA
Dave Edwards—OSU-OKC
Dru Meadows—Green Team Architects
Lee Fithian—Atkins Benham
Mike Bergey—Bergey Windpower
Dianne Wilkins—DEQ Pollution Prevention
Jill Scott—UCO Psychology
Allan Skouby—GeoPro Inc.
Jay Yowell—Elliott + Associates Architects
B.J. Medley—Investment Counselor
Bruce Johnson—Homestead School
Bill Bennett—First Unitarian Church
Shauna Lawyer Struby—Oklahoma Gazette
Susie Shields—DEQ
Maura McDermott—Kerr Center



**Explore,
enjoy and
protect
the planet.**

**Oklahoma Chapter
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2002 Legislative Outlook

(Continued from Page 1)

For disposal may have already passed. We oppose it because we feel the polluters should pay, not the taxpayers. We are supporting another poultry bill, SB 1348, which would remove the corporate farming exemption for poultry factories.

Energy Deregulation. Even though deregulation has been delayed, we'll be working to encourage financial incentives for renewable energy production. (See article on Page 2) Sen. Cal Hobson's bill to provide tax credits for small wind turbine manufacturers (SB 1474) is looking hopeful.

Audit Privilege. SB 1261, an audit privilege bill (aka Pollution Secrecy and Amnesty) was trotted out again this year. We've successfully killed these monsters many times before, but only with your help.

The Chapter Legislative Committee maintains a phone/email alert system (and occasionally, snail mail) – the **Capitol Action Network** – for Club members interested in Legislative goings-on. We need your help to achieve to maintain a successful program! To enlist, contact Susie Shields, <sshields@cox.net>.

Help Wanted . . .

*Are you interested in
campaign finance
reform?*

Sierra Club needs a representative for Oklahoma Citizens for Campaign Finance Reform (OCCFR). Monthly meetings are held in Oklahoma City.

Contact Susie Shields for more information, (405) 297-0179



25TH ANNUAL WILDFLOWER WORKSHOP

**May 17-18 — Alva, Oklahoma
Woods County Fairgrounds**

**For details, contact ODOT
Beautification Office (405) 521-4037**

Oklahoma Water Conference



2002 has been designated as "The Year of Clean Water" by Governor Keating, so many groups are gearing up to help celebrate this 30th anniversary of the Clean Water Act. Save April 4 for a one-day conference, "Quality and Quantity: Water Takes Center Stage in Oklahoma," at Tulsa Country Club.

Get the latest on the water sale compact, chickens, pigs and confined animal feeding operations, the Tyson class action case, Oklahoma water law, what Arkansas is doing to Oklahoma water, EPA/DEQ and the Clean Water Act, and Is Grand Lake water threatened?

Speakers will include: Gov. Frank Keating and his Chief of Staff, Howard Barnett, Mayor Susan Savage, CEO of Simmons Food, attorneys on both sides of the Tyson lawsuit, and other experts on water laws and issues, including our own Jeannine Hale.

To register, call 918/631-5622 or e-mail <slorenz@utulsa.edu>.