

Oklahoma Sierran

Volume 2, Issue 5

October 2001



Inside this issue:

Water Sale (cont'd)	2
Sierra Students	2
Chapter Banquet	2
Blowin' in the Wind	3
Conservation—Italian Style	3
Oklahoma Recycling	4
Help Protect Oklahoma's Water	4
Chapter Directory	4



Please join us for the
**OKLAHOMA
 CHAPTER
 AWARDS
 BANQUET**
 November 17, 6pm
 Oklahoma City Z oo
 (Story on Page 2)

BILLION GALLON BOONDOGGLE: THE PROPOSED TEXAS WATER SALE

by Chris Corbett

You've heard of billion dollar boondoggles before, but have you ever heard of a billion gallon boondoggle? Well, we've had one dropped into our Oklahoma laps, big time. The North Texas Water Alliance, and possibly other groups from Texas, are seeking to purchase water from several rivers of southeast Oklahoma to supply future water "needs" of Dallas and the metroplex area of north Texas.

The NTWA proposes initially purchasing up to 130 million gallons per day (mgd) from the Kiamichi River. The NTWA further proposes that in a second stage, to happen within 15 years, another 130 mgd of water would be obtained from the Little and Mountain Fork Rivers, bringing the total to 260 mgd by 2015. Ultimately, the NTWA seeks to purchase 1 BILLION GALLONS PER DAY by 2100.

How much is 1 billion gal/day? As a comparison, consider that during July, 2001, during a hot, dry summer, all of Oklahoma City used only about 154 million gallons per day. But North Texas ultimately wants to drain southeast Oklahoma of 6 and a half times that amount every day.

Obviously, the plan promoted by the NTWA has the potential to drastically alter the rivers, habitats, water resources and general ecology of southeast Oklahoma and has major implications for the management of water resources for the entire state.

The proposal to sell an amount of water of this magnitude to Texas is potentially the

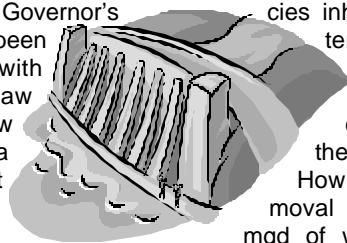
most significant threat to its environment that Oklahoma has ever faced. Imagine the effects that the removal of 1 billion gallons of water per day could have on the ecology of southeast Oklahoma. Ultimately, water from all of the major rivers of southeast Oklahoma could be needed to supply Texas, including the Kiamichi, Little, Mountain Fork, Blue, Clear Boggy, Muddy Boggy, and Glover (the last free flowing river in Oklahoma, and one of the last in the U.S.).

In order to "unfetter" the sale of Oklahoma water to Texas, the Governor's office has been negotiating with the Chickasaw and Choctaw tribes to form a Water Compact with the State of Oklahoma to control and manage the sale of water to Texas, and the distribution of income. The Compact negotiations have been done secretly between the Governor's office and the tribes. The Sierra Club has requested a copy of the draft of the Compact and the Governor has refused to let us see it. Potentially, great power regarding the creation of new reservoirs and impoundments would be held by a small number of persons making up the Water Compact Commission.

Apparently, the Water Compact will not specifically address how water would be

provided to Texas. There are apparently NO SPECIFIC PLANS described in the Compact for dams, impoundments, or how water might be removed from rivers, in what quantities, or how it might be stored after it's removed. That is, the Governor and the Oklahoma Water Resources Board, are willing to go ahead and create a commission to sell the water to Texas before any research has been done to predict the effects on the ecosystems by the removal of such large quantities of water. Endangered and threatened species inhabit these watersheds. Hundreds of other wildlife species inhabit these watersheds. How will the removal of even 130 mgd of water from the Kiamichi River affect the wildlife and water quality of these rivers? No one knows, because no research has been done.

Recently, the Water Board and the Corps of Engineers entered into an agreement to conduct a 10-year study to analyze the six watersheds of southeast Oklahoma. Well, the Water Board wants to sell the water to Texas, and the Corps of Engineers is in the business of damming rivers to create reservoirs. DOES ANYONE DOUBT WHAT THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY WILL (Continued on Page 2)



WATER SALE . . . Continued from Page One

BE? It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure this one out. What's more, the sale of water would begin long before the study is finished.

The Oklahoma Sierra Club believes that once the spigot is opened, there will be no way to close it. And the thirst that North Texas has for Oklahoma water will continue to grow and grow. And the damaging effects on southeast Oklahoma's rivers and ecosystems will mount over the decades. In a resolution previously passed by the Executive Committee, we stated (in part):

(1) The Oklahoma Sierra Club opposes any actions to implement plans to divert or impound Oklahoma waters until the Water Compact and impoundment plans are made public, all studies of environmental impacts are made public, public participation and hearings in the process is allowed, and environmental, social, tribal, historic and other impacts are studied.

(2) The Oklahoma Sierra Club opposes actions that impair the water quality of streams, damage wildlife habitat, and destroy wild places in Oklahoma.

However, we have now come to doubt that ANY sale of southeast Oklahoma water to Texas can occur without damaging the Kiamichi and other rivers there. There are just too many unanswered questions at this point.

For example, has the Water Board shown that there will be no impairment

or degradation of the water quality of the rivers and streams of Oklahoma? No.

Has the Water Board shown that there will be no further impairment or degradation of the wildlife habitat or biodiversity of the rivers, streams, or ecosystems of Oklahoma, such as the endangered species in the Kiamichi River? No.

Has the Water Board given assurances that there will be no damming of the Kiamichi, Little, Blue, Mountain Fork, Glover, Clear Boggy or Muddy Boggy Rivers? No.

Has the Water Board explained how there will be remediation of the degradation of water quality that has already occurred to the rivers of southeast Oklahoma if the flows are even more disrupted than they already are? No.

Has the Water Board given assurances that any sale of water to Texas will not lead to construction of new reservoirs or impoundments in Oklahoma? No.

Has the Water Board given assurances that any sale of water to Texas will not necessitate the construction of reservoirs in Oklahoma to supply water to Oklahomans to make up for water already promised to Texas? No.

Oklahoma Sierrans, there are just too many unanswered questions and too much to lose to consider selling our water to Texas. Why take the chance of ruining our beautiful southeast Oklahoma rivers, just to supply North Texas with more water to waste in car washes and endlessly running sprinklers? Just say "No" to the Texas water sale.

SIERRA STUDENT COALITION AND YOU . . .

Calling all young people! The Sierra Student Coalition is the student-run arm of the Sierra Club. The SSC has a national office, runs national campaigns, and has volunteer state-coordinators across the country serving as a resource for local student environmental groups and students who are taking action locally.

If you are a student or work with students and would like to find out more, contact: Clint Porter, SSC State Coordinator, Stillwater, OK, 405-640-3011, <eco_pal@hotmail.com>, or Emma McCauley, SSC/SC Liason, Norman, OK, 405-307-8132, <emma@desert.as> State-wide student environmental e-mail listserv: <<http://lists.sierraclub.org/archives/oklahoma-students.html>> We can connect you with other students working on similar projects, with the local Sierra Club, or with national opportunities. For example, OUr Earth, the student environmental group at OU, has gone on ICO trips with the OKC Sierra Club group.

The SSC and SC have sponsored students from Tulsa, Norman, and Stillwater to attend national conferences and trainings. The SSC has helped student groups get started and tapped in to the resources of the SSC and SC. The possibilities are endless. So if you are a student or someone who works with students, contact us today!

CHAPTER BANQUET FEATURED SPEAKER

Please join us November 17, 6:00 pm, at the Oklahoma City Zoo for the Oklahoma Chapter's annual celebration to honor many of those working to protect Oklahoma's environment. Club members from throughout the state will be honored for their work, including Dr. Marvin Baker, founding member of the Oklahoma Chapter. Marvin will be joining us from his new home in Salem, Oregon to accept the first ever Marvin Baker Lifetime Achievement Award for his dedication to the Club at all levels—group, chapter and national. Invitations will be mailed to all chapter members along with your Chapter ExCom election ballot. Information is also available on the Chapter website, <www.oklahoma.sierraclub.org>.

Dr. James D. Nations, Vice President of Development and Agency Relations for Conservation International, and featured speaker for this year's Chapter banquet, is a leading anthropologist in the conservation field. Over the past 20 years, Dr. Nations has worked for conservation of tropical ecosystems in Mexico, Central America and South America. For three years, he lived among the Lacandon Maya, a rainforest tribe in Chiapas, Mexico, and as a Tinker Foundation post-doctoral fellow he spent two years studying alternatives to deforestation in Central America. Dr. Nations also lived in Guatemala for three years as a Fulbright Researcher and advisor to Guatemala's National Council for Protected Areas, where his work was instrumental in the government's decision to establish the three million acre Maya Biosphere Reserve.

Dr. Nations' research has focused on the interface between human communities and protected areas, specifically sustainable development, frontier agriculture, population dynamics, and human exploitation of tropical forests. Fluent in Spanish and Yucatec Maya, Dr. Nations holds a Ph.D. in anthropology from Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas.



Oklahoma is on the verge of a power surge. There are 18 power plants being built or in the process of getting permits to be built all over the state. These are all natural gas powered plants and of varying capacity. There are the associated concerns, such as increased air emissions, the amount of water needed to use for cooling, building pipelines for the water, building transmission lines for the power, etc. But why do we need to go to these extremes when the answer is blowin' in the wind?



Conservation of energy is the quickest and most effective way to meet energy needs. Second best is creating a clean way to generate electricity. One of Oklahoma's trademarks is its wind and harnessing this endless resource could bring us to the forefront in the next wave of technology, renewable energy.

Oklahoma ranks 8th in the nation with regards to wind energy potential and if fully developed, we could supply 9% of the country's energy "needs". Texas has already surpassed us in this arena; they will invest over 1 billion dollars by the end of 2001. Oklahoma has 2.3 times the wind potential per capita that Texas does.

We have an opportunity to leave behind the idea that

we are a big oil producing state, and move into the next century as a wind energy leader. There is technology to be refined, ideas to be developed, jobs to be had, and money to be made. Wind power is economically feasible. The word must be getting around because J.C. Watts himself is sponsoring HR 2320, a tax credit bill for large wind power farms. Sen. Kevin Easley's S.B. 440 providing Oklahoma tax credits for wind power, was signed into law in June of this year. Bush, with his coal and oil focused Energy Plan, surprisingly built his mansion in Texas to use geothermal energy. He knows what will save him money. His energy plan just shows that he also knows who gives him money.

The state legislature is doing an interim study this fall on wind power and its feasibility for Oklahoma. Though wind power is feasible, it is still playing on an unequal playing field against other energy sources that are well subsidized. This fall, they are looking at power transmission issues. Luckily, this is where gas and wind complement each other. The gas and wind resources tend to be in the same places, so they can share transmission lines, and wind can be the long-term investment given that gas will phase out over time as resources deplete and pollution regulations become more stringent. Renewable energy and conservation is the future and Oklahoma has the opportunity to move forward environmentally, and technologically. Let's do it!

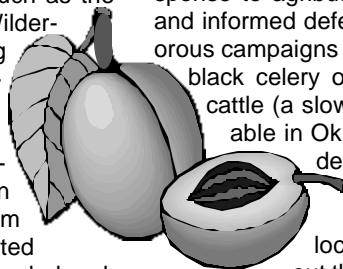


CONSERVATION ITALIAN STYLE

by Paul Moore

This summer, for the first time in thirty years I was able to return to Europe for vacation. Although I was looking forward to seeing Italy and southern France I regretted losing a summer to explore more of the western mountain wilderness of the U.S. For the past several years my summer vacation has been a backpacking trip to beautiful places such as the Uintas Wilderness in Utah and the Weminuche Wilderness of southern Colorado. I was not anticipating that I would find many environmental or conservation issues in well-worn Italy. Of course, I was wrong.

The G8 conference took place in Genoa during our trip and for several days the focus of Italian media was on the anticipated peaceful protests from anti-globalization activists. When the violence started the messages of the other demonstrators were overwhelmed. Organizations that had spent months preparing to make an impact on the G8 negotiations were denied their place near the event and swept away in the police reaction. Ultimately, a person attacking a police van with what appeared to be a bomb in his hands was shot and killed. The police, as usual, took their final revenge in a manner that has become familiar, beating and arresting sleeping activists that had no connection with the violence. After the smoke had cleared, the anti-globalization leaders announced that the time to purge the violent few from their ranks was overdue. The G8 leaders claimed to have incorporated protester demands such as debt relief into their plans. Meanwhile, the G8 has planned their next meeting for a remote resort in the Canadian Rockies to limit access to their venue. The Genoans were left to repair



their city.

There is another anti-globalization project in Italy that could show more significant results. It is a movement named Slow Food, founded in 1986 as a result of the construction of a McDonalds in the Piazza di Spagna in Rome. Slow Food offers an intelligent response to agribusiness-as-usual with a well organized, humorous and informed defense of agricultural diversity. It has launched vigorous campaigns on behalf of the purple asparagus of Albenga, the black celery of Treviso, the Vesuvian apricot and Piedmontese cattle (a slow growing but very low-fat beef that is even available in Oklahoma now). Slow Food is attacking the bland, destructive agriculture of globalization with the traditional variety of Italian agriculture by developing a network of growers and consumers, including local farmers markets and restaurants, and cutting out the supermarkets. Slow Food supports the system with savvy marketing techniques such as knowledgeable food and wine guides. When multi-national food giant Kraft tried to force EU adoption of paper intensive reporting systems (unaffordable to small producers) they gathered over 500,000 signatures on a petition that gained exemption for "artisan" food makers. Not just for the elite, the cost differential of the food is insignificant to Italian consumers, who are willing to pay up to 20% more for organic, fresh and tasteful products.

There are many ways to oppose the seemingly inevitable homogeneity resulting from globalization. Street protests are one way; enlightened consuming another. Each approach faces challenges. Can the anti-globalization leadership oust the violent few? Can Slow Food finish ahead of fast food? There is a link between the two approaches and both are necessary.



Explore,
enjoy and
protect
the planet.

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GOOD NEWS ABOUT RECYCLING IN OKLAHOMA by Lynn Musslewhite

A recent recycling conference in Lawton featured good news about recycling in Oklahoma. Nearly 40% of all Oklahoma families are now serviced by recycling programs, a substantial increase over five years ago. Conference participants also learned that 19 major manufacturing firms in Oklahoma use recycled materials in their manufacturing processes. This strong demand is exemplified by the Republic Paperboard plant in Lawton which uses 700-800 tons of recycled cardboard a day and by the cement plant in Ada which will use about one million tires this year for fuel, which is better than burning coal.

Local communities and tribal entities now implement recycling programs more aggressively and effectively, even small communities such as Waurika. One major recycling challenge looming on the horizon is the problem of dealing with electronic techno-trash, not only computers and monitors, but items such as cell phones, televisions, and microwaves. Such items are difficult to recycle and difficult to dispose of. For example, one 14" computer monitor screen contains nearly three pounds of lead, making it a potential source of toxicity in a landfill or other disposal site. Our communities need to be thinking ahead for possible methods of dealing with this developing crisis.

We each can participate in two important upcoming events, both on November 15:

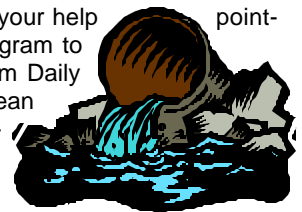
- America Recycles Day
- Use Less Stuff Day

Materials such as planning guides, posters, decals, buttons, etc. are available outlining suggested activities for individuals, businesses, communities, and schools to celebrate these important days. Contact Susie Shields, Department of Environmental Quality, <susie.shields@deq.state.ok.us> or 405/702-



HELP PROTECT OKLAHOMA'S WATER by Jeannine Hale

The Oklahoma Chapter needs your help pointing out the importance of EPA's program to implement the TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load) requirements of the federal Clean Water Act. TMDLs must be established for all of Oklahoma's streams and lakes not meeting water quality standards (and there are a lot of them—streams such as **Blue River, Little River, Mountain Fork, Illinois River, Honey Creek** and others are listed on the state's 303d list as not meeting standards). This is critical for waters impaired by nutrients (phosphorus) and other agricultural sources.



EPA has new proposed TMDL regulations that spell out requirements for states more clearly, but the Bush administration has been responding to pressure to delay and weaken the regulations. Opponents of the new regulations include such groups as Farm Bureau - those who fear they might have to clean up previously unregulated sources of pollution.

The latest news is that EPA will have a Public Meeting in OKC November 15 and/or 16 to take public comments about TMDLs and water quality concerns in Oklahoma. **All Oklahomans who treasure their streams, lakes and drinking water should plan to attend the November 15th (or possibly 16th) public meeting.** Sierra Club will be helping to prepare comments and provide information. We also plan a get together immediately prior to the EPA meeting for food, drink and inspiration - details will be provided later. To get involved, contact Jeannine Hale, 918-227-2790 or <Jeannine.Hale@att.net>.

Watch for an invitation in the mail to attend this event—it is very important we show our support for establishment of TMDLs for all impaired streams and lakes in Oklahoma.