

Oklahoma Sierran

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Yes, Bottled Water is Convenient, but ...

by Susie Shields, Environmental Education Chair

Several us on the Executive Committee of the Oklahoma Chapter, interested in walking our talk and setting an example for sustainable behavior change, recently stood up for an end to serving bottled water at our events. We agreed with the words of Gandhi, "Be the change you want to see in the world."



What did we do before the big corporations such as Nestle, Coca-Cola and PepsiCo started getting rich from their new non-essential wasteful product, which is simply bottled tap water about 50% of the time? Have we become so lazy we cannot bother to fill a glass or reusable bottle from the tap?

Now I'm not trying to say no one should ever drink bottled water, or even that I will never drink it. Bottled water may be needed in emergencies such as when local water is contaminated and is shipped as safe drinking water (1,400,000 bottles each day) for our troops in Iraq. Sometimes we will all need to purchase a bottle of water when no other option ex-

ists. But when we do, we are promoting one of the most expensive, wasteful addictions Americans have ever acquired.

A group called Corporate Accountability International has been pressuring bottled water sellers to curb what it calls misleading marketing practices and stamp the labels with full disclosure of water sources. When Pepsi admitted in August that it bottles tap water under its Aquafina label, the beverage giant agreed to change Aquafina's labels to indicate that the water comes from a public source.

Pepsi's not alone. Coke's Dasani and Nestle's Pure Life brands of bottled waters have long been known to come from municipal sources, which adds up to most of the bottled water sold in America coming straight from the tap.

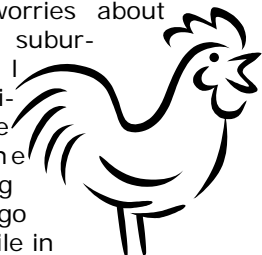
Following are only a few of the important facts about bottled water that I would like you to ponder before you buy that next bottle of high-dollar "tap" water, paying more for it than the same amount of gasoline. *(Continued on Page 3)*

A Chicken in Every Pot? A Car in Every Backyard?

by Terry Jensen, Sierra Club's True Cost of Food Campaign Committee

In the 1928 presidential campaign of Herbert Hoover, a Republican paid newspaper advertisement promised prosperity in the form of "a chicken in every pot and a car in every backyard to boot."

Hoover's prosperity has arrived in spades with food and with cars. Yet, less than 100 years later, worries about global warming and suburban sprawl are making most Sierrans doubt the wisdom of the cars, even suggesting we should often forego the private automobile in favor of public transportation or



even bicycles. It now seems that we should often forego the chicken, too.

Despite the assurance of "Big Agribusiness" that our food is the most affordable in history, the Sierra Club's True Cost of Food campaign exposes the hidden costs to the planet of our meat-rich, pesticide-laden, and transportation-heavy diet.

At the end of 2006, the United Nations released a report titled "Livestock's Long Shadow Environmental Issues and Options." This report on the environment and livestock (beef cattle, dairy cattle, chickens, pigs, and other animals domesticated for food uses) had a stunning conclusion: *(Continued on Page 3)*

View from the Chair

By
Larry
Edmison,
Chapter
Chair

The view from the chair this morning is a pretty optimistic one. As I hope all of you know by now, the Oklahoma Sierra Club, with help from Kristi Denney one of the National Club's environmental attorneys, and Hale Powell, one of the National Club's energy consultants; Larry Andrews and his daughter, who reside across the street from the proposed new power plant; the Oklahoma Sustainability Network; a coalition of energy-using companies; Chesapeake Energy; Treasurer Scott Meacham; a whole host of rate-payers (many of them our members across the state); and others, were able to convince a majority of the elected commissioners of the Corporation Commission to deny pre-approval of the proposed Red Rock Coal Fired Power Plant.

The Club has taken the stance that coal is not an appropriate fuel for the future. The pollution and global warming impacts of the fuel can no longer be accepted. (For an excellent discussion of the issues look to the National Sierra Club website for the new report "The Dirty Truth about Coal." <http://www.sierraclub.org/coal/dirtytruth/report/>

As you can see above, Sierra Club was not the only voice in this fight, but I believe we were a significant one, particularly given the numbers of members and our friends that contacted the Commission on this issue. We have also joined Oklahoma Sustainability Network in petitioning the Corporation Commission to open a rulemaking to adopt better regulations regarding energy efficiency and conservation in Oklahoma. Look for more on this subject on our web site in the next few weeks.

My optimism is not just our one success against one plant, but rather the large amount of attention being given here and elsewhere to the impacts of coal and our many other activities as a society that lead to global warming. I am about to attend the National Council of Club Leaders and Sierra Club Board of Directors meetings in San Francisco. One of the issues being "debated" on the club's email list serves for leaders as we head to the meetings is whether or not global warming should be as big a focus of the national programs and funding as it has become; and whether or not we are abandoning our long held role as protectors of wilderness etc. If the Club's leaders are unsure, imagine what uncertainty resides in the general public.

I am of the belief that the fear of a planetary disaster from global warming is real, cannot be avoided to some significant level already, and if our energy and lifestyle choices don't improve immediately will become catas-

trophic. Having that belief, I am inclined to support the urgency of the Club's focus on this issue. Much of the wilderness we love and want to protect is the very heart



of the areas that will be destroyed—glaciers, mountain habitats, coral beds, seashores, and on and on, if we cannot as a society mitigate the warming that is taking place.

My optimism stems from the recognition of the problem by state officials and the public, even in a state that is not known as a bastion of environmental concern, and that sends a non-believer like Senator Jim Inhofe to Washington. If we can move forward I see reason for hope. To keep moving forward will require a lot of work and focus from Sierra Club, the nation's pre-eminent environmental advocacy group.

I would like to hear your views on the role Sierra Club needs to play, both in Oklahoma and the Nation. I would like to hear your views on the relation of our traditional programs to the new focus on global warming. My e-mail can be found on this newsletter and our state web. Please use the subject line: "Sierra Club and Warming".

THANKS !



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

Not everyone can make a large gift to protect the environment during their lifetime, but you can preserve the environment for generations to come by remembering Sierra Club in your will.

There are many gift options available. We can even help you plan a gift for your local Chapter.

For more information and confidential assistance, please contact:

Gift Planning Program
(800) 932-4270
planned.giving@sierraclub.org

Preserve the Future

A Chicken in Every Pot? A Car in Every Backyard? (Continued from Page 1)

"The livestock sector emerges as one of the top two or three most significant contributors to the most serious environmental problems, at every scale from local to global." It turns out that raising animals for food is a primary cause of land degradation, air pollution, water shortage, water pollution, loss of biodiversity, and not least of all, global warming. The following are findings from the UN Report:

Air Damage

- Animal agriculture is responsible for 18 percent of the world's greenhouse gas emissions as measured in CO2 equivalents. By comparison, all transportation emits 13.5% of the CO2.

- In addition to CO2, environmentally toxic gases produced by livestock include nitrous oxide, methane, and ammonia generated from the animals' intestinal belching, flatus, and manure. The report says "The impact is so severe that it needs to be addressed with urgency."

Livestock

- Produces 65 percent of human-related nitrous oxide, which has 296 times the Global Warming Potential of CO2.
- Accounts for 37 percent of all human-induced methane (which is 23 times as warming as CO2).
- Generates 64 percent of the ammonia, which contributes to acid rain and acidification of ecosystems.

Diversity Damage

- Livestock's very presence in vast tracts of land and its demand for feed crops also contribute to loss of other plants and animals; livestock is identified as a culprit in 15 out of 24 important ecosystems that are assessed as in decline.
- The loss of species is estimated to be running 50 to 500 times higher than background rates found in the fossil record.

Water Damage

- The livestock business is among the most critical users of the earth's increasingly scarce water resources; in addition, contributing to water pollution, excessive

growth of organisms, depletion of oxygen, and the degeneration of coral reefs, among other things.

- The major water-polluting agents are animal wastes, antibiotics, hormones, chemicals from tanneries, fertilizers, and the pesticides used to spray feed crops.

- In the United States livestock is responsible for 55 percent of the erosion and sediment, 37 percent of the pesticide use, 50 percent of the antibiotic use, and a third of the load of nitrogen and phosphorus put into freshwater sources.

- Widespread overgrazing disturbs water cycles, reducing replenishment of above and below ground water resources. Significant amounts of water are withdrawn for the production of feed.

Land Damage

- The total area occupied by grazing livestock is equivalent to 26 percent of the ice-free terrestrial surface of the planet. In addition, the total area dedicated to producing feed crops for these animals amounts to 33 percent of the total arable land.

- Clearing forests to create new pastures is a major source of deforestation, especially in Latin America where, for example, some 70 percent of former rainforests in the Amazon have been turned over to grazing. The forests are the major "sinks" for removing the greenhouse gases from the atmosphere they are the "lungs of the Earth."

**Individual
Choices
Matter**

Three times a day we can help the planet by shifting our food choices towards **more plant-based, organic and locally grown food products.**

Terry Jensen is active in the Fort Worth Group and a member of the National Sustainable Consumption Committee. Another section of his article giving results of a University of Chicago study was omitted due to space constraints. The full article may be found on our Oklahoma Chapter website under Sustainable Agriculture.

Bottled Water Addiction (Continued from Page One)

MONEY WASTED

- Americans spend about \$11,000 per minute on bottled water
- A gallon of Evian (bottled New York City tap water) typically costs more than the same amount of cola, gasoline or milk
- Tap water costs an average of \$.002 per gallon while a gallon of bottled water costs from \$0.89 to \$8.26 per gallon



RESOURCES WASTED

- The amount of water used to make water bottles is double the amount of water that is used to fill the bottle
- 16,000 barrels of oil were used to make the plastic water bottles in the U.S. for one year. (Enough to power 100,000 U.S. automobiles for one year.)
- Americans consume more than 2.5 million bottles of water every hour and only about 10% of the bottles are recycled (Annually, we throw \$1 billion worth of plastic in landfills.)
- Growing demand for water by bottled water industries is putting a strain on existing water sources. (1.5 billion people worldwide have no access to safe drinking water, and 12 million people die each year from diseases brought on by unsanitary water.)

POLLUTION CAUSED

- Shipping and trucking bottled water from one part of the world (or even within the U.S.), to another creates air pollution
- Bottled water must be kept refrigerated before sale, using huge amounts of energy and creating CO2 emissions
- Many plastic water bottles have harmful chemicals that leach into the water when heated, worn or scratched. Disposing of them in landfills poses an environmental risk.
- Production of 1 kilogram of PET plastic results in emissions of 40 grams of hydrocarbons, 25 grams of sulfur dioxides, 18 grams of nitrogen oxides, and 2.3 kilograms of carbon dioxide.

The next issue will include research on water filters and reusable water bottles (Cimarron Group is selling SIGG bottles.) Additional resources can be found on the National Sierra Club website: http://www.sierraclub.org/committees/cac/water/bottled_water/bottled_water.pdf and many other websites including Food and Water Watch, NRDC, Green Guide, Terra Pass, and Natural Home. Just Google for many more resources.



**Explore,
enjoy and
protect
the planet**

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Warner Brothers' 11th Hour Addresses Ecological Overshoot



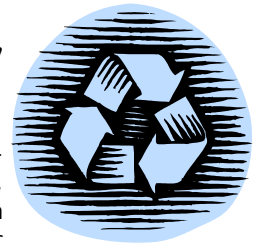
As you probably know, humanity is in ecological overshoot and we are demanding more of our Earth's biological capacity every year. Learning to live within the means of our one planet Earth is the most important challenge of our time; all of us need to engage in the transition to one planet living.

Leonardo DiCaprio and Leila Conners Peterson have just produced an amazing documentary which highlights the realities of humanity's Ecological Footprint. The film was created using over 150 hours of interviews with some of the brightest minds on the planet. "The 11th Hour" documents the extraordinary challenges facing the planet's life systems, including global climate change, deforestation, loss of biodiversity and ocean habitats, and the growing list of integrated solutions at hand to help redirect humanity's course towards living within our planet's means for supporting us.

This film is a must see for all audiences: it will energize and inspire those engaged in restorative work, and will enlighten and motivate those who are not yet involved in the global sustainability movement.

Additionally the 11th Hour website: <http://wip.warnerbros.com/11thhour/> is a fantastic resource for learning about a lot of amazing organizations and innovations in this field.

Oklahoma Celebrates America Recycles Day Officially Kicks Off 2007 Pledge Drive



If protecting the environment and conserving natural resources are important to you, your help in promoting increased recycling in Oklahoma is needed. You'll also be glad to hear that recycling is making great progress. With more than 20-thousand programs available throughout the country, over 90% of Americans have access to recycling. In Oklahoma, over 50% of our citizens have recycling programs available.

Every year, communities, organizations, schools and businesses hold America Recycles Day (ARD) events to celebrate recycling and to keep it in the public eye. ARD celebrates clean air and water, a reliable supply of energy, and a healthy future for our children. However, a lot of valuable materials are still being wasted, so America Recycles Day also means rededicating ourselves to recycling. This year, our theme is "Oklahoma Celebrates America Recycles Day – It All Comes Back to You." The annual ARD date is November 15th, but a lot of events are starting much earlier!

If you are interested in planning an event or celebration, a variety of promotional and educational materials are available from the DEQ. An event planning guide is available on the OKRA website. DEQ will provide pledge cards in pads of 100 and signs for anyone wishing to collect the pledges in offices, schools, public places, etc. Order event kits online at: www.recycleok.org. **Don't forget to pledge online while on the OKRA website!**

State prizes donated for last year's celebration may be seen on the OKRA website now, with 2007 prizes uploaded by late October (possibly sooner): www.recycleok.org. The Oklahoma Sierra Club is donating a terra cotta one gallon water crock filter to this year's ARD prize drawing, so perhaps you can win that and stop drinking bottled water!