

Oklahoma Sierran

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Sierra Club Outings Leader Training Workshop

WHO: If you're a Sierra Club outings leader or you want to become a Sierra Club outings leader, join us for the 2005 Outings Leader Training Workshop at the Lake Murray near Ardmore, OK. Leader training is a never-ending process, so whether you're an old hand or have never led before, this workshop is for you. It's part of the Outdoor Activities Training Program (OATP) - a Club-wide training initiative - being offered in Oklahoma. Join us for a weekend of interactive learning, networking with leaders from all outing programs, and of course, lots of fun.

WHERE: At Lake Murray State Park which is between Oklahoma City and Dallas, TX along I-35 (roughly 90 miles from both).

WHEN: November 11-13, 2005. (Fri-Sun) Opening program on Friday at 7:30 p.m. sharp. Check-in & dinner from 6 p.m. Workshop ends with lunch on Sunday at 12:00 p.m.

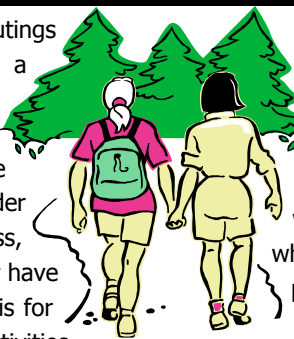
COST: \$45. Includes meals (Fri. dinner-Sun. lunch) & bunk-style lodging.

GOALS AND PURPOSE

The goals of the workshop are to learn and enhance leadership skills, to bring people and programs together to share and exchange ideas, to welcome new outdoor leaders, to learn what it takes to lead for other outings programs of the Sierra Club, and once again, to have a lot of fun.

The purpose of this workshop is to bring together new and seasoned leaders from ICO (Inner City Outings), GCO (Group & Chapter Outings), and NO (National Outings). The agenda for the workshop will encompass an extensive array of leadership topics presented in both group and breakout formats. This workshop will fulfill both the Outings Leader Training 101 and Outings Leader Training 201 requirements.

REGISTRATION To register, learn more about the workshop, or check for available space, go to the National Training website at <http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/training/>. No drop-ins are allowed and registration is open to the region including Dallas, so register early!



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Building Environmental Communities Fall Outreach

Oklahoma's Building Environmental Communities program urges all Oklahoma Sierra Club members to keep their eyes on the prize. That prize would be a clean and safe environment.

We will do so by working for the these strategic initiatives: Protect wild places, demand cleaner renewable energy, create a demand for politicians to consider environmental justice in their campaigns and legislation, keep Oklahoma poison free; clean air and water, build environmental communities and keep them safe. Those are goals for which we are working.

We invite you to help us work to protect clean water for Oklahoma,



specifically this time for Oklahoma City, by joining in on our Fall Outreach. We will be walking in a targeted area of Oklahoma City on Saturday morning, October 15, to inform citizens of the need to protect Lake Atoka. Meet up at the Gold Dome, NW 23rd & Classen in OKC at 9AM for orientation and a continental breakfast. We will form teams and head out at 10AM.

The water quality of the lake, which is a source of water for Oklahoma City, is threatened by a proposal to log its shores. For more information about the planned walk, you may email Nancy Smart at nsmart1@yahoo.com or Billie Brown at billie.brown@sierraclub.org or you may call the Sierra Club Oklahoma office at 405-366-5694. —By Nancy Smart, BEC Chair

Our Nation's Food System by Doug Walton (www.KerrCenter.com)

There is a growing body of evidence from children and youth gardening and cooking projects that shows an increased interest in, and consumption of, fruits and vegetables when the kids are involved in the growing, harvesting or preparation of the foods. I would have to say this holds for my own kids, Charley age 8 and Olivia 12, and even for their friends who've helped or played in the garden or the kitchen over the years. Whether it's picking sugar snap peas, where it goes something like pick 2, eat 1 (... or maybe it's the opposite), or pulling carrots and eating them like bugs bunny, before ever getting them to the wash tub, or eating and liking Brussels sprouts that they've started from seed, then helped transplant and later pick, or just helping peel garlic or chop basil for the spaghetti sauce.

These and other similar experiences lay a foundation for an increased desire to eat fresh food not just from the garden, but even when purchased from the store or the farmers' market, or sometimes when eating out. You know, maybe it's something we've only grown once in the past, or perhaps we've never grown it, but just being able to imagine how it might grow, somehow seems to makes a difference.

Many of us these days no longer have a connection with our food or the people and their communities who raise it. As food production, distribution and marketing have gotten increasingly concentrated and industrialized over the last 50 to 60 years, food itself has become more of a commodity, packaged and sold by corporations, than being the true source of energy, health and life that it is.

As we are all too well aware, we are part of a society that allows less and less time for gardening or for preparing meals and snacks from fresh, home-grown foods. And even when we have grown something or purchased it from the farmers' market, it can be difficult to find the time and energy to put that food to use. There is now a generation of young parents raising children, who for the most part, don't cook. And with this, a multitude of skills and knowledge about preparing and using fresh whole foods is literally being lost from our culture, in a way very much similar to our loss of knowledge about farming and gardening. And for most of us, we likely don't see ourselves having the time, the skills, or maybe even the interest in preserving and putting up some of the season's surplus bounty that comes available.

By now, you can probably tell one of the main reasons it's so exciting for me to see the growing success of family farmers and their markets. Plain and simple, I love to eat good fresh food, especially when it's raised by people that I know or have met. Because at this point, I'm not able to grow it all myself, much to my chagrin. But besides the amazing variety of great flavors, and the wonderful relationships that can be built around our food, there are also a number of other reasons why the availability of locally produced foods is so vitally important: First of all, using locally produced food supports local communities—economically, culturally, and environmentally. Here are some rather alarming statistics:

Since 1940, Oklahoma has lost nearly 100,000 farms. 63% of Oklahoma farms have annual sales less than \$10,000. Nearly 2/3 of Oklahoma



farmers are over the age of 54, and only 5% are below the age of 35. Equally concerning, in the 1950's, the farmer's share of the food dollar for grain products was about 35 cents, today it is barely 9 cents, with most all of difference going to the marketing sector. Since 1990, an average of 9000 new food products have been released each year. Most all are just reformulations of the same basic raw ingredients. So that now well over 300,000 items are competing for supermarket shelf space that can only hold about 50,000 products. The end result of this: **advertising.**

Decisions about food and farming are being made in corporate boardrooms, where the focus is on the bottom line and how to produce food most cheaply and sell it for the most profit, with little regard for the effects on rural communities and their natural environments.

- Our nation's food and farming system has become increasingly concentrated in the hands of fewer and fewer entities.
- Three multinational companies handle the movement of virtually all the world's grain,
- Two firms process the majority of meat in this country,
- Five control the seed for all major crops worldwide. -And five other companies sell half of our groceries in the U.S.

This globalization has reduced access and competition within agricultural markets and has limited the options available for family farms and businesses. Many farms have subsequently failed and others have gotten larger to overcome the smaller profit margins and to gain access to the consolidated markets. Larger farms means fewer farmers, and that means fewer people, businesses and services in our rural communities. A process that Jim Horne, president of the Kerr Center, has referred to as "Desperation Economics."

When a community becomes willing and eager to accept any industry, regardless of the environmental or social costs involved. The smaller, diversified family farmers like we've seen the past two days can help save their communities. Now, in Oklahoma we import roughly 90% of the fresh produce items that can be grown here. Much of this comes from California, Florida, and Texas, with an increasing amount being imported from countries

such as Mexico and China. ***Did you know that food items purchased at your local supermarket or in restaurants or in school cafeterias travel an average of 1500 miles to reach your plate?*** This means that our current system is completely dependent on fossil fuels, not just for transporting food, but also for manufacturing and operating farm machinery, making fertilizers and other chemicals, and for pumping irrigation water. This alone should make us all stop and think about the sustainability of our food—homeland security takes on a whole new meaning!

Local food systems are built upon activities and transactions such as farmers markets, CSA's, caterers and restaurants using locally grown food, the Oklahoma Food Cooperative and farm to school projects (school gardens, and farm/food activities). All of these function largely on the basis of people making healthy food choices. By acquiring foods that are grown or processed locally, we help ensure the long-term availability of fresh, safe, and nutritious foods to everyone in our communities.

As we look, we begin to see. As we see, we begin to care. And as we care, we begin to take action.



The Life of Ilene Younghein. . . A Eulogy

On June 6, 2005, long time Sierra Club member and environmental activist, Ilene Younghein, died at the age of 83. The article below is taken from her eulogy.

How does one tell the story of a life lived on as grand a scale as Ilene Younghein? You could describe her many achievements: the Planned Parenthood clinic she started in rural West Virginia in the 1950's, her coordination of the Great Books Discussion Program, her successful fight to close the Kerr-McGee plutonium facility near Crescent, Oklahoma, her intervention in the proposed Black Fox nuclear power plant, the 102 panels she sewed for the Peace Ribbon that wrapped the Pentagon in 1985, the publication of her book of poems last year. Among her many awards and accolades: A Certificate of Appreciation ... "for devoted and valuable services to the Sierra Club..."; the "Oklahoma Nonviolent Action Award" from the Community of John the XXIII given of the 20th anniversary of the closing of Black Fox "for her vision, wisdom, faith, determination, courage, perseverance, and generosity; her recognition by Frosty Troy of the *Oklahoma Observer* as an "Oklahoma Treasure."

Ilene was an activist. On nuclear energy, overpopulation, reproductive rights, factory farms, environmentalism, you always knew where she stood. Her opinions were always well reasoned and backed by substantial reading and research and

she didn't back down. When she opposed the Vietnam War before few else did, she lost friends. That hurt her, but didn't change her mind. And many of those friends came to agree with her in time.

Perhaps it only toughened her for the later vilification and spying she would endure when she came up against Kerr-McGee. She never backed off on anything she believed in because she was fearless.

Ilene's great encompassing love and nurturing of the world was the basis of her activism. Remember that first photo of the earth from space- that beautiful small blue ball? That's truly how she saw her home. The earth was her home and she meant to take care of it, as she did her own house and her own family. Not fastidiously, bogged down in the details of it, but always aware of the biggest possible picture and her own priorities within it.

Ilene's life – whether reading to a grandchild or fighting for a cause – was informed by love, by joy, and by curiosity. A self-educated woman, she read everything . . . even the technical and scientific documents that only specialists usually delve into. She wrote many articles for the *Oklahoma Observer* and countless letters-to-the-editor as well as being a well-respected poet.

Better World Club Joins With Sierra Club, Helps Fight Global Warming

Better World Auto Club has announced that it is donating \$7,000 to the Portland schools as part of its TravelCool! program which helps offset the greenhouse gas generated by the air/auto travel of Better World members. This year, the award-winning program will help the Portland (OR) schools test an innovative project: a control system that uses CO2 sensors to reduce energy (i.e. by turning down the heat) when a communal room such as a gym or auditorium is unoccupied.

Better World has also announced a commitment to the Sierra Club's Fuel Economy Campaign: \$12,000 over the next year to support its efforts. The Bush administration and the automakers have opposed any meaningful increases in Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFÉ) standards, despite the existence of technology that will enable passenger cars and light trucks to go farther on a gallon of gas.

The time is now for automakers to increase the fuel economy of their fleets. Better World Club and the Sierra Club are both working to extend California's law to limit global warming emissions from the transportation sector to other states. This could increase fuel economy to 40 miles-per-gallon (mpg) for cars and light trucks and reduce consumer spending at the gas pump, save more oil than America currently imports from the Persian Gulf, and cut heat-trapping carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions.

The stated goal of Sierra Club's Fuel Economy

Campaign is to cut CO2 pollution and curb global warming by spurring American know-how to increase the fuel economy of new cars, SUVs, and other light trucks, a goal shared by Better World Club. To achieve this goal, Sierra Club intends to:

- Create demand for decision-makers to implement solutions to global warming;
- Continue defending the implementation of California's global warming law and educate the public in other states and Canada on the availability of these cleaner cars;
- Advocate for state-level administrative changes that will improve fuel economy;
- Educate Americans about existing technology that would increase the fuel economy of all passenger vehicles without sacrificing safety, size, or comfort;
- Continue pressuring auto manufacturers, including Ford, Chrysler, and General Motors, to increase production of hybrid vehicles to meet consumer demand;
- Build strong and effective coalitions with allies in the labor and faith communities; and
- Secure opportunities in print, television, and radio media to inform Americans of the benefits of better fuel economy.

If you are interested in more information, contact The Sierra Club Foundation at (202) 675-6692. Find out about Better World Auto Club on its website: www.betterworldclub.com.





Explore,
enjoy and
protect
the planet

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Sierra Club's Capitol Action Network Needs YOU!!

The Sierra Club's Oklahoma Capitol Action Network is a group of members and friends who are dedicated to passing good environmental legislation and fending off the bad. This is a project of your Oklahoma Chapter Legislative Committee chaired by attorney Charles Wesner, Norman.

Starting in February 2006, the committee will meet regularly to discuss all bills that are environmentally-related, deciding whether to SUPPORT, OPPOSE or just WATCH. A bill tracking list is kept, with many bills dropping off the agenda early in the session. Fact sheets are prepared and delivered to all legislators by Keith Smith, our dedicated lobbyist. When we feel additional help is necessary to sway votes on certain bills, we send an Action Alert electronically to approximately 200 members who have signed up for our list serv. We ask these members to contact (by phone, e-mail or snail mail) their legislators

about voting for or against certain bills.

With a membership of 2800, we should have many more of you on our Action Alert list serv! Please e-mail me at <sshields@cox.net> to join or sign-up on the web: www.oklahoma.sierraclub.org. You are not obligated to take action every single time, but we hope our Capitol Action Network members pay attention and act when we have an urgent vote on a bill. Please sign up now!

The other aspect of the Capitol Action Network is the development of relationships with our legislators. We are looking for folks who will be the point person/liaison for their senator or representative and get to know them on a first name basis. If you are not sure whose district you are in, there is a link on our Web site that will help you find out. Please contact me to volunteer. Remember, this is YOUR Sierra Club Chapter, too!

—Susie Shields, Legislative Committee

