

Oklahoma Sierran

Volume 5 Issue 5

September 2004



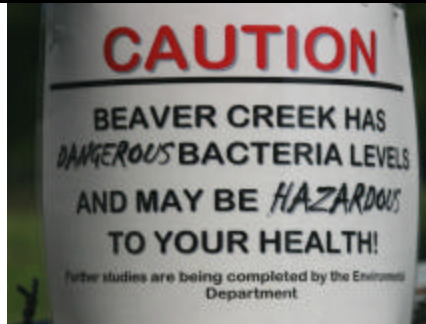
Inside this issue:

Sierra Club Endorses Kerry	2
Consortium for Environmental Literacy	2
Ecological Footprint of Nations	3
Letter from Kalyn Free	3-4
Legislative Scorecard (cont'd)	4
Chapter Leadership Directory	4

TAR CREEK BLUES

by Paul Moore, Chapter Conservation Chair

One of the benefits of serving on the Chapter Executive Committee is seeing first hand the areas of Oklahoma challenged by environmental degradation. Our peripatetic chairman, Tom Libby, has scheduled bi-monthly meetings from one end of the state to the other and each has been rewarding in its own way. This past month we met in Miami, Oklahoma, and spent the morning touring the Tar



Above photo shows the sign that greets visitors to the local pow-wow campground.

Creek Superfund site. It is hard to understand the magnitude of the problem unless you spend time driving the area above the abandoned mine caverns. To paraphrase Dick Van Dyke, "They got the gold and we got the shaft."

Driving through the mountainous chat piles and stopping to view the streams flowing out of the caverns we saw some optimistic signs of possibility. In North Miami a former horse ranch is being redeveloped as a water treatment facility. Subsidized land covered with mine runoff is being slowly cleansed with native plants that draw out the heavy metals.

As local environmental activists Rebecca Jim and Earl Hatley pointed out, it is important that people focus on starting many small experimental projects instead of being stymied by the magnitude of the problem. Out of these experiments the most cost-efficient and effective result may be identified. Even along Tar Creek, plants and birds have reappeared above the rust colored stream. Government efforts to divert the

mine runoff from the stream with dikes have failed to raise the water quality back to its original level, but in the aftermath some small steps of improvement have occurred along the banks of the blighted creek.

This land can be reclaimed. It will take money, as much as \$1 billion, to simply clean up the chat piles. A huge investment, but insignificant when compared to the cost of the war in Iraq. Mean-

while the EPA Superfund is tapped out for this year. Further, the budget has remained flat for the past two years of the Bush Administration at a level that cannot possibly deal with the number of polluted sites left behind by corporate greed. Trapped in this policy of "malignant neglect", are families that cannot abandon what little they own.

A cynical person might say that this problem will not be solved until the wealthy Grand Lake community admits that it is downstream from an ocean of pollutants and the City of Tulsa recognizes the potential danger to their future water supply at Lake Hudson. Hopefully, citizens will decide to do the right thing for the sake of the children and the environment and not wait for self-interest to arise.

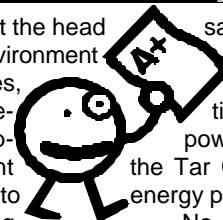
This is a political problem, not an engineering problem. The water can be pumped and the chat can be moved and the caverns can be filled. Our legislators must make the salvage of Oklahoma lands as important as the salvage of foreign lands to the "inside the beltway" crowd.

SIERRA CLUB SCORECARD GRADES LEGISLATORS' ENVIRONMENTAL VOTES

by Jody Harlan, Political Committee

Some Oklahoma legislators are at the head of the class when it comes to pro-environment voting. Others deserve failing grades, according to an "Environmental Scorecard" released by the Oklahoma Chapter of the Sierra Club. The document establishes an average score from 0 to 100 based on state lawmakers' voting records on key environmental bills considered during the 2004 legislative session.

"The Environmental Scorecard covers votes on corporate welfare for chicken factories, overuse of groundwater and out of state water



sales," Sierra Club Chapter Chair Tom Libby said. "We also analyzed votes related to environmental budget protection, water development planning, wind power development, factory farm regulation, the Tar Creek Superfund site buyout and safe energy promotion."

No Oklahoma Senate or House member had a perfect voting record this year. Senators Bernest Cain (D-Oklahoma City) and Debbe Leftwich (D-Oklahoma City) tied at the top by casting pro-environment votes 80% of the time. Representative Rebecca (Continued on Page 4)

Sierra Club Endorses John Kerry for President

"This year the choice for president could not be clearer," said Sierra Club President Larry Fahn, announcing in May the Club's endorsement of John Kerry for president. "We are faced with a choice between the most anti-environmental president ever and a true friend who would bring to the office a dedication to improving all issues facing the environment. The past four years have witnessed an outright assault on 30 years of environmental progress, selection of staunchly anti-environmental judges, backroom deals with polluting industries—the list goes on."

The Club's endorsement surprised few Sierra Club activists, who are by and large more familiar with the Bush administration's environmental depredations than the average American. But even Club members may not realize the extent to which Kerry has been an environmental leader throughout his career in public service. In 1970, fresh back from service in Vietnam, he gave some of the first speeches of his career at Massachusetts' first Earth Day, which he helped organize. As Massachusetts lieutenant governor he co-chaired the 1983 Acid Rain Task Force and issued the Call for Action Against Acid Rain Report, at the time one of the most comprehensive analyses of the damage caused by acid rain in this country.

As a senator, Kerry has consistently supported the Sierra Club's agenda; the League of Conservation Voters this year gave Kerry a 96.5 percent career rating, the highest LCV rating of any presidential nominee ever from a major party. He has been a Senate leader on fuel efficiency, led the charge against the Bush administration's attempts to allow oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, and has strongly opposed the nominations of anti-environmental candidates for judicial and federal agency appointments. Kerry has championed legislation supporting Endangered Species Act protections, opposed efforts to open national monuments to drilling, voted to strengthen public lands protections, and opposed the Bush administration's attempts to weaken Clean Air and Clean Water Act protections.

Kerry advocates removing the incentives in federal regulations and tax policy that encourage sprawl, and he favors restoring the Superfund Act's "polluter pays" trust fund to clean up hazardous waste sites. He has

promoted an energy policy that would reduce our dependence on oil, increase our energy efficiency, and increase the amount of clean, renewable energy used to generate electricity. In 1997 Kerry traveled to Kyoto to promote the climate control accords that President Bush subsequently shunned, and he has stated that as president he would work to re-establish the United States as a world leader on environmental policy.

The Sierra Club's Political Committee sent an environmental questionnaire to all of the presidential candidates earlier this year, and interviewed the seven Democratic contenders who returned the questionnaires. (President Bush did not return his.) "Senator Kerry had an amazing grasp of the issues," reported Fahn. "This guy really gets it."

**Preserve
The
Future.**

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 the Sierra Club in your will.

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

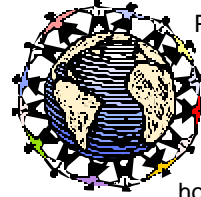
For more information and confidential assistance, contact:

John Calaway
Director, Gift Planning
85 Second Street, 2nd Floor,
San Francisco, CA 94105
(415) 977-5639 or e-mail:
planned.giving@sierraclub.org



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

Consortium Begins Master Plan for Environmental Literacy in Oklahoma



People of all ages and walks of life are invited to join the Oklahoma Consortium for Environmental Literacy (OKCEL) as it develops the Environmental Literacy Master Plan for Oklahoma.

Our Master Plan is being planned, developed and sustained just like a garden. We have chosen four areas in which goals are targeted and action plans will be carried out: Public Relations, Outreach, Implementation and Resources.

You are welcome to attend any or all of the Master Plan Clinics which will be held in the coming year: October 15 and December 3 at the Oklahoma City Zoo Educational Department. You may also participate in chat room discussions in any or all of the Master Plan focus groups: Public Relations, Outreach, Resources and Implementation.

Check our website bulletin boards at www.okcel.org for the times and dates of upcoming classes and events, or call us at (405) 314-8629 for more information.

The Oklahoma Consortium for Environmental Literacy (OKCEL) is working with dozens of Oklahomans of all ages, backgrounds and professions to develop the Oklahoma Master Plan for Environmental Literacy.

OKCEL was created in 2001 as the Oklahoma Consortium for Environmental Education when a group of Oklahomans applied for a national EETAP grant, and was one of eight states selected for funding.

In 2002, the Oklahoma team sent out a statewide survey and analyzed data related to general awareness of environmental issues and education.

In 2003, the Oklahoma team held a clinic for community leaders to help them create plans to address local problems. Team members wrote a mission and vision for the Master Plan, and the foundation for developing the Master Plan was poured.

2004 has seen the dream of a Master Plan become a reality. Reachable goals for the Master Plan have been written and we are now at work developing action plans to attain them.

The work of finishing the action plans and making them happen continues. Members of OKCEL want this Master Plan to be a vital contribution to Oklahoma, and truly a pathway to helping all of our state's citizens become environmentally literate.

Sierra Club has been an active partner in the Consortium since its inception through the work of Susie Shields. This year, the Club has been represented by a new volunteer, Red Earth's Group's Nancy Smart.

Earth's Resources Overused by 15%: Deepens Plight of Poorest Nations

Redefining Progress recently released an update of the world's leading indicator of sustainability, the Ecological Footprint(tm) Accounts. The 2004 Footprint of Nations concludes that the world's wealthiest nations are mortgaging the future at the expense of today's children, the poor, and the long-term health of the Earth. Through excessive consumption of non-renewable resources, a handful of countries are depleting global reserves at a faster rate than ever before. These problems are compounded as wealthy nations continue to grow their economies by exploiting the resources and economic potential of their impoverished neighbors.

The national Ecological Footprint Accounts measure the land area required to support a nation, providing for its needs and absorbing its wastes. The Accounts are composed of six factors energy use, grazing land, pastureland, fisheries, built land and forests.

Redefining Progress's prior reports have focused on the dangers of overusing our natural resources and the effect on future generations. For the first time, this year's report documents the current impact of over-consumption on the world's most vulnerable populations.

"This measure speaks for those with the least power in today's world: children, the poor, the environment, and future generations," said Michel Gelobter, Executive Director of Redefining Progress. "These are groups with little or no voice in the political system or the economy, but whose resources are being compromised. When we ignore their plight, we undermine our collective future."

For the first time the United States has the world's largest Footprint at 9.57 hectares (23.7 acres) per person - a sustainable Footprint would be 1.88 hectares (4.6 acres). At the other end of the scale, developing countries like Bangladesh and Mozambique have Footprints of 0.53 hectares (1.3 acres) per capita - just over 1/20th of the US Footprint. Humanities combined footprint represents an overuse of the earth's natural resources by 15%.

Unsustainable consumption and population play a big part in the size of a nation's Footprint. Since much of an industrialized nation's ecological impact is due to the use of fossil fuels, shifting to renewable energy can dramatically lessen

a country's Footprint. Even a developing nation with a small per capita Footprint can have a very large overall Footprint when its population grows rapidly. Sustainable modes of production and consumption and attention to social equity can help decrease national Footprints and improve quality of life around the world.

Another trend reported in the study is the growing number of sub-national governments that have taken action by compiling local Ecological Footprint Accounts to reduce their use of global ecological resources.



"When London, Paris, and San Francisco calculated their Footprints, they invested in the future. When they take action to reduce their impact, they see returns immediately in environmental health, economic vitality, and social equity," said Jason Venetoulis, co-director of the Sustainability Indicators Program at Redefining

Progress, speaking from the 4TH Conference of the Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development in Cardiff, Wales.

The full report, "2004 Footprint of Nations," can be downloaded at: <<http://actionnetwork.org/ct/21zEMRs10B44/footprintnations2004>>. Redefining Progress has calculated Ecological Footprints for over 130 countries and numerous regions as well as an increasing number of municipalities and businesses. Individuals can calculate their own Footprint (in seven languages for 60 countries) at www.myfootprint.org.

Switch to compact fluorescent bulbs . . .



Change the three bulbs you use most in your house to compact fluorescents. Each compact fluorescent bulb will keep half a ton of carbon dioxide out of the air over its lifetime. And while compact fluorescents are initially a lot more expensive than the incandescent bulbs you're used to using, they last ten times as long and can save \$30 per year in electricity costs.

A thank you letter from Kalyn Free, Sierra Club endorsed candidate . . .

Dear Friends:

Thank you so much for your support throughout our campaign. Unfortunately, we did not win the primary in Congressional District 2. Ten days ago, the polls showed us within eleven points and gaining fast; all the pundits and even our opponent were predicting a close race and a runoff. But, one week before Election Day, our opponent poured \$260,000 of his own money into negative advertising on choice and gun control and he won the Democratic nomination.

I cannot adequately express how grateful I am to you for giving me the chance to make this race. We knew from the beginning what the odds were — we were up against the biggest name in Oklahoma politics, massive amounts of money and the entire political establishment. But I thought that the people of Eastern Oklahoma deserved a chance to have a real choice. Forty-six thousand and sixty people took advantage of that chance and voted for a fresh, progressive alternative to politics as usual.

Part of me wants to apologize for spending your money in a losing cause. But more of me is proud that I gave the men and women of organized labor, the pro-choice Democrats, the pro-environment Democrats, believers in the civil justice system, opponents of bigotry in every form, and people who appreciated my work for the victims of domestic violence and child abuse, somebody to vote for. I could not have done that without you.

I would not have asked for your support if I did not think we had a real chance to win — and again, as of a week ago, it seemed that we did have that chance. Although I cannot tell you that you invested in a winning candidate, I hope it is enough to tell you that I still believe this was a race worth running.

For the rest of the year, I will dedicate my political energy to electing John Kerry and John Edwards and Democrats everywhere. Maybe I'll see you on the campaign trail. Saddened as I am by this defeat, I am filled with hope that this November we can and will take back America.

Again I thank you, from the bottom of my heart.

—Kalyn Free

(See photo on Page 4.)



Explore,
enjoy and
protect
the planet

[www.oklahoma.
sierraclub.org](http://www.oklahoma.sierraclub.org)

CHAPTER LEADERSHIP DIRECTORY	
CHAIR:	Tom Libby, 405/722-2367, <tomlibby@yahoo.com>
VICE-CHAIR:	James Martin, 405/424-0632, <james_e_martin@yahoo.com>
SECRETARY:	David Franklin, 405/789-5377, <dfranklin@ussok.com>
TREASURER:	Mark Derichsweiler, 405/297-0179, <mderichsweiler@cox.net>
MEMBERSHIP:	VACANT—HOW ABOUT YOU?
POLITICAL CHAIR:	Charles Wesner, 405/321-2204, <wesner@qns.com>
OUTINGS CHAIR:	Tom Libby, 405/722-2367, <tomlibby@yahoo.com>
CONSERVATION CHAIR:	Paul Moore, 918/584-6447, <pfmoore001@aol.com>
CONSERVATION VICE-CHAIR:	Susie Shields, 405/297-0179, <sshields@cox.net>
CONSERVATION ORGANIZER:	Billie Brown, 405/366-5694 billie.brown@sierraclub.org
LEGISLATIVE CHAIR:	Charles Wesner, 405/321-2204, <wesner@qns.com>
LEGISLATIVE VICE-CHAIR:	Olivia Waldkoetter, 405/821-2304
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>
NEWSLETTER EDITOR:	Susie Shields, 405/297-0179, <sshields@cox.net>



Kalyn Free visits with Paul Moore (top) and Charles Wesner (bottom) at the Oklahoma Chapter 2003 fall planning retreat



Legislative Scorecard *(Continued from Page 1)*

Hamilton (D-Oklahoma City) led the Oklahoma House members, earning a 78% score. Representatives Debbie Blackburn and Mary Easley tied with 67% scores.

Senator Easley began as a state House member. She was elected to the Senate before the end of session, giving her a partial voting record in each legislative body. Sierra Club scorecard analysts added the votes Easley cast in both the House and Senate.

"Everyone running for office is a 'green' candidate around election time because they realize that clean water and air are important to voters,"

Sierra Club Political Chair Charles Wesner said, "The scorecard provides an objective way to rank legislators. Basically, their actions in support of environmental issues speak louder than words."

Those with the voting records that did not support environmental issues were Representative Joan Greenwood (R-Moore) who scored 0%, Senator Mike Johnson (R-Kingfisher) with 10% and John Smaligo (R-Owasso) with 11%.

On the average, legislators voted in favor of environmental issues 46% of the time with Democrats averaging 55% compared to Republicans' 35%.

For complete lists of scores for all Oklahoma legislators and summaries of the bills used for the scoring, go to the home page of the Oklahoma Chapter website: www.oklahoma.sierraclub.org. If you would like a hard copy mailed to you, contact Jody Harlan, 405/354-3189 or hwinc@cox.net.