

Fresh Air



April Meeting - See New Sierra Club Office

The Oklahoma Chapter has opened an office for our EPEC Coordinator, Billie Brown, which is located in Norman above Harold's Outlet Store (575 S. University Blvd.) We will help inaugurate this facility by holding our April meeting there and by starting off the meeting with a Pizza party. Please join us on April 22 at 6:15 for Pizza and conversation.

Our program for the evening will be presented by Keith Smith. Keith is the Oklahoma Chapter lobbyist and he will be filling us in on the deeds and mis-deeds that are occurring in the current legislative session and what we might be able to do to help.

So, join us for the fun. There is parking available in the Presbyterian Church parking lot across the street.

Report from the Chair

After a winter of our discontentedly depending on our country's outrageous agricultural system, the spring brings with it many opportunities to wean ourselves away from that system. The soil is warming up, young vegetables are sprouting, and the fruit trees are flowering, yielding the promise of homegrown food to come. The farmers' markets are busy with customers seeking vegetable plants and fresh early season produce.

A group of us, lead by the remarkable energy and enthusiasm of Robert Waldrop, have founded the Oklahoma Food Cooperative in order to expand the marketing opportunities for Oklahoma farmers and ranchers and to give Oklahoma consumers easy access to Oklahoma food. The Co-op currently offers once a month deliveries to Oklahoma City, Norman, Edmond, Tulsa, and several other communities. The first delivery took place last November, and the Co-op has already grown to over 150 members, including about 50 producer members. Members can now order on-line, choosing from a large assortment of meats, vegetables, eggs, cheese, nuts, processed foods, and nonfood items, such as soaps and handmade crafts. The customer handbook contains detailed descriptions of each producer, including location and production methods.

So what are the environmental advantages of such a food co-op? We believe that the Co-op provides an antidote to many of the environmental degradations of Big Agriculture! Most of the foods in our grocery stores have to travel a great distance from the source to the store, wasting large amounts of energy, whereas most of the Co-op's products originate within the state. Big Ag poisons our foods with pesticides, fungicides, hormones, antibiotics, and other chemicals, while smaller producers can usually get by with small amounts, or in some cases, none of these agents. The CAFO's that manufacture most of the meats in supermarkets treat animals in a inhumane way and often pollute water supplies. The OK Food Co-op does not carry meats from CAFO's. Huge farms that grow enormous amounts of a single crop depend on immense quantities of artificial fertilizers that can get into our rivers and streams, and they destroy top soil at an alarming rate. Family farms are rapidly becoming an item for the history books, and our rural areas are dying.

We believe that such a food co-op is a good way to support our Oklahoma family farms and ranches, to slow down the rate of environmental destruction, and to offer Oklahomans a source of fresh, healthy foods. For more information, please see our web page at www.oklahomafood.org

Sutton's Big Event!

Oklahoma University annually coordinates a day of volunteerism by connecting students with over one hundred community projects in the metro. Undaunted by the weather, eight students and one staff joined Nancy Smart, Carolyn Showers and Judith Wilkins of the Red Earth in hauling out a winter's worth of trash and recyclables. Not only was it a joy to work with the students, but when our world sometimes seems to be going to hell in a hand basket, it's reassuring to know that conscientious young adults like these will make a positive impact. It's also nice to have a place so close like Sutton Wilderness to get away from it all and go for a trail walk in a mini-forest. Check out the new gazebo and kiosk.

Earth Day 2004



**Please join us for these upcoming events
sponsored by the Sierra Club!**

Saturday, April 17

Walk To Protect Oklahoma's Water

Crown Heights Park -- 37th and N. Shartel, OKC

Meet at 10:00 am,

Directions for Walk

Canvass neighborhood to hand out informational brochures

Wednesday Evening, April 21

Caring for the Environment

Saint Paul's Cathedral, 127 NW 7th -- Oklahoma City,

Learn about environmental issues -- educational/spiritual Forum

Sponsored by Sierra Club. Open to the public. Reception, 6:30 pm

Panel discussion, 7:00 pm Featuring:

Secretary of Environment Miles Tolbert,

The Very Reverend George Back, Dean of Saint Paul's Cathedral

Tom Libby, Oklahoma Sierra Club Chapter Chair

Director Zaleha

Sponsored by the Sierra Club, open to the public.

Thursday Morning, April 22

Talk for Water

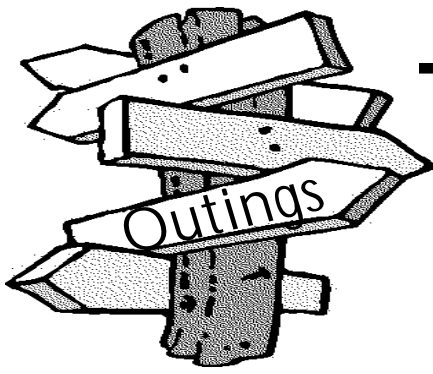
State Capitol, fourth floor Rotunda

Meet at 10:00 am

Juice/coffee/directions

Hand out Sierra Club Environmental brochures with seeds to Decision Makers

For more information on any of these events, contact: Billie Brown at billie.brown@sierraclub.org



and plants. We have a great chance to see Buffalo, Deer, Elk, Long Horn Cattle and Prairie Dogs. The birds will be out. At the beginning of hike we could see Red-Headed Woodpeckers. Perhaps with our fingers crossed we could see a Lewis' Woodpecker. Even if we don't see any of this stuff, we will have a good time. Come see the blooming catus and points of interest such as the Pear and the Apple, Twin Rocks and Sunset Peak. Bring daypack with lunch and drink. Rating moderate with off trail hiking. Meet at 10:00 am at the Refuge visitor center parking lot for the start of this hike. The drive from Norman to the visitor center is about one and one half hours. Call John Raeside at 321-4518 for information or if interested in carpooling arrangements. I have room for those who want to carpool. Cost: None.

April 17, Saturday: WICHITA MOUNTAINS DAY HIKE. The Charon's Garden Wilderness Area. Spring should be in full form for this hike. On our visit to the refuge we will have the opportunity to see a variety of wildlife

May 1, Saturday: BROOKHAVEN CREEK CLEANUP. 8:30 to 10:30. Brookhaven Creek is located in north-west Norman on the east side of 36th Ave. between Robinson and Crossroads Blvd. Wear shoes or boots that do not mind getting dirty, I have extra gloves. Call John Raeside at 321-4518 for directions.

May 2, Sunday: PONTOTOC RIDGE PRESERVE. This will be a day hike through a Nature Conservancy holding. The preserve which lies on the eastern edge of the Arbuckle Uplift features a prairie that is home to many species of amphibians, flowers and butterflies. Other communities to observe, enjoy and learn about are crosstimbers, and bottomland forests.

The preserve, which is about two hours from Norman, has self-guiding trails and picnic facilities. Bring a picnic lunch, which you can leave in your car, and water for the trail. This is an easy hike; children are welcome. Call Suzette McDowell at 364-2617 to arrange a place to meet in Norman before we leave for Ada. We will need to gather at 8:00 AM. You will receive maps showing how to get to the preserve from Ada.

Don't forget to vote in the Sierra Club Board of Directors' election. Deadline in April 21.

Red Earth Group Officers

Chair:	Walter Kelley*	329-6059	wkelley@math.ou.edu
Vice-Chair:	David Miller*	321-4140	bneasm31@sbcglobal.net
Secretary:	Jim Long *	579-9924	jim_long@swbell.net
Treasurer:	Nicolette Nicar*	366-8056	nnicar@ou.edu
Conservation:	Rick Poland*	360-5001	rgpoland@swbell.net
Outings:	Suzette McDowell*	364-2617	suzettemcdowell@sbcglobal.net
Programs chair:	Gloria Long	579-9924	gjmsl@swbell.net
Legislative chair:	Sandra Rose	321-7639	msrose@cox.net
Political chair:	Rick Poland*	360-5001	rgpoland@swbell.net
Membership chair:	John Raeside*	321-4518	raesidej@aol.com
Newsletter editor:	Jim Long *	579-9924	jim_long@swbell.net

* indicates Executive Committee member

Yes, we did produce a near-perfect republic. But will they keep it? Or will they, in the enjoyment of plenty, lose the memory of freedom? Material abundance without character is the path of destruction.

-Thomas Jefferson

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