

Congaree Chronicle

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Sprawl: Our Most Important Environmental Issue

Recently the *Congaree Chronicle* interviewed South Carolina Chapter Director Dell Isham on the issue of sprawl. Isham has a unique perspective on sprawl, having served on a county planning commission, as a legislator who chaired a committee on land-use planning, and as a mayor of a city that enforced planning regulations.

Q. CC: What do you think is the most important environmental issue in South Carolina?

A. Isham. Undoubtedly, water quality, is a major issue. But water, just like air pollution or inadequate transportation and many other issues, are really symptoms of a more basic problem. They are the result of not planning ahead. Proper planning can avoid problems. So, I would say unplanned growth, or sprawl, is the greatest underlying environmental problem in South Carolina.

Q. CC: What are some of the other results of unplanned growth?

A. Isham. In addition to air and water pollution, unplanned growth results in loss of wildlife habitat and natural areas, increased cost of government services, loss of a feeling on community and social responsibility, traffic congestion and time loss, and even obesity and health problems because people don't walk enough.

Q. CC: Do you bring this issue up in your talks around the state?

A. Isham. Yes. I often ask audiences if they walked to school as a child. There is a big difference in the responses I get depending on the age group I am speaking to. Ask a senior citizen group that question and virtually every hand is raised. Ask a college-age audience and hardly anyone raises their hand. That is a dramatic change in our society in just two generations and one that is detrimental to our environment and health.

Q. CC: How can we prevent sprawl?

A. Isham. First of all, we must recognize that sprawl is not inevitable and it is

not a result of free enterprise. Sprawl requires government subsidy for the increased cost of diffused transportation, sewer and water service, police and fire protection, schools and recreation, and other government services,



Photo by Warren Gretz.

none of which are generally paid for by the developer. Many well-intended government programs make sprawl possible. If we concentrated government services where they were most efficiently provided, sprawl would be halted. We also have to plan for the future so we will not continue past mistakes.

Q. CC: What are the elements of good land-use planning?

A. Isham. First, every city, town, and county should be required by the state to have a long-range comprehensive plan. It should look at least 20 years in advance. A priority should be to save farmland and forest land from development, as well as natural areas, wetlands, floodplains, and (Continued on page 5.)

Chapter Plans 2005 Strategic Priorities

by **Eric Thompson, Chair, Strategic Planning Committee**

A great group of South Carolina Sierrans spent a day and half looking at our future on Saturday and Sunday, March 5 and 6. We were led by two volunteer leaders from National Sierra Club, Greg Casini and Debbie Heaton. Greg came in from Colorado. Debbie came from Delaware. After an all day meeting, we had dinner together a short walk from the Chapter office. We finished up around noon on Sunday. Our group included: **Amy Armstrong, Susan Corbett, Dwight Fee, Ed Fitzgerald, Al Graves, Pam Greenlaw, Bob Guild, Starr Hazard, Chris Kempton, Malcolm Kudra, Christine Von Kolnitz, Jim Majors, Cynthia Powell, Jim Robey, Virginia Sanders, Allyn Schneider, Norm Shea, Linda Taft, Eric Thompson, Steve Valder, Janet Wedlock, Joe Whetstone, Bob Wislinski, Joe Zdenek, and Dell Isham.**

As I write this, the Plan has not been put in a final form for the ExCom to endorse. Our Strategic Planning Committee is completing that task. Nevertheless, I wanted to report on some of the progress we have made.

At the beginning of our Retreat, we talked about the strengths and weaknesses of the Chapter. We put together about 75 different ideas of things we should consider doing to improve the South Carolina Club, both the Chapter and Groups. We ended up in typical Sierra Club democracy with a vote. We were given stickers of different colors and had to place votes on a set of possible projects. (Continued on page 5.)



National Board member and Chair of the Organizational Effectiveness Governance Committee, Greg Casini, and Committee member Debbie Heaton visited Columbia in March to facilitate the Chapter's strategic planning.

Inside

Page 1

Sprawl
Chapter strategic planning

2-5: Club news

Your letters
National election results
Book festival
Chapter awards
Farewell to Walt Schrader
Donors
Columns

6-7 Conservation

Native medicine
Bush energy plan
Dumb consumer goods

8: Outings and events

State outings
10 good things of 2004
Mountain Bridge trail projects



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Congaree Chronicle

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Club News

Your Letters

Dear Sierra Club,

I have recently bought a house of my own. . . . I love being a homeowner, but my funds are really low now. It's much more expensive owning. But it's what I chose to do.

I have recently felt defeated and angry with Bush's reelection and the Sierra Club newsletters & magazines make me feel like there is hope yet!

Thank you!

N.P., Greenwood

"Public policy pertaining to the environment should be nonpartisan or at most bipartisan. I am confident that there are many members of the Sierra Club whom identify with the GOP. I would hope that the Sierra Club would acknowledge that there are many Republican office holders who are various shades of green."

J.C., Columbia

"Dear Dell Isham,

"Many thanks for talking with our Contemporary Issues Sunday School Class at Trenholm Road United Methodist Church. Your messages were well received."

J.L., Columbia

"Herewith my annual contribution to the Chapter March window . . . Physical condition precludes my joining any more camping or canoeing trips (I am 89), but I will render what support I can."

C.L., Columbia

"Dear Mr. Isham,

"Your message on the interrelationship of all God's gifts was truly inspiring."

C. R., Columbia

"We have a beautiful state and I would like to leave as much as possible to my grand & great grand children."

T. L., Richburg

"Dear Dell

"Thanks so much for your presentation at the Contemporary Issues Class yesterday. You did a great job and as a result, I'm joining your club."

M. M., Columbia

Memorials

The Chapter wishes to thank
the following for their contributions

IN MEMORY OF

Ralph Gilman

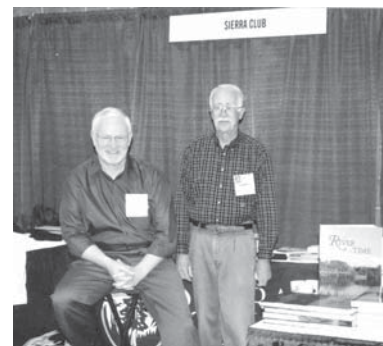
Allstate Insurance Company,
Charleston MCO
and daughter, Judith Gilman

2005 National Sierra Club Election Results

Elected were Joni Bosh, Jennifer Ferenstein, Jim Dougherty, Jim Catlin, and Barbara Frank. The Population Immigration Policy change failed (yes 18,998; no 102,455). Both bylaws changes passed, one ending the provision of write-in candidates (yes 92,289; no 26,936), the other requiring one year of membership before running for the national board (yes 115,392; no 5,272).

Chapter Participates In Book Festival

For the third straight year the South Carolina Chapter of the Sierra Club participated in the South Carolina Book Festival by providing information and selling publications on the environment.



"Those who attend this event are friendly, knowledgeable, and receptive to our message," said Chapter Director Dell Isham. "Participating in this festival is an important part of our outreach effort and also a minor source of income for our chapter." The Sierra Club sold books, T-shirts, tote bags, and books, in addition to giving out information and membership forms.

Chapter Director Dell Isham and Bachman Group Chair Steve Valder were among the volunteers who staffed the Sierra Club table at the South Carolina Book Festival, February 19-20, at the Columbia Convention Center. Photo by Deborah Kingsbury.

Volunteers for this year's event were Mark Hall, Susan Corbett, Steve Valder, Debra Staples, Pam Greenlaw, Malcolm Kudra, and Isham.

Springtime....

What a pity flowers can utter no sound! A singling rose, a whispering violet, a murmuring honeysuckle--oh, what a rare and exquisite miracle would these be!

...Henry Ward Beecher, American clergyman

Chapter Awards Nominees Sought

by Joe Zdenek

The Awards Committee of the South Carolina Chapter is seeking nominations for meritorious service during 2004. Nominations for the following awards must be submitted no later than July 1.

Conservationist of the Year: Given to a member who has made a major and extraordinary contribution to a statewide or national conservation campaign.

Carolina Sierran: Given to a leader who has administered a position or office in the Chapter with unusual skill and success.

Silent Footprinter: Given to a Sierra member who has gone above and beyond expected performance in an unobtrusive Club role. The Recipient need not have a formal title or position.

Palmetto Pathfinder: Given to a member who has exhibited outstanding effort and influence in organizing, leading, and recruiting for exciting outings in South Carolina.

Elected Official of the Year: Given to an elected official in recognition of current or past environmental efforts and achievements, with preference given to legislators and other officials serving at the estate level.

Media Person of the Year: Given to an individual in recognition of outstanding, positive contribution to the environment in South Carolina through journalism.

Distinguished Service Award: Given to a member who has contributed long-term, outstanding service and accomplishments to the Chapter.

Group Certificate of Achievement: Given to groups for outstanding activity in any area of club activity. Groups may nominate themselves.

Student Environmental Excellence Award: Given to the Sierra Student Coalition member or other student member attending a school, college or university in South Carolina who has exhibited high achievement in the areas of environmental projects, environmental awareness, and/or enhancement of the organizational well-being of Sierra in South Carolina.

To make a nomination, please use the form on this page.

Chapter Awards Nomination Form 2005

To make a nomination, please mail this form to Joe Zdenek, 752 Harrell St., Rock Hill, SC 29730. Please describe the accomplishments this person or group has made to be eligible for the award suggested. Provide sufficient detail in order to allow the Awards Committee to evaluate the nominee; remember, the Awards Committee may not be familiar with the nominee. If more space is needed, use additional pages. If appropriate, include additional materials such as newspaper clippings. **NOMINATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN JULY 1.**

Name of nominee:

Address:

Telephone:

E-mail address:

Group:

Award category:

Name of nominator:

Address:

Telephone:

E-mail address:

Details of reason for nomination (Use additional pages and attachments, if needed):

A Fond Farewell to Walter Schrader

by Harry Dalton, Rock Hill

On April 17 the Sierra Club and the environmental cause lost a true friend and longtime activist with the passing of Walter Schrader. Walter was 92. He and his dear wife Alpha, whom he affectionately called "Sweetheart", were life members of the Club since 1975. He was a retired biologist with the S.C. Wildlife Department.



Walt Schrader. Photo courtesy of The Herald, Rock Hill.

In the mid 1980's Walt received one of the Club's highest national awards. A Special Service Award for his lifetime of service to conservation and the environment was presented to him in San Francisco at Sierra Club's annual Awards Banquet. He also served faithfully for many years with the S.C. Wildlife Federation and with other conservation groups in York County. He was an active volunteer lobbyist for conservation organizations, seemingly never tiring of writing or calling an elected official. He relished the chance to engage in political dialogue if an issue concerned preserving or protecting the environment.

Walt was born and raised in Colorado where he graduated with a BS degree in horticulture. As a young man he helped restore the Dust Bowl of the Southwest by engaging in replanting of native species and vegetation. He relocated to South Carolina in the late 1930's as the first wildlife biologist for the S.C. Wildlife Department. He encouraged the restoration of wildlife, especially alligator, deer, wild turkey, and game birds. The success of his work is self-evident.

In the 1990's York County honored Walt by giving his name to its most prestigious hiking trail at Brattonville. York County's Culture and Heritage Commission named Walt Schrader the first recipient of its annual "Keeper of the Culture" award in 1997. Walt also was the first male to enroll at Winthrop University and became its first graduating male when he received an MS in Biology in 1969.

Walt's life was filled with superlatives. To say he will be missed is a gross understatement. To his friends Walt was of John Muir in statue. A local reporter said, "Nature was more than his choice of study--it was his life".

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Strategic planning

(Continued from page 1.)

The topic areas which received the most votes were:

- Using technology to improve communication and involve members
- Develop volunteers skills through training
- Develop strategies for engaging our members
- Build membership diversity
- Expand alliance outreach efforts

There are a couple ideas that seemed to ring true for many of the attendees. One is that we need to upgrade our electronic communications. As many of us have seen in the recent election, there are a lot of ways to effectively communicate with a broad and very busy membership like ours. Another is the concern about drawing in more activists. We see that in some of the ideas for engaging our members as well as ideas about training our new group and chapter leaders.

As the plan is finalized, we will share it with all of you.

Sprawl

(Continued from page 1.)

cultural and historic sites. The plan should include all public services, including all modes of transportation. There should be constraints on unplanned growth with the use of urban growth boundaries or greenbelts, which have been successfully used in other states.

It is also important to plan for a full range of housing options, as well as to aside areas for commercial and industrial uses. Mixed use development should be encouraged in some areas to reduce the cost of public services and return a feeling of community. Lastly, I would say that comprehensive planning needs to encourage public participation, open government, and have an evenhanded method of mediating conflicting land uses.

Q. CC: That is a tall order. Where do we begin?

A. Isham. It is essential that we **do** begin, if we are going to save any of the valued traditions and quality of life in South Carolina. Some counties have made valiant, but mostly inadequate attempts, with really no help from the State. The legislature and governor need to take some responsibility for land-use planning by providing guidelines, financial assistance, and technical support. Cities, counties, school districts, and special purpose district need to coordinate with each other so all plans will mesh. Sprawl is not inevitable. Nobody likes the results of sprawl. So, let's work together to control our own destiny.

CC: Thank you for an interesting discussion on one of South Carolina's important, but unaddressed problems.

If You Can't Beat 'Em....

by Bob Guild, Chapter Chair

We left the meeting feeling mighty discouraged. We'd driven three hours to attend the Chapter ExCom meeting at Jones Gap State Park to make our case on a conservation issue we felt passionate about but had been trounced by the vote rejecting our proposal. Susan and I left the meeting room; Malcolm followed us out and called after. As we stood on the porch overlooking the rushing Middle Saluda River, Malcolm said, "you're not going to quit over this are you? Stick with it and you may change our minds on this."



Now some five years later I'm remembering this bittersweet experience in democracy from the vantage point as your Chapter ExCom Chair who has just finished representing the Club in its advocacy of the very policy we argued for that day. I'll tell you a bit about that policy issue in a minute. But, the real lesson I want to share is the one I learned that day from fellow Sierrans Malcolm Kudra and Susan Corbett: grassroots democracy is alive and well in the Sierra Club. As they say, "if you can't beat 'em join 'em." So we did!

The Club is a democratically-lead membership organization consisting of some 750,000 conservation-minded folks just like us; 5,000 are affiliated with our Chapter. What many of us don't appreciate, including me that day years ago, is that the work of the Club is determined by its democratically-elected leaders who serve as volunteers on local Group and Chapter ExComs as well as on the national Sierra Club Board of Directors. It is these governing bodies which establish conservation policies and priorities, based on member participation in our various conservation and issue committees, which then become the focus of the Club's vital work. So . . . if you think the Club is missing the boat on a conservation issue that is important to you, get out there and join that Conservation Committee, or run for Group or Chapter ExCom or even the National Board. And that's just what Susan Corbett and I did.

The issue that got Susan and I fired up that day over 5 years ago--Nuclear waste dumping at the Chem-Nuclear facility in Barnwell. We asked the Chapter to take a strong stand against the practice of dumping most of the nation's nuclear waste in unlined pits where it leaks into the shallow water table, moves over 1/2 mile through groundwater and contaminates Marys Branch Creek, which flows into the Savannah River. We argued that this antiquated disposal method--a giant septic tank drain field which leaks by design--should be replaced by state-of-the-art barrier technology just like the above-ground concrete bunkers which Chem-Nuclear itself designed for a proposed North Carolina facility. Our willingness in South Carolina, however, to continue to sacrifice our environment persuaded our neighbors to the north to let us keep the dump.

Fast forward five years. In a unanimous vote last year the Chapter ExCom voted to challenge our state's failure to insist on adequate radiation barriers at the Barnwell dump. Chapter Attorney Jimmy Chandler and I are now representing the Club in an appeal of Chem-Nuclear's license renewal where we presented expert testimony supporting the Club's position. While the ruling on our appeal is still pending, we have taken a strong stand on nuclear waste disposal in South Carolina.

Not all of the last five years have been struggles over conservation priorities by any means. I've watched Susan sweat blood over organizing volunteers to staff the Sierra booth at the State Fair where thousands of folks wielding corn dogs or cotton candy linger to chat about the Club and its activities. I've sat through too many meetings to count where Malcolm's wisdom has nudged us through the mundane but essential work of raising a budget and keeping up with information technology. And we've all shared many a laugh over a box lunch at a meeting or trail mix in a canoe on the Enoree River

with some of the finest, most passionate and nicest folks you'd ever want to meet.

The practice of citizen democracy can, indeed, be messy and can break your heart when it lets you down from time to time. But the democracy practiced in the Sierra Club is, for me, the model to share with all of those like us who want to save the planet. Malcolm and Susan: Thanks!

Oil Slick Tourism

by Dell Isham, Chapter Director

"Hey, Mom and Dad, let's go to the beach and watch the oil slick!" That may be the plea of children in the future if some in Washington D.C. have their way.



South Carolina has a well-deserved reputation for trading pollution for dollars, leaving the next generation to pick up the real cost.

So, when Congress talks about paying states for offshore drilling, it is time to get nervous. After all, in South Carolina we already take in toxic waste, hazardous waste, medical waste, and nuclear waste for a few dollars. How much are oil-wasted beaches worth?

It is somewhat reassuring, however, to know that we do not have the only gullible legislature. The Virginia General Assembly recently passed a bill so they could be first in line to drill for oil and gas off the Virginia coast, just in case the Congress passed implementing legislation. Governor Mark Warner took the only responsible action available by vetoing the bill.

There has been a 24-year federal ban on East Coast exploratory drilling for natural gas and oil. The Majority Staff of the U.S. House Natural Resources Committee is drafting a complex bill, however, to undue the moratorium and promote offshore drilling. This "not ready for prime time" bill called SEACOR (State Enhanced Authority for Coastal and Offshore Resources Act) will include the following provisions:

- End the moratorium on Congressional offshore leasing
- Terminate presidential offshore "leasing deferrals"
- Allow the Department of the Interior to lease for oil, gas, or methane hydrates
- Share up to 50% of the drilling revenues with the states where drilling is taking place
- Impose fiscal penalties on states attempting to protect their shores from drilling
- Fast track federal offshore oil and gas leasing approval
- Prevent state objection to landing crude oil pipelines on the coast

Where is our Congressional Delegation on this issue? Their silence is not very reassuring.

The only South Carolina Congressmen to be quoted on this issue at the time of this writing is U.S. Representative Henry Brown, who represents much of the South Carolina Coast. He said he could not have an opinion until he has seen the legislation and consulted with state legislators. How complicated can this be? Does he support offshore drilling or not?

By contrast, North Carolina's two Republican U.S. Senators, Elizabeth Dole and Richard Burr, have made their opposition to off shore drilling quite clear.

The U.S. Senate recently approved drilling in the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge, so forgive me if I am not convinced that ending the moratorium on offshore drilling is a "long shot."

South Carolinians hold their beaches dear. It is where we, and much of the rest of the country, go to vacation. It is the home of an important recreational and commercial fishery. It is also a fragile and beautiful environment.

What shall we leave to the next generation? A pristine beach or an oil slick? "Look Mom, at that funny oily bird on the beach."

Conservation

Native Medicine Opens Doorway for Modern Cures

By Chris Paget, South Carolina Chapter Volunteer

In the modern American pharmaceutical market, synthetic medicines are the prevalent choice in treating illness, but this has not always been the case. Throughout history, Native Americans and settlers alike have relied on plants for medicine. The history of modern medicine is often linked to the original discovery of whole plants or plant compounds that cure. Indigenous groups' botanical discoveries have profoundly affected today's medicine.

During the past two centuries, a necessary reliance on medicinal plants has existed for *all* in need of healthcare. A shift is taking place, as plant-based medicine is finding its way onto shelves in large numbers. This shift can be recognized as a nod to the Native Americans who discovered these uses; discoveries that happened even without benefit of microscopes or high-end lab tools.

The inclination towards purely synthetic medicine dates back to the turn of the 20th century, when American citizens saw an almost total dismissal of raw plant material as medicine, and an acceptance of the use and invention of pharmaceutical medicines. Even so, the truth of the matter is that more than 80 percent of the planet's population today still relies on compounds taken directly from plants for primary healthcare.

Plant medicines have created a system of effective healthcare for both indigenous peoples and the developed world. The World Health Organization relayed some circumstantial evidence of this in one early study that noted that of 119 plant-derived pharmaceutical medicines, 74 correlate with how native cultures used them.

Plants can provide new and effective healthcare, yet few have been explored. An estimated 40 percent of today's pharmaceuticals come from natural compounds, begging the question of why only 5,000, or roughly 2%, of the world's 300,000 plant species have been investigated for medicinal or bioactive potential. Fewer than 100 species have given us 120 major prescription and patented drugs, a fact that can increase awareness that we have many higher plants to explore.

Native Contributions to Modern Medicine

Native American discoveries of botanical medicine still echo in today's pharmacies. The label on a bottle of aspirin, for example, contains the chemical sounding "salicylic acid," a primary ingredient in many pain relievers.

Nonetheless, this chemical comes straight from the bark of the willow tree and has been used for centuries by American Indians. Seminole groups in Florida derived a solution from the coastal plain willow's inner bark and used it as a fever and pain reducer. Other groups

used it for thinning blood, another application that persists in today's pharmacies.

The blueberry is a folk medicine used in several parts of the world for the treatment of diabetes. Modern research has found that the leaves of a relative to the common shiny-leaved blueberry can in fact lower plasma glucose levels by 26 percent in two stages of diabetes.

Capsicum, from the species of fiery pods we know as cayenne, chili, and other hot peppers, were used traditionally for seasoning, but also to aid digestion, asthma, arthritis, muscle cramps and toothaches. One can find tubes of capsicum or capsaicin creams today on the pharmacy shelf, designated as muscle and joint pain relievers. Current studies allude to the fact that capsicum aids digestion, and may even prevent heart disease. Hot stuff!

Native groups narrowed the field of plant medicine to a science of disease prevention as well. Noting trends in illness, tribal doctors or medicine men thought about possible epidemics that might lie in the year ahead. They were then able to prescribe preventative medicine to the entire tribe and to patients susceptible to disease.

Muscadine grape is one fruit traditionally used as preventative medicine among southeastern groups. Scientists are studying the high level of antioxidants in the grape, and have found that it offsets the generation of free radicals that can damage the immune system. Two compounds in the grape may also reduce the risk of cancer and heart disease.

Three compounds from the leaves of another Native American preventative medicine plant, sweet bay, show strong antifungal and antibacterial activities. The leaves also show inhibitory effects on an enzyme that causes blood coagulation and platelet disorders.

Plant Medicine in the Palmetto State Native Americans have a great agricultural history in this state, and the expansive botanical knowledge base they created still exists. But it needs nurturing and protection. As a driver passing through South Carolina (or reading this newsletter), one is likely to see the names Congaree, Saluda, Santee, Pontiac, Oconee, or Seneca.

These names recognize the history of at least 29 distinct groups that have lived in this state, and whose ethnobotany can offer much wisdom to modern medicine agriculture.

In South Carolina several initiatives and programs are creating opportunities for medicine plant agriculture to flourish in the state and to possibly take the place of tobacco as a high-income crop. These include the Plant Medicine and Toxicology Initiative at Clemson University, projects of the Sustainable Universities Initiative in Columbia, the National Nutraceutical Center in Charleston, as well as

joint research studies between Clemson and the Medical University of South Carolina.

Feverfew is an anti-inflammatory herb that helps improve blood vessel tone and head health. Today research is based on the relief of migraine headaches, as well as overall head health in times of increased stress. The Catawba and other southeastern tribes used tannin from one species for external pain relief, especially to treat burns. According to one source, the herb has been used traditionally to treat headaches for 2,000 years.

Recent tests of feverfew conducted at Clemson University also show that it has the greatest potential for commercial production in the state. By contrast to harvests of other medicinal herbs, it has the most potential to rival tobacco in income, and it could be produced with existing equipment, without the use of pesticides and herbicides. This could be very good news for the state's agricultural climate.

"The idea is to link agriculture and medicine, helping the nutraceutical industry that is already present in the state to become more vibrant and bring new players into South Carolina," stated David Gangemi, executive director of the National Nutraceutical Center.

Cherokee natives used the natural population of black cohosh extensively. They used the root to treat muscles, tendons, joints, bones, or nerves, and also as a restorative tonic. Research today focuses on utilizing the herb to decrease hot flashes triggered by menopause.

Black cohosh is one herbal remedy whose increased demand could actually endanger it. Developing a protocol by which to grow it on farms could save both a native crop and a Cherokee tradition. Compounds from this plant alone create annual sales of about \$34 million. South Carolina provides mixed hardwood forests, which is the ideal, and indeed only, climate the plant grows best in.

The ramifications of native plants and their native uses are far reaching and at times stunning. At Clemson, researchers have found local raspberries, strawberries, grapes, and walnuts, for centuries thought of as food, to contain an acid that has the ability to inhibit the growth of cancer cells.

Scientists are still discovering the ways these compounds work, and more research with these and numerous other species is ongoing. Given South Carolina's temperate climate, our farms can sustain and further the benefits of these plants.

For more information on native plant medicine, check out the National Nutraceutical Center's website at <http://www.clemson.edu/NNC/>. For information on South Carolina's native people, look up the 500Nations website at <http://www.500nations.com>.

Bush Energy Plan Fails To Offer Real Solutions

Statement by David Hamilton, Director of the Sierra Club's Global Warming and Energy Program

In his Washington speech on April 27, President Bush offered up "new" energy ideas that are anything but new--they are old, outdated, obsolete energy policies that depend on last-century technology and polluting sources of energy.

At least they are being consistent in Washington: The President made this speech exactly one week after the House of Representatives passed the Energy Policy Act--a bill that threatens to open up our coasts and special places to oil development, lets big business polluters off the hook for cleaning up the messes they make, funnels billions of dollars in subsidies to out-



The City of Plano, Texas uses Toyota Prius hybrid vehicles. Photo courtesy of the City of Plano.

dated dirty industries like coal, oil and nuclear power, and fails to offer the clean, visionary solutions that Americans want

Despite repeated promises by the President and Congress to move America into the 21st century--Washington once again has failed to offer us an energy policy that lowers energy prices, creates jobs, and curbs our dependence on foreign oil. Instead they are serving up energy programs that help industry, step on state's right and thumb a nose at sound science:

At a time when oil companies are making record profits, the federal government does not need to subsidize the construction of new refineries. The current lack of refinery capacity is the result of a conscious decision by the oil industry in the 1990s to limit the supply to increase profits. The lack of refinery capacity is not due to environmental regulations, as some

reports say--it is due to the oil industry itself. The only long term solution to lowering how much consumers pay at the gas pump is to reduce demand. The good news is that we have the technology today to make all vehicles--from sedans, to SUVs to pickup trucks--go farther on a gallon of gas.

The President's plan would take power away from states and communities to site liquefied natural gas ports and put it in the hands of federal agencies. This is wrong--states and local communities deserve a say to decisions that affect the health and security of their families.

At a time when the Bush administration's own scientists are saying that Yucca Mountain is not safe, it does not make sense to build a new generation of nuclear power plants when we have no place to store the waste, and we have cheaper, cleaner ways to provide electricity for our families.

It's time to reenergize America with a smarter, safer, cleaner, and cheaper energy policy. We can light and heat our homes with safer, cleaner wind or solar power. We have the technology to make all cars go 40 miles per gallon within ten years, saving more oil than the U.S. currently imports from the Persian Gulf or could ever take from the National Wildlife Refuge, combined. We can improve the energy efficiency of our homes, businesses and appliances--putting money in our wallets and keeping the environment clean. We can protect our children from the air pollution that spews from cars and power plants. We can protect our coasts and the wildlands left to us for safekeeping. All we need now is leaders who will put people ahead of corporations and act now to create a legacy that we will be proud to leave our children.

The Growing Energy Crisis

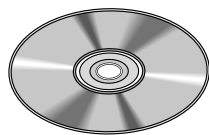
An article by Charles T. Maxwell, described as "the dean of energy analysts by *Barron's* financial weekly" in *BottomLine/Personal* (March 15, 2005) describes how he believes the growing energy crisis will affect our lives.

New oil can't be found and developed for use fast enough; oil fields are operating at 98% of capacity. Sixty percent of what the U.S. uses today is imported. Non-OPEC oil production is approaching a peak.

As a result, prices will soar for gasoline, heating oil, and electricity over the coming decades. We will turn to smaller cars, new high-efficiency gasoline engines and high-mileage diesel engines. Homes will be more energy efficient, using new types of motors, heaters and coolers to reduce electric consumption. We'll spend more time closer to home. Urban planning will stress far more vertical development, and cities will thrive. Some might give up their cars.

Suggested remedies: improve insulation in your home, set the thermostat down, buy a more fuel-efficient car, think twice about buying a vacation home.

Of course, environmental organizations have been warning of these consequences for many years. It now appears that people are getting ready to listen.



10 Dumbest Consumer Goods

Reprinted from the January/February 2005 issue of *Sierra* magazine

"Only ten?" OK, it was a tough choice. Some waste exorbitant amounts of energy, others turn precious natural resources into trivial junk, while still others encourage us to consume for the sake of consumption. Here then are ten of the sorriest ways to dispose of your disposable income:

1. Talk 'n toss cell phones. Their inventor was inspired by wanting to toss her regular cell out her car window. Now she can! Upside: If they're littering the highways they won't clog up landfills.

2. Leaf blowers. Using a leaf blower for half an hour is equivalent to driving a car 110 miles. And all it gets you is leaves on the other side of the driveway.

3. Disposable DVDs. Disney and Flexplay are marketing DVDs that become unplayable 48 hours after the seal is broken. They can be mailed in for recycling, but would people who couldn't be bothered to mail in a rental really do so?

4. Lunchables. Processed meat, fatty cheese, and crackers in an unrecyclable plastic tray, wrapped in more plastic and then

cardboard. Kids deserve better.

5. Disposable toilet cleaners. Instead brush that lasts for years, you can now a lot of money for flushable toilet brushes.

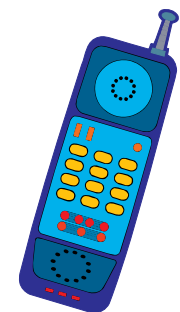
6. Imported bottled water. Even if your ter is undrinkable, your H2O doesn't have shipped in tiny bottles halfway around the globe.

7. AOL CDs. The glut of 400 million unsolicited discs a year has inspired numerous recycling attempts. Beer coasters? Sushi platters? Mailbox reflectors? But trash they are and to trash they shall return.

8. Swiffers. "You can just throw away the dust with the cloth!" exults the Web site for these rags-on-a-stick. Somehow it doesn't sound like progress.

9. Disposable underwear. Disks of cloth with an adhesive that sticks directly to your pants. They even come in camo!

10. The Hummer. Ostentatious energy waste as a reason for being. A special lifetime achievement award. — P.R.



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Outings and Events

Group designations:
BA = Bachman; BR = Bartram; CA = Cathcart; FH = Foot-hills; HK = Henry's Knob; LZ = Lunz; PD = Pee Dee; SF = Swamp Fox; SR = Savannah River; WY = Winyah

State Outings

May

May 14: **Mountain Bridge Wilderness hike.** HK. Rated moderate, 5 miles of easy downhill, mostly riverside trail. Lunch on a rock by a little waterfall. Good supper buffet on the way home. Meet at 7 a.m. at Airport Winn Dixie. Mary Keenan, (803)324-2568 or mkeenan@comporium.net.

May 14: **Kayak trip near Hilton Head.** CA. Charlie Mehlinger, former President of the Lowcountry Paddle Club, and his friends will guide us on a wonderful kayak trip. Cuckold's Creek, north of Beaufort, is on the short list, and exact location and time will be announced soon. The trip will be rated moderate with some experience need. Kayak rentals will be available or bring your own. For information, email alexskev@aol.com or call (843)816-2378. Leave your name and phone number and specify if you would need equipment. Donation is \$5, which does not include kayak rental.

May 20-22: **Pisgah Forest campout.** WY. The Davidson River Ranger District is our destination. We'll camp near a beautiful stream, quiet trails and a waterfall. Tent camping will be within easy walking distance from the parking area, but there are no facilities. Bring all needed food, equipment and gear. Rick Rickenbaker, (843)626-5405(w) or (843)248-4201(h) before 8 p.m.

May 21: **Tyger River canoe trip.** BR. A 13-mile easy float through the proposed lake area. It will be an all day event leaving Greenville PROMPTLY AT 8 am. Bring lunch, and appropriate clothing for the river. It is suitable for first time canoeists. Need a boat to rent, call Sunrift in Traveler's Rest 864-834-3019. They will bring up to 12 boats and you may carpool via their van. If you

are coming up from Columbia, meet us at a rest stop on I-385. Limited to 15 boats. Joe Ashley, (864)294-2057 (w) or Dennis Chamberlain, (864)331-3069.

May 28: **Hike to Dungannon Heritage Preserve.** LZ. We hope to see the seasonal transformation of the site since our January hike and to discreetly view the nesting woodstorks. Starr Hazard, (843) 881-8902 or hazardes@bellsouth.net.

June

June 4: **Trip to a Carolina Bay.** LZ. Site to be announced. Starr Hazard, (843)881-8902 or hazardes@bellsouth.net

June 12: **Catawba Quickie Paddle.** HK. Six miles of easy paddle from Wylie Dam to River Park. There will be some splashing and a lunch stop on the Catawba River. Meet at 8 a.m. below the dam: Sutton to Gray Rock road, left to boat landing. Trip time will be 3 to 6 hours, including shuttles. Mary Keenan, (803)324-2568 or mkeenan@comporium.net.

June 17-19: **Backpack at Mt. Mitchell, Burnsville, NC.** WY. Enjoy this rugged mountain by backpacking to a base camp on Commissary Ridge. From there we will dayhike a series of loop trails in the area. Rated moderate due to severe elevation. Wonderful views and streams. Rick Rickenbaker, (843)626-5405(w) or (843)248-4201(h) before 8 p.m.

June 18: **Garris Landing to Bull Island kayak and hike.** LZ. All day trip for intermediate kayakers. Tides are favorable for an 8 a.m. start. Low tide is between 1 and 2 p.m. We will hike the ocean beach and return with the tides. This is a nice way to celebrate the Solstice. Starr Hazard, (843)881-8902 or hazardes@bellsouth.net.

10 Great Things That Happened in 2004

1. On 40, Going on Forever. The Wilderness Act reached a major milestone in 2004, celebrating its 40th anniversary. To date, there are more than 655 million acres of land "where the earth and its community of life are untrammled by man."

2. Eye on the Prius. What cynics assumed would be a gimmick turns out to be a goldmine. Toyota has sold over a quarter million of its Prius sedan, a gas-electric hybrid, proving that this fuel saving technology is anything but a flash in the pan.

3. Riding That Train. Baby, you can drive my car. I'm going to take the train. In 2004, voters passed no fewer than 40 ballot initiatives to fund public transit, ranging from San Antonio to Kalamazoo, MI.



Photo by Walter Marks.

4. Stepping on the (Greenhouse) Gas. California finalized rules for its landmark law to curb global warming pollution from cars and trucks. Now other states like New York and Massachusetts and even Canada are considering adopt-

ing the same rules.

5. Rocky Mountain High Five. The Bureau of Land Management announced that it would no longer consider oil and gas drilling along the Rocky Mountain Front. The Front was first made famous in the journals of Lewis and Clark and is the only place where grizzly bears still venture onto the prairies.

6. Tune In, Turn Out. Sierra Club completed its most ambitious voter education effort ever, knocking on more than 1 million doors, making 1.5 million phone calls, and recruiting 12,000 new volunteers.

7. Nobel Peace Is the Answer. A longtime associate of the Sierra Club's Human Rights and the Environment campaign, Wangari Maathai was awarded a Nobel Peace Prize in October for her work leading Kenya's Green Belt Movement and mobilizing poor women to plant 30 million trees to stave off deforestation.

8. Voting for Dollars. Voters nationwide approved 120 out of 161 local and state conservation ballot measures, raising more than \$3 billion for land conservation.

9. Grab Yer Partner. Protecting the environment is about finding common ground, and Sierra Club found a lot of ground to celebrate this year teaming up with labor unions to promote clean energy

technologies, standing ground with ranchers against the Bush administration's aggressive agenda to expand oil and gas drilling, and working with hunters and anglers to protect America's wetlands.

10. Supreme Rejection. The Supreme Court rejected the Bush administration's argument that it has a constitutional right to keep the workings of its Energy Task Force secret and sent the case back to the Court of Appeals.

Mountain Bridge Wilderness Trail Service Projects for 2005

The trail maintenance service projects for Caesars Head and Jones Gap State Parks are six hours of camaraderie and outdoor enjoyment that results in the improvement of the trails that we enjoy so much throughout the rest of the year. Come join us on the following dates: May 21, September 24, October 22, and/or November 19. Each project starts at 9 a.m.

For more information about meeting place and what to bring, contact Jim Majors at (864)233-7576 or at jim.majors@worldnet.att.net.