

Congaree



Chronicle

September/October, 2005

Volume 28, Number 5

Save the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

by Frank Crowder, Conservation Chair

Like many of you, I became involved in the conservation movement because I believe that I should leave the world a better place than the world I inherited. I do not remember whether this is a belief that I learned from my parents or my religion, but it has remained with me through my entire life.



When I joined the conservation movement, the first place that captured my imagination was the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. This seemingly barren land actually has abundant wildlife. A few examples are: caribou, polar bear, musk oxen, wolves, bird species too numerous to mention, and the people that have lived on this land for thousands of years. It still feels far away and exotic.

Unfortunately, we can lose this treasure forever by the end of this year. In late September or early October, the budget reconciliation bill will contain revenues from this treasure. By the end of the year, a final vote could be held to open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to drilling.

To preserve this national treasure, we must convince our legislators to vote against any budget that includes drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

In the past, many of us avoided some legislators. This is a mistake. If we do not contact them, they will say that no one in their district cares. Five years ago, if someone told me that Representative Bob Inglis would send a letter to his constituents that opposed drilling in the refuge, I would not have believed them. However, he did send that letter this year. We must contact all of our legislators, but pay special attention to members of the House and Senator Graham. We need you to contact your member of the House and Senator Graham.

You can make the following points in your calls, letters or emails. The phone numbers, addresses and email addresses can be found on the chapter website.

Oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge would ruin one of America's last unspoiled wild places for what government experts at U.S. Geological Survey say is only a few months' worth of oil that would not be available for a decade.

Drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge would not put a dent in our dependence on foreign oil, would do nothing to strengthen our national security, and would not save consumers a dime at the pump. But the harm to wildlife and this spectacular wilderness would be permanent and irreparable.

Americans deserve a cheaper, quicker, safer and cleaner energy policy that safeguards the wild places we care so deeply about. We cannot drill our way to energy independence, but we can embrace responsible measures and real, 21st Century energy solutions that make cars go farther on a gallon of gas, promote conservation, invest in clean renewable energy, and protect our natural heritage.

Senator Graham says that drilling would only affect 2,000 acres. This only includes (Continued on page 4.)

Club Seeks End to Leaking Radioactive Waste

By Jimmy Chandler, Chapter Legal Committee

Sierra Club has filed papers asking a state Administrative Law Judge to order Chem-Nuclear Systems, Inc. to stop burying radioactive waste in leaking containers.

Represented by the South Carolina Environmental Law Project and Columbia attorney Bob Guild, Sierra Club is appealing the renewal of the permit for the Chem-Nuclear Low Level Radioactive Waste Landfill at Barnwell. We are seeking improved landfill designs and operating procedures to prevent expansion of a long-standing problem with leaking radioactive waste. During a four-day hearing in February we presented evidence showing that the current landfill design is flawed and that better means of containing the wastes are readily available.

The Chem-Nuclear landfill has operated since the early 1970s as one of the nation's largest dumping grounds for "low level" radioactive wastes. Some of these wastes will present dangers for thousands of years. The wastes at the site include everything from low hazard contaminated hospital clothing to high hazard uranium and old nuclear power plant reactor vessels. The wastes are buried in trenches just outside the Town of Barnwell.

The present appeal represents the first time that the permit for the Chem-Nuclear facility has been challenged.

In early years, wastes were buried in cardboard boxes and other makeshift containers. Although it was initially predicted that any leaks from the landfill would take more than 424 years to result in radioactive contamination of nearby streams, in fact radioactive tritium was found in monitoring wells shortly after the landfill opened, and a nearby stream, Mary's Branch, was contaminated within 20 years. Mary's Branch flows into Lower Three Runs Creek and that creek runs to the Savannah River.

(Continues on page 4.)

Take Action for Conservation

If you would like to receive alerts from the Chapter regarding South Carolina conservation issues, please send your email address to the office at scsierra@earthlink.net or call (803)256-8487. Email addresses will not be shared with any other individual or organization. Thanks!



Sierra Club, South Carolina Chapter

1314 Lincoln Street, Suite 211
Columbia, SC 29201
Mailing Address: P. O. Box 2388
Columbia, SC 29202
Phone: (803)256-8487
Fax (803)256-8448
E mail: scsierra@earthlink.net
website: <http://www.sierraclub.org/chapters/sc>

Chapter Chair:
Bob Guild,
(803)252-1419; bguild@mindspring.com

Chapter Director:
Dell Isham

Congaree Chronicle

Editor: Barb Postles,
bpostles@aol.com

Views expressed in the *Chronicle* reflect the opinions of the individual authors and may not necessarily be official Sierra Club views and positions. The *Chronicle* welcomes articles, letters to the editor, photographs, and illustrations. The editors reserve the right to edit any material for clarity, style and length.

The *Congaree Chronicle* (ISSN #O164-5676) is published bimonthly for the South Carolina Chapter of the Sierra Club, 1314 Lincoln St., Site 211, Columbia, SC 29201. One dollar of annual dues pays for a subscription to this newsletter. Periodicals postage is paid at Columbia, SC.

Send address changes to: Postmaster, P.O. Box 2388, Columbia, SC 29202. Include your membership number.

SUBMIT ARTICLES TO:
Chapter Office--address and phone above.
NEXT DEADLINE: October 10

Advertising Rates and Terms

Full Page—\$250.00
1/2 Page—\$150.00
1/4 Page—\$ 80.00
1/8 Page—\$ 45.00

Business Card—\$25.00

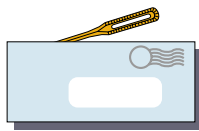
Classified Ads—\$1.00/word, 15-word minimum.

Rates are based on circulation of more than 5200 members across the state.

We reserve the right to refuse publication of ads. Paid advertisements contained in the *Chronicle* do not necessarily constitute endorsement, support, recommendation, or alliance with or for the party paying for the advertisement and the South Carolina Chapter of the Sierra Club.

For placement, contact the Sierra Club office at (803)256-8487.

Consider a bequest to the Club
Please contact John Calaway, Director, Gift Planning, 85 Second Street, 2nd Floor, San Francisco, CA 94105; (415)977-5639; or email planned.giving@sierraclub.org.



Your Letters

The following is a sample of the mail received by the South Carolina Chapter of the Sierra Club in the last couple months:

Dear Mr. Isham,
Thanks again for your second presentation to the Contemporary Issues Class of Trenholm Road United Methodist Church. Your thoughts on stewardship of the environment were both inspiring and provoking. We certainly appreciate your efforts and those of the Sierra Club to protect our natural heritage.
Gene Reeder

Dear Mr. Isham,
Thank you for coming to our class and giving a presentation. You greatly impressed our students. We are hoping that we will continue our work together with the Sierra Club in the future!
Theda Wrede, USC

Dear Norm,
I wrote a letter to the Secretary of Transportation, Norman Mineta, requesting the Federal Highway Administration conduct a cost-benefit study of a proposed con-

necter between Lone Star and Rimini South Carolina. . . . I am concerned that the cost of the bridge will outweigh any real economic benefit and its potential impact on the Shaw Air Force Base range.
Lindsey O. Graham, U.S. Senator

Dear Dell,
Thank you for your letter to Governor Sanford regarding the Roadless Area Conservation Rule. . . . The Governor certainly shares your concerns regarding our national forests. . . . With regard to the new rule, the Governor has come down on the side of preserving old growth forests.
Austin Smith, Policy Advisor

Dear Mr. Isham,
Thank you for contacting me to express your opposition to oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. . . . I share your concerns for the environment and I support the development of our natural resources while protecting Alaska's natural beauty. That is why I voted in favor of an amendment that would limit drilling to a very small area within Alaska.
Jim DeMint, U.S. Senator

ExCom participates in national direction setting

The Executive Committee (ExCom) of the South Carolina Chapter met in Columbia on July 23 and completed its input to the National Sierra Club Strategic Direction Setting Process known as "From Our Roots to the Summit." The results from the many Groups and Chapters throughout the Club will be presented and considered by delegates to the first-ever national Sierra Summit in San Francisco.



The Chapter ExCom weighed a series of alternative conservation approaches and recommended as top priority for our work the vision of 'Building a New Energy Future,' which embodies a new energy future for America "based on efficient and renewable energy technologies that bring an end to oil dependence, global warming, toxic air emissions and environmental damage to sensitive areas." A close second priority was 'Investment in Building Sustainable Economies and Businesses,' to provide "good jobs as well as long-term economic and environmental well-being." In choosing among various strategic approaches to our conservation work the ExCom emphasized "getting many to voice their opinions" with grassroots lobbying of decision makers and mobilizing environmental voters.

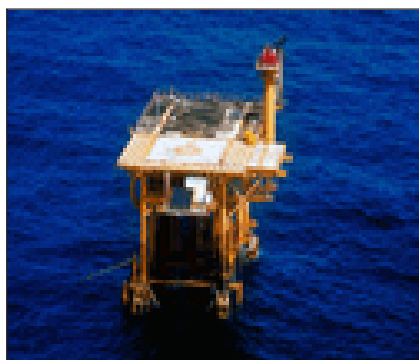
As a means of more effectively communicating with our members to take conservation action, the ExCom unanimously authorized the Chapter to contract for the use of electronic member mobilization tools to add to our website. Several available systems in use by our conservation allies are under review. More effective use of information technology for such member mobilization was identified in our recent strategic plan.

In other action, the ExCom approved Treasurer's and Fundraising Committee reports and confirmed the appointment of Ann Neely of the Pee Dee Group to join Chair Nena Rice and Frank Crowder on the Chapter Nominating Committee which will shortly consider nominations for four at-large ExCom positions to be filled this fall. Chapter membership stands at 5,544 individuals.

Offshore Drilling Possibility a Real Concern

By Dell Isham

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 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 for oil and gas drilling off the Virginia coast, just in case Congress passes 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. During this time, the coastal tourism industry has boomed. The majority staff of the U.S. House Natural Resources Committee, however, is drafting a complex bill to undo the moratorium and promote offshore drilling. This "not ready for prime time" bill, called the 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 U.S. Department of the Interior to lease for oil, natural gas or methane.

Share up to 50 percent of the revenue with the state 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 beach.

Where is our congressional delegation on this issue? U.S. Senator Jim DeMint, R-Greenville, naively said he would support only gas exploration. S.C. Representative Henry Brown, R-Hanahan, who represents much of the S.C. coast, including Horry and Georgetown counties, said he could not have an opinion until he has seen the legislation and consulted with state legislators.

In contrast, North Carolina's two Republican U.S. senators, Elizabeth Dole and Richard Burr, have made their opposition to offshore 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 recreation industry and commercial fishery. It also is a fragile and beautiful environment.

What shall we leave to the next generation? A pristine beach or an oil slick?

(This editorial appeared in May in *The Sun News*, Myrtle Beach.)

ACE Task Force creates BEACON network

Right off our shorelines, along the Atlantic seaboard, is the most endangered large whale in the world the North Atlantic right whale. Fewer than 350 remain—just a tiny portion of a population that once numbered in the tens of thousands.



North Atlantic right whales migrate each year from their winter calving areas off Florida and Georgia to their summer feeding and nursing grounds in the Bay of Fundy off New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. These slow moving whales spend much of their time on the surface, which makes them particularly susceptible to ship strikes. In the past year and a half, eight right whale deaths were recorded, including six adult females, three of them carrying near-term calves. It was determined that at least three were hit by ships and one had been entangled in fishing gear. Sonar activities by the Navy and seismic activity in the exploration for oil and gas also pose a threat to the whales, which communicate through the use of sound.

To respond to these threats, the Sierra Club's Atlantic Coast Ecoregion Task Force (ACE) is launching its North Atlantic Right Whale BEACON (Binational Early Alert Coastal Network) project.

North Atlantic Right Whale BEACON will monitor the entire coastal range of *Eubalaena glacialis*, through teams of volunteers working in their own states and provinces. This unique international network will track development projects like harbor expansions, high speed ferry proposals, Navy Sonar testing, liquefied natural gas terminals, and oil and gas exploration and drilling, to insure that the well-being of these marine mammals, protected under the federal Endangered Species Act, is taken into consideration before such projects proceed.

To rally support for the North Atlantic right whale and to protect our coast ACE has developed fact sheets and will support a road show this fall and winter. To distribute the facts sheets and schedule our road show tour we need your help.

What you can do to help right now!

1. The national Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), a branch of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), has developed a Right Whale Ship Strike Reduction Strategy that would reduce ship speeds and require alternative routes during those times of the year when the whales frequent particular parts of the coast. Unfortunately, the US Coast Guard is being uncooperative with these measures, questioning the authority of NOAA to propose slower shipping speeds, declining to promote voluntary compliance, and lagging in their utilization of Port Access Route Studies to identify alternate ship routes that will lessen the incidence of right whale strikes. To send a letter to the Coast Guard urging protection of the North Atlantic right whale, please visit: <http://www.sierraclub.org/ecoregions/atlantic.asp>.

2. Schedule our North Atlantic Right Whale BEACON Road Show this fall or winter with your local Sierra Club Group or other interested and concerned organization. We have developed a presentation on the right whale and what citizens can do to help to protect it and our coast. Let us know of your interest in helping to schedule a showing by sending an email to: narightwhale@hotmail.org

3. Sign up to volunteer. Please send an email to: narightwhale@hotmail.com with your name, address, phone and email so we can keep you informed on other ways you can help. For additional information call (804)565-4950.

Radioactive waste

(Continued from page 1.)

The Barnwell site has always been among a very small number of radioactive waste burial grounds in the US. The unfairness of a few states bearing the entire burden of radioactive waste has been long recognized. During the 1980s, Congress passed a law stating that disposal of radioactive waste is the responsibility of the state where the waste is generated. The new law allowed groups of states to form waste compacts to limit import of radioactive wastes from other states. In 1982, South Carolina joined the Southeast Compact with seven other southeastern states. Under the compact agreement, the Chem-Nuclear site was to serve the seven states until 1992, when it would shut down. North Carolina was supposed to open a new disposal site in 1992 to serve the southeast region. But the North Carolina site ran into great public opposition and was never opened.

Instead of shutting down, under Governor David Beasley South Carolina withdrew from the Southeast Compact and the Chem-Nuclear site was again allowed to receive waste from every state except North Carolina.

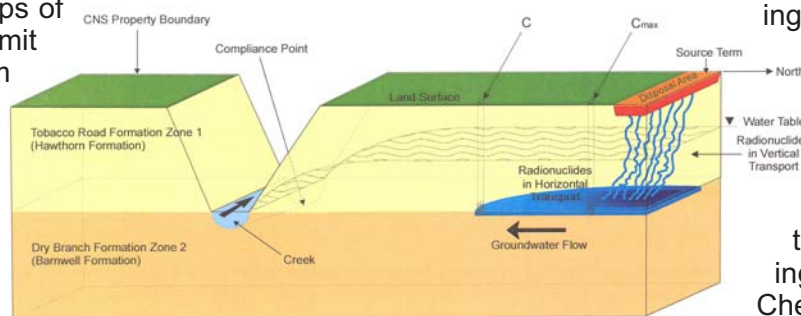
In 2000, under Governor Jim Hodges, South Carolina joined with New Jersey and Connecticut to form the Atlantic Compact. Current laws still allow some wastes from non-Compact states to be buried at Barnwell, but by 2008 the Chem-Nuclear site will be limited to wastes from the three compact states.

When North Carolina was trying to create a new waste disposal site, Chem-Nuclear was the successful bidder in a competition to design the new facility. The design Chem-Nuclear proposed for North Carolina was significantly different, and more protective of the environment and human health, than the design used at Barnwell. The North Carolina facility would place the wastes above ground, on a thick layer of reinforced concrete forming the floor of burial units. Within these units, wastes would be put into concrete vaults in addition to the "high integrity containers" used for shipping the wastes to the site. All waste disposal activities would be conducted under roofs, to prevent contact with water. The waste vaults would be grouted and sealed to prevent infiltration of water.

During the 1990s, Chem-Nuclear began using concrete vaults at the Barnwell site. These vaults differ, however, from those proposed in North Carolina. The Barnwell vaults have holes in the bottom of them to allow water that enters the vault to drain off into the surrounding soil. Water enters the vaults during normal operations, as operations are not conducted under roofs. The Barnwell vaults are not

sealed to prevent water infiltration and their concrete walls are simply designed to support the soil that is placed over the vaults.

As noted earlier, Chem-Nuclear uses trenches dug into the ground at Barnwell. The bottoms of the trenches are supposed to be at least five feet above the highest groundwater table. However, Chem-Nuclear has admitted that it has detected high groundwater levels that



rose up into closed trenches. The holes in the bottoms of the Barnwell vaults will allow water from rising groundwater to enter the vaults.

A dry disposal operation is superior to one in which water is allowed to make contact with the waste. Water serves as the primary factor in both the breakdown of vaults, as well as other containment barriers, and the transportation of radioactive materials into groundwater aquifers and later into surface streams. Surface stream infiltration could then lead to human contamination.

Since the early 1990s, members of the DHEC Board and others have raised questions about improvements in the Barnwell design. In 2001, as part of DHEC's review of the permit renewal, the DHEC staff directed Chem-Nuclear to investigate alternative designs related to water intrusion. Chem-Nuclear provided DHEC with several conceptual design changes and predicted a two-year time frame for final design, DHEC approval and implementation. Yet in 2001, DHEC issued the renewal permit without requiring any follow-up by Chem-Nuclear on the new designs.

At the appeal hearing, conducted in February 2005, Chem-Nuclear and DHEC conceded that simple design changes would significantly reduce the risk of water intrusion into landfill vaults. DHEC said it "could have" required the changes, but provided no explanation of why it did not require Chem-Nuclear to adopt better designs. Although DHEC touted a lengthy "Technical Evaluation Report" as evidence of the DHEC staff's thorough review of the Chem-Nuclear facility, on cross-examination, DHEC's Henry Porter admitted that the report had been entirely written by Chem-Nuclear. When asked whether contamination from the Chem-Nuclear landfill had failed to meet the goal of "isolation of wastes from

the biosphere inhabited by man and his food chains," Porter said he was unfamiliar with that phrase. He later admitted that the phrase is part of the DHEC regulation's definition of the term "disposal."

Given that the contamination of groundwater at the landfill boundary currently exceeds state standards, DHEC and Chem-Nuclear have agreed to change the "compliance point" to Mary's Branch, about 3,000 feet from the site boundary. In the late 1990s, landfill operations involving the pumping of accumulated rainwater from a landfill trench resulted in the contamination of the lands of an adjoining church. Chem-Nuclear excavated and replaced several thousand cubic yards of soil from the church property to reduce the contamination to the level of drinking water standards. Both DHEC and Chem-Nuclear said they were unsure of how the contamination occurred.

Chem-Nuclear presented testimony about a study done by its hydrogeologist that concluded that even if all containment fails, the landfill wastes will not exceed safe radioactivity levels for 2000 years. The actual study was not placed into evidence and was protected as a "trade secret" by Chem-Nuclear. Sierra Club's expert on radiation testified that significant amounts of waste in this landfill will be dangerous for far more than 2000 years.

DHEC and Chem-Nuclear jointly filed their own proposed order, plus a memorandum of law, urging the judge to affirm the permit as-is to allow the facility to continue to operate under the existing design.

State Administrative Law Judge John Geathers has the matter under advisement and is expected to issue his ruling soon.

Arctic Refuge

(Continued from page 1.)

clean renewable energy, and protect our natural heritage.

Senator Graham says that drilling would only affect 2,000 acres. This number does not include the airports, the desalination plants, barracks, the roads, and the shipping terminals.

Some places are too special to sacrifice. We don't need to ruin the land we love or the special places we've been entrusted to protect in order to meet America's energy needs. We will post updates on the chapter website at <http://southcarolina.sierraclub.org>. Select the "Conservation" header and you will see a link to the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Remember, when all of the oil has gone, the oil companies will not dismantle the oil rigs, the pipelines, the barracks, the roads, the airports, the shipping terminals, the desalination plants and restore the land to its original condition. These will remain. We can only lose this battle once--then the refuge will be gone forever.

Conservation, briefly...

Proposed standards a sham

According to the national Club, these are the real facts about Bush's recently announced changes in CAFE standards for light trucks—SUV's, minivans, and pickups.



1) The Bush administration claims its approach would save 10 billion gallons of gas over four years. For a little perspective, that

would feed America's current oil appetite for a whopping 11 days.

2) Under the proposed rules, gas guzzlers that weigh over 8500 pounds—like the Hummer H2, Ford Excursion and some models of the Chevy Suburban—wouldn't have to meet any fuel efficiency standards.

3) The Bush administration's proposal is based on models that assume gas prices of \$1.50/gallon from 2007 to 2011. Prices hit a record \$2.55 a gallon in August—68 cents higher than last year.

We have the technology to make all vehicles average 40 miles to the gallon within ten years. This would save the United States more oil than we currently import from the entire Persian Gulf or could ever take out of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge combined—and save consumers money at the pump.

Clemson Extension announces low-impact gardening series

Location: The Academy for the Arts, Science & Technology, Hwy. 17 Bypass and 79th Ave. North, Myrtle Beach



Time: Thursdays, 6 p.m. until 7:30 p.m.

Sessions include: Understanding Soils and Plant Growth, Producing a Quality Lawn, Managing Woody Ornamentals, Landscape Pest & Their Control, Growing Annuals, Perennials & Bulbs, Houseplants and Their Care, Urban Tree Care, Creating and Environmentally Friendly Landscape. Information and pre-registration (required): (843)365-6715 or gfrstr@clemson.edu.

Polluted babies

"These 10 newborn babies...were born polluted. If ever we had proof that our



nation's pollution laws aren't working, it's reading the list of industrial chemicals in the bodies of babies who have not yet

lived outside the womb."—Representative Louise Slaughter (D-NY), discusses the findings of a study by the Environmental

Working Group. It tested blood from 10 umbilical-cords and found an average of 287 contaminants, including mercury, fire retardants, pesticides, and the Teflon chemical PFOA.

Organic food sales increase

According to the Organic Trade Association, sales of organic food reached \$10.4 billion in 2003, a hearty 20 percent increase over the previous year. Consumers are paying attention to where their food comes from and using their purchasing power to get synthetic pesticides and growth hormones out of what they eat.

Offsetting global warming

Air travel is a major contributor to global warming—but you can buy carbon offsets, environmentally beneficial actions like planting trees or modernizing old water heaters that can help compensate. For \$10, American Forests (www.americanforests.org) will plant ten tree seed-



lings in a damaged forest on public land. For \$11, the Better World Club (www.betterworldclub.com) balances emissions by retrofitting oil-burning boilers and water heaters in public schools.

Greenhouse gases causing ocean to turn more acidic

Increasing emissions of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere are making the global ocean more acidic, with potentially catastrophic and irreversible consequences for marine life, according to a new report from Britain's prestigious Royal Society. The report may be downloaded from <http://www.royalsoc.ac.uk/displaypagedoc.asp?id=13314>

Humidity to drinking water

The German company Aqua-society has developed a device, called Aquamission, which extracts humidity from the air by condensation to produce drinking water. The device draws in large quantities of air, chills it to the point of condensation, and collects the water in a tank where it is filtered and mineralized. According to the manufacturer, in hot regions with high humidity, a single machine can produce enough water to meet the daily needs of 300 people.

The Clean Water Act Owner's Manual, 2nd Edition

This straightforward, plain-English guide of the Clean Water Act focuses on public involvement opportunities. It is a valuable resource for anyone involved in any aspect of water work. Place your order at <http://www.rivernetnetwork.org/marketplace/cwa.cfm>.

Protecting kids and pets

If you are concerned about exposure to law chemicals, go to http://www.checnet.org/healthhouse/education/articles-detail.asp?Main_ID=432 for an excellent discussion of natural lawn care. Covered are choosing a grass variety, encouraging healthy soil, mowing, watering, and weeding.

Energy incentives

Amy Horwitz, a reader from Charleston, sends along the following:



".... The on-line Database of State Incentives for Renewable Energy (www.dsireusa.org) allows you to search for local, state, federal, and utility incentives by state, incentive type, and technology....

.... Energy Star has an on-line rebate locator that can help you find selected rebates using your zip code (www.energystar.gov, click on "Special Offers").

.... Loan Programs: Learn more... by visiting the Department of Energy website (www.eere.energy.gov/consumerinfo/factsheets.html)...."

Car-wash kits protect water quality

If your school, club or nonprofit group holds charity car washes as fund-raisers, King County in Washington State has car-wash kits available for use at no cost to help you protect water quality.



Some effort is involved in using the kits. To redirect dirty water, the car-wash kit includes a plastic insert that must be stuck down a

storm drain to capture dirty water. Also in the kit is a submersible electric sump pump for emptying the plastic insert, and a long garden hose for diverting old water from the insert into a nearby toilet, sink or drain connected to a treatment plant.

Information on how to install and use the car-wash kit, and where to get one, is on-line at dnr.metrokc.gov/carwash or call (206)296-8265.

Conservation, Briefly is written by Barb Postles. If you would like additional information about any topic, please contact her at bpostles@aol.com.



Restoring the Congaree

by Bob Guild, Chapter Chair

We should always remember with pride the Sierra Club's historic leadership in winning protection for the threatened primeval forests of the Congaree Swamp.



In our successful effort some 30 years ago to win National Monument protection, and more recently National Park status, for this largest contiguous tract of old-growth bottomland hardwood forest remaining in the

United States we heeded pioneer ecologist Aldo Leopold's injunction to "first, save all the pieces" of nature's complex web of life. Now, we face the added opportunity to actually restore the natural ecology of this unique floodplain system through the removal of a significant past human intrusion.

Together with our conservation partners, the Sierra Club is calling on the Department of Transportation (SCDOT), the Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) and the US Army Corps of Engineers to require an ecologically restorative design for the planned US Highway 601 replacement bridges crossing the Congaree floodplain. In order to actually restore the free-flowing floodwater system critical to wildlife movement and flood water transport on the Congaree we are urging the authorities to remove the existing two miles of earthen embankment which now blocks most of the three-mile wide floodplain with an elevated replacement bridge design which spans the full floodplain.

The SCDOT 601 bridge permit application seeks to fill over eight acres of riverine wetlands within the congressionally authorized boundaries of the Congaree National Park. As South Carolina's only national park, Congaree is an asset of inestimable value to the state of South Carolina and the nation, both in terms of its ecological significance and its economic and cultural value. The recent re-discovery of the long-thought extinct Ivory-billed Woodpecker in a second-growth bottomland forest in Arkansas reinforces the critical value of the preservation and restoration of this very-best-remaining piece of that magnificent bird's ancestral habitat right here in South Carolina.

The existing Congaree crossing on over 9,000 feet of filled embankment was built long before enactment of our current environmental laws and recognition of the need to preserve and protect wetland

and river resources. With this replacement bridge, we have a unique opportunity to correct past mistakes, to remove inappropriate wetland fills and to restore this part of the Congaree to a more naturally functioning floodplain ecosystem.

We should commend the various natural resource agencies for their support of an ecologically restorative alternative bridge design. The National Park Service through the formal comments of Congaree Park Superintendent Martha Bogle notes evidence of significant wildlife 'roadkill' mortality on the existing highway embankment as well as the need to restore the natural floodwater flow regime in her call for an elevated replacement bridge design. Similarly the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the SC Department of Natural Resources have honored their stewardship missions in challenging SCDOT to choose an alternative design which better protects environmental values.

Thanks are due to all those who have already submitted formal comment letters to the Corps and DHEC particularly John Grego and Dick Watkins of the Friends of the Congaree Swamp who have lead the efforts to understand and shape the SCDOT bridge proposal. SCDHEC and the Corps have received numerous comments opposing the existing SCDOT bridge design and requesting the extension of the public comment period and the conduct of a public hearing to allow the development of a more complete record for decision. Please add your voice to those who have already spoken by writing SCDHEC and the Corps and attending the requested public hearing.

By choosing to invest in the restoration of the Congaree River floodplain forest we offer hope that the widespread ecological destruction of these once magnificent bottomlands might not only be averted but actually reversed in our own South Carolina backyard. Perhaps once again the distinctive 'keent' call of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker might join the chorus of songbirds in the rich and diverse natural sanctuary that is the Congaree.

Written comments on U.S. Highway 601 Bridge Replacement, Joint Public Notice P/N #2005-2T-208-W may be sent to: South Carolina Dept. of Health and Environmental Control, Office of Environmental Quality Control, Water Quality Certification and Wetlands Programs Section, 2600 Bull Street, Columbia, SC 29201 or the Charleston District, Corps of Engineers, Columbia Field Office, Strom Thurmond Federal Building, 1835 Assembly Street, Room 865 B-1, Columbia, SC 29201.

Join the Grassroots Lobbying Forum!

To receive the latest information on environmental legislation and to influence our decision-makers, join the SC Sierra Club Grassroots Lobbying Forum. All that is needed to join is to notify the South Carolina Sierra Club Chapter with your email address and say, "I want to be a grassroots lobbyist!"

Or, you can mail or fax the following response:

YES, I WANT TO BE A GRASSROOTS LOBBYIST FOR THE ENVIRONMENT:

Name

Mailing Address

Phone number

Sierra Club Group (if known)

Email address

Please respond by emailing to scsierra@earthlink.net, mail to P.O. Box 2388, Columbia, SC 29202, or fax to 803-256-8448. Thank you.

17th Annual Beach Sweep/ River Sweep

September 17, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Anyone can participate; all necessary supplies are provided. To volunteer on the coast, call Susan Ferris at (843)727-2078. To volunteer inland, contact Alison Krepp, (843)953-9335. For more information, visit www.scseagrant.org/education.htm.

Donate Your Recyclables

The Chapter invites you to do your part in helping to slow the rapid overflow of our landfills and make a donation at the same

time. An organization called US Recycling, located in Columbia, will give the Club cash for used inkjet cartridges and cell phones. A price sheet

and more information is available on their website at www.usrecycleink.com.

To participate in this program is simple and free. Simply have the members of your group bring their donations to each group meeting and then present the items at the Chapter ExCom meetings or bring them to the Chapter office.

This is an excellent way to donate to the Club and help save our environment!



Less Pandering, More Leadership

By Dell Isham, Chapter Director

I have had enough pandering by our politicians. It's time for leadership.



It should be obvious that we live in a world of finite resources and unlimited desires. It is the responsibility of human beings to resolve this basic conflict if our species is to survive.

Society based on continually increasing consumption in a world of limited resources is not sustainable. In other words, we can't go on

like this.

Honest leadership. It will take honest leadership and personal resolve if we are going to reverse our self-destructive path.

My parents were said to be a part of the "Greatest Generation." They not only survived the Great Depression and World War II but also raised our standards of wealth, health, and education. What will our generation be called?

The issue of environmental unsustainability is no greater challenge than worldwide economic collapse or worldwide warfare. Leaders sixty years ago said, I can only promise you "blood, sweat, and tears." They said, "The only thing we have to fear, is fear itself." They demanded sacrifice for the common good, and the public responded in an overwhelmingly unselfish manner.

Cutting taxes. What do leaders say today? "Vote for me and I will cut taxes." "Global warming has not been proven." "Incentives for energy producers will solve the energy crisis."

Oh please, how stupid do you think we are?

In the meantime, our "leaders" widen the gap between the rich and the poor; borrow our nation into oblivion; distract the gullible with "moral" issues.

Energy plan. The "energy plan" recently passed by Congress is a rope to hang ourselves.

—More tax breaks for polluters

—Continued dependence on the volatile Middle East

—Exploring for oil and gas off our coasts

—Promoting energy generation from coal and uranium

Nobody expects a miracle. But instead of pandering by our officials, how about some planning?

To begin with, let's plan for the next three generations – about 75 years. That may seem like a long time for some, but believe me, when you become a grandpar-

ent you begin to realize that it is not. If present trends continue, I would not want to live the lives of my grandchildren.

Pandering exercise. Our legislature is engaged in a typical pandering exercise right now. They are holding hearings around the state on our property taxes. They have assumed they are too high, so the public is given a forum to vent about their taxes.

The fact is, every year the legislature exempts more classes of property from taxation. Naturally, that leaves the remaining property with a higher tax rate. Our total taxes are not too high, it is just spread over a continually shrinking percentage of total property. I doubt they will consider putting property back on the tax rolls in order to lower tax rates because that would mean asking someone to sacrifice for the common good. And that is just the opposite of pandering.

The public is crying out for leadership. Leadership is found wanting at every level, every branch of government, and every political party.

New generation. It is time for a new generation to step forward to make a better place for our grandchildren.

As for me, I am voting against every politician who promises to lower my taxes, say I don't have to sacrifice for the common good, or has an excuse for not cleaning up the environment.

Get Well Dell!

All South Carolina Sierrans wish Chapter Director Dell Isham a speedy and comfortable recovery from his second major back surgery! Dell--the soon-to-be bionic environmentalist--is expected to be on medical leave through at least September 6. In his absence the Chapter office will be staffed part-time by our able administrative assistant Blanche McBride.

Please share your best wishes for Dell's health with a note to the Chapter office at P. O. Box 2388, Columbia, SC 29202.

...Bob Guild, Chapter Chair

South Carolina Company Offers Bamboo Clothing

Go to www.bamboosa.com to view the products offered by an Awendaw-based company. It's bamboo blended with organic cotton. It's advertised as durable and feeling like cashmere. The site also has some interesting links to many green sites. (On my browser, I had to click the "Free Shipping" box to get beyond the first page.)

...Barb Postles, Editor

Fundraising Continues

Fundraising for the chapter continues throughout the year as volunteers strive to meet our goals. Donations are coming in at about the same rate as last year, with the following contributing in the last two months (ending August 22):

White Oak (\$2500+)

Rufus Dalton

Long Leaf Pine (\$500-999)

Edmund and Mary Taylor

Spruce (\$250-499)

Dell Isham

Allyn and Ann Schneider

Dogwood (\$100-249)

Susan Hilfer and William Campbell

T. John Claggett

Kathryn Eichelberger

William and Eleanor Hare

Grady and Honor Hartzog

Walter Hughes, Jr.

Leroy Phillips Hutchinson

Steve and Maria Johnson

Dorothy Payne

Ron Sobczak and Kathleen Kempe

June Yanick

Redbud (\$50-99)

Eleanor Clark

Walter V. Duane

Robert and Elizabeth Edgerton

Mr. and Mrs. Elmore Fabrick

Decie Jones

Patricia Luck

Jack and Martha Meyer

Anne Neely

Margaret B. Neville

Carolyn N. Tutwiler

John and Mary Wilson, Jr.

Trillium (\$25-49)

Daniel and Mary Abel

Mary White Anderson

Robert Ashcraft

Thomas Babb

Thomas Barnes, Jr.

Ute Brady

Myrtle Brown

Bradford and Virginia Connett

Adam Cooper

Douglas and Deborah Deaton

Dwight and Mary Jo Fee

Patricia Green

Max Heller

Victor Hurst

Mary T. Kelly

Klaus and Ann Koch

Robert and Sheryl Linsenmayer

Eric Miller

Walter and Jeri Muller

Leona Sobel

Alice Thurstin

William and Mary Alice Walker

Samuel Wang

Red Clover (<\$25)

June Campbell

Suzanne Robinson



State Outings

October

October 8: **Dungannon Heritage Preserve hike.** Lunz. Starr Hazard, (843)881-8902 or hazardes@bellsouth.net.

October 10-14: **Hump Mountain, NC backpack.** Lunz. Number of days on the trail is flexible. Night of country singing. Story telling festival October 7-9 will be added for those interested. \$135. Rose Ganser-Schwartz, (843)563-6404 or 607-1108 or ganserschwartz@hotmail.com.

October 14-16: **Blue Ridge Mountain Camping.** Winyah. Check out the fall leaves in the North Carolina mountains. Camp, hike, relax, take pictures, eat. I can tailor the outing to the wishes of those who sign up. Call me early so I can work out details. Rick Rickenbaker, (843)248-4201 or (843)626-5405.

October 29-30: **Rim of the Gap, Hospital Rock backpack.** Lunz. Rick Dandridge, (843)345-8697 or 851-5951 or rickdandridge@hotmail.com.

October 29: **Donnelley Wildlife Management Area hike.** Lunz. Three miles.

Starr Hazard, (843)881-8902 or hazardes@bellsouth.net.

November

November 5: **Bike rural Horry County.** Winyah. Enjoy the fall countryside--pastures, tobacco barns, country stores and rural lands. 12-15 mile ride at a leisurely pace. Bring your bike and a bag lunch. Rick Rickenbaker, (843)248-4201 or (843)626-5405.

November 5-6: **Overnight kayak to Capers Island.** Lunz. Not suitable for beginners. Starr Hazard, (843)881-8902 or hazardes@bellsouth.net.

November 19: **ACE basin paddle.** Lunz. Either upper Ashpoo to Horseshoe Creek or Cuckhold's Landing to Combahee River. Starr Hazard, (843)881-8902 or hazardes@bellsouth.net.

December

December 3-4: Overnight kayak to Otter Island. Lunz. Not suitable for beginners. Starr Hazard, (843)881-8902 or hazardes@bellsouth.net.

Consider this National Outings Training Opportunity

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 Group Lodge in Cedars of Lebanon State Park, Lebanon, TN, September 30-October 2.

Join us for a weekend of interactive learning, networking with leaders from all outing programs, and of course, lots of fun. For further information go to <http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/training/>.



HOLIDAY GIFT MEMBERSHIP

A Sierra Club Gift Membership is a wonderful way to let someone know you care—about them *and* the environment.



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

Join today and receive a **FREE Sierra Club Weekender Bag!**



My Name _____
Address _____
City/State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____
email _____

Check enclosed, made payable to Sierra Club
Please charge my Mastercard Visa Amex Exp. Date ____/____

Cardholder Name _____

Card Number _____

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES INDIVIDUAL JOINT

INTRODUCTORY \$25

REGULAR \$39 \$47

SUPPORTING \$75 \$100

CONTRIBUTING \$150 \$175

LIFE \$1000 \$1250

SENIOR \$24 \$32

STUDENT/LIMITED INCOME \$24 \$32

Contributions, gifts and dues to the Sierra Club are not tax deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to *Sierra* magazine and \$1.00 for your Chapter newsletter.

Enclose check and mail to: **Sierra Club, P.O. Box 52968, Boulder, CO 80322-2968**

F94Q W 1

GOING, GOING... GONE?



Sea turtles date back nearly 90 million years and are among the Earth's oldest surviving species. Yet the Kemp's Ridley sea turtle is quickly fading away—it is losing its habitat at an alarming rate. At the Sierra Club, we've mounted a major campaign to defend the Endangered Species Act and preserve threatened habitats before their inhabitants are gone forever.

Please join the Sierra Club today and help protect threatened and endangered animals.

Join today and receive a **FREE Sierra Club Weekender Bag!**



My Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone # _____

email _____

Check enclosed, made payable to Sierra Club
Please charge my MasterCard Visa AMEX

Exp. Date ____/____

Cardholder Name _____

Card Number _____

Membership Categories INDIVIDUAL JOINT

INTRODUCTORY \$25

REGULAR \$39 \$47

Contributions, gifts and dues to the Sierra Club are not tax deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to *Sierra* magazine and \$1.00 for your Chapter newsletter.

Enclose check and mail to: **Sierra Club, P.O. Box 52968, Boulder, CO 80322-2968**



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet