

Congaree Chronicle

May/June, 2006

Volume 29, Number 3

Nuclear Irresponsibility

And No One to Protect Us

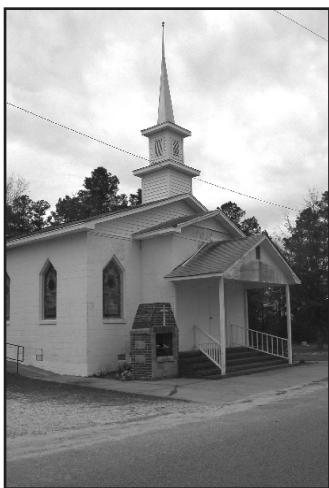
By Dell Isham, SC Chapter Director

The story of the nuclear industry is a tale of irresponsibility, often with government assistance. It is also an industry that could not



Nuclear waste at Barnwell sits in the open air, surrounded by rainwater, awaiting burial. Photo by DHEC.

exist without placing a heavy debt upon future generations, not only in the cost of managing deadly waste but also for the cost of present



St. Paul Baptist Church adjacent to Chem Nuclear fenceline.

energy production. Nuclear power could not exist in an atmosphere of free enterprise. This is why the nuclear industry is often called "immortal." The long-term cost of nuclear power and weapons production is an accumulating burden on every future generation. Nuclear waste, like all pollutants, gravitates to the point of least resistance. South Carolina is that point of least resistance for radioactive waste, even welcoming it for the right price. We lead the nation in the underground storage of "low level" nuclear waste.

The plutonium of Rocky Flats in Colorado has been sent to us without resistance from our leaders, with the exception of Governor Hodges. He said it would be here forever; it looks like he was right.

There is a plan to consolidate all American nuclear power waste in our state and possibly reprocess it, thus creating more radioactive waste.

There is a plan to consolidate all surplus weapons grade plutonium in our state, reprocess it into mixed oxide fuel (MOX), thus creating more radioactive waste.

There is a plan to oppose the implementation of the Atlantic Compact, which would limit the importation of low-level nuclear waste from three states, so we can continue to receive waste indefinitely from 37 states instead.

There is a plan to build more nuclear power plants in our state even though there is still much we can do to conserve energy. Nobody has built a nuclear power plant in this country since Three Mile Island, but the power companies expect little resistance to building two or three in South Carolina. Do not expect the nuclear power industry to be held responsible by our state or federal government. The federal law exempts the nuclear power industry from most liability for accidents, provides millions in tax breaks, and will even pay power companies to take MOX.

Evidently the federal government will even pay their fines. A federal jury recently awarded more than \$500 million to 12,000 property owners near the former Rocky Flats Nuclear Weapons Plant in Colorado. Evidently all the plutonium was not sent to South Carolina. According to Attorney Merrill Davidoff, "Dow and Rockwell polluted their neighbor's lands with plutonium, then did

nothing to clean it up." Rockwell International Corporation and Dow Chemical Company-private contractors who operated the plant for the U.S. government--lost their lawsuit. No worry, the U.S. Department of Energy (taxpayers) indemnified the companies for their half billion dollars in losses.

At the Savannah River Site they found it very inconvenient and costly to remove the radioactive sludge at the bottom of storage tanks. But they arrived at a solution. They convinced the Congress to pass a law no longer defining the sludge as "high level radioactive" waste. This allowed them to mix this atomic stew with grout. No one really knows what will happen over the years as this concrete mixture is subjected to continual heat and radioactivity.

In Barnwell County leakage of radioactivity through ground water from the Barnwell Low Level Nuclear Waste Landfill got so bad Chem-Nuclear had to dig up a church parking lot and haul it away, supposedly for safe keeping, and build a new parking lot for the church. For some reason this incident never made the news, but it is in the State Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) records.

Also found in DHEC records are photographs of sinking concrete vaults filled with radioactive waste into ponds formed by rain (Continues on page 4.)

American's Crown Jewels at Risk

By John Byrne, Chair, National Parks and Monuments Committee

Yosemite! Grand Canyon! Yellowstone! Denali! Everglades! What do these names have in common? They are all national parks whose names are known by everyone, the true crown jewels of America.

And being national parks, they're all well protected, right?

Wrong! The present administration, attuned to maximizing commercial profits and minimizing the public values of our public lands, has other plans for your national parks.

The Interior Department proposal to rewrite the management policies for our parks would topple "conservation of resources unimpaired for the future" as the mission of our national parks. Under proposed new management policies, the Park Service could:

- Allow increased motorized use in spite of air pollution, noise, and damage to the land.
- Let commercial outfitters keep caches and other developments in Wilderness.
- Consider increased uses of park resources just as important as "preservation" of these resources.

Sierra Club and other concerned activists commented extensively on the proposed damaging changes. Most comments can be summarized as follows:

(Continues on page 4.)



Activists enjoy the scenic Watchtower area of Sequoia National Park. Photo by JoAnne Armstrong.

Governor Sanford Signs \$32 Million Conservation Bond Act

A ground-breaking new conservation deal has ensured that nearly 39,000 acres of working forestland, recreation lands and wildlife habitat in South Carolina will be protected.

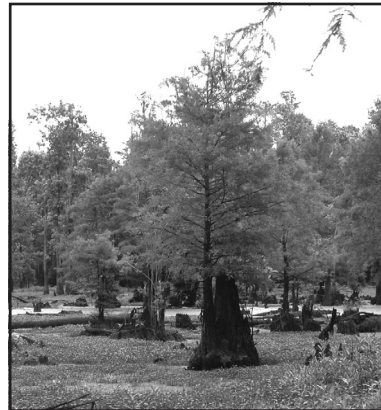
Governor Mark Sanford signed into law a measure that would allow the South Carolina Heritage Trust to borrow about \$32 million for forest acquisition across the state. Heritage Trust is a 30-year-old division of the state's Department of Natural Resources.

"This bill and this land acquisition will go a long way toward preserving the way South Carolina looks and feels as a state," Gov. Sanford said. "The quality of life in our state is going to be an increasingly important part of our competitive edge when it comes to the global race for jobs and investment."

The agreement with International Paper Company will be the largest conservation purchase by the state in its history.

In addition to providing recreational opportunities, these forests protect large tracts of habitat for several important wildlife and aquatic species, including such birds as the Kentucky warbler, Louisiana waterthrush, rusty blackbird, swallow-tailed kite, Swainson's warbler and others. These tracts will provide river corridor protection to 27 miles on the Great Pee Dee, 11 miles on the Little Pee Dee and eight miles on the Savannah River.

The Southern United States represents the most biologically diverse region in the country, and is one of the most threatened. The continued fragmentation of forests because of development is one of the most pressing threats facing the American landscape today. Forests--both public and private--protect biodiversity, habitat, and recreational opportunities and jobs for more than 1.6 million Americans.



Scenes from the IP tract which will be protected by SC Heritage Trust. Top left is in the Woodbury tract, top right is on Jordan Creek. Below DNR botanist Ann Darr stands next to an ancient cypress.



Photos by Mary Crocket, SCDNR.

South Carolina Poised to Get Even More Nuclear Waste

By Susan Corbett, Chapter ExCom delegate and Bachman Group member

As if South Carolina didn't already have more than our fair share of the world's nuclear waste, current administration's plans may leave us inheriting yet another deadly generation of nuclear waste.

Under the Bush administrations GNEP plan, or "Global Nuclear Energy Partnership", the president wants already stressed taxpayers and the debt-laden U.S. economy to foot a \$100 BILLION plus to develop a global nuclear program which would extract plutonium and uranium from spent commercial fuel rods, and recycle it as fresh fuel, to be used in a new generation of 'fast burner' reactors.

There are so many reasons this plan is a disaster it is hard to tell where to begin. Just the economics of it are mind boggling, especially in an economy already \$8 trillion in debt. Just implementing the demonstration phase would cost \$30-40 billion over the next 15 years and would not generate a single kilowatt of commercially available power.

Currently, SRS companies are lobbying hard for the demo plant to be built here, possibly in the old F-Canyon reprocessing facility. If this happens, large scale shipments of spent and highly radioactive spent fuel would begin coming to our state. And, of course, if this facility ultimately proves too costly for our fragile budget, or ineffective, we would most likely become the permanent "interim" home of more deadly waste. (see deadly Plutonium brought here to be turned into MOX fuel, but no plant built and plans floundering).

While nuclear proponents love to tout France and Japan as the poster children for reprocessing and fast reactors, it is well documented that reprocessing and fast reactors are commercial disasters. France, the world's reprocessing leader, spends about \$1 billion extra per year on plutonium fuel compared to uranium fuel. Japan's new reprocessing plant, Rokkasho, will likely provide the most expensive nuclear power fuel in the history of nuclear power, close to 3 cents per kilowatt hour. And neither country has a responsible solution for the waste. Currently, France sends at least some of its recovered uranium to Russia, where there is no public documentation of what happens to it, and the rest is scheduled to go to a Yucca mountain type of repository in France, where, like Yucca, research has failed to address key issues and its opening is behind schedule.

Other arguments against this idea, too long to describe in detail in this article include:

- Reprocessing creates enormous amounts of waste. The nuclear industry currently has a dismal record for dealing with waste (witness the "high tech" method of disposal at Barnwell--dig a hole, dump it in, cover it up, leave it forever.) The liquid waste created by reprocessing 2-5 decades ago at SRS is still there, in above-ground tanks.

- Demonstration-phase processed waste CAN be used by terrorists in nuclear weapons, despite claims by the industry that it is "proliferation resistant".

- If SRS is approved as the site for the demonstration or full scale reprocessing facility, we will once again be receiving tons of nuclear materials into our state, and be burdened by tons of nuclear waste for which there is no permanent solution.

How can the nuclear reprocessing industry call itself "clean" energy, when it would generate millions of gallons of radioactive waste? How can it call itself "safe" when it has a history of radiation leaks, sodium fires, and a worldwide problem of unaccounted-for plutonium? And how can it be "proliferation resistant" when this "global partnership" would train people worldwide in the science of separating plutonium and other long-lived weapon-usable materials?

No doubt, the nuclear lobby will persist in glossing over all of these disturbing facts and persistent questions, and continue to hold out nuclear reprocessing as the golden apple of our energy future. They've been perpetuating the myth so long, they actually believe it.

STOP PLUTONIUM REPROCESSING! Send Comments to DOE Telling Them "We Don't Want GNEP"

Please read the article about the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership and write your letters to DOE. The comment period ends May 8th. We must speak out now if we are to avoid a new generation of nuclear waste in South Carolina.

Send your letters, emails, faxes to these addresses:

Timothy A. Frazier
NEPA Document Manager
Office of Nuclear Energy, Science and Technology

U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20585-0119
tel. 866-645-7803
fax 866-645-7807
GNEPTechDemo@nuclear.energy.gov

Carol Borgstrom
Director, Office of NEPA Policy and Compliance
tel 202-586-4600, 1-800-472-2756
fax 202-586-7031
Carol.Borgstrom@eh.doe.gov & askNEPA@eh.doe.gov



Robert Barber and Sierra National Board Chair Lisa Renstrom, right, with guest at the oyster roast at Bowens Island. The roast was a part of the national board meeting held in Charleston in March.

Global Warming Becomes Mainstream

By Frank Crowder, Conservation Chair

This has been a landmark year for the acceptance that human-induced global warming is changing our planet. Many events during the last year indicate that the debate may be over.



The April 3 issue of *Time* magazine has the tag line: "Be Worried. Be Very Worried." This is not a small event. *Time* is one of America's most mainstream publications and this is not a pronouncement of doubt.

The same *Time* magazine issue contains an interview with NASA's lead climate scientist, James Hanson. In the interviews Hanson says "We are getting close to a tipping point ... we need to get on a track that I call the alternative scenario, which requires that we begin to slow emissions this decade and substantially reduce them before mid-century. If we stay on a business-as-usual path for another decade, the alternative scenario becomes impractical if not impossible."

Second, *Grist* magazine reports: "On April 4, The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee heard statements from leaders representing General Electric, Shell, Exelon, Duke Energy, and WalMart. The companies said they would either welcome or accept mandatory caps on their greenhouse-gas emissions."

The companies are reacting to different greenhouse gas regulations that are popping up all over the country. It is in the companies' best interest that there be one federal set of regulations, not regulations that vary from state to state or region to region. Still, I can't help but think that we are at a turning point. The fact that Senator Pete Domenici was an organizer of the event is a strong indicator that the tide is turning.

Finally, the headline for the April 10 issue of the *Greenville News* proclaims that Senator Lindsay Graham and Representative Bob Inglis believe that global warming is real. I remember being in Senator Graham's office four years ago. His environmental aide did not believe that global warming had been proven.

Stage one of the battle to control global warming is over. Our leaders finally realize that we have a problem. Now it is time for a solution.

The Sierra Club is advocating real solutions to our energy needs. It is an approach to identify what is possible to satisfy our energy needs and control global warming. There is no doubt that global warming will be the challenge of our generation, our children's generation, and their grandchildren's generation.

As Sierra Club President Lisa Renstrom said in a recent email, "If every one of us contributes some part of our volunteer time to Smart Energy Solutions we can move this country forward. Global warming has entered the consciousness of America; we no longer have to convince folks that it is real. We do have to provide solutions and hope."

With real world solutions we can move down the path to a solution, but we need our members help. We need to convince our elected officials to implement real solutions.

Legislative Report

Conservation Bank, Wetlands, Takings

By Cary D. Chamblee, Lobbyist

There are several positive and beneficial natural resource bills that have been passed by the legislature this year or are currently under consideration.



The legislature has passed a measure granting one-time authority to the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources to sell bonds, to be repaid from Heritage Trust revenue, for the purchase of several major tracts of land totaling about forty thousand acres from International Paper. This is a very positive move that has been strongly supported by the Sierra Club.

The House responded very favorably to a serious effort to divert funds from the Conservation Bank to education in Charleston and Beaufort Counties. This was voted down by a margin of 91-10. The Conservation Bank provides about \$18 million annually

to purchase public lands and conservation easements.

Another positive move by the legislature is the introduction of S. 1206, The South Carolina Isolated Wetlands Act of 2006. This bill is sponsored by Sen. Larry Grooms (R-Berkeley), Chairman of the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee along with Sen. Chip Campsen (R-Charleston) and Sen. Phil Leventis (D-Sumter). This proposal is the product of months of work by environmental interests and the SC Association of Realtors. This bill is expected to pass the Senate and move on to the House in April.

However, on the negative side there are several proposals that indicate a disturbing trend that will have long term impacts on our state's resources and the quality of life that we enjoy. This trend is evident in continued attempts by the legislature to weaken home rule, especially the authority of local governments to implement local land use ordinances and zoning requirements. The first successful bill to chip away local power was the Billboard Protection Act. This bill was vetoed by the Governor; his veto was overridden by both houses. The bill is now law.

Remaining on the list of bills negatively affecting home rule is the "regulatory takings" provision in H.4503, the Eminent Domain Bill. This is possibly the most troubling natural resource-related measure proposed this year. H.4503 is the legislature's response to the June, 2005 US Supreme Court decision in the now famous Kelo case, which was rendered in response to a law suit regarding an eminent domain proceeding that occurred in New London, Connecticut. The House has attached a totally unrelated and far reaching component to this bill regarding regulatory takings. Under the regulatory takings portion of this bill a city, county or other government entity must provide "just compensation" if the value of a particular parcel of property is diminished by the enforcement of a land use or zoning regulation, even though the regulation benefits the community as a whole. **This bill recently passed the House and will be considered next by the Senate Judiciary Committee. The Sierra Club continues to actively oppose the regulatory takings provisions of H.4503.**

Contact me at chambleec@gmail.com. Please ask questions or share your thoughts. Web Legislative site is www.statehouse.net.

Nuclear

(Continued from page 1.)

and groundwater. There is so much water at the burial sites that workers are equipped with life vests.

It does not look like the ideal conditions for storing radioactive waste. We became even more concerned when we learned that the concrete storage vaults were equipped with drainage holes so when the groundwater receded the boxes would automatically drain water they collected.

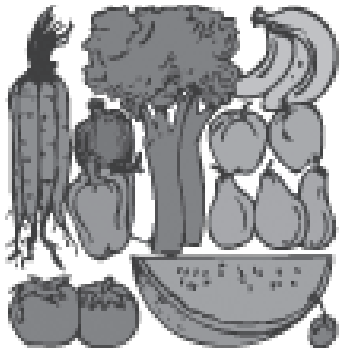
DHEC is required to do regular inspections and annual reports on the safety and management of the nation's largest low-level radioactive waste depository at Barnwell. It was disturbing to learn recently that Chem-Nuclear actually drafts the annual reports and DHEC signs off on them without changing a word.

We can only draw one conclusion. The atomic industry is irresponsible and we should not assume government, national or state, would protect us. It would only take one human error to create a disaster in our state that a terrorist could only dream of.

The True Cost of Food - A Campaign Whose Time Has Come

From the National Sustainable Consumption Committee

In just two years some 20 sustainable consumption committees have sprung up nationwide in the Club to promote an Earth-friendly diet. Events have varied from a few folks enjoying a pot-luck to hundreds of people attending a fund-raising concert with gourmet appetizers. Why have these outings proved so popular?



They're a great new angle on having fun while helping the Earth. A mantra of the True Cost of Food campaign is "Eat for your health and your planet's

health." Multitudes of earth-friendly people are conscientious about diet and health. This is a reservoir of environmentalism that Sierrans have not fully tapped. Local Sierrans are always looking for innovative ideas to build membership while raising ecological consciousness.

The planet simply cannot sustain our wasteful lifestyle indefinitely. In the U.S. we consume 10 times more resources per capita than the median for all other countries, and about double that of the other industrialized nations. But that's not all. Goaded by U.S.-driven globalization, the rest of the world is scrambling to catch up. Take, for instance, the 1.3 billion Chinese--over four times the U.S. population--who also are striving to drive Hummers, eat fast-food jumbo burgers, and refrigerate their homes in summer. China has made it a top priority to surpass the U.S. economy by about 2020.

What can we, as individuals, do about this? A lot, it turns out. The Union of Concerned Scientists states that individuals can make a big difference by shifting a few basic consumption choices. Not surprisingly, the number one choice involves energy, especially in transportation or in heating and cooling our homes. But a clear number two involves our diet. Three times a day we can help the planet by shifting our choices towards more plant-based, organic and locally-grown food.

This is nothing doctrinaire, simply the more you make these choices the better. How much better, you ask? The Club's True Cost of Food campaign wants you to know that:

--For each a pound of beef you pass up, you save a gallon of oil, 2500 gallons of water, five pounds of grain and an acre of land that went into its production.

--By choosing certified organic food, you keep a toxic brew of pesticides and chemicals out of the soil, water, and air.

--The average U.S. meal travels 2000 miles to reach our tables. If you avoid imported foods or support farmers markets, you can prevent thousands of pounds emissions from polluting the atmosphere.

These choices protect not only the environment's health but your own. The highest mortality in the U.S. now stems from an epidemic of degenerative diseases linked to all the saturated fats, empty calories, pesticides, and chemicals that we ingest. On the other hand, numerous studies have shown that a diet high in whole grains, legumes, fresh vegetables and fruit prolongs both length and quality of life. Buying organic, moreover, decreases our exposure to toxins, while locally grown foods retain more nutrients and flavor.

American Agribusiness trumpets our diet as the most plentiful, tasty, and affordable in history, and pushes it relentlessly through

saturation advertising, fast-food outlets, and hundred-acre supermarkets. We have seen, however, that this "cheap" food has an exceedingly high--and largely hidden--cost to our health and to our planet. But now the Club is exposing these costs through its True Cost of Food campaign and acclaimed video.

Most of our Sustainable Consumption committees around the country hold earth-friendly dining outings. We might ask a restaurant to feature a plant-based meal. Conversely, we might set up one that features organic, or perhaps a locally-grown menu that supports sustainable family farms. Restaurants are delighted to get the business, and local groups often add a fund-raising surcharge. These social events easily recruit new activists. Often people comment that they had been Club members for years, but had never attended a meeting before.

Would you like to get involved? The national Sustainable Consumption Committee is looking for folks to help locally with this campaign. Our popular 15-minute animated DVD, "The True Cost of Food," is a good way to get started. This gripping yet humorous video dramatizes what our so-called "cheap" food really costs and makes a great presentation for a local Club meeting.

Please don't hesitate to contact us for information, names of possible other interested people in your area, and guidance on how to approach your local Club leaders to include sustainable consumption and True Cost of Food among their outings and conservation efforts. Contact Gordon LaBedz at GLaBedzMD@aol.com or Michael Beck at (818)246-3661. For more information, check out: Sierra Club Sustainable Consumption at www.sierraclub.org/sustainable_consumption and the True Cost of Food Campaign and Video at www.truecostoffood.org

National Parks

(Continued from page 1.)

"If it ain't broke, don't fix it." and "Our parks need more protection for the future, not less."

If the Administration listens to the public's concerns, they will withdraw the proposed changes. However, we're not counting on that! Although the first round of comments is over, the Administration, overwhelmed by the outpouring of public opinion, is considering reopening the comment period. Now is the perfect time to publicize our outrage over this attempt to shift our national parks' mission from preservation to development and commercialization.

Please send a Letter to the Editor of your paper, and send a copy of it to your members of Congress. Here's sample language for a Letter to Editor to put into your own words.

(Start with some personal info and reason why you care about the parks or about one particular park that you like to visit.)

America's National Parks provide some of the finest outdoor recreation opportunities, scenic wonders, and wildlife habitat. Millions of Americans and visitors from around the world flock to our parks each year. But the National Park Service's (NPS) proposed rewrite of the park's Management Policies would fundamentally shift how our nation's national parks are managed from resource conservation toward commercialization.

The proposed policies fail to meet the current level of protection afforded our National Parks and eliminate reference to the mission to conserve parks unimpaired for future generations. The draft Policies would limit the agency's ability to protect air quality and soundscapes, and control inappropriate motorized use in national parks. In short, the proposed NPS Management Policies are fundamentally flawed and cannot be fixed.

National Parks are special places and should be preserved for future generations. The public doesn't want more commercialization, more off-road vehicles, and other threats to our crown jewels, America's great natural treasures. NPS should abandon its proposed changes and keep its current strong preservation policies.

The Sierra Club's brand new National Parks and Monuments Committee is working to raise public consciousness about major threats to our National Parks and Monuments. Join our network of parks activists. Just send an email to committee staff liaison Vicky Hoover at vicky.hoover@sierraclub.org.

Charleston pledges to cut emissions

Charleston is taking steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The city has become a "cool city" after joining the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement.

In 2001 Charleston signed a \$3.9 million, 15-year contract with Johnson Controls, aimed at reducing municipal emissions through energy-saving improvements that also save money on energy costs. Charleston's municipal carbon dioxide emissions during the first four years of the contract were reduced by 15,219 tons, and the city's energy costs were reduced by \$2.5 million.

So far the U.S. Conference of Mayors and 224 individual cities have joined the 2005 climate protection agreement, calling on federal and state governments to take action on global warming, and pledging "to strive to meet or exceed Kyoto Protocol targets for reducing global warming pollution by taking actions in our own operations and communities."

Sumter is the only other Palmetto State city to sign on.

To learn more about this initiative, go to <http://coolcities.us/>.

Sweet Victory: Top Five Environmental Wins

By Katrina vanden Heuvel

Reproduced with permission of The Nation. Edited. -- Co-written by Sam Graham-Felsen.

Of all of the disastrous hallmarks of the Bush presidency, Bush's darkest legacy in the long run may be his unmitigated assault on the environment and his deliberate campaign to cover up the immediate threat of global warming. It was no exaggeration when Al Gore said "George W. Bush has by all odds been by far the worst president for the environment in the entire history of the United States of America--bar none."

The Bush Administration has undermined the Environmental Protection Agency, appointed corporate cronies in the oil industry to critical environmental posts, and muzzled top scientists from warning the public about the imminent climate crisis. Yet, Bush's actions have brought the environmental movement closer together t planet. On Earth Day 2006, we salute those who took part in the top five environmental victories of the past year.

Saving ANWR: In what the Sierra Club called an "against-all-odds victory for wildlife, wild places and all Americans," the Senate rejected Sen. Ted Stevens' (R-AK) attempt to attach provisions to the Defense Appropriations Bill last December that would have opened up the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to drilling for oil. And weeks ago, the House Budget Committee also refused to appropriate funds for ANWR drilling in the FY2007 budget. Thanks to overwhelming pressure from environmental advocates, one of our nation's most pristine natural refuges remains safe from corporate poachers.

Governors Embrace Apollo: In July, The Apollo Alliance, one of the best progressive ideas of the millennium, gained some important new supporters. Six new Democratic governors--Rod Blagojevich (IL), Jim Doyle (WI), Christine Gregoire (WA), Ted Kulongoski (OR), Janet Napolitano (AZ), and Brian Schweitzer (MT)--joined an earlier trio--Jennifer Granholm (MI), Ed Rendel (PA), and Bill Richardson (NM)--in embracing the Alliance's goal of achieving sustainable American energy independence within a decade. The nine governors are all leaders in state-based efforts at energy efficiency and increased use of renewables, the core twin planks of the Apollo program. That program calls for a national investment of \$300 billion over the course of ten years to

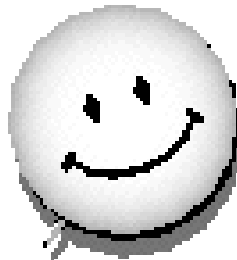
build the basic production and distribution infrastructure needed for a cleaner energy economy.

Cleaning Up Mercury Pollution: While Bush's EPA has deregulated controls on mercury emissions--making it easier for power plants to emit this deeply harmful chemical into the environment--several states have strengthened anti-mercury laws. Gov. Rod Blagojevich of Illinois announced a proposal to reduce mercury emissions by 90 percent, and weeks later, Gov. Jennifer Granholm of Michigan followed suit. Massachusetts' legislature just passed legislation that would prevent mercury pollution in household items such as thermostats, automobiles, fluorescent lights and electrical switches. And Idaho just passed a two-year moratorium on the building or operating of mercury-emitting coal-fired power plants.

Mayors Say Yes to Kyoto: We remain one of only two major industrialized nations that have not signed the Kyoto Protocol. Yet America's mayors are letting the world know that they stand with the global community--not Bush--on Kyoto. So far, 220 mayors, frustrated with federal environmental inaction, have created their own Kyoto-complying standards, investing in cleaner vehicles, cutting dependence on oil, and promoting efficient and renewable energy projects. Check out Cool Cities for more info on this growing movement.

Clean Cars Movement Rolls On: Last year, Clean Car legislation, which requires the reduction of harmful auto emissions, was adopted in California; now eight other states have followed suit. These states combined cover a full third of the car and SUV market in the US.

Honor Roll: Madison Gas and Electric Co. of Wisconsin decided to stop burning coal at the state's dirtiest coal-fired power plant and switched to renewable energy. Gov. Tom Kaine of Virginia rebuffed a proposal that would have opened up the state's beautiful coastline to offshore drilling. Atlanta's Development Authority greenlighted an innovative new public transportation plan for a beltline connecting the entirety of Atlanta's downtown and surrounding the line with green space for walking, jogging, biking, and public enjoyment.



Conservation, briefly....

From Time Magazine:

"Polar Ice Caps Are Melting Faster Than Ever...More And More Land Is Being Devastated By Drought...Rising Waters Are Drowning Low-Lying Communities...By Any Measure, Earth Is At...



The Tipping Point"

"No one can say exactly what it looks like when a planet takes ill, but it probably looks a lot like Earth. Never mind what you've heard about global warming as a slow-motion emergency that would take decades to play out. Suddenly and unexpectedly, the crisis is upon us."

"In a new TIME/ ABC News/ Stanford University poll, 85% of respondents agree that global warming probably is happening. Moreover, most respondents say they want some action taken. Of those polled, 87% believe the government should either encourage

or require lowering of power-plant emissions, and 85% think something should be done to get cars to use less gasoline."

Swearing an oath to Bush

"It is outrageous that park superintendents must swear political loyalty to the Bush agenda and parrot hokey mottos in order to earn a promotion. The merit system is supposed to be about ability, not apple polishing." --Jeff Ruch, Executive Director of Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER), responding to a new National Park Service order that all top civil service positions, including park superintendents and program managers, must first be approved by a Bush administration political appointee.

Public Interest Groups Ask Government To Ban Triclosan

Public interest groups have petitioned the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to ban the antibacterial agent triclosan in household products because of evidence that it causes health and environmental effects and leads to antibiotic resistance. The chemical, marketed widely to protect children from germs, is found in antibacterial soaps, deodorants, toothpastes, cosmetics, fabrics and plastics.

The household use of triclosan results in contamination of the nation's waterways, according to the petition, with triclosan among the most prevalent contaminants not removed by typical wastewater treatment plants. William Arnold, Ph.D. Associate Professor, University of Minnesota, Department of Civil Engineering, explained, "Upon triclosan exposure to sunlight, two of the products generated are 2,8-dichlorodibenzodioxin and 2,4-dichlorophenol. If triclosan is exposed to chlorine and then sunlight, there is the potential for more highly chlorinated products to be produced."

The petition and background are posted at <http://www.beyondpesticides.org>.

Environmental labeling

The Consumers Union Guide to Environmental Labels is at www.eco-labels.org. At the site you can "Learn more about products that



are eco-labeled compared to those that are conventionally farmed or produced, keep track of labels recently added, compare labels quickly with a shorthand report card and print easily to use while shopping, sign up to register for specific news updates and much more!"

Sierra Club, South Carolina

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: JUNE 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.

One Club, Many Faces

By Bob Guild, Chapter Chair

I have been reminded lately of the unique character of our Sierra Club--the nation's oldest, largest and most influential conservation organization. We are, indeed, one Club representing the many faces of our broad grassroots membership and employing many varied efforts to advance our common mission "to explore, enjoy and protect the wild places of the earth." The Club's unique character was brought home recently when the South Carolina Chapter hosted the national Board of Directors and senior staff for their formal meetings in the 'holy city' of Charleston.



There, amidst the blossoming azaleas, the national leadership shared with us their vision for the Club's exciting new national conservation initiatives which have emerged from the Club-wide direction-setting process in which many of us participated.

The national Club leadership also solicited a formal presentation from us on the South Carolina Chapter. We shared with our distinguished visitors the proud history of our Chapter founded in the successful grassroots fight to preserve Congaree Swamp--now our first national park and our current efforts to build our capacity to better do our important future work. The

national Club Board and Staff left sunny Charleston suitably welcomed and with an appreciation for and strong commitment to support our chapter's work.

The national conservation initiatives embraced by the Sierra Club Board of Directors represent three priorities for our conservation work: Smart Energy Solutions, America's Wild Legacy, and Safe and Healthy Communities. The latter two initiatives continue the Club's long commitment to protecting wild places--like our beloved Congaree--and our neighbors' backyards from pollution. The first initiative, however, represents, a uniquely visionary effort by our Club to assume positive leadership on the most pressing global issue of climate change driven by our flawed and destructive current energy practices.

In the face of the grossest neglect by our national political leadership, the Sierra Club has embraced a positive and visionary platform of Smart Energy Solutions calling for a bold shift from reliance on fossil fuels and nuclear power to a safe, clean energy future built on efficiency, renewable fuels and innovative technologies. Contrary to the one dimensional 'doom and gloom' caricature of environmentalists, the Sierra Club is filling the vacuum of leadership on energy solutions by pressing a positive grass roots effort to rebuild our energy future from the community level up.

As you read this, the national Sierra Club leadership is actively seeking input from Sierra volunteer leaders at the individual, Group and Chapter levels on the critical questions of how this national Smart Energy Solutions initiative is best executed in our communities. Of course, we in South Carolina recognize that some of the most dirty and dangerous elements of the current failed energy system uniquely plague our state; and that the industry moguls behind the national government's bankrupt energy plan call for more of the same dirty coal and nuclear plants--along with the additional nuclear waste--to be targeted on South Carolina. Our local work on Smart Energy Solutions must include resistance to expanding South Carolina's nuclear waste burden as an essential part of our visionary clean energy future. Like the motto of our nation, "e pluribus unum" or out of many one, the one Sierra Club builds its strength to lead on such critical challenges of our time from the many faces of Sierrans from California to South Carolina.

For more information: <http://www.sierraclub.org/globalwarming/cleanenergy/index.asp>

Sierra Student Coalition....

Be a Force for Change

This summer, let the Sierra Student Coalition change your life.

Have you ever seen an environmental problem in your neighborhood or on your campus, but you weren't sure what you could do about it? Want to get involved or be more effective for the environment in your school or community?

Every year, the Sierra Student Coalition runs a series of week-long summer programs for environmentally-minded high school and college students. While there, you will meet people who share a common love for the environment and new ideas for how to make things better.

The programs combine rustic settings and outdoor activities with intense training on how to plan and run environmental campaigns, communicate effectively and build campus environmental groups. Guest speakers provide new insights into the problems facing our planet and how all of us can get involved to solve them.

Many past participants have gone on to become leaders in their student environmental groups and Sierra Club Chapters. Get more information at www.ssc.org or by calling 1-888-JOIN-SSC.

2006 Student Summer Training Program dates and locations:

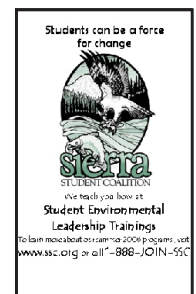
June 19-25: North Carolina

June 26-July 2: Minnesota

July 17-23: Washington

July 24-30: Environmental Justice, near Los Angeles, CA

August 14-20 Pennsylvania



Chapter Fundraising Doing Well

The chapter must raise nearly three-fourths of its funds, the remaining coming from national Sierra Club allocations. Therefore, fundraising at the state level is essential to the success of the chapter.

Chapter fundraising is doing well so far in 2006 compared to last year. In fact, the chapter has raised about 43 percent more this year compared to 2005 at this time. Another way to look at fundraising, however, is the total need for the year to fulfill the budget. Based on that calculation, the chapter has only met 25 percent of its goal so far for 2006.

If you have not contributed to the chapter so far this year, you are encouraged to do so. The average contribution in 2006 so far has been \$84.27.

Those who have contributed between January 15 and April 10 are:

White Oak (\$2500+)

Harry and Rebecca Dalton

Magnolia (\$1000-2499)

Rev. and Mrs. Alanson Houghton

Long Leaf Pine (\$500-999)

Senator John Courson
Barbara Postles

Spruce (\$250-499)

Dr. Charles W. McRae
Dr. Mark Salley
Allyn and Ann Schneider
Daniel and Cynthia Tufford
Mary Lou Ulmer
Joseph and Connie Zdenek

Dogwood (\$100-249)

Paul Baldrige
Bruce and Phyllis Baxter
Ethel Brody
Scott and Dana Crater
Dr. and Mrs. John and Rhonda Grego
William and Eleanor Hare
Patricia Hayes
Frank and Anne Holleman
Frank Hooper
Dell Isham
Steve and Maria Johnson
E.W. Keller
Graydon Kingsland
Stephen and Betty Kolarich
Michael and Karen Manley
Keith McCook
Dorothy Payne
John and Susan Rae
Philip and Ann Reed
Reta Richardson
Jim and Jacquelyn Robey
Betsy Russell
Pamela Shucker
Robert and Patricia Shufeldt
Gary and Salley Smith
Timothy and Lisa Spira
Loring Stone

James Townsend
Preston Whetstone
Linda Winecoff
Winyah Group
Bob Wislinski

Jamie Young-McCulloch

Redbud (\$50-99)

William and Barbara Anderson
Carol Barker
Leslie Bateson
Ray Browder, Jr.
John Cassidy
Sheila Cook
Samuel Daniel
David Dexter
Otto and Joyce Frei
Barbara Gawler
Eugene R. Goodwyn
Wayne and Precious Grooms
Alex and Carol Henderson
Jane Hinton-Smith
JWF Holliday
Decie Jones
Joffre and Marjorie Kaminer
Kurt Krucke
Patricia Luck
Barbara Marhoffer
Roy and Francie Markham
Wallace McIntyre
Cynthia Powell
Marilyn Raines
Bruce and Maryrose Randall
Frances and Arthur Rickenbaker
Beth Roraback
Gail Royal
Sara Schechter-Schoeman
Richard Sillivant, Jr.
William Stephenson
Carolyn Tutwiler
Roger Van Horsen
Dr. Michael Watson
Edwin Wilde
W.F. Wingard

Trillium (\$25-49)

Alexander Alperin
Arlene Arellano
Brent Barron
Donald Barth

Chapter ExCom Says

“Don’t Sell Forests or Expand Nukes”

The Executive Committee (ExCom) of the South Carolina Chapter of the Sierra Club met in Columbia recently to confirm that the Club does not want the federal government to sell off national forests or continue to turn South Carolina into a nuclear dumping ground. Resolutions on both issues were passed unanimously by the 16-member ExCom. The committee also responded to a national Sierra Club survey on energy policy.

The ExCom noted that “to protect the wild places of the earth” is one of the founding ideals of the Sierra Club and that the “best wild places in North America are found on our public land, much of which is managed by the U.S. Forest Service.” The Bush Administration has proposed to sell Forest Service land, with revenue to go, in part, to rural school districts as a one-time payment. The Chapter opposes the sale of any public lands under this policy.

The Chapter is increasingly concerned that South Carolina, specifically the Savannah River Site (SRS), has been targeted to receive plutonium and spent nuclear fuel rods for reprocessing, increasing the burden of storing radioactive liquid waste indefinitely. The Bush Administration has also proposed making 125 nuclear weapons per year at SRS, or some other site in the United States. The ExCom voted to oppose the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership to reprocess spent reactor fuel, the building of fast burner reactors, and the transportation of any more nuclear waste to South Carolina.

The National Sierra Club is refining club energy policy, which they say will be the major priority of the Sierra Club over the next ten years. The Chapter voiced agreement with the national organization that public transit, vehicle fuel efficiency, energy and land-use planning, and production electricity from wind and solar power should be priorities. The Chapter also noted that recycling, including a “bottle bill,” should be emphasized at the state level to save energy.

The state Chapter told the national organization that reforestation should be given a higher priority to store carbon emissions and reduce greenhouse gases. They also said that producing energy from ocean wave action and tides was not acceptable and needs more research. The Chapter confirmed that they opposed offshore oil and gas exploration.

Other news from the Chapter ExCom meeting including the following:

--Chapter Chair Bob Guild expanded the sizes of the Conservation Committee, Environmental Education Committee, and Membership Committee by appointments.

--Guild reported on a successful meeting of the National Sierra Club Board of Directors held recently in Charleston.

--Chapter Director Dell Isham is interviewing candidates for governor for possible endorsement. Questionnaires are being sent to legislators as part of the endorsement process too.

--Isham plans to have a summer intern in the chapter office from May 15 to August 11. The selection of the successful applicant will be announced soon.

--Conservation Committee Chair Frank Crowder is proposing that his committee be divided into three subcommittees to conform to the three main conservation initiatives: America’s Wild Legacy, Safe and Healthy Communities, and Smart Energy Solutions.

--A settlement has been agreed to with Central Electric Cooperative and its Black River Power Line. The utility agreed to a buffer zone to shield power lines and to paying \$125,000 into a mitigation bank to purchase land for preservation in the Black River watershed.

--A lawsuit has been filed against Youwall Company and Allendale County for approving a landfill in a manner contrary to their own solid waste ordinance, which was originally drafted for them with the help of Sierra Club members.

--The ExCom voted to transfer Allendale County from the Bachman Group to the Cathcart Group. A final decision on this matter must be approved by the national organization.

Doris Brandenburg
Christine Brennan-Bond
Danny Brown
Elizabeth Buckles
Robin Carter
Richard and Linda Clapp
Susan Close
Jean Clute
Carmen Covington
William and Louise Ellis
Leon Ember
Victor and Carmen Estaba
Francis and Dolly Fant
Dorothy Fetters
Anna Forbis
Wayne and Shirley Galloway
Fran Massa George
Martin Gipe
Ismario and Dana Gonzalez
Allan Goud
Donald and Connie Gray
Peggy Greaves
James and Kay Gross
William and Linda Hamann

Maureen Harris
Donald and Alice Henderson
Patricia Hicks
Ollie and Barbara Johnson
Joe and Mary King
Malcolm Kudra
L.I. and N.A. Larsen
May Leong
Martha Lever
Robert and Sheryl Linsenmayer
Madge Major
William Masters
Janice May
Bruce Nelson
Alma Nunnally
Donald and Jody Pearce
Robin Pepper
John and Ruthild Phillips
Robert and Sharon Phillips
Stacey Pope
Betty Raines
Bonnie Ramey
Linda Regnier

Nena Powell Rice
James and Cynthia Rodgers
Mariette Ruppert
Gerald and Carolyn Santas
John and Dianne Schnell
Alpha Schrader
Victor and Diane Schwarzer
Herman Senter
Norm and Linda Sharp
Felicia Smith
Merike Tamm
Nancy Thomas
Frank and Mary Traficante
Robert Tucker
Katherine Tumbleston
Richard and Revera Wayburn
Robert and Myrna Wigger

Red Clover (<\$25)

Karla Barker
Laura Boone
Vicki Corley

David and Linda Courtney
Page and Diane Crouch
Diane Gilbert
Laura Gonzalez
John and Marilyn Green
Margaret Hausman
David Hilderbrand
Jean Jerome
Ernest Larch
Thomas Littlefield
Irving and Adrienne Lustig
Al and Carol Martig
Donald and Georgia McDowell
Benjamin and Faye Morrison
Toni Parker
Raymond Phillips
John and Kathryn Sharp
Peter Silveston
Mr. and Mrs. James Sloan
Ruth Snead
Jack Valpey

State Outings

May

May 6: **Mistletoe State Park.** Savannah River. Richard Dillenback, (706)869-8770.

May 6-7: **Eastatoe Gorge overnight hike.** Lunz. Dave Schwartz (843)607-1108.

May 20: **Mountain Bridge Wilderness Trail Service.** Bartram. The objective of this service project is to improve and preserve existing trails at Caesars Head State Park in order to assure that all trails are safe for use by future hikers. Trail workers will meet at **9:00 a.m. at Caesars Head Ranger Station.** The morning work session will last until the noon lunch break. Each worker should bring their own lunch and water. Lunch break will last 30 - 45 minutes. The afternoon work session will end about 3:00 p.m. Other outings are September 23, October 21, and November 18. Jim Majors (864)233-7576 or jim_majors@bellsouth.net.

June

June 25: **Tour de Harbor kayak.** Lunz. A long days' journey into light beginning at 7 a.m. We will let the tide carry us all the way to Ft. Sumter and Morris Island than all the way back to Shem Creek. This is our solstice paddle and it's a new moon so the tide currents will be grand. Open water passages make this an intermediate level trip. Starr Hazard, (843)881-8902 or hazardes@bellsouth.net.

July

July 8-10: **Joyce Kilmer Wilderness hike.** Lunz. Dave Schwartz (843)607-1108.

September

September 8-10: **Panthertown Valley, North Carolina hike.** Lunz. Lots of waterfalls. Maureen Blair, (843)568-7134.

October

October 7-9: **Manchester State Forest hike.** Lunz. Dave Schwartz, (843)607-1108.

Sparkleberry Swamp

by Den Latham

In late November, six of us paddled the floodplain of the Upper Santee. The area is a wide expanse of wetland, creeks, and small lakes about half an hour south of Sumter at the head waters of Lake Marion. Scott Murphy, co-owner of Naturally Outdoors in Florence, was our guide.

Scott had a compass and laminated map lashed to the deck of his kayak. Four others paddled Sparkleberry Swamp with us: Danny, an accounting and I.T. manager with Sonoco; Charlie, a machinist, jet-skier, and ex-dirt biker; Brian, a biologist who worked with the National Marine Fishery Service in Alaska; and Gregorio, who'd been a fashion photographer in Eastern Europe. Sporting straw-colored hair, a jet-black goatee, and a neon-chartreuse polypro jacket, Gregorio was the most colorful mammal we saw that day.

Gregorio was paddling a kayak he'd rented from Scott. As Scott helped him into his boat at the water's edge, Gregorio asked if there'd be any strong currents. In his lap was an expensive black camera with a zoom lens. Always helpful and often wrong, I said no, pointing to a few orange leaves and cypress needles drifting slowly by.

Paddling out from the boat ramp, we wound our way through a flooded plain of cypress and tupelo. Their trunks were banded: wet-black near the water, then muddy brown, then lichen-gray to the crown. The water temperature was cool, maybe 55 degrees, and the sky was blue and sunny, but a cold front was blowing in. Too cold for gators and snakes, I thought. When we entered the open water of Sparkleberry Flat, the wind was chilly and in our faces. I was glad I'd grabbed my son's stocking cap out of the car.

"It still beats a day at work," said Charlie, paddling beside me.

"It'll be easy on the way back," I said, "going with the current and the wind at our backs."

After crossing the lake, we headed south on Mill Creek, then east-northeast up Otter Flat Creek. The swamp on either side of the creek was beautiful, peaceful, quiet. Elephant ear grew like big potted plants on tiny islands. The leaves were remarkably fresh and green. Scott pointed to an osprey soaring over head, its underwings and belly a feathery white.

On Otter Flat Creek, we paddled against a stronger current of 2 or 3 knots and hit a stretch where the gusts were head-on, maybe 20 mph. Following Scott, I could see the usually smooth black water ahead suddenly dimple and wrinkle silver and I could hear him say "Wow" before the gust would hit me. I leaned forward and dug my paddle blades in.

Half an hour later and halfway up Otter Flat Creek, Scott scouted another waterway edged in tall grass, then directed us onto a narrower, doglegged creek that would lead us to Old Riser's River, where we'd stop for lunch on the bank.

By chance I took the lead, the others following single file several yards behind. At a sharper bend, I glanced at a long mass of char-

coal-gray mud on the bank. My brain was idly questioning what could have made the long muddy pile when my eyes registered a gator. A ten-footer, I thought. No, twelve. Forward momentum took me toward it, within five yards. The bigger my eyes got, the bigger the gator.

I pointed frantically at it, silently, not wanting to scare it, hoping the others would see. As I drifted past, it regarded me with a dull lethargy as if to say "Oh bother," then slid backward off the bank and sank out of sight. Brian, coming up on my stern, saw the head before it disappeared.

After lunch on the paddle back across Sparkleberry Flat, with the wind at my back I decided to turn on the speed, paddling fast and smooth, reaching each blade in at the foot and pulling back to the hip, the powerfaces of the blades giving sharp kisses as they left the water flinging arcs of water drops. A black-shelled turtle on a log arched his head toward me, scabbled his clawed feet along the log and disappeared into the lake.

I raced along for a quarter of a mile, then stopped, figuring I'd missed the opening on the eastern wall of trees that would take us back to the landing. I had, and I paddled back about 50 yards to where Scott led us along a creek lined with tall, wide-bladed grass, cypress and tupelo.

It's essential to know that places like Sparkleberry Swamp still exist, I thought--places beyond the reach of roads and the sounds of traffic, wild places where we can, if briefly, get back to a more original relationship with creation. A swamp is "a sacred place," wrote Thoreau, "a sanctum sanctorum."

I shared these thoughts with Scott. He reminded me that Senator Clyburn hopes to build a bridge across the floodplain as part of an economic corridor from Sumter to Orangeburg. The proposed cost of the bridge is 83 million dollars. I thought of the other costs.

"Barring love and war, few enterprises are undertaken with such abandon, or by such diverse individuals, or with so paradoxical a mixture of appetite and altruism, as that group of avocations know as outdoor recreation."

-- Aldo Leopold

Hike with Rudy Mancke

Rudy Mancke, a renowned South Carolina naturalist, will be leading a hike on Saturday, May 27 at 10 a.m. at the Hatiola Hunt Club in Barnwell County.

This is the second in a series of natural-

ist hikes around the state intended to educate Sierran's about South Carolina's natural history. The first was held on April 15 at the Bonaventure Cemetery in Savannah, GA to see where Sierran Club founder, John Muir, slept while on his first cross-country adventure between Indiana and Cuba.



This second naturalist hike will be about Reverend John Bachman, known primarily for his role in establishing Newberry College, but also a premiere mammalogist and South Carolina naturalist. The Columbia area group was named in honor of Bachman's life work. As part of the hike, participants are suggested to read Bachman's famous work: "The Viviparous Quadrupeds of North America" co-written by John James Audubon.

More information about the trip is available online at www.myscsierra.org or by contacting Erika Hartwig at erika@myscsierra.org.