



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

January to April 2012

Major Environmental Benefits In Turk Settlement

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Update by Lev Guter, national Sierra Club Field Organizer, Beyond Coal Campaign: Arkansas

The Sierra Club and Audubon won major environmental benefits for Arkansas in the settlement concerning the Turk Power Plant.

On December 22, 2011, Sierra Club and Audubon announced a legal settlement with Southwestern Electric Power Company (SWEPCO), a subsidiary of American Electric Power (AEP), that phases out Welsh 2, a dirty coal plant upwind of Arkansas in northeastern Texas, provides hundreds of megawatts of new clean energy for the region, secures \$10 million for land conservation and energy efficiency advocacy, and limits development of additional plants and transmission lines. This settlement ends a four-year public battle over the construction of the Turk coal-fired power plant in southwest Arkansas.

Ideally, Turk should never have broken ground, but even so the settlement brings some very good news for Arkansas. Currently, the Turk plant is about 80% complete, so without the enormous pressure that Sierra Club volunteers levied against SWEPCO, the Sierra Club never would have gained the strong protections we extracted in the settlement. As part of the agreement, the retirement of the aging Welsh 2 coal plant in northeast Texas will significantly reduce air pollution coming into Arkansas.

Protecting Arkansans from coal pollution is our top priority, and the Sierra Club Beyond Coal Campaign will continue its fight to shut down the coal plants still operating in Arkansas, including White Bluff, located just north of Pine Bluff.

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Lake Maumelle Watershed Zoning Code Update

2 Developing and enacting the Pulaski County Lake Maumelle Watershed Zoning Code has become very controversial and complicated. Many different constituencies are involved in the debate and there is a lot of misinformation. While the current draft of the Zoning Code contains important elements, it does not adequately preserve the existing forest, which is the main contributor to the current

excellent water quality. Another area of concern is the level of density allowed in the current draft. Density of population is regulated for the most part by lot size. But the current draft could allow a staggering 72,000 people to live in the Pulaski County part of the watershed if it is developed.

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CAG Meetings January to April 2012 At Oyster Bar

The Central Arkansas Group meets on the third Tuesday of each month (except August & December) at the Oyster Bar, 3003 West Markham, in Little Rock.

6:30 p.m. social time

7 p.m. program begins.

January 17: Barbara Meier, Recycling Program Educator for the City of Little Rock, will give a presentation called "Recycling Made Easy."

February 21: We will show portions of Manufactured Landscapes (2006), an acclaimed film about the environmental impacts of pollution as seen through the lens of Canadian photographer Edward Burtynsky. Al Gore called this film "Extraordinary, haunting, beautiful, insightful, touching."

March 20: Beth Phelps, of the Pulaski County Extension Agency, will speak on "Environmentally Friendly Landscape Management."

April 17: You'll be well prepared for the Arkansas primary on May 22 by coming to a Candidates Night at the April meeting. We will invite as many candidates as possible and see which of them present the most environmentally responsible platforms.

For information on CAG activities including outings and the spring picnic, check <http://Arkansas.sierraclub.org> & follow link to CAG.

Eagle Watch Hike Jan. 15 At Holla Bend Refuge

On Sunday January 15 Petit Jean State Park is sponsoring an Eagle Watch at Holla Bend National Wildlife Refuge, and Sierra Club has a special invitation to sign up for this outing.

We will meet at 1:30 p.m. on top of Petit Jean Mountain at the State Park Rec Hall (which is right behind the Visitors Center)

for a brief presentation on eagles.

Then at 2 p.m. we will take our cars in caravan to Holla Bend Wildlife Refuge with the park rangers to look for eagles, other raptors, and waterfowl. We expect the tour to take about two hours, and you are free to drive home from the Refuge. The entrance fee to the Refuge will be

waived. We recommend that you bring warm clothing, binoculars, and a camera.

Please contact Carolyn Shearman at tucshea@gmail.com or 501-603-5305 to sign up. Petit Jean State Park must provide an exact count to Holla Bend, so we will need to give them the number of participants in advance.

Fall 2011 Canoe Trash Pick-Up A Great Success

On a warm October day seventeen Sierrans took part in the annual Pinnacle Mountain Canoe Trash Pick-Up that was postponed from the spring owing to flooding. The event was such a success that we will continue to hold the annual trash pick-up in the fall rather than the spring.



Lake Maumelle Zoning Update Cont'd

After careful consideration, Sierra Club Central Arkansas Group officers voted to remain neutral on the current draft of the Code. They could not approve the current draft because it lacks true preservation of forest or reasonable density limits. But they decided not to lobby for an amendment for fear zoning might not be adopted at all.

Surprisingly, another group, the coalition of Little Rock downtown neighborhoods, was able to

lobby members of the Pulaski County Quorum Court to amend the Zoning Code. This amendment calls for a review of the Code once 7,000 homes are built. But it is unclear whether the amendment as written is legal or how effective the amendment will be in protecting water quality. The full Quorum Court considered the amendment on December 20 and voted to set the entire Zoning Code aside until a particular report from the local office of the United States

Geological Survey is released in February or March 2012. The Sierra Club Central Arkansas Group along with its partners will continue to monitor the process closely. We encourage you to get the facts and plan to post a longer version of this update on our website. Read the current draft of the Zoning Code (dated November 8, 2011) at <http://co.pulaski.ar.us/planning-lmw.shtml> or email specific questions to Kate Althoff at ktalt-hof@aol.com.

Challenge The Air Permit Renewal For White Bluff

WHAT: Join us to contest the air permit renewal for the White Bluff coal plant located 30 minutes south of Little Rock in Redfield, Arkansas.

White Bluff is one of the top 20 coal plant mercury air polluters in the country.

WHEN: Meet Tuesday, January 10, at 4:30 p.m., at the Sierra Club offices, 1308 W. 2nd St, Little Rock, AR 72201.

WHERE: We will carpool from the Sierra Club offices to the air permit public hearing which begins at 6 p.m. organized by the Arkansas Department of

Environmental Quality at Redfield Junior High School Auditorium, 101 School St., Redfield, AR 72132.

Contact Lev Guter at lev.guter@sierraclub.org to reserve your spot in the carpool.

Obama & EPA Issue Strong Mercury Protections



On December 21, 2011 the EPA and the Obama administration issued the first-ever nationwide protections against toxic mercury from dirty power plants. Hundreds of thousands of Americans spoke up for these vital safeguards in an epic vic-

tory we can all call our own. These landmark protections will cut over 90% of this toxic pollutant from coal-fired power plants and will dramatically clean up our nation's air and significantly reduce our exposure to life-threatening heavy metals.



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Turk Settlement Story From Page 1 Cont'd

SWEPSCO agrees to the following major concessions:

1. The permanent retirement of the 558 megawatt Welsh (Unit 2) boiler in Pittsburg, TX, as early as 2014 but no later than 2016. Welsh Unit 2 will also reduce its capacity factor to no more than 60% (reducing output and emissions about one fifth from recent levels) when Turk begins commercial operation.
2. SWEPSCO will purchase 400 megawatts of new wind or solar energy resources for its service territory (AR, OK, TX, and LA), with power purchase agree-

ments for at least 20 years.

3. SWEPSCO must provide \$8 million to The Nature Conservancy for conservation and restoration purposes in Arkansas.
4. SWEPSCO must provide \$2 million to the Arkansas Community Foundation to support clean energy and energy-efficiency policy efforts in AR/OK/TX/LA.
5. SWEPSCO agrees not to build additional units at the Turk site, nor build any coal-fired units within 30 miles of Turk.
6. SWEPSCO agrees not to site any future Turk transmission

lines in the Nacatoch Ravines Natural Area, the Little River or Bois d'Arc Wildlife Management Area, or several other areas.

7. SWEPSCO agrees to stricter and more frequent testing and monitoring requirements for the Turk plant's air emissions, wastewater discharges, and landfill.

