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The PLANET

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inside

7 Great Smokies Threatened by Boondoggle Boulevard



March/April 2006 ■ VOL. 13, NO. 2

Why the Endangered Species Act Works...

USEFMS



Back from the Brink: The American alligator, first listed as endangered in 1967, was declared recovered in 1987 after Endangered Species Act protections allowed its numbers to rebound to more than a million animals in a belt stretching from North Carolina to Texas.

...and Why We Need to Keep It Strong

■ BY TIMOTHY LESLE

Congressman Richard Pombo (R-Calif.) claims that there's a big problem with the Endangered Species Act: He says only 10 of the species listed have recovered enough to be removed from the list (it's actually 15), and the act is "a failed managed care program that checks species in but never checks them out." In January, Interior Secretary Gale Norton extended the analogy, comparing the act to a hospital, adding, "The purpose of a hospital is not to keep people there." The problem with that, says Sierra Club wildlife expert Bart Semcer, "is Richard Pombo and Gale Norton want to discharge patients from the hospital without giving them any medication at all."

In fact, the Endangered Species Act, signed by President Richard Nixon in 1973, is a success story and a cornerstone of U.S. environmental law. It has prevented the extinction of 99 percent of all species ever listed, says Semcer. Among the high-profile species it has helped are the American alligator and the peregrine falcon, which have recovered enough to be removed from the list.

But it takes time for a threatened or endangered species to recover, and "most of these species are in such trouble that it's going to take decades to restore healthy populations," Semcer says. Species recovery plans average 30 to 50 years, and the average number of years a given species has been listed under the act is only 15.5 years.

That's too long for Pombo, who, with Representative Dennis Cardoza (D-Calif.), introduced legislation that will drastically change the act. Pombo says it will improve the law, but Semcer says it will actually "gut" it.

What endangered species need most to recover is land—federally-recognized "critical habitats" carefully managed to promote recovery. Semcer points out that "analysis of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's own data shows that species that have had their critical habitat designated are twice as likely to be heading towards recovery than species without critical habitat." But the proposed legislation will remove those very protections from tens of millions of acres of mostly federal land. And as a result, it will be easier to strip mine, clearcut, and graze in those habitats.

Besides removing habitat protections, Pombo's bill would:

- Pay developers, agribusiness, and polluters whatever they demand to obey the law and not kill fish and wildlife;
- Give special interests access to government decision-makers by creating a mechanism for them to interfere with efforts to

[MORE ON P. 2]

Sierra Club Kicks Off 'Reality TV'

■ BY TOM VALTIN

In mid-January, ten Atlanta knitters gathered at the home of Sierra Club organizer Anna Swinson for a "Stitch & Bitch" party and to watch the first episode of a new TV series: *Sierra Club Chronicles*, from filmmaker Robert Greenwald. The episode, "9/11 Forgotten Heroes," tells how the federal government has reneged on its pledge to help cover medical expenses for 9/11 first responders who have experienced health problems due to toxic pollution at Ground Zero.

The same evening, 2,500 miles to the west, the San Francisco Bay Chapter's Energy Committee watched an advance screening of the series' second episode, "The Day the Water Died," about Exxon's refusal to pay court-ordered punitive damages to residents of Cordova, Alaska, after the Valdez oil spill crippled the local economy. Near the beginning of "The Day the Water Died," an Exxon spokesman assures Cordova residents four days after the spill that the company will do whatever it takes to "make them whole" again. But as we learn from Cordova fishermen, businesspeople, scientists, and civic leaders, the company has done nothing of the sort.

For 16 years, Exxon—now ExxonMobil—has appealed the case again and again and used every legal maneuver at its disposal to wriggle off the hook. Meanwhile, 2,000 plaintiffs in Alaska whose livelihoods were wrecked or hamstrung by the Valdez spill have died without seeing a penny of the court-ordered recompense. In late January, as ExxonMobil's record 2005 profits of \$37 billion were making front-page

[MORE ON P. 2]

Largest-Ever Mercury Study Finds One in Five Women With Dangerous Levels

Direct Relationship Found Between Mercury Levels and Fish Consumption



Researchers in North Carolina released results in February of the nation's largest study ever on the effects of mercury on the U.S. population. It analyzed hair samples from more than 6,600 women from all 50 states and found that one in five women of childbearing age exceeded the EPA's recommended limit of 1 microgram of mercury per gram of hair.



The hair samples came from public mercury-testing events sponsored by the Sierra Club and Greenpeace and individuals who ordered testing kits online and mailed a couple inches of hair to the lab. The samples were analyzed by Dr. Steve Patch and fellow researchers at the Environmental

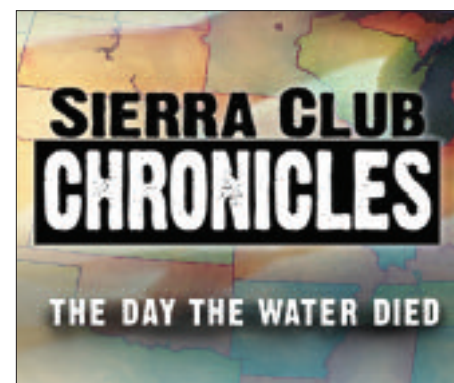


Quality Institute at the University of North Carolina-Asheville. Researchers found a direct relationship between mercury levels and fish consumption.

Coal burning is the main way mercury gets into humans—rainfall brings the mercury into waterways, where it accumulates in fish and makes its way up the food chain. Mercury contamination is especially dangerous for women of childbearing years because mercury exposure in the womb can cause neurological damage and other health problems in children.

Find out more about what fish are most contaminated with mercury in the Sierra Club's handy pocket-sized Mercury Survival Guide. To download the guide, take our "Test Your Mercury I.Q." quiz at sierraclub.org/mercury.

ADRIAN COTTER



The PLANET

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First You Trek, Then You Organize

■ BY VICKY HOOVER
ACTIVIST OUTING CHAIR

Wilderness has been at the heart of the Sierra Club mission since 1901, when we started our outings program to inspire people to fight to protect America's wild legacy. Sierra Club national activist outings go further than inspiration: they train participants to become wilderness advocates once they return home.

Join one of this year's activist outings and learn how to become a key part of the campaign to protect wildlands in Florida, Nevada, Utah, Idaho, and Vermont.

(Our January trip to Florida's Everglades has already taken place, but space is still available for the four trips this summer and fall.)

Endangered Wilderness of Nevada's Toiyabe Crest

JULY 6-12: Follow leader Melinda Goodwater on a 43-mile moderate backpack through an unprotected roadless area in the Toiyabe Range, one of the West's best-kept secrets. The trail weaves among

peaceful meadows at 10,000 feet, cascading trout streams, sheer cliffs and pinnacles, home to bighorn sheep and rare Lahontan trout. Price: \$395. [06101A]

Tushar Highlands to the Aquarius Plateau, Utah

AUGUST 27-SEPTEMBER 4: Leaders Vicky Hoover and Jim Catlin will guide you through central Utah's rarely-visited national forest plateaus for two short moderate backpacks separated by a rest day. These remote heights form the headwaters of Utah's spectacular canyonlands. Price: \$545. [06102A]

Big Sky and Winding Rivers in Idaho, Oregon, and Nevada's Owyhee

SEPTEMBER 8-16: Where these three states meet lies a hidden land of high desert and a broad, undulating volcanic plateau deeply cut by abrupt gorges, known to few people. You'll hike the Owyhee's dramatic ridges and rivers with leader Craig Deutsche while van-camping along its remote backcountry roads. Price \$725. [06103A]



COURTESY OF THE GREEN MOUNTAIN CLUB

Green Mountain Rockers: Three volunteers put their backs into trail maintenance on Vermont's Long Trail in the Green Mountain National Forest, where the Sierra Club is promoting a new Glastenbury Mountain Wilderness area. One of this year's national activist outings features a mix of backpacking and trail work on Glastenbury Mountain, the last wild peak in Vermont over 3,700 feet that has no mechanized access.

Autumn Wanderings in Wild Vermont

SEPTEMBER 10-17: Enjoy a mix of moderate backpacking and trail maintenance in the proposed Glastenbury Mountain Wilderness. Join leader Debbie Smith and Vermont activist John Harbison for two short "working" backpacks in the legendary Green Mountains, and enjoy Glastenbury's breathtaking Appalachian Trail summit view and early autumn colors. Price: \$595. [06104A]

For more information, contact Vicky Hoover at (415) 977-5527 or vicky.hoover@sierraclub.org. Partial scholarships may be available and some chapters may be able to help if you become an official chapter representative. To apply, call (415) 977-5522, or visit sierraclub.org/outings/national.

Danger Ahead for Endangered Species Act

[FROM P. 1]

recover species and allowing them—but not citizens—to supply information;

■ Let politicians tell professional wildlife scientists how they should do their research and what kind of information they can and can't use when making their conclusions.

Semcer says the bill is "all about funneling taxpayer subsidies to big developers and has nothing to do with protecting America's fish and wildlife heritage."

One of the more recent successes stemming from the Endangered Species Act is the Peninsular bighorn sheep, which lives in Southern California's Peninsular Mountains. By the time it was listed in 1998, the Peninsular bighorn population had dropped by 77 percent due to sprawl, overgrazing, and diseases from domestic livestock. In 2000, only 334 individual animals remained. The next year, the FWS designated 854,000 acres of critical habitat for the sheep, and, with the Bureau of Land Management, instituted management practices such as closing illegal roads and removing livestock. Meanwhile, local communities incorporated bighorn conservation into their planning decisions. Joan Taylor of the Tahquitz Group (San Geronio Chapter) has been working to protect the bighorn for 35 years and drafted the original petition to FWS. "Without a doubt," she says, "federal listing has helped." In 2003, the California Department of Fish and Game estimated that 500 Peninsular bighorn lived in the wild, marking a 49 percent increase in five years. Now, says Taylor, "the population has doubled." She's currently involved in protecting lambing areas crucial to bighorn recovery. "This is the kind of thing we're just going to have to keep working on."

Take Action Please sign the Sierra Club's petition to Senate leaders, telling them that you support protection for endangered species and urging them to oppose Pombo's bill. Go to sierraclub.org/planet/esa.

[FROM P. 1]

news, the company appealed yet again in the U.S. 9th Circuit Court to avoid paying punitive damages.

Sierra Club Chronicles is the latest project by Greenwald, whose 2005 film, *Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Price*, attracted hundreds of thousands of Americans to home screenings and continues to keep Wal-Mart's PR brain trust scrambling to do damage control. The new series captures the David vs. Goliath stories of ordinary Americans, such as small-town Mississippi residents going up against a corporate giant to improve lax safety practices at a local chemical plant (Episode 3), or New Mexico ranchers fighting back against mining operations that are poisoning their water and killing their cattle (Episode 4).

Sierra Club Chronicles debuted January 19 on Link TV, a public broadcast satellite channel whose mission is to "engage, educate, and activate viewers to become involved in the world." Hosted by Daryl Hannah, the 7-episode series airs the second Thursday of each month through July, at 8:30 PM Eastern and Pacific. Sierra Club members around the country are hosting house parties to get people talking about the issues explored in the series.

But you don't have to have satellite TV or watch on Thursday nights. Both Swinson, who hosted the Atlanta *Stitch & Bitch*, and the Bay Chapter Energy Committee ordered a free DVD from Sierra Club Productions,



ANNA SWINSON

Sittin' & Knittin': Young Atlanta activists at a January *Stitch & Bitch* hosted by Club organizer Anna Swinson. The knitters gathered for a pot luck dinner and a screening of *Sierra Club Chronicles*, a new television series.

which created the series with Greenwald's production company, Brave New Films.

"House parties are a great way to get to know people in your local environmental community," says Swinson. "We surveyed our members, and a lot of people said they like to knit while they talk about politics—that's where the idea of the *Stitch & Bitch* came from. Our first get-together was right before Christmas—folks knitted holiday scarves and talked about local environmental issues. It's a fun community-building learning experience."

Swinson invited inexperienced knitters to show up an hour early to learn the basics. The old hands arrived at 7:30, and after a potluck dinner, the whole crew got out their needles and yarn and settled in to watch "9/11 Forgotten Heroes."

"People were outraged that the government would lie to people about the environmental hazards at Ground Zero, and then vote to withdraw the aid they'd allocated to help first responders," says Georgia Chapter Vice Chair Julie Stuart, who attended the *Stitch & Bitch*. The sierraclub.org/tv Web address appears on-screen several times during each episode of *Chronicles*, and activists who go to the Web site will find a list of ways to take action. For example, viewers of "The Day the Water Died" are urged not to purchase ExxonMobil's gas or products or invest in ExxonMobil stock, and to write to the company's CEO explaining why. Sample letters

are provided, and e-mails can be sent directly from the Web site with a click of the mouse.

Greenwald says one of the things he hopes to convey in the series is that people can do something about environmental problems. "The common thread in all these films is, 'Here's a story, and with community involvement, something can be done,'" he told the *Planet* in January. "None of these are 'the-sky-is-falling' stories. These are problems with solutions."

To read the interview with Greenwald, see sierraclub.org/tv/greenwald. To learn more about *Sierra Club Chronicles*, order a free DVD, and get info on hosting a house party, go to sierraclub.org/tv. Link TV is broadcast on DIRECTV channel 375 and Dish Network channel 9410. *Sierra Club Chronicles* runs back-to-back with *The ACLU Freedom Files*, also produced by Greenwald's Brave New Films, in association with the American Civil Liberties Union.

THE PLANET

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The *Planet* is free to all Sierra Club leaders as well as to members who join the Club's activist network. You can receive the a printed copy of *Planet* in the mail or an e-mail version. Or both. Find out more at sierraclub.org/planet. (All our stories are posted there as well.)

For membership information:

Sierra Club National Headquarters, 85 Second St., 2nd Fl., San Francisco, CA 94105; Legislative Office, 408 C St. NE, Washington, DC 20002

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new and improved* The Sierra Club

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WHERE WE'RE GOING IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS AND HOW WE GET THERE

The damage done by global warming is now indisputable and spreading.

American consumers are paying record prices for home heating oil and gasoline. Volatile energy markets roil our economy. And even President Bush admits our nation's energy "addiction" has left us vulnerable and dependent on oil from dangerous regions of the world.

It is now obvious that nothing threatens the future of our planet, the security of our nation, or the health of our air, water, and wildlands more than the way we produce and consume energy. Continuing down the same path is no longer an option and America has hard, urgent choices to make about how to move past petroleum.

That's why the members of the Sierra Club have made the push for "Smart Energy Solutions" its highest priority over the next five to ten years. After an almost year-long deliberative process, grassroots members of Sierra Club chapters and groups and their delegates to the Sierra Summit in September 2005 voted to make three Conservation Initiatives the centerpieces of our national conservation agenda:

"Smart Energy Solutions" calls for a bold shift from reliance on fossil fuels to a safe, clean energy future built on efficiency, renewable fuels, and innovative technologies.

"America's Wild Legacy" focuses on protecting wild and special places, and preserving our wildlife and their habitats.

"Safe and Healthy Communities" fights pollution of our water and air and toxic threats to communities across America.

In addition to identifying what the substance of our work will be between 2006 and 2010, members of the Sierra Club also adopted strategies to help us accomplish our goal of building power for our cause and our organization. Those approaches include:

■ **Using the media to communicate sensible solutions.** We already know how to increase the energy efficiency of our cars and buildings and protect the quality of our drinking water; we need to create visibility and demand for those solutions.

■ **Broadening our base and building new coalitions.** The Club is committed to building grassroots power in our communities by strengthening alliances with hunters, anglers, the faith community, unions, and communities suffering from pollution and environmental injustice, and reaching out to family, neighbors, and co-workers who share our values but do not consider themselves "environmentalists."

■ **Connecting the dots, engaging and empowering people to take action together,** as neighbors, as voters.

Finally, the Sierra Club agreed that we have a huge opportunity to make progress in two key forums. Since the federal playing field is highly unfavorable, we are emphasizing work at the state and local level. This plays to the Sierra Club's strength: our members and activists already working at the grassroots in all 50 states and hundreds of cities and towns. Our strategy is to push states to take small and large steps that add up to big national changes, and to pressure federal policy makers to follow suit.

We will also be working in the political arena, educating and engaging citizens to increase the environmental vote.

Smart Energy Solutions

We already have the technology to tackle some of our most pressing problems, like global warming, air pollution, and our dependence on oil and coal. The Smart Energy Solutions Conservation Initiative aims to strengthen the political will to adopt them. Key components include:

■ **Pushing for "Clean Car" laws in more states.** Eleven U.S. states and Canada have enacted measures to require the auto industry to produce cleaner, more efficient cars and trucks than federal standards mandate. Adding more states will force the auto industry to make all cars sold in the U.S. and Canada meet these standards.

■ **Encouraging more states to adopt aggressive energy efficiency and renewable energy programs and goals**—21 states now require local utility companies to derive a specified percentage of energy from renewable sources. Our goal is to have more states and ultimately the entire country adopt a standard of at least 20 percent renewable energy by 2020 and to increase electric energy efficiency by at least 2 percent per year.

■ **Expanding the "Cool Cities" campaign.** The Sierra Club has dubbed the nearly 200 cities that signed the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement and pledged to reduce global-warming pollution as "cool cities." The campaign aims to help these cities fulfill their pledges through energy efficiency and renewable energy, and encourage more cities to get "cool."

■ **Stopping the coal rush** by opposing as many strategically important coal plants as possible and cleaning up existing plants. We also want to have states and the federal government cut mercury emissions from coal-fired power plants by 90 percent.

■ **Protecting the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, coastal waters, and other sensitive lands** from coal, oil, and gas development.

■ **Promoting the job-creation potential of clean energy** using our key partnerships with labor and consumer groups.

Following the lead of Sierra Summit delegates, the Club board approved three conservation initiatives for 2006-2010—Smart Energy Solutions, America's Wild Legacy, and Safe and Healthy Communities.

America's Wild Legacy

This initiative seeks to engage a broad spectrum of citizens around the value of public lands and special places and block threats to these lands from commercial logging, mining, abusive recreation, and overgrazing. Key components include:

■ **Protecting wildlife and their habitat** by pushing for strong enforcement and funding of the Endangered Species Act and resisting attempts to weaken it. We also want to increase protection for wildlife habitats on public lands by creating new wildlife refuges and other protected habitats.

■ **Protecting and defending state and federal wildlands,** including the more than 60 million acres of roadless national forests. We are also working for full protection of Bureau of Land Management Wilderness Study Areas and endangered wild private lands such as the Maine Woods.

■ **Investing in America's crown jewels,** and ensuring that our parks, monuments, and wildernesses have the necessary resources and management to protect them in perpetuity. The newest national monuments that President Clinton designated are at risk from logging, energy interests, and off-road vehicles. Even treasured national parks such as the Everglades and Yellowstone are threatened by exploitation.

Safe and Healthy Communities

The overall goal of this initiative is to foster vibrant, healthy communities with clean water and clean air, and that are free from toxic chemicals. The initial focus will be to work at the state and local level to protect sources of drinking water from pollution, and to address the largest sources of water pollution: sewage and storm water runoff. Key components include:

■ **Making sure that the Clean Water Act** and other laws are enforced to protect our sources of drinking water. We will focus our efforts on protecting headwaters streams and wetlands and eliminating harmful levels of nutrient pollution that threaten our water supplies.

■ **Working at the local level** to ensure that sewage treatment facilities are upgraded and maintained, and that storm water runoff and sewage overflows are controlled.

■ **Advocating local ordinances** that require utilities to inform the public about sewage overflows.

■ **Encouraging communities and developers** to increase their investments in "green" infrastructure to minimize storm water runoff.

■ **Providing citizens with a toolkit** to help them advocate for sound local water protection measures.

You can help us fulfill these visions. Contact your local chapter or go to sierraclub.org/vision to find out more.

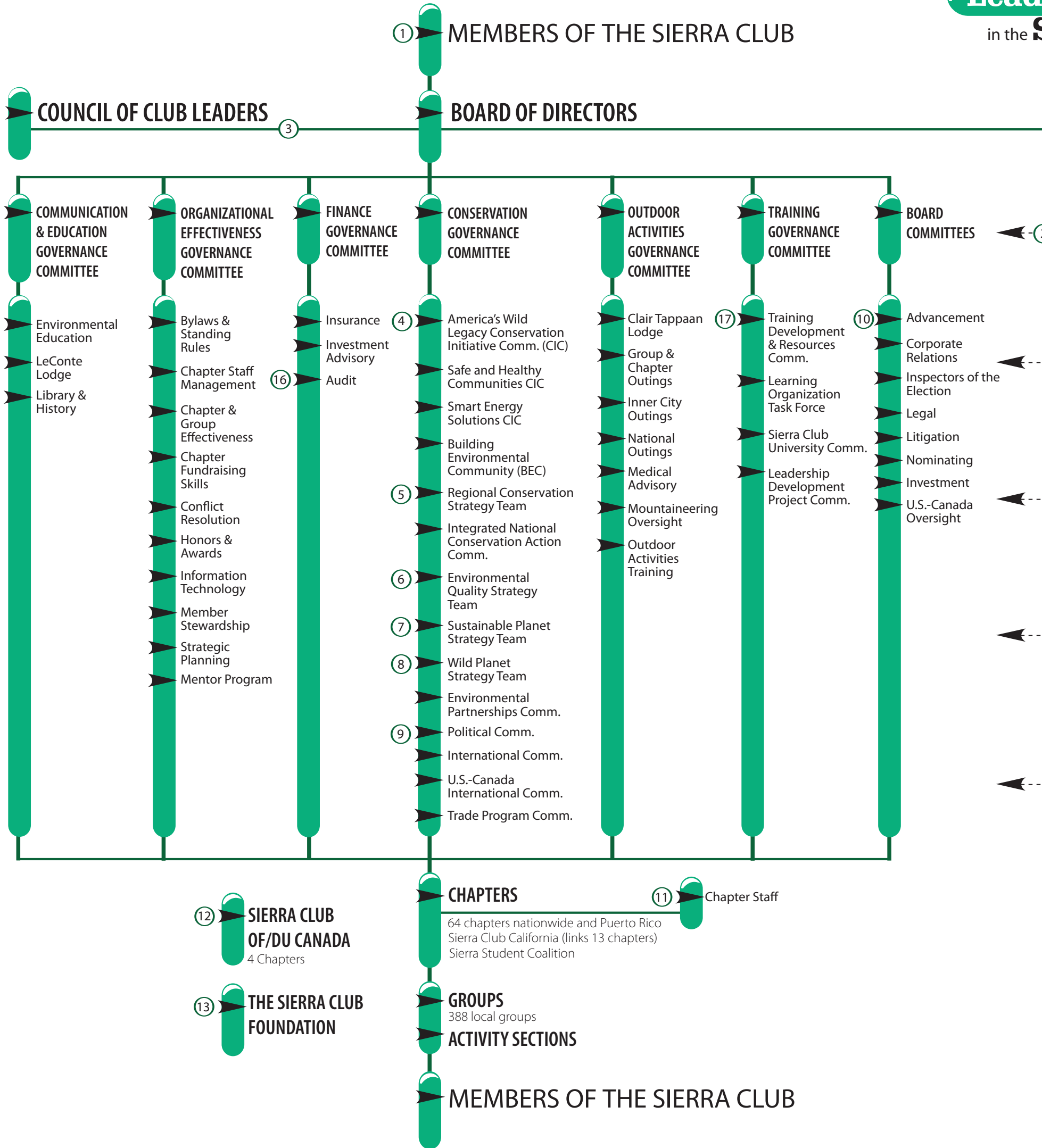


Smart Energy Solutions: We already have the know-how to move beyond our dependence on oil and coal. All we need now is the political will to make it happen.

America's Wild Legacy: We can protect wildlife habitat, state and federal wildlands, and America's crown jewels by engaging a broad spectrum of citizens.

Safe and Healthy Communities: By working with local governments and providing citizens with the tools they need, we can foster vibrant, healthy communities.

VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP

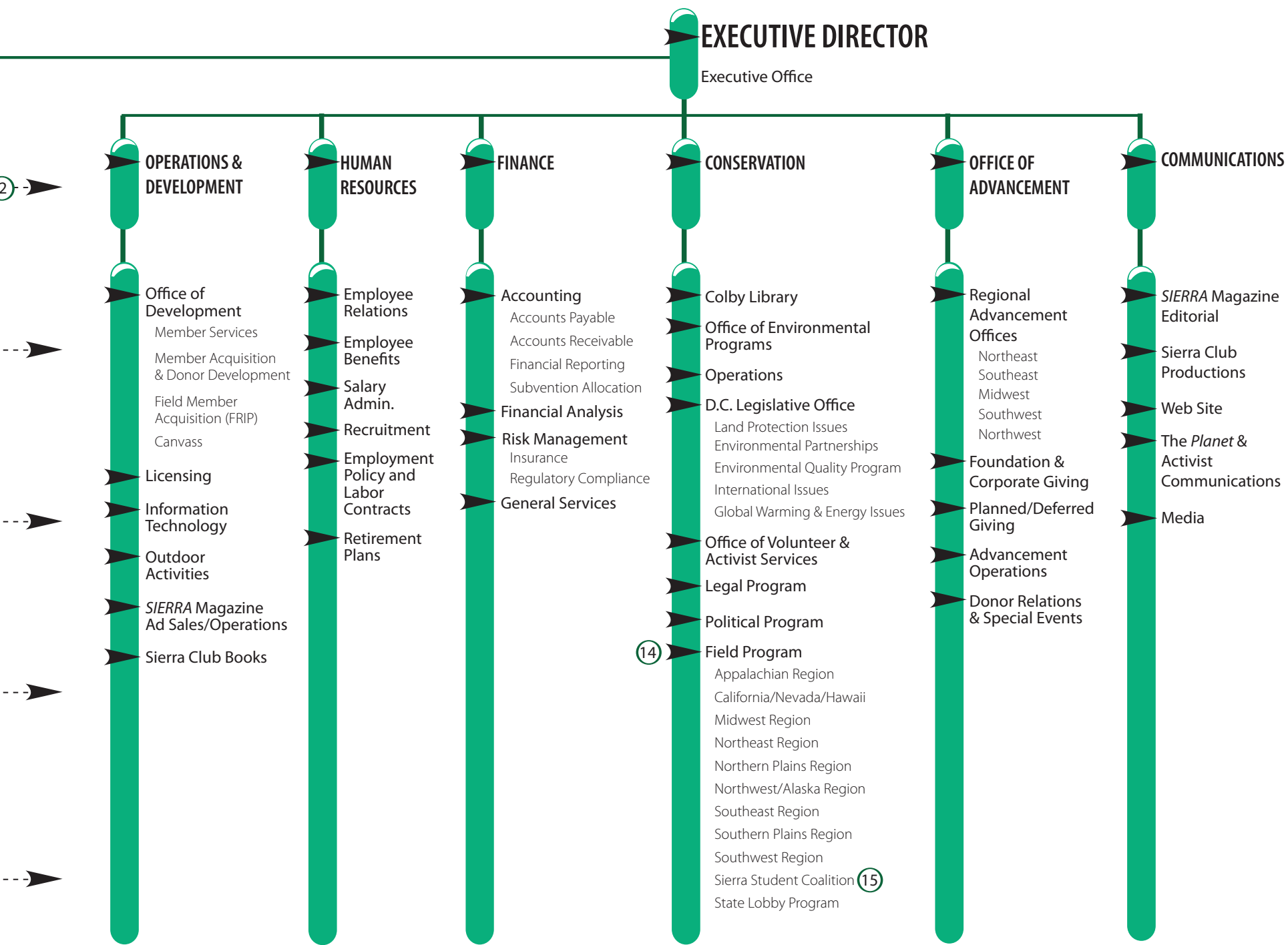


NOTE: You can find a regularly updated version of this chart at clubhouse.sierraclub.org/go/tools/leadershipstructure.pdf and a more comprehensive list of all volunteer committees at clubhouse.sierraclub.org/go/leaders.



Bureaucracy or Community? Sure, when you try to map out the Sierra Club and its myriad committees and task forces, it starts looking like a bureaucracy where we're all in our own boxes, but the heart of the Sierra Club is our volunteers and staff working together in our communities, as well as at the state and national level. Maybe that's why we call it a "club."

STAFF



1. Sierra Club members elect leaders locally for groups and chapters, and nationally for the Board of Directors.

2. Sierra Club staff and volunteers function as partners, with volunteers setting policy and priorities, and staff providing ongoing, full-time, and professional support to organize the Club's work and advance its mission in cooperation with activist volunteers. There are so many interdependencies we can't possibly portray them in the chart above. For example, the newsletter editor/Web editor training is coordinated by members of the Communications staff working with both the Communication and Education Governance Committee and the Training Governance Committee.

3. The Council of Club Leaders (CCL), made up of representatives from each chapter and the Sierra Student Coalition, serves as an advisory body to the Board of Directors on chapter and other issues.

4. The three Conservation Initiatives for 2006-2010 replace the "conservation campaigns" of previous years. Each Initiative has a committee (CIC) that oversees the development of projects under its umbrella. As these projects are approved, a working group to implement them will be formed.

5. The Regional Conservation Strategy Team is the coordinating body for conservation issues that transcend the boundaries of individual chapters and is responsible for directing the work of Ecoregion Task Forces within each region.

6. The Environmental Quality Strategy Team addresses pollution-related issues and coordinates the work of nine committees—Air, Challenge to Sprawl, Clean Water, Corporate Accountability, Environmental Justice, Gulf Coast Restoration, Toxics, Water, and Waste.

7. The Sustainable Planet Strategy Team addresses issues of human sustainability and numbers and oversees the work of six committees—Agriculture, Global Warming and Energy, Trade, Global Population and the Environment, Genetic Engineering, and Sustainable Consumption.

8. The Wild Planet Strategy Team focuses on wilderness and parks and oversees ten committees—Wildlife and Endangered Species, Marine Wildlife and Habitat, National Forest Protection and Restoration, Recreational Issues, Rivers, Forest Certification, Canyons of the Colorado, National Parks and Monuments, Grazing, and Wildlands.

9. The Finance and Election Reform Committee reports to the Political Committee.

10. The Advancement Committee works with both the Sierra Club Board of Directors and The Sierra Club Foundation Board of Trustees to raise individual donations to support the work of the Club.

11. Chapter staff are accountable within the overall Sierra Club, but are directly supervised by their chapter executive committee. Chapter staff and regional field staff often work closely together in their areas.

12. Sierra Club of/du Canada, a legally separate entity chartered under Canadian law, represents its own members in Canada and collaborates with the Sierra Club in the United States. The U.S.-Canada Oversight Committee ensures coordination and collaboration between the two organizations.

13. The Sierra Club Foundation, a legally separate organization, is a public charity whose mission is to provide financial support to the Sierra Club and other environmental organizations for tax-deductible work.

14. Field staff work with chapter activists on local issues and build grassroots support for national campaigns.

15. Sierra Student Coalition is an umbrella organization for students and student groups around the country that enables them to become more effectively involved in environmental activities under the auspices of the Sierra Club. The Coalition works in coordination with chapters and groups to ensure that student actions support local grassroots activism and are consistent with Club policies and procedures.

16. The Audit Committee reports to both the Sierra Club Board of Directors and the Finance Committee.

17. The Training Development and Resources Committee oversees three committees—e-Learning, Training for Trainers, and Training Materials Library.



Who You Gonna Call?

A Short, Incomplete Guide to Sierra Club Staff and Resources

This is not a comprehensive, everything-you-need-to-know guide, but a starting point—some of the people or positions most likely to work with volunteer activists. You can find a more complete and regularly updated version of this guide at clubhouse.sierraclub.org/hrd/staff_directory/staff_roles.asp

[ACTIVISM] To join the Action Network and receive occasional e-mail alerts, sign up at sierraclub.org/action.

[ACTIVIST MATERIALS] For buttons and placards, fact sheets, bulk orders of the *Planet*, and other activist materials for tabling and outreach, go to clubhouse.sierraclub.org/go/activist.asp.

[ADDRESS CHANGES] Contact Member Services at (415) 977-5653 or address.changes@sierraclub.org.

[BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND NATIONAL VOLUNTEER LEADERS] For questions about Board meetings, national elections and ballots, contact John Ridener at (415) 977-5675; john.ridener@sierraclub.org.

[CALENDAR SALES] To learn how you can raise money for your chapter or group by selling Sierra Club calendars, go to clubhouse.sierraclub.org/go/money/calendars or contact Jim Cohee at (415) 977-5718; jim.cohee@sierraclub.org.

[COMPLIANCE REVIEW] For questions about c3 and c4 funding issues for chapters, contact compliance.review@sierraclub.org or go to clubhouse.sierraclub.org/leaders/chapterfunding.

[CONSERVATION POLICIES] For national conservation policies, go to sierraclub.org/policy/conservation. For

chapter and group leaders with questions about local application of national policies, contact the field office in your area. Go to sierraclub.org/field.

[E-MAIL AND DISCUSSION LISTS] For questions about e-mail lists (using Listserv), go to sierraclub.org/lists/faq.asp. For information on how to start an e-mail list, go to clubhouse.sierraclub.org/infosys/listserv/creationportal.asp.

[E-MAIL NEWSLETTERS] For Currents, Insider, and other e-mail publications, go to sierraclub.org/email.

[EXCOM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES] For questions and materials related to chapter and group excoms, including by-laws, conflict resolution, conflict of interest issues, chapter and group elections, and Sierra Club policies and procedures, go to clubhouse.sierraclub.org/go/policies or contact Emily McFarland at (415) 977-5535; emily.mcfarland@sierraclub.org.

[FIELD OFFICES] For help on conservation campaigns or media outreach, contact the field office in your area. Go to sierraclub.org/field.

[FINANCE] For questions about finance, e-mail finance@sierraclub.org. For a staff list, go to clubhouse.sierraclub.org/finance/staff.htm.

[FOUNDATION] For questions about the Sierra Club Foundation, call (415) 995-1780; toll free (800) 216-2110; fax (415) 995-1791; or e-mail sierraclub.foundation@sierraclub.org. More info can be found at sierraclub.org/foundation.

[LEGAL] For inquiries on Sierra Club involvement in environmental litigation and other environmental legal activities, call (415) 977-5772 or go to sierraclub.org/environmentallaw.

[LISTS AND LABELS] For chapter and group leaders who need lists or labels of local members, contact Lillian Miller at (415) 977-5657 or Alex Bauer at (415) 977-5684, or labels@sierraclub.org. To report changes in group, chapter, regional, and national leadership positions, contact leader.updates@sierraclub.org. (But not address changes; for those, contact address.changes@sierraclub.org.)

[LOGO AND DESIGN GUIDELINES] To download Sierra Club logos or for guidance on the Club design guidelines, go to clubhouse.sierraclub.org/design or e-mail design.guidelines@sierraclub.org. Or contact Jim Bradbury at (415) 977-5726; jim.bradbury@sierraclub.org.

[MAILING PERMITS] For help obtaining mailing permits for chapter or group publications, contact Stephen Byington at (415) 977-5679; stephen.byington@sierraclub.org.

[MEDIA] For assistance on media outreach or responding to questions from the media, contact your local field office. Go to sierraclub.org/field.

[MEMORIAL GIFTS] To set up a memorial gift to the Sierra Club, contact Member Services at (415) 977-5653 or membership.services@sierraclub.org.

[MEMBER SERVICES] For membership/donation questions or *Sierra* magazine subscription changes, contact Member Services at (415) 977-5653 or membership.services@sierraclub.org.

No need to wiretap the Sierra Club to find out what we're doing.

We're happy to tell you.

Sign up for one (or more) of our e-mail newsletters at sierraclub.org/emailnewsletters



Sierra Club Insider

Sent to your inbox twice each month, the *Insider* features our take on the news of the day, photo galleries, places to visit, people you might want to meet, offers for members, and more. The *Insider* is your guide to exploring, enjoying, and protecting the planet.



Currents

Get the "environmental buzz" once a week—*Currents* includes two hot stories, some fun facts or interesting trends, a quote of note, and two "take action" features.



RAW

Sign up for *RAW* and once a week our team of Sierra Club correspondents will bring you edgy insights about environmental stories you won't want to believe.



The Planet

The Sierra Club's activist newsletter for members, the *Planet* is available via e-mail or the U.S. mail. Published six times a year, the *Planet* tells the Club's story through its volunteers and staff—people like you doing extraordinary work.

And don't forget to visit our Web site at sierraclub.org.

[MEMBERSHIP AND FUNDRAISING]

For chapter and group membership recruitment and fundraising help, and information about Sierra Club coffee, note cards, apparel and other merchandise, call (415) 977-5635 or e-mail frp@sierraclub.org. Also, go to clubhouse.sierraclub.org/membership.

[NEWSLETTER REIMBURSEMENT]

For information about reimbursement procedures for chapter and group newsletters and other chapter and group projects, go to clubhouse.sierraclub.org/leaders/oepl/newsletterguidelines. Or contact Carrie Hudiburgh at (415) 977-5580; e-mail: chapter.funding@sierraclub.org.

[NEWSLETTER RESOURCES]

For newsletter stories, photos, and camera-ready graphics, go to clubhouse.sierraclub.org/go/tools/newsletters. For help with newsletter design and editorial, contact John Barry at (415) 977-5584; john.barry@sierraclub.org.

[OUTINGS]

For support and materials for chapter and group outing leaders, call (415) 977-5528 or e-mail gco@sierraclub.org. For national outings, call (415) 977-5522 or e-mail national.outings@sierraclub.org. For inner city outings, call (415) 977-5628 or e-mail ico@sierraclub.org. For detailed information on national, local, or inner city outings, and a list of outings department staff, go to clubhouse.sierraclub.org/outings.

[PLANNED GIVING]

For information about including the Sierra Club as a beneficiary in wills, trusts, or retirement plans, or creating charitable gift annuities and trusts, contact Linda Coffee at (415) 977-5639; linda.coffee@sierraclub.org.

[THE PLANET]

To suggest story ideas for the *Planet*, contact Tom Valtin at (415) 977-5742; tom.valtin@sierraclub.org. To receive the *Planet* via paper or e-mail (or both), go to sierraclub.org/planet/subscription.asp. Or e-mail planet@sierraclub.org.

[POLITICAL PROGRAM]

For questions about voter education and the political program, call (202) 547-1141 or e-mail political.desk@sierraclub.org. For questions about candidate endorsements and contributions, contact Geoff Suttle at (202) 675-2393; geoff.suttle@sierraclub.org.

[RISK MANAGEMENT, INSURANCE, AND LIABILITY]

For general questions regarding insurance and risk management issues, contact the Office of Risk Management at (415) 977-5569; insurance@sierraclub.org. Or go to clubhouse.sierraclub.org/finance/risk_manual. For insurance coverage relating to an outing, call (415) 977-5528, or e-mail gco@sierraclub.org. For chapters or groups with questions about matters our legal counsel may need to address, contact Julia Reitan at (415) 977-5597; julia.reitan@sierraclub.org.

[TRAINING]

For information about the Sierra Club Training Academy, chapter chair and political trainings, and more, go to clubhouse.sierraclub.org/go/training or contact Emily McFarland at (415) 977-5535; emily.mcfarland@sierraclub.org.

[VOLUNTEER POLICIES]

For internal policies governing volunteer responsibilities, such as "Speaking for the Sierra Club," go to clubhouse.sierraclub.org/go/policies. Or contact Julia Reitan at (415) 977-5597; julia.reitan@sierraclub.org.

[WEB SUPPORT]

For questions about the Sierra Club's public Web site—sierraclub.org—or Clubhouse, our leader Web site—clubhouse.sierraclub.org—e-mail webmaster@sierraclub.org. For chapter and group webmasters seeking assistance, go to clubhouse.sierraclub.org/websupport or contact Jenny Coyle at (415) 977-5533; jenny.coyle@sierraclub.org.

Still don't know who to call? Contact Member Services at (415) 977-5653; membership.services@sierraclub.org.

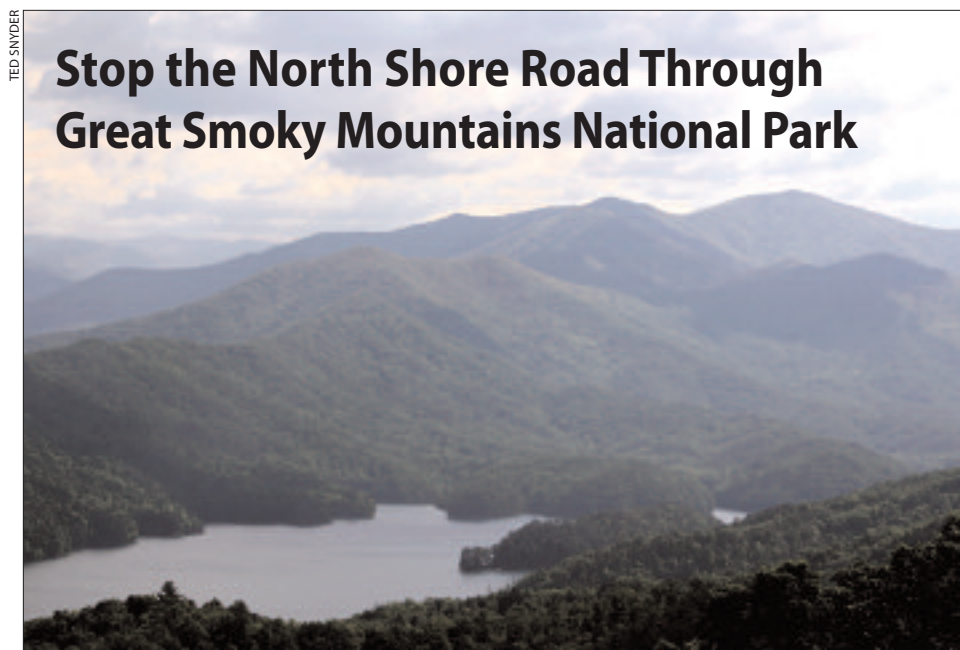
Introducing the Mentoring Program

Let's say you've been an active Sierra Club member for some time and you decide to up the ante and become chapter chair. But quickly you discover that for all your passion and commitment, leading effective meetings isn't your forte. Neither are the administrative tasks that come with the job. And what to do about those two conservation committee members who are forever quibbling?

That's where the Sierra Club's Mentoring Program comes in. Less than a year old, the program pairs veteran leaders with volunteers new to their leadership roles. The program's goals are twofold: to help get knowledge and expertise to new leaders; and to keep past leaders engaged. "Often a chapter chair will complete their term and then, for all intents and purposes, disappear," says program co-director and Delaware Chapter Chair Matt Urban. "The Mentoring Program is an effort to keep those people in the loop by helping new leaders to learn the ropes—it's about fostering relationships between leaders and sharing information in an informal way."

The program is an outgrowth of a recent study of national advocacy groups by Harvard public policy professor Marshall Ganz and the Sierra Club. That study, "National Purpose, Local Action," found that the Club could be more effective in its grassroots work if it placed more emphasis on training and nurturing volunteer leaders. Urban and fellow Delaware Chapter leader Debbie Heaton launched a pilot project in May 2005, pairing four veteran leaders with newcomers.

Find out more at clubhouse.sierraclub.org/leaders/mentoring.



Stop the North Shore Road Through Great Smoky Mountains National Park

BY TOM VALTIN

The Great Smoky Mountains National Park—the most-visited in the national park system—contains one of the largest undeveloped tracts of mountain land in the eastern United States. But a proposed highway, the North Shore Road, would cut through the heart of this rugged landscape, bisecting the Appalachian Trail, harming wildlife habitat, and threatening pure mountain streams with polluted runoff.

In January, the National Park Service released a draft environmental impact statement identifying five alternatives to resolve a 63-year-old road dispute. They range from completing the North Shore Road—to the tune of \$589 million in taxpayer money—to leaving the wilderness intact. The Park Service’s “environmentally preferred alternative” is to not build the road—a position the Sierra Club supports. But the agency declined to name an overall preferred alternative, saying it wanted more public input. Members of the public have until March 20 to comment on the five alternatives.

The *Charlotte Observer* calls the road proposal “an outrage...\$600 million, and maybe more, for a 34-mile-long road in a national park that almost no one wants and that makes no sense, financial, environmental, or otherwise.” So why ram a highway through the heart of this wilderness?

In 1943, the federal government built the Fontana Dam in Swain County, N.C., submerging a county road and displacing rural residents along the north shore of the new Fontana Lake. At the time, federal officials promised that a replacement road would be built. The park service began construction in the late 1960s, but

only seven miles were built before exorbitant costs and environmental damage halted construction in 1972.

Since then, community leaders and conservationists have advocated that a cash settlement of \$52 million be paid to Swain County—less than a tenth of what completing the “Road to Nowhere” would cost. The Park Service is on record as saying the road would serve no transportation need and would jeopardize its mission to protect the biological and cultural resources of the park. In recent years, the cash settlement option has gathered widespread support. But the debate was reopened in 2000 when Congressman Charles Taylor (R-N.C.) convinced Congress to allocate \$16 million in federal money to restart construction.

The road is opposed by North Carolina Governor Mike Easley, the Swain County Commissioners, and other civic leaders in western North Carolina, all of whom favor a cash settlement. The Park Service acknowledged that building the road would cause the permanent loss of aquatic and terrestrial habitat, introduce “roadway mortality and habitat fragmentation,” and do “substantial” damage to water quality and aquatic species.

“The Park Service has received thousands of public comments in support of the monetary settlement option,” says Sierra Club organizer Natalie Foster. “Why isn’t the agency willing to support the option that saves taxpayer dollars?”

Under federal rules, the Park Service had to get a waiver from Interior Secretary Gale Norton to avoid naming a preferred alternative. D.J. Gerken, an attorney for the Southern Environmental Law Center, is worried the agency will be forced to build the road despite its better judgment.

Take Action To send your comments to the National Park Service by March 20, go to sierraclub.org/greatsmokymountains.



Boondoggle Boulevard: The proposed North Shore Road would slice through the largest tract of unroaded mountain forest in the eastern United States, pictured at top behind Fontana Lake. Sierra Club members and other wilderness supporters, above, gather in 2005 for a Save Our Smokies hike-in at a tunnel entrance near where the current road ends.

Sierra Club Insider

Saving the Great Bear



On February 7, British Columbia announced that nearly 5 million acres of the Great Bear Rainforest will be kept off limits to logging. The agreement between the provincial government, Native Canadian nations, logging companies, and environmental groups came after more than a decade of talks, international boycott campaigns against Great Bear wood products, and sit-ins by Native Canadians and environmentalists, who chained themselves to logging equipment.

According to the *New York Times*, “A deluge of postcards and demonstrations by groups like the Sierra Club and Greenpeace at shareholders meetings and retail outlets pressed American, Japanese, and European hardware chains to shun products from the area.” The Great Bear Rainforest supports one of the highest concentrations of grizzly bears in North America, as well as habitat for the rare white “spirit bear,” coastal wolves, and mountain goats.

Turning Down the Heat



Tackling global warming and our overheating atmosphere isn’t a morning’s work, but trying to get a mall to turn down the thermostat is a different story. For Frank Zaski, a retired Chrysler manager from Franklin, Michigan, sometimes all it takes is talking to the store manager. Zaski, a Sierra Club member, carries a pair of thermometers to local malls in the

Detroit area, records temperatures, and tries to get mall managers to lower the heat a few degrees. After all, most people are walking around in winter coats.

He’s talking with a facilities manager at a mall in Troy, who’s considering lowering the thermostat, but in many stores and malls, the temperature is controlled from corporate headquarters.

A Bold Plan to Limit Mercury Pollution in Illinois



In January, Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich called for new state rules cutting mercury pollution from coal plants by 90 percent in the next three years. If the new rule is adopted, Illinois will join a growing list of states that limit mercury pollution far more stringently than would the Bush administration’s so-called “Clear Skies” plan.

The utility industry is expected to fight these proposed rules, but the Sierra Club’s Bruce Nilles says local activists will counter that by highlighting the cost-effectiveness of pollution controls—it would add only pennies a month to utility bills—and educating residents about the link between mercury and health. The Club sponsored nine mercury hair testing events in Illinois last year and is planning more this year to help build support for the governor’s proposal.

Wisconsin Utility To Switch from Coal to Wind



Responding to grassroots pressure and an economic reality check, a Wisconsin utility announced in January that it would stop burning coal within six years at its aging downtown Madison coal plant and generate more electricity from wind power. Madison Gas and Electric says it will begin construction on a wind farm near Fond du Lac this year.

The Club’s Midwest Clean Energy Campaign, coordinated by Jennifer Feyerherm, relied on classic organizing tactics like building alliances with community groups, knocking on doors in surrounding neighborhoods, making hundreds of phone calls, rallying citizens to public hearings, and getting the story on the evening news. One hearing had the highest attendance the local environment commission had ever witnessed. The Madison coal plant is the dirtiest in the state.

New Jersey Requires Employers to Cover Contraceptives



It took eight years of lobbying and grassroots pressure by the New Jersey Chapter and its allies, but in December, during its lame duck session, the New Jersey legislature passed a measure requiring employers to provide prescription drug coverage for contraceptives. New Jersey, the nation’s most densely populated state, becomes the 24th state to pass such a law.

Republican legislator Charlotte Vandervalk, one of the bill’s champions, argued that the long-term costs to women faced with a pregnancy, miscarriage, or abortion far outweighed any perceived upfront costs in insurance. For more, see sierraclub.org/planet/newjersey.

Victory to Preserve California Farmland

Two years ago, the Sierra Club filed a lawsuit against the city of Stockton, California, claiming it had illegally annexed farmland on which developers were planning to build 7,000 homes. In January, the developers agreed to settle the suit for \$17.5 million, which will be used to preserve farmland elsewhere. The deal also requires the city to vote within six months on whether to charge developers fees for farmland preservation.

Dale Stocking, chair of the Club’s Mother Lode Chapter, says he will “ride herd on the city” to adopt the development fees. Last October, partly due to Club pressure, the nearby cities of Manteca, Tracy, and Lathrop agreed to charge developers \$2,000 an acre to preserve farmland in California’s Central Valley.

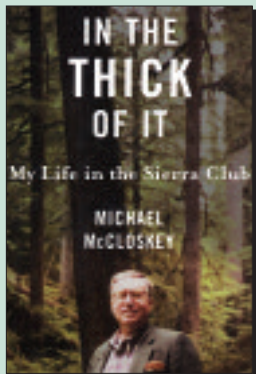
—JOHN BYRNE BARRY AND TOM VALTIN



NOTES FROM ALL OVER

A Warrior Looks Back, Water Sentinels Look Ahead

In the Thick of It: “In the 1950s, the conservation movement at the national level was described by one observer as ‘small, divided and frequently uncertain.’” So begins *In the Thick of It: My Life in the Sierra Club*, by former Sierra Club Executive Director Mike McCloskey.



Between the time McCloskey drew his first Club paycheck in 1960 and his retirement in 1999, the environmental movement came of age as a national force. “Of all the social movements that emerged in the latter half of the 20th century in the United States,” he writes, “the environmental movement is perhaps the most durable and well rooted.”

As the Club’s first field organizer in the early 1960s, McCloskey helped pave the way for the Wilderness Act of 1964. In 1966 he became the Club’s first conservation director, a platform he used to spur the designation of new national parks and wilderness areas, including North Cascades and Redwood National Parks. From 1969-85 and again in 1986-87 he served as executive director, helping launch the first Earth Day in 1970 and successfully lobbying for the enactment of more than one hundred environmental laws. As Club chairman in the 1990s he fought efforts to undercut EPA regulations and trade agreements that curtailed environmental programs.

When McCloskey joined the Club staff, the organization was a California-oriented outdoor club with

16,000 members and 25 employees. By the time he retired, membership exceeded 700,000, supported by 300 staffers from coast to coast. *In the Thick of It* documents the great environmental battles that were waged during McCloskey’s 40 years as an environmental activist, and reveals the inner workings and politics of the Sierra Club during that time, including the ouster of his mentor, the charismatic but controversial David Brower. Available at www.islandpress.org, or at better bookstores near you.

Finding Common Ground: Northern Kentucky Water Sentinel Tim Guilfoile reports that the February 3-4 Clean Water Summit for Hunters & Anglers at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Louisville was “a roaring success.” More than 160 conservationists, sportsmen, scientists from state and national agencies, and members of the public attended, including six high schoolers from Teen Environmentalists in Lexington. The Sierra Club garnered 17 co-sponsors for the event, including not only likely suspects such as the National Wildlife Federation and Trout Unlimited, but also the League of Kentucky Sportsmen, the Northern Kentucky Fly Fishers, and the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, whose motto is “Guaranteeing You a Place to Hunt and Fish.”

“It’s a diverse group and we’re going to disagree on some things, but there’s strength in diversity,” says Guilfoile. “I couldn’t be more pleased.” Larry Drake, a National Rifle Association member and president of the Derby City Fly Fishers, told the *Louisville Courier-Journal*: “The Sierra Club and I don’t get along on



some things, but I think we will understand each other better by being here. I was talking to one of the people from the Sierra Club, and she said if we lined up our views side by side, there would be more things we agree on than things we don’t agree on. She’s right.”

The keynote address was delivered by Chad Pregracke, founder of Living Lands & Waters. Longtime Cumberland Chapter leader Hank Graddy moderated, and among the presenters was former Sierra Club Midwest staffer Eric Uram, founder of Mercury Free Wisconsin. Workshops included sessions on non-point source pollution, local and state action to reduce mercury pollution, and what sporting clubs can do to improve fish and wildlife habitat. “We need to bring more hunters and fishermen into the fold,” Chickasaw Group (Tennessee) conservation chair Jim Baker told the *Courier-Journal*. “Sportsmen are out there. They see what’s going on. The more eyes you have in the field, the better. There’s a lot of overlap of interests between traditional sporting groups and the non-consumptive environmental crowd.”

Board Election Ahead—Don’t Forget to Vote:

The annual election for the Sierra Club’s Board of Directors is now underway. In March, all members will receive a national Sierra Club ballot in the mail, including information on the candidates. Ballots must be cast by noon EDT on Monday, April 24, 2006. Additional information can be found at the Club’s election Web site: sierraclub.org/bod/2006election.

—TOM VALTIN

who we are

Richard Sloan—Fresno, California
Tehipite Chapter Outings Chair

Fresno native Richard Sloan has been drawn to the San Joaquin River for as long as he can remember. “As a child I’d ride my bike there after school, through fig orchards that have long since become suburbia. When I was in 6th grade we built a tree house by the river. It was on someone else’s land, but it didn’t seem to bother anybody.”

Fast-forward to January 2006. Sloan is attending a ceremony celebrating the deeding of 230 riverfront acres



to the San Joaquin River Conservancy for a hiking trail and wildlife corridor. It’s the same land on which he built his childhood tree house. On meeting the man deeding the land, Jim Moan, he mentions the tree house. “I always wondered who built that—my children had a great time playing in it!” Moen exclaims.

In 2003 Sloan started RiverTree, a charitable organization dedicated to cleaning up the San Joaquin. Under his direction, over the past six years Sierra Club members, RiverTree volunteers, and others have removed 5,800 tires, ten large dumpster loads of trash—seven in 2005 alone—and countless invasive weeds from the river. “Full restoration is still a distant goal,” Sloan says, “but this is a good start.”

Sloan says his environmental awareness was spurred while attending junior high school in Khartoum, Sudan, where he witnessed problems with water pollution and degraded wildlife habitat. Following a 27-year military career, he went to work for the San Joaquin River Parkway Trust, around which time he became active in the Sierra Club. He is currently helping restart the chapter’s Inner City Outings Program, and he regularly takes kids hiking or canoeing and kayaking on the San Joaquin.

Linda Ernst—Grand Rapids, Michigan
Mackinac Chapter community activist

A former research scientist in the field of immunology, Linda Ernst says the trigger for her environmental activism was reading scientific journals outside her field. “I became more and more alarmed by reports of environmental degradation, and the mounting evidence that human activity was the cause.”



Retiring after 20 years as a scientist to raise her son, Ernst shifted her focus to working with children. Five years ago she started a canvas-shopping-bag program and an environmental club at her son’s school. Enrolling the club in Jane Goodall’s Roots and Shoots program to engage children in community service, “with beginner’s luck” club members were able to attend a meeting in Grand Rapids where Goodall spoke. At the meeting they described the canvas-bag project to Goodall (who loved it) and presented her with an autographed bag. “It was a major thrill for the kids,” Ernst says.

Last year, she created “Dr. Linda’s Study Garden,” an outdoor classroom at the school where kids plant and tend Michigan native plants. “It brings the natural world to students in ways textbook learning can’t,” she says. “We won a grant for 200 bulbs which were planted in October, so spring should be quite spectacular.”

A long-distance runner who also tutors low-income students in reading, Ernst recharges her batteries at a family cottage on Lake Michigan. “The sand dunes, shoreline, storm systems, beach walks, birds in flight, sunsets over the Big Lake—they’re all so inspirational to me.”

Ernst says a highlight of 2005 was attending the Sierra Summit in San Francisco. “The Club has a long history that I wanted to be connected to. Being there totally reinforced my commitment to conservation.”

Rod Hunter—East Bend, North Carolina
North Carolina Chapter Chair

If Rod Hunter is hard to get a hold of, it’s because he’s out taking photographs of tundra swans wintering on Lake Mattamuskeet. Or, as chapter chair, he’s visiting his state’s 13 groups to see how the chapter can help them, and vice versa. Or he’s working on the Leadership Development Program, or mentoring other activists, or advising the Organizational Effectiveness Committee, or...



Well, you get the picture. Hunter has been a member of the Sierra Club on and off for more than 20 years. During that time, he served as president and chairman of a mid-size company, published a magazine, became a pro photographer at age 51, retired, and never once set foot in a Club meeting. “Never got involved,” he says, “felt life was OK the way it was.”

Five years ago, after hiking for 10 days on a Club outing to the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge with people deeply critical of the Bush administration’s environmental policies, he decided to run for excom of the North Carolina Chapter (despite the fact no one in the chapter knew who he was). But he won—by one vote. “The first time I went to a Sierra Club meeting,” he says, “I went as a state excom member.”

He brought experience as an administrator and businessman to the chapter and after a year, was voted chapter chair. “The quality of my life has improved tremendously since I became an activist,” he says. “All of us have this inner urge, a compelling need, to know that we are making a little difference in the world.”

Hunter is also involved in the local arts council and the Amani Children’s Foundation, for which he traveled to Kenya to photograph some of the millions of African children orphaned by AIDS.

—TOM VALTIN AND TIMOTHY LESLE