

# The ARKANSAS Sierran

Summer 2014



SIERRA  
CLUB  
FOUNDED 1892

## EPA ISSUES 1ST-EVER CARBON DIOXIDE LIMITS FOR POWER PLANTS

### Arkansas, Other States Charged With Drafting Compliance Plan

On June 2nd, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) made history by issuing draft regulations aimed at reducing carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions from power plants nationally by 30%. Sierra Club and other groups have been pushing to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> for years as part of our efforts to reduce the impacts of climate disruption.

Carbon pollution is the main contributor to climate disruption, making extreme weather worse—including more severe floods, widespread wildfires and record drought. It is also linked to life-threatening air pollution such as the smog that can trigger asthma attacks.

Yet even though carbon pollution threatens our health, our economy, and our children's future, we currently have no national protections on how much carbon can be released into our air by dirty power plants.

The EPA's carbon pollution protections would limit the amount of carbon pollution that power plants can dump into our air. These safeguards would require energy companies to reduce their carbon pollution using technological innovation or to transition to cleaner sources of energy.

Coal and gas-fired power plants emit more than 2.3 billion metric tons per year of carbon pollution, approximately 40% of total U.S. energy-related carbon pollution. Right here in Arkansas, power plants pumped nearly 41 million metric tons of carbon pollution into our air in 2013 alone. Eighty-five percent of that (36 million metric tons) came from just five dirty coal-fired power plants. Accordingly, EPA's goal for Arkansas is a 44% reduction by 2030—we have some significant opportunities to do good work here in the Natural State.

By establishing strong carbon pollution protections, the EPA can clean up and modernize the way we power our country. These protections will ensure that our kids, our communities and America's workforce are healthier, while also creating much-needed jobs and fighting climate disruption.

To its credit, the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality has already convened a working group of stakeholders who will work to fashion a plan for Arkansas to meet its carbon pollution reduction goals. Your Arkansas Sierra Club is participating in this stakeholder group and will push for smart and realistic reductions through a mix of phasing out dirty coal-fired

power plants, ramping up our clean energy usage, and implementing an aggressive energy efficiency program for Arkansas utilities.

Over the next year, EPA's draft carbon rule will be open for public hearing and comments on its way to becoming law. Stay tuned for news on how to make your voice heard in these arenas!

### PAPERLESS OPTION FOR NEWSLETTER

In an effort to save trees and money, your Arkansas Sierra Club newsletter will soon be available in an electronic format. If you'd like to receive your newsletter electronically rather than via US Mail, please email your address to [glen.hooks@sierraclub.org](mailto:glen.hooks@sierraclub.org), with "ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER" in the subject line.



# CACHE RIVER RESTORATION PROJECT NEARING COMPLETION

## It's the Second Major Project to Result from Settlement of the Turk Litigation

In December 2011, Sierra Club and Audubon Arkansas ended a four-year campaign against SWEPCO's proposed John W. Turk, Jr. coal-fired power plant in southwest Arkansas. The parties settled all pending litigation—the plant moved forward, but the settlement contained many great environmental benefits for Arkansas. Those benefits included SWEPCO committing to more than 400 megawatts of wind power, shutting down an old and dirty Texas coal plant that was polluting Arkansas, sending \$2M to the Arkansas Community Foundation for grants to improve renewable energy and energy efficiency advocacy in the SWEPCO service territory, and sending \$8M to The Nature Conservancy to purchase land tracts aimed at minimizing the damage done by the Turk plant. Although we certainly



worked tirelessly to stop the Turk plant, the settlement ended up providing significant positives for our state.

Last April, the first TNC tract was dedicated—369 acres of formerly private land in Clark County added to the Terre Noire Reserve and now opened to the public for enjoy-

ment. In April of this year, TNC took several Sierra Club and Audubon leaders on a tour of the second site, which is a restoration of the lower Cache River (channelized by the Army Corps of Engineers for flood control) to its normal and natural meander.

TNC tells the story well:

*The story of conservation in the lower Cache River and surrounding Big Woods of eastern Arkansas is one of ecological setbacks, protection victories and painstaking restoration. Yet the final chapter has yet to be written.*

*In 1970, with support from local landowners, the Army Corps of Engineers slated 232 miles of the meandering lower Cache River and Bayou DeView for channelization to control flooding on adjacent fields. But a group of concerned sportsmen and conservationists led by Dr. Rex Hancock joined conservation agencies and organizations to launch a campaign that eventually brought a halt to ditching of nearly all of the lower Cache. During the battle, seven miles of the river were channelized.*

*Soon afterwards, a partnership of agencies, conservation groups, businesses and landowners began working together to conserve the remaining forests in the lower Cache basin. Major victories included securing federal funding that created the Cache River National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) and later working to add 41,000 acres of Potlatch Corporation lands to the White River NWR.*

*Through the Wetlands Reserve Program, tens of thousands of bottomland acres were reforested. All told, the partnership has reforested more than 50,000 acres and protected more than 130,000 acres in the Big Woods.*

*While the conservation strides have been significant, the work on the channel-*

*ized stretch of the lower Cache remains incomplete. Now we have an opportunity to begin restoring natural meanders of the channelized river, helping to fulfill the vision of those who originally worked to protect the river. When complete, this stretch of the Cache will once again enjoy thriving fish populations and flourishing habitat that supports waterfowl and hundreds of other resident and migratory bird species.*



*With channelization, the Cache basin's productive aquatic habitats and richly diverse bottomland forests have declined. This harms millions of wintering waterfowl that flock to this area, black bears that roam freely in surrounding woods, and prized sport fish that define the Cache's waters.*

*Returning the lower Cache to its natural meandering condition will slow the river's velocity and reduce the delivery of sediment that damages not only the Cache but also downstream rivers and habitats. Benefits of restoration include:*

- Improved habitat for sight-feeding sport fish, mussels and other aquatic species;
- Improved growing conditions for bottomland forests and wetlands;
- Increased wetness in the floodplain during the summer months to improve waterfowl habitat; and
- Boosted tourism opportunities for Delta communities and revitalization of the land for hunters, anglers and birds.



*More than that, restoring the Cache pays homage to and helps sustain the deeply rooted Delta river culture so cherished throughout Arkansas. We anticipate that this restoration project will also inspire people across Arkansas and serve as a model for river restoration nationwide.*

Your Arkansas Sierra Club is proud to be a part of the story of reclaiming the Cache, and is especially proud to partner with our friends at The Nature Conservancy and Audubon Arkansas. Many thanks to TNC Arkansas Director Scott Simon and his great team helping to bring back an important Arkansas treasure.

## OUTINGS REPORT: *Central Arkansas Group*

The Central Arkansas Group participated in three separate Earth Day events in Little Rock—at UALR, Heifer International Headquarters and in the River Market area. A big shout out to Rel Corbin who organized and staffed all of these events. We also had two outings: The loop trail at Woolly Hollow State Park featured an array of wildflowers, and at Petit jean State Park, we were treated to a nature walk guided by park interpreter B. T. Jones. The hikes were first rate, and you are welcome to join us for the next outings in the fall. Please help us plan when & where you would like to have future events.

Our Central Arkansas Group picnic was inadvertently scheduled on Mother's Day, but in spite of this planning faux pas, we had fifteen folks gathered for tacos at Allsop Park. Thanks to Carolyn Shearman and Rel for the fabulous taco fixins! Remember our upcoming fall picnic will be Sunday, October 26th.

## BUILDING A STRONGER SIERRA CLUB: IT STARTS WITH US



**Glen Hooks,**  
**AR Sierra Club**  
**Chapter Director**

One of the great things about the Sierra Club is our long, solid history of being a volunteer-driven organization. From the time that John Muir founded Sierra Club in 1892 to the present day, volunteers make up the elected leadership across the country and make decisions about our environmental campaigns. Staff takes our direction from volunteers—I'm proud to be the director of the Arkansas Sierra Club, and to work directly for our thousands of members to make Arkansas a better place.

Here in Arkansas, your Sierra Club chapter has been officially chartered since the early 1980s. Volunteer members like you have led our efforts to protect our air, our water, our forests, and our special places. Our members have terrific stories to tell. Maybe you helped to protect the Buffalo River and

get it designated as our country's first national river. Or you were part of the group standing up against clear-cutting our forests. You may have attended rallies to stop the pollution of Lake Maumelle, or testified in favor of clean energy legislation at the Capitol. Did you stand up against dirty coal pollution? I might have seen you helping community members in Mayflower stand up against ExxonMobil after last year's tar sands oil spill. Over the years, thousands of Arkansas Sierra Club members have found countless ways to contribute to the cause and help make us the state's most active environmental protection organization.

In 2014, your Arkansas Sierra Club continues to fight the good fight. For example, we are supporting efforts to double the state's energy efficiency goals for utilities—ensuring that Arkansans both save energy and money while also cutting down on pollution. We are fighting back against pollution from dirty coal-fired power plants in our region that

contribute to the degradation of our environment and our health. Finally, we are already beginning to prepare for the upcoming legislative session in an effort to promote solid environmental legislation and push back against bills that hurt The Natural State.

I invite you to be part of the Arkansas Sierra Club's legacy of environmental leadership and activism. We have volunteer activities that can fit your schedule—everything from testifying before government bodies, to writing letters to the editor, to calling your elected officials, to leading hikes and float trips, to tabling for Sierra Club at festivals. We need you. Arkansas needs you. Contact your local Sierra Club group leader, or contact me at [glen.hooks@sierraclub.org](mailto:glen.hooks@sierraclub.org) or 501-301-8280.

Thank you for your membership, and thank you for all that you do to protect Arkansas. Let's get to work.



# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## June

- 6/5 - "First Thursday" in Hillcrest (Little Rock)
- 6/14 - Helena "2nd Saturday" (Helena)
- 6/17 - Central AR Group meeting, 6:30 p.m., Oyster Bar (Little Rock)
- 6/20 - "3rd Friday" in Downtown Rogers (Rogers)
- 6/27-6/28 - Buffalo River Elk Festival (Jasper)
- 6/28 - Archey Fork Summer Festival (Clinton)

## July

- 7/3 - "First Thursday" in Hillcrest (Little Rock)
- 7/12 - Helena "2nd Saturday" (Helena)
- 7/15 - Central AR Group meeting, 6:30 p.m., Oyster Bar (Little Rock)
- 7/18 - "3rd Friday" in Downtown Rogers (Rogers)
- 7/24 - Ozark Headwaters Group monthly meeting
- 7/25-7/26 - Johnson County Peach Festival (Clarksville)

## August

- 8/7 - "First Thursday" in Hillcrest (Little Rock)
- 8/7-8/9 - Watermelon Festival (Cave City)
- 8/8-8/10 - Hope Watermelon Festival (Hope)
- 8/9 - Helena "2nd Saturday" (Helena)
- 8/19 - NO Central AR Group meeting in August
- 8/22-8/23 - Frisco Festival (Rogers)

## September

- 9/4 - "First Thursday" in Hillcrest (Little Rock)
- 9/6 - Arkansas vs. Nicholls State, 3. p.m. (Fayetteville)
- 9/13 - Helena "2nd Saturday" (Helena)
- 9/13 - EcoFest (Conway)
- 9/16 - Central AR Group meeting, 6:30 p.m., Oyster Bar (Little Rock)
- 9/19 - "3rd Friday" in Downtown Rogers (Rogers)
- 9/20 - Arkansas vs. Northern Illinois (Fayetteville)
- 9/27 - Autumn on the Square (Marianna)

## October

- 10/2 - "First Thursday" in Hillcrest (Little Rock)
- 10/4 - Hillcrest Harvestfest (Little Rock)
- 10/4 - Brinkley Fall Fest (Brinkley)
- 10/4 - Sierra Club Canoe Clean-Up of Little Maumelle River, Time TBA
- 10/4-10/5 - El Dorado MusicFest (El Dorado)
- 10/11 - Helena "2nd Saturday" (Helena)
- 10/11 - Arkansas vs. Alabama (Fayetteville)
- 10/12 - Audubon Center Guided tour and BYO picnic, 1pm, (Little Rock)
- 10/17 - "3rd Friday" in Downtown Rogers (Rogers)
- 10/18 - Arkansas vs. Georgia (Little Rock)
- 10/21 - Central AR Group meeting, 6:30 p.m., Oyster Bar (Little Rock)
- 10/25 - Arkansas vs. UAB (Fayetteville)
- 10/26 - Central AR Group picnic at Allsop Park, 4-8 p.m. (Little Rock)

## November

- 11/15 - Arkansas vs. LSU (Fayetteville)
- 11/22 - Arkansas vs. Ole Miss (Fayetteville)
- 11/16 - Central AR Group hike at Cadron Settlement Park, 2 p.m. (Conway)
- 11/28 - Central AR Group "Black Friday" hike at Petit Jean State Park, Time TBA (Morrilton)



**PLEASE  
RECYCLE  
THIS NEWSLETTER!**



## THE TRICK OF QUIET



**George Wise, Chair  
Sierra Club, Central  
Arkansas Group**

In a letter to Waldo Frank in the 1920s, Sherwood Anderson said:

*Is it not likely that when the country was new and men were often alone in the fields and the forest they got a sense of bigness outside themselves that has now in some way been lost...Mystery whispered in the grass, played in the*

*deep semi-religious influence that was formerly at work among our people. The flavor of it hangs over the best work of Mark Twain...I can remember old fellows in my home town speaking feelingly of an evening spent on the big empty plains. It had taken the shrillness out of them. They had learned the trick of quiet.*

We live in a world where we are constantly stimulated by fossil fuel burning vehicles, televisions, smart phones, tablet computers, radios playing in the background and other noises of progress. How do we learn the trick of quiet in a noisy world? We do it by remembering that although we can make

It is no longer enough to set aside and preserve wilderness areas. Preserving wilderness requires reversing climate disruption. Here is part of our to do list to accomplish this goal:

- Help us continue our Beyond Coal campaign.
- Put the brakes on fracking and take fracking out of trade agreements
- President Obama will soon make his final decision on the fate of KXL. We have to act NOW to ensure he keeps his climate promise and rejects KXL once and for all!
- Fight logging in wilderness areas and in roadless national forests.
- \* Support alternative energy sources and fight taxes on hybrid cars and solar energy.
- Keep our water clean

**“IN WILDERNESS IS THE  
PRESERVATION OF THE WORLD.”  
- HENRY DAVID THOREAU**

*branches of trees overhead, was caught up and blown across the American line in clouds of dust at evening on the prairies.... I am old enough to remember tales that strengthen my belief in a*

a TV and a computer and a car, we can't make wilderness. We can't manufacture wild places. We preserve wilderness to preserve the world. We preserve wilderness to ensure our survival.

There are many more pressing issues and ways to fight climate disruption and preserve wilderness. Pick an issue. Get involved. Future generations deserve the chance to learn the trick of quiet. Let's preserve wilderness before the quiet is gone.

## SUPPORT YOUR ARKANSAS SIERRA CLUB!

The Arkansas Sierra Club depends on your generosity and financial support to function. Simply put, our membership keeps us going—both in terms of activism and in terms of our budget.

As we work to protect The Natural State, promote cleaner energy sources, double our state's energy efficiency goals, and prepare for significant environmental challenges in 2015, your contribution is critical.

The polluters are well-funded, strategic, and aggressive. Stopping their agenda and promoting one that helps Arkansas is our goal—will you help with a generous financial contribution today?

Arkansas Sierra Club  
1308 West 2nd Street  
Little Rock, AR 72201

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT —  
PLEASE SEND IN YOUR DONATION TODAY!**



# EFFICIENCY IS THE ANSWER

The answer to the question in the real estate business about property is always “location location location.” Similarly, the answer to the energy utilization question is always “efficiency, efficiency, efficiency.”



**Dr. Bob Allen**

Dr. Amory Lovins, a physicist and energy guru coined a term for it called the “negawatt.” A negawatt as opposed to a kilowatt is the energy you don’t use by being more efficient. Negawatts save rather than cost money, yet still provide the same service to a homeowner.

So why all this talk about negawatts and efficiency? The Public Service Commission (PSC) here in Arkansas will soon have to address new regulations, promulgated by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) intended to reduce the harmful effects of power plant emissions.

These rules will impact coal fired power plants most directly, and rightfully so. Burning coal for electricity generation releases the largest share of pollutants from any of the possible fossil fuels. For a given amount of energy produced, burning coal produces more Carbon Dioxide, Sulfur and Nitrogen

Oxides, heavy metals, fine particulates, etc—all serious pollutants.

You might ask that if we throttle back the burning of coal and coal is cheap, then our cost for electricity production is going to go up. Not necessarily for two important reasons. First, the cost you see on your electric bill is only part of total cost.

The cost of impaired health due to exposure to the aforementioned pollutants is real but not accounted for. Likewise, the cost of environmental degradation from global warming is real. The cost of political instability due to global warming induced climate change is real. The Less coal we burn, the lower are these external costs born by society.

So how do we contain the direct costs? The second step is demand side management. Now we’re back to negawatts. The new EPA regulations call for lowering carbon emissions by 30% by 2030. We need to achieve about a 2% reduction per year to meet the standard. It shouldn’t be difficult to achieve this goal through efficiency improvements alone.

Nobody really cares how many kilowatt-hours they use, what they care about is having a warm in the winter, cool in the summer, well lit home. The less energy you need to achieve that goal, the lower will be the electric bill. A very cheap step is to check that ALL incandescent lights have been replaced by compact fluorescent bulbs, or even better now, Light Emitting Diodes.

Consider adding some solar panels to produce energy and lower the electric bill. The cost of PV systems has decreased drastically, 60% in just the last two years!

Check the attic to see if more insulation is in order. How old is

your HVAC system? Newer equipment is much more efficient. If you have an older Heat Pump, newer is better, ie more efficient. Or consider a ground source heat pump which is much, much more efficient.

Some of these efficiency upgrades can be expensive, but recent legislation can help. Most notable is the PACE law. The Property Assessed Clean Energy bill allows cities and/or counties to form Energy Improvement Districts which have the authority to assist homeowners to make improvements, the cost of which is then added to the property taxes at such a rate that the increase in property taxes is matched by a corresponding decrease in energy costs.

Efficiency, Efficiency, EFFICIENCY.

*Dr. Bob Allen is a member of the Excomm and a retired Professor of Chemistry. He writes about energy issues and the environment on his blog at <http://ozarker.org>*

## ARKANSAS SIERRA CLUB 2014 OFFICERS

A big THANK YOU to all of you who sent in your ballots for our 2014 Arkansas Sierra club Chapter ExComm elections. Your officers for this year are as follows.



# ARKANSAS SIERRA CLUB WANT ADS

Your Arkansas Sierra Club seeks talented Arkansans to volunteer and build a stronger organization. If your interests and passions lie in any of the following areas, please contact Chapter Director Glen Hooks at [glen.hooks@sierraclub.org](mailto:glen.hooks@sierraclub.org) or (501) 301-8280.

## WANTED: FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Are you an experienced fundraiser, or simply a passionate Sierra Club member who has no qualms about asking for donations? If so, we need your help! Fundraising Committee members will help in all areas of Arkansas Sierra Club fundraising: major gifts, small donor projects, and fundraising events. Creative and dedicated people are a plus!

## WANTED: MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Our strength lies in our numbers—increasing our membership numbers is key to our success! The Membership Committee will work to add a significant number of new members to our Arkansas Sierra Club rolls in the next year through tabling events, public outreach, and other creative methods. Sign up today!

## WANTED: COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Our members need to know the latest news and they need to know it in a timely fashion. The Communications Committee is responsible for two major areas: content for our Chapter newsletter and for our Chapter website. If your talents lie in the area of writing clearly and succinctly, the Communications Committee is for you!

## WANTED: CONSERVATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The Chapter Conservation Committee identifies and researches Arkansas environmental issues of concern, and makes recommendations to the Chapter Executive Committee about our environmental priorities. The ideal Conservation Committee member is knowledgeable about Arkansas environmental issues, knows her way around state administrative and legislative bodies, and has a passion for finding solutions that will improve life here in The Natural State.

**Chair:** Karen Sykes (Little Rock)

**Vice-Chair:** David Lincoln  
(Mountain Home)

**Conservation Chair:**

Tom McKinney (West Fork)

**Treasurer:** Rob Leflar (Fayetteville)

Bob Allen (Dover)

Brian Broussard (Little Rock)

Cami English (Ozark Headwaters

Group Chair, Fayetteville)

Uta Meyer (Little Rock)

Aubrey Shepherd (Fayetteville)

George Wise (Central AR Group  
Chair, Little Rock)

## MEMBER SURVEY

Your Arkansas Sierra Club leadership wants to hear from YOU about your environmental priorities. What Arkansas issues do you care about the most? Here are some suggestions, but feel free to name your own.

\*CLEAN ENERGY

\*BUFFALO RIVER

\*FOREST PROTECTION

\*ENERGY EFFICIENCY

\*OIL PIPELINES

\*NUCLEAR POWER

\*GAS "FRACKING"

\*COAL-FIRED POWER  
PLANTS

\*CLEAN WATER

PROTECTION

Send your thoughts in to [glen.hooks@sierraclub.org](mailto:glen.hooks@sierraclub.org), with the words "MEMBER SURVEY" in the subject line.

**THANKS!**





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Check out our redesigned/updated  
website at [www.arkansas.sierraclub.org](http://www.arkansas.sierraclub.org)!

## SIERRANS,



*Karen Sykes*

The last few months have been a very exciting time for our Sierra Club because we hired our first ever Chapter Director while changing leadership at the state level. My overall vision is to create the conditions in which an executive director can thrive where my first plan of action was issuing the newsletter you are reading and updating our website. I also led the executive committee through a strategic planning session called “Appreciate Inquiry” which draws out the “Why we do what we do” and the goals of the organization by asking a series of questions that create a conversation as opposed to merely listing our strengths and weaknesses.

After a float on the Upper Piney, the executive committee created our 2014 strategic plan and 2014 conservation goals that focus on communications, fundraising, collaboration and increasing membership while protecting our natural resources and promoting clean energy and en-

ergy efficiency. Without a solid foundation, we cannot expect to maintain existing autonomy, increase autonomy or increase resources.

I am very excited about the progress we have made in such a short amount of time and look forward to our continued growth, but the executive committee cannot do it alone. We value our members’ expertise and hope that you can join us as we continue to make our wonderful club a more vibrant and visible organization.

*I slept and I dreamed that life is all joy. I woke and I saw that life is all service. I served and I saw that service is joy.*

*- Khalil Gibran*

Thank you,  
**Karen Sykes, Chair**  
**Sierra Club State Chapter, Arkansas**

*Karen Sykes is currently earning her Master’s of Public Administration at U.A.L.R with a focus on policy analysis and organizational development. She also works with various non-profits throughout Central Arkansas.*