

The ARKANSAS Sierran

Winter 2015



SIERRA
CLUB
FOUNDED 1892

YOUR ARKANSAS SIERRA CLUB: STRONG AND GROWING



Glen Hooks,
Chapter Director

One of my favorite things about Sierra Club is feeling the strength in our connections and our friendships.

I feel that strength when we collectively speak truth to power at a hearing before the EPA or a state legislative committee. Looking around those rooms and seeing the faces of Sierra Club volunteers who've taken the time to lend their voices to the cause is inspiring and energizing. I hope you'll read Scharmél Roussel's piece in this newsletter for a great account of a busload of Sierrans loading up to testify in favor of cleaner air.

I feel that strength during our monthly Sierra Club local group meetings here in Little Rock, when a roomful of Sierrans routinely arrive early, ask approximately a million intelligent questions during the meeting, and stay late to keep the discussion going. These are my people. Take a look at the newsletter contribution from George Wise, Chair of the Central Arkansas Group, and you'll see what I mean.

I feel that strength when your Sierra

Club legislative committee pores over each and every bill filed and makes decisions about strategy. These are people with decades of institutional and technical knowledge about Arkansas's history and her potential. I hope that you feel well represented by this solid collection of lawyers, scientists, experts, and political junkies—they are solid, and they do the thankless work of reading bill after bill.

I feel that strength when I get the chance to represent Sierra Club before a college classroom, or on a "clean energy" panel, or testifying before the legislature, or at the table helping an Arkansas utility draft its energy plan for the next three years. I'm not just there as myself—I have the energy and enthusiasm of thousands of Arkansas Sierra Club members backing me up.

Happily, I can also feel that strength outside of the official work arenas as well. During Sierra Club outings to beautiful Arkansas locations, or in fellowship with our members at a "Sierra Club & Beer" event, or even when just sharing a lunch and learning about each other, I know that our members are building strong bonds with each other that will lead to achieving our conservation goals.

Since our last newsletter, I'm

pleased to report that all of these strengths have been working together to make our state a better place. We're pushing the retirement of aging coal-fired power plants, supporting clean energy and energy efficiency, and protecting our state's waterways from dangerous oil pipelines. Your Sierra Club membership makes all of this happen.

This month, please be on the lookout for our annual fundraising mailer. All of the money raised from this March appeal stays here in Arkansas with your local Chapter, and goes toward the work we do in The Natural State. Please give generously to support the work we, collectively, do to advance progressive environmental policy in Arkansas. If you'd like to give today, head on over to www.sierraclub.org/arkansas and click "DONATE".

Thanks again for everything that you do. If I may be of any help to you, please contact me at glen.hooks@sierraclub.org or (501) 301-8280.

SOLAR POWER IN THE OZARKS



Dr. Bob Allen

When my wife and I built our home in 1985 we had no idea we would ultimately become our own power company selling electricity to the rest of the world. We did know that we wanted a home that was full of sunlight, warm in the winter and cool in the summer. We wanted a home with modern conveniences. A home with a spacious deck overlooking Mill Creek. A home nestled up to the bluff behind us. The only question was how to achieve this goal at a cost we could afford. Our path to comfort and affordability comes through efficiency.

Amory Lovins, a physicist and energy efficiency guru coined a wonderful term – negawatts. Negawatts are the kilowatts of electricity you don't need to buy because of efficiency. Better wall and roof insulation means a cooler in the summer, warmer in the winter home with less energy use. The same goes for energy saving double pane windows. Efficient lightbulbs such as compact fluorescents keeps your house well lit and use less energy. Shade trees, house eaves, and shower heads also matter but lets move on.

If the three most important things

about real estate are location, location, location, then the three most important things about solar power (you were beginning to wonder if I would ever get there) are efficiency, efficiency, efficiency. The location of solar power is simple. The only requirement is access to the southern sky. Expensive land, cheap land, on a roof or on the ground, it doesn't matter other than southern exposure. So why is energy efficiency so important? Because electricity generated by PhotoVoltaic (PV) panels is not cheap, at least on the front end. But equally important to what solar power does costs is what it doesn't cost.

You don't have to blast the top off a mountain in West Virginia, to get at the coal underneath. Miners in Kentucky don't have to die in underground explosions to get at coal. No wells in Arkansas need be polluted or foundations cracked from hydro fracturing for natural gas. Children everywhere needn't suffer asthma as a result of emissions from coal powered plants. No terrorist will obtain radioactive materials which could result from the nuclear power fuel cycle. All the above are called externalities which affect the cost of energy, but don't show up on your bill. These costs show up in health care costs, lives lost, homes destroyed, and taxes paid.

Our solar panels only have the direct cost of purchase and installation, no fuel costs, no externalities. They convert sunlight into electricity with about 15 per cent efficiency. Our array consists of forty panels mounted on a frame in a meadow covering about 450 square feet. It is a grid-tied system with a bidirectional meter. When the sun is shining excess energy production goes through our electric meter making it run backwards and into the electric lines for others to use. At night we draw power from the grid. Overall our system produces about a third again as much energy as we use, thus making us a clean, sustainable power plant for the rest of the world.

In the last analysis and not discounting for externalities our electricity is expensive. So why do we do it? To us externalities do matter. To us the health of children, the lives of coal miners and the preservation of family home sites matter. Plain and simple, it is the right thing to do.

Dr. Bob Allen is a member of the Arkansas Sierra Club 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 CHOSEN FOR "YOUTH ENGAGEMENT TRAINING"

Your Arkansas Sierra Club chapter was recently chosen by national Sierra Club to participate in a several-month training on youth engagement and recruiting. Many states applied, and only 5 state chapters were chosen.

Over the next several months, a 5-person team of Guy Choate, Sarah Helen Leflar, Uta Meyer, Robin Rumph, and Kyndal Saverse will be engaged in conference calls, mentoring, and planning sessions with some of the Club's best minds. Our goal? How to successfully recruit and retain more young people in the Arkansas Sierra Club's work. Many thanks to our team—stay tuned for more good news!

700 MILES, 18 HOURS – A Piece of Cake (and a piece of pizza too)!



Scharmel Roussel
*Executive Director,
Arkansas Interfaith
Power & Light*

Joining 15 Sierra Club members on a bus from Little Rock to an EPA hearing in Oklahoma City on January 15 was a privilege. Along the way we picked up passengers

haze pollution, which drifts from coal-burning power plants in East Texas into national parks and wilderness areas in Arkansas. The thick particulate matter is not only dangerous for public health, but also spoils the natural beauty of outdoor areas in Arkansas—places we cherish, such as Caney Creek.

Under the Clean Air Act (already the law for decades), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has the authority to reduce haze pollution. Large amounts of dangerous toxic greenhouse gas emissions would be reduced. Not only could we see more clearly, we could breathe easier too.

Polluters should not get a free pass; we all have a responsibility to ask the EPA not to give them one. That is exactly what we asked on January 15. Sixty people signed up to speak during the two-hour hearing. Only two spoke up for the power plants. The other 58 found the courage to speak up for clean air, the rights of children, the benefits to generations to come, and the law. It was our duty as parents and grandparents who enjoy the beauty of the Natural State. It was our responsibility as stewards of creation to protect the planet and preserve fragile ecosystems that sustain life.

So how did we endure 18 hours on the road? No problem! Delicious free food helped—serious sandwiches, chips, energy bars, cold drinks, pizza. We could have passed the time watching movies. But we chose to chat and get to know each other. Chances

are—we will have an opportunity to do it again. Our collective voices will always be needed to speak up to preserve and protect.

Clean air and clean water are social justice issues. Why? People most impacted by environmental degradation are those who most likely cannot spend



in Conway and Van Buren. We stopped in Checotah, Oklahoma to pick up a Native American who also is a Viet Nam veteran. He made our group complete.

Once in Oklahoma City, we joined dozens of Sierra Club members from Oklahoma and Texas for a news conference. People spoke passionately about protecting our air from dangerous



a weekday on a bus to speak at a 5 p.m. a weekday on a bus to speak at a 5 p.m. hearing. Thankfully, Sierra Club members carved out the time to speak up for them...and for all of us.

A 700-mile trip might seem like a chore, but it is a piece of cake compared to what others before us have done to preserve the natural beauty of the great outdoors for all of us to enjoy. What a privilege it is to live in the USA, where everyone (not just the elite who own private land) can enjoy national parks, wildlife refuge areas and the great outdoors.



**PLEASE
RECYCLE
THIS NEWSLETTER!**

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

The best thing about being an Arkansas Sierra Club member is living in The Natural State! Get out and see Arkansas--here is a selection of upcoming activities sponsored by Sierra Club and other conservation partners.

March

March 2015 (TBD): Wye Mountain Daffodil Festival
Wye United Methodist Church in Bigelow, AR
For opening date:
facebook.com/DaffodilsOnWyeMountain

3/8: 1 p.m. - Central AR Group Outing: We will have a 4 mile Lake Sylvia hike and meet at the Trees of the Forest Parking lot. RSVP to Carolyn Shearman at tucshea@gmail.com for more information.

3/13-3/15: The Battle of Helena
(a reenactment by the Delta Cultural Center)
Fort Curtis (350 Columbia Street, Helena, AR)
For more info: deltaculturalcenter.com/calendar

3/17: 7 p.m. - Sierra Club Central AR Group Meeting
Oyster Bar (3003 W. Markham, Little Rock)

3/18: 6 p.m. - Sierra Club Ozark Headwaters Group Meeting, Apple Blossom Brewing Company
(1550 Zion Road, Fayetteville)

3/26: Noon - ADEQ "Putting Green To Work" Lunch;
Focus on Fayetteville stream restoration efforts.
FREE - attendees bring their own lunches. To register, contact Audree Miller at 501-682-0015 or email miller@adeq.state.ar.us

April

4/1-5/15: 11:30am-12:30pm - Spring Showcase
Trail Experience
Crystal Bridges Museum in Bentonville, AR
For more info: crystalbridges.org/event/spring-showcase-trail-experience

4/9: 8:30am-1pm - Little Rock Sustainability Summit
Clinton Presidential Library in Little Rock, AR
Register here: eventbrite.com/e/city-of-little-rock-sixth-annual-sustainability-summit-registration-15079653650

4/18: 11am-4pm - Arkansas Earth Day Festival
Heifer International in Little Rock, AR
More info here: facebook.com/AREarthDay

4/21: 7pm - Sierra Club Central AR Group meeting
Oyster Bar (3003 W. Markham, Little Rock)

May

5/9: 10am-11am - Books & Butterflies with Lori Spencer
Ozarks Botanical Garden in Fayetteville, AR
More info here: bgozarks.org/event/books-butterflies-with-lori-spencer

5/9: 4-8pm - Sierra Club Central AR Group Picnic
Allsopp Park in Little Rock, Email Gary Cawood
gary@garycawood.com for more information

5/19: 7pm - Sierra Club Central AR Group Meeting
Oyster Bar (3003 W. Markham, Little Rock)

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 U.S. Mail, please email your address to glen.hooks@sierraclub.org, with "ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER" in the subject line.

NOTE: You will still receive a paper newsletter at the end of each year, so that you may receive and return your Sierra Club officer ballots. Thanks!

The Arkansas Sierra Club sends out a paper newsletter on a quarterly basis. More frequent information is available on our web site at arkansas.sierraclub.org or via e-mail updates. If you haven't received any Sierra Club messages in the last six months, we probably do not have your address. If you would like to be added to our e-mail list, please send your e-mail address to glen.hooks@sierraclub.org.

COUNCIL OF CLUB LEADERS REPORT



Brian Broussard

The Council of Club Leaders (CCL) is comprised of one delegate from each of the Sierra Club's 65 Chapters as well as a delegate from the nationwide youth Chapter, the Sierra Student Coalition (SSC). The CCL serves as a communication link between the Chapters and the National Board of Directors and also acts as an advisory panel for the Board. The annual meeting is typically held every September, but the 2014 meeting was pushed back to late November because of the People's Climate March held in New York City September 20th. For whatever reason, Arkansas has not sent a delegate for a few years, and I was very excited to have the opportunity to represent our Chapter at the meeting.

Most of the meeting was held at the Sierra Club Headquarters in San Francisco. This gave everyone the opportunity to meet with volunteers and staffers from all over the country as well as

the leaders of Sierra Club programs and campaigns. The main purpose of the meeting was the discussion of the year's resolutions. Every Sierra Club Chapter has the ability to submit resolutions to the CCL. These resolutions are then reviewed by the CCL's Resolution Committee and offered for consideration by the full CCL. Though our votes are technically little more than non-binding advice submitted to the Board of Directors, taking part in the discussion lent a feeling of significance and involvement to our stake in the Club and at the least served as a symbol of the comparatively outsized role that grassroots volunteers play in our organization. And you can take part in this democratic undertaking, too. If you have anything that you'd like to see changed in the Club or its policies (or any good things you'd like to express), be sure to let us know.

The meeting consisted of various other workshops, lectures, and trainings, and the weekend culminated with the awards banquet, celebrating Sierra Club members and supporters from all over the country and the work they've

done towards local and national conservation efforts. The recipients ranged from students to renowned photographers to Minnesota Congressman Keith Ellison, who gave a rousing speech emphasizing the need for greater diversity in the Club. The Club's highest honor, the John Muir Award, went to author Terry Tempest Williams, whose writing has appeared in numerous publications and who was featured in Ken Burns' PBS series "The National Parks: America's Best Idea."

As inspiring as it was to get to talk to and hear the stories of these accomplished individuals and the remarkable contributions they've made, the real benefit of the meeting came from being immersed in a room with other rank and file volunteers from all across the country. Learning about their individual passions and campaigns was a strong reminder of what we can accomplish. Forging these connections with other Chapters, near and far, enabled me to experience firsthand the enormity and strength of such a large grassroots network that we have in the Sierra Club.

EPA TO HOST ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE TRAINING IN LITTLE ROCK

Your Arkansas Sierra Club is proud to partner with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and other organizations to host a training on environmental justice issues. The training will be held in Little Rock June 16-18.

What is "environmental justice", you ask? According to the EPA, environmental justice is "the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies." What it means in practical terms is that all of us, not just citizens

who lack political power, should equally bear the brunt of pollution—we shouldn't only locate power plants and polluting industry in poorer neighborhoods to threaten less-powerful constituencies, for instance.

Sierra Club is 100% committed to the ideals of environmental justice, and we encourage you to attend the conference. Registration is free, but seating is limited to 100 people in total. You may register online at <https://us-epa-region6-ej-training-workshop-arkansas.eventbrite.com>

To learn more about Sierra Club's environmental justice work, go to <http://www.sierraclub.org/environmental-justice>.

CENTRAL ARKANSAS GROUP REPORT



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

“Volunteering is the ultimate exercise in democracy. You vote in elections once a year, but when you volunteer, you vote every day about the kind of community you want to live in.”

- Unknown

The Arkansas Chapter of the Sierra Club and the Central Arkansas Group are largely volunteer organizations. We have a great core group of volunteers at both the Chapter and Group levels. I want to thank my fellow executive committee members and acknowledge them for the hard work they do.

Joe Wankum has done a great job updating our Chapter and Group websites. Joe brought his lengthy experience and long history on volunteering for Sierra Club home to Arkansas from California. Check out the websites here:

sierraclub.org/arkansas - for the state-wide Arkansas Chapter

sierraclub.org/arkansas/central - for our Central Arkansas Group

Robin Rumph is a newly elected member of our Group executive committee. Robin has been working on membership and helping us reach out to college groups and other organizations with a shared goal of protecting the environment. We are

excited to have Robin's help and have already seen an increase in member activity from his efforts.

Carolyn Shearman and Gary Caywood are executive committee stalwarts. Our Group would not function without their institutional knowledge and hard work. Carolyn and Gary organize and lead our outings. Below is a calendar of recent and upcoming events:

Saturday, February 21st hike a controlled burn area near Little Rock. Join us for a hike through an area that was recently under a controlled burn in one of Central Arkansas park areas. We will hike through one of these areas to see the results of the burn. Our intent is to return to the same area periodically in the coming months to monitor the habitat restoration resulting from the burn. For more information, check the Club Events page on our web site on or after February 18 or contact the Leader: Joe Wankum at jbwankum@aol.com or at the February 17 meeting. Our intent is to return to the same area periodically in the coming months to monitor the habitat restoration resulting from the burn.

Saturday, February 28th join Joe Wankum for and Orienteering Exercise - Are you interested in an orienteering (with compass) exercise on a local orienteering course? The course is in an area that was recently part of a controlled burn so the weeds in the area will be minimal for the next month or two. This exercise involves off-trail hiking so participants should wear lug soles to minimize slipping on the

recently burned leaves. For more information, check the Club Events page on our web site on or after February 18 or contact the Leader: Joe Wankum at jbwankum@aol.com or at the February 17 meeting.

Tuesday, February 24th: Science Cafe: “Bye Bye Fossil Fuels, Hello Clean Energy” Science Cafe will be dedicating its program to a discussion of renewable energy. Chapter Director Glen Hooks will be representing Sierra Club on KUAR 89.1 FM radio program from 6:05-6:30, then also on a panel from 7:00-9:00 at The Afterthought Bistro & Bar (2721 Kavanaugh Blvd) with Frank Kelly of the Arkansas Renewable Energy Association and Bill Ball of Stellar Sun.

March 8th at 1pm we will have a 4 mile Lake Sylvia hike and meet at the Trees of the Forest Parking lot. See Carolyn Shearman at the meeting or email tucshea@gmail.com to sign up.

March 17th is our next regular 7pm meeting at the Oyster Bar.

May 9th is the Sierra Club Picnic at Allsop Park pavilion at 4-8pm.

Super Volunteer Rel Corbin serves on the executive committee of both the Chapter and the Group. Rel is always the first to volunteer and sets a high bar for the rest of us by his commitment to the Sierra Club's goals.

Becky Williams is our group executive committee treasurer. Becky brings a wealth of experience to our Group through her talents as a consultant to many other volunteer groups. Becky will be our April speaker and will discuss the Wolfe Conservation

Service Project.

Guy Choate is our newest EC member. Guy is a new Sierra Club member and is a great example of someone who stepped up and asked how he could help. Guy jumped right in and agreed

to be vice chair of our group. We look forward to Guy's service on the executive committee. Guy will represent our Group at the annual stakeholders meeting of Central Arkansas Water.

We can use your help. Ask any ex-

ecutive committee member about volunteer opportunities with the Group or Chapter. Help us make Arkansas the type of environmentally conscious community you want to live in.

CAMPUS REPORT: HENDRIX COLLEGE



Hanna Davis

My name is Hanna Davis, the new intern at the Arkansas Chapter of the Sierra Club. I am an Environmental Studies major and English minor at Hendrix College and am originally from Dallas, Texas. At Hendrix, I am heavily involved in sustainable causes on campus as one of the vice chairs of the Environmental Concerns Committee (ECC).

The members of ECC work hard to make Hendrix an eco-friendly community and to raise awareness about environmental issues, and we have a variety of programs set up to achieve these goals. Every week in our student center we hold the Free Store, where students, staff and faculty can come and shop for free clothing, books and knick-knacks or donate unwanted items. The goal of

the Free Store is to provide people with a venue to reuse old items instead of buying new ones, while diverting items that are in good condition from landfills. In addition to the Free Store, ECC is in charge of the Dish Program, through which student clubs and organizations can rent out plates, cups and silverware to use at their events instead of buying paper, plastic, or worse, Styrofoam dishes that would most likely end up being tossed out.

ECC holds Clean Up Sundays as well, which are weekly campus cleanups. We don green jumpsuits and gloves, pick up litter, and transfer recyclable materials from trash cans into recycling bags. (That's right; we dig through the trash. But all in the name of the environment!) Not only do cleanups keep the campus looking pretty, but they also significantly decrease the amount of recyclable materials that would otherwise be thrown away. Other events that ECC

holds include bimonthly meetings, documentary screenings, panels, No Shave November, food-focused events during campus Food Week, and events throughout Earth Week.

This year, ECC has been working hard to formulate a proposal for a Campus Sustainability Fund. The Fund would give students, faculty and staff the opportunity to propose sustainability projects and get allocated the resources to carry out their projects. A vote back in September yielded a \$20 per semester fee as the preferred amount, which is the amount that is being proposed. In January, a student referendum vote was held. 50% of students voted, and 80% voted in favor of the fund. Recently, the Hendrix College Board of Trustees voted to approve the Sustainability Fund, which is a great success for ECC and for the promotion of environmentalism on campus.

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?

Please make your donation online by going to www.sierraclub.org/arkansas and clicking "DONATE". You can make a one-time donation, or spread a larger gift out by scheduling an automatic recurring monthly donation. Thank you!



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Check out our redesigned/updated
website at www.sierraclub.org/arkansas!

ARKANSAS SIERRA CLUB 2015 EXCOMM

Thank you to everyone who voted in our recent Arkansas Sierra Club elections. Participation was up and the races were quite close—I especially appreciate each of the candidates who stood for election.

YOUR 2015 ARKANSAS SIERRA CLUB EXCOMM MEMBERS ARE:

George Wise (*Chair, Little Rock*)

Bob Allen (*Vice-chair, Dover*)

Cami English (*Treasurer, Fayetteville*)

Uta Meyer (*Secretary, Little Rock*)

Brian Broussard (*Little Rock*)

Rel Corbin (*Little Rock*)

Rob Leflar (*Fayetteville*)

Tom McKinney (*West Fork*)

Aubrey Shepherd (*Fayetteville*)