**Oklahoma Sierra Club Fracking Policy 01/20/15**

Oklahoma Sierra Club opposes the extraction of natural gas and oil through the hydraulic fracturing, or “fracking,” process and underground injection of fracking wastewater based on unacceptable risks to human health and safety, water resources, property rights and the environment:

1. Fracking uses up to 200 chemicals, requires high-pressure wastewater disposal or storage in pits, and produces dangerous surface spills and leaks. These are all direct causes of underground and surface water contamination, which directly compromises drinking water sources, as well as water used for agricultural, industrial and recreational purposes.
2. Fracking consumes between two and four million gallons of water per well at a time when Oklahoma is already impacted by severe drought and water shortages.
3. The underground injection of fracking wastewater has been identified by the U.S. Geological Survey and Seismological Society of America as a potential trigger for earthquakes.
4. Increased earthquake activity threatens Oklahomans’ health, individual and business property, and public infrastructure (schools, roads, bridges, dams, public utilities). We are unprepared for environmental disasters that will occur if earthquakes rupture aging and hastily constructed pipelines transporting toxic tar sands and traditional oil and natural gas across Oklahoma.
5. The release of powerful greenhouse gases, such as methane, carbon dioxide and other pollutants during gas venting and flaring, well leakage and other related aspects of the fracking process generates air pollution at unsafe levels for human exposure and contributes to increases in the planet’s surface temperature leading to global climate disruption and severe weather incidents, including droughts, wildfires, floods and super-storms.

No regulatory safeguards exist that can credibly assure protection from fracking-related dangers to human health and safety, drinking water, air, and urban and rural property. Therefore, Oklahoma Sierra Club supports the prohibition of fracking and underground injection of fracking wastewater in Oklahoma.

Furthermore, Oklahoma Sierra Club supports diversifying Oklahoma’s energy options by transitioning from fossil fuels (coal, oil and natural gas) to much greater use of clean, renewable energy, such as wind and solar power, as well as improved energy conservation and efficiency.

***Background***

*Hydraulic fracturing, or “fracking,” refers to a well stimulation process that pumps two to four million gallons of water, sand and chemical additives underground under high pressure to break apart subsurface rock formations to improve the flow of natural gas, oil or other hydrocarbons into wells.*

*Flowback is a mixture of injected fracking liquids and naturally occurring “produced” water found in rock formations.*

*An estimated 80 percent of injected fracking fluid is pumped back to the surface as flowback with potentially hazardous chemicals, including biocides to prevent microbes from growing, gelling agents to thicken fluids, sand to prop open cracks in the rocks and compounds that prevent pipe corrosion. Flowback may also contain TENORM (Technologically Enhanced Naturally Occurring Radioactive Material).*

*Fracking wastewater may be disposed of in storage pits or tanks, or recycled for repeated use. In Oklahoma, the fluid is usually reinjected under high pressure in disposal wells considered by the U.S. Geological Survey and* Seismological Society of America *to be a factor in triggering earthquakes.*