



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

SIERRA CLUB MISSION STATEMENT: To explore, enjoy and protect the planet. To practice and promote the responsible use of the earth's ecosystems and resources; to educate and enlist humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environment; and to use all lawful means to carry out those objectives.

CENTRAL ARKANSAS GROUP QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2009

[HTTP://WWW.ARKANSAS.SIERRACLUB.ORG](http://www.arkansas.sierraclub.org)

CENTRAL ARKANSAS GROUP GENERAL INFORMATION

The whole state makes up the Arkansas Chapter of the Sierra Club (SC). Visit the Arkansas Chapter's website at <http://arkansas.sierraclub.org> for local and national information. The two groups within this Chapter are the Central Arkansas Group (CAG) and the Ozark Headwaters Group (OHG). Glen Hooks is the Senior Regional Representative on staff for the Sierra Club with special responsibilities for the national Coal Campaign. Contact him at glen.hooks@sierraclub.org or (501) 301-8280.

The Central Arkansas Group meets on the third Tuesday of every month (unless otherwise noted) in the party room at the Oyster Bar, 3003 W. Markham, in Little Rock. No meetings in August or December. Come at 6:30 pm for social time, before the program and discussion begin at 7 pm. We offer programs that are educational as well as entertaining!

CENTRAL ARKANSAS GROUP MEETINGS July 21, NO MEETING IN AUGUST, September 15

See you at the Oyster Bar on the dates below. Social time at 6:30 pm, monthly program and update on local initiatives at 7 pm. Our programs are both educational and enjoyable!
(Note that these programs are subject to change.)

July 21: An update on the coal issue in Arkansas with exciting recent developments. Speaker TBA.

NO MEETING IN AUGUST

September 15: Susan Staffeld, Park Interpreter at Pinnacle Mountain State Park, will instruct us on "Hiking and Camping 101." She'll bring some gear and talk about local hiking trails. When it cools

HUGE VICTORY AGAINST DIRTY COAL

ate a special hiking excursion for Sierrans on the Ouachita Trail.

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On June 24, 2009, as this newsletter goes to press, the Arkansas Court of Appeals rejected a permit from the Arkansas Public Service Commission (PSC) allowing construction of the proposed \$1.6 billion Turk coal-fired power plant near Fulton, Hempstead County. The plant is owned by Southwestern Electric Power Company (SWEPCO), a subsidiary of American Electric Power, one of the largest electric utilities in the country. The Court's unanimous decision stated that the PSC did not comply with a law requiring utilities to demonstrate environmental compatibility and public need. A legal challenge to the initial permit was brought by a coalition of environmental and hunting groups: Sierra Club, Audubon Arkansas, and Hempstead County hunting clubs.

Thanks to all of you who wrote letters and e-mails and who called officials and others at the PSC and elsewhere. This is a huge victory for grass roots activism and for environmental responsibility.

NOTICE OF CENTRAL ARKANSAS GROUP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ELECTIONS



The Central Arkansas Group (CAG) will hold elections in December 2009. All CAG members are invited to be part of this process. The following information is a bit complicated but it's part of the national Sierra Club's election requirements. Please don't be intimidated! Working with your fellow Sierrans to implement the Sierra Club's mandate to Explore, Enjoy and Protect the planet is important (and often fun) work. Please consider this opportunity to become more involved locally.

We need seven volunteers to serve on the Executive Committee (ExCom), which sets the direction for our CAG and guides our activities; and three volunteers to serve on the Nominating Committee (NomCom) to oversee the election.

This election requires at least nine candidates to run for the seven open ExCom positions. Starting in January 2009, the top four vote getters will serve two-year terms (through 2011), the next three will serve a one-year term (through 2010). Thereafter elections will be held annually to fill the expiring terms with the newly elected members serving two-year terms. Once seated your new ExCom will determine who will fill the officer positions of the CAG.

Any Sierra Club member receiving this newsletter may run. Our election process requires each candidate to submit a one-paragraph ballot statement (150 word limit) explaining why you wish to serve. The Nomination Committee, whose three members cannot be ExCom candidates, will manage the election's logistics.

Key dates to mark on your calendars –

November 9th – Finalize Nominating Committee
November 13th – Deadline for Nominations
December 1st through 26th – Election Period
January 1st – Announce new ExCom (in CAG newsletter)
January 11th – New ExCom is seated.

Ask your current officers for more information (contact information at end of newsletter).

LITTLE MAUMELLE CANOE PICK-UP FLOAT IN JUNE A BIG HIT!

On a gorgeous June day, eleven environmentally dedicated Sierrans from the Central Arkansas Group took action to retrieve and remove trash from the Little Maumelle River at Pinnacle Mountain State Park: Doug Barton, Rel Corbin, Guniz Jernigan, Dee Dee Boniecki, Philip Buck, Bernie Jungkind, Fred Stanchi, Bob and Zabelle Stodola, Diane Thomasson, and Bill Saunders. The Park provided all the canoes, paddles, gear, and shuttles for the leisurely four-mile, two-hour float. To express our thanks, CAG gave the Park a \$50 contribution. There was no-one else on the River, and while we enjoyed the natural scenery, we also went home feeling that we had done something small to protect our planet. We'll do this again in 2010 and hope for an even bigger group then. Photos below courtesy of Bernie Jungkind.



Doug Barton and Guniz Jernigan in foreground



L to R: Bernie, Dee Dee, Bob, Philip, Fred, Zabelle, Guniz, Bill, Doug, and Diane (Rel came later)

SIERRA CLUB VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR REGREEN MENA PROJECT

ReGreen Mena is a program developed by Hot Springs-based Diamond Bank after a tornado devastated Mena in April, wiping out about 600

homes and businesses, and thousands of trees. The program involves removing the debris left behind, replanting hardwood trees, removing the stumps in the city's cemetery, and helping elderly citizens whose yards were destroyed by the storm landscape around their homes. Right now the partners include: Arkansas Forestry Commission, Arkansas Forestry Association, UA Cooperative Extension Service, and the Sierra Club - Arkansas. AFC, AFA, and Diamond Bank will donate trees. Sierra Club will provide manpower in an event this fall.

For information contact Kelli Reep, who is organizing the program, at kelli@flywriteinc.com

THANKS TO ARKANSAS EARTH DAY VOLUNTEERS

The Sierra Club was well represented at Arkansas Earth Day 2009 held in North Little Rock's Riverfront Park. Thanks to all the volunteers who manned our booth and helped the public learn about the Sierra Club's educational and leisure activities in the Natural State and beyond.

SIERRANS AND FRIENDS AT CAG'S SPRING PARTY AT THE GRANDE MAUMELLE SAILING CLUB



ONGOING LOCAL ISSUES IN CENTRAL ARKANSAS

LAKE MAUMELLE DRINKING WATER:

The Pulaski County Quorum Court met in April and passed Chapter 8 without amending it to require a minimum lot size of 5 acres, which would have helped to protect the lake by limiting dense development. The ordinance that passed will not

stop man-made structures around the lake from proliferating and threatening water quality. We hope that Judge Villines will keep his promise to develop a land use plan and enact zoning-type land use regulations. But during the intervening months when his plan is being drafted, developers will be able to file plats under Chapter 8 and become grandfathered in, therefore avoiding the more restrictive future zoning provisions. For further information check the website www.ProtectArkansasWater.org

ALLIED WASTE/BFI LANDFILL:

A report from Sharon Stark, CAG's point person on the BFI issue, says, "It's tricky to convey the status of the Allied Waste/BFI landfill on Mabelvale Pike opposite UALR. A lawsuit was filed on June 19 in the 6th Circuit Court. In this suit BFI wants to stop the City of Little Rock from enforcing a ban that prohibits landfills from accepting shale drilling waste. Shale drilling waste, or cuttings, come from hydraulic fracturing, or "fracking" as the oil industry calls it. Water and sand along with frac oil are pumped into the ground to allow the natural gas/oil to be released. The big problem concerns frac oil's hazardous ingredients which include benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, and xylene. Health hazards include headaches, loss of appetite, and liver and kidney damage. Driving past the BFI landfill, across from UALR, the benzene still causes my eyes and throat to burn," Sharon says.

2009 CENTRAL ARKANSAS GROUP OFFICERS

Chair: Currently unfilled

Vice Chair: Cindy Fribourgh cfribourgh@gmail.com
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