



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

September to December 2011

## Expert Scott Ausbrooks Weighs In On Earthquakes And Fracking

### Special points of interest:

- Fracking Injection Wells and Earthquakes
- Pinnacle Mountain Canoe Clean-Up October 1
- Central Arkansas Group Monthly Meetings
- Fall Picnic October 22
- Central Arkansas Group Officer Information
- Lake Maumelle Update and Call to Action
- Update on Turk Power Plant

The Central Arkansas Group's July meeting featured a timely presentation by Registered Professional Geologist Scott Ausbrooks, who is the Geo-Hazards and Environmental Geology Supervisor for the Arkansas Geological Survey. In other words, he's the earthquake expert for central Arkansas, and there have been plenty of earthquakes in this area in the last year to keep him very busy.

Since 2005, more than 3,000 natural gas wells have been drilled in the Fayetteville Shale Play in and around Faulkner county. To release the gas, millions of gallons of water, salt, and chemicals are injected into the rock, which splits and releases the trapped natural gas. Although some of this used hydraulic fracturing (or "fracking") fluid can be recycled, most of it ends up in deep storage, or injection, wells.

As it turns out, three of these injection wells were built close to a fault line between Greenbrier and Guy, which is where 98% of a swarm earthquakes have occurred since 2009. These quakes culminated in a 4.7 magnitude seismic event four miles northeast of Greenbrier on February 27, 2011.



After Mr. Ausbrooks testified on July 26 before the Arkansas Oil and Gas Commission, companies complied with the requirement to permanently shut down the storage wells closest to the fault.

Mr. Ausbrooks clarified that the new extraction wells are not the problem; it's the storage wells that are the culprit because they go down over a mile and contain tainted water that can seep out and destabilize surrounding rock and earth.

— Information from Scott Ausbrooks and from "Bonnie 'Prince' Billy's Earthquake Ballad," a story that aired on "All Things Considered," hosted by Michele Norris, National Public Radio, July 8, 2011. "Frack" image from Sierra Club Allegheny Group at <http://alleghenysc.org/?p=2439>.

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## Join Pinnacle Mountain Canoe Clean-Up October 1

The Sierra Club and Pinnacle Mountain State Park jointly sponsor a fun annual canoe clean-up of the Little Maumelle River. Postponed from the spring because of high water levels, the event is now scheduled for Saturday October 1st. We will put-in no later than 10 a.m. at the back parking lot of the Highway 300 entrance to Pinnacle Mountain State Park by the boat launch to the Little Maumelle

Wear appropriate clothes, and bring a sack lunch, drinks, and bug spray. We will take out about 1 p.m. and the Park staff will drive us back to the parking lot.

Contact Carolyn Shearman at (501) 603-5305 or [tucshea@gmail.com](mailto:tucshea@gmail.com) to sign up. We need to know exact numbers in advance so the Park can provide canoes, paddles, shuttle, life vests, and garbage bags.

# Monthly Meetings At The Oyster Bar

The Central Arkansas Group (CAG) meets on the third Tuesday of each month (except August and December) at the Oyster Bar in Little Rock. 6:30 p.m. social time, 7 p.m. program and local updates begin.

**September 20:** Jim Gifford, President of the Friends of the Ouachita Trail (FoOT), is passionate about trails and hiking! Since moving to Arkansas in 2000, Jim has become not only an avid hiker but also a strong advocate for trails stewardship. He was named 2004 "Trail Volunteer of the Year" for

the state of Arkansas.

Jim helped found Friends of the Ouachita Trail (FoOT), an all-volunteer force to aid in the maintenance, enhancement, and use of the 225-mile Ouachita National Recreation Trail in Arkansas and Oklahoma. He will talk about his work with FoOT.

**October 18:** Prof. Matthew Moran, a biologist from Hendrix College, will speak about his ecology research. He teaches Ecology and Evolution, Zoology, Field Ecology, and Natural History and co-edited the book

*Tropical Deforestation: Exploring Environmental Challenges*, which was published in 2006.

**November 15:** Prof. Nancy Landrum is an associate professor of Management at UALR and an utterly committed believer in green business practices. She co-authored the 2009 book *Sustainable Business: An Executive's Primer* and has published many articles. She will talk about green business initiatives.

## 2011 Central Arkansas Group Officers

Your Central Arkansas Group officers are:

David Lyon (Chair)  
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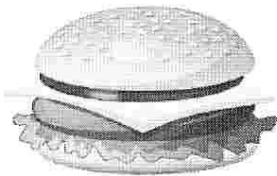
Zabelle Stodola (ex-officio) Secretary.

### NEW BLOOD NEEDED!

Please consider running for office in the upcoming elections in December to choose the 2012 Central Arkansas Group officers and to continue the good work.

Contact current officers for more information.

## Fall Party At Allsopp Park October 22



Join your Sierra Club friends for a fall picnic on Saturday October 22 from 4 p.m. to dark at the pavilion in Allsopp Park, at Cedar Hill and Cantrell Roads in Little Rock.

As usual, we'll provide food and soft drinks featuring, of course,

Bob's famous burgers with all the trimmings (meat and veggie options). Other party goodies will include shrimp with cocktail sauce, veggie plate, hummos, fruit, brownies, various dips, and other desserts and finger food.

# Continuing Fight Against Turk Power Plant

Join the Sierra Club for a FREE lunch and rally against the proposed Turk plant and protect us from one of the greatest threats to our air quality in Arkansas. The proposed Turk coal fired power plant being built in Hempstead County will jeopardize air quality for all of us in the State, yet almost all of the electricity will be shipped to Texas and Louisiana! To symbolize the devastation that coal plants have on our air quality, we will be inflating a GIANT, 2 story tall asthma inhaler.

**WHO:** You and concerned citizens who want clean air

**WHAT:** FREE lunch and Rally to stop the proposed Turk coal plant

**WHEN:** Wednesday, September 7, at 12:00 p.m.

**WHERE:** Pulaski County Courthouse rose garden, 401 West Markham Street, Little Rock, AR 72201, corner of Broadway and West Markham.

**RSVP:** Please contact Lev Guter at [lev.guter@sierraclub.org](mailto:lev.guter@sierraclub.org) so we know how much food to provide! Questions: call Lev at (941) 779-3337

We had some excellent news in our battle against the proposed Turk coal fired plant when on July

14 a three-judge panel of the United States 8<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals upheld a decision that halted construction on eight acres of wetlands and the water intake structure under the Little River. In order for the Turk plant to generate steam and electricity, it would require 6,500 gallons of water *per minute*. Therefore, without the 404 water permit, the plant could not operate. The 8<sup>th</sup> Circuit has sent the case back the US District Court to decide whether to force the US Army Corps of Engineers and the

(Continued on page four)

## Important Lake Maumelle Update & Call To Action

Lake Maumelle provides water for almost 400,000 Central Arkansans. The primary threat to its almost pristine water quality is residential development of the forest around the lake. Efforts to protect its water quality now focus on a Land Use Plan by Pulaski County government. If the Pulaski County Quorum Court enacts the Land Use Plan, it will result in zoning regulation in the watershed portion of the County that will

prohibit solid waste landfills, injection wells, and large confined animal operations. The Pulaski County Planning Board is expected to hold a public meeting on this topic September 27, 2011. The Quorum Court is expected to consider this item at its meeting on October 25. We encourage supporting the Land Use Plan. Pulaski County is accepting public com-

ment on a proposed draft of the plan until September 16. Make your voice heard and submit your comments to [vmclendon@co.pulaski.ar.us](mailto:vmclendon@co.pulaski.ar.us). A PowerPoint on the proposed draft is at <http://co.pulaski.ar.us/pdf/LUPCpublic081511.pdf>. Contact me for more information.

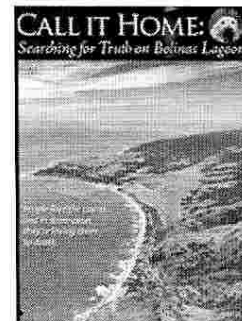
— Kate Althoff, CAG Treasurer  
[Kate.Althoff@arkansas.sierraclub.org](mailto:Kate.Althoff@arkansas.sierraclub.org)

## Screening of Environmental Film October 29

Screening of *Call It Home* on Saturday October 29 at the Fletcher Library (823 N. Buchanan) in Little Rock at 4:00 p.m.

This documentary uses a northern California lagoon to examine the development of the environmental movement. Here's what the film's website says:

*Call it Home: Searching for Truth on Bolinas Lagoon* celebrates the beauty and importance of the world famous Bolinas Lagoon, explores the issues behind a decades-long community debate to understand the forces affecting its future, and seeks to inspire people everywhere to love and respect nature.





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## Turk Update Continued

Southwestern Electric Power Company (SWEPCO) back to square one, where they would need to conduct a proper National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis before being allowed to continue construction on the 8 acres. Currently, construction on the rest of the 2,800 acres continues.

The Sierra Club is proceeding with full force in our water and air permit cases, though one of the other plaintiffs, the Hempstead County Hunting Club (HCHC), decided to settle with SWEPCO. The fact that HCHC decided to settle does not affect Sierra Club's ability to move our water and air lawsuits forward. Some of the terms in HCHC's settlement

with SWEPCO included for SWEPCO to never build additional generation units on the Turk site; no future transmission lines associated with the Turk Plant will cross sensitive environmental areas; and SWEPCO will provide funding to support the HCHC's longstanding efforts to conserve, restore, preserve, and enhance the Little River Bottoms and the Grassy Lake area.

Sierra Club's brief in the air permit appeal at the Arkansas Court of Appeals is due on September 6, and then SWEPCO has 30 days after that to submit their reply brief. Oral arguments will be requested. Sierra Club members submitted over 160 comment letters (thank you!) to the Arkansas

Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) opposing Turk's draft National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit, which would be a permit to discharge polluted water into the Little River. Ten of our members also went down to Hope to testify at the hearing. Toxins from the coal plant would be in the discharge water, along with high temperatures, which damage aquatic life living in the Little River Bottoms area. ADEQ has not finalized the permit, but if we decide to, we will have 30 days to appeal the permit once it is finalized.

— Lev Guter, Sierra Club Associate Organizing Representative