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IOWA SIERRAN

Spring 2007

Volume 37, No. 1

Legislative Priorities for Iowa Chapter of Sierra Club

For the 2007 Session of the Iowa Legislature, Sierra Club, Iowa Chapter has established a number of top priority issues for our work. This is an outline of our priority issues and we ask your support and involvement in achieving success for the protection of Iowa's environment and natural resources.

If you are interested in receiving an email newsletter and update on legislative issues, please contact lylekrewson@mchsi.com with "Legislative Update" in the subject line. We do guarantee you will not receive these missives too frequently, so we hope you will want to stay on our distribution list.

What follows is the first basic outline of the issue areas these emails would highlight. From time to time, we will highlight one or more in an 'Alert' fashion asking for your action in contacting your legislators or the Governor about them.

Please take a moment to familiarize yourself with the issues below. We hope you will want to be a part of Sierra Club efforts this year to achieve success from our legislative actions.

Thanks for your kind attention and for the actions you may take. Now is not too soon to begin these conversations with your legislators.

Lyle Krewson
Iowa Chapter Lobbyist

Debbie Neustadt
Legislative Chair

Energy:

Sierra Club has energy policy among its highest priorities (highest nationally), so we will be pushing for strong policies on carbon reduction, greenhouse gas emissions, energy efficiency and global warming.

Representative Donovan Olson, Chair, House Environmental Protection Committee has appointed a standing Energy Subcommittee, Chaired by Representative Nathan Reichert. That subcommittee will meet weekly, and look at all energy related issues to come to the committee. Reichert has stated they will work on developing, with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR), long term Energy Policy legislation for Iowa. A particular focus, according to Reichert, is to look strongly at ways to enhance energy conservation efforts and initiatives in Iowa.

On the Senate side, Senators Rob Hogg and Joe Bolkcom are leading an effort to develop a series of energy policies, taken from parts of a comprehensive bill drafted last year by then Representative Hogg. A special focus will be on issues relating to climate change, energy efficiency, a state carbon registry and carbon reduction policies.

Sierra Club will be very involved in all of these issues.

Local Control of Siting of Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs):

Sierra Club is involved in a broad coalition to give counties authority to have a local say in the siting of CAFOs, as a quality of life issue for people residing in areas where CAFOs are sited. This would be in addition to the statewide environmental standards that CAFOs of a certain size must meet. This will be one of the most hotly debated issues during the 2007 Session of the Iowa Legislature.

In addition, the separation distances currently in the law to protect nearby neighbors and important facilities may be re-considered this year.

The House Environmental Protection Committee has been holding discussions on these issues in full committee and in a subcommittee chaired by Representative Marcella Frevert. They planned to meet weekly for six weeks to develop the committee response on these CAFO issues. Additionally, the local control issue is reported to be looked at by the House Agriculture Committee chaired by Representative Delores Mertz.

Your conversations on these issues with your local legislators will be crucial to our success.

Sustainable Funding:

Jane Clark, former Chapter Chair, has served this past several months as a member of the Sustainable Natural Resource Funding Advisory Committee. This committee was mandated by the legislature during the 2006 session and was convened by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. The committee was charged with investigating sustainable sources of funding for natural resources needs in Iowa. Sierra Club - Iowa Chapter, Iowa Environmental Council, Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, Iowa Association of County Conservation Boards, Iowa Farmers Union, Izaak Walton League of Iowa, Conservation Districts of Iowa, Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants

Forever, Farm Bureau, The Nature Conservancy, Iowa Renewable Fuels Association, the Secretary of Agriculture, and four legislators, make up the Advisory Committee.

For a more complete article about this issue, see page 2 of this newsletter. Sierra Club will be very involved in this issue, as appropriate funding for natural resources has been greatly constrained in recent years and Iowa ranks near the bottom of all states in funding for natural resources.

Septic Tanks:

Senate Study bill SSB 1066 requires septic tank inspections at time of sale or other property transfer of a building where a person resides, congregates, or is employed that is served by a private sewage disposal system to have the sewage disposal system serving the building inspected prior to any transfer of ownership of the building. At the time of inspection or within one year prior to the inspection, any septic tank existing as part of the sewage disposal system shall be opened and have the contents pumped out and disposed of as provided for by rule.

Working with the Iowa Environmental Council and others, Sierra Club is supporting this bill.

Cougars and Bears:

Sierra Club continues to advocate the addition of cougars and black bears to the 'Fur-Bearing Animal' list administered by the DNR. This would have the effect of protecting these species. It would allow the DNR to establish a hunting season if the species numbers would support that; typically those two species would not, of course. Currently, there is no protection for those animals that do appear in Iowa... obviously in very small numbers; they can be killed with no recourse by the public, no public protection. Always a person can protect themselves and property from direct threat.

Sierra Club takes the lead on this issue.

Bottle Bill:

Senator Dennis Black, Chair of the Senate Natural Resources & Environment Committee, has indicated an interest in developing a bill to 'solve some issues' in the current bottle deposit law. Representative Donovan Olson, Chair of the House Environmental Protection Committee, has appointed a subcommittee chaired by Representative Beth Wessel-Kroeschell, who will look at issues relating to the bottle deposit law. She has begun subcommittee meetings, and will be hearing from various stakeholders, before developing a bill. It is likely, of course, to include the issue of the handling fee per container that supports the redemption centers around the state.

Sierra Club supports the Bottle Deposit Law as currently constituted. We would want to see it expanded to include the redemption of all similar containers...water, tea, etc., and support the increase in handling fee for redemption centers.

Lyle Krewson
Sierra Club, Iowa Chapter Lobbyist

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Tongass National Forest Still Needs Protection Comments Needed

On January 12 the U.S. Forest Service proposed an amendment to the Tongass National Forest land use management plan (TLUMP), starting off a 90-day comment period on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS).

Now is the time for Sierra Club members across the nation to weigh in on management of the Nation's largest National Forest. The new draft forest plan for the Tongass is the result of an August 2005 decision by the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals on a case called NRDC vs. the Forest Service, (with Sierra Club as a co-plaintiff.). The court ruled that the forest plan was illegal because of a Forest Service calculation error that doubled the estimates regarding projected market demand for Tongass wood. As a result the forest plan had designated much more land than was appropriate for logging, particularly logging in roadless areas. This is borne out by the fact that, while the old plan allowed up to 257 million board feet of timber to be sold every year, the actual amount of wood cut has averaged less than 50 million board feet over the last six years.

So, faced with rejection by the courts and overwhelming citizen opposition to logging in roadless areas, what does the Forest Service propose to do? They developed seven alternatives that each allow logging in important Tongass watersheds! Incredibly, the Forest Service's "proposed" alternative would again allow up to 257 million board feet to be cut annually -- as much cutting as under the old, illegal plan and five times as much logging as the six-year average. Our calculations estimate that up to 80 percent of this logging would likely come from roadless areas. How does the Forest Service rationalize this increase? They say their plan accommodates a new and revitalized logging industry in Southeast Alaska. An industry they hope to create. Wishful thinking: Tongass timber remains uncompetitive in the market place.

The Tongass National Forest has the highest subsidy level of any National Forest and currently citizens subsidize more than \$45 million worth of money-losing timber sales each year. This translates into about \$200,000 for every logging and mill job generated by the program. A large part of this loss is generated by the Forest Service's road building program.

Nearly every roadless area sale has depended on the American taxpayer paying directly for the road building. This happens nowhere else in the National Forest System. Many times the Forest Service pays for and constructs a road before they have even found a mill willing to buy the timber. One example is the infamous Midway Timber Sale. This sale was planned in an extremely high value and undeveloped watershed south of Hoonah, Alaska. When the sale failed to attract any bidders, Alaska's Senator Ted Stevens earmarked funds to 'pre-road' it at a cost of over \$2 million. Several years and several re-offerings later the sale sold for less than \$60,000. Under the Forest Services new 'proposed alternative', every roadless area sale will almost certainly require a 'pre-roading' contract to attract a bidder.

Different Visions

The Sierra Club's vision for the Tongass is one where all its wild places are protected. It is one where the economies

Continued on page 2.

Sierra Club Iowa Chapter
3839 Merle Hay Road, Suite 280
Des Moines, IA 50310

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Sustainable Funding for Natural Resources

Iowa has one of the most altered landscapes in the nation. Prior to European settlement, Iowa was covered by a mixture of tall grass prairie, savannas, deciduous forest, and wetland-associated vegetation. Today, 99.9% of the prairie, 99.0% of the savannas, 95.0% of the wetlands, and 57.0% of the woodlands have been converted to other uses. This has caused environmental stresses, problems for wildlife, and a loss of natural areas.

A number of worthwhile attempts have been made over the years to provide funding for natural resource protection and enhancement including the Resource Enhancement and Protection Fund (REAP) and the Environment First Fund. Unfortunately, these and other funding sources have always been inadequate to sustain and protect natural resources and to increase natural open space in Iowa. Funding for natural resources has averaged less than one percent of the State's General Fund. Even this funding fluctuates from year to year and has no long-term guarantee of future availability.

Increased efforts toward Iowa's natural resources will provide multiple benefits. Soil conservation efforts will improve both surface water and groundwater quality in this state, and, additionally, improved natural areas (including parks, wildlife areas, and trails) will provide open spaces for young and old alike to enjoy the Iowa outdoors.

In order to look at long-term funding for Iowa's natural resources, the Iowa Legislature requested that a report be prepared researching sustainable funding sources to address the current inadequate funding. This report has been prepared as directed in HF 2797; (Standing Appropriations Act); Div. IV; Sec. 43 passed by the General Assembly and signed by the Governor in 2006 (see Appendix 1). This Act required the formation of an advisory committee to look at options that may be used to provide sustainable funding for Iowa's natural resources. The committee consists of diverse individuals representing 18 conservation agencies, organizations and members of the Iowa Legislature. The legislative mandate required this committee submit a report on its findings to the General Assembly by January 10, 2007. It was directed that the report contain, but was not limited to, the following four components:

1. Information on what surrounding states have done to provide sustainable funding for natural resource conservation.
2. Outline of a conservation funding initiative agreed upon by the advisory committee.
3. Outline of the amount of revenue needed and what would be accomplished if the conservation funding initiative is implemented.
4. Analysis of Iowa's citizens' willingness to pay for identified conservation funding initiative.

After in-depth discussion and research over several months, a preliminary report was submitted to the Legis-

lature. To summarize the findings of the components:

- Surrounding states have used a variety of methods to fund conservation actions ranging from relying primarily on user fees to using a dedicated portion of their general sales tax.
- The committee has estimated that a sustainable total of \$150.0 million per year is needed to begin to address Iowa's natural resource needs and is outlined in this report, as well as providing suggested distribution of these funds to the following to implement actions identified in the report:
 - \$20.0 million for the Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) Fund. (currently funded at \$11 million)
 - \$20.0 million for the Local Conservation Partnership Program. (this would be a new program)
 - \$35.0 million for the Department of Natural Resources (IDNR). (this would be a base increase over FY06)
 - \$30.0 million for the Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS). (this would be a base increase over FY06)
 - \$20.0 million for Watershed Protection.
 - \$10.0 million for Lake Restoration.
 - \$15.0 million for Trails.
- A "Willingness to Pay" survey of Iowans was conducted and an analysis of their comments was completed. The committee also held a public forum to receive comments on the concept of sustainable funding.
- To help provide focus to the possible sustainable funding sources, aka mechanisms, the committee determined the need to identify how "natural resources" would be defined for this report. To address Iowa's wide-ranging needs, the result consisted of three categories:
 - (1) Fish, Wildlife and Natural Areas
 - (2) Soil and Water
 - (3) Parks and Trails.

The committee identified parameters that sustainable funding mechanisms would need to meet for consideration. This set of common sense guidelines include:

1. All Iowans will benefit from sustainable funding for natural resources and the burden of funding should be a responsibility of all Iowans. (This parameter is also supported by responses in the Willingness to Pay survey.)
2. The funding source should have statewide appeal and be politically viable.
3. The source of funds should be easy to administer without the need to establish significant additional administrative staff.
4. New funds, when possible, should have the ability to be leveraged to increase their effectiveness.
5. Each new revenue source must raise over \$5 million annually to be considered by the committee.

6. The new funding source must conform to all state and federal commerce regulations.
7. The funding source should be "new money" and not a replacement of existing resources.
8. The funding source should be stable, protected, and identified as dedicated.
9. The new funding must unite, rather than divide, conservation agencies and organizations.

After discussion and research, the committee evaluated a broad range of sustainable funding mechanisms that Iowa has yet to pursue but may already be working revenue streams in other states supporting their natural resources. As the committee identified if the funding mechanism met the criteria in the parameters above, they narrowed down the list to the five most viable options to survey Iowans on and recommend Governor and General Assembly for consideration.

It should be noted that a number of the funding mechanisms may need to be combined to reach the recommended \$150.0 million per year. The committee also recognizes that the dedicated funding mechanisms have the possibility of not being guaranteed as being sustainable; therefore, a variety of funding mechanisms may need to be initiated in order to help maintain an adequate funding level for natural resources.

The priority funding mechanisms being recommended by the committee, at this time, are:

1. Gaming/Gambling Revenues
2. Fractional Sales Tax Increase, that is constitutionally protected
3. Lottery (A dedicated portion of the state lottery profits)
4. Tax Incentives/Credits for Conservation
5. Bonding

If you support sustainable funding for natural resources, please contact your legislators. This information was excerpted from reports and materials of the committee. If you would like more information on these reports, please contact Jane Clark at jrclark@radiks.net.

Continued from page 1.

Tongass National Forest

of the region and its communities are in harmony with their wild setting. Our vision recognizes that even as the timber industry has become more un-competitive, the recreation and visitor industries have expanded and become the true economic drivers of Southeast Alaska. Yet to help these industries, the Forest Service spends only a tenth of what they spend to promote logging. Our vision for a new Forest Plan would move funding from the timber program to managing appropriate recreation and tourism. It would recognize that 435,000 acres of existing clearcuts need restoration. Our vision is one of repairing the damage resulting from past logging practices, not one of creating yet more damage.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Let the Forest Service know you believe it's time for a change in the Tongass! Write a comment letter before April 10, 2007. Tell them they must now protect all wild roadless forests, move away from wasteful spending on a flawed logging program and toward a new plan which makes sense for Alaskan communities.

Time to Act

Comments are due by April 10th!

(If you mail comments, send them by April 3rd)

Submit Comments To:
Tongass Forest Plan Adjustment
C/O Sierra Club
333 West 4th Ave., Suite 307
Anchorage, AK 99501

You can also find more information and write a sample letter through our website at www.sierraclub.org/forests. Comments generated there will be sent electronically to the Forest Service. A form letter has been generated, and you can also add own comments.

Contact:

Katherine Fuselier, Conservation Organizer
Sierra Club, Alaska
333 West 4th Ave., Suite 307
Anchorage, AK 99501
Katherine@sierraclubalaska.org
(907)276-4060
C: 907-317-4975
F: 907-258-6807
www.alaska.sierraclub.org

SATURDAY, MARCH 31:
TONGASS NATIONAL FOREST
Urbandale Public Library on 86th Street—11 a.m.

Lois Norrgard of the Alaska Coalition will present a program on the Tongass National Forest: The U.S. Forest Service is revising the Tongass National Forest Land Management Plan. Public comments can be made until early April. Lois will be giving a presentation to inform us about this important forest - America's Rainforest. We will be pushing for greater biodiversity protections, protection of the roadless areas and to push for final protection of the Tongass. Contact Jane at jrclark@radiks.net or 515-223-5047 for more information and to RSVP.

Volunteers Needed to Help Protect our Rivers and Streams

The timing is right for you to volunteer for a campaign to gather testimony in support of the recreational uses made of Iowa's rivers and streams. We have a narrow window of opportunity to provide this input. The first round of 200 stream assessments and recommended designations will be presented in April 2007. The results of this survey will help determine the level of pollution protection that streams and rivers will receive.

Please see the volunteer opportunity outlined on page 3 (opposite this page) for helping Iowa Chapter gather information about the uses of the rivers and streams that you are familiar with.

Energy Committee Volunteers Needed

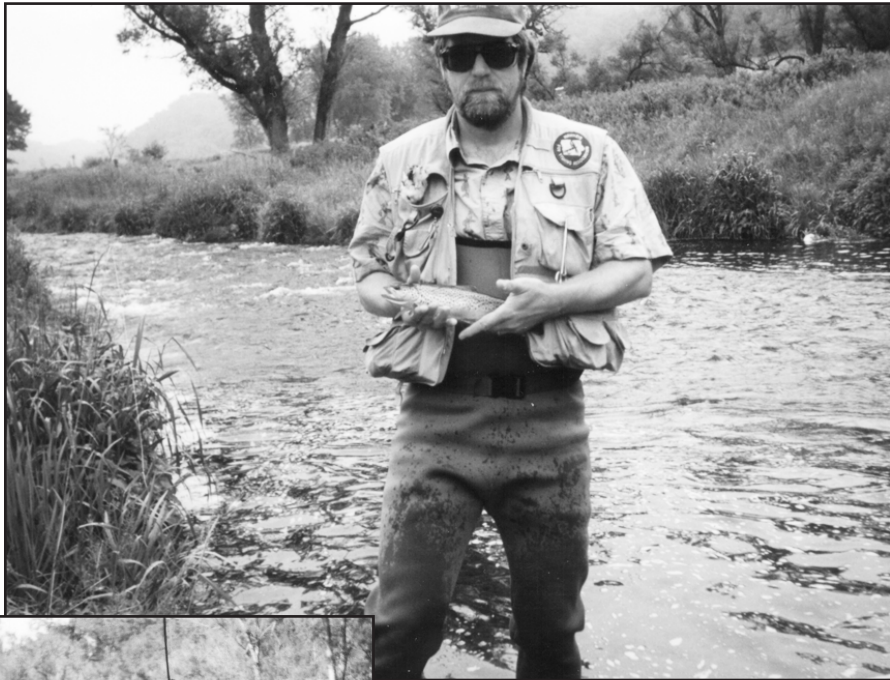
Iowa Chapter of Sierra Club is forming a committee of Chapter members who are interested in energy issues. We want to propose and work to adopt policies that will ensure environmentally sound responses to the issues of energy production, use, and efficiency and conservation. These proposals will be presented to state and national legislators and administrative decision makers. There is no question that everyone now sees the importance of planning our energy future. The Sierra Club must take the lead in making sure this future is one that protects the environment.

If you would like to be a member of this important committee please contact: Wally Taylor, Wtaylor784@aol.com, 319-377-2842 (home), 319-366-2428 (work)

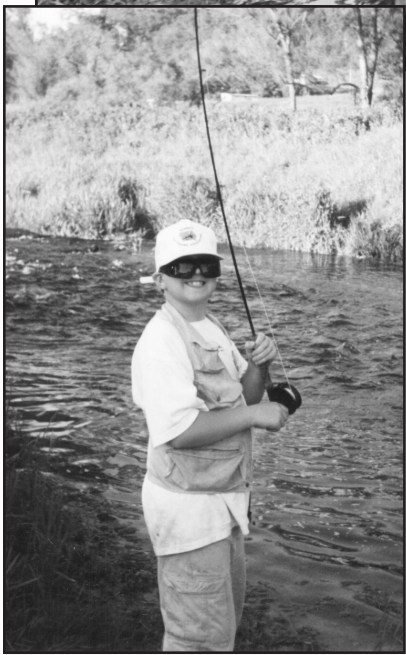
Volunteer Opportunity—Assistant Treasurer for Iowa Chapter of Sierra Club

We are looking for a volunteer to serve as assistant treasurer. The current treasurer, Don Wall, will train this assistant. Following training, the assistant treasurer could move into the treasurer's job when Don steps down. Prior to each meeting the treasurer prepares a financial statement. The treasurer collects contributions during the year and at the annual dinner and silent auction. The treasurer also pays bills of the Iowa Chapter. Additionally the treasurer keeps Chapter financial records, prepares a budget, and completes reports that must be sent to the National Sierra Club office. If you are interested, call Don Wall at 515-232-8569 or email your interest to pammackeytaylor@aol.com.

Sierrans – We Need Your Help to Protect Our Rivers and Streams



Above, Steve Veysey holds a Waterloo Creek brown trout caught and released.



Above, Spencer Veysey catches his first trout on a fly rod at Waterloo Creek.

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) needs our help. DNR is currently researching how Iowans use rivers and streams for recreation.

To assist with this effort, the timing is right for a public outreach campaign in support of the recreational uses made of Iowa's rivers and streams.

In 2005 the Iowa Chapter of Sierra Club was instrumental in getting state water quality standards rewritten to presumptively protect all perennial and perennial-pooled rivers and streams for recreation and aquatic life. The Chapter now faces the challenge of ensuring that the rules are implemented properly.

The State has mandated that all affected streams must be formally assessed before the additional protections will actually be used in calculating wastewater discharge permit limits. The Use Attainability Assessment (UAA) process can be heavily influenced by public input describing specific personal uses of the water resources. The first round of 200 stream assessments and recommended designations will be acted upon during the spring and summer of 2007. We must act NOW. Copy the form below, or download copies from: www.iowa.sierraclub.org.

It is important to gather information now about existing recreational uses of our rivers and streams. The results of this survey will help determine the level of pollution protection that streams and rivers will receive.

For questions or more information, please contact the Iowa Chapter office at 515-277-8868 or email iowa.chapter@sierraclub.org.

WE NEED EVERY SIERRAN WHO USES OUR RIVERS AND STREAMS TO ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS FOR EACH RIVER OR STREAM YOU USE.

RIVER and STREAM EXISTING USES TESTIMONY

Have you ever participated in or observed someone taking part in the following activities in the stream named below. Please circle your answer. If you answer "yes", please describe where and how often the activities took place. Return the survey as soon as possible to:

Iowa Chapter of Sierra Club
3839 Merle Hay Rd, Suite 280
Des Moines, IA 50310

STREAM NAME: _____ COUNTY: _____

CITY OR TOWN CLOSEST TO THE AREA OF THE USE: _____

Swimming or other water play where you might ingest water. YES NO
If yes: _____

Children playing in or near the stream. YES NO
If yes: _____

Canoeing or kayaking. YES NO
If yes: _____

Tubing (body partly or completely immersed in the water). YES NO
If yes: _____

Fishing, seining, or trapping for minnows. YES NO
If yes: _____

Which fish species have you caught or observed others catch? Circle fish caught.

BASS CATFISH CARP BLUEGILL CRAPPIE BULLHEADS CHUB TROUT

Do you eat the fish you or others catch in this river or stream? YES NO

NAME: _____ Phone or E-mail _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ ZIP _____

This information is complete and true to the best of my knowledge.

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

IOWA SIERRAN

Editor: Jane R. Clark
Associate Editor: Jo Hudson

The Iowa Sierran is dedicated to informing members and other friends about environmental issues that affect Iowa. It is a forum for the expression of ideas on topics of environmental concern, as well as the voice of the Iowa Chapter of the Sierra Club. Articles with a by-line represent the research and opinions of the authors and not necessarily that of the Sierra Club.

We invite submissions of letters, articles, photographs and illustrations. Letters and articles must be complete, accurate and identified with your name, address and phone number(s).

Deadlines are February 5 for the Spring issue; May 5 for the Summer issue; August 5 for the Autumn issue; and November 5 for the Winter issue. Preference will be given to articles 400-1,000 words in length that relate to Iowa. Longer articles will be considered. The editor reserves the right to edit for clarity, space and libel reasons. Copy should be typed or clearly handwritten, or copy may be submitted in text by e-mail. Other word processing formats may be acceptable--please call before sending. Articles sent by e-mail should be included in the body of the message, not sent as an attachment. If you must attach a file, use a Word document and send to iowa.chapter@sierraclub.org.

Photos may be submitted. Your name, address and phone number(s), as well as all significant information describing the photo(s) must be included. Photos will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Display advertising may be accepted. Please contact the editor or executive committee (see Directory of this newsletter) before submitting an ad. Ad rates are: \$450 for full page; \$250 for half-page; \$125 for quarter page (11 x 17 page size); or \$16 per column-inch for camera-ready copy. Receive a 10% discount for the same ad with an annual contract (4 times/year); payment in advance is required. Column width is 3.2 inches, gutter (column spacing) is 0.3 inch. Placement of any ad is contingent upon availability of space, and ads must meet Sierra Club guidelines.

Classified ads are five cents per character, including punctuation. Enclose payment with order. Personal checks are acceptable, payable to Sierra Club Iowa Chapter. The editor reserves the right to reject any ad deemed inappropriate. Send classified ad information to: Sierra Club, 3839 Merle Hay Road, Suite 280, Des Moines, Iowa 50310.

A subscription to the Iowa Sierran is included in the cost of Sierra Club membership. For non-members, a subscription is \$5 per year.

National Updates

Sierra Club Renewable Energy Report

Roadmap Details Plan for Tackling U.S. Global Warming Emissions by 2050 Using Efficiency, Renewables

On January 31, 2007, the Sierra Club joined with the American Solar Energy Society (ASES), key Members of Congress, and the nation's preeminent climate scientist to unveil a new report authored by ASES that lays out a plan for dramatically reducing the nation's global warming emissions. The roadmap—now the official Sierra Club global warming strategy—details how an aggressive, yet achievable increase in the use of energy efficiency and renewables alone can achieve a 60-80% reduction in U.S. global warming emissions by 2050.

"This report moves the discussion from *whether* we can achieve the necessary reductions in global warming pollution with energy efficiency and renewable energy in this country to exactly *how* we should do it," said Carl Pope, Sierra Club Executive Director. "Fully three-quarters of the reductions in global warming pollution called for by Dr. Hansen and other scientists can be realized using energy efficiency, wind, and solar—all technologies we have today. The rest can be made with geothermal, biofuels, biomass, and other renewables. We already have the best, cheapest, and cleanest solutions at our disposal; now we just need the market and our political leaders to put them to work."

Key findings of the report:

- We can reduce carbon emissions by 1,100-1,200 million metric tons annually by 2030 with aggressive deployment of energy efficiency and renewable energy alone;
- 82% of necessary reductions in carbon emissions can come from wind, solar, and increased energy efficiency. Biomass, biofuels, and geothermal could comprise the rest;
- This plan would achieve the U.S. share of reductions required to stabilize atmospheric CO₂ levels at 450-500 parts per million and limit additional average temperature rise to 1°C above 2000 levels.

Climate scientists agree that in order to prevent the most catastrophic effects of global warming we need to halt the growth of our emissions immediately and begin reducing them within the decade. The peer-reviewed report, "Tackling Climate Change in the U.S.," is authored by scientists from the American Solar Energy Society, many of whom are employed by our nation's national research laboratories.

It identifies the renewable energy resources available across the U.S. that can be used to transition away from the dirty, fossil fuel-based energy economy of yesterday toward the clean energy technologies that will fuel the economy of tomorrow. The report brings together detailed analyses of various smart energy solutions, including energy efficiency solar (both photovoltaic and concentrating), wind, biofuels, biomass, and geothermal.

The report was unveiled at a Capitol Hill event featuring, preeminent NASA climate scientist James Hansen; Carl Pope Executive Director Sierra Club; Dr. Chuck Kutcher, ASES member, an NREL researcher and principal author of the report; and Brad Collins, ASES executive director.

A most exciting development – we have developed with the American Solar Energy Society a road map using existing renewable and energy efficiency technologies to achieve a 60-80 percent reduction in Co₂ by 2050. The report is definitely worth a read. <http://www.ases.org/climatechange/index.htm>

For information, contact Josh Dorner, 202.675.2384 josh.dorner@sierraclub.org.

Environment and Public Works Hearing on "Global Warming and Wildlife"

Statement of Bart Semcer, Washington, DC
Sierra Club Representative, Fish and Wildlife Policy
February 7, 2007

Global warming is the most significant threat to America's fish and wildlife since the unrestrained market hunting and rampant destruction of habitat a century ago. The threats to the natural world faced by earlier generations gave rise to leaders in the halls of government, people like Theodore Roosevelt, who had the will to take bold and thoughtful action to secure our wild places and the benefits they provide the people of this nation. Addressing the challenge of global warming requires that our leaders follow in the footsteps of Roosevelt and take the same kind of determined action to protect our wild heritage.

We can secure the conservation achievements of the past and the outdoor traditions they support. We can ensure that wildlife is still found in the precious, wild reaches of our nation. We can prevent hundreds of thousands of acres of existing national wildlife refuges from being lost to rising seas, we can maintain America's over \$100 billion hunting

and fishing economy and we must confront the threat of global warming by working our way towards a new energy future.

The certain and drastic impacts of global warming make it even more imperative that we take immediate action to protect important fish and wildlife habitat from other degradation. For example, since it is estimated that global warming has the capacity to eliminate as much as 90% of the wetlands in the Prairie Pothole Region, we must create incentives and implement protections that keep these vital wetlands from further destruction by development. These remaining wetlands have become even more precious and the area known as "America's Duck Factory" will cease to produce the abundance of wildlife we enjoy unless we better address all of the impacts.

Likewise, with the expected changes in precipitation patterns in inland regions and the predicted rise in sea level along coastal areas, all bird, land and aquatic species will be affected. Drought, flooding, changing river patterns and decreased snow pack will affect all wildlife in North America. Public land managers must incorpo-

rate the effects of global warming into their planning.

A new energy future that ends our dependence on the dirty oil and coal technologies of yesterday can be built around the recommendations of leading scientists who last week issued a report showing that we can use the smart energy solutions we have today - solar, wind and efficiency technologies - to achieve a large share of the 60% - 80% reduction in U.S. global warming emissions that we need to realize by mid-century if we are to stave off the worst effects of global warming. Building this future means securing jobs: keeping jobs to boost the outdoor industry and creating jobs for those who will manufacture America's new energy infrastructure and put it in place.

The technology is here. The workers are ready. The polar bear, the musk ox, the walrus, and the caribou are counting on us. What we need now is leadership in Washington and a willingness to follow in the footsteps of Roosevelt and take decisive action to protect the wild legacy we leave our children.

Contact: Virginia Cramer, 202-675-6279

Cool the Planet, Save the Arctic From Alaska Wilderness League, AlaskaWild Update #254

March 20 has been dubbed "Climate Crisis Action Day - Cool the Planet, Save the Arctic." Marrying the two issues of global warming and protecting America's Arctic Refuge makes perfect sense. While oil and gas drilling may be the most visible threat to the fragile Coastal Plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, global warming is perhaps an even bigger threat. And while stopping oil drilling *merely* means blocking some other piece of legislation, stopping global warming will require a massive, pro-active effort on the part of this country as a whole.

Global warming has and is affecting America's Arctic in many ways. Alaska will be experiencing the worst, most detrimental changes brought on by global warming anywhere on the planet. Alaska's plants, animals, lands and people are and will experience fundamental changes as a result of global warming. Furthermore, Alaska's three largest industries – oil, tourism, and fishing – have all been affected dramatically by rising temperatures already.

Over the past 40 years, annual temperatures in Alaska have increased 4-5°F and winter temperatures have warmed 8-10°F. Over the next 100 years, under a moderate emissions scenario, annual average temperatures are projected to rise 5-9°F over land and up to 13°F over the oceans. Glaciers throughout the Arctic are melting, with some of the most rapid glacial retreats being recorded in Alaska. A 2002 study of 67 Alaskan glaciers found that most are melting at a rapid rate, shrinking by an average of more than a foot each year from the 1950s to the 1990s, and some nearly 6 feet a year from the mid-1990s to 2001. As a result, Alaska not only loses a great deal of its natural beauty, but also one of its largest tourist attractions (AK glaciers). Of course, with record high temperatures during the last few years, we have also seen a record number of acres in Interior Alaska consumed by forest fire. In the summer of 2004, 6.5 million acres of Alaska burned, including blazes in the Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge. Alaska's forests are also moving northward and to higher elevations. A study of 200 locations

in northern Alaska found that shrub cover had increased 40 percent over the last 50 years. As a result, Alaska has lost 15 percent of its arctic tundra since 1980.

Along with glacial retreat, Alaska has also experienced a 10 degree rise in water temperatures in the Yukon making the Chinook salmon more susceptible to parasites which cause the salmon to rot instead of drying as they are caught by subsistence fishermen. Readings from the Niniichik River on the Kenai Peninsula in 2004 found temperatures were above state water quality standards for salmon on 83 days.

Warm waters have made Alaska's Bristol Bay salmon runs occur earlier than normal, making it harder for the salmon to survive. Furthermore, in the Yukon River, anywhere between 30 and 40 percent of all salmon caught are infected with a disease called ixthyophonosis. This disease basically rots the fish from the inside out, making the fish inedible. Almost no fish were recorded as infected 40 years ago, but with warmer temperatures, the disease has become more of a problem.

Another vivid example of global warming is the thawing permafrost that lies beneath 80 percent of the Alaska. This represents 166 towns and 1700 miles of Alaska highway. As temperatures have warmed, the southern limit of permafrost has shifted northward by several hundred kilometers. Economic damage will continue to be severe as more and more buildings sink into the ground and hundreds of roads are warped and cracked. Also with warmer temperatures, the permafrost on Alaska's north slope is melting more rapidly, resulting in oil companies across the north having less time to use their ice road accesses to many of their wells. In essence, frozen ground (permafrost) is a lot harder than unfrozen ground, therefore it is able to support the weight of heavy equipment. When the ground is defrosted, it is not hard enough to bring such equipment across the land. In 1970, there were 200 days a year in which oil companies could make use of their ice/frozen roads. By 2002 that

number had dropped to 103 days (according to the state of Alaska).

Also, as temperatures rise and vegetation shifts, Alaska's wildlife have to adapt. We are already seeing moose and beaver populations moving northward, forcing current arctic denizens to adapt or perish with nowhere northward to go. Global warming has also caused a delay to the Porcupine caribou herd migration through the Arctic Refuge as deeper snows and more freeze-thaw cycles in recent years have dramatically altered the characteristics of Alaska's land. In addition, earlier thaws of river ice have increased the loss of newborn calves during the migration. If the loss of summer sea ice continues at its current rate, wild polar bears will go extinct by the end of the century. Polar bears in the Hudson Bay area have already experienced a 15 percent decline in weight and number of cubs born between 1981 and 1989.

It will no longer be enough for us to stop drilling in America's Arctic Refuge if we truly want to protect it. Global warming is just as real of a threat to the ecosystems, Native peoples and animals as oil drilling is today. March 20 will be the official joining of the campaigns to protect America's Arctic Refuge and to stop this country's dirty energy agendas which contribute to global warming.

*On March 20, thousands of concerned citizens will gather at the United States Capitol for Climate Crisis Action Day. The day will begin with speeches from politicians, celebrities, and religious and indigenous leaders. Then, everyone will have a chance to speak with his or her legislators in the halls of Congress. All of the day's actions will ensure that Congress hears the urgent message: it's time to fight global warming with responsible energy decisions and protections - not drilling - for special places like the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. **Please join us in DC on March 20 for this critical day of action. Sign up and let us know you're coming by going to www.ClimateCrisisAction.org.***

Retain the Rain with Permeable Surfaces

By Jerry Neff, Eagle View Group Chair

During the last two or three decades flooding in urban areas has been more severe. Although global climate change is responsible for severe weather, the major factor in flooding is increased rapid runoff from impermeable surfaces such as streets, parking lots, roofs, sidewalks and driveways. A thunderstorm dumps a lot of water in a short time causing storm sewers to overload wastewater treatment plants, which results in releases of untreated or partially treated water or sewage into rivers.

The Clean Water Act calls for cities to develop a stormwater management plan which would ease or end the dumping of untreated runoff or sewage from wastewater treatment plants. The easiest and best way to solve the problem is at the source—the impermeable surface that the rain falls on. In my case it is the 1200-square foot house roof and the 1300 square foot concrete driveway.

Our house was built in 1965 and a year later we began paving sections of the gravel driveway. In the years that followed we added a parking area and a second garage. After about 40 years the concrete had deteriorated and needed replacement. It was so full of cracks it could almost have been considered already permeable. It took us over a year of driveway research and estimates before we finally decided to go with a permeable replacement.

In case you weren't paying attention in school, the word PERMEABLE means "having small openings that permit liquids and gasses to seep through." Even though our house is located in the county and not subject to city regulations, we made the decision to do the right thing, bite the bullet on cost and install a new driveway of locking concrete pavers separated three-fourths of an inch apart and infilled with stone chips. Aesthetically, its beauty is worth the extra cost.

The old concrete was removed and trucked to a cement plant five miles away, where it was recycled into new concrete. Then 18 inches of earth was removed and replaced with 16 inches of 2-inch stone. A layer of fine gravel was then applied and the 10-inch square pavers were laid down and the spaces filled in with fine stone chips. The job took a week to complete and involved a lot of labor.

We are now halfway through our second winter with the new driveway. It is unaffected by frost heaving, which is

what hastened the demise of the old concrete drive. Rainwater comes off the house and disappears into the permeable surface. In the hardest rain, the water that hits the driveway is soaked up with no runoff. Because of the large amount of gravel under the driveway, it can catch and slowly release very large amounts of rainwater.

In our rural area a neighbor clears the snow from our road and driveways with an old Ford tractor, but I have asked him to not clear our drive for fear of damage to either the pavers or his equipment. I don't mind shoveling snow so I take care of that. A snow blower would handle the job just fine but I eschew motorized labor savers.

Of course you must be wondering about the cost. Sometimes going green isn't cheap. At about \$13 a square foot it was more than twice the price of a ho-hum ordinary driveway which in time would need replacement. Permeable driveways will outlast regular concrete and handle heavier loads. If a paver should break it is easily replaced.

Permeable sidewalks, parking areas, and public spaces in Europe have been around for a long time and add charm to any area. If you are thinking of replacing your old path with something more up to date you can reduce the cost by going partially permeable. A concrete drive can have strips and borders of permeable pavers and still do a good job of retaining the rain.

The down side? I had to buy a rechargeable leaf blower to remove leaves and debris from between the pavers. A debris build up can reduce the ability to absorb water and could lead to vegetation growing between the pavers. With a driveway this pretty, I want to keep it that way.



The Author's Driveway

Note:

Urban stormwater continues to impair the nation's waterways, 29 years after passage in 1972 of the law now known as the Clean Water Act. Stormwater regulation has been in and out of the courts, Congress and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and is now in the hands of states and local governments.

EPA ranks urban runoff and storm-sewer discharges as the second most prevalent source of water quality impairment in our nation's estuaries, and the fourth most prevalent source of impairment of our lakes.

The main reason why urban stormwater remains such an important contributor to water pollution is the fact that in most areas, stormwater receives no treatment before entering waterbodies. The storm-sewer system merely collects the urban runoff and discharges it directly to the nearest river, lake, or bay. Comprehensive stormwater regulation has been slow to develop but is progressing.

Our Water, Our Land, Our World

Carl Kirpes: A junior at Valley High School in West Des Moines, participated in the 2006 Governor's High School Water Summit held at the State Capitol. He is a sports enthusiast who enjoys writing poetry, specifically sports poetry. He also enjoys exploring the outdoors via hiking, canoeing or biking on local bike paths. Carl recently read some of his poems at a meeting concerning the new possible uses for the old Science Center in Des Moines. His poetry served to inspire the audience during their discussions.

He wrote of this first poem:

One of the places I find inspiration in life is through the beauty and power of nature. Athletics are a big part of my life but the athletics that I enjoy the most are those that take me outside into the natural world. I wrote this poem for the "River of Words" competition and it ended up being selected as a state winner.

Then Carl wrote:

After winning the "River of Words" competition I was invited to present at the celebratory banquet for the participants in Project A.W.A.R.E. Project A.W.A.R.E. is a river expedition in which a group of individuals canoe down a river and as they do so they take the trash out of the river. At the end of the expedition some of the trash is then assembled into an art sculpture to commemorate the handwork of the participants. After presenting my River Run poem at the end of the banquet I sat and listened to the other presenters and looked around at the participants of Project A.W.A.R.E. and I began to write this poem. This poem is to honor the participants of Project A.W.A.R.E. and all other individuals who are working hard to better our world.

River Run

By Carl Kirpes

*I run,
But not alone,
For the river runs beside me
The water runs between the banks
Following a course towards an unknown destination
The water
Is in constant motion
Its only goal
Is to reach the destination
In which
The river leads it
It flows silently
Yet beneath the surface
There is a great power
As I run, I tire
But when I feel I can run no more
I look to the river for inspiration
I continue running, running to a destination
I will only know when I reach it
My legs, feeling like that cannot take another step
Begin a constant motion again
My only goal is to reach that destination
I run silently, breathing in and out
On the surface, I may look like a simple runner
But under the surface
I am an athlete
Filled with the will power,
Of a river*

Our Water, Our Land, Our World

By Carl Kirpes

*A Great power
Earned over Centuries
Carving its path through the landscape
Started from a single raindrop
Added by the thousands
To create a stream
A stream that turned into a river
A river that has carved its course
And left its mark
On the land on which we live
A force that has been here longer
Than all of us
And yet
This great force
Has no control over its fate
The fate of the river
Is in our hands
Along with the fate of this world
We can choose to destroy it
Or make it better
Make it our own*

Explore • Enjoy • Protect

“Cool Congregations” Solving Global Warming One Family at a Time

By Sarah Webb

A group of three moms and a dad from St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Cedar Falls, Iowa, have taken the words of their priest to heart: “To keep the faith, we must keep the earth,” says Rev. Benjamin Webb. Sarah Webb, Kate Dunning, Ann Eastman and Curt Ritter responded to this call by starting a program called, “Cool Congregations”, as a means for people of faith to take practical steps to slow global warming. “Every faith tradition has a tenet calling us to care for creation,” Sarah Webb says, “Cool Congregations” is a way to put your faith into action.”

“Cool Congregations” adds a new dimension to regular financial stewardship programs in faith communities whereby interested congregants pledge to implement energy efficient measures in their own homes. They choose just four or five actions from a list of many researched options. In doing this, they are pledging to reduce their personal family contribution to global warming, and often save money in the process! Energy efficiency is the first step to take to reduce a homeowner's contribution to global warming because it is the most cost effective and quickest solution.

“Cool Congregations” is a program of the new Iowa Interfaith Power and Light, www.ncrlctk@mchsi.com, one of twenty-two state initiatives of The Regeneration Project. www.theregenerationproject.org. Their goal is to educate Christian, Jewish and Muslim faith communities about global warming and encourage them to take steps to solve the problem, both in their institutional buildings and in the homes of congregants, as well as working on policy issues at all levels.



The carbon dioxide emissions coming just from the electricity used in Kate Dunning's home totaled 20,000 pounds before she became “cool”. She changed 75% of her bulbs to compact fluorescent in August and has seen a 50% reduction in her electricity use on her utility bill and will save nearly 10,000 pounds of carbon dioxide this year alone, just from switching bulbs. She invested \$200 in light bulbs, will get that back in lower utility bills over the next 5 months, and save an additional \$450 in the first year on her utility bill.

“Cool Congregations” participants first measure their carbon footprint, then choose steps to reduce it by 10% and submit this in the form of a pledge sheet to their congregation.

So what's a carbon footprint? Well, it has nothing to do with shoe size. Ann actually has tiny feet. It's a number that represents how much energy one uses and therefore how many pounds of global warming pollution (carbon dioxide or CO₂) one produces. Counting natural gas, electricity, car and airplane miles, and garbage, Ann's family of four produces 87,000 pounds of carbon dioxide a year. The average American emits just over 21,000 pounds of CO₂ annually, so Ann's family is just slightly above average.

At St. Luke's, stewardship is seen as more than just giving time or money, it's taking good care of what we have been given - this fragile earth, our island home. One Psalmist states, “The earth is the Lord's and everything therein.” Rev. Webb interprets this for his congregation as, “Creation is God's gift to us - the gift of good land, good water, good air - and we are placed in the garden to tend and care for the earth as God's stewards, as earthkeepers. We keep the faith in part by keeping the earth, by conserving it in good health for future generations, exercising restraint for the sake of others yet to come, repairing and restoring what has come undone out of love for the Creator and compassion for others.”

Ann Eastman's family took these words to heart and was the first of thirty-five families to figure their carbon footprint at St. Luke's as part of the new “Cool Congregations” stewardship program. When Ann first saw her figures, she groaned in dismay, “Just call me Bigfoot!”

Ann made some changes with some help from the

“Cool Congregations” program. She changed six regular light bulbs to compact fluorescent. She washes most of her clothes in cold rather than warm water, turns out the lights when she leaves the room and hangs 5 of the 15 loads of wash a week she does each week on a drying rack rather than use the dryer. Over a three month period Ann was able to reduce her carbon footprint by 9%, at the cost of \$12. “I was amazed at how much I saved with so little effort! I feel a little better, but we have a ways to go.” She's right, the Kyoto Protocol (international climate agreement to stop global warming) suggests 11,000 pounds/person and some scientists say 4,700 pounds/person is what's needed to slow global warming.

Inspired, and four months into the program, after an energy audit by the utility, (one of the first steps recommended by Cool Congregations), Ann's family replaced their 50 year old boiler and their decades old water heater with a new energy star appliances. With these additional steps Ann's family's total reduction of CO₂ is 21%, and they are saving \$100 a month on their utility bill. With these savings they will have received payback on their initial investment just after four years.

If all Iowans took simple steps to reduce by 10%, we could prevent the amount of global warming pollution that 604,000 average cars produce in a year. That's one third of Iowa's present fleet of cars. At St. Luke's the 35 participating families hope to reduce global warming pollution equal to the amount that 18 average cars produce in a year.

The “Cool Congregations” team has presented training workshops in four cities in Iowa - Cedar Falls, Iowa City, Des Moines, Cedar Rapids - reaching over 60 congregations. One team of three from St. Patrick's Catholic Church who attended the training in Cedar Falls have formed a steering committee and their goal is to enroll 40% of their congregation - 500 families- over the next 36 months.

Workshop participants will measure their own household carbon footprint, look at ways to reduce it, and learn how to organize a “Cool Congregations” stewardship program in their own congregation. Workshops are free and open to all, but participating congregations are asked to join Iowa Interfaith Power and Light at the \$50 membership level. Individuals may join at any level they wish.

On March 31 a “Cool Congregations” training workshop is being held at Church of the Resurrection, Dubuque. Contact Paul Schultz at schultzpf@msn.com to sign up.

“Cool Congregations” is also presenting to the CITM gathering of the South East Synod of the ELCA on March 10 in Cedar Rapids and to the Episcopal Diocesan Convention in Des Moines in November.

What about Conservation?

By Jerry Neff, Eagle View Group Chair

In a recent issue of the MILWAUKEE JOURNAL SENTINEL, Wisconsin Governor Doyle talked about how important it is to wean ourselves from foreign oil and start producing homegrown alternative fuels like windpower and biofuels. Sounds like a pretty good idea but, quoting Governor Doyle, “We need to pump more fuels produced from Wisconsin's crops and trees into drivers' gas tanks...,” TREES? First there was the Coal Rush, then the Ethanol craze and now Biofuels.

Sierra Club is definitely against using forest biofuels. The forest service and the timber industry are looking for all sorts of excuses to cut more trees and the use of forest biofuels could be another foot in the door to increase logging in our national forests.

One might ask—well, what is wrong with using wood waste from our national forests to make energy? The answer is—any time loggers and equipment go into a forest, the soil is disturbed, small trees and seedlings are destroyed and erosion begins. Since a lot of logging occurs on hillsides and slopes, any soil disturbance creates erosion which fouls streams.

Electricity generation requires a steady and dependable supply stream of fuel. In order to accomplish this, loggers would not be selective—they would log the quickest and easiest way, by clear cutting.

Our national forests are too valuable to be used for fuel.

There are better ways to create biofuels, like switch grass and prairie grasses. No matter which alternative is used there will always be a down side.

But what about conservation?

Is anyone talking about using less fuel? That is certainly the lowest hanging fruit. President Bush and other elected officials are so concentrated on meeting the demand no matter how great it is. Every morning I see cars idling in the driveways, waiting for their drivers to jump into a nice warm car. We've all heard this a hundred times but getting cars

to go farther on a gallon of gas is the quickest and easiest way to ease into the no-fossil-fuel-age. But you can't get better mileage out of a car if the engine is running and the wheels aren't turning. Every driver can be more efficient by improving his or her driving habits. And it's not just about cars. Turn off the light when you leave the room. Turn down the thermostat, wear long underwear. The list is endless.

Let's all get on the Energy Band Wagon and start solving problems.

DON'T MISS OUT!

If you're not on the Iowa Topics listserv you're missing out on information about everything from genetically modified organisms to energy policy to wetlands information and more. The listserv is a combination of legislative information, meetings and outings announcements, take-action alerts and general discussion. It is open to any subscriber. Any message relating to the environment or the Iowa Chapter itself is welcome to be posted on the list.

To subscribe, address an e-mail to LISTSERV@LISTS.SIERRACLUB.ORG. In the message body, type the following one line command (use your first and last name instead of the example given):

SUBSCRIBE IOWA-TOPICS Your first name Your last name. No subject is necessary.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

(See insert for calendar of events for Central Iowa Group and Leopold Group.)

Cedar Prairie Group (Cedar Falls/Waterloo Area) New!

• **Trail Walks and a Cup of Joe:**

Meet at Mendale Park Downtown Cedar Falls at First and Main Streets. Sundays at 2:00 p.m.:

February 25
March 18
April 15

• **March 24, Saturday, Prairie Plants--Pioneer Cemetery Workday:**

1:00 p.m. meet at HyVee, Logan Ave, and Waterloo to prepare for burn at Bennington Township Cemetery/rural Dunkerton. Bring rakes; wear gloves, long pants, and long sleeves.

• **April 22, Sunday, Earth Day hike:** Effigy Mounds, Harpers Ferry

10:00 a.m., Guided Bird/Walk
11:00 a.m., Woodland wildflower hike (1 ½ hrs)
Meet at Hy-Vee, Logan Ave in Waterloo at 8:30 a.m. to carpool

• **April 27, Friday, Arbor Day Tree Planting:**

Denver City Hall, 5:30 p.m.

• **April 29, Paddle Fest—Environmental Education Event:**

Gateway Park, Cedar Falls, 11 a.m. -6:00 p.m.

• **May 13, Sunday, Visit Wolters Prairie near Clarks-ville:**

1:00 p.m. meet at Shellrock Kwik Star, Hwy 3 to carpool.

• **May 20, Sunday 2:00 p.m., IOWATER Monitoring:**

Black Hawk Creek, Waterloo, an impaired waterway, specific site TBD,

• **June 10, Sunday, Visit Cedar Hills Sand Prairie, North of Cedar Falls in Butler County,**

1:00 p.m. meet at Happy Chef in Cedar Falls, 1st St. to carpool.

• **June 21, Thursday, Tour UNI Tall Grass Prairie Center:** 6:00 p.m., North of UNI- Dome

There may be an admission fee or cost associated with some events or gas money contribution to car pool

Please call Outings Co-chairs, Pam Wolter at prwolter@earthlink.net or 319-231-0541 or Rebeca Jimenez at JimenezRE@aol.com or 520-705-0262 with any questions you may have or changes that may have occurred about these outings prior to the event.

Eagle View Group (Quad-Cities Area)

The Eagle View Group meetings are held at the **Bettendorf Public Library** the 3rd Monday of the month except June, July and August. Our EXCOM meets the 2nd Monday of EVERY month at the Butterworth Center in Moline, Illinois. All of our meetings begin at 7 PM and the public is welcome to attend. Because this schedule is made out well in advance, some changes might occur so it is a good idea to call the information number if you are expecting to see a special program. **For more information about meetings, contact Jerry Neff at gmn14r@aol.com or 563-332-5373.**

• **March 9-11, Madison Wisconsin**—Join fellow Sierrans in working “Our” Sierra Club Booth at Canoecopia—one of the largest Paddling Expos. Spend the weekend in the booth educating customers about the Sierra Club, yet with plenty of opportunity to enjoy the show. What should you expect at Canoecopia? Check out the website at: www.canoecopia.com. If you like to paddle this is the expo you have been waiting for. For more information contact Holly Johnson at hollajean@yahoo.com or 309-912-8110 cell. Canoecopia 2007 will run the weekend of March 9-11 inside the Exhibition Hall at the Alliant Energy Center in Madison, Wisconsin.

• **March 19—Eagle View Meeting:** Beth Carvey Stewart, museum director of Blackhawk Historical Site will show slides and give a talk about the Civilian Conservation Corps rebuilding park infrastructure during the Great Depression.

• **April 16—Eagle View Meeting:** Roger Bollman, Corps of Engineers and avid canoeist will present a slide program CANOEING THE NORTH COUNTRY of northern Minnesota in the Boundary Waters.

• **March 18—Outing: Gems, Fossils, and Volcanoes... Oh My!** Join us on Sunday, March 18 from 2-4pm. The Augustana College Geology Museum will run continuous tours for Eagle View Group members and friends. Tours will include hands-on activities for the whole family. See the skeleton of the “new” dinosaur that Dr. Hammer discovered in the Antarctic, amazing prehistoric fossils, rocks, minerals that glow in the dark. Examine other rocks and minerals to learn their many uses and why we need to conserve them. At 3:00pm, Dr. Wolfe will explain about the unique geology of Hawaii and demonstrate a simulation of a volcano erupting! Please contact Holly Johnson at email: hollajean@yahoo.com.

• **April 1—Outing: Pelican Picnic:** Pack your picnic lunch and pile the family in the car for a fun filled outing. Observe and learn about the migrating American White Pelican and other water fowl. We will take a short hike around Smith’s Island where we can study newly emerging spring wildflowers, native plants and other birds. While enjoying our, lunch we can discuss the sightings of our hike and a future service outing to Smith’s Island. Bring your picnic lunch, beverage, binoculars, and camera. Conditions on Smith’s Island can be muddy, wear waterproof hiking boots and long pants. Contact Sheri Colman at email: skcolman@aol.com.

• **April 1—Outing: Pelican Picnic:** Pack your picnic lunch and pile the family in the car for a fun filled outing. Observe and learn about the migrating American White Pelican and other water fowl. We will take a short hike around Smith’s Island where we can study newly emerging spring wildflowers, native plants and other birds. While enjoying our, lunch we can discuss the sightings of our hike and a future service outing to Smith’s Island. Bring your picnic lunch, beverage, binoculars, and camera. Conditions on Smith’s Island can be muddy, wear waterproof hiking boots and long pants. Contact Sheri Colman at email: skcolman@aol.com.

• **May 21—Eagle View Meeting:** This program will be presented by Neila Seaman, Director of Sierra Club’s Iowa Chapter. More information will be available in March.

Northwest Iowa Group (Woodbury and Surrounding Counties)

All the events are referenced to Karen Juhl at 712-276-6965 or email at ajxot@longlines.com

• **Thursday, March 15, 7 PM,** Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center - Karen Taylor-Burton will talk about the monarch butterfly garden when has been successfully developed by Master Gardeners at Monarch Cove on West Lake Okoboji. This is a very innovative project to rehabilitate a ravine and is a model for other such endeavors that is receiving recognition by other groups. Refreshments will be provided.

• **April 19, 6:30 PM**—Firehouse 29, Floyd Boulevard Local Foods Market, 1211 5th St. Program includes: organic foods buffet dinner, silent auction and speaker on environmentally friendly topic (to be determined).

Forest Service Budget Calls for Land Sales

Recreation and Wildlife Funding Goes Down While Timber Subsidies Go Up

On February 5, 2007, the Bush administration released a proposed FY2008 Budget for the U.S. Forest Service, which would require the agency sell land holdings in order to pay for many basic conservation and recreation programs. The agency also came under fire for wanting to make double digit cuts in funding for recreation and wildlife programs while also pushing to increase subsidies for commercial timber sales.

Specifically, the draft budget includes language that would require the Forest Service to raise \$800 million through land sales and use half of the proceeds for payments to states and half for land acquisition and other programs such as “conservation education, access to public lands, habitat improvement and to cover the administrative costs of disposal.” A similar proposal last year met with strong bipartisan opposition from state and federal lawmakers as well as hunting, fishing, and other recreation and conservation groups. To view the official list of potentially eligible lands for sale by the Forest Service, go to: <http://www.fs.fed.us/land/staff/spd.html>

The Forest Service has also been under fire for a proposal to close thousands of campgrounds, boat launches, and picnic areas, and while the agency has promised to seek public input before making final decisions, the budget proposal reflects the administration’s desire to pay for core programs in part by closing facilities.

Also buried in the budget proposal is language that would significantly increase subsidies for commercial timber harvesting. The Forest Service aims to increase timber production by over half a billion board feet more than the previous year, almost doubling the timber output in the Northwest alone. Overall, timber subsidies are about the only program to see any increase in funding—costing taxpayers roughly \$408 million. Meanwhile, the Forest Service has proposed an 11% funding decrease for both “recreation, wilderness and heritage” and “wildlife and fish management.”

In response, the Sierra Club issued the following statement from Executive Director Carl Pope: “Our National Forests are an important part of our national heritage and they belong to all Americans, including future generations. The Bush administration has no business auctioning them off to the highest bidder for a short term fix.

“There is no reason why the most powerful nation in the world should have to sell off its public parks and forests to pay for core programs that allow people to hunt, fish, and hike and protect sources of clean water. The only explanation is reckless mismanagement and misplaced priorities.

“Rather than selling off or shutting down its core assets, the Forest Service should pull the plug on costly subsidies to the timber industry. If the agency is so desperate that it must sell off its land holdings and close campgrounds, it certainly has no business continuing, let alone increasing, subsidies for commercial timber production. Eliminating that wasteful spending would help to Forest Service focus more on stewardship and less on selling public land.”

CONTACT:

Eric Antebi 415-977-5747
Sean Cosgrove 202-675-2382

To read the proposed FY2008 Forest Service Budget, go to: <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/usbudget/fy08/pdf/appendix/agr.pdf>

To view the official list of potentially eligible lands for sale by the Forest Service, go to: <http://www.fs.fed.us/land/staff/spd.html>

Prairie Lakes Group—New! (Buena Vista, Clay, Dickinson, Emmet, O’Brien, Osceola, Palo Alto and Pocahontas Counties)

Group ExCom meetings: The second Wednesday of each month at 6:30pm at the Pizza Ranch, 528 Grand Ave, Spencer. Contact Donna at (712) 336-2103 or prairielake@sierra@hotmail.com for more details about these events.



SIERRA
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Loess is More

Service in Iowa's Loess Hills National Natural Landmark
September 20-29, 2007

*Away, away then I must go.
Up into these hills where the prairies grow.
And nature speaks to let us know
the wisdom in a flower.*
-- Sylvan Runkel, "Ode to the Loess Hills"

Sierra Club is sponsoring its second Service Outing at Country Homestead in the Loess Hills. This year's challenge will be to outdo the group from the 2006 Service Outing who managed to clear an acre of invasives and gather nearly 24 pounds of native grass and flower seeds. Some activities on this trip will be strenuous. You should be able to hike steep hills and be in good physical condition to enjoy the outdoors. This will be a non-smoking trip. You can check out the details at www.sierraclub.org ...click on "get outdoors" on the right and on the next screen click on "search for a trip" on the left. All you have to do is enter the trip number (2007 Sierra Club Trip #07431A) and submit, then click on brochure...and it should pop up.

Highlights of the Outing:

Learn about rare hill prairie habitats. See a rare loess landform. Explore Lewis and Clark sites

Includes:

Lodging, meals, on-trip transportation, all project tools and instruction, presentations on history, culture, and habitat restoration.

Trip Number: 07431A

Price: \$695

Deposit: \$100

Capacity: 9

Leader: Sharon Colman

When the last glaciers departed from the Midwest 14,000-24,000 years ago, vast quantities of fine silt particles called loess were left exposed to the elements. The wind sculpted glacial loess into phenomenal land formations exceeding 200-300 feet in depth. Such formations are found in only one other location in the world—along the Yellow River Valley of China.

Iowa's Loess Hills include virgin hill prairie abundant with dozens of grasses, sedges, and flowering plants. Today in Iowa, less than one-tenth of one percent of the original prairie remains. The Loess Hills face a series of threats: farming, ranchette development, mining, fire suppression, invasive species, off-road vehicle (ORV) misuse, sedimentation, and ill-suited land management practices. Large areas of loess are being carted away as landfill for metropolitan areas such as Omaha.

The Loess Hills of Iowa cover more than 650,000 acres, but only about 18,000 acres are being managed by a federation of state, county, and private partners. Over 95 percent of the loess hills are on private land. To give recognition to this diverse public-private partnership, Congress has designated the area a National Natural Landmark.



Photo by Holly Johnson

The Outing

Trip participants will assist private and government parties to preserve and protect the Loess Hills by working with David and Lin Zahrt, who were featured in a Sierra magazine article in 2005. Trip participants will undertake a range of habitat preservation tasks, including identifying existing flora and creating a botanical inventory, cutting and removing invasive

cedar trees, identifying and rescuing native oak savannah, harvesting and processing seasonal prairie seeds, preparing prairie restoration seed plots. The many efforts underway to protect the Loess Hills are eloquently described in the March 2005 issue of Sierra magazine. See <http://www.sierraclub.org/sierra/200503/prairie.asp>.

Sierra Club's Iowa Chapter is campaigning to protect the Loess Hills through education, service projects, conservation easements, and the acquisition of wild places in the Loess Hills's twelve special landscape areas. The club hopes to

help add 20,000 acres of protected prairie by 2020 to the acres currently protected. The club also encourages enforcement of bans on off-road vehicle use in publicly protected areas to prevent the scarring of these sensitive lands.

David and Lin Zahrt are the fourth generation living on land homesteaded in the late 1860s. They own 160 acres within the

Loess Hills National Natural Landmark in what is known as the Turin Special Landscape Area. David and Lin have been working diligently to restore loess prairie sections that have declined due to improper land management practices over the last 50 years. When not volunteering as prairie restorers, they operate the Country Homestead Bed and Breakfast, <http://www.country-homestead.com>.

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