



SIERRA  
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# IOWA SIERRAN

Fall 2008

Volume 38, No. 3

## Annual Awards Luncheon and Fundraiser

Date: Saturday, September 20  
Time: 11:00 social time, silent auction  
12:00 lunch, followed by speaker and awards ceremony  
Place: Story County Conservation Center  
McFarland Park, north of Ames  
Speaker: Frederick L. Kirschenmann  
Distinguished Fellow, Leopold Center  
for Sustainable Agriculture, "Why our Modern Food System is not Sustainable"  
Food: Lucallan's Restaurant featuring local foods  
Cost: \$35 per person  
Make checks payable to:  
Sierra Club, Iowa Chapter  
RSVP: by September 17  
to Neila Seaman, Director  
Sierra Club, Iowa Chapter  
3839 Merle Hay Rd, Suite 280  
Des Moines, 50310  
iowa.chapter@sierraclub.org  
Or 515-277-8868

Join us on Saturday, September 20, as we celebrate together the efforts and achievements of fellow Iowa Sierrans and conservation activists. Hear Fred Kirschenmann's unique perspective on the challenges and opportunities we face in balancing an agricultural economy with the protection of our natural heritage. Hike the many trails in McFarland Park. The event will be catered by renowned Lucallan's Restaurant, featuring local foods.

NEEDED: Silent auction items of a unique, novel, or personalized nature. Please send them to Neila at the address above as soon as possible.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!!

### Fred Kirschenmann To Speak at Annual Awards Luncheon and Fundraiser

Dr. Frederick L. Kirschenmann, Distinguished Fellow for Sustainable Agriculture will be speaking on "Why our Modern Food System is not Sustainable" at the Annual Awards Banquet and Fundraiser on September 20. Dr. Kirschenmann states "It is my belief that we will see major changes take place in our food and agriculture systems in the next few decades that will likely give the comparative advantage to ecologically sound, smaller farms and a lot more people engaged in producing our food."

Today's modern food system has been designed as an industrial enterprise. Such enterprises subscribe to the same industrial principles as any industrial operation - specialization, simplification, concentration, maximum production, and short-term return. While these principles have proven themselves to be very effective in efficiently producing the short term products they are designed to produce, they are dependent on the unlimited natural resources which fuel all industrial systems and they ignore all ecological and social costs. In other words the resilience of the system is essentially ignored. We are now about to reach a series of thresholds which will make our industrial food system dysfunctional and we need to begin redesigning new food systems that are resilient and self-renewing.

### Directions to the Conservation Center in McFarland Park

The Story County Conservation Center is located in McFarland Park, north of Ames. From I-35, take exit 116 (County Road E-29). Travel west 1/2 mile to Dayton Avenue. Turn north on Dayton Avenue to 180<sup>th</sup> Street. Then turn east on 180<sup>th</sup> and drive 1/2 mile to the Conservation Center.

## Water: The Rural-Urban Connection by Cornelia Butler Flora

North Central Regional Center for Rural Development  
Iowa State University Ames, Iowa

\*Editor's note: Professor Cornelia Butler Flora wrote this paper about the 1993 floods in Iowa, beginning the paper in 1997 and completing it in 1998. It is previously unpublished.

Rainfall in Iowa increased 10% in the last 30 years. Flood events in Des Moines increased 480%. During that 30-year time period, Des Moines increased its geographic area, incorporating farmland, flood plain, and wetlands. The city paved and subsidized pavement of hundreds of acres of land and, with federal financial support, straightened streams. As a result, water, which had previously stayed on the land, where it slowly percolated downward and where plants and microbes took out a wide variety of excess nutrients and pollutants, now rushed faster and in greater quantities whenever it rained.

But it is not just the extra water coming from the city of Des Moines that increases the flood events. Upstream, federal conservation funds straightened streams and drained wetlands. Most of the fields in Iowa are undergirded by a complex series of drainage tiles and agricultural drainage wells. The tiles quickly move water from the land and into streams. That water is clear - the nutrients and pesticides it contains do not appear as suspended solids. But the quality and quantity of the water that reaches Des Moines, other cities downstream, and ultimately the Gulf of Mexico has changed (Isenhardt, et al.). Downstream dikes are built and buildings raised. Yet these countermeasures to increasing flow exacerbate the problem for those further downstream.

Iowa (89%) ranks behind California (91%) and Ohio (90%) in the percent of wetlands lost between 1790 and 1980, although Indiana, Illinois and Missouri are not far behind. The rate of wetland lost declined in the 1980s and 1990s. But there are still perverse policies in place that encourage land reclamation - and cost taxpayers money in terms of disaster relief, higher insurance rates, water treatment costs.

### How Did This Happen?

Since the Swamp Act of 1850, it has been the policy of state and federal governments to drain wetlands, therefore increasing the economic utility of the land. There was no awareness of the ecological utility of wetlands - the very term "swamp" implies danger and disorder, nature out of control. For western European settlers, there was no word for forested or prairie wetlands, for there they had long been eliminated. Swamps violated their norms of orderliness, evoked disease and evil, and were viewed as an obstacle to progress (Vileisis, 1997).

The Swamp Act was one of the few federal programs greeted warmly by the pre-Civil War South, as it moved swampland from the federal government to the states, thus setting the stage for drainage and channeling. Even

then, there was realization among engineers that upstream drainage shunted water more quickly into the river, boosting its volume and that upstream levees increased the rate of downstream flow. The response to the ever-increasing flooding was ever-increasing spending for drainage and levees with federal as well as state funding.

In Iowa and much of the rest of the country, tubular drainage tiles, laid in ditches dug through low land and then covered, began to be used in the late 1800s. However, it took twenty years after the passage of the Swamp Act for the technology of drainage, the infrastructure, the state laws and financial institutions to be put into place for the drainage of the land to gain momentum. Public investment was critical for private investment to be profitable. And large scale drainage had to be approached as a community endeavor through the creation of drainage districts with the authority to tax land for project and the power of eminent domain to condemn land through which a drainage ditch was deemed necessary. Such districts generally were inaugurated in response to local demand. In the first decades of the 1900s, farmers drained 69 percent of Iowa's wetlands.

### First Alarms: Birds

The first ecological goods that were missed as part of the efforts to eliminate wetlands by draining, straightening, and damming were birds. Local sportsman's groups and Audubon Societies joined together to protect waterfowl - and their habitat. The Migratory Bird Act of 1913, a rider to agricultural appropriations bill, gave the federal government primary jurisdiction over migratory birds, making it a primary protector of waterfowl.

Scientists, particularly biologists, recognized the connection between drainage of land, flooding, and plentiful fish and birds. Even as drained land lost its productivity and fell into tax delinquency, more lands continued to be drained. Only by linking wildlife loss to habitat destruction could lands be spared from reclamation.

We have reached the point where the endangered species act is the only national land use policy. While this may protect wetlands, it sets up strong antagonisms between landowners, local residents, and the federal government.

### US Department of Agriculture and Wetlands

The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) has traditionally and not unexpectedly viewed farmers, not nature or environmental advocates, as its principal stakeholders. Increasing short-term production by bringing new land into production - even during periods of major land set-asides to control supply - provided perverse incentives for farmers to take good land out of production to qualify for deficiency payments, while bringing marginal land into production to qualify for conservation payments.

*Continued on page 2, Iowa Sierran.*

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## Water: The Rural-Urban Connection

(continued from page 1, *Iowa Sierran*)

The first major conservation effort by USDA related to soil. The new Soil Conservation Service, in cooperation with state and local governments, created Soil Conservation Districts to implement practices felt to conserve soil. That single-minded approach to conservation, with the focus on soil led SCS engineers and soil scientists to increasingly become involved in drainage programs. The Civilian Conservation Core drained or re-drained over 1.5 million acres in 1939 alone. The federal government gained local legitimacy by offering Soil Conservation Districts technical assistance and subsidies for drainage. Even marginal areas were thus cropped – increasing the deficiency payments made to keep prices supported. SCS viewed drainage as a “hook” to get farmers to use other conservation measures and draw up conservation plans. To further the process, the USDA Production and Marketing Agency shared the cost of on-farm drainage projects. That cost sharing continued through a variety of agency name changes. Price supports and subsidies for drainage removed the risk from investing in marginal land. In many places, retiring erodible lands from cultivation depended on draining wetlands for cultivation. And the training and singularity of the SCS mission made it difficult for the agents in the field to move easily when their mission was redefined as more than soil protection.

Villeisis states the perverse incentives and the social structure to support them well.

With the sanction of the federal government and the approval of local farmers and contractors, drainage proceeded as a mission unifying communities with a patriotic, agrarian zeal to make their lands as productive as possible in the hungry post-war world. (1997: 197).

Wildlife decreased apace with its habitat. The Bureau of Biological Survey provided data and worked to restore marginal land wetlands. Jay N. “Ding” Darling, who headed the Bureau in the 1930s, had long pointed out the contradictions in his political cartoons, which showed the irony of draining land and depleting waterfowl and fish while agriculture’s major problem was overproduction. From 1938 on, the US Biological Survey (USBS) and later the Fish and Wildlife Service continually fought for resources to counteract the more generously funded policies of habitat destruction.

Since 1970, there has been an enormous increase in the science available about wetlands and the services they provide (Ewel, 1997). Wetlands together provide biodiversity, water quality improvement, flood mitigation and abatement, water conservation, denitrification, carbon accumulation, and sulfur reduction, among other services. No single wetland provides all those functions, but each provides some. By equating wetlands with wildlife and endangered species, their role in effecting water quality has been ignored. The dangers of pollution to wildlife – and to humans – is as important as habitat preservation in terms of ecological services. But the single-issue approach to wetlands – stemming naturally from the first to voice the alarm about them, leads to continuing disconnects between local and federal officials. For example, a community leader in [a] small coastal town in Oregon was vociferous in a recent meeting about the idiocy of the EPA, who would not let them drain a low spot that only sometimes had water in it – and it ran into the ocean, anyway. There weren’t even any wildlife around it. That place was needed for a city building. The fragility of the local coast, due in part to the poor quality of water which drained into it, was not even in her consciousness as she worked hard to make her town sustainable.

### What Can Be Done?

Much can be done in urban areas through zoning, land use planning, the use of permeable materials, and urban wetland restoration. These tend to be fairly point-specific solutions, easy to identify in place (although difficult to implement when the local growth machine is intent on expansion). But rural areas also deserve attention because more land is rural and more water comes off it. Because that water runs into – and sometimes over – urban areas, rural urban partnerships must be formed to make sure that both water quantity and quality are controlled.

Several exciting partnerships are already underway. The City of New York and the Watershed Agricultural Council in southeastern New York State are working together to assist the agricultural community in adopting operational program and management techniques that protect water quality as well as enhance economic competitiveness and viability. That management includes a variety of riparian buffers and constructed wetlands, which take agricultural land out of production – and is compensated. And it saves the City of New York billions that would otherwise be spent

on constructing a water treatment plant. This partnership between land managers and the people who use one of the products is mediated through non-governmental organizations and municipal governments.

In Iowa, watershed restoration on Bear Creek, with a wide array of public and private support (local farmer-owned cooperative, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture at Iowa State University and the Iowa State University Agroforestry Research Team) has included wetland restoration. While woody and perennial buffer strips protect Bear Creek from soil erosion, the pipes from the drainage tiles run directly into the creek. Only by diverting the tile flow into a newly constructed wetland can the majority of the field be drained and the water slowed down and cleansed of both pesticides and nutrients. A constructed wetland now processes water from a 12 acre cropped field by rerouting the drainage tile to the wetland (Isenhardt, et al.). A group of landowners are now discussing a large wetland to drain a larger part of the watershed. But new partners will be required, both to help compensate for the crop land that must be taken out of production and to be sure that the downstream effects are optimized.

### Lessons Learned

While it is easy to critique past policy and private investment strategies based on superior science, acknowledgement of our collective past ignorance of hydrology and ecological functions suggests the power of the unknown mediating human-nature relationships. What we do not know about natural systems may do us much more harm than the good done by what we do know about altering them.

A key part of working with the ecosystem rather than against is understanding what we do know about ecosystem functions – and respecting what we don’t know. Education programs that show the linkages between rural and urban areas through water – its quality and quantity – can suggest on a sub-national scale who pays and who benefits from rethinking the utility of wetlands and their role in long term sustainability at the local as well as regional, national and global scale. Policies which stress technology – a means – over economic, social and environmental ends can quickly lead to decreased sustainability.

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## CALL FOR NOMINATIONS TO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee (ExCom) of the Iowa Chapter of Sierra Club is looking for members to accept nomination for election to the ExCom of 2009. The Executive Committee is made up of eleven members and is elected by the chapter membership in December. Members elected begin their term at the first meeting in January and serve a three-year term. The ExCom meets about six times a year for a half day at locations throughout the state. Offices of chair, vice-chair, secretary, treasurer, and committee chairs are selected from the ExCom. Committee work such as political activity, fundraising, conservation and personnel help to carry out the functions of the ExCom and the chapter. If you are interested in helping make decisions about the priorities, activities and political endorsements of the Sierra Club in Iowa, and you have the time, please nominate yourself. Candidate statements will be in the December newsletter on the ballot and should consist of a statement of 100-150 words or less. Contact Pam Mackey-Taylor at [pammackeytaylor@aol.com](mailto:pammackeytaylor@aol.com) or send the statement to her at 2200 S. 31<sup>st</sup> Street, Marion, IA 52302-9413, or call her at 319-377-2842.

## Master Matrix 101

By Neila Seaman, Chapter Director

Iowa law requires a proposed facility to complete a Master Matrix questionnaire if it is larger than 1,000 animal units (au). A producer is also required to complete a manure management plan (MMP) if the facility is planned for more than 300 au. One hog equals 2.5 au so a 1,000-head hog facility translates into 2,500 animals. The application, MMP and other documents are then submitted to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR). There are two exceptions to requiring a Master Matrix questionnaire:

If the county where the operation is or will be located has not adopted the Master Matrix resolution for that particular year or does not have a valid construction evaluation resolution when the application is submitted *or*

If the operation was first constructed prior to April 1, 2002, and is expanding to an animal unit capacity of 1,666 animal units or less.

Counties can opt in their participation on an annual basis. In 2008, 87 of Iowa’s 99 counties adopted the Master Matrix resolution. That’s up from 83 in 2007. County Boards of Supervisors that chose not to implement the matrix during 2008 include Osceola, Plymouth, Jasper, Iowa, Warren, Mahaska, Keokuk, Washington, Wapello, Fremont, Decatur and Lee.

The Master Matrix questionnaire consists of general questions and three subcategories – air, water and community impacts. According to the DNR’s website, the proposed facility must obtain a minimum overall score of 440 out of 880 possible points and a score of 53.38 (out of a possible 213.5) in the “air” subcategory, 67.75 points (out of a possible 271.0) in the “water” subcategory and 101.13 points (out of a possible 404.5) in the “community impacts” subcategory.

According to Dave Moody of Nevada, president of the Iowa Pork Producers Association, producers typically won’t turn in a proposal that won’t pass the matrix.<sup>1</sup>

Let’s break that down using the Greene County facility as an example. Prestage Farms of Iowa wants to build a 4,800-head hog facility. The operator must first complete all of the supporting documents, including a manure management plan (MMP) because the proposed facility will be 1,920 animal units. Once that’s completed, the applicant completes the 44-question Master Matrix questionnaire and can pass it by collecting 50 percent (440) of the total possible points. However, an applicant must score 25 percent of the possible points in each of the subcategories of air, water and community impacts. Other points can be scored via separation distance subcategories, liquid manure structures and containment, landscaping, truck turn arounds, violation history, size of facility, manure management practices, groundwater monitoring and other issues.

Then, the county Board of Supervisors reviews the questionnaire. If the facility passes the Master Matrix, DNR issues a construction permit. If the board doesn’t approve, the DNR reviews the application and can override the county and issue a permit. The county can appeal to the EPC, but if DNR recommends approval, there is no legal basis for EPC to deny the permit.

That’s the simplified version, but you get the idea.

### (Endnotes)

<sup>1</sup> Counties need clout in siting hog facilities, *The Des Moines Register* editorial, July 22,

## IOWA SIERRAN

Editor, Chapter Chair: 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).

Please submit by email to [jrclark@radiks.net](mailto:jrclark@radiks.net). The editor reserves the right to edit for clarity, space and libel reasons.

**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.**

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

## EPC IS LAST STOP IN APPEALING CAFOS

By Neila Seaman, Chapter Director

One sunny Sunday morning, rolling along I-80 on our way to a meeting in Western Iowa, our carpool passed several large, windowless buildings near Stuart and we began speculating what animals were confined inside those buildings. We concluded that it was a chicken factory. All of the five passengers shared stories about their experiences traveling throughout the state and the smell associated with factory farms along Iowa's landscape.

All of us in the van that day are from the city. None of us are forced to stay inside our homes because the smell of ammonia emanating from a factory farm, particularly a hog facility, is so strong we can't breathe. But too many Iowans are in that predicament because their neighbors are confined animal feeding operations (CAFOs) that cram animals into very small spaces.

I have attended the Environmental Protection Commission's (EPC) monthly meetings for the past four years. During that short amount of time, I have witnessed members of communities throughout the state attend the meetings and ask the EPC to deny a construction permit that Department of Natural Resources (DNR) staff recommended because the proposed facility had passed the convoluted Master Matrix -- a system where counties annually choose to participate and adopted this year by 87 of Iowa's 99 counties.

Countless times I have witnessed the EPC members listen to the public's concerns about yet another facility moving into their community only to tell them there was nothing the EPC could do but approve the DNR's recommendation to issue the permit.

Iowans attend these meetings desperate for help. They also arrive hopeful that they will receive some relief from the onslaught of factory farms in their communities. Those of us who are spectators simply shake our heads because we've seen it so many times before. Yet, those of us who oppose the flood of CAFOs in Iowa are also hopeful the permit will not be approved. I've seen only one permit denied and that was on a technicality -- because the manure management plan was flawed.

Dallas County Supervisors voted in July 2008 to oppose two confinements planned for south of Dawson. Each confinement calls for 7,440 hogs. The supervisors knew their vote was simply symbolic and it was. The project had accumulated enough points to pass the Master Matrix and, within days, the DNR issued the construction permit.

*The Des Moines Register* quoted Murray McConnell, Dallas County's planning and development director as saying, "We sympathize with the issues that residents have, but it doesn't matter what the county does." Residents attempted to convince the Dallas County supervisors to appeal to the EPC by filing a "demand for hearing." At its July 22 meeting, the Board unanimously voted to appeal the DNR's permit to the EPC.

Why does the livestock industry have such a stranglehold over Iowans who don't want any more CAFOs in their communities?

Groups speaking out against the construction of new CAFOs in Iowa, including Sierra Club, are accused of being anti-agriculture. In fact, after the chapter distributed a news release calling for a moratorium on the construction of new CAFOs, the Coalition to Support Iowa's Farmers (CSIF), an appendage of the Iowa Farm Bureau, wrote about the Sierra Club on its website:

"The Sierra Club, a frequent critic of farm families who raise livestock under roof, renewed its call this week for a moratorium... In a news release laced with inflammatory adjectives, the Club's Iowa Chapter said 'giant' farms where thousands of head of livestock are raised indoors puts 'rural citizens at risk.'"

What's not "giant" about raising 4,800 hogs at one site? In fact, there are already 15 CAFOs within a 5-mile radius of a facility planned for Greene County. And who wants to live near 9,600 hogs near Denison or 14,880 hogs in two facilities near Dawson? Not Robert Manning, Jr., the applicant of the proposed Dallas County facilities. He lives in Granger. He said he just wants the manure so he can apply it to the 7,000 acres he farms with his father and brother.

Manning was quoted in *The Des Moines Register* as saying, "It did catch me a little off guard that there were that many people opposed to agriculture in this state." What this young farmer doesn't understand is "that many people" are not opposed to agriculture. But, anyone who opposes confining thousands of animals in tight quarters gets labeled "anti-agriculture" by industry-sponsored organizations.

Facilities proposing less than 2,500 hogs are not required to go through the process so, as a result, many of these smaller, unregulated facilities are springing up around the state.

It would be very easy to blame the Iowa Farm Bureau for all of our state's problems resulting from CAFOs. But the real culprits in this situation are our legislators. Murray McConnell, Dallas County's planning and development director, got it right when he said, "[The residents] need to take this cause to the Legislature."

Until legislators understand that the Master Matrix is permanently broken, those of us attending EPC meetings will continue to watch the parade of concerned residents and local politicians pleading with the EPC to help them by denying more permits to construct more facilities in their communities. Until the Legislature acts to change the laws, residents, tourists and interstate travelers passing through our state will be forced to tolerate the stench.

See related article on page 2, Iowa Sierran about the Master Matrix

## COUNTIES APPEAL CAFO CASES TO THE EPC

By Neila Seaman, Chapter Director

Counties that annually choose to participate in the Master Matrix can appeal CAFO construction permit applications to the Environmental Protection Commission (EPC). In the past two years, four counties have appealed by requesting a "demand for hearing." None of the appeals have been overturned and construction permits have been issued.

Most recently, Greene County submitted a "demand for hearing" against a 4,800 head Prestage Farms of Iowa facility planned for less than two miles from the Jefferson city limits. The facility passed the Master Matrix but the county didn't want the 4,800 head facility to be built. A contingent of Greene County residents—including two of the county's supervisors—traveled to Des Moines in May 2008 to speak out against the facility during the public comment period and the hearing. When it came time for the hearing, DNR Attorney Randy Clark presented the DNR's case; then Prestage Farms of Iowa and finally Greene County.

Henry Marquard, the newly elected commission chair, said the commission would exclude any information into evidence that wasn't part of the hearing. Greene County wanted the public comments from earlier that day to be part of the record; Prestage didn't because their representatives hadn't seen the comments and weren't at the meeting when they were presented.

Jerry Roberts, a Greene County supervisor, stated during "testimony" that Greene County has upward of 300 drainage ditches. Right now, he said, they're all full and because the Raccoon River is so high, these pools of manure are just sitting there until the Raccoon's levels decrease and they can drain. He said it was "like a bathtub full of manure waiting for the plug to be pulled." And that was before the severe weather slammed the state.

After lengthy discussion, Commissioner Charlotte Hubbell moved to deny the permit and Commissioner Sue Morrow seconded. Commissioners Hubbell, Morrow, Susan Heathcote and Paul Johnson voted yes while Commissioners Marquard, David Petty and Ralph Klemme voted no. Because there were only seven seated commissioners instead of the required nine, the motion failed because rules require the commission to have five votes for a motion to pass.

More discussion followed. Marquard wanted a motion to reconsider because he didn't think commissioners understood how they were voting. Hubbell moved; Morrow seconded. The vote count mirrored the first vote. So, there was a majority vote, but Greene County lost and the permit stands.

This is a 4,800-head CAFO going into an already over-polluted Raccoon River watershed. There are 15 CAFOS within a 5-mile radius of the facility planned near Jefferson.

Kossuth County appeared before the EPC in December 2007 appealing to commissioners to reject a permit issued to Charles Kollasch of near Algona. Jack Plathe, chair of the Kossuth County board of supervisors, presented concerns about two fields proposed for the application of manure and flooding that occurs at those sites. The landowner who agreed to have the manure applied to his fields, according to Plathe, lives in Minnesota.

When Commissioner Hubbell asked Kollasch how many facilities were nearby the one he proposed, he replied that there are "probably a dozen within a four-mile radius," none of them owned by him. Supervisor Plathe responded that there are approximately 400 permitted sites in Kossuth County. After more discussion, Commissioner Marquard moved

and Commissioner Klemme seconded a motion to allow the construction permit with an amendment requiring the manure to be injected/knifed into the fields 250 feet away from the drainage ditches and Prairie Creek. The motion carried 5-2 with Commissioners Hubbell and Morrow opposed.

In November 2007, Poweshiek County requested a "demand for hearing" against a facility also planned by Prestage Farms of Iowa. Ellie Snook, representing Poweshiek County, cited concerns about air quality.

"Please do not ignore the documented facts and jeopardize the well-being of a community for the financial gain of one confinement operator," she said. "Poweshiek County is already saturated with AFOS... More people experience problems with asthma, headaches, depression and nose and eye irritation." She also noted that Prestage Farms is based in North Carolina.

Commissioner Morrow stated her concerns for the residents that are court-ordered to live at nearby health care facilities. "They don't have the option to move," she said. "This is very disturbing."

Commissioner Marquard stated that he would prefer voting against the permit but there was no legal basis for doing so. He then moved, with a second by Commissioner Klemme, to approve the Prestage Farms of Iowa permit. The motion carried 5-2 with Commissioners Hubbell and Morrow opposed.

Crawford County requested the last CAFO hearing held before the governor appointed four new commissioners to join the five sitting commissioners. County representatives appealed to the EPC in December 2006 against the construction of two swine finishing operations proposed by Nebraska Pork Producers (NPP) for west of Denison. Each confinement was designed to hold 4,800 head.

County representatives noted that two NPP facilities are in close proximity to each other and another livestock facility, but the law does not limit how close animal confinements can be to one another. Crawford County also cited detrimental effect to health and quality of life/odor, devaluation of property values, concerns about the slope of the fields that would be receiving the manure applications and water resources. Petty moved and Commissioner Mary Gail Scott seconded a motion to approve the permit. The motion carried with Commissioners Francis Thicke abstaining and Darrell Hanson not present.

In March 2006, the same commissioners who would hear the Crawford County appeal eight months later, denied a permit to Twin Pines, LLC, of Wapello County. Commissioners cited the Twin Pines proposal as having too many inconsistencies in its manure management plan to allow a valid Phosphorous Index calculation. In this situation, Wapello County, who has never opted into the Master Matrix resolution, did not appeal the permit to the EPC. Instead, the issue was brought to the EPC's attention by DNR staff because Twin Pines requested a 30-day extension.

After considerable public comment and discussion among the commissioners, Francis Thicke moved and Sue Morrow seconded denying the permit. Commissioners Peckum, Davis-Cook, Buell, Morrow and Thicke voted to approve Thicke's motion while Commissioners Hanson, Marquard, Petty and Mary Gail Scott voted to let the permit stand.

## PRO DRILLING FORCES GAINING STRENGTH! CAN WE REVERSE THIS CRISIS? ONLY IF WE ACT!

By Phyllis Mains, Artic Activist

For the first time ever polls show the American public is beginning to support drilling for oil off our coasts and in pristine Arctic Wilderness. The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is at the greatest risk in history. How could this happen? Partly because lawmakers are deluged with calls and emails from constituents complaining about high gas prices and wanting short term solutions and easy answers. The Bush Administration and pro big oil company lawmakers have capitalized on these complaints by promoting domestic drilling as the immediate solution to high gas prices. Led by Newt Gingrich, they have been pounding the air waves to expand domestic drilling with their "Drill here, Drill Now, Pay less."

Also because the media is not doing its job informing the public that thousands of acres of public land are already available for oil drilling, and, federal reports show domestic drilling will not immediately affect prices at the pump—now or ever. And finally, because not enough Americans who have the facts are standing up to debunk false information from the pro drilling faction.

According to the federal government's Energy Information Administration (EIA) it would take 7-10 years for oil to come online from new drilling, and twenty years to reach peak production. And the New York Times reported "because of a recent shortage in drilling equipment, it could likely take even longer". The EIA also predicted that "access to the Pacific, Atlantic, and eastern Gulf regions would not have a significant impact on domestic crude oil and natural gas production or prices before 2030." **Domestic crude oil production does not mean domestic oil use. All domestic oil is placed on the world market and is sold to the highest bidder. The oil in Prudhoe Bay, Alaska belongs to BP, a foreign oil company, and BP gets its oil to the world market using America's pipeline. Supplies are trucked to the oil field on the Dalton Highway, maintained and built with American tax dollars.**

The number of drilling permits both onshore and offshore have risen from 3,802 five years ago to 7,561 in 2007. While the government has issued 28,776 permits to drill for oil on public land, only 18,954 wells were actually drilled. With thousands of acres on the North Slope of Alaska already open for oil drilling, the pressure to open our coasts and pristine Arctic Wilderness makes no sense.

We do not have to wonder why Senator John McCain flip-flopped and is now pushing for drilling offshore and in the Arctic Refuge. McCain said "he was convinced offshore drilling would yield immediate oil"—despite hard data to the contrary from experts like the EIA. McCain's flip-flop might have more to do with big oil's vigorous backing of

his campaign. McCain ranks second in the Senate for donations from the energy industry and he has raised over \$700,000 from oil and gas this election season alone. **Even the Bush administration admits that "drilling will do absolutely nothing to lower gas prices today, tomorrow or even two decades from now."**

What has worked to lower gas prices immediately is less demand for oil as Americans drive slower, reduce unnecessary driving, take public transportation when possible, and use car pools. Driving slower, inflating tires to proper pressure, and changing air filters save gas and money. Conservation is the only short term solution to lower gas prices.

**What we can do to expose the false and deceptive pro drilling campaign and change direction to conserve now, pay less and fund future technology:**

1. Call your members of congress now and let them know drilling will not reduce prices at the pump and conservation has already lowered prices. (Congressional contact information on the last page of the *Iowa Sierran*)

2. Write letters to the media with facts, not fiction, about drilling. (More information can be found at our Coalition Partners: Sierra Club [www.sierraclub.org](http://www.sierraclub.org); Alaska Wilderness League [www.AlaskaWild.org](http://www.AlaskaWild.org); Defenders of Wildlife [www.defenders.org](http://www.defenders.org); Center for Biological Diversity [www.biologicaldiversity.org](http://www.biologicaldiversity.org); Clean Water Action [www.cleanwateraction.org](http://www.cleanwateraction.org); The Wilderness Society [www.wilderness.org](http://www.wilderness.org).)

3. Work to get your environmental lawmakers elected: Senator Tom Harkin and Representatives Bruce Braley, Leonard Boswell and Dave Loebsack are on record supporting protection of the Arctic Refuge. This can change if pro drilling forces generate more calls and emails. **Big oil has big money to get their message out. The Arctic Refuge has only us.**

4. Help educate folks in your communities with these DVDs: "Oil on Ice", "Being Caribou", and our new "Voice from the North", a 25 minute DVD produced by the Gwich'in Nation, portraying their deeply spiritual, nutritional and cultural connection to the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. It contains spectacular scenery. Contact Phyllis Mains at [pmains@juno.com](mailto:pmains@juno.com) or 641-445-6326 to get these DVDs on loan and she is available to present these programs in person with additional information on drilling.

5. Go to [www.shameonbigoil.org](http://www.shameonbigoil.org) to sign a petition sponsored by the entire coalition. It is up to us to expose the ruthless and misleading tactics of pro big oil supporters in Congress and the Bush Administration, who continue to go after thousands of miles of pristine coastlines and Arctic wilderness, while thousands of miles of public land, already available for drilling, goes untouched.

## Chill the Drills

### Myth vs. Fact in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge: Don't Believe the Lies!

The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska is one of the last areas of true wilderness left in the United States. This special place supports over 200 animal species including caribou, grizzly bears, and migratory birds. It is a protected wildlife habitat where oil and gas drilling are off limits and deserves continued protection for future generations.

#### Myths vs. Fact

**Myth: Opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil drilling will bring down prices at the pump.**

**Fact: Opening the Refuge to drilling would not lower today's prices.**

According to a May 2008 report by the Energy Information Administration, opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge today would result in Americans saving just a few pennies per gallon, ten years from now.

Read more about better solutions on our website:

- Wilderness Society
- Study the EIA report
- Read an analysis of the EIA report

In 2007, multinational oil corporations posted record profits exceeding \$100 billion. At the same time American consumers continued to pay record prices for gasoline.

**Myth: Oil development does not harm the environment or people.**

**Fact: Oil drilling would harm the land, animals, and people of the Refuge.**

Where the oil companies have drilled before in Alaska, they have caused oil spills and leakage of toxic chemicals that harm habitat. Each year there are over 500 toxic spills in the Prudhoe Bay oil fields and pipelines, according to Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation. In 2007, BP was fined \$20 million for the largest crude oil spill in the Prudhoe Bay oil fields which was caused by corrosion, negligence and poor government oversight. The National Academy of Sciences reported that cumulative impacts of oil activities harmed the land, animals, Alaska Native culture, and wilderness. If we let oil companies drill the Arctic Refuge, they will destroy this unique wilderness forever.

Learn about the oil industry's track record in Alaska on our website:

- AlaskaWild
- Wilderness Society
- Alaska State Government page
- National Academy of Sciences

**Myth: The Coastal Plain "1002 Area" of the Refuge is a desolate landscape with virtually no wildlife.**

**Fact: The Coastal Plain "1002 Area" is the biological heart of the Refuge.**

Oil companies seek to drill the Arctic Refuge's 1.5 million-acre Coastal Plain "1002 Area" which scientists say is its "center of wildlife activity." The Porcupine caribou herd travels here each summer to give birth and raise their young. It is the most important land denning area for polar bears in the United States. Millions of birds from all 50 states and 6 continents migrate to the Refuge for nesting and staging. The Gwich'in Nation and other Alaska Native people rely on the wildlife for their traditional way of life and as a basis of their cultures. The harm to wildlife habitat for polar bear, caribou, birds, and the Gwich'in way of life from habitat destruction and toxic spills would be permanent.

- Drilling risks to the Gwich'in People
- Join the caribou journey

**Myth: Oil drilling will have a minimal footprint on the coastal plain "1002 Area" of the Refuge.**

**Fact: Drilling on the coastal plain "1002 Area" will leave a permanent network of sprawling industrial sites.**

The map on our website shows how oil drilling would use roads, pipelines, airfields, ports, and other infrastructure -- harming wildlife habitat -- across the entire 1.5 million-acre area. Any claims to lease, drill and develop "only 2,000 acres" of the 1.5 million-acre Coastal Plain are false - such oil drilling & pumping area would not be compact and excludes land disturbances such as gravel roads, mines, and pipelines. Drilling legislation has not required that the "2,000 acres" of development be contiguous, as it could not be since federal government experts state that any oil that might be found under the Coastal Plain would be in small finds spread throughout the Plain. This hypothetical

development scenario map is consistent with proposed bills to drill-the-Refuge.

**Myth: Drilling in the Refuge will help secure America's energy future.**

**Fact: Drilling for oil in America's Arctic will not break our oil addiction. The U.S. needs to lead the world in new, clean, renewable energy solutions.**

The real opportunity for consumers hit hard by gas prices is clean energy, not drilling. Energy efficiency provides immediate relief, clean energy solutions provide lasting relief.

Car and truck mileage improvements required by the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 will save more oil than might ever be produced from the Arctic Refuge and our protected coasts. Savings from clean energy trump drilling by 1.2 million barrels per day by 2015 and 4.7 million barrels per day by 2030.

Increased conservation and alternative technologies in the last three years have cut the projected need for imported oil between now and 2050 by more than 100 billion barrels, according to Department of Energy (EIA). That's 10 times more benefit than what we might get 10 years from now from drilling the Refuge.

- Energy Solutions
- Pump Up Your Tires
- 800,000 renewable energy jobs

**Why should we protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge?**

We should protect one of America's most valuable wilderness areas from oil and gas drilling which would cause permanent destruction - and would offer most Americans nothing in return but more profits for the oil companies. We must prevent harmful oil and gas drilling in the Refuge because once this wilderness is destroyed it is gone forever.

\*Chill the Drills, Myth vs. Fact was excerpted from Sierra Club's website [www.sierraclub.org](http://www.sierraclub.org)

## The Basics of Carbon Cap and Auction

Among the proposed methods for curbing global warming is a national cap and auction program. Cap and auction generally refers to 1) the establishment of an emissions cap that would limit and reduce overall greenhouse gas emissions in a certain set of economic sectors, and 2) the creation of a system that turns emissions reductions into equal economic units (generally one ton) that can be traded or auctioned like a currency.

The theory behind cap and auction is that such a system enables maximum economic efficiency and flexibility for the market by encouraging those entities that can most cost-effectively reduce their emissions to do so aggressively. These processes theoretically combine to produce the lowest price for the reduction of emissions in the economy while ensuring progress toward meeting environmental goals.

Some cap and auction proposals are designed to be "economy-wide"; to take on the whole of U.S. emissions. Others are or could be limited to the utility, industrial, or transportation sectors or some combination.

### Cap and Auction versus Other Options

The two other most discussed methods of controlling greenhouse gases are a "carbon tax," and "direct regulation" of emissions.

Many economists ascribe the greatest economic efficiency to the imposition of a tax on carbon. By this line of thought, the higher price will simply shift behavior to lower carbon options of powering the economy. The biggest advantage is simplicity and speed of implementation. Critics of a carbon tax note the difficulty of arriving at the proper tax level to achieve the desired emission reduction outcome.

Energy legislation that directly regulates greenhouse gas emissions from the dirtiest sources, including power plants and industrial sources, could very effectively reduce greenhouse gases.

Congress has recently introduced various bills to serve as comprehensive global warming legislation, all of which encompass a carbon cap and auction program. The basic elements of such a system include long and short-term emission reduction goals, an allocation system for carbon allowances, and methods for enforcement. The effectiveness of global warming legislation greatly depends on the details of these elements.

### Sierra Club Position

Scientists tell us that we must reduce carbon emission by at least 80% by 2050 to prevent global temperatures from exceeding 2° Celsius above pre-industrial averages. The Sierra Club supports legislation that both requires the U.S. to meet this long-term goal and also requires a short-term emission reduction goal of at least 20% by 2020, thereby ensuring we are on a path to avoid dangerous climate change.

The carbon emission allocation system is pivotal in determining the success of global warming legislation. While many bills propose freely distributing credits to polluters as a way to garner political and commercial support, the Sierra Club firmly supports a 100% auction system. An auction system would avoid windfall profits for polluters and generate clean energy alternatives into the U.S. energy portfolio and assist vulnerable communities and natural habitats with measures necessary to adapt to the effects of climate change, including higher energy costs.

Lastly, enforceability mechanisms within comprehensive legislation must ensure polluter compliance with both short and long-term emission reduction goals. Necessary conditions include accurate inventory of baseline greenhouse gas emissions as well as effective systems for measuring future reductions. Also necessary is the exclusion of loopholes and opportunities for polluters to legally comply with a cap and auction program while actually sustaining high levels of greenhouse gas pollution.

The Club believes that a well-designed cap and auction program can successfully control global warming if implemented in concert with energy legislation including a renewable electricity standard, a utility energy efficiency standard, and strong fuel economy standards for vehicles. By applying both comprehensive global warming legislation as well as sectoral energy regulation, we can prevent crossing the dangerous tipping point of 2° Celsius above pre-industrial averages.

**Pursue the Cleanest, Safest, Fastest, and Cheapest Solutions First:** Revenue raised by auctioning emissions permits should be invested in the highest-value solutions for emissions reductions first. Increasing energy efficiency in homes, commercial buildings and vehicles is the fastest, cleanest, cheapest and safest way to reduce our energy use,

our energy bills, and America's greenhouse gas emissions. Clean, renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, and biomass should be deployed to meet our remaining energy needs. Energy efficiency and renewable energy projects have the potential of generating hundreds of thousands of family-supporting jobs particularly in regions suffering from recent losses in the manufacturing sector.

- The Carbon industries are lobbying to get a cap and trade deal that would give away carbon permits free of charge to existing polluters -- bribing the sluggish, and slowing down innovation. This so-called "cap and trade" system, whereby a declining cap is put on total emissions with individual emissions permits being traded amongst emitters. Depending on how it is designed, such a system can be heavily tilted toward the interests of the planet or, as some would prefer, the interests of polluters.

- The design of a cap and trade program is critical to its chances of success. Permits to emit carbon must be used for public benefit, not private windfalls. **All allowances** should be auctioned or otherwise used to benefit the public, not to generate windfall profits for polluting industries. Free allocations, if any, must be limited in size and restricted to a short transition period

- Revenue raised by permit auctions should be used to promote a clean energy future by investing in the highest-value solutions for emissions reductions first. These funds should not be used to perpetuate dirty, expensive, outdated technologies like coal and nuclear energy. Allowances and auction revenues should be used to accelerate deployment of the clean energy technologies we have today and to develop the ones we need for tomorrow.

- Auction revenues should also be used to protect low- and moderate-income citizens from rising energy costs and other negative economic impacts, create new jobs, ensure fair treatment for affected workers and their communities, and drive technology transfer to help achieve emissions reductions around the world.

*(Adapted from a Dave Hamilton memo, and from Carl Pope's essay at: <http://gritsmill.grist.org/story/2008/2/14/95124/2187> and from the Sierra Club website [www.sierraclub.org](http://www.sierraclub.org))*

## Taking The Tops Off Mountains At The Flip Of A Switch

by Jea Yoon Lee

Everyone knows that electricity comes from power plants. Some know that 40% of the electricity in the U.S. comes from coal-fired plants. Fewer know that an estimated 7-10% of the country's total coal production comes from mountaintop removal (MTR) mines in Appalachia. Unfortunately, many Iowa consumers are linked to MTR through their utility companies which are themselves linked to MTR mining.

First developed around the 1970's with the innovation of massive dragline equipment, MTR is a method of coal mining which entails razing the tops of mountains with dynamite to reach the thin seams of coal buried underneath, and then dumping the crushed remains of the land into valleys. MTR is the cheapest method for coal companies because it is speedy and requires fewer employees than underground mining. The exponential growth of Americans' energy consumption and the rising demand for low-sulfur bituminous coal found in central Appalachia has led to increased MTR mining in the past decade. So far, MTR has destroyed over 800 square miles of mountains and 1,200 miles of streams across Appalachia, according to the Environmental Protection Agency's 2005 Environmental Impact Statement.

The tragedy of MTR is not just the abstract notion of "losing" mountains, forests, and streams, however. For West Virginians, Virginians, Kentuckians, and Tennesseans living near the mines, it means undrinkable, rash-inducing water

full of arsenic and mercury, flying boulders and earthquakes caused by the blasting, and dramatic depreciation of property value. They also live in the shadow of impoundments -- dams which hold back the wastewater created by washing the debris off coal. Eight years ago in Kentucky, one broke and released a torrent of over 300 million gallons of thick, toxic sludge which destroyed homes, farmlands, and 100 miles of waterways.

For the rest of us, more MTR leads to burning more coal, which diverts resources away from alternative energy sources and greater reliance on coal-powered plants, which leads to even more MTR. That means dirtier air, more acid rain, and more global warming emissions.

Fortunately, the Interstate Power & Light and the Mid-American Energy grids of Iowa do not have any power plants that purchase coal directly from MTR mines. Almost all the power plants in the state are still connected to MTR, however, because their coal suppliers in Wyoming are owned by companies that operate MTR mines in Central Appalachia. (For more information on your community's connection to MTR, visit [www.ilovemountains.org/myconnection](http://www.ilovemountains.org/myconnection).)

Rising gas prices open the prospect of a coal-to-liquid industry which would lead to an even greater reliance on coal. The coal industry is peddling the false solution of converting coal into liquid fuel, but the reality is worse than being topless in Appalachia. Not only does it take one ton

of coal to produce just two barrels of fuel, but burning liquid coal also releases double the global warming emissions per gallon as regular gasoline. Replacing 10% of our nation's transportation fuels with liquid coal would require increasing coal mining by over 40%.

Coal is not the solution! Currently there are plans for constructing 87 new coal power plants, each with an expected lifespan of 50 years. Is an additional 50 years of reliance on coal even a viable option for our planet? Let us oppose the irreversible, irremediable practice of MTR, and instead invest in solar, wind, and geothermal power.

MTR requires filling valleys with vast quantities of mining waste. Filling streams with waste was illegal under the Clean Water Act, and advocacy groups used the law to protect the mountains and streams. Rising to the defense of coal companies, the Bush Administration changed the rules, effectively legalizing the filling of streams with waste. Sierra Club and other groups are urging Congress to enact the Clean Water Protection Act, which would reverse the rule change, once again prohibiting the filling of streams with MTR waste. Please join our efforts by asking your utility company not to use MTR coal and urging your Representative to co-sponsor the bill. For more information on how you can help, visit <http://www.sierraclub.org/mtr/> and <http://www.stopmountaintopremoval.org/>.

Jea Yoon Lee is an apprentice with the national coal campaign in Washington, DC.

## Create an Environmental Legacy

Bequests have played a key role in the Sierra Club's environmental successes over the years.

Planning now may make your gift more meaningful and reduce taxes on your estate. We have many gift options available. We can even help you plan a gift for your local Chapter.

For more information and confidential assistance contact:

Sierra Club Planned Giving Program • 85 Second Street, 2nd Floor • San Francisco, CA 94105  
(415) 977-5639 • email: [planned.giving@sierraclub.org](mailto:planned.giving@sierraclub.org)

A Mountain Top Removal Program will be presented on Wednesday, September 17, 7:30 p.m. at Grace United Methodist Church, 37th and Cottage Grove in Des Moines. Contact Jane at [jrlark@radiks.net](mailto:jrlark@radiks.net) or 515-223-5047.

## Public Lands Day—Resilient Habitats

Saturday, September 27, 2008

America's wild lands are a repository of nature's bounty. However, as the planet's temperature continues to rise, the impacts of global warming will be massive. According to the Consultative Group on Biological Diversity, global warming is already severely affecting forests, oceans, and wildlife – not to mention the rippling outward of its effects on the economy and public health.

We have an opportunity and an obligation to act to mitigate this, to preserve wildlife habitat, and to protect America's public lands from warming temperatures.

**Saturday, September 27th, 2008** is the 15th annual Public Lands Day. Sierra Club is encouraging its members to show support for our public lands by organizing public lands restoration projects.

Protecting wildlife habitat not only ensures that we will be able to enjoy our outdoor traditions for years to come—it also helps combat global warming. By keeping our wetlands and forests intact, we help clean carbon pollution from the air and stop the worst impacts of global warming.

This year the Sierra Club is planning on hosting special Public Lands in Public Hands events in four distinct ecoregions in celebration of National Public Lands Day. We will be hosting larger events to highlight the effects global warming is having on iconic ecosystems, like polar bear habitat, Yellowstone National Park, or Glacier National Park.

There are predictions that if global warming continues unchecked, moose and sugar maples will disappear from New York and New England; most of the Florida Everglades will be lost to sea rise; Yellowstone National Park will not be able to support grizzly bears; an ice free North Pole will be unable to sustain healthy numbers of polar bear and walrus and 97% of trout streams in the Southern Appalachians will be gone, along with most coral reefs and their associated marine life worldwide.

**The goal of Public Lands in Public Hands is three-fold:**

1) Engage the public in local restoration projects on Public Lands Day, Saturday, September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2008 to demonstrate support for protecting our public lands.

2) Educate the public about how to protect our wildlife, wild lands and native plants from the effects of global warming.

3) Encourage the public to engage with governmental agencies in protecting critical habitat to preserve our plants and wildlife from the effects of global warming.

### To survive global warming, wildlife and native plants need Resilient Habitats.

Global warming has already begun to take a toll on wildlife and plants around the world. The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change projects that 20-30% of plant and animal species will be at increased risk of extinction even if we dramatically reduce our global warming gas emissions. Some scientists suggest we could lose as many as one million species worldwide if we don't act quickly. Even a fraction of such a loss stands to have severe economic, social and spiritual impacts for all of us.

If we want the world's wildlife and native plants to survive, we must help them adapt by protecting critical habitat and creating corridors that will allow for migration as temperatures rise. If we act now, we can still pass on to our grandchildren a world where polar bears, giant sequoias, wild salmon, sea turtles, rainforests and emperor penguins survive.

According to conservation biologists working in the field, the four key steps to helping wildlife survive are:

**Cut global warming emissions by 2 percent a year so that the temperature shift is minimized.** Scientists tell us if we can reduce carbon emissions by just 2 percent a year over the next 40 years, we can curb the worst impacts of global warming. If we can keep the temperature increase small, more species will survive and we will have better options for managing them.

**Protect adequate and appropriate space.** This includes protecting the most important habitat areas, buffer zones between habitat and development, and corridors to aid migration.

**Limit or eliminate non-climate stresses.** Reduce or eliminate habitat fragmentation, over-harvesting, invasive species, disruptive human activities, and pollution.

**Where necessary, intervene to help species adapt.** In order to help wildlife and plants survive temperature increases, it may be necessary to reintroduce native species, assist in migration, control pests or disease outbreaks, apply prescribed burning, and control invasive species.

## CAUTION URGED FOR OUTDOOR WOOD-FIRED BOILERS

From Iowa Department of Natural Resources

The high cost of petroleum-based fuels for home heating has Iowans looking at alternative sources. In both rural and residential areas, some Iowans have purchased or are considering outdoor wood-fired boilers (OWBs) or furnaces. Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) officials caution against burning any wood other than untreated, well-seasoned wood and advise that OWBs can be more polluting and less efficient than other home heating devices.

"Unlike residential wood burning stoves, OWBs are not required to meet federal emission standards," says Christine Paulson, an air specialist with the DNR Air Quality Bureau. "We've received a number of complaints about the OWBs, and our investigations have revealed that many of the concerns raised are valid. Because of the large fireboxes on the units, some people have jumped to the conclusion that anything can be burned in them."

OWBs are free-standing wood burning devices that heat water, which is then pumped to one or more structures to provide heat. They look like a small shed with a short smokestack on top. They may be used to heat homes and outbuildings, produce domestic hot water, heat hot tubs or provide heat to agricultural operations. OWBs are also called Outdoor Wood-fired Hydronic Heaters (OWHH).

Household garbage and debris contain chemicals that are illegal to burn in such devices without an air permit. Burning such items releases toxic air pollutants, some of which are carcinogens.

"We had a case recently where someone was burning railroad ties in his OWB," adds Paulson. "Railroad ties are treated with creosote, a probable carcinogen. Just handling railroad ties has been shown to cause skin rash and irritation. Imagine what it can be when vaporized and drawn deep into the lungs."

Even wood smoke from well seasoned hardwood contains fine particle pollution, carbon monoxide, and other pollut-

ants, so it is important to release it through a stack well above roof lines so that children, people with lung and heart disease, and other sensitive groups are not exposed to it.

Before buying an OWB, the DNR asks you to consider the possible health and environmental impact to your family, neighbors, pets and livestock, and to contact your county health department or city hall to see if OWBs are allowed.

"We encourage consumers to choose the cleanest, most efficient models available, preferably EPA-certified units. Then operate and maintain the unit, whether it is new or one of the older models, according to manufacturers' instructions," emphasizes Paulson.

The DNR also recommends that OWB operators place the unit at least 500 feet from an adjoining property line, keep the doors of the unit closed unless loading or stoking the live fire, and install a vertical, unobstructed stack that is at least 5 feet taller than the roof line of nearby structures and residences. Never use propellants to start a fire and do not store them near an OWB. A child in Iowa recently died from burns linked to a propellant stored near an operating OWB.

A DNR OWB Fact Sheet with more information is available at [www.iowadnr.gov/air/](http://www.iowadnr.gov/air/). Information on EPA's OWB program, including information on EPA-certified models, is available at <http://www.epa.gov/woodheaters/>.

Questions or complaints regarding specific OWB or other wood heaters should be directed to appropriate DNR field offices. A map and contact information for the six DNR field offices is available at <http://www.iowadnr.gov/fo/fo-map.html> or call (515) 242-5100. Those with questions or concerns within Polk County should call (515) 286-3351; or within Linn County call (319) 892-6000. Permit questions may be directed to the DNR Air Quality Bureau permit hotline at 1-877-247-4692.

Public Lands Day is a great opportunity to engage community members in a project that improves their neighborhood and educate citizens about Sierra Club's actions to protect our lands, native plants, and wildlife from the effects of global warming.

Get your hands dirty and show how much you care, and:

1) Organize a Public Lands Day event on September 27<sup>th</sup>

2) Submit a Letter-to-the-Editor to your local newspaper—reach as many news outlets as possible with LTEs, and op-eds through the course of the week Monday, September 22<sup>nd</sup> through Saturday, September 27<sup>th</sup>.

3) Contact key newspapers and pitch an editorial or op-ed

### RESOURCES

To see what Sierra Club chapters and groups did last year go to [www.sierraclub.org/publiclandsday](http://www.sierraclub.org/publiclandsday).

## THERE IS A BETTER WAY



## BUT ONLY IF YOU HELP

Over the last thirty years, we've made real progress cleaning up our water. But the Bush administration is threatening that progress, proposing that "isolated" small streams, ponds and wetlands no longer be covered under the Clean Water Act. Work with us to strengthen the Clean Water Act and its enforcement. Together we can leave our children a legacy of clean water, air and wild lands. With your support, we can do better now.

Join today and receive a **FREE Sierra Club Weekender Bag!**



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Membership Categories **INDIVIDUAL** **JOINT**

**INTRODUCTORY**  \$25

**REGULAR**  \$39  \$47

Contributions, gifts and dues to the Sierra Club are not tax deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to *Sierra* magazine and \$1.00 for your Chapter newsletter.

Enclose check and mail to: **F94Q W3700 1**  
**Sierra Club, P.O. Box 52968, Boulder, CO 80322-2968**



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

## EXPLORE • ENJOY • PROTECT

(See inserts for calendars of events for Central Iowa Group, Iowa City Area Group and Leopold Group)

### White Pine Group (Dubuque Area)

**September 30, Tuesday, 7 p.m.**—H.O.M.E.S.(Helping Others Maintain Environmental Standards) will give a program on their effort to stop a mega dairy CAFO in NW Illinois. This meeting will be held in the basement meeting room of the US Bank at Kennedy and Wacker in Dubuque's west end.

Meetings/Programs are held each month except June, July, August, and December at 7 p.m. White Pine Group Contact: Dick Worm, 563-582-2580; raworm@msn.com; 3680 Echo Hills Dr., Bellevue, IA, 52031.

### Eagle View Group (Quad-Cities Area)

The Eagle View Group meets the third Monday of each month except June, July and August at the Bettendorf Library, 2950 Learning Campus Drive. The meetings begin at 7 p.m. and everyone is welcome. Information: Jerry Neff, 563-332-5373

**September 15**—Julie Plummer of Scott Community College will give a progress report on Scott Community College District's plan to reduce their global carbon footprint. They have joined the American College and University President's program to reduce global warming emissions district wide, and to increase energy efficiency.

**October 20**—Amy Johannsen, Watershed Coordinator for Scott County Soil and Water Conservation District will talk about the Duck Creek Watershed, flash flooding and what can be done to retain the rain.

**November 17**—Becky Passman, Iowa Quad City Transit Coordinator presents a program on the future of mass transit in the Quad Cities.

**January 17, 2009**—Kathy Morris of the Scott County Waste Commission will discuss recycling electronic waste as the switch to digital TV happens in February.

### Measure Introduced to Rename Sierra Nevada North Palisade Peak in Honor of the late David Brower

**Washington, DC**—U.S. Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer (both D-Calif.) introduced a measure to rename the North Palisade glacier peak, located in the Sierra Nevada bordering the Kings Canyon National Park and Inyo National Forest, "Brower Palisade" after the late David Brower, who some consider the father of the modern environmental movement.

"David Brower was a true champion for the environment," Senator Feinstein said. "Our nation owes David Brower a significant debt for his role in shaping the modern environmental movement during the 1950s and 1960s. He helped to preserve vast acres of wilderness in California and across the country. And he has inspired new generations of activists to the cause of safeguarding America's rich natural heritage. Renaming the North Palisade peak in the Sierra Nevada as 'Brower Palisade' will be a lasting reminder of David Brower's leadership and invaluable contributions to the environmental community."

"Naming the North Palisade Peak after David Brower is a fitting tribute to a man who loved the High Sierra and all of America's wilderness," said Senator Boxer. □David Brower was a conservationist-hero and generations will come to know of his passion and achievements. I thank Senator Feinstein for her leadership and look forward to working to pass and enact this bill.

David Brower was the first executive director of the Sierra Club, a position he held for nearly two decades. Under his leadership, the Sierra Club helped create many units of the National Park System, including North Cascades National Park, Redwood National Park and Point Reyes National Seashore. Brower also played a significant role in drafting the Wilderness Act in 1964, which has preserved much of the Sierra Nevada, including his favorite group of peaks, the Palisades.

Following his tenure with the Sierra Club, David Brower founded Friends of the Earth in 1969, co-founded the League of Conservation Voters in 1969; and founded Earth Island Institute in 1982. Brower was nominated three times for the Nobel Peace Prize for his environmental advocacy efforts. Brower was born on July 1, 1912 and passed away on November 5, 2000.

## Everyone needs more excitement in their life

By Jerry Neff, Chair, Eagle View Group

On August 12<sup>th</sup>, I returned from a trip to California. The trip was two-fold; the first part was a Sierra Club National Outing with hikes along the Pacific Crest Trail and through Calaveras Big Trees State Park and the Lake Alpine region of the Central Sierra, called Bear Valley. We stayed in a lodge for five days and car pooled to various trail heads each day. The second part of our trip was a two-day trip to Yosemite National Park ending with a summit climb of Half Dome, a giant granite rock 8,836 feet above sea level. This part of the trip was on our own and had nothing to do with Sierra Club.

My traveling companions were Bill Davies of the Eagle View Group and two friends, Sheri and her husband Steve who live in Walford, Iowa. Sheri had accompanied Bill and me and another climber to the top of Mt. Harvard (14,420 ft.) in Colorado in 1996. Both Sheri and Steve had done day hikes with Bill and me locally.

The outing to Bear Valley was unique as it combined our hiking with two evening concerts at the Bear Valley Music Festival. One concert was a chamber music event which included a wine tasting party while the second night was a jazz concert. It was a wonderful way to relax after a day of mountain hiking.

The hiking part of the trip began on Monday with a short two-mile hike to view Giant Sequoias, some were 30 feet in diameter! Day 2 was a five-mile walk with a 600-foot elevation gain. Day 3 was a free day and we choose to rent kayaks on Lake Alpine, a beautiful mountain lake with boulder islands. Day 4 was a six-mile hike to Wheeler Peak with a 1200-foot elevation change. Day 5 was a 7.4 mile hike to Bull Run Lake with a gain of 1300 feet.

Day 5 began with a car shuttle. Since some of the group preferred a longer version we left one car at Mosquito Lake, then we drove on to the trail head for the Bull Run hike. The plan was for all of us to go to the lake, eat lunch and then those who wanted to go farther would continue on two and a half more miles while the remaining five people would return back to where the cars were parked. After lunch nine of us hardy hikers continued on. At about 4:30 p.m. our group reached the parking lot where we had left a leader's car. Several guys from our group, Steve and another guy named Steve got in the car with the leader and went off to retrieve our cars.

About 25 minutes later our leader drove into the gravel parking lot at a rapid rate and stopped in cloud of dust. I could tell by the look on her face that something was very wrong. She reported that all the cars were still at the trail head. That party should have reached the trail head by 2 p.m. It was now after 5 p.m. We were told to return to the lodge and wait. Around 6 p.m. we learned that four of the missing people were found and okay, however, Sarah, the leader was still missing. She had taken a short walk after lunch and said she would return in 15 minutes and that

was the last they had seen her. A 911 call was made and a helicopter was summoned from Stockton, some 90 miles distant. What happened next was a bit hazy but Steve and others went searching and blowing their whistles.

An unknown hiker family who were in the area joined in the search and soon found Sarah sitting on a rock. She had gone off trail and wandered into a different watershed. When they found her she was only a few hundred feet from the trail. She had a space blanket, gloves and cap and had become tired and fallen asleep for a couple hours! The helicopter came after she was found and through hand signals was told the lost hiker was found and safe.

The lesson in this story is don't hike alone in the wilderness without a map and compass and a knowledge of the area. Stay on the trail and if you get lost, stay put and blow your whistle, if you have one.

The next morning the four of us bid goodbye to our hiking friends and set out for Yosemite. We arrived in the afternoon and made our way to the trail head. We wanted to see in daylight where we could park the car for our early departure for Half Dome the next morning. We then drove back to our inn

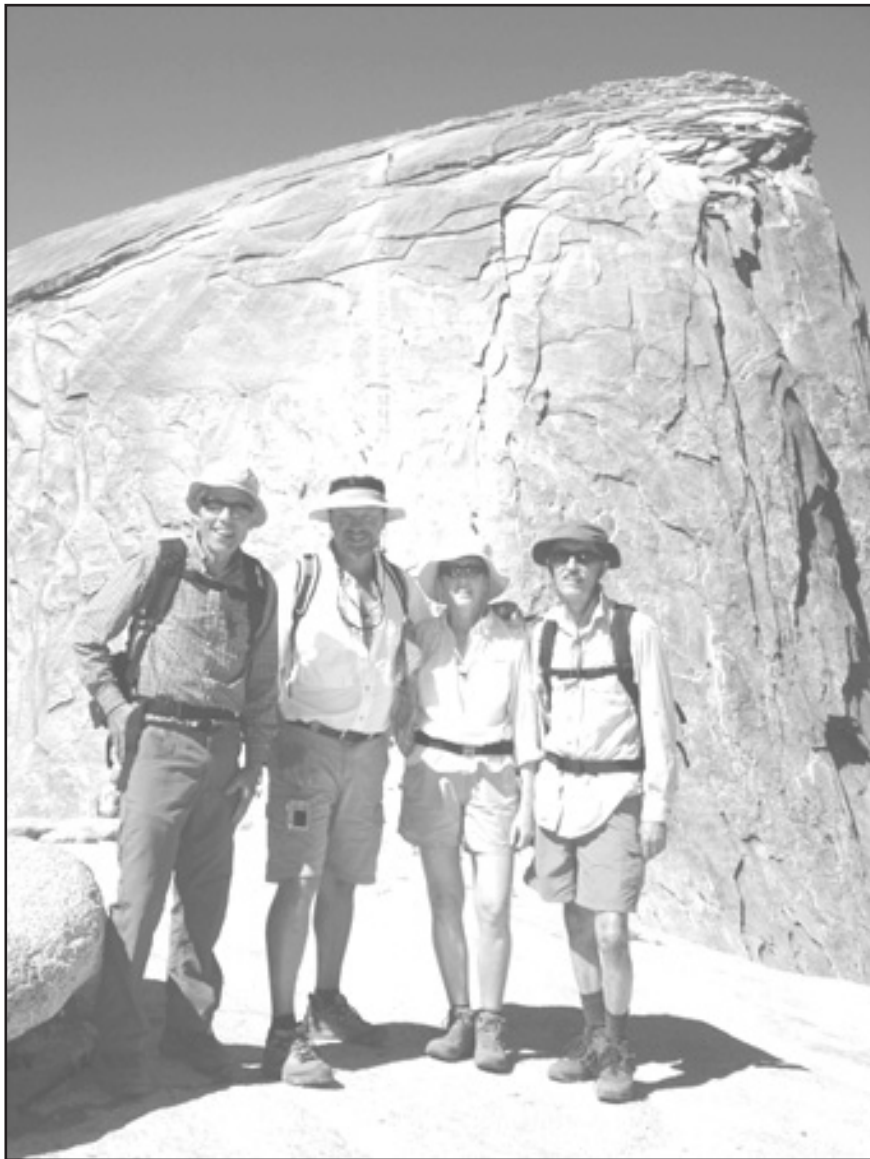
just outside the park, noting as we drove through the valley that Yosemite Falls was dry. It hadn't rained in that part of California in four months.

The hike to Half Dome is 16.3 miles round trip with 4,800 feet of elevation gain. Our hike from where we left the car was about 17 miles. The hike is rated as extremely strenuous and it took us 12 hours. Vernal Falls and Nevada Falls were both flowing as we passed by. Around 11 a.m. we approached Sub Dome with 700 steps of various heights and no railings and a lot of exposure. Don't look down, just watch where you are carefully placing your feet! Reaching the top of Sub

Dome, you get your first close-up look at the cables and Half Dome. It is a real OH-MY-GOSH. Just your grip on these two cables is the only thing separating you from death. The cables go up 440 feet at a 45 degree angle and are sort of like banisters but they wiggle a bit. Meeting people who are coming down (and there a lot of them) is very tricky. I would be lying if I said I wasn't scared. After 30 minutes of pulling myself up with my arms, I and my fiends attained the summit. After some high fives and a couple belly bumps we took the obligatory summit photos and ate our lunch. We still had the six hour return trip and the cable descent to think about.

Going down the cables in reverse was a lot easier than expected and eventually we arrived back at our car as the sun was setting. It was indeed a grand trip and as I have said before, everyone needs more excitement in their life.

*The photo was taken at the base of Half Dome in Yosemite National Park, just before the climb up to the cables. Pictured are Jerry Neff, of Pleasant Valley, Iowa, Steve Carrager, and Sheri Albrecht, both of Walford, Iowa and Bill Davies of Moline, Illinois.*



## Environment neglected in initial flood recovery discussions

By Neila Seaman, Chapter Director

The sun finally came out, the floodwater subsided and Iowans began the daunting task of cleaning up. Disaster declarations, relief aid and executive orders followed. On June 27, Gov. Chet Culver issued Executive Order Number 7 calling for, among other things, a Rebuild Iowa Commission and nine task forces. The order listed the task forces and one of them was Environmental Quality and Review.

However, on July 10, the governor's office issued a news release listing all of the task forces as written in the Executive Order, except the task force for Environmental Quality and Review had morphed into the Agriculture and Environment task force. Under the headline, Iowans were encouraged to visit a website to apply for one of the task forces.

E-mails landing in my inbox discussed the Agriculture and Environment task force. Although I researched who was actually appointed, I learned more about who wasn't. I received e-mails from six people who reported that as of July 24, there were no available slots on the 24-person task force.

People who have been active in agriculture and environment issues for years were told they could be a "resource person" but could not sit on the task force and could not speak unless they were asked a question. Task force staff was instructed that some organizations could not delegate their staff to the task forces or delegate board members.

The governor's office, they were told, was seeking "regular members" of organizations that had been invited to participate. One e-mail quoted a governor's office representative as saying appointments were still being considered and the names of appointments would be released the next day even after others were told that same day that there were no more seats on the task force.

Being the curious person that I am, I took to the Internet in search of the appointees. I found absolutely nothing. After the first Ag/Environment meeting ended on July 30, I finally obtained a list of the members from a colleague.

You can count on one hand how many of the 24 task force members are appointed to represent environmental organizations. The list includes a former deputy director of the Iowa Department of

Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS), Iowa State University's dean of Agriculture and Life Sciences, the Iowa secretary of agriculture, nine agriculture related individuals including some who staff agricultural organizations, a school superintendent, a county engineer association representative, a city planning commission member and four legislators.

Iowa Farm Bureau hosted the first meeting. A government facility would have been more appropriate. "Resource persons" and others told me that environmental issues were not discussed. It seems like this task force is taking on yet another transformation to that of the Agriculture Environment task force.

Obviously, agriculture took a big hit with the storms. Nobody denies it should be a part of the recovery effort. In fact, it probably deserves its own task force. But so does the environment.

Flooding resulted in part because so many of Iowa's wetlands have been destroyed and the landscape has been so altered. *The Des Moines Register* reported "tons of waste spilled into floodwaters." Pesticides, chemicals, oils, sewage, hog manure and even hogs wound up in our waters. There are still treatment plants bypassing waste into our water. Landfills are overflowing. Some communities are encouraging polluted flood debris be burned and ground to keep it out of the landfills. Air quality is compromised because asbestos, lead-paint filaments and other pollutants are getting into our air.

If the first meeting of the Ag/Environment task force is any indication, environmental issues caused by the floods will not be fully addressed in any of the other task forces.

The floods left Iowa in a mess. But somebody didn't fully think through the composition of the task forces. And then, when appointments were made, it was in the dark. It's time to let the sunshine into the flood recovery process.

\*This opinion piece was previously published in the *Des Moines Register* on Wednesday, August 13, 2008 and it is used here with permission.

## Time to Reflect

By Pam Mackey-Taylor, Chair

Now that we have had a respite from the floods and tornadoes that struck earlier this year, it is time to reflect on how policies and land use decisions affected the flooding and how future policies and decisions need to be made for the recovery.

Iowa has one of the most altered landscapes in the country. Mother Nature just told us that those alterations can cause us serious harm, in the form of flooding.

Over the years there have been large numbers of wetlands filled, drained, and built on. Every time a wetland is destroyed, the sponge-like qualities of the wetland are destroyed. Therefore the water drains off the land more quickly which heightens flooding.

Agricultural lands across the state have been tiled to support growing crops. Yet the tiles allow the water to drain off the fields quicker, which exacerbates the flooding.

One of the more recent practices is wetland mitigation. A mitigation wetland is created in one area of the state and any wetland that is destroyed is replaced by the new acreage added to the mitigation wetland. When the mitigation wetland is not in the same watershed as the destroyed wetland, a heavy rain will not have that local wet-

land to serve as a sponge and therefore will run off the land more quickly with the potential for causing floods.

For years builders have been allowed to fill in wetlands and build structures in flood plains, as long as the structure sits a foot above the water level in the flood plain. The problem is when many structures are built on filled floodplains, the flood waters become displaced, flooding neighboring properties.

Farming practices can affect how heavy rains impact farm fields. Farmers who have left the stover on their fields have built soils with that compost and have found that their soils held up better during the floods and absorbed rain better.

Cities need to make sure that their wastewater treatment systems are located in areas that are less prone to flooding. For those cities that still divert storm water to their sewage treatment plants, it is long past the time for the storm water to be removed from the sewage treatment plant. And for those cities that continually have discharges after major rains, it is imperative that the capacity of their wastewater treatment systems be increased to handle the waste that comes into them.

Now is not the time to rush into ill-conceived projects that will destroy the environment as being necessary to spur the economy after the floods. We need to continue to be vigilant environmentalists watching over these projects.

It is clear that the Department of Transportation (DOT) faces a significant and costly challenge in repairing damaged roads and bridges. Prior to the weather-related repairs, the DOT did not have enough funds to do all of the work that was requested. Now is not the time to build Highway 100 through the Rock Island County Preserve.

After the 1993 floods the Galloway report recommended protecting natural areas along floodways. This report has gathered dust for years. Climate change experts predict that our weather patterns will become more erratic if we do not significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Hopefully the floods of 2008 will encourage us to heed Mother Nature's warning. Let us hope that any report recommending changes to protect the environment and property owners from future floods is not allowed to sit on a shelf somewhere gathering dust for the next 15 years.

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