TN Climate Action Campaign
Is Your Hair on Fire?

Anthropologists have learned that much human physical and cultural evolution occurred as adaptations to past periods of climate change. The current climate change presents us with a similar evolutionary bottleneck and the imperative that we change our bad manners and learn how to live on this planet as welcomed guests.

The need for climate protection grows more urgent. Many fight the despair that our species will not act in time or that it is already too late to prevent catastrophic climate fluctuations. Most know about climate change, but so few from its emergency. This has been the Campaign’s experience in recruiting other climate protection activist/organizers. “Yes, it is important, but right now I don’t have time.” Very few of us are running around with our hair on fire.

A recent article “Why we disagree about climate change,” by Mike Hulme (link) gives voice to the emerging idea that climate protection is the road we must travel to actualize the Earth does matter, more will value our place, our community.

• Through enactment of effective climate protection policies, carbon will have a price. This source of revenue will fund the green jobs of sustainable transformation – energy efficiency, renewables, healing of the damaged earth systems, food production, wellness.
• Through our growing understanding that the Earth does matter, more will value our place, our community.
• Through global emergency cooperation, we will learn how to work together as Earthlings so that we may survive. We will learn that the Earth does depend upon diversity and our nurturing of life, all life.
• Unlike other times in history when humans had little understanding of climate changes, we do. We can respond with some intelligence and much caring for the Earth and each other.

This is the perspective of the TN Climate Action Campaign. We are not an organization but a wave. We follow no formulaic script as no culture has faced this climatic challenge in many millennia. Indeed, human life never existed without permanent ice somewhere on this planet, a reality we seem bent on experiencing. The Campaign learns, acts, and adapts as we go along. But what is certain, the more intelligence and good heart this wave has in responding to the need for climate protection, perhaps we and more likely future generations will experience the sustainable vision that sparkles with diamond-like clarity within our imagination.

This year TN Climate Action develops a network of 500 climate protection activists. Each activist is an organizer within their own circle of influence. The challenge this year is not just to collect 500 names but to develop the change skills of the 500. We do this on several levels:
• Recruit other activists.
• Grow local climate action teams.
• Work together on local climate protection events
• Participate in capacity development webinars. (SACE will do a webinar for the Campaign on the TVA coal fleet in April.)
• Identify new ways to grow the Campaign network and develop our skills.

The second year (2013) goal of the TN Climate Action Campaign launches us into advocacy for effective climate protection policies. First up at the bat is getting TVA to adopt at least a 1.5% energy efficiency target to leverage the closure of more coal plants. After that the Campaign will move on to advocating for the next high leverage climate protection policy.

The reality is that no one group, organization, or whatever will do what needs to be done. It will take all of us. The Campaign is for those who feel the deepening urgency for climate protection. We wave the flag to attract others whose hair is on fire.

The ask: Be a climate protection activist. Find other climate protection activists. Develop strategies that reflect our principles and vision. Develop our capacities as social change agents to make the new way normal. Be among the 500! Go to our website now (www.tnclimateaction.net) and make your pledge to reduce your carbon footprint. The Campaign will contact you to learn what you want to do as a climate protection activist. The clock is ticking.

Louise Gorenflo
TN Climate Action Campaign
lgorenflo@gmail.com

The Climate Recovery Partnership
is a joint effort by the Sierra Club and The Sierra Club Foundation to prevent runaway global warming, protect ecosystems, and communities during the climate transition, and eventually restore climate stability.

The Climate Recovery Partnership fosters:
• A reduction in carbon emissions of at least 80% by 2050;
• U.S. energy independence;
• A thriving, clean energy economy – supporting smarter industries, construction, and transportation; and
• Natural environments and threatened communities protected from the consequences of global warming.

Looking Ahead to Sierra Club Objectives
Our 2010 achievements positioned us well for our progress in 2011. Here are a few examples of where we are focusing our attention:
• Launch nationwide campaign to retire and replace all existing coal plants by 2030.
• End mountaintop removal mining and block oil drilling in Alaska and other pristine wilderness.
• Advocate for adoption of high-performing building codes in 10 states.
• Establish 5-7 renewable energy zones in the Western United States.
• Promote strong Pavley 2 standards and an effective Zero Emissions Vehicle program to drive technology forward and influence national guidelines.
• Support initiatives that increase transportation choices and improve community planning.
• Reinforce protection for wildlife migration corridors.
• Uphold and strengthen the roadless rule for all national forests.

The monthly state newsletter for the Tennessee Chapter Sierra Club
Volume 43, Number 3 - May/June, 2012

Explore, Enjoy and Protect the Planet
**Tennes-Sierran**

The bi-monthly newsletter of the Tennessee Chapter of the Sierra Club.

**SEND CHANGE OF ADDRESS TO:**
*Email: address.change@sierraclub.org*
*Mail: clip the Moving? coupon below and mail to*

*Address changes are processed much faster if you include your Sierra Club membership number. To find your membership number, look on the address label of this newsletter.*

**SEND ARTICLES TO:**
E-mail: gvanhorn26@gmail.com
USPS: Gene Van Horn, Editor
895 Red Cloud Trail
Spring City, TN 37381
423-365-0692

**ARTICLE SUBMISSION GUIDELINES:**
Submission Target Date is May 25 for the July-August issue.
1. E-mail and e-mail attached files are preferred. Send to gvanhorn26@gmail.com or with embedded text messages, or attached files. Attached files are preferred.
2. Photographs should be scanned in a .jpg or a .tif file format then either attached to e-mail or mailed via U.S. Postal Service on a 3 1/2" diskette or CD RM. Please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope if you would like your diskette or photo prints returned.
3. Hard-copy handwritten or typewritten articles may be accepted; however, pre-approval from the Editor is required.
4. Any materials submitted via USPS mail will not be returned unless a stamped, self-addressed envelope is provided.
5. Concerns or complaints should be addressed to: Barbara Kelly, Communications Committee, bk1rivers@comcast.net.

**Target Date for July-August issue is May 25, 2012. All meetings and out-ings notices, articles and photographs should be in by then. Send material to Gene Van Horn at gvanhorn26@gmail.com**

---

**Sierra Club Officers**

TENNESSEE CHAPTER:
Chair: Katherine Pendleton (615) 943-6877
kpendleton@att.net
Vice Chair: Keven Kostan (901) 417-1593
kwatts@me.com
Secretary: Barbara Kelly (423) 718-5009
bk1rivers@comcast.net
Treasurer: Michael Varnell (615) 217-0985
rvannell@bellsouth.net
Conservation: Gary Bowers (615) 744-3185
gb3782@yahoo.com
Outings: Webb Griffin (423) 727-4797
gla7979@embarqmail.com
CCL Delegate: Brian Paddock (931) 276-1387
bpaddock@twlakes.net

TN LOCAL GROUPS:
Cherokee Group
www.tennessee.sierraclub.org/cherokee
Chair: Davis Mounger (423) 877-4616
wdmounger@yahoo.com
Vice Chair: John Doyal (423) 304-7467
baldie052@yahoo.com
Secretary: Barbara Kelly (423) 718-5009
bk1rivers@comcast.net
Treasurer: Barbara Hunt (423) 866-9503
barbaraehunt@hotmail.com
Conservation: Davis Mounger (423) 877-4616
wdmounger@yahoo.com
Outings: Emma Mar Davis (423) 413-3083
emmar.davis@gmail.com

Chickasaw Group - Memphis
www.tennessee.sierraclub.org/chickasaw
Chair: Sue A. Williams (901) 274-0524
saw@juno.com
Vice Chair: Keith Hoover (901) 363-8299
hooverk26@yahoo.com
Secretary: Emily Schwimmer (901) 753-5474
eschwimmer@gmail.com
Treasurer: Susan Routon (901) 413-3888
susan.routon@gmail.com
Conservation: Scott Baubry (901) 619-8567
snbaubry@gmail.com
Outings: Open - Would You Like To Organize the Outings?
Membership: Keith Hoover (901) 363-8299
hooverk26@yahoo.com

Harvey Brouse Group - Knoxville/Oak Ridge
www.tennessee.sierraclub.org/harvey
Chair: Robin Hill (865) 996-9435
robinhill8@gmail.com
Vice-Chair: David Reister (865) 980-3991
dreister@bellsouth.net
Secretary: Susan Routon (901) 413-3888
susandrouton@gmail.com
Treasurer: Scott Baubry (901) 619-8567
snbaubry@gmail.com
Outings: Ron Shrieve (865) 922-3518
ronaldshrieve@comcast.net

Middle Tennessee Group - Nashville
www.tennessee.sierraclub.org/mtg
Chair: Betsy Garber (615) 666-1977
garberb@hotmail.com
Vice-Chair: Carol Dalley (615) 254-1880
cardalleyan@comcast.net
Secretary: Betsy Garber (615) 666-1977
garberb@hotmail.com
Treasurer: Michael Varnell (615) 217-0985
rvannell@bellsouth.net
Outings: Open - Would You Like To Organize the Outings?
Chair: Sue A. Williams (901) 274-0524
saw@juno.com
Vice Chair: John Doyal (423) 304-7467
baldie052@yahoo.com
Secretary: Emily Schwimmer (901) 753-5474
eschwimmer@gmail.com
Treasurer: Susan Routon (901) 413-3888
susan.routon@gmail.com
Conservation: Scott Baubry (901) 619-8567
snbaubry@gmail.com
Outings: Ron Shrieve (865) 922-3518
ronaldshrieve@comcast.net

Watanga Group - Carter, Johnson, Sullivan, Unicoi and Washington Counties
www.tennessee.sierraclub.org/watangs
Chair: Gloria Griffith (423) 727-4797
gla7979@embarqmail.com
Vice Chair: Sandi Cranford (423) 727-5044
sugar@highcountryonline.net
Secretary: Dennis Sheikhah (423) 727-6497
dsheikhah@centerlink.net
Treasurer: Cindy Johnson (423) 768-3882
cj782@bellsouth.net
Conservation: Dean Whitworth (423) 727-7214
Outings: Webb Griffin (423) 727-4797
gla7979@embarqmail.com

National Sierra Staff in Tennessee:
Rita Harris, Field Organizer
Environmental Justice Program (901) 324-7757
rita.harris@sierraclub.org

Please notify the Editor when changes are needed.
Dear Tennessee Chapter Members,

Recently I was appointed to serve on a stakeholder task force for the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) representing the Sierra Club. The mission of the task force involves determining the best plans for building new roads in Tennessee. I need input from you regarding new infrastructure and road use in our state. I welcome contact from you via e-mail or telephone.

In February I attended the Good Jobs, Green Jobs conference in Atlanta, Georgia representing the Tennessee Chapter. The seminars were regionally focused. I spent some good quality time with Georgia Sierra Club leaders. Cliff Cockerham and two Sierra Student Coalition members also attended the conference.

During April I visited leaders from Chickasaw Group twice. I plan to visit all our groups this summer.

Many thanks go to the Watauga Group for hosting the spring chapter meeting at Sterchi Lodge. The work of hosting a chapter meeting is arduous and greatly appreciated.

Katherine Pendleton, Chair
Tennessee Chapter Sierra Club

To subscribe to the Tennessee News Listserve, email the following text to
LISTSERV@LISTS.SIERRACLUB.ORG:

SUBSCRIBE TENNESSEE-NEWS YourFirstName YourLastName

(Of course, substituting your actual first and last name in the places indicated.)
The public is very welcome at ALL Sierra Club Meetings and Activities! All members traveling across the state should join us in and attend another Group’s meeting. You will find yourself among friends and learning something interesting.

CHEROKEE GROUP (Chattanooga)

May Strategy Meeting: May 14 (Board Meeting) 2nd Monday, 6:00 P.M., at the Eastgate Town Center on Brainerd Road, at the south end near the indoor waterfowl. All members of the Group and interested people are welcome – this is where and when we plan our action ideas for outings & programs for the rest of the year – come add your ideas. To place an item on the agenda, contact Chair Davis Mounger at 433-877-4616 or wdmounger@yahoo.com, preferably a week ahead of our meeting.

May Program: 3rd Monday, May 21, 7 P.M. at GreenSpaces, 63 E. Main Street, Chattanooga. Topic: "Mountain Top Removal and The Last Mountain," by J.W. Randolph. JW will bring us the latest on the fight against mountain top removal coal mining, as well as highlight his talk with some clips from the award-winning movie, “The Last Mountain.” JW, Tennessee Director of Appalachian Voices, helped lead the fight for the Scenic Vistas Act in the Tennessee Legislature this spring, and will brief us on the next steps for bringing this horrific practice to an end. Our work is not done! We welcome JW home. He’s from Chattanooga!

NOTE: To avoid Memorial Day, we are meeting 1 week earlier than the usual Thursday. Bring your friends.

II. Board Meeting and YOU: If you have information to present, or if you have an agenda item, contact Sue Williams for location information

The Executive Committee meets on the second Tuesday of every month. This is a business meeting where members are welcome to attend. Come and see exactly what we do! If you have an agenda item which you would like to see discussed, agenda items must be submitted at least 5 days before the meeting to the Executive Committee at (JW) (at) zkcvmu@yahoo.com or 901-274-0524.

THURSDAY, May 7, 5:30 P.M. Meet & Greet & Snacks with a 6:00 P.M. Program by TBA

THURSDAY, June 7, 5:30 P.M. Monthly First Thursday Gathering Otherslands Coffee Bar, 641 S. Faris Ave., Springfield, MO

Sierra Club members, activists, and friends can meet in a casual setting to talk about issues and interests. First Thursday contact: Mark Plumlee at mark.chickasaw@gmail.com or 901-679-4622.

First Thursday Gathering Otherlands Coffee Bar, 641 S. Faris Ave., Springfield, MO

Sierra Club members, activists, and friends can meet in a casual setting to talk about issues and interests. First Thursday contact: Mark Plumlee at mark.chickasaw@gmail.com or 901-679-4622.

THURSDAY, June 7, 5:30 P.M. Monthly First Thursday Gathering Otherlands Coffee Bar, 641 S. Faris Ave., Springfield, MO

Sierra Club members, activists, and friends can meet in a casual setting to talk about issues and interests. First Thursday contact: Mark Plumlee at mark.chickasaw@gmail.com or 901-679-4622.
Welcome to the Tennessee Chapter’s master list of our outings. Members, and the public, are always very welcome at any of these events. Listed by the specific Group, whoever is listed as the contact is listed as the contact. If you would like to read a copy of the wayer before you participate, please refer to http://www.scierraclub.org/outing/chapter/forms/Signin.aspx

 webinar registration #423-717-5630 for a printed version. Transportation to the outing, including carpooling, ride-sharing or anything similar, is strictly a private arrange-
tation among the participants. Participants assume the risks associated with this travel.

CHEROKEE GROUP (Chattanooga)

We must say “Aaf Widersehen” to Leslie Jakob, and “Danks” for a job well done as our Outings Chair; Leslie and her family will be moving back to Germany.

We welcome Emily Marr Davis as our new Outings Chair and point-person for outings infor-
mation for our Group. Our activities are always open to the public and to members of the Club from across the state! We explore interesting and unique parts of Tennessee, gaining an appreciation of how wonderful, and sometimes threatened, our area is — while having fun! You’ll see the birds, explore the streams and well as the trails:

www.heartwoodbattleofthebandsandfest.com/

Sandy Kurtz. Kids 12 and under free with paid adult, some jambalaya, camping along the stream, and have a cook already set. Pickett is north of Knoxville —Hazard Cave Trail-2 1/2 mile loop
—Natural Bridge Trail-1 1/4 mile loop
—Ladder Trail-1 mile loop
—Bluff Loop-1 mile—one way

June 8, 9, 10 (Fri-Sun) Pickett State Park
Contact Barbara to reserve your place in the cabin.


June 27 (Sun). A Dayhike at the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

Chickasaw Coulee (Memphis)

Outings Chair for the Chickasaw Group

Looking for someone interested and willing to provide leadership and direction to the Group’s Outings programs. This position involves outdoor activity organ-
ations as an integrated and vital element of our Group’s efforts. Don’t worry if you aren’t a certi-
fied Outings Group Leader. Participants and experience in the outdoors a plus!

Volunteer First Aid Trainer

www.heartwoodbattleofthebandsandfest.com

hard to the one described for May 26 (with the exception that Ron Shrieves is the leader), so see that descrip-
tion. Preregister with Ron Shrieves: phone 922-3158; ronshrieves@comcast.net.

June 9 (Sat). Take-a-Hike, Biodiversity tour (Spruce-Fir, Grassy Bald, Beech, Gorge), Fortney Point and Andrews Bald. This is a new

refurbished trail starts at the Chimango’s Dome park-

ing lot. It begins in the backcountry, then winds up to Andrews Bald, which is managed to preserve the native grasses and azaleas. Before returning, we will also visit a nearby nearby public road in the region. Total distance 4.2 miles rated easy. One-way drive:

June 16-17 (Sat-Sun). Backpack, Mt. Rogers National Recreation Area (Jefferson National Forest - Virginia)

The 170 Essentials for Hiking

Meeting (Pine-Oak), Roundtop Trail, GSPMN. We’ll first drive to the end of this trail at the “Y” on the Little River Trail—1 1/2 miles. The water is low enough to rock hop or wade the river. If the water is low enough for a river crossing, we’ll leave a shuttle car at the Redfield site (starting from Wear’s Cove Gap Road near Metalforf Bottoms) and walk up the trailhead on Wear’s Cove Gap Road, hike halfway to the top of Joint Ridge and return to the start. Total distance 7.5 miles rated moderate. One-way drive: 44 miles. Preregister with Mac Post at 865-806-0980 or mpost3116@aol.com (email preferred).

MIDDLE TENNESSEE GROUP (Nashville)

May 19 - 9:30AM - Beamank Park. We will take up to the highest ridges, rated strenuous in parts. Hiking boots recommended and bring water. Meet at Beamank Park at 9:30AM. We know you’re coming. Contact: John Pigg at j.pigg@comcast.net or (615)585-1192.

Ten Essentials for Hiking

Sierra Club outings offer a variety of challenging and near-incredible adventures. It is important to realize that while all trips are guided by a leader, it is ulti-
mately the responsibility of the individual to operate in a safe manner. To this end, the following is a list of essential items without which according to the specific type of outing: Sundae are:

A. Adequate map
B. Water
C. Compass
D. Rain gear
E. Reading clothing (it is a good idea to always have a wool hat)
F. Matches
G. Knife
H. Flashlight
I. Fresh, food, water
J. The tenth essential: You decide what is the most important thing to bring!
Citizen scientists from across the United States have submitted more than 900,000 observations of plants and animals at 5,000 sites as part of the Nature’s Notebook program. The program records the timing of natural events, such as tree blossoms, construction of bird nests, salmon migration, and leaves changing color in the fall.

The data collected by citizen scientists are used by researchers to understand how plants and wildlife are responding to climate change. The outcomes of this research are being used or will be used in the future to forecast the onset of allergy season or chance of wildfires, manage wildlife and invasive plants, and set baselines for habitat restoration.

The program is part of the USA National Phenology Network, a partnership of federal, state, and local agencies, universities, schools, non-governmental organizations, and others. The network is funded by the United States Geological Survey, National Park Service, University of Arizona, and the National Science Foundation. Learn more about the program at http://www.usanpn.org/participate.

**Public Opinion Data On Climate Change**

November 2011 update: a new poll conducted by the Yale Project on Climate Change Communication and George Mason University indicates that 70% of Americans say that “global warming” should be a very high, high, or medium priority for the President and Congress - including 44% of Republicans, 72% of Independents, and 85% of Democrats. 52% of Americans say that a presidential candidate’s views on global warming will be “one of several important issues” in determining their vote - including majorities of Democrats (62%) and independents (54%). 66% say that the United States should make a “large-scale effort” (26%) or “medium-scale effort” (40%) to reduce global warming, even if it has large or moderate economic costs.

Americans support the concept of a revenue-neutral carbon tax (meaning the total amount of taxes collected by the government would stay the same). 65% would support “a shift in taxes that reduces the federal income tax that Americans pay each year, but increases taxes on coal, oil, and natural gas by an equal amount.” Despite continued concern about the economy, Americans’ support for many climate and energy policies remains high: 78% support funding renewable energy research, 78% support tax rebates for efficient cars and solar, 73% support requiring utilities to produce at least 20% of their electricity from renewable sources (even if it costs the average household an extra $100 per year), and 66% support the U.S. signing an international treaty to cut emissions.

October 2011 update: public opinion data shows that while an 83% majority of Americans believe global warming is happening (Stanford/Ipsos/Reuters poll), the majority are not worried about it – (Nielsen’s bi-annual online survey in 51 countries finds that while 69% of people around the world are concerned about climate change, less than half (48%) of Americans are worried about climate change - a 3-point drop from 2009 and a 14-point drop from 2007.)

**Phenology Network Approaches One Million Observations by Citizen Scientists**

The Phenology Network is a partnership of federal, state, and local agencies, universities, schools, non-governmental organizations, and others. The network is funded by the United States Geological Survey, National Park Service, University of Arizona, and the National Science Foundation. Learn more about the program at http://www.usanpn.org/participate.

**Outings (continued from page 5)**

Saturday, June 30 - 10:00AM Goodletsville Heritage Days. Mansker’s Station at Moss Wright Park at the Bowen House. Colonial period demonstrations include blacksmithing, leather-working, outdoor cooking, soap making and more. This 147-acre park has a two-mile trail (rated easy), picnic tables (some with grills), baseball fields and even a dog park. Bring the kids. Make a day of it! Moss Wright Park is located on Caldwell Drive off Long Hollow Pike in Goodlettsville and is only twelve miles from downtown Nashville. For more information contact: John Pigg at j.t.pigg@comcast.net or (615)851-1192.

We want you! All Middle Tennessee Group/Chapter members are encouraged to apply. Be an Outings Lead for MTG. Please contact John Pigg at j.t.pigg@comcast.net or (615)851-1192.

**RECYCLING VOLUNTEERS: EVERY SATURDAY - 9:00 - 12:00 - Volunteer at the recycling Site**

We are looking for volunteers to man the recycling center from 9 to 12 on Saturdays. This is a major source of income for the club and we need volunteers to spread the work load out so that few do not have to keep it doing every month. If you could volunteer just a few times a year that would help. Volunteers just need to be willing to ask people if they need help in unloading their recyclables and tell them “thank you” for recycling.

The bins are in front of the Kroger at 3955 Nolensville Road, Nashville, TN. The Kroger lot is about a half-mile towards town from the Bowen House at Harding and Nolensville. It’s a great place to get involved with our Group! Contact Tom at 423-718-5009 or bk1rivers@gmail.com.

**Volunteer Opportunities:**

Social Media Team Member: Persons willing to help with the jump to more active social media involvement at the Chapter/Groups level as we increase our organizational skills and craft effective messages for our campaigns and conservation work.

Fundraising Team Member: Persons willing to work on our development team to support the jump to mor...
Hard Questions about Coal, Q&A

1. If we reduce coal use, won’t that drive up electricity prices, particularly in parts of the country that have been hit hard by the recession and rely heavily on coal, like the Midwest and Appalachia?

Times have changed since solar and wind power first became available. Nationwide, the price of coal is going up, and the price of clean energy is coming down. Just like any technology, when cellphones first came out they were huge, rare, and expensive – now they are technologically advanced, widely available, and much cheaper – solar and wind are on the same trajectory and are getting cheaper every day.

Xcel energy in Colorado recently raised its electricity prices six percent to cover the cost of a new coal plant and less than 2 percent for a similar size wind farm. Wind is already cheaper than coal in many places. What’s more, the cost of the actual coal fuel itself is going up and we have no idea how much more it will cost in a few years or decades – but we do know the exact cost of wind and sunshine – it will be free.

2. Why are you trying to kill jobs?

Moving towards clean energy will create jobs. Employment trends are shifting – today more workers are actually employed in the wind industry than in the coal mining industry. The coal industry has been shedding jobs – and we know that wind, solar, and energy efficiency create more jobs than the coal jobs that they replace.

In addition, we are not talking about making this switch overnight. We are talking about phasing out these old, dirty plants on reasonable timelines that ensures workers are taken care of. In two recent major announcements of old coal plants that were being retired – TVA in the Southeast and Centralia in the Northwest – tens of millions of dollars will be invested in workforce development and in investments in clean energy technologies and efficiency measures. The announcement of the Centralia deal had the major labor unions in the environment AND the company standing side by side highlighting how this was a win-win for workers and the environment.

3. Coal-fired power plants and coal mines provide the lion’s share of local tax revenue in many rural areas. What do you propose for communities that are going to have to close schools, lay off emergency workers, and cut other vital services as a result of this campaign?

One of the greatest tragedies of coal is that great wealth is extracted from these communities and they are left worse off, not better off, when the boom is over. The time is now to diversify these economies, before the coal has been mined and only pollution and ruined infrastructure is left behind.

4. Many electric utilities like American Electric Power are claiming that new EPA regulations are going to result in higher electricity prices and will slow down the economic recovery. How can you support these new regulations at a time when the economy is in such a slump?

EPA is taking common sense action to close loopholes that only benefit the polluters, and that cost the rest of us hundreds of millions per year in health costs and cleanup costs for polluted air and water. American families are currently footing the bill for over $100 billion in health costs related to coal pollution. Loopholes for the coal industry include: no federal limits on mercury pollution from coal; no federal standards for disposal of toxic coal ash; outdated and unhealthy standards for sulfur and smog, which can trigger asthma attacks. These protections are long overdue, and study after study has shown economic benefits of clean air and water protections far outweigh the costs.

5. Clean energy sources like wind and solar provide 10% of our nation’s electricity, while coal provides 45%. Renewables are not ready to replace coal – they are too unreliable and too expensive. Given that reality, how do you propose to replace all this coal power and keep the lights on?

First, clean energy is already replacing coal around the country. The state of Iowa is at 20 percent wind power and wind is providing low-cost reliable power to keep that state humming. Xcel Energy – one of the five largest utilities - just announced it will get 30 percent of its power in Colorado from clean energy in the next 3-5 years. Second, the solar industry is experiencing huge growth – it nearly doubled last year – and as the industry grows, the price of solar gets cheaper. And third, studies show that we can reduce 30% of demand for electricity just through reducing energy waste – energy efficiency is the cheapest, cleanest energy resource available.

6. Most of these coal plants are just going to be replaced or re-powered with natural gas. Aren’t you concerned about the environmental damage and water pollution that will increase as a result, especially in states like New York where fracking is a big problem? And won’t increased use of natural gas severely undercut the global warming benefits of reducing our coal use?

Wind, solar and geothermal energy are abundant and available today. As the Sierra Club’s coal campaign retires coal plants it is working to replace them with these clean alternatives. Natural gas can only play a role in phasing out coal if it can be extracted responsibly. The Sierra Club is pushing for tough regulation of natural gas extraction, as well as putting gas extraction off limits in our most vulnerable areas, like the NY City Watershed.

7. Would you support the increased use of nuclear power to replace this coal power, especially given the recent nuclear disaster in Japan? Don’t you think the manageable risks of coal power are preferable to the threat of a meltdown at a nuclear plant?

The Sierra Club has a long history of opposing nuclear power because it is dirty, dangerous, and extremely expensive. Coal is also dangerous - burning coal causes tens of thousands of premature deaths and hundreds of thousands of asthma attacks every year, not to mention massive destruction of our land and water. In Appalachia alone, 500 mountains blown up and 2,000 miles of streams buried by mountaintop removal mining – there’s nothing clean about that. Coal pollution is a very real threat to our health and safety. We don’t have to choose between two dirty and dangerous sources of power. This is about securing investments in clean energy choices we all agree on: wind, solar, geothermal and energy efficiency – which are available today and ready to provide safe clean power.

8. Why should we replace these coal plants? Why not just retrofit them with modern pollution controls and keep them running? The Obama Administration’s Department of Energy – which is headed by a Nobel Laureate – is deeply committed to clean coal and says it’s an essential part of our energy mix, so why don’t we just clean these plants up?

There is no such thing as clean coal. Talking about “clean coal” is like talking about “healthy tobacco.” There is no technology ready to go today that can clean up the carbon pollution from these coal plants. And there’s nothing clean about mining or transporting coal either. Why rely only on costly and time-consuming research when invest- ments in already existing renewable energy like solar and wind can already help solve our energy problems today? We should be investing our money in carbon-free, truly clean energy – not propping up these dinosaur coal plants to operate for another 50 years.

9. Most people don’t even know where their power comes from. Why should they care?

Pollution from coal knows no boundaries. Everyone who eats fish is affected by mercury pollution. Everyone who breathes is affected by soot and smog. Everyone who drinks water is affected by contamination from coal mining and coal ash. This is nothing short of a fight for the health of our chil- dren, and we have no time to lose. There is a better way to get our energy and the time is right to invest in solar and wind.
Sierra Club No Nukes Activist Summit

By Brian Paddock


Sierra Club Chapters and Activists are confronting nuclear issues all over the country. It is time to share our experiences and create a plan for mutual and national support for campaigns that challenge nuclear power, nuclear weapons systems and radioactive waste. Club members are invited to Washington, D.C. May 4-6, 2012 to develop a strategic plan for the Club’s anti-nuclear work, learn how to organize around the issues, and create a national network.

In the TVA area we have special interest as TVA is finishing the Watts Bar 2 reactor and plans to build a reactor at Bellefonte in Alabama using a decades-old design. This is done with money from our power bills plus funny-finance borrowing that costs us more to build these multi-billion dollar plants. Tennessee now accepts about 75% of all the “low level” radioactive waste generated in the U.S. and the radioactive waste process companies are getting licenses to bring more waste from all over the world. This radioactive waste stays in ordinary landfills under a program fostered by the TN Department of Environment. It is called “BSFR”. [http://www.state.tn.us/environment/rad/bsfr.shtml]

There will be presentations from national nuclear experts including Kevin Kamps from Beyond Nuclear and Sierra National Board candidate Arjun Makhijani, author of Carbon Free Nuclear Free.

Presentation topics include:
- Overview of the current condition of the Nuclear Fuel Chain
- The True Cost of Nukes - Why the economics is their Achilles Heel
- Nuclear Waste: reprocessing, transportation, and storage
- Living in the nuclear neighborhood
- Creative strategies for stopping nukes
- Developing a national strategy to replace nuclear power with renewable energy and efficiency
- Using online community tools and social media to communicate, collaborate, and organize.

Paul Gunter from Beyond Nuclear, Katherine Fuchs from The Alliance for Nuclear Accountability, and Robin Mann, Sierra Club board president are also confirmed.

The No Nukes Team needs your ideas, enthusiasm and dedication. Sierrans are doing anti-nuclear work in many places and in many ways. This is our chance to share and to forge the basis for a national Sierra campaign to avoid the end of coal becoming the new impetus for nuclear power. Check-in starts at 3:00 P.M. on May 4. The meeting ends on May 6 at 5:00 P.M. There will be a group activity on Monday, May 7 at the Sierra Club office in Washington, DC.

All of the sessions will be held at the Washington Theological Union (WTU). The conference fee includes a reception on May 4, continental breakfast and lunch on May 5, and continental breakfast and lunch on May 6. The fee does not include lodging. There is limited space at the WTU that will be filled on a first-come, first-serve basis. Please register on line as soon as possible. There will not be onsite registration. Registrations need to be completed no later than April 20, 2012.

The on-line registration at http://action.sierraclub.org/site/Calendar?id=159641&view=Detail also accepts lodging reservations and payment. The Conference Fee is $35.00 in advance. There are a limited number of scholarships available for conference volunteers. Contact Leslie March for more information on scholarships. Contact Leslie March at lesliemarch@hotmail.com or 503-615-5750 for conference questions. Please add “No Nukes Strategy Summit” in the subject of your e-mail. You may also join the No Nukes Team on the Activist Network for current information.

Join fellow Sierra Club No Nukes activists for a national strategy meeting in WA, DC.

Register today at http://sc.org/no_nukes

Saturday

Join the anti-nuclear tradition of the Sierra Club on May 6th, followed by Nuclear Waste. The event will be on the National Mall, at the steps of the Lincoln Memorial.

Sunday’s session is focused on developing a national campaign that will support local battles and develop a strong national network for Sierra Club No Nuke Activists.