Chapter Announces Comprehensive Policy to Protect Flint Hills

Over the past several years proposals to install wind turbines in the Flint Hills have generated considerable controversy. The Kansas Chapter, in a published policy statement, declined to take a position on individual wind farm proposals anywhere in the state, which is a national policy of the Club. As a result we were subjected to harsh criticism by some opponents of wind power.

National policy aside, many members of the Executive Committee were reluctant to endorse a wholesale ban on wind turbines in the Flint Hills because such a position would ignore many other important issues that needed to be addressed. The Flint Hills is not a pristine region and has been heavily managed by humans for a long time. If this is to continue, as opposed to turning it back to nature, then it really becomes is a matter of equity in land use management. For example, if some land owners are to be denied the use of their land for wind turbines, then why should other landowners be allowed to continue practices which are equally or even more damaging to wildlife and the environment?

Secondly, if the ban on turbines is desired to protect the admittedly strong aesthetic values of the Flint Hills and its value for tourism, then shouldn’t we improve access for average Kansans so they could really enjoy the place in an ecologically sound way?

Finally there was the question of how to balance the existing natural and aesthetic values of the Flint Hills against an overriding need to do our part to combat global warming by promoting renewable energy sources. The question then became, given that the Flint is a really large part of the state, some 60 miles wide and 170 miles long, how much of the area’s

See Flint Hills on page 7
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Farm Bills Aren’t Just for Farmers
By Paul D. Johnson, Prairie Writers Circle

Someone once said federal farm bills should be called food bills, because they affect all Americans, not just farmers.

The present farm bill expires in 2007, so talk has already begun on where to go from here. Fundamental change is needed.

We need to loosen the corporate grip on agriculture and revamp the government’s role. The present system has forced many farmers out of farming, ravaged the free market in food, encouraged an environmentally destructive agriculture, and promoted cheap calories that feed our obesity epidemic.

The next farm bill should promote a freer, more local market in agriculture, sustainable, soil-saving farming, and a safer supply of more healthful food.

And we should not forget the need to ensure a nutritional safety net for millions of low-income Americans.

Let’s get our priorities straight. Here is a shopping list for the next farm bill:

- Progressively reduce excessive corn and soybean subsidies. These give factory confinement of chickens, hogs and cattle a cost advantage. Pasture production is better for animals and the environment, and results in more healthful food for consumers. And subsidy-driven corn production has given the food industry a cheap sweetener, high-fructose corn syrup, a tool to increase profits by pushing calories through supersizing at fast-food outlets.
- Expand conservation programs. Eighty percent of this money is now used to take land out of production and plant it with soil-saving vegetation, such as native grass. While this is a good idea, most of America’s soil loss and water pollution are from working farms. More reward should go to active farmers who use the best environmental practices.
- Expand rural development programs that promote food that is locally grown, processed and marketed. We need more small dairies that bottle their own milk for local consumers, medium-scale meatpacking and farmers’ markets. By cutting the distance food travels to reach consumers now an average of 1,400 miles, fossil fuel use would drop, our air would be cleaner and our food fresher. Increased crop diversity would result in a healthier food base.

See Farm Bill on page 22
2006 Legislative Summary
by Charles Benjamin, Legislative Coordinator

The Legislative Committee of the Kansas Sierra Club sets the legislative priorities and goals of the Chapter in consultation with me, the Chapter’s legislative coordinator. The following summary describes legislation before the 2006 Kansas legislature that the Chapter has decided to support or oppose in order to carry out the conservation goals of the Chapter. The full text of all legislation below, as well as summaries, can be found on-line at http://www.kslegislature.org/legsrv-bills/index.do.

ENERGY: (See also the analysis of energy issues in the Kansas legislature by Associated Press reporter John Hanna in this issue of the Planet Kansas)

H.B. 2657 supported by Sierra Club would have allowed utilities to recover their authorized rate of return on investments in energy efficiency and conservation programs for residential customers who have an energy audit and are current in their utility bills. The bill was defeated in the House Utilities Committee on an unrecorded voice vote.

H.B. 2934 supported by Sierra Club would have provided a state contribution to low-income home weatherization activities, increased the number of homes served in Kansas for weatherization, provided technical information and assistance for Kansans to take advantage of tax credits and other programs in the Federal Energy Policy Act of 2005 and increased spending on current energy-related technical assistance and public education efforts to promote the efficient utilization of all energy resources in Kansas. The bill was defeated in the House Utilities Committee on an unrecorded voice vote.

H.B. 2637 supported by Sierra Club would have provided state income tax credits for ceiling insulation, newly installed and more efficient heaters, ventilation or air conditioners in single family and multiple family dwellings and the installation of energy conservation exterior doors and windows. The bill was referred to the House Taxation Committee but there has been no hearing.

H.B. 2644 supported by Sierra Club would have required the disclosure of the thermal efficiency of a new home at the time the new home is offered for sale, or at any time upon request by a prospective buyer, rather than “upon request or prior to closing” as is in current law. The bill had a hearing but was never worked or voted on in the House Commerce and Labor Committee.

H.B. 2657 supported by Sierra Club would have allowed utilities to recover their authorized rate of return on investments in energy efficiency and conservation programs for residential customers who have an energy audit and are current in their utility bills. The bill was passed out of the House Utilities Committee but was defeated on an unrecorded vote in the full House.

H.B. 2642 supported by Sierra Club would have set up “the energy policy advisory group” composed of an energy economist from a state university; representatives of businesses that consume fuel in the production of their products; a representative of renewable energy producers; representatives of other energy producers; representatives of the energy consuming general public; representatives of agricultural interests; a representative of energy conservation and efficiency interests; a representative of a Kansas refinery; a tax specialists knowledgeable about energy tax matters; a representative of environmental advocacy groups; representatives of energy production, consumption, conservation of efficiency interests not otherwise represented on the energy advisory group – all appointed by the governor. Other non-voting ex officio members would have included members of the legislature and various state administrative agencies. The advisory group would employ an executive director and technical advisory committees and would have developed and updated a state energy plan. The bill was voted favorably out of the House Utilities Committee but failed on a recorded vote of the full House by 3 votes.

H.B. 2588 supported by Sierra Club would have required the Kansas Corporation Commission (KCC) that decides on utility rate increases and the Citizens’ Utility Ratepayers’ Board (CURB) that represents small business and individual ratepayers in KCC rate cases, to consider technologies which provide long-term economic, social and other benefits including environmental benefits and avoided costs of meeting anticipated regulatory requirements when determining whether or not an investment by a utility in electric generating property is “prudent.” Sierra Club supported this legislation in order to get the KCC and CURB to incorporate analyses of long term benefits of renewable energy technologies and environmental upgrades even if there are short term investment costs. The KCC claims they do this already and CURB does not want the legislature to tell them how to evaluate prudent utility investments. An amended version of HB 2588 was defeated on an unrecorded voice vote in the House Utilities Committee.

H.B. 2589 supported by Sierra Club would have required state agencies to increase the amount of the total energy they consume from “renewable energy resources and technologies” to not less than 2.5% by 2007 and to not less than 10% by 2010. Sierra Club strongly supported these provisions and urged House Utility Committee members to increase those amounts. An amended version of the bill, making the renewable energy goals optional, was defeated in an unrecorded voice vote in the House Utilities Committee.

H.B. 2636 supported by Sierra Club would have allowed local governments and educational entities to form cooperatives to generate and purchase renewable energy and require retail suppliers of electricity to purchase, at wholesale market prices, any surplus renewable energy generated or purchased by such cooperatives. Sierra Club strongly supported this bill in order to promote the idea of “community wind farms” and

See Legislative Summary on page 17
Big Electric Utilities Team Up to Oppose Community Wind Bill

The state of Kansas missed another opportunity to support and stimulate renewable energy development when big electric utilities successfully opposed House Bill 2636.

About the Bill

HB 2636 was recommended by the Special Joint Committee on Energy and sponsored by Tom Sloan, member of the Utilities and Environment committees in the Kansas legislature. In recognition of the increasing flow of energy dollars out of the state while Kansas sits on a nearly undeveloped gold mine of wind resources, the bill attempted to set policy enabling municipalities and educational institutions to develop small scale distributed generation, or community wind installations. Rep. Sloan noted the obvious, “…it is better for Kansas to be close to the source of energy than to be at the “other” end of the supply pipeline.”

Fostering development of community wind projects will benefit Kansas. First, Kansans can utilize their vast wind resources to make their own electricity and save money rather than sending money to Wyoming to burn more coal. There are many community wind projects across the region, though not in Kansas, that support school systems and small communities. These developments provide strong track records of economic gains. Second, no single source of electric generation is going to provide a silver bullet allowing the Kansas economy to grow while still protecting our environment. However, wind power will play an increasing and important role in meeting our energy needs going forward. Bills like HB 2636 are needed to clear the way for development.

Why the Electric Utilities Opposed HB 2636

The simple and primary reason that the utilities opposed HB 2636 is that it fosters competition in their markets. The utilities have no winning option in HB 2636 other than the opportunity to turn wind power development, management, and maintenance into a business opportunity – a level of foresight and business risk-taking not common in the Kansas utility industry. The utility companies did, however, point out several reasonable concerns with the bill that should be taken seriously. These flaws could have been dealt with through amendments during committee deliberation.

Westar pointed out that a utility would be required to maintain capacity in reserve to provide the full power requirements of the community wind customers. This capacity would be locked up and unavailable for sale on the wholesale market. This argument uses the biggest bug-a-boo in Kansas energy policy – that a policy change could raise customers’ costs. If utilities like Westar will incur a real cost if they are required to be ready to step in and meet the full power needs of small

Lawmakers Make Little Progress on Conservation, Energy Bills

By John Hanna - Associated Press Writer

Tuesday, March 7, 2006. This article was earlier published in the Lawrence Journal World.

Topeka — When the price of gas peaked at more than $3 a gallon last year and winter promised steep increases in home heating costs, some legislators assumed promoting renewable energy and conservation would be big issues this year.

They turned out to be wrong.

With the start of the 2006 session’s ninth week Monday, the Legislature had made relatively little progress on conservation and renewable energy legislation. At least nine bills were introduced this year, and so far only one has passed a single chamber.

Some lawmakers believe their colleagues lost interest in the topics when gasoline prices dropped and the winter turned out to be much milder than anticipated. Some of the proposals would cost state and local governments tax revenues, and the potential for short-term utility rate increases also have become an issue.

“Essentially, a majority of legislators don’t feel a lot of pressure right now to take action,” said Rep. Tom Sloan, R-Lawrence, a member of the House Utilities Committee. “The energy crisis furor of last fall has dissipated.”

Considered bills

The only bill to make significant progress would provide $875,000 a year in state incentives to biodiesel fuel producers. The Senate approved the bill unanimously last month.

The House last month rejected a bill aimed at giving utilities an incentive to start programs to help customers make their homes more energy efficient. A bill that would put a small surcharge on electric bills for state assistance is stuck in committee.

The House Utilities and Taxation committees still are considering other legislation, including a bill to give property owners income tax incentives if they add insulation, install energy-efficient doors and windows or improve heating or air conditioning systems. House Utilities Committee Chairman Carl Dean Holmes, R-Liberal, said he’d still like pass the latter measure this year.

But the two committees also are considering legislation to give tax incentives to companies that build or expand oil refineries or crude oil pipelines, or that convert Kansas coal into a gas to power generators or make fertilizer.

See Utilities on page 14

See Lawmakers on page 15
No Sweat Guide to Stop Global Warming

Global Warming is real. The urgency of the global warming problem can no longer be denied. It could be a matter of life and death for our children and grandchildren. We can do something about it before it’s too late. The quickest way to address to reduce our use is, for the most of the problem, in many ways, is focused on the and environment of electricity.

Changing our habits can achieve efforts at a relatively defies logic, electric in Missouri and the United States a program to build new coal fired power is the need to meet loads and their assumption is that Americans will continue to demand ever more power. We can prove them wrong, and hardly break out in a sweat!

Challenge # 1.

The most expensive and environmentally damaging use of electricity by the general public is, surprise... Air Conditioning in the Summer.

Air conditioning is very costly because peak demand, also called peak load, is caused by home and office cooling needs during summer heat waves. Electric utility companies must install equipment that can be ramped up quickly to meet surges in load. As a rule this need is served by combustion turbines fueled by expensive natural gas. Even if natural gas were cheap, the cost would still be high because the equipment sits idle all but a few weeks of the year.

Challenge # 2.

People love their air conditioning! This requires no further explanation for long time Kansas and Missouri residents.

Meeting the Challenge with personal solutions. Is there a way out? Can I be part of the solution and not suffer in a sauna? Yes you can! But first some principles to guide your actions.

Fundamental Action Principle #1: Stop making your air conditioner work so hard.

Many uses of electricity in homes and businesses give off waste heat that forces your air conditioner to work longer and harder while using extremely costly power. The five main sources of waste heat are:

1. Incandescent lights. Perhaps the most energy inefficient device ever invented. They work on a principle of creating so much resistance to the flow of electricity that the internal element becomes white hot. The bulb gives off heat that significantly increases the temperature in a room. In contrast, fluorescent lights use 65 to 75% less energy and give off little heat.
2. Gas compressors. These are also very inefficient devices because they are, in effect, trying to pound air or gas into a smaller space. Try that with your fist. The “guilty parties” in your home are your refrigerator and freezer. The waste heat is given off by the cooling coils underneath or on the sides of the appliance.
3. Heating elements. Like incandescent bulbs, they work by creating resistance to the flow of electricity. The “Perps” are electric stoves, ovens, counter top ovens and heating plates, coffee makers, toasters and electric clothes dryers.
4. Gas fired appliances. Gas stoves put most of the energy into your rooms not your food. And don’t forget hot water heaters and pipes.
5. Electronics. All electronic devices like computers, monitors and TV’s contain resistors and capacitors that give off heat. Many of these devices are unnecessarily left on while unused.

Fundamental Action Principle #2: use your appliances during off-peak hours.

Note: Peak summer loads occur between 11 AM and 7 PM. It's coolest from 6 to 7 AM in the morning.

Thus, especially on hot days, do your chores and run your appliances late in the evening or first thing in the morning. This way the appliances don't draw power while air conditioning everywhere is going full blast and straining the grid.

No Sweat Action Steps (while still enjoying your summer)

1. Replace incandescent lights with fluorescent lights. Fluorescent lights now come in all shapes and sizes at low cost. It's worth it to replace all your incandescent lights that operate more than a few minutes each day. Tube fluorescents are moderately more efficient than the compact units (CFL's), but of course, tubes cannot be screwed into exiting fixtures.

If you have recessed lighting fixtures of the open-end kind, you can now buy flood-type CFL's to fit, or you can coat the insides of the fixture with aluminum paint to increase reflection in the desired direction from a standard CFL which are much less expensive. Of course it's best to keep any lights off when unneeded. Regularly clean fluorescent lamp tubes and shades.

Fluorescent lamps contain a tiny amount of mercury and need to be properly disposed of or recycled. The good news is these lights last many years with normal use and cause less emission of mercury than would occur if more coal was burned to run incandescent lights of comparable
hugely valuable wind resources should be placed off limits? After considerable deliberation the excom has decided on a new, comprehensive policy for the protection of the Flint Hills.

The Policy.

The Kansas Chapter believes that the recovery and conservation of the Flint Hills requires a comprehensive approach by state leaders. Addressing only the issue of utility scale wind turbines will leave, frozen in place, the existing abuses to the Flint Hills ecosystem and the region's air quality, as well as inadequate facilities for the enjoyment of the area by nature-oriented visitors. Therefore, the Kansas Chapter of the Sierra Club offers the following five-point plan for the protection of the Flint Hills: Establish:

1. a ban on the use of utility-scale wind turbines in the area designated by the Governor as the “Heart of the Flint Hills.” Exemptions would be allowed for small, community-scale wind farms used to supply power to towns, schools and agricultural operations in the area.
2. much tighter regulation of, and reduction in, the wholesale annual burning of the prairie.
3. a state recovery plan for the prairie chicken and a reduction in the hunting of prairie chickens until the population recovers.
4. large and genuine prairie parks that bring back unmanaged native plant species, bison and other native animal species.
5. improved, ecologically sound facilities for tourists such as hiking trails, campgrounds and educational centers (visitor centers).

Protect the Flint Hills and Give Us Wind.
My opinion is worth two-cents, maybe.
By Steve Baru

The media industry loves Kansas and why not? We continually find ways to feed them headlines for their “News of the Weird,” from Senator Kay O’Connor’s famous statement that women should never had be given the right to vote to Connie Morris of the Kansas State Board of Education calling evolution a fairy tale. Between the headlines over intelligent design (denial of evolution) and intelligent falling (denial of gravity) were numerous stories about turmoil within the Kansas environmental movement. The story was that our movement was about to implode over the issue of developing Kansas wind power as a source of Kansas energy.

The truth is that while the Kansas State Board of Education has gone over the deep end, the Kansas environmental movement is alive and well. In fact there is no disagreement that I know of about developing wind in Kansas; we’re as unified in our support as we are resolute in our determination that Kansas needs to develop its huge wind potential.

Kansas has wind, a lot of wind. Western Kansas has the most wind, on the most consistence basis. So an easy answer might be to build wind towers in western Kansas. The problem is that there aren’t enough transmission lines in the west to distribute electricity out of the region.

Eastern Kansas has wind, too, though not as much and not as consistently as the West but enough to make wind power feasible. Eastern Kansas has more population and therefore a plethora of transmission lines to transport electricity. The problem is that the east also has a plethora of sensitive habitat in the Flint Hills. The area is so sensitive that the Governor designated a portion of it, known as the Heart of the Flint Hills, as off limits to industrial wind turbine operations.

The Sierra Club supports the Governor’s position, that the Flint Hills is special and needs protection. In fact we’ve gone on record that the Flint Hills needs more than that: It needs a full comprehensive plan to protect and restore it.

(See our official position in the column to the left)

It is my belief that if we, the State of Kansas, begin this day to plan for our energy future, then by the year 2020 we can be producing 20% of our energy from renewable resources. I call for the Governor to appoint a taskforce to make recommendations on how to accomplish this goal.
Energizing Kansans for Energy Independence

That’s the theme of this year’s silent auction

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Environmental Awards

Kansas is ripe with the opportunity for wind power. This opportunity lies in western Kansas where wind is strong and steady, but it will take the entire state to support the effort and win the day. Your Kansas Sierra Club has already begun its efforts to educate and promote the economic, health, and environmental benefits of wind and other sound alternative energy strategies.

Now, you can help us make a difference. See you on April 29th

You can help make our Silent Auction a success

We need your help on the Auction Committee to call members, ask for quality donations from merchants, and help with details of the event.

Interested?
Contact Craig Wolfe at 913-299-4474 or info@kansas.sierraclub.org
My last point of concern is that we are a net exporter of electricity. We need to plan today so that we aren’t left holding the dirty air of tomorrow that’s left behind from the electricity we produce and ship to others. I’m certain that the entire Kansas Environmental movement is unified on this key point.

As Steve Abrams and Connie Morris of the Kansas State Board of Education continue to find ways to dumb down the science taught to children in our public schools, let’s remember that it’s sound science that will allow us to clean up this world, protect the Flint Hills and give us fresh unpolluted air to breath.

Let’s hope that the actions of people like Abrams and Morris aren’t successful in changing our state song from “Home on the Range” to “If I Only Had a Brain.”

I invite your feedback; please send to Steve Baru, wildlife1@aol.com or 13114 W. 125th Terrace, Shawnee Mission KS, 66213.

Here’s some websites where you can get additional information:
- www.energystar.gov (Guide to energy efficient appliances & certification of compact fluorescents -CFLs)
- www.lamprecycle.org (click on “recycling household lamps” and the EPA Fact Sheet) for info on proper disposal or recycling of CFLs.
- www.ase.org and www.powerisinyourhands.org (Comprehensive energy savings info)

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**Protect the Flint Hills, continued from page 7**

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**No Sweat, continued from page 7**

- Turn outdoor security lights off during the day. Use fluorescent, high density discharge or low pressure sodium lights.
- Unplug that old refrigerator or freezer. Our grandchildren can’t afford for us to use the old frige to keep our beer cold. Throw out or use up old food so you can consolidate into one refrigerator. You can keep the old frige for emergencies.
- In early AM use your whole house fan to draw in outside air. Then shut the house up during the day. This helps during all but the hottest days. When the house is closed up, use ceiling fans to circulate the air. This allows you to turn up the thermostat and still remain cool.
- Cool only the rooms you need by closing cooling vents and doors of unused rooms.
- Do your chores late at night or during the cool of the morning. Wash & dry clothes, run your dishwasher, take your shower and cook meals to eat later. Better yet, dry those highly water absorbing items like towels and jeans on an outside clothesline.
- Wash your clothes in cold water.
- Use your microwave to cook and heat food. It uses 1/3 the energy of electric ovens. Better yet, eat cool foods on hot days, like forget the toast.
- Turn your electronics completely off when not in continual use. If you aren’t planning to use your computer in the next hour or so, turn it completely off. That goes for your TV, too. Make sure your computer is on a power strip/surge protector which you can use to easily disconnect the system. Most PC’s reach the end of their useful life because of advances in technology long before being switched on and off reduces their service life. If you can’t wait for start up, use the sleep mode. Screen savers do not save energy and are no longer necessary.
- Complain to your boss! That’s right. The next time you are freezing cold in your office while it’s 95 degrees outside threaten that you are going to tell the stockholders that he is wasting a lot of their money. Better yet call his children and grandchildren! This kind of nonsense has to stop now!

**Longer term action steps**

OK, you’ve come this far and you haven’t even broken a sweat. Your grandchildren can breathe a little easier. If your credit card still has some room, though, or you received an inheritance, there’s more you can do. Buy new, high efficiency home appliances. Add insulation. Install a whole house fan. Do an energy audit and install some electronic controls to reduce power use during peak demand. Go off the grid, even ... with a wind turbine or solar panel. The energy policy Act of 2005 allows tax credits for certain home improvements.

Come to think about it, that’s like giving an inheritance to your children and grandchildren... now, while it’ll do the most good.... and they can’t blow it on a Hummer or a boat. Let’s “Spread the Light.”

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Steve Baru inspects the grasses of the Flint Hills.
Ecosystems Report
Links Human Well-Being with Health of Planet

WASHINGTON—Life on Earth midway through the 21st century as population climbs from the current 6.5 billion to more than 9 billion will be marked by struggles for food, water and energy security, according to the first major global assessment of the relationship between human activity and the environment.

“There is an unbreakable link between human well-being and the health of the planet,” asserted Dr. Walter Reid, director of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment and a professor with Stanford University’s Institute for the Environment, at a news briefing here to release the report.

The four-year $24 million study by 1,360 scientists from 95 nations commissioned by the United Nations provides stark evidence of consequences stemming from the world’s rapidly growing population, including:

- Sixty percent of the ecological systems that sustain life on Earth are being degraded or used unsustainably;
- Some 10 to 30 percent of the mammal, bird and amphibian species are threatened with extinction;
- Water withdrawals from lakes and rivers for human use have doubled in the past 40 years;
- A third of the world’s population lives within ecosystems that contain less than 10 percent of the global freshwater supply;
- Accelerated and sustained resource exploitation over the past 50 years has led to new diseases, widespread water pollution, coastal dead zones and the likely collapse of a number of global fisheries.

The report indicates that by 2050 when the planet’s population is projected to surpass 9 billion, most people will have migrated to massive cities and the demand for food, fresh water and raw materials for construction and energy will stretch natural resources to their limits.

Unlikely there are major changes in the way people consume natural resources, there most probably will be widespread famine, severe shortages of clean water and an escalation of natural disasters such as hurricanes. In addition, cities will likely have vast amounts of wastewater and sewage; sea levels will rise; fisheries will collapse, and disease epidemics will sweep across the globe.

Reid noted that living conditions have improved for a majority of the world’s population during the last 50 years, but this progress has come at the expense of a heavy cost of natural resources. Continued degradation of resources such as forests and fresh water will have a serious impact on the quality of life, he warned.

“It is now time to measure the economic value of these services so that we can make better decisions about our future,” Reid said. “As long as we consider ecosystems free and limitless we will continue to use them in a way that does not make economic sense.

Though several European countries are acting on some of the report’s recommendations and China is preparing to initiate its own assessment based on the model provided by the international effort, he noted that there has been little reaction from the upper echelons of the United States government.

(Reprinted with permission from the January-February issue of POPLINE, the newsletter of the Population Institute.)
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Life Member Program

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Mercury Threat from New Kansas Coal Plants
by Craig Volland

Electric Power Producers in Kansas are planning to add some 3000 megawatts of new coal burning capacity by 2012. In addition KCP&L has recently received a permit (being appealed) to add 1050 MW in coal burning capacity at their Iatan site just north of the KC metro area near Weston, Mo. To put this in perspective, Westar’s existing coal-fired generating capacity is 2638 MW, and their total capacity, including nuclear, oil and natural gas is about 5800 MW.

The reason for this rush to burn coal is the soaring price of natural gas combined with the state’s proximity to relatively cheap Wyoming coal, though this coal is not at all cheap if the true costs of using it were accounted for. Power producers have little interest in aggressive campaigns to help customers reduce demand, and they are reluctant to take advantage of the vast wind resources in central and western Kansas.

So why should we care? Well there are tens of millions of tons of greenhouse gases that will increase global warming, increased fine particles that have been shown in the last 20 years to increase death rates particularly among the elderly and infirmed and increased precursors to ozone smog which also increases mortality and aggravates certain chronic diseases like asthma. For now though, I’ll focus on mercury pollution. Mercury that was absorbed by ancient plants millions of years ago and pressed into coal is about to make a redux into our atmosphere. The rush to burn huge quantities of Wyoming coal becomes a special problem for down winders in the eastern third of the state.

People can easily get confused about mercury. Why is it such a concern? After all, I played with the silvery elemental mercury when I was a kid, and I’m still here. Well, it all depends on which type of mercury you are exposed to and how it enters your body.

Elemental mercury is the only metal that is a liquid at room temperature. It doesn’t exist in nature in the form we played with. Primarily because it is useful in processing gold, humans have for many centuries dug mercury out of the earth, where it was perfectly happy married to sulfur in cinnabar ore, and then drove it off with heat. This lonely substance takes every opportunity to escape and find its way back home by attaching to carbon or sulfur in plants or in the soil, to eventually become buried in sediment where it can go out of the ecosystem undisturbed.

Our problem is that it wreaks havoc all along the way, by flirting with other elements or compounds that are highly toxic to humans. The worst thing we can do is to send this chemical in vapor form out of a tall stack so it can spread evenly over the landscape and wash into streams and lakes. Mercury falls out primarily in rain.

Elemental mercury is almost insoluble. If you swallow it, almost all passes on through. But if you breathe it in vapor form it is absorbed into your bloodstream and can get into the

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brain where it does its damage. One normally is not exposed to enough mercury in the air to get hurt. It’s a particular mercury compound that causes the problem.

Mercury is most toxic to the human fetus. In 2004 the USEPA announced that one in six women of child bearing age have levels of mercury in their blood that could be toxic to a fetus. How did this happen? Mercury exits a smoke stack and falls into or is washed into both fresh and marine water bodies where it can be transformed by bacteria into methyl mercury. Methyl mercury is taken up by fish and concentrates in those fish species at the top of the food chain. When ingested the methyl mercury, unlike elemental mercury, is taken up by the digestive system and even more easily gets into the brain. Methyl mercury is one of the most potent neurotoxins known. It is so toxic that fish are considered contaminated if they contain less than one half of one part per million of the fish’s weight.

Few Americans eat a significant amount of freshwater fish. However, they do eat a lot of seafood and that’s where the vast majority of our mercury body burden comes from. We have so polluted the world’s oceans that mercury levels are now beyond the threshold of harm such that any more consumption by certain people, like pregnant women can be harmful. Also relatively small subsets of our population like anglers and poor (often rural) people who rely on freshwater fish in their diet are especially at risk.

Coal fired power plants are the largest source of mercury in this country. The USEPA last year issued new regulations, called the Mercury Rule. EPA set an emission limit that was designed to let power producers off the hook until 2010. Then they can participate in a “cap and trade” program until 2018 at which time the total of US mercury emissions is supposed to be down by about 65% from current levels. Fifteen states are suing the EPA because they believe the cleanup will take too long, and the cap and trade program could lead to concentrations of emissions or “hot spots” in parts of the country. All of Missouri’s lakes and streams are already under a public health advisory for mercury in fish. Levels in Kansas have been shown to be rising in recent tests.

EPA tried to justify their extraordinarily complicated and industry-friendly Mercury Rule by claiming that only 8% of the wet deposition of mercury nationwide comes from US power plants. The rest floats in from foreign sources. Even if that were true, it doesn’t matter because the vast majority of mercury now lodged in people’s brains comes from seafood, much of it imported from all over the world. So our mercury emissions can come back to us in a can of tuna from Thailand.

But a new study has blown EPA’s claim out of the water. Researcher found that 70% of mercury found in rainwater in Ohio came from nearby coal burning industrial plants. So no matter where our lonely, promiscuous little mercury vapor comes from, or ends up, it’s trouble.

That what we get for digging up billions of tons of coal across the world in the past 150 years, a mere blip in geologic time. Add to that all the mined mercury in batteries, pigments and electrical switches we burned in garbage incinerators. Had humans been exposed to methyl mercury gradually over tens of thousands of years we might have developed defense mechanisms in our bodies. For example dolphins and whales, at the top of the marine food chain, have been exposed for a very long time and consequently can tolerate much higher body burdens of mercury. We have become victims, again, of our voracious appetite for energy.

Anyway, back to power plants. It turns out that utilities that burn eastern US coal can get about a 90% reduction of mercury by installing the same equipment they soon will have to install anyway to remove acid gases. That’s because eastern bituminous coal contains a significant amount of chlorine. Mercury quickly combines with chlorine in flue gases to form mercuric chloride which is very soluble and easily removed by scrubbers. Wyoming coal, on the other hand, contains very little chlorine, and less than 25% of the mercury can be removed by the dry-type scrubbers used out west. So what may happen is that utilities burning Wyoming coal will buy the excess credits (the right to pollute) from eastern utilities and eastern Kansas and Missouri could become a mercury “hot spot.”

The largest chunk of the new capacity in Kansas will be three new boilers totaling 1950 MW planned by Sunflower Electric at their existing Holcomb, Ks site near Garden City. Most of this power will be sold to customers in Colorado. The others plants are planned by Westar at 650-800 MW and by the Bureau of Public Utilities in Kansas City, Kansas at 250-300 MW.

Mercury removal tests at Sunflower’s 360
towns or school systems, should the community wind facilities go 'off line'. In utility regulation, this requirement to step in and meet the needs of customers within a utility’s service territory is called being the ‘provider of last resort’. These requirements are typically for monopoly providers of service with franchise territories.

A compromise is to allow the utility to charge higher rates for the back up power; rates that are pegged to actual costs associated with natural gas combustion turbines that usually sit idle waiting for peak load. The higher rate would make sense only if the community wind plant lost some significant portion of its power generations - like greater than 25%. Small incremental demand needs during off peak times should not be charged a premium as they are consistent with the utilities normal functions as a regulated provider of service in its franchise territory. While it is not often that a community wind system would go offline at the time of peak power usage, if they did they would be charged the higher rate. They would also have the option to install their own stand-by generator, or they could institute demand management within their small system, i.e. turn off non-critical load.

Actually this back-up power challenge is no different than that already faced by small municipal power entities in Kansas. The Sierra Club discovered in the recent KCC proceedings that KCP&L has many wholesale contracts with small municipal power entities to provide back up power.

Westar also expresses concern that Part B of the bill, which requires the dominant utility to either purchase any excess power generated by the community wind facilities or make a good faith effort to sell the excess power on the wholesale market, will drive up costs. This argument appears flawed. First and foremost, community wind facilities are typically designed and constructed to meet the specific needs of the small community or the educational institution that constructs them. Thus community wind facilities are unlikely to generate disruptive amounts of excess electricity for the dominant utility to handle. Simply stated, community wind facilities are not set-up as merchant power plants to generate and sell wholesale power.

Secondly, the bill requires only that the utility put forth a ‘good faith effort’ to sell the excess power on the wholesale market. This is a loop hole big enough to drive a coal train through. As an easy fix, the bill could have been amended to limit the percentage of design capacity the community wind provider could send to the dominant utility. This would prevent community wind developers from constructing excessively large facilities on the hopes of getting rich in the merchant market, much like KCPL would like to do with Latan II.

KEPCO, a generation and transmission utility that sells power to nineteen rural electric coops in eastern and central Kansas, made arcane arguments about how community wind developments would violate “all requirements power contracts’ required by their lenders. Taken to its logical extreme, KEPCO implies that if any single customer bought a diesel generator, KEPCO’s finances would be imperiled. This concern could have been resolved by amendments during the committee review process.

The Kansas Electric Cooperatives (KEC), which represents 30 rural electric cooperatives, identified what is really buggling the utilities… that HB2636 “essentially creates retail competition.” Changes in technology and in the costs of energy inputs have made new sources of energy competitive. Any fundamental change in the landscape like we are seeing in the energy markets today, typically harm the large dominant firms already in the market. Their reaction? Fight like crazy to prevent development of the new technology.

It’s easy to see why a rural electric coop would choose to fight new technology in order to prevent the loss of some of their customers. Few large and established firms impacted by technological change have the foresight to ‘ride the wave’ to a new way of doing business. In the current energy situation in Kansas, if a few large customers find it economical to set up a renewable energy coop and establish their own system, then so could the KEC. There’s absolutely no reason why the KEC couldn’t start decentralizing their generating system to minimize cost. In fact, it is likely that their experience and skills in the industry would enable KEC to do it cheaper and keep customers in the fold. Another business model for KEC is to provide the considerable maintenance and management functions needed to make the community wind projects function properly. From their reactions to this bill, it appears that KEC and the other dominant utilities are unwilling to adjust their business model and change to do what is best for the community. They instead prefer to do what is best for themselves.

KEC also feared that new renewable cooperatives could be set up with members at opposite corners of the state creating unreasonable transmission requirements. While this appears to be a valid flaw in the original bill, it could have easily been addressed in committee. The intent of the bill was to foster new renewable coops that are small-scale community projects serving an interconnected small area. This could be defined within the bill. The bill was not about the formation of direct competitors that serve broad areas. As a practical matter we are talking about a turbine connected to a school and a city hall in Small Town, Kansas.

Summary of Solutions.

1. Alter the bill to ensure that any increased costs created by the community wind facility are pegged to actual, audited back up costs and absorbed by that entity.

2. Add language to ensure that renewable cooperatives consist of customers that have a defined and geographically limited ‘community of interest’ as intended in the bill.

Conclusion

HB 2636 had the potential to advance energy policy and
Thus, the session has been frustrating for proponents of renewable energy and conservation such as Charles Benjamin, a lobbyist for the Sierra Club’s Kansas chapter.

“The Legislature doesn’t seem to see the urgency of it,” Benjamin said.

‘A difficult question’
Legislators have been concerned in recent years that Kansas has become a net importer of energy, instead of an exporter, particularly as demand for electricity has increased.

Like others, Benjamin argues that reducing the demand is the cheapest way to address the problem in the long term.

But relying on incentives to spur conservation has some legislators nervous. House members rejected the bill designed to encourage utilities to start energy efficiency programs for their customers after some members worried it would lead to higher utility rates and harm consumers who have efficient homes.

“You get into some really interesting questions of who gets what and why and who should have to pay for it,” said David Springe, the chief attorney for the Citizens’ Utility Ratepayers Board, which represents residential customers and small businesses.

Springe added: “I wouldn’t say there’s not a lot of interest. I would say that we haven’t really jelled on the appropriate mechanism to do it.”

Other issues
But conservation advocate Bruce Snead, an energy specialist for Kansas State University’s extension service, said legislators shouldn’t focus too much on per-unit electric rates.

For example, the bill calling for an efficiency surcharge on energy bills would raise $550,000 a year — and, Snead said, raise electric rates between 15 cents and 20 cents a year. But if consumers cut energy use, he said, their overall bills will drop, despite a rate increase.

“What people want are energy services,” he said. “In the summertime, they want a cold drink and cold air conditioning. In wintertime, they want hot coffee and hot showers.”

Members Needed for the Energy Committee!!
Join the energy committee of the Kansas Chapter of the Sierra Club.
By Brooks Albery

Energy policy in the U.S. has vaulted to a prominent spot in state and federal political and economic debates for many reasons. First, energy production generates significant forms of pollution including mercury, ozone, particulates, and greenhouse gases. Second, securing energy resources endangers our environment through fossil fuel mining and transportation including oil exploration and transportation, water pollution from coal bed methane production, and mountain top mining practices. Third, current energy policy undermines the security of our country through long term dependence on foreign supply and the military intervention required to secure sources of foreign energy. Fourth, energy policy undermines the Kansas economy by continuing dependence on Wyoming coal and imports of foreign oil and gas. Kansas imports roughly $2B in energy products every year to fuel our economy all while ranking near last among the states in energy conservation policy and while sitting on some of the best wind resources in the world.

The energy committee has developed an energy campaign for our state with primary goals of promoting energy efficiency and conservation and opposing the construction of new coal-burning power plants. We need your help to bring this energy campaign alive within the state of Kansas. If you are interesting in participating on the energy committee to either help move the energy campaign forward, or simply to learn more about the energy issues affecting our state, I urge you to attend our next committee meeting on March 13th from 6:30-8:00 PM. A conference call number has been set up to allow folks to participate without having to travel.

Please contact Brooks Albery at brooksalbery_sr@yahoo.com for more information.

Utilities, continued from page 14

energy security in our state by fostering an environment that allows for distributed wind-power. While there were several challenges and concerns associated with the bill, these concerns could easily have been worked out in committee. Instead, the bill was voted down following the expected attacks from those with the most to lose – the dominant electric utilities, utility associations, and corporations that seem bent on sending your energy dollars out of state while they use Kansas’s increasingly scarce water to burning Wyoming coal.

Call to Action

Please call your state representative and senator and tell him you support community wind power and the independent use of Kansas’s vast wind resources to benefit schools, communities, and other public entities. Tell him you are disappointed that HB 2636 did not get full and fair consideration at the legislature and that you expect him or her to use bills like HB 2636 to establish the legal framework necessary to make community wind projects possible in the very near future.
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other forms of small scale renewable energy projects that would allow local people to invest in such entities and to keep their investments in renewable energy projects, and the returns on such investments, in their local communities. Representatives of Kansas Electric Power Cooperatives (KEPCo) and Westar testified in strong opposition to the bill arguing that their entities would be required to provide “reserve capacity” to such entities. A revised version of the bill that would limit the number of entities that could form a renewable energy coop and that would not require retail electric suppliers to purchase the surplus energy of such coops was defeated on an unrecorded voice vote in the House Utilities Committee.

H.C.R. 1620 supported by Sierra Club is a House-Senate concurrent resolution to support what is known as “25 x 25” – a national voluntary initiative, adopted by a broad range of agricultural and other organizations, that “agriculture will provide 25% of the total energy consumed in the U.S. by 2025 while continuing to produce abundant, safe and affordable food and fiber.” For further information go online to www.agenergy.info.

H.B. 2903 supported by Sierra Club would provide state income tax credits for investments, accelerated depreciation, ten year property tax exemptions for new equipment, plant construction or expansion and provide Kansas Development Finance Authority (KDFA) financial assistance to promote cellulosic alcohol plants. Sierra Club supports ethanol made from cellulose but Sierra Club does not support corn based ethanol due to its high inputs of water and herbicides.

H.B. 2904 opposed by Sierra Club would provide a 12 year property tax exemption for the expansion of existing nuclear generation facility capacity by at least 10% and exempt new nuclear generating facilities from siting oversight by the KCC. The bill would also provide income tax credits, accelerated depreciation, 12 year property tax exemption and KDFA financing for Integrated Coal Gasification Power Plants. Sierra Club policy opposes nuclear power plants and new coal fired power plants of any kind and instead favors greater investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy.

LANDFILLS

S.B. 467 supported by Sierra Club would have prohibited KDHE from permitting landfills on land overlying the Equus Beds aquifer, on an alluvial aquifer five miles upstream from public water supply wells, within one mile of an intake point for public surface water supply systems or a lake with a surface area greater than 100 acres, wells used for public water supply system, steam segments with an estimated median flow at the downstream end greater than 10 cubic feet per second, wildlife refuges, the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve, the Cimarron National Grassland, the Konza Prairie Biological Station, the Pratt Sandhills Wildlife Area, the Smokey Valley Ranch, and the Arkansas River - including the western portions in Kansas that sometimes have zero or minimal flow. Landfills within ½ mile of the Kansas and Missouri Rivers are prohibited under existing law. None of these restrictions would have applied to the expansion of existing permitted landfills so long as the expanded area complies with enhanced standards necessary to protect human health and the environment. The Kansas Association of Counties also supported this bill but the Kansas Landfill Association and Sedgwick County government strongly opposed it. There was considerable opposition to the bill on the Senate Natural Resources Committee. The bill was never worked but Sen. Carolyn McGinn, Chair of the Committee, has asked KDHE officials to bring various interested parties together after this legislative session to try to find compromises to accommodate a variety of concerns with the current version of the legislation, and to bring back a revised version of the bill next legislative session.

S.B. 362 opposed by Sierra Club would allow the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) to issue permits to operate industrial landfills to corporate entities that do not own the landfill but that only operate the landfill. Currently only a land owner can make application for a landfill permit. Sunflower Electric asked for this change in law to allow them to expand their current landfill operation that houses ash from their 363 MW coal plant located near Holcomb to expand to handle the ash from an expansion to over 2,000 MW. This bill allows Sunflower and other corporations to set up limited liability corporations to limit their liability from harms done to others from operations of industrial landfills. KDHE offered amendments to Sunflower’s version of the bill that would require any operator or owner of an industrial landfill to demonstrate that funds are available to ensure payment of the cost of closure and post-closure of the landfill and to provide liability insurance, surety bonds, trust funds, irrevocable letters of credit and other financial assurances to take care of “accidental occurrences” and other provisions that would require that any landfill site not owned by the operators of the landfill have covenants running with the land that provide a permanent easement to the operator of the landfill or others to handle clean up issues. KDHE’s version of this legislation was not opposed by Sierra Club and is likely to be the final version passed by the legislature.

AIR POLLUTION

S.B. 386 supported by Sierra Club would amend current law that defines air pollution to include airborne contaminants that contribute to the formation of “regional haze”; allows KDHE to develop comprehensive plans for the prevention, abatement and control of air pollution not only in Kansas but also that originates in Kansas or that affects air quality in Kansas or in other states. The bill also amends current law to allow KDHE to enter into contracts with all local units of government in Kansas, other states and interstate and interlocal agencies to deal with air pollution issues and allows KDHE to enter into intrastate or interstate “emissions trading programs” that demonstrate “equivalent air
quality benefits for the prevention, abatement and control of air pollution in Kansas or in other states or both.” This legislation is needed to bring Kansas into compliance with new federal regulations to implement the Clean Air Act and is likely to pass the legislature.

S.B. 361 opposed by Sierra Club would make the Kansas Court of Appeals the court of original jurisdiction to hear any judicial appeal of an air pollution control permit, a variance to such permits, or renewal of such permits issued by KDHE. This legislation would eliminate the state district court in the judicial appeals process. Under current law any pollution control permit issued by KDHE, related to water, landfill, and air pollution, must first be reviewed by the district court before being appealed to the Court of Appeals. SB 361 was introduced by Sunflower Electric Power Corp. that has plans to expand its current 360 MW coal generating plant, called Holcomb I, by an additional 1800 MW—making it one of the largest coal fired power plant complexes in the U.S. Sunflower introduced this legislation in order to “expedite” the air pollution control permits for their new coal plants. However, this expedited judicial review process would apply to all industrial facilities in Kansas that are required to obtain air pollution control permits—including new coal fired electric generators planned by other major utilities in Kansas.

SPRAWL

Eminent Domain for Economic and Industrial Development is the subject of several bills before the legislature as a result of recent Kansas and U.S. Supreme Court and decisions authorizing cities and counties to use economic and industrial development as a “public purpose” in order to exercise eminent domain powers to condemn private property. Some bills would remove economic and industrial development as a public purpose for the exercise of eminent domain either through state law or by a constitutional amendment. Other bills would change procedural requirements to prohibit the use of certain economic development incentives on property condemned for economic and industrial development. Sierra Club supports limits on the use of eminent domain for economic and industrial development primarily because the use of such authority induces “big box” and other developments that create sprawl and its negative environmental consequences. The Kansas Farm Bureau and the Kansas Livestock Association also called for limiting eminent domain powers for economic development. The Kansas Association of Counties and the Kansas League of Municipalities and chambers of commerce oppose limitations on the use of eminent domain for economic development so that they can have maximum economic development flexibility. Substitute for Senate Bill 323, supported by Sierra Club, is a compromise bill agreed upon by agricultural and chamber of commerce interests that allows eminent domain to be used for economic and industrial development under certain circumstances, compensates property owners subject to takings of their property for economic development based upon the amount of time they have owned the land, and exempts agricultural land from such takings.

PARKS

H.B. 2817 and S.B. 483, opposed by Sierra Club, are twin bills that would prohibit the acquisition of land by the Kansas Department of Wildlife & Parks (KDWP) unless the land meets statutory requirements for noxious weeds, the KDWP Secretary has agreed to pay money in lieu of property taxes for land which is exempt from such taxes, and the Secretary has developed a management plan for the property, including five year estimates for annual operating and capital improvement expenditures and staffing requirements. In addition, any acquisition of tracts of land greater than 480 acres would require legislative approval and would also be subject to a protest petition signed by at least 5% of the voters in the city or county where the majority of the land is located. If there were sufficient signatures then a majority of the voters would have to approve the acquisition. In addition, these bills would prohibit the Secretary of KDWP from disposing of any land without first offering to donate or sell the land to the board of county commissioners of the county where the land is located. If the county commissioners chose not to take the land it must be offered for sale to the general public at an auction advertised in a county newspaper. The Kansas Farm Bureau supports the land acquisition provisions of these bills because many of their members want to limit or eliminate further acquisition of lands by KDWP because most new parks would be in rural areas where nearby farmers consider public parks nuisances. The Riley County Commission supports the land disposition provisions of these bills because of the debacle over the sale by KDWP of the historic “Rocky Ford” fishing area to a private individual who then fenced off the fishing area. The requirements for acquisition of property greatly curtail KDWP’s ability to make the best possible transactions for land and, without control over who purchases land, undesirable development could occur; and private estate planning for those wishing to donate land to KDWP would be curtailed. Senator Taddiken, whose district includes the Rocky Ford fishing area, offered a proposed Substitute for S.B. 483, supported by Sierra Club and KDWP, that eliminates all the language regarding acquisition of land by KDWP but requires KDWP when disposing of land to post a written notice on the land that KDWP proposes to dispose of, publish a notice of the sale in a newspaper of general circulation in the county that the land is located in, and publish a notice in the Kansas Register of intent to sell.

S.B. 583 supported by Sierra Club would amend existing law to provide funding from the Economic Development Initiatives Fund (EDIF) to the KDWP to support operations of state parks and provide funding to the Local Government Outdoor Recreation Grant Program, which has not been funded since 2001. EDIF funding comes from the state lottery. The

See Legislative Summary on page 19
state’s parks have been under funded for several years due to reduced state general funds while revenues from park fees are not adequate to make up the difference. The result is deferred building maintenance and replacement of equipment. Last year Sierra Club supported S.B. 87 that would have provided a new funding source for KDWP and local governmental parks from a $4 per vehicle registration fee on motorcycles, passenger vehicles recreational vehicles and trucks under 16,000 lbs. That bill made it out of the Senate Ways and Means Committee to the full Senate last year but was stalled due a request from the Senate Majority Leader for an Attorney General’s opinion as to whether vehicle registration fees could be used for such purposes. The A.G. said they can. Because the entire Kansas House of Representatives is up for election this year their was a reluctance to send the bill over to the House, even if it passed the Senate, because of reluctance to run for re-election after raising vehicle registration fees. In the short term lottery funds are the next best alternative.

TOXICS

H.B. 3009 supported by Sierra Club would require 80% reduction in mercury emissions from coal-fired electric generating plants. This bill was introduced late in the session by Sierra Club and has been referred to the House Utilities Committee which is not expected to hold a hearing on the bill. Sierra Club introduced this legislation because current E.P.A. guidelines require only 25% removal of mercury emission from coal fired electric generating plants using dry scrubbers, even though 80% to 90% reductions are possible using other technologies. Kansas utilities are planning to construct up to 3,200 megawatts of new coal fired generating capacity in the next five years which will significantly increase the amount of methyl mercury in Kansas water bodies. At the time of this writing, we are looking for another legislative vehicle such as S.B. 361 (see above) to attach this legislation.

WATER

H.B. 2710 supported by Sierra Club would establish the Water Right Transition Assistance Pilot Project Program administered by the State Conservation Commission (SCC) that would allow the permanent retirement of water rights in Prairie Dog Creek in north central Kansas and in a Rattlesnake Creek subbasin, which have been designated as target or high priority areas by the groundwater management districts and the Division of Water Resources. These would be considered pilot projects to be assessed by state agencies and the legislature and possibly expanded in the future to other high priority water conservation areas with expenditures for this purpose limited to $1.5 million per year. Other proponents included Kansas Farm Bureau, various groundwater management districts, Kansas Livestock Association, and the Kansas Department of Agriculture. The bill is strongly opposed by the Kansas Grain and Feed Association and Kansas Agribusiness Retailers Association who are generally opposed to taking agricultural land out of production because it negatively affects their businesses. The bill is stalled

in the Senate Natural Resources Committee.

TRANSPORTATION

H.B. 2751 supported by Sierra Club would create a “Kansas and Missouri Regional Investment District” whose purpose is to create a mass transit system in the Kansas City regional area based upon a plan known as “Smart Moves”. The plan would have to be adopted by a 2/3 majority vote of each county’s governing body before final ballot language is put before the voters in their counties. If adopted by their county electorate, local communities in Johnson, Leavenworth and Wyandotte counties in Kansas and Clay, Platte, Jackson, Cass, Ray counties in Missouri would be allowed to raise funds to invest in public transit through a ½ cent retail sales tax for a regional public transit plan. Hearings on the bill were held by the House Taxation Committee with support for the bill from several Johnson and Wyandotte county legislators, the Mid-America Regional Council, the Johnson County Commission, the Kansas City Transportation Authority, the Johnson County Transportation Council, Johnson County Transit, the Civic Council of Greater Kansas City and others. However, the legislation stalled in the Taxation Committee because the large Johnson County cities, Overland Park, Olathe and Shawnee, did not come out strongly in favor of the legislation leading non-Johnson County members of the Taxation Committee to question the necessity of this proposal.

Mercury, continued from page 13

MW Holcomb 1 coal fired power plant, co-sponsored by Westar and BPU, demonstrated that injecting carbon into the flue gas from burning Wyoming coal would remove over 90% of the mercury. In another, short term experiment, Sunflower mixed in some bituminous (presumably high chlorine) coal from Colorado and got up to 80% removal. Nonetheless Sunflower has not yet committed in their permit application to a tight mercury limit.

If they don’t, and instead choose to buy mercury emission credits, a large quantity of mercury will travel on the prevailing winds to eastern Kansas, where it rains much more frequently, and to points east and north. Westar and BPU haven’t said what they plan to do about mercury. Fortunately, after much citizen pressure, KCP&L agreed to avoid increasing mercury emissions at latan, though it will remain a significant source.

If you want to keep eastern Kansas from becoming mercury hot spot you need to contact your legislators and express your concern about this new wave of coal-fired power plant construction in Kansas. Mercury is only one of many reasons why we shouldn’t be burning more coal.

Craig Volland is Chair of the Air Quality Committee. This article is an edited version of a similar article that appeared in eKC at kcactive.com.
Green Tags Provide Renewable Energy Option

Through the recent State of the Union Address, we have now all been officially informed of something that many Americans have accepted as a fact for years — the US is dependent on fossil fuels. Thanks for the newsflash Mr. President. Now what can we do about it? Thanks to the efforts of the Bonneville Environmental Foundation and The Bowersock Mills and Power Company, anyone who chooses can now purchase Zephyr Energy™, which is a Green-e®-certified blend of 50% low-impact hydropower and 50% wind energy. “But wait,” the reader thinks, “I buy all my power from Westar and they don’t have a green option. How does this work?”

What are Green Tags?

Throughout the US, companies and individuals are making the commitment to green their businesses, homes, and even travel. They do this by purchasing Green Tags, or Renewable Energy Credits (RECs). Green Tags allow people to pay a premium for green power. That premium ultimately goes to the producer who has made the commitment to produce renewable power. Green tags allow renewable energy producers to sell their power to the utility companies, and their “greenness” to someone else. The combination of the two sales makes renewable energy production a much more financially feasible option. When someone buys a green tag, the extra money they pay for that tag goes to the person who made the commitment to produce that green energy.

How does the Green Tag market work?

Several different companies serve as the middlemen for the Green Tag market. They seek out renewable energy producers, purchase their tags and then re-sell them to the public. Zephyr Energy™ is being made available through a partnership between the Bonneville Environmental Foundation (BEF), which is a not-for-profit organization located in Portland, Oregon, and The Bowersock Mills and Power Company, a hydro-electric power plant located in Lawrence on the river just below City Hall. One of the reasons that Bowersock chose to work with BEF is because the company preferred the idea of working with a not-for-profit. Eighty percent of all revenues that BEF derives from the sale of Green Tags go in to either watershed reparation projects or the development of new renewable energy projects.

Who is buying Green Tags?

So, given the high price of power, who is actually willing to pay a premium for their power? The great news is, a LOT of people and businesses. White Wave, which produces Silk soy milk, has been green for the past several years. In the past month, Whole Foods just greened their entire grocery store chain at 100%. Mainstream Fortune 500 businesses are choosing to make this commitment. Hyatt Hotels just greened two hotels in Dallas and Safeway just greened 15 stores in San Francisco. Why do they do it? In nearly every instance, the companies have all said that a primary reason for doing it is because it is the “right thing.” The first official individual purchaser of Zephyr Energy™ was actually a Sierra Club member. The first business to purchase was the Oread Friends Meeting (Quakers), which greened the electricity used by its meeting house for 2006 at 100%. According to the John Poertner, the purpose of their purchase was to “expand the development and use of renewable energy as a part of [their] environmental concerns.” The group cites a long history of concerns for peace, simplicity and equality that led them to see “right sharing” of all the world’s resources.

How can I know that a green tag is truly green?

Some green tags are certified by a not-for-profit organization called the Center for Resource Solutions (CRS) as Green-e®. CRS certifies only renewable electricity products that meet specific environmental and consumer protection standards.

What can I do to green my energy consumption?

Anyone can purchase green tags. The most common way to do it online. As an example, if you choose to green your energy consumption through BEF, their site has a carbon calculator, which allows people to calculate their carbon footprint based on their utility bills for the previous 12 months. The following is a list of some of the leading companies that sell green tags to the general public:

- The Bonneville Environmental Foundation: www.b-e-f.org
- Zephyr Energy™ is available at its own site, not yet accessible from the central BEF site. http://www.greentagsusa.org/greentags/zephyrenergy.cfm
- Renewablechoice Energy: www.renewablechoice.com
- 3 Phases Energy Services: www.3phases.com
- WindCurrent: www.windcurrent.com
Celebrate Earth Day in the Park
By Elaine Giessel, Kanza Group Chair

Kansas City area residents are cordially invited to come to The Kansas City EarthFest 2006 to celebrate Earth Day. This very special event will be held on Saturday, April 22 from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM at The Theatre in the Park, located in the northeast corner of Shawnee Mission Park, 7710 Renner Road, Shawnee, KS.

The Kansas City EarthFest 2006 will feature live entertainment, games, crafts and activities for kids of all ages (and adults, too!). All of Kansas City is invited and admission is free. In 2005, more than 2,500 people joined in the celebration.

Some of the special performers who will be appearing at EarthFest this year include:
- The Flying Dutchman, a small unique festival ensemble;
- Grupo Axe'Capoeriera, a Brazilian mix of drums and martial arts performances;
- Eco-Troubadour Stan Slaughter, the Heartland's best known and most honored environmental educator; and
- Kansas City’s own Green Elvis, who will croon “Green Suede Shoes” and other crowd pleasers.

You can also sit and listen to a story as River and Prairie Storyteller Molly Postlewait takes you on a journey of the prairie and our natural world. Or, have an Earth Day picnic with food from the concessions stand hosted by the Friends for Parks and Recreation. Enjoy Jay Cady of Laughing Matters, as he combines his love of science and circus arts in an interactive roving performance. Get your vehicle’s gas cap tested and do your part to help protect air quality in Kansas City. Visit the Ernie Miller Nature Center booth and view native wildlife, including living birds of prey, reptiles and amphibians.

We will be hosting an educational booth at this event, as we did last year, and we need volunteers. Donate an hour of your time to promote our organization’s outreach efforts and spend the rest of the day enjoying the EarthFest activities.

To volunteer, please contact Elaine Giessel at 913-888-8517 or email me at sealaine@yahoo.com.

For more detailed information on EarthFest activities and the tenth annual EarthWalk, visit the Bridging the Gap website, www.bridgingthegap.org. Click on “Special Events” under the “News and Events” menu.

Topeka Group Makes Plans For Earth Day
By Paul Post, Topeka Group Chair

The newly reconstituted Topeka Group is making plans for an Earth Day event that will provide the Group with an ongoing, visible presence in the Topeka community. Jack Smith, Group outings chair, has applied to the Kansas Department of Transportation’s “Adopt a Highway” program for the Group to be assigned a section of highway in Shawnee County for periodic clean up. It is anticipated that the Group will be given a two mile stretch along I-70. The Group must agree to provide clean-up services for the highway right-of-way at least three times a year. In exchange, KDOT will install a sign in the vicinity of the assigned area acknowledging that the roadway has been adopted by the Topeka Group, and will also provide trash bags and safety vests for participating members.

“This will give our Group visibility in the community, as well as to travelers on I-70,” said Smith, “and will also be an ongoing effort that will effectively allow us to celebrate Earth Day throughout the year.” Smith approached the Group about the proposal at its regular meeting in January, and the response was overwhelming. “I think our membership is interested in helping the Group grow through hands-on work that benefits the Topeka community,” reported Smith. “It also allows Group members to get to know each other better outside of the usual meeting format. I am pleased to have spear-headed this effort.”

The Topeka Group hopes to have the project up and running before Earth Day on April 22, and use the day for the first clean-up effort.
Weeding at Buford Watson Park

Spring has sprung, the grass is riz.
I wonder where the birdies is?
--Anonymous

I never make New Year’s resolutions, but the return of spring weather always inspires me to pledge spending more time outside and more time working to protect our environment. If you’re like me, you can meet both pledges at the same time by joining the Wakarusa Group do some weeding at Buford Watson Park (i.e. the “Train Park”).

We’ll be doing the weeding as part of Lawrence’s program to keep several of its parks pesticide free. The city agreed to reduce its use of deadly and expensive herbicides if citizens would step up and fill the gap by pulling weeds by hand. The program started last year, and was a big success. Many people noted that there were fewer weeds in the pesticide-free parks than in parks maintained using the deadly poisons.

However, the program will only work so long as people are willing to do their fair share. Rarely do environmentalists have an opportunity like this – a chance to prove their sincerity by putting their money where their mouth is while enjoying beautiful weather and good companionship! The Wakarusa Group will be meeting every Wednesday night at 7 pm at the Train Park starting on April 12th and continuing at least through September. We’d really love it if you could join us – many hands make light work.

If you can’t come Wednesdays, you can still help. Just weed at your convenience, and let us know that you worked. The city likes to track the number of volunteer hours spent on the project as a way of gauging public interest. Plus, if we have enough people interested, we can organize other times for group weeding.

If you have any questions, please contact Daniel Poull at 749-5578 or dpjp8@yahoo.com. And don’t forget to mark your calendars for Wednesday nights, starting on April 12th.

A Night on the Town

By Stuart Bolt, Southwind Group

It was in the lower 20’s with a wind speed of 30mph. A small band of Sierra Club members braved the cold to meet at a restaurant, Buffet City, in Wichita. Every month, the Southwind Group met at a different restaurant to socialize and try various cuisines.

In January, eight members met at Il Vicino. While enjoying great Italian food, conversation covered the gambit from Sierra Club issues to philosophy and religion. In February, six members and a young guest met at Buffet City. Again the food was good and so was the conservation. Topics ranged from the status of the public school system to travels that each member had made. Both nights were complete successes.

In March, the Southwind Group will be meeting at Marchello’s in the south part of town. This will be the last restaurant outing until fall. Look for the schedule this summer for our fall restaurant outings and hope to see you there.

Farm Bill, continued from page 3

if local farms supplied more of the local diet. This would increase food security by decentralizing our food system, leaving it less vulnerable to large-scale disruption due to contamination, terrorism, insect crop pests and disease.

• Put free enterprise back into agriculture by updating existing anti-trust law. Open to entrepreneurs the markets now dominated by the giants of food handling and processing that cut special deals with retailers. Huge meatpacker Tyson, for example, does this with Wal-Mart, effectively shutting out local meat producers.

• Redirect agricultural research at public universities toward development of more sustainable, environmentally friendly farm practices. Today’s university research is too heavily influenced by the interests of corporations that supply farmers and process food.

• Embrace the idea that in a just society, no one should go hungry or malnourished. This means that, despite the pressure of federal budget deficits, we must provide ample support for school lunch programs and food stamps, which are funded by farm bills.

Every U.S. senator and representative will have a vote on the next farm bill, which will affect your land, your water, your community, your supermarket and the food on your plate. If this matters to you, give them an earful.

Paul D. Johnson is a northeast Kansas organic market gardener and a family-farm legislative advocate for several churches in Kansas. He wrote this for the Land Institute’s Prairie Writers Circle, Salina, Kan.
Perry Lake Trail Update
By Kevin Otterman, Perry Lake Trail Coordinator

Hello, All. I want to provide a quick update on the latest happenings at Perry. Please share with others, as we’re looking forward to increased trail usage this year with the many improvements being put in place.

- **New Trail Access.** The reroute of Section 4 near the Ferguson Road - Slough Creek Bridge is complete. Thanks to the efforts of Sierra Club and KCOC volunteers this past weekend, the old route has been abandoned and stumps and debris have been removed from the new route. Trail access is at the entry road to the boat ramp near the bridge (see [http://www.perrylaketrail.net/Section4Reroute.html](http://www.perrylaketrail.net/Section4Reroute.html)).

- **New Trailhead Kiosk.** Thanks to Troop 351, Shawnee, we now have a new kiosk in place at the Old Military Trail area (see [http://www.perrylaketrail.net/Page.html](http://www.perrylaketrail.net/Page.html)). Within the next week or two we will be putting detailed topo maps of Sections 2 and 3 in this kiosk, along with contact information and other pertinent details. Plans are to put a similar kiosk in at the new trail access point mentioned above. We’re looking for volunteers!

- **Mile Markers.** KTC, Sierra Club, KCOC and other volunteers have been placing mile markers on the trail over the last few months. At this time, mile markers are in for the first EIGHTEEN MILES, starting at the Section 1 trailhead at Slough Creek Park. With the recent completion of Section 4 reroute, mile markers for the rest of the trail can go in later this year.

- **More Signage.** Thanks to the efforts of Jefferson County Economic Development and the Corps of Engineers, we should soon see road signs (“Hiking Trail Access” + directional arrow) along Ferguson Road near the Slough Creek Bridge and near Old Military Trail area. Additional signs will be placed near the main Section 1 trailhead within Slough Creek Park.

- **Volunteer Opportunities.** Besides the aforementioned need for one more trailhead kiosk and more mile markers, we always have projects in need of volunteers. Some projects currently needing attention include: (1) updating paint blazes on parts of Sections 2 and 3, (2) replacing the 94th Street foot bridge lost to flooding last October, (3) a new bridge project at 66th Street, (4) repairs to the original foot bridge within Old Military Trail area, (5) a minor trail reroute on Section 2 west of Old Military Trail area. If you’ve got a volunteer crew available, or an Eagle Scout looking for a project, please let me know.

Perry Lake Trail is in great shape this year with many improvements and considerable maintenance activity over the last six months. If you haven’t been on the trail recently, consider a hike from the new access point, or anywhere on the other sections. The best hiking conditions this spring will occur over the next two months.

Art at the Arb
April 22, 10-4 and April 23, noon ‘til dark
Robin Macy, owner of the Bartlett Arboretum and one of the original “Dixie Chicks” (who got out of the band before it hit the big time) is hosting “Art at the Arb” which is located in Belle Plaine, Kansas, 20 miles south of Wichita. Gates open from 10-4 on Sat. April 22 and noon ‘til dark on Sun. April 23. Visual arts will be on display and Gypsy Jazz Quintet will perform on Saturday afternoon and on Sunday Robin Macy & her gang will perform...bring a picnic, a blanket and a passion for the great outdoors.

Robin rents the arboretum out for weddings and has acoustic concerts on “the Big Z” -- a zoysia lawn. Robin is considering opening up the arboretum for corporate retreats, writers’ workshops, art classes, etc. Recently, Robin was interviewed by The Wichita Eagle and printed as “Arboretum find its Steward”.

“It’s not what I expected -- but more than I deserve
Like bluebirds in the springtime, like faith without reserve
When I wake up in the morning and see the dew upon the leaves
It’s not what I expected, it look like diamond in the trees!
-- Robin Macy

In the March/April 2006 issue of the “Wichita Register” you can find Robin Macy on the front cover: “Robin Macy In The Gardens At Bartlett Arboretum.” The Bartlett Arboretum overlooks the EuPhrates Creek in Belle Plaine and proves to be a bit of paradise. You can find both articles at Robin’s website: [www.bartlettarboretum.com](http://www.bartlettarboretum.com).

Come join us for “Art at the Arb” on April 22 and April 23 and celebrate Earth Day with the Southwind Group. Contact Yvonne Cather - yvonne.cather@kansas.sierraclub.org or visit our events calendar page for April 22 for more details.
# Chapter & Group Leaders

Groups are the local body of the Kansas State Chapter.

## Chapter Executive Committee

**Officers, Committee Chairs**

*Elected ExCom member; **Appointed ExCom member, ***Group Representative to Chapter, ****Committee Chair*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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## Flint Hills Group (Manhattan Area)

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## Kanza Group (Kansas City)

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## Wakarusa Group (Lawrence)

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General Meetings

**Flint Hills Group**
(Manhattan)

**General Information**
For information please call Scott Smith at 785-539-1973 anytime or email wizard13@cox.net.

**Kanza Group**
May 9. 7:00 pm

**Urban Grown Food Production in Kansas City**
7:00 pm: Come early and share some snacks, and enjoy meeting your Kanza Group leaders and members. 7:30 pm: How the Metro is part of a global trend toward small-scale urban food production. Around the world, city planners, community leaders, conservationists, consumers and farmers are excited about the potential of urban farms to generate income and to make cities, neighborhoods and people healthier. Katherine Kelly and Daniel Dermitzel of the Kansas City Center for Urban Agriculture will talk about the promising developments right here at home. Our meetings are at the Overland Park Lutheran Church, 7810 W. 79th Street. Park on north side. Directions at www.kansas.sierraclub.org/kanzadirections.htm.

Craig Wolfe, (913) 299-4443, info@kansas.sierraclub.org

**Southwind Group**
Apr 14, 6:30 pm

**Social Hour, Backwoods Adventures – Mt. Everest**
6:30 pm: Social Hour, Pizza & Pop & Chat. 7:30 pm: Ron Meyer (Backwoods-Rock Road) will assist Joe Koehly (Backwoods Adventures) with Joe's presentation of his trek to base camp, Mt. Everest. Joe has several stunning photos and will inform everyone of the majesty of the region and the graciousness of the Sherpa people. This show promises to make everyone in attendance ready to pack up and go! Meet at Great Plains Nature Center, 29th N. & Woodlawn, Wichita. Yvonne Cather (316) 522-4741, yvonne.cather@kansas.sierraclub.org

**Southwind Group**
May 19, 6:30 pm

**Movie Night -- The End of Suburbia: Oil Depletion and The Collapse of the American Dream**
6:30 pm: Social Hour. Pizza & Pop & Chat. 7:30 pm: Meet at Great Plains Nature Center, 29th N. & Woodlawn, Wichita. Tom Kneil will give a presentation on The End of Suburbia: Oil Depletion and The Collapse of the American Dream. For 50 years the suburban way of life has been part of the American dream. Now some of us question the sustainability of this way of life. “With brutal honesty and a touch of irony, ‘The End of Suburbia’ explores the American Way of Life and its prospects as the planet approaches a critical era, as the global demand for fossil fuels begins to outstrip supply.” Mankind’s inaction will have enormous consequences! The program explores what can be done NOW, individually and collectively to avoid the end of suburbia. Tom Kneil, (316) 744-1016, thomas.kneil@kansas.sierraclub.org

**Topeka Group**
Apr 25. 7:00 pm.

**Legislative Update**
Charles Benjamin, lobbyist for the Kansas Chapter, will be our speaker and will give us his view of topics of interest before the Kansas Legislature. Charles’ program was well-received in 2005. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library, 1515 SW 10th Street. Paul Post, (785) 354-1972, paulpost@paulpost.com

**Topeka Group**
May 23. 7:00 pm.

**A Trip to Quetico Park**
Kirk Brown and his father, Jerome Brown (who is now in his 80's) have traveled to Quetico Provincial Park in Ontario, Canada every year since 1969 for canoeing and camping in this wilderness area. Quetico is the on the Canadian side of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness in Minnesota. Kirk and Jerome will tell us about the geological and political histories of the park, and the environmental changes they have observed over the years.

Paul Post, (785) 354-1972, paulpost@paulpost.com

**Wakarusa Group**
(Lawrence)

**General Information**
The Wakarusa Group is limiting its general meetings in order to concentrate on holding special events. Please contact Mike Campbell at (785)542-3885 or shamsoup@yahoo.com for more information. To get the most up-to-date announcements on our events, please add your name to our e-mail list. You can add your name to the list by contacting Carey Maynard Moody at careymm@sunflower.com.

**Wakarusa Group**
Mar 29. 7:00 pm.

**The Natural Beauty of the Haskell/Baker Wetlands**
Noted local nature photographer Kyle Gerstner will show some of his amazing pictures of the wildlife of the Haskell/Baker wetlands. Refreshments will be served. Location is the Lawrence Public Library. Mike Campbell (785) 542-3885, mick.campbell@kansas.sierraclub.org
Sierra Club Outings

Below is the combined list of all outings by the Kansas Chapter and Groups. The number in [brackets] indicates the area of the outing as shown on the map. Please contact the outing leader listed after the description by phone or e-mail before attending any of these activities. For trips requiring physical exertion, leaders need to know your ability and condition. Sierra Club policy also requires participants to sign a liability waiver or acknowledgement of risk prior to departing the trailhead.

The Kanza Group maintains this trail, so let's get out and enjoy it. No work, I promise (no fooling). $5 donation requested. Contact via email preferred. Kanza. Bob Wilshire, (913) 384-6645, bob.wilshire@kansas.sierraclub.org

This short 4.5 mile loop passes through wooded hills and fields with good views of the lake. $10 donation requested. Kanza. Eileen McManus, (816) 523-7823, eileenm@missouri.sierraclub.org

[2] Apr 8.  10:00 a.m.  Bartlett Arboretum Service Outing
Service Outing in preparation of the Apr 22 & 23 Open House at the Bartlett Arboretum – “Art at the Arb”. Meet Yvonne at 9:00 a.m. at the Sierra Club Office, 2935 S. Seneca, Wichita. We will grab food either on the road or in Belle Plaine. Southwind. Yvonne Cather (316) 522-4741, yvonne.cather@kansas.sierraclub.org

[1] Apr 12.  7:00 pm.  Weeding at train park
Help sustain Lawrence's pesticide-free park program by helping pull weeds. We'll meet every Wed night through September. Wakarusa. Daniel Poull, (785) 749-5578, dpjp8@yahoo.com

Join us for our 3rd annual trip to Blanchard Springs Recreation Area and the Ozark Folk Center State Park. Deadline for signup on this trip is April 6, $10 donation requested. Kanza. Dave & Kathy Patton, (816) 461-6091, dave.patton@missouri.sierraclub.org

12:00 pm - Hot Dog Lunch. 2:00 pm - “Art at the Arb.” 6:00 pm - Cook Out with John Muir and the Girls in Rubber. John Muir's Birthday & Earth Day Celebration. 9:00 am meet at Udall Restaurant. We will begin the day with trail maintenance at Satterthwaite Wildlife Refuge 1 ½ miles East of Udall on K-15. Hot dog lunch will be provided. We will then visit the Bartlet Arboretum from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. for “Art at the Arb”. visual arts will be on display and there will be music by “Gypsy Swing”. Next we will hike the Goat Ranch and have a cook out at 6:00 pm with entertainment and multimedia presentation by John Muir and the Girls in Rubber. Spend the night and canoe on the Arkansas River on Sunday, April 23rd or visit the Bartlett Arboretum from noon ‘til dark and hear Robin Macy and her gang perform. Bring a picnic lunch, a blanket and a passion for the great outdoors. Southwind. Bill Cather (316) 522-4741, bill.cather@kansas.sierraclub.org

[1] Apr 22.  8:00 am.  Birding Haskell-Baker Wetlands
Learn about birding at with an expert from the Kansas Biological Survey. Bring binoculars, hat, water, bird book, insect repellent, and sturdy shoes. Can be wet, so wear rubber boots if you have them. Meet at north entrance off 31st Street. Wakarusa. Bill Busby (785)864-1530, wbusby@ku.edu

Join us at 2 p.m. at Ernie Miller Nature Center www.erniemiller.com for a nature “scavenger hunt.” Kids welcome! $5 donation requested. Kanza. Ellen Brenneman, (816) 213-2415 mobile, ebrenn1@yahoo.com

Want two nights of sleeping in the woods over a weekend? Join us backpacking by moon light to our first camp site Friday night. $10 donation requested. Kanza. Bryan Ohrman, (816) 214-7875, phandj14@comcast.net

[2] Apr 29.  10:00 am.  Natural Habitat Exploration with emphasis on Wildflowers
Meet at the Wichita State University Field Station at 10:00 am to explore with Dr. Don Disler. Call Bobbie Keltner for address and map. Southwind. Bobbie Keltner, (316) 722-5621

[1] Apr 29.  9:00 - 10:30 am.  Tour of Bowersock Dam & Hydroelectric Plant
Learn about this great source of green energy right on Lawrence's front porch. See how the plant operates and learn about their certification as an environmentally-responsible hydro-operator, as well as their new green tag program. Registration required! Wakarusa. Carey Maynard-Moody, (785) 842-6517, careymm@kansas.sierraclub.org

We'll hike the Williams Creek Lake trail (3.8 miles) then tour the historic Watkins home and woolen mill. $5 donation requested. Kanza. Anne McDonald, (913) 384-6645, anne.mcdonald@kansas.sierraclub.org

[2] May 5.  6:00 pm.  Neighborhood Literature Drop
Meet at the Sierra Club Office, 2935 S. Seneca, Wichita. We will walk down town along the Arkansas River delivering river clean-up flyers. Southwind. Yvonne Cather (316) 522-4741, yvonne.cather@kansas.sierraclub.org
Committee Meetings

Kanza Group  
(Kansas City)  
Executive Committee  
Apr 27, May 25 - 7:00 pm,  
Contact: Elaine Giessel, (913) 888-8517, elaine.giessel@kansas.sierraclub.org  
Joint Action Committee  
Apr 27, May 25 - 7:00 pm,  
Conservation, legislative, political and population. Contact: Frank Drinkwine, (913) 385-0385, frank.drinkwine@kansas.sierraclub.org

Southwind Group  
(Wichita)  
Executive and Fundraising Committee  
Apr 2, May 7 -  6:00 pm  
2935 S. Seneca, Wichita. Bill Cather (316) 522-4741, bill.cather@kansas.sierraclub.org  
Conservation Committee  
Date TBA - 6:00 pm  
2935 S. Seneca, Wichita. Bill Cather (316) 522-4741, bill.cather@kansas.sierraclub.org

Wakarusa Group  
(Lawrence)  
Executive Committee  
1st Sunday of month, 7:00 pm,  
Location TBA. Mike Campbell, (785) 542-3885, mike.campbell@kansas.sierraclub.org  
Conservation Committee  
Contact Carey Maynard-Moody, (785) 842-6517, careymm@kansas.sierraclub.org

Topeka Group, ExCom meets quarterly, date and time announced by email  
Paul Post, (785) 354-1972, paulpost@paulpost.com

Kansas Chapter: (State), Executive Committee, May 20 (time & location TBA)  
Bill Griffith, (913) 772-8960, bill.griffith@kansas.sierraclub.org

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**more outings**

[2] May 6.  9:00 am – 12:00 noon.  River Trash Round-up  
Canoeing-Float Trip. Come help clean along the Arkansas River. 9:00 am meet at Exploration Place. Walkers and canoeists needed. Lunch at noon along the river. Possible 1:00 pm river float south of the Lincoln Street Dam down to the new Garvey access. Wear shoes to walk the river and to get wet. Rentals available. Southwind. Yvonne Cather (316) 522-4741, yvonne.cather@kansas.sierraclub.org

Investigate plant materials from international grocery stores, farmer’s markets, and produce sections of mainstream grocery stores. Kanza. Richard Frazier, frazier@cmsu1.cmsu.edu

Join us on Monkey Mountain for this high tech scavenger hunt using GPS. Great fun for kids as well as adults. GPS not required. $5 donation requested. Kanza. Dave Patton, (816) 461-6091, dave.patton@missouri.sierraclub.org

Meet at the Sierra Club Office, 2935 S. Seneca, Wichita. Help us build our float. Dinner will be provided. Southwind. Yvonne Cather (316) 522-4741, yvonne.cather@kansas.sierraclub.org

[2] May 12.  5:30 - 6:00 pm.  River Festival Sundown Parade  
Meet between 5:30 and 6:00 pm (call Yvonne for exact location) on the parade route. Help participate in the River Festival Parade. Be prepared to walk 3 to 5 miles. Southwind. Yvonne Cather (316) 522-4741, yvonne.cather@kansas.sierraclub.org

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[1] May 13.  9:00 am.  Wildflower Walk at the Haskell-Baker wetlands  
Come see the wide variety of plant life with a professional botanist. Be prepared to walk on wet ground. Meet at the north entrance off 31st St. Wakarusa. Frank Norman (785) 887-6775, frank.norman@appliedeco.com

Come see and smell a unique variety of flowering trees on the grounds of Linda Hall Library. $5 donation requested (Mothers free). Kanza. Eileen McManus, (816) 523-7823, eileenm@missouri.sierraclub.org

Join us as we float a section of the Buffalo River, in Arkansas. Designated our nations 1st National Scenic River way. We will haul our gear with us, and spend one night along the river. Deadline for signup on this trip is April 23. $10 donation requested. Kanza. Melody Gross, (816) 228-6563, melody.gross@missouri.sierraclub.org

Meet 9:00 am at the Bill’s Old Goat Ranch, Old Goat Ranch Road & 120th - South of Mulvane. Section of the river to float will be announced. Contact Bill Cather for a map. RSVP Southwind. Bill Cather (316) 522-4741, bill.cather@kansas.sierraclub.org

[2] May 27.  7:00 am to Noon.  Old Town Farmer’s Market Fundraising Event  
Meet at 6:30 am at the Old Town Farmer’s Market to set up and man a booth. Fundraising & information booth. Southwind. Stuart Bolt, (316) 685-3492, stuart.bolt@kansas.sierraclub.org
## Calendar of Events

**Summary of all Kansas Chapter Events**

Below is a listing of all General Meetings (GM), Outings (Out), and Committee Meetings (CM) for the Kansas Chapter and Groups. For specific information, see General Meetings page 25, Outings page 26, and Committee Meetings page 27. For the latest update on events, go to www.kansas.sierraclub.org/EventsSearch.htm.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apr 20-23</td>
<td>Call Leader. Car Camping, Mountain View, AR. Kanza. Dave &amp; Kathy McManus</td>
<td>Mountain View, AR</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dave.patton@missouri.sierraclub.org">dave.patton@missouri.sierraclub.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 18</td>
<td>10:00 a.m. Bartlett Arboretum Service Outing Southwind. Yvonne Cather</td>
<td>Southwind</td>
<td><a href="mailto:yvonne.cather@kansas.sierraclub.org">yvonne.cather@kansas.sierraclub.org</a></td>
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<td>Apr 15</td>
<td>7:00 p.m. Conservation Committee Meeting. Bobbie Keltner, Southwind.</td>
<td>Southwind</td>
<td><a href="mailto:stuart.bolt@kansas.sierraclub.org">stuart.bolt@kansas.sierraclub.org</a></td>
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<td>Apr 14</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:yvonne.cather@kansas.sierraclub.org">yvonne.cather@kansas.sierraclub.org</a></td>
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<td>Apr 11</td>
<td>13:00 am. Wildflower Walk at the Haskell-Baker wetlands. Wakarusa.</td>
<td>Wakarusa</td>
<td><a href="mailto:frank.norman@appliedeco.com">frank.norman@appliedeco.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr 10</td>
<td>5:00 pm. Executive Committee Meeting. Southwind. Bill Cather (316) 522-4741</td>
<td>Southwind</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:yvonne.cather@kansas.sierraclub.org">yvonne.cather@kansas.sierraclub.org</a></td>
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<td>Apr 8</td>
<td>Call Leader. Exotic Botany at the Farmer's Markets, MO. Kanza. Anne McDonald</td>
<td>Missouri</td>
<td><a href="mailto:annemcdonald@kansas.sierraclub.org">annemcdonald@kansas.sierraclub.org</a></td>
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<td>Apr 7</td>
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<td>Apr 4</td>
<td>2:00 pm. Executive Committee Meeting. Southwind. Bill Cather</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:bill.cather@kansas.sierraclub.org">bill.cather@kansas.sierraclub.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr 3</td>
<td>Call Leader. Backpacking, Paddy Creek Wilderness Licking, MO. Kanza. Bryan Ohrran</td>
<td>MO</td>
<td><a href="mailto:bryan.ohrran@kansas.sierraclub.org">bryan.ohrran@kansas.sierraclub.org</a></td>
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<td>Apr 2</td>
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<td>Apr 1</td>
<td>9:00 am – 12:00 noon. River Trash Round-up. Southwind. Yvonne Cather</td>
<td>Southwind</td>
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<td>Apr 28</td>
<td>6:30 - 7:30 pm. Movie Night -- The End of Suburbia: Oil Depletion and The Collapse</td>
<td>Southwind</td>
<td><a href="mailto:tom.kneil@kansas.sierraclub.org">tom.kneil@kansas.sierraclub.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr 27</td>
<td>5:00 pm. Urban Growth Food Production in Kansas City. Kanza. Craig Wolfe</td>
<td>Kansas City</td>
<td><a href="mailto:craig.wolfe@kansas.sierraclub.org">craig.wolfe@kansas.sierraclub.org</a></td>
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<td>Apr 26</td>
<td>5:30 - 6:30 pm. River Festival Float Work Party. Southwind. Yvonne Cather</td>
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<td>Apr 24</td>
<td>10:00 a.m. Bartlett Arboretum Service Outing Southwind. Yvonne Cather</td>
<td>Southwind</td>
<td><a href="mailto:yvonne.cather@kansas.sierraclub.org">yvonne.cather@kansas.sierraclub.org</a></td>
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<td>Apr 23</td>
<td>Call Leader. Scavenger Hunt, Ernie Miller Nature Center, Olathe, KS. Kanza.</td>
<td>Kansas City</td>
<td><a href="mailto:anne.mcdonald@kansas.sierraclub.org">anne.mcdonald@kansas.sierraclub.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr 22</td>
<td>9:00 am. Trail Maintenance for John Muir's Birthday. Service, Social, Hiking, and</td>
<td>Southwind</td>
<td><a href="mailto:yvonne.cather@kansas.sierraclub.org">yvonne.cather@kansas.sierraclub.org</a></td>
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<td>Apr 17</td>
<td>7:00 pm. Legislative update. Topca. Paul Post, (785) 354-1972, <a href="mailto:paulpost@paulpost.com">paulpost@paulpost.com</a></td>
<td>Kanza</td>
<td><a href="mailto:paulpost@paulpost.com">paulpost@paulpost.com</a></td>
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<td>Apr 16</td>
<td>7:00 pm. Conservation and Joint Action Committee. Kanza. Frank Drinkwine, (913) 385-0385, <a href="mailto:frank.drinkwine@kansas.sierraclub.org">frank.drinkwine@kansas.sierraclub.org</a></td>
<td>Missouri</td>
<td><a href="mailto:frank.drinkwine@kansas.sierraclub.org">frank.drinkwine@kansas.sierraclub.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr 4</td>
<td>2:00 pm. Executive Committee Meeting. Southwind. Bill Cather (316) 522-4741</td>
<td>Southwind</td>
<td><a href="mailto:bill.cather@kansas.sierraclub.org">bill.cather@kansas.sierraclub.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 3</td>
<td>2:00 pm. Executive Committee Meeting. Southwind. Bill Cather (316) 522-4741</td>
<td>Southwind</td>
<td><a href="mailto:bill.cather@kansas.sierraclub.org">bill.cather@kansas.sierraclub.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 2</td>
<td>2:00 pm. Executive Committee Meeting. Southwind. Bill Cather (316) 522-4741</td>
<td>Southwind</td>
<td><a href="mailto:bill.cather@kansas.sierraclub.org">bill.cather@kansas.sierraclub.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 1</td>
<td>2:00 pm. Executive Committee Meeting. Southwind. Bill Cather (316) 522-4741</td>
<td>Southwind</td>
<td><a href="mailto:bill.cather@kansas.sierraclub.org">bill.cather@kansas.sierraclub.org</a></td>
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