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Voice of the Kansas Sierra Club

Kansas Chapter Members Appear at KDHE Hearing Opposing Sunflower Plant

By Phil Morse, Topeka Group Political Chair

It has been a busy September and October for all of us who care about the environment. Thanks to the leadership of the Kansas Sierra Club, we in Topeka have been able to also be engaged and participate in a small way in the effort. Our Topeka Cool Cities endeavor seems to be stalled for the moment, but promises to gain a little more momentum in coming days. Clearly, we need to concentrate on broadening the base of our support, and we will be thinking about people and organizations with common interests to add more muscle to our effort.

The proposed addition of 2100 megawatts of coal fired power generation at Holcomb is presently the focus of most our attention. The CO2 impact on global warming alone of this kind of facility belittles almost any of our efforts to promote

See KDHE Hearing on page 6

Sierra Club Focus of KC Area TV Talk Show

On November 15, Elaine Giessel, representing the Sierra Club, was the guest of Steve Rose on the KCPT (PBS) program "TalkBack Live." Giessel, a member since 1981, is chair of the KC metro area Kanza Group and currently serves on the Sierra Club's national Environmental Quality Strategy Team and the Kansas Chapter Executive Committee.



Rose, chairman of Sun Publications, hosts a live 1/2 hour call-in program, which consists of a fifteen minute interview with his guest, after which phones are open for viewers to call in. Rose describes his program "as a great opportunity to get to the bottom of issues facing the Kansas City area, and to put the community leaders in a position where they can explain their side of the issues, first directly to me, then to viewers who call in with questions."

A broad range of topics was covered during the show,

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- National Sierra Committees Meet in KC pg 12*
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- Charles Benjamin Says Goodbye pg 14*

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- Elaine Giessel - Environmental Quality Strategy Team
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A Big Stink in the Heartland

By Teri Leahy

Editor's note: I was contacted by the property owners impacted by the the following article. Their story depicts the plight of property owners ignored by our local officials.

Without prior notice or even permission, our property was altered. A large drainage ditch was cut through the center, rendering it useless for any use or resale. At times a flow of raw sewage measuring 6" in depth ran freely through that ditch and then meandered through a highly populated subdivision. Children have played in this filth. Folks are plagued by the beginnings of auto immune disease and e-coli contamination. At times, the stench of the surrounding residential areas doesn't allow neighbors to greet guests without having to run inside to escape the smell.

Sounds like something that could only occur in a third world country? Wrong. It is happening now in the heartland of America, in DeSoto, Kansas (Johnson County).

The property owner is a person just like you and me... just a regular law abiding citizen who has owned the property for years, paid taxes on it, speculated that it would someday be worth something someday when development in the area finally began. Directly next door is a brand new bank, and on the other side is a residential area. The property is in a prime location with much potential, but it has one flaw.

Its use and function has been redefined without due process by the City of DeSoto. The City has designated the drainage ditch as a ditch for the overflow of a sewage lift station located just feet from it. The City of DeSoto has also systematically denied and blocked access to the owners of the property by building a chain link fence and no access curbing on the north side from the street.

What causes such a thing to happen? An outdated, undersized

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Wanted Change? Let's Hope.

Tom Thompson, Political Co-Chair

In the last issue of the Planet Kansas I wrote the article "Want Change? Go Vote!" The question now becomes did we get change on November 7th. The political answer is yes and no. Only time will answer this question for certain

What did stay the same? Kathleen Sebelius remains as the Governor of Kansas. Furthermore, the Kansas Senate remains the same except for Kay O'Connor. There are still 30 Republicans and 10 Democrats because there were no Senate elections this year. The Kansas Senate is elected every four years, the same years as Presidential elections, the next election being 2008.

Kay O'Connor resigned as the 9th District Republican State Senator from Olathe after being beaten in a primary election for Secretary of State. Republican committee people replaced O'Connor with Julia Lynn also from Olathe. It is not known if this is really a change.

What has changed? The make up of the Kansas House went from 83 Republicans and 42 Democrats to 78 Republicans and 47 Democrats. Furthermore, Doug Mays resigned from the House and a new Speaker is being chosen as I write this article. We also have Paul Morrison as our Attorney General replacing Phill Kline.

In the U.S. Congress, Kansas now has two Representatives who have Sierra Club endorsements instead of one. In the 2nd District Democrat Nancy Boyda came on strong beating Republican Rep. Jim Ryun and will be joining reelected Rep. Dennis Moore from the 3rd District. This is progress but leaves us with two U. S. Senators and two U. S. Congressmen that have near 0 ratings on the environment according to the League of Conservation Voters.

Reflecting Boyda's victory and similar trends throughout the country, there has been a regime change in the U.S. Senate and House. Before the November elections the Republican Party had a clear majority in both. Now the Democrats have a 229 to 196 majority in the House. This is undoubtedly the biggest change of the 2006 elections. In the Senate, Democrats, with the help of two Independents, have a 51 to 49 majority. All the Committee Chairs will be replaced hopefully keeping many environmentally damaging issues off the agenda and allowing environmentally friendly issues to be considered.

Candidates endorsed in races for the Kansas Legislature did very well. All 29 endorsed incumbents will return. Of the races not having friendly incumbents, we had 3 win out of 11 giving us a total of 32 members of the Kansas House having

pro-environment credentials out of 125. Progress has been made but work still needs to be done. What our government leaders do in the next two years will determine how much change there really has been.



Dec 2006/Jan 2007



Candidates Endorsed by Sierra Club and How Well They Did

By Tom Thompson, Co-Political Chair

Those of you who helped with campaigns, especially in the 2nd Congressional District, should be proud. I am sure each group communicated endorsements with members at meetings and events. The Boyda Campaign was given labels to send a mailing to Sierra Club members. I know individuals who worked directly on campaigns on endorsed candidates. With all the fires there are to put out, it was good to have some victories.

**W=Win, L=Loss, Unapp=Unapposed
Newly endorsed candidates**

W by 3 votes in recount completed Thursday-16th Overland Park
- Gene Rardin

W-18th Shawnee - Cindy Neighbor

24th Mission/RP, dual endorsement -L- Andy Sandler and W- Ed O'Malley

L-30th Lenexa - Amy Kamm

L-49th Overland Park - Bond Faulwell

L-52nd Topeka, Letha Swank

L-54th Topeka - Tanya Dorf 51 to 49%

W-64th Clay Center - Vern Swanson

L-76th - Emporia -Susan Fowler

L-81st Clearwater, Judy Armstrong 51 to 49%

L-91st Wichita Walt Chappell

L-105th Wichita - Jane Byrnes

Friendly incumbent endorsement list

W-Menghini, Pittsburg, 3

Unapp-Williams, Chanute, 8

W-Holland, Baldwin City, 10

Unapp-Knox, Fredonia, 13

W-Sharp, Lenexa, 17

W-Huntington, Mission Hills, 25

W-Storm, Overland Park, 27

W-Burroughs, Kansas City, 33

W-Henderson, Kansas City, 35

Unapp-Ruff, Leavenworth, 40

Unapp-Crow, Leavenworth, 41

W-Sloan, Lawrence, 45

W-Davis, Lawrence, 46

W-Mah, Topeka, 53

Unapp-Kuether, Topeka, 55

Unapp-Flora, Topeka, 57

W-Lane, Topeka, 58

W-Carlin, Manhattan, 66

W-Hawk, Manhattan, 67

Unapp-Goudeau, Topeka, 84

W-Ward, Wichita, 88

Unapp-Miller, Park City, 89

W-Dilmore, Wichita, 92

Unapp-Flaharty, Wichita, 98

Unapp-Garcia, Wichita, 103

Unapp-Svaty, Ellsworth, 108

W-Holmes, Saint John, 114 3,596 to 3,571

W-Jim Morrison, Colby, 121



U.S. Congressional Endorsements

W-District 2 Nancy Boyda
W-District 3 Dennis Moore

Big Stink, continued from page 3

sewage lift station is the source of the sewage. For years it has been unmonitored and allowed to overflow. Our property owners have reported this situation and made countless complaints to the city and local authorities without results. Since the spillages are infrequent and occur so sporadically, and also because of the slow response time of the contacted local officials, they never arrive in time to actually witness the live spillage. Agency officials never cared enough to take samples to verify the occurrence. Instead, officials claimed that 'everything was fine and that no spillage was observed.' Since then, we have hired consultants whose laboratory tests have confirmed greatly elevated e-coli in soil and water samples taken from and being drained through the property.

Eventually this ditch empties into Kill Creek and then flows into the Kansas river. According to various EPA reports, Kill Creek is contaminated by fecal coli form or e-coli contamination. As a result, it is polluting the Kansas River. The source of e-coli contamination to Kill Creek has been speculated on, but until now hasn't been pinpointed. At least we now know of one direct source of e-coli contamination... the City of DeSoto's lift station.

Why is this sad and harmful condition allowed to continue? The owners the adjoining properties ask themselves this very question every single day. They think it is because of greed and money. As with any new development in a city, arrangements, alliances, and agreements for concessions are made between the city and the developers. The developers get their business in place. The city gets taxes paid to them. And property owners get the shaft. If professional foresight and planning would have been used, the City's and developers' needs could have been met without destroying our property. Instead, because of the City's unprofessional blunderings and lack of care, the property is rendered useless.

Our plight has been going on since the spring of 2004 and still continues. This is not just one isolated incident, but instead is an ongoing contamination of property and people. We need your help. The children need your help. They are being contaminated daily. Property owners' complaints have gone unchecked, and we are pleading with the conscience of the public to help. Please call the following people listed below and appeal to their conscience to rectify this situation. We live in America where such things cannot be allowed to happen. Only if we band together and support one another can such injustices be stopped.

What ever happened to The Clean Water Act? Why don't we demand compliance with the law?

EPA Region 7 Compliance Officer Stacie Tucker at: (913) 551-7715, tucker.stacie@epa.gov

Kansas Department of Health & Environment:

Lawrence Office: (785) 842-4600

Topeka Office: Michael B. Tate, PE at: (785) 296-5504, mtate@kdhe.state.ks.us

Also please call your elected State officials and the State of Kansas elected officials as well. 

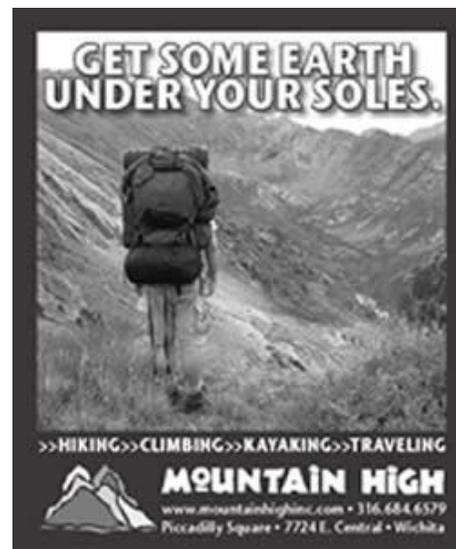
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For more information contact
Ben Kjelshus,
816-767-8873
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KDHE Hearing, continued from page 1

energy and environmental responsibility. Kansas Chapter members from Topeka, Lawrence, and Kansas City, participated in the October 26th KDHE hearing on the proposed Holcomb power plant additions. Another public comment hearing is scheduled for November 14 at 7:00 p.m. In Lawrence, and we are encouraging our members to attend that meeting or to submit their comments and concerns about this proposed plant. The good news is that broad based, thoughtful, heartfelt, and very articulate concern and comment was expressed to the KDHE during the Topeka hearing. The message had to have been heard, but whether it will make a difference is another matter.

Difference making, it appears to us, is going to have to be at the policy level. The Secretary of the KDHE and the Governor are going to have to take a stand if this "train" is going to be slowed. Our Kansas Sierra Club leadership is on target with their call to the Governor for a moratorium on new coal fired power plant construction until the possibilities for energy efficiency, wind power, or at least coal gasification are more thoroughly explored.

The Governor's response indicates that she is relying on the advice of the KDHE and the Kansas Energy Council (KEC). So the KEC's hearing in October on their draft energy policies assumed even greater importance. The Kansas Chapter was able to contribute to the effort by participating in that hearing and challenging the KEC to include a far greater role for wind energy in their policy recommendations to the Governor and the legislature. None of us knows how the KEC will respond, and given the industry loading of its membership, it is not easy to be optimistic. However, during the hearing there were indications by the KEC membership of an understanding of the reality of global warming and the tremendous contribution coal fired power plants make to this potential disaster.

There is much to be done... we in the Topeka Group are pleased to be a part of the Kansas Sierra Club effort. 



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Huge Crowd attends Third KDHE Hearing on Holcomb Expansion

The Chapter's request for an extra evening hearing on the huge Holcomb, Kansas, coal-fired power plant expansion paid off when over 300 people attended in Lawrence on Nov. 16. So many people arrived that KDHE had to quickly arrange to pipe in testimony to an adjacent room, in response to a rising chorus of complaints. Over 70 people testified until the hearing officer ended the hearing because the Kansas Union building was closing. He reopened the hearing the next day for those who wouldn't have to travel far for their chance to be heard.

A large majority of the speakers were opposed to the project. Many college age people testified, and one young lady of 10 or 11 years evoked cheers from the crowd for her clear and impassioned statement. Other high points came from scientist, Wes Jackson, Director of the Land Institute, and from KSU environmental historian, Donald Worster, who warned that global warming could return western Kansas to conditions worse than the dust bowl of the 1930's. This suggests that any jobs gained from the project could be lost from traditional agricultural pursuits in the area.

The Club's national legal staff is preparing a detailed comment on the draft permit for the project. Chapter members need to keep writing letters to Governor Sebelius asking for a moratorium on any new coal fired power plants in Kansas. Sample leaders and details can be found on our website, www.kansas.sierraclub.org. 



Clean Energy Workshops Held In Topeka And Wichita

by Paul Post, Topeka Group Chair

On October 1, a warm fall Sunday afternoon at Washburn University in Topeka, 19 Sierra Club members from Topeka, Lawrence, and Kansas City attended a four hour workshop on clean energy strategies in Kansas. Featured presenters included Charles Benjamin, legislative coordinator for the Kansas Chapter; Michael Goldberg of ActionMedia, located in Minneapolis, Minnesota; Wallace McMullen, from Louisville, Kentucky, and with the Midwest New Energy Future Project, Carrie LaSeur, an Iowa attorney with the Sierra Club national Environmental Law Office, Jennifer Feyerherm, with the Sierra Club Midwest Clean Energy Campaign, Joe Spease, a member of the Kanza Chapter and president of Pristine Power, Inc., and Craig Volland, also a Kanza Chapter member.

All of the speakers had presented a one day program in Wichita on Saturday, September 30, and condensed their program into a half day workshop for Topeka. Charles Benjamin began the workshop with a power point presentation titled: "Global Warming, The Kansas Connection." He focused on the proposed Sunflower Electric coal-fired electric generating plant - a three-unit behemoth - to be build near Holcomb in western Kansas. Charles spoke of a "coal rush" that was on to build as many as 150 new coal fired plants in the United States in the next 15 years.

Following Charles on the podium was Michael Goldberg, who discussed "Presenting Our Message" which suggested new and innovative ways for Sierrans to frame and convey the message of global warming. Michael's company, ActionMedia, provides issue framing and strategic communications training, research, and consultation services to advocates for positive social change. Michael suggested that Chapter members should ask ourselves the following questions prior to taking action: What needs to happen? Who can make it happen? What story do they need to hear? Who should they hear it from? How can we tell them?

Michael was followed by Wallace McMullen whose presentation focused on energy savings through energy efficiency. Wallace emphasized that the use of the word "efficiency" carried a more positive connotation than does "conservation," which implies that sacrifices would follow from energy savings. He primarily focused on commercial and industrial efficiency strategies.

Jennifer Feyerherm's presentation was "How Coal Plants Make Us Sick." She talked about the hazardous by-products of coal fired electrical generation, including smog (nitrous oxides or Nox and volatile organic compounds, VOCs), soot (composed of Nox and sulfur dioxide, SO2), mercury, and heat

Talk Show, continued from page 1

including bottled water, results of the recent Congressional election, global warming, coal-burning electrical generating plants, wind, solar and nuclear power, light rail, local air and water quality, and sustainable communities.

Giessel responded to about a dozen different questions during the 15-minute call-in portion of the program. According to Rose, the large number of calls received and answered was unusual, indicating a high level of interest locally in environmental issues. Rose commented that he found the information provided on the show as "very, very enlightening."

While voicing appreciation that KCPT has given Sierra Club an opportunity to share its views, Giessel added, "There is an urgent need for the general public to get more detailed information on the environmental issues facing their families. The Kansas City area could serve as a model for building livable communities, but there are still many concerns to be addressed and sustainable options to be explored."

Giessel is scheduled to be on KKFI's (90.1 FM) live call-in talk show "6 B.C." with host Barbara Crist at 6:00 pm on Tuesday, December 19 to discuss how the results of the last election might affect the environmental work being done by Sierra Club.

According to a recent poll done by Zogby International, global warming was a "sleeper issue" in the midterm election. More than 75 percent of the respondents, including self-described conservatives and "very conservative" voters, said they agreed with the following statement: "Congress should pass legislation promoting renewables and alternative energy sources as an effective way to reduce global warming pollution." 

trapping carbon dioxide (CO2). Carrie LaSeur returned to the "coal rush" theme which Charles Benjamin introduced, and discussed the various means by which coal plant permitting could be challenged and slowed, include review of Environmental Impact Statements (EIC), air permits, water rights/permits, historic/landmark requirements, and endangered species considerations. Carrie noted that if the pace of the permitting process is retarded, developers will often simply abandon the proposal in the end and the power plant will not be built.

Joe Spease discussed recent advances in renewable energy technologies. Craig Volland ended the workshop with a presentation on ways to enhance residential energy efficiency.

Those attending left the workshop with new knowledge and renewed optimism that things can indeed be done to turn Kansas from its historic reliance on dirty coal to clean, renewable and technologically advanced energy solutions. 



An Eyesore at Hercules Glades Wilderness

By Bob Wilshire, Kanza Group Outings Chair

Editor's note: Some late-breaking news. The Forest Service has agreed to "dismantle the cairns this winter and improve Wilderness ethics signage specific to cairns and man-made structures at trailhead bulletin boards." So, thanks to the Forest Service for taking swift action on this matter.

I was backpacking last October with my nephew at Hercules Glades Wilderness, in the Mark Twain National Forest, near Forsyth, Missouri. Along the north (Pilots Knob) trail, I was shocked to find that someone had erected two large cairns and another is in the works. A cairn is mound of rocks or stones erected along a trail to mark the way, usually when the trail is not clearly defined or at a trail intersection. It is not unusual to see small cairns along a trail and they can be quite helpful to the hiker. However, the cairns that have been built along the Pilots Knob Trail are large and unsightly. Each one is about 7 feet tall and 4-5 feet around the base (notice my 4' hiking poles lying against it). I was previously at Hercules in late 2005 and I do not remember seeing any cairns this large then, so they were probably built sometime in the last eight to ten months.

These structures detract from the surroundings and I believe they violate the Wilderness Act of 1964. A part of the definition of wilderness is found in Section 2c of the Wilderness Act where it states "wilderness...generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable". Among the prohibitions set out in Section 4c, it states "there shall be...no structure or installation within any such area" (designated wilderness). I think each of the larger ones is a "structure or installation" and they are certainly "substantially noticeable".

On behalf of the Sierra Club, Kanza Group, I wrote a letter to the Forest Service asking them to enforce the law and see that these eyesores are dismantled and not rebuilt,

thus insuring compliance with the spirit and letter of the Wilderness Act. Dave Patton with the Thomas Hart Benton Chapter in Missouri also wrote as well as Cynthia Andre, Chair of the White River (MO) Group and Ken Midkiff Conservation Chair Ozark (MO) Chapter, Sierra Club.



A cairn along the trail at Hercules Wilderness may not comply with the Wilderness Act.



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You Asked For It

By **Bob Wilshire, Kanza Group Outings Chair**

Last September we kicked off the fall-winter backpacking season with a beginners' overnight trip to the Jerry Burns farm near Adrian, Missouri.

The group of fourteen was quite diverse and included ages in almost every decade from 10 to 80-something. A naturalist from Powell Gardens was along and introduced us to many edible plants and other foliage. Jerry Burns himself entertained with stories, an exhibition of fire starting with a bow and peg and a "spider hunt" after dark (you can see a spider's eyes in the grass if you shine a light on them). The group enjoyed themselves so much they wanted to do a similar trip in the winter. Your fearless Outings Chair told them we would put such a trip on the schedule. So, when the Outings Committee met last month, guess what? We came up with the following trip...

Introduction to Winter Backpacking...

At the Jerry Burns Farm, Adrian, Missouri, January 13 and 14. Experience the mystique of a cold winter's night from within the ring of our campfire's warmth, then sleep away until

morning tucked inside your sleeping bag. A winter sleeping bag (15° rating or lower), a sturdy tent and warm clothing are musts. Falling temperatures will not deter us but slippery roads will. Bob Wilshire (e-mail preferred) rjwilshire@kc.rr.com or (913) 384-6645. 



Backpacking at Jerry Burns farm, September, 2006... during warmer times

Looking for a speaker on the Environment?

Contact **Elaine Giessel**,
Education Chair, at
elaine.giessel@kansas.sierraclub.org



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Bell Mountain

By Anne McDonald

Two guys and a gal from Missouri, along with two guys and a gal from Kansas – oh, and a dog from Missouri – headed out to climb Bell Mountain the first weekend in November. Though many leaves had already fallen, the autumn color was still magnificent, looking out from atop Bell Mountain in the Mark Twain National Forest just southeast of Rolla, MO. While there may be a big rivalry between the Jayhawks and Tigers, the six humans and one canine got along just fine.

The climb was like Baby Bear's chair for Goldilocks: "Not too easy, not too flat, not too hard, not too steep, but 'Just Right'"! And the weather was the same: a little cloudy, a little cold, but just right for backpacking. We set up camp Friday afternoon and enjoyed the traditional campfire after dinner. Saturday, the guys headed out to climb Lindsey Mountain and find an old mine shaft. The gals bushwhacked toward Shut Ins Creek, found a tiny tributary creek and replenished some of the water supply. The route to Lindsey Mountain turned out to be through private property so the men never got to it but had a good day exploring the area nonetheless. Sunday we hiked out and got on the road just in time, as it began raining shortly after noon. Max, the Missouri dog, a charming fellow in his own right, earned the gratitude of all by carrying out the garbage in his doggie backpack. It was the first Ozark backpack trip for Vinnie from Overland Park. He says he'll be back. 🍄



The view from the top of Bell Mountain

KCC Investigates Energy Efficiency Programs

Sierra Club Intervenes in Proceedings

On September 11th of this year, the Kansas Corporation Commission opened an investigation on the possibility of requiring utilities in the state of implementing some sort of energy efficiency programs for their customers. This came at the behest of the Sierra Club who in an earlier proceeding at the KCC had asked for energy efficiency efforts to be expanded. The KCC stated at that time that they may open a general docket on energy efficiency and specifically invited the Club to intervene and bring forth comments.

"This is a golden opportunity to help put in place mechanisms that will assist in cutting greenhouse gases, mercury, and fine particulates," noted Bill Griffith, Chapter Chair. "As of now Kansas utilities rank at the very bottom of all the states in their energy efficiency offerings to their customers. Efficiency is the quickest and cheapest way to cut air pollution. We need to get proven programs in place quickly to stop any new coal-fired power plants in the state from being built. Hopefully this proceeding will include the rural cooperatives, municipalities, and BPU as well so their customers can benefit from this action."

Sometime next spring is the anticipated outcome of this investigation. After that, programs may be put in place by power providers. The timetable could vary depending on the company. 🍄



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Members of the Flint Hills Group gathered for the 10th anniversary celebration. Front Row - Charles Benjamin (chapter lobbyist), Ann Zimmerman (Kansas Singer - Songwriter), Cherie Birkbeck (Chapter Group Representative). Back Row - Carol Barta (Program Chair & Newsletter Editor), Elise de Wit (Outings Chair), Scott Smith (Group Chair & Chapter ExCom member).



National Sierra Club Committees Meet in Kansas City

By Elaine Giessel, EQST and Kanza Group Chair

Almost 50 of the national Sierra Club's conservation issue experts stayed mostly under the radar screen on Veteran's Day weekend as they met in Kansas City. They came to the Heartland Presbyterian Conference Center near Parkville by plane and by car from as far away as Alaska and Puerto Rico and from all three coasts for a rare face-to-face "family meeting" of the Environmental Quality Strategy Team (EQST).

The EQST oversees all national level pollution work of the Club. Volunteer leaders working on air, water, solid wastes, toxics, radiation, livable communities, environmental justice, corporate accountability and Gulf Coast restoration were in town for three days with Board members Robin Mann and Marilyn Wall, as well as other Club experts, to collaborate on efforts to protect the environment.

The Kanza Group hosted the meeting, including arranging lodgings, meeting rooms, airport shuttles, registration, a Saturday night social event and refreshments. Marilyn Wall attached a special note to the Board of Directors about the meeting: "...our Kansas City hosts were wonderful and those who put the weekend together from one end to the other did a terrific job!"

A special thanks to local "Transportation Captain" Steve Hassler, whose organizational talents are sadly under-recognized. He worked for hours doing our ground transportation schedules and then spent more time revising them to deal with flight changes. Thanks to Steve also for being one of our shuttle drivers, along with his wife Jennifer, Richard Voss, Craig Lubow and Frank Drinkwine. Steve Baru also did some driving for select Club leaders, who got a special tour of downtown KC.

Kanza volunteers devoted much of what might have been a 3-day weekend to making the national meeting a productive one for our guests. Several Kansas leaders also took the time to participate in the meetings.

This is a great example of the grass roots nature of the Sierra Club. I hope our success in bringing this national-level meeting to Kansas City will inspire our local members to get more involved in Club activities. 





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Contributions, gifts and dues to Sierra Club are not tax deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to Sierra magazine and \$1 for your Chapter newsletters.

Enclose a check and mail to Sierra Club:
P.O. Box 52968, Boulder, CO 80322-2968
or visit our website www.sierraclub.org F94Q IW 1

LEEDS For Green Design

The media tells us the bad news about the impact humans are having on our planet. The building industry has played a major role in this global decline. Consider the impact of buildings:

- 65.2% of total U.S. electricity consumption
- 30% of total U.S. greenhouse gas emissions
- 136 million tons of construction and demolition waste in the U.S. (approx. 2.8 lbs/person/day)

Fortunately, there is good news. The United States Green Building Council has created a program to help architects, contractors and building owners (both commercial and residential) develop effective and healthy buildings. This program, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), is improving the building industry by bringing Green Design into the mainstream. Green Design represents design and construction practices that significantly reduce or eliminate the negative impact of buildings on the environment and occupants in five broad areas:

- Sustainable site planning
- Safeguarding water and water efficiency
- Energy efficiency and renewable energy
- Conservation of materials and resources
- Indoor environmental quality

The conservation of site and water resources has become a significant issue for many parts of the country where water rights are under stress and where land is at a premium. Preserving Greenfield sites, reusing existing buildings, building along public transportation and encouraging the conservation of greenspace all maintain the urban fabric and reduce sprawl. Capturing rainwater, using efficient plumbing fixtures, and planting native or climate tolerant landscaping can eliminate a home's need for city supplied water.

Place your house on the site to best utilize the sun and reduce long term utility costs. Also, insulate your building and use windows that cut direct solar gain (widely available) to further reduce utility bills. Renewable energy is now widely available at costs cheaper than fossil fuel based energy.

'Green' building materials can last longer and provide environmental benefits for the manufacturer and the end user. Locally sourced materials reduce transportation pollution as well as supporting local businesses. Reusing materials, such as timbers from deconstructed buildings can reduce the impact on natural resources. Products with recycled content use 'waste' materials, such as denim based insulation.

The quality of our indoor environment has a direct affect on our health, productivity and peace of mind. Daylight in a building creates a connection to the outside. It also reduces the need for lighting and associated energy costs. Use of water based paints and finishes keeps our indoor air healthy.

This is a sampling of the opportunities for green design. At 360 Architecture we use these and other strategies in all of our commercial and residential projects. We are proud

of the positive impact we are making, and strive to improve performance with every project. Everyone can make an impact through simple changes, such as:

- Buy compact fluorescent bulbs for your lighting. They save money (40-50\$/year) and use less energy.
- Plant flowers tolerant of our climate, not needing chemicals or large amounts of irrigation.
- Use locally produced materials for construction as well as our day to day purchases.

The positive impact of these items alone could be amazing. That is good news. 



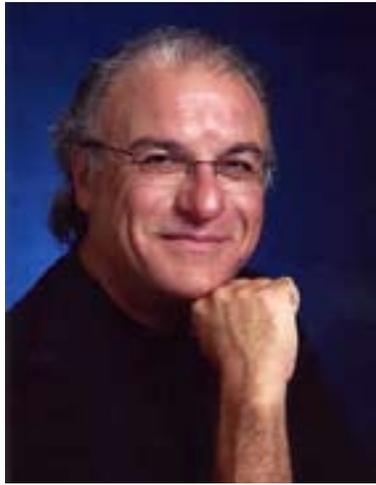
The advertisement features the Sierra Club logo at the top, with the tagline "Explore, enjoy and protect the planet". Below this, it says "Sierra Club 2007 Calendars". Two calendar covers are shown: one with a sunset over a field and another with a field of wildflowers. At the bottom, it reads "Buy from us and support local conservation work!" and "To Order, Call Craig Lubow 913-299-6620".



A Look Back While Looking Forward as I Leave Kansas for Nevada

By Charles Benjamin

It was with mixed emotions that I informed Bill Griffith, Kansas Chapter Chair, on November 11 that I had been offered, and had accepted, a position as Director of the Nevada office of Western Resource Advocates (WRA), effective January 1, 2007. I will be based in Carson City, Nevada and will be representing WRA and others in proceedings before the Nevada Public Utility Commission and serving as a resource to groups working with Nevada legislators on renewable energy and energy efficiency matters.



It was ten years ago, in late 1996, that I was one of several people who interviewed in Topeka with representatives of Kansas Sierra Club and the Kansas Natural Resource Council to replace Bill Craven who had taken a position with the California Sierra Club. The position with Kansas Sierra Club and KNRC was described to me as an attorney/lobbyist who would represent only those two clients as an independent contractor. This arrangement would allow the holder of this job to work full time lobbying the Kansas legislature to pass laws to protect the Kansas environment during the legislature's annual 90 day session and filing court cases in state and federal courts seeking enforcement of existing environmental laws during the rest of the year.

At the time I interviewed, I had just finished "fast tracking" through the KU law program in 26 months from 1994 to 1996. During the 1980s through the mid-1990s I had been a Harvey County Commissioner and political science professor at Bethel College, including teaching courses in environmental studies. During the mid-1980s I had served on the KNRC board of directors. During the 1970s I earned B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. degrees from the School of International Relations at the University of Southern California with extensive training in political analysis. It was this combination of education in political science and law, experience in Kansas politics and familiarity with environmental issues that lead to my selection to replace Bill Craven.

In January of 1997 I began working full time for both organizations. I took over Bill Craven's office in Topeka and plunged into the legislative session intending to keep my mouth shut and ears and eyes open. That didn't last long.

Almost immediately I found myself being quoted in newspapers statewide criticizing the KDHE Secretary for his failure to carry out laws regulating confined animal feeding operations for hogs. I quickly found myself up against the powerful agricultural lobby. I also found myself fighting against a coalition of agricultural and municipal interests seeking to weaken Kansas water quality standards. So much for keeping my mouth shut. Clearly that wasn't part of the job description.

Then in mid-March 1997 I happened to take a blood pressure check at the state capitol. The person taking my blood pressure advised me to see a doctor right away. That set off a chain of events that lead to the discovery of a cancerous tumor growing on my left kidney. My kidney was surgically removed in late April putting me in the hospital for five days. At one point I was told by my surgeon that if the cancer had spread beyond my kidney then I would have six months to "put my affairs in order." Three months later I was sitting for the Kansas Bar Exam. I survived both and don't wish the experience of either on anybody.

In early 1998 I was informed that neither KNRC nor Sierra Club had enough money to pay me to continue working full time on environmental issues in Kansas. Fortunately for me and both organizations I was introduced to Lynate Pettengill. Lynate lived in Lawrence and had been working for several years as a major donor fundraiser for the Kansas Nature Conservancy. She wanted to continue raising money for environmental causes in Kansas part time so that she could spend more time with her young son. Lynate and I began visiting with potential major donors across Kansas to raise money for Kansas Sierra Club and KNRC. We were successful beyond anyone's expectations and continued our efforts into 1999 and 2000. The funds we were able to raise and the major donors we were able to cultivate allowed me to continue working for Kansas Sierra Club and KNRC. In 2000 KNRC decided to go their own way by hiring an executive director. I continued on with Kansas Sierra Club as my principal client while I also worked for neighborhood associations on zoning cases involving landfills, quarries, sand pits, big box developments and other land use issues across Kansas.

From 1997 to 2002 I spent most of my time for Kansas Sierra Club working on two major issues. The first was to stop large corporate entities from locating a 4 million head per year "hog processing plant" in Great Bend (or elsewhere in Kansas) that would have lead to the proliferation of hog "feeding facilities" throughout Kansas. Seaboard Corporation had earlier established a hog slaughtering facility of similar size in Guymon, Oklahoma. The hog feeding facilities that had sprung up all over the Oklahoma Panhandle and western Kansas to supply hogs to that facility caused odor and other nuisances to their neighbors. The Chapter leadership and I developed a two part strategy that I worked to implement with Sierra Club volunteers and others. First, was to help citizens groups in western Kansas organize



against future proposed corporate hog operations. Second, was to apply maximum political pressure on the Kansas legislature to get the most stringent environmental laws we could get under the political circumstances of the time. The strategy worked. The proposed “hog processing facility” was never built because everywhere there was local resistance to it. The laws passed in during the 1998 Kansas legislative session discouraged “mega” hog facilities from locating in Kansas.

The second issue that I worked was on water quality issues in Kansas. Political pressure on EPA Region 7 and KDHE prevented those governmental agencies from fully implementing the Clean Water Act (CWA). Congress, when they passed the CWA in 1972, set as a goal “to restore the chemical, physical and biological integrity of the Nation’s waters.” Kansas made national headlines in the mid-1990s of having the dirtiest water in the nation. The Kansas Sierra Club ExCom and KNRC board decided to use a tool, known as “citizen suits”, that Congress provided to ensure that the EPA carried out the intent of Congress.

I was authorized to represent Sierra Club (as had Bill Craven) and work with John Simpson (representing KNRC) to file a series of lawsuits against the EPA that forced the EPA to order KDHE to fully implement the CWA in Kansas. As part of court settlements KDHE began implementing the “total maximum daily load” provisions of the CWA, designed specifically to deal with non-point source pollution. KDHE was forced to conduct “use attainability analyses” on any streams that were not deemed to be capable of achieving the “fishable-swimmable” goal set by Congress. The result was that municipalities, who had been resisting spending the money to upgrade their wastewater treatment plants, spent the money necessary to install state-of-the-art wastewater treatment plants to minimize their “point source” pollution to Kansas’ rivers and streams. Kansas State University Extension hired and trained staff to work with farmers across the state to implement “best management practices” to prevent non-source pollution to Kansas’ rivers and streams. While no

one would say that Kansas has achieved the goals set by Congress when they passed the CWA in 1972, these lawsuits certainly brought Kansas closer to that goal.

About three years ago the priorities of the Kansas Chapter ExCom shifted to energy policy. The primary motivation was the increasing evidence that the effects of global warming could no longer be ignored. The Chapter leadership and I developed a two part strategy of lobbying the utility committees of the Kansas legislature and intervening in utility rate case dockets before the Kansas Corporation to encourage energy efficiency and renewable energy.

The Chapter’s greatest legislative success on renewable energy came during the 2005 Kansas legislative session with the creation of the Kansas Electric Transmission Authority. KETA creates an organizations solution to the problem of lack of transmission lines in western Kansas that impairs the development of wind energy in that part of the state. Kansas ranks third in the nation in wind energy potential but has fallen far behind other states in actual installed wind capacity.

Sierra Club’s interventions in KCC rate cases has sent a strong message that Kansas utilities need to do more to implement energy efficiency and renewable energy before building more global warming producing coal plants. This kind of political pressure is working and the Kansas Energy Council and the Kansas Corporation Commission are considering policy initiatives that will encourage more energy efficiency and renewable energy in Kansas. In the meantime, widespread public opposition is emerging against plans by utilities to build giant, dirty coal plants in Kansas.

As I prepare to leave Kansas for Nevada I look back with great pride on my work this past decade with Sierra Club volunteers in Kansas to promote public policies and laws that protect the Kansas environment. In that regard I want to express my thanks and admiration for Craig Volland with whom I have worked closely during the last decade on all of the issues above. Craig deserves the thanks of all Kansans for his dedication and hard work.

There is much yet to be done as we face the biggest environmental challenge of all time—global warming. Leading scientists believe we have at most 10 years before we reach a “tipping point” and the effects of global warming will be irreversible. I will continue to fight global warming – but in Nevada. I urge all of you to support the work of the Kansas Sierra Club to fight global warming by contributing as much money as you can afford so that the Chapter can hire an organizer to promote energy efficiency, a lobbyist to promote energy efficiency and renewable energy in the legislature and attorneys to represent the Chapter in KCC rate dockets. I wish all the best to my many friends in the Kansas Sierra Club.



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, *Officer / Committee Chair

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Topeka Group

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Bill Cutler, Treasurer, (785) 379-9756, spudspa@yahoo.com
Jack Smith, Outings Chair, (785) 273-3138
Jo Ann Van Meter, Conservation Chair, (785) 234-3023,
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Wakarusa Group (Lawrence)

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Carey Maynard-Moody*, Vice-Chair, Political Chair, Sprawl/
Transportation, (785) 842-6517, careymm@kansas.sierraclub.org
Frank J. Norman*, Treasurer, (913) 887-6775,
frank.norman@appliedeco.com

General Meetings

General public is welcome to attend

Flint Hills Group (Manhattan)

General Information

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

Kanza Group

Jan 9. 7:00 pm.

Close Loop Energy System for Dairy Production

7:00 pm: Come early at 7:00 pm, share some snacks, and enjoy meeting your Kanza Group leaders and members.

7:30: Dennis Langley, CEO of E3 biofuels, will give a presentation of his company's close loop energy system for dairy production. This should be a stimulating and thought-provoking look at a different way of running an agricultural operation. 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

Kanza Group

March 13. 7:00 pm.

Share Your Adventures

Share Your Adventures is Kanza Group's annual invitation to members to bring their special slide shows of your recent vacations. This is always a favorite of wonderful adventures around the world. Call Craig Wolfe (913-299-4443) if you are bringing slides. 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

Dec 16. 6:30 pm.

Southwind Holiday Party

Holiday Party. Bill Cather (316) 522-4749, bill.cather@kansas.sierraclub.org

Southwind

Jan 12. 6:30 pm

Global warming & the Holcomb Coal-fired Plant Expansion

Great Plains Nature Center. Tom Kneil, (316) 744-1016, thomas.kneil@kansas.sierraclub.org

Topeka.

Dec 15. 7:00 pm.

Holiday Dinner

2nd Annual Topeka Group Holiday Dinner, Magic Wok, Gage and Huntoon. Paul Post, (785) 354-1972, paulpost@paulpost.com

Topeka

Jan 23. 7:00 pm

Movie Night

"Movie Night" - featuring "The End of Suburbia – Oil Depletion and the Collapse of the American Dream" This provocative documentary, a regular on the film-festival circuit, examines the history of suburban life and the wisdom of this distinctly American way of life. A post-World War II concept, suburbia attracted droves of people, giving rise to sprawl and all that comes with it -- good and bad. How has the environment been affected by this lifestyle, and is it sustainable? Dinner at Annie's Place before the meeting at 5:30. 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. 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.

**Looking for a speaker on the
Environment?**

**Contact Elaine Giessel,
Education Chair, at
elaine.giessel@kansas.sierraclub.org**



Sierra Club Outings

General public is welcome to participate

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.



[4] Dec 2. Seasonal scavenger hunt and dinner on the Plaza, Kansas City, MO

This seasonal urban adventure among the festive lights on Kansas City's Plaza will be fun for the entire family. Please bring warm clothing if necessary. We will meet at a restaurant on the Plaza after the hike to round out the evening. Please RSVP by December 1.. Kanza. Claus Wawrzinek, (816) 561-7863, clausw@worldnet.att.net

[1] Dec 2. 7:00 am. I-70 "Adopt a Highway"

This is another installment of our highway cleanup project on west I-70. Meet at the parking lot of Tallgrass Clinic, 6th and Wanamaker, at 7 a.m. Dress appropriately for the weather. Work gloves are suggested. Topeka. Jack Smith (785) 273-3138, jkmsmith@aol.com

[4] Dec 8-10. Winter Backpacking at Hercules Glades Wilderness, MO

Throw your warm stuff in your pack and join us for a quick weekend backpack. \$10 donation requested.. Kanza. Dave Patton, (816) 461-6091, dave.patton@missouri.sierraclub.org

[1] Dec 15. 7:00 pm. Holiday dinner

2nd Annual Topeka Group Holiday Dinner, Magic Wok, Gage and Huntoon. Topeka. Paul Post, (785) 354-1972, paulpost@paulpost.com

[2] Dec 16. 6:30 pm. Southwind Holiday Party

Holiday Party. Southwind. Bill Cather (316) 522-4749, bill.cather@kansas.sierraclub.org

[4] Jan 6. Day hiking at Fleming Park, Jackson County, MO

Enjoy the crisp winter air as we hike and explore some off trail ravines and woodlands. Bring your lunch, and

we'll provide the hot chocolate. \$5 donation requested.. Kanza. Paul Gross, (816) 228-6563, paul.gross@missouri.sierraclub.org

[4] Jan 13-14. .X. Introduction to Winter Backpacking

Jerry Burns Farm, Adrian, Missouri. Experience the mystique of a cold winter's night from within the ring of our campfire's warmth, then sleep away until morning tucked inside your sleeping bag. A winter sleeping bag (15° rating or lower), a sturdy tent and warm clothing are musts. Falling temperatures will not deter us but slippery roads will.. Kanza. Bob Wilshire, (913) 384-6645, bob.wilshire@kansas.sierraclub.org



Committee Meetings

Kanza Group (Kansas City)

Executive Committee

Dec 7, Jan 25 - 7:00 pm,

Contact: Elaine Giessel, (913) 888-8517,
elaine.giessel@kansas.sierraclub.org

Joint Action Committee

Dec 7, Jan 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

Dec 3, Jan 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, Jan 20 (time & location TBA)

Bill Griffith, (913) 772-8960, bill.griffith@kansas.sierraclub.org



Southwind hikers pose on the summit of Timber Mountain during the Third-annual Gyp Hills hike on the Kirkbride Ranch southwest of Medicine Lodge. (left to right) Neil Marcus, Karin Cowdrey, Vernie Woollard, Bill Cather, Kathryn Buck, Bruce Fuelling, and Mary Kirkbride.



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 17, Outings page 18, and Committee Meetings page 19. For the latest update on events, go to www.kansas.sierraclub.org/EventsSearch.htm.

OutDec 2. Seasonal scavenger hunt and dinner on the Plaza, Kansas City, MO. Kanza. Claus Wawrzinek,

(816) 561-7863, clausw@worldnet.att.net

OutDec 2. 7:00 am. I-70 "Adopt a Highway". Topeka. Jack Smith (785) 273-3138, jkjmsmith@aol.com

CMDec 3. 6:00 pm. Executive Committee Meeting. Southwind. Bill Cather (316) 522-4749, bill.cather@kansas.sierraclub.org

CMDec 7. 7:00 pm. Kanza ExCom meeting. Kanza. Elaine Giessel, (913) 888-8517, elaine.giessel@kansas.sierraclub.org

CMDec 7. 7:00 pm. Conservation and Joint Action Committee. Kanza. Frank Drinkwine, (913) 385-0385, frank.drinkwine@kansas.sierraclub.org

OutDec 8-10. Winter Backpacking at Hercules Glades Wilderness, MO. Kanza. Dave Patton, (816) 461-6091, dave.patton@missouri.sierraclub.org

OutDec 15. 7:00 pm. Holiday dinner. Topeka. Paul Post, (785) 354-1972, paulpost@paulpost.com

GMDec 16. 6:30 pm. Southwind Holiday Party. Southwind. Bill Cather (316) 522-4749, bill.cather@kansas.sierraclub.org

OutJan 6. Day hiking at Fleming Park, Jackson County, MO. Kanza. Paul Gross, (816) 228-6563,

paul.gross@missouri.sierraclub.org

GMJan 9. 7:00 pm. Close Loop Energy System for Dairy Production. Kanza. Craig Wolfe, (913) 299-4443, info@kansas.sierraclub.org

GMJan 12. 6:30 p.m.. Global warming & the Holcomb Coal-fired Plant Expansion. Southwind. Tom Kneil, (316) 744-1016, thomas.kneil@kansas.sierraclub.org

OutJan 13-14. X. Introduction to Winter Backpacking. Kanza. Bob Wilshire, (913) 384-6645, bob.wilshire@kansas.sierraclub.org

CMJan 13. 10:00 am. Kanza Retreat. Kanza. Elaine Giessel, (913) 888-8517, elaine.giessel@kansas.sierraclub.org

CMJan 20. TBA. Kansas Chapter ExCom. Chapter. Bill Griffith, 913-772-8960, bill.griffith@kansas.sierraclub.org

GMJan 23. 7:00 pm. Movie Night. Topeka. Paul Post, (785) 354-1972, paulpost@paulpost.com

CMJan 25. 7:00 pm. Conservation and Joint Action Committee. Kanza. Frank Drinkwine, (913) 385-0385, frank.drinkwine@kansas.sierraclub.org

CMJan 25. 7:00 pm. Kanza ExCom meeting. Kanza. Elaine Giessel, (913) 888-8517, elaine.giessel@kansas.sierraclub.org



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