The Coal Rush Slows

By Craig Volland

Recent events suggest that the mad dash by the electric utility industry to build some 150 coal fired power plants may be slowing. Here in Kansas Westar announced in December that they were placing their proposed new coal plant on hold because of soaring construction costs. They could no longer be sure, they said, that a new coal plant would be the cheapest option for rate payers. In January, 2005 they had estimated the cost of electricity from a new coal plant at $46.50 per megawatt-hour. In October, 2006, their estimate was almost $60.00/Mwh.

The most important reasons for this increase are limited manufacturing capacity and the soaring cost of commodity metals and alloys. High demand for engineering services is also a factor. The price of Wyoming coal has doubled over the last 18 months or so. A major factor in that increase is the cost of diesel fuel required not only to dig up the coal but to transport it long distances. KCP&L has also disclosed increasing costs for its Iatan 2 coal plant already under construction. According to the Kansas City Star the cost of KCP&L’s 55% share of the new coal plant has risen from the original estimate of $733

See Coal on page 6

The Cost of Wind Power in Kansas

By Joe Spease

(Joe Spease is the President of Pristine Power and a member of the Kansas Chapter ExCom.)

There is a lot of confusion about the cost of wind-powered electricity. Many of the cost estimates we read are national averages; some are averages from 10 or more years ago; different turbine sizes affect efficiency and kilowatt hour (kWh) rates; the Federal Production Tax Credit (PTC) affects the rates offered on the market; the quality of the wind resource differs from area-to-area and day-to-day within the same areas. So how would the cost of wind power in western Kansas compare with the cost of electricity from new coal plants, or old coal plants paying carbon taxes? How about comparisons with electricity from natural gas or nuclear plants? How do you know that a cost estimate for wind is accurate?

Unfortunately the only way to know about the accuracy of a cost estimate for wind is to study the information carefully and have a good idea of the cost history from a particular area. So, to estimate a cost for potential wind power in western Kansas,

See Cost of Wind on page 7
Remembering Dan Fuller

By Craig Wolfe

When I joined the Sierra Club in 1988, Dan Fuller was the Chair of the Kanza Group in Kansas City (Kansas side). Dan continued as Chair of the Kanza Group for a few years after that, and again served as chair from about 1993-1995. He held just about every position in the Kanza Group and was also active in the state Chapter, serving in several positions, including Council Delegate.

My memories of Dan as a leader were that he was always fair and always mild mannered. He was a hard worker for Sierra Club, but I think that Dan probably loved Sierra Club outings the best. Dan and the outdoors just seemed to fit.

The Kanza Group lost Dan to the Missouri side of the state line when he married Donna Clark in 1997 and moved to Peculiar, Missouri. Both Dan and Donna were active in the Thomas Hart Benton Group (Missouri side of KC). Kanza was still linked to Dan through his involvement in the joint outings. The Kanza Group honored Dan in 2002 with the John Muir Bulging Pack Award “For organizing the One Club outings/conservation program, which integrates conservation issues and outings, and for bringing together both Kanza and Thomas Hart Benton Groups to successfully implement this important program.”

Dan Fuller passed away on January 19, just two days before our Kanza Retreat. At our Retreat, the Kanza ExCom decided to name an award after Dan. I will be working with Donna Clark Fuller to create the award honoring in others those traits and characteristics that made Dan special to us all. We will miss Dan Fuller, his good works, his kindness, and his genuineness.

Memorial contributions may be made to Donna Clark Fuller to establish a scholarship fund for at-risk high school students in the Kansas City, Kansas school district, to Peculiar United Methodist Church, or to the Missouri Conservation Heritage Foundation.

You can contact Donna Clark Fuller at donnadan@casstel.net
Farewell

Bill Griffith Steps Down as Chapter Chair

By Bill Griffith

Well, fellow Clubbers, as you read this I have completed my third and final year as your Kansas Chapter Chairman. Quoting my favorite song I am going to go “Off into the sunset like the western heroes do (or the Monty Python Knight).” Actually I am stepping down from the Chapter’s Executive Committee to have a little more weekend time with my family. I will still be active in conservation and political issues within the state organization. The end of my term has caused me to reflect upon this time and look at the changes that have occurred in the Chapter and in Kansas the last three years.

In 2004 I went to a very thorough chair training in Marin County, California and it got me off to a good start on being a chair. The Sierra Club does some very effective leadership training and I highly recommend it if you get an opportunity to take part in one.

While listening to a presentation at the Kansas Energy Conference that year, I became convinced that the Club could influence energy politics in our state by beginning to intervene in rate cases at the Kansas Corporation Commission. I discussed this with the Executive Committee and Charles Benjamin and we soon filed our first intervention in a rate case that Aquila had in front of the KCC. We asked for more energy efficiency measures to be implemented. We were given a promise by the KCC that this would be done in the near future. In 2006 the KCC opened a generic docket on energy efficiency- more on this later. The governor also re-formed the Kansas Energy Council and made it a little more friendly to environmental concerns, but it still leaves much to be desired.

In 2005 we intervened in the KCPL docket at the KCC. We supported the utilities investments in energy efficiency and wind but opposed their desire to build an 850 MW coal-fired power plant northeast of Leavenworth on the Missouri River. The KCC ruled against us and we are now pursuing litigation in this matter. The Chapter also worked with the Thomas Hart Benton group in Missouri and the Platte County Concerned Citizens to rally people against this power plant. By this time it had become clear to the utilities and gatekeepers of this state that the Club was a vigorous opponent of coal and a strong supporter of energy efficiency and wind power.

After some years of slumber the Topeka Group has arisen with vitality in no small part due to the efforts of Paul Post. This group of folks has energy, talent, and smarts and I look forward to the noise they will be making in the coming years on behalf of the environment.

In September the Club held its first Sierra Summit in San Francisco and 10 members of the Kansas Chapter attended. Al Gore, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., (Kennedy gave one of the best speeches I have ever heard) and Arianna Huffington were among the speakers who urged the Club to make climate change its new priority. The Chapter had already decided to vote for this shift. It was heartening to see that this passed overwhelmingly. The Club is now implementing this change in priorities.

2006 brought a setback in the state political arena. We had been successful the past few years in blocking particularly onerous legislation. However a bill was passed that essentially “fast tracked” the appeal process with regards to permitting in the state. This would be an advantage to Sunflower if there is any litigation over the air permit it is applying for with the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. Governor Sebelius signed the legislation into law.

The KCC opened a generic docket on energy efficiency in August and Hudson Luce, an attorney from Topeka, is representing the Club on this docket. I feel that this is a major step forward in changing the way utility business is done in the state of Kansas. This is a vital opportunity to start curbing greenhouse gases in the state and saving customers’ money on their utility bills. Check future Planet Kansas editions to stay posted on the results of this case.

We were able to get Dave Hamilton, the Director of Global Warming and Energy Programs with the Club, to be a keynote speaker at the Kansas Energy Conference. After Dave’s address, we rushed out to a press conference that Charles Benjamin had thrown together in about a day and announced the Club’s opposition to the proposition by Sunflower Electric to build the largest new emitter of greenhouse gases in the United States at Holcomb, Kansas in the form of 3 new coal-fired units totaling 2100 MW. We received press hits from many parts of the United States and through the grapevine I heard the utilities and some of the powers that be in the state were less than pleased. Our reply to them was “Tough! Get used to it. There is a paradigm shift going on and it will not be business as usual anymore.” The shift is happening due to increased concerns about climate change (“Thanks Al for “An Inconvenient Truth”) and the costs of coal-fired power. Also in Kansas people are scratching their head and saying, “Why aren’t we investing in wind power?”

The Chapter put its shoulder to the wheel and with other folks (you know who you are) and generated a record number of comments in opposition to the Holcomb proposal. It was so heartening to see 200 plus people packed in a room to attempt to speak against the permit. KDHE had to schedule another hearing just to get everybody in.

See Griffith on page 6
Coming Home to Eat
Conference:
Creating a sustainable community food system

Editors Note: This article will reach you after the February 2-3 date of the conference (we did provide an ad in the last Planet Kansas). Due to the importance of this topic, we are including information about the topic in the article below.

• Are you concerned about the impacts climate disruption due to global warming and “peak oil” will have on our ability to feed ourselves?
• Are you troubled by studies showing the nutritional content of food is declining?
• Do you think multinational corporations have too much control over the food supply?
• Would you like to help increase the number of small family farms in our area?
• Do you want to eat fresh, delicious, and nourishing food grown close to home by people you know?

The global food system is highly dependent on cheap and abundant oil & natural gas supplies. For example, researchers have calculated that the average distance food travels from farm-to-plate in the U.S. is 1,300 miles, and other estimates are even higher. Moreover, conventional agriculture consumes enormous quantities of nitrogen fertilizers, which are synthesized using natural gas, and insecticides and herbicides, the majority of which are made from oil. Oil & natural gas supplies have tightened in recent years, forcing price increases, and this situation could worsen dramatically if predictions that global oil production will soon peak and begin to decline prove correct.

In addition, ecologists tell us that our ability to feed ourselves is increasingly at risk from climate disruption due to global warming, soil degradation, water supply limits, and more. One compelling piece of evidence that we’re straining against global limits is the fact that the world has consumed more grain than it’s produced in 6 of the last 7 years, forcing us to draw reserve stocks down to their lowest levels in over 30 years.

It’s always been risky to depend on distant strangers for one’s basic needs, and food is almost as basic as our needs get. Many of those who understand the challenges described above are convinced that risk has become far too great. We see an urgent need to create a food system in which decisions are made at the most local level possible and are based on direct personal relationships with the land and the growers rather than governmental policies. We also need to figure out how to feed ourselves today without degrading the ability of our children and grandchildren to feed themselves in the future.

Conference goals were:
• Explore the evidence that we are at or near the peak of global oil production and past the peak of North American natural gas production;
• Explain the serious consequences that oil & natural gas depletion, climate disruption, and other ecological challenges are likely to have on the global food system;
• Convince conference participants that we need a locally-based food supply not only for these reasons but also so we can have the most delicious and nourishing food;
• Inspire participants to take action to create a sustainable community food system and recruit others to join us.

For more information on this topic and how you can be involved, please call contact:
Ben Kjelshus at 816-767-8873 or bkjelshus@sbcglobal.net or John Kurmann at 816-452-6707, willowjohnwillowjohn@gmail.com

Background information:
• “Fifty Million Farmers” by Richard Heinberg: http://www.energybulletin.net/22584.html
• “Peak Oil and Community Food Security” http://www.energybulletin.net/18521.html
Coal, continued from page 1

From that meeting came the idea of a rally at the capitol steps to protest the power plant. We worked with The True Blue Women and Concerned Citizens of Platte County to organize this event. If you go to our website you can see the results of this endeavor. Again we received major press coverage and continued to put pressure on the governor to say no to the permit.

The Club has been so impressed with our efforts that they have dedicated $20,000 as seed money to help us hire a staff person that will work on energy issues in the state. The hiring of a staff person to do this has been a personal goal of mine for several years. Others in the Club agree that Kansas is a place where its money and trust will be well placed with regards to doing what is right in the energy arena.

Politically speaking, November brought us some well earned relief. Nancy Boyda defeated Jim Ryun and we will see a measurable difference in how the environment is treated from her. I believe some national legislation that will be very helpful to us will come out of the next session of Congress.

Now my challenge to you, dear readers is the following: We need to change some of our habits with regards to energy in this state. First, read and implement the “No Sweat Action Guide to Stop Global Warming” (website). Next, target some friends and family that don’t use CFLs and discuss the importance of this change. Heck, buy them one and show them how much money you just saved them. I spoke to a guy at the rally who bought one for every person in his office! Know who your state legislators are and write to them about your environmental concerns. Speak up at city and county meetings and get others to do as well. There is a great deal that local officials can do. If you need talking points, please contact me. Now, let’s kick some butt.

Griffith, continued from page 4

These announcements follow a nationwide trend. According to information provided by the Sierra Club’s midwest office, Duke Power has said that the cost of building a new coal plant complex in North Carolina has risen from 2.0 to 3.0 $billion. Otter Tail Power said the projected cost of its Big Stone coal plant in South Dakota has increased from $1.2 to $1.6 billion. Similarly the estimate for Peabody’s Prairie State project in Illinois increased from $1.8 billion to about $2.5 billion.

This escalation in cost may even affect the outcome of the proposal to add three huge coal burning plants near Holcomb, Kansas, two of which will be owned by Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association of Colorado. In December, one of their largest customers, Delta-Montrose Electric Association, decided not to sign a 10 year contract extension that Tri-State said is needed from it member cooperatives to finance new coal plants.

This trend has developed ahead of the expected regulation of carbon dioxide and would not yet include its cost effects. Many public officials and experts expect Congress to pass such legislation in the next 2-3 years. Wall Street, which finances major projects like coal plants, must be viewing this with concern. Meanwhile support is building for large investments in energy efficiency and conservation along with alternative energy production like wind and solar.

Catnapper, continued from page 2

These will add up to a significant cost for the state. The Star also reported that this will likely require a rate increase above the 20% originally estimated by KCP&L.

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Politically speaking, November brought us some well earned relief. Nancy Boyda defeated Jim Ryun and we will see a measurable difference in how the environment is treated from her. I believe some national legislation that will be very helpful to us will come out of the next session of Congress.

There are too many people to thank in this space for assisting me in being chairman the last three years. Many people know where I am deficient and came through to take care of my blind spots. To you all I say a heartfelt “Thank you”. I would like to give a special thanks to Yvonne Cather, our vice chair, who has ran meetings in which I have been absent due to children’s activities.

Now my challenge to you, dear readers is the following: We need to change some of our habits with regards to energy in this state. First, read and implement the “No Sweat Action Guide to Stop Global Warming” (website). Next, target some friends and family that don’t use CFLs and discuss the importance of this change. Heck, buy them one and show them how much money you just saved them. I spoke to a guy at the rally who bought one for every person in his office! Know who your state legislators are and write to them about your environmental concerns. Speak up at city and county meetings and get others to do as well. There is a great deal that local officials can do. If you need talking points, please contact me. Now, let’s kick some butt.
I will rely on the costs of wind power reported from the FPL (Florida Power & Light) wind project in Oklahoma which is very close to the same wind resource for western Kansas.

Before we explore too far into that territory, it will help if you know about the PTC mentioned above. The PTC is a nonrefundable credit against federal tax liability that is available for electricity produced from renewable sources like wind. The PTC is good for the first 10 years of a project’s operations and is a great incentive to wind developers. The PTC was just extended to expire on December 31, 2007, but is expected to get a lengthier extension once the new Congress convenes. The credit is for $0.019 per-kWh or $19 per megawatt hour (mWh). This relatively small amount is nonetheless a great help to investors.

For perspective on this, since some fossil fuel companies complain about subsidies to the wind industry, you should consider that the total PTC amount of a couple hundred million dollars for 2006 is less than 1% of the tax credits given to our largest oil companies over the last few years which total over $30 billion. Not to mention that access is given to natural gas companies to drill on public lands without having to pay any royalties to us, the public. Or the fact that our worst polluters, coal-fired power plants, have never had to pay for the damage they do to the environment or to the healthcare cost increases their pollution causes. When compared with the subsidies being given directly or indirectly to fossil fuel companies, the PTC is a mere pittance.

Back to the cost of wind in western Kansas. If the cost to produce electricity from wind at the Oklahoma FPL is $0.029 per kWh we can assume that the cost in western Kansas would be very similar with only slight variations due to geography from the north border to the south border. Let’s just say $0.03 to keep it simple. Now, the retail cost will be more than that, probably about $0.05 per kWh. If a community decided to build their own municipal wind facility they could deduct the PTC from that amount to bring the cost of their wind down by $0.019 per kWh.

Before I go directly to cost comparisons, I need to address the issue of the carbon tax. Now that the democrats control both the House and Senate in the U.S. Congress, there will be a carbon tax. Even the leading Republicans want a carbon tax. But the biggest influence comes from the CEO’s of some of the biggest energy companies like Duke Energy, Exelon, and others who also support the carbon tax, because they understand that without it we will be doomed by global warming.

What is the carbon tax? In the absence of a national energy policy, and because the U.S.A. needs to do something to contribute to reducing CO2 emissions (the U.S. shamefully refused to participate in the Kyoto accords) the Congress is about to impose a tax on companies whenever a molecule of carbon dioxide is emitted into the atmosphere by burning fossil fuels. Coal-fired and natural gas utilities would pay it based on their smokestack emissions. The cost will be passed on to us in our electric bills. We will also pay at the pump when we fill our cars. (Is it just me or are SUV’s looking less and less attractive?) This won’t necessarily mean a net increase in our cost of living. If, as hoped, the carbon tax serves as an incentive to produce more electricity from wind and for people to buy more efficient vehicles, which would also achieve a reduction in CO2 emissions, then our costs might equal out.

How much will the carbon tax be? We don’t know yet. In Europe it’s about $100 per ton of CO2 emitted. Most carbon tax estimates for the U.S. have been in the $20-$50 per ton range. Let’s use the lower range for our estimate when calculating the following wholesale costs for Kansas electricity:

**With a Carbon Tax of $20/Ton of CO2, the Electricity costs are:**

- New coal-fired electricity - $0.06 per kWh
- Natural gas (market changes will vary) - $0.066
- Nuclear - $0.067 (carbon tax does not apply to nuclear)
- Wind - $0.03

As you can see, the electricity cost champion is clearly wind power. And the cost of wind doesn’t change! We in Kansas are fortunate to be blessed with one of the best wind resources on the planet that can save us money and clean up the environment. But first we have to use this incredible resource. It won’t happen unless you write the governor, your legislators, and the members of the Utility Committees in the State House and Senate. Please let them know that wind is what’s best for the future of Kansas.

Write Gov. Sebelius
Capitol Bldg, 2nd Floor
Topeka, KS 66612
1-877-579-6757
governor@state.ks.us
The Kansas City Food Circle will host the 9th Annual Farmers Exhibition

Saturday, March 24, 9 AM to 2 PM
Civic Centre 13817 Johnson Dr., Shawnee, KS
Includes half-day workshop on nutrition in local foods and the 100 Mile Diet, foraging for local foods.

Free admission and parking.

- Meet local organic farmers who can supply high quality organic fruits and veggies and free range, natural meats for the coming season.
- Seedlings for an early start on your garden
- Pick up a free copy of the 2007 Food Circle Producers Directory

Original music by eco-troubadour, Stan Slaughter

The event is co-sponsored by the Sierra Club
For more info contact
Craig Volland, KC Food Circle
913-334-0556 or hartwood2@mindspring.com
Looking for a speaker on the Environment?

Contact Elaine Giessel, Education Chair, at elaine.giessel@kansas.sierraclub.org
Webster Lake Association Protests Basin Advisory Committee

The following is a letter from the Webster Lake Association

We The Webster Lake Association formally protest the election held at the last BAC meeting, which re-elected members that do not attend on a regular basis, and refused any and all qualified newcomers to the committee except Irrigator Joe Keith. We also protest the reappointment of Paul Best another irrigator, to serve another term as chair of the Solomon Basin. The rest of the population (that does not irrigate) in this basin wants to start making decisions about this public trust of water.

We further protest all representation on the Kansas Water Authority from the western portion of this state since they all represent irrigated agriculture here. Don Paxon, Steve Irsik, David Brenn, and Gary Baker who are voting members. We no longer wish to have irrigated agriculture making the decisions for the other 99% of Kansans that do not irrigate in the western third of the state. 6 of 13 members who are voting members on the water authority are irrigators. We request that irrigated agriculture in this state be metered, regulated downward, and taxed for depletion of ground water which took thousands of years to build. The laws of our state provide for such regulation and all water rights are subject to such regulation. 82-702, 82-803,82-707 etc.

The other 99% of us Kansans that do not irrigate are tired of having the water pumped out from under our property, and our state parks drained. We want rivers that run on a consistent annual basis. We want the water resources that are here to start to benefit all of the population, not 1% of the population that irrigates at the expense of all others. REGULATE IRRIGATION NOW.

Thank you for your consideration of these requests.

Sincerely,

Robin Bailey
Webster Lake Assn
1130 U.S. Hwy 24
Stockton, Kansas 67669
785-425-7057

The Spring/Summer 2007 Outings Brochure Is Here!

By Dave Patton, Thomas Hart Benton Group (KCMO) Outings Chair

Every six months outings leaders from the Kanza and Thomas Hart Benton groups sit down to plan outings. We got together in November to plan outings for our Spring/Summer 2007 brochure. Each time we have a planning meeting I worry that we’ll have a tough time filling space in the Outings Brochure. However, by the time the Outings Brochure is ready to go to the printer, our outings leaders have once again stepped up to the plate and completely filled our brochure with outings. I hope you appreciate as much as I do the commitment of time and effort our outings leaders make on an ongoing basis to bring a quality Outings Program to our groups.

Our Outings Brochure is available to the public in two different formats. First, we have our printed brochure which is distributed throughout the metropolitan area and is available at our general meetings. The second format is an electronic format known as a PDF file (Portable Document Format) on our web site. This version has several attractive features:

• You always know where it is. You don’t have to go around the house trying to remember where you put it. Just download it to your computer and leave it on your desktop.
• It looks nicer. The PDF version is in color. The printed version is black ink on colored paper.
• All the hyperlinks on the PDF version work. If you see an outing you want to inquire about, just click on the leader’s contact info and you’re ready to shoot off an email to that leader.
• And last but not least, it’s more environmentally friendly. No one had to cut down a tree to make the paper to print it on and you don’t have to dispose of it after you're finished with it.

The link to our web site outings page is:
http://kansas.sierraclub.org/EventsSearch.asp

Here’s a quick peek at our upcoming outings:

We’re offering two maintenance outings. Both outings have multiple dates. Doris Sherrick and members of the THB Group will continue their efforts to eradicate the bush honeysuckle in Hidden Valley Natural Area in Kansas City north of the Missouri River. Steve Hassler and Bob Wilshire from the Kanza Group will continue maintenance on the trails at Perry Lake.

We have scheduled four educational outings. Anne McDonald is leading a tour of the new environmentally friendly “green” office building in Overland Park. Paul and Melody Gross are again offering their Beginner Backpacking Class in

See Outings on page 11
Outings, continued from page 10

Independence. If you have any interest in backpacking, Paul and Melody do an outstanding job preparing you for your first trip. Claus Wawrzinek is again leading a Photography Class at Loose Park. With all the spectacular flora and fauna at Loose Park how can you take a bad picture? Eileen McManus is leading her second Compass Class at Loose Park. She has a very fun way to help you learn compass skills.

Eight day hikes are on the schedule. Ellen Brenneman is leading her annual Trolley Track hike. Larry Herndon is leading our first day hike at Smithville Lake, just north of Kansas City. The people at Smithville Lake have been busy building trails for the last several years and now have a fairly extensive network of trails there. Steve Hassler is trying something new. He’s leading two “Sunday Strolls”— one at the Overland Park Arboretum and the other at Lakeside Nature Center. Eileen McManus is heading up a day hike at Lakeside Nature Center in conjunction with our annual THB picnic there. Anne McDonald is leading a day hike at Parkville, Missouri. David Anderson is leading two day hikes — one at Burr Oak Woods and the other at Weston Bend State Park.

Along with our day hikes, Claus Wawrzinek is leading a fun trip to the Crossroads Art District in Kansas City.

We’re offering three backpacking trips. I’m leading a four-day trip for experienced backpackers in Arkansas. Paul and Melody Gross are leading their annual St. Patty’s day trip to the Irish Wilderness. Eileen McManus is leading her annual beginner backpacking trip to Clinton Lake in Kansas.

We’ve been trying to increase our car camping offerings. This year I’m proud to say we have three. Anne McDonald and Bob Wilshire are leading a trip to Turtle Creek State Park in Manhattan, Kansas along with a tour of the Konza Prairie. My wife Kathy and I are leading our fourth annual trip to Blanchard Springs, Arkansas and the nearby Ozark Folk Center State Park. Renee Andriani is leading a trip to the Flint Hills of Kansas. This trip will be a great trip for kids as well as adults. Please remember that working out the logistics on car camping trips takes some time. Be sure to sign up far in advance.

The last several years we have been able to offer a spring canoe trip. This year Terry DeFraties is leading a trip to the Buffalo National River in Arkansas. The Buffalo was the first river in the U.S. to be given the designation National Scenic River. Believe me, it lives up to its title.

That’s it for this time around. Hope to see you soon on one of our outings!
Topeka Group Plans
2007 Programs

By Paul Post, Topeka Group Chair

The Topeka Group executive committee (ExCom) met on December 12, 2006, to plan for programs and activities for 2007. Program ideas for the general membership meetings were many, and after much discussion, the ExCom decided on eleven monthly programs for this coming year. Not all speakers are confirmed as of press time, but it is hoped that all will accept the invitation to present programs to the Group.

To kick off our 2007 programs, Joe Harkin, Kansas Director of Natural Resource Policy, spoke on “Kansas Energy Policy Initiatives” at the January 23 meeting. Joe was appointed by Governor Sebelius in May 2006 to the position of Director of Natural Resource Policy with a mandate to focus on and coordinate use planning for Kansas’ natural resources. Harkins previously served as head of the Kansas Water Office, as well as other state agencies during the past 40 years. The National Governors’ Association recently cited Harkins with its Award for Distinguished Service in State Government.

The February 27 meeting will be “Movie Night” featuring the movie “The End of Suburbia.” 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? Canadian director Gregory Greene dares to ask all the tough questions.

Tom Thompson, Kansas Chapter Legislative Coordinator, will be our speaker on March 27. Tom was recently appointed to his present position as lobbyist for the Kansas Chapter, and will bring us up to date on bills before the Legislature which affect the environment. The annual Legislative Update program has been popular with members of the Topeka Group.

For the April 24 meeting, Mike Hayden, Kansas Secretary of Parks and Wildlife has been invited to speak. At press time, he has not yet accepted the invitation, but the ExCom hopes that he will be able to present a program at the April meeting, or perhaps later in the year. Secretary Hayden was formerly Governor of Kansas from 1987 to 1991. On April 18, 1991, former President George H.W. Bush named Hayden to be the Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish and Wildlife at the Department of the Interior. From 1993 to 2001, Hayden served as President and CEO of the American Sportfishing Association, an Alexandria, Virginia, non-profit trade organization that promotes the conservation of fishery resources and environmental measures that improve the aquatic environment.

The May meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 23, instead of the usual Tuesday time slot: Joe Spease, President of Pristine Power in Kansas City, will speak on the development of alternative energy sources. Pristine Power Corporation is a leading marketer of clean power products to corporations and non-profit organizations nationwide. Pristine Power offers wind, solar, hydrogen, bio-fuels and energy-saving products (some of which are not available anywhere else). Located in the heart of America and founded in 2003, Pristine Power serves Fortune 500 customers, and offers clean power fund-raising programs for non-profit and faith organizations.

On June 25, our speaker will be Don Worster, Hall Distinguished Professor of American History, Department of History, University of Kansas. Professor Worster won the Bancroft Prize for “Dust Bowl—The Southern Plains in the 1930s,” and authored “Nature’s Economy—A History of Ecological Ideas,” “Rivers of Empire,” “Under Western Skies,” and “The Wealth of Nature.” His subject will be “Global Warming in Kansas.”

For the July 24 program, the ExCom has invited Ken Warren, Managing Director of the Land Institute, Salina, Kansas, to speak. The Land Institute has worked for over 20 years on the problems of agriculture to develop an agricultural system with the ecological stability of the prairie and a grain yield comparable to that from annual crops. Located at Salina, Land Institute scientists undertake research into Natural Systems Agriculture (NSA), publish in refereed scientific journals, and give public presentations here and abroad. Land Institute Founder Wes Jackson was recently named by the prestigious Smithsonian magazine as one of 35 people who have made a difference in our time.

On August 28, we will again be inviting Dennis Dinwid-die of Stone Nature Center in Topeka to present a program on “Wild Animals in Kansas.” Dennis was our speaker last July, and brought with him a number of interesting animals and birds native to Kansas. Dennis will be asked to return by popular demand.

Our September 25 program will feature a panel discussion consisting of representatives of Topeka Audubon, Ducks Unlimited, and the Kansas Wildlife Federation on “Preserving Kansas Wildlife.”

For the October 23 program, we will present “Nature Trails in Topeka and Northeast Kansas.” On November 27, the program will be on “Designing the Energy Efficient Home.” Rounding out the year in December (date to be announced later) will be the Topeka Group Third Annual Holiday Dinner.

Members and guests are always welcome to attend the “no-host” dinner which precedes each meeting at 5:30 p.m., at Annie’s Place Restaurant in Gage Center at Huntoon and Gage. Questions should be directed to Paul Post at 784-254-1972 or at paulpost@paulpost.com.
Greenhouse Network Training

By Craig Lubow

ExCom Member Craig Lubow attended a global warming conference with workshops offered by the Greenhouse Network. The conference was held last June at the Cal-Wood Educational Center near Jamestown, Colorado. The training focused on the science of global warming and ways to stop new construction or expansion of coal plants. The Conference organizers were Eban Goodstein and Leslie Glustrom. Eban is a professor at the Lewis and Clark College in Oregon, with a specialty in environmental economics. Leslie is from Boulder, where she has been fighting to stop coal plants in Colorado, with some successes. Leslie often states “there is a great big fusion plant in the sky.” She advocates the use of solar energy as one part of the solution. The other speakers focused on conservation, wind energy, and population as other parts of the solution.

Alison Burchell spoke about the task of grassroots organizing. The grassroots organizing requires mobilization of students to carry on the fight in the long term. Student organizing was the topic addressed by Billy Parrish. Eban is currently coordinating “Focus the Nation,” an effort to organize the environmental movement on college campuses across the entire nation. You may visit the website at www.focusthenation.org.

Roger Clark from the Grand Canyon Trust spoke about his success at stopping coal plants at some Tribal reservations. Other activists from some tribes also spoke. There were some tribes that entered into agreements permitting some Colorado utilities to construct coal plants on the reservations, but the environmental activists successfully stopped the coal plants.

The scientific process of global warming was examined by Dr. Martin Hoerling from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), which produced the National Academy Report entitled, “Understanding and Responding to Climate Change.” Evidence of global warming includes (1) Heat wave of 2003; (2) Hurricanes of 2005; (3) Argentina’s vanishing Upsala Glacier; (4) Accelerated rate of rising sea level; (5) Six of the seven warmest years have occurred in the 21st century and each new peak is warmer than the previous peak; (6) Ice melting in the arctic regions, including polar bear habitat; and (7) Warmer ocean temperatures.

Although it is impossible to prove that greenhouse emissions are the sole cause of global warming the resulting weather events mentioned above, all of these factors are highly correlated with the increases in global greenhouse gases. The significant correlation from the past 200 years make it extremely probable.

See Training on page 14
that the greenhouse gases contribute significantly to global warming, beyond what would occur in natural cycles. Carbon dioxide is the most significant component of greenhouse gases, with methane the second greatest component of the gases.

It is predicted that the earth’s atmosphere will continue to rise as much as six to ten degrees by 2085. Regardless of any efforts to reduce GHG emissions, the atmosphere is still expected to rise by a minimum of two degrees. The more significant warming is predicted to occur if we fail to reduce the emissions substantially. If the permafrost melts, it is expected that there would be an explosion of methane gas emissions, which would further contribute to global warming.

In the year 2000, the United States was the largest emitter of carbon dioxide, accounting for 25 percent of the global emissions. In the meantime, China’s emissions are growing at an alarming rate, possibly passing the United States before the year 2025. Global carbon dioxide is increasing at the rate of nearly two percent per year. Coal plants and automobiles are the most significant contributors to carbon dioxide.

Hunter Lovins spoke about the Kyoto treaty and what we can do to reduce GHG emissions. She cited examples of projects throughout the world in which other cities are making progress. Building design and building codes can reduce our demand for energy significantly.

Alternative energy sources can meet much of the remaining demand after the reductions achieved by conservation. Cars can be more efficient, burning less fuel. Designing communities to reduce urban sprawl can reduce energy demand and energy demand can be further reduced by implementing mass transit, including light rail and commuter rail. One city in Brazil, larger than Kansas City, implemented a system based on rapid bus transit, which operated much like a subway system.

Carbon sequestration is a natural process in which some carbon is absorbed by into the oceans and vegetation. However, our carbon emissions are far higher than what can be naturally sequestered. Some utilities talk about other “sequetration” methods. However, those methods are not really sequestration. Rather, the alternative methods are really storage of carbon emissions. Stored carbon often leaks back into the atmosphere.

There are many ways in which individual consumers can consume less. Let’s start with the home. Consumers can insulate their homes better, install the most efficient water heaters, incorporate solar heating and cooling into new home construction, install slow flowing faucets, purchase newer and more efficient refrigerators, and purchase efficient front loading washing ma-
Contact Gov. Sebelius

Let her know that stopping global warming and coal plants DON’T MIX.

Let her know we need to do all we can, RIGHT NOW, to develop Wind Power in Western Kansas

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For more info, go to: www.kansas.sierraclub.org/Wind/LetterToSebelius.htm
Chapter Executive Committee
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*Elected ExCom member; **Appointed ExCom member, ***Group Representative to Chapter, ****Officer/Committee Chair

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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**
March 13. 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

**Southwind Group**
Feb 9. 6:30 pm.

**Backpacking in Italy & other venues**
Neil Marcus will present photographs from his backpacking trips. Great Plains Nature Center. Dave Kirkbride, (316) 685-2397, dave.kirkbride@knea.org

**Southwind Group**
Mar 9. 6:30 pm

**Wichita Habitat**
The Wichita Habitat Team will show their DVD presentation on efforts to enhance habitat and outdoor recreational opportunities in the Wichita area. Great Plains Nature Center. Dave Kirkbride, (316) 685-2397, dave.kirkbride@knea.org

**Topeka**
Feb 27. 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
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.

Get on our list if you are interested in being contacted to help lop the invasive honeysuckle at Hidden Valley in our ongoing efforts. Kanza. Doris Sherrick, (816) 779-6708, dsherrick@missouri.sierraclub.org

Join us at 2 p.m. at the Brookside Market (63rd and Brookside) for a winter day hike along the Trolley Track Trail. $5 donation requested. Kanza. Ellen Brenneman, (816) 213-2415 mobile, ebrenn1@yahoo.com

Help us keep the Perry Lake Trail attractive and safe for hikers and backpackers! Bring lunch & work gloves; if you have them, bow saw & loppers. Kanza. Steve Hassler, (913) 707-3296, steve.hassler@kansas.sierraclub.org

We'll backpack 28 miles through one of the most scenic sections of the OHT. $10 donation requested. Kanza. Dave Patton, (816) 461-6091, dave.patterson@missouri.sierraclub.org

Learn backpacking basics. We'll cover equipment, a section on low budget options, places to go and more $5 donation requested. Kanza. Paul or Melody Gross 816-228-6563, paul.gross@missouri.sierraclub.org

Help us keep the Perry Lake Trail attractive and safe for hikers and backpackers! Bring lunch & work gloves; if you have them, bow saw & loppers. Kanza. Steve Hassler, (913) 707-3296, steve.hassler@kansas.sierraclub.org

The new Johnson County Office Building at 119th and Ridgefield has won awards for its environmentally friendly construction and operation. They give tours on Thursday evenings and we'll go check it out. Kanza. Anne McDonald, (913) 384-6645, anne.mcdonald@kansas.sierraclub.org

Get out and stretch your legs. We'll hike one of the numerous scenic trails at Smithville Lake. Kanza. Larry Herndon, 816-309-0316, lahinlsmo@hotmail.com

We will meet at the Topeka Transit Administrative Offices, 200 N. Kansas Avenue (under the Kansas Avenue bridge) for a tour of that facility, travel to the new Quincy Street Station to learn more about Topeka's bus system and routes, and then take a trip on one of the new energy efficient buses. Topeka. Paul Post, (785) 354-1972, paulpost@paulpost.com

Spend St. Patty's day backpacking with us in this scenic area near the Eleven Point River. $10 donation requested. Kanza. Paul or Melody Gross 816-228-6563, paul.gross@missouri.sierraclub.org

Join us at 2 p.m. for a short Sunday stroll through the exhibits and grounds of the Arboretum -- a nice hike for the family!. Kanza. Steve Hassler, (913) 707-3296, steve.hassler@kansas.sierraclub.org

This short 4.5 mile loop passes through wooded hills and fields with good views of the lake. $5 donation requested. Kanza. Eileen McManus, (816) 523-7823, eileenm@missouri.sierraclub.org

Spring is a great time to be on the prairie and we can enjoy it on a hike through the Konza Prairie on Saturday as part of our car camping excursion to Tuttle Creek State Park just north of Manhattan KS. $10 donation requested. Kanza. Anne McDonald, (913) 384-6645, anne.mcdonald@kansas.sierraclub.org

Join us for our 4th annual trip to Blanchard Springs Recreation Area and the Ozark Folk Center State Park. Deadline for signup on this trip is April 19. $10 donation requested. Kanza. Dave & Kathy Patton, (816) 461-6091, dave.patton@missouri.sierraclub.org

[4] Apr 29. Outdoor Photography Outing at Loose Park, Kansas City, MO. Bring your camera (digital or film) along with a tripod if you have one for this outing. No previous experience needed. There will be a brief introduction to outdoor photography and hike to look for photo opportunities. Please RSVP. Limit 10 participants. $5 donation requested. Kanza. Claus Wawrzinek, (816) 561-7863, clausw@worldnet.att.net


[4] May 5. Compass class at Loose Park Kansas City, MO. Learn the basics of using a compass. We will locate Champion Trees, Civil War markers, fountains, etc., in one of the most beautiful parks in the city. $5 donation requested. Kanza. Eileen McManus, (816) 523-7823, eileenm@missouri.sierraclub.org

[5] May 5-6. Canoe Trip, Buffalo National River, AR. We’ll float one of the most scenic rivers in the US. Kanza. Terry DeFrates, (913) 385-7374, theerustbucket@aol.com

[1] May 18-20. Family Campout in the Flint Hills. We’ll stay at the YMCA’s scenic Camp Wood in Elmdale, where your choice of accommodations range from your own tent to a well-appointed cabin. A day trip to the nearby Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve will be a great opportunity to explore and learn about the region’s fascinating history and prairie ecosystem. Sign up early so we can arrange accommodations. $10 donation requested. Kanza. Renee Andriani, (913) 488-4445, randri@kc.rr.com

[4] Jun 2. Day Hiking, Parkville, MO. Parkville has two great walking venues: the English Landing trail along the Missouri River and the Nature Sanctuary. We’ll do one or both on a lovely day in May. $5 donation requested. Kanza. Anne McDonald, (913) 384-6645, anne.mcdonald@kansas.sierraclub.org

[4] Jul 7. Day Hiking at Weston Bend State Park, Weston, MO. Join us as we take in some of the scenery along the Missouri River bluffs. $5 donation requested. Kanza. David Anderson, (816) 678-4359, david.anderson@missouri.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 17, Outings page 18, and Committee Meetings page 19. For the latest update on events, go to www.kansas.sierraclub.org/EventsSearch.htm.

Out Feb-Apr. Maintenance, Hidden Valley Park KCMO. Kanza. Doris Sherrick, (816) 779-6708, dsherrick@missouri.sierraclub.org
CM Feb 4. 6:00 pm. Executive Committee Meeting. Southwind. Dave Kirkbride, (316) 685-2397, dave.kirkbride@knea.org
Out Feb 4. Day Hike, Trolley Track Trail, KCMO. Kanza. Ellen Brenneman, (816) 213-2415 mobile, ebrenn1@yahoo.com
GM Feb 9. 6:30 pm at the Great Plains Nature Center. Backpacking in Italy & other venues. Southwind. Dave Kirkbride, (316) 685-2397, dave.kirkbride@knea.org
Out Feb 10. Perry Lake Trail Maintenance, Perry, KS. Kanza. Steve Hassler, (913) 707-3296, steve.hassler@kansas.sierraclub.org
CM Feb 13. 7:00 pm. Kanza ExCom meeting. Kanza. Frank Drinkwine, (913) 385-0385, frank.drinkwine@kansas.sierraclub.org
CM Feb 13. 7:00 pm. Conservation and Joint Action Committee. Kanza. Craig Lubow, (913) 299-6620, craig.lubow@kansas.sierraclub.org
Out Feb 14-18. Backpacking, Ozark Highlands Trail, AR. Kanza. Dave Patton, (816) 461-6091, dave.patterson@missouri.sierraclub.org
GM Feb 27. 7:00 pm. Movie Night. Topeka. Paul Post, (785) 354-1972, paulpost@paulpost.com
Out Feb 24. Backpacking 101 Class, Independence, MO. Kanza. Paul or Melody Gross 816-228-6563, paul.gross@missouri.sierraclub.org
Out Mar 3. Perry Lake Trail Maintenance, Perry, KS. Kanza. Steve Hassler, (913) 707-3296, steve.hassler@kansas.sierraclub.org
CM Mar 4. 6:00 pm. Executive Committee Meeting. Southwind. Dave Kirkbride, (316) 685-2397, dave.kirkbride@knea.org
Out Mar 8. Johnson County “Green” office building, Johnson County, KS. Kanza. Anne McDonald, (913) 384-6645, anne.mcdonald@kansas.sierraclub.org
GM Mar 9. 6:30 pm at the Great Plains Nature Center. Wichita Habitat. Southwind. Dave Kirkbride, (316) 685-2397, dave.kirkbride@knea.org
Out Mar 10. Day Hiking at Smithville Lake, Smithville, MO. Kanza. Larry Herndon, 816-309-0316, lalindsmo@hotmail.com
CM Mar 10. 9:00 am. Kansas Chapter ExCom. Chapter. Yvonne Cather (316) 204-8920, yvonne.cather@kansas.sierraclub.org
Out Mar 10. 10:30 am. Topeka Transit Trek. Topeka. Paul Post, (785) 354-1972, paulpost@paulpost.com
GM Mar 13. 7:00 pm. Close Loop Energy System for Dairy Production. Kanza. Craig Wolfe, (913) 299-4443, info@kansas.sierraclub.org
CM Mar 13. 7:00 pm. Kanza ExCom meeting. Kanza. Frank Drinkwine, (913) 385-0385, frank.drinkwine@kansas.sierraclub.org
CM Mar 13. 7:00 pm. Conservation and Joint Action Committee. Kanza. Craig Lubow, (913) 299-6620, craig.lubow@kansas.sierraclub.org
GM Mar 27. 7:00 pm. Legislative Update with Tom Thompson. Topeka. Paul Post, (785) 354-1972, paulpost@paulpost.com
Out Mar 31-Apr 1. Beginner’s Backpack, Clinton Lake, KS. Kanza. Eileen McManus, (816) 523-7823, eileenm@missouri.sierraclub.org
Out Apr. 14-15. Car Camping Turtle Creek State Park, Manhattan, KS. Kanza. Anne McDonald, (913) 384-6645, anne.mcdonald@kansas.sierraclub.org
Out Apr 26-29. Car Camping, Mountain View, AR. Kanza. Dave & Kathy Patton, (816) 461-6091, dave.pattson@missouri.sierraclub.org