Flint Hills Burning Proposed for Clean Air Act Exemption

By Craig Volland

The wholesale annual burning of rangeland in the Flint Hills is causing exceedances of the ozone smog air quality standard in the major urban areas of Kansas. This is becoming an even more serious problem because the USEPA is proposing to lower the ozone air quality standard this year. Rather than address the problem at its source, the Kansas legislature passed a resolution requesting that Congress grant Flint Hills ranchers an exemption to the US Clean Air Act. On April 22, Rep. Jerry Moran of the 1st Kansas Congressional District introduced a bill in Congress, HR 5118, to achieve this purpose.

Let's have the facts, please. This bill is as disingenuous in its language as it is misguided in its purpose. This article seeks to correct the misinformation found in the six “findings” in HR 5118. In each case the proffered “finding” is corrected or clarified by the Sierra Club in **bold italics**.

1. The Flint Hills Region of Kansas and Oklahoma contains the world’s largest share of the remaining tallgrass prairie, and is the only place where that habitat is in landscape proportions. Only 4 percent of North America’s pre-settlement tallgrass prairie survives to this day, and 80 percent is located in Kansas. True. Almost all of the original tall grass prairie & associated habitat in the US disappeared because of intensive agriculture development. Vast areas were plowed up. The Flint Hills is the last remaining relatively “intact” tall grass prairie because it was not suitable for row crops. It was used for livestock, instead. That was fine until about 1980 when many ranchers greatly intensified the frequency of grass burning and/or increased the density of cattle grazing. These practices are now wiping out grassland bird habitat and, in essence, beginning a new round of destruction of the tall grass prairie.

2. The Flint Hills Region is also home to certain declining avian species such as Henslow’s True. Almost all of the original tall grass prairie & associated habitat in the US disappeared because of intensive agriculture development. Vast areas were plowed up. The Flint Hills is the last remaining relatively “intact” tall grass prairie because it was not suitable for row crops. It was used for livestock, instead. That was fine until about 1980 when many ranchers greatly intensified the frequency of grass burning and/or increased the density of cattle grazing. These practices are now wiping out grassland bird habitat and, in essence, beginning a new round of destruction of the tall grass prairie.

See Burning on page 6
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Chapter Members Holding National Positions
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Is the Gulf Spill Our Pearl Harbor?

By Craig Wolfe, Communications Chair

The horror has now begun. Before, we were only being told that the oil spill would devastate jobs and wetlands for decades (only!!). But it is now different. If there is one thing that will bring a tear to our eye, it's the images of abused dogs and cats with the haunting voice of Sarah McLachlan singing "Angel" in the background. Now, we are an eye witness to the suffering of the true innocents of the gulf spill, the wildlife. Watching the struggling of the wetland birds, covered in BP oil, is just too much.

The horror has now begun. I just read the email from Heidi on the Kanza News ListServe. She wrote, “Anyone else feel like “marching on Washington”, holding signs, shouting, ‘Stop the Drilling! End the Killing? I’m so disgusted, outraged, sickened, and heartbroken over the gulf oil disaster, I can’t sleep, seriously.” That is how we all feel, but is it enough of an anthem to finally motivate us to turn the tide... to begin shouting, “Enough is enough”?

In the early months of World War II, we watched as Nazi Germany began its plunder of Europe, but we did not act. We thought about it, maybe planned for it, but it took the bombing of Pearl Harbor to knock us off balance long enough for us to finally say, “THIS CANNOT STAND!!”

President Obama is taking quite a lot of heat these days for his somewhat passive and professorial approach to the crisis in the gulf. This may not reflect what is really going in the background, just as President Roosevelt was merely waiting for the right moment.

After Pearl Harbor, we did something miraculous. Our industries literally changed their stripes and began building the infrastructure needed to build the airplanes and tanks needed to win the war. It will be harder this time to change our stripes due to our dysfunctional political system, and it will be a harder task to convince the Repubs...
Executive Director
Michael Brune Speaks Out on Oil Drilling

President Obama Halts Arctic, Virginia Drilling, Announces New Safety Rules. Sierra Club Calls for an End to Offshore Drilling and a Plan to Move Beyond Oil

From Sierra Club press release of May 27 by Michael Brune.

Washington, DC – The Sierra Club issues the following statement in response to President Obama’s announcements about the BP oil disaster in the Gulf:

It’s very encouraging to see President Obama taking steps to end the lax safety regulations the oil industry has fought so hard to maintain and to put a stop to more drilling in areas like the Arctic and Virginia. The changes President Obama announced will help reduce the risk of another catastrophic oil blowout. We know this disaster is the worst of its kind in U.S. history. These are important short-term moves, but these steps won’t solve the underlying problems caused by our reliance on oil.

The resignation of Elizabeth Birnbaum as head of the Mineral Management Service is a sign that a culture of accountability may finally be taking hold but the cozy relationship Big Oil has with our government is pervasive. To end the industry’s reign of self-regulation, pollution and profiteering, BP must be held fully responsible for their negligence, the government must stop subsidizing these polluting companies, and there must be a massive new effort to move America away from oil dependence.

Oil is a dirty and dangerous business and the industry has repeatedly refused to learn from its failures. Where there is offshore drilling, there are oil spills. The disaster we see in the gulf is the worst of its kind. The risks of oil have never been clearer.

The oil industry is going to greater and greater lengths in its desperate bid for more oil, while the cost to the rest of us grows. The President has taken an important step today. To fully address this crisis, we are also calling on the President to:

Stop the gusher. The latest “top kill” measure may be working, which would be a great relief but once the gusher is stopped, the Gulf and coasts will still be facing dire impacts from the oil that is already there. Focus must remain on containment and recovery. The administration is working around the clock to stop the spread of oil. They need to continue to employ every tool at their disposal to contain this disaster as quickly as possible.

Stop all new drilling. We are pleased that the President heeded our call to cancel exploratory drilling permits for the Arctic’s Beaufort and Chukchi seas and Virginia’s coast. The President should go one step further and halt all new drilling.

Make the Gulf communities and environment whole – Gulf coast communities, which supply 30 percent of the nation’s wild caught seafood and still have not recovered from Hurricane Katrina and subsequent storms, are suffering from this oil drilling disaster. Gulf coastal wetlands have been under assault by the oil industry for half of a century, and this disaster will further destroy them. The federal government and BP must be held accountable to restore the communities and environment of all of the affected areas. More specifically, impacted communities should receive full compensation for financial losses, all health expenses from medical care and missed work for clean-up workers and other affected people should be covered, legal and translation skills should be provided to assist with compensation and wetlands should be restored.

Demand more accountability and transparency from government and industry. The safety measures announced today are crucial. In addition, BP and the federal government must immediately release all information regarding the response to the spill including: spill size and impacts, any and all data regarding the chemical properties and impacts of dispersants, as well as contamination testing. Oil companies and other responsible parties – not taxpayers or those affected – should be liable for the full costs of cleaning up the spill and compensating the victims.

Deliver a plan to end our dependence on oil and move to a new clean energy economy. It’s time to move beyond oil. We already have the technology and clean energy solutions for a 21st century transportation system that will create energy independence and end our addiction to oil. President Obama should deliver a bold plan to implement these solutions, immediately.

Also today the Sierra Club and the American Security Project released a joint report entitled “Ending Our Dependence on Oil,” which shows how America’s addiction to oil threatens our national security, our economy and our environment.

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. -- A brown pelican is released at the Egmont Key National Wildlife Refuge near St. Petersburg, Fla. May 30, 2010. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Nick Ameen

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. -- Dr. Sharon Taylor of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service releases a northern gannet at the Egmont Key National Wildlife Refuge near St. Petersburg, Fla. May 30, 2010. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Nick Ameen.

Natural Gas Initiative

The following is a message from Sierra Club Executive Director Michael Brune to Sierra Club volunteers and staff.

In one of my first messages to you as the Sierra Club’s new executive director, I spelled out four matters I consider priorities for my first three months. Today I’d like to discuss our plans for addressing one of those priorities: the regulation of natural gas.

The topic has come up often in my travels and it is important that we address it even as we focus so much attention on the disaster BP has created in the Gulf. As the recent natural gas boom changes the energy landscape, new production techniques raise environmental concerns about this fuel. Let me repeat now what I have been telling those of you who fear that your favorite landscapes and the communities you love may be at risk: The Sierra Club has your back. We will stand with you to ensure that natural gas extraction is effectively regulated and that the industry employs the safest and most environmentally sound techniques.

We stand at a crossroads today. The time is coming when coal and oil will be the energy of the past. Over the past five years Sierra Club has led a nationwide effort with our chapters and local allies that prevented the construction of more than 125 coal-fired power plants. Just two weeks ago the Mississippi Chapter won a David-versus-Goliath battle to block Southern Company’s proposal to build a massive new coal plant.

On the horizon are the predominance of new clean-energy projects and the country’s reliance on wind and solar. The only question is how long it will take (and what we’ll lose as many of our leaders dither). As the Sierra Club works hard to stop the worst of the worst, we have to fight equally hard to promote the best of the best, starting with energy efficiency and moving on to the range of renewables, from responsibly sited wind and solar projects to distributed generation in communities across the country.

During the transition from old to new, we acknowledge that some fuels will remain in use, even though they should have no place in our long-term energy vision.

Several years ago the Sierra Club, using its standard democratic processes and taking into account the best scientific evidence, acknowledged that natural gas will be part of the transition from far dirtier energy sources—particularly coal—to a clean-energy future (http://bit.ly/SCnaturalgaspolicy). This policy was born of the Club’s realization that the threat of climate disruption is severe and that we need an immediate solution to get off coal on a massive scale.

A commitment to problem solving is one of our organization’s great strengths. The responsible use of natural gas will help the nation address the complex problem of climate change, but only if we do it right.

See Natural Gas on page 7
sparrow that cannot continue to exist without large expanses of native tallgrass prairie in an original state. Further, it is a significant corridor for migrating shorebirds such as the American golden plover, the buff-breasted sand-piper, and the upland sandpiper.

Yes, several species are declining because of habitat fragmentation, excessive (annual) range burning practices, and more intensive grazing pressure. Many ranchers employ a range management practice called Intensive Early Stocking. That's when, in early spring of each year, entire ranches in the Flint Hills are burned at the same time so grassland birds like the Greater Prairie Chicken can find no place to successfully breed.

Beginning in the mid-19th century, cattlemen understood that the richness of the Flint Hills grasses depended on a good spring burn—something they learned from the Native Americans. Fire still thrives in the Flint Hills because the ranchers, and others using the land, know that the natural ecosystem depends on fire.

19th century cattlemen may have copied the Native Americans, but today's ranchers have gone far beyond that. There is no precedent for the wholesale annual burning of the Flint Hills, and it is certainly not a tradition to be revered. See also the answer to finding # 2 above.

Ranchers, landowners, and conservation groups use prescribed burns to mimic the seasonal fires that have shaped the tallgrass prairie for thousands of years. Areas not burned for several years develop mature grasses and thicker, thatch-like vegetation, which habitat is preferred by invasive species. Substantially false. Current burning methods throughout the Flint Hills do not mimic natural burning or traditional rotational burning techniques. Only a few ranchers and conservation groups are using the rotational “patch” or “mosaic” burning technique that protects wildlife while at the same time preventing invasive plant species.

The Flint Hills Region is one of the few places in the United States where the prevailing agricultural system works essentially in tandem with an ancestral native ecosystem, preserving most of its complexity and the dynamic processes that helped shape it.

Completely false. Ranching today in most of the Flint Hills is a broad-scale industrial activity that is damaging on many levels. Scientists agree that it is responsible for the decline of the Greater Prairie Chicken and other grassland birds. This excessive burning and stocking system is so vast that it has caused exceedances of the ozone air quality standard at monitors in Kansas City, Wichita and/or Topeka in three of the past eight years. It is estimated that some 70% of the Flint Hills is owned by outside investors.

Due to the uniqueness of the Flint Hills tallgrass prairie and the historic manner in which the tallgrass prairie has been managed by fire, existing prescribed burn practices should be allowed to continue and ambient air data resulting from fires used to manage the Flint Hills tallgrass prairie should be not be included in determinations of compliance with the Clean Air Act.

Absurd. It is completely unnecessary to exempt current burning practices in the Flint Hills from the Clean Air Act. The USEPA and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment are currently working with all stakeholders on a Smoke Management Plan to mitigate the problem. The simple answer is for Flint Hills Ranchers to switch to alternate burning practices. HR 5118 is special interest politics at its worst.

New website feature. The Kansas Chapter has sent a letter of objection to Rep. Henry Waxman, Chairman, House Energy and Commerce Committee, whose committee will be handling this bill. We are also setting up a button on the home page of our website to closely track this issue and to post facts that will correct misinformation from Kansas livestock interests and their political supporters.

Take Action: Please write or call the Chairman of the House Energy & Commerce Committee, Mr. Henry A. Waxman’s office and call your Representative in Congress to tell them that you are tired of breathing pollution every spring from the wholesale burning of the Flint Hills just so ranchers and their investors can make a few extra bucks off their beef at the feedlot gate. The USEPA and KDHE are already working on a smoke management plan to help with this problem, so there is no need for Congress to intervene.

contact info:
Rep. Henry A. Waxman
Chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D. C. 20515
202-225-2927

Burning, continued from page 1
We must be clear that energy efficiency, distributed solar and wind, and appropriately sited large-scale wind, solar and geothermal projects are true clean-energy solutions and should be at the front of the line for new energy investments. Indeed, it is a priority for the Club to build a package of grassroots campaigns so that we can more effectively build a movement and make dramatic progress at the local, state and federal levels to stabilize energy demand and create a larger share of the pie for clean energy.

We must also wrestle with the environmental challenges raised by the use of natural gas. Modern natural gas production techniques can cause significant environmental damage, and the risks are multiplied by the increasing use of hydraulic fracturing (“fracking”) technology that allows for recovery of gas from deep in shale formations. Expanded natural gas production without adequate regulation has led to serious problems, from fouled well water in Wyoming, to polluted rivers in the Northeast, to air-pollution in Texas. These problems are exacerbated by legal loopholes that exempt the industry from basic environmental laws, by outdated state regulations that do not fully control modern gas-production practices, and by the limited capacity of authorities to enforce those laws on the books.

A volunteer-led task force has developed a policy calling for the strict regulation of natural gas fracturing (http://bit.ly/frackingpolicy). Among the types of drilling projects the Club opposes are those in which the contents of fracturing fluids are not disclosed to the public or contain an unacceptable toxic risk, and those that fail to protect drinking and surface water or violate air-quality standards.

To implement this policy, the Club recently formed the Hydraulic Fracture Implementation Task Force and the Hydrofracking Team on the Activist Network (http://bit.ly/activistnetworkgasfrack). The task force is developing model regulatory standards based on detailed best management practices, overseeing an effort to push for them in pilot states, and guiding the identification of areas that should be off-limits to natural gas production. It has already worked with chapters and coalition partners to submit extensive technical and legal comments on numerous state and federal regulatory proposals governing natural gas production. It has also joined with several groups to form a team of attorneys and experts to develop model regulations. The growing team will include engineering, hydrology and toxicology specialists and other technical experts.

Grassroots advocacy for natural gas regulation is essential. That’s why we’re launching a natural gas campaign to coordinate hard-hitting efforts across the country to make sure that this industry is regulated and using best practices. Watch for upcoming opportunities to get involved.

I applaud the excellent work our chapters and activists have already done, and I encourage those of you involved in these efforts to keep pushing for environmental safeguards.

Doing sophisticated campaign work on efficiency and renewables is critical to our success. Getting it right on natural gas is also essential as we move toward a clean-energy future. The Sierra Club has experienced tremendous success in recent years in our efforts to reduce the carbon dioxide emissions that cause climate disruption. Securing major improvements in natural gas extraction practices and regulation is a top priority. I’m looking forward to working with you to get this crucial work done.

I welcome your feedback and ideas. To let me know what you think please visit: www.sierraclub.org/ed/memos And next Monday, June 7, at 5 p.m. Pacific, I will host a call with all volunteers and staff to talk about our natural gas campaign and policies and answer questions (1 866-501-6174; Code 223-9223#).

Sierra Club at the Lawrence Sidewalk Sale

July 15, Thursday, 6:00 a.m. to noon
8th and Massachusetts in front of Central National Bank

Your chance to pick up cool Sierra Club merchandise!

T-shirts, bags, cards, and more

Your purchases support the Kansas Chapter AND help advertise the Sierra Club to one and all

Declare you’re green in a red state!
Thinking Through Our Energy Options

By Philip M. Knighton, MS Geology, JD

By The Sierra Club, of which I’ve been a member for many years, is somewhat of a microcosm of today’s society as a whole in its divisiveness over issues regarding energy. Let me explain. I have been unable to get published my observations on energy policy from both the “conventional” news establishment and the “environmental” mainstream…of which Sierra is a part. It seems no one wants to stray from their position to look at the whole of the picture to get to where we want to be. Old myths and old hardened positions are steadfastly held, without an in-depth look at what we are doing or its practicality. It is very frustrating to a “senior” who knows that a lifetime of experience is ignored because hard core positions held by persons who are more interested in the fight…and winning…than the solutions.

A prime example is the current embracing of nuclear power over fossil fuels by the environmental movements. In an article by Paul Rauber, “Reconsidering the nuclear option,” January/February 2007, found on the Sierra Club website, I think illustrates what I am talking about. Yes one can argue cost, waste and safety problems with nuclear power. As significant as these issues may be, they are immaterial to a larger issue. The facts is: we simply don’t have enough mineable uranium in the USA to run the plants we now have. Maybe I should repeat that about five times so it sinks in. (see article next page)

So what does it seem to me that we do? Basically the government, the politicians, the environmental movements have an answer: ignore the problem…therefore it doesn’t exist if we don’t talk about it. This useful approach works with the justifications for wars, health care legislation…whatever.

As an old geologist who has worked with uranium deposits, this is mindlessly and wildly stupid. If we ignore the resource base facts, what are our options? First answer: import it…sounds a bit like oil however the importation of which is bankrupting our nation. And imports are unlikely as a solution because much of the world’s known mineable uranium is committed to other nation’s power plants. Second answer: Assume we’ll find more, or mine extremely low concentration deposits? Maybe, but at what cost? And strip mining extremely low concentration deposits like the Chattanooga shale in eastern Tennessee does present some problems, like the folks living there not wanting to move or the amounts of water and energy that would take…well, I deem that option highly speculative. I’ve even seen speculation that there’s endless supplies of uranium in sea water…at such low concentrations I can only imagine the cost if the technology exist to remove it. All of this is speculation compounded on speculation. It is a fantasy that would make Steven Spielberg blush.

Do we really want to lead America into a devastatingly short sided energy policy to build more nuclear power plants when we are 50% short of having supplies to run the one’s we have (see article next page with references).

We have wind and solar photovoltaic options that I embrace. We also have conventional fuels like natural gas in abundance. Currently natural gas is 1/3rd the cost of oil per MMBtu’s. That’s way undervalued compared to equivalent oil cost per MMBtu. These resources need to be used to transition into wind and solar energy systems. That’s my belief. Oil is too valuable for non-convertible energy uses such as certain transportation needs, petrochemicals (plastics, paint, etc.) and road materials (asphalt).

This transition period will take a lot of time. Instead of a rational plan, the Obama administration is intent on stopping all drilling in the continental USA. Sec. Geithner testified to congress this is because fossil fuels are causing global warming. They want to shut down all drilling by removing the tax structure (intangible drilling cost deductions and percentage depletion deductions) that brings in risk capital to drill with. We drill with about 90% outside risk capital from investors. This will in fact shut us down overnight. It won’t stop folks from using oil; it will just increase imports. As a major effect it will devastate many state budgets since they live off the sales tax, income tax and severance taxes that new wells generate, as well as the local counties that levy a substantial property tax on producing leases. Kansas alone with its 6.5 billion annual budget (recently reduced to 5.5 billion by the economic downturn), will lose another 342 million per year in lost revenues. Kansas is just a minor player in the domestic oil industry. California, Illinois, Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Arkansas, New York, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Kentucky, Mississippi, Colorado, Montana, Nebraska, Wyoming, Utah, New Mexico and on and on… All these states will get hit. This will make State governments less interested in spending money on supporting solar and wind installations with tax credits and aid. There will be a 100,000 jobs lost nationwide as we lay down all our drilling rigs, causing more pressure on reduced state resources. Education, conservation, environmental improvement and wildlife programs are taking the hit now and it will get worse.

Again we are not thinking these things through, just like the nuclear option. We need these jobs and tax revenues to make an orderly transition into a truly clean energy future. It would be better I think, to try to decrease the need for oil and gas by conservation and development of better ways to generate

See Energy Options on page 11
Is Nuclear Power Part of the Energy Solution?

By Philip M. Knighton, MS Geology, JD

We don’t have enough uranium resources in the USA to run the power plants we have.

How can I say this? I used to manage uranium leases and as a geologist have worked with uranium resources. The principal source of information is the United States Geological Survey (USGS) who keeps track of uranium resources. Examine these resource figures and then use a little simple math that we all learned in about the second grade. The answer is obvious.

In 1978 when Wolf Creek Nuclear Power Generating Station near Burlingame, Kansas, was built we had 640,000 tons of mineable uranium oxide (yellowcake) in America. It takes 5000 tons per 1000 megawatt (MW) sized plant for its 30-year design life assuming 20% uranium being recovered from spent fuel rods. That would have been enough for 128 plants (640,000/5000). But the fuel rods are not being reprocessed for economic reasons. So, we really need about 6000 tons per 1000 MW reactor per 30 year design life…thus enough for 106 such plants (640,000/6000). We have 104 plants operating. As that high pitched salesman on TV says, “But wait there’s more…,” we have extended the design life of these plants by regulatory fiat to 40 years. So you need a third more which I saw recently on TV, a group of Republicans suggesting 100 more nuclear power plants as a solution to global warming and avoiding the proposed carbon credit legislation. John McCain was saying we should build 45 or so new nuclear plants during his campaign. Obama wants more. Where do they think we’d get uranium for even considering nuclear power as an option for our energy future? Maybe we should invade Canada or Australia and take theirs. Be easy…neither has much of an army and we do speak the language (except in eastern Canada). Iran has uranium. So does Angola. Targets? Oh well, I’m joking but with even the environmentalist movements are coming around to supporting more nuclear power plants, the pressure is still on to consider building more. So, what will we do…import it if we can, just like oil, if anyone has any to spare. It doesn’t take a Ph.D. to figure the price of uranium will skyrocket.

Nuclear industrial group websites often project “we’ll find more,” based on a comparison with estimates that we’d exhaust oil and gas resources long ago. No, we won’t find much more in the USA. Uranium is radioactive (unlike oil and gas) and thus it is relatively easy to locate. We did that in the late 1950’s for weapons. Airborne scintillometer surveys can locate it at depth. No, we won’t strip mine the eastern half of Tennessee for lower grade deposits in the Chattanooga Shale (hundreds of times lower grade) for obvious reasons—cost, water and the folks who live there won’t like that idea. No we probably won’t process seawater for the unbelievably low concentrations there. No, we won’t import it as most of the World’s supplies are committed to other nation’s nuclear power plants. Even if it were available at a price, the “import” solution sounds a little like our current oil situation doesn’t it.

The simple truth is in the USGS uranium resource estimates. Politicians whose principle source of information is industrial lobbyist for plant builders, and environmentalist blinded by concerns about carbon dioxide, all aside, we don’t have enough uranium to run the plants we have. Why build more.

There’s also the direct heating of the atmosphere to consider. We really only have three readily available alternatives. Wind, solar and the wise use of our remaining oil and gas deposits. I’m on the fence on coal. I have yet to see “clean coal” more than a drawing board concept. Perhaps it can be part of the mix, but at a price. Solar photovoltaics have the advantage of being generated near the point of use, to wit: the rooftops of our factories and homes. Photovoltaics and wind are heat neutral. They generate no carbon dioxide and no heat is vented to the atmosphere generating it. If we are generating with coal, oil or gas, about 70% to 90% of the heat from burning the fuel goes directly to the atmosphere. What is the hot button issue again…global warming?

The EIA (Energy Information Agency-footnote 2 below), unlike the USGS (United States Geological Survey) estimates we had some 445,000 tons in 2003 of mineable uranium. Still that isn’t enough for our reactors with extended 40-year design lives. And, in my opinion their estimates are largely undocumented.

I saw recently on TV, a group of Republicans suggesting 100 more nuclear power plants as a solution to global warming and avoiding the proposed carbon credit legislation. John McCain was saying we should build 45 or so new nuclear plants during his campaign. Obama wants more. Where do they think we’d get uranium for even considering nuclear power as an option for our energy future? Maybe we should

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<th>No. Spent Rod Recovery</th>
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Glass Recycling Just Got a Lot Easier in KC

From Mid-America Regional Council’s ReNews

Where can I recycle glass? That question is no longer hard to answer thanks to Ripple Glass.

Ripple Glass, a new recycling business in Kansas City, Mo., has placed more than 60 glass recycling containers throughout the metro area making it more convenient for residents to recycle their glass. The 30-yard purple containers accept unsorted green, brown, blue and clear food and beverage containers. The district supported this project with district grant funds for 40 containers and marketing.

Each container is hosted by a local public or private entity.

“Hosts are enthusiastic and it is a positive experience for them,” says Stacia Stelk, Ripple Glass’ executive director. “Their employees and customers are thrilled to have convenient access to glass recycling.”

One of the biggest challenges facing the program is contamination. When people bring their glass in a bag or container, they should dump the glass into the bin and cake the bag or container with them. Other types of glass like plate glass (windows), mirrors, ceramics, and dishes are designed with different properties and are not accepted.

In the near future, Ripple Glass will start collecting glass from bars and restaurants. In the meantime, they need help promoting the program.

“All you have to do is email, blog, tweet and friend us to help spread the word” says Stelk.

The company has also created durable plastic home collection bins available for purchase at area Price Chopper stores for $4.99.

For more information, visit: www.rippleglasskc.com or contact Stacia Stelk at (816) 221-4527 or stacia@rippleglasskc.com.

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Electronics Waste Recycling Proves Popular With Public

from Mid-America Regional Council’s ReNews

The most popular request on the district’s recycling information line is for electronics recycling. While several businesses offer drop-off services in the metro area, an e-waste collection event can provide individuals with more convenient access.

Last year, the district worked with local governments, non-profit organizations and businesses to coordinate five collection events. These events were extremely successful and patrons at every event asked, “When will you do this again?” The events served over 1,000 cars as residents dropped off several tons of computers, monitors, televisions, and other types of electronics to be recycled. All materials were reclaimed under environmentally responsible practices certified by the Basel Action Network, a global environmental justice organization. Costs for responsibly managing these materials are covered in the fees collected from participants.

In addition, the cost to host an event can be reasonable especially if partnerships are pursued. Some event necessities are a feasible site location, volunteers, food for event workers, a dumpster for trash generated during the event and a canopy tent. Sharing resources among partners has proved to be a successful method for keeping costs low and event logistics manageable.

To find out more about how to organize a collection event, including available electronic recycling vendors, contact Nadja Karpilow at (816) 701-8226 or karpilow@marc.org.
electricity. Every barrel of imports we can eliminate makes us more energy secure. Eliminating domestically produced oil only increases our dependence. My hope is to see imports reduced by conservation and conversion to non-fossil fueled electric generation (wind and solar). Killing our domestic oil and gas drilling industry does nothing to solve the problem. It is the most classic “shooting ourselves in the foot” I’ve seen in a lifetime.

Lastly, I think I need to mention something that is an overlooked fact about all conventional electric generation sources. This is critical when we consider future energy sources, particularly the “clean coal” arguments. Fact: all fuels generate heat to make steam and turn a turbine to generate electricity. Most of that heat goes to the atmosphere...about 90% of it. We are talking about global warming here aren’t we? Only wind and solar photovoltaics are heat neutral to the atmosphere in that they don’t generate any heat. To me, looking at the nighttime pictures of the lights on earth should be telling us how much heat we are throwing to the atmosphere every day by generating electricity with fossil fuels and nuclear power. Yes, nuclear is another huge heat generator what vents tremendous amounts of heat, although no carbon dioxide “stack gasses.” I haven’t seen any calculations quantifying the calcification of the atmosphere by conventional electric generation. I hope some reader will know how to do this. It must be huge.

Think about it…why waste resources building somewhat cleaner nuclear electric generation system when we don’t have fuel for the nuclear plants we have? This is so basic, it would seem hard to ignore. Why are we arguing safety, waste problems, and accident risk when this is a “killer” issue? Yet I am sure not getting through to the decision makers or press as a whole. Amazing!

**Nuclear, continued from page 9**

fuels and nuclear, three kilowatts of electricity for each one consumed because of line losses in transmission. That’s a huge amount of heat to the atmosphere, let alone from another 100 nuclear power plants.

We have to get smart and look at the hard cold facts and goals whether it be to reduce global warming, provide power or simply the practical aspects of what will really be usable. Our economy is too fragile to make the wrong decisions at this point. Our children and grandchildren's future in a free and bountiful nation is literally as stake with our energy decisions made today. Look at the facts and tell the single minded simplistic solution folks what your find.

Philip M. Knighton, MS Geology, JD
3711 Amidon
Wichita, KS 67204
(316) 838-5936

2.www.eia.doe.gov/cneaf/nuclear/page/reserves/ures.html

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**It Ain’t Over!**  
(Yes, Holcomb still looms on the horizon)

The Kansas Legislature recently tried to bar the Environmental Protection Agency from regulating carbon emissions in Kansas. Only a line-item veto by the Governor prevented this disaster.

Cattle, farm, and oil industries want free rein to make Kansas an open sewer for their waste and by-products – **and they have the money and lobbyists to make it happen!**

Every seat in the Kansas House of Representatives and the Governor’s office are up for election this year.

**It’s time to send legislators to Topeka who care about our environment!**

**Support the Kansas Chapter’s Political Action Committee!**

Make your check to the Kansas Sierra Club PAC and mail it to the PAC Treasurer:
Gary Anderson
5240 Decatur Rd.
Meriden, KS 66512

**Contributions or gifts to the Sierra Club Kansas Chapter PAC are not tax-deductible and will be used to support state, county, and municipal candidates.**
Kanza Silent Auction
Fundraiser Fun &
Success
Coral, Coal, and Climate Change: The Kansas Connection

By Craig Wolfe, Silent Auction Chair

The Kanza Group again held its 2010 Silent Auction on May 15 for the third year at the Lenexa Conference Center. The theme this year focused on our oceans, how coal links to their decline, and how coral serves as the “canary in the coal mine” to warn us of our actions.

Our oceans, as we now tragically know, are in deep trouble with the crisis in the gulf. And, in turn, we ourselves are in deep trouble. It is now incumbent upon each of us to turn this ship around.

Our speaker this year was Dr. Judy Lang (M.S., Ph.D., Yale University), a coral reef scientist and educator whose expertise is recognized world-wide, will make the connection between our own survival and coral reefs. We were provided the added treat of readings from Kansas Poet Laureate Caryn Mirriam-Goldberg.

Our excellent food and wine this year was again coordinated by Elaine Giessel along with her most excellent Food Committee. Of course it goes without saying that many, many volunteers, individuals, and businesses contributed countless hours of time and effort to make this year’s Silent Auction another great success.
Award winner for the Teddy Roosevelt People's Conservation Award Rep. Dennis Moore with Steve Baru and wife (and candidate) Stephanie Moore

Award Winner Marty Kraft - Heartland All Species Project for the Lifetime Achievement Award

Award Winner Joe Spease for the Rutherford B. Hayes Award

Award Winners Linda and Lisa Meisinger Eco-Advocacy Award: “You Can’t Railroad Us!” with Gretchen standing in.

Award Winner Doug Stecklein for Volunteer of the Year “Bright Idea” Award

Chet McLaughlin in deep discussion with speaker Dr. Judy Lang

Beyond Coal Campaign staffer Stephanie Cole with Development Director Lynate Pettengil

Silent Auction lovers checking out the photo gallery.
Thank You to our Sponsors who Directly Contributed
Baru Financial Services (Steve Baru)  Mike & Pam Miller
Bruce Durkee  Steve & Jennifer Hassler
Craig Volland & Anne Allegre  Tim & Peg Liebert
George & Mary Helen Korbelik  Toby Grotz & Kathryn Bradley
James & Rebecca Graham

Thank You to our Exhibiting Businesses
Anthony Plumbing Heating & Cooling
Decent Energy
The Hayes Company
Hen House Market

Thank You to our Donating Businesses and Individuals
Accentricities  Jaegerz Paintball & Laser Tag (from Carol Johnson)
American Jazz Museum  James & Rebecca Graham
Anthony Plumbing Heating & Cooling  Jamie Wolfe Skating Instruction
Aronson Massage  Jazz District Redevelopment Corporation
B. Adams, Photographer  Jeff Horn
Backwoods  Jim “Mr. Stinky Feet” Cosgrove, Hiccup Productions Inc.
Barbara Brewer  JoCo County Commissioner Annabeth Surbaugh
B-Bop Comics  Judith Zivanovic
Blue Room  Kansas City Renaissance Festival
Bob Sommer  Kansas City Symphony
Backwoods  Kay Young Glassware
Barbara Brewer  Kevin Sink Photography
BodyWorks Massage Therapy  Meyer Therapeutic Massage
JoCo County  Midland Radio
Charlotte Weber  My Favorite Things
Coleman Company, Inc  National WWI Museum at Liberty Memorial
Decent Energy Inc.  NaturaLawn of America
Dolpin Song  Negro Leagues Baseball Museum
Dragon Inn Restaurant  New Day Yoga Studio - Jim Graham
Euston Hardware  New Day Yoga Studio - Vlad Rangotchev
Family Tree Nursery  Odyssey Painting Inc.
Fine Arts Theatres  Performing Arts Series at Johnson County Community College
First Watch  Pizza Fusion
Friends of Chamber Music  Prairie Life Fitness
Friends of the Kaw  Prospero’s Books
Heritage Cleaners  Quality Hill Playhouse
Holy-Field Vineyard  RevoCup
& Winery  Rostberg Chiropractic & Acupuncture
Home  Salsa Grill
Performance Services  Starbucks
Suburban Lawn & Garden  Strawberry Hill Povitica
The Raven Book Store  Suburban Lawn & Garden
Tom & Mary Thompson  Toon Shop
Unicorn Theatre  Tom & Mary Thompson
Verna Voss  Toon Shop
Whole Foods  Unicorn Theatre
Wild Birds Unlimited  Verna Voss
Yoga School of Therapeutics  Whole Foods
Wakarusa Chair, Carey Maynard-Moody, shows a group how to make newspaper pots at the 2010 Lawrence Earth Day celebration in South Park.

As part of the 2010 Lawrence Earth Day celebration, the Wakarusa group partnered with Vinland Valley Nursery to sell native plants and promote water conservation.

Jeanette Klumm, Lawrence Utilities Programs Manager, led members and friends of the Wakarusa Group on tours of the Waste Water Treatment and Kaw River Water Treatment Plants on April 24th. This was the final event in the Wakarusa Group’s spring series, Be Water Wise.

Members and friends of the Wakarusa Group learn about Lawrence drinking water during a guided tour of the Kaw River Water Treatment Plant.

Topeka Group to Tour Landfill Gas-To-Energy Facility

On January 20, 2010, Waste Management, Inc. announced the start up of its new landfill gas to energy (LFGTE) facility at the Rolling Meadows recycling and disposal facility. The Rolling Meadows facility will produce clean, renewable power for Westar Energy, Inc., which will purchase the energy from Waste Management for Westar customers. This new facility is open for tours by appointment.

A previously scheduled tour in March had to be canceled, but a new tour date has been scheduled: Saturday, July 31 at 10:00 a.m. Waste Management will provide us with comfortable tour buses, and take us to the gas plant, where we will see it in operation. Our Waste Management hosts will then give us a tour of the landfill, itself, so that we can see how it is operated. Please note that because of security concerns, photographs of the facilities will not be allowed.

We will car pool and meet at the Topeka and Shawnee County Library parking lot (south end) at 9:45 a.m.

If driving directly, meet at the main office of the Rolling Meadows Recycling & Disposal Facility, 7351 NW Highway 75 (approximately 5 miles north of Topeka), at 10:00 a.m.

Questions? Email Topeka Group Outings Chair Paul Post at paulpost@paulpost.com or by call (785) 354-1972.
### Chapter Executive Committee

**Officers, Committee Chairs**

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

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### Flint Hills Group (Manhattan Area)

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### Kanza Group (Kansas City)

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### Southwind Group (Wichita)

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### Topeka Group

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</table>
Kanza Group (Kansas City)

June 8. 6:30 pm.
To Bee or Not To Bee

6:30 pm - Come early, and we will have $1 per slice pizza from Wheat State Pizza plus other goodies, along with good conversation followed by our program. Bring your own mug for drinks and for the Ugly Mug Contest.

7:00 pm - Bees are in serious and dramatic decline. The reasons are considered to be many, but the precise cause and the solution remains a mystery. Without the honey bee, much of our agricultural crops will be devastated. Come and find out more.

Where - Overland Park Lutheran Church, 7810 W. 79th Street. 8 blocks west of ‘Metcalf’ at Lowell. Park on north side.
Directions: www.kansas.sierraclub.org/kanzdirec___ions.htm.
Contact - Craig Wolfe, (913) 299-4443, info@kansas.sierraclub.org

Kanza Group (Kansas City)

July 13. 6:30 pm.
MetroGreen - The Paths of Outdoor Kansas City

6:30 pm - Come early, and we will have $1 per slice pizza, plus other goodies, along with good conversation followed by our program. Bring your own mug for drinks and for the Ugly Mug Contest.

7:00 pm - The MARC project MetroGreen, an interconnected system of public and private natural areas, greenways and trails linking communities throughout the Kansas City metropolitan area, will present The Paths of Outdoor Kansas City. The 1,144-mile greenway plan covers Leavenworth, Johnson and Wyandotte counties in Kansas and Cass, Clay, Jackson and Platte counties in Missouri. Discussed will be the 200 plus existing and the 100 planned miles.

Where - Overland Park Lutheran Church, 7810 W. 79th Street. 8 blocks west of ‘Metcalf’ at Lowell. Park on north side.
Directions: at www.kansas.sierraclub.org/kanzdirec___ions.htm.
Contact - Craig Wolfe, (913) 299-4443, info@kansas.sierraclub.org

Southwind Group (Wichita)

General Information
Southwind Group General Meetings (Wichita) are held the second Friday of each month at The Great Plains Nature Center, 29th N at Woodlawn, Wichita. Social hour with pizza and pop at 6:30 p.m., announcements of local events 7:00 p.m., programs begin at 7:30 p.m.. Bill Cather (316) 522-4741, bill.cather@kansas.sierraclub.org

Topeka Group

June 22. 6:00 pm.
Census of Marine Life
What Lives in our Oceans and Where
6:00 p.m. Coffee and Conversation.
7:00 pm - Dr. Daphne Fautin of KU will talk about the status of the world’s oceans and the marine census.
Where - Unitarian Universalist Fellowship Church, 4775 SW 21st St
Contact - Gary Anderson, (785) 246-3229; gjanderson1963@ksbroadband.net

Topeka Group

July 27, 6:00 pm.
Annual Movie Night
6:00 p.m. “Coffee, Food and Conversation”
7:00 p.m. Our Annual “Movie Night” featuring a topical film of interest to our members. Please email me your suggestions.
Where: Unitarian Universalist Fellowship Church, 4775 SW 21st Street.
Contact: Gary Anderson, (785) 246-3229; gjanderson1963@hotmail.com

Topeka Group

August 24, 6:00 pm.
Nancy Jackson, Executive Director, Climate and Energy Project
6:00 p.m. “Coffee, Food and Conversation”
7:00 p.m. Nancy will present on a series of Energy issues. She is working with the Heartland Alliance for Regional Transmission in efforts to promote electric transmission lines expansion to serve our Kansas renewable energy needs. She will explain Federal, State and local issues. She is also involved in the hearings and work at the KCC on the tariff being drafted to implement the energy legislation that was passed by the 2009 Kansas legislature. She is also working on Energy Efficiency measures and legislation involving CURB and PACE and will elaborate on future developments.
Where: Unitarian Universalist Fellowship Church, 4775 SW 21st Street.
Contact: Gary Anderson, (785) 246-3229; gjanderson1963@hotmail.com

Wakarusa Group (Lawrence)

We are always looking for members who are willing to commit time to orchestrating fun, educational events geared toward a positive environmental impact. Please contact us if interested! Melissa Rogers. (785) 764-0826. mmrogers816@gmail.com
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.

Hike, Lee’s Summit, MO
Make time for a nice hike through flat grass and wooded hill trails with 2 creek crossings. We’ll hike about 5 miles & finish with a brown bag lunch. Bring food to share; we’ll eat back at trail head. Educational. $5 donation for expenses. Kanza. Tom Kutscher, (913) 383-9351, TomKutscher@aol.com

Join us at the south shelter in Chisholm Creek Park. Southwind. Dave Kirkbride, (316) 522-4741, david.kirkbride@kansas.sierraclub.org

[2] June 14. 5:30 pm. Southwind at Caffé Moderne
Drinks and Conversation at the Café Moderne, 300 block of Mead in Old Town. Southwind. Dave Kirkbride, (316) 522-4741, david.kirkbride@kansas.sierraclub.org

[2] Jul 12. 5:30 pm. Southwind at Caffé Moderne,
Drinks and Conversation at the Cafe Moderne, 300 block of Mead in Old Town. Southwind. Dave Kirkbride, (316) 522-4741, david.kirkbride@kansas.sierraclub.org

[1] Jul 31. 10:00 am. Tour the Waste Management Landfill to Gas Energy Facility (rescheduled from March)
On January 20, 2010, Waste Management, Inc. announced the start up of its new landfill gas to energy (LFGTE) facility at the Rolling Meadows recycling and disposal facility. The Rolling Meadows facility will produce clean, renewable power for use by customers of Westar Energy, Inc., who purchase the energy from Waste Management. We will car pool and meet at the Topeka and Shawnee County Library parking lot(south end) at 9:45 am. If driving directly, meet at the main office of the Rolling Meadows Recycling & Disposal Facility, 7351 NW Highway 75 (approximately 5 miles north of Topeka). Topeka. Paul Post, (785) 354-1972, paulpost@paulpost.com

The Outings Committee is finalizing their schedule of outings as the Planet Kansas goes to press. Go to www.Kansas.SierraClub.org and click on “hikes, meetings, calendar” on the left menu to see the Kanza Group outings list when they are available.
Committee Meetings

Kanza Group
(Kansas City)

Executive Committee
Jun 24, Jul 22 - 7:00 pm,
Steve Baru, (913) 814-0583,
steve.baru@sierraclub.org

Joint Action Committee
Jun 24, Jul 22 - 7:00 pm,
Conservation, legislative, and political
Craig Lubow, (913) 299-6620,
craig.lubow@kansas.sierraclub.org

Southwind Group
(Wichita)

Executive and Fundraising Committee
June 8 - 6:00 pm
Equity Bank Building
Dave Kirkbride, (316) 655-8299,
david.kirkbride@kansas.sierraclub.org

Conservation Committee
Jun 15, Jul 20 - 6:30 pm
5825 Memphis St, Bel AireWichita.
Ellie Skokan, (316) 744-0033
ellie_skokan@yahoo.com

Wakarusa Group
(Lawrence)

Executive Committee Planning
TBA - 7:00 pm
Location TBA. Carey Maynard-Moody,
(785) 842-6517,
carey_mm@kansas.sierraclub.org

Conservation Committee
Contact Carey Maynard-Moody,
(785) 842-6517,
carey_mm@kansas.sierraclub.org

Topeka Group, ExCom meets quarterly, TBA. Gary Anderson, (785) 246-3229, gjanderson1963@ksbroadband.net

Energy Committee, TBA, Phil Morse (785) 273-3614, p.morse@sbcglobal.net

Pearl Harbor, continued from page 3

that Climate Change, habitat collapse, and scores of other looming environmental disasters actually could be a harbinger of very very tough times for our stupid little species.

Hopefully, Obama is plotting to make this his moment of change. Clearly, he must know that this, our largest made-made environmental disaster, will be the test that the world and history will use to judge him. But, just to be sure, you and I must make certain that the loss of life of coal workers and oil workers cannot stand. The loss of an entire way of life for the gulf states cannot stand. And, yes, the loss of the innocents of wildlife cannot stand.

The horror has now begun. We are watching it from our comfortable living room chairs. However, I am sure that you, like me, are not very comfortable right now. That's good. We need to finally be uncomfortable. We need to feel desperate. We need to feel like there must be something we can do. We need to stand up and do something out of character for us. We need to make sure that President Obama, the U.S. Senate and House, the Kansas Senate and House, and all our government officials finally know that it is us... our species... that has led us to this sad day. We need to make sure that they know that it is us who demand a different path, a different way. It is up to us.

This is our Pearl Harbor. This is our wake up call. Those of us who have not taken a stand need to join the growing throngs that are shocked by what our policies and wrong-headed priorities have wrought. We need to demand of ourselves to make a difference.

The answers are simple, and the answers are hard, but we really have no choice. We now need to demand the long and arduous trek to a clean and renewable energy world. We need to incentivize the correct behaviors and penalize the bad behaviors.

The horror has begun. We will be watching it unfold in the gulf for years and years. Now, it is time for us to say, “I’ll change it!”
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 13, Outings page 14, and Committee Meetings page 15. For the latest update on events, go to www.kansas.sierraclub.org/EventsSearch.htm.

CM Jun 6. 6:00 pm. Southwind ExCom Meeting. Southwind. Dave Kirkbride, (316) 522-4741, david.kirkbride@kansas.sierraclub.org
Out Jun 6. James A. Reed Wildlife Area Day Hike, Lee’s Summit, MO. Kanza. Tom Kutscher, (913) 383-9351, TomKutscher@aol.com
GM Jun 8. 6:30 pm. To Bee or Not To Bee. Kanza. Craig Wolfe, (913) 299-4443, info@kansas.sierraclub.org
Out Jun 11. 6:30 pm. Southwind Annual Potluck Picnic. Southwind. Dave Kirkbride, (316) 522-4741, david.kirkbride@kansas.sierraclub.org
Out June 14. 5:30 pm. Southwind at Caffé Moderne. Southwind. Dave Kirkbride, (316) 522-4741, david.kirkbride@kansas.sierraclub.org
CM Jun 15. 6:30 pm. Conservation Committee. Southwind. Ellie Skokan, (316) 744-0033, ellie_skokan@yahoo.com
GM Jun 22. 6:00 pm. Census of Marine Life - What Lives in our Oceans and Where. Topeka. Gary Anderson, (785) 246-3229; gjanderson1963@ksbroadband.net
GM Jun 22. 6:00 pm. Oceans and the census of marine life. Topeka. Gary Anderson, (785) 246-3229; gjanderson1963@ksbroadband.net
CM Jun 24. 7:00 pm. Kanza ExCom meeting. Kanza. Steve Baru, (913) 814-0583, steve.baru@sierraclub.org
CM Jun 24. 7:00 pm. Conservation and Joint Action Committee. Kanza. Craig Lubow, (913) 299-6620, craig.lubow@kansas.sierraclub.org
Out Jul 12. 5:30 pm. Southwind at Caffé Moderne. Southwind. Dave Kirkbride, (316) 522-4741, david.kirkbride@kansas.sierraclub.org
GM Jul 13. 6:30 pm. MetroGreen - The Paths of Outdoor Kansas City. Kanza. Craig Wolfe, (913) 299-4443, info@kansas.sierraclub.org
CM Jul 20. 6:30 pm. Conservation Committee. Southwind. Ellie Skokan, (316) 744-0033, ellie_skokan@yahoo.com
CM Jul 22. 7:00 pm. Conservation and Joint Action Committee. Kanza. Craig Lubow, (913) 299-6620, craig.lubow@kansas.sierraclub.org
CM Jul 22. 7:00 pm. Kanza ExCom meeting. Kanza. Steve Baru, (913) 814-0583, steve.baru@sierraclub.org
GM Jul 27. 6:00 pm. Annual Movie Night. Topeka. Gary Anderson, (785) 246-3229; gjanderson1963@ksbroadband.net
Out Jul 31. 10:00 am. Tour the Waste Management Landfill to Gas Energy Facility (rescheduled from March). Topeka. Paul Post, (785) 354-1972, paulpost@paulpost.com
GM Aug 24. 6:00 pm. Energy issues of transmission lines, energy legislation and energy efficiency. Topeka. Gary Anderson, (785) 246-3229; gjanderson1963@ksbroadband.net

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