Chapter Supports PowerShift Effort

The Kansas Chapter supported several local students by contributing to their bus transportation to the PowerShift event held in Pittsburg, PA on October 18-21. Over six thousand young people from all over the country are converging in Pittsburg, PA for Power Shift 2013, a massive training dedicated to bringing about a safe planet and a just future for all people. The PowerShift movement is described below from excerpts from their website.

The PowerShift Movement

The PowerShift generation is the generation that occupied Wall Street, Sandy, and Tahrir Square. We dyed Facebook red in support of marriage equality. We’ve turned out in record numbers to every election we’ve been allowed to vote in, and been the deciding factor in presidential elections – twice.

We are leading the fight to solve the climate crisis and build a clean, just and thriving economy by standing up on our campuses and in our communities to demand real solutions that work for workers and Millennials. We have put our fists in the air and our bodies on the line to fight Keystone XL, fracking, and mountaintop removal — and we’re willing to do it again.

We are not afraid to speak truth to power, to sacrifice and to demonstrate our commitment to changes that seemed impossible to previous generations. We are the most diverse generation in history, united with one voice, demanding justice for all.

The Mission

Let’s face facts: we’ve got an uphill battle ahead. From the Keystone XL pipeline and university endowments tied up in shares of Exxon and BP, to fracking wells going up in our backyards that poison communities and workers, catastrophic climate change threatens our future unlike any other generation.

Meanwhile, the same corporate interests who pollute our climate have hijacked our democracy with billions of dollars

See PowerShift on page 9
Sierra Club info

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GOING, GOING... GONE?

Sea turtles date back nearly 90 million years and are among the Earth's oldest surviving species. All 6 species of sea turtles are protected under the Endangered Species Act. Sierra Club has mounted a major effort to defend and preserve threatened habitats before their inhabitants are gone forever.

Help protect our animal friends; because once they’re gone, they’re gone. Join Sierra Club now.
Are We Ready to Call It Planetary Treason?

Are you and I coconspirators?

By Craig Wolfe - Chapter Communications Director

I am sure we all remember the Cold War. After we got over the nonsense of telling school kids to “duck and cover,” we can all agree that nuclear war was a pretty terrifying prospect. Almost impossible to imagine... the leaders of our nations were only a stalemate and a button away from devastating life of the Planet. Sadly, we are now in a new, lethargic and terrifying prospect... a slow planetary bake in which we may well experience the same catastrophic result, but one that will take decades to endure and scores of centuries to work our way out of... at least for whoever is left.

However, this time ‘round, there are no quick fuses to accidentally lead to our demise, no political stare-downs, no squabbling nations to trigger the domino effect of destruction.

After thinking long and hard on this, the root cause behind our current slide to destruction is two words... greed and power.

I label the source of it “The BIGS.” Big Oil, Big Coal, Big Natural Gas, Big Corporate. Their greed. Their thirst for power. We (our species) have created this monster whose only ambition, whose only goal, is to maximize profit. Their planning window is short. Their concern for the collateral damage from their actions, nonexistent. Thanks to the Supreme Court, these corporations are now considered people. And these people have enormous power and wealth. ENORMOUS.

This power and wealth devastates our decision making process. Our decision makers are bought off through their political campaigns and shake in their boots over the prospect of getting on the wrong side of corporate power. This power creates “foundations” tasked to design false and misleading studies to discredit science-backed evidence of climate change threats. Think tanks feed despicable legislation to politicians crafted to derail environmental protection, limit human rights, and restrict the right to vote for those with whom they disagree.

Those who wield this power and those who succumb to it do it for their own selfish gain. They do it with no empathy for how their actions will impact civilization in the centuries to come. They do it knowing the consequences will eventually be devastating. Or they do it because their own self-interest or ignorance leads them to buy into the lies that has been fed to them, choosing to ignore science...
Kansas Chapter Renews Climate Education Grants for 2014

By Robert F. Sommer, Director of Development and Education Grants Committee Chair

Once again, the Kansas Chapter of the Sierra Club will offer a limited number of grants to K-12 teachers in accredited Kansas schools to educate students about climate change. Grants may be used to attend conferences, prepare special lessons and experiments, and purchase materials for lessons and projects on climate change. Licensed K-12 teachers in Kansas school districts in any field of study may apply.

Now in its second year, the Sierra Club Environmental Grants for Kansas Primary and Secondary Educators program was uniquely created by the Kansas Chapter. This is the first program of its kind in the national Sierra Club. These grants are intended to enhance teachers’ abilities to educate students on the nature of climate change and explore solutions to the immense challenges it poses.

Grants range from $250 to $1,000. The deadline for applications is March 15, 2014, by postmark or email timestamp. Awards will be announced in early May. Grant recipients will agree to present their projects at a General Meeting of one of the Kansas Sierra Club Groups during the 2014-15 academic year. Sierra Club General Meetings are open to all members and the general public. Teachers do not need to be Sierra Club members to apply for a grant.

For more information and to download an application, please visit the Kansas Chapter’s Education Grants web page at http://kansas.sierraclub.org/EducationGrants-2014.html. Please do share this link with dedicated teachers who may have an interest in applying.

The Sierra Club’s Kansas Chapter hopes to partner with teachers throughout the Sunflower State in educating students about the nature and causes of our changing climate, and so to contribute to their success in addressing this vital issue.

Save the Date!

Sierra Club – Kansas Chapter 40th Anniversary Celebration & Conference: Planning the Next Forty!

• A one-day gathering of Sierra Club members and leaders
• to enhance member activism and growth;
• to refine our focus on campaigns and activities for the coming years;
• to educate ourselves on the issues.

Saturday, March 8, 2014
8:30 a.m. – 4:15 p.m.
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Topeka
4775 SW 21st Street, Topeka, Kansas

Agenda to include special guest speakers, panel discussions, good food (lunch is included!), and good fellowship!

Check kansas.sierraclub.org and watch your email for more details!

This is a free event for Sierra Club members and guests.
RSVP to Gary Anderson,
gjanderson1963@gmail.com
Provide meat or meatless preference.
A Time to Gather: Kansas Chapter to Host Statewide Conference

Did you know that 2014 marks forty years since the founding of the Sierra Club’s Kansas Chapter?
Hard to believe, isn’t it?
To commemorate this landmark year and plan for the future, the Kansas Chapter will host a one-day statewide gathering of members and friends.

Please plan to join your fellow Sierra Club members at the “Sierra Club – Kansas Chapter Fortieth Anniversary Celebration & Conference: Planning the Next Forty!”

The conference will be held on Saturday, March 8, 2014, 8:30 a.m. – 4:15 p.m., at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Topeka, 4775 SW 21st Street, Topeka, Kansas.

The day has been planned around themes of enhancing member activism and growth, refining the focus of our campaigns and activities for the coming years, and educating ourselves on the issues.

Sessions will include panel discussions by regional experts on the challenges of environmentalism in Kansas today.

Also, Group and Chapter leaders will give their perspectives on where we go from here, and you’ll have a chance to learn more about the Chapter Committees that most closely align with your environmental interests and passions.

This is a great opportunity for Kansas Chapter members and leaders from around the state to get acquainted. Continental breakfast and buffet luncheon will be provided at no cost to participants.

Several special guests have been invited to address the gathering and give Club members a perspective on the challenges we face as environmentalists in Kansas.

This event is free for Sierra Club members and guests.

Check kansas.sierraclub.org and watch your email for more info! See ad to left for RSVP details.

For more information, contact Robert F. Sommer, Director of Development, Sierra Club-Kansas Chapter, at bob.sommer@kansas.sierraclub.org.

Sierra Club Endorses Ed Peterson for Chair of the Johnson County Board of Commissioners

The Kanza Group and Kansas Chapter of the Sierra Club have endorsed Ed Peterson for Chair of the Johnson County Board of Commissioners in the upcoming 2014 election. Peterson is a former city council member and a former mayor of Fairway. He has served as commissioner for District one for the past 12 years. Peterson is seeking the Chair position because he believes new leadership is needed to address the challenges, including environmental, that face the county. As a commissioner, Peterson has been an outstanding advocate for sensible environmental policies.

While serving as commissioner, Peterson also served as Chair of the Air Quality Forum of Mid America Regional Council, Co-chaired the Water Resource Task Force, founded Northeast Johnson County Sustainability Committee, Chaired the Citizens Environmental Citizens’ Advisory Task Force, and served as a member of the Environment and Land Use Steering Committee of the National Association of Counties.

Peterson opposed the merging of the Johnson County Department of the Environment with the Department of Health and is a strong advocate for public transit. The Kanza Group of the Sierra Club presented Peterson with its Eco-Advocacy award in 2012. We strongly urge all Sierra Club members to support Ed’s candidacy. Additional information on Ed’s positions on various issues and how to donate can be found on his website – www.edpeterson.org. There is a fundraiser for Peterson organized by Johnson County environmentalists to be held on January 16, 2014.
Just Imagine
Field Notes from the DD…

By Robert F. Sommer, Director of Development,
Kansas Chapter

“There are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies, and statistics.”
—attributed (probably incorrectly) to Benjamin Disraeli by Mark Twain in his Autobiography

No lies or damned lies here, but I do want to share a statistic about the Kansas Chapter of the Sierra Club.
Here it is: 7 percent.
Statistics are best served warm.
We’ll let that simmer for a spell to bring out its flavor.
You have to be amazed at how much the Kansas Chapter accomplishes on limited resources. We took on the eight-year battle to stop a new coal plant from being built in southwest Kansas—and won!
In fact, litigation has been our strong suit, so to speak. Just last year we also won major concessions from the Board of Public Utilities in Kansas City to shut down one coal-burning plant and limit carbon emissions at another. We also brought suits on behalf of wetlands and wildlife refuges in Lawrence and Marais des Cygnes.
We’ve had a big impact on classrooms throughout the state, too, with our Education Grants program, and we’ve been effective in assisting those in underprivileged communities through our Energy Efficiency Grants.
We also support the only lobbyist in Topeka on behalf of the environment during the legislative session.
There’s much more. You know the catalogue. It accumulates throughout the year in the pages of Planet Kansas (which is also a vital part of our Sierra Club community).
So what does 7 percent have to do with any of this?
It’s probably simmered long enough.
That’s the number of Sierra Club members in Kansas who contribute 100 percent of the in-state financial support for all of the above and more.
Now it’s really amazing how much gets done, when you think about it.
Try that again.
Just 7 percent of our members contribute all of the funds the Kansas Chapter receives from its own members.

I’m a believer in transparency in government and in organizations like the Sierra Club, so I think it’s important to share this statistic.

The Kansas Chapter has about 4,500 members on its roster. Roughly 300 very generous people provide all of the financial support it receives from its members. That trend has been fairly steady for the past few years.
While we do receive an allocation from the national Sierra Club, you may not be aware that 100 percent of donations made directly to the Kansas Chapter stay right here in Kansas doing the work that needs to be done in our collective backyard.
Since I took on the role of Development Director, it’s been my effort to give our members a reason to support the Kansas Chapter by getting folks involved in our meetings and activities. People who are involved tend to support what they’re doing, and people who have an equity stake in their organization tend to stay involved.
So here’s the challenge: 100 percent!
That’s next year’s statistic—with every Sierra Club member in Kansas participating!
Can you give $10 to the Kansas Chapter?
That’s less than a pair of movie tickets or a pizza.
Imagine if everyone did!
If every member of our Chapter gave $10 we’d cover most of our operating costs for a year. (Of course, you’re welcome to change the 1 to a larger number—or add a 0 on the back end.)
Maybe you can budget $10 a month for the Kansas Sierra Club—roughly the cost of one month’s cell phone bill or a couple of concert tickets spread out over a year!
Imagine the huge impact we could have on environmental policy and education if everyone in the Chapter did just that.
The goal here is 100 percent participation!
100 percent!
This is not only about money—it’s about participating, taking an equity stake in your Sierra Club Chapter.
No amount is too small—but your commitment at any level is very big!
Donate on-line at kansas.sierraclub.org (click the DONATE button).
Or send checks to:
J. Scott Smith, Treasurer
Sierra Club – Kansas Chapter
2111 Snowbird Dr.
Manhattan, KS 66502

And thank you for all you do for the environment!

“Field Notes from the DD…” is a regular feature of Planet Kansas. To reach Bob, email bob.sommer@kansas.sierraclub.org or call 816-898-1100.
FDA Appears to Take Action on Use of Antibiotics in Livestock

By Craig Volland, CAFO Chair

In December the FDA proposed a new policy on the use of antibiotics in livestock production.

The medical establishment had become increasingly alarmed in recent years by the appearance of illnesses caused by bacteria commonly found on supermarket meat such as campylobacter and salmonella resistant to one or more commonly used antibiotic medicines. The meat industry has fiercely opposed restrictions on this use pointing out correctly, but disingenuously, that antibiotic resistance is also caused by overuse of these meds on humans.

The FDA action involves two steps. First, they want drug makers to voluntarily change the labels to eliminate the use of certain medically important drugs for the purpose of promoting growth of healthy animals. Secondly, they want livestock producers to get a prescription from a veterinarian before putting these drugs into the animals’ food and water. This policy, if followed, would supposedly eliminate the “over-the-counter” use of antibiotics in livestock.

Some authorities called the FDA’s action a good first step, but many environmental and consumer groups panned it as grossly inadequate. To find out who was right I actually looked at some of the FDA guidance documents. The first thing that caught my eye was this heading:

Contains Nonbinding Recommendations

FDA’s guidance documents, including this guidance, do not establish legally enforceable responsibilities. Instead, guidelines describe the Agency’s current thinking on a topic and should be viewed only as recommendations, unless specific regulatory or statutory requirements are cited. The use of the word “should” in Agency guidance means that something is suggested or recommended, but not required.

After FDA cautions against the use of drugs for promoting growth, I found this statement:

In contrast, FDA considers uses that are associated with the treatment, control, or prevention (my emphasis) of specific diseases, including administration through feed or water, to be uses that are necessary for assuring the health of food-producing animals.

Then there’s this FDA caveat:

Most of the feed-use antimicrobial drugs are currently approved for over-the-counter use in food-producing animals for purposes that include treatment, control and prevention of disease as well as for production purposes (i.e., for growth promotion uses such as increased rate of weight gain). In addition to instituting voluntary measures that would limit use of medically important antimicrobial drugs in food-producing animals to uses that are considered necessary to assure the animals’ health, FDA also believes it is important to phase-in the voluntary practice of including veterinary oversight and or consultation in the use of these drugs.

Here we have the FDA proposing to phase in a voluntary practice. That has to hold the all-time record for timidity. Of course so many animals are crammed into CAFOs that any veterinarian in the pay of a livestock producer can easily excuse the use antibiotics to “prevent” disease. Just name a specific disease and away you go. Nobody other than the producer’s management is going to know what’s actually going on in a hog confinement, for example. Due to the ever-present threat of viral disease in these places, only employees are allowed inside.

Sigh. This most tentative of actions by FDA is completely consistent with it’s deeply ingrained habit of deferring to corporate interests. For some 30 years they operated on the assumption that the type of arsenic used in chicken feed (also showing up in meat) was harmless. Then they decided to actually test their assumption, which turned out to be wrong. FDA also dithered for decades before figuring out that synthetic trans-fat used as cooking oil and in margarine was killing people. So don’t hold your breath that the problem has been solved.

For more detail on the FDA at work go to: http://www.fda.gov/AnimalVeterinary/GuidanceComplianceEnforcement/GuidanceforIndustry/ucm042450.htm. Click on #209 (existing drugs) and #213 (new drugs).

Topeka Group Executive Committee Changes for 2014

By Gary Anderson

With 2014 come some changes to the Topeka Group ExCom. We say thanks and best wishes to Jim Tuchscherer who has been Vice Chair and a member of our ExCom for many years. His help and advice have been appreciated. He has been our contact and connection to the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Topeka especially as we continue to occasionally meet there.

We welcome Helen Woerner to a full term with our ExCom. She has been mid-year and is involved in many environmental issues with the Sierra Club and other allied organizations. She has been very involved in the continued actions regarding the Keystone XL pipeline. She has also been involved in promoting the climate change movie, Chasing Ice.

We also welcome Duncan Whittier to our ExCom. Duncan has been an active member of the Topeka Group and we are glad that he has been able to join us in this leadership role.

These two ExCom members join Anita Frank, Paul Post, Bill Cutler, Ramon Powers and Gary Anderson to make up the leadership team for the Topeka Group.
Michael Brune’s Remarks at PowerShift

They say that it can’t be done.
They say that fossil fuels are what make our country grow.
They tell us that we need oil and coal and gas and that our prosperity is threatened if we even look for a better way.
And they have never been more wrong.
Now, there’s a reason why a movement has burst open to stop the Keystone XL pipeline.
It’s the same reason why people across the country have shut down 150 dirty and deadly coal plants.
It’s the same reason why communities here in PA and in NY, MI, WV, and beyond have called for an end to fracking.
What is happening is that the spell has been broken. Here, and across the country, people are realizing there’s a better way. Why rely on dirty fuels when clean energy will do a better job? Why settle for the status quo when we can have power without pollution? Why wait for a distant clean energy future when we can have a prosperous clean energy present?!
As we approach the one-year anniversary of Sandy, I don’t need to tell you all the stakes are high. When we look at the consequences of doing nothing about the severe storms, wildfires, droughts and destruction, it’s clear that we all have an obligation. An obligation to act strongly.
But here’s the thing: obligations don’t spur innovation. Obligations don’t change convictions. Obligations don’t start revolutions. So I want to talk about opportunity. The opportunity to do something that’s never been done before: to build a society that is 100% powered by clean energy. 100% clean energy.
We’re on the path in Iowa and South Dakota, which generate more than 25% of their electricity from wind right now.
We’re on the path in Colorado, which soon will be at 30 percent from wind and solar.
We’re on the path in California, which may get up to 40 percent clean electricity by 2020.
And this is where the tipping point happens. This change won’t be linear: As we get bigger and bigger inventories of clean energy, the costs come down. The price of solar panels has dropped 80 percent in three years. The cost of wind has dropped 90 percent over the last decade. That means that when it comes to the price of energy, renewables are going head to head with fossil fuels.
And they’re winning. In Southern California, a new gas plant was shelved because solar came in cheaper.
In Colorado, the utility will triple the amount of solar and wind that’s coming online, because it’s cheaper and more reliable than gas or coal.
They’re winning in Nebraska, where 30 percent of electricity will come from wind by 2015 with no increase in rates.

10 years ago, none of the so-called experts predicted clean energy would be this competitive this soon. They didn’t predict solar panels would drop so quickly in price. But they didn’t predict we’d defeat hundreds of coal plants or build a movement this powerful either.
Here’s something else that most people don’t realize. These clean energy victories are irreversible. We’re on a one-way trip. Once we leave fossil fuels behind, we’re never going back. We’re not going to tear down wind farms because people get nostalgic for fracking in our watersheds. People won’t rip off solar panels because they miss having mercury in their tuna or asthma inhalers for their kids.
But to take this one-way trip, we need the President’s policies to match his principles. We need to trade the President’s “all of the above” energy policy for an “all in on clean” energy policy. If we do that, our country can have a fossil fuel-free power sector by 2030. That’s right, by the time your little brothers and sisters are in grad school, every time we flip on a switch, turn on a light, power up our homes all of it will come from carbon-free energy. We can also cut the use of liquid fuels like oil and gas in half by 2030, and then cut it in half again a decade later.
So what’s standing in our way? People talk about coal and gas companies or Exxon, Chevron and the Koch brothers as if they’re invincible. They’re not! They are dangerous, and reckless, but their influence is overblown.
Fossil fuel companies are like zombies from the apocalypse. They don’t know they’re already dead! But we do.
The real war we’re declaring isn’t on coal or fracking or oil or any other dirty fuel. The real war is on pessimism. We need an end to pessimism... the pessimism that limits our ambition and our willingness to fight for big ideas. And there is nobody better equipped for that fight than the people here in this room. You’ve already ignored the doubters. You’ve stared down the powerful. You’ve rejected the cynics. And you know how to win.
Think of what we can do. Something that has never been
in campaign contributions, ads, and outright bribes. They are behind efforts to restrict our right to vote, eliminate workers’ rights to organize, promote tragic laws like Stand Your Ground, and other attacks on our generation that are as numerous as they are shameful.

This fall, our generation must come together for a Power Shift: it’s time for a shift in priorities at every level of society. From our local communities to the national government, our generation has the power to make it happen.

Together we can build a stronger and more vibrant climate movement to fight fracking, divest from fossil fuels, demand climate justice, and build a clean energy economy that works for everyone.

Last October in Pittsburgh, Power Shift united under their grand vision for justice, and built the power to make change possible.

Thousands of youth leaders from every walk of life — college students, young environmental justice leaders, DREAMers, young people of faith, young workers — came together to learn from one another, to build and launch strategic campaigns in their own communities.

Power Shift 2013 launched hundreds of sustained campaigns and mass actions to demand climate justice. Together, their voices will unite in a drumbeat calling for change that will not be ignored.

done. A society powered 100% with energy that is safe, secure, and sustainable, forever. 100% clean energy, forever. Are you with me!!??

To get us started, I’m going to ask you all to do three things.

First, come Occupy the Sierra Club. We’re member-driven, so take us over. Whether you’re a student, teacher, if you work in maintenance here in the building or for another NGO, we have room for you. We’re run by volunteers. Become a member, you can use the Sierra Club brand to fight for clean energy in your backyard. Stand for election to run the Sierra Club in your state, or join our national board. Come Occupy the Sierra Club. Make it yours. We. Need. You.

Second, I want you to take out your cell phone. Go ahead, take it out. I’ll do it too. Now open Twitter, Instagram, Facebook or even Snapchat. You ready? Ok, now hold your phone up and take a picture of this amazing crowd. Bonus points if you get yourself in it. Okay? Now post it with the following: Over 5K of us commit to 100% Clean Energy. Add whatever hashtags you want: #100% #ActOnClimate #Powershift #HiMom. Tag your best friend, tweet at the President. Tag me @bruneski or the Club @sierraclub. I’m going to post this right after so make sure you tag yourselves in that too. Okay you guys got it? Done? Awesome. We just committed publicly. We’ve told maybe half a million of our closest friends and followers that we don’t buy the pessimism. We’ve told them that we will stop at nothing less than 100%. We’ve told them it’s 100% possible. WE ARE ALL IN. And when you get home, I want you to start writing this everywhere. Make t-shirts, stencils, short stories. Make art! Take pictures. Tatoo it over your heart it’s the new world. I want to see 100% everywhere we go. On the Sierra Club’s Facebook feed! On the bathroom stalls. And soon I want to see our politicians saying it on TV.

Finally, this is our future, so stake your claim. This is an art project, but so much more. Make 100% clean energy a reality where you live, work, play and party. 100% clean energy universities. 100% clean energy coffee shops and dive bars. When you get home, keep this energy alive. Go to ssc.org and join thousands of students like you who will be participating in a Week of Action to fight zombie fossil fuels companies. Keep working for 100% clean energy in your hometown.

I just turned 42. By the time most of you are my age, there will be no coal or fracked gas powering our lives. No more mountaintops destroyed. Rather than building a pipeline that divides our country, we’ll be building high-speed rail lines to bring us closer together. Rather than exporting coal or natural gas, we’ll be exporting innovation and climate solutions. 100% clean energy. Can we do this? Are we ready? Let’s go!
The 2nd EPA Listening Session For Region 7

By Richard Mabion

Representatives of various environmental organizations from Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska and Iowa, met December 14th with EPA Clean Air personnel at EPA Region 7 offices in Lenexa, Kansas. This meeting, billed as the 2nd Listening Session, was a follow-up to the original Listening Session held November 4, 2013, to receive input from the public on how to regulate greenhouse gas emissions from existing coal-fired power plants. The photo shows Andy Knott (sitting to the right in the green shirt) from the Missouri Chapter’s Beyond Coal Campaign addressing the focus of the meeting with Becky Weber, the EPA facilitator (in front of the poster board).

EPA seems to be focusing on energy efficiency as the principal means to obtain a significant reduction of carbon dioxide emissions. These gains would come from ‘inside the fence line’ from improvements in the operation of the plant, itself and from “outside the fence line” where business and residents would reduce their demand for electricity. It was the outside the fence approach that appealed to me the most.

The EPA participants proposed that a reduction of electricity usage of 17% was feasible. When asked if 17% would be enough, they replied that President Obama used that figure when he introduced the proposed regulation.

Since the first Listening Session in November, Region 7’s Clean Air team had met with state regulators and utilities companies in all four states in the region. Most of the conversation had been on the state’s responsibility to have a Clean Air plan competed by June 2016. This would be a year after EPA had finished its Clean Air guidelines on the rules for existing power plants (Sec. 111d of the Clean Air Act).

However, the EPA people said the utilities felt that a 17 percent overall reduction seemed achievable, with only 0 – 5% coming from inside the fence line (1 to 2% seemed to be the average), and the rest from outside the fence line. That fits with the kind of energy efficiency education the Kansas Sierra Club has been doing in Kansas City, Kansas and Wichita with our low-income citizens, who, as we know, are usually the most vulnerable and neglected Americans.

There was also some discussion on what was called the baseline. I don’t feel I know enough to comment, but 2007 seems to be the baseline year being considered.

The other members who were able to attend the meeting (either in person or on call) were: Andy Knott, Sierra Club; Moti Rieber, Interfaith Power and Light; David Weiskopf, NRDC; Dorothy Barnett, Climate and Energy Project; Heather Navarro, Missouri Coalition for the Environment; Kate McCormick, Missouri Coalition for the Environment; Ed Smith, Missouri Coalition for the Environment; Glenda Abney, Missouri Botanical Garden Earthways Center; Jonathan Hladik, Center for Rural Affairs; Joshua T. Mandelbaum, Environmental Law and Policy Center; Larry Lazar, NRDC Citizen Advocates; Andrew Linhares, Renew Missouri; Zack Pistora, Sierra Club; Richard Mabion, Sierra Club; Harold Hedelman, NRDC Citizen Advocates; Andrew Linhares, Renew Missouri; Zack Pistora, Sierra Club; Richard Mabion, Sierra Club; Dorothy Barnett, Executive Director of the Climate + Energy Project; Glenda Abney, Missouri Botanical Garden Earthways Center; Jonathan Hladik, Center for Rural Affairs; Joshua T. Mandelbaum, Environmental Law and Policy Center; Larry Lazar, NRDC Citizen Advocates; Susan Guy, Interfaith Power and Light. EPA had 6 in attendance with Becky Weber being the facilitator, and Josh Tapp & Mark Smith being their presenters.

Topeka Group Program Schedule for first 7 months of 2014

January 28 - We will have a presentation by Mark Lumpe of Wakarusa Valley Farm. It is a family operated vegetable and mushroom farm located 7 miles southwest of Lawrence. Certified organic since 1989, they provide fresh local produce to the Lawrence community year round. They have subscription services available in the Lawrence and Topeka areas.

February 25 - Zack Pistora, Legislative Director and our Sierra Club lobbyist, will give us an update on what is going on in the Kansas legislature. This is always a very important presentation because Zack can explain all the important environmental issues that we care about, give us the current status of bills, answer questions and give us advice as to any actions we can take that would help key legislation. We know that this year, in addition to being an election year, will have a large number of controversial issues to address.

March 25 - Dorothy Barnett, Executive Director of the Climate + Energy Project will give us another Legislative update plus share information about CEP projects. CEP is involved in electricity transmission, energy efficiency and energy and water conservation in farming among other activities. Dorothy will also share about any new projects they are involved in.

April 22 - Scott Schwarz, a high school teacher at Hope Street Academy in Topeka was a recipient of a Sierra Club Environmental Grant in 2013. His environmental science class students participate in designing a model wind turbine for the KidWind competition at KSU each year. Scott’s class has won the competition for the past three years. We hope to have some students with Scott share their model and give us an update on the 2014 competition results.

May 27 - Brig. General Christopher King from Ft. Leav...
enworth will share information about climate change and the military. Gen. King has participated on a panel where he has shared how serious the military is in addressing the world security aspects related to changing climate. The US military also continues to develop and use renewable energy ideas around the world.

June 24 - Kimberly Gencur-Svaty, Public Policy Director for Kansas of The Wind Coalition will present. The Wind Coalition is a non-profit association formed to encourage the development of the vast wind energy resources of the south central US. The Wind Coalition's members include developers, owners and operators of wind farms, turbine and component part manufacturers, law and engineering firms and public interest advocates.

July 22 - Ian Spomer, Sales Director for Cromwell Solar in Lawrence, will describe their company and their unique program for installing solar panels for residential and business customers. They have a residential plan that involves installing solar panels that will cost the homeowner less per month than the electricity costs that they save. He will also be able to update us on the status of solar incentives and issues in KS.
In Search of the Enbridge Spearhead with Reflections on the Flanagan South

By Helen Woerner

Editor’s note: This is a long article for the Planet Kansas, and I thought about editing for length, but I found I could not stop reading. Great job, Helen!! Some of the photos are from a later trek in November by Sierrans from all over the state to the area of the pipeline in Kansas.

On a beautiful morning last August, taking advantage of some exceptionally mild weather, my husband and I loaded up our kayaks and set out on a mission. We wanted to find and photograph the Enbridge Spearhead oil pipeline where it crosses the Marais de Cygne River and Wildlife Refuge and see where the company's new partner pipeline, the Flanagan South, would be built, if approved.

Enbridge Inc., a Canadian company headquartered in the tar sands capital of Alberta, proposes to run its new tar sands pipeline from Flanagan, Illinois, near Chicago, to their terminal in Cushing, Oklahoma, a distance of roughly 600 miles. From Cushing an existing pipeline would carry the crude, mostly diluted bitumen, or ‘dilbit’, to the Gulf Coast for refining and eventual export (pipeline routes; Spearhead line).

We have had a crash course in pipelines, thanks to our participation in the movement to halt TransCanada's Keystone XL. Like the KXL, Enbridge's Flanagan South would carry toxic tar sands oil through the United States, entailing similar environmental risks, not only locally through the possibility of leakage and ruptures, but also in the tar sand industry's devastation of an area of Canadian boreal forest the size of Florida and contamination of adjoining lands and waterways in what has been called 'the most destructive project on Earth'. Perhaps most significantly, the project would also contribute to the global crisis of climate change since pipelines like the KXL and the Flanagan South provide transport infrastructure that is essential to tar sands exploitation.

The Sierra Club and a number of regional environmental groups like the Great Plains Tar Sands Resistance, Tar Sands Free Midwest, and Kansas Climate Action have opposed the Flanagan South pipeline. But figuring out how to take effective action on this project is a challenge. For one thing, the proposal is not open to public comment. Whereas the KXL requires a Presidential permit, Flanagan South's fate is decided by the Army Corps of Engineers.

Enbridge has requested a Nationwide Permit 12 “expedited permit review,” a fast-track process exempting it from Clean Water Act requirements and public notification. We were appalled to learn that although the Flanagan South would cross major US rivers, including the Missouri and the Mississippi, as well as thousands of smaller waterways, the expedited review request characterizes the 600-mile course not as one pipeline, but rather as a collection of mini-projects in order to meet the permitting requirement that each water crossing disrupt no more than half an acre of wetlands. According to attorney Doug Hayes of the Sierra Club, “This is a 600-mile project that will clear everything in its path for a 100-foot right of way. And they're treating it as thousands of separate, little projects…The effect in the end is that they never analyze the environmental impact under the National Environmental Policy Act” (NEPA). NEPA would require the assessment of the likelihood and potential impact of an oil spill. According to Hayes, in the entire Nationwide Permit 12 application, there is not a single mention of oil spills.

Despite the lack of public input required for its approval, Canadian-owned Enbridge had attempted to build public support for the project along its projected route. Earlier in August we made a point of attending an Enbridge “open house” for communities along the pipeline route. At the Iola, Kansas, event, on signing in at welcome desk at the North Community Building, visitors were greeted by smiling Enbridge personnel offering glossy brochures bearing titles like “Safely Transporting North America's Largest Reserve of Crude Oil,” “Operating Safely along Our Pipeline Routes,” and “Emergency Prepared.” In regards to safety, we had a number of questions for the company reps:

How could Enbridge claim a strong safety record when it was responsible for the 2010 Spearhead pipeline spill which dumped over a million gallons of tar sands oil into Talmadge Creek near Marshall, Michigan, contaminating over 35 miles of the Kalamazoo River, disrupting the lives and threatening the health of the local community—and which has still not been cleaned up?

Why did the EPA cite Enbridge for negligence and fine the company over $3.7 million for the Kalamazoo River spill? What, exactly, were the 24 enforcement actions against Enbridge taken by the US Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA)?

The company's own data acknowledges that over 800 spills occurred at Enbridge pipelines between 1999 and 2010, releasing approximately 6.8 million gallons of hydrocarbons. According to PHMSA, there were 115 Enbridge pipeline spills between 2006 and 2012, which released 40,270 barrels of hydrocarbons, caused $620 million worth of damage, and resulted in two fatalities. How could the company account for these accidents in terms of their purported safety record?

In response to our other questions about pipeline security, we learned that the Flanagan South was to be laid UNDER, not over waterways—using a ‘horizontal drilling’ technique. And yes, they did intend to run the pipeline under the Mississippi River. “Under the Mississippi?” I echoed. “But dilbit is extremely corrosive. What about a rupture? How would you clean up a...
spill?" We were told that, first, the Flanagan South product was not, technically, ‘dilbit’. So in the unlikely event of a spill, the oil would simply “float to the top” where it could be “skimmed off using barges carrying booms.” Despite these questionable assurances, it was difficult to picture how a rupture in a pipeline located many feet beneath a river like the Mississippi would play out—how would the line be accessed for repair? How would they clean up a major dilbit spill in the Mississippi River? Where would the oil actually end up? Are we really willing to gamble the Mississippi River for the profits of a Canadian oil company?

The specific location of the proposed Flanagan South was difficult to determine. At the open house we had picked up a brochure with a rough sketch of the route. Nobody we spoke to outside the company seemed to know exactly where the pipeline would be situated, but we knew it would parallel the old Spearhead line. Using a fairly good interactive map we found online (dilbit pipeline) and a river map from Dave Murphy’s book, Kayaking Kansas, we thought we had pinned down the pipeline’s location in Linn County and identified about where it should cross the Marais de Cygne River in the Wildlife Reserve: just below the Trego Road Boat Ramp, three or four miles upstream from something called the Trading Post on Hwy 69. We estimated it would be about a two and a half hour drive from Lyndon to the site.

Leaving our house about sunrise, we picked up Hwy 68 East out of Ottawa, planning to turn south on US 69 just before Louisburg, about 20 miles from Kansas City. We estimated the Spearhead pipeline would cross Highway 69 approximately five miles south of Highway 152 near La Cygne Lake and then run southwest about five more miles through the Wildlife Reserve to its crossing point at the Marais de Cygne River. The river crossing was our ultimate destination, the point where the pipeline could pose the greatest risk to the river and the La Cygne Waterfowl Area.

I wasn’t driving, so I used my iPad to search for updates on the Spearhead. I’d been checking the InsideClimate News website regularly after reading The Dilbit Disaster, their Pulitzer Prize-winning report on the 6B Spearhead segment that produced the Kalamazoo River catastrophe.

I learned that Enbridge bought the Spearhead line, constructed in the 1950s, from BP in 2003. The 20-24 inch pipeline was originally designed to transport conventional oil, not dilbit. Unlike conventional crude, tar sands bitumen has a very
high viscosity and is diluted with a variety of chemicals (including hydrogen sulfide, benzene, and heavy metals like nickel and arsenic) to flow through pipelines.

When up and running, the Flanagan South will be another link in the chain of transport for Canadian tar sands oil. The new 36-inch pipeline will have a carrying capacity of 830,000 barrels of oil; combined with the converted Spearhead line, 783,000 barrels per day are scheduled to pass through American lands and under our rivers and waterways. Like the KXL, the Enbridge pipelines will facilitate the refining, marketing, and further extraction of tar sands oil which Dr. James Hansen, former lead climatologist for NASA, has called, “game over for the planet.”

Hansen’s words were in my mind as we passed through the scenic countryside along Highway 68, where the well-maintained, prosperous-looking farms and country homes had an air of timelessness and invincibility. The corn and milo crops were ripening on schedule, gardens were replete with impressive-looking tomato plants and rows of bush beans; herds of fat cattle and glossy-coated horses grazed peacefully in belly-high grasses as the cool morning breeze blew through our open car windows. All seemed well. Yet juxtaposed over the scene was my uncomfortable awareness of the fragility of our ecosystem in the face of the changes human beings are wreaking upon the planet. Last year at this time, I thought, the drive would have been a very different experience, given the nightmarish Great Dust Bowl-like conditions of the summer of 2012. Climate science predicts that the future for our region holds more years like 2012 than like the current year, with permanent ‘dustbowlification’ possible by 2040. Perhaps the fates were offering us a glimpse of what we stand to lose if we don’t speedily transition away from our extractive economy to renewable energy—a planet-friendly future we now know is entirely achievable.

About 30 miles south of Louisburg, following our route on the map though idyllic, undulating terrain and approaching La Cygne Lake (where I had been hoping we could stop for a swim), we noticed a looming industrial structure of some kind under a cloud of smoke on the eastern horizon. --What on earth? Unfamiliar with this part of Kansas, we hadn't recognized the La Cygne Power Plant, Linn County icon of the Coal Era. Constructed in the 1970’s, this behemoth is still churning out electric power at 33% efficiency while annually emitting over 10,331,008 tons of greenhouse gases (2006 data), along with fine-particle pollution from soot, acid particles, and heavy metals. According to a 2011 Clean Air Task Force study, health and mortality ‘costs’ from the La Cygna plant total over $200 billion yearly from deaths (28), heart attacks (43), asthma attacks and ER visits (510), chronic bronchitis (17), and unspecified hospital admissions (21). The dam for the scenic reservoir was one of those Faustian bargains with coal-fired electrical generation; the lake was constructed to cool the power plant which is situated at its eastern end. La Cygne is the second highest polluting power plant in Kansas, after the Jeffries installation, and holds the distinction of ranking 16th in the nation for coal ash production: in 2006 it released 2,127,000 pounds of toxic combustion waste to surface impoundments.

Forgoing the swim, we opted instead for a snack at the Longhorn Restaurant, whose sign we saw at the junction with Hwy 152. We hoped its extensive parking area signaled a popularity with truckers that might mean good coffee. Behind the café was a row of cabins, probably intended for anglers attracted by the lake’s promise of excellent catfish, crappie, and “some of the best largemouth bass in the state,” which were said to congregate near the plant’s hot water outlets. In deciding whether to actually eat any fish they catch, people can consult the consumption advisories on the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, & Tourism site (http://kdwpt.state.ks.us/news/Fishing/Are-My-Fish-Safe-To-Eat) which have guidelines for EPA-classified cacogenic contaminants as well as “non-cacogenic-assessed” substances like mercury, lead, and cadmium, with special precautionary advice for infants and for women of childbearing age (“consult with their physician”) as well as a tip for PCB-intake reduction: only eat the fillets.

After refills of some surprisingly decent coffee, we took the short drive to the power plant entrance for a souvenir photo and then headed back onto Hwy 69 to search for the first Spearhead crossing. We noticed a large numerical aerial surveillance marker at a spot corresponding to the pipeline route marked on our map, across from what appeared to be a clearance running into a ditch. Our mission compelled us to investigate. We pulled off onto a small side road which we followed to a larger graveled clearance area posted with a ‘No Trespassing’ sign. Beyond, at the edge of a soybean field, we could see a metal-fenced installation enclosing wheels, levers, and pipes and covered with warning signs. This had to be the Spearhead. It looked as if the pipeline crossed a stream there, heading west.

We couldn’t find a way to follow the pipeline any further on Hwy 69, so we drove back to the 152 crossing and took a likely-looking gravel road in the direction of the Reserve. We tried to pick up the course of the pipeline again, but it had disappeared into the farmland. Driving along, we wondered how many people here knew about the Spearhead and whether they had any opinion about the Flanagan South. When the Enbridge line ruptured in Michigan in 2010, most local residents hadn’t even known it existed. Had Enbridge reached agreements about the Flanagan South addition with Linn County property owner? Were there any holdouts on the Kansas route, like the landowners in Illinois, Michigan, and Minnesota who were refusing to sign?

In other parts of the US and Canada, pipeline safety standards and emergency response preparedness have been issues of contention along pipeline routes, and people have achieved
some concessions elsewhere regarding construction specifications, shut-off valve distances, and safety standards. Did people living in this fine Kansas countryside know that, according to federal regulations, their land is not a ‘High Consequence Area’? Construction and maintenance standards for pipelines here would be considerably lower than HCA standards. Emergency shut-off valves, for instance, would be located much further apart (in some rural areas, the distance between shut-off valves in Enbridge lines is over 30 kilometers).

Federal standards for hazardous liquid transport define HCAs as either high population areas, unusually sensitive areas (drinking water sources or ‘ecological resource areas especially responsive to environmental damage’, or commercially navigable waterways). According to Enbridge information, the government supplies operators with maps depicting HCA locations, but elsewhere, pipeline operators, themselves, are ‘independently’ responsible for evaluating pipeline risk potential.

Enbridge’s published list of risk assessments should raise concerns about the aging Spearhead line. Its “threat categories” include: “metal loss or corrosion, pipe deformation (such as denting caused by third-party digging near the pipeline), cracking related to steel manufacturing processes or exposure to natural environments, and incorrect operations.”

I wondered if it were possible to calculate how much oil might be spilled in the event of a rupture in the area we were driving through. Math problem: You and your family own a stretch of land here. This is not a High Consequence Area, so the Spearhead line shut-off valves on your property are ten miles apart. At that time, Enbridge has been granted its permission for a line capacity increase to 200,000 barrels of tar sands oil per day. Let’s say that on January 2 at 10 p.m. the Spearhead line ruptures between the shut-off valves at Point A and Point B on your land. At 6 a.m. the next morning your neighbor, heading off for his Longhorn coffee in spite of the blizzard, calls and says he noticed a black fluid flooding pooling up in your lower pasture. You call 911 to report the problem and at 8 a.m. Enbridge shuts down the Point A and Point B valves (in the Kalamazoo River case, although headquarters’ alarms sounded repeatedly, it took Enbridge over 18 hours to recognize the spill and shut down the flow of oil). The question would be: What is the total amount of tar sands oil spilled onto your land?

Now let’s try the problem again using Flanagan South numbers: Suppose the pipeline is carrying 830,000 barrels of oil per day…?

The Marais de Cygne National Wildlife Refuge would surely be a High Consequence Area. Established in 1992 to restore and protect the sort of bottomland hardwood forests that are unique to this region, the refuge encompasses 7,500 acres, with 5,000 open to the public for recreational use. Over 300 species of birds nest in or visit the Reserve; the river and wetlands areas support an abundance of fish, mussels, and amphibians, as well as a wide range of reptiles and mammals.

Referring to the line we had drawn on the Kayaking Kansas map, we aimed our course for the point in the Reserve where we thought the Spearhead would cross the Marais de Cygne River, taking a series of turns along smaller and smaller dirt roads until we came to an intersection with a road called E 1700, just before a bridge. According to our map, we had reached the Marais de Cygne River. The Spearhead pipeline should cross the river here just to the east of the bridge, to our left. A place called Boicourt would be on the other side of the bridge and the railroad tracks; campgrounds and river access should be downstream.

We got out of the car for a look at the water. It was about 30 feet wide under the bridge, probably not deep, greenish-brown, of course, but fairly clear. The river was banked by a rocky, steeply sloping ground covered with thick brush, tall grasses, vines (poison ivy, no doubt) and trees. Tossing a stick into the water, I noticed very little current. From the bridge we didn’t see any way to walk along the edge of the river and locate the pipeline crossing; however, there was a stretch a hundred feet or so upriver that could be the pipeline clearance, since clearances were supposed to kept accessible at all times. Walking back along E1700, we saw another numerical marker and a fenced, signposted installation like the one we had found off Hwy 68. This had to be the place. Behind the marker a wide swath of trees had been cut for the pipeline’s course, stretching back as far as we could see from the road. On the other side of E1700, we assumed, the old Spearhead must be buried in the bean field next to the river.

So there it was: the Spearhead pipeline. A small, unobtrusive cylinder silently transporting the toxic product of the most destructive
back to Table of Contents

Spearhead, continued from page 15

had disturbed them, but barring the soothing voices of the
birds and the sound of the breeze in the trees, all
was exceptionally quiet and peaceful. We had a
lovely float for a few miles and then easily paddled
back to where we had started.

On the drive back we stopped again at the
Longhorn to try our burgers. I tried to talk
about tar sands oil, but the effort felt futile. We
had been, we had seen, and now…?

So, really, the question was: What were we
going to do?

Every one of us in the Sierra Club knows now
that we are on the precipice of climate change
catastrophe. We are aware that pipelines like the
Keystone XL and the Flanagan South are critical
components of commercial tar sands exploitation
and the extractive industrial/economic system that
is wrecking the planet. We have seen courageous
individuals in groups like Oklahoma-based Great
Plains Tar Sands Resistance, Tar Sands Blockade,
and Earth First! standing with the First Nations
peoples’ like Idle No More, literally putting their
lives on the line to oppose tar sands projects
through direct action. We hear that the fossil fuel financial
divestment movement initiated by Bill McKibben and 350.
org., is growing on campuses and in communities worldwide.
And we understand that we are running out of time.

So now: What?

In mid-November a group of Sierra Club mem-
ers visited the Flanagan South construction site
in the Marais de Cygne Wildlife Reserve, where
work was just beginning. We walked around, took
photos, spoke with employees, and shared our
impressions over dinner that afternoon. Everyone
agreed that significant action was needed against
tar sands extraction and climate change. People
floated a lot of intriguing suggestions for ways
individuals in the Sierra Club could contribute
more effectively to common aims. We agreed we
wanted to see greater member involvement and
try out new approaches. There was a lot of energy
in the air. When someone at the table asked who
would be willing to take direct action, we all
raised our hands.

So the question remains: What are we Kansas
Sierra Club members willing to do about the
pipelines crossing our state and the prospect of
catastrophic climate change that threatens our
future and the lives of future generations?

For more information about the Spearhead and the Flanagan
South, or to offer suggestions, initiate actions, or participate
in future events having to do with climate change including
fossil fuel divestment, tar sands extraction, and pipeline is-
issues, contact Helen Woerner (woernerhelen1@gmail.com),
Lori Lawrence (lawrencelorid@gmail.com), or Yvonne Cather
(Yvonne.cather@kansas.sierraclub.org). Or check Kansas Cli-
mate Action for updates.
Eco-Band Soular Takes Back the Tradition of Musical Activism in its Debut Album, ‘Take It Back’

By Bob Sommer

This CD review is a large excerpt from Bob Sommer’s blog Uncommon Hours. For the entire review of the Soular Take it Back CD, go to: www.uncommon-hours.blogspot.com

Sometime about six months ago, Craig Wolfe sent me a link to a song he wrote and played and sang. Gorgeous stuff. Song called “Solar Prayer.” I click on the link, stare at the psychedelic waves on my screen’s Mr. Softy Media Player, and I’m mesmerized, not by the jittery micro-compressed rainbow patterns of ones and zeroes oozing all over the screen—but by the music. This is good stuff. Two chords is all. As the title says, a prayer—no chorus, no bridge—a chant, a plea, full of passion and recognition. We’re messing up our planet—help us, please help us, we need help so we can GET IT—and we need to GET IT now.

I call Heather over to the computer. She listens, ignores the psychedelic eye candy. Listens. She’s hooked too. Yes, very good stuff. Here, check out this lyric from “Solar Prayer”:

Sun of our Earth,
Give us food and warmth to grow.
And Sun, for the children,
Give them time, the time to know.

This is sincere. Sun, Earth, Children. Irony would resonate about as well as jokes do when the subject is the Lincoln or Kennedy assassinations. Just bad taste is what it would be, and there’s none of it here. Sincerity and passion are the only way to sing—and Wolfe brings both to the tune.

So I shoot Wolfe an email asking, “Have you ever wondered if THIS is how you can do your bit, channel the tree-hugger, make everyone say stop hey what’s that sound what’s goin’ down, we’re messing this up bad and we need to fix it, so have you, I ask, ever thought that this, this music that you’ve been bottling up and hiding away, is how you can get that message, get it on through?

Wolfe’s been pounding away all these months, writing tunes, singing, playing with his good friend and über-excellent bass player from his 70’s band days with Amdahl Wolfe, Randy Deutch, doing coffee houses, fundraisers for tree-hugging empaths, big gig for the Sierra Club to help raise money, so forth. He’s on it, doing it. New songs, new guitar licks, new band called Soular—appropriately, suitably, just the right title, what else would they be?

So what we have now is MUSIC. A debut CD called Take It Back by Wolfe’s new band Soular. Wolfe wants it back, wants you to take it back, wants us all to TAKE IT BACK because it’s time to be done with fouling our nest and that sort of nastiness, which is what acidic oceans and polluted air and denuded forests and extinct species cumulatively amount to: THE NEST BEFOULED! By greed. By moronic behavior. By acting like fools. Time to TAKE IT BACK.

Okay, enough. Let’s talk about Wolfe’s tunes:

Corporations and politicians are low-hanging fruit, fish in a barrel, other similar and equally meaningless clichés. Name your own. They’re like that Far Side cartoon in which two deer are having a chat in the woods in the middle of hunting season and one deer says to the other, “Bummer of a birthmark, Phil,” referring (you’ve probably already guessed—you’re ahead of me) to the bull’s eye target on Phil-the-deer’s otherwise snowy white furry chest. So that’s not where Wolfe aims—and he’d never shoot a deer anyway, but he does know where the birthmark bull’s eye target on the soft snowy white fur of the corporations and their employee-politicians is, and that would be you and me. So he aims at us, challenging us to get busy and don’t just stand there and watch while the waters rise and the wasteland moves in on us like Birnam Forest creeping up on Macbeth’s castle, Dunsinane, which, you already know, did not work out well for Macbeth.

Songs like “Stand Up” and the album’s title song “Take It Back” urge us to take action:

So set your heart on fire.
And raise our banner high in the air….
I’m tellin’ you, it’s bigger than we thought. The planet’s getting hot.
Doin’ nothing is crime. We’re running out of time.
A crime! Complicity! It’s our own fault

See Soular on page 18

Kansas Chapter Communications Director Craig Wolfe and his band Soular perform at the Uptown Arts Bar. From left: Jim Huber, Kenny Hines, Craig Wolfe and Randy Deutch
if we don’t act. And we’re running out of time. The lyrics are direct, the metaphors easy. We need to get on it.

Similarly “Book of the Heart” reminds us that if we’re looking around for someone else to get on the job, we might just look over our shoulders and find we’re looking into a mirror at our own sorry selves staring back at us like why are you just standing there looking at a mirror? Take yourself a selfie, delete it, get over yourself, and get outside where you can do some good.

Only you can say I’ll change it.
No one else to arrange it.

Several tunes take up the theme of generational responsibility. Oh yes, what about the children? How are we going to explain this mess to them?

“You Are Young” speaks to the children. It is they who will live to see the results of accelerating climate change on planet Earth, rising waters, turbulent weather, drought, famine, extinct species. Sound biblical? Wolfe would have us know that that’s not overstating it. But he brings a lyrical quality to the song that derives from its gentle waltz beat and the rhythmic accent of arpeggiated chords on his tremelo guitar. Sorrowfully delivered in a minor key, “You Are Young” is an apology to innocents who’ve had no hand in shaping the world they will inherit. If there’s such a thing as a power lullaby—a musical oxymoron, I concede, hereby trademarked, etymological derivation: power ballad—this is it, offering a surprising turn when children’s voices break into the chorus forming a responding canon:

Where do our children go?
(Children) Please help us to see which way to go.
Is it enough to say we just don’t know?
(Children) No, No! Don’t you tell us now you don’t know.
Who else will they sadly watch fade away?
(Children) We don’t want to watch our world slip away.

Ask what kind of music is on Take It Back and Wolfe answers in one word, “Rock.” But no, no. That’s too easy. The album travels byways of jazz, folk, and country (thankfully for my taste only a smidge of the latter), and the arrangements include creative uses of violin and cello, as well as some tasteful choral work to accent words and phrases in surprising ways.

Using music (or any art form) to take up a cause won’t work if the music (or art) isn’t good, but it is. Wolfe is a fine songwriter and arranger, bringing captivating innovations and chord changes to his songs. His guitar work doesn’t dazzle for its own sake but rather tells the story of each song, and his vocals bring passion to his lyrics.

I first heard several of these tunes played live with just Wolfe and Deutch performing. The addition of a full band on Take It Back has enriched the music without overwhelming it. Notably, Kenny Hines’s drum work is lively and interesting, avoiding the repetition of just carrying a beat, more suggestive of jazz than rock. Wolfe was also fortunate to add keyboard player Joe Miquelon, whose regular gig is with the internationally known Celtic band, The Elders. Guitar player and keyboardist Jim Huber adds depth to the album, while cellist Sasha Groschang, violinist Laurel Morgan, and vocalists Monique Danielle and Maya Thies give the music a creative edge that takes the music beyond the boundaries of rock. Bass player Randy Deutch contributes strong and soulful melodic work in several tunes, especially “Stand Up.”

In the 60s and 70s—BACK IN THE DAY, that is—music was the anthem of change for the Civil Rights and anti-Vietnam War movements. It would be oversimplifying to say there are no musical voices besides Wolfe’s for the environmental crisis we face today. Rather, they are mostly suffocated by corporate media, which would keep us in an Orwellian nightmare of redundancy, listening to the same forty tunes played over and over in the same place on the radio dial wherever our radios happen to be.

To hear samples of Take It Back, visit Soular’s website at www.soular.co/CD/KansasChapter.html.
Prison of Hope
Eating as Though the Earth Matters column

By Judy Carman, M.A.

After over twenty years of fighting to save the sacred Haskell/Wakarusa Wetlands in Lawrence, Kansas, the highway builders now have the go-ahead to destroy the precious and rare ecosystem, killing many animals in the process. Dolphins off the Louisiana coast show signs of serious illness after the BP oil spill, and the oil companies just keep drilling, spilling, and killing.

We continue to fight the Keystone XL pipeline which would be one of the worst threats the earth and her wildlife have ever known. Already, according to Sierra Club news, Canada is allowing the poisoning and hunting by air of wolves in preparation for tar sands sludge pipelines. A baby humpback whale was thankfully rescued from a fishing net pulled tight around her chest. How many more are there who are never rescued?

You and I could fill volumes with the tragedies befalling the earth and her waters, soil, animals, and plants every single day. As we go forth into this new year of 2014, we are all looking for signs of hope.

Looking for hopeful things, I remembered an experiment that was conducted at the Victor Valley Correctional Facility in Adelanto, California. For a period of seven years, inmates were given a choice between living in the “New Start” wing of the prison or a regular wing. The “New Start” program which was chosen by 85% of the prisoners included bible study, anger management, job training, and a vegan diet. During that time, California had a recidivism rate of 95% while Victor Valley’s record of recidivism dropped to 2%.

Not only was the recidivism rate significantly lower for the vegan prisoners, their behavior in prison was atypical of normal prison life. There was no evidence of racial tension, gang violence, or hierarchical behavior.

Individuals committed to nonviolence toward all life choose not to consume animal-based foods. Conversely individuals who may not have made such a commitment, but who are fed only plant based foods, actually may become nonviolent. This makes sense on many levels—spiritual, physical, mental, and emotional. Killing an animal requires violence, and the animal’s reaction of terror and pain fill his or her cells with adrenalin and extreme stress.

Every day we hear of someone with great power making violent, destructive decisions against the forests, oceans, and the places of peace we all cherish. What if they, like the prisoners at Victor Valley switched to a vegan diet (along with anger management, of course)? What if we all did?

In our 2014 prayers and visions for a healed earth this year, let us be open to all the possible ways to bring human consciousness away from its destructive tendencies and into its highest possible expression. There are signs of hope everywhere, and the greatest hope of all lies in your ongoing willingness to speak truth to power and in the hearts of activists everywhere.

And Now for a Hearty (and quick to make) Tomato Soup to celebrate the New Year:

From SeriousEats.com

Ingredients (as many organic, non-GMO, fair trade, local ingredients as possible)

- 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, grated
- 1 small onion, finely sliced (about 1 cup)
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 2 slices bread, crusts removed, torn into rough 1/2-inch pieces
- 2 (28-ounce) cans whole peeled tomatoes packed in juice
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- Minced chives, basil, or parsley as garnish
- Toasted bread or grilled Daiya vegan cheese sandwich to accompany soup

Procedures

1. “Heat 2 tablespoons olive oil in a large saucepan over medium high heat until shimmering. Add garlic, onions, oregano, and red pepper flakes. Cook, stirring frequently until onions are softened but not browned, about 4 minutes. Add bread and tomatoes. Roughly mash tomatoes with a whisk or a potato masher. Add 2 cups water. Bring to a boil over high heat, then reduce to a simmer. Cook for 5 minutes.

2. Transfer half of soup to the jar of a blender. Blend soup, starting at low speed and gradually increasing to high (be careful starting up, it can shoot out the top of the blender—open the vent and hold a kitchen towel over the lid to prevent blowout). With blender running on high, gradually trickle in half of remaining olive oil. Season soup to taste with salt and pepper. Transfer to a large bowl and repeat with remaining half of soup and olive oil. Ladle into individual serving bowls, top with minced herbs, drizzle with more olive oil, and serve with toast or grilled vegan cheese.”

© 2014, Judy Carman, M.A., is author of Peace to All Beings: Veggie Soup for the Chicken’s Soul and co-author of The Missing Peace: The Hidden Power of our Kinship with Animals, and owner of a truck and a car powered by used veggie oil. Her primary websites are circleofcompassion.org and peaceetoallbeings.com.
Chapter & Group Leaders

Groups are the local body of the Kansas State Chapter

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

Yvonne Cather*, Chair, Council Delegate, (316) 299-6620, craig.lubow@kansas.sierraclub.org
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Bill Griffith****, Energy Chair, (913) 722-8960, bill.griffith@kansas.sierraclub.org
Craig Volland****, CAFO Chair, Trade Chair, Agriculture Chair, (913) 788-7336, volland@kansas.sierraclub.org
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Duncan Whittier*, ExCom Member, (785) 362-2600, duncan888@aol.com

Kanza Group (cont)
General Meetings

General public is welcome to attend

Kanza Group (Kansas City)
January 14, 6:30 pm
Gasland II Showing
6:30 pm - Come early, and we will have goodies, along with good conversation followed by our program.
7:00 pm - Gasland II is the second in a series and is a documentary that declares the gas industry's portrayal of natural gas as a clean and safe alternative to oil is a myth, and that fracked wells inevitably leak over time, contaminating water and air, hurting families, and endangering the earth's climate with the potent greenhouse gas methane.
Where - Overland Park Lutheran Church, 7810 W. 79th St. 8 blocks west of Metcalf at Lowell. Park on north side.
Contact - Craig Wolfe, (913) 299-4443, info@kansas.sierraclub.org

Southwind Group (Wichita)
February 14, 6:30 pm
Lobbyist's Report on State Legislature
Zack Pistora, our Legislative Director, will discuss about the 2014 legislative session. There is a social hour that begins at 6:30 pm. Salad, pizza and pop will be available.
Where - Great Plains Nature Center, 29th Street North & Woodlawn, Wichita.
Contact - Stuart Bolt, (316) 682-4722, stuart.bolt@kansas.sierraclub.org

Southwind Group (Wichita)
March 14, 6:30 pm
Vermiculture
Elaine Giessel program will discuss composting with the addition of earthworms. A new bin with worms will be created and will be given to a member of the audience. There is a social hour that begins at 6:30 pm. Salad, pizza and pop will be available.
Where - Great Plains Nature Center, 29th Street North & Woodlawn, Wichita.
Contact - Stuart Bolt, (316) 682-4722, stuart.bolt@kansas.sierraclub.org

Topeka Group
January 28, 7:00 pm
Mark Lumpe of Wakarusa Valley Farms
6:30 pm - “Meet and Greet and Gather”
7:00 pm - Mark will share about their family operated vegetable and mushroom farm located 7 miles southwest of Lawrence. Certified organic since 1989, they provide fresh local produce to the Lawrence community year round. They have subscription services available in Lawrence and Topeka. Come learn about an organic local farmer in our area.
Where - Topeka Shawnee County Public Library, Marvin Auditorium 101C, 1515 SW 10th Ave., Topeka, KS
Contact - Craig Wolfe, (913) 299-4443, info@kansas.sierraclub.org
Sierra Club Outings

General public is welcome to participate

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

(To attend, you must go to the MeetUp website www.meetup.com/KC-Sierra-Club-Outings/.)
Get your 2014 hiking season jump started with an invigorating winter hike at Perry Lake. The trails at Perry are named clockwise from the Slough Creek Trailhead at the southern end. We will be hiking the Section 2 East Trail but we will actually be hiking west from the Old Military Trailhead. We will meet at the Old Military Hiking Trail Access on the west side of Ferguson Road just south of the bridge over Little Slough Creek.
This section is 3.5 miles long. We will hike out and back on the “Green” section, making this a 7.0 mile hike round trip.
Most of the terrain is mostly up and down of moderate difficulty with nice views of the lake and the occasional eagle sighting. There are a couple of surprising steep ascents and descents that make this hike a little tougher in places so trekking poles might be a good thing to bring.
This hike may be cancelled if trails are impassable due to weather conditions or temperatures are dangerously cold.
Outings like this are one way our local Sierra Club group raises money to fund operations... Kanza. www.meetup.com/KC-Sierra-Club-Outings/

[2] Feb 15.  9:00 am.  Southwind’s Annual Valentine’s Day Hike
We will meet at the Great Plains Nature Center. We will then take a hike around Chisholm Creek park to study the wildlife. Please wear appropriate clothes for the weather. Please include gloves as we will be picking up trash as we hike. We ask for a $5 donation to be used to further our outings program... Southwind. Stuart Bolt, (316) 682-4722, stuart.bolt@kansas.sierraclub.org

General Meetings, continued from page 21

Questions-GaryAndersonat(785)246-3229; gjanderson1963@gmail.com

Topeka Group
February 25, 7:00 pm
Zack Pistora, Legislative Director and our Sierra Club lobbyist
6:30 pm - “Meet, Greet and Gather”
7:00 pm - Zack will give us his annual update on what is going on in the Kansas legislature. This is always a very important presentation because Zack can explain all the important environmental issues that we care about, give us the current status of bills, answer questions and give us advice as to any actions we can take that would help key legislation. We know that this year, in addition to being an election year, will have a large number of controversial issues to address.
Where - Topeka Shawnee County Public Library, Menninger Room 206, 1515 SW 10th Ave., Topeka, KS
Questions-GaryAndersonat(785)246-3229; gjanderson1963@gmail.com

Topeka Group
March 25, 7:00 pm
Dorothy Barnett, Executive Director of the Climate + Energy Project
6:30 pm - “Meet and Greet and Gather”
7:00 pm - Dorothy will give us another Legislative update plus share information about CEP projects. CEP is involved in electricity transmission, energy efficiency and energy and water conservation in farming among other activities. She will also share about any new projects they are involved in.
Where - Topeka Shawnee County Public Library, Marvin Auditorium 101C, 1515 SW 10th Ave., Topeka, KS
Questions-GaryAndersonat(785)246-3229; gjanderson1963@gmail.com
Treason, continued from page 3

and facts. These corporations, the boards who run them, and the politicians who line their pockets by playing along are committing planetary treason.

The dictionary defines treason as a violation of allegiance to one’s sovereign or state, or the betrayal of a trust or confidence; treachery. What could be more treacherous than willfully causing the collapse of nature, the fall of civilization, and the resultant human suffering, all to satisfy one’s selfish greed and thirst for power?

So, where are you and I in this treachery? There are many examples where we humans, be it in a scientific experiment or in history (1930’s Germany), may know the truth but dare not speak. We are passive. We let others speak for us. We choose to take no action because “they” will do it. Today, we go on with our daily lives thinking if we change to fluorescent light bulbs, recycle, and turn our thermostats down that we have done our part. That will not be enough. To allow power to remain with the deceitful rich and powerful is to be a passive coconspirator, letting an already threatened planet earth slip further away from our grand children’s future.

It will not be enough to be responsible in our daily actions. Don’t get me wrong, these actions are indeed part of the solution. But these actions to not wrestle power from the BIGS. They do not call out our politicians for blind allegiance to the implementation of the BIGS’ agenda. We must do more.

Above all, the nation and the world need to hear our dissatisfaction. Our anger. We need to be vocal and outspoken in our conversations with our friends, family, business associates, and organizations with whom we affiliate. We need to use the power of the pocketbook to support sustainable products and services from businesses who have turned the corner and are pulling the rope in the right direction. We need to divest our investments from unsustainable corporations. We need to act in every way possible to pull support from Big Oil, Big Coal, Big Natural Gas and Big Corporations whose behavior increases the likelihood of the cataclysmic impacts of climate change. To be passive is to be complicit in allowing decisions to be owned solely by the rich and powerful.

There may be the thought that it is an exaggeration to label such destructive behavior as treasonous. But how would we judge the manipulation of truth from a corporation if those lies directly resulted in a nuclear disaster so that their own wealth and power were enhanced? The only difference is the torturous time frame that climate change will inflict its misery.

Craig Wolfe is the Communications Director, Newsletter editor and webmaster for the Sierra Club Kansas Chapter, President of the Heartland Renewable Energy Society, and singer/songwriter for the group Soular with the motto “Thought for the Mind. Love for the Heart. Truth for the Soul.”

Solar Prayer, By Craig Wolfe ©

From the music group Soular and their Take It Back CD. A simple prayer to the source of what makes life possible on our amazing blue ball.

Sun of our Earth,
Give us food and warmth to grow.
And Sun, for the children,
Give them time, the time to know.
And Sun of our day,
Light the Truth so we might learn.
And Sun of our darkest nights,
Give us faith for your return.
And Sun of our soul,
Give us wisdom from above.
And Sun of our hearts,
Oh fill them with your Love. Love. Love
Amen

Craig Wolfe
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 21. Outings page 22, and Committee Meetings page 23. For the latest update on events, go to www.kansas.sierraclub.org/EventsSearch.htm.

CM Jan 5. 6:00 pm. Executive Committee Meeting. Southwind. Stuart Bolt, (316) 682-4722, stuart.bolt@kansas.sierraclub.org

GM Jan 10. 6:30 pm. Sierra Club Grant Winners. Southwind. Stuart Bolt, (316) 682-4722, stuart.bolt@kansas.sierraclub.org


GM Jan 14. 6:30 pm. Gasland II Showing. Kanza. Craig Wolfe, (913) 299-4443, info@kansas.sierraclub.org

CM Jan 23. 7:00 pm. Conservation and Joint Action Committee. Kanza. Craig Lubow, (913) 299-6620, craig.lubow@kansas.sierraclub.org

CM Jan 23. 7:00 pm. Kanza ExCom meeting.. Kanza. Craig Lubow, (913) 299-6620, craig.lubow@kansas.sierraclub.org

CM Mar 2. 6:00 pm. Executive Committee Meeting. Southwind. Stuart Bolt, (316) 682-4722, stuart.bolt@kansas.sierraclub.org

GM Mar 11. 6:45 pm. Education Grant Winner Presentations. Kanza. Craig Wolfe, (913) 299-4443, info@kansas.sierraclub.org

GM Mar 14. 6:30 pm. Vermiculture. Southwind. Stuart Bolt, (316) 682-4722, stuart.bolt@kansas.sierraclub.org

GM Mar 25. 7:00 pm. Climate + Energy Project. Topeka. Gary Anderson, (785) 246-3229; gjanderson1963@gmail.com

GM Apr 12. 6:30 pm. 2014 Sierra Club Annual Fundraiser/Silent Auction. Kanza. Craig Wolfe, (913) 299-4443, info@kansas.sierraclub.org