

Nebraska Sierran

Publication of the Sierra Club's Missouri Valley Group, Nebraska Chapter

November 2009

<http://nebraska.sierraclub.org>

Vol. 36, No. 4

Explore, Enjoy, and Protect the Planet

Sen. Haar Speaker at Chapter Banquet Nov. 21

The Nebraska Chapter of the Sierra Club will hold its Annual Banquet on Saturday, Nov. 21 in the Omaha metro area at the Spaghetti Works Restaurant, 8416 Park Drive in Ralston, about 1.5 miles south of I-80. Take 84th Street south from I-80, and the restaurant is located near the northwest corner at Park Drive. Our evening will include a social hour with cash bar and silent auction at 6 p.m., dinner at 7 p.m., a brief presentation of awards, and a program.

The speaker will be State Sen. Ken Haar from Malcolm near Lincoln. Sen. Haar, a member of the Natural Resources Committee, has been instrumental in getting legislation passed to promote renewable energy in Nebraska. He will discuss the outlook for environmental legislation in the 2010 legislative session.

Cost for the banquet is \$20. Price includes dinner of all the pasta you can eat with 12 different choices of sauces, salad bar, bread, coffee, tea, or soda.

In conjunction with the dinner, the Missouri Valley Group will hold a silent auction. The new 2010 Sierra Club calendars will also be on sale.

Join us for a fun evening of socializing, fine dining, and an outstanding program.

For reservations, mail the form on page 4 with your check by Monday, Nov. 16.

Auction donors, buyers needed

This year's annual banquet will be held on Saturday evening, Nov. 21, at Spaghetti Works Restaurant in Ralston. Donations are needed for the silent auction, which is an important part of this event, and an important part of raising funds for the Sierra Club. Please think about what you could donate, whether an item or a service (or even a baked good!). Any donations will be greatly appreciated.

Money raised from the silent auction is a vital part of our local group's budget and will be used primarily for participation in the political process. Contributions to the Sierra Club are not tax-deductible; they support citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. We hope you will donate to the silent auction as well as attend the banquet -- where else can you enjoy good food and conversation and have fun bidding on auction items, all in support of your local Sierra Club? The banquet

See Auction, page 4

Nebraska Sierran newsletter to come via E-mail, Website

**By Clyde Anderson
Chapter Treasurer**

Be sure to see the end of this article to see how YOU can help!

The Nebraska Chapter publishes its Nebraska Sierran newsletter four times a year, usually in March, June, September, and November about two weeks before the quarterly Chapter meetings. Last year newsletter expenses totaled over \$3,600. With the price increases in printing, postage and supplies, the March 2009 newsletter cost \$1,415. Obviously, it was impossible to publish four

issues this year and stay within our \$4,000 budget.

At the Chapter's Jan. 24 meeting, a Communications Committee was formed to make communications more effective while reducing expenses and waste. The first step was to redesign the Chapter website, <http://sierranebraska.org>, which webmaster Justin Kemerling completed in May. Visit the site if you haven't done so recently. It has a much "cleaner" appearance, and navigation through the site has been simplified.

The June and September newsletters are now posted on

the Chapter web site.

One way we have cut expenses is by combining the Chapter and Missouri Valley Group newsletters four months a year, saving about \$520.

Beginning with the June issue, Clayton Brant, Chapter Newsletter Editor, and MVG newsletter editor Scott Kemper, are producing a digital version of the newsletter. This allows transmission of the newsletter to the printer electronically which improves the reproduction of photos and graphics. Having the entire newsletter as an electronic file also simplifies its posting on

the web site, and photos and graphics can also appear in color.

This issue will be the last mailed to all 1,800 Nebraska member households. Next January, only those members who have told us that they wish to continue receiving the newsletter in the mail will get paper copies. Everyone else will get a postcard with a reminder that the Nebraska Sierran newsletter is available online at <http://sierranebraska.org>. If we have your email address in our Chapter data

See Digital, page 4

Chapter Chair's Column: Money Dominates CCL Discussions

By Dick Boyd

Nebraska Chapter Chair

I recently returned from the annual CCL (Council of Club Leaders) in San Francisco. The meeting was reduced from three days to two because of the financial condition of the Sierra Club. Most, if not all, nonprofits are having money issues because of the nation's economic condition. With that said, day one consisted of reviewing the resolutions that had been submitted by the chapters prior to the actual meeting.

Below are the eight resolutions and the outcome of the vote by the CCL members on each resolution and my personal comment.

Resolution 1: Group and Chapter Club Election Processes (Tabled)

Resolution: The Board of Directors should establish a task force to study all Chapter and Group elections within the Club and to develop recommendations to the Board for how elections are to be conducted.

Comment: Many were of the opinion that the method was too involved and should be made much easier to conduct. The main factor involved the cost of the elections, particularity, to the small Groups.

As a side point, many Groups and Chapters have gone or are going to electronic newsletters.

Resolution 2: Costs for Club Election (Passed)

Resolution: The Board of Directors should establish a task force to study methods of reducing the costs of Chapter and Group elections, increasing turnouts and implementing electronic voting for

Chapter and Group elections.

Comment: Limited discussion because all were in agreement.

Resolution 3: Sustaining and Building Membership (Passed)

Resolution: The Board of Directors, with participation of the Chapters through the CCL, should vigorously pursue answers as to why the Sierra Club is seeing declining membership, and should allocate appropriate resources and budget to pursue approaches, programming, and outreach changes that will turn around the flagging membership and increase retention of members of the Sierra Club.

Comment: Most Chapters and Groups are becoming smaller because of the lack of recruiting younger members,

Resolution 4: Forest Biomass (Tabled)

Resolution: the Board of Directors should consider the effects of forest biomass energy projects on forest ecosystems. The Club should only endorse projects that include satisfactory management plans for sustainable biomass production and are in accordance with the "No Commercial Logging On Public Lands" policy adopted by the Sierra Club in the 1996 General Election.

We oppose utility-scale biomass facilities or conversion of coal-fired facilities to biomass, as well as the classification of such facilities as "renewable" or "carbon neutral."

Comment: Most, if not all, of the comments and discussion came from the states that had timber/logging industries.

Resolution 5: Federal Election Reform (Tabled)

Resolution: the Board of Directors should begin working in partnership with other national organizations that seek to establish justice and promote the general welfare for the purpose of passing campaign finance reform, so that we can have clean elections.

Comment: All the members want to have "clean elections" but how to establish this goal became the big question.

Resolution 6: Fundraising (Passed Unanimously)

Resolution: the Board of Directors should increase support for chapter fundraising, starting with:

A - Support implementing electronic fundraising club-wide for Chapters and Groups not currently taking advantage of this method.

B - Address the internal competition issue between national and local fundraising. Previous CCL resolutions on this topic have gone unanswered.

C - Ask BOD to ease restrictions on Chapters regarding contacting donors and foundations.

Comment: It will be interesting how the BOD replies to this resolution.

Resolution 7: Leadership Training (Withdrawn)

Resolution: The Board of Directors should (1) appoint an ad hoc team to create training materials that can be posted on the Club's website for both chairs and conservation chairs at the chapter and group levels; and (2) should scale up efforts to develop and deliver leadership training club-wide.

Comment: The CCL expressed thanks for all the great training of the past, but identified the above

two needs. Much was discussed; however, the resolution was withdrawn.

Resolution 8 : Walk-a-Thons, Bike-a-Thons, Hike-a-Thons, etc. (Passed)

Resolution: The Board of Directors should immediately rescind the interim Sierra Club Policy on walk-a-thons, bike-a-thons, hike-a-thons and other similar fundraising activities and reinstate the previous policy of allowing these important fundraising activities; and a task force should be formed to study this issue carefully so that the needs of Chapters for fundraising are considered and risks are managed by the Sierra Club having appropriate insurance.

Comment: This discussion was the most animated of the eight resolutions.

Enacting a policy such as this without adequate consultation is damaging to grassroots morale and Sierra Club activities. It also makes it hard for us to be partners with other organizations.

Some members were most upset with the recent policy relative to walk/bike/hike-a-thons. Some Chapters and Groups have been involved with these types of events, some of which involve great numbers of people, for years.

At the actual BOD meeting on Saturday a person from the insurance carrier spoke on the subject, but added little to the discussion. It appeared that the Sierra Club could be a target defendant in any lawsuit and just defending a suit is expensive.

Please direct any questions about the CCL meeting to me at dickb8506@yahoo.com .

Chapter Executive Committee 2009

Chapter Mailing Address: P. O. Box 4664, Omaha, NE 68104

Chapter Chair, Council Delegate, *Dick Boyd, Lincoln, (402) 484-0446.

Vice-Chair, *JoEllen Polzien, Lincoln, (402) 483-1112.

Secretary, *Wendy Harrison, Omaha, (402) 415-3248.

Treasurer, Grants Chair, Clyde Anderson, Omaha, (402) 932-7225.

Fundraising Chair, *Ken Haar, Malcolm, (402) 796-2047.

Political, Legislative Chair *Tim Rinne, Lincoln, (402) 475-7616.

Membership Chair, *Mark Weihe, Lincoln, (402) 420-1615.

Chapter Webmaster, *Justin Kemerling, Omaha, (402) 770-8657.

At Large members: *Roy Guisinger, Belgrade, (308) 357-1000; *Mitch Paine, Lincoln, *Suzy Schulz, Lincoln, *Linda Deeds, North Platte, (308) 534-9501.*

Conservation, CAFO Chair, Glen Murray, Grand Island, (308) 381-1397.

Bluestem Delegate, *Foster Collins, Lincoln, (402) 420-2101.

Cottonwood Delegate, *Stan Crawford, Harvard, (402) 772-8421.

Missouri Valley Delegate, *Steve Andrews, Omaha, (402) 933-3059.

Platte Valley Delegate, *Tom Brown, Hershey, (308) 368-5256.

Alternative Energy Chair, Larry Burks, (402) 571-5124.

Missouri River Committee, George Cunningham, Omaha, (402) 561-9422.

Outings Chair, John Calandra, Papillion, (402) 991-8314.

Newsletter Editor, Clayton Brant, 2901 A St. #104, Lincoln, NE 68510; (402) 475-9951.

Cool Cities Conservation Organizer, Camellia Watkins, Omaha Sierra Club Office, 5170 Leavenworth, Omaha, NE 68106; (402) 551-9480.

Chapter Lobbyist, Kenneth Winston, Lincoln, NE 68508; (402) 476-6583.

Advocating for Clean Energy Support in Senate

By Ken Winston

Nebraska Sierra Club Lobbyist

On Oct. 16 I attended a legislative hearing on policies to support making buildings more energy efficient. This is important because buildings consume more than 40 percent of all energy and are also responsible for similar levels of greenhouse gas emissions.

Making buildings more energy efficient is one of the easiest, simplest and most effective ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. However, at the hearing I talked about job creation, economic development and generation of tax revenues, because

many of our public policy makers are in denial about climate change in spite of overwhelming evidence that it is real and that human activity is a contributing factor.

I also could have said that I have been using a similar message about the economic benefits of wind development for several years. I could have pointed out that this message of the economic benefits of wind development is now coming from some of Nebraska's most significant financial leaders.

Sen. Ken Haar recently hosted a meeting with Dick Holland of Omaha for a number of political and financial leaders.

The message that came out of that meeting was that Nebraska had huge potential for wind development that could lead to significant opportunities for job creation and economic development, and that our political leaders should take advantage of these opportunities.

I have been named to represent environmental interests on the LR 83 wind development task force. This requires a balancing of interests.



On the one hand, we need to develop energy sources that help reduce our carbon

See Communication page 7





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The Missouri Valley Sierran

is published about 10 times a year by the Missouri Valley Group-Nebraska Chapter of the Sierra Club

Send articles and correspondence for the newsletter to:

MoValSierraNews@yahoo.com
Phone: 402-981-7819

Mail: Missouri Valley Group – Sierra Club

P.O. Box 4664,
Omaha, NE 68104.

The Omaha office is at

5170 Leavenworth St.
Omaha, NE 68106.
Phone: 402-551-9480
Fax 402-551-9490.

Address changes for members should be sent to:

Sierra Club Member Services
P.O. Box 52968
Boulder, CO 80322-2968

The Sierra Club's main national office is at:

85 Second Street, 2nd Floor
San Francisco, CA 94105
Phone: (415) 977-5635.

Web sites:

National: <http://www.sierraclub.org>
Local: <http://nebraska.sierraclub.org/movalley>

ExCom meeting at Extension office

The quarterly meeting of the Nebraska Chapter Executive Committee will be held at the Douglas County Extension office in Omaha on Saturday, Nov. 21. The meeting begins at 2 p.m. and should adjourn by 5:30 p.m. All Club members and interested environmentalists are invited to attend. The meeting will feature reports on our state and local conservation projects.

The Douglas County Extension Office is at 8015 West Center Road. From I-80, exit at 84th Street and go north about one-half mile to Hascall

St. Turn right (east) on Hascall and proceed to 80th Street. Turn left on 80th Street and go north about three blocks. Turn left into the Extension office parking lot just before the median begins. After entering the front (north) door, turn right to enter the meeting area.

The Annual Chapter Banquet will start at 6 p.m. See the article on the front page in this newsletter for details.

For more information contact Dick Boyd (402) 484-0446 or dickb68506@yahoo.com.

Continued from page 1

Auction supports club

is a great place to meet fellow Sierrans, not only from the Omaha area, but from across the state as well.

To donate to the auction or if you have questions, please call either Mary Bamesberger (402) 895-1635 or Jane Wilson (402) 345-6317 by Nov. 20 so arrangements can be made to pick up your item(s). To make reservations for the banquet, please contact Clyde Anderson at 932-7225 or clydelanderson@cox.net or fill out the form in this newsletter.

Thank you in advance for any donations and we hope to see you at Spaghetti Works in Ralston on Nov. 21.

Events

Thursday, Nov. 12, 9:30 a.m. to noon, Bread Making, UNL Douglas/Sarpy Extension, 8015 West Center Road, cost is \$15, register and pay by Nov. 6, Send name, address, phone, payment to UNL Extension Douglas/Sarpy County, Attn: name of class, 8015 W. Center Rd., Omaha, NE 68124

Saturday, Nov. 21, silent auction and banquet at Spaghetti Works in Ralston. See page 1 for details.

To list an event or activity in the newsletter and online, e-mail the particulars to MoValSierraNews@yahoo.com, or mail it to Sierra Club, P.O. Box 4664 Omaha, NE 68104 For more information, call Scott at 981-7819

Continued from page 1

Digital newsletter replacing paper

base, you will receive an email and a link to the new Nebraska Sierran issue when it is available, probably the first week of January.

During the past three months, all Chapter households were called to find out which members want to continue receiving paper newsletters and to update our file of member email addresses. If you didn't get a call or didn't answer and wish to continue receiving your newsletters in the mail, please contact Communications Chair Albert Lierz by

email (albert_lierz@yahoo.com), phone ((402) 453-2933), or snail-mail (3976 Iowa St., Omaha, NE 68112-2504). Albert needs to know: If you have email, to what email address you would like online newsletter notices sent; and if you wish to continue receiving a paper newsletter in the mail, your name and current mailing address.

Thank you for helping us save paper and make more of our scarce funds available for environmental lobbying and education.

SIERRA CLUB ANNUAL BANQUET RESERVATION

Please reserve _____ seat(s) for me at the Sierra Club Annual Banquet on Saturday, Nov. 21, at a cost of \$20 per person. I am enclosing a check for \$_____.

Name(s) as they will appear on name tags:

Phone Number _____

Please return this form, and your check made out to Nebraska Sierra Club by Monday, Nov. 16 to Sierra Club Banquet, c/o Clyde Anderson, 7020 Burt St., Omaha, NE 68132.

For more information, call Clyde at (402) 932-7225 or email ClydeLAnderson@cox.net.

2009 Nebraska Chapter - Sierra Club Candidates

See page 6 for ballot, which must be received by Friday, 20, 2009

Roy Guisinger

I have served as the Cottonwood Group chair and the Nebraska Chapter membership chair. I have been active with the Alternative Energy Committee and have led outings in the central Nebraska region.

Among my many environmental interests, I am concerned with alternative energy (mainly wind, solar electric, and solar thermal), sustainability, alternative building design, energy conservation, transportation, intentional communities, native plants and animals, indigenous cultures, and climate.

As a rural Nebraskan, I also participate in regional peace and social justice issues, support sustainable agriculture, grow an organic garden, and work for rural community viability.

Steve Andrews

As president of the Missouri Valley Group (MoValley), I have been representing it on the Nebraska Chapter of the Sierra Club Executive Committee for several years. If I am elected to this position, the vice-president of MoValley will replace me as MoValley's representative. I serve on the Chapter's Communication Committee.

As a long time conservationist, I have read extensively in all fields related to environmentalism. One area of experience is recycling. I was Executive Director of the Nebraska Recycling

Association for several years. I have provided support to many of Sierra Club allies - Green Omaha Coalition, Earth Day Coalition, Nebraska League of Conservation Voters, etc. in areas like recycling, communication, and research.

Mitch Paine

Meeting Dr. Jane Goodall in 2004 launched me on a life devoted to the environment. I attended the Zoo School in Lincoln, and now am a graduate student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in Environmental Economics. I have been very active on campus and in the community. I have served almost three years on the Mayor's Environmental Task Force and now am an intern with the Cleaner Greener Lincoln program at the Mayor's Office. Through my campus activities, I have helped enhance the recycling efforts, overall campus sustainability efforts, and representing students in the community.

But the most important environmental activity that I am involved in is the Roots & Shoots program started by Dr. Goodall, which aims to help young people become active in their communities to better the environment. The group I started at the University of Nebraska currently is working on projects to save the endangered Salt Creek tiger beetle, encouraging elementary students to become active environmentally, and helping campus sustainability efforts. I was the designated lobbyist for the UNL Roots & Shoots during last year's legislative session and will be again for the upcoming year. We hope to

represent young people's issues and the environment alongside such lobbying efforts from the Sierra Club, Farmers Union, and other environmental efforts.

In addition, I am a candidate for the Lower Platte South Natural Resources District board of directors in 2010 and hope that I can promote the issues of the Nebraska Sierra Club on the NRD Board as well as through my campaign.

I'm interested in running for the Nebraska Sierra Ex Com because I think we need to develop partnerships between the Sierra Club, Audubon Society, Roots & Shoots, government, and other groups. As an Ex Com member, I hope to encourage these partnerships and inspire our youth to become involved in actively protecting our environment

JoEllen Polzien

We haven't saved the planet just yet -- or stopped global warming -- but I made the right decision when I chose to be more involved with Sierra Club. From the grassroots Training Academy in Nebraska City to the national Conflict Resolution Team (on which I serve) to the Sierra Summit 2005, the training and education has been superior and the participants amazing.

I was elated when Sierra Club determined that stopping and reversing climate change was the Club's highest priority, because I believe that we can come together to make a difference.

I would be honored to have your vote to continue our work to build a strong, vibrant organization locally. I pledge

energy and hard work to make that happen, and ask for your support, your commitment and your vote.

Clyde Anderson

I am Chapter Treasurer and Secretary for the Missouri Valley Group. I also represent Nebraska on Sierra Club's national Transportation Committee. In the past I have been a Chapter ExCom member and Chapter Chair (2002-2003).

During these challenging times, I think we need to remain Nebraska's leading environmental organization by increasing the participation of our grass-roots volunteers in achieving our local and state environmental goals.

Anna Wishart

I have trained with EnviroCitizen, a non-profit environmental advocacy group; I ran an Obama Campaign office for Environment America; and I was the Environmental Affairs Assistant for Middlebury College. But most importantly, having spent a large part of my life outdoors - running, hiking, and riding my horses, I am deeply rooted to the beautiful landscape of Nebraska.

As a member of the Sierra Club Executive Committee, I would lobby to preserve Nebraska's natural landscapes, concentrating first off on getting repairs to bridges and trails in Lincoln's beloved Wilderness Park.

Finally, at 24 years old, I would bring a young perspective to this board and hopefully motivate more young adults to get involved.

*Sierra Club
P.O. Box 4664
Omaha, NE 68104*

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P.O. Box 4664
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Vote for five.
The second blank is provided for joint memberships.

_____ Roy Guisinger _____
_____ Steve Andrews _____
_____ Mitch Paine _____
_____ JoEllen Polzien _____
_____ Clyde Anderson _____
_____ Anna Wishart _____

When completed, please fold and mail this ballot to:
Nebraska Sierra Club
P.O. Box 4664
Omaha NE 68104
Ballots must be received by Friday, Nov. 20, 2009

Continued from page 3

Unicameral Considering Consequences of Renewable Energy Use

footprint in order to combat climate change.

As I indicated in my opening

paragraph, advocating for greater energy efficiency is a vital part of addressing this

issue. On the other hand, all energy sources have some environmental impact, so it is important to make sure that development of alternative energy sources, such as wind generation, do not have an unduly negative impact on wild plants and animals.


One of the areas of greatest potential negative impact of wind development is on bird populations. Therefore, in order to reduce negative impacts on wildlife, the following basic criteria are being proposed: 1 - No siting of wind turbines or transmission lines in major bird migration patterns; 2 - No siting of wind turbines or transmission lines in habitat of threatened or endangered species; 3 - Siting should be limited and mitigation provided if virgin prairie or forest

is involved; 4 - Case-by-case limitations and mitigation should be available to the extent necessary to protect other environmentally significant areas.

In the final analysis, the Sierra Club is still a strong supporter of renewable energy, because the overall impact on the planet will be far worse for all species, including birds, if we don't make use of these resources to combat climate change. There are numerous studies that have documented the dramatic and often negative impacts of climate change on various species of birds. However, it is vital that we develop renewable energy responsibly, using appropriate criteria to prevent unnecessary negative impacts of that development.

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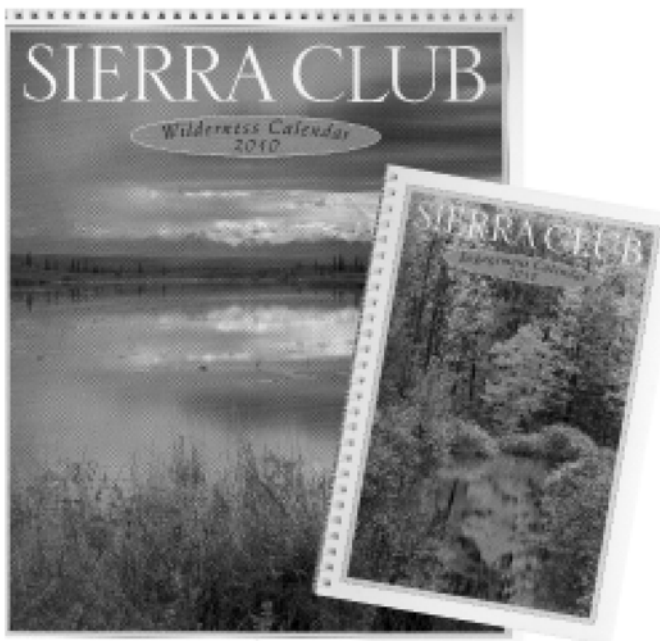


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**Enclose a check and mail to Sierra Club,
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Please fill out the ballot below,
and send to
Sierra Club, P.O. Box 4664, Omaha, NE 68104
and mail by Wednesday, Dec. 2.
Ballots must be received by Saturday, Dec. 5.

Vote for three candidates
(The second column is provided for joint members,
so that both members can vote)

_____ Steve Andrews _____
_____ Glenn Pollock _____
_____ Mike McClellan _____

Glenn Pollock has been a member of Sierra Club since 1976. He has been active in the environmental movement since 1970. His area of interest has been protection of natural habitat. He has gained an expertise in tallgrass prairie management. I have done much work on the

Much of my work has been in the Loess hills of Iowa. When asked why I work so much with an Iowa environmental issue, I answer the ecosystem does not stop at the Missouri river. I work on both sides of the river and in the middle of the river.

Steve Andrews is the chair of the Executive Committee, Listserv Administrator and Chapter Delegate.

Mike McClellan has been the Political Chair since 2005. He's a practicing attorney in Omaha with a strong interest in vital neighborhoods, local government, and conservation.

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