

A brief history of Arctic bribery

■ How many more times do Americans have to tell Congress that the Arctic Wildlife Refuge isn't for sale?

Paul Rauber, Sierra Club RAW Contributor

It's pretty clear by now that the American people don't want the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge sacrificed to oil development. Most people like the idea of being part-owners of a wilderness sanctuary for caribou, polar bears, and wolves. Drilling boosters in Congress and the White House, however, just can't believe it. No, they conclude, the problem is that the price isn't right:

It must just be a matter of greasing the right palms in the right way.

And so, over the years, the hypothetical revenues the Treasury might receive from oil leases in the Refuge have been spent and re-spent in a dozen different ways. Each seeks to capitalize on a popular concern of the moment, and each – thanks to the hard work of thousands of grassroots activists – has ultimately failed. Here then is a brief history of Arctic bribery:

1995: Senator Frank Murkowski (R-Alaska) proposes applying \$2.3 billion from Arctic Refuge oil leases to budget-deficit reduction.

April 2001: George W. Bush says he'd use \$1.2 billion in Refuge proceeds for

solar and renewable-energy technologies.

August 2001: Wait! Senator John Sununu (R-N.H.) suggests using half the money for clearing up the maintenance backlog in the national parks, and half for alternative-energy technologies.

April 2002: Drilling proponents try to drag the steel industry in on their side. In addition to promising thousands of union jobs building infrastructure and pipelines, Senator Ted Stevens (R-Alaska) promises \$7 billion from Refuge revenues over 30 years to fund pensions for retired steelworkers.

March 2003: Senator Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) has a better idea: Contributing \$250 million a year from oil leases to the Land and Water Conservation Fund. "We might be...taking some environmental risk," Alexander admitted, "but we would be balancing that by a huge environmental benefit... closer to where people live, near their homes."

April 2003: No wait! It's still snowing in Pennsylvania, so Representative John E. Peterson (R-Pa.) offers an amendment providing \$400 million of Refuge money annually to help people pay their home-heating bills.

March 2004: Now Senator Stevens wants to set aside some Arctic Refuge oil revenues to help Alaska villages deal with climate change caused by global warming.

June 2004: Steelworkers are so 2003. Representative Richard Pombo (R-Calif.) wants to use the money to pay for the cleanup of abandoned coal mines and to pay for health care for retired coalminers.

November 2005: The deficit is bal-
Please see Bribery, Page 4

GFWSC Conservation Notes

"Smart energy solutions" to be top Club priority

Acting upon a mandate from volunteer leaders at the 2005 Sierra Summit, the Sierra Club Board of Directors will establish Smart Energy Solutions as the Club's top priority for the next five to ten years. While energy issues have not been ignored in the past there has never been a nationally coordinated Sierra Club energy strategy, but with the Board's selection of energy as a priority campaign the Club will be able to focus resources and fully develop a national policy and course of action.

Executive Director Carl Pope and Conservation Director Bruce Hamilton point out that the eventual positions are going to involve hard choic-

es. For example, wind turbines have the potential to replace some coal-fired power plants, but will inevitably cause the death of birds. "Any realistic strategy for supplying the country's energy needs is going to include some compromises," according to Hamilton. "We're not going to be able to supply all of our future energy needs by energy conservation alone. Purists who hope that enough people are going to give up their cars to solve the problem will be disappointed. We need to take a hard look at the availability and economic feasibility of the energy sources we're promoting."

"This is a big opportunity to act on our old slogan – think globally, act locally", Hamilton added. "There's a role for all Club members in this campaign."

**Program
Notes**

If You Get Tired Of 'Taking A Hike,' The June Program Is Speaking To You: The June program will be presented by the Fort Worth Transportation Authority, commonly known as The T. Officials of The T will explain what its 25 year Strategic Plan will mean to public transportation for the area. Since public transportation is an ideal, and often overlooked, means of reducing emissions and global warming, everyone is urged to attend this timely program.

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Mission statement

The purposes of the Sierra Club are: To explore, enjoy and protect the wild places of the earth; to practice and promote the responsible use of the earth's ecosystems and resources; to educate and enlist humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environment and to use all lawful means to carry out these objectives.

Sierra Club files suit against Bush Administration on CAFE standards

As the summer driving season begins, Americans continue to struggle with the rise in gas prices resulting from America's dependence on oil. Due to the President's inadequate response to the growing energy crisis, the Sierra Club has filed a lawsuit against the Bush Administration. At the same time, the Sierra Club launched 'I Want My MPG' – a new web-based tool to help American consumers learn about how much they could be saving at the gas pump were the Bush administration to put existing fuel-saving technology to work by raising fuel economy standards.

The lawsuit alleges that the Bush administration recently announced light truck fuel economy standards run counter to law. These standards could raise Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards for SUVs, pickup trucks, and other light trucks by a paltry 1.8 miles per gallon by 2011 at best, and may actually erode the fuel economy of new vehicles sold in the United States – actually increasing our dependence on oil. This action

is clearly much less than is both economically feasible and possible with existing technology--a violation of the law's "maximum feasible" provision. According to the Bush administration's own estimates, these new standards will save less than two weeks worth of oil over the lifetime of these vehicles.

The Sierra Club believes that the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration failed to follow the law by setting fuel economy standards below the technically feasible level. The Sierra Club joins 10 states and other environmental groups in challenging the new standards.

The new light truck standards abandon the existing fleetwide fuel economy standard and replace it with an easy to manipulate size-based standard. Under a size based system, automakers have a perverse incentive to evade more stringent standards by simply building bigger vehicles to qualify for weaker fuel economy standards--decreasing fuel economy from its already low present level.

And even more Sierra Club Outings

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

National Forest in New Mexico and start from the seldom-seen Dog Canyon area in the extreme northern part of the park. From there we have two options, with the Upper Dog Canyon route being a little longer with a greater elevation gain. That one would take us by Lost Peak (7,890) on the Tejas Trail and on to the Mescalero campsite. It's a quick scamper up Lost Peak from the ranger station. Total one-way length of that option is about 4.8 miles. The other route, the Bush Mountain Trail, has about a 900 foot elevation change, most of it on the return to the Dog Canon Ranger Station. It's 3.8 miles to the Marcus campsite, with a mile-long optional hike following West Dog Canyon to the New Mexico line. Either option is strenuous. Participants and leaders will share cost of transportation to and from the trailhead. Leaders: James Moody, 817-295-1623 (H) or

817-688-3656 (M) (jmoody166@mac.com) and Todd Nichols, 817-937-5217 (toddnichols@comcast.net).

September 10-15, Sunday-Friday

Late Summer Backpack Trip Tuolumne Meadows to Yosemite Valley in Yosemite National Park. This 6 day backpack trip includes two layover days in which we will day hike to an alpine lake and climb one of the peaks that offer spectacular views of the Sierra Nevada. While the trip is rated as strenuous, the daily mileages will be moderate and will be hiked at a relaxed pace. Black bears are abundant, and have associated humans with food. Therefore, precautionary measures will be taken, including using bear resistant containers for food storage, a requirement of the National Park Service. The trip is limited to 8 experienced backpackers. For information and to sign up, contact the leaders. Leaders: Marcos Jorge 972-394-2546(H) or mjorge@ustgolfshaft.com and Steve Longley 214-824-1128(H) or sclongley@sbcglobal.net.

The Greater Fort Worth Group of the Sierra Club

No pets, firearms or radios are allowed on Sierra Club outings. All children (17 years or less) must be accompanied by a parent on any outing. All overnight trips require preregistration with the trip leader. A donation of \$5 per person to the Fort Worth Sierra Club is requested for all overnight trips.

June 17-18, Saturday-Sunday

Birds, Bats, and a beautiful river Car Camp at the South Llano River State Park near Junction, Texas. The South Llano River is spring-fed, flowing over limestone rocks, with great scenery. The river is great for swimming or tubing, or for just keeping cool. We will camp in the walk-in area, and reservations should be made well in advance for this heavily used park. The park is 250 miles from FortWorth, down Hwy 377, and should take about 4-5 hours of driving. We will tube the river on Saturday morning, and go to Mason for the Bat flight at the Nature Conservancy's Eckert James River Preserve in the evening. This is an incredible experience. The scenic drive to bat caves does require high clearance for fording the rivers, but we can car pool as needed. More tubing on Sunday morning or hiking the great trails. There are some of the finest bird blinds in Texas (or the country) at South Llano. Website: www.tpwd.state.tx to access the South Llano River SP site and Contact Marilyn Turnage at 214-533-2481 or

Club Outings

marilynturnage@msn.com to sign up for trip or for more info.

July 2, Sunday

Sustainable Sunday Lunch. All-you-can eat plant-based buffet at Thai Jasmine, 3104 Harwood, southwest corner of Hwy 121 and Harwood in SC with Tom Thumb, Bedford. 11:30 a.m. - 12 p.m. \$8 for adults, \$4 for children.

July 22, Saturday

Need to cool off on Saturday morning? Join Sierrans for a tubing trip down the Brazos River in Glen Rose, providing that there is water release sufficient for trip. Tube rental and shuttle service will be provided by an outfitter in Glen Rose (254-897-3666). Time on river should be less than 3 hours. Only experienced swimmers are allowed and all minors must be accompanied by a parent. Lifejackets are required and provided by the outfitter. Cost of tube rental and shuttle is less than \$10 per person. Must contact trip leader to sign-up in advance due to limited group size. Will meet at Fort Worth location to be designated by trip leader for carpooling. Bring sunscreen, hat, and cooler with water. Leader: Clau-

dia Blalock, 817-924-6242.

August 6, Sunday

Sustainable Sunday Lunch. All-you-can eat plant-based buffet at Thai Jasmine, 3104 Harwood, southwest corner of Hwy 121 and Harwood in SC with Tom Thumb, Bedford. 11:30 am - 12 p.m. \$8 for adults, \$4 for children.

August 12, Saturday

River Legacy Dayhike. We'll hike 6 miles on a paved trail to observe the Trinity River bottom forest, wildlife and open areas east of River Legacy Park. Bring water and sunscreen. Optional restaurant lunch afterwards. Directions: From I-30 in Arlington, exit Collins and take Collins north past Green Oaks Blvd. After crossing Green Oaks approx. 400 feet, turn left into the new River Legacy Park east entrance and park at the south section (walk south from the parking lot to find the map). Meet on the bridge near the parking lot at 8:00 AM. Please no dogs. Hike cancelled if raining in Arlington. No reservations; just show up for hike. Leaders: Claudia Blalock 817-924-6242(H) and Judy Cato 972-238-5738(H).

August 24-27, Thursday-Sunday

Overnight backpack in the Guadalupe Mountains, Texas' highest mountain range. We'll come in through Lincoln

Please see AND EVEN, Page 2

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Mail to Sierra Club Member Services, 85 Second St. 2nd Floor, San Francisco, Calif. 94105-3441					

Coming Events

June 21, Wednesday, 7 p.m.

Newsletter deadline. Submit articles, ads, letters, or other information in writing. Articles may be submitted by mail or email. B&W or color nature photos and electronic images (150 dpi or greater) will be accepted (prints returned if submitted with SASE). Photographs of outings or other club activities encouraged. Identify subject of photo and state photographer's name. Do not write on the back of photos. Mail submissions to Newsletter Editor, P.O. Box 1874, Burlison, Texas 76097-1874, bring to the ExCom meeting, the general meeting, or email jmoody166@mac.com.

June 30, Friday

Noon meeting for Sierrans unable to attend the evening general meeting. This group meets the last Friday of each month at 1 p.m. at Cup a Joe, 602 W. Abram, Arlington. For more information, contact Bonnie Bowman, bfbg@comcast.net

July 3, Monday

Newsletter folding party at Braum's,

General Meeting Wednesday, June 21

7:00 Azalea Room of the Fort Worth Botanic Garden Center Complex. Going north on University, take the 2nd entrance into Botanic Gardens. The Garden Center is straight ahead. Program notes on Pg. 1.

6770 Bridge St. at 6:30 p.m. Call Steve Turner, 457-7131.

July 5, Wednesday, 6:00 p.m.

Fort Worth Sierra Club ExCom Meeting, 6:30 p.m., at Spiral Diner, 1314 W. Magnolia. For more information, contact Susan Haney, 254-582-8228.

July 5, Wednesday

Outings Meeting immediately following the ExCom meeting to plan new outings and reminisce about old trips. See location above. Contact Claudia Blalock, 817-924-6242.

Conservation Committee Meeting

The Conservation Committee meets on an as-needed basis. All members are welcome. For meeting information,

contact: Chair Glenn Ford, 469-6540, Earl Burnam, 244-2328, or Bob Scott, 282-1372.

Bribery

*Continued
from Page 1*

looming again, so Senator Judd Gregg (R-N.H.) sponsors a bill that would commit \$2.4 billion in Arctic oil revenues to pay it down again.

December 2005: Senator Stevens ties Arctic drilling to a must-pass defense-spending bill, promising \$1.9 billion dollars to help states affected by hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma.

May 2006: Gas prices are nearing \$3 a gallon, so Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-Tenn.) proposes mailing \$100 rebate checks to voters-but only if the Arctic Refuge is opened to oil drilling.

There's a lesson here: The Arctic Refuge isn't for sale.

Visit our web site

You'll find the newsletter on-line a week or more before you receive it via mail delivery. Plus, there's always an updated outings listing and other features. We're at <http://www.sierraclub.org/chapters/tx/fortworth/>.

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