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Planet

Sierra Sentinel

The Greater
Fort Worth
Group of the
Sierra Club
Jan.-Feb.
2008

Three decades in the making—

Finally, a pro-environment energy bill is passed by Congress

It was almost as good as an exciting and dramatic come-from-behind overtime win in football when the game seemed hopelessly lost. Certainly it was at least as good as a tie when it's someone else's sister you kiss.

In early December, the House of Representatives, by a margin of 235 to 181, passed the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 – a truly comprehensive, pro-environment, pro-economy energy bill.

"In January, Speaker Pelosi promised to deliver energy legislation that would put us on the road toward a new, clean energy future," Sierra Club Executive Director Carl Pope said at the time.

"The energy bill that the House passed not only puts us on that road, but pushes the accelerator to the floor. It is a dramatic pivot away from the failed energy policies of the past and sets the stage for the Senate to flip the switch on America's new energy future."

Game won, or so it seemed. All that was lacking was the countdown: 10-9-8...

But a not-so-funny thing happened in the Senate. The landmark energy bill failed to achieve the 60 votes necessary to overcome a Republican-led filibuster. The vote on the cloture motion was 53 to 42.

"Senators voting against this measure are not only standing in the way of a clean energy future, but are also turning their backs on the hard-working American families who are suffering under the skyrocketing energy costs brought on by decades of failed energy policies," commented Pope on this new development.

"When this measure is brought up

again – as we expect it soon will be, we hope that the Senate chooses to side with the best interests of their constituents instead of the wishes of polluting special interests determined to stop progress at all costs,"

Mid-Suburban Group starts monthly meetings January 22 in Colleyville

The Mid-Suburban Sierra Club, a satellite group of the Fort Worth and Dallas groups, will meet on the fourth Tuesday of each month at Healthy Approach Market in Colleyville, beginning in January of 2008.

On Tuesday, January 22, Jim Duncan will present a program on "The Updated Scoop on Solar and Wind Power for 2008." Duncan is the founder and president of North Texas Renewable Energy Inc, a Fort Worth Based solar PV installation company. He started his first PV business, Solar Source, in Fort Worth in 1994. Over the years he has grown that company into the premier solar PV design and installation company in North Texas.

With the steady growth of utility electric rates in Texas, renewable energy alternatives are looking more promising every day. Solar and wind energy installations are growing at a furious rate in Europe, Asia, and most of the rest of the world.

Why does the US lag so far behind in acceptance of this fully mature technology? Find out the latest information and dis-information about solar and wind power.

Tuesday, February 26, Jim Sargent will present a program on "Green Building and Remodeling for an En-

he concluded.

His message was prophetic.

Just before Christmas, by an overwhelming, bipartisan margin of 314 to 100, the House passed the final

Please see FUEL, Page 2

ergy-Efficient Home." Earth-friendly building does not have to be mysterious or expensive. Sargent unravels the web of green building and makes it easy to understand the measures needed to lower home utility bills and power usage through energy-efficient building or remodeling.

AndersonSargent, recognized as a leader in green building in Texas and beyond, builds or remodels homes in the Dallas-Fort Worth area for energy-efficiency. In December, CATEE (Clean Air through Energy Efficiency) chose this firm as the leading construction company for the enhancement of air quality in Texas.

Meet in the community room of Healthy Approach Market at 7 p.m., followed by optional drink and/or food at Rio Mambo's across the parking lot.

Healthy Approach Market, 5100 State Hwy 121, Colleyville, is located on the west side of the freeway between Hall-Johnson and Glade roads. Exit Hall-Johnson and go south on the Hwy 121 access road. Turn right into the Healthy Approach parking lot immediately after passing the restaurants Rio Mambo and Mac's

For further information, contact Terry Jensen at 817-545-0140 or 972-251-1532.

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Mission statement

The purposes of the Sierra 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.

-Fuel standards will be raised *Continued from Page 1*

version of the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 (H.R. 6).

It wasn't everything environmentalists or consumers might have wanted, but it was still hallmark legislation.

One compromise that had to be made in order to ensure passage of the bill was a provision to require utilities to produce 15 percent of their energy from renewable sources.

Another part of the bill that had to be eliminated to pacify many Republicans would have provided billions of federal dollars for investments in renewables.

That provision would have been financed by cutting tax breaks and subsidies to the oil and gas industry.

The bill will raise fuel economy standards to 35 miles per gallon, mandate a massive increase in the production of homegrown biofuels, institute programs to train workers for three million green collar jobs over the next 10 years, dramatically increase the efficiency of our buildings and appliances, and begin to take the steps needed to reduce our global warming emissions.

And perhaps best of all coming from a chief executive whose environmental record consisted primarily of photo-ops, President Bush indicated he would sign the bill.

"The leadership in Congress promised a new direction on energy and now they have delivered," Pope said.

"This bill is a clean break with the failed energy policies of the past and puts us on the path toward a cleaner, greener energy future.

"The centerpiece of this bill is a dramatic increase in fuel economy standards that has been some three decades in the making.

"It's testament to the skill and tenacity of Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader Reid, and other key leaders in Congress that not only have we achieved this historic victory – but that we do so with environmentalists, labor unions, and business standing together in celebration.

"This bill is a huge Christmas present to the hard-working American families suffering under record high

energy prices. It will offer them over \$20 billion in relief at the pump and some \$400 billion in additional savings through greener buildings, more efficient appliances, and better light bulbs.

"It will also help us begin fueling our cars with greener fuels from the Midwest instead of expensive imported oil from the Middle East. And as it becomes ever clearer that urgent action is needed to combat global warming, this bill will make real progress by achieving a quarter of the cuts we need by 2030 if we are to avert the most catastrophic effects of a warming climate.

"It remains unacceptable that the Southern Company, other polluters, and a small group of Congressmen determined to block progress were able to use procedural tricks to block a Renewable Electricity Standard supported by a majority of the Congress and – more importantly – by an even larger majority of the American people.

"The American people are demanding clean energy and we will work with the Congressional leadership to ensure that these provisions are brought back for a vote – and passed – as soon as possible.

"We are pleased that President Bush has said he will sign this bill and look forward to this bill becoming law as soon as possible," Pope said in conclusion.

True to his word, the president signed the history-making energy legislation on Dec. 19.

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Owner Mark Shippey is one of the few printers in the area who actively encourages the use of recycled paper and soy-based inks – products used in printing *The Sentinel*.

Call 921-3670 for information on pricing, pick-up, and delivery. It's an easy way to get quality, environmentally friendly printing and help the Group at the same time.

Upcoming Sierra Club Events

January 6, Sunday

Sierra Club Sustainable Sunday Lunch. Thai plant-based buffet at Thai Jasmine, (817) 283-8228, 3104 Harwood at Hwy 121, SW corner, Bedford. This all-you-can-eat buffet is served from 11:30 am to 2 p.m. \$9 for adults, \$5 for children. Ask for Sierra Club at door. Organizer: Terry Jensen

January 8, Tuesday

Sierra Club Excom Meeting, 6 pm. Spiral Diner & Bakery, 1314 W. Magnolia Av at 6th, Fort Worth. All Sierra Club members and interested parties are invited to attend this meeting and help shape the policies and events of the Fort Worth Sierra Club.

January 12, Saturday

Dayhike at Fort Worth Nature Center and Refuge. Hike 3.5-miles on the natural surface Cross Timbers Trail. Difficulty level is easy. Please no dogs or strollers, but children welcome. Meet at 9 AM, in the Hardwicke Interpretive Center parking lot. Hike cancelled if raining at the Nature Center. No reservations needed, just show up. Entrance fee required. Bring water and snacks. Directions: From Loop I-820, exit Hwy 199 (Jacksboro Highway) and go west 4 miles. Exit Confederate Park Rd. Stay on service road. Turn right at the stop sign. Take Buffalo Road to Fossil Ridge Rd. Turn right onto Fossil Ridge Rd. Drive up the hill to the parking area. Walk up the hill to the pebbled sidewalk. The Hardwicke Interpretive Center is at the end of the sidewalk. Phone calls before 8 p.m. please. Leader: Scott Carpenter 817-253-0158(H) or adventureman1@hotmail.com

January 16 Wednesday

Sierra Club Dinner at Spiral Diner, Magnolia and 6th, Fort Worth. We arrive between 5 and 5:30, then leave around 6:30 for Sierra Club general meeting. Look for Sierra Club sign on table (probably handwritten)

January 16, Wednesday

Fort Worth Sierra Club General Meeting at 7 pm. The speaker will be Nancy McVeigh, Fort Worth Sierra Club member who traveled to Tibet in 2007 and will share her experiences and pictures with us. Botanic Garden, 817 871-7686, 3220 Botanic Garden Boulevard at University, north of I-30, Fort Worth. The speaker will be will

This is an all-inclusive list of activities of the Greater Fort Worth Group of the Sierra Club. Check the group website for updates. Most activities are free and open to all. 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 pre-registration with the trip leader. A donation of \$5 per person to the Fort Worth Sierra Club is requested for all overnight trips.

be Nancy McVeigh, Fort Worth Sierra Club member who traveled to Tibet in 2007 and will share her experiences and pictures with us. Excom member Don Young will seek feedback on the extensive outings planned for 2008. Everyone will have a chance to say where they want to go in 2008 – either by bus, van, or carpool. Botanic Gardens, 817-871-7686, 3220 Botanic Garden Boulevard at University, north of I-30.

January 20, Sunday

Sierra Club Sustainable Sunday Lunch. Plant-based, all-you-can-eat buffet from 12 noon until 2 pm. Regularly \$9, \$1 off for Sierra Club. New Start Garden, (972 243-0507) 2330 Royal Lane, ste 900, Dallas 75229. Just west of I-35 on the south side of Royal. Ask for Sierra Club at door. Organizers: Terry Jensen 972 251-1532 and James Bisby 469-371-1938(H)

January 22, Tuesday

Mid-Suburban Sierra Club. Meet in the community room of Healthy Approach Market, 5100 State Hwy 121, Colleyville, at 7 p.m. followed by optional drink and/or food at Rio Mambo's across the parking lot. See more information, Page 1. Terry Jensen, 871-545-1040.

Jan 29 (Tues)

Newsletter Folding Party at 6 pm. Braum's Restaurant, 6770 Bridge St at Loop 820, Fort Worth.

February 3, Sunday

Sierra Club Sustainable Sunday Lunch. Thai plant-based buffet at Thai Jasmine, (817) 283-8228, 3104 Harwood at Hwy 121, SW corner, Bedford. This all-you-can-eat buffet is served from 11:30 am to 2:00 pm. \$9 for adults, \$5 for children. Ask for Sierra Club at door.

Feb. 5 (Tues)

Sierra Club Excom Meeting, 6 pm. Spiral Diner & Bakery, 1314 W. Magnolia Av at 6th, Fort Worth. All Sierra Club members and interested parties are invited to attend this meeting and help shape the policies and events of the Fort

Worth Sierra Club.

February 16, Saturday

Newsletter deadline. Submit articles, ads, letters, or other information by mail or email. Photos of club activities encouraged. Mail submissions to Newsletter Editor, P.O. Box 1874, Burleson, Texas 76097-1874, bring to the general meeting, or email jmoody166@mac.com.

February 17, Sunday

Sierra Club Sustainable Sunday Lunch. Plant-based, all-you-can-eat buffet from 12 noon until 2 pm. Regularly \$9, \$1 off for Sierra Club. New Start Garden, (972 243-0507) 2330 Royal Lane, ste 900, Dallas 75229. Just west of I-35 on the south side of Royal. Ask for Sierra Club at door. Organizers: Terry Jensen 972 251-1532 and James Bisby 469-371-1938(H)

February 20, Wednesday

Sierra Club Dinner at Spiral Diner, Magnolia and 6th, Fort Worth. We arrive between 5 and 5:30, then leave around 6:30 for Sierra Club general meeting. Look for Sierra Club sign on table (probably handwritten)

February 20, Wednesday

Fort Worth Sierra Club General Meeting at 7 pm. Join us for our general meeting at the Fort Worth Botanic Gardens, 817 871-7686, 3220 Botanic Garden Boulevard at University, north of I-30, Fort Worth. "Jim Schermbeck, passionate spokesman of Downwinders at Risk, will speak on "When the Wind Blows: How the Midlothian Cement Plants Destroy Tarrant County Air Quality and What You Can Do About It"

February 23, Saturday

Dayhike at Lake Mineral Wells State Park Hike 2.5-miles (each way) on the natural surface Cross Timbers Back Country Trail. The trail head has steep grades the first $\frac{1}{2}$ -mile. Difficulty level is moderate. Please no dogs or strollers, but children welcome. Meet in the Cross Timbers parking lot inside the park at 9:00 AM. Hike cancelled if raining at the State Park. No reservations needed, just show up. State park entrance fee required. Bring water and snacks. Directions: Lake Mineral Wells State Park is located 4 miles east of Mineral Wells on US Highway 180 or 14 miles west of Weatherford on

Efficiency is important, but conservation essential to cut carbon dioxide emissions

No matter how efficient they make our vehicles and other products, we need to use them a lot less, warns a Canadian economist

Americans need to conserve more opines Jeff Rubin, the chief economist of Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce's (CIBC) and one of North America's premier econo-

Downwinders February program on air quality 'when the wind blows'

Jim Schermbeck, passionate spokesman of Downwinders at Risk, addresses the February general meeting of that organization on "When the Wind Blows: How the Midlothian Cement Plants Destroy Tarrant County Air Quality and What You Can Do About It."

The meeting will take place on Wednesday, February 20, at 7 p.m. at the Botanic Gardens, 3220 Botanic Garden Boulevard at University.

Midlothian hosts three cement plants and a steel mill – the largest concentration of heavy industry in North Texas. These large industrial polluters lie just south of DFW in Midlothian making everyone in Tarrant County "downwind" of the Midlothian Industrial Complex. While the state gives the impression that the air stops at the Ellis County line, Midlothian pollution actually does immense damage to Tarrant County air quality--more even than the damage to Dallas County air.

Downwinders at Risk has actively worked toward cleaning up these industrial sources, to improve regional air quality, and to help write the Citizen's Implementation Plan. Come find out the facts about the kilns and our green cement weapon. Then learn how you can help clean the air in Tarrant County by first cleaning up the industry in Midlothian.

mists. In a recent report, he said the United States would have to face a stark reality to achieve a greener lifestyle.

He states that no matter how much more efficient our vehicles, homes and products are, we are using them too much.

Rubin agrees with a sentiment often expressed by environmentalists: Renewable energy and efficient products are promising, but conservation is also necessary to create a major change.

The good news is that U.S. energy use per unit of gross domestic product has fallen more than 50 percent since 1975, indicating a more efficient society. The bad news is that total energy use has risen by more than 40 percent.

Rubin reports this is caused by an "efficiency paradox" where greater efficiency makes energy cheaper, enabling greater use. He focused on a wealthy society than can simply

afford to use more energy with gas-guzzling SUVs, longer drives, larger homes, more cars per household, and a culture that supports leaving the lights, computers and air conditioners on when no one's home.

Prindle and Eldridge write for The American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy, "Energy efficiency (EE) and renewable energy (RE) are the 'twin pillars' of sustainable energy policy.

"Both resources must be developed aggressively if we are to stabilize and reduce carbon dioxide emissions in our lifetimes."

Although Rubin agrees that we should continue progress in those areas, he also states, "The problem is that energy efficiency is not the final objective.

"Reducing energy consumption must be the final objective to both the challenges of conventional oil depletion and to greenhouse gas emissions."

More Sierra Club Events

Continued from Page 3

US Highway 180. Phone calls before 8 p.m. please. Leader: Scott Carpenter 817-253-0158(H) or adventureman1@hotmail.com

February 26, Tuesday

Mid-Suburban Sierra Club. Meet in the community room of Healthy Approach Market, 5100 State Hwy 121, Colleyville, at 7 p.m. until approximately 8:15, followed by optional drink and/or food at Rio Mambo's across the parking lot. For more information, see Page 1. Terry Jensen 871 545-1040.

February 26, Tuesday

Newsletter Folding Party at 6 pm. Braum's Restaurant, 6770 Bridge St at Loop 820, Fort Worth.

March 1-2, Saturday-Sunday

Car Camp and Day Hike at the Isle du Bois unit of Lake Ray Roberts State Park near Denton. This park is about a 1 hour north of Dallas and Fort Worth,

with a lake and nice hiking trails. Plan to arrive by noon on Saturday. We will hike on Sat afternoon and Sunday morning on trails in the state park and camp Saturday evening in the Hawthorne campground. To reserve your place, contact leader: Martha Ohlson, e-mail mjohlson@sbcglobal.net. Co-leader: Claudia Blalock. Trip limited to 12 persons.

March 2, Sunday

Sierra Club Sustainable Sunday Lunch. Thai plant-based buffet at Thai Jasmine, 817-283-8228, 3104 Harwood at Hwy 121, SW corner, Bedford. This all-you-can-eat buffet is served from 11:30 am to 2 p.m. \$9 for adults, \$5 for children. Ask for Sierra Club at door. Organizer: Terry Jensen

Conservation Committee Meeting

The Conservation Committee meets on an as-needed basis. Contact: Chair Dewayne Quertermous 214-558-1407,

Forest service chief dismisses importance of environmental review ruling by district court

It seems the Forest Service doesn't always take defeat gracefully, especially when the winners are community protection and the environment instead of the timber industry.

The Sierra Club has issued the following statement in response to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruling against Forest Service rules that had exempted logging projects from environmental review.

Forest Service Chief Gail Kimball made statements in the Associated Press implying that the overturned rule had been necessary to protect homes in California from wildfire.

The truth is that the Ninth Circuit's decision won't stop a single good project that is designed to reduce the risk of damage to communities.

The appropriate, environmentally sound removal of small diameter trees and brush and prescribed

burning will sail through environmental review and will not delay the right kind of community protection work. Inappropriate and environmentally destructive logging far removed from communities under the facade of "fuels reduction" does nothing to mitigate fire risk – it only lines the coffers of the timber industry and devastates wildlife habitat and watersheds.

It should not be exempt from environmental review.

Environmental review and public participation are vital to make sure our communities are safe.

In 2003, the Forest Service issued a sweeping nationwide policy exempting from environmental review any logging project less than 1000 acres that was in the so-called "urban/wildland interface."


Sierra Club has supported many

projects adjacent to communities that are focused on brush removal and prescribed fire. The Bush administration has instead prioritized logging thousands of acres, in many cases far from inhabited areas, without any public input and without any assessment of potential environmental harm.

One example is management of the El Dorado National Forest – rather than permitting very small projects that truly would not have significant impacts, the Forest Service planned project after project, many adjacent to one another, of around 980 acres in order to exempt them from environmental analysis.

Most were not focused on brush removal and prescribed burns as the article states, but on logging

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A New Year's Resolution promise to Mother Earth

Already made your New Year's Resolutions? Already broken a few?

Well, in may be January, but it's never too late to make some 2008 Resolutions to honor a special mom.

This is the year to make a green promise to Mother Earth.

We are beyond trivial promises to change a few light bulbs. There are three major ways to show Mom the love she deserves and so desperately needs.

1. Home

Mom blows cold air in January. Air infiltration increases energy consumption in winter and summer. This is the year to do some serious caulking in our homes or apartments.

2. Transportation

There are several ways to make Mom beam with pride:

- Walk or ride a bicycle to work.
- Carpool or take public transportation to work.
- Buy a hybrid.
- Cut driving by 30%. Although this requires planning, practice, car-

pools and care, it is a lifestyle change most of us can make.

3. Food

Give up eating beef and dairy. Whether organic, local, or factory-farmed, cattle are the most destructive animals we could foist off on our long-suffering Mother Earth.

-Court cites forest service failings

Continued from Page 5

large trees. To allow such exemptions wherever they wanted, the Forest Service cynically decided that large percentages, in some cases nearly all, of the national forests were "wildland/urban interface."

Sierra Club and Sierra Forest Legacy filed a suit in October 2004 challenging the Bush Administration's "Healthy Forest Initiative" rule that eliminated a 30-year-old Forest Service practice of analyzing the environmental effects of timber sales up to 1,000 acres and prescribed burns up to 4,500 acres before allowing such projects to proceed.

-Their flatulence and burps fill the air with greenhouse gases.

-Their hooves, grazing, and weight destroy Mom's surface.

-Their manure fouls her waters.

-The slaughter, preservation, and transportation of their flesh use an immense amount of fossil fuel.

This recent ruling from the Ninth Circuit said the U.S. Forest Service erred because it:

-Exempted from the National Environmental Policy Act a huge class of logging classified as "fuels reduction" first, and then later gathered the environmental impact data;

-Failed to assess the cumulative effects of logging 1.2 million acres per year nationwide;

-Failed to assess highly controversial and uncertain risks of impacts; and

-Failed to put more specific constraints on what can be logged.