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CHAPTER NOTES

Though only halfway through my first year with our Sierra Club chapter, I hope it's not too early to offer some thoughts on where we are as an organization, even as we look to the future.

It's been an inspiring first six months, if at times hectic. Hectic because in true Sierra Club fashion, we keep our staffing resources at a minimum in order to encourage volunteer leadership. And inspiring because these months included a "grand tour" of our state's chapter groups to witness that leadership firsthand. There isn't space here for all their achievements, but consider the following:

The Florence-area Pee Dee Group has just completed a beautiful observation deck on a trail through Jeffries Creek.

The Upstate William Bartram Group is working to stop Cliffs Mountain Park golf course from constructing 16 bridges over a sensitive trout habitat on the North Saluda River.

The Columbia-area John Bachman Group has taken a lead role in helping the Common Agenda craft its legislative priorities for the 2009 State House session.

Even in the rain, members of the Clemson-area Foothills Group cleaned up the beaches of Lake Issaqueena.

And the North-coastal Winyah Group partnered up with the Waccamaw Riverkeeper to sponsor a conference on the health of our coastal waterways.

These efforts remind one of the bumper sticker, "Think Globally, Act Locally." Sierra Club members actually live that motto. And together with our friends from many South Carolina organizations, we're creating positive change.

There is another feature of the Sierra Club makes us special, however: our members also live the bumper sticker's inverse. We think locally and act globally.

How is this possible? Because as the nation's oldest and largest conservation organization, the Sierra Club plays an unmatched role at the national level working on campaigns to improve not just South Carolina, but our planet.

Among our achievements:

The national Sierra Club coal campaign has been instrumental in stopping over 60 coal plants.

Over 1,100 American cities have joined the Sierra Club's "Cool Cities" campaign to reduce local greenhouse gas emissions and save taxpayer dollars.

And the Sierra Club is leading a nationwide coalition of conservation groups to lobby against offshore oil drilling.

Thus, Sierra Club members can say proudly that with respect to promoting conservation values, we cover all the bases.

A friend mentioned recently that with nearly one million members, the Sierra Club is the largest nongovernmental democracy in the world. Of course like all democracies, our strength depends on our members. By coming together and acting collectively, Sierra Club members lead by example, whether it's strengthening local stormwater ordinances or lobbying Congress to extend tax credits for renewable energy.

Thinking about the future, I have just two questions. Know someone who would make a great member? There's an on-line membership form at our website. Want to make a difference? We're a phone call away.

Hope to see you on the trail.

John



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The Sierra Club of South Carolina's mission is to explore, enjoy and protect the wild places of the earth and to practice and promote the responsible use of the earth's ecosystems and resources.

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South Carolina at a Crossroads

Like most of our country and on a range of issues, South Carolina is at a crossroads. And perhaps nowhere are the choices starker than with respect to our energy future.

Down one road is an energy future that continues to rely on dirty fossil fuels like coal and uranium, which our state imports at increasing cost and at increasing risk to the environment and our health. Santee Cooper's campaign to build a dirty coal plant is well known. Less well known are the multi-billion dollar nuclear plants that utilities have proposed recently before the South Carolina Public Service Commission (SCPSC).

Conservative cost estimates for the four nuclear generators – two proposed by Duke, two proposed by SCE&G and Santee Cooper, all slated for the Broad River – exceed \$20 billion. Unfortunately, a law passed by the South Carolina General Assembly in 2007 allows our utilities to charge ratepayers for hundreds of millions of dollars in construction costs before a single slab of concrete is even laid. And if the plants are never built, the utilities do not have to return the money.



Duke Energy sank \$633 million into the Cherokee nuclear plant before canceling it in 1982. Guess who picked up the tab?

Down the other road is a clean energy future in which South Carolina generates thousands of megawatts through the cheapest and fastest energy source there is: efficiency. For several years now the conservation community has been speaking with one voice on energy, calling efficiency our “first fuel” and the best way to promote energy security and independence.

This message should resonate in South Carolina. As it happens, we are one of the least efficient states in the nation and rank fourth in per capita electricity consumption. This is not because of hot summers or cold winters. It is a result of being energy

inefficient. It is also because our utilities are among the most resistant to efficiency improvements in the country.

Pessimists discount efficiency on the grounds that it cannot meet growing demand. They are wrong. Last year Santee Cooper's own largest customer, the South Carolina Electric Cooperatives, released a study showing that over the next decade they could generate more megawatts through efficiency and renewables than the proposed Pee Dee plant. Meanwhile, how much does Santee Cooper reduce demand through efficiency each year? A pathetic .01 percent.



With opposition to Yucca Mountain growing, states will have to store their own waste. More nuclear generation in our state means more nuclear waste in our state.

As a public utility, Santee Cooper should be looking out for residential customers, not big business. That the company is spending millions on an ad campaign raises questions of accountability. As do cost overruns. Recently Santee Cooper had to revise construction costs upward by \$250 million, from \$998 million to \$1.25 billion. An independent cost analysis just released by the Eastern Carolina Development Corporation puts the construction price at \$1.35 billion and rising.

The economic prospects for nuclear are even less promising. If not for earmarks and massive subsidies – those handouts that fiscal hawks generally rail against – the nuclear industry would never survive on the open market. But even excluding the billions in subsidies, the health and safety risks, and the massive construction cost overruns, nuclear still can't produce electricity for anything better than 8.3 to 11.1 cents per kilowatt-hour. How does efficiency compare? Less than three cents per kilowatt-hour.

For residential and business customers alike, the choice is clear. In a nuclear or coal-based energy future, utility bills go up. In an energy efficient future, utility bills go down.

Our state has just over four million residents and two million households. If instead of building these base load plants we invested the money in efficiency upgrades for South Carolina homeowners, how far would that \$20 billion take us? This money could be spent on upgrading to Energy Star appliances, improving insulation, and installing solar hot water heaters. This money could stay in our state, employing thousands of people and spurring efficiency and renewable energy businesses.

Sound farfetched? What would you rather do: buy expensive electricity from dirty fossil fuels or actually lower your bills and achieve greater energy independence? The choice is ours.

Setting the PaCE for Clean Energy

The time to pick up the PaCE is now.

Together with utilities and the South Carolina Office of Regulatory Staff, our friends at the South Carolina Energy Office have launched PaCE – Palmetto Clean Energy – a non-profit organization designed to encourage renewable energy in South Carolina.

Through this program, customers of our state's three investor-owned utilities – Duke, Progress and SCE&G – can elect to fund green power through tax-exempt contributions added to their monthly bills. These contributions are remitted in their entirety to PaCE, which uses them to fund renewable energy initiatives around our state.

Customers can buy these energy “blocks” in \$4 increments of 100 kilowatt-hours. One block of green power equals approximately 10 percent of an average home's monthly bill. Customers can also make direct tax-deductible contributions to PaCE.

This program will help promote clean, renewable energy sources found right here in South Carolina. Currently, over 98 cents of every dollar we spend on energy leaves the state. We spend over \$700 million a year on coal alone. Coal plants are associated with a wide range of health risks, including cardiovascular and respiratory illnesses and the dangerous neurotoxin mercury. Coal plants are also a major contributor to global climate change.

By creating incentives for solar, wind, small hydro and biomass, we can begin to diversify South Carolina's energy portfolio and promote a more sustainable, energy-independent state. Our state currently buys coal from Appalachian states and natural gas from Louisiana and Texas. Consequently, we send hundreds of millions of dollars each year to other states to buy South Carolina's energy.

With PaCE, our energy dollars stay in South Carolina, benefiting South Carolinians. And our planet.

For more information, or to sign up to purchase green power from PaCE, please visit www.palmettocleanenergy.org.

Set the PaCE

You Have the Power to Help the Environment

PaCE is dedicated to the development of renewable energy resources for South Carolina's energy supply. These renewable resources improve the environment through reduced greenhouse gas emissions. Visit www.palmettocleanenergy.org to learn how you can make a tax-deductible contribution to PaCE.

Set the pace – and help protect the environment for future generations.

PALMETTO CLEAN ENERGY

SCE&G
800-251-7234

Progress Energy
800-452-2777

Duke Energy
800-943-7585

A Bright Outlook for SCGreen!

For Sierra Club members Libby Smith and Charlie Sneed, the time for renewable energy is now. The couple has just finished installing a solar photovoltaic and hot water system on their James Island home.



Libby explains, “It was the right thing to do and fun. Building a new energy efficient house is easy. Improving the energy efficiency of an existing home is harder. We figured folks just have to start doing it so that we can all learn what works.”

“We had to do our homework,” added Charlie, “But we found a great contractor in Sunstore Solar. They helped us navigate the regulatory process for getting our system attached to the grid.”

South Carolina remains one of a handful of states lacking a regulated net metering program with guidelines for what utilities should pay customers who produce their own electricity. The result, both at the Public Service Commission and in the business sector, has been confusion and red tape.

Thanks in part to efforts this past session by Libby and Charlie, we can expect this situation to change. In the 2008 legislative session they joined Sierra Club member Pam Greenlaw and others to lobby for renewable energy at the State House.

The result was the passage of **H. 3395**, which directs the Office of Regulatory Staff and the South Carolina Energy Office to make recommendations this winter on a net metering program.

According to Charlie, “Sunshine is abundant and free. While the cost of electricity from fossil fuels continues to rise, the cost of renewable energy continues to fall. Plus, there are finally some incentives for adding solar to homes and businesses.”

One of these incentive programs is PaCE, and Charlie and Libby are its first two South Carolina renewable energy providers.

According to Libby, “Because the upfront cost of installing solar is significant, people often ask us, what is the payback? Right now, we pay our utility around 10 cents a kilowatt-hour. But for our excess solar production, we receive 20 to 24 cents per kilowatt-hour. Thanks to PaCE, putting solar panels on our home is not just environmentally sound, but economically attractive.”

Still, there remains work to be done.

Charlie states, “We all need to keep the pressure on government officials to help wean our state from its dependence on fossil fuels and to promote a clean, energy independent South Carolina. Right now our state subsidizes coal and nuclear to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars. Imagine what the future would like if this money went toward a ‘distributed’ system – South Carolinians producing electricity right where we use it – in our homes, schools, and businesses.”

To help make this dream a reality, Libby and Charlie have founded www.scgreen.org, a website where people can share information and resources about sustainability. The site will also connect people looking to pursue a greener, healthier and more sustainable lifestyle.

By going to the website and filling out an online survey, you can help shape the services and resources provided by scgreen.org. And in the meantime, Libby has become quite the citizen authority on navigating how to hook up renewable energy providers to the grid. You can reach her directly at libbysmith@comcast.net.



Clean Water Campaign Underway!

Beginning in June the Sierra Club launched our clean water campaign. National Water Sentinel Bryan Burgess helped the office set up a new computer with GIS (Geographic Information Systems) software that will allow us to track pollution threats as well as in-stream flows that measure water quantity.

Along with our Common Agenda partners, the Sierra Club has drafted legislative proposals that will help protect our waters. They include:

- Passing water-permitting legislation that protects the biological, chemical, and physical integrity of our river ecosystems.
- Passing water efficiency legislation that will help us use less water to meet our needs. As with energy, the cheapest way to ensure clean, abundant water is not by building more dams, but by improving our infrastructure and stopping waste.
- Passing water quality legislation that will help clean up our rivers and lakes. We need to address sewage treatment plant failures, stormwater runoff and failed septic tanks, and to protect our watersheds from poor development practices.

It will take dedicated citizens working together to make sure our state government, regulatory agencies, and businesses do right by our waters. We have established teams of people working on grassroots organizing, media, and legislative efforts. The easiest way to get involved is to go to our website and sign up to join our water team. Hope to hear from you soon!



Our Water Team is growing! Front row: Ollie Johnson, Barbara Bowers, Susan Grey, Gina Hartmeier, Allan Paterson, Janis Wilkins, Jeremy Grant, Ann Jennings, Joe Zdenek, Tom Howell, Joe Woicicki. Second row: John Hartz, Al Rogat, Marsha Bollinger, Pam Greenlaw, Gerrit Jobsis, Jim Cumberland, John Ramsburgh. Back row: Tom Clements, Allyn Schneider, Cary Chamblee, Jason Craig

You can join the team at our website!

Saluda River Update



Photo courtesy of Chris Aluka-Berry, The State

In the last five years over 976,000 gallons of untreated sewage have spilled from seven small treatment plants into the Saluda River. Alpine Utilities alone has been responsible for 17 spills.

One of our state's prettiest rivers, the Saluda – which starts in the Appalachian foothills and then joins the Congaree River in Columbia – has been getting some unwanted attention lately.

First, the Sierra Club Water Committee released its second documentary film on water pollution in South Carolina, focusing on the Saluda. You can watch the video at our website.

Then the *State* newspaper started covering fecal coliform levels at popular swimming holes near Columbia. Coincidence? Hardly. That's what happens when a public awareness campaign attracts media coverage.

But then something happened that surprised everyone but our Water Committee. Sometime in July a privately owned sewage treatment facility, Alpine Utilities,

malfunctioned and started dumping sewage into the Saluda. No one knows when it started or how many gallons they spilled, but fecal coliform levels went as high as 230 times the federal safety standard.

How was this possible? First, the facility itself is unmanned. Second, there is no requirement in South Carolina that plant operators alert the public in the event of a spill. Along with our friends at American Rivers, the Sierra Club of South Carolina is calling for federal passage the Sewage Overflow Right-to-Know Act (H.R. 2452 / S. 2080), which passed the House but now sits in the Senate.

If this bill doesn't pass in Congress we will push for similar legislation in our state's General Assembly.

Coal Plant Striking Out

Among CEO Lonnie Carter's talking points, one has never changed: "this plant uses the best available control technology." But squaring this statement with reality is hard because Santee Cooper has already lowered mercury emissions on two occasions, from 376 pounds when the plans were submitted in May 2006, to 138 pounds last year, to 114 pounds this summer.

One wonders how the plant can always be using the "best" technology if Santee Cooper keeps finding ways to improve it.

And considering that plants in Pennsylvania and Virginia emit fewer than five pounds of mercury a year, one wonders just what Santee Cooper might achieve if they really committed to reducing mercury.

In public comments Carter has downplayed the risks of mercury, suggesting that federal standards are set artificially low and that our states' rivers do not have a serious mercury problem. In a recent oped, three physicians rebuked Carter for these statements, calling them "reckless and misleading."

Instead of issuing a retraction, Carter and Santee Cooper have continued with a paid media campaign that has cost their ratepayers millions of dollars. Santee Cooper recently hired a national industry apologist to soothe away public concerns.

This consultant's list of clients include tobacco companies, which prompted Pamplico resident and plant opponent Mike King to quip, "When we said this plant was like a healthy cigarette, we had no idea that Santee Cooper would actually go out and hire a consultant from Big Tobacco."

DHEC Grants MACT Mercury Permit

Santee Cooper's spin machine appears to be working on DHEC. On September 23 the agency approved a draft MACT (Maximum Available Control Technology) permit that will allow the plant to spew 93 pounds of mercury into the air annually.

In other words, DHEC proposes to let this plant emit ten times more mercury than a recently permitted plant in Virginia. The Virginia plant also produces significantly less sulfur dioxide, particulate soot, carbon monoxide and sulfuric acid mist.

This preliminary approval points to a fundamental disconnect at a state agency charged with protecting the health of South Carolinians. Need another example? Bowing to demands by the medical community, DHEC will undertake testing people for mercury poisoning this fall. However, the results will not be factored into the permitting process.

DHEC is permitting this plant in a region that DHEC's own analysis suggests is highly contaminated by mercury. And mercury is not the only pollution concern in the region. In 2002

Florence County ranked among the worst 10 percent of all American counties for total pollution releases. Just one month ago DHEC determined that the county no longer complies with the Clean Air Act. Counties that fail the federal statutes risk losing federal infrastructure and highway funds. Thus, the plant represents a dual threat to the region. While local people face increased health risks, the coal plant will endanger the region's chances for economic growth.

It begs the question: why can't we suspend the permitting process until we know the long-term impacts?

What YOU can do!

DHEC is accepting comments on the permit until November 6. Please go to our website for more information and to download talking points that you can modify and send to DHEC. You can post comments opposing the plant here: <http://www.scdhec.net/environment/baq/SanteeCooper.aspx> Or send comments through the mail to: Mr. Joseph Eller
Engineering Services Division
Bureau of Air Quality, DHEC
2600 Bull Street Columbia, SC 29201

On October 23, DHEC is holding a hearing in Pamplico on the MACT permit. Please join us! Details at our website.

Coal Plant Threatens Confederate Site



The View from Camp Reliance

Thanks to local historians like Carl Hill, Director of the War Between the States Museum, we have learned that the coal plant threatens an important historical site. Located just 50 yards from the proposed plant's solid waste disposal center, Camp Reliance is one of only a handful of inland battery sites still largely undisturbed. According to Mr. Hill, "This site should be preserved in all its historical integrity as a place that people can visit to learn more about our past." The Florence City and County Historical Commission agreed, passing a resolution on August 11 declaring Camp Reliance a "Historically Significant" Confederate fortification.

SIERRA CLUB INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE: DR. JAMES HANSEN



One of the world's leading climatologists, Dr. James Hansen is Director of the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies. He is also adjunct professor in the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences at Columbia University and was elected to the National Academy of Sciences in 1996.

In early August, Dr. Hansen sent a letter to Santee Cooper CEO Lonnie Carter and other state leaders requesting that the utility discontinue its plans to build a pulverized coal plant on the Pee Dee River and pursue cleaner alternatives instead.

On August 23 he joined Chapter Director John Ramsburgh for an interview. On October 23 Hansen will visit South Carolina to address the coal plant issue and climate change.

Sierra Club: What are the most recent studies suggesting about how fast our planet is warming?

Hansen: It is important to realize that global warming refers not to the year-to-year fluctuations but to changes over a long period. For 30 years now we have been on warming trend at a rate of two-tenths of a degree Celsius per decade. That's about 0.36 degrees Fahrenheit per decade, so more than one degree Fahrenheit in those 30 years.

That doesn't sound like a lot, but it is. It puts global temperature approximately back up to at least the warmest level of the current interglacial period, or twelve thousand years. We have every reason to expect this warming to continue since the planet has only partly responded to the human made greenhouse gases that we have added to the atmosphere over the last 100 years.

Sierra Club: You've talked about our planet approaching several "tipping points." What do you mean by that?

Hansen: A tipping point is when the system reaches a point where positive feedbacks can carry the planet to still larger, relatively rapid changes without any additional forcing by humans or anything else. The Arctic is a prime example of a tipping point. As the sea ice melts it exposes the darker ocean, which absorbs more sunlight, and this in turn melts more ice. Last year we lost almost half of the sea ice in the Arctic by the end of the summer. This year will probably be the second highest year for ice loss.

A tipping point of greater concern is the stability of the ice sheets on Greenland and West Antarctica. If they begin to disintegrate and then lose ice to the ocean at a rate that is out of our control, we would see sea level changes that are irreversible on any timescale that humans can relate to.

Sierra Club: Perhaps these threats help account for your corresponding not only with political leaders from around the world, but captains of industry. What are you telling them and how are they responding?

Hansen: Business leaders are the key players. If they really wanted to, they could help solve the climate crisis. It does require the cooperation of governments, but the captains of industry are the ones who could help move us to energy sources that do not produce large amounts of greenhouse gases. The challenge is to convince them of the urgency of the matter. Some of them are beginning to recognize the urgency, but unfortunately their actions don't yet correspond to what is needed.



According to Dr. Hansen, "Both Greenland and West Antarctica are losing mass now at a rate of more than a hundred cubic kilometers per year."

Sierra Club: We are getting resistance from business interests saying that if they can't build these coal plants then the lights will go out in Myrtle Beach.

Hansen: Well, here's what will happen if we do [build coal plants]. If we continue on this path then we guarantee that our children and grandchildren are going to have a situation that is out of their control. We should have been preparing for this over the last decade or two and unfortunately have not done so.

Still, for the next decade or so we could handle electric power demands with energy efficiency.

Sierra Club: You recently wrote Santee Cooper CEO Lonnie Carter asking that the utility not build its proposed pulverized coal plant in Florence County. Reading the letter I was struck that you mentioned not just the climate threat, but the cost issue. Why do coal plants make bad economic sense?

Hansen: Coal looks like it is the least expensive energy until you calculate its true costs in terms of the environment, human health, and in relation to a federal price on carbon, which is coming in the near future. Even without these costs the price tag for constructing coal plants has been going up rapidly. All studies show that energy efficiency is the cheapest alternative at this time.

Sierra Club: We are trying to start a dialogue about creating efficiency incentives, but we still have people arguing that scientists like you are driven by a liberal political agenda. How do you respond to these charges?

Hansen: It is unfortunate that this issue has become political. I have never completely understood why, since it seems to me that conservatives should be among the people who are most concerned with preserving creation and the environment. By the way, I am an Independent.

Sierra Club: In light of these petitions floating around on the web that deny climate change, can you speak to the level of consensus within the world's scientific community?

Hansen: There is no question. Every major scientific body on the globe has weighed in – not just the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), but our nation's National Academies of Sciences, the American Geophysical Union, the American Meteorological Society, and the list goes on and on.

Sierra Club: One last question. Here in South Carolina we are calling for non-partisan leadership on this issue. Do you have an inspiring story or see positive trends that might give us cause for hope?

Hansen: I am encouraged that young people are beginning to engage. There is an effort called Power Vote aiming to mobilize

1,000,000 young voters to force candidates to address energy and climate issues in key congressional districts.

They are calling for a bold agenda in the first 100 days of a new administration, including a moratorium on coal fired power plants and massive investments in clean energy. This is a great opportunity for leaders to step forward, and there are several governors who have shown vision and courage. They include both Republicans and Democrats, such as Governors Kathleen Sebelius in Kansas, Charlie Crist in Florida, and of course, Arnold Schwarzenegger in California.

Sierra Club: Well, maybe there is hope for us. I heard you sent a letter to our Governor Sanford as well.

Hansen: I did. Let's hope he responds.



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2008 Legislative Summary

by Cary Chamblee



There are few dull moments at the State House and this year was no exception. In addition to budgetary pressures – our state faced a huge shortfall in 2008 – the conservation community faced an open, unprecedented attack from an industry front group masquerading as a conservation organization. “Citizens for Sound Conservation” is bankrolled by special interests



Our volunteers offer a clean energy alternative! l-r: Pam Greenlaw, David Odell, Libby Smith, Erika Hartwig, Cary Chamblee

like the Manufacturers Alliance, SC Ports Authority, the SC Association of Realtors, the Homebuilders Association, Santee Cooper and other electric utilities. The group has placed itself squarely on the wrong side of every major conservation issue in our state, coming out in favor of offshore drilling, Santee Cooper’s dirty coal plant, and expanding the Charleston Port. They also opposed our efforts to craft a reasonable water-allocation bill and have attempted to muddy the waters with the media and at the State House with their pseudo conservation agenda.

The best antidote to special interests is citizen action, and it was a pleasure to work this year with so many great Sierra Club volunteers. Next year will be even better, so I encourage you to contact the office and get involved. By working together we can create a clean, healthy, sustainable South Carolina!

Cary
Legislative Director

Conservation Bank Saved



Now in its fourth year, the Conservation Bank has used voluntary easements and acquisitions to protect vital watersheds, family farms, urban greenways and other vulnerable lands from development. The bank has already preserved over 135,000 acres at an average cost of only \$523 per acre. With the help of conservation friends in the legislature, we were able to preserve this year’s funding. Next year we will continue our efforts to protect this valuable tool used to protect South Carolina’s treasured places.

Nuclear Is NOT Renewable!



In an otherwise innocuous energy bill, utility lobbyists inserted language that classified nuclear as a renewable energy. This bill threatened our state’s credibility and insulted our intelligence since nuclear derives from a finite source, uranium. Moreover, this bill would have had a negative impact on our truly renewable, indigenous energy sources like biomass, wind, and solar. The Sierra Club took the lead in opposing this bill and thanks to our efforts it died in conference committee. We expect this bill to come up again in 2009, so if you support truly renewable energy, please contact our office to learn more.

Net Metering Bill Passed



South Carolina lacks net metering legislation, but change is on the way thanks to the efforts of our net metering team. Sierra Club members lobbied to pass H. 3395, which directs the South Carolina Energy Office and the Office of Regulatory Staff to make recommendations on a statewide net metering program. Our volunteers also took the unprecedented step of intervening at the PSC, which is reviewing net metering proposals for the investor-owned utilities. We are encouraging the PSC to adopt the best net metering practices of other states since ours are confusing and expensive.

Automatic Stay Upheld



According to state law, a private citizen or group can challenge a DHEC permit that poses environmental harm. When this challenge is made, the citizen or group is granted an “automatic stay,” which means the project may not proceed until the challenge is heard by an administrative law judge. Industry front group “Citizens for Sound Conservation” try to shrink the automatic stay period to three days. This bill passed in the House but the conservation community blocked it in the Senate. Once the other side saw that their bill faced defeat, they came to the negotiating table and we were able to reach a settlement giving the public 30 days to intervene on DHEC permits.

Fight Continues for Water!



The biggest disappointment of the session was the failure of S.428, the water-allocation bill. Negotiations on the bill broke down when Duke Energy and manufacturing interests laid claim to 80 percent of our surface waters, leaving just 20 percent for the public. This threatened not only our water-based tourism and sports fishing businesses, but the basic biological integrity of the ecosystems we depend on for recreation and drinking water. With the help of our Senate allies we were able to prevent the final bill from coming to a vote on the Senate floor. 2009 will be a showdown year over our state’s waters.

Opinion: Offshore Drilling Hurts American Security

by Dennis Chamberlain



Dennis Chamberlain is an attorney practicing in Greenville and member of the William Bartram Group.

Syndicated columnist and free market guru Thomas Friedman noted recently that in addition to the crowds of Republican delegates at the Minneapolis convention chanting “Drill, baby, drill!” a number of our nation’s enemies undoubtedly shared in the celebration:

Hugo Chavez, Vladimir Putin and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

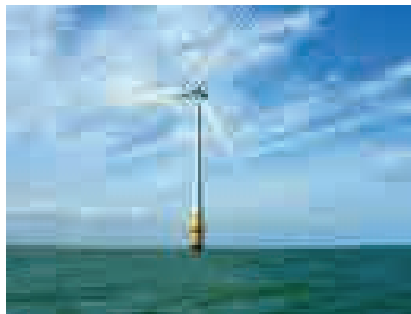
Why? Because by opening the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) and our offshore continental shelf to oil drilling, we *won't* reduce prices at the pump, and we *won't* increase our country’s energy independence. But we will make them richer.

How? It’s very simple: our country has three percent of the world’s oil reserves yet consumes 20 percent of its oil. Increasing national production will not measurably lower prices, but will perpetuate our dependence on oil. And this dependence has the direct consequence of raising prices worldwide and strengthening the regimes of these anti-American petrodictators.

Each year we export \$700 billion dollars to buy oil, largely from regimes hostile to the United States. If trends continue over the next 10 years, our payment will exceed \$10 trillion. According to T. Boone Pickens, a former oil tycoon and vocal skeptic of offshore drilling, it will be the greatest transfer of wealth in the history of humankind.

We shouldn’t be surprised that Big Oil is cynically capitalizing on our pain at the pump to get a lock on the last remaining bits of our offshore continental shelf, even though they are currently sitting on leases to 91.5 million acres of federal lands and water. It’s a chance for them to corner the last frontier and then sit and wait for prices to rise.

But we should be disappointed that so many South Carolina elected officials in both parties are changing their tune on offshore drilling in order to score cheap points with voters. In 2005, Senator Lindsay Graham stated, “If you start opening up offshore drilling, then you are buying time and you are not addressing the fundamental problem with fossil fuels.” Last month he declared our coasts “a cash cow. Out there in American-controlled waters is a lot of oil and gas. So let’s go get it.”



Experts agree that South Carolina’s coast has little oil. But it does have high offshore wind potential.

He’s almost right. Our South Carolina coast is a cash cow, powering our state’s \$16 billion tourism industry. This industry depends on clean, beautiful beaches. At an August Rotary Club in North Charleston, Senator Graham stated that no oil rigs in the Gulf region leaked during Hurricane Katrina. Truth is, Katrina and Rita each sent tens of thousands of gallons of oil into the Gulf of Mexico.

Meanwhile, State Senator Robert Ford (D-North Charleston), with the backing of industry front group Citizens for Sound Conservation, plans to introduce legislation in 2009 at the State House to open our coasts to drilling.

Of course the oil companies are spending millions to amplify the message “Drill here. Drill now. Pay less.” Doesn’t mean they will. Sitting on these leases keeps the prices high; while American families watch their paychecks disappear into their gas tanks, Exxon Mobile reported last-quarter profits of \$44 billion.

Thus, it looks like we can expect the political candidates and their special interest backers to continue misrepresenting the facts on offshore drilling.

But in the interest truth, let’s correct some myths:

- **Myth One. Drilling in these areas will cause the price of gas to go down and help the American consumer.**

Reality: In May, the Department of Energy reported that any increase in oil production from ANWR “would likely be offset ... by lower production outside of the United States.” By 2025 the mean price of oil would be reduced by a mere 75 cents per barrel — or less than 2 cents per gallon. Meanwhile increasing demand worldwide will continue to drive up prices, overwhelming any short-term gains.

- **Myth 2. Drilling can be done in an environmentally sensitive manner.**

Reality: Prudhoe Bay and the Alaska pipeline averaged one spill per day from 1996 through 1999, for a total of 1.3 million gallons of oil and diesel fuel spilled into that fragile environment. Closer to home, Colonial Pipeline pleaded guilty in 1999 to criminal charges and was fined \$7 million for leaking 960,000 gallons of fuel into the Reedy River in Greenville. Last month more than 500,000 gallons of fuel spilled into the Mississippi River . . .

- **Myth 3: Drilling is needed to improve national security.**

Reality: Drilling undermines national security by perpetuating our dependence on fossil fuels. The Department of Defense has listed climate change as a major contributor to future national security risks. Perpetuating our dependence on oil only increases global warming.

Chapter Briefs

The most effective way to make positive change is through grassroots advocacy. Or in Gandhi's words, "Be the change you wish to see in the world."

At the Public Service Commission



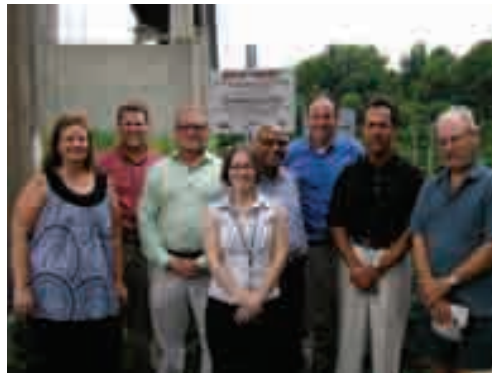
Bruce Wood of Sunstore Solar and David Odell of Southern Energy Management prepare their testimony before addressing the PSC.

Disappointed with utility proposals that are weak on net metering and strong on base load generation, Sierra Club members have begun intervening at the South Carolina Public Service Commission (SCPSC), the state-appointed agency that oversees the utility industry. Partnering with renewable energy entrepreneurs and our allies at Friends of the Earth, citizen volunteers have submitted comments and provided testimony on the benefits of efficiency and renewables and against the million-dollar subsidies for nuclear plants.

Are you upset with the way your rates have been going up? Why aren't South Carolina's renewable resources being promoted? These are good questions for the Public Service Commission, which needs to hear more from citizen ratepayers. The work is challenging but provides one more way to pursue a clean energy future.

If you would like to learn more or get involved, please contact our lead organizer on this campaign, Pam Greenlaw, at pmglrnw@yahoo.com

Encouraging Signs at DHEC



Partnering in the cause of cleaner water. l-r: Rebekah Woodford, Chuck Gorman, Jim Glover, Rebecca Spratlin, Ollie Johnson, John Ramsburgh, David Wilson, Bob Guild

DHEC's Water Bureau is posting over 400 signs at public access points around the state where waters fail to meet federal safety standards for fecal coliform, or where mercury contamination to fish presents a health risk to consumers. Says Water Bureau Chief David Wilson, "The Department is pleased with the results of the new sign program as we continue to provide meaningful information to the public about water quality in South Carolina." The bureau has also joined the Sierra Club in a stakeholder process to strengthen the broader agency's response to environmental and health issues.

DHEC is also reevaluating its freshwater monitoring program and will be holding forums around the state to receive public input.

Places and dates:

Charleston, Oct. 21 Florence, Oct. 28
Columbia, Nov. 6 Greenville, Nov. 13

All meetings begin at 6 p.m. **For location specifics, please contact Karin Skipper, DHEC Public Participation Coordinator, at skippek@dhc.sc.gov**

Recycling Effort Pays Off!



Jeremy Grant accepts a \$2,500 donation to the chapter from St. Pat's Festival organizer Jack Van Loon.

Ever been to a big street party and notice that no one is recycling? Ever wish there was something you could do about it? Under the leadership of Sierra Club member Jeremy Grant, the John Bachman Group has assembled a dedicated recycling team that has worked several area events and festivals.

At the Columbia St. Patrick's Day Festival on May 15, Jeremy assembled recycling team of over 40 volunteers. During the course of the day the team recycled 1,760 pounds of cardboard and 1,160 pounds of aluminum and plastic. In other words, they saved over 1 ½ tons of recyclable material from going to the local landfill! They also earned the thanks of the event organizers, who donated \$2,500 to the Chapter in appreciation of their efforts.

Want to get involved or bring recycling efforts to your community? Contact Jeremy Grant at jeremygrant2@hotmail.com

Chapter Elections!

What makes the Sierra Club special? Our governing executive committee is not hand-picked by donors but elected by our membership. This means YOU! Five great candidates are running for three open spots. Please read their statements carefully and then vote for your top three. You'll find the ballot slip on the last page of this issue. Ballots must be postmarked by November 4. Happy Voting!

Trey Fouche



The Sierra Club exists to “educate and enlist humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environment.” I believe that with appropriate reflection and guided application the South Carolina Chapter possesses the ability to create this transformation.

I currently serve as the Conservation Chair of the Bartram Group ExCom. In this capacity I have worked with our members and other environmental groups to protect the rivers and waterways of the Upstate. Sprawl places significant pressure on our natural resources and I believe it is the responsibility of communities to plan appropriately for growth. I have also served as chair of the Wildlands/Wildlife Committee for the Georgia Chapter.

As a university faculty member in Outdoor Leadership, I strive to help students understand the impact that we have on the environment. I use interdisciplinary methods to help students understand how nature is connected to their daily lives. I hope that as a member of the Chapter Executive Committee I can help educate South Carolinians about their natural resources and to enlist them in protecting our precious environment.

Bob Guild



I ask for your support for reelection to our chapter executive committee. For over 30 years I have worked as an environmental lawyer to protect South Carolina's many special places. In recent years I have served as your Chapter Chair and delegate to the National Council of Sierra Club Leaders. I am currently honored to serve as Chapter Conservation Chair.

South Carolina Sierrans have led the way in the struggle to protect our environment. Last year we won an unprecedented victory against powerful polluters who sought to keep the Barnwell nuclear waste dump open to the nation. Sierrans are also leading advocates for a safe, clean and sustainable energy future for South Carolina. Most recently, Sierrans have drawn new attention to the pollution of our lakes and rivers. Thanks to our efforts DHEC has begun posting advisories along contaminated waterways in our state.

No fight to protect our environment is ever truly finished and much work lies ahead. To face such historic challenges as climate change and the unprecedented loss of wildlife habitat, I ask for your support to continue the work of strengthening our club's ability to lead in the fight to save our planet.

Emily Jackson



I moved to South Carolina last year from Vermont, where I received both a law degree and masters in environmental law. Recently I became Executive Director of the Black Creek Land Trust, an organization dedicated to protecting the Black Creek Watershed. I am also co-chair of Responsible Economic Development and eight months into a yearlong project to eat only local food.

I have served as head of the Pee Dee Group's Energy Film Festival Committee, member of the Florence Trail's Dedication Day Committee, and campaign director for a candidate in a hotly contested mayoral race.

While I believe in a holistic approach to protecting our environment, I am primarily interested in three issues: the fight for clean energy and environmental justice; the promotion of local food initiatives; and building sustainable communities. I feel progress can be made on these issues through outreach and political involvement.

Being in the Pee Dee has been an incredible experience and I hope that you will consider me as an at-large candidate for the Chapter's Executive Committee.

Leslie Miner



Since the late 1970s I have worked as a volunteer with a myriad of conservation organizations. One of the key issues that I have focused on in South Carolina is to stop the importation of toxic and radioactive waste being shipped into our state for disposal. Our work has resulted in the closure of two toxic waste incinerators, the Laidlaw hazardous waste dump and the Barnwell radioactive waste facility.

More recently, I have dedicated myself as a Sierra Club volunteer to educating the public and our elected officials on energy issues. Here in South Carolina we waste massive amounts of energy by air-conditioning and heating our poorly built and inadequately insulated homes. It is my belief that, if shown the way and given the incentives, South Carolinians can achieve what has been done in other states and substantially reduce their home energy use. By doing so, not only will we save scarce resources, we can eliminate the need to build more costly, polluting base load power plants.

I would appreciate the chance to serve on the Sierra Club Executive Committee, where I will continue to work tirelessly to make South Carolina a greener state.

Marissa Mitzner



South Carolina has been an intricate part of my life as a conservationist. It was after I arrived as a student at Coastal Carolina University that I found my passion in helping to educate others about the environment while protecting it at the same time.

While at Coastal, I initiated recycling and environmental education programs. These efforts led to my hiring as the university's first fulltime Sustainability Coordinator. At Coastal I have been growing the recycling program by reaching different aspects of the university through game day and move-in-day recycling, and have also started a bicycle initiative. I believe that education is the foundation to any sound conservation movement, and I work to ensure that everyone is aware of the delicate environment that we share.

As a member of the Winyah Group Executive Committee I see the need for greater youth involvement in the Sierra Club. If I am elected to the Chapter Executive Committee I will work on outreach to get a younger and more diverse group of people involved with the Sierra Club. I'm confident that I would make an excellent addition to the group as I have so much to give, as well as so much to gain, from this experience.

The Great Outdoors: John Muir's South Carolina Connection

by Norman Shar



South Carolina resident and Sierra Club member Norman Shar visited Yosemite's LeConte Lodge in August.

Most South Carolina Club members know that the Club started in California and has its national headquarters in San Francisco. Club founder John Muir established our national parks system, including Yosemite National Park. But there is a special connection between John Muir and South Carolina in the person of Joseph LeConte.

If you visit the park and ride the bus through Yosemite Valley, one of the stops is the Sierra Club's LeConte Memorial Lodge, built in 1903 in memory of Joseph LeConte, one of the founding Sierra Club members and a friend of John Muir. LeConte was an early Club leader in exploring, climbing, mapping, and protecting Yosemite and the Sierra Nevada. He died in Yosemite Valley the night before the Club's first national outing in 1901.

The Lodge was the first visitor center in Yosemite and has a trove of information on LeConte and Muir. It is owned by the Park and operated by the Sierra Club. Curator Bonnie Gisel and Club volunteers keep it open from May through September. One of its first curators was the legendary Ansel Adams. From the front porch of the Lodge, one can see the famous Yosemite landmarks Half Dome, Glacier Point, and Yosemite Falls.

Joseph LeConte had close ties to South Carolina. He was born at Woodmanston Plantation in southern Georgia, graduated from the University of Georgia, and was a professor of Geology and Chemistry at the University of South Carolina from 1857 to 1869. During the Civil War he produced medicines in Columbia. In his autobiography he wrote of the city, "My life in Columbia was perhaps the most

pleasant in my whole career. The society was the most refined and cultivated I have ever known." He left South Carolina after the Civil War and became head of the Geology Department at the University of California in Berkeley.

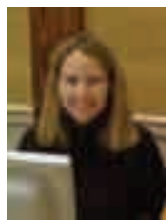
As an indication of LeConte's influence in South Carolina, the Math and Statistics building at USC in Columbia is named after Joseph and his brother, as is Mount LeConte in Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Joseph LeConte's son-in-law, Farish Furman, was the grandson of Furman University founder Richard Furman.

My wife and I had the opportunity to volunteer at the Lodge during a week in August this year, informing visitors about the exhibits and setting up for the nightly programs. I could have spent my whole week in Yosemite just browsing through the fascinating exhibits and reading the books in the extensive library.

Every Club member who visits Yosemite should also see LeConte Memorial Lodge. As curator Bonnie Gisel said, "It is the heart and soul of Sierra Club in Yosemite." For more information on the LeConte Lodge and to see a short video, go to www.sierraclub.org/leconte.

Staff Updates

Mary Beth Bolt



After nearly six months of dedicated service to the Sierra Club, Mary Beth departed in May so that she could begin preparing for her first year of law school at USC. Good luck Mary Beth!

Rebekah Woodford



Rebekah joins us as Administrator and Conservation Education Director. She has degrees in biology and environmental studies and has developed a curriculum for educating South Carolina students in water ecology. Welcome to the team Rebekah!

CALENDAR

CHAPTER EVENTS:

October 4, Florence Energy Forum The Chapter hosts Research Director John Wilson of the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy for a forum on efficiency at the Florence-Darlington Technical College. The forum begins at 2 p.m. in the Fred C. Fore Auditorium, Building 400. Directions are on our website.



After the forum join us for a potluck supper at John Ramsburgh's family farm in Darlington! Call office for details.

October 5, Chapter Executive Committee Quarterly Meeting

Executive Committee meeting at Lynchess River County Park.

October 23-25 NASA scientist Dr. James Hansen visits South Carolina. Check our website for details.

November 4, Executive Committee election ballots due!

GROUP EVENTS:

For listings in your areas, please go to our website calendar:

southcarolina.sierraclub.org/calendar.html

WANTED!

Do you have editing, layout or writing experience? The Chapter is looking for a new editor and for contributions! Please contact our office if you would like to get involved.

The Congaree Chronicle (ISSN #0164-5676) is published quarterly by the Sierra Club of South Carolina. Advertising rates and terms: half page, \$1200; quarter page, \$600; eighth page, \$300. Circulation: 6,000 households, as well as media and elected leaders.

In Appreciation

Contributions from Sierra Club members like you make our conservation work possible. Thank you! Donations received from March 1 to August 30, 2008

White Oak (\$2500+)

Elliott Close
Rebecca and Harry Dalton

Magnolia (\$1000-\$2499)

Anonymous (1)
Bettina and Don George

Longleaf Pine (\$500-\$999)

Lisa and John Courson
Carol Ervin
Barbara Postles

Spruce (\$250-\$499)

Susan Corbett
Patricia and Ed FitzGerald
Bob Guild
Eleanor and William Hare
Kathleen Kempe and
Ron Sobczak
Keith McCook
Barbara and Earl Meyer
Catherine and
Robert Murphy
Cynthia and Daniel Tufford
Jack Wetzel
The Winyah Group
Connie and Joe Zdenek

Dogwood (\$100-\$249)

Anonymous (1)
Jane Anker
LaNelle and Robert Barber
Ethel Brody
Mary Mack and William Cain
Susan Campbell and
William Hillfer
Janet Ciegler
Elbin Cleveland
Sandra DuBose
Carl Ek
Rebecca Evans
Barbara and
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Susan Heyward
Susan Hilfer and
William Campbell
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Jacquelyn and James Robey
Rebecca and
Michael Shettleroe
Patricia and Robert Shufeldt
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Catherine and John Spragins
Lisa Wagner and
Timothy Spira
Betty Wiggins
Linda Winecuff
June Yanick

Rosebud (\$50-\$99)

Anonymous (2)
Barbara and
William Anderson
Michelle Andra
Elizabeth and Charles Baker
Carol Barker
Laura and Keith Barron
Jeff Blackwelder
Peggy and Frank Brown
Cornelia Carrier
Virginia and
Stewart Christner
Alice and John Claggett
Diane and Page Crouch
Sam Daniel
Peg De Lamater
Beverly Diamond and
Edwin Hettinger
Carol and Don Dodson
Ken Driggers
Walter Duane
Ellen and Robert Elson
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Julia and Robert Hall
Robert Hanlin
Merridee Harper and
David Blumberg
Barbara and Samuel Harmon
Page Harris and
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Lauren Clarke
Susan and Jay Close
Alexandra and William Cole
Leslie Coolidge
Adam Cooper
Jan Steensen Crangle
Brian Davenport
Pat Dilger
Leon M. Ember
Susan and Fred Elsasser
Mary Evans
Nora Rooche Field
Mary Finlay
Nancy and Matthew Fitzer
Nancy and Steven Fleming
Joyce Franklin
Bonnie Gepfert
Joni and Leslie Grady
Rachel and Maurice Gray
Bonnie and Dan Hasson
Thelma and Harlan Hawkins
Bonnie Ideal
Ann James
Barbara Katzenberg
Mary and Robert Kelly
Eric Lacy
Sarah and Ernest Lander
Paul Lewis
Jullian Libet
John Lind
Sheryl and
Robert Linsenmayer
Anita Longan
Adienne and Irving Lustig
Francie and Doug Markham
Richard Massey
Linda and Glen Maupin
Fred McGuffin
Ian and Goffinet McLaren
Phoebe McLeod
Patricia and Thomas Merck
Suzanne and Frederick Miller
Gerald Moran
Linda and Noel Morphis
Laura Moses
Barbara and Robert Moxon
Joe Mullinas
Kelly Murphy
Valerie and
Marcil Nechemias
Jo Pearce
Robin Pepper
Susan and David Pierce
Bonnie Ramey
Cynthia and James Rodgers
Mary Roe
Terry Ross and
Stan Gamberg
Mariette Ruppert
Susan Schmidt
Alphia Schrader
and Josephine May
Linda and Norman Sharp
Lynn Shirley

Peter Silverston
Felicia Smith
James Spruill
Ann Stoeckman and
Stuart Grainger
Angeline Sturgis
Mary Jane Sturwold
Karen and Joseph Thomas
James Townsend
Mary and Thomas Tracy
Robert Thomas
Steve Valder
Frieda and Mackie Walker
Bonnie and Boque Wallin
Susan Webb

Red Clover (<\$25)

Patricia Jane and Joe Aduelo
Carol Asalon and
John Bateson
Brent Barron
John Buchanan
Joanna and John Davis
Kenneth Davis
Cindy Dieringer
Sandra Ford
Mary Fray
Irwin From
Carol Gelhaus
Ralph Haller
Alvin Henderson
Shirley and
David Hildebrand
Howard Hill
Amy Horwitz and Norm Shea
Elaine and Hampton Hunter
Matt Kulp
Susan and Wayne Kyzer
Andy Langston
Grace and Laurence Laughlin
Ann McKerney
Iris and Andrew Meeker
Alex Moton
Alma Nunnally
Sylvia and Raymond Phillips
Jeanne Robinson
Gerda Ruksenas
Francisca Samra
Rosemary Schiavi
David Shuford
Jo Anne Simson
Susan Scott Soyars
David Ronald Smith
Louis Smith
Winifred Spears
Stella Stripling

2008 Official Sierra Club Ballot: At-Large Candidates to Chapter Executive Committee

Voting Instructions: Please place checks by your top three (3) candidates and then mail the completed ballot in a sealed envelop to our office postmarked by November 4. **Your name and member number must be written on the outside of the envelope!** You can find your member number on the mailing label below or on your membership card.

The Candidates	Your Vote	If joint membership, your partner's vote
Trey Fouche		
Bob Guild		
Emily Jackson		
Leslie Minerd		
Marissa Mitzner		

After verifying the eligibility of the ballots received, the Elections Committee will separate the ballots from the envelopes before examining the ballots and tabulating the votes. Failure to follow voting instructions may invalidate your ballot.

Send ballot to:
 Nena Powell Rice
 Elections Committee Chair
 Sierra Club of South Carolina
 P.O. Box 2388
 Columbia, SC 29202

Our organization depends on you! Please vote!
Remember to write your member number on envelope

Want to contribute to your state chapter? You can include a donation with your ballot!

Please make your check payable to: Sierra Club of South Carolina, P.O Box 2388, Columbia, SC 29202. Your contribution to the Sierra Club is not tax deductible; it supports our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobby efforts. If you prefer to make a tax-deductible gift to support our work, please call 803-256-8487 to learn how.

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