The View from Standing Rock

By Brian Koon

First night in the camp of the Rosebud Sioux on the south bank of the Cannonball River. I arrive just before midnight. Pitch black surrounds the camp. A few fires offer some light. No road but a dry dirt lane packed hard by hundreds of cars and pickups traveling here over the months of the protest. I park, climb out, stretch from the long drive, and as I look upwards. It’s as if the sky has exploded into stars. The Milky Way spreads before me. 

Changing Kansas, One Election At A Time

We must not let this opportunity pass us by!! So much in our natural world is being subjugated by the dictates of Big Fossil Fuels and Corporate America. Go to page 6 to learn who to vote for and, importantly, how YOU can help.

See Elect on page 6

See Standing Rock page 8
With your help we can protect the wolf

Wolves are vitally important to maintaining nature’s balance, culling out weak and sick animals to keep populations of elk and deer healthy and in check. The Sierra Club is working to defend wolf populations from continued threats from politicians.

Lead the pack & JOIN Sierra Club.
Vote “NO” on Proposed KS Constitutional Amendment about Wildlife

By Elaine Giessel, Conservation Chair, Kansas Chapter

Proposed Amendment §21. Right of public to hunt, fish and trap wildlife. The people have the right to hunt, fish and trap, including by the use of traditional methods, subject to reasonable laws and regulations that promote wildlife conservation and management and that preserve the future of hunting and fishing. Public hunting and fishing shall be a preferred means of managing and controlling wildlife. This section shall not be construed to modify any provision of law relating to trespass, property rights or water resources.

During the last legislative session in Topeka, our lawmakers approved putting proposed Constitutional Amendment 21 on the November 8 ballot. If approved by a simple majority of eligible Kansas voters, the right to hunt, fish and trap will be added to the Kansas Bill of Rights, along with such notable entitlements as equality, free speech and prohibition of slavery.

The Kansas Sierra Club opposes this constitutional amendment.

The proposed amendment would appear to be a case of a solution in search of a problem. If the amendment passes, current laws and regulations governing hunting, fishing and trapping of wildlife would still apply, as the proposed right is subject to reasonable laws and regulations. If the amendment fails, there would be no changes to current laws and regulations.

However, one sentence in the proposed amendment is of special concern: “Public hunting and fishing shall be a preferred means of managing and controlling wildlife.” The use of the verb “shall” implies legal obligation and “wildlife” includes both game and nongame species.

Wildlife “control” issues are complex and often have to be addressed case by case. Management decisions should be based on the best available science and on recommendations made by expert wildlife biologists. All reasonable alternatives for maintaining healthy ecosystems must be considered and evaluated. Public hunting, fishing and trapping remain options but cannot be required as a preferred solution.

See Wildlife on page 9
Frackquakes Migrating to Northwest Kansas

By Joe Spease, Chairman, Hydraulic Fracturing Committee

Earthquakes believed to be attributed to disposal of oil and gas waste fluids into injection wells in Northwest Kansas are occurring more frequently. In recent weeks there have been 4 quakes registering a magnitude of 3.0 and higher near Ellis County. 8 quakes have been registered overall.

The Kansas Geological Survey (KGS) believes it is possible that disposal into injection wells is causing the quakes. More study will be needed, but the quakes are similar to those that have caused serious damage to property in South Central Kansas over the last 4 years. Like South Central Kansas quakes, the ones in Northwest Kansas have occurred at shallow depths ranging from 1-5 kilometers. Natural quakes usually occur at depths far greater, usually at 50 km and deeper.

Like South Central Kansas, in Northwest Kansas especially around Ellis County, there are fault lines that, when affected by the disposal of fracking fluids into injection wells near the fault lines, will result in quakes. In an interview with KSN-TV, Fort Hays State University professor of geology, Dr. Hendratta Ali said, “We’re used to tornadoes around here, but definitely not used to earthquakes.” She went on to say that there is no way to tell, without more study, if larger quakes can be expected. She then confirmed that there are fault lines underground beneath Ellis County.

One question that many citizens in Ellis County are asking is, “What insurance is available to protect our property?” Now that earthquakes are established, it will be harder to find affordable insurance.

The issue of insurance and compensation for damages to property is sure to be raised in the next legislative session in Topeka. Historically, Kansas has averaged about 1 earthquake per year and those were typically small. With frackquakes over the last 4 years now increasing to hundreds per year the damages to property are skyrocketing. One petroleum geologist estimates the damages to property in the “frackquake corridor,” which runs from north Texas through Oklahoma into Kansas, at $1-$2 billion. Much of that damage is not insured since insurance companies claim that the quakes are man-made. Oil and gas companies say that it is impossible to punish them for damages since no one can point to a particular injection of their toxic waste fluids as the cause of a particular quake. Yet the United States Geological Survey (USGS) has declared in scientific studies that disposing of fracking waste fluids into injection wells near fault lines is indeed the cause of the frackquakes.

Something must be done to help people who have dangerous cracks in their foundations, walls, windows, roads, bridges, public buildings, and more. It is important that people contact their state representatives and senators, and the commissioners at the Kansas Corporation Commission (KCC) which is the regulatory agency for oil and gas in Kansas. Anyone can call or email the Kansas Sierra Club for guidance.

The KCC has taken action to bring some relief to Kansans in the central part of the state where frackquakes have been severe and frequent. The KCC passed an Order which reduced the amount of fracking waste fluids that could be disposed into injection wells in South Central Kansas. Since that Order was passed, the number of frackquakes has decreased. So, we should take care to learn from that experience before the damages from frackquakes in Northwest Kansas climb higher.

We are fairly certain that we know the cause of the newest quakes. Now we need the support of the legislature and the KCC to protect Kansans from brutal damages to property from frackquakes. To begin with we are starting a petition to bring to the KCC calling for another Order to stop the use of problem injection wells in Northwest Kansas. The Sierra Club will work hard to protect people from this environmental threat.
The Climate Crisis and the Food We Eat.

By JoAnn Farb

Although veganism is fundamentally about non-violence towards all beings, many who don’t share this value still adopt a plant-based diet for its greenhouse gas-reducing effect. Even ignoring the animals, the social justice imperative of ending animal agriculture is clear: If sea levels do rise as our current trajectory predicts, poor populations around the world in low-lying areas will be forced to emigrate in numbers never before seen. It is possible some of us alive now will witness mass migrations that could make today’s Syrian refugee crisis look small.

World Watch Institute has stated that, “The human appetite for meat is a driving force behind virtually every category of environmental destruction,” while a 2006 UN Report explained that animal agriculture contributes more greenhouse gases than the entire transportation sector. The recent drought in California – where much of our food comes from, was sobering. Yet in Orwellian fashion, many people heard that almond crops sucked down 10% of California’s water (and in so doing provide 80% of the world’s demand for almonds) while meat and dairy producers slid by under the radar — using HALF the state’s water to produce only about 1% of the world’s beef and dairy!

Given that our collective “choice” of what to eat, might make the difference as to whether Bangladesh and Florida sink under the ocean — there is no time to lose in showing people how delicious, satisfying, and easy it is to eat a diet based exclusively on plants. And there is a wonderful side effect for individuals who make this transition. We have compelling science showing that a whole-foods, plant-based diet can prevent, and often even reverse the majority of chronic diseases that disable and kill Americans. Now, newer studies also suggest that our cell’s telomeres – the end caps on our DNA — which control the upper limits of lifespan — actually grow longer in individuals who make this switch — overturning previous biology dogma about how telomeres only shorten with time, never lengthen!

When my husband and I married 24 years ago, many of our guests who heard that our wedding spread would be vegan, made sure to eat a meal before attending, so sure they were that there would be nothing for them to eat. Yet after the buffet was served, many of them told us that our vegan buffet was the best wedding food they had ever had! Our children are both grown now, but they frequently remark how grateful they are that we made the choice to raise them vegan BEFORE they had enough understanding to make the choice for themselves. Because of all this, it never ceases to surprise all of us how many here in progressive Lawrence still wonder if a vegan diet can be healthful, satisfying, or even possible.

I have been teaching cooking classes and nutrition education for over twenty years now, and enjoy helping people learn simple ways to adapt their old familiar recipes, or try out new foods while educating them about the wealth of studies that are compelling and inspiring. It is immensely gratifying when people tell me that information I shared has profoundly improved their quality of life. Every week it seems I meet someone else with an extraordinary story of getting off all medication and feeling better than ever as a result of going vegan.

I will be presenting a food demo and sampling of plant-based foods for Sierra Club members who would like to learn more, pick up a few tips, have questions answered, or just get inspired in their dietary journey. The class will be two hours long, during which time I will demonstrate how to make rich, creamy, pourable cheesy sauce from carrots, potatoes, sunflower seeds, and nutritional yeast, then show how to adapt it for pasta and peas, make it into hot cheese dip for chip dipping, and use it to top burritos. We’ll sample coconut date balls, learn how to make a smokey “Gooda” Cheese from nuts, and make and sample salad dressings that will entice you to eat more leafy greens than ever before! Finally, we’ll sample a plant-based meat alternative, and learn how to use it to make delicious grab-and-go food. Everything will be entirely gluten-free, too. Contact Karin Pagel-Meiners [kpagelmeiners@earthlink.net with RSVP in the Subject line] if you would like to be part of this special event on Monday, October 24, 2016 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at the Lawrence Public Library, Meeting Room B.

JoAnn Farb is a writer, speaker, and microbiologist, addressing the intersections of health, environmental sustainability, and social justice. She is the author of Compassion Souls — Raising the Next Generation to Change the World and Get Off Gluten.
Changing Kansas, One Election At A Time

For all our 2016 election information go to: 
http://kansas.sierraclub.org/get-your-kansas-political-information-here-2/

or, go to our home page www.kansas.sierraclub.org, look for Uncle Sam, and click Learn More

The above links take you to our Political Home Page on our website where we have tried to put all the information regarding our recommendations for the upcoming Kansas election. Specifically, you will find:

- How to find your state House and Senate districts
- How to find your U.S. Congressional districts and who your U.S. Senators are
- Find out how to send in your Application for Advanced Ballot
- Find our Kansas Sierra Club endorsements sorted by legislative district, by candidates’ last name, and by candidates’ home town
- Find a link for volunteer opportunities to help local candidates
- Find our link to donate to our Kansas Sierra Club Political Action Committee online
- Find our Legislative Scorecard prepared by our Legislative Director Zack Pistora
- Find our position on a Kansas Constitutional Amendment about wildlife (FYI, vote no. See page 3 in this newsletter.)

Elect Jay Sidie in the U.S. 3rd Congressional District.

We have a great shot of electing someone we can count on in the U.S. 3rd. Jay Sidie will be a breath of fresh air!! Get involved in Jay’s campaign. Go to Jay’s website and find out how you can help.
http://www.jay4congress.com/

Kansas Sierra Club Legislative Endorsements

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How can I say this?

Ya’ll need to step it up!!

By Craig Wolfe, Communications Director
info@Kansas.SierraClub.org

Frankly, I have been disappointed in our members this year. Electing Environmental Heroes cannot be and should not be only up to Kansas Sierra Club leaders. At our PAC parties, we have more candidates there than Sierra members. There are not enough volunteers to help our endorsed candidates. We are struggling to raise money so that we can direct resources to elect the right candidates.

With Brownback’s record, this is such an enormous opportunity. Anti-enviro legislators who are beholden to the Kochs and Big Fossil Fuels have never been more vulnerable.

But you can still make a huge difference. The next few weeks are the weeks that really count!

Check out our website. Volunteer your time, Write a check.

We can do this, or we can drop the ball. Please, show your true colors.
I’m Not Asking for Your Money...Really!

Elaine Giessel, Chapter Vice Chair

The Sierra Club actually values your passion and skills as much as your monetary support. That may come as a surprise, given the many times you’ve been asked for donations. But in reality, the oldest and most effective grassroots environmental organization in the nation depends upon the expertise and commitment of its diverse members.

Running an environmental nonprofit organization has real challenges. Our “program,” including our many different outings and our conservation objectives, is what appeals to most people and keeps them paying dues. It’s not that difficult to attract people who want to go hiking and or who hope to share their interests with fellow environmental advocates.

But the sustainability stool of the Sierra Club itself has two other essential legs: administration and fund-raising. Those individuals with expertise in leading outings or on specific conservation issues have their work cut out, but we often lack true managerial skills. We simply can’t expect the technical “wonks” to do everything well.

We have a great need for new leaders, whose passion for the environment is balanced with administrative experience. To assist running the organization we welcome money-managers, educators, secretaries, meeting facilitators, publicists, graphic designers, grant writers, social media fans, students, campaign strategists, hospitality hosts and event coordinators who are willing to put their skills to work for the environment. It’s a huge challenge that is critical for the survival of the Sierra Club in Kansas.

Largely because the Kansas Sierra Club has a relatively small membership and limited financial resources, we can’t afford to hire full-time staff. Our Chapter is governed and driven by a “board” of elected volunteers who serve as the Executive Committee (ExCom). Currently, the Chapter ExCom has three under-paid and over-worked part-time staff to assist volunteer efforts. The five local Groups in Kansas function almost entirely with volunteer effort, with assistance from Chapter staff as needed.

Volunteer burn-out is real; we need help. Younger perspectives would be great, but retired members often can contribute more time. If you can’t serve on a governing board now, perhaps you would work short-term on a special administrative, conservation or outings committee or project. A current leader can help find the right place for your skill set and passions; you don’t need to be an issues expert.

Now is the time to step up. Our annual Chapter and Group ExCom elections are approaching. Nomination committees at both the Chapter and Group levels are searching...
Way isn’t just visible from horizon to horizon. It is bright. I stand in the cold and the darkness, stunned by the beauty of the natural world. I have never seen the Milky Way like this. I have never seen nature like this.

The Northern Lights are visible on the northeast horizon, green columns of light that seem too weird to be real or natural. Also visible are the lights of drones circling overhead, owned by Dakota Access or the State Police, probably equipped with infrared sensors to count us in the darkness while we sleep. In many ways this place is isolated and pristine and untainted by humans, but it also feels like a war zone. There is a very real battle for the soul of this river going on here—and perhaps for the future of this country and the planet itself.

Oil? No oil? Water? No water?

Today, the battlefield is Standing Rock.

At dawn, mist rises from the Cannonball River. Helicopters and fixed wing aircraft photograph us and watch all that we do. They don’t need to fly overhead to find out. All they need to do is ask and we would tell them: we split firewood in preparation for the coming winter so Mni Wiconi, the water of life, will never be unguarded. Children play and ride bicycles together, racing horseback riders from here to there. The kids always win.

Prayers are offered in dozens of languages and virtually every religion on the planet. We cook in a large communal kitchen, wash dishes, sort donations and inventory what we have so we can plan. People have traveled hundreds, even thousands, of miles to work here for no money. Some risk arrest; some left jobs or homes to return to an ancestral land that hadn’t been “home” in two generations. No one here is afraid. Which greatly confuses the construction workers and the employees of the oil companies, and even many of the police with all their weapons and violence at the ready.

Our opponents only understand personal gain and profit. We frighten because they cannot understand our motivation. We have no single common language, religion, culture, or nationality. But we do have unity of purpose, and that transcends all.

I believe they are afraid of us. Why else would they bring in assault rifles and riot armor, armored vehicles and tear gas, more weapons and armor almost every day—all to fight un-
armed people who came to pray in the road? Mahatma Gandhi called it “Soul Force,” and it is here in abundance in the camps of all the nations and people who have come to oppose the “Black Snake”—the pipeline.

A slight woman named Red Fawn was thrown onto the road and violently arrested by police as she prayed, but she didn’t stop praying until her prayer was done. We treat our opponents with the compassion they would deny us, and we are better for it.

Water protectors have shut down construction almost daily with nonviolent methods. We rejoice with music and dancing around campfires. An old white woman named Mary Beth fearlessly walked up to the police after they made a show of loading their guns. She strode across the no man’s land of the road that separated us and shook each officer by the hand. All the other water protectors followed her example, including Indians on horses.

Some of the police whispered that they agreed with us. As the day wore on, the police became hot in their armor and Mary Beth and others brought them water, and by her generosity shamed them for their fear of us. They couldn’t refuse a drink of water.

Water. It all comes back to the water.

Employees of Dakota Access “explain” to water protectors on the front line that in the unlikely event of a spill from the pipeline, the water will be cleaned and returned “cleaner” or better than before the spill, with fewer microbes or “stuff” in it.

“Why can’t you understand that?” they ask the water protectors.

Cleaned? Better?

The river doesn’t need to be “cleaned.” The river needs to be left alone. The water is already polluted. Drinking water has to be trucked in to sustain us. Water is life, a lesson we in the camps of the Seven Council Fires relearn each day.

The Cannonball and Missouri Rivers are home to fish and heron, and even seagulls because the rivers and Lake Oahe are so large. The river is alive, and so is the land. The peaks of the hills around camp are used for Lakota vision quests. One must bring an offering of sage for the spirits to visit there. Some hills are sacred because they’re home to bald eagles, who soar high over the camps. Coyotes and wolves call to each other late at night. Deer are the size of elk. I have seen a pheasant nearly as big as a turkey.

I mention these things because when the pipeline breaks—which it inevitably will—this abundance of life is what the world will lose, the intricate balance of predator and prey and primary producer.

And we humans who live downstream will also lose our water source. By some accounts, more than 18 million people drink Missouri River water each day, and depend on Mni Wiconi for life. Everything needs water to live. As we often say here, “You can’t drink oil.”

The national Sierra Club has a policy that supports restoring and maintaining whole and healthy natural systems that provide diverse habitat for our wildlife and that include open spaces where Americans hike, camp, hunt and fish.

The Kansas Sierra Club believes that game and nongame wildlife contribute to the quality of life for all Kansans. Our native plants and animals are held in public trust by the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism. KDWPT is tasked with managing, enhancing and protecting these valuable natural resources and already actively promotes and regulates hunting, fishing and trapping as part of its conservation efforts.

If you are not yet convinced that we don’t need a constitutional amendment to protect public access to hunting, fishing and trapping, I recommend the following editorial piece from the Hays Daily News:

http://www.hdnews.net/opinion/editorials/needless-meddling/article_104a90a1-3269-50b3-8fdc-bfe22296540d.html

The Sierra Club has been at the forefront of the movement to protect America’s wild places, and the beauty, escape, clean water, wildlife habitat, and recreational opportunities they provide. Our Wild America Campaign works to create a national network of connected wild lands and marine areas to preserve America’s natural, cultural, and recreational heritage. Thanks for your ongoing support!
All Sierra Club members and friends of the environment are invited to join us for the annual Gyp Hills Day Hike. We will be exploring the peaks, mesas, and canyons in the beautiful and rugged Gyp Hills of Barber County on Saturday, October 29th. Hikers will meet at the house on the Kirkbride Ranch at 10:30 a.m. on October 29th. The ranch is located six miles southwest of Medicine Lodge and 90 miles southwest of Wichita.

Lunch will be provided for all hikers. Following lunch, we will begin the hike which will cover between five and eight miles. The difficulty is moderate. We will be requesting a voluntary donation of $5.00 for our outings program. To make a reservation and to receive additional information and detailed directions, please contact David Kirkbride, Chapter Outings Chair, by October 22 at david.kirkbride@kansas.sierraclub.org or call 316-945-0728.
Field Notes from the DD

It’s All About You!

By Robert F. Sommer, Director of Development

The uniqueness of the Sierra Club arises from the fact that it’s a grassroots organization. Members decide who will lead the Club, what policies and activities to pursue, and how much support they’ll provide through volunteerism, participation, and financial donations. In short, the Sierra Club is the sum of its members. And this is as true locally as it is nationally.

The Kansas Chapter is among the smallest of the Club’s sixty-four chapters, with about 4,600 members statewide. This isn’t surprising because Kansas has a smaller population than most states. Still, we continually hear from Sierra Club leaders, like National Organizing Director Bob Bingaman, that “the Kansas Chapter is punching well above its weight class.”

And we need to be. We live at the epicenter of Koch World, where an extremist Governor and State Legislature want nothing more than to strip away all environmental protections and declare Kansas open country for an industrial and agribusiness free-for-all on wildlife, water, soil, and air. Our lobbyist is the only full-time lobbyist for the environment in the State House. We are living the story of David and Goliath.

Which has only served to strengthen the resolve of our members and volunteer leaders as we face an existential crisis unlike any in history. Global temperatures are increasing at a pace beyond scientists’ expectations. Ice sheets are disappearing from the planet’s polar caps. Wildlife species of flora and fauna are vanishing into extinction annually. Anyone reading this newsletter is already aware of the environmental crisis and its magnitude.

Here in Kansas these issues take the form of unregulated prairie burnings, industrial meat production, diesel fuel emissions, urban and suburban sprawl, fracking, and legislators who reject science in favor of fossil fuel interests. So the Kansas Chapter does have its hands full. And all the while we continue to support outings, underwrite grants for educators (who have their own challenges), sponsor public education, keep our members informed through social media and newsletters, and take polluters to court.

Still, only about ten percent of our Kansas Chapter members support these sometimes heroic efforts financially. One reason may be that members believe their annual dues support the Kansas Chapter. They don’t. We receive a very small allocation from the National Sierra Club based on our membership rolls. Also, some members may think donations to the National Sierra Club are returned to the Kansas Chapter. They’re not. Those funds support important National campaigns and programs, but the Kansas Chapter does not receive any portion of them. In short, we depend on your direct contributions to support our efforts in the Sunflower State.

But here’s the good news!
We’re a grassroots club—and like the Bernie Sanders and Barack Obama presidential campaigns, small donations by a lot of people can make all the difference. If every member in Kansas—every member—donated just $10, we could cover our basic operating costs for a year. Just $10! About the price of a movie ticket or a pizza. Can you do that much today? Ten dollars.

Ten dollars!

Don’t wait. Go to Kansas.SierraClub.org right now, click Donate, and support the Kansas Chapter with a $10 donation. You can finish reading this terrific issue of Planet Kansas after you do that.

This is your Sierra Club here in Kansas. Please show your support today. And remember, 100 percent of your donations to the Kansas Chapter remain right here in the Sunflower State.

Thank you for all you do for Planet Earth and Planet Kansas.

Support Your Kansas Sierra Club

Your donations are how we all can protect what we hold dear in Kansas.

Send your check made out to:
Kansas Sierra Club to
Kansas Sierra Club
c/o Scott Smith
2111 Snowbird Drive
Manhattan, KS 66502-1960

Contributions, donations, gifts, and dues to the Sierra Club are not tax deductible. They support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. The Sierra Club is a non-profit, tax-exempt, 501(c)(4) organization.
Thank you, Yvonne!

**Yvonne Cather** recently stepped down after over 8 years as Kansas Chapter Chair. While working full-time and taking care of grandchildren, Yvonne devoted tremendous energy to the success of the Sierra Club in Kansas. She further maintained her position on the Southwind Group ExCom and took on increasing responsibilities in the National Sierra Club on the Council of Club Leaders. A few of our members and leaders wanted to say “Thank you, Yvonne!”

“Yvonne had a full plate of Sierra Club work to do when the frac-quakes issue began. She not only joined in the Fracking Committee, she became a fracquake activist event leader in South Central Kansas. Her dedication to environmental causes is admirable. Her willingness to fight to solve the problems is inspirational.”
—Joe Spease, Fracking Chair

“Leading the Chapter Excom can be like herding cats. Yvonne has done an outstanding job in this capacity.”
—Craig Volland

“She has done an outstanding job as chair—above and beyond the call of duty.”
—Paul Post, Kansas Chapter Chair

“Yvonne is the Sierra Club’s own Energizer Bunny! She has served in many capacities for our organization, and is willing to do just about anything for the Club and its affiliates. She served several terms as the Kansas Chapter chair, as a member of the Council of Club Leaders, and as our Southwind Group treasurer simultaneously. She is one of the most dedicated and hard-working environmentalists I know.”
—Dave Kirkbride, Chapter Outings Chair & Secretary

“Yvonne is a force of nature, and a unique treasure to the Sierra Club. If she were an alpine forest or a deep canyon in red rock country, we’d be pushing President Obama to declare Yvonne a National Monument! Thank you, Yvonne, for all you do for our country and our planet.”
—Michael Brune, Executive Director, Sierra Club

“Yvonne Cather is the most dedicated Sierra Club leader I’ve been around. Not only is she an outstanding chapter chair, but she works on the National level as a member of the Council of Club Leaders and as a leader in the Southwind Group. She’s led the Sierra Club from top to bottom. She has a unique ability to resolve contention and unify people to a common direction. I am so grateful for Yvonne’s continued mentorship and friendship through the years. She defines a true environmental champion, and Sierra Club is lucky to have her.”
—Zack Pistora, Legislative Director

“I met Yvonne Cather through the Council of Club Leaders where she always held a leadership role and frequently mentored new CCL delegates including me. In spite of a heavy workload in Kansas Sierra Club and at the national level, she mentored Oklahoma Sierra Club, helping us implement and expand a Chapter Conservation Program. Yvonne worked closely with Oklahoma Sierra Club on multiple Earthquake Fighters events, which raised awareness and educated the public about the connection with wastewater injection in fracking operations affecting both states. Yvonne works hard and is generous about sharing credit with others. Kansas Sierra Club is fortunate to have Yvonne Cather as a leader, and I am fortunate to call her my friend.”
—Jody Harlan, Political Committee Chair, Oklahoma Sierra Club

“When I was the Chapter Chair, Yvonne was the very able Vice-Chair, pitching in wherever it was needed. I felt very comfortable handing the reins over to her as I sensed she would shine as a leader and facilitator. She surpassed my lofty expectations of her skills quickly and easily.”
—Bill Griffith, Energy Chair

“When I worked for the Sierra Club in Kansas, Yvonne was leading our state chapter. I worked closely with Yvonne to engage the state chapter in our national campaigns, and I realized how many demands Yvonne was managing - and managing very well. Yvonne was working a full time job, dedicating many hours to her volunteer work with the Sierra Club, and managing a household. When I traveled out-of-state, leaders at the national Sierra Club level always commented on how strong of a leader Yvonne was for the Kansas Chapter. I couldn’t have agreed more.”
—Stephanie Cole, former Beyond Coal Coordinator, Kansas Sierra Club

“Yvonne has been the Kansas Chapter’s symbol of dedication, passion, and professionalism. She has demonstrated an unbelievable output with her work for National Sierra Club, the Chapter, and the Southwind Group. Given everything else on her plate, I really don’t know how she has done it. I don’t think I ever heard her say, “I really don’t have time to do that.” Fortunately, we don’t have to say we will miss her. The last time I checked, her shoulder was still firmly pushing our Sierra Club wheel.”
—Craig Wolfe, Communications Director, Kansas Sierra Club

“Yvonne’s energy and devotion to environmentalism are only matched by her dedication to the success of the Sierra Club in Kansas.”
—Bob Sommer, Development Director, Kansas Sierra Club
Kansas Sierra Club Grant Recipient Makes National News

Perry Lecompton High School science teacher Eryn Norton Moland is featured in the current issue of Sierra magazine, the national publication of the Sierra Club.

Eryn received a Kansas Sierra Club climate education grant in 2015.

“I purchased kits so that students in my Earth, Space, Science classes could design wind turbines,” she told Sierra associate editor Wendy Becktold. “First, they had to decide if they wanted three or four blades. Then they messed around with the shape and the angle at which the blades were pitched.”

Students then determined the best places near their high school for generating wind energy.

Since 2012, the Kansas Sierra Club has annually awarded a select number of teachers from all over the state grants to help them instruct students about climate change.

Read the Sierra article on-line at http://bit.ly/2c8rS1X.

Sierra Club Offers New Credit Card

Credit cards have become increasingly necessary to navigate everyday life, but not all credit cards are created equal. Many credit cards in the market finance dirty energy practices that Kansas Sierra Club aims to combat. What if there was an alternative to the big bank credit cards that would allow individuals to direct fees to activities you want to support?

The Sierra Club Visa® Rewards Platinum Credit Card is aligned with your environmental values, supports the Sierra Club with every purchase, and is offered in partnership by Beneficial State Bank, a triple bottom-line bank that doesn’t back environmentally destructive industries or projects.

Using a responsible, values-aligned credit card is another way to deprive those resources from the big banks engaged in anti-environmental or anti-justice activities.

For each approved Sierra Club Visa application that comes through Kansas Sierra Club, our chapter will receive $40 to help support clean energy, protect air and water, and save wild places.

“You’d be getting a double benefit because your credit card would not only support sustainable, socially responsible banking but also support the Sierra Club’s work. By taking one small action, you’ll be making a difference every time you eat out or rent a movie,” says Sierra Club Executive Director Michael Brune.

Sierra Club Visa® Platinum Credit Cardholders have already diverted over $44 million away from big banks. Sierra Club members and supporters in Kansas are invited to join the growing movement from dirty energy towards a new clean-energy economy.

Start supporting the Sierra Club and Kansas Sierra Club with your everyday actions and apply for the Sierra Club Visa® Platinum Credit Card today!

Apply Now [https://goo.gl/SHmh1g]
“Burn, Prairie, Burn,” say KSU Researchers

By Craig Volland and Skokan

Introduction.

In a journal article published in July, researchers at the Konza Prairie Biological Station (KPBS) warned that a large increase in burning of range land in the Kansas Flint Hills will be necessary to avoid wholesale loss of tall grass prairie from encroachment by woody plants “in the coming decades.” KPBS is associated with Kansas State University (KSU). Their projection combines data from experimental plots within some 8000 acres at KPBS and conclusions from other studies, with satellite imagery measurements of burn rates in the Flint Hills from 2000 to 2010.

The prospect of yet more burning in the Flint Hills got the attention of Kansas Chapter members concerned not only with air pollution exposures to downwind communities and rural residents but also with loss of biodiversity, including the destruction of wildlife habitat. Except in occasional drought years, landowners in the Flint Hills burn between 2 and 3 million acres of grassland every year. The Flint Hills encompasses some 6.9 million acres. This article is a detailed review of the KSU researchers’ claims.

Narrow Focus of the Study.

Several key studies cited by the article, and the article itself, acknowledge that the spread of woody plants in the Flint Hills-type of grassland is dependent on several other important variables besides burn frequency, including grazing intensity, species of grazer, and topography (upland vs. lowland). There is also conflicting evidence that temperature and precipitation are factors within the multi-decadal term covered by the various research groups working in this field.

Grazing intensity. The authors qualitatively recognize that overgrazing is a major factor, and briefly allow that changes in grazing management may be necessary to build fuel loads. But nowhere did the authors quantitatively assess this element in their analysis. A significant number of acres in the Flint Hills are burned almost every year under the intensive early stocking technique (IES) which involves ranch-wide burning most years followed by maximum density of grazing by stocker cattle. It’s also called double stocking. This takes place in a narrow window in early to mid-April. This annual routine is related to scheduling-in yearling stocker cattle from points south (Texas) on their way to vast cattle feedlots in western Kansas by July.

The authors’ data does not address this issue. The KPBS research plots, when grazed, were grazed by bison not cattle. It can be argued that the intensive grazing associated with the IES regime requires annual burning to prevent woody plant encroachment. The high stocking rate reduces the fuel load available for the next burn. Before the advent of IES in the 1980s, a one in three year burn cycle with moderate grazing pressure was quite sufficient because the burn was intense enough to kill both shrubs and small trees. In other words, IES is the problem, not the solution.

Topography. The KPBS fire return estimates are primarily based on data obtained in their lowland experimental plots. Much of the Flint Hills is upland. This is important because lowlands contain much deeper soils with higher moisture than uplands soils. Such conditions encourage the spread of woody plants. Collins, et al., noted that “response of lowland areas to variable fire and grazing may differ from that of upland sites.” Ratajczak, et al., noted that shrubs will not spread easily in thin upland soils.

Grazer species. As anyone who passes through the Flint Hills can attest, it’s cattle that do the grazing. In contrast, the only cattle at KPBS are on plots being studied under a patch burn regime, not included in the present research. Collins, et al[9] found that plant species richness and community stability were maximized in the system at KPBS with infrequent fire (every 4–20 years) and bison grazing across a range of soil types.

How Typical is the KPBS?

Our discussion of these unexamined factors raises an even bigger issue. Just how representative of the entire Flint Hills physiographic region is the 8000 acres of the KPBS observed for this study? Previously we noted that the topography and grazing regimes were not typical. In addition, these research plots comprise only about 0.1% of the region’s 6.9 million acres. The KPBS in Riley County is near the northern extremity of the Flint Hills that stretches 250 miles north to south and features a substantial gradient in rainfall. For example, normal rainfall in Riley County is 33.54 inches per year. In the center, Chase County’s normal rainfall is 36.66 inches, and to the south, Elk County’s normal rainfall is 40.60 inches. There is also a temperature gradient. This issue needs closer examination.

Shaky Estimate of Transition Threshold

See Burn Prairie on page 15
The primary variable examined by the authors was the fire return interval, or burn frequency. The authors’ selection of woody plant transition thresholds appears arbitrary and contradictory to statements they make elsewhere. At several points in the text they say that fire return frequencies of 3 years or less will limit woody encroachment. In an earlier paper\(^3\) from KPBS some of the same authors say, “In tallgrass prairie, recurring fire intervals of > 3 years between fires can potentially result in transitions to shrublands or woodlands.” In fact there is no 3-year experimental burn interval in the data set they use for their cited transition threshold research, i.e. they skip from 1 year to 4 (they have some limited 2-year fire return data at KPBS used elsewhere).

But in Figure 3A of the present study they have selected the crucial threshold, a “mean fire return interval,” to be only 2.2 years. No range around this mean is given. Above 2.2 years they claim any particular area is “precarious” with respect to risk of transition to woody species. Apparently unable to rely on KPBS data to support this number, they cited Bowles, et al\(^11\) and Fuhlendorf, et al\(^12\), instead.

The Bowles data came from ungrazed, prairie remnants of dissimilar topography near Chicago where the plant growth pattern was actually measured only at years 1 and 25 of the study. The Fuhlendorf study used an average 3-5 year fire return interval with bison, not cattle, grazing under a random, patch-burn regime, uncommon in the Flint Hills, and a variety of burn times (fall, late spring and during the growing season). The authors said, “… composition of functional groups differed most between plant communities that had been burned and grazed in the past year and those that have not been burned or grazed in the past 3 or more years.” They were most interested in whether the plant community had recovered without significant change after a three-year patch-burn interval. Neither the Bowles nor the Fuhlendorf study supports the notion that a 3-year burn interval is insufficient to prevent woody encroachment in the Flint Hills landscape. That is, they differ enough in technique and setting that they are not applicable to the present study.

As for transition to woodlands (mainly red cedar) the authors stated that “fire-free intervals >10 years can potentially lead to the formation of woodlands,” and areas not burned for 30-50 year almost always transition to woodland given enough time.” They did not explain how they differentiated upland from lowland areas throughout the Flint Hills in their model. This would be crucial for differentially assessing the susceptibility of upland areas to encroachment by either shrubs or trees. The near disappearance of grassland in their projection of the future end-state (Fig. 1) suggests they extrapolated a lowland shrub threshold assumption to the entire Flint Hills.

The authors’ satellite observations\(^2\) were taken March 1 through May 10, with most observations between March 15 and April 15, and thus did not include any burns done at alternate times of the year. Their observations, though innovative, also did not assess what, if any, woody encroachment actually occurred during the 2000 to 2010 period. The satellite monitoring merely calculated the fire return interval spatially and does not add information to the estimation of plant community transition thresholds. The author’s conclusions are only a projection forward.

The authors seem to acknowledge these uncertainties by stating, “We stress that the length of time needed to trigger state transitions is currently an estimate that requires significant refinement.”

**What Really Happened After Settlement of the Flint Hills?**

In the subject article, the authors estimate that the pre-settlement, fire return interval was within a range of 2 to 10 years with an average of 2.5–4 years “… In their earlier paper\(^3\), they estimated a range of 3 to 5 years, with an approximate 4 year average. These intervals seemed to work fine prior to settlement, so what changed? We submit that the major changes were the substitution of cattle for bison, which were slaughtered to near extinction in the second half of the nineteenth century, and the introduction of IES in the 1980’s, which greatly intensified the grazing pressure.

Indeed KPBS researchers said in their earlier paper\(^3\) that “conventional cattle grazing generally favors greater tree establishment by reducing fuel loads, and thereby fire intensity,” and “In contrast, native grazers such as bison (Bos bison) can significantly restrict woodland development.” While it is unrealistic to bring back the bison, any progress on the question of woody encroachment in the Flint Hills must address the damage wrought by IES, including its impact on wildlife.

**Why are Parts of the Flint Hills Unburned?**

The lowland areas most at risk for woody transition generally lie on the periphery of the Flint Hills region. The authors say more than 2 million acres are unburned or burned less frequently than every ten years. No detailed data or analysis is given as to why such a large area is not now being burned. This prevents any kind of assessment of how realistic are the prospects for additional burning. It would be foolhardy to proceed with enhanced burning without a detailed analysis of this question.

**Socio-Economic Challenges**

To their credit the authors recognize the complex socio-economic issues surrounding the management of the Flint Hills. In Table 1, they point to changes that need to be considered. These include getting landowners to burn at times other than in April and the use of the innovative patch burn system where a different portion (typically one third) of a ranch is burned every year. This protects wildlife habitat and creates a more natural, heterogeneous landscape. This would be a crucial element in moving forward. The authors did not elsewhere assess the impacts of more burning on wildlife or plant diversity.

**Advocacy vs. Science**

This paper can be perhaps best under-
Range Management Practices are Biggest Threat to Grassland Birds

By Craig Volland and Ellie Skokan

Recent studies published by Kansas State University (KSU) biologists identified intensive burning and grazing practices as the biggest threat to grassland birds in the Flint Hills and Smoky Hills regions of Kansas. The broadest study\(^1\) was conducted in the central Flint Hills where the most intensive burning and stocking of grassland typically takes place, another was done at the Konza Prairie Biological Station (KPBS) in Riley County near Manhattan, and two others around the Meridian Way Wind Farm near Concordia.

The greater prairie chicken (GPC) population in the Flint Hills has been in decline since the 1980s. This decline corresponds to the adoption by many landowners of the intensive-early-stocking range management system (IES) whereby very large areas are burned in April of most years and then heavily stocked with cattle.

From 2011 to 2013 KSU biologists collected data on GPC nest selection & survival across Butler, Chase, Greenwood, Lyon and Morris counties. They compared two large areas managed by patch burn grazing (PBG), (Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve and privately-owned Browning Ranch), with 78 properties, about 6 times larger in total area, managed mostly by IES. PBG is a rotational burn management technique that the researchers consider to be “ecologically similar to pre-settlement grazing–fire interactions.” In PBG, typically only one third of the ranch is burned every year.

They found that GPC nest survival was double on the PBG properties and was directly correlated to the amount of vegetative cover. 2012 and 2013 were drought years, so the authors expect that this positive effect will be even greater with normal precipitation, due to more cover for nest concealment. Interestingly, on PBG properties, the cattle stocking density had little effect on nest survival because cattle congregated on the one third of the ranch that was burned, leaving plenty of nesting cover on the remainder. They also noted that PBG results in an accumulation of biomass on unburned patches. This higher fuel load controls encroachment of woody plants when burned in rotation.

In another study of nesting selection and survival, this time for the upland sandpiper at a KPBS site, biologists found that the birds benefited from foraging in burned and grazed plots, but their nest survival was two to three times greater in unburned sites than burned sites. The lowest survival rates were found in units managed with grazing and annual burns.\(^2\) The reason is the same as with GPC’s, i.e., birds nest where the cover is.

The authors said, “Our findings raise concerns for conservation because most native grasslands in the Flint Hills ecoregion are managed with intensive grazing and annual burning.” They urged “new approaches for restoration of heterogeneity of native grasslands and partnerships with private landowners.”

Two other studies measured the response of GPC’s to the construction of the Meridian Way Wind Farm near Concordia, which started operation in December of 2008. The authors found some avoidance behavior in use of space by female GPC’s.\(^3\) However, nest survival was not affected by proximity to wind turbines.\(^4\) Again researchers found that females preferred nest sites with greater vertical cover. They predicted that, “Changes to rangeland management that improve habitat by doubling vertical cover to 50 centimeters could triple the probability of nest survival from 0.17 to 0.52.” Researchers unexpectedly found that female survival rates actually increased after wind turbines were installed, perhaps because the machines kept predators away from the nests.

As a whole these results are not surprising. Ground-nesting birds, such as the greater prairie chicken and the upland sandpiper, need lots of grass cover to protect themselves and their broods. When frequent, large-scale burns are conducted on rangeland that is then heavily stocked with cattle, the females and their nests are subject to increased predation during breeding season.

These results are also consistent with the Kansas Chapter’s advocacy for patch burn grazing and/or burning in alternate seasons as a way to increase diversity in the Flint Hills ecosystem and to decrease the adverse effects of smoke during the burning season. If we are to actually preserve the tall grass prairie in all its elements, landowners need to advance their range management technology to be ecologically compatible, similar to pre-settlement patterns.

Author information: Craig Volland, of KC, KS is Chair of the Agriculture and Air Quality Committees of the Kansas Chapter, Sierra Club, and Ellie Skokan is a retired biologist and a member of the Conservation Committee of the Chapter’s Southwind Group in Wichita.

References

Paul and Margaret Miller have been lifetime members of the Sierra Club and live in Wichita, Kansas. Last year Bill Cather dedicated a campsite to Paul and Margaret Miller along the Giant's Path at the Old Goat Ranch commemorating other Sierra Club Giants. Paul and Margaret certainly are giants in their own right. Their impact in Wichita, Kansas has been huge. They founded the Pro Kansas Miller Recycling Center, 725 E. Clark, Wichita, Kansas and Margaret advocated and assisted in forming the Citizens Utility Ratepayer Board. Margaret is a former editor of the Kansas Chapter newsletter, and she published the Recycling newsletter. Both Paul and Margaret are activists for the environment, and Bill Cather and I paid tribute to them at their 75th Wedding Anniversary celebration. Check out the article Beccy Tanner with The Wichita Eagle published at https://goo.gl/pExTW6.

Bill Cather with Margaret and Paul Miller at the Wichita Library celebrating their 75th Wedding Anniversary. Margaret volunteered at the Wichita Library for years.


Stood by its alignment with a paper published in 2013 by Twidwell, et al. of Oklahoma State University. Both papers advocates for “burning cooperatives” that pool labor, equipment and expertise to achieve more range burning. The OSU group, however, has also pioneered the patch burn technique to mitigate some of the negative effects.

KSU’s press release1, “Burn, prairie, burn,” announcing the subject article says:

To find solutions for this problem, Briggs said land managers are working with fire cooperatives and the Kansas Flint Hills Smoke Management to find best practices and compromise.

It’s unclear from which stake holders, the authors are expecting a compromise. The 2010 all-voluntary, Flint Hills Smoke Management Plan, which after six years has clearly failed to reduce the air quality problem, does not represent a compromise, not from the cattle industry anyway. Actually the 2010 SMP called for less burning, not more. Even if the authors’ recommendations were applied to only those areas currently unburned or burned only once every ten years, we are looking at burning, every other year or so, another 1.5 million acres.2 That’s a lot of new smoke.

Nonetheless, to the extent that this effort results in major changes to current range management practices, such as burning outside the usual April time window and much greater use of the patch burn technique, it could be a step in the right direction. If it becomes a distraction from dealing with current intensive burning and grazing practices, with everybody burning at roughly the same time, we will continue to have a major public health problem. All this smoke most directly afflicts citizens in small towns and rural areas. Some of these people may not benefit when the cattle industry is able to maximize profits with excessive burning and stocking.

Conclusions

The authors’ projection of woody encroachment in the coming decades goes far beyond what is justified by the breadth and quality of their data. In particular their claim that a three-year fire burn frequency is not sufficient to prevent woody encroachment is inadequately supported. Their model does not address several important variables in the Flint Hills including topography, grazing intensity and grazer species. The authors acknowledge that their primary independent variable, the fire return interval that enables woody encroachment, needs significant refinement.

Author information: Craig Volland, of KC, Ks. is Chair of Agriculture and Air Quality Committees of the Kansas Chapter, Sierra Club, and Ellie Skokan is a retired biologist and a member of the Conservation Committee of the Chapter’s Southwind group in Wichita.

References can be found at: http://kansas.sierraclub.org/burn-prairie-burn-say-ksu-researchers-1/
Eating as Though the Earth Matters

Butterflies and Big Macs

I had noticed the For Sale sign on a small forested property for quite a while and hoped that whoever bought it would respect the trees and the wildlife there. Then one sad day I discovered that the sign was gone, and so were the trees. In their place a few fence posts stood, signaling the next stage of destruction to be caused by too many animals crowded together with nowhere else to go. Although you can’t see it in the photos, the dozing of trees goes all the way down the steep hill to the creek. This creek is already polluted by animals upstream as well as by pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers used to grow food for animals. This newly denuded pasture will compound the pollution and add even more to the Kansas River as it carries soil, toxic debris and chemicals down to the Mississippi and into the Gulf.

In the grand scheme, this seems a small blip on the radar, but in truth, as we all know, this is just a tiny microcosm of what is going on worldwide to grow animals to kill for meat and to grow grain for them. This is what indigenous people in the rainforest see happening every single day—and for the very same reason—animal agriculture. Many activists who have protested the slashing and burning of their forests have been killed for their actions.

In his book, Carbon Dharma: The Occupation of Butterflies, Sاهلеш Rao uses the metaphor of caterpillars transforming into butterflies to describe what our species must do to repair the damage we’ve done to the earth. Caterpillars are voracious eaters. They are little eating machines, but when the time is right they surrender to the miraculous process of disintegrating and then reintegrating into butterflies who set about replacing what they consumed so that their children can survive too. They do this by eating very little and pollinating plants so that more can grow. Our species, by contrast, has become a huge and destructive eating, consuming machine that has not surrendered to the call to become butterflies. What will we leave the children if we persist?

That little piece of paradise that I described above was a home for many animals and birds. Now it is bare dirt. That was some caterpillar! How interesting it is that a company that sells 300 different machines specifically designed to dominate nature is known as Caterpillar. From Asphalt Pavers to Wheel Dozers, Homo Sapiens is well equipped to take apart and consume everything on the planet, leaving an uninhabitable home for the children of our own and all species.

According to Gus Speth, Yale’s Dean of Environmental Studies, as long as we keep doing what we are doing, we will “leave a ruined world to our children.” He states, “It took all of human history to grow the $7 trillion world economy of 1950. We now grow that amount in a decade.” (from his book The Bridge at the Edge of the World) Well, at least some of the caterpillars are well fed. But, as we know, that “growth” has left a huge portion of humanity, nature, and wild animals struggling or simply unable to survive and caused immeasurable suffering to billions of farmed land and sea animals.

The unrelenting hunger for this “growth” affects animal agriculture just as it does all the other industries. But animal agriculture has a special advantage. David Simon’s book Meatonomics: How the rigged economics of meat and dairy make you consume too much and How to eat better, live longer and spend smarter, makes the case that there are “externalized” costs that we all pay to prop up the meat and dairy industry. In addition to the already well known environmental, nutritional, and ethical costs of this industry, he adds the costs to all of us economically. There are huge hidden costs to all taxpayers in every hamburger, egg, glass of milk, etc. This is because of government subsidies that have been won by the powerful animal agriculture lobbyists that seek to sell more meat, dairy, and eggs, with zero regard for the damage being caused to all life forms, including us. The introduction to Simon’s book states, “A $4 Big Mac really costs society about $11, and regardless whether you even eat meat, you incur a share of $7 in external costs each time someone buys a burger.”

Because of government subsidies hog farmers spend approximately eight dollars more raising a pig than the actual sale price of the pig. Likewise, it costs corporate cow producers $20.00 to $90.00 more than the cow will be sold for, according to Simon. He estimates that, “Each year, American taxpayers dish out $38 billion to subsidize meat, fish, eggs, and dairy.” The costs to human health are yet another hidden price to pay. American obesity, diabetes, cancer, and heart disease continue to rise along with unbearable health care costs. The destruction of the environment and extinction of species due to the relentless ravaging of the earth for more pasture and more land to grow feed leads to further hidden costs.

Simon explains, “More than any other microeconomic system in the United States, meatonomics aggressively shifts the costs of producing its goods onto American taxpayers and consumers. The only word for these costs is staggering. The
Total expenses imposed on society—that is, production costs not paid by animal food producers—are at least $414 billion. These costs are not reflected in the prices Americans pay at the cash register. Rather, they are exacted in other ways, like higher taxes and health insurance premiums, and decreases in the value of homes and natural resources touched by factory farms. For every dollar in retail sales of meat, fish, eggs, or dairy, the animal food industry imposes $1.70 of external costs on society. If these external numbers were added to the grocery-store prices of animal foods, they would nearly triple the cost of these items. A gallon of milk would jump from $3.50 to $9, and a store-bought, two-pound package of pork ribs would run $32 instead of $12.”

So Simon joins Rao and so many others in saying that ending animal agriculture and transforming our actions to vegan, nonviolent living is within our grasp and absolutely necessary in order to save the earth. There is hope. At Rao’s Climate Healers.org website, he explains their mission to heal the Earth’s climate. He states that the biomass of livestock on earth is now three times greater than the biomass of human beings and more than five times the biomass of all wild animals that were on earth prior to animal agriculture and the human caused destruction we see today.

Rao believes that by living vegan, we can reforest and rewild the earth. Professor Atul Jain and Shiije Shu, of the University of Illinois specialize in land carbon studies. They used the Integrated Science Assessment Model (ISAM) “to estimate that recovering forests can sequester 265 GtC if everyone goes vegan, which is more carbon than the 240 GtC that humans have added to the atmosphere in the entire industrial era!” To put it simply: “A global transition to a simple, vegan lifestyle allows for massive carbon sequestration through rewilding of the planet.” (from climatehealers.org) To see other charts showing how eliminating animal agriculture can help heal the earth, please check out climatehealers.org.

We can halt animal agriculture in its mindless, soulless march across the land and seas by not buying those products. Rao quotes a member of the Ianomami tribe who said to a visiting scientist, “Doesn’t the white man know that if he destroys the forest, the rain will end?” He said he learned this from the Forest Spirit. Science is now catching up with that Spirit and agrees. The man who deforested that little acreage pictured above doesn’t realize he is part of a global, planet destroying enterprise. He is just doing what he and his family have done to survive. But survival like that for a few is causing massive destruction, suffering and death around the world.

While it seems as though time is terribly short, we must not despair. We have knowledge. We have the power to stop the animal agriculture behemoth. We do not have to wait for laws to change or governments to take action. We understand that it is our consumptive behavior that causes this cancerous “growth.” In my book Peace to All Beings I envision our species becoming Homo Ahimsa (meaning nonviolent human). Rao envisions us as emerging butterflies. We will leave a healed and peaceful planet to our children and the children of all nature, because we can and because we must.

© 2016, Judy Carman, M.A., is author of Peace to All Beings: Veggie Soup for the Chicken’s Soul and co-author of The Missing Peace: The Hidden Power of our Kinship with Animal; 2014 winner of the Henry Spira Grassroots Animal Activist award; and owner of a truck and a car powered by used veggie oil and house and a Chevy Volt electric car powered by solar. Her primary websites are circleofcompassion.org and peacetoallbeings.com.
Volunteerism is Recognized by Jackson County Parks

The following is a “thank you” note from volunteer Susan Pavakis to Elaine Giesel for Susan’s work in Jackson County Parks. Susan cleaned up waterways in her kayak. See the Planet Kansas Winter 2016 issue.

Elaine, I have been wanting to say, “Thanks for asking!” I forwarded that long-winded explanation I had emailed you of how I stow trash in, on and behind the kayak to Susan Kinneman, the volunteer coordinator for Jackson County Parks. I was kind of proud of the fact that my local Sierra Club had included it in the newsletter. Had no idea they would use it to introduce me at the Volunteers Award Banquet when they gave me the Volunteer of the Year award. Yeah, I was floored. Prior to the event, I did not realize what a big deal the awards banquet was. Several of the Jackson county big wigs were there, including Frank White, Jr., Executive (George recognized him immediately as former Royals 2nd baseman :) I was really impressed when they told us 1) Jackson county parks is the third largest county park system in the nation; 2) Volunteer workers save the county over half a million dollars a year; and 3) There are over 600 volunteers. So when they announced me as the Volunteer of the Year, I was surprised, honored and humbled all at the same time.

The theme this year for the volunteers was “Jewels of the Park”, so my trophy had this big honkin’ diamond on it. I found the perfect spot to display it. :-) Hope you’re stayin’ cool! SSu (stands for Susan Pavakis)

The Climate Reality Project

Here’s something you can do to fight the Climate Crisis

Does your church, business, or other organization have regular speakers?

Kansas Chapter Communications Director Craig Wolfe has been trained by Al Gore’s Climate Reality Project to discuss the climate crisis.

Craig is ready, willing, and able to come to your organization and share his presentation The Climate Crisis: Threats and Opportunities

Contact Craig Wolfe at 913-299-4474 or info@Kansas.SierraClub.org
Chapter & Group Leaders

Groups are the local body of the Kansas State Chapter

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Dave Kyner* Chair, Wetlands Chair, (785) 856-1683, kcarol148@aol.com
General Meetings

More details at www.Kansas.SierraClub.org/Calendar/

Kanza Group (Kansas City)
Saturday, November 12, 6:00 pm
Wildlife at Risk
Join our guest Olga Khakova for a presentation on her volunteer work in Costa Rica and Peru. Olga will share ideas, based on personal experience, on what we can all do to support animal conservation (whether it’s volunteering, donating, or through grassroots advocacy work.) She will be showing photos and offering ways we can all positively engage our communities in improving animal lives locally and globally. Olga is CEP’s Program Director and is leading the conception and development of the Clean Energy Business Council (CEBC). CEBC is a network of businesses who are seeking to capitalize on abundant clean energy resources in Kansas and the greater Kansas City area through policies conducive to growing renewable energy and energy efficiency.

Potluck supper and Program: Bring a dish to share. We will provide drinks and bison brats. This is a family-friendly event so feel free to bring children.

Where - Overland Park Lutheran Church, 7810 W 79th Street, Overland Park, KS (park on north side)
Contact - Gail Shafton, (913) 909-3127, gail@shafton.com

Southwind Group (Wichita)
Friday, October 14. 6:30 pm
Holy Solar.
6:30 pm – Social hour begins. Potluck will be available. Please bring your own place setting.
7:30 pm - WSU professor emeritus Bill Wentz presents HOLY SOLAR, detailing the transformation of University United Methodist Church to green, by solar power. POTLUCK!

Where - Great Plains Nature Center, 6232 E. 29th St. N., Wichita, KS
Contact - Deborah Gafvert, 316-733-5102, dsgafvert@gmail.com

Southwind Group (Wichita)
Friday, November 4. 6:30 pm
The Flying Flowers of Kansas
6:30 pm – Social hour begins. Finger Foods - bring your favorite fall snack. Please bring your favorite cup or mug. Hot Apple Cider available!
7:30 pm - The Flying Flowers of Kansas. Jim Mason, Director of the Great Plains Nature Center, will present this program on Kansas butterflies, featuring the 61 different species illustrated in the Great Plains Nature Center Pocket Guide to Common Kansas Butterflies. Jim will discuss the life history of butterflies, their plant associations, and reveal some of their unique features and capabilities. Copies of the pocket guide will be available at the program.

Where - Great Plains Nature Center, 6232 E. 29th St. N., Wichita, KS
Contact - Yvonne A Cather, 316-204-8920, yvonne.cather@kansas.sierraclub.org

Topeka Group
Tuesday, October 25. 6:30 pm.
Climate Change in South America
6:30 pm - “Meet, Greet and Gather”
7:00 pm - Climate Change in South America: A Look at the Galapagos Islands and Machu Picchu”. Sierra Club members Paul Post and Kay Kelly recently traveled to the Galapagos Islands and Machu Picchu. The Galapagos is where Darwin visited in 1836, and from his travels there, began to formulate his theory on evolution by means of natural selection. Machu Picchu is the ancient Incan capital in Peru, and was conquered by the Spanish in 1532 which ultimately led to the demise of the Inca civilization. Paul will report on their trip to these areas, present photos of the flora and fauna in the Galapagos, and discuss how an established civilization can abruptly end through unanticipated external forces. Please join us for this presentation.

Where - Topeka Shawnee County Public Library Marvin Auditorium 101C, 1515 SW 10th Ave., Topeka, KS
Contact - Gary Anderson, 785-246-3229, gjanderson1963@hotmail.com for info.

Topeka Group
Friday, December 2. 6:30 pm
Topeka Group Holiday Dinner
6:30:00 pm - Topeka Group Holiday Dinner at Tup Tim Thai Restaurant - We will meet at 6:30 PM, and have dinner at 7PM. Come join the Topeka Group members to celebrate the year and the holidays. (Dinner and beverages are no-host.)

Where - Tup Tim Thai Restaurant 220 SW 29th St., Topeka.
Questions? - contact Gary Anderson 785-246-3229 or gjanderson1963@gmail.com Please email Gary with names if you are coming.
Sierra Club Outings

General public is welcome to participate

Below is the combined list of all outings by the Kansas Chapter and Groups. Please contact the outing leader listed after the description by phone or e-mail before attending any of these activities. For trips requiring physical exertion, leaders need to know your ability and condition. Sierra Club policy also requires participants to sign a liability waiver or acknowledgement of risk prior to departing the trailhead. Outings organizers have a Meetup webpage for the latest outings updates at:

http://www.meetup.com/KC-Sierra-Club-Outings/. Outings are also listed at http://kansas.sierraclub.org/outings/.

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**Sat, Oct 29, 9:00 AM, (Time Tentative). 4602-South Wind Group Social Event. Southwind Outing - Annual Gyp Hills Hike.** Dave Kirkbride 316-945-0728 david.kirkbride@kansas.sierraclub.org.

For additional information, make reservations & to receive directions, send an email to Dave Kirkbride at david.kirkbride@kansas.sierraclub.org.

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**Sat, Oct 29, 10:00 AM, (Time Tentative). Wakarusa Outing. Hike Knob Noster State Park, Knob Noster, MO.** Sara Pittman 785-764-0011 pittman.s.j@gmail.com.

We will enjoy a morning hike along several trails that wind around open woodland and a lake. Optionally bring a sack lunch to eat afterwards. $3 donation requested.

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**Sun, Oct 30, 10:00 AM, (Time Tentative).**

Wakarusa Outing. Hike Wallace State Park, Cameron, MO. Nate Southwick 785-760-3219 nathanmsouthwick@gmail.com.

We will enjoy a beautiful hike on the wooded trails near Lake Allaman. Optionally bring a sack lunch to eat afterwards. $3 donation requested.

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**Fri, Nov 04, to Sun, Nov 06. Kanza Outing. Flint Hills Hike & Camp, Cottonwood Falls, KS.** Renee Andriani 913-488-4445 randri4445@gmail.com.

We'll set up camp at Chase State Fishing Lake on Fri afternoon, followed by a 9-12 mile hike on Sat morning through the bison pasture at the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve. We'll then return to camp and maybe head into Strong City for dinner. Bring boots, tent and food to cook over a campfire. Kids and newbies are welcome; no dogs on the backcountry trails. $10 donation requested.

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**Sat, Nov 05, to Sun, Nov 06. Kanza Outing. Missouri River Canoe/Kayak Trip.** Terry DeFraties 913-385-7374 theorustbucket@aol.com.

Enjoy open spaces while paddling a stretch in central Missouri and camp Sat night on a sandbar. This is a joint trip with the Eastern Missouri Group. $10 donation requested.

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**Sat, Nov 12, 9:15 AM. Kanza Outing. Perry Lake Hiking Trail Maintenance, Perry, KS.** Steve Hassler 913-707-3296 hassler@planetkc.com.

Join us as we begin our 26th year of semiannual trail maintenance on this 28-mile loop trail halfway between Lawrence and Topeka. Bring lunch, water, snacks, work gloves, and if you have them, a lopper or bow saw. Weather postponement date is Nov 19.

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Eagle Rock Loop (ERL) is a scrambler’s paradise along rivers, through shady gorges and over mountains. It is one of the most difficult trails in Arkansas: one leg alone crosses six 500-800 foot ridges in eight miles. Only experienced, trail-conditioned, injury-free adult backpackers with the proper equipment will be accepted on this trip. $10 donation requested.

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**Sat, Dec 10, to Sun, Dec 11. Kanza Outing. Women's Backpacking on the Pigeon Roost Trail, Rogers, AR.** Renee Andriani 913-488-4445 randri4445@gmail.com.

A perennial favorite! This will be a moderate hike on the Pigeon Roost Trail, a scenic 8.5 mile loop on the south shore of Beaver Lake near Rogers, Arkansas (about 4 hours from KC). Some ascents & descents but no scrambling or real ruggedness. Well-behaved dogs are welcome. $10 donation requested.

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**Sat, Dec 17, 10:00 AM. Kanza Outing. Day Hike at Bluffwoods Conservation Area, St. Joseph, MO.**

Steve Hassler 913-707-3296 hassler@planetkc.com.

Join us for a day hike on several trails at the Bluffwoods Conservation Area southwest of St. Joseph. We'll start with the 2 miles of nature trails to the east (two of which are paved) and then head over to the west side for primitive trails that total 4-5 miles in length. Bring water, snacks, lunch. $3 donation requested.

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*Fall - 2016*
Deadline for the next issue is December 10