
Delaware Sierra News

A Sierra Club Newsletter about Environmental Matters Important to Delaware

Summer 2007

Letter from the Delaware Chapter Chair

by *Kathleen Davis*

The winds of change are blowing in Delaware! Congratulations to all Delawareans who worked to persuade our State leaders to accept wind power. It was a collaborative effort by environmental groups and grassroots citizens' groups, a pure example of how power by the people can work to effect change. Thanks to all those who sent letters and postcards and made phone calls. The system can and does work! The challenge now is to contin-

ue alliances that will promote a healthy and green Delaware.

I would like to notify our members of a change in leadership. I will be moving from the area and I have resigned as chair. Jay Cooperson, who has been a Sierra Club member for many years, is the new chair. I thank everyone for his/her support in my brief term as chair. It has been a great experience, and it is wonderful to exit after a victory. Please welcome Jay as chair and provide him your support.

Sierra Club Takes Action on Energy Bill

The Sierra Club has been actively working on policies relating to the U.S. Senate energy bill. This past month, members of the Sierra Club of Delaware spoke with staff members in the offices of Senator Tom Carper and Senator Joe Biden.



We emphasized the importance of acting on global warming and energy security, and pushed for a bill that would contain (1) meaningful renewable energy portfolio standards and (2) significantly raised CAFÉ (fuel economy) standards but would not contain nuclear energy or "clean" coal and did not support the creation of a new liquid coal industry.

Political Committee Underway

A group of Sierrans met on Thursday, June 7, to begin putting together a political committee for the chapter. Interests ranged widely and included starting a political action committee; creating a group to review and lobby on state legislation; interviewing candidates for county, state, and federal elections; and reporting the answers received and information about candidates' sources of campaign support in the chapter newsletter or on its website. If you have an interest in participating in one of these activities and would like to help chart the course of this committee, please contact Ezra Temko at the chapter office so that you will be invited to the next meeting of the group. We are especially looking for representatives from Kent and Sussex counties.

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2007 Governor's Conservation Excellence Award to Kent Parks Director & Delaware Sierra Water Quality Activist

On Wednesday, April 25, at the Delaware Agricultural Museum and Village in Dover, Governor Ruth Ann Minner, together with DNREC Secretary John A. Hughes, DDA Secretary Michael Scuse, and Delaware Association of Conservation Districts President Josef "Andy" Burger, awarded the winners of the Annual Agricultural and Urban Governor's Conservation Awards. The Governor also signed a proclamation officially designating April 29 through May 5 as Soil and Water Stewardship Week.

The Kent County Parks Division Director, Carl Solberg, received the Governor's Conservation Award for Excellence in Urban Conservation Activities. Citing his work in public and private open space restoration efforts, the Award focused on a major ecological restoration practice completed on his personal property in December 2006.

On Carl and Dolores Solberg's 55-acre property in the Marydel area near the intersection of Tappahannak Trail and Mahan Corner Road in the Chesapeake Bay drainage basin, Carl completed a unique stream and wetland restoration project in a cooperative effort between the Division of Soil & Water Conservation's Ecological Restoration Program and the Kent Conservation District. The project was funded by the North American Wetland Conservation Act, the US Fish & Wildlife Service, Partnership for the Delaware Estuary, and a personal financial match by the Solbergs.

With the goals of abandoning a tax ditch channel, providing diverse aquatic and stream-side habitat, improving water quality, and increasing total wetland acreage, the project involved 1,700 feet of stream restoration of what was previously a prong of the Marydel Tax Ditch. The scope of work included elevating the ditch bottom, installing three water-control structures (including one created to replicate a beaver dam) and creating two acres of floodplain wetlands adjacent to the original channel.

What makes the project unique is that the entire tax ditch right-of-way was vacated by petition to the Superior Court, thus allowing elimination of portions of the tax ditch maintenance access way by conversion to a meandering stream morphology and wetland creation. Reconstruction of geometries typical of natural coastal plain streams and vegetation consistent with natural riparian communities is a

regional conservation priority.

The restoration of these wetlands includes the excavation of the ditch management right-of-way creating macro topographic conditions, adding organic matter, and planting native plants and trees. A portion of the excavated material from these restored wetlands was placed in the ditch to raise the bottom elevation and create a more diverse hummock system within the portions of the ditch. Carl and Dolores purchased two additional acres of land along the tax ditch so that the State's drainage ROW Easement could be abandoned and allow the project to be designed without landowner or geographic constraints. The re-integration of the floodplain with the "bank full" rain event has restored the reach of flow of waters lost since the original construction of this tax ditch in 1978. River otter have already discovered the new habitat early this winter, while teal, wood duck, and other wetland-dependent fauna appeared early this spring.

Upon completion of primary construction of the project in December, Carl and Dolores voluntarily recorded a perpetual conservation easement, retiring all the development rights on their 55-acre property for the purpose of, "...the establishment and maintenance of an old growth coastal plain forest ecosystem and secondarily to protect species listed by Delaware or the federal government as endangered or threatened." (Ref. Kent County Recorder of Deeds, Instrument #2006-77292.)

Household Tips for the Conservation-Minded

by Carol Reid-Grandfield

Easily clean your glass shower – Use lemon juice with a sponge. Take newspaper to wipe the lemon juice off the glass and *voila!*

Newspaper weeds away – Start putting in your plants; work the nutrients into your soil. Wet newspapers and put layers around the plants, overlapping as you go. Cover with mulch and forget about weeds. Weeds may get through gardening plastic but they will not get through wet newspapers.

No more mosquitoes – Place a dryer sheet in your pocket. It will keep the mosquitoes away.

Squirrel away – To keep squirrels from eating your plants, sprinkle plants with cayenne pepper.

A Major Step Toward a Clean Energy Future

by *Chad Tolman*

Delaware Chapter Energy Chair

Delaware Alliance for a Clean Energy Future

After months of public hearings, much public testimony, and thousands of phone calls, letters, and email messages, the State of Delaware has finally decided that offshore wind power is the best choice for significant new electrical generating capacity. Four state agencies have asked Delmarva Power to negotiate a long-term power purchase agreement with Bluewater Wind. Many members of the Delaware Chapter of the Sierra Club participated in making this victory possible, along with many others from a variety of organizations in the state, including the LWVDE, the Delaware Nature Society, Delaware Audubon, Citizens for Clean Power, Citizens for a Better Sussex, faculty from the University of Delaware, Green Delaware, and area churches and civic organizations. Thanks to all of you.

This is an important step for Delaware, which could become the first state in the U.S. with an offshore wind farm – capable of supplying 17% of Delaware’s current electrical energy demand if Bluewater Wind installs its proposed 200 3MW tur-

bines off the Sussex coast. Not only will this help stabilize electricity costs (once a wind farm is built, there is no cost for fuel), but also, for every MWh generated by wind, we will avoid about a ton of carbon dioxide and a number of other pollutants that would be released by burning a fossil fuel in a conventional power plant.

Once Delaware breaks the ice, a number of other East Coast states, including Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, and New Jersey, are likely to follow suit with offshore wind projects of their own. Since offshore wind turbines are too large to be transported overland, they must be built on the coast and moved into location by ship. Delaware could become a major turbine manufacturing center, producing tens of thousands of turbines to supply electricity to the whole coast from Cape Hatteras to Cape Cod – a region with a huge wind resource offshore. Denmark already supplies 20% of its electrical energy with wind power – most of it offshore – and is going for 30%. We could do the same and show the world that we are serious about dealing with the multiple challenges of dwindling fossil fuels, rising energy prices, environmental degradation, and climate change.

UD Students for the Environment Organization Working to Promote Improved Energy Policy on Campus

by *Lauren Asprooth*

*Co-President; Students for the Environment
University of Delaware*

Students for the Environment at the University of Delaware is a student-run organization that consists of approximately fifty student members in addition to faculty and graduate students. Members come together for bi-weekly meetings to work towards improving environmental policy and awareness at the University and the nation as a whole. Focusing on creating an environmentally-friendly campus as well as taking part in national and global campaigns, Students for the Environment is one of UD’s most active clubs.

We are currently running a campaign to convince the University to purchase at least 8% of our electricity through wind power, a clean and renewable resource. After getting the initiative for wind

power at UD passed in the Undergraduate Student Congress and meeting with several faculty members about the possibility, we are now planning on presenting the proposal to several university boards and forming petitions to create more student awareness. With a new president in the fall and increased faculty support, we are hoping to join the hundreds of other universities and colleges throughout the nation in supporting green energy and purchasing wind power.

In addition to our wind power campaign, we also volunteer with Corporate Accountability in their campaign against bottled water and work in the Delaware area to combat invasive species. Tree planting, camping, beach cleanups, and environmental education are among other activities as we work to improve the quality and protection of the environment through activism, education, and fun.

BOOTH AT THE FAIR? Not This Year!

Carol Reid-Grandfield reports that, despite all the well-laid plans and support for a booth at the Delaware State Fair by the Sierra Club and the League of Women Voters, there won't be one this year. According to a fair official, all booths have been taken by vendors who previously exhibited, and there were none remaining for new vendors. The focus at the Sierra Club-LWVDE booth was to have been on global warming and practical solutions for each of us to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels.

Carol Reid-Grandfield and Ron Zink, Co-Chairs, thank all the committee members for their help with planning: Mary Snyder, Ralph Johnson, Carol Taylor, Ruth Ann Purchase, Betty Wagner and Les Stillson. Special thanks to June Satterfield for her exquisite drawing of our proposed booth. A big thanks also to the Delaware Sierra Club, to the LWVDE, and to the Delaware LWVEF for their financial backing.

This group has already put its imprint on Kent County with two special events this spring, the first an "energy film festival" entitled "The Hot Topic: A Film Fest on the Use, Abuse, and Future of Energy" held in partnership with the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources at Delaware State University on April 20 and 21. June Satterfield chaired this event, at which approximately 25 films, including Al Gore's "An Inconvenient Truth," were shown. The second event, a children's art exhibit, chaired by Carol Taylor, showed what even elementary school children can do to reduce their use of fossil fuels. This exhibit was part of the Old Dover Days celebration (see article below).

Children's Energy Art Graces Old Dover Days

Congratulations to Carol Taylor and her committee, a part of the Kent County Cool Cities Committee, for the delightful children's art exhibit at the Old Dover Days celebration on May 5. The exhibit portrayed Dover elementary school children's interpretations of ways that children can reduce their consumption of energy. Reaching out to our nation's children and getting them involved is vital to accomplishing our goals. Again, congratulations and thanks for a worthwhile project.

Delaware Sierra Club Seeks Volunteers

Are you interested in volunteering with the Sierra Club? As your Member & Community Engagement Coordinator, I want to connect you to your interests in our chapter.

Let us know how you would like to participate in environmental advocacy by filling out our online sign-up form at Delaware.SierraClub.org/Survey. If you would like a hard copy mailed to you, please let Ezra know at Ezra.Temko@SierraClub.org or 302-981-3007.

We are also looking for people to participate in our Membership Committee and Outings Committee. The Membership Committee will contact new members, help arrange meetings of new members, and help with the administration of our chapter. The Outings Committee will help plan and run hikes and other outdoor social and educational activities for the chapter. If you are interested in either of these issues, please contact Ezra.

Sierra Club Membership Application Coupon		
New Member Name(s) _____		

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State _____		Zip _____
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Membership Categories (circle one)		
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Mail to: Sierra Club, P.O. Box 52968, Boulder, CO 80321-2968		
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Delaware Chapter Sierra Club Summer Outings & Events

Executive Committee Meetings – Third Monday of each odd month, 7 p.m.: July 16, September 17, November 19 – St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, Old North Road, Camden, DE.

First Thursday SDG Socials in Dover – First Thursday of each month, 6:30 p.m.: August 2, September 6 – The Lobby House, 9 E. Loockerman St., Dover, DE 19901, 302-741-2420. Order off the menu, cash bar. Meet your fellow members and enjoy a lively discussion.

Chapter Picnic – Saturday, August 4, 4 p.m. -? – Mary and Dan Snyder’s home, 639 Deer Track Lane, Dover, DE. RSVP to the Snyders at 302-674-4040 or dmsb@comcast.net.

Canoe/Kayak the Broadkill River from Milton to Roosevelt Inlet – August 11, 2007 – Take your choice: canoe or kayak a light and breezy 2.5 hours (3.5 stream miles) from the Milton Public Park Boat Launch down the densely forested upper freshwater tidal reach to Smith Landing west of Route 1. Or, get tough and stay the course for a hardy trek of roughly 8 hours, touring on one of the most remote river segments in the coastal plain of DelMarVa, down the wide open, estuarine tidal marsh component to Roosevelt Inlet at the confluence of Canary Creek, Broadkill River, and Lewes and Rehoboth Canal at Beach Plum Island. From the head of tide at the dam at Milton to the UD College of Marine Studies at Roosevelt Inlet you can experience the entire range of coastal plain tidal river habitats. Good experience is required for the full 8 hour trek.

Plan to bring food, lots of water, bug repellent, broad brimmed hat – your Goretex survival suit is optional. Parking will be arranged at the receiving end to transport back to Milton. We’ll figure out the group’s trip duration preferences and develop our trip accordingly.

For more information and logistics, contact Carl Solberg, (H) 302-697-1735, carlsolberg@mail.com

Conservation Committee Meetings – Third Monday of even months, 7 p.m.: August 20, October 15, December 17 – St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, Old North Road, Camden, DE.

21st Annual Delaware Coastal Cleanup – Saturday, September 15, 9 a.m.-noon – Coastal Cleanup is the world’s largest clearing of trash from coastlines and lakes by volunteers. The success of the beach cleanups relies on a dedicated and diverse group of volunteers, from civic organizations and business to individuals and families. Last year, nearly 2,000 volunteers participated in the cleanup, collecting 12,000+ pounds of

trash from Delaware’s shoreline and tributaries. This year 48 sites in New Castle, Kent and Sussex counties are targeted.

Register online at www.dnrec.state.de.us. Click on the “Coastal Cleanup Signup” link to make a difference in your local environment. To register by phone, call Jennifer Hall, Coastal Cleanup Coordinator, at 302-739-9906.

Newark Social – Will return in September. Check the web site for dates – Home Grown Cafe, 126 E. Main St., Newark, DE.

Household Hazardous Waste Collection Event Dates & Sites

September 1, 8 a.m -4 p.m.: Old Curtis Paper Mill, Newark, DE

October 6, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.: Cheswold Collection Station, Cheswold, DE

November 3, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.: Frawley Stadium, Wilmington, DE



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Delaware Chapter and Southern Delaware Group Leaders



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Production: Susan Oldenburg

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