

Orange- Chatham Group

www.sierraclub-nc.org/ocg

New Meeting Place

The OCG Excom has been looking for ways to revitalize the General Meeting. One decision we've made is to change the day and location of our monthly meeting. The General Meeting will be at the Carrboro Century Center and will be held on the second Wednesday of each month. Remember our new day and location.

MAY 2004



Navy Outlying Landing Field

The recent announcement that U.S. District Judge Terrence Boyle has granted a preliminary injunction stopping the U.S. Navy from proceeding with a plan to construct an outlying landing field (OLF) in eastern North Carolina was good news to the Sierra Club. The North Carolina Chapter and other environmental organizations have been actively opposing this facility.

For years, the wetlands of eastern North Carolina have provided a winter haven for as many as 100,000 birds, among them such large species as Tundra swans, Great Blue Herons, and Canada Geese. The area's wildlife refuges have become popular destinations for birdlovers who may be treated with seeing dozens of different bird types in a single visit. A budding ecotourism industry is beginning to provide much needed jobs in an area where unemployment has been traditionally high.

All this will change if the U.S. Navy is permitted to move forward with plans to build an OLF in Washington and Beaufort Counties on land adjacent to the Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge. The facility would be used to practice touch and go landings for Super Hornet jets and other aircraft.

If built, the OLF will constitute a threat to both birds and pilots. Jet screams will destroy the tranquility which has been one of the area's main attractions for birds. Pilots will be confronted with the heightened danger of bird/aircraft collisions. According to Ronald Merritt, a scientist specializing in Bird Air Strike Hazard, there are few areas in the United States where the threat of a bird strike is greater. Colliding with a 16-20 pound bird can cause a crash, killing both bird and pilot and destroying an aircraft which cost millions of tax dollars.

Environmental groups, civic organizations, farm organizations and public interest organizations have gone on record as opposing the OLF. Opposition has also been registered by federal, state and regional agencies, including the US Department of the Interior and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife service. Local citizens have organized to protest vigorously the loss of 32,000 acres of farmland from the tax bases of two of the state's poorest counties with no ameliorating benefit to the local economy.

Serious questions have been raised as to whether the OLF is needed at all, given that present training facilities are underused and a smaller air fleet is projected. If the need for an OLF is confirmed, there is still the possibility of an alternate site where the threat of a bird

Navy OLF - continued on back page.

OCG Meetings

May General Meeting

Wednesday, May 12th, 7:30 p.m. General Meeting. Visit To China: China, an emerging economic giant, has its own environmental problems. OCG member Annette Jurgelski recently visited China and saw first hand the controversial dam being built on the Yangtse River and some of China's efforts to deal with its air pollution and population problems. She will show slides and lead a discussion on what environmentalists can expect from the evolving super power in the East.

There is parking directly across the street, a lot next to Wendy's, and, of course, a big lot in front of CVS/Harris Teeter on Greensboro off of Weaver. There will be an additional charge for a screen. The most direct entrance to the Meeting Rooms is from Greensboro at the door marked "Activity Rooms."

Saturday, June 12th, 7:30 p.m. Summer Picnic: Join us at Umstead Park off Airport Road in Chapel Hill from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. for our annual group picnic. We've reserved a covered picnic shelter and will mark the location with the Sierra banner. Bring a dish of picnic fare (main dish, salad, or dessert) to share with others.

Wednesday, May 5th, 7:30 p.m. ExCom meeting. At the Oriental Garden Restaurant on Rosemary Street. Submit agenda items to Robert Porter at robertporter@mindspring.com or 933-7613. All OCG members are welcome and encouraged to join us.

OCG Contacts

Excom members denoted by year term expires.

Robert Porter	Chair	929-6983
robertporter@mindspring.com		2003
Bill Bracey		967-4116
arbornet@mindspring.com		2004
Joyce Brown		929-7781
joycebrown@mindspring.com		2004
Kristen Dang	Membership	932-3127
kamerath@bellsouth.net		2004
Greg Gangi		932-7340
ggangi@mindspring.com		
Annette Jurgelski	Outings	644-0280
jurge001@mc.duke.edu		2003
Mary MacDowell		968-9184
macedowell@poetworld.net		2004
Norman Miller	Conservation	
nmiller285@aol.com		2003
Andrea Rohrbacher	Treasurer	
Bernadette Pelissier	Political	643-2762
bpelissier@juno.com		
Peter Todd	Media	942-2581
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Navy OLF - continued

strike would be significantly less. Alternate locations apparently exist.

While the temporary injunction is good news, environmentalists still need to be heard on this issue. To register opposition to an OLF as a neighbor to a wildlife refuge, call the governor's office at 1-800-662-7952 or e-mail lisa.nolen@ncmail.net.

Human Rights Report

We are gearing up for a new campaign that will be grounded in a new environmental defenders report. This one focuses on folks who have had their rights violated for trying to stop illegal logging in their countries. More information about the Club's human rights and the environment program can be found at the following link:

<http://www.sierraclub.org/human-rights/>

Contact Doug Hunt to help or for information at doug.hunt@sierraclub.org or call at 202-675-7907/

Outings

All participants on Sierra Club outings are required to sign a standard liability waiver. If you would like to read the liability waiver before you chose to participate on an outing, please go to: <http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms/>, or contact the Outings Department at (415) 977-5528 for a printed version.

3rd Saturday - Bolin Creek Trail. Work is continuing on the Bolin Creek habitat restoration project. After a fairly small amount of work, a significant improvement is now visible along the Greenway. This is a long-term project, and we need many more volunteers. It's hard work, but very rewarding.

We meet the third Saturday of each month at the Greenway entrance on Bolinwood Drive, just off Hillsborough Street in Chapel Hill. Please contact Bill Bracey at arbornet@mindspring.com, or 942-9937 if you are interested in participating.

1st and 3rd Saturdays of each Month - American Tobacco Trail Service Outing. Generally, the group meets on the first and third Saturdays of every month starting at 9:00 AM. The workgroup meets at the Scott King Rd. crossing of the ATT. For more info contact Thad Howard (HWG) at 919-544-9126 or e-mail thad.howard@duke.edu.

Clean Water Lobby Day

Wednesday, May 19th, you can join voices with river and coastal organizations from across the state to educate our state legislators about the need for clean water in North Carolina. There will be a BIG focus this year on stormwater pollution and how runaway development is harming our waterways. No experience necessary -you can join with a team that will lobby together as a group!

We're asking everyone to wear a blue shirt or t-shirt this year so that we stick out as we make the rounds of the legislature building.

The Lobby Day is organized by the Watershed Alliance with NC Conservation Network. Meet at 9:00 am in the NC Education Building, Room 224 (in the state government quad in downtown Raleigh) After a quick briefing we'll pick up written materials and go meet with some of our representatives and senators face to face. The day usually ends by 2:00. Call 919 542-5790 more details and directions.

MAY 8-9 (Mother's Day Weekend) Lumber River. Paddle two of this National Wild and Scenic River's most beautiful sections, for a total of 19.7 miles. This is an easy to moderate trip; leader reserves right to change location depending on weather and/or water levels. Car camp Saturday night at Lumber River State Park. No pets or children under 13. Contact Chandler Stewart (CG) at cstewart4@mindspring.com or by phone between 8:30 to 10:30 P.M. @ 910-739-4879 or 910-536-4416.

MAY 28-31 (Memorial Day weekend) Ramsey's Draft Wilderness. Ramsey's Draft Wilderness is the George Washington National forest in northern Virginia. Three day backpack (moderate to strenuous) in the largest tract of virgin forest left in the eastern U.S. Learn about the plants and geology of the area. Drive up Friday, return Monday. Maximum group size 10. \$10/refundable deposit. Call Chris or Odile Gould (OCG) at 919-493-1194, or e-mail chris_gould@mindspring.com.

MAY 28-31 Joyce Kilmer - Slickrock Wilderness Backpack. Spend a long weekend in the midst of virgin stands of giant hemlocks and oaks, and if a storm blows through, we'll be treated to amazing views of eastern Tennessee, the Smokies, and the mountains of the Nantahala Forest. We'll cover 25-30 miles in rough terrain; hence this trip is rated strenuous. Limited to 6. Contact Shelly Eberly (OCG) at 919-967-7358 between 7 and 9 p.m. or e-mail seberly@earthlink.net.

More outings information is available on-line at <http://www.sierraclub-nc.org/ocg>



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