

## Orange-Chatham Group

# Sierra Club

<http://nc.sierraclub.org/ocg/>

P.O. Box 1303, Chapel Hill, NC 27514

### 2005-2006 Executive Committee Election Results:

The following members of the Orange-Chatham Group were recently elected to serve on the Executive Committee. ExCom members are typically elected to serve for two years.

Kristen Dang  
Don Eads  
Tom Jenson  
Annette Jurgelski  
Bernadette Pelissier  
Robert Porter  
Andrea Rohrbacher

## OCG Events:

### Group Meeting

Wednesday, February 9th, 7:30 p.m.  
Room 2-3 of the Carrboro Century Center

### “Protecting our drinking water, rivers, and lakes”

Elaine Chiosso, our speaker, is Executive Director and past president, of the Haw River Assembly, a non-profit organization founded in 1982 to restore the Haw River and protect Jordan Lake. Chiosso has championed clean water in a number of forums, including on the State Infrastructure Council as an appointee of Gov. Jim Hunt.

## NCDOT proposes road extension in Hillsborough

by Annette Jurgelski  
OCG ExCom Member

The N.C. Department of Transportation (NCDOT) has numerous functions, but road building has long been its preferred solution to traffic problems. A new road is also a boon to developers, who see it as a new opportunity to create more strip malls, more houses and inevitably more traffic.

Under the innocuous name of Elizabeth Brady Road Extension, the NCDOT is proposing to build a new 4-lane connector between Business 70 just before it enters Hillsborough and Highway 70 on the other side of town. The announced purpose of the new road is to route thru traffic away from Churton Street, which is Hillsborough's main thoroughfare and the artery through its historic downtown.

Unfortunately, the new road comes with few guarantees and a potentially heavy cost to the environment. Drivers coming toward Hillsborough on Highway 86 from Chapel Hill might use it as a shortcut to Highway 70, but any reconnection to Highway 86 North would be interrupted by two traffic lights and potentially heavy traffic from a small shopping mall. Drivers coming from the north toward Chapel Hill might choose the longer alternate route but are equally likely to follow 86 South through town. The present estimate is that the new road will reduce traffic on Churton Street by only a fifth.

Each of the three alternative routes for the Elizabeth Brady Road Extension enacts a heavy environmental price. Two would involve building a new 4-lane bridge across the Eno River, whose meandering through the area has already subjected it to repeated bridging. Presently there are 8 bridges across the river in the Hillsborough area, each one discharging storm runoff containing contaminants such as oil, gasoline and rubber into the waters below. These same waters provide Hillsborough with drinking water and drain into Falls Lake, which is a major water source for Raleigh.

In response to opposition from the Eno River Association, Walkable Hillsborough and other environmental groups, the NCDOT came up with one



alternate route which did not involve a new river crossing. However, this alternative would unleash chain saws on a wide swath of steep woodlands along the Eno River watershed.

Any route the DOT chooses is likely to have a negative impact on an area that is rich both in history and natural resources. Five sites on the National Register of Historic Places, 3 sites in the Orange County Inventory of Natural Areas, and many acres of prime forest and native wildlife habitat would be impacted. Several existing homes would also be destroyed.

A fourth and little publicized alternative is to look for solutions that do not mandate a new road. These include improving existing roads, implementing better traffic routing on Churton Street, staggering work shifts for the county employees working in downtown Hillsborough, and offering more public transportation. NCDOT has not overtly acknowledged this alternative, but public comment could force its consideration.

### Join our e-mail news list!

To receive occasional e-mail updates about the Orange-Chatham Groups activities, including monthly meeting updates, go to:  
<http://lists.sierraclub.org/SCRIPTS/WA.EXE?SUBED1=nc-ocg-news&A=1>  
Follow the instructions to subscribe or unsubscribe.



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## 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.

### Ongoing Service Outing:

#### 3rd Saturdays on the 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 [arbor-net@mindspring.com](mailto:arbor-net@mindspring.com), or 942-9937 if you are interested in participating.

### Current Outings:

**FEB 5** (Sat) William B. Umstead State Park. Moderate 7-mile afternoon hike all around re-opened Sycamore Trail. Enter from Glenwood Avenue (U.S. 70) and proceed to far left corner of last parking lot. Sign-in by 1:20 required. For more details, contact Peter or Isabel Calingaert (OCG) [pc@cs.unc.edu](mailto:pc@cs.unc.edu) (or 919-933-5489 between 9 am and 9 pm).

**FEB 19** (Sat) 1 p.m. Kayak the backwaters of Jordan Lake. Two or more portages rewarded by views of beaver lodges and either osprey, heron or eagles' nests depending on destination, which will be dictated by weather, wind direction and lake level. Three hours total. Contact Susanne Gomolski (OCG) at 919-929-3805, evenings only please.

**FEB 26** (Sat) 1 p.m. Moderate RT hike of 4.1 miles in Few's Ford section of Eno River State Park. Estimated RT walking time 2 hours. Trail can be muddy in places depending on recent weather or high water. Due to rocks and tree roots along the trail, hiking boots are recommended. 250 foot elevation gain. Educational angle: we will pass by the stone ruins of a 200 + year old grist and saw mill, one of several that used to operate on this section of the river. Directions: from I-85 and 15-501 take Hillsborough Road/ Cole Mill Road exit and follow Cole Mill Road N about 4 miles to Pleasant Green Road. Continue straight about 1 mile to Few's Ford Access at Eno River State Park. Park in first parking lot (marked for Buckquarter Creek Trail). Park, sign-up, hike starts at 1:15 p.m. For more information please contact Garry Post (HWG) at 919-490-7905 or [garry-robert2004@yahoo.com](mailto:garry-robert2004@yahoo.com)

**MAR 12** (Sat) Enjoy the early signs of spring. Hike at the Eno River State Park; about five miles. Moderate. Contact Margaret Anderson (OCG) at 919-493-0397 before 9:30 or e-mail [andcamlib@hotmail.com](mailto:andcamlib@hotmail.com)

**MAR 12-13** Women's Backpack in the Birkhead Mountains Wilderness (moderate). The Birkhead Wilderness is a great place for a weekend backpack that is close to the Triangle. We'll backpack a 13-mile loop, covering about half the distance on Saturday and half on Sunday. Although the mileage may seem long, the trails are friendly and generally gentle. Limited to 6. Contact Shelly Eberly (OCG) preferably at [seberly@earthlink.net](mailto:seberly@earthlink.net) or 919-967-7358 between 7 and 9 p.m. only.


**MAR 19** (Sat) 1 p.m. Kayak the backwaters of Jordan Lake. Two or more portages rewarded by views of beaver lodges and either osprey, heron or eagles' nests depending on destination, which will be dictated by weather, wind direction and lake level. Three hours total, moderate. Contact Susanne Gomolski (OCG) at 919-929-3805, evenings only please.

**MAR 19** (Sat) Falls Lake hike. Pack a lunch and join us for an early spring hike. On this moderate 6-mile hike we will discuss some of the issues that impact our local drinking water supply. Boots recommended. Contact Robert Gordon (CG) at [robert747@netzero.net](mailto:robert747@netzero.net) or (919) 954-1442.

### Save the Planet Fun Facts

**Q: Computer equipment can use a lot of electricity; some devices can drain power even when they're turned off. How can this energy waste be eliminated?**

A: Connect your PC, monitor, fax machine, and computer peripherals to a single power strip; when they're not in use, turn the strip off. This will put a stop to "leakage" from nominally switched-off electronics. Use the same technique for your home entertainment components.



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### Save the Planet Fun Facts


**Q: How much do you know about driving in order to maximize fuel efficiency? Fill in the blanks:**

1) Aggressive driving can lower your gas mileage by \_\_\_ percent at highway speeds.

2) Use of an air conditioner on a hot summer day can decrease mileage by \_\_\_ percent.

A: 1) Aggressive driving can lower your gas mileage by 33 percent at highway speeds (and by 5 percent around town).

2) Use of an air conditioner on a hot summer day can decrease mileage by 21 percent. Whenever possible, use a flow-through air vent instead.



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