

Orange-Chatham Group

Sierra Club

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

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

Conservation committee news: Jordan Lake Hearings Finally Being Heard



The long-awaited public hearings on new rules to decrease the nutrient pollution Jordan Lake finally occurred in July in Carrboro and at Elon University. As Chatham Commissioner George Lucier pointed out, since the coastline of the lake is mostly in Chatham County, it's odd that hearings were held only in Alamance and Orange, but many Chathamites attended and spoke out.

So did many municipalities and developers, whose financial interests lead them to oppose regulations that would help clean up the lake. Some of their arguments sounded familiar from other environmental debates—prevention efforts cost too much and won't be effective anyway; the condition of the lake is already improving on its own; and it's unfair to force jurisdictions that have already somewhat improved their wastewater treatment plants to shoulder more burden (for another view and the contributions of Sierrans see also the chapter's blog on the hearing <http://sierraclubnc.blogspot.com/2007/07/jordan-lake-hearing-wrapup.html>).

One of the problems that watersheds often face is that upstreamers who don't drink the water don't feel they have a stake in cleaning it up. And this problem was built into this lake: Jordan Lake was originally proposed for the purpose of flood control. When funding was denied, drinking water was added as a more persuasive purpose, and in a fast-growing area, the need for drinking water was undeniable. But the way the lake was created and configured, and the way the tributary river and streams were being used made excess nutrients predictable. That was one reason some opponents of the lake argued against it in the first place. So in a sense

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Call for Candidates

The terms of three Executive Committee members will expire in December (see below). If you or someone you know is interested in serving, please contact Dave Keesee, Nominating Committee Chair.

Executive Committee Planning Meetings

Join the Executive Committee and others for a discussion of group issues and projects. Our meetings are held on the second Wednesday or each month at the Carolina Meadows annex meeting room at 7:00 p.m. Our web site will also have information on meeting dates and location.

Keep in touch online:
Orange-Chatham meetings podcasts:
<http://h2opodcast.com/earth.html>
NC Sierra Blog:
<http://sierraclubnc.blogspot.com/>

Orange-Chatham Group Leaders

Chair+ **Bernadette Pelissier** bpelissier@juno.com 643-2762
Treasurer* **Andrea Rohrbacher** arohrbacher@earthlink.net 967-4213
Conservation+ **Judith Ferster** judith_ferster@ncsu.edu 929-6648
Political & Transportation* **Loren Hintz** lhintz@chccs.k12.nc.us 933-8987
Calendar Sales **Pam Hemminger** pheeminger@bellsouth.net 942-2273
Secretary+ **Maureen Hayes** mchayes720@earthlink.net 933-3140
Newsletter/Web **Kristen Dang** kristen.dang@gmail.com 932-3127
Listserv **Marsha Stephens** stephens@mail.fpg.unc.edu 732-4014
Outings **Annette Jurgelski** jurge001@mc.duke.edu 644-0280
Nominating **Dave Keesee+** dskeese@bellsouth.net 933-4879
Executive Committee vacancy*

* = Executive Committee Member (term expires in 2007)

+ = Executive Committee Member (term expires in 2008)



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Group Events:

In lieu of a regular meeting, the Orange Chatham Sierra Club will sponsor three candidate forums in September:

Carrboro Board of Aldermen Candidates' Forum Monday, September 17, 7-9 p.m.

Carrboro Town Hall

The forum, organized by the Orange Chatham Sierra Club Group, will focus on local environmental issues. The forum will be broadcast on public access television.

Hillsborough Town Board Candidates' Forum Tuesday, September 18, 7-9 p.m.

Courthouse Gordon Battle Room, Hillsborough

Chapel Hill Town Council Candidates' Forum Tuesday, September 25, 7-9 p.m.

Chapel Hill Town Hall

Similar to the Carrboro forum, it will be broadcast on public access television.

GROUP FILM SCREENING & DISCUSSION Wednesday, October 10, 7-9 p.m.

Chapel Hill Public Library

100 Library Drive (off Estes Drive)

The Orange-Chatham Sierra Club Group (OCG) and the New Hope Audubon Society (NHAS) are working collaboratively to offer their memberships the opportunity to view two energy-related films to increase public awareness of energy issues within our country.

Oil On Ice — A story of the Gwich'in people taking on global energy interests to prevent invasive oil operations in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge's fragile caribou calving grounds. (50 minutes)

French Fries to Go — A funny short film that documents the origins of Telluride, Colorado's Biodiesel project. (15 minutes)

The meeting is open to all members, as well as the public. We will gather in the large meeting room downstairs at 7:00 pm for a few refreshments, watch the films, and then have time for discussion following.

Have Fun Volunteering!

Volunteers are essential to the Sierra Club. Our goal is to provide any member who wants to help out the opportunity to do so. Volunteering is a great way to learn about our issues and have fun with other active Sierra Club members.

Publicity Coordinator — Coordinate media events. Provide information about events and activities to media outlets. This is a great opportunity for someone who doesn't have the time to go to meetings.

Sierra Watch — Members needed to attend various city and county public meetings to act as the Sierra Club's eyes and ears on environmental issues. If interested, we'll connect you to the meetings that meet your interest and concerns.

Outreach Coordinator — Coordinate logistics and organize volunteers to cover booth shifts at events such as Hog Day, Festifall, and others.

If you are interested in any of these opportunities or want to know about other volunteer possibilities, please contact Bernadette Pelissier.



Outings

Sierra Club outings are open to all. Outings are educational unless designated as a social (S). 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: This is a long-term habitat restoration project, and we need many more volunteers. It's hard work, but very rewarding. We meet at the Greenway entrance on Bolinwood Drive, just off Hillsborough Street in Chapel Hill. Please contact Bill Bracey at arbor-net@mindspring.com, or 942-9937.

Current Outings:

William B. Umstead Park Saturday and Sunday morning hikes. Pre-registration for either Saturday and Sunday hikes is not required. In case of inclement weather or questions, contact Debbie Jacobowitz (HWG) at (919) 493-0780. For directions, see <http://ils.unc.edu/parkproject/visit/wium/directions.html> or call (919) 571-4170.

Saturday hike description: Sycamore Trail. Moderate 7.2 mile hike at a steady pace. We will meet at the Crabtree Creek section off US 70 at 10 a.m. From the entrance, drive past the visitor center and proceed to the second parking lot. Please wear hiking boots and carry water; a picnic lunch is optional.

Sunday hike description: Moderate 5.9 mile hike at a steady pace. We will meet at the Reedy Creek section off I-40 (exit 287, turn left on Harrison into the parking lot) at 10 a.m. Please wear sturdy footwear and carry at least 16 oz. water; a picnic lunch is optional.

AUG 4,11,18 (Sat) William B. Umstead State Park Saturday a.m. hikes. See description and contact information above.

AUG 5,12,19 (Sun) William B. Umstead State Park Sunday a.m. hikes. See description and contact information above.

AUG 24-26 Shining Rock Backpack. Join us for a moderate 15 miles of backpacking, hiking, & blueberry picking on the Shining Rock Ledge. Friday backpack into Flower Gap on the Art Loeb Trail and Day Hike to Cold Mountain. Return Sunday via Graveyard Ridge Trail to play in the falls. Includes car shuttle. \$15 refundable deposit required. Leaders: Chris Plummer (CG) and Bill Troop (CG). Contact Chris Plummer at (919) 720-8125 or cplummer@nc.rr.com.

SEP 1,8,15,22,29 (Sat) William B. Umstead State Park Saturday a.m. hikes. See description and contact information above.

SEP 2,9,16,23,30 (Sun) William B. Umstead State Park Sunday a.m. hikes. See description and contact information above.

OCT 6,13,20,27 (Sat) William B. Umstead State Park Saturday a.m. hikes. See description and contact information above.

OCT 7,14,21,28 (Sun) William B. Umstead State Park Sunday a.m. hikes. See description and contact information above.

OCT 19-21 Fires Creek Rim Trail Backpack. A 25.5-mile loop in Nantahala N. F., mostly up on a circular ridgeline at elevations between 3-5 thousand feet, looking down into a watery basin. If solitude is your desire, this hike offers it. Rated moderate to strenuous, limit of five, \$50 refundable deposit. Contact Chris David at chrisdavid@bellsouth.net or 919-676-1214.

OCT 21 (Sun) Eno River State Park easy to moderate 6-mile afternoon hike along all trails in Cole Mill Access Area (off Old Cole Mill Rd), not the area at the end of Cole Mill Rd! Park in last lot in time to sign in by 1:20 sharp. For more details, contact Peter Calingaert (OCG): pc@cs.unc.edu (or 919-933-5489 between 9 am and 9 pm).

NOV 2-4 Uwharrie National Forest Backpack: Uwharrie National Trail. Spend a weekend hiking along a historic trail of gold mining, bootleggers, and civil war lore. We will ramble south and up the legendary and ghostly Dark Mountain, and continue along Dark Mountain Ridge. We'll cover 12-15 miles of varied terrain, about half with backpacks and half with daypacks. Limited to 6 and pre-approval by leader required. Trip rated moderate difficulty, prior backpacking experience recommended. Contact Chris Moses (OCG) at chrisjmoses@hotmail.com.

NOV 3 (Sat) Fall color hike at the Little River Park and Natural Area. Meet at 10 a.m. and hike a four mile loop. Break for lunch at the picnic shelter and do a 2.5 mile loop after lunch. Dogs on leash are welcome. Contact Marcia Eickmeier (HWG) at 919 644-1806 before 9 p.m. to register.

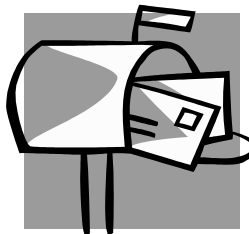
Watch for additional outings listings on our website.

Jordan Lake Hearings continued

the nutrient problem Jordan Lake faces is existential. If you have this lake, you have this problem.

Like other existential problems, fair or unfair, we just have to deal with them. The federal government wants the state to clean up the lake to protect it as a drinking water source, a recreational site, and a wildlife habitat, so the state needs new rules. Many of the environmentalist speakers at the Carrboro hearing, Sierrans among them, wanted the deadline for wastewater treatment plant upgrades returned to the original 2011 date, not extended to 2016. They also wanted mandates for retrofits for already developed sites. Their testimony was pointed and vividly informed by experience on and close observation of the lake.

You can add your voice to this call to clean up the lake by contacting Mr. Rich Gannon, NCDENR-Water Quality Planning Branch, 1617 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1617, rich.gannon@ncmail.net, or phone (919) 733-508 extension 356 or 537, fax (919) 715-5637. The deadline is Sept. 14, 2007. Speak out for the lake now.



Report by Judith Ferster, Conservation Chair



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