

Orange-Chatham Group Sierra Club

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

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

Completing the streets

By Judith Ferster, Conservation Chair



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At the October program meeting at Binkley Baptist Church, there was a wide-ranging discussion of transportation. It started with a presentation by David Jones of the Active Living by Design Partnership about Complete Streets, a program that promotes "roadways designed for safe, attractive, and comfortable access and travel for different users," including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and public transport. That might mean sidewalks, bike lanes, setbacks and medians with vegetation, and public transportation, all to create a transportation system that is healthier for users, neighbors, and the

environment. In 2001, the National Household Transportation Survey found that in metropolitan areas, fifty percent of all trips were three miles or fewer and 28% were just one mile. People who walk, bike, or ride save money and energy while reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing air quality. Fifty-five percent of Americans say they would like to drive less and walk or bike more, but many streets do not have the sidewalks, shoulders, or bike lanes that would make it palatable or even possible.

Transforming the ways people get around thus fights global warming and obesity while reducing the number of asthma attacks suffered because of low air quality. Between 1990 and 2003, Complete Streets modifications in Boulder, Colorado, reduced CO₂ emissions by a half million pounds per year. Completing its streets since 1993, Portland, Oregon, has reduced per capita carbon emissions by 12.5%. The city expects carbon savings worth 28 to 70 million dollars annually.

A number of states such as Massachusetts, Oregon, Florida, California, and South Carolina, and cities such as San Francisco, San Diego, Charlotte, and St. Louis have enacted rules and procedures to make Complete Streets possible. Nationally, the Complete Streets Act of 2008 in the Congress has gathered sponsors, among them Rep. David Price. Since President Obama vows to support a job-creating stimulus package that deals with infrastructure, maybe Complete Streets programs will make some headway.

In Chapel Hill, the Active Living by Design Partnership has proposed an interdepartmental task force involving Planning, Transit, Public Works, Parks and Recreation, and Public Safety. In addition, we heard about a coalition in Wake County called Capital Area Friends of Transit, which supports "a comprehensive regional transit system, including expanded bus services, fixed rail corridors and local circulators, which creates efficient travel options and supports sustainable land use patterns." It has already garnered many supporters, including over 60 civic leaders and 35 civic organizations, the Sierra Club's Capital Group among them. They will try to coordinate with the governmental groups making regional transit plans.

Later in the fall, Chapel Hill Transit revealed its proposal to run a weekday bus from Pittsboro to Chapel Hill. During the public comment period, several members of ExCom sent email testimony encouraging such a plan, which would link our group's two counties.

OCG will follow these initiatives. Let us know if you'd like to help monitor and participate in them.

Executive Committee Election Results

Congratulations (and thanks) to returning Executive Committee members Judith Ferster, Dave Keese, and Matt Scheer. Welcome to new Executive Committee member Olga Grlic, who takes the seat previously held by Maureen Hayes. Maureen is continuing to help OCG by organizing our calendar sales. The current roster of the Executive Committee and other group leaders can be found on reverse.



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Group Events

Attention all members: Our monthly meetings are now at Binkley Baptist Church., off Fordham Blvd./15-501 near University Mall. For more-detailed directions, see <http://www.binkleychurch.org/about/directions> or contact Loren Hintz (see reverse). Please attend and share your ideas for future speakers and programs.

No Group Meeting in February

Discussion with County Commissioners Wednesday, March 11, 7-9 p.m.

Binkley Baptist Church (directions above)

Sprawl, transportation, water quality, open space and energy conservation are all environmental issues impacted by local government. Learn what is and can be done to address these issues.

Executive Committee Meetings Second Monday of each month, 7-9 p.m.

Carolina Meadows

All members are invited. Contact Judith Ferster (see reverse) for more information.

Come to the Burrito Bash!

Please join us for an evening of fun, environmental fellowship, and the Pittsboro General Store's burritos—all to benefit the **Orange/Chatham Group of the Sierra Club and Chatham Citizens for Effective Communities**, a



Chatham County organization that guards the environment by monitoring residential and commercial development.

Festivities will include a short satirical play by Fearington Village's Carl Granath. The "Off the Road" band will play their original mix of blues, bluegrass, jugband music, and rock and roll—both classic and original songs.

Local auctioneer Pam Smith will conduct a live auction of a variety of exciting items, including handcrafted jewelry, hand-blown wine glasses, garden consultations, and gift certificates from restaurants like Top of the Hill and Margaret's Cantina. All ticket-holders will be eligible for one of two Grand Prizes, if you are there to win: a night's stay at either Rosemary House B&B in Pittsboro or the Chapel Hill B&B on Mann's Chapel Road.

Please come out to support our work.

Details:

Where? The Pittsboro General Store Café (39 West Street, Pittsboro)

When? Tuesday, March 3, 6-9 p.m.

How do I get tickets? Order advance tickets at \$12/person by mailing a check to one of these addresses:

OCG Sierra Club

CCEC

P.O. Box 1303

P.O. Box 412

Chapel Hill NC 27514

Pittsboro NC 27312.

Please note on the check that it is for the "Burrito Bash" and indicate the number of tickets you want.

We'll hold advance tickets in "Will Call" until the night of the Bash. Tickets will cost \$15 at the door.

Questions? Call 919-932-3132 or email info@chathamcitizens.org.



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. The difference is visible immediately, and the effect is long-lasting. 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

The North Carolina chapter of the Sierra Club is forming an "Atlantic Alliance" with nearby chapters and is interested in receiving feedback on proposed collaborative outings. Please visit <http://nc.sierraclub.org/outings/o080.html> to read about these proposed future outings and express your interest!

FEB 6-8 (Fri-Sun) Piedmont Plateau Group. Neusiok Trail, Croatan NF. Easy for flat and distance, mostly scouted. Max of 3.0 miles Fri. to base camp. Dayhike Sat. north to and along the sand beaches of the Neuse, about 8 miles. Varies from pine/hardwood upland forest to cypress/palmetto swamp to sandy riverbanks. Group size limited. \$25 refundable-at-the-trailhead deposit required. Contact Jerry Weston (336-856-1431 before 9 PM, takeahike@earthlink.net, or Jweston@gbwlaw.com).

FEB 14 (Sat) Cypress Group. Celebrate with your valentine and friends on hike in Goose Creek State Park. Meet in park at 9 AM, or at Greenville JC Penney parking lot at 8 AM to carpool. Contact Steve Holmes (757-3350) or Cindy Wooten (252-355-7577 or cindywooten@suddenlink.net).

FEB 21 (Sat) Cypress Group. Learn about birds while enjoying trails along Tar River with the River Park North Parks Coordinator. Bring binoculars. Meet at River Park North at 8:30 AM. Contact Cindy Wooten (252-355-7577 or cindywooten@suddenlink.net).

FEB 21 (Sat) Piedmont Plateau Group. Moderate 4-mile loop in Hanging Rock State Park. If visibility is good, we may see magnificent views of Pilot Mountain, Sauratown Mountain, the Blue

Local Activism Efforts

OCG's Executive Committee has asked the NC Division of Water Quality to reject Durham County's proposal for a change in the Jordan Lake normal pool boundary in Durham County. The change would allow major development in the floodplain. Given the current nutrient pollution and the federal mandate to clean it up, Jordan Lake needs more protection, not less.

In addition, OCG testified before the Chatham County Board of Commissioners to support changes in ordinances about regulations to protect Natural Heritage Areas; prevent erosion and sedimentation; and institute new storm water management practices. If you'd like to be part of these efforts to protect the environment, contact the Conservation Chair (see list at right).

Ridge Mountains, and the skylines of Winston-Salem and Greensboro. Leave the trailhead at 9:30 AM. Contact Cheryl Garrity (336-427-0413 or cgarrityhike@triad.rr.com).

MAR 6-8 (Fri-Sun) North Carolina Chapter. Winter outing to Mt. Rogers, the highest point in Virginia. Meet Fri. afternoon to set up base camp or join early Sat. morning. We'll explore a wilderness area and may try an across-the-park hike. We'll pick one of the many day hike options based on group and conditions. Required: warm clothes in layers, winter tent/ground cloth, and a winter sleeping bag rated to 15 deg. F. Also, lots of good, nourishing food for cooking in the camp. Bring your appetite and a treat for the rest of us! Participant led car-pool is recommended, including sharing travel expenses. Small fee required to cover camping costs. Friendly dogs allowed providing they are kept on a leash. Leader pre-approval required plus a \$25 deposit refundable at the group campground. Contact Chris Plummer (919-720-8125 or cplummer@nc.rr.com).

MAR 14-21 (Sat-Sat) Capital Group. Base camp-work trip for blazing, documenting and trail maintenance in the Snowbirds, a rugged wilderness area. We'll be helping with the goal of making a comprehensive guide book for the 38 miles of Snowbird trails. We'll be measuring, blazing, recording trail data and doing some trail maintenance, using fold-out saws, pruners, and small chain saws. We also hope to establish a loop backpacking trail in this area. The trip is scheduled for an entire week, but you may join for shorter periods of time. All interested participants should contact Chris David (919-676-8927, 919-673-1214, or chrisdavid@bellsouth.net).

MAR 21 (Sat) Piedmont Plateau Group. Moderate trail, 4-5 miles in Stone Mountain State Park. First mile is strenuous, rest is almost all downhill. Great views! Leave the trailhead at 10:15 AM. Contact Cheryl Garrity (336-427-0413 or cgarrityhike@triad.rr.com).

MAR 21 (Sat) North Carolina Chapter. First lecture of Beginner Backpack classes for spring 2009, in Raleigh. Course includes a second lecture and three progressively more difficult outings. Cost: \$75 per person, plus a possible small fee for second/third outings, to defray leader expense. Class size limited to 8 people. Contact Chris Plummer (919-720-8125 or cplummer@nc.rr.com).

International outings. OCG outings leader Peter Calingaert is leading outings to central Turkey in June and northern India in November. For details, explore <http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/national/> or contact Peter at pc@cs.unc.edu or (919) 933-5489.

Watch for additional outings listings on our website.

Orange-Chatham Group Leaders

Executive Committee Members (year indicates end of two-year term)

Loren Hintz (2009) **Group Co-chair and Transportation Chair**
ldhintz@bellsouth.net 933-8987

May Becker (2009) **Group Co-chair** tomatocutter@yahoo.com 969-7439

Dave Keesee (2010) **Treasurer** dskeesee@bellsouth.net 933-4879

Judith Ferster (2010) **Conservation Chair** judith_ferster@ncsu.edu 929-6648

Jean Westbrook (2009) jtwdwr@hotmail.com 542-6212

Matt Scheer (2010) mws21575@yahoo.com 370-4267

Olga Grlic (2010) olgagrl@duke.edu 968-4318

Other Group Leaders

Jason Baker **Political Chair** jason@jasonbaker.us 338-1506

Max Felsher **Newsletter/Web** max.felsher@gmail.com 929-8937

Maureen Hayes **Calendar Sales** mchayes720@earthlink.net 933-3140

Paul Jones **Listserv** smalljones@gmail.com 360-7740

Annette Jurgelski **Outings** jurge00111@gmail.com 644-0280

We have a vacancy in the position of membership chair. Contact Loren Hintz (above) if interested in volunteering.



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