

# Orange-Chatham Group Sierra Club

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

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

## Sustainability in Chapel Hill

By Judith Ferster, Conservation Chair

For years, the federal government offered no leadership to fight global warming. But states and towns, including Chapel Hill, are working to reduce carbon emissions. Chapel Hill participates in the Sierra Club's Cool Cities and in ICLEI (Local Governments for Sustainability), which starts with an inventory of emissions sources and follows with efforts to reduce them 60% by 2050. On May 13, John Richardson, Chapel Hill's Sustainability Officer, described the town's approach to sustainability.

### Expanding mass transit

At April's meeting, we learned about the town's free buses, some of which are hybrids and all of which can carry bicycles, linking many parts of the town. In May, Richardson revealed that ridership increased 100% when the system became fare-free. It is now second highest in the state. Alternative fuels power sixty percent of the town's fleet of vehicles, from trucks to lawn mowers.

### Greening town buildings

The town used a 2003 bond referendum to devote \$500,000 to a revolving fund to support energy-reduction projects. For example, the fund financed the replacement of the town hall's 20-year-old heating and cooling system with a more efficient digital management control unit. Savings will pay back the fund's initial outlay in seven years, and the money will be reinvested in other projects.

The town adopted a standard of LEED silver (strict green-building practices) for all new public buildings and additions of more than 5,000 square feet. The jewel in the crown is the town operations center on Millhouse Road, north of Eubanks Road. It is heated by geothermal heat pumps and photovoltaic panels. It uses a solar thermal system to heat water. Through the use of natural light, light sensors, motion detectors, and dimmers, the energy needed for lights is reduced when the sun shines.

### Adopting new technology

Another energy-saving project is a solar-powered bus shelter. A solar array on the roof powers LED (light-emitting diode) lights that turn on at dusk and stay lit for nine hours. Their batteries store enough power to maintain the lights for five days without direct sunlight. An experimental program has installed LED street lights on Franklin Street and will monitor their energy savings. An audit revealed that street lights account for 7% of Orange County's carbon emissions, so a successful LED street-light conversion could make a significant difference.

### Saving water

Because water processing is energy-intensive, Chapel Hill has mandated year-round water conservation practices. The town's storm water division educates citizens about stopping water from running quickly off the land, which takes nutrients into streams and causes erosion. The town operations center employs good storm water management, using retention ponds, permeable

SUSTAINABILITY (Continued on reverse)



SIERRA  
CLUB  
FOUNDED 1892

## Group Events

### Exclusive reception on climate politics

Tuesday, September 1, 6-8 p.m.

3Cups (227 S. Elliott Rd, Chapel Hill)

Suggested contribution: \$40

RSVP with Nation Hahn at 919-833-8467 or

[nation.hahn@sierraclub.org](mailto:nation.hahn@sierraclub.org)

Find out where climate politics is headed from those who are working day and night to make a difference.

Cathy Duvall, Sierra Club's national political director, will give a first-hand account of the political landscape in Washington. Duvall was recently listed by *Washington Life* magazine as one of D.C.'s 100 most influential people.

Molly Diggins and Drew Ball of the NC Sierra Club will provide a look ahead at how our state can help advance a national clean-energy agenda. Join us for a fun evening featuring a great discussion, wonderful food and drinks, and excellent company.

### Local candidate forums (all 7-9 p.m.)

Wednesday, September 2

Carrboro Town Hall

Wednesday, September 9

Chapel Hill Town Hall

Wednesday, September 16

Old Courthouse, Hillsborough



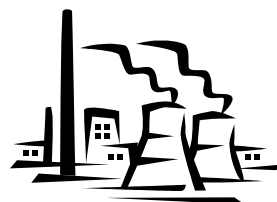
Listen to candidates for each town's mayor and town council/board. Learn where they stand on environmental issues.

### The truth about energy Wednesday, October 14, 7-9 p.m.

Binkley Baptist Church,  
Chapel Hill

(For directions, visit

[www.binkleychurch.org/about/directions](http://www.binkleychurch.org/about/directions) or contact Loren Hintz.—see reverse for contact information.)



Two local journalists will share stories about energy in America. Learn about the front lines of coal activism, the nation's crumbling electrical grid, the hidden energy in food, and more. The stories appear at [www.poweringnation.org](http://www.poweringnation.org), a publication of the UNC School of Journalism.

### Executive Committee Meetings

Fourth Monday of each month, 7-9 p.m.

Carolina Meadows

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



## 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 [arbornet@mindspring.com](mailto:arbornet@mindspring.com) or 942-9937.

### Current Outings

**SEPT 11-13 (Fri-Sun) Piedmont Plateau Group.** Devils

**This is your chance to serve on the OCG executive committee for 2010-2011! Contact any committee member (see below right) if interested.**

#### SUSTAINABILITY (Continued from reverse)

surfaces, and bio-retention areas. Rainwater is reused to flush toilets, wash vehicles, and irrigate.

#### Preserving the land

In 2007, a 100-acre conservation easement was granted to the NC Botanical Garden for the Morgan Creek preserve. The town has preserved 1,100 acres of parkland and open space, 80% of it undeveloped.

#### Investing in buildings

Residential, institutional, and commercial buildings are responsible for 48% of carbon emissions. Chapel Hill is exploring weatherization for individual residences. The state building code is due for an update, and Chapel Hill has asked for stricter regulations.

#### Looking to the future

Chapel Hill's government has built concern for sustainability into its structure. Committees and commissions explore and advise the town on sustainability issues. The committees are coordinated by the sustainability officer, who connects to both the community and those outside it.

Marble Yard near Lynchburg, VA, which has been described as "God's rock garden," is a large area of 200 million-year-old sandstone blocks along a ridge. We will begin at Pettis' Gap Rd and end at the AT parking at the intersection of AT and James River. Contact Jerry Weston ([takeahike@earthlink.net](mailto:takeahike@earthlink.net) or 336-856-1431).

**OCT 17-25 (Sat-Sun) Capital Group.** Starting in GA, we will backpack the entire 100-mile Bartram Trail. Andre' Michaux, a brilliant French horticulturist, spent much time on this trail. Thomas Jefferson had convinced him to come to America for a year, but Michaux was so taken aback with the plant diversity that he stayed for 18 years. The trail provides a few more vistas than even the AT through this part of NC. Trip is rated moderate to strenuous, is limited to five and requires a \$50 refundable deposit. Contact Chris David (919-676-8927 or [chrisdavid@bellsouth.net](mailto:chrisdavid@bellsouth.net)).

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

## Don't miss the Orange County Environmental Summit!

**Saturday, September 12, 10 a.m.-12 p.m.**

NC Botanical Garden's Education Center, Chapel Hill

Dr. Larry Band, the director of UNC's Institute for the Environment, will be the keynote speaker. There will be a presentation of the 2009 Orange County State of the Environment Report and a panel discussion on ground and surface water issues. At 12:15 there will be a tour of the new LEED Platinum Education Center.

Watch for further information on the OCG website.

**Interested in buying or selling next year's Sierra Club calendars? Contact Maureen Hayes (see below).**

### 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](mailto:ldhintz@bellsouth.net) 933-8987

May Becker (2009) **Group Co-chair** [tomatocutter@at@yahoo.com](mailto:tomatocutter@at.yahoo.com) 969-7439

Dave Keesee (2010) **Treasurer** [dskeesee@at.bellsouth.net](mailto:dskeesee@at.bellsouth.net) 933-4879

Judith Ferster (2010) **Conservation Chair** [judith\\_ferster@at.ncsu.edu](mailto:judith_ferster@at.ncsu.edu)  
929-6648

Max Felsher (2009) **Newsletter/Web** [max.felsher@at.gmail.com](mailto:max.felsher@at.gmail.com) 929-8937

Matt Scheer (2010) **Political Chair** [mws21575@at.yahoo.com](mailto:mws21575@at.yahoo.com) 370-4267

Olga Grlic (2010) [olgagrl@at.duke.edu](mailto:olgagrl@at.duke.edu) 968-4318

#### Other Group Leaders

Maureen Hayes **Calendar Sales** [mchayes720@at.earthlink.net](mailto:mchayes720@at.earthlink.net) 933-3140

Paul Jones **Listserv** [smalljones@at.gmail.com](mailto:smalljones@at.gmail.com) 360-7740

Annette Jurgelski **Outings** [jurge00111@at.gmail.com](mailto:jurge00111@at.gmail.com) 644-0280



P.O. Box 1303  
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

U.S. Postage PAID  
Non-Profit Org.  
Chapel Hill, NC  
Permit No. 464