



# Kansas Natural Resource Council

Journal - Winter 2002

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Defending Kansas Environment for Over 20 years!

## “Green Scissors” and State Budgets

There are a wide variety of critical environmental issues demanding attention today across the country. Even with that need for more attention, we have the federal government in the hands of folks intent on lifting one regulation after another, leaving it to states to protect their own resources and citizens from abuse and misuse. And with that greater need for state attention, we are about to convene a legislature so preoccupied with budget issues that it will certainly have little time for environmental issues cast in traditional terms. It is widely assumed that our issues will be “entirely off the radar screen”.

What’s a green group to do?

KNRC’s answer to that question is our new “Green Scissors Program.” We’re not the first green group to adopt the strategy, but we are uniquely positioned to make good use of it in this bleak setting.

Green Scissors strategies identify and publicize potential reductions in state spending or tax credits that subsidize or encourage environmentally harmful behavior. By reducing the investments taxpayers are mak-

ing in those harmful projects or policies, the state can reduce budget deficits and use market forces to improve both the financial and ecological health of Kansas.

KNRC, with membership and public input via our website, will be identifying spending that can be reduced or eliminated in both newly proposed and existing programs to free up revenue for more critical programs, and reduce the state’s spending and tax credit subsidies for pollution, environmental damage, and waste.

*...Continued on page 10*

## KNRC Receives KHF Grant

KNRC has been awarded a Recognition Grant from the Kansas Health Foundation in the latest round of their grants. The \$25,000 grant from the Foundation will support a statewide survey of the public’s knowledge and attitudes about the links between the Kansas environment and public health, and planning for a conference to share the information.

Wichita KNRC Member Bill Howse is credited as the initial proponent of the concept and Dr.

*Continued on page 4...*

## From the President:

Summer has turned to Fall. Election Day has come and gone. Soon the holidays will be over and the new year will begin. Seems like only yesterday we were celebrating the start of 2002. Time does fly when you are having fun.

And KNRC has been having fun this past year. This issue of the Journal covers many of the activities KNRC have been involved in this past few months. We have made significant progress, even to the point of being called by our elected representatives to provide input on environmental issues. And not the representatives you would associate with environmental activism.

Much of the credit for this success is due to the hard work of our Executive Director, Jay Barnes. He has worked tirelessly around the state – meeting KNRC members, briefing legislative and regulatory leaders, providing testimony for KNRC and planning the Annual Dinner. Equally important, he has worked hard at the day-to-day mundane tasks needed to keep the organization running.

KNRC needs his efforts on our behalf to be successful. And KNRC needs your donations to

*Continued on page 7...*

**KNRC Journal is a quarterly publication of the Kansas Natural Resource Council P.O. Box 2635 Topeka, Kansas 66601 www.knrc.ws**

**Kansas Natural Resource Council (KNRC) is a non-profit, environmental organization whose purpose is to advocate for the protection, preservation and restoration of Kansas' natural resources in order to ensure the health and quality of life for all Kansans. This shall be accomplished through public policy development, grassroots action, public education and litigation.**

**KNRC is funded by memberships, donations and grants. It is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit and all donations are tax deductible.**

## **2002 Annual Meeting Held**

by Jay Barnes, Executive Director

Our Annual Meeting this year was similar to the advertising you have perhaps seen for the US Marine Corps. We attracted a "few good members"!

Low turnout aside, the meeting gave those who did attend an excellent chance to meet and get to know each other better, to share an great meal prepared by Matfield Green's best caterers, to listen to absolutely wonderful entertainment by long time KNRC member and staunch supporter, Ann Zimmerman, to share the great promotional artwork offered by the hard-working and always supportive Shirley Barnes, wife of the Executive Director (Thanks, Hon!), and to hear about a number of new initiatives KNRC has undertaken this year.

Jay Barnes, Executive Director, announced the winner of this year's Bill Ward Award, the highest recognition KNRC gives. The 2002 recipient is retiring State Representative Laura McClure, Osborne. Ms McClure was recognized for accomplishments in her body of work on environmental issues in the Kansas Legislature during an outstanding career in Topeka. (See Representative McClure's acceptance speech elsewhere in this issue.) As KNRC tries so hard to do, Ms McClure brought many issues to the legislative agenda that would simply not have been there otherwise, and raised the level of the discussion of those issues while she did so.

Members also heard from Tracy Streeter, Executive Director of the State Conservation Commission on the plans for the Kansas Natural Resource Legacy Alliance; from Nick Gregory, City of Great Bend on the proposed plans for the Cheyenne Bottoms Interpretive Center; from Laura Downey, Executive Director of KACEE -the Kansas Association for Conservation and Environmental Education - on our partnership with her organization in developing our new Community Forum Series; and from KNRC member

Bill Howse in the inauguration of that Forum series with his presentation on a lifetime of environmentally friendly ranching in Kansas and Texas.

In short, if you missed the meeting this year you missed a lot. We are already working on plans for the next meeting and it will offer even more. Watch for an announcement of the date and place in the next Journal issue. Put it on your calendar early and plan to come meet the folks working hard for your KNRC, and the other members sharing the support roles with you.

## **New Board Members for KNRC**

By Jay Barnes, Executive Director

Two new board members are lending their time and talents to KNRC this year. They come to us with quite different, but equally rich, backgrounds) in knowledge and experience with environmental and natural resource issues.

Greg Sievert, Emporia, is an instructor at Emporia State University. A self described "educator and Herpetologist", Greg holds a Masters degree in Wildlife Management and Fisheries Biology from Eastern Kentucky University. His strong science background, like that of so many of our board members, adds real depth to the governance of KNRC.

Bob Lindholm, Lindsborg, is a photographer and author, as well as a lawyer, and a former Asst Attorney General for state of Missouri. Bob's creative talents are welcome additions to KNRC, as is his legal background. His public service provided much experience in environmental issues and brings unique perspective to the table in KNRC activities.

Service to any nonprofit organization through board membership requires personal commitments of time, energy, and resources that could easily go to other activities or other groups doing similar work. I am therefore especially proud and grateful that such well qualified gentlemen have chosen KNRC as their vehicle for their involvement.

Welcome, Greg! Welcome, Bob!

## Message From The Executive Director

Welcome to the latest issue of the Journal. My column this time is a preview of this issue, one I am particularly proud of.

We welcome two new board members to KNRC this year, and you'll meet them briefly in this issue. I frequently quote Lester Brown's line that "Saving the planet is not a spectator sport." The quote clearly states a requirement for personal involvement in the issues and answers KNRC is committed to. These two men share that perspective with me and with the rest of the KNRC Board and they bring valuable new depth and perspective to our work.

Wind generated energy is on our Kansas horizons, both figuratively and literally. You'll read in this issue about KNRC's position supporting environmentally responsible development of our generating capacity and our work with the Kansas Renewable Energy Working Group on large-scale wind installations. The new legislature is expected to again consider proposals supporting smaller scale installations and KNRC will be there in 2003 to support issues like net metering that create a favorable economic climate for expansion of those small-scale systems.

You'll read of KNRC applause for the leadership shown by Norton County Commissioners in the battle they are waging to protect the environment and public health of that county's citizens from the pollution of confined animal feeding operations. The county has appealed the judge's decision and County Attorney, Doug Sebelius, expects briefs will be filed in February, 2003.

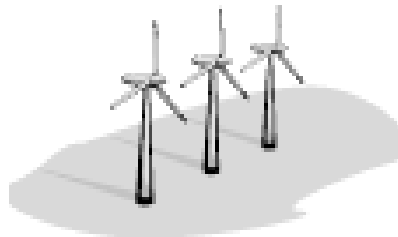
You will also read of Dr. Melinda Smith's award winning work on the long-term health of tallgrass prairie ecosystems. The implications of her study and ones similar to it deserve wider attention than they sometimes get. Scientists like Dr. Smith understand

something that seems hard for the lay population and policy makers to grasp - healthy ecosystems of any kind do not just one day collapse. They fail, or they cannot be saved from failure, because they are dismantled or polluted piece by piece, either by our commission or our omission, during the very time they are still viable and recoverable.

In our new "REPRINT" series you'll read Dr. Alan Maccarone's commentary on the administration's energy plan. As bleak as the picture looked last spring when he wrote, the recent elections have made the picture even worse for federal energy policies, indeed for ALL federal environmental policies, over the next two years. Our thanks go to Dr. Maccarone for reprint permission. His piece still serves as a clarion call for our attention.

KNRC is now working on three different projects with KDHE and you'll find summary reports of our work on each one. We believe in active engagement on environmental issues and your support insures that KNRC is at the table and our voice is heard on a wide range of issues.

The successful debut of our new Community Forum series, a report on the Annual Meeting, coverage of our work with the Kansas Natural Resource Legacy Alliance, our new Green Scissors Initiative, a new and major grant project funded by Kansas Health Foundation, and a friendly reminder re your membership dues for 2003, will round out this issue. I hope you'll be as pleased with it as I am.



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# McClure Accepts 2002 Bill Ward Award

By Jay Barnes and  
Laura McClure

Now in its 12<sup>th</sup> year, KNRC's Bill Ward Award goes annually to the person or group who has done the most during the year to advance the cause of the environment in Kansas. Retiring State Representative Laura McClure, Osborne, was recognized this year for her accomplishments in the body of her work throughout her service in her career in the Kansas legislature. The following letter is extracted from her acceptance letter.

To the Board and Members of the Kansas Natural Resource Council,

First of all, let me say **"Thank You"**, for honoring me with the Bill Ward award! It means a great deal to receive such recognition from a respected environmental organization. KNRC has a well established reputation for being on the frontlines of protecting our state's natural resources; providing useful information and well reasoned arguments to concerned citizens and to public agencies alike.

Personally, this award brings back a flood of warm memories developed over the years. KNRC was one of my first calls after getting involved in the nuclear waste issue. Staff and members were more than gracious to coach both my husband John and I as green rookie activists through the process of lobbying the legislature, following bills and working with the press. The old office on Topeka Blvd. felt like a safe haven where we could vent frustrations, reload with information and recharge our enthusiasm

before jumping back in to fight the good fight.

Later, as a member of the Board, I was privileged to be involved with the decision to challenge the governance of the State Board of Agriculture. KNRC took on this battle and was successful in making the State Secretary of Agriculture more accountable to the people of Kansas. Until KNRC challenged the old system, this important agency head with vital regulatory responsibilities was selected by a narrow group of organizations with a vested interest in lax enforcement of environmental standards. Now, as an appointee of the governor, the Secretary of Agriculture is subject to full public scrutiny and accountability fitting for such a key position.

Then as a member of the legislature and as the ranking minority member on the Environment Committee, I continued to depend on KNRC as a barometer of environmental issues in Kansas.

For me, KNRC is more than just an organization. It represents a network of personal friends who have encouraged, instructed and inspired me to go further and accomplish more than would have been possible without their influence. At the almost certain risk of omitting someone, I'll mention Claudia Speenor, Shawn McGraff, Vicki Foth, Bob Eye and of course, Bill Ward. This list could go on and on. I am thankful for everyone who has and continues to show their concern for environmental issues through involvement with KNRC.

Today I'm approaching the end of my current service in the Kansas Legislature and just beginning in a new capacity as the Economic Development Director for the City of Osborne. This may seem an unlikely career choice given the stereotype that the environment and

economic development are always in conflict. However, one overriding conviction I bring to this task is the understanding that long term economic growth and stability cannot happen without environmental sustainability.

In closing, I want to thank Jay Barnes for nominating me for this award, and thank the board for selecting me to receive it. I am honored to receive this award, established in memory of our friend Bill Ward.

Laura

## KNRC Receives KHF Grant

*...Continued from page 1*

Collette Burke and her Geology Department at Wichita State University were major partners in developing the project proposal.

Results of the survey will be shared with all interested Kansas nonprofits during a mid-year conference, and will be published on both the KNRC and WSU websites.

The project is designed to improve the quality and extent of available knowledge of the issues being surveyed and to improve the effectiveness of all Kansas nonprofits working on the dual issues by sharing the information, improving communications among the groups, and supporting coordination and partnering in their plans and activities based on the information.

The Kansas Rural Center and the Arkansas River Coalition are assisting in the development of the actual survey instrument and a number of other green groups approached have already indicated an interest in assisting with planning and presentation of the conference. More partners, from among both environmental and health focused nonprofits active in the state, are being sought as this is written.

## Wind Energy - The Time Has Finally Come

A recent study by the United States Public Interest Research Group (USPIRG) verified what old-timers in Kansans (newcomers too, for that matter) have believed all along – there's no place the wind blows more than right here in Kansas! That report rated Kansas as the number 1 place in the country in wind energy potential.

Reaction to the report is amazing to the folks that have worked so hard for years to get attention for our wind power potential – nevertheless, developers are poring over maps and literally knocking on doors looking for the best sites across the state to install their machines.

Long-gone are the discussions about the status of the technology and the high costs of producing wind energy. Topics of discussion in the hallways at the recent Kansas Wind Energy Conference in Lawrence were more likely to focus on connection to the national power grid, on transmission issues, and on the environmental issues that all come hand-in hand with major generation installations, issues that assume the presence of substantial investments in large-scale wind development.

KNRC has long supported the development of wind energy as a clean, safe, and effective alternative to the traditional and dirtier coal, oil and gas, or nuclear generation of electric power. We do so today and we are actively involved in both the environmental and economic development issues that accompany the recent interest and activity.

Our policy position on the issue is direct – we support the development of wind power in Kansas when done in an environmentally responsible way.

KNRC is a charter member of the Kansas Renewable Energy working Group, a coalition of stakeholders

working with the support of the Kansas Corporation Commission to promote the responsible development and use of renewable energy in the state. We work with others from the ranks of environmentalists as well as developers, on the Group's Environmental and Siting Committee.

It is easy of course to be in favor of wind generated energy. Assessments of best wind patterns for siting for the generators and the costs of grid access via transmission lines quickly leads developers' attention to the Flint Hills, the Gyp Hills, and the Shortgrass and Sandsage prairies of southwest Kansas. The wind is there. In some cases, especially in the high potential Flint Hills, the major transmission lines are already there as well.

The initial enthusiasm for unbridled development of wind energy is quickly tempered when one begins considering impact issues of that development that range from prairie chicken habitat to the fragile nature of the prairie ecosystem ( see "Award Winning Tallgrass Prairie Study" elsewhere in this issue.), to the esthetics of Flint Hills and Gyp Hills scenery.

Must the most unique and fragile parts of Kansas be sacrificed to development in our support of wind energy generation? KNRC believes the answer is a resounding "NO!"

Wind power developers are quick to remind the KREWG that they are "green companies" themselves and they understand the concern over environmental issues. They have, after all, they tell us, come to the Group to work with other stakeholders to address those very issues. I've worked with them in that committee and I've questioned them from the floor of the Wind Conference about their use of environmental reviews in their siting process. Frankly, not all of the more active developers knocking on doors appear as committed as some are to those practices, but I'm personally convinced that those who are can be dealt with in environmen-

tal concerns. That's why we work with the Environmental Siting Committee.

The immediate goals of the Committee are twofold – first, the development of voluntary guidelines/criteria for responsible siting of wind farms, and second, the compilation of a map of the state overlaying wind potential, powerline infrastructure, and conservation priority areas to identify potential wind sites with minimal environmental and visual impacts.

The guidelines under consideration are adapted to committee issues and concerns from the National Wind Coordinating Committee's own guidelines. Published guidelines and maps will certainly fall short of full environmental impact assessments for siting considerations, but they will nevertheless serve all stakeholders - the power companies, the land owners, local zoning and permitting officials, and environmentalists of many different stripes, with a single document.

Wind energy development on the large scale in Kansas now has an energy of its own. Its time has come. With care and attention to the environmental issues inherent in development, Kansas can have the opportunity to show the nation the way in environmentally responsible development, as well as lead it in generating capacity.

KNRC will continue to work to that end within KREWG, and within the new legislature.

**Visit Us On The  
Web**  
[www.knrc.ws](http://www.knrc.ws)

# Legislative Update Plans

By Jay Barnes, Executive Director

Once again in the 2003 – 2004 session, KNRC will be providing our weekly legislative oversight reports – the KLUE – the Kansas Legislative Update on the Environment. KLUE receipt is available in both email and hard copy versions this year and is automatically included in your basic membership fee.

Even during a session where environmental issues will be minimized in the face of major budget issues, we can expect to see important

issues of interest debated and it is more important than ever that KNRC continue to help shape the agenda and provide direct input on our environmental concerns for our elected decision makers.

A new Governor (the only candidate incidentally who apparently respects the work of environmental nonprofits enough to reply to KNRC's issues questionnaire during the campaign ) will be inaugurated soon, providing new opportunity for raising vital issues and our concerns, and KNRC's Green Scissors Initiative is designed to keep us relevant

to the Legislature's focus in that setting.

A wide range of wind and related energy issues should again be before the Utilities Committees, this time undoubtedly with more attention because of the Flint Hills wind turbine siting issues. A bill on a new program of environmental use controls for KDHE is expected. Regulation of water quality and quantity are always potential issues, etc.

I'm looking forward to this year's session and I appreciate the suggestions that you've given me in the past about the KLUE format. Even in a session dominated by other issues, your participation in the process by your cards and letters and phone calls, is still important...and the KNRC KLUE is your best single starting point for that involvement.

Members with email access for KLUE receipt provide by far the least expensive way for distribution of the weekly reports. If you don't have that access or you haven't shared your e-address with me, I'll be sending you the first three issues of KLUE by hardcopy with a return card for you to tell me you want to continue to receive the reports. Be sure to return the card quickly to keep your copies coming throughout the legislative session without interruption

## Community Forum Series Begins

With tremendous support from local members, the first public presentation of KNRC's new series of Community Forums was recently conducted in Prairie Village. Local KNRC members, Kathy Riordan, Margaret Thomas, and LeAnne Howard handled the arrangements and publicity for "Kansas Environmental Horizons –2003" presented by Executive Director Jay Barnes.

The program content was based on Barnes' assessment of key issues on the public agenda in 2003 following direct interviews with the Kansas Secretaries of Agriculture and Health & Environment, the Executive Director of the State Conservation Commission, and staff members of those agencies.

Fifty eight people, including two City Councilmen, attended the discussion of expected legislative and regulatory issues in the Kansas environmental arena during the coming year. Feedback on the forum content and value from attendees was very good, including suggestions for annual repetition.

The KNRC Community Forum series was inaugurated with one presented at the 2002 Annual Meeting by new Wichita KNRC member, Bill Howes. Bill's summary of a lifetime of environmentally friendly ranching in Kansas and Texas was a memorable highlight of the meeting.

The Forum series is designed as the primary vehicle for KNRC's efforts to bring environmental issues directly to the public's attention in a setting that will simultaneously educate and encourage informed discussion among all stakeholders in Kansas environmental issues.

Current Forum topic materials available include water and land use, in addition to Mr. Howse's program and the 2003 Horizons package. If you'd like to see KNRC conduct a Forum in your community, or you have an idea for other topics we should develop, please contact Jay Barnes for more information



## Public Meetings --

# KDHE Triennial Review of Water Standards

With Secretary Graeber's guidance, KDHE has adopted a more open methodology for this year's Triennial Review of Water Quality Standards, and KNRC was invited to be a part of the process. The process adopted is intended to draw public attention to a few key issues, while allowing any part of the current standards to be commented on.

KNRC members are encouraged to attend the public hearings and participate in the discussion of the need for standard revisions.

The Clean Water Act requires states to conduct a public review of their water quality standards every three years. The last formal Kansas review was begun in 1997, but delayed in finalization for two years by legislative intervention. It was then that EPA agreed to a revised date of 2002 for the next formal review.

With the help of a focus group to identify priorities, KDHE developed "white papers" – thorough discussions - on selected standards, and will use them as the heart of public discussion in a series of meetings coming up across the state.

A focus group composed of 11 organizations representing the regulated community, environmental advocacy groups (including KNRC), technical groups, and regulators, has been meeting since mid-year. The group identified the highest priority issues with the atrazine, bacteria, high flow, natural pollutants, nutrients, and site-specific standards.

White papers on the six standards identified are available on the internet at [www.kdhe.state.ks.us/water/triennial/](http://www.kdhe.state.ks.us/water/triennial/), or by telephone request at 785-296-5506. Meeting dates are 12/17 in Manhattan, 12/19

in Shawnee Mission, 1/7/03 in Colby, 1/8 in Hays, 1/14 in Garden City, 1/15 in Wichita, and 1/22 in Independence. All meetings are from 7 to 10 pm on the dates shown. Check the KDHE website or telephone KDHE for specific meeting locations.

## Norton County Commission Leads the Way

By Jay Barnes, Executive Director

Early this year the Commissioners of Norton County developed regulations to protect their northwest Kansas community from the environmental impact of a number of large confined animal feeding operations. In October, a District Judge in Wichita told them they can't do that.

In spite of that finding, the public - and environmentalists specifically, owe the commissioners a great deal for their leading efforts to address CAFO issues head on. "Sometimes," the Commissioners wrote, "county governments have to step up to the plate and pass laws to protect the public."

Their original actions came based on numerous citizen concerns and an in-depth study of the air, ground and surface water risks of CAFOs in their community.

For years Norton County had struggled with the impact of virtually unregulated CAFOs. In 1998 the state passed regulations that were supposed to help. Still, a county study showed, among other findings, that half of the county's wells were polluted with high nitrate levels.

The commissioners did the responsible thing. They worked with

experts and developed a set of regulations that would minimize the environmental risks posed by the feeding operations and help protect the public health.

Opponents of the new regulations argued that existing state and federal laws were adequate to protect the county, but the commissioners pointed to the study results. "If the state's laws were sufficient to protect this county from the environmental risks that were identified, we would not have gone to the time, trouble, and expense of developing county regulations."

The judge's decision found that the state law had exempted CAFOs from home rule authority. He also found that the regulations violated a state prohibition against applying zoning regulations to agricultural land. "Relief to local authorities", the judge wrote in his decision, "lies in the wisdom of the legislature, not in this court..."

Well, Sir, that might be a good idea - if only our legislature had the wisdom of the Norton County Commission!

## From the President:

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KNRC needs your donations to keep Jay working for us. As the year winds down and you receive countless appeals for last minute contributions, remember the one organization dedicated to Kansas issues. Your donation to KNRC as the year ends will help make 2003 a banner year for us. The groundwork has been done – help us build upon it with your membership renewal and a generous contribution.

Thanks to all KNRC members for your support this past year. I and the rest of the members of the Board looks forward to serving you in 2003.

# Award Winning Tallgrass Prairie Study

Jay Barnes, Executive Director

A study with serious implications for long term management of tallgrass prairie has brought recognition to a recent K-State PhD graduate. Dr. Melinda Smith has been honored by the Ecological Society of America for her paper on the role of plant species diversity in the health of intact tallgrass prairie.

The Society's Murray F. Buell Award is given annually to the most outstanding paper presented by a student at the previous annual meeting.

Dr. Smith's paper summarized two years of research examining the consequences of natural patterns of plant species loss on aboveground biomass production, a key prairie ecosystem process.

Controlled experiments were used to mimic the natural patterns of species loss that can occur with drought or fragmentation of grasslands. While short-term results indicated dominant grasses were able to maintain biomass production, results also showed that over the long term, the loss of the more uncommon or rare forbs - i.e., the diversity of the ecosystem, may result in even further species loss and substantial decline in the biomass production essential to a healthy prairie ecosystem.

In the face of increasing fragmentation of the remaining intact prairie, this study has significant implications for long-term management of the ecosystem.

"Remember," Dr Smith told me, "The prairie IS a grazing ecosystem. The environmental sustainability of

the ecosystem must be included as a goal of management efforts as well as its economic sustainability if the ecosystem is to survive in the long term. We need to set aside – to protect and preserve – more of the Flint Hills area."

Interest in the tallgrass prairie ecosystems brought Dr Smith from the University of Colorado to K-State for her Masters and PhD work. She is now working in synthetic research on the impact of bio-diversity on ecosystems for the National Center for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis in Santa Barbara, California.

KNRC extends our congratulations to Dr Smith for her well-deserved recognition from ESA and our thanks for substantive work giving us a better understanding of the long-term needs of the prairie ecosystems.

## Proposed Legislation – Environmental Use Controls

KNRC has been working with KDHE and a number of interested stakeholders to refine a proposal for Environmental Use Controls for the new legislature's consideration.

Environmental Use Controls – voluntary legal restrictions on the use of contaminated real property, were originally proposed in the last legislature under House Bill 2830. The bill passed the House on a 105-17 vote in February and spent the rest of the session with one hearing before the Senate Natural Resources Committee, but no action taken.

Environmental Use Controls, also called Institutional Controls, are restrictions or prohibitions of certain uses or activities for property with residual contamination even after remedial action to clean it up. Agreement for the restrictions is voluntary by the landowner and is subject to the acceptance and approval of KDHE. The tool provides opportunity for both KDHE and landowners to protect public health and the environment by mitigating the risks of exposure to the contamination and it passes with ownership of the property. And it does it all with minimal cost to taxpayers because of landowner fees for administration of the agreement.

The idea is too good to waste. KNRC's work with KDHE and the other stakeholders is to consider and revise the details of the initial legislation to find supporting consensus. KDHE's understanding of the need for support from a broad range of stakeholders, and their willingness to work to get it to create this tool, are commendable.

It appears as I write that supporting consensus can be found. If so, support in both houses of the new legislature should follow next year. Such a tool should add effectively to Kansas landowners' options, while strengthening KDHE's ability to protect the health of the public and the environment from contaminated property.



## REPRINT: COMMENTARY

By Alan D. Maccarone

The Sierra Club recently announced its new strategy, which consists of trying to sound more positive and less pessimistic than usual about environmental issues.

Well, good for the Sierra Club. It must have adopted this strategy before it had a chance to examine the current administration's energy plan.

For anyone even mildly concerned about environmental issues, the Bush administration's energy plan makes it extremely difficult to be optimistic.

Environmentalists should have been concerned by the fact that the Energy Department did not even approach major environmental organizations until just two days before its deadline for receiving comments. Even then, Energy Department officials were told to sift through any comments to try to find some that were worthy of administrative support.

By contrast, energy companies had been given months to essentially set the course for our energy policy. This is unfortunate, because now we are left with a plan that is weighed heavily toward increased fossil-fuel consumption but sees little merit in providing funding for developing and improving alternative, renewable energy sources.

Even European environmental leaders have been openly critical of our country's energy policy, especially the fact that we have steadfastly refused to sign the Kyoto Protocol, which seeks to reduce emissions of so-called "greenhouse gases," and we appear unwilling to embrace any policy

that requires us to reduce our insatiable thirst for energy.

The United States contains 5 percent of the world's 6 billion people, yet American drivers account for some 15 percent of global oil consumption. To put this figure into perspective, all of the world's remaining cars combined consume only 7 percent of the world's oil.

One way to reduce oil consumption, obviously, would be to build more fuel-efficient cars. According to a recent National Academy of Sciences report, it may be feasible to increase the fuel efficiency for minivans and sport-utility vehicles by more than 40 percent. However, automakers have been given too little support to undertake this costly research and development.

To the contrary, three decades of efforts that have succeeded in raising fuel-efficiency standards were scrapped by a 62-38 Senate vote last month. The vote to rescind the corporate average fuel economy standards fell largely along party lines.

Improving the fuel efficiency of our country's 150 million automobiles would encourage energy conservation and be a significant step in helping to achieve our goal of reducing our dependence on oil imports.

The Senate also rejected a proposal that would require energy utilities to produce up to 20 percent of their energy from renewable fuel sources by the year 2020. This would be a rather significant increase from the current 2 percent of energy generated from wind, solar, geothermal and other renewable sources.

Those of us who are concerned about our pattern of ever-increasing consumption of fossil fuels, and its now-documented effects on the global environment — such as pollution, a scarred landscape and global warming — should be outraged by this energy plan, which lacks vision or a plan for improving our environment. Our country, as a world leader, should be setting better examples about how we treat the Earth.

*Alan D. Maccarone is Director of Environmental Studies at Friends University in Wichita. This item is reprinted with his permission. It originally appeared in the Wichita Eagle on April 29, 2002. Things haven't improved since then.*

**“Saving  
the planet  
is not a  
spectator  
sport”**

**--Lester Brown,  
Worldwatch Institute**

# KNRC Presents To KNLRA

The Kansas Natural Resource Legacy Alliance will be completing the public hearing phase of its work about the time you receive this issue of the Journal. The Alliance work then turns to preparation of the report of its recommendations, with a preliminary version due to the Governor in May and a final report due by December, 2003.

From the initial legislative proposal for the Alliance, KNRC has supported the principle of a comprehensive planning approach to managing the state's natural resources and the Alliance as the best tool available to accomplish that.

The Alliance as it is composed today is the last legislature's version of that tool. It is not a perfect version. Although widely criticized for its makeup as it has toured the state, primarily because of the formal roles given to KLA and Kansas Farm Bureau, the fact is that the Alliance composition we have was probably the only one possible from the last legislature.

One principle that KNRC has worked hard to underline in the legislature and with regulatory agencies is that ALL stakeholders must be included in the decisions of public policy, not just those with direct financial stakes in the policy. So, instead of criticism of the composition, KNRC's position has been to adopt a self-appointed advisory role before the Alliance and to present, both directly, and through members' appearances, on a wide range of issues.

We were the only non-agency/ advisor presentation at the Alliance's first meeting and have since presented on a wide variety of topics. For the most part we have not dealt with immediate issues, but with the principles and tools necessary for

policies that manage resources held in common in an expanded community. We have addressed the need for better process and better structure within the state's legislative and administrative branches to address future natural resource issues and to build environmental considerations and costs into state policy decisions.

Topics of our ED presentations include:

- the critical role that enforcement plays in adequate regulation of the environment,
- the design of the Alliance use of committees for their work,
- the principles of "Green Planning", i.e., planning for the protection and sustainable use of natural resources,
- the value of the "Precautionary Principle" as a management tool ( taking precautionary action when first significant concerns are raised as opposed to waiting for disaster as proof of danger before acting to address environmental issues), and
- our "Green Scissors" Program

The environmental community has very strong and capable representation on the Alliance and those members deserve our full appreciation and support for their efforts.

All of the alliance members have worthy interests and valuable perspectives for the debate before them. If they are not all reflective of our own hopes, they certainly are reflective of the political realities that dominate this state.

The friends of the environmental community on the Alliance cannot possibly represent all facts of every environmental issue and should not be left on their own to do so. That's our job. We must take the issues to the table and we must do so persuasively. We must also listen to the "other" stakeholders in the debate and understand their thinking and motivation and consider their issues. That's what all of the Alliance

members must do. And that's what democracy is about - the opportunity to make our case and hear from others - and that's exactly what vehicle for debate the Alliance offers us.

A number of KNRC members have worked hard on their own presentations before the Alliance and I thank each one of them in behalf of our whole membership. I am also inviting each of them to provide me with a copy of their presentations for our official records. With those in hand, I will also personally insure that the Alliance has a full set of our contributions to their work.

It is important that the Alliance report be as comprehensive and as good as Alliance members can make it. It is even more important that organizations like ours pick up on their recommendations and develop our own strategies to see that the best of them become public policy. That's when and where major efforts will again be needed, and as always, that's where you'll find your KNRC.

## Green Scissors

*...Continued From Page 1*

We have matched this program with a call before KNRLA for recommendations in their final report that would institutionalize such a program, requiring not only budget impact analysis on proposed legislation as is done today, but environmental impact assessment of proposed measures as well.

A "Green Scissors" program offers green groups a chance to pursue our fundamental issues of a healthy environment even when the legislature is seemingly preoccupied with issues they consider more important. Our version of the program is still in its development stages but it will be in place during the coming legislative session and you'll find more details on our website soon, as well as in the next Journal issue.

# Kansas Natural Resource Council

## 2003 Membership Application

KNRC is a private, nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization.

All contributions are tax deductible.

**Membership Benefits.** All Membership categories receive our newsletters, action alerts for selected state and national issues, notice of selected statewide and local events, our exclusive electronic Kansas Legislative Update on the Environment (KLUE) reports during the legislative sessions, and the opportunity to network with folks across the state who care about our environment and believe our collective voice CAN make a difference in Kansas.

### Membership Categories

- |   |      |                                       |       |
|---|------|---------------------------------------|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual                   | \$25 | <input type="checkbox"/> Contributing | \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family                       | \$30 | <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting   | \$200 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student/Senior Citizen       | \$15 | <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining   | \$500 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Organizational/Institutional | \$50 |                                       |       |

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Please add me to the KNRC electronic mail list (Free Service)

Mail to: KNRC Membership Drive  
P.O. Box 2635  
Topeka, KS 66601



**Kansas Natural  
Resource Council**

Kansas Natural Resource Council  
P.O. Box 2635  
Topeka, Kansas 66601

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## 2003 Memberships Due

You have in hand a summary of the quality and wide variety of work KNRC is doing today. We are raising the level and expanding the scope of awareness, and the quality of the debate, on environmental issues across the state, in farm houses and town houses alike. We think it is worthwhile work. We know it is expensive.

We need you. We need you membership to show that our messages have strong support. We need your financial support to deliver the messages.

In the final analysis, it is our work that must stand as our appeal for your support. I hope you agree that our work is good and deserves your support, but I know we also have to ask for it, and so I do – Please renew your membership for 2003.

We'll stretch your money as far as possible and make sure it's a good investment. It's also totally tax deductible. Consider a gift membership for your friends or neighbors who are potential KNRC supporters. Consider one for your local high

school library to help get the word out to the next generation that activists are hard at work out here in their behalf, or perhaps order one for your veterinarian's waiting room. You'll think of others perhaps. Those are tax deductible too.

Send your check today to our Topeka address – and don't forget your email so you can get the first issues of KLUE!

**Membership Form  
Available On Page 11**