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## Mississippi Chapter Sierra Club

Golden Triangle Group

### *CROSSROADS*

April 2005 – August 2005

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#### EVENTS

##### APRIL

Sat., April 30<sup>th</sup>, 8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. **Plant Sale** at Frances and Harold Thompson's home, 608 Lakeview Dr., Starkville. Come and check out the flowers, vegetables, and herbs for sale at this fun fund-raising event. We need plant donations and volunteers to help during the day of the sale. Please call Frances at 662-323-7379 to sign up. Follow Montgomery St. north of Highway 82, turn right on Critz St., take 1st left on Overstreet Dr., and left again on Lakeview Dr. *See featured article* inside to find out how you can volunteer and/or donate plants.



##### MAY

Sun., May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 9:00 a.m. **Work Outing. Sierra Club Wilderness Trail.** Volunteers are needed to clear brush and fallen trees from the Sierra Club Wilderness Trail in the Noxubee Wildlife Refuge. Bring gloves, lunch, and water. Any of the following tools are helpful: loppers, clippers, hand saws, and light chain saws. This trail goes through low areas so consider wearing boots if there has been recent rain. From Starkville, take Highway 25 S for about 10 miles. Turn left onto Keeton Tower Rd. and follow it until you get to the trailhead. We'll meet at the trailhead. The trail is a 4 mi. loop so there's lots to do. For more information, call Juliet Tang at 662-338-5426.

##### June

Wed., June 8<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 p.m. **Potluck and Program** at David Cross and Juliet Tang's home, 211 Edgewood Drive, Starkville. **Community Onsite Management Options for Wastewater Treatment.** We will be showing two 17-minute videos that document how small communities across America are successfully solving their wastewater problems in a cost effective manner. The videos were produced by the National Environmental Services Center, West Virginia

University. From Highway 82, go north on Old West Point Rd. Take the 3<sup>rd</sup> left on Critz St., then the 1<sup>st</sup> right onto Edgewood Dr. For more information, call Juliet Tang at 662-338-5426.

Sat., June 18th, 7:30 a.m. **Outing.** Join us as we explore the **Dolomite Glades in Bibb County, Alabama.** This unique area harbors an amazing diversity of plants, rarely seen in one location. We will meet in the parking lot of the Clay Lyle Building, MSU Campus, Starkville. Bring lunch, water, and comfortable walking shoes. Traveling distance is about 2 hours one way, so we may be eating dinner on the road. For more information, call Juliet Tang at 662-338-5426. *See featured article* inside.



##### AUGUST

Fri., Aug. 12<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 p.m. **Potluck** at Adrienne and Rob Minerick's home, 1891 Chapel Hill Rd. Leave the clouds at home and head out to the country to get the best views possible of the **Perseid Meteor Shower.** From Oktoc Rd., take left at cemetery onto Artesia Rd., take 2<sup>nd</sup> right, then at the next intersection, bear right onto the paved road, then take the 1<sup>st</sup> left at the fire station onto Sessums Rd. (gravel). For more information, call Adrienne at 662-722-1243.

Wed., Aug 24<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 p.m. **Potluck and Planning** at the David Cross and Juliet Tang's home, 211 Edgewood Dr., Starkville. Bring suggestions for fall programs, outings, and newsletter articles. From Highway 82, go north on Old West Point Rd. Take the 3<sup>rd</sup> left onto Critz St., then the 1<sup>st</sup> right onto Edgewood Dr. For more information, call Juliet Tang at 662-338-5426.

## NOT TOO LATE TO SAVE ANWR – WRITE SENATORS AND LEGISLATORS NOW

Is there a lot of recoverable oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR)? You bet! There's likely over 5 billion barrels worth. With record oil prices, (over \$55 a barrel), that's enough to make companies and individuals significantly richer. Would the extraction of this oil benefit **our nation** in terms of our relative independence from foreign producers and our economy in general? Let's look at it in terms of this country's annual oil consumption. According to our government's estimation made in 2000, the oil that could be recovered from ANWR would cover our needs for only **9 months**. Now think about it in terms of just one year's trade imbalance. Last year our trade deficit was over \$615 billion, more than twice the estimated value of the oil in ANWR. With these figures in mind, consider a realistic time frame needed to bring **all** this oil through exploration, production and finally to your gas tank. Decades. My point is that, from a yearly perspective, this doesn't amount to more than a tiny blip on the radar screen monetarily and in terms of gaining independence from foreign oil.

We could save the same amount of money that would otherwise go towards buying foreign oil through **conservation**.

To get a clearer idea about the likely threats to wildlife if we drill for oil in ANWR, I wanted to stay away from any obviously biased source of information. Because of that, I went to our government's (don't laugh) U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's site, ([http://www.mapcruzin.com/arctic\\_refuge/issues1.html](http://www.mapcruzin.com/arctic_refuge/issues1.html)). I hope some of you will take the time to read what they concluded after extensive studies. They admit that some things aren't easily predictable, but some things are definite. Major impacts to the Porcupine Caribou herd and muskoxen would occur. They stated even a 5% increase in caribou calf mortality would result in a population decline. Because of geographical constraints, there is a limited amount of area for the animals to feed. "To successfully reproduce, female caribou must be able to move freely throughout the 1002 Area to find adequate food resources to build up their fat reserves and milk." Over 120,000 caribou migrate into the ANWR for calving every year. Like caribou, muskoxen and migrating birds and other wildlife are very sensitive to disturbances.

People who would argue that advances in more environmentally friendly methods of oil exploration might avoid these problems should look at the scars left just from the winter survey equipment. These are present even after 15 years. This is an incredibly fragile ecosystem. If they were to go for the oil, roads would have to be built. Roads would likely change water drainage, migration routes, allow easier access for predators, and generally stack the odds against what is in an already delicate balance.

As you certainly must already know, in a sneaky vote on the budget, (for which only a majority is necessary for passage), our U.S. Senate voted 51 to 49 to include revenue that would be generated from issuing oil leases in the ANWR. This is only the first step of many that would have to be taken to begin drilling. **Let's stop it now.** Flood your Senators and Legislators with letters (unfortunately emails don't carry as much weight as snail mail). Let them know you support keeping the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge a true refuge, a unique and splendid part of our national lands.

David Cross

## PUBLIC OUTCRY SAVES MISSISSIPPI STATE PARKS FROM CLOSING

The fate of ANWR may look bleak to many of you but now is not the time to give up hope and certainly don't put your pens down. This next article clearly demonstrates how public outcry can effect change to save public lands even when it may seem like it's too late.

In 2004, Mississippi State Legislators voted to close five State Parks. These included the Casey Jones Museum and State Park in Vaughan, Floewood Plantation State Park in Greenwood, Sam Dale State Park in Daleville, Nanih Wayia State Park in Neshoba County, and Legion State Park in Louisville. Now, in 2005, at least one if not all of these parks is up for sale.

In 2005, faced with continued budget shortfalls, the Mississippi House of Representatives on February 17, 2005 voted to close 23 of the 24 remaining State Parks under House Bill 1657. The immediate public response was overwhelming. Consequently, the following week, the Mississippi House reversed their previous vote and voted to set aside \$7 million to keep our state parks open through the start of the next fiscal year. Where they will find the money in

an already lean budget though is still questionable. And, what about the fiscal year beyond this one?

With budget cuts, there will surely be personnel reductions and reductions in service, but there are cost-saving measures that State Park Officials need to explore and implement before the Legislature votes to shut our parks one by one. The most viable option is training and/or recruiting volunteers to help with park activities, admissions, and storefronts. Given the right kind of leadership and motivation, volunteers can be a very reliable, creative, and dedicated workforce.

Of course, increasing admissions fees and state taxes are also options but they aren't the sole solution. State Park Officials have got to catch the public's interest so that they want to come and keep coming back time after time. Sure, families love picnics, and enjoy playing disc golf, but there's so much more to do outdoors. Activities that emphasize bird, plant, and insects are always fun and attract the public of all ages. Outdoor skills like using a map and compass can be learned by teaching orienteering, a competitive sport of land navigation. Adventure games for youth are also rewarding in that they build character, communication skills, trust, and promote group problem solving.

And yes, you guessed it, in 25 years, I'll be able to retire and I can't wait to be a volunteer, helping people enjoy the great outdoors. My only hope, though, is that the State Parks can remain open for that long.

Juliet Tang

## **DOLOMITE GLADES OF BIBB COUNTY, ALABAMA**

Once again we head out to Bibb County, Alabama to see the rare plants inhabiting this unique region. On last year's May 24<sup>th</sup> canoe trip, we saw the spectacular aquatic spider lilies (*Hymenocallis coronaria*, Amaryllis family) growing in the rocky shoals of the Cahaba River. This year, we'll travel a little later, on June 18<sup>th</sup>, so that we can see several of the 8 endemic species, described in 1992 by James Allison, in bloom. These include the yellow-flowered Cahaba paintbrush, the Cahaba torch (a species of *Liatris*), the Cahaba prairie clover (a species of *Dalea*), the Cahaba daisy fleabane (*Erigeron strigosus*), the sticky rosinweed (a species

of *Silphium*), and the Ketona tickseed (*Coreopsis grandiflora*).

According to James Allison, the unusually high number of endemic species is attributed to the unusually pure dolomite present in the outcroppings of the Ketona Formation. With only about 2% impurities, the soil derived from the weathering of Ketona Dolomite is exceptionally high in magnesium. Magnesium, although essential for plant growth, is toxic at high concentrations because it interferes with the uptake of other essential elements. The combination of high magnesium and a shallow, droughty soil where the rock is at or near the surface produces conditions that only specially adapted plants can tolerate. The result is a community of drought- and magnesium-tolerant plants able to evolve in the absence of competition from more generally adapted types.

Excerpts for this article were taken from: <http://www.mindspring.com/%7Ejallison/lostworld.htm>

## **USE EMAIL FOR NEWSLETTER AND CLUB NOTIFICATIONS**

Email Juliet Tang ([jtang@mafes.msstate.edu](mailto:jtang@mafes.msstate.edu)) if you would like to receive this newsletter electronically. Also, please specify if you want to be included in our email list for club notifications.

## **ANNUAL PLANT SALE FUND-RAISER**

Buy some beautiful flowering perennials, annuals, vegetable and herb seedlings, and help raise funds for the Golden Triangle Group of the Sierra Club. This year's plant sale will be held on Sat., April 30<sup>th</sup> from 8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. at the Thompson's home, 608 Lakeview Dr., Starkville. If you want to donate any plants, here are some suggestions. Root cuttings now; plant annuals, herbs, and vegetable seeds in early March; and divide and pot crowded perennials a few weeks before the sale date.

Plants donations can be brought to the Thompson's after Thurs. April 28<sup>th</sup>. Volunteers are needed for set up, sales, and clean up. Call Frances at 662-323-7379 to arrange to drop off plants or to volunteer.

## **GOLDEN TRIANGLE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

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\* Ex Comm, two year term, ends Dec. 2005

\*\*Ex Comm, two year term, ends Dec. 2006

## **NEWSLETTER ARTICLES**



Newsletter is printed on recycled paper.

The next newsletter will be published and circulated in September. Send any suggestions, articles, or announcements to Juliet Tang (662-338-5426).

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*Crossroads*

