

Poudre Canyon Cache

Newsletter of the Poudre Canyon Group of the Sierra Club

Volume 3 - 2009, Issued April 21

Welcome to this third edition of PCG's online newsletter. We are endeavoring to bring you important environmental news and information of regional concern and beyond. Please send your PCG news stories, event announcements and Eco Tips to jpgascoyne@frii.com for inclusion in future newsletters.

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1. PCG hosts Sierra Club Chapter

On Saturday, April 11, PCG hosted the monthly Executive Committee meeting of the Sierra Club Chapter, our state organization. The meeting was held at the recently opened Primrose Studio facility, at Reservoir Ridge beside Claymore Lake, west of Fort Collins.

Among matters discussed was Colorado House Bill 1126, the solar thermal energy bill, under consideration by the House Finance Committee. If passed, the bill would "allow local governments to provide the same incentives for solar thermal energy installations as may now be provided for solar electric installations. Attendees were urged to contact Fort Collins Representative John Kefalas, member of the Finance Committee, and ask him to support the legislation.

2. Endangered Black Footed Ferrets - by Ted Manahan

The PCG Sierra Club learned about Black Footed Ferrets at the general meeting on April 8. Sarah Bexel, of the National BFF Conservation Center in Wellington, gave an interesting and informative presentation on this charismatic local predator.

The black footed ferret is considered the most endangered mammal of the North American Prairie. Similar to weasels, black footed ferrets are dependent on healthy prairie dog populations. However, prairie dogs have lost 98% of their original habitat. Black footed ferrets were never plentiful and, at the low point of their population, there were only eighteen of the animals known to exist.

The black footed ferret breeding program was initiated in 1987. Now, over twenty years later, the program has managed to increase the population from eighteen individuals to over one thousand. Estimates are that about 800 black footed ferrets currently live in the wild.

3. Fort Collins Municipal Election

PCG endorsed four candidates for the April 7 Fort Collins City Council election. Ben Manvel, District 1, and Kelly Ohlson, District 5, each ran for re-election in their respective districts. Dale Lockhart ran for the District 3 seat and Tom Griggs campaigned for the mayor' position.

Two of the four, Ohlson and Manvel, won their races and each will serve a second four-year term. Aislinn Kottwitz won a narrow race in District 3 and incumbent Doug Hutchinson won the mayor's race by a significant margin.

Fort Collins City races are officially non-partisan and political affiliations do not appear on the ballot. Nevertheless, some trends emerge over a period of time. Aislinn Kottwitz has said she will carry on in the tradition of former District 3 councilperson Diggs Brown. The net effect, predictably, is that the priorities and voting trends of Council will remain the same for the next two years.

PCG members have a long tradition of working with the City Council and look forward to working with the new body. The Executive Committee of PCG extends its thanks to all Fort Collins Citizens who stepped forward to participate in this election.

4. Earth Fair 2009

Earth Fair will be held at Fort Collins City Park this Saturday, April 25, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. The objective of the annual celebration is to create an awareness of Earth Day and foster an everyday commitment to its principles. There will be speakers, musical acts and an assortment of demonstrations on sustainable living.

5. Upcoming Events:

April 22 - Wednesday: Beginning at **5:30 p.m.** at the CSU Lory Student Center Theater, Jax Outdoor Gear will host the 2009 Wild & Scenic Environmental Film Festival On Tour. The films are a collection of award-winning short productions by outdoor activists, for outdoor activists, and intended to inspire audience members to enjoy and protect our natural environment.

April 30 - Thursday: Save The Poudre Coalition will celebrate Junerise at Avogadro's Number, 605 S. Mason, in Fort Collins. Events will include happy hour and silent auction, beginning at **6:00 p.m.**, and the Nation Paddling Film Festival, at **7:30 p.m.** Tickets are \$10 at the door. All proceeds go to Save The Poudre. Contact: Gina at info@savethepoudre.org.

May 6 - Wednesday , 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. Oil Development and Climate Change in America's Arctic: Kit McGurn, National Arctic Organizer for the Sierra Club will discuss threats to America's unique Arctic ecosystem and what can be done to protect the area. The presentation will take place in the Ben Delatour Room of the Main Branch of the Fort Collins Public Library, 201 Peterson Street. Contact: Kerry Miller, 970-672-0431, 7kmiller@gmail.com.

May 9 - Saturday. Map and Compass 101 Workshop and Hike: Join the Indian Peaks Group, Sierra Club, in this combination of hands-on classroom work and practical exercises - all designed to bring participants from minimal knowledge to confident use of map and compass, with an emphasis on survival and otherwise staying out of trouble. Start at the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) at the western end of Table Mesa Drive in Boulder

(about 50 miles from downtown Fort Collins). Topo maps will be provided. Bring (1) a compass if you have one - we'll share as needed and (2) snacks and/or a lunch - for a working lunch in the classroom. We'll be both inside and out, so wear or bring layered clothing options. Meet at **8:30 a.m.** at the eastern end of the NCAR parking lot (the lower end of the parking lot that looks over Boulder). We'll be outside for the first hour or two, and then move into a classroom in the NCAR building. Indoor workshop will end about 2:30, followed by a short hike, to the west of the facility, to practice navigation and to consolidate knowledge gained in the class sessions. The hike will end about **4:00 p.m.** You'll be amazed at how much you'll learn. The event is limited to 20 participants. Must pre-register with Dave Hawley, 303-443-2332 or dave_Hawley@comcast.net.

May 11 - 17: Zion National Park, Utah: *This is an opportunity to participate; it is not an official Sierra Club outing.* You will be leaving early on the 11th and heading back on the 16th, with an overnight stop in Moab and Arches or Canyonlands National Park. One campsite for six people is currently reserved. Contact: Neal Marsh, Nandv@aol.com, for more information or to sign up.

June 3 - Wednesday: Laurie D'Audney of Fort Collins Electric will give a presentation on water conservation. The event begins at **7:30 p.m.** at the Fort Collins Senior Center.

6. March Fundraising

Last month, PCG members participated in the annual March appeal for contributions needed to provide funding for our local, state and national organizations. The effort was deemed a success and both callers and donors were thanked by the PCG Executive Committee.

A special note of thanks is offered to attorneys Michael Manning and Mark Hanson who provided office space for the telephone calling for the second year in a row.

7. Carl Bruning Elected to PCG Executive Committee

At its monthly meeting, on April 20th, the Executive Committee of PCG elected Carl Bruning to fill a vacancy on the Committee. Carl has been a very active member of PCG and puts a good deal of energy into a number of environmental concerns. Welcome aboard, Carl.

8. Green River Pipeline Comments Sought

The US Army Corps of Engineers is seeking scoping comments as part of the NEPA process for the proposed Green River Pipeline. Proposed by entrepreneur Aaron Million, the pipeline would pump up to 250,000 acre feet of water per year (about 80 billion gallons) from the Green River to the Front Range via a 400+ mile pipeline. This amount of water is slightly less than the entire native flow of the Poudre River in an average year. Sierra Club and other environmental groups in Wyoming, Utah, and Colorado have expressed concerns about the project's effects on the Green and Colorado ecosystems, as well as imported salinity, invasive species, and the very large greenhouse gas emissions resulting from the pumping of such a large quantity of water. Activists are highlighting the need for comprehensive and effective conservation and efficiency measures on the Front Range before new water supply projects are built.

The public is invited to provide scoping input and comments through May 19. Public notice is available at: <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/20#89F78>. Address comments and questions on the proposal and EIS to Ms. Rena Brand, Project Manager, US Army Corp of Engineers, Denver Regulatory Office, 9307 S. Wadsworth Blvd., Littleton, CO, 80128-6901; mrcg.eis@usace.army.mil.

Review *NYTimes* opinion http://nytimes.com/2009/04/21/opinion/21tues4.html?_r=1&ref=opinion.

9. Eco Tip:

As you cook on your range top or in the oven, consider how much heat is being built up in your cookware or oven chamber. Much of this heat remains and dissipates gradually after you have turned off the appliances. With a bit of practice, you can turn off the electricity or gas while your food is still cooking and still have your food cooked as you like it. Think about the energy savings you can create over a year's period.