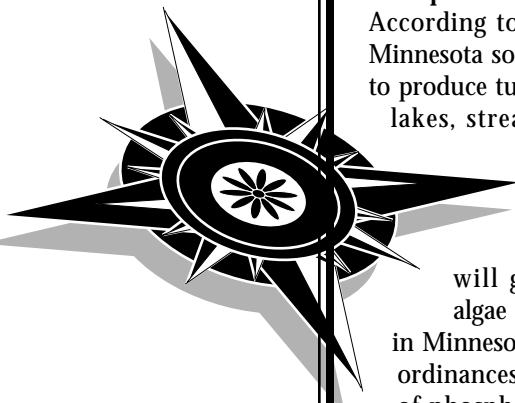




# North Star Journal

February/March 2002 • Volume 22 Issue 2



## Achievement and Recognition

An enthusiastic thank you to extraordinary Sierra Club volunteers, including the winners of the Dr. Joe Barbosa Award for Environmental Leadership.

See page 20 for more information. North Star Chapter also honors two outstanding legislators, see page 4.

## 2002 State Legislature Report: Protect Our Waters

by Scott Elkins, State Director

The beginning of the 2002 state legislative session also marks the beginning of a powerful new collaboration for environmental protection. This Minnesota Environmental Partnership (MEP) is a coalition of more than 75 environmental organizations representing more than 500,000 Minnesotans, ranging from

small, local, all-volunteer groups, to statewide organizations like the North Star Chapter of the Sierra Club. While MEP has been around for a number of years, we're embarking on a new direction in 2002. We'll be working together closely to push a unified legislative agenda that we're calling Protect Our Waters.

Protect Our Waters includes a wide range of programs that will help lay the groundwork for improving the quality of water in our lakes, streams and rivers throughout Minnesota. All of the member organizations of MEP will be working in a coordinated fashion to promote these programs at the state legislature this year, and the Sierra Club will be taking a strong role in the effort.

As the session progresses, you can expect to hear from us at critical times to help Protect Our Waters succeed. We've also recently upgraded our electronic activist alert system, SierranACT, which we'll be using to help our volunteers take action on Protect Our Waters and our other conservation campaigns. For more information on SierranACT, and how you can sign up, click on the SierranActivistNetwork at <http://northstar.sierraclubaction.org/>.

### Protect Our Water

#### Part 1 — Tax Incentives

**Property Tax Rate Reduction for Undeveloped Shoreline** – This would provide state tax breaks to property owners that sign a covenant to keep their shoreline in an undisturbed state.

**State Income Tax Credit for Conservation Land Donations** - This program would create a state income tax credit for 50% of the value of land donated for conservation purposes.

#### Part 2 — Policy Proposals

**Phosphorus-free Lawn Fertilizer** - According to industry experts, 70% of Minnesota soils do not need phosphorus to produce turf. Phosphorus run-off into lakes, streams, wetlands, and water holding ponds increases the amount of algae in a body of water. One pound of phosphorus will grow 300-500 pounds of algae bloom. A number of cities in Minnesota have already passed local ordinances to restrict the application of phosphorus on residential turf. A number of other cities are considering

#### Inside

Reducing Toxic Emissions	3
Legislators Honored	4
Public Land Right to Know Act	5
Green Teen	5
New Minnesota Lobbyist	7
Chapter's Volunteer Leaders	7
Transportation Funding Outlook	8
Attend Your Precinct Caucus	9
Protecting the Arctic	11
Be Part of Forest Watch	11
Dirty Coal and Other Energy Issues	12
Chapter Political Training	13
Green Government Initiative	14
Budget Impacts Environment	15
Farm Bill Update	15
Chair's Column	16
Membership Notes	17
Group News	18
Outings	19
Volunteer Column	20
Calendar	22

similar ordinances. A statewide law would provide for uniform, consistent application of the law and provide the market that fertilizer producers say they need to economically make available phosphorus-free fertilizer.

**“Right to Know” About Water Quality** – The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency runs two volunteer water quality monitoring programs, that give citizens the get involved in a concrete way to help protect water quality. However, sometimes the information that these citizens receive about the initial status and needed information about a water body is limited. This policy would require the PCA to provide this information to citizens in an easy-to-understand format.

### Part 3 — Conservation Investments - “Land Protection for Water Protection”

**Metropolitan Greenways** - This legislative proposal would provide a \$5 million conservation investment to protect, restore, connect and manage a metro-wide network of regionally and locally significant natural areas and open spaces interconnected by ecological corridors.

**Prairie Bank** – This proposal would provide \$2 million in funding for the existing Native Prairie Bank program to provide incentives for landowners to preserve undisturbed prairie lands, which helps to reduce runoff into our lakes and streams.

**State Park Land Acquisition** – This proposal would provide \$6 million in funding for preserving important shoreline and sensitive runoff areas in our state parks.

**Scientific and Natural Areas** – This proposal would provide \$4 million for the state to acquire sensitive native habitat areas, which are important for preserving the quality of local water resources.

**RIM Reserve** – This proposal would provide \$14 million for the existing *Reinvest in Minnesota* (RIM) program to set aside sensitive, erosion-prone farmland as wildlife habitat.

**Local Open Space Grants Initiative** – This proposal would provide \$3 million for the existing Scenic and Natural Areas and Regional Non-Metropolitan Park programs, which provide matching grants to local governments to protect important native habitats.

### Part 4 — Conservation Investments - River Restorations, Groundwater Protection

**Red River habitat restoration for flood prevention** – This \$12 million proposal would provide funding for environmental restoration and flood control in the Red River Valley of northwestern Minnesota.

**Streambank, Lakeshore and Roadside Erosion Control** - This proposal is a \$10 million conservation investment to protect Minnesota’s water quality by protecting and restoring the state’s critical shorelands.

**Stream Protection and Restoration Program** - This legislative request for bonding money of \$1.5 million will fund 7 important projects, restoring degraded streams to a healthier, cleaner state.

**Stream Restoration through Dam Removal** – This \$3 million proposal would fund the DNR to remove ‘problem’ dams that degrade the water quality and wildlife habitat of a number of waterways across the state.

**Fisheries Critical Habitat** – This proposal would provide \$1 million in funding to the DNR to purchase critical fish spawning habitat from willing landowners when the opportunity becomes available.

**Clean Water Partnership Grants** - Since 1987, the Clean Water Partnership has worked to clean up lakes, streams and groundwater from pollution. But funding for the CWP is diminishing, and in 2001 it received just \$2 million. This proposal would fund the CWP at \$10 million.

**Sealing of Old Wells to protect groundwater** – This program would provide \$600,000 for sealing up old wellheads which pose a threat to groundwater quality throughout the state.

**Agricultural Loans to implement feedlot Best Management Practices (BMPs)** - The Agricultural BMP Loan Program provides low-interest loan assistance to mid-sized livestock feedlot operators to implement practices that reduce pollution from their facilities. This would be funded at \$2 million.

**“Brownfields to Greenspace”** - The proposal seeks \$3 million in bonding dollars for grants to local governments to assess and clean up contaminated property (“Brownfields”) that will be preserved as public open space, parks and natural areas as important community amenities (“Greenspace”).

**Environmentally Friendly Pork Production Systems** – This \$300,000 proposal would provide funding to the University of Minnesota to investigate techniques for reducing pollution from large-scale livestock operations.

## How To Get Involved

You can get involved in helping to Protect Our Waters. To find out about urgent action opportunities, sign up for SierranACT (<http://northstar.sierraclubaction.org/>). Also, to find more ways you can get involved volunteering for the Sierra Club, fill out our volunteer activists information form on page 21.

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## Air Toxics Legislation: Reducing Toxic Emissions

by Paula Maccabee,  
Air Toxics Campaign Project  
Coordinator

The Air Toxics Campaign is gearing up to advocate for two key initiatives to reduce toxic emissions.

The first initiative, *protect children from school bus diesel*, is a part of our campaign’s efforts to clean up dirty diesel, one of the worst sources of air pollution.

It’s a common experience to see and smell a black cloud of smoke rising from behind a diesel school bus. We know that diesel exhaust contains potent carcinogens and that diesel particulates increase the risk of asthma and lung disease as well as cancer. Federal regulators have estimated that diesel exhaust is responsible for as many as 125,000 cancers nationwide. Studies in California reveal that more than 70 percent of the risk of cancer from air pollution comes from diesel exhaust.

Our schoolchildren are particularly vulnerable to this risk. Not only do they wait in line while buses idle, but the level of exhaust to which they are exposed within diesel school buses is as much as 4 times higher than in nearby vehicles. The Natural Resources Defense Council has estimated that school bus diesel exposures to children pose as much as 23 to 46 times the cancer risk considered significant under federal law.

The Sierra Club Air Toxics Campaign and our cosponsor, the Minnesota Children’s Health Environmental Coalition, are supporting legislation that will begin both to raise awareness of school bus diesel risks and take steps to reduce the risks. Key provisions include:

1) The Department of Children Families and Learning will provide information to local school districts on the health risks to schoolchildren of diesel exhaust and ways in which these risks can be reduced, including, but not limited to:

- Reducing or eliminating idling of buses
- Parking buses away from areas where children are gathered
- Increasing maintenance of buses and/or using biodiesel fuels to reduce emissions
- Purchasing new buses using cleaner fuels and technologies, such as retrofit equipment to reduce particulates

2) Children Families and Learning will develop sample contracts to assist school districts that do not own their own buses in obtaining cleaner bus service.

3) School districts will inform parents at the beginning of each school year of the risks of diesel emissions and the steps that they have taken to protect schoolchildren from exposure.

Along with this legislative program, the Air Toxics Committee and our new part-time Conservation Organizer, Michelle Rosier, are developing a comprehensive grassroots campaign, including mobilization of volunteers, efforts to work with individual parent groups and school leaders, local media efforts and training for citizen advocacy. Please contact Michelle Rosier at 612-379-3853 or [mrosier@hotmail.com](mailto:mrosier@hotmail.com) to assist in planning and participating in this grassroots campaign to protect our children from school bus dirty diesel.

The Air Toxics Campaign is also launching an initiative to reduce Persistent Bioaccumulative (PBTs). Persistent Bioaccumulative Toxins (PBTs) are highly toxic substances that persist in the ecosystem and concentrate in the food chain, causing a danger to wildlife and serious health risks to human beings. PBTs like mercury and lead are

potent neurotoxins, impairing learning and development, particularly in children. Chemicals such as benzo-(a)pyrene and dioxins are carcinogens. Dioxins are widely recognized by scientists as the "most toxic chemical on earth." They can disrupt normal growth and weaken resistance to disease.

In 1997, the United States and Canada adopted a Great Lakes Toxics Strategy for virtual elimination of persistent toxic substances in the Great Lakes Basin. Last spring, almost 130 nations, including the United States formally agreed to ban or minimize use of a dozen toxic organic chemicals, including pesticides and dioxins. The United States Environmental Protection Agency has recognized reduction of PBTs as a national and international priority.

Yet, very little has been done in Minnesota to protect our families from these highly toxic, long-lasting chemicals. There are no specific emissions limits for dioxin, mercury or other persistent bioaccumulative toxins in either Minnesota law or rules. Open burning of wastes, which produces even more dioxin than incinerators, is permitted in many non-urban areas of our state. Products that result in dioxin when burned, such as PVC plastic and chlorine-bleached paper, are widely used in Minnesota. Companies neither have surcharge disincentives to reduce emission of particularly dangerous chemicals nor positive incentives, such as grants or loans, to change their practices and eliminate PBTs.

The Sierra Club Air Toxics Campaign and our cosponsor, the Women's Cancer Resource Center, are supporting legislation that will reduce emissions of PBTs and reduce the use of products that produce PBTs when burned. Key provisions include:

- 1) Place limits in permits and require pollution prevention planning so facilities that release PBTs meet the most stringent emissions limitations attainable no later than 2006.
- 2) Over time, phase out the use of products that produce dioxin when combusted, such as PVC plastics and chlorine-bleached papers.
- 3) Charge a surcharge to any facilities that emit PBTs and deposit these funds in the environmental fund to support government efforts to reduce emissions.
- 4) Prohibit open burning of wastes unless a county passes a resolution finding that there is no other feasible way to dispose of wastes.
- 5) Issue bonds to give loans to businesses investing in new equipment that virtually eliminates PBTs and their chemical precursors.

Enacting this type of policy is likely to take time and education, of the community and of legislative leaders. The Air Toxics Campaign is developing a strategy with targeted media, public health leaders and government leaders to build the foundation for a fundamental change in the way Minnesota protects our citizens from hazardous, long-lasting toxic chemicals.

Please contact Michelle Rosier at 612-379-3853, [mrosier@hotmail.com](mailto:mrosier@hotmail.com) or Air Toxics Project Coordinator, Paula Maccabee at 651-646-8890, [pmaccabee@visi.com](mailto:pmaccabee@visi.com) to participate in strategy to reduce persistent bioaccumulative toxins.

## ***North Star Chapter Honors Two Outstanding Legislators: Sen. Sabo & Rep. Wagenius***

Senator Julie Sabo received the 2001 Legislator of the Year Award for her excellent work to protect Camp Coldwater Springs in Minneapolis. She worked tirelessly to garner support for a bill that protects the natural flow of groundwater to the spring and places it within the boundaries of the Old Fort Snelling Historic District. The bill was already used successfully in a lawsuit halting construction that would have likely damaged the spring. Sen. Sabo also received a 100% voting record from Sierra Club for the 2001 legislative session. THANK YOU SENATOR SABO!!

Representative Jean Wagenius received an Award for Outstanding Environmental Leadership for her many years

of advocating for a cleaner, healthier environment. She has led efforts to set air and water quality standards that protect our children, to preserve and enhance our waterways and important natural areas, to reduce pollution from feedlots, to remove the damaging effects of mercury, and to bring transit into Minnesota. Furthermore, Rep. Wagenius strongly supported the election of an environmental mayor in Minneapolis, R.T. Rybak, at considerable political risk to herself. Rep. Wagenius has earned consistent 100% voting records from Sierra Club. THANK YOU REPRESENTATIVE WAGENIUS!!

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## Sprawl Committee Seeks Passage of the Public Land Right to Know Act

by Sharon Stephens,  
Sprawl and Land Use Chair

The Sprawl and Land Use Committee has a bold new initiative to help save our public lands from development that it plans to take to the Legislature this spring. Too often our public lands are sold, converted, or changed into uses without meaningful public notice or comment.

Nine of the ten sites listed on the Sierra Club's 10 Most Endangered Areas in Minnesota are public land. Land is not protected merely because it is a park or because it is owned by a city, county or state agency. It is only protected when people who care about the environment are given the tools to become involved in its future.

Minnesotans have a right to know about decisions that affect the future use of public land. Many of these decisions take place in public meetings with little or no notice to the community. Citizens have a further right to provide public comment prior to the decision to sell, convert, or change the use of public land.

Spirit Mountain in Duluth and Patrick Eagan Park in Eagan are just two of the endangered areas in Minnesota where city officials and administrators have tried to shut out the public from the decision-making process.

Both of these beautiful natural areas were purchased with federal funds from the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Despite this, both are now threatened with development into golf courses that would destroy an old growth forest and a rare trout stream at Spirit Mountain, and diminish Eagan's largest natural park into unwanted fairways and greens.

Existing laws that govern notice and public comment are inadequate. The Minnesota Environmental Policy (MEPA) allows for only a 30 day comment period once an Environmental Assessment Worksheet is completed.

As taxpayers—any future use that would substantially harm or destroy the natural values of public land must be carefully evaluated to protect the public's investment in resources that are often irretrievable once lost. Thirty days is not enough for the public's voice to be heard.

Sierra Club plans to seek a new law—the Public Land Right to Know Act—where no sale, conversion, or change of use of public land is authorized until after a 120 day notice and public comment period. Moreover, the law will require that no future use which may threaten or destroy the natural value of public land is allowed until after a 120 day notice and public comment period. See the article on attending your political caucus, page 9, for full text of the resolution.

It's time to put the public back into public land.

To get involved—contact Sharon Stephens at the Sprawl and Land Use Committee at 952-941-4719 or by email at [sssteph2659@msn.com](mailto:sssteph2659@msn.com).

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## Green Teen Teens are Involved in Government Too

By Liv Harder

Many teens feel that they are too young to influence government, but I interviewed Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak and found out otherwise. I go to Anthony Middle School in Minneapolis and am in 7th grade. I found out that teens like me helped in his campaign for passing out literature, participating in parades, and stuffing envelopes. "They were incredible!" said Rybak. "They were very helpful." When asked how teens can continue to influence government, he said that as mayor, he would do more listening than talking. He would choose one or two issues like the ban on phosphorus fertilizers. Then he would have teens spread the word and talk to representatives. "People don't often realize how easy it is to make change," he said. "People power beats money every time."

When asked how teens can get involved in government, Rybak suggested the Minneapolis Youth Council ([www.ycb.org/home.html](http://www.ycb.org/home.html)). Other cities may have similar organizations. Governmental experience can help teens get involved in their own student government, get into college, and improve their communication and people skills.

Rybak explained that fresh ideas from teens are always good. Older people who run the government don't always have the best ideas. Some people wait until they're around 30 or 40 before they start to volunteer. Until then they just complain. Instead they should put that energy into changing things themselves. When you are young you ask questions like "If deforestation is bad, why don't they stop?" When you are older, you stop asking. "Don't let others run the world," he said.

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## Toxic Twelve Campaign

The North Star Chapter launched the 2002 Toxic Twelve Campaign with a press conference in late January, highlighting the environmental voting records of state legislators and naming the first four members of the Toxic Twelve list. More members will be added as the legislative session progresses.

This non-partisan campaign identifies legislators with terrible environmental voting records and educates voters in the legislator's district of his/her votes. The campaign premise is that Minnesotans expect their elected officials to protect the environment and will send them packing if they are not doing so.

Since the goal is either to get legislators to improve their voting record or to remove them from office, the campaign focuses on "vulnerable" legislators—freshmen, those who won by narrow margins, and "swing" districts. Some of the most anti-environmental legislators are considered nearly undefeatable. That's why Toxic Twelve list members may not have the absolute worst records in the legislature. But if we replace enough of them with pro-environment legislators, soon the anti-environmental members will have a much harder time passing bad laws.

Over the past few years, half of the votes used in the Sierra Club voting charts were decided by less than eight swing votes in the House and four votes in the Senate. Moving just the Toxic Twelve legislators to vote for the environment, or moving them out of office, could have a tremendous impact on protecting Minnesota's environment.

The first Toxic Twelve Campaign was in 2000 and was a great success. Of the thirteen legislators placed on the original Toxic Twelve List, three were removed at the end of the 2000 legislative session because they began dramatically improving their voting records. In the election, three members were defeated by Sierra Club-endorsed candidates. In addition, we held those who won to narrow victories and placed the legislature on notice that the environment matters.

This year's campaign will include press conferences announcing the membership of the list as it develops. Ads and letters to the editor placed in local newspapers in the district of Toxic Twelve legislators and direct mail pieces will alert their constituents about their terrible voting record. We will participate in summertime community parades to reach even more voters with our message. And we'll be enlisting the help of our members in their districts, to help defeat the Toxic Twelve in November.

In addition to the Toxic Twelve Campaign, the political committee will be working to defend Environmental Champions. Like the Toxic Twelve, these are vulnerable legislators who are in danger of losing their seat, but who, in contrast, have outstanding environmental voting records. Investing resources in supporting these legislators will help to increase our efforts to improve the outlook for pro-environmental legislation in the years to come.

It will be a busy year and we will need LOTS of help. All Sierra Club members are welcome to help in the Toxic Twelve and Environmental Champion campaigns.

### What You Can Do

1. Join the Toxic Twelve/Environmental Champion campaigns. Contact Ginny Yingling at 651-731-4420 or [mikeandginny@earthlink.net](mailto:mikeandginny@earthlink.net).
2. Attend your precinct caucuses and become a delegate (see article on page 9).
3. If you are a Sierra Club member, consider making a non-tax deductible contribution to the Sierra Club Political Action Committee (contact Ginny Yingling for more details).
4. Visit our website for more information:  
<http://northstar.sierraclubaction.org>.

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## Chapter Welcomes New Minnesota Lobbyist

by Clyde Hanson,  
Conservation Chair

Many times achieving our conservation goals requires action by our state legislature and governor. New laws, authority for state agencies, and funding are usually required to protect the land or stop pollution. But getting their attention and support is not easy. Your Sierra Club Chapter was the first environmental organization in Minnesota to have a professional lobbyist. Our continuous record will be extended by another year.

We are proud to announce that former Senator Tracy Beckman will be helping our volunteers accomplish our legislative goals this year as our lobbyist. "The Sierra Club needs a strong and credible presence at the State Capital ... a presence that cannot be ignored. Former State Senator Tracy Beckman gives us a seat at the table," Chapter Secretary and Executive Committee member Sam Garst noted.

Mr. Beckman was in the state senate from 1986-1999, overlapping tenure with Chapter Executive Committee member, former Sen. George Perpich. Beckman was appointed by President Clinton to an executive position in the Dept. of Agriculture and has both a small business and manufacturing management background. He has run for the US House of Representatives in Minnesota's 1st district. Known as a fiscal conservative he has a record of promoting public health, innovation, and effective public social services. He's excited by the opportunity to work on conservation issues because they are important to him.

Mr. Beckman will be working with our Conservation Committee, which now has representation from all of our groups, Priority Campaigns and our Political Committee. Weekly conference calls in the evening and a listserv will be used to update chapter volunteer activists who will be guiding policy and helping build support for several proactive environmental initiatives. And (with your help) the club will be ready to defend good laws and the staffing and resources of key environmental agencies.

Mr. Beckman will be working with Paula Maccabee on air toxics policy and Chapter Conservation Director Heather Cusick on public education and demonstration of support for environmental protection. We are fortunate to obtain the services of a seasoned legislative veteran, but Mr. Beckman is the first to admit that it is the visits, rallies, phone calls, letters to the editor, faxes and emails from club members that really make good things happen at the legislature. To get involved in the legislative campaign, contact our campaign chairs, myself, or our chapter office.

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## The North Star Chapter's Volunteer Leaders

The last edition of the North Star Journal included the 2001 ballot for the ExCom, for members who will hold their position until 2004. Newly elected members of the ExCom are:

Ken Bradley	Rick Duncan
Mat Hollinshead	Jon Rosenblatt

The Executive Committee (ExCom) of the North Star Chapter is the elected body of member-volunteers who lead the Sierra Club in Minnesota. The ExCom is comprised of 12 members who are elected by the membership at-large for staggered three-year terms, as well as an appointed member from each of the chapter's five active groups.

The full powers and responsibilities of the ExCom are laid out in the bylaws of the North Star Chapter, available in the chapter office. The ExCom is responsible for ensuring that all activities and services provided by the North Star Chapter are consistent with the policies, positions and rules of both the chapter and the national Sierra Club. The ExCom is responsible for strategic planning and budgeting of the chapter and for establishing and overseeing activities of all chapter committees and local groups.

These newly elected members join the current members of the ExCom, who are listed below, with the year that their term expires, or their group appointment:

Judy Bellairs (2003)	Jill Walker Boogren (2003)	George Perpich (2003)
Sharon Stephens (2003)	Judy Chucker (2002)	Sam Garst (2002)
Clyde Hanson (2002)	Karen Harder (2002)	
Jim Blau (St. Croix Valley)	Ron Williams (Twin Cities)	
Todd Leake (Agassiz Basin)	Eve Wallinga (Big River)	
Karen Johnson (Northern Lights)	Joanna Martens (Red River Valley)	

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## Transportation Funding Outlook 2002 Minnesota Legislative Session

by Mat Hollinshead,  
Transportation Chair

The biggest single cause in Minnesota of loss of wildlife habitat and open space, in my view, is the relentless expansion of roads and parking pavement. It is also the most politically complicated to change, because we all drive for almost all of our mobility needs. That's not always because we want to, despite what road advocates say. It's because we have no real choice.

This legislative session, we can push hard to create new transportation choices, if we decide to communicate and, where time permits, to work with our elected representatives in making choices happen.

Being a short session and a bonding year at the Legislature, word has it that the governor's only transportation priority will be \$120 million for the Northstar Commuter Rail Corridor, a Sierra Club North Star Chapter legislative priority.

That doesn't mean it will be easy. And there is no indication that Governor Ventura will include intercity High Speed Rail, our other transportation priority, in his bonding proposals.

Always overarching all legislative activity on transportation funding is the fact that in Minnesota, roads and bridges are supported by the biggest constitutionally dedicated funding stream in the state budget, the gas tax. In the past fiscal conservatives, therefore, seldom wanted to spend any general fund money on transportation, be it bonds or appropriations.

Last year, they even scored a hit on license tab fees, which also go only to roads and bridges, not transit or intercity rail. The fact that these two funding sources are dedicated only to roads and bridges is lost on most legislators, which makes transit funding a perennial struggle. In other words, when most legislators hear the word 'transportation', they think ONLY of roads and bridges.

Add to that a purge mentality in the Minnesota House leadership when it comes to passenger rail funding of any kind, and you have the picture.

Those among us who would like to live up to Minnesota's national reputation for environmental stewardship by moving about without using a car are orphans when it comes to legislative priorities.

Recently things have shifted a little. On the positive side of the ledger, Minnesota is building its first rail transit line in half a century, along Hiawatha. On the negative side of the ledger, road and bridge advocates have succeeded in getting even fiscal conservatives to support General Fund money for roads and bridges—over and above the massive amount of dedicated gas tax funding.

Most insulting to the environment among this year's transportation proposals? Representative Tim Pawlenty's idea of borrowing against Minnesota's tobacco settlement receivables in order to pave over more farmland and wildlife habitat, increase traffic capacity, and hence add to the air pollution that is probably the second biggest threat to healthy lungs after cigarettes!

The Minnesota Transportation Alliance (MTA), Minnesota's oldest and largest transportation advocacy group (formed under the name Good Roads Minnesota in 1893 by bicyclists and farmers), has also shifted its stance, with a platform calling for \$500 million per year in new road and bridge funding and a new Intermodal Fund dedicated to both roads and transit. MTA's emphasis is still overwhelmingly on roads and bridges, but transit operating funding, and capital funding for intercity rail, commuter rail, light rail and buses, are now accepted as necessary, desirable pieces of MTA's transportation vision for Minnesota.

Despite years of stalemate, there is again talk of increasing the Minnesota State Gas Tax. MTA has proposed "indexing" it to inflation and adding five cents per gallon. Road advocates interpret the gas tax language in the Constitution as restricting gas tax money to roads. Transit advocates have disputed that interpretation, but the road lobby has always been able to block any real challenge. The next time your local public works department says they "have to" expand this or that road, remember: they believe they don't get funded for anything but roads.

Unfortunately, most of the major players are proposing no change in the constitutional dedication of this tax to roads and bridges, a condition that, year-in and year-out, puts road expansion on auto-pilot with no flexibility at the local or state level to use gas tax money for genuine intermodal transportation investments. The next time your local public works



department says they “have to” expand this or that road, remember: they don’t get funded for anything else through the state, so they have no incentive to change.

Last but not least, the University of Minnesota, perhaps the largest single trip generator in Minnesota, has shown strong interest in transit issues recently. The implementation of the new U-Pass program for the Twin Cities campuses in the past two years has jumped bus ridership among students drastically, helping the University change direction from massive parking subsidies to building more classroom and lab space. Although the University’s own budgetary priorities have of necessity taken center stage in its legislative activities lately, we can at least expect a higher level of understanding and support for student mobility needs in this and future legislative sessions.

The governor is poised to spearhead the fight for Northstar Commuter Rail and we have powerful allies among transportation advocates and environmental groups on a range of transit and funding issues. These allies include suburban and business interests, the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce, and the University of Minnesota.

What we need is strong input, from constituents in their own districts, to members of the Minnesota House and Minnesota Senate Republican leadership who have become the major critics and obstructionists of transit funding.

Sierra Club North Star Chapter members who live in the districts of House Speaker Steve Sviggum, House Transportation Chairs Carol Molnau and Tom Workman, Senate Republican Minority Leader Dick Day, and House State Administration Affairs Committee Chair Phil Krinkie should contact these leaders and tell them that intercity passenger rail, and transit and transit funding, are vital economic and environmental interests that Minnesota cannot ignore.

On the Democratic side, Senator Dean Johnson has been and will probably remain a key leader in transportation battles. Senate Majority Leader Roger Moe and House Minority Leader Tom Pugh need to hear from all of us on Northstar Commuter Rail and Midwest High Speed Rail.

With former Senator Randy Kelly now the mayor of St. Paul, there will be a new chair of the Senate Transportation Policy Committee by the time this article goes to press. Whoever that key person is, he or she needs to know that we care strongly about balanced transportation, long-term, dedicated transit funding, and \$10 million THIS YEAR to prepare Minnesota’s intercity rail corridor for more trains and faster trains in the next few years. Federal matching money for capital improvements to intercity rail is poised to become a major issue in the next Congress, but only for those states willing to invest their own money as well.

With one of highest per capita road mileages of all 50 states, Minnesota already has an extraordinary road and highway network. Although the gas tax should have been challenged or changed years ago to make it fund all modes equitably, that’s viewed as a political nonstarter by many state political leaders. In the meantime, our only alternative is to oppose gas tax increases.

It’s way past time for a strong statewide and Metro-area system of bus and rail passenger transportation. Wherever you live, contact your legislator now and throughout the session. Tell him or her to support \$10 million for Midwest High Speed Rail and \$120 million for Northstar Commuter Rail. Ask him or her to support new dedicated funding for transit at a level sufficient to provide both capital and operating money for a true passenger transportation system for Minnesota.

Call me at 651-645-4267 or e-mail me at [mlhpd@bitstream.net](mailto:mlhpd@bitstream.net), especially if you want information about North Star Chapter Transportation Committee meetings. Also, check out TLC’s new Transportation Choice Network at 651-767-0298—organizing transit passengers to stand up for their rights as a group. If you get voice mail, leave your name and address and they can mail you a card to fill out. We need your help, and your participation!

# Take Action to Defend the Earth Attend Your Precinct Caucus

by Ginny Yingling

## Party contact information

Green: 612-871-4585 or  
[www.mngreens.org](http://www.mngreens.org);

DFL: 651-293-1200 or  
[www.dfl.org](http://www.dfl.org);

Republican: 651-222-0022  
or [www.gop-mn.org](http://www.gop-mn.org);

Independence:  
651-487-9700 or  
[www.eindependence.org](http://www.eindependence.org).

It's time again for that quirky Minnesota political tradition — the precinct caucuses! This is the place where the usually closed world of politics is open to every citizen. It's also a huge opportunity for Sierra Club members to bring our message of concern for the environment directly to local, state, and federal elected officials and candidates.

The precinct caucuses will be held at 7:00 pm on Tuesday, March 5. To find out where to attend your party caucus, contact your party or county auditor's office after February 13 or check your local newspaper during the week before March 5. Party contact information is listed at the end of this article.

Precinct caucuses are the beginning of the process that Minnesota's major political parties use for choosing the candidates and issues they will support in the 2002 elections. At the caucuses, you will help elect delegates to the party endorsement conventions held later this spring and summer. You will also elect local party officers and participate in a preference ballot for candidates for governor. You will also get to raise, discuss, and vote on issues of importance that the party conventions may make part of the party's platform.

It is the first and last activity in which Sierra Club members are strongly encouraged to participate. Becoming a delegate to the endorsing conventions is very easy. Often all you have to do is volunteer, but if there are more candidates than positions you may have to tell the group a bit about yourself and why you want to be a delegate. Being a delegate gives you the opportunity to help endorse pro-environment candidates to run in the elections, vote on pro-environment platform resolutions, and remind candidates that the environment is important and should be part of their campaign.

You can also offer pro-environment resolutions at your caucus. To do this, bring one or more resolutions in writing. When your chairperson asks for resolutions, you will read these to the group, who will debate the issue and then vote on it. To help you, we have provided three resolutions from the Sierra Club's priority campaign committees that you can cut out and take with you. Want to do more, or want to choose from other issues? Check out the chapter website at: [www.northstar.sierraclub.org](http://www.northstar.sierraclub.org) and click on the "Political/Legislative" page to find more resolutions.

Plan to attend your caucus meeting and speak up for the environment!

### CLEAN ENERGY

WHEREAS, Minnesota relies on combustion of dirty, non-renewable coal for three-fourths of its electric power, causing lung and heart disease, neurological damage from mercury, global climate change and other environmental harms; and

WHEREAS, numerous other states have required old, dirty coal plants to meet modern standards and/or have adopted standards to reduce the emissions of four key pollutants — nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide, carbon dioxide and mercury; and

WHEREAS Minnesota is a state with extensive resources for home-grown, clean, renewable energy including wind, solar power, biomass and manure digestion which are economically viable; and

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Energy has estimated that additional energy efficiency could reduce growth in electricity 20 to 47 percent throughout the United States;

Therefore BE IT RESOLVED that the party support the following Clean Energy positions:

- 1) Require all coal plants to meet modern pollution control standards and reduce statewide emissions of nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide, carbon dioxide and mercury;
- 2) Increase reliance on clean renewable energy by requiring that all utilities increase the share of power generated from clean, renewable energy;
- 3) Increase investment in energy efficiency.

### PUBLIC LAND RIGHT TO KNOW

WHEREAS, publicly owned park land, green space and natural areas are being increasingly threatened with development and are being sold, converted or changed into uses without meaningful public notice, comment or consent; and

WHEREAS, the public has a right to know about decisions that affect the future use of public land and has a further right to provide public comment to the state or local agency charged with its management prior to a final determination as to whether to sell, convert, or change the use of public land; and

WHEREAS, any future use that would substantially harm or destroy the natural values of public land must be carefully evaluated through meaningful public notice and comment to protect the public's investments in resources often irretrievable once lost;

Therefore, BE IT RESOLVED, that the party supports "putting the public back into public land", by requiring that no sale, conversion, or change of use of public land be authorized until after a 120 day notice and public comment period. Moreover, no future use which may threaten or destroy the natural value of public land is authorized until after a 120 day notice and public comment.

### END COMMERCIAL LOGGING ON FEDERAL LANDS

WHEREAS, commercial logging in our national forests loses money, costing taxpayers over \$100 million each year and harms the environment, and

WHEREAS, our national forests already have over 440,000 miles of roads, and

WHEREAS, recreation in our national forests creates 31 times more jobs and 38 times more income for the nations economy than logging,

Therefore, BE IT RESOLVED that the party supports ending commercial logging in our national forests.

Note: commercial logging does not include cutting trees for ecological, fire safety or personal firewood gathering. These management activities would continue after the commercial timber sale program is ended.

## Protecting the Arctic While Supporting Minnesota's Economy

by Scott Elkins

With the beginning of a New Year, Congress remains undecided on the country's energy future. Prior to September 11, the House of Representatives passed an energy bill that would, unfortunately, take us 'back to the future', with a policy that emphasizes the dirty energy sources of the past, primarily coal, nuclear and petroleum. While the bill is filled with provisions that make the wrong choices for the environment and our future, probably one of the worst is the authorization to drill for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. With President Bush's support for Arctic drilling clear, that means the only thing standing in the way of oil drills is the U.S. Senate.

The good news is that the Senate has not yet passed a bill, and there is a good opportunity, post September 11, to pass a bill that looks ahead to clean, renewable energy sources, and increased conservation measures.

However, for Minnesota the stakes are even higher. Minnesota has the second greatest wind power potential of all states in the lower 48. We've just recently begun to tap into this potential with a 1994 legislated mandate that required Xcel Energy (then Northern States Power) to develop the first 300 megawatts of wind energy from Buffalo Ridge in southwestern Minnesota. In addition to providing a clean, renewable energy source, this project has kept our energy dollars inside the state, providing farmers and other local landowners a critical source of revenue in what has been historically a declining region of the state.

This investment in wind energy has allowed the technology to improve, making wind a cost competitive source of energy, on par with coal and natural gas plants. While some hurdles remain, the largest one is the political will to face the future and embrace renewable energy sources.

Fortunately, Minnesota's two U.S. senators, Paul Wellstone and Mark Dayton, have seen the future and understand the benefit that Minnesota would reap from a shift to renewable energy sources. Both of them are supporting energy policies in the Senate that would provide increased incentives for renewable energy sources, and both are on record as strongly opposing any efforts to drill for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

The outcome on energy policy in the Senate is still far from clear, but Minnesota's senators deserve a round of applause for taking the stand for a positive energy future.

### What You Can Do

- Call Senator Paul Wellstone (202-224-5641) and Senator Mark Dayton (202-224-3244) and thank them for their strong stand in favor of renewable energy, and opposing drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Politicians don't often receive calls of thanks from citizens, and when they do it makes a difference!
- Don't forget to sign up for SierranACT to get regular updates on immediate issues you can take action on to protect our environment (<http://northstar.sierraclubaction.org/>).

## Be a Part of Forest Watch

Forest Watch participants help monitor, comment on, and track timber sales, and provide comments to the U.S. Forest Service about its forest management planning—crucial steps to help protect our National Forests and the American heritage they embody.

The next Forest Watch training dates are (choose one):

Thursday, Feb. 28th, 6:30-8:45pm, at the Southdale Library (7001 York Ave. So., Bloomington)

Wednesday, Mar. 27th, 6:30-8:45pm, Roseville Library (2180 No. Hamline Ave., Roseville)

This training is an opportunity to gain valuable skills and information to assist you in your efforts to protect our National Forests. It will also be a chance for you to meet

other activists working to ensure that future generations of Minnesotans will be able to enjoy the Superior and Chippewa National Forests in all of their splendor. It's a great opportunity to take positive action in favor of wildlife, clean drinking water, and recreational opportunities.

Don Janes, Forestry Committee chair and Forest Watch training leader, encourages all who even have a slight interest in our forests to attend. We hope to see you there!!

To register, please contact the Sierra Club office at (612)379-3853 and indicate your choice of session. The training is free of charge; however, we need to know the number attending so we can provide materials and refreshments in the right quantity.

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## **Air Toxics Campaign: *Dirty Coal and Other Energy Issues***

### **Riverside Coal Plant**

The Air Toxics Campaign has been working to reduce coal plant emissions throughout our state. The Sierra Club worked closely with neighborhood leaders in Minneapolis to oppose the granting of an air emissions permit renewal to the Riverside coal plant. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency was proposing to reissue the permit without requiring Xcel Energy either to install modern pollution control equipment or to repower with natural gas. The Sierra Club requested that the permit be denied and that Xcel be required to submit a new permit application that included either replacement of coal with cleaner natural gas or, at least, installation of all modern pollution control equipment.

### **Rapids Power Coal Plant**

Minnesota Power and the Blandin paper company in Grand Rapids have jointly proposed to build yet another coal plant in the Grand Rapids area, near Clay Boswell and on the Mississippi River. The plant would produce steam heat for Blandin, which might expand its production, and 225 MW of electricity that would be sold on the open market. This proposal is very controversial and over 100 neighbors turned out at an informational meeting in Grand Rapids to question the need for this polluting eyesore. Construction of a coal plant in Grand Rapids would increase emissions of mercury, particulates, criteria pollutants and global warming gases and could put forest resources at risk. The Sierra Club has filed a petition; we will participate in every step of the administrative process that will decide whether or not the plant will be built and, if so, at what size and location.

### **State Energy Plan**

The Sierra Club Air Toxics Campaign also became closely involved as the Department of Commerce began preparing a State Energy Plan to develop goals and strategies to address the environmental effects of energy consumption. Although the draft State Energy Report did a good job documenting the environmental impacts of burning coal and the benefits of conservation and renewable energy, the Report made few real policy recommendations. We worked with the POWER Campaign to highlight policy changes Minnesota must make to reduce environmental harms from energy. Here are a few of our key environmental recommendations (see <http://www.northstar.sierraclub.org> for more information):

- 1) The State shall adopt a policy of no net air emissions from coal plants and the Public Utilities Commission shall not issue a certificate of need for any new coal plant that increases net air emissions in the State.
- 2) The State shall set specific four-pollutant emissions reduction goals/requirements to apply to each Title V operating permit as it comes up for renewal.
- 3) In cases where utilities have not agreed voluntarily to pursue emissions reduction projects, the Public Utilities Commission shall seek the authority to order any utility to repower a coal-burning plant with natural gas and/or to install pollution control equipment to reduce emissions.
- 4) The Public Utilities Commission should move up the deadline for Xcel Energy to acquire 400 MW of additional wind power, to 2006 or earlier.
- 5) The State should achieve a goal of 10% of Minnesota's electricity from renewables by 2015 or earlier.
- 6) The Pollution Control Agency should set emission standards applicable to diesel generation to reduce criteria pollutants, particulates, and air toxics.
- 7) The Department of Commerce should require that any new modular or peaking generation facility be at least as clean as natural gas combustion in terms of emissions of criteria pollutants, particulates and air toxics.
- 8) To the extent that Minnesota continues to rely on combustion of wastes for any portion of its energy supply, policies must be changed to prevent use of polyvinyl chloride plastics and chlorine-bleached papers that, when combusted, release dioxin.
- 9) Loopholes in current law that permit combustion of wastes in burn barrels for which emissions are uncontrolled should be closed to protect Minnesota adults and children from mercury, dioxin, and other toxic air emissions
- 10) For the bonding years 2002 and 2004, the legislature should fund pilot programs using fuel cell demonstrations in state buildings.

11) Individual and business purchases of fuel cell products should be encouraged, by, for example, using rebates, tax credits, or tax exemptions.

12) The State should promote and provide financial incentives for green buildings for both residential and commercial sectors.

13) State government should work with its vendors to establish an electric purchasing target of 20% wind power or other clean, renewable energy by 2007.

14) The State should establish a clear yearly demand goal for energy savings through 2010.

15) The State should prevent non-utility "merchant plants" from degrading the environment by requiring the application for a permit to demonstrate that Minnesota adults and children will not experience negative health impacts and that Minnesota natural resources shall not be impaired as a result of the facility construction or operation if such harms could be avoided by any feasible alternative.

At this point, we believe that it may be a two-year process to advocate for a State Energy Plan that has real, enforceable goals and strategies to support conservation, clean renewable energy and reduction in toxic emissions.

## Energy Initiatives at the Legislature 2002

It is almost certain that various proposals to build new coal plants in Minnesota will be introduced during this year's legislative session. Advocates for the environment will need to be vigilant to ensure that decisions aren't hastily made to build plants that will pollute Minnesota's air and water for decades to come.

In addition to opposing ill-considered dirty coal plants, the Sierra Club is working with the POWER Campaign and cosponsoring policies to accomplish the goals not achieved in the 2001 energy legislation. Among the key environmental goals not achieved in 2001: a requirement that yesterday's old and dirty coal plants meet modern pollution standards; a renewable energy standard that creates a guaranteed market for wind, solar and other clean energy; a utility-funded energy conservation effort that's independent of utilities' natural goal to sell more energy.

Conservation and clean, renewable energy are needed both to protect the health of Minnesota's families and to provide a home-grown, reliable source of energy, not vulnerable to terrorist attacks or international price controls. Key provisions supported by the Sierra Club include the following:

- 1) Require coal plants to meet modern pollution control standards and reduce emissions of nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide, carbon dioxide and mercury from coal plants;
- 2) Increase reliance on clean renewable energy, such as wind and solar power through a guaranteed renewable energy standard;
- 3) Increase conservation investments and make the conservation effort funded by utilities independent from the competing need of utilities to sell more energy.

Please check the North Star Chapter web site (see page 21) to learn more about the Air Toxics Campaign's efforts to reduce pollution foster clean, renewable energy. Please contact Paula Maccabee, Project Coordinator, at 651-646-8890, pmaccabee@visi.com to get involved.

### ***Chapter Political Training Feb. 24***

Interested in learning how to get involved in political campaigns? The North Star Chapter of the Sierra Club will hold a nuts and bolts political training on February 24, 2002 from 10:00 to 6:00. Location TBA. If you are interested you can contact Heather Cusick at 612/379.3853 or heather.cusick@sierraclub.org.

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# Green Government Initiative

Sen. Jane Krentz Takes  
the lead in '02

By Sam Garst

Last year, the Sierra Club won a few victories in our efforts to transform government procurement and operations into a driving force for environmental sustainability. Specifically, government buildings, and those built with government bonding authority, must now meet strict energy efficiency standards and follow green building guidelines.

Thanks to Sen. John Hottinger, Rep. Phyllis Kahn, Sen. Steve Kelley, and the 45 cosponsors of the Green Government Initiative, this issue has evolved from a modest concept to high visibility legislation for the environmental community.

However, too often opponents criticized our proposal for the specific, commonsense policy changes contained in last year's bill, such as purchasing paper produced totally without chlorine, that creates dioxins in our environment. To move beyond the debate over specifics, the Sierra Club organized a series of three roundtable discussions on fundamental ways Minnesota could improve the environmental performance of government.

The Sierra Club and our supporters reached a consensus that the central and most important issue was the creation of a management structure to institutionalize sustainable thinking, policies, and practices within Minnesota's government. In December, a Sierra Club led group of 12 environmental organizations and two private companies sent a letter to Governor Ventura asking him to issue an executive order to implement a sustainable overhaul of State Government. The Governor failed to take action.

However, Sen. Jane Krentz, Senate Environment Committee Chair and one of our key allies in 2001, is drafting legislation following the policy outline contained in our letter to the Governor. Her bill creates a broad-based, cabinet level committee, the Minnesota Green Government Council, which is charged with pursuing policies that will attain sustainability in Minnesota within one generation ... or by 2025.

Each department or agency in state government will be required to formulate annual Green Plans and submit them to the MGGC for approval or modification. The MGGC will develop purchasing policies, targets, and benchmarks for each of the following product areas: paper products, building construction materials and practices, cleaning products and coatings, plastic lumber, general purpose motor vehicles, purchase of E85 and biodiesel fuel, office furniture, and such other products considered appropriate by the MGGC.

One basic policy directive is to continuously improve the environmental performance of state procurement practices. If a more environmentally friendly, efficacious, and cost competitive product exists, the MGGC can direct the phase-out of the less environmentally friendly product, such as non-recycled content paper. The MGGC is directed to use product criteria such as energy efficient, reduced toxicity, recycled content, use of plant-based ingredients and or components, water conservation, reduced packaging, and/or rebuilt or reconditioned products. The Department of Administration is currently developing these criteria.

The Sierra Club believes that Sen. Krentz's commonsense approach has a good chance to pass. The cost is minimal, but the impact on Minnesota's environment is potentially huge. This legislation supports environmentally friendly companies and the sustainable jobs of the future. A win for the environment, and a win for Minnesota's economy.

## What You Can Do

1. Visit the North Star Chapter's website to learn more about the Green Government Initiative and other priority legislation at [www.northstar.sierraclub.org](http://www.northstar.sierraclub.org);
2. Write a letter, call, or visit your state representative and state senator to discuss Green Government Initiative and other Sierra Club legislative priorities; and
3. Make a commitment to participate in the Sierra Club's Lobby Day at the Capitol.

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## 2002 Budget Decisions Will Impact Environment

By Brett Smith

policies are not effective without sufficient funding for implementation activities such as education, monitoring, research, and enforcement. The unfortunate state trend toward environmental budget cutting is likely to accelerate unless citizens speak up for environmental protection.

Last year, the Sierra Club fought hard for adequate environmental funding but, in the end, this was mostly a losing battle. Even with a surplus of almost a billion dollars, the governor and Legislature enacted a cut in general fund spending on the environment and agriculture by about \$10 million or almost 2 percent. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) alone saw its general fund budget fall by over \$8 million.

In 2001, we focused largely on cuts proposed for the Pollution Control Agency (PCA). After the dust of the legislative session settled, the PCA was left with the need to cut over 70 positions, continuing a three year trend during which the PCA has lost about 9 percent of its staff. This cut has resulted in a number of significant program eliminations and reductions:

**Malformed Frogs:** This program was eliminated. The PCA will no longer collect or analyze data and will not even log citizen reports of malformed frogs. At one time the PCA had as many as five staff working on this problem. As summed up in the PCA's November 2001 fact sheet, "The

A major issue for the 2002 Legislature will be how to handle the state's projected two billion dollar budget deficit. The outcome will affect Minnesota's environment for years to come.

Even good laws and

MPCA regrets this necessary loss of service to citizens and students who have followed with interest the agency's search for causes to this problem."

**Ground Water Monitoring:** The PCA will no longer collect ground water monitoring data to determine emerging pollution issues; nor will it any longer provide the Department of Health with information regarding potential sources of contamination.

**Permitting and Enforcement:** Cuts in regulatory programs for hazardous and solid waste, underground and above-ground tanks, and industrial air pollution will result in slower permits, reduced compliance and enforcement activities, diminished technical assistance, and reduced capacity to respond to citizen complaints.

**Wetland and Water Quality Protection:** With staff cuts, the PCA has had to waive its right to certify that state water quality standards are met for projects requiring federal permits such as Corp. of Engineers programs. Most of this activity in the past has been focused on the protection of the state's remaining wetlands. Given the Corp's history in water quality protection, this is a major loss.

Other program reductions include indirect air source permitting, hazardous waste site remediation, emergency response, biocriteria development for water quality standards, source water and wellhead protections, and septic system programs.

These cuts took place in the context of a large budget surplus. Now we face a large deficit. Even before the full extent of the deficit was known, the Governor asked agencies such as the DNR and PCA to submit five and 10% budget reductions. Contact the governor and your legislators and tell them not to cut funding for the environment. To get more involved in this budget battle, call the chapter office at 612-379-3853.

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## Farm Bill Update

by Karen Hunter

depended on for their livelihood. Sierra Club has been actively working with other environmental organizations and with members of Congress to ensure that the new Farm Bill provides continued protection of our natural resources and support of our small farmers in their efforts to reduce pollution.

The existing conservation programs in the Farm Bill required that farmers set aside agricultural lands that are of marginal quality to receive payments. Sierra Club supports these programs as well as the new Conservation Security Act, which rewards farmers for implementing conservation practices on working lands.

But even the existing programs are under siege. The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) has traditionally provided funding for small farmers for pollution abatement projects. Sierra Club has been fighting to keep the program centered on small farms rather than opening it up to the giant agricultural corporations that should be pro-

The current Farm Bill will soon expire, and with it, the farm subsidy and conservation programs that farmers have

viding their own pollution technology. We are also pushing to extend EQIP to support the development of energy from animal waste on small farms.

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), another highly successful existing Farm Bill program, pays farmers to retire agricultural lands that are highly erodible or environmentally sensitive. Governor Jesse Ventura and the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources, the state agency that administers the program, toured farms and CREP sites in southwestern Minnesota. The Governor expressed his support for the program and was pleased by its positive impacts.

### What You Can Do

At the time of this writing, Congress has not settled on a new Farm Bill. Contact your State Senators and Representatives and let them know that you support the conservation provisions of the Farm Bill and program support for small farmers. After this federal bill is passed, there will be opportunity to impact state implementation of these programs. For further information contact me at the Sierra Club office or at [ktharder@efg.com](mailto:ktharder@efg.com).

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## Chair's Column

By Judy Chucker

Did you grow up as I did, hearing the refrain “Do be a Do-Bee. Don’t be a Don’t-Bee”? Sounds obnoxious now. Come to think of it, it was obnoxious then. The intent of teaching children right from wrong was lost on me. For as soon as I heard the jingle and saw the bumblebee, I was struck silly. I was a 36-inch tall corn kernel bouncing around the room in eager anticipation of popping. Unaware of my irreverence, the lesson plan was shot to hell. But it was a rather simplistic and narrow methodology if the writers had expected me to use it as my guide in the real world: “Do this. Don’t do that.” Come to think of it, it has been my guide, just not in the way they intended.

Do-Bees always do things according to convention. They are predictable, to put it kindly. They serve on committees galore but never accomplish much — certainly never anything for which the community stands up and takes notice nor anything of lasting value. Take our state legislature. Many have accused it of just this kind of prevaricating. Last year’s environmental record does nothing to discourage this viewpoint.

So here we are on the threshold of a new legislative session. If we are to have an impact, what could we do to shake up those bunch of Do-Bees?

I believe the answer is to root out the insidious Do-Bee scourge in our own house. The North Star Journal’s new format represents one of a series of plans to fight fire with fire and come to terms with any complacency that renders us less effective than we want to be. When organizations become too comfortable, they fall under the Do-Bee spell and will defend the status quo unwittingly until they do themselves in. Don’t you agree that if an organization doesn’t quite measure up to their vision, there must be some slacker responsible for it?...Wait! Hold your hornet’s hat! If you believe that, that is a dead giveaway to your own complicity. Yet, to deny that you are vulnerable to this line of thinking is like denying in a monotone voice that you were paid a visit during the invasion of the Bodysnatchers: Sorry, the signs and symptoms are dead giveaways.

Clearly, the *Journal* is comprised of the contributions of talented and dedicated volunteers and staff. Yet, at our October strategic planning retreat, the unanimous diagnosis was that the *Journal* was suffering the ill effects of Do-Beeism. Due to no one in particular, and all of us in general, the *Journal* was not the super communications tool we knew it could be.

What it boiled down to is that we were throwing a lot of time and energy into our work on an individual basis without any organization-wide coordination of those efforts. Decisions regarding what issue received the most prominence were sometimes made without the left hand knowing what the right hand was counting on. The result was that the effectiveness of the final product was watered down. The slow and painful part was in recognizing that we were all part of the pattern of miscommunications permitting this deadlock to continue.

So what does this have to do with the upcoming legislative session? First, we have taken a semi-fallow resource and made it work for us by simple collaboration. We wish to focus everyone’s attention on the legislative session since it occupies such a large portion of our visual field regarding the work that we do.

Second, this simple shift in our perspective which produced a big change in the *Journal*, is being applied elsewhere in the chapter. Through better coordination of our grassroots effort, we know we can generate disproportionately greater representation than we could acting as a happenstance collection of environmentally minded citizens. In other words, an organized organization can really accomplish things worthy of the community’s attention and recognition.

Wouldn’t it be nice if our state senators and representatives were among those paying attention, and themselves became good Don’t-Bees?



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# Membership Notes

## Chapter Executive Committee

The Chapter Executive Committee meets on the 4th Wed. of each month at 6:30 pm. Meetings are open to all club members. Meetings are held in the U-Tech Center, 1313 5th St. SE, Rm 320, Dinkytown, Mpls. For more information, contact Judy Chucker at 612/546-4429.

## Chapter Conservation Committee

The Conservation Committee meets at 7 p.m. the first Wed. of each month at the U-Tech Center. Look for signs at the entrance for meeting location, or come to the Sierra Club office, rm #323. This committee oversees and coordinates all of the chapter's issue work, including campaigns in urban sprawl and wolf protection. Attending a committee meeting is a good way to see the variety of activities underway. All are welcome. For further information call 612/379-3853.

## Forestry Task Force

The task force meets the first Wed. of each month at 6 p.m., before the Conservation Committee meeting (see above for location). Agenda items should be submitted to Don Janes at 651/429-0016, or by e-mail to dljanes@yahoo.com.

## Sprawl and Land Use Committee

Henceforth, the Urban Sprawl Task Force will be known as the Sprawl and Land Use Committee, and meetings will take place the first Wed. of the month at 6 pm at the U-Tech Center. Please call Chair Sharon Stephens at 952/941-4719 for details.

## International Issues Committee

This committee supports campaigns on global warming, fair and green trade practices and others. Anyone with an interest in working on these or other international environmental issues is welcome. We have an e-mail member list and meet regularly to plan and educate ourselves. Meetings are the third Tues. of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the U-Tech Center. For information about the committee, contact Brett Smith at 612/920-9569 or e-mail smithb@macalester.edu. For details on the shade-grown coffee project, contact Rick Charboneau at 612/722-4942 or e-mail charb002@maroon.tc.umn.edu.

## Air Toxics Activists Committee

The chapter is gearing up for major campaigns on cleaning up dirty coal plants, reducing persistent bioaccumulative toxins (like mercury and dioxin), and alerting schools and parents to the threats contained in diesel schoolbus exhaust. We now have two staffers working on this issue, Paula Maccabee and Michelle Rozier, but we need your volunteer energy to guide and implement this campaign. If are interested, contact acting Air Toxics Committee Chair Brett Smith at 612/920-9569 or e-mail to smithb@macalester.edu.

## North Star Chapter Book Group

The book group meets at 7 p.m. the last Wed. of each month at the home of Gary Becker, 5201 Fremont Ave N., Minneapolis. For information about the book group and/or directions, call Gary at 612/522-5142 or Sue Lamoureux at 651/699-8961.

### Feb. 27

*Fawn Island* by Douglas Wood

### March 27

*The Moon by Whale Light* by Diane Ackerman

### Twin Cities Group

The Twin Cities Group welcomes interested people in the Twin Cities area. Please come to their meetings if you are interested in environmental affairs, even if you have little knowledge of them. You will learn about the Sierra Club, and meet others who want to protect the environment.

#### General Meeting Information

**Time:** 7-9 p.m.

**Location:** U-Tech Center, 1313 5th St. SE, Rm 102B

According to our new format, the first twenty minutes of the meeting will be devoted to presentations from the North Star Chapter Director Scott Elkins, Chapter Conservation Committee Chair Clyde Olson, and representatives of chapter issue committees. Don't miss this opportunity to find out how the chapter is working to protect the environment and how you could plug into this effort!

In addition, at 6:30 p.m. before each meeting (at the same meeting room), we invite new members or old members to get information about the Sierra Club. Are you a new member who would like to understand the ins and outs of the Sierra Club organization from local to national, about committees to join, about a whole variety of volunteer jobs? Would you like to learn Sierra Club speak? Then come hear Scott Elkins, Chapter Executive Director extraordinaire, lead a discussion on these matters.

#### Wednesday, February 6

This program features Nicole Smaglic, president and co-founder of Another Land, an organization sponsoring East African cultural and wildlife safaris. Her topic will be "Relationships Between Nature and Cultures of East Africa." She will discuss these tours and how they are special because they arrange the tourists to interact with the villagers around them. She will talk and show slides about various aspects of the lives of people in Uganda and Tanzania: music, cooking, beer brewing, blacksmithing, basket weaving, wood carving, traditional healing, dance, and rain making. Ms. Smaglic will also discuss the heritage of co-existence between humans and nature and how saving wildlife here means saving people. In particular, she will show us how the relationship between nature and the three main ethnic groups of sub-Saharan Africa (the Pygmies, Bantu, and Nilotics) differs from one group to the next. She says that some communities here may not have the resources to sustain certain aspects of their culture due to globalization. Her programs have helped not only preserve these traditions, but have also sparked cultural innovation within these traditions. In the process, these communities also gain financially.

Nichole Smaglick has guided travelers into Africa since 1994. Some of her adventures include being initiated into clans, several marriage proposals that included cows, having her home raided by vervet monkeys, insect eating, and blood drinking. Her East African credentials include a bachelor's degree in African studies and music, a master's degree in cultural tourism, and research and teaching in Uganda and Tanzania. Don't miss this exciting program on African culture!

#### Wednesday, March 6

Please welcome Lois Norgaard on behalf of The Marine Fish Conservation Network who will speak on "America's Ocean Fish Are In Trouble and Need Our Help." The Marine Fish Conservation Network, a broad-based coalition of over 128 commercial and recreational fishing associations, environmental organizations, aquariums and marine science groups, is dedicated to promoting the long-term sustainability of marine fish. Please come to this video and verbal presentation and allow Ms. Norgaard to guide us in writing to get Congress to take action.

#### ExCom News

Three people were elected to Twin Cities Group ExCom at the January, 2002 membership meeting. They were Pat Dreese, Bob Pollock, and Bruce Watson. Congratulations to the three new ExCom members! Their terms extend to Dec. 31, 2003. Ron Williams and Fred Ellingson are current ExCom members whose terms end on Dec. 31, 2002.

With regard to feedback on any of the above, please contact Ron Williams at 763/533-3065 or [ronald.williams@usbank.com](mailto:ronald.williams@usbank.com).

### Big River Group

Meetings take place at the St. Cloud Heritage Park Nature Center, 225 3rd Ave. S. the first Wednesday each month. Please call Kim Hellier, 320/259-1142, for further information.

### Northern Lights Group

Please call Karen Johnson 218/525-0283, for further information on this group.

### Wasioja Group (Rochester Area)

Please contact Jon Rosenblatt, 507/284-3050 for information on this group.

### St. Croix Valley Interstate Group

The St. Croix Valley Interstate group met last month in Stillwater for a potluck lunch and planning session. This past year the group helped sponsor author presentations at the Valley Bookseller in Stillwater. Our snowshoe/skiing outing at Wilder Forest was another great time, thanks to all the wonderful snow. Can you believe we had about 70 inches last year? The highway cleanup is a twice a year event in the spring and fall. The bridge as we know has not been torn down nor has a new one been built. This resolution is worth keeping in the New Year. Our meetings have always welcomed a variety of alternative viewpoints surrounding the bridge issue and this input from all our members and visitors is needed and appreciated.

The next meeting is Monday, February 14 at the Stillwater Public Library. Please help us in discussing ideas for the coming year. We welcome all of our members to take part in setting up our calendar events. If you would like to be in contact with St Croix Valley Interstate members via e-mail, contact Kathleen Vollmer at [Kjvollmer@cs.com](mailto:Kjvollmer@cs.com) and you will be added to our list. Otherwise, call Jim Blau at 651/430-8022 for any other related questions concerning the group.

## Outings

### Sierra Club Activities

For more information for the following outings, please call Basil Loney at 651/774-2640 (evenings).

#### February 2-3

Join us for weekend winter camping in the Ely district of the BWCA. We will ski a couple of miles in, set up a camp, and day trip to other lakes. We leave Friday evening at 6 pm.

#### February 16-18

Celebrate Presidents Day with a three-day winter camping trip in the BWCAW.

#### March 15-17

Three days of trout fishing and winter camping in the Gunflint district of the BWCA. This is a nice time of winter to camp because of more moderate temperatures and

longer daylight hours. Trout fishing is fun!

#### March 29-31

Winter camping & trout fishing on Easter weekend.

#### April 6-7

Weekend canoeing on a southern Minnesota or northern Iowa river.

*In order to participate on one of the Sierra Club's outings, you will need to sign a liability waiver. If you would like to read a copy of the waiver prior to the outing, please see <http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms/> or call 415/977-5630.*

*In the interests of facilitating the logistics of some outings, it is customary that participants make carpooling arrangements. The Sierra Club does not have insurance for carpooling arrangements and assumes no liability for them. Carpooling, ride sharing or anything similar is strictly a private arrangement among the participants. Participants assume the risks associated with this travel.*

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## Volunteer Column

by Heather Cusick

Once a year we set the pens down, put the computer away, and turn down the phones and recognize the invaluable work of Sierra Club volunteers. 2001 was no exception. At the Annual Solstice Party the Sierra Club Executive Committee recognized the work of 21 volunteer activists. Each of these volunteers used their talents and time to work for the protection of our environment for our families and for our future.

A very big thank you to the 2001 recipients of Sierra Club North Star Chapter awards for **outstanding achievement**: Sharon Stephens, Volunteer of the Year; Leigh Haynie, Forest Stewardship; Jeff Fellows, "Sees the Forest for the Trees!"; Botany Bob Pollack, "This Bud's for You"; Teri Bedard, "Jump Right In, the Water's Fine"; Evan Moyle, "Tale of Two Cities"; Karen Johnson, Star of the North; Glenn Maxham, Star of the North; Julie Bellehumeur, Star of the North; Jeff Strate, Defender of Wild Places, Birch Island Woods; Ron Williams, Defender of Wild Places, Theodore Wirth Park; Ken Bradley, "Urban Hack" Award; Mollie Dean, Human Rights and the Environment Campaign Leadership; Ryan Gorzinski, "A Class Act," Spirit Mountain; Chad Davidson, Four Years of Volunteer Service in Minnesota Inner City Outings; Carolyn Malcoun, "Presto!" Award Minnesota Inner City Outings; Ken Valley, Four Years of Volunteer Service in Minnesota Inner City Outings; Josh Almond, Two Years of Volunteer Service in Minnesota Inner City Outings; Marlene Hoffman, One Year of Volunteer Service in Minnesota Inner City Outings.

Finally, thanks to Bonnie, Craig, Cyndi, Joe, Karen, Ken, Margaret, Michelle, Sarah, Vicki, Carol, Kate and Leila for helping with our Minneapolis 2001 Get Out The Vote efforts.

The chapter recognized Everett Law (First Place) and Cara Saunders (Second Place) as the 2001 recipients of the **Dr. Joe Barbosa Award for Environmental Leadership**. The award is given to an individual who shows exemplary leadership and commitment in his or her role as a volunteer working for environmental protection of the land, air, and/or waters of Minnesota. The recipient is awarded a \$500.00 cash prize to be designated to the environmental effort of their choice.

## 2002 Opportunities

Whether you want to meet with legislators, conduct mailings, or set strategy, you are invited to become a leader on the environmental issue of your choice. These are just a few of the opportunities to get involved.

### Volunteers Needed!

**NEW Air Toxics Committee (chapter-wide opportunity)**: The North Star Chapter, working in collaboration with the Sierra Club's Midwest Office, is establishing a committee to work on clean air issues. Volunteers are needed to get in on the ground floor of this exciting opportunity. You'll learn lots of new information about clean air issues, meet other committed activists, work with knowledgeable and committed Sierra Club staff members, and work as a team to develop and implement a campaign plan that will help to clean up the air we breathe! To get involved, or just learn more, contact interim air toxics committee chair, Brett Smith, at 612-920-9569 or smithb@macalester.edu.

**Forestry (chapter-wide opportunity)**: The U.S Forest Service is revising the Management Plans for Chippewa and Superior National Forests. If you are interested in long term protection of our forests we invite you to attend our forestry committee meetings on the first Wednesday of each month (for meeting details, see page 17). We need scientists, economists, community leaders, activists, and students to make a strong case to adopt the best management plans. Please join us February 6 for our next meeting or contact Don Janes, chair of our Forestry Committee, at 651/429-0016.

We're also looking for volunteers who will help our education and outreach efforts on Minnesota forestry issues. This may include: helping with mailings and calling members

and other volunteers; organizing and staffing a Sierra Club booth at events; coordinating and leading outdoor activities; and/or adopting a public forest site for monitoring timber sales and other activities. Training and assistance is provided at all levels of involvement. Please contact our forestry organizer at 612-379-3853.

**Sprawl Activists (chapter-wide opportunity):** Our sprawl committee is really taking off, with a lot of energy and great ideas for making our urban spaces more livable and protecting ecologically valuable green spaces at the same time. We currently have active sub-committees in policy, education/outdoor activities, and a rapid response team. Interested in getting more involved? Contact our sprawl committee chair, Sharon Stephens, at 952-941-4719 or ssteph2659@email.msn.com

**International Issues Committee (chapter-wide opportunity):** Volunteers are needed to help plan and carry out chapter activities responding to the impacts of globalization on the environment, including responsible trade, protection of the human rights of those who stand up for their environment, the devastating effects of megahydro projects and the import of their electricity into the U.S., global climate change, population and consumption, and shade-grown coffee. Contact Brett Smith at 612-920-9569 or smithb@macalester.edu. .

**Workplace Giving Liaisons (chapter-wide opportunity):** The Sierra Club Foundation, which supports the educational work of the North Star Chapter, is a proud member of the Minnesota Environmental Fund—the workplace giving program for the environment. If you are interested in signing up your workplace for the Environmental Fund, contact Scott Elkins at 612-379-3853 or scott.elkins@sierraclub.org.

**Newsletter Editor and Layout (metro-area opportunity):** After many years of dedicated service both the editor and the layout person for the North Star Journal are ready to pass the baton. If you have experience in either of these areas and are interested in contributing your talents to the Sierra Club, please contact Scott Elkins at 612-379-3853 or scott.elkins@sierraclub.org.

Got E-Mail?

Join the SierranActivistNetwork at <http://northstar.sierraclubaction.org/>

## Yes I'd Like to Volunteer for the Sierra Club!

I will (please check all that apply):

- Make phone calls       Write letters  
 Do public/media outreach  
 Write articles/do promotion  
 Call/meet with my representative  
 Do database management  
 Staff booths/do tabling  
 Attend rallies/town meetings  
 Do mailings  
 Lead outings       Plan events  
 Participate in trail clearings/cleanup  
 Work on issue(s)       Fundraising  
 Legislative/Lobbying

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

*Items that interest me:*

- Forestry/White Pines       Urban Sprawl  
 BWCAW/Voyageurs       Energy  
 Global Climate Change       Clean Air  
 Wildlife       Clean Water  
 Feedlots       Population       Toxic 12 Campaign

Additional comments/areas of interest:

*This form may be printed out, filled out, and sent to:*

Sierra Club North Star Chapter, Volunteer Activist Network, 1313 5th St. SE, #323, Minneapolis, MN 55414

# Calendar

## February

6	Wed	Chapter Conservation Committee Meeting	17
		Forestry Task Force Meeting	17
		Twin Cities Group and ExCom Meeting	18
		New Chapter Volunteer Orientation (5:30 pm - call chapter office for info.)	
		Big River Group Meeting	18
		Sprawl and Land Use Committee Meeting	17
14	Mon	St. Croix Valley Interstate Group	18
19	Tue	International Issues Committee Meeting	17
24	Sun	Chapter Political Training	13
27	Wed	Chapter ExCom Meeting	17
		Book Group Meeting	17
28	Thurs	Forest Watch Training	11

## March

1	Fri	NORTH STAR JOURNAL COPY DEADLINE	
5	Tue	PRECINCT CAUCUSES	9
6	Wed	Chapter Conservation Committee Meeting	7
		Forestry Task Force Meeting	17
		Twin Cities Group and ExCom Meeting	18
		Chapter New Volunteer Orientation (5:30 pm - call chapter office for info.)	
		Big River Group Meeting	18
		Sprawl and Land Use Committee Meeting	17
19	Tue	International Issues Committee Meeting	17
20	Wed	Forest Watch Training	11
27	Wed	Chapter ExCom Meeting	17
		Book Group Meeting	17

### ***Buy Shade-Grown Coffee and Support the Sierra Club!***

**N**ow you can buy shade-grown coffee and support the North Star Chapter's conservation work, too. Grown organically and bought from fair-trade co-ops in the country of origin, the coffee beans are roasted in here in Minnesota and shipped to buyers hours later. The whole beans come in 12 oz. bags and remain fresh up to three months. Available caffeinated in dark or medium roast, or in French roast decaf, for \$8.50/bag. Shipping costs \$4 up to 2 bags; \$1.10 each bag thereafter. Please make your check payable to the Sierra Club, and send your order to:

Rick Charboneau  
4452 17th Ave. S.  
Minneapolis, MN 55407

For more information, please call Rick at 612/722-4942.

Thanks for voting for the environment with your coffee dollars!