

Conservation Watch

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Lessons of the Washington NAL Meeting 2010

Rising to the Challenge

What a difference a year makes. One year ago Garden Club of America delegates from across the nation descended upon our nation's capital on the dawn of a new administration and with a hopeful time looming ahead. This time, in February of 2010, delegates almost didn't make it to Washington, D.C.! The climate both inside and out seemed very different in Washington this year. Politicians seemed to have lost an essential element in the art of governing - meaningful compromise. Partisanship, it appeared, had never been worse. No one seemed willing to make hard choices. Meanwhile, citizens coming to Washington were telling their officials that the greatest threat to our planet was doing nothing at all.

The evidence of was everywhere as already received more New York this year. Olympics were going on convened. The balmy Vancouver was delaying was being hauled into truckload. Meanwhile, the year, Jeremy Jones, at the same time as members lobbying climate bill. He told Congress, "I've been years and traveling the and I've seen definite mountains." Elsewhere harsh winter was that the world is this merely bolstered the patterns are growing more extreme. *Climate change* doesn't just mean global warming; it means climate disruption.



Photo courtesy of shipbright.wordpress.com

"climate change" Washington had snow than Buffalo, The Winter as the meeting weather in events and snow venues by the the snowboarder of was on Capitol Hill garden club Congress to pass a members of snowboarding for 25 world for 15 years change in the on our continent, a leading to skepticism warming. However,

argument that weather

A few snow banks didn't deter 300 women from making the trip to advocate for environmental issues that The Garden Club of America supports. Our GCA National Affairs and Legislation Committee Chair Nancy McKlveen introduces us to the exciting meeting that took place from February 22-25. *Editor*

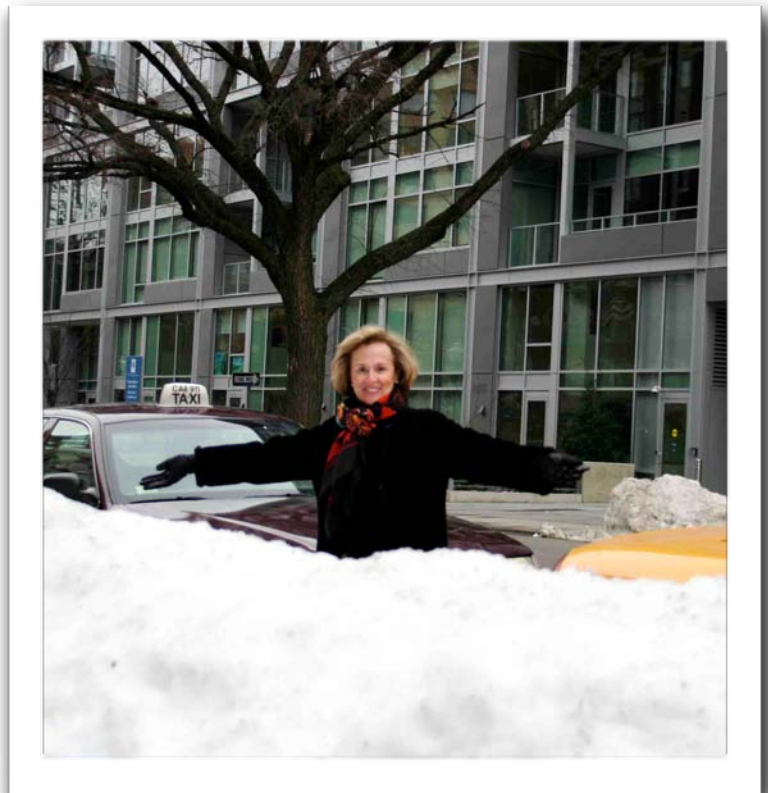
Democracy 101 – Advocacy at its Best

Delegates from all twelve GCA zones who got the prized spots at this year's NAL meeting heard from environmental leaders from many agencies, members of Congress and the administration, and our own GCA vice-chairmen who are experts in our areas of interest. The meeting's goals are to educate, inform, and update the delegates on current environmental concerns and possible related legislation. They then spread GCA's message to Capitol Hill.

This year's meeting included a workshop called "How to Conduct a Successful Hill Visit" to teach delegates how to best advocate for the positions GCA takes. (See "What Are the GCA Position Papers?" on page __.) We were assisted by our D.C. Consultant, Rich Innes. Attendees heard from our kick-off speaker, John Broder, *The New York Times* Energy and Environment Reporter, and other well-known spokesmen addressing water and ocean initiatives, climate change, the problems of mountaintop removal mining, and strategies to encourage our representatives to at last fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

On the second day, delegates headed to Capitol Hill. In the historic Cannon Caucus Room, members listened and asked questions of Senators, Congressmen, and representatives of the Administration. Pending health care legislation (passed on March 21) and economic issues made scheduling speakers quite a challenge, but the high regard for GCA became the winning force! Many themes emerged. However, climate change was a primary focus with the need for climate and energy legislation dominating the agenda. How to transform our economy to one of green technology invaded our conversations with the constant reminder that legislators must translate these messages to job creation. We heard over and over about how the rest of the world, particularly China, is doing in meeting these challenges.

On the final day, delegates took the information they had immersed themselves in and visited their elected representatives, making their voices heard. Our "troops" were strong, committed, and respected. The spirit to protect our earth and make it a better place for future generations was the driving force on Capitol Hill that day! We then headed home, mentally exhausted, but fully committed to fight for the earth we love. We hope you will enjoy reading the following reports from another successful Washington meeting and take up the struggle in your own regions.



Nancy McKlveen
(Photo by Patricia Wall)

*Nancy McKlveen, Des Moines Founders G.C. – Zone XI
GCA NAL Chair 2009 - 2011*

"In the almost 100 years of GCA advocacy, our members have built a formidable reputation in Congress. Many of our delegates have been returning for years and help to lead the newcomers into becoming successful GCA activists in the tradition of our founders. A better source of friendships could not be found."

*Heidi Ho Conjugacion, Honolulu (HI) G.C.
GCA Zone XII Conservation/NAL Representative*

Climate Change Debate in Washington: Regulate or Legislate?

*Suzanne Booker-Canfield, Ph.D. – Garden Guild of Winnetka (IL) – Zone XI
GCA NAL Committee – Vice-Chair, Climate Change*

As climate legislation continues to work its way up the calendar on the 111th Congress, GCA members attending this February's Legislative Meeting in Washington learned about a range of regulatory and legislative approaches to reducing carbon in the atmosphere. Last December's Copenhagen Accord pledged that the U.S. will reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) pollution by about 17 percent below 2005 levels over the next decade; however, fulfillment of that obligation means the Senate needs to pass legislation similar to the House-approved comprehensive climate bill (H.R. 2454). Between competing climate bills and a largely partisan divide, the outcome of a Senate bill is difficult to predict.

Many speakers addressed the urgent need for legislation. Larry Schweiger, President and CEO of the National Wildlife Fund, noted that there are more than 40,000 studies on climate change now and more than 800,000 years of ice records. With the concentration of carbon in the atmosphere currently outpacing the IPCC* worst-case scenario, he questioned, "When the pot boils over, who would turn up the stove?" The \$2.4 trillion damage resulting from the pace of Arctic melting, the release of methane from melting permafrost, the rapid loss of wetlands, increases in forest fires and invasive species, and the change in hardiness zones are just a few of the reasons Schweiger urged GCA members to actively oppose the well-funded fossil fuel supporters and lobbyists and make a difference for our children and grandchildren.

Democratic, Republican, and independent media polls in January found that more than half the American public supports climate change legislation that would reduce pollution, increase national security, create sustainable jobs, build a new energy economy, promote energy independence, and protect the environment. However, citing a poll ranking 29 percent of Americans as "doubtful and dismissive," of climate change, John Broder, the *New York Times* environment and energy issues reporter, told NAL delegates about the challenges of getting a comprehensive climate bill passed this year. Meanwhile, he noted, China is already seizing the opportunity to become a global leader in the clean energy technology field.

Other speakers addressed the political and economic issues. Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) said that, "even if you don't believe in science," putting out \$1 billion a day for energy from the Middle East and China is both economically and strategically perilous for America. Congressman Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) praised the House climate bill (H.R. 2454) for moving the nation in the right direction by promoting renewable energy, incentivizing reduction in energy waste, and offering low-cost financing for green-energy businesses. Similarly, Senator Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), who believes that the clean energy revolution could be as significant as the digital revolution, contended that the climate skeptics "cede the race to clean energy leadership" to such countries as India and China.

Reducing GHG emissions can be approached from either a regulatory or legislative perspective. Addressing the regulatory approach, Gina McCarthy, Assistant Administrator of the Environmental

Protection Agency (EPA), told GCA delegates that the Obama administration's priorities were to take action on a comprehensive approach to climate change, employing "common-sense measures" to protect Americans. However, the means to regulate GHG emissions already exists; under the EPA's Endangerment Finding, the agency has the legal authority to regulate GHG emissions as threats to public health and welfare. (Health effects include a decrease in air quality and increase in disease, especially among vulnerable populations; environmental effects comprise a rise in sea level, a deterioration of ecosystems, and challenges to water quality and availability.) McCarthy noted that in terms of lives saved, the forty-year-old Clean Air Act is better than every other law combined. Although President Obama and EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson have both stated that they prefer a legislative approach to a regulatory one, the Clean Air Act could authorize the EPA, beginning in January 2011, to regulate an estimated 85% percent of emissions, according to McCarthy.

The legislative picture is more complex. The field is crowded with a number of competing approaches to addressing climate change. Last fall, the Senate introduced Kerry-Boxer (S. 1733), which calls for an economy-wide cap-and-trade program to reduce GHG emissions. Cap and trade puts a cap on emitters throughout the economy and creates a market to buy and sell allowances to meet emission cuts.



Approaching the tipping point.
Photo courtesy of wineeconomist.com

However, that bill appears to have been abandoned in favor of a forthcoming bill by Sens. John Kerry (D-MA), Joe Lieberman (I-CT), and Lindsey Graham (R-SC), who have been building a tripartisan coalition to support a sector-by-sector approach to cap and trade. Their bill is expected to make concessions by increasing the role of nuclear energy, decreasing restrictions on offshore drilling, and setting a "price collar" to limit the cost of compliance.

Meanwhile, Sen. George Voinovich (R-OH), Sen. Richard Lugar (R-IN), and some moderate Senate Democrats put forth "Plan B," regulating CO₂ for power plants only. Senators Maria Cantwell (D-WA) and Susan Collins (R-ME) introduced a "cap-and-dividend" approach in which energy producers would bid in monthly auctions for shares of carbon. Finally, Senators Tom Carper (D-DE) and Lamar Alexander (R-TN) and a bipartisan group of senators introduced a "three-pollutant bill" that would only regulate sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, and mercury.

After the briefings, GCA delegates urged their legislators to pass a comprehensive clean energy and climate bill this year. Doing so would address an array of environmental, economic, health, and national security problems. How does it do this?

- reduces pollution in our deteriorating atmosphere.
- protects the land and maintain biodiversity, especially plant life.
- increases national security by promoting America's energy independence and ending our dangerous reliance on foreign oil.
- promotes clean, safe renewable energy production.
- reduces reliance on dirty and unsafe energy.
- builds a new energy economy and create sustainable manufacturing jobs that cannot be exported.
- prices greenhouse gas emissions to provide a dividend for those who use clean energy and a penalty for polluters.

GCA delegates were charged with the mission of encouraging their clubs' members to contact their elected officials and tell them why the GCA supports comprehensive climate legislation.

* IPCC - Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

Hope for Greenhouse Gas Regulation – But Who Rules?

Annie Ager, French Broad River G.C. (NC) – Zone VII
GCA Conservation Committee – Vice-Chair, Air Quality/Toxic Substances

The effort to slow the effects of climate change depends on limiting greenhouse gas emissions. Regulating carbon dioxide, nitrogen, sulfur and mercury can be done by Congress or, because of a 2007 ruling by the Supreme Court, by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Congress can pass a climate bill limiting greenhouse gas emissions and the provisions of that bill become the law of the land. The EPA, because the Supreme Court ruled that greenhouse gases are “air pollutants that endanger public health and welfare,” is responsible for regulating them under the provisions of the Clean Air Act.

A top priority of the Obama Administration is to take action on climate change. The administration prefers that Congress pass climate legislation, rather than the EPA taking the initial action. The House did pass the Waxman-Markey Bill in the fall but the Senate did not take up the legislation last year. Perhaps in a move to keep the pressure on Congress, Lisa Jackson, EPA Administrator, in December issued an “endangerment finding” on greenhouse gases. This “finding” means that the EPA must develop regulations to control the pollutants.

At the February NAL meeting in Washington, Gina McCarthy, EPA Assistant Administrator, office of Air and Radiation, explained the scientific basis for the “finding” and the process EPA used to develop rules. In September of 2009 the agency ruled that large industries emitting greenhouse gases have to keep track of their emissions. Regulations could be developed using these emission numbers. The largest emitters are electricity generation (35%), transportation (28%) and industry (19%), so they would be regulated first. Regulations would be written in conjunction with other government agencies. Ms. McCarthy extolled the benefits of the Clean Air Act since its inception, and speculated that even more benefits could come from the new regulations.



Gina McCarthy photo courtesy of flickr.

Senator Murkowski (R-AK), in an immediate response to the EPA, introduced a bill in January that would remove greenhouse gases from the jurisdiction of the Clean Air Act. This bill gathered some support but wasn't voted on, probably because the legislators knew President Obama would veto it. Senator John D. Rockefeller (D-WV) introduced a bill to “delay” the rules for two years. Lisa Jackson, EPA Administrator, answering these critics, wrote, “I really think the energy of the Senate on this issue would be wonderful if it would be put towards new legislation to do something!”

Meanwhile, to garner Republican support, Senators Kerry, Graham, and Lieberman have dropped the controversial “cap and trade” proposal for limiting carbons. Instead, in a move to gain big oil support they have suggested a carbon tax on each gallon of gasoline that would be passed on to the consumer. This fee would be linked to the market price of carbon emissions bought and traded by the utilities and other industries. They would forgo a cap on carbon emissions in favor of an approach that puts different pollution limits on different parts of the economy. The bill would also offer federal assistance to nuclear power plants, carbon sequestration research, storage facilities at coal plants and offshore oil exploration. On March 23, the three Senators sent their bill to the EPA for review.

On March 30, President Obama announced that new areas for offshore drilling would be opened up, explaining this was necessary for our independence and for job creation. This is also a bid to gain

support for the climate bill. He promised that a bill would be introduced in the coming weeks. What will happen to the EPA regulations if the bill passes? If the bill doesn't pass, will the states have enough staff and funding to enforce the rules? The answer to the first question is that the Senate bill would take effect and the rules would be subject to the provisions of the bill. If the bill doesn't pass, then Congress must authorize enough money to fund the state EPA's. Politics is always a delicate balance and this issue is especially precarious.

Help Make Energy a Top Priority

*Melissa McAdams, Knoxville (TN) G.C. – Zone IX
GCA NAL Committee – Vice-Chair, Energy Sources*



Photo from citris-uc.org.

Beginning with the Industrial Revolution, we have used coal and then oil to power our way to the top. Energy is possibly the greatest factor in our success.

However, the use of coal and oil now carries a heavy price—in environmental and health damage, international dependence, and reliance on rapidly depleting resources and outmoded technology. As early as 1931, Thomas Edison saw that the cost of industrialization was inefficient and finite. “This scheme of combustion to get power makes me sick to think of it,” he said. “It is so wasteful.” Instead he suggested that, “we should utilize natural forces for our power. Sunshine is a form of energy, and the winds and the tides are manifestations of energy. Do we use them? Oh, no! We burn up wood and coal, as renters burn up the front fence for fuel. We live like squatters, not as if we owned the property.”

Renewable energy sources such as hydro, geothermal, solar, and wind power have proven him right. They produce electricity without generating tons of greenhouse gases and waste. This benefit cannot be realized, however, until the price of competing fossil fuel use reflects the very real costs of the resultant pollutants, disruptions and byproducts. The shift to sustainable energy use has begun, and the policies to shepherd this change are being debated now. In fact, how best to facilitate the utility sector's shift to geothermal, wind and solar power and the transportation sector's shift to electric and biofuel power is a primary focus of the Obama Administration, Congress, as well as many state and local governments.

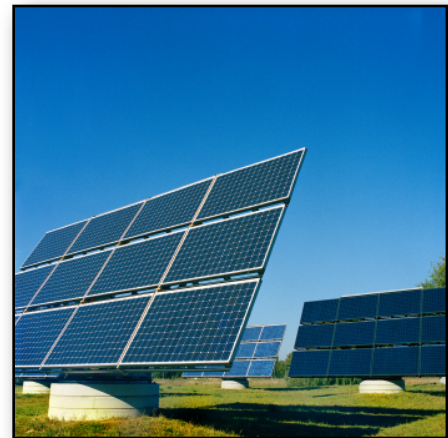


Photo from wordpress.com.



Photo from envocar.com.

Thirty states plus our nation's capital have adopted Renewable Energy Portfolio Standards. For example, Maine requires that 40 percent of an energy provider's sales must come from renewable resources by 2017; Maryland's target is 20 percent by 2022. Senate Bill 1462, the bill reported out by the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, sets a nationwide standard requiring 15 percent of power generation by a utility company to come from renewable sources by 2021. This bill also contains other incentives to increase the use of

lower carbon power sources, but it does not mandate reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

In just the past year, Recovery Act investments in energy efficiency, in renewable energy research and deployment, and in reforming transportation have been phenomenal. Billions of dollars are being spent to better insulate homes and offices, make wind turbines more efficient, support production of electric vehicles, and improve our power transmission infrastructure. An Assistant Secretary at the Department of Energy recently said, “The Recovery Act is a down payment, hugely significant, but alone not sufficient to drive the kinds of investments we’ll need to reach our goals.” He suggested that, “To transition into a clean-energy economy, we must create a system of incentives to make clean energy the profitable kind of energy. That means **putting a price on carbon pollution through comprehensive energy and climate legislation.**”

Comprehensive energy legislation, such as the House-passed Waxman-Markey bill, H.R. 2454, includes a cap on allowable greenhouse gas emissions. Capping places a price on fossil fuel use. Currently, America is the only developed country in the world without a cap on carbon emissions. Most businesses expect and have been preparing for the enactment of a carbon tax or a cap and trade system that places a price on carbon emissions.

GCA members learned at our meeting in Washington that action by the Senate on climate and energy legislation is possible in late spring or early summer. Meetings are ongoing about the details of the Kerry, Graham, and Lieberman plan to price carbon emissions from the electric utility sector first, before phasing in limits on manufacturers and other greenhouse gas-emitting businesses. They also plan to regulate emissions from the transportation sector. Senator Lugar (D-IN) has introduced an energy only bill that includes incentives to shut down the highest carbon-emitting coal plants. With health care out of the way, the Obama Administration is pressing for climate and energy legislation to give certainty and predictability to investors. The Administration believes the clarity and confidence provided by nationwide emissions regulation will boost the economy.

Several speakers at our Washington meeting remarked that in spite of polls, competing issues, distorted media accounts, and lack of camaraderie, factors may converge to finally push a solution on how to curb greenhouse gases and still meet the power needs of the United States. Bipartisanship is exhibited in many recently introduced energy and climate bills. Also, issues such as jobs, national security, military preparedness, health and the economy are closely linked to moving America towards a clean energy future. In addition, Congress, and many others may find the regulation of greenhouse gases by the Environmental Protection Agency a much less desirable option.

Let your legislator know what you think about energy and climate change, and remain optimistic that sixty votes can be found in the Senate for passage.

Our Oceans – Our Responsibility Improving the Health of Our Oceans

*Fayetta Weaver, Mill Mountain (VA) G.C.
GCA Zone VII Conservation/NAL Representative*



Credit: angling4oceans.org

Oceans are crucial to our society; yet, they are in crisis. Oceans are regulators of our weather and powerful drivers of our climate. Half our population lives in close proximity to an ocean. Oceans spawn \$138 billion of our economy annually, more than agriculture. And we depend on them for water-related recreation.

But the stability and resilience of the oceans are at risk. Water quality is declining. Oceans absorb one third of the CO₂ in our atmosphere, leading to increasing acidification and the resultant “osteoporosis of the oceans”. Fisheries are collapsing. Harvest of large fish is down 90 percent and all commercial stocks may collapse by 2020. Half of the seafood we consume is farmed and aquaculture can cause pollution from the toxic waste created by high-density fish populations. Escape of some farmed invasive species into the wild threatens native stock. And, a changing climate will only accelerate these stresses. Because of the U.S. Senate’s refusal to endorse the Law of the Sea Convention, we do not even have representation at the international body charged with addressing these pressing problems. [See “The Law of the Sea Treaty: Lost or in Limbo?” by Sharon Stewart in *Conservation Watch*, Summer, 2008, pg. 9, still available online on the GCA website.]

Our current federal ocean management system is broken. To counter the ocean’s decline, the 3.4 million square acres of waters within two hundred nautical miles of our shores must be nursed back to health. One hundred and forty laws regulated by 20 different agencies results in perpetual confusion and conflict in the absence of an overarching policy.

However, reform efforts are underway at last. The privately-funded Pew Ocean Commission and a Congressionally-mandated U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy were formed shortly after the turn of this century. These bodies, recognizing that the health and future of our oceans must be addressed in a connected and integrated fashion, founded the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative with experts from both entities to raise public awareness. In June, 2009, President Obama called for an inter-agency task force including the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Departments of State, Interior, and Defense. Members were charged with developing recommendations for a national ocean policy, an improved agency structure to implement the policy, and a framework for coastal and marine structure planning.



Credit: SunSentinel.com

Their report, "*Changing Oceans, Changing World*", was released in early April. It recommends twenty specific actions in four categories: Improving Ocean and Coastal Policy Management, Bolstering International Leadership, Strengthening Ocean Science, and Funding Ocean and Coastal Policies and Programs. Estimated costs for the first year of \$1.7 billion suggest both the breadth of this report and the potential political hurdles it will face. Proposals include a strengthening of NOAA and the Clean Water Act, recommendations to support regional collaborations, accession to the Law of the Sea Convention, and integration of ocean science into climate change. These could have dramatic, positive effects on the environment if federal legislation follows to guarantee implementation. Federal agencies will then review their regulations and implement these new policies.

What can we as individuals do? Be more aware of our personal actions. Live sustainably, by making informed choices when buying seafood. Voice our concerns to elected officials - future climate change legislation could have a positive impact. And insist that our nation's involvement on the international level must be increased. We are the only developed nation on the globe refusing to participate in Law of the Sea negotiations. Encourage your senators to ratify this treaty. Signing this agreement would demonstrate our willingness to join other nations in addressing the health of our oceans.

[Source:

Remarks by Laura Cantral, Co-facilitator and Convenor, Joint Ocean Commission Initiative and Chris Mann, Senior Officer, PEW Environment Group, February 23, 2010, GCA NAL Meeting, Washington, D.C.]

Mountaintop Removal Mining – Strip Mining on Steroids

Jane Whitaker, Cherokee G.C. (GA) – Zone VIII

GCA Conservation Committee – Vice Chair, Land Use/Sustainable Development

Mountaintop removal mining (MTR) is a form of surface mining that occurs on the summit ridge of a mountain. The peak is leveled, the seams of ore exposed, and the mining debris deposited into the valley below. This process of coal extraction is ravaging the environment of the Appalachian Mountain states, especially West Virginia.

Mining has always been big business in the Appalachian states and in recent years the mining companies have turned more often to the practice of MTR because of the ease of extraction and the need for fewer employees. With MTR, heavy equipment does most of the work. According to Rob Perks, Director of the Center for Advocacy at the Natural Resources Defense Council, who spoke at the NAL Meeting in Washington, there were approximately 150,000 miners in the early 1950's employed in West Virginia, and today there are only about 14,000. Coal production has increased with this method - but at what expense? According to labor statistics, counties that produce coal are devastated by poverty, school closings, and unemployment.



Mountaintop removal coal mine in southern WV encroaching on a small community.
Photo courtesy of Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition.

The process goes as follows: Before mining begins, vast areas of forest are brutally clear-cut. Then explosives are set. Approximately 2,500 tons of ammonium nitrate/fuel oil explosives are detonated every week - equivalent to the power of the atomic bomb that fell on Hiroshima. Huge draglines towering 20 stories high are brought in to cut off the top of the mountain, then bulldozers scrape and level the craggy peaks, exposing the thin seams of coal. The vast amount of residue, filled with such contaminants as arsenic, boron, selenium and mercury, is then loaded onto trucks and dumped over the mountain side into fertile fields, forests, rivers and streams, where it suffocates and pollutes the entire valley.



The devastated landscape of the Birchton Curve Valley Fill.
Photo courtesy of Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition.

The federal government's response to this issue has been mixed. The enforcement of the Clean Water Act (CWA) of 1977 kept in check the disposal of toxic residue into the waterways. However, in 2002 the Army Corps of Engineers, under the direction of the Bush administration and without congressional approval, altered the CWA's longstanding definition of "fill dirt" to include mining waste, opening the way for mountaintop removal mining and the destruction of more than 2,000 miles of Appalachian streams.

Scientists have been hard at work educating Congress about this issue and asking for a stop to the practice. In January 2010, a group of 12 well-respected scientists called on the Obama administration to present the findings of their study published in the journal *Science* (Jan. 8, 2010), which concluded that the practice is endangering the public health and causing environmental destruction that will take 10,000 years to reverse.

There is a growing sentiment in Congress that MTR mining is not smart, politically or environmentally. Senators Benjamin Cardin of Maryland and Lamar Alexander of Tennessee have introduced the Appalachian Restoration Act, Senate Bill 696, which changes the wording of the 1977 Clean Water Act to prevent the disposal of toxic waste into streams and rivers. Senator Alexander is to be applauded for

introducing this bill since he is from Tennessee, one of the Appalachian states where MTR mining is carried out. Even senior Senator Robert Byrd of West Virginia, a longtime supporter of the mining industry, has conceded that public opinion is definitely growing against mountaintop removal mining and has asked the mining industry to use “a more conciliatory approach”. It was disappointing to hear Congressman Nick Rahall from West Virginia announce at the NAL Meeting that he supports mountaintop removal mining, since it offers an economic boost to his district.

Good news was announced on March 26 by the Environmental Protection Agency. It proposed a veto for one of Central Appalachia’s largest mountaintop removal mining projects, a sign that the EPA is taking a stronger stance on the protection of the water quality in the Appalachian coal-mining region. The proposal will be published in the *Federal Register*, initiating a 60-day public comment period. If finalized, the veto will invalidate the Army Corps of Engineers’ permit for the Spruce No. 1 surface mine in southern West Virginia that was first issued in 2007. The agency has never before vetoed a previously issued permit. On April 2, the EPA announced that it has tightened water-quality standards by setting limits on the electrical conductivity, or saline level, in streams. This standard is effective immediately and will severely limit future MTR mining. The EPA supported its proposal by stating that it “has a duty under the law to protect water quality and safeguard the people who rely on these waters for drinking, fishing and swimming.”

These rulings have sparked an outcry from some of West Virginia’s big mining companies and lawmakers - among them, Rep. Rahall - who called the decision “unconscionable”. Mining company officials have said the new water-quality standards are unfair and will endanger jobs. Senator Ben Cardin (D-MD) cheered the proposal and stated, “Everyday, new science makes it clearer that the mining pollution from these operations poisons streams—and the people and wildlife that depend on them—in a way that can never be reversed.”

Can Plants and Wildlife Escape the Heat?

Ruth Flournoy, River Oaks G.C. (TX) – Zone IX

GCA Conservation Committee – Vice Chair, Endangered Species/Ecological Restoration

Lest we forget, the Washington NAL meeting provided us with further reminders of the perils of climate change. Most gardeners are aware of changes in the Plant Hardiness Zone Map, last updated by the USDA in 1990. The Arbor Day Foundation created a new map in 2006 that shows significant warming with portions of many states shifting at least one full hardiness zone and some areas warming two full zones.(1) As a warming climate affects species all over the world, some will adapt, some will move, and others will die. The plight of the polar bear is a story we all know but entire ecosystems found on mountain tops, low lying islands, high latitudes and edges of continents become increasingly vulnerable as our climate warms.



Where to now?

Photo courtesy of science.howstuffworks.com.

Research reveals numerous examples of plants that have climbed to higher elevations or moved closer to the poles to survive. James Owen calls holly an ideal bioindicator of global warming. Since the 1940s, the Common holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) has moved 80

miles in Denmark and 75 miles in northern Germany.(2) A study of ten dominant species in Southern California in the Santa Rosa Mountains compared 1977 to 2006-07 and found that nine out of ten moved up the mountain, gaining an average of 213 ft in elevation.(3)

Alpine species are most at risk because they have no place to go. They are further threatened as frost-sensitive species that are no longer checked by prolonged freezes rapidly move into their space. Research in Italy comparing data from recent plant surveys to studies completed 80 to 100 years ago showed grassland species from lower slopes had crept up as much as 4 meters per decade on more than two-thirds of the sites resurveyed.(4) In the Italian Alps, trees now advance into alpine meadows. Frost hardy ecosystems like the sagebrush of the Great Basin that spans eleven of our western states are already being invaded by frost-sensitive woody species and invasive cheatgrass.(5)

The mountain goat, an icon of Glacier National Park, has suffered as trees have invaded its sub alpine meadow habitat, reducing forage and providing shelter for predators. (6) The American pika is another



American pika
Courtesy of depts.washington.edu

alpine mammal on the move. It is a furry, hamster-looking animal that is slow to reproduce and has a thermal regulatory system that does not do well above 78 degrees. (7) While archaeological records show it lived at 5700 feet, it now lives above 8000 ft. Climate is suspected as a cause of the move, along with habitat loss, roads and human disturbance. Its food sources could be maturing earlier or shifting location. Colonies could be getting separated and isolated, thus affecting breeding and weakening the gene pool. These creatures are known to survive best in other ranges where talus fields extend upslope, such as the Sierra Nevada and Rocky Mountains. (8) In 2007 Earthjustice and the Center for Biological Diversity petitioned the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to list the pika as endangered primarily because of climate change. In February, 2010, the petition was denied.

Looking at the fate of birds, an Audubon 2009 report states, "Nearly 60% of 305 bird species found in North America in winter have been on the move over the last 40 years, shifting their ranges northward by an average of 35 miles, and in some cases by hundreds of miles." In this time period, the range of the purple finch has moved north more than 400 miles.

An increasing rate of extinction of species that need cool temperatures to survive is predicted because many plants and wildlife will simply not be able to adapt or move. Those that can't will disappear forever.

Sources:

- (1) www.arborday.org.
- (2) Owen, James, "Wild Holly, Mistletoe, Spread with Warmer Winters," *National Geographic News*, December 7, 2005, quoting research of WR Walther, "An Ecological 'Footprint' of Climate Change."
- (3) *Discover*, January 2009.
- (4) Camione, Nicoletta; Sgorbate, Sergio; and Guglielman, Mauro, "Unexpected Impacts of Climate Change on Alpine Vegetation," *Ecological Society of America Journal*, September, 2007.

- (5) Sweiger, Larry J., "The Greatest Show on Earth," *Last Chance*, Fulcrum Publishing, 2009.
- (6) Fagre, Dan, "Climate Change Impacts on the Crown of the Continent's Ecosystem."
- (7) Stark, Mike, www.trib.com (Casper Wyoming Star-Tribune), 4/4/09.
- (8) Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative.

Our National Parks – Challenges for the Future

*Marsha Merrell, James River G.C. (VA)– Zone VII
GCA Conservation Committee*

*Sarah Young, Broadmoor G.C. (CO) – Zone XII
GCA NAL Committee*

Vice-Chairs – National Parks/Public Lands

Stewardship of our national parks is one of the few conservation issues on which most Americans can agree enthusiastically. They understand the need for protection and preservation of our natural resources. Our childhood memories of family vacations to national parks rekindle feelings of childlike awe and reverence. In our minds, the national parks represent the pinnacle of our unique and abundant natural heritage. This issue can be, for many of us, the keystone that unlocks our long-forgotten resolutions to preserve our magnificent wild lands. In this era of partisan rancor, we should not overlook the value of this unifying issue – one that has the power to elicit cohesion and cooperation and the joy of harmonious effort for the common good.

In addition, our national parks can hold another key. They may be the essential element permitting threatened species to adapt to the increasing challenges of climate change. Jon Jarvis, the director of the National Park Service, has stated, "Our national park(s) . . . can serve as the proverbial canary in the coal mine, a place where we can monitor and document ecosystem change without many of the stressors that are found on other public lands. Parks are already experiencing some dramatic impacts that may be resulting from climate change."

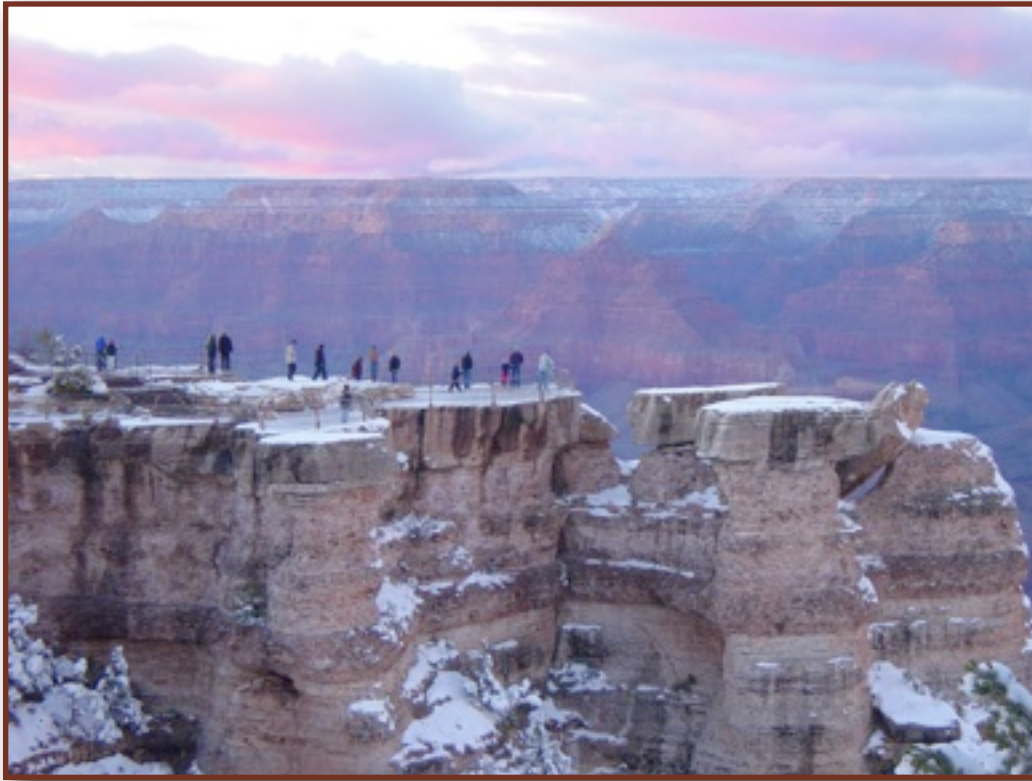
In 2008, the National Parks Conservation Association convened an independent commission consisting of a diverse, bipartisan group of national leaders. It was called the National Parks Second Century Commission and was charged with developing a twenty-first century vision for the National Park Service as the national park system enters its second century in 2016. With that, comes a new set of problems - population, development, global warming - that didn't exist when these public lands were dedicated nearly 100 years ago. The Commission issued their report, "Advancing the National Park Idea" in September of 2009.

The report has as one of three missions "to create new national parks, collaborative models, and corridors of conservation and stewardship and expand the park system to foster ecosystem and cultural connectivity." An area of great concern for the future, as we learned at the NAL meeting in

In 1960, Wallace Stegner, environmentalist and Pulitzer prize winner, wrote "**The Wilderness Letter.**" It contains the following passage which still rings true today.

"Something will have gone out of us as a people if we ever let the remaining wilderness be destroyed; if we permit the last virgin forests to be turned into comic books . . . ; if we drive the few remaining members of the wild species into zoos or to extinction; if we pollute the last clean air and dirty the last clean streams and push our paved roads through the last of the silence, so that never again will Americans be free . . . from the noise, the exhausts, the stinks of human and automotive waste. And so that never again can we have the chance to see ourselves single, separate, vertical and individual in the world, part of the environment of trees and rocks and soil, brother to the animals, part of the natural world and competent to belong in it. Without any remaining wilderness we are committed wholly, without chance for even momentary reflection and rest, to a headlong drive into our technological termite-life, the Brave New World of a completely man-controlled environment. We need wilderness preserved - as much of it as is still left, . . . - because it was the challenge against which our character as a people was formed. The reminder and the reassurance that it is still there is good for our spiritual health even if we never once in ten years set foot in it. It is good for us when we are young, because of the incomparable sanity it can bring briefly . . . into our insane lives. It is important to us when we are old simply because it is there."

(offered by Sarah Young)



Grand Canyon photo courtesy of The National Park Service.

Washington, is the need for natural corridors that will ensure biodiversity as climate change causes a shift in the habitats of both flora and fauna.

Greater cooperation between federal agencies that manage public lands and private landowners is imperative in carrying out this mission. Recently, conservation easements have helped by protecting many acres of private land from development. The law permitting tax credits for these conservation easements was allowed to expire at the beginning of 2010. HR. 1831 and S. 812 would make the tax credits for conservation easements permanent. They were both referred to committee about a year ago.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) was created by Congress in 1965. This fund has been used to add millions of acres to our national parks, national wildlife refuges, national forests, historic and scenic trails, wild and scenic rivers corridors, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands, and other federal lands. It has also helped in acquiring many new parks and recreation lands for every state in the union. The LWCF was originally authorized to receive \$900 million annually from a portion of the revenues from oil and gas leasing on the Outer Continental Shelf. Unfortunately, it has been chronically underfunded and funding has steadily declined in the last nine years. If we are to establish wildlife corridors to protect and preserve the wildlife and plants in our national parks as they adapt to the mounting challenge of climate change, it will be essential for this fund to be restored to its original intended level. If it had been fully funded in 2010 with inflation-adjusted dollars, it would now be \$3.2 billion.

Preservation of national parks is an issue that elicits agreement and is easy to understand. Let's spread the word and keep our government representatives aware of our concern.

A Final Thought – Impressions of a Delegate

Candace Lyche, Hillsborough (CA) G.C. – Zone XII
Past Conservation Chair and NAL Delegate 2010

When I arrived in Washington, the headlines on newsstands were daunting: **Is Washington Frozen?** - a tongue-in-cheek reference to the blizzards that had shut down the capital, or a more pointed reference to the gridlock in the hallowed halls of the Senate? *The Economist* cried out: **What's gone wrong in Washington?** The article inside asked, "Are we ungovernable?"

At the GCA NAL meeting we heard that the Senate was a "graveyard", with 200 bills having stalled after their passage in the House. One speaker described working with federal agencies as "working at the United Nations without translators".

Ocean scientists described struggling to create a national oceans policy within 140 laws flowing from 20 agencies. We learned a new term –

"*hyper-partisanship*". Many speakers were dismayed that today the left moves further left and the right moves further right. We heard a reference to "Congressional constipation." One wetlands project required 3 1/2 years of permitting to do a week's worth of work. Washington, D.C., we were told, was in freefall. The only visible legislative action, to that point, seemed to be Congressmen hurling accusations of partisanship on a 24-hour news cycle. What had happened since my last visit with GCA in 2004?



(Photo by Patricia Wall.)

1. **Media:** The most stunning change was the swarm of news media we found in the Cannon House Office Building outside our meeting room. The coffered dome and Corinthian columns of the rotunda still inspire, but we now look through the lens of our free press: floodlights, computers, cables, gaffers, photographers and reporters. Microphones are poised for the whisper of controversy. The media is a massive presence on the hill, its impact undeniable.
2. **Recession:** We learned how difficult it is to support environmental good works during a recession. Our Congressmen reiterated a single priority - **jobs**. If an environmental action had an economic cost, it is instantly irrelevant. If energy legislation doesn't create more jobs, it won't pass. If dirty coal and mountaintop mining could keep a town afloat for 10 more years, it is the "moral high ground."
3. **Cloture:** No discussion of the current paralysis in D.C. is complete without a reference to Rule 22, the cloture and filibuster rule. Depending on who is using it, Rule 22 is either a weapon of mass destruction, or the path to progress.
4. **Money:** Divide the country into three parts - Main Street, Wall Street, and the Capitol, where massive spending is taking place. Congressmen look and sound like CEOs, not public servants.

The challenges today are greater than ever. Despite such dispiriting trends, what is most profound in Washington today is what has NOT changed - the need for coherent advocacy, especially as provided by groups like the GCA. Nothing dims our bright light! In a town of black suits and Blackberries, the women of the GCA stand out. Woe to the Congressman who is taken in by the elegant scarf, extraordinary presence or obvious refinement of his constituent. Members of the GCA are *intellectual wolves in sheep's clothing*. They are well read, well prepared, and well spoken, having received advocacy training, primers on the legislative process, and comprehensive GCA committee reports. Members combine their knowledge with civility, decorum and an apolitical message that is impossible to ignore.

One speaker put it plainly. Doomsday doesn't sell; solutions sell. GCA is an integral part of the solution. When the NAL goes to Washington, representatives of our 18,000 members with widely diverse interests from every part of this country urge a simple message of conservation and preservation. Our positions are consistent and unwavering, unfettered by ties to any political party. Despite the current gridlock, our government, and the Senate in particular, works as intended by our nation's founding fathers. Our Constitution is designed to avoid rapid shifts in the status quo. We flourish in consensus, and come to a standstill in the absence of compromise. It's difficult to drag this nation in a new direction. The GCA has the power to move Washington, and the country, in the direction of clean air, clean water, protection and restoration of public lands and parks, sound energy policy, healthy oceans and forests.

One moment, in particular, sums up the strength and purpose that is the hallmark of the NAL meeting. In the Cannon Caucus Room, during a day of spectacular speakers, we heard from the esteemed Representative Nick Rahall from West Virginia. He spoke of his many environmental efforts, including support of NEPA and the ESA and the Clean Water Act. As he ended his talk, he rolled back on his heels with a grand smile and asked if anyone in the room had a question. One from the audience was quickly read: "Congressman Rahall, given your support of clean rivers, and the environmental efforts you've been associated with, how do you explain your continued support of the destructive process of mountaintop mining in your own district?" I wanted to stand up and cheer.

Upon my return home, I received a personal note from Congresswoman Anna Eshoo, expressing her respect for the GCA and our advocacy of environmental issues. My daughter read the note, her eyes wide as she touched the gold seal of the Congress of the United States, and asked "Mommy, can I make a difference some day?"

Carbon Free Meetings – What a Concept!

For the fourth year in a row, the NAL meeting in Washington, D.C. was a **carbon free** meeting. What does that mean? Through the non-profit organization, Carbonfund.org, the amount of carbon dioxide generated by the meeting is calculated – for air, auto, and train travel; meals; hotels; etc. Meeting organizers are then offered the opportunity to offset this CO₂, in this case at \$2.46 per attendee. A carbon offset represents the reduction of CO₂ in one location needed to offset the CO₂ production in another location. Carbonfund.org invests in clean, renewable energy for us, including wind energy facilities, biomass generators, affordable solar homes, and tree planting in national forests. Visit the Carbonfund.org website and see if your meetings in your area could be carbon free in the future. Don't be part of the problem; be part of the solution!

Editor

The City of Trees

Sharon Blackburn, Loveland G.C. (NE)
GCA Zone XI Conservation/NAL Representative



Delegates to the 2010 NAL Meeting arrived in Washington soon after an unusual snowfall severely damaged the city's trees. How apropos that the opening speaker was Mark Buscaino, director of Casey Trees, a non-profit organization dedicated to restoring, enhancing and protecting trees in the District. And, this is an organization begun by the Garden Club of America! Mr. Buscaino spoke about the history of trees in Washington and the mission of Casey Trees.

Planting 60,000 trees early in its history established Washington as "The City of Trees" and was the beginning of urban forestry. In the 1900s, elms and the signature Yoshino cherries were added. However, by the 1990s, there was significant loss of canopy due to disease, development, and attrition. In 1999 philanthropist Mrs. Betty Brown Casey decided to help her home city deal with its declining tree canopy. She donated two million dollars to the GCA and Casey Trees was established in 2001.

Casey Trees' goals are to connect people to trees, to improve neighborhoods, and to enrich lives by strengthening community connections. Its programs include tree walks, providing storm water information, interactive satellite imaging to view the tree canopy in any area of the city, and the Citizen Foresters program – training volunteers to lead community plantings. There are school programs and a summer work crew, opportunities for students to explore careers in urban forestry. An improved tree box including specifications for urban plantings can be found on their website. After neighborhood plantings, groups must have a party to foster a sense of community. Watering trees using eye-catching bicycles with trailers that hook up to hydrants raises awareness and visibility! About 7,000 trees have been planted since 2001.

Mr. Buscaino stressed the importance of trees to the livability of a city and the well being of its residents. Planting trees is an act “for our kids,” hope for the future. One benefactor and the know-how of a dedicated group of GCA women made this vision possible and now Casey Trees is helping to protect our nation’s priceless resource. You can find more about Casey Trees and tree planting at www.caseytrees.org and on the GCA website.

[Photos supplied by Casey Trees.]



For more about the NAL meeting, see The GCA Bulletin, April-May, 2010 issue, pages 3 - 7.

What Are the GCA Position Papers?

On the GCA website home page, you will find an item labeled “Position Papers.” There you can click on a collection of the Position Papers that have been adopted by GCA. The list includes papers on the following topics:

Clean Air
Clean Water
Climate Change
National Parks
Native Plants
Public Lands
Transportation

Each is prefaced by the following statement:

“The Garden Club of America supports independent, academic, peer-reviewed scientific research as the basis for formulation of responsible public policy and legislation, as well as appropriate funding to ensure quality results.”

All of the position papers have been reviewed and revised this year.

How did these position papers come to be? What is their purpose? How do we use these position statements? The first GCA position papers were created in 1989 to help GCA address specific pieces of national legislation dealing with the environment. Over time, these position papers were broadened to cover more general topics (listed above), rather than being aimed at specific bills. In that way, the papers could be used to influence any piece of legislation that could impact areas of interest to GCA.

These position papers are created with great care so that they can be applied to many different pieces of legislation. Research by committee members of both the GCA Conservation Committee and the National Affairs & Legislation Committee precedes the drafting of a position paper. It is then reviewed extensively by both committees and after full committee approval, taken to the GCA Executive Committee for final approval. This is given only after careful deliberation. *

When GCA members contact their elected federal officials they use these position papers of the organization to support their stands on various pieces of legislation, such as are covered in this issue of *ConWatch*. They also provide their legislators with copies of GCA Position Papers dealing with the area of interest.

A sample of these statements and positions follows:

- In supporting **Clean Air**, GCA notes that greenhouse gases released to the atmosphere changing the climate poses the greatest risk to biodiversity (of plants and animals).
- In the position paper on **National Parks**, GCA supports the establishment of corridors to enable migration of wildlife adapting to climate change.
- GCA supports strengthening public policy to prevent, control and eradicate invasive plants in the position paper on **Public Lands**.
- The need for protection of fresh water resources to ensure that an adequate supply of fresh water is available both now and in the future is included in GCA's position on **Clean Water**.

These are just a few examples of what you will find in your organization's Position Papers. Look at them on the GCA website today.

Editor

[Sources:

GCA website, go to "Position Papers" on the Homepage.

* Coburn, Ann, "The Background of Position Papers", GCA website, 1998.

(Found on the GCA website. Go to "Members Only," then "Committees," then "National Affairs and Legislation (NAL).")]

Summing Up . . . Federal Legislation—Coming into the Home Stretch

*Martha Phillips, Litchfield (CT) G.C. – Zone II
GCA NAL Committee -Vice-Chair, Legislative Update*

Climate change legislation—focus on the Senate:

Climate change remains the front-and-center item the GCA National Affairs and Legislation and Conservation Committees are watching. The House of Representatives narrowly passed a sweeping measure last summer. The Senate Majority Leader has pledged to bring up comprehensive climate and energy legislation in the late spring or summer. But its prospects remain cloudy.

Under Senate rules, 60 votes are required to move any controversial bill. But so far, only 41 Senators are on record as likely or definitely supporting a climate change bill. Five Democrats are unwilling to



Photo by Kevin McCoy for www.dguides.com.

support mandatory curbs on emissions. Ten Democrats come from coal, oil or manufacturing states and seek provisions to promote offshore oil/gas drilling, "clean coal" technology, and border adjustments for goods imported from companies without tough climate policies. Several senators want proceeds from sale of emission allowances to be refunded to citizens instead of going back to utilities, industry and R&D. Half a dozen Republicans might support a bill, depending on its contents, especially now that the President has signaled willingness to drill for off-shore oil.

To come up with the magic formula that will attract 60 votes, Senate leadership has turned to the tri-partisan team of Senators Kerry (D-MA), Graham (R-SC) and Lieberman (I-CT), as mentioned earlier. Their proposal—months in the making—is to be presented shortly after Earth Day, April 22. It is expected to concentrate on energy efficiency, renewable energy including nuclear power, more drilling for oil and gas in offshore waters and target the power generating industry with a carbon price.

Time is growing short. Even if the Senate manages to pass a compromise bill, there are only about 100 legislative days left this year—not enough time for a House-Senate conference to resolve differences between the two bills and then get both chambers to accept the compromise. So the Senate strategists are counting on the House to accept the Senate-passed bill. House strategists are not so sure they are willing to do that.

Climate change regulations:

While Congress has been struggling to pass a climate change bill, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has seized the initiative by proposing federal regulations under the existing Clean Air Act that would tackle the problem of greenhouse gases on a piecemeal basis. EPA and the Department of Transportation jointly issued tough mileage standards for cars and trucks effective in 2012. EPA regulations are also in the works for power plants, factories, cement plants and chemical plants, refineries, nitric acid plants and oil/gas drilling operations.

State governments, which do the actual day-to-day Clean Air Act enforcement, fear they will be overwhelmed. Even though EPA says the regulations in the first few years would apply only to the "big guys" and not local drycleaners, restaurants, farms or other "little guys," state agencies don't think they have the resources to do the job, even with promised extra appropriations from Congress. More than a dozen states have joined a federal appeals court legal challenge to stop EPA's rules. "Stop EPA" bills in the House and Senate would strip EPA authority to use the Clean Air Act to enforce limits on greenhouse gas emissions.

[Find more on climate legislation in Legislative Update #8, 111th Congress on the GCA website in the Members Only section, then "Committees," followed by "National Affairs and Legislation." Look at the "Current Legislative Update."]

(April 22, 2010)

Partners for Plants – What Is It?

*Susan Osborne, Carmel-by-the-Sea (CA) G.C. – Zone XII
GCA Conservation Committee – Co-Chair, Partners for Plants*

Partners for Plants (PFP) has been a program of the GCA since the early 90's, yet many members still don't know exactly what it is. This may be due in part to how much the scope of PFP has changed over its almost 20 years.

PFP was begun under the auspices of the GCA Conservation Committee to help Federal botanists with work on Federal lands such as National Parks, National Forests and Bureau of Land Management lands. Since then "public lands" have been extended to include state and county lands as well as city parks of over 150 acres. While the original work focused on surveys of endangered and threatened plants, there are now projects involving the removal of invasive plants, the reintroduction of endemic plants and the study of medicinal plants as well. The first year there were three projects and now there are over twenty with plenty of work still to be done.

Usually the Conservation chair of a club sets up the project with the public agency involved. She may notice a park that needs help or might go to talk to the manager of a nearby piece of public land to see what needs to be done. While the project co-coordinator needs to be a GCA member, the rest of the volunteers may be drawn from anyone willing to help. Members of the Native Plant Society, Boy Scouts, and many other non-GCA partners have helped with various projects. The national co-chairs will also help to find a project if one is not readily apparent to the interested person or club.



Sarah Young and Sherry Coutts of the Broadmoor Garden Club counting ferns on Pikes Peak.

The first step in doing a project is to download and fill out the Proposal Form from the GCA website. The path is GCAmerica.org>Members Only>Committees>Conservation>Partners for Plants>Proposal Form. If you have questions about filling out the form or about your project idea, there is contact information for the current co-chairs at the bottom of the form. Proposal forms for the even numbered Zones should be sent to Susan Osborne (osusan@comcast.net); those for odd numbered Zones should be sent to Chris Caudill (clc3245@aol.com).

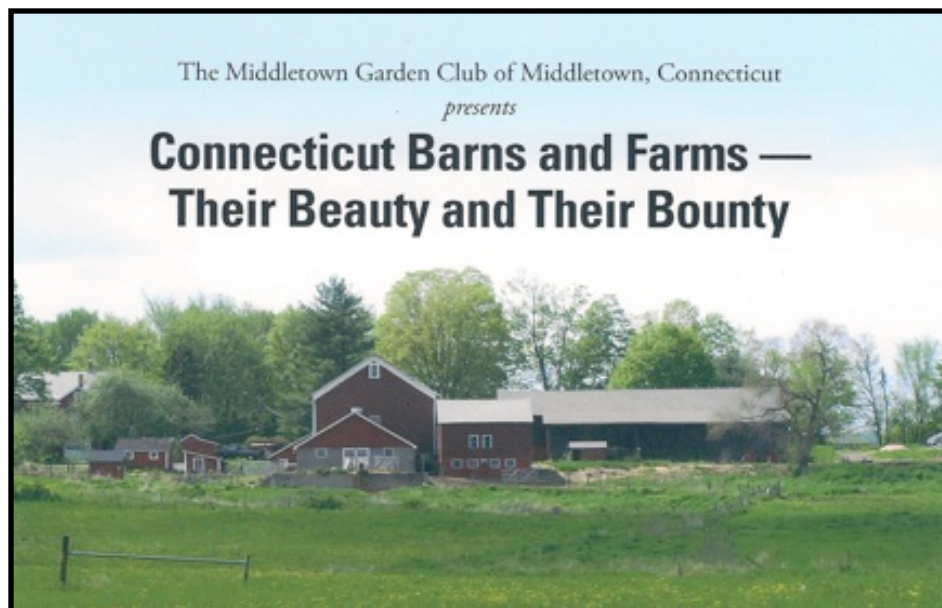
Partners for Plants is a great way to have a good time with friends, learn about the flora in your area, and help the plants on our public lands to thrive. Be a partner for plants!

Club News

Connecticut Barns and Farms – An Agricultural Heritage

On April 15 and 16, 2010, the Middletown (CT) Garden Club presented a flower show titled, “Connecticut Barns and Farms – Their Beauty and Their Bounty.” The show reflected their area’s agricultural heritage in its overall theme in several ways. Flower arranging designs complemented original farm and pastoral paintings produced expressly for the event and offered for sale. The club’s Conservation Committee created an exhibit that included a farm wagon laden with the varied products and produce of the Connecticut River Valley. Brochures, maps, and club bookmarks were provided to the public listing markets, pick-your-own sites, and explaining the values inherent in the area’s farms. A small farmers’ market was on site throughout the show as well. A companion piece for the flower show is a DVD, produced by the committee and underwritten by the Connecticut Department of Agriculture. The DVD shows the true beauty and bounty of the region’s rich agricultural legacy, emphasizing the importance of its preservation for our children’s future. Viewers of the DVD are reminded of the challenges facing farmers today. The DVD, also entitled “Connecticut Barns and Farms – Their Beauty and Their Bounty,” explains how farming provides local jobs, tax revenue, recreational open spaces, and the sheer beauty of the pastoral landscape. For more information about the DVD and how to produce one for your area, contact me at: rjschoonmaker@comcast.net.

*Judy Schoonmaker, Conservation Committee Chair and Incoming President
Middletown (CT) G.C. – Zone II*



Saving the San Francisco Bay

The San Francisco Bay is a natural treasure that defines the Bay Area, provides recreation and beauty, and moderates the climate. Only 10% of the Bay's original wetlands remain after years of Bay fill and development. Now Minnesota-based Cargill, Inc. and the developer, Arizona-based DMB, want to develop 1400 acres of retired salt ponds along the Bay. They propose building 12,000 homes, one million square feet of commercial development, playing fields, a park, 5 schools, and roads behind a massive levee, on a site that should instead be restored to wetlands.



Cargill proposed site. Photo by Matt Leddy.

The Woodside-Atherton Garden Club is united in opposition to the Cargill development. The members believe the entire site should be restored to benefit wildlife and provide public recreation and open space. Scientists recommend that at least 100,000 acres of tidal wetlands be re-established to support a healthy, sustainable ecosystem. And the State of California's Climate Adaptation Strategy recommends against any new development in undeveloped shoreline areas vulnerable to sea level rise and that critical habitats be restored to tidal wetlands.

The salt ponds are far from transit and are at or below sea level. Development would require 220 acres of new roads, causing runoff of pollutants into the Bay. The site is zoned "Tidal Plain," allowing for salt production, parks, and other open space uses, not housing. A massive new Bay-fill development will result in a huge increase in traffic and pollution to all in the Bay Area. Further, there is no potable water on site, requiring that water be purchased and transported from another area.

Led by the club's Conservation Committee and working with the environmental organizations Save The Bay, the Sierra Club, Audubon, the Committee for Green Foothills, and over 100 elected officials who oppose this project, citizens are writing letters, meeting with officials, attending council meetings, and informing the public about this misguided development. The goal is to see this vital natural resource restored, rather than destroyed. For more information or to get involved, please contact your favorite national environmental group and ask them to join in the opposition. Check out the Save the Bay website: savesfbay.org

Janet Larson, Conservation Committee Chair
Woodside-Atherton (CA) Garden Club – Zone XII

[For further information, you may contact Janet Larson at: janetlarson@sbcglobal.net.]

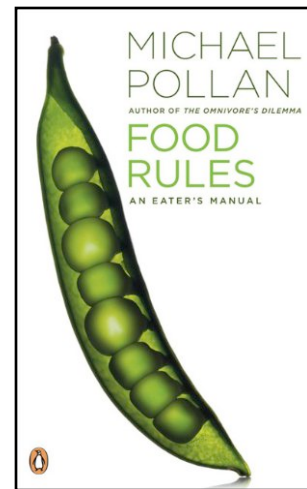
Media Reviews

Here's another excellent source following the last issue of *ConWatch* (Winter, 2009-'10), "The Dinner Table: A New Battleground for Conservation?"²⁴

Food Rules: An Eater's Manual by Michael Pollan

Michael Pollan brings another not-to-be-missed short book that manages to bring an array of food thoughts right to your table. It arrives loaded with facts and a smile, sending such a strong message that it makes giving it as a gift an inexpensive joy. I suspect that you will find it right on your bookseller's check-out counter. Who else but Michael Pollan can so succinctly say "eat food from a plant, not food made in a plant?" He makes us know he is oh so right!

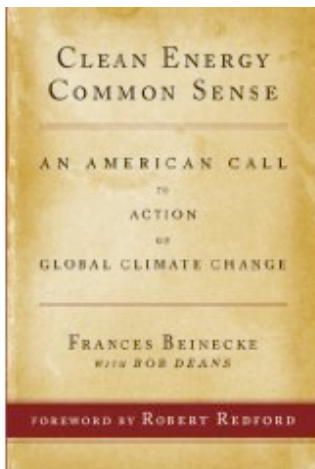
Judy Boggess, Lake Forest G.C. - Zone XI
GCA Conservation and NAL Resource Committee



Climate Change References

Clean Energy Common Sense - *An American Call to Action on Global Climate Change*

by Frances Beinecke



This small, inexpensive book is the perfect gift for someone who is not yet convinced that climate change is real or that anything can be done about it. Frances Beinecke, President of the Natural Resources Defense Council, has written a concise picture of the issues and the solutions to our current situation. Inspired by Thomas Paine's revolutionary classic, *Common Sense*, Ms. Beinecke addresses the science, the various effects that climate change are already having across the globe, proposed governmental solutions and how this would benefit our U.S. economy. "We know what it will take," she writes. "We must find the courage to begin." This is a powerful read that can be completed in a couple of hours.

Susie Wilmerding, G.C. of Philadelphia (PA) – Zone V
GCA Conservation Committee Chair

Storms of My Grandchildren: The Truth About the Coming Climate Catastrophe and Our Last Chance to Save Humanity

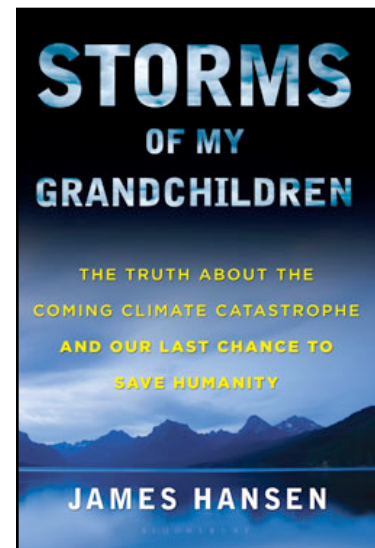
by James Hansen

In the early 1980's, research scientist James Hansen, director of the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies, first testified before Congress about the dangers of climate change. He described how the increasing atmospheric CO₂ levels would cause the world's temperature to rise. Over the years, his scientific research continued to show that the world's climate was changing faster than anyone imagined. But to his horror, political systems did not adequately respond. As a result, he decided to write his first book, *Storms of my Grandchildren*, offering scientific proof of the coming crisis and what can be done to avert it.

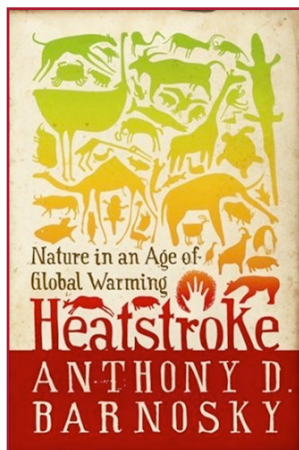
From his first sentence, "Planet Earth . . . is in imminent peril," Hansen gives clear scientific and historic evidence of why atmospheric CO₂ is rising so rapidly, concluding that humans are now in charge of the world's climate. But the role of money in politics and the effort of special interests to "greenwash" scientific evidence have slowed necessary action to stabilize our climate. He describes his frustration as a scientist, interacting with governmental policy makers and his amazement at the gap between public perception of what is happening to the climate and the scientific reality.

But, the laws of geophysics are immutable. The Arctic ice caps are melting at a shockingly rapid rate and arid zones which circle the globe, continue to increase because of the earth's rising temperature. Global disaster will occur when increasingly violent storms caused by climate change are combined with the rising sea level, probably in the second half of this century. To avoid disaster, we must act quickly to dramatically slow down greenhouse gas emissions, before we reach the tipping point.

Hansen writes that our ultimate goal should be to create a carbon-free global energy system. Because of current political inaction, however, Hansen asks each of us to get personally involved, demanding that our lawmakers quickly develop a strategic solution to the climate problem. This will be the most urgent fight of our lives - the last chance to keep the earth from becoming a devastated place, purged of life. This fascinating book is certainly a must-read for us all.



Susan Caven – Late Bloomers G.C. (FL)
GCA Zone VIII Conservation/NAL Representative



Heatstroke: Nature in an Age of Global Warming

by Anthony Barnosky

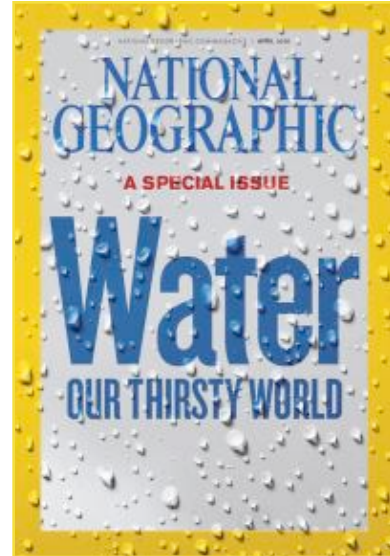
Another useful addition to the library on climate change, Mr. Barnosky brings us insights into what is happening on our planet because of these changes. Not only are we heating up the planet, but also changing its basic character. The familiar animals and plants and the wild places we treasure may not be here tomorrow. The rapid pace of climate change along with habitat fragmentation and human insults on nature are altering ecosystems forever and threatening the survival of many species. The author's premise is that we need to keep nature alive, connect the geographic ranges of stressed ecosystems, and create additional nature reserves. It's more than just changing out some of our lightbulbs for compact fluorescents. Barnosky says, "It's time to make a choice about nature: let it go, or dare to shape its future."

Editor

On Your Newstands Now!

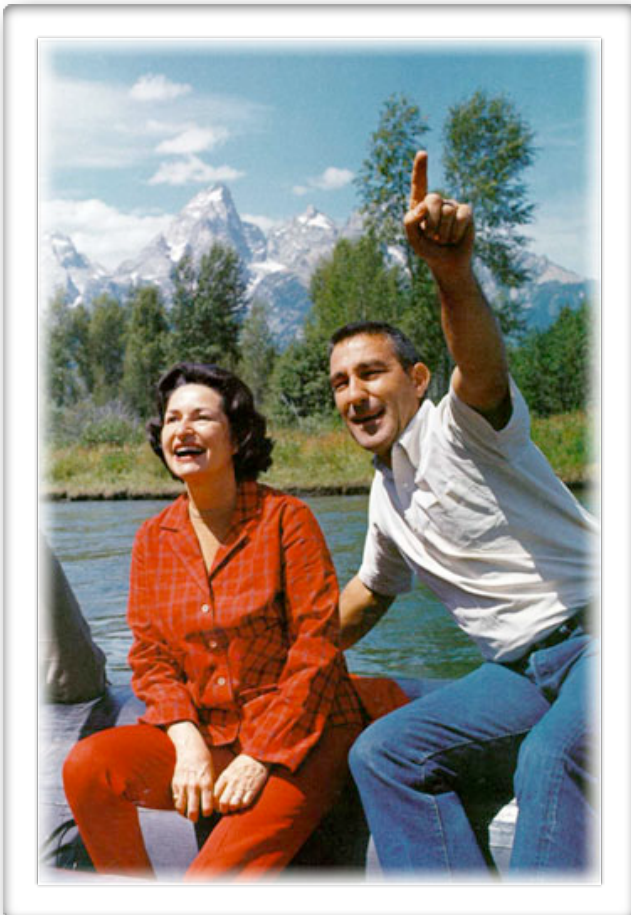
Pick up the latest copy of *National Geographic Magazine* - April, 2010. This special issue is called "Water: Our Thirsty World." Included inside is a poster of the water "footprint" of many of our foods and common goods we use. For example, a human diet that includes meat requires 60% more water than a diet that's predominantly vegetarian. During its lifetime, a beef cow uses **816,600 gallons of water** for its pasture land, feed, hay, drinking, and cleaning of its stables and farmyards. A cup of coffee takes **37 gallons of water** to produce - enough to fill the average bathtub! You can also download a free copy of the issue by going on the National Geographic website at ngm.nationalgeographic.com. Here's a portal to even more information: www.nationalgeographic.com/freshwater. Don't miss this issue!

Editor



In Memoriam

Stewart Udall – American Hero of the Environment



Interior Secretary Udall with Lady Bird Johnson in the Tetons.
Courtesy of National Park Service.

On March 20, 2010 our country lost a guardian of our wild lands. Stewart Udall sowed the seeds of the modern environmental movement during his time in public office. He served as an Arizona Congressman and, in the 1960s, as Secretary of the Interior under Presidents Kennedy and Johnson. Under his leadership the Interior Department aggressively promoted an expansion of public lands and helped secure passage of major environmental laws, including ones to protect endangered species. On his passing, President Obama stated, "He left an indelible mark on this nation and inspired countless Americans who will continue his fight for clean air and clean water, and to maintain our many natural treasures."

Udall was an ardent conservationist and a son of the West. He championed the Wilderness Act of 1964, which protects millions of acres from logging, mining, and other development. More than 60 additions were made in the National Park system during the Udall years, including the first national wilderness areas. The creation of the Land and Water Conservation Fund happened during his tenure.

As early as 1963, Udall warned of a “quiet conservation crisis” coming from pollution, overuse of natural resources, and dwindling open spaces. He appealed for a new land conscience to preserve the environment. “We cannot afford an America where expedience tramples upon esthetics and development decisions are made with an eye only for the present,” he declared in his 1963 book, “*The Quiet Crisis*.”

Many of the significant environmental and land-protection laws of the 1970s and 1980s, including the Endangered Species Act, bore the stamp of influence of Stewart Udall and his brother Morris, who succeeded Stewart as an Arizona Congressman and who ran for President. Stewart Udall has reflected that there was a consensus then that the country needed more conservation projects of the kind the brothers supported. Stewart’s son, Tom, a New Mexico Senator, remarked that his father had become greatly concerned about the state of politics in our country today and that we were losing the bipartisanship of the past in the environmental arena.

In 2008 Udall wrote a letter to his eight grandchildren on behalf of his late wife Lee and himself. He urged them to transform our society to a clean energy and clean job society, reject the myth of superabundance, and build sustainable lifestyles. In the letter, he sent this final blessing to these children: “Go well, do well, my children. Cherish sunsets, wild creatures, and wild places. Have a love affair with the wonder and beauty of the earth.”

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GCA Conservation Committee – Editor, ConWatch*

*In thinking about our recent NAL meeting in Washington, GCA President Joan George recalls:
"Stewart Udall's appreciation of the potential for beautification of this country included the heart of our capital where he encouraged Lady Bird Johnson to make Washington D.C. 'a garden city whose floral displays and plants would make it a handsome model for America'."*



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Elva Busch, Editor

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