

# Missouri Valley Sierran

Publication of the Sierra Club's Missouri Valley Group, Nebraska Chapter

June\July 2007

<http://nebraska.sierraclub.org/movalley>

*Explore, Enjoy, and Protect the Planet*

## June Program

# Bees and Beekeeping: Pollination and Making Honey

By Mary Green  
Program Director

Bees have been in the news a lot recently, as the mysterious colony collapse disorder threatens to bring honey bee populations to the brink of extinction. So we decided it was time to visit a local beekeeper and learn about bees and bee keeping.

Jack Eager is a long-time Sierra Club member and has been keeping bees for 34 years. He has about 80 beehives on his property in Ashland. Jack says each hive has 25,000 bees right now, and each will have about 80,000 bees at the peak of the season. Jack will talk about bee keeping, show us his equipment, and let us watch him open a hive (though he doesn't recommend standing too close!)

After the program you are welcome to purchase some of Jack's honey, which comes in one-pound (\$3), two-pound (\$5), and five-pound (\$10) jars, as well as a 60-pound size for true honey-lovers.

All Sierra Club members, families, children, and friends, are welcome to join us for the potluck dinner, or you can come out later just to hear the program.

We plan to meet at First United Methodist Church to carpool/caravan to Jack's place in Ashland. For more information, or for directions



*By Scott R Kemper*

Honeybees have been disappearing around the country, which could have a severe effect on crops that need pollination, meaning many fruits and vegetables.

to Jack's house if you're not meeting us at FUMC, contact Mary Green at 556-1830, or [megreen4@cox.net](mailto:megreen4@cox.net).

For the potluck: Please bring a dish to share and a folding chair if you have one. Sierra Club will provide plates, utensils, and some drinks, but feel free to bring your own drink if you wish.

A carpool/caravan will leave at 5:30 from First United Methodist Church, 69th & Cass Streets, north parking lot.

An RSVP is not required, but if you let me know how many are coming ([megreen4@cox.net](mailto:megreen4@cox.net), or 556-1830) I'll have a better idea of how many drinks to provide.

For the program: Please bring a folding chair if you have one. A carpool/caravan will leave at 6:30 from First United Methodist Church, 69th & Cass streets, north parking lot. Cammy Watkins (S.C. office #551-9480) will meet you in the parking lot.

## Program: Bees and Bee Keeping

Thursday, June 28

Carpool/caravan at 5:30 p.m. for a potluck at 6 p.m.

or

Carpool/caravan at 6:30 p.m. for 7 p.m. program at

the beehives of Jack Eager in Ashland

Meet on north side of First United Methodist Church, 69th and Cass streets to carpool/caravan to Ashland to learn about bees and beekeeping.

**The public is welcome at Sierra Club's educational programs**

In case of rain: we'll meet instead at the Ashland city park (28th & Clay, in Ashland) in the covered shelter. Contact Mary Green at 556-1830, or cell 415-1081, for last-minute weather concerns.

# College Club Makes Environmental Progress

By Patrick Sechser  
Sierra Student  
Coalition Organizer

To Creighton's Environmental Science Club and Members:

Hello everyone. I hope all of your summers are interesting and fun. Now that the year has passed, much reflection is due in order to chart the environmental progress made on campus. First and foremost, I would like to thank Anastasia, Nadia, Susanna and Alicia for their leadership and involvement.

This year, our accomplishments were small in stature, but big in terms of impact. We formed an environmental activist club without much help from the Center for Service and Justice, Campus Ministry and other traditional social sources that Creighton has to offer. Previously, no club like this had existed on campus, and it just goes to show how important the stability of the environment is becoming to people.

From the film festival to arti-

cles in the student newspaper and to helping host speakers and putting up tables on campus, the club succeeded in getting the environmental message out to a wider audience. It was great to further the club's cause by seeing people networking with other clubs on campus such as the Gay/Straight Alliance, Medical Students for Social Responsibility, Residence Life, UNO Environmental Club, Social Justice Club and the Atmospheric Science Society. As I always say, the more, the merrier.

Although we didn't convince Creighton to implement large-scale projects such as wind turbines or to change the fuel efficiency of their vehicles, the club, along with Facilities Management, succeeded in implementing small, but significant changes at Creighton.

For starters, Creighton is putting in new oxygenated shower-heads in their dorms to

reduce water loss, and has installed compact florescent bulbs to cut down on energy costs. Creighton appears to finally be implementing a campus-wide recycling program after many years of strategizing, and are composting coffee grounds and ensuring fair-trade coffee stays here on campus. Work continues on the Living Learning Center, which contains 'green' building components, and Creighton's pool is now heated by solar power.

Sure, we may not have gotten the big stuff done, but all these smaller victories contribute to our long-term goal of making Creighton more sustainable and environmentally friendly.

Unfortunately, being that Creighton is a private school, resources and funds are limited in making the big changes we want to see. But after networking, lobbying to Fr. Schlegel, and attending the Energy Awareness Meetings,

Creighton is very aware of its environmental impact.

Many administrators believe in environmental sustainability, and our president, Fr. Schlegel, is a self-proclaimed environmentalist. We have allies in high places, and from taking a look around Nebraska and Iowa, we see environmental change happening all around us. Iowa's main public utility company is investing over a billion dollars in wind turbines, and because Nebraska's utility companies are publicly owned, the Unicameral just passed an unopposed legislative bill to promote wind turbine development between Nebraska's farmers and ranchers and outside renewable energy development companies.

We have much to be optimistic about, and I hope it helps spearhead another great year. I look forward to more changes around campus and hearing all about it. Have a great summer and great work.

## Missouri Valley Group Sierra Club Officers

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556-1862

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\*Patrick Sechser

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917-3302

*\*Voting Members of the Executive Committee*

***Vacant Positions: Eco-Kids, Endangered Species/Wildlife, Conservation,***

# Garlic Mustard is Invasive Infliction along Trails

Arlys Reitan of the Wachiska Audubon Society forwarded an invitation to tackle a problem along a hike-and-bike trail near Omaha.

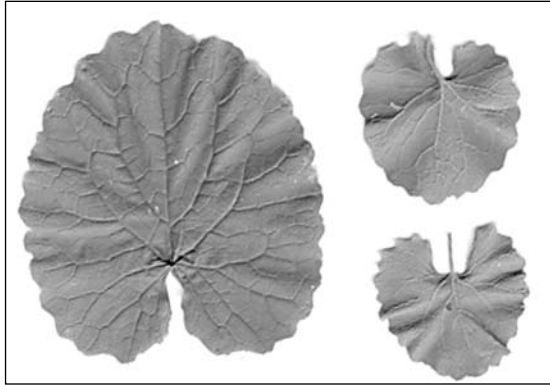
This could be a rewarding project if conducted in even one of these areas. Maybe a shared effort area groups would work -- perhaps an Omaha/Lincoln effort? There are grant-funding possibilities for such projects.

For more info, contact Arlys Reitan: wachiskaoffice@cornhusker.net or go to www.wachiskaaudubon.org

Dear Wachiska,

My wife, Sheryl, and I, along with our boys, went for a walk down the MoPac Trail that runs from Louisville, Neb., to Springfield, Neb. As you likely know, from the parking lot at the Hwy. 50 bridge, the trail runs through a wooded area.

It is quite pretty with sandpit ponds, marshy bottomland, etc. Right now, violets



National Park Service photo

Garlic Mustard is an invasive plant seen around the Midwest, and often supplants native flora.

and woodland phlox are blooming.

Unfortunately, the phlox is drowning in a sea of what I believe is garlic mustard. If I am correct, this alien plant will completely overrun the wooded area and eliminate the native plants. This is an address for good information on garlic mustard: www.nps.gov/plants/alien/fact/

alpe1.htm

I know of Wachiska's involvement in prairie conservation. Would the chapter consider a project to remove this plant from along this trail, or similar projects?

For instance, there is a significant Sericea lepedeza infestation along some of the trails in Indian Cave State Park; garlic mustard is a problem at Fontenelle Forest; kudzu drapes trees along the Steamboat Trace Trail and at Indian Cave, and so on.

Perhaps dedicated volunteers could set back or eliminate some of these invasions and give the natives a chance. If this sounds like something Wachiska members would be interested in, we'd like to help.

Melvin and Sheryl Burbach, 400 W. Dilin St., Lincoln, NE 68521

402-475-0201

402-304-7584

sburbach@windstream.net



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## You otter know about this one.

Did you know that sea otters are the largest member of the weasel family? Southern sea otters can only be found in California between Half Moon Bay and Santa Cruz, or in one of several national aquariums. With a million hairs per square inch on their bodies, sea otters have the thickest fur in the animal kingdom. Although sea otters are protected under the Endangered Species Act, their safety will be threatened if Bush's plan to weaken the Act is approved. Your help can keep sea otters and the water they live in safe.

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Contributions, gifts and dues to Sierra Club are not tax deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to Sierra magazine and \$1 for your Chapter newsletters.

Enclose a check and mail to Sierra Club, P.O. Box 52968, Boulder, CO 80322-2968 or visit our website www.sierraclub.org

# Volunteers to Cut Cedars in Valentine Refuge

By Buffalo Bruce

The Platte Valley Sierra Club Group will be partnering again this year with Western Nebraska Resources Council to host a June service outing.

The outing this year will be June 7-10. We will be staying at Smith Falls State Park campgrounds, about 12 miles east of Valentine on the Niobrara River.

Our objective this year will be to enhance the chances of survival for a rare aspen community by eliminating invasive competition (cedars, etc.)

Since this is a group of volunteers, no camping passes are needed. You will need a state park permit for your car.

This June outing has always been a delightful outing and an eye opener for folks who have never been to the area. For those of you who may not use chain saws, please bring loppers or bow saws to clear lower branches for the chain saw users.

All the food will be provided. The head chef is a culinary expert import by the name of James, who is bring-

ing most of his own staff. Volunteers are coming from Idaho so they don't miss this outdoor eating experience.

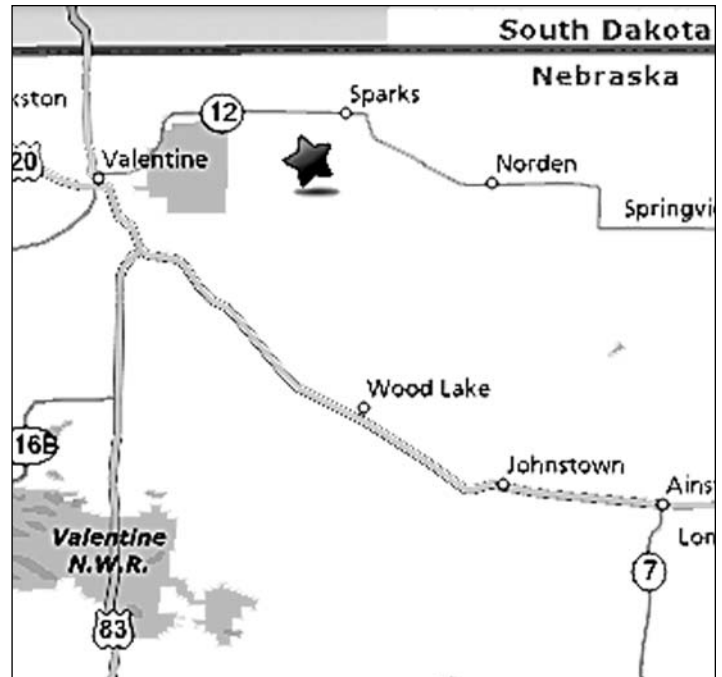
Some necessary items to bring are enthusiasm, hat, gloves, sleeping bag, long-sleeve shirt and pants, insect repellent, sun lotion and chain saw/loppers/or bow saw. Some optional items you may want to bring are folding chair, swim suit, sunglasses, binoculars and camera.

Thursday and part of Friday a few early arrivals will be working on two of the three existing Sand Hillian aspen stands, which are within Valentine National Wildlife Refuge.

The results of this outing will complement the target goals of our Nebraska Natural Heritage Project.

Our agenda includes a canoe trip on Sunday in the Niobrara River, for those who want to hang loose a little longer (free for volunteers).

We will be on the alert for sensitive and rare fauna and flora, so bring your camera. It may be possible for some of you who have a keen interest



from Mapquest

Volunteers cutting cedar trees and other invasive plants will stay at Smith Falls State Park east of Valentine (marked with a star). Valentine National Wildlife Refuge, where the invasive plants will be targeted, is in the lower left corner.

in butterflies or birds to add new species to your checklist. This outing can qualify towards community service hours, if needed for students.

Please contact me so I can get head count for food, to arrange for car pooling and

for more information. Funds for travel may be available.

Keep it Wild -- Bruce  
E-mail: [buffalobruce@panhandle.net](mailto:buffalobruce@panhandle.net)  
308-432-3458  
402-416-3239 cell, Lincoln local

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Web sites:  
National: <http://www.sierraclub.org>  
Local: <http://nebraska.sierraclub.org/movalley>

# Neb. League of Conservation Voters Wants to Expand

By Mary Harding

## Nebraska League of Conservation Voters

The Nebraska League of Conservation Voters is forming anew. You might have seen the Conservation Voters' Guide to the Republican governor's primary last May, or one of several guides distributed last fall on Unicameral candidates. But those were just a hint of what lies in store.

The League has been working steadily the past few months to build an organization that can help everyone be informed, effective and influential partners for a strong and sustainable outdoors Nebraska. The organization has obtained a small organizing grant, has hired the first-ever executive director, and is focused on creating a forum to strengthen the voice of the conservation community in Nebraska.

The League is eager to match the power, sophistication and results achieved by leagues of conservation voters in other states. That goal can only be reached through a strong coalition of the members of the conservation community across Nebraska.

Members of the Sierra Club are invited to attend a meeting from 1 to 4 p.m., Saturday, June 16, at the Izaak Walton League Hall in Lancaster County, followed by a social hour. This afternoon is designed to showcase the achievements of other leagues and lay

groundwork for the development of the Nebraska League.

Speakers include Senior Vice President of the League of Conservation Voters Tony Massaro; Carrie Doyle, executive director of Colorado Conservation Voters and Jim O'Brien, executive director of the Granite State League of Conservation Voters, and former State Senator and Lincoln Mayor Chris Beutler (invited).

The League hopes members of the con-

servation community will plan to participate, and become an integral part of the growth of a Nebraska League of Conservation Voters. Opportunities to get involved and build this kind of organization from the ground up are few and far between.

Registration is \$15 per person. To register, or for more information, e-mail Mary Harding at [mharding@nlcv.org](mailto:mharding@nlcv.org). Directions will be provided with your registration confirmation.

# Student Environmental Leadership Training

Student Environmental Leadership Training Programs are coming up.

June 18-24 will be an action-packed week of trainings, speakers, discussion, and networking that will equip you with all the skills you need to run effective, strong campaigns to demand action on climate change -- from your school, from your community, from your elected officials. No where else can you get all this in one place so easily, so cheaply and have so much fun doing it!

Student Environmental Leadership Training Programs are week-long training sessions in organizing skills led by the nation's top student organizers. Learn to develop effective groups that can tackle serious environmental issues, and network with other activists to build your region's student

take what you've learned and put it into action at your high school, on your campus and in your community.

Although global warming is in the news as a threat to the health and the sustainability of our planet, there are other threats to the environment. Skills you'll learn at the summer program will be applicable to whatever issues excite you the most.

Of course, the program isn't all work and no play. Trainings will be the main focus, but you can also expect to enjoy: The beautiful surroundings of a serene state park; Hikes, games, and energizing nighttime activities; The company and friendship of fellow student activists

Dates & Details: June 18-24 at the Iowa 4-H Center in central Iowa.

Apply now online at [www.ssc.org/sprog](http://www.ssc.org/sprog)  
Questions? Call 888-JOIN-SSC

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## *Outings and Events - Public welcome at all events*

Saturday, June 2, Join Iowa and Nebraska paddlers for the Salt Creek (Ashland) cleanup as part of the National River Cleanup, for more information e-mail Brett Ensor at [bensor@aol.com](mailto:bensor@aol.com)

Saturday, June 9, Join the Sierra Club Missouri Valley Group for an easy hike at Platte River State Park. Let's beat the heat with a walk through the woods and hills and down to the river. Meet in northeast corner of SuperTarget parking lot located on west side of 84th in Papillion at 8 a.m. We'll carpool to the park and hike for a couple of hours. If you take your car there is a \$5 park fee. There will be a \$1 Sierra Club fee. No dogs, please. Leader: John Calandra (402-312-4672) [johndcal@cox.net](mailto:johndcal@cox.net)

Saturday, June 9, Join Iowa and Nebraska paddlers for the Elkhorn River cleanup as part of the National

River Cleanup, for more information call James Keyes 680-6369

Saturday, June 9, 9 a.m., the Adopt-Elmwood-Park Group gathering will stencil storm sewers in Elmwood Park. Supplies will be provided by Keep Omaha Beautiful. This activity will provide an opportunity to become aware of the connection between stormwater and our local creek system.

Thursday, June 14, 7 p.m., at the PS Collective (Pizza Shoppe, 6056 Maple St. in Benson), Join the Missouri Valley book club for a discussion of magazine articles, newspaper articles and books with theme of global warming. Please contact book club facilitator Candy Bless at [nescbookclub@gmail](mailto:nescbookclub@gmail.com)

Thursday, June 28, Sierra Club Program: Bees and Bee Keeping, at the beehives of Jack Eager of Ashland.

Carpool/caravan at 5:30 p.m. for a potluck at 6 p.m. or Carpool/caravan at 6:30 p.m. for 7 p.m. program. Meet on north side of First United Methodist Church, 69th and Cass streets.

Saturday, Aug. 4, 2-4 p.m., main branch of the Omaha Public Library, John Pollack, National Weather Service, speaks on The Science of Global Warming.

To list an event or activity  
in this space,  
e-mail the particulars to  
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