

Your lands for sale - Administration puts Forest Land up for auction.

by James Martin, Conservation Chair

The President's FY 2007 budget includes the sale of 304,370 acres in 35 states, including 3,572 acres in Oklahoma, now held by the US Forest Service. The sale is intended as a source of funding for the Secure Rural Schools Act.

The Forest Service downplays the sale, stressing it is less than two-tenths of one percent of Forest Service land. And, taken out of context, it's probably no big deal. But let's put it in context.

In a period we now call the Dark Ages, Europe stagnated. Innovation was suppressed, philosophy and literature banned, and achievements in the rest of the world, ignored. The average European counted with his fingers. The contemporary Hindu-Arabic number system had something the European couldn't dream of – something for nothing – a zero.

Zero is handy for a lot of math, and also for double-entry accounting. "Double-entry" uses a set of accounts which, taken as equation, add up to zero. Without the "credit" side of the accounting equation, you might know how much money was in your pockets – but you wouldn't have a clue where it came from.

That was the case in those Dark Times. Princes loved money, and they borrowed a lot. Lacking adequate accounting methods, it was

squandered. Merchant banks foreclosed on their manorial estates, speeding the decline of feudalism, and the beginning of capitalism.

Americans love money, too, and we also borrow a lot of it. We have sophisticated methods for accounting debts, and equally sophisticated methods for hiding them. One such sophisticated method is the "tax cut."

Americans love tax cuts, while government spending continues to grow. It has grown an average of 5% in each of the last 5 years – the highest rate of growth since the Great Society, Vietnam War and race to the moon during the Johnson Administration. But this time around, taxes were cut. Result - the federal debt has grown by half in the current Administration – to \$8.37 Trillion.

Staggering as that may be, the number is mere cash accounting – it does not include unfunded commitments like pension guarantees, new Medicare drug benefits, environmental cleanups and flood insurance. Liabilities like these have doubled in the last five years to \$46 Trillion.

There's a lot of talk about the Social Security trust fund in the next half-century. In a couple of CBO scenarios, the fund will run a deficit of 1.3% of GDP in 2042, down from its cur-

See conservation corner, next page

Next Meeting: May 18th, 2006

We're changing our meeting location and day. Beginning in 2006 we will meet the **third Thursday of every month** at the Mayflower Congregational Church on NW 63rd between Portland and NW Expressway. Across the street from Hometown Buffet.

7:30 PM - Please Join Us!

May Meeting: A journey of enduring curiosity by Ty Reidenbaugh

Join Ty as he shows slides from a trip he took in 2001. The first part was a 2,200 mile four person canoe trip on the Peace/McKenzie river system, and the return trip was a solo bike trip of 2,400 miles. These trips took place in British Columbia, the Northwest Territories, and the Yukon territories. Join us May 18th at 7:30 PM for this great program.

June Meeting: Outdoors at Martin Park Nature Center

Join us June 15th as we continue our tradition of holding a spring meeting outdoors. Bring some bug

See meetings, page 3

OKC's curbside recycling needs help!

by Susie Shields

The City of Oklahoma provides a very valuable service to its metro area residents . . . a service that is often ignored. As part of its Total Trash Services, the City provides each of us with a blue recycling bin, two if you request an extra one, and pays Recycle America to come by and pick it up weekly on the same day as garbage collection. My question is, "Why do only 17% of us take advantage of this service?"

Setting up a simple system is key to your recycling collection. It is no more difficult than the system we have for sorting our dishes from the dishwasher into different shelves and drawers or sorting our laundry into lights and darks and folding or hanging them for closets and drawers when dry. It is just adding one more household responsibility to your daily habits.

Primary items that can be recycled are newspaper, magazines and catalogues, junk mail, phone books and

office paper; glass bottles and jars; plastic containers with #1 or #2 on the bottom; aluminum beverage cans and foil; and tin cans and lids. We have a lot of cardboard and chipboard (cereal boxes, soda six-pack holders, etc.), so we flatten it and put it in a big box under our carport until full. We then deliver it to Oklahoma City's Midland Recycling at 1432 W. Main. Midland operates a daily drop-off for all of the curbside items as well as the cardboard and chipboard for those of you who live in apartments.

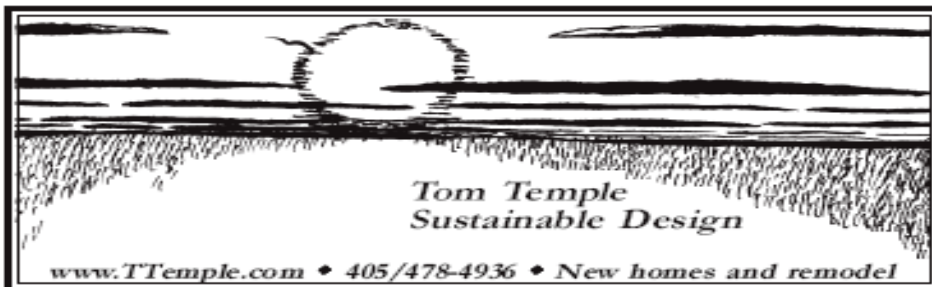
Recycling provides a range of environmental and economic benefits to our communities that the alternatives, landfilling and incineration, simply do not provide. Manufacturing with recycled materials saves energy and water and produces less air and water pollution than manufacturing with virgin materials. It takes 95% less energy to recycle aluminum than it does to make it from raw materials. Making recycled steel saves

60%, recycled newspapers 40%, recycled plastics 70%, and recycled glass 40%, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Disposal options like landfilling extend the responsibility for and the costs of our waste to future generations. Recycling relieves pressure on dwindling natural resources and places the responsibility on this generation, where it belongs, to be wise stewards of our resources for our children.

Two other things you can do to help the City solid waste efforts are mulching your grass and composting leaves and other organic waste. You would save yourself a great deal of work by mulching, as you will not have to bag the grass. Most lawnmowers can easily be retrofitted with mulching blades.

For ideas on building your own compost bin, go to: <http://www.deq.state.ok.us/mainlinks/enedu/compostbin.pdf>



Conservor Corner Continued from page 1

rent surplus. If the Bush tax cuts are made permanent, the combined budget would yield a deficit of 10.7% of GDP the same year.

And where do the tax cuts go? Supply-siders recall the Laffer Curve, depicting higher federal revenue from lower tax rates. The napkin drawing ignores the business cycle, as demonstrated lately; and, it assumes tax cuts produce higher domestic income, despite the fed policy of keeping wages flat. What if the tax dividend is absorbed in a housing bubble or pushes up gas prices instead? Or, what if it is sent to Asia, adding fuel to the trade-deficit.

Another form of debt, last year's trade-deficit broke all records - \$805

Billion. To make up for the tax cuts, the fed has to borrow dollars back, selling long-term debt to finance the current year. Dollars from all over the world flow back in to buy our debt, as well as capital.

Americans don't contribute. Not much. In 2005, for the first time since the Great Depression, American households had a negative savings rate. We're getting older, and spending like there's no tomorrow. But tomorrow, the debt comes due. Tomorrow, we may be selling the farm, not just the forest.

The Conservation Committee will meet next at 7pm on May 10, at the Oklahoma River turnout off SE 15th between Meridian and Portland.



*Spring Party -
June 3rd, 7pm*

Join us at Carolyn Ford's house for a spring get together. Why? Why not! Bring a snack to share, we'll supply drinks. Carolyn's house is at 2304 NW 49th, in Oklahoma City, call 843-2778 if you need directions or want to help setup.

Get Outdoors

●Friday – Wednesday, June 30th – July 5th. Backpack the South San Juan in southern Colorado. Rated Strenuous. San Juan National Forest; Southern Colorado. A three day, two night backpack in the South San Juan Wilderness featuring some of Colorado's finest examples of aspen, spruce-fir and ponderosa pine forests along with views from high rocky mountain plateaus. To sign up contact trip leader David Schultz at david.schultz@noaa.gov or 405-366-0453. A donation to the newsletter fund of \$15 per person is suggested.


●Saturday – Sunday, July 22nd – 23rd Car Camping at the Wentz Camp in Ponca City. Rated Easy. The beautiful Wentz camp and pool nestles between the shores of Lake Ponca and the lovely Lew Wentz golf course. Recreate yourself with swimming, volleyball, softball or horseshoes. Contact trip leader Bill Scimeca at wscim@swbell.net or 405-879-2040 to sign up. A donation to the newsletter fund of \$4 per person is suggested.

●July 24th - 28th – Raft / cleanup the Green River near Vernal, UT. This trip will go from the put in just below the Flaming Gorge Dam to end at Lodore Campground (Gates of Lodore take out point is in Dinosaur National Monument), approximately 46 river miles. With five days on the water and a relatively short distance to travel, plenty of time will be available to dayhike and do some clean-up of trash along the river. Rapids are class II with III possible. Those with personal kayaks and appropriate experience can join the trip as kayakers. Contact trip leader David Franklin, 405-789-5377 or dfranklin@ussok.com to sign up. Assistant leader is John Bowen, an experienced river guide, but this is a non-commercial trip. Limit 10, minimum needed for trip is 6. More detail on the web. No fees for service trips, actual expenses (meals, etc) will be split amongst the participants.

●August 13th to 19th - California High Sierra Hiking and Lake Tahoe Exploring. Trip is full: wait list only.

OKLA. CITY: Town & Country Village,
122nd & N. May Ave. A (405) 751-7376

Backwoods



PATAGONIA
VASQUE
MOUNTAIN
HARDWEAR
ASOLO
BLUEWATER
SAGE

Meetings Continued from page 1

spray and water and enjoy a program that always proves interesting. Martin Park, located near Mercy Hospital at 5000 W. Memorial Road, is a 140-acre nature park that combines recreation, education and wildlife. It features a hands-on nature museum highlighting the animal life, flora and fauna of Oklahoma, three hiking trails, a large prairie dog colony, bird observation wall and a watchtower.

July Meeting:

Thursday, July 20th, escape the heat by coming to our Ice Cream Social and picture sharing party. Bring photos of your favorite outing to share; maybe from some place cool? Pun intended! ☺ Come enjoy an evening with friends, and a chance to virtually explore some great places.

August Meeting:

Backwoods will join us for our August 17th meeting and show off the latest in gear and clothing. This proves to be one of our most popular meeting programs so be sure to mark it on your calendar.

Outings Program Help wanted!!!!

Two of our veteran leaders are stepping down this summer. Bill Scimeca, who has been active in group leadership for over 10 years and many of those as group outing chair, has stepped down. That means we now have an opening for group outings chair. The group outings chair is responsible for holding quarterly outing planning meetings to coordinate outings, tracking leaders to make sure that they stay current in their training, arranging to have the outings table covered at meetings and keeping the newsletter editor and webmaster current with the list of outings. If you're interested in this position, please contact Bill Scimeca at wscim@swbell.net, David Franklin at dfranklin@ussok.com, or Tom Libby at tomlibby@yahoo.com.

Another leader stepping down is Jay Trenary. Jay has been our Inner City Outings Chair for the last several years making sure that ICO trips continue to involve inner city youth in exploring, enjoying and protecting the natural world. You can learn more about the program at oklahoma.sierraclub.org/ico or by e-mailing jay@lawyer.com. Jay is leaving us to move to the Pacific Northwest to train for adventure racing ...a little tougher than working with the kids but still sounds like fun.

We will miss both our friends as they move on to different fun activities and wish them the best. Training and other resources are available for those of you moving into these volunteer leadership positions.



photo/Kevin Walsh

It's time for America to get smart about energy and be less dependent on dwindling oil reserves. We need to increase our use of clean, renewable energy sources like wind and solar power.

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Volunteer Directory

Executive Committee (ExCom)

The ExCom meets on the first Wednesday of every month from 7:30pm to 9:00pm. All Club Members are welcome to attend. Please contact any ExCom member for the current month's meeting location.

Chair	Olivia Waldkoetter	821-2304
Vice-Chair	open	
Secretary	Kathy Cunningham	942-6911
Treasurer	Kathy Scurlock	942-6343
Member	Susie Shields	297-0179
Member	James Martin	361-2373
Member	Martha Holland	946-4962
Member	Lois Pokorny	728-0832
Member	Jay Trenary	831-5535
Member	Bill Dinger	323-1297

Committee Heads

For more information on an activity, contact the respective committee head listed below.

Conservation	James Martin	361-2373
Conservation Vice-Chair	Esther Houser	282-8074
Outings	open	
Inner City Outings	Jay Trenary - soon to be open	831-5535
Social	Carolyn Ford	843-2278
Legislative	Susie Shields	297-0179
Membership	Martha Holland	946-4962
Enviro. Educ. Programs	Susie Shields	297-0179
Volunteer Coordinator	Olivia Waldkoetter	821-2304

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Senior Editor: Open. Assistant Editors: Kathy Scurlock, David Franklin
 See our website for more info: oklahoma.sierraclub.org/cimarron