

## No. 1

### Seeking Support for Club to Lobby for Redistricting Reforms (Missouri and Ohio Chapters)

**Resolution: The Council of Club Leaders requests the Sierra Club Board of Directors to provide encouragement and support for Chapters to lobby for establishment of redistricting reforms for state and Congressional districts, and for leaders and volunteers to gather signatures on initiative petitions to place redistricting reforms proposals on the ballot, acting in accordance with guidance from the Club's Political Program regarding redistricting petitions.**

53 yes, 0 no, 1 abstain

#### Explanation/Description of issue

With many important issues in Congress and our legislatures, we need to make our legislators less secure in their gerrymandered seats, so that they might become responsive to the will of the people on our issues. There is no time to lose. We have approximately five years until the next U.S. Census and redistricting. In the meantime, egregious examples of gerrymandering continue to ignore the political will of the people. Redistricting efforts are underway in several states. There is an opportunity here for the Club to be involved and support these efforts.

#### PROS:

- Successful redistricting efforts should encourage legislators at all levels to be more responsive to the political will of the people.
- Adding the Sierra Club to the list of organizations working towards this could be enough to concern those who are strictly partisan and work to ensure continued gerrymandering.
- Chapters and groups who are able to put work into these efforts can use it as a vehicle to build strong partnerships with other organizations.
- We may be able to help place in office more legislators who support and will work with us on environmental issues.

#### CONS:

- Chapters and groups have a lot on their plates; however, the resolution does not mean that all Chapters/groups must spend time on this effort.
- Opponents of an open redistricting process may want to target the Sierra Club and its efforts for the environment even more.

## No. 2

### Encouraging the Board to Re-Emphasize Communications Policy (Lone Star Chapter)

**Resolution: The Council of Club Leaders requests the Board of Directors to re-emphasize the policy adopted in the Chapter National Relations Task Force report highlighting "communications/ mutual support and respect" as a priority area and encourage National**

**staff and volunteers to strive to improve communications when National activities and priorities impact local chapter and group volunteers and chapter staff and vice versa.**

53 yes 0 no, 1 abstain

Explanation/Description of Issue:

The Chapter/National Relations Task Force in 2012 tackled several important issues related to the chapter-national relationship, among which was to strive for improved communications all around. In interviews with important stakeholders, both staff and volunteer members of the task force heard repeated stories of how the lack of effective communication between staff and volunteers at all levels often led to strained relations and ineffective results.

The Task Force report included a section on “Communications/mutual support and respect” which emphasized communication as a “priority area.” Specifically, the Report identified as a goal a “mutually beneficial relationship” which “would have national-to-chapter communications that are streamlined, clear, effective, readily available, and widely published and chapter-to-national communication channels that are clearly identified and broadly known.” The Report goes on to state that “[e]nhanced and improved communications will foster a better mutual understanding of and dialogue about national and chapter priorities and their relatedness.” The bottom line in this section of the report’s recommendations (which were adopted by the BOD in 2012) is that the Club’s work should be “communicated at all levels as a consistent narrative that weaves local, state and national work into a strategic whole.”

Progress has been made in the training of new national staff about the role of chapters and groups and the workings of the Club at the local level. However, more than an emphasis in the training manual is needed to assure that the goals of this section of the task force report are met.

PROS:

- Better communication could lead to better cooperation and support from local chapters and groups for national priorities, especially those of the various campaigns that work locally
- Better communication could eliminate the lack of knowledge of various national campaign efforts and avoid embarrassment when local media and other local partners inquire of local Sierra Club contacts as to those activities

CONS:

- Since these recommendations were adopted by the Club in 2012, improved communication is already Club policy and nothing else needs to be done
- Implementation of additional communication avenues is duplicative
- National campaign efforts are often different from local initiatives, and, therefore, enhanced communication is not essential

**No. 4**

NERC Reinstatement: Seeking the Club to allow chapters in the former Northeast Regional Committee (NERC) to work together officially on issues affecting the states and provinces in the region (Atlantic, Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Rhode Island, and Vermont Chapters)

**Resolution: The Council of Club Leaders requests the Board of Directors to have Sierra Club reinstate the Northeast Regional Committee (NERC) allowing the members of these**

**chapters to work together on environmental issues that collectively affect these states and provinces. NERC was composed of the six New England states, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, plus Quebec and Atlantic Canada Chapters.**

45 yes, 8 no, 2 abstain

**PROS:**

The geographic region of these 7 Chapters is not as big as many mid- to large-size states. The proponent Chapters have commonality of a large number of interests that is unlike other contiguous states and comparably sized regions. These interests include, among others:

- Opposing expansion of regional natural gas pipeline infrastructure, LNG export facilities and fracking
- Regional Green House Gas Initiative (RGGI) <http://www.rggi.org>
- Developing regional clean energy economies using solar, wind, storage, clean thermal energy, smart grid improvement and development, micro-hydro, energy efficiency and conservation, for example
- Eliminating all remaining coal plants
- Opposing tar sands pipelines being proposed through several NERC states
- Halting expansion of Canadian hydropower and transmission infrastructure
- Promoting environmentally sound off-shore wind development
- Preserving forest, parkland, fields, other open space and natural carbon sinks
- Creating contiguous animal and plant habitat and opposing destructive industrial forestry and agricultural practices across state boundaries
- Supporting sustainable agricultural practices across state boundaries
- Preserving regional watersheds and water resources that cross state boundaries
- Promoting public transportation and EVs
- Working in ocean, fisheries and coastal preservation issues

The total geographic region of these 7 Chapters is small compared to many mid to large size states and thus working jointly makes sense in that regard.

This formal structure will bolster coordinated, effective, mutual regional efforts and facilitate working with National Sierra Club's regional representatives and on Sierra Club's national positions. It will also enhance the ability to partner and collaborate with each other as well as other groups and individuals outside the Sierra Club.

**CONS:**

No funding request is being made of National as a condition of acceptance of a NERC Resolution. After a year, NERC may seek specific grant support for specific projects.

The Chapters will need to identify and prioritize their common interests and resolve conflicts, if any, that may arise.

In working with Canada, trans-national and different laws apply, and there are possibilities of miscommunication due to cultural and linguistic differences.

## **No. 5**

Requesting the BOD to respond to CCL Resolutions before the next CCL meeting with reasoning on disposition  
(New Jersey Chapter)

**Resolution: While the Council of Club Leaders (CCL) recognizes that the Sierra Club Board of Directors (BoD) has full discretion in responding to CCL resolutions, it respectfully requests that the BoD respond to all adopted CCL resolutions before the next CCL meeting so that its members may learn the BoD's reasoning regarding those resolutions and share the results with other Club activist leaders.**

55 yes, 1 no, 1 abstain

### **Background Information:**

While the Sierra Club Board of Directors has full discretion as to how it responds to any and all requests presented to it from the Council of Club Leaders, it would be quite helpful if the CCL could learn the Board's responses to all resolutions, as this would enable CCL members to better understand the reasoning of the Board, share the results with other Club activists, and thus help strengthen the Club's relationships between Board members, CCL members, and other Club activist leaders.

### **Arguments For:**

- Encouraging the Board to respond and share their thoughts to those CCL resolutions with strong CCL support would allow the CCL to gain better insight into the Board's thoughts and thus help strengthen the Club's relationships between Board members, CCL members, and other Club activist leaders.

### **Arguments Against:**

- While the Resolution merely encourages the Board and in no way changes the full discretion of that body to respond however it wishes to any CCL resolution, some Club members may misperceive the resolution as in some way diminishing the authority of the Club's Board of Directors.

**No. 7**

Seeking Club financial and staff support for a volunteer-led organizing skills training program  
(Illinois Chapter)

**Resolution: The Council of Club Leaders requests the Board of Directors provide financial and staff support for a volunteer led SPROG like organizing skills training for Club members of all ages. The trainings would be designed to serve as a means for recruiting and integrating diverse and traditional members into the Club's organizing activities in furtherance of the Club's campaigns and Diversity Equity and Inclusion goals.**

43 yes, 6 no, 4 abstain

Explanation/Description of issue

The fight to preserve the environment is in part a struggle of organized people against organized money. Organized money is flooding our political and legislative processes and is being used to attack environmental policies and limit the environmental progress that needs to be made. The Club has limited staff and financial resources fight these attacks. To counter this influence the Club's volunteers need to be a lot better at organizing people to win campaigns.

Currently most national organizing training resources are directed towards staff. The staff in turn are responsible for helping to train volunteers. However, staff time and resources are limited. There are a limited number of comprehensive training available and a number of these trainings are mostly limited to those volunteers working on Chapter or national Club priority campaigns.

What is needed is a corps of volunteer trainers that will teach organizing skills to other volunteers and are supported by staff and some additional resources. One model for such volunteer led trainings are the Summer SPROG trainings run by the Sierra Student Coalition, visit [sierraclub.org/youth/summer-sprog-training](http://sierraclub.org/youth/summer-sprog-training) for more details. By increasing volunteer organizing capacity we will give more volunteers the tools to devise strategic campaigns that organizes and inspires other volunteers to win real environmental change in their communities. These wins will help reinvigorate the Club overall and can serve a means to expand the power and influence of the Club.

PROS:

- Trainings will create a stronger volunteer base that is less dependent on staff support to create and implement campaigns

- In addition to help develop volunteer campaign leadership should also help with Chapter and Group volunteer leader recruitment and involvement
- Training could be combined with Diversity, Equity and Inclusion trainings to achieve synergistic outcomes greater skills and increased Club diversity
- Success can be measured by the increased self-organized events and by the number of attendees at those events

CONS:

- Could duplicate some existing trainings and programs being held by staff
- Depends on finding volunteers to lead the trainings

**No. 9**

Seeking Club approval to adopt a position to ask EPA to establish specific drinking water standards under the Safe Drinking Water Act  
(Ohio Chapter)

**Resolution: The Council of Club Leaders requests the Sierra Club Board of Directors to adopt the position that the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) should establish specific microcystin and cylindrospermopsin drinking water standards under the Safe Drinking Water Act solidifying the current health advisory with regulatory protocols.**

48 yes, 3 no, 4 abstain

Explanation/Description of issue:

The Problem – No federal drinking water standards for cyanobacterial toxins (microcystins or cylindrospermopsin) exist.

The US EPA wrote in June 2015, “There are no U.S. federal guidelines, water quality criteria, standards or regulations for cyanobacteria or cyanotoxins in drinking water under the Safe Drinking Water Act or in surface waters under the Clean Water Act. However, EPA has listed cyanotoxins (commonly known as “toxic algae”) including microcystin-LR, cylindrospermopsin, and anatoxin-a on the previous and current Contaminant Candidate Lists (CCL), which identify contaminants that may need regulation under the Safe Drinking Water Act.” The result is that we do not have established protocols for testing, monitoring or prevention of toxins produced by toxic algae. Municipal water treatment plants are not required to test unless mandated by State or local regulations. Eleven million people, who depend on Great Lakes waters for drinking water, are especially vulnerable to these toxins.

Pros:

1. Help coastal communities from eight states (IL, WI, MN, IN, MI, OH, PA, NY) that depend upon drawing fresh drinking water from the Great Lakes and inland lakes/reservoirs in the

region. The city of Toledo, with 500,000 people, was shut down for almost a week in August 2014 that required multi-agency help to simply supply citizens with safe bottled drinking water. This is very likely to happen again in the Great Lakes region that is dependent on the lakes and reservoirs for drinking water.\* Additionally, annually these toxins are also being found in inland lakes and reservoirs; many of which are also being used as water sources, including Columbus, OH that had two algae incidents in early 2014 and mid-2015.

2. Federal Government Latest Endorsement: In the last few years, USEPA has worked to compile world-wide data about human health impacts generated by the three most common forms of toxic algae (cyanobacteria) poisons in drinking water: Microcystin, Cylindrospermopsin, and Anatoxin-A. As a result enough information was scientifically justified for the EPA to formulate [human health advisory document](#) on the former two during June 2015. Although this is a start, this is still not a regulatory standard but rather voluntary recommendations for public water suppliers. This is not good enough; human drinking water needs regulatory protection from toxic algae poisons that are now found common in our public waters.

3. A group sign-on message coordinated by Great Lakes Sierra Club staff, entitled "ACTION AGENDA FOR SECURING A SAFE DRINKING WATER SUPPLY" (August 6, 2014) was endorsed by Alliance for the Great Lakes, American Rivers, Environment Ohio, Freshwater Future, Lake Erie Charter Boat Association, Lake Erie Waterkeepers Inc., Ohio Environmental Council, National Wildlife Federation, and the Sierra Club. The letter stated that, "Many initiatives currently exist to reduce nutrient pollution into Lake Erie and our nation's waters, such as the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and Farm Bill. However much more needs to be done." Amongst the group's many recommendations, they included that, "The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) should establish specific microcystin standard under the Safe Drinking Water Act."

4. Avoiding contaminated water would: a). Benefit the health of sensitive populations (i.e. infants, preschool children, pregnant women, dialysis patients, and patients with existing immune issues); b). Increase recreational opportunities (fishing, swimming, boating, and skiing); and c) reduce health care costs in treatment to general population who also become sensitive to toxins.

5. The World Health Organization (WHO) has long established international guidelines and various [publications](#) on toxic algae.

#### Cons:

1. CITIZEN PAYS. The EPA/legislatures may argue that there is not enough funding to pursue mandatory testing by all public water suppliers. Therefore, we would: a). Need to raise water rates to citizens, b.) Come up with more taxes, or c.) Write the laws/regulations as "unfunded mandates" which then leaves the loopholes open for communities to say they can't afford thus get waiver. d.) Need to be aware that environmental justice issues are a concern (i.e. if we raise rates/taxes, etc. then how do we make sure those already needing help with their water bills can afford to keep up with any new increases).

2. AGENCY BUDGETS IMPACTED. There is a long process to establishing regulatory rules, starting with listing the "chemical" as a contaminant, public comment windows, etc. which may

take years to complete and cost the federal and/or state governments lots of extra dollars in staff time, resources, etc. to develop the regulations.

3. FEDERAL vs LOCAL COORDINATION ISSUES: Some states, counties, cities, villages have already developed their own individual rules since there were not federal rules already in place when water toxins issues hit the Great Lakes. Thus, it may be difficult for the federal government to require standards and subsequently immediately coordinate each individual entity that had something else implemented to adhere then to the new federal regulation. Thought must be given to allow time for those communities to adjust to new requirements.

## **No. 10**

Seeking Club approval to adopt a position that USDA policies and actions of national and state public western forests should not be a policy of public eastern forests  
(Ohio Chapter)

**Resolution: The Council of Club Leaders requests the Sierra Club Board of Directors to adopt the position that the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) policies and actions of national and state public western forests should not be a policy of the public eastern forests. The Sierra Club does not support or recognize the efficacy of prescribed burns in the eastern forests of Ohio and other eastern forests in North America.**

**32 yes, 14 no, 10 abstain**

### Explanation/Description of issue:

The state and national forest have burned large areas of forest in a one day event—more than 1,000 acres. The Wayne National Forest and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry\* have and seek to burn large areas of forest in their management activities. Public lands provide large tracks of contiguous land that acts as non-fragmented habitat if managed without disruption. Forests are critical for carbon sequestration, ecosystem services, support of biodiversity and human health. Climate disruption is a pressing issue globally; and forests play a critical role in stabilizing climate and supporting environmental services, provide habitat for countless animal, plant and other species. Each and every action on state and national lands in the eastern states should address the climate disruption locally and the disruption globally. Public Lands and Forests should not be purposely burned but need to be protected for its ecosystem services, carbon sequestration and habitat biodiversity.

### Pros:

1. The extensive academic literature on prescribed burns in Ohio forests discount the efficacy of prescribed burns for oak and hickory regeneration
2. Prescribed burns have negative impacts as invasive species dispersal and impacts on amphibians, reptiles and many invertebrates as pollinators



3. Eliminating burns would aid the soil algae, moisture, soil structure, microbial community and ground fauna.
4. The human health impacts of prescribed burns in the state of Ohio are not studied or documented but excessive smoke may act as a health irritant to communities within and adjacent of prescribed burns.
5. Science supports that larger trees and older trees sequester more carbon than younger smaller trees
6. Burning forests is not carbon neutral

Cons:

1. USDA's policy of paying the Wayne National Forest (in Ohio) to conduct prescribed burns. Forest funding at the Federal and State level is directly related to fire policies and initiatives. This is the foundation for the prescribed burning in the eastern forests. Thus if our resolution impacted policy it could thereby impact the forest budget.
2. Burns are used to try to eradicate an invasive Tree of Heaven (ailanthus). Although we know such process does not actually kill the plant roots. It would be more expensive to manually remove those invasives or result in using chemical herbicides.
3. Oak and hickory trees might less likely populate.