

I recently received a letter from a member stating that she was not renewing her Sierra Club membership because the Pikes Peak Group (PPG) had neither announced nor attended a public meeting in Canon City. The meeting, which occurred on Election Day, apparently related to the Cotter Corporation's proposal to import radioactive soil from a New Jersey Superfund site and store it at its facility in Canon City. Although Canon City is not within the Pikes Peak Group's geographical boundary, this member felt that a PPG representative should have been at the meeting and that the meeting should have been announced in the Timberlines because the issues raised by the proposal had an impact on PPG members.

While I certainly agree that this proposal has ramifications for everyone across the nation and raises important environmental concerns for those of us in the Pikes Peak region, I have to admit that when I first read the letter, I got a bit angry. I'm a volunteer – I can't be expected to keep up with every environmental issue happening around the state! After I calmed down and read the letter again, I realized that she was right – someone from the PPG should have been at that meeting and taken responsibility to make sure that the meeting announcement was in the Timberlines. But did that responsibility rest with me, the Timberlines editor, the Conservation Committee Chair? Perhaps, had we known about the meeting. But I also believe that the responsibility rested with the

member who was concerned enough about the proposal to write the letter.

You see, that's the way the Sierra Club works. Although the club has paid staff at the national and state levels, we are essentially a volunteer organization. All of the substantive work that we do at the local level is done by volunteers – dozens of people with full-time jobs spend their free time attending meetings, writing letters, and testifying before government bodies to protect the places they love. They lobby elected officials to protect wilderness areas, push our local utility to invest in renewable energy and recycling, and work with the city to restore the wetlands destroyed by the Pikes Peak Highway. An even smaller number of us have taken on the task of managing the PPG – we raise money to keep the club going, arrange speakers and venues for the general meetings, and publish the Timberlines. At the same time, we try to build up the organization by recruiting volunteers and training outing leaders.

So, to the member who wants to let her membership lapse, I hope you will reconsider. I hope that you will volunteer to be the person who represents the PPG at any future meetings concerning the Cotter proposal because you are the Sierra Club. If you don't take responsibility for meeting announcements in the newsletter and representing the PPG's interests, no one will.

Two Members' Views

Two (separate) letters from Robert B. Hoff and Spencer Johnston

Dr. LeAnna DeAngelo spoke out in the January "One Member's View" against the rationale for compromising on the environment with big business. She then went forward to discuss pesticides in the food supply, increasingly unhealthful air and water, less logging and more trees, organic farming and fewer tract homes. I agree wholeheartedly that there [are] issues which should not and cannot be compro-

mised but there are also issues where the Club members need very badly to [be] better informed and where an extreme stance lessens our credibility and cannot be justified.

Actually, **our air and water in this country are increasingly cleaner. Pesticides in our food supply account for less than 1% of cancers in the US while tobacco and poor diet account for approximately 65% of cancers.** The clear-cutting of our forests is one of those issues where no compromise should ever be made but we had best conduct that argument in full knowledge that **forest cover, both globally and in the US, is growing every year. Forest cover in the US is now approximately 70% of that in place when the Pilgrims landed** and the day is in sight when we will reach 100%. **Organic farming requires the use of substantially more land than does farming using fer-**

tilizers and there is no evidence at all that GM crops are harmful.

The argument against tract homes is very likely to be seen by most people as an elitist stance. How are we to argue credibly against housing our own children? A far better case can be made against the large-lot 4000 and 5000 square foot McMansions so often found in the Pikes Peak Area. And, unfortunately, many of them are occupied by our own members.

There is no question that the Sierra Club occupies an honorable position in our society. It has been a force for good in this country for over 100 years. We need, however, to develop our positions knowledgeably and reasonably. If, as Dr. DeAngelo says, we are losing our arguments, and those she describes as destroyers are winning, it is because we have lost credibility

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Beidleman Environmental Center, 740 W. Carmillo St., COS

Take action to promote and protect wildlands in our region. The work of CCWC involves exploring and researching wild candidate areas and developing Wilderness legislation for possible Congressional action. For more information, contact John Stansfield, 303-660-5849 or e-mail jorcstan@bewellnet.com

Timberlines Deadline: Feb. 15

The **TIMBERLINES** Deadline is **Wednesday, April 20** for the May/June issue. This is to give you a **little** recovery time after tax prep.

Timberlines Mailing Potluck:

Sunday, May 1

5 pm

Help our members fold and label the May/June *Timberlines* newsletter and share our favorite potluck meal with friends. For location and more information, contact Jim Lockhart at 385-0045. **Please call to confirm.**

A Fun Way for You to Help the Pikes Peak Sierra Club

WE NEED YOU: Do you enjoy reading the newsletter? Want to make sure that it keeps arriving in your mailbox? If so, you can help by coordinating our bi-monthly newsletter folding party. The job is easy, but extremely important to our ability to communicate with our members, and the "work

party" format and friendly Sierrans who show up bearing good food make the evening pass swiftly and pleasantly!

For more information, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Kirby Hughes (685-3019).