

# ETHICIAN NEWS NETWORK

1401 19<sup>th</sup> Street  
Huntsville, TX 77340

Reception 936-295-5767  
Fax 936-295-0020

e-mail: [ghr@cyberclone.net](mailto:ghr@cyberclone.net)  
internet: [www.salvationnetwork.org](http://www.salvationnetwork.org)

**OCTOBER 7, 2004**  
**ATTN: EDITOR**

## **POWER COMPANY THREATENS TEXAS' FIRST GREEN CEMETERY**

**For Immediate Release**

**Contact: George H. Russell 936-891-5245**  
**or 936-295-5767**

Sam Houston Electric Cooperative (SHECO) has filed a request with the Public Utility Commission of Texas to build a 138,000-volt electric power transmission line along nearly a mile long swath through The Ethician Family Cemetery in East Texas. The cemetery is America's first "green" family cemetery and is located on an 81-acre forest of ancient trees. Found within this forest is habitat of the endangered Red-cockaded Woodpecker, including two cavity trees.

In addition, SHECO is applying to clearcut a swath through The Holy Trinity Wilderness Cathedral, a special natural area sanctified and dedicated to the memory of David "Gypsy" Chain, and other environmental martyrs. The 716-acre Wilderness Cathedral, believed to be the world's largest, serves as a refuge for rare and endangered species, including Bald Eagles, American Alligators, Canebrake Rattlesnakes, Paddlefish, White-faced Ibis, White Pelicans, and even Cougars. To date, over 650 species of plants have been identified, some of which are extremely rare.

The power line would also impair the Chapel of the Nativity, which is housed in a 19<sup>th</sup> century log building. The Chapel is open to people of all faiths 24 hours a day and has received visitors from across the United States and around the World. A Texas Parks and Wildlife Prairie and Piney Woods Trail traverses the 10-acre chapel grounds and leads to one of East Texas' most beautiful rock waterfalls which is graced by an ancient Magnolia believed to be up to 500 years of age.

Another sanctuary that the SHECO power line would damage has been designated as a Texas State Archaeological Landmark. A rare Catahoula outcrop of ancient boulders is located in the path of the planned power line and would be bulldozed. Because of the location of the boulders in relation to the setting sun during the equinox, it is believed that the site may have served as a place of worship for Native Americans.

Over 130 acres of the only Longleaf Pine stand known to have ever existed West of the Trinity River has been donated to Natural Area Preservation Association in the form of a perpetual conservation easement. It has been estimated that 97% of the original Longleaf Pine forests in North America have been extirpated and, thus, this rare ecosystem is of national significance. The SHECO project would do irreparable harm to this preserve that has attracted the attention of scientists from The Nature Conservancy, Rice University, Texas A&M, Lamar University and other institutions. Because of its rarity, the preserve has been designated a Special or Unique Aesthetic Management Zone by the Director of The Texas Forest Service.

The SHECO power line project would damage or destroy a swath 2.7 miles in length through various preserves and sanctuaries that have been consecrated as a lasting legacy to future generations. Over 7 miles along FM 980, one of the most beautiful highways in East Texas, would be ravaged by the line. The power company refuses to consider other less costly and less damaging routings, although alternate routes are available that would pass through clearcuts, cow pastures, and pine plantations, thus causing almost no environmental or aesthetic damage.

An inspection of documents associated with SHECO's application to the Public Utility Commission of Texas will reveal the great length and expense SHECO has gone to in order to convince the PUC that there is nothing worthy of protection along its preferred route. These documents are displayed on the PUCT web site under Docket Number 29705.

The Chapel of the Nativity, The Holy Trinity Wilderness Cathedral, and The Ethician Family Cemetery are all operated under the auspices of The Universal Ethician Church. The church has been the victim of a significant amount of bigotry, hatred, and vandalism directed against it because the church welcomes people of all races, faiths, national origins, and sexual orientation in an ultra-conservative part of the United States.

A letter to the Editor, published in the Huntsville Item, condemning the "green cemetery" was meant to incite fear in the readership. Letters to the Huntsville Police Department and others have falsely accused the church's founder as being associated with David Koresh. Church leader, George Russell, has been the victim of identity theft and the subject of a slanderous column written by a local pastor and published in the Item.

Two gates to the Wilderness Cathedral have been stolen, a dead horse dumped at the entrance, a third gate vandalized, statues stolen and knocked over, and the future tomb of a church board member vandalized. One of the Catahoula boulders that served as a part of the Rock of Anointment was pried loose and rolled down to the water's edge.

SHECO's proposal would cause even worse physical damage to church property and the spiritual values fundamental to church members and guests than all of the other desecrations combined. SHECO's disdain and contempt for the church and one of its fundamental ethics, based on "caring for Creation," must give great satisfaction to those whose intolerance and bigotry have been responsible for the desecrations and vandalisms suffered by the church.

George Russell will be more than happy to accompany any member of the media on a tour of the affected areas.

George H. Russell, an outspoken opponent of the death penalty, is a resident of Huntsville, Texas, known worldwide as "The City of Death."

He is founder of The Patriot Network, and author of its 35+ web sites located at [www.patriotnetwork.org](http://www.patriotnetwork.org), as well as founder of The Universal Ethician Church, an interfaith ministry with a worldwide following via the church's 275+ web sites located at [www.salvationnetwork.org](http://www.salvationnetwork.org).

Russell, 59, is an educational video producer, environmental activist, historic preservation specialist, photographer, art and antique collector, philanthropist, American patriot and ethician.

Additional biographical information may be found in Who's Who in America, through Internet searches, and in other publications. Images of Mr. Russell suitable for downloading for publication may be found at [www.salvationnetwork.org](http://www.salvationnetwork.org).