

Tallgrass Sierran

Sierra Club - Heart of Illinois Group - Central Illinois Region
P. O. Box 3593 - Peoria, IL 61614

GENERAL MEETINGS

****January 17, 7 p.m., Forest Park Nature Center "ILLINOIS STEWARDSHIP ALLIANCE: AG/ENVIRONMENT ISSUES FOR '96"**

Renee Robinson, Executive Director for the Illinois Stewardship Alliance will give an update on sustainable agriculture topics, including the Safer Pest Control Project under way with Sierra Club. The new Farm Bill, Pig Factory Farming concerns, and the upcoming Farm Tour offered by this group will be covered. Bring your questions on agriculture-related environmental issues. This is an important topic for Central Illinois. *Local Group news and refreshments follow the program. Everyone is welcome!*

****February 21, 7 p.m., Forest Park Nature Center
"ALASKA AND ADVENTURES"** will be presented by one of Springfield's finest nature photographers, John Schnell. With a 4x5 field camera, John has been making images of the American wilderness for the past several years. Using a stirring combination of scenery and music, John will convey the natural wonders of the Great Land. John is a veteran Alaska hiker, and will have just returned from another two weeks in Alaska in early February. He will give us an update on traveling in the Last Frontier. This is a program to sit back and enjoy. Bring your friends and neighbors! *Local Group news and refreshments follow the program. Everyone is welcome!*

Annual Harvest Dinner Brings Great Rewards! THANKS AL HARKRADER!

by Joyce Blumenshine

The November Fund-Raiser Dinner Program by Al Harkrader brought a near record attendance, and the highest earnings ever. Heart of Illinois Sierra Club sends a special THANK YOU to Al Harkrader for his great program on rafting down the Colorado River. Al gets our SUPERMAN OF THE YEAR AWARD: not only did he present the program, he scanned the graphics for the newsletter and ads, brought Mary's great soup, helped set-up, and served notable duty on the clean-up crew. WOW!

If you weren't there, you missed a great evening of Al's humor and fine slides, plus special soups, salads, and desserts beyond description. Over \$897. was earned for the club, including money from our first-ever silent auction. Thank you to all the great cooks, helpers, auction donors, and to all who attended and supported Club efforts for the year ahead through this fund-raiser.



Sierra Club members offer an alternative to the Corp of Engineers Navigation Study. Left to right, Rudy Habben, and 1995 Co-Chairs Mary Bodell and Joyce Blumenshine.

SIERRA CLUB PROTESTS CORPS OF ENGINEERS NAVIGATION PLANS *by Hal Gardner*

Sierra Club staged a competing public meeting with the Corps of Engineers at Holiday Inn City Centre in Peoria on Dec. 6. Sierra Club also held competing meetings at a number of other Mississippi River cities slated for Corps hearings. Because the Corps plans to make structural improvements for barge traffic on both the Upper Mississippi and Illinois Rivers, the Sierra Club tried to convince the public that it was a bad idea for river ecology, transportation economic efficiency, and the taxpayer. Although the Corps public meeting was poorly attended, the Sierra Club's meeting room attracted about an equal notice from the public.

Twenty years ago, system-wide improvement was estimated to cost \$5 billion, including \$630 million for duplicate 1200-foot locks for the Illinois river segment. But now the Corps claims they have low cost alternatives, like scheduling barge traffic. However, it is noted that they are still talking about expensive lock replacement. There is good reason to believe the Corps is now pressing for this project because they are losing a "window of opportunity". Since the late 1970's following a big fight over Locks and Dam 26 on the Mississippi at Alton, IL, it was agreed that barges should pay 100% of operation and maintenance. It is widely acknowledged that the fuel tax trust fund is well over 10 years over-spent. Several expensive projects scheduled for the Ohio River has the Rock Island District scrambling to get their

share of navigation monies. Even if the money is not available, environmentalists worry that Congress will simply ignore the rules and appropriate the money anyway. It is to be noted that this Congress is all too willing to cut welfare for the elderly and the poor, but they will never cut welfare for industry, including barges owned by the big industry companies.

River ecologists worry that an increase in barge traffic may cause the Mississippi ecology to suddenly decline or "crash", much like the crash that has already occurred on the Illinois River. Twenty years ago, we defeated the Duplicate Locks project for the Illinois River after a tremendous amount of effort. Members should start educating themselves on this issue in preparation for participating in a tough fight ahead.

All I Ask

*You straighten out my curves.
You slow my flow,
so slick-slime sediment suffocates.
Engines churn my waters into confusion.
Your chemicals leave me lifeless,
my lovely green dress is no longer dancing.*

Won't you let me be.

*Let me rest in memories,
of grace and waters clean.
Let me carry a dream,
and make it the future.*

- Beth Brockman



KNOX COUNTY SAYS NO TO LLNWF by Rudy Habben

It didn't take the residents of Knox and Warren Counties long to get organized and oppose the State of Illinois' siting a Low-Level Nuclear Waste Facility (LLNWF) in west central Illinois. After the Low-Level Radioactive Waste Task Group held a September public meeting in Galesburg, residents of Knox and Warren Counties circulated petitions and attended the November 7th public hearing in Springfield to challenge the land, water, and other environmental standards to be used in a search for a site. On November 15th the Knox County Board passed a unanimous resolution opposing a site in that county.

The State Task Group has extended its comment period until February 1996. It then will prepare its report for the Governor. The State Task Group Criteria Report will be used by the Illinois State Water Survey and the Illinois State Geological Survey to identify at least 10 locations that appear to meet the criteria. This report may be completed by the end of 1996. The Task Group will select three sites from the list to be studied in detail

by Chem-Nuclear, the contractor that will build and operate the facility. Once the final site is selected by the contractor it will make formal application to the Illinois Department of Nuclear Safety (IDNS) and the Task Group will disband. It will probably be 1997 before IDNS holds hearings and issues a license.

The Knox County Board, mindful of a nuclear dump near Sheffield that contaminated the ground water in Bureau County in 1960, wanted the State to know early that it was not interested in having their nuclear facility in western Illinois. However, a similar study in 1988 by the Illinois Department of Nuclear Safety would suggest that east central Illinois will have the most sites that meet the criteria. Peoria and Knox Counties had no candidate sites. Part of the process is to give preference to volunteered sites. Reportably, three communities have told the Department of Nuclear Safety that they would welcome the facility, its 100 jobs and \$5 million annual budget.



COUNTY PLANNERS WANT TO SURROUND JUBILEE STATE PARK WITH SUBURBAN DEVELOPMENT

by Hal Gardner

Peoria County Planning and Zoning Department appointed a "Northwest Small Area Planning Group" to determine the future planning goals of the northwest corner of the county. As it turns out, the appointed voting group is overwhelmingly development-oriented. They proceeded to select all the areas surrounding Jubilee State Park as having potential for residential zoning with densities of 1- to 2-acre lots. The area affected includes all around the park borders, including the entire Jubilee Creek drainage area far to the north. Sixty percent completion of such a plan would populate the area with a small city of 28,000! This area is already under rapid development pressures with people being attracted to the quality environment the park now provides. But, like Waikiki Beach in Hawaii, over development will surely ruin the unique wild quality of the lands now surrounding the park.

When local residents discovered the current thinking of the Planning Group, they began to attend the meetings, first with a dozen, then with about 50 at the last meeting at the Brimfield Town Hall on December 13. The members of the Planning Group moved to adopt the development intensive plan when disapproving, sometimes loud, discussion broke out among those attending. Hal Gardner passed out a Sierra Club position in favor of a plan to preserve the integrity of the Park. Because of the obvious opposition to their plan, the Planning Group tabled their decision until their next meeting, tentatively slated for January 11 or 12, probably in Brimfield. If you are interested in attending the next meeting, contact **Hal Gardner at 446-9792 (H) or 681-6230 (W)**. This may be your last chance to affect the future of Jubilee College State Park.

ILLINOIS TELEPHONE ACTIVIST NETWORK (I-TAN) by Mary Bodell

Our Group has the opportunity to become involved in I-TAN, a system of receiving information and influencing legislators. We would receive action alerts over an E-mail system and record them on a telephone hotline. Activists could then obtain the information by calling the hotline number.

A hotline in area code 309 would make it easier for central Illinois activists to participate. We would need to purchase an answering machine with four mailboxes and obtain a commercial telephone line. Chapter would pay half the startup cost, with some continuing money from operations if we can demonstrate a need. Right now we can afford our half of the startup cost. We would also need a committed volunteer to maintain the system.

Activists Needed!

Hotline Coordinator to run telephone activist network: Receive action alerts over E-mail system, record the action alerts on the hotline soon after they are received, and start the phone tree.

Action Alert Activists: Receive and make phone calls on environmental issues. Calls come from other activists and relate to state and national issues. Make calls to other local activists and to legislators and executive branch members in Springfield and Washington D.C.



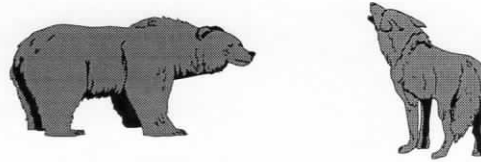
We can do it! We need to do it! What Do You Think about our proposed involvement in I-TAN? If you have comments or are interested in volunteering, please call Mary Bodell (745-5479) or another member of the EXCOM as soon as possible.



Action Alert PHONE NOW!

Your calls are needed to urge President Clinton to veto the following appropriation bills as long as they contain anti-environment provisions. Ask **President Clinton (phone 202-456-1111)** to keep vetoing these bills until environmentally friendly versions are worked out: Interior Appropriations Bill H.R. 1977; EPA Bill H.R. 2099, and the Budget Reconciliation Act of 1996. Thank President Clinton for his vetoes to protect the environmental progress made in the last 20 years.

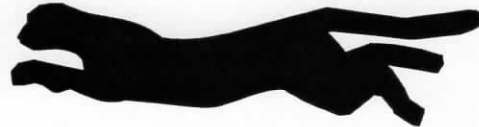
Call **Senator Carol Mosley-Braun (202-224-2854)** and **Senator Paul Simon (202-224-2152)** and **Representative Ray LaHood (202-225-6201)** to urge them to do the same. These bills may keep coming up for votes as various versions are made. We need to demand environmentally friendly bills.



ENDANGERED SPECIES REAUTHORIZATION by Hal Gardner

Congressman Don Young of Alaska is the environmentalists' worst nightmare, one of the most extreme in our current Congress. Young has been known to brandish a knife or a walrus bone to make a point in Congress. He has also been known to place his hand in a steel leg-hold trap to argue against a federal legislative ban of these traps (his hand was reportedly blue after the deliberations). He is also Chairman of the House Resources Committee that oversees important environmental/public lands issues, like endangered species.

So, is it any surprise that Don Young (with Rep. Pombo) sponsored an Endangered Species Act (H.R. 2275) that (1) no longer mandates recovery of species, (2) no longer protects the habitat of endangered species, (3) does not protect marine species, such as sea turtles, etc., (4) lifts the ban on importation of endangered species or their parts, (5) does not permit the release of captive-bred species into the wild, and (6) landowners must be compensated for loss of land value due to endangered species of over 20% or totally compensated for losses over 50%? However, it may be a surprise to you that our **Congressman Ray LaHood is a cosponsor of H.R. 2275. What is his motivation for cosponsoring such a terrible bill? Is he truly insensitive to the plight of species diversity, or is he concerned about campaign contributions from special interests? I suspect it is both.**



MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS



- You'll Be Helping The Planet
- **Sierra Magazine** A one year subscription to *Sierra*, our award-winning magazine
- **Discounts** on publications, including our distinguished books celebrated calendars.
- **Worldwide Outings Program**
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	INDIVIDUAL	JOINT
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LIFE	<input type="checkbox"/> \$750	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1000
SENIOR	<input type="checkbox"/> \$15	<input type="checkbox"/> \$23
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Enclose check and mail to:

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Boulder, Colorado,
80322-2968

Annual dues include subscription to *Sierra* (\$7.50) and chapter publication (\$1). Dues are not tax-deductible.

Group Calendar

January

- 10 Executive Meeting, 7:30 p.m.**
Corps of Engineers Bldg., foot of Grant St. Call Larry Robbins at 676-4601 (days) for directions.
Election of new officers.
- 17 General Meeting, 7 p.m.**
Forest Park Nature Center,
"Illinois Stewardship Alliance: AG/Environment Issues for '96"
- 21 Illinois River Eagle Watch**
See newsletter announcement.
- 28 Starved Rock Winter Hike**
See newsletter announcement.

February

- 14 Executive Meeting, 7:30 p.m.**
Corps of Engineers Bldg., foot of Grant St.
- 21 General Meeting, 7 p.m.**
Forest Park Nature Center,
"Alaska and Adventures"
- 24-29 Display at George Luthy Botanical Garden**
Visit our display promoting Sierra environmental issues, legislative action, and local activities.
- 29 Newsletter Deadline**
Send articles for March & April to John Wosik, 3403 W. Richwoods Blvd., Peoria, IL 61604

March

- 6 Newsletter Mailing, 7 p.m.**
Peoria Pizza Works; Everyone welcome!
- 18 Clean Water Celebration**
Peoria Civic Center; See newsletter article for more details.

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CLEAN WATER CELEBRATION

You Can Help! by Rudy Habben

The Heart of Illinois Sierra Club is looking for members who can help staff the Club booth at the Clean Water Celebration at the Peoria Civic Center on Monday, March 18. We need your help to represent the Sierra Club to the 4,000 primary school students that are expected to attend. Call **Rudy Habben (685-5605)** if you are interested.

This year the Club booth will have "**SEDIMENTATION**" as its theme. If you have an idea that will teach students the concept of sedimentation, please call **Ralph Ginn (274-3289)**. Anything from maps showing sedimentation of Illinois lakes and impoundments to sedimentary rocks will be welcome.



Illinois River Eagle Watch - Jan. 21

Join Sierra Club members Larry Robbins and experienced ornithologist Brenda Onken at the Forest Park Nature Center at 9 a.m. From the Nature Center we will be touring, both by car and by foot, selected Illinois River valley locations between Henry and Havana in search of our national symbol, the Bald Eagle. Lunch in one of the towns along the river is always a possibility. Dress appropriately and bring your binoculars! **Call Larry Robbins at 681-1558 for more information.**

Starved Rock Winter Hike - Jan. 28

The all-day event to Starved Rock State Park begins with carpooling at the Forest Park Nature Center, Sunday, Jan. 28, at 9 AM... or meet in the Starved Rock State Lodge hall at 10:30 AM, where we will be joining fellow Sierra Club members from the Kishwaukee Solduc Group (DeKalb). Dress warm and bring a lunch to eat on the trail. Following the 3-4 hour leisurely paced hike, there will be a stop for dinner on the way home. **For more information contact Al Harkrader @ 682-8462.**

1996 Heart of Illinois Sierra Club

Executive Committee

Mary Bodell	745-5479	Perry Johnson	697-3211
Hal Gardner	446-9792	Kelly O'Leary	685-2240
Ralph Ginn	274-3289	Larry Robbins	681-1558
Grayce Haworth	246-8397		

Calendar Sales:	Chris Meydam	682-0549
Clean Water Celebration /		
Land Use Advisory Com. Rep:	Rudy Habben	685-5605
Newsletter Editor:	John Wosik	682-8950

Note: New officers will be elected at the January EXCOM meeting.

HEART OF ILLINOIS Sierra Club

P.O. Box 3593
Peoria, IL 61614

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