



Tallgrass Sierran

Sierra Club - Heart of Illinois Group - Central Illinois Region

P. O. Box 3593 - Peoria, IL 61614

GENERAL MEETINGS

☐ **March 20, 7 p.m., Forest Park Nature Center**
“ANTARCTICA ENCOUNTERS”

Dr. Jeff Ahlgren will tell us what it is like to reside in Antarctica. Dr. Ahlgren was part of a research team stationed in Antarctica which studied the factors that keep cold-water fish from freezing in chill waters. He will give his impressions of his encounters there and give his views for the future of the frigid continent. You are sure to enjoy this interesting slide program. *Local Group news and refreshments follow the program. Everyone is welcome!*

☐ **April 17, 7 p.m., Forest Park Nature Center**
“SAVANNA ARMY DEPOT UPDATE”

The Savanna Army Depot located along the Mississippi River near Savanna, Illinois, is slated to be closed. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service wants the undeveloped portion of the depot, principally because it contains significant bottomlands and about 7,000 acres of sand prairie. The sand prairie is a very significant and rare ecosystem. We have been promised a speaker (to be announced) from either the Illinois Department of Natural Resources or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to tell us about the details. *Local Group news and refreshments follow the program. Everyone is welcome!*



WILDLIFE PRAIRIE PARK, A \$19 MILLION GIFT THE STATE DOESN'T WANT!

by Hal Gardner

According to Department of Natural Resources Director Brent Manning, the State will not accept Wildlife Prairie Park even though Bill Rutherford wants to give it to them! Considering the topnotch condition of Wildlife Prairie Park, which is 2,000 acres in size and valued at \$19 million, Brent Manning's excuse seems rather lame. A duplication of the same programs offered by Jubilee State Park is one reason given for refusal. Another is the no-fee entrance policy of the state, and the annual shortfall expense involved. None of these excuses make sense. Everyone in the Peoria area knows that Jubilee Park in no way duplicates the programs offered by Wildlife Prairie Park, and a no-fee policy can be easily modified for this specific site. An annual shortfall of about \$300,000 seems minuscule compared to other state expenses, like highway repair, but then we know that

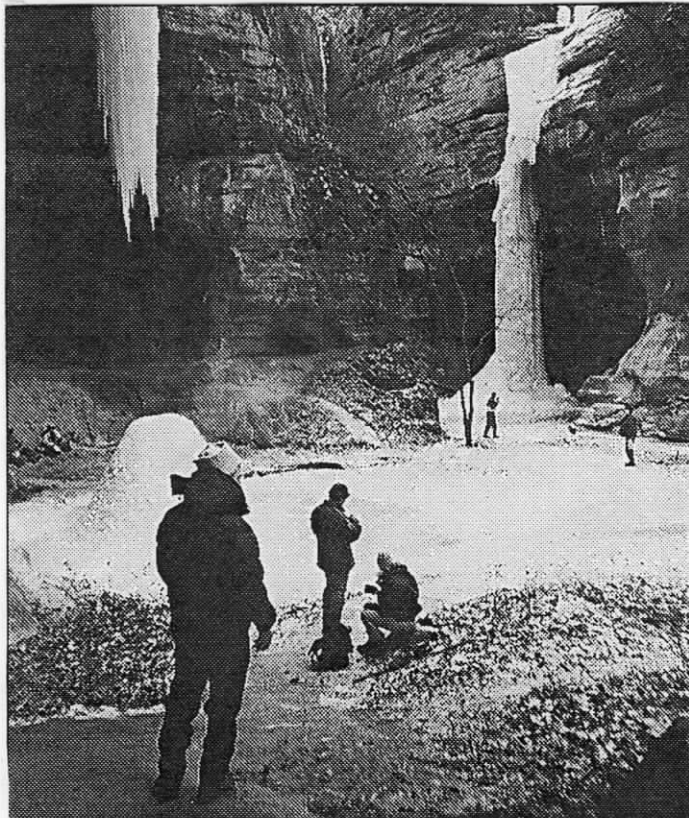


Photo by Al Harkrader

Starved Rock Outing: *Twenty-one Hikers from the HOI, DeKalb, and Kane County Sierra Groups attended the Starved Rock outing on Sunday, January 28. Pictured above: the winter hikers check out the ice formations in Tonti Canyon where they stopped for lunch under the frozen waterfalls.*

conservation issues fall way low in the state's priority list. In this author's opinion, elevation to state status and the addition of a tasteful hotel/motel could easily transform Wildlife Prairie Park into a highly desirable and profitable convention center. I can personally attest to the suitability of Wildlife Prairie Park as a convention site as I helped organize a prairie convention there eight years ago. Everyone was impressed and pleased with the site, and the organizing committee was given excellent service.

If you feel the state can not afford to throw away such a wonderful opportunity to educate our children about conservation of our flora and fauna, as well as view the natural history of our past, then please express your views to Governor Edgar; many letters are needed. **Write to: The Honorable James Edgar, 207 State House, Springfield, IL 62706.**

HYPER-DEVELOPMENT AROUND JUBILEE STATE PARK STALLED

by Hal Gardner

HOI Sierra Club and neighbors of Jubilee State Park alike objected strenuously to Peoria County's permissive zoning plans for lands surrounding the park. If the Northwest Planning Group of the Peoria County Dept. of Zoning and Planning had their way, the lands surrounding the park and the entire drainage area of Jubilee Creek would be opened for 1- to 2-acre residential lots. At 60% build-out this would have comprised a town of 28,000 people! Since there was so much opposition, the Planning Group backed way off from their original proposal. Now development will be permitted only adjacent to the park on the south (along Rt. 150) and on the east (along Jubilee-Princeville Rd.). Unfortunately, a fair portion of this area is *de facto* developed with housing, so the new plan is far less disastrous than the original proposal. From a historical perspective, the park was originally perceived as an economic drain on the local economy, but now everyone wants to live next to the park. With proper planning the area might keep the qualities for which it was established.



Rock Island Trail Extension Needs Letters of Support by Joyce Blumenshine



On Wednesday, February 14, 1996, the Peoria Park District held a public hearing on an extension of the Rock Island Trail. The Park Board is applying for grant funds to work on constructing an addition to

the Rock Island Trail that would go from Pioneer Park, south, to Knoxville Avenue. They need to use the existing railroad right-of-way to do this. Before this can be done, the Peoria City Council must approve the Peoria Park District's request for the transfer of the railroad right-of-way.

Please write to your Peoria City Council representatives and urge their support for the transfer. List your favorite reasons why Peoria needs the trail extension, such as the need for more areas for walking, jogging, and bicycling, a safe bicycle route from north Peoria to the riverfront, or as a connection to the Robert Michel Bridge and the East Peoria trails.

To support the extension of the trail:

Bonnie Noble, Director
Peoria Park District
2218 N. Prospect Rd.
Peoria, IL 61603

To support the trail and transfer of the railroad right-of-way:

Mayor Jim Maloof /
Hon. Council Member _____
City Hall
419 Fulton St.
Peoria, IL 61602

You can make a difference!

- Write your U.S. Senators:
Carol Moseley-Braun / Paul Simon
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510
- Write your U.S. Representative:
Ray LaHood / Lane Evans
U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515
- Call your U.S. Senators and Representatives at the
Capitol Switchboard: (202) 224-3121, or call their
local numbers: Ray LaHood (309) 671-7027
Lane Evans (309) 793-5760
- Call the White House comment line at (202) 456-1111
- Write Governor Edgar or your state Senator or
Representative: The Hon. _____
State House
Springfield, IL 62706
- Call Governor Edgar at: (217) 782-6830
- Call your state Senator or Representative at the Capital
Switchboard: (217) 782-2000

TRI-COUNTY GREENWAY PLAN

by Rudy Habben

The Peoria Tri-County Planning Commission has received a grant from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to develop a greenway plan for the metropolitan area. The Commission wants citizen involvement in developing the plan. To kick the program off, a public meeting will be held March 14, 1996 at 7 p.m. at the Fondulac Park District Office on Veterans Drive in East Peoria. Speakers include Ed McMahon, Director of the American Conservation Fund Greenway Program, and Ed Hoffman from the Illinois DNR Division of Planning. Anyone interested in preserving open space in urban areas is encouraged to attend.

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80322-2968

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THE FORMER SAVANNA ARMY DEPOT:

A CHANCE TO PRESERVE OVER 11,000 ACRES OF ILLINOIS PRAIRIE, WETLANDS, AND FOREST

In 1995, the Defense Department decided to close the Savanna Army Depot in Carroll and Jo Daviess counties in northwestern Illinois. The closing of the Depot presents an incredible opportunity to set aside thousands of acres for public enjoyment and wildlife habitat. The Savanna Army Depot presents many opportunities, including:

OVER 10,000 ACRES OF VALUABLE WILDLIFE HABITAT

The Depot is 13,062 acres in size, including 7,000 acres of very rare sand prairie habitat and savanna/forest land, as well as 5,500 acres of Mississippi River backwater lakes and islands.

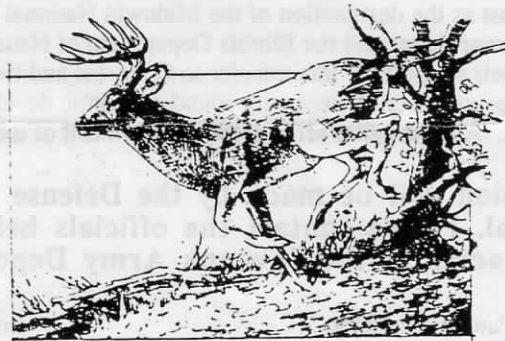


RARE AND ENDANGERED SPECIES

The high quality habitat at the Savanna Army Depot is currently home to 32 species that are endangered or threatened in the State of Illinois, including river otter, bobcat, bald eagle, osprey, great egret, and many other plants and animals that are in danger of disappearing from Illinois. These and many other species are thriving at the Depot.

UNLIMITED RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

The opportunities for public recreation are as varied as the habitat. Throughout the property, nature observation, hiking, camping, and bicycling could be accommodated. The Mississippi floodplain and wetlands offer outstanding potential for boating, fishing, waterfowl hunting, and the upland prairie, savanna, and forest areas offer upland game hunting opportunities and a chance to experience an extremely rare Illinois ecosystem, the sand prairie.



LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

These recreation opportunities would certainly create tourism-related economic development in the region. Together with nearby Mississippi Palisades State Park, a large preserve at the former Savanna Army Depot could constitute a major attraction for outdoor enthusiasts, creating new opportunities for retail, lodging, hospitality, outdoor equipment, and other related industries.

HOW TO MAKE IT HAPPEN

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has asked that 11,400 acres at the former Depot be transferred to their agency for management as habitat and recreation area in conjunction with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. This transfer would allow Illinois residents to enjoy a large new preserve along the Mississippi River at no cost to them. Contamination on the property resulting from weapons manufacture would remain the responsibility of the Army, guaranteeing cleanup of areas in need of it. This proposal allows for over 1500 acres in the developed portion of the Depot to be reused for local economic development.

The Army will decide the fate of this request by **March 28th**. In the interests of the local community, and the entire State of Illinois, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's request for transfer of the property should be granted.



Sierra Club, Illinois Chapter 1 N. LaSalle, Suite 4242, Chicago, IL 60602 (312) 251-1680

YOUR LETTERS NEEDED TODAY!

HELP SAVE OVER 11,000 ACRES ALONG THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER!

Your active support is needed NOW to ensure that more than 11,000 acres of sand savanna and bottomland forest, one of the largest remnants in the Midwest, at the Savanna Army Depot are protected by transfer from the Department of the Army to the Department of the Interior under the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) legislation.

The 13,000 acres Savanna Army Depot was targeted for closure by Congress and President Clinton in the latest round of BRAC closures. Under BRAC rules, federal agencies have first choice to accept surplus lands. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has requested 11,000 acres at Savanna, and has made it a very high priority for the Department of the Interior. U.S. Fish and Wildlife did not include the southern 2,000 acres most suitable for economic development in their proposal to provide for local economic recovery.

The BRAC legislation also requires that a Local Redevelopment Authority of concerned citizens be created in affected communities to consider economic redevelopment opportunities. The last round of BRAC, in fact, emphasized this economic component. The Savanna Army Depot Local Redevelopment Authority, made up of ten residents from the Savanna area, has requested that the Department of Interior, (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) rescind its proposal. They have also requested that Congressman Lane Evans intercede on their behalf.

We believe that the protection of the 11,000 acres at Savanna Army Depot should be a very high priority for the State of Illinois, just as the designation of the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie at the former Joliet Arsenal was. It is imperative that Governor Edgar and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, with conservation groups throughout the state, express their support for this transfer to Congress and the Clinton administration. We believe that the protection of the natural resource is consistent with sound economic development in a region of the State so attractive to tourism and outdoor recreation. Almost 2,000 acres at the southern end of the depot provide ample opportunity for more intensive development.

A decision will be made by the Defense Department by March 28th on US F&WS' proposal. Please contact the officials below and voice your support for transferring 11,400 acres at the Savanna Army Depot to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:

Paul W. Johnson
Deputy Asst. Secretary for Installations
and Housing
U.S. Dept. of the Army
Room 3E, 581 Pentagon
Washington, DC 20310-0110
*ask him to support approval of the Dept.
of Interior's transfer request*

Bonnie R. Cohen
Asst. Secretary for Policy, Management, and Budget
U.S. Dept. of Interior
6132 Interior Building, 1849 C. St. N.W.
Washington, DC 20240
express support for U.S. F&WS' transfer request

The Honorable Governor Jim Edgar
207 State House
Springfield, IL 62706
*ask him to actively support
U.S. F&WS' transfer request*

send a copy to:
Brent Manning, Director
Illinois Department of Natural Resources
524 S. Second St.
Springfield, IL 62701-1787

Senator Paul Simon
462 Dirksen Building
Washington, DC 20510
ask our senators to actively support U.S. F&WS' transfer request

Senator Carol Moseley-Braun
320 Hart Building
Washington, DC 20510

U.S. Representative Lane Evans
2335 Rayburn
Washington, DC 20515
ask these area congressmen to support U.S. F&WS' transfer request

U.S. Representative Don Manzullo
426 Cannon
Washington, DC 20515



THE ILLINOIS TELEPHONE ACTIVIST NETWORK (I-TAN) WANTS YOU! *by Mary Bodell*

Do you want an easy, quick way to make your voice heard on environmental issues? Join the Illinois Telephone Activist Network (I-TAN). The Illinois Sierra Club is developing a network of phone trees to quickly respond to important environmental issues arising in the state and federal legislatures. As an I-TAN volunteer, you will receive a brief phone call about every 2 to 3 weeks from a local Sierra Club member. You will be instructed to call a regional hotline to receive more detailed information on the action alert. You will then pass on the action alert to a few individuals on our local phone tree and leave your legislator a brief message. Calls to state and federal legislators are taken by receptionists who record calls and tally the responses. By joining I-TAN, you will be making a contribution to promote the passage of legislation that will help protect the environment. We can really make a contribution by speaking up on environmental issues, and we can do it with very little effort. **To join, call Mary Bodell at 745-5479, or fill out the form on the right and mail it to: Mary Bodell, I-TAN, 2267 Hollands Grove Rd., Washington, IL 61571.**



I-TAN Will Soon Play in Peoria

The HOI Sierra Club will have its own regional I-TAN hotline operational by this summer. Two I-TAN numbers are currently in operation: Chicago (708-690-4930) and Alton (618-462-6802). Our own local hotline will allow our members to receive information on action alerts and local Club activities.

Thanks to Frank Orto of the River Prairie Group, we received a great price on a new answering machine. It has nine mailboxes, 36 minutes of recording time and no limit on the length of outgoing messages. When we have 25 volunteers on our phone tree we will qualify for matching funds from the Illinois Chapter of the Sierra Club, so please sign up now!

Yes, I want to join I-TAN!

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Home Phone Number _____

Answering machine? Y N Sierra Club member? Y N

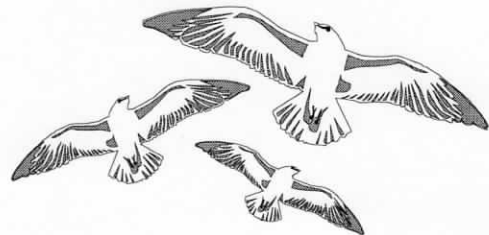
MIDWIN NATIONAL TALLGRASS PRAIRIE SIGNED INTO LAW

by Rudy Habben

On February 10, 1996, President Clinton signed the bill transferring the Joliet Arsenal from the Department of Defense to the Department of Agriculture for development as a tallgrass prairie. The U.S. Forest Service will have a limited number of volunteer guided tours later this spring. Sierra Club tour participation is being coordinated by the Illinois Club office in Chicago. **If you are interested in a tour, contact Joyce Blumenshine (688-0950) or Rudy Habben (685-5605).**

Pimiteoui Trail Outing Sunday March 24

Hike the newly completed section of the Pimiteoui trail through Glen Oak Park. This "showplace" section is lighted, and will link our hike to the Springdale Cemetery part of the trail. Plans for the Peoria Park District trail extension north will be discussed, and the outing leader will have a map of the overall Pimiteoui and Rock Island Trail plan. Meet at 1 p.m. at the front entrance to the Luthy Botanical Garden (not the gift shop entrance), at Glen Oak Park. **Call Joyce at 688-0950 for more information.**



Site M Bushwhack - April 27

Sierra Club members will receive a preview of the 15,000 acre megasite to be developed by Illinois DNR during the next ten years. We will meet at 10 a.m. at the Site M office located on Cass County Hwy 11, six miles north of Illinois 125 and the village of Philadelphia. (Peoria area Club members who want to car-pool should meet at 8 a.m. at the Forest Park Nature Center.) Dan Riggs, site superintendent, will give an overview of the proposed development plan. We will then visit the hill prairie restoration area, the Cox Creek Indiana bat habitat area, and segments of the proposed 30 mile equestrian trail. Bring a day pack with lunch, liquid, and sun block. Be prepared to go cross-country on hilly terrain and wade a shallow creek. Returning to Peoria in the late afternoon, we will stop at Sand Lake on IL. Rt. 97 south of Havana. Illinois Audubon has a campaign to acquire this site as a nature reserve. **Call Rudy Habben at 685-5605 for more information.**


Group Calendar

March

**12 Emiquon and Chautauqua:
Public Input Meeting, 7 p.m.**
Dickson Mounds State Museum.
Hosted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife
Service, this meeting will provide an
opportunity for public input into the
management planning efforts for the
refuges. (Not a Sierra Club event.)

12 Executive Meeting, 7 p.m.
Corps of Engineers Bldg., foot of
Grant St.

18 Clean Water Celebration
Peoria Civic Center, 8:30 a.m. to
2 p.m. Contact Rudy Habben at
685-5605 for more information.

19 Election Day 

20 General Meeting, 7 p.m.
Forest Park Nature Center,
"Antarctic Encounters"


24 Pimiteoui Trail Hike
See newsletter announcement.

April

9 Executive Meeting, 7 p.m.
Corps of Engineers Bldg., foot of
Grant St.

14 Rock Island Trail Bicycle Ride
Meet at 1 p.m. next to the trail in the
former Handy Andy parking lot on
Pioneer Parkway. Trip length will be
determined by the group. Call Joyce
at 688-0950 for more information.

17 General Meeting, 7 p.m.
Forest Park Nature Center,
"Savanna Army Depot Update"

22 Earth Day 

26 Newsletter Deadline
Send articles for May & June to
John Wosik, 3403 W. Richwoods
Blvd., Peoria, IL 61604

27 Site M Bushwhack
See newsletter announcement.

May

1 Newsletter Mailing, 7 p.m.
Peoria Pizza Works; Everyone
welcome!

**11 Illinois Chapter Executive
Committee Meeting**
Hosted by HOI Group. Place and
time to be announced. All *Sierrans*
are welcome.

**12 Illinois Chapter Conservation
Issues Meeting**
Hosted by HOI Group. Place and
time to be announced. All *Sierrans*
are welcome.

15 General Meeting, 7 p.m.
Forest Park Nature Center,
details in May-June newsletter.



Other Events:

(Not sponsored by the Sierra Club but provided as a public service)

Work Crew Starts Season

At Jubilee State Park, and the Rock Island Trail crews will start work on improving native plant diversity. Work includes prairie burns, brush-cutting, eradicating alien plants, native plant seeding and planting root stock. Work crews will meet on the first and third Saturdays at 9 a.m. at Hal Gardner's red barn about 2.2 miles west of Jubilee-Princeville Rd. on Jubilee-Brimfield Rd. Except for prairie burns, work usually ends at noon. Call Hal Gardner at 446-9792 for directions.

Lakeview Wilds Fundraiser Chili Cook

A Fundraiser Chili Cook will be held at Lakeview Museum on Sunday, March 24 from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. to benefit Lakeview Wilds, Inc., a nonprofit group dedicated to conserving land in Peoria County. Live music will accompany the food prepared by six local chefs. Tickets are \$12 per person, or \$20 per family, and are available at the door, or by calling David Pittman at 688-7708.

Heart of Illinois Sierra Club

Executive Committee

Chair	Ralph Ginn	274-3289
Vice-Chair	Hal Gardner	446-9792
Secretary	Perry Johnson	697-3211
Treasurer	Grayce Haworth	246-8397
Membership Chair	Larry Robbins	681-1558
Executive Committee	Mary Bodell	745-5479
Executive Committee	Kelly O'Leary	698-1163
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Conservation Chair / Chapter Rep	Rudy Habben	685-5605
Outings Chair	Joyce Blumenshine	688-0950
Calendar Sales	Chris Meydam	682-0549
Newsletter Editor	John Wosik	682-8950

HEART OF ILLINOIS

Sierra Club

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