



Tallgrass Sierran

September/October 2005 Volume 33 No. 5

THE HEART OF ILLINOIS GROUP OF THE SIERRA CLUB ♦ P.O. Box 3593, Peoria, IL 61614 ☎ (309) 637-1393

HOI Group Meetings

WED
SEPT 21 **Public Lands at Risk**
Forest Park Nature Center, 7 p.m.

Enjoy a slide show of treasured, scenic places that are American public lands, presented by Clayton Daughenbaugh, National Conservation Organizer with the Sierra Club. Learn about threats to these lands and attacks on democracy in public lands decision making and citizen participation. Clayton's program, "Public Lands at Risk" will show you beautiful views of our public lands and damage resulting from federal policies. You will see and learn about locations in Alaska, Utah, Colorado, and New Mexico that are at risk from oil and gas developments. This educational program will show you threats to our public lands and what you can do to help. *All are welcome!*

WED
OCT 19 **The Galapagos Islands**
Forest Park Nature Center, 7 p.m.

Shari Britner, professor at Bradley University, will present highlights of her trip to the Galapagos Islands. *All are welcome!*

HOI EXCOM Nominations Needed

Nominations for the HOI EXCOM Board are needed by October 22nd. Three board positions will be up for election this year. Board members have a range of opportunities from organizing programs for the general meetings, representing HOI at various meetings and events, or being active by contributing ideas. Nominate yourself or send in a nomination for someone that would like to be on the Board. Meetings are held once a month, and are a great way to participate in your local Sierra Group. Send nominations to Joyce Blumenshine, 2419 E. Reservoir Blvd., Peoria, IL 61614, or call 688-0950.

Rotten Apples and Paradox

BY RALPH GINN

"Hear me people. We have now to deal with another race, small and feeble when our fathers first met them, but now great and overbearing. Strangely enough they have a mind to till the soil and the love of possession is a disease with them. These people have made many rules that the rich may break but the poor may not. They take their tithes from the poor and weak to support the rich and those who rule."

- *Chief Sitting Bull, speaking at Powder River, 1877*

ENERGY BILL: The long contested energy bill has passed both the U.S. House and Senate and has been signed by the President. Most of the 14.5 billion cost, a number underestimated by a factor of five times according to some economists, is in tax breaks to the fossil fuel (oil, coal, gas) industries. About 2.7 billion will go to renewable energy sources. Farm groups are happy with a mandate that requires production of 8 billion gallons of ethanol by 2012. Illinois farmers should see higher demand and prices for their corn. Illinois Senator Barack Obama authored a provision, included in the final bill, that would provide \$40 million for research on the combined electric and E85 (fuel that is 85% ethanol) powered automobile. A vehicle projected to get 500 miles per gallon of gasoline. But, this bill is most notable for what it doesn't do. There is no mention of more efficient fuel standards, there is no chance of reducing America's reliance on foreign oil which is projected to rise from 60 to

70 percent in twenty years, and it does nothing to reduce the 50 percent energy use increase expected over the next fifteen years. Tucked into the bill are exemptions from some Clean Water Act laws for oil and gas industries. Remember, the original Senate bill was called the "No lobbyist left behind bill" by Senator John McCain. In a footnote of absurdity one Congressman bragged that the provision likely to have the broadest impact was the one month extension of daylight saving time. Sitting Bull wouldn't find much in this energy bill to belie his speech at Powder River.

SECRETS: A lawsuit has been filed in New York federal court by the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) against the Bush administration for withholding a large quantity of evidence about the severe harm caused to whales, dolphins and other marine mammals by high-intensity military sonar. NRDC seeks thousands of pages of documents from the U.S. Department of Commerce and the National Marine Fisheries Service related to the mass strandings, injuries and deaths of marine mammals exposed to military sonar.

AMNESTY: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is offering four years of amnesty to farmers for livestock emissions. Farmers would pay a one time monitoring costs fee of \$2500 plus a penalty fee that depends on the type and size of their operation. The EPA plans to use the monitoring data to determine "appropriate air quality standards." This

(See *Paradox*, page 2)



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

(Paradox, from page 1)

program apparently ignores the fact that there are already federal laws regulating clean air. Expressing the confusion of many, one farmer describes it, "I'm not violating any air quality laws, but I'm going to pay to see if I'm violating any laws?" On the positive side, the program may die from lack of participation. Only 1,050 farmers in the entire country have signed on, in spite of two deadline extensions.

\$75,000 or DEATH: Pastor Johnnie Wilson II has given Tree City USA, Centralia, IL, until the end of the summer to pay \$75,000 or he will cut down a 300 year old bur oak tree in his church yard to make room for more parking. So far, the Reverend has received a contribution of 10 cents. The Tree City mayor, in an effort to preserve the town's image, has made a counter offer of \$1 that would lease Wilson II a strip of roadway to be used for parking.

COMPASSIONATE CONSERVATIVE: Matthew Scully, a former speech writer for George W. Bush, has written a book called "Dominion: The Power of Man, the Suffering of Animals, and the Call to Mercy." The starting point, says Scully should be our obligations for living with integrity. He doesn't suggest a vegan lifestyle, but proposes a Humane Farming Act that would provide livestock a merciful life and a merciful death. Scully asks, "Why is the cruelty to a puppy appalling and cruelty to a pig or cow a matter of social indifference?" He answers, "Christian morality, is one of condescension, the proud learning to be humble, the higher serving lower, the strong protecting the weak. If reason and morality are what set humans apart from animals, then reason and morality must guide us in how we treat them."

ANWR: Drilling for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge was not included in the energy bill in order to ease its passage. Drilling will be back on the Congressional agenda this fall as sure gasoline price-gouging is unbounded.

STORMS: New research indicates that hurricanes in the Atlantic and typhoons in the Pacific may have increased by 50 percent in duration and intensity since the 1970's. Climatologists at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology claim their data is closely linked to warmer temperatures of ocean surfaces. Some scientists call these findings alarming because they suggest that global warming is influencing storms now rather than previous projections of 50 years in the future.

Friends of the Rock Island Trail Bike Raffle



Win an awesome TREK 2300 Road Bike (59cm) and support local bicycle advocacy at the same time. The cause is worthy and the bike would be a great addition to your riding or a fantastic gift for someone you know. See this light as a feather super bike at Illinois Cycle's new Pioneer Park location. Second and third prizes are \$50 and \$25 gift certificates at Illinois Cycle. The drawing will be held on September 28th. Tickets are \$10 each or 3 for \$25. Make your check payable to: Friends of the Rock Island Trail and mail to: FORIT c/o George Burrier, 701 East Polk, Morton, IL 61550 [Raffle license #R-129-051]

Toxic Release Inventory Shows Huge Amounts of Heavy Metals Received at PDC Hazardous Waste Site

BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recently published figures for the annual national Toxic Release Inventory and Peoria Disposal Company is burying huge amounts of toxic heavy metals in their hazardous waste landfill located at the end of Richwoods and Reservoir streets at the west edge of Peoria. The most recently released figures are for the year 2003. According to the U.S. E.P.A. listing, Peoria Disposal Company buried 1,258,000 pounds of lead compounds; 457,700 pounds of chromium compounds; 25,500 pounds of cadmium compounds; 23 pounds of mercury compounds, and this is just part of the listing. Chemicals released into the air were listed by the U.S. E.P.A. report as 214 pounds of manganese compounds; 88 pounds of lead compounds; 1,170 pounds of zinc compounds; 21 pounds of chromium compounds; among

others. Peoria citizens live in a chemical soup in our air and threatening our water. While PDC follows all E.P.A. guidelines and has received awards for their hazardous waste landfill site, these heavy metals are piled up at our veritable back door. Heart of Illinois Sierra Club presented this information to the Peoria County Board during citizen comments at their August meeting.

There is no good reason to allow hazardous waste to continue to be buried so close to city residential areas and near surface water and the San Koty aquifer. Please write to your Peoria County Board representative and state your concerns about having a hazardous waste landfill at the city edge. Check on the Peoria County webpage at www.co.peoria.il.us or call the Peoria County Clerk's office at 672-6059 for your county board member information.

Yes, I want to join the Sierra Club! My check is enclosed.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Introductory \$25 Individual \$39 Joint \$47

Contributions, gifts and dues to the Sierra Club are not tax deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to Sierra magazine and \$1.00 for your Chapter newsletter.

Please mail this to Sierra Club,
P.O. Box 52968, Boulder,
Colorado, 80322-2968

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Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

Vote to Protect Banner Natural Areas!

Online petition at www.SaveOurEagles.org

BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

Lt. Governor Pat Quinn gave a wonderful boost for local efforts to protect wetlands and river habitat. On July 18th the Lt. Governor held a press conference south of Banner, Illinois, directly across from fields and wooded fence rows which are part of the 643 acres proposed for a strip mine by Capitol Resources Development Corporation. Pat Quinn made clear that he wants to see protection for the area that hosts eagles, osprey nests, Great Blue Herons, American White Pelicans, other migrating water birds and a host of plants and animals worth protecting. Quinn spoke to the need to protect our waterways from pollution, and that a strip mine in this location could leach heavy metals and other mine waste into adjacent creeks and the Illinois River. Marc Miller, assistant to the Lt. Governor, had attended several hearings regarding the proposed mine and has worked with local residents on the issue.

Local Banner residents have been fighting gallantly to counter efforts by the coal interests. Citizens for the Protection of Banner Township are pursuing legal action to keep Prairie Lane Road open, and the case is now in the Fulton County Circuit Court. On August 17th the Banner Township Board voted to intervene in the case. Land for Prairie Lane Road was

given to the township in the 1850's and the route links Banner Dike Road with Illinois Route 24, going across a major portion of the proposed strip mine location. Local citizens found documentation to prove that Prairie Lane Road was never vacated and that the Banner board directed the township road commissioner to repair and upgrade the road several times. The group is also pursuing efforts to get the area declared unsuitable for mining. The area in

contention is located between two designated important Illinois bird habitat locations, which are both owned by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources: Banner Marsh State Fish and Wildlife Area and the Rice Lake Conservation Area. John Grigsby, leader of the Citizens for the Protection of Banner Township, has been voted "Conservationist of



Lt. Governor Pat Quinn speaking for the protection of Banner natural areas on July 18th. Photo: John Wosik

the Year" by the Heart of Illinois Group Executive Board, for his unflagging efforts to save the area from being strip mined.

Donations to help with legal fees are greatly needed. Checks should be made to "Save Rice Lake" and mailed to Mike Grigsby, 21574 N. US Route 24, Canton, IL 61520.

John Grigsby Named "Conservationist of the Year" by HOI

BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

The Heart of Illinois Sierra Club Board has awarded the group's highest honor to John Grigsby of rural Banner, Illinois, for his tireless work to save Banner from a strip mine proposed at the east edge of town. John Grigsby's award will be presented at the September 21st HOI meeting. John has worked indefatigably to research information, inform local citizens, and organize action to protect the Banner area from strip mining.

This is not his first environmental battle. As president of the Save Rice Lake Association, John led the successful effort to stop proposals to mine the Rice Lake Conservation Area and to have the area declared unsuitable for mining. John says his awareness in the

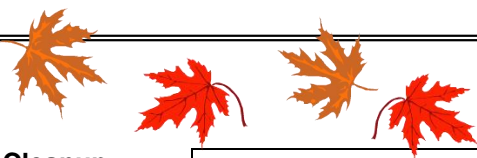
importance of protecting the environment began with his father, who had a great interest in everything around him and knew many bird calls. John said he grew to realize that "some things are not replaceable" and that if mining expanded in the area it would be "like a malignancy on the land." John's conviction against strip mines was seared into his mind when he saw what mining did to the area that is now Banner Marsh. When he saw the land with no vegetation, no trees, nothing left by the strip mine, he knew he did not want this to happen in front of his children and family. He credits his wife Lorraine for giving him support through the battles they have waged to stop strip mining, and for being his best friend during their 54

years of marriage. His children and grandchildren stand with him in his efforts. John works constantly on the Banner issue and looks for more information and contacts as "so many people are uninformed." He says that if you continue to work on things and work hard, "even a blind sow can find an acorn." Thanks to John Grigsby for his hard work and incredible efforts to protect Banner and our river region from strip mining.



John Grigsby Photo: Joyce Blumenshine


HOI Group Calendar



September

14 WED **Executive Meeting, 7 p.m.**
Joyce Blumenshine's home, 2419 E. Reservoir Blvd., Peoria. Call 688-0950 for directions.

21 WED **Group Meeting, 7 p.m.**
Forest Park Nature Center. *Clayton Daughenbaugh, Public Lands at Risk.* Everyone is welcome!

 Drop off your aluminum cans at tonight's meeting and help raise money for the HOI Sierra Club.

24 SAT **Aluminum Can Drop-Off, 10 a.m. to Noon**

Help raise money for the Heart of Illinois Sierra Club! Drop off your aluminum cans at Forest Park Nature Center parking lot from 10 a.m. to noon. Your donation will help finance HOI Group operating expenses, including this newsletter. Please call 243-2230 for more information.

25 SUN **Hike at Black Partridge Park, 2 p.m.**

This educational outing will take you along some of the improved trails in a beautiful woodland park just west of Metamora. Black Partridge Park is the largest contiguous woodland located in Woodford County. We will discuss how citizens saved this park from being destroyed and turned into a golf course. Wear sturdy walking shoes and dress for the weather. This will be about a two hour hike. Meet at the Forest Park Nature Center parking lot at 2 p.m. *For more information phone 688-0950.*

Coming in December

The 2nd Annual HOI Sierra Club Birdseed Sale



More information and an order form will be in the next issue of the *Tallgrass Sierran*. Birdseed makes a great Christmas gift!

October

8 SAT **Adopt-A-Highway Cleanup, 9 a.m.** 

Meet at the Fry Farm at the intersection of Rt. 40 and Singing Woods Road. Gloves and hard-soled shoes are recommended. Sorry, no helpers under 10 years due to safety concerns. For more information, or if you have not viewed the safety video (required), call Rudy Habben at 685-5605.

12 WED **Executive Meeting, 7 p.m.**
Ralph Ginn's home, 20822 N. Blue Ridge Rd., Chillicothe. Call 274-3289 for directions.

15 SAT **Exploring Peoria's Newest Bike Trail, 1 p.m.**

Learn about a section of the Kellar Branch Line that may not be included in the new bicycle trail. George Burrier, Chair, Friends of the Rock Island Trail and Rail Trail Advocates, will bring us up-to-date on what is happening with the Kellar Branch bike trail. We will hike along a section of the right-of-way that is not currently included in plans for the bike path. Meet at 1 p.m. at the corner of Harvard Street and Ruppman Plaza (just off of Rt. 150 behind the Journal Star building). Park carefully along Harvard Street away from the curve or on nearby local streets. *For more information phone 688-0950.*

19 WED **Group Meeting, 7 p.m.**
Forest Park Nature Center. *Shari Britner, The Galapagos Islands.* Everyone is welcome!

22 SAT **Newsletter Deadline**
Send articles for November/December to: John Wosik, 12409 N. Blackhawk Ct., Dunlap, IL 61525, or johnwosik@insightbb.com.

31 MON **Newsletter Mailing, 6:30 p.m.**
Peoria Pizza Works, 3921 N. Prospect Rd., Peoria Heights

Other Events: (Not sponsored by the Sierra Club but provided as a public service.)

Illinois River Sweep, Sept. 17th (Sat)

Help clean up the Illinois River! All registered participants will receive a free River Sweep T-shirt plus gloves and trash bags. Call (866) 584-1310 to join in or register online at www.friendsoftheillinoisriver.org/sweep.htm. Participating communities include Peoria, Banner, East Peoria, Henry, Lacon, Chillicothe, and Havana. Peoria volunteers meet at Liberty Park at 8:30 a.m. to board a barge to pick up trash along the river. A more complete list of participating communities and contact information for each community is available at the website listed above.

Illinois Environment Council Annual Dinner, Sept. 29th (Thu)

Celebrate with Illinois environmental advocates. For information contact IEC in Springfield at 217-544-5954.

The Illinois River: Progress & Promise, Oct. 4-6 (Tue-Thu)

The 2005 Tenth Biennial Governor's Conference on the Management of the Illinois River System, at the Holiday Inn City Centre, Peoria. Speakers will address issues, programs, progress and future plans that will influence the Illinois River in the 21st century. For a detailed list of speakers and registration see www.heartlandwaterresources.com.



Prairie Dawgs Work Crew

The Prairie Dawgs meet the 1st and 3rd Saturdays of the month at Jubilee State Park. Work includes prairie burns, brush cutting, eradicating alien plants, native plant seeding, and planting root stock. Call Doug Franks at 691-7993 for more information.

Heart of Illinois Sierra Club

Hotline: Local Meetings & Outings • Action Alerts (309) 637-1393
Contacts • Leave Messages

Executive Committee

Chair Joseph Laszlo 637-4692 laszloja@excite.com
Vice-Chair Rudy Habben 685-5605
Conservation Chair Ralph Ginn 274-3289 randdginn@bwsys.net
Membership Chair Norman Ewing 686-4122
Outings Chair Joyce Blumenshine 688-0950 joblumen@yahoo.com
Political Chair David Grebner 688-3908
Newsletter Ed./Sec. John Wosik 243-2230 johnwosik@insightbb.com



Treasurer Grayce Mesner 246-8397
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