



# Sauk-Calumet Group

August 2024 Newsletter Volume 43, Issue 2

## An Alternative Vision to a Peotone Airport

*by Robert Sullivan*

Some call the proposed Peotone airport the third airport. However, when one rightly considers not only O'Hare and Midway, but also Gary, Rockford and Milwaukee, it would be the sixth airport. It is generally agreed that Peotone would never have passenger service due to its distance from population centers, lack of infrastructure and lack of interest by all airlines. O'Hare, Midway and Milwaukee already provide passenger service. So, by default it would have to be a cargo airport. It has never been clearly established that the existing airports cannot accommodate cargo for the foreseeable future. O'Hare is opening a \$56 million cargo facility. Rockford has spent \$200 million building a cargo hub. Milwaukee is planning a new cargo facility. Gary could also pursue cargo business. It appears that no cargo carriers have expressed interest in moving operations to Peotone. There is also the potential environmental damage to consider. Massive amounts of air pollution and noise pollution would be generated. Thousands of acres of productive farmland and natural areas would be covered with pavement. Diesel fume spewing trucks would clog area roads. Related suburban sprawl would potentially cover thousands of acres around the airport. It makes no sense to destroy an existing area of open countryside when existing airports can be used. Peotone area residents have lived under a cloud of uncertainty for years. They understand that the quality of life for area residents would be severely impacted by an airport. The State of Illinois is in no financial position to spend billions of dollars on a Peotone airport for which the need is so unproven. A similar project went forward near St. Louis called MidAmerica Airport which has been losing State money since it opened in 1997. It did not generate the promised jobs, which is always the reason to build the airport cited by airport supporters. Close to \$100 million has already been spent on land acquisition for the Peotone airport, leading one to wonder if this is destined to be a huge mistake like MidAmerica Airport. That does not have to be the case as this expenditure may still be justified with an alternate vision for a wonderful regional asset that would benefit everyone and improve the quality of life. The Chicago region has a very low amount of state park acreage per capita. The 9 million people living here have just a few state parks within the area such as Illinois Beach, Channahon, James Pate Philip, William G Stratton, Moraine Hills, Chain O'Lakes, and Gebhard Woods. The Peotone airport site, currently about 4,500 acres, would be a wonderful new state park for the Chicago region and the State already owns it. A new state park could take advantage of the area's agricultural history and incorporate sustainable food production and research, as well as ecological restoration. The University of Illinois and Illinois State University could be involved in this research. Agricultural tourism can include vineyards and wineries, farm to table dining, fruit

orchards, harvest festivals, etc. Hiking, birdwatching, camping and other natural area activities could be available. Educational facilities could accommodate visiting students. The new state park could include demonstration gardens for homeowners and urban farmers, sustainable stormwater management and park prototypes for local governments, and sustainable landscape prototypes for business and school campuses. The creation of this project would reflect real visionary leadership leading to a true asset for the region, providing jobs and improving the quality of life for all. All of this would be a fraction of the cost of an airport. It would also provide a conservation and education focused institution for the south suburbs. The north suburbs have the Chicago Botanic Garden, and the west suburbs have the Morton Arboretum, as well as Brookfield Zoo. It's time to bring such an asset to the south suburbs, not another polluting land use that causes harm to residents and to the environment.

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## Mother Nature Quotes

- "Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better." - Albert Einstein
- "Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's need, but not every man's greed". – Mohandas K. Gandhi
- "In every walk with nature one receives far more than he seeks." – John Muir
- "Study nature, love nature, stay close to nature. It will never fail you." – Frank Lloyd Wright
- "The miracle is not to fly in the air or to walk on water, but to walk on the earth." - Chinese proverb
- "We are the first generation to feel the impact of climate change and the last generation that can do something about it." - Barack Obama
- "If you can't be in awe of Nature, there's something wrong with you." -Alex Trebek
- "The greatest threat to our planet is the belief that someone else will save it." - Robert Swan

# I Dream of “Slim Pickins”

*by Dorelle Ackermann*

I joined the 2024 annual **DuPage River Sweep** on Saturday May 4th. Although I make it a habit to collect garbage while kayaking for pleasure, there is something inspiring when joining others of like mind. Over the past 30+ years that this event has taken place, more than 9,000 volunteers have removed nearly 300 tons of garbage from DuPage County streams.

When I inquired about using kayaks on the river sweep, I learned that I needed to join the group that would “sweep” beginning at the Canoe Launch and Dog Park on Mack Rd. It is a lovely stretch of river and, perhaps, due to the efforts of the sweep, much cleaner than the Shorewood to Channahon area. These pictures show how lovely the river is. Ray Ziemer, a member of the **Prairie State Canoeists**, collecting the typical tires carelessly dumped into rivers and my kayaking showing evidence that I won the “trifecta of river sweeps” finding 3 or more balls from different sports.



I enjoy kayaking the DuPage River and my usual route begins in Shorewood and ends in Channahon for a 7-9 mile paddle. The river fluctuates greatly so it's a good idea to [check water levels](#) and ask locals. A good resource is [“Friends of the DuPage River”](#). The sweep had “slimmer pickins” than the cleanup I attended last October with the “Friends of the DuPage River” Facebook group (see the short video of our haul”. **Yikes! This** brings me to an “ask”. **“The DuPage River Watershed”** (<https://theconservationfoundation.org/rivers-streams-old/dupage-river-watershed/>) could use our help. Our **Sauk Calumet Sierra Club** could adopt a stream, stencil storm drains or extend the reach of the river sweep. Volunteering as a group is that much more effective. Will you take the lead?



Email Lisa O'Brien at [lobrien@theconservationfoundation.org](mailto:lobrien@theconservationfoundation.org). As the Conservation Foundation's website states: "Nothing feels quite as good as working hard at work worth doing" and creating "slim pickins" will do just that.



## Election 2024 Needs Us!

*by Lois Lauer*

I'm happy to report that the Sierra Club has endorsed the Harris-Walz ticket! According to Sierra Club National Director, Ben Jealous, we know they will work "*ambitiously to advance our progress toward a just, thriving clean energy economy.*" From the top of the ticket to the down-ballot races, so much hangs in the balance of this November's election. The platforms of the opposing candidates will have a huge impact on the future of this planet.

In addition to Harris-Walz, Sierra Club has endorsed numerous Congressional candidates and Illinois legislative candidates. Look for an email from the Illinois Sierra Club in October with all the endorsements! The following are the candidates in the Sauk Calumet area that have already been approved for endorsement, and there are other candidates still awaiting final approval.

For Congress: Sean Casten (IL06) and Lauren Underwood (IL14)

For IL Senate: Rachel Ventura (43), Meg Loughran Cappel (49)

For IL House: Justin Slaughter (27), Billy Morgan (29), Mary Gill (35), Debbie Meyers-Martin (38), Suzanne Ahkris (82) and Dagmara Avelar (85)

For Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago Commissioner: Precious Brady Davis (2-year term), Marcelino Garcia (6-year term), Kari Steele (6-year term), Sharon Waller (6-year term)

So, what does a Sierra Club endorsement mean?

In 1892, Sierra Club started as a mountaineering club, but after a fight to save the Grand Canyon, in 1964 it was decided it could best protect the natural environment by electing and lobbying environmentally conscious legislators. That's when the Sierra Club endorsement tradition began. It's a rigorous process. Candidates are endorsed when they fill out an endorsement questionnaire, are interviewed by a team of Sierra Club members, and then, based on the recommendation of that team, are approved by the local group in their area (in our case, the Sauk Calumet Excom), then by the Chapter Political Committee, then by the Chapter Excom, and in the case of federal elections, also by the National Political Committee. An endorsement by the Sierra Club means that we consider the candidate to be an environmental champion, and we can expect them to use their office to sponsor and support environmental legislation. It also means we're ready to support them in their campaigns! If you'd like to help to campaign for any of our endorsed races, from the top of the ticket on down, there are lots of opportunities to write postcards, make phone calls, knock on doors, post on social media, donate to campaigns, put up campaign signs, and perhaps most important of all, talk, talk, talk to everyone you know. Tell your friends and family that we need these champions. We know that our climate crisis needs massive correction action now! We know that our lands, water, and air needs protection. We know that we all need to work together toward the goal of a just and healthy future for all. We've planned some great opportunities for you to get involved in this fall's campaigning. We'll have postcards to write and registration information for canvassing days and phone-banking opportunities at our Sept 9<sup>th</sup> meeting – see page 8 of this newsletter for details. Plus, we have Pizza and Postcard Parties planned at Barraco's Pizza in Orland Park on Sun, Sept 15. 3-5 pm. and at Arrowhead Brewery in New Lenox on Sun, Sept 29, 3-5 pm. You can register on the Illinois Sierra Club events calendar page at <https://www.sierraclub.org/illinois/events-calendar>. This election needs us, and we can make a difference!

## Frankfort Library Earth Awareness Fair March 24, 2024

*By Sam Bretz*



Sierra Club's Sauk-Calumet members Sam Bretz and Dan McNamee joined over 17 other eco-organizations at the Frankfort Library to showcase and encourage Earth stewardship, resilience, sustainability, and community. Attendees discovered how they could lend their skill and passion to support local organizations dedicated to promoting a healthy environment for all of Earth's inhabitants. Visitors expressed interest at the Sierra Club table in our meetings, which are held every second Monday of the month both via Zoom and at the Frankfort Library, and about our outings. Folks can sign up for meetings and outings [via our website](#).

Every day is Earth Day, we recognize this every time we step outside, breathe the air, consume food and water, and bloom together through the changing of seasons. If you have any interest in becoming a member of the Sierra Club or would like to donate to an organization catalyzing positive change, these QR codes will take you towards those important actions.



**SIERRA CLUB**



**JOIN TODAY!**



**SIERRA CLUB**



**DONATE TODAY!**



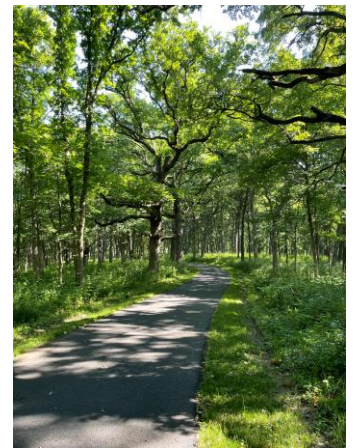
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## It's Still Exercise!

*by Dorelle Ackermann*

I have always loved biking as a way to get out into the forest preserves and get exercise at the same time. I live within a mile of the [Hickory Creek Forest Preserve](#) in Mokena and the paved bike path can connect to the [Plank Road Trail](#) as well as [Hickory Creek Barrens](#) along bike paths and no roads. These trails offer riders 35+ miles of joy.

For me, the joy faded considerably when I hit some challenging hills (none on the Plank Road Trail), when the temperature and humidity reached high eighties or when the wind and hills slowed me down to under 6 mph. E-bikes are officially allowed on bike trails in Will and Cook county as long as the top speed is 20 mph and the bikes have pedals to engage the engine.



But, what about exercise? My motto is "I exercise to eat" so my cookies and ice cream habits force me to get some amount of exercise. My calculations tell me that if I ride twice as far (I do) and keep the electric assist gear in the lowest level, I am getting approximately the same amount of exercise as I would with a regular bike. Now, hills, wind, temperature and humidity don't prevent me from enjoying the paths.

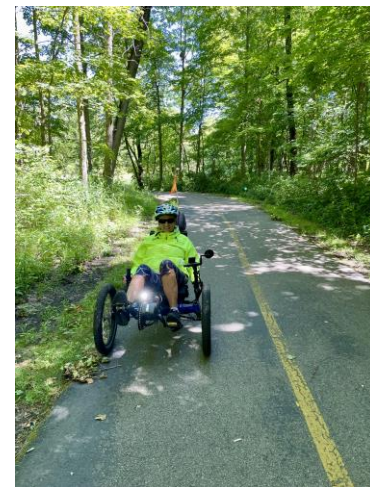
Another benefit of E-bikes that I enjoy is doing errands via bike. Meijer's, Kohls and PetSmart are easily accessible (located at the corner of Lincoln Highway and



Wolf Road) as well as Michaels, Target and Lowes just west of Hickory Creek Barrens. Below is a picture of my bike loaded up with groceries and clothes.



For my friends and I who are in the 7th decade of life, balance can be an issue. Don't let that stop you from enjoying biking in our forest preserves. Electric trikes are just one answer to that concern. Talk about comfort! This one comes with a padded seat, back rest and head rest. Now your only concern might be that you are so comfortable you might fall asleep.



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## Tinley Park Earth Day Fair

### April 27, 2024

*By Gregg Ott*

The Sauk -Calumet Group of the Sierra Club was one of many organizations promoting ways to protect our planet at the Tinley Park Earth Day event. Gregg and Christy Mazrimas-Ott took turns answering questions, handing out information about the Sierra Club and talking about ways to maintain a healthy planet. We also found time to visit other groups at the event. There are so many organizations that are fighting the good fight to protect the only planet we have. The Cook County Forest Preserve District had multiple tables full of information about all their parks. The Citizens Climate Lobby, Illinois Beaver Alliance and the Urban Canopy Compost Club were just a few of the tables I visited. The Village of Tinley Park does a good job of promoting this event to families. It was good to see so many young kids interested in ways to protect the planet.



Christy & Gregg answering a question about the Sierra club.



The Sauk -Calumet information board.



Fellow Sauk Calumet member Dorelle on the right is working the Pachamama Alliance table.

# No More Sauk Calumet “Hybrid Programs!”

*by Lois Lauer*

For the past year, we have tried to accommodate everyone’s preferences by having our monthly programs at the Frankfort Library, with members having the option of attending in person or via zoom. We gave the idea our best shot, but it was never a smooth operation nor a really good experience for either group as we struggled with the technical challenges! So, we are giving up on that idea. Our plan for the 2024-25 year is to have some meetings in person and some meetings on zoom. We feel confident that we can provide quality experiences either way, just not at the same time! Here is the schedule:

In-person meetings at the Frankfort Library at 7pm: The second Monday of September, October, March, April, and May.

Zoom meetings at 7pm: The second Monday of November, December, January, and February. As you see, we have also changed the meeting time slightly. We will now start at 7:00 p.m., which is 15 minutes earlier than in previous years. This change is due to the library wanting us to end our programs by 8:30 pm.

We are lining up a great schedule of programs for the fall---about beavers, clean energy, clean transportation, and butterflies! And of course, January is our traditional member’s slide night, in which we can all share slides of our outdoor experiences from the past year. We hope that you will join us whenever you are able. We look forward to seeing you!

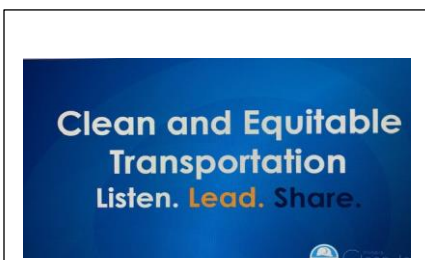
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## Sauk Calumet Sierra Club Group Meetings Schedule

Meetings are held at 7:00pm on the second Monday of every month except for June, July, and August. All meetings are free and open both to Sierra Club members and to the public. The meetings will take place in person only at the Frankfort Library in September, October, March, April and May. The meetings will be on Zoom only in November, December, January and February. An email will be sent the week before each meeting, asking you to RSVP. A second email will be sent to those who plan to attend online with the instructions and connection information for our Zoom conference. Please check on the [Sauk Calumet Sierra Club website](#) and [Sauk Calumet Group Facebook page](#) for the latest information on our meetings.



September 9 -in person only at the Frankfort Public Library at 7pm Welcome to the Sierra Club Meeting/Volunteer Information on Outings, Climate and Political Activism. Join us for a night of getting to know your local Sauk Calumet Group.



October 14 - in person only at the Frankfort Public Library at 7pm. Sierra Club Clean Transportation Team member Gregg Ott will talk about transportation, climate change, and things we can do to make transportation cleaner in Illinois.





November 11 - online via Zoom only. 7 pm. Join Sierra Club organizer Ann Baskerville as she talks about how we can make Illinois's grid cleaner and more resilient. Illinois is in the forefront of clean energy after passing CEJA. Ann will talk about next steps to help combat climate change.



December 9 - online via Zoom only. 7 pm. Allen Lawrance, co-director of the Illinois Butterfly Monitoring Network, will discuss the Network, their volunteer scientific monitoring work, and different butterflies of Illinois. He'll also have some tips about setting up butterfly gardens.



January 13, 2025 - online via Zoom only. 7 pm. Members' Slide Night! Share some of your best nature slides from 2024. Your slides can be from anywhere - your backyard, a local forest preserve, or a faraway natural wonder. There's beauty all around us! Please contact Lois Lauer or Portia Gallegos if you want to share your photos.



February 10, 2025 - online via Zoom only. 7 pm. Movie Night. We'll watch **Common Ground**, a movie about regenerative agriculture.



March 10, 2025 - in person only at the Frankfort Public Library at 7pm. The Illinois Beaver Alliance is to improve the health and function of Illinois watersheds, which will increase climate resilience, improve water quality, increase biodiversity, and create floodwater storage capacity; and to educate the public about the ecological importance of beavers and the modern tools for resolving human-beaver conflicts.

Letters to the Editor:

Letters on content within the Sauk-Calumet newsletter should be sent to the editor at:

[sc-editor@illinois.sierraclub.org](mailto:sc-editor@illinois.sierraclub.org)

Please include your full name and address and reference the article on which you are commenting.

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The Sierra Club from the national level down to the local groups does so many positive things to help protect our planet. So, let's get outdoors and enjoy our beautiful world together. Click below for Sierra Club Illinois outings.



Remember to check our Sauk-Calumet Group website for current information and news updates on issues relevant to Illinois.

[Click here for our website.](#)

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to find us on Facebook