



RIVER PRAIRIE GROUP

DuPage Sierran
Summer 2024, Vol 44, No. 3



Chatter From the Chair

Hello to my friends from the River Prairie Group. Tabling season is in full swing with members of RPG leadership sharing information on the Sierra Club, DuPage Monarch Project, Plastic Reduction, and Clean Energy at many events. We are collecting names at tabling events to share the newsletter hoping to engage new members. I welcome you to email this newsletter to share with friends to welcome them to join our activities. [Full story...](#)



Not Just Plastics Recycling - Plastics Reduction!

By Connie Schmidt and Wendy Vernon

Wendy Vernon is adding a new area of action to the work of the River Prairie Group of Sierra Club. She has created a website that is linked to our River Prairie Group page [here](#). Just scroll down to see “Plastics Reduction” and click. Below is an excerpt from her front page, but please explore, as there is much more on the site. If you are interested in working on this issue or for more information, you can reach her at wvecoactionhub@gmail.com.

[Full story...](#)



Eclipse Experience

By Bob Barbieri

I've seen several partial solar eclipses over the years and have always found them amazing, but never had I had the opportunity to experience a total eclipse of the sun... a totality! Everyone who has seen one has said that it is awe-inspiring. I missed the total eclipse that came through Southern Illinois in 2017 and decided that I wasn't going to miss this one, too.

[Full story...](#)



Transition to Electric School Buses in DuPage

By Janice F. Guider

Reflecting on the Clean School Bus journey we embarked on nearly a year ago, it's heartening to see the progress made for a healthier environment for our students and community. The initial disconnect highlighted the need for educators to recognize the importance of clean, healthy air in education. While there is no one-size-fits-all solution to creating a conducive learning environment, it's becoming increasingly clear that environmental scientists play a crucial role in enlightening educators, physicians, and policymakers about the link between many adult-onset and chronic illnesses and early childhood exposures or experiences. This underscores the importance of our role in advocacy efforts. [Full story...](#)



Trees Are Extraordinary

By Lonnie Morris, Volunteer Coordinator of the DuPage Monarch Project

Trees have long been revered for the many benefits they give us. They also continue to surprise us as we learn more about them. Recent research has revealed the important contribution trees make to the survival of native bees in the early weeks of spring. The growing impact of the biodiversity crisis has set off an alarm calling for more attention and understanding of the complicated web of relationships sustaining life on Earth.

Kelsay Shaw, botanist and owner of The Possibility Place, a native plant nursery in Monee, Illinois, will share his 25 years of experience growing native trees and observing the many bees and butterflies they support.

Save the Date

Meadows in the Sky for Bees and Butterflies

Kelsay Shaw

September 25, 7:00 pm

800 N Main St, Glen Ellyn



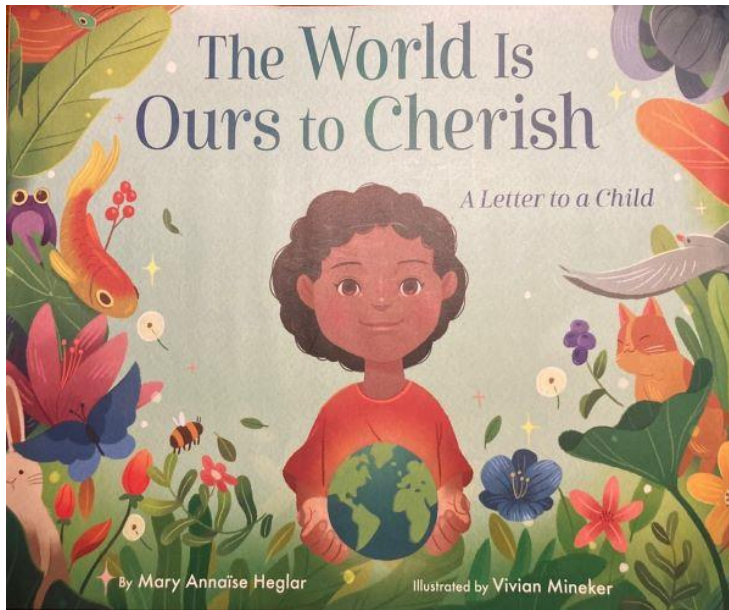
Illinois Lobby Issues for 2024

By Connie Schmidt and Linda Sullivan

Please note this article reflects the status of bills at time of writing, but the legislative session is now over.

DuPage legislators were impressive in the spring legislative session in the number of environmental bills important to the Sierra Club IL Chapter that they cosponsored or voted for.

At the time of this writing, the season is not over, and some of our most important bills are still pending. Below is a rundown of what we have passed, what we still hope to pass, and the legislators that helped us. If you see that your state representative or state senator cosponsored one of our bills, you can help the cause by contacting them and thanking them. [Full story...](#)



The World Is Ours to Cherish

By *Connie Schmidt*

I am honored to serve as a Library Trustee on the board for my local public library. And as a result, I was invited to attend the Public Library Association conference in Columbus, Ohio, this spring. My world as a Sierra Club volunteer, educator, democracy defender, and grandmother all collided with the Big Ideas speaker on the last day of the conference when Mary Annaïse Heglar spoke. WOW!

[Full story...](#)



Renovation Ongoing at Mayslake

By *Connie Schmidt*

Many of you may know Mayslake from attending an outdoor Shakespeare performance on a warm summer evening. Others may know of Mayslake from the art fairs held in their lovely grand hall. Still others may have bought native plants over the last several years at the Native Plant Sale held at Mayslake.

This article is written to let you know that much is going on at the former Peabody Estate, and the Forest Preserve District of DuPage is opening the doors wide to encourage you to come check out the improvements and note that more is in store for this beautiful building and the surrounding landscape. [Full story...](#)



Springtime in Shawnee Nat'l Forest

By Linda Sullivan

The forest floor was a carpet of spring wildflowers. Snakes on Snake Road swam to the edge of ponds to stare at hikers who stared back in delight. The cypress swamps of the Cache River Basin were loud with the drone of insects and unfamiliar birds singing their ancient songs. Hikers who pulled out phones to use the latest app to identify them seemed out of place in an area where dinosaurs seemed just around the corner. The contrasting sunny hills and canyons were no less wild. At night, those who ventured out were serenaded by frogs long extirpated from urban areas. [Full story...](#)



Recap - Spring Programs

By Connie Schmidt

In March, we had a presentation from Adam Kreuzer on the consequences of outdoor light pollution and what we can do to preserve our natural night skies. His presentation focused on how light pollution adversely affects migrating birds, our other wildlife friends, and our personal health. In addition, we can save energy and money by using more efficient or less lighting. Adam is a delegate for DarkSky International and a founder of its Chicago Chapter, DarkSky Chicago.

[Full story, including Making Your Garden Come Alive program...](#)

Looking to get more involved? See our campaign flyer below.

ENVIRONMENTAL CAMPAIGNS

2024

ILLINOIS SIERRA CLUB • RIVER PRAIRIE GROUP



Glacial Ridge Restoration

Volunteers, led by a trained Forest Preserve Steward, work to remove invasive plants so that native plants can grow in their natural environment at the Churchill Woods Forest Preserve's Glacial Ridge. It is an 8-acre woodland on a steep-sided mound of gravel

deposited by a melting ice sheet adjacent to the IL Prairie Path just north of Walnut Glen Park in Glen Ellyn. Contact Bruce Blake at rlinstns1@aol.com



DuPage Monarch Project

The DuPage Monarch Project is a group of local organizations working together to provide education about pollinators and increase the amount of suitable monarch habitat throughout DuPage

County. DuPage Monarch Project is asking mayors and village boards to formally resolve to make their communities more monarch friendly. Contact Lonnie Morris at dupagemonarchs@gmail.com

Outings

We have a nature-inspired trip for every season, skill level, and outdoor interest. Trained Sierra Club leaders guide hikers, bikers, backpackers, and kayakers on trips through various Midwestern terrains lasting from a couple hours duration to overnights. There is truly something for everyone.

Contact Mike Davis at mikeyd5600@gmail.com



Electing Environmental Champions

We interview and endorse candidates for political office that will support our environmental values. We organize teams of volunteers to help them get elected. We also lobby legislators to get key environmental bills passed in Springfield. This is probably the most impactful work we do.

Contact Linda Sullivan at lsullivan23@hotmail.com



Water Monitoring

For almost 20 years, the River Prairie Group of Sierra Club in DuPage County, IL has monitored the water quality of three regional rivers – Salt Creek and the east/west

branches of the DuPage River – as part of Sierra Club's national Water Sentinels project. Our all-volunteer effort, one of the oldest and broadest programs of its type, tests river water each month and posts it to a website. Contact Bob Barbieri at bob-barbieri@comcast.net



Clean Energy and Clean Transportation Advocacy

We plan and push for transforming our economy away from fossil-fuel dependence in a just and orderly manner. We advocate for more solar energy, electric vehicle transportation, and other measures to address climate change and the health of all of our communities.

Clean energy contact: Jeff Gahrts at jgahrts@gmail.com
Clean transportation: Connie Schmidt at cschmidt527@gmail.com

How You Can Help

The River Prairie Group is looking to expand our outreach in the towns and cities of DuPage County. We're asking you to help by volunteering for one of these six Campaigns. If you have questions or would like more information, contact one of the names listed above; or contact Connie Schmidt, River Prairie Group Chair, at cschmidt527@gmail.com or 630-234-3029. Also see our web site: www.sierraclub.org/illinois/river-prairie

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!



SIERRA CLUB
ILLINOIS CHAPTER



Last Word

"Sentiment without action is the ruin of the soul."

- Edward Abbey

GET OUTSIDE

Enjoy the outdoors by joining our upcoming local outings! [Sign up here.](#)



Facebook

Follow us on Facebook for news, events and updates on the work we do to keep our communities green!

[Donate to Sierra Club Illinois Today!](#)