



# Tallgrass Sierran

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THE HEART OF ILLINOIS GROUP OF THE SIERRA CLUB ♦ P.O. Box 3593, Peoria, IL 61614 ☎ (309) 745-1920

## HOI GROUP MEETINGS

WED  
JAN 17

**The Future of Peoria Lake**  
Forest Park Nature Center, 7 p.m.

Terry Kohlbus, Director of the Tri-County Planning Commission, will present proposals developed by the Peoria Lakes Basin Alliance to rehabilitate the Peoria Lake section of the Illinois River. Since the Peoria Lock and Dam was constructed in the 1930's, over 100,000 acre-feet of silt has been deposited in the Lakes. What to do with the silt has been studied for a number of years. The Alliance is now seeking comments on it's proposed solutions. *All are welcome! Refreshments served after the meeting.*

WED  
FEB 21

**Local Elections: Meet the Candidates**  
Forest Park Nature Center, 7 p.m.

This evening we will have a number of candidates seeking local office express their views on sprawl, public transit, urban forestry, and other environmental issues for the year ahead. *All are welcome! Refreshments served after the meeting.*

## Millions for a Baseball Stadium Axes Tree and Flower Funds

Bad News from the Peoria City Council

BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

Residents of Peoria can only be dismayed that the Peoria City Council has cut Budget Year 2001 funds for its annual agreement with the Peoria Park District to supply road median flower plantings and other city beautification, such as the flower bed at the corner of Knoxville Avenue and War Memorial Drive. The city funding deficit created by massive projects, such as the proposed baseball stadium, resulted in last minute wheeling and dealing to trim city expenditures for the new year. This funding cut appears to also impact efforts for a tree preservation ordinance, as funds for PUFAB, the Peoria Urban Forestry Advisory Board, have also been axed. Current information indicates that PUFAB is on hold with efforts regarding a tree protection ordinance request to the City Council.

## The Conservation Vote



BY RALPH GINN

One of the questions that bedevils conservationist groups like Sierra Club is, how influential is an environmental issue(s) in determining the way people vote? The League of Conservation Voters specializes in publicizing the conservation records of Presidential and Congressional candidates. In the 2000 election LCV spent over \$4 million for their "Environmental Champions" and opposing their "Dirty Dozen." And, on face value, with good results. Seven of the dirty dozen were defeated, including three incumbent senators, Gorton (WA), Abraham (MI), and Grams (MN). All six of their selected environmental champions won. A close look at these races reveals that LVC doesn't spend money on races that have a small chance of going their way. In other words, underdogs need not apply. But, Sierra Club picks their favorites for endorsement in much the same way. Walla! Dollars well spent, and an impressive won-loss record.

But, the question of how much a conservation issue swings voter opinion remains. The 2000 election in Hallock Township, of Peoria County and the 18th congressional district of Illinois defines this problem in sharp image. Ray LaHood, incumbent Republican, was challenged by Joyce Harant, democrat. At issue was Corridor A of the proposed Peoria-to-Chicago freeway. A strong grassroots organization calling themselves "No Way corridor A" (NWCA) organized,

held public meetings, sought and garnered support of township boards and city councils up and down the length of corridor A. NWCA signs sprouted like dandelions throughout the Corridor A bisected Hallock Township. The politics of this issue were that Ray LaHood was and is still the numero uno pusher for a Peoria-to-Chicago freeway and had expressed favoring Corridor A over the other two corridors. His opponent opposed the freeway and favored upgrading existing highways instead. Surprisingly, LaHood carried, typically Republican Hallock, by a greater margin than George Bush.

So, what were the voters of Hallock Township thinking when they punched LaHood's chad? Did they make the connection between LaHood and Corridor A? LaHood's romance with the freeway and Corridor A was often spoken at NWCA meetings and in the press. Did Hallock voters think a freeway through their backyard was a small price to pay for voting their favorite candidate? I'm sorry to disappoint, but I don't have a clue. Maybe, NWCA didn't hammer the politics of the issue enough. Maybe the voters are stubborn to their party preference. Whatever the answer, the result sends a clear message to Congressman LaHood that the NWCA voters are not willing to back up their opposition with a vote.

In this one case, the conservation issue struck out in the voting booth. We can only keep trying and hope for better outcomes.

## Your Phone Call Needed on Behalf of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge



## Nature Preserve Status Closer for Singing Woods

BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

Until January 20, 2001, President Bill Clinton has the executive right to provide National Monument status for the Coastal Plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Please call now to urge President Clinton to protect the Arctic Refuge as a National Monument. The White House Comment Line phone number is 202-456-1111. You can call toll free by dialing the Alaska Wilderness League number 1-888-750-4897 and you will be connected to the White House comment line. Other options are to FAX the White House at 202-456-2461 or write to President Bill Clinton, The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., Washington, D.C. 20500.

January 3, 2001, is designated as the Arctic Monument Nationwide Call-In Day. The Alaska Wilderness League, which is a coalition of environmental groups including the Sierra Club, hopes to generate thousands of phone calls to President Clinton in early January. It is essential that the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge be protected. The Coastal Plain in the Refuge is the biological heart of the last unspoiled Arctic ecosystem in North America. Polar bears den on these coastal lands and 130,000 Porcupine River caribou travel hundreds of miles each year to the coastal plain to deliver their young. Grizzly bears, musk oxen, wolves, golden eagles and tundra swans all depend on this area for a critical part of the year. The area is also critical to the subsistence lifestyle of the Gwich'in Native Americans, who depend on the Porcupine caribou herd for their food and maintaining their culture.

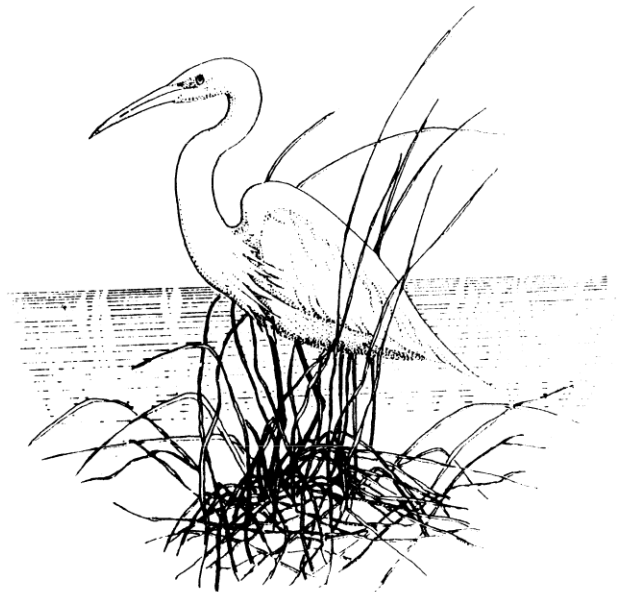
National Monument status for the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge will make it easier to defend the Refuge if proposals are made by President Elect Bush or the new Congress to open the Refuge to drilling. Bush campaigned on opening the Refuge for oil, which will destroy the pristine nature of the coast, even if the oil exploration and drilling is done in a so-called "environmentally sensitive" manner.

In a December interview on the Discovery Channel President Bill Clinton said that he did not believe that the oil drilling issue alone would justify declaring National Monument status for the Refuge, but that there might be other reasons to take such action. PLEASE CALL PRESIDENT CLINTON and state the need to protect the Gwich'in Native Americans' dependence on the Porcupine Caribou herd and the importance of elevating the nation's respect and awareness of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge by declaring it a National Monument. Ask your friends to call. Time is running out! Please ring in the New Year by ringing the White House phone line on behalf of National Monument status for the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

At the December 20th Peoria Park Board meeting, the Board voted unanimously to approve proceeding with Nature Preserve status for a large part of the 694 acre park.

Some areas of Singing Woods will not be included in the designation so that the option for building parking lots and other facilities remains open. Angela Moorehouse, Illinois Nature Preserve Commission, attended the meeting. Singing Woods is expected to come up for consideration at the February Illinois Nature Preserves Commission meeting. Special thanks go to Peoria Park Board Trustee Jim Allen, who led Park Board efforts in evaluating Nature Preserve status for the park.



## Vote for New Shortline Rail Company Gives Hope for Rock Island Trail Extension

### Good News from the Peoria City Council

BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

Thank goodness that at a mid-December meeting the Peoria City Council voted to proceed with a new railroad spur company. Negotiations and plans for the western rail access to Pioneer Park will continue without Pioneer Rail Corporation. DOT shortline rail was given the Council's vote to handle the rail extension, and this is an essential step towards development of the Kellor Branch Line as a hiking-bicycling-greenway trail to downtown Peoria. Special thanks goes to City Council members Chuck Grayeb and Gail Thetford who have been advocates for progress with the trail. Mayor Bud Grieves added significant efforts in making progress on this issue.

# THE CLINTON ENVIRONMENTAL LEGACY

BY RALPH GINN

President Bill Clinton gets my vote for the Jekyll and Hyde Award of the 20th Century. But, if we can blink at the Monica conundrum and focus on Environmental Bill, we find a truly remarkable record of fighting off anti-environmental riders, strong support for the EPA, and a whirlwind of monumental decisions. Nine monuments to be exact. To be sure, Clinton created eight in his final year. Only, Grand Staircase-Escalante (Utah-1.7 million acres) dates back to 1996. This year's creations are: Canyons of the Ancients (Colorado-164,000 acres), Cascade-Siskiyou (Oregon-52,000 acres), Hanford Reach (Washington-195,000 acres), Ironwood Forest (Arizona-129,000 acres), Giant Sequoia (California-328,000 acres), Grand Canyon-Parashant (Utah-1 million acres), Agua Fria (Arizona-71,000 acres), California Coastal (840 miles of coastal islands, rocks and reefs), Pinnacles (California-8,000 acre expansion of the existing National Monument).

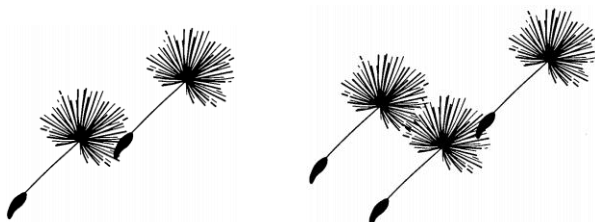
In 2000 Clinton has also created the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Reserve which encompasses the Hawaiian Islands National Wildlife Refuge. This coral reserve is 84 million acres of reefs around the northwestern islands. Pending are at least five more monuments and, of course, the whip cream and cherry topping, 60 million square miles of public lands to be closed to road building

Not since Teddy Roosevelt has a President come remotely close to the Clinton conservation legacy. Now, lets keep our environmental eye on Bill, and don't neglect your Monica blink exercises.



## Thanks to Rudy Habben!

Special thanks and recognition goes to Rudy Habben, Heart of Illinois Sierra Club Chairman for 2000. Rudy's dedication to HOI group goes above and beyond what you may realize. He tirelessly attends meetings on a wide-range of topics and has represented our group on a host of boards and important functions. Thanks Rudy, for making HOI Sierra your retirement job of choice! We appreciate all the work you have done. Rudy was presented with a special commemorative book at the December HOI group potluck meeting.



## All Creatures Great and Small



"Every good thing, great and small, needs defense."—John Muir

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CONTRIBUTING	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150	<input type="checkbox"/> \$175
LIFE	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1250
SENIOR	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32
STUDENT	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32
LIMITED INCOME	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32

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Enclose check and mail to:  
**Sierra Club**  
 P.O. Box 52968  
 Boulder, CO 80322-2968

