



**SIERRA  
CLUB**  
FOUNDED 1892

# Shawnee Trails



<http://www.sierraclub.org/illinois/shawnee>

**Sierra Club – Shawnee Group**

**September – November 2023 QUARTERLY**

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**Shawnee Group Contact Information:**

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PO Box 172, Carbondale, IL 62903-0172  
<http://www.sierraclub.org/illinois/shawnee>  
also <http://shawneegroup.blogspot.com>

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Jean Sellar 618-893-1379  
[biojean@peoplepc.com](mailto:biojean@peoplepc.com)

**Conservation Co-Chair, Shawnee National Forest Committee, Cool Cities Initiative:**  
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618-529-4824 [habitaji@aol.com](mailto:habitaji@aol.com)

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[eberpsy@icloud.com](mailto:eberpsy@icloud.com) 618-687-2998

**Fundraising Committee:**  
Carla Womack (native plant sale)  
Barb McKasson (calendars)

**Newsletter Editor, Webmaster:** Sabrina Hardenbergh [sabrina@midwest.net](mailto:sabrina@midwest.net)

**Publicity:** Mike Covell [emike@siu.edu](mailto:emike@siu.edu)

**Our Future Homes: Healthy, Sustainable and Affordable**

*By Barbara McKasson*

How are we doing in our efforts to kick our addiction to fossil fuels? Illinois is now a leader!

CEJA, the Illinois Climate and Equitable Jobs Act, signed into law in 2021, includes provisions to phase out carbon emissions from the energy production and transportation sectors as part of the strategy to phase into all-electric energy powered by renewable sources by 2050. Illinois agencies, businesses and citizen groups, including Sierra Club, are now busy implementing these provisions.

Because we now have a climate emergency, we need to do “Everything, Everywhere All at Once.” Burning fossil fuels in buildings accounts for 22% of Illinois carbon emissions. So, the Illinois Clean Jobs Coalition <[ilcleanjobs.org](http://ilcleanjobs.org)>, including Sierra Club, is now developing a state policy on clean buildings, with a goal of pushing “Clean Building” state legislation starting in 2024. This will also be a phase-in for existing buildings, with incentives (carrots). Requirements (sticks) would be focused on new construction, such as requiring all-electric buildings.

What is a “Clean Building”? A “clean building” is efficient, with insulation and weatherization plus energy efficient appliances. That is the first level effort. Our next level effort is to reduce and even eliminate gas and oil appliances from our homes, relying instead on electricity powered by renewable sources, such as solar, wind and geothermal heat pumps.

Clean buildings can improve our health in addition to helping the climate. Presently, almost 80% of Illinois residents rely on burning gas for heating. Many people also still rely on burning gas for cooking and water heating. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has found that indoor pollution is on average 2 – 5 times higher than air pollution outside. Much of this unhealthy air is from burning gas in our homes. In a peer-reviewed study, children in homes with gas stoves had a 42% increased risk of childhood asthma.

Clean buildings can save us money. Efficient electric appliances cost less than gas appliances when figured over the lifetime of the appliances. The Illinois Citizens Utility Board has found that they pay for themselves in a few years, with appliance lifetime savings of thousands of dollars. Savings are also available upfront on some clean energy and energy efficient items, such as *(Continued on Page 2)*

(Our Future Homes, Continued from Page 1)

through the Inflation Reduction Act. For that information, check out:

<https://www.citizensutilityboard.org/blog/2022/09/01/heres-what-illinois-consumers-need-to-know-about-inflation-reduction-act-benefits/>.

Clean buildings will help curb climate change, which is why the Illinois Clean Jobs Coalition, including Sierra Club, is charging ahead with a three-pronged strategy: oppose expansion of fossil fuel infrastructure, along with accompanying rate hikes; educate people on the need for efficient all-electric homes; and push for state legislation that facilitates the transition to all-electric buildings.

### **What You Can Do**

- **Come to the “Clean Building” event in Carbondale on September 27<sup>th</sup>, 5 to 7PM** at the Civic Center. This event will give you more information on the transition to clean buildings, address your concerns and questions, and get your advice and ideas on how to reach our goals.
- **Sign online petitions to oppose the excessive rate hikes for gas and electric** that Ameren has requested for approval from the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC). We need to spend our money on efficient appliances, not on fattening Ameren stockholders and executives. Go to: <citizensutilityboard.org>, click on “Fight Record Rate Hikes”, then under “Take Action”, sign the CUB petition against Ameren Illinois’ 1.3 billion electric rate hike request and the petition against Ameren Illinois’ \$148.9 million gas rate hike request.
- **Submit a written public comment to the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC)** on the proposed Ameren rate hikes. Follow the links on the CUB website <citizensutilityboard.org> (see above) and then click on the “File a public comment with the ICC” link and let the ICC know your concerns about the proposed Ameren rate hikes.
- **For even more impact, give oral comment** at an online ICC meeting in September, October or November. For help on how to make an oral comment contact Sally Burgess, who will happily reach out to anyone who expresses interest and provide them with talking points and the link to register. [sally.burgess@sierraclub.org](mailto:sally.burgess@sierraclub.org)

We are all in this Climate Change fight together and we need your help to keep it going in the right direction!

**Community Event:** “Homes of the Future in Southern Illinois: Important Transitions for Cleaner Air in Your Home and Community”

**Date and Time:** Wednesday, September 27, 2023, 5 pm to 7 pm

**Location:** Carbondale Civic Center, Room 108, 200 South Illinois Avenue, Carbondale, IL

The Shawnee Group and other co-sponsors—including Faith in Place and Citizens Utility Board—invite you to attend "Homes of the Future in Southern Illinois." At this event, we will share and together discuss information, questions, and concerns about the transition to clean buildings needed to make our utility bills more affordable and the air in our southern Illinois homes and communities healthier.

To learn more about this transition and what is meant by “clean buildings,” see the piece above by Barb McKasson in this *Shawnee Trails* issue: “Our Future Homes: Healthy, Sustainable, and Affordable.”

We look forward to seeing you on September 27<sup>th</sup>. The event is free and open to the public! Refreshments will be provided!

For further information, contact Jane Cogie ([jane.cogie@gmail.com](mailto:jane.cogie@gmail.com)). More details will soon be available on the Shawnee Group website and on our Facebook page.

## FALL 2023 – SHAWNEE GROUP SIERRA CLUB MEMBER PROGRAMS

Note our **in-person** Shawnee Group member programs, all at the Carbondale Township Hall Meeting Room, 217 E. Main, Carbondale, IL. **Enter** through the Township's **backdoor**. Parking is available in lots along the alley near the backdoor. Do also consider other Illinois Sierra groups' virtual presentations, as well as our own, listed on [www.sctrips.org](http://www.sctrips.org).

### Thursday, September 14, 2023, 7 pm

**Presentation Title:** Industrial Hemp: Opportunities for Southern Illinois

**Presenter:** Oussama Badad, Lead Geneticist at Trilogene and Co-Founder and Chief Science Officer of Growmics

**Location:** In-person, Carbondale Township Hall Meeting Room, 217 E. Main, Carbondale

### Thursday, October 12, 2023, 7 pm

**Presentation Title:** Tribal Recognition, Sovereignty, and Land in the Long 20th Century

**Presenter:** Gray Whaley, SIUC Professor of History

**Location:** In-person, Carbondale Township Hall Meeting Room, 217 E. Main, Carbondale

Dr Whaley, a professor of History at SIUC, focuses on the changing nature of Native nationhood within the U.S. legal and political systems with an emphasis on Oregon and the Pacific Northwest.

### Thursday, November 9, 2023, 7 pm

**Presentation Title:** Shawnee National Forest and Tribal Partnerships

**Presenter:** Heather Carey, Heritage Program Manager/Tribal Liaison for the Shawnee National Forest

**Location:** In-person, Carbondale Township Hall Meeting Room, 217 E. Main, Carbondale

In this program, Heather Carey, who has worked on the SNF for 20 years as an archeologist, will present on a number of federally recognized tribes that have early ties to southern Illinois. She will focus in particular on each tribe's connection to the region, the federal consultation process, and current partnership initiatives in the Shawnee National Forest.

## Pollinators and Mosquito Spraying Announcement

People with pollinator gardens and bee lawns can contact the Carbondale Sustainability Coordinator, Lauren Becker, or the Supervisor of the Carbondale Township Mosquito Abatement District, Bobby Kelly, to be on a “**No Spray**” list for when mosquito spraying is being conducted. Lauren Becker: 618- 549-5307, ext. 246 or (618) 457-3246 office [lbecker@explorecarbondale.com](mailto:lbecker@explorecarbondale.com); Bobby Kelly: 618-549-2150.

Learn more on the [City Sustainability webpage](#) – which also has a page specifically for [pollinator supportive landscaping](#), with a video about Carbondale's pollinator-supportive landscape policies.



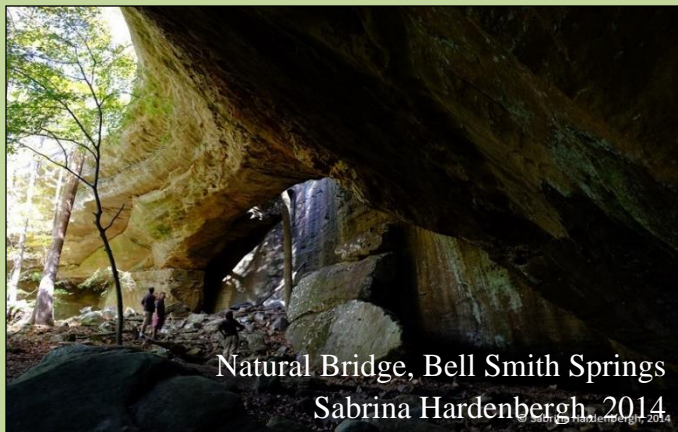
## FALL 2023 – SHAWNEE GROUP SIERRA CLUB OUTINGS

### Little Grand Canyon Hike, Sunday, September 10, 2023

**Please Note:** This is a [dog friendly hike](#): hikers may bring a dog, though only if it remains on a leash. Meet before 10 am at the upper left parking lot for the Little Grand Canyon outside Murphysboro. We will do a moderately difficult hike of about 3 miles along the trail and through the canyon. You will see beautiful views of both the Big Muddy River and the Mississippi floodplain, and then descend and walk through the canyon. Wear appropriate hiking shoes and bring water. This hike will be led by Jon Womack. You must call Jon at 815-263-9625 to register for the hike.

### Bell Smith Springs Hike, Sunday, October 8, 2023

Meet before 10 am at the main Bell Smith Springs parking lot, past the Red Bud Camp Ground. We will hike Natural Bridge, Devil's Backbone, and Old Grist Mill trails, which will be a moderately difficult hike of 3 miles. Bring water and wear appropriate hiking shoes. You must call Jon Womack at 815-263-9625 to go on this hike.



Natural Bridge, Bell Smith Springs  
Sabrina Hardenbergh, 2014

### Panthers Den Hike, Sunday, November 12, 2023

Meet at the Panthers Den trailhead before 10 am. This is a moderately difficult hike of 4 miles and goes through a very scenic, wooded and hilly area. Bring water, a hiking staff and wear appropriate shoes. You must call Bob Mulcahy at 618-942-6342 in order to go on the hike.

### Sharp Rock Falls Hike, Sunday, December 3, 2023

Meet in the parking lot at Murphysboro Hardees before 10 am. This hike goes through a scenic, wooded canyon to a beautiful waterfall. It is a moderately difficult hike of 3-4 miles. Be sure to bring water and wear appropriate hiking shoes. You must call Steve Eberhart at 618-967-8690, to register for this hike.

Browse the lower right Index on our old blog page for numerous southern Illinois hiking trail descriptions, and explore some of these during your own time: <http://shawneegroup.blogspot.com/>. Check the Illinois Chapter listings for other outings across the region: <https://www.sierraclub.org/illinois/events-calendar>.

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### Service Outings – Help Save High Quality Natural Areas

Shawnee Group is committed to helping rid high-quality natural areas of non-native invasive plants (NNIS) that are threatening to crowd out our native plant communities at La-Rue Pine Hills Research Natural Area (Snake Road) and at Fern Rocks Nature Preserve (Trillium Trail) in Giant City State Park.

To volunteer, contact Barb at 618-549-9684, [babitaji@aol.com](mailto:babitaji@aol.com) or text 618-534-7440.

#### **Piasa Palisades Group Outings Chair:**

Carol Klinger, 618-288-5506, [ciklinger@yahoo.com](mailto:ciklinger@yahoo.com)  
<http://www.sierraclub.org/illinois/piasa-palisades>

#### **Eastern Missouri Group Outings Chair:**

Doug Melville, 636-288-1055  
[douglas.k.melville@gmail.com](mailto:douglas.k.melville@gmail.com)  
<http://sierraclub.org/missouri/eastern-missouri>

#### **Future Outings TBA:**

Updates listed on our or Illinois Chapter websites:  
<http://www.sierraclub.org/illinois/shawnee>  
<https://www.sierraclub.org/illinois/events-calendar>  
Other short notice outings and events may be announced on our Facebook page:  
<https://www.facebook.com/SierraClubShawnee>

## **VOTE!** DEADLINE is NOVEMBER 30th

Look for Illinois Chapter's *The Prairie State Update* in your mailbox soon. Shawnee Group Sierra Club ExCom candidate bios & ballots will be in this brochure, and here, Pages 5-6.

### **Jane Cogie**

I would like to serve another term on the Shawnee Group Ex Com, to continue collaborating with other group members and with folks from other community groups on work to protect the environment and advance a more resilient, equitable clean jobs economy. One recent project I was glad to help make happen is the planting of native trees at the Jackson County Housing Authority Bridgewood Estates, with the trees funded by a Trees Forever grant and the event collaborated on with other non-profits, among them Faith in Place, Food Autonomy Group, and the Downstate Caucus Tree Equity Group. Were I to serve another term, I would continue to help forward other projects, whether initiated by our group (such as the children's book give away that became one of many events at the 2023 Earth Day Celebration at Attucks Park) or initiated by another group (such as the EV Car Show we partnered on with the event's lead organizer, the Green Team of Carbondale's First Christian Church).

### **Rick Steger**

I've been a Southern Illinois resident since 1985 when I joined the Physiology Department in the SIU School of Medicine. I taught undergraduate, graduate and medical students and maintained an active and continually funded research program. I became Chair of the department in 2001 and retired in 2009. Besides serving on a number of SIU committees, I served on the boards of McLeod Summer Playhouse, The Science Center, and the Boy Scouts where I also served as Scoutmaster.

I live on a 40-acre farm just southwest of Carbondale where we have been working to restore wildlife habitat. I've also been involved with habitat improvement, trail building and maintenance both in the local area and in several western states. I would welcome the opportunity to use my experience from work with other boards, in grant writing and my love of the outdoors in service to the Sierra Club.

### **John Dively**

I am interested in volunteering with the ExCom of the Sierra Club's Shawnee Group, as it provides an opportunity to combine my interest in the natural world with my vocational experiences in education, law and public policy advocacy. Over the years, I've participated in native tree and seed plantings, prescribed burns, forest thinning, erosion control and litter removal. I have also completed the Master Naturalist training through the U of I Extension Office. Most of my time recently has been spent managing some acreage around our home consistent with the Illinois Conservation Stewardship Program. I believe in the Sierra Club's vision and goals and would appreciate the opportunity to serve.

### **Jean Sellar**

Jean Sellar is a biologist who specializes in restoration ecology. She has supervised the restoration of over 10,000 acres, as well as projects that benefitted a number of threatened and endangered species. She is active on the Sierra Club Shawnee National Forest Committee and is co-chair of the Shawnee Group Conservation Committee.

### **Jayne McCarroll**

I moved to Southern Illinois thirty-three years ago around the time of the protests over the clear cutting of a section of the Shawnee forest. I was new to the area but remember thinking how much I love this area and the people. This was around the time I met my first friends in the Sierra Club. In recent years I have been concerned about issues such as the logging at Lake Kincaid, allowing the release of mine waste into the Big Muddy and the impact of the warming climate on our local citizens.

I like bird watching, growing native plant species, and enjoying the area lakes. I am also in two bands, Loose Gravel and SIWADA (Southern Illinois West African Drumming Association) which have always been community minded.

I thank you for your invitation to run for and serve on the executive committee.

# VOTE! DEADLINE is NOVEMBER 30th

Look for Illinois Chapter's *The Prairie State Update* in your mailbox soon. Shawnee Group Sierra Club ExCom candidate bios & ballots will be in this brochure, and here, Pages 5-6.

**Read EXCOM  
CANDIDATE  
BIOS on Page 5**

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ELECTION RULES

1. All ballots for Groups and the Chapter must be postmarked by November 30, 2023 to be counted.
2. You may vote ONCE for the Chapter election, and ONCE in your regional group. If you do not know your Group's name, it is printed on the label of the mailer under your name. If your group does not appear in the mailer, expect a separate letter containing your election materials.
3. Individual members are allowed one vote. If you have a joint household membership, you are allowed two votes total—one per member in your household. You may photocopy the ballot for privacy in voting, or you can use the Voter 2 column.

### HOW TO VOTE

1. GROUP: Place a check next to the candidate that you'd like to vote for. Write your full name on the outside of an envelope for membership verification. Do not write your name on the ballot. If you are a joint membership household, remember to list both members' names on the outside of the envelope for verification. Cut out your group ballot and mail to the address listed on your group's ballot. Do not mail group ballots to the Chapter address or Chapter ballots to group addresses, they will not be counted!
2. CHAPTER: You can vote online for the Chapter election as will be indicated in their mailing. Please vote using the paper OR electronic ballot—not both. Thank you for voting!

## Shawnee Group Ballot

Vote for up to 4 candidates, 1 vote per member

	Voter 1	Voter 2
Jane Cogie	_____	_____
John Dively	_____	_____
Jayne McCarroll	_____	_____
Jean Sellar	_____	_____
Rick Steger	_____	_____

Please copy or clip ballot and  
Mail your Shawnee Group Ballot to:  
**Sierra Club Shawnee Group**  
Attn: Patty  
PO Box 172  
CARBONDALE, IL 62903-0172

## The Effect of Dogs on Wildlife

By Steve Eberhart



Taking your dog for a walk on a trail can be a pleasant experience for you and your pet, but may have more of a negative effect on wildlife than you realize. A person walking on a trail causes wildlife to flee for a distance of 150 feet. But, when they walk down that same trail with a dog on a leash, wildlife flees almost four times as far (560 feet). Of course, this distance would be greatly increased if a dog is allowed to run free. Because animals' senses are so much better than our own, they often flee before we can even see them. And, because the scent of dogs repels wildlife, the effects of a dogs' passage can remain after it's gone. This effect may be only temporary if a single dog visits the trail, but may become permanent if repeated. This can cause an animal to abandon places where it might find the best forage and security cover. Another issue is that when animals become alarmed, they will likely stop their routine activities. This not only reduces their opportunities to feed but also has numerous effects on their health. Dogs can also transmit diseases to wildlife, and loose dogs can kill wild animals. While your dog can be a wonderful pet and companion, it's important to keep the above information in mind when you consider taking them on a trail where wildlife live.

## **Big Muddy River Protection Gets a Boost!**

*By Barbara McKasson*

Illinois Attorney General, Kwame Raoul, has now filed a state lawsuit against Williamson Energy LLC for violating its water pollution permit at the Pond Creek Mine. The suit alleges that Williamson Energy has violated its permit limits dozens of times, failed to report bypasses, caused numerous violations of water quality standards and failed to comply with good mining practices. This suit could bring penalties of \$50,000 for each violation. This suit is important because it shows that Illinois is serious about protecting our waters. It is also important because Williamson Energy wants to direct effluent from Pond Creek Mine via a 12.5-mile pipeline into the Big Muddy River.

Sierra Club members and many other citizens in the Big Muddy watershed gave testimony against the proposed discharge from the Pond Creek Mine into the Big Muddy River at a hearing held on December 18, 2019. In May 2022, Prairie Rivers Network (PRN) and Sierra Club appealed to the Illinois Pollution Control (IPCB) against the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) decision to issue the permit as written because it was insufficient to protect the environment and did not even meet requirements of Illinois and federal law. The discharge would contain high levels of chlorides and sulfates and would be allowed to occasionally spike above regulations. The discharge can also contain iron, copper, nickel and other damaging heavy metals.

The permit to discharge into the Big Muddy requires Williamson Energy to monitor chlorides, sulfates, alkalinity/ acidity, sediments, iron and other heavy metals discharged along with wastewater from the Pond Creek Mine. The company is required to conduct continuous monitoring of conductivity (a pollution screening test) of the discharge into the Big Muddy River and is allowed a maximum of 5,000 gallons of discharged mine wastewater per minute. As highlighted by the IL Attorney General's suit, Williamson Energy is not meeting requirements for their other permits, which shows the company needs stricter enforcement and penalties to ensure their pollution is controlled. The permit appeal by Sierra Club and PRN claims that the permit itself also needs stricter requirements than the IEPA says it would allow.

Science has shown that organisms have trouble regulating osmosis through their tissues with high concentrations of chlorides. Fish, mussels, insect larva, plants and other aquatic wildlife that depend on clean water may be harmed by Williamson Energy's disregard for pollution control regulations. Sierra Club members and others want canoe down the Big Muddy, go fishing or enjoy other recreation without worrying about the pollution. To make matters worse, Sugar Camp Mine, also owned by Williamson Energy, is discharging wastewater with high concentrations of chlorides and sulfates a few miles upstream of the proposed Pond Creek discharge into the Big Muddy.

We will be watching and hoping for strong enforcement from the Illinois Attorney General's court case. We are also hopeful for the best outcome of the Sierra Club and PRN appeal of the IEPA NPDES (wastewater discharge) permit, which will be decided by the Illinois Pollution Control Board.

### **Illinois Legislative Contacts: CALL YOUR LEGISLATORS TODAY!**

State Dist. 109 – Charles Meier: 618-651-0405; 217-782-6401; [repcmeier@gmail.com](mailto:repcmeier@gmail.com)

State Dist. 115 – David Riess: 618-282-7284; 217-782-1018; [friess@ilhousegop.org](mailto:friess@ilhousegop.org)

State Dist. 116 – David Severin: 618-440-5090; 217-782-1051; [severin@ilhousegop.org](mailto:severin@ilhousegop.org)

State Dist. 117 – Patrick Windhorst: 618-294-8703; 217-782-5131; [windhorst@ilhousegop.org](mailto:windhorst@ilhousegop.org)

State Dist. 118 – Paul Jacobs: 618-559-7018; 217-782-0387; [Jacobs@ilhousegop.org](mailto:Jacobs@ilhousegop.org)

Senate Dist. 55 – Senator Jason Plummer: 618-283-3000; 217-782-5755

Senate Dist. 58 – Senator Terri Bryant: 618-684-1100; 217-782-8137; Sec'y.: [cbrown@sgop.ilga.gov](mailto:cbrown@sgop.ilga.gov)

Senate Dist. 59 – Senator Dale Fowler: 618-294-8951; 217-782-5509; [senatorfowler59@gmail.com](mailto:senatorfowler59@gmail.com)

Governor J.B. Pritzker: 217-782-6830; <https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/gov/contactus/Pages/default.aspx>

Speaker of the House Emanuel Chris Welch: 217-782-5350; 708-450-1000; [repwelch@emanuelchriswelch.com](mailto:repwelch@emanuelchriswelch.com)

Senate President Don Harmon: 217-782-8176; 708-848-2002; <http://www.donharmon.org/contact-senator-harmon>

### **Congressional Contacts: CALL YOUR CONGRESSMEN TODAY!**

Senator Dick Durbin: 618-351-1122; 202-224-2152; <http://www.durbin.senate.gov>

Senator L. Tammy Duckworth: 202-224-2854; <https://www.duckworth.senate.gov>

Representative Mike Bost: 618-457-5787; 202-225-5661; <https://bost.house.gov>

Representative Mary Miller: 618-240-3155; 202-225-5271; <https://marymiller.house.gov>

**President Joseph R. Biden**, The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., Washington, D.C.  
202-456-1111; <https://www.whitehouse.gov/contact>

### Has Your Email Address Changed?

To receive notification when the latest Shawnee Group newsletter is posted online, be sure to inform the Group when you change your email address. Send email address updates to: [crusso1957@yahoo.com](mailto:crusso1957@yahoo.com).

Read current and past newsletters on our website: <http://www.sierraclub.org/illinois/shawnee>. The website also lists information on upcoming local programs and outings, plus state and national Sierra Club issues.

### Leadership Opportunities

**Run for the Board!** We need a few good women and men. Join the board of directors (the executive committee, also known as the ExCom) in overseeing the Shawnee Group's strategic direction and economic health. Board members meet monthly for about 2 hours. Board terms are for two years. We are always interested in potential candidates. Contact Jane Cogie, 618-549-4673, [jane.cogie@gmail.com](mailto:jane.cogie@gmail.com).

**Call for articles and photographs for Shawnee Trails!** The next issue will be published in August. Please send your Word, PDF or JPG files to [sabrina@midwest.net](mailto:sabrina@midwest.net) by **Monday, November 6th**.



### Shawnee Group Sierra Club T-Shirts for Sale!

Show your support for our local group's activities. Contact Mike Covell at 618-201-4928 or [emike@siu.edu](mailto:emike@siu.edu).

White logo on blue T-Shirt **\$15**  
Medium Large or X-Large

## Sierra Club 2024 Calendar Sale!!

Contact Barb McKasson, 618-549-9684, [babitaji@aol.com](mailto:babitaji@aol.com), or buy at the monthly meetings this fall. Wall calendars are \$16. Engagement calendars are \$17.

