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Shawnee Group Contact Information:

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

Chair, Political Chair: Jane Cogie 618-549-4673 jane.cogie@gmail.com

Vice Chair, Membership Chair: Carla Womack, crusso1957@yahoo.com

Treasurer, Monarch Team: Patty Weyhrich pweyhrich711@hotmail.com

Secretary: TBA

Program Committee: Jane Cogie

Lobbying Chair, Conservation Co-Chair:

Jean Sellar 618-893-1379

biojean@peoplepc.com

Conservation Co-Chair, Shawnee National Forest Committee, Cool Cities Initiative:

Barb McKasson

618-529-4824 babitaji@aol.com

Mining: John Dively, divelys@gmail.com;

Rick Steger, rwsteger@gmail.com

Water Team: Tharran Hobson

thobson@tnc.org

Outings Chair: Steve Eberhart,

eberpsy@icloud.com 618-687-2998

Fundraising Committee: Carla Womack

(plant sale) Barb McKasson (calendars)

Newsletter Editor, Webmaster: Sabrina

Hardenbergh sabrina@midwest.net

Join the Effort to Ban Wildlife Killing Contests in Illinois

By Jane Cogie

For close a year now, Jane McBride and Francisco Santiago-Avila of the Coyote Project have been holding programs for environmental and animal rights organizations across Illinois, including one for the Shawnee Group on April 11, asking the groups to support a ban on Wildlife Killing Contests (WKC) in Illinois. Given the backgrounds of these two organizers (see the short bios below), their dedication to this outreach work is not surprising.

When Jane and Francisco began their campaign in our state about a year ago, few if any Illinoisans even knew what wildlife killing contests are, much less that they have been taking place in Illinois. But they have been. More than a dozen of these cruel and senseless contests occurs in our state each year, some of them in our area. Unlike wild game hunters, whose take is limited and regulated to center respect for the prey, WKCs give out prizes to the participants that deliver the greatest number of dead animals to specified sites, with the weapons used (including large capacity semi-automatics with any type of shell for coyotes) leaving the carcasses of the killed “beyond use,” whether the designated targets are coyotes, foxes, racoons, or a combination.

The members of the Shawnee Group Executive Committee were definitely unaware of this destructive practice until Jane McBride, one of the two Illinois Coyote Project representatives, reached out to ask that we join other groups in pushing State agencies and legislators to halt these day- or week-long contests. Since our group’s conversation with her, Jane and Francisco have obtained support for this campaign from the Sierra Club’s Illinois Chapter.

Their effort in Illinois has gone beyond seeking the support of environmental and animal rights non-profits. A bill to ban them, HB2900, sponsored by Representative Anna Moeller, has been introduced for passage during the spring 2024 legislative session. This bill wouldn’t in any way ban or alter laws and regulations for hunting in Illinois. Rather it “would make it unlawful for any person to organize, sponsor, conduct, promote, or participate in any contest, organized competition, tournament, or derby with the intent of taking or hunting fur-bearing mammals for cash, prizes or other inducements, otherwise known as wildlife killing contests”

(https://docs.google.com/document/d/1d_W8T9XV5_Mhy-XPntgHh7c5Rxxg3xap00wC7cScQZ8/edit).

(Continued on Page 2)

If we as Illinoisans convince our legislators to pass this bill, Illinois will join ten other states that have already taken this step: Arizona, California, Colorado, Massachusetts, Maryland, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Vermont, and Washington. Local governments in seven states have issued statements condemning these contests: Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. On the federal level, in April 2022, members of Congress introduced the Prohibit Wildlife Killing Contests Act of 2022, which would prohibit the organizing, sponsoring, conducting, or participating in WKC on more than 500 million acres of U.S public lands.

To become more informed and in a better position to discuss the need for this bill with your legislators, check out the Coyote Project's website and the Fact Sheet on WKC linked here. As the fact sheet notes, the coalition to stop WKC includes the Illinois Chapter of the Sierra Club, Project Coyote and its Illinois membership, the Illinois Bobcat Foundation, and the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS). Please consider joining this effort.

Link to Coyote Project Website: <https://projectcoyote.org/>

Link to Fact Sheet:

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#search/jmcbriidenator%40gmail.com/FMfcgzGwJvnTGQZTHIRwPDwqGdMwGZTk?compose=CllgCJvnqzpCtKmmntCQqKNfWkJBBjMPFKkFRGShjFWJpTjjsqmkKXNwrVLhspLmnrXPLWTztVq&projector=1&messagePartId=0.2>

Link to video on WKC:

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#search/jmcbriidenator%40gmail.com/QgrcJHsThjDVfMGbnBttRKXnpPxIjBvpRtQ?compose=CllgCJvnqzpCtKmmntCQqKNfWkJBBjMPFKkFRGShjFWJpTjjsqmkKXNwrVLhspLmnrXPLWTztVq&projector=1>

Francisco J. Santiago-Avila, Science & Ethics Manager for the Coyote Project, is involved in the Coyote Project as part of its Carnivore Coexistence Lab, focusing his quantitative research on evaluating the impact of policies and interventions to both conserve and prevent conflicts with large carnivores, specifically endangered gray wolves in the U.S. With a Master's in Public Policy and Environmental Management from Duke University and a PhD in Environment & Resources from University of Wisconsin Madison, he pursues qualitative research and advocacy on the promotion of ethical deliberation to equitably consider animals in policy, while also exploring conservation ethics that promote the flourishing of our entire community of life.

Jane McBride, Illinois Representative for the Coyote Project, is an attorney, recently retired after 24 years with the Environmental Bureau of the Illinois Attorney General's Office. Jane has a Bachelor's degree in Fisheries and Wildlife Biology and another in Agricultural Journalism, both from Iowa State University. In 1997, soon after earning an Energy and Environmental Law certificate from Chicago-Kent College of Law, Jane joined the Illinois Attorney General's Office, where the majority of her caseload concerned litigating and bringing into compliance the water and odor air pollution of livestock, crop, or agricultural chemical facilities. This work entailed a depth of knowledge in all things agriculture. Jane also handled natural resource matters, including obtaining a settlement between the local drainage district and the State for the preservation of the Cache wetlands in far southern Illinois. Certainly, as relevant to her Coyote Project work, Jane is a founder of and principal in Illinois Humane, an organization that focuses on cruelty and neglect investigations of companion animals, including horses, and the recovery and rehabilitation of the animal victims in these cases. The organization also is heavily involved in advocacy, including state legislation.

SPRING 2024 – 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, behind Township Hall and Buckwater Brew Works, on the block bounded by South Washington Street, East Monroe, and South Marion (by Rock Hill Baptist Church). Masking is recommended. Do also consider other Illinois Sierra groups' virtual presentations, as well as our own, listed on www.sctrips.org.

Thursday, March 21, 2024 Program, 7 pm:

Presentation Title: Climate Change in Southern Illinois

Presenter: Trent Ford, Illinois' State Climatologist

In his talk, Trent Ford will focus on the impacts of climate change in our region and steps our communities can take to mitigate and adapt to those impacts.

Dr. Trent Ford, whose specialty is Hydroclimatology, currently serves as the State Climatologist for Illinois, a position he obtained after serving as an assistant professor in Southern Illinois University's Department of Geography and Environmental Resources. His research interests include soil moisture, land-atmosphere interactions, and monitoring and predicting extreme climate events such as drought and heat waves. A native of Roanoke, Illinois, he earned a bachelor's in geography from Illinois State University before completing his master's and PhD at Texas A&M University.

Thursday, April 11, 2024 Program, 7 pm

Presentation Title: Campaign to Stop Wildlife Killing Contests in Illinois

Presenters: Jane McBride, Illinois Representative for the Coyote Project and an attorney retired recently from the Environmental Bureau of the Illinois Attorney General's Office, and Francisco J. Santiago-Avila, Science and Ethics Manager for the Coyote Project and Researcher conducting studies as part of the Coyote Project's Carnivore Coexistence Lab.

In the talk, Jane and Francisco will explain how Wildlife Killing Contests differ from wild game hunting and why Illinois should join ten other U.S. states that have banned the contests offering prizes to contestants that have killed the highest number of coyotes or other target animals, including racoons and foxes.

Thursday, May 9, 2024 Program, 7 pm:

Presentation Title: Update on Cache River Restoration

Presenter: Molie Oliver, Nature Resource Coordinator (Education and Interpretation), Illinois Department of Natural Resources

In her talk, Molie Oliver, Natural Resource Coordinator at the Cache River State Natural Area for 18 years, will update us on recent efforts to restore the Cache. Plenty of time will be set aside for Q & A.

SAVE THE DATE: WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 28TH, 6:30 PM, VIA ZOOM.

Please mark your calendars for the community event "**Homes of the Future in Southern Illinois: A Healthcare Professional's Perspective.**" RSVP for Zoom link: sc.org/cleanheathealth

The co-hosts for this community event include the Shawnee Group of the Sierra Club, the Carbondale Branch of the NAACP, Faith in Place, the Black Graduate Greek Council of Carbondale, Citizens Utility Board, Carbondale United, SIU Sustainability, and the Natural Resource Defense Council. During this gathering, local healthcare professionals will offer their perspectives on indoor air pollution and children's health issues that are important to consider as we transition our homes and communities to clean affordable heat. Following the panel, plenty of time will be left for Q & A and community dialogue.

We look forward to having you join us on the 28th and hope you will share information on this event with your networks.

SPRING 2024 – SHAWNEE GROUP SIERRA CLUB OUTINGS

Piney Creek Ravine Petroglyphs Hike, Sunday, March 10, 2024

Meet at the Murdale shopping center parking lot in Carbondale before 10:15 am, or at Piney Creek Ravine before 11 am. This is a joint event of the Shawnee Group of the Sierra Club and the Illinois Extension Forestry. Piney Creek Ravine is a designated Illinois Nature Preserve with unique natural communities and prehistoric rock art. The trail is about 2 miles long and of moderate difficulty. Bring water, a hiking staff and wear appropriate shoes. You must contact Kevin Rohling at 618-695-3383 or krohling@illinois.edu in order to attend the hike or if you have questions or need accommodations. You can also register for the hike at <https://extension.illinois.edu/events/2024-03-10-piney-creek-ravine-ecology-hike>

Ferne Clyffe Hike, Sunday, April 21, 2024

We will hike scenic Ferne Clyffe state park. This will be a moderate hike of 3.5 miles. Meet at the Ferne Clyffe Lake parking lot before 10 am. Wear appropriate hiking shoes and bring water. You must call Jon Womack at 815-263-9625 to go on this hike.

East Trigg Trailhead Loop Spring Wildflower Hike, May 5, 2024, 10 am to 1 pm

[Register here](#) to join us as we explore the East Trigg section of the River to River Trail starting and ending at the East Trigg Trailhead in Pope County ([37.49845, -88.70793](#)) (also known as Cove Hollow, *but not the Cove Hollow by Cedar Lake*). We'll observe some of the best scenery southern Illinois has to offer while enjoying spring wildflowers! The trail is somewhat rugged and could have equestrian impacts (e.g. trails may be very muddy depending on conditions). The trail is approximately 3.2 miles round-trip. For those wishing to carpool, we will meet at the Marion, IL Rural King near the farm implements before 9:15am on 5/5/2024, or you may choose to meet us at the trailhead at 10:00am. Please dress appropriately for the weather and bring water and a snack. In case of thunderstorms, this event will be postponed. See the map on this [page](#) that shows the East Trigg Trailhead and the Cove Hollow Loop (001T).

Contact Kevin Rohling with questions at krohling@illinois.edu or office phone 618-695-3383. This is a joint program of the Shawnee Group of the Sierra Club and University of Illinois Extension Forestry. University of Illinois Extension Forestry provides equal opportunities in programs and employment. If you need a reasonable accommodation to participate, email krohling@illinois.edu. Early requests are encouraged to allow time to meet individual requests.

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>.

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 or text 618-534-7440.

Piasa Palisades Group Outings Chair:

Carol Klinger, 618-288-5506, 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
<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>

Free Again Wildlife Rehabilitation Center Visits Shawnee Group Meeting

By Barbara McKasson

The Shofstalls and four owls paid a visit to Carbondale at our January member meeting – Bev, Jim, screech owl, barn, barred and great horned owls. We learned that barn owl populations have declined because of a lack of large hollow trees and a lack of barns! Every farmer should have a resident barn owl family because their diet is almost exclusively made of mice. Barred owls, however, are on the increase. You have probably heard their calls at night: “who, who, who cooks for you-all?” Great horned owls are supreme predators who could eat all the other owls, plus any small cat or dog. Screech owls make eerie, haunting calls.

The Shofstalls regularly give programs that include birds of prey that they have rehabilitated, but which could not survive in the wild – including a turkey vulture they take to Makanda’s Vulture Fest every year. In operation since 1988, Free Again takes in over 450 rescued animals per year and is southern Illinois’ only all-species rehabilitation center and the only one south of I-64 that is licensed to take in birds of prey. Their mission statement is a pledge to return animals to their natural environment, study behavior and diseases of wildlife, and educate the public on the importance of wildlife in our environment.

The Shofstalls have dedicated their lives to their center but could not do it all without volunteers and always need more help. It’s obvious why they are sometimes near burn-out, since they sometimes have to work sixteen-hour days. They need to train volunteers, so one must commit to helping at least once per week for several hours over an extended length of time.

Other ways to support their efforts are to donate money or supplies. Just the animal food costs are staggering. For example, they must spend at least \$800 per month just for frozen mice. Alternatively, you can sponsor one of their resident animals such as a fox or owl – one that could not return to the wild but is used in their public education programs.

They are always looking for areas suitable for releasing animals that have recovered, so if you or someone you know has sizeable acreage, contact Free Again. The form is on their website: freeagainwildlife.org. You can also call them at 618-988-1067. Their Facebook page is: <facebook.com/freeagainwildlife>. They do not have the time or resources to accept visitors who just want to see the animals. Also, you must call first before bringing in an animal since they cannot accommodate unannounced drop-offs.



Bev Shofstall with owl. Photo by Barbara McKasson.

UPROOTING INJUSTICE BY PLANTING TREES, MARCH 13TH, 6:30 - 7:45 PM, VIA ZOOM

SAVE THE DATE: We hope you will join us for this webinar offered by Friends for Tree Equity (<https://friendsfortreeequity.org>). At this event, folks in southern and central Illinois will learn about resources and funding opportunities available for groups interested in increasing the number and equitable distribution of trees in their communities.

Here's the link to register and receive the link to join the Uprooting Injustice webinar on March 13th:
[Meeting Registration - Zoom](#)

Or here:

Join Webinar: <https://bit.ly/treeewebinar>

Meeting ID: 893 1778 9940

The event's panel includes representatives of three non-profits that center their work on advancing environmental justice:

Wade Halva, Faith in Place (faithinplace.org/blog)

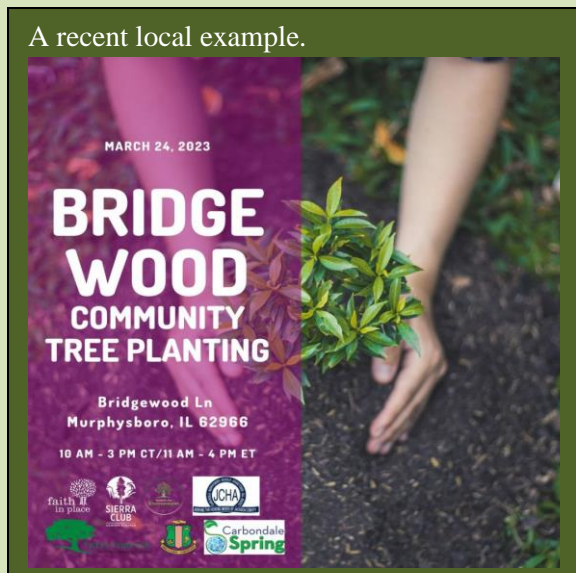
Emily Ehley, Trees Forever (treesforever.org/get-involved/)

Colette Copic, Morton Arboretum (mortonarb.org/plant-and-protect/).

The event will focus first on the many ways trees contribute to the comfort, health, and resilience of our communities. Next the panelists will explain the resources their organizations offer communities interested in forwarding tree planting and also share examples of communities that have benefited from those resources (including funding) to increase their town's tree canopy while also helping uproot injustice. The injustice piece is central to Friends for Tree Equity given the historic lack of trees and their benefits in underserved communities, given the legacy of wide spread policies such as redlining (<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/08/24/climate/racism-redlining-cities-global-warming.html> ; https://www.fs.usda.gov/nrs/pubs/jrnl/2022/nrs_2022_nowak_001.pdf). The webinar will conclude with Q & A, next steps, and links to resources.

We look forward to your joining us for this virtual event. If, in the meantime, you have questions, you are welcome to contact Jane Cogie, Chair of the Shawnee of the Group Sierra Club and a member of Friends for Tree Equity (jane.cogie@gmail.com).

A recent local example.



How do we pay for this?



Earth Month Electric Car Show

An Electric and Plugin Hybrid Car Show will be held Saturday, April 13 from 3pm until 5pm in the parking lot of the First Christian Church of Carbondale at 200 S. University Ave. across from Carbondale City Hall.

The purpose of the car show is to allow the public to see a variety of fully electric and plugin hybrid vehicles all in one place. Local car dealers and individual owners are eagerly supporting this car show.

The vehicles, including bicycles and battery powered tools, will be available for viewing up close but there will not be any test driving. However, visitors may at the event schedule test drives later at the dealership.

There will be informational posters and hand out sheets highlighting such things as how to apply for the Illinois rebate, how to apply for the Federal Tax Credit, lists of other electric vehicles, etc. Plus, Egyptian Electric will have a representative on hand to explain charging and other infrastructure.

For more information about this event, contact coordinator, Al Parr, dialparr@siu.edu, 618-559-3132.

Event sponsors are the City of Carbondale Planning and Sustainable Commission, Sierra Club Shawnee Group, and the First Christian Church of Carbondale Green Team.



Illinois Legislative Contacts: CALL YOUR LEGISLATORS TODAY!

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

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

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

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

State Dist. 118 – Paul Jacobs: 618-559-7018; 217-782-0387; 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

Senate Dist. 59 – Senator Dale Fowler: 618-294-8951; 217-782-5509; 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

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.

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.

Call for articles and photographs for Shawnee Trails! The next issue will be published in May. Please send your Word, PDF or JPG files to sabrina@midwest.net by **Monday, May 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.

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

Sierra Club Annual Native Plant Sale!

Come out to the Shawnee Group of the Sierra Club's annual Native Plant Sale! The date this year is **Saturday, April 13, 2024**. The time is **9:00 am - 1:00 pm**. The location is the **Townsquare Pavilion, 121 North Illinois Avenue, Carbondale, IL**.

Come out to find the *perfect* native plants for your yard! The prices of the pots this year will be **\$8.00** each, (we have not had a price increase in a few years but the cost to produce these beauties has increased for our vendors). The vendor and another Sierra Club member will be on hand to answer any questions you may have. Questions? Call Carla Womack, chair, 815-263-8173 or Barb McKasson, 618-549-9684. We hope to see you all there!! Support a great cause in this time, our environment!

