



HEART of ILLINOIS

Sierra Club

TALLGRASS SIERRA

Recycled paper

P.O. Box 3593, PEORIA IL 61612

JANUARY 1993

JANUARY MEETING: Wed. Jan. 20, 7:30 p.m.
 Michael Platt, Executive Director of Heartland Water Resources Council, will present a program about the future of the IL River and the role Heartland Water Resources Council will play in it. We look forward to seeing you and hearing your input at this informative meeting. Refreshments to follow.
 Chuck Buchna

THE BECKER-EAST PEORIA MARINA: THE FINANCIAL CONTRACTS

We are waiting for a decision on the state & federal permits on the Becker-East Peoria for a 600-boat marina extending 1,000 feet out into Peoria Lake next to Jonah's Restaurant (a mile upstream from the river boat gambling casino).

But even though the for-the-record comment period is over, don't slack off your letters. SEND them. (See below for addresses.) REALLY, three decisions have to be made: 1) A permit from the Corps of Engineers; 2) A permit from the Ill. Division of Water Resources; 3) A decision by Gov. Edgar to release the \$5 million he earmarked for the project in 1991.

Except in HoI testimony, no where have the financial facets been fully revealed. They are:

--The 1989 tax assessed valuation of the 26 acres of lakefront floodplain Ray Becker sold E. Peoria was \$6,150. Tax paid was \$617.98.

--On April 3, 1990, the E. Peoria City Council bought the parcel from Becker with a \$2 million loan from Community Bank of E. Peoria, co-owned by Becker, according to the Journal Star, at 8% annual interest. The city can return the land within 3 years (another 2½ months) if the project does not go through.

--The city's "Purchase Agreement" stipulates that the \$2 million and interest (now totalling nearly \$480,000) would be paid only through state or other government grants, or from marina revenues.

--Since marina revenues are a long way off, it's likely that \$2.5 million of the \$5 M. Edgar has earmarked would go to buy the wetland site. The other half would reportedly go to starting construction of the huge breakwater -- for which Becker would evidently be the prime contractor, since a 9/11/90 city ordinance gives him "sole & exclusive right to submit proposals for the construction of all or any portion of the project."

--A 3/27/90 letter to the E. Peoria Council from Sen. Richard Luft (D-Pekin) indicates he will seek still another \$5 million grant from the state, and "loans from the Capitol Development Board and the State Boating Fund."

--Last January the city designated the 26 acres as a Tax Increment Financing District to assign 80% of the real estate taxes from it to retire revenue bonds the city would issue to finance construction of the marina harbor, utilities, roads, parking lots.

--According to the contract agreements, the public financial responsibilities are: Dredging and maintaining the 25-acre harbor and 6,000 feet of access channels to water deep enough for boating; building & maintaining the breakwater around the harbor (originally proposed as concrete rubble) & a boat ramp for the public in Cooper Park; disposing of the dredgings

OTHER MARINA POINTS WE'RE MAKING

--The \$2 million E. Peoria is paying for Becker's 26 acres would buy a much larger tract anywhere else on lower Peoria Lake, as behind the flyash fill area of the old CILCO power plant, a truly blighted area in the heart of the community.

-- E. Peoria has already removed between 6 & 8 million 6 and 8 billion gallons of floodplain space over the years, and this project would take from 100 to 150 million more gallons. Like the national debt,

-- A 600-boat marina is huge even for Lake Michigan let alone the 1,000 acres of lower Peoria Lake deep enough for boating.

-- A concrete riprap "cliff" would replace the present windswept sand shore there.

-- If we do is what our children learn.

THE SUBSTITUTE PLAN

Remember, with no advance notice, a new plan for the marina was substituted by E. Peoria at the Dec. 8 hearing.

Despite our Freedom of Information Request for a copy immediately filed, we didn't receive the plan until Jan. 4 -- well after the Dec. 22 deadline for comments.

For the upstream breakwater, it shows a string of barges moored to "cofferdam mooring cells" 10 to 15 feet in diameter between every barge. That certainly requires a new permit application -- & denial of the present one.

WHERE TO WRITE ON BECKER E.P. MARINA

Send your letters to:

Wayne Hannel
 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
 Box 2004
 Rock Island, IL. 61204

Gov. James Edgar
 207 State House
 Springfield, IL. 62706

Mike Diedrichsen
 Ill. Division of Water Resources
 2300 S. Dirksen Pkwy.
 Springfield, Ill. 62764

2 miles away; building & maintaining up to 4-5 acres of parking lots in the 26 acres, and a 4-acre lot behind Jonah's in Cooper Park at the boat ramp, & also roads & utilities; and evidently filling the 15 acres of wetland with up to 330,000 yards of fill, & the area behind Jonah's with 250,000 yards of fill (if the park lot is to be above flood stage, and also concrete riprapping the shoreline).

Yet this is to be a "private" development with only the boat ramp fully "public", according to city atty. Dennis Triggs statements at the TIF hearing.

-- Tom Edwards

HEART of ILLINOIS

Sierra Club

P.O. Box 3593

Peoria, Illinois 61612

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
 U.S. POSTAGE PERMIT NO. 100
 PEORIA, ILLINOIS



To explore, enjoy and preserve the best

in the forests, waters, wildlife and wilderness.

CALENDAR

JAN 17 Starved Rock Outing - 9 a.m.
20 Group Meeting Forest Park
Nature Center - 7:30 p.m.
28 EXCOM

FEB 1 Newsletter Deadline
6 Moonlight Hike 6 p.m.
(see story)
9 Newsletter Assembly &
Mailing 7 p.m.
17 Group Meeting Forest Park
Nature Center - 7:30 p.m.

CONGRATULATIONS TO RAFFLE WINNER- Ricca
Slone! - She won the painting donated by
Tower Park. Thanks to all who bought
and sold raffle tickets! Also, thanks
to Tower Park for the donation! S.O.

ANNUAL STARVED ROCK EXPEDITION: LET'S HAVE
FUN! Bring the kids and join the annual trek
to view spectacular icefalls & watch for bald
eagles from the bluffs. On the return we will
stop for dinner at Mona's in Toluca. Bring
a sack lunch & drink. Meet 9AM, Sun., Jan. 17,
at Forest Park Foundation next to the Nature
Center for carpooling. 309-676-5479 Call
Shirley O. with questions or if bad weather.

MOONLIGHT MADNESS HIKE - 2-6-93

Full moon ski or hike guided by Larry
Rice at the Marshall State Fish &
Wildlife area. Depending on conditions,
we will trek across the lake to the island,
or hike trail on river bluff. This has been
a favorite experience over the years and some-
times conditions produce a near mystical
effect. Hearty souls interested in extend-
ing to a campout need to call in advance.
Hot cider afterwards. Meet 6 p.m. across
the highway from campground. Call S.O.
676-5479

1993 EXCOM MEMBERS

Phil Minear, Ch.	694-3014
John Wosik, V. Ch.	682-8950
Chuck Buchna, Treas.	243-7142
Shirley O'Connell, Sec.	676-5479
Larry Johnson	697-3211
Larry Robbins	692-3930
Glenn Zipp	243-9001
Tom Edwards, Cons. Ch.	681-9069



PLEASE NOTE: Please send copy for newsletter
to Cheryl Pauli, RR 1, Box 168A, Brimfield IL
61517 by Feb. 1, 1993. Thank you.



FRIENDS OF THE ROCK ISLAND TRAIL
SATURDAY WORKDAYS: Feb 6 & March 6
Meet at 9 a.m. at the Trail office in
Wyoming. Enter Wyoming on Rt.91,
building is on left between IDOT &
Magnussen Chevy, in the rear of the
green & white bldg. Chris 691-2246
(days) or Paul 695-2228 for info.
PAID AD

The SO-CALLED ISLAND PROJECT

We've got another big project close behind the
Becker-E. Peoria marina one. It is the so-called
"island project" in the Woodford County Conservation
Area in upper Peoria Lake. 1)

Precisely, it would spend \$4.6 million to divert
the backwater channel across from Chillicothe,
called the East River, so its silt will be carried
farther down Peoria Lake rather than lodging in
the Dept. of Conservation area; 2) slice up the
168-acre bottomland woods in the cons. area for
wade-in duck hunting via artificial flooding
(it is the only large tract of woods, & only old
growth, on Peoria Lake); 3) extend the 2-mile
peninsula along the East River another mile, al-
though that peninsula, which used to exist before
the river level was raised, is well on its way
to re-creating itself.

HoI has submitted a complete alternative for
the funds. -- T.E.

CONSERVATION ROUND-UP

We've done a lot in the past year, and our
membership has reached an all-time high.
Shirley O'Connell turned in a yeoman workd
effort as chair, and a gracious presence.

Much of our success is certainly due to out-
going newsletter editor Kathy Berry, who has
consistently turned out a newsletter that has
gained a readership far beyond our membership,
and can certainly claim to be the "newsiest
newsletter in the state."

We have been under constant fire since our
successful stand against the river plan of
the Heartland Water Resources Council, and
my individual position on clearing forest to
plant prairie.

And we've taken it in stride, and are
stronger and more influential than ever. And
not once has a member of our current board
responded in anger. -- Tom Edwards

YOUR LETTERS ARE NEEDED: Please write and urge
the Corps of Engineers to delay processing
Hamm's Holiday Harbor's recent application to
dredge 73,400 sq.ft. of river bed to provide
access to a boat ramp & harbor until the con-
clusion of litigation & restoration of the
river & illegal barge facility there. Refer
to Federal Court Case #89-1287. Letters are
needed by Jan. 24 to: District Engineer
Neal Johnson, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,
Rock Island District, Clock Tower Bldg.
PO Box 2004, Rock Island IL 61204-2004.
Shirley O'Connell for the EXCOM

IS ENVIRONMENT SACRED?

A discussion on "The Sacred(ness) of Environment"
will be the main topic of Universalist-Unitarian
Church Environmental Group Tues., Feb. 2, at 7 p.m.
The Church is at 908 Hamilton Blvd. -- Paid Ad