

# TALLGRASS SIERRA



**Heart of Illinois Sierra Club Group**  
**December 1993, Vol. 21, No. 12**

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## ***General Meeting***     *by John Wosik*

It's time for our annual holiday potluck and slideshow. Bring a dish to share and your own table service. If you have a few favorite slides you would like to share with the group, please bring those along too!

The date is **December 15, 6:30 pm, at Forest Park Nature Center**. Everyone is welcome! (*Note time change.*)

## ***Corps of Engineers Plans Duplicate Locks for Illinois River***     *by Deja Vu*

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District, are currently involved in a six-year study to determine the "feasibility" of constructing duplicate locks on the Upper Mississippi and Illinois Rivers at an estimated cost of \$6 billion. According to the Corps, the study will primarily focus on the river environment; but yet, at the public meeting held in Peoria on November 9, their spokesperson mainly emphasized the convenience of the proposed duplicate locks to the barge industry. According to an informed source, "certain Congressmen" met with the Corps a few years ago to press for the current feasibility study of systemwide replacement of the existing locks with 1200-foot duplicate locks. The same source said that only the Illinois River portion will probably turn out to be "justified" as a result of their study.

Almost twenty years ago a duplicate locks project for the Illinois River was killed by a public outraged over paying the tab for the barge industry. At that time Sierra Club officers predicted the Corps would return with their proposal after the cost of paying for replacing Locks and Dam 26 on the Mississippi River was no longer an issue. Locks and Dam 26 at Alton, IL, the largest, most expensive public works project ever built in the midwest, controls barge traffic to both the Upper Mississippi and Illinois Rivers. A much used tactic of the Corps is to build piece-meal what they can't justify as a package. But then, the Corps' economic computations are not known for either objectivity or honesty. For example, they never calculate harm of a barge project to railroads, which unlike barges, pay about 26% of their operating costs in road maintenance and taxes. As a compromise for building Locks and Dam 26, Congress voted a user's fee of 10 cents a gallon for barge fuel. Although this was a mere pittance, it was the first time barges ever paid for the privilege of using the system. Compare this fuel tax with the estimated cost to the public of about a \$ half million for one round trip by one barge between St Louis and Omaha using the tremendously expensive Missouri barge canal (it is no longer a river).

If laid end on end, the barge canals in the U.S. would more than traverse the entire earth. You can barge goods from Pennsylvania or SC in the east to Tulsa, OK, or South Dakota in the west. From Minneapolis in the north barges can travel to FL or TX, and from Portland, OR, you can deliver all the way to Idaho. You can even barge goods from the upper midwest to the Gulf by a route other than the Mississippi River (via the Ohio, Tennessee, Tombigbee, Warrior and Mobile barge canals)! **The bottom line: the public should not pay for the continual destruction of our rivers for the sole benefit of the barge industry (white collar welfare).**



## AG CHEMICALS IN WELL WATER

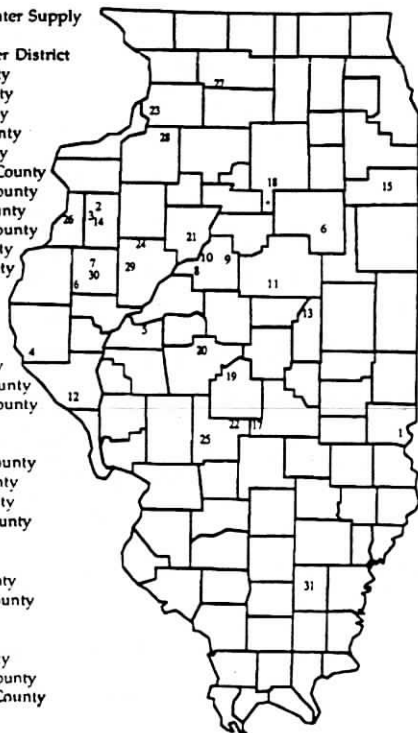
Recent studies by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA), Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) and Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) have shown an alarming increase in groundwater contamination at or near agricultural chemical facilities in Illinois. The majority of the IEPA's investigations of agricultural chemical facilities are located in the central Illinois area.

Pesticides Detected in Public Water Supply

- #1 Union/York Public Water District
- #2 Kirkwood-Warren County
- #3 Monmouth-Warren County
- #4 Plainville-Adams County
- #5 Chandlerville-Cass County
- #6 Forrest-Livingston County
- #7 Good Hope-McDonough County
- #8 Creve Coeur-Tazewell County
- #9 Mackinaw-Tazewell County
- #10 South Pekin-Tazewell County
- #11 Heyworth-McLean County
- #12 Pleasant Hill-Pike County

Contaminated Private Wells

- #13 Galesville-Piatt County
- #14 Ormange-Warren County
- #15 Kankakee-Kankakee County
- #16 Bardolph-McDonough County
- #17 Oconee-Shelby County
- #18 Rutland-LaSalle County
- #19 Sharpsburg-Christian County
- #20 Cantrall-Sangamon County
- #21 Bartonville-Peoria County
- #22 Ohlman-Montgomery County
- #23 Erie-Whiteside County
- #24 Fairview-Fulton County
- #25 Butler-Montgomery County
- #26 Biggsville-Henderson County
- #27 Woosung-Ogle County
- #28 Hooppole-Henry County
- #29 Smithfield-Fulton County
- #30 Tennessee-McDonough County
- #31 McLeansboro-Hamilton County



### LOCATION OF IEPA INVESTIGATIONS AT AGRICULTURAL CHEMICAL FACILITIES (Map Credit: Illinois Environmental Council)

The IEPA has investigated 32 study areas and found 37 private wells, 12 public wells and 12 chemical facility wells to be contaminated with agricultural chemicals. IDPA studies (1987) have reported 3 out of 4 facility wells have shown groundwater contamination. An IDOA study (1993) reported 1 out of 4 facility wells were contaminated. A greater number of private wells near these chemical facilities may be contaminated, but the owners must pursue and pay for the testing of their well water. Once surface and groundwater contamination occurs at

a chemical facility, the chances of public or private drinking water well contamination increases considerably.

In 1987 the Illinois Groundwater Protection Act was passed as a preventive approach to protect our groundwater. This Act created "protection zones" around drinking water supply wells. The Illinois Pollution Control Board (IPCB) was to handle monitoring, reporting, issuing of preventive requirements and closure of chemical facilities within the protection zone of drinking water supplies.

After a 2 year study the IPCB issued the rules and regulations (Nov. 1991) for handling groundwater contamination at these facilities. Under pressure from the agricultural chemical industry the Joint Committee on Administration Rules (JCAR) objected to the rules (Dec. 1991). Because IPCB would not weaken the rules, the chemical industry in 1992 attempted to exempt agricultural facilities from IPCB's rules. This resulted in a compromise bill, Public Act 87-1108. PA 87-1108 allows the facility within a protection zone near drinking water wells to choose the IPCB's rules or the PA 87-1108's **Part 257** rule (final disposition of Part 257 will be made by JCAR). Part 257 would;

- 1) Allow facilities to monitor a **low** vulnerability well 1-2 times a year.
- 2) A **high** vulnerability well would be monitored 2-4 times a year.
- 3) A city has to pass an ordinance, after showing IEPA the well needs the extra-large protection zone.
- 4) A **high** vulnerability well will be monitored only if IEPA decides the facilities present a significant hazard.
- 5) A **low** vulnerability well would be monitored after a spill. Any "sizable" spill that takes place outside the protection zone would be monitored annually only if the IDOA requires.

**ACTION NEEDED:** The public comment period on Part 257 is open until Dec. 14, 1993. Contact your state senator and representative and encourage them to strengthen the protection of our groundwater and encourage them to contact JCAR members with your concerns. JCAR members will make the final decision on Part 257. Ask them to support; 1) Monitoring drinking water wells with a **high** vulnerability within a

protection zone. A high vulnerability well is a well that has a water vein or water supply within the first 50 feet of the grounds surface. The present depth is 20 feet. 2) A facility located over a high vulnerability water supply should monitor their water at least twice a year. 3) Ask for the monitoring period to be extended beyond the present 5 years. Some chemicals move slowly and may not appear within the 5 year period. 4) Monitoring of private wells if a chemical spill occurs outside a facility's containment area. The chemical facility should share the cost of monitoring private wells nearest the facility to make sure the residents aren't drinking water contaminated by spills within the facility's containment area.

Contact your legislator at Illinois State House, Springfield, IL 62706 or call 217/ 782-2000.

(Information source; IEC Research Report, Pollution Prevention Program of the Illinois Environmental Council Education Fund. Contact IEC for more details 217/544-5954. )



### **SIERRA CLUB GRANT UPDATE** by Dale Goodner

A couple of folks have asked about the wetlands restoration project, for which we received a grant from the Illinois Chapter. Work efforts have been dampened by high water this past summer. Dr. Gerould Wilhelm visited the Cooper Park site in June. He feels we need to consider prescribed burning to enhance the survival odds of the federally endangered *Botonia Decurrens*. Also the fire would benefit a host of other native species. I spoke recently with a representative from CILCO. Burning would help reduce the need for herbicide near their power line. They may be willing to help. We will schedule a winter meeting for those interested to lay the groundwork for this important restoration project.



### **CONGRATULATIONS**

Congratulations to Bill Rutherford on receiving the Tom Conner Award for Community Service.

And congratulations to Kathy Berry and Tom Edwards on their recent marriage.

# HOLIDAY

# GIFT

# MEMBERSHIPS



☐ **Yes**, I want to give a gift membership.  
I want to help safeguard our nation's precious natural heritage. My check is enclosed.

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94120-7959

## ILLINOIS WILDERNESS

Letters are needed to support several wilderness designations in the Shawnee National Forest.

Adding Camp Hutchins to the proposed wilderness area is considered a top priority. This area adjoins two other areas in the National Wilderness Preserve System. With these 2 areas, adding Camp Hutchins would provide 13,548 acres of contiguous forest. It would create an area of forest canopy unbroken by logging roads and power lines.

Also, the addition of Burke Branch (5,755 acres) and Ripple Hollow (3,986 acres) to the National Wilderness Preserve System would protect more forest from the degradation of logging, logging roads, power lines and off road vehicle destruction.

Request the U.S. Forest Service begin consolidating these areas. These areas of majestic biological diversity are aesthetically beautiful and excellent for hiking, fishing, bird watching, scientific research and communing with nature. Having these areas receive the protection of the National Wilderness Preserve System would also provide the desperately needed habitat for the dwindling populations of neotropical songbirds. **ACTION NEEDED:** Contact Senators Carol Mosely-Braun and Paul Simon: The Honorable Senator \_\_\_\_\_, Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510 and your U.S. Representative: The Honorable \_\_\_\_\_, House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515.



### A LAKE FOR SITE M

It appears the Department of Conservation may be considering developing a large lake in the bottomland forest area of Site M. If you are opposed to the development of such a lake you need to let Director Manning know your feelings.

The value of this area is its natural attributes. Is a large lake part of its ecosystem and will it keep the site in a "naturalistic state"? Do we need another motorboat paradise?



### Group Calendar

- DEC. 15** General meeting and pot luck, 6:30  
Forest Park Nature Center
- 16** Executive Committee, 7 pm Corps of Engineers building, foot of Grant St..
- 28** Newsletter deadline, send copy to C. Pauli, R.R. 1, Box 168A, Brimfield, IL 61517
- JAN. 4** Newsletter mailing, 7 pm Pizza Works; everyone welcome.
- 19** General meeting

### OTHER EVENTS:

- DEC. 4** Rock Island Trail work day, 9 am
- JAN 8** Rock Island Trail work day, 9 am  
Meet at the temporary trail office on Fox Rd., Alta. Go west of Alta on Rt. 91 to Radnor Rd., about one mile. Turn right on Radnor and continue around curves. House and metal barn (office) will be on your right just before the railroad tracks. Call Chris (691-2246 or 682-0549) (Note: The HOI Grp. provides this information as a public service. OTHER EVENTS are not sponsored by Sierra Club.)



HEART OF ILLINOIS  
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