

# TALLGRASS SIERRAN

Heart of Illinois Group, Vol. 21, No. 3  
March 1993-The Central Illinois Region



## PROPOSED EAST PEORIA MARINA: OPPOSITION AND COSTS MOUNT *by Tom Edwards*

Evidence, public opinion and millions in costs continue to mount against public financing and ownership of the 600-boat marina proposed by developer G. Raymond Becker in East Peoria. Originally stated as costing \$10 million in state and/or federal grants, plus government loans, it now seems that at least \$20 million in grants, plus loans may be needed. Projected revenues from the marina and private development following the marina's construction may not be enough to maintain the facility let alone retire the loans.

The new facts are: 1) The amount of wetland that would be filled is 30% greater than stated in the East Peoria City Council's application for a construction permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. 2) The amount of dredging required would be 2.5 times the 411,500 cubic yards stated in the application. 3) Overtures have been made to dig the material needed to fill the lakeside wetlands from the side of the riverbluff near the proposed marina site on Rt. 115 adjacent to Jonah's Restaurant. Five hundred thousand cubic yards of fill would be needed.

The 2,000 foot floating barge breakwater in a substitute new plan being proposed would be virtually unmaintainable, according to Peoria Ivy Club experience, which has 3 barges being used as a breakwater. They are beset with problems and are expensive to maintain. Also, because of silt, it would be exceedingly difficult to keep open the mile-long channel needed to get from the marina to water deep enough for boating, according to two engineers who testified at the public hearing.

Taxpayer costs of the proposed project: 1) dredging 25-acre harbor and channels, \$10 million (Army Corps data), 2) breakwater construction, \$5 million (city statement) and 3) filling wetlands, boat slips, roads, utilities, parking lots, and harbor facilities are costs that have not been released. Gov. Edgar has earmarked \$5 million for the project so far. HOI opposes the project as the wrong direction environmentally and financially. East Peoria has given Becker a contract for "sole and exclusive" first development rights.

The Heart of Illinois's alternative site in the area of the closed CILCO power plant looms ever better. Another proposal to consider is East Peoria's existing Spindler Marina (84 boat slips). It could be expanded 7 times over with little or no public funding.

**Keep writing! Send letters to:** Senators Paul Simon, 462 Dirksen and Carol Mosley-Braun, 331 Hart Building, Washington, DC 20515; Gov. Edgar, Statehouse, Springfield, IL 62706; Reps. Robert Michel, 2112 Rayburn and Lane Evans 2335 Rayburn, Washington, DC, 20515; and District Engineer, Corps of Engineers, Box 2004, Rock Island, IL 61204. (*Marina Fund Campaign on page 2*)

## Point of View: On Restoration *by Dave Grebner*

As a group of local Sierrans undertake their first restoration project it's important for people to remind ourselves why such active stewardship is important. Nature, as an independent, self-sustaining ecosystem, no longer exists in central Illinois.

Our choice is not between "interfering" or standing back and "letting nature take its course," between destruction by default (fire suppression, introduction of alien species, habitat reduction and fragmentation, pollution) or enhancement through active participation (establishing cooperative relationships with landowners and public agencies, seed collecting, brush cutting, burning, reintroduction of endangered/threatened species). We are an integral part of the process: whatever we choose to do, we profoundly affect the natural environment around us.

We have abused and exploited this land; now it's time we

assumed responsibility for redressing those actions. We must accept the fact that we and the land are part and parcel of each other, that we're all in this together and must help each other.

## HAVANA INCINERATOR VICTORY! *by Tom*

*Edwards* Developers seeking to site a mass burn incinerator at Havana to burn municipal waste from Chicago and other Midwest cities, withdrew their petition last month. It was a big victory for our fellow environmentalists in Havana and Mason County. They waged a year long educational campaign to derail it. HOI was their chief supporter. It was our defeat of the Pekin incinerator that sent the same developer to try again at Havana.

□ **HELP FUND MARINA CAMPAIGN!** Our educational campaign to halt the proposed 600-boat East Peoria marina is becoming quite expensive and is vital to the future of the remaining local river wetlands and riverfront as well as Peoria Lake itself. Send donations to: Heart of Il. Sierra Club, c/o Chuck Buchna, treasurer, RR 2, Box 151A, Princeville, IL 61559 HOI Executive Board

### Chautauqua National Wildlife Refuge

At one time the Illinois River's marshes and backwaters were the resting and feeding grounds for thousands of migratory waterfowl and other birds. Then, the floodplain was diked, drained and cultivated. In the 1920's the caprice of the river reclaimed Lake Chautauqua and it once again supported a habitat favored by these birds. But, the 30's brought major man-made changes to the river in the form of navigational dams. The river's silt load accumulated in backwater areas discouraging the plant growth needed by waterfowl. In 1936 the Chautauqua Drainage and Levee District purchase was approved and Lake Chautauqua became part of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Due to this refuge impressive concentrations of ducks, geese and other shorebirds can be viewed during all seasons, especially migration. Bald Eagles may be observed, although they have not been as plentiful this winter due to the flood condition of the river. This month the Heart of Illinois Group has scheduled an outing to Sand Ridge State Forest and Chautauqua National Wildlife Refuge. At that time you may be able to view the spring migration of many birds. After visiting Chautauqua one could visualize how the development of the proposed Emiquon Wildlife Refuge would enhance this system (see *OUTINGS*).

🌲 **Outings:** An overnight outing is planned for Sand Ridge State Forest on March 27-28. Saturday will be spent hiking in the forest, while part of Sunday may be spent visiting Chautauqua National Wildlife Refuge. The return trip will pass the area that would be restored for the proposed Emiquon Wildlife Refuge. Must call Shirley O'Connell at 676-5479.

**GROUP EX. BOARD:** Chair, Phil Mincar 694-3014; V. Chair, John Wosik 682-8950; Sec., Shirley O'Connell 676-5479; Treas., Chuck Buchna 243-7142; Larry Johnson 697-3211; Larry Robbins 692-3930; Glenn Zipp 243-9001. Others: Editor, Cheryl Pauli, 446-9792; Cons. Ch., Tom Edwards, 681-9069; Mem.Ch., Joyce Blumenshine, 688-0950.

**General Meeting:** March 17, 7:30 PM, Forest Park Nature Center. March's guest speaker, Andrew French, is Refuge Manager for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Mr. French will speak about the proposed Emiquon Wildlife Refuge as well as the Meredosia and Chautauqua refuges and how they will compliment each other. A question and answer session will follow.



**ANCIENT FOREST:** The ancient forest continues to need your support. With the economic package taking most of the time on Capitol Hill we need to remind these folks the preservation of our national forest is still very important. The timber industry is very busy lobbying the members of Congress due to the President's economic package. *Contact your:* Representative, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20510; Senators, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510

**Support the President's Economic Package.** The environment and economy benefit! Contact C. Pauli for more details. (446-9792)

### GROUP CALENDAR:

- MAR. 15** Conservation Meeting, 7 PM, 2702 N. Peoria Ave., T. Edwards home; everyone welcome.
- 17 Grp. General Meeting,** 7:30PM, Forest Park Nature Center
- 20 Work Day at Forest Park Nature Center,** 9 AM, trail work or landscaping to be done, work gloves needed, John Wosik leader.
- 25 Ex. Com. Meeting,** 7 PM, Army Corps Build., foot of Grant St.; everyone welcome.
- 27 Sand Ridge State Forest Outing (camping)**
- APR. 1** Newsletter Deadline, send copy to C. Pauli, RR1 Box 168 A, Brimfield, IL 61517. Due to Easter holiday late submissions will not be accepted.
- 13 Newsletter Mailing,** 7 PM, Pizza Works: everyone welcome, good food, interesting conversation.
- 21 John Muir's Birthday, Gen. Grp. Meeting,** details later.

### Other Events:

**March 20, April 3 & 17: Volunteers Needed** for prairie work-days at Jubilee State Park, 9 AM, contact Hal Gardner 446-9792. Also need leaders and workers for trail repairs.

**April 3 & May 1 Work Days** at the Rock Island Trail, 9 AM, meet at Trail office. Enter Wyoming on Rt. 91, building is on left between IDOT & Magnussen Chevy. For info. call Chris 691-2246 (days) or Paul 695-2228.

**April 14 Lobby Day** with Illinois Environmental Council, 9:30-4:00 PM, Springfield, IL.

(Note: The HOI Grp. provides this info. as a public service. Not all items listed are sponsored by Sierra Club.)

HEART OF ILLINOIS

*Sierra Club*

P.O. Box 3593  
Peoria, Illinois 61614

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To explore, enjoy and preserve the nation's forests, waters, wildlife and wilderness...