



# Tallgrass Sierran

Sierra Club - Heart of Illinois Group - Central Illinois Region

P. O. Box 3593 - Peoria, IL 61614

## GENERAL MEETINGS

**\*\* March 15 Meeting.** Mike Ulm, Illinois Rails-to-Trails Director, will describe the 475.7 mile Grand Illinois bicycling and hiking trail. In the planning stages, this trail system will link 129.2 miles of existing trails, add on 192.5 miles of new trails, include 124.5 miles of designated roads and streets, and link another 30 miles of hopeful acquisitions for a fantastic state trailway. Mike will tell you about hopes to obtain a linkage between the Hennepin and I&M canals. Bring your questions and get some great information to plan for your spring, summer and fall bicycling/hiking.

**\*\*April 19 Meeting.** Mike Ingram will give a slide program on the beauty of our local Natural Areas. Mike is an excellent photographer, who is sure to impress everyone that we have some little known jewels tucked away in remote corners of central Illinois. He is also the Nature Conservancy steward of Detweiler Park Nature Preserve and a volunteer worker at other sites.

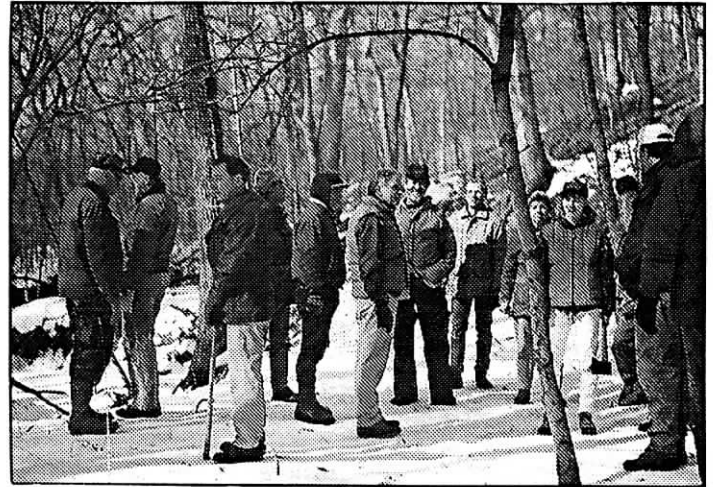
Please join us for these two great programs. All meetings will be held at Forest Park Nature Center in Peoria at 7 pm. Refreshments will follow the meeting. Everyone is welcome!



## REPRESENTATIVE LA HOOD AND THE RIVER

by Joyce Blumenshine

In a brief meeting February 20th, Rep. LaHood said he shares Heart of Illinois Sierra Club concerns about protecting the Illinois River from silting in. He made it very clear that "clean air and water are important, but there has to be some reasonableness." Rep. La Hood is very, very much in support of doing away with many regulations. His view seemed to be that many agencies have gone overboard in regulations and that there must be legislation to reverse some of these extremes. He also said that the Agriculture Bill for 1995 will be a complete rewrite. Action needed! Write now and write often to ask that essential national clean air and water regulations not be rolled back. Urge Rep. LaHood to protect and maintain federal funds for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Sustainable Agriculture Practices and Research, and assistance for family farms.



Sierra Club and Nature Conservancy team up for first work day in Jubilee State Park Nature Preserve. Twenty-three workers turned out for this effort.

## TAXPAYERS' DOLLARS BURN by John Wosik

The Illinois Retail Rate Law gives significant economic advantages to waste incineration in Illinois. Under the law, electric utilities are required to purchase the power generated from waste incineration at the full retail price of that power (essentially the same price we pay as consumers). That price is about three times what it would cost the utility to produce the power on its own. Each year the electric utility is allowed to take the difference in cost as a tax credit, reducing the state's overall income. At the end of 20 years the state can try to recover the money by "asking" the incinerator operator to repay the amount of the tax break granted the electric utility. However, such a repayment is not guaranteed under the Retail Rate Law.

The end result is that over the next 20 years Illinois taxpayer will be providing somewhere between \$750 million and \$1 billion dollars in interest free loans to incinerator operators. There is a high probability it will never being repaid! This massive subsidy has attracted 13 proposals for new waste incinerators in Illinois, primarily from out-of-state developers.

The U.S. EPA recently confirmed that incinerators are the leading source of cancer-causing dioxin in the environment. Incinerators also compete with local recycling efforts for combustible recyclables such as papers and plastics.

**Action Needed:** Write or call your state representative or senator and urge support of either House Bill 730 or Senate Bill 47, which will repeal the Retail Rate Law. Contact your representative or senator at State House, Springfield, IL 62706 or call 217/782-2000.

## **WELFARE FOR THE RICH HARMS THE ENVIRONMENT** *by Hal Gardner*

This Congress is poised to gut the environment with the excuse that budget-cutting measures are necessary. Funds for local Wildlife Refuges, Meredosia and Emiquon, are potentially on the chopping block, even though the money comes from the Land and Conservation Fund. When you write to your Congressman, point out that an overwhelming majority of people support the environment and conservation. Unfortunately, there is immense support in this Congress for welfare for the wealthy. Note that Congress increased funding of defense and even tried to bring back Star-Wars, all of which helps defense contractors. Corporate America receives about \$200 billion per year in subsidies. Direct environmental harm comes from numerous federal subsidies a few of which follow: 1. *\$36 Million was appropriated to the Corps of Engineers "to study" the Upper Mississippi and Illinois Rivers, a prelude to \$billions in construction projects.* 2. *The Forest Service loses money in timber sales and unnecessary road building. The logging firms usually clear-cuts and sells the uncut logs to Japan; thus we lose our resource and taxpayers lose \$.* 3. *Grazing fees for grossly over-used public lands are unrealistically low, and due to government subsidies there is a loss to the government and the resource is irreparably damaged.* 4. *Mining reform should be instituted to provide the government with a fair return for minerals extracted from Federal land, and mining companies should be required to clean up the mess.* 5. *Cheap water and power is provided by Federal projects, especially in western states, providing unfair economic advantage to some, such as Idaho potato growers. As a result of potato irrigation, the Snake River has completely dried in places (2 feet of water is required for potatoes). The salmon and sturgeon fisheries are gone. Idaho has more millionaires than anywhere else in the U.S. -- welfare for the rich.*

## **BEWARE OF THE JOB CREATION AND WAGE ENHANCEMENT ACT, H.R. 9**

*by Mary Bodell*

Although the media will refer to this bill as the one eliminating capital gains taxes, a majority of the titles are anti-environmental. For example, Title III requires agencies of the federal government to perform risk assessment and cost/benefit analyses on rules relating to health, safety, and the environment. Peer review would be completed by panels of scientific experts, including those employed by regulated industries. Anyone in violation of the title may sue and collect attorney's fees. This

puts the burden on government for any new regulation and will result in "paralysis by analysis". Title IV establishes federal regulatory budget cost control with total cost to the private sector limited to 5% of the gross domestic product. "Paralysis by analysis" applies here as well since the Office of Management and Budget and Congressional Budget Office determine the figures. Titles V-VIII generally regulates regulations into nonexistence through the guise of "paperwork reduction", "regulatory flexibility", "impact analysis", and "regulatory abuse". Title IX provides for compensation to private property owners whose property values are reduced by 10 % by government regulation. This is a "takings" provision, effectively creating yet another entitlement program. Thus, owners are paid not to degrade their property (welfare for the rich). Title X. State and local governments would not be required to implement federal regulations (federal mandates) unless the feds pay total costs. In practice environmental legislation, like the Clean Water Act and the Endangered Species Act would be voluntary. Title XI deals with federal mandate budget cost control. Titles XII and XIII designate amounts for reduction of the public debt and small business incentives (more welfare for the rich).

A vote on this bill is pending any day. Please call or write your member of Congress immediately. For most of us this is The Honorable Ray LaHood, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515; Phone: (202)224-3121. Ask him to oppose H.R. 9. If this bill passes, be sure to write to President Clinton for a veto!

## **"TAKINGS" TAKES FROM THE PUBLIC** *by Mary Bodell*

"Takings" bills have become popular in Congress and are commonly attached to legislation. The starting premise is from the Fifth Amendment "Nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation." It is easy to see that citizens have the right to be compensated for their property, but less obviously the government has the right to provide for public use.

The Supreme Court has ruled that some regulations act as a taking when the regulation diminishes the property use or value of the level of confiscation. Citizens have the right to seek just compensation in the courts. The Court has also ruled that legitimate regulations do not act as a taking if they leave the owner some reasonable economic use of the property, even if the property value is significantly lowered. Because of a variety of factors involved, "takings" are decided case-by-case.

The new takings bills are based on the assumption that property owners are entitled to do whatever they want with their land, even if the use might be harmful to others. Speculative investment is not excluded. Regulations which reduce the value of the property or part of the property (sometimes by 10%) would automatically require compensation.

The rights to clean air, clean water, unpolluted surroundings, even zoning restrictions, become subordinate to the individual use of property, and owners must be paid by taxpayers to not

degrade the environment, to not devalue neighboring property. In practice the takings catchphrase of private property rights, that sounds so reasonable and just, actually becomes anti-private property by overriding the rights of the neighboring property owners. *Editor's Note: Consider having a huge-scale hog farm being proposed next to land you own. Some citizens in our area experienced this situation. They were able to prevent it, but "takings" legislation could make it impossible.*

## ONE EARTH, ONE CHANCE.

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

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Phone (Optional) ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

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## ENVIRONMENT GOOD-BY: Legislative update

by Mary Bodell

A new politics is unfolding in Washington, DC. The House leadership especially is moving rapidly to dismantle environmental laws. Last week a bill emerged from committee that will replace health based standards for determining risk to people and the environment with a new standard of cost effectiveness. HR 925 will go before the House in late February. It requires that anyone whose property values decrease by 1/3 due to endangered species or wetlands regulations be fully compensated by the federal government.

Don Young (R-AK), chairman of the House Committee on Resources expects to have an endangered species bill on the floor of the House by June. He also plans to introduce legislation to open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to energy exploration. Bud Schuster (R-PA) will begin hearings on a bill dismantling federal wetlands protection.

Unfunded mandates bills passed both houses recently (HR 5 and S 1). These bills require the Congressional Budget Office to perform lengthy cost analyses on federal regulations. No mandate that would cost over \$50 million could be considered unless a majority of the House and Senate voted to do so. If passed implementation the law must be completely paid for by the federal government. HR 5 and S1 will soon be before President Clinton, so direct your opposition to him.

In the Senate the Hutchinson Endangered Species bill, S191, which eliminates endangered species protection, will come up in committee. Larry Craig (R-ID) introduced legislation, S391, to remove environmental protection from most national forests, benefitting timber companies.

While we may lose many of these fights in the House, we have a chance of doing better in the Senate, especially if we can generate a serious battle in the House.

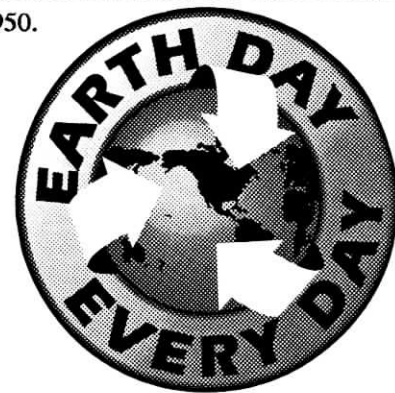
It is IMPORTANT that members of Congress know that citizens are watching their votes. Those who vote incorrectly need to hear from their constituents, and right away. Those who vote correctly need our thanks and to know they have our support. This Congress is moving legislation so fast we must act quickly if our voices are to be heard. **WRITE NOW:** Representative: The Honorable \_\_\_\_\_, House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515 and Senators: The Honorable \_\_\_\_\_, Senate Office Building, Washington, DC 20510 or call Capitol Switchboard: 202/224-3121.

## GREEN SCISSORS AHEAD by Joyce Blumenshine

One way that is looking a little hopeful for this 100 days of the new Congress is the Green Scissors approach. Although this puts environmentalists in the unusual company of some of the most ardent budget cutters in Congress, it could mean some "better for the environment" cuts may be made. A coalition is looking at such costly projects as taxpayer funded roads into federal timber areas for the use of logging companies. Other projects are being reviewed. This could mean better conservation if dollars are deleted. (See "Welfare For The Rich Harms The Environment")

## EARTH DAY 1995

What special way will you honor April 22, Earth Day 1995? Will you plant a tree, walk instead of drive, recycle or write a letter to your state and federal representative? Have your own celebration or volunteer to help with the PEACE/Bradley University Earth Day Celebration. The Sierra Club will have an informational table at this event. For more information contact Joyce at 688-0950.



## 1995 CLEANWATER CELEBRATION

Experience rivers, wildlife, water and wetlands. Learn about all these areas from students and conservation organizations Join us on March 20th from 9 am to 2 pm at the Peoria Civic Center. If you'd like to help with the Sierra Club booth on Sunday or Monday contact Rudy Habben at 685-5605.



## Group Calendar

**March 4 Sat. 9 am**  
**Conservation Workday**  
 Contact work crew leader Hal Gardner for locations at 309/446-9792.

**March 8 Wed. 7:30 pm**  
**Executive Meeting**  
 Meet at Les and Mary Bodell's, 2267 Holland's Grove Rd., Washington, IL 61571. Call 309/ 745-5479.

**March 12 Sun. 1 pm**  
**Outing at Farmdale Park**  
 See OUTINGS for details.

**March 15 Wed. 7 pm**  
**General Meeting**  
 Forest Park Nature Center

**March 18 Sat. 9 am**  
**Conservation Workday**  
 See March 4th.

**March 20 Mon. 9 am-2 pm**  
**Clean Water Celebration**  
 Peoria Civic Center. See newsletter article for details.

**March 24 Fri. 7 pm**  
**4th Fri. Letter Writing Nite**  
 Show the power of the pen in saving the environment. See newsletter article for details.

**April 1 Sat. 9 am**  
**Conservation Workday**  
 See March 4th.

**April 9 Sun. 1 pm**  
**Hike/Bike the River Trail of Illinois**  
 See OUTINGS for details.

**April 12 Wed. 7:30 pm**  
**Executive Meeting**  
 See March 8th.

**April 15 Sat. 9 am**  
**Conservation Workday**  
 See March 4th.

**April 19 Wed. 7 pm**  
**General Meeting**  
 Forest Park Nature Center.

**April 21 Fri.**  
**John Muir's Birthday**

**April 26 Wed.**  
**Newsletter Deadline**  
 Send articles for May and June to C. Pauli, RR 1 Box 168 A, Brimfield, IL 61517.

**April 28 Fri. 7 pm**  
**4th Fri. Letter Writing Nite**  
 See newsletter article for details.

**May 2 Tues. 7 pm**  
**Newsletter Mailing**  
 Peoria Pizza Works. Good food, conversation and great people

**May 6 Sat. 9 am**  
**Conservation Workday**  
 See March 4th.

## OTHER EVENTS

**Rock Island Trail Workday, 9 am**  
**March 4, April 1 and May 6**

Meet at the Alta end maintenance building. Leave Alta on Rt.91, go about 1 mile, turn right on Radnor Rd. Follow road around curves, maintenance building is on your right just before the railroad tracks. Call Chris at 682-0549 or 691-2246.

*(Note: The HOI Grp. provides this information as a public service. OTHER EVENTS are not sponsored by the Sierra Club.*



## OUTINGS

Hike at Farmdale Park on Sunday, March 12th, 1 pm. Meet at the Thompson Store, Sunnyland Plaza, E. Peoria. Contact George Burrier at 266-5085 for more details.

Hike or bike the River Trail of Illinois on Sunday, April 9th at 1 pm. Meet at the Fondulac Park District Headquarters. Contact George Burrier at 266-5085 for more details.

## FOURTH FRIDAY LETTER WRITING

Join in for half an hour or whatever on March 24th and April 28th from 7 pm to 9 or 10 pm, at 120 W. Arcadia St., Peoria to write letters on conservation issues. Information sheets on major issues will be available. Hope you will join us! Call Joyce at 688-0950 for information.



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**Sierra Club**  
 P.O. Box 3593  
 Peoria, Illinois 61614

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