



Tallgrass Sierran

Sierra Club - Heart of Illinois Group - Central Illinois Region

P. O. Box 3593 - Peoria, IL 61614

GENERAL MEETINGS

****May 17 Meeting, 7 pm. "Fight to Save the Land"**

Anna Johnson, farmer, activist, long-time supporter for the Rock Island Trail, will talk about her work to save prime farm land from strip mining. Anna has been a student in the "school of hard knocks" of Mines and Minerals Regulations and She has stories about waging appeals, winning and losing issues, from which we can learn. No matter what your particular conservation interest, Anna has some tips in how to go about dealing with government agencies. She will give us an update on issues our members from the Group's western region are involved with, too.

The Illinois River Watch Network will also give a brief talk after Anna's presentation. Please join us for this program. The meeting will be held at Forest Park Nature Center in Peoria at 7 pm. Refreshments will follow the meeting. Everyone is welcome!

****June 21 Meeting, 6:30 pm. Potluck Picnic and "White Elephant" Auction**

Join us for our annual summer potluck picnic, presentation of the Conservationist of the Year Award and fundraising auction of unusual, useful, and tasty items donated by members. Join us for a relaxing evening to celebrate summer and bring some friends. Iced tea and lemonade will be provided. Bring a main dish or other food to share, plus your own table service. Money raised from the auction will be used to cover expenses of the Group.

Meet at Biefeldt Park in Peoria along Route 29. Go north out of Peoria on Route 29. From the McCluaggage Bridge go north about 1.5 miles. Watch for the Phillips 66 gas station on your left. The Biefeldt Park is a few hundred feet ahead, on the left. Set-up for dinner will start at 6 pm with dinner at 6:30 pm. Contact Joyce at 688-0950 or Mary at 745-5479 for more information.

LOGGING WITHOUT LAWS by Mary Bodell

Amendments to H.B. 1158 and other Senate bills will waive all federal laws to allow maximum timber cutting in National Forests and BLM lands requiring road building at the expense of the government. Timber cutting will be exempt from all federal laws! President Clinton has announced his intention to sign H.B. 1158 into law. A massive outpouring of public protest is needed

to convince President Clinton to either veto H.B. 1158 or work with the conference committee to remove the logging provision from the bill. You can call the White House at 202/456-1111 and leave a message with the operator. Or write to President Clinton, The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., Washington, DC 20500.

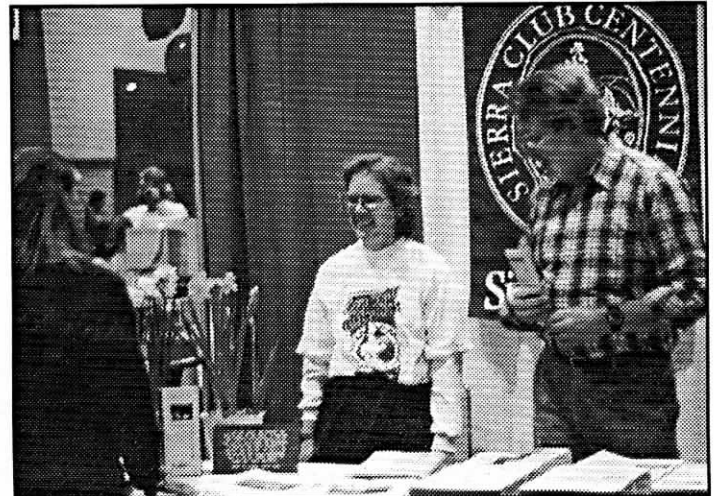
CONGRESSMAN LAHOOD SCORES A ZERO ON THE ENVIRONMENT by Hal Gardner

The League of Conservation Voters gave 18th District Congressman LaHood a 0% rating for the first 100 days of this legislative session. Votes on ten separate issues were used to in the scoring. Unfortunately, Mr. LaHood voted "in lock-step" with the wishes of House Speaker Newt Gingrich. Mr. LaHood apparently hasn't figured out that he represents central Illinois, not central Georgia. By contrast, 17th District Congressman Lane Evans scored 100% for the environment!

CLEAN WATER CELEBRATION RE-CAP

by Rudy Habben

Valdas Adam Kus, Head of Region 5 U.S. EPA was elated to see 3000 high school students attending the Clean Water Celebration held at Peoria Civic Center March 22, 1995. This



Sierra Clean-Water Booth with Mary and Rudy helping.

was in stark contrast to the current low priority given to the environment in government these days. The event was sponsored by Southern Illinois University, the Sun Foundation, local

corporations, and the National Science Foundation.

The Exhibit Hall featured environmental projects from 50 Illinois high schools as well as those from three other states. They were joined by 35 state and private agencies, including HOI Sierra Club. Available from the Sierra Club booth was information on the Mississippi Basin Ecoregion, wetland restoration at Emiquon, governmental regulation needed to protect the environment, and practical tips on how to protect clean water at home. Activities in adjacent Civic Center rooms offered the Small Change Theater Company of Minneapolis, lectures on the environment, and exhibits of aquatic animals.

Because of downsizing of the federal budget, a grant from the National Science Foundation is not expected next year, thus this may be the last year of the Clean Water Celebration. Other sources for funding are being sought. EPA's Mr. Adam Kus felt that the Celebration gave a focus to environmental sciences that will make a difference in student's attitudes. Hopefully, funding will be there for educating future minds, and steering them toward the right directions.

PROPOSED PEORIA/CHICAGO HIGHWAY

by Mary Bodell

You may remember that there are four possible routes of the proposed Peoria to Chicago Interstate. One incorporates U.S. 24 through Washington, one follows Rt. 116 through Germantown and Roanoke to Pontiac, one utilizes I-74, but bypasses Bloomington-Normal and one goes north parallel to Rt. 29 to join I-80 near Princeton. Of all the proposals, the North Route running parallel to Rt. 29 is the most environmentally damaging.

The State of Illinois, in its commendable concern for wetlands cannot build a major highway where Rt. 29 is presently located because in many areas there is too little space between the bluffs and the floodplain. Illinois Department of Transportation's (IDOT) solution is to wind the highway up and down the bluffs, crossing in five different places at highly erodible streams, and passing through oak-hickory forests. In fact, we have been unable to obtain a map from IDOT of this corridor.

Oak-hickory forests like those of the Illinois River bluffs are becoming rare. This same area was considered worthy of preservation and was targeted for Conservation Leases under the Forest Legacy Program. The continuous forests of the Illinois River bluffs serve as an important wildlife corridor and flyway for forest dwelling birds and animals. Water and silt passing through these forested areas are slowed and trapped by the vegetation, preventing additional siltation of the Illinois River. If the purpose of building a Peoria-to-Chicago highway is as much for economic development as for transportation, we do not want a bluff route to open this rare and sensitive area to further development.

The north route seems to be favored by IDOT. One reason may be increasing opposition to the other alternatives. Pontiac is on record as not wanting another highway. Farmers around Flanagan are opposed to taking farmland for the road. The

Bloomington-Normal area, with its water supply problems, doesn't want a highway too near Lakes Bloomington and Evergreen, its major water sources.

IDOT needs to hear from you. Letters of concern and opposition to the North Route are needed!

Action Needed: Contact Annette Mills, P.E., Program Development Engineer, Dist.4, Illinois Dept of Transportation, 401 Main St., Peoria, IL 61602.

AN OPEN LETTER TO REP. LAHOOD

by Joyce Blumenshine

Dear Representative LaHood,

I urge you to promote reforms in the 1995 Farm Bill that would support small and medium sized farms, and provide incentives and assistance for farmers who are trying to practice environmentally sound production methods. Please support Conservation Incentives for farmers through the Environmental Reserve, Conservation Flex Option, Stewardship Incentive Payments, Water Quality Incentive Program and Conservation Compliance Provisions.

It is essential that the Conservation Reserve Program be continued. The Agricultural Conservation Reserve and Environmental Stewardship Program and Pesticide Reduction and Education programs have also made valuable contributions to caring for land. Illinois needs to continue making improvements in saving one of our most valuable resources, our topsoil. These conservation programs will in turn help reduce erosion into the Illinois River, and the great problems and expense of dealing with silting in the river.

I urge you to support sustainable agriculture programs, which are fiscally responsible, prevent costly pollution and health problems, and help small and moderate sized American family farms. Please reject efforts to cut funding for these critically needed programs, and give your Illinois voters sustainable agriculture leadership at this critical time. Your actions will mark the direction of agriculture for years to come.

Sincerely, (*signed*) Joyce Blumenshine

Will you write a letter? Send a version of your thoughts to Ray LaHood, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515. He must hear from as many of his constituents as possible. Mr LaHood has a leadership role in the House of Agriculture Committee. Call Joyce for more information (688-0950).

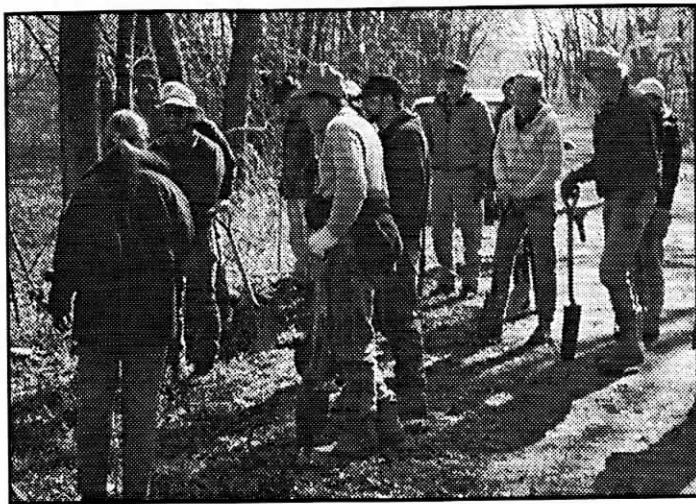


HOI EXECUTIVE MEETINGS

The HOI Executive Meeting are open to the public and members are encouraged to attend. The meetings are held the second Wednesday of each month at 7:30 pm. The May 10th meeting will be held at 120 W. Arcadia in Peoria. Call Joyce for information (688-0950). The June 14th meeting will be held at 2267 Holland's Grove Rd., Washington. Call Mary for information (745-5479).

SOME "SHOTS" OF THE WORK CREW

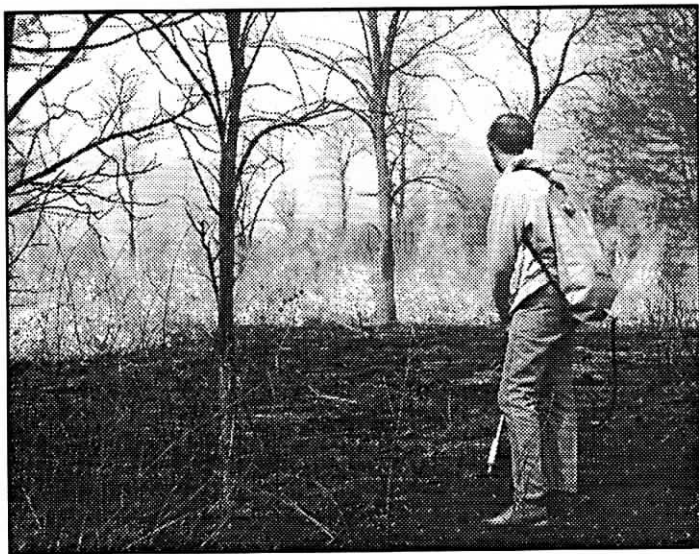
Sierra Club/Nature Conservancy team of workers have been busy all spring as sampled by the photos below and opposite.



Earth Day tree-planting crew at Emiquon Refuge.



Planting prairie root-stock at Jubilee Park.



The burn of the "Big Prairie" at Jubilee Park attracts 25 workers.

CONSERVATIONIST OF THE YEAR

Nominations for Conservationist of the Year are now being accepted. The individual nominated does not have to be a Sierra Club member. This individual's conservation efforts should have been pursued on a volunteer basis, not for pay. Write a summary telling why you feel this person deserves the award and give it to any Executive Board member or mail it to J. Blumenshine/M. Bodell, c/o HOI Sierra Club, PO Box 3593, Peoria, IL 61614 by May 9 th.

The Conservationist of the Year is the highest honor the Group bestows. It will be presented at the June, potluck picnic.



LAND USE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

by John Wosik

Rudy Habben is the new HOI Sierra Club representative on the Land Use Advisory Committee of the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission. Rudy replaces Mary Harkrader, who served as our representative the last few years. Thanks to Mary and Rudy for the time and effort they have been willing to devote toward the Sierra Club.

MEET THE STATE SIERRA CLUB

If anyone would like to attend the Illinois Chapter of the Sierra Club in Moline on May 13th or attend the Chapter's conservation meeting on May 14th call Mary (745-5479) or Joyce (688-0950) for details or to car-pool.

This is your chance to meet and discuss environmental issues with other Sierrans from around the state.

1995 Heart of Illinois Sierra Club

Co-Chairs: Joyce Blumenshine* (688-0950) and Mary Bodell* (745-5479); Secretary: Ralph Ginn* (274-3289); Treasurer: Grayce Haworth* (246-8397); Board members: George Burrier* (266-5085); Dale Goodner* (682-0789); Kelly O'Leary* (685-2240); Conservation Chair: Hal Gardner (446-9792); Newsletter Editor: Cheryl Pauli (446-9792); Membership Chair and Newsletter Mailings: Larry Robbins (692-3930); Outings Chair and Legal Advisor: George Burrier (see Board Members); Land Use Advisory Committee Rep: Rudy Habben (685-5605); Solid Waste Issues: John Wosik (682-0549); Book/Calendar Sales Coordinator: Chris Meydam (682-0549)

*Board members that represent the membership and vote on pertinent issues are denoted by an asterisk *.*

FROM YOUR CO-CHAIR

"Our goal is an environment of decency, quality and mutual respect for all other human creatures and for all other living creatures." -Gaylord Nelson, founder of Earth Day, 1970.

How was your Earth Day? Or more importantly, are you living an Earth Day each and every day? Maybe this is preaching to the converted, but if we as Sierrans don't make earth-conscious living our daily priority, don't expect your neighbor to. Let's make "earth friendly" our daily motto and not be afraid to do something daring. How about picking up that piece of trash on the sidewalk. Write those letters to your legislators. And, then take time out to enjoy nature and the joys of spring. -Joyce Blumenshine, Co-Chair.

"The question is, when do we stop getting bigger and get better." -Eugene P. Odum

"If (we're) successful, the word environment itself would disappear. It would not be the province of special groups, it would be as fundamental a concept as neighborliness, community and compassion, citizenship and dignity." -Paul Gorman, Executive Director, National Religious Partnership for the Environment.

OUTINGS: May 27-29 Canoe Trip

Memorial Day Canoe Trip on the Current River, Missouri. Contact George Burrier for details (266-5085)

June 18 Boulevard Lakefront Tour
Contact George for details.

June 25 Fox River Trail
South Elgin to Crystal Lake, 10 am. Meet at Blackhawk Forest Preserve off Rt. 31. Contact George for details.

GROUP CALENDAR

MAY 10 Executive Meeting, 7:30 pm
Meet at Joyce Blumenshine's home. See article for details.

17 General Meeting, 7 pm
Forest Park Nature Center.

JUNE 14 Executive Meeting, 7:30 pm
Meet at Mary Bodell's home. See article for details.

21 General Meeting, 6:30 pm
The annual potluck and Conservationist of the Year Award will be given at this meeting. See article for details.

26 Newsletter Deadline.
Send articles for July and August to C. Pauli, RR1 Box 168 A, Brimfield, IL 61517.

JULY 5 Newsletter Mailing, 7 pm
Peoria Pizza Works.

OTHER EVENTS:

ROCK ISLAND TRAIL WORKDAYS, 9 AM:
May 6, June 10 and July 1. 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.

BICYCLING FUN AHEAD

A "Poker Ride" fundraiser for the Rock Island Trail will be held on Sunday, July 16th. This will be a relaxed point-to-point bike ride with great refreshments and a goal of raising funds for Rock Island Trail projects. More details will follow.

DEDICATION OF ROCK ISLAND TRAIL EXTENSION

by Joyce Blumenshine

On June 3rd at 10 am, you are invited to attend the official opening of the Peoria Park District's extension of the Rock Island Trail. Meet at the Shamrock Plastics parking lot in Alta. Friends of the Rock Island Trail and members of the Pimiteoui Trail Association will provide refreshments for this event. For more information call George Burrier at 266-5085.

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



HEART OF ILLINOIS

Sierra Club

P.O. Box 3583
Peoria, Illinois 61614

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
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To explore, enjoy and preserve the nation's forests, waters, wildlife and wilderness...



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