

Tallgrass Sierran

March/April 1997 Volume 25 No. 2

THE HEART OF ILLINOIS GROUP OF THE SIERRA CLUB ♦ P.O. Box 3593, Peoria, IL 61614 ☎ (309) 745-1920

Rock Island Trail Extension in Danger

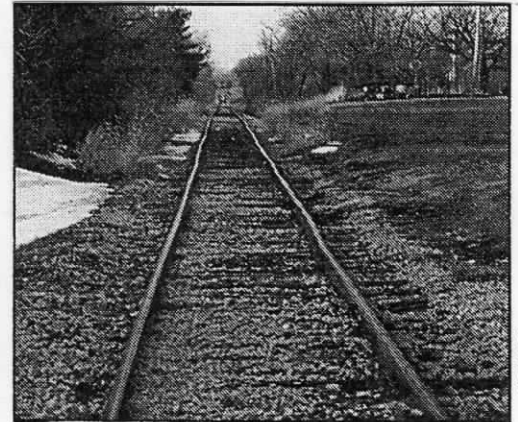
Your Calls and Letters to Peoria City Officials Needed

By JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

The southward progress of the Rock Island Trail from Pioneer Park is in danger of being stopped. A vital 9 mile link, along with a previously approved Peoria Park district grant of \$200,000 in state trail funds, and \$150,000 of design and engineering work will be lost if the Peoria City Council does not vote to stop operations on the Peoria, Rock Island and Pacific Rail line. (The city owns the railroad. A 20 year lease agreement allows the city the option of discontinuing service to Pioneer Park customers at any time after a 30 day notice.) The city may decide the fate of the rail line as early as March 4th. Your letters and calls to Peoria City Council members and Mayor Maloof are needed as soon as possible to ask that the city of Peoria cease operations of the branch

rail line from Pioneer Park to downtown Peoria. This vital link will enable progress in connecting the riverfront trail system to northern Peoria and Peoria Heights, and the hundreds of recreational trail users along the way.

At a February Railroad Commission meeting, Steve Van Winkle, Director of Public Works for the City of Peoria and member of the Peoria Railroad Commission, recommended that the city cease operations of the branch line from Pioneer Parkway to downtown Peoria. This line is the intended extension of the Rock Island and Pimiteoui Trail system. It has been losing money as a short line railroad for the city for several years, as only two businesses use it. The track ■ PAGE 2 ■



Peoria, Rock Island, and Pacific Railroad:
View looking north from Teton Drive



General Meetings

WED
MARCH
19

Pesticide Patrol

Forest Park Nature Center, 7 p.m.

Ronald and Laurel Williams of rural Delavan, and Dennis Wooden of Bradford have both been victims of irresponsible pesticide spraying. Tonight they will share their experiences with us, and will discuss the steps you can take if you or someone you know has been exposed to chemical spraying. A question and answer period will follow. (NOTE: This is rescheduled from the January program, which was cancelled due to bad weather.) *Refreshments follow the meeting. Everyone is welcome!*

WED
APRIL
16

Rock Island Trail Update

Forest Park Nature Center, 7 p.m.

Meet Melinda Stivers, the new Site Superintendent of the Rock Island Trail. Melinda will talk about her experiences as a ranger, and her goals for the trail. *Refreshments include a Happy Birthday John Muir Cake.* *Everyone is welcome!*
Pre-Meeting Hike, 6 p.m. - Arrive an hour early for a hike on the Forest Park Nature Center trails. Enjoy the spring wildflowers, get some exercise, and talk with other Sierrans.

Public Support for the Environment is Confirmed!

By HAL GARDNER

Last year the 103rd Congress led by Newt Gingrich tried to undo 25 years of environmental progress. Worse yet, Congress was poised to give away hundreds of millions of acres of public lands. Except for large scale logging of our National Forests (the logging without laws bill), other schemes to rape our public lands largely failed. The Congressional plotting failed because of public protest. Most of the nasty bills were stopped by the Senate or the President. But there are indications the 104th Congress may persist in dirty tricks (despite Newt's born-again environmentalism). The environmentally defunct Senators and Congressman from Alaska will certainly continue pushing for clear-cut logging in the Tongass National Forest and oil-drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. And, we will see how Congress reacts to mining reform. Thanks for the letters you wrote last year, and keep up the pressure!



■ R.I. TRAIL, from front page ■

is in such poor condition that an estimated \$2.4 million is needed to make repairs, and trains are limited to 10 mph because of the hazardous conditions.

Other options for the two businesses using the rail line exist. Funds might be found between business and government to connect the Union Pacific line from the west, which lacks only 1,800 feet of trackage to link into Pioneer Park. An estimated \$405,000 would be needed for this. The city might be able to help the two businesses, Carver Lumber and Gateway Milling, by paying the difference between rail and trucking costs for a set time. Carver received 42 railcar loads and Gateway received 177 railcar loads in 1996. The businesses could also opt for truck delivery, as other businesses in Pioneer Park do. Guy Brenkman, President of Pioneer Rail Corp., 1318 S. Johanson Rd., Bartonville, runs several short lines, and is challenging Steve Van Winkle's recommendation. Mr. Brenkman is prepared to ask the City to vote this issue in his favor. He would like to have the personal option on running the rail line, and says he will be successful. Carver Lumber and Gateway Milling say the higher freight costs will close their businesses. Please call and write. Ask the Mayor and City Council to cease operations of their branch railroad line from Pioneer Park to downtown Peoria. For more information call George Burrier, 698-5512.

City of Peoria - Elected Officials

James A. Maloof (Mayor)	804 W. Chalon, 61614	672-8519
At-Large Councilmen		
Camille M. Gibson	1627 W. Columbia Ter., 61604	673-7289
Dr. Edward P. Glover	3711 N. Sheridan Rd., 61614	688-2271
Charles V. Grayeb	502 N.E. Monroe, 61603	676-2913
W. Eric Turner	6212 N. Tealwood Circle, 61615	672-8519
Leonard A. Unes	1216 W. Teton Dr., 61614	685-4942
District Councilmen		
1st - Andre M. Bohannon	2130 W. Kettelle, 61605	673-3370
2nd - Gary V. Sandberg	1305 N. North, 61604	673-1430
3rd - David M. Koehler	1413 N.E. Madison, 61603	674-7256
4th - Stephen A. Kouri	2900 W. Winterberry Ln., 61604	676-8986
5th - David P. Ransburg	509 E. High Point Rd., 61614	692-2200

Clean Water Celebration

By RALPH GINN

HOI Sierra Club will again participate in the Clean Water Celebration on March 10 at the Peoria Civic Center. This will mark the 4th annual Clean Water Celebration, a coming together of more than 100 groups seeking to promote education of middle and high school age students in Central Illinois. Last year the number of visitors and participants was over 3,000.

Once again our booth will have as its theme, sedimentation and erosion. But, this year we will focus on one Illinois River feeder stream, Senachwine Creek in northern Peoria County. Specifically, we will display two settling cones, one filled with water from upstream of a clear-cut logging site and one filled with water from downstream of the site. A printed handout interpreting the display will be offered to interested students and teachers. The handout will also explain the history of the logging operation, its destructive pressure upon erosion and what can be done to halt this environmentally harmful practice. Four questions related to the display and handout will be printed in the Clean Water Celebration program. Many teachers require their students to answer these questions as an assignment. This requirement has proven to be a meaningful educational experience for the students, teachers, and Sierrans working in the booth. Some art work, photo blowups and our HOI banner will add to the attractiveness of the booth.

If you would like to help, the Clean Water Celebration runs from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Show up at 8:30 a.m. or any time after, we always need workers. For more information call Rudy Habben at 685-5605 or Ralph Ginn at 274-3289.



You can make a difference!

- ☐ **The White House:**
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue., NW,
Washington D.C. 20500
Comment Line: (202) 456-1111
E-mail: president@whitehouse.gov
- ☐ **U.S. Senators:**
Carol Mosely-Braun / Richard Durbin
U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C. 20510
Capital Switchboard: (202) 224-3121
- ☐ **U.S. Representatives:**
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515
Capitol Switchboard: (202) 224-3121
Local: Ray LaHood (309) 671-7027
Lane Evans (309) 793-5760
- ☐ **Governor Jim Edgar:**
State House, Springfield, IL 62706
Ph. (217) 782-6830
- ☐ **State Senator or Representative:**
State House, Springfield, IL 62706
Capitol Switchboard: (217) 782-2000

Reform the 1872 Mining Law!

Ask Ray LaHood to Support "The Mineral Exploration and Development Act of 1997"

By MARY BODELL

Finally, the overdue reform of the 1872 Mining Law! **HR 253, "The Mineral Exploration and Development Act of 1997"**, provides five key reforms: 1) It eliminates the patenting process which enables companies and individuals to purchase public lands outright; 2) It provides for citizen participation by requiring mining companies to advertise their plans and to hold a public hearing before beginning any work; 3) It eliminates the free ride for mining companies by requiring them to pay an 8% royalty to the federal government; 4) It provides for the eventual reclamation of mine sites by

requiring companies to post bonds or otherwise set aside funds and by establishing strong environmental standards; and 5) It requires companies to submit detailed plans for all mining operations and authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to deny permits based on poor plans or inappropriately situated mines.

Representative Ray LaHood promised to support reform of the 1872 Mining Law in the HOI debate last fall. Please write or call him, remind him of this pledge, and ask that he support (or even cosponsor) H.R. 253. His address and phone number are in the box on the left.

To landowners of Illinois River bluff property in Peoria, Marshall, Woodford, and Tazewell Counties:

State Conservation 2000 grant applications are now being sent to persons with projects that improve the natural resources of the bluff and river ecosystems. For more information, and to receive an application packet, call Rudy Habben at 685-5605. Applications must be received by April 30, 1997 for review by the Illinois River Ecosystem Partnership



Prairie Dawgs Work Crew Starts Season



By HAL GARDNER

February 22 was the 1997 kickoff for ecological restoration by the *Prairie Dawgs* of Jubilee Park. Thereafter the work crew will meet the first and third Saturdays of each month until November. Meet at Hal Gardner's old place at 14401 Jubilee-Brimfield Rd. (2.4 miles west of Princeville-Jubilee Rd.--a brown house on top of hill to the right). For directions call Hal Gardner at 446-9792.

March and April will feature 5 prairie burns, and depending on the weather we may have to call for help on weekends other than the first and third. One of the interesting burns is the Henry property in Macomb, which is threatened by interstate construction. Sierra Club has notified the Illinois Dept. Of Transportation that we are opposed to this route. Why? Because it has the second largest population of a federal-listing candidate Hill's thistle and other rare species, such as Indian paintbrush. Other burns include a large prairie at Jubilee Park, two private sites, and the Rock Island Trail Nature Preserve. If you enjoy working to preserve native plants from being overcome by alien plant invasion, we are the group for you. (Editor's Note: Although Sierra Club members participate, the *Prairie Dawgs* are not sponsored by the HOI Sierra Club.)

ONE EARTH, ONE CHANCE®

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

Name

Address

City

State Zip

Phone (Optional) ()

Annual dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to Sierra magazine and \$1.00 for your Chapter newsletter. Dues are not tax-deductible.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

	INDIVIDUAL	JOINT
REGULAR	<input type="checkbox"/> \$35	<input type="checkbox"/> \$43
SUPPORTING	<input type="checkbox"/> \$50	<input type="checkbox"/> \$58
CONTRIBUTING	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100	<input type="checkbox"/> \$108
LIFE	<input type="checkbox"/> \$750	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1000
SENIOR	<input type="checkbox"/> \$15	<input type="checkbox"/> \$23
STUDENT	<input type="checkbox"/> \$15	<input type="checkbox"/> \$23
LIMITED INCOME	<input type="checkbox"/> \$15	<input type="checkbox"/> \$23

Enclose check and mail to:

Sierra Club

P.O. Box 52968

Boulder, CO

80322-2968



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Remembering Bob Prager

The Sierra Club and those who love the outdoors mourn the passing of Bob Prager, who died in January. Bob's work at Forest Park Nature Center and his leadership in prairie restoration will not be forgotten. Memorial donations can be sent to Forest Park Nature Center, 5809 Forest Park Drive, Peoria, IL 61614 or to the Peoria Academy of Sciences Scholarship Fund, c/o Richard Barthel, 6501 N. Greenmont, Peoria, IL 61614.

Protect the Tongass

By JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

The Tongass, the last best remnant of a vast sea of green forest stretching from northern California to Glacier Bay, Alaska, needs your help. For 50 years timber company contracts have allowed 400 year-old trees to be purchased for the price of a cheeseburger. About one-half million acres of prime Tongass timber has been clear-cut. The cancellation of one long-term contract, along with the closing of the Ketchikan Pulp Company mill now open an opportunity for a new management plan to be put in place. Your calls and letters are needed to urge protection for the Tongass for its long-term sustainability as a complete ecosystem. The following points need to be made: the long-term contract with Ketchikan Pulp Company must be cancelled; large, protected biological reserves must be established within the Tongass; significant resources within the forest ecosystem must be protected; complete buffer areas for beaches and river edges must be established; and management actions must be monitored and evaluated.

Please contact President Bill Clinton, your U.S. Senators and Representative (see address box on page 2).



Support Larger Kenai Fjords National Park

By MARY BODELL

Please call the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council at the toll-free number 1-800-283-7745 and tell them that you support the National Park Service's purchase of 49,000 acres of inholdings of Alaska's Kenai Fjords National Park. The sale is desired by both parties and is critical to the integrity of this remote, rugged park. Include the following points in your message: 1) You support the purchase; 2) It is important to you personally to preserve the Kenai Fjords; 3) You want access to the coast and all wildlife protected.

Yes you can!

I-TAN



Make your voice heard on environmental issues! Join the Illinois Telephone Activist Network (I-TAN). Approximately every two weeks you will receive a brief action alert, pass it on to another local I-TAN member, and then call the HOI HOTLINE for more detailed information and the officials to contact to make your opinion count. To join call Mary Bodell, 745-5479, or the HOI HOTLINE, 745-1920, mailbox 5, and leave your name and phone number.

HOI Group Calendar

March

10 Clean Water Celebration

MON Peoria Civic Center, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Contact Rudy Habben, 685-5605, for more information.

11 Executive Meeting, 7 p.m.

TUE Peoria Pizza Works

19 Forest Park Nature Center

Hike, 6 p.m.

Arrive an hour before our General meeting and hike the trails with us at the Forest Park Nature Center. View the wildflowers, watch the migrating birds, get some exercise, and socialize with other Sierrans.

19 General Meeting, 7 p.m.

WED Forest Park Nature Center. "Pesticide Patrol: Ronald and Laurel Williams, and Dennis Wooden"

23 Migratory Duck Watch, 8 a.m.

SUN Ducks and their relatives are among the most beautiful birds of North America, so we've planned this outing to coincide with the spring migration. Learn the habitat, identification, and habits of these striking birds with master birder Brenda Onken as we drive along the banks of Spring Lake and stop at the boat ramp and bluff trail at Chautauqua National Wildlife Refuge. The itinerary may vary with the location of our quarry. A hike at Sand Ridge State Forest's Gleason Prairie will stretch our legs and complete the day.



We will carpool from Forest Park Nature Center. Bring a sack lunch and binoculars. Call Brenda, 923-7696, or Mary and Les Bodell at 745-5479 for more information.

April

8 Executive Meeting, 7 p.m.

TUE Hal Gardner's home: 14401 Jubilee-Brimfield Rd. Call Hal at 446-9792 for directions.

16 General Meeting, 7 p.m.

WED Forest Park Nature Center. Melinda Stivers, new Site Superintendent of the Rock Island Trail.

19 Adopt-A-Highway Cleanup, 1:30 p.m.

SAT Meet at Forest Park Nature Center at 1:30 p.m. to view the safety video (required to participate) if you have not already done so. At 1:45 we will carpool to our two selected sites on Rt. 26 and Rt. 40. It is suggested that you wear gloves and hard-soled shoes or boots and layered clothing. Sorry, no helpers under the age of 10 due to safety concerns. Call Grayce Hayworth at 246-8397 for more information.

20 Earth Day Celebration at Bradley Univ., Noon - 4 p.m.

SUN Have a great time browsing the many group displays and student environmental projects. Not an HOI sponsored event, but we will have a table. Call Joyce at 688-0950 if you would like to volunteer. We will have various handouts and petitions against the ring road proposal for the Washington area.

22 Earth Day

TUE



24 Newsletter Deadline

THU Send articles for May and June to: John Wosik, 3403 W. Richwoods Blvd., Peoria, IL 61604, or jwosik@mtco.com

29 Newsletter Mailing, 7 p.m.

TUE Peoria Pizza Works; Everyone welcome!

Other Events: (Not sponsored by the Sierra Club but provided as a public service.)

Spring Hikes Hosted by the River to River Trail Society:

Mar. 15 - Godwin Trail

April 5 - Trigg Tower to Double Bridges

May 17 - Lusk Creek Canyon

Call Lee or Cindy Smith at 618-777-2946 for more information.

Peoria Academy of Sciences Banquet - April 18

U. of I. Professor Jim Koehler will talk about the year's highlights in astronomy. Phone Greet Princen at 691-0519 for reservations and more information.

MARCH FOR PARKS - April 19

Wildlife Prairie Park - Get pledges or contribute \$20 (or more) for a 2 or 4 mile hike to benefit the park. Check-in begins at 8 a.m. with hiking at 9:30 a.m. For information/registration phone Cindy Matthias at 686-4134.

Lakeview Park - Meet at 10 a.m. to hike for Lakeview Wilds. Phone 688-7708 for more information.

Green View Nursery Earth Day Celebration - April 19

Al Harkrader will be at Green View Nursery with a HOI Sierra Club display (among other things). For more information, or if you would like to help staff the table, phone Al at 682-8462.

Springfield Demonstration and Lobbying Day - April 22

Sponsored by PEACE. Phone 688-7708 for more information.

Wetlands Appreciation Day - May 4

Noon to 4 p.m. Sponsored by the Fondulac and the Peoria Park Districts.

■ Cooper Park South, East Peoria

■ Detweiler Marina to Murray Baker Bridge, Peoria

Display booths, free canoeing lessons, tours of Bennett's Terraqueous Garden. Call 688-7708 for more information.

Heart of Illinois Sierra Club

HOTLINE: Local Meetings & Outings • Action Alerts • 745-1920
Public Official Contacts • Leave Messages

Executive Committee

Chair / Chapter Representative	Rudy Habben	685-5605
Vice-Chair	Joyce Blumenshine	688-0950
Secretary / Newsletter Editor	John Wosik	682-8950
Treasurer	Grayce Haworth	246-8397
Membership Chair	Cindy Matthias	686-4134
Conservation Chair	Ralph Ginn	274-3289
Alternate Chapter Representative	Hal Gardner	446-9792
Outings Chair / I-TAN	Mary Bodell	745-5479
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HEART OF ILLINOIS

Sierra Club

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