

Tallgrass Sierran

September/October 1997 Volume 25 No. 5

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

General Meetings

WED
SEPT
17

Highways and Endangered Species Forest Park Nature Center, 7 p.m.

Get ready for a wild ride on the ring road and other major areas of highway concern. Our speaker, David Wade, is a highway activist who wants to see roads built in an environmentally sensitive way, if they have to be built at all. Mr. Wade is on a highway corridor board for the Monmouth area, where he lives, and he brings new information from Illinois DOT about the Washington area ring road and some ideas you will want to hear. Find out how endangered species fit into all this by attending the program. *Refreshments follow the meeting. Everyone is welcome!*

WED
OCT
15

Friendly Earth Homes Forest Park Nature Center, 7 p.m.

Davis Caves Construction Earth-Sheltered Homes will give some thought-provoking information on the energy savings, safety, minimized maintenance, comfort and beauty of earth sheltered homes. Their slide show will change all your assumptions of what living in an earth sheltered home might be. Davis Caves Construction believes the choice of a home can make a positive contribution to protecting and preserving the environment. Learn more about building options for lower impact living. *Refreshments after the meeting. All are welcome and bring a friend!*



Harvest Dinner

Join us on Saturday, November 15th at 6:30 p.m. for our Annual Harvest Dinner at the Grace and Peace Lutheran Church, 7611 N. Knoxville Avenue, Peoria. This year's dinner features a slide presentation, *"American Beauty: Environment and the Art of Seeing"* by noted landscape photographer Willard Clay. Cost is \$8 for adults, \$3 for children under 12, free for children under 6. Reservations are required. Call 688-0950 or the HOI HOTLINE at 745-1920. The public is invited to attend. **See the newsletter insert for more details.**

The Harvest Dinner is the year's major fundraising event for the Heart of Illinois Sierra Club. Proceeds pay for next year's operating expenses and help fund new projects. *Donations of the following items for the dinner would be appreciated:*

- ☼ Your favorite homemade soups, salads, breads, or desserts
- ☼ New or good-quality used items for our **Silent Auction** that reflect an environmental or outdoor theme.

If you do not plan to attend the dinner but would still like to donate a food or auction item, please call. We will also try to arrange transportation for anyone requiring a ride. **Attend the Harvest Dinner and help support the HOI Sierra Club!**

Conservationist of the Year

The Heart of Illinois *Conservationist of the Year* is awarded to Mary Jo Adams for all the volunteer hours she has contributed to the Mackinaw River Project since 1993. Responding to a newspaper announcement on the first community meeting on the Mackinaw River Project by the Nature Conservancy, she has:

1. Served on the Project Executive Committee, Planning Committee, and Action Committee.
2. Contributed articles to and served as editor of the newsletter.
3. Co-chaired a citizens education program on Illinois EPA strategies to ease stress on the Mackinaw River.
4. Organized the Volunteer Stewardship Education Center in the Mackinaw drainage.
5. Always been willing to speak to community groups about the Mackinaw River Project.
6. Led numerous float trips down the Mackinaw River.

Mary Jo lives in rural Carlock with her husband Sandy on the Mackinaw River near Wyatts Ford, used by Abraham Lincoln when he was a circuit rider. When not working on the Mackinaw River Project, she teaches physical science at Illinois State University.



HOI Chair Rudy Habben presents the Conservationist of the Year Award to Mary Jo Adams before our July ice cream hike.

Dillin Bequest Disclaimed - National Club Cites Liability Risks

By RALPH GINN

On July 3, 1997 National Sierra Club disclaimed the eighty acres of land, located in Tazewell County, that Ilo E. Dillin left to Heart of Illinois Sierra Group in her will. National Sierra Club is able to do this because legally the Sierra Club is one corporation. Local groups and state chapters have no autonomy. This action was taken against the wishes of HOI and we have expressed our disappointment in a letter from Chairman Rudy Habben to Executive Director Carl Pope.

The reasons given by National are numerous and have changed repeatedly since Ms. Dillin's will became known to us in the fall of 1996. At one point National agreed to finance a will construction suit. Later, they wanted to find a foundation to which the land could be transferred. At that point we made contact with Parklands in Bloomington, IL. Their environmental ethic and desire to see the land preserved as a wildlife refuge seemed a perfect fit for us and the terms of Ms. Dillin's will. But then, National cited liability risks and were at first receptive to a one day transfer to Parklands but later backed off even that position. Their final rationale for disclaiming is that Sierra Club is an activist organization and does not want to be involved with land acquisition and management.

HOI Excom was disheartened by this action. We saw the Dillin property as an opportunity for restoration to oak savanna and prairie grasses. Parklands had agreed to use the agriculture income from the property to finance our

National Club's Bureaucratic Policies Shortsighted

COMMENTARY, By HAL GARDNER

As everyone must know by now, the Heart of Illinois Group inherited 80 acres of land to be held as a wildlife/prairie preserve. So, why has National Sierra Club decreed that the land will not be accepted even for a one-day transferal to the Parklands Foundation? Get this - they are afraid of being sued by USEPA in the event that a toxic waste dump exists on the property. Sure, farmland all over Illinois is loaded with buried nuclear waste, PCBs, dioxin, arsenic, and lead? Rather than accepting responsibility for reaching a satisfactory conclusion, they are dumping \$176,000 worth of land down the drain. You can bet they would do anything for the equivalent in cash. The tune changes when an inheritance has strings attached, like responsibility for land conservation. An opportunity to preserve 80 acres in Illinois is a rare occurrence, and it is clear that Sierra Club's bureaucratic policies are incredibly shortsighted.

The Heart of Illinois Group does not buy National's arguments, and thus, our Executive Board voted to censure National's decision. A quote from Rudy Habben's letter of protest to Carl Pope, Executive Director of Sierra Club, summarizes it all, "It should be obvious to you that Illinois is among the most deprived of states in conservation lands, and land acquisition is difficult because of the high costs....We definitely are left with the impression that San Francisco does not give a damn about the flatlands on the other side of the Sierras."

Speaking for myself, a charter member of the Group and the first Chair, I am reevaluating membership in an organization that does not stand up for conservation and preservation of land. The Earth is too close to environmental collapse for such compromise. Compromise is a recipe for disaster, a recipe routinely used by governmental agencies responsible for preserving our environment and our federal lands.

restoration work. Our plan was to retire a few acres of agricultural land each year as the restoration progressed.

National Sierra Club believes there is still a chance that the land can be directly transferred from the estate to Parklands, eliminating any "risk" to Sierra Club. However, this would require disclaimers by the other two estate heirs (National Wildlife Federation and

National Parks Association), agreement by the estate executor, probate judge, and Parklands. This scenario seems to be a long shot but is not impossible.

Editor's Note: We'll keep you informed on the final disposition of the Dillin land. Also, thanks to Ralph Ginn and Rudy Habben, who have spent considerable time and effort on this issue.

HOI Group Seeking EXCOM Nominations

The HOI Sierra Club is seeking nominations for the annual election of its Group Executive Committee. If you are interested in being considered or would like to nominate a person for consideration contact Nominating Committee members **Mary Bodell (745-5479)** or **Chris Meydam (682-0549)** by Sept. 17. The EXCOM positions will be for a 2 year period (1998-99).

Any member not considered by the Nominating Committee, but who would like to be on the ballot should submit a petition with the signatures of 10 HOI Group members to John Wosik (682-8950) by Oct. 14. Ballots will be mailed with the Nov-Dec newsletter and counted at the November general meeting.

Bird Seed Sale



The annual Friends of the Rock Island Trail / Peoria Audubon Society bird seed sale will once again be offering the finest bird seed in central Illinois, including striped and black oil sunflower, thistle and mixed seed, and other seeds. Pickup will be Saturday, November 8 at Metro Center. Contact Bert or Greet Princen, 691-0519, for information on placing an order.



Heart of Illinois Sierra Club
ANNUAL HARVEST DINNER

6:30 PM, Saturday, Nov. 15, 1997

Grace & Peace Lutheran Church

7611 N. Knoxville Ave, Peoria

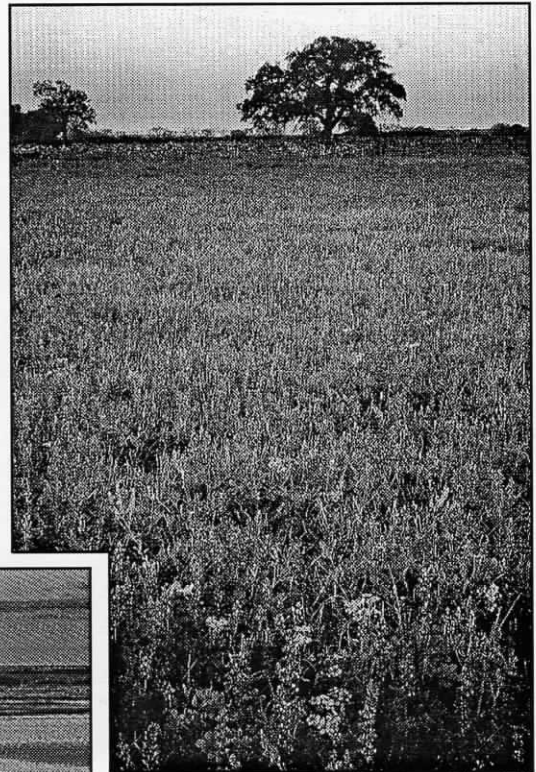
- *Featuring an awesome buffet*
 - *homemade soups*
 - *salads*
 - *desserts*

- *Plus a magical slide-program*

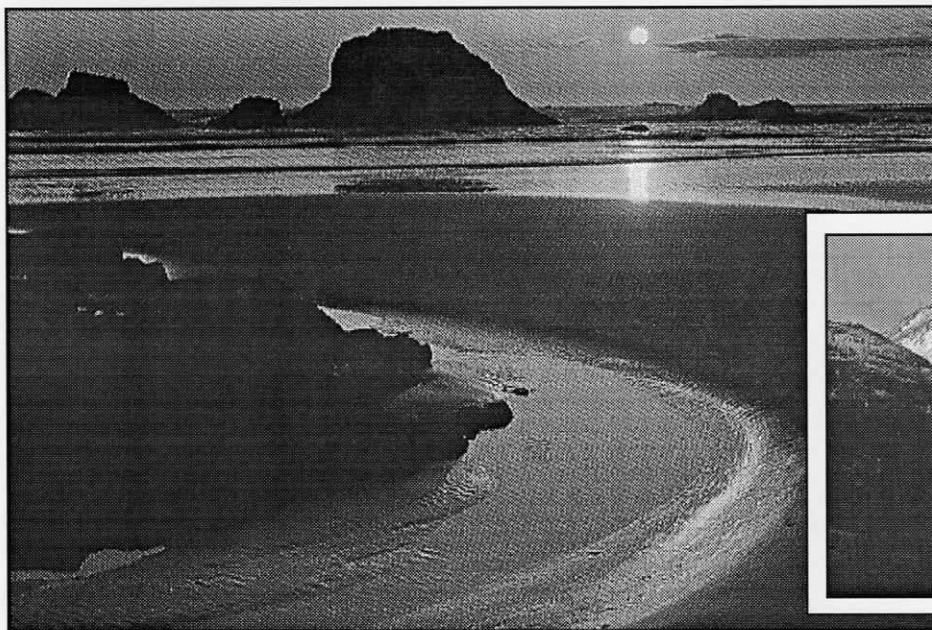
"American Beauty: Environment and the Art of Seeing"

by noted landscape photographer

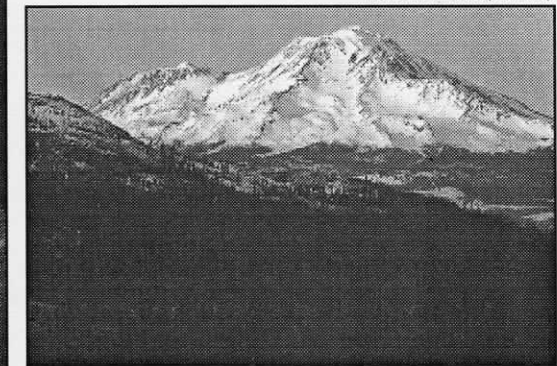
Willard Clay



Texas Bluebonnets, Gillette, TX



Olympia National Park, WA



Mt. Shasta, CA

Adults \$8 • Children \$3 • Under 6 Free

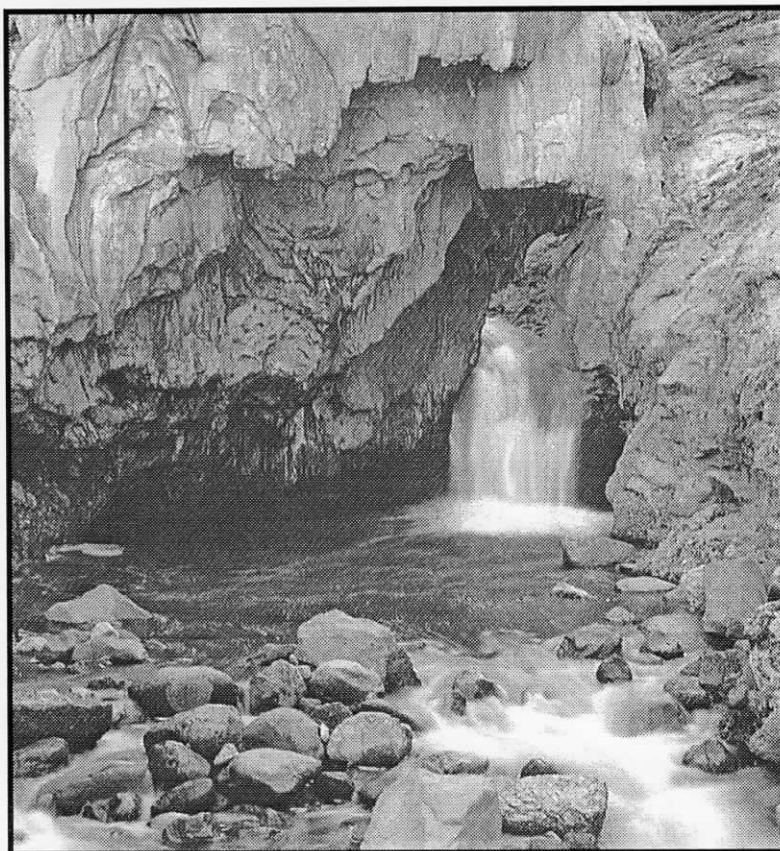
Reservations Required • Call 688-0950 or 745-1920

Seating limited to 120

**"AMERICAN BEAUTY"
SUBJECT OF HOI
DINNER PROGRAM**

**"... my vision
in photography
is inner vision."**

WILLARD CLAY



Jemez Springs, New Mexico

Willard Clay, nationally noted landscape photographer, says that "I don't shoot a scene until something inside of me gives me that spark. Most of my vision in photography is inner vision."

Clay will present "American Beauty: Environment and the Art of Seeing," a slide presentation of his work at the Heart of Illinois Sierra Club's annual Harvest Dinner, Saturday, November 15, 1997, 6:30 PM at the Grace & Peace Lutheran Church, 7611 N. Knoxville Ave., Peoria, IL.

Former botany professor at the University of Arizona, Clay left his Ph.D. research projects and a teaching career in 1982 to pursue photography on a full time basis.

Natural compositions in color and form are what he seeks with his 4X5 view camera. "It is the finding of the scene that is most difficult and most rewarding part," he says. From that point on, the right lens, correct exposure and process become mechanical, after his inner vision says: "That's it!" Then he gets serious about capturing a picture. The all important signal is his inner sense of seeing.

Willard Clay is a man of two passions: music and art. When not traveling and taking photographs, he is home listening to Beethoven, Mahler and Vaugh Williams. Music inspires him to photograph and some have said it is reflected in his photographic work.

Clay's photography first appeared in *Arizona Highways Magazine* and has since been presented in a myriad of national publications and calendars. He has completed eight photographic books: *Oregon*; *Northern California*; *Illinois - Images of the Landscape*; *Deep in the Heart of Texas*; *Wild and Scenic Illinois*; *Yellowstone - Land of Fire and Ice*; *Grand Tetons - Citadels of Stone*; and *A Guide to West Virginia, Kentucky and Tennessee*.

His books will be available for purchase at the Harvest Dinner.

A true friend of the environment, he has shared his professional talents in many presentations, and is giving this program to benefit the efforts of the Illinois Sierra Club. He lives in Ottawa, Illinois, and will return from a photo trip to Utah just in time to give his program at the Heart of Illinois Sierra Club's annual Harvest Dinner.

Proceeds from the dinner and a silent auction will go towards the newsletter and environmental issue costs for the Heart of Illinois Club. The cost is \$8 for adults and \$3 for children, children under 6 are free. Seating is limited to 120. Reservations can be made by calling 688-950 or 745-1920.



ISTEA Funding in Danger Calls and Letters Needed Now!

By JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

Federal funding for bicycle trails is in danger. The Intermodal Surface Transportation Act (ISTEA) will be over at the end of September. This law required that a small amount of funds from the DOT highway building trough go toward non-vehicle use. ISTEA funding has enabled states to preserve greenways and railroad rights-of-way across the country. These funds have helped build many of your favorite bicycle trails and ISTEA needs to be continued. Contact Representative Ray LaHood or your local representative right away. Use the sample letter below or write your own.

Dear Representative LaHood,

Your support is greatly needed for continued bicycle transportation funding in the upcoming reauthorization of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA). Encouraging nonpolluting bicycle transportation for recreation and for travel is important to the economy of our area, and many others. Bicycle trails are proven economic boosters for rural communities, and they enhance property values in urban areas. ISTEA funds have saved greenways for wildlife and conservation corridors across the country. Bicycle trails also offer low-cost, healthy family recreation. Your support is needed to continue full funding for the Enhancements and CMAQ programs in ISTEA; for maintaining citizen participation in state and local transportation planning; and for requiring consideration of bicyclists in all federally-assisted projects, such as bridges and new roads. ISTEA has made a positive difference in commuting and recreation alternatives. This funding needs to be continued. Please let me know how you will be voting on this issue.

The highway lobby is fighting hard to stop ISTEA funding. Please call and write your support now. More information is available at www.outdoorlink.com/bikes-istea on the Internet.

The Attack of the Idaho Potato Heads

By RUDY HABBEN

Just when you thought the 105th Congress was going to go easy on the environment, along comes the Idaho delegation to prove you wrong. HR725 sponsored by Rep. Crapo (ID) and S485, the identical Senate bill sponsored by Senator Larry Craig (ID) is titled the "Precision Agriculture Research, Education and Information Dissemination Act". The bill, introduced at the request of the chemical fertilizer industry, would focus government research away from sustainable integrated farming to a high tech, high cost, chemically dependent approach using satellites, computers, GIS systems and paid consultants. Specifically, the bill would:

1. Eliminate the sustainable agriculture directive to the National Research Initiative (NRI), replacing it with a demand that no less than \$40 million be invested in "Precision Agriculture".
2. Require U.S.D.A. to spend Fund for Rural America money on "Precision Agriculture".
3. Remove chemical-use reduction as a valid focus of U.S.D.A. research and education.
4. Compromise scientific integrity by requiring recipients of federal grants to report only on the benefits, but not costs or the impact on water quality and wildlife habitat of adopting this technology.

Not to be outdone by the other members of the Idaho delegation, Rep. Helen Chenoweth (R-ID), has been swept up in Rocky Mountain paranoia and introduced a bill to kill President Clinton's proposal to designate 10 American rivers as American Heritage Rivers. Since Clinton announced the program in the January State of the Union speech, it has been the target of a misinformation campaign via the internet, fax machine and radio talk shows. The paranoid far-right sees the Heritage River proposal as a scheme to have United Nations troops control all land use using black helicopters, aerial photography and satellite surveillance.

The HOI Sierra Club has sent a letter of support to be included in an application being prepared by Lieutenant Governor Kustra requesting the Illinois River be designated an American Heritage River. If designated, Illinois will not get an army of occupation but the assignment of one full-time federal representative to coordinate federal agency involvement in technical assistance and funding to meet locally determined objectives. It would help if you sent a letter of support for the American Heritage River Initiative to your members of Congress.

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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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

HOI Group Calendar

September

- 9 Executive Meeting, 7 p.m.**
TUE Ralph Ginn's home: 20822 N. Blue Ridge Rd., Chillicothe. Call Ralph at 274-3289 for directions.
- 17 General Meeting, 7 p.m.**
WED Forest Park Nature Center. David Wade, "Highways and Endangered Species".
Pre-Meeting Hike, 6 p.m. - Join us for an enjoyable hike on the Forest Park trails before our meeting!
- 20 Adopt-A-Highway Cleanup, 9 a.m.** 
SAT Route 26 volunteers meet at the Total Gas Station at the Rt. 26 & 116 intersection. Route 40 volunteers meet at the Fry Farm at the intersection of Rt. 40 and Singing Woods Road. If you have not viewed the safety video (required) call Rudy Habben, 685-5605. Gloves and hard-soled shoes are recommended. Sorry, no helpers under 10 years due to safety concerns. Call Grayce Hayworth at 246-8397 for more information.
- 27 Merwin Tract Tour, 11:30 a.m.**
SAT Meet at Forest Park Nature Center to carpool to the Parklands Foundation property on the Mackinaw River. Roger Anderson, plant ecologist and former chairman of Parklands Foundation, will give us a tour of the Merwin Tract, including the prairie restoration area, and another prairie restoration near Lexington. Call Rudy at 685-5605 for more information.

October

- 14 Executive Meeting, 7 p.m.**
TUE Joyce Blumenshine's home: 120 W. Arcadia Ave., Peoria. Call Joyce at 688-0950 for directions.
- 15 General Meeting, 7 p.m.**
WED Forest Park Nature Center. Davis Caves Construction, "Earth Friendly Homes".
Pre-Meeting Hike, 6 p.m. - Join us for an enjoyable hike on the Forest Park trails before our meeting!
- 16 Newsletter Deadline**
THU Send articles for November and December to: John Wosik, 3403 W. Richwoods Blvd., Peoria, IL 61604, or jwosik@mtco.com
- 18 Illinois River Environmental Tour, 10 a.m.**
SAT Join us for a tour of interesting sites on or near the Illinois River north of Peoria: Miller-Anderson Woods, a large, mature woodland; Hennepin Bridge, possibly to be replaced, we're seeking to convert it to non-motorized traffic; an eagle roost; and Tom Hall Woods near Lacon. Bring a snack and drink. We'll have an early supper in Lacon. Call Rudy at 685-5605 for more information.
- 21 Newsletter Mailing, 7 p.m.**
TUE Peoria Pizza Works; Everyone welcome!
- 25 Adopt-A-Highway Cleanup, 9 a.m.** 
SAT See September 20th date for meeting places and more information.

November

- 11 Executive Meeting, 7 p.m.**
TUE Location to be announced.
- 15 Annual Harvest Dinner, 6:30 p.m.**
SAT Grace and Peace Lutheran Church, 7611 N. Knoxville Ave., Peoria. Program: "American Beauty: Environment and the Art of Seeing" by landscape photographer Willard Clay. See newsletter insert and front page for more information.
- 19 General Meeting, 7 p.m.**
WED Forest Park Nature Center. Program to be announced.



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

Prairie Dawgs Work Crew

Work includes prairie burns, brush cutting, eradicating alien plants, native plant seeding, and planting root stock. Crews meet the 1st & 3rd Saturdays at 9 a.m. at Hal Gardner's old house about 2.4 miles west of Jubilee-Princeville Rd. on Jubilee-Brimfield Rd. Call Hal Gardner at 446-9792 for directions.



Rock Island Trail Workdays

Workdays are **Saturday Sept. 20 and Saturday Oct. 18**. Rain dates will be the next day (Sunday). Meet at 9 a.m. at the Alta end maintenance building. Directions: Go about 1 mile west of Alta on Rt. 91, turn right on Radnor Rd., follow road around curves, maintenance building is on your right just before railroad tracks. Call Chris at 682-0549 for more information.

In the Shadow of Mount Everest

In the Shadow of Mount Everest, a slide presentation by Barbara Gurtler, will be shown on Sunday, September 7, 5:30 p.m., University United Methodist Church, 2818 N. University, Peoria. This program tells the story of Barbara's 1997 attempt to summit the world's tallest mountain. It is FREE and OPEN to the public. Ice cream social before and after. Call 692-7514 for more details.

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
Calendar Sales	Chris Meydam	682-0549

HEART OF ILLINOIS

Sierra Club

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