

Tallgrass Sierran

May/June 1999 Volume 27 No. 3

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

HOI Group Meetings

WED
MAY 19

Tour of Singing Woods

Forest Park Nature Center, 6:30 p.m., or
Singing Woods, 6:45 p.m.

Mike Ingram, who works for the Nature Conservancy, will lead our group on a short tour of an area in Singing Woods that is currently being restored to native oak-hickory hill prairie. Mike will show us first hand what the Conservancy and Peoria Wilds volunteers have accomplished. The designation of the 1,100 acre tract by the owner (Peoria Park District) has been one of our highest priority issues the past two years.



There are two ways to reach Singing Woods: 1) Take route 29 north from Peoria, or south from Chillicothe and turn west on Cedar Hills Dr. (stop light). Go west on Cedar Hills Dr., about ¼ mile past the south entrance of the Cat tech center, turn north on Ivy Lake Rd. Go 0.6 miles north (about 0.1 mi. past the place where the power line crosses the road). There is a zig in the road and a small creek with a concrete sided bridge. We will park in the field on the west side of the road; 2) Take route 40 north from Peoria or south from Bradford to Cedar Hills Dr. Go east about two miles to Ivy Lake Rd. Turn north and follow the directions above. For those not sure of these directions we will have a caravan leaving Forest Park Nature Center at 6:30 p.m. In case of rain, bring an umbrella and/or rain gear. In case of lighting we will postpone.

Root beer floats (Coke, & 7UP too) will be served after the tour. All are welcome!

WED
JUNE 16

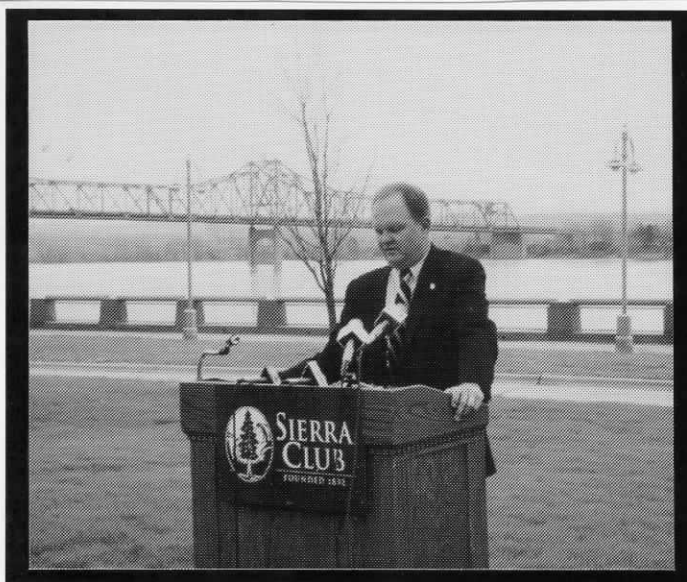
Annual Potluck Picnic & White Elephant Auction

Detweiller Park - Moose Shelter, 6:30 p.m.



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 our members. Bring a main dish or other food to share, plus your own table service. Iced tea and lemonade will be provided.

This year's picnic will be held at the **Moose Shelter at the south end of Detweiller Park, Peoria**. Enter the park from Rt. 29 and follow Detweiller Drive toward the bluff. Turn left before ascending the bluff and follow the park road to the far south end of the park. Turn right at the Moose shelter sign. Or, from Knoxville Ave. (Rt. 40) take Detweiller Drive east, turn right at the park entrance sign, and then turn right twice immediately after descending the bluff. If you'd like, don't forget an item to donate to the auction. *And bring a friend! Everyone is welcome!*



Chuck McGrady, National President for Sierra Club, speaks to the press at the riverfront in Peoria on April 19th. Photo: John Wosik

National Sierra Club President at Peoria Press Conference

Sierra SPARE Initiative Announced, River
& Local Park Key Issues

By JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

Chuck McGrady, the elected National President for Sierra Club, visited Peoria on April 19th for a press conference hosted by Heart of Illinois Group. Illinois State Sierra Club Field Representative Jack Darin organized the press conference, which featured Jack's introductory comments on protecting the Illinois River and watershed issue concerns. Chuck McGrady announced the new Sierra **SPARE** America's Wildlands initiative, which stands for **Smart Growth, Preservation, Acquisition, Restoration, and End Commercial Logging**. McGrady emphasized that Sierra Club is bringing the SPARE message to focus on local and regional environmental concerns, in addition to major Club campaigns, such as saving the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge from oil exploration. Featured in the SPARE campaign is the Illinois River Watershed. Sierra Club Upper Mississippi River issues representative Mark Beorkram spoke about the negative effects increasing the size of locks and dams on the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers will have. Farm and industry groups are pushing Federal legislation to fund billions of dollars in lock expansion at taxpayer expense. Metamora area resident Ed Smith spoke about the damage to

■ see page 2 ■

■ Press Conference, from page 1 ■ the local watershed that will be caused if the proposed development of Black Partridge Park proceeds. Heart of Illinois Group presented a statement of opposition to the Metamora Park District's proposal to turn much of the heavily wooded area into a golf course.


Chuck McGrady spoke later in the day in Normal, where he was hosted by the Illinois State University student environmental organization. He was the first speaker in a series of Earth Day/Week events at ISU. McGrady commented that America is waking up to the problems of urban sprawl. He urged individuals to get involved and to act personally with tenacity and optimism to protect local and national wildlands.

Conservationist of the Year



The HOI Executive Committee is seeking nominations for the **Heart of Illinois Conservationist of the Year**. The nominee 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. Your nomination should include a brief explanation of why you feel this person should be considered. The deadline for nominations is June 1. The winner will be announced at our annual potluck picnic on June 16. Send nominations to **Cindy Ewing, c/o HOI Sierra Club, P.O. Box 3593, Peoria, IL 61614; or call 686-4122.**



Action Alert!

Fight Black Partridge Park Land Grab

By JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

On April 20th, a group of about 50 concerned citizens met in a garage in rural Woodford County to discuss ways to stop the proposed \$55 million golf course and resort at Black Partridge Park. The park is a 640 acre area at the west side of Metamora. The development is being pushed by the Metamora Park Board and details of the plan are to be released to the public at an open meeting April 23rd. A demonstration by opponents to the project is planned for the Metamora Square the same morning. The public was denied access to an earlier meeting at which the Park Board selectively chose the agencies they wanted to attend. The golf resort development would clear ridge tops in the park for an expansive golf course. A lake would be formed by damming local creeks. Condominiums, a hotel, cottages, and other facilities would be built. This development would be in the heart of one of the largest tracts of unspoiled woodlands thought to be left in Woodford County. Land from the adjoining Girl Scout Camp Tapawingo is marked for purchase for building of the condominiums. Loss of habitat, destruction of forests, siltation caused by the project that would enter the Illinois River from Black Partridge Creek and its tributaries, pollution caused by golf course chemicals, and the size of the development and its impact on the surrounding rural area are major concerns. Another major contention is that the land was obtained and purchased to be a public park. The proposed golf resort would mean access would be very costly for the average citizen. Currently there are three existing golf courses in Woodford county, although none are as expansive as the proposed resort. The closest similar course is the new Weaver Ridge Golf Course, a private development near Peoria, which is reputed to be losing money. **Send or phone your comments to Metamora Park Board President Stan Sayre, 730 N. Wiedman, Metamora, IL 61548, phone 309-367-4267.**

Illinois Endangered Species Act Under Attack

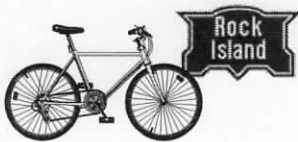
By JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

Phone your State Senator to vote for specific changes on House Bill 2243, and demand that politics be taken out of endangered species protection. As it stands, H.B. 2243 will drastically weaken the state Endangered Species Act by allowing the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to allow the killing of threatened and endangered animals in certain circumstances. Wording in this legislation will allow IDNR to issue "incidental take" permits to let people "take" or kill endangered animals if the "takings" will not threaten the survival of the species as a whole in Illinois. Wildlife advocates are concerned that legislators are now changing the Illinois Endangered Species law to allow local construction projects or other projects to proceed in spite

of existing endangered species at the site. Ask your Senator to have H.B. 2243 insure that the Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board makes decisions regarding endangered species and not the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Urge that the public can have the right to challenge Incidental Take Permits. The bill must also be amended to require that habitat improvements will take place to mitigate damage caused to a species if an incidental take permit is approved, and a bond should be required to guarantee mitigating action will be taken. Call 217-782-2000 and ask for your state Senator. **CALL TODAY! A VOTE MAY BE TAKEN SOON!** Letters are also needed. Write to your Senator at State House, Springfield, IL 62706.

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:**
Richard Durbin / Peter Fitzgerald
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 George Ryan:**
State House, Springfield, IL 62706
Ph. (217) 782-6830
- **State Senator or Representative:**
State House, Springfield, IL 62706
Capitol Switchboard: (217) 782-2000



May 22nd March for the Rock Island Trail!

Petition Drive to Get Trail Extension Action

By JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

Please join in the walk on the proposed Rock Island Trail extension through Peoria Heights. At 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, May 22nd, there will be a special hike on the railroad line going north from the Peoria Journal Star parking lot back gate entrance. Mayors from Peoria and Peoria Heights are expected to participate, along with city officials. The hike is to demonstrate public concern for the delays in continuing the Rock Island Trail and to show support for the trail. A ceremonial "gold spike" will be presented midway to Peoria Heights to symbolize the joining of Peoria City and Peoria Heights in the trail effort. The hike is being organized by a new trail group called RTA: Regional Trails Advocates. The group includes area bicycle riders, runners, representatives from various groups, and other concerned citizens. RTA is sponsoring a petition campaign for the trail. Friends of the Rock Island Trail will provide refreshments. For more information phone George Burrier at 698-5512

Spring Dinner Fun!

Thanks go to Mary Bodell and the many helpers who made the March 17th spring dinner event a success. The silent auction raised over \$150 for Heart of Illinois Group and additional funds were raised by the dinner. Great work folks!



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

Name

Address

City

State Zip

Phone (Optional) ()

Contributions, gifts or dues to the Sierra Club are not tax deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to *Sierra* magazine and \$1.00 for your Chapter newsletter.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

	INDIVIDUAL	JOINT
INTRODUCTORY	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	
REGULAR	<input type="checkbox"/> \$35	<input type="checkbox"/> \$43
SUPPORTING	<input type="checkbox"/> \$60	<input type="checkbox"/> \$68
CONTRIBUTING	<input type="checkbox"/> \$120	<input type="checkbox"/> \$128
LIFE	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1250
SENIOR	<input type="checkbox"/> \$19	<input type="checkbox"/> \$27
STUDENT	<input type="checkbox"/> \$19	<input type="checkbox"/> \$27

PROTECT AMERICA'S ENVIRONMENT.
For Our Families, For Our Future

Enclose check and mail to:

Sierra Club
P.O. Box 52968
Boulder, CO, 80322-2968



F94Q **W-0703** -1
W99901

Proposed Pekin Landfill Threat to Area Water Supply

By JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

FOCUS-W, Families Opposed to the Contaminating Use of Soil and Water, Inc., is fighting a landfill proposal for a wooded area off of Towerline Road, on Pekin's southeast side. The citizens' group is concerned that the landfill could contaminate the shallow groundwater table and major aquifers in the area. 185 families live within one mile of the proposed landfill, and all use well water. Much of the land has sand and gravel seams, and is considered an unsafe location for such a dump. The landfill would be operated by Waste Professionals, Oakbrook, Illinois, and would accept waste from anywhere. This company owns a closed landfill north of the site, and major leachate concerns and erosion problems at the old landfill have not been corrected. Contamination has already been found at a test well in the closed landfill.

The FOCUS-W group has suggested two alternative locations for a new landfill. The Tazewell County Board will be voting on whether or not to accept a "Host" agreement for the new landfill proposed by Waste Professionals. FOCUS-W has worked hard to inform the Tazewell County Board members of environmental concerns with the new landfill proposal, but there appears to be significant Board support for proceeding with the new site. The County would gain tipping fees and other financial return from the dump. FOCUS-W is planning a rally at the Pekin Courthouse Square prior to the April 28th Tazewell County Board meeting. Heart of Illinois Sierra Club members in Tazewell County are urged to write and phone your County Board members and ask them to vote No on the Host agreement for the Landfill Proposal from Waste Professionals. Urge the members of the Tazewell County Board to oppose the landfill because of significant environmental concerns with the site. For more information phone 688-0950.

Knox County Suit Goes to the Supreme Court

By RALPH GINN

On March 3, 1999 the Illinois Supreme Court agreed to hear an appeal of the Knox County (and Citizens) suit with Highlands (a mega-hog farm 2 miles south of Williamsfield). The 2nd District Appellate Court ruled 2-1 in Dec. 1998 to uphold a lower court decision that gave relief to Highlands from the Knox County Zoning Board decision to rescind Highlands construction permit. Knox County appealed the Appellate Court judgment in January of 1999 to the State Supreme Court.


Families Against Rural Mess (F.A.R.M.) whose members make up the "Citizens" filing the appeal asked Sierra Club to join the appeal as amicus curiae (friend of the court). We have until May 4 to file. Approval has been obtained from National Sierra Club to file amicus curiae and Albert Ettinger, attorney for the Environmental Law and Policy Center and Illinois Chapter of Sierra Club legal consultant, has agreed to write and file the brief. If Knox County wins this appeal, the resulting chain of events could be extremely favorable for regulation and control of large livestock facilities in Illinois.

HOI Group Calendar


May

- 11 Executive Meeting, 7 p.m.**
TUE Peoria Pizza Works, 3921 N. Prospect, Peoria Heights.
- 19 Singing Woods Tour, 6:30 p.m.**
WED Meet at Forest Park Nature Center, 6:30 p.m., or at Singing Woods, 6:45 p.m. Everyone is welcome! See front page for more details.
- 22 March for the Rock Island Trail, 1 p.m.**
SAT Meet at the Peoria Journal Star parking lot back gate entrance. Sponsored by the Regional Trails Advocates. See newsletter article for more information.
- 25 Green River Meeting**
TUE Meeting at the Des Plaines Wildlife Center regarding problems at the Green River State Fish and Wildlife Area. This meeting is being organized by Michelle Moss, Assistant Illinois State Sierra Club Field Representative, to bring environmental and hunting groups together to discuss concerns at the site. For information phone 688-0950.

June

- 8 Executive Meeting, 7 p.m.**
TUE Peoria Pizza Works, 3921 N. Prospect, Peoria Heights.
- 12 Allerton Park Hike, 9 a.m.**
SAT  Allerton Park, with its wilderness trails and formal gardens, statuary, a mansion, prairie woods, and wetlands forms a unique area in central Illinois. We'll caravan from Forest Park Nature Center at 9 a.m. Call Mary Bodell at 745-5479 for more information.
- 16 Annual Potluck Picnic & White Elephant Auction, 6:30 p.m.**
WED Detweiller Park, Moose picnic shelter. See front page for more details.
- 16 Newsletter Deadline**
WED Send articles for July and August to: John Wosik, 3403 W. Richwoods Blvd., Peoria, IL 61604, or jwosik@mtco.com



- 19 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. Gloves and hard-soled shoes are recommended. Sorry, no helpers under 10 years due to safety concerns. For more information, or if you have not viewed the safety video (required), call Grayce Haworth at 246-8397.
- 23 Newsletter Mailing, 7 p.m.**
WED Peoria Pizza Works; Everyone welcome

Future Outings Not Yet Scheduled

Raffensperger Hike & Lunch

Chicago Sierran Dr. John Raffensperger has again invited the HOI Group to visit his property near Henry. Dr. Raffensperger owns 130 acres which he is restoring as much as possible to presettlement conditions. A cabin has electricity provided by solar panels. Tentative plans are to meet on a Saturday in June (not yet scheduled). In the morning we will hike through the property and then have lunch. Dr. Raffensperger may have some restoration work for those who wish to stay during the afternoon. For more information, or to sign up, call John at 682-8950. You will be called when a date is scheduled.

Mackinaw River Canoe Trip

We'll try again! Date depends on availability of canoes and river water level. People who sign up will be called. Sign up by leaving your name, phone number, and number of people on mailbox 4 of the HOI hotline (745-1920) or by calling Mary at 745-5479.

Southern Illinois Trip

Help plan a fall trip to southern Illinois. Would you prefer to hike, backpack, bicycle, canoe, or a combination? Of the myriad places to go, which ones should we choose? Call Mary Bodell, 745-5479, and we'll get together and make some choices.

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



Friends of the Rock Island Trail Workdays

Workdays are usually the first Saturday of the month. Call Trail Superintendent Melinda Kitchens at 695-2228 or 243-5082 to confirm workdays. 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. *Everyone is welcome!*

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.

Heart of Illinois Sierra Club

HOTLINE: Local Meetings & Outings • Action Alerts (309)
• Public Contacts • Leave Messages 745-1920

Executive Committee

Chair	Cindy Ewing	686-4122
Vice-Chair	Ralph Ginn	274-3289
Secretary	Norman Ewing	347-8921
Treasurer	Grayce Haworth	246-8397
Calendar Sales	Chris Meydam	682-0549
Excom	Richard Klatt	274-3792
Excom	Laurel Williams	244-7238

Conservation Co-Chair	Joyce Blumenshine	688-0950
Conservation Co-Chair	Rudy Habben	685-5605
Membership Chair	Cindy Matthias	686-4134
Outings Chair / I-TAN	Mary Bodell	745-5479
Newsletter Editor	John Wosik	682-8950

HEART OF ILLINOIS

Sierra Club 

P.O. Box 3593
Peoria, IL 61614

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... To explore, enjoy and protect the wild places of the earth ...