

Tallgrass Sierran

September/October 1999 Volume 27 No. 5

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

HOI Group Meetings

WED
SEPT 15

Can the River be Saved?
The Illinois River Restoration Project
Forest Park Nature Center, 7 p.m.

Dr. Donald Hey, with the Wetlands Initiative headquartered in Chicago, will review the present status of the Illinois River Restoration Project. The Project, funded by private contributions, is a set of demonstration areas placed strategically along the river channel and within the watershed which are designed to reduce flood damages, improve water quality, enhance wildlife habitat, and maintain property values. In Woodford County a tributary creek restoration project will show how a series of check dams and wetlands can capture sediments from entering the Illinois River mainstream. Near Hennepin a project will demonstrate backwater lake revitalization and wildlife habitat restoration. *All are welcome. Bring a friend interested in this topic. Refreshments served after the meeting.*



WED
OCT 20

Southeast Asia Travels:
Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia
Forest Park Nature Center, 7 p.m.

Fred Dintzis will speak about his travels through Southeast Asia and will show slides from Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia. He will discuss the area in general and include land use problems that he and his wife observed. Mr. Dintzis, now retired, was a research physical chemist at the Northern Regional Lab in Peoria. *All are welcome! Refreshments served after the meeting.*

Heart of Illinois Sierra Hosts River Press Conference

Counters Army Corps of Engineers Push
to Double Lock & Dam Size

By JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

On Tuesday, July 27th, Heart of Illinois Sierra hosted a press conference to call attention to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' plans to double the size of selected locks and dams on the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers. Mark Beorkrem, Midwest Area Sierra Representative, presented a new Sierra Club study showing that rail traffic is the most cost effective for hauling grain. If the lock and dam expansion proceeds, it will cost taxpayers over a billion dollars. Larger locks and dams would mean increased commercial river traffic and bigger tows, further threatening the already damaged environmental health of the entire river system.

The Army Corps of Engineers held a public meeting July 28th at Illinois Central College. The meeting presented data from the Corps on the need for larger locks and dams and requested comments from the public. A "Citizen's Alternative" informational room was sponsored by Sierra Club to counter the Army Corps presentation. Sierra Club had displays and a slide show to tell the many environmental issues for the river systems. You can send comments on the lock and dam expansion proposals and your concerns for the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers to: U.S. Army Engineer District, Rock Island Attention: CEMVR-PM-A (Jackson); Clock Tower Bldg.; P.O. Box 2004; Rock Island, IL 61204-2004.



Burnout Elixir



By RALPH GINN

Will the environmental activist among us who has never suffered burnout stand up and reveal his or her secret. In the meantime, while we wait, why burnout? Frustration and failure have rank near the top. Take an issue, say CAFO's (Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations). HOI, F.A.R.M., Stewardship Alliance and others have experienced plenty of frustration and failure these past four years. And this is an issue with some success. A bill strengthening regulations was passed by the Illinois General Assembly and signed by the governor this summer. But it was a weak bill and has, on close inspection, a swiss cheese look.

Take our regional newspaper, the Journal Star. A recent column condemned urban sprawl and championed a Peoria-Chicago expressway, (not for transportation but for its

development potential), all in the same editorial. DUH! Consider the Metamora Park District, a body that talks and acts more like a local Chamber of Commerce than the real thing. They want to develop Black Partridge Park, a 435 acre woodland that was sold to them, far under appraised value, by East Peoria's Fondulac Park District. East Peoria got the land for nothing from Forest Park Foundation in 1966, with tacit understanding it was to be preserved for public use. And, recall what our own National Sierra Club did to the 80 acre Ilo Dillin bequest. Tying themselves in bureaucratic knots, they disclaimed it.

But, what about a cure for burnout? Try reading a book. Not any book, and not an environmental horror story ("A Civil Action", "And the Rivers Turned to Blood"). ■ see page 2 ■

■ **Burnout Elixir, from page 1** ■ Those are for arousing the demon anger in your belly. What you need for burnout out is a calming elixir. A written celebration of the earth's magnificence that drags you to the realization that your work and efforts are more than worth the price in time and energy.

Why not try Edward Abbey's "Desert Solitaire" or "Down by the River." Both explore the beauty of some of the last great stretches of American wilderness, and are full of fun, humor, and passionate condemnation of "progress and profit." A broad ranging collection of essays by Edward Hoagland in "Tigers and Ice" has several of his reflections on nature that are excellent. "Earth's Eye" beautifully describes his primitive Vermont home, and "I Have Seen the Elephant," depicts an Antarctic voyage of grandeur and splendor. And if you have read Aldo Leopold's "A Sand County Almanac," read it again. If you haven't, you are missing the one greatest literary work in the environmental library. Leopold was a keen observer, a meticulous recorder of nature's nuances, and a poet. The classic essay, "Thinking like a Mountain" is quoted in more lectures, meetings, and forums than any one piece of nature literature.

Of course, reading a book to recharge your battery will always be second best to getting "out there," seeing, smelling, touching, and listening. But, we can't always find the time to visit the places we love. The alternative medicine, maybe a book.

River Cleanup Crew Inspires

By JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

Chad Pregracke and his Mississippi River Beautification and Restoration Project crew visited the Peoria area in August. On August 14th, Chad lead a Peoria cleanup that attracted over 20 volunteers. Three helpers from Heart of Illinois Sierra joined in the work of collecting tires, rusty oil drums, and garbage of all kinds from the river delta near Farm Creek. Chad and his team are young people working at the daunting task of river garbage cleanup purely on their own motivation. Send them a check to help with their work at : Chad Pregracke; 17615 Route 84 North, Great River Road; East Moline, IL 61244.

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



"No Grazing" Movement Growing

Efforts Underway to Stop Abuse of Federal Lands

By JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

One of the most damaging uses of Federal lands in the arid southwest and other regions of the country is grazing. Domestic livestock grazing on Federal lands has stripped native vegetation, dried up springs and creeks, and severely harmed stream-side ecosystems.

This abuse is made possible by over \$500. million of our tax dollars each year for government management of the grazing allotments, predator control, and other costs.

Only 2% of the annual U.S. cattle production comes from Federal lands grazing. A growing movement of environmentalists is calling for an end to grazing on government lands and restoration of the biodiversity and wilderness populations these lands once contained.

At this time no national environmental organization has a campaign to end public lands ranching. The Sierra "Grazing on Public Lands Policy," adopted in 1992, contains language which is outdated, confusing, and weak. A grassroots effort among Sierra groups is growing to urge national Sierra to change their policy and to call for an end to domestic livestock grazing on Federal lands. The Heart of Illinois Sierra Club ExCom passed two resolutions at its August meeting. One resolution calls on national Sierra to change the policy on Federal lands grazing. The second resolution is addressed to the Illinois Chapter ExCom. It requests that they adopt a similar resolution. For more information or copies of several fact sheets on the impacts of grazing on Federal lands, call 688-0950.



We Need You!

**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 **Joyce Blumenshine (688-0950)**, **Mary Bodell (745-5479)** or **John Wosik (243-2230)** by October 12. The EXCOM positions will be for a 2 year period (2000-01).

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 Norm Ewing (347-8921) by Oct. 12. Ballots will be mailed with the November-December newsletter and counted at the November HOI Group meeting.

Native Tree Seedlings Available

Rare native tree seedlings are available free of charge to anyone willing to give them a good home. Contact Jim Anderson, (309) 691-4189, by September 1st if you are interested. The following seedlings are available: American Chestnut, Butternut, Persimmon, Pecan, Paw Paw, Wild Hazelnut, and Wild Plum.



Impressions from the Sierra Club 1999 Big River Week

By **KAREN HUDSON**, *President of FARM (Families Against Rural Messes)*

I attended the Sierra Club 1999 Big River Week held June 10-15 1999 in Washington DC. I was one of several Illinois citizens representing the Illinois Chapter Sierra Club. Assembled were approximately 120 Sierra Club members from across the nation who are working on the Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation [CAFO] issue. Cross training sessions were offered on water quality testing, grassroots organizing, legal issues, federal guidelines, and the health, economic, social, and environmental impacts of CAFO's.

Highlights of the week were presentations by anthropologist Dr. Kendall Thu and Economist John Ikerd. Dr. Thu is widely known for his valuable research on the impacts of CAFO's and provided us with a comprehensive overview of the issue. John Ikerd delivered two inspiring presentations about current trends in agriculture and their devastating effects on rural communities and the environment. He pointed out that we must not accept the concentration and industrialization of agriculture as something inevitable and that we are part of a "revolution" of sorts that can change these trends for the better. He stressed that corporate profits should not be allowed to take precedent

over the lives of people and the quality of the environment. We all agreed!!

I returned to Illinois with with more ideas about grassroots organizing and a notebook full of valuable new contacts from around the country. I was saddened to see how many other people there are that must also sacrifice time away from home, family and work just to fight for the quality of life in their communities. We all felt that we will be successful in working this issue because we now have volumes of "sound science" to back us up. I also realized that Illinois is many steps behind other states in organized efforts to educate the public and stand up to the invasion of livestock factories. The negative impacts from these animal cities such as the decline of communities, decreased food safety and antibiotic resistance, sterile soil and toxic air and water are issues that affect every Illinoisian from our small rural towns to urban Chicago. Now is the time to "kick it up a notch" and ORGANIZE!

More information on CAFO's and FARM can be found on the web at www.netins.net/showcase/megahoglaws.

Metamora Park Board Slows on Golf Resort



By **JOYCE BLUMENSHINE**

There is a little good news regarding the battle to save the woodlands of Black Partridge Park from becoming a golf resort. Some members of the Metamora Park Board will not approve spending additional funds on plans for the golf course until funds are spent on other park improvements. More funds are needed as the golf course plan has to be revised. The original plan includes private property that the Park District intended to purchase from local owners. The property owners have refused to sell, and have demanded that the Park District not display a proposal that includes their property. *You can send a donation to the local residents fighting to save the park at Black Partridge Conservancy; 411 Northfork Rd.; Metamora, IL 61548.*

1999 Governor's Conference on the Management of the Illinois River System

The 1999 Governor's Conference on the Management of the Illinois River System will be held October 5-7 (Tue-Thu) at the Peoria Holiday Inn City Centre. The HOI Sierra Club will have a display at the conference. Registration for the full conference is \$90, Wednesday only is \$60, and Thursday only is \$55. A separate pre-conference tour of Peoria area conservation sites is \$15. Contact the Heartland Water Resources Council at 309-637-5253 to register and for more information.



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

Name

Address

City

State Zip

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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
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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

Enclose check and mail to:
Sierra Club
P.O. Box 52968
Boulder, CO, 80322-2968



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

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September

9 Executive Meeting, 7 p.m.

11
SAT  **Illinois Chapter Executive
Committee Meeting, 9 a.m.**



15 Group Meeting, 7 p.m.

18 Adopt-A-Highway Cleanup,
SAT 9 a.m. 

9 a.m.

19 Black Partridge
SUN **Park Hike, 1:30 p.m.**

Bring water and snacks as we take four hours to explore this 600 acre woodland proposed for a golf resort development. To reach the park take Rt. 116 to the west edge of Metamora, turn north on Susan Lane, go three blocks to St. Mary's Cemetery and follow the signs to the park. We will meet in front of the log cabin at the far end of the park parking lot. Call Rudy at 685-5605 for more information.



October

2 Camp Wakonda Hike, 10 a.m.

SAT We will meet at the lodge at Camp Wakonda. To reach the camp take Rt. 6 or Rt. 29 to Old Galena Road and turn west on Boy Scout Road. We will view some of the improvements to the lodge by the Peoria Park District and then hike the Red Trail. We should have fall color for the two hour hike up the river bluff. Call Rudy, 685-5605, for more information.



12 Executive Meeting, 7 p.m.

TUE Mary Bodell's home, 2267 Hollands Grove Rd., Washington. Call 745-5479 for directions.

18 Newsletter Deadline

MON Send articles for Nov. and Dec. to:
John Wosik, 12409 N. Blackhawk Ct.,
Dunlap, IL, or jwosik@mtco.com

20 Group Meeting, 7 p.m.

WED Forest Park Nature Center. *Fred Dintzis, Southeast Asia Travels: Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia*. Everyone is welcome!



22-24 Fall Hiking in
SAT-SUN Southern Illinois



Join us for a weekend of hiking in southern Illinois. We'll leave late Friday afternoon for Giant City State Park where we'll pitch our tents after sundown. Saturday we plan to hike the Giant City Trail and visit the Heron Pond-Little Black Slough Natural Area. If time permits we also plan to visit Bell Smith Springs and hike the local trails. On Sunday we will stop and hike the trails at Little Grand Canyon before arriving home that evening. Saturday morning breakfast will be provided at the campsite. Group participants should bring food for Saturday and Sunday lunch and snacks on the trail. The remaining meals will either be at the Giant City Lodge or other restaurants selected by the group. Shower facilities are available at the Giant City State Park campsite. **Call Mary Bodell, 745-5479, for more information and to sign up (required) by October 18.**

27 Newsletter Mailing, 7 p.m.

WED Peoria Pizza Works; Everyone welcome!

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



Friends of the Rock Island Trail Workdays

Workdays are **Saturday October 2 and Saturday November 6**. 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 Melinda at 243-5082 or 695-2228 for more information. *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

HOTLINES

Local Meetings & Outings • Action Alerts
• Public Contacts • Leave Messages

(309)

745-1920

Executive Committee

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HEART OF ILLINOIS

Sierra Club



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