

Tallgrass Sierran

January/February 2000 Volume 28 No. 1

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

HOI Group Meetings

WED
JAN 19

Nepal: Land and Culture
Forest Park Nature Center, 7 p.m.



Anne Desjardins will present a program of slides and commentary on the mountainous Asian country of Nepal. Ms. Desjardins, presently a research chemist at the Northern Regional Laboratory in Peoria, taught science in Nepal from 1971 to 1973 and has made four other visits to the country since. She is planning yet another trip for the spring of this year. After Nepal changed to a democracy in 1991, tourism flourished and has largely been responsible for the breakdown of class bondage. Nepal has two principle cultures, Hindu and Tibetan. Ms. Desjardins will discuss the very different land stewardship ethic of these two cultures. *All are welcome! Refreshments served after the meeting.*



The Kellar Branch Line: View looking north from Teton Drive. With your support this will become a recreational trail stretching from Pioneer Park to the riverfront. Photo: John Wosik

WED
FEB 16

Planning for Peoria's Third Growth Cell
Forest Park Nature Center, 7 p.m.

Wayne Anthony, longtime chief Peoria city planner, will speak of his ideas and dreams for Peoria's third growth cell, north of War Memorial and west of route 6. Mr. Anthony envisions miles of hiking and biking trails linking subdivisions, linear parks, lakes, and ponds. Open space of this type would be unlike any found in a central Illinois city. In Mr. Anthony's plan, bikers and hikers would have trail access to the Rock Island Trail. *All are welcome! Refreshments served after the meeting.*

Urgent! Letters & Calls Needed to Support the Rock Island Trail Extension!

Be at Peoria City Hall, Tuesday, February 22nd,
for the Vote

By JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

Please contact Peoria Mayor Bud Grieves and as many Peoria City Council members as you can. Let them know it is essential that the City of Peoria approve the Rock Island Trail extension on the Kellar Branch Line. The city must vote to vacate the line and end train traffic there so that the extension for the Rock Island Trail can be built. The Peoria Park District has obtained \$4.5 million dollars of Federal and state grant funding for developing the Rock Island Trail extension, however, the money could be lost if the project is further delayed. In all the years Pioneer Park has promoted businesses, only three places there use rail service. An 1800 foot rail line extension will connect existing track from the Union Pacific line at the west edge of Pioneer Park so that rail service can continue to Pioneer Park. Funds to extend the railroad branch line have been obtained by Representative David Leitch.

The Rock Island Trail extension will go from Pioneer Park south to Peoria Heights and on to the riverfront trail. The trail will provide safe, off-street bicycling, hiking, jogging, and walking north/south through Peoria. Currently there is no safe way to commute by bicycle going to Pioneer Park from central Peoria. The trail extension is an essential link in the area bicycle path system, and it will connect the East Peoria/Morton trails to the Rock Island Trail. Significant political pressure is being made to keep a shortline railroad running on the Kellar Branch line. If rail access to Pioneer Park is not moved see page 2



JOIN US ON OUR ANNUAL STARVED ROCK WINTER HIKE!

When - Sunday, January 30th

Where - Forest Park Nature Center, 9 a.m., or
Starved Rock Lodge, 10:30 a.m.

What - Bring Lunch for the Trail / Dress Warm

What (About Dinner) - Mona's in Toluca

Who - HOI members and the public

Questions? - Al and Mary Harkrader,
(309) 682-8462



■ Rock Island Trail, from page 1 ■ from the Kellar Branch Line to the western Union Pacific access, the opportunity for the Rock Island Trail extension will be lost. A meeting of the Trail Advocates group will be held January 6th, 7:00 p.m. Phone George Burrier, 698-5512, for more information.

The Peoria City Council voted at their December 14th meeting to defer the issue until February 22, 2000, at the regular 6:15 p.m. City Council meeting. Please Contact:

City of Peoria - Elected Officials

Bud Grieves (Mayor)	125 SW Jefferson Ave, 61602	671-1011
City Council		
Jim Ardis	6141 N. Evergreen Circle, 61614	690-4032
Chris Duncan II	314 Madison Park Ter., 61605	673-0673
Camille Gibson	1627 W. Columbia Ter., 61606	673-7289
Charles Grayeb	510 W. High St., 61605	676-2913
John Morris	4104 N. Chelsa Place, 61614	686-3944
Patrick Nichting	10507 N. Sleepy Hollow Rd., 61615	692-5580
Gary Sandberg	1810 N. Bigelow St., 61604	682-2564
Gail Thetford	1126 E. Fair Oaks, 61603	686-7151
Eric Turner	6212 N. Teal Wood Circle, 61615	691-2537
William Spears	2225 W. Overhill Rd., 61615	688-0960

SUPREMES RULE AGAINST KNOX COUNTY

By RALPH GINN

On December 2, 1999 the Illinois Supreme Court ruled that Illinois counties do not have the authority to regulate Mega-hog farms or other large-scale livestock operations (CAFO's). The court ruled that The Highlands in Knox County, a 3,600 sow, hog raising facility near Williamsfield, should be considered agricultural and not industrial or commercial. In Sierra Club's opinion, this is a misguided judgment and leaves us, and other opponents of CAFO's, with only the option of going back to the State Legislature for relief from this ill-wind blowing into rural America.

Native American Mounds Concern if Pekin Landfill Expands

By JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

FOCUS-W (Families Opposed to Contamination of Urban Soil and Water) group representative Bruce Knoll has been coordinating with the Native American Midwest Soaring Group. Historical research and contacts with elderly residents have disclosed Indian burial mounds along the Lost Creek area, southeast of Pekin. This area is close to the site Waste Professionals of Chicago wishes to use for expansion of the closed Pekin Metro landfill. Area residents share concerns with the Native American group that some mounds may have been destroyed by the old landfill. Protection of possible Indian burial sites is another issue to be considered by the Tazewell County Board in any further negotiations of a Host Agreement to allow Waste Professionals to proceed with plans for the dump. A revised Host Agreement has reportedly been written, however, it has not been made available to members of the FOCUS-W group nor to the public. Waste Professionals is facing legal action for problems with their closed landfill, and the Illinois Attorney General's Office has been looking into illegal dumping at the site. The old landfill and proposed new landfill are both located over major water recharge areas, with parts of the Mahomet Aquifer nearby. Several thousand people live in the water-recharge area and use well water. If you have not yet called or written to your Tazewell County Board Representative to urge that the Waste Professional's south Pekin landfill site be vetoed, please do so.




ALDO LEOPOLD EDUCATION PROJECT



The Heart of Illinois Sierra Club Executive Committee has decided to ask members of our group for a one-time donation to be used for support of the Aldo Leopold Education Project. This project is being proposed by the Hult Health Education Center located at 5215 Knoxville Av., Peoria, Illinois. Hult Education Center is a not-for-profit organization established to supplement the education of Illinois school children and families. This unique health-science museum utilizes "hands-on" exhibits and computer animation to educate more than 40,000 individuals annually.

Hult hopes to develop an education project that will be used to teach children and the public about the environmental principles so elegantly described by Aldo Leopold in his book, "A Sand County Almanac." Twelve learning stations will be constructed on a one-acre plot adjacent to the Hult Center. These learning stations will focus on sustaining natural cycles and preservation of plant and animal species. Hult hopes to raise \$50,000 for this project and is asking for one-time donations of \$500 from regional businesses and organizations.

Enclosed is my gift to Heart of Illinois Sierra Club to be used for the Aldo Leopold Education Project.

\$5 _____ \$10 _____ \$20 _____ other _____

Your name(s) _____ (optional)

Mail to: Grayce Haworth, Treasurer
HOI Sierra Club
Route 1 Box 219
Lacon, IL 61540



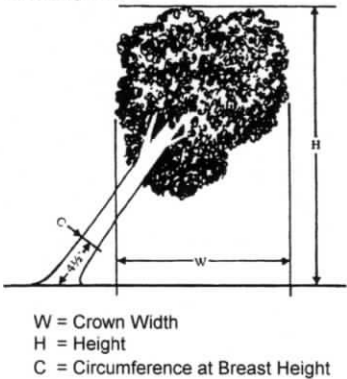
Our goal is to raise \$500 from HOI Sierra Club. We have also asked Illinois Chapter of Sierra Club to match our donation. HOI has not asked members for a donation in many years. The Executive Committee believes this is an excellent opportunity to promote the education of children and their parents about basic principles of conservation.

Please give a gift of \$5 or more and send it in with the form on the left.

Thank you! HOI Executive Committee

Heart of Illinois Big Tree Survey

Illustration 1 - How to measure Crown width and Height of a Leaning Tree.



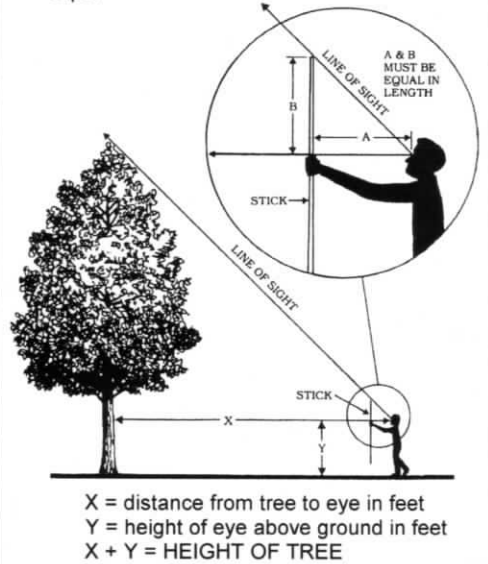
Heart of Illinois Sierra Club is asking its members to help in developing an inventory of large, old or otherwise significant trees in our 15 county area. This project is in response to the cutting down of four very large oaks on Peoria's northwest side for a strip mall. This form and instructions is condensed from *Guide to the Illinois Big Tree Register* published by the Illinois Department of Conservation Division of Forest Resources. We are asking that you return any nominations to HOI Sierra Club. We, in turn, will forward the information to the appropriate District Forester.

Only NATIVE Illinois trees that are listed in Robert H. Mohlenbrock's *Guide to the Vascular Flora of Illinois Revised and Enlarged Edition* are eligible. A tree is defined as a woody plant having one erect, perennial stem or trunk at least 9 1/2 inches in circumference at a point 4 1/2 feet above the ground, a definitely formed crown of foliage, and a height of at least 12 feet. Trees must receive sufficient care or be expected to live at least 10 years beyond the date of nomination to be considered.

The circumference of a tree is measured in inches at a point 4 1/2 feet above the center of the base of the tree. In the case of a fork, growth or a branch on the trunk at this point, the circumference is measured at the point below this where the circumference is least. A note should be made of this height and included on the nomination form.

Height of a tree is the measurement of the vertical distance in feet from the base of the tree to the highest live branch. If the tree is a leaner, its topmost branches might not be directly over the base of the tree. Only the vertical distance from the tree top to a point level with the tree base, is measured. A plumb-bob or weighted string may be needed for sighting to determine this point (see Illustration 1).

Illustration 2 - How to measure the height of a tree using a long stick and measuring tape.



Partial List of Trees Eligible for Inclusion On the Illinois Big Tree Register

Aceraceae - maple
Anacardaceae - sumac
Annonaceae - pawpaw
Aquifoliaceae - holly
Betulaceae - alder, birch
Bignoniaceae - catalpa
Caesalpiniaceae - redbud, honey-locust, coffee-tree
Caprifoliaceae - viburnum
Cornaceae - dogwood
Corylaceae - blue beech, hop hornbeam
Cupressaceae - juniper (red cedar), arbor vitae
Ebanaceae - persimmon
Fabaceae - yellow-wood, locust
Fagaceae - chestnut, beech, oak
Hamamelidaceae - sweetgum
Hippocastanaceae - buckeye, horse-chestnut
Juglandaceae - hickory, walnut
Lauraceae - sassafras
Magnoliaceae - tulip tree, magnolia
Moraceae - mulberry
Nyssaceae - tupelo
Oleaceae - ash
Pinaceae - larch, pine
Platanaceae - sycamore
Rosaceae - shadbush, hawthorn, apple, plum, cherry, mountain ash
Rutaceae - hop-tree
Salicaceae - poplar, willow
Styracaceae - silverbell tree
Taxodiaceae - bald cypress
Tiliaceae - basswood
Ulmaceae - hackberry, water elm, elm

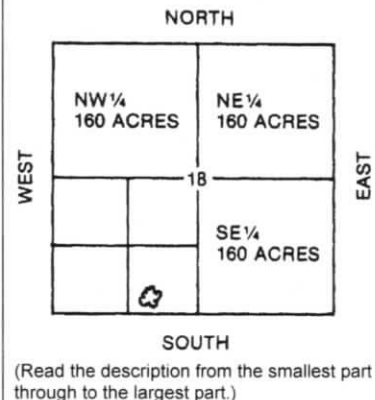
A simple instrument for measuring height is a straight stick 5 to 6 feet long. To use this method hold the stick at arm's length so that the stick is vertical. The length of the stick above the hand should equal the distance from your hand to your eye. Move forward or back until the top of the tree is in line with the top of the stick. The distance to the base of the tree plus the distance from the ground to eye level equals the tree's height (see Illustration 2).

Crown spread is measured at two points, where it is the least and where it is the greatest. The average of the two should be recorded on the nomination form. A plumb-bob or other weighted string may be used to sight the edge of the crown on the ground.



Illustration 3 - How to identify a tree location in a section of land taken from a Plat Book.

BUCKHORN T. 2S. - R. 3W.
(from a plat book)
One Section, 640 ACRES



LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF THIS TREE LOCATION:
SE QTR., SW QTR., SEC. 18, TWP. 2S, R. 3W,
TOWNSHIP: NAME BUCKHORN, COUNTY: BROWN



Big Tree Nomination Form

Return a copy of this form to: HOI Sierra Club
PO Box 3593
Peoria, IL 61614

Nominator _____ Phone _____

Address _____
(Street or Box #) (City) (State) (Zip)

Tree Owner _____ Phone _____

Species Name _____ Common Name _____

Circumference _____ Height _____ Average Spread _____
(In inches 4½ feet above the ground) (In feet) (In feet)

Life expectancy of tree (check one): ☐ 10 years or more ☐ less than 10 years

Attach: ✓ A photograph of the tree.
✓ A map or description of the exact location of the tree.

DISTRICT FORESTER USE

Circumference _____

Height _____

Average Crown Spread _____

D. F.'s Signature

OFFICE USE

Circumference _____

Height _____

1/4 Crown Spread _____

Total Points

RING ROADS, SUPERHIGHWAYS, SPRAWL, AND OBESITY



By RALPH GINN

Congressman Ray LaHood has apparently strong-armed regional legislators, local leaders and IDOT (Illinois Department of Transportation) into giving up on the north ring road which would cross the Illinois River at Mossville and meander through Tazewell County. He would, instead, focus on a Peoria to Chicago superhighway. Not that the ring road is any great loss. Neither highway is, admitted by all of the above, needed for transportation. Both are the product of the fuzzy idea that the purpose of super-roads is for attracting development and business.

Historically, the interstate highway system was started by President Dwight Eisenhower in the late 50's. It was a transportation system and it worked well. But, it had a downside that included the beginnings of urban sprawl and the isolation of small towns not located near a superhighway. Later came bypasses, and ring roads for larger metropolitan centers and the sprawl accelerated. It was in the 70's that planners and developers got into the mix with their promises of growth, jobs, and opportunities. The politician's mantra across the land became, "We need a new highway (bypass-ring road) in my district." Deals were made and the growth spun out of control. By the late 80's and early 90's it became painfully apparent that superhighways were attracting a nightmare of traffic congestion, a collapse of basic municipal services, and environmental disasters....urban sprawl. Chicago, Los Angeles, Atlanta, to name three of the worst. Atlanta was recently designated the most sprawled city in America. On its north side, I-75 has a section with eight lanes, in each direction. Have those 16 lanes alleviated traffic congestion? No, but they do continue to attract more development.

Congressman LaHood and local leaders are driven to this folly by jealousy of Bloomington-Normal's three interstates. LaHood credits the twin cities for being one of the fastest growing communities in Illinois and flatly states that the three highways are the reason. But, is fast growth good? The current buzz words of the planners and developers are "smart growth." The trouble with smart growth is that it must thrive in a democracy. An environment of overlapping township, city, and county jurisdictions. And each with its own jealously guarded territory. Smart growth soon turns into dumb growth, with all of the headaches for the average man and woman trying to get to their jobs and back home. How many living in the 15 counties that make up HOI Sierra Club want to trade places with the commuter living in the heart of Chicago Suburbia?

As if urban sprawl isn't bad enough, a recent study coming out of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (based in Atlanta) concludes that Americans are getting fatter. Obesity soared from 1 in eight in 1991 to 1 in five in 1998. Leading the way is Georgia with a 102 percent increase. Dr. William Diet, one of the study's co-authors points to urban sprawl as one of the main culprits. Keeping people trapped in their cars for hours, leaving no time for exercise, and munching on greasy fast foods.

Bright people learn from the mistakes of others. Sierra Club hopes that our Congressmen, legislators, and local leaders will take a second hard look at the Peoria-Chicago highway. It is not needed and should be abandoned.

☒ **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
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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



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Black Partridge Park Battle Continues



By JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

More pressure has been added to concerns for the protection of Black Partridge Park, located at the east edge of Metamora. The Metamora Park Board is proceeding with steps to plan the lake proposed for the golf resort and park development, and is working on the permitting process that is required. Because acres of wetlands will be lost if the lake is developed, the Park Board must come up with a mitigation plan that will establish another wetland to replace the acres that would be destroyed. One Park Board member has resigned. The Metamora Park Board has not supplied a revised site plan that leaves out parcels of private property they included for the golf resort, even though the owners have made it clear they will not sell. Advocates for protection of the park are working on what legal grounds can be used to stop the project. *Donations can be sent to Black Partridge Conservancy, 411 Northfork Rd., Metamora, IL 61548.*

HOI Group Calendar



January

8 SAT Illinois Chapter Executive Meeting, 9 a.m.
HOI Group will host the state Sierra board meeting at the Alpha Park Public Library. Key issues on the agenda will be political endorsements for the March elections, a revised resolution requesting a no-grazing of domestic livestock on Federal public lands, and Sierra bylaws.

19 WED Group Meeting, 7 p.m.
Forest Park Nature Center. *Anne Desjardins, Nepal: Land and Culture.* Everyone is welcome!

22 SAT Illinois River Moonlight Hike, 6:30 p.m.
Join us for a moonlight hike at the Marshall State Fish and Wildlife Area, adjacent to the backwaters of the Illinois River. DNR wildlife area manager Larry Rice will lead the hike. We will caravan from Forest Park Nature Center at 6:30 p.m. Dress for cold, windy, wet weather - waterproof boots, hats, gloves, and flashlights are must-have gear! A hiking or ski pole is strongly recommended - extras are available upon request. Only appropriately dressed people should consider going on this hike. Hot drinks and other refreshments will be available afterwards.



NOTE: R.S.V.P. by Jan 21 a must!
Call Mary at 745-5479 for more details and to R.S.V.P.

30 SUN Starved Rock Winter Hike, 9 a.m.
This traditional hike starts by car pooling at the Forest Park Nature Center. . . or meeting at the Starved Rock Lodge Great Hall at 10:30 a.m. Bring something to eat and drink on the trail during the 3-4 hour outing, and dress for the weather. Following the hike a stop is planned at Mona's in Toluca on the way home. Call Al or Mary Harkrader at (309) 682-8462 for more information.



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

Friends of the Rock Island Trail Workdays

Watch this box for plans for a spring work day. Year 2000 brings a new schedule with a seasonal work day in the spring, summer, and fall.

Join the Forest Park Nature Center Book Club!

The Peoria Park District's Forest Park Nature Center is establishing a book club that will focus on environmental and nature-related books. The first regular meeting is January 25th, 7 p.m. at the Nature Center, with the first scheduled book "Ishmael" by Daniel Quinn.

Membership is free. Copies of the first book as well as all chosen books for the club may be purchased at the Trailhead Nature Store at a 25% discount. For more information, call Kristin Jacobson at 686-3360.

February

9 WED Executive Meeting, 7 p.m.
Joseph Laszlo's home, 330 S. Barnewolt Dr., Peoria. Call 637-4692 for directions.

16 WED Group Meeting, 7 p.m.
Forest Park Nature Center. *Wayne Anthony, Planning for Peoria's Third Growth Cell.* Everyone is welcome!

17 THU Newsletter Deadline
Send articles for March and April to: John Wosik, 12409 N. Blackhawk Ct., Dunlap, IL 61525, or jwosik@mtco.com

19 SAT Illinois River Eagle Watch, 9 a.m.

Join us at the Forest Park Nature Center. From there we will be touring selected Illinois River valley locations in search of our national symbol, the Bald Eagle. Dress appropriately and bring your binoculars! A lunch stop is in our plans. Call Mary at 745-5479 for more information.



23 WED Newsletter Mailing, 7 p.m.
Peoria Pizza Works; Everyone welcome!



SIERRA CLUB
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Thanks to Past Chair Cindy Ewing!

Heart of Illinois Sierra Club says a great big THANK YOU to Cindy Ewing for her year as Chair of the Group. In spite of all her work demands and travels, Cindy never, ever, lost her wonderful sense of humor that made all those board meetings bearable. Thanks, Cindy!

New Officers

Heart of Illinois Sierra Club

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

Executive Committee

Chair	.....Rudy Habben	685-5605
Vice-Chair	.....Norman Ewing	686-4127
Secretary	.....Joseph Laszlo	637-4692
Treasurer	.....Grayce Haworth	246-8397
Conservation Chair	.....Ralph Ginn	274-3289
Outings Chair	.....Richard Klatt	274-3792
Newsletter Editor / Chapter Del	.....John Wosik	243-2230
Membership Chair	.....Cindy Ewing	686-4122
Alternate Chapter Delegate	.....Joyce Blumenshine	688-0950
I-TANMary Bodell	745-5479
Calendar SalesChris Meydam	682-0549

HEART OF ILLINOIS

Sierra Club

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