



Tallgrass Sierran

March/April 2001 Volume 29 No. 2

THE HEART OF ILLINOIS GROUP OF THE SIERRA CLUB ♦ P.O. Box 3593, Peoria, IL 61614 ☎ (309) 637-1393

HOI GROUP MEETINGS

WED
MAR 21

Illinois Clean Water Campaign
Forest Park Nature Center, 7 p.m.

Jack Darin, Director of the Sierra Club Illinois Chapter, will present a program on cleaning up pollution in Illinois rivers, lakes, and streams. HOI Group has been asked to monitor the Illinois River from Lacon to Pekin. The Group will decide if it's members will make the commitment of time and effort for this year long project. *All are welcome! Refreshments served after the meeting.*

WED
APR 18

Building Illinois Transportation Systems
Forest Park Nature Center, 7 p.m.

Ann Spillane, attorney with the Environmental Law and Policy Center, will review effective citizen involvement in the expansion of Illinois highway-freeway systems and the campaign to build Illinois public transit. *All are welcome! Refreshments served after the meeting.*



Attend the State Conservation Issues Day

BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

Illinois Chapter Sierra Club will be hosting a "Conservation Retreat" on March 9th at Pilgrim Park Conference Center near Princeton, Illinois. Sessions will focus on Sierra Club's four major conservation campaigns in Illinois: Clean Water; Shawnee National Forest; Sprawl; and Land/Habitat Protection. A social will be held Friday evening, March 8th, and will be a great opportunity to talk with Sierrans from around the state and learn about issues and strategies. For reservations on Saturday, contact the Illinois Chapter Office at 312-251-1680. A carpool from Peoria will be driving up Route 29 and returning on Friday evening and on Saturday. To carpool phone 688-0950.



A Defining Battleground ... ANWR

BY RALPH GINN

What is it about the two words "Wildlife Refuge" that President George Bush and newly confirmed Secretary of the Interior, Gale Norton, don't understand? The National Arctic Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) is public land and was created a wildlife refuge by Congress in 1980. Is that not a promise to the animals, plants and native Gwich'in Athabaskans who live there? A promise to the American people, the legal owners? A promise to protect the land from oil development and the web of roads, drill pads, processing facilities, and airports that accompany? To a President with black crude in his veins and a boxcar full of I.O.U's to Exxon, Arco and BP, a promise apparently depends on the definition of the word.

Of the refuge's 19 million acres, the 125 mile coastal plain makes up 8 percent and it has been in the bore-sight of the oil industry from day one. Unlike the North Slope (Prudoe Bay), which is one large oil field, ANWR's oil pools are scattered across the plain and contain a total of 4.3 billion barrels, according to the U.S. Geological Survey. It is also this coastal plain that is home to most of the Beaufort Sea polar bears, and 300 musk ox, a species once nearly extinct. It is the calving ground for the 130,000 Porcupine caribou, and the nesting sites of 135 species and millions of migratory birds.

So what is it worth to endanger this plethora of wildlife? A 10 month supply of oil is what Bush would say it's worth. An amount that could be twice saved by increasing fuel efficiency of cars and trucks by 2 percent per year, for 10 years.

In 1995 the U.S. Congress passed a rider to the budget bill that in effect would have opened the ANWR to drilling. President Clinton vetoed the entire bill, citing his objections to drilling in the refuge. The next year Alaska's Senator Frank Murkowski led a successful effort to lift a 20-year ban on oil exports from the North Slope. In 1999, 7.1 percent of North Slope oil was shipped to Asian countries. Yet, Bush and Murkowski cheerlead that ANWR's oil is vital to national energy security.

Will drilling harm the wildlife of ANWR? Of course it will. In contrast to the irresponsible statements by oil company "scientists," no independent biologist in the county is saying otherwise. Polar bears are extremely wary of human activity, as are musk ox. Calving caribou and nesting birds will be forced out of the friendly coastal plain into inhospitable grounds, and their survival rate will be depressed.

The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge has become a historic battleground for Sierra Club, Audubon, Wilderness Society, Alaska Wilderness League and other environmental groups. We no longer have a sympathetic President. Congress is our last and only deliverance. Remembering the Exxon Valdez, ■ see page 2 ■

■ ANWR, from page 1 ■ and the tens of thousands of dead and dying, oil-soaked mammals and birds washed on to the 1500 mile shoreline of Prince William Sound, Americans have consistently polled against drilling for oil in the ANWR. In a recent Associated Press poll 53% opposed, 33% favored. We have public opinion on our side. But, if we are unable to protect a wildlife refuge, with an irreplaceable array of wildlife, on a public land, in one of the most remote places on the planet, and if we let it all be sacrificed for a 10-month supply of oil, our role as guardians of the natural earth will be rightfully defined as failed.

Letters and calls to Congressmen, and Congresswomen are absolutely vital to this cause. Yes, letters and calls... as in more than one. PLEASE! Let Congress know how important it is to leave the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to its present inhabitants.



Silvercreek's Bear Mine Issued Permit

BY RALPH GINN

On January 31, 2001 the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) approved the Silvercreek Construction Company Bear Mine application for a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. Bear Mine is a 195-acre surface coal mine located two miles northwest of Farmington, IL in Knox County. The mine operated for approximately six months in 1999 without a permit and was the subject of an IPEA hearing in March of 2000. That hearing had been requested by HOI Sierra Club, other groups, and individuals.

Silvercreek shut down operation of Bear Mine in January of 2000 because of economic problems and has not since resumed operation. A copy of the IEPA Responsiveness Summary may be obtained by contacting Bill Hammel, IEPA Office of Community Relations, 1021 N. Grand Ave. E, P.O. Box 19276, Springfield, IL 62794, or phone 217 785-3924, or e-mail: Bill.Hammel@epa.state.il.us.

Candidates Forum Addresses Environmental Issues

BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

All candidates for Peoria Mayor and eight City Council candidates participated in the Heart of Illinois Sierra Club forum February 21st. HOI Chairman Joe Laszlo presented questions on major Peoria environmental issues, including tree protection, extension of the Rock Island Trail on the Kellar Branch Line, urban sprawl and the Peoria to Chicago highway. Council candidates attending were: District 1- Debra Doyle and Clyde Gulley, Jr.; District 2- Marcella Teplitz; District 3- Gale Thetford, Monica Jones, and Don Siders; and District 4- Jim Montelongo. It is essential that pro-environment individuals be elected for progress on city environmental issues.



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



Clean Water Celebration

BY RUDY HABBen

On Monday, March 19, 2001, the Clean Water Celebration will be held at the Peoria Civic Center from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. The keynote speaker this year will be Kelley Belcomb-Bartok from the Center for Whale Research in Washington State. After his 10:30 a.m. presentation "Orcas in Our Midst" in the Civic Theater, Mr. Bartok will be at the Sierra Club booth in the exhibit hall to meet students and answer questions.

The Clean Water Celebration is a mix of theater, exhibits, demonstrations, and science where students learn what they can do to improve water quality and the wise use of natural resources. Admission is free and the public is invited. If you come, be sure to stop at the Sierra Club booth and meet Kelly Belcomb-Bartok.

National Sierra Ballot Will Include Grazing Issue

Please Vote to Support No-Grazing on Federal Public Lands Initiative!

BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE, HOI EXCOM

Your vote does count! A major Sierra national ballot option needs your support. Please take a moment to consider the environmental health of our federal public lands in the Western U.S. When your ballot arrives in the mail in early March, vote to support the Sierra Club resolution for a Sierra policy on ending grazing of domestic livestock on federal public lands. **The Heart of Illinois Sierra Group Excom has voted to support this No-Grazing initiative.** This new policy will enable Sierra activists to work on legislation for buying back grazing permits, finding alternatives for ranchers using federal public lands, and for reclaiming parks for wildlife. Cows are changing entire ecosystems in the West. The eating and drinking behaviors of cows are different from native species such as elk, deer, and antelope. Cows like to congregate around waterways. They graze down plants along streams and cause serious erosion and pollution problems. Cows compete with native wildlife for food and water resources on our federal public lands. The multiple use approach of grazing on federal public lands has resulted in extensive extermination of native grasses and plants, and the spread of noxious weeds and alien species that invade over-grazed land. Our tax dollars, up to \$500 million a year, are spent to provide predator "control," fencing, water ponds, and the whole system that administers grazing permits for our federal public lands. Only 3% of U.S. beef production is from cattle grazed on federal public lands. Just like the Sierra initiative for no logging on public lands, the time has come for returning our parks to wildlife and restoring habitat that has been changed by domestic livestock grazing. For more information, check out "Grazed to the Bone" by the Forest Guardians at <http://www.fguardians.org/graz.html> or Save Our Public Lands – End Public Lands Grazing at the Rangenet site <http://rangenet.org/> and vote on your Sierra national ballot!



2000 LCV National Environmental Scorecard

The League of Conservation Voters (LCV) has issued its 2000 Scorecard of the Second Session of the 106th Congress. The Scorecard represents the consensus from more than 20 respected environmental groups who selected the key votes on which members of Congress should be graded. Except in rare circumstances, it excludes consensus action on the environment and issues on which no recorded votes occurred.

Included here are the overall scores for our U.S. Senators and the House Members covered by the HOI Group's geographic area. Congratulations again go to Senator Richard Durbin for a perfect 100% score and to Representative Lane Evans for a 93% score. Although his score is not as high as hoped for, Senator Fitzgerald does often support key environmental issues, such as preventing Arctic drilling and limiting timber sale subsidies. Representative LaHood's score, as usual, is dismal.

	2000	1999	1998
HOUSE			
Lane Evans (D)	93%	94%	100%
Ray LaHood (R)	21%	19%	31%
SENATE			
Richard Durbin (D)	100%	100%	100%
Peter Fitzgerald (R)	57%	44%	---

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Contact your Senators and Representative and congratulate them on their pro-environmental votes. Express your dissatisfaction with their anti-environmental votes you feel strongly about. Check out the LCV homepage at www.lcv.org for much more complete and detailed information on Congress' environmental record.

All Creatures Great and Small

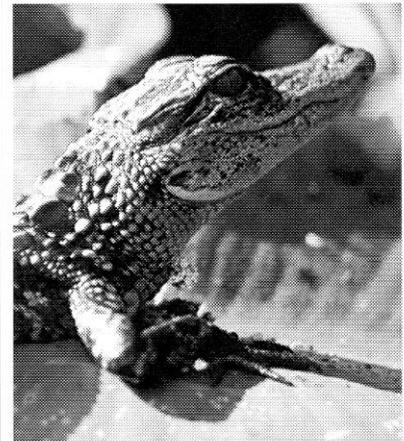


Photo by Gary Braasch

"Every good thing, great and small, needs defense." —John Muir

Join today and receive a **FREE Sierra Club Backpack!**



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

My Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

email _____

Check enclosed, made payable to Sierra Club

Please charge my Mastercard Visa

Exp. Date ____/____/____

Cardholder Name _____

Card Number _____

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

	INDIVIDUAL	JOINT
INTRODUCTORY	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	
REGULAR	<input type="checkbox"/> \$39	<input type="checkbox"/> \$47
SUPPORTING	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100
CONTRIBUTING	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150	<input type="checkbox"/> \$175
LIFE	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1250
SENIOR	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32
STUDENT	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32
LIMITED INCOME	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32

Contributions, gifts and 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.



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

HOI Group Calendar

March

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

21 Group Meeting, 7 p.m.
 WED Forest Park Nature Center. *Jack Darin, Illinois Clean Water Campaign.* Everyone is welcome!

25 Jubilee State Park Spring Hike, 10 a.m.
 SAT Stretch your legs and look for signs of spring! Meet at 10 a.m. at the parking lot near the main historical building. We'll hike about two hours and have an optional lunch stop at a local eatery. Call 688-0950 for information.



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



Forest Park Nature Center Book Club

Mar. 22, 7 pm – *The Story of B*, by Daniel Quinn
 Apr 26, 7 pm – *Maybe One* by Bill McKibben

Copies of all chosen books may be purchased at the Trailhead Nature Store at a 25% discount. For more information, call Kristin Jacobson at 686-3360.

Prairie Dawgs Work Crew



We need volunteers! 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 more information.

April

11 Executive Meeting, 7 p.m.
 WED John Wosik's home, 12409 N. Blackhawk Ct., Dunlap. Call 243-2230 for directions.

18 Group Meeting, 7 p.m.
 WED Forest Park Nature Center. *Ann Spillane, Building Illinois Transportation Systems.* Everyone is welcome!

20 Newsletter Deadline
 FRI Send articles for March and April to: John Wosik, 12409 N. Blackhawk Ct., Dunlap, IL 61525, or johnwosik@home.com.

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

22 SUN



Earth Day

Join in Earth Day Celebration!

Heart of Illinois Sierra Club will join with Peoria PEACE and other area organizations to celebrate Earth Day from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at Lakeview Museum, Peoria. A variety of workshops and panel discussions on environmental topics are being planned, in addition to displays by different organizations.

25 Newsletter Mailing
 WED Peoria Pizza Works; *Everyone welcome*

May

6 Forest Park Nature Center Spring Wildflower Hike, 12 p.m.
 SUN

Meet at the Forest Park Nature Center parking lot. Phone Mary Bodell at 745-5479 for more information.



Earth Day "...calls on all mankind to recognize and respect Earth's beautiful systems of balance, between the presence of animals on land, the fish in the sea, birds in the air, mankind, water, air, and land. Most importantly there must always be awareness of the actions by people that can disturb this precious balance."

- Margaret Mead

"All individuals and institutions have a mutual responsibility to act as Trustees of Earth, seeking the choices in ecology, economics and ethics that will eliminate pollution, poverty and violence, foster peaceful progress, awaken the wonder of life, and realize the best potential for the future of the human adventure."

- Earth Day Website



SIERRA CLUB
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Heart of Illinois Sierra Club

Hotline: Local Meetings & Outings • Action Alerts (309) 637-1393
 • Public Contacts • Leave Messages

Executive Committee

Chair Joseph Laszlo 637-4692
Vice-Chair Rudy Habben 685-5605
Secretary Joyce Blumenshine .. 688-0950
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 Norman Ewing 686-4127
Calendar Sales Emiko Yang 691-5213

HEART OF ILLINOIS
Sierra Club

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