



# Tallgrass Sierran

November/December 2001 Volume 29 No. 6

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

## HOI GROUP MEETINGS

WED  
Nov 21

**Out Around Las Vegas**  
Forest Park Nature Center, 7 p.m.

During the 1990's Las Vegas, Nevada was the fastest growing metropolitan area in the United States. Dale Kuntz will present a slide presentation illustrating the impact rapid growth and urban sprawl has had on the desert ecology of southern Nevada. *All are welcome! Refreshments served after the meeting.*

WED  
DEC 19

**Happy Holidays!**  
**Annual Potluck and Slides Party**  
Forest Park Nature Center, 6:30 p.m.



Bring your favorite food to share and a dozen or so slides from your latest trip or event, for a holiday time get-together. The Nature Center will be decked for the season, and this is a great chance to enjoy a relaxing evening during the holiday. Bring some friends! Hot and cold drinks will be provided. You will need your own table service and a good appetite! A projector will be available for showing a sampling of slides after the meeting, and you will see your fellow/friend Sierrans in action!

## Light Pollution: A Problem We Can All Fix

BY MEREDITH CURREN

An issue currently being visited by Peoria City Council is the installation of more lights on the I-74 bridge that crosses the Illinois River. This issue has troubled Sierra Club members and other concerned citizens in Peoria, since the additional lighting is considered excessive and will surely contribute to the amount of light pollution that is already experienced in this region. Light pollution is created from excessive and inefficient outdoor lighting that spills in all directions, including upward. It can also stem from the haze of air pollution. The widespread effects of light pollution include the creation of bothersome and unsafe glare, spill light (light that shines where it is unwanted), and urban sky glow. Light pollution can result in the waste of energy and money, and can also interrupt bird migration patterns, since migrating birds are guided in part by the constellations. The flocks become confused by nighttime light sources, which causes them to collide with each other or against lit structures.

The topic of light pollution is not unique to our city and has been actively addressed by interested groups such as the International Dark-Sky Association (IDA), whose mission is "to preserve and protect the nighttime environment" ■ see page 2 ■

## River Sweep, Highway Pick-Up, and Humpty Dumpty



BY RALPH GINN

When Friends of the Illinois River called Ron and Cassie Dunbar on September 13, two days after the terrorist attacks, and asked if they wanted to postpone Saturday's Chillicothe based River Sweep they said "No." The hotdogs, soda and chips were bought, the boats were promised and more than one hundred volunteers were ready. On Saturday, 110 trash gleaners showed up and the Illinois River between Rome and Lacon is the better for their efforts. It was part of the getting back to normal process and except for a group working an island shore that thought they had been forgotten, everyone felt good about what they had accomplished. Some apparently felt so good they helped themselves to an extra T-shirt. Ron laughed when he said, "One hundred ten signed disclaimers but we gave out 150 shirts."

The same day as River Sweep, HOI was spreading itself thin with an Adopt-A-Highway cleanup. We are doing one highway instead of two this year because we couldn't get enough volunteers and take on the monthly Illinois River monitoring project too. Since we're talking excuses here,

how's this? There are a few of us that get a little gaggy picking Marlboro packs and Bud cans four times a year, year after year. It can wear on your psyche, especially when you convince yourself it's the same regulars doing the pitching. Edward Abbey, who wrote of the Southwest as eloquently as Aldo Leopold did of Wisconsin, but with a rebel streak, didn't like roads of any kind and showed his disdain by saving his beer cans to decorate "useless roads." Abbey was a great lover of rivers and would no doubt approve of River Sweep.

The point is worth a repeat. Our nation must put Humpty Dumpty together again. And, we who value the environment must get our act together again. While the White House and Congress are focused on terrorism, global warming continues, factory farms pollute, toxins are released into air and water, erosion depletes our soil and chokes our streams, giant old trees fall to the saw, flora and fauna disappear forever. Not to trivialize terrorism, but all of the above have the potential to do just that if left to the avarice of the egocentric human. These will be hard times for environmental groups. We must speak out and we must be true to our cause.

■ Light Pollution, from page 1 ■ and our heritage of dark skies through quality outdoor lighting". It is astonishing to consider that many people in North America have never observed a pristine night sky nor experienced the joy of viewing a constellation. The IDA has several practical suggestions for addressing light pollution that we can all follow:

1. Use the right amount of light, not overkill.
2. Shield the light, so it goes down, not up or sideways.
3. Use time controls when possible.
4. Use low pressure sodium sources whenever possible; not only does it not affect most of the visible spectrum, but it is also the most energy efficient light source.
5. Be aware of quality lighting. Educate others.

More information on light pollution prevention can be obtained from the International Dark-Sky Association (IDA) at <http://www.darksky.org/ida/index.html> or (520) 293-3198.



In an effort to create protected light-free areas, three communities in North America have gone so far as to establish official dark-sky reserves or parks. The world's first dark-sky reserve was approved on July 2, 1999, by the provincial government of Ontario, Canada, for a 1,990-hectare tract of Crown land just west of Gravenhurst and south of Lake Muskoka, in southern Ontario. Since then, official dark-sky parks have been established in Abbotsford, British Columbia, and near Coudersport, Pennsylvania. These areas are virtually free of light pollution and are therefore an astronomer's delight. Information about each of the parks can be obtained as follows:

- Torrance Barrens Dark Sky Reserve, Ontario, Canada  
<http://www1.kingston.net/rasc/conserves.htm>
- McDonald Park, Abbotsford, British Columbia, Canada  
<http://www.fvas.net/dsp.html>; (604) 850-3931 or (604) 853-3350
- Cherry Springs State Park, Pennsylvania  
<http://members.aol.com/CherrySpSP/>; (716) 483-0343

## Good Things Happening at the Fondulac Park District

By JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

Thanks to East Peoria's Fondulac Park District Director Jim Coutts, and some dedicated people, a Conservation Committee is forming to work actively on identifying areas for protection and working to acquire areas for preservation in the Fondulac Park District. This is a major step, and could not have happened at a more critical time. The Fondulac Park District recently purchased hillside property along Route 29 to save a unique seep feeding into the Bennett's Terraqueous Garden. Other environmentally sensitive properties, such as bluffs along the

river, may be considered by this new committee and their prompt action is really needed.

## FARM BILL SLIGHTS RIVERS AND SMALL FARMERS

By RALPH GINN

The U.S. House of Representatives has passed a \$170 billion, ten year, farm bill that would, once again, miss an opportunity to ease the flow of fertile topsoil into the streams and rivers of America. A bipartisan amendment that would have shifted \$1.9 billion per year from crop subsidies to conservation programs was defeated 226-220. Amendment co-sponsor Sherwood Boehert, (R-NY) stated that these conservation programs would help the small farmer and protect water quality. The amendment was vigorously opposed by agribusiness, the Farm Bureau, and central Illinois Republican Ray LaHood (18th district). Ironically, even the Bush administration came out against the \$170 billion bill. The White House contended that it was too costly, would encourage overproduction when prices are low, and would fail to help small farmers.

It is disappointing that Congressmen LaHood and Lane Evans (17th district) voted against an amendment that would benefit the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers. LaHood is the same man who, for the past six years, has never missed an opportunity to exclaim his friendship and concern for the Illinois River. Yet in a quote born of tortured reasoning, he said, "The best name for this amendment is the land-grab amendment." The hard truth is that dredging and island building go for naught if sedimentation is unabated, and the principle source of soil erosion and sedimentation is agriculture. Is it too much to ask? NO! Require farmers to conserve the soil if given monetary incentives. Congressman LaHood's friendship with the River is as shallow as a Peoria Lake backwater.

This ten year farm bill guarantees more of the same advantage for big grain producers and concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFO's) as the current Freedom-to-Farm (F2F) Law passed in 1996. It would also convert a long-term, conservation incentive program (EQUIP) that focuses on watersheds into a short-term cost share program that benefits CAFO's. We must ask the Senate to re-work this bill into an environmentally friendly law. There is time, F2F doesn't expire until next year. Both Agriculture Committee Chairman Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) and senior Republican Dick Lugar (R-Indiana) have called for greater emphasis on conservation. Write or call our Illinois senators, Richard Durbin (202-224-2152) and Peter Fitzgerald (202-224-2854).

## ICC Takes Action Regarding River Bluffs

By JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

Thanks to everyone who wrote to Illinois Central College President Erwin and the ICC Board. At the September ICC Board meeting, President Erwin told a Heart of Illinois Group member that he received a stack of letters, indicating about an inch and half high, that were all requesting protection of the wooded bluffs. ICC has sent a letter to developer Dennis LaHood to inform him that the college is not interested in having residential roads access their drive. Hopefully this will hold off development of the river bluffs to the west of the college. Your prompt action made a difference! Give yourself a pat on the back for making a positive difference in environmental quality for Central Illinois.

## 2001 HOI Excom Election: Rules and Procedures

1. You must be a HOI Sierra Club member to vote.
2. Vote for not more than 3 candidates for a 2002-2003 term to the Heart of Illinois Executive Committee.
3. Joint memberships may use Ballots #1 and #2.
4. Mail ballot(s) to: Sec. Joyce Blumenshine  
c/o Heart of Illinois Sierra Club  
P.O. Box 3593  
Peoria, IL 61614
5. Write the name of the voting member(s) on the outside of the envelope containing the ballot.
6. Ballots must arrive at the Sierra Club's mailbox by Nov. 21, or can be delivered to the Group Meeting on Nov. 21.
7. Ballots will be counted at the Group Meeting on Nov. 21.

### 2001 HOI Sierra Club Excom Election Ballot #1

\_\_\_\_\_ Rudy Habben  
\_\_\_\_\_ Joseph Laszlo  
\_\_\_\_\_ John Wosik

### 2001 HOI Sierra Club Excom Election Ballot #2

\_\_\_\_\_ Rudy Habben  
\_\_\_\_\_ Joseph Laszlo  
\_\_\_\_\_ John Wosik

**Ballots Due November 21**

## *Heart of Illinois Executive Committee Election: Candidate Statements*

### Rudy Habben

I am interested in continuing on the HOI Executive Committee because of my interest in trail development and restoration plans for the Illinois River. The next two years should see the building of trails in Peoria and East Peoria. Restoration work has begun on the Hennepin and Emiquon sites. I have been a Club member since 1970 and, now retired, can represent the Club on local committees such as the Illinois Bluffs Ecosystems project and Tri-County Planning Commission work groups. I am also a candidate for the Illinois Chapter Executive Committee.

### Joseph Laszlo

I have been a member for seventeen years. For the past two years I have served as secretary and then chair for the HOI Group. They said I have to continue to serve until I got it right.

### John Wosik

I am currently the newsletter editor of the Heart of Illinois Group, and have previously served as Group Chair and Vice-Chair. I enjoy hiking and camping and have participated in National Sierra Club outings in the Sierra Nevada Mountains of California.

As a member of the Executive Committee, I will continue as newsletter editor and focus my efforts on encouraging our members to participate in Club activities and in educating the public on environmental issues. We need to make all our members feel that it is of value to be a part of our Group, and that their participation is needed and welcome. Whether one's area of interest is conservation, outings, or politics, we all share an enjoyment of nature, and a desire to see it preserved and protected.



## Hennepin Backwater Restoration Tour

Members of the HOI Sierra Club toured the Hennepin and Hopper lakes restoration project on October 6. The Wetlands Initiative purchased the 2,600 acre Hennepin Drainage and Levee District in March, 2001. This area, adjacent to the Illinois River just south of Hennepin, is being restored to the backwater lakes, marshes, wet prairies, and forests that existed before European settlement. Photo: Joyce Blumenshine

## Membership

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

email \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Check enclosed, made payable to Sierra Club

☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa Exp Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Cardholder Name \_\_\_\_\_

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_

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.

### 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

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**Sierra Club**



**SIERRA CLUB**  
FOUNDED 1892

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