



Tallgrass Sierran

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

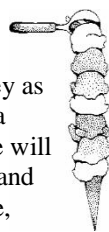


*Celebrate Summer & Enjoy
the Beauty of Every Day*

Take a Hike with Your Friends at HOI!

**WED
JULY 17**

Grand View Drive Hike to the Spotted Cow
Meet at Grand View Drive Park, 7 p.m.



Enjoy the amazing beauty of our Illinois River valley as you walk to the Spotted Cow ice cream shop in Peoria Heights. Optional tasty treat after the hike. Car shuttle will bring you back to your vehicle. We are meeting at Grand View Drive Park, which is at the east end of the drive, 1.8 miles from the corner of Prospect and Grand View Drive, Peoria Heights. If you are entering Grand View Drive off of Route 29 (turn west at the stoplight at East Lorenz), it is .7 miles up the hill and on your left. Wear comfortable walking shoes, bring water for yourself, and dress for the weather. *All are welcome!*

**WED
AUG 21**

Rock Island Trail Hike
Meet at Main Trail Parking Lot in Alta, 7 p.m.



Take a tour of the eastern link on the Rock Island Trail as we hike to Pioneer Park. Enjoy the cool echoes of the tunnel under Route 6, and hear the little stream burble as you walk. We are meeting at the main Rock Island Trail parking lot at the west edge of Alta, north of Peoria. Take Allen Road north and turn left at the big curve going into Alta: watch for the Trail gravel parking lot on your right across from the nursery. From Knoxville Ave./Rt. 40 turn west on Alta Road, cross Allen Road and take the left curve to the stop sign just past the trail entrance; turn right and watch for the big gravel parking lot ahead on your right. Wear comfortable walking shoes, bring your own water, and bug repellent is a good idea. Car shuttle will take you back to the parking lot. *Everyone is welcome!*



Monitoring the Illinois River: The Results are In

BY JOSEPH LASZLO, CHAIR

Some local conservation activities seem to drag on forever; not so for our campaign to highlight pollution problems in the Illinois River. In the Spring of 2001, with the support of Jack Darin and Jennifer Hensley in the state Chapter office, our group undertook a year-long effort to sample and analyze monthly the Illinois River at eight sites between Peoria and Lacon.

We analyzed the water samples for dissolved oxygen, phosphate, nitrate, nitrite, ammonia and pH. Our results demonstrate that the river is overloaded with some of these nutrients, particularly phosphate and nitrate. At times the phosphate concentration in the river was six times higher than the maximum level recommended for healthy waters (by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency guidelines). These high nutrients levels were found to coincide with low dissolved oxygen concentrations, which adversely impacts fish and other aquatic wildlife in the river. On the other hand, you may take some comfort in knowing that the pH of the river is just fine!

While collecting data is all well and good, putting it to use is key to having a successful campaign. Therefore, a broad dissemination of our findings is underway. We started by displaying our preliminary data at several Earth Day events (Macomb, Peoria, Illinois Central College). By the time you read this we will have held a press conference at the Peoria riverfront to formally release our results to the public. A web site watersentinels.home.insightbb.com will include more of our findings and describe how we obtained them. A brochure has been prepared that features our data and explains where the pollution comes from. Copies of this brochure will be available to you as well as our state legislators. In addition, radio ads will be airing in the Peoria area, funded by a grant from the national Sierra Club, asking the public to support stronger measures to protect the Illinois River. Eventually, our findings may be used to spur the Illinois EPA to set regulatory limits for nutrients in the river's watershed and undertake remedial action to bring the river into compliance.

Our water monitoring project was both rewarding and challenging. Cold weather and flooding made getting samples from the designated sites a challenge. Expanding our circle of friends through our common interest in protecting the river has been the best reward imaginable. I extend my thanks to the river monitors Joyce Blumenshine, John Wosik, Ralph Ginn, Dick Klatt, Dick Barthel, and Ron Dunbar, and invite the rest of you to join us in the next water monitoring project.

A Note on Earth Mothers and Earth Fathers

BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

Each individual can make conscious choices in their every day actions that will help the earth. The term "Earth Mother" brings a nurturing, care taking image to mind. Let yourself think about the term "Earth Father" as a title more important than any macho man image or profit line manager, rock singer, or sports star.

An "Earth Father" would be the highest ideal of maleness. Instead of the head-of-the pack, survival-of-the-toughest, there could be an image of a protector of what really matters for us all: clean air to breathe, clean water to drink, and sustainable lifestyles that do more good than harm for the earth. Author Ellen Snortland says in a recent article that an Earth Father is spiritual, and takes his spiritual beliefs into action. She also quotes a prominent actor who says that the macho, "draw-a-line-in-the-sand" male values have gotten us all into trouble, and must be changed if we are going to save ourselves from environmental suicide.

Thanks

Thanks to everyone who donated auction items and came to the annual Heart of Illinois Sierra Club potluck picnic and white elephant auction. With the help of auctioneers Mary Harkrader and Larry Johnson, we raised \$192 this year.



Dave Pittman Selected Conservationist of the Year

BY JOSEPH LASZLO

The H.O.I. Executive Committee has selected Dave Pittman as this year's outstanding conservationist. In recent years Dave has lead or actively been apart of many successful conservation activities. He was instrumental in establishing the Peoria Green Party and he served several years as a Peoria Park District Board Member. His efforts helped secure protection for Singing Woods, Fondulac Seep, and the Lakeview Wilds site. Through Dave's initiative the environmental/educational program "Living on Earth" was added to WCBU's weekly programming. Not one to avoid taking direct action for conservation, he has served as the site steward of St. Mary's Cemetery prairie in West Peoria for more than a decade. We applaud Dave for his dedication to preserving and protecting the natural resources of our community.

New Oil Leases Add to Reasons to Protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

More than 60 tracts, covering 579,269 acres of the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (NPRa) were leased to oil companies during the first week of June for \$63.8 million.

The NPRa is a large, federally owned area on Alaska's North Slope immediately west of the sprawling Prudhoe Bay oil complex. The leases come just a few weeks after the U.S. Geological Survey issued a new report concluding that the amount of oil in the NPRa is five times previous estimates and comparable to the amount of oil estimated beneath the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. In May, 1.1 million acres of state-owned lands in the central Alaskan Arctic were leased for oil. The U.S. Department of Energy predicted in February, before the revised estimates for the NPRa, that oil production in Alaska would increase by more than 20% over the next 20 years without opening the Refuge to development. There are environmental concerns about impacts of oil extraction in the NPRa, and the Bush administration has failed to extend permanent protection for Special Areas identified in the NPRa for protection.

---information from *The Wilderness Society*, June 10, 2002, "The Arctic Truth"

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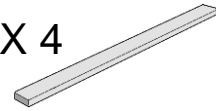
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Banner Strip-mine: The Carrot and the 2 X 4



BY RALPH GINN

Capital Resource Development Company has applied to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) for permits to mine a 137 acre track of river bottom near Liverpool and a 682 acre floodplain sandwiched between Banner Marsh and the north end of Rice Lake. Capital Resource is owned by Material Services, the Chicago based company founded by the Henry Crown family. Material Services also owns Freeman United Coal Company and it appears that Freeman would run the mining operation. The Liverpool mine has already been approved by IDNR and is awaiting filing with the Fulton County clerk's office for public review. The permit for the Banner Mine is still in review with IDNR.

It is the Banner mine that gives cause for trepidation by HOI and other conservation groups. Freeman estimates the mining operation would last 5 years. Bill Douglass, site manager at both Banner Marsh and Rice Lake says that the mining operation would probably disrupt the migratory bird patterns in the area, keeping birds off the north end of Rice Lake and the southern border of Banner Marsh. Another concern is the hydrological effect on the surrounding area. The town of Banner and other area residents could see their wells run dry as mining operations pump water out of the pits. This water removal could also effect the controlled shallow water levels in Rice Lake.

Rumor has it that the market for the Banner coal will be an ethanol plant planned for construction by Central Illinois Energy. The 280 acre site, near Canton, was purchased from Freeman Coal Mining Company. Mike Smith, general manager of the ethanol plant, says construction will begin this summer. Tom Korman of Capital Resource denies that there has been any negotiations for the ethanol plant to buy Banner mine coal, but it doesn't take a business degree from Harvard to see a pattern here. Not that there is anything illegal or sinister, but an ethanol plant fired by high sulfur Illinois coal negates, and then some, the benefits of burning ethanol gasoline in your vehicle.

The carrot is the possibility that the Banner Mine area, when the mining is finished, would be reclaimed to either farmland or conservation use. If the land were turned over to the State, it could be developed into a conservation area that would complete a corridor between Banner Marsh and Rice Lake. Reclamation to farmland is no juicy carrot, but a wetland connection between Banner and Rice is tempting. HOI, COP (Citizen's Organizing Project), a long time opponent of strip-mining, Save Rice Lake, and the town of Banner aren't biting.

The short term (five years) negatives are a risk to the migratory birds, flood plain, wetlands, and water table that exist in the area. There is no guarantee that the Banner land would ever be reclaimed for conservation. The downside for wildlife and the local water table are less a stick, and more a 2 X 4 over the

Action Alert!

Ask Rep. LaHood to Support Section 9005 of the Farm Bill

BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

In spite of all the problems with the new Farm Bill, there are a few provisions that are worthwhile. For the first time, the U.S. Farm Bill includes an innovative new clean energy title and other important clean energy provisions. One of the key energy provisions is section 9005, which establishes an important new energy efficiency and renewable energy audit program for farmers, ranchers and rural small businesses. Although Congress funded several programs in the Farm Bill itself, Congress deferred the decision to fund other provisions, including Section 9005, to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees. **Representative Ray LaHood is on the House Committee that will decide the fate of these important provisions and your phone call and FAX are needed TODAY to urge Rep. LaHood to support Farm Bill Section 9005: Funding to Implement Energy Efficiency and the Renewable Energy Audit Program.**

Contact Rep. LaHood at his Washington, D.C. office, phone 202-225-6201 and FAX 202-225-9249. You can ask to speak with Patrick Carroll, Legislative Assistant for Agriculture and Energy issues to Rep. LaHood.

Farm Bill Section 9005 will help farmers, ranchers, and rural small businesses by authorizing the USDA to issue merit-based grants to organizations (such as state energy or agriculture offices) to conduct energy audits. These audits will help identify ways to cut energy costs and waste, and to use more renewable energy. Energy efficiency improvements that can be funded by these grants include more efficient motors, pumps, lighting, and other systems. The grants can make renewable energy investments possible, such as wind turbines, solar panels, biomass energy, and other clean power technologies.

The audit program will help farmers, ranchers, and rural small businesses to identify financing opportunities, including those offered in other sections of the Farm Bill, to implement the audit recommendations. In New York state, an energy audit program for dairy farms helped identify energy efficiency savings of up to 50%.

An appropriation of at least \$10 million in year 2003 funding for Section 9005 is necessary for a successful energy audit program. Section 9005 is cost-effective for both the government and taxpayers and will help rural Americans by saving on

