

# 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

## HOI Group Meetings

WED  
JAN 15

**Lights in the Sky**  
Forest Park Nature Center, 7 p.m.



Are the stars out tonight? You may not be able to tell due to the "glow" of our urban areas. Richard Tennis, Chair of the Light Pollution Committee of the Peoria Astronomical Society, will present a program outlining the problem nationally and in central Illinois. He also will present some ideas of what can be done to correct the situation. *All are welcome! Refreshments served after the meeting.*

WED  
FEB 19

**Wild Utah: America's Redrock Wilderness**  
Forest Park Nature Center, 7 p.m.



"Wild Utah: America's Redrock Wilderness" is a multi-media slideshow documenting citizen efforts to designate public lands in southern Utah's spectacular canyon country as wilderness under the 1964 Wilderness Act. This 20-minute journey through redrock splendor invigorates and motivates viewers to participate in the movement to protect these lands. Bob Brister, Outreach Associate of the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, updates us on the current status of the Utah wilderness movement with this inspirational and informational event. *All are welcome! Refreshments*

## EPA Issues *Stinky* Rules

BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

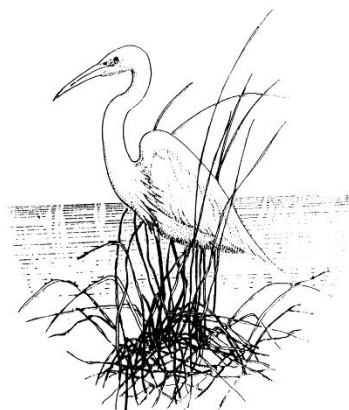
Big loopholes are underneath the new Factory Farm rules announced by the Environmental Protection Agency. The new regulations will require more factory farms to have special permits to allow them to dispose of animal waste. One of the loopholes is that the manner in which farmers clean up the manure, chicken poop, etc., is entirely up to them. Farmers will also be allowed to write their own waste management plans, and decide for themselves on how much waste they will be allowed to discard. Over 2.7 billions pounds of waste comes from factory farms each year. The new rules do not provide any clear and effective requirements for keeping factory farm waste out of surface and groundwater sources.

## TWI: The Real Deal

BY RALPH GINN

This is the season for traditions and among them are appeals for gifts from a plethora of worthy organizations. Many are needy environmental and conservation groups. If you aren't able to contribute to all you would like, let me suggest one that is doing some great things for conservation right here in Central Illinois. I am talking about The Wetlands Initiative (TWI), a non-profit corporation based in Chicago, dedicated to restoring wetlands to the Midwest. TWI hopes to eventually restore 250,000 acres of wetlands along the 273 mile-long Illinois River and its tributaries. Gary Sullivan, restoration ecologist, says, "Such an undertaking would pay for itself in just the money that would be saved as a result of reduction in pollutants and flood damage."

In less than two years, Illinois' largest wetlands restoration project near Hennepin is astonishing biologists with the reappearance of plants and rare wildlife that haven't been seen for generations. In April of 2001 TWI shut down the pumping station that farmers built in the 1920's, which, along with a levee, diverted the Illinois River away from a 2,600 acre floodplain. Once the pumping stopped, rain, natural springs and seeps filled two original backwater lakes, Hennepin and Hopper. In the same spring season, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) began stocking the two lakes with walleye, bass, crappie, bluegills, northern pike and catfish. Ducks, geese, hawks, pelicans, herons and eagles soon were in abundance. Frank Bellrose, famed naturalist and conservationist, says, "I have never witnessed such a rapid turnaround." Wayne Herndon, veteran IDNR fish biologist is calling Hennepin-Hopper, "The best crappie population in the state." In September 2002, Herndon sampled crappie averaging 9-10 inches, a size it would take four years to attain in most Midwest lakes. Birders have counted 200 species of birds on the site and this fall as many as 60,000 ducks were using Hennepin-Hopper at one time. Public use of the two lakes is expected to include fishing, hiking and birding. Total restoration of the Hennepin-Hopper site will take five years and cost \$15 million dollars. TWI hopes that money will come from federal and state agencies, conservation groups, foundations, and individual donors. You can contribute to: *The Wetlands Initiative, 53 West Jackson Blvd., Suite 1015, Chicago, IL 60604.*





Site of planned horse camp at the center of Jubilee State Park, just east of the park office and across the road from the main picnic areas. Photo: John Wosik

## Big Horse Campground Planned for the Heart of Jubilee State Park

BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

Heart of Illinois Sierra Club member John Wosik was quoted in the Peoria Journal Star on December 6<sup>th</sup> regarding plans for a huge horse camp across from the main picnic areas at Jubilee State Park. John commented on how such a horse facility would detract from the broader usability of the area. Horses do a lot of environmental damage, and thoughtless riders cut new trails, instead of staying on established trails, which increases erosion in the park. Horses spread weed seeds, and could rapidly increase the spread of the invasive weed garlic mustard, which is already in several areas of the park.

This high impact campground will support 100 horses and will include roads, pads, electricity, water, a shower building, vault toilets, shelters, and play equipment. The cost of \$750,000 was provided from State Representative Dave Leitch's "Membership Initiative Money" during a time of large state budget deficits. While the Illinois Department of Natural Resources worked with horse owners in planning the camp, IDNR failed to make a sincere effort to include other park users in the decision-making process.

*Thanks to a a a a a*

**Joe Laszlo** who is completing two consecutive terms as our Group chairman. Joe lead the effort to tackle a year-long Illinois river water monitoring project and has done more work behind the scenes than we will ever know! Thank you, Joe, for your dedication, vision, and leadership. The group is greatly enriched by your chairmanship.

**Dick Klatt** for your years of insight, dedication, and efforts on the HOI Board. Dick served as an Illinois River water sample taker through months of all kinds of weather, and his "cut-to-the-quick" comments kept many a board meeting in focus, if not in humorous stitches. Dick, we wish you and your wife good health and well-being for the new year.

**Emiko Yang** for all her work handling, promoting, and recording Sierra calendar sales for HOI Group. Proceeds go to our treasury, which benefits from every sale made.

## Send a Letter! Fuel Efficiency Can Be Better



BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

The Bush Administration will raise fuel efficiency for domestic vehicles a whopping 1.5 miles per gallon over three years, starting in 2005. So from now until 2008 the Bush Administration is doing essentially nothing to decrease America's dependence on foreign oil. Last year the Bush Administration opposed plans to significantly increase fuel economy by adding available technologies to the manufacturing of cars. New vehicles could be averaging 40 miles per gallon of gas if Sierra Club supported legislation had been passed. The Sierra Club website has a handy form letter you can send to Ford, requesting they commit to better mileage. Click on the "Take Action" tab at <http://lists.sierraclub.org/>



## Membership

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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.

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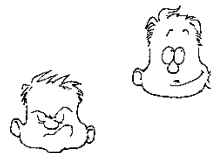
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# SAP



BY RALPH GINN

Let's condense some recent environmental news events, offer comments, and give each a gut response of **SCARED**, **ANGRY**, or **PROMISING (SAP)**.

**8/26** ▪ President Bush proposes that thinning the National Forests will prevent fires.....Another bone to timber interests and a short-cut to the harvest of old growth trees and suspension of environmental laws. Mark Finney, research scientist with the U.S. Forest Service, says, "Even widespread thinning is not going to stop forest fires."..... Ignoring science is a Bush pattern, **ANGRY**.

**8/30** ▪ The White House has launched a "review" of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) which was signed into law in 1970. This is a law that requires an environmental impact study and public comment on development and extraction activities on public lands.....The word "review" in the mouths of lawmakers is ominous. I'm **SCARED**.

**9/1** ▪ Las Vegas is spying on water wasters. And, with good reason, water waste is rampant amid the most explosive growth city in the country. It's source of water, Lake Mead, is at its lowest level since 1964, and the average temperature has gone up 3 degrees in the same period of time.....If you own gambling stock you are **SCARED**. I find it **PROMISING** that spying may bring water conservation.

**9/4** ▪ Congressman Ray LaHood (IL-18th) embraces the concept of a ring road around metro-Peoria's east side.....This is **PROMISING** news because it is the 6th time LaHood has changed course in the Peoria-to-Chicago freeway saga. Although his attitude adjustments have cost the taxpayers several million in "studies," we aren't any closer to pouring cement than we were eight years ago.

**11/23** ▪ The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency relaxes clean air requirements. In superb Orwellian hyperbole, administrator Christine Whitman said, "By providing manufactures, utilities, and refineries with new flexibility, these changes will decrease pollution".....Christine knows better. **ANGRY** is too mild.

**12/2** ▪ After last year's worst winter in memory for ski-resorts all across America, the National Ski Areas Association announced its Keep Winter Cool campaign. This is the first industry-wide initiative aimed at Global Warming. Ski areas will purchase more wind power and use their clout in Washington to encourage federal incentives for renewable energies....Two decades late but **PROMISING**.

**12/4** ▪ The Bush administration maps its new global warming strategy for the next five years.....more study.....This is as predictable as death and taxes.....**ANGRY**

**12/11** ▪ A Consumer Report survey found harmful bacteria, many of which were antibiotic resistant, in almost half of the chickens it bought from nationwide stores. 42% had campylobacter (vomiting, diarrhea) and 12% had salmonella (diarrhea, fever, abdominal pain).....I'm **SCARED** and giving the chicken an extra 10 minutes on the grill.

**12/13** ▪ The Bush administration announced an increase in fuel economy requirements of 1.5 miles per gallon, over a three year period, beginning in 2005 for SUV's, minivans, and light trucks....This miniscule change will barely offset the decrease in fuel efficiency this group of vehicles has incurred in the last 15 years. Osama is laughing and we have to be **ANGRY**.

## Dick Hamm Logging Island

BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

An island in the Illinois River, outside of Chillicothe, is being logged by its infamous owner, Dick Hamm. Mr. Hamm is infamous because of his sordid history of environmental abuses, from illegal dredging to barge fleeing and a host of other problems related to his Hamm's Holiday Harbor and river properties. In a call December 17<sup>th</sup> to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Peoria office, Heart of Illinois Sierra Club was told that Mr. Hamm can log the island as he wishes. With all the efforts going to reduce siltation into the Illinois River, it seems particularly ironic that an island can be denuded of cover with no constraints. The Army Corps office did say there is a regulation regarding tree stumps, however, as long as Mr. Hamm does not pull out the tree stumps, he is within his legal rights.

## Roosting Lame Ducks in Springfield



BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

Word from Citizens for the Preservation of Knox County anti-mining activist Jane Johnson is that state government offices are not responding or are very slow due to the pending change in administration. No decision has been received on appeals to protect the unique heron rookery south of Macomb. Freeman Coal Company wants to begin strip mining adjacent to the rookery area.

