

Tallgrass Sierran

May/June 2003 Volume 31 No. 3

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

HOI Group Meetings

WED
MAY 21

New Zealand
Forest Park Nature Center, 7 p.m.

Mary and Al Harkrader take us on a slide show tour of both the North and South Islands of this land down under. Included are the thermal area of Ruapehu, the Southern Alps and the misty fiord of Milford Sound. *All are welcome! Refreshments served after the meeting.*

WED
JUNE 18

Annual Potluck Picnic & White Elephant Auction

Detweiller Park – Moose Shelter, 6:30 p.m.

Join us for our annual summer potluck picnic and fundraising auction of unusual, useful, and tasty items donated by our members. *This year's auction proceeds will be donated to the Allen-Dunbar Children's Trust Fund. (See story on page 3.)* Bring a main dish or other food to share, plus your own table service. Iced tea and lemonade will be provided.

This year's picnic will be held at the **Moose Shelter at the south end of Detweiller Park, Peoria.** Enter the park from Rt. 29 and follow Detweiller Drive toward the bluff. Turn left before ascending the bluff and follow the park road to the far south end of the park. Turn right at the Moose shelter sign. Or, from Knoxville Ave. (Rt. 40) take Detweiller Drive east, turn right at the park entrance sign, and then turn right twice immediately after descending the bluff. If you'd like, don't forget an item to donate to the auction. *And bring a friend! Everyone is welcome!*



HOI Monitoring Water Runoff from Two CAFO's

BY RALPH GINN

In March of this year, the Heart of Illinois Sierra Club started a second water monitoring project. We had completed the Illinois River project in the summer of 2002. The new project will include testing water runoff from two CAFO's (concentrated animal feeding operations). Both CAFO's are large hog farms, one in Knox County (The Highlands) and the other in Woodford County (Old Prairie Pork). Collection sites were selected in February and early March and collection of water samples was initiated in late March. Our first samples will be tested for fecal coliform. If early results indicate that other tests are needed, they can be added. Additional tests under consideration are for nitrates, phosphates, and dissolved oxygen. Water samples will be collected on a monthly basis as well as after each significant rainfall. Testing of the water samples will be commercially contracted to Peoria Disposal Company in Peoria. Our goal is to collect scientific data on the quality of the watershed runoff from the two CAFO's.

There have been numerous incidents of stream and river contamination from CAFO's in Illinois in recent years. Two serious incidents occurred in Central Illinois within the past two years. The High-



HOI Water Monitoring leader Joe Laszlo meets with Rocky Hudson and a Knox College student volunteer to plan CAFO runoff water sampling locations. Joe also met with water project leaders from around the region on April 26th at a meeting north of Chicago. Photo: Beth Burns, Illinois Stewardship Alliance

lands applied excessive waste to their fields in June of 2002, resulting in contamination and a fish kill in French Creek. In 2001, Peoria County located Inwood Dairy had a waste lagoon overflow into a tributary of Kickapoo Creek, causing contamination and a fish kill.

We have two project teams in place. The Woodford County team is represented by John Imhoff, Herb Guth, Rich and Margo Tennis, and Steve Jauch. All live in the area of Old Prairie Pork. The Knox County team is represented by Karen Hudson, Abby Letzter, and Lucy Havolic. Lucy and Abby are students at Knox College in Galesburg and Karen lives on a farm near Elmwood. Funding for the project has been provided by Global Resource Action Center for the Environment (G.R.A.C.E). Joe Laszlo, conservation chair of HOI, is the Monitoring Project Coordinator.



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Legislative Alert !

BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE



Your Letters and Calls Needed Now on State Issues!

Support Senate Bill 1379; The Safe and Clean Communities Act

This legislation will strengthen Illinois' enforcement of existing safeguards against contamination of our air, land, and water. If a company applies to the Illinois EPA for a permit to discharge new pollution into our air, water or land, the EPA needs to review the applicant's prior records. Companies with a history of violating pollution laws could be denied a permit for further discharges. Other provisions of the bill make environmental pollution fines equal more than the economic benefit that the polluter gained by cutting corners and violating the environmental laws, and it prevents state contracts with repeated violators of environmental laws. Illinois Senator John Cullerton developed this bill with Attorney General Lisa Madigan

Oppose Senate Bills 1521 & 1804; Oppose House Bills 2816 and 2273

These bills promote ATV, dirt-bikes, and 4-wheeler use.

Senate Bill 1521 and House Bill 2816 remove a long-standing prohibition against using funds from the Off Highway Vehicle Trust Fund to build ATV facilities on land owned by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Currently, these funds are used for ATV facilities on private land. High noise levels, disruption of wildlife, off-trail and trail damage, and safety threats to riders are major concerns. ATV engines have noise levels that can be heard from up to 7,000 feet away to over 11,500 feet, which is over two miles.

Senate Bill 1804 and House Bill 2273 would limit enforcement of safety laws regarding ATV use. Illegal ATV riders have caused serious damage at Cahokia Mounds, Illinois Nature Preserve lands, levees and other locations. These bills would limit fund expenditures on law enforcement against illegal ATV riders. Public land managers already do not have adequate funds for monitoring ATV use.

Support House Bill 422; The Illinois Wetlands Protection Act

H.B. 422 will allow state protections for wetlands that the federal government is no longer protecting. Federal protections for critical isolated wetlands were vastly limited in 2001 and Illinois has no state-level program in place for protecting these areas. This bill also enables Illinois counties to protect their wetlands if the county so chooses and puts in place a program that is as protective as the state's. Illinois has lost over 85% of its wetlands. Wetlands are essential for filtering pollutants out of our water supplies; protecting areas from flood damage; providing wildlife habitat and migrating bird areas; and absorbing rainwater.

Support Senate Bill 1060; The EPA-NPDES Discharge Fee Act

This bill will establish an application fee for water pollution permits in Illinois. The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issues NPDES (National Pollution Discharge Elimination System) permits to discharge industrial wastewater treated sewage and other forms of pollution into Illinois' rivers lakes and streams. At least 39 other states (including all of our neighbor states) charge a fee for water pollution permits. Illinois does not. You have to pay a fee for licenses and other state services but currently Illinois businesses pay nothing to apply for water pollution permits. Illinois taxpayers support the costs of processing and monitoring approximately 800 permit applications each year. Permit fees established by this bill will help develop restoration plans for the state's most polluted waters and fund clean-up programs. The fees will also provide an incentive for the state's largest polluters to reduce water pollution and remove toxic chemicals from discharges into our rivers.

Support Conservation and Land Acquisition

Please write to your Illinois Senator and Representative and ask them to support funding for Conservation Land Acquisition. Let them know that Illinois needs a new long-term program to protect open space for our families and for our future. The Illinois' Natural Areas Protection Program will expire this June, and after that time our state will not have any significant source of funding for the acquisition of threatened natural areas. It is essential that Illinois has a solidly funded program for acquiring lands for natural areas.

If your legislators are not listed below, check <http://www.legis.state.il.us/> or call your local public library.

Senator George Shadid
127 Capitol Bldg.
Springfield, IL 62706
Phone 217-782-8250
District Office:
410 Court St.
Pekin, IL 61554
Phone 309-353-6276
FAX 309-353-1819

Senator Dale Risinger
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Springfield, IL 62706
Phone 217-782-1942
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Phone 309-693-4921

Rep. David Leitch
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Rep. Ricca Slone
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Rep. Michael K. Smith
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Phone 217-782-8152
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A Friend Lost

BY RALPH GINN

The environmental community lost a friend on the warm spring afternoon of March's ultimate day. Cassie Dunbar, wife of Ron Dunbar, mother of six children, ages 7-19, was shot and killed in her home by an intruder high on crack cocaine. "Cassie was an environmentalist. Her life centered around the environment," said her father, Daniel Jones. She was a member of Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, and Bat Conservation International. She and Ron were co-chair of the Illinois River Sweep out of Chillicothe in 2001 and 2002, and she was a working activist in No Way Corridor A, a grassroots group opposing the north route of the Peoria-Chicago freeway. Ron Dunbar, her surviving husband, was a member of HOI's water monitoring team that completed a year long study of the Illinois River in 2002.

The confessed killer is Jayson Schertz, a 28 year old drifter, who happened to be driving by the rural Dunbar house in search of drug money. He saw Cassie working in the yard, pulled in the

driveway and asked for "gas money." Schertz followed her into the house, when she agreed to give him \$20, and shot her three times. The first shot hit her in the arm, she picked up a fireplace poker and struck him in the back. He shot her twice more, killing her. He was in custody within two days. Police discovered that he had taken Cassie's checkbook, written a check to himself for \$100 and cashed it at her bank in Chillicothe. Schertz has a long history of arrests for burglary and drug use.

This was a random killing, a tragedy that will deprive six children of a mother, a husband of a wife, a mother and father of a daughter, two women of a sister, and countless others of a friend. Memorials may be made to: Allen-Dunbar Children's Trust Fund, 1st National Bank, 900 4th St. Chillicothe, IL 61523. *This year's proceeds from the White Elephant Auction at the June HOI picnic will be donated to the fund.*

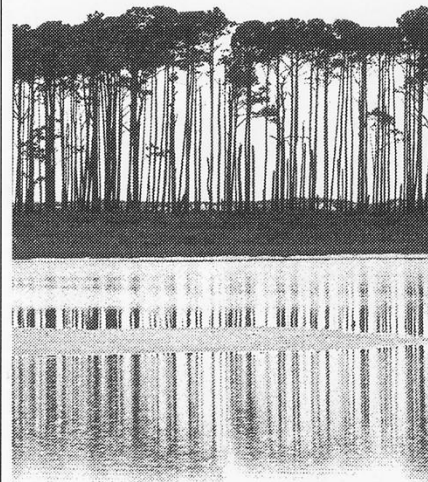
Keep Jubilee Horse Camp Funds Frozen

Write to Governor Blagojevich's Deputy Bradley Tusk

BY MARY HARKRADER

On March 22, 2003, John Wosik and Joyce Blumenshine led a group of Sierrans on a hike through Jubilee College State Park. We went into the area that Representative David Leitch has proposed for a Class B Horse Camp. This area is in the middle of the park, directly across the road from picnic areas. It does not appear to be the place to develop a horse camp.

Please write to Bradley Tusk, Governor Blagojevich's Deputy at 207 State House, Springfield, IL 62706. We need to invite him to come to the park for a look at this area. Right now, the money requested for this project is "frozen", and, hopefully, it will remain that way until new management can study the project. The needs of everyone who uses the park should be considered before locating a large project like this in the middle of the park.



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Like Ansel Adams before him, the work of Donald Muir Bradburn is intensely honest, reflecting the passion of his childhood memories of the Mississippi Barrier Islands, which his photography helped save. For millions of people, the Sierra Club turns that same passion for nature into something just as moving—successful protection of our natural treasures. Insure tomorrow is filled with scenes that inspire. Join us. You'll be in good company.

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June

Larry Rice will give us a tour of the 356-acre Duck Ranch area just south of Henry along the east side of the Illinois River. A tour of Weis Lake on the west side of the River is also a possibility. Duck Ranch was acquired by the IDNR in January, 2001 and is a mixture of Illinois River floodplain forest, lake and ponds. The goal of the waterfowl management scheme is to balance hunting opportunities while providing waterfowl resting areas. *The exact time and meeting place has not yet been determined, so sign-up is required by May 23. Call Rudy Habben at 685-5605.*

25 Newsletter Mailing, 7.p.m.
WED Peoria Pizza Works; *Everyone welcome.*

The Prairie Dawgs meet the 1st and 3rd Saturdays of the month at Jubilee State Park. Work includes prairie burns, brush cutting, eradicating alien plants, native plant seeding, and planting root stock. Call Doug Franks at 691-7993 for more information.



This individual's conservation efforts should have been pursued on a volunteer basis, not for pay. Your nomination should include a brief explanation of why you feel this person should be considered. The deadline for nominations is August 20th. The winner will be announced at our September 17th Group meeting. Send nominations to **Joyce Blumenshine, c/o HOI Sierra Club, 120 W. Arcadia Ave., Peoria, IL 61604; or call 688-0950.**

-- **Gaylord Nelson**, former governor of Wisconsin, founder of Earth Day

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