



Tallgrass Sierran

September/October 2003 Volume 31 No. 5

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

HOI Group Meetings

WED
SEPT 17

Brian Fox Ellis: Story of a Watershed

Forest Park Nature Center, 7 p.m.

Thinking Beyond the Thin Blue Line: Story of a Watershed. Professional storyteller Brian Fox Ellis brings to life the natural history of the Illinois River valley. *All are welcome! Refreshments served after the meeting.*

WED
OCT 15

The Benefits of Organic and Sustainable Regional Food Systems

Forest Park Nature Center, 7 p.m.

Presented by Anne G. Patterson, R.D. Eating locally grown organic foods as much as possible includes ecological, economic, nutritional and social benefits. Plus the taste is great. But a good intention in a fast paced society, which is dependent upon a global food system, doesn't make it easy to eat regionally. Come hear the whys and hows of moving toward a local food system from a dietitian and organic farmer. *All are welcome! Refreshments served after the meeting.*



The Lies They Spin

BY RALPH GINN

When did it become acceptable for the media to label the old fashioned, bald-faced lie an overstatement...exaggeration...hyperbole...spin...misspeak...prevarication?" The latter is a strong word, but no one knows what it means, so there's no harm in using it. Government in America, at every level, has learned the lie game. Say what is needed to fit your agenda, and if caught in untruthfulness trust the media to use standard euphemisms. The media's unwillingness to call a lie a lie is noted by only a few in the audience.

The War in Iraq has provoked the most egregious of these gloss-overs, but governments at the state and local level are not immune to "embellishment". This pattern has, of course, spilled-over to environmental issues. Christine Whitman, ex-director of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), said that relaxing clean air requirements will provide manufactures, utilities, and oil refineries with new flexibility and decrease pollution. President Bush proposed new rules that would allow increased timber harvest on public lands to "prevent forest fires." The same Bush ordered the EPA to delete concerns about health and environmental changes in its long awaited report on global warming. James Connaughton, chairman of the White House's Council of Environmental Quality, said the changes were ordered because the EPA report "overstated" causes of climate change and the report needed to be con-

densed to make it more usable by the public. On the 4th of July, at Warren Dunes State Park and nearby Lake Michigan beaches, seven swimmers drowned in killer rip-tides. Michigan Department of Natural Resources officials say that the red warning flags were out that day (a red flag meaning dangerous conditions exist and no swimming is permitted), although their view from Lansing, 130 miles away, is disputed by on-the-beach eye witnesses, who saw yellow flags.

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the lie game.

Are the above examples of government lying? Of course they are. Does any clear thinking, objective mind believe that in all of the briefings the President attended from October 2002 to February 2003, no

one mentioned that the yellowcake uranium documents were forged? Impossible.

During the 15th stage of the 2003 Tour de France, Lance Armstrong fell when his bicycle's handlebar caught on a pressing spectator's handbag. His closest pursuer, Jan Ullrich avoided the crash and immediately slowed to wait for Armstrong to catch up. A similar incident involving the same two riders occurred in the 2001 race. Ullrich crashed during a downhill ride and Armstrong slowed until Ullrich was back on his bike. An example of sportsmanship at its finest and regrettably rare. Both athletes displayed integrity and respect for each other, and their sport. Oh! that government officials, and the media would choose that same integrity and respect.



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Wetlands: Call Your State Senator

BY RALPH GINN

We all get a lots of appeals to call/write our political representatives and this is another, but a very **IMPORTANT** one. Many Sierrans worked extraordinarily hard to gain a victory in the Illinois House of Representatives to get an Illinois Wetlands Protection Act passed that would extend protection to isolated wetlands. The next hurdle is the Illinois Senate. It will consider HB 422 during the November veto session.

The necessity of this effort was perpetrated by the U.S. Supreme court in 2001, in an all too familiar 5-4 decision, when it ruled the Federal Clean Water Act would no longer protect wetlands that were not connected to navigable water. In Illinois, this meant that 60% of our remaining wetlands (only 10% of original wetlands survived the 19th and 20th centuries) lost all federal protection.

This effort is probably the most important environmental effort, at the state level, of the past ten years. **PLEASE call or write:**

Senator George Shadid
410 Court St.
Pekin, IL 61554
phone: 309 673 8404

Senator Dale Risinger
5415 N. University St. Suite 105
Peoria, IL 61614
phone: 309 693 4921

If you do not know who your state senator is you can go to the State of Illinois website: www.elections.state.il.us/dls/pages/DLSAddresscrit.asp or call the Sierra Club, Illinois Chapter: 312-251-1680

Great Opportunity for Sierra Members

Nominations for HOI EXCOM Board are needed by October 7th. Three board positions will be up for election this year. Board members have a range of opportunities from organizing programs for the general meetings to representing HOI at various meetings and events or being active by contributing ideas. Nominate yourself or send in a nomination for someone that would like to be on the Board. Meetings are held once a month, and are a great way to participate in your local Sierra Group. Send nominations to Ralph Ginn, Chair, HOI Sierra, 20822 N. Blue Ridge Rd., Chillicothe, IL 61523-9751

Governor Helps Protect State Parks from ATVs and Dirt Bikes

BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

On August 18th Governor Rod Blagojevich used his amendatory veto authority to propose changes in two bills passed by the Illinois General Assembly. Blagojevich vetoed allowing the use of state funds to build tracks for dirt bikes and four-wheelers in state parks. Funds can be used to build special all-terrain vehicle facilities outside of the state park system. The Governor also proposed changing the amount of funds from 15% to 30% annually in the Off-Highway Vehicle Trails Fund that can be used to enforce existing laws against unsafe off-road vehicle use. Illegal use of ATVs and dirt bikes cause major damage to many park area in Illinois, including Cahokia Mounds, in the Shawnee National Forest, and Illinois Nature Preserve areas. Thank you Governor Blagojevich!

Trail Funding Being Axed By Bush and Republicans

BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

If anyone remembers President Bush's Fitness Initiative, you can put it in the ranks with "No Child Left Behind" for a glitzy press op that has no substance in adding Federal funds to critical needs for our country. Please apply the word "lie" if you wish because we are talking about insulting, misleading, and blatantly abusing the public good.

In spite of overwhelming evidence of the lack of physical fitness of Americans and the huge percentage of citizens that are obese, not to mention just fat, Congress is on the way to cutting funds for trails and related rail-trail projects. Federal funding before Bush II helped build hundreds of bike and pedestrian trails since the early 1990s. Quoting from the 8/20/02 Runner's World magazine, "It's hard to imagine anything the government has done, or could do, that more effectively promotes health and fitness than providing a 'fitness infrastructure' of trails for the public. And yet this major source of funding has been put at risk, and unless there's a serious public outcry when Congress reconvenes, it may disappear."

Lead by Oklahoma Republican Ernest Istook, Jr., who is head of the Transportation and Treasury Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee, funds for Transportation Enhancements which include trail projects in the Department of Transportation's 2004 budget will be transfigured. Istook's committee has already added \$4.8 billion in highway spending above what the White House requested for next year. Does more highways and no trails make sense for a nation of fat adults and kids?

Write to Rep. Ernest Istook and to our Illinois Rep. Ray LaHood and to President Bush to demand that Federal funding for trails and rail-trail projects be maintained. Let them know that American needs public trails and remind them that this is one of the best ways President Bush can follow-through with his "President's Fitness Initiative".

Addresses:

U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20510

The White House, Washington, D.C. 20500 (phone comment line 202-456-1111)

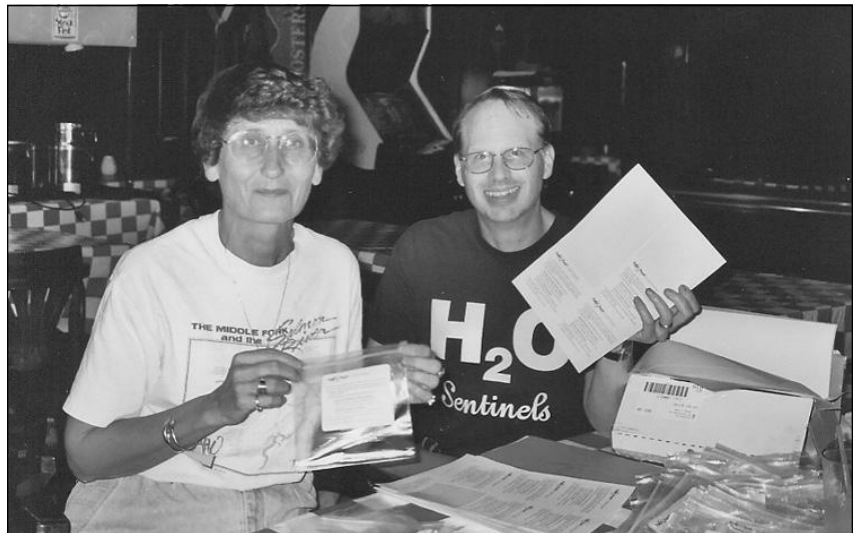


Photo: Joyce Blumenshine

Sierra Club Helps Prepare "Patch Pouches"[®]

BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

Heart of Illinois Sierra Club Conservation Chair Joe Laszlo and Heart of Illinois Planned Parenthood Director Joyce Harant are shown preparing "Patch Pouches"[®] for distribution. A press conference was held July 17th at the Peoria Riverfront to introduce the project to the public. Patch Pouches are being supplied at area Planned Parenthood offices and some local pharmacies for women who use birth control patches. Discarded patches contain significant amounts of hormones, which can get into the water supply more readily if they are flushed down toilets. Used birth control patches should be placed in the Patch Pouches and returned to Planned Parenthood for proper disposal. The goal of the project is to keep birth control patches from being flushed into the water system or put in standard garbage. High hormone levels in surface water have been shown to negatively impact fish and other wildlife.

October

2 Executive Meeting, 7 p.m.
TUE Joyce Blumenshine's home, 2419 E.
 Reservoir Blvd., Peoria, IL 61614-8029.
 Call 688-0950 for directions.

17 Group Meeting, 7 p.m.
WED Forest Park Nature Center. *Brian Fox Ellis, Story of a Watershed.* Everyone is welcome!

20 Rock Island Trail Hike, 9 a.m.

SAT Take an early look for fall and get away from all those things on the "to-do" list. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the Trail parking lot north of Dunlap. Take Rt. 91 north and turn left/west at the first road just outside of town (Parks School Road). Watch for the trail parking lot on your right a short way ahead. We will walk for one hour and then have options for breakfast at a local eatery.

4 **"Windows on the West" at the**
SAT **Art Institute, 6 a.m.**

Enjoying nature in art: a trip to the Art Institute of Chicago. Catch the end of the "Windows on the West" art exhibit, "Wilds of the West" photography, and the new Van Gogh and Gauguin "Studio of the South". Tickets will be reserved ahead so you must phone 688-0950 by September 17th if you wish to go. Cars leave at 6:00 a.m. from Peoria, and a stop for dinner will be made before leaving Chicago.

7 Executive Meeting, 7 p.m.
TUE Ralph Ginn's home, 20822 N. Blue Ridge Rd., Chillicothe. Call 274-3289 for directions.

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

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 Rudy Habben at 685-5605.

15 Group Meeting, 7 p.m.
WED Forest Park Nature Center. *Anne G. Patterson, R.D., The Benefits of Organic and Sustainable Regional Food Systems.* Everyone is welcome!

24 Newsletter Deadline
FRI Send articles for November/December
to: John Wosik, 12409 N. Blackhawk
Ct., Dunlap, IL 61525, or
johnwosik@insightbb.com.

29 Newsletter Mailing, 6:30 p.m.
WED Peoria Pizza Works; *Everyone welcome.*

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

Prairie Dawgs Work Crew

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.

"Study nature, love nature, stay close to nature.
It will never fail you."

-- Frank Lloyd Wright

"Treat the Earth well. It was not given to you by your parents. It was loaned to you by your children."

-- Kenyan Proverb

"... all things share the same breath - the beast, the tree, the man ... the air shares its spirit with all the life it supports."

-- Chief Seattle, Duwamish

Conservation is like freedom. It can only be maintained by constant vigilance."

-- H. R. H. Prince Phylp,
Duke of Edinburgh

Heart of Illinois Sierra Club

Hotline: Local Meetings & Outings • Action Alerts
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Executive Committee

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HEART OF ILLINOIS

Sierra Club

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