

# Tallgrass Sierran

March/April 2004 Volume 32 No. 2

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

## HOI Group Meetings

**WED  
MAR 17** **Landscape Ecology**  
Forest Park Nature Center, 7 p.m.



As winter ends and the Illinois growing season begins, have you wondered if the products you use on your lawn and garden are safe, or are possible carcinogens and a danger to children, pets, and earthworms? John Armbruster, a volunteer Master Gardener with University Extension, will present a program on the ecological care of your home landscape with practices that can cool summer surface temperature, control dust and allergens from weeds, and generally promote your home environment. *All are welcome! Refreshments served after the meeting.*

**WED  
APR 21** **Helping Urban Wildlife**  
Forest Park Nature Center, 7 p.m.

The Peoria area with its river bluff and wooded ravines provides habitat for a wide range of birds and animals. Many people have squirrels and rabbits, and some have raccoons, deer or wild turkey on their property. Sometimes a bird or animal appears to be injured, diseased, or orphaned. What should be done? Allison Wolverton, President of the Illinois Chapter, Wildlife Rehabilitators Association, will present a program on the right things you can do to help. (For more information, see the article and interview with Allison Wolverton by Ralph Ginn in this newsletter.) *All are welcome! Refreshments served after the meeting.*



BY RALPH GINN

If there were a Church of Birds and Mammals, it would do well to bestow sainthood upon Allison Wolverton of rural Tazewell County. She is the founder, director, and with her husband Larry, the principle financial support of Wildsides Wildlife Rehabilitation and Rescue Center. Wildsides provides treatment and care of injured, sick, and orphaned Illinois wildlife, and the subsequent release of healthy animals into appropriate native habitat.

Allison, a licensed wildlife rehabilitator, established Wildsides in 1996. She had worked as a volunteer for other animal rehabilitators for several years before establishing her own Center. Wildsides has treated over 1000 animals in each of the last two years. A tornado in the spring of 2003 was particularly hard on wildlife. Entire litters of raccoons, opossums, and squirrels came to the Center. Most were in shock, cold and wet; some were orphaned. Downed trees and power lines made it difficult for the Center's volunteers to reach Wildsides. Allison describes the following days as CPR (care, prayer, and rehabilitation).

Wildsides gets invaluable support from a dozen volunteers, including Dr Shawn Hohulin, veterinarian from Minier, and the University of Illinois Veterinary School's wildlife ward. The Center works in cooperation with the Illinois Depart-

## WILDSIDES



**Allison Wolverton releases a rehabilitated raptor to the wild.** Photo from WILDSIDES informational pamphlet.

ment of Natural Resources, providing data on animal injuries, illnesses, and locations. Although rehabilitation doesn't contribute to population changes in common animals, rehabilitation for an endangered or threatened species can be very significant. Wildsides recently rehabilitated and released an injured American Bitten, a species with only five sightings in Illinois since 1977. The Center receives no support from federal or state funding, instead relying on donations and the generosity of the Wolverton's to meet a \$35,000 annual budget.

After touring the 3/4 acre site that has access to a 10 acre lake, I was astonished that two people and a few volunteers could accomplish the enormous amount of work and care that obviously goes into this rehabilitation facility. And

(See **WILDSIDES**, page 2)



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(*WILDSIDES*, from page 1)

that isn't all they do. Allison frequently takes her show on the road to schools and scout groups. Last summer a group of scouts built a water loafing platform for ducks, geese, and turtles. "Wildsides is committed to education," Allison says, "Awareness of the animal world and its habitat requirements is something I try to pass on to those willing to listen and see."

Tallgrass Sierran readers, **PLEASE** make a donation. The environment will benefit and so will you. Send to:

**Wildsides Wildlife Center**  
P.O. Box 212  
Tremont, IL 61568



**Urban Wildlife:** No, the above picture is not HOI ExCom members recently convening at Joseph Laszlo's home. Joe spotted these turkeys in his backyard, which is not far from the Madison Park Golf Course in Peoria.  
Photo: Joe Laszlo

## A Talk With Allison Wolverton

BY RALPH GINN

I stood in a small feed preparation building, holding the tethers of an eye-injured screech owl, watching Allison Wolverton place a dead mouse on a top of a high bird cage. The American Kestrel that had been flying around our heads for several minutes pounced immediately and carried his prey to a corner rafter. This was my introduction to Wildsides Wildlife Rehabilitation and Rescue Center on a cold, snowy day in early February.

**Question:** Are some animals more difficult to rehabilitate than others?

**Allison:** Definitely, bird nestlings can be especially challenging. See the yellow-shafted flicker on that tree, (she points out the window), I learned, after much research, that the young flickers must be placed in a visually open enclosure within ten days of hatching. Otherwise, they won't learn to orientate to the stars and will not be able to migrate as adults.

**Question:** Take us through a typical rehabilitation of a large raptor. I know from your literature that it can be time consuming and complicated.

**Allison:** Let's use a red-tailed hawk as an example and let's assume someone brings us a fallen nestling. We do pick up animals if the finder is unable to bring it to the Center. Our first job is to feed and hydrate the young bird. I wear

camouflage, completely covered, with only an opening for my eyes. I feed the bird with a hand puppet that resembles a large beak, so that the bird will not imprint on a human. If there is an injury we will treat that. Our Center doesn't have a cage large enough for a big hawk to develop flight strength, but we are trying to rent some property near by and build one. When the young hawk is ready, we take it to a facility in Warrensburg that has a large cage. We take eagles to a facility near St. Louis that has an even larger flight cage. Our hawk will stay in Warrensburg until it is flying properly. When it's ready, I pick it up and take it to a suitable release location, preferably near where it was originally found.

**Question:** You get calls about animals that are sick, injured or abandoned. What is the most common problem?

**Allison:** "Abandoned" fawns and baby rabbits are common and 8 times out of 10 the mother is nearby and will be happy to see the human intruder leave her baby alone. Another common problem occurs when a mother of a litter of raccoons, squirrels, or opossums takes up residence in an attic or a shed. A loud radio or rags soaked in ammonia will usually persuade the mother to seek

other quarters. Don't misunderstand what I'm saying, we want calls about injured, sick, or orphaned animals, their treatment and rehabilitation is the principle mission of Wildsides.

**Question:** What kinds of public support does the Center need most?

**Allison:** We are truly in a money crisis this year. The tornado last spring added nearly \$2000 to our regular expenses. I don't think we will be able to continue rehabilitation at the present level unless donations increase. We also need volunteers, and we need new release sites.

**Question:** What do you look for in a release site?

**Allison:** Mainly, a site that already supports the type of animal to be released. We go all over Central Illinois to release animals, so distance is not usually a problem.

**Question:** What is your busy season?

**Allison:** The baby season runs from late May through August. I put in a lot of 20 hour days during that period. A baby song bird formula takes more than 2 hours to prepare.

**Question:** What are you going to do at 7 p.m. April 21?

**Allison:** I'm going to bring my slides and one or two educational animals to Forest Park Nature Center and talk to the Heart of Illinois Sierra Club.

## Action Alert!

## Illinois Natural Resource Programs Being Cut

BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

State budget cuts will eliminate essential natural resource programs and decimate important habitat and natural area programs for Illinois. Please call and write Governor Rod Blagojevich, 207 State House, Springfield, IL, 62706, phone 217-782-0244 or email to [governor@state.il.us](mailto:governor@state.il.us) and tell him that funding must be restored for the Illinois Natural Heritage program, the Nature Preserves Commission, Open Space Protection, the Endangered Species Protection Board, and the Natural Areas Acquisition Fund. Cutting these programs is a direct attack on the quality of life in Illinois, and these cuts must be restored.

Our state Natural Heritage Program is responsible for protection, management, and restoration of endangered species, natural areas, and critical wildlife habitat on public and private lands. If the Governor's cuts proceed, all 30 professional biologists and three clerical staff positions will be permanently lost. The Governor is diverting dedicated funding for this program which was established by the State Legislature. Part of the Real Estate transfer tax has funded this im-

portant program since 1991, and these funds should be restored.

The Illinois Nature Preserves Commission is responsible for the dedication of high quality natural areas and endangered species habitats, placing protection of these lands as their highest and best use, which is the strongest protection for land in Illinois. All 15 positions for the commission will be permanently lost. Dedicated funding was established by the State Legislature for this program, and is being diverted by Governor Blagojevich.

Illinois ranks 47<sup>th</sup> out of the fifty states in public open space per capita. Governor Blagojevich is eliminating funding for the Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development Fund, which provides grants to local units of government for the acquisition of open space, parks, and the development of park facilities and forest preserves. The six staff positions for this program, who work directly with local units of government, will be cut. A dedicated funding source for this program was established by the State Legislature in 1991, and

should be used for this purpose, instead of being diverted by the Governor.

The Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board is responsible for listing animals and plants that are endangered or threatened. They also advise the Illinois Department of Natural Resources on the conservation of listed species. No funding is being provided for this effort, which will halt the listing of threatened plants and animals.

Illinois' Natural Areas Acquisition Fund has a dedicated funding source which is being taken by Governor Blagojevich. This fund is used by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources for the protection of natural areas, including habitat needed by endangered and threatened species, wetlands and other high quality natural habitats. This fund enabled the state to acquire more than 20,000 acres. Two staff positions responsible for acquisitions will be lost.

Cutting habitat and environmental programs short-changes the future generations of Illinois. These cuts will impact the quality of life for us all by diminishing the health of our state's natu-



### Vote for the Environment on March 16th!

Sierra Club Endorses Barack Obama for U.S. Senator

The Illinois Chapter of the Sierra Club has enthusiastically endorsed Barack Obama for U.S. Senator from Illinois in the Democratic primary on March 16th. Obama has compiled an impressive 100% environmental voting record in the Illinois Senate and has the proven leadership to champion the environment in Washington D.C. and combat the assaults on our air, water, and public lands by the Bush Administration. As a member of the Illinois Senate, Barack Obama:

- Sponsored the Illinois Wetlands Protection Act, which will help protect Illinois' remaining wetlands.
- Voted to punish repeat polluters, helping to ensure that polluting doesn't simply become a "cost of doing business".
- Is a sponsor of legislation to promote clean, safe, energy in Illinois by requiring electric utilities to use wind, solar, and other renewable sources of energy.
- Is a sponsor of legislation to create a statewide, energy-efficient building code in Illinois.

For more information, check out the Illinois Chapter of the Sierra Club website at <http://illinois.sierraclub.org/vote/index.html>.

### Vote for the environment on March 16th! Vote for Barack Obama!

☐ Yes, I want to join the Sierra Club! My check is enclosed.

Name

Address

City  State  Zip

Introductory ☐ \$25 Individual ☐ \$39 Joint ☐ \$47

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.

Please mail this to Sierra Club,  
P.O. Box 52968, Boulder,  
Colorado, 80322-2968



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## HOI Group Calendar

*March*

**2 Executive Meeting, 7 p.m.**  
**TUE** Ralph Ginn's home, 20822 N. Blue  
 Ridge Rd., Chillicothe. Call 686-4122  
 for directions.

**17 Group Meeting, 7 p.m.**  
**WED** Forest Park Nature Center. *John Arm-  
 Bruster, Landscape Ecology.* Everyone  
 is 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.

*April*


**4**  
**SUN**



**Jubilee State Park  
Spring Hike, 2 p.m.**

Join us for a Spring hike at Jubilee State Park. Meet at the Jubilee State Historical Site at 2 p.m. During our hike we will point out some of the horse trail damage occurring in the park. An optional dinner stop is planned afterwards. Call 688-0950 for more information.

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

**17 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.

**21** **Group Meeting, 7 p.m.**  
**WED** Forest Park Nature Center. *Allison Wol-*  
*verton, Helping Urban Wildlife.* Every-  
 one is welcome!

22  
THU

 Earth Day

**23 Newsletter Deadline**  
FRI Send articles for May/June to: John  
Wosik, 12409 N. Blackhawk Ct.,  
Dunlap, IL 61525, or  
johnwosik@insightbb.com.

**28 Newsletter Mailing, 6:30 p.m.**  
WED Peoria Pizza Works, 3921 N. Prospect  
Rd., Peoria Heights

Earth Day is April 22nd!


*By Joyce Blumenshine*

Celebrate Earth Day as a car-free day!

Other Earth Day ideas: plant a tree; take a walk; donate to an environmental or social justice organization; eat vegetarian meals for the day; drop off your recyclables at an area recycling center; pause to think how lucky we are to live on this beautiful planet.

The first Earth Day was April 22, 1970. In the midst of the social activism of the 1970's, Earth Day called attention to environmental abuse and neglect of our planet. Earth Day also commemorates John Muir, naturalist, author, early environmental activist and founder of Sierra Club. John Muir was born April 21, 1838. Among his many good works were the development of our national monuments system and the establishment of many of our national parks. John Muir influenced President Theodore Roosevelt in conservation of Americas

natural resources. John Muir's words ring as true today as they did over 100 years ago:



*No dogma taught by the present civilization seems to form so insuperable an obstacle in a way of a right understanding of the relations which culture sustains as to wilderness, as that which declares that the world was made especially for the uses of men. Every animal, plant, and crystal controverts it in the plainest terms. Yet it is taught from century to century as something ever new and precious, and in the resulting darkness the enormous conceit is allowed to go unchallenged.*

*John Muir, born April 21, 1838. Died 1914*

# Heart of Illinois Sierra Club

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## Executive Committee

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<b>Vice-Chair</b> . . . . .	Rudy Habben . . .	685-5605	
<b>Secretary</b> . . . . .	Joyce Blumenshine . . .	688-0950	joblumen@yahoo.com
<b>Conservation Chair</b> . . . . .	Joseph Laszlo . . .	637-4692	laszloja@excite.com
<b>Membership Chair</b> . . . . .	Cindy Ewing . . .	686-4122	
<b>Newsletter Editor</b> . . . . .	John Wosik . . . . .	243-2230	johnwosik@insightbb.com
<b>Political Chair</b> . . . . .	Ralph Ginn . . . . .	686-4122	randdginn@bwsys.net

**Treasurer** . . . . . Grayce Mesner . . . 246-8397  
**Calendar Sales** . . . . Emiko Yang . . . . 691-5213

## HEART OF ILLINOIS

*Sierra Club*

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