

Tallgrass Sierran

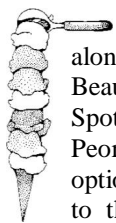
July/August 2004 Volume 32 No. 4

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

HOI Group Meetings

WED
JULY 21

Spotted Cow Ice Cream Hike Grandview Dr. Park, 6:30 p.m.



Enjoy a summer evening walk along WMDB – the World's Most Beautiful Drive. We will end at the Spotted Cow ice cream shop in Peoria Heights with time for an optional treat. Transportation back to the starting point will be provided. Be sure to wear good walking shoes: this is about a three mile hike. Meet at the Grandview Park parking lot (go up Grandview Drive from Rt. 29 at the corner of Lorentz Ave. and watch for the park on your left at the top of the hill). *All are welcome! Call 688-0950 for more information.*

WED
AUG 18

Riverfront Walk & Dinner Gateway Building, 6:30 p.m.

Enjoy an evening out along the river for a comfortable hour hike. Afterward we will stop at the Old Chicago Restaurant near the Gateway Building for an optional late dinner. Meet at the Gateway Building fountain (at the foot of Hamilton Blvd.). Parking is available along Hamilton or in nearby lots. *All are welcome! Call 688-0950 for more information.*

Don't Forget Wildsides . . .

If you have a few dollars yet in your monthly budget, don't forget that the Wildsides Wildlife Center in Tremont needs your help. They depend on donations to support supplies for the thousands of hours of volunteer work they provide in saving injured wildlife and providing wildlife awareness education to the entire area. Send your check however large or small to: Wildsides Wildlife Center; P.O. Box 212; Tremont, IL 61568

Beatable Bush

BY RALPH GINN

A few months ago I wrote that a Bush presidency was nearly inevitable through 2008. I was wrong, but the circumstances are not happy ones. George W. Bush is in re-election trouble and Iraq is the issue. If only we could point to his environmental record as the cause for his tumble in public opinion. Don't delude yourself. Since last year, he has only added to an abysmal record of environmental insults. The economy, education and health care are issues but not poll moving. It's Iraq. And if we are to beat Bush, it is Iraq that must be our lever. At a cost of hundreds of young American and tens of thousands of Iraqi lives, we should take no pleasure in our consequences. But, Bush has, with his incomprehensible war, given us an opportunity.

There are a score and more environmental transgressions Bush has committed and that we have repeatedly noted in the Tallgrass Sierran. In my opinion, the most damaging is the trivialization of environmental groups, Sierra Club included. The blatant resolutions that have weakened environmental laws, the omission of environmental groups in structuring policies that effect the planet, the appointment of anti-environment officials to key government positions overseeing public land, have all contributed to an attitude in Washington that demeans our efforts toward a healthy earth. For example, Dick Durbin, D-IL, recently joined a group of senators to push forward a controversial \$2.8 billion plan to lengthen seven locks on the upper Mississippi and Illinois rivers. This is the same plan that has twice been determined un-

necessary by independent studies. The same plan for which the Army Corps of Engineers was exposed for cooking the books when calculating the cost/benefit ratio. Durbin's environmental scorecard, as marked by the League of Conservation Voter's (LCV), has averaged 96% over the last four years, but he caved to the Corn Growers Association, Cargill and ADM. Durbin's retreat is a virus that has infected other LCV good guys and girls in Congress and was born of the disdain for the environment, with impunity, championed by George Bush.

A George Bush defeat will reclaim respect for the environmental ethic. John Kerry's LCV score is as good as Durbin's and he will not turn his back on his core support. But, to beat Bush we must push the issue that moves the voters, and that is Iraq.

Talking Points:

- weapons of mass destruction...**LIE**
- Saddam's ties to Al Qaeda...**LIE**
- nuclear weapons program...**LIE**
- missiles that could reach American soil...**LIE**
- postwar plan...after it rained on the liberation parade, there wasn't one
- number of troops...not enough
- built a coalition...that is ominously undersized
- "Iraq is the front line of terrorism"...it wasn't, but is now, and then some
- "The war in Iraq is the will of God"...moral arrogance!
- a grand crusade...at Abu Ghraib prison?

(See *Beatable Bush*, page 2)



SIERRA
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Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

(Beatable Bush, from page 1)

Talk to your friends, neighbors, relatives, be a missionary, it's the last of the ninth and the game is hardball, Bush won't go down easily and the environment can poorly afford four more years of abuse.



Oppose Expansion of the PDC Hazardous Waste Dump at the West Edge of Peoria

BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

Volunteers are continuing to gather signatures on petitions opposing the PDC Company expansion of their hazardous waste dump west of Sterling Avenue at the edge of Peoria. While PDC has not announced when they will proceed with their expansion permit application, they could move the issue forward at any time. Over 2,000 signatures against the hazardous waste landfill have been collected. The hazardous waste dump places tons of treated highly toxic materials in a landfill near major residential areas and by a stream that flows into the Illinois River. The area is also over our closest aquifer. If you could volunteer a few hours with petitions or other efforts, phone 688-0950.

Illinois' Pyramid State Park Needs Special Protection

Write to Joel Brunsvold, Director, IDNR

BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

Three years ago the Illinois Department of Natural Resources purchased nearly 16,500 acres of reclaimed strip-mined land in Perry County, about 75 miles southeast of St. Louis, to add to Pyramid State Park. The area is described as an "ark" or Ark Land for many species of birds that have experienced a steep decline in populations nationwide. The area features many different habitats which have attracted a wide range of birds, including 16 state threatened and endangered species of birds. Northern Harriers, Willow Flycatcher, Bell's Vireo, Loggerhead Shrikes, and many other species use this park because of the vast spaces and varied types of habitat. Wildlife in Pyramid State Park is threatened by a resolution passed last year by the Illinois State Legislature which would permit field dog trials in the park. These involve horseback riders following hunting dogs as they flush game birds. Off-road vehicle riders also want access to the park's vast grasslands. Such disruptions would impact the breeding and wintering success of many Illinois resident bird species as well as birds that use the vast grassland during spring and fall migrations.

A plan can be developed which would permit multiple users to enjoy Pyramid State Park without negative impact on important bird species. State biologists would prefer to maintain a core bioreserve at Ark Land specifically for birds and other prairie grassland species. The Illinois Chapter of the Sierra Club is interested in exploring establishment of such a bioreserve at Pyramid State Park with IDNR staff. The Illinois Legislature has recently passed a bill to allow the use of the Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) Fund to develop trails on IDNR land. Sadly, Pyramid State Park Ark Land is the most frequently mentioned park as a location for an OHV trail. In addition, hunting dog field trial enthusiasts have stated they want to use 10,000 acres of Ark Land for events that would involve hundreds of equestrians riding their horses through the area. Write to Joel Brunsvold, Director, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, IL 62702-1271 and ask that protection of habitat be the first priority for Pyramid State Park and that IDNR identify and set aside a bioreserve before other recreational activities are established at the park. *(Information excerpted from Lake & Prai-*



Skiing, Anyone? Al and Mary Harkrader auction off a pair of skis during the annual HOI potluck picnic and white elephant auction. Photo: Joyce Blumenshine



Thanks to everyone who donated auction items and came to the annual Heart of Illinois Sierra Club potluck picnic and white elephant auction. The Sierra Club Auction brought in \$275 which we donated to the Education Fund of Jaycie Butler, great granddaughter of Dick Klatt, a Heart of Illinois Sierra Club member. Many useful and some not-so-useful (but beautiful) articles, as well as eatable items were sold under the direction of our entertaining auctioneers, Al & Mary Harkrader, with the help of HOI Treasurer Grayce Mesner who collected the money.

Clearcutting America's Rainforest - Your Tax Dollars Hard at Work!

BY KIM NOVICK

In this time of growing budget deficits, a social security crisis and economic uncertainty, the question of how our government is appropriating our tax dollars is looming large. Most Americans would agree that's its time to cut wasteful government spending programs. If Congress and the President are serious about cutting waste, removing taxpayer subsidies for logging in America's Rainforest – the Tongass National Forest in Alaska -- is a great place to start.

For decades, the Forest Service has been heavily subsidizing the timber industry in the Tongass National Forest by building logging roads and preparing logging projects. And in recent years, the annual subsidies have soared to record highs due to a worldwide timber glut and the availability of cheaper, more accessible wood in other parts of the country. According to the Forest Service's own records, in 2002, the federal government spent \$35 million facilitating timber industry operations in the Tongass, subsidizing every logging job in Southeastern Alaska by \$178,000.

That's not small potatoes! Since 1982, the cumulative amount of government subsidies for logging in the Tongass has totaled almost \$1 billion, and the Forest Service doesn't show signs of slowing down anytime soon. Plans to lay an additional 1,000 miles of logging roads in the Tongass are in the works as the Forest Service considers 50 new timber projects in the Forest.. And in order to guarantee timber industry profits, the Forest Service has offered to sell priceless old-growth trees for far less than they are worth.

For example, Forest Service records show that an average hemlock is priced at

just \$2.09 (the price of a cup of coffee), a 600-year old, 250-foot tall spruce at \$10.28 (the price of a pizza), and a prized Alaskan Yellow Cedar at only \$24.49 (less than the cost of two CD's).

Talk about not seeing the forests for their green! It doesn't take a degree in economics to realize that this is a bad fiscal policy. It doesn't make sense for American taxpayers to pay the timber industry to clear cut our nation's only coastal temperate rainforest, especially when the market for hardwood lumber is saturated.

Nor is this sound environmental policy. The Tongass National Forest – established by Teddy Roosevelt in 1907— is America's Rainforest. Parts of this 19.7 million acres ecosystem receive upwards of 180" of rain a year, and its centuries-old Spruce and Hemlock trees are home to wolves, bears, salmon, and Bald Eagles

that have disappeared from many other parts of the country. These ancient trees also shelter and protect freshwater streams that are crucial spawning grounds for Wild Salmon – a precious resource that supports a commercial fishing industry that provides far more jobs in Southeastern Alaska than logging and timber operations.

These trees are worth far more standing than cut, and its time for tax subsidies for logging in the Tongass National Forest to end. Illinois legislators can play a big role in ending this billion-dollar boondoggle, so please contact your federal representative and Senators today and urge them to end tax subsidies for logging in the Tongass. Its the common sense thing to do!

Kim Novick is the Illinois Organizer for the Alaska Coalition.

Good News on the Tongass National Forest

BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

With a fantastic bipartisan effort at 10:30 p.m. on June 16th, the House of Representatives voted to limit money for building logging roads in the Tongass National Forest. 48 Republicans joined 123 Democrats for the winning vote. Peoria Representative Ray LaHood voted against this effort and you can let him know your disappointment, again, at his failure to vote for the good of environmental preservation. Rep. Tim Johnson, Bloomington, did vote in support of the bill and thanks goes to him for this good work. The Tongass National For-

est has been under increased threats as the Bush administration moves forward with nearly 50 timber logging projects in roadless areas that should be protected. These areas supply centuries-old trees which provide critical habitat for wolves, grizzly bears, wild salmon, bald eagles and other wildlife that have disappeared from many other parts of the country. During the last 45 years, the Alaska timber industry has logged over 1 million acres of old-growth forest and built 5000 miles of logging roads in the Tongass.

Heart of Illinois Sierra Club to Host State Sierra Meeting in September

Your local Sierra group will host a State Sierra EX-COM meeting on Saturday, September 11th. Donations of breakfast baked goods, desserts for lunch, and other help is needed to give a warm welcome to an estimated 25 participants from around the state. Please call the Heart of Illinois Group phone hotline at 637-1393 to volunteer with food and/or help with this event.

☐ 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

July

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

21 WED Spotted Cow Ice Cream Moke, 6:30 p.m.
 Meet at Grandview Drive Park. See front page for more details.


29 THU Engaging Our Members Party, 7 p.m.
Heart of Illinois Sierra Club members are invited to a house party to discuss Illinois issues and the November elections. This is an informal event to meet your group members and share your views. Seasonal desserts will be available throughout the evening. Mark your calendar for Thursday, July 29th, 7-9 p.m. at 2419 E. Reservoir, Peoria. Please RSVP via phone to Joyce Blumenshine, 688-0950 by July 22nd.

Consider Writing an Article for the Tallgrass Sierran . . .

Do you have an important environmental issue you would like to communicate to our readers? Consider writing an article for the *Tallgrass Sierran*. All submissions are welcome. Contact John Wosik or one of the other HOI EX-COM members if you are interested.

August

3 TUE Executive Meeting, 7 p.m.
Joseph Laszlo's home, 330 S. Barnewolt Dr., Peoria. Call 637-4692 for directions.

7 SAT A Summer in the Park with George

"A Summer in the Park with George" trip to the Art Institute of Chicago to view the special exhibit on George Seurat's "A Sunday on La Grande Jette" This will be a get-away from your routine day with museum viewing, optional time downtown Chicago, and dinner. Reservations by July 15th (call 688-0950) are required as tickets must be ordered in advance. Art Institute special exhibit is \$15. We will leave at 7 a.m. and be returning by 9 or 10 p.m.

18 WED Riverfront Walk & Dinner, 6:30 p.m.
Meet at the Gateway Building in downtown Peoria. See front page for more details.

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

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



Conservationist of the Year Nominations Sought

The HOI Executive Committee is seeking nominations for the **Heart of Illinois Conservationist of the Year**. The nominee does not have to be a Sierra Club member.

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 1st. The winner will be announced at our September Group meeting. Send nominations to Joyce Blumenshine, c/o HOI Sierra Club, 2419 E. Reservoir Blvd., Peoria, IL 61614 or call 688-0950.

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.

Write & Phone to Keep ATV's Out of State Parks

BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

Yes, you have done this before, but the ATV industry has pushed their bills through the Illinois Legislature again. The Illinois Legislature has passed two bills that eliminate the long-standing prohibition against spending money from the Off Highway Vehicle Fund to build dirt-bike trails and facilities on public lands, while at the same time restricting law enforcement funding to police ATV use. Let the Governor know you want your state parks protected from ATVs. **Urge that he veto Senate Bills 2272 and 2273.** Phone 217-782-6830 and write to the Governor at 207 Statehouse, Springfield, IL 62706

Heart of Illinois Sierra Club

Hotline: Local Meetings & Outings • Action Alerts (309) 637-1393
Contacts • Leave Messages

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