

# Tallgrass Sierran

November/December 2004 Volume 32 No. 6

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

## HOI Group Meetings

WED  
NOV 17

**Jubilee State Park Update**  
Forest Park Nature Center, 7 p.m.

Thomas Hintz, new Site Superintendent for Jubilee State Park, will talk about his first impressions of the park and plans for the future, including new prairies and other conservation projects.

*All are welcome! Refreshments served after the meeting.*

WED  
DEC 15

**Annual Potluck & Slides Party**  
Forest Park Nature Center, 6:30 p.m.

Bring your favorite food to share and a dozen or so slides from your latest trip or event, for a holiday time get-together. The Nature Center will be decked for the season, and this is a great chance to enjoy a relaxing evening during the holidays. Bring some friends! Hot and cold drinks will be provided. You will need your own table service and a good appetite! A projector will be available for showing a sampling of slides after dinner, and you will see your fellow/friend Sierrans in action!

## *Starved Rock Winter Hike, February 6*

It's not too early to mark your calendars! Everyone is invited to participate in this annual HOI outing tradition. An approximately 4 hour slow paced walk and lunch on the trail is followed by a dinner stop at Mona's Italian Restaurant in Toluca on the way home. More details will be in the January-February issue of the *TallGrass Sierran*. For additional information, contact Al or Mary Harkrader at 682-8462.

## For An Attitude Adjustment: Glacier National Park

BY RALPH GINN

On November 3 environmentalists across the land will be standing at the base of "progress mountain." We may be looking at a rock wall (a Bush win) or a winding but accessible trail (a Kerry victory). A way to prepared for either is an attitude adjustment trip. A trip to your favorite place or a place you have always wanted to see. A long trip or a day trip. There is nothing that renews the natural ethic like experiencing nature's unlimited wonders.

Becoming obsessed, over the summer, with Machiavellian politics and environmental setbacks, my wife and I set off for Glacier National Park in northwest Montana. Glacier, best known for its grizzly population, but, as we would learn from a park ranger, is also the natural habitat of "the most remarkable mammal of the mountains," the mountain goat.

Glacier National Park was created in 1910. It includes over 1 million acres of unspoiled wilderness and 730 miles of superb hiking trails. Towering peaks overlook meadows, natural amphitheatres, pristine forests, crystal lakes and streams, waterfalls, and 25 remaining glaciers. Glaciers, down in number (think climate change and global warming) from hundreds, once blocked the travel of trappers and hunters when the area was "discovered" in the mid 19th century. The rock strata of Glacier was laid down more than a billion years ago as bottom sediment of an inland sea. Tectonic forces pushed a huge slab of rock 42 miles to the east forming the Lewis Over-

thrust. It is this displaced rock that created the original mountain masses of the park. Erosion and ice age glaciers carved the breathtaking views remaining today.

Our trip included six days in the Park, camping, hiking, sight seeing, and gathering (outside of the Park) a few of the beautiful green Appekuny argillite and red Grinnell argillite rocks for our garden in Illinois. We camped in a full facility campground near the eastside and discovered the Burriers (George and Sandy) after living 100 yards apart for three days. We saw one black bear, zero grizz, and that is a monument to the arduous work of the park rangers and wildlife managers who train bears and humans to avoid one another. The "bear rules" for food, cooking gear, and dishwater are stringent and enforced. A doughnut left on your camp table will cost you \$50. We saw deer, scores of mountain goats, many species of birds, including grouse, ptarmigan, and eagles. On a rainy day hike a young coyote trailed close behind us for a time.

If you are interested in grizzlies, Douglas Chadwick's book "True Grizz" relates his time with the Wind River Bear Institute's Carrie Hunt, Tim Manley, and their Karelian dogs, tracking and "educating" bears during a berry poor season that brought the Silvertips into human domain in search of food. If you are curious about the beast the color of winter read Chadwick's "A Beast the Color of Winter" and learn why the mountain goat is the most amazing mammal of extreme high country. If you travel to Glacier, don't miss ranger Pat Hagen's

*(See Glacier, page 2)*



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## Local and State Updates BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

### Friends of the Rock Island Trail and Rail-Trail Advocates Hold Rally

On October 24th, local trail groups met along the Kellar Branch Line to show support for trail construction and to announce a new fund raising effort. Due to the years of delay in progress with development of the Kellar Branch Line extension of the Rock Island Trail, grant funds awarded to the Peoria Park District will not be adequate for trail construction. George Burrier, Chairman, Friends of the Rock Island Trail and with Rail-Trail Advocates, announced a cooperative effort with Illinois Valley Wheelmen, the Illinois Valley Striders running group, and several other local organizations. Donations are being urged to assist in building a fund that can be applied to trail expenses. Mr. William Rutherford, Forest Park Foundation, hosted an organizational meeting for this effort on October 14th at Wildlife Prairie Park, and a variety of organizations were represented. Donations can be sent to: Friends of the Rock Island Trail, c/o George Burrier, 257 E. Washington St., East Peoria, IL 61611 or phone George at 698-5512.

### Expansion of Hazardous Waste Landfill at the West Edge of Peoria Still an Issue

No announcement has been made regarding any plans on behalf of PDC (Peoria Disposal Company) regarding their intention to request permitting for a 30 year continuation and expansion for dumping hazardous waste at their landfill near the end of West Reservoir Blvd., by Pottstown at the west edge of Peoria. PDC has to hold a public hearing on their expansion request, and no date has been announced. Last year, their Host Agreement proposal was rushed through committee review at the Peoria County Board just before Thanksgiving and pushed to a vote at the December Peoria County Board meeting. The Peoria League of Women Voters is holding a public session on the issue, Saturday, November 20th, 9:30 a.m. at Pleasant Valley School, 3314 W. Richwoods Blvd., Peoria. League member Dorothy Sinclair will be moderator for the meeting. She will begin the session with a summary of the process involved in acquiring landfill expansion.

### Waiting for IDNR Decision Regarding Banner Mine

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Division of Mines and Minerals has until November 10th to announce their decision regarding an application to strip mine at the south edge of Banner. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is also looking into the matter. In addition to many significant environmental concerns regarding the site, a township road runs through the land being considered for mining. Banner Township cannot give their road to the mining company without a vote of their electorate.

### Thanks to J.E. O'Brien for Saving the Rock Island Trail Extension

Quick action and amazing generosity on the part of Joseph E. O'Brien, Chairman of the Board of O'Brien Steel Service Company, Peoria, and his family, saved prospects for a trail on the Kellar Branch line from Pioneer Park to downtown Peoria. The O'Brien's donated \$175,000 to the Peoria Park District so the Park District can re-allocate the funds to the City of Peoria. The City announced a shortage of \$175,000 and appeared to have no provision for obtaining the funds only days before a deadline for signing necessary contracts. The City risked missing deadlines that could have resulted in the loss of millions of dollars of state and federal grants awarded to the Peoria Park District for trail construction. Thank you Mr. O'Brien for your public spirit and good deed.

### Another Governor Blagojevich Failure

Adding to the horrific list of disappointments, debacles, and out-right failures of the Illinois Governor Blagojevich regime is the September 30th announcement from his administration recommending doing nothing at all regarding cleaning up mercury and air pollution from old coal-fired power plants. Although Blagojevich ran on promises of clean air action, his administration report does nothing. With an out-right assault on clean air from the Bush administration on-going, we now have a governor who will do nothing to protect the health of his citizens. Over 1,000 deaths in Illinois each year are estimated to be attributable to effects of air pollution. People with asthma and other health conditions have added problems from polluted air. Go to the Illinois PIRG (Public Interest Research Group) web site for more information and an action letter you can send to Governor Blagojevich.

#### *(Glacier, from page 1)*

impersonation of "Big Billy," an evening program at the St. Mary's visitor center.

It's too late for a trip to Glacier this year, but planning one is next best. June and September are ideal, July and August, as with every great place, are crowded. Glacier is my new favorite place and is a guaranteed enviro-ethic renewal trip.

☐ 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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## 2004 HOI Excom Election: Rules and Procedures

1. You must be a HOI Sierra Club member to vote.
2. Vote for not more than 4 candidates for a 2005-2006 term to the Heart of Illinois Executive Committee.
3. Joint memberships may use Ballots #1 and #2.
4. Mail ballot(s) to: Joseph Laszlo  
c/o Heart of Illinois Sierra Club  
P.O. Box 3593  
Peoria, IL 61614
5. Write the name of the voting member(s) on the outside of the envelope containing the ballot.
6. Ballots must arrive at the Sierra Club's mailbox by Nov. 17, or can be delivered to the Group Meeting on Nov. 17.
7. Ballots will be counted at the Group Meeting on Nov. 17.

### 2004 HOI Sierra Club Excom Election Ballot #1

\_\_\_\_\_ Joyce Blumenshine  
\_\_\_\_\_ Norman Ewing  
\_\_\_\_\_ Ralph Ginn  
\_\_\_\_\_ David Grebner

### 2004 HOI Sierra Club Excom Election Ballot #2

\_\_\_\_\_ Joyce Blumenshine  
\_\_\_\_\_ Norman Ewing  
\_\_\_\_\_ Ralph Ginn  
\_\_\_\_\_ David Grebner

**Ballots Due November 17**

## *Heart of Illinois Executive Committee Election: Candidate Statements*

### **Joyce Blumenshine**

Each of you as members of Heart of Illinois Sierra Club is part of an important voice for protecting the environment for our families and for our future. Whether you write letters, call your legislators, recycle, or give your time or resources in other ways to help the environment: we are all in this together. I would like to be a board member for HOI group to participate in environmental issues that impact the quality of life in our community. Several key environmental issues for the Peoria area will be occurring in 2005 including work on the Kellar Branch Line trail and possible action regarding the PDC hazardous waste landfill expansion. I have been involved in these and other issues in the past years, and believe it is essential for the HOI group to be an active voice in environmental issues in the Peoria area.

### **Norman Ewing**

I have been on the EXCOM 6 of the last 8 years and have served as Chair in 2004. I have served as membership chair and vice-chair in previous years. It has been my pleasure to serve on this committee with other activists who care about the environment. I will take over

membership duties after my term ends this year. Local issues are the horse camp at Jubilee and on the national level prevention of drilling in ANWR.

### **Ralph Ginn**

Serving on EXCOM for HOI has been rewarding in many ways: working on important issues; some successes and the feel good of accomplishment; working and association with good people who share common ideas; friendships. It been a good ten years and I would like to continue Sierra Club work as long as I am healthy and having fun.

### **David Grebner**

I have been a member of the Sierra Club since 1976. I have been active in the establishment of the Rock Island Trail and have previously served on the club's excom. I believe the quality of our environment, including safe and secure habitat for wildlife, is essential for the human health and economic well being. If elected I would do my best to further the cause of the Sierra Club.

## **CRP and CAFOs**

**BY RALPH GINN**

Arguably the most popular government program in farm country USA, is the Conservation Reserve Program. CRP is an elegantly simple plan in which farmers hold land out of crop production and in return the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) pays an amount that is profitable for marginal land. The usual contract is for increments of five years (i.e. five, ten, fifteen). CRP land provides much needed habitat for wildlife, preserves millions of tons of topsoil every year, and, in the case of flood plains, cleans water and reduces flood damage. CRP is enthusiastically supported by environmentalists, landowners, hunters, birders, and conservationists. But, is hated by the USDA's agribusiness pals at Tyson, Smithfield, Cargill, Seaboard, and ConAgra; it cuts into sales of seed, pesticides, fertilizer, and farm equipment.

The 2002 farm bill raised CRP's enrollment cap from 36.4 million acres to 39.2 million acres. Today there are about

34 million acres in CRP, 5 million short of the farm bill cap. The shortfall is not for want of farmers waiting to enroll land in CRP, no, the Bush Administration has not set a sign-up date, blocking further enrollment. USDA has had one enrollment date in the last 3 and 1/2 years. The Clinton Administration had five in 8 years. Secretary of Agriculture, Ann Veneman, has declined to set a sign-up date because of "concerns over low grain stocks." Now that this year's grain harvests have been declared bin-busting records by the USDA, further delay in opening CRP enrollment reeks of political favoritism.

The same giant multinational corporations mentioned in the first paragraph above are not so secretly lobbying the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for a deal that would exempt Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) from air pollution requirements specified by the Clean Air Act. That factory farms have already driven the family

farmer out of the livestock market is a fact. That these behemoths have polluted the air of their neighbors with nauseating gases and stench has mysteriously slipped below the EPA's radar.

The Clean Air Act is specific, it matters not that the polluter is a sulfur belching power plant or flatulent pigs, the EPA is charged with enforcing the law. But, the law takes on multi-shades of gray when companies with fat wallets want relief, and that is exactly what Smithfield, Tyson, Cargill, et al. want. Their negotiations with the EPA, until recently, were secret (remember Cheney's secret meetings to formulate an energy plan). Documents, e-mails and informants have recently revealed that the Bush Administration asked agribusiness lobbyists to prepare presentations on the Clean Air Act amnesty deal they desire. The EPA needs a reminder of it's mission...to protect the environment. Call Robert Kaplan at 202-564-1110 or e-mail at [kaplan.robert@epa.gov](mailto:kaplan.robert@epa.gov).

# HOI Group Cal-

## November

**2 TUE Election Day**  
*The Environment Needs Your Vote!*




**4 THU Executive Meeting, 7 p.m.**  
 John Wosik's home, 12409 N. Blackhawk Ct., Dunlap. Call 243-2230 for directions.

**17 WED Group Meeting, 7 p.m.**  
 Forest Park Nature Center. *Thomas Hintz, Jubilee Park Update.* Everyone is welcome!

## December

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

**15 WED Annual Christmas Potluck & Slides Party, 6:30 p.m.**   
 Forest Park Nature Center. *See front page for more information.*

**18 SAT Newsletter Deadline**  
 Send articles for Jan/Feb to: John Wosik, 12409 N. Blackhawk Ct., Dunlap, IL 61525, or johnwosik@insightbb.com.

## January 2005

**5 WED Executive Meeting & Newsletter Mailing, 6:30 p.m.**  
 Peoria Pizza Works, 3921 N. Prospect Rd., Peoria Heights



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



### *The Land Connection Harvest Benefit Dinner*

Support sustainable agriculture and fresh, local food in central Illinois! The Land Connection, a grassroots nonprofit based in Goodfield, invites you to our first annual Harvest Benefit Dinner featuring...

- Gourmet dinner of delicious local organic foods and wine
- Keynote by Richard Manning, acclaimed author of *Against the Grain*, *Grassland*, *Food's Frontier*, and many others
- Silent auction of fabulous items including a Persian carpet, a child's mountain bike, Eco-Lawn treatments, Yoga classes, and many more

**WHEN:** Thursday, Nov. 11th, 5-9 p.m. (dinner at 6:00 and talk at 7:30)

**WHERE:** Fuller Building, 126 E. Beaufort, 2nd floor (This is the old Oddfellows Hall, two doors down from the Coffee House in downtown Normal)

**HOW:** Seating is limited to 100 and is going fast. To reserve your seat, send \$60 to The Land Connection, 1569 Sugar Hill Lane, Congerville, IL 61729.

For more information on the Harvest Dinner, or on Land Connection talks, tours and workshops, contact Terra Brockman at [terra@mtco.com](mailto:terra@mtco.com) or 309-965-2407 or 309-678-2672. Or visit us at [www.thelandconnection.org](http://www.thelandconnection.org).

### League of Women Voters Meeting on PDC Landfill Extension

Saturday, Nov. 20th: League of Women Voters informational meeting on the Peoria Disposal Company effort to obtain a 30 year extension for dumping hazardous waste in their landfill at the west edge of Peoria, 9:30 a.m. at Pleasant Valley School, 3314 W. Richwoods Blvd., Peoria. Royal Coulter, head of PDC, and a representative from the environmental community will speak and there will be time for questions from the audience.

### Friends of the Rock Island Trail and Rail-Trail Advocates Annual/Holiday Dinner

Tuesday, Dec. 14th, 6:30 p.m. at Johnny's Italian Steakhouse at Grand Prairie shopping center. For reservations, contact George Burrier, 698-5512.

### Pimiteoui Trail Association Hikes

**Nov. 13 (Sat), 9 a.m. - Merwin Preserve**  
 Meet at the Kmart parking lot in Washington to carpool. Leader: Jay Meinrich, 688-7679

**Nov. 28 (Sun), 1:30 p.m. - Meadow Valley**  
 Meet at the parking lot on Legion Road (turn at the Washington CEFCU along Rt. 8). Leader: Dave Grebner, 688-3908

**Dec. 11 (Sat), 9 a.m. - Dirksen Park**  
 Meet at the Casey's on Rt. 98 in North Pekin before preceding to a nearby parking lot at the park. Leader: Cindy Alexander, 444-3297

**Dec. 26 (Sun), 3 p.m. - Forest Park Nature Center**  
 Leader: Chris Golden, 579-2967



### Prairie Dawgs Work Crew

The Prairie Dawgs meet the 1st and 3rd Saturdays of the month at Jubilee State Park. This time of year we are primarily doing seed collecting and preparation. Call Doug Franks at 691-7993 for more information.

## Heart of Illinois Sierra Club

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

### Executive Committee

**Chair** . . . . . Norman Ewing . . . 686-4122  
**Vice-Chair** . . . . . Rudy Habben . . . 685-5605  
**Secretary** . . . . . Joyce Blumenshine 688-0950 [joblumen@yahoo.com](mailto:joblumen@yahoo.com)  
**Conservation Chair** Joseph Laszlo . . . 637-4692 [laszloja@excite.com](mailto:laszloja@excite.com)  
**Membership Chair** Cindy Ewing . . . . 686-4122  
**Newsletter Editor** . . John Wosik . . . . 243-2230 [johnwosik@insightbb.com](mailto:johnwosik@insightbb.com)  
**Political Chair** . . . . . Ralph Ginn . . . . . 274-3289 [randdginn@bwsys.net](mailto:randdginn@bwsys.net)



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

### HEART OF ILLINOIS

*Sierra Club* 

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