

Tallgrass Sierran

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

HOI Group Meetings

WED
MAR 16 **Illinois Wildlife**
Forest Park Nature Center, 7 p.m.

Jeff Lampe, Journal Star outdoors columnist, will lead a group dialogue on management of Illinois wildlife. In recent years the State has been successful introducing wild turkey and river otter populations. Private groups have expanded and improved habitat for game birds and waterfowl. Native North American species such as coyote, gray wolf, and cougar have migrated into Illinois. On the down side, foreign species such as Asian carp and zebra mussels are in Illinois waterways and the deer population has grown in number to be a nuisance to farm field, suburban yard, and a road hazard. Is there common ground for the various interest groups on management of Illinois wildlife? Come and join the discussion. *All are welcome! Refreshments served after the meeting.*

WED
APR 20 **Summer in Antarctica**
Forest Park Nature Center, 7 p.m.

Chillicothe resident Janet Myers was a National Science Foundation volunteer spending a six month summer season tour at the McMurdo Research Station in Antarctica. Come and learn what life support systems are necessary to survive the harsh Antarctic climate. *All are welcome! Refreshments served after the meeting.*

Illinois Environmental Council's Mid-Term Environmental Report Card for Governor Rod Blagojevich:

Water	B
Air & Energy	D+
Transportation	D+
Conservation & Natural Resources	D

More information at www.ilenviro.org.

Mindless Growth

BY RALPH GINN

"Grow or die" is the mantra of the business age, and it's collateral appeal has spilled over to every facet of commerce and management. "Growth is good," is so deeply imbedded in the American psyche that most people, with the exception of many environmentalists and other "odd-balls," accept it as gospel. A phenomena that is perpetrating ever increasing and ever more acute problems upon our country and our planet. Ed Abbey said, "We can see that the religion of endless growth, like any religion based on blind faith rather than reason, is a kind of mania, a form of lunacy, indeed a disease. And the one disease to which the growth mania bears an exact analogical resemblance is cancer. Growth for the sake of growth is the ideology of the cancer cell. Cancer has no purpose but growth, but it does have another result, the death of the host." A fair warning to CEO's, Chambers of Commerce, politicians, mayors, city councils, and bureaucrats.

The growthists would say that growth is vital to the democratic/capitalistic form of government; that a rising tide raises all boats; that the consequence of faltering growth costs jobs; that new technologies will not deplete and pollute like the old ones; that "smart growth" has replaced uncontrolled growth; that opponents of growth, like environments, are elitists who want pristine nature for their own selfish use. Rebuttal: endless growth is necessary to the democratic/capitalistic form of government and that can be a fatal flaw, unless politicians adjust their vision beyond the next election, ours

would not be the first democracy to fail due to depletion of natural resources or political decay; a rising tide does lift all boats, unfortunately, for most of us, the tide is lifting the luxury boats much higher than our dinghies; slowing growth will cost jobs, only if it is one dimensional, there are opportunities in the environmental improvement and protection sectors that are routinely ignored; new technology may slow resource depletion and pollution, but the downside to better technology is increased profit and it has a way of encouraging excess, the multimillionaires of Silicone Valley won't be satisfied with two hybrid cars and a 2500 square foot home; developers say "smart growth," but the reality is sprawl; environmentalists aren't selfish elitists, most are average middle class working people, more thoughtful than the average, and more attuned to the natural changes they see and alarmed by what they see.

What does mindless growth mean for us living here in the 15 counties of HOI land? For the most part, we are spared smog and the mind-numbing commutes of sprawling suburbia. But, we are not immune to pollution. The commission on growth of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) recently released results based on more than two years of research collected from 97% of the power plants in the U.S., Mexico, and Canada, showing that the Powerton plant near Peoria ranks as one of the top 25 polluters of mercury. Based on toxic release data from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Archer Daniels Midland (See Growth, page 2)



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

HOI Files Citizen's Complaint

BY RALPH GINN

In the spring of 2003 the Heart of Illinois (HOI) Sierra Club began monitoring water runoff from two Central Illinois Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs), The Highlands, located in Knox County three miles south of Williamsfield, and Old Prairie Pork, located in Woodford County four miles northeast of Metamora. With the invaluable help of volunteer monitors at both sites, water samples have been collected over a period of two years. All water samples were taken to the Peoria Disposal Company's (PDC) laboratory in Peoria and tested for coliform bacteria. This project has been funded by the G.R.A.C.E. Foundation.

Joe Laszlo, project leader and HOI Conservation Chairman, has compiled results from the PDC data and subsequently filed a Citizen's Complaint with the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) regarding the contamination of stream and ground water at the Old Prairie Pork facility in Woodford

County. Two monitoring sites have consistently produced high coliform counts, one sample, collected on July 7, 2004, measured 12,000 cfu (colony forming units) per 100 milliliters of water. An IEPA representative will be meeting with Joe to work out the details for more extensive sampling by IEPA in the area. HOI will continue its own sampling at least through the fall of this year and possibly longer if funds can be acquired and our monitors are willing to continue their excellent work.

The monitoring at The Highlands in Knox County resulted in low coliform counts, indicating that Highlands has been handling their manure in a manner that is not producing unacceptable amounts of coliform in water runoff. Prior to our monitoring, in 2002, Highlands was cited and fined by IEPA for a fish kill in nearby French Creek that resulted from over application of lagoon wastes.

PDC Hazardous Waste Landfill Expected to Apply for Extension of Dumping

BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

Peoria Disposal Company, operator of the hazardous waste landfill at the west edge of Peoria, is expected to file their permit application for an expansion of the toxic waste landfill in the next few months. PDC will be the only hazardous waste landfill in the Midwest, when a site near Chicago closes in the near future. PDC currently accepts hazardous waste from states as far away as Texas. The Peoria County Board entered into a Host Agreement with PDC in December, 2003, even though several environmental groups urged the Peoria County Board to study the issue further before voting. The agreement includes a tipping fee greatly below what other hazardous waste landfills are paying to local governing units. Environmental concerns with the PDC site include as yet an unknown risk for pollution of the underlying aquifer for the area and surface water sources that are nearby.

(Growth, from page 1)

(ADM) was named the 30th worst company in the nation in 2002 when compared for cancer-causing pollutants. ADM's plant on the Peoria riverfront contributed heavily to Peoria County's ranking in the top 10% of the dirtiest counties in the U.S. Carbon dioxide is a boundless gas that is the primary culprit in global warming. A phenomena that is affecting the climate of the planet in ways that are both obvious and mysterious. The evidence is so clear that even the growth fanatics don't deny global warming exists, but they do want to ignore it. While they fiddle, temperatures rise and polar ice melts. Reputable scientists claim it may already be too late to reverse global warming. Not too late to mute catastrophic effects, but the longer we wait the more draconian the remedies must be. When storms become more frequent and violent, and oceans overwhelm the shorelines, the growthists will be cursed but to what advantage for the rest of humanity.

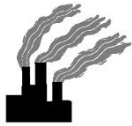
Here in West Central Illinois our two most harmful and immediate growth related problems are expressways and Con-

centrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs). Expressways are the Holy Grail of the growth advocates. In Chillicothe the mayor and city council have inexplicably endorsed an expressway that will run two miles west of town. Have these people noticed what happens to local businesses when a town of 6,000 is bypassed by an expressway? Apparently, they are "growth brainwashed" to believe that anything that requires concrete and sweat is good. Several towns between Peoria and Macomb, along corridor 336, are vulnerable to the same fate. In our rural areas, the CAFO strikes fear into the hearts of neighbors and towns. Ground water depletion and contamination, summer winds heavy with nauseating odors, and falling property values are the punishment for what Farm Bureau, Pork Producers, and Smithfield call "agricultural growth."

Galesburg, Rushville, Thompson, Harvard, Bloomington-Normal are a few of the Illinois towns that have tasted the sourness of State-City agreements gone bad. Maytag, Mitsubishi, and pris-

ons, have been the eaters of local and State dollars given in the name of growth. The Army Corps of Engineers has propagandized and cooked the books for a \$3.5 billion lock expansion project on the Mississippi/Illinois Rivers that will accommodate larger barges, more wave action, increased water turbidity, and bank erosion. Corn Growers, ADM, Cargill, and pseudo-river advocate Congressman Ray LaHood have all endorsed this boondoggle under the umbrella of raising grain exports. The actual numbers show that grain transport on the two rivers has been stagnant for 15 years, with a decline of 8 million tons between 2003 and 2004.

Not all growth is bad, and the discourse on growth should be about thresholds. The thresholds where harmful growth consequences exceed benefits. A difficult determination, but the answer isn't "never," as the growth gurus would have us believe. In the January 27, 2005 issue of the Peoria Journal Star, an editor, writing about city growth, said, "Stagnation can be a terminal disease." Let's add, "So can uncontrolled growth."



Peoria Air Particulates Near Alert Status in February

HOI Outing to View Three Nearby Coal-Fired Power Plants March 6th

BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

Do you recall a scratchy throat and uncomfortable feeling of gritty, dense air the first week of February? I phoned the local Illinois Environmental Protection Agency Air Quality office to ask for information. Basically, I was told that they did not have any information on what was causing an elevated air quality index rating for Peoria, and that the main problem was the weather.

Warm air and a lack of wind trapped air pollution over Peoria and the Midwest that normally blows away to other parts of the country. Early in February the Peoria air quality index was at 90, only eleven points from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) Air Quality Index warning that the air is unhealthy for sensitive groups. According to the IEPA rating, active children and adults, and people with respiratory disease, such as asthma, should limit prolonged outdoor activity if the Air Quality Index range is 101 or higher. At this level, there is an increased likelihood of respiratory symptoms and breathing discomfort in sensitive groups.

In a Chicago Tribune story February 3, 2005, by Michael Hawthorne, the lead

sentence read "Soot pollution trapped over much of the urban Midwest led Illinois officials Wednesday to issue their first-ever wintertime alert for dirty air...." "Soot alerts are a recent addition to a nationwide warning system for dirty air... The new warnings for soot demonstrate the emerging understanding that the tiny particles in the air pose a significant public health risk." WCBU radio also had an Associated Press news item that referred to the air quality alert and cited soot pollution.

Your air quality in the Peoria area is impacted by three coal-fired power plants, numerous industrial sites, and other facilities such as the PDC Hazardous Waste Landfill at the west edge of the city. In addition to soot and air pollution, all of us who live in Peoria County have added pollution concerns. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Toxic Release Inventory summaries for year 2002 put Peoria County in the nation's top 10% worst counties for pollution, based on the amounts of reported releases in this county. The listing of environmental releases includes zinc compounds, manganese compounds, hydrochloric acid, lead compounds, sulfuric acid, chromium compounds, cadmium compounds, methanol, barium compounds, copper compounds, hydrofluoric acid, acetaldehyde,

and others. The USEPA Toxic Release Inventory lists the following companies as releasing the highest quantities of pollutants in Peoria County: Peoria Disposal Co.; Central Illinois Light Co./Ameren CILCO, Bartonville; ADM, Peoria; Keystone Steel & Wire; Degussa/Goldschmidt Chemical Corp., Mapleton; Caterpillar Inc., Mossville Complex; PMP Fermentation Prods. Inc., Peoria; Caterpillar Inc., Mapleton; Lonza Group, Mapleton; Crompton Corp., Mapleton; Rohn Inds. Inc., Peoria; Midwest Mill Service Co., Peoria and others.

Heart of Illinois Sierra Club will have a road trip to view the three coal-fired power plants in our immediate vicinity on March 6th. We will be measuring mileage, wind direction, and other observations. See the events calendar in this newsletter for more information.

The Illinois Chapter Sierra Club has a new Clean Air Committee. Volunteers are needed to look into air quality concerns. Like to breathe? Enjoy doing something positive for your community for a few hours a month? Join the Sierra Clean Air Campaign! For more information, check out the Clean Air Campaign on the Illinois Sierra Club website, or phone 688-0950.

Action Alerts

BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

State Parks Are Not ATV Motorways:

Please contact your State Representative and urge that they oppose House Bill 47, which amends the Recreational Trails of Illinois Act with respect to the Off-Highway Vehicle Trails Fund. This legislation would allow the Department of Natural Resources to use public funds to build all terrain vehicle (ATV) trails on Illinois Department of Natural Resources owned or managed land, except for designated nature preserves. This means ATV trails could be built in state parks. The noise and pollution of ATVs does not belong in state parks. Impacts on wildlife and damage to parks from erosion and off-trail riding are additional concerns.

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Sen. George Shadid
121C Capitol Bldg.
Springfield, IL 62706
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Pekin: 353-6276

37th District
Sen. Dale Ringer
M103F Capitol Bldg.
Springfield, IL 62706
217-782-1942
Peoria: 693-4921

73rd District
Rep. David Leitch
220 Capitol Bldg.
Springfield, IL
62706
217-782-8108
Peoria: 685-3900

92nd District
Rep. Aaron Shock
226-N Stratton Bldg.
Springfield, IL
62706
217-782-3186
Peoria: 672-9292

Ban a Toxic Flame Retardant:

Please contact your State Senator, and urge them to support Senate Bill 424, which will ban the toxic flame retardant chemical PBDE after December 31, 2005. This chemical is used in children's pajamas, upholstered furniture, computer cases, and other products. PBDE is polybrominated diphenyl ether. The European Union banned types of PBDEs in 2003. California, Hawaii, Maine, and Michigan have already enacted bans. PBDEs are found in human fatty tissue, blood and breast milk and levels found in Americans are rapidly increasing. Toxic effects in animals include hormone disruption, fetal malformations, and a host of other health problems.

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

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