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

HOI Group Meetings

WED

Water Quality and You MAY 18 Forest Park Nature Center, 7 p.m.

Jane Li with the Prairie Rivers Network in Champaign will present practical ways citizens can get involved protecting water quality in their area. Contractors often do a poor job stabilizing soil at work sites that is carried away by storm water runoff into lakes and rivers. This presentation informs citizens on identifying common site violations and what can be done to correct problem sites. All are welcome! Refreshments served after the meeting.

WED

Annual Potluck Picnic & JUNE 15 White Elephant Auction

Detweiller Park - Moose Shelter, 6:30 p.m.

Join us for our annual summer potluck picnic and fundraising auction of unusual, useful, and tasty items donated by our members. Bring a main dish or other food to share, plus your own table service. Iced tea and lemonade will be provided.

This year's picnic will be held at the Moose Shelter at the south end of Detweiller Park, Peoria. Enter the park from Rt. 29 and follow Detweiller Drive toward the bluff. Turn left before ascending the bluff and follow the park road to the far south end of the park. Turn right at the Moose shelter sign. Or, from Knoxville Ave. (Rt. 40) take Detweiller Drive east, turn right at the park entrance sign, and then turn right twice immediately after descending the bluff. If you'd like, don't forget an item to donate to the auction. And bring a friend! Everyone is welcome!

Streamlining, The Constitution, and 500 MPG

BY RALPH GINN

A small, but politically powerful group, calling themselves the Illinois Livestock Development Group is promoting a slate of proposals to the Illinois State Legislature that are intended to increase livestock production. This group includes Illinois Farm Bureau, Illinois Pork Producers, Illinois Beef Producers, and members from the Illinois Department of Agriculture. The group seeks to draw large livestock producers into the state with tax incentives and "streamlined environmental regulations."

When big agriculture proposes "streamlining regulations", environmentalists, neighbors and nearby towns BE-WARE! Parts of the group's initiative are already placed in various bills now before the Illinois Legislature. They include making it more difficult for residents to object to the building of large livestock facilities, eliminating public hearings, e v e n nonbinding ones, curtailing media coverage on farm issues, and reducing the capacity of waste confinement structures. Many livestock experts warn that these changes to an already milquetoast Livestock Management Facilities Act would consolidate livestock ownership into three or four big producers, forcing small producers out of business, and further endangering rural communities of the state.

A new survey found that a majority of U.S. high school students think newspapers should not be allowed to publish without government approval, and one in five said Americans should be prohibited from expressing unpopular opinions. Apparently, "No Child Left Behind" has left these youths constitution challenged and yet another obstacle achieving an environmentally conscious public.

Americans consume 21 million barrels of oil a day, one fourth of the world total of 84 million barrels, China is second at 6.4 million barrels a day. Americans have 250 million cars and trucks. China has 20 million. While some pundits are doing the ostrich thing and blaming China for high oil prices, the above facts point a different direction. There is now a solution to this gross imbalance of natural resource usage. A solution that would, in a few years, solve the oil problem and America's dependence upon the Middle East. Four hundred to 500 miles per gallon of petroleum is possible using "plug-in" hybrid vehicles that are equipped with "flexible-fuel tanks." These vehicles run on batteries, that are recharged over night, and fuel that is up to 85% ethanol or methanol. A smart government would jump all over this technology with subsidies, tax incentives and reasonable deadlines.

Oppose House Bill 2409 **Undermines Existing Legislation** to Regulate CAFOs

By Joyce Blumenshine

Illinois HB 2409 is called the Livestock Management Facilities Act, and basically undermines existing protections for the siting and monitoring of CAFOs (Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations) more accurately described as

(See House Bill 2409, page 2)



(House Bill 2409, from page 1)

factory farms. The House Sponsors are Rep. Brandon W. Phelps, Democrat 118th Rep. District Harrisburg, IL, and Rep. Kurt M. Granberg, Democrat 107th Rep. District, Centralia, IL.

This bill amends the Livestock Management Facilities Act enacted several years ago to provide local protections against CAFOs. HB 2409 provides that livestock management facilities and livestock waste handling facilities serving less than 50 animal units or serving 150 or less animal units and located wholly within "certain agricultural areas" are exempt from the requirement to file a notice of intent to construct. Other provisions in the bill provide that livestock management facilities or livestock waste handling facilities serving 2,000 or less animal units located in "certain agricultural areas" are not required to hold public informational meetings related to proposed construction. In addition, livestock management facilities and livestock waste handling facilities located in "certain agricultural areas" are exempt from certain construction standards.

HB 2409 allows livestock waste handling facilities with a design capacity of 300 or less animal units to demonstrate that a reduced storage volume for manure is feasible due to the availability of certain land application areas. The bill exempts settling basins and holding ponds for the management and control of feedlot runoff and within which no livestock manure is actively stored or handled, and in which there are permanent manure pipelines to transport manure from a livestock waste handling facility to a land application area, from certain construction standards. It provides that livestock management facility owners and operators who have been issued a National Pollution Discharge Elimination System-Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation Permit are not required to prepare a general waste management plan. It exempts from setback requirements livestock management facilities and livestock waste handling facilities serving 50 to 150 animal units in certain agricultural areas and with certain separation distances. Please phone or write your State Representative to oppose this really bad bill!

73rd DistrictRep. David Leitch
220 Capitol Bldg.
Springfield, IL
62706
217-782-8108
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92nd District Rep. Aaron Shock 226-N Stratton Bldg. Springfield, IL 62706 217-782-3186 Peoria: 672-9292

Crimes Against Nature



BY RALPH GINN

Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.'s new book, "Crimes Against Nature" is a must read for everyone who wants clean air, cherishes clean water for personal and recreational use, and appreciates the natural beauty and health of our public lands and waters. This book will astound even the most severely Bush jaded environmentalists.

Robert Kennedy, Jr. is a senior attorney for the Natural Resources Defense Council, chief prosecuting attorney for Riverkeepers, president of Waterkeeper Alliance, and nephew of President John F. Kennedy. He has spent most of his working time the past three years as a speaker for the environment and a harbinger of present and impending disasters, consequent of the Bush administration.

These are chronicles of subversion of the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts, suppression and corruption of science, packing the upper levels of the Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Interior with corporate cronies, handouts to the extraction industries (coal, metals, oil, timber) that cost the American taxpayers tens of billions a year, and lax enforcement of security measures for the chemical and nuclear industries. Have you puzzled the media's air-brush coverage of these stories? Don't miss the chapter entitled "What Liberal Media?"

Unlike most authors, Kennedy puts his bottom line in the introduction, saying, "If you ask (environment leaders) to name the greatest threat to the global environment, the answer wouldn't be overpopulation, or global warming, or sprawl. The nearly unanimous response would be George W. Bush."

Peoria Disposal Company Permit Application Announced for May or June

By Joyce Blumenshine

During public comments at the Peoria County Board meeting April 14th, Tom Edwards spoke about concerns for having a hazardous waste landfill at the west edge of Peoria. He pointed out that the Peoria County Board could cancel the Host Agreement they entered into with PDC (Peoria Disposal Company) at any time, and urged them to cancel the agreement. Tom has been speaking at County Board meetings monthly regarding health issues and long-term dangers to our community from having a hazardous waste landfill adjacent to the city, and has worked tirelessly to raise awareness about the issue.

Brian McGinnis, attorney for PDC, announced that the company would be likely to file for expansion of its hazardous waste landfill at the west edge of Peoria in late May or June. After the permit request is filed, PDC must hold a public hearing regarding the request within 90 to 120 days following the filing. The hearing could be in September or October. After the hearing, the Peoria County Board will vote to accept or reject the landfill expansion. McGinnis

commented that PDC would answer all questions at the public hearing and urged the County Board members not to consider the issue until then. McGinnis is the same attorney who berated the County Board to approve the Host Agreement with PDC at the December, 2003, County Board meeting when several citizens requested that the Board postpone their vote a month to obtain more information. The terms of the Host Agreement give Peoria County \$1.00 per ton of hazardous waste as a tipping fee. Rates at other hazardous waste landfills run from \$13.00 to closer to \$100.00 per ton in different parts of the country. There are only 14 hazardous waste landfills in the entire U.S. PDC landfills hazardous waste from states beyond the Midwest, and the hazardous waste is hauled in by truck. Brian McGinnis commented that PDC is hiring a group of experts to address questions and concerns, and would answer issues that have been raised by Tom Edwards in the numerous letters Tom has sent to the Peoria County Board.



Hearing in Clinton on New Nuclear Power Reactor

Plans for First Nuclear Reactor in U.S. Since Three Mile Island

By Joyce Blumenshine

Concerned citizens from across the state headed to Clinton, Illinois, April 19th to comment on plans for a second nuclear reactor at the AmerGen site, a subsidiary of Exelon Corporation, that owns and operate the existing Clinton nuclear power plant. This would be the first new nuclear reactor in the United States since the partial meltdown at the Three Mile Island power station near Harrisburg, PA, in 1979. For those who are willing to discount the 1986 Chernobyl disaster and Three Mile Island, here are some thoughts regarding the future of nuclear power.

Illinois has the largest number of nuclear power plants of any state in the U.S. The Chicago metro area is ringed by a crescent of nearly a dozen nuclear reactors and there is an existing reactor in Clinton, where the second, new reactor is proposed. Illinois has 11 functioning nuclear plants and three others have been decommissioned, but still contain nuclear waste. Nuclear energy comes with high risks, both to the future due to the hazards of radioactive waste, and to the present,

due to the hazards of a single accident or terrorist event.

Dr. Helen Caldicott, president and founder of the Nuclear Policy Research Institute, has commented that: "If even one of these plants had a catastrophic accident, prevailing winds could send a highly toxic plume or radioactive isotopes over the city (Chicago), killing thousands within days and perhaps millions over the next several decades. It would make 9/11 look like nothing." Caldicott is particularly concerned about what a nuclear accident would mean to infants and children. She has dedicated herself to the fight against nuclear proliferation.

Sierra Club responded to President George W. Bush when Bush commented that nuclear power plants may be the solution to problems posed by coal burning plants, by stating "switching from dirty coal plants to dangerous nuclear power is like giving up cigarettes and taking up crack."

Dave Kraft, a founding member of the Nuclear Energy Information Service, states that if the nuclear industry cannot meet the threats of the 21st century, then they shouldn't be open in the 21st century. Kraft cites numerous safety violations at plants, ranging from the accidental dis-

charge of radioactive gas and water, to aging plants that keep operating in spite of visibly deteriorating infrastructures.

The Dresden nuke plant in Morris, IL, has been fined 25 times by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for maintenance and safety violations, totaling over \$1.65 million in fines. According to Caldicott's organization, even on accident-free days, nuclear facilities discharge radiation into the air and water every day.

Nuclear power does not cause the greenhouse gases changing our climate, but has an entire set of enormous health and safety hazards. Obviously solar and wind energy cannot supply enough power, but there must be a better solution than more nuclear power plants. Citizens, government and public leadership could find a better way to reduce our reliance on coal-fired power plants than endorsing nuclear power. Construction of the existing nuclear reactor at Clinton cost \$4.25 billion. What would investing this amount into a national move to LED lights, highest energy efficiency, solar power and passive solar heating in all new home construction and retrofitting existing buildings, and less lethal forms of energy generation do?

Banner Citizens Try to Save Road: Coal Interests Behind Move to Vacate Prairie Lane Road

By Joyce Blumenshine

Prairie Lane Road runs through the middle of fields proposed for a strip mine at the south edge of the village of Banner. On March 28^{th,} Banner Township Road Commissioner Dick Ball announced that he was going to vacate the road, in spite of repeated citizen requests to keep the road open. Mr. Ball is a retired coal company employee. As the township road commissioner, he has failed to maintain the road and complete upgrades to the road that were requested by the Banner Village Board. An attorney for land owners who want the strip mine to proceed and two coal company employees were present at the road meetings. They were advising Mr. Ball throughout the meetings. Concerned citizens have hired attorneys and are appealing the action. Maintaining the road is part of a local effort to stop the area from being strip mined. Banner residents opposed to the strip mine are concerned about water issues and their quality of life. Banner does not have a water system, and residents rely on well water. The Banner sewage treatment plant is immediately next to the area proposed for strip mining. The proposed strip mine fields are subject to flooding and are in a federal wetland, near the Illinois River.

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 10th. The winner will be announced at our September Group meeting. Send nominations to John Wosik, c/o HOI Sierra Club, 12409 N. Blackhawk Ct., Dunlap; or call 243-2230.

HOI Group Calendar

May

11 Executive Meeting, 7 p.m.

Ralph Ginn's home, 20822 N. Blue Ridge Rd., Chillicothe. Call 274-3289 for directions.

18 Group Meeting, 7 p.m.

Forest Park Nature Center. *Janet Li*, *Water Quality and You*. Everyone is welcome!

Locks & Windmills Hike, 9 a.m.

Join club members for a leisurely hike on the towpath of the Hennepin Canal between Tiskiwa and Wyanet. Persons preferring to take bicycles are encouraged to do so. On the way up, we will use Bureau County roads to see the Crescent Ridge wind farm in operation. Optional stop in Princeton for a snack or ice cream. Meet at the Forest Park Nature Center parking lot at 9 a.m. Call Rudy Habben at 685-5605 for more information.

June

Rock Island Trail Hike, 4 p.m.

Celebrate National Trails Day! Meet at the Toulon trail access area, which is a small parking lot on the north side of the highway, located near the east side of Toulon, before you reach the FS building, just off of Route 91 from Wyoming. This will be about a two hour hike on flat trail. Enjoy the scenic Spoon River bridge and one of the prettiest sections of the Rock Island Trail. Optional dinner outing afterward. For more information, or if you are interested in sharing a ride to Toulon, call Joyce at 688-0950.

Executive Meeting, 7 p.m.

Joyce Blumenshine's home, 2419 E. Reservoir Blvd., Peoria. Call 688-0950 for directions.



Annual Potluck Picnic & White Elephant Auction, 6:30 p.m.

Detweiller Park, Moose picnic shelter. See front page for more details.

18 Newsletter Deadline

Send articles for July/August to: John Wosik, 12409 N. Blackhawk Ct., Dunlap, IL 61525, or johnwosik@insightbb.com.

27 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.)

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.

Five HOI Volunteers Attend Sierra Club Lobby Day in Springfield

Special thanks to Wendy and Randy Marquis and to Kiersten Sheets, new volunteers for the state Sierra Lobby Day in Springfield on April 7th. Rudy Habben and Joyce Blumenshine also attended and assisted as organizers for the event. Meetings were held with Senator Risinger, Representatives Leitch and Schock, and other legislators were contacted. The group urged legislators to support full funding for the Illinois Dept. of Natural Resources FY2006 budget, and to oppose the governor's diversion of funds dedicated to conservation and the environment to other uses in the state budget. Thanks to the efforts of Heart of Illinois Group Chair Joe Laszlo, this was one of the largest ever contingents representing our Group, with five people attending.

Address			
City	State	Zip	
Chapter newsletter. Please mail this to Sier P.O. Box 52968, Boulder	rra Club,	bscription to Sierra magazine and \$1.0 F940 W - 0703	0 101 you]- 1

Heart of Illinois Sierra Club

Hotline:	Local Meetings & Outings ● Action Alerts (309) 637-1393 Contacts ● Leave Messages			
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Vice-Chair	Rudy Habben 685-5605			
Conservation Ch	air Ralph Ginn 274-3289 randdginn@bwsys.net			
Membership Ch	air Norman Ewing 686-4122			
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Political Chair .	David Grebner 688-3908			
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