



# Tallgrass Sierran

March/April 2008 Volume 36 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 19

### Make Your Own Rain Garden

Forest Park Nature Center, 7 p.m.

Stacy James, Water Resources Scientist with Prairie Rivers Network headquartered in Champaign, will tell you all about what rain gardens are, their role in capturing rain and keeping communities safe from flooding, and how they can be constructed and maintained. Free handouts include a rain garden brochure, a native plant list, and website links. After seeing Stacy's PowerPoint and hearing her talk, you will leave the presentation with enough knowledge to make your own rain garden. Everyone is invited to attend! Bring your neighbors and friends!

WED  
APR 16

### Kilowatt Hours: A Plan to Re-energize America

Forest Park Nature Center, 7 p.m.

HOI volunteer and Global Warming Solutions Group co-chair Kiersten Sheets will introduce this great film, which takes you from the coal mines to the power plants as movie producer Jeff Barrie shows you the real costs of electric power. In this award winning film, Jeff Barrie explains how he and his family cut their energy use in half, and will give you great ways to do the same. Be energized to take action on your own power use and lower your utility bills, while decreasing your personal carbon pollution footprint! Everyone is welcome to attend!



## Hits and Misses

BY RALPH GINN, *Opinion Columnist*

**SUSHI:** For the edification and health of those of you that fancy sushi, testing on bluefin tuna, the most common source of sushi, shows unacceptable levels of mercury. Mercury acts as a neurotoxin in the human body. If you must eat sushi or for that matter any high-end predator fish or meat, keep in mind that all top of the food pyramid carnivores have mercury in their flesh. With coal-burning power plants, paper mills, and other industrial sources smoking the atmosphere, it's a fact of life.

**GONE FISH GONE:** A group of well-known marine scientists from Canada and four other countries reached the conclusion that 29% of all fish species now being fished are in a population collapse from overfishing, pollution and habitat loss. The study published in the journal *Science* defined collapse as a 90% decline from historic highs. Cod, tuna, and swordfish were included in the collapsed category. The study estimates that at the present rate of decline the world will be without seafood by mid-century. Long-John-Silver's stock is not a good long term investment.

**THUMBS-UP:** In a precedent setting case, a French court has ruled that the oil company Total was partially liable for a vast tanker spill in 1999 that blackened the Brittany coast with fuel oil. Although the company did not own the ship, Total was fined \$550,000. Under complex maritime law the responsibility for oil spills has usually been the ship's owner. But in this case, the cargo belonged to Total, the

ship was Italian, the crew Indian, the ship sailed under a Maltese flag and was chartered by a company in the Bahamas. Such complexity is common in the shipping business primarily to obfuscate accident liability. The fine is (a pun coming up here) an oil drop in the bucket, but the precedent is important.

The Irish have embraced the use of cloth bags to carry their groceries. A 33 cent tax on plastic bags was the "stick."

Massey Energy Company, our nation's fourth largest coal producer, has been fined \$20 million under the Clean Water Act. The company violated water pollution permit limits more than 4,500 times from 2000 to 2006. The government said Massey had polluted and clogged hundreds of streams and rivers in Kentucky and West Virginia. The company must also spend \$10 million for pollution control improvements.

**ENDANGERED SPECIES:** One of the great wildlife management stories of our time is the reintroduction of the gray wolf to the Rocky Mountains. From a few dozen in 1995, the wolf population has grown to 1,500 in Idaho, Montana and Wyoming. This remarkable comeback prompted the Fish and Wildlife Service to, later this year, remove the wolf from the endangered list. Never to be caught napping when an opportunity for mischief arises, the Bush administration is revising a rule in the Endangered Species Act that will require each of the three states to protect 20 breeding pairs and 200 total wolves. The new rule is not aimed at pro-

(See *Hits and Misses*, page 2)



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## Central Illinois Global Warming Solutions Group News

BY KIERSTEN SHEETS

**CFL Recycling:** You can recycle your burnt out or broken CFL (compact fluorescent lamp) at Farmington Road True Value, located on Farmington Road in West Peoria. If your lamp is actually broken, it should be in a zip lock plastic baggie before you turn it in for recycling. If you have questions, please call the store at 676-7811. We are continuing to look for a way to make this a permanent program and to expand it to other places in Central Illinois. Please contact Kiersten Sheets at [wtigerme@yahoo.com](mailto:wtigerme@yahoo.com) if you have anything to offer in this regard.

**Library Display:** The global warming solutions library display is currently being hosted by the Pekin Public Library, 301 S. Fourth St., [www.pekin.net](http://www.pekin.net). Please check it out!! The display will be featured at Morton Public Library in March (315 W. Pershing, [www.mortonlibrary.org](http://www.mortonlibrary.org)) and will be at the Illinois Prairie District Public Library in Metamora (208 E. Partridge, [www.ipdpl.org](http://www.ipdpl.org)) in April. Currently, this display is booked until October. Would you like the display in a library near you? Please contact David Pittman [dvdptmn@yahoo.com](mailto:dvdptmn@yahoo.com).

**Low Carbon Diet:** *Low Carbon Diet, A 30 Day Program to Loose 5,000 Pounds* by David Gershon is available for purchase at Global Village, 1308 E. Seiberling Ave., Peoria Heights, 681-8180, [www.globalvillagepeoria.org](http://www.globalvillagepeoria.org). This is a GREAT book for anyone who wants to slim down their carbon footprint. It's sort of like a workbook to help you make some simple lifestyle changes and a few changes around your house. You wouldn't believe the little things you can do that really make a big difference. We highly encourage anyone wanting to make a difference, but not sure how to do it or where to start to purchase this book. It's not a bad book for those seasoned carbon counters, either.

If you are interested in helping in any way (information, time, money.....anything!), please contact David Pittman [dvdptmn@yahoo.com](mailto:dvdptmn@yahoo.com) or Kiersten Sheets [wtigerme@yahoo.com](mailto:wtigerme@yahoo.com). For more information on the Central Illinois Global Warming Solutions Group, check out <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ciglobalwarming>.

## Peoria Lake: Don't Take the Green from Its "Green Edge"

BY TOM EDWARDS

City of Peoria planners are proposing a two-lane highway along Peoria's lakefront from downtown to War Memorial Dr., plus apartments or row houses along one side of it in the city's lakefront park from the park district's Rec Plex to Detweiller Marina.

To compensate for the loss of recreational land, the proposal includes extending the existing shoreline further into Peoria Lake either by constructing linear islands just offshore, or by filling out along the shore itself. The city is calling it "The Green Edge Plan."

But the lake already has a very green edge. And much of it is a park intensely used area wide for active and passive recreation, as ethnic festivals, concerts and art shows, plus an annual carnival with Steamboat Days. And all of it is extensively used by walkers, joggers, bikers, and people just wanting to get away from the city hubbub for lunch or an evening walk.

This lakefront use has been a longtime pursuit of city activists that continues to grow and flower. The bike and walkway could well expand to the entire distance between the upper and lower bridges of the lake.

Piercing that sphere of both healthy activity and tranquility with a major roadway, apartment buildings, and their parking lots, would greatly diminish the "green edge." It would subtract rather than add to the vitality and livability of our city, indeed, our area, and would be costly to build and maintain.

HOI Sierra's board moved in February to oppose this proposed highway and apartment development, given the will of the membership. There are superior alternatives.

Keeping our lakefront green and inviolate is immeasurably less costly, yet infinitely more valuable. And we need to expand our lake and its use rather than contracting it with more filling of any amount.

### (Hits and Misses, from page 1)

tecting cattle and sheep but rather to protect elk and deer for hunters. Wyoming plans to kill 300 of its 450 wolves and Idaho will kill 75% of its 700. Both states have already purchased airplanes for the hunt. This is, biologically, to the detriment of hunters and the public. Aldo Leopold warned of the dangers of removing top-predators from an ecosystem in the story, "Thinking Like a Mountain" in his classic 1949 book *A Sand County Almanac*. In this case we can expect the grizzly bear population to suffer, as they often take over wolf kills. Also, scavengers like foxes, wolverines, fishers, martens, and mink share wolf kill remains. Coyotes will return in un-manageable

numbers, and, in the long term, so will elk and deer as they over-populate and must be fed by Fish and Wildlife to survive the winter. The mutualistic relationship between predator and prey has been known to subsistence hunters for thousands of years, but has been ignored by governments for just as long. A wolf population in Illinois would improve the over-populated Illinois deer herd the same way it does in the Rockies, by suppressing coyotes and culling weak and sick deer.

Remember the movie *Mr. Deeds*? The antithesis of which would be *Mr. Misdeeds* and that would, of course, be George W. Bush, in regard to endangered species. The Interior Department has recently been admonished by Federal Judge

B. Lynn Winmill for ignoring the conclusions of consulting experts and intimidating Fish and Wildlife staff members in the decision not to list the sage grouse as threatened or endangered. Judge Winmill accused Julie MacDonald, a deputy secretary and a Bush appointee, of editing scientific conclusions in the case. Sage grouse numbers have plummeted in the past century, mostly because of gas and oil exploration and development.

**GETTING NO RESPECT:** Global warming is the Rodney Dangerfield of the presidential debates. As of mid-January, in the major network debates, candidates were asked 2679 questions. Three about global warming, the same number as UFOs.



Photo: Mike Grigsby

## Proposed Banner Strip Mine Area Flooded

On Sunday, February 17th, the Banner Dike Road was closed because of flooding from Copperas Creek. This area is directly next to the proposed Banner strip mine, which is already flooded for the second time this year, by Illinois River floodwaters. Water from the overflow of Copperas Creek, which drains a large watershed to the northwest, and river water were both converging where stockpiled coal, mine waste, mine equipment, and strip mine pits are proposed.

Citizens from Banner, members of HOI Sierra, the Illinois Attorney General's Office, and members of other groups will be in Springfield March 18th to begin the process of an Administrative Review of the Banner Mine permit #355. Many issues are being contested in the determination of the Illinois Office of Mines and Minerals in approving the mine permit.

## Protecting the Illinois River - A Time for Action

Public Policy Symposium, March 7<sup>th</sup>

BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

Gateway Building, Peoria riverfront, March 7th, 1-5 p.m. All of the stakeholder groups that have been working to protect the Illinois River from Chicago to Alton are invited, including the entire Illinois congressional delegation, all state elected officials who serve the Illinois River watershed, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The program will look at progress made in the Illinois River watershed over the last decade; how can the Illinois River be elevated to the level of national importance like the Everglades, and how can our federal and state elected officials work together to secure the \$1.72 billion in ecosystem restoration monies authorized under WRDA 2007. This event is sponsored by the Dirksen Congressional Center in partnership with the Institute for Principled Leadership in Public Service at Bradley University, with support from Tri-County Regional Planning Commission. For registration see <http://www.bradley.edu/continue/river/index.html>.



Looking for something new in your life? Heart of IL Group is looking for the following volunteers:

- An outings leader to organize and lead hikes or other outings.
- A person to take on membership outreach to contact all new members with a letter and follow-up call.
- A creative person to help build the HOI Sierra Club website.

If you are interested, leave a message on the HOI hotline at 637-1393, or contact any HOI Excom member.

## Ethanol Plants Update: Hearings at Annawan and Hennepin; Peoria Zoning Request Delayed

BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

Two hearings will be held on area ethanol plant permits for water discharges from plant processes. The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency will hold public hearings regarding the National Pollutant Discharge elimination System (NPDES) permits for the plants below. Please try to attend these hearings to ask questions and state your concerns regarding water use impacts of ethanol.

Wednesday, March 12, at 3 p.m. At the Community Center, intersection of Rte. 6 and Main Street, Annawan: Patriot Renewable Fuels, LLC, is planning a 110 million gallons a year plant with an average discharge of 178,000 gallons per day to a maximum water discharge of 206,000 gallons per day. Wastewaters to be discharged include cooling tower blowdown, reverse osmosis reject water, water softener regeneration water, hydrostatic test water and stormwater. Gradett Ditch will receive the discharge.

Thursday, March 13, at 10 a.m. At the Hennepin Park District community Room, 236 S. Milan (intersection with south 6th) at Hennepin: Marquis Energy, LLC, is planning a 110 million gallons a year plant with an average discharge of 360,000 gallons per day. Wastewaters to be discharged include cooling tower blowdown, reverse osmosis reject water, multimedia filter backwash and water softener regeneration water. The Illinois River will receive the discharge.

The new ethanol and biodiesel plant proposed for the end of Cameron Lane, near Route 9 to the Pekin Bridge, and adjacent to the Illinois River has again been delayed for consideration before the Peoria Zoning Appeals Board. Land at the site is zoned agricultural and will need to be changed for the plant to proceed. The application on file with Peoria County lacks many specifics, and does not indicate where the actual water source for the plant is to be obtained. The application also does not state if the plant will be coal powered or with natural gas. Burning coal to power ethanol plants raises many environmental issues.

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