

# Tallgrass Sierran

May/June 2008 Volume 36 No. 3

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

## HOI Group Meetings

WED  
MAY 21

### Landscaping with Native Plants



Forest Park Nature Center, 7 p.m.

Kelsay Shaw, co-owner of Possibility Place Nursery in Monee, Illinois, will talk about using native plants in the landscape. Kelsay was born and raised on the grounds of what would eventually become Possibility Place Nursery, and went on to earn his BS in botany from Eastern Illinois University. Kelsay serves as botanist and sales consultant with municipalities, park districts, forest preserves and golf courses as well as homeowners. Everyone is invited to attend!

WED  
JUNE 18

### Annual Potluck Picnic & 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 like, don't forget an item to donate to the auction. *And bring a friend! Everyone is welcome!*

## The Grand Canyon of Politics

BY RALPH GINN, *Opinion Columnist*

The Grand Canyon in Arizona, U.S.A. has been called the earth's greatest geological showcase. It is the canyon to which all others are compared. If you visit, you will be struck by the number and variety of foreign tourists. Tour buses carry language specific groups.... a good place to test your German, Spanish, French, or Japanese linguistics. The canyon itself is 4000' deep and from 8 to 16 miles from rim to rim as the California Condor flies. It was carved 5-6 million years ago by the Colorado River from the Kaibab Plateau on the north and the Coconino Plateau on the south.

As magnificent as The Grand Canyon is to the beholder, the canyon dividing the two major political parties of the United States is as deep and wide, but not so magnificent. And nowhere are today's Republicans and Democrats further and deeper apart than on environmental issues. The League of Conservation Voters (LCV) keeps a congressional scorecard for each member of Congress. Scores are rated from 100 to 0 on votes for or against environmental bills. One hundred is a perfect positive score and zero is...well, a zero. In the House, LCV chose 20 bills to score. The farm bill, and bills addressing clean water, mining, clean air, global warming, fuel efficiency, renewable energy, and logging roads were included. In the Senate LCV chose 15 bills, many of them similar to the ones in the House. Here is a sample of the results: In the House, the average score for Democrats was 83, and for Republicans 15; the high-

est score was 100, by 28 Democrats and one Republican (Christopher Shays-CT), the lowest score was 0 by 1 Democrat (Kevin Brady-TX) and 46 Republicans; in the Senate the average score for Democrats was 81 and 22 for Republicans; the highest score was 100, by 1 Democrat (Bob Casey-PA) and 1 Republican (Susan Collins-ME). The lowest score was 0, by 9 Republicans.

Because all three of the remaining Presidential candidates are in the Senate it is easy to get a preview of how the environment will fare under the leadership of each. Barack Obama's score for 2007 was 67 and Hillary Clinton's score was 73. Both missed four of the 15 votes, LVC scores a missed vote as a negative vote. Both Obama and Clinton missed votes due to campaign schedules, but both had scores in the 90's in previous years. John McCain's score in 2007 was 0. He missed every vote. Why? Make your own excuse, but a good guess would be the deep suspect the Republican Right holds for environmental issues. McCain's lifetime average is 24.

Closer to home, Ray LaHood, Republican Congressman from the Illinois' 18th district, scored a 35 in 2007 and claims a lifetime (13 years) average of 26. Philip Hare, Democrat from the 17th Illinois district, had a score of 85 in 2007, his only full year in Congress. In the upcoming November election, the 18th Congressional district has Aaron Schock running as a Republican and Colleen Callahan as a Democrat. We will have to wait a bit to find out where each stands on the environment.  
(See *Grand Canyon*, page 2)



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# Tom Edwards Files Citizen Appeal of PDC Operating Permit

## Issues Presented at Illinois Pollution Control Board Hearing in Peoria: Public Comments Due May 7th

BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

Tom Edwards, representing himself and his group River Rescue, gave testimony regarding concerns about the recently issued operating permit for the Peoria Disposal Company Hazardous Waste Landfill, at the April 16<sup>th</sup> Illinois Pollution Control Board (IPCB) hearing held at the Peoria County Courthouse Board Room. He faced the hearing officer for the IPCB and attorneys for PDC and the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA).

Tom filed a third party appeal challenging issues in the operating permit, which was approved at the end of November, 2007, and went into effect on January 1, 2008.

Tom has raised thirteen main points in his appeal. He questions if the permitted capacity of the landfill might not already be reached, and asks the IPCB to provide oversight regarding the original capacity limitations established in 1987 at 2.63 million cubic yards of toxic waste. Several of his issues relate to PDC doing their own data collection and reporting to IEPA, and he asks the state to take more direct responsibility.

A major point he raises is that collection of samples from water monitoring

wells, formerly done quarterly, are now to be collected semi-annually. Since four consecutive samplings showing a progressive increase of a constituent are needed to trigger an action in some cases, this makes the time frame from detection to an actionable report for some monitoring taking up to two years or longer.

While the landfill can accept waste that contains up to 2% mercury in weight of the entire waste, no water monitoring testing is done for mercury.

While the operating permit states that the landfill cannot be operated to cause or tend to cause air pollution in Illinois, the only air monitoring reported to IEPA is at the Waste Stabilization Plant. Tom points out that air monitoring is needed to find out if particulate pollution is leaving the

landfill and going into residential areas. He also raises concerns about gases being vented from the landfill.

The full case information is at [www.ipcb.state.il.us](http://www.ipcb.state.il.us). Click on "Clerk's Office Online" to view case information and search the files; then select the county search box and click Peoria County, and scroll down to Tom Edwards/River Rescue. Tom must supply his completed brief May 5th. Public comments are due May 7th. The IPCB expects to give their decision by June 17th.

Your letters are needed to raise questions regarding the Peoria Disposal Company Hazardous Waste Landfill operating permit. Please see the shaded information box with this article.

### Please write your concerns regarding the PDC Hazardous Waste Landfill

Comments must be postmarked by May 7th. Write to:

Illinois Pollution Control Board  
Clerk, RE: PCB 08-42  
100 W. Randolph St., Suite 11-500  
Chicago, IL 60601

Specifically request that the frequency of water monitoring tests not be reduced and that quarterly testing be done; ask that testing be done for mercury; ask that nickel monitoring be required for wells that have been exempted; ask for additional water monitoring wells down gradient of the older sections and barrel

trench; ask that air monitoring be done at the perimeter of the landfill and in adjacent neighborhoods; question how increased height of waste can be allowed over C Cells and C-1 in particular, due to known problems with cell liners and the fact that sand lenses are known to be located in this area of the landfill (pollution can travel more quickly through sand to the aquifer level); ask that a closure date be set for March, 2009, and that the Waste Stabilization Plant be required to close within a set time after the landfill is closed.

### (Grand Canyon, from page 1)

ronment, but I don't hold much optimism for Mr. Schock. Three years ago, when running for the Illinois State Legislature, he failed to return to HOI a 10 question "yes or no" survey on regional environmental issues. Mrs. Callahan is an unknown and Philip Hare, (17th) has no opponent at this writing. Richard Durbin (D-IL), incumbent Senator, had a score of 93 in 2007, and has a lifetime average of 82.

While the stark gap in environmental ethics between Democrats and Republicans seems extreme, other political issues mirror similar patterns. Without delving into the deep recesses of the political junkie mind, bedrock principles of Democrats and Republicans are described in

concise terms by *New York Times* economist and opinion columnist Paul Krugman in his new book, *The Conscience of a Liberal*. Krugman explains that the basic tenets of the Republican Party are: small government, minimal government regulation (let the free market prevail), low taxes for everyone (including the wealthy). Basic tenets of Democratic Party are: government assistance and regulation, a progressive tax, compression of wealth inequality. It doesn't take a political science PhD to see which philosophy is favorable to environmental issues. My opinion is, when it comes to the environment, Democrats are just being Democrats and Republicans are just being Republicans, it's their respective ideologies.

In November, please give careful thought to which side of The Grand Canyon you stand on.

### BUSH 3 ..... WOLVES 0

At midnight on March 28, gray wolves of the Northern Rockies lost the protection of the Endangered Species Act and became big game animals in the gun sights of trophy hunters and ranchers. In the next three days, 3 wolves were killed in Wyoming, two by hunters and one by a rancher. Idaho and Montana have not released any kill information yet. Environmental groups planning to sue for the reversal of protection are barred from doing so for 30 days.

# East Peoria Becomes a Cool City

BY DIANE JORGENSEN

On March 3, 2008 East Peoria Mayor David Mingus signed the U. S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement. Mayor Mingus also declared March, 2008 as Climate Protection Month in East Peoria. In attendance was State Senator Koehler, who spoke to the City Council praising East Peoria for being a leader in the pursuit of reducing green house gases by pledging to strive to reduce East Peoria's carbon footprint. East Peoria had already been implementing ways of reducing its carbon emissions with the guidance of Facilities Manager Robert Cole. Bob Jorgensen, East Peoria resident, and Council Member Dan Decker were instrumental in bringing the Cool Cities Pledge to the East Peoria City Council members' and to Mayor Mingus' attention and in co-coordinating the signing.

The U. S. Climate Protection Agreement was initially developed by the Mayor of Seattle to work towards a reduction of greenhouse gases to 7% below the 1990 level. U. S. mayors across the country have signed onto this initiative. Illinois has 27 cities listed on the Cool Cities website and East Peoria will become number 28. For more information on Cool Cities, check out <http://coolcities.us>.



East Peoria Mayor David Mingus and HOI Sierra member Bob Jorgensen at the East Peoria City Council meeting on March 3rd.

Photo: Joyce Blumenshine

## Kellar Branch Line News

BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

### Peoria Heights Mayor Mark Allen Challenges Pioneer Rail to Repair Problems

Special thanks and great appreciation goes to Peoria Heights Mayor Mark Allen for his action to confront Pioneer Rail Corporation regarding drainage problems and lack of maintenance on the Kellar Branch Line through the Heights. Mayor Allen intends to keep Pioneer off of the tracks if they do not meet their obligations, as listed in the last existing operating permit. Peoria Heights has millions of dollars of developments pending that would be enhanced by a trail.

### Peoria City Council Votes to Have City Manager Negotiate for Trail by Rail Study

In contrast, at the April 22<sup>nd</sup> Peoria City Council meeting, the Council voted to approve having the City Manager enter into negotiations with a company selected for a study of feasibility and costs of a trail by rail on the Kellar. A subcommittee chaired by Councilman Spears was to have reached a recommendation by April 1st, but was delayed by several weeks. No set date is certain when and if the City of Peoria will proceed with such a study, even though the council voted at an earlier meeting to have such a study done. When the City Manager achieves a price and terms for the rail and trail study, he will have to have the proposal and funding voted on by the full City Council.

At that same meeting, Councilman Patrick Nichting asked if city staff would determine if HazMat fees could be applied to the hazardous waste railroad cars parked on the north end of the trail by Central Illinois Rail. The rail company has about 30 cars being stored on the publicly owned rail line.



Members of the 7 Circles Native American Fellowship rallied on a rainy afternoon to raise concerns about toxic waste being land-filled at the Peoria Disposal Company Hazardous Waste Landfill. The fellowship is located several miles directly west of PDC. Tom Edwards, one of the founders of HOI, participates in some of the 7 Circles events. Photo: Joyce Blumenshine

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

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# HOI Group Calendar

*May*

**1 THU Global Warming Solutions**  
**Group Meeting, 6:30 p.m.**  
 Peoria Public Library, 2nd floor conference room, downtown Peoria. Check out <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ciglobalwarming> for more information.

**4**  
**SUN**

## **Adopt-A-Highway Cleanup,** **9 a.m.**

Meet at the Fry Farm at Rt. 40 and Singing Woods Road. Gloves and hard-soled shoes are recommended. Sorry, no helpers under 10 years due to safety concerns. For more information, call Rudy Habben at 685-5605.

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

**21** **Group Meeting, 7 p.m.**  
WED Forest Park Nature Center. *Kelsay Shaw, Landscaping with Native Plants.*  
Everyone is welcome!

**May 12-16 (Mon-Fri) - Bike to Work Week**  
**May 16 (Fri) - Bike to Work Day** 

Call 676-5237 for more information.



**May 17 (Sat) - Rock Island Trail Hike,  
2:30 p.m.**

Hike the scenic Spoon River section of the Rock Island Trail with visitors from the Black Hawk Hiking Club. Long-time trail advocate Joe Taylor will be bringing a group from the Quad Cities. Meet at the downtown, Wyoming, IL ,rail depot on Williams Street. Dress for the weather and wear walking or hiking shoes. The hike begins promptly at 2:30 p.m. For information or car travel from Peoria phone 688-0950.

## June

**5 THU Global Warming Solutions**  
**Group Meeting, 6:30 p.m.**  
 Peoria Public Library, 2nd floor conference room, downtown Peoria. Check out <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ciglobalwarming> for more information.

**11** **Executive Meeting, 7 p.m.**  
**WED** Wendy Marquis' home, 13707 N. Lucerne Dr., Dunlap. Call 645-6263 for directions.

**18 Annual Potluck Picnic & White**  
**WED Elephant Auction, 6:30 p.m.**  
Detweiller Park, Moose picnic shelter.  
See front page for more details.

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

## Pimiteoui Trail Association Outings

**May 4 (Sun), 2 p.m. - INDEPENDENCE PARK**  
Dan Redmon (leader). Meet at the site. Phone 241-5179.

**May 17 (Sat), 9 a.m. - SERVICE DAY AT ROBINSON PARK SOUTH**  
Mark Klokenga (leader). Meet at the new Mossville road parking lot. Phone 868-0247.

**June 1 (Sun), 2 p.m. - MEADOW VALLEY PARK**  
Dave Grebner (leader). Meet at the site. Phone 688-3908.

**June 14 (Sat), 8 a.m. - HENNEPIN CANAL**  
Tom Roesch (leader). Meet at Forest Park Nature Center. Phone 364-4340.

**June 29 (Sun), 1:30 p.m. - COMLARA PARK (LAKE EVERGREEN)**  
Cindy Alexander (leader). Meet at St. Clare Crossing in Washington. Phone 444-3297.

**June 21-22 (Sat-Sun) -  
Lakeview Museum Interplanetary  
Bicycle Ride or Walk with Peoria's  
Moonwalk**

Your chance to travel the Solar System!  
See [www.lakeview-museum.org](http://www.lakeview-museum.org) for ride  
and registration information.



### 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.



## Heart of Illinois Sierra Club

**P.O. Box 3593, Peoria, IL 61614      Hotline: (309) 637-1393**

## Executive Committee

<b>Chair</b> . . . . .	Robert Jorgensen . . . . .	698-0325	jestpr@aol.com
<b>Vice Co-Chair</b> . . . . .	Rudy Habben . . . . .	685-5605	
<b>Vice Co-Chair</b> . . . . .	Judy Stalling . . . . .	673-4673	
<b>Secretary/Calendars</b> . . . . .	Diane Jorgensen . . . . .	698-0325	jestpr@aol.com
<b>Conservation Co-Chair</b> . . . . .	Tom Edwards . . . . .	637-1979	
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<b>Global Warming</b>			
<b>Solutions Co-Chair</b> . . . . .	David Pittman . . . . .	676-5237	DvdPttmn@aol.com

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**Treasurer** . . . . . Chris Golden . . . 579-2967  
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**Global Warming**  
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