



Shawnee Trails



<http://www.sierraclub.org/illinois/shawnee>

Sierra Club – Shawnee Group

December 2021 – February 2022 QUARTERLY

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Barney Bush, 1944-2021: A Voice for Memory and Environmental Justice

By Jane Cogie, Shawnee Group Chair

Barney Bush, a widely known Shawnee/Cayuga poet, environmental activist, and educator, died on September 18 of this year [link to obit: <https://www.reedfuneralchapel.com/obituary/Barney-Bush>]. Many within Shawnee Sierra Club territory knew him from the events he presented locally. Perhaps the most familiar are those taking place at Vinyard Indian Settlement. In the following passage from the Shawnee Trails article ([Winter 2019-2020](#)) Barney kindly wrote for us, he describes life at the Settlement that visitors coming there for the annual Reconnection Days, would experience:

“We still maintain traditional living standards that include massive gardening, fishing, hunting, gathering of herbs and maintaining regular jobs. Ceremonial life is still a serious part of [the Vinyard Settlement] culture and investigation of life. We maintain a sense of caution as would any people concerned about emerging into the modern world of a culture that has not been kind to us nor our homelands. We ask that all people be respectful of our ways and learn to receive respect in return.”

Whether at home in the Settlement or out, as he often was, in the culture that “has not been kind to us or our homelands,” Barney Bush was an environmental activist. In his writings, presentations and actions, he wanted people not only to understand but to take action themselves to heal the devastation the coal industry continued to inflict on the astonishing natural spaces where he and his ancestors grew up and that the Settlement’s younger generation had never fully had the chance to experience.

In a speech at the 2013 “Climate Crisis Chicago: The Roots of the Problem,” Barney speaks out about that loss and its source in that modern world, represented most in his life by the fossil fuel industry and its mechanisms of extraction:

“We have 2,000 trips of coal trucks going past the Vinyard Settlement every day. That’s all those diesel fumes in the air. We don’t have bugs anymore. We don’t have honey bees. We have people with respiratory disease. We have things happening to the health of children who live along those routes. We also have the mass digging up of our graves—of Native American graveyards that aren’t considered quite as legitimate as (Continued on Page 2)

(Barney Bush, 1944-2021, Continued from Page 1)

White graveyards.” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fh0yReJABro> (8 minutes into the recording)

He spoke often of these tragedies brought to his people by extractive industries, such as in his testimony at IDNR hearings on coal industry permit applications, in his opening night speech at the fall 2019 Forest Convergence at Touch of Nature, and at the spring 2018 Downstate Caucus Equitable Decarbonization Summit. But his voice offers perhaps the strongest case against the modern world’s treatment of his homeland in his poetry, as in his 2012 reading of “Lady Liberty: An

Indictment”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c9l6DzzV69M>

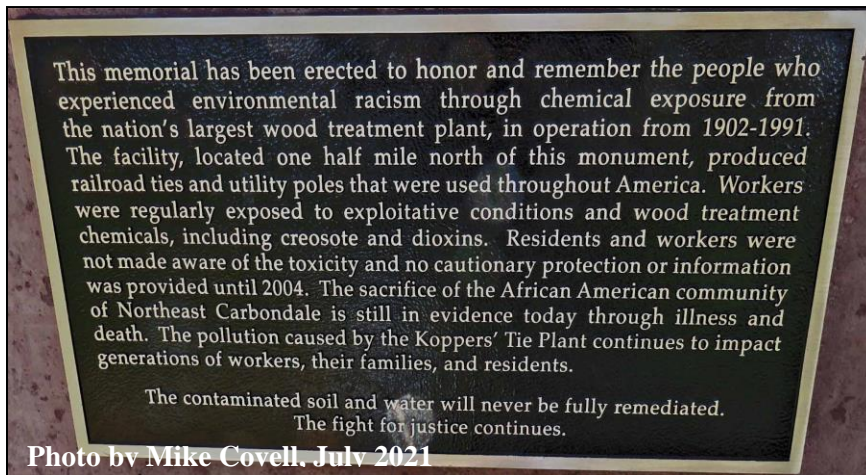
“Through the voice of the whippoorwill/ I sing a song, a childhood song/ about a doorway to the other side/ I sing this song/I sing with my heart /open to all the relatives that have gone on/I sing for you /Hear me in a prayer of cedar /I sing for the holiness between us/I sing for all the voices to hear/ to come forward in the light of day or in the dark of night/ to intercede.”

In this lyrical concluding section of “Lady Liberty continued below, he still—or perhaps especially--had a place for the anger and the pain industry’s destructiveness has caused:

“What happens now? America, do you have any reality about how much you have hurt? /While shouting proudly about more waste upon this Earth/ I am nearly blind with grief/ the kind no one wants to hear or attempt to tame down./ I am here in the breaking/ grinding my heels into the dirt/ shouting forth the ancestors/ and rumors of god who may answer with a whisper of faith.”

Though many of us did not know Barney well, we share in the great loss many many people and groups have expressed at his passing—loss of his generosity of spirit and his great and often-used ability to speak out against the destruction that has been wrought on the planet and, especially on the lands and cultures of indigenous peoples. We still have and should return often to his writings and recordings to press ourselves with the same urgency as he would, to stand up against the continued despoiling of the earth.

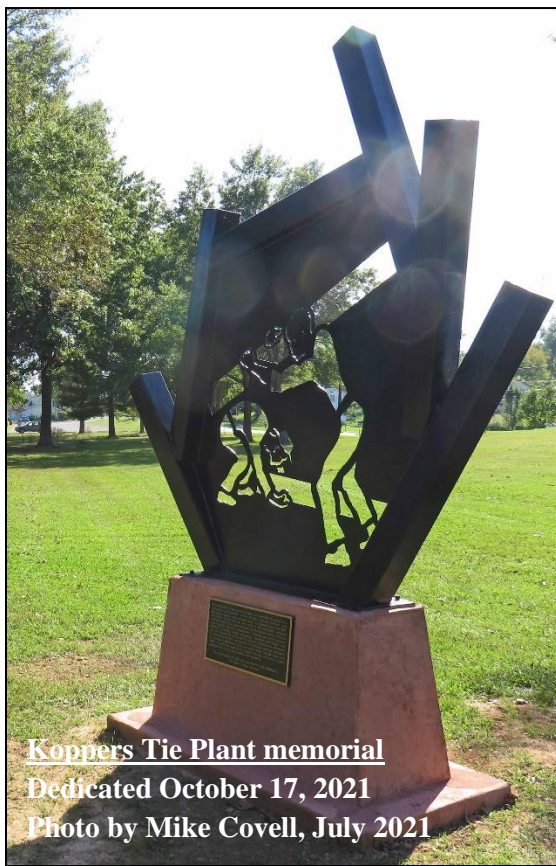
Read [“North Dakota gets fracked.”](#) three book reviews, by John Magney in Monthly Review online, August 19, 2021.

The logo for MRonline, featuring the letters 'MR' in a large, bold, white font on a red background, followed by the word 'online' in a smaller, white, sans-serif font on a red background.A black rectangular plaque with white text, mounted on a stone base. The text describes the memorial's purpose: to honor and remember people who experienced environmental racism through chemical exposure from the nation's largest wood treatment plant, in operation from 1902-1991. The facility produced railroad ties and utility poles that were used throughout America. Workers were regularly exposed to exploitative conditions and wood treatment chemicals, including creosote and dioxins. Residents and workers were not made aware of the toxicity and no cautionary protection or information was provided until 2004. The sacrifice of the African American community of Northeast Carbondale is still in evidence today through illness and death. The pollution caused by the Koppers' Tie Plant continues to impact generations of workers, their families, and residents. Below the main text, it states: "The contaminated soil and water will never be fully remediated. The fight for justice continues." Photo by Mike Covell, July 2021.

This memorial has been erected to honor and remember the people who experienced environmental racism through chemical exposure from the nation's largest wood treatment plant, in operation from 1902-1991. The facility, located one half mile north of this monument, produced railroad ties and utility poles that were used throughout America. Workers were regularly exposed to exploitative conditions and wood treatment chemicals, including creosote and dioxins. Residents and workers were not made aware of the toxicity and no cautionary protection or information was provided until 2004. The sacrifice of the African American community of Northeast Carbondale is still in evidence today through illness and death. The pollution caused by the Koppers' Tie Plant continues to impact generations of workers, their families, and residents.

The contaminated soil and water will never be fully remediated.
The fight for justice continues.

Photo by Mike Covell, July 2021



WINTER 2021/2022: VIRTUAL SHAWNEE GROUP SIERRA CLUB MEMBER PROGRAMS

Information for joining these online Zoom webinar meetings will be shared later by Shawnee Group email, and [Shawnee Group of the Sierra Club Facebook Page](#). **No in-person Shawnee Group member programs will occur this winter, per national Sierra Club directions, because of COVID precautions.** Do also consider other Illinois Sierra groups' virtual presentations: www.sctrips.org.

Thursday, December 9, 2021, 7:00 – 8:15 PM

Virtual “Panel & Discussion: Climate & Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA)” The panelists presenting on this newly passed legislation will focus most on provisions beneficial to jobs, climate and equity in southern Illinois
Location: Via Zoom (To receive the Zoom link, contact jane.cogie@gmail.com or go to the Shawnee Group of the Sierra Clubs website event page, <https://www.sierraclub.org/illinois/shawnee/events>); then scroll down and click on the listing for this event

Thursday, January 13, 2022, 7:00 – 8:00PM

Presenter: Mike Baltz, Ecologist and Director of the “Let the Sun Shine In” conservation collaborative
Program: “What’s Up With Oak Forest Ecosystems and What is the ‘Let the Sun Shine In’”

Location: Via Zoom (To receive the Zoom link, contact jane.cogie@gmail.com or go to the Shawnee Group of the Sierra Clubs website event page, <https://www.sierraclub.org/illinois/shawnee/events>; then scroll down, and click on the listing for this event.)

Thursday, February 10, 2022, 7:00 – 8:00 PM

Presenter: Tharran Hobson. Southern Illinois Program Director for The Nature Conservancy and currently Prairie State Conservation Coalition Board Member and past President of Friends of the Illinois River

Program: “Southern Illinois: A Convergence of Landscapes”

Location: Via Zoom (To receive the Zoom link, contact jane.cogie@gmail.com or go to the Shawnee Group of the Sierra Clubs website event page, <https://www.sierraclub.org/illinois/shawnee/events>; then scroll down, and click on the listing for this event.)

Alternative Gift Fair
Sunday, December 5, 2021, 2:00-5:00 pm
Civic Center, Carbondale

Shawnee Group Sierra Club will be one of many non-profits with items to sell at the holiday gift fair. We will have some beautiful Sierra Club calendars and other items to sell for the silent auction. Come and do your Christmas shopping early! Beat the crowds!

Volunteers Needed to Help Protect Shawnee National Forest

Protecting Shawnee National Forest involves frequent communication with the Forest Service, research on issues, and educating others about those issues. We especially need help in keeping oil and gas wells out of the forest - including fracking wells. Please contact Barb at babitaji@aol.com if you are interested in helping in any way.

Concerned about fracking?

Contact Barb McKasson at babitaji@aol.com if you are interested to help. Bills to support in Springfield, include [HB282](#) (fracking transparency bill) and [HB1562 \(People’s Property Protection Act\)](#), concerning subsurface trespass), so do contact your legislators. However, Barb can alert you of many action, outreach and planning opportunities that come up.

FYI, to receive more timely alerts from the Illinois Chapter of the Sierra Club, sign up online at their state website: https://secure.sierraclub.org/site/SPageNavigator/Chapter/il_newsletter_signup.html?jsessionid=84420F4C49A5A8CD264E1E3C3F131E25.app205a

Call for articles and photographs for Shawnee Trails! The next issue will be published in November. Please send your Word, PDF or JPG files to sabrina@midwest.net by **Monday, February 7th**.

WINTER 2021/2022 – SHAWNEE GROUP SIERRA CLUB OUTINGS

POSTPONED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE: Panthers Den Hike previously listed for 12/12/21

Sunday, January 9, 2022: Hike Borks Falls & Bobcat Loop trails at Ferne Clyffe

We will do a 1-mile hike of moderate difficulty through the Cedar Bluff area and a .5-mile hike to the base of a waterfall. Wear appropriate hiking shoes and bring water. Meet at the Marion Rural King parking lot by 9:30 am or in the parking area above Borks Falls by 10 am. Participants must call Kevin Rohling at 618-694-8150 in order to go on this hike.

Sunday, February 6, 2022: Little Grand Canyon Hike

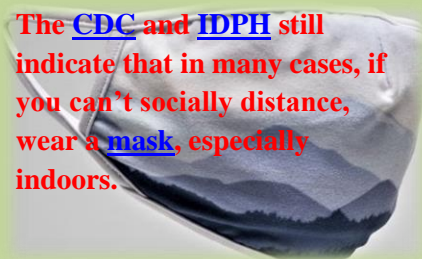
Jon Womack will be hiking the little-known bootleg trail at Little Grand Canyon. The trail will be approximately 4 miles. It will feature spectacular views. Safe distancing will be practiced during the hike. Meet at the Little Grand Canyon parking lot before 9:30 am. You must call Jon Womack at 815-263-9625 in order to go on the hike.

Sunday, March 20, 2022 10 am: Hike on Kinkaid Lake Trail at Crisenberry Dam

Moderate hike of up to 5 miles. This hike offers views of the lake, rock ledges, canyon and cave. From Murphysboro, go west on 149 about 6 miles, turn right on Spillway Road, go 1.5 miles to small parking area. Bring water and wear appropriate hiking shoes. The leader is Bob Mulcahy. Call Bob at 618-942-6342 to go on the hike or obtain more information.

Visit our older Shawnee Group Sierra Club blog page, lower right side (Index), for a list of weblinks to local hiking trail descriptions, and directions about how to get there: <https://shawneegroup.blogspot.com/>

The [CDC](#) and [IDPH](#) still indicate that in many cases, if you can't socially distance, wear a [mask](#), especially indoors.



Service Outings – Help Save High Quality Natural Areas

Shawnee Group is committed to helping rid high-quality natural areas of non-native invasive plants (NNIS) that are threatening to crowd out our native plant communities at La-Rue Pine Hills Research Natural Area (Snake Road) and at Fern Rocks Nature Preserve (Trillium Trail) in Giant City State Park.

COVID-19 pandemic guidelines restrict group activities, but service outings will eventually occur again.

Please consult our web page sierraclub.org/illinois/shawnee or our Facebook Page ([Sierra Club Shawnee Group](#)) for further developments in 2022 or contact Barb at 618-549-9684, babitaji@aol.com or text 618-534-7440.



Piasa Palisades Group Outings Chair:

Carol Klinger, 618-288-5506, ciklinger@yahoo.com
<http://www.sierraclub.org/illinois/piasa-palisades>

Eastern Missouri Group Outings Chair:

Doug Melville, 636-288-1055
douglas.k.melville@gmail.com
<http://sierraclub.org/missouri/eastern-missouri>

Future Outings TBA:

Updates listed on our or Illinois Chapter websites:
<http://www.sierraclub.org/illinois/shawnee>
<https://www.sierraclub.org/illinois/events-calendar>
Other short notice outings and events may be announced on our Facebook page:
<https://www.facebook.com/SierraClubShawnee>

Let's Celebrate the "Climate and Equitable Jobs Act" ...and look to more victories in the near future

Illinois Chapter Sierra Club and our partners in the Illinois Clean Jobs Coalition are taking a victory lap now that CEJA has passed after almost three years of work. So, what have we gained, how can Southern Illinoisans make the most of it and what are our next goals in combatting climate change?

Some major CEJA outcomes (from Illinois Clean Jobs Coalition analysis):

- Achieves a 100% carbon-free electric power sector by 2045, prioritizing environmental justice communities for pollution reductions.
- Over \$80 million/year for workforce and contractor development programs targeted in equity focused communities
- Immediately opens the closed solar incentive programs to save solar jobs and solar companies
- Funding to get from the present 9% to 40% renewable energy by 2030 and 50% renewable energy by 2040
- Commits to investments that will achieve one million electric vehicles in Illinois by 2030
- Ties any electricity rate hikes to values such as reliability, reducing peak demand, affordability, supplier diversity and environmental quality, under the purview of the Illinois Commerce Commission
- Invests \$41 million/year in former fossil fuel communities and workers
- Diversity and equity requirements for all renewable energy projects and dedicated support for disadvantaged contractors to participate in the clean energy economy
- Offers \$4,000 rebates to Illinoisans purchasing electric vehicles and rebates to communities for EV infrastructure, such as charging stations
- Requires Com Ed and Ameren to enact "Beneficial Electrification Plans" to facilitate electrification of cars, trucks, public transportation and school buses
- Establishes a non-profit "Green Bank" for BIPOC communities
- Designates the Illinois Finance Authority as the state "Climate Bank: to aid clean energy and climate resilience efforts"
- Prohibits fees and requires other measures to help low-income households
- Establishes an Equitable Energy Upgrade Program to permit customers to finance energy efficiency upgrades through their utility bills

Southern Illinois Opportunities:

We already know that there will be a "workforce hub" in Carbondale to provide clean jobs training and a career pipeline for equity eligible individuals. There is an opportunity for a southernmost Illinois organization to provide services to ensure eligible populations take advantage of workforce development programs. For example, one of the 13 contractor incubators that are to provide training, mentorship and recruitment opportunities for small clean energy businesses and contractors could be located in southernmost Illinois (SIU-C?). Energy Transition Community Grants with \$40 million annual funding will be available for communities with closing or closed power plants or coal mines to address economic and social impacts of the energy transition, including replacement property taxes. Ameren is required to provide a free standardized assessment of all public schools in its territory to identify opportunities for energy efficiency and greenhouse gas emissions reductions. There is an opportunity (and funding) to develop closed or closing coal plants into solar fields with accompanying energy storage.

New Goals and Opportunities:

Further goals and opportunities being studied under this act are many. Studies required by CEJA include a commission on market-based carbon pricing solutions, an ICC study on low-income discount electric rates for residential customers, an ICC study and hearing to determine statewide energy storage needs, and a section that enables the Governor to commission a carbon pricing study.

(Continued on Page 6)

(CEJA, Continued from Page 5)

Electric Co-ops and Munis:

CEJA mainly applies to privately owned (shareholders) utilities – Commonwealth Edison, Ameren and Gas Utilities - that are governed by the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC). Thus, participation by Electricity Co-ops (e.g., Egyptian Electric and Southern Illinois Power Co-operative) and municipally owned electric power generation (Munis) is still very limited and problematic. Currently, Co-ops and Munis are really dependent on coal and gas because of previous contracts.

The right of residential customers and small businesses to make their own electricity (e.g., solar panels) while tied to the grid of a Co-op or Muni has been won in court. However, many Co-ops and Munis are still not set up to do the “grid ties” and “net metering” needed for distributed generation (DG). If they are set up for this, the size of the solar system will most likely be limited. Anyone on a co-op grid will have to negotiate with their co-op and find out what they are set up to do. This is an area that Sierra Club and other groups hope to work on to improve as a “next step.”

If you want to learn more and ask questions about how CEJA can help Southernmost Illinois, come to our panel and discussion on CEJA on December 9th at 7:00 – 8:15 pm on Zoom. Read about this program on Page 3 in this newsletter for more details.

Shawnee National Forest Committee Update

In October, our committee held an invasives pull at Snake Road. Ten volunteers pulled perilla (beefsteak plant), covering at least ½ mile along the road. We plan to continue hand pulling plus cutting and treating invasives at LaRue-Pine Hills Research Natural area in cooperation with the Forest Service.

Also in October, we wrote a comment on a proposed parking lot extension at Winters Pond which would destroy a small wetland that currently exists in the middle of the parking lot. We are appalled that the FS managers seem to be forgetting that the LaRue-Pine Hills RNA is one of the highest quality Natural Areas on the forest and actually is in a contest with Smokey Mountain National Park as the most biodiverse area in the country. Excerpts from that letter are below.

To the project manager:

We think that the parts of the project proposed for Winters Pond and Bell Smith Springs do not belong in a “categorical exclusion” (CE) because the projects are in Research Natural Areas (RNAs) and CEs are not appropriate for a project in any RNA.

Title: The title of the project [Recreation Site Overflow Parking Development Project] obscures the most important aspect of this project, which is that it takes place, with over 2,000 species in a relatively small area, in one of the most biodiverse natural areas in the nation, an area designated as the LaRue-Pine Hills Research Natural Area. Research Natural Areas (RNAs) are “...designated to be permanently protected and maintained in natural condition.” The proposed project does not meet that requirement, despite the disingenuous title, nor do RNAs fit the list of recreation sites that qualify for categorical exclusions.

Categorical Exclusion: To be clear, we think that the parts of the project proposed for Winters Pond and Bell Smith Springs do not belong in a “categorical exclusion” (CE) because the projects are in Research Natural Areas (RNAs) and CEs are not appropriate for a project in any RNA. Those areas should definitely be removed from the proposed project and at least be given the consideration afforded by an Environmental Assessment (EA).

Project Delineation: The portion of the project that affects the wetland located in the middle of the parking lot at LaRue-Pine Hills should be separated from the rest of the project because it would destroy a wetland in an RNA.

(Continued on Page 7)

(Shawnee National Forest Committee Update, Continued from Page 6)

Project Need: The U.S. Shawnee National Forest (SNF) Scoping Notice background description states that “large crowds frequently fill the existing parking lots....” We frequently visit Snake Road and park in the Winters Pond lot, and know that this is not the case. Even assuming that there occasionally are cars that overflow the lot and park along the road that leads to Winter’s Pond, there is adequate room for emergency vehicles to pass, despite the claim made by the SNF.

Proposed Action: The project requires the destruction and filling of a wetland that is a breeding ground for amphibians and a foraging ground for reptiles. We have personally observed a great many American Toads, Gray Tree Frogs, Fowler’s Toads, Wood Frogs, and Spotted Salamanders in the water there or in immediately adjacent low areas or ruts (that also qualify as wetland) during the breeding season. We have also observed the eggs and tadpoles of amphibians in this wetland. Plus, we have observed Yellow-Bellied Water Snakes hunting there, and have also observed the State-Listed Mississippi Green Water Snake hunting in the wetland within a few dozen yards of the area scheduled for destruction. An independent study by a qualified herpetologist of the impacts of the project, including the footprint of the construction staging and parking zones, and areas affected by the probable hydrological and water quality changes, should be a prerequisite for the project. It should include at a minimum, a total herp species inventory of the overall site and the impacts to those species, especially state listed species that are known to use nearby acreage.

Better Use of Funding: Finally, we hope that the SNF will choose to use this infrastructure funding to address some of the more fundamental issues that affect the forest. There are numerous, severe, and destructive hydrological and erosion problems (that often have occurred due to ill-considered past projects) that are in urgent need of repair and this funding could at least begin to address them. That would certainly be preferable to using the money to destroy a wetland area for a parking lot expansion that is of questionable necessity.



VOTE!

DEADLINE is DECEMBER 15th

Look for Illinois Chapter’s *The Prairie State Update* in your mailbox or pile of mail that’s already come. Shawnee Group Sierra Club ExCom candidate bios, ballots and directions will be in this brochure and our previous Fall Sept. – Nov. 2021 newsletter on our website.

Illinois Legislative Contacts: CALL YOUR LEGISLATORS TODAY!

State Dist. 109 – Adam Niemerg: 618-813-6036; 217-782-2087; niemerg@ilhousegop.org
State Dist. 115 – Paul Jacobs: 618-534-9880; 217-782-0387; Jacobs@ilhousegop.org
State Dist. 116 – David Riess: 618-282-7284; 217-782-1018; friess@housegop.org
State Dist. 117 – David Severin: 618-440-5090; 217-782-1051; www.ilhousegop.org/contactseverin
State Dist. 118 – Patrick Windhorst: 618-294-8703; 217-782-5131; www.ilhousegop.org/windhorst_contact
Senate Dist. 55 – Senator Darren Bailey: 618-665-4109; 217-782-6674
Senate Dist. 58 – Senator Terri Bryant: 618-684-1100; 217-782-8137; Sec’y.: cbrown@sgop.ilga.gov
Senate Dist. 59 – Senator Dale Fowler: 618-294-8951; 217-782-5509; senatorfowler59@gmail.com
Governor J.B. Pritzker: 217-782-6830; <https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/gov/contactus/Pages/default.aspx>
Speaker of the House Emanuel Chris Welch: 217-782-8120; 708-450-1000; repwelch@emanuelchriswelch.com
Senate President Don Harmon: 217-782-8176; 708-848-2002; <http://www.donharmon.org/contact-senator-harmon>

Congressional Contacts: CALL YOUR CONGRESSMEN TODAY!

Senator Dick Durbin: 618-351-1122; 202-224-2152; <http://www.durbin.senate.gov>
Senator L. Tammy Duckworth: 202-224-2854; <https://www.duckworth.senate.gov>
Representative Mike Bost: 618-457-5787; 202-225-5661; <https://bost.house.gov>
Representative Mary Miller: 618-240-3155; 202-225-5271; <https://marymiller.house.gov>

President Joseph R. Biden, The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., Washington, D.C.
202-456-1111; <https://www.whitehouse.gov/contact>

Has Your Email Address Changed?

To receive notification when the latest Shawnee Group newsletter is posted online, be sure to inform the Group when you change your email address. Send email address updates to: crusso1957@yahoo.com.

Read current and past newsletters on our website: <http://www.sierraclub.org/illinois/shawnee>. The website also lists information on upcoming local programs and outings, plus state and national Sierra Club issues.

Leadership Opportunities

Run for the Board! We need a few good women and men. Join the board of directors (the executive committee, also known as the ExCom) in overseeing the Shawnee Group's strategic direction and economic health. Board members meet monthly for about 2 hours. Board terms are for two years. We are always interested in potential candidates.

We need Hospitality team members

Provide refreshments for one monthly meeting each year (2nd Thursday). Be the Hospitality Chair to organize refreshment providers and greeters OR Act as a greeter for a monthly meeting or welcome and assist our speaker OR Select and make reservations at a local restaurant for our monthly "Dinner Before the Meeting." Contact Jane Cogie, 618-549-4673, jane.cogie@gmail.com.



Shawnee Group Sierra Club T-Shirts for Sale!

Show your support for our local group's activities. Contact Mike Covell at 618-201-4928 or emike@siu.edu.

White logo on blue T-Shirt \$15
Medium Large or X-Large

2022 Sierra Club Calendar SALE!!

Great for holiday gifts, as well as yourself. To buy calendars, contact Barb McKasson at 618-549-9684, babitaji@aol.com.

