

# Shawnee Trails

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June - August 2018 QUARTERLY

## <u>Sierra Club – Shawnee Group</u>

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#### **Shawnee Group Contact Information:**

Shawnee Group Sierra Club

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#### **Solar and the NIMBY Neighbor**

During the past couple years, Shawnee Group Sierra Club has explored means to promote solar energy in southern Illinois, first via solar bulk buys, and during this past year via community solar projects. The recent effort has been a collaboration between interested community churches and progressive organizations, who have sought input from CUB, coops, and community leaders. Church of the Good Shepherd in Carbondale has already erected solar. The group is seeking and evaluating appropriate land for community solar installations. While the rationale for this clean energy transition is accepted in these circles, and they are working on the financial and organizational steps, some people still are not on board with even the general concept. More often one encounters the Not-In-My-Back-Yard (NIMBY) with certain wind energy projects, but sometimes also with solar. Rebecca Judd, of Illinois Chapter Sierra Club, has allowed us to reprint her suggestions for talking to your neighboring NIMBY.

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#### **Benefits of Solar in Your Community**

--Rebecca Judd

Illinois' passage of a new clean energy law (the Future Energy Jobs Act) will spur solar development across the State. The Future Energy Jobs Act (FEJA) – otherwise known as the Clean Jobs Bill – is one of the most significant pieces of clean energy legislation to ever pass the Illinois General Assembly. It resulted from years of negotiations between utilities, consumer advocates, clean energy businesses, and environmental and environmental justice groups. It was signed into law by Governor Rauner in December 2016 and went into effect on June 1, 2017. Some programs have recently started to roll out, and we will see more programs, including the programs incentivizing solar development, opening up later in 2018.

The law requires at least 3,000 megawatts of new solar power – enough electricity to power millions of homes – to be built *in Illinois* by 2030. Right now, Illinois has only around 100 megawatts of solar installed in the State, most of which are rooftop/on-site systems. Due to FEJA, Illinois can expect about a 4000% increase in the development of solar across the State, bringing cleaner air, lower utility bills, economic development, job opportunities, tax base growth, and other benefits to communities all over the State.

FEJA will provide different levels of incentives to ensure that diverse types of solar projects are built, including small rooftop/on-site solar, community solar, and larger utility-scale projects, along with projects that benefit economically disadvantaged and environmental justice communities. Ensure that your community is poised to participate in solar development and doesn't get left behind from a rapidly growing economic sector and clean energy future. (Continued on Page 2)

#### What is Rooftop Solar vs. Community Solar vs. Utility-Scale Solar?

Solar energy can offer substantial cost savings and benefits across all types of projects. Rooftop (or on-site) systems are typically under 10 kW in size for a residential homeowner but can be larger in size for commercial and industrial customers.

Community solar projects are up to 2 MW in size and offer customers the ability to participate in and benefit from solar system who can't or don't want to install solar on their roof or property, perhaps due to roof condition, too much shading on property, living in a multi-family building, or the capital expense required for installation and/or roof repairs. Community solar participants, called "subscribers," lease or buy *a portion* of a solar project, which can be located anywhere in the same utility service territory of the subscribers and typically require around 10 to 15 acres of land. Subscribers can be homes, businesses, hospitals, schools, nursing homes, municipal buildings, or anyone with an electric bill. The electricity produced by a subscriber's share of the system is used as a credit to lower their electric bill, saving them money and allowing them to participate in the benefits of clean, renewable energy.

Larger, utility-scale projects are over 2 MW in size and produce larger outputs of solar energy, which can help maximize the achievement of environmental, energy production, local air quality, and climate protection goals, along with offering more opportunities for economic development, tax base growth, and construction and maintenance jobs.

As communities consider land use planning, permitting, and zoning requirements for solar projects, it is important to acknowledge the different types of solar projects and the different land use forms that rooftop, community, and utility-scale solar development can take, while also recognizing the multiple benefits of solar development. A one size fits all approach may not always work and may have unintended consequences of chilling community solar and other larger projects besides rooftop solar. Identifying how solar development can benefit the community will help decisionmakers determine how solar resources and projects are integrated into the community in a way that balances and protects competing development or land use forms, while not unduly or unreasonably creating barriers to solar entry.

#### How does solar benefit my community?

Solar development can bring a variety of benefits to the local community. These include:

- Tax revenue for the local community: While it depends on project size and the local tax rate, over the 30-year expected life of, for example, a community solar project, total tax revenue could be hundreds of thousands of dollars for a local community.
- **Electric bill savings:** Anyone in the same electric service territory of a community solar project will be eligible to become a subscriber. This provides the opportunity for meaningful long-term bill savings and an ability to participate in clean energy benefits. Rooftop solar customers also benefit from "net metering," a billing mechanism that credits system owners for the electricity they add to the grid, along with the energy savings that results from their system's own electricity production.
- Local economic activity: Solar projects involve a variety of trades and service providers, many of which may be sourced from the local community. This can include on-going landscape management, fence installation, electrical engineering, construction labor, consulting relevant to permitting, and operations and maintenance. 3

#### Solar systems do not impact property values or quality of life.

A community solar garden is a managed landscape with grass and/or wild flowers. According to the U.S. Department of Energy's National Renewable Energy Lab:

While the impacts of a solar farm on neighboring property values have not been studied in-depth, numerous studies found the impact of wind energy generation on neighboring property values to be negligible. As solar farms do not have the same impacts as wind farms (i.e., PV facilities do not cast a shadow on neighboring properties, cause light flicker, or have the same visual impact as wind farms), the impacts on property values caused by solar farms are anticipated to be less than the impacts of wind farms. Some communities have opted for mitigation measures to reduce visual impacts of solar farms through the use of vegetative screening or decorative fencing, since PV modules are usually mounted close to the ground (less than seven feet high).

(Continued on Page 3)

Additionally, photovoltaic (PV) solar panels are coated with non-reflective materials designed to maximize light absorption and, as a result, minimize glare. According to a 2014 study, solar panels produce less glare and reflection than does standard window glass. Regarding noise, a study conducted by Tech Environmental, Inc., for the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center, that investigated two utility-scale solar projects concludes: Any sound from the PV array and equipment was inaudible at set back distances of 50 to 150 feet from the (project) boundary. In fact, solar is a quiet and, typically, visually appealing neighbor that can block the path of undesirable development for decades to come.

The same study also concludes that the <u>electrical and magnetic fields</u> generated by solar panels and their inverters are lower than background electrical and magnetic fields created by other devices that surround our daily lives, such as computers and cell phones, and emit fields that are several hundred times less than recommended exposure limits.

#### Do solar gardens pose risks to wildlife or the surrounding community?

Photovoltaic solar gardens produce no air emissions, do not release toxic materials, and emit no radiation. Further, projects that use photovoltaic technology do not produce excessive heat. In fact, solar gardens are frequently home to nesting birds, and with the right plant and grass mix, can attract butterflies and other species.

#### What are the health and environmental benefits of solar energy?

Solar energy and other forms of renewable energy can replace the use of fossil fuels, such as coal and natural gas, to generate electricity. This provides significant health and environmental benefits. Burning fossil fuels release a variety of pollutants, including sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide, particulate matter, and mercury, which harms the environment, contributes to ozone formation and smog, and causes a variety of chronic respiratory diseases, including asthma and bronchitis, elevated occurrences of premature death, and neurological effects in children. Fossil fuels are also the single largest source of greenhouse gases, which drive man-made climate change and extreme weather events.

#### How can communities leverage solar development to benefit your community?

As communities and counties work with solar developers to bring the benefits of solar to their residents, community advocates and municipal leaders can explore additional measures to maximize local benefits and mitigate any concerns. For instance, communities can require developers to install vegetative screening or fencing to alleviate aesthetic concerns, along with planting of certain grasses or plants underneath ground-mount solar panels to support wildlife habitat. In addition, communities may want to require local hiring, a diverse workforce, prevailing wages, along with other requirements to ensure that fossil fuel workers, communities, and individuals disproportionately harmed by the fossil fuel economy (including but not limited to communities of color, economically disadvantaged, and environmental justice communities) have equitable access to clean energy-related economic opportunities and affordable clean energy.



Help Keep Toxic Chemicals Out of Our Environment!! Household Chemical Waste Collection at SIU-C

SIU Arena - South Parking Lot

June 8 (Friday) - 2:00PM to 5:00PM

June 9 (Saturday) - 7:30AM to Noon

Collect any old spray bottles, used oil, fluorescent lightbulbs, oil-based paint, etc. and bring them to the Jackson County Health Department chemical waste collection at the Southern Illinois University Arena south parking lot. The lot can be accessed off of Rt. 51 or off of Pleasant Hill Rd. For more information, go online at <a href="http://jchdonline.org">http://jchdonline.org</a>.

#### **SUMMER 2018 SIERRA CLUB PROGRAM:**

**PLEASE NOTE:** In contrast to our usual schedule, during June and July, there will be no second-Thursday-of-the-month General Membership program at Carbondale Township Hall.

#### Sunday, June 10, 2018, 1:00 to 4:00 pm

#### Shawnee Group Sierra Club Vegetarian Zero-Waste Potluck Picnic for Members & Guests

Place: Giant Sycamore Shelter, Evergreen Park, Carbondale

Mark your calendar and prepare for fun, food and socializing at the main shelter, Giant Sycamore, at Evergreen Park, right off of Pleasant Hill Road on the south side of Carbondale. Please bring a vegetarian dish to share & your own non-disposable place settings. Bring your own drinks.

This event is instead of our usual 2<sup>nd</sup>-Thursday-of-the-Month Program. For updates on this event, check out the Shawnee Group of Sierra Club Facebook Page: <a href="https://www.facebook.com/SierraClubShawnee/">https://www.facebook.com/SierraClubShawnee/</a>

**July:** No Thursday evening program will be held during July.

Thursday, August 9, 2018, 7 pm: TBA.

#### **SUMMER 2018 SIERRA CLUB OUTING**

#### Kayak Outing, Cedar Lake, 10:00 am, Saturday, June 23, 2018

We will meet at the boat ramp on the west side of Cedar Lake. To join us, bring your kayak and travel south on Rt. 127 from Murphysboro,

turn left onto Boat Dock Road. Park in the lot at the end of the road near the boat ramp.

Call Steve Eberhart at 618-967-8690 to attend the kayak outing.





#### Piasa Palisades Group Outings Chair:

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

#### **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: <a href="http://www.sierraclub.org/illinois/shawnee">http://www.sierraclub.org/illinois/shawnee</a>
<a href="http://illinois.sierraclub.org/calendar">http://illinois.sierraclub.org/calendar</a>
Other short notice outings and events may be announced on our Facebook page:
<a href="https://www.facebook.com/SierraClubShawnee">https://www.facebook.com/SierraClubShawnee</a>

#### **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 <a href="mailto:babitaji@aol.com">babitaji@aol.com</a> if you are interested in helping in any way.

#### <u>ALERT!! Protect Illinois From Federal Rollbacks on Environmental Standards</u> -- By Barb McKasson

Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Safe Drinking Water Act, Endangered Species Act, Occupational Safety and Health Act, Mine Safety, and Federal Labor Standards are at risk, since the Trump administration and Congressional leaders have indicated an intent to weaken, repeal or restrict the implementation of a wide range of environmental, health and safety laws and regulations. Illinois derives many of its current state protections from these federal statutes and regulations, which set minimum standards for the states.

<u>SB 2213</u> would maintain existing environmental and worker protections in Illinois so that if federal minimum standards are lowered, Illinois will not follow suit, but will remain as protective as on January 19, 2017, with a three-year sunset provision.

SB 2213 does not restrict the ability of any state agency to improve a standard or protection, or to make any change that would have been permissible on January 19, 2017.

SB 2213 does not create a single new regulation, standard or rule and does not create any uncertainty or burden for businesses, but only continues the status quo. What SB2213 does do is make sure that our people, our communities, and our environment in Illinois are as protected as they can be from the major steps backward being taken or planned by the Trump administration.

SB 2213 has already passed the Illinois Senate and now must pass the Illinois House and be signed by Governor Rauner.

What you can do: ASAP Call and/ or write your Illinois Representative to vote YES on SB 2213 to prevent Illinois state and local agencies from weakening Illinois environmental or labor standards below the federal standards in place as of January 19, 2017, or "baseline standards" for our keystone Environmental and Labor health and safety standards, including the: Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Safe Drinking Water Act, Endangered Species Act, Occupational Safety and Health Act, Mine Safety and Health Act, and Federal Labor Standards Act. See below for contact information for Illinois Legislative Representatives.

# Note: The deadline for passing bills out of the Illinois House is May 25th, but may be called for a vote any time before that date.

You can get more details at <a href="https://sierraclub.org/illinois/legislation">https://sierraclub.org/illinois/legislation</a> then scroll down to priority-legislation and click, then click on the link to view the factsheet.

You can read the bill and follow the bill's progress on <u>ilga.gov</u>

#### CALL YOUR REPRESENTATIVE TODAY!

State Dist. 109 – Rep. David Reis: 618-392-0108 or 217-782-2087; www.davidreis.org

State Dist. 115 – Rep. Terri Bryant: 618-242-8115 or 217-782-0387; staterepterribryant@gamil.com

State Dist. 116 – Rep. Jerry Costello II: 618-282-7284; 217-782-1018; staterepcostello@gmail.com

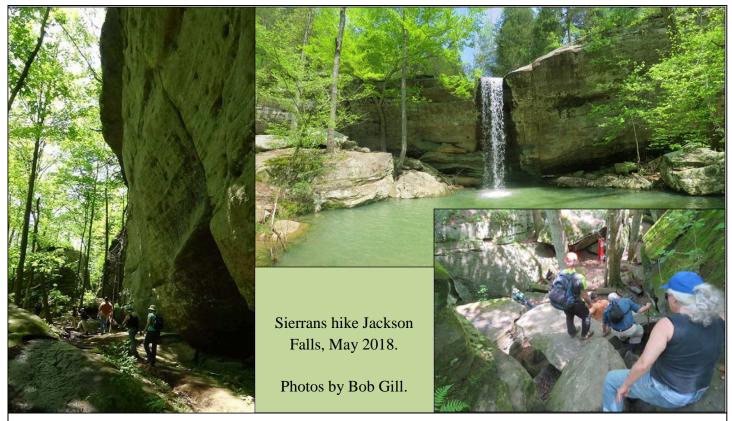
State Dist. 117 – Rep. Dave Severin: 618-440-5090; 217-782-1015; www.ilhousegop.org/contactseverin

State Dist. 118 – Rep. Natalie Phelps Finnie 618-253-4189; 217-782-6674 repphelpsfinnie@gmail.com

### **Success! Shawnee Parkway Nixed for Now**

According to the March 29, 2018 Federal Register, re Environmental Impact Statement: Alexander, Pulaski, and Union Counties, Illinois, "The project is being cancelled and no further activities will occur for the Shawnee Parkway project at this time."

Thank you for all your contacting of IDOT staff and other officials.



#### Illinois Legislative Contacts: CALL YOUR LEGISLATORS TODAY!

State Dist. 109 Rep. David Reis: 618-392-0108 or 217-782-2087; <a href="www.davidreis.org">www.davidreis.org</a>

State Dist. 115 - Rep. Terri Bryant: 618-242-8115; 217-782-0387; staterepterribryant@gmail.com

State Dist. 116 - Rep. Jerry Costello II - 618-282-7284; 217-782-1018 Staterepcostello@gmail.com

State Dist. 117 - Rep. Dave Severin - 618-440-5090; 217-782-1051; <a href="www.ilhousegop.org/contactseverin">www.ilhousegop.org/contactseverin</a>

State Rep. 118 - Rep. Natalie Phelps Finnie - 618-253-4189; 217-782-5131; repphelpsfinnie@gmail.com

Senate Dist. 55 Senator Dale Righter: 217-235-6033 or 217-782-6674

Senate Dist. 58 - Senator Paul Schimpf: 618-684-1100; <a href="mailto:senshimpf58@gmail.com">senshimpf58@gmail.com</a>

Senate Dist. 59 - Senator Dale Fowler: 618-294-8951; 217-782-5509; senatorfowler59@gmail.com

Governor Bruce Rauner: 217-782-0244, <a href="http://www2.illinois.gov/gov/Pages/ContacttheGovernor.aspx">http://www2.illinois.gov/gov/Pages/ContacttheGovernor.aspx</a>

Speaker of the House Madigan: 217-782-5350; 773-581-8000; http://www.housedem.state.il.us Senate President Cullerton: 217-782-2728; 773-883-0770; jcullerton@senatedem.illinois.gov

#### **Congressional Contacts: CALL YOUR CONGRESSMEN TODAY!**

Senator Dick Durbin: 618-351-1122; 202-224-2152; <a href="http://www.durbin.senate.gov/">http://www.durbin.senate.gov/</a>
Senator L. Tammy Duckworth: (202) 224-2854; <a href="https://www.duckworth.senate.gov/">https://www.duckworth.senate.gov/</a>
Representative Mike Bost: 618-457-5787; 202-225-5661; <a href="https://bost.house.gov/">https://bost.house.gov/</a>

Representative John Shimkus: 618-252-8271; 202-225-5271; https://shimkus.house.gov/

The Illinois Chapter Sierra Club's Frack Fight Team is steered by Terri Treacy (terri.treacy@sierraclub.org).

To receive periodic updates and communications from local and national Sierra Club, become a member of Illinois Chapter's Frack Fight Team:

http://action.sierraclub.org/site/Survey?ACTION\_REQUIRED =URI\_ACTION\_USER\_REQUESTS&SURVEY\_ID=138181

**FYI**, to receive more timely alerts from the Illinois Chapter of the Sierra Club, sign up online at their state website: <a href="https://secure.sierraclub.org/site/SPageNavigator/Chapter/il\_newsletter\_signup.html">https://secure.sierraclub.org/site/SPageNavigator/Chapter/il\_newsletter\_signup.html</a> ;jsessionid=84420F4C49A5A8CD264E1 E3C3F131E25.app205a



## News from the Monarch Team

The fact that mosquito spraying or "fogging" by municipalities can drift onto gardens and habitats killing beneficial pollinators was discussed during the April conference call with state Sierra Club Monarch Teams. The northern Illinois teams are working with municipalities and the public to find ways to mitigate that harm. Asking municipalities to limit spraying, spraying at night, and the use larvicides, such as BTI, applied directly on water can help. Even the impractical measure of removing Monarch caterpillars in advance of spraying was suggested.

I was hopeful that in Carbondale, being a small community surrounded by natural areas where frogs, birds and bats control mosquitoes, spraying would not be required. But, according to Bill Kelly, head of Jackson County Mosquito Abatement, they spray in neighborhoods and populated areas, including the wooded area adjacent to the Splash Park, the retention pond and the drainage ditch. Our Monarch Team's habitat restoration project, "The Ditch" is located there.

So that we can determine the future of The Ditch, Patty Weyhrich who leads project, is learning what specific abatement techniques Bill Kelly can use to mitigate harm to pollinators. Jane Cogie, Ruth Hoak and I are looking into possible additional locations for a pollinator garden/habitat where there is no mosquito abatement spraying.

We know home mosquito sprays are also harmful to beneficial insects. Other chemicals to avoid in our gardens are Neonicotinoids. Any plants systemically treated with these toxins will poison insects when they contact pollen or ingest nectar, leaves or stems.

Sierra Clubbers looking to help Monarchs now can volunteer at The Giant City State Park pollinator garden or the Friends of Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge pollinator gardens and new wildflower prairie. Weeding, watering, fertilizing and planting are on-going. An excellent resource for learning are FCONWR's milkweed beds, filled with three varieties milkweeds, and the large main garden that has labeled native plants flowering throughout the growing season.

Kathy Belletire, Monarch Team Leader



Call for articles and photographs for Shawnee Trails! The next issue will be published in September. Please send your Word, PDF or JPG files to <a href="mailto:sabrina@midwest.net">sabrina@midwest.net</a> by August 6th.

#### **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: jane.cogie@gmail.com

Read current and past newsletters on our website: <a href="http://www.sierraclub.org/illinois/shawnee">http://www.sierraclub.org/illinois/shawnee</a>. 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 <a href="mailto:jane.cogie@gmail.com">jane.cogie@gmail.com</a>.



# **Shawnee Group Sierra Club T-Shirts for Sale!**

Show your support for our local group's activities. For sale during our monthly meetings.

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

### Thank you!!

Shawnee Group Sierra Club held its 5<sup>th</sup> native plant sale on Saturday, May 5, 2018. We had fabulous weather this year (as opposed to the rain storm we had last year), and many folks were inspired to purchase plants for their gardens! Our two vendors, Southernwood Gardens, Alto Pass, and Missouri Wildflowers Nursery, had many customers throughout the four-hour sale. Southernwood Gardens sold \$1,753.50 in plants; Sierra Club benefited by \$210.42 being donated back to us. The other vendor had \$3,890.67 in pre-orders and sales on the sale day, and they donated \$466.88 to our account. So, a total of \$677.30 was donated to us. Thank you to all who supported the sale, and gave up their day to help set up, sell, clean up, and haul tables and chairs away!

Also \$60.00 from the sale of Kathy Belletire's fabulous hand-made Monarch-inspired cards will be

donated to be used for the upcoming pollinator garden!

Thank you Kathy!

