



**In This Issue:**

ORV Use Threatens Public Lands Pg 1-2  
 Fall Outings Pg 3  
 Fall Programs Pg 4  
 Clean Energy Voter Pledges Pg 4-5  
 CAFO Alert Pg 6  
 Wildlife Trap Alert Pg 6  
 Shawnee Parkway Alert Pg 6  
 Steps to Cleaner Power Pg 7  
 Contact Your Representative List Pg 7  
 Volunteer Pg 8  
 2017 Calendar Sale Pg 8

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**Off-Road Vehicle Use Threatens Southern Illinois Public Lands**

*by Barbara McKasson*

There is increasing noise from all-terrain vehicle (ATV) users who want to make inroads into public funds and public lands. U.S. Representative Mike Bost has been pressuring the U.S. Forest Service to designate ATV trails in Shawnee National Forest (SNF). Also, State Representative Brandon Phelps introduced a resolution in our state legislature – [HR 1269](#) – to urge the U.S. Forest Service to “allow the use of all-terrain vehicles in Shawnee National Forest” by creating trails for the general use of ATVs. So far, [HR1269](#), or Shawnee National Forest – ATV/Trails bill, is co-sponsored by representatives Jerry Costello, Daniel Beaser and David Reis.

The current 2006 [SNF Forest Plan](#) does not allow designation of ATV trails, [reconfirming the 1996 Court Order and 1997 Forest Supervisors Closure Order](#) and many years of public hearings, litigation and EIS findings, and the Plan will not be revised for at least 4-5 more years. Sierra Club participated in these earlier deliberations. Despite the Orders and Plan, the two SNF law enforcement staff currently have trouble preventing significant damage to natural areas from ATV users who have “handicapped” permits to ride through the forest. There are currently many examples of mud holes and areas torn up by ATVs in the forest.

In addition, the ATV lobby has been accelerating their pressure on IDNR to use federal trails funds for designating trails on our Illinois State Parks. It looks like IDNR is now focused on Sahara Woods Fish and Wildlife Area, which is a state park off of IL Route 13 between Marion and Harrisburg, as the first state park to be opened to ATVs. This is a dangerous precedent. In the past, IDNR has used these federal funds for grants to private ATV parks. There are at least two of these parks in Southern Illinois – one is near Sahara Woods. So why is there a need to tear up public lands?

Who would ever think that the noise and disruption caused by ATVs should share a park or a forest with people who want to hunt, fish, hike or go bird watching? My guess is only people riding noisy, mud-slinging vehicles who are not able to appreciate a natural area because ATVs are just not compatible with quiet enjoyment of nature – and the people who profit from selling these vehicles.

*(Continued on Page 2)*

**What you can do: Write to U.S. Representative Mike Bost, Representative Brandon Phelps,**

and your other representatives in the U.S. Congress and in the Illinois State Legislature (see list on Page 7). Let them know why you are concerned about ATVs on public lands. Some ideas for talking points are below:

- ATV use creates increased erosion, spreads invasive species and creates a need for increased maintenance of trails.
- ATV users often do not stay on trails, but stray off of the trails, creating new trails and causing damage in previously unspoiled areas. The new trails also fragment habitat for animals.
- ATV use has been proven to spoil habitat for animals and native plants, leading to lower populations of wildlife and lower quality of natural areas.
- ATV use is incompatible with most other recreational uses. ATV advocates claim that horse riding and hunting are compatible, but what hunter wants that noise and what horse rider wants their horse “spooked” by the vehicles?
- ATV noise can travel a mile or more, scaring birds and other wildlife.
- People go to natural areas for peace & quiet and solitude. ATV noise travels a mile or more.
- Trail damage caused by ATVs will put an even greater burden on the trail maintenance budgets of the Illinois Dept. of Natural Resources and the Forest Service, forcing the agencies to choose between maintenance of ATV trails and trails for hikers, bicycle riders and horse riders.
- More ATV riders on public lands will lead to more conflicts between the ATVers and other recreationists. Such conflicts in Shawnee National Forest have led to at least one court case of assault by ATVers and documented cases of tourists being driven away by ATVers.
- ATV recreation on public lands run counter to the Forest Service concept of “sustained yield” – ATV riders often leave ruts that remain for years or even decades as scars on the land. As budgets are cut to austerity levels, it becomes impossible to heal many of these scars.
- Degradation of the natural resources by “thrill seekers” and “mudders” will make it much harder to sustain the resources for our children and grandchildren.
- Tourism will most likely decrease with increased usage by ATV riders. More ATVers may come to Southern Illinois, but other tourists will go elsewhere.

“There is disagreement as to whether the use of ATV/OHMs should be allowed. Some believe that ATV/OHM use has no more effects than equestrian use and should be allowed anywhere horses are allowed. Others believe that ATV/OHM use has caused resource damage and user conflicts in the past, but could be an important recreational use if carefully managed. Still others see ATV/OHM use as totally incompatible with environmental protection and other recreational uses. After programmatic analysis of current unauthorized use, use on other national forests, the prohibition of use on state lands, use on private ATV riding areas and the costs and benefits of potential ATV/OHM use, it is clear that comprehensively addressing the anticipated adverse effects on safety, the environment and Forest resources from the use of these vehicles, and prevention of unauthorized use, would require an investment of funds and staffing for program analysis and development that would preclude virtually any other recreation-program activity. Such a resource investment in the foreseeable future to establish an essentially new recreational use of the Forest far outweighs any benefits of establishing this recreational activity. Because of this, the 2006 Forest Plan adopts the prohibition of ATV/OHM use from the 1995 district court injunction and continues the 1997 Forest Supervisor decision and closure order prohibiting ATV/OHM use on the Forest, except as allowed for administrative use, by emergency vehicles and under permit.” -- *Record of Decision Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Land and Resource Management Plan, Shawnee National Forest, Forest Service, Eastern Region, United States Department of Agriculture, 2006.*  
[http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE\\_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5151583.pdf](http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5151583.pdf)

## **FALL 2016 SIERRA CLUB OUTINGS**

### **Bell Smith Springs Hike, Saturday, September 10, 2016**

Meet by the Murdale sign in the Murdale shopping center parking lot in Carbondale before **11 am**, or at the [Bell Smith Springs Mill Branch trail](#) at **noon**. [Mill Branch, aka Hill Branch, is accessed from the Hunting Branch parking area](#). We will hike the Mill Branch trail, and possibly also the Natural Bridge trail, which are moderate hikes of 2 miles and 1.5 miles respectively. We will see beautiful views of canyons and waterfalls as well as many wildflowers. Wear appropriate hiking shoes, and bring water and a hiking staff. The leader is Steve Eberhart. Call Steve at 618-967-8690 to go on the outing.

### **Canoe Outing, Cache River, Saturday, September 24, 2016**

We will meet by the Murdale sign at the Murdale shopping center parking lot in Carbondale before 8 am and then drive to the Cache River. You can also meet at [240 Dean Lane, Ullin, IL](#) before 9 am. The canoe outing will start at 9 am and will last for 2-3 hours. Canoes will be provided by [White Crane Canoe Rentals & Guide Service](#). You will not need to bring your own. The cost will range from \$20 to \$30 depending upon the number of participants. To go on this outing, and to reserve the proper number of canoes for the group, you must contact Steve Eberhart at 618-967-8690 by September 17th.

### **Wolf Den Hollow Trail Hike, Sunday, October 2, 2016.**

Call Bob Mulcahy at 618-942-6342 for directions and to sign up for this hike.

### **Wildflower Walk at Gum Springs/Hoggs Bluff/Split Rock, Sunday, October 16, 2016**

Chris Benda will interpret and instruct us on wildflower identification at three high quality natural areas. Trail difficulty is **moderate**. Outing lasts **four hours**. Limited to 20 participants. You **MUST reserve** your spot. Barb McKasson is the Sierra Club outings leader for this walk, and she will coordinate reservations with Chris. For people who want to carpool from Carbondale, we will meet at NOON at the big Murdale shopping center sign in their parking lot. We will then carpool to meet Chris at 1:00 PM at the Ozark General Store on Hwy. 45 in Ozark. Bring water and a snack and wear sturdy shoes. Call Barb to reserve a spot at 618-529-4824. Leave a voice mail if I don't answer. Deadline for reservations for carpooling is Thursday, October 13<sup>th</sup>.

### **Pomona Natural Bridge and Cave Valley Trail Hike, Saturday, November 5, 2016**

Meet at 10 am at the Pomona Natural Bridge parking lot. To get there, take 127 south from Murphysboro, turn for Pomona and follow signs to the natural bridge. We will hike the natural bridge and nearby Cave Valley trail, a moderate hike of just under two miles. Wear hiking shoes and bring water and a hiking staff. **Note: Registration is required.** The hike will be cancelled if not enough people sign up. Call Steve Eberhart at 618-967-8690 in order to go on the hike.

Sometimes other Sierra Club Chapters organize outings in and near southern Illinois, so also check the national and state Sierra Outings websites periodically for opportunities.

National: <http://content.sierraclub.org/outings/>

Illinois Chapter: <http://illinois.sierraclub.org/calendar>

#### **Piasa Palisades Group Outings Chair:**

Carol Klinger, 618-288-5506, [ciklinger@yahoo.com](mailto: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](mailto:douglas.k.melville@gmail.com)  
<http://sierraclub.org/missouri/eastern-missouri>

#### **Future Outings TBA:**

Updates listed on our website:

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

Other short notice outings and events may be announced on our Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/SierraClubShawnee>

**Call for articles and photographs for Shawnee Trails!** The next Winter issue will be published in late November. Please send your Word, PDF or JPG files to [sabrina@midwest.net](mailto:sabrina@midwest.net) by **November 7th**.

**FALL 2016 PROGRAMS NOTE: Start time at 7 PM!**

**Location: REAR** entrance, through green door in alley, of the Carbondale Township Meeting Room at 217 East Main, across from Rock Hill Baptist Church (at Monroe and Marion Streets). The front door is locked! FREE and open to the public. Refreshments and socializing before and after meeting.

**Thursday, September 8, 2016 at 7 pm**  
**Speaker:** Bev Shofstal, Bobcats, Coyotes, and Foxes. Oh my! (Bev may bring a fox!)  
**Dinner at 5 pm:** TBA

**Thursday, October 13, 2016 at 7 pm**  
**Speaker:** Marjorie Brooks, Campus Lake  
**Dinner at 5 pm:** TBA

**Thursday, November 10, 2016 at 7 pm**  
**Speaker:** Brooks M. Burr, Catfish, Carp, Water Quality and Other Challenges  
**Dinner at 5 pm:** TBA

**Thursday, December 8, 2016 at 7 pm**  
**Speaker:** John Schwegman, Essays on the Natural Heritage of Illinois  
**Dinner at 5 pm:** TBA



## YES, I Am A 100% Clean Energy Voter!

We all win when we move to clean energy. By switching to renewable energy and energy conservation, we can create good jobs where they are needed most, save on utility bills, and give our kids clean air and a brighter future by cutting the carbon pollution that threatens our planet.

Renewables are ready, if we make the right choices. In 2015, we saw renewable energy adding more power to the grid than coal, oil, and gas combined. Now is the time to bring solar and wind technologies to our communities and to create new jobs that make our neighborhoods healthier and safer.

We need leaders who are 100% committed to clean energy. We won't win the future we want with politicians who reject science, cling to the past, and want to divide us. We need leaders who will act on our shared values and our vision for a nation powered by 100% clean energy.

**SIGN the pledge** to help Illinois Chapter today and let's move towards the clean energy future!

## Sierra Club Endorsed Candidates on the November 2016 Ballot in Southern Illinois

- **U.S. President:** [Hillary Clinton](#)
- **U.S. Senate:** [Tammy Duckworth](#)

Local Sierra Club members review records and interview legislative and congressional candidates to determine their positions on environmental issues, including:

- ▶ Illinois' Clean Jobs Bill ([SB 1485/HB2607](#)) which would create up to 32,000 jobs per year in clean energy, reduce carbon pollution, and save consumers \$1.6 billion on power bills
- ▶ the need to address threats to our water supply, including nutrient pollution, invasive species, and toxic chemicals, through better pollution controls and public investment in clean water infrastructure
- ▶ opportunities to protect open space, wildlife habitat, and boost local tourism through conservation programs

As of the writing of this newsletter, Sierra Club has not endorsed any southern Illinois ballots' candidates except Tammy Duckworth. A number of central and northern Illinois candidates have been endorsed. The [full list of endorsed Illinois candidates](#) may be further updated before the November 2016 election, as may be the [national list](#), so check again before going to the polls.

# Are you 100% for Clean Energy? Be a 100% voter!

**PLEDGE to Volunteer for this cause with the local Shawnee Group Sierra Club**

#VoteClimateIL  
#Vote100IL

While the Pledge link on Page 4 lets Illinois Chapter Sierra Club know you want to help at the state level, please also let the local Shawnee Group Sierra Club board know that you want to help local southern Illinois Clean Energy initiatives.  
**Print, complete and mail this page to:**  
Shawnee Group Sierra Club  
PO Box 117, Carbondale, IL 62903-0117

**We all win when we move to clean energy.** By switching to renewable energy and energy conservation, we can create good jobs where they are needed most, save on utility bills, and give our kids clean air and a brighter future by cutting the carbon pollution that threatens our planet.

**Renewables are ready, if we make the right choices.** In 2015, we saw renewable energy adding more power to the grid than coal, oil, and gas *combined*. Now is the time to bring solar and wind technologies to our communities and to create new jobs that make our neighborhoods healthier and safer.

**We need leaders who are 100% committed to clean energy.** We won't win the future we want with leaders who reject science, cling to the past, and want to divide us. We can make our communities and America clean again with leaders who share our values -- if we do our part!

**YES, I am 100% Voter!** Between today and election day, I will support candidates who:

- Accept the science of climate change, and support the Clean Power Plan and other steps to reduce carbon pollution
- Will support policies that help move us toward 100% clean energy to improve our health and create good-paying clean energy jobs in our neighborhoods - especially for communities currently harmed by dirty fossil fuels
- Support the bi-partisan Illinois Clean Jobs Bill which will: increase renewable energy to 35% by 2030, increase energy efficiency so that we reduce energy use by 20% by 2025, and reduce dangerous carbon pollution.
- Use their power to make sure my local utility—Ameren--commits to strong energy efficiency policies, that measure up to energy efficiency benefits in other parts of IL.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

I'm 100% for clean energy - here's how I can help:

- I will support candidates in my community that are also ready for 100% Clean Energy - tell me more!
- I would like to receive text message updates
- I want to volunteer, and I'm best at these tasks: \_\_\_\_\_
- I will follow [@SierraClubIL on twitter](#) and/or [like Sierra Club Illinois on Facebook](#) for more state updates
- I will follow and [like Shawnee Group Sierra Club on Facebook](#) for more local southern Illinois updates

## CAFO Alert: High Cost of Cheap Meat

by Patty Weyhrich and Jane Cogie

Please review the [Illinois Environmental Council \(IEC\) action alert](#), which provides information on concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs), their proliferation in Illinois, and also the harsh consequences of these facilities for the animals raised within their confines and for the people living nearby. IEC references a recent Chicago Tribune exposé: “[The price of pork: Cheap meat comes at high cost in Illinois](#).” Is cheap meat worth the agony that animals and their human neighbors must endure? Is cheap meat worth it?

Take two actions to make your voice heard:

- First, complete the [IEC petition](#) to let your local legislators know your concerns.
- Second, if you are a Jackson County resident, complete the survey on the pros and cons of zoning, accessible through the Jackson County website, <http://www.jacksoncounty-il.gov/> (To reach the survey, scroll halfway down the website to “Zoning Exploration Survey”, and click on the “Learn More” link). This survey was created by a Jackson County Board subcommittee currently studying zoning—its impacts and potential configurations. Zoning laws may help increase transparency in local government and allow a broader range of citizens to have a voice in development within their counties. Mail or email the completed survey or comments to the attention of Jennifer Huson, Committee Coordinator; Jackson County Board; 1001 Walnut Street; Murphysboro, IL 62966; [jhuson@jacksoncounty-il.gov](mailto:jhuson@jacksoncounty-il.gov).

Given recent non-residential construction in Jackson County, including the chicken factory being built next to Cedar Lake ([see our March 2016 newsletter article](#)), the county’s main watershed and a municipal water supply, constituent responses are important.

### **H.R. 5560: Public Safety and Wildlife Protection Act**

A bill recently introduced in the House of Representatives would prohibit interstate commerce in two specific and notorious types of body-gripping devices: Conibear traps (also known as “kill-type” traps) and steel-jaw leghold traps. Use of the latter is already illegal in over 80 countries.

These devices are cruel, indiscriminate, and outdated and should be banned.

Please ask your member of Congress to co-sponsor this legislation ([H.R. 5560](#), the Public Safety and Wildlife Protection Act): <http://bit.ly/2akSLRo>

### **Send Your Comments re Shawnee Parkway**

The proposed 4-lane Shawnee Parkway project from I57 to Cape Girardeau is still pending. Read our earlier [March 2016 newsletter article](#) about its [impact](#) to the Shawnee National Forest and other southern Illinois natural areas. Updates are posted to [Citizens for Southernmost Illinois](#) and [Shawnee Parkway](#) project websites.

1. Sign the Illinois Chapter Sierra Club [petition](#).
2. Send Comments to: [www.shawneeparkway.org](http://www.shawneeparkway.org). Click “Contact Us” and “[Send Us a Comment](#)” OR mail to: Jeffrey Keirn, Illinois Dept. of Transportation, Division of Highways, Region 5, District 9, PO Box 100, Carbondale, IL 62903-0100

The Illinois Chapter Sierra Club’s Frack Fight Team is steered by Terri Treacy ([terri.treacy@sierraclub.org](mailto: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](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: [https://secure.sierraclub.org/site/SPageNavigator/Chapter/il\\_newsletter\\_signup.html;jsessionid=84420F4C49A5A8CD264E1E3C3F131E25.app205a](https://secure.sierraclub.org/site/SPageNavigator/Chapter/il_newsletter_signup.html;jsessionid=84420F4C49A5A8CD264E1E3C3F131E25.app205a)

## Take Steps to Cleaner Power

...even the [road could be a source of power](#) in the [Clean Power Plan](#) future.

If you are an Ameren or ComEd electric utility customer, you have a choice of Illinois Industrial Commission certified and registered **power suppliers** for electricity that comes through the electric lines. Some suppliers are fossil fuel or nuclear sourced, and increasingly others are partly or more fully renewable energy sourced. Check [Plug In Illinois](#) for supplier choices and links to their websites for further information about whether they're fossil fuel or nuclear powered, or the newer solar, wind, hydro- and biomass power from across the grid.



### Energy Efficient Design, Passive Heating and Cooling

For new construction or repairs, ideas include the following references for NetZero and passive heating and cooling homes and landscaping:

[Solar Decathlon](#)

[Energy.gov, Energy Efficient Home Design](#)

Roof-top and yard PV solar panels for home and business electrification, and water heaters, has potential for reverse metering back to the grid. WDBX Community Radio just installed solar panels, which powers 50% of their electrical needs to broadcast to southern Illinois. Local solar installers, trade groups and higher education can help you learn more about incentives, or even train into this new job sector.

[Advanced Energy Solutions Group,](#)

[StraightUp Solar,](#)

[Affordable Solar,](#)

[Solar Systems of Indiana,](#)

[Illinois Solar Tour,](#)

[Illinois Solar Energy Association,](#)

[Midwest Renewable Energy Association,](#)

[Center for Renewable Energy, Illinois State](#)

[University](#)



### Illinois Legislative Contacts: Call Your Legislators Today!

State Dist. 109 Rep. David Reis: 618-392-0108 or 217-782-2087; [www.davidreis.org](http://www.davidreis.org)

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

State Dist. 116 - Rep. Jerry Costello II - 618-282-7284; 217-782-1018 [Staterepcostello@gmail.com](mailto:Staterepcostello@gmail.com)

State Dist. 117 - Rep. John Bradley - 618-997-9697; 217-782-1051; [repjohnbradley@mychoice.net](mailto:repjohnbradley@mychoice.net)

State Rep. 118 - Rep. Brandon Phelps - 618-253-4189; 217-782-5131; [bpphelps118@gmail.com](mailto:bpphelps118@gmail.com)

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

Senate Dist. 58 - Senator Dave Luechtefeld: 618-243-9014; 217-782-8137; [sendavel@midwest.net](mailto:sendavel@midwest.net)

Senate Dist. 59 - Senator Gary Forby: 618-439-2504; 217-782-5509; [www.senatorforby.com](http://www.senatorforby.com)

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

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](mailto:jcullerton@senatedem.illinois.gov)

### Congressional Contacts

Senator Dick Durbin: 618-351-1122; 202-224-2152; [durbin.senate.gov](http://durbin.senate.gov)

Senator Mark Kirk: 202-224-2854; 312-886-3506; [kirk.senate.gov](http://kirk.senate.gov)

Representative Mike Bost: 618-457-5787; 202-225-5661; [bost.house.gov](http://bost.house.gov)

Representative John Shimkus: 618-252-8271; 202-225-5271; [shimkus.house.gov](http://shimkus.house.gov)

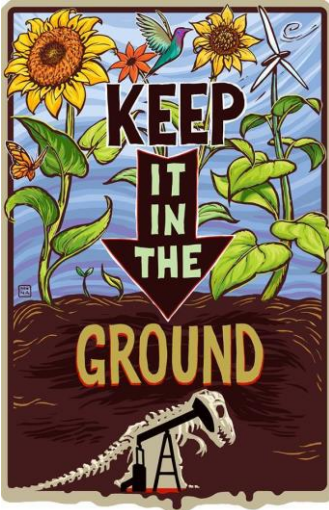
## Has Your Email Address Changed?

To continue 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](mailto:jane.cogie@gmail.com)

At any time you can read current and past newsletters on the Shawnee Group website:

<http://www.sierraclub.org/illinois/shawnee> Visit the website also for information on upcoming local programs and outings as well as state and national Sierra Club issues.



### Volunteers Needed to Help Protect the 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](mailto:babitaji@aol.com) if you are interested in helping in any way.

### 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.

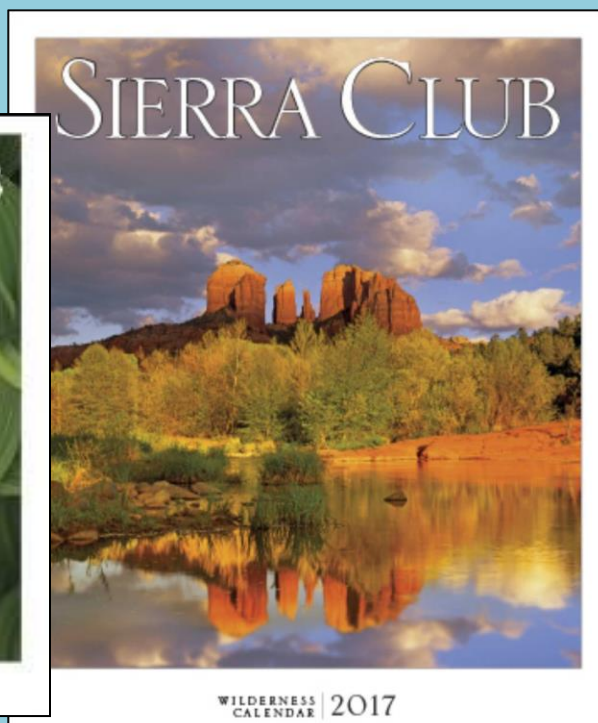
Board terms are for two years.

We are always interested in potential candidates.

## 2017 Sierra Club Calendars Available!

Buy at our monthly meetings this fall. Or contact Barb McKasson ([babitaji@aol.com](mailto:babitaji@aol.com)).

We also seek volunteers to sell calendars.



### We also need:

#### Hospitality team members

Provide refreshments for one monthly meeting each year (second 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 Program Chair Ruth Kelley at (618) 684-2196

or [rth\\_kelley@yahoo.com](mailto:rth_kelley@yahoo.com).