



**SIERRA
CLUB**
FOUNDED 1892

Shawnee Trails



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

Sierra Club – Shawnee Group

September – November 2022 QUARTERLY

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PO Box 172, Carbondale, IL 62903-0172
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also <http://shawneegroup.blogspot.com>

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Stay Informed on Clean Energy Workforce Funding Opportunities

Jane Cogie, Downstate Caucus Representative, Shawnee Group Sierra Club

A year after the passage of the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA), Illinois government agencies are beginning to turn the law into a reality. This comprehensive bill sets Illinois on a course to achieve a completely carbon-free power sector by 2045 and prioritizes environmental justice communities for pollution reductions. Additionally, it provides over \$80 million a year for workforce development and contract development programs targeted in currently under-resourced communities. These CEJA’s [equitable workforce programs](#) are highly significant for southern Illinois because they will create dozens of opportunities for resources and investment in Community Based Organizations that support a clean jobs economy throughout Illinois. (For the full text of CEJA, go to <https://www.ilga.gov/legislation/102/SB/PDF/10200SB24081v.pdf> For Citizens Utility Board’s helpful summary of CEJA, go to <https://www.citizensutilityboard.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Climate-Equitable-Jobs-Act-CEJA.pdf>)

It is exciting that Carbondale, Alton, and East St. Louis are among the handful of Illinois cities chosen to be workforce hubs. Yet that initial designation is only the beginning. Assuring that our communities and ones nearby benefit from these hubs in a way that is equitable and responsive to the specific needs of their residents will require advocacy now. The department tasked with implementing the hubs will soon be starting a Request for Information process to gather feedback on how to ensure the funds are distributed equitably, with local feedback fully considered. Community Based Organizations should [share your contact information here](#) to be notified about this Request for Information, as well as to be notified over time when CEJA funding opportunities become available.

Wondering if an organization meets the definition of a Community Based Organization? Within the full text of CEJA, “Community Based Organization” is defined as “an organization that: (1) provides employment, skill development, or related services to members of the community; (2) includes community colleges, nonprofits, and local governments; (3) has at least one main operating office; and (4) demonstrates relationships with local residents and other organizations serving the community.”

Want to know more about the department gathering feedback on the workforce development hubs and other CEJA programs? The Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) is tasked with setting up CEJA programs and funding opportunities, with the additional focus of “helping Illinois residents be prepared and trained to capitalize on the jobs created by this Act and to provide support to workers and communities facing plant closures.” (See the DCEO <https://www2.illinois.gov/dceo/Documents/CEJA%20one%20pager.pdf>)

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources recently reopened the [Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program \(CREP\)](#). The CREP program is a partnership between the United States Department of Agriculture and the State of Illinois to “retire frequently flooded and environmentally sensitive cropland in order to achieve restoration and long-term protection of those areas.”

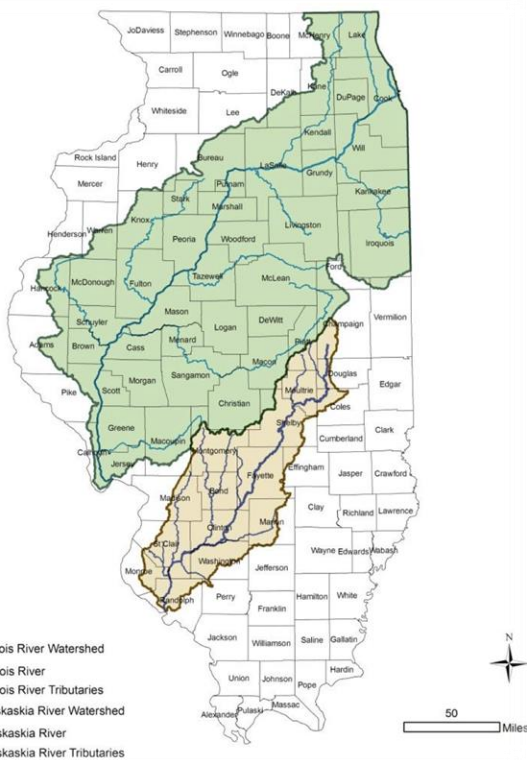


The CREP program allows landowners to voluntarily implement conservation measures on land that has been recently cropped in the Illinois or Kaskaskia River watersheds, and also meets at least one of the following criteria:

- Is in the 100-year floodplain.
- Qualifies as wetlands, wetlands farmed under natural conditions, or prior converted wetlands.
- Is highly erodible land (HEL) with an erodibility index of 8 or greater adjacent to the 100-year floodplain.

Map by State of Illinois of land eligible for CREP

Landowners interested in implementing conservation practices can receive technical assistance from their local USDA Service Center and local Soil and Water Conservation District. These local agencies can provide help and technical assistance designing conservation practices to reduce nutrient pollution and create habitat for wildlife. Sierra Club Illinois encourages all landowners in the Illinois and Kaskaskia watersheds to consider reaching out to their County USDA office to learn more about these programs. [\(Here is the list of Illinois SWCDs.\)](#)



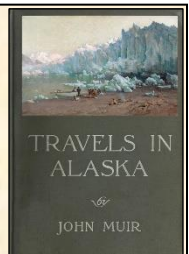
Tharran Hobson, Shawnee Group Sierra Club member, had a very good experience with signing some of his farm land in Brown County into the Conservation Enhancement Program almost 20 years ago:

“I own 160 acres and 20 acres of the farm was in a creek bottom tributary of the Illinois River. The first 5 years I owned the property the creek flooded out the crop in 3 of those years. Being a conservationist, I heard about the CREP program through the NRCS and applied. My restoration prescription was tree plantings so it made sense to do a permanent easement. Permanent easements also carry the highest up-front payment and annual rental payment. This area is now one of my favorite spots on the farm. The program also allows a small percentage to be planted to wildlife food plots. The deer and turkey love this new habitat, and so do I.”

Rediscovering John Muir

Book reviews by John Magney

I first encountered the writing of John Muir sometime back in the 1970s. It was a wonderful collection of pieces about his early life -- growing up in Wisconsin, his avoidance of the Civil War draft and his incredible overland trek through the south to the Gulf coast. I thought his prose style a bit quaint, but he surely knew how to tell a good story. When I subsequently read some of his descriptive pieces about Yosemite and the California mountains, I was struck by the clarity of his explanations of geologic history and other scientific matters. This dude was a very talented writer.



I thought I had a pretty good understanding of Muir's writing career, but during a spring trip to Alaska, I came across a collection I had not read: three pieces he wrote about trips he took to Alaska in 1879, 1880 and 1890 -- [Travels in Alaska](#) (still in print in a Random House paperback). *(Continued on Page 5)*

FALL 2022: VIRTUAL SHAWNEE GROUP SIERRA CLUB MEMBER PROGRAMS

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

Thursday, September 8, 2022, 7 – 8 pm

Presentation: "Overview and Insight into Coal Mining and Issues in the Shawnee Group Area"

Presenter: Joyce Blumenshine, Illinois Chapter Sierra Mining Issues Team member

Location: Via Zoom. (Registration information and access to the Zoom link for this program will be shared by email and on our website event page, <https://www.sierraclub.org/illinois/shawnee/events>; **scroll down** to the **spreadsheet** at the very bottom, click open this event's title and **fill out** your name, email and info. The spreadsheet is also at www.sctrips.org.)

This virtual slide program gives a brief overview of coal mining in southern Illinois and where active coal mines are located. The program focuses on the largest producing mines, with updates on environmental and local impacts. Coal mining is most often "out-of-sight and out-of-mind" as people do not see mining around them. Illinois was the fourth highest state in coal production in the nation in 2020. The U.S. is the fourth highest producer of coal in the world out of the top five countries. This program will expand your awareness of coal mining in the Shawnee Group area, the kinds of mines, and the environmental justice and legacy impacts of this mining. It is relevant for anyone concerned with the impact of coal mining on our area's vital natural resources.

Joyce Blumenshine got involved in fighting coal mines when her local area Sierra Club group was contacted to help stop a mining proposal at Rice Lake State Fish & Wildlife Area in the 1980's. After that, coal mine calls kept coming. She currently assists on the Illinois Chapter Sierra Club Mining Issues Team, which is open to any Sierra member. The group is actively planning virtual programs and is also working on a longwall mining impacts tour. Contact Joyce for more information: joblumen@yahoo.com / 309-678-1011

Thursday, October 13, 2022, 7 – 8 pm

Presentation: "Plants of Concern: A Community Science Rare Plant Monitoring Program"

Presenter: Chris Benda, Botanist, former President of the Illinois Native Plant Society, and Coordinator of Plants of Concern-Southern Illinois

Location: Via Zoom. (Registration information and access to the Zoom link for this program will be shared by email and on our website event page, <https://www.sierraclub.org/illinois/shawnee/events>; **scroll down** to the **spreadsheet** at the very bottom, click open this event's title and **fill out** your name, email and info. The spreadsheet is also at www.sctrips.org.)

Thursday, November 10, 2022, 7 – 8 pm

Presentation: "Giant City, Off the Beaten Path"

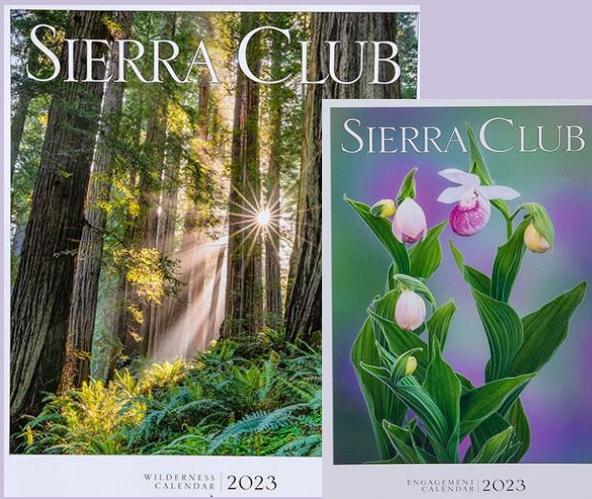
Presenter: Jennifer Randolph-Bollinger, Natural Resources Coordinator, Giant City State Park

Location: Via Zoom. (Registration information and access to the Zoom link for this program will be shared by email and on our website event page, <https://www.sierraclub.org/illinois/shawnee/events>; **scroll down** to the **spreadsheet** at the very bottom, click open this event's title and **fill out** your name, email and info. The spreadsheet is also at www.sctrips.org.)

At close to 1 million visitors a year, most people have walked the "streets" of Giant City and visited the CCC built lodge. But Giant City has lesser known treasures to find if you know where to look. Join Jennifer Randolph-Bollinger, as she shares some of her favorite off-the-beaten-path gems, such as rare and interesting plants, "secret" waterfalls, old home sites, and even an air strip!

2023 Sierra Club Calendar Sale!

Contact Barb McKasson, 618-549-9684,
ba4ba5lu@aol.com.



FALL 2022 – SHAWNEE GROUP SIERRA CLUB OUTINGS

Cache River Hike, Sunday, September 25, 2022, 10 am

Meet at the Cache River Wetlands Visitors Center before 10 am. This will be an easy hike along this beautiful and unique ecological area. You must call Jon Womack at 815-263-9625 in order to attend this hike.

Inspiration Point Ecology Hike, Sunday, October 16, 2022, 10 am

Meet either at the Rural King parking lot in Carbondale before 10 am or at McCann Springs picnic area before 11 am. Inspiration Point is one of the most iconic spots in the Shawnee National Forest. Hear about the ecology, plants and animals found in the area as we walk the trail. Bring water and wear appropriate hiking shoes. You must contact Kevin Rohling at 618-695-3383 in order to attend this hike.

Piney Creek Ravine Hike, Sunday, November 13, 2022, 10 am

Meet at the corner of route 4 and 151 in Ava before 10 am. We will hike to the Piney Creek Ravine and see ancient Indian petroglyphs and rocky bluffs. Bring water, a hiking staff and wear appropriate shoes. You must contact Bob Mulcahy, the hiking leader, at 618-942-6342 in order to attend the hike.

Fountain Bluff & Pomona Natural Bridge Hike, Sunday, December 4, 2022, 10 am

Meet in the Murphysboro Hardees parking lot before 10 am. We will first visit 1,000-year-old native American **petroglyphs** at Fountain Bluff near Gorham and then go to beautiful Pomona natural bridge. Both hikes will be of mild difficulty and will be relatively short. If there is interest, we will stop at either Pomona Winery or Hickory Ridge Winery following the hikes. Wear appropriate hiking shoes. You must call Steve Eberhart at 618-967-8690 in order to attend this hike.

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/>

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](https://www.facebook.com/SierraClubShawneeGroup)) 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:

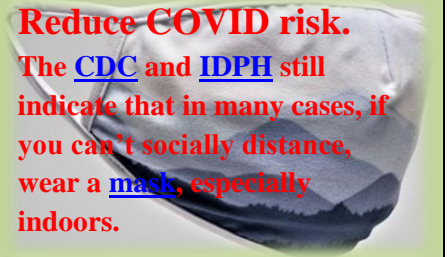
Carol Klinger, 618-288-5506, ciklinger@yahoo.com
<http://www.sierraclub.org/illinois/piasa-palisades>

Eastern Missouri Group Outings Chair:

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

Reduce COVID risk.

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



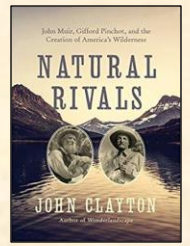
ALERT: Sugar Camp Energy LLC coal mine pipeline spill, July 18th, impacting already polluted Big Muddy River. Read more [here](#).

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>

(Rediscovering John Muir, Continued from Page 2)

When he made these trips, Alaska had a rather loose connection to the rest of the country and Muir encountered many native peoples whose traditional ways had not yet been greatly altered. Much of his time on these trips was spent exploring the glaciers flowing out of the coastal mountains in the Alaskan panhandle. One of the things he documented, using clever stakes in the ice measuring system, was the very slow movement of these huge agglomerations of ice.



As with much of Muir's writing, the three pieces in [Travels in Alaska](#) offer a very readable mix of scientific observations about plants, animals and landscape features and entertaining stories about the people he encountered and his experiences out exploring the different glaciers. The most memorable story is one about him getting lost on a wandering day trek across a dangerous ice field with his little dog Stickeen; had they not finally found their way back to camp around nightfall, his plan was: "to keep from freezing, I could only jump up and down until morning on a piece of flat ice between the crevasses, dance to the boding music of winds and waters." He doesn't say what Stickeen would have done, however. Lots of barking and tail chasing, perhaps.

A few weeks after finishing [Travels in Alaska](#), my rediscovery of Muir continued with a reading of John Clayton's [Natural Rivals: John Muir, Gifford Pinchot, and the Creation of America's Public Lands](#). (First published in 2019, it is now out as a Pegasus paperback.) Although Clayton has no formal credentials as a historian (he identifies himself as a "fulltime freelance writer"), his list of references, footnotes and acknowledgements indicate that he is a very conscientious independent scholar.

[Natural Rivals](#) is divided into two parts. In the first set of chapters, we get a close look at Muir and Pinchot's life histories and an assessment of the relationship between the two men. Muir grew up in a poor Wisconsin farm family that had emigrated to the U.S. from Scotland. After leaving the family farm, he bounced around for a number of years -- studying briefly at the University of Wisconsin, going to Canada to avoid the draft, working in a broom factory after returning to the U.S., doing his amazing thousand-mile hike across the south and then moving out to California to explore -- and write about -- the high mountains in and around Yosemite. Finally, at the age of 42, his life became more settled when he married the daughter of a wealthy Bay area doctor and took on the job of managing the doc's large fruit and nut tree orchard outside Martinez.

Muir had already achieved some success as a writer when he got married. A number of newspapers and magazines had used his work and he'd gotten a research article on giant sequoias published by a professional science journal. He was apparently a rather slow writer, but he kept at it and eventually became a regular correspondent for [The Century](#) magazine, which -- according to Clayton -- "was a [New Yorker](#) of its day." In 1890, the editor of [Century](#) collaborated with Muir on a major publicity campaign urging Congress to pass a bill giving the federal government administrative control of Yosemite Park. And it worked, with the Yosemite bill being signed into law in the fall of 1890. By the turn of the century, Muir had become the figurehead leader of a new "social hiking group" for middle class Bay area folk known as [drumroll] the Sierra Club. And in the famous 1903 encounter, Muir took President Theodore Roosevelt on an overnight camping trip into the Yosemite high country.

Gifford Pinchot came from a background that was greatly different from John Muir's. His Pennsylvania blue-blood family had lots of money, thanks to a grandfather who had been a very successful clear-cutting timber baron. Pinchot's education included studies at an exclusive prep school, undergraduate work at Yale and -- after he decided what he wanted to do with his life -- coursework at a French forestry school. After he came back to the U.S., he landed a job as the manager of forests at George Harriman's huge (125 square mile) Biltmore estate in North Carolina. At Biltmore and then later with a National Forest Commission, Pinchot became known for his outspoken advocacy of "efficient" forest management. In 1897, he went to work for the federal government. After a short stint in the Interior Department, he was appointed to lead the Division of Forestry in the Department of Agriculture. Pinchot was a close friend of Theodore Roosevelt, and when TR became president after the assassination of McKinley, he became the president's go-to advisor on all issues dealing with public lands. In 1905 Pinchot became the first head of the newly created U.S. Forest Service, where he worked with Roosevelt on efforts to greatly expand the agency's forest holdings around the country.

(Continued on Page 6)

(Rediscovering John Muir, Continued from Page 5)

Muir and Pinchot are described as "rivals" because of their contrary views on public forestlands. Muir is called a "preservationist" because of his often-repeated arguments about maintaining forests in a natural pristine state, while Pinchot is considered a "conservationist" because of his writings about the need to manage forests for their long-term commercial use. Despite their differing views, Muir and Pinchot maintained a friendly letter-writing relationship with each other (an earlier Muir biographer who claimed the two had a major falling was incorrect, Clayton tells us). The two also remained on speaking terms during the heated controversy over damming up the Hetch Hetchy valley (which closely resembled the Yosemite Valley) to provide a reliable water supply for San Francisco. Pinchot -- who was on the Sierra Club board -- supported the Hetch Hetchy project, while Muir opposed it and got the Club involved in a lobbying campaign to stop the dam (which ultimately failed).

(Continued on Page 8)



VOTE! DEADLINE is NOVEMBER 30th

Look for Illinois Chapter's *The Prairie State Update* in your mailbox soon. Shawnee Group Sierra Club ExCom candidate bios & ballots will be in this brochure, and here, Pages 6-7.

Tharran Hobson

Pleased to introduce myself to fellow Sierra Club members. I have been a conservation professional for 28 years. Four years ago, I had the privilege of being named the Southern Illinois Program Director for The Nature Conservancy. My family absolutely fell in love with southern Illinois, and we enjoy hiking, biking, and paddling around our natural wonders. I've worked in conservation in southern Illinois over eleven years, guiding our Invasive Species Strike Team and later our Interagency Habitat and Fuels Crew. Prior, my career transitioned from the US Fish and Wildlife Service to The Nature Conservancy where I've been for 24 years. I'm currently a board member of the Prairie State Conservation Coalition and was past president of Friends of the Illinois River, Versailles Fire Protection District, and LaMoine River Ecosystem Partnership. I am interested in stewarding some of the best remaining habitats in Illinois, right here in the Shawnee.

Carla Womack

For many years, I have been interested in doing what I can to help slow pollution and climate change in our world. I have been composting and recycling. I know that individuals can't make the changes ourselves...we need to work together. I try to educate others on what we can do to try to slow the destruction of our planet. Making contact with our legislators (who have the power to do something-change laws and policies that will help with ways to consume less energy) is something we all must do more of, too. I try to reach out to mine when I can. I have been a member of Sierra Club for about 20 years but have been an active member of the Shawnee Group for the last 7. I would like your vote to help me continue the fight for change. Thank you.

Steve Eberhart

I am a retired psychologist and live in rural Murphysboro. I have been a Sierra Club member for 25 years and have served on the executive committee for the last 10 years. I have had the privilege of being the outings chair for the Shawnee chapter since 2013 and would like to continue to be able to help organize and lead hikes throughout southern Illinois.

Patty Weyhrich

I am grateful for the abundance of natural beauty and biodiversity in southern Illinois. The Shawnee Group does a lot to bring people outdoors and to help our natural areas through hands-on work, education, and advocacy. Protecting and respecting nature's diversity of plants and all animals is something I value. I believe that our food choices, practicing sustainable agriculture, and how we use and produce energy are important to stabilize our path forward and care for our shared home in the world.



VOTE! DEADLINE is NOVEMBER 30th

Look for Illinois Chapter's *The Prairie State Update* in your mailbox soon. Shawnee Group Sierra Club ExCom candidate bios & ballots will be in this brochure, and here, Pages 6-7.



Read **EXCOM CANDIDATE BIOS** on Page 6



Shawnee Group Ballot

Vote for up to 4 candidates, 1 vote per member

	Voter 1	Voter 2
Tharran Hobson	_____	_____
Patty Weyhrich	_____	_____
Steve Eberhart	_____	_____
Carla Womack	_____	_____

Please copy or clip ballot and
Mail your Shawnee Group Ballot to:
Sierra Club Shawnee Group
Attn: Patty
PO Box 172
CARBONDALE, IL 62903-0172

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ELECTION RULES

- All ballots for Groups and the Chapter must be postmarked by **November 30, 2022** to be counted.
 - You may vote ONCE for the Chapter election, and ONCE in your regional group. If you do not know your Group's name, it is printed on the label of the mailer under your name. If your group does not appear in the mailer, expect a separate letter containing your election materials.
 - Individual members are allowed one vote. If you have a joint household membership, you are allowed two votes total—one per member in your household. You may photocopy the ballot for privacy in voting, or you can use the Voter 2 column.
- HOW TO VOTE**
- GROUP:** Place a check next to the candidate that you'd like to vote for. Write your full name on the outside of an envelope for membership verification. **Do not write your name on the ballot.** If you are a joint membership household, remember to list both members' names on the outside of the envelope for verification. Cut out your group ballot and mail to the address listed on your group's ballot. Do not mail group ballots to the Chapter address or Chapter ballots to group addresses, they will not be counted!
 - CHAPTER:** You can vote online for the Chapter election as will be indicated in their mailing. Please vote using the paper OR electronic ballot—not both. Thank you for voting!

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. Contact Jane Cogie, 618-549-4673, jane.cogie@gmail.com.

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, November 7th**.



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

(Rediscovering John Muir, Continued from Page 6)

In the second half of Natural Rivals, we get a detailed look at the evolution of public land policies in the U.S. The first relevant piece of legislation was the Homestead Act of 1862, which gave eligible farmers free title to 160 acres of government land if they built a home, made improvements and farmed the property for five years. About the same time, Congress began cranking out massive grants of free land to the companies building the western railroads. Congress also set aside land for large parks around the Yosemite Valley (to be administered by the state of California) and at Yellowstone. By the 1880s, the wanton cutting of the country's old growth forests had created a growing popular concern that the country might actually run out of timber. What would we do if there were more fires like the one that had burned up much of Chicago in 1871? And there was...No More Wood. "In 1888 alone," Clayton writes, "more than two dozen bills were proposed to reserve some of the forests still remaining on public domain lands in the West." The legislation that Congress ultimately passed -- the Forest Reserve Act of 1891 -- turned out to be something of a dud since it included no provision for protecting federal forest reserves. This elicited much grumbling from the American Forestry Association: "What was the point in setting aside forestlands without protection or enforcement?" After several years of political infighting, lobbying by groups including the Sierra Club and a high-level study by the National Academy of Sciences, Congress finally got around to resolving the problem when it passed the 1897 Forest Management Act.

Although Natural Rivals contains numerous quotes from John Muir's writings, none of them are very long. This is somewhat disappointing, at least for me, because he was such an interesting writer. However, Clayton has included a very nice collection of period photographs in the book. There are a number of great shots, including the famous one of Muir and his bully camping buddy, TR, posed on top of Yosemite's Overhanging Rock. My favorite shows an older John Muir apparently telling one of his stories to a group of apt listeners at the Club's summer outing in 1909. It's too bad we don't have an audio recording of what he had to say that day.