



# DuPage Sierran

Sierra Club, River Prairie Group of DuPage County

Winter 2015  
Volume 34, No. 4



## Chatter From the Chair

Recently a dear friend told me that since he has joined the Sierra Club, his wife has become irritated because of the ridiculous amount of e-mails they are receiving to sign this, that, or the other thing and to ask for more funds. Honestly, I can't argue with this complaint--it is annoying! But I want to put it in perspective for you in hopes of keeping each of you more engaged in some way.

Sierra Club is a giant national, actually international, organization. Its claws reach out to a myriad of different concerns including energy, land preservation, and saving wildlife species of both flora and fauna. We get e-mails on causes from mountaintop removal to drilling in pristine wilderness areas. We are asked to save creatures from bobcats to Blandings turtles. Each of these issues is important to someone, just not all of them, to each of us. The national group casts a wide net with activists in a diverse array of issues with the aim of addressing the concerns of many. I must confess that personally, I don't sign each petition sent to me. In fact, some I delete before even reading beyond the headline. But occasionally, there is one for which I am grateful someone is speaking out and organizing a response to which I can lend my signature to make their voice louder. When you join Sierra Club, you join the national organization, but just like the Ginsu knife commercial, "Wait, there's more..."

You also join a chapter, which for us is the Illinois Chapter. There are 40 chapters across the US; seven in California alone. One of our primary activities as a chapter is to identify major environmental issues and to work to pass legislative bills protecting these concerns. For this reason, Linda Sullivan (from right

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### DuPage Sierran

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For activities, legislative action alerts, and outings information:

<http://www.sierraclub.org/illinois/river-prairie>

[Click Here for the River Prairie Group on Facebook](#)

here in Lombard) has organized teams across the state to lobby in both Springfield and the home offices of most of the Illinois Representatives and Senators. Some of the action alerts you receive through e-mails are sent by the chapter to give legislators a heads up that we are watching and voting on how they vote on environmental issues. There are also some fierce battles going on in specific regions of our state. Some e-mails you receive are asking you to support these efforts. Although they may not be directly impacting our neighborhood, they do threaten precious areas within our state, such as the Shawnee National Forest or Starved Rock State Park.

**Continued on Page 2...**

## “Chatter from the Chair”

(Continued from page 1)

But wait, there is even more to offer you...

Lastly, when you join the Sierra Club you join one of the 14 local Groups. The River Prairie Group represents the DuPage County area, including some fringe parcels on its boundaries. We, too, send out some e-mail for programs, outings, and our newsletters. Within the group we hope to educate, engage, and enlist support from you for the environment. But frankly, if you do not wish to become active, your membership alone supports our activities. With your membership, our voice becomes louder, such as to support our Forest Preserve system in DuPage and to encourage the County and municipalities to make sustainability plans to decrease their carbon footprint through the Cool Communities programs. About 10 years ago, our membership in DuPage

was near 2500. It dipped several years ago to 2200, but now is steadily approaching 3000! With a chorus made up of each of you, we can make a difference in DuPage, across the state, and the nation for the benefit of the environment.

So, please be patient with your computer's inbox. Go ahead and delete those cries for support that are not relevant to your personal interest. But know that we encourage you to become as involved as you want to be, and we will help you to fulfill the reason you initially joined the Sierra Club. Get out and explore, enjoy, and become engaged with us.

Connie Schmidt  
Chair, River Prairie Group  
Sierra Club



## The River Prairie Group could not function without the volunteers who step up to the various jobs and positions.

### Officers:

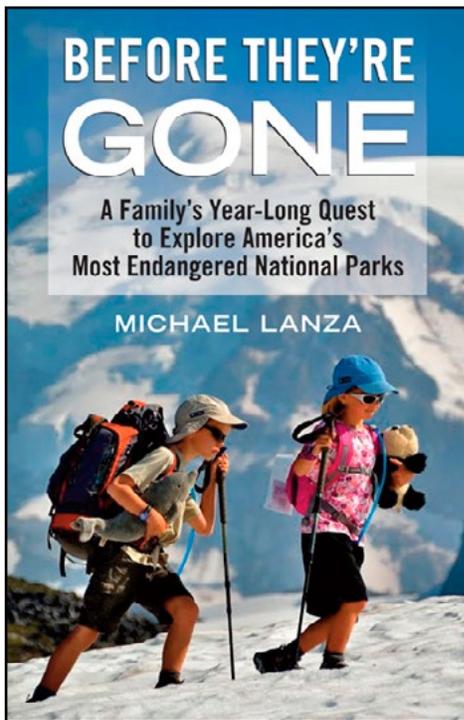
Connie Schmidt – Chair  
Jeff Gahris – Vice Chair  
Kathy Franke / Pete Potamianos – Secretary  
Bruce Blake – Treasurer

### Additional Members of the Ex-Com at Large:

Linda Sullivan – Lobby Chair  
Bob Barbieri – Water Research Project  
Jeff Gahris – Solar Energy Liaison  
Stacey Salmon – Political Endorsements  
Tom Richardson – DuPage County Issues

### Additional Committee Chairs:

Maira Noll – Programs  
Bonnie Blake – Water Monitoring  
Paul Saindon – Outings  
Andrew Cohen – Webmaster  
Joe Pokorny – National Liaison  
Sherry Stratton – Newsletter Editor  
Dave Blake – Newsletter Layout



Once again the "Green Readin' Book Club" of the River Prairie Group is partnering with two local libraries here in DuPage to discuss our choice of 2016: *Before They're Gone* by Michael Lanza. The Helen Plum Library in Lombard will discuss the book at 2:00 pm on Sunday, January 24, and the Warrenville Public Library will have their discussion on Tuesday, January 26, at 7:00 pm. Discussions will be led by RPG volunteer Shannon Burns (former Forest Preserve Commissioner of DuPage County for District 6). Books can be ordered from The Book Store in Glen Ellyn for a 10% discount if you let them know it is for the Sierra Club Book Club (a perfect holiday gift).

Our National Parks are changing, and not for the better. Michael Lanza, writer, photographer, backpacker, and father, spent a year hiking America's most endangered parks with his family. In *Before They're Gone*, Lanza writes a personal account of kayaking in Alaska's Glacier Bay, hiking the Grand Canyon, rock climbing in Joshua Tree National Park, and much more, with his wife and two children, ages 9 and 7. This beautiful story of an extreme family vacation reminds the reader of childhood family outings while sounding the alarm on the impact of climate change on our National Parks. This well-written, nicely balanced book is a fun read!

Join the Sierra Club's Green Readin' Book Club for a lively discussion of this fun-to-read, meaningful book at one or both of the libraries listed above. Some possible discussion questions are listed here.

## Green Readin' Choice of 2016

### Discussion Questions

1. How did this book impact you? (Did it make you want to get outside? Explore local natural spaces? Spend more time with family?)
2. Do you have a favorite National Park? What makes your favorite National Park special to you?
3. Did any of the family members in the book speak to you in a particular way? Did any of the family members or friends in the book experience growth or change that you can relate to in your own life?
4. What's your opinion about the main theme of this book? To raise awareness? Promote family bonding? Incite curiosity? Something else?
5. Did reading this book change you or your outlook about environmental issues? In what ways? Did this book cause you to change anything in yourself or in your life?
6. What do you think of the idea that our parks can become endangered? Is this a natural by-product, just one more thing in a long list of problems, or is it a unique problem of its own?
7. There is a theme in the book of being able to tackle more than what is expected. What does this idea inspire you to try?
8. One reviewer suggests that this book pinpoints "just how costly our inaction is ..." Do you agree? Why or why not?
9. Lanza's book has been called an "act of optimism" that we can all emulate. Do you agree? Why or why not? And what can you, personally, do to carry on the optimism?



*Connecting People to Nature for 100 Years*

**By Ryan Smith**  
**Ranger West Division**  
**Forest Preserve District of DuPage County**

The Forest Preserve District of DuPage County is thrilled to be involved with future issues of the DuPage Sierran. This partnership in connecting citizens to nature alongside Sierra Club's River Prairie Group will aid in the excellence both organizations have provided DuPage County residents, and help further the commitment to principles that help guide the actions and decisions made. As many of you are aware, The Forest Preserve District of DuPage County is a nationally recognized conservation agency that envisions a community in which all citizens share a connection with nature and an appreciation for cultural history. As mandated by the Illinois Downstate Forest Preserve Act, our mission is "to acquire and hold lands containing forests, prairies, wetlands, and associated plant communities or lands capable of being restored to such natural conditions for the purpose of protecting and preserving the flora, fauna and scenic beauty for the education, pleasure and recreation of its citizens." A person's relationship with nature can only be theirs; however, whether it's romantic, transcendental, or just resorting to solitude seeking reflections, it provides a mutual benefit.

During the past year, The Forest Preserve District has had a blast organizing the celebration for one of DuPage County's greatest milestones: the centennial of the June 7, 1915 vote that favored the creation of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County. With this passage, the district was able to spend the next two years working out operating details and in 1917 was able to make the first purchase of 79 acres in

Oak Brook, known as York Woods. Today, we now help manage nearly 25,000 acres.

Throughout the fall and possibly into early December you may have witnessed one of the districts most important habitat restoration practices, the carefully set fires by trained district employees known as prescribed burning. This practice helps the district manage the spread of invasive plant species and ultimately improve conditions for native species within forest preserve woodlands and prairies. The use of fire turns dried plants into ash, allowing nutrients locked inside the plants to quickly reenter the soil and fertilize new growth in the spring. One of the most important benefits with the use of fire is that it can kill or stunt nonnative shrubs such as buckthorn and honeysuckle. These plants cannot bounce back after prescribed burns like native plants do, which have a much deeper root system or thicker bark.

Another important item of note is the annual District's deer management program. Starting in November, and usually lasting until February, deer are removed by U.S. Department of Agriculture staff who have successfully completed IDNR deer management certifications. For the convenience and safety of the public, the deer removal program operates during the winter months, after dark when the preserves are closed. The District's deer removal program is implemented in accordance with IDNR regulations and has received the endorsement of 27 environmental and conservation organizations, including a local animal welfare group. Given the high



reproductive capability of deer, a lack of natural predators, and limited suitable habitat in the suburban environment, it would only be a matter of time before unmanageable populations would grow to the point of jeopardizing themselves and the communities they inhabit. Venison from deer removed from the forest preserves is processed and packaged at local facilities and donated to charitable food pantries in the area. It is imperative that the public stay out of the preserves during closed times, one hour after sunset until one hour after sunrise, for obvious safety reasons. For additional information about the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County's deer management program, contact the District's Office of Public Affairs at (630) 871-6406. For questions concerning the Illinois Department of

Natural Resources urban deer project, call (847) 798-7620.

Between December and March, District employees and volunteers will be seeding for the spring. That's right, seeding! It is a technique called "frost seeding," where crews spread seeds across hundreds of acres of soil. This is done so that when the weather warms, the seeds mix well with the melting snow. After repeated freezing and thawing, they eventually mix with the soil, which has the moisture the seeds need to sprout in the spring. Most native species cannot germinate without this freeze-thaw cycle, which is known as "cold-moist stratification."

The Forest Preserve District has been connecting people to nature for 100 years. With over 25,000 acres, 140 miles of trail, and 60 preserves all right at your feet, there's a perfect way to enjoy DuPage County's forest preserves that's just waiting for you. For information, call (630) 933-7200, or visit [dupage-forest.org](http://dupage-forest.org).



# Got Milkweed?

The Sierra Club responds to the monarch crisis, and what you can do

By Lonnie Morris

Quick, name a butterfly! Likely, monarch was the first one to come to mind, the magnificent black and orange visitor of backyard gardens. The monarch initially captured our imagination because of its fascinating life cycle, a wondrous annual migration between Canada and Mexico, the caterpillar's exclusive diet of milkweed with its toxic "milk," making it poisonous to birds and frequently being cited along with its look-alike relative the viceroy, as an example of protective mimicry.

Monarchs may also have sprung to mind because of things you've heard recently in the news about their situation. Monarchs are a victim of change: change in climate, change in how land is used, and change in how crops are grown in the Midwest. In 2013, the eastern monarch population dipped by 90 percent, with some recovery in 2014 but still 80 percent below historic averages. The verdict is still out on the size of the 2015 population, as it is typically calculated on the number of monarchs overwintering in Mexico.

Over the past couple of years as news spread about the plummeting population of monarchs, grassroots conservation efforts emerged: hand rearing monarchs in locations protected from predators, garden clubs advocating for growing milkweed, and citizen scientists recording butterfly sightings.

The Midwest offers critical breeding grounds for monarchs, and the RPG is stepping up to the challenge of protecting their habitat and increasing the number of monarch-friendly places. In 2016, Sierra Club is launching a three-part monarch recovery initiative: asking municipalities to make their public

land more monarch friendly, educating home and business owners about what can be done in their landscapes to make them more attractive to monarchs, and giving away milkweed plants.

Sierra Club invites you to join us in helping monarchs survive the threats they're facing. Here are some things you can do:

- Plant milkweed in your garden where appropriate. Species native to northern Illinois such as common milkweed, butterfly weed, prairie milkweed, purple milkweed, and swamp milkweed are best.
- Include nectar plants favored by adult monarchs in your garden, such as coneflowers, coreopsis, daisy, marigolds, salvia, verbena, and zinnias.
- Limit or forego pesticide use on lawns and gardens.
- Learn more about monarchs and follow their migration by visiting:  
[monarchwatch.org/](http://monarchwatch.org/)  
[fws.gov/savethemonarch/](http://fws.gov/savethemonarch/)  
[wildones.org/learn/wild-for-monarchs/](http://wildones.org/learn/wild-for-monarchs/)
- Help pass a monarch protection resolution in your community. For additional information contact Lonnie Morris [herbdove@comcast.net](mailto:herbdove@comcast.net)
- Attend Communities in Nature, a program on monarchs and pollinators by Andre Copeland, Interpretative Program Manager, Chicago Zoological Society Brookfield Zoo, February 23, 7:00 pm at Glen Ellyn Public Library, 400 Duane Street, Glen Ellyn.

# CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE ARCTIC A POLAR EXPLORER'S PERSPECTIVE

**DEC  
02  
7PM**

**GLEN  
ELLYN  
CIVIC  
CENTER**

Be sure to put DECEMBER 2 on your calendar for a special presentation from Glen Ellyn native John Huston.

A veteran of the first American expedition to reach the North Pole unsupported, John speaks with a passion challenging and inspiring others to believe in their potential to meet their goals. John has also completed major expeditions to the South Pole, on Greenland, and on Ellesmere Island.

This presentation takes you to the frontlines of climate change, the Arctic. John's stories from the North Pole and the Canadian Arctic demonstrate how climate change is affecting the polar regions. Without a significant reduction in atmospheric carbon levels, there may not be enough ice to ski to the North Pole in the near future.

This presentation is about melting ice and the beautiful Arctic, but it is also about working together to make forward-thinking choices. Plan to join us for an evening of stunning photographs and motivational stories. As an added bonus, John's book will be available as the perfect holiday gift for adventur-



ers in your family.

He has offered to give personalized signatures, as well. Our meeting will be at the Glen Ellyn Civic Center, December 2, 2015 at 7 pm, sponsored by the River Prairie Group.

# *This is the story of* “The Little Community that Could!”

Finding a safe sealant and other best practices for a greener community

By Terri Voitik

I am a long-time active member and citizen lobbyist of our Sierra Club. I am committed to loving, protecting, and caring for our planet. While being an advocate of our planet is a significant part of my life, I am sharing our story because I am also a mother, grandmother, and recently a great-grandmother who believes that we are guardians of the future and that good change occurs with hard work, tenacity, and our passion to stay the course.

I live in Cinnamon Glen Townhome Community in Aurora. Our townhome community was built around 1988 in response to the 1973 Oil Embargo. Our townhomes have a unique construction style and are quite energy efficient, resulting in much lower than average utility costs. My serendipitous moment occurred in 1996 when I found myself looking for an energy-efficient home where wildlife would abound. I found my home, and the real perk was that it bordered a DuPage County Forest Preserve and a series of wetlands. Over the years, we as a community have come together to work toward keeping these natural areas clean and protected. Though I often work globally, the local connection happened in 2012 when I was elected and became a board member of our Homeowners Association. At the same time, our other board members who were also advocates for the environment were elected. This was a major positive turning point for the “Little Community That Could.”

We had much work ahead of us; infrastructure was crumbling. As we began our investigation of ways to maintain our driveways, we all had already attended a class on storm-water management and

were aware of the studies that show how coal-tar driveway sealant is a hidden menace and an unsuspected threat to the health of our children, pets, wildlife, and aquatic organisms. Studies show that dust from coal tar, a known human carcinogen, is being tracked into our homes, and storm water runoff laden with sediment and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) can contaminate our watershed, wetlands, rivers, lakes, and detention basins. While asphalt is a safer alternative than coal tar, PAH is still present. Recently we discovered we can do better than that and that there are other non-PAH alternatives.

While traditional asphalt sealants are somewhat less expensive and safer, they are not without flaw. They contain smaller amounts of PAH but still contain carcinogens, cause skin irritations, and foster dependence on foreign oil.

After three years of research of many different so-called safe products on the market, we recently celebrated the first stage of conversion to what appears to be a safe, non-petroleum-based product called BioSeal/ Biorestor. This pavement-rejuvenating sealant is made from 100% soy bio-based agricultural oil processed and made in the United States.

We have just completed use of this sealant process on 24 of our driveways, and are very pleased with the product. Our goal is the completion of all 144 of our driveways, drive-throughs, and courts, which will be done in stages.

We continue moving forward toward a clean and green community. Some of our other best practices that we have implemented include organic lawn



care. Our lawn service company now uses bag-less mulching mowers so that clippings are returned to the turf rather than being carted away. We do not use sodium chloride; we use calcium chloride during rare and severe ice storms only, and we provide deicer that is safe for humans, pets, and the environment to each family. We are in the process of changing the community-governing documents to allow rain barrels, drought-resistant native plantings, and rain gardens where needed. Many of our town-

homes overlook the natural areas, and light pollution has been an ongoing issue. Our current project is replacing old lighting on the rear of townhomes with lighting that is approved by the International Dark Sky Association. While we are far from where we would like to be, we have come a long way.

And that is the story—so far—of “The Little Community that Could”! For more information, visit [www.biosealusa.com/what-is-bioseal.php](http://www.biosealusa.com/what-is-bioseal.php).



# WHAT ARE THE NEW PROJECTS UNDERWAY AT DUPAGE COUNTY FOREST PRESERVES?

**Join us for a chat with Jay Johnson to hear the latest!**

**By Connie Schmidt**

We are in for a real treat this year as we begin 2016 with a slide show and informal chat with DuPage County Forest Preserve West Sector Manager Jay Johnson. On January 19th 7:00 pm at the Glen Ellyn Civic Center on 535 Duane, Jay will host an informative program sharing details of current projects, such as trail improvements and conservation restoration. Jay is a long-time employee of the district who has moved up through the ranks and knows all aspects of the preserves intimately, so he can give us a great understanding and background on these efforts. Many of us drive by the entrances to the preserves without realizing the expanse they cover. There are over 25,000 acres of open space owned

by the Forest Preserve system in DuPage in 60 different preserves. We enjoy 145 miles of trails without counting the Illinois Prairie Path, the Great Western Trail, and the numerous municipal trails that connect their communities to the local Forest Preserves. The River Prairie Group of the Sierra Club has worked diligently with staff of our treasured Forest Preserve system to support their initiatives and is grateful to now have this first-hand guide demonstrating our tax dollars at work. We hope you will plan to attend this informative event and begin 2016 getting ready to get out and enjoy the beautiful wild spaces we have here in DuPage. It will be a special evening with our friend Jay Johnson.



*In case you missed it...*



We have had two fabulous programs from volunteer presenters since our last newsletter. A huge "thank you" to Richard Stuckey for his talk about his two trips to the Alaskan Wilderness. His first slide show pictured the grizzlies up close in the Katmai National Park. His photos and anecdotes of the bear families and their antics were amazing! He also witnessed the Caribou migration in the Arctic Wildlife Refuge, which was estimated to be about 40,000! Seeing the vast tundra through his camera lens and hearing his story was indeed a treat for River Prairie Group members.

On October 14, 2015, the environmental activist community at large nationally declared a DAY OF CLIMATE ACTION to bring awareness of our concerns to our elected officials who will be preparing for global Climate Talks in November in Paris. RPG already had a meeting planned for that day, so we included a photo opportunity and some remarks on

the topic. It was great to have an opportunity here in DuPage to show our concern. Many of our members traveled to Chicago to the larger rally where 400 folks gathered and marched!

In addition, we were treated to a very informative talk by Gerry Songer on the Dangers of Oil Trains. Gerry's research was thorough and relevant to the vast and increasing numbers of train cars rolling through our communities daily here in the greater Chicagoland area. Her slides were detailed and reflected an immense amount of research. One of the best parts of the program was the incredibly informed questions and comments offered by those in attendance. The degree of commitment and concern showed that Sierrans in DuPage are a truly engaged group. Please refer to the following Web address to see further information on this important topic: [Students4democracy.net](http://Students4democracy.net)

# Join the Fight For Clean Power In Illinois



Act On Climate with the Sierra Club's Illinois Clean Power Team

ILLINOIS  
CHAPTER



SIERRA  
CLUB

**The science is clear.**

**The solutions are ready.**

We have so little time to make the major changes needed to prevent the worst consequences of climate change, but how can one person make a difference?

## Act on Climate

Sierra Club and allies have built unprecedented support for climate action in Illinois. Now President Obama's Clean Power Plan asks Illinois to make a plan to cut carbon emissions and move to clean energy. We're working for an Illinois Clean Power Plan that maximizes renewable energy, energy efficiency, good jobs, consumer savings, and clean air.

## Promoting Clean Energy Solutions

We know Illinois can be a clean power state because we've already started. Since Illinois set clean energy targets in 2007, we have created over 100,000 jobs, saved consumers over one billion dollars, and started reducing emissions of carbon and other air pollutants. But it's only the beginning, and we can't turn back now.

Sierra Club has always been about the power of individuals like you to make a huge difference for our planet when we join together. Now we are doing just that to confront the greatest challenge of our time — global climate change caused by our reliance on fossil fuels. The Illinois Clean Power team is people like you from all over the Prairie State, working to move Illinois beyond fossil fuels to clean energy.

Illinois has a huge role to play in the race to save the planet. Here we have old dirty coal plants, and our farms and water supply are threatened by devastating coal mining and fracking. In recent years, we have also brought wind and solar online, started major conservation programs, and built a growing coalition of diverse allies who share a commitment to a clean energy future for Illinois. **We invite you to join us.**

## ADD YOUR VOICE TO THE CALL FOR CLEAN POWER

### Join the Clean Power Team

Our volunteer leaders have been the cornerstone of our movement for clean air and clean power in Illinois. From planning dozens of town halls, to talking to their neighbors about the importance of clean energy, to lobbying their legislators in Springfield, and working to make your community a leader in sustainability, Sierra Club volunteers are how we win.

**Be a part of this movement by joining the Sierra Club Illinois Clean Power Team at: [bit.ly/SCILvolunteer](http://bit.ly/SCILvolunteer)**

### The Power To Change

We have big goals to make this clean energy future for Illinois a reality. You can help today with your gift.

**You can give online to make the Illinois Clean Power Team stronger at: <https://illinois2.sierraclub.org/donate>**

# River Prairie Group (RPG) Outings

**Note:** Note: All local group outings are offered at cost. Longer and more expensive outings require deposits (ask leader about refund policy). Contact the leader or assistant indicated for more information and outing requirements. All outings have limits on group size; early signup is suggested.

See [scrips.org](http://scrips.org) for new, current and updated outings including all Illinois Club activities.

For general information regarding the River Prairie Group Outings Committee and the outings led by its leaders, contact Outings Committee Chair Paul Saindon at (815) 310-0001 or [paul@pauls.us](mailto:paul@pauls.us)

For all RPG activities, visit the activity calendar at: [sierraclub.org/illinois/river-prairie/activity-calendar](http://sierraclub.org/illinois/river-prairie/activity-calendar). The calendar includes meetings, events, outings, dates, times, directions and maps.

## **Climate Change in the Arctic: Polar Explorer's Perspective Wednesday, December 2 – 7:00 PM Glen Ellyn Civic Center, 535 Duane Street, Glen Ellyn, IL**

This presentation takes you to the frontlines of climate change, the Arctic. John's stories from the North Pole and the Canadian Arctic demonstrate how climate change is affecting the polar regions. Without a significant reduction in atmospheric carbon levels, there may not be enough ice to ski to the North Pole in the near future. This presentation is about melting ice and the beautiful Arctic, but it is also about working together to make forward-thinking choices.

Plan to join us for an evening of stunning photographs and motivational stories. As an added bonus, John's book will be available as the perfect holiday gift for adventurers in your family. He has offered to give personalized signatures as well.

For more info: Moira Noll, 630-469-1606 or [moiradowell@aol.com](mailto:moiradowell@aol.com)

## **River Road Cleanup Saturday, December 5 – 10AM to 12PM 3216 McAdams Pky, Godfrey, IL 62035**

Join us for the final River Road Cleanup of the year and enjoy the natural surroundings, the feeling of doing something worthwhile, and meeting new friends! We'll clean 1-2 miles (depending on # of volunteers) starting at Clifton Terrace Park at the River Road and heading up stream. We'll bring bags and gloves, you bring plenty of warm layers and shoes you don't mind getting a little muddy.

Contact: Christine Favilla, 618-401-7870 or [christine.favilla@sierraclub.org](mailto:christine.favilla@sierraclub.org)

## **Ellis Island Hike Saturday, December 5 – 10AM to 12PM West Alton, MO**

Meet at Ellis Island in the Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary. We will depart from the trailhead at 10:15 and hike to the east end of the island, approximately 1 mile. The well-marked gravel trail is relatively flat but can be muddy in certain areas after rainfall. We will have views of Ellis Bay, in which we hope to spot several species of migratory birds. We will arrive at a viewing blind at the end of the island. On the return hike we will take the mulch trail on the Mississippi side of the Island for the 1-mile return. Wear warm layers and comfortable shoes. Bring your binoculars, water bottle, and sunscreen. Be sure to allow time to visit the Audubon Center at the Riverlands afterward.

Contact: Virginia Woulfe-Beilem, [virginia.woulfe-beile@sierraclub.org](mailto:virginia.woulfe-beile@sierraclub.org)

## **Chicago Botanic Garden Saturday, December 5 – 2PM to 6PM**

Join us for a Winter Wonderland Hike at the Chicago Botanic Gardens. See the gardens decked out in holiday decorations and lights. The Gardens and Wonderland Express will be open until 6:00 p.m. There is a separate fee to see the Wonderland Express (Exhibition of miniature trains winds over bridges, under trestles, and through mini-replicas of Chicago's favorite landmarks). Limit 15. Leader: Mary Fox, Co-leader: Al Theede. Please contact leader Mary Fox [mlbikes@prodigy.net](mailto:mlbikes@prodigy.net).

**Annual Holiday Potluck Party**  
**Thursday, December 10 – 7PM to 9PM**  
**1111 E Schaumburg Rd., Schaumburg, IL 60194**

Join members and friends as we celebrate the Holidays and look forward to a new year. Bring pictures on memory stick of an interesting trip you took in the past year to share with the group. Also bring a dish or beverage to share. Held at Spring Valley Nature Center, 1111 E. Schaumburg Rd., Schaumburg.

Contact: Peter Gorr, 847-991-2185 or pagorr@comcast.net

**Moonlight Hike**  
**Friday, December 25 – 7PM to 10PM**  
**Talahi Lodge, 2213 S Lewis Ln, Godfrey, IL**

Explore Mississippi Sanctuary and Olin Nature Preserve by the light of the full moon.

Contact: Bob Larson, 618-462-4448 or larsonlaw@gmail.com

**New Year's Resolution Hike**  
**Sat., January 2, 2016 – 9:30 AM to 1:30 PM**  
**Cap Sauers Holding Palos Hill, IL**

Start the New Year off right! Join us for a hike through Cap Sauers Holdings in Palos area of the Cook County Forest Preserves. We'll be visiting a glacial area right here in northern Illinois. The Holdings has meadows and woods throughout the area where we'll be hiking. Limit: 15. Mary Fox is the Leader and Al Theede is Co-leader. To sign-up, contact Mary at mlbikes@prodigy.net

**Eagles and Frozen Water Falls-Starved Rock**  
**Sun., Feb. 7, 2016 – 9:30 AM (Time Tentative)**  
**North Utica, IL, USA**

Come join me for a hike in the woods to see Eagles and frozen waterfalls. I'll show you the colors of the ice that represent the minerals in them. Hopefully, you will see lots of Eagles and learn about them as we start our day with a presentation at the Waterway. Later after the hike, everyone is invited to have a bite to eat and/or hot chocolate in the lodge before heading home. Yak Traks required. Asst leader Anatoly Libgober, limit 20 \$3 Sierra Fee Please contact Jan Bradford, leader at jbradford60131@sbcglobal.net We will have a fun day.

**Green Readin' Book Club:**  
**"Before They're Gone"**  
**Sun., January 24, 2016 – 2:00PM**  
**Helen Plum Library, Lombard, IL**

See article on page 3 for more details.

**Green Readin' Book Club:**  
**"Before They're Gone"**  
**Tues., January 26, 2016 – 7:00PM**  
**Warrenville Public Library, Warrenville, IL**

See article on page 3 for more details.

**Communities in Nature, a program**  
**on monarchs and pollinators**  
**Feb. 23, 2016 – 7PM**  
**Glen Ellyn Public Library, Glen Ellyn, IL**

See article on page 6 for details.



## Sierra Club Responds to “Cowspiracy” Film

Over the last year, the film *Cowspiracy* has been shown by several groups in DuPage County and the surrounding area. It is a documentary exposing the large feedlot businesses as a primary source of air pollution. It accuses the Sierra Club of focusing solely on carbon emissions while allowing methane to go unchallenged. Sierra Club is, in fact, actively opposing these ginormous enterprises in multiple locations across the U.S. The RPG reached out to our Chapter officials asking for some evidence to share with you, our members, to arm you with a response to defend your Sierra Club. Please see the following for their response.

# FOOD OUR CLIMATE

By Bruce Hamilton, Sierra Club Deputy Executive Director

As the threat of climate disruption becomes increasingly urgent, it makes sense that every source of greenhouse gas emissions should come under scrutiny. Both the reckless burning of fossil fuels and unsustainable agricultural practices are major contributors to greenhouse gas emissions. However, as the recent documentary film *Cowspiracy* rightly points out, the latter are too often overlooked as a potential source of reductions.

In fact, how we farm and what we eat can make a real difference for our climate future, and that knowledge should inform not only our personal choices but also our public policies. Eliminating or reducing meat consumption in your diet is one important way to reduce your contribution to climate change, since animal agriculture is the single largest source of global greenhouse gas emissions from food production. At the same time, the Sierra Club

continues to support broader reforms in food production that will also help limit climate disruption.

Many current agricultural practices, such as large-scale monocropping (the practice of growing a single crop year after year on the same land) and concentrated animal-feeding operations (CAFOs), consume disproportionate amounts of fossil fuels, pollute our water and air, deplete the soil, and diminish biodiversity. The good news is that we have many opportunities to improve in all of these areas.

We're calling for reform of industrial agricultural and food system practices, to minimize contributions to greenhouse gases and to maximize carbon sequestration in plants and soils. The pollution from concentrated animal-feeding operations in particular is grossly disproportionate to the amount of food

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## “Food and our Climate” (Continued from page 15)

produced. Growing heavily subsidized energy-intensive corn to convert to ethanol fuel makes no sense from an energy, food supply, climate or pollution standpoint and it should be opposed.

The single greatest source of agricultural greenhouse gas emissions is livestock, particularly factory-raised animals. Cattle (for both beef and milk, as well as for inedible outputs like manure and draft power) are responsible for about two-thirds of livestock emissions.

Fortunately, we can cut livestock emissions significantly not only by reducing personal meat consumption but also by following best practices and ending our reliance on concentrated animal-feeding operations. The Sierra Club continues to strongly oppose the establishment of new CAFOs and believes we should phase out existing operations as soon as possible.

Furthermore, ensuring soil maintains its carbon stock is a highly effective means of carbon sequestration. Yet, most agricultural soils have had their carbon stock dramatically reduced by soil loss, excessive tillage, overgrazing, erosion, and overuse of chemical nitrous fertilizers. In fact, the world's cultivated and grazed soils have lost 50 to 70 percent of their original carbon stock. In the process billions of tons of carbon have been released into the atmosphere. That's why it's critical that we rebuild soil carbon through regenerative agricultural practices.

Massive food production operations are at the root of many of these problems. Converting our natural landscapes into intensive agricultural operations can change land from carbon sinks to carbon sources. Deforestation, plowing up prairies, and filling wetlands destroys existing carbon sinks and releases that carbon into our atmosphere, increasing emissions.

As consumers, we each have a personal role to play as well, through our choices about the foods we eat:

- Whenever possible, we can support locally owned and operated farms, which are generally far less destructive and far more productive. This also reduces the need for long-distance transportation of foods.
- We can avoid highly processed, so-called “convenience foods,” which are not only nutritionally inferior, but also waste energy and packaging materials.
- Striving to reduce food waste, through smaller serving sizes, composting, and recycling, will also reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Organically grown foods that don't rely on chemicals are better for the soil, climate, and our health.
- If we do choose to eat meat, we should look for grass-fed, responsibly raised beef, which is both healthier and far more sustainable than factory-produced beef.

Addressing climate disruption is important enough that we cannot afford to overlook any strategy for success. Fortunately, just as with transitioning from fossil fuels to clean energy, we can reap important collateral benefits by adopting more responsible and sustainable agricultural practices and by making smarter lifestyle choices.



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