

Clean Power Plan and the Illinois Jobs Bill

by Pat Coffey, Political Chair

In lieu of any action being taken by Congress on climate change, the Obama administration has undertaken an initiative to reduce CO₂ emissions at U.S. power plants. It's called the Clean Power Plan and it hopes to reduce overall carbon emissions from power plants by 30% by 2030.

The Obama administration has been working on this initiative for several years. In 2011, they started requiring power plants to report their CO₂ emissions. This data will help the government track emissions and measure compliance. Several states, most notably Texas, have opposed this, saying it is unconstitutional for the administration to move forward, since Congress has not approved the overall plan. But the Supreme Court had already ruled in 2007, in *Massachusetts v. EPA*, that CO₂ can be regulated as a pollutant (because of related health impacts) under the Clean Air Act. The EPA is the agency that administers the Clean Air Act, and it is the agency that will administer the new "rule" for power plants.

Although the EPA is responsible for this initiative, it is giving states considerable leeway in how to reduce their emissions. States can move to "cleaner" burning fuels, improve efficiencies, or rely more on renewables like wind and solar. A preliminary rule has been issued to give states an idea of what is coming in the final rule which is coming out sometime this summer. Already, some states have sued, like the ever-environmentally-conscious Texas, but the courts have said any further suits will have to wait until the final rule is published.



Town Hall meeting at Moraine Valley College

In Illinois, the reaction to the Clean Power Plan is much different, and we hope to keep it that way! One bill being considered now in Springfield anticipates the new rule. It's called the Illinois Clean Jobs Bill. It requires power companies to increase the portion of renewable energy they produce to 35% by 2030. This is known as the Renewable Portfolio Standard because Illinois' energy portfolio will contain 35% renewable energy. The bill also requires another 20% reduction in overall energy consumption through efficiencies.

One of the hallmarks of the bill is that it will promote the creation of renewable energy jobs here in Illinois - as many as 32,000 per year for an unforeseeable number of years, according to one study. This means Illinois will not only be in good shape when EPA's final rule is published, but we will also be reaping the benefits of being at the forefront of the renewable energy economy.

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Clean Power Plan *(cont. from page 1)*

Sierra Club has teamed up with other groups, such as other environmental groups, unions, and renewable energy companies to promote this effort. On February 10th, the Illinois Sierra Club organized a Town Hall meeting at Moraine Valley College hoping that 50 concerned citizens would attend. Instead, 115 showed up. Several Sauk-Calumet Group members attended, including Mr. and Mrs. Lorch, Mr. and Mrs. Thiesen, Ben Armstrong, Patrick Coffey, Mary Curtin, Jerry Dagenais, Audrey Fischer, Susan Nicholas, Sharon Rolek, Elise Ziemann, among others ; and Melinda Elliott, who also did phone work and helped organize the event.

Then on April 22, Earth Day, Sierra Club helped organize a rally in Springfield that hundreds of people from all over the state attended. Six buses made the trip from the Chicago area alone. While they were there for the rally, many people were able to talk with their legislators about the Illinois Clean Jobs Bill. Terry Treacy, Illinois Sierra Club's political advocate in Springfield, has said that several legislators commented on the success of the rally, indicating that the rally and lobbying effort had an impact.

Keep tuned-in in the weeks ahead for emails about another Town Hall meeting to be held in the south Suburbs, possibly in Park Forest. We want to show our state and federal lawmakers and the Obama administration how much support there is for climate action. It appears that, around the nation and in particular in Illinois, people are no longer willing to remain silent on this issue. It's time for all of us to stand up and make our voices heard. And the good part of it is, we are actually doing just that.

Earth Day and Lobbying in Springfield

By Melinda Elliott

Since attending the Earth day rally in Washington, D.C. in 1990, I have chosen to do something to make a difference for the environment on every Earth Day since. This year it was my pleasure to attend the Clean Jobs and Lobby Day in Springfield, Illinois on Earth Day, April 22. It was an especially important event for me because, while I have participated in numerous rallies including the People's Climate March, I had never before participated in lobbying efforts. The rally was exciting and the hundreds of Illinois residents who participated were pumped. It was a great showing from an extremely diverse crowd. I truly think that it made a great impression on the legislators who were present. The speeches made by all the legislators were also very moving. It was wonderful to hear legislators so passionate about the cause so important to us that we travelled to Springfield from all across the state.

After the rally, there was a sea of green shirts in the Capitol building. Observers could see that we were passionate, persistent, organized and polite. I was proud of the efforts of all the participants.

I was unfortunately not able to meet with my representatives directly, but I did hand-deliver my letters to their offices. I also watched as my friends spoke to their representative. They were impressive as they offered their views in a friendly, informative and

concise manner in their allotted two minutes. The representative said that he would learn more and would consider the bill - the Illinois Clean Jobs bill. I heard several other such stories. I later learned that several more legislators signed up to cosponsor the bill. It was one of the best Earth Days I've had in a while. Although I know there is still hard work to be done to get the Illinois Clean Jobs bill passed, I know that our efforts made a difference. What more can you ask for on Earth Day?



Other members of the Sauk-Calumet Group who went down to Springfield included Katy Cunningham, Janice Gintzler, Jeff Green and Andy Stevens. Thank you's to all for representing our group and for expressing vital environmental concerns to our lawmakers in Springfield!

Chicago-Promised Ford Calumet Environmental Center Now a Closet!

By Sharon Rolek and Kevin P. Murphy

The City of Chicago last year hired the Lakota Group to "study" the feasibility of building the Ford Calumet Environmental Center - long promised to the southeast side and environmental community. Updates about the progress of the site on Hegewisch Marsh were given periodically through the years by Nicole Kamins, (former) project manager for the City. Progress was arrested, and no word was heard, especially after Mayor Rahm assassinated the Department of Environment and all its wonderful programs. The southeast environmental community is aghast that the City has again lied to them. Comments were sent to the Lakota Group in objection.

Some of the comments can be found at <http://www.spotlightingsoutheastchicago.com/articles.html>
Please be sure to read the two articles by Kevin P. Murphy who outlines the issue and objections thoroughly and eloquently.

Brookfield Zoo Keepers Plant Trees

by Christy Mazrimas-Ott, Conservation Chair

On November 17, 2013, Washington, Illinois was devastated by an EF-4 tornado that hit their community. The tornado damaged as many as 500 homes and cut a path through the center of town. Since this tragedy, the town has been rebuilding, but not only buildings were lost - over 10,000 trees were also destroyed.

Trees for You and Me is a competition fund raiser between zoo keepers to raise money to plant trees and to help the polar bears ice habitat that is being affected by climate change. The competition is supported by the American Association of Zoo Keepers (AAZK) and Polar Bears International (PBI). For the 2014-2015 competition, the Brookfield Zoo AAKZ Chapter wanted to do a local tree planting and decided that Washington, Illinois was the perfect place. The first phase of the tree planting was done in the fall of 2014 and the second phase in 2015 on Arbor Day, April 24.

The Brookfield AAZK Chapter raised \$3,395.45 for Trees for You and Me and was the mid-point and winner of this year's competition. The midpoint winner gets \$25 towards a shrub and the winner gets \$100 towards a tree from PBI. With the added \$125, the Brookfield AAZK was able to donate \$3,520.45 toward the Trees for Washington Phase II.

Five members of the Brookfield AAZK Chapter also traveled to Washington, IL to assist the City of Washington and the Washington Park District in their tree planting project and to explain why planting the trees was so important. Climate change is causing

extreme weather, like the EF-4 tornado that devastated Washington, IL, and the warmth in the arctic that is causing the polar bear habitat to shrink. Trees absorb carbon dioxide, one of the leading greenhouse gases that cause climate change, and release oxygen into the air. By planting 58 trees, we helped both the residents of Washington, IL and the polar bears in the Arctic.

Besides planting trees, members of the Brookfield AAZK Chapter also discussed other ways to reduce, reuse and recycle with the Washington community to continue reducing the effects of climate change and the extreme weather patterns that are affecting the whole planet.



Brookfield AAZK members planting in Washington, IL

Nature Sundays Summer Schedule

Nature Sundays is back! The leader of these six hikes will be Pat Coffey, but, as in previous years, the philosophy will be cooperative. We will work as a team to try to identify species, take photos, and learn as a group. Although the hikes will not be too lengthy, we do stop and look and study. Plan for the hikes to take about 2 hours. Water and snacks will be available.

Preregistration is required, and since these are official Sierra Club hikes, you must sign a waiver form at the beginning of each hike. Directions and other info will be available once you preregister. For questions or to preregister, email Pat Coffey at pjc1000@comcast.net.

Come join us this summer on the trails!

Sunday, June 14th at 1:30 pm **Esker Trail**, Palos Forest Preserves, Palos area - about 2 miles
This afternoon hike is in the woods, when we should be cool and in the shade. This site is a hill or "esker" created by the retreat of the last glaciers.

Sunday, June 28th at 7:30 am **Lockport Prairie**, Lockport, IL - about 1.5 miles
We are getting up early to avoid the sun, and to see if we can catch sight of the Hine's Emerald Dragonfly and to maximize birding on this rare dolomite prairie.

Sunday, July 12th at 9:30 am **Rock Run Preserve / Black Road Access**, Joliet, IL - about 2 miles
A paved trail with lots of reconstructed natural areas: prairie, savanna, wetlands. This site contained at one time a quarry.

Sunday, July 26th at 9:30 am **Braidwood Dunes**, Braidwood, IL - about 2 miles
A great sand prairie with prairie vegetation and even prickly pear cactus.

Sunday, August 9th at 9:30 am **Gensburg Prairie**, Markham, IL - about 1.5 miles
One of Illinois' premier quality prairies. This site was never plowed since pre-settlement times. With possible trips after the hike to other Markham prairies for those who wish.

Sunday, August 23rd at 1:30 pm **Cowles Bog**, Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, IN - about 3 miles
Part of this hike will be forested and in the shade. There will also be views of the bog and open water, and possibly a Sandhill Crane.

Other Area Happenings and Events

Annual Heal the River

submitted by Sharon Rolek and Tom Shepherd

Faith leaders and environmental activists are invited to participate in a day of action and prayer to heal the environment. The 8th Annual Interfaith Day of Prayer to Preserve and Protect our Natural World will be held on June 21 at 4:00 pm at the Cal Sag Canal Waterfall in Blue Island (Blue Island MWRD/CEPA and Water Reclamation Station): Reverse Global Climate Change, Stop Environmental Pollution, Support Renewable Energy, Use Sustainable Construction Practices, etc.

Organized by St. Joseph and St. Aidan Episcopal Church, and co-sponsored by Calumet Watersheds Action Coalition, St. Clement Episcopal Church in Harvey, Southsiders for Peace, and the Southeast Environmental Task Force. Contact Tom Shepherd at 773-370-3305 or Rev. Rod Reinhart at 708-528-9862 for further information or directions.

New Chapter of the Illinois Native Plant Society

submitted by Georganne Higgins

The state-wide Illinois Native Plant Society has formed a new chapter and it's in our area. The Kankakee Torrent Chapter will usually meet on the first Monday of the month at 6:30 pm at the University of Illinois Extension Office, 1650 Commerce Drive, Bourbonnais, IL. (This is just west of Route 50 on the north side of Bourbonnais.) They also plan to take field trips, promote native flora, and encourage restoration of natural areas. For further information, contact president Janine Catchpole at j9-catchpole@comcast.net or look on-line.

Letters to the Editor:

Letters on content within the Sauk-Calumet newsletter should be sent to the editor at: sc-editor@illinois.sierraclub.org

Please include your full name and address, and reference the article on which you are commenting.

**Sauk-Calumet Group
People You Should Know**

Steve Baker Outings	815-485-5273
Pat Coffey* Political Chair / Publicity	708-720-2725
John Field* Treasurer / Web Site	630-852-8202
Connie Heinrich Newsletter	815-476-6171
Jerry Heinrich Midewin Liaison	815-476-6171
Georganne Higgins* Membership	815-936-9040
Lois Lauer* Chair / Programs	708-923-1550
Christy Mazrimas Ott* Conservation Chair	708-825-4163
Sharon Rolek Conservation Liaison - Calumet Region	773-646-0990
Rich Treptow* Secretary, Climate Change Liaison	708-747-0649

*Denotes an elected member of the Executive Committee

**Sauk-Calumet Program
Schedule**

Meetings are held at 7:15 p.m. on the second Monday of every month at the Frankfort Library (21119 Pfeffer Rd., Frankfort). We do not meet in June, July, or August. All meetings are free and open both to Sierra Club members and the public.

Sep. 14 Monarch Butterflies

Dolly Foster will discuss the plight of the Monarch Butterfly whose population has decreased drastically in recent years, and how planting milkweed can help the Monarch survive.

Oct. 12 New Cal-Sag Bike Trail

From Lemont to Alsip plus plans for further expansion! Come and see photos and hear about this wonderful new bicycle opportunity.

Nov. 9 "Cowsspiracy"

(The film is 91 minutes long. We will begin announcements at 7 p.m. so that we can start the film at 7:15 p.m.)

Join us to watch this groundbreaking, shocking, yet humorous documentary about the absolutely devastating environmental impact of large-scale factory farming, and the path to global sustainability that we need to take.

Dec. 14 Climate Change and the Arctic Ecosystem

Christy Mazrimas-Ott will show pictures and tell of the environmental effects of climate change on the arctic ecosystem.

Jan. 11 Members' Slide Night

Calling all members! Please bring slides (film or digital images) or prints of your latest outdoor experience, be it a grand adventure on the other side of the world or the beautiful butterflies of your own backyard.