

DuPage Sierran

Sierra Club, River Prairie Group of DuPage County



Chatter From the Chair

Fall, harvest, back to school, falling temperatures! Personally, I love living in an area where we have an ever-changing shift of scenery and activities. At our house, we had an endless array of salads thanks to the bounty of the garden. We grew beets for the first time this year! We also witnessed a Monarch caterpillar hatch and grow on our own milkweed. Once the rivers died down from the early summer rains, I kayaked the West Branch, Lake Geneva, and Lake Michigan. Kayaking at Diversey Harbor was actually a Sierra Club rally to bring attention to Shell Oil wanting to drill in the Arctic. With several dozen participants, we had a wonderful day in the water in Chicago. Lastly, Michael (my husband) and I took many walks as he built up his strength following a May back surgery. It was the perfect way to appreciate the details of nature surrounding us.

The River Prairie Group has kept close tabs on the DuPage County Forest Preserve over the summer. We hope you were able to attend some of the activities planned for their 100 years celebration.

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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](#)

You may notice new signage at various sites with historical comments as part of the ongoing tribute to the centennial. A petition campaign is underway to demonstrate the importance for the Forest Preserve Commission and the County Board to remain separate entities because of their conflicting missions of development versus preservation. You will find information in this newsletter to sign on.

Many of you may have read about the new science wing being built at Glenbard West High School in Glen Ellyn. Although community action was not successful in stopping the expansion, volunteers were able to organize to save some of the plants.

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Chatter from the Chair Continued from page 1


Thanks to Bruce Blake, our restoration steward, and others, there was a plant rescue on the site prior to the ground breaking. Read the article in this issue for more details.

As we head into fall, the River Prairie Group begins our series of programs in September, October, and early December. See the articles in this issue for details on these informative topics.

Note that elections are taking place for Executive Committee members. Our actual ballot is in the Chapter newsletter that will come in early October.

Each of you is welcomed and encouraged to join us in the leadership of the RPG. If you are interested in working on a committee, or participating in organizing an event, please contact me for details on our Executive Committee meetings. We'd love to have your input! Twnstr111@msn.com or 630 393 6276.

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 Gahrns – 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 Gahrns – Solar Energy Liaison
Stacey Salmon – Political Endorsements
Tom Richardson – DuPage County Issues

Additional Committee Chairs:

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



Cindy Crosby: A Naturalist You Should Know



By Sherry Stratton

A quick sampling of Tuesdays in the Tallgrass will show you why Cindy Crosby's blog is a link we like. In her July 7 post from Nachusa Grasslands, the headline is the prairie's bison herd and its 14 babies born there this spring. But in the fine print, and in her spectacular photos, Cindy profiles some other inhabitants of the prairie, both plant and animal. Or check out her March posting, with topics ranging from sandhill cranes to monarch butterflies. Again, her striking photos draw you in, making you want to linger, and perhaps spend some time in the prairie itself. When weather inclines us to the indoors—whether it's the depths of winter, a rainy spell, or too darn hot—Cindy has that covered, too. Her February entry "Prairie Literature 101" introduces her favorite prairie reads. Here, as elsewhere in Cindy's work, her knowledge is imparted with warmth and just the right amount of detail.

Cindy has the credentials to guide us through the prairie: a master's degree in environmental education and interpretation, multiple certifications from the Morton Arboretum, and a position there as interpretation program coordinator. She has authored or contributed to several books, and written countless essays and articles on the natural world, including for the DuPage Sierran. You may meet her on a guided walk at the Arb, in a classroom, or at a volunteer work day restoring prairie.

When you visit the River Prairie Group homepage, go to the right side of the page at the bottom to Some of Our Favorite Links and click on Tuesdays in the Tallgrass. Or just click here to start enjoying her words and photos now <https://tuesdaysinthetallgrass.wordpress.com/tag/prairie/>.

You'll find that Cindy is great company.

FINDING THE PEACE WITHIN

George Zahrobksy Botanical Garden Another Woodland Remnant Half Lost/Half Saved

By **Bruce Blake**
River Prairie Group , Co-chair Conservation

Walking through the George Zahrobksy Botanical Garden, you feel you are miles away from civilization. It is eerily quiet and peaceful. You are surrounded by oaks, walnut, maples, ash, and many other types of trees. Some are towering oaks over 200 years old. After climbing up the west side of the hill, past the decaying railroad ties used for steps, I really understood the message on the sign: "Find the Peace Within."

George Zahrobksy was a science teacher at Glenbard West High School from 1961 to 1994. He was more than just a teacher. He is remembered for the personal touch he brought in his classes. He would take students on field trips and to dinners and plays. The George Zahrobksy Botanical Garden on the east side of Glenbard West is named after him. Mr. Zahrobksy is retired but still lives in Glen Ellyn. Christina Sedall, a student and Ecology Club President, interviewed him. You can find the interview at www.youtube.com/watch?v=BT1Yu6CJzrc.

The botanical garden is part of a glacial remnant called Honeysuckle Hill by the early settlers in Glen Ellyn. The "hill" and Lake Ellyn were bought by the school district in 1919 for \$8,000. The lake was sold to the Park District for \$1. The east side of the Hill has never been developed; it is as it has been for over a hundred years. There are over 200 trees growing on the site. At least half of them will be destroyed, along with





74 native plant species, for the construction of an addition to the school, cooling towers for air conditioning, and a waste disposal system.

The additions have been in the planning stages of District 87 for over 5 years.

It wasn't until June that we knew about the impact to the Zahrobksy Garden. Citizens for Glen Ellyn Preservation started a petition to stop the development, and over 2,000 people signed it.

Gerould Wilhelm, PhD, a Glen Ellyn resident and one of the most knowledgeable authorities on native plants, did a site assessment for the school. He spoke at several village meetings to try to get this unique site saved from development. The village board gave final approval for the construction.

As a Glen Ellyn resident, volunteer steward for the DuPage Forest Preserve, and longtime naturalist, I couldn't see losing all those plants. There are many that you seldom get to see in the wild. By a strange stroke of luck, I happened to meet Linda Oberg, Vice Principal in charge of Operation for Glenbard West. I had sent a letter to GW about the Sierra Club and WildOnes working on a plant rescue. WildOnes

(<http://wildones.org/chapters/dupage/>) is a group dedicated to preserving native plants. Linda Oberg and Glenbard West were very helpful in allowing us to see where the construction would be. Pat Armstrong, Marlene Rosecrans, Renae Frigo (GE Park District), and I viewed the site and the areas to be removed for construction. There was only about a third of the hill left that wasn't impacted. We decided that we could relocate the plants to the other side.

We set the date of July 24, 25, and 26 for the relocation. Over 25 people from groups including WildOnes, Glen Ellyn Park District, stewards from the DuPage Forest Preserve, and the Sierra Club came out to help relocate several hundred native plants.

The volunteers carefully dug up, transplanted, and watered. It was humbling to see the care and dedication they took with each plant. The weather was hot and dry. Luckily, we had a breeze.

The Park District had two enthusiastic young men, John and Danny, who brought a truck with water and a pumper to get water up the hill. It saved a lot of work. Whatever plants we couldn't get onto the

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other side of the hill will go to the GE Park District's Lake Ellyn.

The High School's Principal, Peter Monaghan, and Public Relations Director, Peg Manion, came out to talk to us. The school has been very cooperative. We explained that many of these plants are rare and unique, and that the site is a remnant of the area before Glen Ellyn was developed. It was set aside as a place where you could find peace and quiet.

The school has set up a watering system, and

the plants we relocated are doing well. We hope that once the construction is finished, the plants will be allowed to return. Part of the science program should be field work using the Hill as a teaching tool. Once you lose something special like this wooded site, it can be restored, but never brought back. It takes hundreds of years. There are not enough places left where we can find the peace within.



EXPERIENCE AN ALASKAN ADVENTURE VICARIOUSLY WITH RICHARD STUCKEY

**SEPT
08
7PM**

**GLEN
ELLYN
CIVIC
CENTER**

Last year, Richard treated us to a wonderful presentation on his trip to the Galápagos Islands. This year, Richard will share with us his amazing trips to Alaska. He saw Grizzlies in Katmai National Park, and he also visited the Arctic Wildlife Refuge to witness the Caribou migration. The herd was estimated at about 40,000!

This promises to be a great evening. Hope to see you there.

For more information, please contact Moira Dowell Noll at moiradowell@aol.com. Glen Ellyn Civic Center is located at 535 Duane St., Glen Ellyn.

DANGERS OF OIL TRAIN TRANSPORTATION



**OCT
14
7PM**

**GLEN
ELLYN
CIVIC
CENTER**

There have been six fiery oil train accidents across the country since the beginning of this year. This alarming fact highlights the dangers of transporting hazardous material via rail within yards of schools, homes and playgrounds. Gerri Songer, a member of the Sierra Club Woods and Wetlands Group and a contact for Energy Transport and Infrastructure, will outline the need for better regulations and more safety measures.

Please plan to attend this important and informative program.

For more information, please contact Moira Dowell Noll at moiradowell@aol.com

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 adventurers 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.



Sierra Club River Prairie Group Members Upcoming Election

The River Prairie Group of the Sierra Club Executive Committee membership information will be posted in the upcoming October Chapter newsletter along with your voting ballot

The River Prairie Group is looking for passionate Group members who want to run for a position on the Group Executive committee. The "Ex-Com" sets the budget, programs, and priorities for the local group. They also network with other groups in DuPage with like minded agendas.

If you feel called to this exciting role and want to help with the leadership of the RPG, contact Connie Schmidt, Chair of the nominating committee for application information and to discuss the responsibilities of this critical and enriching volunteer role.

Email: Twnstr111@msn.com or call 630 234 3029.

The following candidates have declared their intention to run for the Ex-Com:



Jeff Gahris

A 25-year resident of DuPage County and retired environmental engineer, I served on Glen Ellyn's Environmental Commission for about 12 years. More recently, I organized the Glen Ellyn Cool Cities Coalition, which promotes energy conservation and reduction of greenhouse gases. I now work for SCARCE, a local nonprofit promoting energy efficiency. I am a Solar Ambassador for the Illinois Solar Energy Association. As a member of the Naperville Astronomical Association and the Illinois Coalition for Responsible Outdoor Lighting, I advocate for efficient and appropriate use of outdoor lighting. I am also a certified storm spotter. When not looking at the sky, I can be seen volunteering for local gardening efforts, natural area restorations, cleaning up the Illinois Prairie Path, or demonstrating the value of solar energy using a "tiny solar house." I have been a member of the Sierra Club since about 1980 and have enjoyed the camaraderie of fellow environmentalists. I find Sierra Club a unique and effective organization and would be honored to serve for an additional term on the River Prairie Group ExCom.



Joseph Pokorny

I have been a Club Life member since 1986 and a computer geek since the mid-1960s.

I have been acting as an RPG outings leader/assistant since joining and currently as RPG Administrator for HELEN (Club membership database), activity calendar, and email list servers, plus serving as assistant webmaster.

I plan to continue to aid the Executive Committee in attaining their goals, work with the Outings Committee, find ways to enhance our communications, and verify and aid in compliance with Club rules and use of Club resources.



Kathy Franke

My name is Kathy Franke, and I am running for the Executive Committee for 2016 because I believe in the power of grassroots organizing. I joined the Sierra Club at least 25 years ago and began my activism back then as part of the "phone tree" lobbying effort. Though we no longer use the phone tree, I have remained active in lobbying for environmental issues, as I feel the most effective mechanism for change is through the legislative process.

I have been acting as ExCom secretary, though not as an elected member, for the past two years, so I'm familiar with the goals and objectives of the group. It has been an honor to work with the amazing and committed people currently making up the ExCom, and now I am running to become an elected member and officially continue my involvement with the group.

I currently also serve as an appointed member of the Warrenville Environmental Advisory Commission, a dedicated volunteer at SCARCE, and an active participant in the Citizen's Climate Lobby. I feel that the magnitude of the climate crisis we are facing today will require a collaborative effort between the many groups working toward a common goal. We also need to extend outreach and education to the populace to amplify the grassroots movement and engage the next generation of environmental activists.

River Prairie Group (RPG) Outings

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 sierraclub.org/illinois/river-prairie/outings for new, current and updated outings, new RPG listings and offerings from other local groups.

Visit the activity calendar at: sierraclub.org/illinois/river-prairie/outings. The calendar includes meetings, events, dates, times, directions and maps. 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@paul.us.

Experience an Alaskan Adventure (vicariously) with Richard Stuckey Tuesday, September 8 – 7:00 PM Glen Ellyn Civic Center, 535 Duane Street, Glen Ellyn, IL

Last year, Richard treated us to a wonderful presentation on his trip to the Galápagos Islands.

This year, Richard will share with us his amazing trips to Alaska. He saw Grizzlies in Katmai National Park, and he also visited the Arctic Wildlife Refuge to witness the Caribou migration. The herd was estimated at about 40,000!

This promises to be a great evening. Hope to see you there.

For more information, please contact Moira Dowell Noll at moiradowell@aol.com.

Porcupine Mtn Wilderness - Fall Hikes September 10–13, 2015 \$130 with full payment required in advance 901-919 E. Cloverland Dr., Ironwood, MI 49938

Two and a half days of hiking at the Porcupine Mountain Wilderness in Michigan's Upper Peninsula with views unlike any other in the Midwest. Towering virgin timber (pines, cedar, hemlock, oak, and maple), secluded lakes, waterfalls and miles of wild rivers and streams make a visit to the "Porkies" a trip to remember. We hike 8 to 9 miles on the first two days, 3 on the last. Some rocky terrain and a couple of stream crossings. Cost: \$130 includes: 3 nights lodging at the Indianhead Motel, 823 East U.S. 2 (Cloverland Drive), Ironwood, MI. (906) 932-2031. www.indianheadmotel.com, 3 continental breakfasts & Sierra club costs. Full payment required in advance. Limit 14. Leader: Paul Saindon. Assistant leader: Email Paul at paul@pauls.us

Please note: Logistics require that we drive about 90 minutes to get to our first hike on Friday, 45 minutes on Saturday and around 20 on Sunday.

Kayak or Canoe the Kishwaukee River Sat., September 19 – 9:00 AM \$35 kayak, \$30 tandem kayak, \$30 canoe, \$5 own boat, all per person 202 Walnut Street, Cherry Valley, IL 61016

Kayak or Canoe the scenic Kishwaukee River, Rockford IL. The Kish maintains a class "A" rating from the Illinois Dept. of Natural Resources making it one of the three highest water quality river systems in the state. It has often been described as a "unique aquatic resource comparable to a stream without human disturbance".

The cost of (canoe \$30 per person) (solo kayak \$35) (tandem kayak \$30 per person) (private boat, \$5,) for those renting a canoe or kayak it includes kayak/canoe, paddle and life jacket rentals, and Sierra Club fees. Leader is Paul Saindon.

To sign up, email Paul at paul@pauls.us or call after 5pm 815 310 0001.

Fall Mania in the Shawnee National Forest Sat., October 10 – Mon., October 12 \$3.00 per person, for ea. hike. Cost on camping at Giant City is not known right now, but may be around 20.00 per site per night. A guess right now. Carbondale, IL Bring: Hiking boots, water, lunch for all hikes. Rain gear IF necessary.

Come along on one or more of our hikes on Columbus Day weekend. The weather should be great, and the fall colors should be near peak. Camping will be possible, and depending on interest and participants - we can camp at Giant City S. P. near Carbondale (optional and TBD). Saturday: Hiking the snake road in fall should be interesting. We've hiked this road (and trails) in spring to spot the serpents waking up and moving out of the bluffs and

into the swamps. So, this time, we'll hope to see the reverse commute with them moving into the bluffs to hibernate, along with many other species, in this biodiversity 'hotspot. Ed's a certified naturalist as well as an arborist by trade, so we'll be botanizing along the way and checking out the myriad of tree species. A good hike to learn the local flora and fall bloomers for sure! We'll then move up to the bluff top trails to take in the amazing views of the river systems and see a completely different ecosystem - being drier and rockier. Great bluffs and outcrops. Google 'Inspiration Point', at La-rue Pine Hills to see more. Sunday hikes will be a bit easier at Giant City, S. P. again with bluff trails, forests, and ancient relics of native american ruins atop one bluff. We may hike a variety of trails on this day. Also of interest will be eating at the famous 17th St. BBQ after the Sat. Larue hike, and maybe a visit to the lodge at Giant City for their famous fried chicken Sunday? Good grub!

Again, camping is recommended from Friday through Monday at Giant City. Otherwise, hotels are plentiful in the area.

Dangers of Oil Train Transportation
Wed., October 14 – 7:00 PM
Glen Ellyn Civic Center
535 Duane Street, Glen Ellyn, IL

There have been six fiery oil train accidents across the country since the beginning of this year. This alarming fact highlights the dangers of transporting hazardous material via rail within yards of schools, homes and playgrounds.

Gerri Songer, a member of the Sierra Club Woods and Wetlands Group and a contact for Energy Transport and Infrastructure, will outline the need for better regulations and more safety measures.

Please plan to attend this important and informative program.

For more information, please contact Moira Dowell Noll at moiradowell@aol.com.

Bicycling The Tinley Creek Trail
Sat., October 17 – 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM

Join us as we ride through the South Cook County bike trails. We will see open prairie and rolling hills and visit Lake Katherine on this 20 mile ride. The pace will be 11-12 mph. We will break for lunch at one of the lakes along the route. Limit is 15. Mary Fox is the Leader and Mark Ginger is Co-leader. To sign-up, contact Mary at 312-504-4003, mlbikes@prodigy.net.

Des Plaines River Hike #4
Sunday, October 18, 2015
9:30 AM (Time Tentative)
Dam West, Wheeling, IL 60090
\$3 suggested donation to help support Sierra Club initiatives

Join me for my 4th hike along the Des Plaines River Trail. This hike will begin at the Dam #3 parking area and go northwards. The total distance will be approximately 10 miles. If conditions are right, there should be spectacular fall color along this section of the trail as there are large groves of maples along the trail. Limit 15. To sign up, contact the leader Mark Ginger at bubbbleman@outlook.com. Assistant leadership available.

Adopt a Trail Work Day - IL Prairie Path
Sat., October 24 – 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM
485 North Montclair Avenue, Glen Ellyn, IL

This outing will start at 9 AM. This is an easy 2-mile walk on the Illinois Prairie Path to Hill Avenue (+?) and back. It may be canceled if weather is severe with back-up date the next Saturday.

The starting location for us is at the east end of the parking lot near 485 N. Montclair St, Glen Ellyn, where it dead ends into the Prairie Path just south of the Union Pacific Railroad tracks. People should contact me if interested due to possible late developments, Jeff Gahris, (630) 853-5505.

2015 dates are 4/25, 6/27, 8/22, and 10/24 and will be Sierra Club clean-ups; but we will be following County requirements. This allows us to have an Adopt-a-Trail sign on the trail with the Sierra Club name on it.

White Pines fall Hike & Dome House Tour
Sun., November 1 - 9:30 AM (Time Tentative)
Polo, IL 61064, USA

Leader: Jan Bradford - 847-477-5518



Mail-in Membership Form for Sierra Club Membership

**Join or Renew with the Sierra Club today and receive a free backpack!
Print this page, then fill out the information below.**

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____
Phone: _____ Fax: _____
Email: _____

J03WOT0007

Please select a membership level:

Individual Membership

- ___ Introductory \$25
- ___ Regular \$39
- ___ Supporting \$75
- ___ Life \$1000
- ___ Student \$25
- ___ Senior \$25
- ___ Limited Income \$25
- ___ Contributing \$150

Joint Membership

- ___ Regular \$49
- ___ Supporting \$100
- ___ Life \$1250
- ___ Student \$35
- ___ Senior \$35
- ___ Limited Income \$35
- ___ Contributing \$175

Please select a payment method: AMEX: ___ MasterCard: ___ Visa: ___

Credit Card Number: _____

Expiration Date (mm/yy): _____ Signature _____

I'd like to make a special, additional gift, over and above my membership dues, to help in the following area(s):

- Sierra Club** \$ _____ (lobbying and legislation) **The Sierra Club Foundation** \$ _____ (research and public conservation) **Environmental Law Program** \$ _____ (environmental litigation)

___ Please do not send me the free backpack. I prefer that all of my contribution goes towards protecting America's environment.

From time to time, we make our mailing list available to other worthy organizations. If you prefer that your name not be included, please check here: ___

**Mail this form to: Sierra Club Member Services
85 Second Street, 2nd Floor
San Francisco, CA 94105-3441**

Contributions, gifts and dues to the Sierra Club are not tax deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Contributions to The Sierra Club Foundation and Environmental Law Program are tax-deductible. Your dues include \$7.50 for your subscription to Sierra Magazine and \$1 for your Chapter newsletter.