



DuPage Sierran

Sierra Club, River Prairie Group of DuPage County

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Primary Election MARCH 18TH

CHATTER FROM THE CHAIR

This issue is filled with updates on a variety of topics from paths to politics and reducing pollution. After our long ordeal of harsh winter weather, no doubt most of us are ready to find a local trail to take a hike. Favorite suggestions abound here, so find a new trail to explore.

If a purposeful hike is more what you are after, check out the calendar of work dates to support our stewardship project in Glen Ellyn at the Glacial Ridge Forest Preserve, a special eight acres along the Illinois Prairie Path. We remove Buckhorn and other invasives to make way for native plants to thrive. This is indeed a unique area that allows you to stroll to one of the highest natural points in DuPage County. The River Prairie Group is proud of our adopted area and appreciates your support in restoring it to its native splendor!

The political season is in full swing with the primary elections just around the corner. This is one of the things that differentiates the Sierra Club from other environmental organizations. We do make endorsements and lobby our elected officials for positions of importance to the environment. The endorsement process is no "walk in the park" however. Candidates must fill out a questionnaire and then be interviewed by a group of volunteers. Once all interviews are conducted, an endorsement recommendation is made and must be voted on by the committee, and then the RPG Executive Committee. The national bylaws state we must have a second body within the Sierra Club approve our endorsements so traditionally they are presented to the Illinois State Chapter as well for a second approval. The months preceding any election are consumed with this complicated process, but the result is recommendations for candidates who will work to protect our land, air and water resources. Please review our endorsements presented in this issue and share with others. **Some endorsements may be made after the publication of this issue, so check the following link for the latest information.**
<http://content.sierraclub.org/voterguide/illinois>.

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DuPage Sierran

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<http://content.sierraclub.org/voterguide/illinois>

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

Illinois and DuPage County in particular are being pushed by Sierra Club members to support clean and renewable energy resources. The River Prairie Group meeting in January started our year with this topic. Later in January, the Cool Counties initiative signed by DuPage was featured at the Environmental Summit hosted by the Conservation Foundation. With a coalition of volunteers our cities and county will adopt sustainability programs to decrease their carbon footprint and reliance on fossil fuels. To become more involved in a Cool City program in your area, contact Lisa Medearis at lisa.medearis@sierraclub.org. It is an exciting process to work with other engaged volunteers in your neighborhoods who value the environment!

Enjoy this issue and share our mission with others as you "explore, enjoy and protect" the natural wonders of DuPage County and Illinois.

Connie Schmidt
Chair of the River Prairie Group

PRIMARIES: HOW TO BE SMART

Make Illinois' open primary system work for you

Whether you think of yourself as a Republican, Democrat or Independent, and no matter how you plan to vote in the General Election, in Illinois primaries, you can ask for a ballot for any party; and you can change which party's primary you vote in from primary to primary.

The Illinois primary system allows you to vote in the primary that has races that interest you. This year in the March primary, there is no real race on the Democratic side of the governor's election and most Democrats in DuPage are running uncontested or without a serious challenger. So Democrats might want to ask for a Republican ballot to have a hand in choosing their state representative and senator and the Republican candidate for governor.

If the primary is the whole shootin' match in your district, BE SURE TO VOTE!

Many districts were made super safe for one party or the other in the 2010 redistricting. If you live in a safe Republican or safe Democratic district, the election winner is effectively chosen in the primary. No matter which party you will vote for in the general election, consider voting in the primary of the party that is likely to win. Don't sit out the primary just because there is no important race in the party with which you identify.

Does the Sierra Club have any heroes who are threatened in the 2014 primary?

Yes! One of the environment's strongest champions is being challenged in the 48th House District. Rep. Sandra Pihos has tackled many hard issues for the environment and stands up to special interests for Sierra Club every year. We encourage all our members in the 48th district to take a Republican ballot and vote for Pihos.



Sandra Pihos (R) for Illinois House – 48th

Sandra Pihos sums up her attitude toward the environment this way: "Unlike many issues where there really are two sides, when it comes to the environment, there really is a right and wrong way."

More than a reliable environmental vote, Pihos has taken on the toughest issues for the environment. She is one of a handful of Republicans making protecting the environment a bipartisan issue.

Last year she stood up to the power companies once again when she was a chief sponsor of our renewable energy bill. Previously, when Smart Grid was being debated she was one of only eight legislators to stand up to ComEd and insist that the Sierra Club's renewable energy and energy efficiency bills be included in the Smart Grid legislation. She has voted consistently against taxpayer subsidies to coal plants. In 2010 she was one of only a handful of legislators to cosponsor our solar bills. She voted for our phosphorous in lawn fertilizer ban. In 2009 she cosponsored the Sierra Club's Clean Cars bill; she voted for the energy efficient building codes bill, the natural gas efficiency bill and against the hated STAR Bonds bill, all top Sierra Club priorities. She was one of only 17 representatives out of 118 to vote against both bad ATV bills that would have allowed all-terrain vehicles to wreak havoc in our state parks.

Pihos has a tough primary challenger. She is a legislator we cannot afford to lose.

See Sierra Club's complete and up-to-date endorsements at:

<http://content.sierraclub.org/voterguide/illinois>



Michael Fortner (R) for Illinois House – 49th

“Michael Fortner has been an incredibly strong voice in Springfield for the environment,” said Jack Darin, Illinois Sierra Club director. “His science background and willingness to speak up has made him very influential and a great plus for the Sierra Club’s issues.”

Last year Fortner was chief cosponsor of our Power Labeling bill, which allows communities to get information about the source of their power. So many times over the years we have counted on his leadership. When Smart Grid was being debated, he was one of only eight legislators to stand up to the power companies and insist that the Sierra Club’s renewable energy measures were written into the Smart Grid legislation. He has cosponsored our energy efficiency bill and was an early cosponsor and strong voice for the Sierra Club’s solar bills. He was a consistent vote against taxpayer subsidies for coal plants. Fortner cosponsored our Clean Cars bill and our Energy Efficient Building codes bill; he voted for our Natural Gas Efficiency bill and against the hated STAR Bonds bill, all important priorities for the Sierra Club.

Fortner began as a citizen activist fighting to hold Kerr McKee Corporation responsible for contaminating the rivers and groundwater of West Chicago and surrounding communities with thorium. He provided crucial leadership as he progressed from citizen to West Chicago alderman to West Chicago mayor in

getting the multi-group thorium cleanup agreement with Kerr McGee.

His membership on the House Energy and Environment Committee and the Transportation Committee bespeak his environmental priorities and position him to be the powerful help to the Sierra Club that he is. Few have fought harder for mass transit than Fortner.



Kathleen Willis (D) for Illinois House – 77th

Kathleen Willis is seeking re-election as Representative of the 77th House District. Her support for renewable energy and environmental protection earned her Sierra Club’s endorsement in 2012.

In her first term, Rep. Willis demonstrated significant leadership on clean energy issues by co-sponsoring several Sierra Club-backed pieces of legislation. These bills include requirements for electricity suppliers to disclose their energy mix to consumers, development of a task force to analyze and evaluate the development of offshore wind energy in Lake Michigan, and a moratorium on fracking until a thorough review on its impact was completed.

Representative Willis is looking forward to continued work in Springfield, strengthening our economy and creating jobs. “Cleaner energy is not only a way to increase the health of our community, but also I believe it is the pathway to a new frontier in economic development and job creation, with potential for new markets and increased productivity.”

Kathleen Willis is a true environmental champion who sees the win-win opportunities in protecting our environment while spurring job creation in clean energy sectors. She also supports the expansion of recycling programs throughout the state and advancing support for electric vehicles.



Ron Sandack (R) for Illinois House – 81st

Ron Sandack is seeking re-election as Representative of the 81st House District. Before serving in the Illinois legislature, he was an environmentally friendly mayor of Downers Grove. As Mayor, Sandack initiated many cost saving and sustainability-focused programs within the village. These initiatives include a successful recycling “extravaganza,” hybrid-powered residential street lighting, a rain barrel program for residents, and expansion of the village’s natural gas powered municipal fleet.

Rep. Sandack’s voting record has been consistently aligned with Sierra Club’s position. He is supportive of sound clean energy policies, protecting funds allocated for renewable energy projects, and implementing comprehensive fracking regulations. Always willing to consider reasonable solutions, Ron Sandack believes in “innovative solutions, both legislatively and beyond, (and) utilizing market-based ideas to expand good environmental stewardship.”



Shannon Burns (D) for Forest Preserve Commissioner of DuPage County – District 6

A long-time volunteer for Sierra Club, Morton Arboretum and Wayne Conservancy, in her first term as Forest Preserve Commissioner, Shannon Burns has been a powerful and effective advocate for wetlands protection, fiscal responsibility, transparency in government, trail building and enlightened forest stewardship.

Burns has been effective in reaching across the aisle to work with Republicans as well as staff and volunteers to get things accomplished. For instance, her efforts to resolve problems between volunteers and staff at Danada Equestrian Center earned her a standing ovation at the board meeting when she presented her report. “I never saw anything like it,” said Tom Richardson, River Prairie Group’s Forest Preserve liaison. “Republican commissioners were standing and applauding. In the audience, Danada volunteers and staff were standing and applauding too. This problem had festered for so long.”

To further transparency in government, Burns proposed and passed resolutions that led to regular evening meetings, a working ethics committee and accurate recording of public comments.

Her passion for fiscal responsibility has led her to donate 6 percent of her salary to fund transportation of children to Kline Creek Farm programs. She voted to reduce commissioner salaries and voted against programs that were duplicative and wasteful.

She has tirelessly advocated for projects that increase species diversity and add to people’s enjoyment of the forest preserves. She has walked door to door in neighborhoods near restoration projects explaining the benefits.

Burns carries on the great tradition of District 6 sending a great commissioner to the DuPage Forest Preserve Commission.



Joe Cantore (R) **for DuPage Forest** **Preserve President**

In 11 years on the DuPage Forest Preserve Commissioner, Joe Cantore has demonstrated strength and resolve to stand up to political pressure and do what is right for the environment. He has been a friend to the Sierra Club.

He believes in the Forest Preserve mission of connecting nature and people through open space. As a Commissioner, he has voted for projects that restore biodiversity, create habitat for wildlife and give people a great outdoor experience. He has been accessible to constituents. He is against giving up land to private entities that come begging for a place to put their pet project.

We believe that Cantore has the leadership skills and experience to guide the Forest Preserve Commission through the problems it will face in the coming years.



Many trail-related websites offer informational resources about trails and the pleasures of biking, hiking, cross-country skiing, horseback riding, and getting outside to enjoy nature. Following is an overview of trails, trail support groups and agencies that help to build trails and keep trail trekkers safe during their adventures along beautiful routes. Hopefully, this compilation provides the information you need to explore and discover fantastic highlights in DuPage County and elsewhere; and, if you want to be socially networked with other trail advocates, join www.facebook.com/groups/TrailsLinkingCommunities/.

Active Transportation Alliance
www.activetrans.org

The mission of Active Transportation Alliance is to make bicycling, walking and public transit so safe, convenient and fun that we will achieve a significant shift from environmentally harmful, sedentary travel to clean, active travel. The alliance advocates for transportation that encourages and promotes safety, physical activity, health, recreation, social interaction, equity, environmental stewardship and resource conservation.

Adventure Cycling Association
www.adventurecycling.org

The Adventure Cycling Association offers listings of tours and resources for the touring and recreational cyclist.

American Hiking Society
www.americanhiking.org

As the national voice for America's hikers, American Hiking Society promotes and protects foot trails, their surrounding natural areas and the hiking experience.

Chicago Area Mountain Bikers
www.cambr.org

A group of riders that steps up for responsible and safe mountain biking, CAMBr promotes trail advocacy, sustainable trail development, and responsible cycling – all for the sake of a better ride.

Continued on next page

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP)
www.cmap.illinois.gov

CMAP is the official regional planning organization for the northeastern Illinois counties of Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry and Will. CMAP developed and now guides the implementation of GO TO 2040, metropolitan Chicago's first comprehensive regional plan in more than 100 years.

DuPage County Bikeways and Trails
www.dupageco.org/bikeways

This website provides information on all bicycle and pedestrian activities undertaken by the DuPage County Division of Transportation, including 92 miles of trails operated and maintained by DuPage County, such as the Illinois Prairie Path and Great Western Trail.

Elmhurst Bicycle Club
www.elmhurstbicycling.org

The Elmhurst Bicycle Club is one of the larger, more active bicycle clubs in the area and has a variety of activities throughout the year that are directed at all skill levels.

Forest Preserve District of DuPage County
www.dupageforest.com

The Forest Preserve District manages more than 145 miles of trails that cross woodlands, wetlands and prairies. Most of these trails – more than 80 miles covered in crushed limestone or mowed turf – are suitable for hikers, bikers, horseback riders and cross-country skiers. The remainder, including narrower gravel and dirt footpaths, are perfect for quieter, reflective walks and discovering wild plants and animals.

Fox Valley Bike and Ski Club
www.fvbosc.org

The FVBSC provides a focal point for group bicycling and skiing activities for communities near the cities of St. Charles, Geneva and Batavia. The club enjoys proximity to the roads of rural Kane County and the Illinois Prairie Path, the Fox River Trail and the Great Western Trail.



Illinois Bike Transportation Plan
www.altaprojects.net/illinois-bike-transportation-plan

The Illinois Bike Transportation Plan will follow the Long-Range Plan's theme of Transforming Transportation for Tomorrow and will provide the Department with policies, best practices and strategic direction for implementing a sustainable, multimodal vision for Illinois.

Illinois Department of Natural Resources Greenways and Trails
www.dnr.illinois.gov/recreation/

The program promotes greenways, and land and water trails while encouraging information sharing between partners and constituents.

The Illinois Prairie Path
www.ipp.org

The Illinois Prairie Path Corporation and its volunteers are focused on recreation, prairie restoration, land preservation and beautification, conservation of natural resources and ecosystems, preservation and interpretation of historic sites, and the connection of IPP to other trails to form a regional network of greenways.

The League of American Bicyclists www.bikeleague.org

The League of American Bicyclists represents bicyclists in the movement to create safer roads, stronger communities and a bicycle-friendly America. Through information, advocacy and promotion, the league works to celebrate and preserve the freedom cycling brings to its members everywhere.

League of Illinois Bicyclists www.bikelib.org

League of Illinois Bicyclists is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to improving bicycling conditions in Illinois. They are the statewide advocate for all Illinois bicyclists, promoting bicycle access, education and safety.

Nordic Fox Ski Club www.nordicfox.org

The club's purpose is to promote cross-country skiing and encourage skill improvement and ski safety at all levels, while having fun in a friendly atmosphere with other outdoor enthusiasts.

Northwest Municipal Conference www.nwmc-cog.org/Transportation/Bike-Planning.aspx

The Northwest Municipal Conference has taken an active role in several initiatives to enhance the biking and walking environment in our communities. While investment in road and transit improvements are major components of the Northwest Municipal Conference's strategy to improve mobility in our region, they believe it is just as important to provide non-motorized transportation options for those traveling within and between our communities.

People For Bikes www.peopleforbikes.org

The People For Bikes movement works to unite millions of Americans to build better communities for biking coast-to-coast, improving rides and transforming our nation.

Trail Monkey www.trailmonkey.com

This site provides high-resolution, virtual trail maps and images of national parks, forests, dive sites, waterways and wilderness areas, backcountry trails & camping, mountain bike trails and ancient sites throughout the world.



Trail Riders of DuPage www.trod.us

TROD is an organization founded to assist and educate horseback riders and other trail users in the promotion and preservation of multi-use trails.

Trails for Illinois www.trailsforillinois.tumblr.com

Trails for Illinois is building a statewide trails community that integrates trails and trail experiences into Illinois work, play and life.

Our Favorite DuPage County Trails



Bunny alley and the Col du Ferry are a couple of the highlights along with native plants like Black Cherry, Osage Orange, Sugar Maple, Poison Ivy, Spring Beauty and Chicory along my favorite DuPage County trail.

My favorite and most often-used section of the Illinois Prairie Path runs from downtown Wheaton to Eola Road in Aurora. I enjoy the tranquility of the path in the midst of the suburban surroundings. I ride my bicycle along this route at least 50 times a year going to work or going home, often with a fellow biology teacher. Riding in the dark and through sunrise, we started counting bunnies. It has turned into a gentleman's bet where an over/under is set. I have a very ineffective bunny call I use when I need to see another bunny to win.

Looking for wildlife on the path is only part of the enjoyment. As a botanist I most enjoy the plants; and as is all too common in our part of the world, invasive plants are dominant. These transplants from Europe and Asia are all too common. On my section of the path, buckthorn and garlic mustard are very common. In some segments they comprise the majority of the vegetation. There is a section between IL 59 and Warrenville Road, though, with fewer invasive plants. In the springtime, there is a riot of native color under that oaks and maples that dominate the canopy.

There has also been a Superfund clean-up project along the path between Winfield and Batavia roads. The river was moved through a created oxbow and pumped around the area, which was dredged. It was a project that took a couple of years, and now I am watching natural succession take place and nature is reclaiming the area south of the path.

These are some of what make this section of path my favorite. I hope you have a chance to get out for a ride and enjoy it.

— Jeff Schmela, Science Teacher
Metea Valley High School

Do I ride to live or do I live to ride? Yes.

Best place to ride? From home, where the heart is, DuPage County trails are among the best.

Air? Check. Brakes? Check. Chain? Check. Water? Check. Ear buds? Never. Shake, rattle and roll.

I like to ride out to the state park. The Stearns Road west wind blows hard in your face, so live for a tail-wind earning Personal Best. The state park is the perfect trailhead with three trails inside and an all-direction regional trail hub. It has facilities available 24/7 365 and a flag pole to gauge the wind.

The Prairie Path south to Klein Creek Farm starts with a bird-filled wetland marsh. The ducks and geese have their own social circles, and the herons stand still in isolation. Overhead, the hawks own their territory. My bicycle leaves them, undisturbed.

It's a quiet ride to Klein Creek Farm's trip into the past. Wiggle through Winfield, two years to their planned West Branch Trail. Carefully, very carefully, slide quickly across Roosevelt Road. Disappear into McKee Marsh with long-gone mammoths. Take the second right to Blackwell.

Blackwell is the perfect forest preserve. Ground squirrels scurry under the hardwoods, or is that a charging bear crashing through the trees? Pass White Pine Lake and its unmistakable sweet aroma along the trail. Blackwell has something for everyone as well as being another trailhead leading in all directions. Choose west to the Fox River, north and south along the West Branch, or east on the Prairie Path or Butterfield Road corridor. Each choice is the best.

Choosing east to Herrick Lake, ride all the loops full of diversity, then rejoin the Prairie Path spur to Mile Zero of the Illinois Prairie Path. Rejoice for the incredible people who 50 years ago envisioned a place everyone can enjoy. Relax at the water fountain to share stories with other passersby. Enjoy downtown Wheaton and fill up with water to head home.

I am grateful every morning when my eyes are opened. Where will I ride today? What will I see? Who will I meet? How do we make what we have even better? I hope to meet you along the trail so I can say thank you.

— Terry Witt, Spin Doctor Cyclewerks

COUGARS, BEARS, AND WOLVES —OH MY!



The presence of black bear, gray wolf and mountain lion has become more and more commonplace in Illinois. In fact, in the fall of 2013 an Illinois Conservation Officer shot and killed a mountain lion in Whiteside County. Then two weeks later, a motor vehicle struck and killed a gray wolf in LaSalle County. Because of the recent exposure to these animals, there are some who would like to see these animals recolonize the state of Illinois. So the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), with direction from the Governor's office, has proposed to protect these animals under the Illinois Wildlife Code.

Since mountain lions, gray wolves and black bears are not currently mentioned in the state's Wildlife Code, IDNR has no authority to manage those species. At present, individual landowners must make all decisions about dealing with them. IDNR may assist, but only as directed by the landowner. Having the three species added to the Wildlife Code would authorize IDNR to promulgate rules to give its own staff and others direction on how to manage the species while protecting private-property rights and human health and safety.

There is a special committee of Chicago Wilderness members that includes biologists, educators and communication specialists who are studying and discussing this issue. It's anticipated that legislation will be introduced soon to add cougars, wolves and bears to the state Wildlife Code. Proponents of this bill could possibly include Illinois Environmental Council, Chicago

Wilderness, animals rights groups and various environmental groups. A sponsor for a proposed bill has not been identified.

Adding species to the Wildlife Code is a separate and different process from adding wildlife to the list of threatened or endangered species. Since there is no current knowledge of any of the three species breeding in Illinois, discussions regarding threatened or endangered status are not planned at this time. According to Mike Stevens of IDNR, wolves are listed on Illinois' endangered species list and that limits a landowner's decision because an individual cannot kill an endangered or threatened species.

The IDNR has many human dimension surveys to show the majority of Illinoisans would like to see these animals back in the state. However these same people said that while they want them in the state, they would not want them in their back yard. That is where DNR is going to have a problem. Most people do not want them on their property, but roughly 98% of Illinois is privately owned. The IDNR is going to have to walk a fine line to allow these animals back in the state while allowing landowners enough rights to remove potentially dangerous animals from their property.

Among the outstanding issues to resolve is that the IDNR is going to have to develop a conservation program to protect these animals while allowing landowners freedom to remove them.

We anticipate more to come on this issue.



OUR STORY

By Andrew Van Gorp

Whether it was covered by ocean, glaciers, wetlands, savanna or rivers, this place we now call DuPage County has always existed in some capacity. Over a more recent span of time, thousands of humans have called this place their home.

I would like to seek back toward the beginning of our shared local story. Up until European Colonization in DuPage County, the Potawatomi lived upon this land, and the Illiniwek before them. The river here took the name of a French Fur Trapper, Du Page. According to David E. Maas and Charles W. Weber (1976), "Most authorities agree that when (European) residents of our county began to settle along the DuPage River, there were four major Potawatomi villages. One was located on Salt Creek (Oak Brook). A second village was between Lombard and Glen Ellyn, now known as Churchill Woods. The third settlement was on the east branch of the DuPage River in present-day Morton Arboretum. The final major Indian village was in a wooded site of the DuPage River near what is now Naperville."

The Potawatomi and Early Europeans of DuPage County all harbored rich cultural heritages, and yet they shared in a Culture of Place unique to DuPage County for some time. There existed the same growing seasons in their lifetimes, the fruiting of the trees, migrations of the birds and of the fish.

For a moment, allow yourself to fully contemplate the truth that these peoples lived completely from this land. This meant they derived every single object they needed in their life, either directly from the land, or indirectly through trading. That is a truly humbling

and beautiful thought. It is a hopeful thought, as we can look to our past to learn from these successful and sustainable living practices.

Our history makes us who we are. Today we find ourselves in a unique time, where fossil fuels have momentarily made community interdependence unnecessary for those living upon DuPage. For the most part we in DuPage County, unlike the human inhabitants before us, do not depend upon our neighbors in almost any capacity for day-to-day survival. This is our curse.

However, this curse will soon be lifting. As Climate Change, the Global Water Crisis, Ocean Acidification, Fossil Fuel Opportunity Cost, Mass Agricultural Failure, and Habitat Loss begin to exert their pressures upon DuPage County, many of us may find ourselves in need of a stronger community fabric.

Can DuPage County hope to sustain itself locally in such a dystopian future, when so much of our heritage of self-reliance has been lost, when the landscape has been so radically modified? The truth is, we have no other choice! We can allow our community to descend into chaos and division, or we can prepare now to prevent the unthinkable.

Growing up here, we were taught that the early subsistence lifestyles of DuPage were "tireless work" or "brutal labor." This culture of subsistence-shaming is commonplace and unquestioned in many communities today, and needs to end. I don't think many people see the detrimental effect it has on our youth. Physical labor has long been stigmatized as lesser or unfortunate, and yet in my experience I've

Continued on next page

“Our Story” Continued



only ever known it to be fulfilling and worthy of pride. Living on a farm two summers ago was the most meaningful experience of my life, and I hope to share that with everyone I meet. To live off the land in any capacity is a blessing beyond description.

I hope you don't believe in your heart that DuPage County's rich history of subsistence existed, that the practice of sustainable living is no longer desirable or of use to us. I hope you have the vision to see the opportunity available to us, that we as a county can step beyond learning about the advanced living practices that existed in the past and instead pursue to reincorporate these traditions into our lifestyles as a meaningful supplement to everyday existence.

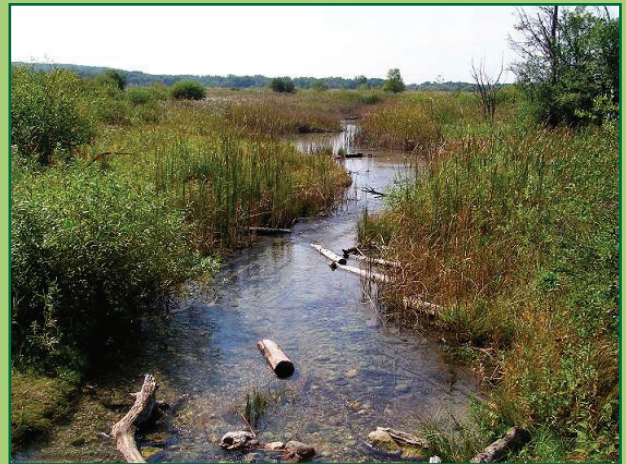
It is true many of us come from different places; some of us may not even think of this place as home. But I find it hopeful to remember it takes seven years for every cell in your body to turn over new. If you lived off food and water from DuPage for seven years, anyone could become of this land.

It can be intimidating to even consider what seems to be in all probability our near-apocalyptic future. And yet, I am daily encouraged and hopeful. Nearly everyone I speak with seems to be consciously or unconsciously yearning for a sense of meaning and belonging within our community. In terms of food security, things in DuPage County can't get much more dangerously unsustainable than they are now, so there's no where to go but up! Many people within our county are working tirelessly to prepare our community for whatever comes our way through Community Gardens, Farm to School Initiatives, Food Cooperatives and Crop Share Associations. During World War II, the United States citizenry grew roughly 40% of what they ate, from their yards alone! The

land and waters of DuPage County are waiting to provide plentiful bounty for us, year after year in perpetuity.

On the verge of our demisemiseptcentennial (175 year anniversary), we have the opportunity to pause on our prairied path to retrace our steps back, in search of our shared local heritage for a more meaningful, safe, and delicious DuPage.

I believe the truest way to maintain the culture of this place, is to sustain ourselves from what this land still provides – to enjoy and sink deep into what it means to belong here. I encourage my fellow DuPage citizens to learn to harvest those black walnuts we bag up at the curb, seek out the headwaters of your streams, teach a child how to save seeds, catch a fish (and then eat it), learn to keep alive the vibrant traditions of this place within your own life for the common welfare. I implore you to meaningfully and fully invest in this place, your homeland. After all, DuPage loves you!



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

The Forest Preserve District has scheduled the following work dates, all 9 AM-12 PM:

March 16, April 6, May 4, June 8, July 6 and August 10.

To register and to find out more information, contact Forest Preserve Volunteer Services at (630) 933-7681 or volunteer@dupageforest.org.

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, so early signup is suggested.

Including updates on those below, new RPG listings, and offerings from other local groups, current listings are online at illinois.sierraclub.org/outings. For our new Activity Calendar, which includes meetings and events and offers map and direction links, go to: illinois.sierraclub.org/rpg/calendar/.

Saturday, April 12 Spring Wildflower Hike Southern Cook County/ Northern Will County, Lemont, IL

Join me for a spring wildflower hike at two locales at the Cook County/Will County border. We will hike a total of six miles at Black Partridge Preserve and Messenger Woods. Black Partridge Preserve is a small and unique area with mixed ecosystems. Messenger Woods is one of the few remaining forests in northeastern Illinois that has not been altered by grazing, cutting or development. It has become known for its abundance of spring wildflowers, especially Virginia bluebells. In addition, there should be trillium, blue-eye Mary, spring beauties, hepatica and skunk cabbage. Limit: 15. Cost: \$3. Leader is Mark Ginger. To sign up, contact Mark at bubbleman@outlook.com. Assistant leader welcomed.

Sunday, April 13 Spring Flower Hike White Pines State Park, Polo, IL

It's springtime so let's do a new hike. This year I thought we would get out early and see/identify the spring flowers at White Pines State Park. I believe there are bloodroots, Virginia blue bells, Dutchman Breeches, etc. But we will have to check this out together. So come join me for a fun day of fresh air and flowers. Limit: 20. Cost: \$3. Please contact the leader, Jan Bradford, at jbradford60131@sbcglobal.net. Assistant leader is Mike Way.

Saturday-Sunday, April 19-20 Forest Glen Backpack East Central, IL

Backpack central Illinois along the Middle Fork of the Vermilion River. This county park is an unexpected treat with 11 miles of backpacking trails and several lateral

trails to peak your interest. We'll hike ravines, grassy meadows and tall grass prairies. This is also a good warm-up trip for your summer backpacking and hiking trips. Cost: \$35. Contact leader Joe Pratola at (773) 344-5287 or jpratola@yahoo.com. Assistant: Marlina Bertolozzi

Saturday, April 19 Spring Wildflower Hike Riverwoods (Near North Suburban Chicago)

Join me for a spring wildflower hike in the near north suburbs of the Chicago area. We will hike about six miles at Heller Nature Center and Ryerson Conservation Area. Heller Nature Center is an invaluable locale that helps educate our youth as well as adults about nature in the Midwest. Ryerson Conservation Area is one of the best examples of a northern flatwoods forest, a rare northern Illinois landscape. Expect to see special wildflower magic at these places. Limit: 15. Cost: \$3. Leader is Mark Ginger. To sign up, contact Mark at bubbleman@outlook.com. Assistant leader welcomed.

Saturday, April 26 Spring Wildflower Hike LaPorte County, Indiana

Join me for a spring wildflower hike in nearby LaPorte County. We will hike about six miles at two locales. Red Mill County Park is a 108-acre area that is the headwaters of the Little Calumet River. Bendix Woods County Park is the old testing ground for the Studebaker automobile. The state-dedicated nature preserve inside the park is a sight to be seen during spring wildflower season as the floor of the forest is transformed into a carpet of white, courtesy of spring beauties, anemone and giant white trillium. Limit: 15. Cost: \$3. Leader is Mark Ginger. To sign up, contact Mark at bubbleman@outlook.com. Assistant leader welcomed.

Sunday, April 27
Spring Hike
Danada Herrick Forest Preserve, Wheaton, IL

Come join us for a special hike in the forest preserve with all the fruit trees in bloom. If Mother Nature cooperates, this will be a hike you won't want to miss. It's beautiful with white, pink and rose blossoms announcing that spring has arrived. Limit: 20. Cost: \$3. Please contact leader Jan Bradford at jbradford60131@sbcglobal.net. Assistant: Mike Way

Friday-Sunday, May 2-4
Mississippi Palisades Hike/Bike Weekend
Northwest IL

Spend one day hiking through the Mississippi Palisades, studying and identifying the spring wildflowers covering the slopes. Hike along ancient Indian trails overlooking the Mississippi River Wildlife Refuge. Spend one day either hiking or biking a section of the Illinois Great River Trail. Camp or stay at a local inn. Limit: 20. Cost is \$40 (\$5 discount for Sierra Club members). \$25 deposit is due April 1. Leader TBA. Assistant leader is Marlena Bertolozzi. Call Marlena at (708) 267-4238 to sign up for this popular trip.

Sunday, May 4
Spring Wildflower Hike
Berrien Springs, Berrien County, Michigan

Join me for a spring wildflower hike in Berrien County, Michigan. We will hike a total of seven miles at two locales. Love Creek County Park is a mix of open prairie and heavily wooded forests. Of note is the large variety of spring wildflowers here and the abundance of white trillium. Fernwood Botanic Gardens is a 105-acre parcel consisting of an arboretum, prairie restoration and nature preserve. It is a magical place located in the St. Joseph River Valley. Limit: 15. Cost: \$3. Leader is Mark Ginger. To sign up, contact Mark at bubbleman@outlook.com. Assistant leader welcomed.

For up-to-date information, visit the IL chapter-wide outings at: illinois.sierraclub.org/outings and the RPG Activity Calendar at: illinois.sierraclub.org/rpg/calendar

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March 10, 7 PM
The Dangers of Using Coal Tar Sealants

Risks to health and environment.
Glen Ellyn Public Library. For info, call (630) 469-1606.

March 16, 9 AM-12 PM
Glacial Ridge Work Day

Help restore a natural area by removing nonnative vegetation in Churchill Wood Glacial Ridge. Call (630) 933-7681 to register.

March 25, 7 PM
Environmental Book Group

In her book, *Overdressed*, Elizabeth Cline evaluates the true cost of low-priced clothing to our world environmentally, economically, and in regard to social justice. Warrenville Public Library, 28 W 751 Stafford Place. For info, call (630) 393-1171.

April 6, 9 AM-12 PM
Glacial Ridge Work Day

See March 16.

April 22 - Earth Day

Join an Earth Day Celebration in your community. For details on the event at Lake Ellyn in Glen Ellyn, call Jeff (630) 469-2056.

May 4, 9 AM-12 PM
Glacial Ridge Work Day

See March 16.

May 18, 2-6 PM
Party on the Farm!

Live music, animals, friends and food. Fund-raiser to help elect environmentally-friendly state legislators. 3 S 501 Landon Drive, Warrenville IL.