

## Make Your Vote Count!

**Sierra Club Candidate Endorsements on Pages 17–22.**

## Noted Native Plant Speaker Invited by RPG

By Steve Windsor



Photo by Lonnie Morris

Prof. Doug Tallamy had his book *Bringing Nature Home* featured in *Sierra* magazine this past March. His “central message is that unless we restore native plants to our suburban ecosystems, the future of biodiversity in the United States is dim.”

But fortunately, because he so clearly demonstrates the problems with invasive plants, he is able to bring us eagerly back to the solution of planting more native plants in our yards. This is the focus not only of his book but also of the many speeches he has given.

The primary problem with non-native plants is that they are not an adequate food source for native insects. You would think these new “pest-free” plants would be gardener heaven. Yes that was the original idea of bringing alien plants to North America--to have plants with full leaves and nary a bite mark. But insects can be picky eaters if they don't find plants with the right micronutrients – the nutrients they've been finding in native plants for thousands of years.

But non-native plants increase biodiversity and that is good thing right? Dr. Tallamy qualifies the idea of biodiversity by numbers, saying that biodiversity is important among member species that contribute

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## DuPage Sierran

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[Http://illinois.sierraclub.org/rpg](http://illinois.sierraclub.org/rpg)

For activities, legislative action alerts, & outings information

**We are on Facebook!**

[Http://www.facebook.com/pages/River-Prairie-Group\\_of\\_the\\_Sierra\\_Club/96257429851](http://www.facebook.com/pages/River-Prairie-Group_of_the_Sierra_Club/96257429851)

to their ecosystem. It is the value of their services to the other species and back again that sustain the whole lot of them.

The non-natives, rather than fitting into this web, disrupt it. The whole food chain then drops to a slower gear, fewer native plants mean fewer insects and less protein all the way up the food chain. So it isn't

## Lombard Garden Club Goes “Grass-roots” in Support of Community Aggregation

By Diane Dassow

Grass-roots support for clean energy in Lombard cropped up in a fitting place this past spring—the garden club.

As the Lombard Village board considered electricity aggregation and the place of renewable energy within it, individual members of the Lombard Garden Club joined Sierra Club members to present visual, verbal, and written support for the idea of the community switching renewable energy.

Some wrote emails to the trustees and Village President supporting their position, others spoke at a public comment session in May, and others just showed up, sporting colorful Sierra Club tee-shirts.

“I think it was the right thing to do,” said Lombard resident Karen Brittain about the switch to renewable energy. Brittain is a member of both the garden club and Sierra Club. “I used to be a teacher, and I saw the increased rates of asthma with the kids. I wanted to show my support [for greener energy sources].”

Another Lombard Garden Club member, Nancy Stewart, said that the reason the garden club is supporting community aggregation is because it corresponds with its mission: the beautification of Lombard.

Meetings have much to do with the basics of gardening and with developing a healthier and safer way to control insects. “(Our members) are very much opposed to using insecticides and avoid them when possible, using nature-friendly means,” Stewart said. “It’s another way of protecting the environment.”

“I’m a gardener,” Brittain said, but added that of late the focus of her interest has shifted from the more formal type of gardening, and toward native wildlife and the environment. She and Stewart were joined at the village board meeting by a number of other garden club members concerned about the environment.



*Photo by Lonnie Morris.*

**Lombard Garden Club members and supporters turned out in force at a village hall meeting to support including renewable energy in the town’s municipal aggregation.**

But both Brittain and Stewart emphasized that this grassroots effort was not an official delegation from the club, but rather a response by individuals to information presented to them by Lonnie Morris.

Morris, Cool Cities Chair of the Illinois Sierra Club, began organizing on behalf of local solutions to climate change in her home community of Lombard in 2005. Her first presentation was to the Lombard Garden Club, which resulted in that board voting to endorse Cool Cities and taking a position of support for Lombard Village President William J. Mueller signing on to the Mayor’s Climate Protection Agreement.

“This was the first community organization to get behind Cool Cities,” Morris said, and this laid the groundwork for Mueller to eventually sign on. Cool Cities grew to 57 cities around the state. “The initial success with the garden club was the spark of motivation for the effort,” Morris said.

According to Morris, it seemed right and fitting that garden club members were instrumental in persuading the village board to purchase 100 percent renewable energy in its electricity aggregation, honoring its commitment to being a Cool City and achieving the reduction of greenhouse gases in the Mayor’s Climate Protection Agreement.

## The History of Aggregation in Lombard

A January 1, 2010 state law allowed municipalities to aggregate electricity on behalf of its residents, and to potentially pass along considerable savings to residents and small commercial retail establishments by entering into contracts with alternative suppliers. In a referendum, Lombard's residents gave the village the nod to seek lower electricity supply rates. After two public comment sessions, at which Sierra Club members and other community residents spoke persuasively on behalf of green electricity, on May 3, 2012, the Village Board approved a 24-month contract with First Energy Solutions, with bid prices based on 100 percent renewable energy for 24 months being 45% lower than ComEd's prices at the time. At the time, Lombard was only one of five communities in Illinois specifying 100% renewable energy in its electricity contract.

## Doug Tallamy Continued From Page 1

just open spaces that are needed to prevent extinctions, it's also the efficiency of the food chain that is important and can be enhanced by starting with native plants.

And the place to put them is in the thousands of square miles of suburban yards. His book offers tips on how to do so and includes a nice primer on insects labeled: "What does bird food look like?"

Dr. Tallamy is able to put this all into a narrative that can be easily followed when he speaks. For that reason the Sierra Club RPG is Partnering with the Greater DuPage chapter of Wild Ones and four other organizations to bring Dr. Tallamy to speak in Bolingbrook. He will be here the morning of October 20. It is free and coffee, juice and Danish will be served. Since hundreds of people will be there, you will need to register for tickets at [www.bringingnaturehome.eventbrite.com](http://www.bringingnaturehome.eventbrite.com). Books will also be available for purchase at the event.

## Green Readin': An Environmental Book Discussion

Sunday October 14, 2:00 p.m.  
Helen Plum Library, Lombard, IL



***Bringing Nature Home – How Native Plants Sustain Wildlife in Our Gardens*** by Douglas W. Tallamy, Professor and Chair of the Department of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Delaware in Newark, Delaware

Written by a scientist for the lay reader, this book will pique your curiosity about the relationship between plants, insects, and birds. Tallamy asks pointed questions about the benefits of native plants versus imported ornamentals and then gives clear explanations of how natural systems have evolved.

He provides a wealth of information about achieving a balanced community of plants and wildlife in our own home landscapes, along with beautiful photographs of trees, flowers, birds and – yes, bugs! In the final chapter are "Answers to Tough Questions."

Join our friendly group of readers in a discussion of these questions, led by Pat Clancy of Wild Ones – Native Plants, Natural Landscapes. You will then be primed to hear Doug Tallamy speak at the Bolingbrook Holiday Inn the following Saturday, October 22.

Sierra Club River-Prairie Group and the Greater DuPage Chapter of Wild Ones, along with The Conservation Foundation, Illinois Native Plant Society, the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County and the Forest Preserve District of Will County, have joined in partnership to bring this popular speaker to our area.

Free and open to the public. This program is not endorsed or supported by the Helen Plum Memorial Library.

# What I Learned From Two Tons of Left-over Coal

By Shannon Burns

In the pre-Internet world of the early 90's, I owned a small historic bungalow in downtown Naperville. I bought this home from the family that built it. The coal furnace in my new home had been converted to gas in 1953, leaving two tons of coal leftover in the coal bin.

I never thought much about that leftover coal. It was just there. And then Naperville got on Lake Michigan water; overnight, everyone's basement – mine included – developed seepage and flooding when it rained. Needing to install a sump-pump, I hired a contractor to put drain tiles under the inside perimeter of the basement floor. But before I could get the job done, I had to do something about the two tons of fossilized plant materials that had been sitting in my coal bin for 45 years.

## Giving Away Coal

I was sure someone would want my coal. I started at the top, calling the Museum of Science and Industry, asking if they wanted my coal for their coal mine exhibit. Sadly, they "already had plenty of coal, thanks," and wouldn't take mine away. Next, I called historic settlements in DuPage County, looking for someone who wanted my coal. By the time I had called every Museum and Historic settlement in three surrounding Counties, and gotten the same answer, I was starting to get worried.

I called waste hauling companies to see what it would cost to remove my coal. What a shock to find out that I couldn't even pay to have the stuff removed! No one wanted leftover coal and the date for my sump-pump installation was fast approaching.

Next, I decided that I could get those two-tons of coal into small bags and drag them to the garbage, a few each week, until the pile was gone. Looking back, I realize this idea was born of delusional optimism, but it seemed like a good idea at the time. I started shoveling.



**Shannon Shoveling the coal from her basement.**

It didn't work. First, coal is freakishly heavy. Even bagged, a small amount is difficult to carry up basement stairs, through the house, down the outside steps and then to the curb. The bags often broke along the way and left coal dust everywhere. And, no matter how much I shoveled and dragged, that two-ton pile in the basement never seemed to get smaller. An additional surprise came when the garbage truck left the bags of coal on the curb and I had to drag them all back inside.

Finally, I asked for help, only to be thwarted again. Here is a partial list of places that had no suggestions for disposing of left-over residential coal: Naperville Public Library, Commonwealth Edison, the Naperville Fire Department, the EPA, the State of Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Exxon, BP Amoco and Mobil Oil, Nicor Gas, Waste Management Inc, three junk yards, Forest Preserve Districts in DuPage and Will Counties, and NPR's Car Talk radio show.

Friends weighed in with helpful ideas, like "packaging the coal in small bundles to sell as novelty Christmas sticking gifts for naughty spouses" or putting an ad in the paper for "free coal". I actually tried the

“free coal” ad idea, forgetting that I had already learned you couldn't give the stuff away. Of course, friends also had useful observations: “You know, old coal is a serious fire risk” and “The weight of that coal is probably cracking your basement floor.”

In the end, I found an out-of-work fellow with a truck who was willing to do anything for money. I paid him to get rid of my coal while I was out of town. When I got back, my coal was gone.

### What Happened?

One of the reasons no one wanted my coal was the sheer overabundance of leftover coal in residential basements at the time. Another reason was environmental regulations on disposing of petroleum products. The fact that it can spoil, rendering it useless, was yet another reason that no one wanted my coal. Even if it could be used for fuel, transportation logistics presented a problem.

Twenty years after my coal experience, thanks to the Internet, I am better informed. It's true that some coal spoils. Once it is taken out the ground and exposed to air, some grades of coal dry out as a result of being exposed to air. Coal that has been mined is also exposed to humidity and oxygen. This combines over time to decrease the fuel value of coal.

Even if it is not “spoiled,” older coal does not burn efficiently. At some point, old coal becomes exothermic, requiring more energy to burn it than is released by burning, similar to wood that has been stored in a damp area. And it's true that coal can be a fire hazard; once coal has become exothermic, it releases a gas that can result in a hazardous material. Old coal also becomes brittle, making it harder to handle and thus harder to move

Modern coal is bagged. This keeps it dry so it doesn't spoil. Because coal is formed by a variety of fossilized plant materials, no two coals are exactly alike. These days, there are Internet lists of types of coal, the geographic location where each type is mined and sold, along with the percentage chance of spoilage for each type.

With the availability of today's Internet, I may have been able to identify the type of coal in my pile, thus establishing whether or not it was spoiled. But even today, knowing that my coal had not spoiled would not have made it easier to get rid of. The Internet is full of posts asking for ideas on getting rid of leftover residential coal.

### Lessons Learned

Someone told me recently that hogs eat old coal. If only I'd had a pet pig.

Judging by the Internet chatter on the subject of old coal, my story is not unique. But my story does illustrate how difficult it is for the average person to make responsible environmental choices in unusual situations.

Given a choice, I would have preferred to get rid of my coal in a way that either put it to good use, or that disposed of it in an environmentally friendly manner. What I discovered with my coal pile – and later, when I got around to dealing with the asbestos on the old boiler – is that environmental disposal systems are designed for corporations and municipalities with larger problems than my small coal pile.

What I learned then – and still believe to be true today – is that the world needs more easily accessible resources for the average person who has an unusual environmental problem.

### Need Coal?

By the way— I did keep a small bucket of that coal. If you ever need a piece of coal for a naughty loved one's holiday stocking, call me. I'm still trying to give it away!

## Home Energy Audits Unveil Inefficiencies

By Barbara Lonergan

According to the U.S. Department of Energy, the typical American family spends about \$1,900 a year on home utility bills. A home energy assessment, or audit, is the first step to assess how much energy your home consumes and to evaluate what measures you can take to make your home more efficient.

Homeowners can conduct a simple no-cost, do-it-yourself home energy audit; contact the local utility company for a low-cost assessment or call an independent energy auditor for a higher cost, more comprehensive examination. An energy audit alone does not improve energy efficiency in a home; it is only a tool to determine the areas in the home that are inefficient and details the sources of energy loss. An assessment will unveil problems that may, when corrected, save significant amounts of money in the long run.

### No-Cost, Do-It-Yourself Assessment

In a no-cost, do-it-yourself energy assessment, the homeowner walks through the home, top to bottom, checking for leaks. Leaks can be found around electrical outlets, switch plates, window frames, baseboards, fireplaces, doors, attic hatches, and window or wall mounted air conditioners. Another way to identify leaks is with an incense test: on a cool, windy day, turn off your furnace, shut all windows and doors, and turn on all exhaust fans that blow air out of the house. Then move a lit incense stick along walls, windows and common leak sites.

Look for gaps around pipes and wire, outlets, foundation seals and mail slots. Most holes can be filled with expanding foam or caulk, and homeowners can consult with a local hardware store for the best and safest remedy. Caulk, weather strip and low cost plastic sheets can fix window leaks.

Other inexpensive ways to cut back on energy consumption: install energy efficient light bulbs; plug electronic devices into power strips and turn off the strips at night or when not in use; install a programmable thermostat.

For a homeowner willing to spend additional money, consider replacing older appliances with energy efficient ones: refrigerators, dishwashers, washers, and dryers.



**Photo by Mike McHugh.**  
**Nicor Home Services workers insulate the McHugh home.**

Free online tools are available to improve your home's efficiency. Visit the Illinois Home Performance site (funded by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity) at <http://ihp.energysavvy.com>, or the MyHomeEQ LLC site (created through a partnership of CNT Energy and RW Ventures) at <http://www.myhomeeq.com>.

Additionally, the Elmhurst Public Library and many other local libraries loan do-it-yourself audit kits, including a Kill-a-Watt energy use meter or a thermal leak detector. For more information, visit the Elmhurst Public Library's 2nd floor Information Desk.

### Low-Cost Investment

The Home Energy Savings Program is a joint program offered to single family customers of both Nicor Gas and ComEd in DuPage County. During the audit, a trained Energy Advisor will conduct a 2 to 2.5 hour assessment for \$99.

The assessment includes a comprehensive review of your home's HVAC, hot water, lighting, insulation, air leakage and major appliances; installation of up to 10 compact fluorescent light bulb, high efficiency faucet aerators and showerheads, and hot water pipe wrap; installation of a programmable thermostat at a discounted price of \$21.89; a customized

report detailing recommended energy efficiency improvements which could save up to 30 percent on your energy usage. If a customer decides to take the next step and have work completed by program-supplied contractors within 30 days of the initial assessment, instant rebates of up to \$1,250 or 50 percent are available.

"For the less environmentally-aware homeowner, I think this (ComEd/Nicor assessment) was a great place to start in understanding how insulation works in your home and how air can move in and out of your house to drive up energy bills," says Elmhurst resident Michael McHugh.

"It's really important to follow the auditor through the home and pay attention to what they are looking for and looking at," says McHugh. "The audit can be a great educational experience, whether the recommendations fall under the program's scope or give you thought for future improvements."

Program funding is limited. For more information on ComEd/Nicor program or to schedule a \$99 assessment, contact 877-821-9988 or visit <http://nicorgasrebates.com/homeenergysavings/>.

### Higher Cost, Professional Assessment

Professional energy assessments generally go into great detail. The energy auditor should do a room-by-room examination of the residence, as well as a thorough examination of past utility bills. Assessments will include a blower door test, which measures the extent of leaks in the home, and should include thermography, or infrared scanning, to record temperature variations and determine if and where insulation is needed.

A professional assessment can reveal damaged or missing insulation, improper caulking, incorrectly installed materials, gaps in construction, and mold and water damage.

"The physical evidence was eye-opening," says Elmhurst resident Lisa Gerhold-Dirks. "Seeing the infrared images where heat was escaping from our home and feeling the drafts during the blower door test made it really obvious where our home's inefficiencies were."

State and local government energy offices often identify local organizations that provide professional home energy audits and provide information on savings incentives and tax credits.

Additionally, homeowners who upgrade their energy efficiency can earn the Illinois Home Performance



**Photo by Mike McHugh**

**The blower door test measures the extent of leaks in a home.**

Certificate of Completion. This certification is included as one of the Chicago-area MLS's third-party certification designating a green and sustainable home. According to Illinois Home Performance, there is an emerging trend of certified green homes selling faster or at a premium price, or both. For more information, visit <http://www.illinoishomeperformance.org/what-expect/certification>.

By auditing your home and implementing changes to improve your energy efficiency, you'll increase your home's value, reduce carbon emissions, and save money.

For more information about home energy audits, including free tools and calculators, visit these and other websites: [www.energysavers.gov](http://www.energysavers.gov), [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov) and [www.energyimpactillinois.org](http://www.energyimpactillinois.org).

## DuPage County Streams Study Released

**Calls for action from state, municipalities and residents to improve water quality**

By Tess Wendel

The River Prairie Group, a local section of Sierra Club, released their latest report on the quality of streams in DuPage County. The report, *As the River Flows*, illustrates water quality monitoring done by the group and puts it in context of other work in DuPage River and Salt Creek watersheds and the rest of the state of Illinois.

The study shows that water quality in DuPage County streams continues to reflect the urbanization of the county. In particular, monitoring shows elevated levels of nitrate and phosphate. These nutrients come from fertilizer runoff and discharge from wastewater facilities. The nutrients feed algae and aquatic plants which cause low levels of dissolved oxygen or big fluxes in dissolved oxygen which are detrimental to aquatic life. The group also found chloride levels that often violate national aquatic life criteria due to road salt-use in the winter time.

"The condition of DuPage streams is not unique," said Jack Darin, Director, Illinois Sierra Club. "With public agencies and Sierra Club volunteers looking out for the health of local waterways and working together to enact science-based solutions to problems, they are working for healthy streams in DuPage County and setting an example to follow throughout the state for addressing similar threats."

The River Prairie Group's (RPG) river monitoring network is one of a number of Sierra Club Water Sentinel groups in Illinois. Water Sentinels work to protect, improve and restore our waters by fostering alliances to promote water quality monitoring, public education, and citizen action. The group's river monitoring network is entirely volunteer-run and this report is a result of over a decades' worth of monitoring and involvement in local environmental planning efforts.

"The report is important for the water collectors and testers because it gives meaning to the data so they are not just a bunch of numbers," said Bob Barbieri, Technical Administrator for the RPG's River Monitoring program. "Collectors get up at 7:00 am on a Satur-



**Photo by Lonnie Morris. Water Sentinel Fran Caffee demonstrating algae growth in water with high levels of phosphorus at Aurora Green Fest.**



day, rain, snow or shine and throw a bucket over the bridge. The report puts problems in the spotlight, honoring the volunteers' contribution."

The report highlights St Joseph Creek, a tributary of the East Branch of the DuPage River, noting its low nutrient levels which are seldom observed throughout the rest of the watershed. The group says that its excellent water quality would make it a perfect candidate for restoration. They also note that that St Joseph Creek and other streams often have high levels of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons which come from coal-tar based road sealants and are carcinogenic. The report recommends a ban on toxic sealants as well as a ban on phosphorus-containing fertilizers and suggests increasing vegetative buffers and green infrastructure to protect DuPage County waterways from pollution.

"It's encouraging to see streams like St Joseph Creek but even our streams of relatively high quality are a long way from their natural, healthy state," said Albert Ettinger longtime legal advocate for clean water. "There is still much work to be done at the federal, state and local level to improve water quality in Illinois and downstream in the Mississippi River and the Gulf of Mexico."

The full report can be viewed at <http://illinois.sierra-club.org/rpg/>



## Nature Photos Donated to the Sierra Club



**Photo by Jennifer Hensley.**  
**Tom Richardson, Jack Darin, and a damselfly photo.**

People join the Sierra Club for the expertly led wilderness outings and the opportunity to protect the outdoor areas they love. Thanks to a donation of nature photographs, Sierra Club members and staff can now enjoy pictures of what the Club is working to preserve while visiting and working in the Chicago office. River Prairie Group member Tom Richardson recently organized a donation of seven, outstanding nature photographs to be displayed at the Illinois Sierra Club office located at 70 East Lake Street, Chicago.

During a visit to the office, Richardson found an environmentally-friendly work space filled with busy staff. While the walls were green both literally and figuratively, they were also noticeably bare. As a dedicated photographer, he quickly identified the potential for bringing nature indoors with photos of Illinois landscapes.

Richardson reached out to fellow Mayslake Nature Study and Photography Club members and professional photographers Willard Clay, Fred Drury and Hank Erdmann to assemble the seven donated photos.

Each of the photographers has a passion for particular subjects. Clay specializes in landscapes and Drury in underwater shots. This past year, Hank Erdmann joined the select few photographers whose work has been featured on the cover of a Sierra Club Calendar.

### Where Can I See More Photos?

#### Tom Richardson

- Photos featured on the River Prairie Group's website.
- Mayslake Nature Study and Photography Club <http://www.naturecameraclub.org/Mayslake/Welcome.html>
- <Http://www.NatureByRichardson.com>

#### Willard Clay

- Photography teacher at Morton Arboretum, Lisle, IL
- Images of the Landscape Illinois
- [Http://WillardClayPhotography.com/blog/?page\\_id=2](Http://WillardClayPhotography.com/blog/?page_id=2)

#### Fred Drury

- Shedd Aquarium
- Gallery 7, Joliet, IL
- Mayslake Nature Study and Photography Club
- <Http://www.NatureCameraClub.org/Mayslake/Welcome.html>

#### Hank Erdmann

- Currently working on a book project on Michigan
- Gallery 7, Joliet, IL
- <Http://HankPhoto.com/>

The gift of spectacular nature scenes will inspire and remind office bound staff and volunteers of the grandeur and amazing beauty of the natural areas they are working to protect.

# Annual RPG Executive Committee Elections

Vote and be part of creating the leadership team for the River Prairie Group

## Candidate Statements



### Connie Schmidt:

My name is Connie Schmidt and I am running for the River Prairie Group Ex-Com in 2012. I have been a member of the Sierra Club since 1990 and have been an activist for the past 15 years.

Currently I am the Vice Chair of our group. I also serve as co-chair for the DuPage County Liaison for local issues. Since starting that role I have watched the enthusiasm for local activism steadily increase in our territory.

I have helped plan eight major fundraisers for our group, lobbied local and state elected officials, and served on numerous endorsement committees. Vegetable gardening is a personal passion as I work to raise much of my family's food over the summer and autumn months.

In addition, I am very excited to learn more about native plantings and their benefit to restoring biodiversity to our community.



### Linda Sullivan:

I am committed to the Sierra Club because of its grassroots structure that empowers ordinary people to make a difference. I believe the River Prairie Group should build on this strength, reaching out to its members, finding new ways to draw them into active participation, and improving channels for all members to make their voices heard.

As lobby chair for the RPG and Illinois Chapter of Sierra Club and as political chair for the RPG, my focus is on finding channels for our members to make democracy work for them instead of for large corporations. As citizen conservationists, we must find ways to raise the profile of environmental issues and hold legislators accountable.

If I am elected, I will bring enthusiasm and a positive attitude toward empowering all of us who care about conservation in Illinois.



**Bob Barbieri:**

As a longtime member of the Sierra Club and an active outdoor enthusiast, I am dedicated to its grassroots structure that allows the average person to make a difference. Through active participation of its members, I believe the River Prairie Group can advance the goal of having a more environmentally conscience society.

I have been serving the RPG as River Monitoring Program Technical Advisor for the past several years, and have been a water tester for the last 10 years. If I am elected to the Executive Committee I would bring the same dedication and enthusiasm to the Ex-Com as I have to the River Monitoring Program.



**Stacey Salman:**

As a child, learning about “acid rain, ozone depletion, and global climate change” significantly impacted my developing attitudes toward environmental protection. These early exposures shaped my belief that industrial activity and economic development should not come with unnecessary expense to our natural resources or our public health.

I have always found it important to contact legislators and representatives in support of responsible environmental legislation, but prior to joining Sierra Club I was acting independently as a concerned citizen. While the actions of individuals are important, a single voice is not too politically powerful.

Sierra Club provides a valuable path for environmentally concerned citizens to use their collective voice in influencing the political process. My involvement with Sierra Club has been as a member of the lobby committee, the energy transition committee, and as co-chair of the RPG political committee.

I value the work of Sierra Club in the political arena, I appreciate the opportunity to participate more directly in impacting environmental policy, and I am continually inspired by other members who are tirelessly dedicated to advancing the goals of Sierra Club. I look forward to continuing my role with Sierra Club as well as developing new opportunities, new roles, and new relationships.

**River Prairie Group Executive Committee Ballot**

- Vote for a candidate by checking off the box next to his/her name
- Vote for up to four candidates.
- Print your full name and address on the outside of the envelope for membership verification, and mark it to the attention of the Elections Committee, n/c Joe Pokorny 1627 Buckingham Ave., Westchester, IL 60154 by 12/15/12.
- Joint members may use a xerox copy for a second ballot. Indicate “joint” on the outside of the envelope and list both joint members' names.

- Connie Schmidt
- Linda Sullivan
- Bob Barbieri
- Stacey Salman

## Calendar of Events

### Saturday, Sep 8, Oct 6, Nov 10 Restoration Workday \*\*

9:00 am-12:00 pm, Glacial Ridge  
Forest Preserve, Glen Ellyn

Would you like to help restore a local prairie, woodland, or wetland? The Forest Preserve District of DuPage County has several restorations going on, including one at the Churchill Woods/Glacial Ridge Forest Preserve in Glen Ellyn. We are looking for volunteers to help remove invasive plants, cut brush, and collect, and plant native seed. For more information contact Steward Bruce Blake at 630-629-2520 or Rllnstns1@aol.com. Preregistration and waiver are required; go to: [www.dupageforest.org/GetInvolved/Volunteer](http://www.dupageforest.org/GetInvolved/Volunteer).

### Monday, September 10 Night Sky

7:00 pm, Glen Ellyn Public Library,  
400 Duane Street, Glen Ellyn

Drew Carhart of the Illinois Coalition for Responsible Outdoor Lighting will give a presentation to the River Prairie Group on the responsible use of light at night, explaining how night is an important but frequently ignored half of every natural environment and discussing what we need to do to better conserve and restore it.

### Sunday, September 16 9th Annual Prairie Day\*\*

11:00 am- 3:00 pm, Terrace View Park, Lombard

Lombard will return to its past on Prairie Day, the 9th annual celebration of the Tall Grass Prairie. This family-oriented, free event is sponsored by the Lombard Garden Club and the Lombard Park District and will be held at Terrace View Park, a tall-grass prairie restoration at Elizabeth and Greenfield. The outing features traditional music, food, children's games, and crafts which were typical pioneer activities in the early days of Babcock's Grove, and one lucky attendee will win a free rain barrel.

### Saturday, September 22 4th Annual Green Fair\*\*

10:00 am – 4:00 pm, Cantigny Park,  
1S151 Winfield Road, Wheaton

Don't miss out on the Green Fair this year! Shop green products, check out the latest green trends at the EcoNista Fashion Show, party with Radio Disney,

learn the how-to of composting, view the Eco Art Contest made by local high school and college students, take a seat in green vehicles, let your kids make crafts in the kid's tent, grab some green grub from the food booths, buy locally and/or organically grown produce from local farmers, peruse the many local/green vendors, and more! Sponsored by SCARCE. For more information call (630) 545-9710

### Sunday, October 14 Green Readin': Bringing Nature Home

2:00 p.m. Helen Plum Library,  
110 West Maple Street, Lombard

Join our friendly group of readers in a discussion as we discuss Bringing Nature Home: How Native Plants Sustain Wildlife in Our Gardens by Doug Tallamy. The discussion will be led by Pat Clancy of Wild Ones -- Native Plants, Natural Landscapes. The book highlights the link between native plants and native wildlife and how gardeners can make a significant contribution toward maintaining a diverse, sustainable environment.

### Saturday, October 20 Doug Tallamy: Bringing Nature Home

8:45 am- 12:00 pm, Holiday Inn,  
205 Remington Blvd, Bolingbrook,

Doug Tallamy will speak on the importance of native plants in the landscape. As the author of Bringing Nature Home he has made numerous speeches around the country to popularize their need and use. Check-in begins at 8:45. Coffee, juice and pastries provided. Doors close, speech begins at 9:30, doors reopen in 7 minute increments. Q & A at 10:40 followed by book signing. Books available for purchase.

### Monday, November 12 Winter Activities\*\*

7:00 pm, Glen Ellyn Public Library,  
400 Duane Street, Glen Ellyn

Come out of hibernation and learn new ways to stay active this winter. Presentations will include ice fishing, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and more.

*\*\*This activity is not sponsored nor administered by the Sierra Club. The Sierra Club has no information about the planning of these activities and makes no representations or warranties about the quality, safety, supervision or management of such activities.*

## 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.

Including updates on those below, new RPG listings, and offerings from other local Groups, current listings are on the internet at: [illinois.sierraclub.org/outings](http://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](http://illinois.sierraclub.org/rpg/calendar)

### **Sept 14-17 (Fri-Mon) Fall Hikes at Porcupine Mountain Wilderness, Ironwood, MI**

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. Cost: \$150 includes: 3 nights lodging at the Indianhead Motel, 823 East US 2 (Cloverland Drive), Ironwood, MI. (906) 932-2031. [www.indianheadmotel.com](http://www.indianheadmotel.com), 3 continental breakfasts, & Sierra club costs. \$5 member discount. Full payment required in advance. Limit 14. Leader: Paul Saindon. Assistant leader: Diane Fram. Email Diane at [dfram1329@hotmail.com](mailto:dfram1329@hotmail.com) to sign-up.

### **Sept 15 (Sat) Early Fall Hike at Danada/Herrick Preserves, Wheaton, IL, 9:15 AM (Time Tentative)**

The Danada and Herrick Lake Forest Preserve duet is close to most of us. And this year I thought we would see it in the early fall before it really gets cold. The fruit trees should all have fruit on them. And the birds will be plentiful. So bring your bird books and binoculars and let's go for a hike. Limit: 20. Cost: \$3. Contact Jan Bradford at 847-455-2947 or e-mail [jbradford60131@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jbradford60131@sbcglobal.net) for reservation and trailhead location. Co-leader is Mike Way. After the hike, there is an option to go to my favorite Mexican restaurant for a bite to eat. Additional Info for the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County's list of Preserve Info and Maps is at: [http://www.dupageforest.com/Conservation/Properties/Forest\\_Preserves\\_List.html](http://www.dupageforest.com/Conservation/Properties/Forest_Preserves_List.html)

### **Sept 21-23 (Fri-Sun) Bike and Hike Washington Island, Door County, WI**

Join us for a biking/ hiking low stress adventure on secluded Washington Island located 6 miles off the tip of the Door County peninsula. We will bike on uncrowded paved roads around the island. Approximate cost of \$130 includes lodging Friday and Saturday at a historic resort on the island serving Scandinavian breakfasts. Please note: The group will meet late morning on Friday to catch the Ferry over to the island or you can catch a later ferry. Meals, ferry to Washington Island, and incidentals are NOT included. Leader is Mike Davis. Assistant leader is Berni Kolasa. Call Mike at 815-331-3042 after July 1 for more details and to reserve your spot.

### **Oct 26-28 (Fri-Sun) TreeHaven Natural Resources Education/ Hiking, Stevens Point, WI**

Come out for a fall weekend of activities in Northern Wisconsin. This outing will be held at Treehaven, an outdoor education center run by the University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point. Activities will include hiking the many miles of marked and unmarked trails covering 1,400 acres of forestland. There will be educational activities Friday evening and Saturday which will include a lecture/hike on Winter Birds given by a Bird Biologist. Cost of \$180 (\$100 deposit) covers 2 nights lodging, 4 meals & administrative fees. Limit 16. Leader is Paul Saindon. To sign up, email Paul at [paul@pauls.us](mailto:paul@pauls.us).

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Photo by Lonnie Morris.  
Prairie Days.



Photo by Lonnie Morris.  
DuPage County Board Chairman Dan Cronin shows support for clean, pedal-power energy by riding his bicycle from Elmhurst to Wheaton during Bike to Work Week.

## RPG Outings Continued from page 13

### Nov 3 (Sat) Fall Colors Hike of White Pines Forest and Dome House Tour, Oregon, IL, 9:30 AM

Come join us for fall hiking at White Pines State Park which is one of the most beautiful state parks in the Oregon area-bring your camera. We will forge over river (on stepping stones, bridges, stairs), enjoy/explore, and learn about this protected area.

Later we will go to Polo to get a tour of an energy saving dome house. Our tour guide(s) will identify energy tips, explain part of the construction and other points of interest that make their house unique. Reservations are required. Please contact leader Jan Bradford at 847-455-2947 after 7:00 PM or jbradford60131@sbcglobal.net. Limit 20. Cost \$3. Co-Leader is Mike Way. For more dome house images and details see: <http://www.monolithic.com/stories/katner-residence-polo-illinois>

### Nov 4 (Sun) Fall Colors on the Rock River canoe and Jay's Car Hop, Oregon, IL, 9 AM (Time Tentative)

Join us in Oregon, Illinois as we canoe down the beautiful Rock River on a warm fall day. We will identify lots of birds and possibly see the eagle that has its nest at the point. This year they had 3 babies which are full grown right now and learning to fish. Hopefully, we will see lots of color in the trees. After the canoe trip, we go to Jay's Drive Inn for a root beer float, Sterling ice cream or a bite to eat. Just a perfect way to end a beautiful canoe day on the river. It will be a "Fun Day" for all of us. Deposit of \$31 covers canoe and other outing costs and is required to reserve your spot. (if less than 6 canoes, cost will be \$36). Limit 20. Please call Jan Bradford, leader, at 847-455-2947 after 7PM or e-mail jbradford60131@sbcglobal.net Co-leader is Mike Way. Optional trip to the Organic Rock Farm after Jay's.

**For up-to-date information, visit:**  
[Illinois.SierraClub.org/Outings](http://Illinois.SierraClub.org/Outings)

**Activity calendar at:** [Illinois.SierraClub.org/RPG/Calendar](http://Illinois.SierraClub.org/RPG/Calendar).

# Wolf Tracking in Northern Wisconsin

By Mark Ginger



*Photo by Judy Fulmer.  
A view of our lodging/dinning/  
classroom facility at Treehaven.*

One of my mission statements is “To create an ecologically balanced world by educating others about the importance of nature.” My vehicle for doing this the last 12 years has been the outings I lead for the Sierra Club. One outing in particular helps me to realize this mission: the Wolf Tracking Outing in Northern Wisconsin.

I have been fortunate enough to lead this outing as a result of a dear friend of mine who has become a permanent ranger with the US Forest Service. As a high school biology teacher and the moderator of the school's Ecology Club, she would periodically take her kids on field trips over Spring break.

As a result of these field trips, she discovered Treehaven, an outdoor education center located in Tomahawk, Wisconsin, owned by the University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point. She planted the idea in my mind of having a Sierra Club outing at Treehaven in the winter to wolf track, and, as they say, the rest is history. This outing has since become one of the gems of the River Prairie Group's Outings program.

Treehaven is a residential natural resources education and conference facility operated by the University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point as part of their College of Natural Resources. It is situated on 1,400 acres of forest and wetlands in Tomahawk, Wisconsin. Their mission is to integrate natural resources education, management, research, and recreation. Their web-

site notes that it is an “ideal place to build a healthy lifestyle and environment.”

The outing, which begins Friday evening, is facilitated by John Huesinkveld, the Assistant Director of Treehaven. I am honored and extremely grateful to have John as our facilitator. He has been with Treehaven for a very long time. He is a walking encyclopedia of natural resource knowledge. I always encourage my participants to not only listen to him but to present questions to him and get to know him. He loves to interact with us, and his flexible nature provides us with the perfect outing experience.

Typically, the outing begins with a presentation on wolves and their presence in Wisconsin given by an expert in the field. This man has been involved with wolves for his entire life. He is at his best when we present him with our own specific questions about wolves and their behavior. We have had quite lively discussions as a result of these inquiries.

Next, depending on conditions, we may begin creating quinzhees (snow forts) after the presentation. One needs to “throw snow” and allow it to settle overnight to build a strong shelter. We conclude the evening with a nice fire inside in the large stone fireplace located in the lounge area.

Saturday is the big day. We begin with breakfast in

**Continued on page 16.**



**Photo by Judy Fulmer.**  
**The winning survival shelter built by the girls team!**



**Photo by Judy Fulmer.**  
**Here we are on the highest point at Treehaven in snowshoes!**

### **“Wolf Tracking” Continued from page 15.**

the most spectacular dining hall! One wall is windows from floor to ceiling providing a panoramic view of Harrison Hills. There is a bird feeder-lined balcony which provides us with the best views of several species of birds. Above the dining hall is a very quaint library that is chockfull of natural resource materials and very cozy chairs.

After our meal, we have a presentation given by John about various topics. Sometimes he talks about the property and what we will see, other times he will discuss survival skills in the outdoors, snow forts, or the art of tracking. Knowing that we are an outdoor group, he makes sure that we don't spend much time inside. We usually go hiking for the rest of the morning.

Saturday afternoon is the big adventure. We get to don snowshoes and trek all over the property. Our focus becomes tracking. Last year we came across close to 20 different types of animal tracks (fishers, snowshoe hares, porcupines, coyote, shrews to name a few) including wolf tracks which were an omen of things to come.

We also observed osprey and golden eagles as well as numerous hawks in flight. The real highlight of the over four hour trek was spotting eight porcupines up in the trees. John gave us a quick primer on how to look for them and before we knew it, we were finding them left and right! By the time we returned to our lodging, it was dusk. It is hard to reel John in once he's outside!

Saturday night John takes us out on a wolf howl. The excitement of this activity is tremendous. Our observa-

tion of recent wolf tracks during the day increased our anticipation of a successful howl. John is an excellent “communicator” with the wolves. His howl is quite good!

He leads us out onto one of the frozen ponds and we space ourselves out. Then, it is absolutely essential that we settle down and become as quiet as we can be before John beckons the creatures with his call. The process takes about 45 minutes. Last year, John's howl got a response from what sounded like two to three wolves far off in the distance. This was extremely exciting for all involved. John said it had been over three months since the last response.

After the wolf howl, we had a bonfire near the pond, allowing us to further discuss wolves and our experience hearing them! The evening continued indoors with the viewing of “Green Fire” a documentary about Aldo Leopold. We were also invited to watch a movie about wolves with a group that was at Treehaven for a wolf immersion weekend with the Timber Wolf Alliance.

The outing concludes on Sunday morning and participants are offered a few different options. One can cross-country ski six-miles of groomed trails, snowshoe, or just hike. It is a great opportunity to explore the grounds and practice the skills learned from the weekend.

The outing is held either mid to late-January or mid-February. Treehaven takes into consideration what weekend would be least populated, providing us with the best opportunity to observe nature. It is a fantastic adventure!



# Sierra Club Political Endorsements

## Congressional

### Tammy Duckworth – Congress – IL- 8

Tammy Duckworth will be a solid vote for clean energy security, clean water and the 21st century green jobs economy.

Her time as a combat helicopter pilot in Iraq and her role as Director of Veterans Affairs in Illinois and as Assistant Director of Veterans Affairs in Washington DC has increased her commitment to a clean energy security future. She points out that most of the fuel transported into Iraq and Afghanistan was used not to transport troops or equipment but to air-condition tents until the Army insulated the tents.

She has seen the results of US military men and women being blown up by IEDs while making fuel runs that would be unnecessary had more energy efficiency been in place. She is enthusiastic about installation of solar panels on roofs of military bases and government buildings generally and adoption of DARPA-developed technology to enable re-charging batteries in the field.

"Government subsidies to the oil and gas industry need to end as they are obstructing progress towards cleaner, more efficient energy systems," Duckworth writes on her website. "We can create American energy independence by rewarding and promoting businesses that seek innovations in renewable energy. We have dozens of businesses in the 8th District that are ready and able to help us diversify our energy sources. Our location, infrastructure and expertise make this area a great place to help build the components of a new energy economy. Supporting businesses like these will also create new jobs and give our economy a new foundation for long-term economic growth."



While Duckworth is in solid agreement with the Sierra Club, her opponent incumbent Joe Walsh has one of the worst environmental records in Congress. His League of Conservation Voters rating is 3 percent meaning almost all of his votes were against the environment. He received a grade of F from the Sierra Club on water issues. He voted for numerous regulatory rollbacks including an assault on the Clean Water Act that the Sierra Club has dubbed "The Dirty Water Bill."

He also voted to eliminate tools used to keep invasive species out of the Great Lakes and many other anti-clean water bills. His record on energy and clean air is equally bad. He voted to eliminate the Department of Energy's funds for energy efficiency and renewable energy. Another Walsh vote would eliminate the long time standard for the Clean Air Act that pollution standards be based on public health science. See <http://capwiz.com/lcv/bio/kevvotes/?id=11922&congress=1122&lvl=C> for a complete list and more detail on Walsh's voting record.



## Bill Foster- Congress- IL- 11

Bill Foster is a scientist who cares deeply about global warming, clean air, clean water and open space. In Congress he will be a passionate advocate for the environment who will speak up with knowledge, eloquence, and confidence for our issues.

His dual careers, one as a high-energy physicist and particle accelerator designer at Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory, the other as cofounder of a small business manufacturing lighting, account for his particular passion for effective energy solutions that create jobs.

"As a scientist and a businessman, I know that technical knowledge and first-hand experience are needed to face the environmental and energy challenges of the 21st century," said Foster. "It's absolutely necessary for the health of our nation and our economy to aggressively combat climate change, reduce our dependence on foreign oil, and promote cleaner and more cost-effective energy sources. Global warming is a serious threat that must be tackled now, and as human beings we have a responsibility to take action and reverse the damage we have caused, and to take those actions in the most economically efficient ways possible. I look forward to bringing a scientific fact-based perspective on this important issue back to Congress."

Foster's opponent, Judy Biggert, on the other hand, has the reputation of a moderate, but her voting record reflects an increasingly anti-environmental stance. Biggert's most recent League of Conservation Voters Score was 17 percent; her Sierra Club

Clean Water Report Card grade was an F. Environment America's tracking of pro-environment bills has her current voting record at 16 favorable votes compared to 48 unfavorable votes. She received a 0% score from the National Clean Water Networks for the current Congress.

Although she is quite vocal about clean energy and energy efficiency projects, she most often votes against tax incentives for advancing such projects. For instance, she voted against HR6049 Alternative Energy Tax Incentives, against HR7060 Renewable Energy Credits, against HR4785 Authorizing Loans for Energy Efficiency Purposes, against HR2751 "Cash for Clunkers", voted in favor of HR2417 Repealing Energy Efficiency Standards for Incandescent Light Bulbs, voted in favor of HR4348 Funding and Approval of the Keystone XL Pipeline, and recently voted in favor of HR4480 Domestic Energy and Jobs Act which compromises EPA's clean air standards. She voted in favor of HR 2018 which the Sierra Club has dubbed the Dirty Water Act because it guts the Clean Water Act which has been in place since the 1970's.

Bill Foster, having served one term in Congress 2008-2010, does not have the extensive voting record of his opponent. His one-term LCV score is 74. His 2009 scorecard from Environment America was 87%. His most controversial vote was voting against the Cap and Trade bill. When we asked him to explain his decision he identified key features of the bill that he felt would not only render the bill ineffective but give the impression that something had been done about climate change when it hadn't. His opposition does not reflect an opposition to climate policy. He is extremely passionate about climate change and made a judgment call which we disagree with on this bill.

Unlike most politicians this year, Foster's website does not ignore the environment. To the contrary, it is filled with ideas and solutions on every environmental issue, but most particularly, energy, climate change, and the green economy. You can check it out at <http://www.billfoster.com/issues/energy/> and while you are on his website, check out the conservation award he received from the US Department of Energy for one of his inventions when he worked at Fermi Lab at <http://www.billfoster.com/about/awards/>

The Sierra Club is confident that Foster is someone who will lead the US to new solutions that promote a 21st century economy with clean energy, green jobs and a sustainable future

## Leslie Coolidge – Congress – IL-6

As an ardent environmentalist and certified public accountant with a life time of success in the private sector, Leslie Coolidge will be an effective advocate for green jobs in the 21st century clean energy economy. She understands both the risks of government inaction on clean energy and the opportunity for economic growth that clean energy provides.

Coolidge is an environmental leader. She currently serves as Vice Chair of the Board of Directors of the International Crane Foundation where she chairs both the Board's Finance Committee and Strategic Planning Committee. She has traveled to Russia, India and China with ICF officials to oversee projects there. Coolidge is on the Board of Trustees of the Chicago Academy of Sciences and its Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum where she has chaired its Collections and Conservation Biology Committee for a number of years.

As a partner in the worldwide accounting firm KPMG LLP, Coolidge has traveled and lived all over the world. She will bring a rare perspective to Congress as an environmental advocate with private sector experience and point of view.

Her opponent, Peter Roskam, is one of the Congressional leaders who has attempted to roll back environmental protections that have been in place for years. His most recent League of Conservation Voters score was 9 percent reflecting an increasingly anti-environmental stance. He received an F on the Sierra Club Clean Water Report Card and a 0% on the National Clean Water Networks rating for the last Congress.

He voted for HR 3010 which would override implementation of existing laws such as the Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act and Occupational Health and Safety Act. He voted for HR 10 which would, in effect, allow just one chamber of Congress to block existing statutory protections ranging from clean air to occupational safety. He voted for HR 2401 which

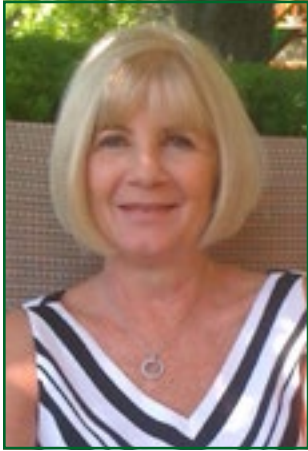


guts the Clean Air Act by eliminating the requirement that clean air standards be based on public health science.

He voted for HR 2838 which would eliminate tools used to protect the Great Lakes and other bodies of water from invasive species introduced by ballast water from foreign ships. He voted for HR 2273 which fails to protect communities from pollution from coal ash, a toxic byproduct of burning coal that is laden with arsenic, lead and other heavy metals and is stored in largely unregulated sludge impoundments that often leach into ground water supplies and sometimes spectacularly burst, destroying communities and water sources. See the full list of Roskam's environmental votes at:<http://capwiz.com/lcv/issues/votes/?votenum=800&chamber=H&congress=1121>

Voters of the 6th District can reject the strident anti-environmentalism of the incumbent by voting for Leslie Coolidge who will promote green jobs in a sustainable, healthy future.

## Forest Preserve



### **Marsha Murphy- DuPage Forest Preserve Commission-District 1**

Marsha Murphy is an incumbent Forest Preserve Commissioner with an excellent record on our issues. She is a strong advocate for the Forest Preserve doing its part to protect the health of our rivers, for instance, by removing dams that impede fish travel and create scum and low oxygen water levels; such a dam is at Fullersburg Woods.

She has been a consistent vote for open space, land management for species diversity, energy efficient buildings and fleet, planning for increased weather situations and not trading away forest preserve land. She has been a very good forest preserve commissioner.



### **Steve Leopoldo - DuPage Forest Preserve Commission - District 3**

Steve Leopoldo will be an excellent Forest Preserve Commissioner. He will require no time to ramp up because he is already incredibly well-versed.

His early education and interests as a teenager and college student in Florida focused on the environment and economics. His studies took him to the area of sustainable community development and smart growth while his volunteer activities brought him to a Clean Water Action group in the Everglades that worked to hold elected officials accountable to protect our water. His first job after obtaining an undergraduate degree was with the League of Conservation Voters.

After moving to the Chicago area, and while working for a public opinion research firm he worked with the following groups to promote environmental issues: Next Era Energy Resource, a wind energy farm; the American Lung, Heart and Cancer Associations to improve indoor air quality; Chicago Friends of the Parks to complete Burnham's plan for four miles of lakefront park; Environmental Law and Policy Center to promote the Chicago Clean Air Ordinance.

Leopoldo will be a strong leader and vote for a well-run Forest Preserve District in DuPage.



### **Shannon Burns- DuPage Forest Preserve Commission- District 6**

Shannon Burns will make an excellent Forest Preserve Commissioner. She has worked to become educated in areas of forest and prairie management through Morton's Arboretum classes as well as by volunteering as a Forest Preserve steward.

She speaks with authority and knowledge of sound environmental practices such as the need for deer management, dam removal, energy conservation and land stewardship. She has a passion for clean, transparent government. Shannon is an active Sierra Club volunteer. She is one of our water collectors, worked hard on our Moving Planet Rally, and has written for the DuPage Sierran on many environmental issues.

## General Assembly



### Tom Cullerton- Senate- IL-23

As president of Villa Park, Tom Cullerton has led the village in several environmental endeavors including a rain barrel program, electronics recycling and replacing retired vehicles with hybrids.

Villa Park is a Sierra Club Cool City having signed the Mayor's Climate Protection Agreement which expires this year. Villa Park, under Cullerton's leadership, is on track to become the second city in Illinois to sign Cool Cities 2.0, Local Sustainability Agreement.

His questionnaire and interview reveal a particular interest in green technology and infrastructure. He hopes to be a leader in mass transit and energy issues. As a second cousin to a founder of the Conservation Foundation, he has an affinity for open spaces.



### Sandra Pihos – House-IL-48

Last year Sandra Pihos was one of only four Republicans and four Democrats 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. We were not surprised. She has been one of the most reliable votes for the environment in Springfield.

Last year she 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.

In her very first year as a representative back in 2003, Pihos cosponsored our bill to save isolated wetlands. She said she was most proud of the work she did lobbying her colleagues for that bill. "I worked along side (Rep.) Karen May on that bill and really learned what lobbying is all about," she said.

In past years, Pihos voted for our bill banning mercury switches in automobiles and our bill limiting diesel truck idling. 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 summed up her attitude: "Unlike many issues where there really are two sides, when it comes to the environment, there really is a right and wrong way."



### **Ron Sandack- House- IL -81**

Ron Sandack has done a great job voting for the environment since he arrived in the General Assembly in 2010. He voted with the Sierra Club five out of five times and shows particular understanding of energy issues and water issues facing municipalities and the state of Illinois.

He is strong on the need to create a green energy economy for Illinois. He voted against a bill that bans communities in Illinois from discouraging use of plastic bags, voted against taxpayer subsidized coal plants and for a bill that provides needed funds for the Illinois Department of Natural resources.

Before his appointment to fill Dan Cronin's unexpired term, he was an environmentally friendly mayor of Downers Grove. Under his leadership Downers Grove developed a sustainability plan that achieved improvements to the village budget, reduced fuel consumed for village services, improved lighting efficiency in municipal buildings and partnered the village with SCARCE and the Conservation Foundation for a successful rain barrel program. The village also installed the first residential hybrid street lighting system in the country, achievements Sandack is proud of.



### **Michael Fortner- House - IL – 49**

"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 one of only four Republicans and four Democrats to stand up to ComEd and insist that renewable energy and energy efficiency be part of the smart grid legislation. He 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. In past years 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.