

## 'Share the Road' License Plates Highlight the Benefits of Bikes

By *Bob Hoel*

So... what does the Share the Road license plate have to do with the Sierra Club? Since 2005, the Sierra Club's top priority has been reducing the threat of climate disruption. One of the best ways Club members can pitch in and help achieve this goal is to bicycle and encourage bike-friendly communities.

Bikes are not just for kids or recreation. By encouraging people to bike more, run errands by bike, and leave the car in the garage, we use less gasoline, save money and have cleaner air. People are healthier. Fewer parking lots need to be built. Roads need less maintenance. Using bikes for transportation has a lot of benefits that support the Sierra Club's mission.

In a number of surveys asking people why they don't bike more to run errands, the response was that they don't feel safe on the roadways; motorists are not always respectful; the limited number of bike trails do not always take riders to where they want or need to go. This is where the Share the Road plate comes in. The small premium paid for this year-round plate will be used by the League of Illinois Bicyclists to educate **both** cyclists and motorists on how to share the roadway. The plate's message will raise awareness that bikes have a right to use the roadways in Illinois and we will have taken a step to reducing the barriers for using bikes as transportation.

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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!** Check out:

[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 sign up for your plates, go to the following link:

<http://www.bikelib.org/other-advocacy/license-plates/license-plate-reservations/>. This is yet one more way to move the Sierra Club's goals forward and reduce your personal carbon footprint.

## Let's get on the Trails

By Dennis Clark,  
IPP Board Director and Lifetime Member

As the hot and humid days of summer wane into the cool, crisp and bug free days of fall, I usually reflect on the list of things I was going to complete this summer... this summer for sure. With only a few more months remaining before I take up the inside tasks planned or perhaps postponed for those short and colder days of winter, I do a mental check of what can be accomplished on this year's "to do" list. High on the list is more time outdoors with an emphasis on biking our wonderful trail system in DuPage County. Wonderful does not seem fitting... simply not enough, let's try outstanding trail system!

Those who travel around the country know we have some of the best trails in the U.S. right here in Illinois. One of the items consistently used on the lists of amenities by companies, apartment ads, and residential real estate listings is a reference of the location's proximity to our area-wide trail system. In fact, some boast of being located right next to the trail system itself. You might have noticed I referred to our area-wide trail system since we all really own it through various governmental agencies. The maintenance of these trails is a combined effort of these agencies and volunteer organizations like The Illinois Prairie Path (IPPC) and Friends of the Great Western Trail.

The IPPC is a non-profit group of caring, involved private citizens who aid municipalities in Cook, DuPage and Kane counties maintain and expand the Illinois Prairie Path to ensure that it remains a safe, public, multi-purpose trail. With 62 miles of biking, hiking, jogging, equestrian, and nature trails, people donate their time, talent and resources to preserve and protect this amazing natural resource. You can support our trails by becoming a member of The Illinois Prairie Path. Your individual dues of \$20 will help to fund many projects that make the trails so enjoyable. Visit [www.ipp.org](http://www.ipp.org) to sign up!

I love biking, running and cross-country skiing our trail systems – getting out into nature and letting my mind escape the electronic world and demands of everyday life. In a very short time I can feel the stress of life fade. Within 15 minutes, even on the worst of days, the



*Dam in South Elgin on the Fox River.*

*Photo by Dennis Clark*

problems of life can be left behind as you focus instead on the tree lined trails, the smells of nature and the feeling and benefits of moving yourself under your own power. Studies have even proven that time spent in nature has a positive relationship to your overall health.

So for me, there are a few major rides left this year and some repeats of my favorites. I want to take the Batavia Spur again to a new restaurant I found there last month, the long ride to Elgin and the loop through the Fox River trail. As I ride, I am always amazed by the diversity of people who use the trails. In spite of the polarized world we are told we live in, it seems many of us want the same thing: enjoyment of nature on our own terms and a place to exercise in the outdoors.

So pull out a map or visit The Illinois Prairie Path or Great Western Trail web sites, select a route and come join me, your neighbors, friends and family to enjoy a ride, run, walk or stroll along our trail system. Make plans soon, for fall is upon us – the best of times for outdoor activities. This might be the year for you to take that long ride you have been meaning to do every year, or to explore a new trail, or use the closest trail to take you to a place under your own power, free of carbon based fuels. It could also become a viable means of transportation for you. So hop on the green movement and save yourself a few dollars while improving your health and disposition. Do not forget to become an IPPC member too. Enough reading, let's get going...see you on the trails!

## Bicycle Friendly Communities

By Shannon Burns

### The Wheelmen

Originally formed in 1880 as the League of American Wheelmen, the League of American Bicyclists had over 102,000 members by 1898. Today, the League works on behalf of America's 57 million cyclists to improve the quality of bicycling in America by "promoting bicycling for fun, fitness and transportation, and by working through advocacy and education" to create a bicycle friendly America.

The League encourages communities to become "bicycle friendly" by ranking states – Illinois ranks 11th – and by sponsoring the "Bicycle Friendly Community Award" to honor American communities that actively promote bicycling.

### Bicycle Friendly Communities

The League of American Bicyclists has received 452 applications and designated 179 Bicycle Friendly Communities (BFC) in 44 states. The BFC program recognizes communities that promote bicycling, and provides technical assistance to help cities in building communities that are bicycle friendly.

Although no Illinois cities received the BFC designation in 2011, two DuPage communities received honorable mention: Elmhurst and Warrenville. Four Illinois communities have already been honored with the BFC designation: Chicago, Schaumburg, Urbana and Naperville. The award is granted for four years, after which time the community must reapply to maintain its designation as "bicycle friendly".

### The Five E's

The American League of Bicyclists BFC application is a rigorous process organized around the League's five "E's" for bicycle friendly community development:

- **Engineering** (including bicycle parking ordinances, engineer training and policies accommodating cyclists in new road construction)
- **Encouragement** (providing bicycle route maps to the community and hosting organized bicycle events)
- **Education** (educating motorists on sharing the road and bicycle safety programs for adults and children)
- **Enforcement** (including police training in cyclist awareness and police units on bicycles)
- **Evaluation and planning** (demonstrating a community-wide commitment to bicycling along with coordination with other community agencies).



*Railroad bridge on the South Elgin branch of our local trail system  
Photo by Dennis Clark*

### Bike Friendly Naperville

Naperville's designation as a BFC was earned through hard work and team effort, says Jennifer Loudon, project engineer and staff liaison to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee (BPAC). City staff first learned of the BFC designation through Committee members who were members of the League of American Bicyclists.

The application for the BFC award is lengthy and complex, but Loudon says it was worth the effort: "Completing the application allowed us to see what we've done and where we want to go in the future. The application process allowed us to be recognized for what we've accomplished, but it also serves as an ongoing assessment tool for improvement".

Loudon credits Naperville's success as a Bike Friendly Community to long-standing cooperation with local park districts and the DuPage Forest Preserve. Andrea Hoyt, Director of Planning for the DuPage County Forest Preserve District agrees: "There has been a long history of design collaboration between the Forest Preserve, the City of Naperville and the Naperville Park District to promote trail connectivity along the West Branch of the DuPage River".

In order to maintain its designation as a BFC, Naperville will need to reapply in 2013 and Loudon says the town is ready; since receiving the BFC award in 2009, the planned \$2.5 million construction of a bicycle/pedestrian underpass at the intersection of 75th and Washington Streets has been completed. Both the DuPage River Trail and the Southern DuPage County Regional Trail pass through this

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*Bicycle Friendly Communities, continued*

intersection and will allow for greatly increased bicycle mobility. Additionally, construction has been completed on a 2.5-mile extension of the DuPage River Trail, a regional off-street, shared-use path that will connect portions of the DuPage County Southern Regional Trail.

"Naperville's commitment to cycling is evident in the number of bicycle trail and facilities that cater to all levels of ability," says Dennis Clark, life time member and Director of the Illinois Prairie Path. Naperville resident, Sierra Club member and cycling enthusiast George Gibson sums it up best: "I'm on local trails three or four nights a week and I'm still finding new routes! This is a great place for riding my bike!"

**Bicycling: The sport that has it all**

From improved air quality, to quieter neighborhoods, reduced road congestion, and improved mental health, bicycling benefits the entire community.

DuPage Forest Preserve Commissioner Roger Kotecki agrees that bicycling is a good idea: "Traveling by bicycle on trails in forest preserves and parks is an enjoyable way to get around. You can savor the sights of nature, breath cleaner air, clear your mind, burns calories and relieve stress".

But here's the surprising news: Bicycling is not only good for physical health; it's also financially good for the community! Studies have shown that bicycle trails increase property values, and cyclists increase local business development. Considering that an urban freeway costs 2500 times more per mile to build than an urban trail system for bicycles, it simply makes good sense to spend tax dollars on building – and then encouraging the use of – cycling trails.



*Photo by Linda Mierendorf*

And it's not just communities that benefit financially from cycling; one source estimates that it costs 93.8 cents per mile to operate a car, compared to just 12.8 cents per mile to operate a bicycle. Yet, in spite of the obvious savings in biking, bicycles are underused for transportation; in the United States, cycling accounts for just 9% of all trips and only .4% of all trips to work

**Get out and ride!**

It's for these reasons – and many more – that communities like Naperville invest time and money into becoming bicycle friendly. To read more about Naperville's BFC, Google Naperville's Application for designation as a Bike Friendly community. To learn more about – or to join – the League of American Bicyclists, visit their web site at [www.bikeleague.org](http://www.bikeleague.org). Then, shut down your computer and get on your bike to explore a local trail!

**Join the River Prairie Group Listserv!**

We encourage everyone to sign up so you do not miss out on any of our news and activities. Stay up-to-date on the River Prairie Group's latest activities by joining our listserv. The listserv is open to anyone interested in finding out more about our group. The purpose of this list is to announce the activities, meetings, news and special events of the the Sierra Club's River Prairie Group, located in DuPage County, Illinois. The format of the list is for announcement and news distribution only, so members will receive but not be able to post messages.

Anyone interested in subscribing to this list can join in either of two ways:

Go to: <http://lists.sierraclub.org/archives/IL-RPG-NEWS.html> and click on "Join or leave the list."

or send an email to: [Listserv@lists.sierraclub.org](mailto:Listserv@lists.sierraclub.org)

Leave the subject line blank, in the message area type: **SUBSCRIBE IL-RPG-NEWS** Firstname Lastname  
(substitute your first and last names)

## Sharing the Road Evanston-Style

By Lonnie Morris

*Tara Johnson, husband Adam Morris-Cohen, and their one year old son Henry are living without a car in Evanston, relying on a combination of bicycling, car sharing, public transportation and walking to meet their transportation needs. Tara talks about the joys and challenges of sharing the road.*

**Q** *Having a car is such an essential component of most people's lifestyles, how did you come to decide you didn't need or want one?*

Living in the city opens up a lot of public transportation options – there really isn't a need for a car in the Chicago/Evanston area. Cars are a liability; they are expensive and can be a headache to maintain. But in addition to all of this, we just plain love to bike! Cycling allows us to experience our neighborhood in a way that cars can't, it's cheap and it feels good

**Q** *What is the hardest part about not having a car?*

The hardest part of being carless is when we're in the mood to get out of the city – if we want to go for a hike, find a nature preserve and go cross-country skiing or head out to the suburbs to see family. Sometimes taking a train will suffice or we'll reserve a zip car to get us where we need to go. It just takes a little more planning.

**Q** *Do you supplement your transportation options with any of the car sharing programs available in the Chicago area? If so, what has been your experience?*

We've had a Zip Car membership for a while and it's awesome! They have cars parked all over our neighborhood and we can usually find one that fits our needs without too much trouble. The cars are always in tip-top shape and the hourly rate covers gas and insurance. Their web site is also great and very easy to use. Two thumbs up!

**Q** *Have you encountered any safety concerns as a bicyclist?*

Oh, yes. Absolutely. Cyclists are so incredibly vulnerable. I often wonder if motorists truly understand the amount of damage they can do when they leave an alley just a little too fast or cut into bike lane absent mindedly, send



*Tara and her wheels  
Photo by Adam Morris-Cohen*

a quick text or forget to check a blind spot. I have a tendency to ride with the assumption that I'm invisible to all motorists, always pedaling defensively. Cyclists can't afford to take risks even if we're in the right. A fender bender for a motorist is broken bones (or worse) for someone on a bike.

**Q** *You began being car free before having a family. Now that Henry has arrived, have there been any changes in how you get around?*

We walk A LOT and it's wonderful. It's so important for us to be within walking distance to all of the good stuff (food, parks, library, ice cream!) and we've certainly found that in Evanston. We also have a bike trailer for mister Henry and a baby bike seat waiting to be secured to one of our racks. This kid's got it made!

**Q** *What do you like best about being on your bike as often as you are?*

The freedom. I can pick up and go anytime, I can park anywhere, traffic is never an issue and I can often go where cars can't.

**Q** *Any advice to motorists on how to share the road?*

Yes I do!

Be aware of the cyclists around you and give them plenty of space. A bicycle is considered a vehicle on the roadway and has exactly the same rights as motorists so sharing the road and being respectful is key to avoiding accidents. Also texting or talking on the phone while driving is so completely unnecessary and incredibly dangerous. You can wait to check your Facebook or play Angry Birds for when you aren't behind the wheel.

## Hope Has Filthy Hands

By Ben Lowe

*“How fair is a garden  
amid the trials and  
passions of existence.”*

*-Benjamin Disraeli*

Over the past growing season, I have been managing a community garden in the ethnically diverse low-income apartment complex that I call home. I live in this apartment complex as part of a group of friends from various local churches. Together, we work with our neighbors to improve the welfare of our community.

Life is hard for our neighbors. Most of them are either first generation immigrants or refugees from war-torn countries such as Somalia, Rwanda, Sudan, Iraq, and Burma. Leaving behind everything and everyone they know, they move entire families into small one-bedroom apartments in an unknown country. They do this to stay alive, and with the hope that their children may one day have a future worth working for.

There are a total of 120 apartment units in the complex, and the community garden provides us with an opportunity to grow healthy and sustainable food while developing love and respect for one another and the land. This can be especially meaningful for many of our neighbors who come from agrarian backgrounds.

The planting season launched with lots of ideas, enthusiasm, and participation from all ages and cultures. We ran soil nutrient tests with the help of a geology professor from nearby Wheaton College, and then found someone willing to donate a couple tons of sand to help improve the soil quality. We also received generous contributions of tools and seedlings, and spent productive hours tilling the ground, building a fence, separating individual plots out, and laying down mulch. The kids were especially involved and never seemed to run out of energy to help, so we designated a kids plot and helped them plant a variety of veggies and flowers there.

I wish we could say that this is how well the rest of the summer went. I wish we could report that the garden brought our community together in an unprecedented way – healing lives, restoring land, and producing basketfuls of vegetables for all to share.

To be honest, however, our reality has been unexpectedly challenging and my dominant sentiment towards the garden has often been one of frustration: frustration with those who signed up but never actually planted their



*The older kids helped plant flowers and get the plots ready for the rest of the community*

*Photo by Ben Lowe*

plots; frustration with those who planted their plots but never watered or weeded them; frustration with the lack of sunlight the garden gets, which makes for some sorry looking tomato and pepper plants; frustration with the damage that strong storms over the summer have caused, especially when a gust of wind blew an upstairs window out of its frame and the glass shattered all over the kids plot; and frustration at the infamous “garden wars,” which broke out over petty disagreements about who got to water whose plot. This particular conflict escalated to the point that an entire plot was destroyed in an act of retaliation, which led to the police being called out and a furious resident marching up and down the complex yelling down curses on her neighbors for three continuous hours.

Things became so exasperating that I started to question whether all the time, money and effort was really worth it. After all, it would be far easier to simply walk across the street and buy the equivalent of our total harvest from the produce section at Jewel.

But the more I think about it the more my frustration turns to wonder and gratitude. With everything that went wrong this summer, the garden project should have failed. Instead, while pushing through the discouragement – we even held an all-night prayer vigil in the garden after one particularly rough patch – we have begun to see modest but promising signs of healthy progress. New friendships have begun to form, our piece of land is now in better shape in every way than when we started, many of the kids have come to love and protect their plots, and some families have harvested enough tomatoes, peppers,

*continued on next page...*

*Hope, continued*

and cilantro from their plots in order to make salsa. The garden is not all that we hoped it would be. But, against many odds, it has grown into something good. And we will continue to build on this year's foundation in the seasons ahead.

Recently one of my young neighbors came to the door with a huge smile on her face and filthy hands from being in the garden. "Look at what we grew," she declared proudly, "it's our very own cucumber!" A simple cucumber may not be worth much in the eyes of the world, but in this case it was worth the world in the eyes of the little girl.

Our community garden efforts remind me that we are a broken people living in a broken world. It can be easy to look at the problems we face and despair. After all, deep change usually takes time and can be quite messy. But as we continue to press on through the challenges before us, we find that another world is still possible, and if we look carefully we can see hopeful signs that it is coming even now.



*Planting seedlings in the kids plot with our young neighbors from around the world*

*Photo by Ben Lowe*

## Coexisting with Coyotes

*By Moira Dowell*

In conjunction with Willowbrook Wildlife Center, the Sierra Club's River Prairie Group will host a presentation on coexisting with coyotes in suburban Chicago on Monday, November 7th, 2011.

Coyotes have long been a symbol of the American Wilderness, but today in suburban Chicago, it is not uncommon to spot them in our own backyards. Coyotes have even been sighted at O'Hare Airport, inside a bustling Loop sandwich shop, and at a Metra station on Chicago's LaSalle Street. As the region's landscape has changed over time, so has this astonishingly adaptable and opportunistic animal.

Even as coyote sightings in our area become ever more ubiquitous, the species has maintained a mystique that's led to anxiety, misunderstanding, and controversy among their human neighbors. Come learn how to coexist with coyotes, to appreciate their vital role in our environment, and to enjoy them from a distance. This program will take place at the Helen M. Plum Memorial Library in Lombard at 7 pm.

## Getting to know your ExCom Members:

*Tom Richardson*

*By Bonnie Blake*

### **Q How did you get involved with the RPG?**

I became interested in the local Sierra Club in 2004 after seeing their involvement in local political issues. They were the only one of the eight environment organizations I belonged to that were looking at local issues and candidates.

### **Q What issues do you work on with the RPG board?**

I started out working on water issues since I am a paddling enthusiast and canoeing instructor. I spent most of my time paddling on clean rural and wilderness waters, and wanted to paddle more locally. I got involved initially on water issues with the Conservation Foundation and the Salt Creek Watershed Network. I discovered that RPG was doing water monitoring and advocating for cleaner water, so I joined and have continued with that effort. I work on the Conservation Committee and we deal with a variety of environmental issues such as invasive species and pollution. I joined the Political/Lobby Committee and have interviewed candidates for local and State offices.

### **Q What impact do you think the RPG has on local environmental and political issues in DuPage County?**

Through candidate interviews and endorsements the RPG has helped get more environmentally friendly people on the Forest Preserve District Board and in the IL House and Senate. One recently elected House member who we endorsed has become one of the "environmental champions" in the House. We have helped stop the FPD from implementing harmful policies.

### **Q What are the advantages of being on the Executive Committee?**

The ExCom gets to oversee all the activities of the RPG, which gives me exposure to a wide range of ways of helping the environment and getting people on trips to enjoy nature through Outings. There is an openness and give and take on the current ExCom that I enjoy and appreciate. While we deal with some controversial issues and strong feelings, we respect each other's sincere concern for doing the best for the environment.

### **Q Do you think your involvement in environmental issues has in any way made your family more aware of their own responsibility to our planet? If so, how?**

Although my children are now out of our home, they continue to be environmentally aware, and my son

is working in conservation in Arizona. My wife and I have implemented some practices in our home that reduce our environmental impact. We are now composting our scraps and using the results on our vegetable garden. We turn down our thermostats in winter and up in summer. We have installed efficient lighting through most of our house and have water barrels we use for our plants. We got a hybrid car a couple of years ago.

### **Q What direction do you think the RPG is or should be going? What issues should we be addressing?**

Some local officials seem to be ignoring the implications of global warming on our local environment. The ExCom will be addressing that in the next election cycle. We have had some success through Cool Cities in encouraging more environmentally responsible policies from local government and should continue with that effort.

### **Q What advice would you give to new members?**

Join an outing and experience the outdoors with our skilled and knowledgeable leaders. If you have some time and energy to spare, contact one of the ExCom members about opportunities to utilize your skills to help the RPG in one of its many environmental pursuits.





## Green Readin' 2.0

By Lonnie Morris

The Sierra Club in conjunction with the Helen Plum Library is pleased to offer a second year of **Green Readin'**, an environmental book discussion series in three parts. Green Readin' offers opportunities for discussing and sharing ideas about current environmental topics in an informal setting. Everyone is welcome to join the discussion. Reading the book selection is recommended but isn't required for participation.

Discussion questions for each selection are available at the Helen Plum Library and at: <http://illinois.sierraclub.org/rpg>

### **The Tiger: A True Story of Vengeance and Survival, John Vaillant,**

**Sunday January 29, 2:00 pm Helen Plum Library**

Rarely do environmental books read with the suspense of a thriller but *The Tiger*, by John Vaillant can hold its own with the best of them. *Green Readin's* first selection for 2012, takes the reader on an exciting adventure into the heart of the frozen, desolate terrain of Russia's Far East where a 1997 conflict between tiger and man played out in a chilling fashion.

Vaillant deftly presents the social forces impinging upon the Amur tiger's habitat, and the economic realities forcing local residents into hunting and gathering lifestyles. Both people and tigers are fighting for survival. Vaillant's writing is balanced, without clear heroes or villains. You're sympathies may change throughout the book, rooting for both the tiger and the game keepers who are charged with protecting tigers but transformed by circumstance into tiger hunters. This cautionary tale of predator and prey sheds light on the ongoing conflict between people and wildlife struggling to find ways to co-exist.

### **Big Coal: The Dirty Secret Behind America's Energy Future by Jeff Goodell**

**Sunday February 26 2:00 pm Helen Plum Library**

My air conditioning gave out on the hottest day of last summer's heat wave, forcing me to search for a vacant outlet in a 1930's vintage home so I could plug in a fan. The house was built with few outlets and each one was already overly full with computers, printers, phones or lights. It was an eye opening lesson in the dramatic increase in the number of electronic gadgets we rely upon and take for granted today.

Coal is the fuel source for fifty percent of US electricity, making each and every outlet a direct link to a coal mine via a coal fired power plant. "There is perhaps no greater act of



*Henry, Adam and Tucker get ready for Green Readin' 2.0*

*Photo by Tara Johnson*

denial in modern life than sticking a plug into an electric outlet" writes Corey Powell in a 2006 New York Times review of *Big Coal*, as few of us are aware of the role coal plays today, both as power source and contributor to environmental degradation and climate disruption.

An informed discussion of America's energy future begins with an understanding of the path traveled by coal, from dark and dangerous mines through board rooms, politician's and lobbyist's office to the outlet making your coffee and powering the computer. *Big Coal* reveals the true cost of this powerful, black rock.

### **Animal, Vegetable, Miracle:**

**A Year of Food Life by Barbara Kingsolver with Steven L. Hopp and Camille Kingsolver**

**Sunday, March 25, 2:00 pm Helen Plum Library**

Spring is the season for planning a garden and the March selection, **Animal, Vegetable, Miracle**, arrives at the right moment for inspiring gardeners with visions of bountiful harvests of local, healthy food. Part memoir, part journalistic investigation, *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle* is Barbara Kingsolver's delightful recounting of her family's year of eating locally, with much of what arrived on her table coming from her own garden.

Kingsolver's delicious prose fills the gap between the growing body of evidence about the environmental benefits of local food production and the joys of eating. Knowing how we should eat is often not enough for motivating major changes in shopping and consuming habits. When Kingsolver invites us to share in her family stories as locavores, from daughter Lily's egg business (which began with pullets arriving at the post office), to the sex education lessons for their rare flock of adolescent turkeys, food rules are transformed into food adventures. Kingsolver has the natural story teller's gift for opening new worlds, even ordinary, every day ones like how we shop and eat, allowing readers to embrace lessons they might otherwise turn aside. Local food on the Kingsolver – Hopp farm is a joyful experience and joy is an irresistible seasoning for food.

## Calendar of Events

### **Saturday, October 8 – Prairie Restoration Workday\*\***

**9:00 am-12:00 pm, West Chicago Prairie, West Chicago**

The West Chicago Prairie Stewardship Group is hosting a prairie restoration workday. Workdays accomplish the necessary clearing, seed collection and seeding to preserve and restore the prairie. Tools provided, but please bring work gloves. Groups of 5 or more call at least 3 days in advance, so that we can properly plan. Meet at the WCP parking lot located on the east side of Industrial Drive between Western and Downs.

**Steve Sentoff (630) 293-1627**

### **Monday, October 10 – Cycling the Great Parks Route 1500 miles, 5 states, priceless beauty, 0 carbon footprint. Presented by Moira Dowell**

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

Few people choose Moira Dowell's and Bill Noll's way of visiting national parks. They began their tour at the Grand Canyon, then bicycled fifteen hundred miles through Flaming Gorge, the Grand Tetons and Yellowstone, ending at Glacier National in Montana.

**Join RPG activists and group leaders to learn about the River Prairie Group and opportunities for activism, service, events, programs, outings, and more.**

*All are invited!*

### **Friday, October 14 – Just Views: Valuing Land Conservation & Stewardship**

**7:20 pm, DuPage Unitarian Universalist Church,  
1828 Old Naperville Road, Naperville, IL**

The River Prairie Group and Just Views will jointly host a free screening of a new film called Green Fire, the first full-length, high definition documentary film ever made about legendary conservationist Aldo Leopold. The film explores Aldo Leopold's life in the early part of the twentieth century and the many ways his land ethic idea continues to be applied all over the world today. (The facility is provided at no cost and the program is free of religious content).

### **Saturday, October 22 – Prairie Restoration Workday\*\***

**9:00 am-12:00 pm, West Chicago Prairie, West Chicago**

The West Chicago Prairie Stewardship Group is hosting a prairie restoration workday. Workdays accomplish the necessary clearing, seed collection and seeding to preserve and restore the prairie. Tools provided, but please

bring work gloves. Groups of 5 or more call at least 3 days in advance, so that we can properly plan. Meet at the WCP parking lot located on the east side of Industrial Drive between Western and Downs.

**Steve Sentoff (630) 293-1627**

### **Wednesday, October 26 – Green Drinks – Naperville\*\***

**7:00 pm, Location TBA**

Every month people across the globe who are interested in environmental issues meet for informal sessions known as Green Drinks. Green Drinks – Naperville is just one of 750+ of these chapters worldwide. It's a lively mixture of people from business, NGOs, academia, our community and government. Our evenings start at 7:00 with networking, at 7:30 we have a conversation-starter presentation, followed by more networking. The October 26th meeting will focus on the topic: How will we waste less? Check the web site for location at: [www.greendrinks.org/il/naperville](http://www.greendrinks.org/il/naperville).

### **Saturday, November 5 – Prairie Restoration Workday\*\***

**9:00 am-12:00 pm, West Chicago Prairie, West Chicago**

The West Chicago Prairie Stewardship Group is hosting a prairie restoration workday. Workdays accomplish the necessary clearing, seed collection and seeding to preserve and restore the prairie. Tools provided, but please bring work gloves. Groups of 5 or more call at least 3 days in advance, so that we can properly plan. Meet at the WCP parking lot located on the east side of Industrial Drive between Western and Downs.

**Steve Sentoff (630) 293-1627**

### **Monday, November 7 – Coexisting with Coyotes**

**7:00 pm, Helen Plum Memorial Library,  
110 W. Maple St., Lombard**

In conjunction with Willowbrook Wildlife Center, the Sierra Club's River Prairie Group will be hosting a presentation on coexisting with coyotes in suburban Chicago. As coyote sightings become increasingly common in urban and suburban communities, it is essential that we increase our understanding of these mysterious neighbors. Come learn how to coexist with coyotes, to appreciate their vital role in our environment. This event is not sponsored by or endorsed by the Helen Plum Library.

*continued on next page...*

Calendar of Events, continued

Saturday, December 3 – Prairie Restoration Workday\*\*

9:00 am-12:00 pm, West Chicago Prairie, West Chicago

The West Chicago Prairie Stewardship Group is hosting a prairie restoration workday. Workdays accomplish the necessary clearing, seed collection and seeding to preserve and restore the prairie. Tools provided, but please bring work gloves. Groups of 5 or more call at least 3 days in advance, so that we can properly plan. Meet at the WCP parking lot located on the east side of Industrial Drive between Western and Downs.

Steve Sentoff (630) 293-1627

Sunday January 29 – Green Readin’: The Tiger: A True Story of Vengeance and Survival, John Vaillant,

2:00 pm, Helen Plum Memorial Library, 110 W. Maple St., Lombard

The first selection for the 2012 Green Readin’ series, takes the reader on an exciting adventure into the heart of Russia’s Far East and the complicated conflict between tiger and man. This cautionary tale of predator and prey sheds light on the continuing struggle between people and wildlife and how they can find ways to co-exist. Discussion questions for each selection are available at the Helen Plum Library and at: <http://illinois.sierraclub.org/rpg>

Sunday February 26 – Green Readin’: Big Coal: The Dirty Secret Behind America’s Energy Future by Jeff Goodell

2:00 pm, Helen Plum Memorial Library, 110 W. Maple St., Lombard

The Green Readin’ series continues with a look into America’s dirty secret: energy dependence on coal. Big Coal reveals the true cost of this powerful and dangerous black rock. Discussion questions for each selection are available at the Helen Plum Library and at: <http://illinois.sierraclub.org/rpg>

Sunday, March 25 – Green Readin’: Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life by Barbara Kingsolver with Steven L. Hopp and Camille Kingsolver

2:00 pm, Helen Plum Memorial Library, 110 W. Maple St., Lombard

The Green Readin’ series concludes with the Kingsolver family’s memoir about their year as locavores. It’s an inspirational way to kick off spring and the planting season. Discussion questions for each selection are available at the Helen Plum Library and at: <http://illinois.sierraclub.org/rpg>

## Join the Bluestem Network, The Official Lobbying Network of the River Prairie Group!

You’ll receive a call whenever the Sierra Club Phone Tree Network is activated with an environmental action alert. Bluestem is generally activated on a monthly basis. Upon receiving the phone call notification, members can access the environmental action alert by two ways: receiving it at an email address or by checking the RPG Web page. The action alert instructs members how to place a call to elected representatives and the position that the Sierra Club has taken. A phone call to elected officials has proven to be the most effective way to have an impact on public policy. To join, clip and mail the application to Linda Sullivan, 302 W. Windsor Ave., Lombard, IL 60148.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

IL County \_\_\_\_\_

Sierra Club Member? Yes  No

Home phone number \_\_\_\_\_  
(required to join)

Answering machine? Yes  No

Email address \_\_\_\_\_  
if you wish to receive action alerts via email

*\*\*Indicates activities that are 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. They are published only as a reader service because it may be of interest to the readers of this publication.*

## 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). 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). Contact the leader or assistant indicated for more information and outing requirements..

*For up-to-date information, visit: [illinois.sierraclub.org/outings](http://illinois.sierraclub.org/outings)*

### Oct 15 (Sat) Fall hike, South Kettle Moraine State Forest, LaGrange, WI

Here's a chance to enjoy a day hike at this outstanding location. The terrain includes a southern hardwood forest, and pine plantations. Limit 25. Cost \$3. Leader is **Paul Saindon**. Email Paul at [paul@pauls.us](mailto:paul@pauls.us) or call after 5pm **815-310-0001**. Assistant leader: **Berni Kolasa**. Nordic Hiking Trail (blue loop) maps at: <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/parks/specific/kms/pdfs/kmsnordictmap.pdf>

### Oct 22 (Sat) Fall Colors on the Rock River canoe and Jay's Car Hop, Oregon, IL

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... 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 fees, costs, and canoes. Limit 20. (If less than 6, canoe prices will be \$36) Please call **Jan Bradford**, leader, at **847-455-2947** after 7PM or email [jbradford60131@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jbradford60131@sbcglobal.net). Co-leader is **Mike Way**. Optional trip to the Organic Rock Farm after Jay's.

### Oct 23 (Sun) Fall colors of White Pines State Park and Nachusa Grasslands, Oregon, IL

Come join me 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 the river (on stepping stones), bridges, stairs, enjoy/explore, and learn about this protected area. Later we will go to Nachusa Grasslands for a guided tour. Our tour guide(s) will identify prairie plants and will tell us about prairie restoration, burning, and much more. We will also collect some seed like we did last year to help out. Please contact leader **Jan Bradford** at **847-455-2947** after 7pm or [jbradford60131@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jbradford60131@sbcglobal.net). Limit 20. Cost \$3. Co Leader: **Mike Way**.

### Oct 27-30 3-Day Backpack at Hoosier National Forest, Story, IN

A moderately paced fall color adventure of backpacking, camping, and hiking through the forested hills of south-central Indiana. Learn how this area of early settlement was converted over the years into a vast national forest. We arrive Thursday evening and camp in the area. Covering about 8 miles on each of 3 days (Fri-Sun), we'll backpack into the National Forest on Friday, camp by a stream, spend the middle day hiking and exploring this vast wilderness area and backpack out on Sunday. Suitable for beginners in good physical condition and for experienced backpackers too. Limit 14. Cost is \$50. Leaders are **Fred Weber** and **Paul Saindon**. Call Fred at **630-469-6826**; email: [FredAWeber@hotmail.com](mailto:FredAWeber@hotmail.com).

### Nov 5 (Sat) Cowles Bog and Sandhill Cranes Viewing, Porter and Medaryville areas, IN

Come and join us for an early November hike at Cowles Bog. We will also go to see the new Indiana Dunes visitor center where we will learn about the Sandhill Cranes and their fall migration. Then we head to Jasper-Pulaski Fish & Wildlife Area, just before sunset, to see thousands of them fly in to bed down for the night. An optional dinner will be in Valparaiso at the Bon Femme restaurant which is on our way home. We will use our GPSs to get us there since it will be dark. They have vegetarian dishes, organic/grass fed beef, fish, etc. but check the menu on the link below. We will have a fun day. Limit 25. Cost \$3. Co leader is **Mark Ginger**. Call **Jan Bradford** at **847-455-2947** after 7pm or email [jbradford60131@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jbradford60131@sbcglobal.net). Restaurant URL: <http://valpodining.com/restaurants/bon-femme-cafe/>

### Jan 14-15 Beginner Cross Country Ski Workshop, Berrien County, MI

Do you want to learn to cross country ski? Do you know how but want to improve your skiing techniques? If so, join us in southwest MI. Participants will learn basic skills in a controlled area and then improve their skills on the trails with instructors. The \$25 cost includes a donation to support cross country ski trails. Meals and lodging costs are not included. Limit 20 participants, intermediate skiers are welcome, but priority will be given to beginners. Trip leaders are **Teresa** and **Dave Barnard**, **Donna** and **Steve Turner**, **Jeanette Vidmar** and **Mike Davis**. To sign up, call **Teresa** and **Dave** at **847-255-9982** beginning December 15 to reserve your spot.

*continued on next page...*



*River Prairie Group (RPG) Outings, continued*

**Jan 21 (Sat) Eagles and Frozen Waterfalls, Waterway and Starved Rock State Park, IL**

Come join us for a fun day watching eagles at the Waterway-dam on the Illinois River, then hiking to frozen waterfalls. At the Waterway, we will learn about the eagle and it's come back off the endangered list. Then we will hike the trails at a leisurely pace, depending on the ice, to the frozen water falls. On the way we will learn about ice colors and minerals of Starved Rock. Limit 20. Cost \$3. Please contact leader **Jan Bradford 847-455-2947** after 7pm or **jbradford60131@sbcglobal.net**. Assistant leader: **Reina Kalish**.

**Feb 3-5 Cross Country Ski Trip, Stevens Point, WI**

Dust off those skis and join us for cross country skiing at its best. We will stay in Stevens Point, about a 4 hour drive from Chicago and ski Saturday and Sunday on groomed trails in the area. The trails are suitable for skiers of all abilities however true beginners should attend the Beginner Cross Country Ski Clinic Jan 15 and 16 which will get you ready for this trip. The \$135 cost is for lodging (double occupancy) and trail passes but does not include food or transportation. \$60 deposit. If the conditions in Wisconsin are not good, this trip may be moved to the Cadillac, MI area. To register, call the leaders **Donna** and **Steve Turner** at **630-782-5865** or email **sdtturner@gmail.com**.

**Feb 10-13 Cross-Country Ski Outing in Michigan's UP, Northern Wisconsin-Upper Peninsula of Michigan, MI**

Enjoy a 3-day cross-country ski trip in the great snow country of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Stay in fully-equipped deluxe cabins on the shore of a (frozen) lake near the town of Watersmeet. Three excellent areas with groomed trails will be skied (classical skiing). Trip fee of approximately \$150 includes 3 nights lodging, two home-cooked dinners, and Sierra Club fees. (S.C. members get \$5 discount.) \$75 deposit due Jan 6th. Limit 18. Leader is **Mike Davis**. Assistant leaders needed. Calls taken beginning December 14 by **Mike** at **815-331-3042** or email: **mikeyd5600@comcast.net**.

**Feb 24-26 Wolf Tracking in Northern Wisconsin, Tomahawk, WI**

Come out for a winter weekend of wolf tracking activities in Northern Wisconsin. This unique winter outing will be held at Treehaven, an outdoor education center run by the University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point. Activities will include an orientation on wolf behavior, outdoor winter survival skills, fort building, tracking, & a wolf howl on Saturday night. Snowshoes and cross country skis will be used for exploring this beautiful site. Approximate \$140 fee covers 2 nights lodging, 3 meals, all necessary equipment, and administrative fees. Limit 15. \$100 deposit. Leader is **Mark Ginger**. Co-Leader is **Paul Saindon**. To sign up, contact **Mark** at **847-699-0329** or email: **bubbleman@earthlink.net**

Note: **www.uwsp.edu/cnr/treehaven**

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

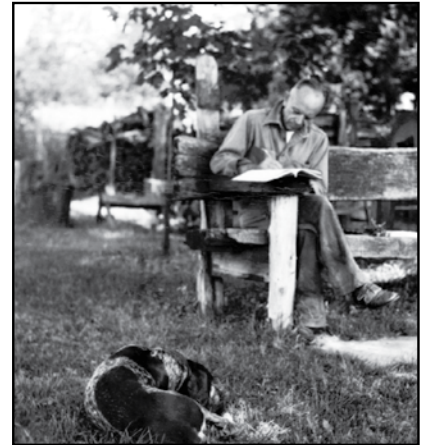
*The DuPage Peace through Justice Coalition invites you to...*

## JUST VIEWS: a Free & Open Film & Discussion Program

Mark your calendars for the 2nd Friday of Each Month!

**Friday, October 14, 2011 at 7:20 pm: Valuing Land Conservation & Stewardship**

This program, co-sponsored by the Sierra Club, begins with the documentary *"Green Fire: Aldo Leopold and a Land Ethic for Our Time."* The film highlights Leopold's life (1887-1948) and extraordinary career, shaping the modern conservation and environmental movement. We view Leopold's farm near Baraboo, Wisconsin where he wrote *"A Sand County Almanac"* and we see other Southwestern and Midwestern landscapes which inspired him. The film includes interviews with biologists, farmers, ranchers, wilderness managers, ecologists, educators, and conservationists; we learn about Leopold's work as a forester, University of Wisconsin-Madison professor leading prairie restoration, and his research and writing helping conserve wilderness and influence modern science. We are encouraged to be outdoor enthusiasts, and love, protect, and advocate for soils, plants, and animals. For more information and to purchase the film, see <http://www.greenfiremovie.com/>.



After the film, Trisha Steele and Lonnie Morris from the Sierra Club – DuPage County River Prairie Group, will discuss with us Leopold's land ethic, and current issues related to environmental education, funding for forest preserves and state parks, EPA, climate change, and advocacy. We welcome active audience participation and all points of view.

**Save this Part for Year-Round Reference: 2nd Friday Nights are for Just Views!**

**Just Views programs start at 7:20 pm**

Sponsored by the DuPage Peace through Justice Coalition  
at the DuPage Unitarian Universalist Church,  
1828 Old Naperville Road, Naperville, IL

### Directions:

If coming from east or west on route I-88, exit at Naperville Road onto Freedom Drive. Turn left (East) onto Diehl Road and continue across Naperville Road/Naper Blvd, and then turn left (*north*) at the first street (*Old Naperville Road*). The Unitarian Church is down one block on your right. **Note:** For other route options and a map, see church web site: [www.dupageuuchurch.com](http://www.dupageuuchurch.com). The church phone is **630-505-9408**.

Our timely issues programs are nonpartisan, *open to the public, and free* – no reservations required. *Parking is free, too.* **Just Views** shows *great films about matters vital to social and economic justice* on the second Friday of each month throughout the year. View and then share views from different vantages with citizens attending and invited resource persons. Each night is a stimulating, informal, stand-alone program.

Upcoming and past films are described at [www.DuPagePeaceThroughJustice.org](http://www.DuPagePeaceThroughJustice.org) – just click on **Just Views**. You can also sign up to receive email notices of future programs. Please mark your calendars ahead for the second Friday of every month, share these notices, and bring friends! **Just Views** Director is sociologist **Stephanie Hughes 630-420-4233**.

## 2012 Group Executive Committee Elections

### *Candidate Statements*

#### Bonnie Blake:

I have enjoyed working with the River Prairie Group. I am currently the Administrator for our Water Sentinels Program and the Membership Chair. As I continue to work on conservation projects, I find that I am always learning more and enjoying all the new people I meet. I will my efforts with the River Prairie Group to reach out to others about environmental concerns.



#### Lonnie Morris:

I joined the Sierra Club specifically to work on the issue of global warming and discovered a group of hardworking, dedicated, knowledgeable environmentalists making a difference in their communities. The Sierra Club provided mentoring and helped me become a climate change activist. It has been my pleasure to give back to the club through my involvement in the River Prairie Group's executive board. I'm seeking re-election to the board to continue my commitment to mentoring members seeking to become environmental activists on issues of concern.

During my tenure with the Executive Committee, I have participated in planning the 350.org event at Blackwell Forest Preserve in 2009 and the 2011 Moving Planet Day of Climate Action. I've worked on community outreach by providing regular, public programs and initiating a group wide environmental book discussion in conjunction with the Helen Plum Library. I have also functioned as a resource for DuPage County's Cool Cities groups.



#### Tom Richardson:

I have held a number of positions in RPG including the following: ExCom (2008-2011), Co-Chair Conservation Committee (2009-2011), Political/Lobby Committee (2009-2011), Representative to DuPage River Salt Creek Work Group (2005-2011).

The RPG has made significant progress in local lobbying and endorsing local and state candidates and I want to continue helping with that effort. We are having a positive influence on understanding what impacts water quality and implementing solutions, and I wish to continue working in that area. I enjoy working cooperatively with the other ExCom members in addressing the wide range of local and state environmental issues and believe I can continue to assist effectively in those efforts.



### 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 12/15/11.
- 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.

- Bonnie Blake
- Lonnie Morris
- Tom Richardson
-