DuPage Sierran

SIERRA CLUB
FOUNDED 1892

Summer 2018 Volume 37, No. 2

Sierra Club, River Prairie Group of DuPage County



Jeff at DuPage Environmental Summit in Naperville, Jan. 25

Jeff's Jots

By Jeff Gahris

I write this after returning from the annual Environmental Lobby Day in Springfield, which has me feeling very pumped-up about the environmental movement. We met with and pressed our legislators about priority bills, even if for only a moment. Environmental challenges can be overwhelming and complex, and there are moments when I feel I don't know what I'm doing. Still, I believe that when we work together, we make the difference. Shortly after our return from Springfield, I learned that a couple of really bad bills, like the so-called Dynegy bail-out bill for obsolete coal-fired power plants, and an attempt to roll back endangered species protections in Illinois, are not moving forward. So if you receive a call from one of our volunteers, go ahead and answer it. Our volunteers will be asking us to support critical environmental legislation, or to support an endorsed political candidate who shares our values. We are a grass-roots club that truly has impact on election outcomes and the passage of important legislation. We actively practice what authors Joanna Macy and Chris Johnstone call "active hope."

Also, I strongly believe diversity is important, since we all need to be part of the solutions for a better environment. The River Prairie Group has been engaging other groups for our mutual benefit. I find it challenging but rewarding to work with people who do not fit our demographic profile. We can learn about what matters to others, and in so doing, we

In this issue...

Jeff's Jots	1
Seeking Leaders	
Volunteer Spotlight: Vera Miller	3
Forest Preserve Update	
Earth Friendly Products	7
Clean Water for All Bill	8
Nachusa/Bison Tour	9
Start a Church Green Team	10-11
Environmental Orgs to Know	
Celebrate IL Pollinator Week	13-14
Outings	15

DuPage Sierran

Executive Chair: Jeff Gahris

Editor: Sherry Stratton

Writers: Jeff Gahris, Bonnie Gahris, Connie Schmidt, Ryan Smith, Linda Sullivan, Jan Bradford, Lonnie Morris Layout: Dave Blake

For activities, legislative action alerts, and outings information:

Sierraclub.org/illinois/river-prairie or SCTRIPS.org

Click Here for the River Prairie Group on Facebook

may find ourselves compelled to stand up to divisive, xenophobic politics, or to provide meaningful opportunities to others, including our younger generations, who we need to actively include in our movement.

So, please, I ask you to invite friends, colleagues, or family who we might assume to be disinterested to attend a program meeting, social, or political activity, or to simply enjoy an outing in the natural world.

SEEKING LEADERS

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

If you feel called to this exciting role and want to help with the leadership of the RPG, contact Jeff Gahris, Chair of the nominating committee for application information and to discuss the responsibilities of this critical and enriching volunteer role. Contact Jeff at jgahris@gmail.com.

The River Prairie Group could not function without the volunteers who step up to the various jobs and positions.

Officers:

Jeff Gahris – Chair Connie Schmidt – Vice Chair Kathy Franke – Secretary Bruce Blake – Treasurer

Additional Members of the Ex-Com at Large:

Linda Sullivan – Lobby Chair

Bob Barbieri – Water Research Project

Jeff Gahris – Solar Energy Liaison

Stacey Salmon – Political Endorsements

Connie Schmidt – DuPage County Issues

Dennis Streicher – DuPage Rivers Salt Creek Work Group Liaison

Additional Committee Chairs:

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

Getting to Know Our Volunteers:

A Spotlight on Vera Miller

By Jeff Gahris



Vera, a Downers Grove resident and a passionate environmentalist, is often seen tackling climate change head-on. She joined RPG's Clean Power Team last year as it formed and began setting its agenda. As if that is not enough, she organized a 350.org group that hosted a watch party at First Congregational Church in Downers Grove for a world-wide live event, as well as organizing and leading several community organizing meetings. It was not long before the RPG and 350.org teams merged, and along with other partners, she helped coordinate the formation of the DuPage Clean En-

ergy Coalition (DCEC). The DCEC is already coalescing into a focused group of individuals and organizations dedicated to promoting and facilitating clean energy development in DuPage. Watch for more leadership action from Vera as she works with other passionate leaders of DCEC.

Recently Vera and her husband, John, installed solar panels on their home, generating enough energy to meet all of their electricity needs. She got this done before joining our Environmental Lobby Day in Springfield. Clearly, they "walk the talk" in Vera's household!



DuPage County Forest Preserve Update

By Ryan Smith, Senior Ranger Forest Preserve District DuPage County

The summer months bring us warm days and nights that are best enjoyed outdoors. However, it is no secret that our current generation spends less time outdoors than the previous ones. The advent and simplicity of modern technology, especially in the last decade, have made remaining indoors more enjoyable. The digital world has given us Smart TV's, state of the art video gaming, and now a boom in "virtual reality." Access to materials and resources has been made extremely simple (for example, with Amazon having anything at your doorstep in the blink of an eye). Sheltering oneself is a basic human need, but staying indoors for long periods of time has been known to fuel anxiety and insomnia. In fact, it has been known that external cues such as sunlight and temperature can assist in

calibrating your circadian "clock." This is the cycle that tells our bodies when to sleep, rise, and eat, and in turn, helps regulate many physiological processes. This upcoming summer is the perfect opportunity to invest in self-care and most importantly, our mental health. I encourage everyone to enjoy all seasons. Whether it is dormant or extremely active, the beauty of the natural world is always alive. Always remember, your local Rangers can be found throughout your forest preserves; so, if anything, come on out just to say hi!

This summer season, we kick off with our annual "Just for Kids" Fishing Derby on Sunday, June 10th, at Blackwell Forest Preserve in Warrenville from 8 a.m. till noon. Anglers 15 years and younger can come out to this free and friendly competition and take their



"Forest Preserve Update" (Continued from page 4)

shot at the grand prize, the "Big Lunker" award. For more information and to register, visit dupageforest. org or call 630-933-7248.

If you haven't already signed up, spots for summer camps may still be available. Come out and join me and my fellow Rangers during our Ranger Adventure Camp being held at either Mayslake Peabody Estate in Oak Brook or Herrick Lake Forest Preserve in Wheaton. Camps start June 18th or 25th or July 9, 16, 23, or 30. Activities will include archery, boating, fishing, and hiking all to be enjoyed while improving participants' team-building and wilderness-survival skills. Register online or at 630-

933-7248. Speaking of archery, later this summer we will be hosting our annual Archery Open House. This event will be held August 4th from 10 a.m. till 4 p.m. Participants will learn about this classic sport and try the basics with our certified Ranger instructors.

The Forest Preserve District of DuPage County has been connecting people to nature for more than 100 years. More than 4 million people visit its 60 forest preserves, 145 miles of trails, five education centers, and scores of programs each year. For information, call 630-933-7200 or visit dupageforest.org, where you can also link to the District's e-newsletter, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages.







Sunday, June 10 8 a.m. - Noon

Blackwell Forest Preserve, Warrenville

- Kids 15 and Under
- Casting Contest
- Fishing Tips and Tricks
 Educational Displays
- Photo Souvenir



- Prizes
- Fun for the Whole Family



Forest Preserve District of DuPage County

dupageforest.org

A Company That Walks the Wa

Here in DuPage



A few weeks ago, executive members of the River Prairie Group were invited to tour a local DuPage business with members of the Green Caucus of the elected officials from Springfield organized by the Illinois Environmental Council. Earth Friendly Products is located in Addison, and was a delightful surprise! You may be familiar with their line of products, including laundry detergent, dish soap, and other general cleaners under the name "ECOS."

Started by a dedicated Greek immigrant over 50 years ago, this family-owned business is committed to offering environmentally friendly, affordable cleaning products manufactured sustainably. The purpose of the tour was to reinforce to the Green Caucus that business in Illinois can operate in carbon-neutral plants, using zero-waste guidelines and renewable energy resources. Dedication to the public, competitively affordable products, and a gentle impact on the planet were apparent as we were guided through the facility.

The operations began in the home of Van Vlahakis, and his daughter Kelly is now the CEO, continuing the dedication to the original promise, "Made with love from the inside out." This award-winning plant hosts its own chemistry department, continually seeking innovative additions to their line. Solar panels were installed over ten years ago and power 60% of their electricity, with additional panels being considered. Purchased power is all from clean energy sources, which brings them to 100% Clean Energy! Skylights were installed to increase the lighting and provide a better atmosphere for workers

in the assembly area. All of the plant facilities are certified Platinum-level Zero Waste by the USGBC, which means that 95% of their waste is diverted from landfills and incineration. They are one of only 19 companies to have achieved that level in the country and one of the only manufacturers. As we toured the area, we noted recycle bins prominently located for materials including plastic gloves, workers' hairnets, and cardboard. Workers begin with a \$17 an hour wage and are even offered a stipend if they are personally buying an electric car or solar panels for their own use. There is not a lot of turnover in this plant, as we met individuals who had been working there for 40 years.

ECOS

ECOS

It is exciting to have this positive example here in DuPage County, one of four Earth Friendly plant locations across the US. The California location has established an Environmental Excellence Award in memory of company founder Van Vlahakis (1935-2014) to give recognition for those whose efforts support environmentally friendly practices and sustainability.

Touring this plant made me definitely want to support their product line, but also to share the news with other businesses and manufacturers that caring for the planet, providing a sustainable work atmosphere, and making a profit with high-quality, affordable products is achievable here in Illinois and around the nation. Look for ECOS products where you shop and check them out, thinking of this remarkable company here in DuPage County.

SEN. CHRIS NYBO (R – 24) COSPONSORS CLEAN WATER FOR ALL BILL

By Linda Sullivan

In the world of Sierra Club volunteers asking our legislators to help pass environmental legislation, the name of the game for many legislators is to seem to support a bill without actually making any commitment to do so.

Volunteer lobbyists get the runaround in all sorts of ways. The easiest evasion for legislators and the most common is for them to agree wholeheartedly with our volunteers that the issue is important and pledge to take a look at the bill. "I'm very interested," they say. But they do nothing.

Sometimes legislators commit to vote for a bill if it should come up for a vote. That is helpful, but most bills never get voted on.

The most helpful thing a legislator can do, however, is cosponsor our bills. That means they put their name on the bill. The more cosponsors a bill has the more likely it is to come to a vote and the less likely it will be amended into ineffectiveness because of industry pressure. Legislators are reluctant to cosponsor bills because it brings paid industry opposition lobbyists into their offices several times a day trying to get them to take their name off the bill.

So when legislators cosponsor a bill they really stick their necks out. It is a big

deal to cosponsor a bill.

Therefore the Sierra Club is pleased to let our members know that Sen. Chris Nybo (R- 24) has cosponsored SB 3080, a bill that requires that all lead service pipes in Illinois be replaced in ten years. It also will reduce long-term water costs by requiring proactive maintenance, repair, and replacement of leaking pipes.

"This environmental initiative is a proactive step in the right direction to eliminating traces of lead in Illinois water systems and ensuring that all residents have access to clean water regardless of their income," said Sen. Nybo.

According to scientists, no amount of lead is safe in drinking water. Even small amounts of lead create health problems, especially in children. "This bill is so important because it addresses a serious public health issue that, if ignored, will lead to more expensive and complex public health problems," said Jeff Gahris, who along with Bonnie Gahris and myself lobbied Sen. Nybo in Springfield during Environmental Lobby Day April 26th.

The bill did not pass this year, unfortunately, but Sierra Club volunteers know it sometimes takes several years to pass a bill. The Sierra Club is grateful for Sen. Nybo's help. We hope to pass this important measure next year.



1-Watt house and Nachusa/Bison Tour June 24, 2018

By Jan Bradford



Our day starts with a tour of this home of the future. Not only is the structure different but it is solar assisted and uses geothermal for pre-cooling or pre-heating of the air before entering the house. Windows are triple pane and open a different way for cleaning. The kitchen also has a stove that uses inductive heating, thus using less energy than the conventional gas or electric stove of today. And there will be many other energy saving ideas and some surprises, too, in the home that we will learn about.

Our day continues to Nachusa to learn about Illinois prairie restoration, outcrops, the American Bison group that Teddy Roosevelt saved, and a tour of prairie flowers as we find the Bison and see the herd with newborns. Hopefully, we will see the new visitor center and learn how seeds are collected, then identify some of the prairie plants that are blooming,

if time permits.

It will be a day of fun as we learn about energy-saving homes of the future, saving the American Bison, and restoring the Illinois prairie grasslands. So, come join us on our fun and educational Sierra tour day.

Sierra Club, River Prairie Group of DuPage County



How to Start a Church Green Team

By Connie Schmidt

I'm affiliated with two churches, one in my hometown of Riverside, Illinois, and the other in Warrenville, where Michael and I live and have raised our children. Neither of these churches currently has an official "Green Team," although both do some good, environmentally friendly things; they serve coffee from glass mugs (although munchies are served on paper plates), the pastor sips from a reusable bottle during the service, they recycle their morning bulletins, and both have lovely gardens on their properties nurturing pollinators from the neighborhoods. But how much more could they be doing? How much more should they be doing? Actually, the real question is how much more should I be doing to help get a "Green Team" going?

Recently I attended a church in LaGrange that asked me to come as the Chairperson of the Illinois Chapter of the Sierra Club to help them think about initiatives a church could do to help the environment. Fortunately for this church they also invited representatives from SCARCE, the Morton Arboretum, Citizen's Climate Lobby, and other groups to talk about their efforts. From this meeting, individuals from this church have stepped up, and a number of new initiatives have begun. They are now collecting items that are difficult to recycle, like wine corks and Styrofoam; conducting an inventory of the church building for energy efficiency; and planning a butterfly garden at the entrance.

One organization whose primary purpose is to help with this effort is Faith in Place. Faith in Place offers a green team coaching program where they work alongside the newly formed green team (or care of creation team) long term to help them achieve their goals. They have a lot of experience in helping houses of worship of all faiths (not just churches) to be successful and have a healthy impact inside their walls and out in their community.

But how does this all get started? We have to start it: in our work place, in our schools, in our homes, and if we attend, in our houses of worship. Each location is different, but here is how I am mapping my course, and I share it with you in case you too are sitting on Sunday mornings saying to yourself, I should be doing something more.

- Talk to those in charge to let them know your thoughts. This means the minister and volunteer board leaders. Chances are, once you say, "I want to help" you will be hugged and revered for this selfless act!
- Chat it up a bit, and try to find 2 or more others who may help with the effort.
- Do a little homework: I recommend researching Faith in Place on the internet: www.faithin-place.org
- More on Faith in Place: They have resources to download and staff available to help you brainstorm what is right for your specific situation. Dan Hunstra works in DuPage, Kane, and other nearby counties. His e-mail is: dan@ faithinplace.org
- Schedule your first meeting: an opportunity to listen to each other about what they'd like

Sierra Club, River Prairie Group of DuPage County

to see the church do. Sharing what you have learned through the research is great, but getting an idea of what brought the individuals to the meeting, and where their vision lies, really helps to build individual commitment to continue on this mission.

Contact me, let me know how it is going.
 Maybe we can even have a little DuPage
 Support Group for budding new Green Teams
 and network with each other for thoughts
 and ideas. Connie Schmidt twnstrlll@msn.
 com 630 234 3029. Good luck on this important and fun endeavor to spread the mission
 further.



Some Good Environmental Organizations to Know

By Bonnie Gahris

Get to know some of the organizations in DuPage we interact with, respect and support, and even partner with as we advocate and educate for protecting our environment.

Citizen's Climate Lobby is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, grassroots advocacy organization focused on national policies to address climate change. We are focused on what we see as the single most impactful solution to climate change — a national carbon fee and dividend.

The Conservation Foundation's mission is to preserve and restore open space and natural lands, protect rivers and watersheds, and promote stewardship of our environment in DuPage, Kane, Kendall, and Will Counties.

DuPage Clean Energy Coalition is a collaboration of DuPage residents, organizations, and entities working to create a swift, just transition to clean energy for all of DuPage.

DuPage Monarch Project is contributing to monarch recovery by mapping existing habitat in Du-Page County, offering programs, and advocating for cities, villages, and park districts to sign a monarch conservation resolution.

Elmhurst Cool Cities Coalition strives to promote sustainable solutions in the Elmhurst community through education, outreach, and community action, through film screenings and advocacy campaigns to educational programming and partnerships with local organizations.

Faith In Place empowers Illinois people of all faiths to be leaders in caring for the Earth, providing resources to educate, connect, and advocate for healthier communities.

Forest Preserve District of DuPage County's mission is "to acquire and hold lands containing forests, prairies, wetlands and associated plant communities or lands capable of being restored to such natural conditions for the purpose of protecting and preserving the flora, fauna and scenic beauty for the education, pleasure and recreation of its citizens."

Illinois Environmental Council promotes sound environmental laws and policies; we encourage decision-makers in the private sector to go beyond

minimum standards to establish new environmental best practices.

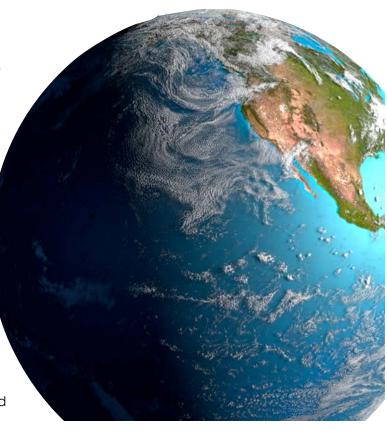
Illinois Solar Energy Association is a nonprofit organization that promotes the widespread application of solar and other forms of renewable energy through our mission of education and advocacy.

Immigrant Solidarity DuPage's mission is to educate, organize, and mobilize DuPage County around the rights and collective struggles of the Latino community.

The Resiliency Institute's mission is to transform the suburbs into resilient permaculture communities by empowering people to live resilient lives, grow resilient landscapes, and build resilient communities.

SCARCE's mission is to inspire people, through education, to preserve and care for our Earth's natural resources, while working to build sustainable communities.

Sustain DuPage is a nonprofit creating opportunities to learn and live DuPage sustainability culture.





By Lonnie Morris

Here are a few suggestions:

- Display pollinator artwork and outreach materials in your office lobby (a printable Illinois Pollinator Week poster is available from DuPage Monarch Project, email herbndove@gmail.com)
- Follow DuPage Monarch Project on Facebook.
 Share monarch sightings and photos.
- Highlight Pollinator Week in a newsletter, blog, or magazine
- Host a pollinator-themed meal or mixer
- Hold a pollinator planting day at your school, office, local park, or library
- Build native bee houses
- Join the Million Pollinator Garden Challenge
- Request a local establishment or building lightup for Pollinator Week (For example: Light up City Hall in Yellow and Black)

- Plant habitat in your backyard using native plants
- · Host a nature walk or pollinator expert lecture
- Screen a pollinator film
- Host a pollinator festival or native plant sale
- Host an educational event at a local library
- Volunteer with DuPage Monarch Project
- Write a letter to the editor of a local newspaper about your concern for pollinators
- Ask your mayor and/or park district to sign a Monarch Resolution and take steps to make the community monarch friendly (information about monarch resolutions can be found at https://dupagemonarchs.com/)



River Prairie Group (RPG) Outings

EXPLORE, ENJOY, AND PROTECT THE PLANET BY DISCOVERING YOUR LOCAL OUTDOORS.

Sierra Club Local Outdoors volunteers lead a range of outings that are as diverse as their interests. Depending on where you are, you can choose from day hikes, bicycling, skiing, paddling, bird-watching, conservation-oriented activities, or forays into the remaining natural areas of our major cities.

For more details on these outings, visit: www.sctrips.org

Remembering Mark Ginger Hike

Sat, Jun 2, 2018, 9:30 AM - 3:00 PM

Churchill Woods/Glacial Ridge Forest Preserve Service Event

Sat, Jun 9, 2018, 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Summer Ice Cream Social

Sun, Jun 10, 2018, 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

Canoe the lower Fox River (2 spaces open)

Sat, Jun 23, 2018, 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Illinois Prairie Path Clean-up (RPG Section)

Sat, Jun 23, 2018, 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Bluff Spring Fen Hike (wait list)

Sun, Jun 24, 2018, 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM

1 Watt house and Nachusa (Bison) Grasslands

Sun, Jun 24, 2018, 9:30 AM

Kayak or Canoe the Scenic Kishwaukee River

Sat, Jul 14, 2018, 9:30 AM - 4:30 PM

Wisconsin River Canoe Weekend

Fri, Aug 10, 10:00 AM - Sun, Aug 12, 1:00 PM

Illinois Prairie Path Clean-up (RPG Section)

Sat, Aug 25, 2018 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Porcupine Mountain Wilderness Two and a half days of hiking

Thu, Sept 20, 6:00 PM - Sun, Sept 23, 12:00 PM

Summer Forest Preserve Work Days

Churchill Woods/Glacial Ridge
Forest Preserve Service Event Organized by Forest
Preserve District of DuPage County
Dates:

Sat., July 21, 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM Sat., August 11, 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM Sat. September 8, 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM Sat. October 6, 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM

Meet at Walnut Glen Park, 860 Walnut St, Glen Ellyn, IL. Preregistration, waiver, and proper dress are required.

Interested in some fresh air and a chance to learn and restore nature?

Contact Bruce Blake for more information - rllnstns1@aol.com . Call the FPDDC Volunteer Office at (630) 206-9630 to register and fill out a waiver. If you are under 18, a parent or guardian must sign the waiver for you. Ages 8 through 17 must be accompanied by an adult. Online - http://www.dupageforest.org drop down column under volunteer/NRM. Also check "more info" for waiver link. Note: This outing is under the auspices and rules of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County (FPDDC). This is not a Sierra Club sponsored activity, but we strongly support the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County.

How to Dress: Wear sturdy shoes or boots, long pants, long-sleeved shirts, and bring your own work gloves, if possible. Shorts are not recommended, as you will be working amidst thorny brush and, occasionally, poisonous plants. Flip-flops, sandals and open-toe shoes are forbidden.



Don't Get Left Out in the Cold... Join Us!



Sierra Club Outings are a terrific way to meet new people and enjoy the great outdoors. Whatever your interests - hiking, canoeing or birdwatching - there is an outing for everyone. If you are new to the area, let your local Chapter or Group give you the lay of the land. Join today and become part of America's largest environmental organization offering the most enjoyable outings.

Name		- X	*************************************	N N N N N N N N N N N N N N N N N N N		
Address		35 - 38 - 31 - 33 - 35 - 16 - 1	9. 10 31 32 31			
City		State		_Zip		
Phone						
Email	\$15\$15\$15\$16\$16\$16\$16	- 10 - 10 - 10 - 10 - 10 - 10 - 10 - 10	- W - W - W - 20			
☐ YES! I would like t	o give a gift ı	membership	to:	Join today and receive a FREE Sierra Club		
Gift Recipient				Weekender Bag!		
Address						
City	State	7in				
Please charge my:		_Exp. Date	AMEX /			
Membership Categories	Individual	Joint		ibutions, gifts & dues to Sierra Club are tax		
Special Offer	□ \$ 15	N/A		ctible; they support our effective, citizen base		
Standard	□ \$ 39	□ \$ 49	advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$ 7.50 for a subscription to SIERRA			
Supporting	□ \$75	□ \$ 100	magazine and \$ 1.00 for your Chapter newsletter.			
Contributing	□ \$ 150	\$ 175	2008 40			
Life	□ \$ 1000	\$ 1250	Enclose a check and mail to: Sierra Club, PO Box 421041, Palm Coast, FL 32142-1041 or visit our website: www.sierraclub.org			
Senior	□ \$ 25	\$ 35				
Student	□ \$ 25	□ \$ 35				
Limited Income	□ \$ 25	□ \$ 35		F940 W0715 1		

F94Q W0715 1