



Summer 2019, Volume 38, No. 2



How do Your Legislators Rate on the Environment?

By Linda Sullivan

Last fall some 50 River Prairie Group volunteers turned out to canvass and phone bank for candidates we hoped would be environmental heroes. We will take some credit for a bumper crop of freshmen legislators elected in DuPage!

[Full story here.](#)



Have Some Fun at Green Trivia Night

Join the Sierra Club and Prairie Food Co-op for an evening of trivia focusing on the environment, food and other earthy topics at the Dry City Brew Works in Wheaton on Monday June 3rd.

Get details and reserve your seat [here.](#)



Meet Your Local Pollinators: Illinois Pollinator Week, June 17 – 23

Has your garden gone quiet, the hum and buzz of busy pollinators a faint whisper? Do you remember summer nights driving through clouds of insects but now arrive home with a clean windshield? Do you miss the enchantment of watching the flash and glimmer of fireflies? [Read more.](#)

Photo: *Bombus griseocollis*, by Gerald Davidson



A New Way to Go Solar

By Christina Uzzo, Citizens Utility Board

Did you know that in Illinois, homeowners can cover up to 60% of the cost of going solar through state and federal incentives? Cook County, Will County, DuPage County, and Kane County have partnered with the Midwest Renewable Energy Association (MREA) and the Citizens Utility Board (CUB) to coordinate Solarize Chicagoland. Solarize Chicagoland is a grassroots community education program. We aim to empower consumers to make informed choices regarding solar energy for their homes, and to make solar more accessible. The DuPage Clean Energy Coalition, of which the River Prairie Group is a partner, is supporting this effort. We plan to pair this program with a Solar Group Buy, where residents can save on the cost of going solar. The advantage of a group buy is the power of volume purchasing, which can significantly reduce the up-front costs of installing solar on your home.

Dozens of solar group buys have been completed across the country in cities like Portland, Milwaukee and Chicago, and in states from California to Vermont. Common elements that lead to the success of these programs include competitive contractor selection, community-led outreach with a trusted community partner, and a limited-time offering.

If you are interested in installing solar energy for your home, you are welcomed to attend an educational Solar Power Hour near you. See the schedule [here](#).



Our Featured Outing

By Paul Saindon

On June 29, come along for a full day on the Lower Fox River! The Fox River offers a unique and memorable itinerary with every kind of landscape from sun-drenched prairies to the dark forest. Just downstream from Merrimack Hill, on the right bank, is an old stone mill structure along with ruins of the dam. Between Sheridan and Ayers Landing there are magnificent outcroppings of Cambrian rock, which is the oldest rock exposure in the state. These rock formation palisades are prevalent along the Fox, and they are as scenic as anywhere in the Midwest. See full details and register to attend [here](#).

Activities of the DuPage River Salt Creek Work Group

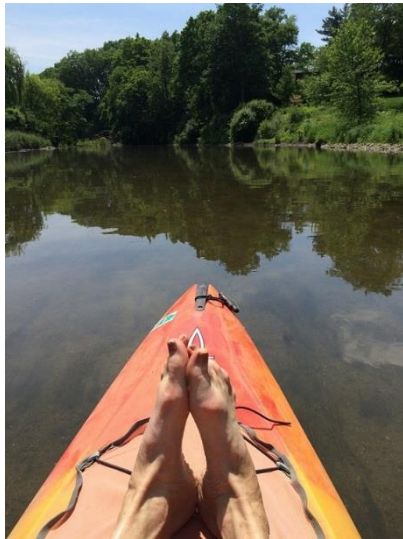
By Deanna Doohaluk and Dennis Streicher

In 2004 a diverse collection of interested groups came together and formed the DuPage River/Salt Creek Workgroup. Membership in the DRSCW includes 55 municipal entities, 24 Publicly Owned Treatment Works (POTWs) and 36 associate members. The River Prairie Group of the Sierra Club was one of the original members and has had a representative on the Executive Board of the DRSCW since the beginning. The mission of the DRSCW is to work together to preserve and enhance water quality and stream resource quality in the East Branch DuPage River, West Branch DuPage River, Salt Creek, and their tributaries. The DRSCW seeks to implement targeted watershed activities that resolve priority waterway problems efficiently and cost effectively. [Learn more about the workgroup.](#)



Jeff's Joys

Admittedly, I felt depressed lately by the continued inaction on climate change, even by those who profess to be concerned about it. Fortunately, I participated in the 2019 Clean Energy Lobby Day in Springfield and was utterly amazed (again!) by the passion and hard work of Sierra Club staff and volunteers like Tom Tuene and Peter Potamianos, as well as our allies affiliated with Faith in Place, The Unitarian Universalist Advocacy Network of Illinois, the Illinois Environmental Council, and others. It was especially gratifying to hear the announcement that a coal ash cleanup bill had been passed by the Senate as we rallied on the Capitol steps. I feel better now.



Last Word

By Tom Montgomery Fate

“... maybe the point is that life is an ellipsis rather than a series of periods, that sauntering is all there really is, and the best sentences we will ever read or write or live only lead us deeper into the woods, into a place where keys and credit cards don't matter, a place where we once belonged, and still long to be ...”

photo: Connie Schmidt

Sherry Stratton, editor
Jeff Gahr, newsletter layout

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