

DuPage Sierran

Sierra Club, River Prairie Group of DuPage County

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It's a Wrap!

By Stacey Salman, Political Chair

Election Day 2018 is behind us, and the River Prairie Group has so much to be proud of. There is no doubt a people-powered movement has been building here since election day 2016. DuPage County has been organizing, talking to neighbors, creating a community dialogue about issues we care about, and deciding who we want to carry our message to Springfield and Washington.

In response to the 2016 election, people have been more engaged than ever. The recklessness of the current administration has motivated and mobilized voters to resist policies that will harm our communities and threaten our future. Sierra Club Illinois responded to these threats by building a grassroots

political field team. Our plan was to build power for our local political program, elect clean-energy champions, and fight back against President Trump's pro-polluter agenda. Our goal here in DuPage County was ambitious. We wanted to elect unwavering champions committed to securing a clean-energy future and protecting our communities. At the federal level, the 6th Congressional district was not going to be easy to "flip." Peter Roskam, a climate change denier, had been comfortably reelected the past six elections. At the state level, our plan was to be bold and not stop with support of clean-energy candidates. We were going on the offensive and targeting legislators who repeatedly worked against a clean future for Illinois.

Sierra Club River Prairie Group hosted a social in the summer of 2017. We invited members and supporters to share their thoughts, hear our plans, and commit to win in the midterm elections. In the crowd that night was local resident Sean Casten, who was also eager to hear Sierra Club's political vision for winning in DuPage County. Over the next 12 months, RPG held multiple events in DuPage County, training volunteers in the various roles needed to build a strong political team. Fast forward to summer 2018 with our candidates endorsed, our team trained, and our volunteers motivated, we launched our political season with another RPG social. Sean Casten attended again, this time as a Sierra Club endorsed candidate excited to talk to our members and share his platform on climate and energy. During the next 10 weeks we held 14 voter outreach events, knocked on thousands of doors, and talked to hundreds of voters on behalf of all our endorsed candidates. Sierra Club members in DuPage County signed up for over 100 volunteer shifts in support of various campaigns. Early planning, bold goals, and a small army of tireless and committed volunteers produced election results that exceeded our expectations.

"Flipping the 6th" was an amazing accomplishment and shows what's possible when people work together toward a common goal. In the final GOTV weekend of the Casten campaign, over 150,000 doors were knocked. That is an incredible number of volunteers committed to creating the change we want to see. Beyond the Sierra Club, the people in DuPage spent two years building a people-powered movement that was laser-focused and determined. All the hard work paid off. At the state level we accomplished so much. Governor Elect JB Pritzker is committed to bringing 100% clean energy to Illinois. Attorney General Elect Kwame Raoul will continue the work of Lisa Madigan in protecting our state and holding polluters accountable. Senator Tom Cullerton is returning to Springfield. After a tense few days of counting ballots, it's been announced that Laura Ellman won her race for Illinois Senate. Karina Villa, Terra Costa Howard, and Anne Stava-Murray are all newly elected clean-energy champions. Deb Conroy and Kathleen Willis will return to Springfield to continue their work on our behalf. The County Board has 12 new elected board members. It will be exciting to see what will be possible at the county

and local level as we capture opportunities through the Future Energy Jobs Act. And while some of our endorsed candidates did not win, we are confident the people spoke loudly on election day that they demand to be heard. Every elected official will be listening to their constituents more closely. They know we hold the power.

It is important to acknowledge that the Valley of the Fox Group leads Sierra Club's political work in the 14th Congressional District. However, there is a sliver of the 14th district in west DuPage County, and we know several of our amazing RPG members were busy in the 14th (and the 6th!) helping to support Lauren Underwood's successful campaign. We could not be more excited to see what Lauren and Sean will accomplish. What an amazing team we are sending to Washington with our two freshman representatives joining Bill Foster and Raja Krishnamoorthi, who are both returning to DC.

So, what is next? Electing environmental champions is just the first step. We need to work with them on issues and hold them accountable. We are part of a movement, and that movement did not end on election day. None of our problems were fixed by electing new representatives. Our work continues, and we ask you to be a part of it. Join us for an election "wrap-up" party on November 29th to talk about what's next. See you there!

Sierra Club Election Wrap-Up Party!
Thursday November 29 @ 6:30pm
Alter Brewing
2300 Wisconsin Ave
Downers Grove IL



Clean Energy is Coming to DuPage County

By Connie Schmidt, Clean Power Team

Although some wheels turn more slowly than others, the wheels of change for Clean Energy ARE turning in DuPage County. In October, the IBEW 701 hosted a conference organized by DuPage County Environmental office, Choose DuPage (a Countywide business organization), Com Ed, and the River Prairie Group of the Sierra Club to explore the “Economic Benefits of Solar Energy to Commercial Businesses”.

Presenters were perfect! Our long time friend, Lisa Albrecht, of the Illinois Solar Energy Association (ISEA) gave an overview of what the Future Energy Jobs Act (FEJA) has to offer to encourage the development of Clean Energy in IL. The following portion of the program outlined how Commonwealth Edison is working with FEJA to embrace the Clean Energy Revolution as well. Lastly, Continental Electric, a union installer, featured a local business with offices in DuPage as a well designed headquarters using water retention, perennial plantings, and of course, plenty of solar panels including those on a shady car port.

A link to the slide presentations and other important information on the Power Forward DuPage (IBEW 701) web site is here for you to explore:

<https://powerforwarddupage.com/news/powerforward-dupage-hosts-solar-energy-conference/>

Clarke is not the only DuPage user of clean energy. Schools such as North Central College, and the Lake Park High Schools, just to name a few, are also leaders in this important trend., with efforts evolving thanks to activists in Naperville and Wheaton Warrenville. Continental’s Headquarters in Oak Brook, ABT electronics and Earth Friendly Products in Addison also are leaders in this revolution.

Just outside our boundaries are two huge IKEA stores in Bolingbrook and Schaumburg and Magid Glove in Romeoville. It is happening!

Members of the DuPage Clean Energy Coalition have active groups in Naperville, Downers Grove, Elmhurst, Warrenville, and Wheaton among other cities. Check out DCEC on Facebook or the RPG Calendar to become more involved.

One big campaign is a post card signing effort to gather support evidence to present to municipal government evidence that citizens do want to transition to Clean Energy.

Because of the new law, benefits to consumers are greatest in the next 5 years. Rebates and tax deductions are guaranteed for only a short length of time, because it is believed that once the trend gathers steam, few incentives will be needed.

In order to learn more about benefits of the FEJA law for either commercial, or residential use you have several options:

- 1. Visit a DuPage Clean Energy Coalition meeting, (Check the calendar of the RPG or contact Jeff Gahris at jgahris@gmail.com, or Connie Schmidt at twustr111@msn.com).**
- 2. Visit the ISEA web site for up to date information on the law and local businesses at www.illinoisolar.org.**
- 3. Contact the IBEW for Union Contractors or check the ISEA web site for member contractors.**



Hike on Feb. 3, 2019 at Starved Rock State Park

Come join me for a hike you will not forget. This was my first hike when I became a Sierra Leader. I had over 100 people sign up originally, and I had to ask other leaders to help me.

Over the years, the presentation format has changed. I started doing the talk in the lodge, standing on a bench and shouting above the crowd of people there. I talked about the history of the American Bald Eagle that became our national bird. It took six years to accomplish that.

Then I joined up with a person from the Audubon Society who had me go to the Waterway across from the park. Then on to rangers, and finally the US Army Corps of Engineers (federal) who helped me do the presentation.

This year, with the Waterway closing because of budget cuts, I will have to do something new as I talk about the American Bald Eagle and the changes to the frozen waterfalls that I have seen in the past 16 years that I have been doing

this trip.

My assistant, Ed Max, our Sierra naturalist, will also be talking about the plants/trees and other things he sees during our hike.

So, please join me and learn about the American Bald Eagle, waterfalls, changes, and plant/trees that are there now. Starved Rock State Park is one of our most popular state parks in Illinois.

Signups are taken at my email. Please include your name, phone number, and address for the waiver as soon as possible to reserve you place on the hike. I am now limited to 20 people.

Thank you,

Jan Bradford, jbradford60131@sbcglobal.net



February 20, 2019 7:00 pm
The Clifford Johnson School
25700 Continental Dr, Warrenville

DuPage Monarch Project Screening: *The Guardians*

The DuPage Monarch Project will screen the documentary film *The Guardians* February 20, 7:00 pm at the Clifford Johnson Elementary School, 2S700 Continental Drive, Warrenville.

A visually dazzling meditation on the balance between humans and nature, *The Guardians* poetically interweaves the lives of the threatened monarch butterfly with an indigenous community fighting to restore the forest they nearly destroyed. Migrating 3,000 miles to hibernate in towering Oyamel, the monarch population faces collapse.

When the directors started filming *The Guardians* in 2014, the monarch population hit an all-time record low of 33 million, down from 1 billion just twenty years prior. In the valley below, the people of Donaciano Ojeda struggle to support their families in their ancestral lands now part of the protected Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve.

Santos, a charismatic avocado farmer, and Aristeo, a philosophical tree caretaker, are the storytellers of the community as they confront internal divisions, illegal loggers, and their own mortality. Shot over three years, this cinematic journey through the butterfly-dense mountaintops of Michoacan tells an intimate story of a unique community at the front lines of conservation.

Forest Preserve District Update

Beginning with this issue of our newly streamlined DuPage Sierran, we are providing the link for the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County.

Everything you might want to know about our DuPage Forest Preserves is there on the site, at your fingertips, including Places to Go, Things to Do, Plants & Wildlife, and more. At the bottom right of the District's home page, under Your Links to Nature, you can access their quarterly publication *The Conservationist*, along with other resources.

We thank Senior Ranger Ryan Smith for the Forest Preserve updates he has written for each issue of our newsletter the past two years.

His words and photos have inspired us, and it's been a pleasure to work with him. Link to the Forest preserve here: <https://www.dupageforest.org/>



Jeff's Joys

By now you have reached the end of our newly formatted newsletter. I trust you enjoyed it and found it useful. It was a while in coming, but hopefully, we will find it easier for everyone to see and read our articles.

DuPage County is a wonderful place to live, work, and play. We have environmental challenges to address locally and nationally, and we strive to provide meaningful opportunities for you to be involved as you see fit. One urgent volunteer need is for help with media outreach for our programs and activities. Meanwhile, if you have any comments on the format, or any stories you would like to see published in this newsletter, feel free to contact me at jgahris@gmail.com.

Speaking of challenges, you no doubt heard the bad news about an IPCC report telling us that we have only 12 years to avoid climate catastrophe unless we dramatically reduce our carbon emissions in short order. It might make you wonder whether humans deserve to exist. Still, we need not despair. While the American news media may give little or no insight into what must be

done, the good news is we already have the tools at hand.

We have all been resisting change, eschewing large-scale paradigm in favor of the little changes that don't make much difference. But we need to kick start now what already promises to be the biggest revolution in transportation in at least 100 years: the advent of electric cars and trucks, and the promise of renewable energy and better agriculture. The only remaining question: will we act fast enough? It starts with the political elections, and our political team has been working hard. Next, we need to deeply engage our leaders and let them know what needs to be done both locally and nationally. We are happy to provide you with the tools.

One of our tools is a clean energy petition card used by the DuPage Clean Energy Coalition. The River Prairie Group is a partner in that effort. Our goals are to collect signed cards for presentation to municipal officials about the need to make clean energy more accessible to DuPage residents, and to build a strong network of clean energy activists using the cards.

Our leaders need to know that thousands of us care about a transition to a just and clean energy economy, and that we want it without delay. Political elections are critically important, but beyond that, it is up to us to solve the climate crisis. Yes, we can do this! For more information about joining our project, please contact me at jgahris@gmail.com.

- Jeff Gahris, Executive Committee Chair

The logo for "GET OUTSIDE" features the words in a bold, blocky font. Each letter is filled with a different nature scene, such as a forest, a field, or a mountain range, giving it a textured, outdoor feel.

[Explore, Hike, Bike and More!](#)

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Follow us on Facebook for news, events and updates on the work we do to keep IL green!

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