



Sauk-Calumet Group

August 2019 Newsletter Volume 38, Issue 2

Nature Sundays 2019, So Far

By Patrick Coffey



Rain has been our biggest challenge this year. At Midewin NTP the forecast was rain, and we had only 2 guests. But it turned out to be a beautiful day, and a perfect hike. We saw the bison up close, too, just on the other side of the fence. At Midlothian Meadows and at Gensburg Prairie we were into the hikes about a half hour before the rain came down. On both occasions, we fled to our cars. At Gensburg, after the rain stopped and everyone had left, I took some photos, one of which is above. The other 2 hikes, thankfully, had no rain. At Raccoon Grove we had 8 guests, and at Kankakee Sands (with Floyd Catchpole) we had 12, and perfect weather. Many thanks to those who took a chance on the weather! Next time we will be better prepared with rain ponchos and umbrellas - before we leave the parking lot!

There are 2 hikes remaining. Both will be vigorous hikes. On September 8th at 2 pm, we will be visiting the big sky of Wauponsee Glacial Trail, with co-leader Ann Baskerville. The Wauponsee Glacial Trail runs from Joliet to the Kankakee River south of Wilmington, but we'll be doing the trail as it goes along the eastern edge of the Midewin preserve. The trail surface is wide and mostly asphalt or crushed limestone, so I don't think we'll be running into many ticks. Bring water and sunscreen; prairies are hot and sunny places. Cameras and binoculars okay; we may see some birds. The hike will last about 2-3 hours, depending on the temperature and the weather. We will probably cover about 3 miles. There are toilet

facilities at the parking lot. Our last hike of the season will be at Mt. Baldy in the Indiana Dunes National Park. That's on September 22nd at 2 pm. This should be another one of our very special hikes. The hike will be led by noted photographer and Park Ranger, Rafi Wilkinson. He will highlight the native wildlife, and then we will climb Mt. Baldy for a beautiful view of Lake Michigan. The hike will last about 2 hours. There are toilet facilities at the parking lot. Please RSVP to this hike if you're coming. We would like to limit attendance to 20 guests. Email the organizer at patrick.coffey@illinois.sierraclub.org. For more details on either of these hikes, look for emails or on Facebook or [Meetup.com](https://www.meetup.com) (under "Nature Sundays").

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Coal Ash Pond's Closure Raises Environmental Concerns

by Ann Baskerville

The Lincoln Stone Quarry in Joliet has served as a dumping ground for coal ash for decades. The dump's 2.6 million cubic yards (tons) of coal ash is leaching unsafe levels of toxins, including arsenic, molybdenum, lithium, and boron, into groundwater. On August 27th, concerned citizens and Sierra Club staff will attend a public meeting in Joliet to learn what the company NRG plans to do to ensure the coal ash pit is closed safely. Coal ash is a byproduct from the burning of coal. Joliet is home to many stone quarries and pumping water in the quarries affects underground hydrology. Due to the stone quarries, it is very important to understand where the coal ash contamination is flowing. Sierra Club plans to remain engaged in this issue and encourages all members to keep an eye out for future emails and newspaper articles about this issue.

America's 61st National Park

Earlier this year Congress passed a bill to create our 61st National Park right here in Indiana. The Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore became the Indiana Dunes National Park. The park is comprised of multiple properties along 15 miles of the southern shore of Lake Michigan. The NPS website is <https://www.nps.gov/indu/index.htm>. This park has several beaches, sand dunes, fifty miles of hiking trails, camping sites, a historic working farm and homestead, birding sites, rivers, forests, prairies and wetlands. The fall season is especially beautiful when the leaves begin to change. So, let's support our local National Park and take advantage of the cooler weather to explore this amazing place. Our last Nature Sundays Hike will be at Mount Baldy on September 22nd at 2pm. If you take Route 20 or Route 12 to Mount Baldy you will drive past most of the areas of the park. The Indiana Dunes Visitor Center on Route 49 is a great place to get information on the National Park.

A Brief Review of the Year's Illinois Environmental Legislation: Lots of Good News!

By Kathy Van Kampen, Sauk-Calumet Sierra Club



Lois Lauer, State Rep Justin Slaughter, Cora Suddoth

Legislation Passed: Good News!

SB9 Coal Ash Prevention Act

Creates a regulatory framework to ensure polluters, not taxpayer, pay for closure and cleanup of Coal Ash pollution in waterways. Passed.

SR214/HR185 Investing in Open Space.

Provides for Capital Investment in open lands and Conservation of lands in Illinois. Resolution Adopted.

SB2146/HB334 Clean Water Workforce Pipeline.

Provides for training and resources for careers in water infrastructure especially for those in disadvantaged communities. Passed.

HB2076 Ban on use of business records/receipts containing BPA. BPA (bisphenol A) exposure has been link to cancer. Passed.

HB2652 Solar and EV Construction. Allows expansion of building codes to include solar, electric vehicle and other supplemental codes. Passed.

Legislation Not Passed: More Good News!

HB1633 - AntiPipeline Protests

An ALEC bill providing for enhanced penalties and sentencing for being on oil pipeline sites to protest. Note: Passed in the House but tabled in the Senate.



Jan Ginzler, State Senator Emil Jones, Linda Kwiatt, Lois Lauer, Holly Fingerle

If you are interested in helping the Illinois Sierra Club pass the Clean Energy Jobs Act (CEJA), you can join them Tuesday, October 29 for a special Veto Session Clean Energy Lobby Day! We'll be talking to our legislators about the urgency of addressing the climate crisis, tackling social inequality, and rallying for a just and equitable clean energy future. Buses will be leaving from across Illinois. [Can you join us?](#)

WHAT: Clean Energy Lobby Day - Veto Session Edition

WHEN: Tuesday, Oct 29 - buses leave in the morning and return in the evening

WHERE: Springfield State Capitol, 402 S State Street

[RSVP Here](#)

Sauk Calumet Sierra Club Group Fall Meetings

Meetings are held at 7:15 pm on the second Monday of every month at the Frankfort Library (21119 Pfeiffer Rd, Frankfort, IL) with the exception of June, July and August. All meetings are free and open both to Sierra Club members and to the public.



September 9: Environmental Protection!

Christine Anderson, Pollution Specialist for the Environmental Protection Agency will discuss EPA's pollution prevention program and the resources it offers. EPA has the responsibility to enforce federal standards for clean air and clean water, and for solid wastes and toxic waste disposal.

October 14: Monarchs!



Environmental activist Peter Gordon will talk about his commitment to saving the Monarch Butterflies, a species whose existence is threatened by habitat loss and toxins. Peter is a Stagg High School student who has been organizing environmental expos, distributing milkweed seeds (the Monarch larvae's only food source), and working with local politicians to create pollinator-friendly roadside vegetation.

November 11: Grizzly Bears!



Zoo Keeper Christy Mazrimas-Ott had the opportunity in June 2019 to visit the Vital Ground's headquarters in Montana through the Brookfield American Association of Zoo Keepers (AAZK) Chapter. Vital Ground's mission is to protect and restore North America's grizzly bear populations for future generations by conserving wildlife habitat by connecting large blocks of public land with private land and by supporting programs that reduce conflicts between bears and humans. Christy was able to see the amazing work they do and will be sharing her experience with us.



December 9: Peotone Airport

Filmmaker Tom Desch will show us a preview of his documentary film about the 20+ year struggle between those who want to build an airport in Peotone and those (including Sierra club) who have been fighting against that idea in order to preserve the farmland and quality of life in Will County.



January 13: Members' Slide Night

Calling all members! Please bring a PowerPoint file or picture file of your latest outdoor experience, be it a grand adventure on the other side of the world or the beautiful butterflies of your own backyard. Call Lois Lauer at 708 (923-1550) if you have slides to share.

Letters to the Editor:

Letters on content within the Sauk-Calumet newsletter should be sent to the editor at:

sc-editor@illinois.sierraclub.org

Please include your full name and address and reference the article on which you are commenting.

Sauk-Calumet Group
People You Should Know

Pat Coffey* Conservation / Publicity
patrick.coffey@illinois.sierraclub.org

John Field* Treasurer / Web Site
john.field@illinois.sierraclub.org

Jerry Heinrich Midwin Liaison
jerry.heinrich@illinois.sierraclub.org

Georganne Higgins* Membership
815-936-9040

Lois Lauer* Chair / Programs
lois.lauer@illinois.sierraclub.org or
sc-chair@illinois.sierraclub.org

Ann Baskerville* Chapter Excom Rep
ann.baskerville@sierraclub.org

Christy Mazrimas Ott* Conservation Chair
christy.mazrimas-ott@illinois.sierraclub.org

Sharon Rolek Conservation Liaison - Calumet
Region 773-646-0990

Rich Treptow* Secretary, Climate Change Liaison
rich.treptow@illinois.sierraclub.org

Steve Baker Outings Chair
steve.baker@illinois.sierraclub.org

Dan McNamee* Audio-Visual Coordinator
danmac6789@gmail.com

Kathy Van Kampen* Political / Lobby Team Chair
kathleenvk@aol.com

Gregory Ott Newsletter Editor
sc-editor@illinois.sierraclub.org

**Denotes an elected member of the Executive
Committee*

The Sierra Club from the national level down to the local groups does so many positive things to help protect our planet. So, let's get out there and enjoy our beautiful world. Click below for Sierra Club Illinois outings.



Remember to check our Sauk-Calumet Group website for current information and news updates on issues relevant to Illinois.

[Click here for our website.](#)

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<https://www.facebook.com/SierraClubSaukCalumet/>

to find us on Facebook.