



Sauk-Calumet Group

Winter Issue 2013 - Volume 32, Issue 1

Smart Choices, Less Traffic

The 50 Best and Worst Transportation Projects in the United States

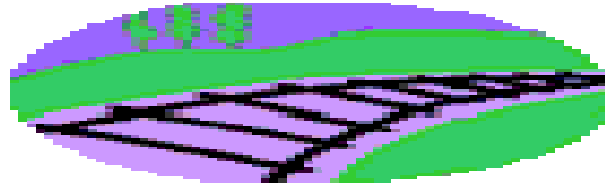
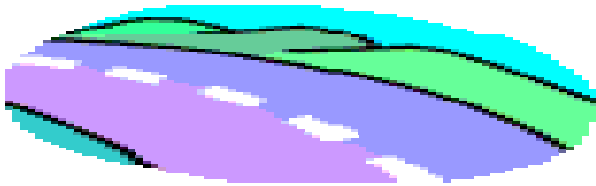
by Connie Heinrich, Editor

As part of its Beyond Oil campaign, the Sierra Club has identified 50 transportation projects across the U.S. that it has categorized as either the best or the worst in the country. On December 11, the Sierra Club issued a press release: *The Sierra Club Identifies Nation's Best and Worst Transportation Projects: How Transportation Funding Will Move America Beyond Oil, or Keep Us Shackled to the Pump*. According to the press release, "the report identifies specific projects, either planned or under construction, that it supports or opposes based on cost and whether the investment will contribute or set back efforts to expand transportation choices and reduce American oil use." The report states that "because transportation infrastructure lasts for decades, the impacts of transportation investments are felt for many years to come, with huge consequences for America's ability to move beyond oil."

The report identifies two projects that pass through the Sauk-Calumet Group's boundaries. The proposed Illiana Expressway that, if built, will connect I-65 in Indiana with I-55 in Illinois, falls into the "worst projects" category. The planned corridor for this highway runs between Wilmington, Illinois and Lowell, Indiana, and it would provide access to the proposed third airport near Peotone.

The Midwest High-Speed Rail project, which includes upgrading track between Chicago to St. Louis, is identified as one of the best. Interestingly, the report states that "track improvement will allow Amtrak trains to run at 110 mph rather than the traditional 79 mph". The statement should read that trains can attain a top speed of 110 mph. Because the trains make stops at towns along the way, and the rail is shared with freight trains, the average speed will be less.

If you would like to read the complete report, the link is <http://content.sierraclub.org/beyondoil/content/smart-choices-less-traffic>



Sauk-Calumet ExCom Election Results

by Connie Heinrich, Editor

The Sauk-Calumet Group is pleased to announce the election of its Executive Committee for 2013. The newly elected members of the 2013 ExCom are: Lois Lauer, Group Chair and Programs; Georganne Higgins, Membership; and Bob Schwaan, Vice-Chair. Continuing on the ExCom are Patrick Coffey, Group Representative to the Chapter ExCom and Publicity; John Field, Treasurer; and Mary Lubertozzi, Political Education.

There are still openings on the ExCom for the positions of Secretary and Conservation Chair, so if you have given thought to being more involved in your local Sierra Club Group, now is your chance. You are welcome to sit in on an ExCom meeting or two before making a decision. Contact Lois Lauer if you think you might like to give it a try. (Contact information on Page 5)

Legislative Update

by Mary Lubertozi, Political Education Liaison

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) sustainable budget bill came up in the veto session, passed in the Senate and has been sent to the Governor. Senators in the Sauk-Calumet Group's area who voted for it include Senators Crotty, Hutchinson, Maloney and McGuire; Senator Radogno voted against it and Senator Emil Jones did not vote. IDNR funding has been a difficult and convoluted topic for us for several years; and it's exciting that, pending a signature by the Governor, we may actually be able to knock that off our "to do" list.

Please thank your Senator if he or she voted for the bill, and express your disappointment if they did not.

The Sierra Club Illinois Chapter continues to work on fracking (hydrolic fracturing) regulations, but at this time no one expects the subject to be addressed in veto session. The soonest will likely be during the lame duck session in early January. More information will be available as negotiations with industry, the environmental community, the Attorney General's office and the Speaker's office continue.

Thorn Creek Nature Preserve

Submitted by Mary Lubertozi, Political Education Liaison

The Thorn Creek Management commission is pleased to announce the hiring of a part-time Thorn Creek Nature Center Coordinator, Caitlin McMahon. McMahon received her bachelor's degree in Interdisciplinary Science, with minors in both Environmental Science and History from DePaul University in Chicago. Her graduate coursework in Wyoming focused on field ecology and place-based education through the Teton Science School. A passionate educator and nature lover, McMahon spent much of her time between schooling and working outdoors with youth in Chicago.

McMahon's experience with nature education has brought her to serve many non-profit organizations within the Chicagoland area and she is excited to engage this community in programs at the Thorn Creek Nature Preserve. Her experience with education programs includes Afterschool Matters, Earth Team, Chicago Public Library, Garfield Park Conservatory Alliance, Morton Arboretum and Lincoln Park Conservancy.

McMahon enjoys leading nature hikes and looks forward to meeting all the Thorn Creek Nature Preserve's volunteers, Friends and preserve hikers. Look for McMahon on weekends at TCNC where you can meet and chat with her about upcoming events or share what kinds of programs you would like to see.

The Friends of Thorn Creek Woods volunteers continue to assist with Preserve programming and the operation of the nature center by helping with trail repairs, Open Hours, program preparations and by

serving as guest naturalists. There are still a number of volunteer opportunities available.

An original graphite drawing by artist Marikay Peter Witlock titled "Prairie Chapel" is available with a donation of \$75 or more to Friends of Thorn Creek Woods. All proceeds will benefit Thorn Creek Nature Preserve, the inspiration for the drawing. Although Thorn Creek's finances allow for the hiring of the new part-time Coordinator, the budget is bare-bones.

Thorn Creek Nature Center, 247 Monee Road, Park Forest is open Friday through Sunday from noon to 4 p.m. Three and one-half miles of trail through nearly 1,000 acres of oak hickory forest are open daily, dawn to dusk. For more information about how to volunteer or to order a print, email thorn_creek@att.net or call: 708-747-6320.



Do You Want to Live in a COOL CITY?

by Lois Lauer, Sauk-Calumet Group Chair

Sauk-Calumet claims title as the *COOLEST* Group in the Illinois Chapter of the Sierra Club!

Yes, that's right. Our group contains more COOL CITIES than any of the other 13 Sierra Club groups in the Illinois Chapter. A total of 58 towns and cities in the state have signed the COOL CITIES agreement, and 12 of those are within our group's boundaries!

Sauk-Calumet area COOL CITIES*:

Blue Island	Bolingbrook	Hazelcrest
Homewood	Joliet	Manhattan
Minooka	Oak Lawn	Olympia Fields
Orland Park	Park Forest	Plainfield

Chicago is a COOL CITY too, although only a small portion in the southern part of the city is in our territory.



What is a COOL CITY?

It is a community that's taking action to protect our earth from climate change. Community volunteers (like you!) can actively initiate and support this program in your town by encouraging your mayor and public officials to lead your community in reducing fossil fuel use through sustainable practices such as energy efficiency, renewable energy, promotion of local food, bicycle use, greener infrastructure and public buildings, greener transportation alternatives, and green lifestyle education. Many of the COOL CITIES have recently chosen greener electricity alternatives when their towns aggregated their electric usage. The COOL CITIES Sustainability Protection Agreement challenges communities to reduce climate change pollution in the next three years by 2% per year per capita.

What can you do to help your town become a COOL CITY?

- Check out the Illinois COOL CITIES website (www.illinoiscoolcities.org). Click on "Resources" and then "COOL CITIES Handout" for an easy-to-understand summary.

- Educate yourself and your community about the serious threat of climate change. Rich Treptow, (r-treptow@earthlink.net), one of our members, has put together a beautiful slide presentation about climate change; he will gladly come and talk with any group interested in learning more about the causes and effects and possible solutions to climate change.
- Talk to your neighbors, community and town council members. Ask Illinois COOL CITIES' chair Lonnie Morris (herbndove@comcast.net) for advice and guidance as you plan to speak with your community officials and mayors about signing the COOL CITIES agreement.
- If your town is already a COOL CITY, join with others in your community to help your town reach its sustainability goals.
- And, of course, do all you can, right in your own home and your own backyard and your own car, to reduce your own carbon footprint so that YOU personally are part of the solution!

Volunteer Workdays Near Your Home

If you enjoy working outdoors, please consider volunteering in one or more of your local natural areas. Contact information for workday schedules is listed below:

Cook County Forest Preserves www.fpdcc.com or
www.fotfp.org

Will County Forest Preserves www.fpdwc.org

Midwin National Tallgrass Prairie
www.fs.usda.gov/midwin

Dress for the weather and wear gloves and sturdy shoes or boots.



Ralph Frese (1926-2012)

Remembering a Friend to Illinois Sierrans

by Paul Strand (Reference: *Chicago Tribune*, December 12, 2012)

Although he lived and worked on the north-side of Chicago near Morton Grove, Ralph Frese was known to many Sierra Club members throughout Chicagoland. He introduced thousands of people to the beauty of Illinois' waterways through canoeing or kayaking. He was also an activist interested in Illinois river trails. A section of the Chicago River from Willow Road in Northfield to Dempster Street in Morton Grove has been designated the Ralph Frese River Trail by the Forest Preserve District of Cook County.

He started the Illinois Paddling Council in the early 1950's and helped raise awareness of protecting Illinois waterways from pollution and overdevelopment. He also started the Des Plaines River Marathon in 1958 and the New Year's Day Canoe Paddle on the North Branch of the Chicago River.

Mr. Frese worked as a blacksmith (fourth generation and perhaps the last blacksmith in our area) in a building adjacent to his northwest-side canoe shop. He used a forge to make high quality tools for sculptors and stonemasons. He also expressed his creativity by building and restoring canoes in his canoe shop.

His interest in paddling began when he first purchased a canvas kayak for \$15 when he was 14 years old. After that, he spent time paddling Chicago-area rivers and learned to appreciate the wilderness along the riverbanks.

In later life, he was involved in re-enacting early voyageurs such as Robert de LaSalle, Jacques Marquette and Louis Joliet. Besides participating in these trips, he built fiberglass replicas of the birch bark canoes, some as long as 34 feet. In addition, Mr. Frese was known for a fiberglass canoe he designed called the Canadienne. When he could no longer keep up with all the orders for the canoe, he leased the manufacturing rights to a larger company.



We can thank Ralph Frese for his efforts to clean up pollution and open up dams along the Illinois waterways so they can be enjoyed by those who canoe and kayak. Here on the south-side, we need to carry on Ralph's legacy by continuing to clean up streams such as Thorn Creek and the Little Calumet River.

Sauk-Calumet Outings

Steve Baker, our Outings leader will be unable to lead outings for the next few months. As he has often written in the past, scheduling winter outings is tricky anyhow because the weather is unpredictable. As March approaches, both Steve and the weather may be improved enough to consider an outing or two. Check the Sauk-Calumet website for developments.



In the absence of a Sauk-Calumet outing, the Friends of Midewin invite you to participate in one of their outings. This outing is suitable for participants of all ages and levels of expertise. Non-members are also welcome to attend.

Feb. 2 - Saturday: Join members of the Midewin Alliance on a mid-winter hike at Midewin in search of a sleepy-eyed ground hog. We will likely hike the Twin Oaks / Group 63 / Hedgeapple Trail. While we can all hope for a perfect sunny day with trails covered with a blanket of white snow, be prepared for less than perfect weather and dress appropriately. This event will happen and is not subject to cancellation. Plan to meet at the Chicago Road Parking Lot located on Hoff Road at 10:00 a.m. Hot chocolate will be available at mid-hike, and lunch at Hayden's Crossing Restaurant in Wilmington will follow. Contact Jerry Heinrich at 815-476-6171 for more information and directions.

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**

Steve Baker Outings	815-485-5273
Pat Coffey* ExCom Rep. / Publicity	708-720-2725
John Field* Treasurer / Web Site	630-852-8202
Connie Heinrich Newsletter	815-476-6171
Jerry Heinrich Midewin Liaison	815-476-6171
Georganne Higgins* Membership	815-936-9040
Lois Lauer* Chair / Programs	708-923-1550
Mary Lubertozzi* Political Education	708-747-1359
Sharon Rolek Conservation Liaison, Calumet Region	773-646-0990
Bob Schwaan* Vice-Chair	630-243-0305
Rich Treptow Publications, Climate Change Liaison	708-747-0649

*Denotes an elected member of the Executive Committee

**Sauk-Calumet Program
Schedule**

Meetings are held at 7:15 p.m. on the second Monday of every month at the Frankfort Library with the exception of June, July and August. All meetings are free and open both to Sierra Club members and to the public.

The Frankfort Library at 21119 Pfeiffer Road is located on the south side of Lincoln Highway (Rte.30) between LaGrange Rd. and Harlem Ave.

Jan. 14 Member's Slide Night

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

Feb. 11 Current Legislative Issues

Jack Darin, Director of the Illinois Chapter of the Sierra Club, will speak on environmental issues that are being or will be addressed by the legislature during the year.

Mar. 11 Fracking!

Cindy Skrukru, Illinois Sierra Club Clean Water Advocate, will discuss the process and the risks of natural gas fracturing and will explain the Sierra Club's concerns about regulating management of the fracking fluids.

Apr. 8 Biking Through Holland

Fellow Sierran Bob Hoel of Elmhurst will show slides and tell of the adventures he and his wife Nancy had as they travelled through the Dutch countryside on their tandem bicycle!