



Sauk-Calumet Group

Jan.-Apr. Issue 2015 - Volume 34, Issue 1

Harvest Parade and Rally Against the Illiana

by Pat Coffey, Political Chair

On October 11th, the Sierra Club, Openlands, No Illiana 4 Us, and other groups got together for a Harvest Parade and rally to protest the proposed Illiana Expressway. One parade started from Wilmington and travelled east to Peotone, Illinois. Another parade started from Lowell, Indiana and drove west to Peotone (in the middle). Both groups took back-roads and followed closely the route of the proposed highway. There was a rally with speakers afterwards at the Will County Fairgrounds in Peotone.

Sauk Calumet members participated in the caravan of about 15 vehicles that formed on the Illinois side. A float with loudspeakers led the parade. It was sobering to see the people along the route, with "No Illiana" signs in their front yards, coming out to wave at the parade. A woman on horseback joined the parade later on the route.

The Sierra Club opposes the Illiana because, as planned, it will run in close proximity to Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie, affecting wildlife there. Also, the highway is projected to cost 1.3 billion dollars, funds that could be used for other, more environmentally friendly transportation projects. It will also eliminate about 3,165 acres of prime farmland in an area where many heritage farms exist, farms that have been run by the same families for over 100 years.



To learn more about the Illiana, its costs and environmental impacts, try these websites:

Openlands Illiana page - www.openlands.org/illiana

On Facebook - www.facebook.com/NoIlliana4US

Sierra Club, Illinois Chapter - www.illinois2.sierraclub.org/priorities/transportation/illiana

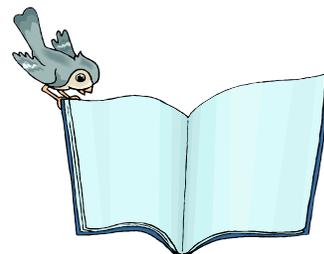
Or to take action: <http://noilliana.org/take-action>

See more pictures from the Harvest Parade at: <http://noilliana.org/harvest-parade>.

On February 9th, Erica Dodt, the Illinois Sierra Club's Illiana Organizer, will be speaking to our group at the regular monthly meeting. Please come and feel free to ask questions and get behind the movement to stop this unnecessary highway project affecting all of us in the south Chicago region. (See program schedule on page 4)

In this issue:

- page 1 Illiana Rally
- page 2 More Comments on the Illiana; KCBX and Pet Coke
- page 3 Green Living; Election Results, Cool Cities
- page 4 People You Should Know; Program Schedule



More Comments on the Illiana

By Jerry Heinrich, Midewin Liaison

The Illiana, besides being extremely costly, just does not make sense!

Consider the following points:

- As you are probably aware, the Illiana Expressway will do little to nothing to address the massive amount of intermodal truck traffic being generated from the intermodal complexes located between Wilmington and Joliet. As proposed, an unending procession of intermodal truck traffic would be funneled down Illinois Route 53 (a.k.a. Historic Route 66), negatively impacting Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery and the USFS Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie. The procession of thousands of trucks daily will change the visitor experience at Midewin. Midewin is not just a local or regional preserve, but rather a national treasure (<http://www.nationalforests.org/treasured>)
- The proposed Illiana route would seriously impact the Kankakee River and DesPlaines Conservation Area. Imagine a visit to one of our National Parks or Forests where the sights and sounds of nature are impacted by noise, light pollution, and traffic congestion.
- As proposed, the Illiana would do little to address traffic congestion on I-80. Consider - if the Illiana is built, travelers from greater Chicagoland and the Joliet area wanting to travel east to Indiana and beyond will continue to use I-80 rather than take the proposed Illiana. I-80 would be miles closer, more convenient, and less costly to use. Why would anyone traveling from Chicago en route to Detroit, Toledo, Cleveland or New York choose to bypass I-80 and take the Illiana Expressway (a toll road), knowing that upon reaching its Indiana terminus at I-65, a traveler would have no option but to backtrack miles north on I-65 to get back to I-80. Dumb! Dumb! The Illiana just doesn't make sense.
- Worse yet, after spending 1 to 2 billion dollars to build the Illiana, IDOT will, in the very near future, have to pump millions, possibly billions, into widening I-55 and I-80 and making improvements to numerous interstate highway interchanges and into improvements to peripheral roads that would funnel intermodal traffic to the Illiana.
- More Dumb! If the above improvements were made to I-55 and I-80, it is highly likely that we would find that the Illiana was never needed in the first place.

KCBX and Pet Coke in Southeast Chicago

by Sharon Rolek, Conservation Liaison- Calumet Region, and Linda Cook

In articles and news media, KCBX announces it plans to build a \$120 million indoor enclosure (about the size of Navy Pier's Exhibition Hall) to consolidate its coal and petroleum coke operations. Chicago is requiring the company to enclose the pet coke (received from BP Whiting Refinery by trains on land and barges on water) that it is stockpiling on the Southeast Side of Chicago and along the Calumet River.

An astute colleague quotes the definition of *enclosure* as "a fence or wall; the separation and appropriation of land by means of a fence" to warn us that KCBX might not be including a roof on their plan.

Currently, the pet coke site is out in the open in huge mounds that are susceptible to strong winds and the elements. The City recently denied a request by KCBX (the Koch Brothers) to allow them to stack the mountains of pet coke to 45 feet high versus the 30-foot height now allowed. Residents are pleased by this denial, but really want the pet coke OUT of the area -

for the sake of clean air and our children.



Green Living

Tips about living "green"

According to the Will County Green website: "Each year thousands of tons of pharmaceuticals and personal care products enter the waste stream. Several United States Geological Survey studies over the past 7 years have found that many pharmaceuticals are surviving water treatment facilities and making their way into drinking water. The very medications that help people may be a concern to aquatic life."

It is therefore important that pharmaceuticals are disposed of properly. That means DO NOT FLUSH THEM DOWN THE DRAIN. Throwing them in the trash is not advisable either. In Will County, it is recommended that unused pharmaceuticals are taken to one of the following:

- a household hazardous waste collection event
- your local police department
- some drugstores (check ahead, not all drugstores accept discarded pharmaceuticals)

Before discarding that pill bottle or box, be sure to use a permanent black marker to cover any personnel information that appears on the label.



For more information on this topic, see the Will County Green website: www.willcountygreen.com or www.epa.illinois.gov

Election Results

Newly elected to the Sauk-Calumet Executive Committee (ExCom) for 2-year terms are:

Georganne Higgins - Membership

Lois Lauer - Chair and Programs

Rich Treptow - Secretary and Climate Change Liaison

No longer serving on the board are Mary Lubertozzi and Bob Schwaan.

Cool Cities

by Christy Mazrimas-Ott, Conservation Chair

In the December 4, 2014 *Chicago Tribune*, there was an article by Stephanie K. Baer, "Oak Park, Neighbors Discussing Green Plan". I have paraphrased the article and I'm encouraging all of the Sauk Calumet Sierra Club members to motivate their own communities to adopt sustainable practices like the examples being led in the communities of Oak Park, River Forest and Park Forest.

Oak Park trustees discussed the idea of creating an intergovernmental group to promote environmental sustainability in Oak Park and neighboring communities at their December 1, 2014 meeting. The effort is being led by Trustee Andrea Ott. The focus of the group would be advising participating taxing bodies on the following issues: energy, water use, conservation, green development and technologies, and more ecological refuse policies. Since the village of Oak Park's sustainability manager resigned in March 2014, the need to further the village's sustainability goal has been hindered. Originally the group would be funded by the participating government bodies with the goal of becoming self-sustaining. Interest has been expressed by neighboring River Forest and Forest Park leaders, but River Forest Village President, Cathy Adduci, is not quite ready to financially invest in the program yet.

The River Forest Parks Foundation is volunteering its services as a "policy arm" for sustainability issues. Forest Park Mayor Anthony Calderone has not discussed with his staff yet but is interested in the program and helping with funds. All three communities involved agree further discussion is needed to determine what the environmental sustainability program/organization should become. Trustee Andrea Ott is hoping as early as February or March 2015 to get moving with the idea.



For information on Sierra Club's Cool Cities program, and to see a list of some communities that have become "Cool Cities", go to <http://illinoiscoolcities.org/>

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* Political Chair / 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
Christy Mazrimas Ott* Conservation Chair, Cool Cities	708-825-4163
Sharon Rolek Conservation Liaison - Calumet Region	773-646-0990
Rich Treptow* Secretary, 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 in Frankfort. At least through February 2015, and possibly longer, the meetings will be held at the Frankfort Park District Community House (140 Oak St., Frankfort). At some point this spring, we may be moving back to our usual meeting location at the Frankfort Library (21119 Pfeffer Rd., Frankfort). See website for location of March, April, and May meetings. We do not meet in June, July, or August. All meetings are free and open both to Sierra Club members and the public.

Feb. 9 Illiana Expressway

Sierra Club's Illiana Organizer Erica Dodt will update us about the fate of the proposed Illiana Tollroad and will explain why the Sierra Club opposes it and what we can do to help stop this controversial road.

Mar. 9 Clean Power!

Clean Power Sierra Club campaign organizer Gus Fuguitt will discuss renewable energy and energy efficiency as part of the Illinois Clean Power Plan, and he'll tell of what we can do to help with this initiative to make Illinois a sustainable and healthy state.

Apr. 13 Local Sustainability

Park Forest Sustainability Coordinator Sarah Coulter will discuss the ways in which Park Forest has embraced the idea of becoming a sustainable community (a "Cool City"!) and will hopefully inspire each of us to work on similar projects within our own communities.

May 11 Native Plants

Chris Benda of the Illinois Native Plant Survey will discuss rare plants of the Chicago Region and where to find them.