



Tallgrass Sierran

November/December 1997 Volume 25 No. 6

THE HEART OF ILLINOIS GROUP OF THE SIERRA CLUB ♦

P.O. Box 3593, Peoria, IL 61614

☎ (309) 745-1920

General Meetings

WED
NOV
19

**In the Shadow of Mount Everest
Forest Park Nature Center, 7 p.m.**

Barb Gurtler will tell the story of her second attempt to climb the world's highest mountain in breathtaking slides and her own unique perspective as an experienced climber during a season when other climbers met death on the great mountain. Barb takes you from the terraced hills to the icy base camps in this awe-inspiring program. *Thanksgiving refreshments follow the meeting! Everyone is welcome!*

WED
DEC
17

**Happy Holidays!
Annual Potluck and Slides Party
Forest Park Nature Center, 6:30 p.m.**

Bring your favorite food to share and a dozen or so slides from your latest trip or event, for a holiday time get-together. The Nature Center will be decked for the season, and this is a great chance to enjoy a relaxing evening during the holiday. Bring some friends! Hot and cold drinks will be provided. You will need your own table service and a good appetite! A projector will be available for showing a sampling of slides after the meeting, and you will see your fellow/friend Sierrans in action!



Strengthen the Livestock Facilities Act

BY RALPH GINN

HOI Sierra Club members need to put extreme pressure on our state representatives to strengthen the Livestock Facilities Act. Members living in our western counties: Fulton, Hancock, Henderson, Knox, Schuyler, Stark, Warren; your areas are targeted by big hog corporations. The current law is weak, it leaves us all vulnerable to odor, groundwater contamination, lagoon spill disasters, and it threatens the very existence of the small livestock farmer.

To give you an idea what we are up against, note the double-talk of State Representative Rich Myers (Colchester). "Tough legislation can end up helping the larger corporation . . . the more legislation we bring down on the large livestock producer, the more we push the business into their hands." He, of course, ignores the fact that the proposed regulations are aimed specifically at the large factory type farms.

Legislators Shadid, Hawkinson, Slone, Moffitt, Leitch, and Smith have collaborated on a set of proposals that would greatly improve protection from these huge confinement operations. Give them your support. Call and write your legislators NOW!



Harvest Dinner



Join us on Saturday, November 15th at 6:30 p.m. for our Annual Harvest Dinner at the Grace and Peace Lutheran Church, 7611 N. Knoxville Avenue, Peoria. This year's dinner features a slide presentation, "*American Beauty: Environment and the Art of Seeing*" by noted landscape photographer Willard Clay. Cost is \$8 for adults, \$3 for children under 12, free for children under 6. Reservations are required. Call 688-0950 or the HOI HOTLINE at 745-1920.

The Harvest Dinner is the year's major fundraising event for the Heart of Illinois Sierra Club. Proceeds pay for next year's operating expenses and help fund new projects. *Donations of the following items for the dinner would be appreciated:*

- ☼ Your favorite homemade soups, salads, breads, or desserts
- ☼ New or good-quality used items for our **Silent Auction** that reflect an environmental or outdoor theme.

If you do not plan to attend the dinner but would still like to donate a food or auction item, please call. We will also try to arrange transportation for anyone requiring a ride. **Attend the Harvest Dinner and help support the HOI Sierra Club!**

The Endangered Species Act Reauthorization: The Good, The Bad, and the Activist

BY MARY BODELL

The Good: H.R. 2351, the Endangered Species Recovery Act, introduced into the U.S. House by George Miller (D-CA) will reauthorize the Endangered Species Act, strengthen it, and address current loopholes. HR 2351 will:

1. reward those who take the extra steps to help recover species already on the brink of extinction.
2. offer tax incentives to landowners that make a commitment to manage their land for the good of society.
3. encourage regional planners to manage development in a way that protects greenspace while allowing economic growth.

HR 2351 improves the existing ESA by strengthening approval standards. It requires that taxpayer-funded activities must not reduce the likelihood of recovery. It also requires that land use planning be consistent with the overall recovery of resident wildlife.

(Continued on Page 2)

(ESA Reauthorization, continued from front page)

The Bad: Senate Bill 1180, deceptively called a reauthorization of the Endangered Species Act, would destroy the current ESA. It includes the following:

1. The Federal Agencies of the U.S. Government would be exempt from avoiding any action that would jeopardize the recovery or preservation of an endangered species.
2. With no public notification and no criteria, the Secretary of State may grant anyone immunity from prosecution by signing a so-called "No Take" agreement.
3. Allows such federal agencies like the Army Corp of Engineers to determine that such activities like river dredging are not likely to adversely affect an endangered species.
4. Allow the U.S. Forest Service and other forest agencies to continue charging forward with a bad forest plan for 15 months after a species becomes threatened or endangered.
5. Senate Bill 1180 turns back the clock on species protection by allowing the Federal Agencies to refuse to designate critical habitat that is crucial for the survival of an endangered species on the grounds that it is "determinable." This was the state of the current Endangered Species Act 15 years ago when Congress amended the current Act to close the "not determinable" loophole that had deprived species of habitat protection.

The Activist: Since the Clinton administration and both the Democratic and Republican Leaderships in the U.S. Senate support Senate Bill 1180, its passage is a very likely possibility. Concerned citizens must mobilize now and put the pressure on their U.S. Senators to OPPOSE Senate Bill 1180. Furthermore, a renewed effort is more than ever now needed to request that our U.S. congresspersons support H.R. 2351, the bill that the Sierra Club and other environmental groups support for the reauthorization of the Endangered Species Act.

Time is running out against the Endangered Species Act. Senate Bill 1180 is expected to come up for a vote sometime in October. We must mount a massive call in to our U.S. Senators to stop this destructive bill. Please call now!

You can make a difference!

- The White House:**
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW,
Washington D.C. 20500
Comment Line: (202) 456-1111
E-mail: president@whitehouse.gov
- U.S. Senators:**
Carol Mosely-Braun / Richard Durbin
U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C. 20510
Capitol Switchboard: (202) 224-3121
- U.S. Representatives:**
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515
Capitol Switchboard: (202) 224-3121
Local: Ray LaHood (309) 671-7027
Lane Evans (309) 793-5760
- Governor Jim Edgar:**
State House, Springfield, IL 62706
Ph. (217) 782-6830
- State Senator or Representative:**
State House, Springfield, IL 62706
Capitol Switchboard: (217) 782-2000



Living Downstream

By HELEN MARTIN

"In this, the story of central Illinois . . . receives my scientific attention not because its history is so unusual but because it is so typical. . . . central Illinois is the source of my ecological roots, and my search for these roots is part of the story." - **LIVING DOWNSTREAM, An Ecologist Looks at Cancer and the Environment**, by Sandra Steingraber.

Ms. Steingraber goes on to say: An upstream image "comes from a fable about a village along a river. The residents who live here, according to parable, began noticing increasing numbers of drowning people caught in the river's swift current and so went to work inventing ever more elaborate technologies to resuscitate them. So preoccupied were these heroic villagers with rescue and treatment that they never thought to look upstream to see who was pushing the victims in."

Sandra Steingraber, a native of Pekin, is an acknowledged follower of Rachel Carson who first alerted citizens of the Earth about carcinogenic toxins in her book SILENT SPRING.

Twenty-five years ago a not-for-profit Earth-based creative enterprise called the Sun Foundation began, centering its activities on the land adjacent to its founding directors' Blue Heron Farm. The goal of the Sun Foundation was to provide innovative and creative leadership in the arts and sciences.

Several months ago the Sun Foundation's board and staff decided to celebrate their twenty-fifth anniversary in a unique and special way. They resolved to bring together as many groups and individuals in the central Illinois area as possible to help identify as well as implement ways for ecological awareness in our midst. Susan Steingraber's book provided the necessary research with accompanying background information to navigate through and into a possible reduction of the number of known carcinogens here in central Illinois.

What has emerged is a group calling themselves "**Living Upstream Downstream**", who have begun to identify what can be done to reduce these known carcinogens. Its members try first to remedy pollutants existing in their homes, with some investigating what businesses in the area can do to reduce environmental hazards and encourage healthful living conditions.

In Susan Steingraber's book the application of pesticides and/or herbicides in the production of food is one of the chief carcinogenic concerns. The Blue Heron Farm, the Sun Foundation's family farm, has been converted to sustainable organic agricultural methods for the past 7 years, using neither pesticide nor herbicide. Joe and Jeff Kennel, two brothers who farm this land, use organic strip farming, doing this more profitably and with less investment than a conventional farm. The Sun Foundation's "Living Upstream Downstream" group is sponsoring a spring workshop for all area farmers and other interested folk on Mar. 14, 1998 at the Sun Foundation in rural Marshall County at Washburn, Illinois, from 9:30a.m.- 2p.m. Everyone will have an opportunity to question and discuss the advantages of organic farming with the Kennel brothers. Attendance is free and lunch will be provided. All are invited. Please mark this date on your 1998 calendars.

Call Rudy Habben, 685-5605, if you would like more information about the "Living Upstream Downstream" group."

1997 Heart of Illinois Executive Committee Election - Ballots and Candidate Statements

Rules and Procedures:

1. You must be a HOI Sierra Club member to vote.
2. Vote for not more than 3 candidates for a 1998-99 term to the Heart of Illinois Executive Committee.
3. Joint memberships may use Ballots #1 and #2.
4. **Mail ballot(s) to: Sec. John Wosik**
c/o Heart of Illinois Sierra Club
P.O. Box 3593
Peoria, IL 61614
5. Write the name of the voting member(s) on the outside of the envelope containing the ballot.
6. Ballots must arrive at the Sierra Club's mailbox by Nov. 19, or can be delivered to the General Meeting on Nov. 19.
7. Ballots will be counted at the General Meeting on Nov. 19.

Cindy Ewing

All of my life I've had a great fascination with nature, a respect for the environment and deep love for animals. Over the years I've consistently been a financial contributor to a number of nature and wildlife conservation organizations as well as an active volunteer with several animal welfare, education and charitable agencies. In recent years, however, I've been lucky enough to have the opportunity to do quite a bit of traveling including hiking in the forests of California and the Pacific Northwest, snorkeling and whale watching in Hawaii, white water rafting and hiking in the Appalachians as well as walking our own Rock Island trail. The beauty that I experienced on these trips inspired me to take a more active role in trying to be a better steward of our precious resources and an persistent voice on the side of conservation. I'm committed to learning more about our fragile ecosystems and to working actively in efforts related to air and water quality, protection of wildlife and preservation of biodiversity.

While this is only my second year as an active member of the Sierra Club, I can sincerely say that I have enjoyed and learned something from every single meeting and outing I've attended. If elected to serve on the Executive Committee, I look forward to serving with and learning from the knowledgeable, experienced and committed members of the Excom and will do my best to support our organizational goals.

1997 HOI Sierra Club Excom Election Ballot #1

Cindy Ewing
 Mike Ingram
 Laurel Williams

1997 HOI Sierra Club Excom Election Ballot #2

Cindy Ewing
 Mike Ingram
 Laurel Williams

Ballots Due November 19

Mike Ingram

As a first time Executive Committee member, I expect to learn a lot from the past and present Excom members. I have been a Sierra Club member for several years, a featured speaker for the local group, and in 1996 was honored as Co-Conservationist of the Year. I have been involved in the restoration of the oak-hickory bluffs of the Illinois River as a volunteer since 1993, and have recently made it my occupation. If elected, I expect to use this knowledge to our club's advantage in our effort to preserve the Illinois River and bluffs.

□ □ □ □

Laurel Williams

I would appreciate the opportunity to be on the Executive Committee of the HOI Sierra Club. Preserving the environment has always been important to me. Our farm has been in the Conservation and Acres for Wildlife program the past 11 years. I feel when you personally experience the destruction of your environment as I have with the misuse of pesticides, you will work harder to try to change things for the better. I plan to continue with my fight against the misuse of pesticides. I hope that the Sierra Club and Agriculture will work together in the future to preserve our environment.

Wildlife Prairie Park License Plates

Wildlife Prairie Park license plates are very close to realization. Requests for 850 are necessary for the State to begin an issue. A few weeks ago the number of requests was within 70 of that requirement. If you have not requested these plates, PLEASE consider doing so. Proceeds (\$25 per plate) will go to the park each year. Wildlife Prairie Park deserves our support. Requests can be mailed to: Department of Vehicle Services, 501 S. second St., Suite 312, Springfield, IL 62756.



Peoria Recycling Proposal Coming Up

A proposal for increasing city of Peoria recycling is likely to be presented to the Peoria City Council in November. If you have an interest in helping to promote household curbside recycling please call Joyce at 688-0950.

Bird Seed Sale

Please order your bird seed on the insert in this newsletter! Your order helps Friends of the Rock Island Trail and Peoria Audubon, and you are guaranteed Kelly's quality bird seed. Kelly's provides bird seed at cost, and this is an important fund-raiser for the Friends and for Audubon service projects. If you received a separate mailing with an order form, please use the insert from this newsletter for your order, as we are tallying orders generated from the Sierra membership. Orders must be placed by November 3rd! Thanks for your support.

Larry Johnson Chapter Excom Candidate

HOI Sierra Club member Larry Johnson is a candidate for Illinois Chapter Executive Committee. Be sure to vote using the ballot in the latest edition of *Lake & Prairie*. Your vote counts, and from past experience with Chapter elections, very well could make a difference!

HOI Group Calendar

November

- 11 Executive Meeting, 7 p.m.**
TUE Peoria Pizza Works, 3921 N. Prospect, Peoria Heights
- 15 Annual Harvest Dinner, 6:30 p.m.**
SAT Grace and Peace Lutheran Church, 7611 N. Knoxville Ave., Peoria. Program: "American Beauty: Environment and the Art of Seeing" by landscape photographer Willard Clay. See front page for more information.
- 19 General Meeting, 7 p.m.**
WED Forest Park Nature Center. Barb Gurtler, "In the Shadow of Mount Everest". Everyone welcome!

December

- 6 I&M Canal Hike, 8 a.m.**
SAT We will carpool from Forest Park Nature Center to hike the I&M Canal, one of central Illinois' premier trails. Bring water and lunch. Dinner afterward at a local restaurant is an option. More details available at the November meeting, or call Mary Bodell, 745-5479.
- 9 Executive Meeting, 7 p.m.**
TUE Peoria Pizza Works, 3921 N. Prospect, Peoria Heights
- 17 Annual Potluck and Slides Party, 6:30 p.m.**
WED Forest Park Nature Center. Everyone welcome! See front page for more information.

January

- 9 Newsletter Deadline**
FRI Send articles for January and February to: John Wosik, 3403 W. Richwoods Blvd., Peoria, IL 61604, or jwosik@mtco.com
- 13 Executive Meeting, 7 p.m.**
TUE Peoria Pizza Works, 3921 N. Prospect, Peoria Heights
- 15 Newsletter Mailing, 7 p.m.**
THU Peoria Pizza Works; Everyone welcome!
- 21 General Meeting, 7 p.m.**
WED Forest Park Nature Center. Program to be announced.

Other Events: (Not sponsored by the Sierra Club but provided as a public service.)

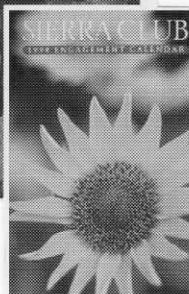
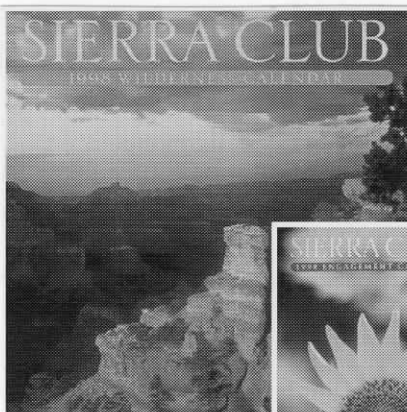
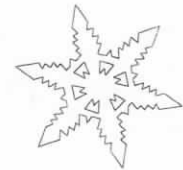
Prairie Dawgs Work Crew

Work includes prairie burns, brush cutting, eradicating alien plants, native plant seeding, and planting root stock. Crews meet the 1st & 3rd Saturdays at 9 a.m. at Hal Gardner's old house about 2.4 miles west of Jubilee-Princeville Rd. on Jubilee-Brimfield Rd. Call Hal Gardner at 446-9792 for directions.



Rock Island Trail Workdays

Saturday, December 13 - Meet at 9 a.m. at the Alta end maintenance building. Directions: Go about 1 mile west of Alta on Rt. 91, turn right on Radnor Rd., follow road around curves, maintenance building is on your right just before railroad tracks. Call Chris at 682-0549 for more information.



1998 Sierra Club Calendars Now Available! The Perfect Christmas Gift!

Sierra Club calendars, with their stunning nature photography, have been bestsellers for many years. Support the Heart of Illinois Sierra Club by buying your 1998 calendars from us! We receive a small profit from the sale of each calendar which helps pay for our operating expenses and special projects. To order, or for more information, call Chris Meydam at 682-0549. Calendars will be on sale at all Group meetings through January and at the *Harvest Dinner* on November 15.

Available Calendars:

- Wilderness
- Wildlife
- Birds
- Flowers
- Oceans
- Baby Animals
- Engagement
- Pocket

Heart of Illinois Sierra Club

HOTLINE: Local Meetings & Outings • Action Alerts • 745-1920
Public Official Contacts • Leave Messages

Executive Committee

Chair / Chapter Representative . . .	Rudy Habben . . .	685-5605
Vice-Chair	Joyce Blumenshine	688-0950
Secretary / Newsletter Editor	John Wosik	682-8950
Treasurer	Grayce Haworth	246-8397
Membership Chair	Cindy Matthias	686-4134
Conservation Chair	Ralph Ginn	274-3289
Alternate Chapter Representative	Hal Gardner	446-9792
Outings Chair / I-TAN	Mary Bodell	745-5479
Calendar Sales	Chris Meydam	682-0549

HEART OF ILLINOIS

Sierra Club

P.O. Box 3593
Peoria, IL 61614

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... To explore, enjoy and protect the wild places of the earth ...