



Tallgrass Sierran

March/April 2010 Volume 38 No. 2

THE HEART OF ILLINOIS GROUP OF THE SIERRA CLUB ♦ P.O. Box 3593, Peoria, IL 61612 ♦ <http://illinois.sierraclub.org/hoi>

HOI Group Meetings

WED
MAR 17

**Birding the Prairie Pothole
Grasslands of North Dakota**
Forest Park Nature Center, 7 p.m.

Angella Moorehouse will show slides and talk about the birding trip she and her husband took to North Dakota. Angella has been working for the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission for the past 14 years as a Natural Areas Preservation Specialist. As part of her job, she is responsible for the protection and stewardship of the nature preserves and natural areas in Peoria County, along with 14 other counties in western Illinois. She and her husband helped to start and continue to help maintain the Western Prairie Audubon Chapter of the Illinois Audubon Society. She is also on the state-wide board of the Illinois Native Plant Society. *Everyone is welcome.*

WED
APR 21

HOI Group Meeting
Forest Park Nature Center, 7 p.m.

The guest speaker for our April meeting has yet to be determined. Check the calendar on our website at <http://illinois.sierraclub.org/hoi> in the near future for information on our April guest speaker. *Everyone is welcome.*

New HOI Website @

<http://illinois.sierraclub.org/hoi>

.....See Page 2

End of an Era: The Last Bimonthly Print Edition of the *Tallgrass Sierran*

Sign up for the new electronic version of the *Tallgrass Sierran* on our new Group website at <http://illinois.sierraclub.org/hoi>.

BY JOHN WOSIK

This edition of the *Tallgrass Sierran* marks the end of an era. This is the last bimonthly print edition of our newsletter in this format. In its place we will offer a free electronic version of our newsletter available to everyone who wishes to subscribe to it on our website.

To complement the new electronic *Tallgrass Sierran*, we still plan at least one print mailing in the fourth quarter of each year which will include our annual Excom election and a yearly summary of our Group's activities and accomplishments. For those members who request it, we plan to provide a limited print version of our electronic newsletter, but we do not know at this time the exact format, frequency, or if we will request a small fee to subscribe. We also still plan to do targeted mailings from time to time for specific activities or issues like our environmental film festival, birdseed sale, or important action alerts.

We are taking this big step with a sadness for the end of a long tradition of a printed newsletter that we believe was effective in communicating local issues and Group activities to our members, and providing a positive identity for our Group in the eyes of the public. (Notice the Volume 38 No. 2 on the masthead for this issue. We really have been doing this

a long time.) Our Excom is very much aware that many of our members are not "tuned into the internet" or may not have any internet access at all. We are still committed to doing everything we can to continue to reach them with the resources available to us.

There are three main reasons why we are making these changes:

Accessibility, More Information, and a Larger Audience.

Our website and electronic newsletter will ultimately reach a much wider audience with more up-to-date information. We will be able to put much more information on our website and in our newsletter, and get it to the public much more quickly. By going online, we hope to reach a large new audience that we currently cannot reach with print - local environmentally concerned people who are not Sierra Club members. Our goal won't necessarily be to get them to join the Sierra Club, but it will be to get them educated and actively involved in environmental issues.

Cost

It takes us approximately \$2,100 a year to publish 6 issues. This may seem like a relatively small amount in the big scheme of things, but it is by far our biggest budget expense. If absolutely needed, we could probably continue to fund 6 complete issues, but in the last couple of years we have not had a

(See *Newsletter*, page 2)



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

New HOI Website Now Available Find Us at <http://illinois.sierraclub.org/hoi>

By JOHN WOSIK

Our new Heart of Illinois Group website is now up and can be reached at <http://illinois.sierraclub.org/hoi>. You can also link to us from the Illinois Chapter website at <http://illinois.sierraclub.org>, or just go to Google, Yahoo, or any other popular internet search engine and type "HOI Sierra Club".

Currently available on our website:

- General information about the Heart of Illinois Group.
- News stories on local environmental issues and HOI Group activities.
- A signup form for the new free email edition of the Tallgrass Sierran newsletter, which will have it's first issue in May.
- Archived issues of the *Tallgrass Sierran* going back to the year 2000. Additional earlier issues will be added in the near future.
- A calendar of HOI Group events, as well some other local events not sponsored by the HOI Group but of environmental interest.
- Links to other primarily local and state websites of environmental interest.
- An online option to join the Sierra Club. Alternatively, a membership form can be downloaded, printed, and mailed in.
- A link to our HOI Group blog at <http://hoisierraclub.wordpress.com> where

some of our members provide their thoughts on environmental issues, and post late-breaking action alerts and news.

- Our HOI Group officers and how to contact us.

We still have a great deal to do! Much more information on local issues will be added to our website, and we know we must keep it up to date in order to keep visitors coming back. As we add more content and functionality to our website, and just get more experienced at this, the look will probably change. With our new website and email newsletter, we hope to attract a large new audience that we currently cannot reach with our print newsletter - local environmentally concerned people who are not Sierra Club members, and may never join, but who want to be educated about local environmental issues and maybe even get actively involved.

And we also need your help. Please contact us if you have comments (both good and bad) about our website. What information are you looking for that we don't have? Do you have suggestions for better ways to display our content? We are also looking for contributions for our website and email newsletter from both HOI Group members and non-members alike. Our goal is to provide as much use-



ful information about local environmental issues as possible to as many people as possible. If you feel strongly about an issue and would like to submit material (articles, calendar events, etc.) for our website and email newsletter, please contact us.

Please send your comments, suggestions, submissions, or just questions to hi-webmaster@illinois.sierraclub.org, or contact any of our HOI Group officers listed on the back of this newsletter or on our website.

(Newsletter, from page 1)

great deal of money left in our budget after newsletter expenses, and part of our calculation is that discontinuing the print newsletter would free this money up for other important uses. Dues from the National Sierra Club have been reduced substantially the past few years even before the recession began, and there is no indication that our dues will return to the levels of previous years.

National Sierra Club Direction

The National Sierra Club and the Illinois State Chapter are strongly encouraging all Sierra Groups to go electronic. Like it or not, fair or unfair, this is the direction most organizations are going with their newsletters. The Illinois Chapter newsletter, *Lake & Prairie*, has ceased as a print publication and will soon be going electronic. The majority of other

Illinois Sierra Groups are in the process of moving to an electronic-only newsletter.

So, what are your options?

If you are a Heart of Illinois Group member, you may already be on our newsletter email list if you provided us a valid email address when you joined the Sierra Club and indicated we could use it to contact you. If you are unsure of this and want to receive our electronic newsletter, please go to our subscribe page on our website at <http://illinois.sierraclub.org/hoi/newsletter/subscribe.htm> and sign up. If you are currently on our email list, you can unsubscribe on our website, or by clicking on the unsubscribe link in any newsletter we email to you.

If you are not a Sierra Club member, or if you are a member but HOI is not your Group, you are also welcome to subscribe to our newsletter on our website.

HOI Group members are encouraged to receive the email version of the newsletter only. This will save resources and help the Group devote more funds to conservation, environmental, and political activities. However, if you are a HOI Group member and would still like to receive a print edition (format, frequency, and cost yet to be determined) email us at hoi@sierraclub.org, phone us at 309-222-2519, or mail us at Heart of Illinois Sierra Club, PO Box 3593, Peoria, IL 61612.

If you have comments, concerns, or questions about these changes, contact us by the above methods, or directly contact any of our HOI Group officers listed on the back of this newsletter or on our website.

Frederick Douglass said, "Power never concedes anything without a demand." We witness this every day in politically divided 2010 America: health care reform, energy reform (cap and trade), banking reform, billions for defense and frequent wars. Sometimes the little stuff gets done, and even then is compromised into near impotence, but the big stuff always meets fierce resistance from the stasis protectors with vested interests. Insurance and pharmaceuticals fight health reform, oil, gas, and coal fight energy reform, banks fight reform, and defense contractors fight military cuts or even withdrawal of far flung armies serving no useful purpose around the globe (Japan, Korea, Germany).

In 1965 President Lyndon Johnson told Martin Luther King he didn't have the votes to pass the National Voting Rights Act. King turned up the heat across the country. The "bloody Sunday" in Selma, Alabama was one of many consequences, and five months later the public demand was so great Congress was forced to pass the bill and LBJ signed on August 6. A textbook example of how to get a big thing done. Environmentalists must con-

sider the same tactics. Decide on the one most important issue, keep it simple and use energy and resources to create demand. A strategy that has a better chance of success than scatter-gun efforts.

Climate change, and the underlying problems of clean energy, pollution, energy efficiency, deforestation, and regulation is the issue of today. Global warming threatens our very existence. Oil, gas, and coal are not playing this one for recreation. They have the money, we have the truth. Cap and trade will fail unless environmental groups put intense pressure on Congress, particularly the Senate. Senate Republicans Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins (both of Maine) have excellent environmental voting records (91 and 100 respectively). They, along with a cast of "what's in it for me" Democrats, Baucus, (MT) Lieberman (CT), Nelson (NE), and Landrieu (LA), must come under savage coercion from environmental groups. Then see what happens.

FINAL: This is Heart of Illinois' final printed newsletter. Financial aid from National and State have disappeared, and repeated pleas to our members for donations have gone wanting from all but a

few. It's a sign of the times. In 5 to 10 years printed newspapers will be an endangered species, and land line telephones will go dead.

LES: Goodbye, Les Bodell. A founder of HOI, passionate, short-fused defender of the environment, birder, hiker, rock hound, rock climber, tireless worker, and friend. Two short Les stories. To a chilled October Sierra Club outing at Devil's Lake, Wisconsin in 1972, Les brought a sleeping bag that was little more than a shell with a sheet stuffed in it, the worst sleeping bag I've ever seen. He slept under the stars, and claimed he didn't get cold. Years later he was telling me about a back-packing trip to remote Alaska with his wife, Mary. He was talking about their primitive camp site above a fast moving river, when I asked if he did any fishing. He said he wanted to but there were already several fisherman in the river when he got up in the morning. I looked at him with skepticism, this place was really remote. After a pause, he went on to say the fishermen were the kind with long claws. So was the humor of Les Bodell. We will miss you.

Your Letters and Calls Needed to Support Renewable Energy and Key State Issues

BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

The Illinois Legislature is in full swing and your help is needed to urge passage of bills that will make a positive difference for our families and our future. Check the Sierra Club Illinois Chapter Legislative Tracker for full fact sheets, regular updates and for complete details at:

http://action.sierraclub.org/site/PageNavigator/egislative_Priorities_2010

Please take a few minutes to contact your legislators in support of the following bills:

RENEW Illinois - Support House Bill 6013, 6202, 5429

These bills comprise RENEW: Rebuild our Economy with New Energy Work. Supporting this package of bills will help create stability for solar renewable energy in Illinois, and generate much needed jobs in our state.

Green Lawns and Clean Water - Support House Bill 6099

This bill will help eliminate unnecessary sources of phosphorus from our waterways by banning phosphorus on turf grass. Phosphorus is a major pollution problem in Illinois streams.

BPA-Free Kids Act - Support House Bill 6088

This bill will limit the toxic chemical bisphenol-A (BPA) from infant bottles and food containers. BPA is a known hormone disrupter and has been banned in other states & European countries.

Public Notice Option for Longwall Mining - Support Senate Bill 3107 - This bill simply asks coal mines to send a notice to

the Illinois Department of Natural Resources sixty days before beginning longwall mining. The IDNR then sends a copy of the notice to the local county affected, and places a public notice in an area newspaper. The county can request IDNR hold a public meeting. This is a social and environmental justice issue, as it is often years between the only public hearing on a coal mining permit and the time when longwall mining begins.

Oppose Star Bonds Financing - This bill (or amendment) would give millions of dollars of state tax funds to developers to promote commercial development in floodplains. While an area near East St. Louis is the current focus, such floodplain development could be a concern in the Peoria or other areas, too.

Protect Ratepayers - Oppose funding for Tenaska coal to gas plant - This provision does not yet have a bill number, but it is expected that the Tenaska company pushing the Taylorville "Energy Campus" will request that Illinois electricity users and state government take the unprecedented step of guaranteeing that the power from this plant will be purchased in total, and at undisclosed rates far into the future. Construction on this coal to gas power plant has not begun and the public is being asked to shoulder the entire risk of future costs through undisclosed rates.

Check out the Illinois General Assembly website at <http://www.ilga.gov> for contact information for your state legislators.

